



sportwaikato

out there and active

KIWIBABY

START EARLY AND BE ACTIVE FOR LIFE

A simple guide to beneficial,
suitable and safe movement
for the first twelve months.



TM

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We have alternated the use of her and him throughout this manual for easier reading.

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The Active Infant

It is essential our children are able to grow, move and develop as they were intended to do.

“To grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.”¹

The physical activity needs of young children are very different from adults and older children. Early childhood experiences must allow the developing baby to acquire physical skills and enjoy moving, as they learn about their body and their environment.

Opportunities for moving from birth are essential for brain development. Every movement made makes connections in the mind/body system. Movement will strengthen the connections within the brain and body. The development of these connections is vital for memory, sensory development, communication between the two sides of the brain, processing of information, participation in the arts and the later formal learning of reading, writing, and mathematics.

The first seven years of life are the most influential in establishing movement habits and setting the foundation for continued learning through life.

All play involves movement that develops and strengthens the body and brain as we grow. Establishing active routines at an early age helps children to successfully develop both the body and mind as they learn about their world.

KiwiBaby™ introduces play activities and ideas appropriate to your baby's development. This allows enjoyment and different skills involving thinking, moving, communicating, socialising and imitating to be introduced, practiced and acquired. It provides parents and

¹ Te Whāriki He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum.

children with ideas for play that can be further developed through imaginative and creative thinking.

It is important for parents and caregivers to be active with children, not only as role models, but also to ensure their own health and vitality. This provides the foundation for an active life for the whole family, and encourages an appreciation of recreation and sport (kori tinana).

To help develop a healthy lifestyle for your baby she needs good medical care and nutrition. The Well Child Tamariki Ora health book and Plunket Thriving Under Five contain valuable information. These are available free for all families.

The drinking habits of children are formed early and at home. It is essential to introduce water to children during the first year. Water is the recommended choice, rather than fruit juice or soft drinks, which can contribute to weight problems and teeth decay.

Encouraging plenty of movement from an early age is essential. While steady weight gain for babies is important, fat does not mean “fit”. The fatter baby gets, the more difficult it is for him to move and he becomes lazy.

About the Manuals

KiwiBaby™ is designed to use daily with babies from birth to one year. There are two more manuals in the series, KiwiToddler™, designed to use daily with toddlers from one to three years, and KiwiPreschooler™ for use with preschoolers from three to five years. To receive your copies of KiwiToddler (when your baby reaches one year) and KiwiPreschooler (when your toddler reaches three years), contact Sport Waikato - info@sportwaikato.org.nz.

Benefits of a Movement Programme for Infants Ngā hua o tēnei mahi

This manual:

- Encourages you to establish quality, positive early movement experiences with your baby. Developing body awareness and good patterns of movement, through the development of fundamental movement skills- the building blocks for a lifetime of movement and formal learning.
- Encourages communication by talking and listening, to help develop language and memory through repetition.
- Encourages stimulation of your baby's curiosity, imagination, and creativity, increasing confidence and self esteem.
- Provides challenges to develop the whole body and builds strong muscles and bones.
- Encourages and suggests developmentally appropriate activity for you as parents and caregivers to become your children's first teachers.
- Promotes the value of giving praise and positive reassurance.
- Encourages good loving touch (awhi) in your family (whanau), to strengthen parent/child relationships.
- Promotes the value of you, the parent, doing daily activity as a role model and interacting in meaningful play with your baby.
- Encourages your baby's enjoyment of being active (kori tinana) which will lead to a healthier life, decreasing the risk of chronic disease and obesity.
- Develops and enhances the emotional, social, cognitive, spiritual and physiological growth of your baby.
- Promotes taha tinana (body), taha hinengaro (mind), taha wairua (spirit), and taha whanau (family).

Baby Behaviour

It is important that you learn to observe the sort of mood your baby is in and how to respond. By following baby's cues, you will be developing communication and trust.

Baby's mood

Quiet alert - Baby quiet and focussing on you or objects in the room.

Waking active - Moving arms and legs and face and not focussing on anything in particular.

Suitable action: Baby is ready to learn: to do games, activities and communicate with you.

Crying or Drowsy

Suitable action: Baby may need soothing, calming activities like rocking, hugging, stroking, carrying, feeding, to organise himself into a better learning state or into sleep state.

Looking away or tuning out

Suitable action: Stop or change the activity because baby is bored or too tired to continue.

Newborn babies often sleep a lot during their first few weeks. Others spend long periods awake. Both types are quite normal.

The activities in this manual are to be used by you as a guide

- It is important to remember that newborns are different and like different ways of being handled, eg not all babies like massage. They may prefer other activities like looking, listening and bathing. Some babies will enjoy activities beyond the stated age group; others will not be ready to do some things at the stated time.

- This manual provides you with a selection of ideas to choose what your baby likes and what suits your family situation.
- Do not feel guilty if you do not follow the suggestions in this manual exactly. You may not have the time or energy to do all that you would like to do or you may not understand what is meant. Your parenting ideas may be best for your baby.

Bone Formation

The bones of babies are more susceptible to injury than those of older children and adults. The skeleton of a baby in the first year of life is not properly hardened. Babies do not have the strength and reflexes to protect themselves from external forces. Be especially careful when doing vigorous games involving swinging. Always lift baby on the side under the armpits, he will not be able to support his weight should you lift him from the hands; you may injure his shoulder joints or elbows, if you lift inappropriately.

Your Baby's Movement and Learning

Movement and play provide the foundation for later skill development. Baby will be moving before birth, and after birth movements will mainly be reflex actions. As baby develops, movement will become more purposeful and eventually more controlled as the sensory motor system matures.

Movement and learning are dependent on one another. With every newly learned movement skill, your baby acquires a new means to better discover the world around her and to acquire new skills and abilities.

A simple activity like reaching for a suspended toy encourages baby to coordinate hand and eye movements. Through this type of activity the foundations for more complex skills like catching a ball, drawing, writing and feeding herself are being formed.

The main aim at the earliest age possible is to motivate your baby to perform movement and help her to become involved with the world around her.

Rates of development

A baby may lag behind or be ahead by up to six months in a particular area of development, eg some babies walk alone at nine months, some not until 18 months.

Babies vary in their individual development patterns, and when they reach milestones such as rolling, sitting and crawling. If baby 'wobbles' or 'flops' unduly during an activity either he needs extra support or he is not yet ready for that particular activity.

If you feel that your baby is not progressing as he should take your baby to see your doctor, paediatrician, Well Child provider, Plunket nurse or a therapist who works with children.

Gadgets for baby

There are many different 'gadgets' available, however, most have limitations and will act as a hindrance to development rather than a help. In general baby should not be placed into a sitting or standing position for long periods unless he can achieve this himself. To do so can put pressure on the developing muscles around the spine and vertebrae, and can lead to muscle imbalance. The best place for baby to develop all muscle groups is on the floor. Whilst you might be tempted to put baby in a gadget when he gets frustrated at being unable to move along the ground, this will slow the process of creeping, turning and crawling down. The floor is the babies gymnasium, and the optimum place for whole body development

- **Car seat:** essential for car travel but not suitable for long periods of sleep. Baby will sleep best when able to lie flat.

- **Baby gym or activity mat:** In the early weeks this can be useful for introducing baby to floor time. Eyes can be engaged looking at the hanging objects and this can provide interest for baby and assist with focusing. Once baby is able to reach out and swipe at the objects he will want to put them to his mouth for taste and touch sensations. He can become frustrated if unable to achieve this. If possible, place baby on a mat or blanket with objects at his side and within view and reach if he turns his head. Baby needs floor time away from under the activity mat or baby gym to encourage the development of rolling and movement. If his only floor time is under the gadget, it could limit his need to move or roll.
- **Baby swing:** is a useful tool once baby is able to sit independently. Moving in a controlled, slow motion through space aids the developing vestibular system of balance, necessary for sitting, standing and walking.
- **Back pack:** places baby into a sitting position prior to achieving this milestone; again this puts pressure on baby's developing spine and vertebrae.
- **Bouncinette:** limits the development of both back and front muscles, especially front. This can cause flexibility issues and delay baby being able to bring his hands together in front of his face and learning to roll sideways.
- **Bumbo seat:** Useful once baby can sit independently
- **Exercise saucer and walker:** places baby in a sitting/standing position prior to her being able to independently achieve this. In turn this places pressure on the lower back (spine and vertebrae), limits upper body development and can lead to delays with the essential milestone of crawling.

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- **Front pack:** has limited support for baby and puts pressure on baby's developing spine and back.
 - **High chair:** useful once baby can sit independently. Ideally the back should be in a straight position.
 - **Jolly jumper:** restricts baby's time on the floor. Places baby into a sitting/standing position before he is able to do this independently. Encourages baby to push - excessive use can lead to leg and muscle imbalance, shortening of the calf muscles and lower back problems. Restricts upper body development essential for developing the ability to crawl.
 - **Pram/stroller/buggy:** ideally a new baby should be able to lie flat as other positions will put pressure on the spine. Choose a pram or a buggy with handles that are high enough for you to push without stooping forward. Take your baby outside daily, if possible, for a walk. Fresh air stimulates the body systems of you and your baby so that both experience a surge of energy.
 - **Push along toys:** Introduce only when baby can walk independently. Before this it can be a hindrance and make baby walk too fast and cause her to be out of balance.
 - **Ride on toys:** make sure baby is able to get on and off by himself so he can make the choice to enjoy using (or not using) the toy.

The best place for the developing baby is on the floor ([see page 18](#)).

Wrapping Tā kai pēpē

Instructions

- Wrap your newborn with a large soft cotton cloth. The larger the wrap the more cosily you can wrap baby. Laying baby on the “cross” of the fabric helps to tuck him up comfortably.

Variations

- Very soon some babies object to being restrained by wrapping and wriggle and squirm whenever you hold them close. Other babies will continue to like being wrapped for many months yet. Both groups of babies are quite normal.



Main Benefits

- Wrapping helps your baby to feel secure during the newborn period; it helps him control his jerky little reflex movements.
- Wrapping from the back to the front helps baby get his hands free for self soothing and hand to mouth activities. Sucking is a powerful soother for a newborn baby and he may need extra sucking in the first few weeks.

Rocking Poipoi pēpē

0-3 MONTHS

Instructions

- Rock baby to a slow rhythm eg. rocking chair rhythm. If baby does not like this try a faster tempo - many babies like this better than slow rocking.
- Try dancing around the room with baby to a simple melodic tune.
- Walks in the pram, rocking the pram may be helpful to soothe and calm baby.
- Hum and sing to baby whilst rocking. This provides familiarisation with your voice, and enhances the feeling of being loved and wanted.
- Hold baby for rocking on the left and on the right, promoting brain development on both sides.



Main Benefits

- Rocking soothes baby so she feels secure in your arms. It also introduces her to a sense of rhythm.

Precautions

- Make sure baby is well supported.
- Do not be too vigorous immediately after baby has fed.



Touching and stroking

Ko te awahi me te mirimiri


Instructions

- Give baby time with skin to skin contact each day especially if baby is bottle fed.
- Alternate feeding sides (especially if bottle fed) to promote brain development on the right and left.
- Gently stroke parts of baby that is easy to get at, eg. top of head, back of neck, hands and feet.

Main Benefits

- Skin-to-skin contact promotes baby's growth.
- Soothes baby.
- Introduces your baby to loving touch and baby massage.
- Baby learns more through the sense of touch in the first year than any other sense. (touching and being touched)

Precautions

- 
- Observe baby's behaviour carefully to ensure that she likes it.
 - Stop if baby is behaving as if she has had enough handling for the time being.
 - If you have baby partially undressed make sure she is warm enough; newborn babies become very cold very quickly which can be dangerous for them.



Deep warm bathing Kaukau ki roto i te wai mahana



Instructions

- Prepare your baby bath with deep (approximately 30 cm) warm water. Test warmth on the inside of your wrist.
- Have a bath towel spread out ready for baby. Use an infant bathing solution and add to the water once the bath has been filled. Hair washing may be better done before bathing. Have massage oil handy ([see page 27](#)).
- Undress baby, place her slowly and gently in the water supporting her (as above) and lower gently into the water rocking as you do so. If baby is still upset; turn her on to her tummy while supporting the side of her chin bone with the little finger side of your hand. Place your spare hand on the back of her head until she is settled in the water. Wash her when she is relaxed.

- If baby is enjoying it and is not cold, she can stay in the bath for up to 10 minutes.
- Say her name, count 1,2,3 out loud then gently squeeze a trickle of water over the back of her head. When baby is comfortable with this, progress to (name 1,2,3) then trickling water over her face (a flannel squeeze is a good start)
- When she has had enough, lift her out, lying her on her tummy. Dry her and massage her gently down her back ([see page 36](#)).

Main Benefits

- Developing baby's water confidence.
- Warmth of water relaxes baby.
- Depth of water gives support to baby's limbs so that she can move her limbs easily.
- Lying on the tummy inhibits baby's startle reflex. This may not be necessary for all babies.
- Introduction to baby massage.

Precautions

- Keep baby's neck as straight as possible.
- Watch you don't block off baby's windpipe.
- Watch that baby's face is well clear of the water.
- Use the trickling activity once or twice each bathtime. Be guided by her response. Always use the name 1,2,3 process to help build her confidence.
- Be careful of your own back while standing bathing the baby, make sure it is straight or put the bath somewhere higher. Carry small amounts of water held close to your body.
- When baby is ready you can progress to using your baby bath inside the big bath.

The Floor is the Baby's Gym

He waahi tākaro te papa mo te pēpē

To achieve the milestones of rolling, sitting, crawling and walking, it is essential that baby spends time on the floor. Baby develops using his limbs (arms and legs) to help build stability. The sequence of development is: head and neck muscles, arms, body, legs and feet, and fingers. At the same time, the baby's brain is also growing by using all the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

Two activities to help with core muscle development are lying on the back and lying on the tummy. Lying on the back is essential as this will allow baby to develop stability and balance; baby will then be able to move her hands and feet and not topple over. Lying on the tummy encourages hands to move forward and push, lifting the head and neck. Both are essential for further development to take place.

Lying on the back

Ko te takato ki runga tuara

Instructions

Lying on the back will allow baby to develop stability and balance through the development of the core muscles.



While lying on the back:


- Hang a mobile or string a row of toys where she can watch them across the pram/cot (see suitable toy section, [page 42](#), for ideas). Give her room for waving her arms about.
- Buy/make sturdy “touchable” mobiles and place them about 10-15 cm above baby's chest. Eventually she will hit them with her hands, probably by accident ([see hand activities, page 40](#)).
- Progress to hanging single toys directly in front of her and encourage her to bring her hands to the front and reach out.

- When she can reach out and touch the toys make light toys accessible on the floor for when she turns her head to look left and right. This will help develop reaching and rolling, and allow her to put the toys to her mouth for touching and tasting.
- Give her time with her nappies off for leg kicking. If she needs encouragement, press on the soles of the feet or put soft foam toys or screwed up newspapers at the foot of the pram/cot so she can see/hear some “results” from her kicking efforts.
- Touch her opposite hand to opposite foot at each nappy change. This will encourage right and left brain development.

Main Benefits

- Interest in the mobile encourages baby to learn to keep her head in the middle rather than let it roll to the side.
- Good position for leg kicking.
- Starting eye-hand co-ordination by reaching for the mobile.
- Assists the eye muscles to develop and become better at focusing.
- Allows for baby to develop stability; evident when she can bring her legs up and put her hands in her mouth at the same time without toppling over or forcing her legs out straight to achieve balance.
- Assists with developing the sideways rolling.

Precautions

- 
- Many babies prefer this position to lying on the tummy.
 - Lying on the back can encourage the development of a ‘flat’ head so make sure baby has time on the tummy as well.
 - Baby will start to roll to each side and wriggle up and down very quickly while playing this game. Make sure she is safe in the cot, pram or on the floor.

Lying on the tummy

Te mahi tāpapa

It is the natural pattern of development for baby to spend time lying on her tummy on the floor and learn to move herself, rather than relying on equipment like baby walkers and bouncers. These gadgets will hinder rather than help her development.

Instructions

- Place baby on her tummy every day. Place baby's hands beside her head and turn her head to one side. Start with a few minutes and gradually increase the time.
- If baby is having trouble lifting her head, try doing some massage on her back.
- An interesting toy or rattle placed ahead of baby may encourage her to make a bigger effort to lift her head.
- Lie on the floor in front of her. Your face is her favourite object.
- As she gets stronger encourage baby to lift her head placing the palm of your hand under her chest. Tuck baby's bent arms under her chest and encourage pushing on hands and elbows. Or place a rolled up towel under her chest to provide extra support.
- Once she can hold her head up, roll a small ball slowly across in front of her.
- When you feel baby is ready, place her gently in a lying position on a swiss ball and slowly rock her back and forwards, whilst holding her.

Main Benefits

- Strengthens baby's neck and back.
- Prepares baby for learning to crawl.
- In the first year, baby will benefit from time spent on the floor. This allows development of all muscle groups, in preparation for rolling, sitting, crawling and walking.



Precautions

- If baby does not like lying on her tummy try laying her across your lap first and gradually increase tummy time.
- Do not place her arms in front of her shoulders. Allow her to develop towards this in her own time.
- Do not over-tire baby with too much time on her tummy to start with.
- Stop as soon as her neck is getting tired.
- Always watch baby when she is on her tummy, to keep her safe.
- Do not lay your baby on her tummy to sleep as there is a risk of suffocation.

Communication

Te whakawhiti korero

Instructions

- Your face is her best source of entertainment. Keep her close when talking to her. During the first weeks, her focusing distance is from your face to hers, when in a normal feeding position.
- Baby communicates her needs to you with the help of body movement, facial expressions, crying and vocal noises. She needs you as an interpreter.
- Your voice is very important to baby. Talk to baby about what you are doing and what will happen next eg “after your feed you will be having a sleep in your bassinette”.
- Use your voice to sing soothing lullabies to your baby to help settle her. Combine with rocking.
- She is soothed by soft rhythmic sounds such as a ticking clock.
- Talk to your baby when she is not looking at you and see if she will turn her head to find the sound.
- Baby may start to babble at about six weeks (along with smiling). Repeat her sounds back to her to establish a conversation.
- Read to your baby every day.

Main Benefits

- Baby will show a preference for her mother’s voice initially because her mother’s voice was “womb sound” to her. She will soon get to know voices of other carers.
- Introduction of baby to sounds and the rhythm of music and finding out what she likes.
- You are establishing the habit of talking with her (conversation).
- She is hearing her language spoken so now she can start to learn it.
- You are treating her with respect.



Precautions

- Baby has a very short attention span and tolerance at this stage. Look for signs of having had enough.

Focusing and following with the eyes and turning the head

Te arotahi, te whai o te karu me te huri o te māhunga

Instructions

Use your own face and simple brightly coloured objects to encourage focusing, following with eyes and turning the head.

- Move the object very slowly to allow the eyes to adjust and refocus.
- Your face is the most attractive stimulus for baby to follow with his eyes.
- Use a selection of shiny objects and other primary colours: black and white, red and other simple colours are best.
- Patterns on toys should be simple, not too fussy.
- Face designs are stimulating.
- Small sized rattles, toys and cuddly toys are best.
- Black and white bold patterns will interest baby.

Main Benefits

- Helps baby master movements of the eyes and head.
- Assists to develop baby's ability to pick objects out with his eyes.
- Helps the eye muscles become stronger.
- Helps baby develop focusing when objects are moving.
- Encourages the eyes to work together.
- Increases baby's awareness of the world around him.
- Once baby is stable on his back he will be able to move his eyes without turning his head. He can now start to concentrate more on his environment.

Variations

Try this activity in different positions:

- When baby is being nursed, wrapped and head supported.
- When baby is on his back.
- When baby is on his tummy, once his neck is stronger.
- On his tummy, roll toys **slowly** across in front of him, encouraging him to follow with his eyes.



Baby Massage Introduction

Te mirimiri pēpē



When

- From birth, hands and feet can be massaged if baby enjoys this (see [pages 33](#) and [35](#) for the correct technique).
- Six weeks old is a good age to start full baby massage.
- Fit massage into your daily routine, eg bath time, evening.
- Make sure you choose a time when you are able to relax and spend time with baby.
- Choose a time when your baby is awake, quiet and not particularly hungry or full in order to establish maximum communication and awareness of touch.
- The massage could take from 1 to 15 minutes, depending on baby's mood.
- Newborns should be held during massage.

Where

- A warm peaceful room. Make sure there are no draughts. Close the doors and windows - you could play some soft soothing music.
- The easiest way is to sit on the floor with baby either on your legs (bent up), or between your legs. Lean your back against a wall or chair for support. Place baby on a sheepskin, soft rug or towel. Have a spare nappy/wrap on hand to cover baby once an area has been massaged.

How

- Take off rings and watches.
- Hands must glide on the skin. Make sure that your hands are warm. Use cold pressed natural vegetable oils (almond, sesame, olive, peach kernel, calendula baby oil). Warm the oil by pouring a little on hands and rubbing them together.
- Maintain eye contact with your baby as much as possible. Talk with your baby during the massage.
- Touch should be firm but gentle.
- If it is too cold for baby to have clothing removed, massage with light clothing on and do not use oils.

All cultures have some particular strokes that are handed down through the generations. The following section gives you specific details on some baby massage techniques.

Main Benefits

- Touch is an infant's strongest sense, and the one baby learns the most from, in the first year.
- Sensory receptors in the skin send messages to the brain, helping it grow and make new connections.
- Touch helps baby to learn how its body fits together, and what is connected to it, eg toes when being stroked.
- Can help babies with colic by breaking the anxiety-pain cycle and improving digestion.
- Can improve poor sleep patterns and settling problems.
- Especially helps the growth and development of premature or low birth weight babies.
- Baby massage techniques are suitable for use in all growing children, eg circular stroking of the temples for soothing older children.

Bonding

- Helps new parents gain confidence in handling their baby.
- Promotes relaxation of both parents and baby.
- Encourages both touching and being touched and this will encourage a more touch responsive child later in life.
- Helps if your baby is physically different in any way.



Precautions

- Wait until the baby's cord has healed.
- Full body massage may not be tolerated by all babies.
- Most babies will enjoy hand and/or foot massage.
- Massage towards the heart: wrist to shoulder and ankle to thigh.
- If baby cries and does not seem to like it, leave it to try again the next day. If after three more days of trying baby still does not like it, either reassess your preparation and technique or leave it for another two weeks, as baby's nervous system may not be ready to handle massage yet.
- Always be gentle rather than vigorous (see introductory notes on bone formation, [page 8](#)).
- Note that the face is a very sensitive area and treat with caution ([see the following technique page 32](#)).
- The palms of the hands and the soles of the feet are also regarded as sensitive areas.
- If baby does not like a particular stroke, leave it out completely. Do more of the strokes that your baby seems to enjoy. You and your baby will know which strokes are enjoyed the best.
- Full body massage could take up to 15 minutes. Spend 1 to 2 minutes on each body part.

Baby Massage Techniques

Ngā pūkenga mirimiri

Instructions

Read the baby massage introduction first. Make sure your shoulders and hands are relaxed, make your movements slow and rhythmic, maintaining continuous skin contact at all times (one hand on the baby).

There are two main techniques used. The pressure for both is the same as you use for burping/winding your baby.

1. Stroking

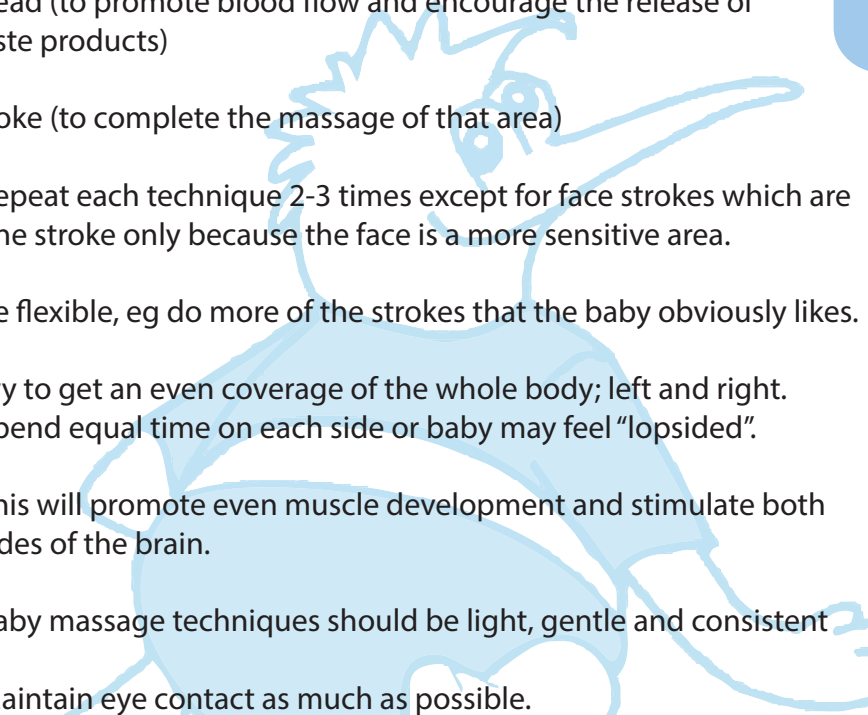
Gliding gently along the surface of the skin in one sweeping movement, always keeping in contact with the skin.

2. Kneading

Gently moving the muscles underneath the skin, using the fingertips and thumbs to knead the tissues. This is a slightly deeper massage stroke. When using the kneading technique always work towards the heart as this promotes draining (wrist to shoulders, ankles to thighs).

out there and active

Generally for each body part:

1. Stroke (to spread oil and promote circulation)
 2. Knead (to promote blood flow and encourage the release of waste products)
 3. Stroke (to complete the massage of that area)
- Repeat each technique 2-3 times except for face strokes which are one stroke only because the face is a more sensitive area.
 - Be flexible, eg do more of the strokes that the baby obviously likes.
 - Try to get an even coverage of the whole body; left and right. Spend equal time on each side or baby may feel "lopsided".
 - This will promote even muscle development and stimulate both sides of the brain.
 - Baby massage techniques should be light, gentle and consistent
 - Maintain eye contact as much as possible.
- 

The Head and Face

Using fingertips (most people use no oil):

- Stroke around the top of the head using palms or fingers.
- Stroke down the sides of face using fingertips.
- From the centre of the forehead to the temples **once only**.
- In circles on the temples.
- Eyebrows from nose to temple **once only**.
- From nose over cheeks to ears **once only**.
- From inner corners of eyes down sides of nose to corners of nose to corners of mouth **once only**.
- From centre of chin out to the ears **once only**.
- Behind the ears from top to bottom.
- The ears back and front, following their shape.



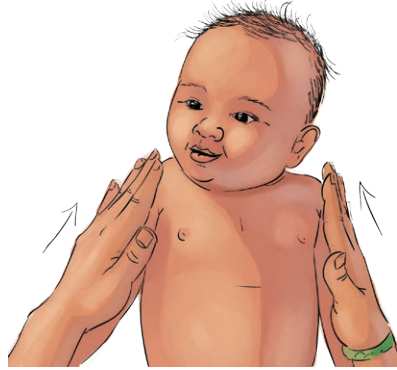
The Neck

Stroke in a downward direction (use oil as needed from here onwards)

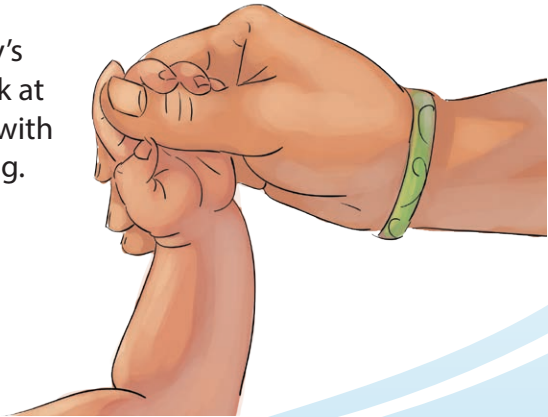
- Ears to shoulders
- Chin to upper chest

The Arms

- Stroke from fingertips to shoulders (x3).
- Squeeze the muscles gently using your fingers and thumbs from the wrist to the shoulder.
- Massage using the kneading stroke from wrist to shoulder.
- Massage wrist using thumb and forefinger.
- Stroke the back of hands using fingers.
- Knead the palm of the hand using your thumb.
- Stroke each finger using your fingertips and thumb.
- Finish by stroking of whole arm (x3) from wrist to shoulder.



Note: while working on baby's hands, encourage him to look at what you are doing and talk with him about what you are doing.



The Chest

- Start at the centre front of the chest, use both hands to stroke in a down-and-out direction, following the spaces between the ribs. This strokes the small muscles between the ribs used for breathing (be very gentle on this area).
- Start at the centre front of the chest where the ribs meet at the lower end of the breastbone. Use both thumbs, stroke down and out following the line of the bottom rib. This follows the line of the big breathing muscle or diaphragm.



These strokes can be useful if your baby suffers from “wheeziness” or “chestiness”.

The Stomach

Use a stroking movement of fingertips or palms. Do clockwise circular massage around the belly button (cord should be healed and off). This stroke follows the natural direction of the large bowel.



This stroke and the chest stroke for the diaphragm can be particularly useful when baby has wind, or is constipated.

The Legs

- Stroke from toes to tops of thighs (x3)
- Knead muscles gently using your fingers and thumbs, from ankle to thigh.
- Massage the ankle area following natural shapes with your palms or fingers.
- Use your thumbs to massage the soles of her feet from heel to toes.
- Stroke each toe individually.

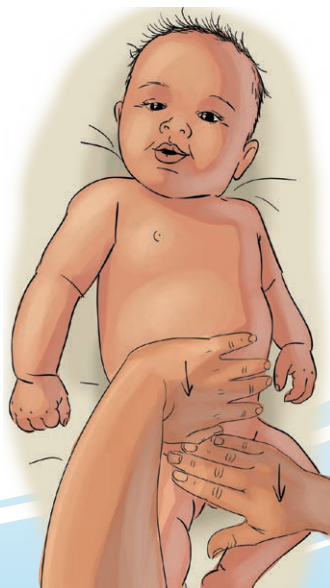


Finish with stroking the whole leg (x3).

The Whole Front

Using both hands, once for each half of the body, stroke slowly from neck to toes including arms and genitals.

Genitals are included in long strokes down the body so that they are touched naturally as part of the body, not ignored, nor accentuated.



Back of body

- If baby still does not like lying on his tummy, do these strokes with baby across your lap or over your shoulder ([refer to lying on tummy, page 20](#)).
- Avoid direct contact/pressure on baby's spine. It is still very soft ([see bone formation page 8](#)).

The Head

Use fingers and palms to stroke from top of head to base of skull.

The Neck and Shoulders

Using fingertips, gently massage the muscles in a small circular motion on either side of the top of the shoulders to the base of the skull.

The Back

- Start with slow circular massage on the lower back (avoid spine).
- Using fingertips stroke upwards from buttocks to neck on either side of the spine (x3).
- Using fingertips of both hands massage muscles in small circular movements in an upwards direction, on either side of the spine.
- Finish with stroking in an upward direction (x3).



The Buttocks and Legs

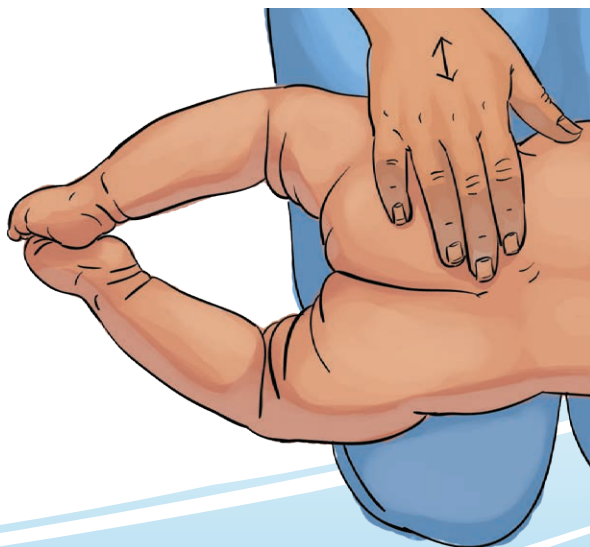
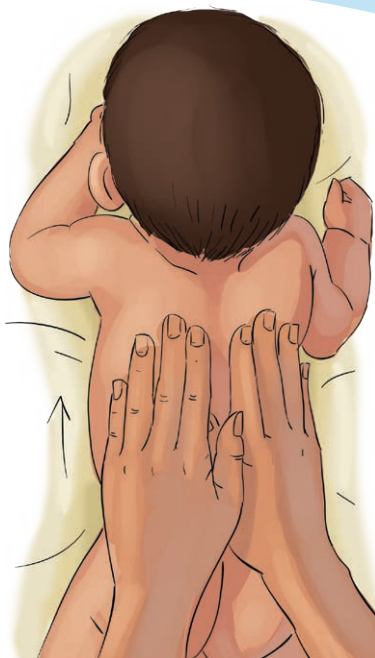
Jiggle buttocks. Stroke the legs from the toes to the top of the thighs (x3).

The Whole Back

From top of head to tips of toes, give several long, light, loving strokes.

To Finish

Wrap baby and cuddle for a few minutes before starting the dressing process.



Baby Lifts Te hiki pēpē

Instructions

- Start with baby on his tummy facing you.
- Put your hands around baby's chest and raise him to the upright position keeping his feet on the ground.
- Lean him very slowly to the left and then the right, waiting for him to keep his head in line with his body.
- Lean him just a little way forwards and then backwards as well.
- Do a maximum of 5 repeats.
- A good time to do this is at every nappy change.



Main Benefits

- Encourages baby to hold head straight.
- Feet on the ground helps baby to work out where their body is in space.
- Baby will be fighting gravity to stay upright and working the core muscles around his middle.

Precautions

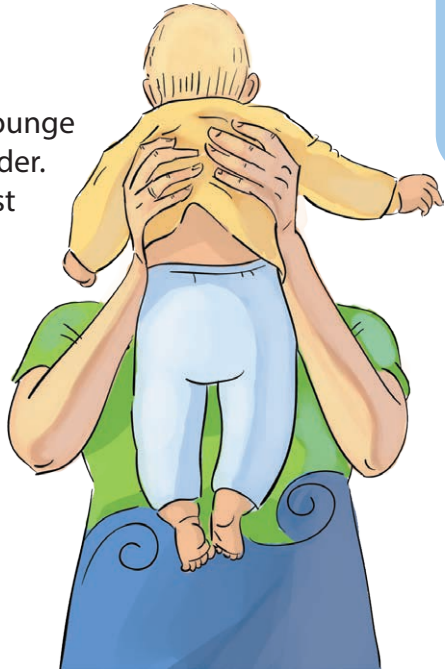
- If baby is not able to hold his head very well yet, don't do this exercise. Try it again in two weeks.
- Baby may only be able to cope with one or two movements at first.

Elevator Game Te kēmu hiki pēpe

0-3 MONTHS

Instructions

- Seat yourself in a comfortable lounge chair with baby over your shoulder.
- Hold your baby around the chest with both hands.
- Lift baby up above you, playing a pretend game of an elevator going up and down.
- You can progress the game to pretending baby is a baby bird, by tipping baby lightly from side to side, dipping head and toes.



Main Benefits

- Strengthens baby's neck and back against gravity.
- Baby experiences his body moving up and down in space.
- Playful communication.

Precautions

- If baby's head and body hang down a lot they are not strong enough for the exercise. Try again in two weeks.
- If baby does not like the game do not persist.
- All movements must be done very slowly.

Hand Activities

Ngā mahi-a-ringā

Instructions

- Baby's hands have a grasp reflex for about the first six weeks.
- Encourage baby to look at her hands and put them into her mouth.
- Encourage baby to swipe at toys by placing or suspending them within reach of her hands and preferably directly in front of her.
- Wait until baby has learnt to release her tight fist (possibly six weeks) before placing toys in her hands.
- Toys must be very light for baby to enjoy holding them.
- Encourage holding on to toys, then start to teach letting go.

Main Benefits

- Increases baby's awareness of her hands.
- Encourages baby's eye-hand-mouth activity.
- Swiping at toys is the beginning of baby's eye-hand-object co-ordination learning.
- Encourages her to hold her head steady in the midline (not favouring either side of her body) when toys of interest are placed within her reach, directly in front of her.
- Encourages holding on to toys.



Precautions

- Make sure wrist toys are not too tight.
- Newborns have strong reflexes for the first 1-3 months which cause them to hold their arms very stiffly in certain positions. Never force baby's arms to move when she is holding them stiffly. Wait until they loosen up when baby is in another position or leave it for several weeks. Baby massage is a good way of helping baby's arms to relax.
- Baby puts every toy into her mouth to explore, so toys must be safe ([see the suitable toy section page 42](#)). She is using her 'taste' sense when she does this.

Suitable Toys

Ngā tāonga e tika ana mo te pēpē

Instructions

- Use natural substances like wool, cotton, wood, as well as plastic. Baby will be attracted to shiny objects.
- Small soft toys, eg woollen teddies, balls.
- Small light rattles, teethingers - plastic, wooden.
- Musical boxes - pull thread type.
- Mobiles - either bought or home made by hanging everyday bits and pieces on a coat hanger with pegs for cot, pram, bouncinette.
- Activity mats that encourage baby, to reach out with the hands, when placed on the tummy.
- Look for toys that move, make a sound and have simple bright colours and patterns.
- Baby will especially like looking at faces during the early months.
- Play classical music and nursery rhymes for baby.



Main Benefits

- Babies are fascinated by movement and contrasting colours.
- Nursery rhymes with their repetitive patterns will encourage memory to develop.
- Providing baby with a variety of interesting toys will stimulate him to want to move and touch.

Precautions

- Look for well known brand names; check the “suitable for certain ages” label.
- Fillings used in soft toys should be soft, non toxic, non flammable, clean. No small pea-like fillings and check the seams.
- Wooden toys should be made with untreated wood and sanded to avoid splinters.
- Fluids in any toys should be non toxic in case of accidental breakage.
- Make sure rattles and teethingers are light, smooth, bits and beads are secure. All toys or parts of a toy should be large enough to prevent them being swallowed or put in ears or nose.
- Surrounding baby with too many toys at once will confuse him. Put out one or two things and change the toys when you think he is bored with them.

Role Models

Te whakatauirā mahi

Instructions

- Do your postnatal exercises with baby somewhere safe where he can watch you. You should do these activities daily until your post natal check up at six weeks.
- One of the best forms of exercise is walking. All you need is comfortable clothing and suitable footwear. Choose walks that suit prams and buggies. Start slowly and gradually build up your distance and pace.
- Start doing activities you enjoy. This could be as simple as yoga, strength and flexibility exercises or aerobics. Clear a space in the lounge and have baby in a comfortable position on the carpet.
- If you belong to a gym, sport clubs or compete in sports teams, take baby along to watch you.

Main Benefits

- Daily exercise is one of the most enjoyable and beneficial activities that you and your baby can do together.
- By watching you, your baby will learn that movement is a fun daily activity.
- You will enjoy a more flexible and energised body.
- Baby will enjoy watching their siblings and the whole family or whanau participating in whatever physical activity they may be involved in, such as games or gardening.



Precautions

- Practical safety considerations at sporting venues and the weather.
- Baby's tolerance; he will get tired after a very short time.



Finding Playmates

Te rapu hoa tākaro

Instructions

- It is never too soon to introduce your newborn to playmates her own age.
- Friends from antenatal classes, the birthing centre, marae and people you meet at parents support groups can all be sources of playmates for your baby.
- Introduce older siblings to interacting with baby from the earliest days, in the form of “doing things for” and “playing with” baby.

Main Benefits

- Newborns will play with each other if they are in the same visual range.
- Babies may be wary of unfamiliar adults but are quite happy and unperturbed by other babies.
- Babies will look at each other, take turns in vocalising and reach out.
- If you give them a toy to share they will interact.
- Encourage simple games of give and take between them.

Precautions

- You will want to protect your baby from people with colds or other illnesses when she is very young.
- She will get tired very quickly.
- Take care that babies do not hurt each other in their enthusiasm - you may have to restrain their small hands from poking eyes and pulling hair.



Baby Massage
Te mirimiri pēpē



Instructions

- If you have not already started daily massage refer to the baby massage ([page 27](#)) in the 0-3 month's section.
- Combine baby massage with body parts games.
- Try other games of touch, for example use your lips and voice on the tummy and back, kiss baby's feet.
- As your baby grows older massage sessions can take place at any peaceful time and not necessarily combined with bathing.

Variations

- Baby may be mobile now and you may find it easier to massage her:
 1. Across your lap or over your shoulder for doing his back.
 2. On your lap for doing his front.
- Only massage the parts you know he is enjoying. It may take a few sessions to get the whole body massaged.
- Skin to skin is best but massage through light clothing will still be beneficial.

Main Benefits ([see page 28](#))

- Baby will enjoy communication and touch very much at this stage.
- Try using baby massage to relax and "loosen up" your baby before trying more vigorous activities.
- "Touch" helps baby to learn about his own body. This is the sense baby learns the most from.
- Sensory receptors in the skin send messages to the brain, helping it to grow and make new connections.

Body Part Games

He kēmu - Ngā wāhanga o te tinana

Instructions

- Play games that associate touching body parts with words.
- Make sure you work the right and left sides of the body evenly. eg both hands for "Round and Round the Garden"

Song one

Upoko, pakihwi, hope, puku, waewae (x3)

Taringa, karu, waha, ihu

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes (x2)

And eyes and ears and mouth and nose

Head shoulders knees and toes, knees and toes

Variations

These rhymes will stand endless repetition and you will find the more often you do them the more your baby will like them as they become familiar with the rhyme and rhythm. Purchase or borrow from a library nursery rhyme CD's and listen to them together.

Main Benefits

- Awareness of body parts.
- A good communication and enjoyment activity.
- Learning the names of body parts as you use them.
- Talk to baby when you dress him (such as "arms up and going in the sleeve").

Other examples:

- Pūngawerewere, pūngawerewere, pūngawerewere, mahia tō whare e
- This little piggie went to market
- Round and round the garden
- Kōnui, kōroa, māpere, mānawa, kōiti
- Incey, wincey, spider



Lying on Tummy

Te mahi tāpapa

Instructions

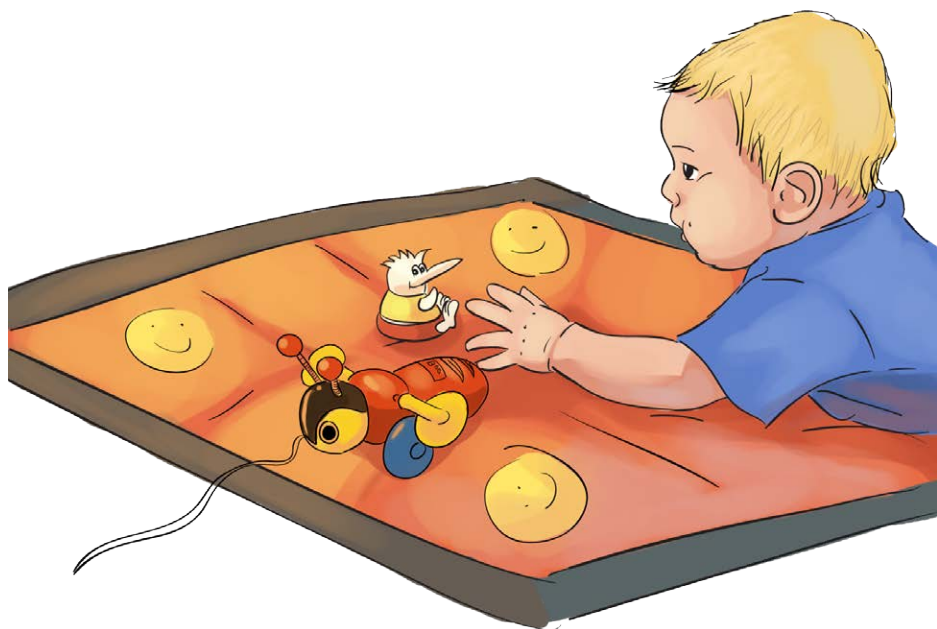
- Place baby on his tummy and encourage him to reach out for toys.
- Place a variety of toys, something different each day, in front of his face to encourage him to support himself on his elbows.
- Roll toys slowly across in front of baby (this will encourage his eyes to develop tracking ability).
- Place your hands behind his feet to encourage him to push away.
- Lie baby on a swiss ball and gently rock him backwards and forwards, whilst holding him.

Main Benefits

- Gives baby the opportunity to prepare for the crawling position.
- Strengthens baby's neck and back against gravity.
- Encourages development of baby's upper arms and shoulders.
- It is the natural pattern of development for baby to spend time lying on his tummy on the floor and learn to move himself, rather than relying on equipment like baby walkers and bouncers.
- In the first year, baby will benefit from the time spent on the floor. This allows development of all muscle groups.

Precautions

- If baby dislikes lying on tummy, go back to the lying on tummy exercise in the 0-3 month section ([see page 20](#)) or have a cuddle and place him on his back.
- Gradually extend the time in this position, be guided by baby's tolerance.
- Do not place baby's arms in front of his shoulders. Allow him to develop to this position naturally.



Rolling Over

Te mahi hurihuri

Instructions

- With baby lying on her back, encourage her to turn her head in one direction.
- Place a brightly coloured lightweight toy within her arms reach.
- Bend baby's legs up towards her tummy, at the knees, and use her legs to roll her over in that direction.
- Help her untangle her underneath arm.
- This is a good exercise to do after each nappy change, doing a different side at each change.

Main Benefits

- Helps baby to learn to roll by herself from lying on her back to lying on her front.
- It is good to assist baby in this movement as it can be a hard one to learn herself. Rolling from lying on her tummy to lying on her back tends to be learnt easily and earlier.

Precautions

- Avoid pulling on baby's arms.
- Use the legs to roll baby and if she needs extra assistance give it by placing hands on her hip and gently encouraging the roll.



Sit Ups Noho ake

Instructions

- Start with baby lying on her back.
- Put your hands behind baby's shoulders and bring her up into sitting.
- Repeat the movement up to 5 times daily. At each nappy change is a good time.
- Say "1, 2, 3 and up". Watch for baby to help with this movement. When she is lifting her head from the floor, she will be using her core muscles.

Main Benefits

- Strengthens the front of baby's neck and body and helps to develop core muscles (around her middle) necessary for rolling, sitting, crawling, and standing.

Precautions

- Do not carry on with this exercise if baby's head wobbles backwards when lifting her into sitting. This could be painful to her neck area.
- Do not have baby hold on to your hands. She may let go at any time and fall backwards. Make sure you have hold of her hands if you progress from assisting behind the shoulder blades.



Baby Lifts Te hiki pēpē

Instructions

Grasp baby under the armpits on the sides of her trunk, lift her into a straight up and down position with feet off the ground.

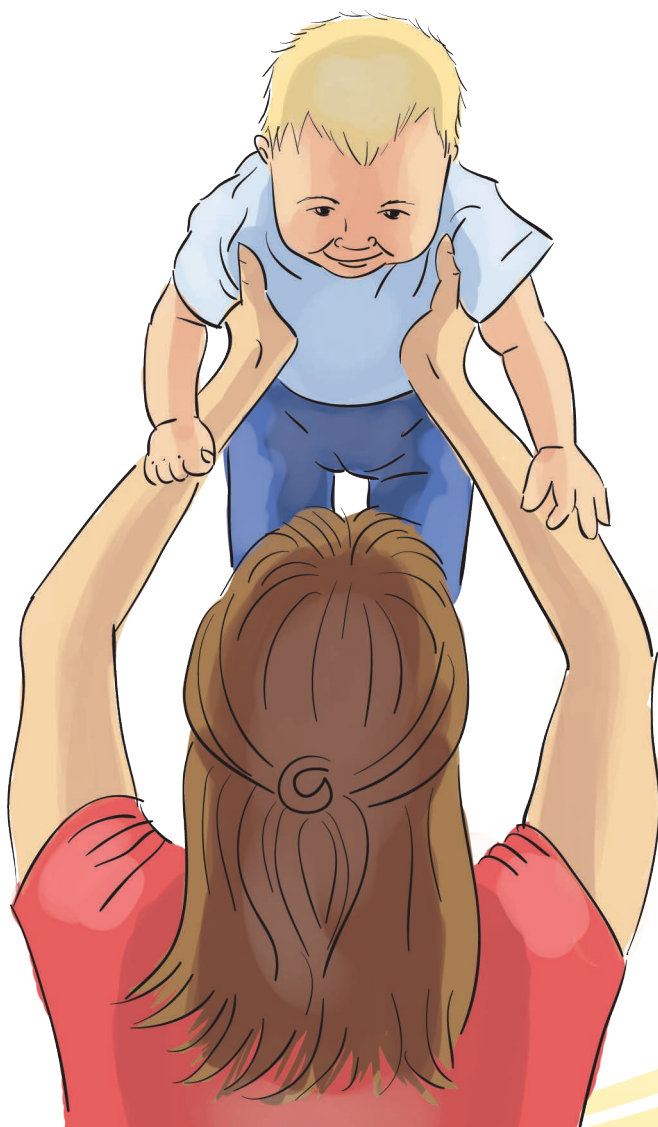
- Lean baby to the left, then the right.
- Lean baby forwards then just a little way backwards.
- Repeat each movement up to five times.

Main Benefits

- Strengthens baby's core body muscles and the neck.

Precautions

- If baby does not like this exercise, go back to doing the baby lift exercise ([page 38](#)) which keeps baby's feet on the floor.
- If baby "flops" (legs, arms or head hang down) baby may not be ready for this exercise.
- This is another great activity to do at each nappy change.
- Do not overdo this activity as baby can become tired easily. Remember the best position for developing muscles is for baby to be on the floor.
- Make all movements slowly and allow baby time to refocus.



Knee Rides

Te hiki-a-turi

Instructions

- You must be seated on a strong, upright dining or kitchen chair.
- Sit baby on one of your knees facing you.
- Move your bottom to the edge of the chair.
- Use a good rhythmical nursery rhyme to move baby up and down on your knee, slowly.
- Suit the movements to the rhythm of the words of the song.
- Do an extra large bounce on important words.

Variation

Other activities suitable for this age group are:

- Galloping or dancing around room with baby in arms to a good rhythmical song.
- Swinging baby, slowly and carefully, on his trunk below his armpits.

Main Benefits

- Gives baby a sensation of moving his body through space.
- Baby learns to locate where his body is in space.
- Baby loves the playful communication with his parent whom he trusts.

Precautions

- Baby must be able to hold his head steady to do these activities.
- Do not persist with a game if baby does not like it. Some babies enjoy more vigorous games than others.
- Make your movements slowly to allow baby's eyes to refocus.

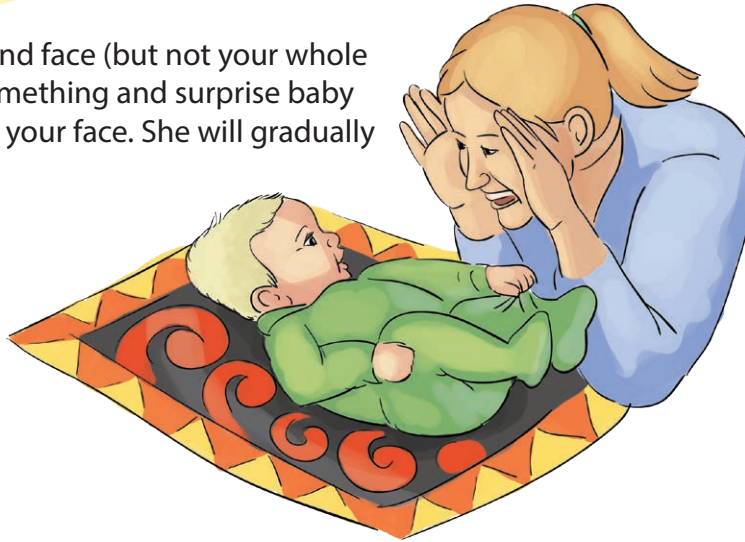


Peek a boo

Whakatātare

Instructions

- Move from one side of baby to the other to encourage baby to turn her head.
- Hide your eyes and face (but not your whole head) behind something and surprise baby when you reveal your face. She will gradually learn the game.



Main Benefits

- Playful communication.
- Encourages baby to turn her head to locate your position.
- Developing interaction and memory.

Precautions

- Baby will take time to learn each game and will enjoy the same game repeated a lot.
- Experiment with using different objects and positions to see what she enjoys.
- Make your movements slowly to allow baby's eyes to refocus.

Bathing Activities

Ngā mahi kaukau

4-6 MONTHS

Instructions

- Continue to use the relaxed baby bathing technique ([page 16](#)). You will need to progress to using this method in the big bath or taking baby into the big bath with you.
- Support baby's head as in the relaxed baby bathing technique or however you find comfortable and move her gently backwards and forwards in the water.
- Encourage arm and leg movements.
- Gently trickle water over her head, using her name, 1,2,3 process as on [page 17](#).
- Use a container to pour water over her head, shoulders and back, again using her name 1,2,3 process.
- Use lots of floating toys to make bath time a fun and interesting learning time.
- Baby can also go in the shower with an adult.



Main Benefits

- Continues to build baby's confidence in water.
- Baby's skin receives sensory information when being touched.
- Develops a relaxed baby in the water.
- Baby is more comfortable with water on her head and face.

Precautions

- Be particularly careful to gradually introduce water to baby's face as this is a very sensitive area.
- If you are very keen on taking baby to swimming classes but lack confidence in water yourself, you should find out about classes for yourself first. If you are nervous about water, this feeling will communicate itself to your baby.

Hand Activities

Ngā mahi-a-ringā

Instructions

- Offering her toys from directly in front will help her learn to use both arms together while looking at the toy.
- Encourage reaching out and grasping by bringing arms forward in front of the body.
- Encourage learning to let go with hands; try different sized toys; place your palm so her hand and the object rest on it and she will be able to let go.
- Encourage passing toys from one hand to another.
- Give a toy that requires her to hold on to it with both hands such as a soft ball or toy.
- Place toys close to her when she is lying on her tummy. This will encourage her to push up onto one elbow with one hand.

Main Benefits

- Improving hand skills by learning to let go.
- Becoming more orientated to doing things in front of herself all the time.
- Beginning to coordinate both hands and eyes.
- This activity also assists with eye focusing at close range.

Precautions

- Baby may still have some newborn stiffness in her arm and it is best to encourage her to bring her arms forward by moving the arm from the shoulder rather than pulling on her hand. Never force them forward; trying another position for the activity may help.
- She may find it difficult to learn to let go, or she may let toys go by accident frequently.



Suitable Toys

Ngā tāonga e tika ana mo te tākaro

- Baby uses the five senses - sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste - to learn. Choosing a variety of toys that use all these senses will help to build his abilities.
- Baby learns the most from the sense of touch. Make sure his toys are available to him by placing them close.
- Baby likes toys that he can put in his mouth to explore.
- Baby likes to feel different textures and shapes.
- Baby likes toys that make a noise and produce a movement.

Choose from the following:

- Toys suitable for mouthing.
- Light small objects that baby can hold on to.
- Toys within reaching distance across baby's stroller, cot etc. So that baby can reach and hold them.
- Suction toys and weighted toys that stand on the ground and don't fall over.
- Home-made toys - simple containers with different everyday items sealed in them. Clear plastic is good so that baby can see the items, eg colourful plastic bread tags in a plastic container.
- Choose brightly coloured toys that also make a noise.
- Toys placed within reach when baby is on the floor.
- Toy frames and activity mats. Stimulate baby under a toy frame but balance this by placing baby on the tummy with access to light toys that he can reach for, grasp and hold, and put into his mouth.
- Baby needs floor time away from under the activity mat or baby gym to encourage the development of rolling and movement. If his only floor time is under the gadget, it could limit his need to move or roll.



Precautions

- Check all objects that might go into baby's mouth for sharp edges, beads, inks, dyes, non toxic paints, fillings.
- Do not let him play with cracked or broken plastic cartons, long pieces of string, wrapping paper or plastic bags.
- Dolls should have soft bodies with embroidered and painted on faces rather than proper eyes. Any eyes, noses, hair and buttons should be firmly and safely attached.
- Allow nothing small enough to be swallowed. Baby may choke.

Communication

Te whakawhiti kōrero

Instructions

- Your voice is still the most important sound to baby. Talk to baby a lot about what you are doing with her.
- Imitate your baby's first babbling sounds. You may hear "ba", "ma" and "da" sounds.
- Read to baby from a variety of sources ranging from baby books to the sections of the newspaper that are of interest to you.
- When you talk to your baby and recite rhymes, pronounce the words well showing baby how to use the lips, tongue and palate to form words. Use rhymes frequently.
- Use your lips and voice to blow and make noises on baby's tummy, neck and back.
- Repeat the sounds baby makes back to her.
- Use the names of body parts, eg "We're putting your arms into your jacket".

Main Benefits

- Imitating baby's sounds teaches taking turns.
- Talking to your baby constantly and reading to baby from a variety of sources is the best way to encourage speech.
- Talking to baby about what you are doing is a way of introducing language and promoting understanding eg "after your feed we will play on the floor".

Precautions

- Watch for signs that baby is "overloaded".
- Have one sound going on at a time so that baby doesn't become confused.



Baby Massage

Te mirimiri pēpē

Instructions

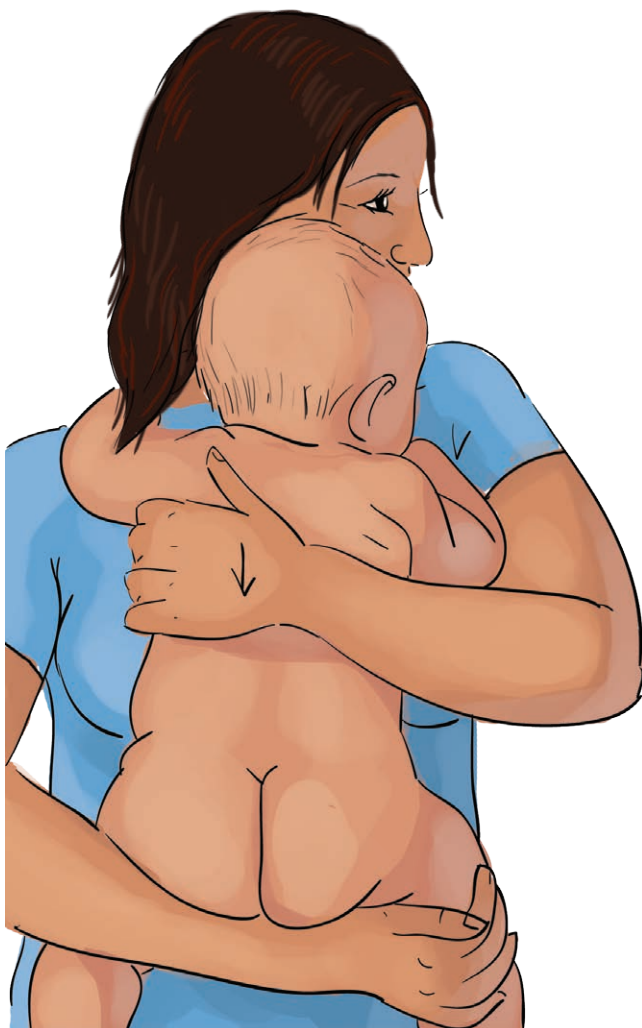
- It is not too late to start doing baby massage, but it is a little more difficult to gain your confidence with a baby who is on the move. Try over your shoulder, across your lap, sitting on your lap.
- You probably won't be able to do a full body massage in one session. Just do what you know baby enjoys - like his feet.
- Strokes you will find most useful are top and back of head, temple circling, neck and back stroking and kneading, long body and legs strokes and foot kneading.
- For information on infant massage ([see page 27](#)).

Main Benefits

- Although baby is on the move, time spent relaxing is still beneficial.
- It is good to keep the massage routine going even if it is very informal and varied.
- Being able to soothe and calm baby using massage can be helpful to you both in many situations.

Precautions

- If baby is very active, do not persist but leave massage until he is older and more content to stay in one place.
- Using oil may be more of a danger than a help now, making baby slippery to handle if he is active.
- If using oil, massage on the floor as baby may now be able to roll over.



Sit Ups Noho ake

Instructions

- Start with baby lying on his back. Hold baby on the upper arms (you have the control). Say "1,2,3 and up", as you start the movement. Wait to feel him assist you as he sits up and pull him up to the sitting position.
- If he achieves this easily, progress to you holding his hands rather than his upper arms.
- Repeat up to five times. At each nappy change is ideal.
- If baby is very strong, he will pull straight up to stand and not stop in the sitting position, which is quite acceptable.

Main Benefits

- Strengthens the front of baby's neck, body, shoulders and arms in preparation for rolling, sitting and crawling.

Precautions

- If baby's arms feel floppy or he is not able to hold sit up, go back to the sit up exercise in the 4-6 month section ([page 56](#)).
- Do not have baby hold on to your hands. He may let go at any time and fall backwards. You must be holding on to his hands.



Crawling

Te ngaoki haere

Preparation for crawling began when baby spent time on the floor on both her tummy and her back, building stability in the use of her body through core muscle development.

Instructions

- Continue to give baby lots of time on the floor. This will allow her to develop all muscle groups.
- Practice crawling as much as possible.
- Once baby is crawling on her knees try to get her to crawl:
 - over a threshold
 - under a chair
 - up a step
 - between two chairs
 - through a large box

Main Benefits

- Crawling is good practice for baby at co-ordinating the movement of her arms and legs.
- Crawling strengthens arms and hands, legs and feet.
- Crawling allows her to explore the world using taste, smell and touch.
- Crawling over, under and up things is an extra demand on baby's coordination.
- Baby is more aware of her body's size when trying to get under and around objects.
- Crawling allows her to practice visually focusing at arm's length - a necessary pre-reading skill.
- Some experts say that crawling is a very important stage in the development of baby's brain, as both sides of the body and brain work together, stimulating essential pathways.



Precautions

- Check the floor surfaces for sharp objects. Dress baby in durable trousers or leggings.
- Look for unstable furniture in the room.
- Supervise threshold and step activities.

Pull Ups Ngā mahi hiki

Instructions

- Allow baby the time to develop this skill on his own.
- Place baby in a standing position once he is able to pull himself up. This is an indication he has developed the muscle capacity necessary to stand.
- Select a suitable piece of solid low furniture for baby to practice pulling himself up to standing.
- Put some attractive toys on it to entice baby into attempting the movement.



Main Benefits

- Teaches baby an important step in his developmental progress, ie getting off the floor to standing in the correct way.
- Teaches baby an activity which makes him independent and not reliant on a carer to stand him up each time.

Precautions

- Use a couch or a piece of furniture against a wall so that it is very stable.
- Have no sharp edges (chrome or glass tops are unsuitable for babies).
- The furniture should be at baby's waist height or lower.

Ankle Rides

Te hiki mā te rekereke

7-9 MONTHS

Instructions

Sit in a chair, cross your legs and sit baby astride your upper ankle; hold her upper trunk. Lift your leg up and down to the rhythm of a bouncing rhyme, such as:

Humpty dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty dumpty had a great fall,
All the king's horses and all the king's men,
Couldn't put humpty together again (lower ankle to floor on "fall")



Main Benefits

- Develops awareness of body movement through space.
- Strengthens body and neck as baby works to keep head and body straight.
- Develops sense of rhythm and fun.

Precaution and variation

- Baby needs good neck and body strength to cope with this game.
- If your baby likes ankle rides, he may also like piggy backs and neck rides when he is able to sit independently.

Rocking Toys and Swings

Tāonga whakapīoioi, tāreere hoki

Instructions

Baby may like a simple rocking toy to sit in or on with support. She may be ready for a small swing with a well padded and supported seat.



Main Benefits

- Rocking toys and swings develop baby's confidence in heights and encourage an enjoyment of rhythm and movement in space.
- The swinging motion will continue to develop the vestibular system of balance.

Precaution and variation

- Make sure baby is ready for this exercise, and neck and body are strong enough. Ideally baby should be sitting independently.
- Make sure baby is well supported and padded in the seat.
- Move swing or rocking horse slowly to start with and if baby does not like it, stop.
- Use in short bursts, not longer than 10 minutes at a time.

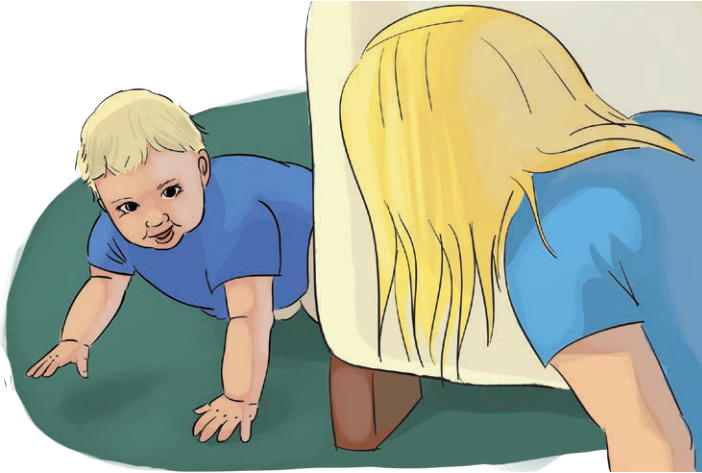
Hide and Seek

Te huna me te rapu

7-9 MONTHS

Instructions

- Partially hide yourself behind furniture or doors and let your baby come to you. Call him if necessary.
- Play hiding games frequently using your body and toys.
- "Under, over, round and through" - use cushions, tables, chairs.
- Use the language 'up', 'down', 'under' etc, so baby can learn these important terms.



Main Benefits

- Teaches baby about the sizes of his body, toys and furniture.
- Games are a good way to stimulate baby to move around a lot.
- Baby will learn terms necessary for directions.

Precautions

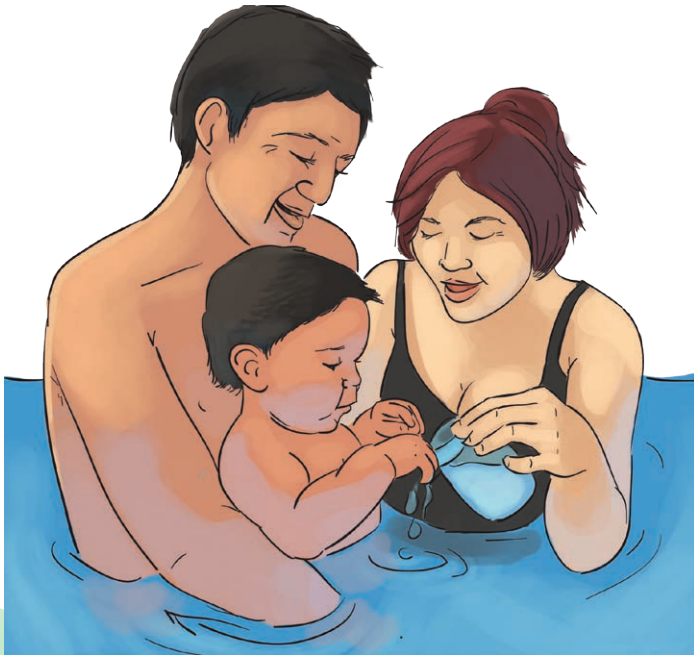
- Don't completely hide yourself or baby will get worried.
- Your house and furniture should be well baby proofed by now - double check for any hazards.

Swimming

Ngā mahi kauhoe

Instructions

- When baby has reliable sitting balance, she will want to sit and play with toys in a much shallower bath.
- Concentrate on fun and games at this stage with a variety of toys for pouring and splashing.
- Continue with the water pouring activity ([page 63](#)).
- Whilst closely supervised by an adult place her on her tummy with bath toys in front of her. This will encourage her to reach.
- Baby can start swimming classes at six months old. This is a good time as baby's natural immunity to infection has developed and she has had several immunisations.
- If you are keen to take baby to swimming classes, take her for a visit to introduce her to the strange atmosphere and smell.



Before taking baby to swimming classes, check:

- Is the water warm enough - needs to be 30-32 °C for babies?
- Is the air temperature warm?
- Is the chlorine level acceptable to your baby?
- Is your baby free of any type of infection, especially ear, respiratory or tummy?
- Is your baby ready for a big pool? Is she confident in the bath at home?
- Are you confident in water yourself?
- Swimming NZ has produced some bath time resources.

www.swimmingnz.org.nz

NZ Water Safety Council Advice:

Continue introducing your youngster to water confidence and play activities until she is approximately four years old. At that stage she can begin to learn recognised swimming strokes.

Main Benefits

- Baby will enjoy water play.
- Baby will see bubbles as the air goes into toys and water pouring out as they empty.
- Developing baby's water confidence.
- Practising pouring, filling and emptying

Precautions

- Baby's sitting balance might be very good, but never leave her alone in the bath, non-slip rubber mats can be useful at this stage.
- An adult must always be within arms reach when baby is in/near water.

Hand activities Ngā mahi-a-ringā

Instructions

- Continue to provide opportunities to grasp a toy with two hands.
- Continue learning to pass a toy from one hand to the other.
- Baby will learn to knock over and pull apart toys; put them back together for him, he will learn how to do it by watching you.
- Encourage pouring action in water play.



Main Benefits

- Baby's grasp and release improves with a variety of objects to practice on.
- Baby starts to use hands in separate skilled movements rather than his whole arm in a large movement.

Precautions

- Baby will put everything that he picks up into his mouth and he is a lot more mobile now so more precautions are necessary around the home. Check to make sure no small objects are available for him to put in his mouth.

Suitable toys

Ngā tāonga e tika ana mo te tākaro

7-9 MONTHS

Choose from the following:

- Once baby can crawl, she enjoys toys that push or roll along, like balls and toys that pull apart.
- Provide simple musical instruments such as drums, wooden spoons, metal pans, upturned ice cream containers and shakers.
- Toys that pull apart: nesting beakers, plastic rings on a column, little peg people for lifting out of holes, pull apart large plastic beads.
- Play nursery rhymes for baby and sing along to them.
- A toy library is a great way to introduce a variety of toys to baby.

Main Benefits

- Toys that move along the floor via wheels or rolling stimulate baby to move after them.
- Learning musical rhythm, and developing memory.
- Baby has to learn pulling apart before she can learn putting together.
- Learning skilled pinch grasp.

Precautions

- Wooden toys are excellent but check that they have smooth edges and are not made of tanned timber.
- Plastic deteriorates in sunlight, breaks and can have sharp edges.
- Avoid toys with holes that your child could catch a finger on. All moveable gears, springs, key, hinges capable of catching fingers in should be enclosed.
- Check toy boxes regularly and throw out any toy that is dangerous.

Communication Whakawhiti kōrero

Talk with your baby about the things you do together. Doing and language are the keys to developing understanding. Baby's understanding is developing rapidly and she now realises that people, things and events have a separate existence from herself. She wants the toy back that she has dropped under her cot, and she follows people with her eyes until they are out of sight and waits for them to reappear again. She will tug at your trouser leg to get you to notice her and shakes her head if she doesn't want something. She will communicate both verbally and non verbally. She can now recall earlier experiences.

Instructions

- Listen to her spontaneous, cheerful chatter and amazing range of sounds.
- Lie down with baby and repeat each sound she makes. Enjoy your simple conversation together. The sounds most likely to occur are ha, he, be, me, ah, da, ma, oh, ka, pa ("t" and "s" sounds are difficult).
- Play nursery rhymes for her.
- Baby now may move her whole body in response to music; encourage this.
- Encourage her to express, in her babbling, the beat of the music she is hearing.

Main Benefits

- Baby loves to communicate and she will find special joy in having you listen to what she says.
- Musical rhythm can be encouraged.

**Precautions**

- She can be very uncooperative if she doesn't want you to take something away or she doesn't feel like being dressed or fed.

Standing and cruising

Te tū me te totitoti haere

Instructions

- Allow her to have bare feet. This lets her toes spread out for maximum touch, and makes balancing easier.
- Give baby opportunities to stand at a low table or couch with interesting toys to play with.
- Use one hand for support at first, and then encourage using both hands while leaning on the couch. Eventually she should be able to use both hands while not leaning against the couch at all.
- Encourage her to walk along the couch using her hands for support.
- Encourage a few steps towards you alongside the couch.
- Allow her to develop the ability to cruise along the furniture herself.

Main Benefits

- Opportunity to develop standing balance and strength while standing at a couch or table will prepare baby to attempt walking.

Precautions

- Check the height of table, couch being used - needs to be at baby's waist height or slightly lower. No glass tables or sharp edges.
- Check piece of furniture is stable.
- If baby is unable to pull herself up to standing, refer back to pull ups exercise in 7-9 month section, ([page 76](#)), and work on that.
- Watch baby closely to prevent falls, bumps and cuts.



Walking Te hikoi haere

Once baby has begun to walk independently you can assist him to try these.

Instructions

- Practice walking holding both his hands.
- Once baby's balance has improved, practice walking holding only one hand.
- Encourage independent walking by taking a few steps between two adults whom he trusts.
- Remember that bare feet are easier for him at this stage.



Main Benefits

- Practising with plenty of support and assistance will boost baby's confidence.

Precautions

- Watch baby closely at this stage - a fall could lead to a loss of confidence from which he could take 1-2 months to recover.
- Do not worry if baby is slow to walk independently. As long as he is moving around eg crawling, he is still able to explore his environment.
- Walk slowly with baby when walking with him; remember he has to take three steps to every one of yours.
- Check the house for hazards at standing height.

Stair climbing Te piki arawhata

10-12 MONTHS

Instructions

- Encourage baby to climb on to the couch and teach her how to get down backwards.
- Teach baby how to climb stairs and how to get down backwards, feet first.
- Allow baby to gain confidence with 2-3 steps before attempting more.



Main Benefits

- Climbing is a further demand on baby's crawling coordination skills.

Precautions

- All stairways should be gated at the top and the bottom.
- All climbing activities should be supervised until at least two years of age.
- Your baby is probably in overdrive by now - crawling, cruising, climbing and possibly walking.
- She wants to climb everything; she can figure out how to shift furniture to climb even higher, gets stuck easily, has a short attention span and no sense of danger; so she needs a lot of supervision and protection from injury at this stage.

Action songs and games Ngā waiata-a-ringa me ngā kēmu

Instructions

- Do lots of baby's favourite action games, like ankle rides, swings, bouncing games.
- "Head and Shoulders" may help if baby dislikes having shirts pulled over his head ([see page 90](#)).
- Play nursery rhymes or children's music on CD. Sing these with baby, and do the actions

Twinkle twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are?
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky
Twinkle twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are?

Come and get me

Simple games played between you and your baby and other people. Look startled when baby catches you.



Main Benefits

- Musical play can enhance the developing language and vocabulary, as well as logic, spatial reasoning and rhythmic skills.
- Encourages the natural tendency of children of this age to move while encouraging body awareness and rhythm.
- Music activities including movement, speech, rhythm and melody activate both the right and left sides of the brain.

Ball skills

Ngā pukenga pāoro

10-12 MONTHS

Instructions

- Sit on the floor opposite your baby with your legs apart and almost touching baby with your feet. Roll a soft light ball along the floor. Encourage her to roll it back.
- Stand, kneel or sit facing baby, give her a small light ball the right size for her hand. A screwed up piece of paper might be best. Encourage her to throw it, and then roll it back to her.
- Balls with texture, such as dimple balls, allow baby to grip more easily.
- The ball should be soft and brightly coloured.
- Smaller balls that she can carry around are also useful.

Main Benefits

- Encourages early development of ball skills.
- Allows baby to practice eye tracking of a moving object.

Precautions

- If she does not understand what to do with the ball, demonstrate with another person.
- She may keep the ball and not roll it back as this is a possessive stage. It will pass.
- Always roll the ball back to her. Throwing a ball at her can be very frightening; it may put her off balance and cause her to fall as she may not be coordinated enough to catch the ball to stop it hitting her body.

Outdoors

Te tākaro ki waho

Instructions

- Sandpit games; provide a variety of containers for pouring and digging sand.
- Paddling pool in summer with toys that float and are fun to tip when full of water.
- Experiences with grass, leaves, play grounds, swings, slides, and at the park.

Main Benefits

- New sensory experiences with sand, water, nature, movement and the world around them.
- Getting out in the fresh air.
- Interacting with you in a different environment.
- Trying new skills like climbing and sliding.

Precautions

- Sandpits need to be covered to keep animals out.
- Paddling pools can be topped up with hot water after filling to about 20cm with cold water, so that they are comfortably warm.
- Empty paddling pools after each use so they do not become a drowning hazard.
- Never leave your baby alone with water because he can drown in a very small amount in a very short time.
- Check playground equipment to make sure it is safe for baby.



Hand activities

Ngā mahi-a-ringā

Instructions

- Encourage picking up raisins, crumbs of bread in a pinch grip between thumb and fingers.
- Encourage poking forefinger into holes and other objects which are safe. This will lead to pointing at objects.
- Encourage using two toys together, pot and spoon, interesting cups.
- When baby can release his grip, play games of give and take.
- Give him lots of opportunities to watch adults using their hands.
- Games with singing - play games with simple arm actions emphasising body parts, turning forearms over so palms face up.
- Encourage first art attempts with crayon and thick, stable paper.
- Encourage pouring sand in the sandpit.

Main Benefits

- Grasping toys in palm of hand progresses to more skilled grip between fingers and thumb.
- The ability to handle more than one object at a time develops.
- Developing hand and eye coordination.

Precautions

- See suitable toy section ([page 96](#)) for a variety of toys.
- More safety precautions as baby's hand skills develop rapidly.
- Supervise crayon attempts closely.
- It may become apparent by now that baby prefers his left or right hand. Do not attempt to change your baby's naturally dominant hand.



Suitable toys

Ngā tāonga e tika ana mo te tākaro

Instructions

Provide a variety of toys when baby is ready:

- Books with thick cardboard and material books.
- A simple shape sorter.
- Simple wooden jigsaw puzzle with small knobs that make it easy to lift out the pieces.
- Toys with cause and effect, eg push a button and music plays.
- Toys that fit into each other.
- Toys that can be stacked on top of each other.
- Once baby is walking independently provide toys that push along - something lower, heavier and stable that moves slowly to start with, then lighter push along toys.
- Once baby is able to climb on and off independently, simple ride on toys with front wheels that only travel in straight lines.

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Main Benefits

- Encourages enjoyment of movement.
- Encourages development of fine hand skills.
- Encourages interaction with you and the opportunity for communication and encouragement.



Precautions

- Little pegs on wooden jigsaw pieces can break off.
- Pull along toy cords can become wrapped around necks. Cords should be as short as possible. Check that there is no possibility of slipknots forming. Remove cords from bedtime toys.
- Pull and push toys with rigid handles should have a protective knob securely attached at the end of the handle.
- Make sure baby is developmentally ready to use a toy or it will only frustrate him. Put it away for a bit longer if it does.
- Push trolleys and ride on toys should only be provided once baby is walking independently and is able to climb on and off by himself.

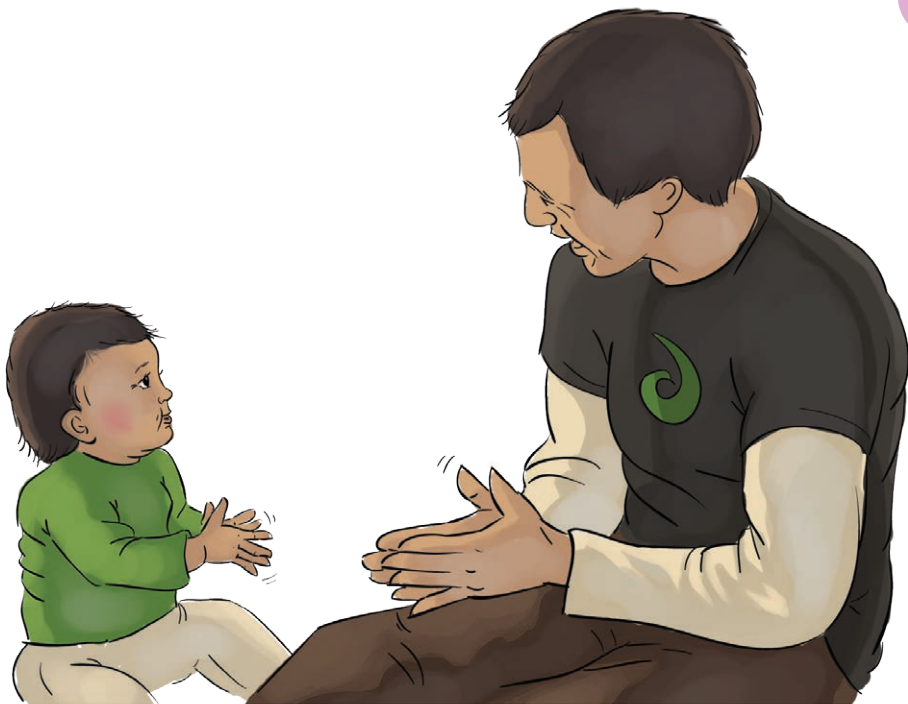
Communication Whakawhiti kōrero

Instructions: Doing and language creates understanding

- Baby is developing his understanding and memory. He can communicate with you and appreciates the games and rituals you have built up together. They give him a sense that life is orderly and secure.
- Talk about what you are doing and what will happen next.
- He will start to respond to his own name about this time.
- He may have some understanding of the word “no” although he may not respond by stopping what he is doing.
- Repeat after me game: say a word such as “water”. When your baby says “wawa”, say “great” and hug him then repeat the process. Use easy words like baby, mummy, lamb, man, apple, puppy, nappy, cow, cat, moo and bye-bye. Encourage him to point out the object.
- Music: attempt to structure his musical instrument playing by sitting down, playing instruments with him and chanting, singing and marching to the beat.
- Read to your baby every day.

Main Benefits

- Baby is imitating your language; he is starting to recognise and use your rhythms, accents and facial expressions, and may say his first word at any time now.
- The repeat after me game will strengthen baby’s vocabulary.
- Baby learns he can please you by doing some things and that there are some things that displease you.
- Musical rhythm will be further encouraged.
- Baby is developing his communication skills.



! Precautions

- Baby now starts to show wariness and caution on meeting unfamiliar adults. This is a normal stage and probably due to his developing ability to remember familiar people.

Email info@sportwaikato.org.nz and Sport Waikato will send you a new manual when your baby reaches 1 year and 3 years.

Sport Waikato's Under Five Manager is available for:

- Queries about any part of this programme
- Group instruction on Infant Massage and Infant Movement.

Address:

Sport Waikato,
Brian Perry Sports House,
Wintec Rotokauri Campus,
Akoranga Road, PO Box 46,
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Phone (07) 858 5388
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www.sportwaikato.org.nz

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Petrie, Pat, **“Baby Play”**, Doubleday.

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Other publications you may be interested in:

“An Introduction to Active Movement” SPARC 2004

“Active Movement an Activity Guide” SPARC 2005

KiwiBaby™ is provided free by Sport Waikato throughout the Waikato region.