

BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES



The Journey to Healthy Parenting

There are many things that can impact the way we parent our children, regardless of whether having a baby is a planned event or an unexpected experience. Becoming a new parent can be an overwhelming challenge for most people even as they look forward to the joys that raising children can bring. The key to successful parenting is to ensure that mothers and fathers consistently attend to their own health and well being.

When travelling by plane, parents with young children are directed to put on their own oxygen mask before assisting



their children. Failing to ensure a parent's well being puts the child at risk for survival. The idea behind this concept is valuable when planning the route to successful parenting. Men and women who have their own needs met as they enter the world of parenting are more likely to raise happy, healthy, and competent



children. Moreover, *their children* are apt to offer rich and nurturing environments



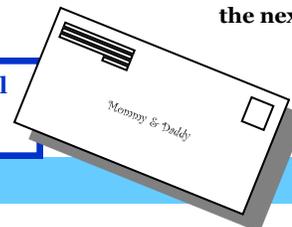
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to future generations as they parent their own children.

Unfortunately, many expectant couples become acquainted to parenting before they are ready or when circumstances make it difficult for them to meet their own needs for wellness. The good news is that becoming a healthy parent is possible for those who are open to examining their own needs and welcoming support.

Get started on your journey to wellness & healthy parenting with the Idea Box on the next page!

Take a look at the love letters to parents on the next page to feel the impact of healthy parenting:



Idea Box

- Find a doctor to visit at least yearly for a physical
- Stay active with your child(ren)
- Try to eat healthy foods most of the time
- Make an appointment with a mental health provider if you want to feel differently after a loss or change
- Try out a support group if you or a loved one is addicted to drugs or alcohol
- Find a safe & nurturing caretaker for your children when you need a break
- Do something to relieve stress daily
- Be sure to add fun to your weekly routine– enjoy your child(ren)!



Love Letters to Our Parents

Dear Mom & Dad to Be...



Thank you for working so hard to try to stop smoking & drinking (even if you weren't expecting a baby right now).

You are helping me grow to the right size, protecting me from birth defects, and making it possible for me to learn like my classmates when I get to school!

Thank you for using the resources in our community, like enrolling in Building Healthy Families. Now we can both get our needs met & have fun together!

Love, Your Growing Baby



Dear Mommy & Daddy,

Thank you for wanting to find out how to take care of me even before I was born. Since you know what to expect, you can enjoy me more!

Thank you for wanting to pick me up when I need to be held (no matter what everybody else says!).

I will learn to trust, know that I am important, & develop valuable relationships with others. You are protecting me from anxiety as I grow.

Love, Your Infant



Dear Mom & Dad,

Thanks for putting me in a safe place & walking away for a couple of minutes when you get mad or stressed with my behavior. Thanks for taking the time to work out, read, talk to a friend on the phone, or journal so you can feel less stressed.

Thank you for finding me a loving & responsible babysitter once in awhile so you get a break from little kids and have some fun with adults!

Love,
Your Challenging Toddler

