



Information for professionals

Baby Steps is an innovative perinatal education programme for parents who may need additional support. It helps get parents off to the best start, enabling them to build supportive relationships and care for their baby. Pregnancy is a time when most parents – including those seen as disengaged or hard to reach – are receptive to offers of support. It is a fantastic opportunity to help set the template for effective parenting.

Aim of the service

This programme reaches those parents who most need support. It provides them with information, practical help and a network of supportive relationships, and uses a range of techniques to engage meaningfully with parents and nurture healthy relationships.

Baby Steps is an evidence based programme and has been welcomed by the Department of Health.

What happens during the programme?

Baby Steps focuses on the transition to parenthood, the relationship between parents and the development of a positive relationship between parents and their babies.

This will be done over nine sessions, which cover:

- babies' development
- parent infant interaction
- relationships and support
- the practicalities of parenting, labour and birth.
- caring for and feeding a new baby.
- mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The programme starts when the mum is around 25 weeks pregnant with a home visit, followed by six antenatal group sessions. After the baby is born there will be a postnatal home visit and three further group sessions. The sessions take place in the children centre and will be run by local children's centre practitioners and health professionals who are part of a local Baby Steps team.

The Baby Steps programme in Wiltshire will be evaluated to help us understand the impact of the programme and to inform future developments.

Who is the programme for?

The programme is open to parents expecting a baby who may require additional support. Reasons for referral include those below. They can be first time parents or have previous children.

You do not need to explain the programme in detail; once we receive their contact details we will get in touch and tell them more about the programme. Ideally we need to have the details before the mum is 20 weeks pregnant to give us time for this.

Referral reason can apply to either the mother or her partner and may include one or more of the following;

- Low level mental health issues; anxiety, depression, previous postnatal depression.
- Social isolation; those with no support networks or no family support.
- Ethnic minority/isolated community.
- Poor housing or homeless.
- Unemployed or poor financial situation.
- Those with learning difficulties.
- Young parents age 20 years or younger.
- Victim of domestic abuse - past or present.
- Drug use - past or present.
- Offender or ex-offender.
- Involved in the care system.
- Social care involvement as appropriate.

In some circumstances when there are complex needs, serious health conditions affecting the baby or high level child protection concerns, Baby Steps may not be the appropriate choice for families and we will need to explore this before accepting them on the programme.

If you know parents who would be suitable for the programme and they agree to their details being passed to the Baby Steps team, please complete a Baby Steps interest form and email to alison.sturdy@nhs.net