



FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Maternal Mental Health Month



May is Maternal Mental Health Month, dedicated to raising awareness about mental health challenges during pregnancy and the first year postpartum, with a focus on treating perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs).

Your First Steps home visitors PHNs can help you better understand:

- What typical emotional changes look like during pregnancy and postpartum.
- Early warning signs of mental health conditions.
- The role of sleep, nutrition, support networks, and realistic expectations in maternal wellbeing.
- They empower families with practical strategies to reduce stress and strengthen coping.

If you develop a PMAD, this does not mean you are doing anything wrong or that you love your baby less; it is a chemical/ hormone imbalance.

As many as **1 in 5** new mothers experience some type of perinatal (before and after giving birth) PMAD. Without understanding, supporting, and treatment, these PMADs can have a significant impact on women, their partners, children and families.



Women of every culture, age, income level and race can develop PMADs. Symptoms can appear at any time during pregnancy and the first 12 months after childbirth.

Talk to your healthcare provider right away if you are experiencing these feelings. There are effective and well-researched treatment options available to help women recover.

Here are some additional resources:

- Postpartum Support International-Minnesota
<https://www.postpartum.net/locations/minnesota/>
o 1-800-944-4773, #1 Spanish or #2 English
- National Maternal Mental Health Hotline 1-833-TLC-MAMA (1-833-852-6262)
<https://mchb.hrsa.gov/national-maternal-mental-health-hotline>
- Postpartum Support: The First 40 Days
<https://sites.google.com/umn.edu/40daysproject/home>
- Nystrom & Associates Mother-Baby Program
<https://www.nystromcounseling.com/our-services/mother-baby-program/>
- PrairieCare Maternal Mental Health Services
<https://prairie-care.com/treatment/perinatal-mental-health/>
- Redleaf Center for Family Healing 612-873-HOPE
<https://redleaffamilyhealing.org/>

May 6, 2026 is
World Maternal
Mental Health Day





What is...



Help Me Connect is a resource portal for pregnant and parenting families with young children, and those working with them.

Categories of resources include those for:

- Pregnant & Expectant Families
- Healthy Development & Screening
- Development & Behavior Concerns
- Disability Services & Resources
- Early Learning & Child Care
- Family Well-Being & Mental Health
- American Indian Families
- Caregiving & Community Support
- Dental & Health Care
- Basic Needs
- Legal Services



<https://helpmeconnect.web.health.state.mn.us/HelpMeConnect>



Activity of the Month

**Nature Walk
Cardboard Vase**
<https://tinyurl.com/5n8s97du>



Drop-In Feeding Support

Tuesdays

- 9:30a-11:30a, Monticello Community Center
- 9:30a-11:30a, St. Cloud YMCA

Wednesdays

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

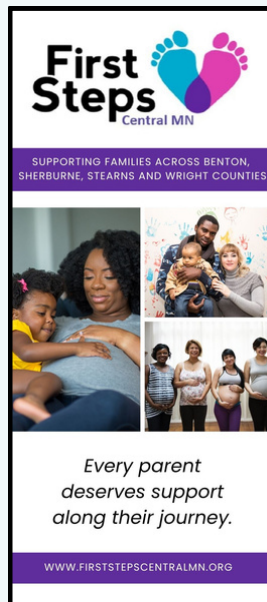
Thursdays

- 10a-12p, Mainstreet Family Resource Center, Elk River
- 11a-12:30p, Cambridge-Isanti Adult Enrichment Center

Fridays

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

=First Steps staff present



Check out our new brochure!

WHO WE ARE

First Steps Central MN is a team of nurses who partner with you in your pregnancy, postpartum, and parenting journey.

WHAT WE DO

Free visits with a nurse.

Connections to community resources.

Education and support for:

- What to expect during pregnancy
- Preparing for childbirth
- Feeding your child
- What to expect for your child's growth & development
- Guiding you and your child through challenging moments
- Accurate health information
- Ways to prepare your home for a child
- Child passenger safety (car seat) education & distribution
- Finding dental, vision, or medical care
- Family planning resources & testing
- Immunizations

HOW TO GET CONNECTED

Call or text 763-276-0441
referrals@firststepscentralmn.org
www.firststepscentralmn.org

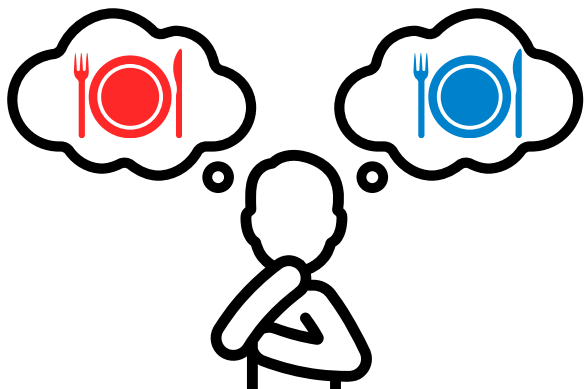




Testing Limits

As your child grows from infant to toddler, they begin to test limits and claim their independence. While this is a normal part of development, it can also be challenging for parents. Here are some tips:

- Set clear boundaries around activities like mealtimes, play, and bedtime. Consistency helps with development.
- Include simple choices that your child can make into your daily life. "Would you like the red plate or blue plate?"



- Practice responding patiently as your toddler pushes back.
- Focus on connecting with your child through one-on-one play and communication.
- Look for support if you are feeling overwhelmed. Parent groups through ECFE or seeing a therapist can help.

Object Permanence

As your baby grows, they observe things and interactions around them. Around 7-8 months old, infants may cry when a parent leaves the room. They believe things (and people) only exist when they can be seen. They don't fully understand that you still exist in the other room and will return to them. Closer to 10 months of age is when infants begin to fully understand that things exist even when they cannot see them. This is called object permanence.

Some easy ways to help your baby develop object permanence include playing:

- Peek-a-Boo
- Hide-and-seek



For more information on object permanence, visit:
<https://www.pampers.com/en-us/baby/development/article/object-permanence>

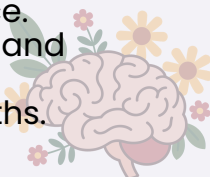


HAPPY
Mother's Day

Mindfulness Moment

Body Scan Meditation is a relaxation technique focusing breath and awareness on each body part at a time to melt away tension.

- Start at your toes. On exhale, visualize tension releasing.
- Move up through your feet, ankles, and legs.
- Soften more with each breath out.
- Continue to your hips, torso, and fingers.
- Let go of any tension you are holding.
- End at your head and face.
- Relax your jaw, forehead, and shoulders.
- Finish with full body breaths.
- Carry the calm with you.



**You Are Doing A Good Job
Mama Keepsake**
<https://tinyurl.com/mtnypwxc>

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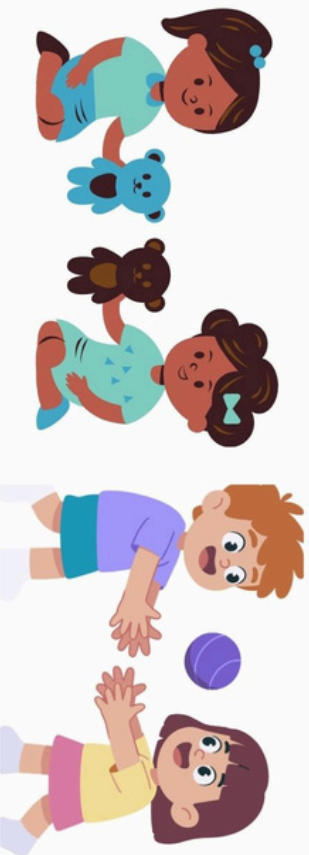


CRAFTS | ACTIVITIES | CONNECTIONS

Caregivers and little ones are invited to join First Steps for a fun morning of crafts designed to build connection, creativity, and community!

MONDAY, MAY 11
10:00AM-1:00PM
MAINSTREET FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
400 JACKSON AVE NW
ELK RIVER, MN 55330

FRIDAY, MAY 15
10:00AM-12:00PM
1010 COMMUNITY OUTPOST
1114 - 9TH AVE SE
ST. CLOUD, MN 56304



THESE EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!

Diaper Club

Join us once a month at the Family Resource Center for our **Diaper Club** — a supportive event where you can pick up **FREE** diapers for your family!

400 Jackson Ave NW
Elk River, MN 55330

May 6, 2026 @ 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Join us once a month at the Family Resource Center for our Diaper Club — A supportive resource for families!

Location: Elk River Family Resource Center 400 Jackson Ave NW Elk River, MN 55330

*Note: Big Lake families can also request pick up from Liberty Elementary by sending a request in advance. Please email shari.ley@mainstreetfamilyresourceservices.org for more information.

Let's Play in the Backyard!

FREE Event For Families With Children
Birth to Kindergarten-Entry

Spring Fling

TUESDAY, MAY 12
5 - 7 PM

Quarryview Education Center
800 7th St S, Waite Park

Hosted by District 742
Early Childhood Education

Spring
Themed
Activities!

Pizza will be provided!

St. Cloud Area
School District

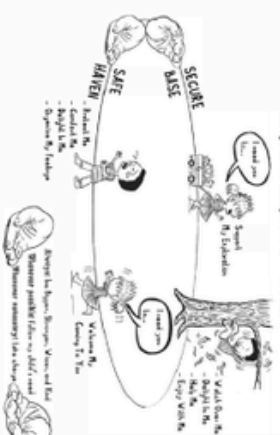
742!

Circle of Security Parenting Group

Be Bigger, Stronger, Kinder, and Wise Parents

Circle of Security (COS) is an evidence-based parenting approach that helps caregivers better understand their child's emotional needs and behavior. This group offers practical tools for strengthening the parent-child relationship, supporting emotional growth, and creating a sense of safety and connection, leading to greater confidence for children and more satisfaction for parents.

Circle of Security Caregiver Meetings To The Child's Needs



Group Information

Date: Wed, April 22 - June 10

Time: 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Location: Zoom Meeting

Facilitator: Mary Linn, MS, LP, IMH-E® (111)

Format:

- 8 weekly sessions
- One hour each
- Interactive education, videos, and guided discussion

Who Should Attend:

This group is for parents and caregivers of children of all ages who want to build stronger relationships, better understand their child's emotional needs, and gain practical tools for supporting behavior and emotional regulation. Participants will learn alongside other parents in a supportive, interactive group setting.

Referral & Registration:

For children who are current CMMHC clients, caregivers will need a brief Comprehensive Evaluation for insurance billing. Our team will assist caregivers with getting established as needed, please call 320-230-0611 for support. If the parent or caregiver is already an established client, referrals may be made directly to the group.



To learn more about this program, watch this short Circle of Security introduction video to see if this group may be a good fit for you.

CENTRAL MINNESOTA
CMMHC
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER