



# Making the most of bath time

Encouraging happy healthy infant development through multisensory stimulation

This pad was developed specifically for midwives

The information overleaf will help you to advise parents on the benefits of multisensory stimulation and a bath time routine. There is also a tear-off section to give to parents.

**Johnson's**  
Science  
of the Senses™

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# Why encourage parents to provide multisensory stimulation for their baby?

More than **9 in 10 parents** surveyed in the UK believe that there is more to bath time than simply cleaning their child, although they may not be aware of the benefits of bath time for their baby's cognitive development.<sup>1</sup>

A bath time routine before bed comprising bath, massage and quiet time (e.g. reading, lullabies) provides plenty of multisensory stimulation – the concurrent stimulation of touch, smell, auditory, and/or visual senses. Stimulation of the senses enhances baby's emotional, cognitive, social and physical development.<sup>2-16</sup>

The benefits of a multisensory bath time routine

Evidence shows that routines help reduce babies' stress and help their learning and development.<sup>17</sup> Bath time routines can create an enriching environment that stimulates the senses, which in turn can promote social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of babies.

## Did you know?

**88% of UK parents surveyed say they have a bath time routine<sup>1</sup>**

Maximise the benefits by encouraging them to incorporate all elements of multisensory stimulation into their routine.

Massage has been shown to help reduce infant stress, increase alertness, improve sleep, as well as aiding feeding and weight gain in preterm infants<sup>8,10-15</sup>

A simple three-step multisensory routine is easy for parents to implement. The bath time routine consists of:



### 1. Warm bath

A **warm bath** which primarily stimulates the tactile and olfactory senses



### 2. Massage

A **massage** which primarily stimulates the tactile, visual and olfactory senses



### 3. Quiet time

**Quiet time** (lullaby or reading a book) to stimulate touch, visual and auditory senses

**REFERENCES:** 1. Johnson & Johnson. 'So much more' Global Market Research Study n=500 UK parents. 2015. 2. Shams L, Seitz AR. Trends Cogn Sci. 2008;12:411-417. 3. Sullivan RM, et al. Pediatrics. 1991;87(4):511-518. 4. Peláez-Nogueras M, et al. J App Devel Psychol. 1996;17:199-213. 5. Farroni T, et al. PNAS. 2002;99(14):9602-9605. 6. Dehaene-Lambertz G, et al. Brain Lang. 2010; 114:53-65. 7. Hart S, et al. Early Child Develop Care. 1998;145:59-64. 8. Lee HK. J Kor Acad Nurs. 2005;35(8):1451-1460. 9. Field T, et al. Early Hum Dev. 2008; 84: 399-401. 10. Field T, et al. J Dev Behav Pediatr. 2008; 29(6):463-6. 11. Field T, et al. Pre and Perinatal Psychol J. 1996; 11(2): 75-80. 12. Diego MA, et al. Acta Pediatr. 2007;96:1588-1591. 13. Ang JY, et al. Pediatr. 2012;130:e1549-e1558. 14. White-Traut RC, et al. JOGNN. 2009;38:22-34. 15. Hernandez-Reif M, et al. Infant Behav Dev. 2007;30(4):557-561. 16. Sullivan RM, Toubas P. Biol Neonate. 1998;74(6):402-408. 17. Fiese BH, et al. J Fam Psychol. 2002;16(4):381-390.

# The benefits of multisensory stimulation in your baby's bath time routine

## What is multisensory stimulation?

Multisensory stimulation is activating many of your baby's senses, such as touch, smell, sight and hearing, all at the same time.



Touch



Smell



Sight



Sound

## Why is it important?

Experts recommend multisensory stimulation, as it helps baby's learning and promotes healthy emotional, physical and brain development.

Baby's learning and development is enhanced when multiple senses are stimulated at the same time

## Developing a bath time routine for you and your baby

A simple bath time routine is an easy way to incorporate multisensory stimulation. A three-step routine such as a **warm bath** followed by **massage** and at night-time ending with **quiet time** such as reading a book, lullabies and cuddling, encompasses all the key elements.



Each multisensory element of a pre-bed bath time routine has benefits to baby



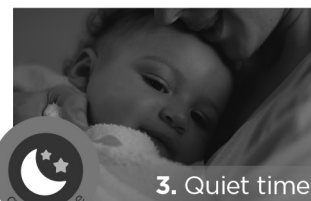
### 1. Warm bath

A calming, soothing experience, that provides tactile stimulation and promotes bonding with baby



### 2. Massage

Reduces baby's stress levels, also making eye contact helps stimulate baby's brain development leading to early communication



### 3. Quiet time

Lullabies can promote bonding; music and speech helps development of parts of baby's brain associated with emotion and communication and also enhances language development

# Developing a bath time routine for you and your baby

## What are the benefits?

Providing regular multisensory stimulation has been shown to have a number of benefits for babies:

- Reduces stress
- Increases alertness
- Improves the quality and duration of sleep
- Helps feeding and weight gain in preterm infants

Combining all three steps and performing these consistently can have multiple benefits for baby, and can also help you to feel happy and relaxed



## Tips for incorporating multisensory stimulation in to your baby's bath time routine

### 1. Warm bath

- Wash baby in a warm bath rather than with a sponge as it provides more stimulation and is a calming, soothing experience for your baby
- Use a mild liquid cleanser that causes minimal disruption to your baby's skin and does not irritate the skin or eyes. Avoid antibacterial soaps
- Use baby-skin appropriate scented bath and massage products to help keep baby calm and less stressed

### 2. Massage

- Massaging with oil or lotion has greater soothing effects than massage alone

### 3. Quiet time

- Make reading, lullabies and cuddling the final step in the routine

For more information visit <http://www.johnsonsbaby.co.uk/sensorial-experiences>