



*Bonding with your baby*  
in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy

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Born in Trust





## Author's note



When I became a mother, I once stood where you are now, uncertain about what pregnancy and birth would bring. It was during my first pregnancy that I discovered the transformative power of HypnoBirthing.

As a certified HypnoBirthing and Hypnosis practitioner and a mother who embraced this approach, I found a deep connection with all three my baby's that shaped not only my birthing experience but also my perspective on childbirth. The journey from uncertainty to an empowered, serene delivery has fuelled my passion to guide expectant parents through this profound process.

I am currently pregnant with my third child, and each of my pregnancies has presented a unique challenge when it comes to connecting with my baby in the early stages. During my first pregnancy, I experienced severe morning sickness, which, for me, manifested as all-day sickness. I felt as if I was being consumed from the inside out and did not enjoy the first half of the pregnancy. Despite my daughter being planned and wanted, I was not prepared for the intensity of this physical challenge.

In my second pregnancy, as in the first, I faced significant sickness, but this time I was prepared. Prior to conceiving my second daughter, I had endured two miscarriages.

Anxiety overshadowed the joy of pregnancy as I constantly feared another loss, making it a special effort to connect with her while grappling with the knowledge that things could go wrong again.

My third and current pregnancy introduced yet another challenge in connecting with my baby. At this point, I was divorced from the father of my two girls and navigating a new relationship. Living together for just nine months, my partner and I unexpectedly found ourselves expecting a child. A few months earlier, I had decided that life was fulfilling enough with my two girls, and I wanted to focus on my HypnoBirthing practice. I gave away most of my baby and pregnancy items to a friend, content with the new direction my life was taking. Fortunately, my partner embraced the pregnancy immediately, leaving me to grapple with this unexpected surprise. Connecting with my baby in an honest and heartfelt way became my solace during this period, as I once again had to reshape the future I had imagined for myself.

In this e-book, drawing from my personal experience and professional expertise, I share insights and practical tips on connecting with your baby—a pivotal aspect of the HypnoBirthing course.

May these pages empower you on your journey of bonding and preparing for the remarkable experience of childbirth.



Titia



# Introduction

When you're pregnant, life normally goes on as before, and that can feel hectic with all the changes that are going on in your body. Probably, you are as busy as always; work, sports, family, social life—everything is going on like usual, but is it really like usual? The difference is that now there is a little human growing in your belly. Especially in the first 12 to 20 weeks, even the physical changes are not so clear to outsiders, but you notice. In this first half of pregnancy, you also don't feel your baby moving yet. As a first-time mom, you can start feeling something from 20 weeks on, while you probably recognize the movement a bit earlier as a second-time mom. Besides life going on as usual and being busy, not feeling your baby yet can also make it harder to connect with your baby.



I see a lot of pregnant women struggling; they would like to connect with their baby but simply feel like they don't have the time and don't exactly know how. This is why I wrote this e-book. In this e-book, I provide you with 3 golden tips to connect with your baby without having to spend too much time. You can just integrate the bonding activities into your daily routine.



Why is it important to connect with your baby? Well, for different reasons. Thanks to a large body of literature and research conducted well over four decades in the field of pre- and perinatal psychology, we know that bonding with your baby in the womb makes an impact on the rest of your baby's life.



Your baby is being marinated inside your amniotic fluid, filled with the flavours of your emotional life and state of mind. From the studies, we now know that the very start of life in the womb is the blueprint for the rest of your baby's life.

The quality of the bond between you and your baby, but also between the father and your baby, influences cognitive, social, and emotional development even in a later stage of life.

Besides that, the way you take care of and spend time with your baby in pregnancy also influences your baby's attachment style. With a good start, it will be easier for your baby and later your child to develop a healthy attachment style.

The close bond that is built can be very real when it is time to connect with your baby during birthing. Your baby needs your reassurance that all is well and that it's a good time to come into the world. This helps both you and your baby during the final stage. Building a bond early in pregnancy also helps you in this final stage of pregnancy.

By spending a little bit of time every day connecting with your baby, you tell your baby that he is welcome. You assure your baby that there is time and space for him in your family. By tuning into this little person growing inside of you, you lay the foundation for a relationship that will last a lifetime.





# Three golden tips

*for bonding with your baby in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy*


## 1. TALK OR SING TO YOUR BABY

Although your baby only starts to hear sounds from about week 16 on, you can already start a daily conversation with your baby before that. Not just to build the habit, but also for yourself to get familiar with speaking to your unborn baby. This already creates warm feelings from you towards your child. If you don't know what to say, you can just start with the simple daily things that are going on in your life; today we go to work, we have loads to do, tonight we meet with my friend, tomorrow we visit your grandmother. This can be an easy way to start the conversation in the morning. You can continue this throughout the day.



It is, of course, nice if you can tell your unborn child about your excitement, love, and joy of being pregnant, sharing your positive feelings and thoughts, but what if you don't have these so much at this stage? You might feel very uncomfortable from your pregnancy; perhaps your pregnancy is a lot harder than you expected, or you simply might be so busy and caught up in work or life that you feel you don't have so much time for all this.





Or maybe you are at the same time of your pregnancy dealing with a loss and feeling very sad, or maybe it was a surprise pregnancy and you are still working out how to deal with all the changes a baby in your life will bring. If the positive words don't come easily, don't force them. No worries; you can still talk to your baby, even when your feelings are not that positive at all. In this case, it is even more important to simply recognize your feelings and explain them to your baby. You can keep it simple by saying things like:

"I am feeling very sick from the pregnancy, but you are still welcome, and I love you already."

"I expected pregnancy to be as nice as everyone says, but I simply feel tired and down, I am not enjoying this. That doesn't mean you are not welcome. I cannot wait until you will be in my arms!"

"I am very busy with work/life and I don't have so much time, especially for you now, but once you will be here, I will for sure make time for you."

"I am very sad right now; that has nothing to do with you. You are welcome, and I look forward to cuddling you."

"You were unexpected, and a lot of things will change in my life. I am not particularly looking forward to that, but I choose to have you and I will make space for you in my life, even when I now don't see how."



12 weeks



16 weeks



20 weeks

*Grow baby, grow!*



You can talk to your baby anytime, out loud, or when you feel uncomfortable doing this because others might hear you, you can choose a moment when nobody is around or do it internally. If you like singing, you can choose some songs to sing; this doesn't have to be a lullaby, it can be the latest song on the radio if you like. I would take into account the text you are singing, though. The advantage of singing is that no one needs to know the song is for your baby. Studies show that your baby will recognize your voice and the voices of the ones you spend a lot of time with during pregnancy. Your baby will also be able to recognize the music you play during pregnancy. The familiar sound will have a soothing effect on your baby.

## 2. HANDS ON YOUR BELLY

Your baby can notice the difference in temperature and energy when you or someone else puts their hands on your belly. Also, when you are still in the very first stages of pregnancy, the difference in energy and thoughts when you place your hands on your is noticed by your baby. During the day, whenever you think of it, you can put your hand on your belly and warm the area where your baby is. Check in on how the area feels and take some breaths. This doesn't have to take a lot of time. When you didn't tell anyone yet you are pregnant and you don't want anyone to notice you can simply do it when you are getting a drink at work or waiting in line at the grocery store. There are always little moments in the day that you can place your hand on your belly without it being noticed.



You can check-in by noticing if you feel a difference in temperature in this part of your body. Is the area hard or soft, or do you notice a different sensation altogether? If you feel tension in the area, you can go there with your breath.

Take a breath in for the count of 4, pause, and breathe out for the count of 8. While breathing, imagine sending your breath down to your womb and baby. Feel if it becomes softer. Imagine that with every breath, the area becomes softer, a nice, safe place for your baby.

You can also create a special moment after having taken a shower or bath. After your usual shower or bath, you can connect with your baby by rubbing your belly with some oil or body cream. You can use a special pregnancy body oil or cream, but it doesn't have to be. You can also use what you already have.



Just give some extra attention to your womb area. A few minutes of extra attention is good enough.

### 3. MOVEMENT

Softly rocking, dancing, or even just walking; your baby moves in your belly. Especially now there is still enough space in the first 20 weeks. When making soft, relaxing movements with attention on your baby, both you and your baby will relax. The more you relax, the more your nervous system calms down, and the more relaxing hormones you will make, and this also comes to your baby, which, in return, also relaxes your baby. When moving softly and calmly, often your baby will fall asleep, which you will notice once you can feel the movements of your baby after 20 weeks.





Softly rocking, you can do by placing your (warm) hands on your belly and softly moving and swaying your belly. You can also, as it were, lift up the womb a bit. Gently move your belly up and down. Rock your belly to the rhythm your body indicates. When you keep doing this past the 20 weeks, you will notice that when you stop the movement momentarily, your baby 'swims' towards your hand. When further in pregnancy and experiencing a hard belly or also called Braxton Hicks, this can also help soften your belly.

If you love dancing, you can choose some calming songs and start dancing while placing your hands on your belly, and maybe you even want to sing something. Just follow your body and move softly on the music.

If you don't have time or possibility for the first two movement suggestions, you can choose to park your car a bit further away than normally when going to work, visiting a friend, or doing groceries. Walk with a calm, steady pace while putting your hands on your belly.



Consider printing this summary of the 3 golden tips as a tangible reminder. Place it on a spot you encounter daily, allowing these valuable insights to stay at the forefront of your mind. Let these tips weave seamlessly into your routine, empowering you on your journey toward a connected pregnancy and childbirth.



## SUMMARY

### 1. Talk or Sing to Your Baby:

- Begin a daily conversation with your baby, starting before they can hear well, to establish the habit and get comfortable speaking to your unborn child.
- Share simple daily activities and thoughts, creating warm feelings between you and your baby.
- Even if positive emotions are challenging, it's fine to honestly communicate your feelings to your baby.

### 2. Hands on Your Belly:

- Regularly place your hands on your belly, noting temperature and energy differences, and take moments to breathe and connect with your baby.
- After showers or baths, apply oil or cream to your belly for a few extra minutes of attention.
- These actions aid relaxation for both you and your baby and contribute to building a connection.

### 3. Movement:

- Engage in soft rocking, dancing, or walking, allowing your baby to move comfortably within the womb.
- Soft, calming movements with a focus on your baby promote relaxation for both you and your baby.

These movements can help your baby fall asleep, a sensation you'll notice after 20 weeks.



“I usually claim that pregnant women should not read books about pregnancy and birth. Their time is too precious. They should, rather, watch the moon and sing to their baby in the womb.”

- Michel Odent

*I trust that the insights and tips shared in this e-book have been valuable to you on your journey towards a connected and empowered pregnancy and childbirth. If you find yourself with lingering questions or simply wish to engage in a conversation with me, I welcome your outreach.*

*Feel free to contact me for a Free 1:1 Introductory Meeting, as I am here to support and guide you through this beautiful chapter of your life.*

*Wishing you a harmonious and joy-filled birthing experience,*

*Titia Kesteloot*

*Born in Trust - HypnoBirthing and Hypnosis Practitioner*

