The Real Nappy Initiative comes under the Recycle for Buckinghamshire campaign co-ordinated by the Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire. The Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire is made up of all the district and county councils in Bucks: Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Chiltern District Council, South Buckinghamshire District Council and Wycombe District Council.

Buckinghamshire Real Nappy Initiative:
- Encourages parents to explore Real Nappy and Natural Infant Hygiene options to help reduce the amount of disposable nappies entering Buckinghamshire's waste stream. The increasing cost of disposing of disposables and associated waste will be unsustainable in the future.
- Provides opportunities for parents and carers to see real nappies locally along with free information to enable families to make informed decisions.
- Provides free Nappy Information Packs and Real Nappy Handbooks to all Buckinghamshire enquirers.
- Provides financial incentive to parents who use real nappies on their children by administering the £30 Cash Back scheme in Bucks. Terms and Conditions apply and Subject to Availability.
- Administers the Buckinghamshire Real Nappy Exchange. A free service for parents to sell/donate/buy 2nd hand real nappies locally.
- Provides training and free Real Nappy Toolkits to health professionals working with antenatal or postnatal families.
- Supports local and national businesses that provide opportunities, information and support to parents. However, no one company or brand is endorsed above another. Illustrated nappies are used as examples only.

Contact Buckinghamshire Real Nappy Initiative on: 01296 382539 realnappy@buckscc.gov.uk www.recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk

What is Buckinghamshire Real Nappy Initiative?
- Selecting the right nappy for your child
- Where to see + borrow library kits, purchase or launder real nappies in Buckinghamshire
- £30 cash back claim form

The Real Nappy Guide
www.recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Real Nappy Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What is a nappy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What’s in your nappy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Health:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allergies, eczema, skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sensitivities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How often should a nappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>be changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nappy rash and how to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avoid it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Disposable nappies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Real nappies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Financial costs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reusable versus Disposable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nappies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Real nappies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td><strong>Environmental costs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reusable versus Disposable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nappies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Real nappy options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nappies for the newborn stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Real nappies to use after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 Part Flat Nappy Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2 Part SHAPED Real Nappy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>All-In-One Real Nappy Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>POCKET Real Nappy Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Toilet Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Real Nappy Accessories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Nappy Guide

• This nappy guide will help you to choose the right nappy for your child.
• All current options of nappies will be explored to encourage you to make an informed choice.
• It will cover the health, financial, practical and environmental considerations that nappies impact on.

What is a Nappy?

The sole purpose of a nappy is to absorb urine (pee), contain faeces (poo) for ease of removal!

A wide range of nappies are available to do this job but there are 2 main categories:

‘Real’ washable nappies: made of fibres and clothing material that can be washed and reused indefinitely.

‘Disposable’ throwaway nappies: made of paper, plastics and gels; that can only be used once and are thrown away after each use.
What’s in your Nappy?

• **Disposable nappies** contain a combination of **virgin wood fluff pulp**; types of plastic including: PP, PE, PDT, PET, **superabsorbent polymer gels** commonly known as SAPS, (these are derived from crude oil which is a non-renewable resource) for absorption; **paper, tape, adhesives, calcium carbonate, bleaches, polyester, elastic, dyes, perfumes, lotion**, and coated plastic for strength, odour control and waterproofing.

• **No ingredients are listed on the products wrapper.** Disposables are generally used in tandem with disposable wet wipes which do list further chemical and natural ingredients used.
Real nappies are made from a combination of natural materials such as cotton, hessian, wool or bamboo for absorption.

Wool and man-made fibres such as polyester fleece, nylon, polyurelamine (PUL) and velcro are used for strength and waterproofing.

Choice of organic cottons and quick growing bamboo are available, to avoid contact with possible pesticides residue and selecting plant-based laundry products reduce further exposure to synthetic laundry chemicals.

All ingredients are listed on the nappies and laundry products.
Health: allergies, eczema, skin sensitivities

• If you or your child has allergies, eczema, skin sensitivities or chemical sensitivities, avoiding or minimising contact with chemicals may be of concern to you.
• UK legislation does not require disposable nappy manufacturers to list ingredients on the wrapper, making ingredients harder to identify and avoid.
• Disposable nappy manufacturers can provide a list of ingredients on request.
• Real nappies have all their ingredients listed to help you decide which ones suit your situation.
• Real nappies can be washed at 30°, 40° or 60° to kill all known viruses and bacteria, in detergents that you choose.
Regardless of whether you decide to use disposable or real nappies, disposal of your child’s faeces (poo) is a serious issue to consider.

By adopting the following practice, faeces should be put in the sewerage system, where it can be treated.

**If using a disposable nappy:** line the inside with a paper liner. When changing a soiled nappy, remove the liner containing the poo and flush down the toilet. The nappy can then be put in your household bin. Adopting this practice will remove excessive odours whilst storing your nappies before waste collection, especially if you have fortnightly waste collections and/or during the summer months.

**If using a real nappy:** line the inside with either a paper liner or fleece. When changing a soiled nappy, remove the liner containing poo and flush down the toilet. If using fleece, allow the poo to drop into the toilet/or sluice fleece in the water flow then wash along with your nappies.
• **A minimum of 6 changes** should be completed per 24 hours, regardless of the type of nappy used. That’s a change every 4 hours – as recommended by paediatricians. A newborn is generally changed up to 10 times per 24hrs.

• **Nappies at night** Once your child is sleeping through the night, the nappy can be left on longer, so more changes generally happen during the day.

• **Soiled nappies** The nappy should be changed immediately, as soon as a child poos in the nappy.

• Cotton wool or washable wipes used with warm water and/or olive oil based baby soaps/cleansers can be used up to toilet training. They are free from strong chemicals and are a natural alternative to expensive throwaway wet wipes. Washable wipes can be used on the go – carry a small pump spray filled with warm water or carry damp wipes in a small wet bag.

• If heated up, the chemicals in disposables may pose unknown risks to your immediate home environment and this practice should be avoided. Keep a couple of spare real nappies in the cupboard for use at times like these.
• **Teething, weaning, illness and medication** can cause the pH balance of urine and faeces to become more acidic which can irritate the skin.

• **Nappy rash is linked to the length of time a child is left in its nappy.** Urine (pee) is sterile on leaving the body but it releases ammonia on contact with the air.

• **Prolonged exposure to ammonia** on the skin will encourage nappy rash to develop, as the skin reacts to its presence.

• **Adopting regular nappy changes** and fully cleansing the nappy area by removing all traces of ammonia/urine and poo, will reduce and prevent nappy rash occurring.

• **A child suffering from nappy rash** should not be cleansed with commercial wet wipes, they contain alcohol and will sting during nappy rash episodes.

• **Include regular bottom airing opportunities in your daily nappy change routine.** Allow up to ½ hour or more after cleansing, to enable the skin to breathe naturally.

• **During nappy rash episodes leave the nappy off for as long as possible** to encourage skin to cool and heal.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Health: Disposable nappies</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Material Used</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable nappies are predominantly made of paper, like maternity pants.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Body Temperature</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gel in disposables may heat up from body and external heat so can add to your child’s temperature. If wearing disposables, monitor child’s comfort particularly in hot weather.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Absorption</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disposable nappies contain gel granules which swell as they get wet. As they swell they get heavier and grow in size. Poo is not absorbed, it sits on top of the nappy core. Disposables should never be put on a child to be used in water such as a bath, swimming pool or the sea.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Toilet Training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable nappies prevent children feeling wet, making them more comfortable but have the disadvantage of prolonging toilet training. The experience of feeling the ‘wetness’ trigger is removed, so in some cases, a child’s connection of urine release with the feeling of being wet can be delayed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skin Sensitivities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fitting: Too tight or too loose?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Health: Real nappies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Used</th>
<th>Real nappies are predominantly made of cotton, along with man-made fibres like normal pants.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body Temperature</td>
<td>‘Cotton’ real nappies encourage the nappy to ‘breathe’, so regulating body temperature and facilitating moisture evaporation. However, man-made fibres used in real nappies could potentially increase body temperature, so monitor in extreme heat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absorption</td>
<td>Natural fibres such as cotton, bamboo or hessian are used to absorb urine so work exactly like a towel. The absorbent core can be lined with fleece, which repels moisture and acts like an air cushion removing direct contact with urine. Poo is not absorbed, so sits on top for easy removal prior to washing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet Training</td>
<td>As absorption is naturally slower in real nappies, children are able to connect with the release of urine and the wetness sensation. Real nappies can be used as an aid during toilet training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skin Sensitivities</strong></td>
<td>Real nappies do not have gel and are made from clothing fibres. In a small minority of cases, children can be sensitive to materials like wool, fleece or nylon edging (if present) and develop ‘Contact Dermatitis: a skin rash, blister or hives on contact with the material. Remove the nappy, cleanse thoroughly immediately and choose a real nappy without material present or disposable nappy without gel. Seek medical advice if necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td>Real nappies are bigger to begin with but don’t swell in size. Selecting outer clothing with expandable waist bands makes using real nappies easier – children’s clothing manufacturer’s are now allowing extra material to accommodate real nappies. Vest Extenders can also be attached to the bottom of vests to provide extra room. Some real nappies are slimmer fitting with no padding on the hips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fitting: Too tight or too loose?</strong></td>
<td>Real nappies are clothes! Once you have selected the best design for your child’s body shape, they can be adjusted to fit perfectly. Any red marks or leaks mean that they are not fitted correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movement</strong></td>
<td>A baby will roll over, sit, crawl, and walk in its own time. Real nappies provide extra support for babies with ‘clicky’ hips, and cushioning for the lumbar region when they learn to sit. When learning to walk, toddlers will also have extra padding to land on preventing bruising to the coccyx.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Financial Costs: Reusable versus Disposable nappies

• If your child is in disposable nappies you’ll be spending between £5-10 a week for about 2.5 years (£650-£1,300)*

• If you buy the cheapest system you can buy enough Real Nappies to last you from birth right through to potty training for as little as £80. If you splash out it can be between £200-£350 plus £50 for accessories*

• Washing reusables costs about £1 a week (£130 over 2.5 years)*

• With all this in mind you can save from £300 to £1300 by using real nappies (depending on what real nappies you buy and what disposables you compare to)

• You can save at least a further £250 on reusable wet wipes (Cheeky wipes kits cost around £30)

• If you have more than one child in nappies or use the real nappies on other children in the future the savings are doubled!

**2013. www.greatbritishnappyhunt.co.uk/nappy_why.html
Financial Costs: Real Nappies

• You can spread the cost of buying real nappies, so you don’t have to buy them all up front (especially if you are buying sized nappies). However, you can often find deals for bulk nappy sets.
• There is a vibrant second hand market for real nappies so you may wish to buy preloved or sell on and recoup some costs when your child is potty trained.
• There is also a cost to Buckinghamshire as a whole to dispose of real nappies. Its costs an increasing amount of money to put waste in landfill and this is funded through council tax.
Environmental Costs: Reusable versus Disposable Nappies

- The Environment Agency reported in 2008 that, used responsibly; Real Nappies can be 40% better for the environment than disposable nappies. To achieve this parents needed to wash at 60 degrees (or less) in full loads and using A rated appliances. They should also avoid tumble drying and use the nappies again for subsequent children.
- 3 billion disposable nappies are thrown away each and every year in the UK, 90% of these are landfilled.*
- 2-4% of waste entering landfill is disposable nappies**
- Disposable nappies are one of, if not the biggest, single identifiable products in the domestic waste stream today.
- Landfill sites produce methane which is a harmful greenhouse gas.
- A baby in disposables will need about 4,000 nappy changes in total, that’s 4,000 disposable nappies in a landfill site. This equates to around 1 tonne of landfill waste per baby per year! *
- Alternative disposable nappies that claim to be biodegradable do not break down any quicker in a landfill environment than a normal disposable nappy (however, they are likely to have less chemicals and made from materials that may be kinder to your baby’s skin)
- Alternative “biodegradable” nappies can not be put into garden compost bins or green waste collections.

* Go Real
**www.greatbritishnappyhunt.co.uk/nappy_why.html
Real Nappy Options

• With hundreds of brands, designs and retailers, real nappies offer a wide variety of choice but can be overwhelming to begin with.

• Real nappies can be started at any time, from birth through to nighttime toilet training.

• Real nappies are exactly like clothes so are washed & dried in exactly the same way.

• Some of the colourful names you will hear are: Bumgenius, Bambino Mio, Charlie Banana, Little Lambs, Lollipop, Motherease, PopNgrow, Tots Bots and Wonderoos, - to name but a few.

However, ALL revolved around 4 basic systems:

2-Part-Nappy:
2 detachable parts – 1 absorbent inner part and 1 waterproof ‘outer’ wrap for quick washing & drying.

All-In-One:
No detachable parts, is put on/taken off in one go but some designs can take longer to dry. New designs are quicker drying.

Pocket Nappy:
Similar to All-In-One but with advantages of a 2-Part-Nappy. Waterproof wrap lined with fleece on the inside, with an opening in the back to pop in an absorbent pad/booster. Can be put on/taken off in one go, washes and dries quickly.
There are a number of nappy options to consider during your last few weeks of maternity. What type of nappy to use straight after birth and then in the long term. It’s not all or nothing. Many parents choose to use both disposables and reusables depending on their situation. For example some carry on using disposables at night or when they are out and about.

**Disposables:**
For immediately after the birth and whilst you are in hospital, disposable nappies might be the realistic option to consider. Remember disposable nappies were originally designed to be used in situations when parents were away from home e.g. hospital, out visiting or shopping, holidays etc.

**Real Nappies:**
If you would like to use real nappies straight from birth, whilst in the hospital setting, this is possible too. Just consider a real nappy that is easy for your midwife or birth partner to use.

**Home Births**
If you are having a home birth, then it really is up to you which nappy you prefer to use as you tailor everything to your specific home environment!
Birth Partners

If you choose to use real nappies, whether at home or in hospital, this could be a lovely job to give to your birth-partner as your midwife may not be familiar with your real nappy. Properly primed (before the onset of labour!) your birth partner could take full responsibility of putting the very first real nappy on your newborn, leaving you and the midwife to the serious business of recovering!

Birth Weight

If you are approaching full term then all newborn real nappies should fit the average size baby (7lbs – 11lbs) with ease. If you are expecting to have your baby prematurely (possibly due to a planned caesarean for example) or a smaller baby, then again, there are real nappies available especially for smaller / prem babies.
Real Nappies to use after the Birth

**A Wrap and Booster** A very quick solution for the hospital/home setting immediately after birth is to use a small wrap with a cotton booster in it. They are so quick to put on, take off and wash. The booster can be lined with a paper liner, making meconium (babies’ 1st poo) easier to dispose of in the toilet! A very, cheap and quick option and is easy to use by midwives and birth partners.

**Terrys, Muslins or Prefolds** are also excellent after the initial ‘birth’ nappy has been put on. Because of the folding involved these aren’t the best nappies to use immediately after birth unless your birth partner or midwife are confident with these. However your 2nd nappy onwards could be a terry, muslin or prefold if you prefer not to use the wrap and booster or disposable nappy options.
In Hospital After The Birth

Have enough real nappies and wraps in your hospital bag for up to 3 days stay. Recommended amount: 18 absorbent parts and 6-8 wraps. Also have some paper liners if you prefer; 2 large wet nappy bags: 1 to collect all the used nappies whilst on the ward and 1 for your partner/family to take home a full bag of dirties to wash for the next day (if needed to).

If you are expected to stay on the ward for more than 2 days, again consider using disposables for ease. However if you would like to continue with real nappies, then this is also possible if you have someone who can come in on a daily basis to collect dirties and drop off clean ones.
2 Part Flat Nappy Systems:
A 2-Part FLAT Nappy System is where you have 2 separate parts to the nappy that you have to put together: a FLAT absorbent part that you fold, with a separate, waterproof wrap that goes over the top are Terry nappies, muslin or prefolds.

Terry Nappies, Muslins and Prefolds
One of the best options for the newborn period (up to 8-12 weeks) are Terry nappies or muslin. Once you learn the very quick folds they are the perfect option. The reasons for this are:
• They fit every shape and size of baby perfectly.
• Nappi Nippas are used instead of pins now, so no chance of pricking baby or your fingers. The nippas ensure the nappy stays snugly in place which means no leaking!
• They are very cheap to buy, approximately £2.00 each.
• Quick to wash and dry at home.
• Can be used for so many other things once baby is in the next size of nappy, so no wastage. Can be used as a booster for larger nappies or pocket wraps as your child grows.
• They can be used with snug fitting wraps such as Motherease Rikki (newborn size with special cut away to accommodate umbilical cord), which make an excellent combination.
• Baby grows so quickly in size and weight that they grow out of newborn terry nappies/muslins by 12 weeks. Think carefully before you buy a newborn ‘sized’ real nappy, which are more expensive, you will only be using them for a matter or weeks, which could be a waste of money in certain circumstances.

40cm, 60cm, 80cm Terry Nappies
Terry nappies come in ‘cm’ sizes the smallest is 40cm (this is the size that is perfect for approx 6lb-9lb newborn period for the first couple of weeks and it isn’t bulky) up to 80cm to fit a toddler. Terry’s become more difficult to use once baby starts to crawl or walk, but can be used to stuff a pocket nappy to make nappy changes quicker!
2-Part SHAPED Real Nappy Systems:
A 2-Part SHAPED Nappy System is where you have 2 separate parts to the nappy that you have to put together: a SHAPED absorbent part that is tailored to snugly fit children, with a separate, waterproof wrap that goes over the top.

- Tots bots Bamboozle and Little Lambs are examples of 2-Part SHAPED nappies that come in 2 different sizes, either Small or Large. If you choose to buy a complete set of this system, it is one of the most expensive systems to buy. Because 18-24 absorbent parts are needed in each size at approx £9.00-£12.00 per ‘absorbent’ nappy part.
- They need an outer, waterproof wrap that goes over the top. You will not need as many wraps at any one time. On average parents generally use between 6-8 wraps for the newborn period, dropping down to 4-6 wraps by the time they reach toddler stage – depending on preference. Wraps cost approx £6-10 depending on the design and make. They generally come in 3 sizes: Newborn/small, Medium and Large.
- Shaped nappies that are made from bamboo will take longer to dry. Therefore access to a tumble drier is recommended for these nappies.
- If you have a child who is a heavy wetter or if you would like to use real nappies at night, then these nappies are perfect. Consider having between 4-6 nappies for night time use in your nappy kit to allow for air-drying times +1-2 wraps to use with them.
- Bamboo is a natural sustainable material. This appeals to parents that prefer natural materials and are more concerned with the environmental impacts of nappies.
- Wraps can either be made from PUL or fleece. They are fully waterproof and breathable. Wraps that have gussets around the legs are particularly good at preventing any leaks.
All-In-One Real Nappy Systems

All-In-One real nappies have both the absorbent part and the waterproof wrap, stitched together.

- They are put on children in exactly the same way as a disposable nappy.
- They are often Birth to potty so you will only have to buy one set. However, it can mean that they sometimes do not fit very well.
- They cost approximately £15-20 per nappy.
- Some of the brand names you will hear are Tots Bots Easy fits and Bambino Mio Solos.
- Each All-In-One nappy has to be washed after every use as opposed to 2-Part nappies where the wrap could be reused quickly after a quick wipe.
- Some can take longer to air-dry because most designs can’t be taken apart to aid speedy drying. However, many, such as Easy fits, are made from microfibre which is very quick drying.
- All-In-One nappies tend to have more man-made fibres so contain more plastic. If your child experiences eczema this type of nappy may aggravate this condition.
- Excellent to have in your nappy change bag for when you are out and about; for use by carers e.g. grandparents, childminders, nurseries as they are as quick to use as disposables.
- Consider opting for a few of these in your nappy kit but think carefully before buying a complete system exclusively made up of All-In-One nappies, as they may not suit every situation that you will experience.
‘POCKET’ Real Nappy Systems
Pocket nappies or you may hear them being referred to as ‘Stuffable’ nappies, is the best of both worlds. Eg. It is like an All-In-One to use, but is quick to wash and dry like a 2-part nappy! This wrap is lined with fleece, with an opening at the back to allow an absorbent material to be ‘stuffed’ in to it.

- The benefit of a pocket nappy is that it fits children like a ‘shaped’ nappy.
- It is similar to a disposable or an All-In-One to put on and take off.
- Anything can be used as absorbent material, which is inserted into the pocket. So you can reuse boosters, prefolds, terrys, towelling - basically any material that is absorbent.
- The disadvantage is that you have to change the pocket wrap at every change.
- However, they are very quick to wash and dry.
- As a result, you may not need as many pocket wraps in your kit, if you only use this type of nappy system. However, you will still need 18-24 absorbent parts to stuff into the pocket.
- An excellent nappy for when you are out of the home, on holiday, for use by nurseries, carers and grandparents and for night time use. Consider having a few of these in your nappy kit.
- Pocket nappies can be sized or birth to potty. They range from £10-£20
- Pocket nappy brands you will hear are: PopNgrow, Wonderoos, Bum Genius and Charlie Bananas.
Toilet Training

- Toilet training is one of the biggest steps a child takes towards independence from its mother.
- It can be an emotional journey and parents are generally keen to make it a positive experience for all the family.
- Nappies of any description can be used up to night time toilet training. Real nappies are thought to aid the toilet training stage as they encourage children to reconnect the wetness feeling with sensations of going to the toilet.
- Both real and disposable nappies are available to fit children up to approx 10 years of age. So can be used on children with special needs.
- There are many brands available, and most of the main retailers do a training pant. Many are just like pants and are great for venturing out, preventing any accidents in the supermarket!

Some brands are Bambino mio, Bright Bots. They are around £5 each.
Nappy Buckets and Nappy Nets

- Look for a bucket with a very good sealing lid! You should have one that can accommodate about 2 days of nappies. A few drops of tea tree or lavender oil can be put inside the lid to keep it smelling fresh.
- Think about buying a nappy net to line your nappy bucket. They make nappy transfer to the washing machine easier so you don’t need to handle stored dirty nappies. When your bucket is full, lift out the nappy net containing the nappies and put straight into the washing machine – remember to open the top of the net to allow the nappies to tumble out during the washing cycle. If you don’t, the nappies won’t be washed adequately.

Vest Extenders

- Vest extenders can be attached to the bottom of babygrows and vests with poppers, to accommodate larger nappies easily in today’s ‘slim-fitting’ baby clothes. Cost: approx £3-5 for a set of 2/3 can be purchased from most real nappy suppliers/advisers.
What's it all about?

Thank you for reading the Buckinghamshire Waste Partnership Real Nappy Guide.

I hope that this helps you select the right nappies for you and answers any questions you have about reusable nappies.

After reading this document if you would like further advice or would like to purchase real nappies there are plenty of online and local real nappy retailers that can help.

On www.recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk you will find a list of different real nappy suppliers, some of which have nappy advisors who can help you further.

You can also find more information at www.goreal.org.uk

This guide is based on an original document written by Janice O’Flynn- Mundin in 2008. Reviewed and re-written in November 2013.