

CAN'T WE GET A PONY INSTEAD?

Imagine if your spouse came home one day and said, "Gee, I love you SO MUCH, I'm bringing home another (husband/wife) and you'll be the special (husband/wife) because you were the first. But you'll also be able to help take care of the new (husband/wife) and won't that be special? And you'll be the BIG (husband/wife). Aren't you happy?"

That's probably how an older sibling feels when they get the bomb dropped on them that they're having a "new baby" in the family. In *WILL YOU MIND THE BABY, DAVY?* by Brigitte Weninger and Eve Tharlet (\$6.95, North South Books), the endearing bunny boy hero says to his mom after the announcement of the imminent arrival of a new baby, "I thought I was your baby!"

If you're getting ready for the big newsflash for the older sibling in your family, you **MUST** have a copy of *MOMMY'S IN THE HOSPITAL HAVING A BABY* by Maxine B. Rosenberg, with photographs by Robert Maass (\$14.95, Clarion) which covers all the details of hospital visits by siblings, what to expect, what the child will see, anticipating questions in a solid readable text.

There are a gazillion "new baby in the family" titles-- everything from *Berenstain Bears New Baby* and *Arthur and The Baby* (he saves the day by

burping) to Amelia Bedelia and the Baby (you'll love how she puts on the baby powder). But the BEST of the new baby books that you're likely to find include:

A Monster in My House by Elisa Kleven (\$15.99, Dutton) with this demanding, messy, screamy, horrible monster coming to live in this girl's house (of course, the monster is....the baby.) Kids will love the tongue in cheek story and the wild illustrations.

I'm A Big Sister and *I'm A Big Brother* both by Joanna Cole are perfect for the older sibling to help express feelings in simple language with clear forthright photos that celebrate the arrival of a new baby in the family (\$5.95 Morrow)

Ginger by Charlotte Voake (\$16.99 Candlewick) tells of the jealousy caused by the new pouncy, energetic, demanding kitten that is brought home, much to the chagrin of Ginger, the old cat. The rivals come to a truce in the end, and it's a great easy to read title with humongously huge print.

The New Baby by Fred Rogers (\$6.99, Putnam) offers full color photos and comforting text by every preschooler's buddy who gives credence to all the feelings that swirl and twirl around such a momentous occasion.

A favorite old title, *Baby Sister for Frances* by Russell Hoban features Frances (the perennially four year old badger) whose nose is really out of joint about the new baby. At first, she is going to give the baby a welcome but she decides it's just better to run away to under the dining room table. There she "accidentally" overhears her mother and father talking about what a shame it is that Baby Gloria won't be able to benefit from the wisdom and insight and companionship of the Fabulously Older and Wiser Frances.

Baby Born by Anastasia Suen (\$6.95, Lee and Low) is a lift-the-flap celebration of new babies age birth to one from a uniquely multicultural perspective reminiscent of the old saying that a baby is God's opinion that the world should go on.

Perhaps the very best title for YOUR family is a homemade book using photos of the older sibling showing "Here you are when you were new. See, you didn't have teeth. Here you are when you were new. See, you couldn't sit up. Here you are when you were new. See, you couldn't walk" and so on. Making a homemade book provides a straight-from-the-heart text unique to your child. It only takes about twenty minutes to sit down and write a book like this. If you have to protect the photos, make sure every page fits inside a ziplock baggie and then staple the "book" together (be sure to tape over the staples so they don't hurt little fingers) Every book, like every child will be unique!

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