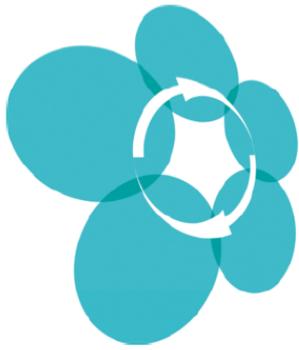


Our current and past family newsletters are posted to our website. Check them out at <https://firststepscentralmn.org/for-families>



MECSH[®]

Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting

On July 1, our home visitors transitioned to a new home visiting model, called MECSH. MECSH stands for Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home-visiting and is replacing our current home visiting models of Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families America.

"When things feel overwhelming, remember: one thought at a time, one task at a time, one day at a time."

What is MECSH?

- A home visiting program that provides personal nursing support for you and your family throughout pregnancy and as your baby grows and develops.
- MECSH is always free to you and voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can change your mind at any time.
- Your Nurse will support you to identify and plan for the needs of you, your baby and your family.

What to expect:

- Visits usually start during pregnancy or soon after you bring your baby home. Visits continue until your child turns 2 years old.
- After your baby comes home, your nurse will visit weekly for 6 weeks and over time the visits are spaced further apart.
- At each visit you will be able to talk with your Nurse about how you and your baby are doing.
- Your Nurse will share information on caring for and bonding with your baby, playing and talking with your baby to help them grow and learn.
- Visits will usually last about an hour.

What to know if you've already been working with a Nurse:

- Not a lot will change for you. You'll likely keep your same Nurse and your Nurse will continue to offer ongoing home visits and regular contacts as in the past.
- The frequency of home visits may change slightly depending on how old your child is or where you're in your pregnancy, but your Nurse will talk to you more about that.
- Your Nurse will have additional tools to support you in your pregnancy and parenting journey. Some may look familiar to you while other tools are new. We think you'll like them!

Water Safety Tips

<https://tinyurl.com/b7s6xhs6>

1. **Protect your child against drowning risks**-stay within arm's reach of your child. Put away your phone or other distractions
2. **Steer clear of contaminants**-any body of water can harbor germs which can lead to infection or diarrhea. Water sources that have been treated to kill common disease threats are best.
3. **Safeguard young skin from the sun**-apply SPF 40 (or higher) water-resistant sunscreen to your child at least 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply regularly.
4. **Keep your child hydrated**-Stay hydrated. Signs of possible heat exhaustion include nausea, vomiting, and mental confusion.

Tips for Surviving Pregnancy Over the Summer

<https://tinyurl.com/d3pcd6rv>

- Stay hydrated-water is best! Your body requires fluid to form the placenta and amniotic sac, which provide your baby with nutrition, warmth and protection.
- Use air conditioning during the hottest hours- if you don't have air conditioning where you live, spend the hottest hours of the day somewhere that does.
- Go outside in the morning or at night.
- Wear loose, light colored clothes to reflect the heat and make you feel less restricted
- Take your time and take breaks when necessary
- Get exercise to boost your mood and energy level, as well as combat constipation and restlessness at night.

Celebrate World Breastfeeding Week (WBW)!

WBW started in 1992 and is celebrated every August 1-7. The theme for 2021 is **Protect Breastfeeding – A Shared Responsibility**, which focuses on how breastfeeding supports the survival, health and wellbeing of all. This year's theme also focuses on the need to protect breastfeeding worldwide.



Here are some ways you can celebrate World Breastfeeding Week:

- Post about breastfeeding on your social media
- If you see another mom breastfeeding in public, tell her "good job"
- Write a letter to your child about your breastfeeding experience
- Search "World Breastfeeding Week" and "National Breastfeeding Awareness Month" for events happening near you

A **Big Latch On** event will be held at the Lake George Splash Pad (St. Cloud) and virtually on Friday, August 6 from 10a-12p. Find out more information on the Central MN Breastfeeding Coalition Facebook page at

<https://fb.me/e/3TUfoP6u9>



Craft Corner

Here are activities to do to celebrate special days in August:

- 1: National Friendship Day: call or visit a friend to reconnect. Talk with your child about what it means to be a good friend.
- 3: National Night Out: a great way to meet your neighbors, as well as those who serve your neighborhoods. Check with your neighbors, local police department, or city to see if events are planned in your area.
- 7: National Play Outside Day: visit a new park or splash pad today!
- 15: National Relaxation Day: focus on taking care of yourself today and taking a moment to relax
- 21: National Senior Citizens Day: have your child draw a picture and deliver it in a card to a senior loved one, grandparent, or local senior center

Muddy Cars & Car Wash: <https://tinyurl.com/3r97nxt8>



Playing in the mud can help kids reduce their stress levels and make them feel calmer. It's one of the many benefits of both sensory play and being out in the sunshine. When kids interact with different textures, their brain forms new connections. It gives them the foundations they need later on to learn new concepts.

Hungry Caterpillar Nature Craft: <https://tinyurl.com/47fekzcn>

