

More about Five to Thrive...

Just as our child's body grows better when you give them good food, your child's brain grows better when you do five simple things that feed the growing brain:

Respond • **Cuddle** • **Relax** • **Play** • **Talk**

These are your child's daily 'Five to Thrive' building blocks for a healthy brain.

Some great ideas to do at home are:

Respond: Follow your child's interests; where possible say yes for example, "Can we play outside?" "Can we read that book again?"

Cuddle: Sing songs such as 'round and round the garden' and 'this little piggy' making contact with their hands and tickling.

Relax: Try to help your child recognise when they need to relax, talk about how they are feeling and look at books about feelings.

Play: Follow your child's lead- if you join their game, you are telling them that their ideas and decisions are important.

Talk: Use as many rhymes, poems or songs as you can – to your child you are the world's greatest singer.



More about respond...

From the moment your child was born they needed you. Without your care and love your baby wouldn't have survived. You did this by responding to their needs.

As your baby grows it is important to continue responding and being consistent in how you interact with your child. When you respond the same way over and over again, the connections in baby's brain grow strong. These strong connections then carry messages between the different parts of your child's brain more quickly.

Some great ideas to do at home are:

- Introduce some early books about feelings for example, 'All kinds of Feelings' book. Start to help your child label how they feel for example, "You look cross," "What a lovely smile you must be happy."
- Follow your child's interests; where possible say yes
- When your child is talking give them eye contact and really show you are listening.



More about Cuddle...

All sorts of touch with your child can be included in the use of the word 'cuddle'. Holding hands, feeding, brushing your child's hair, massage and being picked up.

That feeling of being near you and feeling safe fills their body with special chemicals that help their brain grow. The patterns that grow in their brain when you cuddle them mean that all their life they will be able to feel safe with safe people.

Some great ideas to do at home are:

- Have cuddles with your child as often as you like, but respect that sometimes a child might not feel like a hug and needs some space.
- Sing songs such as 'Round and round the garden' and 'this little piggy' making contact with their hands and tickling.
- When walking with your child hold hands.
- Have a cosy cuddle and read a book



More about Relax...

Every child and adult needs time to relax. When you relax, your heart beat slows down, your blood pressure drops and muscles relax, you feel calm and comfortable and that feeling in children fills their body with chemicals that help their brain grow.

Some great ideas to do at home are:

- Try to end exciting play or activities with a wind down time.
- Sing soothing calm songs for example Twinkle Twinkle.
- Story time
- Cuddle time
- Try to help your child recognise when they need to relax, talk about how they are feeling and look at books about feelings.



More about Play...

Children need you to soothe them when their upset, but they also need you to make life interesting for them. When you play with your child their brain builds a connection that helps them make sense of the world around them and to have fun!

As your child grows older they will need more time to play by themselves and invent their own games-but will always love to have some special time with you.

Some great ideas to do at home are:

- Follow your child's lead- if you join in their game, you are telling them that their ideas and decisions are important
- Outside play in the garden or at the park
- Get down on the floor and play – with Models, dolls, blocks or cars
- Look at a picture book together
- Encourage your child to play pretend games.



More about Talk...

Children love the sound of your voice. They love it when you talk, when you make nonsense noises, and when you sing. Talking to your child and listening to them in return is one of the best ways to stimulate and bond with your child.

They learn so much more from conversations than just language for example, the way people communicate and how they interact. This will support them throughout their life.

Some great ideas to do at home are:

- Songs at bedtime
- Use as many rhymes, poems or songs as you can – to your child you are the world's greatest singer!
- Stories – from books and your imagination
- Talk to your child about the world around them, what they can see and hear. Commentary to everyday life.

Enjoy spending time with your child!

If you are interested in learning more about how to support your child in their learning and development, please ask a member of staff or visit:

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk>

