

Parenting Information For Mums & Dads: Birth to 12 Months



with you
every step
of the way

Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464



Parenting Today

Learning how to care for and nurture your baby to become an emotionally strong and capable adult takes commitment, effort, support and some humour. To bring out the best in your child and family, we recommend a parenting approach known as 'responsive parenting'. This involves tuning in to your baby's social, emotional and physical needs. You are being a responsive parent when you act promptly and match your actions to what your baby is trying to communicate to you.

What to Expect

- Whether you are parenting in a male-female couple, same sex couple or single parent family, there are challenges common to all families.
- Each parent brings their own experiences, values and beliefs about family life and parenting.
- It takes time to become confident in parenting.
- The early relationship you form with your baby sets them up for life in terms of brain development and future relationship skills.

Challenges

- Experiencing challenges in family life and parenting is common. Challenges include:
 - Financial pressures or adjustments.
 - Isolation.
 - Low parenting confidence.
 - Poor sleep.
 - Communication and relationship breakdown between parents.
 - 'Too high' expectations of yourself, baby or partner.

Parenting Tips

- Learn to read your baby's verbal and non-verbal cues to respond appropriately to their needs.
- Occasionally you will misread your baby's cues, this is normal.
- Discover what kind of family you want to be by defining your goals, beliefs and values.
- Develop family traditions, share responsibilities, and allow for moments of fun.
- Be open to advice but remember every family is unique, what works for one doesn't always work for another.
- Parenting is about trying your best, not perfection.
- Healthy eating, sunshine, fresh air, time with friends and relaxing is good for everyone.
- Maintain friendships while making new social connections through parenting groups and supports.
- You are starting a new parenting partnership with your partner, so you'll need to negotiate how you're going to parent together as a team.
- Respectful and clear communication is key for couples (remember, you are both learning to manage the changes in your life).
- Tell your partner how you are feeling, listen to your partner. It's important to share how you're both feeling.
- Accept help or ask for support when needed.

Safety

Seek help if:

- You are finding it hard to understand your baby's cues.
- You aren't coping with parenting or there is ongoing conflict as you try to co-parent.
- You are finding it difficult to resolve common parenting challenges.

**with you
every step
of the way**

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



Feeding - Breastfeeding

Feeding can be an enjoyable, shared family experience and a great way to bond. In the early stages of feeding, you and your baby will learn a lot from one and another. Be patient, enjoy the experience together.

What to Expect

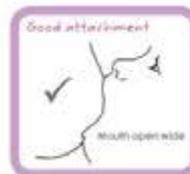
- Meeting your baby's nutritional needs is important for their growth, development and wellbeing.
- It is recommended that babies are exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months.
- Breastfeeding is recommended to continue until 12 months of age and beyond.
- Babies may feed anywhere from 6 to 12 times per day.
- Solid foods can be introduced at around 6 months of age.
- Breastfeeding on demand is recommended to meet the changing nutritional needs of your baby. It involves feeding your baby when they are showing signs of hunger. These include:
 - Sucking noises.
 - Opening mouth.
 - Turning towards your breast.
 - Sucking fingers/fists.
 - Crying (this is usually the last cue).

Challenges

- Your baby might become fussy or refuse a feed. Reasons for this include:
 - Engorgement/getting a large amount of milk too quickly.
 - Low milk supply/slow letdown.
 - Incorrect attachment to the breast.
 - Sore or damaged nipples.
 - Blocked ducts or mastitis.
 - Your baby is overtired or just not hungry.
- As many as 96% of breastfeeding mums experience nipple pain when first attaching their baby to the breast. You may feel like giving up but try and persist as it's usually temporary and there are so many benefits in breastfeeding for both you and your baby. Seek help early if you are having challenges!

Breastfeeding Tips

- Ensure your baby is properly attached to your breast (your baby's mouth is open wide with the top and bottom lips curled out, not tucked in).
- If your baby is attached properly, most of the areola is usually in their mouth and there is no pain.
- If you have pain, carefully take your baby off your breast and then reattach.



NSW
Ministry of Health,
2012

- Breastfeeding is the perfect time to bond and connect with your baby. Some tips include:
 - Soft words.
 - Gentle touches.
 - Speaking to your baby while feeding.

Safety

- Taking care of yourself while breastfeeding is important. Eat a well balanced diet, drink lots of water and rest where you can.
- Avoid co-sleeping while breastfeeding.
- Avoid alcohol, drugs and smoking.



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



Feeding - Bottle Feeding

Bottle feeding is used to offer expressed breast milk or formula to your baby. Making it work for you and your baby takes a little preparation. Always ensure that you're using good hygiene techniques (washing hands, sterilising equipment, cleaning benches).

What to Expect

- Bottle fed babies can be fed on demand, similar to breastfed babies. However, this can lead to:
 - Wasted breast milk or formula.
 - Wind pain due to quick flow of milk.
 - Symptoms of reflux.

Challenges

- Fussy feeding behaviour can be common and may be related to:
 - Poor sleep routine.
 - The flow of milk may be too slow or too fast.
 - Getting confused with feeding if they are breast and bottle fed.
 - Being held in an uncomfortable position while feeding.
 - Health issues.
 - Oral abnormalities.

You and your baby are learning together. Be patient, you and your baby can work through any challenges.

Bottle Feeding Tips

- Knowing how much milk is enough for your baby is based on weight gain, contentment between feeds, behaviour during and after the feed, and your baby's general wellbeing.
- Feed your baby their bottle over 20 to 30 minutes to make digestion easier.
- Choose a cow's milk-based formula (if not using expressed breast milk).
- Check the formula meets Australian Standards.
- Follow the mixing directions and expiry date on the formula tin.
- Allow your baby to let you know when they have had enough to drink.
- Seek professional advice before changing formula.

Always hold your baby when feeding. You are nourishing their brains as well as their bodies through bonding and connection.



Safety

- Always check the temperature of the milk before feeding.
- Don't leave your baby unattended with a bottle.
- Avoid putting your baby to sleep while drinking from a bottle.
- Sterilise bottles and equipment until your baby is 12 months to reduce risk of infection.

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



Introducing Solids

Starting solids is an exciting time. From 6 months milk alone won't meet your baby's nutritional or developmental needs, so it's recommended to introduce solids at this time (unless medically advised by a health professional).

What to Expect

- A variety of foods other than milk are recommended when your baby begins displaying these signs:
 - Tongue-extrusion has disappeared (stopped pushing objects out of their mouth automatically).
 - Good head control when sitting in a supported position.
 - Interested in others eating.
 - Milk alone no longer satisfies hunger.

Challenges

- Getting messy, spitting out food or even gagging can be normal as your baby learns to eat solids.
 - The gag reflex helps prevent your baby from choking.
- Some babies have a change in digestion when starting solids. If constipation occurs, introduce fibrous foods like pear, kiwi fruit and prunes, avoid bananas, persimmon and starchy food for a few days.
- Even without teeth your baby can learn to chew. Start cleaning teeth with a soft cloth and water once teeth appear.
- Your child won't be used to new textures like lumpy or dry foods. Be patient as they learn to accept and enjoy solid foods. It is important to encourage your child to progress to lumpy foods at around 6 to 9 months.

Tips for Introducing Solids

- Offer solid food on a spoon 30 minutes after a milk feed.
- Start slowly – offer solids once per day and work up to 3 times per day over a 4-week period.
- Start with pureed texture and progress to family foods by 12 months.
- Offer iron rich foods like iron fortified cereals, meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits, legumes and tofu.
- You can introduce foods in any order.
- Allow your baby to decide when they have had enough. These signs include turning or looking away, pushing food out or closing their mouth, playing with or throwing food.
- From 6 months of age, you can introduce a cup for water.
- Gradually wean off bottles by 12 months of age.

Sharing a meal is a sociable and enjoyable experience. Where possible have your meals with your baby. Family meal times are a great way to connect each day.



Safety

- Stay with your baby at meal times.
- Use a harness in high chairs.
- For infants under 12 months, avoid whole nuts, seeds, hard fruit, hard vegetables, honey and raw eggs.
- Avoid herbal teas, juice and soft drinks.

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



Understanding Sleep

Each baby develops their own sleeping patterns in their own time. Some babies need a lot of support to feel calm enough to fall asleep. Unlike us, their brains are not able to regulate the emotions associated with tiredness. But don't worry! If you respond to your baby's cues for tiredness and comfort consistently and sensitively, you can help improve sleep quality and duration.

What to Expect

- It is normal for young babies to be unsettled at periods throughout the day and night.
- To fall asleep, your baby needs to be well fed and feel calm and secure in their relationship with you.
- Following a feed, play, sleep cycle helps prepare your baby for sleep.
- The average baby takes between 30 seconds and 30 minutes to fall asleep.
- Babies sleep in cycles of 20 to 40 minutes.
- Your baby is likely to stir and possibly fully wake at the end of a sleep cycle.
- Babies under the age of 12 months wake at least once per night.

Tired Signs

- Recognising and responding to tired signs can help you better prepare your baby for sleep. Signs include:
 - Yawning.
 - Clenching fists.
 - Jerky movements.
 - Frowning.
 - Getting easily distracted.
 - Staring into space.
 - Irritability.
 - Crying (usually the last cue).

Sleep Associations

- Sleep associations can help your baby settle to sleep. Common sleep associations are:
 - Wrapping your baby in a wrap or sleeping bag*.
 - Quiet music or parent singing.
 - A dummy.
 - Rocking in arms or cot.
 - Patting to sleep.
 - Small soft toy (from 7 months of age)*.

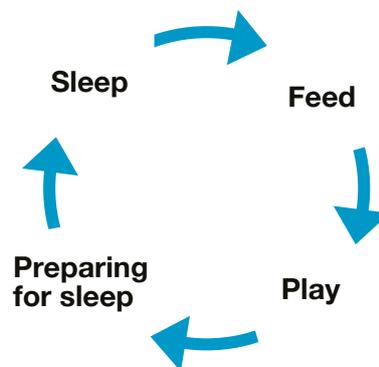
**Follow safety instructions with use of wraps, sleeping bags, or toys.*

- As your baby develops, some sleep associations may no longer be helpful – for example, using a dummy or rocking in arms.
 - Whenever a change is needed, expect that there will be unsettled behaviours like grizzling or taking longer to fall asleep. Help them cope through consistent and sensitive support.

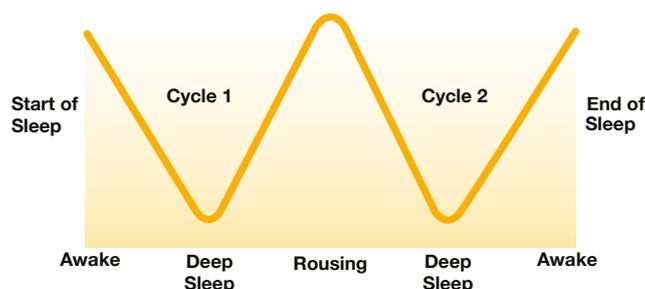
Challenges

- There are many things that can impact your baby's sleep, like:
 - Development.
 - Temperament.
 - Sleep environment.
 - Relationship with parents.
 - Life events.
 - Physical health.

Feed, Play, Sleep Cycle



A Typical Sleep





Tips for Better Sleep

Sleeping Tips

- Provide exposure to daylight and age-appropriate play every day.
- Put your baby to bed in their own safe sleep space in your room.
- Respond to your baby calmly and predictably, as this can reduce the time it takes your baby to go to sleep or resettle after waking.
- Ensure your baby has a clean nappy, face and hands (bathing your baby at night may extend their sleep time).
- Offer healthy, regular feed patterns (avoid feeding your baby to sleep if you can).
- A quiet, darkened room in combination with soft talking, singing, reading or relaxing music may help with sleep.
- Eliminate screen time or bright lights before bed.
- Soothe and comfort your baby with affection before sleep, for example a cuddle or infant massage.

Getting Your Baby to Sleep

- Once you have recognised your baby's tired signs it's time to prepare them for sleep using their sleep association (see understanding sleep).
- As your baby calms and relaxes, put them in their cot awake and allow time for them to settle.
- Stay close - your baby may wriggle and cry a little as they settle in for sleep (we all move around as we try to get comfortable in bed).

More Tips for Better Sleep

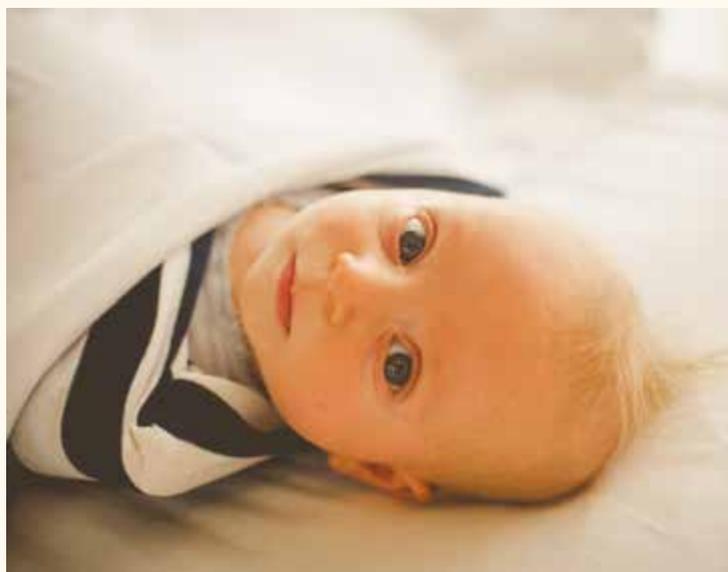
- Listen to your baby and respond to their cries. If they become louder or more distressed try:
 - Soothing words or sounds.
 - Gentle patting on their body or cot mattress.
 - Gentle rocking in cot or your arms.
 - Use a dummy.
- It can take several attempts to settle your baby until they fall asleep.
- If your baby is getting upset, pick them up and check:
 - Are they wet/dirty?
 - Are they well?
 - Are they hungry?
 - Are they too hot or too cold?
 - Do they just need a cuddle?
 - Is it time to try something else like a bath, a walk in the pram or a rest in your arms?
- Sometimes nothing works - that's OK. Next sleep cycle you can try again.

Safety

- If you are feeling overwhelmed and distressed, calmly put your baby in their cot, step out of the room and take some deep breaths and then return to settling your baby.
- Your baby is more likely to respond when you are feeling calmer.
- Always ensure your baby is sleeping in their own sleep space. Please see Red Nose for safe sleeping tips.

Follow the Recommendation of Red Nose:

1. Sleep baby **on the back** from birth, not on the tummy or side.
2. Sleep baby with **head and face uncovered**.
3. Keep baby in a **smoke free environment** before and after birth.
4. Provide a **safe sleeping environment**.
5. Sleep baby in their own **safe sleeping place** in the **same room as an adult caregiver** for the first 6 to 12 months.
6. **Breastfeed** baby if possible.



If you have a sleep & settling question call Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464



Routines

Every home is unique which means there's no one-size-fits-all approach to developing routines. What's appropriate for the age of your baby and what works in your home is important when developing your routine.

What to Expect

- Anything you do consistently becomes your routine.
- Babies grow rapidly and their needs can quickly change so your routines are often changing.
- It can take your baby several months to get used to a routine, so be patient and support them as best you can while they adjust.

Flexible Daily Routine - Following Feed, Play, Sleep Cycle

- Variations may be needed to meet your baby's needs.
- Up to 12 months your baby may still wake at night for a feed.

AGE	FEED-PLAY TIME	SLEEP/ REST TIME	AVERAGE NUMBER OF SLEEPS & FEEDS
0 - 6 weeks	1 hour	Ranging from 1 ½ - 3 hours	5 - 6 sleeps & 6 - 10 feeds
6 weeks - 3 months	1 - 1 ½ hours	1 ½ - 2 ½ hours	4 - 5 sleeps & 6 - 8 feeds
3 - 4 ½ months	1 ½ - 2 hours	1 ½ - 2 ½ hours	3 sleeps in daytime & 5 - 6 feeds
4 ½ - 6 months	2 - 2 ½ hours	1 ½ - 2 hours	3 sleeps in daytime & 4 - 6 feeds
6 - 9 months	2 - 3 hours	1 - 2 hours	2 - 3 sleeps in daytime & 3 feeds
9 - 12 months	3 hours	1 - 2 hours	2 sleeps in daytime & 3 feeds

Challenges

- Any routine needs to be flexible as circumstances change. Even a hot day could mean your baby will need an extra feed.
- Some changes are short term such as illness, returning to work, teething or travelling. Begin putting the routine back in place as soon as possible. This will take consistency and time.

Tips for Routine Development

- A daily routine including feed, play, sleep, good nutrition, physical activity and being outdoors is beneficial for your baby.
- You can develop a healthy routine by understanding your baby's cues.
- Watch for signs of hunger from your baby and respond by offering a feed (this may include solids from 6 months of age).
- Include play so your baby can develop and learn (when your baby is very young, playtime will be much shorter).
- Watch for signs of tiredness after play (this is a great time for a nap).
- It's important the routine is age appropriate for your baby. See flexible daily routine below.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself and your baby and be patient.

If you have a question about establishing routines call Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464



Development

Children grow and develop at their own rates. What is normal for one child may be different for another. As a parent, it's important to provide your baby with lots of opportunities to safely explore their environment and play and interact with you. Doing this helps your baby's language, emotional and problem-solving development.

What to Expect

- Your baby will grow and develop at amazing speed in their first year of life. Besides growing bigger, your baby will learn a range of new skills like:
 - Rolling.
 - Crawling.
 - Standing.
 - Walking.
 - Talking and interacting with others.
 - Using their hands to hold toys or feed themselves.
- Your baby will also learn feelings of safety and belonging. We call this social/emotional development. At around 7 to 9 months some babies experience separation anxiety and may get upset when you leave the room. This is a normal part of development.

Challenges

- Each baby is unique and will learn at their own pace – try not to compare your baby to other children.
- Learning new skills and being exposed to new activities and environments can be unsettling for your baby.
- Introduce new things slowly.
- A parent knows their baby best. If you're concerned about your baby's development, discuss this with your health professional.
- Avoid screen time for babies. They think you're the best 'toy' they have, interacting with you is the best way for them to develop.

Tips for Healthy Development

- Place your baby on their tummy for a few minutes several times a day to encourage crawling and eventually standing and walking.
- Play with your baby throughout the day by talking, singing, reading and having indoor and outdoor play.
- Talking, singing and reading can be done when changing, bathing or feeding your baby.
- Provide a clean, safe place to play such as a clean mat on the floor.
- Have a variety of age-appropriate toys available with different colours, sounds and textures.
- Talk to your baby. If they notice or reach for something, talk to them about that object.
- Recognise the emotions your baby shows and talk about that emotion.

Safety

- Tummy time is best done on the floor.
- Never leave your baby alone on a change table, bed or highchair.
- As your baby learns to roll and crawl ensure your home is safe (power cords and outlets not accessible, small objects or choking hazards out of reach of your baby).

Development Diagram



If you have a question about development call Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464



Mum and Dad Wellbeing

Parenting can be one of the best and also one of the most challenging experiences of your life. Some challenges are common to both parents, but some can be felt differently depending on whether you are mum or dad. Harmony in the home and the quality of your relationship with your baby and partner is important to the health and wellbeing of the whole family.

Mum Challenges

- The expectation to be the perfect mum/super mum.
- It is normal to feel a loss of who you 'used' to be. Being 'mum' can feel different to your identity which could have been attached to your career or independence.
- Taking leave from your career when you have a baby is a big decision. It is common to feel conflicted about this.
- While things are changing, it is still largely women who are at home looking after the baby and it can feel like there is an expectation to be doing it all.
- Around 1 in 5 mums experience anxiety and/or depression.

Dad Challenges

- Many dads struggle with how to be a role model when they themselves may not have a role model to follow. Times have changed and so has the role of dads. This is a good thing, but it is uncharted territory for many.
- Some dads think their partners are better at baby duties, but largely this is because they have more opportunity to practise these skills.
- Struggling to get the balance between career and family is common. Most men only get/take two weeks of paid paternity leave. The expectation is to adapt very fast.
- Sometimes it feels like your relationship is coming last and caring for your baby takes over everything.
- Around 1 in 10 dads experience anxiety and/or depression.

Tips for Mum

- Adjusting to parenting takes time, even for mums. It is normal not to know exactly what your baby needs all of the time.
- Being a perfect mum is an unrealistic expectation. Don't believe everything you see on social media. Every mum and every family faces challenges.
- Identify what was important to you before your baby arrived and find a way to include that in your life.
- Looking after yourself is important. When you care for yourself you are better able to care for others.
- Discuss your plans for return to work 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, plans can change.
- Accept help from others, especially your partner. Accept they might do things a bit differently and that's OK.
- Be specific about what you need from your partner. Respectful communication is important.
- Seeking help early is important and forms part of managing problems successfully.

Tips for Dad

- Learning any new skill takes time, you don't have to be perfect just give it a go.
- Get involved with your baby's routine. Be a team with your partner and embrace that each of you will handle your baby differently.
- Times are changing, so choose parental leave that is right for your family. More dads are taking extended leave to be the dad they want to be. Be brave, even if you are the first in your workplace.
- Take time to connect every day and spend time with your baby. Never underestimate the power of a smile and a cuddle.
- Check in with your partner. Be specific and ask questions about what is going to be helpful.
- 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.
- Looking after yourself is important. When you're happier you're better able to support your partner and your baby. Look out for Dads groups in your area.

Safety

- Getting support that you or a family member needs is a sign of great strength. Support networks exist as a way to promote the health and wellbeing of the entire family.

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

Contact Details

For all enquiries

138-150 The Horsley Drive, Carramar NSW 2163
Ph: (02) 9794 2300
www.karitane.com.au



Karitane is a not for profit organisation & registered charity committed to supporting families.

Our Vision

Leaders in early parenting services that empower families and children to be confident, safe & resilient.



Careline: 1300 227 464

For regular updates and parenting tips visit
www.karitane.com.au

