



A Guide for **Preparing Siblings**

MATERNITY EDUCATORS
Encouraging families in
Trusting what they know; and
Learning what they don't



SENTARA®

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PREPARING SIBLINGS FOR THE NEW BABY

The arrival of a new baby includes new sights, new sounds and new routines. Families soon find ways to adjust to all of the changes that take place. Both positive and negative feelings and behaviors are common in children when a new brother or sister arrives. Research has shown that preparing for a new baby can make a difference. Here are some helpful tips to prepare for the new baby!

During Pregnancy

Explain the pregnancy at your child's level. Preschool age and younger children may not understand the concept of time, so it may mean much more to say the baby will come in the winter rather than in 9 months.

Let your child's questions be the guide. Read books about new babies. Introduce children to and interact with newborns and babies, if possible. Go through the sibling's own baby pictures.

Emphasize what children CAN do with a newborn baby. Learn and rehearse new skills- diapering, holding, and cuddling- with a newborn sized doll.

Help get the supplies and nursery area ready. Discuss potential names for the baby.

Planning For Childbirth

Attend a sibling class with your four to seven year old children. Take a tour of the hospital where you plan to deliver.

Make arrangements for childcare during your hospital stay. Siblings may not stay overnight in the hospital. Share the excitement of these arrangements with your child.

Keep your child's routine as regular as possible.

If your child is approaching any milestones such as potty training or switching from a crib to a bed, you may want to plan that well in advance or wait until after the baby arrives.

When Siblings Meet

Simplicity is the key! Remember "quality" not "quantity" and a short visit may be all your child needs. You know your child best, anticipate some of their reactions and plan



accordingly. You may arrange the visit after naptime or mealtime. It may be helpful to pack a little bag containing a favorite toy, coloring book and crayons, a snack and maybe a small gift from the baby.

There is no "right way" to introduce the sibling to the new baby. It is helpful to decide how to do this ahead of time. It may be helpful to have some alone time with the sibling first then bring in the baby. Some families find it helpful for Dad to hold the baby and Mom to receive the sibling.

Saying goodbye can be challenging with any child (Mommy too), especially a toddler. Anticipate the departure and have a small incentive such as a ride on the elevator or time for ice cream to help the child separate. It might be best to have your toddler visit during the day and not after dinner when bedtime will be approaching.

Bringing the New Baby Home

Once the baby is home from the hospital there are some things you can do to help your older child to adjust to all of the changes. It's a good idea to include your child as much as possible in the daily activities surrounding the baby, so that he or she doesn't feel left out. Though that "help" may mean that each task takes longer, it can give your older child a chance to interact with the baby in a positive way. Depending on your child's age, he or she may want to help with diapering, help push the stroller, talk to the baby, or help dress, bathe, or burp the baby.

PREPARING SIBLINGS FOR THE NEW BABY

Stress with your older children how very lucky and special they are. For example, they can eat “real food”; they have friends to play with; they can run and play; while our babies can’t do very much of anything yet. So as big brothers and sisters they are baby’s FIRST and very IMPORTANT friend for life, and can help teach them some of these things later.

Remind the children of special things you remember about them when they were little, such as:

Your favorite baby food was...

I loved dressing you in...

You weighed this much...

You loved the song...

Your grandparents drove all the way from Florida to see you...

As older brothers and sisters, you are like “investigators” helping mom and dad figure out why our baby might cry since they don’t know how to talk yet. Discuss with the children and help them to name the common reasons babies might “talk” cry (they are tired, hungry, dirty diaper, cold, lonely) Once they figure it out, investigate some ways they could help mom and partner solve these problems (get a diaper, help with a bottle, bring a blanket, sing them a song, and hold their hand....) When the baby becomes calm, they will feel so proud. Thank them for their help with the new baby.



Finally, it is SO important to not have a negative reaction when a sibling is curious or wanting to be involved or present with what is going on with the baby. Obviously, safety is first, but remember older siblings will have more negative feelings toward the baby the more “off limits” they are. This makes the child feel like the baby is more like a nuisance than a blessing, and no matter how young the sibling, there are always ways to include the older brother or sister.

The bond between siblings begins right away and the more involved you make the child, the sooner and stronger the bond will be. Remembering to take the extra time to say “Yes”!

“Yes, you can hold the baby but let me help you wash your hands.” or

“Yes, you can kiss the baby and let me show you where.”

“Yes, you can help me dress the baby. What do you think he/she should wear today?”

Using the terms “your baby” and “our baby” is also very exciting and empowering to older brothers and sisters. For example, “Your baby loves the outfit you chose,” or “Your baby loves it when you sing him/her a song.”

Here are the steps of handling/holding a baby for young children:

- *Ask adult (mom or partner)*
- *Wash Hands*
- *Sit on bottom (preferably on floor)*
- *One hand under head, other hand under baby’s bottom*
- *Hold baby close to your body*
- *Tell adult when you are done holding the baby*

Washing hands cannot be stressed enough!! Especially important for preschool and school age children.

COMMON REACTIONS FROM SIBLINGS

You may expect some regression in development, such as:

- Wetting/soiling pants during the day or bedwetting at night
- Asking to wear diapers
- Using bottles or pacifiers
- Using baby-talk or whining.

In addition, you may experience some aggression or hostility, usually aimed toward mother or baby. Some examples include, ignoring mother/baby during hospital visits; expressing negative feelings such as “Let’s get rid of this baby,” or hitting or punching mother/baby.

Finally, some siblings may increase their attention-seeking behaviors, especially making demands on parent’s time when caring for the baby.

Suggestions to Help these Situations

- Try to ignore or down play regressive behaviors.
- Praise for age-appropriate behaviors, such as dressing or playing by themselves.
- Allow siblings to touch and hold baby when interested, with supervision.
- Teach them what they can do with/for baby, not just what they can’t do.
- Acknowledge negative feelings, or help them to express these feelings. With your understanding, you both can then problem solve as to what will help them feel better.
- Be firm that hitting or any type of forceful act is not allowed.
- Plan activities or snack for sibling when parent is busy with the baby.
- Give the sibling a new doll or stuffed animal to take care of alongside parent.
- Plan a specific time each day for each parent to spend with sibling to allow for that special “alone” time.
- Encourage relatives or friends to spend time with sibling, either playing in the home or taking a fun outing.

Other General Suggestions

- Explain what babies are like, especially their cry and how that tells us what they need.
- Encourage participation from sibling in helping prepare the nursery, clothes, toys, or even picking out the baby’s outfit for coming home.
- Read books to the child that deal with “new baby” issues.
- Let the sibling pick out a gift for the new family member and have a small gift for the older child from the new baby.
- Let sibling come to take mom and baby home from the hospital if possible.
- Have small presents for the older child for those times when he or she might be feeling left out.
- Model how to play with the baby, and then emphasize how the baby reacts through reaching or smiling at them.



THE “LITTLE” BIG SIBLING VISIT

With very small children, simplicity is the key! Listen to your child. You know your child and their personalities better than anyone else. You can anticipate some of their reactions and plan the hospital visit accordingly. For example, arrange the visit after naptime or mealtime. You can even try stopping by the hospital’s cafeteria with your child before the arrival of the baby to establish familiarity with the environment. And lastly, don’t be surprised if a short visit is all the child tolerates. Quality, not quantity, is the key.

Tips that help:

You might find it helpful to pack a small bag or backpack containing some of the items listed below. Bring the bag with your toddler when they come to visit Mommy and the new baby at the hospital.

- A favorite toy, blanket or “lovey”
- A snack
- A small gift for or from the baby
- Crayons, coloring book, or paper

The Introduction:

It is helpful to decide ahead of time how your child will be introduced to his or her new sibling for the first time. There is no “right way” to do this. For some toddlers, seeing Mommy hold the baby can be upsetting. So another family member can hold the new baby and big sibling can climb into Mommy’s arms for a welcome hug. There are other children who glide right past baby and appear to pay no real attention to the newest family member. Take advantage of this “I do it by myself” age and give them things they can do, like touch the baby’s toes or give Mommy a diaper for the baby.



Saying Goodbye:

As I am sure you know, leaving anywhere with a toddler can be tricky stuff. One day they may leave the park easily and the next day they leave kicking and crying. Understandably it is hard for the toddler and Mommy to say goodbye. Think about things that work best for you in other situations. A small incentive might help the toddler separate easier.

- Let’s go ride the elevator
- Let’s take a walk outside/have a picnic lunch
- Let’s go get some ice cream

HELPFUL TIPS FOR SURVIVAL!

Crying in the Car Seat

Some babies will be sound asleep before you leave the driveway, and others will be screaming while you are putting them in their car seat. Even if it's difficult to deal with, your baby's safety is the most important thing. Never take your baby out of the car seat while the car is moving. That is extremely dangerous and also makes it harder for your baby to get used to the car seat. Here are some tips that might help the situation.

- If your baby has been particularly fussy at home, it might not be the car seat. Your baby may have an ear infection or other illness and a trip to the doctor might be best.
- Try to make the car seat more familiar by bringing it into the house and letting the baby sit in it and play.
- Have a few special toys that are kept in the car and played with on car rides.
- Hang toys from the back of the seat so your baby can see them and possibly begin swiping at them for play.
- Music might be a soothing medium that not only calms baby but you also.
- Think about a sunshade to block direct sunlight, fresh air if it begins to be too warm.

Going Places with your Baby

Babies love to explore and see new places. There can be stress involved with visiting other's homes or being in public places with babies that are unpredictable. Here are some ideas to ease the anxiety and feel prepared for the unknown:

- Bring toys that you save for these new places. Purchase new toys or put together a bag of forgotten favorites. Think about the noise factor of certain toys and leave those for home.
- It's always a good idea to have your baby's favorite comfort items, such as a blanket, sling, or pillow.
- Assess the environment before you place the baby down and remove any items that could be dangerous if pulled down, broken, or small enough to be a choking hazard.

By policing their environment, you are putting both yourself and the host more at ease. Remember, always keep your eyes on your baby as they explore.

- Changing a diaper will be done in a new environment so be prepared with a pad, plastic bags for a messy diaper, and it's always a good idea to ask where to dispose of a dirty diaper in the home to prevent odors.
- If nap time or an overnight stay is planned, bring along a portable crib or the car seat inside for the nap. Show your appreciation for all the special requests during your visit. Be prepared for anything and stay calm. Your reaction has a direct response on your baby.

Handling Other's Advice and Opinions

This is your baby that you will raise the way you think best. However, there are others that love this baby too, and want to offer advice that they feel may be valuable. You can respond to unwanted advice in many ways:

- Try to listen first. Advice can come across as judgment of you and your abilities. But, it could be valuable and helpful, and not intended as a slight to you and your parenting.
- You have the ability to listen, disregard the advice, and move on to the next topic. If it is valuable advice, agree and thank them for their suggestion.
- Some battles are not worth the fight. If your mother thinks the baby needs a hat to go outside, but supports your other parenting choices, consider allowing her this suggestion and the battle is done.
- Many grandparents are not current with the changes in child care. Educate yourself, trust your own instincts, and most importantly, educate others that are offering their opinions. Quote your doctor if that supports your point of view and offer books or websites if needed. If you are honest about your feelings and decisions regarding your baby, that will be respected. Ask for help and advice in areas you are questioning. Together, a consistent approach benefits the baby and all that help with their care.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR SURVIVAL!

Ways to Improve Parenting Stress

- Accept and ask for help from neighbors, friends, family, and your partner. Let them know how they can help you and the baby.
- Get as much rest as possible. Try to nap or get off your feet when the baby sleeps. You may need to turn off phones and limit visitors.
- Take time for yourself... a quiet bath, a walk, or an uninterrupted nap are great ways to boost energy. Communicate your needs.
- Recognize that you may not enjoy everything about baby care and the responsibilities. Give yourself time to acclimate to this new life experience.
- It's okay to say no. Prioritize chores, work commitments, social events, etc. It may not be possible to maintain the same schedule you had before the birth of your baby.
- Look for short cuts at home and at work. Make lists, shop online, cook in large quantities and freeze the extra for later.
- Talk with other mothers and share advice and strategies. Try meeting for coffee, taking walks together, or attend the Sentara Martha Jefferson Welcome to Motherhood support group at 595 Martha Jefferson Drive, Third Floor, Community Education Room. This group meets on the first and third Thursday of each month at 10:30am.
- Share your feelings, doubts, and needs with your family and partner.
- Plan time out with your partner or close friend. Even an hour can be beneficial for your well being.
- Expect to be occasionally overwhelmed with anger, resentment, or frustration – it won't last forever. Know that these first six weeks of a baby's life are the most tiring and stressful.

- Know what sort of behavior is normal for your baby by watching their cues, body language, color changes, and types of cries. You'll worry less if you know what is out of the ordinary.
- If you begin to feel angry at the baby, stop and ask yourself why you're so angry. Are you just tired? Are you mad at something deeper? Communication and taking a time out will be best for all. Place the baby in their crib on their back. Walk away and take a few minutes to calm down and get your anger in check. Ask for help from another adult. Do not take your anger and fatigue out on your baby by shaking or hitting the baby. Ten seconds of angry behavior can be a lifetime of regret.



MATERNITY UNIT VISITING HOURS

We recognize that having a baby is a very important event in your life, and want you to be able to share your joy with family and friends. While you are in labor, we recommend that you limit your visitors to two to three support people. Large numbers of people in the room while you are laboring make it difficult to relax and focus on labor.

Once you are on the postpartum unit, we suggest your visiting hours to be 11:00 am until 9:00 pm. Your stay with us is relatively short and you will want time to rest and recover from the birth experience. You will also need time to bond with your new baby and spend time learning to feed and care for your infant. If you have older children at home, your stay in the hospital offers you a chance to get to know your newest baby and rest before going home. You may wish to ask that only your closest family and friends visit you in the hospital, and that co-workers and other visitors wait until you are home to visit. Siblings are always welcome on the unit.

We want to do all that we can to prevent exposing mothers and babies to any contagious illnesses, and children are quite often contagious before they show any signs of sickness. Please do not have sick children visit while you are in the hospital.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital
434-654-7000

Lactation Department (Consultants)
434-654-8440

Lactation Corner (Retail Store)
434-654-7042

OB Care Coordination
434-654-7443

Weather Hotline for Cancellations
434-654-4402

Albemarle Fire Department (Car Seat Safety)
434-531-6614

PACK YOUR BAGS!

Mom	Support Person	Baby
Robe	Comfortable Clothes	Car Seat
Slippers	Sweatshirt	3-4 Receiving Blankets
Pajamas	Toiletries	Warm Blankets for Cold Weather
Nursing Bras	Snacks	Going Home Outfit
Socks	Music Device and Playlists	Nail File
Hair Brush, Bands, Etc.	Gum/Mints	
Shampoo/Conditioner	Camera	
Body Wash	Cell Phone Charger	
Lip Balm		
Toothbrush/Toothpaste		
Deodorant		
Lotions		
Favorite Pillow (optional)		
List of Medications & Herbal Remedies Taken Regularly		

THE LACTATION CORNER

Located in the Martha Jefferson Marketplace,
Hospital Main Lobby, 500 Martha Jefferson Drive

434-654-7042

Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 6:30 pm

Saturday – Sunday 11:00 am to 3:00 pm

- We offer Ameda® breast bumps for rent and sale, pump kits and other Ameda® and Medela® breastfeeding supplies.

Other items for women and babies include:

- Medela® and Bravado Nursing Bras
- Ameda® comfort gel pads
- Halo® Infant Sleep Sacks (Swaddle & Non-swaddle Styles)
- Gift certificates and many more items for moms and babies!

Certified Lactation Consultants are available for individual out-patient visits at the hospital to assist with breastfeeding.

Please call 434-654-8440 for more information.

SUGGESTED READING LIST

I'm Going to be a Big Sister. Brenda Bercun and Sue Gross. 2006.

I'm a Big Brother. Joanna Cole and Rosalinda Kightley. 2010.

My New Baby (New Baby Series). Annie Kubler. 2000.

I Used To Be the Baby. Robin Ballard. 2002.

A New Baby is Coming! A Guide for a Big Brother or Sister. Emily Menendez-Aponte and R.W.Alley. 2005.

Twice Blessed: Everything You Need To Know About Having a Second Child—Preparing Yourself, Your Marriage, and Your Firstborn For a New Family of Four. Joan Leonard. 2000.

And Baby Makes Four: Welcoming a Second Child into the Family. Hilory Wagner. 1998.

Beyond Sibling Rivalry: How to Help Your Children Become Cooperative, Caring, and Compassionate. Peter Goldenthal, Ph.D. 1999.

The Happiest Baby on the Block: The New Way to Calm Crying and Help your Newborn Baby Sleep Longer. Harvey Karp. 2003

Nobody Asked ME If I Wanted a Baby Sister. Martha G. Alexander. 2006.

What Baby Needs (Sears Children's Library). William Sears (Author), Martha Sears (Author), Christie Watts Kelly (Author), Renee Andriani (Illustrator). 2001.

The New Baby. Mercer Mayer.

Best-Ever Big Sister & Best-Ever Big Brother. Karen Katz.

We Have a Baby. Cathryn Falwell.

Babies Don't Eat Pizza: A Big Kids' Book About Baby Brothers and Baby Sisters. Dianne Danzig (Author), Debbie Tilley (Illustrator). 2009.

PERMISSION TO TREAT

When you go out of town and leave your child/children in the care of family or friends, make sure they have written permission for your child to receive medical treatment.

For medical care in your absence, other than an emergency, a written permission slip is necessary and will expedite the care and treatment provided.

Virginia law does provide for emergency care of minors without permission but only in the case of emergencies that threaten life or limb.

Complete the form below and leave it with the person who is taking care of your child or children while you are away.

I, _____, am leaving my child/children

Parent

_____, in the care of

Name(s)

_____ during the period of

Name of Responsible Party

_____ to _____,

Date

Date

I authorize my physician to provide necessary medical services to my child/children. I authorize

_____ to act in my absence on behalf of

Name of Responsible Party

my child/children and to consent for any medical services which may be required.

Parent

Date

Witness

Date

AUTORIZACIÓN PARA TRATAMIENTO MÉDICO A MENORES DE EDAD

Cuando usted esté ausente y deja su(s) hijo(s) al cuidado de familiares o amigos esté seguro de dejar una autorización, o permiso por escrito y firmada en caso de una emergencia, ellos puedan recibir atención médica si fuese necesario.

La ley del Estado de VIRGINIA solamente provee atención médica a menores sin permiso de sus padres en caso de una emergencia de vida o pérdida de una de las extremidades.

Complete este formulario y dejelo con la persona que vaya a estar al cuidado de su(s) hijo(s) mientras que usted se encuentre ausente.

Yo, _____, estoy dejando a mi(s) hijos(s)

Padres / Guardian Legal

_____, al cuidado de

Nombre del Menor(s)

_____ durante la fecha de

Nombre de la persona responsable

_____ a _____,

Fecha

Fecha

Yo autorizo a mi médico a proveer asistencia médica a mi(s) hijo(s), y autorizo

_____ a tomar las decisiones que considere

Nombre de la persona responsable

necesaria en caso de una emergencia médica.

Firma Padre(s)

Fecha

Testigo

Fecha

Hi!
I'm Your
BIG
BROTHER!

*Place
Photo
Here*

Have your child color or decorate this card and place their photo in the space provided.
You can display this card on the new baby's crib at the hospital.

Hi!
I'm Your
BIG
SISTER!

*Place
Photo
Here*

PEDIATRICIANS

By Your Side Pediatrics

375 Four Leaf Lane, Suite 103
Crozet, VA 22903
434-924-9350

Charlottesville Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine

1412 Sachus Place, Suite 203
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-296-8666

Pediatric Associates of Charlottesville

1011 East Jefferson St.
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-296-9161

Pediatric Associates North

1522 Insurance Lane, Suite A
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-974-9600

Pediatric Associates West

2411 Ivy Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22903
434-296-8300

Piedmont Pediatrics

900 Rio East Court, Suite A
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-975-7777

FAMILY MEDICINE

Albemarle Center for Family Medicine

535 Westfield Rd., Suite 200
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-973-4040

Albemarle Square Family Care

416 Albemarle Square
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-978-2126

Bruce D. Campbell, MD

P.O. Box 220
Free Union, VA 22940
434-978-1691

Charlottesville Wellness Center

901 Preston Ave, Suite 300
Charlottesville, VA 22903
434-977-3140

Downtown Family Health Care

313 2nd Street, SE, Suite 300
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-817-1818

Family Medicine of Albemarle

1450 Sachus Place, Suite 201
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-973-9744

Ivy Family Medicine

2 Boars Head Place, Suite 110
Charlottesville, VA 22903
434-202-7830

Louisa Family Practice, PLC

101 Woolfolk Ave
Louisa, VA 23093
540-967-2202

Orange Family Physicians

13198 James Madison Hwy.
Orange, VA 22960
540-672-3010

Pantops Family Medicine

1490 Pantops Mountain Place, St 200
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-979-4440

Rio Family Medicine

889 B Rio East Court
Charlottesville, VA 22901
434-978-7100

Sentara Afton Family Medicine

7849 Rockfish Valley Hwy
Afton, VA 22920
540-456-6710

Sentara Buckingham Family Medicine

65 Brickyard Rd.
Dillwyn, VA 23936
434-983-2722

Sentara Crozet Family Medicine

1646 Park Ridge Dr.
Crozet, VA 22932
434-823-4567

Sentara Family Medicine

435 Merchant Walk Square, Suite 400
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-654-1800

Sentara Forest Lakes Family Medicine

3263 Proffit Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22911
434-654-4600

Sentara Greene Family Medicine

140 Stoneridge Dr., Suite 100
Ruckersville, VA 22968
434-985-2891

Sentara Martha Jefferson Family Medicine

315 10th St. NE
Charlottesville, VA 22902
434-654-1950

Sentara Palmyra Medical Associates

33 Rebecca Dr.
Palmyra, VA 22963
434-654-4680