



PREGNANCY

Kegel exercises or "kegels", also called pelvic floor exercises, help strengthen the muscles, tissues, and ligaments that support the uterus, bladder, intestines, and bowels. Toning these muscles can help reduce urinary incontinence and risk of hemorrhoids during your pregnancy and promote perinatal healing postpartum.

To find your pelvic muscles, urinate and squeeze your muscles to stop mid-stream. Kegels are exercises where you repeatedly squeeze those muscles (when not urinating) to strengthen them. Practice squeezing these muscles for 5-10 seconds, then relax, repeating 10-20 times throughout the day.

CHILD GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

When children have positive interactions with books, they are developing good feelings about reading, which will motivate them to continue seeking out books as they grow.

<https://tinyurl.com/2p8p8m57>

Libraries are a free way to expose your child to many books. Find your local library at: <https://griver.org/>



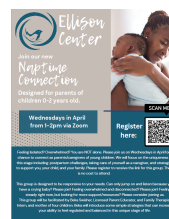
Imagination Library is another way for your child to receive one free book per month to age 5. See if this program is available where you live at: <https://tinyurl.com/bddtc5z3>

Check out some of these books about feelings for babies and toddlers:

- I Am Happy: A Touch and Feel Book of Feelings by Steve Light
- My Many Colored Days by Dr. Suess
- The Feelings Book by Todd Parr
- Baby Faces by Margaret Miller
- Oh, David!: A Diaper David Book by David Shannon
- Oops!: A Diaper David Book by David Shannon
- If You're Happy and You Know It: My First Taggies Book by Ken Geist.
- Lots of Feelings by Shelly Rotner
- Grumpy Bird by Jeremy Tankard
- When I Am/Cuando Estoy by Gladys Rosa-Mendoza
- Tough Guys Have Feelings Too by Keith Negley

POSTPARTUM & PARENTING

- Ellison Center will be hosting a virtual Naptime Connection in April for caregivers with young children to connect with one another. Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/5bec9zw5> and check out the flyer on page 3 of this newsletter for more information.



- There are several ways to look for childcare. For a step by step guide for finding childcare, see: <https://www.parentaware.org/learn/finding-child-care-a-guide-for-families/>
 - When you are ready to start your search, check out the following sites:
 - In-home licensed daycares: <https://licensinglookup.dhs.state.mn.us/>
 - If looking for daycares that are Parent Aware rated, use: <https://www.parentaware.org/>
 - For more information about Milestones Early Learning Scholarships, visit: <https://www.milestonesmn.org/early-learning-scholarships>

INFANT FEEDING

To determine the best breast pump flange size for you, you'll need to measure your nipples. A paper or fabric tape measure often works best. Measure the diameter (width across) your nipple in millimeters. Do not include measurements for your areola, the larger dark part around your nipple. Once you have your nipple measurement, add 3-4 millimeters and that will determine your flange size. Be sure to measure both of your nipples for correct sizing of each flange. If you are between sizes, use whichever size is most comfortable. Your flange size may even change throughout your pumping journey. You can find additional sizes of flanges on your breast pump's website.

- For example, if your nipple measures 17mm, you should use a 20-21mm flange size



If you would like help determining your proper flange size or have additional pumping questions, ask your First Steps home visiting nurse or visit a local infant feeding support group. Groups and other resources can be found on the resource page of the First Steps Central MN website at: <https://firststepscentralmn.org/resources>



SAFETY & RESOURCES

- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month
- Anna Marie's Alliance: provides safety, shelter, support and referral services to survivors of domestic violence and their children. 24/7 phone line: 320-253-6900
- Central MN Sexual Assault Center: 24/7 crisis intervention services to people affected by any form of sexual violence, 320-251-4357
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: call 1-800-799-SAFE, text "START" to 88788, or chat online <https://www.thehotline.org/>
- Rivers of Hope: advocacy services for youth and adults impacted by domestic violence, serves Wright & Sherburne Counties, 763-295-3433
- Terebinth Refuge: shelter & safe home for sexually exploited and trafficked women, 320-428-4704

MINDFULNESS

Mindful breathing can help you manage anxiety, depression, chronic pain, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and increase your focus. It is about taking time to slow down and bring a sense of awareness to your breath.

Children can be taught ways to be mindful with their breathing as well. During stressful or intense emotional moments, children may not have the coping skills to calm themselves. Breathing exercises can help your child (and you) to feel more relaxed and grounded.

Check out the several videos at: <https://tinyurl.com/3p8d975s> for several mindful breathing exercises, including:

- Lemon Squeeze Breathing
- Smile Breathing
- Volcano Breathing
- Superhero Breathing
- Bumble Bee Breathing



AFFIRMATION OF THE MONTH

"I use my body to release stress that builds up inside me."



ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTH

Earth Day Hand Prints:
<https://tinyurl.com/4x4d5649>



Easter Carrot & Bunny Craft:
<https://tinyurl.com/yck5bpmm>

Easter Egg Suncatcher:
<https://tinyurl.com/rehk9xm8>



Homemade Playdough
<https://tinyurl.com/2ja2stzy>

Ingredients:
1 cup water
6 cups flour
1 cup vegetable oil
Food coloring

SPECIAL DAYS IN APRIL

- 1: April Fools Day & National Love Our Children Day
- 2: National Peanut Butter & Jelly Day
- 3: National Find a Rainbow Day
- 9: Easter Sunday
- 10: National Siblings Day
- 11: National Pet Day
- 12: National Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day
- 14: National Gardening Day
- 18: Tax Day
- 20: National High Five Day
- 22: Earth Day
- 23: National Picnic Day
- 25: World Penguin Day





Ellison Center

Join our new

Naptime Connection

Designed for parents of
children 0-2 years old.

**Wednesdays in April
from 1-2pm via Zoom**



SCAN ME

**Register
here:**



Feeling Isolated? Overwhelmed? You are NOT alone. Please join us on Wednesdays in April for a chance to connect as parents/caregivers of young children. We will focus on the uniqueness of this stage including: postpartum challenges, taking care of yourself as a caregiver, and strategies to support you, your child, and your family. Please register to receive the link for this group. There is no cost to attend.

This group is designed to be responsive to your needs. Can only jump on and listen because you have a crying baby? Please join! Feeling overwhelmed and disconnected? Please join! Feeling steady right now, but looking for more support/resources? Please consider joining us.

This group will be facilitated by Beka Swisher, Licensed Parent Educator, and Family Therapist Intern, and mother of four children. Beka will introduce some simple strategies that can increase your ability to feel regulated and balanced in this unique stage of life.