

25 *Must-Know, Time Saving, Stress Reducing*

Secrets for New Dads

By

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Meet The Authors

Michael E. Farrell

My wife, Dawn, and I are the parents of three beautiful children, ages 9, 5 and 3. We've been married twelve years. In 1991 I graduated with a B.A. Degree in English with an emphasis in Secondary Education. I never became a teacher. Go figure. Instead, I became a professional in the information technology industry with experience in networking, data center operations and web site design and development.

In my 'spare time' I enjoy golf, computers, swimming, serving in my church and of course spending time with my family. I am also the owner, operator and Senior Editor of Fatherville.com. My dream is to raise three very smart children who will one day become rich and support me in a manner to which I've never been accustomed.

Michael F. Weber

My bio...what can I say? First and foremost, I'm a husband and a father. My wife, Kimberly, and I have two lovely daughters, Margaret and Abigail. My wife works long, hard hours, so I can have the opportunity to stay at home with the girls.

I also run a small e-commerce site called Daddy Designs (you can find it online at www.daddydesigns.com), where I provide gifts for new fathers. It's the home for Daddy's Survival Kit – the best gift around for any new or expectant fathers.

Before becoming a stay-at-home-dad, I was a TV News Producer. I would like to report that working in a crazy newsroom 10 to 12 hours a day is much easier, although less rewarding, than staying home with a two year old and an infant. To all the fathers and mothers out there remember this: Being a parent IS a full-time job. Respect each other and work together to provide the best environment for the most important blessing in your life.

About This Book

Like many fathers, I (Mike Farrell) found the challenge of being a new dad somewhat overwhelming and even daunting at first. There was so much to learn and I was having a difficult time finding useful information that worked in real world situations.

In November 2000, I decided to create the Fatherville.com website. The goal of the site was to provide an online resource for fathers. But I wanted it to be something other than pediatricians, child psychologists and other parenting authorities telling me what works best for raising my kids. There are plenty of sites already doing that. What I really desired was a site where other fathers, from many different walks of fatherhood, could share their own fathering stories. I wanted “in the trench” experiences from real dads. That’s a big reason why the Fatherville.com website was so important. I felt it was important for dads to see examples, share stories, and even relate their failures so that other dads might know how to proceed with their own fatherhood no matter where, on the journey of fatherhood, they found themselves.

When my firstborn son Jonathan arrived, I was excited and overjoyed with the miraculous event of childbirth. To be sure, the birth of each of my children has been exhilarating. But there’s something unique and awe inspiring about the arrival of your *first child*. When we arrived home from the hospital my wife and I felt an overwhelming almost frightening sense of deep responsibility. I remember, as a new father, feeling panic-stricken and suddenly inadequate for what lay ahead.

If you are feeling worried—don’t. It’s a natural part of the human experience. We often fear things which we have little or no control over. In short, it’s the fear of the unknown. In situations like the birth of a new child it definitely helps to lessen the anxiety if you know someone who has been there before. In my case, my mother and father-in-law were very helpful. If it were not for them volunteering to spend the first couple of weeks with us, I don’t know how we would have ever made it. Having someone there to assist you is highly recommended.

The purpose for this book is to offer you real-world, useful advice that will save you time and eliminate some of the frustrations that many new dads face. This book is laid out in 25 chapters. Each chapter relates a brief example from our (both authors) experiences as fathers and then concludes with the *secret* (a summary) that, when

applied will either save you time, reduce stress, or both. If you are brand new dad, believe me when I tell you that you will need all the help you can get.

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Introduction

Welcome to fatherhood! If you're reading this, the odds are good that you've recently become a new dad, or you're expecting to in the near future. Either way, you have already begun the biggest adventure of a lifetime. This adventure is unlike any camping, hiking, biking, mountain climbing, boating, skiing, golfing, scuba diving, parachuting, or hunting adventure you've ever experienced. It will be one of "the toughest jobs you'll ever love," and will present you with some of the most challenging tests you will ever face in your parenthood. Few things will push you to the limits like becoming a parent. Ideally you and your wife will work together as a team to raise your children. It will require more energy, focus, perseverance, love, and discipline, than you ever thought you had. But for all your efforts the rewards are great indeed.

If this is your first child, then you are about to experience a whole new world. I compare this "whole new world" experience to the very first time I ever went snorkeling in the ocean. When I put on the mask, snorkel and fins and began swimming, I suddenly realized a whole new world teeming with life, popping with color, and frenzied with energy. All this was occurring, on a daily basis, just below the surface of the water. It will be like that when you become a parent too. What's about to happen to you is happening to other new parents all around you everyday. You will suddenly realize how very different life is compared to your blissful couple-hood days. Those days are gone. I realize there are some of you reading this that may not have had the luxury of spending time together as a couple before your baby arrives. While this reality may be eye-opening and scary you nevertheless need to face the facts. You are about to start a new chapter in your life. Repeat after me, "I can do this." There, now doesn't that feel better? C'mon Dad—there's no looking back now.

There are many books and websites on fatherhood, and even a number of books on being a new dad. But there aren't many books that really boil it all down and encapsulate it like this one. Here, in this e-book, we will share with you 25 must-know, time-saving, stress-reducing secrets that every new dad should know as he begins his journey down the road of fatherhood. Most new dads start out knowing very little. Most of what we have learned has come through the trial of experience. In this book we aim to give you a head start. We've discovered these twenty-five secrets only through good old-fashioned, firsthand experience. Knowing these secrets will help make your journey just a little bit easier, a little less frustrating and, hopefully a lot more fulfilling.

We've talked with many dads, and what we've included in this book represents the general consensus of what a new dad *needs* to know to get started on this journey called fatherhood. So c'mon dad – let's enjoy the journey together.

Bringing Baby Home – Is This Weird—or What?

When we had our first child, everything from beginning to end seemed to progress normally right up until the point that he was delivered. But, as is often the case, deliveries are never ‘textbook.’ There often seems to be something that doesn’t go as planned. In our case our baby was being stubborn and wasn’t as anxious to see us as we were to see him. The obstetrician had to first use forceps to try to get him out and then, ultimately, a suction cup. I never dreamed of seeing my first born child coming out with a plunger stuck to his head. But that’s exactly how it happened. The little guy was stuck in the birth canal and he was not moving as quickly as the doctor would have liked so the doctor decided to suck the baby out by attaching a suction cup to the top of his head and pulling him out. Once he was out, his head was shaped like a cylindrical cone. I kid you not—my son was born with a ‘coned head.’ After about 4 to 6 hours his head slowly began to reshape to resemble something more like a normal human head. Twenty four hours later we were on our way home with a brand new, round-headed baby.

Depending on the circumstances of your baby’s birth, he or she may not come home from the hospital right away. For example, if your baby was born prematurely he or she may remain in the NICU (Neo Natal Intensive Care Unit) for several days or even weeks. While not planned, this is not unusual. In fact, I’ve known lots of dads whose new baby had to stay in the NICU for various reasons. Whether your baby comes home from the hospital right away, arrives later, or even if you have chosen to adopt, homecoming is usually among the top anticipated events surrounding your baby’s arrival. Of course, it may or may not turn out to be what you'd expected.

The most important item for the trip home is a proper car seat. Hopefully, you’ve already bought one. The hospital can rent one to you if, for whatever reason, you weren’t able to make arrangements. Every state requires them because it's one of the best ways to protect your baby. Make sure the seat is properly installed. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, **80 percent of all car seats are installed incorrectly.**

Even for a short trip, it's never safe for one of you to hold your baby in your arms while the other drives. Your baby could be pulled from your arms and thrown against the dashboard by a quick stop.

You may choose to have a friend or a parent meet you at the hospital and drive your vehicle while both of you sit next to your new bundled up package of love. I promise that your first trip home with your new baby will be surreal. You will spend much of your time just staring at your new baby. Nothing else matters at this moment. You are carrying precious cargo.

Don't be surprised if you have a wild mixture of feelings as you bring your baby home, especially if this is your first child. You'll likely be nervous. In fact, you may actually feel terrified as you realize that you've given up a certain amount of control over your life. You may also be surprised by some of the emotions you will experience. To use the words from a famous science fiction television series, "you've just crossed over into the twilight zone." Now everything else seems secondary. All the daily distractions like bills, phone calls, animals, television, and a myriad of other things now pale in comparison to this little child. Speaking of phone calls, if you have an answering machine or voice messaging now would be a good time to change your greeting message to give the vital statistics of your new arrival. You might want to announce:

"Our newest family member has arrived. His name is Jonathan Daniel; he was born May 9th at 4:00 a.m., and weighed 9 pounds, 1 ounce. The family is doing fine and we are adjusting to our new life. If you'd like us to call you back when it's convenient, please leave your name and number."

This is a great way to communicate with friends and family without having to actually answer the phone. Everyone who has ever experienced the birth of child will understand if you don't answer the phone.

When it comes to visitors don't be afraid to ask friends to give you and your spouse a few days before they come over. Once you do start accepting visitors it would be especially wise to ask anyone who's ill to wait until they're feeling well and are no longer contagious before they visit. It may seem strange at first but it's a good idea to ask visitors to wash their hands if you are going to allow them to hold your new baby. Your newborn baby's immune system is still fragile. The last thing you want is a sick baby shortly after arriving home. You've got too many other things to be concerned about.

SECRET!

Secret #1 – Recruit Help...You Are Going To Need It

You will make your life much easier if you will simply accept the fact that you need as much help as people are willing to offer. Set aside your manly, pioneering spirit. Accept offers from close friends who are willing to provide meals, clean the house, run errands, or even watch the baby for a few hours. Just remember that your job is to take care of and bond with your newborn. Your friends can help make that happen with a little less worry and effort on your part. If you are lucky enough to live near your parents take advantage of any help they are willing to offer.

The First Six Weeks: Baby Boot Camp for Parents

Your first six weeks with your new baby will be a true test for you. This newborn child will charm you and irritate you all at once, and a range of emotions unique only to this time and this experience will invade your life. For example, nothing will ever compare to the love that you will find for your child. You will find yourself always wanting to protect your children from everything that could possibly harm them, in a way that you have never before felt for most other people in your life. You will also suddenly realize that the life you led prior to your baby's arrival is now gone. That life, that only a few weeks ago existed, is no longer. The very first time the reality of these thoughts enter your mind something close to a panic attack may ensue. Crying is an acceptable behavior at this point. You'll get extra points if, while you are crying, you confess your newfound confusion to your wife. Yes, this is a time for reappraisal, a time for setting new priorities, a time for processing all the changes that are occurring in your life. Speaking of change you will also learn to change those rancid, foul-smelling diapers. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I'll explain more about diapers later.

One of the most important things you can do as a father in the first six weeks is to start forming routines. Most babies thrive on routine: They eat better, sleep better, and are more emotionally secure when they know that their needs are going to be met in a predictable way. But, as most new parents quickly discover, the routine a baby likes isn't necessarily the one you're trying to impose. In fact, you can count on your new baby's schedule not meshing with yours.

Much like starting a new job in the workplace, the first few months of parenthood are hard to organize.

Eating and Sleeping

For newborns, these two activities are inextricably linked, as most babies sleep a total of 16 to 18 hours a day. And because infants can hold only enough food in their stomachs to sustain them for a few hours, they'll awaken when they're hungry.

Unfortunately, your newborn will need to be fed on demand. Did you get that? *“On demand.”* He or she will not understand the concept of routine for a number of weeks. So it will help you as a father to understand this and not expect the baby to wait until feeding time. This will come later as you continue to build consistency into the daily routine.

Although it may not be possible to impose much consistency in those first hectic days, there are some steps you can take to foster an early sense of routine. For example, try to sit in the same place each time you rock your baby. When mom is feeding the baby it's also a good idea to nurse in the same location whenever possible. You'll also want to keep the area well-lit, day and night, to discourage your little one from dozing while feeding.

It has been my experience that starting some sort of sleep ritual for even the youngest infants—like feeding, changing, then singing a lullaby—helps babies understand that it's time to go to sleep. Arrange your activities according to your baby's natural tendencies. If the baby is soothed by a nice, warm bath, for instance, consider giving them one in the evening; on the other hand, if the water and splashing rev him up, switch bath time to earlier in the day. Above all, make sure that your baby is awake when you put him in his crib. This is how he learns to sleep on his own.

By the time your baby is four months old, he'll be able to hold more in his stomach and remain satisfied longer. He'll also be alert for longer periods, so you can attempt to initiate a more regular eating and sleeping schedule.

SECRET!

Secret # 2 – Build Regular Routines Into Your Babies Life

Your first six weeks with your new baby will be a true test for you. This newborn child will charm you and irritate you all at once, and a range of emotions unique only to this time and this experience will invade your life. One of the most important things you can do as a father in the first six weeks is to start forming routines. It has been my experience that starting some sort of sleep ritual for even the youngest infants—like feeding, changing, then singing a lullaby—helps babies understand that it's time to go to sleep.

Baby Proofing Your Home: Get Ready to Look at Life From the Ground Up

I cannot prepare you enough for what happens when your child starts crawling. It happens much sooner than you think, and when it does your home is no longer safe for your child. So there are a few things you should do before he or she starts crawling.

1. Start child-proofing before your kid learns to crawl. You will have more time to find all of the hazardous spots if you start early.
2. All of the things that you use to clean your house are extremely hazardous to your baby. Either lock them up or get rid of them. If you leave them in any cupboard or cabinet your child will find them. Put child-safety locks on every cupboard and cabinet.
3. Keep nothing under the sink but pots and pans. Yes, it's inconvenient, but your child may thank you some day for caring enough to remove the items that can be so tempting for them to explore.
4. As if you didn't need another reminder of your parenthood, now is the time to replace all your glassware with high quality plastic ware. Glass is attractive to children but very dangerous. Just plan on putting your nice glasses away for the next couple of years.
5. Want to know what your child sees? There's no better way to experience your baby's world than by crawling around the house on all fours to see where the hazards are. Go from room to room and examine things with an eye for curiosity. Ask yourself, 'If I were seeing this for the very first time would I want to pick it up and play with it.' That's what your baby will be thinking while he or she is exploring the house on all fours.
6. As your baby becomes a toddler the hazards will become different. You cannot childproof once and for all. Your infant cannot climb but your toddler can. He or she will literally scale every table, counter, and staircase in your home. So be prepared to completely block off the stairs. One of the best ways to do this is to buy a gate that will install at the top of the stairs and the landing. These gates will become a semi-permanent fixture in your home for the next three to four years.

7. If there is anything in your house that absolutely cannot be destroyed, make sure it is inaccessible or put it in storage for the duration. You've been warned.

SECRET!

Secret #3 – Start Early To Childproof Your Home

Want to know what your child sees? There's no better way to experience your baby's world than by crawling around the house on all fours to see where the hazards are. Go from room to room and examine things with an eye for curiosity. Ask yourself, 'If I were seeing this for the very first time would I want to pick it up and play with it.' That's what your baby will be thinking while he or she is exploring the house on all fours.

Me? Afraid? I'm Not Afraid.

Having a baby can be an emotional and practical upheaval for dads too... bringing changes to your life and your outlook that you may not have anticipated.

From the moment you learn of your partner's pregnancy, you're thrust into a strange new world and encouraged to participate in the pregnancy and birth process. Yet, you may feel awkward about sharing your fears and insecurities. That's only natural. Here are seven common fears faced by fathers-to-be:

Security Fears - The biggest fear men face is the one most deeply hardwired into our culture: Will I be able to protect and provide for my family? In most families, when the first child arrives there's this sudden if temporary shift from two incomes for two people to one income for three. And that's a tough burden to carry in today's world. The father has to be strong in ways he hadn't counted on before. He has to provide support not just financially but also emotionally: His wife will need his help, she'll be undergoing dramatic emotional shifts, and he has to be ready for her to lean on him.

Performance Fears - More than 80 percent of the fathers I've asked say they were worried that they wouldn't be able to perform when their wife was in labor. They were afraid of passing out, throwing up, or getting queasy in the presence of all those bodily fluids. Such fears may be based on cartoons and sitcoms and our culture's way of making fun of men, but two things became clear: The men all expected it — and it almost never happens.

If you really can't tolerate blood, step out of the delivery room. Don't ignore your fears — work through them. Talk to other fathers who've been there. Typically, the first thing fathers say when they come out of the delivery room is "The baby and my wife are fine; it's a girl." And the second thing they say is "I didn't get queasy — I came through it okay."

Paternity Fears - About half of new and expectant dads eventually come around to admitting they had fleeting thoughts that they weren't really the baby's father. But if you ask them whether they suspect that their wife had an affair, they're insulted and hurt. On a logical level, it's a disconnect, but on an emotional level something else is going on. Men often dwell on their own inadequacies: "It's too monumental, too godlike, being part of the creation of life. Someone bigger than me must have done it."

One dad I know, a friend of mine, has bright red hair, freckles, and a crooked smile. His baby had bright red hair, freckles, and a crooked smile. And he said with a straight face, "I wonder if my wife was unfaithful." But he went on: "It just seemed—I don't know—this was too good, too miraculous to happen to me."

Mortality Fears - When you're a part of the beginning of a life, you can't avoid thinking about the end of life. Thoughts about your own mortality can loom large: You're not the youngest generation anymore, your replacement has arrived, and if everything works out right, you'll die before your child dies. For a lot of young men who go around thinking they're immortal or invincible, that's a big change. As the reality of fatherhood slowly sinks in you begin to realize your own mortality. That realization prompts many fathers to dramatically change their life-style and reduce the risks they are used to taking. While this kind of reversal is not inevitable you are wise to consider the needs of your family first and foremost. In short, your life is no longer your own. It's not about you anymore.

Fear for your spouse's or child's health—Childbirth is such a nerve-racking experience. Scary things can happen to the person you love most in the whole world. You might lose the baby; you might lose your wife and have to bring the baby up alone. It really wasn't long ago that giving birth was fraught with danger: When my grandparents had children in the early 1920's, the main cause of death in women under 50 was childbirth. Even in the modern world today's medical technology if the birth goes well and the baby's fine, you'll still find most parents secretly counting the newborn's fingers and toes.

Relationship Fears - Men often fear that their wife will love the baby more than anyone on earth — and exclude them from that intimate relationship. It's a very real fear of being replaced. In so many households, after the birth Mom becomes the gatekeeper, giving her husband access to the baby only when she sees fit.

I recall being at a family outing at an amusement park where a mother was carrying a newborn and the dad went over to give the baby a kiss and she slapped his hand and said, "You'll wake him." The dad just crumpled and walked away. What he should have said was, "I'd like to hold our baby and if he wakes up I'll take care of it." He needs to make it clear that this is his child, too, and they're partners in raising him. He needs to spend time alone with his baby and send Mom out of the house occasionally. Otherwise, I can see him spending all his time away from the home

doing his own thing because there's no place for him in the house. Don't let this happen to you. If your spouse tends to be dominant discuss this possibility with them.

Each parent brings different strengths to the partnership. The child usually relies on the mother for security, comfort, and warmth. The child looks to the father for his sense of freedom and separation and sense of the world. Of course, those qualities can come from either parent, but when all these strengths work hand in hand, it's fabulous.

Fears of how women are wired—Men are not used to the ob-gyn establishment. It's foreign, it's cold, and it's something we don't understand well. Even as observers, many men feel embarrassed and inhibited around the gynecological exam room. Hospital examining rooms and delivery rooms are not made comfortable for a father. Men are usually fairly ignorant about a woman's reproductive system — it's what happens "down there." And so when men encounter all this for the first time, they get clobbered with it. Being prepared—making decisions together about the kind of care you want for your partner and baby—helps tremendously. Having a birth plan, with a set role for you, also helps to make clear what's ahead in the process.

SECRET!

Secret #4 – To Become a Better Dad Admit Your Fears

Having a baby can be an emotional and practical upheaval for dads too... bringing changes to your life and your outlook that you may not have anticipated.

From the moment you learn of your partner's pregnancy, you're thrust into a strange new world and encouraged to participate in the pregnancy and birth process. Yet, you may feel awkward about sharing your fears and insecurities. Your fears may include some or all of the following: security fears, performance fears, paternity fears, mortality fears, relationship fears, female plumbing fears. Most men share one or more of these fears during the process of becoming a father.

I'm a New Dad...Now What?

Interacting with your baby

For the first six to eight weeks of life, your baby probably won't give you much feedback about how you're doing as a father: few smiles, no laughs, not much response at all. In fact, just about all he'll do is cry. It's easy to take his "opinions" a little too seriously, to interpret his lack of enthusiasm as some kind of referendum on your fitness as a dad. Don't. If you back off, your baby will too. So hang in there a little longer — it'll be worth the wait.

Remember when you held your first baby in your arms and—probably not out loud—asked yourself, “Now what do I do?” You didn’t get an answer, did you?

Well, dad, I’m glad you’re seeking new insights and information to be the best dad you can be.

At work, a job description helps keep you on task for your company. Is there a “job description” for dads? It’s important for dads—of all ages—to think through issues, plan our strategy, and begin to put it into place.

Your job description for fatherhood probably should begin with expectations. You may sense certain expectations from our culture, from co-workers, from your parents or your in-laws. But a good place to start is with the expectations carried by you and your wife.

First, it’s vital that you recognize and understand your father’s impact on your life, because that’s where you first received messages about what a father does. None of our fathers were perfect, so it’s important for us to understand their shortcomings as well as carry forward their strengths.

Then, talk intentionally with your wife. She is an essential parenting partner, and like you, her expectations for you will be influenced by her father. If her dad was absent or abusive, she may find it difficult to trust you with the children. If her father was present but emotionally disconnected, she may not appreciate the unique assets you bring to the parenting team. If she had a close, loving relationship with him, she may have high expectations and you may feel pressure to live up to an unrealistic ideal.

Discuss all of those issues. Help her understand your ideas about fathering, and listen closely to her perspective. Ask her what she expects of you as a father. Get specific. Talk about daily caretaking duties, the amount of time spent with the kids, discipline, navigating work and family issues, moral and spiritual training, the priority of your marriage, and other values related to childrearing.

Once you've defined what is realistic to expect from yourself as a dad, I suggest verbalizing your commitment to that role. Define "father" as a verb, not a noun. Resolve to live out your commitment to your children day by day.

SECRET!

Secret #5 – Embrace Your New Found Fatherhood by Interacting with Your Baby

For the first six to eight weeks of life, your baby probably won't give you much feedback about how you're doing as a father: few smiles, no laughs, not much response at all. In fact, just about all he'll do is cry. It's easy to take his "opinions" a little too seriously, to interpret his lack of enthusiasm as some kind of referendum on your fitness as a dad. Don't. If you back off, your baby will too. So hang in there a little longer — it'll be worth the wait.

Will This Baby Ever Stop Crying? – Discovering Why Your Baby Is Crying

Each of our children had an extended crying period shortly after they arrived home. Your baby's first extended crying period at home will be painful for you to listen to. But remember: Young babies typically cry for one to five hours within a 24-hour period, and you can't always calm them. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. The crying usually decreases gradually after six weeks. Babies are amazingly resilient, and—although it seems impossible now—in a few months, it will be difficult to recall their seemingly endless crying episodes. But some crying is due to stomach gas and intestinal changes. When your baby has gas trapped in her stomach it can be very painful. But it's not always easy to determine exactly what is causing the pain.

Find the Source

Find the source of your baby's pain. When your baby is crying uncontrollably, there is always a good reason for it. You need to find the source of that pain quickly, and solve the problem.

Pinky Trick

If you are uncertain as to what the problem might be, offer your pinky to your baby to suck on. Place your pinky, nail down, into your babies mouth. (Just remember to clean your hands first.)

Drink

Since you will be unable to breast-feed your baby, reach for the bottle of formula you left in the freezer.

Rock-a-Bye-Baby

Your baby will love to be held and rocked. Combine this with gentle singing and you may be surprised at how quickly your baby will settle down.

Touch

Use a front-loading sling to comfort your baby. The warmth of your body and the beating of your heart combined will sooth your baby, and quite possibly allow them to lull into a gently sleep.

Try these ideas, too:

- Hold your baby in your arms. Keep his arms close to his body. Walk or rock the baby gently, while talking to him softly. Remember, (be gentle!) Shaking or bouncing too roughly can harm your baby, or even cause death.
- Sit and hold your baby face down with your hand under her tummy. Slowly rock your legs back and forth, or lift them gently up and down.
- Lie on your back and lay your baby on top of you with his tummy down. Massage or pat his back slowly and gently.
- Give your baby a warm bath, gently massaging her tummy with your hand, soap, or a soft cloth.
- Turn on a radio, vacuum cleaner, hair dryer, clothes dryer, or water faucet. Some babies are calmed by steady sounds and noises.
- Offer your baby a pacifier (again, remember to be gentle—you can injure the baby's mouth if you are too rough.)
- Take your baby for a ride. If you use a car, be sure to place baby in a safety seat.
- Place the baby in a wind-up swing; be sure that his neck is supported.

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Secret #6 –Learn To Speak Your Baby’s Language

Each of our children had an extended crying period shortly after they arrived home. Your baby's first extended crying period at home will be painful for you to listen to. But remember: Young babies typically cry for one to five hours within a 24-hour period, and you can't always calm them. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. The crying usually decreases gradually after six weeks. Babies are amazingly resilient, and —although it seems impossible now— in a few months, it will be difficult to recall their seemingly endless crying episodes. Your baby may be crying for any of the following reasons: cold, scared, wet, angry, frustrated, sick, hungry, tired, or surprised.

Will I Ever Sleep Again? — How to Survive on Only 4 Hours of Sleep per Night.

If you are like almost every other new father you are not alone in this question. It's a fair question to ask, especially after you've been up trying to soothe your screaming newborn.

I have good news. The screaming and crying will eventually subside and yes, you will eventually get some well-deserved rest. But, it may be a while. So here are a few tips to help you make it through those (short) nights.

1. Breast-feeding mothers need help. That's right; don't assume that because your wife is breast-feeding that you are "off the hook." If your wife is breast-feeding she will treasure you for taking the time to get up and bring your baby to her. It seems insignificant now. But at 3 a.m. in the morning it's a beautiful gesture.
2. Take shifts with your wife. Agree before you go to bed at night which of you will get up with the baby first. It might help to simply pick even and odd hours. For example, if the baby wakes up during the 11 pm, 1 am, 3 am, 5 am hours then you wake up with him or her. If it's during the 12 am, 2 am, 4 am, 6 am hours, then your wife will wake up with the baby. The point is to have a plan before you go to sleep at night. This will eliminate the anger and frustration of the moment when neither one of you wants to get up.
3. Learn the different ways your baby likes to be held. Some like to be held chest to chest. Others like to be cradled. And still others like to be seated facing away from you. Find the position that your baby feels most comfortable in; try soothing him or her in that position.
4. Don't be too proud or embarrassed to sing softly and even talk to your baby. The sound of your voice is very reassuring to your baby and it is part of the bonding process. Your baby will quickly learn to associate your voice with safety and security.
5. Gentle bouncing works sometimes. But be careful not to bounce baby too much, or you may upset your baby's tummy.

6. Pacifiers work too. Some babies find comfort in a pacifier. Others refuse to accept it, especially if your wife is breast-feeding.
7. Rocking your baby, either in a chair or in the bassinet, can also be a helpful means of easing your baby back to sleep.
8. Pacing the floor was very soothing to my daughter. In fact, she would transition from a "deathly scream" to silence if I put her chest to chest with her head on my shoulder and simply started pacing the room. While pacing the room you'll discover little nooks and crannies that you had never noticed before.
9. Placing a warm heating pad in your babies cradle before bed time can ease the transition when laying baby down for the first time at night. **NOTE:** The heating pad should *never* be left in the cradle when it is occupied.
10. A warm bath in a baby tub can also be a great way to soothe your baby before bedtime. It's important that you have a towel to wrap your baby in right away after the bath. This will eliminate him from getting cold.

These are all useful tools that will help you get your baby back to sleep a little quicker—and that's good for you. If you discover other ideas write me and let me know what works for you.

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Secret #7 – Plan Ahead and Communicate for a More Restful Sleep

The best way to get a more restful sleep is to plan ahead. You and your partner must learn to communicate what your expectations are. Design a plan that covers who is expected to get up and when. Then you must share your plan with your partner. If you both communicate about your expectations for the late evening and early morning hours the night will flow much more smoothly and you will not awaken with a feeling of guilt.

The Terrible Tooth (Uh, I mean Truth) About Teething.

When Does Teething Begin?

When a baby begins teething, there is no set pattern on when it will begin, how long it will take, and how painful it will be. For one baby, cutting a tooth might happen overnight without pain, while another child might have to go through a long, drawn out and painful experience. You may sometimes visibly see a rise or lump in the gum for several weeks, while sometimes there may be no visible clue at all until the tooth actually appears.

The process of teething often follows hereditary patterns, so if the mother and father teathed early or late, your baby may follow the same pattern. On average the first tooth comes in during the seventh month, although it can arrive as early as three months, as late as a year, or in rare cases, even earlier or later.

Which teeth come in first and how many will there be?

Your child will develop twenty primary (first) teeth. All of these primary teeth will fall out and be replaced with their secondary or adult teeth. When all is said and done the full adult mouth comes equipped on average with thirty-two permanent teeth. Most children have a full set of primary teeth by the time they are around two or three years old. These teeth usually last until about the age of six, when the teeth that were first to appear become loose and fall out as the second teeth begin to push through the gums. The primary teeth continue falling out until roughly the age of twelve. Again, these ages mentioned above are only averages and your child may follow an earlier or later pattern. The following is the most common pattern in which your baby's teeth will usually appear.

Age	Teeth	Position
6 to 7 months	Incisors	Two central bottom & Two central top teeth.
7 to 9 months	Two more incisors	Top & bottom; making four top & four bottom teeth in all.
10 to 14 months	First molars	Double teeth for chewing
15 to 18 months	Canines	The pointed teeth or "fangs"
2 to 3 years	Second molars	The second set of double teeth at the back

What are the symptoms of teething?

The symptoms of teething vary from child to child, and opinions as to exactly what these symptoms are, and how painful teething actually is, vary between physicians and between parents. Each of my three children had different teething symptoms and each one needed to be treated differently. What worked for one child had little or no effect on the other. The symptoms listed below are the most commonly accepted symptoms that parents and physicians believe a teething baby may experience. Most parents who have been through the experience of a teething baby will usually agree that some or all of the symptoms below happened at or near the time of teething.

Irritability: As the sharp little tooth rises closer to the surface, your baby's gums may become increasingly more sore and painful, leading to your baby being very fussy. The pain and discomfort is most often worse during the first teeth coming in and later when the molars come in because of their bigger size. This is most often the case, since babies become accustomed to the sensations of teething and learn to live with them. But you may find your baby to be fussy during the whole time that every tooth comes in. Every child reacts differently.

Drooling: From three to four months of age you may see your baby start drooling more often than normal. Teething stimulates drooling, which is often worse with some babies than others.

Coughing: The extra saliva can cause your baby to occasionally cough or gag. This is usually nothing to worry about as long as your baby seems fine and shows no signs of a cold or flu and does not run a high fever.

Chin rash: If your baby is a big drooler, the constant contact with saliva can cause the skin around the chin and mouth to become irritated. To help prevent this, gently wipe your baby's mouth and chin periodically throughout the day.

Biting & gnawing: A baby that is teething will gnaw and gum down on anything she or he can get their mouth around. The counter pressure from biting on something helps relieve the pressure from under the gums.

Cheek rubbing and ear pulling: Pain in the gums may travel to the ears and cheeks, particularly when the back molars begin coming in. This is why you may see your baby rubbing their cheeks or pulling at their ears. However, keep in mind that pulling at an ear can also be a sign of an ear infection.

Diarrhea: While some pediatricians disagree on this particular symptom most parents usually notice slightly looser bowel movements when a baby is teething. A recent study done by a children's hospital found diarrhea to be the most common symptom of teething. But many people disagree stating that it's the extra saliva swallowed, which then loosens the stool. Be sure and report any diarrhea to your doctor that lasts more than two bowel movements.

Low-grade fever: A fever is another symptom that doctors are sometimes hesitant to directly link with teething. But there are many parents who will disagree with this and find their baby gets a slight fever while teething. The best thing to do is be extra safe and notify your doctor if a fever lasts more than two days.

Not sleeping well: With teething pain happening during the day and night, you may find your child wakes more often at night when the pain gets bad enough. Most parents agree that the night waking happens more often during the first set of teeth and with the molars.

Cold-like symptoms (runny nose, etc.): Some parents find that their baby will show signs of having a cold. Runny noses, coughing and general cold symptoms are believed to come from the baby having its hands in its mouth more often. Play it safe and always notify your doctor if symptoms such as this occur.

How can I help my baby with the pain?

There are several things that you can try to help ease the pain of teething; some work and some don't, but most parents agree they're always worth a try. Teething rings, water-filled and chilled rubber teething toys and, moms and dads fingers can all provide counter pressure that can sometimes bring relief. Offering your baby a cold bottle of water can also help. If sucking on the bottle bothers your child, offer a cold cup of water. The water can also help replenish your baby's fluid if he or she is drooling a lot or has loose bowel movements.

Cold food has also been found to be helpful by some parents. Chilled applesauce, yogurt and pureed peaches may be more appealing to your baby and also more nutritious than a chilled teething ring.

When nothing else helps, you can also turn to Infant Tylenol. Before giving your child Infant Tylenol (acetaminophen) always check with your doctor first. Your doctor will tell you if it's all right and what the proper amount is to give your baby. Baby Orajel and other teething pain medicines that are applied to the gums can also

provide some relief. Some parents say the Baby Orajel type products work great, while other parents will say it doesn't. Also check with your doctor before giving this type of over-the-counter pain reliever to your baby.

The teething process will come and go just like so many other things with new babies. Keep trying different things until you find what provides the best relief for your child.

Note: Before trying any of the suggestions listed above or any other type of home remedy it is highly recommended that you contact your pediatrician first. You should follow your pediatrician's advice first before trying anything mentioned in this book or on any website. Your child's doctor knows what is best for your child.

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Secret #8 – Learn to Identify the Signs and Treat the Symptoms of Teething

When a baby begins teething, there is no set pattern on when it will begin, how long it will take, and how painful it will be. It will be a very trying time. Be patient. During this time your baby will be uncomfortable much of the time. Teething symptoms include: Irritability, drooling, coughing, chin rash, biting and gnawing, cheek rubbing and ear pulling, diarrhea, low-grade fever, cold like symptoms. There are several things that you can try to help ease the pain of teething; some work and some don't. Your job as a daddy is to identify the signs of teething and to understand the various ways to treat the symptoms of teething and to help make your baby as comfortable as possible.

Daddy, Look What I Can Do: 5 Things Your Baby Can and Will Do.

I must admit that when we brought our oldest daughter home, I didn't think of a baby as anything more than a blob that couldn't really do anything. I mean, she couldn't talk, walk, or play catch. She pretty much just pooped, ate, and cried.

However, as I began observing my daughter closely (as many fathers do), I began to notice some things she could do. For example, if I put my finger in her hand she would automatically grasp it tightly. If she was startled, she would throw her head back and kick out her arms and legs. I didn't really know that these *reflexes* were something a baby's naturally born with. I also didn't know it was something the pediatrician would check at the first check-up.

So, to help you new fathers out—who may think your baby's unable to do anything—I'm going to list and describe five of the natural reflexes babies are born with.

1. **Root Reflex** – This is when, if you gently stroke his cheek, your baby begins reaching for something with his mouth. The baby is “rooting” for a nipple to feed on. This reflex can be especially useful if you're trying to give your baby a bottle and he's having trouble finding it. Just stroke his cheek and he'll turn toward the stroke.
2. **Suck Reflex** – When something touches the roof of your baby's mouth, he will automatically begin sucking. This reflex helps the baby feed early on. The baby can use the suck reflex on his fingers or on a pacifier.
3. **Moro or Startle Reflex** – This reflex occurs when your baby is startled. He will throw his head back, kick out his arms and legs, cry and then pull his arms and legs back in. The baby's own cry can cause this reflex.
4. **Grasp Reflex** – Your baby will grasp at anything placed in his palm. This, to me, is one of the cutest of the reflexes. Nothing made me feel better than when my little girls would hold on tightly to my finger.

5. **Step Reflex** – If you hold your baby upright with his feet touching solid ground, he will appear to try and walk or dance. We used this reflex to train both of our daughters to walk. I'm not sure how well we did, though, neither of them started walking until well after their first birthdays.

But these reflexes are not all your baby can do. They can also begin using some of their five senses (and if you ask some parents, a sixth sense, too).

Just remember, each baby is unique and can do different things. As the father of a new baby, take time to learn and bond with your baby. Discover what your baby can do. Notice and celebrate new milestones in the baby's development.

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Secret #9 – Stay Engaged and Resist Boredom by Recording the Almost Daily Changes that Your Baby Makes.

Babies are born with a number of natural reflexes. Bond with your baby and learn some of the things he or she can do. Keep track of milestones. And remember, the little newborn that doesn't do much, will soon be a talking, walking three year old with her own unique personality.

Watch for the following growth changes in your baby:

1. Root Reflex
2. Suck Reflex
3. Moro or Startle Reflex
4. Grasp Reflex
5. Step Reflex

Don't Throw the Baby Out With the Bath Water: Tips for Good, Clean Bath Time Fun

At some point after bringing your new baby home he or she will need a bath. You will be so caught up in the rapture of your new little one that the thought of bathing will not frequent your mind. But, after a couple of weeks, it becomes evident that baby really does need to bathe. What's a dad to do? You'll probably feel apprehensive the first time you have to bathe your baby. You may have practiced it once or twice in the hospital, but once you get home, you're totally on your own. Here are some tips to help you through the first few baths.

When you first get your new baby home, you will be doing sponge baths until the umbilical cord stump dries up and falls off. This is because you don't want it to get wet, and a sponge bath allows you to wash around the cord without soaking it.

To give your baby a sponge bath you will need a couple of towels, one to spread out on a flat area such as a changing table top, bed or floor. The second one is to dry your baby. Having a soft, hooded baby bath towel works well here. You will also need a soft wash cloth, a warm bowl of water, baby soap and, if your newborn has a lot of hair, baby shampoo. Make sure the soap and shampoo are formulated specifically for babies. Do not use adult soaps and shampoos. They contain chemicals that can irritate the delicate skin of your baby and cause irritation and chemical burns of the eyes, should the soap product get into them.

To begin, lay your baby on the towel and dip the wash cloth into the warm water. Apply a small amount of soap to the cloth and gently bathe your child's body, making sure to wipe inside the crevices of the underarms and legs. Rinse off the soap. You may want to pat dry your baby at this point to protect him or her from getting chilled.

Take the wet wash cloth and gently lift your baby's head and wet it down. Apply a very small amount of shampoo and wash the hair. Rinse off the shampoo with the wet wash cloth, making sure to get out any residue. Gently dry your baby's head. That's really all there is to it. You don't need to wash your baby everyday. Once every 2-3 days is fine.

Once the umbilical cord stump falls off you can begin bathing your child in a baby tub. Partially fill the baby tub with warm water (be absolutely sure it isn't too hot!) Gently place your baby in the tub and support his or her head, neck and upper back with your hand and arm. Use the same technique above to wash your baby. Dry the baby off, put on a clean diaper and sleeper, and you're done. Soon, you'll be an old pro at this!

It really is a fun activity. Don't be afraid that you are going to hurt your baby. As long as the temperature is lukewarm your baby will usually enjoy this interaction. Make this a real bonding time for you as a daddy. Enjoy it.

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Secret #10 – Use Bath Time to Bond with Your Baby.

Bath time with your baby can be an incredible bonding experience. Many fathers relegate this activity to mom. Don't! This warm intimate time with your child can be very rewarding. Bathing your child promotes a healthy bond that will grow with time. One warning though: Always remember bathing is a brand new experience for your child. Always stay with your child when they are in or around water. If you are distracted by the phone or if someone shows up at the door, they can wait. Never leave your baby unattended. Always keep a hand on your baby to insure that whatever the position the child will not tip or roll over.

Time, Love and Tenderness: Providing Care for the New Mom

The first few weeks home are filled with readjustment, doubt, fear, lack of sleep and frustration, with intermittent moments of joy and relief when your baby goes to sleep. In the midst of all the chaos an extra effort to provide love and tenderness to your wife will pay-off in big ways.

Generally speaking the arrival home is far worse for mom; after all she is recovering from birth and perhaps a C-section, riding an emotional roller-coaster, trying to breastfeed a screaming infant she may believe she is starving, and has little experienced help but lots on uninformed advisors.

Life as she knew it has evaporated, her traditional support structure is gone, she feels trapped and is often physically attached, and under the best of circumstances, gets no more than a few hours rest. Exhausted and overwhelmed, due to her "maternal instinct," she is expected to also know and do all the baby needs. Talk about a setup!

Here are a few ways you can provide the time, show love, and demonstrate tenderness to your wife:

- Help out as often as possible. Even late at night or early in the morning when the baby is crying reach deep and find the strength to get up and handle the baby. Allowing your wife to sleep will do her good.
- As I've mentioned before it's important to coordinate lots of help. Obtain what you need from family, friends or neighbors, and make sure it is actually helpful.
- Tell her often that she is wonderful mom and she's doing great.
- Help her get some sleep, and try to get some yourself.
- Your mate may also think she's inherently supposed to know it all at the same time she is feeling staggered and lost. Reassure her that you are in it together and you will get through it together. Be positive, constructive, encouraging, and help build her confidence.
- Quickly learn to change diapers, burp and calm your crying baby by jumping in from the start. Show mom she can count on you.
- Keep a list of phone numbers of doctors, the hospital, helpful books, etc., and use them.

- Show her that you love her with a quick backrub. On occasion, when your child is calm, remind her of the miracle that she brought into your world.

Some new moms totally thrive, like they were born to be a mom. Some babies sleep through the night right off and rarely cry. If so, enjoy, but don't count on it. And be aware that "natural" moms and calm babies don't need as much from dad. Don't be left out.

Many a new dad underestimates the real value in taking special care of his wife as she is becoming a new mom. This is especially difficult when you're dog tired and perhaps taking heat for not being perfect. But down the road, when you look back, you will want to know you were up to it, and you will want her to know too. This is a perfect opportunity to earn brownie points with your wife.

It is often the little things that count the most. "Nice job, mom," when your baby goes to sleep on a tummy full from mom's breast. The impromptu backrub that feels good and leaves mom feeling loved and appreciated. The encouraging call home in the afternoon when your baby will tend to be fussy and mom frustrated.

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Secret #11 – Your Job as a Dad and Husband is to Provide Time, Love and Tenderness

The first few weeks home are filled with readjustment, doubt, fear, lack of sleep and frustration, with intermittent moments of joy and relief when your baby goes to sleep. In the midst of all the chaos an extra effort to provide love and tenderness to your wife will pay-off in big ways.

The Times They Are A Changin' and so Must You

The birth of a baby represents a tremendous change in a man's life. You are a daddy now. No longer are you responsible for just your own well-being, you're now responsible for another human being. And this responsibility starts from the moment the baby is born—completely dependant on its parents, all the way through childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood.

This responsibility means your life will change. But not to worry, embracing the change, understanding it, and looking forward instead of back can make the transition into fatherhood a wonderful experience.

One of the first changes I dealt with when my oldest was born was my loss of "freedom." Before our baby was born, I was used to doing whatever I wanted, when I wanted. Whether it meant taking off for a few days on a weekend vacation, hitting the golf course early in the morning, or just going out with some buddies after work, I was no longer in charge. I had to consider what my daughter and my wife needed before I could do anything.

This was tough for me. At times, I wondered why I gave up my old life. Maybe my wife and I should have waited to have children. All of these thoughts floated through my head in the first few months. But, soon I came to accept that being a father came with certain responsibilities. I had to get out of my "self" and put my family's needs before my own. Once I realized that, I began to understand a little about how my life had changed.

I started to embrace my sacrifice. This isn't to say that I dropped the hobbies I once enjoyed. Quite the contrary, I sacrificed when necessary, but I also made sure to take time for myself. I could still do some of these things, but I had to plan them around my family. If I want to go out with my friends, I tell my wife in advance. We plan for someone to watch the children or make sure I'm going at a time that's good for her. There's a fine line between sacrifice and being a martyr.

One of my biggest sacrifices came with the birth of our second daughter—the loss of my pick-up truck. I bought my pick-up truck right after I left high school and it had been with me ever since. It was truly the last link to my bachelor days. That truck

represented the last surviving vestige of my bachelor days. My wife wouldn't even drive it (it was standard transmission with no power steering).

After our first daughter was born, I was still able to drive my pick-up around. I bought her a car seat and stuck it on the passenger side. She loved my truck, too. She would get so excited when we went for a ride. Her car seat was up front and it gave her a completely different perspective. She could see me while I drove and the truck sat higher, giving her more scenery to look at out the window.

However, when my wife told me she was pregnant with our second daughter, I realized the truck was on its way out. There was no way I was going to be able to fit two car seats into the pick-up. And since my wife couldn't drive the truck, I realized that I wouldn't be able to go anywhere with the girls.

But I held on to my truck for the entire pregnancy. I pretended to look for new vehicles, but I didn't make any serious effort. I started reminiscing about all the adventures I had experienced in my pick-up truck. I was going to miss 'her', dents and all. Finally, a week after my second daughter was born my wife and I went to the car lot and traded her in for an SUV. As we drove away, I looked back at my truck and realized that I had finally crossed the threshold into fatherhood.

I know it sounds like a clichéd country music song title: "I Traded My Pickup Truck in for Fatherhood." But it was a very emotional time for me. Trading in the truck made me realize my carefree days were gone. I was now a father and a family man. The truck was the last link to my former life.

Making the leap to fatherhood also changed my life at my job. Balancing work and home became a big issue for me after I became a father. My chosen career was a big source of self-esteem and self-worth. I worked very hard, paying my dues through college and on the job. I was very proud of my accomplishments and didn't mind telling everyone about it. Because of that, working long hours was something that came naturally to me. It's a cut-throat world out there and, in order to keep my career on the fast track, I wanted to show that I was willing to do whatever it took. That was fine...before the baby was born. But, after the baby was born, I noticed a slight shift in my priorities. It wasn't fair to my wife if I worked twelve to fourteen hours a day while leaving her home with the baby. But, how could I get ahead if I didn't "burn the midnight oil?"

I jumped back into my work full throttle after our maternity leave. But when I agreed to come in early or stay late, I had a nagging feeling in my head. It just didn't feel right anymore. I felt like I needed to be somewhere else—at home, with my daughter and my wife. So, I slowly began to ease back on my work. I realized I had to find a good balance between my job and my family. So what if I was successful at work? Should I sacrifice my career for the sake of my family? I was afraid my supervisors and co-workers would see my new fatherhood as being a knock against me.

Nevertheless, I began to cut back. I still worked hard while I was there, but I learned to manage my work day much more efficiently so it wasn't necessary to work the long hours. I made it my goal to get my work done in the eight hours I was there. I also talked with my boss about balancing my work and family. To my surprise, he was very supportive and respectful of what I wanted to do. He told me that if I didn't take care of my family first, I wouldn't be much use at the job. And he was right! He also encouraged me to go home and spend time with my family during my evening lunch break. That hour became a family tradition. My daughter would look forward to daddy's lunch break and wait by the door for me to come home. And I learned that making fatherhood a higher priority actually helped me in my career. I was promoted and given a raise. Nobody held my role as a father against me.

Transitioning to fatherhood is a tough, yet rewarding experience. It doesn't happen overnight. I didn't wake up one morning and sweep aside my entire life to focus entirely on fatherhood. It was a learning process baby, step by baby step. The important thing for me was to be aware of my shortcomings and make a change in life's priorities. But I needed help on the road to self-awareness. I listened to my wife, my parents, and others in the support system I had built up throughout my life.

No man is a rock, and no man can go it alone. I had to learn not only to ask for advice and feedback, but also to listen to those around me. I was a first-time father who didn't have a clue to what being a father was about and, thankfully, there were people around to help and support me as I learned and am still learning.

Becoming a father doesn't mean everything is going to change completely. I can still do the things I used to do, but I have to be a little more creative and take into account my responsibilities as a father. I can't promise to take my daughter to the park on Saturday and then abandon her when my friends call to play a round of golf. I can, however, plan a round of golf a few days in advance and still have a good time.

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Secret #12 – Your Life Will Change Significantly—Prepare For It

- Recognize that fatherhood is going to change your life, dramatically.
- Understand that changing your priorities will make the first few months and years a positive experience for your entire family.
- Set aside time for yourself. With good planning you can still enjoy many of the same activities you did before you were a father.
- Create a balance between work and family. Your new career is as a father to a beautiful baby, embrace that.
- The first few years as a father is something you can never replace, make sure you embrace that time and create warm, loving memories for your entire family.

Getting Down and Dirty with Those Diapers

As a new dad you will be required to change diapers. There is no escaping this necessary evil, so don't even try. The most important thing to remember when changing your baby's diaper is to have plenty of wipes on hand. Your new born baby's diaper will not be very messy the first few weeks. Enjoy this period while it last. The "stink" and the "volume" will come soon enough.

Make diaper changing more comfortable for you and your baby by being prepared with the basics, including:

- **Diapers.** Be sure to stock an adequate supply of diapers — infant-sized at first, and larger sizes as your child grows.
- **Premoistened diaper wipes.** Although a moistened towel also works, it's tough to top the convenience of premoistened diaper wipes.
- **Diaper pail.** Store shelves are stocked with various types of diaper pails, each with its own claims — among them, odorless, convenient and sanitary. An ideal pail meets all three requirements.
- **Baby lotion and powder.** It's not necessary to use lotion or powder at every diaper change, but they may come in handy if your baby develops diaper rash.
- **Baby wipes warmer.** Baby wipes warmers do just what you think they do — warm up the wipes to a temperature that's more comfortable for your baby.
- **Changing table.** Choose a table with a wide, sturdy base that has compartments for storing diaper-changing supplies. Be sure to use the safety belt whenever your child is on the table.

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Secret #13 – Just Doo It!—Learn to Change Those Diapers

As a new dad you will be required to change diapers. There is no escaping this necessary evil, so don't even try. The most important thing to remember when changing your baby's diaper is to have plenty of wipes on hand. Your new born baby's diaper will not be very messy the first few weeks. Enjoy this period while it last. The "stink" and the "volume" will come soon enough.

A Fathers Guide to Breast-feeding

There are so many more good reasons to support breast-feeding than there are bad ones. That being said, breast-feeding doesn't work out for every family. When my wife and I had our first baby we had a nurse who showed my wife exactly how to get our baby to latch on to her breast. Once your wife become comfortable with this process it makes regular feeding much more enjoyable. Here are some good reasons to breast-feed:

- Breast-feeding requires no preparation, no heating, no bottles or dishes you have to wash.
- It's free—and formula isn't cheap.
- Breast milk never runs out and you never have to deal with leftovers.
- Breast-feeding is good for your partner, giving her a chance to bond with the baby.
- Breast-feeding is good for your baby. Breast milk contains the perfect blend of nutrients. Breast-fed babies have a much lower tendency than formula-fed babies do to develop food allergies and respiratory and gastrointestinal illnesses, and they are less likely to become obese as adults. Breast milk also transmits the mother's immunity to certain diseases.
- Breast-fed babies' diapers don't smell as bad. Breast-fed babies produce bowel movements that smell almost sweet, especially when compared to the poop produced by formula-fed babies.

After the baby comes, though, a lot of new fathers have a change of heart about the benefits of breast-feeding. It's not that they don't support it—they still think it's the best thing for everyone concerned. It's just that the whole thing can make them feel left out.

Coping with feelings of inadequacy

I have to be honest about the whole breast-feeding topic. It is inevitable that exclusive breast-feeding will result in a different relationship between mother and baby than the one you would have got if the feeding was shared. So, don't be surprised if you are feeling or felt some or all of the following:

- Worry that you'll have a harder time bonding and developing a relationship with your child.

- A sense of inadequacy, thinking that nothing you do for your child could ever compete with your partner's breasts.
- Resentment towards the baby who has "come between" you and your partner.
- Relief when the baby is weaned because you'll finally have a chance to catch up.
- A belief that because women can breast-feed, they somehow possess knowledge and skills that make them naturally better parents (while men just aren't cut out for the job).

Six Ways for Dad to Participate in Feeding

Studies of new and expectant parents show that they consider feeding to be the most important aspect of caring for an infant. And there's no doubt that if your partner is breast-feeding, you're at a bit of a disadvantage in that respect. But just because she's got control of her breasts and the food that's in them doesn't mean you have no part to play. You can get involved in the process in a number of ways and help make breast-feeding as pleasant an experience as possible for everyone:

1. Spend plenty of private time with your baby doing activities that involve skin-to-skin contact. Changing diapers, cuddling, putting the baby to sleep, bathing, and even just reading in a chair while the baby naps on your shirtless chest are all great relationship builders. They give you and the baby a chance to be alone together, and the more this happens, the more confident you will feel about your own abilities as a parent.
2. Spend plenty of time just being with your baby. Take him for walks in the stroller, put him in a sling and go shopping, or do whatever you can think of to be together.
3. Be supportive and thoughtful towards your partner. Take responsibility for chores that normally fall to her. Breast-feeding can be hard work at first. The current thinking among pediatricians is that women should try to breast-feed for at least a year. Interestingly, studies have shown that the more supportive their partners, the longer women breast-feed and the more confident they feel about their ability to do so.
4. Discuss with your partner the possibility of giving your baby expressed breast milk from a bottle. But don't put pressure on her, as some women find expressing breastmilk (manually or with a pump) uncomfortable or even painful. If you both decide that this is a good idea, it is important to wait a few

- weeks before introducing a bottle so your baby will have a chance to get completely comfortable with feeding at the breast rather than experiencing nipple confusion.
5. Try not to take it personally if your baby seems less than interested in taking a bottle from you at first. Teats on bottles come in all shapes, sizes and textures, so you may have to do a little experimenting and be very patient before you and your baby discover the kind he likes best.
 6. Be patient if your partner seems less interested in sex than in pre-baby days. Imagine that someone has been crawling all over you and sucking on your breasts five or six times a day for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time. You might be less than enthusiastic about sharing your body yet again at the end of the day. Your partner's breast-feeding may affect intercourse as well. Lactating women produce fewer of the ovarian hormones responsible for producing vaginal lubrication. Without that lubrication, lovemaking can be uncomfortable or even painful. So instead of thinking that your partner isn't aroused by you any more, stock up on a good water-based lubricant for when she is interested in sex.

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Secret #14 – Learn How To Support Your Wife By Encouraging the Process of Breast-Feeding.

There are so many more good reasons that support breast-feeding than there are bad ones. Once your wife become comfortable with this process it makes regular feeding much more enjoyable. That being said, breast-feeding doesn't work out for every family. (Personal note: If, for some reason, breast-feeding doesn't work out for you and your spouse don't fret the matter. When my wife and I had our first baby we nursed for all of about 9 weeks and my wife quit because of the pain she was experiencing. When this happens that's when you become a more integral part of the feeding team.)

Hey! What's Happening to US? The Effects of Your New Baby on Your Marriage

My wife and I had been married three years before we had our first child. Those three years were great for really getting to know each other better and doing some of the fun things that couples can do without being tied down to the responsibility that a baby can bring. To be honest, I felt like a king, we were so focused on one another.

When your baby comes along it can often be a celebratory experience for couples, but it can also be a strenuous time. Your new child will alter the dynamics of your relationship, which can lead to stress, pressure, and negative patterns if not handled properly.

The first thing to do is to discuss caretaking, which should be shared. Even if one spouse stays home, he or she should not assume all baby-related responsibilities. If he's not there to change seven diapers during the day, he should change one a night. To adequately bond with the baby both partners should share in these pleasant and not-so-pleasant child-rearing tasks. If one partner changes the diaper better or quicker or feeds the baby more carefully, he or she must let the other develop similar skills.

In addition to discussing and implementing shared caretaking, couples must master shared decision-making. For example, both parties should mutually decide on a pediatrician. Likewise, business trips and major professional decisions should be discussed. Lastly, couples must allot time to nurture their relationship. It doesn't have to be a week-long vacation, just something you can count on—an evening walk with the baby, or a regular date night.

Triggers that lead to quarrels

Moms do too much. Period. In most families, Mom still orchestrates family life and Dad helps out. Even though today's fathers are much more involved with their kids and the housework than their own fathers were, mothers carry around an endless to-do list—from buying birthday presents to making play dates to signing permission slips. Most dads have no idea how many details their wives deal with. Do you want a little perspective? Try making a list of everything you do in an average day. Now have your wife do the same and show your lists to each other. You may be surprised by the number of things that mom is doing on a daily basis to keep the home running smoothly.

Unfortunately, when a man does share more of the responsibility, it's often hard for his wife to let him take charge. The biggest gripe most dads have is that their wives criticize them, pointing out that a task is not done quickly enough or is done too quickly, or that the kids weren't fed right or dressed appropriately. But it's tough for a mother to stop being controlling because our society still blames her if her child is late for school or dressed improperly.

The result of this situation, however, is that Mom feels frustrated because she's swamped and Dad is angry because his wife makes him feel like he's never doing a good enough job. That leads to resentment, a lack of intimacy, and disagreements over minor issues.

You can help to lighten the load

One of the main reasons why dads still tend to be less involved with child care—and one they rarely own up to—is that they think it's boring. Of course, most moms would be quick to admit that there are plenty of times when they'd rather be reading a book than driving their kids to soccer or putting them to bed. But it's during such "boring" moments that kids are likely to talk about what's happening in their lives. That's what keeps moms motivated—they know in their gut that they're getting something back from their kids. When you are part of the daily routines, your kids will look to you as well as Mom when they need comfort or advice.

SECRET!

Secret #15 – Prepare For the Changes That Absolutely Will Occur in Your Relationship When You Bring Your New Baby Home

When your baby comes along it can often be a celebratory experience for couples, but it can also be a strenuous time. Your new child will alter the dynamics of your relationship, which can lead to stress, pressure, and negative patterns if not handled properly. As a couple you must allot time to nurture their relationship. It doesn't have to be a week-long vacation, just something you can count on—an evening walk with the baby, or a regular date night.

How Can I Bond With My Baby If I'm at Work All Day?

Mothers, generally speaking, seem to bond better with the new-born baby than the Dad does. It makes sense, mothers spend more time with their new born babies, they feed them, change diapers and often are the ones who will sit and rock them to sleep. It is up to the new father to make ways which allow them to bond with their newborn. But what can you as the new father do when you spend so much time away from home? Here are a few ideas you can try:

Wife Not Breast-feeding?

When we had our first child my wife struggled with breast-feeding. As hard as she tried it just didn't seem natural and at times become very uncomfortable. After six months we switched to bottle and breast-feeding. Eventually we bottle-fed entirely. If your wife isn't breast-feeding your baby, it would be a good idea to help with the feeding. When you are feeding a baby, they tend to bond with the person who is feeding them for a number of reasons, but it is a time when just the two of you can sit and focus into each others eyes, and get used to each other.

Eye Contact

Try having a staring competition with your baby. Because a baby can only focus on objects that are close to them, sitting and staring into each others eyes will help him/her become used to your face and voice. You will find that she will start to respond to the little things you do, like smile or laugh.

Bathing Together

A baby may feel a whole lot more secure when someone is in the bath with them, and if you are offering that security, it will only strengthen your bond with him/her.

Read Together

When babies are young they love to hear the sound of your voice. So it is a good idea to read to them, it doesn't even need a story book. Weather it is your favorite book or the sports page, it doesn't matter, as long as you are reading it out aloud in a soothing voice it will keep your baby entertained for hours on end.

Diaper Change

Many fathers hate to change a diaper at first, but this is the best time for some serious bonding. When you change a diaper you get to talk to the baby as well as have physical contact with him/her.

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Secret #16 – Learn to Bond with Your Baby by Doing the Little Things

It is up to the new father to make ways which allow them to bond with their newborn. There are several methods which can be used to promote bonding including: Changing the diaper, reading together, bathing together, making eye contact, singing and rocking together and feeding the baby.

New Baby – New Expenses

Having a baby can be a joyous occasions. It can also be really expensive. Items such as diapers, formula, clothing, and furniture can add up. Here are some easy steps that you can take in order to save money on your new bundle of joy:

Feedings

If possible I would encourage you to encourage your wife to breast-feed your baby. (Note: Breastfeeding doesn't work for everyone. Never let anyone guilt you into breastfeeding your baby. There are other viable alternatives to breastfeeding—though none of them are as healthy.) Having said that breastfeeding is free and best of all, convenient. It's recommended as being the best form of nutrition for your baby. If she does not want to breast-feed have her join a baby club such as 'Welcome Addition' by Similac. They give you a free case of milk and discount coupons regularly.

Diapers

You can save a bundle if you use cloth diapers instead of disposable diapers. As with breast-feeding, there's a little more work involved, but it can be worth it. If you'd rather go with the disposable diapers, opt for the store brand. Some of the store brand disposable diapers can be just as good as the name brand. Even better, they are normally around \$10 less than their name brand counterparts.

Clothing

There is no need to buy expensive designer clothing for your little one. With spit-ups, toileting accidents, and everyday play, these items will most likely be ruined. Focus on purchasing good quality clothing, something that will not shrink or fade excessively. Don't think about purchasing shoes until your baby begins to show interest in walking. Accepting gently used clothing from friends and relatives can be helpful. If that option isn't available to you, try shopping at consignment shops. They usually carry gently worn children's clothing at reasonable prices.

Furniture and Accessories

A lot of things that are advertised for babies as a "must-have" are unnecessary. The only furniture and accessories required for your baby are the crib and car seat. Other items—such as a dresser, changing table, and high chair—are acceptable additions. Anything else, put it on your baby gift registry list or borrow it from a friend or relative. Don't waste money on something that may or may not ever be used.

Toys

Buy toys that will help with your baby's development. Prefer toys that are durable and age appropriate.

Test your child's response to the toy before buying it. Don't buy things that *you* like, but what *they* like. Check out consignment stores for great bargains on pre-owned toys.

The key to saving money on your new baby is to provide him or her with their basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, and love. If you stick to that, then your child could not ask for anything more.

SECRET!

Secret #17 – To Save Money Consider Only the Bare Essentials for Your Baby

The key to saving money on your new baby is to provide him or her with their basic needs: food, clothing, shelter, and love. If you stick to that, then your child could not ask for anything more. You will be wise to discuss baby related financial expectations with your spouse. New babies don't care what you buy them. Only that you take good care of them.

100 Cans of Formula on the Wall: The Lowdown on Bottle Feeding Your Baby

Before the birth of your baby, you and your wife will need to decide whether you will breast- or bottle feed. Bottle feeding can be a very convenient and rewarding method of feeding your baby. Like breast-feeding, bottle feeding has advantages and disadvantages. Formula has to be purchased (and believe me, the cans of formula can add up fast!) The preparation takes time, too. On the other hand, while you are breast-feeding it's much more difficult to leave your baby with another caretaker. The breast milk has to be pumped and put into bottles. It's free though and free is good.. You and your wife will need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages to decide which method is right for you.

If formula feeding is the choice you and your wife have made for your baby, there are several types and brands on the market. After the birth of your baby, your pediatrician will recommend the formulas that will best fill your baby's nutritional needs. Powdered formula that you measure and mix with water is generally the most reasonable in price. Ready to feed formulas are also available and are very convenient, but they are more expensive. Powdered formulas and liquid formulas are equally nutritious, and your baby will do fine on whichever you decide to use.

Bottles with plastic liners are convenient and easy to use. They are pre-sterilized and disposable. Once you choose the type of bottle and nipple you will be feeding your baby with, it's best not to change to another type. Your baby will become comfortable with a certain shaped nipple and will not readily accept a different one.

It is recommended that you sterilize the nipples by boiling them several times before the first use. This will remove anything that may be harmful to your baby. It is also important to wash all of the bottle parts in hot soapy water before each use. Many dishwashers have a high temperature setting that will effectively kill any germs.

Bottled water is not necessary unless your water is not safe to drink. If your water is safe for you, then it's fine for your baby. If you are unsure about the quality of your water, there are water filtering systems available that will remove most impurities and harmful chemicals.

Your baby will require about six daily feedings, and will generally not drink more than three ounces at each feeding. Filling each bottle to the four-ounce mark will be sufficient. Setting the bottle in a pan of hot water will bring it to room temperature. It is not necessary for the formula to be any warmer than this. Never heat the bottle in a microwave or in a pan of water with a flame under it. It can become too warm and also have hot spots that could burn your baby. Any formula left in the bottle after feeding should be disposed of. Your baby will let you know when he is full.

The decision to breast or bottle-feed is up to you. Don't let other people make you feel guilty about your choice. Your baby will grow and thrive whether breast-fed or bottle-fed.

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Secret #18 – Bottle or Breast? Decide Now, Before Your Baby is Born to Prevent Frustration Later

Before the birth of your baby, you and your wife will need to decide whether you will breast- or bottle feed. Bottle feeding can be a very convenient and rewarding method of feeding your baby. Like breast-feeding, bottle feeding has advantages and disadvantages. Formula has to be purchased (and believe me, the cans of formula can add up fast!) The preparation takes time, too. On the other hand, while you are breast-feeding it's much more difficult to leave your baby with another caretaker. Carefully think through this decision and then give it a fair shake. Many couples are guilted into breastfeeding but it's not right for everyone.

Who's Got the Baby Blues—Me or You?

Two weeks after we brought our first daughter home from the hospital, the “Baby Blues” hit my wife. I came home from work at my usual time and my wife was lying on the couch crying uncontrollably. I asked her what was wrong, but she only cried harder. I tried putting my arm around her and she pushed me away. What was going on? Everything had been so happy up to then.

The problem was that I didn't get it. I had trouble empathizing with my wife about her blues. I thought the mood swings would be over once the baby was born. I was totally unprepared for my wife's blues. My attitude was that she should “suck it up.” Unfortunately, this caused tension between the two of us and taught me that maybe there is more to this baby blues than I understood.

According to some estimates, as many as 90% of new mothers get the baby blues. Much of these feelings can be attributed to a drop in hormone level after the baby is born. But the hormones are only part of the story. Adoptive mothers have reported feeling the blues and new fathers have also reported the blues.

The change in lifestyle that comes along with the new baby can also be a big part of the blues. When a new baby is around, the family dynamics are completely changed. For a first time parent, the new baby represents a complete change. New mothers and fathers are responsible for more than just themselves.

The new mother could also be mourning her pregnancy. Whether her pregnancy was difficult or not, many new mothers miss the feeling of having the baby inside their belly. They can also miss the anticipation of the baby's birth and the attention that pregnancy can bring them.

Another big factor in baby blues is sleep deprivation. The new baby commands attention every couple of hours and its hard for parents to get a good night's sleep. Anyone who is exhausted will experience stronger mood swings and tougher feelings.

So, what can you, as a new father, do to help your wife with the blues?

Here are some suggestions for you to help your partner deal with the “Baby Blues”:

Empathy – Show love and compassion, not anger or impatience. Surprise her with your thoughtfulness. Do something that is special for her and can make her feel more adequate. Even if it is just something simple like buying flowers or giving her a few

uninterrupted moments to herself. You can even try to set up alone time for the two of you. Try to rekindle some of the romance that may have disappeared since the baby was born.

Don't Judge – It can be easy to give your partner the “suck it up” attitude, but resist it and realize these blues are nothing that your partner can control. Reassure your partner that she's a good mother and a great woman. Don't criticize your partner on her housework, her appearance, or anything else. Understand that having a new baby in the home is a big transition and it will take you and your partner time to get into a routine.

Be Available – Become more active in taking care of the baby. Take the initiative if the baby cries at night or needs a diaper change. You can even offer yourself as “Diaper Man”—changing every diaper while you're home. You can also take some added housework responsibility. Volunteer to cook, clean, do laundry or any other household chore that your partner normally takes care of. If you take the initiative, it can help keep mommy from feeling overwhelmed.

Be Aware – Understand that the baby blues don't always have an obvious solution, and that despite your best efforts, the blues may have to just run their course. But know that your partner has the blues and keep trying to do what you can to help. Let her know that you're aware she has them and you're doing your best to be supportive.

Be Patient – The baby blues don't last forever. Most of the time, mothers have the blues only for a week or two. While those two weeks can seem long and tough, remember it's just part of the early journey as parents. The blues can disappear as quickly as they appeared.

Be a father – Once again, take the initiative in baby care. Many fathers feel that once they go back to work, mommy can take care of the baby full-time. But, remember, staying at home with a new baby is just as difficult, if not more, than going off to work everyday. When you get home, you can take over and let your partner have a few hours of sleep. Or volunteer for middle of the night baby duty. Agree to get up with the baby once or twice at night so your partner can get some extra shut-eye. Another thing you can do, is take the baby out. Load the baby up in the car and go do something. This will give you time to bond with the baby and, at the same time, give your partner a chance to rest.

Be observant - While the “Baby Blues” are the most common and least severe of the postpartum reactions, there are more serious forms that you, as a father should be aware of. Remember, you will probably be the first one to recognize a problem in your

partner and you should make sure you're familiar with the three different postpartum reactions.

The National Woman's Health Information center (www.4women.gov) has a pamphlet that describes the three different reactions:

The **Baby Blues** happen in many women in the days right after childbirth. A new mother can have sudden mood swings, such as feeling very happy and then feeling very sad. She may cry for no reason and can feel impatient, irritable, restless, anxious, lonely, and sad. The baby blues may last only a few hours or as long as one to two weeks after delivery. The baby blues do not always require treatment from a health care provider. Often, joining a support group of new moms or talking with other moms helps.

Postpartum depression (PPD) can happen a few days or even months after childbirth. PPD can happen after the birth of any child, not just the first child. A woman can have feelings similar to the baby blues—sadness, despair, anxiety, irritability—but she feels them much more strongly than she would with the baby blues. PPD often keeps a woman from doing the things she needs to do every day. When a woman's ability to function is affected, this is a sure sign that she needs to see her health care provider right away. If a woman does not get treatment for PPD, symptoms can get worse and last for as long as one year. While PPD is a serious condition, it can be treated with medication and counseling.

Postpartum psychosis is a very serious mental illness that can affect new mothers. This illness can happen quickly, often within the first three months after childbirth. Women can lose touch with reality, often having auditory hallucinations (hearing things that aren't actually happening, like a person talking) and delusions (seeing things differently from what they are). Visual hallucinations (seeing things that aren't there) are less common. Other symptoms include insomnia, feeling agitated and angry, and strange feelings and behaviors. Women who have postpartum psychosis need treatment right away, and almost always need medication. Sometimes women are put into the hospital because they are at risk for hurting themselves or someone else.

If you have any doubts or questions, you should contact your health care provider. These symptoms can vary from woman to woman.

Fathers can also suffer forms of postpartum depression too. While your "Baby Blues" are not caused by hormonal changes, lifestyle changes directly related to your new baby can have an effect on you. One of the ways to battle these blues is to try and

discover some of the factors contributing to your blues. Some common contributing factors are:

- **Financial Stress** – A new baby means added financial responsibility.
- **Partner’s extra attention to baby** – You may start playing second-fiddle to the new baby as far as attention goes. Remember this isn’t a judgment of your partner’s feelings for you. It’s just part of her maternal instincts.
- **Lost or fading love life** – The early days and weeks can be tough in the romance department. Do your best to try and bring romance back into your relationship. During these first weeks and months don’t expect or demand sexual intimacy with your wife. Be patient.
- **Change in lifestyle**- Accept the change in life and embrace it. Having a child can be one of the best changes a father can have.
- **Sleep deprivation**- Make sure both you and your partner are getting some sleep.

Take an honest look at your feelings and discuss them with your partner or someone else you are close with. Discovering some of the contributing factors could help you to manage your blues. However, working through these stresses may not help completely. Your blues could linger for awhile. If you feel it is affecting your ability to function, contact your physician as soon as possible.

SECRET!

Secret #19 – Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression that can affect both men and women.

Post Partum Depression can come in many shapes and forms. It is important for you, as the father, to recognize the symptoms and help your partner through them. Contact a medical professional if you have any concern. Symptoms can include:

- constant tiredness or exhaustion
- sleeping problems
- lack of appetite,
- disinterest in new baby,
- lack of motivation,
- panic attacks,
- feelings of isolation,

- sense of feeling overwhelmed,
- loss of sex drive,
- guilt, and
- physical signs of tension, such as headaches, stomach pains or blurred vision.
- Fathers can also suffer from forms of Post Partum Depression. Try and figure out some contributing factors to your depression. Including the following items:
 - Financial Stress
 - Partner's extra attention to baby
 - Lost love life
 - Change in lifestyle
 - Sleep deprivation
 - Finally, do not hesitate to contact a medical professional if the symptoms are affecting your ability to work.

It's Only a 2 Hour Drive: How To Prevent The Drive To Grandma's House from Turning into a Nightmare.

Small Babies Need Lots of Equipment

The trip to grandma's house can be fun for everyone if you and your baby are properly equipped. I can tell you from first-hand experience that riding with a screaming baby is no fun—especially when the baby can be easily calmed with the right equipment on hand. If you want to make traveling with your baby as effortless as possible, make sure you pack extras of almost everything. Here's a handy list to get you started:

- **Diapers.** How many does your baby go through in a day? Will you be able to buy more where you're going? Pack at least one for each hour you'll actually be traveling.
- **Baby wipes.** Will a travel container do, or will you need more?
- **DESITIN** (for diaper rash)
- **Plastic bags** for disposing of dirty diapers (The ones you get from the grocery store are perfect.)
- **Changing pad.** If you're staying in one place for a while, a towel works well.
- **Receiving blankets.** At least two—one to keep your baby warm and an extra for when you can't find the other one.
- **Burp cloths.** Only you know how many you might need.
- **Pacifiers.** It's a long car ride without them.
- **Clothes.** At least two outfits per day, plus pajamas.
- **Hats.** Important in either warm or cold weather. They are not only cute but they keep the sun out of your baby's eyes and off baby's gentle skin.
- **Food.** Formula, water, juice, snacks. Bring extra because you can't predict traffic jams or airport delays. Remember some for yourself, too.
- Any necessary **medication.**

- **Sling or child carrier.** Bringing one of these along means other people can more easily help take care of your baby.
- **Portable crib.** If you'll be there overnight, or during naptime.
- **Collapsible stroller.** Make sure your baby can sit up in it.

SECRET!

Secret #20 – Plan ahead when traveling with your baby to provide maximum comfort for your baby.

The trip to grandma's house can be fun for everyone if you and your baby are properly equipped. Plan poorly and even a short trip can seem to last forever. If you want to make traveling with your baby as effortless as possible, make sure you pack extras of almost everything.

Here Fido, Here Boy! Look What Mommy and Daddy Brought Home

Even before baby arrives, make sure that during your wife's pregnancy your pet gets regular veterinarian checkups and vaccinations. During the last few weeks of pregnancy, begin the process of familiarizing your pet with the sights, sounds, and smells the baby will bring. Here are a few ideas:

Have your wife spread a baby blanket scented with baby powder or lotion on her lap, then let your pet rest on her lap to feel the baby moving inside her. Have her talk to the animal to reassure it.

You or your wife can do the following: wrap a doll in the same blanket, and perform baby-care tasks such as feeding and changing diapers. If you have a dog, practice having him sit or stay. Offer your pet a food treat, petting, and kind words after you've finished the "chore."

Several times a day play a short recording of a baby's crying; talk calmly to your pet while the tape is running.

As your house and/or baby's room fills with clothes and furniture, allow your pet to sniff and inspect everything.

Have a friend or relative bring their baby to your house. While someone holds the baby, carefully allow your pet to see and smell the baby; for safety's sake, you should hold your pet during this visit (a friendly dog can simply get overexcited, for example).

If you have any concern that your dog will misbehave when he first meets your baby, you should plan to have him muzzled or on a leash. If he's not accustomed to these devices, use them periodically now—but don't limit their use to times when you're familiarizing him with baby's world. It's hard for most dogs to get used to a muzzle, and it may take some time before the animal is comfortable with it.

Many veterinarians recommend that you and your dog attend obedience classes months before your baby is due. An uncontrollable dog can easily injure a baby, just by accident.

It's important that the mother attends the classes. Dogs are most likely to obey a man's deep voice, so classes will probably be most helpful if they train the dog to listen to Mom too. This is especially true if your spouse usually gives the dog commands but you (or later, a female caregiver) will be the one home alone with baby and dog.

When Your Baby Meets Your Dog

Feed your pet prior to baby's arrival home; he'll be in a better mood after a meal, and more receptive to meeting the baby. And he'll also be more receptive to your baby if she's not crying when they meet.

Talk calmly, and offer petting, praise, and treats for good behavior. Do not force the animal toward the baby. Some species-specific tips:

If you have a dog:

When everyone returns home at once, bringing in an unfamiliar bundle, a dog can easily get overexcited. Ideally, when mother and baby come home, the mother should greet the dog without the baby. After all, you've been gone for a day or so, and the dog probably misses you. If possible, get someone else to hold the baby, in another room, while you give the dog some attention.

Wait for the dog to settle down before the baby is brought into the room. One person should attend to the baby, and one to the dog. Whoever is holding the baby should be seated, to appear less threatening.

At first, let the dog see and smell the baby from about ten to fifteen feet away. As mentioned above, if you have any concern that the dog will misbehave, use a muzzle or leash.

Slowly bring the dog toward the baby. If the dog is too excited, don't let him get close to the baby, and you may want to wait until later if you have any qualms about how the dog is behaving. It may even take several days for the dog to become calm enough. Reward good behavior, and avoid harsh punishments.

Doggy Issues

Usually dogs are protective and will accept a baby as part of the family "pack". However, problems occasionally occur when it has not been made clear to the animal that the new bundle is a family member the dog needs to protect and respect. Parents might not be concerned that the dog would see the newborn as an intruder or threat,

but even if your dog gets along with older children, don't leave him alone with a new baby.

Taking the steps outlined above to prepare your pet will help him understand that your baby is part of the family.

Be alert when the child starts to crawl or walk, as your dog may react in self-defense to these new behaviors. And keep soiled diapers in a securely sealed container. It's normal maternal behavior for a dog to lick up her puppies' waste, and your dog may try to do this for your baby.

For a Cat:

Sit down with the baby, and allow the cat to inspect him. Unlike dogs, cats may not want to sniff the baby right away.

A Happy Family

After baby is home, be sure to give your pet extra attention so he will not feel neglected. If ignored too long, he will act naughty to receive any attention from you (in much the same manner that older siblings often do).

It's not a good idea to leave your pet and baby together unsupervised. Even though they may seem to get along, it's best to be completely sure they "play nice"—for your baby's sake and for your pet's. So shut the baby's bedroom door, or install a gate or screen door. Use a room monitor for extra protection.

Catty Remarks

Most veterinarians agree there is usually almost no trouble when introducing a cat to a baby. Yet old wives' tales abound. The most common one is that cats suck the breath out of babies, because they smell milk on their mouth.

This is false. A more realistic reason your cat may want to be close to your baby are because it is curious and it wants to stay warm. Your baby may seem to be the perfect

Since cats are jumpers, crib rails are no obstacle for them. Place a screen or taut netting over the crib to keep the cat from sleeping with the baby. (Remove the screen once the baby is able to reach it.)

Be aware that a cat might scratch or urinate on baby's belongings. This behavior in a cat can symbolize a number of things—affection, a sense of possessiveness, or aggression.

In any case, spraying is a habit you want to discourage; if you have this problem with your cat, keep him out of baby's room. When you must reprimand your cat, experts recommend spraying him with water from a plant mister or clapping your hands and shouting, "No!"

Keep the cat's litter box out of children's reach; a number of infections can be contracted from animal waste. If the litter box is kept behind a closed door, and the cat is shown where it is, he will quickly learn ways to let you know he needs to use it.

Cat dander is the most common cause of pet allergies. To reduce allergic reactions and the spread of germs, wash your child's hands after she pets an animal. Bathing the animal weekly may reduce allergic reactions. If you have an older cat who doesn't take well to baths, brush-on products to reduce dander are available. If your baby often has a runny nose, or if allergies are common in your family, you might want to have her checked for a pet allergy.

Cats do not like loud noises, such as crying; rapid movements, such as baby's sometimes jerky limb movements; or the rough handling that toddlers are capable of. A toddler can learn to live peacefully with a cat. Parents must be role models. Show the child how to gently stroke the cat. Make sure the child knows not to antagonize a cat, pat him sharply on the head, or hold him against his will.

Your cat may hide when the atmosphere gets too loud or wild; even if everyone knows where his hiding place is teach your child to leave the cat alone when he's retreated there.

SECRET!

Secret #21 – Prepare Your Animals for the Arrival of Your Baby

Your baby's arrival will bring all kinds of new smells and sounds. These smells and sounds can cause various odd responses and behaviors from your dog or cat. To reduce unwanted animal behavior it's wise during the last few weeks of pregnancy, to begin the process of familiarizing your pet with the sights, sounds, and smells the baby will bring.

This article Reprinted from American Baby, "Will our Pet Like the Baby?", by Cathy Edler, March, 1994

An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure: Some Good Old Fashioned Advice That Really Works

We've learned a number of things about parenting a baby that don't fit neatly into any of the other categories, so we decided to list them here. It's possible that not all of these suggestions will work for you. You and your spouse will have to come to an agreement on a great number of issues as your baby grows older. Try to talk about these issues before they come up. Here then is a list of suggestions, ideas, and practices that seemed to work for me. Use the list as a platform for discussion.

- Don't let anyone talk you into using cloth diapers. Use disposable diapers and buy one of those Diaper Genies to dispose of the soiled disposable diapers. Cloth diapers were a big deal for your grandparents. But disposable diapers are the way to go.
- It's okay, even helpful, to keep a few reusable cloth diapers around for cleaning up spills and other unplanned for liquid related disasters.
- If you think your baby may be sick, try kissing her on the forehead. If it feels hot or even warmer than usual, your baby may have a fever.
- If this is your first baby you will be overprotective of your newborn baby (and rightly so.) Either you or your spouse (hopefully not both of you) will over-react to every little cough and grunt that your new baby makes. With this in mind, make plans to discuss the "When should I call the pediatrician?" question at your first visit.
- Keep laundry in a well ventilated container—mildew can ruin all the baby clothes in a sealed hamper in a couple of days.
- Soaking laundry in cold water overnight works on most stains.
- Red children's clothing always seems to bleed color in the wash.
- Don't rush your baby to learn to walk. It will happen sooner than you think. Also, please don't use one of those walker devices with the wheels that allow your baby to scoot around. They are a bigger pain than they are worth. Trust me on this.

Backpacks are great. I highly recommend one that can either be carried on the back or converted quickly to be pulled with wheels.

- In a pinch, corn starch is good for diaper rashes.
- If your baby is stuffed-up, bring it into the bathroom when you shower.
- Toilet training is easy. Simply wait until your child is ready. Don't try to rush toilet training. It will be more hassle than it's worth. Certainly you can encourage your child to use the potty but don't fixate on making it happen.
- Pajamas for your infant and baby are a waste of time and money. Keep them bundled up in a layette gown. These are infinitely easier when a diaper needs to be changed.
- After a few weeks at home you will feel much more comfortable with your baby. Don't feel trapped in the house just because your baby seems so tiny and fragile. Infants are surprisingly portable. Don't be afraid to travel. Simply dress them appropriately for the environment and use layers of clothing.

Getting Your Baby Dressed: Step By Step

When dressing your new baby, choose clothes that are soft and easy to put on. That usually means cotton clothes without too many buttons (especially in the back) and nice wide arm and neck holes.

I like to appraise the outfit before I start to dress my baby, stretching out the neck hole (just by making taut side to side and front to back) and also stretching out the arm holes, not only at the sleeve but also at the shoulder. Also, check to make sure all the snaps, buttons and zippers are in good condition. Let's begin:

1. Get comfortable with your little one on a flat surface, and sit right next to her. Talk to her about what's going to happen. It may sound silly, but it's fun, to talk about her clothes and what you're doing. Sit and hold your baby up next to you.
2. Start by holding the garment by the neck, gathering the material so you can get the whole thing over the head in one move (rather than dragging the full length of the shirt over your baby's face.) Your baby may become frightened if you suddenly disappear from view so try to make this process as smooth and quick as possible.

3. The best way to get a shirt over your baby's head is to remember how babies are delivered from the birth canal: the widest part of the head first. So begin at the crown of your baby's head, and then carefully, but not too slowly, ease the garment around the front of the baby's head (so that his or her eyes aren't covered) and down over the face and back of the head.
4. After the head is through, and while keeping the head supported, put one arm at a time gently through the sleeve. Make sure that you watch out for the fingers and the thumb, too. They sometimes get caught in the sleeves.
5. Then, while baby's still "sitting" up, pull the "onesie" (or shirt, dress or pajamas) as far down as comfortable. Remember, it's helpful to keep talking with your little one.
6. If you have a changing table lay your baby down, face-up, and fasten the snaps (usually) around the diaper area, then work your way down the legs. Some baby clothes now have zippers that zip up the legs, which are wonderful. Just keep your fingers between the zipper and the baby to protect your baby's skin.
7. If baby's not going barefoot today, put on baby's socks or booties and shoes. Save the hat or bonnet until you're heading out the door.
8. Take a deep breath and relax -- your baby's dressed! Now it's your turn.

SECRET!

Secret #22 – Discuss Various Baby Related Issues Before They Become Problems

You and your spouse will have to come to an agreement on a great number of issues as your baby grows older. Use this list to get you started. Things that may seem trivial or unimportant to you may be very important to your wife when it comes to caring and comforting the baby. If you are reading this consider this a fair warning: talk about these issues before they come up. You can thank us later.

Tell Me a Story, Daddy

The day my wife told me she was pregnant; my mind swarmed with visions of different things I was going to do with my child: Visions of teaching her to read; of teaching her my love of sports; of having long intellectual conversations with her about politics and current events. But, after ten long months of these thoughts, after we brought her home, reality struck me. Babies aren't very interactive. It was going to be a few years before I could do all the things I had imagined during the pregnancy.

So how was I to bond with her? I held the totally dependent infant in my arms, trying to come up with ways to bond with her. It seemed easy for my wife. They had the natural maternal/baby bonding thing going. They also had breast-feeding to share. So I needed to come up with ways to bond with this baby, who could do nothing but eat, sleep and poop. I realized the importance of bonding with my daughter early, so I came up with some creative ways to bring us together.

1. Read children's books to baby – If you're like me, you received plenty of children's books before the baby was born. Many of these books had stories that I could recall from my childhood. So, in the interest of bonding, I returned to my childhood through the stories I enjoyed—by reading them to my daughter. Dr. Seuss was one of my favorites as a child. I held my daughter in my arms and read his stories. It was a game. I read using strange voice and strange cadences. My daughter just adored it. There wasn't any crying. She just enjoyed being near me and hearing my voice.
2. Read *your* books to baby – Sometimes children's books can get boring. After reading some of them over and over again, they become tiresome—to you, anyway. One alternative to reading children's books to a baby is to read *your* books to your baby. Grab a book you've wanted to read—maybe that novel that's gathering dust on your shelf—start reading it to your child. Your baby can't understand your words early on anyway; it's your voice and your touch that's soothing to the baby.

Books aren't the only thing you can read to your baby. Read the newspaper or magazines. One other thing I've tried is older children's books. I don't always feel comfortable with the subject matter in my books for my baby, even if she can't understand it. However, a book written for ten year olds can be just as

interesting as any other novel, plus they're usually written without controversial subject matter or foul language.

3. Listen to music together—This is one activity I really embraced when both my children were babies—I called it Daddy/Baby Music Time. Grab your favorite CD, plug it in, turn up the volume and enjoy. Before my children were born, I had the mistaken impression that I was going to be listening to children's songs for the next ten years or so. While singing along with those children's CDs was fun, it wasn't nearly as much fun as plugging in some of my adult music. I could sing along to the songs, dance both by myself and gently with the baby. Also, I noticed my baby quickly began recognizing some of my favorite songs. She would offer a smile that melted my heart when some of our favorite songs would come on. My oldest (she's now three) can even sing along with many of the songs I enjoyed with her when she was a baby.
4. Take a walk – Taking a walk in the stroller is another good way to bond with your baby. The world is entirely new to babies, and things you take for granted are new experiences and wonders for them. Walking together and enjoying your surroundings can be a great bonding experience for both Daddy and Baby. While you're walking, point out different things to your baby. Point out the squirrel running through the grass, show your baby the pretty flowers growing, or just point out landmarks. If you start a regular walking routine, you'll find that your baby will look forward to these walks as she gets older.
5. Out on the town – This is another great way to bond with your baby. Take the baby out with you by yourself on a drive or while you run errands. It can be daunting at first—I was afraid to go anywhere by myself with an infant. But, once I got over my fears, I began taking my daughter around town quite often. Besides just bonding, our trips out on the town helped my two other ways: The trips made me more confident that I could care for an infant by myself outside the house, and it gave my wife some much needed rest and relaxation. Now, I learned quickly to make my trips short and not go too far. I also learned to make most of my trips right after naps when crankiness wouldn't be a problem. I also always prepared an overstuffed diaper bag for any conceivable emergency.

Try some of these bonding ideas, or adapt them and come up with your own. The secret here is to spend some quality bonding time with your child as an infant. As the child grows older, you will discover more activities you enjoy

doing together. Take cues from the child: what makes her happy? What does she get excited about doing with you? Developing a bond with your child early on will strengthen your overall relationship as your child gets older.

SECRET!

Secret #23 – Read To Your Children

For fathers, bonding with your infant is not always easy, but spending quality time with your child begins at birth. Begin bonding with your child as early as possible. While an infant can seem difficult to interact with, come up with some creative ways to enjoy the time you and your child spend together. This time you spend together now will pay off huge dividends as your child gets older.

Here are some more ideas for spending time with your baby:

- Have a staring contest
- Take a bath together
- Read the sports page
- Set a table for two
- Change a diaper
- Be there for a cold or fever
- Bench press
- Be a texture board
- Take pictures

Preparing for the Future: Financial Advice for You and Your New Baby

When my wife was pregnant with my oldest daughter, a daunting thought came to mind. I realized that from that point on I was going to be financially responsible for another human being for at least the next eighteen years, maybe longer. For someone just out of college, in his mid-twenties and working in his first “career-type” job, that was a tall order.

Financial concerns often times weigh heavily on the new father. Besides long-term planning, short-term concerns such as formula costs, child care, diapers, etc; can hit the pocket-book hard. I don't think there's anyway to be completely prepared, but there are some things you can do to prepare.

1. **Buy Term Life Insurance:** Preparing for the worst has never been more important than once you have children. Keeping a life insurance policy will make sure your family is financially stable if something should happen to you. The general rule is to have five times your annual earnings in life insurance.
2. **Save For College Early:** Many states are now offering 529 plans. A 529 plan is a savings plan, sponsored by states and educational institutions to encourage parents to set aside money for their children's education. If the plan satisfies a few basic requirements, then participants are eligible for certain tax breaks. Navigating the world of 529 plans is difficult and requires plenty of research. So, check with your financial advisor or do some heavy research to find out what is right for you and your family. One of the best resources I can recommend is www.savingforcollege.com . It can get you on the right track toward college savings.
3. **Continue to Prepare for Retirement:** When you have your first child, it's easy to concentrate on preparing for your child's future rather than your own. But, that could be a big mistake. Don't skimp on your retirement savings in order to save for college. It's easier for you and your child to come up with ways to pay for college, as opposed to your child supporting you during your retirement.
4. **Plan your Baby Spending:** When my wife and I found out we were expecting our first child, the spending spree began. We needed anything and everything

baby-related. As first time parents, we depended on the advice of magazines, other people, and ads to decide what we needed. After the baby was born, we quickly learned that many of the baby things we thought were “must need” ended up in the garage, barely used. Bear in mind that babies grow up quickly and can quickly outgrow many of the baby items you buy early on. It’s easy to get caught up in preparations, but it’s a good idea to step back and have a plan.

Making a plan could save you money early on, making it easier to save for college or retirement. Here are some ideas to avoid overspending on the baby:

- *Make a list of what you absolutely need.* This includes baby furniture, car seats, clothing, etc. After you finish the list, scrutinize it closely and make sure each item is an absolute necessity
- *Make a budget to go with your list.* If you make a budget and agree to stick to it, you can easily avoid buying unnecessary items.
- *Avoid the trap of buying the newest, best thing on the market.* As new parents, you will be bombarded with marketing and advertising materials touting the newest, best baby item. These ads will assure you that their product is a must-have, but that is not always the case. Take a step back and decide if it’s truly necessary.
- *Use hand-me-downs as much as possible.* As I said earlier, many parents over-buy for their baby and have plenty of like-new baby items sitting in their garage, unused. Ask other parents you know if you can borrow or buy some of their old baby stuff. Ask parents with a one-year-old, because at one their child has definitely outgrown most of their baby stuff and is moving into toddler stuff. Many of these parents will be more than happy get some of it out of their garage.
- *Visit thrift stores and consignment stores.* These places are great for finding new and gently used clothes at a fraction of the price. Many of these clothes were barely worn or still have the tags on them.
- *Scour garage sales or auction sites for “big ticket” items.* You can get great deals on cribs, bassinets, pack and plays, jungle gyms, etc for almost nothing. These clean up well, and are often like new. Also, as an added bonus, you may not have to worry about putting these things together.
- *Keep all gifts in original packages.* When the baby shower rolls around, avoid taking everything out of the packages and setting it up. Also avoid taking the tags off any of the baby’s clothes until he wears

them. If you're like me, you'll find that many baby items from the shower will go unused. You can return these items and buy "must haves" such as diapers, wipes, and bottles.

When added up, these tips could amount to a substantial savings. This is money you and your family can use as you plan for your future.

Financial Planning for your family can be a very stressful part of becoming a parent. The task of paying for a college education, eighteen years later, can cause sleepless nights. A little planning and less worrying can definitely make it less stressful.

SECRET!

Secret #24 – Plan Now for Your Baby's Future

Financial Planning for your new arrival can be a daunting task. However, with a little research and some planning, you can prepare for your family's future. While eighteen years seems like a long time, it will come before you know it. Begin preparations now with life insurance, retirement planning, college savings and cutting back on spending for your baby.

Patience: The Key to Being A Great Daddy

It's 2:00 AM, and I feel as though I've barely gotten to sleep. Just then, the baby lets out a huge wail! It's feeding time. My wife elbows me in the ribs and tells me it's my turn to find out what's wrong with the baby. I get up on the wrong side of the bed—I just want the baby to sleep for a couple of hours so I can get my beauty sleep. I try everything to calm her down. I change her diaper; I rock her; I give her a bottle; I sing to her—but nothing's working. Finally, my wife gets up and tries to calm the baby. After what seems like hours, with both of us working together, we finally get the baby back to sleep. Two hours later...Wahhhhhhhhhh.

Does this sound familiar? If you're already a father, than you know how tough a baby can be on your patience. One of the toughest parts of fatherhood is being calm in the middle of the storm.

One of the best ways to relieve stress, especially in the early days, is to be calm, cool and collected, despite the unpredictable nature of babies. Embrace your calmness and learn some of the causes of your impatience, and it can go a long way in helping you get through the first few months or years.

I found out early on that babies feed off negative emotions. The more impatient or upset I'm feeling the harder it will be to calm baby down. They just have some sort of sixth sense about daddy's emotions, and act accordingly. So here are some steps you can take to help calm those negative emotions:

1. *Pause for a moment* – Before rushing in to grab baby after just waking up, stand up, count to 10 and take a deep breath. Sometimes that moment can give your mind time to clear.
2. *Keep on the lookout for triggers* – Keep a list of the things that can cause you to lose your patience. Just recognizing some of the causes can help you prevent them.
3. *Realize babies can only cry to communicate* – Crying is her only way of communicating with you. Don't take it personally, and understand that your baby only wants one of her needs met.

4. *Take a break* – It's impossible for anyone to be patient all the time. If you feel really impatient or edgy, take a break. Go for a walk outside, or do something you enjoy. Of course, with babies this isn't always possible. But sometimes, just taking a step back can clear your head.
5. *Talk about what's bothering you* – Sometimes our patience can wear thin when we have a lot on our mind. As men, we are taught to hold these feelings in and just deal with them. I suggest trying the opposite. Talk about the things that are bothering you, either with your partner or someone else whom you trust. Just getting these things off your chest can help you become more patient.
6. *Take shifts* – Negative emotions can come from resentments against your partner. Maybe you expected her to get up at 2 AM, or maybe you feel it's her turn to calm the baby down. Either way, if you discuss expectations with your partner it can help sooth some of the resentments. For example, take shifts in the middle night. Your partner gets up with the baby during the first half of the night and you do the same on the second shift.

The above are just some quick suggestions. If you feel you're having real anger management problems, seek professional help. There are many resources available to help parents.

The need for patience is continuous throughout the journey that is fatherhood. As your child grows, you will find different things causing you to lose your patience. Create a support system around you and remember, no man is an island.

SECRET!

Secret #25 – Patience: The Key to Being a Great Daddy

Fatherhood requires a special dose of patience that no other job can match. Self-appraisal and a support system can help keep you from becoming impatient. Find out what some of your triggers are. Remember, no father is perfect. There will be times, no matter what, that you get impatient. But, it's how you deal with the times that can ultimately strengthen your family as a whole. Here are a few tips to remember:

- Pause for a moment and count to 10.

- Keep on the lookout for what triggers your anger.
- Remember that your newborns primary means of communicating is crying.
- Talk about what is bothering you. Learn to be open with your spouse.
- Take shifts attending to the baby.

The List of 25 Secrets

After reading this book print this list off and put it on your refrigerator or some place where you will see it every day.

Secret # 1 – Recruit help because you are going to need it.

Secret # 2 – Build regular routines into your baby's life.

Secret # 3 – Start early to childproof your home.

Secret # 4 – To become a better dad admit your fears.

Secret # 5 – Embrace your new found fatherhood by interacting with your baby.

Secret # 6 – Learn to speak your baby's language.

Secret # 7 – Rest better at night by communicating with your spouse and planning ahead.

Secret # 8 – Learn to identify the signs and treat the symptoms of teething.

Secret # 9 – Stay engaged and resist boredom by recording the almost daily changes that your baby makes.

Secret # 10 – Use bath time to bond with your baby.

Secret #11 – Your job as a dad and husband is to provide time, love and tenderness.

Secret #12 – From this point forward your life WILL change significantly—prepare for these changes.

Secret #13 – Learn to change those diapers. Just “dooo” it!

Secret #14 – Encourage your wife by learning to support her in the breast-feeding process.

Secret #15 – Prepare for the changes that absolutely will occur in your relationship when you bring your new baby home.

Secret #16 – Learn to bond with your baby by doing the little things.

Secret #17 – To save money consider only the bare essentials for your baby.

Secret #18 – Bottle or Breast? Decide now—before your baby is born to prevent frustration later.

Secret #19 – Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression that can affect both men and women.

Secret #20 – Plan ahead when traveling with your baby to provide maximum comfort for your baby.

Secret #21 – Prepare your animals for the arrival of your baby.

Secret #22 – Discuss various baby related issues with your spouse before they become problems.

Secret #23 – Read to your children.

Secret #24 – Start planning now for your baby's future.

Secret #25 – Patience: The key to being a great daddy.

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