

# Life with Your New Baby

Handout

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Presented By:  
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Sponsored by NIH Child Care Board & ORS/Division of Amenities and Transportation Services.

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## *Agenda*

- Bringing your new baby home
- Trusting your instincts
- Infant care resources – first year
- Living in “Baby Time”
- New parent stress management
- Balancing work & family

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## *Bringing Baby Home*

- Make a “Helper List”
- Prepare your home
- Get organized
- Get comfortable



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## *Trust Your Instincts*

- Fear v Intuition
- Societal messages...insecurity
  - "Show the baby who's boss."
  - "You need to put that baby on a schedule."
  - "If you let that baby sleep in your bed, you'll never get her out."
  - "Don't pick that baby up. Babies need to cry."
  - "Put that baby down. You'll spoil her."
  - "That's not what the experts say."
- Responding assertively to family and friends

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## *Believe in Yourself*

- To build your baby's sense of self.
- To make it easy on yourself (this year and next year, too).
- To enjoy the perks.



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## *Infant Care - The First Year*

- Get familiar with each other
- Understand developmental milestones
- Crying to communicate
- Feeding your baby
- Sleep schedule
- Toys and activities



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### *Infant Care Resources*



- *Healthy Start, Grow Smart*
- *What to Expect First Year*
- Resource & Referral Service  
1-800-777-1720
- Resources List

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### *Learning to Live in “Baby Time”*



- Connect with other moms and dads
- Take breaks
- Establish a satisfying routine
- Look at the big picture

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### *Memory Keeping Framing “Baby Time”*

- Keep a Baby Book of milestones
- Make a photo album
- Invite other family members to write an observation in a baby diary
- Create “birthday videos”



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### *Stress Management*

- Continue good eating habits
- Get the rest you need
- Delegate some items on your 'to-do' list
- Communicate assertively
- Develop a routine
- Be prepared
- Enlist support – build in personal time

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### *Returning to Work*

- Carefully examine your family's needs
- Display confidence in your decision
- Respect the decisions of other parents
- Use the family-friendly tools at work



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### *Balancing Work & Family*

- Prioritize
- Explore options
- Share the load
- Combine tasks
- Enjoy quality time
- Simplify
- Remember, it's a balancing act



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*Thank You*

Please take a moment to complete the evaluation form provided. Your input is appreciated

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## ***Tip Sheet: Caring for Your Newborn***

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Few events are as exciting or as intimidating as bringing home a new baby. After all, there is no owner's manual for your particular baby, because they're all different in their "signals", preferences and patterns. But with an understanding of the basic parenting guidelines for a newborn, you'll have a better idea of what to expect and how to fulfill the needs of your baby.

### **Getting Familiar with Each Other**

One of the most important things you can do for yourself and your baby is to spend time getting to know him. While he sleeps, take off the blanket and look at his little toes, feet, legs, and on up to his puffy little face. Babies born vaginally generally have a pretty tough time of it during the birthing process and may have a slightly pointed head, squinty eyes, and flattened nose. Don't worry, this is only temporary. Babies born by C-section usually don't have the pointed head or puffiness.

Listen to the sounds he makes and watch the faces he makes while sleeping and when awake. You will get to watch your baby yawn, cough, sneeze, hiccup, and cry when he is lonely or uncomfortable in some way. Getting to know this new little person in your life makes him much less intimidating and will make you much better able to understand what he's trying to tell you.

You can't spoil a newborn, so holding him as often as you and he would like is not only fine, it's good for him. Babies thrive on human touch. It is not true that letting a newborn baby cry is "good for him". One of the first lessons your newborn baby needs to learn is that his world, your family, is a place where he is loved and that his needs will be met.

### **Developmental Milestones**

The first 4 to 6 weeks of your baby's life are a time of amazing growth and development. At first, your baby's arms and legs may still stay curled up close to her body as she gets used to being out of the womb. Swaddling your baby securely in a baby blanket can help her feel secure as she adjusts and learns that stretching out her arms and legs feels good. She should be able to move her arms and legs equally well on both sides of her body.

Your baby may begin to lift his head a little bit when on his tummy and will enjoy looking up at objects while on his back. By the end of the first month he may even be starting to turn to his side and will be finding his hands and fingers for sucking. He can only focus on objects that are about 8 to 15 inches away, so his favorite thing to look at will be your face! Spend a lot of time holding your baby close and talking or singing to him.

Crying is how your newborn will communicate her needs to you. It may take you a little while to begin to know the "hungry cry" from the "tired cry", but you will figure it out. The best thing to do is pick her up when she cries and check which of her needs may need to be met. Check for a dirty diaper and change it if it is overly wet or if she has had a bowel movement. Has it been more than 2 hours since her last meal? She could be hungry. Or, if she has recently been fed, she may need to be burped. Is she uncomfortably warm or cold? Newborn babies generally need only one more layer of clothing than you do, and overdressing can make them too warm.

If his diaper is clean, he's been fed, and is not otherwise uncomfortable, he may just be lonely. Holding your baby while walking or rocking him and singing or pointing out pictures around the house can help to calm and distract him. Remember, your touch is very important to your baby's physical and emotional development. Hold, caress and talk to your baby as often as you can.

### **Feeding your Baby**

Whether you decide to breast feed or bottle feed your baby, in the first few weeks she will need to eat every 3 to 4 hours. The amount of formula will vary. Some babies take a full 4 ounce bottle at each feeding, while others only take 1 or 2 ounces at one feeding and 4 ounces at another. As long as your pediatrician feels your baby is gaining weight at an appropriate rate, there is no need to worry about inconsistent feeding patterns in the first few weeks.

Remember that 3 to 4 hours between feedings is approximate. Sometimes your baby may be hungry again after only 2 hours, and other times he may sleep through a feeding. Encourage your baby to awaken during the day for all of his feedings so that he will get used to eating during the day and, eventually, sleeping at night.

When feeding your baby, pick a quiet spot where you can sit comfortably and give her your entire attention. Establishing a feeding routine that includes a favorite rocking chair, comfortable pillow to help prop your baby up, and a pillow behind your back for your comfort makes your baby expect feeding time to be a favorable experience. Do not try to talk on the phone or entertain guests during feeding time, unless you want a fussy baby. Always wash your hands before preparing formula and feeding your baby.

Find quiet time activities for your other children such as watching a video or having a snack of their own. Younger children might enjoy bringing along a favorite stuffed animal or doll so they can feed their "baby" too. Talk to and caress your baby during feeding time and burp him between breasts or halfway through the bottle. If he seems to be full before usual, he may just need to burp. There are many good formulas available. Ask your baby's doctor for recommendations on what kind of formula is best for your infant.

## Parenting

The most important part of parenting a newborn is making sure her needs are met and providing her with plenty of love and attention. Keep diapers changed, hold and talk to her, feed her when she's hungry and help her to establish a sleep schedule. The best way to help your newborn establish a sleep schedule is by setting up a bedtime routine each night. A warm bath (a sponge bath is fine in those first days or weeks before the umbilical cord has fallen off) followed by pajamas, a bottle and being rocked help baby to relax and to learn the cues that mean it's bedtime. There are different ways of thinking about the best way to help children sleep through the night. Read up on the subject and then choose the one that works best for you. The important thing is to be consistent so your baby knows what to expect.

## Toys and Activities

It is not necessary to provide a lot of expensive, "development toys". The toys your baby is most likely to enjoy in those first months include a few small stuffed animals, a brightly colored baby gym for him to look at while he's lying on his back, and an infant seat to allow him to sit up a little bit and begin to look around. You will be the one who provides the most entertainment just by holding him and letting him focus on your face.

Give her time on a blanket on the floor (either carpeted or on a soft rug) so she can practice focusing on the toys on her baby gym and practice rolling to her side. This is also a good place to give her some time on her tummy so she can practice picking her head up and, eventually, pushing up with her arms. Never leave your baby unattended in any kind of baby seat or swing, or on the floor alone if there are any pets in the house. Even newborn babies can surprise you with their ability to slide out of things or grab fur. Playing soft music, classical, jazz or whatever you enjoy, and gently dancing with your baby is fun and a good way to soothe her too.

## Conclusion

Although a new parent needs to learn many things, the most important guideline is to love your baby and give him the best care that you can. Learning about babies and children and how they grow and develop will help you become the best parent you can be.

## ***Tip Sheet: Feeding Infants and Toddlers - Ages and Stages***

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Just like other areas of development, learning to eat follows a developmental pattern. The baby will go through different stages as he/she gains new motor, social-emotional and cognitive skills.

**Birth to 6 months:** Breast milk and/or iron-fortified formula. A baby does not need solid foods at this age.

**6 months:** Introduce mashed bananas, pears, rice cereal and applesauce. Babies are transitioning from liquids to solids.

**7 to 9 months:** Introduce cooked carrots, mashed potatoes, teething biscuits, cubes of cooked fruit, rice cereal, peaches, cooked peas beans, squash, and baby cereals such as barley, wheat, and oatmeal. By nine months they will be more interested in a variety of foods. They will also be more accomplished at eating and interested in different textures and tastes.

**9 to 12 months:** Continue to add in new foods one at a time: rice cakes, O-shaped cereals, pasta, tofu, noodles, peas, beans, egg yolk, ½ inch cubes of cheese, yogurt or cottage cheese, baked yams and ground up chicken. If there is a history of allergies in the family, some pediatricians suggest postponing the introduction of dairy products until one year of age.

Babies at this stage are beginning to pick up objects with their thumb and forefinger. For this reason parents need to be very careful and watch out for foods that can cause choking. Avoid crunchy raw fruits and vegetables. Try to serve foods that dissolve easily in the mouth and can be mashed with the gums, such as rice cakes, pasta, and cooked carrots. Stay away from popcorn, nuts, raw apples, raisins and other raw firm fleshed fruits and vegetables. Babies need full fat dairy products. It is a good idea for adults to cut back on fat, not babies.

**12 to 18 months:** Babies begin to eat foods from the family menu. They will now eat mashed or chopped family foods. Offer whole milk, apricots, ice cream, grape halves, grapefruit, beef, strawberries, peanut butter, muffins, pancakes, melon, fish (salmon, tuna), wheat cereal, spinach, cauliflower, mango, kiwi, melted cheese sandwich, and honey. When appropriate cut food into bites sized pieces (*Do not give honey to a baby under one-year old! It sometimes has spores that can cause infant botulism.*)

Your baby is becoming a toddler and is much more on the go now. He/she may not want to sit still for any reasonable length of time. Keep this in mind when deciding what to offer at a particular meal. They want to eat little bits, on and off, all day. This age group sometimes develops a passion for one particular food and requests it for every meal. That is just fine. Try to think of a balanced diet over the week rather than one meal at a time.

At this age you may notice that your child is becoming a more independent eater. He/she may want to feed himself either finger foods or attempt to use toddler size utensils. Let your toddler explore. Remember, relax and enjoy this time and your baby will too.

## ***Tip Sheet: Helping Your Child Prepare for a New Baby***

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The arrival of a new baby is a time of adjustment for the whole family. The question is:

### ***How can you make that transition easier for your child?***

#### *Start before the baby arrives:*

- ✓ As you get closer to your due date and the impending birth seems a little more concrete to your child, begin including the child in the preparation for the baby.
- ✓ Take him to an OB appointment. Let him hear the heartbeat.
- ✓ Let your child feel the baby kick.
- ✓ Be prepared for many questions.
- ✓ Read children's books to your child. This allows him to talk about his feelings related to the anticipated arrival.
- ✓ If you are going to use his crib, make the transition to a bed at least a couple of months before the arrival of the baby. It might even be a good idea to put the crib away. The child will feel less sense of ownership.
- ✓ Also, store all baby toys away before the birth of the baby. Again, the child might feel less sense of ownership. When the baby gets old enough to play with some of these toys, let the big brother/sister pick a few baby toys out from storage to give to the baby. The older child might start playing with these toys again because they are novel. That is okay. If the child identifies some of these toys as his, let him pick something different for the baby and wait for another time.
- ✓ Let him help set up the baby's room.
- ✓ Many children start pre-school around the time a family is expecting a new baby. Try to settle your child into his pre-school at least a couple of months before the birth of the baby. Starting pre-school is a big transition in a child's life. He/she will need time to adjust to the new setting.
- ✓ Give your child the opportunity to visit other babies, if you can. This enables the child to see what a baby is really like, especially in the early months. This might give the child a chance to practice gentle touches.
- ✓ If your child seems to really like babies, you might get him/her a baby doll of his/her own. This allows him/her to act on those nurturing feelings or even those angry feelings that he might not feel comfortable expressing to you.
- ✓ Avoid telling the child how much fun it will be to play with the baby. This will not happen for a while.

#### *Life with baby:*

- ✓ Have the baby give a gift to the older child.
- ✓ When you arrive home, celebrate the fact that your child is a big brother or sister, with a cake.
- ✓ Be prepared for some emotional times. How your child handles this transition is somewhat dependent on his/her personality. Every child and family responds differently to change.
- ✓ Do not be surprised if your child shows some signs of regression for a few weeks. This does not always happen but if it does, keep in mind that it is temporary.
- ✓ Tell your child how important he/she will be to the new baby and you. He/she can teach the baby how to play with toys and he/she can help you take care of the baby.
- ✓ Assure him/her that you will always have plenty of love for him/her and the new baby!
- ✓ After the baby is born, try to set some time aside for just you and your older child. Maybe a grandparent or friend can take the baby and the rest of the family can go for ice cream or to the park.
- ✓ Most of all enjoy this time together!

## Resources

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### **Caregiver Resource & Referral – Free Benefit**

800-777-1720

#### *Scope of Child Care Services*

- Child Care Searches & Profiles
- Tips Sheets and Books
- Licensed Family Care Providers
- Child Care Centers
- Preschool Programs
- Special Needs Programs
- Adoption Agencies
- Summer Camps
- College Planning

### **NIH Work/Life Center – Campus Resource Center**

301-435-1619

TTY: 301-480-0690

<http://wlc.od.nih.gov>

U.S. Product Safety Commission, [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) (tips on childproofing your home).

Safe Kids, [www.SafeKids.org](http://www.SafeKids.org) (information on product recalls)

American Academy of Pediatrics, <http://www.aap.org>

Child Care Bureau, [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb)

National Association for the Education of Young Children, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

Administration for Children and Families, [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

Zero To Three, [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

Children's Defense Fund, [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)

Boys & Girls Club of America, [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

DC Baby, <http://www.dc-baby.com/>

DC Urban Moms and Dads, <http://www.dcurbanmom.com/>

## Presenter Bio

### Hazel Osborn, M.A.

Hazel Osborn holds degrees in psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and a graduate degree with a focus on research in work balance issues. Since 1991 she has worked in the DC metro area offering consulting and training seminars on a variety of workplace issues with a focus on personal and professional growth. She has provided services to over sixty corporations as well as hundreds of family care facilities. She has published several articles in professional journals, several adult training curricula and newsletters, and two books. Hazel also works with LifeWork Strategies to deliver training and parent coaching.