

Nottinghamshire Best Start for life offer

A guide to local
support and services



Revised November 2025

...giving children the best start

Useful contacts

For information on how to register your pregnancy, advice and support, please visit the hospital links below.

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

[Find your nearest Family Hub Team ▶](#)

Tel: 0300 500 8080

Introduction

The first 1001 days of your child's life, from the start of pregnancy, 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 you and your family—whether you're a mum, dad, grandparent, or carer—find 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



Feelings during pregnancy



Antenatal classes



Healthy Families Antenatal Contact



Keeping your baby safe



Breastfeeding & infant feeding



Caring for your baby



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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Pregnancy

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Dads & partners

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

The [Think Dads! Dad Pack](#) is full of information for all dads expecting a new baby. It contains information on preparing for labour, feeding and play, and looking after you.

On the [Nottshelpyourself dads pages](#) you will find a range of information for new dads, parenting resources and sources of support.

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](#)

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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](#)



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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](#)

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Keeping healthy

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

Avoiding alcohol in pregnancy helps keep your baby safe. There is no known safe level for drinking alcohol during pregnancy. It is best not to drink alcohol at all if you are pregnant or trying for a baby.

[Tips for an alcohol-free pregnancy | Tommy's](#)

If you need support to stop drinking, reducing drinking or using drugs, your midwife can refer you to a local service with your consent. Dads and partners can access the service by self-referral [Nottinghamshire | Change Grow Live](#) Tel: 0115 896 0798

Smoking

If you are pregnant, or planning to be, now is the time to stop smoking. If you're already pregnant, ask your midwife about stop smoking services for you. Otherwise, if you're planning a pregnancy, or if you're a dad or partner, you can get FREE support to quit smoking via [Your Health Notts](#) Tel: 0115 772 2515

Healthy eating and exercise

Eating a healthy, nutritious diet is especially important if you're pregnant or planning to be. [Healthy eating in pregnancy - Start for Life - NHS](#) Gentle exercise during pregnancy is good (and safe) for you and your baby. Not only does it help you maintain a healthy weight but it also helps prepare your body for labour.

[Exercising in pregnancy - Start for Life - NHS](#)

Speak to your midwife if you would like more support with eating healthily and exercising safely in pregnancy.



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.

[NHS vaccinations in pregnancy](#) ▶

[Vaccinations in pregnancy – Protecting you and your baby](#) ▶

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 develop 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, 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

During pregnancy or early parenthood, you and your partner might find it helpful to visit your local Family Hub. These welcoming spaces offer a range of sessions, groups, and activities designed to support families who are expecting a baby or have young children. It's a great way to connect with others, access advice, and enjoy time together as a family.

[Find your nearest Family Hub](#) ▶

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.

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

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



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.

If you and your partner are expecting a baby, you can find support, advice, and guidance at your local family hub. These hubs offer a range of groups and activities for families with young children and those who are expecting a baby.

[Pregnancy health and wellbeing | Nottinghamshire County Council](#) ▶



Healthy Family Team Antenatal Contact

The antenatal visit is offered to all parents-to-be by the health visiting service. It takes place after 28 weeks of pregnancy, before baby is born. This appointment may be offered within the family home, health care setting, by telephone or through a digital offer, and helps you prepare for a new baby 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 which provide information on breastfeeding and feeding choices.

[**Nottshelpyourself | Breastfeeding**](#) ▶

Dads and other support people can find out how to support breastfeeding: [**Who can support you with breastfeeding? | Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**](#) ▶

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. Discover support and advice for caring for your baby at your local family hub. From group activities to expert guidance, get the best start for your little one.

[**Family health and wellbeing | Nottinghamshire County Council**](#) ▶
[**Best Start in Life health advice - NHS**](#) ▶

Family Hubs also provide a wide range of support.

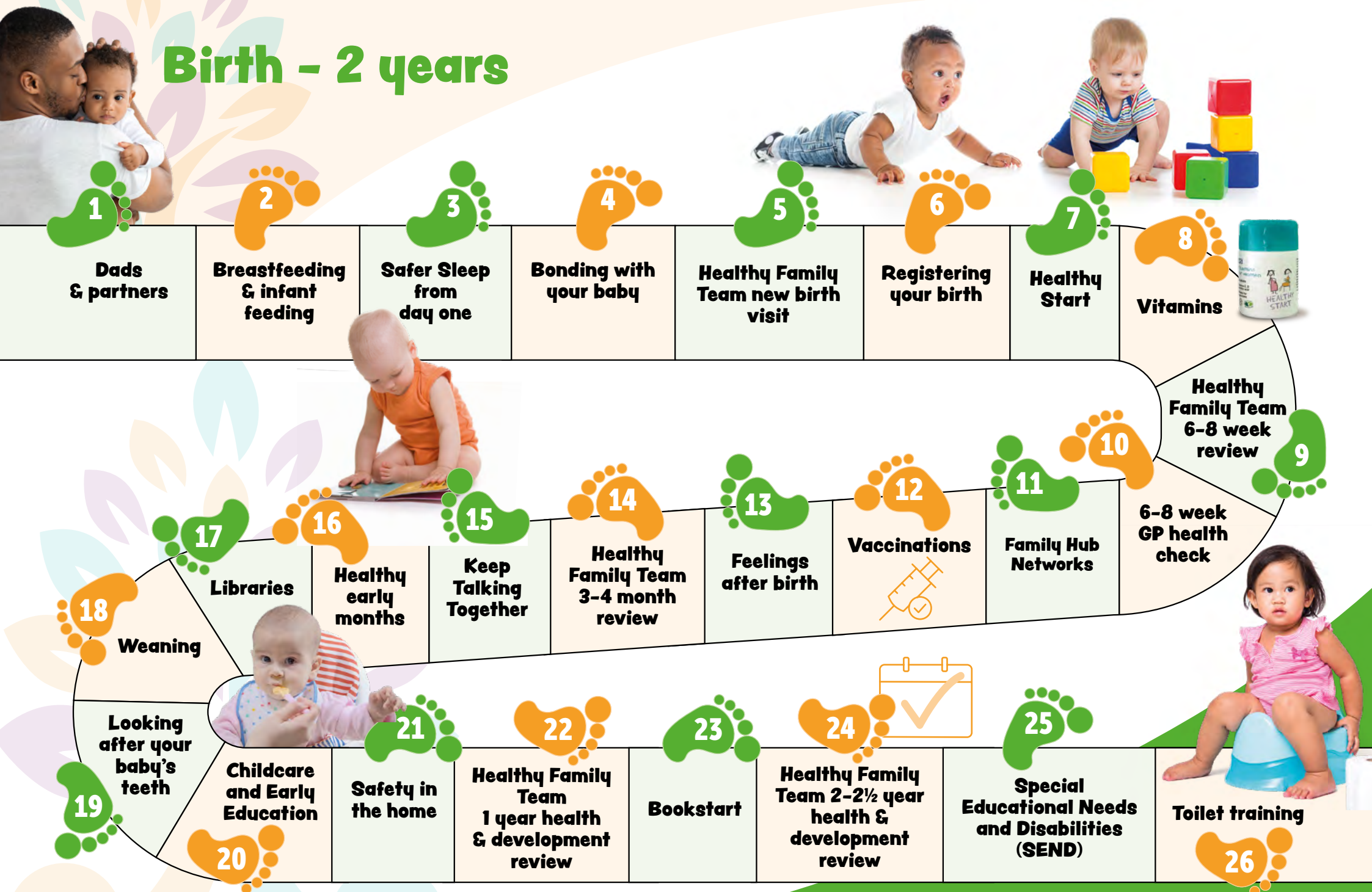
[**Find your nearest team | Nottinghamshire County Council**](#) ▶

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



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



Dads & partners

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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 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](#)

Dads and other support people can find out how to support breastfeeding:

[Who can support you with breastfeeding? | Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)



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.

[Safer sleep information | The Lullaby Trust](#)

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](#)



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](#)

You should speak to your health visitor in the Healthy Family Team if you're worried about your bond with your baby – the Healthy Family Team can arrange extra support.



Healthy Family Team new birth visit

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. Dads/partners are also invited to attend.

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



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](#)



Healthy Start

Find out if you are entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk.

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





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 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 Family Hub team](#) ▶

Tel: 0300 500 8080



Healthy Family Team 6-8 week review

Your health visitor will discuss your recovery after giving birth (both physically and emotionally), offer support around health promotion and development of baby, and signpost to services where needed. There will also be an opportunity for you to ask any questions you may have. Dads/partners are also invited to attend.

[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 pelvic health, physical health, mental health, family planning and health promotion e.g support losing weight, stopping smoking etc. It is a great opportunity to ask questions and get support to improve your health, as a healthier parent will help create a healthier family.

[Your 6-week postnatal check - NHS](#) ▶



Family Hub Networks

When you're ready to go out and about with your baby you might be interested in sessions at Family Hubs. 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
- 18 months*

*For babies born on or after 1st July 2024.

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





Feelings after birth

After the birth of a baby, it's normal to experience a range of different emotions due to hormonal changes and adjusting to parenthood. While having a new baby can be a wonderful time it can also be challenging. It's common for both new mother's and father's to feel overwhelmed, and experience some anxiety, worry, or stress. If these feelings start to interfere with your daily life, you or your partner should speak to your Healthy Family Team, GP or self-refer to talking therapies to access some extra support.

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

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

Family Hubs 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](#) ▶



Healthy Family Team 3-4 month review

If you're a first-time parent, you'll be offered a 3-4 month review with the Healthy Family Team. It will focus on how your baby's brain is growing, the importance of attachment, and ways to enjoy positive and fun activities together. The aim is to support you and your baby to build strong, loving connections. You'll also have chance to ask any questions you might have.

[Healthy Family Teams | Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#) ▶



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 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. For FREE support to stop smoking.

[Quit Smoking - Your Health Nottinghamshire](#) ▶

Tel: 0115 772 2515



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



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 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](#) ▶





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 \(www.nhs.uk\)](#) ▶



Childcare and Early Education

It's a good idea to start thinking about the childcare you will need. Your child will learn lots of important things when they are little, and this helps them grow and develop. Try visiting different settings to see what feels right for your child. There is also help with paying for childcare for babies from 9 months old. Find childcare near you and what childcare funding support you can get.

[Nottshelpyourself | Find Childcare](#) ▶

or call the advice line **Tel: 0300 500 80 80**



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](#) ▶ [Nottshelpyourself | Child safety](#) ▶



Healthy Family Team 1 year health & development review

Between 8 and 12 months, your baby will be offered an important health and development review to check in on how your little one is growing and learning. This review will include key areas like language and learning, safety, eating habits, and early behaviour.

[8-12 month review](#) ▶



Bookstart

Bookstart is a national programme that gifts free books to babies to support early development and inspire 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)

You can talk to your Healthy Family Team for any queries about your child's development and for more information about special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). To make sure your child gets the right support in place before they start school, health professionals will inform your local council if they believe a child under school age may have special educational needs or a disability.

You can find a guide to local services and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

[Nottshelpyourself | Nottinghamshire's 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](#)** ▶ team to find out about toileting workshops.

Tel: 0300 500 8080

[Family health and wellbeing](#) ▶



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](#) ▶
[Nottshelpyourself | Family Support](#) ▶

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)