

Card 7: Shared Responsibilities and Co-Parenting

Understanding Co-Parenting

Start by saying – “As you and your husband adjust to life with a new member, you may feel excited as well as nervous. If you live with a larger/joint family, you may have some help with household chores for a few weeks after birth. But you may feel the pressure to start taking your responsibilities back. I would like to ask a few questions to understand this further.”

- What were the responsibilities that you and your husband shared before childbirth?
- What are the new responsibilities that are there now?
- How are these divided?
- How does your husband feel about the kind of responsibilities both of you share?
- Is your husband supportive? Can you give me some examples?
- Does your husband involve himself with household chores? Can you give me some examples?



Sometimes mothers influence the father's involvement in child care. Explain with these examples:

- Efficiency: “It’s faster if I feed the kids myself.”
- Quality: “I do a better job of changing the baby’s diapers.”
- Sympathy: “I don’t want to bother him while he’s watching TV.”
- Admiration: “He works so hard...he shouldn’t be coming home and taking care of the kids, too.”
- Cultural beliefs about gender roles: “Men don’t prepare meals or take care of children...that’s a woman’s job.”



Involving Father in Childcare

Involving the father in sharing responsibilities of child-care has many benefits that include a positive impact on the mother and the child's physical health and psychological well-being and later on, the child's adjustment to school life and peer relations. It can also improve the father's satisfaction as a parent and impact the entire family.



Fathers tend to be more involved in parenting when their partners are supportive and encouraging!



Give the father a benefit of doubt; don't assume that he does not want to be involved.



Suggest that you and your husband go for the baby's immunisation or other health check-ups together.



Give him the time with the baby to learn how to comfort him/her. This will improve his confidence as a parent and give you a break to take rest or do something you like.



If you feel your husband is not doing something right, e.g., feeding the baby, explain in a calm manner and teach him.



Ask him to soothe the baby when crying and put the baby to sleep after a feed.



Encourage him to discuss any concerns he has with the FLW or the doctor.