

Caring for New Life



SPHE STRANDS:

**Myself – New life – Feelings
and emotions**

**Myself and Others – Myself
and my family**

Visit

- If possible it would be good to organise a visit from a mother or father with a small baby. The children may have had a visit from a baby in an earlier class, but their understanding and appreciation will be much more developed now.
- In advance of the visit, suitable questions can be prepared. Ask the children to consider the changes that a new baby brings to a couple or family? How much looking after do they need? Will they always need to be looked after? In what ways might that change? Who might help out?
- During the visit, these or similar questions could be asked:

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- What is the baby's name? What was the reason for choosing this name?
- When was the baby born? How old are they now?
- Has the baby changed much since then?
- Did the baby sleep much when it was born first? How is it sleeping now?
- Has the baby's daily routine changed much since birth? In what way?
- What changes did the baby bring to the house? Have the parents' lives changed much? Is it ever difficult looking after a baby? In what way?
- Was the pregnancy difficult? (sensitivity required)
- How often does the baby need to be fed and changed?

Art

Invite the children to draw a picture of a newborn baby in the centre of a page, and around it to write all the words they associate with caring for a newborn:

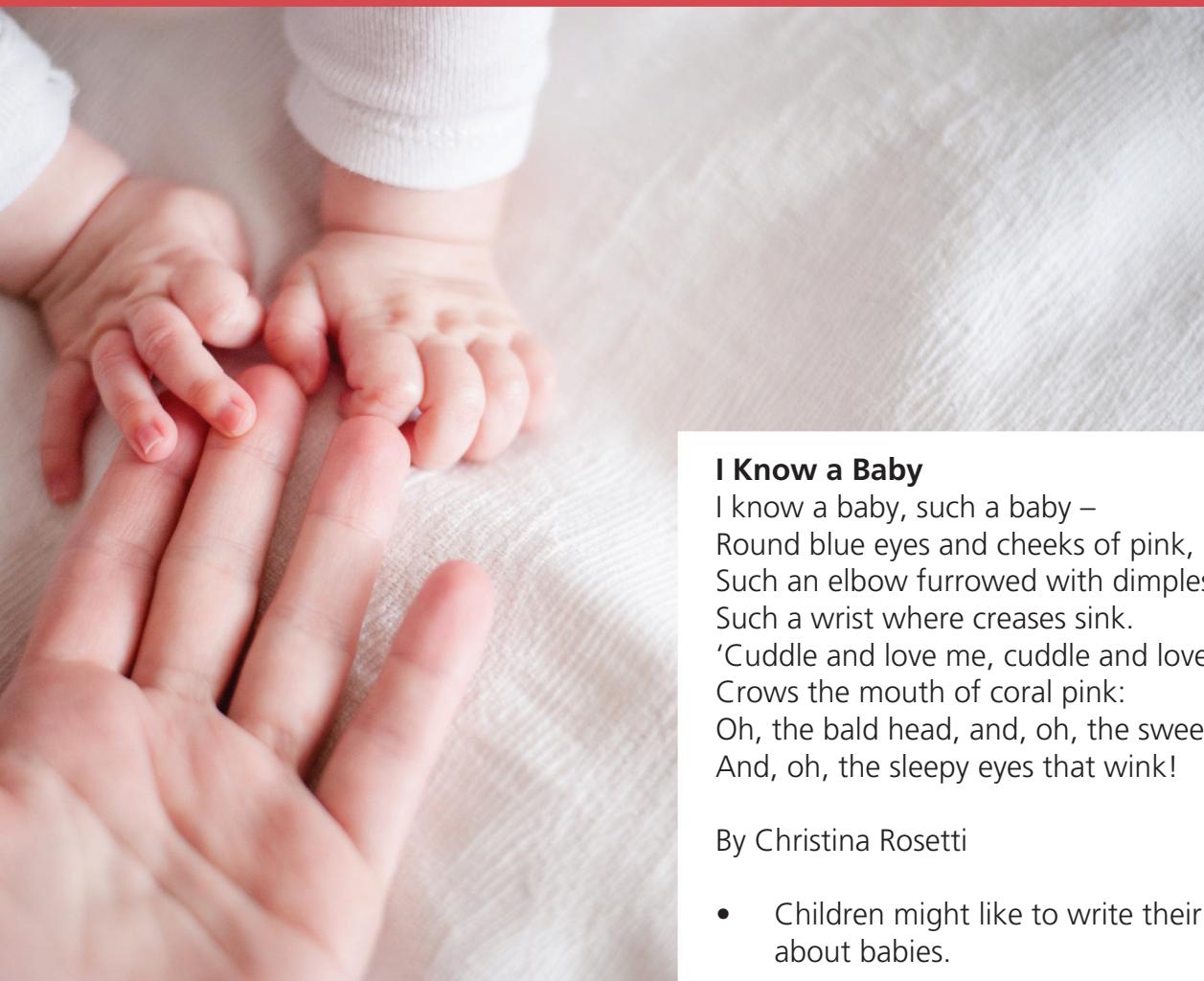
- E.g nappies, breast-feeding, bottles, sleep, burping, walks, play, cuddles, etc.
- In groups of three/four invite them to share their experiences of minding babies.

Poem

You might like to read the following poem with the class:

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I Know a Baby

I know a baby, such a baby –
Round blue eyes and cheeks of pink,
Such an elbow furrowed with dimples,
Such a wrist where creases sink.
'Cuddle and love me, cuddle and love me,'
Crows the mouth of coral pink:
Oh, the bald head, and, oh, the sweet lips,
And, oh, the sleepy eyes that wink!

By Christina Rosetti

- Children might like to write their own poems about babies.

Reflection

Invite the children to sit still with their feet on the floor and read the following reflection:

Close your eyes and imagine a newborn baby. Think of its tiny fingers and toes, its soft skin and warm, tiny body. You were once a tiny baby like that. You needed to be fed and changed. You needed love and cuddles. You needed someone to listen when you cried and to come and help you.

Babies are precious gifts from God. From the time they are tiny cells in their mother's womb they need to be minded and they are born completely helpless. They need trusted adults to make sure they grow into strong, healthy children and, eventually, strong adults.

We ask God to help us to appreciate how wonderful new life is. Help us to always care for this wonderful gift from the moment that life begins. Make us gentle and caring. Help us to realise what an important job caring for a baby is. Amen.