

## Massage stories

A massage story is a way of sharing a story, song or rhyme with your child through touch, using a series of strokes on your child's body (usually the back). Massage stories are a way of sharing touch in a fun and interactive way, and can also be used as a way of calming your child.

If you want to use massage oils, plant-based ones are best (e.g. coconut oil, jojoba oil, avocado oil, apricot oil, sweet almond oil, and olive oil). Beware of using essential oils, especially if your child is on medication, as they can cause an adverse reaction.

Here are some examples of massage stories for you to try:

### Patting Story - The Cat and the Bird

Once upon a time a bird flew "flip flap flip flap flip flap"  
(Fingers pat up and down both arms)

Suddenly a big cat came running" thump, thump"  
(Fists pat up and down the arms)  
And chased the tiny bird up into a bush!  
(Patting fingers up the arms to the head)

A storm swept the bush to and fro.  
(Pat all over the head)

The wind blew "puff puff puff puff puff puff!"  
(Pat face on the cheeks and blow)

The rain fell "tinkle tinkle tinkle tinkle!"  
(Pitter-patter raindrops on head with fingertips)

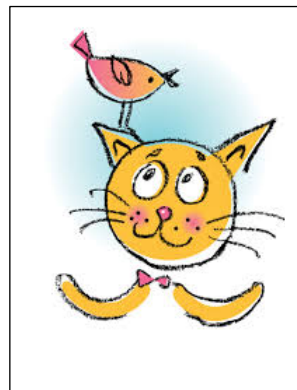
The little bird flew to find safety in the bushes on one side.  
(Strum fingers on one side of the hair)

And then on the other side.  
(Strum fingers on the other side)

The cat followed into the bushes chasing the bird!  
(Pat all over the hair)

When suddenly!  
(Stop and hold up your arms and hands)

The bird flew down ... and found safety in a warm heart!  
(Take hands to heart of the listener and flutter them together)



Taken from 'The Sensology Workout: waking up the senses'

## Weather Massage

Once there was a big yellow sun

*One hand on the shoulder, the other hand makes clockwise circles on the back*

that warmed the whole world.

*Make sun rays to the side of where the circle has been 'drawn'*

But clouds appeared and covered the sun.

*Small circles with finger tips*

Then came the wind, which blew and blew harder and harder

*Move hands across back applying increasingly firmer pressure*

until the wind turned into a tornado and hurricane.

*Make vigorous circles on back using finger tips*

Then came lightening

*Make 'lightening' zig zags with finger tips*

and thunder.

*Pat on the back with cupped hands*



Next came the rain.

*Stroke down the back beginning at the shoulders*

It rained harder and harder

*As above, increasing the pressure*

until the rain turned to hail.

*Patter on the back using finger tips*

Then it began to snow and everything was white and beautiful,

*Press slowly and lightly with fingers over the back*

The only thing to see was the cat that climbed the roof of the house

*Starting at the base of the spine, to one side of the spine, not on the bones, roll hand up towards the neck*

Finally, a fog appeared and everything became still.

*Lay hands still on the back*

The sun came out and burned the fog away and warmed the earth once more

*Begin at the centre of the back. Slowly make a circle, getting bigger and bigger, finish by rubbing shoulders then laying hands still on the shoulders.*

Based on a massage story by Toni McGloin and Jan Nation, Fordwater School, Chichester

## The Butterfly massage story (adapted from the original by Sonia Murray)

### Materials

Basket containing fabric butterflies (including shiny textures) and caterpillars  
A collection of twigs and leaves  
Tissue paper/fabric/ real flowers (artificial flowers to be scented)  
Soft pastry brush

### Beginning the session

Exploring the butterflies and caterpillars together.



Once upon a time there was a tiny caterpillar who went for a walk. Sometimes he walked this way.....  
*Walk your fingers in a clockwise direction around the back of the child's hand*

Sometimes he walked that way.  
*Walk your fingers in the other direction around the back of the child's hand*

Sometimes the caterpillar had to climb up a plant.  
*Walk your fingers slowly and firmly up the back of the child's hands from the fingertips to the wrist*

When he reached the top he looked around to see what he could see.  
*Gently stroke the palm of your hand in a clockwise direction over the back of the child's hand*

Then he looked the other way.  
*Gently stroke the palm of your hand in the other direction over the back of the child's hand*

The caterpillar decided to climb down and find a place to build his cocoon.  
*Walk your fingers slowly and firmly back down the back of the child's hands from the wrist to the fingertips*

On his way the caterpillar crawled over twigs, leaves.  
*With your forefinger and thumb, starting with the little finger squeeze gently down the side of each finger/thumb to the fingertip. Use hand under hand explore twigs and leaves*

The little caterpillar reached a flower that smelt beautiful.  
*Using hand under hand explore flowers/rose petals etc. and offer them to the child to smell*

The little caterpillar decided to build his cocoon (house) here. He added layers and layers to make it safe and strong.  
*Place the palms of your hands either side of the child's and stroke repeatedly from the wrists to the fingertips*

After a while the little caterpillar had grown and needed to push his way out of the cocoon.  
*Gently rub your thumbs from the centre of the child's hand outwards in firm strokes*

When he climbed out of his cocoon the little caterpillar realised he was very different and had grown beautiful wings. He flapped his wings.  
*Gentle brushing on the back of the hand with a soft pastry brush*

Then with a gentle whoosh of air, he flapped his wings and flew away *Blow gently on the back of the child's hands*

*Place your hands on the child's shoulders and firmly stroke down to the hands saying the story has finished*

Some videos of massage stories can be found at

- YouTube: Search 'Massage stories for children'
- African safari: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/story-massage-11248067>
- Wind the bobbin up- video <https://vimeo.com/399825972>