

Parent Wellbeing

Babies develop and thrive in homes which are nurturing and stable, even though families may experience rough times. Looking after yourself and seeking help when you need it can help navigate these times.

REALITIES

- Many people feel an expectation to be the perfect parent. It takes practice to get better. Be patient with yourself and your partner.
- It is common to feel a loss of identity. Being a parent can feel different to the identity you may have been used to before having children.
- Taking leave from your career when you have a baby is a big decision. It is common to feel conflicted about this.
- Many parents experience anxiety and/or depression (around 1 in 5 mums and 1 in 10 dads). Help is available via the ForWhen Helpline: 1300 242 322.
- Many parents struggle with how to be a role model when they themselves may not have had a role model to follow.
- Struggling to get the balance between career and family is common. Paid paternity leave can be limited, and the expectation can be to adapt very fast.
- Caring for your baby can take over everything, and at times it may feel as though your relationship is coming last.



WELLBEING TIPS

- Adjusting to parenting takes time for everyone. Learning any new skill takes time. You don't have to be perfect, just give it a go.
- It is normal not to know exactly what your baby needs all of the time.
- Being a perfect parent is an unrealistic expectation. Don't believe everything you see on social media.
- Looking after yourself is important. When you're happier you're better able to support your partner and your baby. Identify what was important to you before you had children, and find a way to include that in your life.
- Times are changing, so choose parental leave that is right for your family. Be brave, even if you are the first in your workplace. Discuss your plans with your partner and employer. It's OK if you want to return to work, but it's also OK if you change your mind.
- Seeking help early is important and forms part of managing problems successfully. Accept help from others, especially your partner.
- Check in with your partner and be specific about what you need. Respectful communication is important.
- Get involved with your baby's routine. Be a team with your partner and embrace that each of you will handle your baby differently.
- Take time to connect every day and spend time with your baby. Never underestimate the power of a smile and a cuddle.
- Quality time as a couple is important to stay connected. Discuss what quality time means to both of you. Don't assume a romantic dinner is the magic fix.

SAFETY

- Sometimes you'll feel like you know what you're doing. Other times you won't. But you don't have to learn it all on your own. Getting support that you or a family member needs is a sign of great strength. Support networks exist to promote the health and wellbeing of the entire family.

If you have a parenting question,
call Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464