Author Arlene Day with two young parents-to-be

CHILDBEARING PRACTICES IN THE APPALACHIAN CULTURE

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Arlene Day is a product of the culture she describes in this article. She was born at Cutshin Mission Clinic. She has lived all her life in Appalachia, and she is a graduate of the Frontier School of Midwifery and Family Nursing. Arlene has been associated with the Frontier Nursing Service since 1977. Among other things, she has served on the staff of the Hyden Clinic, and most recently she has been Family Nurse Instructor at the Frontier School. The following article is based on a paper she presented last May at a seminar entitled, “Appalachian Children: A Challenge for Health Care,” which was given under the sponsorship of the Continuing Nursing Education Appalachian Consortium at the Mountain Area Health Education Center in Asheville, North Carolina.

Each culture has its own health and illness belief systems. There are many rituals and behaviors that often surround both the process of birth and the process of death. For the most part these rituals and behaviors are harmless. They may provide a psycho-