



## Series 1. Episode 6

Turning *Little Stones* show notes

Sharing baskets of treasures with Emily's 6-month-old daughter.

## 6. Sharing Baskets of

Treasures

with Emily Parker

This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> in a two-part mini-series. If you haven't already listened to episode # 4, we suggest that you do before tuning into episode #6.

### Sharing a Basket of Treasure

A few weeks ago, we chatted with Lauren about 'Baskets of Treasure' (Series 1, episode #4). She inspired us as she explained what they are, what to include and what an amazing resource they are for our youngest children.

Hopefully we've had time to source or make our own and we're now eager to introduce it to our child (typically 6 to 10 months).

### Your basket's first outing!

In today's podcast, Emily has been watching her 6-month-old daughter, Hallie, as she explored her basket for the first time. In conversation, we pick out key points which make every Treasure Basket outing special.

### Preparation

The basket had been carefully **prepared** beforehand (refer to Baskets of Treasures podcast #4 & show notes). Emily needed to know that everything is clean and safe.

Emily was surprised how many 'treasures' it contained. It was **FULL** of different objects that were safe and appealing.

We **prepared the space**. This involved removing all distractions. Hallie's toys were out of sight, a different mat was brought out for her to sit on with room enough for the basket and objects. This mat will only be used it for heuristic play activities.

### Position

The basket of treasures was placed on the mat **next to** the side of Hallie's body. Hallie is able to sit securely, but if she were still a little wobbly in a sitting position, we could either place a support cushion behind her or be a human support ourselves. (This is the better option as the carer is behind the child's sight line and therefore not be a distraction).

Emily was invited to **be quiet** and observe. She tells us that this was not easy, but she soon realised that it helped Hallie stay focussed on exploring her treasures.

### Observe & enjoy!

Emily took the opportunity to **notice** what Hallie was drawn towards and how she explored whatever she chose. She tells us that she could almost "see her cogs whirring" and that some of her choices surprised her!

Emily was also surprised how long Hallie remained **focussed** on the basket of treasures. She tells us that it seemed to "give her a boost of energy". She also explained, "I was engrossed too... time flew by". Emily describes the whole session as a 'joyful' time for them both.



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## How to make every 'Basket of Treasure' session special

### What is it?

We need to remember children are exploring an object to find out *what it is*. Maybe it makes a sound (the toothbrush inside the wooden tube)? Maybe it feels cold or textured?

Babies typically use their mouth to explore *what things are*. Emily noticed that Hallie seemed unsure about the sensation in her mouth of the metal handles of the measuring cups. But she persevered, took it out and then tried a second time.

Some discoveries are accidental. Hallie realised that the metal cup sounded differently when connecting with different objects.

Babies typically will not choose the obvious things. Emily thought that Hallie would choose colourful or noisy objects. As we offer a basket of different treasure to explore, they will show us their interests and current fascinations.

### No distractions

Preparing the environment is key. By removing visual or sound distractions and bringing out a different mat, signals to very young children that it is time for a heuristic play session.

Think about where the carer should be. Close enough to communicate our presence yet out of our child's immediate sightline is ideal.

Our words can be distracting. It can be hard to stay silent, but it really aids their concentration. Even naming an object during the session can break the spell.

We do not need to touch the objects but *if* we do (to keep our child's interest), it is best to use slow and careful movements, keeping our focus on the treasures, not our child.

### What is the role of the carer during the session?

The adult should always keep still, present and focussed on the basket of treasures.

Our primary role is to observe, notice and learn from our children. What are they choosing? Which of their senses is being stimulated? (Hallie's was sound today, but this might change). We need to be prepared to be surprised and question our assumptions about what our child likes...

Marvel at the neural connections that we can almost 'see'. This simple activity is enabling thinking and learning to happen by synapse connections, stimulating our children's brain development. WOW!

Enjoy the peace!

### How long?

The first heuristic treasure basket session may last 20 minutes or more – it is amazing to see how long an infant can remain focussed and attentive!



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We can see when our child's interest begins to waver, but don't hurry to pack away, they often keep going when they find some other treasure!

### How to end the session

We can now break the silence by suggesting it's time to put things away.

It's best to involve the child in placing everything back in the basket. Doing this together, maybe singing a put-away song. Emily used Makaton signs. This is *part of* the session.

Whilst putting things away, we might name the ONE item that held most appeal for our child.

### What next?

We will want to make sure that the objects that held most appeal are in there for next time. Emily knew that she would keep the measuring cups and toothbrush holder in for next time and maybe position them lower in the basket.

We'll need to check everything for safety and cleanliness. Which items have been in the mouth and need to be cleaned?

Children are typically calm and peaceful after this activity.

Put it away (including the floor mat – folded and used as a cover) and consider if you will change any items or add to the basket of treasures for next time.

*Enjoy!*

*Further information, practical guidance and advice are available through*

*Turning Little Stones*

***Delving a little Deeper***