

Planning With Your Partner

for becoming a 1st, 2nd, 3rd... time parent!



Parenting is hard and having a newborn can mean sleepless nights and new stresses for both parents. Planning with your partner before baby arrives can help.

Sleep is a high priority for the primary caregiver, a nursing mom, or a recovering birth parent. It's also a priority for working parents.

- Research shows that we need two three-hour blocks of sleep at minimum. Talk about how you can each get some sleep with a new baby.
- Who will get up for baby in the night or will you share?
- If baby cries a lot at night (after diapers, feeding, rocking, swaddling or other comforts), how will you want to support each other to get enough sleep?
- Who can you ask to help you during the nights if you are sleep deprived?
- Have you considered other kinds of help at night, such as a post partum doula?

Other thoughts about sleep: _____

Ask your partner about how you will share baby care:

- How will you share diaper changes, bath time, etc.?
- Ask your partner how they want to be involved in feeding the baby and share your ideas too.
- What things are you both looking forward to in caring for your baby?
- How can you or your partner give each other a break each day?

More ideas: _____

Have a conversation about feeding:

- Babies often need to eat around the clock and change their feeding schedule frequently. Share with your partner what you want feeding to be like and hear from them their ideas.
- If a partner is breast or chest feeding, how can your partner be involved?
- What about feeding yourself? Talk a little about how you can have good food for the early days and weeks.
- How can you make it easy (because you'll be tired)?
- How can you make it nutritious?

More ideas about feeding baby and yourselves: _____

Talk about how you will share household chores with your partner in the early days and weeks:

- What chores are most important to you and your partner?
- What if "new" chores come up because of baby? Like extra garbage from disposable diapers or laundering cloth diapers, washing bottles or pumps, or additional laundry from spit ups or blow outs?
- How would you respond if the chores didn't get done?
- Can you ask for help from family or friends?
- Would you hire some help to get you through?
- How will you rethink sharing the chores when you or your partner return to work?

More ideas to help you prepare for adding a baby to your home: _____

Getting ready for baby can be a good time to think about your relationship with your extended family:

- How many visits do you hope for?
- Is it okay to visit at the hospital or soon after baby arrives?
- What if you feel differently later, and you really just want a midday nap instead of visitors?
- What do you think will be helpful from family and friends?
- What boundaries do you think you might want in the first couple weeks?

More ideas: _____

More resources for talking to your partner about parenting:

Bringing Home Baby is The Gottman Institute's class for expecting parents. This local research-based work focuses on how a resilient and responsive relationship between parents reduces conflict and supports baby's development.

PEPS Groups for couples as well as for one parent cover many family topics, such as couple's relationship, work and family balance and other topics.