

▪ **Infants (0-18 months)**

Communication

- Write a letter to your newborn expressing your feelings, expectations, dreams, etc. upon his or her's birth.
- Talk to your infant in a pleasant soothing voice, using simple language.
- Listen to and respond to sounds your child makes and imitate them. Take turns babbling.
- Be aware of your infants body language communicating distress, fear, hunger, tired, etc.
- Openly express love to your child.

Teaching

- Allow your child to actively explore his or her environment. Encourage them to grasp, chew, and manipulate safe objects to help them understand the nature of their environment.
- Teach and model to your child how to play safely - not touching hot things, not sticking your hands in electrical outlets, places they can play, etc.
- Imitation, hiding, and naming games are important for learning at this age.

Monitoring

- Be aware of and schedule proper immunizations for your child.
- Carefully monitor your child's play to ensure safety.
- Monitor your child's physical development by encouraging nutritious eating.
- Check on your sleeping child.

Thought Processes

- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse what your thoughts, feelings and commitments were before you had your child and how they have shifted since you became a parent.
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about the hopes and dreams of being the kind of father you want to be. Have you in any way lost touch with some of these hopes and dreams. Why?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about a person in your life who you have noticed parents in a way you feel is admirable. What can you learn from their example?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse the memories you have of your own father. What did you decide about how you would like to father your child based on those experiences?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about times you enjoy most with your child. Notice the aspects of your relationship you think you are doing right.
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about times you felt personally challenged in interactions with your child. What are some of your strengths from which you can draw on to better meet these challenges?
- Think, write, or discuss with your spouse about what you believe others (partner, children, relatives, friends, community, etc.) expect of you as a father. How do they differ? When have you met or not met these expectations?
- Create a story about the kinds of stories you would want your child to tell of you as their father.

Errands

- Go grocery shopping while your wife and child nap.
- Be willing to run to the store for extra diapers, replacement pacifiers, or understocked baby food.

Care Giving

- Be attentive during daily routines such as diaper changing, bathing, feedings, or changing clothes. Talk about what you are doing and what you will do next. Sing songs, play games (peek-a-boo) explain body parts, draw attention to surroundings or specific actions etc.

- Read books frequently to your child. Allow for much interaction and conversation.
- Care for your child when they are sick.

Child-Related Maintenance

- Increased laundry, sterilizing bottles, taking out all those dirty diapers, etc. are normal changes. Take the initiative to maintain a healthy, clean environment for your child to grow up in.
- Repair broken toys or baby paraphernalia.

Shared Interests

- Make exploring the world through a child's eyes your shared interest with your child.

Availability

- Be available for feedings, diaper changings, bed time routines, hospital check ups, immunizations, exploratory play, etc.

Planning

- Devise a financial plan for future expenses associated with your child (college, lessons, sports, etc.). Talk to a financial advisor, make investments, set aside a savings account, set up a college fund, etc.
- Plan family trips which include both sides of the family to encourage generative relationships with both maternal and paternal grandparents of your child.

Shared Activities

- Engage your child in games such as Patty-Cake, Peek-A-Boo, 5 Little Piggies, etc.
- Read and sing frequently to your child.
- Go exploring with your child in an empty field, at a park, in a new setting, etc. Follow their initiative and interests and build or scaffold on actions/ideas.
- Work together building things out of blocks, clay, sand, snow, etc.

Providing

- Buy toys that are safe, washable, rounded, too large to swallow, and are responsive to a child's action (squeeze toys, toys that rattle, honk or squeak, music boxes, bells, balls, blocks, etc.)
- Buy Books that are made of heavy cardboard, have rounded edges, and bright pictures of familiar objects.
- Provide needed documentation for your child (social security, birth certificate, etc.)

Affection

- Engage your infant in many face to face, one on one interactions that includes cuddling, tickling, smiling, hugging, kissing, making frequent eye contact, etc.

Protection

- Install the baby car seat properly
- Always buckle up your children in the backseat.
- Baby-Proof your house.
- Install electrical outlet covers that are large enough not to be a choking hazard if taken out.
- Install cabinet and drawer locks on locations that contain dangerous materials such as cleaning chemicals, sharp tools or appliances, medicine cabinets, etc.
- Install window blind cord wraps designed to prevent strangulation from hanging window blind cords.
- Keep house plants out of reach of your child as many of them can cause illness or death.
- Install a child gate to block off stairways, or places of the house you do not monitor regularly.

Supporting Emotionally

- Respond promptly and appropriately to your baby's needs.