



PlanetBaby!

Program Guidebook

July 2025

What is the **PlanetBaby!** Program?

Weekly support groups for expectant mothers through baby's first year

A place to meet new friends and find support

A practical focus on the Five Protective Factors for families

Engaging workshops designed to enrich the prenatal and parenting journey

Monolingual groups offered in English or Spanish

Groups offered in a hybrid model

Program Overview

PlanetBaby! is a support group-based program for engaging pregnant women through their baby's first year. The program is designed to offer parent education and social support. The program is founded upon the Five Protective Factors and the groups are designed to help participants increase their parenting success.

Groups feature engaging, interactive sessions with activities and periodic training. The groups encourage attendees to grow deeper in relationship with one another and to use their concrete learnings to help them prepare for parenting.

Groups and trainings will be monolingual in English or Spanish. Support groups are offered weekly in person or hybrid.

Participants in the program will have additional opportunities and encouraged to engage with other programs/services provided through Family Resource Centers (FRC). Participants are encouraged to invite other pregnant women/parents of babies into the group.

Periodically special training workshops will be offered to both participants of the program and open to the community. These workshops will offer educational components to engage, educate, and build attendance.

Program Objectives

The program's primary objectives are to provide support and information to help parents become more confident in their parenting skills. The program will utilize the Five Protector Factors to build family self-sufficiency. The core components of the Five Protective Factors are:

Parental Resilience:

The ability to manage challenges and bounce back

Social Connections:

Networks of support from family, friends, neighbors, and community members

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:

Understanding the stages of child development helps parents have appropriate expectations for their child

Concrete Support in Times of Need:

Support for parents in times of need

Social and Emotional Competence of Children:

Helping children develop social and emotional skills

Program Outcomes

- Through ongoing support, attendees will better respond to personal stress.
- Attendees will show improvement in understanding and having protective factors in their lives.
- Attendees will gain knowledge in specific prenatal topics
- Attendees will have a medical provider (pre and post survey)
- Attendees will attend medical appointments
- New enrollees will be added to the group

Program Data Reporting

- New enrollees will complete a data sheet
- Attendance will be taken at each meeting
- Monthly statistics will be reported via the First 5 Stanislaus online data portal

Role of Facilitator

- Send meeting reminders to the group participants prior to the meeting
- Come prepared (meeting space, materials, facilitation components, etc.)
- Attend necessary training to support group facilitation
- Encourage participants to have a medical provider and keep medical appointments.
- Set up trainings and presenters for meetings, as needed
- Attend monthly TA meetings

Role of Participant

- Arrive on time to every meeting
- Come with an open mind
- Be respectful and mindful of others
- Respect the Group Agreements

Structure of the Support Meetings

Support group meetings are designed to be approximately 55 minutes long and are modular in format. There should be a minimum of five attendees as part of the support group. The basic structure will consist of a welcome component, a group discussion, a teaching or activity time, and a wrap up. Teaching is not needed for each support group session. As the facilitator, you have some control over how your session is organized, but please do not significantly deviate from the agenda outline. On occasion, you might have a Group Chat for part of the group session, if you sense that is where the group really needs to go. As the facilitator you will need to exercise good judgment on your group dynamic, while accomplishing the goals for the program.

1. Welcome (approximately 10 minutes)

- Sign in (In-person and Virtual)
- Welcome and acknowledge each participant
- Review Group Agreements
- Lead a kinesthetic movement or breathing exercise to prepare yourself and each group member to be present.
- Icebreaker - This could be a topic related to the upcoming group discussion, time of year, or just a fun topic. Keep it light and simple.

2. Group Discussion (approximately 15 minutes)

- 2 minutes: Review group ground rules. (listen, don't interrupt, everyone gets a turn, share responsibility for the group, etc.)
- 6 minutes: Question of the day (keep the topic to building the protective factors) You can use Parent Café question cards in this section. Make it fun! Utilize breakout groups and small groups for in-person classes. Then bring the group back for discussion
- 8 minutes: Groups get to share ideas from their breakout on how they are coping/addressing the question of the day

3. Teaching Time or Activity (approximately 25 minutes)

- 10-20 minutes: Live training or topic area video module followed by some Q&A or additional discussion for application
- 10-15 minutes: Live Q&A or supplemental activity

4. Wrap up (5 minutes)

- Follow up with any questions in your "Parking Lot" from training or support time

Training Components

Training will be a component of the PlanetBaby! program. Training should typically last 10-20 minutes and there should be sufficient time for discuss following the training topic. Trainings will ordinarily occur every other support group session (twice per month). On occasion there will be special workshops that could take place outside of the regularly scheduled support group time as an additional activity. These workshops could be 30-45 minutes in duration. These workshops would be coordinated by facilitator. Workshop would be delivered at a specific date/time with all PlanetBaby! attendees invited.

Example of training topics may include:

- First, Second and Third Trimesters - What to Expect
- Blood Pressure
- Safe Sleep for Baby- <https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/resources/caregivers/videos>
- Prenatal Nutrition
- Prenatal Exercise
- Diabetes
- Planning for Birth and Breastfeeding
- Having a Personal Support Network
- Bringing aby Home and Car Seat Safety
- Breastfeeding
- Importance of Medical Appointments
- Baby Blues and Postpartum Depression

Materials you will need to operate support groups over one year:

- Healthy snacks
- Chart Paper
- Post it - Sticky Notes
- Sign in sheet
- Computer and projector (or TV capabilities)
- Incentives giveaways for group drawing (board books, diapers, baby wipes)
- Possible arts and crafts supplies
- Internet Access

(This will be an evolving list, as program material as needs arise)

Tips for your first PlanetBaby! meeting:

- Focus on making it a welcome environment
 - Smile!
 - Greet all group attendees
- Do not put any pressure on attendees to share at the first meeting
- Use this opportunity to share about all the programs at the FRC
- Be sure to explain what the group's purpose is, so people do not leave unsure
- Work on building trust with each participant
- Make it fun and welcoming, so people want to come back!

Tips on how to structure the group for success:

- Have a plan!
- Stay organized and on task at every meeting
- Start and end on time
- Begin and end with important announcements
- Have an opening activity
- Have a plan and a list of discussion topics - give people input
- Give people the chance to participate at every meeting
- To further build a sense of community within the support groups, FRC's will utilize their Social Media platforms to keep participants connected and informed on activities in the FRC

Group Agreements

Group Respect and Support: We will respect each other's experiences and perspectives, offering support and encouragement to one another throughout the program.

Confidentiality: What is shared in the group stays in the group. We value each other's privacy and will maintain confidentiality.

Active Participation: We encourage everyone to participate, ask questions, and share ideas to create an engaging and supportive learning environment.

Be Open-Minded: We will approach each topic with an open mind and be willing to learn new things, even if they are different from what we expected.

Respectful Communication: We will listen attentively, speak kindly, and avoid interrupting. Every voice matters.

Positive Attitude: We understand that every mother's journey is unique, and we agree to support each other without judgment.

Punctuality: We will make an effort to arrive on time for all meetings and sessions to respect everyone's time.

Ask for Help: If you need help or have questions, feel free to reach out to the group, facilitators, or peers. We're all here to support one another.

Self-Care: We will remember to take care of ourselves and each other, recognizing that this is an important part of the journey.

Growth and Learning: We will approach the program with a mindset of growth, understanding that we are all here to learn and support each other in this exciting stage of motherhood.

Group Facilitators Function

Each FRC will have a lead facilitator and a designated backup facilitator (two facilitators per site).

Group facilitators work to promote the processes that help the group meet its established goals. Facilitator is responsible for overseeing the group and making decisions in response to the group needs. Facilitators will schedule and facilitate trainings ensuring stimulating discussions designed to support and encourage progress for the group as a whole and each member as an individual. Their primary function is to foster communication among the group and model effective interaction that members can emulate. Facilitators will provide resources and referrals to participants while maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity. Facilitators will provide crossover opportunities to link participants into other FRC programs, as needed.

Attributes of Good Facilitators

Facilitators should be positive and energetic people. Facilitators should be good listeners and also adept at knowing when to speak and how to promote open discussion. They should be articulate, organized and work well with other people. A good facilitator can keep a group moving toward their goal, but also sense when to deviate from the goal in order to support the energy of the group on a certain subject. A good facilitator should be focused on growing and learning and passion for the subject matter is desirable.

A good facilitator should be a good communicator. Communication can be verbal or written. Communication includes listening, speaking with plain language using non-clinical verbiage and appropriate body language. To establish clarity in their messages, facilitators also need to make sure their words, gestures, facial expressions, and tone match the people with whom they are speaking.

Facilitator Self Care

Managing the well-being of a support group starts with addressing the well-being of its facilitator. This must be every facilitator's priority. One of the building blocks of self-care is self-awareness. Successful support group facilitators are aware that their situations and experiences may impact their facilitating. This is particularly true for peer facilitators, whose personal health conditions, or the health conditions of a loved one, can color their responses.

There may be times when facilitator needs to remove themselves from the facilitator's role to take care of themselves. Facilitating a support group is not as administrative or passive as it may seem. It is often very emotionally involved. The potential for triggers to arise affects everyone, even the most experienced facilitators. This potential is one of the reasons facilitators must practice the art of self-care.

Facilitator Boundaries

Facilitators are to maintain appropriate boundaries. Important aspects are experiential knowledge and confidentiality. Essential to the successful functionality of these features is the proper application of boundaries. Relationship boundaries are established to promote trust, increase safety, demonstrate respect, develop a working alliance (rapport), and provide structure to the helping relationship.

Facilitators need to maintain professional boundaries with participants. Boundaries create clarity and predictability for the individual, the facilitator, and the group.

Facilitator Peer Support & Training

Each FRC will have a lead facilitator and a designated backup facilitator (two facilitators per site). Facilitators will attend monthly meetings to network with other facilitators and enhance their skills. These sessions will be facilitated by a Technical Assistance consultant provided by First 5 Stanislaus. The facilitators will expand facilitator skill sets, learn about prenatal care, and grow in their support of one another through this engagement. Facilitators will learn new techniques to actively engage participants.

Monthly Facilitator Meetings

- Both the lead facilitator and designated backup are required to attend all monthly facilitator meetings. Consistent participation ensures program alignment and continuity across all sites.
- Facilitators are encouraged to request training topics or areas where additional support is needed.
- Trainings will focus on core areas such as Safety, Health and Wellbeing, and Child Development to strengthen facilitation skills and support families effectively.
- While in-person attendance is expected, virtual participation may be allowed occasionally with prior approval. Virtual attendance should not become a regular substitute for in-person presence.
- Facilitators must follow proper virtual meeting etiquette, keep their cameras on, and actively participate during virtual meetings.
- Arrive on time and come prepared with any required materials or updates.
- Participate respectfully, listen actively, and contribute to a collaborative environment.
- Facilitators are responsible for implementing meeting takeaways at their site.

Facilitator Resources

- <https://www.first5stan.org/>
- <https://www.first5stan.org/familynetwork/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- <https://www.schsa.org/publichealth/programs/wic/>
- <https://www.schsa.org/PublicHealth/programs/cpsp/>
- <https://www.schsa.org/publicHealth/mainpages/cfhl/>
- <https://www.stancounty211.org/>
- <https://www.dancyperinatal.com/>
- <https://www.safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-stanislaus-county>
- <https://www.stanc2c.org/focus-areas/imagination-library>
- <https://www.csa-stanislaus.com/childrens-services/child-abuse-prevention-council.html>
- <https://www.stanislausfamilyjustice.org/>
- <https://www.thehealthyroomproject.org/>