Job Aid #9: Assessing Mom’s Readiness for Labor and Delivery

Directions

Use this job aid to help you evaluate the needs of pregnant moms in the late stages of pregnancy during your home visits. The job aid helps you assess three things:

- **Physical/Emotional condition:** What are mom’s expectations of labor and delivery? Is she prepared for the physical and emotional aspects of giving birth?
- **Home environment & family life:** Who will be with mom when she gives birth? Has mom thought about what life will be like after the baby is born?
- **Financial Resources:** Is the mom able to pay for all the expenses associated with labor and delivery? If she is not, what resources will she use to help her?

For each category, the job aid lists:

- Observations for you to make.
- Comments for you to listen for during visits.
- Questions you can ask.

Based on what you see and hear, you can evaluate the type of information or help to provide to the mom.
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Labor and Delivery

### Physical/Emotional Condition

**Observe:**

- Mom’s physical appearance for signs that she’s struggling with common discomforts seen in late pregnancy/early term labor.
- Mom’s emotional state when she talks about giving birth. Is she nervous? Scared? Excited?
- Signs that mom is gathering information about labor and delivery – such as magazines or pamphlets on pregnancy from a healthcare provider.
- Signs of drug or alcohol use
  1. Physical signs in mom such as dilated pupils, agitation, needle tracks, nose bleeds.
  2. Drug paraphernalia such as bongs or pipes.
  3. Bottles or cans of beer, wine, or hard liquor.

**Listen for:**

- Mom’s comments about how she feels – both physically and emotionally.
- Mom’s physical appearance- does she look well rested, well hydrated, well nourished?
- Requests from the mom for information about labor and delivery.
- Questions related to preparing for breastfeeding.
- Comments or questions about the stages of labor and/or the health of her unborn baby.
- Mom’s expectations related to giving birth.

**Ask:**

- What do you think labor will be like? Have you heard about the stages of labor? **Note:** Most moms will probably not be able to identify the 3 stages of labor (1st start of contractions to fully dilated, 2nd fully dilated to birth, 3rd birth of baby to birth of placenta), but this will give an opening for discussion.
- What do you know about pain management during labor? Have you considered an epidural or do you prefer to try natural childbirth?
- How do you feel about the use of forceps, an episiotomy, or even a cesarean section should you need them?
- Do you know the signs that labor has begun?
- Do you know about danger signs to watch for such as bleeding, a gush of fluid from the vagina, cramps, changes in the baby’s movement and severe headaches with blurred vision and swelling and how to report these to your health care provider?
- Have you considered a birth plan? What do you know about a birth plan?
- Have you thought about breastfeeding? What are you doing to prepare your breasts for breastfeeding (Did you know you can prepare your breasts for breastfeeding)?

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Home Environment & Family Life

Observe:

- Signs that mom has packed for herself and for her baby for their hospital stay.
- Signs that mom has prepared her home for the arrival of her baby.
- Indicators that family members, friends, and the father of the baby (FOB) are ready and willing to help mom.

Listen for:

- Comments from mom about how prepared her home and family are for the arrival of the baby.
- Questions related to how her home environment and family life will change with the arrival of the new baby.
- Comments from mom regarding who will be with her when she goes into labor.

Ask:

- What supplies have you gathered to take to the hospital for the baby? Have you packed for the hospital?
- Who will go with you to the hospital when you go into labor? How will you get there?
- Who will be in the delivery room with you when you give birth? Will the FOB be present for the birth?
- Who will take you and your baby home from the hospital?
- Who do you turn to when you need advice or guidance about labor and delivery options?
- Do you have someone in your life you can turn to for emotional support and love?
- What things do you think are important to have for your baby when you bring him/her home from the hospital?
- (If other children are in the home) Have you talked to your child(ren) about what life will be like with the new baby? How does your child(ren) feel about being a sibling (again)? Will your children visit you in the hospital?
- How do you think your home or family life will change when you bring the baby home?
- Who will watch over your house and take care of the children (if needed) while you're in the hospital? Who is helping you now?
Financial Situation

**Observe:**
- Signs that mom is struggling financially – such as lack of a car, job, basic necessities.
- The kinds of expenses that seem to have a high priority for this family – such as clothing, furniture, food, rent, transportation, or medical care.

**Listen for:**
- Comments from mom regarding her financial situation.
- Comments that indicate how mom plans to pay for hospital expenses.
- Comments that indicate mom is thinking about/preparing for expenses related to the baby (i.e. diapers, formula, clothing, childcare, etc.).
- Comments from mom regarding her employment and maternity leave.

**Ask:**
- Do you have health insurance? Can you tell me what it covers?
- What resources will you use to help pay for your hospital costs?
- When will you stop working? What have you told your employer about your maternity leave? (Are you planning on taking a maternity leave?)
- Will you return to work after the baby is born? When?
- How will you find nurturing, safe childcare? And how will you pay for it?
- Is the father of the baby (FOB) planning on helping with hospital and baby expenses?
- Do you know what financial assistance is available to you?