

So, let's talk about Moms Club of Virginia...



What is it? Group learning for pregnant women, facilitated by a Health Educator that has been specially trained in the BB Moms Club of Virginia group model.

Who attends? Any pregnant woman and her support partner, at any stage of her pregnancy, as often as she likes – no matter who her provider is and no matter where she delivers.

Why attend a group model? Not all moms will attend traditional childbirth education. Many are not comfortable in a classroom setting and many cannot afford the cost of a childbirth class, BB Moms Club of Virginia is always **free**.

What will they learn? The Virginia Model of BB Moms Club was built on the 6 key topics that impact birth outcomes. Moms have multiple opportunities to learn about; 1. Preterm birth 2. Safe Sleep environment/car seat safety 3. Nutrition – feeding a family on a budget 4. Baby Blues, Depression/Intimate partner violence 5. Breastfeeding and support 6. Substance use in pregnancy Each mom receives a Baby Basics Pregnancy Guide and planner developed by *What to Expect When You are Expecting*. The Baby Basics Pregnancy Guide is written at an easy third to fifth grade reading level.

Why this works? Studies have shown that pregnancy is the most teachable time in a woman's life. The Moms Club is a place where pregnant women can come together in a safe and nurturing environment and discuss issues that can lead to poor birth outcomes. It is also a place where they can get connected to services that assist them with needs they may have.

What moms get? We call it learning in **stealth mode**. Moms leave meetings with a much better understanding of how certain behaviors can impact their health and the health of their baby. They learn about making manageable changes and setting realistic goals. Moms begin to create a network of support with other moms and health care professionals.

What we have learned? Moms Club is filling a need in communities across the state and while the program was developed to target at risk moms that's not all that attend. In fact we see a very diverse group of moms, dads and support partners. At any club meeting you might see a 17 year old first time mom sitting right next to a mom with a college degree and, a mentoring friendship develops. This is just one of many positive surprises we have encountered.

OUTCOMES – Data reflects only 4.2% of moms attending all 6 the key topics experience a preterm birth, compared to the state average of 11% and the U.S average of 11%. Ninety eight percent of Moms Club moms place their babies in a safe sleep environment, moms also report an increase in smoking cessation, and moms are more likely to try breastfeeding and still be breastfeeding at 6 weeks post-partum. Anecdotally moms are creating networks to support one another during their pregnancy and following it. A Moms Club mom gains the tools to be a more active participant in her pregnancy and the health of her baby.

Who to call? For more information about starting a Moms Club in your community please call Merry McKenna at 276 494-5419 or email merry@bbmomsclub.com