



# Tips for New Parents

Making the most of the early years

If you have questions about caring for your new baby or where to go for help, call the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program at your local public health unit.

**Algoma**

705-541-7101,  
1-888-537-5741

**Brant County**

519-753-4937

**Chatham-Kent**

519-352-7270

**City of Hamilton**

905-546-3550

**Durham Region**

905-666-6241,  
1-800-841-2729

**Eastern Ontario**

613-933-1375,  
1-800-267-7120

**Elgin-St. Thomas**

519-631-9900

**Grey Bruce**

519-376-9420

**Haldimand-Norfolk**

519-426-6170,  
905-318-6623

**Haliburton, Kawartha,**

**Pine Ridge District**

1-866-888-4577

**Halton Region**

905-825-6000,  
1-866-442-5866

**Hastings & Prince Edward  
Counties**

613-966-5500,  
1-800-267-2803,  
TTY 613-966-3036

**Huron County**

519-482-3416,  
1-877-837-6143

**Kingston, Frontenac  
and Lennox & Addington**

613-549-1154,  
1-800-267-7875 ext 1555

**Lambton Public Health**

519-383-8331,  
1-800-667-1839

**Leeds, Grenville and  
Lanark**

613-345-5685,  
1-800-660-5853

**Middlesex-London**

519-663-5317 ext 2280

**Niagara Region**

905-688-8248  
1-888-505-6074 ext 7555

**North Bay Parry Sound  
District**

705-474-1400,  
1-800-563-2808

**Northwestern**

807-468-3147,  
1-800-465-4377

**Ottawa**

613-580-6744,  
TTY: 613-580-9656

**Oxford County**

519-539-9800, ext 3410  
1-800-755-0394, ext 3410

**Peel Region**

905-799-7700

**Perth District**

519-271-7600

**Peterborough**

705-743-1000 ext 282

**Porcupine**

1-800-461-1818

**Region of Waterloo**

519-575-4400

**Renfrew County  
and District**

613-735-8666,  
1-800-267-1097 ext 666

**Simcoe Muskoka District**

705-721-7520,  
1-877-721-7520

**Sudbury and District**

705-522-9200,  
1-866-522-9200

**Thunder Bay District**

807-625-5900,  
1-888-294-6630

**Timiskaming**

705-647-4305

**Toronto**

416-338-7600

**Wellington-Dufferin-  
Guelph**

1-800-265-7293 ext 3616

**Windsor-Essex County**

519-258-2146,  
1-800-265-5822

**York Region**

1-800-361-5653

To order by phone:  
1-800-668-9938  
TTY: 1-800-268-7095

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Learn more: [www.ontario.ca/children](http://www.ontario.ca/children)

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All children deserve the best possible start in life. A child's early years from before birth to age six are very important to his healthy development. This is a time when children's brains and bodies are developing at a rapid pace. Healthy babies are more likely to continue to be healthy through their childhood, teen and adult years.

The early years of your child's life are a very exciting time. Your baby is learning about you and the world around her.

You are your baby's best teacher. How you care, talk and play with your infant will influence how your child learns and grows.

Early experiences with you will benefit your child the most. Here are some suggestions to help you enjoy your time with your new baby in the first year:

- Babies love to be held. Take time to cuddle and hold your child.
- Comfort your baby when he cries.
- Learn your baby's cues — when she is hungry, sleepy or wants to play with you.
- Breast milk provides all the nutrition your baby needs for the first six months. Feeding can be a special way to feel close to your baby.
- Speak in a soft, gentle voice to your baby.
- Talk to your baby and tell him about the things that are around him. The way you talk to, play with, teach and love your child will help him grow and learn.
- Help your child explore safely. Share different textures, colours, sounds and smells.
- Share picture books and read simple stories, including in your first language. This is also an opportunity to cuddle with your child.
- Babies learn naturally through play. Have fun, play, sing to your child, play music and dance with her.
- Taking care of yourself is important too! Ask a trusted friend or family member to watch your baby so you can take a break.

A visit to your local Ontario Early Years Centre is an opportunity to connect with other parents of young children. You can also find out more about parenting and community programs for you and your baby. To find a location near you check [www.ontario.ca/earlyyears](http://www.ontario.ca/earlyyears).

## Online and community resources

**Ministry of Children and Youth Services:** [www.ontario.ca/earlychildhood](http://www.ontario.ca/earlychildhood)

- Learn more about your child's development and Ontario government programs and services.

**Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:** [www.ontario.ca/vaccines](http://www.ontario.ca/vaccines)

- Learn about Ontario's free vaccination programs and the immunization schedule for your child.

**Ministry of Education:** [www.ontario.ca/childcare](http://www.ontario.ca/childcare)

- You may need child care if you are returning to work — search online here for child care that best meets your needs.

**Telehealth Ontario:** call toll-free 1-866-797-0000

- Anyone can call for free confidential health advice, breastfeeding support or general information from a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Ontario Early Years Centres:** [www.ontario.ca/earlyyears](http://www.ontario.ca/earlyyears)

- Drop-in centres where children up to age six and their parents and caregivers can enjoy programs and activities together such as playing, crafts and music circles.

**Nipissing District Developmental Screen:** [www.ndds.ca](http://www.ndds.ca)

- Access to developmental information for your baby and child up to six years of age which will help you monitor and support your child's healthy development.

**Ontario 211:** call 211 or online at [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca)

- Information and referrals to community and social services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Phone service is available in more than 150 languages.

**Canadian Paediatric Society:**

[www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)

- Helpful information for parents from Canadian paediatricians.

