

Massage for babies offers extra benefits

STEPHANIE PAINTER

Most adults are well versed in the advantages of a blissful, relaxing massage, but many do not know that babies could also benefit.

Infant massage enhances the bond between a parent and child and can also help with reflux, sleeping and immunity, according to Infant Massage Information Service founder Heidi McLoughlin.

Mrs McLoughlin, of Sydney, was in Perth last week to conduct an intensive three-day infant massage workshop at Royal Perth Hospital. At the conclusion of the course yesterday, 20 people qualified as instructors and now will be able to teach others.

Mrs McLoughlin said more than 500 people had qualified as instructors since she had set up the service 11 years ago after noticing a gap in the market.

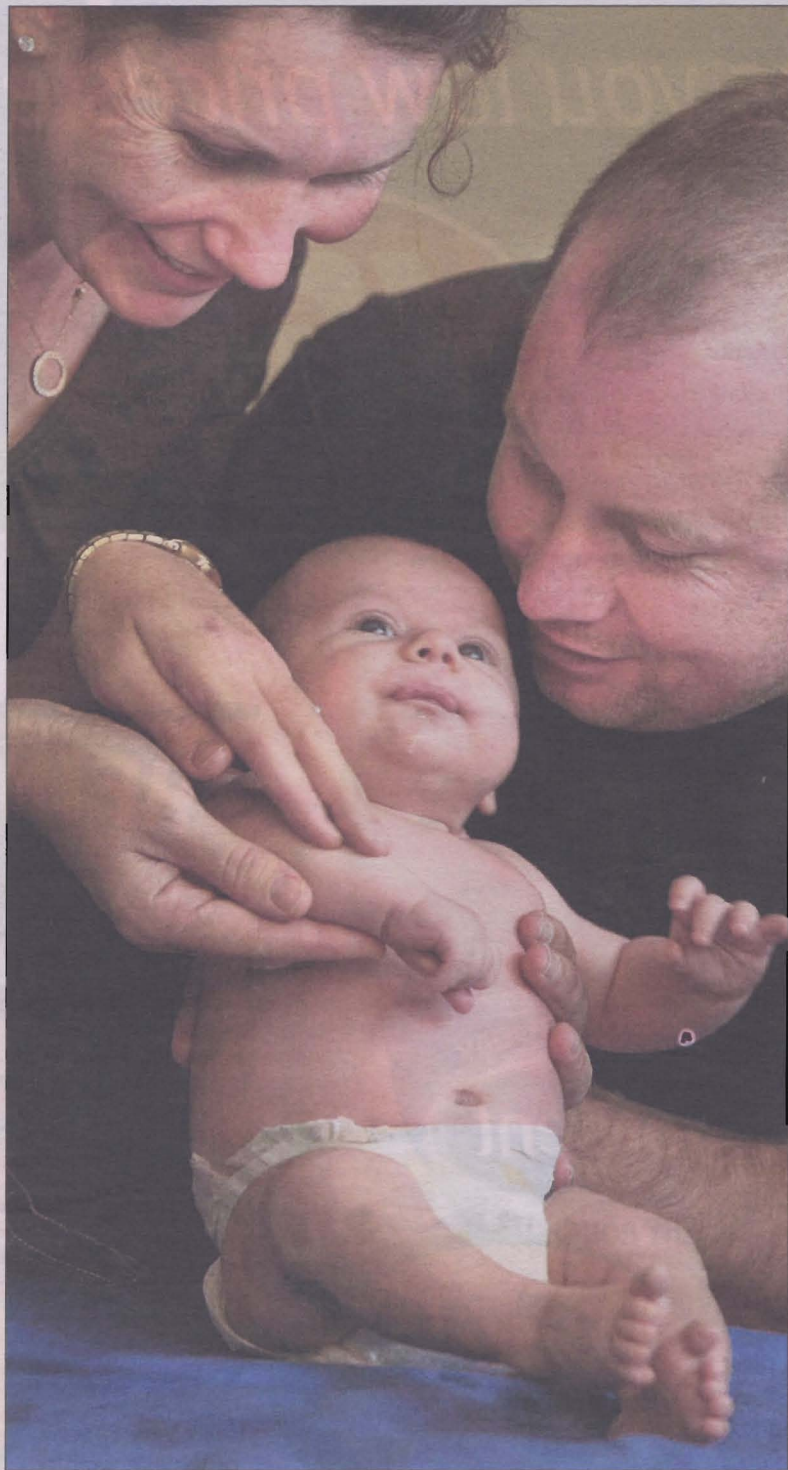
Students were taught about massage techniques, massage oils, when to massage and how to interpret infant body language.

She said parents should seek permission to begin a massage through a sequence of hand signals that babies recognised after two to eight weeks.

"It sounds funny but it's a way of letting the baby know what is going to happen next," she said.

Catherine Baker, of Willetton, attended the course so she could teach other parents, including her husband Adam, the benefits of infant massage.

For information, call 1300 137 551 or visit www.babymassage.org.au.



Loving touch: Catherine and Adam Baker, of Willetton, with six-week-old Beau during an infant massage session at Royal Perth Hospital yesterday. Picture: Nic Ellis