

Planning for Baby Care – How You’ll Divide Responsibilities

Here are ideas for starting a conversation before the birth. Note: not all questions may be relevant to your situation.

Feeding

- Plan for learning about breast/chestfeeding. (i.e. date of class, who to ask for advice, books, etc.)
- Who to call for help with breast/chestfeeding:
- Plan for expressing milk: What kind of pump, how will you store milk, when will you start pumping?
- Plan for introducing the bottle: Who and when?
- Who is responsible for washing the pump parts and bottles?

Feeding the Parents

- Before baby arrives, what foods will you stock up on? List at least 12 foods that 1) you can eat with one hand while holding a baby, 2) don’t need to be prepped, 3) are good hot or cold, 4) don’t spoil when left out for a few hours, and 5) you like to eat.
- After baby is born, who’s responsible for grocery shopping?
- Who will make dinner or do other meal prep?

Hygiene

- Who’s responsible for diaper changes when the whole family is together?
- Who’s responsible for dealing with dirty diapers and providing clean ones (i.e. washing diapers and diaper covers, or taking out the trash and buying new disposables)

- Who's responsible for baths? How often will you bathe?
- Who is in charge of laundry (washing, folding, and putting away)

Sleep and Night-Time Wakeups

- Where will baby sleep for the first three months? Where will baby nap during the daytime?
- What steps do you need to take to have all the places baby sleeps as safe as possible?
- When baby wakes up in the middle of the night, who's responsible for going to the baby first?
- Who's responsible for night-time feeding? (Note: this could include the non-chest-feeding parent bringing the baby to the chest-feeding parent.)
- Who does night-time diaper changes?
- Night-time calming a crying baby?

Cleaning and Household Tasks (i.e. paying bills, running errands)

- Which household tasks can you totally ignore / let slide for baby's first 6 weeks?
- Of those tasks that must be done, who's responsible for what:
- Do you have family or friends who could help? Or could you hire help?

Caring for Baby

- Who will have primary responsibility for taking care of baby at various times of day. (Note: if baby is breastfed, the nursing parent has to do that, but the partner can do any other baby care tasks).

In the morning? _____ From when to when _____

During the daytime? _____ Times _____

During the evening? _____ Times _____

- Weekend Plan?

- For calming baby, what techniques do you plan to use?

Support and Sanity Savers

- When you need emotional support, who can each of you call (name / phone #)
- What self-care activities really improve your emotional well-being? How will you do those after birth?
- What are activities that help you connect as a couple? How can you continue those after the birth?
- List some experienced parents in your life that you can go to for ideas, advice, and support:
- Where will you meet other new parents for peer support and friendship?
- Make a list of other local and online resources and make sure there are copies easily accessible on your phone, on your fridge, and so on. (Your doctor, baby's doctor, breastfeeding help lines, parent help lines. Poison control. Websites about infant health. And so on. Research those resources now when you don't need them so you can access them later if you do!)