

Nevada Early Childhood Care & Education



A Guide for New Parents
for a Healthy Family





New Parents. Healthy Families.

Are you a new parent or caregiver in Nevada who could use some advice and guidance as you begin the journey of parenthood? Are you searching for early care and learning options? If so, you're just like most new parents, and we're here to lend a helping hand. This guide offers an overview to help you stay on top of your family's health – and just as important – your own health. It also provides a summary of the different types of child care available, important questions to ask when choosing care, and resources to help you understand early learning and development.



This is not medical advice. Always consult your doctor for more information.

To access an electronic version of this New Parent Guide with active links, scan here:



A healthy family starts with healthy parents



Mom's Physical Health

Taking care of yourself is critical for the health of your family.

- > Half of women experience pelvic floor dysfunction in the years following the birth of a child. Your pelvic floor includes muscles that outline your pelvis and continues up to your navel. To feel all of the muscles contract, stand up and on an exhale try pulling your hips together and hold. You should feel that triangle of muscles contract.
[10 Pelvic Floor Exercises: Kegels & More for Pelvic Health.](#)
- > Drink lots of water and eat healthy foods like lean protein, fruit, vegetables and whole grains.
- > Light to moderate aerobic activity after having a baby has many benefits for the new mom, including: strengthen and tones abdominal muscles, boosts energy, relieves stress, and promotes better sleep (consult with your doctor before starting any new exercise/physical activity routines).

Questions for your doctor:

- > When can I lift 20 lbs or start Pilates or other exercise?
- > When can I have sex?
- > Post delivery bleeding is normal, but what does normal look like?
- > What foods or vitamins promote my health and the health of my child?
- > What amount of pain killers are safe while breast feeding?
- > Vaginal Birth – What cleaning products do you recommend?
- > C-section – How do I care for the incision? What are signs of infection?
- >> For more questions to consider and ask, please visit:
[Your body after baby: The first 6 weeks | March of Dimes](#)
[Timeline of Postpartum Recovery](#)
- >> For tips and information on postpartum physical activity, please visit:
[Exercise After Pregnancy | ACOG](#)





Mom's Mental Health

Having a child, especially a first child, is a lot to process. Be mindful of how you feel and make sure you talk to someone that you trust for support.

- > Some moms are high on joy for their child as soon as their child is born, while others need more time to process, that is ok, your life is changing.
- > If you feel anxious, hopeless, and/or disconnected from your child for a week or more, you may be one of the 1:9 women who suffer from post-partum depression. You have done nothing wrong but seek help and talk to your doctor. For help talking to your doctor check out this [new mom mental health postpartum checklist](#).
- > You may not be ready for sex in the time frame that your doctor suggests, that is ok.
- > Find time for yourself and find joy in something, it will be to benefit your whole family.
- > Adjusting to a new family member can be difficult for everyone in your home – but help is available, consider a [postpartum doula](#).

Individual doulas provide different services, prioritize what is important to you and find a doula to fit your needs.



Question for your doctor:

- > What are strategies to process life changes, feelings of loss of independence or depression?

Managing Postpartum Anxiety



> *Taking Care of a Newborn is Unnerving*

No questions or concerns are irrational and you should discuss them with your support team, including your child's pediatrician.

> *Build Your Support Network*

Try to surround yourself with people who are supportive and can offer help and encouragement when you're facing a difficult time.

> *Practice Self Care*

Self-care is vital. Exercise, get plenty of sleep, eat healthy, and seek support to help you during this period.

> *Communicate with Your Partner*

Try to be open and have honest conversations with your partner about how you feel, your needs and concerns.

> *Get Professional Help*

Never hesitate to seek professional help if needed. Get the advice and knowledge needed to advocate for your own mental health.





Understanding Postpartum Body Changes In the Six Weeks After Birth

> *Your Breasts*

As colostrum develops the breasts begin to fill with milk. While they can become hard, sensitive or painful, this will go away.

> *Tearing*

Lidocaine spray, ice packs and witch hazel pads can be helpful with discomfort and pain caused by tearing.

> *Hormones*

Mood swings, anxiousness and indecision are common. Ask for help if your emotions affect you negatively for longer than you are comfortable with.

> *Hand Swelling*

50% more blood and fluids are produced by mothers during pregnancy. Eating potassium rich fruits and vegetables helps with swollen hands and legs as your body returns to normal fluid levels.



The 4th Trimester *(or the first 3 months after birth)*

As your baby changes, so will your hormones – get ready!

- > *Hair loss is normal*
- > *Mom Brain – brain fog and forgetfulness are due to hormone changes*
- > *Sweating*
- > *Other new parents are going through similar things – find a support group for moms or dads.*

Feeding Options

If breast feeding is not working for you or you do not have the time to feed and pump, remember what is important is the health of your baby. While your baby will get different prebiotics and antibodies from different milk sources, they will get what they need to thrive.



Resources

- > [What is Considered Postpartum Care? - Maternal Instincts](#)
- > Breast pumps are covered by your insurance – checkout how to get one – [Are breast pumps covered by the Affordable Care Act? | HHS.gov](#)
- > [Postpartum care: the fourth trimester | News & articles | UnitedHealthcare](#)
- > [Postpartum: Stages, Symptoms & Recovery Time](#)



To access an electronic version of this New Parent Guide with active links, scan here:



What is considered “normal” at 6-weeks post-partum?



- > *Your uterus has returned to normal size*
- > *Vaginal bleeding has stopped*
- > *You will be given all clear for exercise and sex*
- > *Breastmilk contains the peak concentration on antibodies*

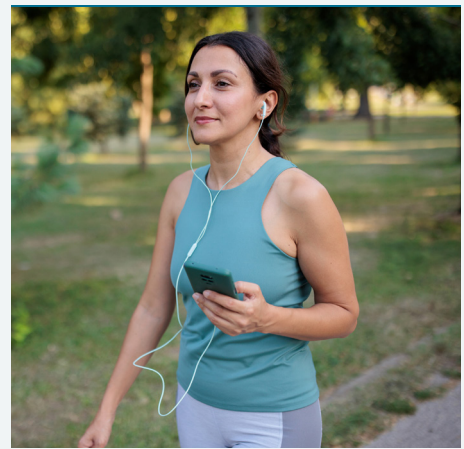
Caregivers Also Need to Care for Themselves



MAKE THE TIME FOR HOBBIES



GO TO BED A HALF-HOUR EARLIER



GO FOR A SHORT WALK OUTDOORS



TRY YOGA



MEET UP FOR LUNCH WITH FRIENDS



JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

Activities like these are great for lowering stress, boosting mood and making you the best caregiver you can be. [Learn more at www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving)

Health of Parents and Other Care Givers

It is not only mothers that need advice following the birth of a child, the lives of all primary care givers change.

- > Sleep, you may learn to adapt without it, but it is not good for your overall health, if your child is not a good sleeper find support so that you can cope.
- > Make sure you get the exercise or other activities that you find enjoyable.
- > Think creatively how to integrate exercise into your life – short exercise routines can not only improve your health but your mood and energy levels.
- > Your life is changing; it is ok to feel that you are losing something.
- > Honor changes to your relationship – different is not always bad.
- > Wash your hands a lot, keeping your infant healthy, will keep you healthy.

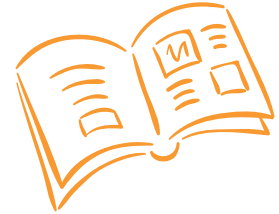


Resources

- > [New Parents: Tips for Quality Rest | Johns Hopkins Medicine](#)
- > [Caregiver stress: Tips for taking care of yourself - Mayo Clinic](#)



Early Care and Education



Types of Early Care and Education Programs

Nevada offers 5 different types of early learning programs, which include:

- > **Child Care Centers** – A non-residential facility that often groups children by age, has dedicated staff and director, and provides day or night care for more than 12 children.
- > **Licensed Family Child Care** – A licensed in home program offering care for 6 children.
- > **Licensed Group Home Child Care** – A licensed in home program offering care for 7-12 children, with two adults present.
- > **Nevada Ready! State Pre-Kindergarten** – Nevada Ready! State Pre-K (NR!PK) is a state funded pre-kindergarten program designed to support 4-year-old children (must turn 4 on or before August 1st).
- > **Head Start (now including Early Head Start)**
 - > Pregnancy Services
 - >> Connecting families to community resources (mental health, housing, food, etc.)
 - > Early Care & Education
 - >> Early Head Start (Prenatal – 3yrs)
 - >> Head Start (3yrs – Kindergarten entry)
 - >> Home Visiting
 - > Nutrition Services
 - >> Provide healthy Meals for children & access to nutrition supports
 - > Parent Support and Engagement
 - >> Provide supports to assist families in Self sufficiency
 - > Health & Wellness
 - >> Provide Health, Hearing & Dental Screenings



When looking for care it's important to know what is important to you and your family. Here are some questions to consider:

- > Do you prefer in home providers or a center-based program?
- > Do you prefer a location closer to home or your work?
- > Is a religious based program important to you and your family?



To help identify if a program will be a good fit for you, your family, and your child/children, you should tour the program and classroom. Here are some questions to consider and/or ask when touring:

- > Do you provide meals/snacks?
- > What is your discipline/guidance policy?
- > What are your ratios? (number of adults to children)
- > What are your teacher qualifications?
- > Do teachers get breaks?
- > If in home; Do you have pets in the home? What breed(s)?



For additional questions to consider, please visit:

- > [Top 20 Questions to Ask at Your Daycare Tour](#)
- > [Child Care Center Checklist](#)

Resources



- > **What is Quality?** What's important for one family may not be for another. A quality early learning program is one that meets the needs of the family and is developmentally appropriate for the individual child/children.
- > To find licensed programs that are committed to increasing quality, check out Nevada's Quality Rating Improvement System: [QRIS Program Ratings Dashboard](#)
- > For information on finding licensed childcare near you, the IDEA services, and Nevada's childcare subsidy program visit:
 - >> [Parent Resources - Nevada Child Care Resource & Referral](#)
 - >> [Child Care Licensing](#)
- > Are you eligible for Head Start? *Check if you qualify and find a Head Start Program near you:* <https://headstart.gov/center-locator>.
- > Do you qualify for Subsidy? Find out here: <https://www.nevadachildcare.org/child-care-subsidy-assistance/>



Developmental Milestones Overview

Newborn to 1 Year

Physical: Rapid growth, head control, sitting up, crawling, and possibly walking.

Cognitive: Recognizes faces, starts to understand object permanence, and begins to explore with hands and mouth.

Social/Emotional: Smiles, responds to name, and shows attachment to caregivers.



1 to 2 Years

Physical: Walking independently, beginning to run, and improved hand-eye coordination.

Cognitive: Simple problem-solving, understanding basic instructions, and beginning to use words.

Social/Emotional: Increased independence, parallel play, and showing defiance.



2 to 3 Years

Physical: Running, climbing, and beginning to pedal a tricycle.

Cognitive: Improved language skills, understanding of simple concepts like big/small, and beginning to sort objects by shape and color.

Social/Emotional: More interactive play, showing empathy, and beginning to understand sharing.



3 to 4 Years

Physical: Improved balance, hopping, and beginning to dress themselves.

Cognitive: Asking questions, understanding time concepts, and beginning to count.

Social/Emotional: Cooperative play, developing friendships, and showing a range of emotions.



4 to 5 Years

Physical: Skipping, catching a ball, and using utensils more skillfully.

Cognitive: Recognizing letters and numbers, understanding rules, and showing independence in daily activities.

Social/Emotional: More complex friendships, understanding rules, and showing independence in daily activities.



Data Compiled using ChatGPT. For additional information on children's developmental milestones:

[Milestone Moments Checklist](#)



Developmental and Health Challenges



What to expect when the unexpected happens –

because sometimes things do not go as planned. When we think of the ideal life with our children, they are perfect and can achieve anything. Everyone is different and develop at their own speed based on their own needs. Here are some tips for when the unexpected developmental or health challenges happen:

- > If you get news that you are not expecting about the health of your baby, take time to process. All of your feelings are valid. Know that you are not alone, find a peer group of parents that are in similar situations – peers with similar experiences will help you process.
- > Nevada does not have a lot of choice when it comes to pediatric specialists. You will likely have to travel out of state for your child's care, so be prepared and ask questions. When you discuss specialists with your pediatrician, ask who they would take their kids to.
- > [Nevada Early Intervention Services \(NEIS\)](#)

If your child has a diagnosis that includes developmental delays, you will be referred for Early Intervention. Services are free and are available for children 0-3 years of age.

The project described herein is [partially] supported by the Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Initiative (PDG B-5), Grant Number 90TP099, awarded to the Nevada Department of Education, from the Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Office of Child Care, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Please visit <https://bit.ly/nevadaPDGB-5> for more information or contact Rachel Stepina at rachel.stepina@doe.nv.gov

To access an electronic version of this New Parent Guide with active links, scan here:

