

SUPPORTING SIBLINGS: A NEW BABY



As seen in
haven
for families
Magazine

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HOW DO I SUPPORT MY EXISTING CHILD TO ADAPT TO HAVING A NEW FAMILY MEMBER?

Bringing a new family member into the house can be full of joy and excitement. But a new baby also brings change ... a lot of change! Without the correct support, change can bring a variety of unwanted and confused emotions. Feelings such as joy, excitement, resentment, jealousy, pride and guilt are not uncommon to feel ... sometimes all at the same time! However, with the right support this change does not need to be overwhelming and can be filled with the joy that this new soul brings in coming to your family.

Preparation is the key! With preparation the focus is on ensuring all people have the best opportunity to have the 'same picture' of:

1. What is happening NOW in the day/week/month
2. What is happening NEXT in the day/week/month
3. What behaviours are EXPECTED of any person at any time

This 'Now - Next - Expect' guideline is supportive for any person at any stage of their life. For example, if we don't know what is happening now or next in our life then our anxiety levels are likely to be high. If we don't know what behaviours are expected of us at any time then our anxiety levels are likely to be increased. Increased anxiety precedes the use of all unwanted behaviours!

So to support all existing family members including mum, dad and any siblings, a key support will be based on ensuring that ALL

people have the SAME PICTURE by always discussing the Now - Next - Expect!

This preparation for existing siblings can begin from the moment you are willing to share the pending birth of your new family member with other people and continue well beyond the birth of their new sibling. With existing siblings all language can be based on supporting the development of pictures as to what life will look like when the baby comes. For example:

1. "Now this is the spare bedroom and next when the baby comes, this will be the baby's bedroom. Would you like to help me decorate and set up the baby's bedroom? What would you like to add to the baby's room?"
2. Or when the baby has been born: "Now I am feeding the baby and next when the big hand is on the four on the clock [you can put a sticker on the four if the child is not yet able to read numbers] I will be finished feeding and I will play your game with you! Now you could sit next to me when I am feeding, or you could play or ... [whatever you as the parent might expect the older sibling to do now]."
3. "Now the baby will take a bit more of my time, but next the baby will be growing up and they will not need as much of my time. When the baby is older they will be able

play more with you, but now we just need to let the baby grow, the same way that you and I got to grow when we were babies."

4. "Now things will be a little different at home - just like they were different when you were first born. But let's all talk about these differences as they happen and talk about what is happening now and next in our life and what is expected of any of us at any moment. Let's work together as we are a team"
5. "My picture is now this is going to happen and next this is going to happen. What is your picture? How can we make our pictures the same?"

As you can see, these statements can just be integrated into all conversation and made part of 'the way you speak as a family'. The conversation allows for all people, including siblings, to be part of creating the pictures of what is happening now and next and what is expected of all family members at any moment.

With this information, all people have the capacity to embrace the change with minimal anxiety as they all have the required information to prepare themselves for their future. Thus each person has increased their capacity to feel equipped to manage life.

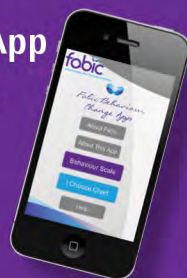
This will allow the embracing of joy and love that comes with the arrival of any newborn baby!

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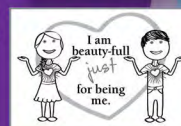
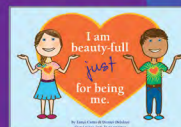
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FABIC Director: Tanya Curtis leads a team of psychologists who all employ the unique Fabic methodology based on supporting people to understand & change unwanted behaviour
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