

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

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

Minnesota Mental Health Resources

<http://mnmentalhealth.org/>

- You are able to search for resources and providers at: <https://tinyurl.com/3xe7zxus>
 - This includes both a Mental Health Resource Guide for Adults and a Housing Resource Guide
- Virtual Peer Support Network: Each session will provide tools and support to help you lead a healthier and happier life. Learn more at <https://mnwitw.org/vpsn> or by emailing VPSN.info@gmail.com

"Nobody can go back and start a new beginning, but anyone can start today and make a new ending."
Maria Robinson



MDH Newborn Screening

Newborn screening are routinely done for all newborns in MN during their hospital stay. It consists of three parts. Learn more at <https://tinyurl.com/2fzyads4> and <https://tinyurl.com/26k52cwj>

- **Blood spot screening**-done between 24-48 hours after birth. A health care provider will prick your newborn's heel to obtain a few drops of blood. The drops of blood will fill five spots on a filter paper card. The card will then be sent to MDH to be screened for more than 50 rare but treatable disorders. This early detection can help prevent serious health problems, disability, and even death. Results take a few days to get back, but your baby's primary care provider will contact you as soon as possible if the results suggest a problem.
- **Hearing screening**-done once your newborn is at least 12 or more hours old and while your child is asleep. A device that looks similar to headphones will be placed over your newborn's ears. This screening is to identify hearing loss in the range where speech is heard. This early detection helps babies stay on track with speech, language, and communication skills. You will receive the results on the same day of screening.
- **Pulse oximetry screening**-done once your newborn is at least one day old. Sensors are placed on the skin of your newborn's hand or foot. The sensors measure the amount of oxygen in the blood. This screening helps identify newborns who may have critical congenital heart disease. You will receive the results on the same day of screening.



Skin-to-Skin (aka Kangaroo Care)

from <https://tinyurl.com/yzjzjd6u>

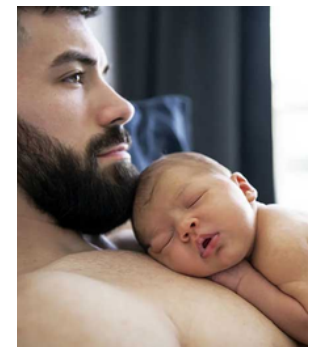
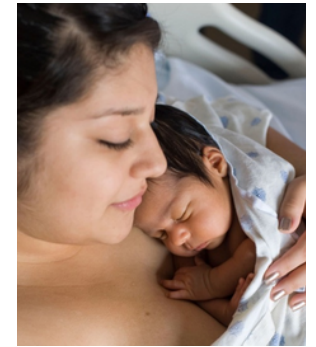
What is skin-to-skin?

Skin-to-skin means your baby is placed belly-down, either naked or with only a diaper on, directly on your bare chest. As long as there are no medical concerns for you or your baby, this can be done right after delivery. Hospital staff can dry your baby off, cover him or her with a warm blanket, and even do some assessments all while baby stays settled on your chest and you get to know one another.

Benefits-there have been different research studies that have shown skin-to-skin provides benefit to both baby, mothers, and other caregivers.

- For baby:
 - Better able to absorb and digest nutrients
 - Maintain body temperature
 - Cries less often
 - Demonstrate improved weight gain
 - Experience more stable heartbeat and breathing
 - Higher blood oxygen levels
 - Long-term benefits, such as improved brain development and function as well as parental attachment
 - More successful at breastfeeding immediately after birth
 - Spend increased time in the very important deep sleep and quiet alert states
 - Stronger immune systems
- For mother or caregiver:
 - Experience more positive breastfeeding
 - Improved breast milk production
 - Likely to have reduced postpartum bleeding and lower risk of postpartum depression

Dads and other caregivers can provide skin-to-skin care to an infant too! Skin to skin is not only important right after birth, during your hospital, but also once you are home.



Breathing Exercises for Kids (and Adults!)

Find more examples at: <https://www.pcamn.org/practicing-resilience-in-community/>

Rainbow Breathing



1. Place your finger at the bottom of the rainbow.
2. Breathe in through your nose and trace the red arc until you reach the top.
3. When you reach the top, begin to exhale through your mouth and continue tracing.
4. Repeat with each color or until you feel calm and grounded.

BALLOON BREATHING

Step 1: Inhale Fully

Place your hands on your belly. Breath in slowly through your nose to fill your lungs all the way to the top, as you feel your belly, abdomen and chest expanding out like a big balloon...



Step 2: Exhale Fully

Now open your mouth and slowly blow **all** of the air back out of your lungs, letting your belly sink down flat, as if deflating that imaginary balloon. Repeat, but the next time close your mouth and practice breathing in, and out, through your nose, as you feel your belly expanding and shrinking.



Craft & Activity Corner

- **March 7: National Cereal Day**

- Cereal is great for sensory bins. You can keep it whole, smash it up, or even blend/grind finely to make sand-like texture. Use measuring cups, small bowls, or funnels to encourage your child to measure and mix.

- **March 17: St. Patrick's Day**

- Decorate the rainbow on page 4 of this newsletter. You can use cereal, pom poms, crayons, stickers, or glue pieces of paper that your child cuts or tears.

- **March 20: First Day of Spring**

- With some washable paint, a marker and a piece a paper, you can create a Happy Spring kite sign. Handprint art is fun to go back to each year and see how much your child's hand has grown.

- **March 26: Make Up Your Own Holiday Day**

- Make it "Pom Pom Day" then try out a Pom Pom Bath <https://tinyurl.com/4j8dkaav> or Pom Pom 'Soup' in a sensory bin <https://tinyurl.com/4z4zv687>

- **March 31: National Crayon Day**

- Encourage your toddler's fine motor skills by introducing him to crayons for scribbling and building hand muscles. Most toddlers are ready to start coloring and scribbling between 12-15 months.



