

The Family Strengthening Network supports parents in Los Angeles County who are expecting or have recently given birth to a baby. The Network helps families build strong parent-child relationships and maximize the health and safety of their children. It also connects families with other support services and community resources.

The Network's services begin with Welcome Baby, a free and voluntary program for pregnant women and families with newborns. Welcome Baby is available at 14 hospitals in L.A. County and is free to all families regardless of their income.

The Welcome Baby program includes prenatal support, a hospital visit when the baby is born, and home-based visits during the baby's first nine months.

Welcome Baby provides the tools and resources to help parents be the best they can be. The program's "parent coaches" support families in a variety of areas, including: bonding and attachment, maternal depression, breastfeeding, nutrition, early child development education, and home safety. The program also helps families navigate insurance coverage, schedule timely doctor visits, and access community services.

All women who deliver at a participating Welcome Baby hospital are eligible for the hospital visit. After that, the range of services depends on whether or not a family lives in a Best Start community (a designation based on various demographic factors). Families residing in a Best Start community are eligible for up to nine Welcome Baby visits: three prenatal, one at the hospital, and five after birth.

Family Strengthening Outcomes

- Increased initiation, duration, and exclusivity of breastfeeding
- Improved parent knowledge of infant development and nutrition
- Adequate and appropriate health care
- Higher rates of on-time immunizations
- Higher rates of health insurance coverage
- Higher rates of screening and treatment for maternal postpartum depression/anxiety
- Higher rates of screening and treatment for developmental delays
- Improved home safety and baby-proofing
- Connections to support services that address substance abuse, domestic violence, housing needs, and social isolation

How Welcome Baby and Home Visiting Work Together

With nearly 13,000 families participating each year, Welcome Baby adequately supports most pregnant women and new parents. But some families need more intensive and longer-term support. Following birth, new mothers receive an assessment to identify risks and determine if they would be better served by a more intensive home visiting program.

Families deemed high-risk who live in a Best Start community may opt to participate in a free home visiting program that provides services and support for as long as five years after birth. High-risk families who do not live in a Best Start community are eligible to receive the hospital visit and up to three postpartum visits.

Two dozen community agencies offer the longer-term home visiting services, which reach over 3,000 families each year. Each agency uses one of two nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting models: *Healthy Families America* or *Parents As Teachers*.

These programs, along with Welcome Baby, comprise the Family Strengthening Network. Funded by First 5 LA, this continuum of care and support helps families give their children the best start.



Moms and dads tell their own Family Strengthening stories here:

WelcomeBaby.LABestBabies.org

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