

Preparing for Your Baby

Understanding the Power of Positive Experiences



What is the HOPE Framework?

HOPE stands for Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences. It's a powerful way to understand how simple, loving, everyday moments can shape your baby's future.

From cuddling and singing to keeping routines and showing love, these experiences build your baby's brain, strengthen emotional bonds, and support resilience, confidence, and lifelong well-being. When parents, caregivers, and communities focus on creating positive experiences, they help children grow stronger, healthier, and happier.

The Four Building Blocks of HOPE

Research shows that positive childhood experiences (PCEs) help children grow into healthy, resilient adults. The HOPE framework centers around the Four Building Blocks of HOPE, key types of PCEs that all children need to thrive.





Relationships

Loving and supportive bonds with parents, caregivers, and extended family.

- Pay attention to your baby's cues and answer with love, comfort, and kindness.
- Talk to your baby—your baby can hear you!
- Encourage friends and family to sing, talk, and read to your baby.
- Practice mindfulness and self-care—your calmness helps your baby too.
- It takes a village to raise a child. Think about which of your friends and relatives will be able to support you in everyday life, and in emergencies.

Environments

A stable and equitable home where your baby feels calm, secure, and safe.

- Prepare your home with love so it feels ready to welcome your baby.
- Maintain predictable routines and create a peaceful space.
- Set up a cozy, peaceful space for your baby, even small touches like soft lighting or calming music help.
- Take care of your physical and emotional well-being
- Go to prenatal check-ups and ask questions to feel more confident and informed.

Engagement

Connections to your community and chances to explore the world.

- Join a prenatal class or support group to connect with others.
- Share your excitement and fears with trusted people.
- Begin building your support network for postpartum.
- Join a social group or hobby class you enjoy.
- Simple moments like going for a walk, joining a community event, or visiting a friend help build curiosity and a sense of belonging.

Emotional Growth

Learning about feelings and how to manage them: noticing emotions, soothing yourself when upset or not feeling well, and choosing kind, healthy ways to respond.

- Find people you can talk with about your feelings related to childbirth and the postpartum phase. It is normal to feel anxious, unsure, or scared. Giving those feelings voice can help reduce their power!
- Talk with your family about your expectations around the postpartum period. Think about what you might need in those first weeks, and let others know what would feel supportive (or- just as importantly- not supportive!).
- Begin to notice and talk about your own emotions—your baby is already sensing your tone and mood.
- Practice calming strategies like deep breathing, music, or gentle movement—your regulation helps your baby feel safe.
- Take time to play, laugh, and do things that bring you joy—your emotional well-being nurtures your baby.
- Reflect on how you want to support your child emotionally once they're born.

