

Baby Massage Advice for Parents

Getting Started

Massage is a powerful form of communication. It is important that it is approached with respect for your baby and it should always be a positive experience. That is why we always ask permission of our babies – gently place your hands on your baby's chest and look in to their eyes and ask 'Would you like a massage?' By doing this you are communicating what is about to happen to your baby and offering them a choice. This will give you time to observe your baby's body language and establish whether they are in the mood to enjoy a massage. As your baby becomes familiar with this routine, they will be able to recognise your signals and clearly respond to them.

If your baby fusses or cries during the massage then stop massaging, talk to them and give them a cuddle. Sometimes they may just be asking for a little break, or telling you they want to stop until another time. Again, by watching your baby's signals you will be able to offer a massage to suit his needs.

A baby should not be massaged if they:

- Are asleep, tired, hungry, crying or fretful
- Are unwell, or have a raised temperature
- Have had a vaccination in the last 3 days
- Have had a full feed
- Have undergone recent surgery
- Have an infectious skin condition, bruising, fractures or open wounds. (With the exception of the infectious skin condition, it may be possible to massage unaffected areas of the body.)

Creating the perfect space for your baby's massage

- Choose a room that is warm enough for baby to be undressed
- Be aware of the environment. Ensure room is free from strong smells, overhead lighting is not too bright, reduce extra noises and use soothing music. It is important that baby is comfortable, relaxed and not over-stimulated
- Wear comfortable clothing as you will be on the floor. Remove sharp jewellery and tie back long hair
- Use a change mat covered in a soft towel. Have a spare towel handy for accidents or if baby becomes cold
- Keep a spare nappy, wipes and tissues close to hand
- Choose an organic, vegetable oil in a small bottle (eg Sunflower). Keep in a cool place, but ensure it is room temperature before massage begins
- Be aware of your own comfort. Sit on a cushion, keep back straight and lean against a wall if you can
When your baby is old enough to hold a toy they may enjoy playing with a small rattle whilst being massaged

After massage advice

- Remove excess oil from your baby's skin with a towel
- Offer baby a drink after massage as they may be quite thirsty
- Never expose your baby's recently oiled skin to the sun
- Contact your Touch-Learn Qualified Infant Massage Teacher if you have any queries

