

SESSION

6

# Babies Matter: Thinking back, looking forwards

NAME: .....

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## Babies Matter: Thinking back, looking forwards



**BABIES  
MATTER**

A KIDS MATTER PROGRAMME

### Pre-Session planning list

To do	To buy	To prepare	Babies Matter resources
<i>Reminder text to parents</i>	<i>Refreshments</i>	<i>Post it notes and pen</i>	<i>Facilitator's Booklet</i>
<i>Double check room is booked</i>	<i>Flowers</i>	<i>Kettle, mugs, water, spoons, plastic cups, plates</i>	<i>Guest Booklets (include extra copies of S1-5 for anyone who missed a session)</i>
<i>Collate toys / blankets for babies</i>		<i>Tablecloth, napkins &amp; tissues</i>	<i>Group register</i>
<i>Sticky labels for names</i>		<i>Pen, paper and post-its</i>	<i>Postcards</i>
<i>Complete certificates</i>		<i>Find out about groups for babies and toddlers in your local area</i>	<i>Pens</i>
<i>Pray! Prompt others to pray for you</i>		<i>Date and plans for your Booster Session</i>	<i>Evaluation form links (send out at the end)</i>

### On the day:

- Set up chairs in a 'horseshoe' with blankets / cushions on the floor with baby toys in reach
- Check that baby changing facilities are stocked up and clean
- Prepare tea/coffee/food on a separate table
- Introduce yourself, and each other, give out name labels
- Offer a tea/coffee/water; make sure hot drinks are covered if using disposable cups

**Remember:** Smile, be positive, be ready to share your good and bad experiences of parenting babies of this age!

### My goals in facilitating this session:

To highlight challenges and positive responses from Session 5  
Parent/carer has space to reflect on and recap what they've learnt at Babies Matter  
Parent/carer can identify some of the things they still want to try to strengthen their relationship, look after their wellbeing, and strengthen their attachment with their baby  
The group starts to plan activities to do together  
Parent/carer recognises & celebrates the achievement of completing the programme  
Complete evaluation forms



## Review of Session 5

Last week, we talked about how everything we do when we are with our baby sparks connections in their brain – and the more we do certain things, the stronger the pathways and connections in their brain become. We also thought about practicing gratitude and how to ask for help

Q: Did anything stand out to you that helped you this week in looking after your baby?

Q: Who has a moment from this week where they enjoyed being a parent?



## Over the next 6 weeks we will be covering:

- Session 1 – Changes for me and us
- Session 2 – Bonding and attachment
- Session 3 – Helping baby to develop
- Session 4 – Building strong relationships
- Session 5 – Baby's amazing brain
- Session 6 – Thinking back, looking forwards

Today we are going to think back and recap the key topics we've covered throughout the programme, as well as look ahead to how we use all the tools we've learnt through Babies Matter. One thing that can be hard to make time for as a parent is reflecting, so this session is a chance to do that and to recap and remind ourselves of all the ways we've grown as parents and carers over the past 6 weeks.





## Overcoming common challenges in parenting

If you are expecting your baby, there may be some things that make you nervous about becoming a parent, or if you've had your baby, you may have already experienced some challenges.



**What are the 3 biggest challenges you have faced since becoming a parent / parenting teammate so far? Or what 3 things makes you nervous about becoming a parent / parenting teammate?**



**1.** .....



**2.** .....



**3.** .....

Let's think about what we have learnt on Babies Matter that we can use to face these challenges. As parents and parenting teammates, we have learned the important role we have to in helping our baby to develop, but also the importance of looking after ourselves and our relationships. During Babies Matter, we have looked at:

- My Parenting Team
- Changes to our sleep
- Building a strong attachment with our baby responding to, reassuring, and playing with them
- Meeting our baby's needs and understanding their temperament
- Helping our baby's brain to develop – playing 'serve and return' and using repetition
- Soothing our baby when they are unsettled

Q: Looking back at all we've learned, what might help you face the challenges you just named?

Q: How can you use something you've learned at Babies Matter next time you're feeling overwhelmed?

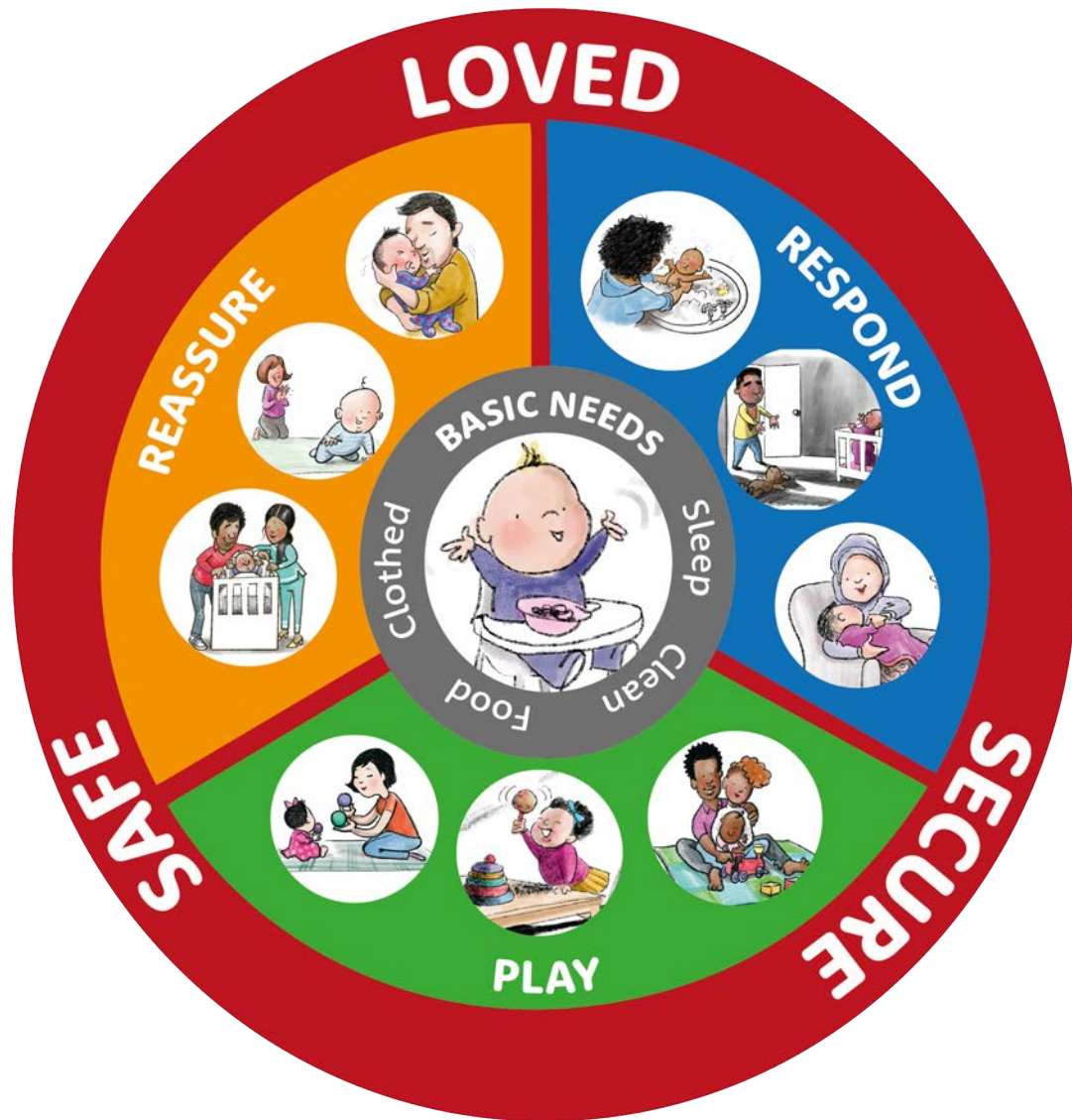
Q: What other support might you need?

Q: After today, how could we continue to support each other? *Write each idea down on a post-it and take a photo of them all together. Explain how, at the end of the session, you will share it on your WhatsApp group as a reminder.*



In Session 1, we looked at this diagram to help us see how important our role is as a parent or carer. Our baby has basic needs that need meeting, and when these are met and we respond to, reassure, and play with our baby, it helps them to feel loved, safe, and secure.

Q: Who has noticed a change in the way they respond to, reassure, or play with their baby since starting Babies Matter?



As we have covered, when understanding your baby and how to help care for them and bring them up, a vital part of the picture is you as the parent. We're now going to revisit how to look after yourself well in order to look after our baby.



## Remembering to look after ourselves

Looking after ourselves isn't a luxury or self-indulgence but a priority in order to be the best parent for our child. It might not be something we are used to doing but by coming to Babies Matter, you have already shown that you can invest time in yourself.

Let's recap some of the ways that we've been thinking about how to look after ourselves.

Some of the ways we can look after ourselves include:

- Being aware of what 'fills and empties our stress bucket'
- Making time to look after our physical health
- Balancing our time with Everyday activities, Must-do activities, and Fun activities
- These help us develop a sense of 'ACE' (achievement, connection, enjoyment)
- Seeking help if we are experiencing postnatal depression
- Practicing gratitude

When we talked about the importance of balancing our time, we recognised how coming to Babies Matter was an example of an 'ACE' activity that you have made happen. As we come to the end of the programme, it's important that we take as much away as we can and give it a go.

Q: What else would we like to do more of or less of to help balance our time better?

Encourage guests to fill out the green box below to summarise and share their ideas.

One way I am going to prioritise my wellbeing is by.....

Next time you have a tough day, here are some 'quick wins' that you could try to find enjoyment in parenting.

### How can we find ways to enjoy the early days of parenting?

- Look back at pregnancy photos and think how you now know the baby you were carrying
- Try not to compare ourselves or our baby to others, especially siblings, as we're all different and our babies will have different temperaments and develop at different times (social media can make this challenging!)
- Share a positive story about your baby with somebody (something new they have learnt or a funny experience that happened)
- Look back at photos and videos from when they were younger and notice how much they have changed
- Ask your relatives who knew you as a baby to share how you are similar or different to your baby

Q: Which of these ideas would you like to try?



## Staying connected in our relationships

Another important part of Babies Matter has been looking at how to look after our relationships.

As we face the challenging parts of having a new baby, it's important to try and find time to invest in our parenting teammate relationship. This might seem impossible with a new baby to look after and feel uncomfortable at first, but relationships thrive when we invest time in them.

The three key 'ingredients' for strengthening our relationships with the people in our baby's lives are:

- Communication and listening teamwork
- Disagreeing well
- Saying 'sorry' and forgiveness



We've also looked at:

- Understanding how our past relationships impact us now
- Getting conversations started by asking open questions
- Asking for help and remembering that we can express how we feel to our teammate.

Q: Which of these things have you tried so far? What difference has it made?

Q: What would you still like to try?

*Encourage guests to note down an answer below.*

**What is one thing I can try this week to strengthen my relationship with my parenting teammate?**

.....

## Connecting into our wider community

You are now a new family! The time you have invested in this group will have made an impact on the others in the group, yourselves and even your babies. Well done for being part of this community!

Q: What have you found helpful about being part of a group at this stage of parenting?

Being part of Babies Matter proves that you have something to contribute to the wider community, and lots to gain.

As well as looking to our parenting teammate for support, it is important for us to have others around us who can help us in our parenting.

Q: How well connected do you feel with your wider community?

Q: What sorts of things do you enjoy doing with people outside your family and friends?

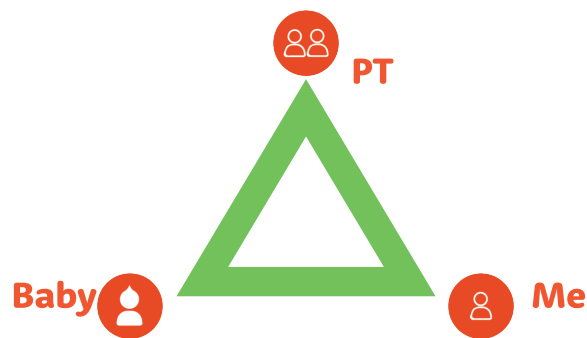
Before we end this session, let's think about our wider community and where we can get more support. There is a proverb which says, 'It takes a village to raise a child'. Finding local support and friendships can make a big difference for us as mums, dads, and carers as it means we don't feel alone, can support each other, and share our experiences.

*Encourage parents to share local resources and make a note of groups that are relevant to them, including toddler groups, baby massage groups, stay and play, sling libraries, breast-feeding groups, as well as online groups.*

**Local community support ideas:**



## Summing up....



Over the past 6 sessions we have thought about the triangle of 'me', 'baby' and 'PT', and we have discussed how we can look after ourselves and our relationships so that we are in a good place to look after our babies well.

Today we have looked at what we are going to take away from Babies Matter to put into practice and strengthen these 3 areas. Congratulations on completing Babies Matter!

Thank you all for your openness and sharing, I have really enjoyed...

Q: What has been particularly helpful or memorable for you from our time together?

I would love to hear from each of you what you are taking away from Babies Matter, as well as anything that could have been better. Would it be okay for me to **video** us all answering that question for Kids Matter's social media? (*Note: make sure you have consent from everyone before you film.*)

*When everyone has finished, ask if anyone has anything else they would like to say or ask and then hand out **certificates of completion and congratulate** them on working so hard for the duration of the programme! Capture any encouraging and positive comments from the guests on post-it notes.*

**Note: As you give out certificates of completion, try and say something genuine and positive that you noticed about them over the duration of the programme.**

*After handing out certificates, explain that as we have come to the end of the programme, it is time to fill in the post-programme online survey that is the same as the one from Session 1, and will help to see what has improved or changed over the 6 weeks.*

I will not be looking at your answers and nor will anyone else other than the Kids Matter research team who will put everyone's data together. Your names (use initials if you prefer) are used only to match your answers up with your answers given in Session 1. The reason for doing these forms is so Kids Matter can learn if taking part in this programme helps you feel more confident as a parent and if that helps your children do better as well. If filling in the forms raises any concerns for you then we are here to talk anything through.

I'm going to send the same link which will take you straight to the survey. Answer all the questions and keep clicking 'okay' and 'next' until you get to done, once clicked it will say 'thank you for completing the survey.'

*Send out the evaluation forms link by email, text or WhatsApp and encourage everyone to let you know when they have completed them. If anyone wants to complete the forms outside of the group, agree that they will complete within 2 days and send a group reminder after this point if anyone hasn't completed the form.*



*At the end, thank everyone and arrange to get back in touch as a group in 6 weeks for a **reunion** to do something fun, and invite them to a community event before then if possible. Remind them there will be a **Booster** session to check in with any parenting questions they may have in 3 months' time. Encourage continuity of contact between group members and remind them of confidentiality 'what is said in the group, stays in the group'.*

**At the end of the session:**

- *Look at the Top Tips*
- *Make sure guests take their certificates of completion*
- *Make sure you have everyone's phone numbers, so that you can be in touch about getting together again in a few weeks for something social and then in 3 months for the Booster session*
- *Thank them for their contribution over the programme*
- *Offer food to them all to take away*
- *Don't rush off! Be available for anyone who wants to chat*

**After the session:**

- *Send photo of 'ways we can continue to support each other' post its to the WhatsApp group*
- *Send messages to anyone who didn't make the session*
- *Fill in the portal on Beacon and send to your Support Coach*
- *Capture any stories/quotes/videos / photos of the group and share with your Support Coach if you have permission*

## Useful Contacts and websites

To find out more about local supporting agencies, visit your library, your town or county hall, or contact your local council for voluntary services. Here are some other organisations that have useful resources and helplines if needed.

### Association for Postnatal Illness

Helpline: 020 7386 0868

[www.apni.org](http://www.apni.org)

### Cry-sis

Local support for families with excessively crying babies.

Helpline: 08451 228 669 (9am-10pm, 7 days a week)

[www.cry-sis.org.uk](http://www.cry-sis.org.uk)

### National Childbirth Trust (NCT)

Enquires: 0870 444 8707 (charged at local rate)

Support line: 0333 252 5051 (8am-midnight, 7 days a week)

[www.nctpregnancy.org.uk](http://www.nctpregnancy.org.uk)

### Parentline

Help and advice for anyone looking after a child.

Freephone: 0808 800 2222

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

### Purple Crying

Looks in detail at the stage in your baby's life when they cry more than at any other time.

[www.purplecrying.info](http://www.purplecrying.info)

NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/caring-for-a-newborn/soothing-a-crying-baby/>

### Contact a Family


Help for parents and families who care for children with any disability or special need.

Freephone: 0808 808 3555

[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)







There is no 'one size fits all' method but it can help to remember three simple steps to soothe your baby are: **Reflect, Respond, Reassure**

Being part of Babies Matter proves that you have something to contribute to the wider community, and lots to gain.



It is important that we look after ourselves and our relationships so that we are in a good place to look after our babies well.



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