



## Toddler Massage

The power of nurturing touch is not just something your baby will benefit from. Often when an infant starts to walk parents will stop massaging - feeling their infant no longer needs to be massaged. Toddlers, children and indeed adults - we all do better when we have lots of positive touch in our lives.

### **Life for a Toddler**

Toddlerhood is a time of significant social, emotional, and cognitive development. As they are mastering these new skills – walking, talking, relating to others and the world around them and problem-solving, life can be a time of great frustration and exploration. A toddler will begin to push their boundaries as they start to explore the world around them and come to terms with their emerging autonomy (think teenage but smaller!).

### **Massage Positions**

Toddlers can be a moving target, so you will need to be flexible when it comes to massage. Try the following positions. •Laying on the floor on a soft towel or blanket (never the change table as it is not safe) •Sitting on your knee – for a back massage •Standing – you could stand behind your toddler in front of a mirror, so you can see each other •Lying on their tummy •Sitting and playing with toys •Lying in their cot or bed – a hand, foot or head massage can be the perfect end to the day

As toddlers are so busy you often must look at those opportunistic times to massage. It might mean you just spend a few minutes massaging the legs at a nappy change or massaging their head as they are having a cuddle. Fill your day with micro massage – this is still of great benefit.

## Make It Engaging

One of the keys to successful toddler massage is to make it interactive, engaging and fun. Toddlers are busy little people with very short attention spans!!

Try some of these •don't always massage in the same room

- mix it up a bit • go outside - sit on a blanket under a tree and talk about what you are seeing and hearing
- incorporate storytelling and songs into the massage eg "Insy Winsy Spider" or "Round and Round the Garden"
- use household items to add a little variety, eg a soft hair brush to massage the back, a bath mitt to massage their head or perhaps a small ball to roll over their feet - the options are endless

## Rhymes and Songs for Massage Time

Using rhymes, songs and storytelling can be a wonderful way to engage your infant during massage time. Not only will it provide all the benefits of massage it will help to stimulate their language development, visualisation and early literacy skills.

### TEDDY BEAR

Round and round the garden.

*Massage into palm of hand with your thumb*

Like a teddy bear.

One step two step

*Walk fingers up or gently squeeze the arm up to the arm pit*

Tickle (child's name) under there.

*Playful tickle*

### INCY WINCY SPIDER

Incy Wincy Spider climbed up the water spout

*Walk up back or tummy with pads of fingers*

Down came the rain

*Use pads of fingers to imitate the pitter patter of rain drops*

And washed the spider out

*Use long stroke from head to toe*

Out came the sunshine and dried up the rain

*Draw a big circle for the sun*

So Incy Wincy Spider climbed up the spout again

*Walk up back or tummy with pads of fingers*

### OTHER RHYMES TO TRY

Humpty Dumpty

This Little Piggy

Five Little Ducks

Head Shoulder Knees and Toes

### FOR THE OLDER TODDLER

Draw number, letters or picture on their back eg :

shapes

butterfly

smiley face

cat

spider

love heart

Maybe try "I love U"