

Growing Into Parenthood: Online Prenatal Classes for Young Parents

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Conference
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Karon Foster



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1

The Rationale

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4

Learning Objectives:

- “ To describe the rationale for an online program for young parents.
- “ To describe the online content, interactive learning elements and online parent community.
- “ To discuss the challenges and lessons learned from implementing this program.

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2

Online Classes for Young Parents?

- “ **75 % of users in Canada use the internet to research family matters such as parenting and child health.** (Canadian Internet Use Survey May 2011, Bernhardt et al., 2008; Dobranksy & Hargittai, 2012)
- “ **Parents find internet-based information useful and would use it again.** (Tuffey & Findlay 2002)
- “ **Parents also use the internet as a means of social support** (Gundersen et al., 2011)
- “ **Some online educational programs shows gains in parenting knowledge and skill.** (Wade et al 2011, Na & Chia 2008, Pacifici et al 2011, Enebrick et al 2012; Kolb et al 2009, Taylor et al 2008, Gelatt et al 2010).

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Project:

Collaborative project with a group of 8 Ontario agencies serving young parents and the feedback of young parents.


To revise the classes in the Welcome to Parenting Program an online Prenatal and Parenting program.

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3

Why use Online Classes for Young Parents?

- “ **Canadians are greatest users of internet in World** (8 out of 10 online-CIRA Factbook 2013)
- “ **Canadians spend about 45.6 hrs per wk on internet** (CIRA Factbook 2013)
- “ **Over 98% of 16-24 yr. olds use internet** (Statistics Canada 2013)



- “ **Increases accessibility for young parents to access information**
- “ **Way to provide service in remote or rural areas**

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6

Young Parent Suggestions

- Over 65 expectant and young parents reviewed the Welcome to Parenting program.

Suggestions:

- Brighter colours
- More visual images of young parents, teen parents, babies
- More videos
- Less repetition of topics i.e. safety, feeding etc.
- Fewer classes
- Incorporate more about the young/teen parent experience

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7

The Online Program

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10

Why Prenatal Classes?

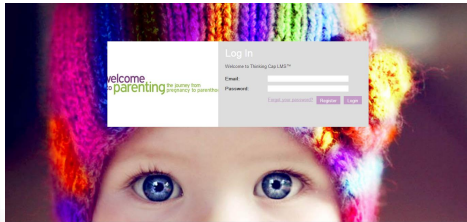


- Expectant parents seek out resources, experts, classes when pregnant (Oldershaw 2002)
- Parents most willing to learn about parenting with first baby and in the first year after baby is born (Crill Russell, 2003)
- Maternal role attainment begins in pregnancy and continues for 1st year includes cognitive components (how, what, why of caring for child) and affective components of commitment, empathy and positive regard (Mercer 1995)

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Welcome to Parenting for Young Parents



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11

Why Parenting Classes?



- 30% of Canada's young children have cognitive or behavioural problems (D. Willms 2002, McCain, Mustard & Shankar 2007)
- Lack of positive and sensitive parenting is a factor in these problems- 2/3 of parents use punitive parenting (D. Willms 2002)
- Majority of parents know little about how child grows and developments (Oldershaw 2002)
- Increased conflict after the birth of a baby and increase conflict affects parenting (Krishnakumar & Buelher 2000)

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9

Goal of the Program

- Increase parents' knowledge, skills and confidence about pregnancy and birth.
- Increase parents' knowledge, skills and confidence in parenting and child development.
- Promote sensitive, responsive and warm parent/child relationships.
- Foster parents' sense of support for their role.

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12

Features of the Program

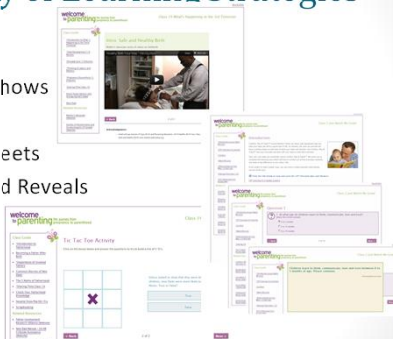
- “ Modular classes: Prenatal, Parenting 0-12 Months
- “ Classes accessible any time with internet connection
- “ Library of Topics
- “ Access to a Panel of Experts (post questions)
- “ Access to an Online Parent Educator (for support and information)
- “ Ability to connect with other young parents at same stage of pregnancy or with baby the same age.
- “ Variety of videos, games, slideshows to engage young parent

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13

Variety of Learning Strategies

- “ Videos
- “ Slides Shows
- “ Quizzes
- “ Worksheets
- “ Click and Reveals
- “ Games

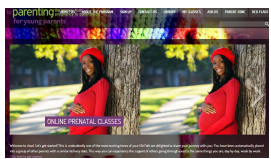


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16

Classes

Prenatal Classes



- “ 13 Classes
- “ Topics include: prenatal care, fetal development, your changing body & mind, healthy lifestyle, you and your relationships, labour and birth, breastfeeding, newborn care and becoming a parent.

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Challenges & Lessons Learned

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Classes

Parenting 0-12 Months



- “ 17 classes
- “ Topics are: 1st weeks home, eating, sleeping, cues & attachment, baby care, safety, baby’s personality, child development, discipline, childcare, your relationships after birth, being a parent and Comfort, Play & Teach activities for baby.


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15

- “ Learning online will not appeal to all young parents
- “ Revising topics into small pieces
- “ Finding appropriate visual images of young parents in labour, giving birth, breastfeeding etc.
- “ Finding appropriate videos
 - “ with young parents that could be used with permission from production companies

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18



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19