



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert
Arizona Republic

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Q: I'm about to have a baby and I'm concerned about how my two children will respond to our new addition. What can we do to make this a smooth transition?

A: One thing parents can do is be honest in setting children's expectations and explaining what will happen. Try to paint a picture of what life will and will not be like when the new addition to the family arrives. Another is avoiding major changes in older children's routines around the time the new baby is due. Instead, complete changes before the baby arrives or postpone them until after the baby arrives and is settled in at home.

Siblings age eight and older can help prepare for the baby to avoid the tendency to become rivals with or experience animosity toward the baby. Younger children might experience more anxiety and might begin to regress, engaging in baby-like behaviors. Parents should praise the more age-appropriate behaviors rather than focus on the baby-like behaviors.

To help siblings feel loved at a time when most of the attention is turned toward the baby, parent-to-child quality time is crucial. It can take many forms such as a discussion, a walk around the block, a walk to the mailbox or perhaps 15 minutes at the playground. Quality time is especially important when parents must divide their time among several children.

For children age three to eight resources and programs such as Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers' Sibling Superstar program can help positively prepare them for their new siblings making the transition easier. To learn more about classes available in the East Valley, please call ResourceLink toll-free at 1.877.728.5414.

Gia Marchisano is a Prenatal Program Coordinator and Instructor for Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers. To learn more about classes or for a doctor referral, please call ResourceLink toll-free at 1.877.728.5414.