



Australian Association for
Infant Mental Health

Letter from your baby



Dear Mum and Dad,

This first year is pretty intense, isn't it? You're adjusting to huge changes in your world. So am I! It's going to take time and patience for us to figure things out together.

I can't tell you in words yet what I feel and what I need. A lot of the time you'll have to guess, and you won't always get it right. But please keep trying. Just the way you keep trying reassures me that you love me, and that's the most important thing I need to know.

When you look at me and smile, it feels wonderful. When you talk and sing to me, I'm comforted by your voice, and I learn about sounds, rhythm and language. When you gently rock or dance with me, it teaches me to enjoy moving. When you hold me in your arms, I learn about touch.

I love it when you're interested in exploring the world with me. Sometimes I'll get scared, and I need to know I can always come back to you and feel safe again. That's how I'll get confident exploring and learning. When I'm in danger and don't realise it, I need you to protect me. You keep watching and I'll keep changing. You have my permission to be amazed by me!

While I'm figuring out how the world works, it's nice if the same kind of things happen around the same time each day. But I don't need really strict routines – I can't read a watch yet! Somewhere in the middle is great. Don't get too stressed out by all the advice you hear and read. We're working this out together, day by day.

I will cry when I'm uncomfortable. I will cry when I'm hurt. I will cry when I'm afraid. I never cry because I am upset with you. Try to stay calm: that will help me feel calm. Get other grown-ups to help you. Eventually I'll get better at calming myself – but there'll always be times when I need comfort from you. The work we put into this relationship now will pay off for the rest of my life.

Sometimes it's all too much. If I turn away, it might mean I need to take a break. When I'm distressed, try to stay with me and comfort me, even when that's hard for you. Sometimes it might help to distract me, but most often it helps to just hold me, so I feel someone understands. Show me that I don't need to be afraid of my big feelings.

I know sometimes we don't get along. Our relationship doesn't need to be perfect. When we have a problem, I need you to repair things between us and be with me again afterwards. I need to know we can get through these things together. This 'growing up' is hard work. Please keep being patient with both of us – you can't ever be 'too' kind to me.

Being a parent is the most important job you'll ever do, and the most rewarding. We're going on an amazing journey together and it's just beginning. Don't be afraid of your big feelings. Enjoy me, delight in me, take it one step at a time. We've got this.

All my love,

Your Baby

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