

July 19, 2007: The Nashua Telegraph
New Business Bio: Early Bird Baby

Type of business: E-boutique offering gifts bringing parent and baby closer when they are apart.

Main location: Online, based out of Brookline

Company website: www.EarlyBirdBaby.com

Date opened at this location: May 7, 2007

Is this a franchise? No based out of Brookline

Highlights of products and services: Early Bird Baby offers gifts that build bonds between parents and their babies. Inside every Signature Baby Box are special items, each one carefully chosen to match the true needs of parent and baby as they navigate the early days of being together.

On the Web site you'll find Baby Boxes for preemies, preemies in the neonatal intensive care unit, twins, twins in the NICU, newborns, going-back-to-work gifts, military deployment gifts, baby shower gifts and special comfort gift boxes for mom's facing cancer treatment.

Names and backgrounds of the key leaders: Shannon Dwyer of Brookline, a former elementary school teacher, is the mother of two boys who were both born premature. Between the two boys, Shannon and her husband traveled to Boston's Brigham & Women's Hospital NICU for 120 days. She is thrilled to report that both of her boys are now thriving, happy, healthy, and the loves of her life.

In 2005, Dwyer was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. She has undergone radiation, chemotherapy and multiple surgeries, clocking in almost 100 nights in the hospital. For this reason, Early Bird Baby expanded their collection to include gifts for bringing moms with cancer closer to their babies. Dwyer is currently cancer-free.

Patty Nagle of Brookline, a mother of four, remembers the mixed feeling she had about returning to work after the birth of her first two children. Being apart from her children was the toughest part of her career in educational publishing sales. After the birth of her last two children, premature twins, she knew she needed to be home with her babies who had spent weeks in the special care nursery.

History of this business: The idea for Early Bird Baby really started when two neighbors formed a friendship due in part to a unique bond they shared. After sharing their experiences, Dwyer and Nagle found that they had encountered many of the same challenges with their preemies.

Finding ways for parents and children to bond while apart became their mission.

For all their efforts, both women had found few sources. The two got to work assembling all the tools parents of newborns, twins and preemies would need to enrich the bonding experience.

What's the biggest challenge facing your type of business, and how are you approaching it? The biggest challenge is getting a gift box into the hands of the parents who need it the most. They are reaching out to hospitals to see that every new parent with a baby in the NICU gets an Early Bird Baby Box; by connecting with corporations to provide Early Bird Baby Boxes to their employees just returning from maternity leave; and by making available a "donate a box" feature on their Web site for individuals who want to donate boxes to their local hospitals or military bases.

What else should the readers know about your business? Early Bird Baby donates \$10 per box from the sale of its NICU Signature Gift Box (Preemies, Newborns and Twins) to the March of Dimes NICU Family Support Project. A percentage of the profits from all other sales go to the Early Bird Baby Fund, which will help NICU families during their time of need and beyond.