



# ElternMail Berlin

## YOUR BABY IS HERE - CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR LITTLE MIRACLE!

We, the ElternMail team, are happy for you and your family and hope you will enjoy many happy moments while getting to know each other!

We want to be there for you, your family, and your baby. We also want to be a source of strength for you in this exciting time. In this ElternMail, you will find knowledge, tips, and tricks as well as plenty of answers to your questions.

*Your ElternMail-Team*



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# THE FIRST WEEKS WITH YOUR BABY

Take your time and enjoy the lying-in period with your baby. Immerse yourself in this new world and get as cosy and comfortable as possible. Right now, all that matters is your well-being as a family and that you take good care of yourselves. Be patient and loving with yourself and allow yourself the time to grow into your new role.

If you are in a couple's relationship, take care to also take your time as a couple to find yourselves again. Arrange for meals or groceries to be delivered to your home, if possible.

If you are a single parent, feel free to make use of the support we reference at the end of this ElternMail. Of course, your baby also needs time to settle into the world and to process all the exciting experiences, such as the birth, new sounds, smells or temperatures.

**Maybe you are feeling like most young parents: You are overjoyed and sometimes also insecure and overwhelmed with all the new challenges. All your feelings are valid!**

## This is how you - as a partner - can be of support from the start:

- Bathing your baby and changing their diaper
- Massaging the feet of your baby
- Carrying your baby in the sling
- Being there at night (e.g., take your baby to breastfeed or give the bottle)
- Creating a harmonious atmosphere in your family
- Buying or preparing meals or snacks for your partner
- Massaging your partner
- Taking care of household chores
- Ensuring there is enough peace and quiet



## Good to know: about the lying-in period

The lying-in period starts with the birth and ends when the baby is about 6 weeks old. You as a mum and your baby now need rest and recuperation. Your body needs this relaxation during the lying-in period for the recovery and healing of your body. Ideally, a midwife will take care of you during the lying-in period. She will regularly come to your home. In case you are breastfeeding, this is also the time where you gain confidence with the breastfeeding. This so-called "breastfeeding relationship" grows in small steps.

Be gentle with yourself during this time and take it seriously when your midwife recommends you to move only as much as you need to. Be sure to accept support when it comes to pending tasks and allow yourself to be pampered by your partner, spouse, or other loved ones who are good to you. Even though all your loved ones would like to see your baby immediately, you alone or you as a couple decide how much and what kind of visits are right for you. Use the time as a small family to cuddle, because plenty of skin contact will strengthen the bond to your baby from the very beginning.



### Don't miss out!

Register for the ElternMail starting at 7 months of age (see backside)  
(Deutsch / українська / Türkçe / العربية)



# ESTABLISHING ATTACHMENT AND BASIC TRUST



## Good to know:

### What is secure attachment?

Secure attachment develops when the baby's needs are fulfilled (e.g., sleep, closeness, food, etc.). The first two years are especially important for establishing secure attachment. The establishing of attachment is supported by the so-called bonding after birth.

Bonding means the emotional connection between infant and parents that is created by physical closeness. For bonding, the infant is placed upon the naked skin of mum or dad. The baby smells their caregiver, hears the heartbeat and in doing so feels safe and secure.

It is important for secure attachment and the creation of basic trust, that your baby has at least one close caregiver who reacts reliably and quickly to their needs. It is often discussed whether babies will become spoiled when their crying is addressed immediately. No - quite on the contrary. Babies aren't yet capable of tolerating frustration very long. Therefore, it is important that parents react quickly to their baby's crying and try to find out what they need at that moment. Sometimes you may not be able to tell immediately what your baby needs. In those situations, it is helpful to use a gentle voice and be physically close to your crying baby while very calmly finding the reason for the crying.

### Why secure attachment is important for your child:

- Because attachment supports a healthy brain development.
- Because attachment builds your baby's basic trust.
- Because attachment helps your child to develop a positive sense of self.
- Because attachment helps the baby to build trust with the people around them.



## This is what your baby tells you - understanding the signals

There are so called baby signals, also called "baby subtle clues" which can tell you something about what your baby wants to tell you. Feel free to use the following descriptions to help you understand your baby a little better.

### "I need rest!"

You notice that your baby sucks on a finger, fist or cloth or turns their head away.

They may also clench their fists.

**This helps:** Give your child prompt rest, lots of closeness, and make sure they get to sleep

### "I need sleep!"

Your baby pulls their ears and/or rubs their eyes.

**This helps:** Take the signs seriously and get your baby to sleep before it gets too tired, because overtired children sleep worse.

### "I'm hungry!"

Your baby makes searching motions, sucks noisily, becomes more restless and/or begins to cry.

They're searching for their milk source.

**This helps:** Make sure to feed your baby promptly.

### "I have a stomach ache (e.g., colic, cramps, constipation)!"

Your baby is overstretching their back, is curling up into a ball. They stiffen and stretch or tuck their little legs.

**This helps:**

- a warm hand on the belly or massaging the belly clockwise
- The "colic hold": The baby lies belly-down well supported on the forearm and the head rests securely in the crook of the arm of the caregiver.



## Good to know: What is the startle reflex or Moro reflex?

The startle reflex, also called Moro reflex, is essential for survival in infants. It develops in the 9th week of pregnancy and disappears when the baby is 3 to 4 months old due to the maturation of the nervous system. Your baby jerks their arms up and then very slowly lowers them again. The Moro reflex, for example, enables the first gasp and helps to open the windpipe when there is a risk of suffocation.

# ESSENTIAL BASIC NEEDS - CLOSENESS, SLEEP AND FOOD

## Closeness

### Why babies need closeness in the form of carrying, snuggling etc.:

- Bonding hormones, which are also important to produce milk for breastfeeding, are released.
- The needs for safety, trust and comfort are fulfilled.
- The secure bond with the parents and basic trust are fortified.
- Your baby can relax and fall asleep.

## Sleep

### 6 facts about baby sleep during the first 8 weeks

- The stomach of your baby is as small as a cherry. Once we visualize that, we can understand why the intervals between feeding are quite short and why hunger keeps interrupting the sleep.
- During the first two months, babies sleep for 15 to 18 hours a day. A baby (month 0 - 1) will only stay awake for 30 to 45 minutes in between naps. At 2 months, the waking phase can range from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours.
- Newborns don't have a day-night-rhythm at first - they only start to develop one from the 9th week onwards.
- Recurring rituals, a calm environment, and a set place called a "sleep home" can make your baby sleep calmer. Therefore, make sure that your baby can always get back to sleep in their "sleep home".
- Many babies can fall asleep easier when they are swaddled. In swaddling, the infant is wrapped in a swaddling sack - similar to a sleeping bag. As a result, the baby experiences a certain tightness, which usually has a calming effect because it is already familiar with this from the womb. You can ask your midwife to show you the swaddling technique.
- Historically, babies are not made to sleep by themselves, because back then in the cave, that would have been too risky. Therefore, they developed a primal instinct to sleep more at ease when in close proximity to their caregivers.

## Safe baby sleep: This is how!

To avoid the sudden infant death syndrome, also called SIDS, please be sure to watch out for the following:

### 1 Baby's crib in the parents' bedroom

It is recommended for babies to sleep in a bed-side crib during the first year or in their own crib in the parents' bedroom as they get older. Studies indicate that babies should not sleep in the family bed for safety reasons, as this can increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome. If you do end up lying in the big bed with your baby, make sure your baby's head is higher than yours. In addition, babies should always lie in a protected nest.

### 2 Adequate room temperature

Your baby's sleeping room should have a temperature around 16 to 18° Celsius. In summer, make sure that your baby wears less clothing and does not freeze in colder temperatures.

**Attention:** Furs, thick blankets, hot water bottles, etc. have no place in the baby's bed. Your baby also doesn't need a hat in the house.

### 3 Sleeping bag

Please use a sleeping bag for your baby, so that no blanket or pillow can cover your baby's face.

### 4 Don't smoke

Smoking poses a major health risk to your baby. Optimally, you and your partner refrain from smoking altogether. In case that is not possible, make sure that the bedroom and of course all other rooms in your home remain smoke-free.



## Food - breastfeeding

Breast milk is the most natural food for your baby and mothers and children usually bring with them the innate ability for a great nursing relationship. A positive attitude towards breastfeeding supports the success of this temporary but very special phase in your life! Besides the many benefits for the mother and the baby, breastfeeding helps building a secure attachment. However, if you consciously decide against breastfeeding or if you are unable to breastfeed for other reasons, your child can also build up a secure attachment to you through bottle-feeding. Because breastfeeding is only one possible strategy to fulfil your child's need for closeness and nourishment. It is your body and you decide which way feels right for you and your baby.



### Tips and tricks

... in case of sensitive / sore nipples

- Warm your breast before latching on, so that the milk flows more easily and your baby doesn't have to suckle so hard.
- Let them start drinking on the "better" side and change once the milk starts flowing more steadily.
- Breastfeed more often and instead in shorter periods.
- Let plenty of air to your chest.
- Use wool-silk nursing pads or untreated sheep's wool (healing wool).
- Use lanolin ointment or lanolin compresses.
- You can also try tin hats.
- Avoid friction with the cloth by using nipple shields.

### Does my baby get enough milk?

You might be wondering whether your baby is really getting enough milk. You realize that they are, when your baby is content after feeding and produces 6 to 8 wet diapers per day. You can probably also see and hear how your baby is merrily suckling and swallowing. Your breast will feel softer afterwards.



### Tips and tricks

... to stimulate milk production

- Hourly latching
- Skin contact
- Breast massages and warmth
- "Breastfeed tea" and /or malt beer
- Fenugreek capsules, milk thistle capsules
- Lots of rest and relaxation for mum



### Good to know:

How often should my baby be drinking?

- Babies may drink according to their own needs entirely!
- Make sure that both breasts are regularly emptied equally, because otherwise the milk can clog.
- The more often you breastfeed, the more milk you produce.
- During the first days or weeks, your baby may call on you every 30 to 60 minutes. This "multi-course-meal" ensures that enough milk is delivered (Cluster Feeding).



### SOS for plugged ducts:

Plugged ducts happen when the milk ducts are not emptied completely, e.g., because of stress, too much milk (child isn't able to drink it all) or a tight bra.

**Possible symptoms** are sensitive breast, maybe hot, reddened spots, painful knot. The milk ducts should be dissolved quickly, otherwise there is a danger of mastitis.

### This is what you can do:

- Choose a breastfeeding position in which the chin of the baby lies directly on the painful area, as this creates the most effective suction!
- Warm your breast before breastfeeding.
- Light massages can stimulate the milk flow.
- After breastfeeding, you can put cool quark wraps or white cabbage leaves on the breast.
- Make sure that your bra is not too tight.

### Your diet during breastfeeding

During the breastfeeding period, it is important to eat a balanced diet in a regular manner and drink enough water. You can also prepare healthy snacks for in-between meals and avoid dieting. Caffeinated drinks should be consumed only in moderation and alcohol and nicotine are totally taboo. Eating sour fruit can give your baby a sore bottom. Once everything has settled

in, you can still spend time away from your baby, even though you are in the breastfeeding period. When you want to meet your loved ones without taking the baby, you can pump, or hand express the breast milk. In order for your partner to be part of the breastfeeding relationship, he or she can give the bottle after the pumping.

## Food: feeding with the bottle



### Good to know:

Milk quantity, temperature, and cleaning

The amount of milk your baby is drinking can vary and will not always be what is indicated on the package. If the bottle is empty and your baby is still uneasy, they may need a little extra portion.

In the beginning, it often provides more security for the mother or father if a little more milk is prepared so that there is always a small amount left in the bottle – but with the comfort of knowing that the baby is full.

- Please don't feed small leftovers from the bottle. If you do have to keep milk, it should not be left for more than 2 hours!
- To check the temperature, put a few drops on the inside of your wrist – the milk should not feel warm or even hot.
- Please never take a sip directly from the bottle, as you could be transferring caries germs onto your baby.
- Rinse bottles and teats with hot water and dish soap immediately after use.
- Rinse until there is no more dish soap on bottle or teat anymore.
- Let everything dry upside down and cover it up.
- During the first weeks, it is recommended to boil all bottle accessories once a day. Boil the accessories for at least 5 minutes in a pot of boiling water.



### Tips and tricks

... for drinking out of the bottle

- Hold your baby in your arm while you're feeding, occasionally switching between the right and left arm.
- Offer lots of skin contact and hold eye contact. Drinking is also communication!
- The milk should only come out of the teat drop by drop so that your baby does not have to swallow a lot of milk too quickly.
- When you turn the bottle upside down, one drop should appear per second.
- Even if your baby is drinking slowly, a burp after finishing the bottle feels good.
- When mixing the food, always follow the instructions and mixing ratio on the pack!
- During the first months, use boiled drinking water and only start mixing the bottle right before feeding.



# WHEN BABIES CRY

## The most common reasons for crying in babies

- hunger
- tiredness
- full diaper
- irritability
- need for closeness
- stress or restlessness of the parents
- stomach ache (e.g., flatulence or colic)

If you can rule out these reasons, it is okay for babies to cry sometimes, because this is the only way for your baby to express their feelings. In fact, oftentimes they might be making use of the so-called processing crying, also called narrative crying. This helps babies to process everything they have experienced and to relieve stress. Sometimes the experiences of birth are also processed through crying. You can help them through the crying by being close, singing or talking in a loving voice. In this way, your baby makes important experiences in their self-efficacy: "I'm seen and I'm important."

**Tip:** For example, if you are in the shower and cannot give your baby immediate closeness, connect to your crying baby by talking in an understanding and calming voice.

### This is how you can soothe your baby

- Light humming or soothing sounds (sh-sh-sh)
- Sing a song
- Tender rocking / gentle movements
- Gentle talking
- Using a feather cradle, carrier or pram can help
- Sometimes it is easier for children to calm down if swaddled

**Tip:** Note down your baby's sleeping and eating times. This way, you can see in time when they might be tired again and when breastfeeding or bottle feeding is necessary. Sleeping and eating habits change as your baby grows. So, stay curious and observe your child.

### How to recognise a crying peak

During crying, your baby often reaches the peak of crying after 5 minutes. With loving support, the crying decreases thereafter.

- During the first 6 weeks, crying increases, then it slowly decreases again.
- Crying is often most intense between 4:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. (processing of the day).

### Tips for relaxation after 4 p.m.

- Reduce stimuli (e.g., avoid radio, TV, visits, etc.).
- Offer skin-to-skin contact.
- Gently massage your baby.
- Create a harmonious and stress-free atmosphere.

### If the crying phase persists

- Open the window – fresh air is always good for you.
- Provide enough physical closeness by carrying your baby.
- Go into another room when your baby is with your partner or in a safe place (e.g., in the cot) and try to calm down – for example, with fresh air, cold water, breathing or relaxing music.
- Walk back and forth with your baby in the apartment.
- Go for a walk outside with your baby.
- Take turns with another person or try to get in touch (e.g., by phone) with someone familiar.

If your baby's crying does not stop, you feel increasingly helpless and at a loss and you are worried that your child might be in pain – get help, e.g., by calling an experienced person from your environment or seeking help in a so-called crying baby clinic (see support services from p. 13)!

**Important:** A baby never cries out of malicious intent or because they want to provoke you. Because their brain is still immature, they cannot yet calm their feelings without the help of a caregiver.



## Calming strategies for parents

- Breathe in while slowly counting to 4. Breathe out loudly while counting to 4. Repeat the breathing exercise.
- Drink a glass of cold water.
- Run cold water over your hands and arms.
- Go outside for a short while and breathe deeply when your baby is with your partner or in a safe place (e.g., in the cot).
- Call a person who can calm you down.
- Take turns as a couple.
- Get support (see the services from p. 13 on)



**Important:  
Never shake your baby!**

Even a short shaking can cause great damage to your child's health.

**Shaking can lead to death.**



**This is how you protect your baby from the shaking:**

If you are totally exhausted or distressed because your baby won't calm down, your nerves may be on edge. Put your baby in a safe place (e.g., in the cot) and calm down first. Otherwise, you may shake your child on impulse.

On the website of the "Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung" (Federal Centre for Health Education) you can find a video in different languages:



[www.bzga.de/mediathek/themen/fruehe-hilfen/v/niemals-schuettern-wenn-babys-nicht-aufhoeren-zu-schreien](http://www.bzga.de/mediathek/themen/fruehe-hilfen/v/niemals-schuettern-wenn-babys-nicht-aufhoeren-zu-schreien)





# BABY HEALTH AND BABY CARE

## Baby health

- Always lift your baby over the side, as the muscles of the side of the neck are stronger than the ones of the back of the neck at this stage of life.
- Make sure that you lift your baby alternately over the left and right side. This exercises all the muscles.
- Always support your baby's head.
- In waking phases, your baby may also lie on their stomach or on their side. In this case, however, check regularly that the breathing is calm.
- A baby car seat should only be used for car journeys. Avoid long car journeys. Lying flat is best for a healthy back in the beginning.
- If you would like to use a sling or a baby carrier, you can find out more at a baby carrier consultation.
- The so-called U examinations (early detection examinations, Früherkennungsuntersuchungen) by the paediatrician offer the chance that any developmental delays or illnesses can be detected early and treated well. You can find more information on page 13 of this ElternMail.

## U examinations for babies and children

- U2 at 3 to 10 days old
- U3 at 4 to 5 weeks old
- U4 at 3 to 4 months old
- U5 at 6 to 7 months old
- U6 at 10 to 12 months old
- U7 at 21 to 24 months old
- U7a at 34 to 36 months old
- U8 at 46 to 48 months old
- U9 at 60 to 64 months old



## Baby care

### Changing diapers

- Every 3 to 4 hours after every bowel movement
- Cleaning with clear, lukewarm water
- On the go: you can use wet wipes.
- Creams, powders, etc. are not necessary, except for a sore bottom.
- Make sure your baby does not get cold during changing. If necessary, install a heat lamp above the changing area.
- Never leave your baby alone on the changing table.

### Baden

- 1 to 2 bathing sessions per week once the navel has healed well.
- Bath additive is not necessary.
- Ideal water temperature: 37° Celsius  
**Tip:** Use a bath water thermometer for safety!
- A secure grip during bathing is important, so it is recommended to do the first bathing attempts together with a midwife.
- Where? Use a large bathing bucket, a baby bath or a clean plastic bowl.  
**Tip:** Don't use the sink or bathtub for bathing, as the risk of accidents is too high.
- Have a towel ready to dry off.

### Washing

- Make sure that the skin folds on the armpits and neck are checked and cleaned with lukewarm water. This will prevent soreness.
- Cleaning the ears: Please do not use cotton buds. The earlobes can be cleaned with a damp cloth.

### Nails

- The finger and toe nails may be cut for the first time no earlier than 4 weeks after birth.
- There are special baby nail scissors with a rounded front.

# ALL FEELINGS ARE VALID



## Good to know:

### Baby blues or bawling days

You may find that tears well up when you smell, watch or cuddle your baby during the postpartum period. This phase is called baby blues or bawling days. It's important to remember that this is not the so-called postpartum depression.

Many mothers experience this because of the hormonal changes that can disrupt your emotional stability. Maybe you feel sadness, maybe you are deeply touched or even disappointed that something is not as you imagined it. All these feelings are allowed to be there, and it helps to talk about them with people you know or to get professional help (see services from p. 13).

## Love for the baby at second sight

Sometimes it takes some time for parents to feel a deep, intimate love for their baby. If this is the case for you, you may be asking yourself:

**“And what about the butterflies in my stomach now?”**

**“Where is this feeling of unconditional love for my infant?”**

Many parents are exhausted and overwhelmed after giving birth and these feelings block intense mother love or father love. Because suddenly they are responsible for a little person. From now on, the baby determines your everyday life. For many women and men, this external determination is absolutely unfamiliar and often difficult to bear at the beginning. They need time to accept the new situation.

Be patient with yourself and don't judge yourself for these feelings, because they show you that you still have to get used to your new role.

If you notice that you are having increasingly negative instead of positive feelings towards your child, you can find addresses of support services you can get professional help from on p. 13.

If you are wondering whether you are suffering from postpartum depression, the following table will help you to distinguish between the baby blues and postpartum depression.





**Don't miss out!**

Register for the ElternMail starting at 7 months of age (see backside)  
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## DIFFERENCE AT A GLANCE: BABY BLUES AND POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD)

	BABY BLUES	POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD)
<b>When and for how long do baby blues / PPD occur?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few days after birth</li> <li>• Goes away on its own after a few days without leaving any consequences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the first 12 months</li> <li>• Lasts for at least 2 weeks</li> </ul>
<b>What causes baby blues / PPD?</b>	Hormonal changes after birth	Possible characteristics: Special events during birth, sick child, private problems, trauma in own childhood, etc.
<b>How can I tell that I am suffering from baby blues / a PPD?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mood swings</li> <li>• Sudden “crying” attacks</li> <li>• Exhaustion</li> <li>• Lack of energy</li> <li>• Irritability</li> </ul>	<p><u>More pronounced than baby blues:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depressed mood</li> <li>• Inner void</li> <li>• Sleep disturbances</li> <li>• Persistent exhaustion</li> <li>• Suicidal thoughts</li> <li>• Feelings of guilt</li> <li>• Avoiding contact with others (isolation)</li> <li>• Self-doubt and anxiety</li> <li>• The feeling of being a stranger to oneself</li> <li>• Great doubts about one’s own abilities to be a mum</li> <li>• Absolute concern for the baby’s welfare</li> <li>• Feelings of hatred for the baby</li> </ul>
<b>What can I do?</b>	Pay close attention to what you need (e.g., rest, understanding). The symptoms will pass on their own within a few days.	Urgent need for professional help and support.

**You are not alone with your thoughts and feelings and a lot of understanding and support is needed to regain your strength!**

# PARENTAL COUPLE, SINGLE PARENT, SEPARATED PARENTING - USEFUL TIPS



## **If you are in a relationship ...**

- ... realise that a new phase of life has begun, and priorities are shifting.
- ... stick together as a team and support each other.
- ... use walks for conversations, because your baby usually sleeps for a longer period of time in the carrier or pram.
- ... understand your partner's moods. Lack of sleep and new challenges often lead to nerves being on edge.
- ... cuddle with your baby in the parents' bed. This strengthens your relationship - because the usual closeness between partners can become less during the first months.
- ... consciously take time for things that were important to you before becoming parents so that you don't lose sight of each other - e.g., the goodnight kiss or a loving greeting in the morning.
- ... give each other, but also together, little time-outs. Maybe another familiar person can look after the baby. Do what brings you joy and relaxation - at least for short moments.
- ... decide together how much outside interference you can tolerate and when you would like to have visitors.

## **If you are a single or separated parent ...**

- ... network with other single or separated mothers or fathers.
- ... find out about support services from p. 13.
- ... accept family support and help from friends. Asking for help is not a weakness!
- ... take part in baby classes or parent-child meetings, for example, to meet other mothers and fathers, also as a couple.
- ... take good care of yourself and try to find someone who can be with you and your baby in an emergency. And also in everyday life, it can be very helpful for you to know that you can be relieved from your tasks from time to time.
- ... praise yourself every day and be proud of yourself, because you are a wonderful mother, a great father!
- ... if possible, let go of the inner and outer images that show a so-called "perfect family". There is no such thing as perfect. Family is where children and love are found!

# SUPPORT SERVICES IN BERLIN

There is a saying that says it takes a village to raise a child.  
The following offers will help you create the right village for you.



The **Berlin Family Portal** is there for families in all situations of life. Here you will find valuable information, addresses and tips for your everyday family life, guides to key family phases, event calendars and always up-to-date information:

← [www.berlin.de/familie](http://www.berlin.de/familie)



## Support by midwives

Some maternity clinics in Berlin and many family centres have midwife consultations if you haven't found a midwife yet. It is best to ask at your maternity clinic or the nearest family centre:

← [www.berliner-familienzentren.de/standortkarte](http://www.berliner-familienzentren.de/standortkarte)



You can also use the online consultation hours of midwives on **ElternLeben.de**

Support is also offered by **family midwives** and **family health and paediatric nurses** within the Early Assistance program. The contact persons of each district are happy to help:

← [www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/kinderschutz/fruehe-hilfen](http://www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/kinderschutz/fruehe-hilfen)

## KJGD first home visit

In the first few days after the birth of your baby, you will receive mail and the Child and Adolescent Health Service (Kinder- und Jugendgesundheitsdienst, KJGD) will announce themselves. You may be irritated or unsettled by this official letter, but don't worry - this is a voluntary appointment that is meant as an offer to support you in the next steps in this new phase of your life.

Social workers of the KJGD offer you free support and advice on all questions concerning your child's health. You can get in touch with parent-child groups or family centres and receive information on topics such as preventive medical check-ups and parenting. In addition, there are many practical tips on the topic of child day care, applications for child and parental allowance or other support.

This appointment can be very valuable and helpful for you and is worth attending.

You can find more information here:

← [www.kinderversorgungsnetz-berlin.de/gesundheitsamt](http://www.kinderversorgungsnetz-berlin.de/gesundheitsamt)



## Family Service Offices

Another helpful contact point for questions about your family life is one of Berlin's family service offices. Especially if you are stressed and at a loss with various applications, the staff there will support you. You can get the forms for various applications there, such as the one for parental allowance or a daycare or after-school care voucher, and they even provide help with filling them out. You can also get advice on topics such as financial aid, custody declarations or paternity acknowledgements, or information on leisure activities for families in your area.

In challenging family situations, such as separation or debt, the family service offices can also refer you to the appropriate specialised counselling centres.

Further information and addresses of the individual service centres can be found at

← [www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/familienservicebueros-350](http://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/familienservicebueros-350)



## Family care

Family care offers practical support in emergency situations. Families with children under 12 years of age or high-risk pregnant women can receive this help. Funding is provided by the statutory health insurance fund or pension insurance provider and must be applied for there. In case of refusal, funding is also possible through the youth welfare office. There are several family care centres in Berlin that also work closely together.

Nachbarschaftsheim Schöneberg, Tel. 030 - 221 828 929,

AWO Mitte, Tel. 030 - 8321 930 10, Weg der Mitte, Tel. 030 - 814 10 67,

HorizOnt, Tel. 030 - 30 20 58 40, Familienpflege Sabine Werth, Tel. 030 - 213 82 23.

# SUPPORT SERVICES IN BERLIN



## Early Assistance

The so-called Early Assistance is part of the support services aimed at parents from pregnancy onwards and families with children up to the age of 3. They will help you find the right offer if you need support. This and more information can be found here:

← [www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/kinderschutz/fruehe-hilfen](http://www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/kinderschutz/fruehe-hilfen)



## Family centres

Family centres offer services for you and your child, such as open groups or courses and counselling. There are exercise or creative activities and often events on various topics. They are a good starting point for building a good network.

← [www.berliner-familienzentren.de/standortkarte](http://www.berliner-familienzentren.de/standortkarte)



LGBTIQ\* families find support, guidance and advice in specialised family centres:

← [www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/regenbogenfamilien-343](http://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/regenbogenfamilien-343)



## Help for single parents, separated parents

Berlin offers a wide range of support services for single parents, separated parents and single-parent families. You can find advice and support, for example, at the Verband alleinerziehender Mütter und Väter e. V. (Association of Single Mothers and Fathers): [www.vamv.de](http://www.vamv.de)



... the Self-Help Initiative for Single Parents (SelbstHilfelnitiative Alleinerziehender, SHIA) e. V.

← [www.shia-berlin.de](http://www.shia-berlin.de)



... or the networks of single parents in the Berlin districts

← [www.alleinerziehend-berlin.de](http://www.alleinerziehend-berlin.de)



You can also find more information on the Berlin Family Portal:

← [www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/alleinerziehende-getrennte-eltern-einelternfamilien-221](http://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/alleinerziehende-getrennte-eltern-einelternfamilien-221)

## Fatherhood

Berlin offers a variety of services especially for fathers and their children as well as for single and separated fathers. At the Berlin Fathers' Centre (Väterzentrum) or at offers in the district, fathers can get information and advice on topics such as relationship management, upbringing and the role of the father, or legal topics such as divorce, maintenance or custody. There are also seminars and group offers, fathers' and children's breakfasts, PEKiP courses for fathers or joint leisure and holiday activities. You can find the individual addresses and websites at:

← [www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/beratung-von-vaetern](http://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/beratung-von-vaetern)



## Special situation: My child is difficult to comfort

If your baby cries a lot and for a long time, sleeps badly or eats and drinks poorly, it can be extremely stressful. If your baby cannot be calmed for inexplicable reasons even after hours of crying, it can lead to a crisis situation. But there is help – for example in one of the so called crying baby clinics (Schreibaby-Ambulanz) in Berlin. Specialists on site provide quick and unbureaucratic support by listening and, above all, by employing calming and relaxation methods. In addition, they will analyse the causes of the crying with you and give you tips on how to deal with a colicky baby.

You can find more information and addresses of the crying baby clinics in your area on:

← [www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/hilfe-fuer-eltern-von-schreibabys-264](http://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/hilfe-fuer-eltern-von-schreibabys-264)





... or here:

← [www.schreibbabyambulanz.info](http://www.schreibbabyambulanz.info)



In addition, many pedagogical and / or family counselling facilities also offer support on this topic:  
[www.efb-berlin.de](http://www.efb-berlin.de)



Please do not shake your baby under any circumstances! In case of emergency, please contact one of the Berlin emergency numbers early on:

Service helpline “**number against sorrow**” (Nummer gegen Kummer) parents’ line: 0800 111 0550

**Berlin crisis service** (Berliner Krisendienst), who are there for you in all districts by telephone and in person or in acute situations also on site: [www.berliner-krisendienst.de](http://www.berliner-krisendienst.de)

**Phone counselling** (Telefonseelsorge): 0800 111 0 111 or 0800 111 0 222

### **Special situation: Multiples**

You didn’t just have one baby, but two or more?

A tip right at the beginning: Accept the help that people offer you and look for sufficient support. Two or more babies mean little sleep and a lot of care work. Help is available, for example, in the form of family care and voluntary work:

← [www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/familienfoerderung/netzwerk-fruehe-hilfen](http://www.berlin.de/sen/jugend/familie-und-kinder/familienfoerderung/netzwerk-fruehe-hilfen)

If you are looking for an open meeting place for families with multiples, please ask at the nearest family centre (see above) or at the Early Assistance Network Coordinator in your district (see above).



### **Early support for multiples can be found here:**

← [www.familienportal.de/familienportal/familienleistungen/mutterschutz/welche-regelungen-gelten-wenn-ich-zwillinge-oder-weitere-mehrlinge-erwarte--125154](http://www.familienportal.de/familienportal/familienleistungen/mutterschutz/welche-regelungen-gelten-wenn-ich-zwillinge-oder-weitere-mehrlinge-erwarte--125154)



### **An offer for triplets / higher-grade multiple families is available here:**

If you have triplets or even more babies at once, you can find answers and support at the ABC Club e.V.:  
[www.abc-club.de](http://www.abc-club.de)



### **Special situation: Premature babies**

Your baby was born prematurely?

You can find special support through the “early care” offer:

← [www.wegdermitte.de/index.php?mid=88&uid=226&sid=543](http://www.wegdermitte.de/index.php?mid=88&uid=226&sid=543)



Social medical support from the Kindergesundheitshaus e.V.: [www.kghaus.de](http://www.kghaus.de)

Or, if you are looking for respite for you alone or you as parents, you can contact other volunteer services.



### **Special situation: Babies with impairments or disabilities**

Families with children with disabilities or severe chronic illnesses can take advantage of various support and counselling services, e.g., from “Eltern beraten Eltern von Kindern mit und ohne Behinderung e. V.” (Parents advise parents of children with and without disabilities).

← [www.eltern-beraten-eltern.de](http://www.eltern-beraten-eltern.de)



... or Traglinge e.V.

← [www.traglinge-ev.de/das-machen-wir](http://www.traglinge-ev.de/das-machen-wir)





## WELL-SUPPORTED FROM THE BEGINNING

Mit der **ElternMail Berlin** will die **Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Familie** allen Eltern mit dem Start ins Familienleben und auf dem weiteren Weg zur Seite stehen und sie stärken. Das für Familien kostenlose Angebot soll dazu beitragen, dass Mütter und Väter hilfreiche Informationen rund um die Entwicklung ihres Kindes erhalten und praktische Tipps und Hinweise zu unterstützenden Angeboten vor Ort finden.

### Further references



Families with children with disabilities or severe chronic illnesses can also find advice and help at Kindergesundheitshaus e. V.

← [www.kghaus.de](http://www.kghaus.de)



Even more information can be found here:

← [www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/kinder-mit-behinderung-beratung-und-hilfe-fuer-eltern-146](http://www.berlin.de/familie/informationen/kinder-mit-behinderung-beratung-und-hilfe-fuer-eltern-146)

### What do I need to do after the birth?

In almost all of Berlin's districts there are so-called roadmaps around the birth with checklists for necessary applications as well as addresses. The Baby App Berlin also offers this service.

You'll find both here: [www.gesundheitliche-chancengleichheit.de/berlin/aufgaben-angebote-und-schwerpunkte/baby-berlin-app](http://www.gesundheitliche-chancengleichheit.de/berlin/aufgaben-angebote-und-schwerpunkte/baby-berlin-app)



The federal government's family portal also provides information on this topic:

← [www.familienportal.de/familienportal/lebenslagen/schwangerschaft-geburt/checklisten](http://www.familienportal.de/familienportal/lebenslagen/schwangerschaft-geburt/checklisten)



### Preview of the next ElternMail - 3rd and 4th month of your baby's life

1. Feelings and needs in the new role as a parent
2. Your baby's development and health
3. Your baby's sleep
4. Childcare options for your child
5. Help with worries about money



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