

# Hafiza Stands Her Ground



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# Hafiza Stands Her Ground

A health reader for Entry 2  
ESOL students

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There were nearly 700,000 new babies born in the UK in 2015 and around 40% of these were first births to new parents. The current trend is for the number of births to increase each year.

Being a parent for the first time can be a very challenging experience because there is so much to learn. However, there is a wealth of information out there, both online and from experienced health professionals and childcare organisations, to help people develop good parenting skills and understand how their child will develop both mentally and physically.

If you are a new parent and need some help you can ask your midwife, health visitor or GP for advice. You can also get more information about child development, immunisation and parenting from your local children's centre or baby clinic. Your local baby feeding support service can help if you have problems breastfeeding your baby. Also, parent and baby groups can be a valuable support for new parents. More information about the services available can be found on the NHS website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



Hafiza is 22 years old and comes from Bangladesh. She has just had her first baby, a boy called Aayan. She came to the UK three years ago with her husband. She has been going to English classes but she doesn't feel very confident when speaking English and she doesn't get many opportunities to practice.



Hafiza and Yusuf's families still live in Bangladesh. She really misses them. Her husband Yusuf came here to study and get a job. He is out most of the time because he studies during the day and works most evenings in a restaurant. Hafiza feels lonely because she doesn't know anyone in London.



Hafiza is worried there might be something wrong with her baby. She feels unsure about how to look after him. Sometimes she rings up her mum in Bangladesh. Her mum always has an opinion and tells Hafiza what to do. Hafiza's mum is a strong woman! Hafiza doesn't always agree with her ideas but she keeps her opinion to herself.



One day, when the health visitor is weighing Aayan, she asks Hafiza if she would like to join a parent's group and gives her a leaflet.

"Do you want to become a better parent?"

DIY Health is an 8 week course where you can learn about childcare and meet other parents at your local health centre."



Hafiza shows the leaflet to Yusuf when he comes home from work. "This course sounds interesting," she says "but I think it might be too difficult for me."

"I think you should go." says Yusuf

"You will be able to meet other people and it will help us to feel more confident about looking after our baby." Hafiza decides to go on the course.



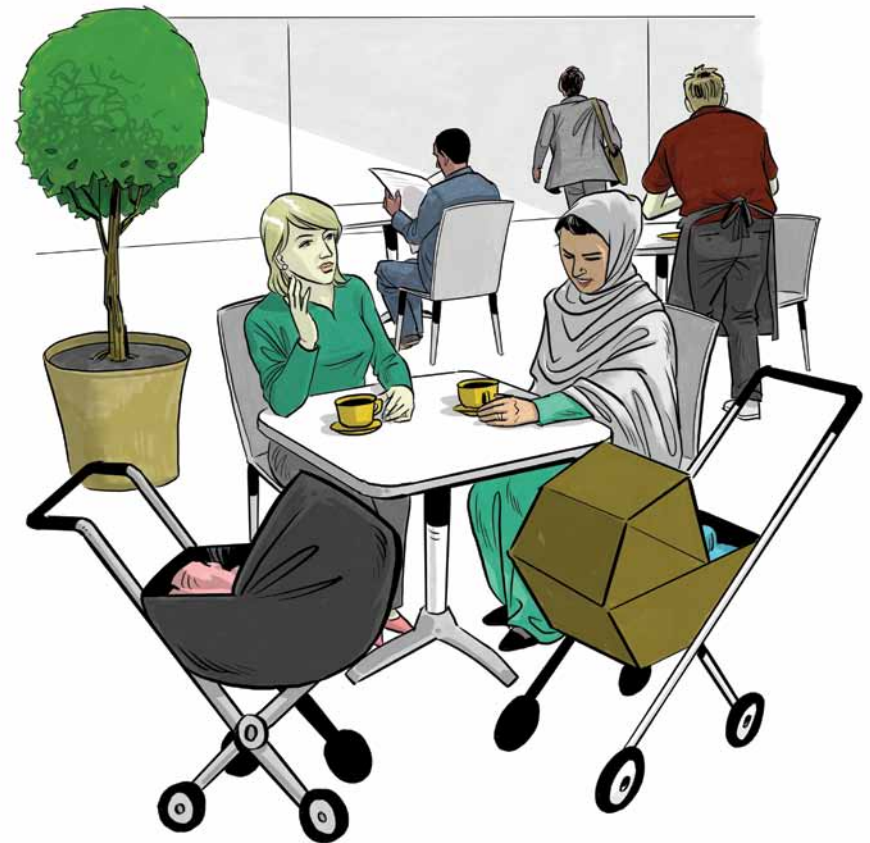
On the first day of the course, everyone sits round in a circle. A woman called Sue is running the course. She asks everyone to introduce themselves and say why they are there. "I want to be a good parent for my little boy," says Hafiza. "He's my first baby and I sometimes worry that he might be ill or not developing properly. I'm not sure who to ask for help."



"There's a lot of help out there for parents," says Sue. "Your pharmacist can give you advice if he has any minor health problems. Also, there's a baby feeding support service. You can find out how to contact the service through your health visitor, baby clinic or at your local children's centre." "I didn't know there are so many people to ask for help!" says Hafiza.



As a group, they decide what topics they would like to cover. The parents decide they want to learn about child development, introducing solid foods, healthy eating and common childhood illnesses. They want to learn as much as possible to give their babies the best start in life.



Hafiza feels nervous about speaking at first, but once she gets to know the other parents, she soon begins to enjoy the sessions. It's not long before Hafiza has made friends with another woman in the group. They both have young babies and are able to share anything they are worried about and discuss it.



Hafiza rings up her mum to tell her about the course. "I've learnt so much about childcare," she says. "Aayan is nearly 3 months old now, so I'm taking him for some more vaccinations soon." "I hope you're not going to let them give him that MMR jab when he gets older," says her mum. "It's not safe."



"That's not right mum," says Hafiza. "There's been lots of research that shows that the MMR jab is perfectly safe. There's no evidence of any link between MMR and autism. I'd be really worried if he didn't have it because measles is very infectious and can cause serious complications such as pneumonia."





Hafiza suddenly hears herself speaking and realises how much more self-confident she feels.

For once, she is able to stand her ground and tell her mother what she thinks rather than asking her for advice. "I've come a long way" she thinks "and I feel much happier now."

## Comprehension Questions

1. What is DIY Health?

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2. What can you learn on a DIY Health course?

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3. Why does Hafiza want to go on a DIY Health course?

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4. What is an MMR jab?

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5. Why is it important that babies have the MMR jab?

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6. If you are worried about your baby, where can you go for advice?

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## Health Check at the Doctor's

- ☾ Hello. I've come for a new baby review.
- ☾ Hello Hafiza. My job today is to answer any questions you have about parenting, immunisation and how to look after your baby. If you have any worries, we can discuss them.
- ☾ Aayan never seems to stop crying. I'm worried he isn't getting enough food. He always seems to be hungry.
- ☾ Babies cry for many different reasons and crying doesn't hurt them. He may simply have a windy tummy.
- ☾ I'm finding breastfeeding very difficult. I don't think I've got enough milk.
- ☾ It takes time to get going with breastfeeding. Don't give up yet. You need to give yourself and your baby a bit more time to get used to it.
- ☾ I'm thinking of changing over to formula milk.
- ☾ Breastfeeding is good for babies because it helps to protect the baby from infections and diseases. I can give you the details of the local baby feeding support service and they will help you.
- ☾ Thank you. That would be very helpful.

## Glossary

- advice** what someone thinks you should do
- autism** a condition where children find communication with others difficult
- child development** how a child grows both mentally and physically
- complications** medical problems that happen because of another illness
- confident** to feel sure something is right
- infectious** able to be passed from one person to another
- MMR jab** Measles, Mumps & Rubella injection
- nervous** frightened or worried about something
- opinion** what someone thinks about something
- opportunities** chances to be able to do something
- stands her ground** to fight for what she believes in
- support service** an organisation that gives help to the public
- vaccination** injection to stop someone getting a disease



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