

preoccupation with events of labor and delivery and the spouse's health may detract from paternal attachment. Research has noted that, although fathers spend similar amounts of time in interaction with their newborns as do mothers, the nature of their interaction is different. Mothers and infants focus on face-to-face exchange and mutual gazing, co-vocalization, and affectionate touch. Fathers' time with their infants includes quick peaks of high positive emotionality, including joint laughter and open exuberance. Interactions with fathers tend to center on physical games or games with an object focus rather than on face-to-face signals (Feldman, 2007).

The nurse observes for the same indications of affection from the father as those expected in the mother, such as making visual contact in the en face position and embracing the infant close to the body. When present, such behaviors are reinforced. If such responses are not obvious, the nurse needs to assess the father's feelings regarding this birth, cultural beliefs that may affect his expression of emotions, and other factors that influence his perception of the infant and the mother in order to facilitate a positive attachment during this critical period.

Siblings

Although the attachment process has been discussed almost exclusively in terms of the parents and infants, it is essential that nurses be aware of other family members, such as siblings and members of the extended family, who need preparation for the acceptance of this new child. Young children in particular need sensitive preparation for the birth to minimize sibling jealousy.

In support of family-centered care, siblings are generally encouraged to visit the mother in hospital and to hold the newborn (Fig. 7-16). Another trend has been the presence of siblings at childbirth. Unlike sibling visitation, the evidence supporting this practice has been controversial, yet family-centered care encompasses siblings, grandparents, and other significant persons who comprise the extended family unit. Children exhibit different degrees of involvement in the birth process. Some reported benefits include children's increased knowledge of the birth process, less regressive behavior after the birth, and more mothering and caregiving behavior toward the infant. Some practitioners add