



**Title: Being a parent/carer**  
**Part 2: What babies need/the best start in life**

**Level: THIRD/FOURTH**

**Links to Curriculum for Excellence**

Experiences and outcomes	Benchmarks
I can explain the importance and the enduring and complex responsibility of being a parent/carer, and the impact on life choices and options. HWB 3-51a I can explain the support and care necessary to ensure a child is nurtured through the different stages of childhood. HWB 3-51b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explains the short and long-term impact of parenthood, for example, joy, commitment, financial implications, anxiety, physical demands.</li> <li>Explains the meaning and importance of nurture in a child’s development.</li> <li>Identifies local support available for parents and carers.</li> </ul>

**Learning Intentions**

- Young people understand the role of a parent/carer.
- Young people understand the challenges of being a parent/carer.
- Young people understand how having a child would impact on their life.
- Young people understand the importance of nurture and play in a child’s development.
- Young people learn about the importance of finding and seeking help and support as a parent.

**Success Criteria**

- I can discuss the skills and qualities of a parent/carer.
- I can talk about what a parent/carer does to make sure their child is healthy, happy and safe.
- I can discuss some of the challenges of being a parent/carer and how to seek help and support.
- I talk about the kind of parent or carer I would be.

**NOTE:** In this second activity about parenthood, the young people will explore what is needed in order that children have the best start in life. The focus is on babies and as examples of the important role of the parent/carer role some emphasis is given to responding to crying and breastfeeding.

**Resources to support this activity**

- PowerPoint slides
- **Crying films:** *Why do babies cry? Seven reasons why your baby cries* film (from babycentre.co.uk duration 2 minutes 10) <https://www.babycentre.co.uk/v25023732/seven-reasons-babies-cry-video>  
*How to cope with a crying baby* (National Childbirth trust film <https://www.nct.org.uk/parenting/coping-crying-baby> (duration 2 minutes 39)
- **Breastfeeding films** <https://www.babycentre.co.uk/v25007241/how-to-get-a-comfy-attachment-video> (from babycentre.co.uk duration 2 minutes) OR *How to breastfeed* from Parents magazine (2 minutes 12) : [https://youtu.be/qzSB\\_4rOIJU](https://youtu.be/qzSB_4rOIJU)

*Whenever you use content on a platform like YouTube please cue the film you intend to play in advance, check it is the film you want to view, and skip adverts.*

## Activity

1. Introduce the activities with a reminder of the previous session together. Have the posters young people made about what children and young people need at different stages of development on view for a quick review. Share the slide:

**We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential. We do all we can to ensure our children grow up in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.**

2. Explain that this is what the Scottish Government says should be the case for all children and young people, it's called a *National Outcome*. Explain that today's focus is on the earliest stage of child development, the idea of giving children *the best start in life*. So, ask: **If babies and toddlers are to have the best start, and be loved, safe and respected, what can their parents and carers do?** after small group or full group discussion explore similarities and diversity of opinion.
3. **Things parents do every day for a baby.** Explain that you would like the young people to work in pair/3 and be very practical, to think about every day of a baby's life. The question is: **What do parents/cares do for their baby every day?** After some time, get some feedback and discuss. Then, share the slide with the prep-prepared suggestions – compare and contrast this list with the young people's suggestions.

### Things parents do every day for a baby

- Changing nappies
- Cleaning/washing
- Responding to crying
- Dressing
- Feeding/winding
- Keep the child safe
- Sleeping
- Bonding
- Talking and playing

4. Ask the young people: **Of all these tasks, what do you think would be the most difficult, and why?** Find out views across the group. Then explain that you will spend some time looking at 2 things – crying and feeding.
5. **Crying.** Ask: *Why do babies cry?* In groups or together explore and discuss. Watch the short film (go to the page and scroll down to the film). After watching contrast and compare what the young people had suggested.  
*Why do babies cry? Seven reasons why your baby cries* (duration 2 minutes 10 seconds)  
<https://www.babycentre.co.uk/v25023732/seven-reasons-babies-cry-video>
6. **What would you do if your baby was crying?** Ask young people to have a chat in pairs/3s and come up with their best suggestions as to how to soothe a crying baby – get some feedback after a few minutes. Some young people might have good experience from home, helping others with their babies – what works for them? Then, watch the film *How to cope with a crying baby*  
<https://www.nct.org.uk/parenting/coping-crying-baby> (duration 2 minutes 39) Scroll down the page to locate the film. (NOTE: In discussion make sure to encourage reflection on the role of dads/male care givers).

7. **Breastfeeding:** Introduce the next topic and use the slide

**Breastfeeding** can also be called **nursing**. It is the feeding of babies and young children with milk from a woman's breast. Health professionals recommend that breastfeeding begin within the first hour of a baby's life and continue as often and as much as the baby wants. During the first few weeks of life babies may nurse roughly every two to three hours and the duration of a feeding is usually ten to fifteen minutes on each breast. Older children feed less often. Mothers can express milk (using a breast pump) so that it can be used later if they can't be there to breastfeed. Breastfeeding has a number of benefits to both mother and baby.

*NOTE:* in discussion acknowledge that in some circumstances breastfeeding may not be possible, perhaps for the mother, or if the child is not living with their birth mum.

8. Ask the young people: *What do you think the benefits of breastfeeding a baby?* Take some ideas and share the slide:

**Breastfeeding is good news for baby and you**

- Breast milk is tailor-made for your baby and gives them all the nutrients they need in the first 6 months, and alongside other foods thereafter.
- Breast milk boosts your baby's ability to fight illness and infection.
- Breastfeeding lowers your risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer, and burns about 500 calories a day.
- Breastfeeding is a great way to strengthen the bond between you and your baby.

9. **Breastfeeding film.** The short film is about getting a good attachment so that a baby can feed but its use here is good in simply showing the young people what breastfeeding looks like/how it works. In that sense explain before viewing that 'a good attachment' means making sure your baby can attach to the mum's nipple: <https://www.babycentre.co.uk/v25007241/how-to-get-a-comfy-attachment-video> (duration 2 minutes). Take any immediate reactions or comments/questions about the film. Alternative film *How to breastfeed:* [https://youtu.be/qzSB\\_4rOIJU](https://youtu.be/qzSB_4rOIJU)

10. Ask the young people to work in pairs, print the first 3 pages of the **Off to the Best Start** NHS leaflet on breastfeeding, give a copy to every pair and ask them to read through. After some time, review the pages with the class/group, checking understanding, encouraging questions and comments: *Is this what they thought breastfeeding would entail?*

11. Share the 2 slides: Breastfeeding what mums and dads can do, this helps clarify what Dads/male carers can do to help. Review and discuss.

12. Go back to the National Outcomes shared at the start of the session: **We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential.** Ask the young people to work in a pair or a 3 and think now of **5 pieces of advice** they would give to a new parent/carer about what they can do to give their child the best start in life. Through feedback explore suggestions.

13. To end acknowledge contributions and tell the class/group that next time you will be discussing what kind of parent/carer they imagine they would be.

### Additional ideas

- Get copies of the **Baby I love** you book from UNICEF available to every family in Scotland
- **UNICEF Baby Friendly initiative** is a campaign and associated resources young people may be interested in: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/about/>
- For young people who want to explore the issue of breastfeeding further more in Scotland here: Breastfeeding in Scotland <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/about/breastfeeding-in-the-uk/breastfeeding-in-scotland/>

### Connecting with home

- Information is provided in activity *Being a parent: Important things about child development*

### Further learning activities are available that connect to this RSHP curriculum content

- Being a parent: Important things about child development
- Being a parent: If I was a parent

### Practitioner Notes