Starting the Baby Behavior Conversation Prenatally

BABY BEHAVIOR SPOTLIGHT #2

The prenatal period is a critical time for Baby Behavior education. Helping parents know what to expect from their newborn baby’s behavior can prepare them and increase their confidence when their baby arrives.

It might seem logical, or easier, to wait until after the baby has arrived, but if parents may misinterpret from the beginning their baby’s normal waking and crying as hunger, it may lead them to supplement with formula even before the baby’s first WIC appointment.

But how do you start the baby behavior conversation prenatally? Here are some ideas from others.

- “I start by showing the pamphlet to the participant and saying that this is information that I just learned about and wished I would have known it when my own kids were babies. Then I ask if there are any areas they are interested in talking about. Usually before we are done with the appointment, we’ve hit on all areas and I’ve shown most of the prenatal video clips.”

- “With 2nd & 3rd time moms, I ask what they remember about those first few days after their last baby was born, which usually leads into a discussion of sleep or crying.”

- “I used the ‘FACES’ tool from PCS, and asked a mom to choose a face that describes how she feels when she hears a baby cry. This led into a discussion about crying.”

- “I use the circle chart, and my own version of the opening statement written on the circle chart tool. It takes some time to explain the circles, but I’m getting better at it and it is becoming smoother.”

- “I especially like it when Dad attends the appointment, because we can give dad specific things to look for—giving him a real feeling of involvement.”

- “I ask ‘What questions or concerns do you have about what to expect the first few weeks with your baby?’, then I show the handout if they don’t have questions, saying that these are some things that other moms sometimes have questions about and then I ask permission to discuss sleep and crying.”

What idea will you try this week? What works for you? Share your experiences with your coworkers.