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### **Parental and Baby Bond Lends to Future Benefits**

When parents develop close ties with their babies the future results can be beneficial, according to studies. A recent study conducted by the University of Iowa and published in the research journal *Child Development*, suggests preschoolers who have close ties with their parents have a greater ability to manage their own behavior and demonstrate patience, reflective thought and self-control.

The study found children who had a close, positive and mutually responsive bond with their mother during the first two years were better able at age 4 to follow the mother's requests not to do something in addition to controlling their actions better than children without these types of parental ties. Such bonds include coordinated routines, mutual cooperation, harmonious communication and sharing positive emotions and interactions.

When the researchers looked at the effects of mutually responsive connections between mothers and babies who develop a close relationship in infancy and toddler hood, they found the need for forceful discipline was reduced. Instead, a mother's subtle control can enhance compliant and self-regulated behavior when the child is preschool age.

The study also looked at these same relations with fathers. Findings were similar to mothers and children, yet reasons for the father-child link were less clear. Relationships between mothers and children are studied more frequently. More research to better understand the dynamics of fathers and their children is needed.

The study included 102 families who volunteered when their children were 7 months old and continued until they were almost 4 ½ years old. The parents and children were observed several times both in the families' homes and in a laboratory.

When you are interacting with your baby and toddler, you are establishing a bond and also setting the fundamentals for the child's future development. Building a positive, close relationship early on will be beneficial years down the road. The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, or status as a veteran and is an equal opportunity employer. Information given herein is for educational purposes only. References made to commercial products or trade names are with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State and Local Governments Cooperating.