

Massage for Growing Children

Massage can continue to be an enjoyable and beneficial experience between parent and child. It is possible to make some simple adaptations to the baby massage routine to meet the needs of your growing child.

Remember to Always:

- Ask permission to massage your child
- Respond to signs that your child is saying 'no' to massage
- Respect your child's wishes
- Patch test new oils



Crawling Babies

Your baby is becoming very aware and interested in everything around them and it's quite natural for them to want to explore and crawl away! Don't feel disheartened if your baby is not interested in massage at this stage, they may be more interested again from around 18 months onwards.

- Introduce more rhymes and songs into the massage
- Break the routine down and do in short segments (for example do the legs when changing a nappy)
- Try Baby Yoga or Rhythm Kids® which may keep your baby's interest

Toddlers

Toddlers have a much shorter attention span than an older child so keep massage short and interesting. Children want to exert their independence at this age and it is important to understand and respect non-verbal and verbal communication.

- Naming parts of the body can help teach body awareness
- Introducing colourful props (puppets, scarves etc) can make massage more interesting
- Use your child's favourite songs, stories and rhymes
- Encourage your child to copy by massaging a doll, teddy or you!

Pre-School and Primary School Children

By this age your child's attention span is much longer and they can interact and play games with you. Massage and positive touch can be used in interactive play without the need to remove clothes or use oil. Massage can help to relieve growing pains and maintain physical closeness.

- Use massage time to tell stories, make up new stories and role play
- Relate to your child's favourite interests, hobbies, characters or role models
- Use props and toys to help maintain interest and promote learning
- Allow your child to choose when and where they would like to be massaged
- Allow your child to reciprocate by also 'receiving' a massage yourself

Older Children

As children approach their teenage years they are likely to become self-conscious as their body grows and their hormones surge. Massage has many physical benefits at this age and the massage routine more resembles that which a fully grown adult would receive.

- Allow your child to select the music
- Allow your child to select the oil (consult a qualified aromatherapist for essential oil blends)
- Respect privacy

For more information or if you'd like to learn more about massaging your growing child find a qualified teacher at www.gofsd.org.uk

