



How can I encourage my baby to look for help?



Babies need to understand that they are part of a wider group of people – such as a family – and not alone. To learn well, they need help from parents, siblings, friends and others who will encourage them and challenge them in their learning.

When your child is older, they will need to ask teachers for help.

“Babies need to know it’s OK to ask for help.”

- **Start by spending time with baby** so that you enjoy spending time with each other, and baby will have the confidence to come to you for help.
- **Respond to your baby** when they are learning (rather than *telling* baby what to do), by gradually giving them help when they want it so that they can learn successfully.
- **Babies love routines** and knowing what to expect. When introducing changes, help them to prepare for and cope with the changes by talking positively about the new challenges.
- Try not to force baby or toddler to learn new things – but **allow them to “have a go”**. Sometimes it is helpful for baby to watch how you do it, then they copy you and you give your baby or toddler lots of encouragement!
- **Help your child to feel safe and secure when asking for help** by responding positively with:
 - looking at them (making eye contact) and giving a smile,
 - using supporting words for their attempt (such as “you are so clever to have done this already!”), and
 - using encouraging words as they continue their attempts and come back to you for support.

Note: If you are busy and feeling overwhelmed and baby is looking to you for help, try to put those stressful things to one side for a while and get down on the floor and spend time with baby. Sometimes time away from the stress helps put it in perspective! Harsh words to a baby when you are stressed can stop them asking for help at other times and make them more withdrawn.

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