

Baby Care



Rock-a-Bye Baby

The arrival of your newborn is a time of joy, awe and wonder as they become familiar with their brand new environment.

For parents, this can mean a complete shift in their daily routines. One important aspect moms and dads need to focus on is their sleep schedule.

While it can be difficult to adjust to a little one's sleeping patterns, ensuring you're well rested is imperative when raising an infant.

SAFE SLEEPING

Of course, ample sleep is also important for an infant. Here are some tips from the March of Dimes to help keep them safe while they rest.

Baby should be placed on their backs on a flat surface like a crib or bassinet.

Allow your little one to slumber in a crib or bassinet but never in your bed.

Bumpers, loose bedding and toys should not be allowed in the crib.

Following these safety tips can ease the minds of parents by knowing their infants are sleeping safely. You can also benefit by utilizing these tips to get a fussy newborn down for some much-needed rest.

FOLLOW A ROUTINE

The United States National Institutes of Health revealed



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studies that show bedtime routines have an important association with a child's well-being and development. Some benefits they found include increased readiness for school, cognitive flexibility and a better working memory.

It's important to create a

routine at a young age and stick to it as your child ages. You can introduce bedtime after a warm bath, story time or a happy lullaby. Make sure to perform these pre-bedtime activities in their bedroom so they can associate them with rest.

KEEP LIGHT TO A MINIMUM

While a night light can be a beneficial purchase for growing children, infants may confuse the glow with daytime. Consider investing in light-blocking curtains and dimming the lighting in their

room when it's time to slumber.

If your little one commonly becomes fussy for nighttime feedings, you should install a lamp with a dimmer to accommodate them without the room becoming too bright.

Baby Proof your Home

Preparing your home for a newborn's arrival isn't only about decorating a nursery and stocking up on new clothes and products. To ensure their safety, you should spend just as much time baby proofing certain dangers around your home.

While each child develops differently, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggest that most begin crawling between eight and twelve months and take their first steps around their first birthday. As they begin to move on their own, their curiosity can also be enhanced and used to explore their surroundings.

Don't procrastinate on child proofing your home because once they get moving, it can be difficult to keep up. Here are some areas in your home to focus on.

ACCESS TO ROOMS AND STAIRS

A great way to keep an eye on your little one and restrict them from entering other rooms or accessing stairs is by blocking these areas with baby gates. Look for options that parents can easily open in case your hands are full. It can be quite a challenge to step over these barricades, especially



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when holding your baby or their necessities.

REMOVE KNOBS

While cabinet and stove knobs provide great convenience for adults, with access to these areas, children can find themselves in dangerous situations.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, kids 1 to 4 had the highest rate of poisoning. If you keep your cleaning chemicals in a cabinet, it's important to either relocate them or lock the door.

Stoves can be another hazard that can put everyone in the

home at risk. Consider removing the burner knobs and ensuring your little one is out of the kitchen when it is hot.

STABILIZE FURNITURE

According to the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, on average, one child dies every 10

days when a television or furniture falls onto him or her.

Unanchored furniture can be dangerous especially when younger children use it as a brace to help them stand. Invest in anchors that work with your wall's material to stabilize dressers and other heavy items.

Choosing a Car Seat

Once the day has arrived to depart from the hospital and take your child on a maiden voyage on the highway, it's crucial you have a quality car seat installed securely.

Because there are so many available options, you should do your research on the perfect model to fit your lifestyle. Whether you want a dedicated infant seat or a convertible style that adapts to their growing frames, the perfect car seat is available to protect your child on the road.

Each manufacturer includes their specific instructions on how to install their seat to offer the ultimate performance. If you find it difficult or feel that it is loose or incorrect, visit a safety event at a Safe Kids Coalition in your area. There, you will meet with child passenger safety technicians for an inspection or install.

When choosing they type of seat for your little one, here are some factors to consider.

SAFETY RATINGS

Under the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, the CPSC can mandate federal requirements to specific product types. Here are some of the high standards set for children's items reported by the Juvenile Products



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Manufacturers Association.

Goods should be tested for compliance by a CPSC-accepted accredited laboratory.

Compliance should be documented with a Children's Product Certificate for proof.

Items should comply with all applicable children's product safety rules.

Fortunately, many baby product manufacturers per-

form their own independent testing to ensure their goods exceed federal regulations.

TYPE

When deciding which type of car seat to invest in, consider how long you plan to use the same model. For instance, if you prefer a dedicated rear-facing seat, it can be a cheaper purchase initially, but your little one will outgrow it

once they are eligible to be placed in the forward-facing position.

While state laws may differ regarding their car seat laws, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend allowing a child to sit in the rear position until at least age 2 or until reaching the maximum weight threshold suggested by the manufacturer.

If you're looking for a seat

that will adapt to a child's growing frame, a convertible car seat can be a one-time purchase. Their durable frames are great at providing the support a little one needs from infancy (with an additional insert) to booster.

Because of its long-term use, it's best to buy new as these protective carriers adhere to strict expiration dates.

Dressing Baby

With all the thoughts of raising a baby running through your mind, a challenge you probably haven't considered is getting them dressed for the day or their nighttime pajamas.

Before attempting to dress your newborn, ensure their temperament is calm and serene. It's much easier to dress them while supporting their sensitive bodies when they aren't in the middle of a tantrum. It may take time to learn what calms your baby down, so ensure you aren't in a hurry before dressing.

Here are some other tips to prepare you for this sometimes difficult experience from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

DRESS FOR THE WEATHER

Making sure your baby is neither too hot or cold helps keep them safe and ensure comfortability and to improve their temperament. In cooler weather under 75 degrees, you should incorporate several layers. You can use an undershirt which should be covered by pajamas or a dressing gown before wrapping them in a receiving blanket.

During warmer conditions, a good rule to follow is to dress a baby in one more layer



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of clothing than you are wearing to give them the same comfortability you experience.

HELPFUL CLOTHING FEATURES

When searching for a little one's wardrobe, remember to find clothing that offers features which make dressing and undressing easier. The

AAP offers these helpful tips.

Snaps or zippers that work from the front of the outfit rather than the back make it easier to finish up the dressing task.

Snaps or zippers located on the legs provide convenient access to change a diaper.

Stretchy fabrics that don't bind around arms, legs or

necks are much more comfortable for infant wear.

IN THE CAR SEAT

For the five-point harness in the car seat to work efficiently, it should be snug against your newborns body. When traveling in cool temperatures, dress them in light layers before buckling, then

cover them with a warm blanket.

During warmer temperatures, follow the extra-layer rule but avoid clothing that may expose their skin to the seat's hot buckles. A thin layer of pants can be a more comfortable alternative to shorts that may expose their thighs to an unpleasant surprise.

Caring for a Newborn's Skin

One of the most precious features of your newborn is their soft skin. Because of its sensitivity, caring for it takes serious attention to protect it.

If you have a summertime baby, it can be tempting to travel outdoors and let them view their new surroundings. The American Academy of Pediatrics warns parents against bringing a baby into direct sunlight until they are at least 6 months old.

While this doesn't mean they should be stuck indoors the entire time, you should take necessary precautions before heading outside. You can dress baby in protective clothing like a hat that provides shade for the entirety of their face, long-sleeve shirts and pants. Try to use light-weight clothing to ensure they are comfortable while outside in the heat.

The sun isn't the only danger you should avoid when keeping your little one's sensitive skin in its pristine condition.

PROTECT FROM BUGS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends waiting until an infant is at least 2 months old before using bug spray. However, the possibilities for diseases being spread to their fragile immune systems is not something to risk.

Before your baby is old



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enough to use EPA-registered repellent, you can protect them by dressing in loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts. Avoid using lotions with perfumes and schedule outdoor activities after early morning or dusk when bugs are most active.

DIAPER RASH

This skin condition commonly occurs when a diaper

area isn't kept clean or dry. While most outbreaks can be solved at home with dedicated ointments and creams, sometimes topical oral antibiotics are necessary if it turns into an infection.

The experts at WebMD suggest the best way to avoid this painful experience is to change diapers as soon as they are soiled and apply an ointment

like zinc oxide or petroleum jelly to add a protective barrier.

BATHING SCHEDULE

How and when you bathe your newborn can have immediate effects on their delicate skin. According to Stanford Children's Health, daily bath time may not be necessary as the consistency of diaper changing and cleanups is

enough.

Instead, the group recommends bathing only two to three times a week or every other day. Stick to sponge baths until your baby's umbilical cord falls off and heals. Once they are ready to be submerged in bathwater, use soft cloths to apply infant-approved soaps before applying a moisturizing layer of lotion.

Find the Right Daycare

The sad reality faced by many moms and dads occurs when it's time to head back to work after the excitement of a newborn's debut.

Choosing a proper daycare to protect them while you are away is important and should be done before their birth. Don't procrastinate finding a suitable sitter as your favorite option may have a waiting list. Here are some of the most popular types of facilities and daycare options you should consider.

STAYING WITH FAMILY

Many new parents opt to ask their families to assist them in providing childcare. This is an affordable alternative to a childcare facility which comes with several advantages and disadvantages.

One positive aspect of finding a loved one to babysit your child is the sense of trust you have already established. It can also save the hassle of interviewing different facilities about their policies and waiting lists.

A disadvantage for some children is the lack of social interaction if there aren't other kids around. You may also discover conflict with a loved one if you have different views on encouraging and disciplining your child.



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AT-HOME FACILITY

Another option to consider is using an at-home facility that is licensed by the state. Most of these businesses oversee less children than a large group-based company which provides your child with more dedicated attention. Before committing to this type of sitter, ask questions about how

many children are present and the number of adults who are employed.

A few downsides include the chances of kids being of mixed ages so your child may be exposed to behaviors from older peers and the risk of being without a care plan if the business owner decides to shut their doors or take an

extended vacation.

CHILD-CARE CENTER

Another avenue to travel when in search of childcare is through a center-based group which are typically located in a commercial building. Class sizes are large and age groups are usually separated so children gain a significant amount

of interaction.

You can also rest assured that there will be ample supervision as these groups often hire extra employees to cover sick days or time off.

You can expect to pay a higher fee for this type of childcare and adhere to strict hours for pickup and delivery or be charged additional fees.

Your Baby's First Year

Understanding what to expect in the first year of your child's life ensures you know which developmental milestones they should be obtaining.

If you notice troubling signs regarding how they are growing, don't hesitate to contact their primary caregiver to identify if there is an issue.

According to the American Pregnancy Association, infant development is divided into these four categories.

Social: Based on interaction to the human face and voice, includes smiling and cooing.

Language: Measures how receptive a baby is to language development. Trouble may signify a vision or hearing problem.

Large motor development: Ability to hold their own head up, sitting, pulling up or rolling over are examples.

Small motor development: Includes eye-hand coordination, reaching and manipulating objects.

Here are some milestones you should expect during the first year to ensure their development skills are on the right pace, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

2 MONTHS

By your baby's second month, they should begin showing emotional progress



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by smiling and looking at people. You will also notice them actively moving their head toward the direction of different sounds. Physical development will include holding their head up, pushing themselves when on their tummy and smooth arm and leg motions.

6 MONTHS

At the end of six months, baby should begin recognizing familiar faces and responding to the emotions of others. Communication skills

will also establish as they should respond to their name, become vocal when expressing joy or displeasure or responding to noises with their own sounds. This exciting threshold is when your little one should begin sitting without support and bounce when standing as their legs are more suitable for supporting their weight.

9 MONTHS

Milestones at 9 months old include a demand for attention from familiar adults and

showcasing uncertainty around strangers. Cognitive development should include finding items you playfully hide and a curiosity and attempt to grab items which are out of reach. An 9-month-old infant should also be responding to their own name and combining vowels together while babbling.

FIRST BIRTHDAY

By your little one's first birthday, you should notice them repeating sounds or actions for attention, minor

cooperation when getting dressed and a showcase of favor toward specific people or objects. You should also expect them to be vocal with different words like "mama" and "dada" and simple gestures to react toward spoken requests.

Cognitive learning behaviors should include using items like drinking cups and hairbrushes correctly. Physically, your child will be able to take a few steps without holding on to something and even stand alone.