



Rhode Island Department of Health
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For Parents: Frequently Asked Questions about First Connections

What is First Connections?

First Connections is a free home visiting service provided by the Rhode Island Department of Health. This service is offered to pregnant women and to parents and guardians of newborns and young children through age three.

Is First Connections available to every family with a newborn or young child?

Any family living in Rhode Island can receive visits from First Connections regardless of income level or insurance status. First Connections providers contact families of newborns that might benefit the most from home visits soon after they are discharged from the hospital. First Connections contacts families with young children after receiving a referral from a healthcare or social service provider.

Why doesn't First Connections contact every family with a newborn?

First Connections contacts families that would probably benefit most from home visits. These include single and/or first time caregivers. Other factors First Connections considers include the health of the mother and the newborn, the amount of prenatal care that a mother received, and the birth weight and gestational age of the baby at birth. Sometimes, your doctor may think your family would benefit from First Connections and make a referral when your baby is discharged from the hospital.

When are First Connections home visits scheduled?

First Connections providers contact families and arrange home visits around dates and times that are convenient for the family. Some families need immediate support when they come home from the hospital with a new baby, while others want support weeks or months later.

How many home visits from First Connections does a family receive?

It depends on the needs of each individual family. Some families want one or two home visits, and others want more visits.

What happens during a First Connections home visit, and how long are visits?

It depends on the family and child. Some caregivers have questions about breastfeeding, how much a child should be fed, or home safety. Other families want to talk about their child's development or need assistance finding child care. Many families ask questions that they are too nervous or shy to ask their healthcare provider. First Connections can also link families with immediate needs to resources or link families to parenting groups. The needs of every family are different, so the length of visits and what happens during a visit is different.

Can families refuse First Connections home visits?

Yes. All visits are voluntary. Families can also initially decline First Connections home visits, then change their minds and request home visits at another time.

How can families and caregivers request First Connections home visits?

Home visits are conducted by one of four [First Connections providers](#), depending on where a family lives. Call the provider in your city or town if you would like to receive First Connections home visits.

What if I have more questions?

Ask a First Connections provider or contact the First Connections program at the Rhode Island Department of Health by calling the HEALTH Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711.