



# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

## As we welcome July,

we're excited to share fresh tips, resources, and activities to support you through pregnancy, early parenting, and all the small moments that help little ones grow. We're grateful to be part of your family's journey.

This month, we're highlighting a few key topics:

- Tummy time ideas to help babies build strength through simple, playful moments.
- Summer heat and car safety reminders to keep everyone safe during warm-weather travels.
- A focus on gratitude—easy ways to notice and celebrate the positive moments in your day.

Add in a family nature walk to explore, letting your little one collect leaves or rocks to explore. Wishing you a July filled with sunshine, curiosity, safety, and connection.

## Tummy Time

Tummy time is important for infant muscle development. It also helps prevent flat spots on your child's head and torticollis. Tummy Time can begin right after you return home from the hospital.

- At first, your little one might fuss when on their belly. The position is new, and tummy time is tough work for little muscles!
- Start slow with just a few minutes a day. Place toys nearby and talk or sing face-to-face with your baby.
- Work up to longer spurts of tummy time that total an hour throughout the day by the time your child is 3 months old.
- Your baby will have the strong muscles needed to lift their head, crawl, sit, and more!

See different tummy time positions and learn more at:  
<https://tinyurl.com/2wn7m96>

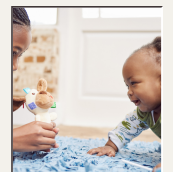
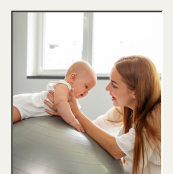


Always remember to put your baby to sleep on their back.

## Home Visiting Tools

In addition to checking in with you about your mental health, well-being, and safety, your home visitor uses a variety of tools to ask about your child's development and promote your growing relationship with your child. These tools give us a better understanding of how your family is doing and how we can support you. They also give parents a clear picture of your own well-being, your child's development, and the strengths already present in every day interactions.

They're not tests or judgments--just helpful guides. They highlight what's going well, identify areas where support might be useful, and ensure we're providing the right resources at the right time. Most importantly, they help us celebrate growth and partner with you in ways that feel meaningful, respectful, and supportive. Let your home visitor know if you have questions at any time!





## Learn more about... **Supporting Fathers in Home Visiting**

### **Program Overview**

Family home visiting has fatherhood-specific offerings using two evidence-informed approaches—the Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA) and A Nurturing Father's Program (NFP). They can be provided in groups or one-on-one and give fathers/masculine caregivers practical skills to strengthen family relationships and support healthy child development.

### **Observed Impact**

- Fathers become more emotionally present
- Increased confidence in parenting
- Improved co-parenting communication
- Stronger parent-child connections
- Children benefit from calmer, more regulated caregivers

### **Nurtured Heart Approach (NHA)**

A six-week, discussion-based series that helps fathers build their child's confidence through everyday moments. It emphasizes positive reinforcement, clear expectations, and instant feedback as a self-regulation tool.

### **A Nurturing Father's Program (NFP)**

A deeper, 12-week exploration of healthy fatherhood. Topics include personal upbringing, co-parenting, non-violent discipline, self-nurturing, and healing generational patterns. Uses mindfulness, visualization, and positive self-talk.

### **What Progress Looks Like**

- Reflecting on one's own childhood and upbringing
- Identifying areas for personal growth
- Understanding their impact on their children
- Growing in empathy
- Meeting children where they are

### **How to Get Started**

Fathers/masculine caregivers can self-refer through the online First Steps referral form. Nurses Ben or Caidan will follow up. Currently offered in Wright and Benton Counties.

## **First Steps Fun Facts**

We asked our home visitors what they love most about their job

- Seeing the kids grow & learn!
- The flexibility & variety my job offers. I love seeing families grow.
- Seeing the difference we make with families. I know we are only "one person" in their lives, but I'm sure our support changes the trajectory of their lives.
- Reviewing & making birth plans.
- Seeing the parents & child bond.
- Watching the baby grow into the unique person they are.
- Meeting families in their home, relationships, flexibility
- Seeing a mom go from questioning themselves to feeling more confident & trusting themselves.
- Have a job that allows me to spread love & positivity daily & form meaningful relationships
- Getting to see the kids
- Getting to support parents & their babies.
- Building relationships.
- Learning from families.
- Flexibility & working in the community with families.
- Meeting new families & building relationships.
- Long term connections with families & partnering with community resources.
- Being a support to families during vulnerable, difficult moments & helping them find their shine.
- Building stronger communities through connection & relationship-building.
- Making connections with community partners.



**Cheers to families from our team!**





## Understanding Social Emotional Development in Early Childhood



Social-Emotional development begins in the very first months of life and forms the foundation for how children understand themselves, relate to others, and navigate their world.

In infancy and early childhood, this includes learning to trust caregivers, express emotions, build secure relationships, manage frustration, and explore with confidence.

These early skills grow through everyday interactions—being comforted when upset, having predictable routines, hearing encouraging words, and playing with responsive adults.

When caregivers help children feel safe, seen, and supported, it strengthens brain development and lays the groundwork for future learning, resilience, and healthy relationships.

Investing in social-emotional development early on sets children up for long-term success. Calm, connected caregiving today helps children grow into empathetic, confident, and well-regulated learners tomorrow.

## Drop-In Feeding Support

### Tuesdays

- 9:30a-11:30a, Monticello Community Center
- 9:30a-11:30a, St. Cloud YMCA



### Wednesdays

- 9:30a-11:30a, Wright County Historical Society, Buffalo
- 1:30p-3p, Maple Grove Hospital

### Thursdays

- 11a-12:30p, Cambridge-Isanti Adult Enrichment Center

### Fridays

- 10a-12p, Options for Women -Cornerstone, St. Michael



=First Steps staff present

## Activities of the Month



### Handprint Firework

<https://www.avasalphabet.com/handprint-fireworks/>

### Butterfly Sponge Art:

<https://tinyurl.com/2xxbfjzp>



## Mindfulness Moment

Gratitude practice is a form of mindfulness that involves reflecting and expressing gratitude for every positive aspect of life and milestones made.

- Use a gratitude journal to write down three things you are grateful for each day
- Take a few moments to reflect on positive experiences during the day--check out page 5 for a template.
- Take a mindful walk and focus on things in your surroundings that you appreciate
- Use a gratitude jar to store at least two milestones that you make weekly so that you can go back to read them.
- Write a letter of appreciation for someone in your life and give it to them. Not only will you see positive effects to your well-being, coping, and memory but you also will increase that person's happiness.



## CRAFTS | ACTIVITIES | CONNECTIONS

Caregivers and little ones are invited to join First Steps for a fun morning of crafts designed to build connection, creativity, and community!



**WEDNESDAY, July 1st**  
10:00AM-1:00PM

**MAINSTREET FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER**  
400 JACKSON AVE NW  
ELK RIVER, MN 55330



**FRIDAY, July 17th**  
10:00AM-12:00PM

**1010 COMMUNITY OUTPOST**  
1114 - 9<sup>TH</sup> AVE SE  
ST. CLOUD, MN 56304



**THESE EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!**



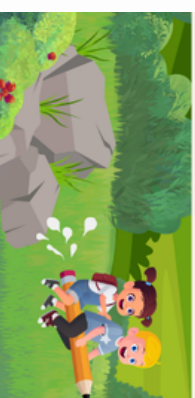
## PARK PALS

Bringing families together through play, laughter, and friendship.

Are you looking for new ways to connect and make new friends at the park this summer?

Join us for Park Pals Playdates!

Bring your kids for fun, friendship, and outdoor play in a welcoming, inclusive environment for all children, including those with special needs!



Saturdays: June 13 & 27,  
July 11 & 25, August 8 & 22

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM  
(weather permitting)

Location: Lion John Weicht  
Park  
1104 Lions Park Drive  
Elk River, MN 55330

### Move Your Body. Lift Your Spirit. Build Your Village.

**Monday, June 15th 9:00am-10:00am**  
Montissippi County Park 2801  
Broadway W, Monticello, MN 55362

**Monday, July 13th 9:00am-10:00am**  
Woodland Trails Regional Park  
20135 Elk Lake Rd NW, Elk River, MN  
55330

**Monday, August 10th 9:00am-10:00am**  
Otsego County Park  
15198 96th St NE, Otsego, MN 55330



#### What to expect

Meet new people, enjoy the outdoors, and support mental wellbeing together.

Everyone welcome - bring a friend!



Take a moment before the noise begins each morning. Ground yourself in gratitude and intention.

Right now, my body feels:



Emotion I've noticed most today:



One moment that made me smile:

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One thing I can let go of before the day ends:

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