



# Bath Time & Your Baby:

*Loving and learning while getting clean*

## 24-30 Months

Bath time is about so much more than cleaning up after a messy day in the trenches. For your child, the bathtub is her personal water park, and a great opportunity for you to connect with her and teach her all sorts of important skills. Check this out:

**My bathtub is like a giant ocean where anything can happen. I love playing with my sea creatures. They like it when I take them on adventures and especially when you play, too. You can be the seal and chase my whale. They love to dive down underneath all the bubbles and then pop up to surprise you! When you tell me it's time to get out of the bath, I say a very loud, "NO!" But then you tell me that Whale is very tired and wants to go to sleep. You take him out of the water and ask me to gently tuck the washcloth around him like a blanket. I say, "Shhhhh" and quietly climb out of the tub and into the warm towel you have waiting for me.**

Bath time offers endless opportunities for young children to use their imaginations. By playing pretend, toddlers develop strong thinking, language and social skills. When you join in your child's play, follow her lead, and build on the stories she creates, you are nurturing her development in very important ways.

Always remember, part of keeping bath time fun is making sure your child is safe. This means never leaving her unattended, even if she is in a bath seat. So gather all the things you will need for the bath beforehand and let the phone ring over to voicemail. Also, be sure to set your water heater below 120 degrees to prevent the possibility of scalding.

*For more information about bath safety, go to [AAP.org](http://AAP.org).*

*For more information about child development, go to [zertothree.org](http://zertothree.org)*

**Find out what bath time teaches your child on the next page!**



## What you can do

## What your child is learning

### Social-Emotional Development

Play games like taking turns trying to find a toy under the bubbles.

→ How to share and play well with others.

Comment on her accomplishments: You made yourself the greatest bubble moustache! Can you put one on me too?

→ That you appreciate her efforts and her creativity. This builds her self-esteem and makes her want to keep on creating!

Help her cope with rules and limits by engaging her imagination. When she has to get out of the bath, you might say: Come on, little froggy, time to climb out of the pond. One, two, three, I'm going to hop you out of the tub!

→ How to accept and go along with limits—a critical skill for success in school and life.

### Language and Thinking Skills

Nurture your child's imagination. Encourage him to play pretend—such as taking care of his ducky or pretending to be a fish.

→ To be a good thinker and communicator as he develops and shares his ideas through pretend play.

Follow his lead and ask questions: Mr. Whale and Baby Seal are racing around so fast in the water. Where are they going?

→ That his interests and ideas are important to you.

### Physical Development

Have your child help you with the logistics of bath time—getting out the towels, filling the tub, washing her body, emptying the tub, cleaning up afterwards.

→ How to use her good, strong body to help with “real” work. This makes her feel important and competent.



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