

How can Baby Massage help Speech, Language and Communication development?

Touch is a way of communicating.

- Babies gain early experiences and learn about the world around them through their skin.
- They can learn how others feel about them by the way they are handled.

Baby massage is an ideal time to communicate with your baby through touch and your voice because:

- you're face to face
- it's relaxed and quiet.

Did you know?

- To be able to learn, children must be emotionally secure.
- The human face and voice are very important in developing secure attachment relationships.
- Babies are born sociable and needing to interact.
- Soon after birth they can understand facial expressions.



New words:

- Say the names of the body part you're massaging. Hearing these words again and again will help baby learn their meaning
- Use describing and action words that match your massaging actions. E.g. round and round, up and down, fast, slow, clapping, smiling.

Social Skills:

- Take turns to communicate. Wait for baby to have a 'turn' (smile, babble, wave a hand, giggle etc) before you say something back.
- Show your baby the importance of eye contact as you talk.



Speech sounds:

- Being face to face means baby can see how your lips, teeth and tongue look when you make different sounds.
- Copy your baby's sounds (like a mirror) so baby can see what the sounds they are making look and sound like. It also tells them you find them interesting and are listening to them.
- Make funny faces and sounds. Your baby might then try and copy you e.g. poking tongue out, blowing raspberries, opening mouth really wide, moving tongue side to side, blowing kisses.



Rhythm and rhyme:

- Singing helps babies and children learn about rhythm and rhyme. This is important for learning to read, write, and talk.
- The younger the child, the slower you sing! Remember babies can't process language as fast as we can.
- Singing during massage makes talking fun and can help babies predict what will happen next. Turn over for some ideas.



Round and round the garden like a teddy bear

(Move index finger around palm of hand, sole of foot or tummy)

One step, two step

(walk fingers up baby's arm, leg, or chest)

Tickle you under there

(tickle baby under chin or tummy).

I can ride my bicycle, I ride it to the shop

(Cycle baby's legs)

But when I see the light is red

I know I have to stop

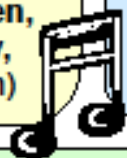
(Stop movements)

When I see the light is green,

I know that I can go. Ready, steady, go (Cycle legs again)

If you're happy and you know it...

Stroke your tummy, rub your cheek, tickle your arm etc.



The wheels on the bus...

(Cycle baby's legs for wheels going round and round. Touch baby's nose for horn going beep, beep. Wave baby's hands for wipers going swish swish swish).

These are baby's fingers,

These are baby's toes,

This is baby's tummy button,

Round and round it goes.

(Touch named body parts and trace finger round tummy button at the end)

Relaxing songs for massage:

- Row, row your boat
- My bonnie lies over the ocean
- Twinkle twinkle little star
- Pat-a-cake

This is the way we massage your leg, massage your leg, massage your leg. This is the way we massage your leg, you and me together.

(Sing to the tune of 'Here we go round the Mulberry bush'. Other verses: stroke your tummy, rub your arm, kiss your cheek etc.)

Songs to sing that involve touching individual fingers or toes as you sing:

- This little piggy went to market
 - 1,2,3,4,5 once I got a fish alive
 - Tommy Thumb, Tommy Thumb.
- (Ask someone if you don't know the words to these rhymes)

Rhymes for up and down movements:

- Incey Wincey Spider
- The Grande Old Duke of York

Head, shoulder, knees & toes.

(Touch appropriate part of body as you sing the words)

Hickory, dickory, dock

(Tap fingers on hand/foot/tummy)

The mouse ran up the clock

(walk them up arm/leg/chest)

The clock struck one (tickle)

The mouse ran down

(walk fingers them down)

Hickory, dickory, dock

Tickling your tummy, Tickling your tummy Tickle, tickle, tickle, Tickling your tummy

(Make up your own tune. Other verses: stroking your cheek, wobbling your arm, rubbing your leg, patting your tummy)

2 little eyes to look around, 2 little ears to hear each sound, 1 little nose to smell what's sweet, 1 little mouth that likes to eat, And eat + eat + eat

(Point to parts of face, and tickled tummy on 'eat')

Big toe, tall toe, middle toe strong, funny toe, little toe, bongity bong

(Touch toes in turn, and then the bottom of the foot on 'bongity bong').

