

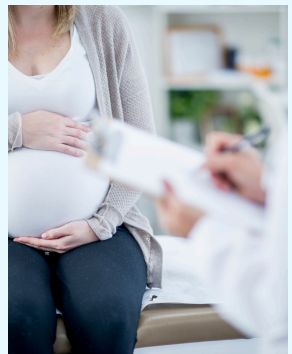


Website:

WWW.PREGNANCYBASICS.CO.UK

PREGNANCY BASICS TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

*Bonding and Attachment Screening for Intervention,
Care and Support*



Why This Toolkit Matters

Pregnancy is more than a physical journey — it is the **foundation of a lifelong relationship between parents and their baby**. From as early as 16–18 weeks, the unborn baby begins to hear, recognise, and respond to the voice and emotions of their parents. Research shows that **the quality of this early connection has lasting implications** for infant brain development, emotional regulation, parental mental health, and long-term child outcomes.

And yet, while **NICE guidance recommends that ALL pregnant women receive attachment-focused support**, there is currently no widely used, practitioner-friendly tool to assess or explore **parent–fetal attachment** in routine care. As a result, many professionals are left without the confidence or structure to notice early signs of connection — or disconnection — at the time when intervention could be most effective.

Pregnancy BASICS was developed to fill that gap. It is a simple, reflective toolkit that enables professionals to assess bonding during pregnancy in a way that is gentle, relational, and grounded in real-world practice. It is designed to be used **during any routine antenatal contact**, and to help practitioners identify where a family might benefit from **additional intervention, care or support** — before birth.

What is Pregnancy BASICS

Pregnancy BASICS is a four-part practitioner tool that enables the **early assessment of bonding and attachment during pregnancy**. It is designed to be used across maternity, health visiting, early help, Family Hubs, and perinatal mental health services.

This tool supports **both maternal and paternal bonding**, promotes emotional readiness for parenting, and enables earlier identification of families who may benefit from supportive intervention.

Pregnancy BASICS has been thoughtfully designed with cultural sensitivity and neurodiversity in mind, ensuring it is inclusive, adaptable, and suitable for use across all communities.



How the Tool Works: The Four Parts

Pregnancy BASICS is structured into four easy-to-use components, which can be used flexibly during routine appointments or targeted interventions:

01 Conversation Starters

A set of trimester-based, open-ended prompts to explore how the parent is thinking and feeling about their baby. For example:

- “When did you first feel the baby move?”
- “How did that make you feel?”
- “Have you chosen a name or nickname yet?”

These questions encourage reflection and connection, without pressure or judgement.

02 Observational Reflection

Practitioners use six areas of observation to observe how a parent is connecting with their baby:

- Physical engagement (e.g. touching the bump)
- Verbal engagement (e.g. talking to the baby)
- Sensitivity engagement (e.g. awareness of baby movements)
- Emotional engagement (e.g. displaying affection for baby or partner)
- Protective/nurturing behaviours (e.g. changes to lifestyle/habits)
- Preparation behaviours (e.g. planning for the future)

These indicators are based on attachment theory and adapted from successful postnatal tools – but reimagined for use during pregnancy.

03 Attachment Indicator Summary Scale (Optional)

A simple, optional scale spanning from -1 to 2, which practitioners can use to record or reflect on the level of bonding or otherwise observed.

This can support referral, supervision, planning, or service-wide evaluation.

04 Support Pathways

If a low level of attachment is observed or expressed, the toolkit provides clear next steps, including:

- Encouraging safe bonding activities (e.g. journaling, bump play)
- Exploring potential barriers (e.g. anxiety, trauma, disconnection)
- Signposting to local services, peer support, or mental health referral
- The focus is always relational, not diagnostic.

Who Is It For?

Pregnancy BASICS is designed for use by any professional that works with expectant parents, including:

- Midwives
- Health Visitors
- Family Hub staff
- Early Help teams
- Doulas and peer supporters
- Perinatal Mental Health practitioners
- FNP Nurses and early intervention leads

It is flexible enough that can be used at any stage of pregnancy — with question prompts and observation cues tailored for early, mid, and late trimesters. It fits naturally within:

- Booking appointments
- Antenatal check-ins
- Home visits
- Targeted early help assessments
- PMH or trauma-informed support sessions



Why This Tool is Different

Many existing tools — like the Maternal Antenatal Attachment Scale (MAAS) or Maternal Postnatal Attachment Scale (MPAS) — rely on structured questionnaires, self-reporting, and deficit-focused language. These tools are often:

- Time-consuming
- Intrusive and rely on self-reporting
- Don't target dads or non-birthing partners
- Difficult to integrate into routine practice
- Focused on mothers only
- Unsuitable for diverse or complex family situations

Pregnancy BASICS is different because it is:

- Simple and time-efficient — requires only a few minutes
- Relational, not clinical — based on conversation and observation
- Inclusive — designed for ALL parents, not just mothers
- Strengths-based — focused on what's present, not what's missing
- Practice-led — developed **by** and **for** frontline professionals
- Culturally and neuro-aware — integrates best practice guidance to ensure sensitivity, safety, and adaptability across all communities

Designed for Real-World Use

We know that professionals are under time pressure and emotional demand. This toolkit has been developed with realistic 'real-world' use in mind — whether you're seeing a parent for 10 minutes in a clinic or during a longer home visit.

It doesn't require formal scoring (although this is optional), paperwork, or digital tools. It gives professionals a shared language for bonding, a reason to pause, and a way to support families with empathy and confidence — from the very beginning.

Pregnancy BASICS gives professionals the confidence to Observe and Assess, the prompts to Connect, and the structure to Signpost to Support.

It helps ensure every unborn baby is held in mind — not just medically, but relationally — right from the start.

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**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR INTEREST.**

*Contact us for
more support.*



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