

Five to Thrive

Easy workouts for
babies and toddlers

RESPOND

TALK

PLAY

CUDDLE

RELAX

Believe in
children
 Barnardo's



Morning

TALK

Sing along

Sing along to your favourite song or your child's favourite nursery rhyme. If your baby isn't speaking yet, copy their sounds, facial expressions and any movements they make.

PLAY

Fun with water

Get a bucket or bowl and put warm water in it. Sit or hold your baby safely near it and support them to play with the water. Splash each other gently or run water over their arms or toes. Respond to your baby's facial expressions and copy them.

RELAX

Take a stroll

Take your child out for a walk and talk about everything you see and hear. Stop to touch hedges and trees, collect a few sticks and leaves. If you can't go outdoors, look out of the window and talk about the things both of you can see.

CUDDLE

Tickle, tickle

Tickle their toes, palms or any other areas they like and get them to tickle you too. You can also try out 'high fives', 'pat-a-cake', 'this little piggy' or any other childhood game that includes contact.

RESPOND

Copy them

Respond to your child by copying their facial expressions and give them time to respond. Playing these games is great for your child and can be amusing and amazing for you too.

Lunchtime

TALK

Story time

Read a book to your baby or toddler and give your child a chance to join in. If your child is older, ask them to turn the pages, predict what is happening next or get them to act out the story with their toys.

PLAY

Peekaboo

Hide your face behind your hands and then pop your face out with a loving smile, saying ‘peekaboo’. Encourage your child to copy you and take it in turns to play this game.

RELAX

Yoga time

You don't need to be a yoga expert to do some calming stretches. Stretch your arms up and down and use a calm voice to tell your child to copy your movements. Babies can take part too, gently help them to get their arms up for a good stretch.

CUDDLE

Role play

Pretend your child's favourite toy needs cuddles for comfort because it is upset or ill. Show your child how to comfort and talk calmly to the toy to make it feel better. This game teaches them about different types of positive touch and how to give and receive cuddles and love.

RESPOND

Get creative

Put a sprinkling of flour on your table or on a tray on the floor and let your child draw with a finger in the flour. Older toddlers may want to use a pencil and some paper with your help. Ask them to tell you about their drawing and respond to their answers.

Evening – calming down before bed

TALK

Get organised

Tidy up all the toys and mess from the day while you sing along about what you're doing.

PLAY

Put on a show

Use finger puppets to put on a little show for your child which is related to their bedtime. You can talk about going to bed and sleeping with the stars in the sky. If you don't have puppets, use some odd socks or old gloves.

RELAX

Get wet

Bath time is a great for relaxing your baby or toddler. Move your baby gently in the water in a swaying motion or encourage your older toddler to pretend to swim. Blow some bubbles into the bath for them to catch or look at.

CUDDLE

Show them how much you love them

Cuddle your baby as part of their feeding routine. This can be done while breast feeding or bottle feeding. For best results, place your baby on the left side of your chest. This will enable them to feel, hear and tune into your heartbeat.

If your older toddler doesn't like cuddling as much, find another type of touch they like. Some children love their hair being stroked, or hands tickled.

RESPOND

Talk them to sleep

As your child settles for the night, respond to their fears or dislikes of settling down. Reassure them they are okay, respond if they cry and calm them with a softly spoken voice.



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