



Information Service for Parents

FACTSHEET FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The Start4Life Information Service for Parents – advice you can trust

The digital advice service for parents-to-be and new parents.

In a world of information overload, mothers and fathers can struggle to find information they can trust on the internet and elsewhere to help them through pregnancy, birth and beyond and become more confident parents.

The NHS Information Service for Parents was developed in 2012 as a new digital service for parents-to-be and new parents. In January 2014, it merged with the Start4Life campaign in order to form one single point of authoritative, trusted information and tools for parents-to-be and new parents. Parents are encouraged to sign up from early pregnancy to receive regular free emails and text messages offering timely NHS advice, and signposting them to other quality assured information.

www.nhs.uk/start4life

What does the service offer?

- The service provides information and advice to both mothers and fathers. It offers them up-to-date material from the NHS Choices Pregnancy and Baby Guide and incorporates information previously available in the Department of Health's Pregnancy and Birth to Five books. The service covers a wide range of issues, including how a baby develops, birth and pain relief options, healthy lifestyle advice, breastfeeding, immunisations, common childhood illnesses and what to look for when arranging childcare.
- The service also signposts parents to wider information about parenting, relationship support, benefits advice etc, from appropriate sources.

Why should health professionals trust this new service?

- The service only offers parents information that is quality assured and regularly checked, from existing NHS information and wider appropriate sources that meet the Department of Health criteria for signposting, for example website content is not dominated by advertising.

How has the service been developed?

- Health professionals and parents have been involved in developing and user testing the service, and feedback will be encouraged to help improve the service further.

What information do parents need to share to sign up to the service?

- Parents who choose to sign up will be consenting to share some basic details such as name, due date, email address and mobile phone number for text messages.
- The service is secure and email addresses and the phone numbers parents use to sign up to the service will not be shared with any third parties and will be used only for sending emails and text messages. Parents can unsubscribe from the service any time they wish.
- Health professionals will be able to help parents unsubscribe in case of bereavement by contacting the helpdesk on 0845 458 0159. You will need to know each parent's email address and mobile phone number to unsubscribe them.

Why should I promote this service to parents?

- Quality information and support is important from early pregnancy onwards and throughout children's development to help mothers and fathers make informed decisions about their health and their children's health and become more confident parents.
- The Information Service for Parents complements health professionals' face-to-face consultations with parents and reinforces the health messages they give them. It gives parents regular information on the questions and worries they may have and on issues that they may want to discuss in more depth at their face-to-face appointments.
- It also offers a different way to provide advice to disadvantaged parents and minority groups, directing them to information that is available when they need it, in accessible formats, including text messages and video. The emails can be translated, using Google Translate, into 12 languages by clicking on the language links at the top of any email received.

Sign up to the Start4Life Information Service for Parents at www.nhs.uk/start4life

For text messages only, parents can text their name and baby's due date or date of birth to **84499** as follows:

MUM FIRSTNAME DDMMYYYY or

DAD FIRSTNAME DDMMYYYY

How can I help parents sign up?

- You can help parents sign up by offering information about the service during consultations.
- Parents can sign up individually to the service from early in pregnancy and at any time up to 18 months after their baby is born.

How can I view and input into this service?

- As a health professional you can sign up to the service to see the content as a mother or father would see it. You can also view the content by going to www.nhs.uk/InformationServiceForParents/pages/email-catalog.aspx
- You can also use the feedback mechanism to help evaluate and improve the service.

WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE THIS NEW SERVICE A SUCCESS?

Help us sign up parents across the country to the new service.

Encourage them to explore the links and find out more about pregnancy, child development and parenting, to complement your face-to-face consultations.

Let us know what you and the parents you see think about the new service, using the feedback form on the website.

www.nhs.uk/start4life