



EXTENSION

Bringing Home a Second Baby – 1: Getting Ready

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Laura Hubbs-Tait

Regents Professor, Human Development and Family Science

Ashley Kimble

Assistant Professor, Human Development and Family Science

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Bonding with Older Child

- Help older children love a new baby by loving older children before the new baby arrives.
- The warm emotional bond you build by loving each of your children is a secure attachment.
- This secure attachment will help children in all their relationships, including with their baby brother or sister.

Include Older Children

- The changes of pregnancy and adding a new baby may cause older children to feel scared or rejected.
- Help them feel safe and loved with steps to take and words to say from the table on the next page.
- Say positive things about the baby and being an older brother or sister to the baby.

For All Family Members before Delivery

- Have a plan.
- Choose familiar people to help children feel safe.
- Questions to think about as your family makes a plan:
 - Who is going to take care of the baby's brothers and sisters?
 - Will they be in our house? If not, what is the best familiar place for them to stay?
 - What do our children need to have with them to help them feel safe?

Communicating the Plan

- If the plan is for family or friends to help in your home:
 - Ask children to remember positive visits from family and friends.
 - Ask children to help visitors feel welcome and let them help plan how to do that.
- If the plan is for children to stay in another home, and they have done this before:
 - Have friends or family send an invitation or use Face-Time to start the conversation.
 - Ask children what toys and books they want to take with them.
 - Let children talk about what they want to pack in their backpack.
- If this will be your older child's first time in a different place:



- Arrange to stay overnight with your child where your child will be staying.
- Arrange for a special place for your child's possessions and include family photos.
- Follow the steps for visiting a familiar home outlined above.

Research

Secure attachments of older children to parents are related to positive relationships with a new baby (Volling, 2017). This confirms the importance of parental love and support for future big brothers and sisters during the pregnancy. Telling children earlier in the pregnancy gives them time to adjust and is associated with positive feelings about the baby (Chen et al., 2018).

Books to read with older children about younger siblings

- Church, Caroline Jayne (2015). *I am a big sister*. New York: Cartwheel Books.
- Church, Caroline Jayne (2015). *I am a big brother*. New York: Cartwheel Books.
- Fuller, Rachel. (2009). *My new baby*. Child's Play International.
- Keats, Ezra Jack. (1967). *Peter's chair*. New York: Harper & Row (Viking).
- Penn, Audrey. (2006). *A pocket full of kisses*. Indianapolis: Tanglewood.

References

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2019). How to prepare your older children for a new baby. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/Pages/Preparing-Your-Family-for-a-New-Baby.aspx>
- American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (2017). Planned home birth. Committee Opinion No. 697. *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 129, e117-e122.
- Chen, B.-B., Han, W., Wang, Y., Sui, Y., Chen, Z., & Wan, L. (2018). The reaction of firstborn children to a sibling before the birth: the role of the time at which they are told about the mother's pregnancy and their effortful control. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 36, 158-167.
- Hoffman, K., Cooper, G., Powell, B., Benton, C. M., & Siegel, D. J. (2017). *Raising a secure child: How Circle of Security parenting can help you nurture your child's attachment, emotional resilience, and freedom to explore*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Steinberg, L. (2004). *The ten basic principles of good parenting*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Volling, B. L. (2017). XI. General discussion: Children's adjustment and adaptation following the birth of a sibling. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 82, 142–158.

What to Do	What to Say
Involve older child in interactions during prenatal appointments with doctors, nurses, technicians or other health providers.*	<p>"This is Dr. Smith. She helps Mommy and baby."</p> <p>"This is Mr. Sam." "Do you see his camera?" "It is on mommy's tummy."</p> <p>"He is taking pictures of your brother." "That's your brother in the picture!"</p>
Help children interact with baby "in mommy's uterus" (or "in mommy's tummy").	<p>"Where is baby?" "Baby is growing in mommy's tummy." "Put your hand on baby"</p> <p>"Oh, she kicked!"</p> <p>"Can you feel your sister's hand there? Can you pat it?" "Do you want to say 'hi'?"</p> <p>"Do you think your sister has blue eyes like you?"</p>
Look at older child's newborn pictures with older child.	<p>"This baby is you. You had just been born. Is mommy smiling? Is daddy smiling? Yes! We were so happy you were born!"</p> <p>"Do you see grandma and grandpa holding you at the hospital* when you were a baby? They were so glad to meet you! They will be coming to meet your baby brother at the hospital just like they came to meet you!"</p> <p>"When your baby brother is born, you get to go to the hospital with grandma and grandpa to meet him! Will you say 'hi' to him or will you give him a gentle pat?"</p>
Show pictures of babies and older siblings (from TV, books, magazines, diaper boxes).	<p>"Which one is the big sister? Is she riding a tricycle? Can the baby ride the tricycle? No! That's right! New babies cannot ride tricycles but big sisters can! Some day you can teach her!"</p> <p>"Is the baby wearing a diaper? Yes, you are right! Is the big brother wearing a diaper? No, you are right! Babies wear diapers but big brothers use the toilet!"</p>
Purchase baby doll for older sibling to dress, feed and care for.	<p>"Can you say 'hi' and 'I love you' to the doll? You can say 'hi' and 'I love you' to your baby sister!"</p> <p>"Your baby sister won't talk when she is born. But, you can talk to her. She will learn to talk if you do that."</p> <p>"Is the baby doll crying? How can you help? Can you hug her gently? Can you pat her? What else can you do? Can you sing to her?"</p>
Read books about new baby and becoming a big brother or big sister.	<p>First, read the words and stories in the books by yourself. Then you can decide which words you like best and you can use those words when talking with your older child.</p>
Make changes to physical arrangements such as change of bed or room well before new baby's birth and involve older child in as many choices as are age appropriate.	<p>"When baby comes you get a big sister bed! Which of these two would you like best?"</p> <p>"Do you remember you will share a room with baby after he is 6 months old? Look at this picture of two cribs. Which one do you like better for baby brother?"</p>

*Some families prefer out-of-hospital births. See American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (2017) for recommendations for positive outcomes.

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