



API of Peoria Newsletter

Attachment Parenting International
Peoria, IL Chapter
April 2006

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"What is API of Peoria?"

API of Peoria is a parenting group dedicated to providing support, encouragement and education to parents in the spirit of attachment. We encourage parents of all parenting philosophies to join us at our functions.

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Letter from the editor

Whether you're new to, in the midst of, or finished with childbirth, we can all stand to have more information about this amazing experience! This month's newsletter and meeting are focused on Preparation for Childbirth, one of the ideals of Attachment Parenting. I encourage you to share it with family, friends, co-workers, or anyone who might benefit from more information. And as you start enjoying the outdoors this month, don't forget those cameras – let's have some wonderful spring pictures for our May newsletter!

☀ Angela Loring, editor

Join us at a meeting!

Attachment Parenting International of Peoria holds monthly meetings **open and free to the public**, with different topics related to attachment parenting. We meet at 10:00 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month at the Universalist Unitarian Church, which is located at 3000 W. Richwoods Blvd, Peoria, IL 61604. The meeting room is down the right hallway once you enter the church. Please bring your spouse, children, friends, parents, or anyone else who might benefit from this organization!

April Meeting Topic: Preparation for Childbirth

Connecting early with baby begins with prenatal preparation and alert, active participation in childbirth. You can make informed decisions about the kind of birth you want that will help create a positive experience for you and your baby. After much planning and preparation, API of Peoria is very pleased to announce the kickoff meeting for our own Preparation for Childbirth program.

What does the program consist of?

- **API of Peoria Childbirth Classes taught by our own Hilary Shirven, Certified Childbirth Educator and Doula.** Why take classes? Our birth experiences affect the way we mother and how we feel about ourselves. These feelings surrounding birth stay with us. Therefore, it is essential for women to educate themselves for a satisfying birth experience. Our goal is to give you straight, evidence-based information on all your birth options. At the meeting on Saturday, Hilary will be talking about the "Little Facts that Make a BIG Difference – Keys to a More Satisfying Birth."
- **Integrated Yoga taught by Julie Carnegie Reams, a DONA Certified Birth Doula and approved Birth Doula Trainer.** Julie combines her detailed knowledge of the pregnant body with the Universal Principles of Alignment to help prepare expectant mothers for the rigors and joys of childbirth. At the meeting, Julie will be speaking about the benefits of yoga during pregnancy.

What is your role? Come on out to the meeting to help kick off the program and spread the word about API of Peoria's new Preparation for Childbirth program. It is unique in the community, as it combines childbirth education with prenatal exercise of the body and spirit. This blends together to create a holistic approach to preparing for baby – it's sustenance for the body, mind, and soul all in one place!

Moms, do you need a night out with friends?

Why not join us for Moms' Night Out? This is an opportunity for you to talk with other moms about *anything* and *everything* while enjoying a fabulous dinner! Who knows what the night will bring when you join these moms! This month's details are as follows:

When: April 6th 6-10:30 p.m.

Where: Panache, in Sheridan Village on Sheridan Road. E-mail Mary at welcome@apipeoria.org with any questions, or if you do not have access to the forum.

FYI - the MNO has been moved to the first Thursday of the month for the upcoming months!

For more information about our group or any of this newsletter's content, contact our API of Peoria group leaders at our shared e-mail address: leaders@apipeoria.org

Need parenting advice?

Remember you can contact the leaders of API Peoria anytime for anything. Your leaders can be reached at their e-mail addresses or phone numbers, all listed in the contact information at the end of this newsletter.

A Gift from my Mother – the Story of my Birth

Submitted by Cinnamon Nieu Kirk and Paula Harms (Cinnamon's mother)

One evening, mid-March, my mother and I were talking about birth. The subject comes up frequently between us. This talk was prompted by a post on the discussion board mentioning fast labor versus slower labor. I remembered that her labor had gone fairly quickly. She shared a few anecdotes, we laughed and said "good night" and hung up. Mom called me a few days later and asked if she could come by the house because she had something for me. She arrived and handed me a thick bundle of yellow legal pad paper. I opened it and read the first line: "My dear, sweet daughter..." I asked if she intended me to read it "now", and she said "no, please wait." I was atwitter with anticipation waiting for that moment. As I read the following story, I had a range of emotion from anger, to sadness, to joy, and then to pure admiration for my mother and what we endured at my birth. I am so overwhelmed with this gift, on paper, the story of my birthday. I received this gift two weeks before my 38th birthday, which is April 1st.

My dear, sweet daughter,

We were sharing birthing experiences just moments ago, so I grabbed this pad to share what I remember, maybe not so vividly, but nonetheless, it is my recall of my birth experience with you and your birth.

I am envious of today's progress with the natural, comfortable and accommodated birth. Of course I believe in safety of mom and baby, first and foremost. You know I believe in minimal intervention of pain because there are other ways to control that. For me, with you, I was not able to take advantage of birthing classes or Lamaze. All ahead of your time. I ran my own pain control classes- breathing, focusing, and relaxing.

In the end, that worked. I rubbed my belly trying to make contact with you, the baby within me. I dreamed of the beautiful dark haired baby within me. Well guess what-hardly any hair! I endured morning sickness, loneliness, and isolation and no support from family, husband, or friends. But I was determined to reach my goal of having my first child and to know the joy of holding *her* in my arms.

That's right! I somehow knew all along you were a girl. Just like you, I have an inquisitive nature and did what I could to research what was happening to me and my baby within.

Six weeks before you were born, my brother was scheduled to leave for Vietnam and maybe out of anxiety and desire for you to arrive for his approval, I had a bloody show. Thank God you didn't come out (with the technology where it was then). So it went on until April 1st. I awoke with lots of pressure and another bloody show. Then contractions-5 minutes apart. I prepared what I would need for departure to the hospital. I cleaned my body, put on some comfortable clothes and laid on my bed alone all the while in touch with our birthday. I called Frank for a ride to the hospital where I was taken and dropped off with suitcase. Husbands weren't allowed in labor and delivery. I shared the room with someone not so in charge as I. After about 5 hours of labor I was "checked in." I was shaved, given an enema, had my water broken and told to remove all my clothes and put on a hospital gown. I was fed a light lunch and told to expect a long labor.

I didn't feel like removing my bra because I was ashamed of my breasts, and in the end was screamed at for not removing it. The nurse realized it was still on and made me sit up and remove it while you were crowning. I rested and focused and breathed on my own through the next few hours of labor. When I felt the urge to push, I received a reprimand from the nurse, who was sure I couldn't possibly be ready to deliver you because she had just checked me.

(Continued on Page 3)

A Gift from my Mother (Continued from Page 2)

Well, you had crowned and were on your way out. So much for her evaluation. I was rushed down a hall at the same time as the person I had shared the labor room with. She took priority because she had been in there longer. I tolerated her moaning and "suffering" and then here she was ahead of me in line to deliver while I had been quiet and focused. Her baby boy was delivered 5 minutes ahead of you. I did all the right things to get you out and heard your cry before you were yet completely out of my body. I cried with joy at hearing your voice.

You were flashed before my face for a quick glance and then taken away for 12 hours to a sterile environment (isolation). I was in agony! I was taken to a 24-bed ward and after 4 hours had to get up and go to a public bathroom to urinate "or else." I was forced to shower while a nurse waited outside and then taken back to bed. I heard other women faint and fall in the same conditions, but I did not. The next day, I was told I had to change my own bed, walk to a community dining area for breakfast and then finally go to the nursery to get you. All stiff and starved in your sterile blankets. I took you to my bed, touching you for the first time and did the forbidden---unwrapped your binding to look at all of you. The baby I had so looked forward to holding. We were required to sit on a hard chair next to our beds to feed you sterilized bottles. I had to walk down the hall to return you at the end of the allotted time. The procedure was to place my fingers under your tiny arms suspending you in the air, while they removed your now un-sanitary bindings because they had come into contact with ME- your mother. So after 5 days, during which time Martin Luther King, Jr. with killed, I went home with you.

I went home with you not knowing much about taking care of a newborn. I continued to feed you from sterilized bottles because Frank couldn't bare the thoughts of my breasts being owned by baby.

My desire to have a wonderful fulfilling birth and breast feeding experience wasn't to be with you. I was nonetheless proud of the end result.

So now you know why I am envious of today's treatment of "birth." I was deprived of those first moments of holding you safely in my arms, smelling you, touching you, and hearing you suckle. I wasn't allowed to know you until half a day passed. I gave birth to you among total strangers. I called my husband to let him know you were born and didn't talk to my own mom for 2 days because I had to stand in line at a pay phone and that was the first opportunity I had. And while I thought I must be as radiant as the Virgin Mary, I was told I looked like Hell.

We are survivors and our experiences are unique. I am so glad I have you. You are a blessing. I love you so much and I am so proud I have you for my daughter. □

Have you seen our new brochures? We now have several brochures available to be passed out to your friends, family, co-workers, and anyone else you think might benefit API of Peoria and our community activities! These brochures include the following: Attachment Parenting International of Peoria (general information), Integrated Yoga with Julie Carnegie Reams, Integrated Yoga for Pregnancy, and Childbirth Classes (sponsored by API of Peoria). These brochures are available to print from our website. Please contact one of the leaders if you have further questions. These brochures are being distributed at appropriate places in the community.

If we missed a great location, please let us know!

How can I get involved?

Just pick whatever parts of API of Peoria that you'd benefit from and do them! Participation is open to the public and free. We have monthly meetings in Peoria, playdates, moms' night outs, family events and much more. Many of our parents also find our internet discussion group to be an invaluable source of 24/7 support, advice and friendship. Check the "Calendar of Events" section or our website for activities scheduled for this month.

Come Visit the API Store at Café Press!

www.cafepress.com/shopapi

New to Attachment Parenting International – an online store with AP friendly and supportive merchandise. The have t-shirts, bibs, journals, magnets, pins, calendars, greeting cards, tote bags, mouse pads, coffee cups, coasters, and more! And the best part? 100% of the proceeds go to our national organization! Let's support API!

From website: Attachment Parenting International is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and 100% of the proceeds for products sold in this online shop return to API to further its mission, which is to promote parenting practices that create strong, healthy emotional bonds between children and their parents. For more information about Attachment Parenting or API, please visit our website. We invite you to browse the exciting new products available for Peaceful Parents and Friends of API. Thank you for shopping here and supporting Attachment Parenting International!

What is Attachment Parenting?

Attachment parenting is a philosophy based in the practice of nurturing parenting methods that create strong emotional bonds, also known as secure attachment, between the infant and parent(s). This style of parenting encourages responsiveness to the infant or child's emotional needs, and develops trust that their emotional needs will be met. As a result, this strong attachment helps the child develop secure, empathic, peaceful, and enduring relationships.

You can learn about API of Peoria's parent organization, **Attachment Parenting International** and view the Ideals of Attachment Parenting and of Attachment Parenting the School-Age Child at: www.attachmentparenting.org

API of Peoria Website

This newsletter is posted as a page on our website: <http://www.apipeoria.org>. Please visit for archived newsletters, a listing of Attachment Parenting Ideals, useful links, meeting location information, meeting topic pages, calendar of events, and much more. Please refer anyone wanting to learn about our group to our website.

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteer opportunities always exist! You can distribute flyers and business cards, bring treats to a meeting, host a playdate, or even help plan a meeting. Maybe you have an idea that we haven't thought of before! Contact a leader if you would like to volunteer your time to API of Peoria.

A Request from our Founders

a recent letter sent to our API leaders

Dear Leaders,

As most of you know, Lysa Parker and I are busy at work on our first book - an overview of Attachment Parenting, based on all the research we have been gathering over the years. Of course a large part of the book will focus on the Eight Ideals, and stories from real life AP families! We hope our stories more than anything will give parents examples of how they can rethink how they are raising their children-we all need ideas and models. We will need stories for **every one of the Eight Ideals** but right now we have a need for **co-sleeping and discipline stories**. With the assumption that none of us are perfect parents it is ok to include stories where you made mistakes and how you resolved them. We also welcome stories where your transition to co-sleeping or using positive discipline was a real challenge. We want to present a realistic picture to our readers yet inspire them by your solutions.

Therefore our purpose in writing is to ask if you would share a story with us that pertains to discipline and co-sleeping and how you successfully handled this in your family. Feel free to get the word out to friends and family, especially those with older children who have used AP principles in their parenting and are willing to share a brief story with us.

Lysa is working on the co-sleeping chapter and would like to hear from parents who have an interesting story about sharing sleep. Of particular interest too are stories from families where one parent wanted to co-sleep and the other did not and how a positive compromise was met, or stories of older children co-sleeping and how you transitioned them to their own bed or if they did it on their own, how you managed intimate time with your partner etc. She wants to address all the objections & myths that people typically have when deciding whether or not to co-sleep. If you have a story about possibly saving your baby from SIDS or some other sudden life threatening situation due to co-sleeping, that would be of great interest.

I am currently working on the chapter on Discipline, and probably this chapter more than any other will need excellent ideas for handling difficult situations-at every stage of development. I am looking for examples of how a family can shift from the old model of punishment/rewards to an attitude of empathy/education/consequences of our actions. I would appreciate it if you kept the story under 350 words and send it directly to me, rather than to this list. Email your stories to Lysa at lparker@attachmentparenting.org.

We will categorize the stories in three main developmental areas: Infants and toddlers, young school aged children, and teens. Please state that we have permission to use your story and your name in the book, or if you prefer we could use your initials instead.

Thank you so much for your willingness to be a model and mentor to countless families through this book-we are so grateful for your willingness to take some time, give this some thought, and share a success~we know we all have many stories where we blew it, but changing the paradigm is a slow process!

Gratefully,

Barbara Nicholson

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.
~Eleanor Roosevelt

CATCH UP DAY

Do you like to scrapbook or knit? Do you need to clean your purse, paint your nails, or pay some bills? Make a date to our monthly API of Peoria Catch Up Day!

Bring your children, your crafting supplies, and anything else that you need to get done. Come early, come late, or come the entire time.

We'll sit and talk parenting while our children play around us. Bring your own lunch (or you can run out and grab a lunch - there are several restaurants close by). We hope to see you there, with your knitting needles, bills to be paid, children, and sack lunches!

Friday, April 21st from 10-2 at the UU Church

COMING SOON

Every other occupation, from driving a truck to performing surgery, requires months or years of training. Only for the job of raising children do we expect that love will be enough. But, sometimes it isn't. **Parents also need skills.** Here is the program that gives parents the know-how they need to be helpful to their children and helpful to themselves.

How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Stay tuned for more details about a second session of this upcoming seminar.

INTEGRATED YOGA

Do you enjoy yoga? Or maybe you've always wanted to try it, but haven't had the chance? Join us on Tuesday evenings for integrated yoga at the UU church. Julie Reams will be leading the class. The class fee will be \$5.00 for API Peoria members and \$8.00 for non-members. Please wear light, loose, comfortable clothing and bring a mat if you have one (if not, a folded blanket is a nice substitute). If you are pregnant, please bring a blanket and pillow. Yoga is great for maintaining balance and preparing for childbirth, two of our ideals, so come on out and join us! This month, class will be held on April 11th and 25th only!

ENRICHMENT MEETING: Planning for a More Certain Future

Tuesday, April 18th, 7:00 pm, at the UU Church

Summary submitted by Julie Harvey

As Collin is turning one on April 15th, I am certainly looking to the future. Let's see - he will be heading off to college sometime around the year 2022. And his four year costs for a public, in-state college will be \$153,775. Wow! I don't know if I am ready for that. How about your family? Have you started financial preparations for college and retirement?

If you could use some information or improvement in this area, please join us for an Enrichment Meeting on "Planning for a More Certain Future" with Maria Hurst's husband, Michael Hurst. He is a Registered Representative, Senior Financial Advisor, Certified Long Term Care, Certified Senior Advisor, and has NASD series 6, 7, and 63 licenses. With his business, Family First Financial Solutions, he will be speaking to us on survivor needs, trusts, retirement plans, college funding, and any other financial topics that you have questions on. So please bring your spouse and your children for a thought provoking evening of financial planning information.

Please RSVP to leaders@apipeoria.org if you plan to attend. Depending upon the response to this meeting, we may arrange for mothers' helpers in order to help parents have a better opportunity to participate.

SPANK OUT DAY is April 30th - please see details on Page 7!

APRIL 2006 API OF PEORIA CALENDAR

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6 Moms' Night Out Location TBA 6:00-10:00 PM	7 Playdate UU Church 10:00 am-12:00 pm	8 API Peoria Monthly Meeting - UU Church 10:00-11:30 am
9	10	11 Integrated Yoga UU Church 7:00-8:15 pm	12	13	14	15 Newsletter Submission Deadline Midnight
16	17 Enrichment Meeting UU Church 7:00 pm Details on Page 5	18	19	20	21 Catch Up Day UU Church 10:00 am-12:00 pm Details on Page 5	22
23/30 April 30 th is Spank Out Day! Details on Page 7	24	25 Integrated Yoga UU Church 7:00-8:15 pm	26	27	28	29

MAY 2006 API OF PEORIA CALENDAR

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4 Integrated Yoga UU Church 7:00-8:15 pm	5	6 Moms' Night Out Location TBA 6:00-10:00 PM	7	8 API Peoria Monthly Meeting - UU Church 10:00-11:30 am
9	10	11 Integrated Yoga UU Church 7:00-8:15 pm	12	13	14	15 Newsletter Submission Deadline Midnight
16	17	18 Integrated Yoga UU Church 7:00-8:15 pm	19	20	21	22
23/ 30	24	25 Integrated Yoga UU Church 7:00-8:15 pm	26	27	28	29

MISSING DATES? Are there API Peoria events or community events that should be on our calendar? Please e-mail Angela at newsletter@apipeoria.org to add dates to the calendar.

Spank Out Day is April 30th! submitted by Tammy Smith

"We need to support Spank Out Day USA because non-violent discipline is the only way to model the kind of behavior we want our children to emulate, thus significantly reducing violence in our society."

~Barbara Nicholson, President of Attachment Parenting International, Nashville, TN

"Kids who have their needs met early by loving parents...are subjected totally and thoroughly to the most severe form of 'discipline' conceivable: they don't do what you don't want them to do because they love you so much!"

~Dr. Elliott Barker, director, Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

SpankOut Day USA is April 30, 2006, and API of Peoria is getting involved! We will be setting up an informational booth on Sunday, April 30th. We need **your** help to pass out information and answer questions, to model emotional responsiveness and positive discipline with your children, and to show your support of nonviolent, peaceful discipline. Times and location will be posted to the message board as soon as possible.

For more information, or to volunteer for our SpankOut Day USA booth, please contact Tammy Smith at 309-688-5096 or Tamatha278@gmail.com.

Our Toddler and the Antique Lamp – our personal experience with spanking submitted by Jen McDaniel

It's funny how a person like me, a woman with definite goals and ideas about parenting, never gave spanking much thought. At least not until recently. As a teenager, I already knew I would breastfeed, have natural childbirth, and treat my children with dignity. But the issue of spanking was not something I had an opinion on. Frankly, my ignorance was bliss, for my own parents almost never spanked. Until my first child was a toddler, I never put a serious thought into the rights and wrongs of spanking.

My antique floor lamp with the green marble inset base was the inspirational factor in my first experiences with spanking. My darling, my first child, was eighteen months old when she decided to give the towering, teetering lamp a good shake. Afraid the lamp would shatter or fall, I redirected my child to some appropriate toys. Sure enough, within seconds, she was back by the lamp, hovering like a hungry chimp, her head drawn up and eyeing the forbidden fruit. Out went that pudgy, sweet hand and again, she gave the lamp a good shake. Many mothers with more rambunctious children will laugh upon reading that this was the very first experience I had where my daughter did not easily go along with me. But there we were, at our first parent-child impasse.

Interestingly, I found myself stumped. I spent ten minutes redirecting to no avail. At that point, I had no idea how to get my child to leave the lamp alone. I was frustrated and tired and had other stressors in my life that had nothing to do with her. In that crucial moment, I lost my creative side and made a conscious choice to go the easy route. I had read about 'flicking' in a parenting book, though at the time, I paid the subject no heed. But now, guess what instant solution rang in my mind? Flicking - the loving and socially acceptable way to strike a human child. For the record, I didn't flick so much as smack. For the record, my daughter didn't care about semantics. She felt my hand strike hers and it registered with pain! Instantly, even before my hand made contact with my child's skin, I knew what I was doing was wrong. I had not just hit my child; I had broken her trust in me. She wailed in emotional pain and confusion.

Hands are for holding, for touching and soothing. Hands are a universal sign of compassion and love. Hands come together in prayer and support. I wondered, "How can my child ever want to hold my hand again, these hands that have alienated everything she knew about trust?"

Fortunately, both children and parents are created with resilience and the ability to forgive. All children are destined to learn that a parent will not and cannot be 100% trustworthy all the time. By pure design, there will come a point when a parent is stuck in the bathroom, or falls asleep, or simply loses patience. And the young child begins to understand that this relationship is human and that humans are not perfect. Also, perhaps by design, the resilience of a child gives them the ability to remain humane, compassionate, and trusting, even when they discover that parents are not gods capable of ultimate and perfect care. At some point, a child will have a need that the parent cannot meet. But you hope that the point occurs out of natural development, and not because of the intervention of a spanking.

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Our Toddler and the Antique Lamp (Continued from Page 7)

Whether you call it spanking, patting, smacking, hitting, slapping, or flicking, to strike another human is wrong. In Attachment Parenting, we believe that emotional responsiveness factors into every facet of our successful child-parent relationship. But in spanking there is no emotional responsiveness, only the opposite- complete lack of empathy and feeling. While some may say that anger is the 'emotion' felt by the spanker, anger is not, in my opinion, a true emotion. Anger is a deceptive mask for the true emotions like fear, alienation, vulnerability, and exhaustion. Anger is a way to hide your need for acceptance, belonging, safety, and well-being. To respond to a child or any human with anger is to withhold emotional honesty. In other words, an anger response is not an emotional response, but rather a refusal to acknowledge emotions at all.

Withholding of emotional responsiveness is not only expressed in spanking. Yelling, name calling, shaming, setting children up for failure, or teasing- these are all as destructive to a healthy esteem and relationship as spanking. For myself, I know if my actions stem from frustration and anger, I am not being emotionally responsive to my own needs, much less my child's.

In API of Peoria's recent "How To Talk" parenting workshop, participants learned that all parents withhold emotional responsiveness at some point. All parents get angry. Some yell, some hit, some bottle it all up inside in the misguided belief that they are sparing their children. Regardless, all humans experience this frustrating side of life. When we do, usually our children become targets shafted by our dulled and jagged parenting skills. Though we regret our actions, all parents should understand that expressions of anger and frustration are normal both for ourselves and our children. Children need to know that being angry is part of a normal life experience. Moreover, children need to see parents dealing with their anger so that they can learn to deal with their own as it comes. So instead of beating yourself up about spanking your child, allow yourself to learn and grow. Let your child see that even in the midst of the worst anger and the most tragic of mistakes, a person can and should start again, striving to do better next time.

A good friend and I once joked that our oldest children were unwitting guinea pigs in our first-time parenting science experiment. We felt that due to our sheer lack of parenting know-how, our firstborns were destined for the therapist's chair. Clearly, we all make our share of mistakes while learning to become great parents. Certainly those mistakes do not cease simply because we are on to the second or third child. Every moment from day to day is different and mistakes are sprinkled in with triumphs like the occasional weed in the vegetable patch. But weeds can be carefully pulled out; their growth will not deplete the soil. If you crop the roots and do not allow the weed to seed out, its very flesh can be composted into nourishing soil for the garden plants. So it is with our mistakes. They can make us stronger, better parents. □

A Natural Breech Birth by Liz Pierce

Reprinted with permission from La Leche League International
Thousand Oaks, CA USA

Originally published in *New Beginnings*, Vol. 18 No. 2, March-April 2001 pp.47-49

It's been about a year now since I gave birth to my second son. I am still elated each time I think about what a rewarding experience I had!

My first son was in the breech position (head up, feet down) at the end of my pregnancy. Believing we had no other options, we scheduled a cesarean birth at around 39 weeks. Three years later, we were blessed with another pregnancy and began to plan for a vaginal birth. As the end of my pregnancy approached, we discovered that this baby was also in a breech position. This time, however, I was much more knowledgeable as I had done extensive reading on birthing, mothering, and breastfeeding in the past three years.

I had chosen to use a midwife during this pregnancy and hoped to deliver in her birthing center. Knowing my history of having a baby end up in the breech position, my midwife started monitoring my baby's position at 28 weeks, when he seemed to be in a transverse, or sideways, position. During the operation for my first birth, my doctor had commented that my uterus is heart-shaped. This tends to make the baby more comfortable sideways or, when he gets bigger, with his head up, because there is more room at the top of the uterus for his head. At 32 weeks into my second pregnancy, an ultrasound confirmed that this baby's head was up. I made the commitment to do whatever was in my power to turn my baby so I could have a vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC). I made an appointment with an acupuncturist and started doing moxibustion, a technique to stimulate the baby's movement. My plan with my midwife was to try everything to get my baby to turn head down (vertex), but if that didn't work, we could use one of her backup doctors, who specializes in delivering breech babies.

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A Natural Breech Birth (Continued from Page 9)

By 33 weeks, I was practicing almost a dozen recommended methods to try to turn my baby. At one point, we thought my midwife had turned our baby head-down so I stopped everything. Unfortunately, we soon learned that the baby either hadn't turned or had turned back a few days afterward. My pregnancy was further complicated when I started bleeding early one morning at about 33 weeks and had to go the hospital to be checked. Everything turned out fine and the bleeding stopped after about three hours.

At around 35 weeks, my midwife told me that because of the bleeding, my previous cesarean, and the likely breech presentation, she definitely wanted me to have the baby in the hospital and to start seeing her backup doctor. This was hard for me because it meant that I wouldn't be delivering in her birthing center. Since I was entering the hospital scene, with all my risk factors, I felt the chances were fair that I would end up having another cesarean birth. Soon afterward, I scheduled an appointment with the doctor she recommended. We had planned to try an external version during this appointment, a procedure in which a qualified physician attempts to manipulate the baby manually to turn him head-down. However, an ultrasound exam showed that the baby was already head-down! My husband and I made our plans with this doctor, and he agreed to do a vaginal delivery either way, vertex or breech.

When I went back alone to my next visit with this doctor, my baby had moved back into a breech position. The doctor said he wanted to do an external version in one week and then immediately induce labor. I felt strongly that I did not want to be induced. I was concerned that this would be the first step down the road to multiple interventions and, eventually, a cesarean birth. I told him my feelings and asked him to do a vaginal breech delivery at fullterm, as he had agreed to at the previous appointment. He seemed more hesitant to commit this time, and it concerned me.

At my next appointment, around 38 weeks, ultrasound confirmed that my baby was still breech. However, when the doctor examined further with ultrasound, he could find only a few pockets of amniotic fluid around the baby. He immediately told me it was dangerous for me to continue my pregnancy and that he would recommend that I go to the hospital immediately and have a cesarean! I was in shock! When I resisted, he recommended either the cesarean or an attempt at an external version and a possible vaginal delivery. I asked for a few days to drink plenty of fluids, eat well, and rest, and then to come back to have my fluid checked again. He said he didn't think that would make any difference. I told him I needed to go home, think about it, and talk to my husband. The doctor wanted to monitor my baby to be sure he was okay before I left, which I consented to. After an hour of monitoring, he was convinced that the baby was fine, and I was able to leave.

I immediately started calling, looking, and reading to determine my next move, which seemed to be to investigate the only other doctor in my area who I had heard delivers breech babies vaginally. I spoke with another midwife and found out that he was her backup doctor. She highly recommended him, as she knew of a breech baby he had recently delivered. My first appointment went well. I showed him my birth plan, and he agreed to everything I asked for, as long as there were no complications. I was so happy! He was even going to let me go into labor on my own! I felt so pleased with this doctor and his approach. When I asked him about trying an external version, he said it was too late in my pregnancy to attempt it and we would just go ahead with the breech delivery.

Two days later, just as I went to bed, I started feeling some strange sensations. The contractions continued through the night and the following morning. Walking and eating normally helped me to deal with the intensity of the contractions. Around noon, my husband, son, and I met the midwife at her clinic. I was over six centimeters dilated and my cervix was 100 percent effaced! She asked me where I wanted to go to have the baby - a tricky decision to make at this time. The first doctor, with whom I had had an awful experience, was 20 minutes away, while the new doctor I had just seen for the first time two days ago, with whom I felt very comfortable, was 45 minutes away. I stuck with my feelings and chose the latter.

We arrived at the hospital around 1:15 PM and got settled into a small room. The nurse put an external fetal monitor on the baby for a few minutes, I called a close friend who wanted to attend my birth, and then the doctor showed up. My cervix was over seven centimeters dilated, and my water bag was still intact. I walked around and got into the bathtub which worked out great! The hot water in the tub intensified my contractions. Luckily, my friend had arrived while I was in the tub and was there to assist me during these difficult contractions. The baby was coming! The doctor suggested I push when I felt like it. A few contractions later, I did feel like pushing. That's when my water broke and out popped a foot! Under any other circumstances, this would have been a flag for an emergency cesarean delivery. Since I was fully dilated, the doctor was ready to deliver vaginally. I was moved into the delivery room and with the doctor's guidance and the help of my midwife, husband, and close friend, I pushed for about three contractions and out came my baby boy! It was a miracle!

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A Natural Breech Birth (Continued from Page 10)

Sawyer was born at 3:29 PM and weighed 7 lb 3 oz. Right after he was born, they checked him quickly and immediately put him on my chest, under my gown. The doctor sewed up my episiotomy, and I kept my baby with me for the next couple of hours, then through the night until we left the hospital the next morning. It was terrific! We got off to a beautiful start by breastfeeding, and we were a happy couple, both of us feeling great.

I am so glad that I stuck with my goal and wouldn't let go. Even my husband was unsure at times. For me, the obstacle to a breech VBAC was not the delivery, but finding a doctor who was knowledgeable about and experienced with breech births. My hope is that other women who are facing a VBAC and/or a breech delivery will read, investigate, and consider their options, because they do have options! □

It is important to me that I spend part of the next few hours here alone with you in the darkness.

You and I will never be this close again.

By morning you will be a tiny person all your own.

No longer the kicking, demanding bulge in my body that I have grown to love so well.

I pray God will safely guide you on your journey tonight.

And I ask Him for the strength to help you all I can.

Again, you signal your impatience to be free.

Time to wake Daddy.

~Author unknown



Collin Harvey, just after his birth.



If I had my life to live over, instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

~Erma Bombeck

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Pregnancy and Birth Story by Hilary Shirven Caleb Richard Shirven, born Friday, April 19th, 2002

This birth story is from my perspective as the mother—not from Caleb's perspective. The baby's experience is a very different experience than that of the mother's, and I think it's important to remember and acknowledge that.

Learning About the Pregnancy and Sharing the News

Bret and I were very excited to find out I was pregnant. We were blessed to become pregnant as soon as we decided to try. My period was 10 days late, so I had a blood test done. It showed that we were not pregnant, and I was put on medicine to start my period. It didn't come. I called the doctor's office and talked to the nurse. I explained to her that I just didn't feel right. My lower back and breasts were extremely sore, I was fatigued, I had to pee very often, I was gassy, and I was getting bloody noses. The nurse asked, "Are you *sure* you're not pregnant?" I told her they'd done a blood test, but it was negative. She told me to come to the office right then, and they would do a urine test. It didn't even occur to me that I might *really* be pregnant, so I didn't think to call Bret before going in to humor the nurse. 10 minutes after arriving at the doctor's office, the nurse informed me that I was pregnant. I was so shocked and incredibly excited. It was all I could do to keep myself from calling Bret to tell him, but I wanted to share the news in person. We were standing in the hallway when I shared the news, "You know how I've been late for my period? I went into the doctor's office today to see what was going on...and, well, I'm pregnant." I know that I was beaming when I told him, and he was equally excited.

The day after the positive pregnancy test, Bret and I went in to have our first prenatal appointment. I say "our" appointment, because Bret came with me to each and every prenatal appointment, which I greatly appreciated. I know that it helped the baby and him bond even more than they would have otherwise. The nurse took a urine sample, drew blood, and took my vitals. She told me I would need to have a PAP smear done, but I told her that I wasn't comfortable with that. She gave me a disapproving look and told me I would have to talk to the doctor about it and to go ahead and get undressed. I didn't get undressed for an exam and told the OB that I didn't think it was necessary, since I had just had one in February. She just said, "That's fine. It hasn't been that long since your last exam." I had a vaginal ultrasound done for dating of the pregnancy. It was really neat to see and hear the baby's heartbeat for the first time and to take home a picture of the baby. The due date they came up with was a week later than my calculations showed, and I knew that I was right.

Bret and I were so anxious to tell our family and friends about the news. We called Bret's mom. Then, we paid my grandmothers visits to deliver the news to them in person. Everyone we spoke to was elated for us. Of course, the first people I wanted to call (in addition to Bret) were my parents. However, they were on a cruise in Alaska and could only be reached in a true emergency through a cumbersome process. My dad was heading back home to Tokyo directly from the cruise, and my mom was flying into Peoria. We decided to deliver the news personally to my mom at the airport and then call my dad once he reached Japan. Since I collected a lot of my parents' mail while they lived in Japan, I decided to put the ultrasound picture in a small manila envelope and deliver the news that way. After greeting my mom at the baggage carousel, I handed her the envelope and told her that it looked like something important was in there. She opened it right away and saw the ultrasound picture. She looked up with a tentative smile, and I smiled. She literally SCREAMED with joy in the middle of the airport! I knew she was going to be excited, but her reaction was priceless. I just wish that Dad had been there, too, but he was also very excited when we were able to call him and share the news. We began sharing the news of the pregnancy with the rest of the family and people at church pretty much right away, in part because we were excited and in part because my mom was in town and was able to share in the joy by personally telling her friends. Everyone we told was so happy to hear about a baby coming into our lives.

The Pregnancy

I loved being pregnant! I experienced no morning sickness or weird food cravings. I really wanted a lot of orange and yellow-colored fruits in my first trimester before I even knew I was pregnant, so my body was doing a good job of telling me what I needed. I also really enjoyed anchovies during my pregnancy, but since I already liked them before, I didn't consider that too odd, just my body's way of telling me I needed more salt to make up for the extra blood volume. The only food aversion I had was to greasy fast food, especially McDonald's. I suppose this was another way that my body kept me healthy and on track. My allergies were non-existent during pregnancy (and breastfeeding), and my usual migraines became very rare. This was a wonderful way for me to avoid any temptation to take drugs for these conditions, although I did take Tylenol on a few occasions prior to taking the childbirth classes. Mentally and emotionally, my mood was more balanced and positive than it had been since adolescence. In fact, Bret told me he needed to keep me pregnant all of the time, because he was really enjoying the non-existent mood swings! Maybe it helped that I've always known I wanted to be a wife and mother, so I had been waiting for this all of my life.

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Pregnancy and Birth Story by Hilary Shirven (continued from Page 11)

My pregnancy was considered low risk, but there were a few variations in it. I had three ultrasounds—the routine initial vaginal one to determine the due date, the routine one at around 22 weeks, and a non-stress test after I went in concerned that the baby hadn't been moving. In my second trimester, I tested borderline for gestational diabetes. It never became an issue because I watched what I ate and kept a food log to keep me on track. Towards the end of the pregnancy, my blood pressure elevated slightly (by about 10 points) and was accompanied by mild edema. I was prescribed partial bedrest (lying on my left side 8 hours per day in addition to my sleeping rest). This was very boring for me, even though I'm a homebody. Looking back, I wish I'd upped my protein intake to see if that would have made a difference.

During my pregnancy, I avoided caffeine, artificial sweeteners, alcohol, and medications (except those mentioned above), etc. I tried (and succeeded in) eating about 80-100 grams of protein per day. I avoided high-risk situations and read all of the standard (read "mainstream") pregnancy and breastfeeding books. Initially, I thought that I would try natural childbirth (vaginally and without drugs), but that if I ended up in too much pain, I would ask for an epidural. Since my mom had two Pitocin-induced births without painkillers, I didn't think it was likely that I would ask for an epidural. Somewhere around the fourth month of pregnancy, I decided that if I were to have a natural childbirth, I needed to be determined and armed with the information I needed to do so (although a very small part of me wondered if I were capable, since I am known by family and friends to be a "wimp"). Bret and I decided to take The Bradley Method® course after hearing about it from a couple of friends. We loved the way the classes actively included the father and focused on prenatal care in addition to actual childbirth. I liked the exercises the method teaches (although I didn't practice them as much as I should have) and felt they really helped prepare my body for childbirth. I also preferred the natural breathing to the forced breathing of other childbirth methods; it was definitely the right fit for our family.

The Labor

I was convinced that I was going to go past my due date and would need to be induced, so I was very surprised when my water broke around 7:20 p.m., Thursday, April 18th, exactly one week before my due date. I had not had a single Braxton-Hicks contraction up to that point, let alone any "real" contractions. I was lying on my left side on the couch watching "Friends" when I felt a little twinge in my cervix area. I immediately thought, "That's a weird feeling!" When I sat on the toilet, I noticed some mucous and blood. I knew that didn't necessarily mean I was going into labor right then, but when I went to stand up, a bunch of fluid started leaking. Then a small gush of fluid came out. All of the sudden, every little piece of labor knowledge I had spent so much time acquiring vanished from my brain as if the information had never even existed at all! I was completely dumbfounded and didn't know what to do or even for sure if my water had really broken.

My mom was at home with us, but since Bret had wanted it to just be him and me at the birth, I signaled to him to come to the bathroom. I whispered, "I think my water broke. Should I tell Mom?" He knew that I wanted my mom at the birth, but I also wanted to honor his wishes for it to be just us. He obviously could see in my eyes what I needed and told me that we should tell her and that he had changed his mind—she should be at the hospital for the event. I think he thought the extra support would be good for us, especially since my mom had given birth without painkillers. She was very excited at the prospect of seeing her grandchild's birth and was relieved that we had changed our minds about having her there.

My OB had told us that we needed to come to the hospital right away if my water broke, so (being a good patient, but not necessarily a wise one) we began making preparations to leave for the hospital. I got in the shower to shave and freshen up while Bret loaded the van with what we had packed and made arrangements for our friend next door to watch our dogs. He also called Gretchen, a friend of ours from church who used to teach The Bradley Method® and had offered to help during labor. I was still only feeling a little crampy after my shower, so I told my mom that I would call her from the hospital when I felt Baby was closer to arriving. She stayed behind at the house and cleaned in preparation for us to bring our baby home in a couple of days.

We arrived at the hospital around 9:00 p.m. Since we had pre-registered, we were taken directly to Labor and Delivery. We were informed that my OB was out of town and would not be assisting with the birth. This news was very stressful for me, since I felt my OB really had a handle on what we wanted and was supportive of our birth plan. She had never once planted even a small seed of doubt in my head that I couldn't have this baby vaginally and without drugs, and there was only one element of my birth plan with which she disagreed (delayed cord clamping).

After partially absorbing the information about my out-of-town OB, a resident examined me and said that my water had indeed broken. By this time, I was already confident that it had. I was not effaced or dilated at all (not that I expected to be). At this point my contractions were mild, but were consistently 5 minutes apart. I was then hooked up to a Penicillin drip, since I had tested positive for Group B Strep two weeks earlier.

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Pregnancy and Birth Story by Hilary Shirven (continued from Page 12)

After getting settled in the room, I found out who would be the attending OB. This news made me even more upset than I was when I heard my own OB would not be there. I had heard only horror stories about this doctor—including being told by a nurse who needed to refer me to a gynecologist 6 years earlier that I should avoid this doctor at all costs. The nurse did not help me feel much more optimistic. She told us that the stand-in OB was very “traditional”—constant monitoring, drugs, on your back, feet in stir-ups, episiotomy, etc.—and just the opposite of everything we wanted. However, the nurse seemed to understand our desires and said she would talk to the doctor to see what we “could” do. I reminded the nurse that we had discussed our birth plan in great detail with our own OB and that she was on board with it. A little while later, the nurse returned with the news that we would follow the birth plan as long as things ran smoothly. I would be monitored with an external monitor for 10-15 minutes every hour (ACOG standards despite the routine practice of continuous monitoring), but other than that, interventions would not be used unless “necessary.”

Now that the initial activity had subsided, Bret and I were left alone to labor peacefully and quietly. We turned out most of the lights and I sat in the rocker keeping a record of when my contractions were. My contractions were getting a little stronger and were very regular—about 2-3 minutes apart. However, I was only mildly uncomfortable at this point. More than anything, my brain was going full-speed dreading that I would end up on Pitocin if things didn't pick up, especially with the unknown-OB factor. I expressed my fears to Bret, but told him that I was handling the contractions fine. The nurse was very unobtrusive and only came in when it was time to monitor the baby and me. I hated monitoring time since I couldn't move during it. The contractions were much more uncomfortable when I had to lie or sit still the whole time. Fortunately, the nurse stretched the time between monitoring to give me as much time as possible alone without interventions.

Around 11:00 p.m., I told Bret that he should go ahead and sleep while he could. Had we been home still, we would be lying in bed trying to rest anyway. I figured that I was going to need him a lot more as my contractions became more intense, so I was happy to have him sleep (not so happy to hear him snore, though!). I tried to sleep, as well, but was too uncomfortable to do so. Since I was having back labor, I spent a lot of time in the shower with the hot water on my back. It was amazing what a difference the water made. I only wished they'd had a tub for me to use (and that I'd hired a doula to call my attention to my posterior baby and help me get in the right position)!

By 6:30 a.m., I was feeling like my body had really been working hard. The back pain and contractions had been pretty intense most of the night, and I was convinced I had started dilating. Curiosity got the best of me, and I requested an internal exam so that I would know exactly where I was. I was happy to hear that I was 80% effaced, but I was so bummed to find out I was still at 0 centimeters. I thought for sure that I had started dilating! My fears of “needing” Pitocin pushed themselves back to the surface (I'd barely been managing to keep them below the surface all night). I was also beginning to feel that if this were going to go on for another 10 hours that I would have a hard time making it without an epidural, but as long as I took one contraction at a time, I was fine.

My mom arrived at the hospital shortly after my exam, and we called Gretchen to give her the low-down. Gretchen showed up a while later to see how things were going. My contractions were getting more and more intense and difficult for me to manage. The day shift nurse finally convinced me to sit on a birthing ball. I don't know why I had been resisting that, because things felt better as soon as I sat on it. I leaned forward and rested my head and arms on the bed to help with the back labor. Bret massaged and stroked my back between contractions, but I didn't want *anyone* touching me during the contractions. I knew even before labor that I would find this too much to handle, and I certainly did! Gretchen and Mom caught up on each other's lives while I sat on the birth ball. The contractions started getting much stronger and I had lost my ability to breathe through them. I was reminded by my birth support team of how to relax, to sink into the birth ball, and breathe deeply and naturally. I really needed those reminders, and I was amazed at how much they really helped! I immediately was more relaxed again, even though the contractions continued to intensify.

Gretchen left mid to late morning to tend to her daughter and said she would be back in time for the birth—or so she thought! Things picked up and got very intense very soon after she left. I really began doubting my abilities and saying, “I don't know if I can do this!” I think I remember my mom saying softly to Bret that she thought I was in transition. All of the sudden, I really felt like I needed to go to the bathroom. As soon as I sat down on the toilet, I realized that I didn't need to go. I wanted to push. I called out urgently from the bathroom, “I think I need to push!” The nurse checked me and said that I was fully dilated and ready to push. Within seconds it seemed like the room was full of strangers. I was asked if one of the newer EMTs could watch. She wanted to see what a drug-free delivery was like. I said, “I don't care.” I just wanted to move onto the next stage.

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Pregnancy and Birth Story by Hilary Shirven (continued from Page 13)

Baby's Arrival

I began pushing around 10:30 a.m. Even though I had intended to push in more of a squatting position, I found myself on the delivery bed mostly supine, but partially upright. I'm still not really sure how that happened, but was too tired to ask for anything different. The first couple of pushes were scary for me. It took a couple of tries before I was really comfortable that I was doing it right. Even then, I was nervous about what it would feel like when the baby finally moved out of me and into the world, but I was happy to be working with the contractions. It was hard work, but it didn't hurt. At one point in the middle of pushing, I needed to take a break and said so. Amazingly, the contractions stopped coming, and I was able to breathe and recompose. I even fell asleep briefly. During contractions, Bret and Mom helped hold my legs and encouraged me to push. There was no counting, just pushing as I wanted to push (which was probably harder than I would have needed to if I'd been truly tuned-in to my body).

The stand-in OB arrived somewhere in the middle of me pushing. After the baby's head crowned, she suggested an episiotomy. I really did not want one and said so. She then asked, "Are you sure you don't want an episiotomy?" I didn't know what to do. Obviously, I wasn't at the height of my analytical abilities, so I was really at a loss for what to say. I wasn't expecting to be asked about one in the middle of pushing, since I specified on my birth plan that I did not want one. I asked if she really thought it was necessary, and she said, "Yes." I told her that she could do a small pressure episiotomy off to the side. She did, and I didn't feel a thing. Afterwards, I seem to remember the OB saying that the tearing was mostly internal from the baby's shoulders, and the episiotomy wouldn't have helped that. Maybe a different pushing position would have helped, but the episiotomy sure didn't! The stitches to repair the episiotomy hurt more than anything else, and she stitched me up wrong, but I didn't find that out until my postpartum visit with my regular OB. I thought it was normal for the stitches to feel like they were pulling at me.

Finally, at 11:13 a.m., a healthy baby arrived. It was such a glorious and amazing feeling! Bret looked at the baby and said, "It's Caleb!" It was so exciting finding out that he was a boy. Caleb was placed on my belly while his Apgar score was assessed, and his cord was clamped and cut immediately (way too soon, and it was accompanied by routine Pitocin under the guise of too much bleeding and "helping" the placenta out). It was not too long before the lactation consultant showed up to help Caleb latch on. I felt that was a very awkward process even though breastfeeding itself didn't seem awkward at all. I hope to let my next baby do a self-attachment sequence according to his or her biological impulses.

Caleb weighed 8 pounds 2½ ounces and was 20¼ inches long. He is an amazing human being. The feeling of holding my newborn in my arms for the first time is too much for words to describe. Even though I had been falling in love with him throughout the pregnancy, I fell in love with him even more once I saw him—my beautiful, amazing, baby boy blessing. He is such a gift from God! □

Hilary Shirven is a Certified Childbirth Educator and Doula. Her interest in birth began while pregnant for her son in 2001. Since then, she has devoted herself to learning about pregnancy, labor, birth, and parenting. Hilary encourages and supports her students in staying healthy and low-risk, thereby giving them more options in labor and birthing. She will begin teaching Childbirth Classes for API of Peoria in May of 2006. Please visit www.apipeoria.org for more information.

I Am Not Alone Author Unknown

Running errands and talking on the phone,
I am pleasantly reminded that I am not
alone.

Little tiny hands a precious rounded knee
pushing and twisting that no one can see.
Oh sweet child kicking up your heels,
it is our little secret that only I can feel.

I look forward to your birth,
when I can kiss your skin,
but for now I will just smile,
As I feel you play within.



Left: Mika and Elijah kiss mom's (Julie Carlton) belly as she nears the end of her pregnancy.

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The Birth Story of Rebecca Lynn Dawdy by Libbe Dawdy

Will it ever happen?

Having gone to 41 weeks and 4 days with Caetlyn, I fully expected to go past 40 weeks this time. I set my expectations for it and thought I'd just be pleasantly surprised if I went into labor sooner. Well, I didn't go sooner. As I got closer and closer to the time I went into labor with Caetlyn (10 days past my EDD), the concerns started creeping in. I KNEW I'd eventually go into labor if left alone but was concerned it wouldn't be soon enough for my care providers. Surely I'd go into labor before I hit 42 weeks...

Wednesday morning, October 12th, I had an appointment with my midwife, Chris. All looked well. My blood pressure had come down a little even though my swelling was as impressive as ever. I was 41 weeks and 3 days, according to my ovulation date, and 41 weeks and 1 day, according to the early ultrasound date. Chris asked if I'd considered doing anything to encourage labor. I told her I was already doing the usual stuff (sex, walking, EPO) but was planning to hold off on the big guns (castor oil, cohosh) until the weekend when I'd be nearing my deadline (Monday, according to Dr. P). Chris warned me that Dr. P. would send me straight to the hospital for an induction on Friday if my ultrasound showed that my amniotic fluid level was low at all. She said if the level was so-so and my non-stress test was reassuring, I might be able to talk Dr. P. into waiting until Saturday. What a situation! It wasn't that I expected my fluid level to be low, but if it was or if my baby's umbilical cord was a little long (they can't count fluid pockets that contain cord)...ugh. It was then that I decided I would allow Chris to strip my membranes. Even if this caused my water to break at the start of labor it would be better than going in for an induction.

Chris checked me for dilation while aggressively stripping my membranes. "You are 4 cm!" she announced! I could hardly believe it. Those contractions on Saturday and Monday had done some work! After the stripping I had some bloody show. She also told me my plug was gone (I'd started losing it over the weekend).

By Wednesday late afternoon the contractions were back. They were the same as they'd been on Monday night so I ignored them. I didn't want to get my hopes up for fear of being disappointed again. I decided that I should call my doula, Julie, to talk with her about my appointment and possibly jump starting my labor. This was 5:45pm. Julie suggested I try the knee-chest position for 45 minutes followed by stair lunges (2 steps at a time) for 10 minutes. The goal of this was to jiggle the baby into the right position. She really felt I would go right into labor if we could get the baby into position. We talked a lot about castor oil and nipple stimulation but decided to try the positioning things first. I really wanted to avoid castor oil (ew!).

I went upstairs and assumed the knee-chest position. This is like being on your hands and knees but with your chest/face on the ground. It allows the baby to slide up out of an unfavorable position. I dutifully wiggled my hips every few minutes until my 45 minutes were up. Little did I know Caetlyn had sneaked upstairs to look at me and reported to Daddy that "Mommy is up there wiggling her butt!"

After finishing the knee-chest position I went straight to the stairs. I lunged up them 2 at a time, doing deep knee bends to maximize the effect. Up the stairs, down the stairs, gasping for air by the time I got to the top each time. I did this for 10 minutes and was pretty worn out! It didn't seem like any of that stuff did anything and I was feeling pretty down.

I sat down to eat supper and did some thinking. I really didn't want to do anything further to try to start my labor, at least not yet. I called Julie at 9:15pm and we both agreed that we felt I would go into labor on my own. She recommended I go to bed early. I got on the internet and posted to some of my message boards that I would probably be the world's first eternally pregnant mother! A few of my friends responded with nothing but a wink. I ended up going to bed at midnight. (So much for going to bed early.)

Labor...

I woke up at 1:45am with a strong contraction. I thought, "Wow! That was stronger than anything I've felt so far!" I stayed in bed and had 2 more contractions about 5 minutes apart. They hurt and I didn't want to stay in bed through anymore of them so I got up. I headed to the bathroom because I felt like I needed to have a BM. I was shaking. It was a nervous sort of shake. The shaking and BM feeling concerned me. Surely I wouldn't have the baby right then and there! I decided to wake up Kevin to let him know what was going on in case I got on the toilet and needed help. He suggested I try wrapping up in a blanket in case I was just a little chilled. I thought that was silly because I am ALWAYS hot. I tried it anyway and it seemed to stop the shaking.

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The Birth Story of Rebecca Lynn Dawdy (continued from Page 16)

I went to the bathroom and noticed more bloody show, which I'd had ever since my appointment Wednesday morning. I was shaking again so I put the blanket back on and sat on the cedar chest at the end of our bed. Kevin asked what I wanted to do. I couldn't decide. The contractions were definitely stronger but not any closer together. The shaking and BM thing were concerning but I put them out of my mind. I told him I'd like to go downstairs and distract myself with the internet for a little while. I wanted to see what was going to come of these contractions. At this point I couldn't walk through the contractions but could talk through them.

I got online and the same friend with whom I'd chatted Monday night was online. She was having hard contractions again, too! We joked about how weird it would be if we were both really in labor this time <ahem>. The contractions kept coming 5-10 minutes apart. At some point I thought maybe I couldn't talk through them anymore. I would stop typing and grab onto my desk as I did pelvic circles on my birth ball to get through them. My friend asked if I'd called anyone and I said no. I didn't want anymore false alarms. When I told her I was grabbing onto the desk and couldn't talk through them anymore, she suggested I at least call my doula. I thought that was maybe a good idea.

At 3:30am I typed up an email to let people know I thought I was in labor. Well, if I wasn't in labor I'd be furious! I then signed off and called Julie. She talked with me through a contraction, listening to me breathe. We were still concerned that the baby was on my right side. Julie asked if I thought I could do the knee-chest position now. She felt it would be very beneficial to do it while in labor. The strong contractions would help. I told her I didn't know. She offered to come help me do it or suggested I try getting in the tub on my hands and knees with the water deep. She said she could come over whenever I was ready. I told her I wanted to try hands and knees in the tub and would let her know when I was ready for her to come over. (I wondered what form of torture she'd make me endure once she got here. Drinking lots of water? Knee-chest for hours? The STAIRS?!)

I went upstairs and started the bath water. Kevin got back up to see if I needed help. I told him it was probably time to call my parents to let them know I was in labor. The plan was for them to come stay with Caetlyn at our house. My mom would come to the hospital in time to witness the birth. I also told him I wanted the van loaded up. He gave me a questioning look. I think he wondered why we couldn't just load things when we were ready to go. He must have been thinking we had hours of laboring to do at home. I told him I wanted everything ready so we could just jump in and go when it was time.

Kevin called my parents and told them it was time, while I got in the bath. My mom said they'd be on their way. (They live about an hour and 15 minutes away.) I got on my hands and knees and thought the water felt really nice. I was audibly breathing through my contractions while I rocked on my hands and knees. In between the contractions I would rest my head on the side of the tub or on my bath pillow. Kevin brought in the CD player and started up the harp CD I'd chosen. I lit all of the candles I'd received at my blessing way and placed them around the tub (it's a jacuzzi tub). I also placed my blessing way necklace next to the tub.

There I was...my best friends were with me in spirit, my relaxing harp music was playing and the water felt nice and warm. As Kevin loaded up the van I talked to our baby through the contractions. "Mommy loves you! It's time. Turn your head and move down now. You can do it! Just like that!" I focused on keeping my bottom relaxed during each contraction so it could do its work.

I rocked through a couple more contractions and suddenly felt the baby's head turn and move down. It felt like a corkscrew kind of motion! Whoa! I immediately stood up on my knees and processed what had just happened. Surely this baby isn't going to come out right now?!

Shortly after that Kevin came in the bathroom to check on me. "I swear I just felt this baby's head move down lower!" I told him. He was in the process of getting last-minute things into the van. I almost asked him to get the camera and snap a picture but I thought we had plenty of time for that. And what good would a picture of my butt do?

(Continued on Page 18)



Left: Rebecca enjoys her first meal (maybe the reason she hurried to get out!)

Right: Rebecca lays on mom's chest just after birth. Big sister Caetlyn reaches out to touch her baby sister's hair.



The Birth Story of Rebecca Lynn Dawdy (continued from Page 17)

The next contraction hit harder. I started moaning, "Oh, oh, oh, oh," as I rocked through it. Suddenly the contractions were 5 minutes or less apart. I moaned and rocked through a couple more contractions. They hurt a lot. I thought to myself that the contractions hurt almost as much as the strongest contractions I had during my labor with Caetlyn but they were not very close together. When I got through the next contraction, I decided it was time to get out of the tub and maybe go to the hospital. Kevin had noticed a distinct difference in my vocalizations ("She went from heavy breathing every 5-10 minutes to moaning every few minutes!") and stuck his head in to check on me. I told him it was time to call Julie and tell her to come. It was now 4:10am. I'd only been in the tub for maybe 30 minutes, tops. Julie told Kevin she'd be at our house in about half an hour (she lives 15-20 minutes away).

As I quickly tried to dry off and throw some clothes on I suddenly felt like I was going to vomit. I ran to the toilet and had some dry heaves. The shaking came back. I told myself I might still not be very far along because I was only 4 cm when I vomited during my labor with Caetlyn. I grabbed my blessing way necklace and wrapped it around my left hand. I held it tightly.

At 4:40am I asked Kevin how long it'd been since he called my parents. He said maybe an hour. I asked him to call my mom's cell phone to find out how close they were. My mom answered and said they were just leaving. I heard Kevin say, "Just now leaving?" and I sort of shouted, "Then they'll have to meet us at the hospital!"

Kevin hung up and asked what I wanted to do. I told him we'd have to take Caetlyn with us as I could not wait over an hour for my parents to get here. I came downstairs while Kevin went to get Caetlyn out of bed. "Don't forget a blanket and Super Dog," I instructed. I found myself grabbing onto the counter and leaning over them while I rocked and moaned through my contractions. I knew I was getting louder. I was hoping Caetlyn would stay asleep as Kevin put her in the van. No such luck. She was bright eyed and completely excited. The day had finally come!

At 4:40am I was tired of pacing from window to window, looking for Julie. Where was she?! I asked Kevin to call her cell phone to find out how close she was. Maybe she would have to meet us at the hospital. As Julie's phone rang Kevin spotted her van rounding the corner onto our street.

Julie came in and helped me through a contraction while Kevin called the hospital to let them know we were on our way (and we wanted the tub room). My contraction stopped short. Julie got in her van and we got in ours. I asked Kevin to keep Caetlyn as quiet as possible for the ride. I don't think he heard me. I wondered if Julie thought I was nuts for going to the hospital so soon. She'd only witnessed a short contraction before we jumped into our cars.

As we pulled out of the driveway at 5am I told Kevin to take the short route. He looked at me and said, "There is only one way to get to the hospital." I smiled and said, "I know. I just wanted you to know how fast I want to get there." With as strong and painful as the contractions were, I was surprised at how coherent I could be between them. I totally relaxed and could talk.

Bam! The first contraction in the van hit hard. I felt a lot of pain in my back and it concerned me. The whole time I was in the tub and walking around the house I didn't feel any back pain so I thought the baby was in good position. Now that I was having back pain in the van, I wasn't so sure.

My cell phone rang and I figured it was my parents. I checked it between contractions and it was. I dialed them back and handed the phone to Kevin. My dad wanted to know at which exit to get off. Kevin instructed him and then hung up.

I moaned loudly and arched my back as I grabbed onto the handle above my seat during the contractions. In between them I could hear Caetlyn giggle a little. Sometimes she talked quietly to her dog. At some point I told Kevin to hurry. Go faster! He was driving the speed limit because he was concerned that Julie was following us. What if she got pulled over by the police?!

I told Kevin the contractions were hurting worse than any of them did during my labor with Caetlyn. He stopped at a red light. What was he doing?! Didn't he understand how much pain I was in?! Julie pulled up next to us and could see my white knuckles.

"I need drugs!" I whimpered. "I think you are pretty far along now," Kevin replied calmly. Bam! The contractions were suddenly coming very close together. I hoped that meant I was in transition. I didn't see how I was going to make it. The pain was so severe and I knew the only end to it was to push the baby out. Still, I focused on keeping my bottom relaxed.

(Continued on Page 19)

The Birth Story of Rebecca Lynn Dawdy (continued from Page 18)

At 5:35am we pulled up to the ER entrance. Kevin asked if I wanted a wheelchair or gurney. I told him I didn't know as I opened my door and got out. I started walking into the hospital and Kevin quickly followed. I got inside the first set of doors and got hit with another contraction. I grabbed onto Kevin and we slow danced through it while I moaned. I hoped some ER staff would hear me and come to help. Right about then Julie came running in. She helped as the contraction came to an end.

I'm not sure how they figured out I was there, but a couple of ER staff came running. "You need to sit in this wheelchair, Ma'am." I didn't argue. They told Kevin they couldn't wait for him to park the van. He'd have to meet us upstairs. Kevin went back to park the van and get Caetlyn and our things out, while Julie stayed with me. The ER staff wasted no time in getting me to the OB floor. They weren't quite running but they were certainly walking quickly.

As we got to the elevator doors I saw the look on the ER staff's faces. It was a look I'll always remember. "Please don't let this lady give birth on the elevator!" Yep, that was the look. If I hadn't been concerned about the next contraction coming on, I would have laughed. We entered the elevator and I was hit with a contraction. I really wanted to stand up. Sitting was just the worst position. It made them hurt so badly in my back. I started to put my feet down and the elevator door opened. They raced me out and down the hallway. "SHE'S MOANING!" they shouted as we headed to the tub room. I guess that was their code for, "This woman's about to pop a baby out!" Three nurses came running. It was 5:36am.



Left: a close-up picture of Rebecca's face

Right: Rebecca takes a nap on Daddy's chest



"You need to get undressed and put on this gown," the nurse said with a look of sympathy. I was in between contractions so I quickly tossed off my clothes and put on the gown. No need for modesty. I was way beyond that. "I have to go to the bathroom," I said as I got up and walked over to the toilet. I sat down and tried to urinate but was hit with another contraction. I had to stand up RIGHT then! Forget that idea! Julie came in to help me through that contraction. She asked if I'd gotten to go and I told her no and headed back to the bed.

The nurses wanted to get me hooked up to the monitors for a strip and to check my dilation. I assumed a left side-lying position in the bed. It was 5:40am and the nurse said I was 7-8 cm. I was glad to find out I was, indeed, moving quickly. The pain was pretty overwhelming at this point. While searching for the baby's heartbeat, the nurse kept moving lower and lower. I saw a look of concern on her face momentarily. Then she found the baby's heartbeat. I was surprised (and so were they) at how LOW the baby obviously was.

Kevin and Caetlyn arrived. Kevin put Caetlyn down on the couch in the room and came to my side. Caetlyn was quiet and unsure of what to do with herself. Julie asked me if I still wanted to labor in the tub. "I don't know. I guess...," I replied. Julie and Caetlyn went over to start filling the tub. Caetlyn commented to Julie that sometimes faucets can be a little silly. That is Caetlyn-ese for sometimes faucets are loud and scare me.

The nurses were running around pretty quickly. One of them started an IV saline lock. At 5:45am I wondered out loud where Julie was. She rushed to my side and motioned for Kevin to help Caetlyn with the tub. Not long after Caetlyn was happily settled on the couch. Kevin and Julie were tending to me. At some point I decided I would try a little push with my contraction to see if it lessened the pain at all. It did. I think Julie was probably the only person in the room who noticed I was a little pushy. I really felt like I was going to lose control of myself at any moment.

The nurse checked my cervix and found it completely dilated. "She's complete and +1... +2 when pushing!" My body was pushing. The next contraction started and my water broke as my body pushed. I thought maybe I'd just urinated on the bed. I had totally forgotten about my water. Julie told me my water broke. It was as if she read my mind.

(Continued on Page 20)

The Birth Story of Rebecca Lynn Dawdy (continued from Page 19)

The pace in the room picked up as the nurses paged Chris, who was on her way to the hospital, and an ER doctor. "She's +1, +2 when pushing...+3!" they told Chris. Chris knew she wasn't going to make it. She called Dr. H. because he could get to the hospital faster.

There would be no time for the tub so someone turned off the water. Kevin asked if I wanted my music on. I declined. The nurses told me to blow. I thought to myself, "Either no one is here to catch the baby or they want me to slow down so I don't tear." I had very little clue whom was in my room. Julie got in my face as Kevin took over massaging my back. I don't think I really needed the back massage for pain but more for emotional comfort. I needed to be touched. Julie focused on getting me to relax as I was getting pretty tense. She told me to open my eyes and look at her. She coached me to blow and blew along with me. It was very hard to stop pushing and blow. It took all of the concentration I could muster. Sometimes I could blow and push at the same time. Caetlyn was perfectly content to stay on the couch and watch the whole scene.

The nurses continued telling me to blow. "Blow out the candle," I heard one nurse say. I almost rolled my eyes but was in too much pain. It was obvious that Chris wasn't going to make it. I saw a doctor walk in and I didn't recognize him. I figured he was from the ER and I was right. He started doing something. What was he doing down there?! I think I even said that out loud. "This is the ER doctor," someone said. Well, duh. Now that I've had time to reflect, I think he was massaging my perineum. I do remember thinking he looked very confident with catching a baby, which surprised me.

Julie asked me if I wanted to try to get up on my hands and knees. She thought it would help take some pressure off. I was afraid it would make things hurt worse and wasn't sure I could move. I remained in a left side-lying position. Since the ER doctor had arrived the nurses encouraged me to push. A nurse ran over and hooked my IV up to a bag of solution and put an oxygen mask on me. I thought that was pretty silly. "Your baby has lots of hair," someone said. Julie continued trying to help me relax my shoulders and blow. She wanted to slow me down in hopes of preventing a tear. "Open your eyes, Libbe," Julie said. "I can't. It hurts too much," I told her. "Open your eyes. You wanted to see your baby come out, right?" It was very hard to open my eyes but that was something I really wanted this time. Two pushes, 5:54am, and my baby was out. I wasn't sure if the baby was out all the way because I hadn't felt as much ring of fire as last time. "Is the baby out all the way?" "Yes!" they told me. "Oh, thank God!" I said. I laid back.

Suddenly I remembered that I didn't know the sex of my baby. The baby was on the bed next to my right leg. I tried to sit up as I was dying to know the sex! "Lay back, honey," a nurse said. None of the staff realized we didn't know the sex of our baby. I thought maybe I could reach the baby with my hand so I started groping. Kevin said, "It's a girl!" "It's a girl?" I wanted to be sure. He assured me it was another girl, so I finally laid back and relaxed.

"Put her on my belly," I requested. "We sure will," someone replied. The nurse helped me remove my gown so we could be skin to skin. I finally laid eyes on my new baby girl! She was crying with her eyes wide open. I could feel the umbilical cord against my leg and abdomen. "Mommy's here," I said. I rubbed her all over. It was so wonderful! The doctor asked Kevin if he wanted to cut the cord. He said no. I spoke up and said I would be cutting the cord. He handed me the scissors and I cut my baby's previous lifeline.

Kevin turned to Caetlyn who was still on the couch. "You have a baby sister!" She was suddenly unsure. Later we found out that the blood on the baby concerned her. You see, we didn't prepare her to witness her sibling's birth because we were not planning to have her there. Live and learn, I guess. Caetlyn walked over to the side of my bed and reached out to touch her sister. She looked at me as if to ask if it was okay. I told her she could touch the baby and helped her feel the baby's hair.

We announced her name, Rebecca Lynn Dawdy, as Chris came running into the room. She had her hands up in the air as if to say, "What just happened here?" She was so sorry she missed the birth. I grinned from ear to ear. Dr. H. had also arrived. He asked me why I waited so long to come to the hospital. I calmly explained that my last birth took 20 hours. How was I to know this one would only take 4 hours and 9 minutes from the time I was awakened with contractions?! I heard one of the nurses say, "How long was that one?" "Eighteen minutes from the time she was on our floor!" another answered. Eighteen minutes?! I had no idea it had gone that quickly!

Kevin took Caetlyn out to the waiting room while Chris and Julie tended to me. I felt some heaviness down low and pushed. The placenta came right out. Chris examined me and found a small second-degree tear. She gave me several injections to numb the area and started the repair.

(Continued on Page 21)



Left: Caetlyn poses with her new big sister t-shirt.

Right: Daddy and Caetlyn look on excitedly as mommy holds baby Rebecca.



The Birth Story of Rebecca Lynn Dawdy (continued from Page 20)

Right about then Kevin walked back in. My parents were out in the waiting room so they were entertaining Caetlyn. I guess they arrived in time to see Chris run from the elevator to my labor room. Kevin told them, "You missed it," and walked back to my room. He purposely didn't tell them the sex of the baby. They pumped Caetlyn for information. She told them it was a girl and she had hair and cried.

The nurse removed Rebecca from my belly for just a minute and returned her. We remained skin to skin the whole time Chris was stitching me. Julie and I had discussed ahead of time that it would be neat to see if the baby self-attached to my breast. We waited and watched. She continued to cry for a while but also began to inch her way toward my right breast. She made little pecking movements. I said, "Look you guys, she's doing it!" Chris, Julie and Kevin looked. We were all amazed. The nurse asked Chris if she wanted to administer some Pitocin. "No, she's breastfeeding so she'll be fine," Chris replied.

Everyone left the room except for Chris and Julie. We watched as Rebecca had her first meal. She took to nursing RIGHT away and nursed for an hour straight. That whole time no one asked to take her from me. No one fiddled with us. It was so nice! We all joked that Rebecca was in such a hurry to get out because she wanted to eat!

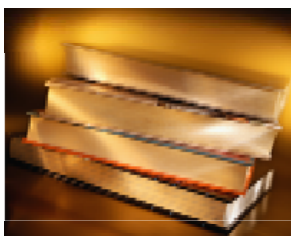
As Chris left she stopped and talked to my parents in the waiting room. They really appreciated that. After a couple of hours we told the nurse we were ready for her to weigh the baby, etc. Rebecca Lynn weighed 7 pounds, 9 ounces and was 19 inches long.

After she was checked over and wrapped up, Julie left and we invited my parents to come into the room. They brought Caetlyn back in with them. She was bouncing around with excitement and looked so cute in her bunny pj's and slippers.

It was very important to Caetlyn that she be the first person to hold Rebecca (after Mom and Dad, of course), so my mom helped her up onto my bed. She got to hold her new baby sister. We looked Rebecca over and talked about all her cute body parts, especially her fingers. Caetlyn was happy to have the sister she'd wanted.

"Do you want to give Rebecca the gift you picked out and wrapped for her?" I asked. "Oh yes!" Caetlyn replied. Caetlyn carefully unwrapped the musical doggie and put it next to Rebecca. I then pulled out a gift from Rebecca to Caetlyn. Caetlyn was very surprised and pleased! She opened her gift and we pulled out her big sister t-shirt. She wanted to put her shirt on right away. She was so proud!

After a short while Caetlyn said she was ready to leave. I think she was bored. My parents took her home with them and Kevin started making phone calls to share the news of the birth of our new daughter. I looked over onto the side table and spotted my blessing way necklace. "Thanks guys," I thought as I cuddled in bed with my beautiful, perfect, new baby. □



API of Peoria Library

API of Peoria has a wonderful selection of books (you may review the book/video list at this link: www.apipeoria.org/library.html). You must be a contributing member to check out a book. Books may be checked out for one month only. Please plan on returning your book at the next API of Peoria monthly meeting. Donations of books are welcome and appreciated. Please check with Sharon Heritch at library@apipeoria.org if you have a book that you would like to donate.

Regular Newsletter Items

API of Peoria Mentors Program

API of Peoria's Mentor Program offers FREE direct one-on-one support for any mom or dad. We hope this will be especially helpful for new parents with first time babies or for those who find that they need consistent help with their current situation. After gaining a little information about your needs and position, a mentor will be assigned to you. You'll never have to wait a whole month to get personal support again!

Your mentor will check in with you to see how you are doing through phone calls, e-mails, or home visits (if you desire). Your mentor will be able to help you with questions about sleeping, crying, babywearing, discipline, breastfeeding, maintaining family balance, and overall caretaking needs—whatever they may be! If your mentor does not know personally how to help you, be assured they will find someone who can!

Don't be shy! Sign up to receive a mentor of your very own! Contact Mary at mentor@apipeoria.org for more information.

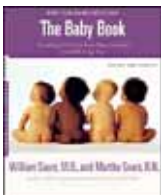
Newsletter Submission Invitation

Reader submissions are what make this newsletter great!! Are you looking for an excuse to write your birth stories? Have a great recipe to share? Read a good book lately? What are your latest favorite quotes? What are your recent thoughts or discoveries about Attachment Parenting topics? Please share with the other readers of this newsletter. *Please send submissions to newsletter@apipeoria.org*. There's a new page on our website with the how's, why's and what's of submitting to this newsletter along with all of the submission deadlines for this year. Please check it out! <http://www.apipeoria.org/newsletter.html> Thank you!

API Message Board

Come and register at the API Message Board. Go to www.apipeoria.org/form.html and complete the form. Tessa Matthews is managing the message board. Once our leaders receive and your form, they will review and then open your membership, which will allow you to view the full board. This message board makes it very easy to follow all of the current API threads! If you have questions, you may write forums@apipeoria.org

Does Your Doctor's Office Have Mothering Magazine?



Or The Baby Book by William and Martha Sears? Several of our members have approached their physicians with that question and offered to donate one or the other as a gift from our group. We think this is a great use for our funds, to get the word out about AP and help local parents feel validated in their instincts. Let us know the name and address of your doctor and which publication you would like them to have. Send information to leaders@apipeoria.org.



API of Peoria Meeting Ground Rules

When you come to a monthly meeting, please consider the following:

1. While children are welcome at meetings and there are plenty of toys for babies and toddlers, we currently do not have hired childcare. We also do not have activities for older children. **If you bring your children to a meeting, be prepared to get up and attend to them regularly. If you bring older children, bring a quiet activity for them and prepare them to sit quietly during the meeting.**
2. **No hitting, spanking, or verbal abuse of children at group functions.**
3. **No gossiping** about group members and their situations outside of the group.
4. Please don't bring a **sick** child (or a sick self) to a meeting within the first three days of the start of a respiratory illness, or within twenty-four hours of the cessation of diarrhea or vomiting. (see our Illness Policy for more details)
5. **No group will espouse or maintain a political or religious affiliation.**

If you have time:

Will you **please consider helping clean up after a meeting**? We need to put all the toys back, put the chairs and tables the way they were, and vacuum the floor. Your help would be appreciated. Thanks!

API of Peoria Illness Policy

In our efforts to keep all of our children as healthy as possible, and to clear up confusion about when children are welcome to participate in API Peoria events, we have adopted a modified version of Dr. Bill Sears' recommendations on when to keep children home from child care.

In general, if your child has nasal secretions but they are clear and watery, and your child is happy and playful, pain free, and has a temperature of less than 101 degrees there is no need to exclude your child from Peoria API events.

However, please do not bring your child to any Peoria API event if she/he exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- a fever of 101 degrees or more within the last 24 hours
- nasal secretions that are thick, yellow, and/or green, especially if accompanied by a fever, an earache, frequent night waking, or a peaked look -- in mother jargon, a sick-looking-face
- a cough accompanied by fever, chills, and/or coughing up of green or yellow mucus
- vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- a rash (especially with fever and itching)
- eye discharge or conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- open or oozing sores
- lice or scabies
- you or your children have knowingly been exposed to a highly communicable disease, until the incubation period has passed and there is no sign of illness.

Thank you for your cooperation and honesty, and for supporting us in our efforts to keep all of our children as safe and healthy as possible. □

Julie Harvey
Cinnamon Nieukirk
API Peoria Leaders

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** You can advertise for free in our monthly newsletter. Do you want to sell something? Do you have a work at home business?

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** You can help to support our group meeting location rent needs. Our new location at the Universalist Unitarian requires that we pay a little more rent. Also, if we choose to do some enrichment meetings (how to freezer cook, how to cloth diaper, etc.) we could use the church for that, too.

** Your money will go toward any future community outreach that we do. Remember when you were a new mom confused about parenting style? Wouldn't it be great to reach those new moms before they've succumbed to societal pressures to sleep train or CIO?

** Your membership status will carry weight when we work with International. Wouldn't it be great to say that we are 100 members strong in Peoria, Illinois!?

How much?

\$15 to join local API of Peoria or \$35 to join AP International (\$15 goes to us and \$20 to International)
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If you have any more questions on membership, please email Libbe at treasurer@apipeoria.org

Classifieds

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Contributing API of Peoria members (contact treasurer@apipeoria.org) may place classified ads for free! Non-contributing members may place an ad for \$3.00 per month, which will be contributed to the API of Peoria group. Thank you to our advertisers for supporting this newsletter and our group!

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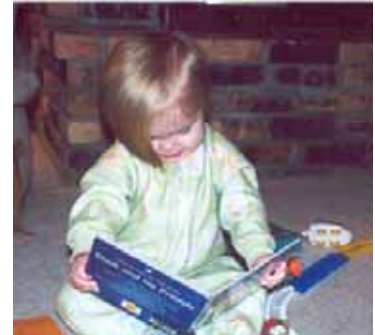
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API of Peoria Leaders:

Please contact the leaders for any questions or concerns you might have!

Julie Harvey and Cinnamon Nieu Kirk

(Shared Leaders e-mail: leaders@apipeoria.org)

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Treasurer: Libbe Dawdy

Would you like to become a contributing member to API of Peoria or Attachment Parenting International?

treasurer@apipeoria.org

To pay for accounts, please feel free to use our paypal address!

paypal@apipeoria.org

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