

Nottinghamshire Best Start for life offer

A guide to local support and services



2024-2025



...giving children the best start

Useful contacts

Sherwood Forest Hospitals:

[Maternity \(1\) - Sherwood Forest Hospitals ▶](#)

Doncaster & Bassetlaw Hospitals:

[Maternity - Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals ▶](#)

Nottingham University Hospitals:

[Your pregnancy and birth | NUH ▶](#)

Tel: 0115 962 7956

Healthy Family Teams

[Healthy Family Teams ▶](#)

Healthy Family Team Advice Line

Tel: 0300 123 5436

Family Hub Networks (previously Children's Centre Service)

[Find your nearest Family Hub/Children's Centre Team ▶](#)

Tel: 0300 500 8080

Introduction

The first 1001 days of your child's life, from the moment you get pregnant, to their 2nd birthday, is the time when their brain develops the most and they grow the quickest. Having the right start makes a big difference to their future.

Families across Nottinghamshire told us they want information on the support that's available to them during this exciting but sometimes scary time. This local 'Nottinghamshire Best Start for Life' offer tells you about services and support available during this time. We hope your family finds it useful.

As you look through this booklet, you'll see links to lots more advice on key topics. You can also find more information at [Nottshelpyourself | Families Information Service ▶](#)



If you have received this but live in Nottingham City you can find your local offer here: [Start for Life | Early Help Nottingham ▶](#)

Pregnancy



Dads & partners



How to register a pregnancy



Healthy Start



Antenatal Checks & Screening



Keeping healthy



Vaccinations in pregnancy



Bonding with your bump



Free NHS prescriptions and dental care



Family Hub Networks/ Children Centre Services



Feelings during pregnancy



Antenatal classes



Keeping your baby safe



Breastfeeding & infant feeding



Caring for your baby



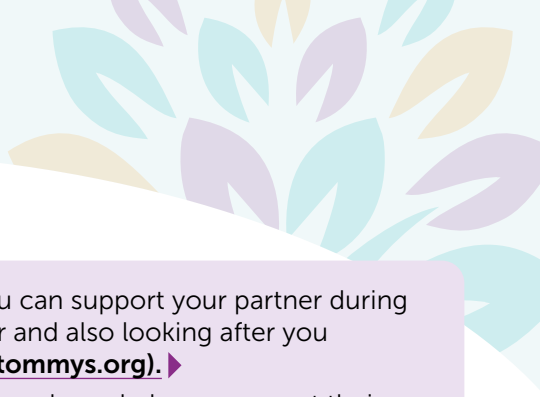
Healthy Families Antenatal Contact



Lots of the services and support available can be accessed when you need them, they are not in order of priority or time.

...giving children the best start

Pregnancy



Dads & partners

For help and advice on how you can support your partner during pregnancy, preparing for labour and also looking after you [Dads and partners | Tommy's \(tommys.org\)](#).

[DadPad](#) also provides top tips on how dads can support their partners after birth to breastfeed, how to hold a new baby, what to do when your baby won't stop crying and lots more. You can download the app for free.

[Nottshelpyourself | Dads](#)



How to register a pregnancy

Contact your GP surgery or midwife as soon as possible after you find out that you're pregnant. For further information, please visit the useful contact section.

Your first 'booking' appointment with your midwife should be before 10 weeks, with various appointments following this:

[Your antenatal appointments](#)



Healthy Start scheme

It's best to start taking folic acid as soon as you start trying for a baby, or as soon as you find out you're pregnant to help prevent birth defects. In Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, anyone who is pregnant should be offered free vitamins. These will be provided by your community midwife.

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk:

[Get help to buy food and milk](#)



Antenatal Checks & Screening

Your midwife will offer you various checks and some screening tests during pregnancy to rule out any health conditions that could affect you or your baby and to ensure you receive any treatment in a timely manner.

[Antenatal checks and tests](#)

[Screening tests for you and your baby](#)



Keeping healthy

Looking after yourself is important to ensure a healthy pregnancy and to reduce any risks and health complications.

[Pregnancy - Start for Life](#) Sign up to Start4Life's weekly emails for expert advice, videos and tips on pregnancy and parenthood. For further information on pregnancy and postnatal pelvic health: [Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy \(POGP\)](#)

There are various local services available to support you if needed:

Alcohol & drug use

Your midwife can refer you into the service with your consent. Change Grow Live: [Nottinghamshire | Change Grow Live](#)
Tel: 0115 896 0798

Smoking

Your midwife can refer you into your local service. You can also get support via Your Health Notts.

[Quit Smoking - Your Health Nottinghamshire](#)

Tel: 0115 772 2515 or by calling the NHS Pregnancy Stop Smoking advice line Tel: 0300 123 1044

Healthy diet & lifestyle

Your Health Notts: [Healthy Family Team - Your Health Nottinghamshire](#) Supporting families to make healthy food choices and create positive lifestyle changes. Tel: 0115 772 2515



Vaccinations in pregnancy

Everyone who is pregnant is eligible for free flu, Covid-19, whooping cough (pertussis) and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) vaccines to protect you and your baby from these viruses.

[Vaccinations in pregnancy](#)

To enquire about these contact your GP surgery or ask your midwife.



Bonding with your bump

It's never too soon to talk to, sing to and stroke your bump. From around 16 weeks your baby can hear and feel your voices. Talking to them helps their brain development and helps you all bond with your baby. [Nottshelpyourself | Start Talking Together: Pre-birth](#) ▶

Whilst you're pregnant you might be interested in sessions at your local Family Hub (also known as Children's Centre), such as Antenatal Peep and Antenatal BABES (Baby and Breastfeeding Encouragement and Support) which support parents to tune into their babies and support attachment and bonding.



Free NHS prescriptions and dental care

Those who are pregnant and have given birth in the last 12 months get free NHS dental treatment and prescriptions. Speak to a healthcare professional for more information.

[Find a dentist - NHS](#) ▶

[How to claim for free NHS prescriptions](#) ▶



Family Hub Networks/ Children's Centre Services

While you or your partner are pregnant you might be interested in sessions at your local Family Hub (also known as Children's Centres). Family Hubs have lots of groups and activities for all families expecting a baby, or with young children.

[Find your nearest Family Hub/Children's Centre team](#) ▶

Tel: 0300 500 8080



Feelings during pregnancy

Expecting a new baby can be a wonderful time but can also be very challenging. It is common for those who are pregnant and new parents to feel overwhelmed and experience some anxiety, worry, depression, stress and confusion.

If this starts interfering with your daily life you should speak to your Midwife, Health Visitor or GP to access some extra support.

[Nottshelpyourself | Mental Health Before and After Baby](#) ▶

[Perinatal Mental Health Service | Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#) ▶



Antenatal classes

You might find it helpful to attend some local antenatal education classes to help prepare for birth and beyond. Your midwife will be able to provide more information on the free sessions delivered by your hospital.

When you get to 28 weeks pregnant, you could attend antenatal groups provided by Family Hub/Children's Centre.

[Find your nearest Family Hub/Children's Centre team](#) ▶



Healthy Family Team Antenatal Contact

The antenatal visit is offered to all parents-to-be by the health visiting service. It takes place from 28 weeks gestation to birth. This appointment may be offered within the family home, health care setting or by telephone and provides support for you and to look after your health needs until the birth of your baby.

[Healthy Family Team Antenatal Visit](#) ▶

[Healthy Family Teams](#) ▶

Healthy Family Team Advice Line Tel: 0300 123 5436





Keeping your baby safe

There are many baby products available but sadly not all of those that are marketed and sold are safe. The following may be helpful: [Child Safety Advice | Child Accident Prevention Trust](#) ▶

[The-Lullaby-Trust-Product-Guide-Web.pdf](#) ▶

There are a number of steps you can take to make sure your baby sleeps as safely as possible and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) which is commonly known as cot death: [Nottshelpyourself | Sleep](#) ▶

Before your baby arrives and you purchase a car seat take some time to understand the law and advice:

[In car child safety - Safety Seats, Boosters, Law and advice](#) ▶



Breastfeeding & infant feeding

Breastfeeding improves the health of both baby and mum, but it's not always easy. If you choose to breastfeed, a range of local support is available from your midwife, Healthy Family Team and via BABES groups at Family Hubs (Children's Centres) which provide information on breastfeeding and feeding choices.

[Nottshelpyourself | Breastfeeding](#) ▶

You can also find information on responsive formula feeding:

[Nottshelpyourself | Baby Feeding and Weaning](#) ▶



Caring for your baby

Baby basics includes practical tips on everything from changing your first nappy to coping with lack of sleep. Remember your Healthy Family Team can give you help and support:

[Baby basics - Start for Life](#) ▶

Family Hubs (Children's Centres) also provide a wide range of support. [Find your nearest Children's Centre Service team | Nottinghamshire County Council](#) ▶

You can find more local information and support on caring for your baby: [Baby | Health for Under 5s](#) ▶

[Nottshelpyourself | 0-4 Years: Part of the Best Start for Life Offer](#) ▶



Birth - 2 years



Breastfeeding & infant feeding



Safer Sleep from day one



Bonding with your baby



Healthy Family Team new birth review



Registering your birth



Healthy Start



Vitamins



Healthy Family Team 6-8 week review



6-8 week GP health check



Family Hub Networks/ Children Centre Services



Vaccinations



Feelings after birth



Start Talking Together



Healthy early months



Libraries



Weaning



Looking after your baby's teeth



Childcare and Early Education



Safety in the home



Healthy Family Team 1 year health & development review



Bookstart



Healthy Family Team 2-2½ year health & development review



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Toilet training



Lots of the services and support available can be accessed when you need them, they are not in order of priority or time.

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Birth - 2 years

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Breastfeeding & infant feeding

Support around feeding your baby is available from your midwife and Healthy Family Team. You can contact your local Family Hub (Children Centre) to find out about the breastfeeding support they offer.

[Nottshelpyourself | Breastfeeding](#) ▶

You can also find information on responsive formula feeding: [Nottshelpyourself | Baby Feeding and Weaning](#) ▶



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Safer Sleep from day one

The Lullaby Trust has lots of useful information about how to sleep your baby more safely, including safer co-sleeping.

[Key safer sleep advice](#) ▶

If you have any questions or worries about your baby's sleep, speak to your midwife or Healthy Family Team and they will support you. You can also find information on [Health for Under 5s](#) ▶

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Bonding with your baby

It's great for both parents to have lots of skin-to-skin time across baby's first weeks. Holding baby close, soothing, cuddling and talking makes them feel safe and secure. It also releases the hormone oxytocin which helps your baby's brain grow and develop.

[Find out more about the science of cuddling](#) ▶

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Healthy Family Team new birth review

You will see your midwife shortly after discharge before your care is handed over to the Healthy Family Team. By 14 days you will receive a new birth review from your Healthy Family Team Team.

[Birth Visit video \(Healthy Family Teams\)](#) ▶

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Registering your birth

Within 42 days of your baby being born, you are legally required to register the birth.

[Register a birth | Nottinghamshire County Council](#) ▶

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Healthy Start

Find out if you are entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk. [Get help to buy food and milk](#) ▶



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Vitamins

It is recommended that breastfed babies take vitamins from birth. Formula fed babies do not need them until they are drinking less than 500ml of formula milk a day as formula milk is fortified with vitamins. Healthy Start vitamins contain the right amount and type of vitamins for babies and are produced by the NHS.

Vitamins are provided in many Children's Centre Service/ Family Hub buildings. You can buy them at low cost or get them free if you are on the Healthy Start scheme.

[Find your nearest Children's Centre Service team](#) ▶

Tel: 0300 500 8080



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Healthy Family Team 6-8 week review

Your baby will receive a complete physical examination including the newborn observation which links to how your baby communicates with you and how you can respond to promote sensitive parenting. There will be a review of feeding and time to address any concerns you may have.

[6-8 Week Review](#) ▶





6 week health check

Your baby will be invited for a thorough physical examination. This is usually done by a GP. You should also be invited for a 6-8 week postnatal check to review your recovery and general wellbeing.



Family Hub Networks/ Children's Centre Services

When you're ready to go out and about with your baby you might be interested in sessions at Family Hubs (also known as Children's Centres). Family Hub teams have expertise in family support, developing parenting skills, promoting health and wellbeing, early years development, communication and language and much more.

Contact your nearest Family Hub team:

[Find your nearest Family Hub](#) ▶

Tel: 0300 500 8080



Vaccinations

Remember to book your baby in for their vaccinations to give them the best protection. These are offered for all babies, including those who are premature at:

- 8 weeks
- 12 weeks
- 16 weeks
- 12 months old

[NHS vaccinations and when to have them](#) ▶



Feelings after birth

Following a baby's birth, women may feel a range of different emotions due to hormonal changes in the body. Having a new baby can be a wonderful time but it can also be very challenging. It's common for new parents to feel overwhelmed and experience some anxiety, worry, depression, stress, and confusion. If this starts interfering with your daily life you should speak to your Healthy Family Team or GP to access some extra support.

[Nottshelpyourself | Mental Health Before and After Baby](#) ▶

[Perinatal Mental Health Service | Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#) ▶

Family Hubs (Children's Centres) also provide support groups including Parent Help and Emotional Wellbeing groups (PHEW) which provide a safe environment to talk and gain support.

[Find your nearest Family Hub](#) ▶



Keep Talking Together

Parents strengthen the connection with their baby in lots of ways - gazing at them, holding them, smiling, talking and singing will entertain and engage your baby. There are lots of things you can do at home and out and about to develop your child's early communication skills. **[Start Talking Together](#)** ▶

Family Hubs (Children's Centres) offer speech and language support such as 'Little Talkers Groups' and 'Baby Peep'.

[Find your nearest Family Hub](#) ▶



Healthy early months

When you're feeling tired, being active may seem like the last thing you want to do but regular activity can relax you, keep you fit and help your body recover after childbirth.

[Keeping fit and healthy with a baby](#) ▶

Reducing your baby's exposure to passive smoke will reduce various health risks and harm it can cause due to their less well-developed airways, lungs and immune systems.

[Support to stop smoking](#) ▶

Tel: 0115 772 2515

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Libraries

Babies love books! It's free to join the library and borrow books with no overdue charges for children. Lots of libraries have free and low-cost activities and sessions for babies and toddlers, such as rattle, rhyme and roll sessions.

inspireculture.org.uk ▶

Email: ask@inspireculture.org.uk

Tel: 01623 677 200



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Weaning

Introducing your baby to solid foods, also referred to as weaning, starts when your baby is around 6 months old and showing the signs that they are ready. [Weaning - Start for Life](#) ▶

Contact your nearest Family Hub (Children centre) team to find out about weaning workshops

Tel: 0300 500 8080

[For information and advice on how to spot food allergies](#) ▶

Eating well: the first year. A guide to introducing solids and eating well up to baby's first birthday:

[Infants & new mums - First Steps Nutrition Trust](#) ▶



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Looking after your baby's teeth

Start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as they start to come through. Use a baby toothbrush with a tiny smear of fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day, just before bed and another time that fits in to their routine: [Looking after your baby's teeth](#) ▶

NHS dental care for children is free and you should take your child to the dentist when their first baby teeth appear. Not all dentists will take on new NHS patients. To find a dentist you can use the NHS service search: [Find a dentist - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) ▶

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Childcare and Early Education

It's good to start thinking about your childcare options as your child will get lots of early education which makes a huge difference to their development. Visit different childcare settings to help you decide what's best for your child. You can also find out about all of the childcare funding support that is available for babies from 9 months. [Nottshelpyourself | Find Childcare](#) ▶ or call the advice line Tel: 0300 500 80 80

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Safety in the home

There are a number of things you can do to help keep your baby safe from accidents and to start preparing your home for when they will be on the move:

[In-Home Child Safety – Good Egg Safety Guides](#) ▶

[Toddler | Health for Under 5s](#) ▶

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Healthy Family Team 1 year health & development review

Your baby will be offered a review looking at, among other things, language and learning, safety, diet and behaviour.

[8-12 month review](#) ▶

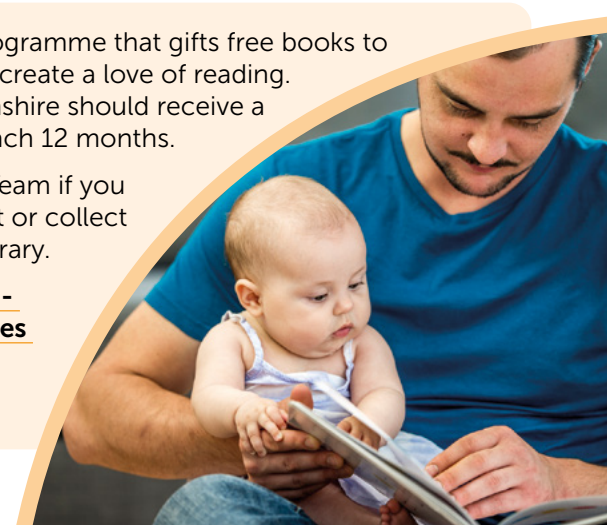
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Bookstart

Bookstart is a national programme that gifts free books to every baby to inspire and create a love of reading. Every child in Nottinghamshire should receive a baby pack before they reach 12 months.

Ask your Healthy Family Team if you haven't received yours yet or collect from your local Inspire library.

[Bookstart Packs | Inspire - Culture, Learning, Libraries \(inspireculture.org.uk\)](#) ▶





Healthy Family Team 2-2 ½ year health & development review

This review will cover:

- general development, including movement, speech, social skills and behaviour, and hearing and vision
- growth, **healthy eating** ▶ and **keeping active** ▶
- managing behaviour and **encouraging good sleeping habits** ▶
- **tooth brushing** ▶ and **going to the dentist** ▶
- **keeping your child safe** ▶
- Vaccinations

2 Year Review video ▶



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

If you are worried about your child's health and development speak to your Healthy Family Team or GP.

The Nottinghamshire SEND Local Offer is a guide to services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25:

Nottshelpyourself | SEND Local Offer ▶



Toilet training

You may want to introduce sitting on the potty as part of your child's normal day when they're around 18 months to 2 years to start getting them ready. It's best to take it slowly, go at your child's pace and begin once they are showing some signs they are ready.

Nottshelpyourself | Toilet Training ▶

Contact your nearest **Family Hub** ▶ (children's centre) team to find out about toileting workshops.

Tel: 0300 500 8080



Additional information

Baby Loss

Very sadly, some babies are lost during pregnancy, birth or shortly afterwards. This can be a heart-breaking and challenging reality for families. For further support and information on local services:

Nottshelpyourself | Baby Loss ▶

Neonatal care

Neonatal care is the care provided for newborn babies who need that extra specialist support. 1 in 7 babies will receive care on a Neonatal unit and 60% of babies admitted to Neonatal units are full term babies.

Special care: ill or premature babies - NHS (www.nhs.uk) ▶

Domestic Abuse

Pregnancy can be a trigger for domestic abuse, and existing abuse can get worse during pregnancy or after giving birth.

For local information & support see:

Domestic abuse and sexual violence support | Nottinghamshire County Council ▶

Housing, money, debt & benefits advice

We understand for many this is a challenging time, especially with a growing family. Find further support, information, advice and guidance to help you and your family, friends and communities:

Cost of living support | Nottinghamshire County Council ▶

Safeguarding

If you have any concerns over the safety of a baby or child please contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub here:

Safeguarding children - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) | Nottinghamshire County Council ▶

Tel: 0300 500 80 80 (for any urgent concerns)