

INFANT FAQs

What is INFANT?

- [INFANT](#) (Infant Feeding, Active play and NuTrition) is a world first early year's evidence-based approach to support new mums, dads and carers with feeding, nutrition and active play in the first 18 months of life.
- INFANT was developed by [researchers](#) at the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University based on over 15 years of research showing sustained benefits for families.
- Evidence suggests the first 1000 days are critical for establishing nutrition and physical activity behaviours.
- Four face-to face group sessions for mums, dads and carers, are led by a health or early years practitioner, delivered when infants are around 3, 6, 9 and 12 months of age.
- Group sessions are generally offered through health services and build on existing new parent's groups, with content reinforced via the [My Baby Now app](#).

What are the benefits of INFANT?

- **Benefits for children** - reduces sedentary time and improves dietary patterns persisting in children aged up to five years.
- **Benefits for mums, dads and carers** - improves dietary patterns for mothers and improves social connections and connections to local services.
- **Benefits for professionals** - provides the latest evidenced based information on healthy eating and active play; trained facilitators have increased confidence to discuss key messages with mums, dads and carers.
- **Benefits for communities** – develops partnerships between early years services and highlights the importance of prevention and early intervention.

How long are the INFANT group sessions?

- There are four group sessions to take place when infants are around the ages of 3, 6, 9 and 12 months.
- The sessions last for about 1.5-2 hours.
- There are ideally 8-10 parents and carers in the groups, but this will be dependent on your community and your facilities.

What do we need to consider when thinking about implementing INFANT?

Every organisation and area are different, and therefore the implementation of INFANT may need to be slightly different. Fortunately, there is flexibility in how the program is implemented, including how it is embedded into services, who facilitates it, where it is held and how long it takes to roll out.

[Here](#) we walk you through what our research has indicated are the important steps to help you consider how you might implement INFANT in your community.

Who in the community leads the implementation of INFANT?

- Both Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Community Health Services (CHS) typically work in partnership to offer INFANT to the local community.
- MCH services within the local government area currently take the lead in 2/3 of organisations that implement INFANT in Victoria. Community Health Services may also lead with parents referred by MCH. However, as INFANT develops, other organisations such as Early Parenting Centres and early childhood centres can also initiate the implementation of INFANT.
- Different models will exist in different states and territories dependant on the workforce and workplace structures.

How can our organisation implement INFANT without additional funding?

Organisations have been innovative in how they incorporate INFANT into their existing programs and systems. Some examples include:

- Including the first INFANT session, the 3mth session, as one of the sessions within First Time Parents Groups.
- Replacing existing group programs with INFANT, for example, talks about the introduction of solids. The introduction of solids often happens at around the time of 6 months so the second INFANT session, the 6mth session, could be used.
- Creating partnerships and building on them to share the tasks needed to implement of INFANT, such as sharing the facilitation of the INFANT sessions with other health or early years practitioners. This may include dietitians, occupational therapists, physios, speech pathologists, family support workers, or others.
- INFANT takes an anticipatory guidance approach aiming to prevent health issues arising. These health issues often result in one-on-one consultations. By running group sessions and providing the opportunity for mums, dads and carers to ask questions, this may result in less one-on-one sessions.
- See [case studies](#) for other innovative ways INFANT is being delivered by organisations.

What is the INFANT facilitator training?

- The INFANT facilitator training informs participants about evidence-based information as well as detailed information and resources on how to facilitate and implement INFANT. The training provides an update on the latest evidence on

healthy eating, active play and reducing screentime in the early years of life. All participants receive a certificate upon completion, which may be used to log CPD points. For more detail, [click here](#)

Do I need to complete INFANT training to implement INFANT in my organisation?

- Yes, all professionals who facilitate the INFANT group sessions must complete the [INFANT training](#).
- Free training is currently offered to Victorian Maternal and Child Health and early years practitioners including managers and admin staff. The training is free until June 2024. For private practitioners, interstate and international participants there is a fee for the training <https://www.infantprogram.org/facilitator-training/>.
- Training is online, self-guided, interactive and takes 6-8 hours. It is available over a 6 week period.
- Access to INFANT resources, including a facilitator manual, handouts, facilitator PowerPoint slides and videos are available upon completion of the training.

Who can complete training and deliver the sessions?

Any professionals can complete the INFANT training and facilitate group sessions, individually or jointly. This may include:

- Maternal and Child Health Nurses
- Allied health professionals including dietitians, physios, speech pathologists, occupational therapists
- Health promotion officers
- Family support officers
- Midwives
- Welfare officers,
- and a range of other staff.
- We recommend that facilitators:
 - a) have skills and experience with group facilitation or are willing to gain them.
 - b) Know when and how to refer to specialist services/professionals as required.
- If you are unsure about whether you or other team members are well placed to deliver INFANT sessions, please contact the INFANT team (via infant-study@deakin.edu.au) to discuss further.
- Find further information [here](#).

What resources are available to those who facilitate the group sessions?

- The [INFANT website](#) is full of information and resources, some of these are listed below (new resources are marked with a *):
 - INFANT booklets – highly visual and suitable for a wide range of audiences*
 - PowerPoint slides to assist facilitators during group sessions*
 - Updated INFANT videos – videos on healthy eating and active play for each of the INFANT sessions*
 - Facilitator Manual
 - Implementation Guide
 - [INFANT Implementation Plan Template](#)
 - INFANT cost estimates
 - INFANT Local evaluation guide
 - [INFANT Facilitator guidelines](#)
 - [INFANT MCH CDIS quick guide](#)
 - [INFANT participant certificate template](#) [INFANT promotion schedule \(My Baby Now and sessions\)](#)
 - [INFANT Program A4 flyer for promotion](#)
 - [My Baby Now A4 flyer for promotion](#)
 - [INFANT Promotion Guide 2023](#)
 - [INFANT promotion schedule \(MBN and sessions\)](#)
 - [My Baby Now A4 flyer for promotion](#)
 - [INFANT Program A4 flyer for promotion](#)
 - [Short video about MBN – parent](#)
 - Short video about MBN – researcher
- Most of these [resources](#) are available to those who have completed the INFANT training.

When is the next INFANT training?

- The next available training date can be found [here](#).
- To [register for INFANT facilitator training](#) .

How do I keep up to date with the latest INFANT news?

- Subscribe to the INFANT e-[newsletter](#) delivered to your inbox every 2 months and join us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

What is the My Baby Now (MBN) app?

- My Baby Now is an app developed by experts in child nutrition and active play at Deakin University and the University of Sydney, and with input from parents and Maternal and Child Health Nurses and the Raising Children Network.
- The My Baby Now app offers mums, dads and carers with trustworthy and up-to-date information about feeding and active play with their baby. Clinicians can also

access the app and we ask that clinicians access it via the link [here](#), to not interfere with our research with mums, dads and carers.

Who can access INFANT's My Baby Now app?

- **Mums, dads and carers** with a baby less than 18 months old can access the My Baby Now app [here](#) – downloading the app from the App Store or Google Play and registering for a new account.
- **Clinicians** can access the My Baby Now app [here](#).
- While professionals do not need to have completed the INFANT training to have access to the MBN app and promote it to families, we recommend completing the training to ensure you are up to date with latest evidenced based information on healthy eating and active play.

How can I contact INFANT?

- For general queries please email: infant-study@deakin.edu.au
- For questions regarding the implementation of INFANT please email Kathy.mcconell@deakin.edu.au or a.gregoriou@deakin.edu.au