

Introduction to Infant Massage for Kids with VI: Shared Joy, Body Awareness and Touch Communication

As we do this intro, I will not be able to see you and your baby. You can look for your baby's cues and respond to what it needs. This is the most important part of Infant Massage. The first attempt is always the hardest, and we want to respect that foremost.

Look for

- Baby's State before (alert, tired, grumpy)
- Baby's feelings during (talking, wiggling, crying, stilling, stiff, relax)
 - Respond to baby's feelings with more/less/pause/hold/stop etc
- There is no wrong stroke, but it is wrong to not observe and respond to cues and feelings of each other.
- Your state and your feelings before and after

Based on International Association of Infant Massage and adapted for Visually Impaired learners and their caregivers.

Support our VI learners' unique learning style by doing the following for them:

- No music
- Simple words of real things
- Tactile Cues
- Slower pace
- Hand under Hand

Extra benefits for our VI babies

- Lower Cortisol
- Reach to sounds faster with massage from parents
- More attentive to sensory information later
- Stronger Body Image – know where my limbs are in space
- Let go of parent and go out to explore faster later
- Rhythmic entertainment
- Sensory friendly NOT sensory overload
- Improves vision (based on scientific study of acuity change in kids with Down Syndrome)



Kimala Rein, TVI/COMS and Certified Infant Massage Instructor

May I massage your _____ Present o to baby's feet

Rub hands together over child's head like you are warming them on cold day. (observe)

Hold hands right over child's face still (observe)

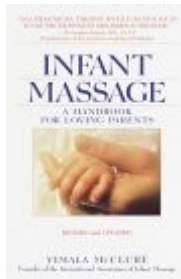
"Let's breathe" put hands on chest and rest them there. Adult breathe deep close to baby face (observe)

Legs and Feet

1. Indian Milking "thigh Foot"
2. Hug and Glide "Thigh... Foot"
3. Thumb over Thumb " Heel Toe"
4. Toe Roll: counting or singing is what I suggest
5. Press Balls of foot "squeeze foot squeeze heel"
6. Thumb Press "beep beep beep beep"
7. Top of Foot "top of foot"
8. Ankle Circles "ankle ankle ankle"
9. Swedish milking " Foot Thigh"
10. Rolling: silly sounds to make child laugh
11. Bottom relaxer "bump bump"
12. Integration "Breathe" "All done sign hand under hand"

How would you like to integrate massage into your life?

Become certified or find a local instructor: <https://www.iaim.net/>



Infant Massage: A Handbook for Loving Parents

Vimala McClure available on Amazon



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During infant massage, the parent masters the following VI friendly teaching strategies:

- Beginning, Middle, End. The routine has a clear routine, add counting to it!
- Auditory Localization. The baby listens to the rubbing of hands with oil.
- Hand under Hand. Resting hands on chest to let baby reach up to meet them.
- Orientation and mobility. Body is the best mental map to learn first. Right leg, left leg.
- Raising a Doer, not Do-toer. Asking baby's permission & asking baby to help.
- Developing strong receptive language by naming real things. Right leg, left leg, chin, Etc
- Smell. I prefer coconut oil since it is stronger (opposite of what is taught for sighted babies)
- Lowering Cortisol. Super important since sensory impaired babies have higher levels hourly.
- Functional vision. Putting hands and face close to baby's face during certain transitions

In addition, when I teach the Infant Massage, there are other benefits as well

- Caregiver Bonding research shows parents who participate develop stronger bonds. This neuro-relational framework of the dyad is fundamental to all future learning.
- Caregiver Empowering: research shows parents of VI who participate feel more empowered
- Caregiver Health benefits: research shows babies are less sick, absorb food more, move better
- The team. during the massage, the caregiver comes to trust through experience and see that I and the team love the baby too because we all are reading the babies cues together.
- Caregiver Buy in. the parent sees the benefit of trying something different and continues to try new things like braille, a pre-cane, and low vision play games.
- Community. Parent can share with other children and adults how to best teach their child now that they are experts at adapting to the needs of a visually impaired learner who needs information presented differently

Join in the fun and unique gift of infant massage! I want to share this with all people who work with kids who are visually impaired!

1. Are you a 0-3 Early Intervention Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired/other provider?:
 - a. get certified to instruct infant massage through International Assoc of Infant Massage: <http://www.iaim.net/>
 - b. [Find a EI provider who is already certified and co-visit with your TVI COMS skills](#)
2. Certified massage instructors who have never worked with a child with vision impairment: connect with your local Early Intervention agency and offer your skills to the people who work with babies who are blind/low vision age 0-3. Find your state's services for blind here: <http://www.familyconnect.org/directory.aspx?action=results>

Contact me with any questions! I work rotations between Colorado and Alaska.

Kimala Day Rein, TVI O&M

- Phone: 907-351-5814
- Email: krein@asharedvision.org
- Bumblebee Vision Impairment Services in AK <https://kimala-rein-vision.business.site/>
- A Shared Vision in CO <https://www.asharedvision.org/>



Kimala Rein, TVI/COMS and Certified Infant Massage Instructor

Resources:

- International journal of early childhood education: A Mother-Child Interaction Intervention for Mothers of Toddlers with Visual Impairments <https://www.int-jecse.net/article-details/2015/7/1/7>
2. British Journal of Visual Impairment Infant massage: A strategy to promote self-efficacy in parents of blind infants by Grace Lappin, First Published September 1, 2006 Research Article <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264619606066199>
 3. Applying Infant Massage Practices: A Qualitative Study by Lappin, Grace; Kretschmer, Robert E.
 4. Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, v99 n6 p355-367 Jun 2005 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ718712>
 7. Effect of early multisensory massage intervention on visual functions in infants with Down syndrome. Early Hum Dev. 2014 Dec;90(12):809-13. doi: 10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2014.08.016. Epub 2014 Oct 30. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25463825>
 6. A Systematic Review of the Literature on Parenting of Young Children with Visual Impairments and the Adaptions for Video-Feedback Intervention to Promote Positive Parenting (VIPP) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5403903/pdf/10882_2016_Article_9529.pdf
 7. Royal National Institute for the Blind: This guide explores the use of infant massage to support the development of children with vision impairment. https://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/infant_massage_for_a_child_with_vision_impairment%5B1%5D.doc
 8. Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired The Importance of Touch in Parent-Infant Bonding <https://www.tsbvi.edu/the-importance-of-touch-in-parent-infant-bonding>
 9. Infant Massage for Babies with Sensory Impairments By Gloria Rodriguez-Gil Educational Specialist <http://files.cadbs.org/200001096-b825fb91fa/Infant%20Massage.pdf>
 10. Selma Fraiberg (1918–1981) was a child psychoanalyst, author and social worker. She studied infants with congenital blindness in the 1970s. She found that blind babies had three problems to overcome: learning to recognize parents from sound alone, learning about permanence of objects, acquiring a typical or healthy self-image. She also found that vision acts as a way of pulling other sensory modalities together and without sight babies are delayed. In addition to her work with blind babies, she also was one of the founders of the field of infant mental health and developed mental health treatment approaches for infants, toddlers and their families

Kimala is an Early Intervention Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Certified Infant Massage Instructor. She divides her time between Grand Junction, CO, where she serves **A Shared Vision's** families along the Western Slope, and Anchorage, AK, where she operates **Bumblebee Vision Impairment Services**. Kimala may be contacted by email at kimaladay@gmail.com or krein@asharedvision.org.



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