

Partner's Role with Baby: Bonding with Baby

"Hi, Momma."

"Hi. Thank you so much."

To say that parenthood is "new" for Sebastian Allapatt and Amanda Rose Walsh, is an understatement: Baby Arya came into the world just two-and-a-half weeks ago. And mom and baby are doing just fine. But what about partner and baby?

"A baby needs to feel loved, supported, nurtured, and it doesn't just come from a mother's and baby's bond; it also comes from a parent's bond, so the partner is very important in creating that bond."

Sebastian and Amanda recognized this, well before Arya was born. So, they prepared for Sebastian's role as partner. Not only around caregiving for the baby, but also connecting with the baby.

"He says, 'Let me have her for a little while,' just to give me a break: It's monumental. I can lean on him; and it's everything."

"Emotionally, my heart is just open more. I mean, I just feel like a greater capacity for love, in a way that I never felt before. You've been so good, with your bath."

So, how does a partner begin to form his or her bond with baby?

"Bonding is creating an emotional and physical relationship with that baby. You know, we're holding them. We're building trust. They have to learn how to trust in the world, and all the things that you are going to do for your baby, changing a diaper, picking up your baby when it's crying. Cuddling with your baby."

Physical touch is key. Experts call it "Skin-to-Skin."

"It's literally, you take your shirt off, you put your baby on skin to skin, and then you put a blanket over the baby and you're, you know, you're doing exactly what the baby needs."

Skin-to-skin is not only one of the best ways to bond with baby, it has Physiological benefits, as well. Research shows that it helps: Regulate the baby's body temperature; Stabilize heart and breathing rates; Maintain healthy blood sugar levels; And promote neurological development.

"We're in the water, our favorite spot, yay!"

Bathing is essential to the partner's role with baby.

"You're talking to your baby; you are stimulating your baby through touch; and the warmth of the water. Partners find that time to increase the bonding with the baby and getting to know the baby."

"Overall, my ease of bonding with Zoe, I never found it as a challenge, really."

Ainsley Bailey has added his own "twist" to bonding with 4-month-old daughter Zoe.

"One of the ways that he bonded with her right off the bat was through music and just spending time cuddling and dancing, and it's something that up to this day he still does. It is interesting because it's different: It's not one of the ways that I bond with her, but it's something unique to his and her relationship."

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Experts say that unique ways of bonding like this can make the connection even stronger.

"Ah, you've got Daddy's glasses."

Having a solid bond with baby also helps the partner recognize cues.

"Really just tuning into what the baby is 'saying' and learning that there are cues that the baby gives you in terms of what they need: there's feeding cues, there's cues that the baby cries when they're over-tired."

"Your baby is learning from you, and you are learning from your baby. It's precious."

And something that Sebastian and Ainsley have certainly learned is the deep sense of joy that comes from being a Dad.

"It's just so much more rewarding than I ever could have imagined. My heart can't do the math."

"With all these roles and how it makes me feel as a father, the one word that could really describe it is bliss. There's no greater feeling."