



FUN 4 BABY BENEFITS

Why?

Babies have a natural urge for movement and contact. By taking advantage of the baby's pleasure in this physical dialogue, the parent and the baby can increase their mutual enjoyment of one another. The happy and loving images of parents and babies portrayed in a session, along with gurgles of delight from baby, as they learn to manipulate and co-ordinate their bodies are a great joy to watch and hear

It seems incredible that not so many years ago, parents were told to leave their babies lying in prams in the garden so that they could benefit

from the fresh air, sleep and rest. What a relief that these erroneous beliefs are in the past and that we now accept that babies want to be played with. However in today's society the demands made on busy parents, we find that babies are still being left, but this time in front of the television. The isolation of many parents with babies has caused a deprived lack of the basic knowledge of how to physically handle, play or enjoy one another.



Benefits of attending Fun 4 Baby

Benefit Parents:

- Learn about their baby
- Teaches a parent the important skill of safe handling and support in playful fun exercises
- Leans how to relax and enjoy
- Provides a great and shared pleasurable discovery

Benefits to Babies

- Enjoyment, balancing and physical contact
- Fulfil baby's needs for physical communication by touch
- Producing confidence, co-ordination, trust, joy and love
- Improves a fuller range of movement, better posture
- Stimulates their minds
- Sessions give a time of fun

FUN 4 BABY AIMS

Properly done, baby gymnastics will provide a sound for baby's natural physical development. It will encourage strong, supple joints and muscles upon which the child will rely on for the rest of its life. Why take chances with children's future strength, flexibility, balance, posture, orientation, locomotion and co-ordination when they can, through the good habit of exercising and playing with their child naturally, ensure that he or she will have these physical attributes. Baby gymnastics guides the baby's body towards its healthy development.

The purpose



- :Enhancing body and mind awareness
- Partner work – bonding whilst exercising
- Interaction “body talk” between parent and baby
- Encourage gross motor skills by developing and strengthening muscles
- Gaining mobility with gentle exercise
- Encourage manipulative skills with specially designed equipment and apparatus
- Encourage speech and communication using song and rhymes
- Prepares the framework for all sports
- “Joy and pleasure to all”

Fun 4 Baby

A health visitor perspective on Fun 4 Baby

A unique opportunity has arisen to proactively develop a progressive child centred developmental programme combined with parenting sessions within the local community.

“The importance of the early years and the key role of parents are central to the message that effective early support enhances positive outcomes for children, family and society.” (The Basic Skills Agency 2003-2)

Overall Aims

Improve the quality of mothers suffering with postnatal depression

Provide additional support for premature babies and those with a physical or mental disability

Promote a healthy lifestyle and reduce the potential for childhood obesity

Promote the health, development and welfare of babies, liaising where appropriate with relevant healthcare professionals (physiotherapists, paediatricians and health visitors)

Provide support/guidance for parents with a wide variety of parenting issues and diverse needs.

Provide a tailored, structured programme for parents and their babies according to their identified health needs.

Baby

Babies have a natural urge for movement and touch, through which they learn to develop. They need freedom of movement to explore in an unrestricted manner. We can enhance this process by providing a stimulating environment and by correcting development, with proper instruction. Eliot (1999 290-327) this is of particular importance when a baby is born prematurely, or where there is a physical disability. Physical exercise or energetic play is important for increasing strength, agility, co-ordination, balance, self-confidence, socialisation and overall health and cognitive development.

A recent longitudinal study in Scotland has shown a direct correlation between childhood obesity and reduced total energy expenditure in pre-school children Reilly J (2004 211-217) by promoting Fun 4 Baby sessions it is hoped that a start can be made at a fundamental stage to reverse this growing trend.

Providing support for parents and improving the quality of their lives it is hoped, will reduce the negative impact postnatal depression has on the child's cognitive development, Murray et al (1996 2512-2525) Murray et al (1999 1259-1271) thus reducing the level of behaviour disturbance amongst children Sinclair (1998 58-63)

Aim for baby

Develop co-ordination (gross & fine motor control) through usage of specific equipment, apparatus and opportunity.

Develop speech and language skills (verbal and non verbal) through the use of rhythm music, listening skills, verbal and body language Eliot (1999 351-390)

Good posture encouraged through exercise, strengthening muscles, developing a fuller range of movement and enhancing mobility.

Stimulate of touch fulfilling a babies need for physical touch, encouraging the parent/child relationship, partner work and fostering a closer relationship Onozawa (201-207) Eliot (1999 123-144)

Social aspects encouraged with singing, visual, tactile and auditory stimulus

Provide mental stimulation through a holistic programme.

Background

Parent

Parenthood provides new challenges for parents, many of which they are unprepared for. Postnatal depression and its negative impact on a child's development have been well document. Murray, Cooper (1997 99-101) Barlow et al (2004-52-56). The break up of the extended family and social isolation has resulted in a lack of basic knowledge of how to physically handle or play with a baby. The demands of parenthood and life in general, mean less time being available to stimulate babies in their early development and fundamental learning skills, resulting in increased emotional and behavioural difficulties. Essex et al (202 776-784) Brunner (1997 1472-1476)

Aim for parent

Time to relax, have fun and develop greater self esteem

Dedicated time to develop a loving relationship with their baby and enhance parenting skills

Introduce and develop new activities with their baby and to understand their importance in the developmental process

Opportunity to socialise with other parents

Opportunity to exercise

Create an understanding with parents of how children develop communication and language skills and what their role is in this process

Partner work encouraged use of verbal and non-verbal skills – praise positive response, verbal conversation with baby, smile, cuddles, handling, and eye contact.

Develop the skills of handling and supporting safely

Provide a tailored programme for parents ensuring their individual needs are met.

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