

Chapter 1

Description and Orientation

Welcome to Nurturing Program for Prenatal Families. The time and energy you are making to increase your nurturing parenting skills will positively affect your children and your family for all time. You are clearly making a pledge that life for your children will be full of love, caring, fun, happiness and guidance.

Program Description

Fill in the information below regarding the schedule of your program:

Group-Based Program

If you are participating in parenting classes with other parents in a group setting, complete the following information:

1. Instructors' names, phone numbers and email addresses: _____

2. Number of classes: _____
3. Day(s) class meets: _____
4. Time class meets: Starts at _____ and ends at _____
5. Where is this class being held? _____

6. Participation of children: _____
7. Materials needed for class: _____
8. Other information: _____

Home-Based Program

If you are participating in a home-based parenting program, complete the following information:

1. Instructor's name, phone number and email address: _____

2. Number of visits: _____.
3. Day visit is scheduled: _____
4. Time of visit: Starts at _____ and ends at _____
5. Location of visit (if different from your home): _____
6. Participation of children: _____

- 7. Participation of other family members: _____
- 8. Materials needed: _____
- 9. Other information: _____

Program Requirements

- 1. Parents are required to attend all sessions. Parents must make up sessions they miss. Children are requested to participate in the program when appropriate.
- 2. Parents need to bring their Parent Handbook to each class.
- 3. Home Practice Assignments will be required for each class. These assignments are primarily designed to provide parents with opportunities to practice the new parenting skills and attitudes being taught in the program.
- 4. Keep a Family Log.
- 5. Other requirements: _____

Chapter 2

Prenatal Nurturing Parenting

Welcome to the Nurturing Program for Prenatal Families. We're glad that you are committing yourself, your baby, and others to developing your nurturing parenting beliefs, skills and practices. Without a doubt, parenting your baby with nurturing at the prenatal time of development is one of the most important actions you can do to increase the chances that your baby will grow in body, mind, and character. By practicing the behaviors and adopting the skills described in this Parent Handbook, your family is off to the best start you and your baby could have. What a tremendous gift to give your child on his or her birth day.

The importance of prenatal care has grown tremendously in recent years in part due to our understanding of prenatal brain development and by the increasing numbers of pregnant women who do not practice good prenatal nutrition. Improper diets, poor eating habits, and lifestyles that are not compatible with the needs of the growing baby are contributing to the influx of children born with low birth weight, deformities, birth disorders, and even addictions to drugs such as alcohol, heroin, crack, and crack cocaine. America has experienced a tremendous increase in the number of preventable childhood birth disorders. Today, the leading cause of mental retardation in children is the result of a condition known as fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). FAS is a completely preventable childhood birth disorder that women, either out of ignorance, misinformation, or addictions have limited, and in some cases, prevented their child from leading a normal life. Such unfortunate realities can be prevented by helping women and their partners develop proper attitudes and practices in prenatal parenting.



The philosophy of prenatal nurturing parenting embraces the belief that “it takes a village to raise a child.” Since the nine months or more of prenatal development can have fantastic or drastic consequences, providing the baby with the optimal conditions for prenatal development is crucial. And that means providing the mom and baby with support. First and foremost is the baby's mom. Since Mom and the baby are inseparable during pregnancy, what happens to Mom happens to the baby. When Mom takes care of herself, she is taking care of her baby.

The mental health of Mom's partner and/or father of the baby is also crucial to the baby's optimal development. Research has shown that stressful partner relationships release high levels of stress hormones in the Mom such as cortisol and adrenaline which can affect the baby's brain development and function, as well as the baby's overall physical development. Healthy and nurturing partner relationships, on the other hand, have repeatedly shown to contribute to prenatal bonding among family members which has positive effects.

The concept of prenatal nurturing parenting contains three important concepts: 1) prenatal; 2) nurturing; and 3) parenting.

Prenatal

The word “prenatal” is a combination of two words: *pre* is a prefix meaning “before;” *natal* comes from the Latin word *natalis* meaning “born.” Prenatal means “preborn” or “before childbirth.” The program you are about to participate in will help you develop nurturing prenatal parenting skills by pointing out ways you can help your baby by taking good care of yourself. **Since you and your baby are inseparable right now; what you do for yourself, you do for your baby.**

Nurturing

Nurturing comes from the Latin word “nutritura” which means to nurse, to nourish and to promote growth. *Empathy*, the ability to recognize and respond in a positive way to the needs of others is the single most important characteristic of nurturing parenting.



Parenting

Parenting is defined as a process of raising children in a safe, healthy and caring home environment. Of course, this definition assumes that parenting process is positive. In 1960, a group of medical professionals recognized that children were being admitted to the hospital emergency rooms with fractures to the long bones of their body. The term “battered child syndrome” was created to identify children whose home life entailed abuse – physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect. Modern day understanding of child maltreatment was born.

Education in nurturing parenting practices is one’s best hope for changing unwanted behaviors and attitudes into behaviors that adults can feel proud of. The Nurturing Parenting Program for Prenatal Families is just the right program to get you started.

Here’s wishing you and your family much happiness and success in creating a nurturing home!

Chapter 3

Nurturing as a Lifestyle

Nurturing is the ability to care. It is a critical skill for all life forms on the planet - especially for humans because we are such complex forms of life. To nurture is to promote the growth and development of all positive traits, qualities and characteristics. To nurture is to treat oneself with caring, kindness, and respect. It is to keep ourselves physically and emotionally healthy, to make good choices, and to be our own best friend. Nurturing oneself is a necessary prerequisite to being nurturing parents. How can you care for someone else when you ignore your own needs?

Why We Don't Nurture Ourselves

Within everyone is the potential to care or to hurt. This potential is fueled, in large part, by the experiences we've had during our lifetime. Inside everyone are four distinct traits of our personality that define the way we're capable of treating ourselves and others:

The Nurturer. The part of our personality that is capable of giving care, concern and compassion. The caregiver we are with our children is our Nurturer.

The Nurtured. The part of our personality that is capable of receiving care, seeking closeness and attachments, and accepting praise and positive touch.



The Perpetrator.

The part of our personality that can be cruel, abusive to self and others, is capable of hurting others, and generally disregards the overall goodness and respect of other living things and objects.



The Victim. The part of our personality that believes the hurt and pain given by others is justified and valid. The victim believes the hurt received is for their own good.

A simple way to understand our abilities to nurture or to hurt is to view both abilities on the scale of 0 to 10. A zero (0) represents the complete absence of the behavior. A ten represents the complete presence of the behavior. Imagine both abilities exist on a range of 0 to 10 in frequency (how often) and in severity (to what degree).

| NURTURING Parenting | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| All the Time | Most of the Time | Some of the Time | Hardly Any of the Time | Never |
| 10 | 9 8 7 | 6 5 4 | 3 2 1 | 0 |
| ABUSIVE Parenting | | | | |
| Never | Hardly Any of the Time | Some of the Time | Most of the Time | All the Time |
| 0 | 1 2 3 | 4 5 6 | 7 8 9 | 10 |

Try This ...

| A PORTRAIT OF ME | |
|--|--|
| <p>The NURTURER or CAREGIVER is the part of our personality that is capable of giving care, concern and compassion. The caregiver we are with our children is our Nurturer.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Here is _____ the Nurturer.</p> | <p>The NURTURED is the part of our personality who is capable of receiving care, seeking closeness and attachments, and accepts praise and positive touch.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Here is _____ the Nurtured.</p> |
| <p>The PERPETRATOR or BULLY is the part of our personality who can be cruel, abusive to self and others, is capable of hurting others, and generally disregards the overall goodness and respect of other living things and objects.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Here is _____ the Perpetrator or Bully.</p> | <p>The VICTIM is the part of our personality who believes the hurt and pain given by others is justified and valid. The victim believes the hurt received is for their own good.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Here is _____ the Victim.</p> |

Session 1

Home Practice Assignment & Family Log

1. Read **Chapter 2: Prenatal Nurturing Parenting** and **Chapter 3: Nurturing as a Lifestyle** in your **Parent Handbook**. What new information did you learn?

2. Review your portrait. What do you notice? How do you feel looking at your traits?

3. Write in your Family Log about changes going on with you, your baby, your family.

Changes happening to **me**: _____

Changes happening to **my baby**: _____

Changes happening to **my family members**: _____

Chapter 4

Changes in Me and You

During pregnancy, changes usually occur in three areas: **PHYSICAL**, **EMOTIONAL** and **SOCIAL**.

1. **Physical** changes include:

- Breasts enlarge and feel tender in preparation for nourishing the baby.
- Morning sickness and fatigue are common, especially during the first trimester.
- Body temperature is raised five degrees Celsius causing increased perspiration and feelings of warmth.
- Weight gain due to increasing size of the placenta, the baby, increased blood volume, and fatty deposits.
- Reduced digestive tract movements and decreased stomach acid resulting in heartburn and indigestion.
- Increase feelings of breathlessness due to elevated progesterone and the growing baby.
- Relaxation of smooth muscle tone resulting in constipation, urinary problems, and leg swelling.



2. **Emotional** changes include:

- Due to the effects of the hormones of pregnancy, there are accompanying emotional changes. The hormone prolactin affects personality causing women to feel more “maternal.”
- As the woman’s body changes, an identity crisis may also develop. Your new body image may be experienced positively as pride in your pregnancy and a proof of fertility. Or, the new image may produce negative feelings which may result from a fear of miscarriage, fear of becoming less attractive, ambivalence about your job, or worry about being a good parent.
- Stress develops as the result of the sudden changes of pregnancy, particularly during the first trimester. During the second trimester, feeling the baby move and the subsiding fear of miscarriage allows for an increased feeling of bonding. Dependence on the mate may grow stronger.
- During the final weeks, the nesting instinct develops which is characterized by bursts of energy to clean the house, preparing the nursery, and having everything ready for the baby.



3. **Social** changes include:

- Pregnancy often changes a marriage or partnership. If the relationship is shaky, the pregnancy will probably not stabilize the relationship, which is one of the most common misperceptions many people have.

- If the woman feels less attractive, the partner may interpret the subtle distancing as a rejection. If communication between partners is weak, such distancing may move the partners further away from each other.
- As the pregnancy begins to show, others begin to extend courtesies not normally given, i.e. seat on the bus, assisting with packages, holding doors, etc.
- Sexuality changes during pregnancy going up or down due to hormone levels and changes in the physical characteristics of the sexual organs. Toward the end of pregnancy, some women may experience diminished sexual desire due to a combination of feeling awkward as a sexual partner and fear of inducing labor.

Changes in Me and My Partner

Expectant Mother: Respond to the changes you have experienced or are experiencing as a result of your pregnancy and the changes you notice in your partner.

1. One **Physical** change I notice in **me** is: _____

One Physical change I notice in **my partner** is: _____

2. One **Emotional** change I notice in **me** is: _____

One Emotional change I notice in **my partner** is: _____

3. One **Social** change I notice in **me** is: _____

One Social change I notice in **my partner** is: _____

Partner: Respond to the changes you have noticed in your partner (expectant woman) and also in yourself.

1. One **Physical** change I notice in **my partner** is: _____

One Physical change I notice in **me** is: _____

2. One **Emotional** change I notice in **my partner** is: _____

One Emotional change I notice in **me** is: _____

3. One **Social change** I notice in **my partner** is: _____

One Social change I notice in **me** is: _____

Chapter 5

Body Image

Pregnancy brings about many changes in the woman's body, especially during the second and third trimesters. Acceptance of these changes is difficult because it involves a loss of control over her appearance. For a woman whose self-esteem is closely tied to her physical attractiveness, this is an especially trying time which may impact on her feelings toward the baby.

"My Views – Then and Now"

1. Write down three words that describe **how you felt** about your body before pregnancy. Then, write down three words that describe **how you think your partner felt** about your body before pregnancy:

My Views:

My Partner's Views

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a. _____ | a. _____ |
| b. _____ | b. _____ |
| c. _____ | c. _____ |

2. Write down three words that describe **how you feel** about your body now. Then, write down three words that describe **how you think your partner feels** about your body now:

My Views:

My Partner's Views

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a. _____ | a. _____ |
| b. _____ | b. _____ |
| c. _____ | c. _____ |

3. Compare the two sets of views. Describe how you feel about your partner: _____

“My Partner’s Views – Then and Now”

1. Write down three words that describe **how you felt** about your partner’s body before pregnancy. Then, write down three words that describe **how you think your partner felt** about her body before pregnancy:

My Views:

My Partner’s Views

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a. _____ | a. _____ |
| b. _____ | b. _____ |
| c. _____ | c. _____ |

2. Write down three words that describe **how you feel** about your partner’s body now. Then, write down three words that describe **how you think your partner feels** about her body now:

My Views:

My Partner’s Views

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| a. _____ | a. _____ |
| b. _____ | b. _____ |
| c. _____ | c. _____ |

3. Compare the two sets of views. Describe how you feel about your partner: _____

Session 2

Home Practice Assignment & Family Log

1. Read **Chapter 4: Changes in Me and You** in your **Parent Handbook**. What new information did you learn?

2. Review responses to the items completed in **Chapters 4 and 5**. Discuss these with your partner/family.
3. Practice sitting quietly and be aware of the tension in your body. Practice breathing in “calm” and breathing out “stress.”
4. Talk to your baby each day and massage your abdomen.
5. Write in your Family Log about changes going on with you, your baby, your family.

Changes happening to **me**: _____

Changes happening to **my baby**: _____

Changes happening to **my family members**: _____
