



# Safe Babies

## Self-directed eLearning for Caregivers

### Audience

This is a mandatory course for kinship, foster, and permanency caregivers who will be caring for infants from newborn to 36 months old.

### Course Description

As a caregiver, it is important to know about the unique needs of babies, toddlers and preschoolers. The purpose of this module is to provide you, as a caregiver, with parameters around safe infant care, which includes the knowledge, skills and confidence to care for vulnerable infants who may have been prenatally exposed to substances.

### Learning Objectives

- Describe the effects of substances on the developing fetus and infant.
- Identify other factors, aside from alcohol and drugs, that impact how a baby grows in the womb.
- Identify the signs and symptoms of neonatal withdrawal and how to care for an infant in withdrawal.
- Recognize the importance of honouring the parent-baby relationship, the baby's cultural heritage, as well as family and community connections.
- Explain the benefits of developing and maintaining communication with a child's family.
- Determine your own personal attitudes and judgements towards women and families with substance abuse issues.
- Describe safe sleep practices.
- Identify the risk-factors of shaken baby syndrome.
- Apply best practice recommendations for infant care and infant safety in general.
- Describe and demonstrate effective strategies for common infant behaviours.
- Recognize the need for and be willing to practice self-care strategies.
- Identify and access community resources that assist and support caregivers and babies.

### Key Messages

1. The effects of childhood trauma can be lifelong and have direct impact on future generations. Children impacted by trauma require specialized care.
2. Knowledge of typical childhood development supports caregivers in identifying where an infant may need additional supports in their development, however, each baby/child is unique and will achieve milestones at their own pace.
3. Keeping infants safe and preventing injuries is a priority of infant care. Safety precautions will need to continually adjust as the baby grows and becomes more active.
4. Consistent, nurturing care has a direct positive impact on growth and development of an infant.
5. Caregiving for vulnerable infants is unique and demanding on caregivers. Ensuring you have support and are able to take care of yourself will be key factors for success.

## Guided Discussion Questions

1. In what ways has this course influenced your approach to caring for a vulnerable infant/child?
2. What are your concerns about caring for an infant who might be experiencing withdrawal symptoms?
3. What have you learned about safe sleep practices and has this changed the way you promote sleep for the child you are caring for?
4. How have your attitudes, beliefs and feelings changed regarding the families of a child who has been exposed to alcohol or drugs during pregnancy?

## Resources

### **Healthy Parents, Healthy Children (HPHC)**

Alberta Health Services

Link: <https://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca/>

### ***Healthy Parents, Healthy Children, The Early Years* manual**

Alberta Health Services

Link: <https://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca/app/uploads/2018/12/2018-The-EarlyYears.pdf>