

Partner and Provider Testimonials – Video Transcription

Stephanie Wolf: Becoming a Mom[®] is comprehensive perinatal education curriculum by the March of Dimes that's brought to families in Kansas through partnerships among Public Health, private practice, hospitals and many other community partners. It's a series of six sessions delivered in a group setting with an aim of providing parents-to-be, experienced and non-experienced, with comprehensive education and support during pregnancy and beyond, leading to health pregnancies, healthy babies, healthy moms and healthy families.

Dr. Christopher Graber: The collaborative model really helps everyone involved by opening pathways for dialogue. It gets everyone talking about the issues and hopefully striving towards the same goal of happy mom and happy baby.

Dr. Leslie Ablard: The collaborative model really gives the patient the best resources of what she can use for her pregnancy and post-partum and delivery, and it puts all the clinics no matter what physician they choose on the same page so we also know where we can go if someone comes to us and has any issues.

Stephanie Wolf: The collaborative model is essential to making Becoming a Mom[®] the best program it can be. It not only provides an extremely informative class by bringing the best content experts in the community to families all in one setting, but it also provides those who attend with gateways to resources and services throughout the community such as medical, mental health and dental care, social services, safety services such as car seat installation, breastfeeding support and resources, early childhood services just to name a few, all of which are geared towards providing comprehensive care, education and support to families in our communities.

Lori Blake: Child Advocacy and Parenting Services has several prevention-based programs, and we provide parenting education in the community not only from the perinatal standpoint but all the way through a child's life, and so we're really excited to have this opportunity for our staff to come down and interact with expecting parents and have that opportunity to tell them about how we can help them once their child is born. We offer family mentoring support and help parents just through they're experiencing, and so for our staff to have access through the Becoming a Mom[®] process is really important for our programming and getting the word out about how CAPS can be a part of their lives.

Patricia Kinnaird: Well, I'm the community relations specialist for Central Kansas Mental Health Center, so it's my job to go out and share information about the center and how people can access services, so I was asked to come and talk to the expectant moms and their support persons to learn about the services that we have here at the center, at Central Kansas Mental Health Center, and also to talk about maybe some of the symptoms that they might experience while they're pregnant or after they've delivered -- anxiety or depression.

Trooper Ben Gardner: Becoming a Mom[®] has invited me to come and speak to their participants, parents, caregivers about the need and safety installation of car seats.

Lori Blake: It makes so much sense to bring that expertise to the parents so they know in the community that it's not just the health department or it's not just CAPS or it's not just the Highway Patrol, but that we're all in this together and that we're really in parenting together.

Trooper Ben Gardner: I mean the collaborative effort that is put towards the instructors and the students and the organizers, we work hand in hand to make sure that the product is as best as it can be, and the students and participants leaving, I feel like they feel energized and comforted knowing that they've gotten the best information they can during the time they're doing that course.

Patricia Kinnaird: I believe that knowing all of the different resources in the community, they have individuals that they can contact. It isn't just an agency, but there's a real person behind that agency.

Lori Blake: We're hearing our kids are entering school ready to learn from an academic standpoint. We're seeing a lot more behavioral needs and the social-emotional issues through child care providers, and so really being able to target in and work on the specific issues I think only happens because of the collaborative nature of the our community.

Trooper Ben Gardner: To see their smiles, to know that they're willingly to gain information and the call-backs that I get. I get a lot of call-backs wanting them to expand on the material that I'm giving them in the block of instruction that I have, but expanding on that individually out in the world, in their community, is wonderful and it happens all the time with Becoming a Mom[®] participants.

Dr. Christopher Graber: I think over the classes, they enjoy their sessions and then come back to me with follow-up questions to clarify things that they learned or ask further questions about what's going to happen at delivery or with breastfeeding or with baby. It really starts the conversation and then we can go from there with more information.

Dr. Leslie Ablard: There have been numerous impacts that I have seen from the classes. Breastfeeding help has been extremely important. I think that that education that they get is probably the most important thing, because I think it's the least intuitive for even people that have had babies before. I think the importance of vaccines that we give in pregnancy -- flu shots, whooping cough. I think you know postpartum depression recognition is important, too, and it gives them some good data on that. I very rarely have patients that are really begging to be induced before 39 weeks because they've gotten the classes and understand the importance of the brain and respiratory development that happened in those last few weeks of gestation.

Lori Blake: So really focusing in that perinatal care and teaching our parents better ways to do things is really the future for our world.

Stephanie Wolf: Outcomes have been so tremendous and so far reaching. Not only do we hear personal testimonies from families as to how the program positively impacted them and how extremely helpful all the information and resources were to them, but evaluation data shows the increase in knowledge, positive change in behavior and improved outcomes as a result. In our two longest running program sites, we have seen a decreased rate of infant mortality for a five-year period, pre-programmed post-program implementation from 8.5 to 4.2 in Saline County, and 10.4 to 6.4 in Geary County. Now the claim is not that Becoming a Mom[®] has caused this change alone, but that it's the result of this great level and intensity of community collaboration across agencies and programs that is leading to a much greater impact than any one agency working in isolation could do on its own.

Trooper Ben Gardner: It's a wonderful approach. I mean the instructors that help teach and run that program are very knowledgeable. They invite very knowledgeable people on the subjects they want to cover for these expecting parents to make sure that these little ones are safe when they leave the hospital and get out into the real world.

Dr. Leslie Ablard: I think the great thing about the classes is it doesn't really matter how many that you've had before. It doesn't matter what your education level is, I think they really benefit everyone. The whole spectrum of patients I think can benefit from the classes, and that's what's really neat about them.

Patricia Kinnaird: The impact is that there are more people that are knowing good information or a good resource that they can refer people to, and maybe not be as frightened if you're expecting your first baby and you've got some good information and a support system, and I think that support system is very, very important now.

Lori Blake: It's nice to have partners that share the same concerns and have the same background and the same research that they're trying to convey so that message is spread more broadly, and that it's not just on one agency's shoulder, but to have those -- those partnerships and not have it be a burden strictly on one place to be the resource for everyone, because you know we need lots of different access points in our community to meet parents' needs.