

## THE BABY BASICS PROGRAM

Baby Basics, The What to Expect Foundation's signature prenatal and health literacy program has reached over half a million mothers across the US, and has growing Initiatives in California, Maryland, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and Florida. The Foundation is a committed partner in all Baby Basics Programs, and continues to build tools, develop trainings run national evaluation studies, create national cross-program learning opportunities and provide development support in order to foster the growth and intellectual capital of the Baby Basics program.

### THE BABY BASICS PROGRAM GOALS:

1. Provide evidence-based prenatal materials to underserved families that are not only beautiful, comprehensive and easy to read but also serve as a catalyst for learning and family literacy.
2. Empower, engage, and educate underserved parents so that they become effective users of the healthcare system, learn critical thinking and problem solving strategies, and begin to plan for their family's long-term success.
3. Help healthcare systems, educators and other service providers empower moms with health literacy, adult learning, cultural competency and other teaching and engagement strategies in order to improve communication with and education of expecting and new parents.
4. Build or partner in caring community initiatives that put everyone "on the same page" helping families receive integrated, coordinated prenatal care, education and social support.

### THE BABY BASICS PROGRAM COMPONENTS REACHES THOSE GOALS BY PROVIDING:

#### **1. Materials:**

The Baby Basics book and planner are evidence-based educational tools for families and providers.

#### **2. Moms Club Curriculum and Strength Based Programming:**

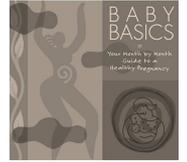
The Baby Basics Moms Club Curriculum is based on an educational strategy that respects and empowers pregnant women to learn not just about their pregnancy but to also practice using critical thinking skills and life planning strategies.

#### **3. Professional Development and On-Going Coaching:**

The Baby Basics Health Education Training, Clinical Quality Improvement Coaching program (QuIC), on-line provider CME/CNE, and Train the Trainer Model provide tools, strategies and practical implementation support to help every agency (from the clinic to the library) and every service provider (from the receptionist to the doctor) build respect for one another's contribution and dedication to their work – and to use new strategies to better engage and empower expecting women.

#### **4. A Community Engagement Framework:**

Using models of collective impact, and working across sectors, Baby Basics brings organizations in varied agencies and systems together with a clear, branded intervention, materials and messaging, along with simple steps for initial engagement.



## **COMPONENT ONE: BABY BASICS MATERIALS**

### FULFILLS PROGRAM GOAL ONE:

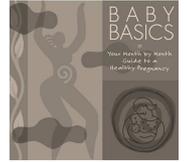
Provide evidence-based prenatal materials to underserved families that are not only beautiful, comprehensive and easy to read but also serve as a catalyst for learning and family literacy.

#### The Baby Basics Book:

- Updated annually to reflect evidence-based best practices in prenatal care.
- Reviewed and endorsed by National March of Dimes.
- Addresses American College of Ob-Gyn (ACOG) education standard.
- Available in English, Spanish & Chinese.
- Health Literate. Written in plain language, a finalist in the Health Literacy Innovation awards, sections of the book are written to a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level, with more in-depth information at a 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.
- Culturally Competent. The book addresses the real health, economic, social, cultural, & behavioral realities and disparities of at-risk expecting families. The Spanish and the Chinese versions were not only translated, significant sections of the book were changed to address the different health, cultural and behavioral concerns of these immigrant communities.
- Over 500,000 copies of the book have been purchased by over 800 organizations for at-risk moms across the US.
- Going international. A grant from the State Department and the Gates Foundation will lead to the creation of Brazilian, Bangladeshi and Liberian versions of Baby Basics.

#### The Baby Basics Planner:

- Serves as a portable Medical Record for moms to use with all of her providers.
- Helps Ob-Gyns make a prescription for health education and direct community support.
- Provides questions for each month (and space for additional questions and answers)
- Gives moms tools to own her care.
- In Program cities, we work with local agencies to create local resource pages that are simple, and provide concrete steps for moms to access services. This is a way to put in writing information about Medicaid eligibility, WIC services, programming etc., but in a plain language that is very clear and actionable way.



## **COMPONENT TWO: MOMS CLUB CURRICULUM AND STRENGTH BASED PROGRAMMING**

FULFILLS PROGRAM GOAL TWO:

Empower, engage, and educate underserved parents so that they become effective users of the healthcare system, learn critical thinking and problem solving strategies, and begin to plan for their family's long-term success.

### **The Baby Basics Curriculum and Philosophy**

The Baby Basics Moms Club Prenatal Education Curriculum has been created to help the many practitioners who provide pregnancy support change the way they work with pregnant moms. Why? Because pregnancy is a teachable moment. Every mom wants the best for her baby- and every mom wants to know about...morning sickness, or constipation, or pain during delivery. Like a child, banging on a closed door – every mother asks herself – “what in the world is going on in there?”

But too often we don't open that door. Health education all too frequently becomes a classroom where the educator who “knows”, teaches the pregnant mother who “doesn't know”, from a set agenda that experts have decided needs to be taught. For moms who did not complete or enjoy High School, we've just replicated the classroom situation that we already know she has failed.

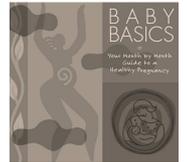
Often mom's burning questions are never addressed, and just as in school, she lacks the confidence to ask them. Quickly, she has lost interest and stops attending “class,” or perhaps even prenatal care, hopeless that she will learn about the things that interest and concern her, perceiving the entire process as another chore, similar to going to school each day to be bored, embarrassed or worse, berated for being a poor student. How can that young woman imagine herself, in 9 months, a successful mother and mentor to her newborn? We've lost that teachable moment, once again.

But it's worse than that. Children learn what they live. The next generation will be lost as well. Moms who don't read, or don't ask questions, or drop out of high school – in short moms with less education are more likely to have poor birth outcomes, are more likely to have children who show up unprepared for kindergarten, and are more likely to have children that drop out of high school.

So, how do we spark a hunger for knowledge? A desire to learn more? The confidence to ask questions? And the breaking of cycles for moms and babies....

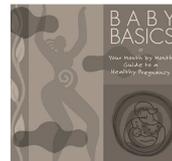
Real learning builds on a mom's prior knowledge, culture and beliefs. It sparks a desire to discuss, ask questions and learn more. Learning is a self-fulfilling cycle. In school kids who came to class confident of their worth and prior knowledge, were the ones able to comfortably ask questions so they could learn more. And once you learn something that interests and excites you – it becomes a way of life - you want to learn more. They became learners.

Pregnancy can be another bite at that apple, another chance to re-start that cycle. The Baby Basics Moms Club Curriculum and model begins by helping mom see how much she already knows. (Because as we all know, life lived in poverty with limited resources takes a great deal of intelligence, wisdom and gut. These moms are not dumb; they were just never told that they were smart.)



If we help moms identify, and revel in what she already knows, and interest her in asking questions based on her knowledge, and show her how to find and assess the answers and information she finds, and finally empower her to see what she's done and what more she can do....then we've helped her become a partner in her healthcare, a confident mother, and a life-long learner (and to one day be a powerful advocate for her baby's health and education as well).

So while the Moms Club Curriculum activities include many key prenatal health education topics (as identified by American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists and American Academy of Pediatrics) it also incorporates practicing general health literacy and critical thinking skills all parents will need. The curriculum models for educators how to work with moms.



## **COMPONENT THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ON-GOING COACHING**

FULFILLS PROGRAM GOAL THREE:

Help healthcare systems, educators and other service providers empower moms with health literacy, adult learning, cultural competency and other teaching and engagement strategies in order to improve communication with and education of expecting and new parents.

### **Training Programs**

1. Clinical Program: Baby Basics QuIC in the Health Center.
2. One on One: For Home Visitors, Case Managers and Health Educators working individually with a mom.
3. Group Education: Baby Basics Moms Club Facilitation.

#### **1. Clinical Program: Baby Basics QuIC**

The QuIC program teaches healthcare systems how to use health literacy and culturally specific tools and strategies to improve patient communication and compliance. The Baby Basics program becomes the cornerstone of a center wide quality improvement initiative at the health center with training, coaching and technical assistance. The training engages all center employees, from the Receptionist and Medical Assistant, to the Nurses and Doctors, thereby maximizing quality of care.

The program components are:

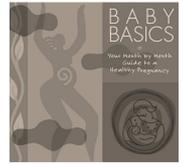
- Process Mapping
- Materials/Inventory Management Plan
- Clinical Orientation (1 hour staff orientation)
- On-Line Provider Training (CME & CNE)
- Health Education Training for appropriate staff
- Clinical Coaching and TA for implementation
- Planner (resources) Collection and Verification (Optional)
- Moms Club Groups (Optional)
- Peer Navigators-Volunteer Health Education Waiting Room Program (Optional)
- Evaluation

#### **2. One-On-One Health Education Program**

Peer educators, nurses, social workers and even volunteers can use the Baby Basics book, planner, and Mom's Club Curriculum one-on-one with expectant women. The tools and curriculum help educators understand and practice the Baby Basics philosophy of engaging and empowering pregnant women to take charge of their care – partnering instead of preaching. The curriculum provides modules and activities to combine prenatal health education with health literacy skills so educators have real tools to support women during pregnancy in engaging with care providers, asking questions, look up health information and learn important vocabulary words, while learning to use books and other sources to actively find information and engage in their care. The Baby Basics program has been fully integrated into existing programs such as Healthy Families, Nurse-Family Partnership, Healthy Start, Parents as Teachers, and other Home Visiting Models.

The program Component are:

- Process Map/Work Plan
- 2 Day Health Education Training
- Continued Coaching, Best Practices learning webinars and other tools

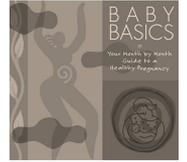


### **3. The Baby Basics Moms Club**

The Baby Basics Moms Clubs are facilitated by Certified Baby Basics Health Educators of whom, credentials range from community health workers, nurses, adult literacy educators or social workers. They are meant to bring pregnant women together to offer them the opportunity to explore prenatal and childbirth issues as a group. The Moms Clubs Curriculum is a gateway for self-exploration, voluntarily sharing and building relationships through open and honest communication with each other, the health care providers and within the community. By incorporating community resources, arts and crafts activities, exercise or walking tours, even grocery shopping expeditions and cooking classes under this umbrella helps to strengthen and expand support networks, information and friendships. Moms Clubs can be held in waiting rooms, libraries, community centers, prisons, schools, health departments, restaurants, churches, and many other places.

The Program Components are:

- Community Mapping Exercise (Optional)
- 2 Day Health Education Training
- Implementation and Outreach Strategy
- Marketing, Coordination Partnership and On-going Program Development



## **COMPONENT FOUR: A Community Engagement Framework**

FULFILLS PROGRAM GOAL FOUR:

Build or partner in caring community initiatives that put everyone “on the same page” helping families receive integrated, coordinated prenatal care, education and social support.

### **A Framework to Put Everyone “On the Same Page”**

The Baby Basics Program serves as a broad public health intervention for women at risk for adverse pregnancy outcomes. Baby Basics Initiatives use the book, training and varied interventions as a framework for community collaboration to integrate existing organization’s prenatal health education.

Baby Basics does not create new systems or programs; its value is that it strengthens existing systems and fosters inter-agency partnerships within at-risk communities. With Baby Basics, strategic stakeholders are “all on the same page” and are able to build on existing collaborative efforts already underway, honoring current programs and engaging established organizations, rather than creating an entirely new solution from scratch.

Community Health Clinics, home visiting programs, managed care coordinators, and community based organization across the country have implemented Baby Basics Programs typically using one or more of the program components. However, optimal success of the Baby Basics Program integrates all of the program components and through community engagement impacts the social and environmental issues affecting perinatal health and infant/child wellness among low income and vulnerable people.

Specialized trainings for medical provider systems, health education programs and others, help individual organizations integrate the tools, methods and philosophy into their everyday work.

Baby Basics Initiatives around the country include everyone from Prenatal Care Providers, Home Visiting Programs, Literacy/ESL educators, Managed Care Plans, Health Departments, High Schools, Prisons, Community volunteers, Churches, Libraries, Housing Agencies and even the District Attorney’s Office (Brooklyn, NY).

The Baby Basics Program helps stakeholders build a shared vision of the overarching program goals, each of the program components can be integrated within health care and community outreach systems, thus creating a framework for a prenatal support network for low income and vulnerable women that empowers, promotes self-efficacy, improved pregnancy and birth experiences, adherence to prenatal and postpartum care, resulting in healthier women, children, families and community.