

Helping children deal with a new baby

Before the baby arrives:

- ❖ Remind them how important they are to you and how much you love them.
- ❖ Tell them about how they were born and how you took special care of them.
- ❖ Set out baby photos at the eye level so they can see themselves as babies.
- ❖ Let your children go to prenatal visits with you. Ask them to listen to the baby's heartbeat and to feel the baby kicking.
- ❖ Give your children a doll so they can practice taking care of a "baby".
- ❖ Have the baby's new room or area set up early so your older children can get to use it.
- ❖ Explain to them what a new baby is like including what a baby can and can't do.
- ❖ Plan who will take care of your children when you go to the hospital. Discuss the plans with the children.
- ❖ Let older children help you pack for the hospital. Ask them to select a special gift for the new baby to put in your bag.

Dealing with the new baby:

- ❖ Let your children help with the baby if they want to and as they are able;
 - Hold the baby while you watch.
 - Bring you diapers and other supplies.
 - Share a few toys with the baby.
 - Smile and talk to the baby, point out when they are making baby happy.
- ❖ Try to read to your older child while feeding the baby.
- ❖ Bathe the children together if the older child doesn't mind

- ❖ It's okay for your older child to be curious about baby's different body parts and body functions. Be honest and use correct terminology.
- ❖ If your older child becomes close to dad or other adults during this time, encourage it.
- ❖ Allow your children to express negative feelings towards their mother or baby. But do talk, hold and show love to them when you see them regressing or acting jealous.
- ❖ Older children can regress around a new baby. Reassure the child if they have back tracked with eating, toilet training, sleeping or crying.
- ❖ Consider using gold stars on a task chart to reward positive behavior.

Remind your older children they are special!

- ❖ Plan activities for older children while you are talking care of baby.
- ❖ Spend special time alone with your older children throughout the day
- ❖ Have small special gifts for them, especially when people drop by with presents for the baby.
- ❖ Have a planned activity once a week for the older child. Go to the park, restaurant or library.