

Your partner has more on her plate than you, a gap that will expand once your baby arrives and she instinctively takes charge. These lists provide you an opportunity to lead as well and create a team approach to building your new family. Print it out and invite her to review it with you together.



Dad's Lists

Agenda for Starting a Family

Our dads and moms-to-be learn about the common landmines they will face together as for new parents. Then they do the best thing possible; they talk about them. Here is what is in their list:

» Plan For Sleep & Night Feedings

Sleep whenever you can is the first advice new parents get and the last one followed. You'll need to make sleep a priority and prepare a sleep plan, as mom will get focused on her baby's needs and forget her own.

» A Postpartum Depression Deal With Mom

Postpartum depression/anxiety symptoms are definitive and if they show up, you're likely the only one around her who notices. A popular "deal" between parents is if you recognize signs of PPD, you'll make sure mom sees her doctor. We're also learning more about the impact of high stress on new dads, so check your own mental health status too.

» Anticipate Mom's Gatekeeping

Hormonally driven new moms mostly take over the care of your baby no matter how egalitarian you both wanted your parenting to be. Talk about it; we recommend a pact between you now that if she starts gatekeeping, you call it (i.e., "you are gatekeeping"), and mom leaves the room. If more effective action is needed, mom leaves the house and heads

» Talk About The Workload

New dads and moms are surprised by the immense amount of work—child care, housework and producing extra income—a baby brings. When there is too much to do, who does what is a major source of conflict. Talk about it now to develop an initial plan, and include streamlining shopping, meal prep, buying baby supplies, etc. After month when you will understand the workload, then talk about dividing it up. At first it's better to for both of you to just pitch in on everything. (baby care, cooking, cleaning, etc.).

» Talk About the Family Budget

Talk with your partner about your concerns and map out a plan to stretch the dollars. Start the conversation now, as it will be difficult to find the time, energy and emotional focus once the baby's on board. Creating a simple budget will make the best use of your money and prevent a lot of unnecessary stress. Find more info on preparing financially here.

» Be Prepared For Childbirth

Go over the Childbirth Cornerman's Guide and talk with mom about her plans. If she wants a "natural birth," point out that plans can take unexpected turns, and create a code word ("red!") for mom to use if she opts for an epidural. Also, download a free contraction timing app for your phone (iPhone: Full Term—labor Contraction Timer; Google Play: Contraction Timer) and show her you are ready when she is.

» Plan For Visitors & Help

"Help" from friends and relatives can and should be just that—helpful. You don't want intrusions in your early days as a family, but you do want to make full use of your "village." See our list of things people can help with (cooking, shopping, cleaning, errands) and outline visitor rules for the newborn phase.

» Begin Building Your Village

You'll need:

- Mom needs mom friends and/or a moms group.
- Dad friends for you (take the initiative with rookies you meet at childbirth class).
- Willing grandparents: don't push them away with a long list of baby care rules.
- Hired help like a sitter; save money on baby stuff and spend it here.
- A mom who accepts help so people get comfortable offering.

Invest In Your Relationship

Creating a building block of humanity works best when two parents collaborate, have each other's back, and appreciate what each other offers. Love rewards and strengthens your team and enables families to thrive.

But the opposite can also occur...Studies show two-thirds of new parents found their relationship suffered after their baby arrived. They didn't prepare for the momentous challenge they took on together, but you can. Here's how:

Practice Talking With Her

If you're like most men, you're not very good at this. Without improvement, your relationship will suffer as your parenting "team" bumbles during months of sleep-deprived stress, too much to do and divisive issues to confront.

To boost your skills, pick any topic, tell her what you think and ask what she thinks. You'll find lots of prompts for key issues on Checklists For Getting Ready that you can download and print, and keep up the practice!

Make a List of What You Do For Fun

To help re-ignite romance after the newborn stage, make a list now of things you enjoy doing together. Check off your interests below and add your own. Once your new life with your baby is under control, bring out your list, pick something, and do it.

- Listen to music
- A special restaurant
- Go for a walk
- Visit with friends
- Bike ride
- Go out to a movie
- Go for a drive
- Netflix
- Get a massage
- Do a puzzle
- Cook dinner
- Bowling/mini golf
- Nap together
- Make love
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Dial in on Her Pregnancy

You're already helping her handle pregnancy, but you can up your game and take a look at the current month in her pregnancy book and ask about something (anything) she may be experiencing followed by, "Is there anything else you'd like me to know?"

She may be overwhelmed with all the info she's absorbing and fears about unlikely-to-happen threats to her baby, so having your interest and calming vibe will mean a lot to her. Go here for a cheat sheet on pregnancy stages and symptoms.

Things to Do Before Birth

Get The House Ready

- Handle any unfinished projects prior to junior's arrival.
- Do a home safety check for loose railings, hallway clutter, and hazards for baby-carrying parents.
- For dog owners, plan how to handle him when your baby arrives.
- _____
- _____
- _____

For the Hospital

- Put all doctors, hospital and important contact numbers in your cell phone.
- Pre-register.
- Tour your hospital and ask a ton of questions.
- Keep the car maintained and gassed up.
- Make a list and pack for the hospital in advance: your baby could be early.
- _____
- _____
- _____

General To-Do List

- Name your baby: [The seven stages of picking a name for your baby.](#)
- Make a list of everyone receiving a baby announcement.
- Set up an in-store or online baby registry.
- Register with sites like [babycenter.com](#) for info and coupons.
- Set up auto bill payments online.
- Set up online accounts for diapers (like [Diapers.com](#)) to minimize in-store shopping.
- Collect gift cards to local restaurants so you can order takeout on the fly.
- Do a practice round of dinner-in from [Grubhub](#) or [Doordash](#) so it's an easy once baby's here.
- _____
- _____
- _____