

## **Neonatal Bathing and Massage Intervention with Fathers.**

Behavioural effects 12 weeks after the birth of the first baby, 1992. The Sunraysia Australia Intervention Project. Scholtz, K, and Samuels, C.A. Published – International Journal of Behavioural Development. 15 (1), pages 67-81.

The hypothesis was that massage was a wonderful and effective bonding tool in the father – infant relationship.

### Method.

Study Group. Sixteen families with first borns, were instructed over a four week program in Baby Massage and the Burleigh Relaxation Bath Technique.

Control Group, sixteen families. The study over 12 weeks was a home observation in which fathers would give their infant a massage and follow on with a Burleigh Relaxation Bath. After a twelve week period the babies from the massage group greeted their fathers with more eye contact, smiling, vocalising, reaching and orienting responses and showed less avoidance behaviours, than the control group. These fathers also showed greater involvement with their infant.

The results emphasise the benefits of having fathers learn infant massage with their children. Massage provides a wonderful time for bonding and attachment to develop between a father and his child. It would be also beneficial for father to feel confident with their interaction with their baby and a tool of encouragement to give and receive unconditional love. Parent child massage throughout childhood and adolescence can provide a channel of tactile and emotional communication., vital during the inevitable troublesome and “silent’ phases of growth and development experienced by children and adolescents.