



# The Head Start New Parents Book Club

## A Two-Gen Book & Program

A parenting group model that begins at birth and provides conversation, books, and videos that offer new parents information, social support and opportunities to learn, laugh and connect.

...because an informed confident parent will be their own, and their child's best advocate for health, school and life.





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A paradigm for education that combines joyful learning with creative and critical thinking -using group dynamics, art, reading, writing and friendship to inspire and encourage a parent's personal and intellectual growth in ways that will enrich their own and their child's lives.

## The Head Start New Parents Book Club

### A Two-Gen Program

### FOR PARENTS

#### A book and additional resources:

In addition to receiving and learning to use the "I Just Had A Baby! Now What?" book as a trusted resource for evidence based information, a discussion starter, Head Start parents will have access to other parenting books, children's books, novels, and videos so they can actively seek information and reading opportunities for themselves and their children.

#### Group support:

What do new parents crave? ... other new parents to talk to, compare notes with, and support one another. Using the model of a book club – where everyone brings their wisdom and experience to the table, these weekly groups will be facilitated NOT led, by Head Start Family Engagement workers and will help parents of babies ages birth to three:

- Learn and support one another and have a safe space for asking questions, and have books, educators and friends that will help them find answers.
- Create, innovate and advocate together to ensure that their own growth and goals are not cast aside now that they are parents.
- Interview community experts, and have journaling and art projects that will encourage critical thinking and creative exploration

### FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STAFF

#### A group facilitation framework:

Book clubs don't need a curriculum! They are free flowing discussions that can go in a variety of directions based on the interests and needs of the members. A simple, flexible framework helps facilitators start the discussions and keep the groups talking and moving when that help is needed. With training and on-going support facilitators learn how to plan, build and grow these groups until parents can take them over.

#### A Professional Development Program:

##### On-line:

- An introduction to the "I Just Had A Baby" book
- A self-paced, open-book certification for providers
- Best practices, resources and family recruitment website and webinars

##### Training of Trainers:

- Running Head Start Book Clubs: A training in group education and strength based group programming (2 days)
- Continued best practices opportunities held at conferences or on-site by NHSAA
- Program partnership TA and best-practice Certification



\*\*Professional development programs will be created as a partnership of Head Start, Simply Put, and tbd



# “I Just Had A Baby! Now What?” “Tuve Un Bebé! Ahora Que?”

A book in English or Spanish for new parents

The first books in the I'm a Parent! Now What? series

Unlike any other book for lower-income parents, “I Just Had A Baby! Now What?” gives families -of all shapes, colors and sizes warm, friendly, and practical information, illustrations and stories in a non-judgmental voice, and with a much needed dose of humor. Like a knowing girlfriend or experienced grandma, “Now What?” is there to inform, support and entertain families from birth to baby’s first steps.

New parenthood can be fun, but it is hardly easy. That’s why even parents who rarely read are eager for information. “Now What’s?” two generation approach takes advantage of that moment, with more than a list of do’s and don’ts. Stories and illustrations that mirror parent’s struggles, share their values, and reflect their culture makes “I Just Had A Baby! Now What?” fun (and funny) It will give even the most reluctant reader a joyful reading experience that can spark a new appreciation for language and learning.

## 1. This book is about the whole baby. That includes:

**How-to:** Here are the first year basics that will remove the fear factor. How to diaper, feed, dress, bathe, buy and install the car seat, pack a diaper bag, get baby to sleep, pick out a snowsuit, baby proof and clean the house- all simply written and *illustrated*.

**Your amazing baby:** The book is organized around baby’s developmental physical, cognitive and emotional milestones (with no timeline, only encouragement and strategies to help parents identify and encourage these skills.) Insight into what brain research tells us about baby’s learning is then related back to the How-to section in everyday ways and surprising teachable moments. (ie., Getting a fussy baby into the snowsuit at 6 months can be fun and even educational if you try this...)

**What to buy, borrow or forget about:** From car seats to strollers, here are some helpful guidelines on safety and price for baby gear, plus suggestions for affordable options and a good dose of calming sense (ie, just because you’re girlfriend has a lacey diaper bag that turns into a baby carrier and plays lullabies does NOT mean your baby MUST have one too!)

**Partnering with the Pediatrician** Going to the doctor shouldn’t bring on tears for mom or baby. Health literacy strategies can help parents turn each of their well- baby visits into a *useful* experience for all involved. There is also a section on sick babies, with help figuring out if it’s an emergency, a doctor visit, or just time for a little love. And an illustrated guide to giving the right medicine, the right way, at the right time.

**simply put**, new parenthood provides an opportunity to help young women (and their partners) develop critical thinking, literacy and self-advocacy skills they will need to support themselves and their families far beyond those first years.



2. **We love adults as much as we love babies, this book will help them figure out:**

**Changing relationships:** A woman or man, a wife or husband, a son or daughter –has now become a mother or father...and don't forget grandma! Here's friendly, funny, compassionate and very practical help for dealing with ALL of the surprises that come with a new baby – from exhaustion to exhilaration. First person stories and friendly advice help parents keep their cool, and confidently embrace their new role.

**What do you want for you?:** The birth of a baby should not mean the end of opportunity. Now is a great time for some parents to figure out what they want for their own lives – whether they've dropped out of high school, have just left foster care, or are juggling baby and a career. This is a book for *adults who are now parents*. Stories and suggestions from others who have used this opportunity to set goals and fulfill dreams will inspire and energize new parents.

**Women's health and family planning:** Just because the baby is born doesn't mean mom's doctor visits are over. These tips for taking charge of her health and the size and timing of her family helps busy moms care for themselves, so they can care for their baby.



3. **A little help from friends, family and community....**

**The cost of a new baby:** Here's realistic, simple and useful help on planning monthly expenses, stretching WIC dollars, filing for or collecting child support, opening a bank account and make financial plans for now and the future (including a college tuition plan) with real budgets and real constraints.

**A little help from:** The alphabet soup of programs that offer financial, social, emotional and educational services from WIC, SCHIP, TANF to SNAP, are explained by parents who have used them and an overview of family friendly federal and state policies.

**A plan for you:** Parents may be planning for a GED or other degree, or thinking about going back to work. We provide the encouragement, some strategies and things to think about

**Childcare 411:** Here's info on finding quality childcare, and what to ask and look for before you decide, plus tips and stories about building a special relationship with those caring for baby while you're at school or work.

**“Language and literacy development start at birth and rely upon the love, motivation, and language parents provide.”**

## Additional Tools:

### The ebook:

A book can tell a mother that talking to her baby is important. It can even identify and illustrate those moments. That coupled with a video of a mother talking to her baby will show her how it is done. From real video to cartoons bringing our illustrations to life, this multi-layered ebook will grow with content and connections.

### The audio version:

### The app/website/texting program

- We will partner with organizations to connect the book's content to the messages that are important just in time to parents. From immunization reminders to tips for staying calm on long colicky nights, **Now What?**™ parents can receive texts or information from partner agencies all tied together with pages in the book that will help with more information – what are the immunizations and when are they given?
- The **Now What?**™ app will help parents connect all the dots. Up to the minute information for local agencies and social services will help our audience – who is likely to need additional services and support – find and get what they need from social service agencies family support programs. The app will also work as a planning tool for parents – where they can note doctor appointments, and jot down questions for their doctor's appointments.

