

Tips for Parents of Young Children



Parenting.
Give it time.

Bathtime

(suitable from birth to age 3)

Bathtime 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 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 fears

For newborns you can make things easier by:

- Making sure the bathroom is warm enough.
- Making sure the water is warm and close to body temperature – remember to mix the water to make sure there are no hot or cold spots. Test it before you put your newborn in. You might want to use a bath thermometer.
- Using a small baby bath may help them feel more secure.

For older babies and toddlers you can make things easier by:

- **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 child gets in. You could use a bath thermometer. Have their nappy or pants, clothes and a warm towel ready for when they get out of the bath. This means that they won't get cold waiting for you to get things ready.
- **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. Or put the baby bath inside the big bath or have a bath with your child. 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 your child when they're in the bath seat.
- **Having a range of bath toys** such as empty plastic containers, plastic letters and numbers, plastic tea cups, bath crayons, rubber ducks, boats and dolls so your toddler won't get bored.
- **Always using a nonslip mat on the bottom of the bath.** Your child 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 specially designed bath hat or using swimming goggles.** This may help if your child 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 child 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. Try not to rush bath time – your toddler may pick up on your mood.

Babies and young children can drown in even a few centimetres of water so never leave your child unattended even for a moment. Take them out of the bath if you need to leave (e.g. to answer the door or telephone).

For more helpful tips on bathtime and on positive parenting techniques, visit: gov.wales/giveittime