

Beginnings Guides

It matters what a mother knows



Beginnings Parents Guide

is a superb publication and will certainly be a boon to new parents. It is easy to read and at the same time it is packed full of useful information.

Dr. Marilyn Segal, Developmental Psychologist
Author of *Your Child at Play*

Beginnings Parents Guide – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the content of the *Beginnings Parents Guide*?

The *Beginnings Parents Guide* presents current evidence-based, medically reliable, easy-to-read information and advice for parents of children aged 2 weeks to 3 years. It is a companion series to *Beginnings Pregnancy Guide*. It begins where the *Pregnancy Guide* ends, after mothers' recovery and the baby's first weeks at home.

The *Parents Guide* focuses on the child as a learner and parents' role as their baby's teachers. Information and advice reflect the conversations an articulate, caring, fully-informed healthcare professional or home visitor would have with each parent at each well-child visit, if time permitted. The *Beginnings Parents Guide* addresses the health and medical aspects of infant and toddler care and the non-medical challenges of becoming a family.

What is the format of the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

The *Parent's Guide* is a series of 8 easy-to-read booklets, which total 196 pages. The series follows the usual course of well-baby visits and the immunization schedule. It is referenced by child age. This staged teaching and learning approach means that parents are not overwhelmed by too much information at one time and not intimidated by the prospect of wading through a book. Information is presented when parents are most likely to need it. Photographs reinforce key messages and aid teaching. Design and layout reflect the most current research on adult learning, health literacy, type and graphics.

The *Parent's Guide* booklets measure 5.5 x 8.5 inches. By a margin of two to one, both college educated parents and those with 6 to 8 years education preferred this size booklet to the same information in 8.5x 11 inch format with more white space and larger type. They said the smaller size is less intimidating and easier to carry, store, and find.

How is the *Beginnings Parent's Guide* distributed?

In home visits

The *Beginnings* materials guide teaching and learning during home visits. The visiting nurse or community health worker reviews with the parent topics of particular importance. She increases comprehension by asking parents to read aloud selected sections or by reading it to them. The nurse explains how information applies specifically to the family and answers questions. Parents keep the *Guide*, which reinforces and complements teaching and serves as a handy reference. This staged learning model and brief counseling increases recall of key messages and supports healthy behaviors.

By mail

Health plans and hospitals mail *Beginnings Parent's Guide* to parents at home. This enables parents to articulate appropriate questions and get the most out of well-baby visits. Mailing also enables insurers and community programs to complement and reinforce healthcare professionals' counseling and advice while maintaining a presence with key constituents.

In WIC offices and medical offices during well-child visits

The materials guide counseling and learning during well-child visits. Optimally, the primary care provider hands the parent the booklet appropriate to the child's age, reinforces key messages, and encourages parents to call with questions. Then a nurse or health educator reviews with the parent topics of particular importance, asking parents read aloud selected paragraphs, or reading and highlighting for them. The nurse explains how information applies specifically to the family and answers questions. The parent takes the *Guide* home where it reinforces and complements teaching and serves as a handy reference.

This brief counseling -less than half minute by physicians and 5 to 15 minutes by the nurse or educator- increases recall of key messages and supports healthy behaviors.

Is the *Beginnings Parent's Guide* suitable for a Medicaid population?

Yes. The *Beginnings Parent's Guide* is easy-to-read. In interviews conducted by New Mexico Department of Health care coordinators, Medicaid eligible parents with 6 to 14 years education found the *Parent's Guide* easy to read and comprehend independently. Some parents may require brief counseling to fully understand and act on the information. If counseling time is limited, prioritize parents with less than 8th grade education.

Is the *Beginnings Parent's Guide* suitable for a commercially insured population?

Yes. Easy-to-read does not mean over simplified or "talking down". It's just easy. Studies consistently show that college-educated readers prefer simply written information, and learn more faster from simply written materials. Using one set of materials for all your constituents ensures equitable information and eases program administration.

How was the *Beginnings Parent's Guide* field-tested?

New Mexico Department of Health conducted Reader Verification Interviews on *Beginnings Parent's Guide* booklet #1 during September-October 2000. Maternal-child health care coordinators conducted structured face-to-face interviews according to a protocol at several clinic locations. Participants were invited to read sections of the test booklet before the interview and to refer to it during the interview. Participants were a convenience sample of women of childbearing age who were residents of New Mexico and visited a DOH clinic during the study period. In recognition of her contribution, each participant was offered a copy of the finished materials and a gift valued at approximately \$5. The testing revealed an easy, effective way to focus counseling. Ask each mother which of the key messages is most difficult for her to follow. On our website you can view and download a copy of the study report and recommendations.

What is the reading level of the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

Readability refers to the relative difficulty of decoding the words. It is expressed as a school grade level or, more accurately for adults, on a scale from very easy to very complex and difficult. A reading level was calculated for each booklet and for the series. Here we show average ratings for the series using two different formulas:

Flesch Reading Ease score = 89 Easy
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level = 3.3

Can we personalize the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

The *Parent's Guide* comes with a folder that accommodates all the booklets plus your inserts. You can personalize the folder pockets and back with information about your program and services. You can order a Special Edition. Replace selected text or photographs with your own to reflect your unique policies and procedures, special services, local resources or figures of speech. Some restrictions apply. Price depends on extent of changes and quantity.

Minimum quantity: 2000 Please call Editor Sandra Smith to discuss your Special Edition 206-441-7046 direct or leave a message toll free 800-444-8806 or email sandras@beginningsguides.net.

What do mothers say about the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

Here are some comments mothers made during field-testing. They are responding to this question:

"This is one booklet in a series of 8. Would you want to receive the rest of the booklets? Why or why not?"

All sections are short and direct, relevant. I like the lists.

I think they are real informative. If you have any questions, it would be something to try before calling the doctor.

The short blocks are good instead of long explanations

It would help one to see what I should be looking for - what I should be teaching my kids.

... Because they are interesting and give you a wide view of what happens to the baby, what to look for, and just the education it gives you

... Succinctly lists things you should know, especially 1st time moms

'Cause I think they are helpful and they can teach you a lot

What do expert reviewers say about the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

...appropriate for several different cultures within the US

Excellent job of graduated, sequential learning that is manageable

Laurel Burch's images are cross-cultural, hip, inviting and warm. The colors are engaging.

There are things to check, questions to answer, places to respond... Lots of specific examples

How can we preview the *Parent's Guide*?

Our downloadable *eBook Preview* lets you look inside the *Guide* on your screen at your convenience free, or you can submit a *Hardcopy Preview* request, or call 800-444-8806 24/7. There is an \$8 shipping and handling charge for preview copies, which are yours to keep and share.

How much does the *Beginnings Parent's Guide* cost?

Price depends on volume. To view prices and discount rates, go to www.BeginningsGuides.net. Select Order from the top menu, then choose Pricing & Volume.

How can we order the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

There are 3 ways to order the *Beginnings Guides*.

1. Order online at www.BeginningsGuides.net using a credit card or a purchase order.
2. Call in your order: 800-444-8806. Leave a message any time. Reach a live person Mon-Fri during business hours. We're in Seattle on Pacific Time.
3. Print and fax or mail a paper order form from our web site.

Who's who in the development of the *Beginnings Parent's Guide*?

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