



## Layers of Love Grow as Baby Grows

For the baby, learning about the layers of love is developmental. It is built over time through shared experience and through brain maturation. These layers overlap and are experienced a little at a time. They may be understood differently by the baby at different developmental levels.

**TRUST:** "Mom is there for me."

Learned from consistent, responsive caregiving, which the baby then expects and counts on.

**UNDERSTANDING:** "Oh! I get it!"

Learned from sharing experiences. Each sharing adds to our understanding of one another. These experiences will be different for each relationship.

**SHARED POSITIVE EMOTIONS:** "Smiling gets you everything."

Learned from experimenting with emotional expressions, such as smiles, laughs, coos, screeches, growls, coughs and watching how parents respond. Babies and toddlers love fun and will continue what makes parents happy.

**INTERDEPENDENCE:** "I've picked out my special people, my loved ones."

Learned from having consistent, loving people around. As babies mature, they become able to pick out their special people and show their attachment to them.

**RESPECT:** "I'm separate, I'm me! Help me problem solve. Let me grow."

Learned from being allowed autonomy, having parents who allow exploring and problem solving. Like adults, babies and toddlers need feelings of independence and mastery.

**REGULATION:** "Whoa! There are rules to this relationship stuff!"

Learned by having gentle guidance and limits from other humans. Regulation helps babies balance emotions and behavior that are out of control. Parents who model emotional control are effective regulators for babies and toddlers.

**TOLERATION:** "My parents have needs too. I guess I'll put up with them."

Learned by experiencing patient, responsive caregiving, a parent's temperament, and the limits parents set to meet their own needs.