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The Holding Place

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The Holding Place

Cover Page Footnote

Special acknowledgements to: The Minding the Baby Program at Yale School of Nursing/Yale Child Study Center and the courageous families who afforded us the privilege of walking beside them on their journey to parenthood.



Minding the Baby®
home visitation program

The Holding Place

As she sits on her couch in her tiny apartment, her hands tentatively cradle the stranger she is carrying inside.

We see her fear, her uncertainty about whether or not she can trust us with her story, her hopes and dreams.

She wonders how she will give her child different, better than what she had.

How will she love this baby if love itself is so very unfamiliar to her?

She looks at our outstretched arms with weary, cautious eyes.

They don't know me, she thinks. They don't understand.

They will judge me, she predicts. I do not look like them, or speak as they do.

They see I have so little, I am so young.

They won't think I can be a good enough mother.

We see her cast furtive glances between the two of us, one nurse, one social worker.

Saying that we have entered her home to offer support, information, and resources to be the best mom she can be.

Support??? She questions, or are they watching me to see if I'll mess up so they can take my baby?

Nurses care and teach but social workers take your kids.

She gives us a chance and lets us in.

Because she is lonely, because we are kind to her

And because no one else is kind.

Because no one else has asked her what it's like for her.
She allows us into her life at a most precious and fragile time.
We listen to her story, we answer her questions, we honor her feelings.
We show up week after week to be with her on this amazing, yet terrifying journey.
She shares her fears about giving birth and her dreams of holding her baby for the first time.
The nurse empowers her to prepare for the birth experience.
The social worker gives her words to express her best intentions as a mother.
The day of the birth arrives and this is indeed a birthday
For not only is a child born, but a girl is reborn a mother.
We visit her in the hospital to welcome her and her baby into this new phase of life.
Her eyes meet ours as we enter the room.
She is cradling her infant and after we wash our hands and approach to greet her,
She holds her baby, arms outstretched as an offering to each of us with complete trust.
"Do you want to hold him?" She says.
" I really did it!" She exclaims.
"We knew you could." We say, as we take turns holding this precious cargo.
Her child is gently handed back to her arms.
We sit on either side of her as she gazes lovingly into her sleeping newborn's tiny, wrinkled
face.
Arms outstretched....holding.