

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Introducing a New Baby

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- Remember that not all children will feel this way, but for those who do, this scenario is comparable to how it might feel to them.
- NOTE: The scenario is taken from *New Baby Sibling: Helping Your Older Child (or Children) Adjust*, Your Child: University of Michigan Health System

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- **Tell your child about the pregnancy when you tell your family and friends** – the child needs to hear this from you, not someone else
- **Check with your hospital about sibling preparation classes and hospital tours:** seeing the hospital where you will be can help alleviate some of their fears about being separated from you.
- **Have them hold a doll and show them how to hold and touch a baby:** teach them how to hold the head and touch the baby gently.
- **Get them involved in preparing for the baby:** you can have them help you pick out baby clothes and supplies and get the baby's room ready.
- **Read children's books to them about having a new sibling:** there are lots of books available on this subject, and they are available at public libraries as well as book stores.

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- **Allow your child to regress:** Some children may regress to baby behaviors – bedwetting, potty training regression, wanting to be held like a baby, talking like a baby. If this happens, do not scold or punish your child. Work with them gently on these behaviors and reassure them that you still love them and that the baby won't change that.
- **Try not to introduce any other significant changes during this time:** If possible, try not to make too many changes in your child's routine. Having a new sibling is a big enough change in itself.
- **Have some special time with your child before and after the new baby is born:** You will be very busy with the new baby and your older child will not have as much time with you. It's helpful to set aside some special time to focus on your older child, so they feel connected and loved.
- **Children tend to respond better when family and friends bring small gifts for them at the same time they bring gifts for the baby:** This helps to reduce feelings of jealousy. If family and friends do not bring small gifts, then you may want to provide your child with a small toy or treat.
- **Visit friends or family who have recently added another child to their family:** this gives your child an opportunity to see how the parents and siblings interact with and adjust to the new baby. It can provide them with a role model for how they will interact with their new sibling.
- **Check out parenting websites and blogs:** There is a lot of helpful information on the internet.
- Blogs can be helpful for being in contact with other parents going through the same type of adjustment. Their stories about their problems and solutions can give you new ideas about how to handle your own child's adjustment.

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- **Help your child identify and express their feelings:** children have difficulty identifying and expressing feelings. Just like adults, they need to be able to express the feelings they have, and they need your help for that.
- **Let your older child help take care of the baby while you are present:** this helps them feel involved and kids love to have “jobs” to do. It also instills in them a sense of caring for the baby.
- **When the baby is a little older teach the older sibling how to play appropriately with the new baby** – tickling feet, playing this little piggy with their toes, peek-aboo, etc. This allows them to have fun with their siblings which helps build a foundation for their relationship later on.
- **Let them know how important they will be to the new sibling:** Talk with them about how important they will be in their sibling’s life. The new sibling will look up to them and learn from them.
- Talk with them about what it will be like to have a new baby in the family: let them know that you may not always be able to give them attention when they want it, but that you will spend some special time with them whenever you can.

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- **Discuss possible changes to the family routines before they happen:** Talk about the type of changes that might happen – example: you may not be able to just pick up and go to the movies or to the park like you used to. Meal time or bed time routines could be different. Special time with Mom might be interrupted at times when the baby needs care.
- **Talk about what will happen when Mom has to go to the hospital:** Who will stay with your child? Will there be different family members or babysitters coming in and out at different times, or will just one person stay with them all the time? Make sure they know you will be coming home with a new brother or sister!
- **Give your child a “baby” of their own:** Have them care for their baby while you care for yours. They can change their baby’s diaper while you change your newborn.

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