

# BABY MASSAGE

A WAY OF EXPRESSING LOVE, CARE AND RESPECT THROUGH POSITIVE TOUCH

**PLEASE READ THESE GUIDANCE NOTES AND TECHNIQUES BEFORE STARTING**

Baby Massage involves gentle, rhythmic stroking of your baby's body with your hands. The soothing strokes stimulate the production of the feel-good hormone oxytocin in you and your baby. Setting aside a special time each day to massage your baby is a great way to bond, connect and interact. Baby massage is also a great way for Dad's to be involved and create that special bond and time together.

Some other benefits of Baby Massage is stimulating your babies vital systems like brain development, sensory awareness, circulation, digestive and muscle tone. Relaxation improves sleep patterns, increased flexibility and reduced agitation. Relief of colic, constipation, teething discomfort, excess mucus and muscular tension.

There are numerous benefits to Baby Massage, these are just a few:-

## For Your Baby:

- Helping to feel more loved, valued and respected
- Reduced crying and emotional distress
- Increased levels of relaxation of longer sleep
- Development of body awareness and co-ordination
- Relief from wind, colic, constipation and teething pain

## For You:

- Feel closer to your baby
- Gain deeper understanding of your baby's behaviour, crying and body language
- Gain confidence to care and nurture your baby
- Feel the relaxing benefits of massage and one to one time



Throughout the day your baby will go through different behavioural states: - asleep, drowsy, awake, crying, active alert (rapid movement of arms/legs etc.) and **Quiet Alert**.

This **Quiet Alert** stage is the **best time** for massaging your baby. They will appear calm and have relaxed movements. They would be aware and interested in what is happening around them, this is the most receptive and responsive state to massage your baby.



Choose a **safe, quiet and comfortable** place to do the massage, position your baby so that they can see your face clearly. Lie baby on a towel or blanket and have cushions for you to sit on if necessary, make sure you are comfortable as well, relax and breathe. Baby can be undressed along the way as you reach each body part. You can use oils which helps your hands glide over the skin better. You can use massage **oils** you buy over the counter, creams or lotion prescribed by your doctor for skin conditions or even use oils you cook with like **sunflower or vegetable oils**. Cooking oils are generally safe for babies as we normally digest them so are safe if baby puts their hands in their mouth, these oils will absorb easily into the skin. Do a patch test the day before, dap a spot of oil behind baby's ear to check for reaction. If using cooking oil decant some oil in a small bottle with secure lid or a bowl to have by your side (making sure baby can't knock over).



Before you start you will need to ask your baby for their **permission** to allow you to massage them and interpret their response. This shows they are valued and respected, encouraging them to communicate their needs to us and we listen and act accordingly. By repeating this each time this lets baby know it is massage time.

We ask by giving **Cues** – getting room ready, massage same time every day etc.

**Permission** – ask ‘I’m going to massage your legs - are you happy’

**Visual** – Show hands, add some drops from bottle of oil

**Aural** – Rub hands together for baby to hear



We now watch and read how baby responds. Does baby look at you? Are they smiling, cooing and babbling? Are they still and relaxed? Are they reaching out to touch? These are ‘**YES**’ responses and you can start to massage your baby. If the responses are turning head away, crying, distracted, pulling or pushing away – these are ‘**NO**’ responses. Attend to your baby’s needs, maybe wait a few minutes or try at a later time.

You know your baby best and will be able to recognise their cues. Throughout the massage you will looking for those cues and your baby will tell you when they have had enough and wants to stop.

The following videos will show you how to use these techniques and demonstrates the strokes to use on your baby. Each week a new video will show the strokes for a specific body part. By watching these videos and downloading the stroke guidance you will learn over a number of weeks how to give your baby an all over body massage. This is a tool for you to use when baby permits massage and when it fits in with your routine and family life.

## RELAX, ENJOY AND HAVE FUN

