



mum or dad



baby

mum or dad

Smiles at baby.

baby

Looks at Mum/Dad's face and sees dilated pupils – a sign that their sympathetic nervous system is pleurably aroused.

mum or dad

Registers the baby's positive response and keeps smiling and engaging the baby. Also experiences release of pleasurable chemicals in the brain.

baby

Baby's sympathetic nervous system is automatically aroused – pupils dilate and heart beats faster.

baby

A natural feel-good chemical (neuropeptide) is released in the prefrontal cortex, which plays a key role in our emotional life. This chemical helps build connections between nerve cells, thus stimulating brain development and making baby feel good.

baby

At the same time, another chemical (dopamine) is released in the brain stem. This chemical helps brain cells take up energy (in the form of glucose), so helping new tissue to grow.

mum or dad

END RESULT:
Mum/Dad finds the interactions with the baby pleasurable, and is more likely to want to repeat the experience.

baby

END RESULT:
Baby learns that interactions with their parents can be pleasurable, and is therefore more likely to respond positively to future interactions.