



# The Promise Card

**Make a Promise of Care to your new baby**

"Welcome Little One, into the cradle of our love."

The home a baby needs is built in the hearts  
of those who offer their love for a lifetime.

Welcome your Little One with your gifts of love..  
your touch, your words, and your care.

Protect and nurture your newborn.

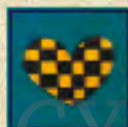
Make your baby a "Promise of Care."

# **“We promise to listen as you tell us all about yourself.”**

Your baby has lots to tell you right from the start.  
A message as sweet as a tiny smile,  
or as nice as a little hand around your finger.  
In his own way, he will tell you all about himself.

Look and listen to your baby and to other babies.  
You will see that each baby is different.  
Watch and listen to find out what your new baby is like.  
The more you learn, the easier it will be to take care of him.

When does your baby smile? What does he like?  
When is he unhappy? What makes him fuss?  
When babies are upset, they let you know.  
They turn away, shut their eyes, make faces and cry.



It's not only being hungry or wet that makes them cry.  
If he is fussy, maybe he needs more sleep.  
Maybe he is upset when it is too loud or too busy.  
Maybe he is shy and only likes people he knows.  
When you learn what he is trying to tell you,  
you can protect him from things that upset him.

If your baby cries and you can't help, try not to be angry.  
Your baby does not want to make you mad.  
If the crying upsets you, it's OK to get away from the baby.  
Put the baby safely in a crib. Leave the room. Calm down.  
Don't ever spank or slap or shake him for crying.

Getting to know your baby is a wonderful discovery time.  
He is not just like his mother, father, brother or sister.  
As you listen and watch, you will learn  
that your baby is telling you all about himself.



# "We promise to comfort you and let you know you are safe."

Your baby loves to be in your arms.  
The sound of your heartbeat tells her she is home.  
Your baby feels safe and loved when you hold her.

When your baby cries, pick her up and comfort her.  
That's what she wants and needs.  
It does not mean she is spoiled if she cries for you to hold her.  
Infants need to be held a lot to learn to feel safe.

Pick her up even when she isn't fussy.  
Cradle her in your arms for awhile. Sing softly or hum.  
Being held is one of the first ways she finds out she is loved.

At first, new babies may seem hard to hold.

Try picking her up with a blanket under her.

Or, lay her on your lap.

Soon you'll get used to being together.

If your baby never seems happy being held,  
ask for help from the nurse or doctor.

If you were hurt or abused by adults as a child,  
you may feel mixed up about touching your baby.  
You can learn how to touch her so you both feel good.  
Sign up for a baby massage class. Try a mother and infant  
exercise class. Talk with others who understand your feelings  
about touching.

Hold your baby when you give her a bottle.  
Look into her eyes. Let a warm, peaceful feeling grow.  
You are giving her much more than food...  
Little by little you give her the important message  
that she is cared for and safe.





# “Right from the start, we will let you know you are loved.”

Your baby can see and hear you as soon as she is born.  
She wants to hear your voice even before  
she can understand your words.



Talk to your baby. Or sing her a song.  
It doesn't matter what you say, just so she gets to hear you.  
The sound of your voice is one of the first ways  
your baby learns who you are.

When you hold her in your arms she can see you clearly.  
Let her look into your eyes.  
Use a soft, high voice and make sounds for her.  
She will learn to smile as you smile at her.

You don't have to feel shy about talking to your baby.  
Tell her about what you are doing.  
Tell her the names of things.  
Use easy words... “Bye-bye,” “Up we go,” “Night-night.”  
Long before she can talk she will understand you.

Play with your baby!  
Playing with her makes her strong and smart.  
Your baby will let you know when she's ready to play.  
She'll flap her arms or kick and make noises.  
She will smile at you.

How do you play with a baby? Be very gentle!  
Blow gently on her fingers and toes.  
Play peek-a-boo and patty cake. Splash in the tub.

You do lots of chores to take care of your baby.  
Making the time to play and talk with her  
is taking good care of her, too.

# **“We want you to know we are proud of you!”**

To become a strong adult, your baby needs  
you to be proud of him now.  
The things you say to him each day  
build the self-image he will have all his life.



Your baby has so much to learn the first year!  
Your pride in what he does makes him want to try new things.  
Make a big deal over every little thing he learns.  
Cheer for him as he learns to smile, sit up and crawl.  
Clap for him! Say, “Good for you” and “Good job!”

Your baby will make lots of mistakes as he learns.  
When he eats, he will make a mess.  
When he tries to walk, he may fall.  
Be kind about mistakes. When you let him know it's OK to  
make mistakes, he will learn to try again and not give up.

Tell him how smart he is and he will grow up  
feeling strong and smart and good.  
Make him proud of what he can do and the way he looks.  
Don't let anyone tease or make fun of him.  
The hurt of mean words can last forever.

Make a baby book and write down what he is learning.  
Write down how he changes and grows.  
Put pictures of family and friends in the book.  
Trace his hand and write the date.  
As he grows, he will love to look at this book about himself.  
He will know he was important to you right from the start.

Children believe what they hear about themselves.  
They grow up and become what they believe.

Teach your little one to believe the best about himself.



# “We promise to protect you from harm and words that hurt”

What was it like when you were growing up?  
How did your family let you know how they felt about you?  
Can you still hear the words they used?  
Will you say and do the same things your parents did?  
You have a choice about the kind of parent you will be.

You first learned how to be a parent when you were young.  
Your family showed you by the way they took care of you.  
If you were hurt or neglected as a child,  
you did not get good lessons on how to be a parent.  
You can learn different and better ways to care for your baby.

Think about what you say and do with your baby each day.  
Learn all you can from other mothers and fathers.  
Ask for help and ideas from people who work with families.

Taking care of a baby is overwhelming at times.  
Find someone to talk to about how it feels when  
your baby is sick, when she doesn't sleep,  
when being a parent makes you feel tired, scared or lonely.  
Talking with another parent helps during the hard times.

Make sure others who look after your baby are kind.  
Some people say it's OK to hurt a baby to make him behave.  
But don't let your baby be hurt by anyone,  
even if they claim to have good reasons.  
You are right to want to keep your baby safe from all harm.

Make this Promise of Care to your baby.  
Ask others who care about him or her to sign it with you.  
Together, build a wonderful home for your baby in your hearts.





## To Parents:

The birth of your baby is an exciting time. Like all parents, you have a lot of questions. This card was written for parent of newborns, like you, who want to know more about taking the best care of a new baby.

Inside the card is the "Promise of Care."

Write your baby's name and date of birth on the card.

Make a plan to sign the card with others who care about you and your baby. It is a way they can share in the important promise you will make. You can create a special family celebration to sign the card and welcome your new baby.

Read the "Promise of Care" out loud to your family and the caring friends who are with you. Sign your names.

Frame the "Promise of Care" and put it where you will see it often. It will remind you of how important you are to your baby.

Keep the "Promise of Care" to your little one.



## **A word to the child advocate working with parents of newborns**

Many young families do not have traditions in place to welcome and celebrate the arrival of a baby. Such rituals acknowledge the responsibilities parents have to their children, reinforcing the bond between them. The Promise Card is designed to welcome and encourage an investiture in the newborn child.

Use the panels of the card to initiate discussion of the many ways parents are important to the emotional growth and well-being of their newborn. The gentle messages in the card underscore the important role parents play in the life of their baby. Building on the Promise of Care is one way for you to teach parents how to work toward these clear and vital goals.

Help fill the baby's name and birth date on the Promise of Care. Offer to help create and participate in a ceremony to sign the Promise of Care. Use the Promise of Care to encourage the development of an emotionally rich bond between parents and their newborn.

### **Foundations of a Family Series from Child Care Publications**

- The Promise Card – A warm welcome for newborns
- The Nurturing Cards – A set of 7 cards to help foster the emotional growth of babies
- The Growing Cards – A set of 6 cards about the emotional growth and needs of toddlers


### **Also from Child Care Publications**

- The Parents' Checklist for the Prevention of Child Abuse (also in Spanish)
- Getting Together – Helping You to Help Yourself
- Working Together – A Team Effort

## **CHILD ADVOCACY PUBLICATIONS**

For ordering information:  
6825 NW 18th Drive  
Gainesville, FL 32653  
Phone: 352-372-2534 x101  
Fax: 352-376-8130  
[info@childadvocacypub.com](mailto:info@childadvocacypub.com)  
[www.childadvocacypub.com](http://www.childadvocacypub.com)





## A Promise To Our Baby

Welcome, \_\_\_\_\_ (baby's name)

born on \_\_\_\_\_ into the cradle of our love.

We promise to listen as you tell us all about yourself.

We promise to comfort you and let you know you are safe.

Right from the beginning, you will know you are loved.

We want you to know we are proud of you.

We promise to protect you from harm  
and from words that hurt.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature)