



Togetherness and Separateness

Speaking for the Baby Campaign

Newborns begin to make sense of relationships by having experiences of togetherness and separateness.

'Soft' experiences provide feelings of oneness and togetherness. This is when your baby is held physically and emotionally close. It's as if you have your mind wrapped around your baby's mind, taking in what they might feel, want or need. Baby feels understood in a warm and nurturing way with this togetherness. These experiences lead your baby to feel safe and protected, which is so important in establishing healthy relationships.



'Hard' experiences remind baby that they are a separate little being from you and that they exist in a 'cold hard world'. Being undressed for a bath or nappy change are examples of hard experiences. Being left alone to sleep might also raise their feelings of separateness. Hard experiences are necessary for your baby to learn they are a separate being who is able to develop as a unique little person alongside you. While these hard experiences are necessary, your baby needs help to navigate them with success. *They need your warm soft approach when they are experiencing the cold hard world.* At these times, you will be side-by-side rather than 'as one', but you can remain in the soft warm parental position. Help them by staying connected through touch, through your reassuring voice and connecting with kind eyes.



Both soft and hard experiences – at oneness and separateness – are the early beginnings of developing an attachment relationship that fosters both intimacy and autonomy for babies.

Provide your baby lots of times of togetherness through 'soft' experiences and help them with times of separateness with their 'hard' experiences.