

# Being a dad ... father's play?!

The time has come – your baby has arrived. This amazing miracle is overwhelming and will change your life.

Both mum and you as the dad need a bit of time to get used to this new situation. You may have already begun together to think about what the birth of your baby means for you and your life up to now as you know it.

Have you become a dad for the first time? Then you may be thinking about such things as: do I have to earn more money? Will I be able to form a connection to my child? How can I support the mum? Will I have time for myself again at some point?

Our society is changing continuously. Families today are very different: one parent, two parents, patchwork families. The role of father is also changing. Dads spend more time with their children and take an active part in their upbringing. Show your partner, that you do not just want to be an onlooker. You can also take care of your child – it needs you just as much as its mum!

## **As the dad, you can:**

- Help with the housework and care for the newborn.
- Do the bedtime routine with your baby as often as possible, to be close to your child.
- Offer support to mum during the night as well.
- If the baby is bottle fed, do the feeds yourself and enjoy looking into your baby's eyes.

You may find out that you do some things differently to mum when dealing with your baby, such as baby care. This is fine. It is important that you handle your baby in a loving and responsible way (see the section on accident prevention in this folder). It is also helpful to make clear distinctions between both parents as to who is responsible for the baby and when.

If you need advice or support, family guidance counsellors will be happy to help. Have a look at the category "Addresses" in this folder to find out which guidance office is nearest to you.

Intensive contact with you as dad strengthens the father-child relationship and helps your baby to learn to interact with different people. This way, the two-way relationship between mother and baby becomes a connection involving mother, father and baby equally. And this does your baby good.



## **As the mum, you can:**

- Trust baby's dad.
- Include dad in the baby care and feeding as much as possible.
- Accept it if dad does things differently to you.

Enjoy being a dad and be patient with yourself. Remember: practice makes perfect! Don't be discouraged if something doesn't go as planned from the start. For example, it is only natural if your baby calms down faster with the person it spends most time with. But babies like a change, because this is the way to discover the world.

Dads are the best playmates, protectors and challengers – and in this way they boost the development of their child's self-confidence.

If you work together as mum and dad, this will

- create freedoms. Each of you will have time to himself and can see to his own needs.
- prevent overtaxing the mother, but also you as the dad.
- help you get to know your baby and its needs right from the start, and you will become more and more confident and experienced in dealing with your child.

## **Dads are also entitled to paternity leave and benefits!**

If you have any questions about family allowance (Elterngeld), you can ask the Landesamt für soziale Dienste Schleswig-Holstein (National Office for Social Services).

## **Contact:**

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