

# Young Parents



Image of a young parent is provided by the [Brave Foundation](#)

## Introduction

Parenting has its ups and downs. Being a young parent can have its own specific challenges, including finishing your education and accessing help. Support and planning can help overcome these challenges.

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## Being a new parent

Being a new parent is an exciting time and there are a lot of things to learn. You are not expected to do it completely on your own. There are a lot of services to help you as a young parent.

Here are a few things you can think about to help you be ready and supported for

your parenting journey:

- **Look at your Centrelink options:** Once your baby is born, you may be eligible for the Parenting Payment. You will need to contact Centrelink to tell them that you have had a change of circumstances and you now have a dependant child. When you contact Centrelink, you will be able to find out if you are eligible for more support and apply. It's best to allow a couple of months for this process. [Pregnancy Birth and Baby](#) have information about what Centrelink supports may be available for young parents.
- **Contact your local community centre for support groups:** Some support groups include young parents groups or services that help younger parents. You can chat to your doctor or a youth worker to find out about community supports in your area. To find your nearest community centre, try looking up your local council website for contacts that are specific to your area.
- **Book into parenting classes:** [Parent Line](#) have information about what to look for in a parenting class so it suits your needs. Parent Line is a fee free service and does not have any costs associated with using the service. [Relationships Australia](#) have resources including online and face to face parenting workshops and courses across NSW.

If you have any questions about your health during pregnancy, or your child's health, give Parent Line a call on 1300 1300 52 from 9am to 9pm weekdays and 4pm to 9pm on weekends. They can help with anything from questions about pregnancy, to your child's development and managing behaviour. For more information visit the [Parent Line website](#).

Friends, family, youth workers and doctors can be good supports. But sometimes you might want to look online for information and support networks as well.

*Remember, you don't have to do this alone, so reach out to people you trust and make some new connections.*

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## Looking after yourself as a parent



When you become a parent for the first time, it can be exciting and exhausting all at once. While it's important to look after your child, it's also important to look after yourself as a new parent.

***Take time for yourself:** Even if it's only for a few minutes a day, do something nice for yourself. Rest when you can, eat nutritious food that will keep your energy levels up, and don't be afraid to ask for help.*

**Support:** Support for yourself and your baby is very important. You are not expected to learn how to be a parent on your own. Support could come from your partner, family, friends, from a health professional (such as your GP or child and family health nurse), or from a service. There are support services such as [The Brave Foundation](#) that are specific for young parents.

Also, support can happen in all kinds of ways. It might be talking to a friend after a long day, having a family member or friend cook food for you to freeze, or having a

service come to you for medical appointments.

It's important to reach out for help when needed. If you think you need extra help speak to your [GP](#) or child and family health nurse.

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## **Baby Blues and depression**

It's common to go through a period of adjustment after having a baby. Your hormones are changing, and you may feel more emotional and anxious than normal.

This is known as the baby blues. For most people, this is temporary.

If the baby blues lasts longer than 2 weeks, it may be a sign of depression or other emotional distress. It can affect either parent.

Depression affects up to 1 in 10 birthing parents during pregnancy (antenatal depression) and 1 in 6 during the first year after birth (postnatal depression).

*It's important you speak to your doctor or health professional if you feel down, worried or distressed for more than two weeks. There is support available.*

You can also find out more information about depression during pregnancy and after birth at:

- [ForWhen](#)
- [Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia \(PANDA\)](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)
- [Raising Children](#)
- [Centre of Perinatal Excellence \(COPE\)](#)
- [NSW Health: Mental health help for parents & babies](#)

For more resources about mental health in general, you can head to our fact sheet: [Mental Health](#)



## Being the partner



All new parents need to look after their wellbeing, this includes the partners of the person who carried the baby. A partner can also find it difficult to adjust to being a new parent, regardless of whether they carried the baby themselves.

- Depression affects 1 in 10 partners
- Anxiety affects up to 1 in 6 partners

For more information for partners visit [Beyond Blue](#), or [A guide for dads: Caring for everyone during perinatal mental illness](#). There is also a service where you can receive free text messages, support, info & tips, especially for dads & dads-to-be on [SMS4dads](#). You can also visit the [mental health](#) page for more resources.

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## Resources for Young Parents

- [Raising Children's - Parents Like Me](#) have more information about parenting as a young person
- [Raising Children](#) also have videos about pregnancy and parenting
- [Youth Links](#) have resources and community links for young parents
- [Brave Foundation](#) are a support service for young parents
- [Pregnancy Birth and Baby](#) have information on all stages of parenting
- [Young Pregnant and Parenting Network](#) have a list of services including rural and regional services
- [Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia \(PANDA\)](#) are a support organisation for parents experiencing perinatal anxiety and depression (Mon to Fri, 9am - 7.30pm AEST/AEDT) Call 1300 726 306.