

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR YOUR NEW SIBLING

Preparing Kids

- After the baby arrives, much of the family's attention involves meeting the newborn's basic needs.
- This change can be hard for older siblings to handle. It's common for them to feel jealousy toward the newborn and to react to the upheaval by acting out.
- But parents can prepare kids for an addition to the family. Discussing the pregnancy in terms that make sense to kids, making some arrangements, and including kids in the care of the newborn can make things easier for everyone.

Bringing the New Baby Home

- Once the baby is home, you can help your other kids adjust to the changes. Include them as much as possible in the daily activities involving the baby so that they don't feel left out.
- Many kids want to help take care of a new baby. Though that "help" may mean that each task takes longer, it can give an older child a chance to interact with the baby in a positive way. Depending on their age, a big brother or sister may want to fold or fetch diapers, help push the carriage, talk to the baby, or help dress, bathe, or burp the baby.
- If your child expresses no interest in the baby, don't be alarmed and don't force it. It can take time.
- Some occasions, like breastfeeding, excludes older kids. For these times, try to have toys on hand so that you can feed the baby without being interrupted or worrying about an older child feeling left out.



- Try to take advantage of opportunities for one-on-one time with older kids. Spend time together while the baby is sleeping and, if possible, set aside time each day for older kids to get one parent's undivided attention. Knowing that there's special time exclusively for them may help reduce any resentment or anger about the new baby.
- Also remind relatives and friends that your older child might want to talk about something other than the new baby.

Dealing With Feelings

- With all of the changes that a new baby can bring, some older kids might struggle as they try to adjust.
- Encourage older kids to talk about their feelings about the new baby. If a child cannot articulate those feelings, don't be surprised if he or she tests limits or reverts to speaking in baby talk.
- If your child acts up, don't bend the rules, but understand what feelings may be motivating that behavior. It could be a sign that your child needs more one-on-one time with you, but make it clear that although his or her feelings are important, they have to be expressed in appropriate ways.

