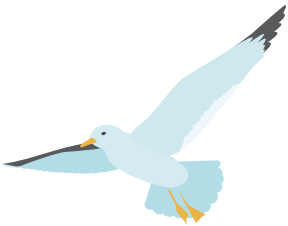
Every Baby's Best Start



A guide to support, advice and services for babies and families in Bristol



BEST START IN LIFE

HEALTHY BABIES

Bristol Family Hubs

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Documents available in other formats

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting: Family.Hubs@bristol.gov.uk

Introduction

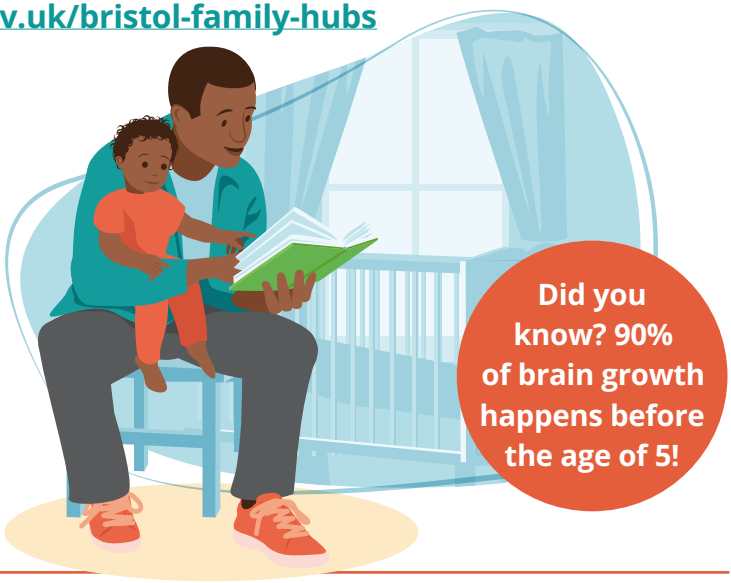
The time from pregnancy to age two is a period of rapid growth and change. In these early days, what a baby sees, hears and feels helps their brain grow and develop.

Being pregnant and becoming a parent is a big change and there can be a lot to think about. The care, attention and experiences you provide in your baby's early years help support their growth, learning and development.

'Healthy Babies Services' brings together the support, advice and opportunities available for you and your baby from conception to age two.

This booklet is here to help you explore what is available and find what feels right for you and your family; supporting you to give your baby the best possible start.

> To find out more about anything included in this leaflet, visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs**



Bristol's Best Start Family Hubs

Bristol Best Start Family Hubs are welcoming places where families can get information, advice and support.

They bring together services, activities and opportunities to help children, young people and families.

There are 15 Best Start Family Hubs which, together with community settings, network sites and outreach activity, cover all areas of Bristol and make up the Best Start Family Hubs network.

> Find your nearest Family Hub
www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs



Family Hubs membership

Sign up for free to access Best Start Family Hubs in-person activities.

To access the full range of Bristol's Best Start Family Hubs in person activities, you need to join as a member. Its completely free and there are lots of activities available

Sign up to join Bristols Best Start Family Hubs, add other members to your membership, fill in the profile for each person to view and book activities for them

> Join online at
www.bristol.gov.uk/family-hubs-membership

Family Hub Navigators

Family Hub Navigators are here to help you make the most of the support, services and opportunities available to you and your family.

Whether you are expecting a baby, adjusting to life with a new child, or looking for support as your family grows, they can help you understand what is available and provide practical, personalised support.

They can help with:

- Finding local groups, activities and services
- Childcare information and funded childcare applications
- Connecting to specialist services when needed

> To connect to your Family Hub Navigator team visit
www.bristol.gov.uk/family-hub-navigators

Support during pregnancy and after birth

Maternity services

You can refer yourself to NHS maternity services as soon as you know you are pregnant. Accessing care early means you can receive important screening, advice and support during the early stages of pregnancy. Once you have referred, you will be offered a midwife appointment.

Most pregnancy care is led by your midwife and takes place in community settings, such as health centres and community clinics. If you need specialist care, an obstetric consultant will lead your care, supported by your community midwife.



Midwives support you during pregnancy and after your baby is born. They can help you access services such as:

- perinatal mental health support
- stop smoking support
- antenatal education
- health and wellbeing advice

To refer yourself, visit **badgernotes.net/selfreferral** and select the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire area. If you need help completing the form, you can visit any Best Start Family Hub and speak to a Family Hub Navigator.

Best Start Family Hubs also offer support for expectant and new parents, including:

- Healthy Start vitamins
- antenatal classes
- early education services
- online resources

> Find more information, visit
www.bristol.gov.uk/pregnancy-to-two

Health visiting

Health visitors are specialist nurses who support families from the later stages of pregnancy until a child starts school.

They offer guidance, information and support on your child's health, development and wellbeing.

You can contact Bristol's health visiting service directly or through your local Baby Hub. Health visitors can be contacted on:

- Bristol East and Central: 0300 125 6274
- Bristol North: 0300 125 6278
- Bristol South: 0300 125 6264

Feeding your baby



We are here to support every family to build a close and loving feeding relationship with their baby.

Just like anything new, breastfeeding can take some time to learn, and it is normal to face some challenges along the way. Some mothers and parents will also decide to bottle feed using formula or expressed breastmilk.

Feeding with breastmilk

- Breastfeeding supports babies' and children's healthy growth and development
- Helps protect against a range of illnesses and diseases.
- It also has health benefits for mothers, including reducing the risk of several long-term conditions.
- Breastfeeding is free, convenient and available whenever a baby needs feeding.

Whatever your feeding journey looks like, Bristol's Best Start Family Hubs are here to offer support when you need it. There is a range of information and support available.

- Support from midwives and health visitors, including specialist infant feeding support if needed.
- Weekly drop-in infant feeding groups with trained peer supporters in Family Hubs.
- Drop -in Baby Hubs where you can meet other parents and speak to your health visitor.
- One-to-one infant feeding support during pregnancy and the early weeks after birth.
- Breastfeeding Welcome venues across Bristol, helping families feed their baby in confidence when out and about.

While many parents start their feeding journey with breastfeeding, it is common to experience challenges along the way. If you need support, please reach out for help.

> For more information, visit
www.bristol.gov.uk/feedingyourbaby

Your emotional wellbeing and getting to know your baby

Becoming a parent is a journey and it takes time to adapt.

Many parents will experience a range of emotions, from feeling a bit low or worried, to feeling completely overwhelmed or struggling to cope. According to NHSE (NHS England) up to 26% of new parents experience challenges with their own mental health or emotional wellbeing.

- Are you feeling sad, worried, or lonely?
- Perhaps you are finding it difficult to bond with your baby, or feeling unsure as a parent?
- Have you experienced the loss of a baby or a traumatic birth experience?

Your baby is learning about the world too, and their brain grows quickly in the first two years. Feeling safe, loved and connected to you helps their brain develop.

Every baby is different, and even though they cannot speak, they have ways of telling you how they feel and what they need.



- Would you like support to understand your baby (e.g. coping with crying, sleep, feeding, interacting with your baby)?
- Would you like to know more about your baby's brain development?

You are not alone and there is a range of information and support available to help you on your journey as a new parent.

> For information about the support on offer in your local area and online, visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/emotional-wellbeing**

You can also speak to a Family Hub staff member, GP, health visitor or midwife.



Online learning

You can find trusted information, advice and learning online whenever it suits you.

Best Start Family Hubs website



The Bristol Family Hubs website has information for every stage, from pregnancy and your baby's first months to the early years.

There are online resources and helpful videos on a range of topics including:

- pregnancy
- feeding and weaning
- emotional wellbeing and relationships
- sleep, play and child development
- oral health and vaccinations
- toilet training

You can book some online family learning and parenting courses through the Family Hubs membership.

> To sign-up for a free membership and find online courses, visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/family-hubs-membership**

Online support from trusted organisations

Togetherness

Bristol's Best Start Family Hubs gives local families free access to Togetherness. The online courses help parents, carers, grandparents and young people understand and manage emotions in everyday life.

You will learn from NHS clinical psychologists, practitioners and other parents, with practical advice to support your family's emotional wellbeing.

Website: **www.togetherness.co.uk/mul/bristol**

Access code: **GROWING**

EasyPeasy

Bristol Family Hubs gives local families free access to EasyPeasy. The app has tips and simple activities to help you play, connect and support your child's development from birth to age five.

The activities fit into everyday family life and use things you already have at home.

> To access the app, visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs**, search **'Talk and play'** and find the EasyPeasy app in the list.

Free childcare and early education

High-quality childcare and early education can help your child learn, play and build confidence, while giving parents and carers the flexibility they need.

Whether you're returning to work, looking for opportunities for your child to make friends and play with other children, or supporting their learning and development, there may be funded childcare available for your family.

What could you receive?

Depending on your child's age and your family's circumstances, you could receive:

- from nine months to school age: up to 30 hours a week for eligible working families
- age two: 15 hours a week for eligible families
- ages three and four: 15 hours a week for all children

Check what you can receive

Eligibility depends on your circumstances. Use the Best Start in Life Childcare Checker to find out what funded childcare is available to your family.

> Visit **childcare.beststartinlife.gov.uk**



Find childcare

The Family Information Service can help you find childcare that meets your family's needs.

Early education gives children opportunities to build their confidence, make friends, develop their language and get ready for school.

> To find a childcare provider or apply for a funded early education place for your two-year-old, visit **parent.bristol.gov.uk** and search **'free childcare'**.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect children in different ways, including how they learn, communicate, build relationships and understand the world around them. It can sometimes be difficult to know where to find information or who to speak to.

Bristol's Best Start Family Hubs can help you find advice and support for your child and family as early as possible.

Bristol's SEND Local Offer brings together information about SEND services and support.

> Visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-local-offer**



Support for children with SEND and their families

Best Start Inclusion Practitioners are based across our Best Start Family Hub network and provide early support for children with emerging or additional developmental needs and their families.

> Find out more at **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs/send-0-to-25**

Bristol Autism Team offers a range of learning opportunities and courses for parents and carers to help build understanding of their child's needs and develop practical strategies to support them.

> Visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-local-offer**

The Early Years Portage and Inclusion Team provides home visiting support for families with young children who have additional needs. They work alongside you to support your child's development and help you learn and play together.

> Visit **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-local-offer**

Bristol Parent Carers brings families of children and young people with SEND together for support, connection and learning. They offer peer support, parent learning groups and focused support blocks, as well as opportunities for families to share their experiences which helps shape SEND services across Bristol.

> Find out more at **www.bristolparentcarers.org.uk**

Growing your skills and staying connected

Whether you're expecting a baby or parenting a young child, Best Start Family Hubs are here for you.

Our groups, activities and support can help you meet other families, learn new skills and feel more confident during pregnancy and the early years.

You can get help with:

- child development
- feeding and sleep
- looking after your wellbeing
- play and language
- pregnancy and birth
- understanding your baby

If you need extra support, we can work with you one-to-one at home or in a Family Hub. We'll work with you to build on your strengths, answer your questions and help you find the support that's right for you and your family.



> To find out more, visit
www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs

Testimonials

"Family Hubs were great when my baby was very little... I could take him to be weighed and casually ask for other advice. The Health visitors were also so helpful and referred me to the breastfeeding team when I needed it "

"I've found the Family Hub to be very good to meet people and ask questions... we enjoy the nursery rhymes at the library too"

"Family Hubs were incredible for getting me and my baby out of the house and having something to base our day around and also so informative! – a great range of groups including PEEP, massage, new parents and infant feeding"



"It has been great to be able to check up on health and wellbeing of my baby and really educational as a new mum. Family Hubs have given me reassurance and someone who listens to what's going on for me."

For more information

> To find out more about anything included in this leaflet, visit: **www.bristol.gov.uk/bristol-family-hubs**



Contact us

North Bristol Best Start Family Hubs

Phone: 0117 922 3779
Email: nbfh@bristol.gov.uk

South Bristol Best Start Family Hubs

Phone: 0117 922 2150
Email: sbfh@bristol.gov.uk

East Central Bristol Best Start Family Hubs

Phone: 0117 9223189
Email: ecfh@bristol.gov.uk

BEST START IN LIFE | HEALTHY BABIES

Bristol Family Hubs

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

BD18709