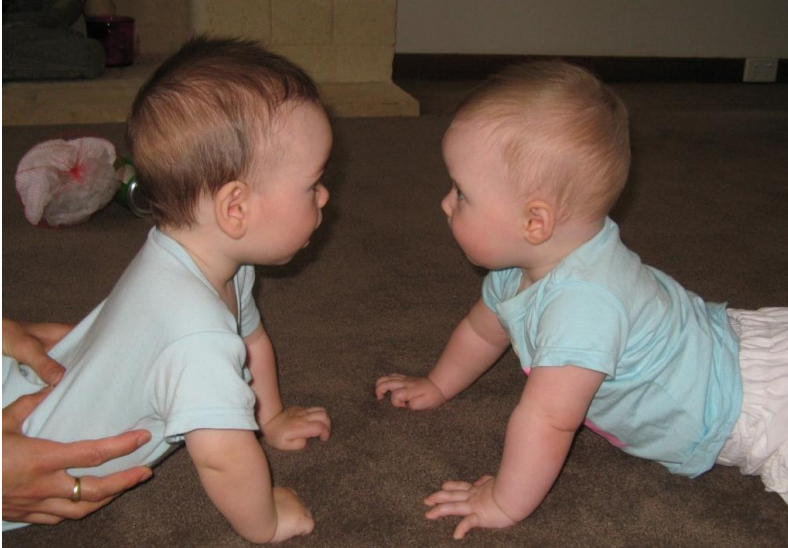




How will my baby learn to be aware of others?



Babies need to be aware of other children – not only as play objects, but to start to learn that others have feelings, and can feel touch and comfort just as they do!

This is the beginning of relationship building and empathy, which is the foundation of social skills.

“Babies need to spend time with others to learn how to relate.”

- Start by giving your baby lots of **opportunities to play with others** at playgroups and ‘mum and baby’ groups. They will learn lots of things about other babies such as:
 - that other babies cry when they grab them or push them over!
 - that other babies also like to play with toys and look at books.
 - that other babies will want to come and play with *their* toy!
- As babies grow and develop into toddlers, **encourage “normal” social behaviour** such as waving goodbye, smiling hello and looking at others with good eye contact.
- **As your baby grows into a toddler**, they will start to develop independence, and realise that they are their “own” person – not just an appendage to mum or dad. **Toddlers start to assert their own opinions** and love saying “no!”
- **Toddlers start to see that others have feelings** – they will imitate cuddling dolly and will sometimes come to give mum a hug if they see that mum is upset.
- **Start to name the feelings** and show your child how to manage difficult feelings. For example “I’m sad that Grandma is not well. I will call auntie to see how we can help”.
- Toddlers will play alongside another toddler, but in these play times they will rarely share. However, if they see that another child is upset, they may offer a toy or teddy for comfort.

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Developed by Child and Adolescent Community Health (CACH), in consultation with the Department for Child Protection, Best Beginnings Program.