



Tips for introducing a new baby

Essentials for life's greatest delivery.

It's not easy for a child when it's time to change from "only child" to "big sister" or "big brother." He will have many concerns, some of which are quite valid. He may worry that his parents won't love him anymore, or not as much. He may worry that he won't get as much attention or be able to do the same things he's used to. He may be angry or fearful about hurting the baby, and may suddenly be given extra responsibilities or pushed to a new level of independence.

It will be totally dependent on the age of your child and you will know your child best and what is best suited to their personality but we've put together some tips that have worked for other parents.

Before the New Baby's Arrival

Begin discussing your pregnancy once it becomes evident to your child, or as soon as you feel comfortable. Waiting to discuss the baby's arrival with your older child often leads to increased jealousy.

Have a "baby talk:" Talk to your child about the baby, encouraging him or her to touch your stomach and ask questions. If you know the baby's gender and name, begin calling the baby by this name to help your child understand that the baby is growing inside you.

Get your older child involved: Involve your older child in preparing the baby's room. Allow your child to choose certain things for the nursery such as the room's color or a new toy for the baby. Make sure your child feels included in preparing for the baby.

When your first-born comes to visit you in the hospital after the baby is born, there is potential for the situation to overwhelm him or her. Help your child feel at ease by having a plan for making him or her continue to feel special.

Be hands-free at the hospital: When your older child arrives, have another person hold the newborn. With your hands free, you'll be able to greet your older child. Remember, your older child is there to visit you, and seeing you with the new baby right away could cause confusion and anger.

Focus on the older child first: After your older child spends time with you, then introduce him or her to the new baby.

Remind guests to visit with the older child: Ask friends and family to greet your older child first before lining up to see the newborn. Also, have them talk about how fortunate the newborn is to have your older child as a big brother or sister.



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Give a gift: Consider giving your older child a gift to celebrate the baby's birth. For example, hide a doll or toy car under the baby's blanket for your older child to find.

SIBLING PACK

When taking photos of the baby, also take some of the sibling and baby and sibling together.

At Home

Once you bring your newborn home, make efforts to be sensitive to your older child as he or she experiences and adapts to the changes in the family.

Ask for help: Encourage your older child to help you care for the new baby. Ask him or her to choose the baby's clothes or help you with diapers when needed.

Encourage interaction: Allow your older child to interact with the baby, playing with the baby's feet and hands instead of sensitive body parts such as the head. If your child is old enough, have him or her hold the baby while sitting down with adult supervision.

Share the love: Remember that just as you need to show affection to your newborn, your older child is in need of love as well. Remember to kiss and hug your older child often to confirm his or her important place in the family.

Allow older child activities: Remind your older child of the benefits of being a big brother or sister. Encourage your child to do "big boy" or "big girl" activities that the baby cannot do, such as riding a bike or playing with friends.

Dedicate special time: Spend special time with your older child without the baby. Have a friend or family member care for the newborn, while your older child chooses an activity for you to do together.

Ask grandparents or other close relatives to spend special time with the siblings-perhaps a special outing to the park, zoo or out to lunch.

Remember that all kids will respond differently. Some will take time to adjust to their new role and may react by trying to get your attention in negative ways while others will simply take it in their stride.