

BABY'S FIRST YEARS NEWS

ISSUE 3, JULY 2021

Shortly after giving birth, you agreed to take part in the Baby's First Years study, which is a group of 1,000 mothers who are sharing information about their experiences so that researchers and policymakers can better understand how families with infants and toddlers juggle all the demands of caring and providing for a family in ways that help children learn and grow. The perspectives of you and the other Baby's First Years mothers in Louisiana, New York, Nebraska, and Minnesota will help everyone understand which resources and programs can help families thrive.

LETTER FROM THE STUDY TEAM

Dear Baby's First Years families,

The past 18 months has been challenging in so many ways. The Covid-19 pandemic and related stay at home orders, as well as police violence and political unrest have affected us all, but of course have hit some of your communities especially hard. In response,

we have extended the 4MyBaby card gifts for an additional year, until four months after your child's fourth birthday.

Now, more than ever, we are so grateful for your participation in the Baby's First Years study. This is the third of a series of newsletters to share information about the study with you. Thank you for your participation in the study.

Warm wishes,
Baby's First Years team

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING FROM YOU

All of you joined the study shortly after giving birth in 12 different hospitals two years ago. We are very grateful that most of you agreed to be interviewed around the time of your baby's first and second birthdays.

So, what are we learning about your lives?

In the first year of your baby's life, about 1 in 4 of you went to school or participated in training programs, and a similar number of you worked full-time. We heard from you that being a mom can sometimes be expensive and hard. About half of you reported that your one-year-old had tantrums, and on average you told us that you spent about \$70 a month on diapers! In addition to these challenges, though, almost all of you agreed that you felt good about your parenting abilities, and almost all the one-year-olds in our study are meeting expectations for their language development (98%).



THIS NEWSLETTER, AT A GLANCE

- 4MyBaby payments extended to when your child will be 4 years and 4 months old
- Third birthday phone survey: you'll be invited to schedule a call around your child's third birthday
- Fourth birthday university visit: you and your child will be invited to [\[local university name here\]](#) around your child's fourth birthday
- *MN and LA participants only:* You also may get a call from a Baby's First Years: Mothers' Voices interviewer, for an additional opportunity to tell us about your experiences. This is separate from the survey study – both are optional to you.

4MYBABY DEBIT CARD DID YOU KNOW...

You can use your 4MyBaby card gift money in any way you want.

There are no restrictions on how to use the money.

Your 4MyBaby card money is a gift.

For this reason, the gift will not be counted as income when you apply/reapply for many public support programs (visit 4MyBabyCard.com for more specific information).

You can get a FREE replacement card.

By calling the 4MyBaby card hotline (608-291-7359), you can get a FREE replacement card if your card is missing. If you prefer, you can call MasterCard, but it will cost \$7. Realizing your card is gone can be disappointing, but it doesn't have to cost you!

You can get a proof of gift payment letter.

Do you need a letter to show that your payments will come regularly for the first 52 months of your child's life? We will gladly write a personalized letter for you if needed – call or email us to make the request.

You can sign-up for text or email alerts to tell you when your monthly payment is deposited.

If you want reminders about your gift payments, you can opt to get a text or email notification. To sign up, call or email the 4MyBaby card hotline, or visit www.myclincard.com.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR 4MYBABY DEBIT CARD? THE 4MYBABY HOTLINE IS HERE TO HELP!

609-291-7359 | 4mybabycard@gmail.com
www.4MyBabyCard.com

We have also learned that many of you have had challenges brought on by the pandemic. Almost all of you stayed inside with your families when your communities were most affected. Nearly two-thirds of you told us that you or people living with you have lost income because of Covid-19. Three in four of you report getting some pandemic government assistance. With infections falling rapidly around the country, we join you in hoping that our communities are doing much better this summer.

UPDATES AND WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the study plans have changed. **THE MONTHLY CASH GIFTS HAVE BEEN EXTENDED BY ANOTHER YEAR – until four months after your child's fourth birthday (52 months of payments total).** You will continue to receive the monthly gift even if you decide not to participate in the research study. Please call the 4MyBaby card hotline (608-291-7359) if you have any questions.

Also, when you first enrolled in the study, we planned to meet together with you and your child at our local university office around their third birthday. However, due to the pandemic we have changed the timing of that visit, and will wait until closer to your child's fourth birthday for that visit. Child care and transportation will be provided.

We would still like to check-in around your child's third birthday to ask you questions by phone. One of the University of Michigan interviewers will reach out to you to let you know about these changes and ask if you have any questions.

GETTING TO KNOW THE BABY'S FIRST YEARS TEAM: YASMIN SALAZAR

My name is Yasmin Salazar and I am a study coordinator for Baby's First Years at Teachers College, Columbia University, and am from New York City. My job is to help develop the letters you get and other study materials, watch playtime videos from age 1 home visits, and support research assistants on the study. Also, many of



you may recognize my voice, since I oversee the 4MyBaby card hotline and support you as needed when you have questions or want support with your cards. I am interested in community and family health, and in the fall I will start a master's degree program in public health. In my free time, I love to read fiction and spend time with friends and family.

For more information visit
www.babysfirstyears.com