

Five to Thrive

Brain-Building Activities for Babies



Copycat – copying your baby’s facial expressions will help to develop their mirror neurons. Give them time to respond – remember that babies take up to 16 seconds to process and respond.

Reduce Fears – your baby will be having many new experiences and sometimes these may cause them to be unsettled or upset. To help your baby to feel safe and secure, they need you to soothe and reassure them.

Serve & Return – when your baby babbles, babble back. It’s like a game of tennis where your baby feels like an important player because you are listening and responding.



Feeding – when you’re feeding your baby, it’s a natural opportunity to be close and tune in to each other. As you and your baby embrace, you will both experience the flow of endorphins through your bodies.

Baby Massage - gentle touch across baby’s back, arms and tummy helps them to feel loved and that they matter. This will also encourage the flow of endorphins to make your baby feel contented.

Cuddle – it’s impossible to spoil your baby by cuddling them. Cuddling your baby has huge benefits for brain development and will help with bonding and well-being.



Nature Walk –walking when you’re not in a hurry can be so relaxing for both you and your baby. Just looking at the leaves blowing in the breeze can be incredibly mesmerising. Notice and talk about everything you see and hear.

Bath Time – bath time is relaxing for babies and us. Gently swirl the water around and over their bodies and look into their eyes to reassure them. Talk or sing softly. Keep the atmosphere calm.

Music – listening to music can help you and your baby to relax. Rocking your baby in time to music may even boost speech development. Clapping hands or tapping their feet will help babies to make connections between what they hear and what they feel in that moment.



Peek-a-boo – babies love the repetition, predictability and surprise element of peek-a-boo games. Just hide your face, emerging with a loving smile and happy face, saying “peek-a-boo”.

Tummy Time - this will help to strengthen your baby’s core muscles. Scatter a few interesting objects around for baby to look at and touch. Eventually, they will try to reach for things and this helps their early hand/eye coordination skills.

Sensory Play – babies learn through their senses, so it’s important to offer them a broad variety of safe items with different textures, weights, sizes, natural colours, sounds and smells, that you can explore together. Why not make a sensory bottle?



Animal Sounds – exaggerating your facial movements will get your baby’s attention. Experimenting with new sounds and facial movements builds brain patterns for language development, thinking and social interaction. Simple finger puppets are great fun!

Sharing stories – even very young babies like to look at books. You might like to start with picture books and make up your own stories using lots of different tones. Repetition is important, especially when you point at pictures because that makes links between words and images.

Rhymes & songs –sing at least five songs or rhymes per day to your baby and by the time they’re five, they will have heard them 9,125 times. Repetition will strengthen the brain connections for language, especially when you link words to actions.

Join us on our free, interactive **Five to Thrive Workshops** for parents with babies up to six months old, delivered over four weeks, for one and a half hours. You can find out more about the building blocks for a healthy brain.

(Insert link to Eventbrite)

