

Parenting Revolution

Baby Edition

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ACTIVITY SHEET



The health and well-being of your newborn will be completely dependent on you. From Day 1 of your baby's life, you'll be confronted with a whole host of decisions - especially as it relates to sleeping and feeding. For each choice, it's up to you to work out what's best for your baby, yourself and your family. But for every decision that has to be made, it would seem friends and family, books and podcasts, all have differing opinions. This session will help you sort the fact from the fiction and help you make informed decisions.



OBJECTIVE SUMMARY

This session is designed to help you:

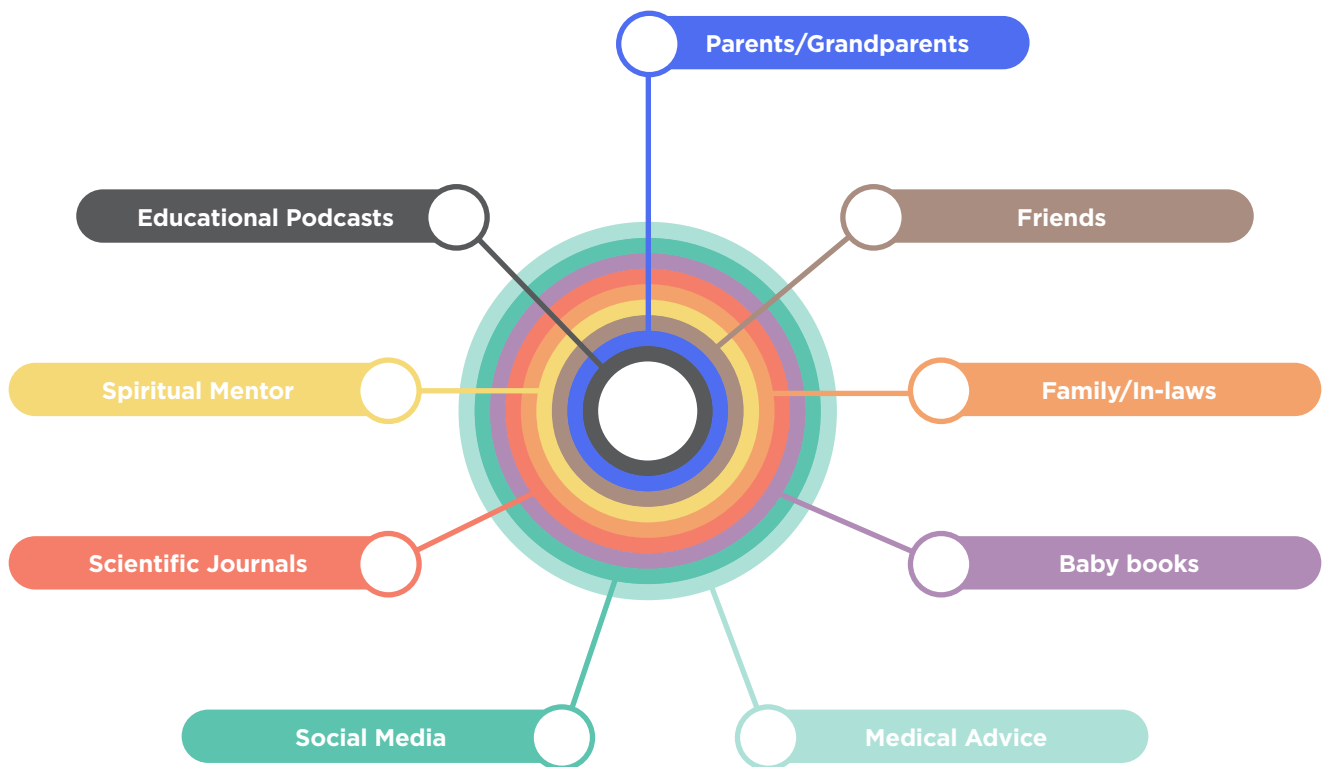
- (a)** make informed decisions from day 1 of your baby's life
- (b)** understand sleeping (pros and cons of tradition versus medical advice)
- (c)** understand feeding – breastmilk, bottles and beyond

The FOURTH Trimester

Welcoming a new baby into the world can be one of the most beautiful and rewarding experiences of your life. But the first few months of caring for a newborn (affectionally known as the “fourth trimester”) can also be a steep learning curve – especially for first-time parents. Unfortunately, this learning process can be hindered by confusing, conflicting and contradicting information (ranging from baby-book recommendations, to the advice of well-meaning in-laws). To help you sift through competing messages and tune your ear to the voices that count, consider what’s most important to you.



Rank the following 9 voices in order of importance (1 = most important, 9 = least important) as it relates to influence the decisions you make:



Q: Why are the top 3 voices so important and influential to you?

Right or Wrong?

Although there's evidence to support certain infant-care practices, there's no single right or wrong way to nurture your baby. Whilst some babies thrive on routine from the start, others prefer a more flexible, on-demand approach. Some babies like to be independent sleepers, whilst others need to sleep on or with their caregiver. Some babies need more sleep, whereas others seem to require less. Some babies will latch and breastfeed perfectly from the start, whilst many others may have difficulty. You won't know which approach is preferred until you meet your little one and have had time to get to know him or her.

BECAUSE EACH BABY IS COMPLETELY UNIQUE AND CIRCUMSTANCES VARY FROM FAMILY TO FAMILY, THERE IS NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' MANNER, METHOD OR MODALITY FOR NURTURING YOUR CHILD.

Relax. So long as your baby's basic needs (food, sleep, protection, love, security) are being met, you're doing a great job.

Sleeping Facts

When a baby sleeps, rather than everything in their body and brain coming to a halt, the exact opposite is true. A flurry of neurological and biological activity occurs when your newborn drifts into slumberland. They are physically growing, consolidating learning, repairing and strengthening their immune systems, creating and connecting neural pathways, and regulating emotions. While there are a number of evidence-based recommendations for how and where your baby should sleep, you may choose to do things completely differently in order to give your baby the best quality sleep.



A NEWBORN WILL SLEEP UP TO 17 HOURS PER DAY

It is common for newborns to wake every few hours for feeds overnight. They do not know the difference between day and night (yet), and therefore, may have awake periods through the night. Babies will gradually grow out of this as their circadian rhythm adjusts to the routine you implement.



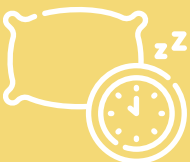
CO-SLEEPING CAN BE BENEFICIAL AND DANGEROUS

Experts recommend infants sleep in the same room as their parents (in their own safe sleeping space) for the first 6-12 months of life. Co-sleeping in the same bed, however, is generally discouraged prior to the age of 1 (due to the increased risk of fatal sleeping accidents and sudden unexpected death in infancy).




SLEEPING POSITION: MORE THAN A COMFORT FACTOR

To help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), experts recommend placing babies on their back to sleep (as opposed to on their side or stomach), especially in the first 6 months of life. Babies should sleep with their head and face uncovered, with no other loose items in their cot/crib.



SLEEPING THROUGH THE NIGHT

Some babies sleep through the night (6-8 hours at a stretch) from as early as 9 weeks of age. Others, however, as late as 9 months. Infants don't typically sleep through the night until they've reached 12+lb/5.5+kgs in body weight. The broad majority of babies are able to consistently sleep through the night by 6 months of age.

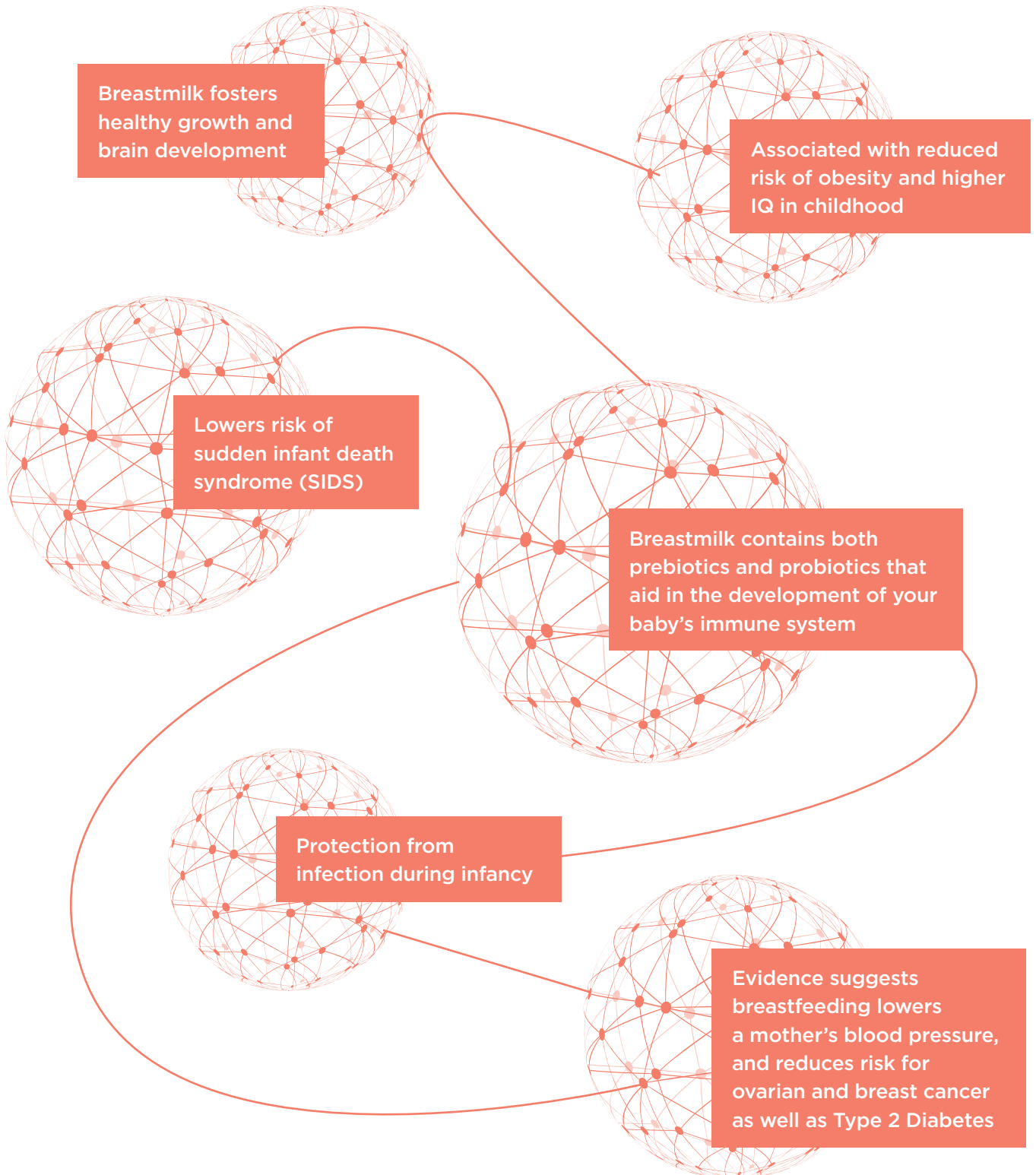



Q: What's your infant-sleep plan? Where and how do you anticipate your baby will sleep?

IT'S WISE TO RESEARCH AND CREATE A PLAN ON HOW YOU CHOOSE TO CARE FOR YOUR BABY. HOWEVER, IT'S ALSO IMPORTANT TO BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR EXPECTATIONS. WHEN THINGS DON'T GO ACCORDING TO PLAN, BE WILLING TO ADAPT, ACCORDING TO YOUR BABY'S NEEDS AND DO WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY.

Breast Milk

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exclusively breastfeeding your baby for the first 6 months of life. From 6-24 months (or beyond) it's recommended you continue breastfeeding, together with appropriate complementary foods. However, it's important that you, as a couple, are able to make an informed decision about what will work best for you and your family (keeping in mind that you may need to be flexible). But if in doubt about breastfeeding, consider some of the following important benefits.





**BEYOND NUTRITION,
FEEDING CAN BE A
WONDERFUL TIME OF
BONDING BETWEEN
PARENT AND
BABY**

During the “fourth trimester”, it’s recommended you feed your baby on demand. This can take place every 1-3 hours (or more frequently). In the early days, your infant may even want multiple shorter feeds (known as ‘cluster feeding’) over the course of a few hours.

Let-down Reflex

The let-down reflex is when a mother's milk is released. When a baby sucks, it triggers nerves in the nipple which send a message to the brain: "it's time to release milk". Some women will experience a let-down just by thinking about their baby, hearing them cry or even just looking at a picture of them – what a mysterious and marvellous design! However, the let-down reflex is not without challenges. In some mothers it can be overactive and in others, underactive. The let-down reflex can be adversely affected by stress, pain and fatigue. Consider the following tips for healthy lactation.



ACTIVATING YOUR REFLEX

The following strategies have been found beneficial in activating the let-down reflex. Which methods would you feel comfortable with?

PHYSICAL ACTIVATION

	✓		✓
Manually attach your infant to your breast	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feed or express in a comfortable familiar location	<input type="checkbox"/>
Massage each breast in a circular motion before attaching your infant	<input type="checkbox"/>	If not too sore, gently roll your nipples between fingers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a glass of water or sip on a warm cup of tea	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gently express milk before commencing the feed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apply a warm washer to your breast before attaching your infant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bend forward and shake your breasts together	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have someone massage your neck and shoulders before/during feed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a bath or have a warm shower before getting ready to feed	<input type="checkbox"/>

PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTIVATION

	✓		✓
Sit in front of a cooling fan or warm heater/fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Relax by listening to calm or soothing music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look at and think about your baby prior to feeding them	<input type="checkbox"/>	If needing to express while away from your baby, look at their photo	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look at and affectionately stroke your baby while feeding/expressing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take a few slow controlled breaths before commencing the feed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smell your baby's head prior to and during their feed	<input type="checkbox"/>	If expressing while away, smell a piece of clothing with their scent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visualise your milk being activated and flowing freely	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray over your baby while feeding, thanking God for this little miracle	<input type="checkbox"/>



It can take a while for breastfeeding to be established. Not all babies will immediately latch, and it can take a few weeks for your milk supply to properly set in.

In the initial phase, you may discover particular sensations, sounds and sights seem to trigger unwanted let-down reflex. This should cease once your breastfeeding rhythm has been established. In the meantime, use breast pads to stop milk from staining your clothes (causing potential embarrassment). If you are having difficulty breastfeeding, be patient, it takes time and practice for your baby to learn how to feed. If you have any concerns, you can see a lactation consultant for specialised assessment and advice on how to increase supply, improve latch and optimise your breastfeeding experience.



Q: What's your preferred feeding plan during the fourth trimester?

Q: What if things don't go according to plan? How will you feel? What could you do?

Q: If you encounter sleeping or feeding problems with your infant, how can you encourage yourself? What would you say to a friend if they were in the same situation?

Q: Who can you turn to for assistance or advice, if or when, challenges arise?
