

Better Start

# Think Baby Toolkit

Supporting babies' voices  
in everyday practice

## Background

Acknowledging the numerous and diverse range of guidance available, we aimed to consolidate best practice through inviting leaders and practitioners from around the UK to take part in a webinar and survey: *'Think Baby: Capturing the Voice of Babies in Practice'*. This learning has developed Better Start's Think Baby Toolkit, launched in early 2026. We asked practitioners to feed back on how the toolkit is being used in practice to strengthen understanding of babies' experiences and needs.

This updated Think Baby Toolkit builds on the original version, retaining its core principles while strengthening clarity and usability based on practitioner feedback.

A key element of our Better Start approach is working together and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed and shared their best practice tips.

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Note: Throughout this toolkit, we use the term 'parents' but we recognise this can also refer to all adults who provide the primary caring role in a baby's life, including birth parents, adoptive parents, foster carers, kinship carers and other significant caregivers.

# Introduction

Think Baby is a simple, strengths-based approach that supports practitioners to recognise and respond to babies' experiences in everyday practice.

Babies are active communicators from birth. Although they may not use words, babies express their views, needs and feelings through their bodies, behaviour, emotions and relationships. Thinking Baby means noticing, valuing and responding to this communication.

## WHO THIS TOOLKIT IS FOR

This toolkit is for anyone who works with babies, parents and caregivers, including practitioners in health, Early Years, social care, early help, voluntary and community services, and multi disciplinary teams. Throughout the toolkit, the term practitioner refers to all professionals and volunteers working with babies and their families.

## HOW THIS TOOLKIT COULD BE USED

Think Baby can be used in many ways:

- in direct work with babies and families
- in supervision and reflective practice
- in training, professional development and education
- to support teams, services and systems to keep babies in mind

No specialist training is required to use this toolkit. The Think Baby principles are designed to support everyday practice by encouraging reflection, curiosity and relational working.

At its heart, Think Baby is about slowing down, noticing what babies are already communicating, and creating the conditions where babies' voices can be seen, held and acted upon.

Babies are people in their own right. They are communicating with us from the very beginning, and they deserve to be listened to.

They want to communicate. They want to be listened to.

A baby might say 'I want to join in. I want to be heard. I want to communicate with you.'



# Supporting babies' voices in everyday practice

Babies are active communicators from birth. Thinking Baby means slowing down, noticing what babies are communicating, and responding in ways that support babies, parents and relationships

## PRINCIPLE 1

### I value babies

#### Put baby at the centre

I keep the baby at the heart of every contact, conversation and decision.

#### Keep the baby in mind

I make the baby visible, even when the focus is on adults or systems.

#### Create space in all its forms

I take time to notice and describe the baby's lived experience.

## PRINCIPLE 2

### I slow down and am in the moment

#### Observing is key

I pause and observe carefully.

#### Listen to verbal and non-verbal cues

I look beyond words and notice behaviour, facial expression and interaction.

#### Respond with curiosity and wonder

I stay curious and avoid rushing to solutions.

## PRINCIPLE 3

### I support parents to Think Baby

#### Share learning with parents

I share understanding in a way that feels supportive and non judgemental.

#### Support parents to bond with their baby

I help strengthen the relationship between parent and baby.

#### Recognise parents' capacity to Think Baby

I recognise and build on parents' strengths.

*Thinking Baby isn't about doing more - it's about noticing, pausing more, and keeping babies visible.*

## Think Baby in practice:

- **Helps you slow down, notice and respond.**
- **Supports in the moment practice, not just reflection.**
- **Builds parental confidence over time.**
- **Works across our early years system - health, social care and community services.**



# Thinking Baby beyond individual practice

Thinking Baby is often experienced in small moments - during a visit, a conversation, a pause, or an observation. However, babies' experiences are shaped not only by one practitioner, but by the systems around them.

## Thinking Baby can be used to support:

- Team reflection and supervision
- Training and workforce development
- Service design and pathways
- Multi-agency working
- Leadership, commissioning and quality improvement

When individuals, teams and organisations share a Think Baby lens, babies are less likely to become invisible within busy systems.

- Culture change
- Leadership led
- Visibility/accountability

Thinking Baby is therefore not only a way of working with babies and parents, but a way of designing systems that support that work well.

## How the principles apply at a system level

I value babies	I slow down and am in the moment	I support parents to Think Baby
<b>Babies are explicitly considered in decision making, planning and reviews.</b>	<b>Creating protected space for reflection, supervision and learning.</b>	<b>Building services that reduce shame and judgement.</b>
<b>The baby's lived experience is named and held in mind, even when discussions focus on adults, processes or risk.</b>	<b>Allowing complexity and uncertainty, rather than rushing to solutions.</b>	<b>Allowing time for relationships to develop.</b>
<b>Language, records and meetings make babies visible, not implicit.</b>	<b>Supporting practitioners to remain curious rather than procedural.</b>	<b>Ensuring workforce messages and expectations align with relational, baby-focused practice.</b>

Thinking Baby is therefore not only a way of working with babies and parents, but a way of designing systems that support that work well.

## PRINCIPLE 1

# I value babies

Valuing baby means holding the baby in mind as an individual with their own experiences, feelings and perspectives.

In practice, babies can easily become invisible when attention is focused on adults, systems or tasks. Thinking Baby means actively bringing the baby into conversations, observations, records and decision making, even when the baby is not physically present.

When we value baby, we are able to describe aspects of the baby's lived experience - how the world feels from their point of view, within their relationships and environment. This helps ensure that babies are not overlooked and that their needs remain central to our work.



01:

## Put baby at the centre

*I keep the baby at the heart of every contact, conversation and decision*

Putting the baby at the centre means holding the baby in mind in every interaction, decision, and request for support - even when the immediate focus may be on the parent or wider family. Practitioners described this as a mindset shift: recognising the baby as a person in their own right, with their own rights, needs and experiences - including in how they experience services.

This principle also involves tuning into the baby's presence, even when they cannot speak for themselves. It's about noticing how parents interact with their baby, how professionals engage with the baby directly, and how systems can be shaped to reflect the baby's voice.

In practice, this might mean centring meetings around the baby's experience, reflecting aloud on what might be pulling attention away from the baby, and ensuring that the baby's needs are being prioritised.

02:

## Keep the baby in mind

*I make the baby visible, even when the focus is on adults or systems*

Keeping the baby in mind means actively imagining the baby's perspective - what they might be feeling, experiencing, or needing - even when they cannot express it in words. In practice, practitioners described this as a form of professional curiosity and empathy, where the baby's emotional world is held at the centre of observation, documentation, and decision-making. It's about tuning into the baby's experience within their family and wider environment, and making space for their voice in practice, even during pregnancy.

*We try to orientate to the baby's experiences and position at all times... reflecting aloud on things that pull attention away from baby, or can get in the way of baby's needs being recognised or acted upon.*

**Bea Anderson, Consultant Clinical Psychologist**

03:

## Create space in all its forms

*I take time to notice and describe the baby's lived experience*

Creating space means more than just making time - it's about cultivating environments, relationships, and moments where babies and parents feel safe, seen, and heard. In practice, practitioners described this as both a physical and emotional practice: slowing down, being present, and allowing room for babies to communicate in their own unique ways. It's also about supporting parents to feel valued and comfortable enough to share their thoughts, while holding the baby in mind throughout.

Space-making enables narration of the baby's experience, being curious about their emotional world, and helping others - including parents and professionals - to tune into the baby's voice.





*'As well as writing case notes, some parent-infant relationship teams use goal based outcomes from the perspective of the baby, e.g., what parents and practitioners think together about what the baby might be needing'*

**Dr Ben Yeo, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist and Clinical Advisor, The Parent-Infant Foundation**



## Practitioner Top Tips

- Put the baby at the heart of every visit, conversation and decision.
- Be able to leave a visit describing part of the baby's lived experience, not just what was discussed with adults.
- Notice how the baby is spoken about - and how you talk about the baby with others.
- Be kind and thoughtful with language; small phrases shape whether babies are made visible.
- Use child-centred language that keeps the baby present, even when parents or systems are the focus.
- Hold babies in mind even when they are not physically present.

*"Valuing baby means the baby doesn't disappear from the narrative."*

## How the principle applies at system level

Valuing baby at system level means:

- Babies are explicitly considered in decision making, planning and reviews.
- The baby's lived experience is named and held in mind, even when discussions focus on adults, processes or risk.
- Language, records and meetings make babies visible, not implicit.



## In practice examples

- Feed back to professionals in the voice of the baby e.g. when emailing professionals who are also providing care.
- Have a section dedicated to 'voice of the infant' on a referral form.
- Speak aloud, as if baby is speaking, after therapist observes baby's expression e.g. *"What's happening?"*, *"What are you doing, mum?"* then explaining to baby what is happening.
- Be available to hear the voice of the baby through 'wonder', e.g. *"I wonder how baby feels when..."*
- Hold longer appointments for parents and babies - there are at least two people to be thought about.
- Value baby voice through assessment summary letters. Greeting both parent and baby during visits including baby in conversations and listening to what they say including babbling.
- Interact with the family and speak/reflect back what the baby could be saying. e.g. *"Be gentle with me."* when taking off a coat.

### Practitioner's tip

### Example

Be kind and think of language used... <i>"I felt..."</i>	<i>"I felt happy when you lifted me up because I was starting to feel ignored sitting on the carpet."</i>
Aim to leave a visit able to describe part of the baby's lived experience	<i>"I love my mum and dad very much. I show this by watching them when they talk to you. Smiling and making noises with them."</i>
Noticing baby's interactions and naming this (e.g. non-verbal eye contact in baby massage, permission when touching)	<i>"I like it when you bicycle my legs. I show this by making eye contact and looking to see if you'll do it again."</i>
Feedback to professionals in the voice of the baby e.g. emailing the core group after a visit	<i>"I enjoyed when [practitioner's name] smiled and talked to me. I was a bit startled by the door slamming which shows that my hearing and reflexes are working well. I liked being picked up by dad when this upset me."</i>
Understand I am always focused on trying to elicit a response from you.	<i>"I watched you as you were talking and made noises to try to get you to talk to me rather than mum and dad. I was really happy when you used my name."</i>
Getting down on the floor with baby or same level and speaking directly to the baby.	<i>"When I am on the floor and you are standing up it can make me feel scared because you are so much bigger than me. When you lie on the floor as me you seem much more friendly."</i>
Greeting babies as an individual. Introduce yourself directly to the baby.	<i>"When you use my name and say hello to me as you arrive it makes me feel like I'm important to you and shows me you care what I think. It tells mum and dad I'm important to you too."</i>

N.B. The examples written from the baby's perspective are interpretive and designed to help bring the baby's experience to life. They are informed by professional knowledge and practice rather than direct practitioner quotes.



## PRINCIPLE 2

# I slow down and am in the moment

Slowing down is an intentional and skilled part of Thinking Baby.

When practitioners slow down, they create space to notice babies' communication beyond words - through movement, facial expression, tone, patterns of behaviour and interaction. Being in the moment helps practitioners look beyond what is being said to what is being shown.

Slowing down also involves becoming aware of our own responses. Babies' communication can evoke strong feelings in adults; noticing our emotional responses can deepen understanding and support more thoughtful, attuned interventions.

Staying curious, allowing silence and resisting the urge to rush to solutions helps make babies' experiences more visible and meaningful.



## 01: Observing is key

*I pause and observe carefully*

In practice, slowing down creates space to truly observe - to notice the subtle, non-verbal ways babies communicate and connect. In practice, observation not just as a technique, but as a mindset: being present, curious, and attuned to the baby's cues. It's about resisting the urge to rush or fill silence, instead allowing time for babies to express themselves through movement, gaze, and emotion.

This approach also involves modelling observation for parents - helping them slow down, notice, and wonder about what their baby might be communicating. It's a relational practice that strengthens the parent-infant bond and supports emotional attunement.

## 02: Listen to verbal and non-verbal cues

*I look beyond words and notice behaviour, facial expression and interaction*

In practice, listening deeply means tuning in to more than just spoken words - it's about noticing silence, body language, facial expressions, and emotional tone. Practitioners emphasised the importance of slowing down enough to truly hear what babies are communicating, even when their voices are not verbal. This kind of listening requires patience, presence, and a willingness to sit with quiet moments rather than rush to fill them.

Practitioners also reflected on the challenge of balancing interaction with sensitivity - recognising that sometimes, well-intentioned talking can overshadow the baby's own communication. Creating space for babies to express themselves means resisting the urge to 'interfere' and instead being attuned to what they are showing us.

## 03: Respond with curiosity and wonder

*I stay curious and avoid rushing to solutions*

In practice, slowing down allows us to respond to babies not with assumptions, but with curiosity - to wonder aloud about what they might be feeling, needing, or trying to express. Practitioners described this approach as a gentle, respectful way of engaging with babies and supporting parents to do the same. It's about creating a shared space of discovery, where the baby's voice is explored rather than interpreted too quickly.

This kind of responsive curiosity helps build emotional safety and strengthens the parent-infant relationship. It also models a way of being with babies that is attuned, respectful, and open - inviting both practitioners and parents to slow down and truly connect.





*My top piece of advice is - don't be afraid of silence. A big part of ensuring the baby's voice is heard is observing the baby. You need to look for both verbal and non-verbal cues and analyse them, listen to them and understand them before you can react to them. Take their voice into your next step/reaction/planning.*

**Eve Ellison, Early Years Practitioner**



## Practitioner Top Tips

- Notice the signals beyond words - babies communicate through cues, and caregiver responses may not always match what is said.
- Get comfortable with silences; pausing often creates the space where babies' communication becomes visible.
- Watch and wonder about babies' communication, and notice how it impacts not only parents, but also you.
- Stay curious rather than rushed - slowing down is an active skill, not doing less.
- Allow yourself to notice what you are feeling in response to the baby and the interaction.

*"Slowing down helps us see what babies are already telling us."*

## How the principle applies at system level

Slowing down at a system level means:

- Creating protected space for reflection, supervision and learning.
- Allowing complexity and uncertainty, rather than rushing to solutions.
- Supporting practitioners to remain curious rather than procedural.



## In practice examples



*Modelling watching, waiting and wondering with parents about what the baby was communicating, 'being with' and alongside parents to observe their baby, modelling a slower pace and identifying nuances of these cues/ responses and helping parents to identify them and wonder what they may mean.*

**Zoe Tate, Parent Infant Therapist**



*A challenge is interacting versus interfering, filling every silence with spoken words, missing opportunities. It is important to reflect and change your own practice to ensure you meet their needs.*

**Pamela Musgrave-Haddow, Speech, Language and Communication Home Visitor**



### Remember:

- Not rushing in to fix.
- No assumptions.
- Sit in discomfort.

### Practitioner's tip

Babies are small. They make small gestures to communicate. Recognising / observing / acting on the small gestures makes a BIG difference to a baby.

Each baby has their own pace. Encourage parents to not focus on what their baby is or isn't doing. Observe and be amazed at what they can do, how they do it.

Continuing observation and keeping baby in mind when they nap or are otherwise occupied. Noticing as a practitioner what this brings up for self and parent - relief? Maybe the pace/environment isn't suiting the baby - maybe we aren't fully holding them at the centre.

### Example

*"I felt overwhelmed when we walked down the loud street. It made me feel safe when you noticed and switched to a quieter one."*

*"I am not ready to sit up myself yet and that's ok. I do love bashing bricks together and looking at them in my hands."*

*"I am tired, I am safe, I am having a good sleep. You can have a break, mum."*

**N.B.** The examples written from the baby's perspective are interpretive and designed to help bring the baby's experience to life. They are informed by professional knowledge and practice rather than direct practitioner quotes.



## PRINCIPLE 3

# I support parents to Think Baby

Supporting parents to Think Baby is a relational process that grows over time.

Parents and caregivers are babies' most important relationships. Helping parents notice, understand and respond to their baby's communication supports both the baby's wellbeing and the parent-baby relationship.

This involves working in a non judgemental, compassionate way, recognising that parents may feel worried about getting things 'right'. Babies' crying can be reframed as communication and strength, rather than something negative or problematic.

Thinking Baby with parents requires time, trust and safety. Gentle curiosity, warmth and shared reflection help parents build confidence in understanding their baby's experience, at a pace that feels manageable for them.



## 01: Share learning with parents

*I share understanding in a way that feels supportive and non judgemental*

Supporting parents to Think Baby begins with helping them see and understand their baby's experience. Practitioners described the importance of gently sharing insights, observations, and reflections that bring the baby's voice to life. This might involve narrating what the baby could be feeling, pointing out subtle cues, or inviting parents to wonder alongside you. It's about empowering parents to tune into their baby's emotional world and recognise their baby as a social, communicative being - even before birth.

This approach helps parents build confidence in their ability to connect with and respond to their baby. It also fosters a deeper emotional bond, rooted in mutual understanding and attunement.

The explainer series resources from The Centre for Early Childhood can help practitioners explain the brain development in early childhood, and how interactions between babies, young children and caring adults can make a positive difference to their social and emotional development.

### The Explainer Series:

<https://centreforearlychildhood.org/help-resources/the-explainer-series/>

## 02: Support parents to bond with their baby

*I help strengthen the relationship between parent and baby*

Helping parents to bond with their baby is central to nurturing early relationships. Practitioners described this as a process of gently guiding parents to notice, respond to, and connect with their baby's cues - building confidence and emotional closeness. It's about creating opportunities for parents to see their baby as a communicator, a person with feelings and needs, and to feel empowered in their role.

Tools like the Newborn Behavioural Observation (NBO) and parent-infant focused conversations were highlighted as ways to support this process. These approaches help parents reflect on their relationship with their baby, their own identity as a caregiver, and the baby's emotional world - all within a safe, non-judgemental space.

## 03: Recognise parents' capacity to Think Baby

*I recognise and build on parents' strengths*

Supporting parents to Think Baby means acknowledging both their potential and the challenges they may face in holding their baby in mind - especially when life circumstances are overwhelming. Practitioners reflected on how stressors like housing insecurity, debt, or mental health struggles can make it difficult for parents to tune into their baby's emotional world. Creating space for compassionate conversations helps parents reconnect with their baby's experience, even during pregnancy.

Practitioners emphasised the importance of being alongside parents in this process - gently encouraging curiosity, validating the difficulty, and helping them imagine their baby's perspective.





## Practitioner Top Tips

- Help parents understand crying or 'protest' as communication - a strength in their baby, not a failure.
- Emulate compassion and warmth; how we respond models how parents respond to their baby.
- Invite parents to wonder about their baby's experience and their relationship with them.
- Recognise that building parental reflection takes time and trust - insight grows through relationships.
- Ask gentle questions that connect parental wellbeing to baby's experience, such as: *"What helps you relax or recharge?"* or *"Who supports you when things feel hard?"*

*"Supporting parents to Think Baby is a process, not a moment."*

### How the principle applies at system level

Supporting parents to Think Baby at a system level means:

- Building services that reduce shame and judgement.
- Allowing time for relationships to develop.
- Ensuring workforce messages and expectations align with relational, baby-focused practice.



## In practice examples

- Ask parents what do you think baby is thinking/feeling/seeing? Name three things that you love about baby / love about your new relationship?
- Having sections to baby in letters - addressing directly and also to wonder about what baby might be thinking, feeling and saying.
- Try to encourage parents (and practitioners) to move away from adults views/issues/problems to notice the baby, look, listen and follow baby's lead - even for a few moments. I wonder what baby is experiencing?
- Have conversations with babies not just parents.

### Practitioner's tip

Asking caregiver to wonder about the baby's experience and the relationship with them.

Practitioner and caregiver being curious together and helping caregiver to be/feel expert of their own baby with guidance.

### Example

*"I wonder what [baby's name] is dreaming about."  
"I wonder what [baby's name] thinks we are talking about."  
"I wonder whether [baby's name] will remember me from last time. Do you think they remember me?"*

Flip the script "If your baby could talk..."

*"How would your baby describe you?"  
"What does your baby love about you?"  
"What would your baby say about you?"*

Help parents to think about, notice, reflect and verbalise how they know or understand their baby's cues or what they might be trying to say.

Provide positive feedback when I noticing them interpreting and acting on baby's cues.

*"You're doing so well. I saw when [baby's name] reacted to what you were saying and you repeated it for them to see if they did it again. You really seem like you can tell when they are enjoying your attention."*

N.B. The examples written from the baby's perspective are interpretive and designed to help bring the baby's experience to life. They are informed by professional knowledge and practice rather than direct practitioner quotes.

*Using the Newborn Behavioural Observation along with parent/infant focused conversations highlight the relationship, the parent's view of themselves and their view of their baby. When explored in a non-judgemental way it gives space to bring their baby to their mind.*

**Pam Whelan-Reid, Specialist Health Visitor**

*Engage in compassionate discussions with parents around how this can be difficult to capture babies voice given the world we live in/ current dynamics/ family situation. Acknowledge and name how this can be tricky. Be with parents, encourage curiosity and wondering about their baby. i.e. 'If your baby had a speech bubble above his/her head what would they be thinking or saying right now?' encouraging time to pause/reflect.*

**Zoe Tate, Parent-Infant Therapist**



## Key resources and tools as recommended by practitioners

This toolkit includes a range of tools, approaches and resources that were identified by practitioners through surveys, workshops and engagement activity as being useful in their work with babies and families. Inclusion of a resource does not constitute endorsement. Some tools may have associated costs or require licensing, and services should consider their own local context, needs and available resources when deciding what to use.

### ADBB Alarm Distress Baby Scale

The ADBB is a scale for assessing relational withdrawal in infants between 0 and 24 months of age, with 8 observation items.

<https://adbb-scale.com/>



### Association for Video Interaction Guidance (AViGUK)

Video Interaction Guidance™ (VIG) is a strengths-based, brief intervention that promotes attunement, sensitivity, and mentalisation in relationships.

<https://www.videointeractionguidance.net/what-is-vig>



### Baby CHAT: Chatting Together

The National Early Language and Communication Project team Scotland have developed a set of key messages for supporting early language and communication from pre-birth to age 5. <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/creatingtheconditions/chatting-together-messages/>



### Better Start's Super Six Strategies

Resources for parents and practitioners with tips to support young children's speech, language and communication development.

<https://blackpoolbetterstart.org.uk/slc/super-six-strategies/>



### Brazelton Centre UK Newborn Behavioural Observations (NBO)

The Newborn Behavioural Observations (NBO) system is a tool designed to help parents and practitioners share together the fascinating uniqueness of a baby, though observing their behaviour, which is their language. <https://www.brazelton.co.uk/training/nbo/>



### Brazelton Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale

The Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS) is the most comprehensive neurobehavioral assessment available for newborn babies, which gives a strength-based, in-depth profile of an individual baby. <https://www.brazelton.co.uk/training/nbas/>



### Child Outcomes Research Consortium - Goal Based Outcomes (GBO)

The GBO tool is a way of evaluating progress towards goals in clinical work. The GBO compares how far a child or young person feels they have moved towards reaching a goal that they have set for themselves at the beginning of an intervention, on a scale between 0 and 10.

<https://www.corc.uk.net/outcome-measures-guidance/directory-of-outcome-measures/goal-based-outcomes-gbo/>



### Common Assessment Framework

Triangle chart for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families relating to safeguarding and promoting welfare.

[https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/appendix\\_4.html](https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/appendix_4.html)



### Mattering In Early Childhood Building a Strong Foundation for Life

While mattering is important to us all, our sense of whether or not we matter - to our loved ones, our communities, and the world at large - begins in the earliest days of infancy. And, while it's never too late to build a sense of mattering, by starting early, we can have an outsized positive effect on children's lifelong health and well-being.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Mattering-Paper-center-on-the-developing-child.pdf>



### Leeds Early Attachment Observation Tool

The Leeds Early Attachment Observation (LEAO), is a simple screening tool, developed in 2014 by the Leeds Infant Mental Health service to support the early identification of emerging difficulties within the caregiver-infant relationship.

<https://leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/infant-mental-health/leeds-early-attachment-observation-leao-tool/>



### Leuven Wellbeing and Involvement Scales

The Leuven scale is a 5 point scale that allows child care experts, nursery practitioners and teachers to measure a child's emotional well-being and involvement.

<https://learningjournals.co.uk/what-is-the-leuven-scale-and-how-to-use-it/>



### NICE Guidance Babies, children and young people's experience of healthcare and healthcare experience checklist

This guideline describes good patient experience for babies, children and young people, and makes recommendations on how it can be delivered.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng204> & <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng204/resources/visual-summary-pdf-9204587245>



### Scottish Government: Getting it right for every child

GIRFEC is both an approach and framework used by services across Scotland to improve and uphold the wellbeing of children and their families.

<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/>



### Starcatchers Engagement Signals Tool & Reflective Practice Template

These engagement signals were used to inform the different ways babies and young children engage in expressive arts experiences in both productions and workshop settings.

<https://starcatchers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Reflective-Practice-Template-1.pdf>



## Further Resources

### **24 Magic Months APP** – Support for parents and carers

<https://www.facebook.com/lpoolcouncil/videos/download-the-free-24-magic-months-app-offers-support-for-parents-and-carers-with/361327035680224/>

### **Association of Infant Mental Health (AIMH)** Getting to know your baby video

<https://vimeo.com/reviews/be29b32d-0c69-4f4e-bf25-0cc632e7e2bb/videos/569795699>

**Aware NI Parent & Baby Aware ‘Mood Matters’** A programme for expectant mothers and parents of babies under 3 years of age. Focusing on the issues affecting this particular target group. There is a strong emphasis on looking after the mental health of both the parent and the child. <https://aware-ni.org/MMPB>

**BBC Tiny Happy People** To help parents to develop their child’s language skills, with simple activities and play ideas <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>

**Brazelton Centre UK - Understanding baby behaviour** How does my newborn baby communicate? <https://www.brazelton.co.uk/parents/your-babys-language/>

### **Building Early Attuned Relationships (BEARs) - a pilot of an awareness raising project in Wales**

<https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/our-work/what-we-do/bear/>

**DadPad** Developed with the NHS, DadPad gives new dads and dads-to-be the knowledge and skills needed to gain confidence and give their baby the best start in life.

<https://thedadpad.co.uk/>

### **DofHSC Reflecting on parent-infant relationships: a practitioner’s guide to starting conversations.**

This guidance provides 3 conversation prompts for frontline practitioners to explore a parent or carer’s relationship with their baby. It also sets out a 3-step framework for using them to help identify parent-infant relationship difficulties.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parent-infant-relationships-starting-conversations-practitioner-guide/reflecting-on-parent-infant-relationships-a-practitioners-guide-to-starting-conversations>

**GroBrain leaflets:** Bonding and brain development leaflet for parents and carers. <https://www.grobrain.com/publicstore/p/bonding-and-brain-development-leaflet-for-parents-and-carers>

**Infant Observation courses** – provide an opportunity for practitioners to build knowledge and understanding of development through direct observation of an infant during its early life. This includes include regular seminars and thinking space with fellow observers. These are offered around the country, for example, OXPIP and the British Psychotherapy Foundation.

<https://www.oxpip.org.uk/training-and-consultancy/training/extended-courses/infant-observation-training> and <https://www.britishpsychotherapyfoundation.org.uk/education/courses/infant-observation/>

**ParentClub Scotland Wellbeing for Wee ones** age specific information for parents around child’s mental wellbeing <https://www.parentclub.scot/topics/mental-health-wellbeing>



## Further Resources continued

**Lanarkshire Infant Mental Health** Observational Indicator Set <https://www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk/download/imh-observational-indicator-set-interactive>

**National Centre for Supervision of Parent-Infant Relationships** <https://ncspir.org.uk/>

**NHS Watch Me Play!** Programme for parents [https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Watch\\_Me\\_Play\\_-\\_Manual\\_for\\_Parents\\_2020.pdf](https://tavistockandportman.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Watch_Me_Play_-_Manual_for_Parents_2020.pdf)

**NHS Emotional Wellbeing support for parents and carers** This includes the AiMH Getting to Know Your Baby Videos

<https://www.wchc.nhs.uk/services/local-support-for-new-parents-cheshire-east/>

### **NSPCC - Learning from Case Reviews**

Sometimes what a practitioner might see when they 'Think Baby' may highlight risk and safeguarding concerns for that baby. Attending to the voice of the child is an important finding in serious case reviews.

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/learning-from-case-reviews/voice-child>

**NSPCC Look Say Sing Play** Fun brain building tips for parents <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1726/look-say-sing-play-activity-sheet.pdf>

**Parent Infant Foundation** provides a list of specialised parent-infant relationship teams across the UK. <https://parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/>

### **Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood explainer series**

<https://royalfoundation.com/the-princess-of-wales-and-the-centre-for-early-childhood-launch-new-film-series-unpacking-the-science-of-social-and-emotional-development-in-early-childhood/>

**Togetherness free wellbeing online courses** Free access to Togetherness resources to support wellbeing. For parents, carers, grandparents, and young people.

<https://togetherness.co.uk/mul/cheshire-east/>

**Watch Me Play!** - A way of supporting parents or carers and their baby or young child - aged from birth to around eight years old - that promotes child-led play, individual attention from caregivers, and talking with children about their play. <https://watchmeplay.info/for-practitioners/>

**UNICEF Relationship building resources** - Baby Friendly Initiative

<https://www.unicef.org/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/relationship-building-resources/>



## References

**Enabling the meaningful participation of children and young people globally:**

**The Lundy Model | Research | Queen's University Belfast**

<https://www.qub.ac.uk/Research/case-studies/childrens-participation-lundy-model.html>

**The Explainer Series - CFEC**

<https://centreforearlychildhood.org/help-resources/the-explainer-series/>

**The Lundy Model (2007) The Lundy Model: Article 12 in Practice - Rights Respecting Schools Award**

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/guidance-assemblies-lessons/the-lundy-model-article-12-in-practice/>

**UNICEF UK. (1989). The United Nations convention on the rights of the child.**

[https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC\\_PRESS200910web.pdf?\\_ga=2.78590034.795419542.1582474737-1972578648.1582474737](https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf?_ga=2.78590034.795419542.1582474737-1972578648.1582474737)







Remember

Thinking Baby is not about doing more - it is about noticing more, and keeping babies visible.



**Better Start**  
Real Change for Childhoods