



# Splashy

Activity Programme

Family Freedom



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# What is Splashy?

The Firefly Splashy is a lightweight bath seat, designed to sit low in the bath to allow your child to benefit from being immersed in the water.

We listened to feedback from parents and therapists about our most popular product, the **GoTo seat\***, and realised that there was a need for a waterproof version which could be used for bathing. Splashy's design is based on the GoTo seat, with additional new features to allow your child to participate in bathing.

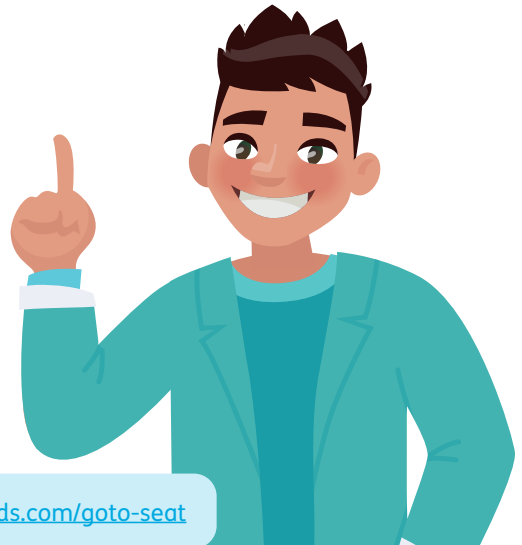
A recline feature means that even children with reduced head control or sitting ability are able to use Splashy. We have added interchangeable foam supports which can be used as a headrest, lateral,ommel or anti slide support. Splashy has a five point harness which can be configured into a three point pelvic support to make washing a little easier. Splashy has a comfortable, warm touch foam covering available in three different colours. Choosing the colour of your child's bath seat and foam supports allows your bath seat to be more personalised for your child.



Firefly is a division of Leckey ([www.leckey.com](http://www.leckey.com)), a company known worldwide for making postural equipment for children with special needs. Firefly's unique focus is special needs family participation, which provides a perfect match for Splashy.

**LECKEY**®

This guide aims to help you get the most out of Splashy and understand that bathing is so much more than just getting washed!



\*View the GoTo Seat – [www.fireflyfriends.com/goto-seat](http://www.fireflyfriends.com/goto-seat)



# Who can use Splashy?

Splashy is designed for children with disabilities ranging from approximately 1 – 8 years old. Children with Cerebral Palsy who use Splashy may range from levels III – V on the Gross Motor Function Classification System (GMFCS). The maximum user weight is 30kg.

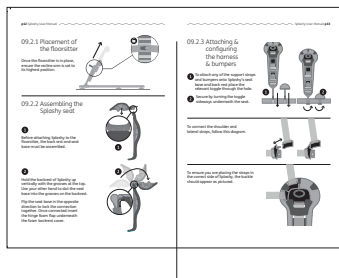
Children whose head control is developing can use this product by simply reclining the backrest of the bath seat so their head is supported by the foam supports.



# Setting up Splashy

Splashy must be attached to the floor sitter attachment at all times for safety and stability. Splashy should be attached to the floor sitter attachment by the locking mechanism, and the complete unit placed firmly in the bath with the suction cups secured **before** your child is placed into the bath seat. A handy setup card is attached to your splashy. Please keep it safe for reference. For further guidance on how to set up Splashy and the floor sitter attachment, please refer to the [user manual](#)\*.

Please read the User Manual.  
**REMEMBER NEVER TO LEAVE  
YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED  
IN THE BATH**



\*View the Splashy User Manual – [www.fireflyfriends.com/splashy](http://www.fireflyfriends.com/splashy)

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# What is the Splashy activity guide?

The Splashy activity guide explains why bathing is so much more than just getting washed. Bathing provides an ideal activity in an environment where your child can develop many skills.

At Firefly we use a model called MAP (Mobility, Ability, and Participation) to show how using a product as part of a therapy programme can contribute to your child's development:

**Mobility** is your child's ability to access their world and gain as much independence as possible;

**Ability** refers to all aspects of your child's physical, cognitive and social development;

**Participation** is about enabling your child to experience as many activities as possible.

We understand the effect that a warm bath can have on relaxing your child's muscles which in turn can improve mobility, however it is not the main purpose of the bath seat. Therefore this Splashy activity guide has been divided into sections which suggest ways to promote development in the areas of ability and participation.



Map Model (©Leckey 2015)

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## Did you know?

The MAP Model is based on the World Health Organisation's ICF-CY Framework.

## Moving and handling

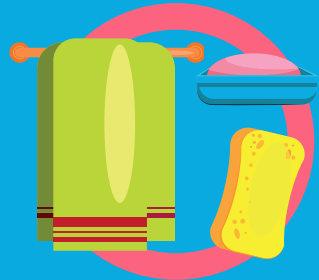
Lifting a child in and out of the bath is an activity which could cause injury to your back. It is not possible for us to provide specialised moving and handling advice for you as the circumstances will differ for each family – for example, the age and ability of your child; the shape of, and space in, your bathroom; your own height and level of fitness etc. However, we have put together some general advice on **‘looking after your back’**. This can be found in the resource section at the end of the activity guide.

If you need more specific information, we recommend that you speak to your therapist about your own situation.



## Bathing preparation

Before using Splashy in the bath, we recommend that you set up your environment in advance. Fit Splashy to the bath, fill the bath with water at a temperature suitable for your child, and have a towel, soap, toys and clothes ready beside the bath. This will ensure you don't have to leave your child unattended at any stage.



## The benefits of bathing

The Splashy activity guide explains why bathing is so much more than just getting washed. Warm water can have a relaxing effect on your child's body and may help to reduce tone in their muscles. (1)

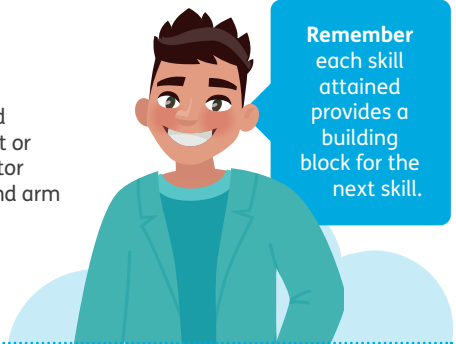
Bathing therefore provides an ideal environment for relaxation and the development of gross and fine motor skills, as well as cognitive, communication and sensory skills. The following section provides you with useful information on how to use your child's Splashy time to work on these skills.

Follow me to learn more about benefits of bathing



# Gross motor skills

Gross motor activities improve muscle strength and function. Movements such as reaching for an object or making big marks with a bath crayon are gross motor skills which help to develop your child's shoulder and arm stability and strength. In turn, this will help to form the building blocks for fine motor skills.



# Fine motor skills

Manipulating small objects, developing hand and eye coordination and exploring different grasps are all fine motor skills. We use these for many daily activities, including washing and dressing.

For example; when getting washed, encourage your child to hold and squeeze a sponge or toy that will squirt water at them. When getting dressed after their bath, you can practice doing up zips, fastening buttons/velcro or tying laces. The little muscles in their hands and wrists will get stronger as a result of these activities.





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# Cognitive development

Bathing provides opportunities for your child's cognitive development as it can be used as an environment to teach about different objects. Using foam bath stickers will help your child develop their ability to recognise or name colours and shapes. You can place items such as vegetables (e.g. carrots or potatoes), plastic cups, a sponge or facecloth into the bath. Your child may start to notice that some items sink or float when in the water; that a sponge absorbs lots of water; or that a toy squirts water when they squeeze it (cause and effect play) [\[2\]](#). When you are playing with bath bubbles your child may wonder how they stick together, why they can sometimes see a rainbow through them, how they burst and how they can make shapes with them, for example, creating many interesting and creative bubble hairstyles! Your child could practice washing their doll or pretend they are having a tea party with their siblings by pouring water from a teapot into a cup.

Without realising, your child is learning about the properties of objects such as colour and shape, size and weight; concepts like in/out, up/down, full/empty; and they are exploring their creative side and developing their imagination.

Practicing dressing skills after bathing is a good opportunity for your child to learn how to sequence movements. For example: you may help your child put on their jumper by putting your child's head and arms into their jumper, but letting them pull the jumper down over their tummies. You can then provide less assistance as your child begins to learn to put their arms into the sleeves themselves.

Bath time also allows your child to practice their 'tidy up' skills! You can teach them to put all of their bath toys into a box when their time in Splashy is coming to an end. This is a skill that can be transferred into everyday life for example, lifting their plates over to the sink when they have finished eating or tidying their jigsaw pieces back into the box. [\[3\]](#)



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# Communication and social Skills

Bathing can be a fun and interactive experience. It provides an ideal opportunity for practising pre-speech communication, verbal and social skills. When your child is in the reclined position, they will be able to make or maintain eye contact with you, an essential building block of communication.

Research shows that participation in a playful conversation is a means of communication for children with a cognitive impairment (4a). You can let your child choose which bathing items (such as their towel, soap, sponge or toys) they would like to use, or you can talk to your child about what you are doing so that they start to recognise familiar items.

For children who have a physical impairment with no cognitive impairment, being able to communicate their thoughts form an important part of their playtime experiences (4b). It is important to recognise that your child may be communicating with you through the use of toys, bubbles or drawings while bathing.

Bathing provides a ‘technology free zone’ which gives you an ideal opportunity to sing and interact with your child without interruption. This face-to-face time is essential for developing non-verbal and verbal communication skills. (5)

Establishing a bathing routine with your child will help them to develop the ability to sequence, take turns and problem solve. Water play is an engaging and fun activity for most children. It can be used to help increase attention span and concentration. These skills can be transferred to other play activities or daily routine.



# Sensory Skills

Bathing provides a complete sensory experience for your child. They may find the water helps to relax their muscles especially if they have high tone. The warm water, scents of soap/bubbles, colours of sponges and toys all help meet your child's sensory needs. Research has found that using lavender scented oils in the bath can reduce stress and help children get to sleep. (6)

Children can use water to explore how to paint. Your child can learn how to manipulate a paint brush and use it to brush water or bath paint onto the bath or wall tiles. This skill can be transferred to other activities around the home or school environment.

Research suggests that parent's touch on their child's skin during washing or handling helps to stimulate the vagus nerve. This nerve controls your child's heart rate, blood pressure and digestion which helps them to relax. (6)

See the activity table in the resource section for more ideas about how to develop skills in each of the above areas.



# Sensory processing

Sometimes children are not able to fully process or regulate sensory information from their senses of hearing, sight, touch, smell, or taste, as well as the 'hidden' senses of balance and body awareness. Some children may over-respond or under-respond to this sensory information.

Children who under-respond may love touching objects, splash excessively, and they may crave bright lights, colours and smells. They might get very excitable and loud, and not tire out easily.

Children who over-respond may not enjoy being touched, they may have very sensitive skin (water or a rough towel might feel painful to them), and they may find bright lights, colours or smells overwhelming. They might cry or try to avoid bathing altogether.

Sensory processing is complex, so if you feel that your child may have sensory processing issues which are interfering with bath time, speak to your Occupational Therapist who will be able to give you specialist advice. **(7)**

'Sensory processing is complex, speak to your Occupational therapist who will be able to give you specialist advice.'



# Activities

Area of development	Activities
<b>Gross Motor Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Splash arms and legs in the water</li><li>• Throw and catch a ball</li><li>• Reach forward for toys</li><li>• Encourage your child to wash themselves – even if you have to give some help or encouragement (they could reach down to wash their legs and feet)</li><li>• Transfer toys or building blocks from one side of the bath to the other</li><li>• Burst bubbles</li></ul>
<b>Fine Motor Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place foam shapes on the edge of the bath</li><li>• Paint / draw on bath with bath paints</li><li>• Manipulate objects e.g. fill and pour water from a cup or jug</li></ul>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place various objects into the bath and let your child explore the size and weight of them</li><li>• Cause and effect toys – wind up a toy which then moves away from you or fill a jug with water and pour onto the child or into the bath</li><li>• Name and describe body parts and encourage your child to repeat or point to the body part</li><li>• Bathe a doll and pretend to wash the dolls hair, face and body. Dry the doll afterwards – this teaches basic bathing techniques and reinforces awareness of body parts</li></ul>
<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play with siblings in the bath</li><li>• Play some music and sing nursery rhymes to your child</li><li>• Use bath paints or bath crayons to write on the side of the bath</li></ul>
<b>Sensory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play with bubbles</li><li>• Use different textures of sponges or cloths to wash with</li><li>• Use different scents and colours of soaps</li><li>• Let your child look at themselves in a mirror whilst in the bath</li></ul>



# Top tips



- Make bathing as fun and interactive as possible to keep your child engaged in the bathing process.
- Let your child help with washing their limbs – this will help develop their body awareness and recognition of body parts.
- Monitor your child's head control: if their head starts to fall forward you can recline the seat back. If they have had enough, it may be time to get out of the bath.
- For some children bathing is a relaxing and calming experience, but for others bathing is a stimulating experience in which case bathing before bed time is not ideal!
- Bathing immediately after meal times can make your child feel uncomfortable or cause them to be sick. (8)
- If your child has many favourite toys, limit the amount they use in the bath to two or three so they can focus and explore them in more detail.

# Resources

## Therapy terms explained



### **Gross motor skills:**

Large movements usually related to developmental milestones. The gross motor skills we will focus on in relation to Splashy are reaching, throwing, catching, clapping and kicking. Gross motor skills are important for developing shoulder girdle and pelvic girdle strength and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills are an important foundation upon which to build more complex skills.



### **Fine motor skills:**

Small movements usually related to hand function. For example the ability to manipulate small objects, isolate fingers for both painting or drawing and grasps and grips on objects.



### **Sensory skills:**

Ability to process information using the senses of movement, balance, sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch to understand the world and carry out everyday activities.



### **Communication:**

Ability to listen and respond through facial expressions, gestures, sounds or words.



### **Cognitive skills:**

The ability to understand, think, learn and remember words, facts or events.



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# Take care of your back

Back pain is a common problem. However special needs parents may be more at risk of back pain because of the amount of lifting and moving of equipment that they do on a daily basis.



**Plan and Prepare:** Take time to think about the task that you are going to do and be aware of the movements needed to complete the task. Try and cut down the amount of lifting required where possible. This may make tasks a little bit longer to begin with, but you will soon get used to it.

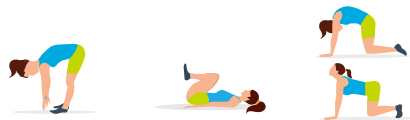


**Keep calm:** When we panic and rush things, we are more likely to hurt ourselves. Stress management and taking care of our mental health is vital for our physical well-being.



**Exercise:** This is one of the best ways to help prevent and manage back pain. The type of exercise, whether it is walking, swimming or yoga, does not matter as long as you do something regularly and remain active. The choice of exercise is yours; if you enjoy what you are doing, you will be more likely to continue and see the benefits. Exercise can be divided into three sections – mobility, strength and endurance. Below are some exercises that you can complete at home which may help strengthen your back to prevent or ease back pain:

**Mobility:** stretches (bending down to touch toes, lying on back and bringing knees to chest, or cat/camel movement all stretch lower back)



**Strength:** squatting, modified deadlifts, plank, press ups



**Endurance (cardio vascular):** walking, running, cycling, swimming



# Take care of your back

More exercises, hints and tips on looking after your back can be found in the library of [www.backcare.org.uk](http://www.backcare.org.uk) website called 'exercises for a better back'.

## How to promote good back health:



If you have experienced back pain, please seek advice from you GP or local physiotherapist who will provide you with ways to treat your back pain.

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for online resources and further info visit  
[www.fireflyfriends.com/GottaGo](http://www.fireflyfriends.com/GottaGo)

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