

## **THIRD & FOURTH Class - Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education (Department of Education & Skills) ( 3<sup>rd</sup> Class only)**

### **Information Lesson: Caring For Baby**

The information given in this lesson should be simple. The headings are intended as a guide for the teacher.

#### **Nutrition in the womb and the function of the umbilical cord.**

Before a baby is born it spends about nine months in his/her mother's womb. The baby gets food from his/her mother through a tube called the umbilical cord. Blood, travelling through the cord, carries tiny amounts of digested food and oxygen to the baby's body. The blood travels round the baby's body and then back to the mother. On the way back it carries waste from the baby's body back to his/her mother's body. When the baby is born it doesn't need the umbilical cord any more so the nurse ties it up and cuts it off in the hospital. This doesn't hurt the baby. The scar the baby is left with heals quickly. It is called the navel. It is also known as the 'belly button'.

#### **Good Nutrition**

A mother who is expecting a baby will want to look after it well. When she is feeding herself, she is also feeding her baby. A mother who is expecting a baby can help her baby to grow strong and healthy by eating healthy food. This means eating a lot of different kinds of fresh food such as meat, dairy produce, fruit and vegetables.

#### **Taking care with medicines, alcohol and smoky environments**

A mother who is expecting a baby usually avoids taking medicine or alcohol. This is because some of the medicine or alcohol could travel through the umbilical cord to the baby and this isn't very good for her baby. Many pregnant mothers decide not to smoke and avoid being in smoky rooms. They might ask other family members who smoke not to do so when they are around.

#### **Some ways other family members can help**

A mother who is expecting a baby will need to get enough rest and take more breaks when working around the house. Other people in the family can help out by carrying heavy weights, like shopping bags, which might cause back ache. Making beds and vacuuming can also cause back ache. Standing for a long time is more tiring than usual. The expectant mother will need to share with other family members housework like making beds and vacuuming, doing the ironing and the washing up.

#### **Travel/Work**

Often people on over-crowded buses and trains will let a pregnant mother have their seat because they know she needs to rest while she does this special job of carrying the baby before s/he is ready to be born. A mother who is expecting a baby is carrying extra weight so her balance isn't as good as usual. You won't usually find a pregnant mother climbing ladders or riding a bicycle.

#### **Exercise**

Exercise is important. Walking and swimming are particularly good. Medical check ups A mother who is expecting a baby visits the doctor regularly. At each visit the nurse weighs her. This way the mother knows that the baby inside her is growing steadily. There will be other ways the mother will know about her baby. After about five months in the womb, the baby will have grown big enough, so that when s/he moves the mother can feel it. A mother might say that this feels like a butterfly fluttering or a little fish zigzagging inside her. As the baby gets bigger and stronger, the mother feels that she is getting a little dig in the ribs when the baby moves. The first time this happens is a very exciting time for the mother. Each time it happens the mother is reminded of the miracle of new life as her beautiful baby grows inside her. The baby is learning about his/her mother too. From about six months, the baby can hear his/her mother's heart beating, her tummy rumbling and the music she enjoys and is listening to. The baby also learns to recognise his/her mother's voice and s/he finds this familiar voice very soothing after birth. After nine months the baby is born.