

Firefly by Leckey Webinar Series

Things you need to know about Playpak

Part 1: Starting strong – 3 essential early positions

30th March 2016

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Moderator: Clare Greer



Aims of today's webinar:

1. To explain how the early building blocks within child development link together.
2. To outline how Playpak can be used to practice positions in the **3 essential, early positions**: back lying (supine), tummy lying (prone) and sitting.
3. To answer as many questions as possible – we'll do this at the end of each section!



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Part 1: Starting strong –
3 essential early positions

1.1 Back Lying (Supine)



Back Lying: Why is it important?

- First position that enables you to have interactive play with your child.
- Supports children with physical difficulties, when working in a flexed position, to find their middle, their hands and legs and to look around.
- Encourages movement of arms and legs independently of each other – leading to activities such as crawling.



- Active movement in back lying positions can help strengthen tummy muscles and helps children develop awareness of their own body by themselves.

Back Lying: Common difficulties

- Too much straightening (extension) due to increased muscle tone (hypertonic muscles).
- Trunk is floppy (hypotonic) making it hard to lift away from surface.
- Head often stretches back (extends) and turns to one side making it hard for children to learn what and where the rest of their body is, and how their eyes/head relate to it.
- Struggle to bring their shoulder joints and blades (shoulder girdle) away from the supporting surface – hard to use hands and develop mid-line awareness.
- Heavy legs, (due to possible low tone or spinal problems) will weigh down the pelvis and bottom of the trunk.

“Supporting a more flexed position will make it easier for a child to use their tummy muscles (abdominals) and progress to moving away from back lying.”

Back Lying: Solutions

By making a 'nest' for baby, we are helping them come to a flexed position.

This will help them to use their tummy muscles and keep head in the middle.



Back Lying: Solutions

The shoulder girdle is forward making it easier to lift the arms. Hips are flexed, easing movement of the legs.

We can easily work on looking at objects being moved from left to right and reaching games with the arms. Looking at our feet is an excellent way to introduce them to baby.



Back Lying: Aims

Support to the shoulder girdle can help baby maintain mid-line of their head, allowing them to focus on a toy and giving them the opportunity to reach.



Back Lying: Have you considered...



Did the child ever get a chance to take their hands to their mouth or reach objects above them? This early skill/opportunity can really help a child then progress to rolling and propping in prone and sitting – then onwards to crawling.

How can we learn to sit if we are unable to place our hands forward?

How can we roll if our arms are pinned to the floor by the weight of our shoulders?

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Back Lying Questions?

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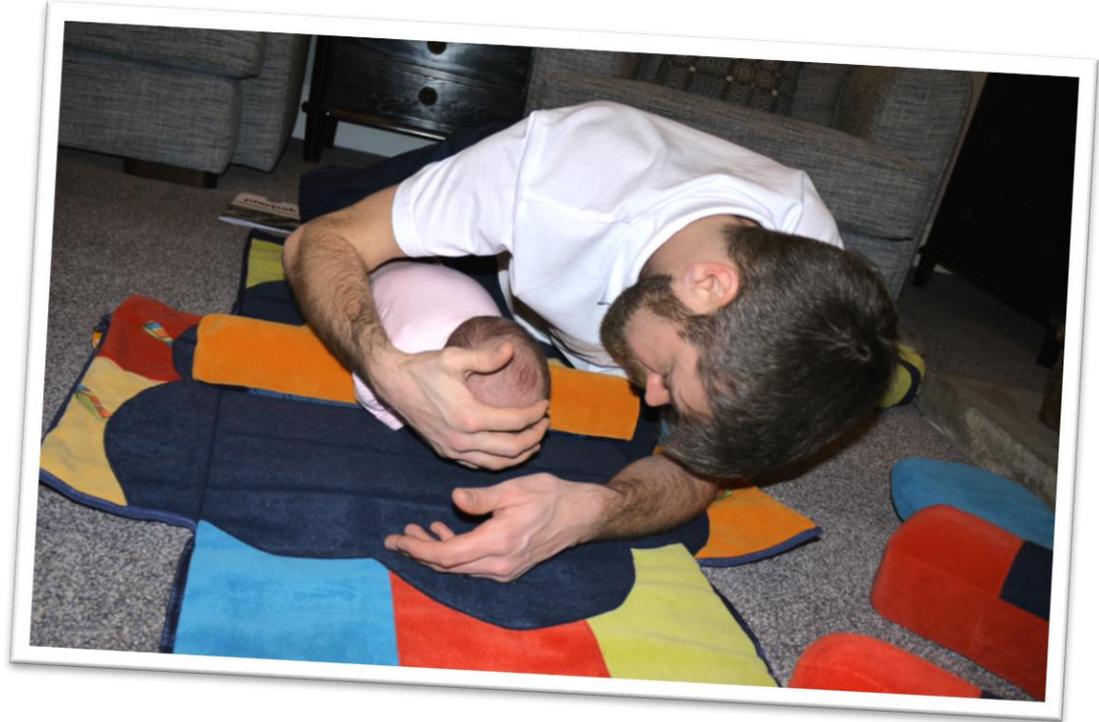
Part 1: Starting strong –
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1.2 Tummy Lying (Prone)



Tummy Lying: Why is it important?

- Works on lots of aspects of development at once.
- Helps to develop head control and skills essential for crawling.
- Teaches weight transfer, putting all weight through one arm to allow baby to release the other to play with objects.
- Sometimes we advise against tummy time – if you have concerns, contact your therapist.



Tummy Lying: Common difficulties

- Can be a hard position for a child to develop. Not being able to lift their head or push through their arms can make tolerating the position difficult.
- If a child's preferred pattern is to straighten all the time (over-extending), placing them in prone can actually reinforce this – seek advice from your therapist to discuss the best way to do tummy time.
- Floppy (low toned) children will struggle to lift their head and push through their arms for support.



Tummy Lying: Solutions

Placing chest over a roll will help to bring the forearms down to the floor.

If you assist with keeping the arms tucked under it will encourage baby to push through them.



Tummy Lying: Solutions

If still unable to lift head you can assist with your hand on top of head, gently easing up to say 'hello'.

A strap over the pelvis with a child who is still quite flexed in the lower limbs will help stabilise it so baby can concentrate on lifting their head.



Tummy Lying: Solutions

Tolerance of tummy time is often limited. Increase it with toys and objects that the child is interested in.

"If your child does not like tummy time, try to persevere."



"Seconds at a time can be a success initially, and remember they will build to minutes."

Tummy Lying: Aims

Initially we want baby to move their weight from chest down to abdomen, so giving support both under the shoulders and over the pelvis to help baby lift and turn head.

Placing weight firstly through forearms and then pushing up to straight arms.

As they improve in this they can progress to moving weight over one arm at a time to play with the other.



All these early skills link – think baby learning to prop in sitting and move their arms when crawling.

Tummy Lying: Have you considered...

How can we crawl if we have never moved our weight over one hand to lift the other?

How much easier will it be to play with toys if we have built up the strength in our arms to lift them?

How much harder is it to maintain a sitting position if we don't naturally place our hands in front to prop?

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Tummy Lying Questions?

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**Part 1: Starting strong –
3 essential early positions**

1.3 Side Lying

Side Lying: Why is it important?

- Makes it easier for hands to come together for early static play without fighting against gravity.
- It's a transitional position so it helps us move from one position to another, e.g. when learning to roll, and when moving from back to tummy lying (supine to prone).
- Essential for developing movement for side-sitting which is used when transitioning from lying to sitting.



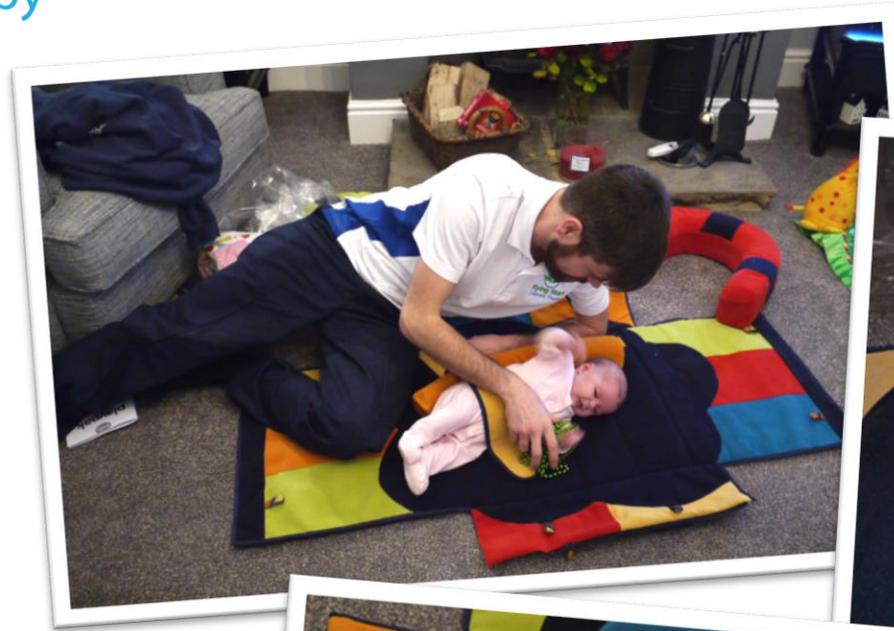
Side Lying: Common difficulties

- Difficult position to maintain. Balancing on the side of the body can increase tone due to the challenge it presents.
- Children with low tone will struggle to keep their hips in a side lying position as they will have a tendency to roll forwards or backwards.

Side Lying: Solutions

Early side lying can work on upper limb skills.

Support as pictured with a strap to help control the pelvis, and a roll to keep the head forward, will make this easier for baby to do.



Side Lying: Solutions

As baby improves in side lying we can lower the support to keep the pelvis on its side, freeing the top half of the trunk. This will allow games reaching forward and backward.



Side Lying: Aims

Maintaining side lying initially will help a child learn how to use their hands in the mid-line of the body – they don't have to hold them up against gravity, and can see them easily.

Moving in side lying with the pelvis supported, reaching forwards and backwards will develop the muscles and movement patterns needed to learn how to roll.



Side Lying: Have you considered...



How will a child learn what their side is if they have never experienced it?

How can we control rolling if we cannot move whilst on our side?

How can we learn how to transition away from the floor if we can't move when we're on the floor?

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Side Lying Questions?

3 essential positions

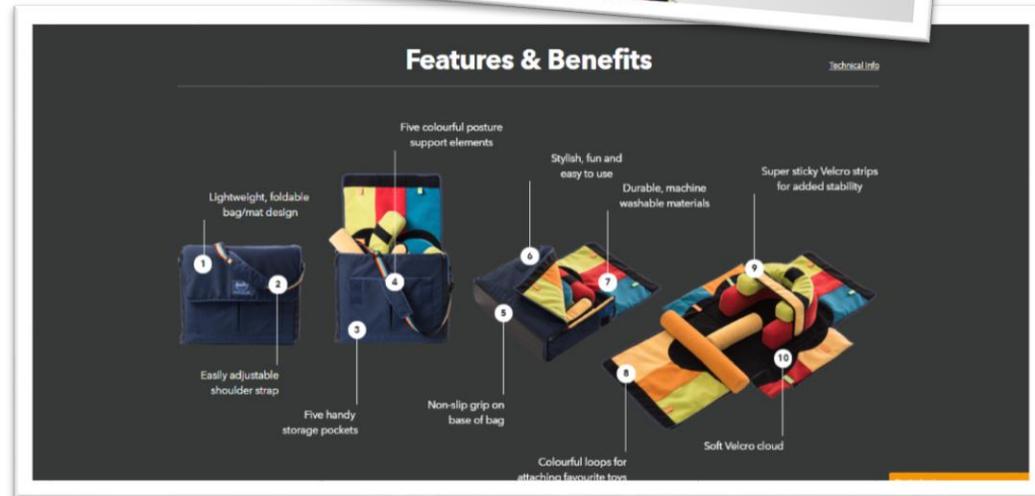
Using Playpak, we have practiced the earliest postures which help a child learn how to maintain strong and essential positions, as well as learning how to move and become more active within them.

"I will work on as many of these skills as possible with all children, even if I know they will not reach certain milestones, to ensure the best possible building blocks are in place for them to succeed at more challenging postures and abilities."



Resources

- www.fireflyfriends.com/playpak
- Playpak [Videos](#)
- Playpak [Fact Sheets](#) – The importance of early development through play, how to pack and unpack Playpak, activity suggestions etc.
- Playpak [FAQs](#)
- Nick's [Blog Posts](#)
- Things you need to know about Playpak: [Part 2. Sitting pretty – transitioning from the early positions](#)





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Final Questions?





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