

Experts Agree Parents Need Help

2421

The NuParent Infant curriculum gives parents the best possible foundation for raising a happy, healthy child. While information on areas like child development, guidance, health and safety is covered, the program also provides an opportunity for parents to bond and develop a relationship with their child and offers an open forum to exchange ideas and concerns.

NuParent is predicated on the belief that with a multi-faceted program that meets all these needs, parents can unlock in themselves their fullest potential, through experiencing not only the responsibilities of parenthood, but the joys, as well.

NuParent was developed in 1997 by Children's Bureau of Southern California to meet an increasing community need for information about parenting specifically for new borns. Each NuParent class involves parent/child activities, knowledge building sessions and a chance to share ideas and experiences with other parents in similar situations.

Experts now agree that all new parents need help to develop good parenting skills. Findings from the Family Resource Council's study on parenting education state: "Parents clearly feel they need outside support ... they can't do it by themselves."

Despite the number of fathers accompanying their partners at child-birth classes and through the birth itself men's participation in parental support.

The demands and challenges of raising children have evolved in recent years and the is new data substantiates the need for further education, a greater involvement with early childhood development, the need for support outside the traditional nuclear family and parents' own hunger to learn.

Some of the facts include:

- Today's child traditionally has an immediate support system of only one to four people compared to 10-14 people just 20 years.
- Less than half of first-time parents (44 percent) say they feel confident about caring for their new born when they leave the hospital. While pamphlets and brochures help, it is the advice and encouragement from professionals (doctors, nurses, instructors, etc. that give parents confidence in the choices they make for their child.
- Most parents of infants and toddlers (79 percent) feel they could use more information in at least one of six areas of parenting (newborn care, sleep patterns, how to respond to a crying baby, toilet training, and discipline).

The infant curriculum consists of eight two-hour sessions, each including parent/infant, enriching and social support activities.

Section One: Introducing the NuParent Program.

Parents get to know each other through several icebreaker activities, and introduce themselves and their babies to the group. Topics discussed during knowledge-building and social support components include:

- separation from your baby;
- group rules;
- expectation of NuParent program;
- the difference between being the "perfect parent" and being the best parent that you can be;
- the transition to parenthood-what it was like for new parents;

Session Two: Understanding Parenting Styles

Parents interact with their babies through a music and movement exercise to strengthen and support the parent-baby relationship. Topics discussed during knowledge-building and social support components include:

- how to build on skills your parents taught you;

Parents learn how to massage their infant and talk about why nurturing touch is important and helps strengthen the parent-child bond. Parents dance with and tell puppet stories to their baby and learn about the importance of play.

Topics discussed during knowledge-building and social support components include: