



# Principles of Good Handling

## Handling Young Children from Birth



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Photos: Canva, personal gallery

Handling young children, is a fundamental skill that is essential for parents, grandparents, caregivers and anyone who works with children from an early age. It is the art of handling a child so that they feel safe, protected and respected. Proper handling involves techniques that facilitate the daily care of the child while supporting his or her psychomotor development.

## WHAT IS HANDLING?

**Handling is** the term used to describe **the physical interaction with young children that involves lifting, carrying, carrying and manipulating their bodies.** This process is not just about moving a child from one place to another, but also about building trust, attachment and emotional connection between the child and their caregiver.

When handling a child, we can imagine gentle and caring handling that takes into account the vulnerability and sensitivity of the child's body. Handling should be carried out taking into account the individual needs of the child and respecting his/her personality. Proper handling creates a feeling of security, safety and love for the child.



## Among child daycare activities we “handle” our baby in the following ways:

- lifting,
- carrying,
- laying down the baby,
- handling over to another person,
- handling in our arms,
- positioning for breastfeeding, feeding,
- bathing the baby,
- changing the baby,
- dressing,
- playing,
- relaxing.

## THE MAIN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD HANDLING

### > Communication

Before handling a child, it is important to make eye contact with the child and make sure he/she is ready to move. Communicating your intentions to the child and responding to their needs is key to building trust.

### > Full body support

The smaller the baby, the more important it is to give him more support with our own bodies so that he can put his weight on us.

For newborns and toddlers it is essential to support their head, chest, back and pelvis (bone mass). The direction and strength of movement comes from these areas. We never fixate or hold the baby by the interspaces (cervical, lumbar spine, shoulder and hip joints) that transmit the movements. This will disturb the entire movement and the baby's perception of it.



### > Symmetrical posture

When handling the child, it is important to pay attention to the symmetry of his body and avoid overloading one side. Handling the baby on both sides engages the muscles of both halves of the body equally, resulting in balanced psychomotor development.



## > **Gentleness and sensitivity**



Handling should be done gently and sensitively, taking into account the baby's needs and comfort. Unpleasant or rough handling can cause distress and discomfort to the baby.

## > **Respect**

Even though the baby is small, it should be respected as an individual with its own needs and preferences. When handling a child, it is important to consider his or her signals and respond appropriately.

## > **We never do things instead of the baby**

Don't try to speed up your baby's psychomotor development by, for example, sitting it down prematurely or teaching it to walk by pulling on its little hands. Don't get ahead of yourself! **When the baby, or rather its body, is physically ready for the movement, it will master each new skill on its own.**

Proper handling is the basis for healthy child development and strengthens the bond between the child and his/her parent. It is a skill that requires patience, empathy and understanding of the child's needs and has an overall positive effect on the child's psychomotor development.



Soon you will find more information about handling, psychomotor development, and child skills according to age in **my new eBook "Look what I can already do – on land and in water"**. You will find soon on my website [zuzananemcova.cz](http://zuzananemcova.cz).

