

Tips for Parents



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Bathtime

(suitable from birth to 3 years)

Bath time can be a fun and relaxing time and can help your child unwind before bed. However some babies and toddlers are frightened of the bath.

For newborns this might be because they might feel out of control, may not like the change in temperature or not like how floating feels.

Older babies and toddlers might be scared of the noise of the water going down the plug hole or of slipping under the water. They might not like their hair being washed or getting water or soap in their eyes.



Ideas for handling bathtime with your baby or toddler

- **Preparing everything you need before bath time.** Have their nappy or pants, clothes and a warm towel ready for when they are out of the bath. This means that they won't get cold waiting for you.
- **Making sure the bathroom and the water is warm enough.** Remember to mix the water to make sure there are no hot or cold spots and test it before your baby gets in. You could use a bath thermometer.
- **Introducing baths slowly.** You could try sitting them in the empty bath and sponging them down. Once they are happy with this, you could try adding a little water in the bottom of the bath. Alternatively – you could put the baby bath inside the big bath or have a bath with them. You could sit them on your lap so they feel secure.
- **Using a bath seat so they can sit in the bath.** Always stay with them when they're in the bath seat.
- **Having a range of bath toys** so your toddler won't get bored.

- **Always using a nonslip mat on the bottom of the bath.** Your toddler might feel less worried about sliding under the water.
- **Taking your toddler out of the bath before you pull the plug.** Some toddlers are afraid of the sound of the water going down the drain.
- **Using a bath hat or swimming goggles.** This may help if your toddler is worried about getting shampoo in their eyes. It's also a good idea to use baby or children's shampoo, which is gentler on their eyes.
- **Having a shower instead.** You could try holding your toddler in your arms or sitting with them on the shower floor.
- **Taking your child's lead** – If they're tired, cut bath time short. If they want to play consider a longer bath time.

Keep your child's head clear of the water. Never leave your child unattended, not even for a moment. Take them out of the bath if you need to leave (e.g. to answer the door or telephone).



Where to get advice and support

Universal parenting support and advice is provided by midwives, health visitors, GPs and your local authority. Early help programmes such as Flying Start (if you live in a Flying Start area) and Families First are also available.

Look after yourself. Meeting up with other parents can be great for your wellbeing. Your local **Family Information Service (www.fis.wales)** will be able to tell you what's on in your area.

For positive parenting tips and expert advice, visit: gov.wales/giveittime

