

ease of transition to parenthood and the parents' perception of the infant.

Nurses can positively influence the attachment of the parent and child. The first step is recognizing individual differences and explaining to the parents that such characteristics are normal. For example, some people believe that infants sleep throughout the day except for feedings. For some newborns, this may be true, but for many, it is not. Understanding that the infant's wakefulness is part of a biologic rhythm and not a reflection of inadequate parenting can be crucial in promoting healthy parent–child relationships. Another aspect of helping parents' concerns includes supplying guidelines on how to enhance the infant's development during awake periods. Placing the child in a crib to stare at the same mobile every day is not exciting, but carrying the infant into each room as one does daily chores can be fascinating.

Infants enjoy human contact and often respond to visual and auditory stimuli in different ways depending on their sleep–wake state and the type of stimuli provided. Infants prefer black and white objects, geometric patterns and shapes, and reflective surfaces, such as mirrors and eyeglasses. However, evidence indicates that infants prefer contact with human faces and enjoy interactions with others more than objects or television images.

Maternal Attachment

Mothers may demonstrate a predictable and orderly pattern of behavior during the development of the attachment process. When mothers are presented with their nude infants, they begin to examine the infant with their fingertips, concentrating on touching the extremities, and then proceed to massage and encompass the trunk with their entire hands. Assuming the **en face position**, in which the mother's and infant's eyes meet in visual contact in the same vertical plane, is significant in the formation of affectional ties (Fig. 7-14). Some authors have suggested that mothers experiencing depression, as well as adolescent mothers, may have lower rates of secure attachment with their infants (Flaherty and Sadler, 2011), necessitating the need for caregivers to monitor such mothers closely and to model attachment behaviors. Nurses must observe for maternal attachment behaviors and exercise caution in interpreting such behaviors.