

LOVE ME ... HOLD ME ... KNOW ME ...

By Marnie Bragg

MOM,

I need your cuddles, your voice and your gaze in order to grow, as much as I need food.¹

When I'm nestled up against you I tend to get lots more strokes, hugs, kisses, eye contact and conversation.² That makes me feel so content and alert that I don't feel much like crying at all.³

I don't have to cry to be picked up when I'm already up here with you. I only have to wiggle to get put down when I feel like it.⁴ And when I get hungry I don't have to waste a lot of energy getting the point across to you.⁵ I know there's a little something in here somewhere; if I just root around a bit I can just about smell it!⁶

I'm really quite portable, Mom. You can take me everywhere. I love it when you pop me into our sling⁷ and take me out for a change of scenery.⁸ It's great to be upright and high where I can see everything and look at people's faces.⁹ Who would have thought that shopping could be such fun?!

Sometimes, when things get overwhelming, I appreciate being able to nuzzle in against you and have a sleep or a quick snack.¹⁰ There's nothing better than to be swaddled¹¹ snug up against your chest, nice and toasty warm. The tickly vibration of your voice, the rhythmic thumpety-thump of your heart, the gentle rocking of your breath and swaying of your body. So warm and safe - where do I remember all this (yawn) from, so well?¹² Mmm. Zzzzz.

Thanks, Mom, for making me feel like I belong.

Love,

Your baby

1. **The Crying Baby**, by Sheila Kitzinger. Viking 1989

Babies respond to skin contact. *"It's an intensely physical language of communication."* pg. 179

The Earliest Relationship, by T. Berry Brazelton and Bertrand G. Cramer. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. Inc. 1990

"Face-to-face interaction with the newborn may be as critical as any other kind, such as breastfeeding, holding, or cuddling." pg. 54

Becoming Attached, by Robert Karen. Warner Books 1994

Harlow's monkey experiments seem to show that comfort is more sought out than food. Pg. 136, 140

The Politics of Breastfeeding, by Gabrielle Palmer. Pandora Press 1988

Human babies are born very vulnerable and dependent on their mothers. *"Breastfeeding provides an intermediate environment of nurturing and security which makes the transference from womb to the outside world softer and less harsh, and a mother's breast gives warmth, food and protection against disease and a learning exercise in interactions."* pg. 13

2. **The Earliest Relationship**

"Touch is the first important area of communication between a mother and her infant."

"One of a parent's first jobs is to learn to recognize and predict their baby's states of consciousness - for feeding, sleeping and for interaction." pg. 64

"We see the infant not as helpless, chaotic or unpredictable, but equipped with highly predictable responses ... These responses in turn shape those of the caregiver to set up a mutual feedback system appropriate to that baby." pg. 86

The Crying Baby

Babies thrive on stimulation from their parents and on communication. pg. 168, 169, 175

3. **The Crying Baby**

Babies who are picked up cry less. pg. 177

4. **Becoming Attached**

"Ainsworth had now clearly established that sheer quantity of maternal care was not the issue. On the whole, for instance, mothers of secure babies did not hold their babies appreciably more than other mothers. But there was a difference in the way that they held them. They were much more affectionate, tender and careful, rarely inept, rarely distressing their babies with an unpleasant experience of physical contact. And they held their babies when the babies wanted to be held." pg. 161

5. **Becoming Attached**

"Mothers of securely attached babies tend to feed them promptly on demand or to hold them off with gentle coaching." pg. 161

Breastfeeding and Human Lactation, by Jan Riordan and Kathleen Auerback. Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Inc. 1999

"In any culture, swaddling the baby and carrying him close typifies the mothers who practice unrestricted breastfeeding." pg. 39

6. **Earliest Relationship**

"Seven day old babies turn their heads towards their own mother's breast pads with 80% reliability." pg. 60

7. **The Crying Baby**

"One of the best ways of giving a baby stimulation, together with the security that comes from closeness, is to use a baby carrier - not only for walks and shopping trips, but everyday around the house, and more or less whatever you're doing." pg. 175

8. **The Crying Baby**

Babies *"want a richer and more varied scene"* than their bedrooms. pg. 165

Babies seem to cry more when socially isolated and *"mothers feel much more anxious about their babies crying when they are socially isolated."* pg. 166

9. **The Crying Baby**

"... so that he is in touch with the interplay of other people and the give and take of social life, and is part of our human community." pg. 176

10. Breastfeeding can be done discreetly and with ease, even while walking, and the mother still has at least one hand free. Babies often quickly fall into a deep sleep while nursing in the sling.

11. Swaddling against Mom's body is warmer, more interesting, and more comforting for baby than being swaddled alone.

12. A sling puts the baby close to his "old home," that is, the uterus, to help ease his transition into the world.

The Crying Baby. A study is described where low income new Moms were given either a sling, a plastic babyseat or nothing. At 13 months, 83% of babies with slings were assessed as feeling secure. At 13 months, only 38% of babies with plastic seats were assessed as feeling secure.