



# Black Woman and Child

THE PULSE OF PAN-AFRICAN PARENTING | FALL 2005

**The Sport of  
Child Development**

**Beyond Sacks and Muumuus**  
Dressing for your Plus-Size Pregnancy

**Best Birth Practices**

**When Discipline becomes Destructive**

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# greetings...

## Words of Appreciation

"Impressive. I like, I like! Keep up the good work." – **Nicole Stovell**, Southampton, Bermuda

"Thank you for your courage to put this together for sisters who are needing support and don't know where to start searching." – **Vicky Campbell**

"Thank you for having such a powerful site for women." – **Rakim**, Toronto, Ontario

"Hats off for the good work you are doing. I love the magazine; the images are awe inspiring." – **Afiya Madzimoyo**, Atlanta, Georgia

"What an awesome ezine. I was so excited to find it. Being a new mother myself and finding for the first time a magazine on mothering as a black woman is overwhelming." – **Rashida Taylor**

"I am a mother of two sons aged three and seven. Thanks for thinking of us Afrikans (one grounded in the Carribean but living in Canada) who still remember who we are." – **Jacqui Cornelius-Beckford**, Ottawa, Ontario

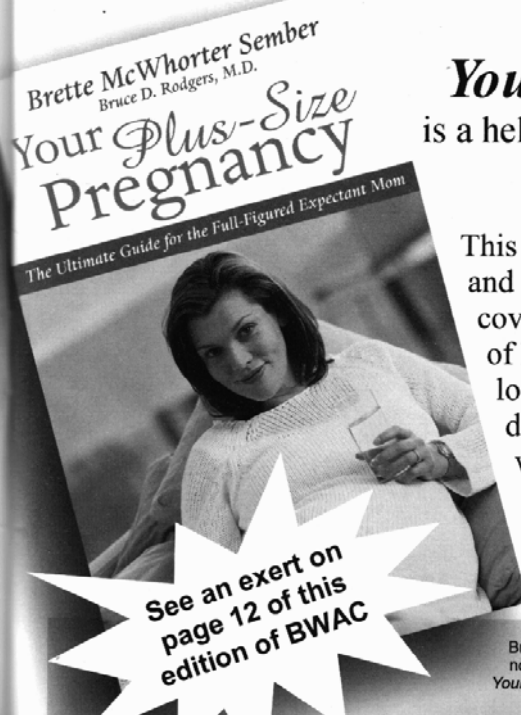
"Your magazine is really amazing – well over due also." – **Tahanee McKnight**, Gatineau, Quebec

"Finally, a magazine in Canada that is geared towards Black mothers, beautiful job! I would like to subscribe to the magazine.

I would like some new reading material. The only book I have have geared towards Black mothers is "Mama's Little Baby: A Black Womans Guide towards Pregnancy & Childbirth." Great book, but now I'm interested in checking out Black Woman and Child." – **Queen Cee**, Hamilton, Ontario

### We Need Your Feedback!

Send your comments to  
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Drive, Toronto, ON M1P 4P0  
or email [bwac@nubeing.com](mailto:bwac@nubeing.com)



## Your Plus-Size Pregnancy

is a helpful, friendly, and uplifting resource for plus-size pregnant women

This book is the ultimate guide for support and information for this vital market, covering such issues as minimizing the risk of health complications, feeling good and looking great at any weight, finding a doctor who is sensitive to the plus-size woman's needs, labor and delivery, breastfeeding and postpartum health, and, of course, finding great plus-size maternity clothes!

Brette Sember is a plus-sized mom of two, a former attorney and author of 20 non-fiction books, including *How to Parent With Your Ex: Working Together in Your Child's Best Interest* and *The Complete Adoption and Fertility Legal Guide*. For more information, visit [www.yourplussizepregnancy.com](http://www.yourplussizepregnancy.com)

**It's** one thing to feel good about your body and who you are, but it's another thing entirely to feel good about the clothes you're wearing and the way they make you look. Finding and buying maternity clothes can be a challenge for any woman, but the selection becomes even smaller when you are looking for plus sizes. It's almost as if most clothing designers think plus size women don't need (or maybe deserve?) maternity clothes. You absolutely do. When you're pregnant, your belly is going to get bigger, even if you don't gain a lot of weight, and many regular clothes are simply not cut for a pregnant belly. You *can* find maternity clothes that fit you and are flattering.



### **Clothes Make the Woman**

Let's face it. You're just not going to feel good about yourself if you spend your pregnancy in a giant t-shirt and sweat pants or in too tight maternity clothes that squeeze you in all the wrong places. If you wear clothes that look good and feel good, you're going to feel better about your body

and yourself. Maternity clothes aren't just sacks in which to hide yourself. They are clothes that help you show off your good features and make your growing tummy look beautiful.

Clothes are a way to express yourself and to project your self image. This shouldn't be put on hold because you're pregnant. Rita Farro, author of *Life is Not a Dress Size: Rita Farro's Guide to Attitude, Style and a New You*, says, "The key to dressing well during pregnancy is to be true to yourself. If before getting pregnant you liked yourself in turtlenecks, then you should still be wearing turtlenecks. If you hated scarves, you're still gonna hate them."

If you slump around in baggy loose clothes all the time, you'll never really see your changing shape or highlight your great legs or your gorgeous collarbone. If you wear pants that are tight in the butt or tops that pull under the shoulders you're going to feel cranky. Wearing unattractive or ill-fitting clothing is going to affect your self-image. If you dress like you're ashamed of your body or don't care about it, this attitude will soon become part of your mindset. But if you dress as if your body is important and you are a beautiful woman, you will soon believe you are (and other people will see that you are!).

### **Dressing for the In-Between Stage**

There will come a point in your pregnancy when your current clothes no longer fit, but maternity clothes just seem like huge tents. By the time you're in your second or third month of pregnancy, you may start to feel as if you need to do something about your wardrobe, but you have no idea what. It seems ridiculous to go out and buy clothes in a larger size that aren't going to fit

through the end of your pregnancy, and you can't imagine wearing giant maternity clothes yet.

There are some solutions for this no man's land. First, examine your current wardrobe. You probably have some loose sweaters and dresses that you can continue to use. Pants with elastic waists or spandex may also last you a while longer. This is also a good time to do a closet sweep. If it doesn't

fit now, it's not going to fit for at least a couple months after the baby comes, so you might as well get it out of sight and out of mind. Push things to the back of the closet or put it away in another room. You're not supposed to be able to fit into those things anymore – you're pregnant!

Think about ways to make other clothing last. Buy waist band expanders and bra extenders. Waist band expanders attach to the buttons on your skirts or pants and add a piece of elastic and some space so that you can continue wearing these items a while longer. There is also a new product called a Bella Band (which comes in plus size). This is a very wide elastic belt that will slip over the waistband of pants or skirts, holding them in place, even if you can't close them. Bra extenders attach to the hooks and eyes of your bras and add extra inches to the band of the bra.

You can find waistband expanders online [See *Mama's Market* on page 28]. They are also often available in maternity stores. Find Bella Band at [www.bellaband.com](http://www.bellaband.com). Bra extenders can be found at sewing stores or maternity stores.

Farro suggests moving into maternity clothes right away. "Enjoy a few weeks of people saying 'that top is way too big on you.'" Maternity clothes will definitely be comfortable at this stage of the game and you'll have a lot of fun trying out your new items.

### What Size to Buy

When buying maternity clothes, you should generally buy the same size you wore before your pregnancy. Practically speaking, this may not always work. Consider clothes up one size and down one size if you are having problems finding things that fit. Everyone's body changes in different ways and you might find your butt expands while your tummy doesn't go anywhere, or that your thighs have decided to be pregnant too. Pay special attention to the fit in the chest and hip area. These areas are likely to expand and if something just fits in

those areas now, you won't have room if your body changes. Manufacturers who make regular size clothing sometimes make the mistake of oversizing arm holes or length when they modify designs to make plus size items, so don't always assume the manufacturer will design properly. Remember also that manufacturers vary widely. What is an XL in one store might be a size 14 in another.

When you try on maternity clothes, it helps to use the store's baby pillow. This is a small pillow that is shaped to replicate how your belly will grow later in your pregnancy. If the store doesn't have one, pinch the top or pants right over your belly and pull it out to see how it will look with a baby growing underneath it, or stuff another balled up shirt underneath.

*continued on page 14*

## Speaking with author Brette Sember...

“I remember going to the mall with my mom when I was pregnant with my first child and trying something on at whatever maternity store we had there. I think I was a 1X at that point. The clothes in the store went up to XL and I tried something on and came out in it. My mom and I just died laughing because it didn't even fit me then, at about three months of pregnancy.

And that stupid little baby pillow they have in those stores didn't even come close to replicating the way my body changed during pregnancy! Please! I didn't just get a little bump on the front of me! I think I expanded in every direction possible – front, back, butt, boobs, hips, upper arms and even my feet got bigger!”

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*Plus-Size Pregnancy...continued from page 13*

## **Clothes That Are Flattering and Comfortable**

Not all maternity clothes are created equal. Some are clearly cut for thin women with basketball stomachs, while others are more flattering for plus size women. Pay careful attention to the material and how it feels against your skin. Your body is going to be rubbing against clothing in ways you never imagined. If something feels scratchy or unyielding now, it's sure to be something you won't want to wear again as you get bigger.

Pants that have exposed elastic on the waistbands can become uncomfortable as they elastic cuts into your tummy. You may also find that as your pregnancy progresses, you turn into a human furnace and only natural, breathable fibers will feel comfortable.

Remember that you don't have to hide your belly. Just look at all the photos of pregnant movie stars walking around with tight tops on or bare midriffs. Baby bumps are definitely in. But it's all a matter of individual taste and preference. If you're comfortable in it and think it looks good, wear it.

## **Where to Buy Maternity Clothes**

Most maternity stores do not carry true plus sizes. Many carry an XL size and some carry sizes 18 to 20 in limited amounts. Instead of dragging yourself around to all your local maternity stores, sit down with the phone book first and call and ask them what sizes they carry. And don't just ask if they carry plus sizes – ask them specifically to name the sizes they have in stock, in the store. Don't be surprised to find them stuffed on a rack at the back of the store either. When you go to the store, ask where the plus sizes are so you don't spend half an hour fruitlessly flipping through every rack only to find that most things end with a size L. Large retailers such as JCPenney, Kmart, Walmart, Sears, Target, Fashion Bug, and Motherhood Maternity frequently carry plus-size maternity clothes in their stores.



Remember to try consignment stores, but call them first to find out if they have any stock in your size in maternity clothes. The selection at these stores can be quite wide if you hit the right one. You may also be able to leave your name and number with the store and have them call you if they receive any stock in your size.

Shopping online is an excellent way to find plus-size maternity clothes, however the downside is that you can't try items on before purchasing. When shopping online, always check to see if the site has a size chart, so that you can get a sense of how their sizes run. The list below offers websites that carry plus-size maternity clothing.



#### **Plus Size Maternity Clothing Stores and Sites**

Fashion Bug – [www.fashionbug.com](http://www.fashionbug.com)

J.C. Penney – [www.jcpenney.com](http://www.jcpenney.com)  
J.C. Penney has plus sizes on their web site and also publishes a maternity catalog that includes plus sizes. If you have a store near you, you can have your order sent to the store and pick it up there, saving on shipping costs.

Motherhood Maternity – [www.motherhood.com](http://www.motherhood.com)

BB Maternity – [www.BBMaternity.com](http://www.BBMaternity.com)  
This site is a wholesaler, but includes a list of stores where you can find their clothes.

Due Maternity – [www.duematernity.com](http://www.duematernity.com)  
This company sells clothes online and also has boutiques in various areas.

#### **Plus Size Maternity Websites**

Plus Mom Maternity – [www.PlusMomMaternity.com](http://www.PlusMomMaternity.com)

Jake and Me – [www.jakeandme.com](http://www.jakeandme.com)

Baby Becoming – [www.babybecoming.com](http://www.babybecoming.com)

Maternity for Less – [www.maternity4less.com](http://www.maternity4less.com)

Pickles and Ice Cream – [www.plusmaternity.com](http://www.plusmaternity.com)

Maternity Mall – [www.imaternity.com](http://www.imaternity.com)

Moms to Be – [www.momstobefashions.com](http://www.momstobefashions.com) ([www.momstobefactoryoutlet.com](http://www.momstobefactoryoutlet.com) is their Canadian site)

QVC – [www.qvc.com](http://www.qvc.com)

Search for maternity on their site. They carry the Mommy & Co. label, which comes in plus sizes.

Maternity Clothing Fashions – [www.maternity-clothing-fashions.com](http://www.maternity-clothing-fashions.com)

Moms Maternity – [www.momsmaternity.com](http://www.momsmaternity.com)

Bloom 'N – [www.bloom-n.com](http://www.bloom-n.com)

This site carries maternity jeans and will also convert your own jeans to maternity for you.

Another good choice online is eBay. You may even be able to buy an entire wardrobe in one purchase. When using eBay, check the seller's rating, and types of payment accepted, and make sure you understand shipping costs before purchase. ■

From the book *Your Plus Size Pregnancy: The Ultimate Guide for the Full-Figured Expectant Mom* by Brette Sember. Copyright ©2005. Published by arrangement with Barricade Books, Inc. [www.barricadebooks.com](http://www.barricadebooks.com).

Photos provided by IGIGI - [www.igigi.com](http://www.igigi.com). See *Mama's Market* on page 28 for more shopping details.