



Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Depression is common, affecting as many as 1 in 4 individuals. Women are more likely to have depression than men, and parents of young children under 5 years are also at higher risk. Although there are many kinds of depression, the most serious forms affect how individuals feel physically, how they think, how they feel about themselves, and how they experience the world. Some parents with significant depression can find it difficult to respond appropriately to their babies and toddlers. In these cases, the child can show delays, relationship problems, or behavior concerns. **First Steps mental health professionals can help when parents struggle with depression and other mental illness.**



How to Help if You Suspect Depression:

- * **Avoid overloading the parents with intervention activities.**
- * **Don't minimize their worries, but do try to point out positives and provide hope.**
- * **Encourage the parent to think about informal helpers and support.**
- * **Encourage the parent to seek formal treatment.**
- * **Consider a referral to a First Steps mental health provider when you are concerned that a young child may be reacting to parental depression.**

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Resources:

Indiana Perinatal Network (indianaperinatal.org)
National Institutes of Health (nimh.nih.gov)

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