

Preparing Your Child for a New Sibling

When I was going to have my second child, I really didn't think much about it. I was in love with my first baby so it seemed natural to add another baby to our little family.

Before the baby was born, we would talk with my oldest about his new sibling. We had him hug my tummy and feed his teddy bear with a bottle. **That was about the extent of our "preparation."**

It's no surprise that he was a little less than thrilled to have a new sister! He saw her as the person who was taking my time away from him.

He handled this new arrival just like any other 18-month old would...he started tantruming and refused to sleep without someone in his room!

This was the hardest time of my life. I wish I prepared him a little better for the arrival of his new sibling.

The following is a list of ideas for helping your toddler cope with the arrival of their new little brother or sister:

Before the Baby Is Born

Try not to talk about the baby too early on. Toddlers do not have a sense of time, so nine months can be a lifetime to them. Start talking more and more about the coming of a new sibling toward the end of your pregnancy.

Give A Gift

Encourage your child to find one rattle or stuffed animal that was theirs to give to the new baby; just one small gift from the big brother or sister.

Get A Gift

In turn, once the baby is born have a small gift waiting "from" the baby to the older sibling.

Teach Your Child How to Treat the Baby

Just like you teach your toddler everything else, you need to teach them how to interact with their new sibling. Model for your toddler how to play, talk and gently touch the baby.

Spend More Time with Your Little One

After the baby has arrived, give your toddler 10-15 minutes of your undivided time each day. Read books, play on the floor or just give some extra hugs and cuddles. Behavior issues and regressions are normal, and can be eased with a little extra time and attention.

Watch What You Say

Try not to blame everything on the baby.

“We can’t go outside right now because the baby’s sleeping.” “I will read to you after I feed the baby.”

You can understand why your toddler is not very thrilled with their new sibling! All you have to do is rephrase what you are saying – *“My hands are full right now.” “We’ll go after lunch.”*

Let Them Help

Give your little one a job so they can be helpful with the baby. Let your toddler get diapers for you, take pictures of the baby, and open gifts from others. Make sure you praise their efforts.

The Bottom Line

This baby is here to stay. Stop feeling guilty! Your toddler will adjust and someday realize that their new sibling was the best gift you ever gave them!