

Tip Sheet for Home Visitors Working with Prenatal Families

1. Meet each prenatal family where they are at. Knowing that they have unique challenges that may include accessing support services, helps you to identify supports needed. Take the time to listen to them before you start giving resources or information, even when they could benefit from these. This is a vulnerable time for women and building trust is key to building relationships, trust and providing support.
2. We know prenatal care is very important to a child's development and learning. Prenatal care helps keep both the mother and the child healthy throughout the duration of the pregnancy. Several key elements to good prenatal and postnatal care are:
 - See a doctor or other health care provider from the start of pregnancy.
 - Get Vaccinated
 - Do not drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, or take drugs.
 - Eat healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk, eggs, cheese, and grains.
 - Take good care of health and exercise sensibly.
 - Have baby checked by a doctor or health care provider right after birth and throughout childhood.
3. Ideas for Recruiting Prenatal Families:
 - Word of mouth from a current family. Invite a pregnant friend to a visit to experience of Home Visiting.
 - Create Prenatal Family Support Groups (virtually, in-person)
 - Build relationship with immigrant/refugee service agencies, local homeless shelter, - offer to facilitate classes, outreach, support group, belly casts, and refer to community resources
 - Do outreach at laundromats, specialty grocery stores, Methadone Clinics, churches, mosques, etc.
4. Opportunities to bring prenatal families together is important in building their confidence and capacity as new parents. Plan group activities for prenatal families based on their needs and interests. Possible group events may include:
 - Birthing classes
 - Partner group events to connect partners in the prenatal and birth experience.
 - NM La Leche League meetups or Lactation Consultant Speaker
 - Community events such as health fairs or 1st Aid CPR class
 - Discussion groups on body changes and sharing healthy recipes
 - Group trip to mother and baby second hand shops such as Other Mothers.
 - Creating a scrapbook of reflections from pregnancy and beyond (could use curriculum handouts).
5. Supporting prenatal families to develop a postpartum plan can help to anticipate difficulties and be prepared for the types of support needed. This can be very challenging to navigate when you are sleep deprived during the early weeks following childbirth. This postpartum plan also includes planning support for the partner during the post-partum period. How is the partner feeling and coping with the changes in their family's dynamics?
Acel-Green, M. LICSW. *Birthing Healthier Families Your Positive Postpartum Plan*.
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/67f9ba_06d7cdb9fbfb408fa13c1d7eab7cea4b.pdf
6. Providing support to prenatal moms that may be experiencing substance abuse disorder or mental health issues can be challenging. Providing information about the New Mexico Safe Haven laws is important for the health and safety of newborns. Below is information on the NM Safe Haven laws. As used in the Safe Haven for Infants Act:
Universal Citation: NM Stat § 24-22-2 (2019)
 - a. "fire station" means a fire station that is certified by the fire marshal division of the public regulation commission;
 - b. "hospital" means an acute care general hospital or health care clinic licensed by the state;
 - c. "Indian child" means an Indian child as defined by the federal Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978;
 - d. "infant" means a child no more than ninety days old, as determined within a reasonable degree of medical certainty;
 - e. "law enforcement agency" means a law enforcement agency of the state or a political subdivision of the state;
 - f. "safe haven site" means a hospital, law enforcement agency or fire station that has staff on-site at the time an infant is left at such a site; and
 - g. "staff" means an employee, contractor, agent or volunteer performing services as required and on behalf of the safe haven site.