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Calming with the touch of hands

ANNE-Marie Kennedy felt helpless when her baby daughter Teresa suffered from severe bouts of colic and constipation after she was born a year ago.

"She would scream and cry for most of the day, which was extremely distressing," Mrs Kennedy, 32, of Ascot Park, said.

"I found myself extremely helpless after trying everything to calm her down without success and not knowing what I could possibly do to help my child."

But things changed when Mrs Kennedy, a medical scientist specialising in cellular immunology, read about the Infant Massage Information Service in her local Messenger and enrolled in the infant massage certificate training course.

Once she put the massage training into practice on Teresa, she saw results immediately.

The massage takes only about five minutes and involves the "Indian strokes" technique which goes in the direction of the hair growth.

Parents massage the child's entire body section by section but must ask their child if they want a massage first and wait for the child to give them a response.

"They'll give eye contact, giggle, squeal or get really excited and that's a positive indication that they want the massage."

Mrs Kennedy said it was imperative to ask the child if they wanted a massage because it taught that it was "not okay for just anyone to touch them".

She said infant massage also helped parents to bond with their child.

"Bonding between mothers and their infants does not always occur immediately following the birth for many different reasons, which can be quite distressing to new mothers.

"I believe we can make a real difference in the way we nurture, bond with and care for our children using one of the most simple means of communication – touch."

Mrs Kennedy will be running four-week courses on infant massage at the Burnside Community Centre every Friday at 10.30am beginning on February 13.

Cost is \$116 for the entire course and bookings are essential to Anne-Marie on 0417 087 705.

■ **For more information about Infant Massage Information Service 1300 137 551 or www.infantmassage-imis.com.au**



Anne-Marie Kennedy is an infant massage instructor.