

## Parents Report Hitting Their Babies Less

Besides encouraging competent parenting, the newsletters may also be reducing child abuse in Barron County. A large quasi-experimental study of the newsletter in Wisconsin showed that parents who received the newsletters had beliefs significantly less like those of child abusing parents, as compared to parents not receiving the newsletters. They also reported actually slapping or spanking their babies less often.



*"I love receiving the newsletters. They are filled with great information that allowed me to feel more comfortable and confident as a mom."*

-Barron County Parent-

---

### For more information contact:

Linda Heppner  
Barron County Extension Office  
330 E. LaSalle Avenue, Rm. 2206  
Barron, WI 54812  
[Linda.heppner@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:Linda.heppner@ces.uwex.edu)  
Phone: 715-537-6250

---



# Parenting the First Year

Evaluation Summary 2007

---

- ❖ The series is distributed in the county through a joint partnership with UW-Extension-Barron County, Cumberland Memorial Hospital, Cumberland Kiwanis, Lakeview Medical Center and Rice Lake Golden K Kiwanis, Luther Midelfort Northland and Barron Kiwanis reaching approximately 650 parents in Barron County each year.
- ❖ The 12 month age-paced newsletter series is mailed free to parents and gives parenting advice geared to their infant's first year of life.
- ❖ Written by the University of Wisconsin-Extension child development specialists to help parents do their best. Written in a practical, easy to understand format that addresses questions young parents have.
- ❖ Age-paced newsletters are effective because they are relatively inexpensive and offer highly relevant information at a "teachable moment."

.....

An evaluation of Parenting the 1<sup>st</sup> Year was done by UW-Extension Barron County Family Living Educator, Linda Heppner in 2007. One hundred survey responses were tabulated which showed the following

### 4 KEY FINDINGS



## 1. Parents say the newsletters are very useful.

- ❖ 72% of parents found the newsletter somewhat or much more useful than other information received from their hospital after the birth of their child.
- ❖ 60% rated the newsletter very useful, higher than any other source of parenting information.

*“Who knows what I would have done without all the advice! It was just nice to know what is “normal” and what to expect.”*

-Barron County Parent-

## 2. Parents report positive changes in their parenting

One of the goals in distributing the newsletters was to influence positive behaviors changes in new parents. Parents reported that reading the newsletters led them to change their child rearing behaviors in six key areas:

- ❖ 50% report they talk to their baby more.
- ❖ 42% report they provide more things for their baby to feel, see, listen to and smell.
- ❖ 40% report making the house safer for baby.
- ❖ 37% report they are less angry when their baby is difficult.
- ❖ 33% report they respond more quickly when their baby cries.
- ❖ 28% report they smile, kiss and hug their baby more.

## 3. Parents really read the newsletters.

- ❖ 65% read all articles in all issues
- ❖ 48% keep them for future reference.
- ❖ 70% said someone else reads them, usually the father; readership is nearly doubled by sharing.

*“They have helped my husband understand the different stages of development and given me ideas on ways to help my baby grow.”*

-Barron County Parent-

## 4. “At-risk” parents reported the greatest benefit from the newsletters.

“At-risk” parents were those who were very young, low-income, less educated, and did not have a lot of community or family support. At-risk parents were significantly more likely to talk with their baby, and smile, kiss and hug their baby more, compared with non-risk parents.

*38% of the non risk parents  
58% of the at risk parents . . . reported they talk to their baby more as a result of the newsletter series.*

*This is a 20% difference in the two groups reporting positive behavior change.*

*19% of the non-risk parents  
34% of the at risk parents . . . reported they provide affection, ie; smile, kiss or hug their baby more.*

*This is a 15% difference in the two groups reporting positive behavior change.*

*32% of the non-risk parents  
44% of the at risk parents . . . reported making the house safer for their baby.*

*This is a 12% difference in the two groups reporting positive behavior change.*

*I never really talked to my baby while feeding her. But after the newsletter I do.”*

-Barron County Parent-