

## Parents Report Hitting Their Babies Less

Besides encouraging competent parenting, the newsletters may also be reducing child abuse in Racine County. A large quasi-experimental study of the newsletter elsewhere in Wisconsin showed that parents who received the newsletters had beliefs significantly less like those of child abusing parents, as compared to parents not receiving the newsletters. They also reported actually slapping or spanking their babies less often.

\*\*\*

The series is distributed in Racine County through a partnership of UW-Extension with Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare All Saints, Central and Western Racine County Health Departments, City of Racine Health Department, Next Generation Now, Safe Kids Kenosha-Racine, West Racine Kiwanis Club, and Racine County Human Services Department.

*"There were things I didn't know at all, and now I do. I use the advice and knowledge every day."*

- Racine County Parent -

---

For more information contact:  
Sarah Hawks  
Racine County Extension Office  
209 N. Main Street  
Burlington, WI 53105  
262-767-2929  
Sarah.Hawks@goracine.org

---

**UW**  
**Extension**

# **PARENTING** *the FIRST YEAR*

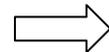
- ❖ A free, 12-part newsletter series of parenting advice geared toward each of the first twelve months in a child's life.
- ❖ Written by the University of Wisconsin-Extension to help parents do their best.
- ❖ Age-paced newsletters are effective because they are relatively inexpensive and offer highly relevant information at a "teachable moment".

\*\*\*

## **EVALUATION SUMMARY**

Starting in April 1989, *Parenting the First Year* was mailed monthly to mothers of all babies born in Racine County. An evaluation of this parenting project was recently conducted.

**Here are 4 key findings**



## 1. Parents say the newsletters are very useful.

- ❖ 61% rated the newsletter very useful, higher than any other source of parenting information.

*“Thank you so much for the newsletters. They helped me and my husband so much. Very helpful information even for a 4th time mom.”*

- Racine County Parent -

---

## 2. Parents really read the newsletters.

- ❖ 74% read all articles in all issues
- ❖ 71% said someone else reads them, usually the father; readership is nearly doubled by sharing.
- ❖ 57% keep them for future reference.

*“I like having a quick developmental update in an easy format. I’m much more likely to read this newsletter than the thick volume on the shelf.”*

- Racine County Parent -

---

## 3. Parents Report Positive Changes in Their Parenting

One of the goals in distributing the newsletters was to influence positive behaviors changes in new parents. Parents reported that reading the newsletters led them to change their child rearing behaviors in five key areas:

- ❖ 61% report they provide more things for their baby to feel, see, listen to and smell
- ❖ 57% report they are less angry when their baby is difficult.
- ❖ 56% report they talk to their baby more.
- ❖ 49% report making the house safer for their baby.
- ❖ 38% report they smile, kiss and hug their baby more.
- ❖ 35% report they respond more quickly when their baby cries

## 4. "Inexperienced" parents reported the greatest benefit from the newsletters.

First-time parents also told us they especially appreciated the newsletters: *“I’m a first time mom and I was scared and nervous. Reading the newsletters helped me in more ways than one. There were a lot of things I would never have known if I didn’t sit and read them.”*

- Racine County Parent -