

# EXAMPLES OF BEING MENTALLY HEALTHY IN BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

## **I am two days old.**

*When I cry, my grown-up holds me skin-to-skin. Breastfeeding quickly calms and comforts me. This makes me feel safe, secure and loved.*

## **I am 9 weeks old.**

*When I'm feeling calm and alert, I open my mouth wide, my grown-up notices and does the same with his mouth. I smile at him, and he smiles back, this helps me to feel connected and to develop a sense of myself.*

## **I am four months old.**

*Getting my nappy changed and cutlery clanging in a drawer can make me cry. I also cry when I'm feeling hungry, uncomfortable, or poorly. When I cry, I'm soothed and comforted quite quickly by the grown-ups around me who can help me to feel calmer and safer.*

## **I am six months old.**

*who is curious about the world around me. I enjoy picking up or touching things that interest me. I most like chewing on my toys and find it funny when my dog wags his tail.*

## **I am 14 months old.**

*I seek out connections and feel good when I experience care and love from the grown-up close through eye contact, cuddles and smiles. Knowing that I have the support of those close to me helps me to gain a sense of security and confidence to explore my world in the way I want to. When I am taken to playgroup, I crawl back to my caregiver if there is something I'm not sure about. After a quick cuddle, I'm ready to go again!*

## **I am two-and-a-half.**

*I can get frustrated when I have to do something I don't want to. Today I cried and lay down on the ground because I didn't want to walk home from the park. My grown-up understood that I was tired and sad to be leaving the swings. They gave me a cuddle, told me I'd done a great job walking so far, and reminded me that we could come back to the park tomorrow. This helped me feel calmer, I stopped crying, continued walking for a little while, and then asked to be carried the rest of the way.*

## **I am nearly three.**

*I feel capable of trying new things, even when they're tricky. I used to push and hit when I got cross, but now I can breathe deeply and keep going. With the encouragement of the grown-ups around me, I know I can try, try, try again.*

## **I am 18 months old.**

*I know the grown-ups around me love me because they smile and laugh at things I do, they give me hugs, and lots of encouragement when I'm trying new things. I feel happy, safe, and relaxed when I'm at home with my family.*

## **I am three.**

*I have a favourite friend at nursery who I like playing cars with. Sharing is something I'm still learning to do, but most of the time I'm able to take turns playing with our favourite cars. She makes me laugh when she pulls funny faces.*

## **I am four.**

*Sometimes I feel worried when trying out new things. I started Reception a few months ago. I was able to tell my grown-ups at home and my nursery key worker that I was feeling scared. They helped me feel less nervous by listening to what was worrying me, and we found some ways to make me feel more excited to start school. In the beginning, I still cried when I had to leave my grown-ups, but my friends and new teacher were kind and comforted me so I quickly felt more settled and happier at school and formed new relationships.*

## **I am four-and-a-half.**

*I love using my imagination. I enjoy being with other children at school but I'm happiest when I'm playing on my own and creating whole new worlds with my action figures. I'm really good at building towers for my figures to jump between. It can be hard to build the towers, so I need to be calm and careful to make them balance.*