

Birth of a Sibling



Be sure to help a child celebrate the birth of a new sister or brother. How?

- **Ask his/her classmates to draw special cards for the family**
- **The child can share special photographs of the baby**
- **The child can share his/her feelings about the new arrival and allow the other children to talk about their sisters/brothers**
- **Sometimes a teacher just needs to listen to a child. A few minutes of undivided attention may be just what he/she needs**

See the sample article on the next page. You can send it home to parents so they can help children cope with the birth of a sibling!

Dear Parents,

No matter how welcome babies are, newborns can cause stress in a household. Parents are usually very tired. Routines change, and older children may have trouble adjusting to the new role in their expanded family.



Parents can affect the relationship between children by what they do before and after the birth. In the last several months of the pregnancy, talk with your child about the impending birth and how everybody will need to help out with the baby. Answer questions about birth, and read books about the arrival of a sibling. Children can accompany his/her mother to the doctor's office for prenatal checkups and visit the hospital where the birth will take place.

Prepare grandparents and other family and friends, too. When people are always asking "How's the baby?" the older child feels left out. The special adults in a child's life could be encouraged to pay special attention to the older child, inquiring about his/her activities and interests.

After the birth, arrange a hospital visit so the preschooler can see mother and baby. Photograph or videotape the meeting. Consider giving the child a gift to celebrate the new role as big sister/brother, as well as a picture of the baby to take to school.

Minimize changes in the child's life by keeping up with school attendance, maintaining bath time and bedtime routines, and trying to initiate as many conversations and playtimes as before the birth of the baby. Enlist children's help in caring for the new baby.

Changes will occur. But careful attention to family routines and observation of how children are responding can help smooth this time of transition.