

Age-Specific Observations of the Parent–Child Interaction

The following observable behaviors are indicators of a growing secure attachment between parent and child. These interactions may also serve as a guide for behavior for families in which attachment concerns may be present.

Developmental Period	Supportive Parental Interactions	Positive Infant Responses
Newborn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Looking frequently at the infant ■ Having specific questions and observations about the individual characteristics of the infant ■ Touching, massaging, or gently rubbing the infant ■ Attempting to soothe the infant when the infant is upset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Looking content ■ Signaling needs ■ Feeding well ■ Responding to parent’s attempts to soothe
1 month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Talking to and smiling at the infant during the exam ■ Holding the infant during most of the visit ■ Comforting the infant effectively during stressful parts of the exam ■ Differentiating among different types of crying ■ Describing the infant’s routine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Turning head toward parent’s voice ■ Looking well cared for ■ Looking content ■ Responding to parent’s attempts to soothe ■ Appearing well-nourished ■ Searching for faces and actively regarding surroundings
2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Describing feeling more confident with the infant ■ Describing the infant’s routine ■ Talking to the infant and looking at the infant ■ Describing the infant’s likes and dislikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gaining weight at an appropriate pace ■ Smiling
4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Having fun with the infant ■ Thinking the infant is wonderful in one or more ways ■ Bringing toys and objects to amuse the infant ■ Naming specific games played with the infant ■ Describing funny or surprising behaviors that the infant does ■ Describing the infant’s personality ■ Anticipating the infant’s response to a particular event (e.g., undressing, a shot) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recognizing parents ■ Having a well-shaped head as opposed to occipital flattening ■ Showing delight in social play with movement, smiles, giggles, and positive vocalizations ■ Looking well-nourished

Age-Specific Observations of the Parent–Child Interaction (continued)

Developmental Period	Supportive Parental Interactions	Positive Infant Responses
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Holding the infant for most of the exam ■ Comforting the infant after distress ■ Bringing and offering toys or appropriate objects ■ Responding to the infant’s bids for attention ■ Allowing the infant to explore with his mouth ■ Tolerating the infant’s exploration of the parent’s face, hair, and so forth while setting limits in a positive way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrating awareness of the presence of strangers ■ Looking to the parent for comfort ■ Anticipating and adjusting to lifting and carrying ■ Babbling
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Allowing the infant to explore the environment safely ■ Being mindful of safety risks in the office (e.g., does not leave the infant unprotected on exam table) ■ Describing a good leave-taking ritual ■ Describing a comfortable bedtime routine and routine in case of nightwaking ■ Getting the infant to wave, play peek-a-boo, or play other games ■ Handling limit-setting comfortably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Demonstrating awareness of the presence of strangers ■ Looking to the parent for comfort ■ Reacting to separation from parent ■ Babbling syllables (e.g., ma-ma, da-da) ■ Smiling at his own image in the mirror ■ Responding to her name ■ Pointing at objects
1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reading books to the child ■ Bringing age-appropriate toys ■ Reporting safety-proofing the house ■ Using appropriate limit-setting (e.g., moving the child away, distracting the child with an alternative activity) ■ Having appropriate behavioral expectations ■ Interpreting the child’s behavior or utterances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Exploring the environment ■ Showing signs of using the parent as home base while exploring, checking back as necessary ■ Being able to self-soothe ■ Responding to his name ■ Sharing or using toys interactively with adults ■ Looking well cared for

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