

## Does your child have a Personal Health Record?

'Thank heavens for my Blue Book,' a friend said recently. 'What with having a family and a job, there's always so much to remember - but if I need to check when the children's next immunisation is due, or to write down the phone number of my local early childhood health centre, it's all there in the Blue Book.'

The 'Blue Book' is another name for the Personal Health Record. This booklet, bound in a blue plastic cover, is produced by the NSW Department of Health, and given to all parents in NSW after the birth of a baby. The book is useful for parents because it provides an important record of their child's health.

### How is the Blue Book used?

It works like this. Before you leave hospital, the details of your baby's birth and of the first examination of your baby after delivery are recorded in the book by hospital staff. After that, each time you take your child to the doctor, the early childhood health centre, or to hospital, take the Blue Book with you. This means the doctor, nurse or other health professional can write down details of each consultation (the date, the reason for the visit and what action was taken) in the book.

Babies and young children also need regular health and development checks by a doctor or child and family health nurse, formerly know as early child health nurse, to check on their progress, and to identify any problems needing treatment. The Blue Book has information for parents on when children need these checks, and pages for health workers to record test results.

There are also pages for parents to write down details and answer questions about their child's growth and development (the child and family health nurse, formerly know as early child health nurse, can help you fill these in). Some of these details - like when your baby first said 'Mama' or 'Dada', or walked for the first time - are family milestones which you'll enjoy looking back on in years to come.

The book also includes a page of useful telephone numbers including emergency services and information services for parents, as well as a page for parents to record telephone numbers for their personal use - such as phone numbers of the local hospital, doctor, dentist and the child's school. In other words, it's a great way to keep important information together in one place.

### What are the advantages of the Blue Book?

Caring for the health of children involves parents and health workers working as a team - the book helps parents and health professionals keep track of a child's health and development. It also means that each time you take a child to see a different health professional, the Blue Book provides him or her with the child's medical history - this is particularly helpful in cases where parents aren't fluent in English.

### **How long do parents use the Blue Book for?**

The Blue Book is designed so that it can be used from birth until your child turns 18. It's important to use the book up until your child starts school. And you are encouraged to continue using the book throughout your child's childhood and adolescence.

### **How do parents get copies of the Blue Book?**

The book is given to all women after the birth of a child - it is usually given out by hospital staff, along with other documents such as the birth registration form. Parents of babies or small children who don't have a Blue Book - perhaps because they've mislaid their copy, or because their children were born outside NSW - can ask the local early childhood centre about how to obtain a copy.

If you need help making phone calls in English, ring the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

You can find more health information in your language on the Multicultural Communication website at <<http://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au>>.

Telephone numbers are correct at time of publication but are not continually updated. You may need to check the numbers in the telephone directory.