

caring hearts

Ages 12
months +



Caring for baby

Give your child a calming, sensory experience and nurture their caring hearts.

Learning benefit/skill development

- Provides an opportunity for turn-taking with a caring adult
- Promotes children's curiosity and provides a sensory experience
- Builds empathy and emotional intelligence for all genders
- Develops language

What you'll need

- A toy doll (avoid fabric dolls so they can be wiped dry after getting wet)
- A baby bath, large mixing bowl or ice cream container
- Face washer or hand towel
- Muslin wrap, scarf or small blanket
- Doll or small baby clothes (scarves or scraps of fabric will also make good clothes)
- Water

Instructions

1. Fill whatever you are using with a small amount of water, 2cm is good for safety, and have all the other supplies beside the bath.
2. Speak to your baby about what is going to happen - you might like to say "oh look, the baby is dirty! Let's give them a bath."
3. Invite your child to put the baby in the bath and make suggestions about what they can do to bathe them, e.g. "Can you put the washer in the water? Can you wipe the baby's legs?"
4. Talk about what the water feels like and so on. Pretend the doll is real – don't let the doll's head go under water, or get too cold, and hold them gently like you would a real baby.
5. Once the doll is washed, follow through with wiping dry with a towel and wrapping or dressing.

Tips/modifications

- Turn-taking with babies (also known as serve & return) is an important brain-building activity, so remember to give baby time to look, touch and/or vocalise before it's your turn again.
- Give the doll a name and bring your child back to caregiving activities again and again like feeding, nursing, comforting, sleeping and nappy change.
- As your child reaches toddlerhood, give the doll a persona—talk about what the doll's likes/dislikes and invite your child to help meet the child's needs.
- Never leave your baby with a vessel of water unattended