

2009 Evaluation of *Parenting the First Year* Newsletter

Report Author

Chelsey Klinger

Contributors

Ramona Danielson

Kay Schwarzwalter

Karen Olson

Dr. Richard Rathge, Director

July 2009

An assessment of the North Dakota Department of Health,
Division of Family Health, *Parenting the First Year* newsletter



North Dakota State Data Center

P.O. Box 6050, Dept. 8000

Fargo, ND 58108

Phone: 701.231.7980

Fax: 701.231.9730

Website: www.ndsu.edu/sdc



FOREWORD

This report, *2009 Evaluation of Parenting the First Year Newsletter*, presents the findings from surveys sent out by the North Dakota State Data Center to new parents in North Dakota. The purpose of the surveys was to gather information from new parents in North Dakota regarding the usefulness, appeal, barriers, and preferences to reading the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Family Health, *Parenting the First Year* newsletter. The findings presented in this report will be used by the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Family Health, to make informed decisions to improve the publication.

Acknowledgments

This project was commissioned by the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Family Health, to evaluate their publication, *Parenting the First Year*. The survey instrument was designed and conducted by the North Dakota State Data Center staff with input from the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Family Health, staff. We want to especially thank Kim Senn, Director of the Division of Family Health, and Kjersti Hintz, Maternal and Child Health Nurse Consultant, for their support and guidance throughout this project.

An electronic version of the report will be available on the North Dakota State Data Center website at www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Profile of Parent Respondents

Parents were asked where they get information about parenting and/or newborn issues.

- The majority of parents said they get information about parenting and/or newborn issues from their doctor or pediatrician.
- Two-thirds of parents get information about parenting and/or newborn issues from the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

Parents were asked which topics related to parenting were of interest.

- The majority of parents said child development (stages of growth, behavior and learning, brain development, etc.) and health and safety (chronic health conditions, immunization, feeding/nutrition, safe sleeping, etc.) were the topics of most interest.

Parents were asked how much time they spend in a typical week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues.

- Two in five parents spend from 1 to 2 hours per week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues and an additional two in five parents spend less than 1 hour per week reading education material about parenting and/or newborn issues.

Parents were asked how many issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter they have received.

- Roughly one-fourth of parents have received two to four issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter, and another one-fourth have received five to seven issues. One-fifth of parents have received eight or more issues of the newsletter.

Ages of respondents:

- Two-thirds of the parents were ages 25 to 34.

Parents were asked if they have access to the Internet.

- The vast majority of parents have access to the Internet.

Utilization of the Newsletter

Parents were asked how much of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter they typically read.

- Three-fourths of parents read most of or the entire *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

Parents were asked how much time they typically spend reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

- Half of parents spend less than ½ hour reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter. Two in five parents spend from ½ to 1 hour reading the newsletter.

Parents were asked how long they usually save, or plan to save, the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

- One-fourth of parents save the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter less than 1 week and another one-fourth of parents save the newsletter 1 week to 1 month. One-third of parents save the newsletter longer than one month.

Perceived Usefulness of the Newsletter

Overall, the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is perceived to be very useful, with the topics of child development and health and safety being of most interest and highest utility to parents.

Potential barriers to the usefulness of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter indicated by parents included not having received/read the newsletter, the information being repetitive, and the design of the newsletter being perceived as unappealing.

Parents tend to agree that the type and amount of information included in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is useful and appropriate and that the newsletter helped in their understanding of child development. However, there was less agreement that the layout of the newsletter was appealing.

Graphic and Format Appeal of Current Newsletter

There were several suggestions from parents on to how to make the newsletter more graphically appealing. These suggestions included adding more color, updating photos and incorporating more photos and other graphics into the layout, making the newsletter more eye-catching and visually appealing, changing font types, changing the paper used, reworking the layout so the information is easier to find and less “squished” together, and using a newer style of layout.

Barriers and Preferences to Reading the Newsletter

Parents were asked what limits their availability to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting.

- Two-fifths of parents do not have enough time to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting, one-fourth of parents already know much of the information, and one-fourth of parents said nothing limited their reading information on parenting.
- Other reasons given for not reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting included being too tired, not liking to read, never having received the newsletter, forgetting or misplacing the newsletter, and the newsletter being too far ahead of the actual developmental stage of the parent’s child.

Parents were asked if they would be more likely to read the newsletter, less likely to read it, or if it would make no difference if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was available online only.

- Two-fifths of parents said that if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was only available online they would be less likely to read it, one-third of parents said it would make no difference, and one-fifth of parents said that they would be more likely to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter if it was only available online.

Parents were asked how they would prefer to be reminded of the availability of the version that corresponds with the age of their infant if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters were only available online.

- Nearly two-thirds of parents would prefer to receive an email reminder if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters were available exclusively online. Small proportions of parents said they either preferred to be reminded by postcard or didn't want a reminder at all.

Recommendations

Graphic Design

- It would be beneficial for the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter to update its graphic design to both maintain and increase readership and in order to compete with other sources of parenting information.

Online Availability

- While more than half of parents indicated that if the newsletter was only available online they would be more likely to read it or it would not make a difference, a sizeable proportion of parents said that if the newsletter was only available online they would be less likely to read it. Based on this finding, it may be necessary to continue sending out the newsletter by mail.
- Another possible option would be to give parents the choice to receive the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter either by mail or via electronic communication such as email.

INTRODUCTION

Study Objectives

The North Dakota Department of Health, through their Division of Family Health, publishes a monthly newsletter entitled, *Parenting the First Year*. The purpose of their newsletter is to provide parents of a newborn educational information regarding parenting during the first year of their new child's life. This is a critical period for children and parents alike, and the issues that need to be addressed over the course of their first year are constantly changing. Therefore, there are 11 separate editions of the newsletter, each corresponding to a different period within the first year of the child's life. For example, the first edition centers on the first three months, the next edition corresponds to the third to fourth month, while the last edition relates to issues regarding the last two months of the child's first year of life. These newsletters are mailed to all parents of babies born in North Dakota within the previous 12 months who indicated on their birth certificates that they were willing to receive the newsletter. Each month, a copy of the appropriate newsletter is sent to the parents based on when their child was born. The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the perceived usefulness of this series of newsletters.

Methodology

For evaluation purposes, a survey instrument was designed by staff at the North Dakota State Data Center and feedback on the design of the survey instrument was obtained from staff representing the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Family Health.

This survey of new parents receiving the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was conducted as a mail-out questionnaire. The sampling frame of the mothers was provided by the North Dakota Health Department, Division of Family Health. The survey questions focused on a) utilization of the newsletter, b) perceived usefulness of the newsletter, c) appeal of the current newsletter, and d) barriers/preferences to reading the newsletter. The survey asked 16 questions and took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

If the parent chose to participate, they were asked to complete the survey and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that was provided. Each parent had the opportunity to leave any question blank that they did not wish to answer. The information they provided was combined with other parents' responses; therefore, their identity was kept confidential.

A simple random sampling design was used to collect the data. Each year, 11 editions of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters are sent to new mothers. The 11 editions correspond to the month in which the child was born. For example, the first edition is designated for children born within the first three months or receiving the newsletter. The second edition is for children born 3-4 months prior to the newsletter, while the last edition is for children born 12 months prior to receiving the newsletter. Thus, each month 11 different editions of the newsletter are sent to new mothers and the edition the mother receives corresponds to the age of the new born as a result. The monthly distribution of newsletters is a representative sample of new mothers by birth order. This means that a simple random sample of mothers in any given month is a generalizable sample. It was assumed that since the style of each newsletter is very similar, it was unnecessary to draw independent samples for each age grouping and that an overall evaluation is sufficient. A random sample of 1,800 mothers was surveyed in the month of January 2009. The size of the sample provides a statewide generalizable sample with an error rate of less than 5 percent and a confidence interval of 95 percent. This means that one can be 95 percent confident that the results obtained from the sample deviate no more than plus or minus 5 percent from results one would obtain by surveying all mothers receiving the newsletters. A total of 364 parents in the sample completed and returned the survey; resulting in usable response rate of 20 percent.

Presentation of Findings

The presentation of findings for the evaluation of *Parenting the First Year* Newsletter includes frequencies, figures, and associated appendix tables. The number of surveys is represented by N in the figures throughout the report and in the subsequent appendix tables. In some instances, a measure of central tendency called the mean is presented to give clarification to the data. Central tendency refers to the center value of a distribution which can be measured using the mean, median, and/or mode, depending on the type of data being analyzed. The mean is the total sum of the data values divided by the total number of items in the data set, which is often referred to as the average. In this study, the mean was calculated where appropriate (i.e., where interval level data were available).

SURVEY RESULTS

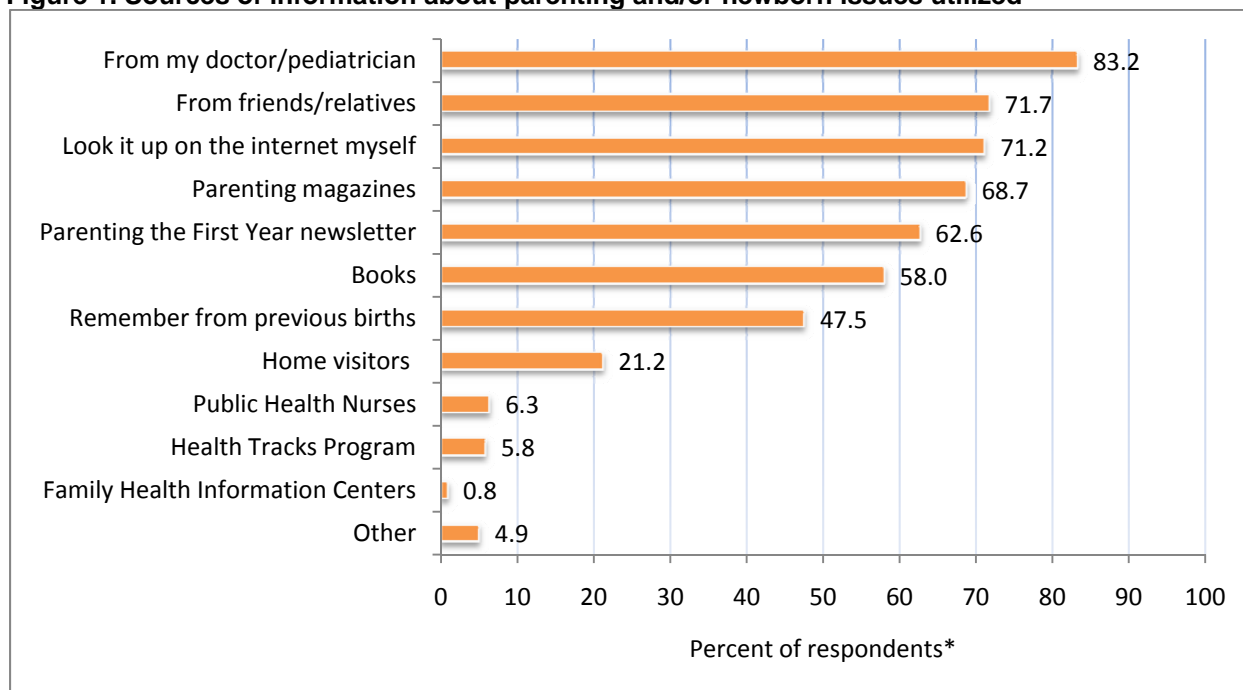
Profile of Parent Respondents

Sources of Parenting Information

Parents were asked where they get information about parenting and/or newborn issues.

- The vast majority of parents said they get information about parenting and/or newborn issues from their doctor or pediatrician (83.2 percent).
- Roughly two-thirds of parents said they receive information from friends and relatives (71.7 percent), the Internet (71.2 percent), and parenting magazines (68.7 percent).
- Nearly two-thirds of parents said they get information about parenting and/or newborn issues from the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (62.6 percent).
- More than half of parents said they get information about parenting and/or newborn issues from books (58.0 percent).
- Less than half of parents said they remember information about parenting and/or newborn issues from previous births (47.5 percent).
- Other sources of information about parenting and/or newborn issues include home visitors, public health nurses, Health Track programs, Family Health Information Centers, parental support groups, daycare, the Bible, coworkers, and television programs.
- See Figure 1, Table 1, and Appendix Table 1 for additional information.

Figure 1. Sources of information about parenting and/or newborn issues utilized



N=364

*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Table 1. Other sources of information about parenting and/or newborn issues utilized

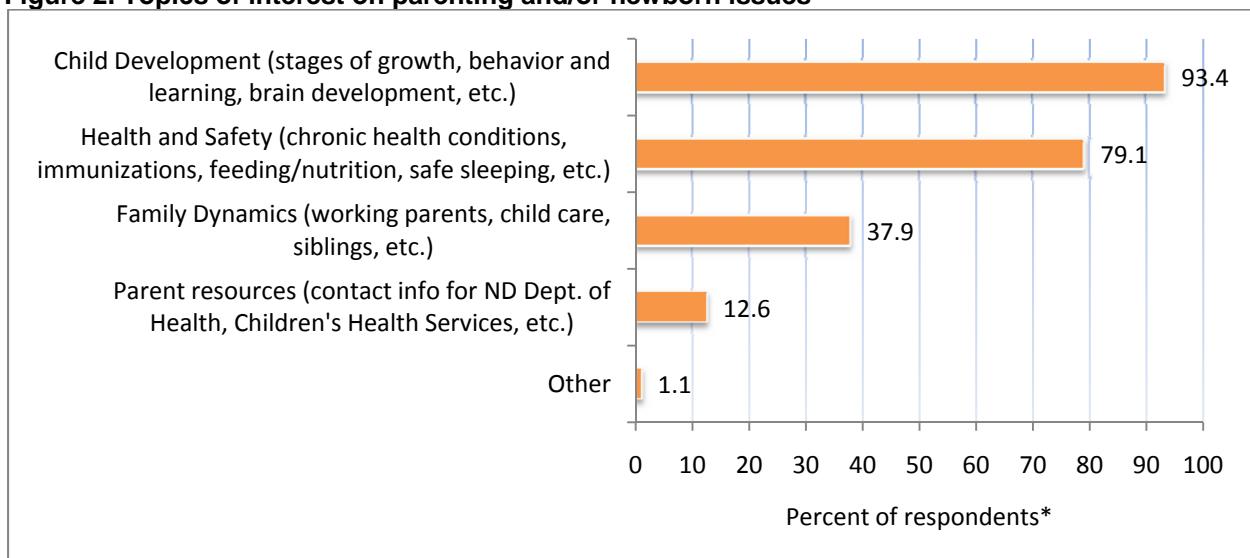
Other responses	Number of respondents
Parenting focused websites or emails	4
Previous childrearing experience	4
Parent support groups (New Parent Support Program, pregnancy group, Head Start Programs)	3
Daycare	2
Bible	1
Coworkers	1
Lactation consultants	1
Television programs (Nanny 911 or Super Nanny)	1

Parenting Topics of Interest

Parents were asked which of the following topics were of interest.

- An overwhelming majority of parents said child development (stages of growth, behavior and learning, brain development, etc.) was a topic of interest (93.4 percent).
- Approximately three-fourths of parents said health and safety (chronic health conditions, immunization, feeding/nutrition, safe sleeping, etc.) was a topic of interest (79.1 percent).
- More than one-third of parents said family dynamics (working parents, child care, siblings, etc.) was a topic of interest (37.9 percent).
- Other topics of interest included family resources, child/family activities and classes, nutrition, and training or discipline.
- See Figure 2, Table 2, and Appendix Table 2 for additional information.

Figure 2. Topics of interest on parenting and/or newborn issues



N=364

*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Table 2. Other topics of interest on parenting and/or newborn issues

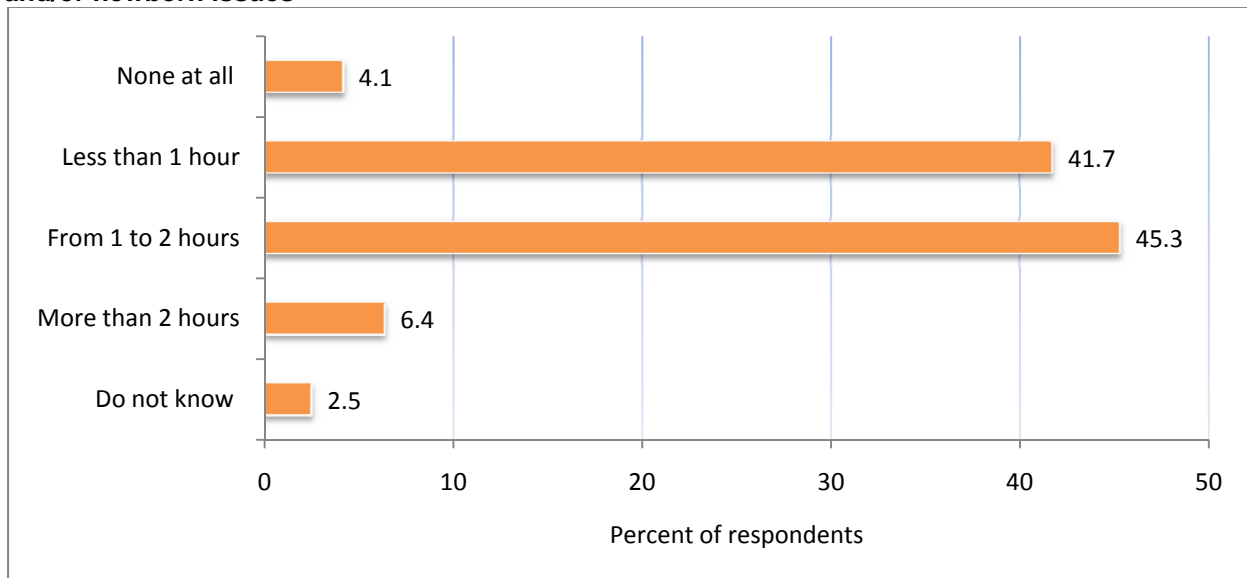
Other responses	Number
Child and family activities and classes	2
Nutrition	2
Training or discipline	1

Time Spent Reading Parenting Materials

Parents were asked how much time they spend in a typical week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues.

- Two in five parents spend less than 1 hour per week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues (41.7 percent).
- Nearly half of parents spend from 1 to 2 hours per week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues (45.3 percent).
- A marginal number of parents spend more than two hours reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues (6.4 percent).
- See Figure 3 and Appendix Table 3 for additional information.

Figure 3. Amount of time spent in a typical week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues



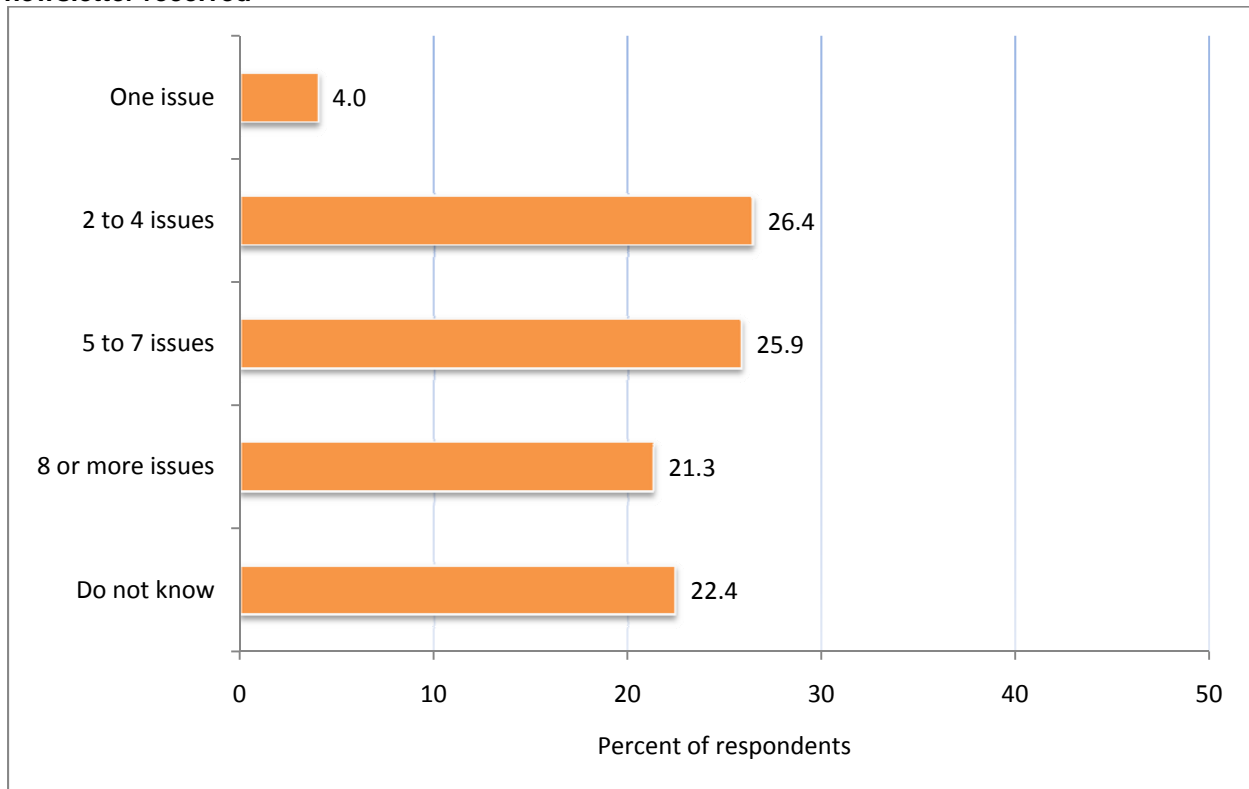
N=364

Number of Newsletters Received

Parents were asked how many issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter they have received.

- Roughly one-fourth of parents have received 2 to 4 issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (26.4 percent), and another one-fourth have received 5 to 7 issues (25.9 percent).
- One-fifth of respondents have received 8 or more issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (21.3 percent).
- Nearly one-fourth of parents did not know how many issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter they have received (22.4 percent).
- See Figure 4 and Appendix Table 4 for additional information.

Figure 4. Number of issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter received



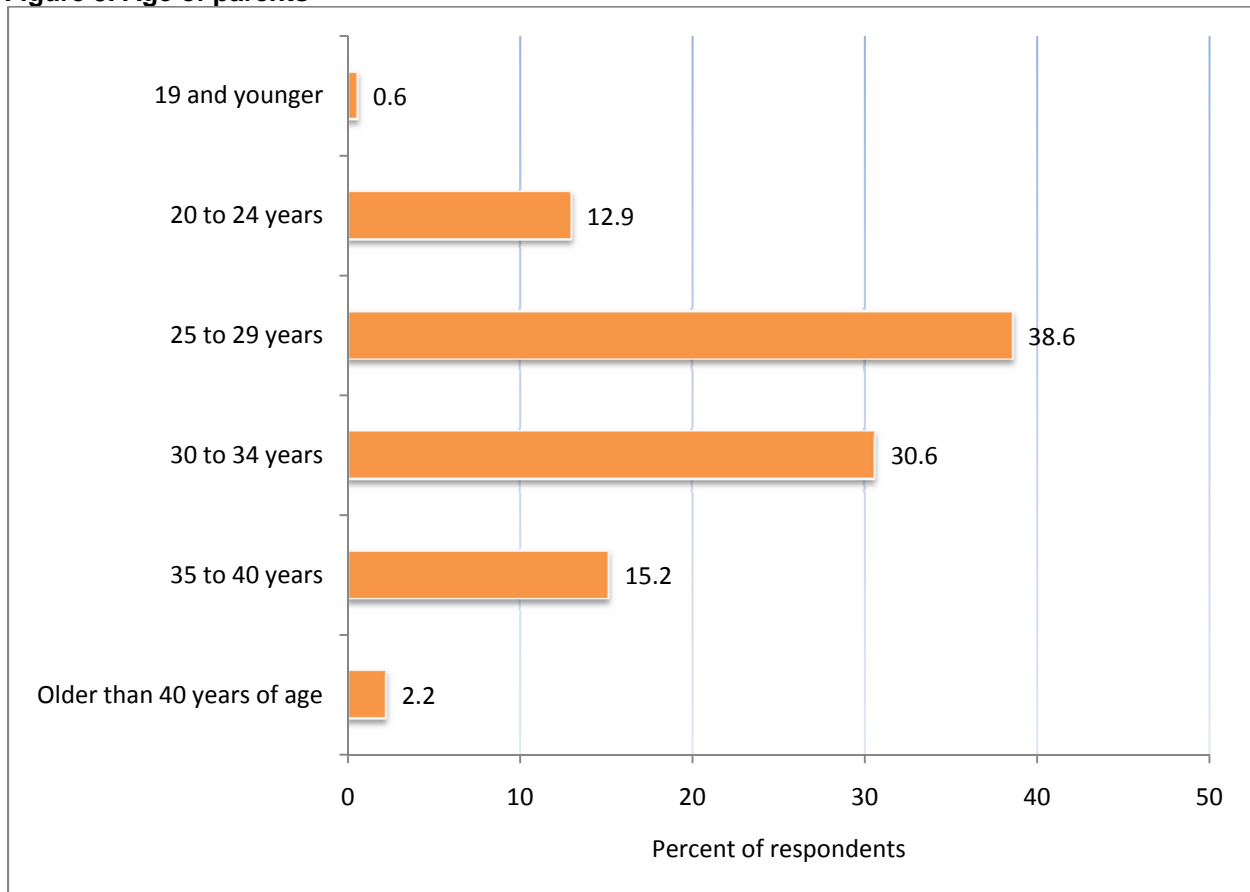
N=352

Age of Parents

The distribution of parent's ages is as follows:

- Nearly two-fifths of the parents were ages 25 to 29 (38.6 percent).
- Three in 10 of the parents were ages 30 to 34 (30.6 percent).
- Nearly one-fifth of parents were 35 years of age or older (17.4 percent).
- More than one in 10 of parents were 24 years of age or younger (13.5 percent)
- See Figure 5 and Appendix Table 5 for additional information.

Figure 5. Age of parents



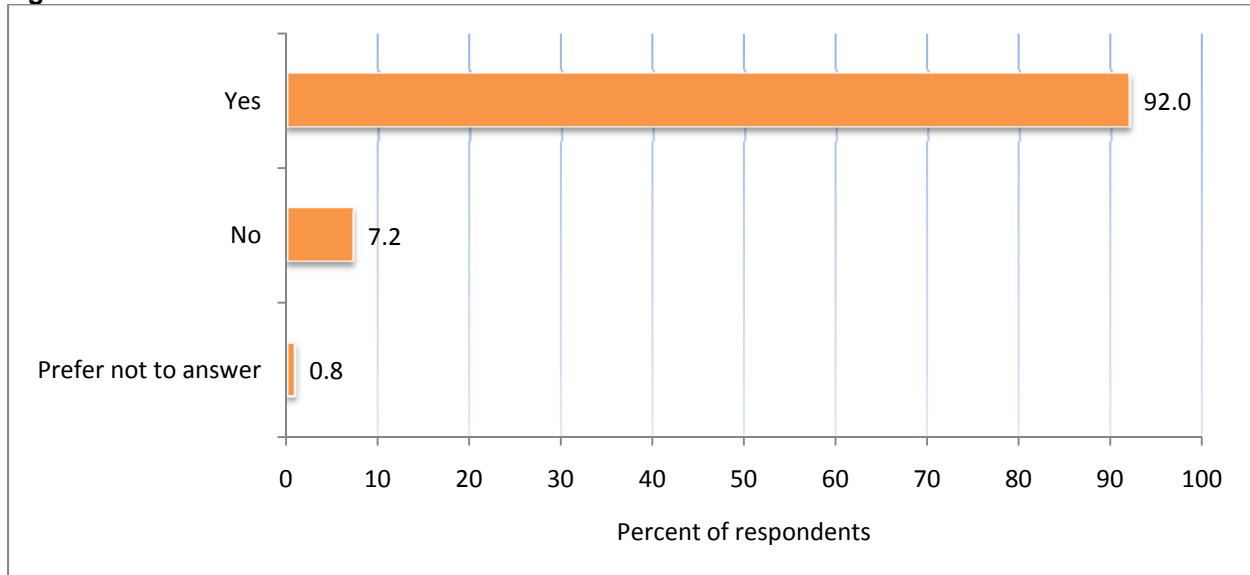
N=363

Access to the Internet

Parents were asked if they have access to the Internet.

- The vast majority of parents have access to the Internet (92.0 percent).
- Less than one in 10 parents do not have access to the Internet (7.2 percent).
- See Figure 6 and Appendix Table 6 for additional information.

Figure 6. Access to the Internet



N=361

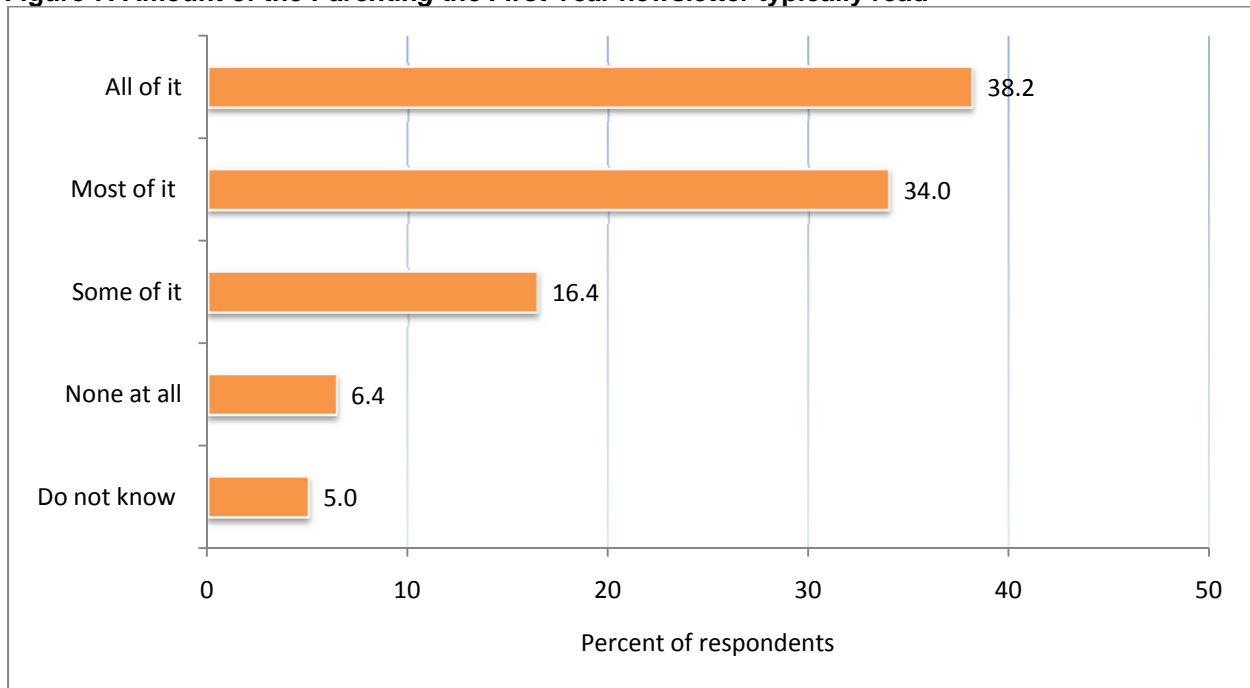
Utilization of the Newsletter

Amount of Newsletter Read

Parents were asked how much of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter they typically read.

- Nearly two in five parents read the entire *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (38.2 percent).
- One-third of parents read most of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (34.0 percent), and 16.4 percent of parents read some of it.
- One in 10 parents either read none of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (6.4 percent) or do not know how much of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter they read (5.0 percent).
- See Figure 7 and Appendix Table 7 for additional information.

Figure 7. Amount of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter typically read



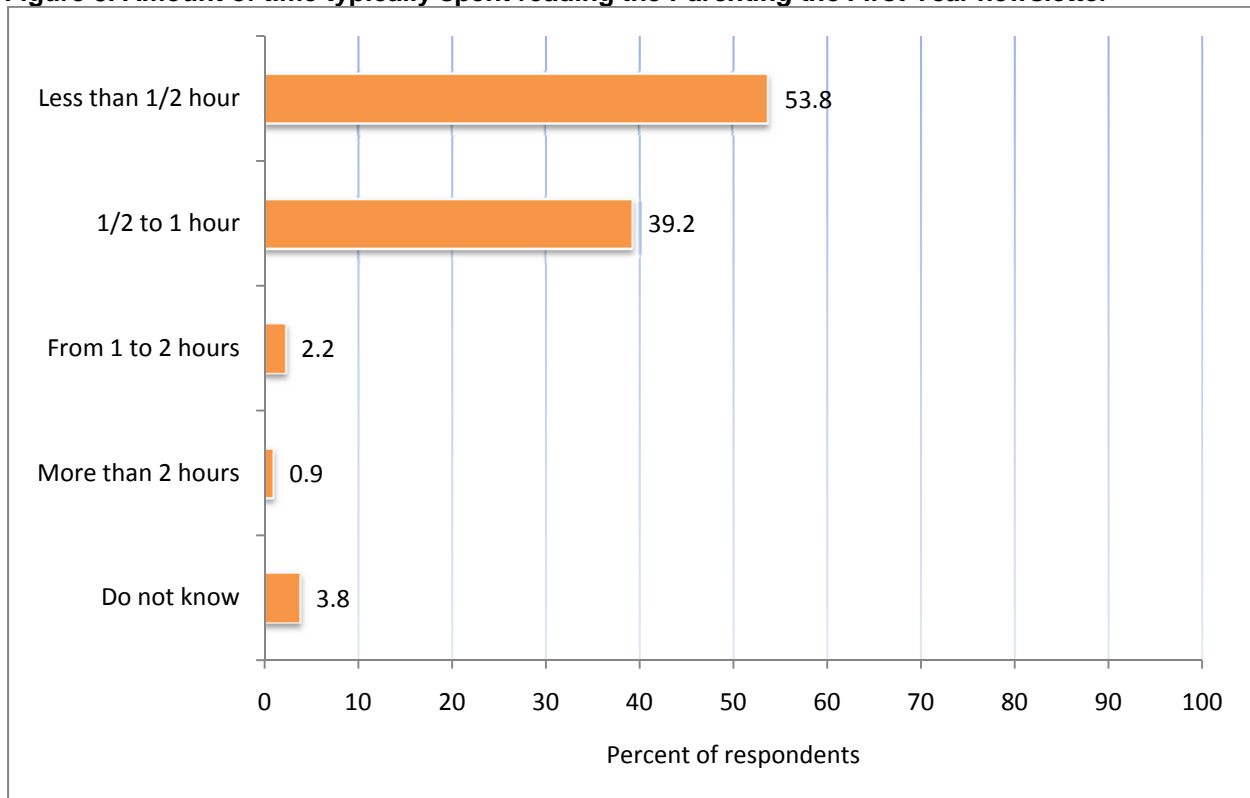
N=359

Amount of Time Spent Reading the Newsletter

Parents were asked how much time they typically spend reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

- Approximately half of parents spend less than ½ hour reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (53.8 percent).
- Two in five parents spend from ½ to 1 hour reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter (39.2 percent).
- See Figure 8 and Appendix Table 8 for additional information.

Figure 8. Amount of time typically spent reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter



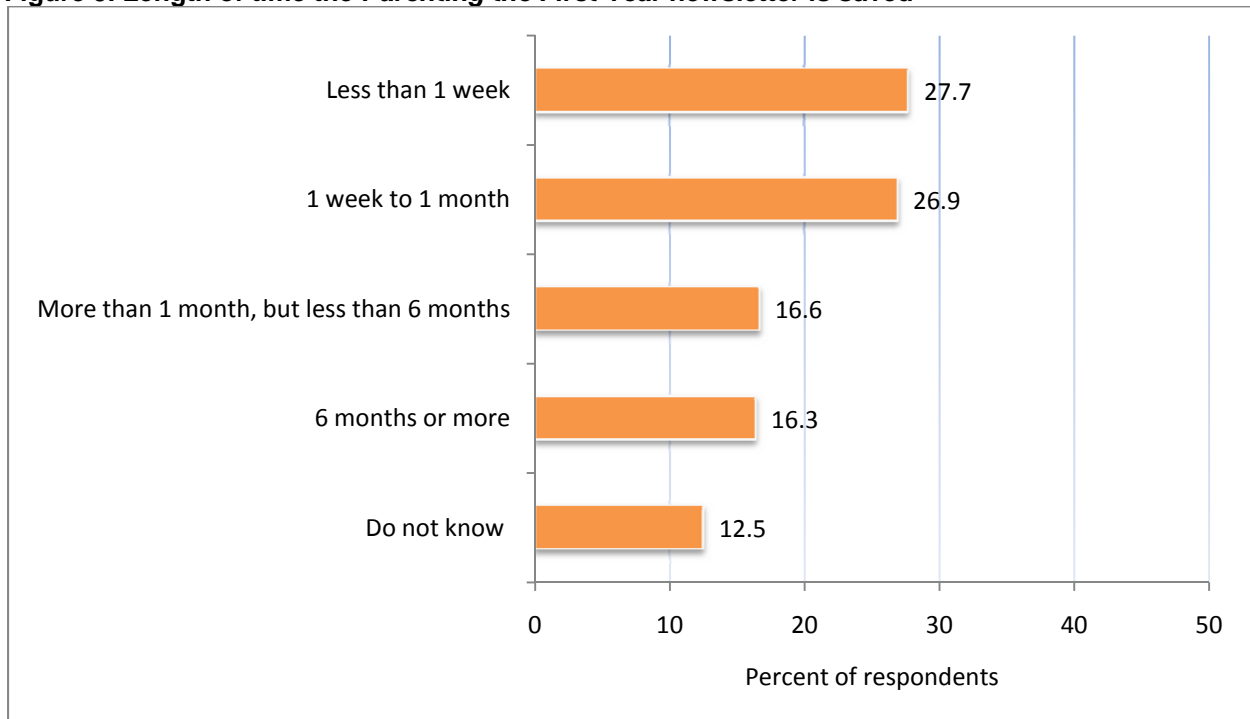
N=316

Length of Time Newsletter is Saved

Parents were asked how long they usually save, or plan to save, the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

- One-fourth of parents save the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter less than 1 week (27.7 percent), and another one-fourth of parents save the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter 1 week to 1 month (26.9 percent).
- One-third of parents save the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter longer than one month (32.9 percent).
- See Figure 9 and Appendix Table 9 for additional information.

Figure 9. Length of time the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is saved



N=361

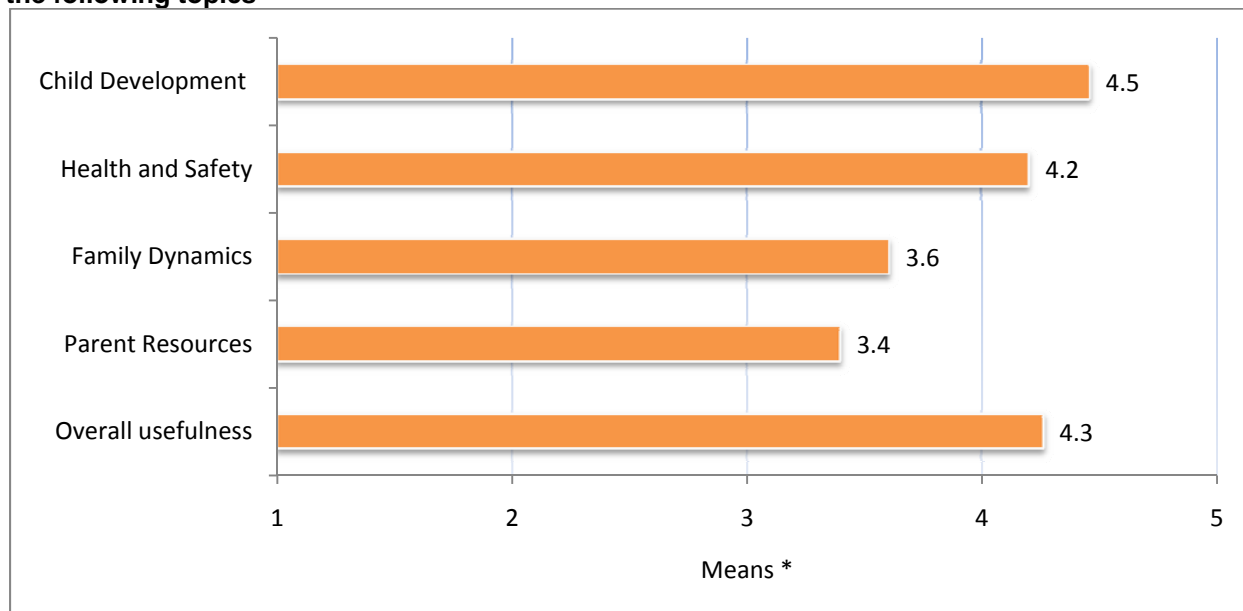
Perceived Usefulness of the Newsletter

Newsletter Usefulness by Topics

Parents were asked on a one to five scale, with one being “not at all” useful and five being “very useful,” how useful the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is.

- Overall, the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is perceived to be very useful, with the topics of child development and health and safety being of most interest and highest utility to parents.
 - On average, the overall usefulness of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is seen to be relatively high (mean = 4.3 on a 1 to 5 scale).
 - On average, the usefulness of topics related to child development within the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is seen to be relatively high (mean = 4.5 on a 1 to 5 scale).
 - On average, the usefulness of topics related to health and safety within the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is seen to be relatively high (mean = 4.2 on a 1 to 5 scale).
 - On average, the usefulness of topics related to family dynamics and parent resources within the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter are seen to be moderately high (mean = 3.6 and 3.4, respectively).
- Other responses that indicated potential barriers to the usefulness of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter included parents not having received/read the newsletter, the information being repetitive, and the design of the newsletter being perceived as unappealing.
- See Figure 10, Table 3, and Appendix Table 10 for additional information.

Figure 10. Level of usefulness of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter's information regarding the following topics



N=364

*Means are based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “Not at all” and 5 being “Very useful” and exclude “Not sure” and “Missing” responses.

Table 3. Other responses regarding the level of usefulness of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter's information

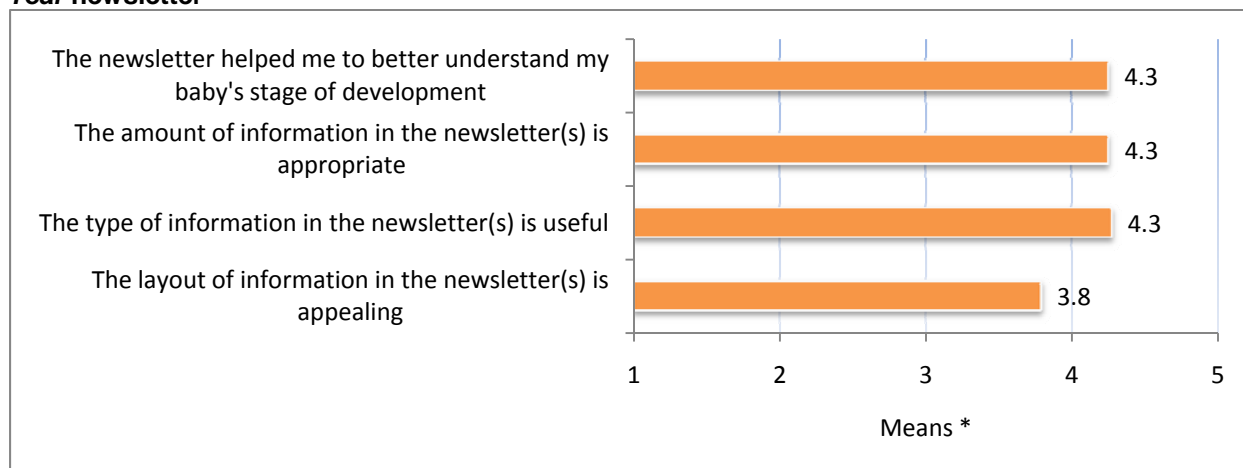
Other Responses	Number of respondents
I have never received the newsletter	5
I think the newsletter is a great resource!	3
I don't read it	2
If I was with my first child it would be more useful	1
More should be included on differences in abilities of children	1
The design is not appealing (dated photos, color of paper, etc.)	1

Parent Perceptions of the Newsletter

Parents were asked on a one to five scale, with one being “not at all” and five being “a great deal,” how much they agree with the following statements regarding the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

- Overall, parents agree pretty strongly that the type and amount of information included in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is useful and appropriate and that the newsletter helped in their understanding of child development. However, parents agreed less that the layout of the newsletter was appealing.
 - The mean scores for level of agreement with each of the following statements were all relatively high, (mean = 4.3 each):
 - The newsletter helped me to better understand my baby’s stage of development.
 - The amount of information in the newsletter(s) is appropriate.
 - The type of information in the newsletter(s) is useful.
 - The mean score for level of agreement with the statement “The layout of information in the newsletter is appealing,” is weaker than the other three statements included in the question.
- See Figure 11 and Appendix Table 11 for additional information.

Figure 11. Level of agreement with the following statements regarding the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter



N=364

*Means are based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “Agree not at all” and 5 being “Agree a great deal” and exclude “Not sure” and “Missing” responses.

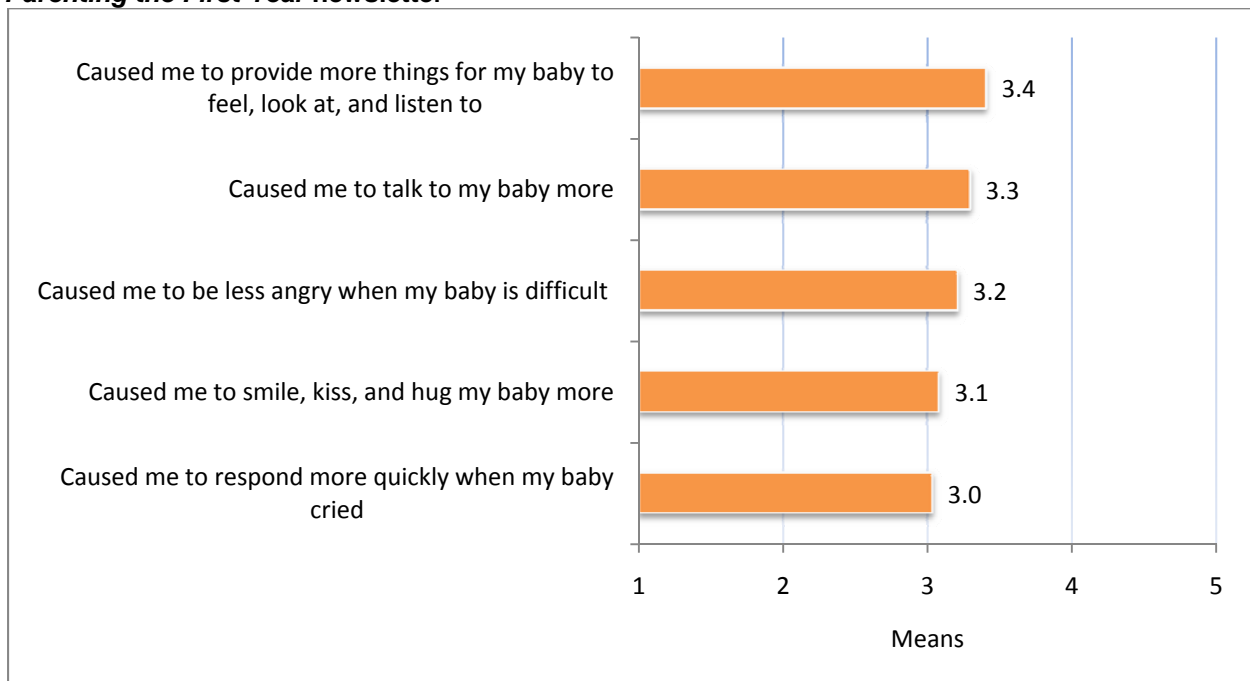
Parents were asked on a one to five scale, with one being “agree not at all” and five being “agree a great deal,” how much they agree with the following statements regarding the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter.

- The mean scores for level of agreement with each of the following statements were fairly neutral:

The information in the newsletter caused me to...

- Provide more things for my baby to feel, look at, and listen to (mean = 3.4)
 - Talk to my baby more (mean = 3.3)
 - Be less angry when my baby is difficult (mean = 3.2)
 - Smile, kiss, and hug my baby more (mean = 3.1)
 - Respond more quickly when my baby cried (mean = 3.0)
- See Figure 12 and Appendix Table 12 for additional information.

Figure 12. Level of agreement with the following statements regarding the information in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter



N=364

*Means are based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being “Agree not at all” and 5 being “Agree a great deal” and exclude “Not sure” and “Missing” responses.

Graphic and Format Appeal of the Current Newsletter

Appeal of Current Newsletter Layout

Parents were asked on a one to five scale, with one being “not at all” and five being “a great deal,” how much they agree with several statements regarding the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter. Overall, parents tend to agree that the type and amount of information included in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is useful and appropriate and that the newsletter helped in their understanding of child development. However, there was less agreement that the layout of the newsletter was appealing. Refer back to Figure 11 and Appendix Table 11 for more detail.

This finding was further explained through the comments made by the parents when asked to provide any suggestions they had that would improve the newsletter.

- Many parents had no suggestions and felt the newsletter is great the way it is.
- Some parents felt that the newsletter could be expanded and more information could be included.
- There were also several of suggestions pertaining to how to make the newsletter more graphically appealing. These suggestions included:
 - Add more color
 - Change font types
 - Change the color of the paper used
 - Improve paper quality
 - Incorporate more photos and other graphics into the layout
 - Make it more eye catching/visually appealing
 - Rework the layout so the information is easier to find and less “squished” together
 - Use a newer, fresher style of layout
 - Update photos
- See Table 4 for overview of parents’ suggestions.

Table 4. Suggestions for improvement of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter

Suggestions	Number of respondents
No suggestions, the newsletter is great the way it is!	42
Include more information (child development, parent resources, feeding, first 3 months, premature babies, etc.)	23
Make the newsletter more visually appealing (add colors, update pictures, improve paper quality, etc.)	21
I never received a newsletter	7
Make the newsletter available online	5
Send it out as the children reach the developmental stages, not months ahead of time	4
The information in the newsletter is most relevant and most useful to first time mothers	3
Shorter articles (more concise), facts, attention-grabbing headings	2
Cancel it and save some taxpayer money	1

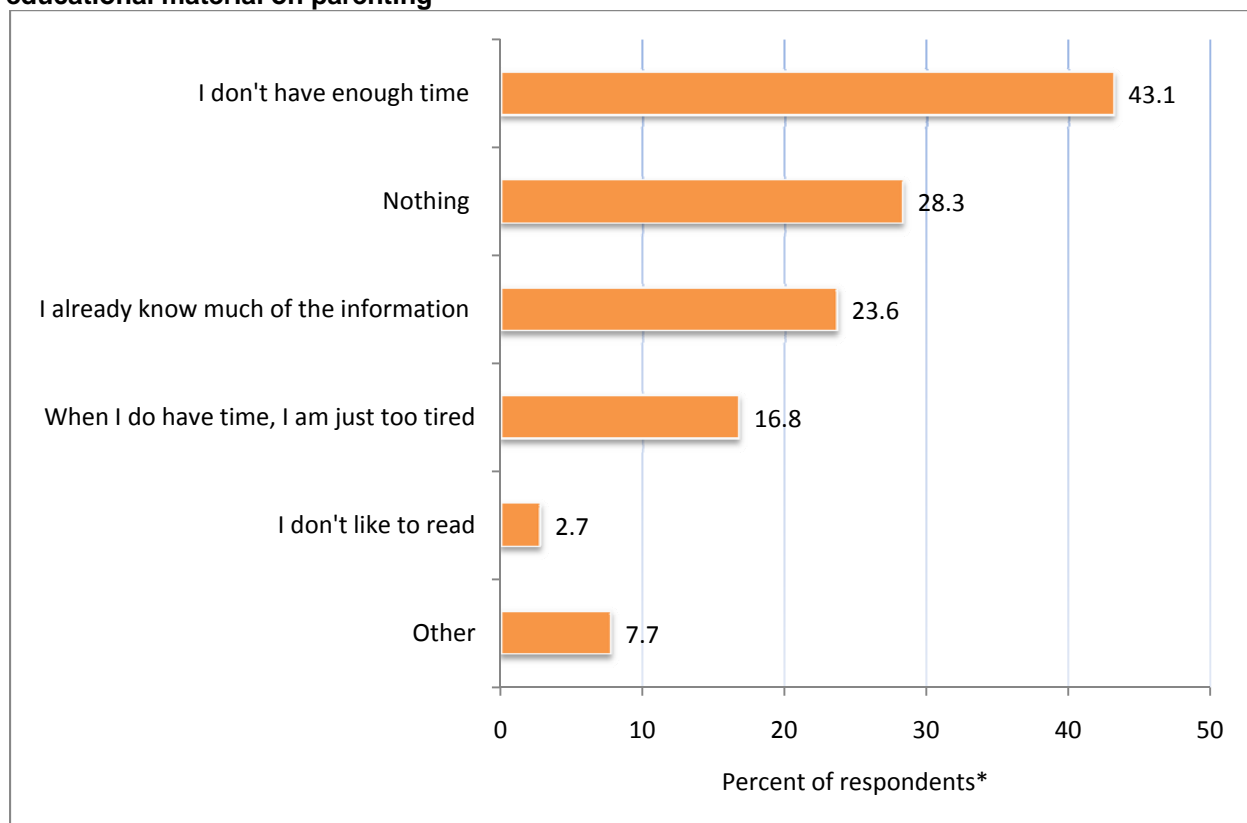
Barriers/Preferences to Reading the Newsletter

Barriers

Parents were asked what limits their ability to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting.

- Two-fifths of parents do not have enough time to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting (43.1 percent).
- Approximately one-fourth of parents gave no reason for not reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting (28.3 percent).
- Nearly one-fourth of parents already know much of the information in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting (23.6 percent).
- Other reasons given for not reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting included being too tired, not liking to read, never having received the newsletter, forgetting or misplacing the newsletter, and the newsletter being too far ahead of the actual developmental stage of the parent's child.
- See Figure 13, Table 5, and Appendix Table 13 for additional information.

Figure 13. Reasons that might limit ability to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting



N=364

*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses

Table 5. Other reasons that might limit ability to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting

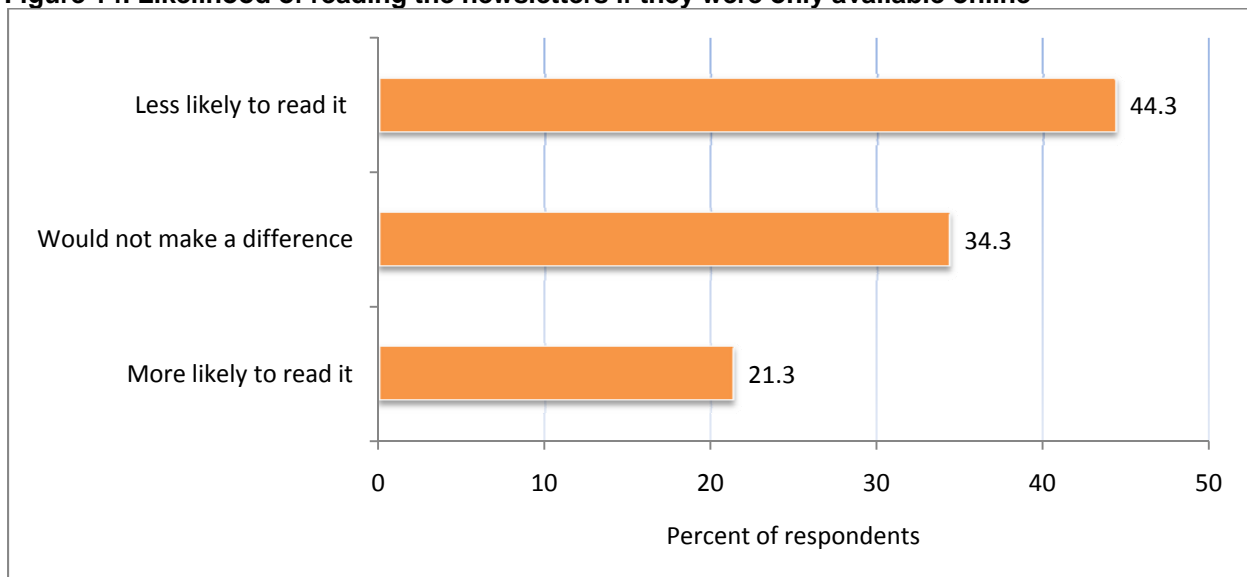
Other Responses	Number of respondents
I have never received the newsletter	13
I always read it	4
I am too busy tending to/playing with my children	2
I forget or misplace it	2
The newsletter is received too far ahead of the actual developmental stage of my child	2
I have a degree in child development	1
I read only about issues we have	1
It gets put in the recycling before I get to it	1
No finances	1
Non-English speaker	1

Preferences

Parents were asked if they would be more likely to read the newsletter, less likely to read it, or if it would make no difference if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was only available online.

- Two-fifths of parents said that if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was only available online they would be less likely to read it (44.3 percent).
- One-third of parents said that if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was only available online it would not make a difference in whether they read the newsletter or not (34.3 percent).
- One-fifth of parents said that they would be more likely to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter if it was only available online (21.3 percent).
- See Figure 14 and Appendix Table 14 for additional information.

Figure 14. Likelihood of reading the newsletters if they were only available online

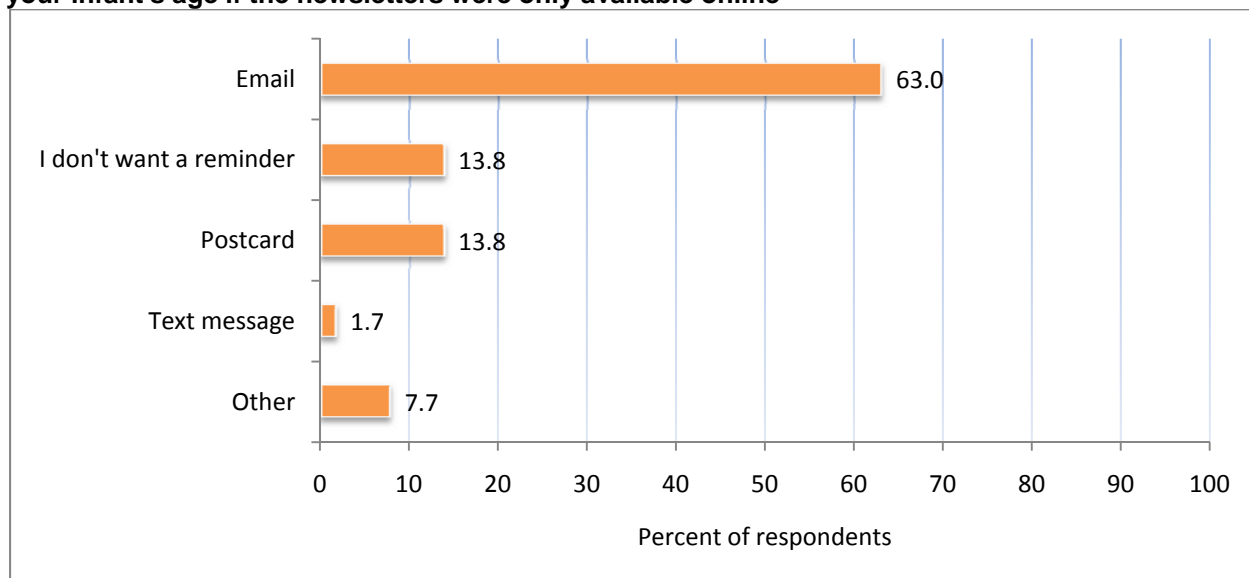


N=361

Parents were asked how they would prefer to be reminded of the availability of the version that corresponds with the age of their infant if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters were only available online.

- Nearly two-thirds of parents would prefer to receive an email reminder if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters were available exclusively online (63.0 percent)
- An equal proportion of parents said they either preferred to be reminded by postcard (13.8 percent) or didn't want a reminder at all (13.8 percent) if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters were available exclusively online.
- Other preferred methods of reminding parents about the availability of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters included text messages or some combination of direct mail and electronic reminders.
- See Figure 15, Table 6, and Appendix Table 15 for additional information.

Figure 15. Preferred method to be reminded of the availability of the version that corresponds to your infant's age if the newsletters were only available online



N=362

Table 6. Other preferred methods to be reminded of the availability of the version that corresponds to infant's age if the newsletters were available only online

Other Responses	Number of respondents
Email and postcard	12
Email and text	6
Email, text, and postcard	2
Postcard and text	2
Like it in the mail or do not have Internet	2

RECOMMENDATIONS

Graphic Design

Overall, parents tend to agree that the type and amount of information included in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is useful and appropriate and that the newsletter helped in their understanding of child development. However, there was less agreement that the layout of the newsletter was appealing.

Suggestions made by parents regarding the graphic design of the newsletter included adding more color, updating photos, incorporating more photos and graphics throughout the newsletter, using different paper, and reformatting the newsletters using a newer design. Based on the finding, the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Family Health, may want to update its graphic design of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter to both maintain and increase readership and to compete with other sources of parenting information.

Online Availability

Parents were asked if they would be more likely to read the newsletter, less likely to read it, or if it would make no difference if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter was only available online. A sizable proportion of parents said that if the newsletter was only available online they would be less likely to read it. Based on this finding, it may be necessary to continue the option of sending out the newsletter by mail.

However, the vast majority of parents indicated that they have access to the Internet and several parents indicated that they would be interested in receiving the newsletter online only. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of parents would prefer to receive an email reminder if the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters were available exclusively online. Based on these findings, it may be possible to give parents the choice to receive the newsletter either by mail or via electronic communication such as email.

APPENDIX TABLES

Appendix Table 1. Sources of information about parenting and/or newborn issues utilized

Sources of information	Respondents (N=364)	
	Number	Percent*
From my doctor/pediatrician	303	83.2
From friends/relatives	261	71.7
Look it up on the internet myself	259	71.2
Parenting magazines	250	68.7
<i>Parenting the First Year</i> newsletter from the North Dakota Department of Health	228	62.6
Books	211	58.0
Remember from previous births	173	47.5
Home visitors (Right Track or Infant Development Program)	77	21.2
Public health nurses	23	6.3
Health Tracks programs	21	5.8
Family health information centers (Family Voices, Pathfinder, Parental Information Center/Extension)	3	0.8
Other	18	4.9

*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 2. Topics of interest on parenting and/or newborn issues

Topics	Respondents (N=364)	
	Number	Percent*
Child Development (stages of growth, behavior and learning, brain development, etc.)	340	93.4
Health and Safety (chronic health conditions, immunizations, feeding/nutrition, safe sleeping, fire and burn prevention, spanking, etc.)	288	79.1
Family Dynamics (working parents, child care, siblings, etc.)	138	37.9
Parent resources (contact information for parent support groups, ND Dept. of Health, Children's Special Health Services, Consumer Product Safety Commission, etc.)	46	12.6
Other	4	1.1

*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 3. Amount of time spent in a typical week reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues

Amount of time spent reading	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
None at all	15	4.1
Less than 1 hour	151	41.7
From 1 to 2 hours	164	45.3
More than 2 hours	23	6.4
Do not know	9	2.5
Total	362	100.0

Appendix Table 4. Number of issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter received

Number of newsletters received	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
One issue	14	4.0
2 to 4 issues	93	26.4
5 to 7 issues	91	25.9
8 or more issues	75	21.3
Do not know	79	22.4
Total	352	100.0

Appendix Table 5. Age of parents

Age	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
19 and younger	2	0.6
20 to 24 years	47	12.9
25 to 29 years	140	38.6
30 to 34 years	111	30.6
35 to 40 years	55	15.2
Older than 40 years of age	8	2.2
Total	363	100.0

Appendix Table 6. Access to the Internet

Internet access	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Yes	332	92.0
No	26	7.2
Prefer not to answer	3	0.8
Total	361	100.0

Appendix Table 7. Amount of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter typically read

Amount of newsletter read	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
All of it	137	38.2
Most of it	122	34.0
Some of it	59	16.4
None at all	23	6.4
Do not know	18	5.0
Total	359	100.0

Appendix Table 8. Amount of time typically spent reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter

Time spent reading the newsletter	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Less than 1/2 hour	170	53.8
1/2 to 1 hour	124	39.2
From 1 to 2 hours	7	2.2
More than 2 hours	3	0.9
Do not know	12	3.8
Total	316	100.0

Appendix Table 9. Length of time the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter is saved

Length of time the newsletter is saved	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Less than 1 week	100	27.7
1 week to 1 month	97	26.9
More than 1 month, but less than 6 months	60	16.6
6 months or more	59	16.3
Do not know	45	12.5
Total	361	100.0

Appendix Table 10. Level of usefulness of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter's information regarding the following topics

Topics	Level of usefulness (1=Not at all, 5=Very useful)										
	Mean*	Percent of respondents (N=364)							Not sure	Missing	Total
		1	2	3	4	5					
Child Development	4.5	1.1	0.8	8.5	25.5	55.5	5.8	2.7	100.0		
Health and Safety	4.2	1.4	1.6	13.7	34.6	39.6	6.0	3.0	100.0		
Family Dynamics	3.6	1.6	8.2	28.8	29.1	17.0	11.8	3.3	100.0		
Parent Resources	3.4	3.3	12.9	28.3	22.5	14.8	13.7	4.4	100.0		
Overall usefulness	4.3	1.4	0.8	9.6	36.0	37.9	6.9	7.4	100.0		

*Means are based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "Not at all" and 5 being "Very useful" and exclude "Not sure" and "Missing" responses.

Appendix Table 11. Level of agreement with the following statements regarding the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter

Statements	Level of agreement (1=Not at all, 5=A great deal)										
	Mean*	Percent of respondents (N=364)							Not sure	Missing	Total
		1	2	3	4	5					
The newsletter helped me to better understand my baby's stage of development	4.3	0.8	2.5	9.9	36.3	39.8	8.0	2.7	100.0		
The amount of information in the newsletter(s) is appropriate	4.3	0.3	1.1	12.4	37.4	37.9	8.5	2.5	100.0		
The type of information in the newsletter(s) is useful	4.3	0.3	1.1	10.7	39.8	38.5	7.1	2.5	100.0		
The layout of information in the newsletter(s) is appealing	3.8	2.2	5.5	22.8	36.5	21.7	8.8	2.5	100.0		

*Means are based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "Agree not at all" and 5 being "Agree a great deal" and exclude "Not sure" and "Missing" responses.

Appendix Table 12. Level of agreement with the following statements regarding the information in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter

The information in the newsletter...	Level of agreement (1=Not at all, 5=A great deal)								
	Mean*	Percent of respondents (N=364)							
		1	2	3	4	5	Not sure	Missing	Total
Caused me to provide more things for my baby to feel, look at, and listen to	3.4	10.2	8.0	21.2	25.0	18.4	13.5	3.8	100.0
Caused me to talk to my baby more	3.3	9.3	10.4	25.5	23.1	15.4	12.9	3.3	100.0
Caused me to be less angry when my baby is difficult	3.2	12.1	9.1	26.1	20.1	15.1	14.0	3.6	100.0
Caused me to smile, kiss, and hug my baby more	3.1	15.7	11.0	21.4	20.3	14.3	13.7	3.6	100.0
Caused me to respond more quickly when my baby cried	3.0	15.1	11.3	24.7	17.6	13.2	14.6	3.6	100.0

*Means are based on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 being "Agree not at all" and 5 being "Agree a great deal" and exclude "Not sure" and "Missing" responses.

Appendix Table 13. Reasons that might limit availability to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting

Reasons limiting reading availability	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
I don't have enough time	157	43.1
Nothing	103	28.3
I already know much of the information	86	23.6
When I do have time, I am just too tired	61	16.8
I don't like to read	10	2.7
Other	28	7.7

*Percentages do not equal 100.0 due to multiple responses.

Appendix Table 14. Likelihood of reading the newsletters if they were only available online

Effect of making the newsletter available online	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Less likely to read it	160	44.3
Would not make a difference	124	34.3
More likely to read it	77	21.3
Total	361	100.0

Appendix Table 15. Preferred method to be reminded of the availability of the version that corresponds to your infant's age if the newsletters were only available online

Method of reminding	Respondents	
	Number	Percent
Email	228	63.0
Postcard	50	13.8
I don't want a reminder	50	13.8
Text message	6	1.7
Other	28	7.7
Totals	362	100.0



February 5, 2009

Dear Parent,

Each year, the North Dakota Department of Health's Division of Family Health publishes several newsletters entitled *Parenting the First Year*, which are designed to follow the age of the baby through the first year of life. The purpose of the newsletters is to provide parents of newborn children educational information about parenting. The newsletters also provide contact information for various parental resources. The department's records indicate that you likely have already received one or more editions of this newsletter.

Now, we would like to ask your help in evaluating the *Parenting the First Year* newsletters. The North Dakota Department of Health has contracted with the North Dakota State Data Center at North Dakota State University to conduct an evaluation. Enclosed you will find a very short survey.

Regardless of whether or not you have read the newsletters, your input is very important. Information gathered from you and other survey participants will help us to determine the effectiveness of the newsletters and how we may improve them. In addition, you'll also have the opportunity to tell us what information you're most interested in.

You are being sent the survey because your name was randomly selected from a list of parents in North Dakota who have an infant between 1 month and 16 months of age. The information you provide will be combined with that of other participants. The surveys are anonymous and confidential, so please do not write any identifying information on the surveys.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey. For your convenience, we have enclosed a prepaid self-addressed envelope. It is important that we have your survey returned by **Friday, February 27, 2009**.

If you have questions about this project, you may call Dr. Richard Rathge at 701-231-8621, or Kjersti Hintz at 701-328-2784. Thank you so much for taking the time to help us with this important survey.

Richard W. Rathge, Director
North Dakota State Data Center
North Dakota State University
Dept. 8000, P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, North Dakota 58108-6050

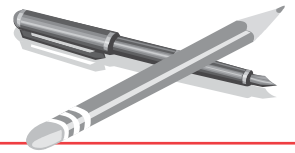
Kjersti Hintz, MCH Nurse Consultant
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 East Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200

North Dakota Department of Health *Parenting the First Year* Newsletter Survey

- Use a pencil or blue or black pen.
- Fill bubbles completely.
- Do not mark answers with Xs or ✓s.

Correct Mark: 

Incorrect Marks:   



Q1. Where do you get information about parenting and/or newborn issues? Fill in the ovals of all that apply to you.

- Parenting magazines
- Books
- Look it up on the Internet myself
- From my doctor/pediatrician
- Home visitors (Right Track or Infant Development Program)
- Family Health Information Centers (Family Voices, Pathfinder, Parental Information Center/Extension)
- Parenting the First Year* newsletter from the North Dakota Department of Health
- Public Health Nurses
- Health Tracks Program
- Remember from previous births
- From friends/relatives
- Other: please tell us _____

Q2. When you're looking for information, which of the following topics are you most interested in? Fill in the ovals of all that apply to you.

- Child Development (stages of growth, behavior and learning, brain development, etc.)
- Health and Safety (chronic health conditions, immunizations, feeding/nutrition, safe sleeping, fire and burn prevention, spanking, etc)
- Family Dynamics (working parents, child care, siblings, etc.)
- Parent Resources (contact info for: parent support groups, North Dakota Department of Health, Children's Special Health Services, Consumer Product Safety Commission, etc.)
- Other: please tell us _____

Q3. How much time do you spend, in a typical week, reading educational material about parenting and/or newborn issues?

- None at all
- Less than 1 hour
- Between 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours
- Do not know

Q4. How many issues of the North Dakota Department of Health's *Parenting the First Year* newsletter have you received?

- One issue
- 2 to 4 issues
- 5 to 7 issues
- 8 or more issues
- Do not know

Q5. How much of the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter do you typically read?

- None of it (SKIP TO Q7)
- Some of it
- Most of it
- All of it
- Do not know (SKIP TO Q7)

Q6. How much time do you typically spend reading the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter?

- Less than 1/2 hour
- 1/2 to 1 hour
- Between 1-2 hours
- More than 2 hours
- Do not know

Q7. What are some reasons that might limit your ability to read the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter or other educational material on parenting? Fill in the ovals of all that apply to you.

- I don't have enough time
- When I do have time, I am just too tired
- I don't like to read
- I already know much of the information
- Nothing
- Other: please tell us _____

Q8. How long do you usually save, or plan to save, the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter?

- Less than 1 week
- 1 week to 1 month
- More than 1 month, but less than 6 months
- 6 months or more
- Do not know

Q9. On a one to five scale, with one being "not at all" useful and five being "very useful," how useful is the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter's information regarding the following topics?

	Not at all useful				Very useful	Not sure
A. <u>Child Development</u> (stages of growth, behavior and learning, brain development, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
B. <u>Health and Safety</u> (chronic health conditions, immunizations, feeding/nutrition, safe sleeping, fire and burn prevention, spanking, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
C. <u>Family Dynamics</u> (working parents, child care, siblings, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
D. <u>Parent Resources</u> (parent support groups, North Dakota Department of Health, Children's Special Health Services, Consumer Product Safety Commission, etc.)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
E. <u>Overall usefulness</u>	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
F. Other: please tell us _____						

Q10. On a one to five scale, with one being "not at all" and five being "a great deal", how much do you agree with the following statements regarding the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter?

	Not at all				A great deal	Not sure
A. The layout of information in the newsletter(s) is appealing	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
B. The type of information in the newsletter(s) is useful	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
C. The amount of information in the newsletter(s) is appropriate	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
D. The newsletter helped me to better understand my baby's stage of development	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Q11. On a one to five scale, with one being "not at all" and five being "a great deal", please indicate how much you agree with the following statements regarding how the information in the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter relates to you.

The information in the newsletter...	Not at all				A great deal	Not sure
A. Caused me to talk to my baby more	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
B. Caused me to smile, kiss, and hug my baby more	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
C. Caused me to be less angry when my baby is difficult	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
D. Caused me to respond more quickly when my baby cried	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
E. Caused me to provide more things for my baby to feel, look at, and listen to	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Q12. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the newsletter?

Q13. We're considering making the *Parenting the First Year* newsletter available in an online format. If the newsletters were only available online, would you be more likely to read it, less likely to read it, or would it not make a difference?

- More likely to read it
- Less likely to read it
- Would not make a difference

Q14. If the newsletters were only available online, how would you like to be reminded of the availability of the version that corresponds to your infant's age?

- Postcard
- Text message
- Email
- I don't want a reminder
- Other: please tell us _____

Q15. Please tell us your age.

- Younger than 19
- 20 to 24 years
- 25 to 29 years
- 30 to 34 years
- 35 to 40 years
- Older than 40 years of age
- Prefer to not answer

Q16. Do you have access to the Internet?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer to not answer

Additional comments.

Thank you for helping us with this important survey!