




Early Intervention -Infant Development Program

Baby Group

From Fragile Beginnings to Strong Futures

A unique group for families with babies who have experienced fragile beginnings. Parent-to-parent connection and support is facilitated by bringing together potentially isolated families in a physically and emotionally safe environment.

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient. It is decorated with several butterfly silhouettes. Most are white, but there are a few in shades of yellow and blue. The butterflies are scattered across the page, with some appearing larger and more prominent than others.

“The friendly, community feel; chance to talk about anything on your mind regarding your child; listening to similar parents’ experiences.”

Introductions

- Island Health, Early Intervention Program
- Cheryl Fertich, Infant Development Consultant
- Dee O'Connor, Infant Development Consultant
- Dawn Grunert, Infant Development Consultant
- Combined years of experience – 84 – eek?!?
- Who are you??

Learning Objectives

- Identify key benefits to parents, babies and facilitators
- Develop and employ the necessary tools to replicate this model of support in your own community
- Describe the value of this program and how to advocate for this in your own community

“It was the best
thing after
coming home
from the NICU.”



Beginnings

- Cheryl's experience teaching an Infant Massage class where parents were talking about how isolated they felt because of their child's special needs and how they didn't feel like they 'fit in' to community programs or groups.
- Dee's personal experience as a parent at a community baby group and the life time connections she made.
- The group is in it's **7th** successful year!
- More than **150 families** have benefitted from this opportunity.

“It was great to ask anything
and know there was no
judgment.”



Benefits for Parents

- Parents with medically fragile children have the opportunity to experience a baby group
- Parents are provided with support to develop their own networks and create lifelong friendships
- Parents have the opportunity to share experiences: a safe place to share their stories, their tear and joys
- Helps to prepare parents to transition to a community group

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several butterfly silhouettes scattered across it. The butterflies are in various colors, including light green, yellow, and blue, and are shown in different orientations as if flying. The text is centered on the slide.

“I feel very connected to the other
moms.”


“Yes, amazing connections! So
grateful for the friendships I’ve
made.”

Benefits for Families

- Engages isolated families (a welcoming community for different ethnic groups, young parents, ESL families)
- Fosters parent resilience and decreases postnatal depression
- Empowers parents
- Education in a variety of topics of concern/interest to parents
- Supports and build strong bonds between parent and baby
- **Support first, learning second**

Benefits for Babies

- Opportunities for tummy time and floor play
- Social connections with peers
- A fun, safe environment to explore and be celebrated
- One-on-one time with parent
- Supports Infant Mental Health
- Parents become more attuned to meeting developmental needs
- 'It's good for my Mom and Dad!'



“They created a place that was clean and free of illness/cold but also a comforting environment where I felt safe to share our story and express our challenges/successes.”

Benefits for Facilitators and Community Partners

- Provides education on a wide range of topics that might not be possible during home visits
- Staff gets to know each child and family and can provide additional support
- Frequent “check-ins” with families
- Provides a “second set of eyes” for clinical observations
- It’s a real honour to share the journey in such an intimate way
- It’s the best part of our week!!!
- Pay it forward. For parents too.

“We plan to continue meeting
up every Tuesday at one of
our homes!”



Physical Environment

- A physically clean and healthy environment – safe for babies to be on the floor
- A non-threatening environment
- Available parking and/or bus routes
- Available stroller parking
- Bathroom and change table access
- Privacy
- Big enough to accommodate your group size
- Accessible
- Storage for floor mats


Emotional Environment

- Confidentiality agreement between participants – ‘What happens at baby group stays at baby group.’
- Health and Wellness agreement – ‘You don’t come if you, baby or anyone in your home is sick.’
- Tears, poop, boobs and bottles are WELCOMED!

“Definitely! I was hesitant at first, as my baby was a preemie but this is a phenomenal group and a great resource!”

Schedule

- Weekly – Fall and Spring Sessions
- Registered 'Drop-In' (Group Size)
- 90 minute session – 30 minutes for parent connection followed by 60 minutes for topic
- Guest speakers and parent choice days provide variety
- Seasonal celebration in December and 'Graduation Ceremony' in June
- Allow for cultural diversity
- Parent Evaluation in December and June



“100% so
welcoming
and safe.”

“Yes. It was a
great baby step
to being out in
the real world!”

Key Topics

- First Love: Stories and pictures from babe's beginning
- Introduction to Infant Massage
- Sleep
- Grief and Depression
- First Foods
- Early Language Development/Sign Language
- Gross Motor Development

Even More Topics

- Play – Toys – Songs
- Healthy Babies
- Taking Care of Ourselves
- Emergency Preparedness - First Aid
- Baby Proofing
- Breast Feeding
- Advice and How to Deal with It
- Mommy and Me Yoga
- Travel
- Photography

➤ HANDOUTS

“Everything – the topics,
the friends, the talks.”



"I definitely feel connected with parents in the group. I feel that I have really found my "community" for this new time in my life. It has been incredible to meet with parents who had challenging pregnancies, spent time in the NICU and whose children had extra challenges after birth. My pregnancy was not typical, the birth was challenging, and our daughter had major health concerns when born. The time in NICU and when she first came home was incredibly overwhelming and isolating. It was challenging to meet with old friends and family (especially friends who also had babies) as I felt they didn't understand our journey or minimized my feelings by saying "everything will be fine" or "everything happens for a reason".

With the moms I met in baby group I was able to share our journey with people who understand a little of what we went through. They had the best 'listening ears'. They Got It! They too might have doctor appointment after doctor appointment and a list of specialists. In fact, some parents shared the same specialists and it was nice to remove some of the fear of the unknown before appointments if another parent had already been there or to pass that knowledge onto another mom.

It helps to feel not quite so alone on this journey."

Funding and Partnerships

- Minimal cost (as long as space and staffing are available)
- Management
- Jeneece Place
- NICU
- Others
- Yearly Reports

Video

Baby Group Fragile Beginnings, Strong Futures

<https://vimeo.com/228105731>

“Such an instant sense of community with these families. While we had different experiences, I feel we can all empathize and understand each other’s struggles.”

“I’ve looked forward to every Tuesday morning. I would even plan all appointments around Tuesdays so I wouldn’t have to miss. My daughter also seemed to be comfortable when we were at baby group and with all the people there.”

Appendices

- Planning timeline
- Suggested Guest Speakers
- Poster
- Welcome Signs
- Registration form
- Attendance List
- Feedback form
- Standard Report

Suggested Planning Timeline

- 3 months to start (or more) – book space
- 2 months to start – draft schedule and confirm guest speakers
- 6 weeks start – send out invitations and spread the word
- Last 6 weeks – gather registration information, prepare materials, send out new invitations as required (this continues throughout the session)
- Last week – send reminders

Possible Guest Speakers

- Physiotherapist (general gross motor development)
- Occupational Therapist (first foods)
- Speech Language Pathologist (first words/signs)
- Nurse Practitioner (Healthy Babies)
- Social Worker (Self-care)
- Certified First Aid Instructor
- Yoga Instructor
- Photographer
- Guest Speakers on topics suggested by parents
- Past parent participants (World Premie Day)
- Think about the resources in your community and what might be of interest to your group (i.e. previous parents with specific interests & knowledge – quilting, memory books, etc)

Excellent care, for everyone,
everywhere, every time.



The Early Intervention and Infant Development Programs invite you and your baby to

QA BABY GROUP

An informal drop-in (registration required) education and parent connection group where parents and babies get together to talk about health, wellness and the challenges of parenting. Offered to families registered with the Early Intervention Program and Queen Alexandra Centre for Children's Health with infants from birth to walking.



TUESDAYS 9:30-11:00

Scheduled Topic starts at 10:00
201 Hospital Way
"JENECE PLACE" – Media Room

To register please contact: Cheryl at 250-519-5390 x. 32426 or Cheryl.Fertich@viha.ca
or Dawn at 250 519-6710 or Dawn.Grunert@viha.ca

Goals of the group:

- To provide a safe, comfortable and healthy environment for families with children who have or are at risk for developmental delay
- To build supportive relationships between families and facilitate parent to parent connections
- To provide education for parents on growth and development, baby care, various topics of interest, and adjustment to parenting

TOPICS

Sept 26	First Love (stories from early days)	Nov 7	Photography (Guest)
		Nov 14	Gross Motor (Guest)
Oct 3	Infant Massage	Nov 21	Toys and Play
Oct 10	Early Language (Guest)	Nov 28	First Foods (Guest)
Oct 17	Grief & Depression		
Oct 24	Taking Care of Yourself (Guest)	Dec 5	Family Traditions/Holiday Planning
Oct 31	Sleep	Dec 12	Festive Celebration

PARKING: Parents are invited to park in the Jenece Place Parking lot if spaces are available.
The code for the gate is 4411*.
If no parking is available there you can park in general parking for \$2.75 for 2 hours

NO FOOD OR DRINKS (EXCEPT WATER) IN MEETING ROOMS PLEASE

From Fragile Beginnings To Strong Futures



VIHA – Early Intervention Program – BABY
GROUP

EIP Baby Group Registration Form

Parent Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	

Child:	
DOB:	
MRN:	
Diagnosis:	

IDP Consultant:	
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(READ) As one of the facilitators of the EIP Baby Group, we strive to provide the healthiest environment for your baby. If you, your baby, or anyone in the household is sick, or has been exposed to sickness, please do not attend the group. Your IDP consultant can provide a one-on-one session of the missed topic.

As facilitators, we will cancel the group if we are sick.

No food or drinks in the meeting room at Jenece Place. Water okay.

Please bring a blanket to put on the floor for your child

Parking: Enter through the staff parking lot and head to Jenece Place. Parking code is *. If no available spots head out of the parking and around the hospital to the main parking area. Parking in a numbered spot and pay at the kiosk at the front of the hospital. Parking is \$2.75 for 2 hours.

Enter Jenece Place from the lower level closest to the free parking. Cheryl or I will need to let you in. If you are late, please tap on the outside window of our meeting room.

Tuesday EIP Baby Group Parent Survey

Our primary goal for the EIP Baby Group is to provide a welcoming, stimulating, and educational environment for parents and their infants. The purpose of this survey is to learn if we are meeting our goals. We appreciate your feedback for future planning.

Do you feel that the staff provided a comfortable and safe environment for you and your child?
Comments:

Do you feel you connected with other parents in the group and/or comment on the benefits of socializing with other parents whose children have extra needs:

What do you like about this group?

What doesn't work for you and your child/ren?

Suggestions to improve the Baby Group:

Has this experience assisted you to feel more comfortable attending groups in the community?

Baby Group had a number of guest speakers. Comments:

Overall, the EIP Baby Group has been a positive experience for our family.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Please rate these topics presented at baby group and add comments:

Topic	Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Okay 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
First Love (Jan. 24)					
Attachment and Gentle Massage (Jan. 31)					
Sleep (Feb. 7)					
Helping Baby Feel Loved and Secure (Feb. 14)					
Helping Your Baby Talk (Feb. 21)					
Baby Health (Feb. 28) GUEST					
Grief and Depression (Mar. 7)					
Infant Massage (Mar. 14)					
Safety and Exploring – Saying Yes (Apr. 4)					
Health Families (Apr. 11) GUEST					
Toys and Play (Apr. 18)					
First Foods (Apr. 25) GUEST					
Community Resources (May 2)					
Taking Care of Yourself (May 9)					
Capturing the Moments (May16)					
Helping Baby Discover Their World (May 23)					
Gross Motor Development (May 30)					
Infant CPR and First Aid (Jun 6) GUEST					
Travel and Camping – Summer Fun (Jun13)					

Thank you for your participation in the EIP Baby Group. Have a great summer!!

Additional comments:

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM
INFANT DEVELOPMENT: EIP BABY GROUP REPORT

NAME: Xxxx Xxxxxxx

DATE: Xxxx XX, XXXX

DATE OF BIRTH: Xxxx XX, . XXXX

M.R.N. #: XXXXXXXX

The Vancouver Island Health Authority's Charter of Family Centered Care states facilitation of family to family connections as one of its six objectives. The Early Intervention Program supports this charter objective by providing the EIP Baby Group. The EIP Baby Group is an informal drop-in education and parent connection session where parents and babies get together to talk about health, wellness, and the challenges of parenting unique infants.

Goals of the group include:

- Providing a safe, comfortable and healthy environment for families with children who have or are at risk for developmental delay
- Building supportive relationships between families and facilitating parent to parent connections
- Providing education for parents on growth and development, baby care, various topics of interest, and adjustment to parenting
- Providing education topics focused on infants from birth to walking
- Providing a transition to attend community groups

Xxxx and her mom attended XX of XX drop-in Baby Group sessions at the Jeneece Place. Xxxx enjoyed watching and interacting with other babies. Xxxx and her mom enjoyed connecting with other parents and the educational component of the sessions.

It has been a pleasure to meet with Xxxx and her mom in the Baby Group setting.

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We would like to thank:



**And all of the parents and babies
we have met and worked with
over the past 6 years!**

Contact Information

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