

# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

## Contact Us

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[www.firststepscentralmn.org](http://www.firststepscentralmn.org)

## Pregnancy & Parenting

### Timing Contractions

Timing your contractions will help you and your healthcare provider track what is happening. You will need to know how long your contractions last (duration) and how close together they are (frequency). Frequency is timed from the start of one contraction to the start of the next. Contractions are considered regular when the duration and frequency are stable over a period of time. For example: contractions lasting 60 seconds and coming five minutes apart for an hour.

### Playing with your Baby

When you play with your baby, you're helping them develop **executive function skills**. These skills teach them how to focus their attention, use working memory, practice basic control, and set the foundation of lifelong health and resiliency.

Ways to play with a 6 month old:

- Peekaboo: cover your face with your hands then reveal your face. Try the same with a toy under a cloth, cup, or bowl.
- Sing Pat-a-Cake while clapping, rolling, and patting your baby's hands together during the song
  - "Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man. Bake me a cake as fast as you can! Roll it, and pat it, and mark it with a [first letter of baby's name], then put it in the oven for the baby and me!"
- Sit baby facing you on your lap and tell them a story. Pause and see if baby babbles back. Then copy their sounds and facial expressions back to them.

<https://tinyurl.com/5ex33hnz>



## Child Growth & Development

### Teething

Most babies get their first tooth between 6 and 10 months of age, starting with the two bottom middle teeth, then top two middle teeth, then those along the sides.

#### Common signs of teething may include:

Fussiness, Increased drooling, Swollen gums, Gnawing or biting, Refusing to eat, Trouble sleeping, Rubbing face and ears, Slight fever (temperatures above 100.4 degrees F are not normal for teething)

#### What can you do to help?

- Teething rings
- cold washcloths
- cold foods (if old enough),
- pain relief medications (check with your child's healthcare provide for correct dosing)



### Spit Up

Spitting up is common in healthy babies. During their first three months, about half of all babies experience spit up because the muscle between their stomach and esophagus needs time to mature.

Normal spitting up doesn't interfere with a baby's well-being. As long as baby seems comfortable, is eating well, and gaining weight, there's little cause for concern. Spit up amounts often appear to be more than it actual is, and not their entire feeding.

- Check out this video by Taking Cara Babies  
<https://tinyurl.com/mtczp966>



## Upcoming Events

County offices are closed:

- Monday, February 17 (President's Day)

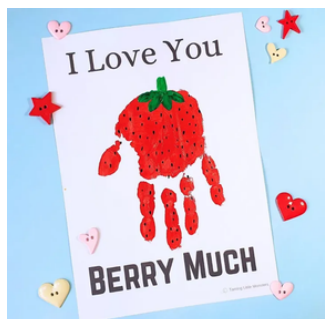
**SORRY  
WE'RE  
CLOSED**

To help reduce spitting up, try to keep your baby in an upright position for 30 minutes after feeding, avoid overfeeding, and take time to burp your baby.





## Activities of the Month



### Valentine's Day: I Love You Berry Much

<https://tinyurl.com/2yf6fn3f>



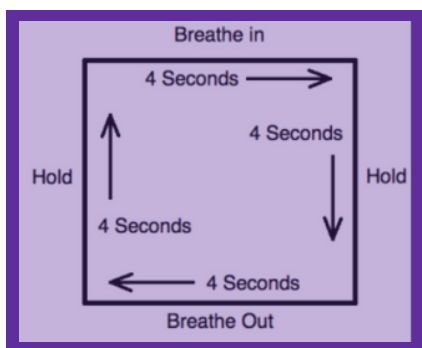
### Roll, Count & Fill Snowman

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

### Mindfulness Moment

Box breathing is a simple technique that you can do any time you feel stress and anxiety. Focused breathing calms nerves and relieves stress.

- Lie down on your back and breath only through your nose.
- Inhale for 4 seconds, letting your belly fill up like a balloon.
- Pause the breath at the top of the inhale for 4 seconds.
- Exhale through the nose for 4 seconds, fully emptying the lungs.
- Pause the breath at the bottom of the exhale for 4 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times.



## Safety & Resources

### ABCs of Safe Sleep

The ABCs of Safe Sleep for your infant:

- **ALONE:** your baby should sleep alone in their own space.
- **BACK:** your baby should sleep on their back. Place baby on their back to sleep and tummy to play.
- **CRIB:** your baby should sleep in a crib, bassinet, or pack-n-play that meets current safety standards and is a firm sleep surface. Do not use pillows, bumpers, blankets, toys, or sleep positioning devices in their sleep space.



### Tummy Time

While babies should be put on their backs for sleep, they should spend some time on their tummies when awake. Aim for a few minutes 2-3 times a day to begin with. This helps babies learn to lift their head, strengthen their neck and shoulders, and prepare them for crawling.

### Drop-In Infant Feeding Support

#### Mondays

- 10a-12p, Monticello Community Center

#### Tuesdays

- 9a-11a, Princeton ECFE Family Center
- 9:30a-11:30a, St. Cloud YMCA



#### Wednesdays

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



#### Fridays

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



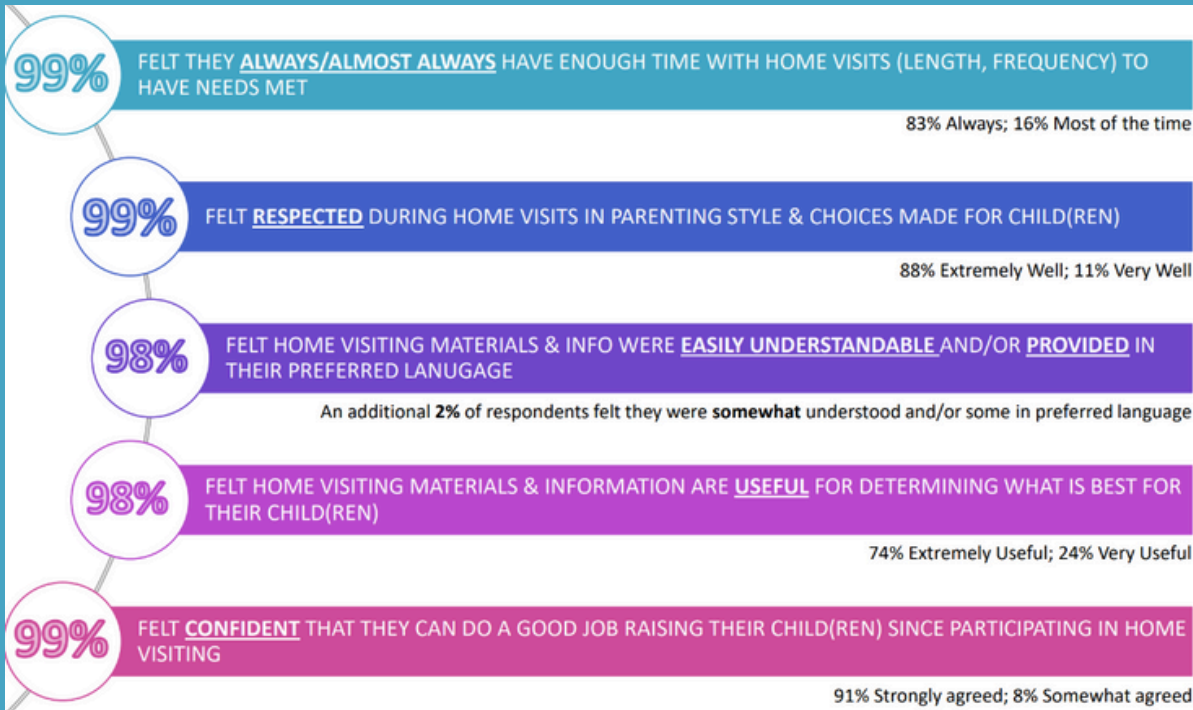
**=First Steps  
staff present**



## FAMILY FEEDBACK SURVEY

Our annual Family Feedback Survey is distributed to all families currently enrolled in our home visiting program across our four counties. Responses are voluntary and anonymous. This year, we received 132 family responses. 87% of responses were in English, 13% were in Spanish. Thank you to all of the families who completed the survey!

**92% of respondents reported high likelihood to recommend family home visiting to other families.**



**100% of families expressed improvement in one or more areas of life since beginning home visiting.**

