

# Relaxation

## Ways to help your child relax

It is not only babies who like strokes and cuddles; older children can also find gentle touch relaxing, too. Always ask your child what kinds of touch they like.

## You will need

You and your child

## Activity

Here are a few ideas:

- massage their head, feet, hands and/or back
- stroking their head/hair, or brushing and braiding hair
- cuddles and kisses
- manicuring nails
- rubbing tummies
- gentle tickles.

## If your child doesn't like to be touched

- try allowing them to brush your hair, do your nails or massage you
- spend some quiet time relaxing with your child, maybe using music and relaxing oils like lavender
- offer warm bubbly baths — again you could use relaxing aromas such as lavender
- take your child swimming — this can be relaxing, but can also be a time when your child likes a cuddle in the pool or when getting dry.

A note on massage: massage is a wonderful way not only to relax your child but also to help with circulation, digestion and general health. For more advice you can contact the Guild of Infant and Child Massage at [www.gicm.org.uk](http://www.gicm.org.uk) or 01889 564555.

# Child of our Time



# Relaxation

## The explanation

Many children feel anxious but may have difficulty recognising it, talking about it or getting rid of it. Starting school and family change are common causes of anxiety.

## The signs of anxiety

- not eating or increased fussiness
- tummy aches or other aches and pains
- an increase in defiant or challenging behaviour, maybe directed at a brother or sister
- difficulty sleeping or bad dreams
- tearfulness or unusually clingy or withdrawn behaviour.

Touch can give children a sense of security and help them feel safe and relaxed. But it's important to remember that this isn't true of all children though. Some children, just like some adults, don't like close physical contact, and trying to encourage it is likely to create greater anxiety. You may also find that your child likes different kinds of touch to other family members.

If you are going to help your child, the first rule is to respect their wishes. You can make suggestions and offer new ideas, but don't put pressure on your child.

Finally, try to feel relaxed with your child. Your own feelings can create anxiety for your child, so relax together and have fun!