

the early years toolkit

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Tummy time

Why is tummy time important?

Lying your baby on their tummy and encouraging them to lift their head to look around helps to strengthen the muscles in their neck, shoulders, back and hips.

Developing these muscles will help them learn to hold their head up, roll over, sit, crawl and eventually walk.

Tummy time reduces the risk of developing flattening at the back or one side of your baby's head.

Is tummy time safe?

Yes – when your baby is awake and supervised.

The 'Back to Sleep' campaign recommends that babies should always sleep on their backs. This advice should still be followed as it reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS) or cot death.

Parents' concern about placing their baby on their tummy has led to babies spending too much time lying on their backs or sitting in car seats and bouncer chairs and not enough time on their tummies when they are awake.

Babies spending too much time on their back can result in:

- Delay in reaching some stages of development.
- Flattening on the back of the head or one side of the head.
- A preference to turn the head to one side.

We recommend 'Back to Sleep and Front to Play'