The Dear Baby Project: An Interactive Journaling Tool for Pregnancy Education

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Abstract

A wide body of literature indicates that pregnancy and childbirth education is often inaccessible and that it inadequately addresses psychological aspects of pregnancy. This paper reviews the numerous barriers to providing useful prenatal education and outlines the ideal approach to prenatal teaching. Then, the author presents the concept for new tool for interactive pregnancy education, The Dear Baby Project. The Dear Baby Project is a self-contained kit that involves the cognitive, physical, and affective aspects of pregnancy and delivers health information while leading women to create a scrapbook and journal of their pregnancy. The Dear Baby Project capitalizes on the known benefits of reflection and journaling to provide a fun approach to pregnancy and parenting education. The exercises contained in the Dear Baby Project guide women through important learning topics and promote a feeling of mental and emotional readiness. The Dear Baby Project is meant to address six educational units and this paper presents the pilot materials for one of those units: emotions and emotional aspects of pregnancy and parenting. With careful attention to readability, appropriateness and suitability of materials, the author provides examples of educational, art, and literary components from the kit. The flexibility of this design will allow clinicians to select relevant modules and distribute kits that are tailored to each patient’s individual risks, needs, interests, and expectations. The final portion of this paper describes the next steps in the project’s design and implementation and proposes some innovative modifications for the project content.

Keywords: pregnancy, education, art therapy, journaling, reflection, childbirth education
The Dear Baby Project: An Interactive Tool for Pregnancy Education

Pregnancy is a time of excitement, change, and numerous learning needs. Expectant women experience the physiological changes of pregnancy and childbirth and must navigate a significant psychological transition as well. The work presented here details a tool, called the Dear Baby Project, that is designed to educate pregnant women while allowing them to engage in reflection, creativity, and thoughtful consideration of their pregnancy and future lives as mothers.

The Dear Baby Project is a self-contained arts and journaling kit complete with instructions, information fact sheets, crafting activities, supplies, and a binder to house the completed work. It consists of information and activities related to six general topics: the development of the baby, emotional and relationship changes during pregnancy and beyond, the health and well-being of the mother, labor and delivery, caring for the baby, and emergencies or when/who to contact if something goes wrong. For each of the six broad topics, the kit contains modules with easy-to-understand information fact sheets, art projects, and literary/journaling exercises. In completing the Dear Baby Project kit, mothers will not only have reviewed useful health information but will also have chronicled their pregnancy and created a specialized scrapbook of their experience.

This paper presents the current state of prenatal education dissemination in the United States and reveals a need for an accessible, adaptable, fun and self-paced approach to prenatal and parenting education. A detailed look at the design concept and process of the Dear Baby Project follows the review of literature. This paper includes elaboration on one set of modules addressed in the Dear Baby Project: emotions and emotional changes during pregnancy and parenthood. The paper presents pilot materials for the four modules and provides examples of
completed activities. The final sections of the paper lay out the next steps for the project, including suggestions for adaptation.

**Literature Review**

Pregnancy is a developmental period where patient education is critical and where psychosocial well-being is a key component to a successful developmental transition. How many women actually receive this important preparation before the birth of their baby? How do most women and their families get their information and are they satisfied with that preparation? Gager, McLanahan, and Glei (2002) analyzed data from the 1996 Commonwealth Fund Survey of Families with Young Children and found that only 40 percent of parents felt confident about their abilities to parent and believed that they were coping well with the demands of new parenthood. Though dated, the statistic is unsettling. More recent research indicates that the health information, particularly the psychological preparation mothers receive in childbirth classes continues to be unsatisfactory. Prenatal education tends to focus physical needs and leaves significant gaps in provision of education regarding mental health issues, family life/sexuality, and parenting (Hanson, VandeVusse, Roberts, & Forristal, 2009).

In 2007, 70.5% of pregnant women in the United States received early and adequate prenatal care according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2013). While we might expect that women will receive education and information about their pregnancy during their prenatal visits, the actual clinical tasks tend to focus on immediate health issues and women are referred to attend childbirth classes separately (Novick, 2009). In the United States, approximately 66-71% of mothers ever attended a childbirth class prior to the birth of their child(ren) (Gager, McLanahan, & Glei, 2002; Lu et al., 2003; Murphy-Black, 1993; Slusser & Lange, 2002).
Pregnant women make up a large patient population of relatively healthy individuals with a strong readiness to learn. Taken together, the literature reviewed above indicates a definite need for enhanced prenatal education, particularly tools targeting the development of psychological and other coping skills.

**Common Barriers to Prenatal Education**

While there is little research on prenatal education effectiveness rates, there is ample research on the common barriers to accessing and receiving prenatal education. Common reasons why women do not attend childbirth classes or receive effective prenatal and parenting education include:

- Low average level of patient literacy and lack of informational materials written in simple, easy-to-understand language (Hansford & Forsdike, 2013; Porter et al., 2012; Renkert & Nutbeam, 2001; Shieh & Hosei, 2008);
- Feeling confident enough without the classes or having attended classes for a previous birth (Murphy-Black, 1993).
- Difficulty finding time to fit the classes into their schedule and/or needing to find childcare in order to attend any additional classes or events (Murphy-Black, 1993; Novick, 2009);
- Financial costs (Murphy-Black, 1993; Novick, 2009; Phillippi & Roman, 2013);
- A lack of culturally appropriate options (Nolan, 2005);
- A fear of being judged and a fear of being pressured to participate in specific prenatal services (Breustedt & Puckering, 2013; Roberts & Pies, 2011);
• Concern for being made to feel guilty about risky behaviors the mother has engaged in (e.g. drug or alcohol use) (Phillippi & Roman, 2013; Roberts & Pies, 2011; Tighe, 2010);

• Worries that someone will contact Child Protective Services (Roberts & Pies, 2011).

Best Practices In Prenatal Education

Given the numerous barriers to accessing and understanding prenatal education, what can be done? What would an ideal prenatal education program look like? Most pregnant women are adults who appreciate and learn best when approached using the principles of adult learning (Nolan, 2005; Nolan & Foster, 2005; Tighe, 2010). Based on those principles, childbirth and parenting education should be client-led and dynamic. Women and their partners want to see themselves engaged in their own personal gain (Nolan, 2005). Education should draw on previous life experience, link experiences to the new learning, and should encourage clients to reflect on the influences their parents and family lifestyles have had on their beliefs and behaviors (Nolan, 2005; Nolan & Foster, 2005). Ideal prenatal education would be casual and fun, offered early on with continuity throughout pregnancy, accommodate all social backgrounds, include flexibility on the topics covered, be conducted in a comfortable setting, and tailored toward each individual woman and her family (Candib, 2010; Tighe, 2010). The information should be free or inexpensive.

Description Of The Product

Given the need for a new approach to pregnancy and parenting education and based on the ideal educational techniques outlined above, the remainder of this paper presents the concept for a creative alternative education tool: The Dear Baby Project. The Dear Baby Project utilizes the therapeutic benefits of journaling and art (Demecs, Fenwick, & Gamble, 2011; Lane, 2006;
Perry, Thurston, & Osborn, 2008; Staricoff, 2006) as means of health promotion (Mills, Knuiman, Rosenberg, Wood, & Ferguson, 2013). The method allows women to work on the project at their own pace, in the comfort of their own familiar home or space, and using their own personal experiences as inspiration.

The Dear Baby Project is a self-contained kit for pregnant women. Health care providers may distribute the kits at the first prenatal visits, or women may request a kit on their own behalf. Women will use the kit to complete self-directed modules that each have three components: an educational fact sheet, an arts and crafts activity, and a related literary or journaling activity. The kit will contain everything the women need to complete each of the modules: instructions, examples, craft supplies, and some journaling stationary. In addition to each of the educational modules and their accompanying activities, the kit encourages women to write letters to their babies throughout their pregnancies. All of the letters, journaling, art activities, and educational handouts may be housed in a decorated three-ring binder that comes in the kit. By the end of the pregnancy, the woman will have a chronicle of her pregnancy with art activities, poems and other things she has created. This will serve as both a meaningful way for her to reflect on pregnancy and her transition to parenthood as well as a lovely keepsake to pass on to the baby when he or she is older. While some parents forgo prenatal education classes because they have been for a previous pregnancy, the Dear Baby Project offers an experience that parents can enjoy for each pregnancy, even including their existing children in its creation.

Target Audience

The target audience for the Dear Baby Project is any pregnant woman who would like to chronicle her pregnancy and learn more about herself, her body, and her baby in the process. The women need no previous knowledge of journaling, arts and crafts, or scrapbooking. Currently
modules are written in English only. Ideally the modules will be available in different languages, with an adaptable set of culturally relevant modules.

**When To Implement The Product**

Providers should distribute the Dear Baby Project kit early on at one of the first prenatal visits. Women will then maximize their time journaling and will be able to work through project modules that are appropriate for their stage in the pregnancy. Qualitative studies indicate that nurses should help women develop coping skills early on in pregnancy (Côté-Arsenault, 2007; Perry, Thurston, & Osborn, 2008). Through providing education early, nurses enable women to develop those problem-focused coping skills.

**Expected Outcomes**

Women should learn about their pregnancy, birth, and the transition to parenthood while developing a sense that they have the ability to successfully give birth and parent their child. They should feel more confident in their knowledge and ability and recognize that they can make their own decisions. One of the main goals for the Dear Baby Project is to increase expecting women and their partners’ psychological skills and coping mechanisms.

In addition to benefiting women and their families, the Dear Baby Project will aid clinicians. Healthcare providers can use the Dear Baby Project as a means to encouraging patients’ self-directed preparation. Providers can also utilize the product as a way for patients to keep track of important information. For example, practitioners may want a mother with preeclampsia to be self-aware of her physical wellbeing and to record her blood pressures and other symptoms in her journal. Finally, clinicians may use the modules in the kit as starting points to talk about subjects that can otherwise be difficult to broach: intimate partner abuse, depression, developmental anomalies, etc.
Topics Covered

Extensive literature review reveals that prenatal information from practitioners, books, and birth/parenting classes falls into six broad categories (Billingham, 2011; Hanson, VandeVusse, Roberts, & Forristal, 2009; Nolan, 2005; Novick, 2009):

- The development of the baby
- Emotional and relationship changes during pregnancy and early parenthood
- The health and well-being of the mother
- Labor and delivery
- Caring for the baby
- Emergencies or when/who to contact if something goes wrong

Eventually, The Dear Baby Project will include multiple modules for each of those six units. To limit the scope of the work presented here, this paper presents pilot materials for only one of the six units.

Research on parents’ and caregivers’ perspectives show parents are most interested in developmental information about their babies, practical skills, and information that is timely/appropriate for their stage in the pregnancy and birth (Billingham, 2011; Candib, 2010; Hanson, VandeVusse, Roberts, & Forristal, 2009; Nolan, 2005; Tighe, 2010).

However, the category of information that may be the most neglected and sometimes, the most uncomfortable category of information to address is emotional change in pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. Patients may be hesitant to talk about sexuality, abuse, depression, or anxiety out of fear of being judged (Novick, 2009; Tighe, 2010). Moreover, patients often struggle with how to ask about and develop the psychological coping skills necessary for pregnancy and parenthood (Gager, McLanahan, & Glei, 2002; Tulman & Fawcett, 2003b).
Practitioners may inadequately address this subject in order to prioritize immediate physiologic concerns.

In a longitudinal study of women’s health during pregnancy and the first six months postpartum, Tulman and Fawcett (2003) asked women to reflect about their pregnancy and their postpartum life. 52% of the women in the study said that they felt the first six months postpartum were harder than they had expected (Tulman & Fawcett, 2003a). Recommendations from the Tulman and Fawcett study include interventions that result in a reduction in anxiety and depression during pregnancy and postpartum, utilizing screening scales for depression, and counseling women about having realistic expectations for what can be accomplished during pregnancy and new parenthood.

With these psychosocial needs in mind, the selected pilot materials of the Dear Baby Project presented here target the broad category of emotional and social changes during pregnancy, birth and parenthood. Specifically, the work below explains four related modules. The four modules address: a) the women’s own internalization of their pregnancy and eventual transition to motherhood, b) changes in relationships, communication, and sexuality, c) perinatal anxiety and depression, and d) parenting philosophies and principles of parenting.

**Design Process**

The Dear Baby Project utilizes the principles of adult learning to present educational material and to engage women in therapeutic practices of creative art and journaling. The product allows women to draw on their strengths and previous experiences to learn about and chronicle their pregnancy. Each topic and its related modules contain detailed instructions for the creative activities.
All Dear Baby Project materials are designed using simple, easy-to-understand language with colorful pictures. American patients’ low level of health literacy is a major barrier to high quality health care provision. Recent research indicates that most printed medical communications are written at a 9th grade or higher reading level, usually lacking interaction and summary components (Hansford & Forsdike, 2013; Shieh & Hosei, 2008). According to the Suitability Assessment of Materials (SAM) tool, materials written at or above a 9th grade reading level are not suitable, while materials at a 6th to 8th grade reading level are adequate and materials at a 5th or lower level are superior (Doak, 1996). It is imperative that prenatal health education materials contain simple and easy-to-understand information because a woman’s level of health literacy not only influences her ability to understand and act on health information, it also affects her ability to care for her children and other family members.

In order to ensure that the Dear Baby Project materials and instructions are easy to read, the work here utilizes an online tool that computes the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level for the educational materials (Flesch, 1948; Kincaid, 1975). The Flesch-Kincaid scoring method was first developed in the mid-twentieth century and is now a widely-used and recommended tool for assessing the reading level of health education materials (Shieh & Halstead, 2009). All of the Dear Baby Project educational information sheets are crafted to a 7th grade or easier reading level.

In addition to being assessed for readability, the Dear Baby Project educational fact sheets are carefully created to consider content, graphics, layout, motivation, and appropriateness for the educational tasks and the patient population. The Dear Baby Project design employs the SAM tool as a systematic way to assess the suitability of the fact sheets (Doak, 1996). Using the
tool helps to ensure that there is clear communication and that the health education materials are suitable (Shieh & Halstead, 2009).

The Modules

This section briefly outlines the contents of the emotional/social modules of the Dear Baby Project. Each module contains one educational information sheet, instructions and materials for one art activity, and a guided literary activity. Some modules have additional journaling prompts that help initiate journaling.

A. Module 1: The Woman’s Experience of Pregnancy (See Appendix A for examples)

1. Educational component—The educational fact sheet reviews the three stages of emotional development during pregnancy and provides links to online resources for further reading or information.

2. Art component—“Polaroids” of Then, Now, and Later.

This art activity prompts women to draw, collage or otherwise create “snapshots” of important people, places, and events that are currently important in their life. The pictures are “framed” in Polaroid-type frames and then can be inserted into their journals. The activity helps women identify existing resources in their life, encourages reflection on what is important, and will later serve as a chronicle or time capsule.

3. Literary component—The listing activity asks women to reflect on their life, pregnancy and memories and then list things like their top
five best memories, five people who have been helpful to them during the pregnancy, etc.

4. Journaling prompt—This activity includes prompts that encourage mothers to write about what they were like before they were pregnant and what they are like now.

B. Module 2: Relationships and Pregnancy (See Appendix B for examples)

1. Educational component—The educational information sheet addresses intimate partner violence and identifies warnings signs of an unhealthy relationship. The sheet provides resources to contact for women who believe they may be in an abusive relationship.


Here, women fill in and decorate a book of 10 coupons. The completed book can serve as a gift to a parenting partner like the baby’s father or grandmother. Women design the coupons to be redeemable for low-cost but fun activities that they can share with their parenting partner. Examples might include a coupon for making the partner’s favorite dinner, or for watching their favorite movie with them.

3. Literary component—This activity instructs women on creating an acrostic poem with the word TOGETHER to emphasize working together (with husband, partner, mother, etc) to make it through pregnancy and to raise the baby.

C. Module 3: Perinatal Stress, Anxiety and Depression—Warning Signs and Coping Strategies (See Appendix C for examples)
1. Educational component—The educational information sheet reviews the idea of stress and depression during pregnancy and presents warning signs for perinatal anxiety or depressive disorders.

2. Art component—This art activity leads women in creating a bookmark or a hangtag that has inspiring phrases or calming instructions. Women may choose phrases that speak to them and decorate the bookmarker with favorite icons. Women can carry the bookmarker as a totem or use it to encourage calming or decompressing thoughts when they are feeling stressed.

3. Literary component—The literary exercise asks women to think about stressors in their life and to identify things they can do to alleviate the stress. The women are also encouraged to think about resources (people, books, etc.) they can use to address issues of concern.

D. Module 4: Parenting Philosophies and Identifying Principles of Parenting

(See Appendix D for examples)

1. Educational component—The educational information sheet describes the concept of parenting philosophies and outlines important components of parenting philosophies and styles.

2. Art component—Favorite traits sun-catcher

With this activity, women create a cheerful sun that can be hung as a sun-catcher or as a mobile. On the sun’s rays, women use rubber stamps to spell out ideals they would like to encourage in their
children (e.g. "Courage", "Humor", "Integrity", etc). This project can serve as a decoration in the baby’s nursery and requires the mother to think about what qualities she would like to teach her child.

3. Literary component—The literary exercise presents a framework that women can fill in to create their own personal parenting philosophy.

**Next Steps**

This paper proposed the concept of the Dear Baby Project and presented examples of modules related to one of the six core topics to be included in the kit. Future design will include related modules for each of the other five key subject areas. After creating modules for the other units, the next step is to implement a pilot test by distributing a number of kits to various prenatal care providers. Ideally, the implementation will include a pre- and post-test or survey to patients receiving the kits, providing feedback essential to refining the project. The surveys will also ask women about their satisfaction with the kit and ask about feelings of preparedness for childbirth and parenthood. Clinicians will complete a separate survey in order to generate feedback about their perspective of using the kits and suggestions for additional topics or modules.

**Ideas For Adaptation**

The Dear Baby Project is highly adaptable. In the future, the project may include specialized modules that clinicians select to order to tailor the kits to each patient’s individual needs. Additional modules beyond the six core topics mentioned above may include:

- Modules specific to teen pregnancy
- Add-ons for older siblings to complete
- A companion kit for fathers
- A detailed module on pre-term birth
• Adaption of the product for women who experience perinatal loss.
• An electronic version of the product with information and activities for the computer, phone or tablet

A preliminary field test of the product and survey data collected from patients and clinicians will help inform priorities for new modules and formats.

Summary And Conclusions

In summary, a wide body of literature indicates that Americans struggle with access to education and preparation for childbirth and parenting. Prenatal education in the United States is fragmented, expensive, and insufficient for parents’ learning needs. This paper presents the concept for a novel approach to prenatal education. The Dear Baby Project utilizes the documented benefits of journaling and reflection and guides expectant women through fun writing and art activities while providing important pregnancy and parenting information. The Dear Baby Project employs a flexible design that allows clinicians to select relevant educational units and to provide a custom tailored learning tool for their patients. The design of the Dear Baby Project minimizes or eliminates many of the common barriers to utilizing prenatal and childbirth education:

• Materials are carefully designed with pictures and simple, easy-to-read language;
• Women can complete the project over time, at their convenience, in whichever setting they choose;
• The activities in the kit draw on each woman’s personal experiences, making the process more relevant and fun;
• The tool lends itself to adaptation for varying cultural contexts;
The reflective process and the educational topics included in the kit target the affective and emotional aspects of pregnancy that are often missed in traditional childbirth classes.

This paper presented the pilot materials for four related project modules approaching emotional and relationship changes during pregnancy. Future work will include the development of modules for the five remaining educational units and a preliminary trial of the product. This tool represents a significant effort to focus on areas of pregnancy education that have largely been neglected from American families’ preparations. The refinement and development of The Dear Baby Project will create an important potential solution to the lack of accessible, appropriate pregnancy education in the U.S.
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Appendix A

Materials for Module 1

The materials below include the educational information sheet, literary activity, and art activity instructions. When printed, the educational information sheet fills a single sheet of paper.

Thinking About Your Pregnancy: What Does It Mean To You?

Purpose: This sheet will tell you about common emotional stages in pregnancy.

How do you feel about this pregnancy? What are your goals for the next year? Five years? How does the baby fit in to those plans? Pregnancy is a normal and healthy process for most women. However, pregnancy comes with many changing emotions. Women usually go through three emotional stages during their pregnancy.

**STAGE 1: Accepting Pregnancy—You are pregnant!**

You might feel excited about being pregnant. You might also feel nervous or conflicted. By the end of this stage you will be aware that you are pregnant.

**STAGE 2: Realizing there are two of you—You are going to have a baby!**

During this stage you will begin to see your baby as a unique individual. Your baby is a separate person growing inside of your body. You will feel an increased responsibility. You will probably have a lot of questions. By the end of this stage you will realize you are going to have a baby.

**STAGE 3: Preparing for birth and parenting—You are going to be a mother!**

During this stage it will sink in that you will soon be a mother. This may cause anxiety or fear. On the other hand, this time can be very exciting. You will wonder what your baby will look like and what the baby will be like. By the end of this stage you will realize that you will be a parent.

No two women have the same exact pregnancy experience. However, most women do go through the same three emotional stages during pregnancy. Writing in your journal and reflecting on your feelings can help you think about what stage you are in.
Want to learn more? Here are some online resources that are helpful:


**Listing Activities To Get You Started Writing About Your Pregnancy**

5 things I have learned during this pregnancy:

5 best days in my life or best memories:

3 things about myself that I have improved or that I am working on improving:

5 people who have most helped me in my life:
Listing Activities To Get You Started Writing About Your Pregnancy

5 things I have learned during this pregnancy:

1. Being pregnant is not as much of a "condition" as I thought. I have been able to do a lot.

2. Everyone wants to give you their two cents.

3. What is best for the family may not seem the best for any one individual

4. Drink lots of water!

5 best days in my life or best memories:

1. The birth of big sister: I did it at the birth center with no pain medications.

2. Christmas 2013 photoshoot: Big sister and Daddy were quite the comedy team.

3. Blueberry picking: Just Big sister and I because Daddy was out of town. We picked loads of berries.

4. The ride on the GSM Railroad: We saw the country, had a chance to hike and enjoy each other.

5. Big sister’s 3rd birthday party: a perfect day. She was so happy.
Write On!
Use the space below to write about what your life was like before you were pregnant. Then write about what your life is like now. You might want to try using these ideas to get started.

I used to be afraid of... Now...
I used to want to... Now...
I used to think... Now...

• I used to think pregnancy was kind of scary—now it is mostly just amazing
• I used to want to meet important milestones like getting married or graduating. Now I prefer to enjoy the journey and the process
• I used to be afraid of “bully moms”, but now I feel I have the right and the strength to have my own philosophy about parenting and family
Picturing this Pregnancy: An Art Activity

The next two pages have pictures of empty photograph frames. If your baby could see the outside world right now, what would he or she see? What important things have happened this year before baby is born? Fill in the blank photograph frames with pictures of important people, places or things in your life. You can use a pen, markers or pencil to draw the pictures. If you don’t want to draw, you can use scissors and a glue stick to cut and paste pictures from magazines. Or, you could take pictures with your phone or camera and print them out. Glue or tape the pictures to the photograph frames. Make sure you label your photograph frames so your baby can one day look back and see what you created.

Here is an example of what one mom did to fill in one of her photograph frames.
Dear Baby Project

Nursing
School
Be Prepared.

Mommy finished up nursing school and is preparing to be a new grad nurse!

"Heirloom Pahmey to Garden"
Big sister and mommy planted heirloom "pah-may-tees" using seeds from friends, Robert and Jenny

Mommy, big sister, and daddy are very excited for your arrival! We all want to give you a great big smock!

For big sister's birthday we grew some butterflies and let them fly free in our flower garden.
Appendix B

Materials for Module 2

The materials below include the educational information sheet, literary activity and art activity instructions. When printed, the educational information sheet fills a single sheet of paper.

In It Together: Family, Partners, and You

**Purpose:** This paper will tell you about feeling safe while you are pregnant.

Has being pregnant changed how you get along with other people? How do you think your family will change when you are a mother? Some women who are pregnant feel supported and loved. Not all pregnant women feel safe, though. Some pregnant women are victims of violence. Violence is not just a physical thing. The chart below talks about different ways families get along. Some of the ways are healthy; others are not. What are your family relationships like? Look at the chart below to find out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs of Healthy or Unhealthy Family Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy Signs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling loved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being open to talk about feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy spending time together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have hopes and dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free from drug or alcohol abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable and reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being safe while you are pregnant is important. Think about how you and your family get along. If you feel scared of someone there are many people who can help. You can look at the links below to find help.
Want to learn more? Here are some online resources that you can use:


**Relationships and Emotions: Make An Acrostic Poem**

Being pregnant can be hard and being a parent can be even harder! Sometimes you may feel like you are doing it alone. But, there are people who will help you through. Taking help from family or your friend makes pregnancy easier. Help from family or a friend can also be good for your baby. Think of someone who has helped you so far or will help you in the future. It could be your partner, your mother or grandmother, your best friend or a neighbor.

In the next pages you can make an *acrostic* poem about a helpful person using the word TOGETHER. An acrostic poem is a poem where the first letter of every word spells out a message. You will spell out the message TOGETHER using words about someone who has helped you.
Relationships and Emotions: Make An Acrostic Poem

Here is an example of an acrostic poem that a mother made to describe her own mother.

A person who has helped me during my pregnancy is_____________________. Here is a poem to describe that person:

T

O

G

E

T

H

E

R
Relationships and Emotions: Make An Acrostic Poem

Now you can make your own acrostic poem.

A person who has helped me during my pregnancy is my husband. Here is a poem to describe that person:

Taking it all in
Observant
Genuine
Educated
Tickled pink
Humble
Encouraging
Reflective
**Relationships and this Pregnancy: How to Make a Personalized Coupon Book**

**Purpose:** This paper will tell you how to make a coupon book for someone who has helped you during your pregnancy.

In your packet you will find a blank coupon book. You can use your art supplies to fill out the coupon book. It will make a nice gift for someone who has helped you during this pregnancy.

Using markers, pens, stamps, stickers and other materials decorate the front of your coupon book. Below is an example of a decorated book. It has simple stamped and handwritten letters. It says “Coupons for my partner in crime”.

![Figure 1 An example of how you might label your coupon book.](image)

After you have decorated the outside of your coupon book, make a list of coupon ideas. The ideas can be for activities or things that do not require money. They can be simple.

Here is a list of some ideas:

- A hike or nature walk
• Visiting a favorite museum
• A back or foot rub
• Enjoying ice cream sundaes together
• Going to a concert
• Taking a picnic
• Making the person’s favorite dinner
• Look up the schedule for the moon and admire a full moon
• Breakfast in bed

Once you have a list of some “gifts” that you would like to put on your coupon book, decorate each page of the book. The picture below shows what a coupon could look like.

![Figure 2 An example of what one coupon looks like. The coupon says “Blast from the past: Let’s have a brownie sundae and look through our old photo albums together.”](image)

You can use stamps, markers, pens, stickers or even collage materials. The drawings or decorations can be simple. It is the idea behind each coupon that is most special. When you are finished, give the coupon book to someone who has helped you during your pregnancy. It will be a personalized and thoughtful gift.
Appendix C

Materials for Module 3

The materials below include the educational information sheet, literary activity and art activity instructions. When printed, the educational information sheet fills a single sheet of paper.

Anxiety and Depression During Pregnancy

Purpose: This sheet will tell you about depression and anxiety during pregnancy

Feeling depressed when you are pregnant is more common than many people think. About 1 out of every 5 or 6 mothers deals with anxiety or depression while she is pregnant. Some women do not realize they are depressed when they are pregnant. Being depressed while pregnant may be different than depression during other times of life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs Of Depression During Pregnancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong anxiety or fear—more than just a little bit worried</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling sad and/or crying a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling worthless or like you will not be a good mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanting to be dead or thinking of killing yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent headaches, fast beating heart, or feeling like you cannot breathe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being able to sleep even when you are very tired, or sleeping too much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed or hopeless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low energy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is normal to have some worries when you are pregnant. Writing in your journal can help. You can also talk to someone you trust. If your worries keep you from enjoying your life, you can talk to your healthcare provider. If you feel anxious or depressed it is important you seek help. With help you can feel better. Whatever you are feeling, you are not alone. If you struggle with depression, you are not to blame.

Want to learn more? Here are some online resources that are helpful:
Working Through Your Worries: Let’s Make A Plan

It is natural to feel tired, irritable or worried during pregnancy. One way to help work through your worries is to write about them and make a plan.

1. Use the space below to write down a concern or worry that you have had during this pregnancy.
2. List some people who might be able to help you figure out a solution.
3. List some ideas you have for how to work through the problem.

Here is an example of a concern that mother had and her ideas for addressing that worry.

One thing I have been concerned about is

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Some people who might be able to help me are

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Some ideas that might help with addressing my worry are

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Now that you have seen an example, use the next page to write about your concerns. If you need more room, you can use some journal paper to write down more of your thoughts.

**Working Through Your Worries: Let’s Make A Plan, Continued**

One thing I have been concerned about is
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Some people who might be able to help me are
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Some ideas that might help with addressing my worry are
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
Working Through Your Worries: Let’s Make A Plan

It is natural to feel tired, irritable or worried during pregnancy. One way to help work through your worries is to write about them and make a plan.

1. Use the space below to write down a concern or worry that you have had during this pregnancy.
2. List some people who might be able to help you figure out a solution.
3. List some ideas you have for how to work through the problem.

Here is an example of a concern that mother had and her ideas for addressing that worry.

One thing I have been concerned about is
how my daughter will react to having a new baby in the house. Will I have time for both kids?

Some people who might be able to help me are
My midwife – maybe she has information that will help
My mom – she has two children and has been through this.

Some ideas that might help with addressing my worry are
• I could buy a book or find something at the library that will give me some tips.
• I can look for children’s books about brothers and sisters to read to my daughter
• I can talk to my husband so we can figure out a plan

Now that you have seen an example, use the next page to write about your concerns. If you need more room, you can use some journal paper to write down more of your thoughts.
Keeping Calm and Carrying On: Making an Inspirational Bookmarker

**Purpose:** This paper will tell you how to make a bookmark that will help calm you when you’re feeling overwhelmed.

In your packet you will find two blank bookmarkers. You can decorate the bookmarkers and carry them with you.

1. Use markers, pens, stamps and other materials to make a relaxing or peaceful design on the front one of the blank bookmarkers.

2. Next, think of a calming phrase. You could use phrases like “at peace” or “onward.” Using a marker, pen or alphabet stamps, write the phrase on the front of one of the bookmarkers.

*Figure 3 This bookmarker uses the phrase “at peace.”*
3. Now, make a list of a few things you can do when you feel overwhelmed. You could take a walk, call a friend, clean the house, listen to some music, or things like that. You will write or stamp this list on the back of your bookmarker.

![Figure 4](image)

Figure 4 The back of the bookmarker has a list of things to do when feeling anxious.

4. You can decorate your second bookmarker with a different design. You can write or stamp a quote that inspires you.

You can use your bookmarkers while reading. Or, you could carry them in your bag and look over them when you’re feeling anxious.
Appendix D

Materials for Module 4

The materials below include the educational information sheet, literary activity and art activity instructions. When printed, the educational information sheet fills a single sheet of paper.

Parenting Philosophies: What Kind of Parent Will You Be?

Purpose: This sheet will tell you about different types of parenting.

What plans do you have for yourself after your baby is born? Many moms have a certain way they want to raise their baby. A parenting philosophy is a set of ideas about the way a person should raise her child. An example of a parenting philosophy is “Attachment Parenting”. With attachment parenting, parents think the bond formed between parent and child has important life-long meaning. The parents try to be sensitive and available to their children. The chart below lists some parts that make up different parenting styles. Often parents combine styles. You can make a unique parenting style. You can pick and choose the parts that are important to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Parts That Make Up Parenting Styles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision Making:</strong> Who makes the decisions in the family? Should the child make any decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control:</strong> Does the parent make the rules and demands? Does the parent explain the rules to the child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Involvement:</strong> Is the parent involved in the child’s life? How much attention does the child get? Is the child the center of attention in the family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acceptance:</strong> Is the parent warm and responsive? Does the parent like to give the child whatever he or she wants?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whose Job Is It?:</strong> Is the work shared equally between all adults? Whose job is it to raise the child?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discipline:</strong> When your child does not follow the rules, what will you do?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about the different parts in the chart above. You can choose how you will parent your baby. Having a plan will help you adapt when being a mom is tough.
Want to learn more? Here are some online resources that are helpful:

- Mothers and Caregivers Online Resources [http://www.now.org/issues/mothers/resources.html](http://www.now.org/issues/mothers/resources.html)

**What Kind of Parent Do You Want to Be? Creating a Parenting Philosophy.**

**Purpose:** This sheet will help you to design a personal parenting philosophy.

Think about the people who raised you when you were child. What kinds of things did they do to help you grow? What kinds of things do you wish they had done? Now think about your baby. What kinds of traditions do you want to pass on? What kind of values do you want your baby to have? This sheet will help you write about the kind parent you want to be.

Below is a template that you can fill out. It will help you to create a parenting philosophy. You can see an example of how one mother filled out her parenting philosophy template. Then you can use the blank template to fill in your own thoughts.
What Kind of Parent Do You Want to Be? Creating a Parenting Philosophy.

In our family, the main values we try to live by are:
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
As a mother, I would like to teach my baby ____________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
My parenting philosophy means that every day I will remember this about
Myself:___________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
My baby:__________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
My community:______________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
What Kind of Parent Do You Want to Be? Creating a Parenting Philosophy.

In our family, the main values we try to live by are:

- EMPATHY
- A SPIRIT OF GIVING
- HONESTY
- FRIENDSHIP
- OPEN-MINDEDNESS
- INTEGRITY

As a mother, I would like to teach my baby to value and learn from each human being; to be confident in herself; to explore and be curious about the world and its wonders.

My parenting philosophy means that every day I will remember this about myself: I need to take care of myself, too! That I am deserving and worthwhile. That I will strive to learn more about parenting.

My baby will grow up before I know it, so I will try to be patient and live "in the moment" with her. My baby might not like the same things as me and that can be exciting.

My community: I will try to make sure my baby and I are active members in our community. This includes taking care of and enjoying our neighbors and environment.
Parenting Your Baby: Make A Cheerful Sun-catcher

Purpose: This paper will tell you how to make a cheerful sun-catcher for your baby.

When you are finished with this art project your sun-catcher will look like this.

![Figure 5: You will make a sun-catcher like this one.](image)

To start, get the plastic bag with the sun-catcher supplies in it. You will need the yellow and the orange sun papers. You will also need the two pieces of sticky plastic papers. You will need your alphabet stamps, inkpad, and your scissors, too.

1. First, think of some characteristics you want to teach your baby. Do you want your baby to be determined? Do you want to teach your baby to be courageous? Make a list of about six to eight words.
In the picture above, I used:

• Courage
• Humor
• Determination
• Empathy
• Integrity
• Gusto

2. Use the alphabet stamps and your inkpad to stamp the words on your yellow sun paper. If you do not want to stamp the words, you can write them in pen or marker.

3. Next you will need one piece of the sticky plastic paper.
Peel off the white waxy paper from the back of the sticky paper. Put the paper on your table so the sticky side is toward the ceiling and the shiny side is touching the table. Put your sun papers on the sticky paper. Put the yellow sun with the words point down toward the paper. Next put the orange paper on top of the yellow. It will look like the picture below.

Figure 7 Plastic sticky paper has a shiny side and a sticky side that is covered by the white waxy paper.

Figure 8 The yellow paper with words touches the sticky side. The orange paper goes on top.
4. Now you will make the sun face. First put down two black circles inside of the sun’s center. The black circles are the sun’s eyes. Then put down two pink tissue paper circles on the sticky paper to make the sun’s cheeks. Then you put the black string from cheek to cheek to make the sun’s smile. Your sun will look the like the picture below.

![Figure 9 Make the sun’s face in the center of the circle.](image)

5. Next you will cover the face with tissue paper. Cover the whole face with the tissue paper provided. Don’t worry about being neat; it will look good when you are all finished. Your sun’s face will look like this.
6. Now you will use the second piece of sticky paper. Peel off the white waxy paper from the plastic sticky paper. Cover your sun with the sticky paper so that the sticky paper points towards the table and the shiny side points toward the ceiling. The sun will be sandwiched between the two sticky papers. Smooth out your project.
7. Next, use your scissors to cut off the extra plastic sticky paper around the sun. When you are finished you will have your sun-catcher ready to be used. You can tape it into a window or you can punch a hole in the top and hang it from the ceiling. The sun will shine through the tissue paper and your baby can see the sun’s smiling face.

![Image of a sun-catcher](image.png)

Figure 12 Tape your sun-catcher to the window or punch a hole and hang it up.