The Baby Buddy App embracing technology to support Nurturing Care
Alison Baum OBE, Founder and CEO

Harnessing digital technologies for maternal health and parenting
The 59th session of the UN Commission for Social Development
11 February 2021

@AlisonBaum @BabyBuddyApp @BestBeginnings #DigitalMoms #MothersforBetter
There are shocking inequalities that exist through pregnancy and the early years. Black women are more than 4 times more likely to die in childbirth than white women. Babies born in Birmingham are 3.5 times more likely to die before their first birthday than in Bath. By the time a child is 3 years old there is already a 17 month income-related language gap. Best Beginnings was founded in 2006 to change this.
So parents look after themselves and can maximise their child’s development.

Designed with parents & professionals to purposefully:

* Directly empower and inform
* Augment & enhance existing interventions & support
* Iterate, based on our data-driven development feedback loop
Our Vision
All children have the best start in life

Our Aim
To inform and empower parents and professionals to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities
Window of Opportunity

Pre-conception

Our guiding principles

INNOVATION  COLLABORATION  EVIDENCE

5th Birthday
Baby Buddy 1.0
Launched 2014

Solid Theoretical Underpinnings

Proportionate
Universalism
SRHIE
(2010)

Behaviour
Change Science
Michie et al
(2011)

Nurturing
Care Framework
WHO/UNICEF/
World Bank (2018)

Baby Buddy 2.0
Launching soon
Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently. To reduce the steepness of the social gradient in health, actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. We call this proportionate universalism.

Professor Sir Michael Marmot
NURTURING CARE
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

A FRAMEWORK FOR HELPING CHILDREN SURVIVE AND THRIVE TO TRANSFORM HEALTH AND HUMAN POTENTIAL

COMPONENTS OF NURTURING CARE

- Good Health
- Adequate Nutrition
- Opportunities for Early Learning
- Security and Safety
- Responsive Caregiving

ENABLING POLICIES
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES
CAREGIVERS’ CAPABILITIES

UNICEF
WORLD BANK GROUP
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

Week 21 Day 6
Will becoming parents change our relationship?
Most couples find that becoming parents does change their relationship a lot...

Search for more stories
Embracing technology to proudly support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular:
A child from the lowest socioeconomic group is half as likely to be "school ready" as a child from the highest socioeconomic group. Through pregnancy and the first six months.
There are shocking inequalities that exist through pregnancy and the early years. A child from the lowest socioeconomic group is half as likely to be “school ready” as a child from the highest socioeconomic group.

Personalised Daily Information

Clinically assured, and with the tone of a best friend, “bite-sized” bits of information, “nuggets of knowledge”, to inform and empower and support relationships.
There are shocking inequalities that exist through pregnancy and the early years. A child from the lowest socioeconomic group is half as likely to be "school ready" as a child from the highest socioeconomic group.

Over 300 films to support Nurturing Care

Developed over the last twelve years in co-creation with parents, multi-disciplinary professionals and endorsed by Representatives of Royal Colleges & other Professional Bodies.
There are shocking inequalities that exist through pregnancy and the early years. A child from the lowest socioeconomic group is half as likely to be “school ready” as a child from the highest socioeconomic group.

Thanks to our collaboration with SHOUT, a fellow “Heads Together” charity partner, we provide free and confidential access to the 24/7 Baby Buddy Crisis Messenger.
Registered users as at 31st December 2020

- Mums: 87.99% (n=273,228)
- Dads & other non-birth parents: 6.44% (n=20,001)
- Healthcare professionals: 3.70% (n=11,478)
- Other: 1.87% (n=5,806)

Total: 317,458

It is time for fathers to have their own content pathways.
Embracing digital for scale and reach

Our free NHS approved and award-winning Baby Buddy app has informed and empowered over 300,000 parents across the UK. Baby Buddy is a purposeful publication intervention which is disproportionately used by families who experience inequalities.

Since our foundation in 2007, we have reached more than 3.7m families within the NHS and across 26 Local Authorities, we have trained and supported over 1,200 professionals.

In 2020 we launched a version of Baby Buddy for Cyprus in English, Greek, Turkish, Russian, and Arabic. We have secured funding to create an Australian version of Baby Buddy.

Proportionate Universalism in action

Key:
- % Baby Buddy users for whom this is their first language
- % of UK population for whom this is their first language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Baby Buddy Users</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>ONS 1.05%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
<td>ONS 0.01%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>ONS 0.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>0.82%</td>
<td>ONS 0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>ONS 0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>ONS 0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>0.46%</td>
<td>ONS 0.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>ONS 0.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>0.37%</td>
<td>ONS 0.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese (any ..)</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>ONS 0.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>0.24%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somali</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
<td>0.35%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog/Filipino</td>
<td>0.11%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian/Farsi</td>
<td>0.12%</td>
<td>ONS 0.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Embracing digital for scale and reach

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Usage of the Baby Buddy app during the 104 days of core Lockdown – Proportionate Universalism in Action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ALL Baby Buddy users</th>
<th>Baby Buddy users that are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities</th>
<th>Baby Buddy users for whom English is a second language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High usage (&gt;45 times)</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely high usage (&gt;100 times)*</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>85.7%*</td>
<td>85.0%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*85% of parents using the app on average more than once a day.
**Feedback from Baby Buddy users**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback from in-app surveys users report that Baby Buddy:</th>
<th>All UK Women respondents</th>
<th>Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic UK Women respondents</th>
<th>All UK Partners/Dads respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is easy to use</td>
<td>&gt;99% (n=16,592)</td>
<td>&gt;99% (n=428)</td>
<td>98% (n=3072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me look after my mental health</td>
<td>89% (n=5875)</td>
<td>92% (n=779)</td>
<td>88% (n=585)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me feel closer to my baby</td>
<td>89% (n=4472)</td>
<td>92% (n=606)</td>
<td>92% (n=415)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me feel more confident caring for my baby</td>
<td>98% (n=4317)</td>
<td>97% (n=135)</td>
<td>98% (n=810)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps me get more out of my appointments</td>
<td>86% (n=8759)</td>
<td>91% (n=1278)</td>
<td>89% (n=475)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have evidence of impact. It is now time to scale.
Top 10 local authorities by number of Baby Buddy mothers per 100 live births from January to March 2020

Darlington 56.6%
Telford and Wrekin 44.3%
Shropshire 38.3%
Leeds 33.2%
Eastbourne 32.5%
Hastings 30.6%
County Durham 29.1%
Middlesbrough 28.5%
Northumberland 26.9%
Newham 26.0%
Qualitative Feedback from Baby Buddy users during the pandemic

From free-text boxes in the online survey (Antenatal / Postnatal)

- Even though it’s an app, it makes you feel that you’re getting some contact, some easily-absorbed information, that can be easily shared with my partner.
- Baby Buddy is giving me hope and courage that everything is going to be well with my pregnancy and delivery.
- I have had very little contact with my midwife and I really like how much information I can get from the app given that I can’t seem to get any support from anywhere else.
- I miss getting out to baby groups, so it is good to have daily reminders/updates on variety of issues and reassuring what we experience is totally normal.
- The daily reminders of my baby's progress and ideas of activities to support her development which don't require equipment or going out.
- It's giving me more confidence as a first-time mother and it's reassuring to know that other parents are experiencing the same things.
- This app is fantastic. My mum doesn't live in UK and I have that reassurance from this app and talking to my mum.

From follow on Telephone Interviews (Antenatal / Postnatal)

- The information is so useful – I share it with my husband. We’ve looked at the videos – the baby moving in the womb. It’s really good for my husband because he didn’t get to go to the scan and I worry he is not bonding with the bump. He hasn’t heard the heartbeat.
- I’ve watched most if not all the videos – the chair exercises, the skin to skin, the MRI scan one. The boys watch them with me – it’s nice for them to see what a newborn looks like.
- I love the videos and the partners’ advice – a lot of apps don’t bring partners into it….it’s brilliant because it’s a stressful time and two people don’t react the same way.
- It’s reliable – like the people who are writing it are knowledgeable. Today’s message is always more or less in line with what I am thinking…I like to see the videos. It helped a lot to know that other women are struggling.

Experiences, Attitudes, and Needs of Users of a Pregnancy and Parenting App (Baby Buddy) During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Mixed Methods Study

Alexandra Rhodin, BSc, MSc; Sara Khwiedine, BSc, MSc; Andrea O Smith, BSc, MPH, PhD

https://mhealth.jmir.org/2020/12/e23157
Baby Buddy 2.0 will build on the evidenced successes of 1.0 and, from launch, it will introduce:

- Personalised pathways for mothers, fathers, non-birth parents, with Daily Content to the child’s 1st Birthday
- A series of Maternity Personal Care Plans
- A Personal Child Health Record that is Interoperable with the NHS “Spine”.
- Functionality for multiple children and for parents (or a parent and a professional) to sync accounts
- Ability to create versions for other countries
The Early Years Digital Partnership – 40+ Organisations

Vision

Parents of all backgrounds have the knowledge and agency to look after their physical and mental health and to maximise their children’s development and wellbeing from pre-conception to 5th birthday.

Aim

To work with families and collaboratively across the Early Years and Health Sectors to:

- develop engaging, accessible, clinically-assured content which will be deployed through a single digital resource (Baby Buddy) to support preconception to 5th birthday
- to achieve equity of provision and empowerment across the UK

Best Beginnings is a convenor, connector and catalyst for change.
Baby Buddy 2.0

Over the next four years

Baby Buddy 2.0 will also:

• Have content to the child’s 5th birthday
• Have personalised pathways for professionals to support professional development and communication
• Have Bespoke content pathways and features for localities
• Be used for academic research and cohort studies
• Be interoperable with the NHS spine for maternity records
• Be embedded into at least two other countries
A proposal to NHS England to scope CAMERA*
*The Child and Maternal Electronic Records Altogether

An opportunity to work collaboratively with Best Beginnings to improve parent experience and child health outcomes and reduce inequalities in child health.

CONFIDENTIAL
This proposal is for internal use by NHS England only. It is for the attention of the Head of Early Years, Imms & Military Health and the HV/FNP/CHIS Commissioning Manager. It must only be discussed with other employees or advisors with the purpose of evaluating the proposal contained within it. This document must not be shown, distributed or discussed with any third parties, without the express permission of Best Beginnings.
If you would like to discuss the possibility of Best Beginnings working with you to create a version of Baby Buddy for your country, please email our Head of Digital and Content: Matthew@bestbeginnings.org.uk

Thank you
Findings from our national survey* showed that COVID-19 has intensified the need for our work.

7 in 10 parents felt less able to cope.

7 in 10 parents felt the changes brought about by COVID-19 were affecting their unborn baby, baby or young child.

2 in 3 parents weren’t confident they could access mental health support.

Many families with lower incomes, from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and young parents have been hit harder by the COVID-19 pandemic and were less likely to receive the support they needed.
Digital Maternity Record

Advice & Guidance conception > 5th birthday

Digital Personal Child Health Record

Children’s Health Digital Strategy

SPINE (NHS login & NEMS)

Maternity transformation

Healthy Child Programme

NHS

Digital Maternity Record

Your baby

Pregnancy

Options

This is your baby in this week

Due date

2nd trimester

20 weeks

Due date

18 Nov 2020

Week

22

Day

1

9:41

9:41

Tuesday, 6 June

Baby name

Hi (Harry)

I have an update on your key goals: Stop smoking in pregnancy.

Week 22 Day 1

Don’t worry if you wet yourself.

Nobody ever said that everything about pregnancy was dignified. Unfortunately it’s very common to...

Your holiday feed

You can connect with NHS to view Daniel’s NHS child health record.

Add NHS child data

Your child

Health

Settings

Vaccinations

Last received on 15 Apr 2020

Hib/MenB, MMR, PVC, MenB

21 Dec 2020 – 21 Jun 2021

Healthy Child Programme

Digital Personal Child Health Record

Advice & Guidance conception > 5th birthday

Digital Maternity Record

Maternity transformation

Children’s Health Digital Strategy

SPINE (NHS login & NEMS)
Personalise your Baby Buddy

Quote of the Day

When you are a mother, you’re never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice. Once for herself and once for her child.
— Sophia Loren

Week 21 - Day 3
What is a MAT B1 certificate?
Now you are 21 weeks pregnant you can ask your midwife or doctor for a MAT B1 maternity certificate...

Baby kit to borrow or buy
What does a newborn baby really need? Companies think they can sell anything to pregnant women...

Baby Buddy

13 Jun

Baby Buddy

16 Jun

Hi Mary, how can I help?

Ask a question

Record a development

Show my spaces

Change avatar appearance

YOU HAVE 1 NOTIFICATION

Invitation
Mary has sent an invitation to add Daniel to your profile.

ACCEPT
REJECT
As well as a daily information timeline, receive nudges from Baby Buddy to take action.
Complete and share your personal care plan with HCP or family/friends

**Personal care plans**

- **About me**
  - **Due date**
    - Select a date
  - **Name of my maternity unit**
    - Kingsworth Medical Practice
  - **Intended place of birth**
    - e.g., home, AMU, FMU or obstetric-led unit
  - **Team name**
    - Kingsworth MU team
  - **Named midwife**
    - Agnes Farmsworth
  - **Midwife/team contact**
    - 07911 123 456

- **Health and wellbeing in pregnancy**
  - All questions are connected to data in the Pregnancy section. These can be completed in one go or be an on-going process following discussion with your care provider.

- **Physical health and wellbeing**
  - I have a long-term health condition that may affect my pregnancy
    - - diabetes
    - - epilepsy
    - - mental health problems
    - - high blood pressure
    - - asthma
    - - hypo/hyperthyroidism
    - - other

  **Notes**
  - Other notes and reflections can be added here.
Explore choices of birthplace.

Unit information includes:

- Name, ODS code, address and other location information
- Unit type (OU, FMU, AMU)
- Baby Friendly Status (2 fields - status; level code 0-3)
- Neonatal unit Level (1-3)
- Mapping codes (e.g. CQC, Care Opinion)
- Website URL
- Self-referral URL
- Description including images or video tour
- Parking info

Explore maternity units

Unit information includes:

- Name, ODS code, address and other location information
- Unit type (OU, FMU, AMU)
- Baby Friendly Status (2 fields - status; level code 0-3)
- Neonatal unit Level (1-3)
- Mapping codes (e.g. CQC, Care Opinion)
- Website URL
- Self-referral URL
- Description including images or video tour
- Parking info
Register and keep track of multiple children.

Connect your Digital Personal Child Health Record or use offline.
Saving content to view offline

**Asking for help to get started**

If your child is ill, the most important thing to do is to listen to them.

**Save to space**

You’re about to save **How can I mix breastfeeding and bottlefeeding?**

**Choose a space**

- My private space
- Mary & Sam

**Two of us**

Remember to ask Videos Articles

Save a question to ask on your next visit. Edit

**ASKED 2 Aug 2020**

Why do people say “breast is best”?

- MARK AS ANSWERED

**ASKED 2 Aug 2020**

What will happen if I stop breastfeeding too early?

- MARK AS ANSWERED

**ANSWERED 10 Feb 2020**

When should I stop breastfeeding?

- MARK AS UNANSWERED

**Two of us**

Remember to ask Videos Articles

4 videos

- Asking for help to get started
- Good positioning tips from a midwife
- Getting the position right

**DOWNLOAD**
Keep track of your child’s health and developments
Parents can give feedback to their Baby Buddy about the app and/or about their experiences of local services.