

can assist them in being more supportive toward the mother, especially as the labor and delivery draw near.

At the infant's birth, the nurse can play a vital role in helping the father express engrossment by assessing the neonate in front of the couple; pointing out normal characteristics; encouraging identification through consistent referral to the child by name; encouraging the father to cuddle, hold, talk to, or feed the infant; and demonstrating whenever necessary the soothing powers of caressing, stroking, and rocking the child (Fig. 7-15). Fathers are encouraged to be with the mother during labor and delivery, to spend time alone with the mother and newborn after delivery, and to room-in with the mother and infant. Many hospitals and birthing centers have adopted a family-centered focus, including sleeping accommodations that more closely resemble the home environment for the new parents.



**FIG 7-15** A desire to hold the infant and participate in caregiving activities is an indication of paternal engrossment.

Fathers, like mothers, may demonstrate attachment not only after the infant's birth but during fetal life as well. Paternal attachment may proceed at a different pace than maternal attachment. Paternal