

BRINGING BABY HOME

“The greatest gift you can give your child is a strong relationship between you and your partner.

- John Gottman, Ph.D”

Even the strongest relationships are strained during the transition to parenthood. Lack of sleep, never-ending housework, and new fiscal concerns, along with emotional overload, can lead to profound stress and a decline in marital satisfaction — all of which affect baby’s care. Not surprisingly, 69% of new parents experience conflict, disappointment, and hurt feelings.

Researched-based Bringing Baby Home workshops prepare couples for life with baby and helps them be the best parenting team possible. In a relaxed and supportive environment, parents learn to strengthen their relationship and foster baby’s development during this challenging time. They build on what Dr. Gottman and colleagues found is the best predictor of marital adjustment after baby arrives: the quality of friendship in the marriage.

This 12-hour workshop combines scientific research and public education to improve the quality of life for babies and children by strengthening their families. It teaches new parents how to gain relationship satisfaction and create healthy social, emotional, and intellectual development for their child(ren). It offers a chance to spend two days with your partner, away from the stress of everyday life, to intentionally work on skills to strengthen your relationship.

TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD

The Gottmans first began testing their interventions by exploring what happened to a couple when the first baby arrived. In this longitudinal study they began observing young couples in first marriages a few months after their wedding, following couples into pregnancy and studying parent-infant interaction using the Lausanne Triadic Play paradigm. They discovered that 67% of couples experienced a precipitous decline in relationship satisfaction in the first 3 years of the baby’s life. They then compared the 33% of couples who did not experience the downturn in satisfaction with the 67% who did.

The Gottman’s research team showed that they could predict the baby’s vagal tone, how much the baby laughed and cried at 3 months, from the way the couple discussed a conflict in their last trimester. Again, based on the differences between the “masters” of relationships and the “disasters” of relationships, Drs. John and Julie Gottman designed a couples’ workshop and a couples’ therapy which became the highly effective “Bringing Baby Home” (BBH) workshop. They performed a randomized clinical trial with long-term follow up. That workshop has now been taught to 1,000 birth educators from 24 countries. The effects have been replicated in Australia and Iceland.

The initial findings from this research indicate that both the BBH workshop and support groups led by family educators are effective in promoting positive marital relations, parent-baby interactions, and overall infant development through the first year after the baby is born. The specific results of the evaluations to date include:

Parent-Baby Relations

- Both fathers and mothers who took the BBH program (compared to those that did not) showed greater sensitivity and responsiveness to their infant's signals. This was particularly true for fathers.
- Parents who took the BBH program demonstrated better co-parenting abilities in that they were able to work together more positively during family play with their 3-month-old baby.
- Babies expressed more smiling and laughter during family play if their parents had participated in the BBH program. This was true for both 3 and 12-month-old infants.
- Several indicators of father-infant attachment security were rated more positively in families who had taken the BBH program.

Infant Development & Temperament

- There were less language delays in one-year-old infants of parents who took the BBH program.
- Mothers who took the BBH program rated their babies as showing less distress in response to limitations (such as having a toy out of reach).
- 1-year-old babies in the workshop group were rated as responding more positively to their fathers' soothing (this is likely to reflect something about father-baby interaction quality as well as infant temperament).

Father Involvement

- Fathers who took the BBH program reported being more involved in parenting and feeling more satisfied and appreciated for their parental contributions.
- The quality of father-baby interactions was more positive if fathers had taken the BBH program.

Couple Relationship Quality

- Couples who took the BBH program reported high stable relationship quality. Those who did not take the BBH program showed a decline in relationship quality over the first year after the baby's birth.
- There was less hostility expressed by both husbands and wives during conflict discussions if they had taken the BBH program.

Parent Psychopathology

- Fewer mothers who took the BBH program showed symptoms of postpartum depression, the baby blues, and other indicators of psychopathology such as anxiety.
- Fewer fathers who took the BBH program showed signs of depression, anxiety and other psychopathology after the baby was born.

If you, or someone you know, is expecting a baby or is already parenting an infant or toddler (age 0-3 years) and is seeking to strengthen and maintain a healthy relationship, please join us for the next ***Bringing Baby Home*** series.

Saturday June 8th & 15th, from 9:00am -3:00pm



At the Tahoe Forest Hospital Children's Center

Cost: \$199 per couple*

Childcare \$30 per child per day – request space in advance

*TFHS employees can use Wellness Bank to cover the program costs (childcare must be paid separately)

For more information or to register, please call: (530)587-3769

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