



## Once Upon a Touch...: Story Massage for Children

*By Mary Atkinson, Sandra Hooper*

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A fun and creative way to increase general well-being, improve concentration and self-awareness, and encourage relaxation in children aged 3-11, this book offers a hands-on guide to story massage.

Central to the book are step-by-step, illustrated instructions for ten easy-to-learn basic strokes which are given through clothes on the back, head, shoulders and arms. These basic strokes have then been used to create over 25 story massages which vary in length and complexity. The stories range from traditional tales such as 'Humpty Dumpty' to hands-on learning stories such as 'Deep in the Rainforest.' The massages can be carried out by adults in one-to-one or group sessions, or taught to children to practice on each other.

An enjoyable and interactive way of sharing the benefits and safe and appropriate use of positive touch with all children, this book will be of interest to parents and carers, bodyworkers, teachers and other school staff, care workers and arts therapists.

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## **Once Upon a Touch...: Story Massage for Children** By Mary Atkinson, Sandra Hooper Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

Story Massage empowers parents giving them a tool they can use to interact with their children in a calm non-threatening way. It is also a way for parents to spend one to one time with their child thus reinforcing the bond between parent and child. -- Andrea Bilbow, OBE, Chief Executive, ADDISS, The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service, UK This beautiful technique is an easy to grasp concept that can be passed and shared with others very simply. It is going to be something that we can use all the time. -- Louise Anderson, Mum and Social Worker I find the whole concept simple but extremely effective. The ability to have ten strokes to cover so many objects, feelings and actions allows me to see how it can be used in a variety of settings. -- Carla Malkett, Rachel House Children's Hospice, Glasgow, UK I would recommend this book to anyone who would like to help children learn to relax at home, school, nursery, play group, in groups or one to one. It introduces simple massage skills to promote relaxation and wellbeing. The stories help promote creativity, turn taking, empathy and self-esteem. Great concept, great book. -- Kay Locke, Yoga Therapist for Mental Health and Special Needs The book is AMAZING! I love it! It's so easy to use as a teacher. -- Mary Spink, Drama Teacher, Massage in Schools Programme Instructor The reach of positive touch never ceases to amaze me. All it takes are some bold and visionary advocates, in this case from the folks at Story Massage UK. This totally innovative program empowers children using structured touch for interpersonal skills development, confidence building and self-discovery. -- David Palmer, Founder and Executive Director of TouchPro International I work in a special needs early years setting with children who have profound and multiple learning disabilities and also some with sensory processing disorders and some with challenging behaviour. We have trialled a few of your massage rhymes and stories. Some children showed real enjoyment and relaxed into the sessions, others stilled and briefly calmed down, others nuzzled into staff showing pleasure as they had their massage and some lifted up their tops by themselves during it to get skin on skin contact. For other children it was another alternative idea for them to get used to "touch" and they tolerated and preferred some strokes more than others, again, that is positive in itself. As it has been so successful we are now going to extend it into our timetable on a regular basis. -- Helen Edgar, Special Needs Teacher, Birmingham, UK We have been using story massage with our pupils for twelve months. The pupils at Westfield have a wide range of complex needs and we have found that there are benefits for all pupils from 4 years to 19 years. The main benefits for us have been increased levels of engagement, understanding and acceptance of appropriate touch, peer working across phases and the enhancement of our literacy curriculum. Story massage is very effective and very easy to put in place across a school. -- Nicki Gilbert, Head Teacher, Westfield Special School As a therapist as well as a mother of a child with ADHD I have found story massage to be a valuable tool... The illustrations are colourful and appropriate and the children really enjoy them. The way the book is set out is child friendly and very easy to understand. -- Leanne Brown, Indian Head Massage Therapist The book provides the information you need to approach story massage confidently and sensitively and with a real sense of enjoyment. There are many benefits to story massage both for the child and the adult. Amongst other things it promotes calmness, relaxation, wellbeing and bonding. -- Pooky Knightsmith In Our Hands blog I found the book easy to use and the stories highly enjoyable. I tested some of the stories out on my five-year-old daughters and found it to be the perfect way to relax before bedtime. My girls have also enjoyed learning to use the different strokes on each other, and this provides a chance for fun and bonding between them. -- Pooky Knightsmith In Our Hands

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bond between parent and child. (Andrea Bilbow, OBE, Chief Executive, ADDISS, The National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service, UK)

This beautiful technique is an easy to grasp concept that can be passed and shared with others very simply. It is going to be something that we can use all the time. (Louise Anderson, Mum and Social Worker)

I find the whole concept simple but extremely effective. The ability to have ten strokes to cover so many objects, feelings and actions allows me to see how it can be used in a variety of settings. (Carla Mallett, Rachel House Children's Hospice, Glasgow, UK)

I would recommend this book to anyone who would like to help children learn to relax at home, school, nursery, play group, in groups or one to one. It introduces simple massage skills to promote relaxation and wellbeing. The stories help promote creativity, turn taking, empathy and self-esteem. Great concept, great book. (Kay Locke, Yoga Therapist for Mental Health and Special Needs)

The book is AMAZING! I love it! It's so easy to use as a teacher. (Mary Spink, Drama Teacher, Massage in Schools Programme Instructor)

The reach of positive touch never ceases to amaze me. All it takes are some bold and visionary advocates, in this case from the folks at Story Massage UK. This totally innovative program empowers children using structured touch for interpersonal skills development, confidence building and self-discovery. (David Palmer, Founder and Executive Director of TouchPro International)

I work in a special needs early years setting with children who have profound and multiple learning disabilities and also some with sensory processing disorders and some with challenging behaviour. We have trialled a few of your massage rhymes and stories. Some children showed real enjoyment and relaxed into the sessions, others stilled and briefly calmed down, others nuzzled into staff showing pleasure as they had their massage and some lifted up their tops by themselves during it to get skin on skin contact. For other children it was another alternative idea for them to get used to "touch" and they tolerated and preferred some strokes more than others, again, that is positive in itself. As it has been so successful we are now going to extend it into our timetable on a regular basis.

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The book provides the information you need to approach story massage confidently and sensitively and with a real sense of enjoyment. There are many benefits to story massage both for the child and the adult. Amongst other things it promotes calmness, relaxation, wellbeing and bonding. (Pooky Knightsmith *In Our Hands* blog)

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#### About the Author

**Mary Atkinson**, MA, PGCE, is an award-winning complementary therapist and tutor, and author of four books on massage, including *Healing Touch for Children*. Alongside Sandra Hooper, she runs training courses for individuals and organisations to help develop skills and confidence in the use of story massage. Mary lives in Chichester, UK.

**Sandra Hooper**, BEd (Hons), is an experienced primary school teacher, massage therapist and a respected international trainer on the Massage in Schools Programme (MISP). She runs training courses on story massage alongside Mary Atkinson. Sandra lives in Brighton, UK.

#### Users Review

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