



aggravate this condition, drying it out, but gentle stroking with grapeseed or almond oil moistens skin and serves to loosen the cradle cap.

Bonding refers to strong physical, emotional and spiritual attachment. For bonding to occur between babies and the parents special time together needs to be made, particularly straight after birth, which is why more people are choosing home births of the Leboyer type, where there are minimum medical and technological and nursing procedures to interfere with the normal birth process. This way the birth experience, the bonding and the welcoming time all belong to the parents and their new baby. The mother and her baby are not separated but close together, and soon get to know each other; the father at their side, involved, loving and bonding too.

The baby through touch, sight, hearing, taste and smell develops bonding. Behaviour by parents such as fondling and gazing are indicators of bonding attachment to their baby.

The ideal birth is however not always possible. Sometimes things go wrong and medical intervention is needed. Events which interfere with mother/child bonding are any delay in infant and mother being together after the birth; drugs which anaesthetise either mother or baby; prolonged separation after a Caesarean Section, or the use of the incubator. In such instances massage given to the child by a person other than the parents can be very calming to the child and reduce the separation anxiety such a situation can cause.

Whilst some hospitals respect the Leboyer type of birth so often in hospitals a normal birth involves noise, bright lights and separation from the mother and thus little opportunity for bonding.

Massage is an expression of pure love through a special kind of positive, caring touch. When mothers massage their babies at an early age, the massage



continues the bonding process and helps to establish a warm, positive, parent-child relationship. It also creates a metaphysical energy flow of love between mother and child. This is an energising experience to both and a deep communication is formed. Baby massage is an introduction of caring touch to an infant that can continue to any age. Toddlers, teenagers and adults are all more receptive to touch if they were massaged as babies. They have been granted permission to touch; reassured that it is okay.

Where there is a lack of loving touch with a child, the emotional and physical development of that child will be impaired or arrested. If given freely the child will become confident, self assured and have an inner strength and resolve which will make them better prepared to cope with life and less prone to anxiety and fearfulness. Likewise a child that has been taught to appreciate positive touch is unlikely to later become someone who would engage in negative touch, which is so much a problem today.