

March of Dimes & Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated

Steps for Planning a Successful Stork's Nest Program

1. Organize a Planning Committee

Contact Zeta's National Director, Regional or State Coordinator for Stork's Nest to discuss plans for the Nest and to review basic information about the program.

Meet with the leaders of your chapter to discuss preliminary plans for the project. Select a Stork's Nest Chairperson who is committed to the project and who has strong planning and organizational skills, leadership ability and community contacts. The chairperson should be a Zeta Phi Beta soror.

Review the list of suggested committees and select appropriate people to head each one. Stork's Nest committee members may be Zetas, members of its auxiliaries, representatives from the March of Dimes, or other collaborating organizations with similar concerns and goals. Use the Implementation Guide to educate planning committee members on their roles and goals for the program.

2. Contact your local March of Dimes chapter

The March of Dimes has many materials and resources that can enhance the effectiveness of your Stork's Nest program. The local chapter may be able to provide facilitators for the educational sessions, help establish community contacts, assist with publicity, and provide guidance. The chapter also can supply educational materials such as brochures and videos to support the Stork's Nest Prenatal Educational Curriculum, although these items may be purchased directly from the March of Dimes Fulfillment Center by using the ordering form. Depending on its capabilities, the chapter also might help with photocopying needs, serve as the collection center for layette items, or provide grant funding to stock the Nest until it is self-sustaining.

3. Identify a site

Locate a suitable site for Stork's Nest by letting local prenatal care providers, business people, clergy, community leaders, and realtors know about your need. The Building and Equipment committee should take the lead on this task. A Nest can be housed in a store that has not been rented, a space in a church, a YWCA, a housing project, a community or day care center, neighborhood health center, or in a hospital. It should be a space that is easily accessible to potential clients, securable with a lock, and that can be made comfortable and attractive. You will need sufficient space for displaying incentive merchandise, holding classes, and storing educational materials and other equipment such as audiovisual projectors, counters, shelves, racks, hangers, bags and boxes to display the merchandise. You will also need to have access to a photocopy machine to assist with documentation and other administrative procedures.

Prior to opening your Nest, be sure to check with the national office of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated to obtain the required liability coverage for your site. You will also need to contact city and state tax offices to obtain tax-exempt status for your Nest. Both of these tasks are the responsibility of the Management committee.

4. Recruit community partners

Contact prenatal care providers and other agencies serving pregnant women in the community to describe Stork's Nest goals and make arrangements for referring pregnant women to the program. This task is the responsibility of the Community Relations committee. Use the "About the Stork's Nest" brochure to explain who you are

and the goals of the program. Be sure to establish which agencies will refer women to Stork's Nest and provide them with any forms needed to facilitate the referral process.

If your Nest will be housed within a prenatal care facility, make a date to work out policies and procedures with key staff involved with the program. You may wish to record your respective roles and responsibilities in a written letter of agreement, especially if you have a fiscal relationship with the facility. The national offices of the March of Dimes or Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. can assist you with developing a letter of agreement.

5. Secure incentives

Now is the time to plan *what* incentives the Nest will offer, *how* you will obtain them at low or no cost, *where* you will get them, and *who* will be responsible for their storage and distribution. These are the main tasks for the *Incentive* committee.

Maintaining sufficient incentive stock is vital to the successful operation of the Nest. To keep a well-stocked Nest, it is important to get the cooperation of businesses and other appropriate organizations in seeking and obtaining donated merchandise. Give the "About the Stork's Nest" brochure to anyone helping to secure incentives to help them discuss the program effectively with potential donors. As incentive donations are received, record all items and their sources on an inventory list.

Inventory items may include some maternity items for mothers and all items needed for the baby – diapers, blankets and other layette items, clothes, bassinets, bottles, etc. The items may be new or used but in good condition. They may be items from stores, gently used items, or new items knitted, sewn or donated by senior citizens groups, youth or adult organizations. Thank you notes should be sent promptly to all donors of incentive merchandise.

Volunteer support is extremely important for keeping your Nest operating well. Volunteers will be needed to pick up and deliver merchandise, sort merchandise according to type, size and need for repairs, and label and display merchandise in the Nest. Be sure that your storage area for incentive items is easily accessible to the display area of the Nest and securable with a lock.

6. Organize an incentive point system

The Management, Incentive, and Community Relations committees should work together to develop the point system to be used by Stork's Nest clients when redeeming incentive items. The committees should first decide which activities will earn points for clients and how many points will be given for each activity. Your Stork's Nest should give points for:

Prenatal Period

- Attending prenatal care visits
- Attending Stork's Nest (or other) prenatal education sessions
- Making healthy lifestyle choices such as quitting smoking, not drinking alcohol, etc.
- Using community resources such as the WIC program

Post-Partum Period

- Attending well-baby visits
- Enrolling the baby in WIC
- Breastfeeding

Give the most points for attending prenatal care appointments, as this is the single most important thing a woman can do to take care of herself and her baby when she's pregnant.

Next, develop a wallet card or booklet that shows the points for each activity, and gives instructions for clients for redeeming their points for incentive items. Be sure to ask partnering agencies to stamp or initial each activity that is completed within their facilities by Stork's Nest clients. Consider providing them with a special Stork's Nest stamp to use for this purpose.

7. Organize a record-keeping system for clients and incentives

An organized record-keeping system that tracks information on clients and incentives is essential for managing and evaluating your Stork's Nest program. Registration forms for clients and inventory logs for incentives are useful tools for collecting data, and should be developed by the Management committee.

Once registration materials are developed, organize a system for filing client information alphabetically, or by client ID number, whichever is easiest for volunteers. Information contained in the registration materials is considered confidential and must be kept in a securable file cabinet in a safe location of the Nest. All women arriving at the Stork's Nest should be registered as member clients.

When clients collect their Stork's Nest incentives, it is essential that Nest volunteers document the prenatal care visits, prenatal classes, etc. that are completed by photocopying clients' *stamped* card or booklet as verification. This documentation should be filed with clients' registration information and kept until they "graduate" from the program. At that time, the Evaluation committee can compile and report information on clients' prenatal care use on the Stork's Nest Program Evaluation Form. It is also important for volunteers to keep good records on incentives given by recording which items were given, to whom, and the estimated value of the items. Estimating the value of the incentives helps to quantify the financial benefits provided to program participants and is also required for completing the annual Stork's Nest Program Evaluation Form.

8. Set up the Stork's Nest facility

The physical space within your Stork's Nest should be arranged to:

- Display and distribute incentive items
- Register clients
- View educational and other resource materials
- Conduct prenatal education sessions (unless sessions will be offered elsewhere)

Make "shopping" easy and fun at the Nest by creating an attractive display of the incentive items. All merchandise should be folded and labeled with the size (if applicable) and "price" (number of points). If your display area is very limited, put out only a few items and keep a complete listing of your inventory handy for volunteers and clients to use. "Dress up" your Nest with Stork's Nest signs and membership materials, educational posters and literature, and maternity-related decorations.

If space allows, designate an area to be used by clients as a resource library. Stock this area with purchased or donated educational videos, books, and other literature. The space does not have to be large, but it should have a video monitor, appropriate shelving for books and literature, and comfortable furniture for reading and viewing the materials. You can also enhance your resource library by keeping brochures and resource listings for local social service agencies such as WIC, women's shelters, and housing agencies, as well as recent issues of popular parenting magazines.

If you plan to offer Stork's Nest prenatal education sessions "on-site" at the Nest, make sure you have ample classroom space for at least 10 – 15 women and their

partners. Don't forget to provide additional chairs for women to put their feet up if needed. When sessions begin, make the classroom space cheery and welcoming, using decorations, Stork's Nest signs, and even fresh flowers if possible.

9. Plan the Stork's Nest education component

Once plans for the incentive component are in place, begin plans for organizing the education component. Stork's Nest prenatal education sessions are a vital component of the Stork's Nest program, and are the main responsibility of the Education committee. Coordinating the sessions involves:

- Recruiting and training session facilitators
- Purchasing (or securing donations of) educational materials to support the sessions
- Scheduling the sessions
- Providing refreshments
- Maintaining records of all sessions conducted and participants who attend
- Evaluating sessions using the forms provided in the Stork's Nest Prenatal Education Curriculum

Education committee members may be volunteers from Zeta Phi Beta chapters and their auxiliaries, the local March of Dimes chapter, and partnering agencies and organizations. Committee members may facilitate educational sessions, but are not required to do so.

The Stork's Nest Prenatal Educational Curriculum provides clear instructions for preparation, implementation, and evaluation of seven educational sessions. The curriculum is designed for use by facilitators with health-related education or experience, but who do not have specialty training in prenatal care. Facilitators may be nurses, midwives, health educators, or other qualified persons from Zeta Phi Beta sorority, the March of Dimes, or other collaborating Stork's Nests agencies. Although they need not be experts, facilitators should have sufficient knowledge to answer questions about session topics that are posed by the group.

All facilitators should participate in a Stork's Nest Facilitator Orientation session to familiarize themselves with the curriculum and the overall program before conducting sessions for clients. Additional training should be provided for facilitators with limited experience to give them "hands-on" practice using the curriculum.

Your Stork's Nest program may provide points to clients who attend prenatal education sessions that are offered by collaborating prenatal care agencies. This arrangement may be very appropriate, provided the subject matter reflects that of the Stork's Nest curriculum. You will need to work out a procedure for documenting attendance to validate point earned for those "off-site" sessions.

10. Set a date for a Grand Opening

With planning well underway, set a date to kick-off your Stork's Nest with a community-wide Grand Opening celebration.