

Being a Co-Parent During Prenatal Care and Birth

If you are a father or co-parent, it is important to think about what role you want to have in supporting your partner through the pregnancy, labor, and delivery. It is important to remember that the mother/birthing parent makes the ultimate decision about what they believe will be best for her. But you can help by starting the conversation. Here are a few options to consider for what you can do:

- Attend birthing classes or read books and articles about pregnancy, labor, and delivery with your co-parent and discuss ways that you can help her relax and manage pain during labor and delivery.
- Learn what will help your co-parent feel encouraged and supported during labor and delivery, including who she does and does not want with her for support.
- Talk to your co-parent before prenatal appointments to help her focus on the questions she wants to ask.
- Attend prenatal appointments together and learn about healthy lifestyle choices during pregnancy and about your co-parent's options during labor and delivery.
- Talk to your co-parent about what role she does and does not want you to play in encouraging her to make healthy lifestyle choices during pregnancy.
- Meet with a doula together to create a birth plan that includes your role as the co-parent.
- During labor and delivery, support your co-parent in seeing that her needs are met, her concerns are heard, and her questions are answered.
- Take parenting classes together or read parenting books or articles to help each other prepare for parenting.
- Discuss any special challenges you might face after the baby is born and how to address them.
- Speak to the caseworker together to address any special challenges you might face regarding your case, including housing changes, visits schedules, and child care plans.
- Brainstorm together who else will support you after the baby is born.
- Make a plan for supporting each other and sharing child care responsibilities in the weeks after the baby is born.
- Discuss long-term plans, including continuing education and employment, and how you can help each other manage those challenges with a baby.