



Parents as Teachers®

ACTIVITY *page*

3½-5½ months

What do we have?

- > Blanket
- > Small amount of natural vegetable oil (olive, safflower, sunflower, or canola) in a cup or saucer
- > Board book
- > Parent handout [Your Nurturing Touch: Practicing Infant Massage](#) (optional)

Book sharing



Your baby is becoming a strong sitter. Support your baby's back and sit together when you read.

Encourage him to hold the book and turn the pages. You don't have to read from beginning to end. The book ends when your baby tells you he is done.

I Am Special: Stretching and Relaxing

How do we do it?

1. After a busy play time or after changing his diaper you can ask him, "Do you need to relax?" Use the same verbal cues each time you do this. He will remember and anticipate this special time.
2. Use **parentese** as you talk about what you are doing. Use a higher pitch than your normal tone and stretch out your word.
3. To help him relax through movement, say, "I'm going to hold your foot. I'm going to let your little leg do some bounces." This will capture your baby's attention. Gently bounce each leg.
4. For a massage, rub your hands together with a small amount of oil to warm it. Massage your baby's leg.
5. Watch your baby for changes in his activity level and emotional state. Continue as long as he is enjoying the massage or movement.

Your child's brain



When you use parentese, it helps your baby "map" the sounds he is hearing. Understanding the way you talk prepares him to use words later on.

What's in it for us?

- > **Motor:** As you help your baby move his limbs, he is stretching and developing his large muscles.
- > **Social-emotional:** Your baby is learning that he is a separate individual. He can communicate and the people he loves will listen.
- > These moments in your day foster attachment between your baby and you. This reduces stress and supports your baby's brain development.

(child skill or parent skill defined by the parent/parent educator)

Safety tip



Vegetable oils are recommended for your baby's massage. Lotions will absorb into his skin more quickly than oils, and this could cause friction.



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Parenting behavior

Responding: You are in the rhythm of a relationship. As you watch and understand your baby's nonverbal communication, you are enhancing your baby's emotional development.

What I noticed about my baby ...

What I noticed about myself ...

Continued learning

Use the handout [Your Nurturing Touch](#) to learn more techniques, or make up your own by repeating simple phrases like the ones below.

Bicycle, bicycle, fun to ride a bicycle, any time of day.

Bicycle, bicycle, fun to ride a bicycle, this is how we play.

(Gently move your baby's feet and legs as if riding a bicycle.)