



INFANT (Infant Feeding, Active play & NuTrition):

A world-leading program to support parents with a new baby, INFANT has been developed over 15 years by researchers from the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University.

More evidence and history of INFANT infantprogram.org



Endorsed by US CDC

"... the strongest model for translating findings from a Randomised Control Trial to wide-spread implementation of an intervention in the community was provided by the INFANT study."

Complementary Feeding Review, US Centre for Disease Control².

Cost-effective parenting support to establish healthy behaviours

INFANT is an effective, universal intervention that enhances existing Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services, with **evidence-based approaches** to feeding, nutrition and active play for parents with young children¹. The program helps families to establish health behaviours in the early years with related **health, social and economic benefits and budget savings for the health system, immediately and long-term.**

Delivers health, social and economic benefits to parents and young children as they grow, and the health system

- **Participating in INFANT** has positive effects on the health of **parents and children** age 2, sustained at ages 3.5 & 5 including increased fruit, vegetable and water intake and 1.7 serve reduction in discretionary food per week.^{3,4}
- **Health economic modelling** shows a 1 serve reduction in discretionary food per week results in approx. \$1,287M savings in healthcare costs during a lifetime, and could prevent over 50,000 cases of type 2 diabetes and 20,000 cases of heart disease nationally.⁵
- **Parents engaged with INFANT** were less likely to seek advice on infant feeding, activity or growth across the first nine months of life from one or more health services including MCH helpline, GPs and Paediatricians, with **significant health service cost savings** estimated at \$1.6 million annually from fewer GP and Paediatrician visits in Victoria alone.⁶

Streamlined intervention that utilises group-based support, technology and engages priority populations

- **Engages priority groups** including First Nation and culturally diverse families, with 'easy English' resources translated in 6 other languages at age-based stages.
- **Embedded low-cost digital technologies** including the evidence-based *My Baby Now* app for parents.
- **Online training for health professionals** leads to lasting (12-month post-training) boosts in practitioner confidence and frequency discussing crucial nutrition, active play, and screen time messages with parents.

Tap in to water



Start to give your baby water in a sippy cup from 6 months of age. From 1 year old, water straight from the tap is the best drink for children. Offer water regularly and make sure that it's always available. Avoid fruit juice, cordial, soft drink and other sweetened drinks.

Eat together, play together



From birth, children watch and copy their parents. They learn about their world with you. Enjoy sharing mealtimes together and find time for active play with your child each day.

Off and running



Screens of any type are not recommended for children under 2 years of age. Children learn more from you and their surroundings when screens are off. Encourage your child to be active every day and enjoy active play together.

Snack on veg and fruit



Eating a wide range of vegetables and fruits is one of the most important things we can do for our health. Vegetables and fruits make great finger foods and are perfect for snacks!



Feeding is a learning curve

Feeding is a learned skill for everyone - mums, dads, carers, and babies. It can take time, practice, and patience. Breastmilk is all baby needs until around 6 months of age and commercial infant formula is the only safe alternative. Ask a health professional for help to find an approach that works for you.

Parents provide, kids decide



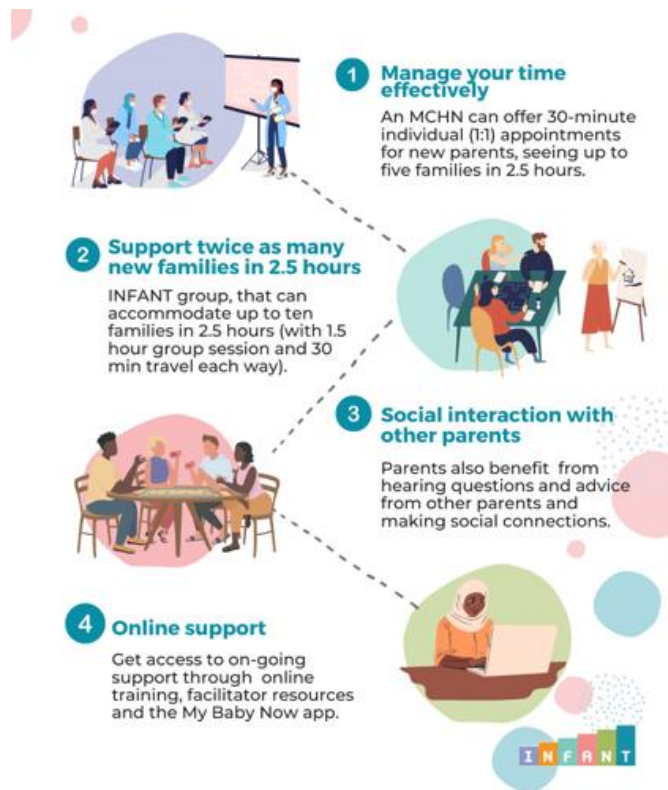
Parents provide a range of healthy foods and activities. From these, let kids decide what and how much to eat and do. Keep offering a variety of healthy foods and active play opportunities so they learn to enjoy these with you.

Colour every meal with veg & fruit



Try to provide different coloured vegetables and fruits at every meal. It may take up to 10-15 tries before your child learns to like some vegetables, don't give up! This helps your child to learn to enjoy these foods. Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruits are all great choices.

Benefits and cost efficiency of INFANT parenting support groups, based on seven key messages (shown on left)



Reduces health service costs with early years obesity prevention

- **Direct healthcare costs** related to young children 2 – 4 years with obesity are more than 60% higher than children with healthy weight.⁷
- **Annual excess cost per child** with obesity compared to healthy weight is \$426 nationally (95% CI \$62-\$1,235, AUD2020)⁸. Based on these findings, reducing the prevalence of obesity among 2-4 year olds in Victoria by 5% would save \$5.3M in annual direct healthcare costs.

Laying the foundation for health and wellbeing in the early years

- **Establishing a healthy weight trajectory** with formative health behaviours has continued benefits, as young children with a healthy weight are very likely to remain a healthy weight into teens.⁹
- **Preventing early childhood obesity** influences child wellbeing - children with overweight or obesity have lower quality of life (QoL)¹⁰; growing into teens, the QoL gaps widens between children with a healthy weight compared to those with overweight/obesity¹¹.
- **Support starting in pregnancy** with credible breastfeeding support via the My Baby Now app that is acceptable and perceived to be useful, particularly for women with lower levels of education¹².

"... there's really not that much out there that the doctors or the hospitals or anything give you. So, apps like My Baby Now are great because there's so many breastfeeding questions mums have." – Parent

"I really like that the key principles that reinforce the messages we use as MCH nurses. They are very clear and easy to follow for parents.

The (INFANT) program also makes it easy for us as health practitioners to provide the right guidance for parents, backed up by evidence.

The app is also a really useful tool."
- Maternal & Child Health Nurse

"I love this (My Baby Now) app, it is the best one out there and I found the information predicted, normalised and provided strategies around the developmental challenges we faced at the time.

I found myself less anxious as the information guided me to solutions I could then talk about with my partner" – Parent

Increases access for parents from priority populations and cultural groups, with low literacy and cultural adaptation of parent resources

- In partnership with Western Public Health Unit INFANT parent booklets and videos have been translated into 6 community languages – Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu & Vietnamese

SESSION 2 INFANT booklet - Punjabi

ਸੈਸ਼ਨ 2



ਆਪਣੇ 6-9 ਮਹੀਨੇ ਦੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਆਉਣਾ-
ਪਿਲਾਉਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨਾਲ ਖੇਡਣਾ

SESSION 3



Feeding and playing with
your 9-12 month old baby



INFANT contact details

Website: infantprogram.org

Email: INFANT-study@deakin.edu.au

Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN)

Deakin University, Burwood Campus

221 Burwood Road, Burwood VIC 3125

Tel: +61 9244 5574

References

1. Laws, R., Hesketh, K., Ball, K. et al. (2016). Translating an early childhood obesity prevention program for local community implementation: a case study of the Melbourne INFANT Program. *BMC Public Health*, 16:748. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-016-0777-7>
2. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2023. *Complementary Feeding Interventions for Infants and Young Children Under Age 2: Scoping of Promising Interventions to Implement at the Community or State Level*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/27239>
3. Campbell, K., Lioret, S., McNaughton, S. & Hesketh, K. et al. (2013). A parent-focused intervention to reduce infant obesity risk behaviors: a randomized trial. *Pediatrics* 131(4): 652-660. doi.org/10.1542/peds.2012-2576
4. Hesketh K., Salmon J. & McNaughton S. et al. (2020) Long-term outcomes of the INFANT early childhood intervention to improve health behaviors and reduce obesity: cluster randomised controlled trial follow-up. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 17(1):95. doi.org/10.1186/s12966-020-00994-9
5. Lal, A., Peeters, A., Brown, V., Nguyen, P., Tran, H. N. Q., Nguyen, T., Tonmukayakul, U., Sacks, G., Calache, H., Martin, J., Moodie, M., & Ananthapavan, J. (2020). The Modelled Population Obesity-Related Health Benefits of Reducing Consumption of Discretionary Foods in Australia. *Nutrients*, 12(3), 649. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu12030649>
6. Calculations modified for Victoria, based on methodology used in onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1753-6405.12628
7. Hayes, A., & Killedar, A. (2021). Unpublished data. Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood (EPOCH) Centre for Research Excellence. earlychildhoodobesity.com
8. Hayes A, Chevalier A, D'Souza M, Baur L, Wen LM, Simpson J. (2016) Early Childhood Obesity: Association with Healthcare Expenditure in Australia. *Obesity*, 24, 1752-1758
9. Hayes, A.J., Carrello, J.P., Kelly, P.J. et al. (2021). Looking backwards and forwards: tracking and persistence of weight status between early childhood and adolescence. *International Journal of Obesity* 45, 870–878. doi.org/10.1038/s41366-021-00751-3
10. PedsQL Version 4.0 Generic Core Scales (PedsQL) is a validated scale for 2–18 year olds, measuring children's health-related Quality of Life.
11. Hayes, A., & Killedar, A. (2021). Unpublished data. Early Prevention of Obesity in Childhood (EPOCH) Centre for Research Excellence. earlychildhoodobesity.com
12. Laws, R. A., Cheng, H., Rossiter, C., Kuswara, K., Markides, B. R., Size, D., Corcoran, P., Ong, K. L., & Denney-Wilson, E. (2023). Perinatal support for breastfeeding using mHealth: A mixed methods feasibility study of the My Baby Now app. *Maternal & child nutrition*, 19(2), e13482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mcn.13482>

ipan.deakin.edu.au

Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B