

# A Guide for New and Expecting Parents

**Carnegie Mellon University**  
Human Resources



Adding a child to your family is an exciting occasion. At times, it may also be overwhelming to consider all the things you would like to prepare prior to welcoming your child. At Carnegie Mellon University, we're here to support you through every step of this process, so that you can focus on what matters most — the well-being of you and your growing family.

This guide outlines some of the primary considerations related to welcoming a child, with special attention to the CMU programs, services, and benefits that can help. Our intention is for this document to offer a “one stop shop,” covering a wealth of topics which may be of interest to new and expecting parents. If you have questions or would like personalized assistance, please reach out to your [Family Care Concierge Specialists](#).

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## Pregnancy Support

*Pregnancy is an exciting life experience, but it also may evoke many wonderings, concerns, and questions. Fortunately, there are some resources that can offer additional support during this time.*

The [Pregnancy Support and Accommodations Policy \[pdf\]](#) applies to university faculty, staff and student workers. It provides reasonable accommodations for concerns related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or events. To learn more, please contact your supervisor, HR business partner, or CMU's [Equal Opportunity Services](#).

### **Vendor Resources:**

In addition, through our partner programs and services, you have access to information and helpful tips. For example, [Care@Work](#) offers guidance on [Coping With Work Stress During Pregnancy](#), among other helpful articles and webinars. [Guidance Resources](#) provides [Tips for Each Month of Your Pregnancy](#), [Pregnancy and Exercise](#), along with a variety of other guides.

### **Groups and Guidance:**

Many pregnant individuals are also interested in connecting with a group or organization that offers support, guidance and comfort as they navigate this experience and prepare for parenthood. Below are some organizations which may help you connect with others who can offer support during and after your pregnancy:

[Better Moms Unite](#): Offered through The Better Institute, Better Moms Unite aims to help parents create a postpartum plan to create for their mental health. There are a variety of ways to engage, including through social media, virtual hangouts, peer support and professional counseling.

[Postpartum Pittsburgh](#): The organization aims to foster the mental well-being of new and expectant parents. It includes information on mental health services, virtual support groups, child development, and resources that support families from pregnancy through early childhood.

[NurturePA](#): This is a text messaging program that pairs new parents with mentors. The mentors can offer guidance, support and helpful tips to support both the parent and child.

[MAYA](#): This organization offers mentors, doulas and assistance for Pittsburgh parents. Their aim is to support birth outcomes for BIPOC parents and babies. They offer prenatal classes, mentorship and counseling services at no cost.

## Leaves

It is beneficial to start planning your time away from work as far in advance as possible. Leave options vary based on university affiliation, employment status and other factors. It is important to familiarize yourself with the options that apply to your situation.

### Staff

Staff members may have access to several leave options following the birth or adoption of a child including the *Family Medical Leave Act*, *Short Term Disability*, *Parental Leave*, *Maternity Leave*, *Reserve Sick Days*, and *PTO*. These options can vary depending on your situation and some may overlap. The [Staff Parental and Maternity Leave Implementation Toolkit \[pdf\]](#) provides information on the eligibility, timing and pay associated with each leave option. You are encouraged to reach out to the [Leaves Team](#) to schedule a time to discuss your leave plan and the programs that apply to your life event.

[Matt McCabe](#)

Leaves Manager  
Phone: 412-268-5899

[Amelia Kephart](#)

Leaves Administrator  
Phone: 412-268-5072

Other Staff Resources: [Staff Parental and Maternity Leave Program](#), [Guide to Time Off Options for New Parents \[pdf\]](#), [Family Medical Leave Act](#)

*Please note that these guidelines do not apply to staff members governed by a collective bargaining agreement.*

### Graduate Students

Students who require time away following the birth of a child have two options available, per the [Student Maternity Accommodation Protocol](#):

*Short-Term Maternity Accommodation* — A short-term absence from academic responsibilities for six weeks; when medically necessary, this absence can be extended to eight weeks. Students remain enrolled when taking this accommodation.

*Formal Leave of Absence* — Under the Student Leave Policy, students can generally take an absence for a semester, mini-semester, or for the time remaining in a semester. All remaining courses are dropped and students are unenrolled for the semester.

Students seeking the accommodations described above must register with the Dean of Student Affairs by scheduling an appointment at 412-268-2075.

## Faculty

The the [Faculty Parental and Family Leaves of Absence](#) website details the leave options for eligible faculty members.

[Parental Leave](#) offers paid leave for a certain period of time for regular faculty members who are the parent and primary care-giver of a newborn child or the adoptive parent of a child of pre-school age.

[Family Leave](#) may be taken on a “full” or “partial” basis by faculty members who are the primary caregiver of a child or other dependent during the period of leave. Faculty on “full” family leave have no teaching, research, or administrative duties and receive no salary. Faculty on “partial” family leave have a reduced workload and receive a comparable reduction in salary. Benefits may be effected by this leave option as well.

Faculty members may also be able to request leave via the [Family Medical Leave Act](#). Contact the [Office of Human Resources Leaves Team](#) to learn more.

For more information about any of these options, please contact the [Faculty Leaves Team](#).

## Adoption

Adoption is another way through which you may choose to add a child to your family. If you are just at the beginning of this process, our guide, [Adoption: Exploring your Options \[pdf\]](#), may provide helpful information. If you are already expecting your child, we have listed some topics and resources from that guide which may be helpful to you.

### Adoption Finalization Day

Many parents expect the day that they get to take their new child home to be the end of their adoption journey, but this is usually not the case. Generally, there is a supervision period where the child is in your care, but the adoption is not yet finalized. The final step of the adoption process actually happens some months later at your final court hearing. Below are some resources to help prepare for that day.

- [What to Expect During Your Adoption Finalization Day](#) by American Adoptions
- [What to Expect During Your Adoption Finalization](#) by Adoptive Families

### Bonding

Bonding can be a topic parents seek advice on for any number of reasons, but it can be especially important when welcoming a new child into your home. Many families are anxious to form a secure attachment and lay the foundation for a successful family dynamic and a well-adjusted child. Below are some resources to help with that process.

- [How to Bond with a Child in Foster Care or Adoption](#)
- [What Are the Best Ways to Bond in a New Adoptive Family?](#)

### Sleep Issues

Many children who have gone through the adoption process suffer from sleep difficulties. Since sleep is essential for healthy growth and development, it can be a pressing topic for parents as they try to acclimate children to their new home.

- [Sleep Issues with Adopted Kids](#) — a podcast discussing the issue
- [All Through the Night](#) — an article discussing several factors and possible solutions

## Postadoption Depression

The adoption process can be a stressful change for any child, but it is rarely discussed that this process can take an emotional toll on parents as well. Below are some resources to provide more information about this topic.

- [Child Welfare Information Gateway: Postadoption Depression](#)
- [Post-Adoption Depression: How Common? Who is At Risk?](#)
- [Understanding Parental Postadoption Depression](#)

## Adoptive Parenting Resources

All parents look for help and advice when it comes to their child's specific needs. For adoptive parents, this may mean finding strategies that acknowledge their child's unique life experiences. Below are some resources that provide parenting advice relevant to adoptive parents.

- [Parenting After Adoption](#)
- [What Makes Adoptive Parenting Different From Parenting a Biological Child?](#)

## Parent Support Groups

- Special Kids Network — 800-986-4550; connects families to a variety of resources for their children
- [Together as Adoptive Parents, Inc](#) — 215-256-6438; provides adoptive families with information on therapists and tutors available to work with their child
- SWAN Helpline — 800-585-7926; foster care only
- [NACAC Parent group database](#)
- [Chat-N-Chill parent support group](#)
- [Pittsburgh Adoption Support Group](#) — 412-767-4250; [pghadoptsuprtgr@webtv.net](mailto:pghadoptsuprtgr@webtv.net)

## Delivery

Through the university's Employee Assistance Program, you can access many articles related to delivery. For example, "[Choosing Where to Deliver Your Baby](#)" explains the differences between and considerations for hospital, birthing center, and home based births.

In addition to choosing where you give birth, you may be interested in exploring different birthing methods, as well as practitioners who can support birth such as midwives and doulas. The Care@Work LifeCare Family article "[Learn About Birthing Methods](#)" offers useful information about birth techniques and support professionals.

If you're looking for facilities in the Pittsburgh region that offer care and support for childbirth, some options are listed below. Many hospitals offer tours of their maternity wards for expecting parents.

### **Hospitals**

- [West Penn Hospital \(AHN, Pittsburgh\)](#)
- [Forbes Hospital \(AHN, Monroeville\)](#)
- [Jefferson Hospital \(AHN, South Hills\)](#)
- [Wexford Hospital \(AHN, Wexford\)](#)
- [Magee Women's Hospital \(UPMC, Pittsburgh\)](#)

### **Birth Centers**

- [The Midwife Center for Birth & Women's Health \(Pittsburgh\)](#)

### **Resources for Home Births & Doulas**

- [Blessed Arrivals](#) — offers doula services, childbirth and lactation classes, photography services, and more
- [Steel City Home Birth](#) — offers homebirth midwifery, prenatal care, birth and postpartum doula support, lactation counseling and classes.
- [Birth Doulas of Pittsburgh](#)
- [Clinical Doula Services at the Department of Family Medicine \(UPMC\)](#)
- [Golden Lotus Doula Services](#)
- [Pittsburgh Doula Network](#)
- [DONA International](#)
- [Shining Light Prenatal Education](#) — Offers private childbirthing, yoga classes, fertility coaching, and doula services; 412-915-6167



# Depression During and After Pregnancy

Peripartum depression refers to depression that occurs during pregnancy or after childbirth. According to the American Psychiatric Association, an estimated one in seven women experiences peripartum depression. Though less common, the non-birthing partner may also experience depression after the birth of a child. Some signs of this condition are listed in the article "[Coping With Postpartum Depression](#)."

If you are experiencing signs of this condition, know that you are not alone and that there are many resources you can turn to for help; please contact your health professional. In addition to speaking to your healthcare provider, the following services can offer additional information and support:

- CMU staff and faculty can receive support through the [Employee Assistance Program](#). Employees and their household members can access free, confidential assessments from a counselor and, if needed, referrals to other providers.
- [Postpartum Support International](#) aims to raise awareness of and provide support for mental health issues related to childbirth; and offers online support groups, peer mentorship, and help finding local support and providers. It also offers help for dads, partners and families, and birth and adoptive parents.
- The Substance and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has a 24/7 Helpline at 800-662-HELP (4357). This is a free and confidential service that can provide referrals to local support groups, facilities and organizations.
- The [Mayo Clinic - Postpartum Depression Overview](#) provides insight on signs, symptoms and treatment.
- [AHN Postpartum Depression Resources](#) outlines services available through the Allegheny Health Network, including mental health screenings, several types of individual therapy, group counseling, and/or medication management.
- Through [UPMC Magee](#), individuals can receive help for postpartum depression through counseling, medication and/or support groups.

## Health Care & Related Benefits

When you experience a life change such as adding a new child to your family, you have the opportunity to adjust your benefit elections, such as [your medical plan](#). If you are interested in making changes to your benefits for this reason, please note that you have 60 days after the date of birth or adoption to do so, and have 30 days after making the change to provide supporting documentation. The following links offer more guidance and considerations for changing your benefits:

- [How to Change Your Benefits for a Life Event More](#)
- [Changing Benefit Elections System Guide](#)
- [Benefits for Dependents](#)
- [Dependent Eligibility Documentation](#)

### Student Plans

Please note that if you are a Carnegie Mellon University student, your [plan options](#) are different. Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield is the provider, and it is available for undergraduate and graduate students and their eligible dependents. If you are a full time student physically based in the United States, you must either enroll in the student insurance or submit a waiver. To request a change to your student insurance for a qualifying life event such as the birth or adoption of a child, please email [shinsure@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:shinsure@andrew.cmu.edu) to request an enrollment change form.

### Other Options and Considerations

If you are not insured through one of Carnegie Mellon University's plans, you will need to consult with your provider to find out the process for making any necessary changes. There is usually an increased cost if you are transitioning from a family without children, so it may be important to consider costs and compare plans. Please note that pediatricians request to see infants fairly frequently during the first year of life and there is increased opportunity for illness if your child will be attending a group child care setting. This may factor into your decision making when choosing a plan. There may also be options to insure your child at low or no cost through the federally funded [CHIP](#) program.

As you consider your family's needs during this time, you may also consider exploring CMU's [life insurance options](#) and [supplemental life insurance and will preparation services through MetLife](#). There are also market alternatives if you would like to compare other plans.

Your [Health Care Flexible Spending Account](#) can be used to cover medical expenses incurred by your dependents. You must be a full time, benefits eligible employee to contribute, and you are required to make new elections each year (i.e., your elections from one year do not automatically roll over to the next year).

## Finding a Pediatrician

As you consider adding a new child to your family, you may also need to look for new providers through your medical plans to meet your family's needs. Selecting a pediatrician is something that is done prior to the birth or adoption of child. If you are giving birth, your child's pediatrician may be able to see your child at the hospital shortly following the birth. You may be able to share the pediatrician's information with your prenatal care provider prior to birth so it can be on record. Below are some instructions for how to find a pediatrician using the two CMU health plan providers:

### [Highmark Provider Search](#)

1. Under "Stay in-network & save," click "Medical"
2. Under "Network," select "Complete PPO Blue"
3. In the menu to browse by category, select "Medical," "Primary Care," and then "Pediatrician"
4. [Instructions for outside of Western PA \[pdf\]](#)

### [UPMC Provider Search](#)

1. Enter your Member ID or select, "I'm Just Browsing"
2. Under the drop down menus, select "Medical" for the type of care you are looking for
3. Under "Find a Person or Place," select "By type, specialty, procedure, service, or equipment," and then select "Pediatrics"
4. [Instructions for outside of Western PA \[ppsx\]](#)

# Resources for Child Care

It is beneficial to start planning child care as far in advance as possible. Through the Office of Human Resources, there are myriad services and resources related to this need:

- Through the Concierge Service, you can receive personalized, one on one assistance with any dependent care related topic. For new and expecting parents, this is a great place to start as you review your child care options. Our team can provide you with a list of child care centers that may have availability when you want your child to begin care, and they can also share resources for nanny care and care shares. To access this service, simply email [hrfamilycare@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:hrfamilycare@andrew.cmu.edu) with a few details of your request or needs, and a specialist will be in touch with you promptly to start connecting you with programs, services or resources that can help.
- Our [Family and Child Care Resources](#) are a wealth of resources on an array of topics. For new parents in particular, the following educational materials may be of interest:
  - [Child Care Options to Consider \[pdf\]](#)
  - [Child Care in Pittsburgh: What to Expect \[pdf\]](#)
  - [Choosing High-Quality Child Care \[pdf\]](#)
  - [Affording Quality Child Care \[pdf\]](#)
- [CareLink](#) is network available to members of the CMU community to both post jobs and offer services, including child care, pet care, tutoring, household help, and a variety of other areas.
- Through the [Care@Work program](#), eligible staff, faculty and graduate students have access to a free subscription to Care.com where they can view provider profiles or post a job for caregivers. This benefit also provides a limited number of emergency backup care days for either home based or center based child care when your typical plans fall through. These days are available at a subsidized rate.
- [The Cyert Center](#) is CMU's early education and child care program for children from 12 weeks to 6 years of age, available to CMU graduate students, faculty, and staff. You can receive information on [sliding scale benefit](#) and [how to apply](#). Please note that there is usually a significant waitlist for this program.
- [The Children's School](#) is the laboratory preschool and kindergarten for children ages 3–6 affiliated with CMU's Department of Psychology. Interested families can [apply online](#); please that there is typically a significant waitlist for this program.
- The [Employee Assistance Program](#) can offer support for a variety of personal needs. In addition to counseling referrals, they can also offer help in finding child care, and have informative articles on a variety of parenting related topics.

## Parent & Caregiver Support

As you prepare to expand your family, you may be interested in connecting with other parents. Support groups can be a meaningful way to form relationships, learn from fellow parents, build a sense of community, and gain information and resources. Below is a list of groups and community organizations that can offer support.

- [Fathers Trying Together](#) — This is a group for single fathers and caregivers. You can connect with others to learn how to cope with stress, overcome barriers and bond with your child.
- [Women's Rap](#) — Offered through the Homewood Family Center, this is an opportunity for parents and caregivers to engage in self-care by gaining encouragement and support from others.
- [Parent/Primary Caregiver Support Group](#) — PA Parent and Family Alliance offers a weekly virtual support group where parents can discuss shared questions and issues with each other and build a sense of community
- [Allegheny Family Network](#) — This organization offers a variety of groups and ways for parents to come together, including specific groups for foster parents and fathers.
- [Mother to Son Program](#) — Small Seeds Development, Inc. runs this group for single mothers of African-American sons.
- [Family Resources](#) — This organization provides counseling, treatment and services to help families build healthy interactions and positive relationships.
- [Latino Community Center](#) — This organization offers a variety of supports for Latino families in Allegheny county, including parenting classes, home visits and a family hotline.
- [Angels' Place](#) — This organization offers support for single parents. It provides early childhood education, child care, and parenting education and assistance.
- [Anchorpoint Counseling Ministry](#) — Serving all families and individuals, Anchorpoint Counseling offers child, marriage and family counseling, in addition to workshops, parenting groups and a tutoring program for school-age children.
- [Family Support Centers](#) — The Allegheny Intermediate Unit offers 10 centers that provide assistance and information to caregivers, including development assessments for children, parenting support groups, home visits, family activities and other resources.

## Lactation Support

While not all families have the opportunity to breastfeed their infants and others choose not to, many new parents are interested in providing breast milk for their infants for a variety of reasons. Breastfeeding is often cheaper than store bought formula; it is also a powerful tool for protecting your child from illness, producing antibodies for them while their immune systems develop and lowering the risk of certain cancers, infections, respiratory illnesses, obesity, diabetes and SIDS. A mother's milk will also change to fit the dietary needs of the infant, providing custom nutritional benefits for that child. However, it is important to note that not all parents are blessed with a strong supply of milk and many choose to supplement the milk they can produce with formula so that their babies can get enough to eat. Breastfeeding can also be a challenging process, which can be made easier with the support of lactation consultants; and it may require a safe place to pump multiple times a day, which can be a challenge for parents returning to work. The following resources may be helpful.

### Lactating at Work

As a [Breastfeeding-Friendly Employer](#), CMU supports ways to ease the transition back to work post-birth. The [Lactation Support Policy \[pdf\]](#) outlines the procedures and policies surrounding breastfeeding at work. The university has several lactation rooms available to students, faculty, staff and guests; use the [Lactation Room Request for Access Form](#) to receive card-swipe access to these rooms.

### Lactation Supplies

If planning to pump, your insurance usually provides one breast pump at no cost. Your healthcare provider will need to write a prescription for the pump, and you can contact your insurance provider to learn more. In some cases, you can request a breast pump prior to the birth of your child, and up to one year postpartum. There are also companies that will work with your insurance provider to allow you a larger selection of pumps than the standard one provided; [Airflow Breastpumps](#) is one example. You can also purchase any pump you like if you are willing to pay full cost, or rent a pump from most hospitals.

Beyond breast pumps, many parents also benefit from supplies such as pumping bras, nipple cream, nursing pads, milk storage bags, and supplements to increase their milk supply. These can be purchased at many retailers.

### Breastfeeding help lines

- PA WIC Breastfeeding Warm Line: 1-855-427-5666
- Allegheny County Breastfeeding Help Line 412-687-2243 (8:30 am – 4:30 pm, M-F)
- PA Department of Health Healthy Baby Line: 800-986-BABY or 800-986-2229
- National Women's Health Information Center: 800-994-9662 (peer counselors)

## Lactation Consultants

If you are delivering your baby in a hospital, they will likely have lactation consultants available onsite and offer services after delivery. If you are looking for assistance independent of the hospital, some options are listed below. Your child's pediatrician may also have lactation consultants available to help.

- [Breastfeeding Center of Pittsburgh](#) — provides visits and consultations, coordinated care with the baby's pediatrician, prenatal breastfeeding and Working and Breastfeeding classes along with additional support as needed; 412-246-4726
- [Heritage Valley Sewickley](#) — board certified lactation consultant available by appointment; Chippewa location, 724-773-6842; Beaver location, 724-773-4797
- [Western Pennsylvania Hospital](#) — Lactation consultations available by phone at 412-578-7030
- [Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Primary Care Center](#) — 412-692-6000; ask for a lactation consultant visit
- [Lactation Center at UPMC Magee](#) — telephone assistance for mothers with questions or concerns once home, and specially scheduled in-person or virtual outpatient consultations; the Center's retail, phone, virtual and outpatient services are available to any mother, regardless of whether they delivered at Magee or another facility
- [Healthy Start Lactation Consultant Program](#) — 412-247-1000; must be enrolled in Healthy Start

## Other Milk Sources and Support Services

- [Mid-Atlantic Mothers' Milk Bank](#) — This organization accepts donations of unused breast milk and donates it to medically fragile babies who will greatly benefit from the boost to their immune system. If you have an oversupply and wish to donate, or if you have an infant who could benefit from this program, this may be a good resource.
- [WIC](#) — The Pennsylvania Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children provides nutrition services, breastfeeding support, health care and social service referrals, and healthy foods. Families must have income at 185 percent of the poverty level to receive services.
- [CMU Pantry](#) — Available to CMU undergraduate and graduate students, the CMU Pantry provides diapers, baby wipes, diaper rash ointment/cream, baby shampoo and infant formula to students families who need it.
- [La Leche League](#) — This international organization was created by parents to help people meet their feeding goals. It provides information and support to parents who want to nurture their children and feed them human milk.
- [Allegheny County Breastfeeding Coalition](#) — The mission of this coalition is to encourage and help normalize human milk feeding in every community across Allegheny County.