

# Are you pregnant and/or parenting?



Connecticut takes a recovery friendly approach to supporting **individuals and families with prenatal substance exposure** – one that is nonjudgmental and compassionate. There are many state resources available to pregnant individuals, one of the most important is the Family Care Plan.

Two federal laws help to support best outcomes for expecting families **when prenatal substance exposure is identified**: The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA).

To achieve this, they require a **Family Care Plan for families who experience prenatal substance exposure.**



## What is a Family Care Plan (FCP)? How do I start one?

An FCP is a document created before birth that includes services and supports you have in place for you and your baby. These can include medical and behavioral healthcare, material and financial support, and other resources required to meet wellness and parenting needs. Ideally, this plan is created with your provider, but you may also choose to work with anyone on your support team, such as family and friends, trusted medical or behavioral provider, or a human service agency. Make sure that your prenatal care provider and/or your birthing hospital has a copy of your completed plan on file.

## What are the elements of a Family Care Plan?

- Physical health
  - Postpartum care
  - Support with feeding
  - Medication and pain management
  - Contraception and reproductive health
- Behavioral health
  - Engagement, treatment, recovery supports
  - Treatment for partner/other family members
- Infant health and development
  - High risk follow-up care, with referral to specialty care
  - Developmental screening and assessment, linkage to early intervention services
  - Early care and education program
- Parenting/family support
  - Coordinated case management
  - Home Visiting/Head Start
  - Housing, employment support, child care, transportation



## What is CAPTA?

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was written during the 1970s. Over time, it has changed and now includes more protections for infants and children. In CT, hospitals are required to submit what is known as a “CAPTA Notification” when an infant with prenatal substance exposure is born. This CAPTA notification is “blind,” meaning that no identifying information on the parent or child is disclosed. If your baby is identified as prenatally substance exposed, your hospital provider will submit this notification which also asks them to verify your Family Care Plan.

## Does a Family Care Plan put me at risk for a Child Protective Services report?

NO. In CT, prenatal substance exposure alone is not grounds for child protective services involvement. However, a CPS report will be made to the CT DCF Careline if your provider suspects abuse or neglect outside of prenatal exposure alone. Having a Family Care Plan completed before delivery helps to mitigate potentially unnecessary reports to child protective services if there are no safety concerns.



## What will happen to my baby after delivery?

If your baby is identified as prenatally exposed to substances, your birthing hospital will complete a CAPTA Notification, which includes completing your Family Care Plan. If you do not have a plan, you should create one with your hospital provider before discharge. A Family Care Plan is required by law to complete a CAPTA Notification.



Specifics of care for your newborn will vary by hospital. Some hospitals put infants with prenatal substance exposure into the neonatal intensive care unit to be monitored and to be given medications to manage withdrawal symptoms. Some hospitals use the “rooming -in” approach where your baby will stay in the room with you and you will provide nurturing and supports for your baby. You are able to tour facilities before you deliver to select the one that suits your needs.

## How do I start the conversation with my provider?

It is encouraged that you disclose any use with your provider/s. This will help ensure the best care for both you and your baby. It can be hard to have these conversations but it can be helpful to practice them with someone you trust.

Reach out for support as early in your pregnancy as you can. Open up to someone who can help you start this journey. This may include your significant other, trusted family and friends, your behavioral or medical provider, or a human service agency.

SEPI-CT has many recovery friendly and non-judgmental resources for birthing people. You are not alone. Visit <https://www.sepict.org/individuals-and-families/resources/>

