



## Consider...

### Maria and Esther

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**T**wenty-two year-old Maria lives with her husband and their two-year-old son, Javier. During this pregnancy, as with her first, Maria had fortnightly prenatal visits from a home visitor. During these visits, Maria had an opportunity to discuss her own health and to learn more about the developmental stage of the baby she was expecting. The home visitor encouraged her to attend the health unit regularly for prenatal assessments. With the arrival of the baby, the visits will become weekly and will focus on the health and well-being of the baby and attachment between the mother and child. The home visitor helped ease the parents' anxiety during the first few months of Javier's life. Her advice on nutrition, nurturing, and stimulation helped Maria feel much more confident in her parenting role. Now Javier benefits from his own home visitor, who drops by weekly to visit with Maria and discuss Javier's development. Both Maria and Javier look forward to the visits and the simple developmental toy or game that the home visitor will leave with them. The whole family looks forward to the community events that the community health team organizes, which include cultural activities, sports, arts, and crafts but, most importantly provide families with an opportunity to build friendships and support systems. Maria and her husband are excited to show-off their new daughter at the next community get-together. Despite the economic challenges in their lives, they feel confident that they can give her and Javier a joyful childhood and a positive future.

Esther and her husband welcome their new daughter, a sister for their two-year-old son, Nelson. Esther found this pregnancy more difficult than her first. Until recently, Esther was able to carry Nelson on her back for much of the day, but now he is constantly on the move. It was challenging and exhausting to care for a toddler while doing the daily household chores, maintaining their small garden, and making the daily walk for water. Esther knows the importance of staying healthy during pregnancy, but the nurse visits to her community are infrequent and often unscheduled. She was only able to connect with the nurse once in the past seven months. The nurse warned her to take better care of herself, to eat more nutritious food and get plenty of sleep or the baby's health could suffer. Now the baby has arrived early and is

underweight. Esther and her husband are anxious about her health and want to do what is best for her. Esther keeps the baby close to her in a wrap so that she can easily feed and comfort her. Nelson is having to grow up quickly, helping with simple chores and finding ways to amuse himself as his mother focuses on the new baby. Esther promises herself that when the baby is a little stronger, she and Nelson will make regular walks to the nearby village where she has extended family and friends.