# Bath time (suitable birth to age 3)

**Bathtime can be a fun and relaxing time and can help your child unwind before bed.**

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, which can make things feel stressful.

These are some ideas that may help make bath time easier.

Some babies and children are afraid 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 bath time fears

#### For new-borns 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 is warm enough so your toddler isn’t put off by a chilly bathroom.
* Making sure the water is warm – 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.
* Introducing baths slowly, for example, by 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.
* Putting the baby bath inside the big bath, until they get used to the idea.
* Having a bath with your child - you could sit them on your lap so they feel secure. Or encourage an older sibling to share their bath.
* 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.
* Letting your toddler wash their doll’s hair or other toys.
* 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 (and maybe out of the bathroom) 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.
* Having their nappy or pants, clothes and a warm towel ready for when you get your toddler out of the bath. This means that they won't get cold waiting for you to get things ready.
* Taking your child’s lead - If they’re tired, cut bath time short. If they want to play consider a longer bath time.
* Trying not to rush bath time - your toddler may pick up on your mood.