

Baby on the way...

A new baby brings big changes... often ones you can't control. Even if it's not your first baby, new things may come up that you didn't expect or have forgotten how to handle since last time.

Here are some things you can do to prepare:

- Think back to how you were raised, will you do things the same or differently?
- Talk about things before baby arrives so you have time to think things through. Where will baby sleep? How will we manage the crying and the tiredness?
- Find out what you're entitled to – parental leave, family benefits or allowances.
- Try not to stress:
 - babies don't need lots of stuff.
 - you can borrow or get most of it second-hand.

Parent tip

"Don't be shy about asking visitors to help out – hang the washing out, cook a meal or take the other kids out for a while."



Preparing younger children

- Start talking about 'our' baby when your pregnancy is starting to show – nine months can be a long wait for little people.
- Show them their baby photos and talk about their birth, where it was and if Mum had to stay in hospital for a few days.
- Make any changes well before baby comes. Things like moving from cot to bed, or car seat to booster.

Preparing older children

When the new baby is born:

- Focus on the other kids when they first visit – maybe someone else could hold the new baby so Mum's arms are free for hugging.
- Help them to hold the new baby as soon as possible and take photos.
- If they want to, ask them to help, eg getting things ready for bath time, choosing baby's clothes. But don't push it or worry if they're not interested.
- Have something planned for them to do while your focus is on baby.
- Make time each day to read a book together or just cuddle and talk. If they're upset or angry, talk about their feelings. Be firm about always being gentle towards baby.
- Tell them stories about when they were born – show them photos.

Older kids might find it hard when a new baby arrives. With all the focus on the baby they might feel left out or ignored. You might see a change in their behaviour. They may be more clingy or grizzly, or test the boundaries more.

- Read books on babies together and answer questions honestly.
- Involve them in choosing things for the baby.
- Talk about how they will be able to help out and welcome baby to the family.

Parent tip

"It's important for them to feel a part of everything. They need to feel important and responsible."

