

7 TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD *Welcome a New Baby to the Family*

Contributed by Dr. Zlata Stankovic-Ramirez

1 *Tell your child about the pregnancy first!*

Before you share with extended family and close friends, have the conversation with your child first. This way if they are excited or disappointed or nervous, you can have those important talks before people ask, "are you excited to be a big brother/sister?"

2 *Have all the talks*

There will inevitably be lots of questions. Spend as much time as needed to talk through all the things that come up throughout your pregnancy.

3 *Prepare the environment with your child*

Involve them as you set up the nursery, buy things like furniture, toys, clothes and other baby things. Talk about why babies need so many things and explain that they too, had all these things when they were a baby.

4 *Take a special trip as a family of 3*

Kind of like a "babymoon" but this one's all about celebrating your family of three before you welcome a fourth person into the mix. Give your child your full attention and make some great memories

5 *Set realistic expectations about your time with the new baby*

Have lots of conversations about how much the new baby will need Mama to feed, cuddle, love and spend time with her. Of course, also talk about how much they matter too! It's just that new babies depend on you for everything, they're not big like you!

6 *Set aside special times with your older child*

Every day have time with your older child to be together with your full attention, doing what they choose - play games, read a book, watch a show, whatever makes them feel loved. Even 10 minutes of alone can fill their cup (but try to make it longer)

7 *Check in often*

Ask your child often how things are going with having a baby around. Explain what's going on with the baby because things will change frequently. Help them be as involved (or not involved) as they'd like.