

brief. Siblings focus more on the head or face than on touching or talking to the infant. The siblings' verbalizations are often focused less on attracting the infant's attention and more on addressing the mother about the newborn. Children who have established a prenatal relationship with the fetus have demonstrated more attachment behaviors, supporting the suggestion of encouraging prenatal acquaintance. Additional research is needed to establish theories on sibling bonding as have been constructed for parental bonding.

Multiple Births and Subsequent Children

A component of attachment that has special meaning for families with multiple births, **monotropy** refers to the principle that a person can become optimally attached to only one individual at a time. If a parent can form only one attachment at a time, how can all of the siblings of a multiple birth receive optimum emotional care? Research on bonding and multiple births is still lacking despite the recent increase in multiple births, and even less is known about paternal engrossment and sibling attachment. In regard to mother–twin bonding, the conclusions of different authors vary. Some report that mothers bond equally to each twin at the time of birth even if one twin is ill. Others suggest that mothers of twins may take months or years to form individual attachments to each child or even longer if the twins are identical.

Nurses can be instrumental in promoting bonding of multiple births. The most important principle is to assist the parents in recognizing the individuality of the children, especially in monozygotic (identical) twins. The mother should visit with each newborn, including a sick infant, as much as possible after birth. Non-separation and breastfeeding are encouraged. Any characteristics that are unique to each child are emphasized, and each infant is called by name rather than referring to “the twins.” Asking the family questions (such as “How do you tell Ashley and Amy apart?” and “In what ways are Ashley and Amy different and similar?”) helps point out their individual characteristics. Behaviors on the BNBAS can be used to illustrate these differences and to stress effective strategies for dealing with multiple personalities at the same time.

Co-bedding (bed sharing) of twins or other multiples may be