

overheating) calms infants, promotes sleep, and maintains body temperature. Rocking the infant may reduce crying and induce quiet alertness or sleep.

Variations in the initial cry can indicate abnormalities. A weak, groaning cry or grunting during expiration usually indicates respiratory disturbance. Absent, weak, or constant crying requires further investigation for possible drug withdrawal or a neurologic problem.

Assessment of Attachment Behaviors

One of the most important areas of assessment is careful observation of behaviors that are thought to indicate the formation of emotional bonds between the newborn and family, especially the mother. Such behaviors include the en face position; undressing and touching the infant; smiling, kissing, and talking to the infant; and holding, rocking, and cradling the child close to the body (see [Nursing Care Guidelines](#) box). Because assessment is closely related to interventions that promote attachment (e.g., encouraging these behaviors in parents), assessing attachment behaviors is further discussed later in the chapter.

Nursing Care Guidelines

Assessing Attachment Behavior

- When the infant is brought to the parents, do they reach out for the child and call the child by name?
- Do the parents speak about the child in terms of identification—who the infant looks like; what appears special about their child compared with other infants?
- When parents are holding the infant, what kind of body contact is there? Do they feel at ease in changing the infant's position? Are fingertips or whole hands used? Are there parts of the body that they avoid touching or parts of the body they investigate and scrutinize?
- When the infant is awake, what kinds of stimulation do the