

Hello everyone,

My name is Anne, I am an Early Years Practitioner, trained Henry Facilitator and I run the Little Explorers sessions.



For the last couple of weeks, we have been using Five to Thrive to look at how your baby's brain grows better when you do five simple things that feed the brain:

RESPOND. CUDDLE. RELAX. PLAY. TALK

So this week we will be looking at putting this all together. You are probably doing all of the above every day without even realising what a wonderful job you are doing and what a great start you are giving your baby.

How many times a day do you knowingly:

RESPOND to what your baby needs?

CUDDLE to comfort your baby?

RELAX with your baby while you feed them or settle them to go to sleep?

PLAY with your baby, helping them to get used to tummy time?

TALK and sing nursery rhymes, and read to your baby?



I have mentioned during previous weeks that 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 once they go to school.

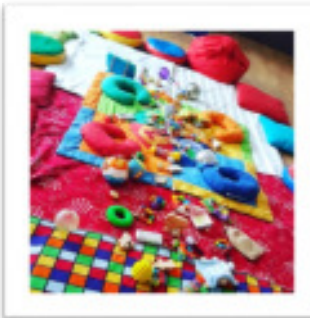
In addition, every day will bring many opportunities to give your baby's brain what it needs to grow.

We have also looked, over the last few weeks at how your mental health can influence your unborn baby and your baby when it is born and that the first 1001 critical days and how important this time is for your baby's development. If you have any concerns you should contact your midwife, health visitor, doctor or call 111 or speak to a member of your family or a friend, **remember 'It's ok not to be ok'**

I hope you find the information useful. I know it is not the same as attending a group where you could chat to other mums and share experiences. I feel the same not having face-to-face contact with you.

Fun Activities for you and your baby.

Plan an outing with your baby. It does not need to be a far away place, a nearby park or any natural surroundings. Let your baby enjoy the lush greenery and feel the fresh air. Even though your baby may be too small to play, they may really enjoy seeing the colourful environment and other children playing. It will also be a good change for you and your baby from everyday routine.



Music

All babies seem to like music. Some tunes have a soothing effect on babies and can boost their memory as well as mental skills.

Play different kinds of music when your baby is awake and see which music relaxes your baby and which annoys your baby, some music might excite your baby, while some will make them sleep. It is important to be with your baby while the music is playing. Your touch

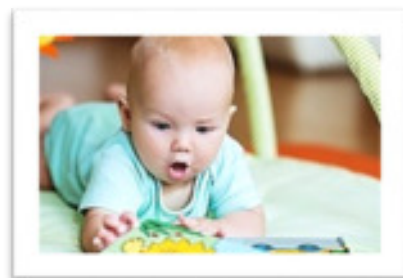
and voice may bring out the benefits. Sing along and encourage your baby to do so too! Besides making your baby happy, music will also help calm you.

Rattles Rattles

Rattles are good because babies just love them! The sound also improves your baby's auditory senses. You can start with a little rattle.

Try to place the rattle in between your baby's fingers. Although they are too small to grasp, they will begin to feel and sense the object. You can also shake the rattle, slowly moving from one

end to another, letting your baby shift their eyes on the toy as the sound moves. Try not to rattle too loudly as this will scare your baby. You can make a rattle out of a plastic bottle with rice in it or a box or anything you can find with a lid will do.



Happy Talk

You need to strike up active communication with your newborn. Your baby will be trying to understand the various sounds around them, including the speech pattern of people's voices. They will also try to communicate with gurgles and coos.

Try to do a little happy chat with your little one. Make faces, funny sounds; these things will give your baby curiosity while building a bond with you.