

Hello everyone!

Hope you are all well and keeping safe during these challenging times.

My name is Anne, I'm an Early Years Practitioner and I facilitate some of our Little Explorers sessions.

I thought it would be nice to keep in touch with you all by sharing some very simple activities you can all do together at home.

Rather than focusing on the hard parts of isolation. You can make the most of this enforced interruption to spend quality time with your baby, time that you might not have otherwise had.

You are in a great position to enjoy in each moment almost uninterrupted for a bit. We will get to the other side of this, and you will have a story to tell your baby.



Routines

Developing daily routines will help your baby to learn about the people and the world around them. And remember to talk to your baby as you go through your daily routines. Tell your baby what is going on, point out interesting things that you see together, and help him develop his other senses—hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

Responding warmly and predictably to your baby and creating routines help babies feel safe. It shows them that they can count on you when they are sick, upset or distressed, and that you can meet their needs. Babies need their parents and caregivers to respond to them in loving, caring and consistent ways.

3 key areas for establishing a routine

Sleeping: This is a key one that not only helps your baby and their growth and development, but makes for a generally happier household too. If you're tired and you have other children to look after, it can be a very challenging period to do everything expected of you as a parent whilst exhausted.

Routines to try for encouraging your baby to be a consistent sleeper include bath time, gentle baby massage, dim lights and a bed time story.

Eating: Feeding on demand during the first few weeks of your baby being born is more important than sticking to a timeframe. It's also important to remember that it's a routine, not a schedule so look for the signs your baby is hungry and then respond

Bath time: Be prepared to test the right time for bath time for your baby. Some find it relaxing (so best to have it at night before bed) and other babies find baths stimulating so it's a great way for them to wake up in the morning.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR SOME PLAY ACTIVITY IDEAS

Stay & Play

activities to try @home

Little Explorers PLAY

Your baby's brain grows better when you do five simple things that feed the brain:

RESPOND. CUDDLE. RELAX. PLAY. TALK

These are your child's daily '**five to thrive**' - the building blocks for a healthy brain. A healthy brain will help your baby be happy in themselves, make friends and enjoy their family as well as being the best start for learning for when they start school. And every day will bring many opportunities to give your baby's brain what it needs to grow well.

"My brain grows better when you **PLAY** with me.....

I need you to soothe me when I'm upset, but I also need you to make life interesting for me. Toys are great, but the best toy in the world for me isyou!

When you stick your tongue out at me I copy you, and connections build in my brain linking together controlling my tongue and communicating.

That will help me learn to speak.

When you pull faces at me I copy you, and connections in my brain make links between the expression on my face and communicating. That will help me to understand feelings.

When you play counting games, or singing games or action games, my brain builds connections that help me to make sense of the world around me and to have fun.

As I get older, playing with me and helping me to play on my own or with other children builds connections in my brain that make it possible for me to think and plan, to make sense of the world around me and to develop social skills.

And whenever I smile and you smile back at me I feel happy. Happiness fills my body with chemicals that help my brain to grow".

Some suggestions

- Follow your child's lead - if you join in their game, you are telling them that their ideas and decisions are important
- Try to ensure you spend some time outside every day. This might be difficult at this time but a short walk will do you both good
- The outside world is full of interesting, exciting things for your baby, and being able to look across long distances is very important in helping their developing vision.
- Get down on the floor for creative play - with models, dolls, blocks or just pieces of paper
- Explore shapes, colours and textures with your child. You could look at a picture book together, or make simple toys and pictures with pens, paper, fabric etc.
- Encourage your growing child to play pretending games. Who will they be?
- Help your baby explore his surroundings, both inside and out where will they go? What will they do there?
- Remember play works best when you are on the same level as your child - on the floor together, sitting at a table etc.
- As your child grows older they will need more time to play by themselves and invent their own games - but they will always love to have some special time with you.

Play helps babies learn, and you are your child's first playmate.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR INFORMATION ON ROUTINES