



## introducing a new sibling

when you tell your child that you're having another baby depends on their age. the younger they are the longer you can wait. whenever you do it though, it's important that your child hears the news from you, so you can help him understand that a new baby is coming.

- for little kids, who have no concept of time, let them know that the baby will be in your tummy while it is cold outside, for example, and will be born when summer begins.
- include your child in your pregnancy by sharing ultrasound pictures, encouraging her to talk to the baby, and to touch your belly.
- prepare your child for the baby's arrival by reading books about new baby additions, and enlisting your child's help in getting ready.
- be honest about what having a new baby in the family will mean. talk to your child about the amount of time you'll be spending with the baby. your child won't know what to expect so let her know that at first, new babies can't play much, but that she can read to her new sibling, hold his hand, and help mommy put him to bed.
- tell your child stories about when she was a baby, and show her pictures of when you were pregnant with her and when she was first born. children love revisiting these stories over and over again.
- encourage your child to talk about her feelings. let her know that she can have mixed feelings or more than one feeling at a time. it's ok to be excited about the new baby and also worried about sharing mommy. try drawing or acting things out with puppets or dolls.
- once the baby is born, expect a transition period. be patient and anticipate that it might take time for your child to adjust. after the new baby arrives limit other major changes for a while, like introducing a new care taker, moving to a new home, or potty training.
- if your child regresses that's normal. in response, be as consistent as possible and try to maintain her usual routine. all children thrive on structure.
- finally, be loving to yourself! a new baby means more joy, but also more work, so make sure you get both the rest and support that you need.

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