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What We Offer:

**Services:**
- Classes & Support Groups
- Breast Pump, Scale, and Waterbirth Tub Rentals
- Breastfeeding Education and Counseling
- Baby Gift Registry
- Lending Library

**Products:**
- Maternity and Nursing Clothing and Bras
- Layette and Baby Gifts
- Organic Baby Clothing
- Pregnancy, Breastfeeding, Birth, and Parenting Books
- Baby Carriers & Slings
- Breast Pumps and Breastfeeding Supplies
- Dutailier Gliders & Replacement Cushions
- Arm’s Reach Co-Sleepers
- Britax Car Safety Seats

Confessions of a Birth Junkie

In my youth, I clearly remember saying that I probably wouldn’t have kids, because I just couldn’t imagine being able to give birth. The idea of it just freaked me out. My own mother gave birth in the era of “twilight sleep” deliveries, and barely remembered her own experience, although she did clearly remember hearing women screaming down the hospital halls.

In my twenties, I came to terms with my fear of giving birth: it’s just one day in your life, right? I figured I could get through it somehow.

I was present at the birth of my sister’s first child, which was a natural birth. It was a joyful and relatively easy birth (at least for me!). And my oldest sister had given birth to both her children at home, so I knew that natural birth was possible, at least in theory.

During my first pregnancy, I mostly avoided thinking about the birth. I attended childbirth classes and formulated a birth plan, but I also had a strong sense that it would just happen however it happened. I wanted to “go natural,” but I wasn’t going to torture myself if I needed some sort of anesthetic to get through it. I never thought of myself having a high pain tolerance.

After finishing six weeks of bedrest for suspected pre-term labor,

**Fall Classes and Groups**
- Drop-in New Parent Support Group
- HypnoBirthing® Class
- Childbirth Preparation Refresher
- Breastfeeding & Newborn Care Classes
- Free Baby Carrier Class
- Baby Signs Workshop
- Doula Information Night
- La Leche League
- And More...

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*Continued on page 2*
I was anxious and impatient for Benjamin to be born, especially as I watched my due date come and go. It was only after my due date passed that I started really worrying about how the birth would go. I just had too much time to think about it!

I found a book that helped put my mind at ease. It was called “Mind Over Labor,” and although it was dated and a bit esoteric, it helped me get my head “in the right place.”

When Benjamin was 14 days late, I agreed to go into the hospital to begin the induction process. But it was “leap day” (February 29), and every other mother in town was giving birth, so they didn’t have a room for me.

The next day they induced labor with pitocin. I think that I was already in early labor, but since I’d been having bouts of contractions for about 14 weeks, we weren’t going to wait and see whether they turned into “the real thing” this time.

I was lucky -- I only needed a very low dose of Pitocin to get labor going. They started the IV drip at about 2pm, and they only increased it once and I was off and running (during transition I remember telling them to turn it off, with some juicy expletives thrown in!)

Early labor was sort of fun and exciting. I have video footage of my husband Igal and I slow-dancing to “Mr. Jones” by The Counting Crows, and he cut my toe-nails at one point (it had been a while since I’d been able to do it myself...). By 6pm, I was at 4 cm and fully effaced, and I definitely had to focus on my breathing to get through the contractions comfortably. It was the contractions that came when I wasn’t prepared that hit me the hardest. If I breathed “into my cervix” and imagined it “opening like a flower” (from Mind Over Labor) throughout the contractions, I was okay.

Whenever I got too uncomfortable, I would try to do something different -- take a bath, get out of the bath, lean over forwards, sit on the toilet, etc. The logistics of getting from one point to another took some time, since I had about 30 seconds between contractions to do anything, but it helped the time pass and made me feel like I was doing something to get through it. At some point, I started feeling like I was having a hard time finding a comfortable position, and I noticed that during contractions I was having trouble keeping my breathing even. They checked me at that point, and told me I was nine centimeters. and the next contraction I noticed that I was involuntarily bearing down during contractions. They checked again and said I was complete and could push!

Pushing was hard for me. In hindsight I realize that I had a fused tailbone that wasn’t going to move out of the way with just my own effort. After two and a half hours of pushing that wasn’t going anywhere, they used vacuum extraction, and on the third pull (and my push), Benjamin...
came out all at once (head, shoulders & body, and it was so fast the doctor almost dropped him!). Needless to say, I had a bunch of stitches and a tough recovery (broken tailbone, too), but I was just so relieved that it was over and we'd both survived it relatively intact, that I didn't dwell too much on the discomfort. I had enough to think about learning how to care for my new baby!

After my birth experience with Benjamin, I was a bit nervous about how the pushing would go when my second baby Elijah came along. I had the idea that some of my difficulty with pushing during Benjamin's birth was the forced “three pushes per contraction” that was imposed by the hospital staff. I didn't have any strength by the end to push, so this time I wanted to push “with the urge,” taking breaks if I needed to, and see how that went. I also hired a doula to help advocate for me and provide extra support, which I heartily recommend to all moms.

I shouldn't have worried. After about two hours of active labor, I could have pushed Elijah out while hanging from the ceiling by my toes! Second baby? Tailbone out of the way? Doula? I'll never know, but he came out in three pushes, all 9 lbs, 12 oz of him! I fell in love immediately. And this time, I swear I felt better the day after his birth than I did the day before. It really is easier the second time.

With my daughter Emma, labor went smoothly. I told the labor nurse when I felt she was going to come soon -- the doctor was across the street at her office. I said “I remember how this feels, you'd better call the doctor.” I guess they figured I was too lucid to be in transition. But when I went to the bathroom a little while later (wanting to avoid any embarrassment on the delivery table...), I realized I couldn't get back on the table. I felt like I'd be sitting on her head! They checked me and said I was complete, but I had to breathe through the contractions, because the doctor wasn't there yet!

I climbed on the table on my hands and knees, and waited not-so-patiently for the doctor to arrive. When she did arrive, I told her I couldn't figure out how to get back on my back, so she suggested I just push in that position. She was born with the second push, and was perfect. She was so serene -- while they were bathing her she just looked around the room so curiously, wanting to see everything, but just not too worried about any of it.

My daughter Emma just started Kindergarten two weeks ago, and I have no more babies. Sometimes I think “Oh, just one more...” But it's kind of like getting another kitten -- you can keep getting more kittens, but then you've got a houseful of cats! And I suspect that much of my desire to have another baby comes from my love of giving birth. So now I'll have to live vicariously through all of you!

And I do have quite a “houseful of cats.” There is never a dull moment. My kids are amazing people, and I marvel at the fact that they came from my body and were

---

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nurtured from my body, but they are each their own individual. I have learned so much from caring for them. And when I talk to women who are about to give birth, as much as I know that labor can be hard, and frightening, and may not always go the way you plan, I’m jealous! Because you are embarking on the greatest adventure of a lifetime, and you will grow in ways you can’t even imagine.

In this issue of The Nurturing News, on page five, Lara Honos-Webb, Ph.D. presents her views on the role the mother-daughter relationship can have on a woman’s pregnancy experience. On page seven, doula Deanna Jesus discusses her views on the sexuality of childbirth. And on page 15, Danielle Saunders, MFT discusses the role birth art can play in preparing for labor. And our class listings start on page nine.

We are making some changes in our class program at The Nurture Center. We have had a conflict in trying to make our classroom work for many different kinds of classes, which requires us to keep a completely empty room, that is often not in use. Going forward, we will be stocking our classroom with Dutailier gliders, which will accomplish two goals: providing a showroom for Dutailier so that customers can try out the chairs before they purchase one; and providing comfortable seating for classes, such as childbirth education and support groups, which are the foundation of our class program. So you will notice that our class offerings are leaner going forward, but I hope you will find that the classes we continue to offer will be more comfortable.

In addition, class registration for most classes will be done by the instructor going forward. Instructor contact info for ongoing classes appears in our class listings.

To reach instructors for classes that are no longer offered, contact info appears on page 17.

We hope to see you soon at The Nurture Center!

Happy and healthy parenting,

Meri Levy, M.A., C.L.E.
Executive Director
The Psychology of Pregnancy:  
Giving Birth to Yourself as a Mother  
By Lara Honos-Webb, Ph.D.

Pregnancy can be a stressful time for any woman. There are many factors that can increase stress during pregnancy. Not surprisingly, a woman’s relationship with her own mother plays a central role in determining how well a woman can adapt to the challenges of pregnancy. Studies have reported that women with a lot of unresolved conflict toward their mothers are even at risk for health complications during pregnancy.

One study of women who adjusted poorly to pregnancy and motherhood found that many of these women had not examined or dealt with their conflicting feelings toward their own mothers.

The more you are aware of your own conflicting feelings about your mother, the more you can identify and work through them to resolution.

There are many reasons that your relationship with your mother takes on such importance during pregnancy. To the extent that you have a negative image of your own mother, this image may weigh on you as you move toward motherhood. Women who are disconnected from their mother are at risk for difficulty in establishing a new identity as a mother. If a woman does not have a healthy mother image to look toward, becoming a mother can create greater conflict and stress.

If you do not have a positive role model for how to be a good mother, you may have increased fears about your own ability to mother. These fears and anxieties may make your pregnancy more difficult than it would be if you had a healthy maternal role model.

As you contemplate your new life as a mother, you are likely to more consciously evaluate your relationship with your own mother. This makes pregnancy a wonderful time to seek support in working through and resolving any unresolved emotions and conflicts.

If you have unresolved anger towards an abusive or neglectful mother, you may be at increased risk for depression and anxiety during pregnancy. Working through these feelings of anger and sadness can have positive effects that transcend your pregnancy and can impact your experience of pregnancy and motherhood, as well as allowing you to become the best mother you can be.

Pregnancy is a time to forge a new identity in which you are the parent. This transition provides a ripe oppor-
tunity for resolving issues regarding one’s own mother. As you begin to identify more with your own mother, it becomes even more important to psychologically “separate,” allowing you to become fully adult yourself, and ready to take on the new job of being a parent. When you have psychologically separated from your mother, you are able to be less emotionally dependent, either in terms of needing her acceptance, or in needing to “be the opposite” of your own mother.

Where there are unresolved conflicts in your relationship with your mother, achieving psychological separation is a developmental achievement that will promote your general psychological and physical health for the rest of your life.

Lara Honos-Webb, Ph.D., is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Walnut Creek. She is author of The Gift of ADHD, and Listening to Depression: How Understanding Your Pain Can Heal Your Life and more than twenty-five scholarly articles. Her work has been featured in Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal, and Publisher’s Weekly as well as newspapers across the country and local and national radio and television. She specializes in the treatment of ADHD and depression and the psychology of pregnancy and motherhood. Visit her website at www.visionarysoul.com.
The Sexuality of Birth
By Deanna Jesus, CD, CLE, HBCE

I’ve often heard the phrase “The same way the baby gets in, the baby gets out.” I believe that what this means is that the baby is conceived as a product of our sexuality, and that birth can be sexual as well.

Oxytocin, the “hormone of love” is secreted during sex and orgasm, as well as during birth and breastfeeding. Oxytocin makes us feel loving, and stimulates uterine contractions. Oxytocin is involved in the “ejection reflexes,” including ejaculation and the “fetal ejection reflex;” the powerful contractions that can occur at the end of labor, which birth the baby quickly and easily. Postpartum, the milk ejection or “let-down” reflex in breastfeeding is also governed by Oxytocin.

Recently, I had the privilege of witnessing a couple’s birth where the positive sexual side of birthing was brought to light. While in labor, the mother asked her husband to kiss her. Not just a peck, but passionate lovers’ kisses. Doing this in front of their Doula and their nurses was slightly uncomfortable for him, but he obliged. Their ardent kissing helped to make her contractions more bearable. This made me realize that more women and their partners could be taking advantage of their sexual energy as couples during labor and birth.

I’m sure you have heard that nipple stimulation and orgasm help to stimulate labor surges (contractions). But what does that really mean? Nipple stimulation does not have to be clinical – sexual stimulation of the nipples and breasts can enhance labor both physiologically and psychologically. When a woman is sexually aroused, she is more relaxed and open to the birthing experience. Lovemaking during labor can make the experience more powerful, spiritual, gentle, calm, and comforting. Make sure to avoid any penetration if your water has broken to protect against the risk of infection.

According to Nathalie Mottershead, a British midwife, sexual stimulation during labor “can be used to bring on labor contractions, open the cervix and vagina and help with pain relief. …If mothers-to-be are open to feeling...
sexy, labor can be pleasurable, not painful, and it sometimes builds up to a climax at birth.”

Nipple stimulation can have very strong effects, similar to the overuse of Pitocin (synthetic Oxytocin). For this reason experts have given recommendations on its use. Here are some recommendations taken from www.birthingnaturally.net:

- Only massage one breast at a time;
- Only massage a nipple for 5 minutes, wait up to 15 minutes to see what happens before continuing with the massage;
- Do not stimulate the breast during a contraction; and
- Do not use nipple stimulation after the contractions are 3 minutes apart or 1 minute long.

So, what else can help your labor be a true “labor of love?” Make sure that your care provider honors your choices, and that you can completely trust their support of your choices during your labor. Take responsibility for creating the environment you want. Pave the way toward a good outcome. As you meet new nursing staff, or on-call Doctors, make sure you educate them about your plan. There should be ongoing, constant communication surrounding your birth. If you are not being heard, don’t be afraid to request a new caregiver.

Another aspect of laboring sensually is creating a comfort zone. Ask for privacy if and when you want it…and always be willing to ask for whatever might help you be comfortable. I start all of my Childbirth Preparation classes with this phrase “If you can’t make yourself comfortable in this room, with me...how are you going to be able to do it in a room full of strangers?” Comfort and trust will allow you to follow your instincts and to birth openly and freely.

Be in your body. Work with your body. Take the time to be in the moment and open up to the force of sexuality and birth. The power of birth is awesome; relax into it. Along with comfort comes support. Your partner should be able to offer you what you need to stay in the moment. You may also consider hiring a Doula to help you maintain a calm and loving atmosphere in your labor room. When you feel safe, you will be able to follow your own instincts and listen to your inner voice...when you follow your body’s lead, your labor will be easier.

I want to encourage all expecting mothers to welcome the birth process. Open to the power and sensuality of your body, and trust in yourself and your body to birth your baby wonderfully. Relax. Open. Love.

3  Giving Birth: The Endocrinology of Ecstasy.
4  Taken from http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,8123-2238733,00.html.

Deanna Jesus is a birth doula and HypnoBirthing® instructor, and is Program Director at The Nurture Center. You can visit her website at www.birthingbabies.com.
HypnoBirthing® (The Mongan Method)
HypnoBirthing® is a unique method of relaxed, natural childbirth education, enhanced by self-hypnosis techniques, providing the missing link that allows women to use their natural instincts to bring about a safer, easier, more comfortable birth in a way that most mirrors nature. Emphasis is placed on both pregnancy and childbirth education, as well as on HypnoBirthing® methods. You will use deep relaxation and visualization which will help you learn to ‘let go’ and ease the “Fear-Tension-Pain” cycle of birth. HypnoBirthing® is as new as tomorrow and as old as ancient times. The birthing mother should be accompanied by her partner, doula and/or birth attendant. Each couple is encouraged to have all other birth attendees come to the class with them at no additional charge. Learn more about HypnoBirthing® at www.HypnoBirthing.com.

Facilitator: Deanna Jesus, Certified Labor Doula, Lactation Educator, and HypnoBirthing® Childbirth Educator – Deanna has been attending births for over three years. Her passion is working with couples who have become pregnant using Assisted Reproductive Technology. Learn more about Deanna at www.BirthingBabies.com.

Dates/Times:
Five Tuesday Nights from 7:00pm to 9:30pm at The Nurture Center
Session I – September 26 through October 24.
Session II – November 21 through December 19.
Cost: Group classes $350.00 per family. Payment is due in full at the beginning of the first class. Cost includes all materials. To register please contact Deanna Jesus at DoulaDee@BirthingBabies.com or call (925) 216-7264. Advance registration is required.

Pregnant Again
Childbirth Education Review
Congratulations, you are expecting again! In this refresher course you and your support team will review many aspects of labor and birth including: relaxation and breathing techniques, positioning and comfort measures, anesthesia options, and breastfeeding techniques.

Facilitator: Deanna Jesus, Certified Labor Doula, Lactation Educator, and HypnoBirthing Childbirth Educator – Deanna has been attending births for over three years. Her passion is working with couples who have become pregnant using Assisted Reproductive Technology. Learn more about Deanna at www.BirthingBabies.com.

Fall Classes and Groups
Classes for Expectant Parents
more about Deanna at www.BirthingBabies.com

Dates/Times:
Tuesday, September 12 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.
Saturday, October 7 from 10:30am to 12:30pm.
Wednesday, November 22 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.

Cost: Group class $80.00 per family. Payment is due in full at the start of class. Cost includes all materials. To register please contact Deanna Jesus at DoulaDee@BirthingBabies.com or call (925) 216-7264.

Prenatal Breastfeeding Preparation
Most of us know that “breast is best” when it comes to optimal nutrition for your baby. Give yourself the best chance of success by preparing yourself for the ups and downs of breastfeeding your new baby. This class will introduce expectant parents to basic breastfeeding techniques, the physiology of the breast, appropriate feeding positions, attaining a comfortable latch, establishing an adequate milk supply, handling common breastfeeding problems, and knowing when to get help. It will also cover the advantages of breastfeeding, and ways partners and family can support the breastfeeding mom.

Facilitator: Kay Goodyear, MSN, RNC, IBCLC. Kay works as a perinatal nurse and has been a lactation consultant in private practice for 10 years.

Dates/Times:
Wednesday, October 11 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.
Thursday, November 30 from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.

Cost: $25.00 per couple. To register for this class please contact Kay Goodyear at (925) 313-8986. Advance registration required.

Newborn & Infant Care Class
This class will prepare expectant parents for the first weeks of parenthood and includes discussion about the appearance and behavior of newborns, sleep and feeding issues, as well as diapering and bathing.

Facilitator: Kay Goodyear, MSN, RNC, IBCLC. Kay works as a perinatal nurse and has been a lactation consultant in private practice for 10 years.

Dates/Times: Saturday, November 4 from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Cost: $35.00 per couple. To register for this class please contact Kay Goodyear at k_nurture@earthlink.net or call (925) 313-8986. Advance registration required.
Meet the Mt. Diablo Doula Community - Free!
The Mt. Diablo Doula Community is a group of Labor and Postpartum Doulas serving the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Join us for a fun evening of education, discussion and information about this valuable resource for expectant parents. The Doulas will share their knowledge, give an overview of their field and follow with questions and answers. With a Doula you will be more empowered during your pregnancy and birth. Bring your partners, family and questions to this informative gathering.
Facilitators: Holly Wiersma, CD, CLE and Deanna Jesus, CD, CLE.

Date/Time: Usually meets the first Wednesday of every month (September 13, October 4, November 1, and December 6) from 7:00pm to 9:00pm.

Cost: This session is free of charge. Advance registration is required; seating is limited, please RSVP to Deanna Jesus at DoulaDee@BirthingBabies.com or call (925) 216-7264.

Classes for New Parents

An Introduction to Baby Carriers and Slings
This class will help you get comfortable using a ring sling, pouch, wrap, or mei tai (a westernized Asian baby carrier) with your baby/toddler. We have lots of carriers available for practice or bring yours in and learn how to use it more effectively. Another option is to come try the different carriers, and then buy the one you like best at our store.

Facilitator: Dawn Holtan and/or Liz Fierro - experienced sling mamas.

Dates/Times: Ongoing Class meets the fourth Wednesday of every month from 12:30pm to 2:30pm (September 27, October 25, November 22, and December 27).

Cost: Free! There is no fee to attend. Advance registration required. Please RSVP at the Center or by sending an email to classes@nurturecenter.com or call (925) 283-1346 to reserve your seat as class can get very crowded.

Wee Signs 101: A Baby Signs Parent Workshop - Signing Fun for You and Baby!
Would you like to stop wondering what your infant wants, needs and feels? Learn how you and your family can benefit by using the beautiful language of sign. We invite you to join the thousands of families who have already discovered the magic of this revolutionary new way to talk with babies before they can talk.

This workshop is specially designed for parents of hearing children from birth to 24 months and will provide knowledge and strategies needed to begin using the Baby Signs®

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Program at home. Early childhood educators, parent educators, social workers and health specialists are welcome. Babes in arms are also welcome, but this class is targeted at parents.

Facilitator: Andra Lekich, Baby Signs® Independent Certified Facilitator.

Dates/Times:
Saturday, September 9 from 1:00pm to 2:30pm.
Saturday, October 14 from 10:30am to 12:00pm.
Saturday, November 11 from 10:30am to 12:00pm.
Saturday, December 9 from 10:30am to 12:00pm.

Cost: $85 per couple (includes all materials, including the “Baby Signs Parent Kit”). To register please contact Andra Lekich at weesigns101@hotmail.com; or call (925) 935-5415. Advance registration required.

**Support Groups**

**New Parent/Baby Support Group**
This is an ongoing, drop-in support group where parents can discuss topics of interest and interact with other parents. The focus is on making connections with other new parents, and sharing issues and insights about parenting a baby. If you would like to be contacted regarding upcoming topics, sign up at the Center. Advance registration is NOT required. Come on Tuesdays with your baby, and get connected! Send an email to meri@nurturecenter.com to be placed on an email list for upcoming topics.

Facilitator: Meri Levy, C.L.E., a certified lactation educator, mother of three, and Executive Director of The Nurture Center.

Dates/Times: Tuesdays - 12:45pm to 2:15pm (newborn – one year).

Cost: First session free, then $8.00/session (members $7.00) or four sessions prepaid for $28.00 (members $24.00). No reservation required. For more information, you can reach Meri at 925-283-1346 Ext. 305 or meri@nurturecenter.com.

**La Leche League - Lamorinda Group**
This La Leche League Group meets on the second Thursday of each month. Leaders are eager to help you find solutions to any breastfeeding problems you may be facing. Join us to discuss any issues or concerns you may be experiencing as a breastfeeding mother or just to be with other lactating moms.

Facilitator: La Leche League Leader – Diana Torp (925) 247-0481.

Dates/Times: The 2nd Thursday of each month from 12:00pm to 1:30pm (September 14, October 12, November 9, and December 14).

Cost: All La Leche League meetings are free of charge. Meeting space is donated by The Nurture Center. La Leche League memberships are encouraged for $40 a year as a way to support the group. No reservation required.

**Cesarean Support Group**

ICAN of Mt. Diablo
The best way to avoid a surgical birth is to educate yourself. This is a local chapter of The International Cesarean Awareness Network, Inc. (ICAN). ICAN’s mission is to improve maternal-child health by preventing unnecessary
cesareans through education, providing support for cesarean recovery, and promoting Vaginal Birth After Cesarean (VBAC). For more information visit www.ican-online.org.

Join our Yahoo Group! Online at http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ICANMtDiablo/
Facilitator: Holly Wiersma, CD, CLE and Deanna Jesus, CD, CLE.

Dates/Times: The second Wednesday of each month from 11:30am to 1:30pm (September 13, October 11, November 8, and December 13).
Cost: This event is free of charge.

Rediscovering Yourself in the Midst of Motherhood

Are you a desperate housewife? Do you sometimes wonder, “What has happened to the old me?” Although being a mother is one of life’s most wonderful and joyous experiences, it is easy to lose a sense of who you are as a person, apart from being a mother. In this group, we will discuss the transition to motherhood and explore balancing motherhood with other parts of your life. We will do exercises to help you reconnect with your own personal interests and values, and set goals for bringing more of what you need back into your life. Group size limited to 6.

Facilitator: Yvonne Lefort, M.A., has over 15 years of experience in the career counseling field. For the past four years, she has specialized in leading mothers’ groups and is a speaker at mothers’ clubs and schools around the Bay Area. She is the mother of an 8-year old boy and has a private career counseling practice in Moraga.

Dates/Time: Thursday evenings 7:30-9:30 p.m., Sept. 14 - Nov. 16. (no class Oct. 5).
Cost: $180 for 9-week series - For more information or to register, call 925.376.5885 or visit www.mothersinbalance.com. Register early!

Nurturing the Couple Relationship - While Raising Children

Parenthood is a life-changing experience in so many ways. Couples often feel the strain as we adapt our lives and routines to accommodate the little people we are raising.
In this interactive session, we will discuss the changes that occur in a relationship when "husband and wife" become "mom and dad." We will also discuss ways to nurture our relationship and sustain the friendship and intimacy in the midst of being parents.

Facilitator: Yvonne Lefort, M.A., has over 15 years of experience in the career counseling field. For the past four years, she has specialized in leading mothers’ groups and is a speaker at mothers’ clubs and schools around the Bay Area. She is the mother of an 8-year-old boy and has a private career counseling practice in Moraga.

Date/Time: Saturday, Oct. 21, 11:00am-12:30p.m.
Cost: $45.00 individuals/ $60 couples - For more information or to register, call 925.376.5885 or visit www.mothersinbalance.com.

**International Cesarean Awareness Network**

The best way to avoid a surgical birth is to educate yourself.

- Learn ways to avoid a future/ repeat cesarean
- Cesarean support and healing
- VBAC Education
- Birth trauma support
- Prepare for a scheduled cesarean

**ICAN of Mt. Diablo**
Free monthly meetings, the second Wednesday of every month at The Nurture Center - starts at 11:30a.m.

For more information:
- Holly (925) 947-5674
- Deanna (925) 216-7264

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Preparing for Labor Through Birth Art

By Danielle Saunders, MFT

Women's bodies are made for birthing. We have sturdy hips and loads of helpful hormones. We have thousands of years of species survival to prove it. So why don't we feel more at ease about the birth process? To have a sense of confidence in preparing for the birth process, women must work consciously to reclaim their sense of power in giving birth.

Dr. William Sears and Martha Sears, RN, authors of several pregnancy and childbirth books, discuss the influence of fear in labor:

“...The uterus is not just an automatic pump that pushes the baby out. [It is] affected...by a neurohormonal pathway that connects the brain, circulatory system, and the uterus. Fear alters this pathway reducing blood flow and oxygen... Pushing a baby against an unwilling cervix... can cause unbearable pain.”

Many birth fears and myths negatively influence and hinder our body's natural ability. To regain a sense of power, women can examine these acquired attitudes through non-verbal means, such as art-making, stream of consciousness writing, and dream reflection. By putting energy into envisioning our births, we can positively impact our readiness. Education about labor stages and delivery options is the first step. A second, vital, often overlooked step includes knowing yourself and learning to flow with the unknown of the birth process. A final step is to create a support network and community resources to help enact your new vision.

Art making, meditation, hypnosis, and yoga slow down our intellectual minds. Through these methods, we can tune into our bodies and unlock the ancient wisdom that resides there. By slowing our process in this quick paced world, we connect to the rite of passage and ritual of...
To prepare for both of my births, I used art making to understand myself and connect to inner resources. Nearing the arrival of my first child, I created an image of a powerful being "blowing out" my baby to inspire me during pushing. A similar art process can be done alone, in a class or with a book like Birthing From Within, a classic childbirth prep book detailing artistic and written exercises.

To get started, think of your topic and begin spontaneous scribbling. After about three minutes, examine your drawing to see what shapes you can begin to make out. Add stronger lines to define certain areas. Then write or talk about it. Let yourself speak or write freely in order to explore the possible associations with your image. You can continue on to draw several scribbles with additional topics such as: birth fears, hospital births, dream births, inner resources and the new baby. Some women draw abstractly, others draw specific animals or nature scenes. It is important to be non-critical about images or thoughts that may emerge. Sometimes a conversation with a trusted friend or therapist can help you integrate their meanings.

Birthing From Within authors, England and Horowitz remind us, “One kind of learning comes from books. But the learning necessary for you to participate completely in your birth must come from you.” We can come to trust our bodies fully and give into the flow of experience by examining ourselves and making the changes that flow from the insight.

Danielle Saunders, an Expressive Arts Therapist and Marriage and Family Therapist, facilitates private and group Birth Art/Birth Vision classes with women and birth attendants at area centers and her office in San Ramon. For more information visit DanielleSaunders.com or she can be reached at: 510-325-7194.

Creating a Birth Opening by Danielle Saunders

Connecting to My Unborn Baby by Danielle Saunders
How to contact instructors for classes no longer offered:

Infant Massage and Yoga - Veera Sanjana
925-258-9753 vsanjana@aol.com

Infant Massage and Yoga - Kim Lyons, M.Ed., CMT
510-798-3089 www.movingfromwithin.com

Feeding & Nutrition Education - Jane Fowler
925-938-8174 numats@hotmail.com

Childproofing - Rachel Murray
510-832-0222 www.safeandsoundchildren.com

East Bay Music Together - Julie Tanenbaum
510-843-8641 www.eastbaymusictogether.com

Happiest Baby on the Block - Holly Wiersma
925-947-5874 hdwiersma@hotmail.com

Parenting Classes - Shar Bhatia
925-262-3506 parentingnow@yahoo.com

Natural Remedies - Dr. Anja Lindblad
925-939-0300 www.dranja.com

CPR - CPRescue
888-313-2444 www.cprescue.com

Wills, Trusts & Estate Planning - Richard Collari
925-648-2043 www.collarilaw.com

Acupressure for Birth - July Ballinger, RN
510-236-1543
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Organizational Information

The Nurture Center, LLC is a store and resource center for new parents located in Lafayette, California. Our parent education and support programs are funded by proceeds from our retail store and by membership contributions. You may reach us by phone at 925-283-1346 or by email at info@nurturecenter.com. You can shop our store online at http://shop.nurturecenter.com.

Meri Levy, Executive Director
Sherry Henderson, Associate Director
Deanna Jesus, Program Director
Christin O’Leary, Internet Sales Manager

Nurture Center Staffmembers:
Stephanie Pearce
Ramona Lappier
Jeannine Otterbeck
Claire Stevenson
Aurora Drysdale
Karma David

Membership Information

The Nurture Center offers memberships to parents and professionals who wish to support our parent education and support work.

Membership costs $50/year ($25 for doulas), and includes discounts on all products in our store, classes, and newsletter advertising, lending library privileges, and professional listings in our listings directory, in our newsletter and on our website.

You may become a member by mailing a check to The Nurture Center, 3399 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, CA 94549, or by visiting http://shop.nurturecenter.com/anmem.html.

For a limited time, we are offering a free Nurture Center membership when you place a custom stationery order for birth announcements, or when you purchase a Dutailier glider for local pick-up.

Newsletter Information

This issue of The Nurture Center newsletter is being provided free of charge to current members and parents and professionals in our community. To subscribe or unsubscribe, or to switch to receiving an electronic copy, call us at 925-283-1346 or email info@nurturecenter.com.

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Advertisers and professional members of the Nurture Center pay a fee to advertise their services and to support our parent education work. Listing their services in this newsletter does not constitute an endorsement of these service providers or their services.

All parents should check references and background carefully before hiring any service provider, or work with a reputable agency who does this work for them.
Thank You to Our Professional Members!

Laura Aguiar, Jade Acupuncture  
Judy Ballinger, RN  
Doula Plus Acupressure  
Elon Bartlett, D.C.  
Bartlett Chiropractic Family Wellness Center  
Samsarah Becknell  
Birth Professionals of the Bay Area  
Shoshana Bennett, Ph.D.  
Postpartum Assistance for Mothers  
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Jane Fowler, Nutrition Matters  
Kay Goodyear, RNC, IBCLC, Nurture  
Jenny Goyne, Doula  
Jill Hager, Photography by Jill  
Beth Hammond, CD (DONA)  
Birth and Postpartum Doula  
Betsy Hansen, IBCLC  
Lactation Consultant  
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Align Healing Center  
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Marcie Parisi, MA  
Marriage and Family Therapist  
Mary Perez, LM  
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Kristy Vicari, Living Well  
Holly Wiersma, CD, Loving Hands Doula Service