

Get out and meet others

After the first few weeks it can be helpful to get out and meet other parents at toddler groups or at your local children's centre. When you've only had three hours of sleep, having someone else say "me too" can be amazingly reassuring!

Mums - give your body time

It's easy to assume that as soon as your baby's born your body will spring back to normal. It takes nine months to grow the baby; it will probably take around that time to return to something resembling your pre-baby shape.

Make time for your relationship with your partner

Parents need time for their relationship too. You need each other's love and support for this big change in your lives, so keep talking, and don't forget to show how important you are to each other.



Helping you to be an even better mum or dad



For more information and tips on family life, visit
www.careforthefamily.org.uk.

You might like to:

- Attend a local *Time Out for Parents - The Early Years* course
www.careforthefamily.org.uk/courses
- Read *Let's Stick Together* by Harry Benson
www.careforthefamily.org.uk/shop
- Visit the *New Parents* section of our website
www.careforthefamily.org.uk/parenting

positiveparenting



Care for the Family is a registered charity and has been working to strengthen family life since 1988. Our aim is to promote strong family relationships and to help those who face family difficulties.

For information on the wider work of Care for the Family visit
www.careforthefamily.org.uk

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Top Tips For Parents

New Parents



You've been waiting for this moment for nine months, together you've survived the months of pregnancy and now your baby is at last home with you. There will be joy, relief, exhaustion and probably one or two questions about what happens next. Here are some helpful tips on how to manage those early days as new parents.

Give your baby lots of time and attention

Right from the start your baby needs lots of time and cuddles from you, which will help you to develop a strong bond. Prioritise spending time together as a new family.

Give yourself time

If you do not have strong feelings of love to begin with, allow some time for this to develop as you care for and protect your baby. If you are worried about how you feel then talk to your doctor or health visitor.



Keep them close

When you feed your baby, keep them in your arms which will help them feel more secure and will increase their bond with you.

Keep them safe

Remember to support your baby's head as you carry them or when you lay them down. Be very careful not to shake your new born; whether in play or in frustration. When on the move make sure your baby is securely fastened into the baby carrier, buggy or car seat.

Talk to them

Babies usually love vocal sounds, such as talking, singing and cooing. Your baby will probably also love listening to music. Try singing, reciting nursery rhymes or reading aloud as you sway or rock your baby gently in a chair.

Play with them

Play little games with your baby as early as the second or third month, such as peek-a-boo and clapping hands. You will be surprised how quickly your baby will join in, and it can be fun for you too.

Help them learn

Allow some time each day for your baby to stretch, kick and roll around on a blanket. Their intelligence and awareness develops faster in the first few years than ever again, so give them colourful things to look at and play with.

Take a lot of photos

The early days and years with your child will fly by, though it may not feel like this if you're on the go all day and most of the night! Take lots of photos/videos to help capture the memories, and write down 'firsts' for you to look back on with your child in years to come.



Resist competition

Parenting can feel like a competitive sport. Your baby is unique so resist comparing them with others and just enjoy them for who they are. Also, try not to compare yourself to other parents; it can lead to feelings of insecurity about your own ability. Do follow good advice, but also go with your own instincts.

Take your time

Give yourself time to relax and enjoy your baby. Learn to enjoy the little things like their first smiles, the way your baby holds your finger and the little sounds made to you – not to mention the quiet when the crying stops!

Rest when you can

Sleep in the daytime when your baby sleeps and allow others to help you in small ways, such as leaving visitors to help themselves to tea and coffee!

Relatives and friends can be a great resource and their experience can be useful. Be willing to take up offers of a meal delivered to the house, or someone to sit with the baby while you take a shower.

Look after yourself

It's perfectly normal if you feel a little down and tired in the early days, so don't be surprised if as parents you feel this way. Don't ignore how you're feeling. Give yourself a treat; while your baby sleeps, take a long bath or read a magazine. If you don't feel better after a few days, talk to your doctor or your health visitor.