



# The Science of Early Childhood Development

EVIDENCE-BASED INSIGHTS FOR NEW MOTHERS

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Your baby's brain is built through connection

Newborn brains grow through responsive interaction—eye contact, talking, soothing, and responding to cries.

You're not "spoiling" your baby. You're wiring their brain.

### Secure attachment shapes emotional health

When caregivers respond consistently, babies learn the world is safe.

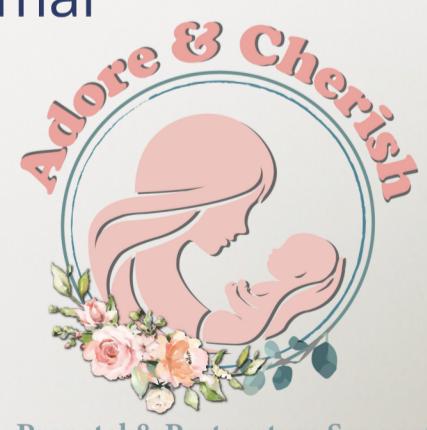
This builds better stress regulation, emotional security, and resilience long-term.

### KEY FINDINGS:

- Responsive caregiving builds the brain
- Secure attachment supports lifelong emotional health
- Parental mental health affects infant development
- Sleep disruptions are biologically normal

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# Key Findings New Parents Need To Know

## ***Early brain development is relationship-driven***

A newborn's brain grows fastest in the first year and connections are strengthened through serve-and-return interactions—when a baby signals and a caregiver responds. Toys and programs don't build brains, people do.

## ***Secure attachment improves stress regulation later in life***

Babies who experience consistent, responsive care develop healthier stress responses. This is linked to better emotional regulation and resilience in childhood and adulthood.

Attachment is not about perfection—it's about consistency over time.

## ***Language development starts long before speech***

Newborns are wired to recognize voices and language patterns. The quantity and quality of words spoken to an infant predicts later vocabulary and processing speed.

Talking during everyday care (feeding, diaper changes) matters more than flashcards or “educational” tools.

# Key Findings New Parents Need To Know

## Parental mental health directly impacts infant development

Studies consistently show that untreated postpartum anxiety or depression is associated with differences in infant sleep, emotional regulation, and behavior. This applies to both mothers and fathers.

Treating parental mental health is a developmental intervention for the baby.

## Sleep fragmentation is developmentally normal

Newborns do not have mature circadian rhythms and are biologically programmed to wake frequently. This supports feeding needs and may reduce SIDS risk.

Context: Night waking is not a failure—it's physiology.

## Developmental timelines vary widely

Large pediatric datasets show broad normal ranges for milestones. Early or late milestones do not reliably predict intelligence or success.

Trends over time matter more than one moment or comparison.