



As exciting as it is to become a first-time parent, taking care of a newborn can also come with feelings of confusion, overwhelm, and isolation. To help parents feel better equipped with the knowledge and resources they need to support their families, First 5 California established the *Kit for New Parents*. The *Kit* is free and filled with informative resources for parents, as well as books for the family to read together to support their baby's development. Some of the *Kit* contents include: two parent handbooks, the *California Parent Guide* and *What to Do When Your Child Get Sick*, pamphlets about dental health and accessing California Poison control, and two children's books, *Three Brainy Birds Spreading the Word*, and *Numbers Touch and Feel*. Additionally, an infant toothbrush and a KN95 mask were included. Select counties opted to add more resources to the *Kit* including a thermometer, baby toys, and brochures providing information about early childhood development, local libraries, and breastfeeding. *Kit* contents are available to families in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

To gauge how useful the *Kit* contents were to families, SPR staff spoke with over 100 parents to hear about how the resources were integrated into their daily lives as a part of our evaluation in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Our initial conversation was just weeks after parents received the *Kit*, with some opening it for the first time during the call. Two months later, we had a follow up conversation to determine if the contents still felt relevant. In both sets of interviews, parents named the *California Parent Guide* and *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* books as some of the most useful resources. The *Parent Guide* provided information on developmental milestones, childcare, and guidance on navigating bigger decisions about their baby's health such as when to start solid foods, vaccines, and doctor's appointments. Similarly, *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* covers a plethora of common illnesses and health challenges children face in their early years such as cradle cap, toothaches, and the flu. Many parents mentioned they found this resource helpful to turn to first before deciding if they should contact their pediatrician for more support. Parents also noted that having this resource helped to mitigate some anxiety around their children's health as having a sick baby can feel overwhelming for the whole family. With these two resources in hand, parents mentioned that they felt equipped to make informed decisions about their babies' health and well-being.

In addition to the parent handbooks, parents found the children's books included in the *Kit* to be a fun way to integrate more reading time. First 5 recognizes the importance of reading



in supporting developmental milestones, so the *Kit* included a book that had fuzzy touch and feel elements designed to pique babies' interests. Additionally, there was a book that included illustrations of birds without words. The book prompted parents to describe the photos to their babies and ask questions to spark imaginative conversations and keep them engaged. Some parents mentioned that this book helped them to lean into their creativity and allowed them to tell stories in multiple languages.

We also asked parents what they might add to the *Kit* to make it more useful. Some recommendations included a local resource guide, additional information on parenting topics similar to those included in the Parent Guide, and more supplies for babies. Through these conversations, we learned that a vast majority of parents found most of the *Kit* to be a useful tool for learning more about how to best support their child's development.

After completing data collection and analysis, SPR's contributions to AIR's evaluation were submitted in the Fall of 2023. We are hopeful that our findings will be of use to First 5 California as they continue to distribute *Kits* to families throughout the state. To learn more about the *Kit* or order one of your own, please click [here](#).