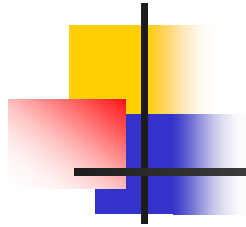


# Have We Lost Touch ?

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By  
Sylvia Baddeley.



# Touch.

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- The influence of tactile experience on development before, during and after delivery has been extensively documented.
- Loving touch and stimulation is necessary for healthy physical and mental development.
- Deprivation of loving touch is akin to not feeding and can have the same devastating consequences.
- Loving touch matters to our babies.



# The Importance Of Skin And Touch.

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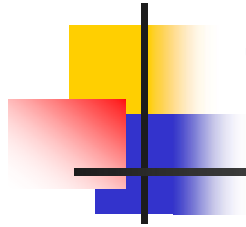
- Quote : “ it is in large part the stimulation of his skin by touch which enables the child to emerge from his own skin” .(Ashley Montagu).
- Experience shapes our brain,our skin is the vehicle that brings all those experiences in early life.



# Species Specific Touch.

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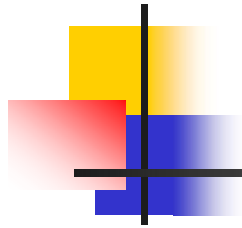
- Mothers exhibit species specific touch behaviour as they start to get to know their infants. (**Rubin, Klaus, and Kennell.**)



# The Sense of Touch.

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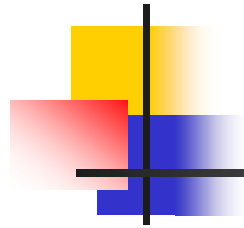
- The first sense to develop in the fetus at five to six weeks gestation.
- Foetuses at five months in the womb have been seen sucking their thumbs.
- Complex skin development is well under way at this early stage.
- The skin is the earliest sensory system to develop.
- The skin can be considered to be an exposed part of our nervous system.



# The Sense of Touch.

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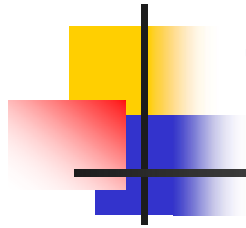
- Our skin allows us to be informed of the world around us.
- There is a general embryological law that states that the earlier a function develops, the more fundamental it is likely to be.
- The fetus is continually touched and caressed by itself and its mothers body, inside the uterus.
- The process of labour and contractions and the sensations received by the skin send signals to the fetus that a big change in his enviroment is about to occur and this alerts systems and organs to prepare.



# Loving Touch In Labour.

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- Mothers who have had recent experience of supportive , loving touch in labour from their carers use their own hands more effectively when touching and exploring their own infants.
- This has implications for dads in attendance and for professionals who provide care.
- ( Reva Rubin –maternal touch.Nursing outlook.11 (1963)pp828-831).



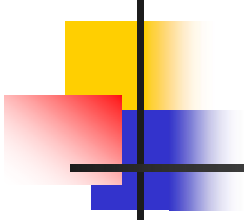
# The Sense Of Touch

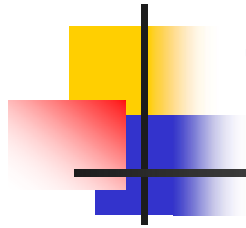
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- Montagu states that labour is the process of the beginning of caressing the infant in the right way, a process that should be continued in very special ways immediately following birth and for a considerable time afterwards. (Touching-the human significance of the skin by Ashley Montagu, third edition, 1986, p 68).
- Mothers voice, recognised in the womb from 24 weeks gestation is a life line in a cacophony of sound in the birth place.



# Touch Needs At Birth.

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- Kulka, Fry and Goldstein( Kinaesthetic needs in infancy ,1960 American journal of orthopsychiatry,33,p 562-571)state;
  - “Contact needs are probably gratified fully in intrauterine life, and a gradual transition in the postnatal period is mandatory for healthy development-satisfaction must be supplied by the enviroment-cuddling,rocking, being kept warm”.



## Touch Needs At Birth.

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- Warmth sensors in babies and mothers skin give continuous feedback on body temperature and the mothers skin cools down or warms up depending upon the needs of her baby.
- At birth mother needs to caress and cuddle her baby to help stimulate regular respiration and deep breathing.



# Bonding and Breastfeeding.

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- Skin to skin stimulates the production of Oxytocin hormone, a major female bonding hormone, as well as a participant in the lactation process.



# Touching.

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- Infants pick up messages from muscle/joint receptors from the manner in which they are held, rather than mere pressure.
- It tells the infant what the holder “feels” about it. Every baby is born with this sense.
- Educating parents to be and new parents about their babies need for talking, eye to eye contact and skin to skin contact should be high on the list of all parent educators and supporters of parents.



# Touching.

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- Eye to eye contact is "touching at a distance" and is very important for babies.
- Babies are very sociable and need to interact.
- Babies can read facial expressions soon after birth and an unresponsive "flat" expression will be noticed very quickly and cause distress.



## The Effect Of Touch And Communication On Growth And Development.

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- Touch and talk plays a crucial role in the growth of all babies.
- An awareness of his and his mothers body and voice is babies first lesson in object reality.
- Eventually, baby becomes aware of “the interrelated triangle”.



# The Effects Of Lack Of Touch On Growth And Development

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- The lessons learned from Romania in the 1980's .
- The shock of the birth experience is not reduced if no skin to skin contact.
- Growth hormone levels reduced.



# The Effects Of Lack Of Touch On Growth And Development

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- Weight gain is not optimal.
- Babies cry more, are less easy to settle.
- Brain size is affected in severe deprivation , as 90% of the brains size is completed by three years of age.
- Babies who are nursed in a sling for the first year of life show a higher percentage of secure attachment relationships than those who are not.



# Touch Deprivation.



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- The touch need is often overlooked as touch deprivation effects are not immediately obvious.
- Mothers are the main providers and source of opportunity for touch stimulation in the first year of life.



# Key Messages.

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- We cannot hold, nurse or cuddle our babies too much in the first years of life.
- We will not “ spoil ” them if we do.



# Key Messages.

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- Frequent skin to skin contact-remember you cannot spoil a baby by holding and nursing too much.
- Frequent eye to eye contact and conversation about anything and everything as well as loving touch will help our babies brains and their ability to talk.
- Keeping in touch will help baby experience the most important touches of his life- his mothers and those of his family.

















