

Our current and past family newsletters are posted to our website.

Check them out at <https://firststepscentralmn.org/for-families>

Wake Windows for Babies & Toddlers

A wake window is the amount of time your baby is awake between one nap and the next. If a wake window is appropriate for your child's age, it can help your baby fall asleep more easily and stay asleep longer.

Wake windows that are too long can result in an overtired baby who struggles to calm down enough to fall asleep or stay asleep. Wake windows that are too short, may mean your baby might not be ready to fall asleep or will only take a quick catnap. Here are some initial suggestions from **Taking Cara Babies**, found at <https://takingcarababies.com/wake-windows-and-baby-sleep/>


- 0-4 Weeks: 35-60 minutes
- 4-12 Weeks: 60-90 minutes
- 3-4 Months: 75-120 minutes
- 5-7 Months: 2-3 hours
- 7-10 Months: 2.5-3.5 hours
- 11-14 Months: 3-4 hours
- 14-24 Months: 4-6 hours

Remember, you know your baby best. He or she is growing and developing rapidly. Finding the right wake window may take some time, adjusting, and flexibility. Continue to watch your baby for cues for sleep and alertness, then adjust to help create a flexible routine for your day.

February is Children's Dental Month

"Give Kids a Smile" Event

On February 4 & 5, free dental care will be available at many locations throughout MN for children ages 3-18. Services will vary from preventive care, which includes cleanings, sealants, and fluoride treatment, to restorative care, which includes fillings. Find a participating clinic by visiting www.mndental.org/gkas or call the United Way by dialing 2-1-1 or 1-800-543-7709.



"The only failure is quitting. Everything else is just gathering information."
Jen Sincero

Bedtime Routines

(from <https://takingcarababies.com/creating-a-bedtime-routine/>)

Babies thrive on predictability and routine. Their world is full of action and stimulation, but providing a consistent routine offers safety and security. Babies can recognize a bedtime routine as early as by 8 weeks old! Bedtime routines do not need to be complicated or long. It means you do the same things in the same order each night.

Here's an example:

- Bath (or for non-bath nights: wipe baby's face with washcloth)
- Lotion
- Change diaper & put on pajamas
- Feeding
- Read books, sing songs
- Crib

Before starting the bedtime routine, make sure your baby has a good awake time before bed. Here are some suggestions about wake times before bedtime:

- 4-10 weeks: 60-90 minutes
- 10-12 weeks: 75-95 minutes
- 3-4 months: 95-120 minutes
- 5-6 months: 2.5-3 hours
- 7-14 months: 3-4 hours
- 14+ months: 4-5 hours

Also, pay attention to the clock. For most babies (older than 4 months), between 7-8p may be the best time for falling asleep the easiest and staying asleep the longest. Some babies may need an earlier or later bedtime, be flexible and watch their cues.

Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program Can Help Keep You Warm This Winter

Staying warm and safe is critical during long Minnesota winters. If you need help paying your utility bills, the Minnesota Energy Assistance Program can help. Qualifying households can get help paying their energy and water bills with free grants up to \$3,200. Visit <https://mn.gov/EnergyAssistance> to learn more.

- Renters and homeowners are eligible. Assets such as the home are not considered in determining eligibility.
- Free grants to help pay for energy bills range from \$300 to \$2,000, based on household size, income, and fuel cost. The average grant is about \$1,100.
- An additional \$1,200 in Crisis funds are available to help pay past due energy bills or get emergency fuel deliveries.
- Yet more funds are available to help pay past due water bills.
- Homeowners can get their broken furnace repaired or replaced.
- Income guidelines:

Household Size - Annual Income Limit

1	- \$35,237
2	- \$46,080
3	- \$56,922
4	- \$67,765
5	- \$78,607
6	- \$ 89,450

How to apply for EAP

- Contact your local EAP service provider. Find your EAP provider:
 - By calling 1-800-657-3710 and entering their zip code, or
 - On this list of service providers by county or tribe at <https://tinyurl.com/yhsu42a9>
 - **Benton, Sherburne, Stearns County residents:** Tri-CAP <https://tricap.org/> 320-251-1612 or 1-888-765-5597
 - **Wright County residents:** Wright County Community Action www.wccaweb.com/ 320-963-6500

What is a Doula?

A doula is a trained professional who provides continuous physical, emotional and information support to a mother before, during and shortly after childbirth to help her achieve the healthiest, most satisfying experience possible. Doula care can improve both physical and psychological outcomes for both a mother and baby. Research shows that women value and benefit from the presence of a support person during labor and childbirth.

Learn more at <https://www.dona.org/> and page 3 of this newsletter!

Everyday Miracles Doula Support

<https://www.everyday-miracles.org/>

Everyday Miracles is committed to improving maternal health, and specifically reducing health disparities in communities at risk for poor outcomes. They strive to provide compassionate, culturally aware support and a nonjudgmental, welcoming community.

They offer a Doula Support Program for pregnant people. Most services are 100% covered by families on MA with zero out of pocket fees. For those with private insurance plans, they focus on accessible pricing. To request a doula, complete their [online request form](#).

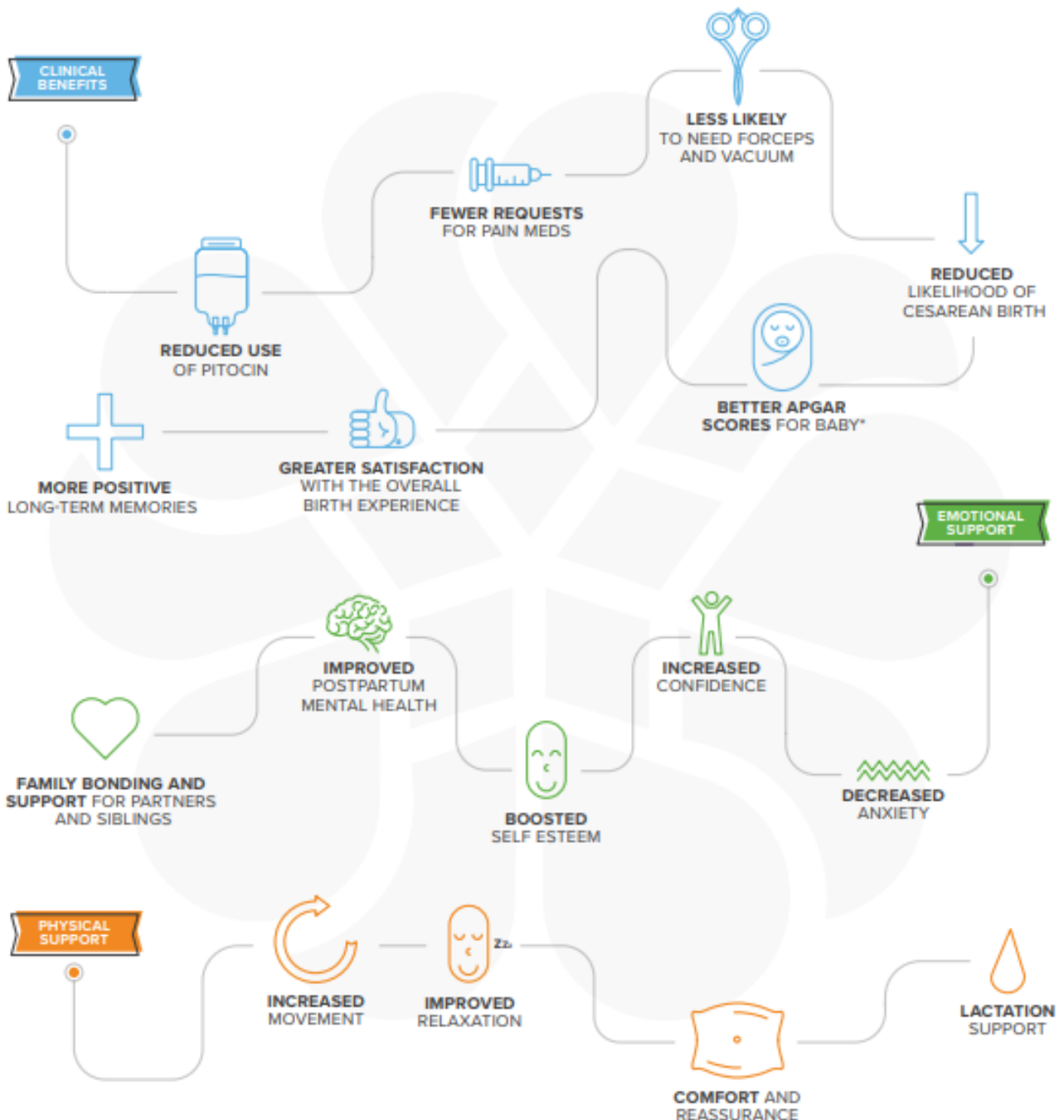
They recently added 4 BIPOC doulas out of St. Cloud. Learn more about them at: <https://www.everyday-miracles.org/st-cloud-doulas-1>



◎—BENEFITS OF—◎ BIRTH & POSTPARTUM DOULAS

EVIDENCE-BASED INFORMATION AND ADVOCACY

- + Assist with planning: help parents make informed choices based on what they value
- + Provide resources: connect families with additional resources and support
- + Facilitate effective communication between families and healthcare team



Hodnett ED. Pain and women's satisfaction with the experience of childbirth: a systematic review. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2002; 186(5): S160-72.

Hodnett ED, Gates S, Hofmeyr G J, Sakala C, Weston J. Continuous support for women during childbirth [PDF]. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev* 2011, Issue 2.

*Based on clinical research data (outcomes limited to trained doulas – not hospital staff or family/friends)

Craft & Activity Corner

Roll, Count and Fill Snowman

<https://tinyurl.com/27n7exe8>



Sensory Bin Ideas:

<https://tinyurl.com/27n7exe8>

Valentine's Day Crafts

I Love You Berry Much:

<https://tinyurl.com/5n8uvrsw>

Valentine Butterfly:

<https://tinyurl.com/2e8fsj83>



Teaching Your Toddler the Alphabet with Action ABC's

<https://tinyurl.com/3939r2jc>

A	Crawl like an Ant	Sniff with your Nose	N
B	Bounce like a Ball or Buzz like a Bee	Hoot like an Owl	O
C	Stretch like a Cat	Be a Pig rolling in a Puddle	P
D	Dance like a Dog or Duck	Be Quiet "shhh" the Queen is sleeping	Q
E	Swing your trunk like an Elephant	Run like a Rabbit	R
F	Hop like a Frog or Swim like a Fish	Stomp in your Shoes	S
G	Gallop like a Goat or Honk like a Goose	Tickle your Toes	T
H	Hop like a Hippo	Get Up on your Unicorn	U
I	Itch your ears	Play your Violin	V
J	Jump with a Jump rope	Wave like Whales	W
K	Fly like a Kite	Play your Xylophone	X
L	Leap like a Lion	Yawn	Y
M	Move like a Monkey or Mouse	Zip your Zipper	Z

BecomingTomorrow.com