

# A guide to 0-5 Start for Life services in Leicestershire

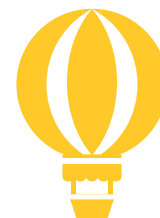
In Leicestershire we believe that every baby deserves the best start in life, and this is a priority right across our children and family partnerships. This means that organisations including the county council, health services, community and voluntary services all work together to ensure families receive the help they need at this important time in their family life. Nationally, this is known as a Start for Life offer, and the information below sets out Leicestershire's Start for Life offer.

Our ambition is that families in Leicestershire can access the support they need when they need it by:

- bringing services together to improve access
- improving the connections between families, professionals, services and providers
- putting relationships at the heart of family support



# Leicestershire Start for Life offer



## Pregnancy

### Midwife appointments

The following is a guide to the appointments for women expecting their first baby. Sometimes a different schedule of appointments will be made for women with additional health or other needs. Your midwife will talk to you about this.

[Your Maternity Service](#) - this web page will guide you through booking with a midwife, to interpreting services, your wellbeing and much more.

If you have previously had a healthy pregnancy, you might have slightly fewer appointments.

**‘Antenatal care’** is the name of the care you receive during pregnancy and is mainly delivered by a midwife.

The word ‘trimester’ is sometimes used to talk about the months of pregnancy. A trimester is 3 months, so people may talk about your first trimester (up to 3 months) second trimester, (3-6 months) and third or final trimester (6 to 9 months)

- **8+ - 12 week's Booking appointment with midwife.**  
This will usually be a slightly longer appointment where you share information with the midwife
- **Approximately 4 weeks after booking appointment or as soon as an appointment is available.** This is the first ‘baby scan’ appointment at the hospital
- **15 weeks Monitoring visit with the midwife**
- **20-22 weeks Baby scan at the hospital**
- **25- or 28-weeks Monitoring visit with midwife / GP**
- **31 weeks Monitoring visit with midwife / GP**
- **34 weeks Monitoring visit with midwife / GP**
- **36 weeks Monitoring visit with midwife / GP**
- **38 weeks Monitoring visit with midwife / GP**
- **40 weeks Monitoring visit with midwife**
- **41 weeks Monitoring visit with midwife**
- Between 28 and 36 weeks of your pregnancy you will receive a letter from the health visiting service explaining how to access digital resources including your health, emotional health and wellbeing, caring for your baby and the bumps to babies antenatal video sessions – see link [below](#)

### Healthy Start

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy foods and milk. If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. Money is added onto this card every 4 weeks. [Apply for a Healthy Start Card.](#) Find out [how to shop, what you'll get and how much.](#)

[Healthy Start vitamins](#) support you during pregnancy and breast feeding. There are also vitamin drops for babies and young children. These are suitable from birth to 4 years old. You can find out where to get Health Start vitamins from here [Where to get Health Start Vitamins](#)

## Staying Healthy in pregnancy

QuitReady Leicestershire provides a specialist home visiting service for people wanting help and support to quit smoking at any point in their pregnancy [Smoking in pregnancy](#). Stopping smoking will be better for both you and your baby and can help prevent premature births and the risk of your baby developing various health difficulties.

[Healthy Lifestyle in Pregnancy](#) can offer a free and confidential service with healthy eating advice and lifestyle information, with 12 weeks of personalised support

[Pregnancy - a week by week guide](#) has lots of useful information about what to expect in each week of your pregnancy journey

[Bumps to Babies: antenatal sessions](#) is a series of 4 videos which offer advice and information around becoming a parent, labour and pain relief, infant feeding and baby care

## Preparing for birth

As your pregnancy progresses there will be things to think about like items you might need when baby is born: somewhere for baby to sleep, clothing, nappies, etc. You don't need to spend a fortune – babies don't mind if things are pre-loved or handed down! And re-using clothes and equipment is also better for the planet. Look at what local charity shops and on-line marketplaces have to offer, as well as local re-use charities such as [Baby Basics](#), [SOFA](#), and [Hinckley Work Link](#). Young parent under 21? You might be able to get help from the Baby Box offer – see below.

## Infant Feeding

The World Health Organisation recommends breastfeeding for the first six months. But, no matter how you choose to feed your baby, your decision is respected, and support is available for all new parents. Information and advice is available for [How you'll feed your baby](#). Around the county there are a number of volunteer led breastfeeding support groups - [Infant Feeding Support Groups](#)

## Further Support

Speak to your midwife who may be able to refer you on for additional services if you need more help. Family Help within Leicestershire County Council Children and Family Services offer a referral-only 0-2 Pathway through Family Hubs. The Pathway provides intensive support for parents to-be with additional support needs right from the beginning of their parental journey and through the first two years of the child's life, their first 1001 days. Families are referred to and join the Pathway for lots of different reasons, but all referred families are made welcome regardless of their situation. Parents will get to know each other and wherever possible, be supported by the same worker throughout their Pathway journey. [Leicestershire County Council Family Help Service - The 0-2 Pathway](#)

**Baby boxes** provide additional support for young parents and parents to be, aged 21 and under, referred by professionals. The service provides a box full of essentials for a new baby at 24 weeks into the pregnancy. A home visit is offered which gives an opportunity to talk through the box contents and topics such as safe sleep, feeding options, etc. If needed, a referral can be made to the 0-2 Pathway or other support identified through Family Help staff and befriender volunteers.



## Birth to 3 months

For about 10 days after your baby is born you will stay under the care of a midwife. In the first few days you will have a home-visit from a midwife when your baby will be weighed, and they will check how you are doing. You will also be contacted by a Public Health Nurse (Health Visitor) who will arrange a contact with you when baby is **10-14 days old**. This will be a chance to ask questions and get advice on a range of subjects including safer sleeping and emotional wellbeing. Your baby will also be weighed.

**At 6-8 weeks** you will be offered a contact with the health visiting team to review your baby's health and development. You will be able to discuss a range of subjects like vaccinations, bonding with your baby, if your baby won't settle, and your baby will be weighed.

[Becoming a parent](#) is a 14 minute video that helps you through the early days, looking at bonding and attachment and baby development.

[Baby: the first year](#) on the Health for Under 5s website has lots of useful information and advice for new parents on a range of topics including vaccinations, feeding, safer sleeping

It's normal for babies to cry, particularly in the early days. Sometimes babies cry because they are hungry, need changing, feel unwell, or want a cuddle, but sometimes they cry for none of these reasons. ICON infant crying support is about helping parents and carers with babies to cope with crying. Find lots of hints and tips at [iconcope.org](http://iconcope.org)

Within the first 42 days you must [Register the birth](#). Where you register the birth depends on where your baby was born – for example if in the city of Leicester, you will need to [request an appointment in Leicester](#)

### Baby's First 1001 Days

The first 1001 days of a child's life, from conception to age two, is a window of opportunity. It is a time of particularly rapid growth and brain development. It is believed that the care given during the first 1001 days is hugely important to a child's future. [Watch our video on baby brain development and 1001 Critical Days](#)

### Other useful information:

[Ideas to help your child thrive by five](#)

Leicestershire County Council Facebook Page: [Early Years Communication and Language](#)



## 3-12 months

You will be contacted by the Health Visiting Team when your child is between **3 and 4 months old**, when you will receive information about eating solid foods, home safety, emotional health and wellbeing, etc. [This link provides more information about your growing baby](#)

At 10-12 months there will be a further contact from the Health Visiting Team [Find out more about your child's 10-12 month development review](#)

Some working parents and carers of **9 months** may be eligible for up to 15 hours funded childcare from September 2024 increasing to 30 hours in September 2025. You can find out more about the funded childcare offers from [Childcare Choices](#) and use their handy calculator to see what you could be eligible for.

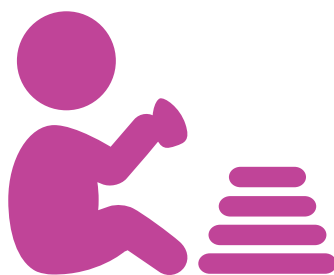
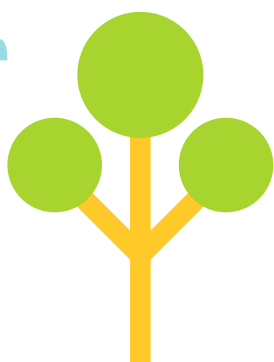
If you or your health visitor have concerns about your child's development, they could be recommended to have additional support from the Early Years Inclusion and Childcare Portage team. Play is very important to your child's development. It supports their learning and emotional development. Your child can develop many skills through regularly playing and engaging in playful experiences with you and others. This will develop their language skills, emotions, creativity and social skills.

They will be invited to messy play sessions during term time across the county and Inclusive play sessions during the school holidays where families can attend. There are also ideas for you to try at home with your child [Extra help for pre-school children | Leicestershire County Council](#)

## 12-24 months

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## 24 – 36 months

After your baby has turned two years old, you and your baby will be invited to what is called a '2-2 1/2 year development review' with your health visiting team.

This review will cover:

- general development, including movement, speech, social skills and behaviour, and hearing and vision
- growth, [healthy eating](#) and [keeping active](#)
- managing behaviour and [encouraging good sleeping habits](#)
- [tooth brushing](#) and [going to the dentist](#)
- [keeping your child safe](#)
- vaccinations.

An Ages and Stages development assessment toolkit will be used at the development reviews to assist the practitioner in reviewing the development of the child

If your child is not meeting their expected milestones the health visitor will identify what future support will help them.

### [Find out more about the 2 year old review](#)

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You may want to consider thinking about starting funded childcare. From April 2024 some families of 2-year-olds, there is funding worth up to 15 hours of childcare each week. Some working parents and carers of 2-year-olds, may be eligible for up to a further 15 hours funded childcare by September 2025. You can find out more about the funded childcare offers from [Childcare Choices](#) and use their handy calculator to see what you could be eligible for.

At this time, you might want to consider supporting your child to become toilet trained.

Resources have been made you to [help you at home](#) with your child



## Age 3+

Link to our new webpages

Once your child turns three years old, they are entitled to 15 hours a week of [funded childcare](#) for 38 weeks of the year. Some working parents and carers of 3- and 4-year-olds, may be eligible for up to a further 15 hours funded childcare.

Choosing childcare to support your child's learning and development is a big step. Each child and family are different and the type of childcare you choose will depend on your own family circumstances and the needs of your child. It is important to start planning for childcare before you need it.

### Finding a childcare provider:

- Childminder
- Pre-school
- Day Nursery

### Quality Childcare helps children to:

- become more confident
- learn through play and have fun
- learn new words and extend their vocabulary
- experience new activities and learn new skills
- problem solve and test out their ideas
- learn independence and get ready for school.

### Choosing childcare for children with SEND

We are currently working with all Early Years providers across Leicestershire to develop a tailored SEND report that will be easily accessible to all parents looking for childcare. The reports will be available under each individual provider when following the above link.

### What to consider

When you are deciding about the right childcare provider for your child, you may want to consider:

- The provisions that are available and the size of the provision. For example, if you know your child doesn't like large open spaces or noisy environments, it may be worth considering a smaller provision or childminder.
- The qualifications and experience that staff hold, for example, have they had experience with children with similar needs in the past? Do they use Makaton? Are they British Sign Language trained? Have they undertaken any qualifications around Autism? Are they willing to engage in further training to support your child and their needs?
- Is your child allowed visits before starting? Are you, as their parents/carers, allowed to stay for some sessions? Are you happy with the settling in plan?
- What is their accessibility – do you need to consider ramps, so your child can access all areas independently?

- What changing facilities or accessible toilets are there in the provision?
- Do they use health plans and what are their protocols for any emergencies?
- The provisions behaviour policy
- How you the setting communicate with you to celebrate and share experiences of the day ?
- How lunch and snack times work – what if your child has any dietary needs or feeding equipment, how would this impact on their lunch times?
- Experiences of working with wider professionals, including health teams, EYSEND advisors, Portage practitioners, Area SENCO's, Speech and Language Therapists, Psychologists etc.
- These are just some ideas to consider. Remember, as parents/carers, you know your child the best and will know what they need from their Early Years provision.

## Get support

Children up to statutory school age with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may be able to get home visits and extra teaching to help with their development.

For more information please visit [Extra help for pre-school children](#), where you can find support that's available, including support to access a provision if your child has a medical need.

Once you have decided which preschool you want your child to attend, there is additional support the Early years and Inclusion and Childcare service will offer to support the [transition](#).

## Talking about starting school

Getting your child ready for school is a journey you've been preparing for since their birth. We know starting school can be a very exciting time, but it can bring some challenges too. We hope this Leicestershire video, "Talking about starting school", will help your family on this journey.

The school your child is due to start will usually contact you once your child's place is confirmed.

You may be offered a visit or digital tour so that your child can view their prospective school.

If you have any concerns make sure you contact the school before your child starts to talk these through.

Watch this [short clip](#) to help you prepare for school

This [leaflet](#) about getting ready for school will help you and your child prepare.

This [leaflet](#) has additional information for parents if your child has additional needs.





## Helpful information for all ages:

[Healthy Together 0-19 \(Health Visiting and School Nursing\)](#)

Health for Under 5's [Health for Under 5s | For healthy, happy early years](#)

0 to 2 pathway - [Small steps to a better future](#)

Bumps to babies - [Becoming a parent](#)

ICON - [ICON Cope](#)

Safer Sleep toolkit [Safer sleeping sleep plan](#)

Lullaby Trust - [Safer sleep for babies, Support for families](#)

Peer Supporters – [Infant feeding support groups](#)

Healthy Start [Get help to buy food and milk \(Healthy Start\)](#)

1001 days - [My first 1001 days](#)

Smoke free homes [Home Page - Quit Ready](#)

