



A RESOURCE FOR STUDENTS & TEACHERS

Our pedagogy

Our approach to teaching baby massage,
nurturing touch and baby yoga



At Blossom & Berry, we teach baby massage, nurturing touch and baby yoga as ways to deepen connection between parents and babies. Our pedagogy brings together the values that guide our work, the knowledge that informs it and the ways we help teachers and parents learn. Love, care, connection and community shape both what we teach and how we teach it.

Love Creates Love

www.blossomandberry.com

CARE BEGINS WITH CONNECTION

Our purpose

We believe that caring for babies begins with caring for the people who nurture them. Parents deserve nourishment, understanding and practical support in their own right. Supporting their wellbeing also helps create the conditions for responsive care. We recognise the love parents give during difficult circumstances and do not make calmness, confidence or wellbeing a requirement for being a loving parent.

Our purpose is to help families experience connection in ordinary moments, and to prepare teachers who can support those experiences with sensitivity and skill. Our wider vision is that changing the world can begin at the beginning of life: by surrounding babies and their caregivers with care, and helping families build foundations for wellbeing and belonging.

The relationship guides the practice

Within our approach, touch and movement are invitations to communicate. We teach parents to notice their baby's expression, posture, movement, sounds and changing state, and to respond thoughtfully. The baby participates through these signals. Their comfort and readiness guide the pace, duration and choice of activity.

We invite parents to offer touch, wait and observe, then continue, adapt or stop according to their baby's response. Babies cannot give informed consent; attending to their behavioural cues is our way of respecting their participation and withdrawal. Feeding, holding, resting or watching are equally welcome ways of taking part.

Learning is successful when a parent becomes more attentive and confident in responding to their baby. Completing a massage sequence or movement routine is secondary to that relationship.

RESPONSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Connection, co-regulation and responsive care

We use co-regulation to describe the support a caregiver offers as a baby experiences and manages changing feelings and bodily states. Our teaching invites parents to explore gentle touch, comfortable holding, appropriate movement and a familiar voice, while noticing what their own baby finds reassuring. Responses differ between babies and from moment to moment.

We also offer parents opportunities to notice their own comfort, breathing and need for support. A teacher models a steady, responsive presence without expecting every parent or baby to feel settled. Crying communicates a need; it is not evidence that a parent has failed or that a class has gone wrong.

We teach serve and return through practical exchanges: a baby makes a sound, looks, moves or gestures, and the parent notices and responds. The parent then pauses to allow another response. These everyday interactions are recognised in developmental science as important to early communication and brain development. [3] Our application is to make touch and movement part of an attentive conversation, rather than something delivered to a passive baby.

Our attachment-informed approach encourages sensitivity, comfort and reliable responsiveness over time. Massage and yoga provide opportunities to practise these qualities. We do not promise that a particular technique or course will produce secure attachment, or judge the parent–baby relationship from a single interaction.

Touch and movement are part of an attentive conversation.

BELONGING & SUPPORT

Supporting the transition into parenthood

We recognise that becoming a parent can involve profound emotional, physical, mental and spiritual changes. Parents may experience joy alongside uncertainty, exhaustion, grief or changes in identity and relationships. Every family brings its own history, circumstances and ways of making meaning.

Our teaching makes room for these experiences without requiring disclosure. Spiritual wellbeing, where meaningful to the parent, may include purpose, belonging, faith or connection; participation never depends on sharing a belief. We welcome mothers, fathers and other caregivers, and recognise varied routes into parenthood and family structures.

Community as part of care

We create opportunities for parents to be heard, share experiences and build supportive relationships at a pace that feels comfortable. Participation is voluntary. Teachers model compassionate listening, protect privacy and avoid comparison. The community we offer should help parents feel that their own needs matter and that they can ask for support.

Caring for babies begins with caring for the people who nurture them.

RELATIONAL LEARNING

How we teach

Our teaching is relational, practical and reflective. We aim to model the same attentiveness towards parents that we encourage parents to offer their babies. Teachers explain the purpose of an activity, demonstrate clearly on a doll and invite parents to explore it with their own baby when appropriate. Parents remain the primary partners in their baby's experience.

We use a repeating learning process: observe, invite, practise, pause, reflect and adapt. Teachers ask open questions such as "What did you notice?" and "What might your baby need now?" They help parents interpret possible cues without claiming certainty about a baby's internal experience.

Sessions allow time for feeding, rest, questions and repetition. Teachers adapt demonstrations and activities to developmental readiness, access needs and family circumstances. They encourage parents to build small, manageable moments of connection into daily life, with flexibility about when and how these happen.

Love becomes visible in our teaching through patience, respectful language, choice and practical care. We avoid pressure to perform, comparisons between babies and messages that increase parental guilt. Parents bring valuable knowledge of their own baby; the teacher's role is to build on that knowledge while offering clear guidance.

Observe · Invite · Practise
Pause · Reflect · Adapt

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Preparing and assessing teachers

Teacher learning combines relevant theory with demonstration, supported practice, discussion and reflection. Trainees learn to explain responsive caregiving in everyday language, recognise when an activity should pause, adapt teaching and create a welcoming group environment. Reflection helps them recognise assumptions and understand how their own presence affects the space.

Assessment should consider both technical competence and relational practice. A trainee should demonstrate safe handling and clear instruction, alongside responsiveness to cues, respect for parental choice, inclusive communication and sound professional judgement. Knowing a routine alone is insufficient for the kind of teaching we seek to offer.

Safety and professional boundaries

Touch and movement must be appropriate to the baby's health, development and comfort, and the parent's needs. Teachers work within their training and follow current safety guidance, contraindications and safeguarding procedures. They seek appropriate advice when individual needs fall outside their competence.

Our classes offer education, connection and support. Teachers recognise when a family may need medical, mental health or specialist assistance and signpost sensitively. Emotional openness is welcomed without positioning the class as a substitute for clinical care.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRINCIPLES

Our research foundations

The first 1,000 days, commonly described as conception to a child's second birthday, are an important period for development. UNICEF emphasises the importance of nutrition, stimulation and care during this period, alongside support that enables parents to nurture their children. [4] We use this early-life focus to guide our purpose, while recognising that development and opportunities for support continue throughout childhood.

The Nurturing Care Framework, developed by WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank Group with partners, takes a broader focus from pregnancy to age three. Its five interconnected components are good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, security and safety, and opportunities for early learning. [1] Our teaching contributes particularly to responsive caregiving and early learning, with attention to safety and caregiver support. It sits within this wider picture of family care.

WHO's guideline on improving early childhood development recommends responsive care and early learning, and the integration of support for maternal mental health into early childhood health and development services. [2] This supports our commitment to considering the caregiver's wellbeing alongside the baby's needs.

These sources inform the principles behind our pedagogy. They do not establish that Blossom & Berry's particular massage or yoga programme has been clinically evaluated, or that it is endorsed by WHO or UNICEF. Claims about specific physical, psychological or therapeutic outcomes require evidence relevant to that practice and population.

OUR GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

Love Creates Love

Love Creates Love is the philosophy that gives our work direction. We believe that experiences of being cared for can help people offer care to others. Through nurturing touch, responsive interaction and supportive community, we seek to help that care travel from teacher to parent, from parent to baby and into family life. Our contribution begins with small moments of attention and the relationships that grow around them.

Foundational references

[1] WHO, UNICEF and World Bank Group (2018). Nurturing care for early childhood development.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241514064>

[2] WHO (2020). Improving early childhood development WHO guideline.

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/97892400020986>

[3] Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Serve and Return.

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/key-concept/serve-and-return/>

[4] UNICEF. Early Moments Matter.

<https://www.unicef.org/early-moments>

Love, care, connection & community