



# Welcome Back!

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We hope everything is going well for you and your baby.

As you might remember from your group sessions, having a new child in the house means a lot of things change in your life! The amount of time you have for yourself, the amount of time you can spend with your other children, and also the time you can spend with your partner, family members, or friends has probably decreased.

The next couple pages are reminders about how you can use Mothers and Babies skills to help you manage some of the stressful things that come with being a new parent.

There is also information in the next couple pages about how you can use the Mothers and Babies skills to help strengthen the relationship between you and your baby.

If you can't find your Mothers and Babies workbook and you want to review some of the information that was part of your group, you can find it on our website: <http://www.mothersandbabiesprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/6-Week-Participant-Manual-2017.pdf>.

You can also contact us directly at [mbgroup@northwestern.edu](mailto:mbgroup@northwestern.edu) and we can send you these materials.



## Pleasant Activities

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As your baby is getting older, there are more and more things that your baby will enjoy doing. **It is important to have your baby doing pleasant activities.**

A lot of pleasant activities that babies like to do are **things they enjoy doing with their mother, or with their parents.**

You probably remember some examples of these pleasant activities that babies can do with their parents and you may already be doing some of them with your baby as well. For example, playing peek-a-boo, looking at picture books together, or singing to your baby.

What pleasant activities have you done with your baby since he/she was born?



Remember, **the pleasant activities you do with your baby will help create a strong bond between you and your baby.**

Also, **as your baby gets older it is important to keep doing pleasant activities with your child**, but those activities will start to look a little different since your baby will become interested in doing different things. For example, pretty soon your baby will be walking and talking so think about all the new things that you can do with your baby when that happens!



# Thoughts

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By now you have probably had some helpful thoughts as well as some harmful thoughts about how you are doing as a new mother.

Remember, harmful thoughts are things that make you feel stressed, worried, sad, scared, or angry. Harmful thoughts also affect your mood in a negative way.

As we talked about during group, it is really important to catch yourself having harmful thoughts so they don't take you down a negative path and make you feel down or depressed.

It is also important to remember that our thoughts can affect the way we interact with our children.

If we have harmful thoughts about our ability to be a good parent, it may result in actions that do not best support our baby's growth and development.

For example, if you have the negative thought that things aren't going to work out for you in the future then you might not set goals for you and your baby's future.

In the same way, if you have negative thoughts about expanding your support system, you may miss opportunities to identify existing and new sources of support that may help you and your baby.

As your baby gets older, try to catch yourself when you are having harmful thoughts that might affect the way you are interacting with your baby.

As we discussed in group, remember that **your baby learns to think in certain ways based on how she/he sees her/his mother and other adults thinking**, so it is really important that you be your baby's first teacher in teaching her/him to think in healthy ways!

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## Support from Other People

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During groups we talked about how **one way to build your support network is to do pleasant activities where you might be able to meet other people.**

Since your baby was born, have you had a chance to try and do a pleasant activity where you would meet someone new?



One reason it is important to build your support network is that **it helps to have people you can count on to help you in your role as a new mother.**

For example, we know that having a new baby can mean less sleep for you, more responsibilities around the house, and more things that you need to take care of—like going to your baby's pediatrician.

Sometimes when we are stressed with all of these things going on in our lives, it is hard to pay attention to a new baby and give her/him the attention, care, and love that she/he needs.

**So, having people in your life who can support you can keep you from getting overwhelmed by all of the things involved in having a new baby.**

Keep trying to do pleasant activities that will also allow you to meet people who can be part of your support network. If you are having difficulty thinking of what those pleasant activities are, think about places where other new parents might spend time such as the park, library, church, or a community center.