



13 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR NEW PARENTS

1 Recognize That the First Year Is Usually Challenging

The first year is challenging because having a baby will turn anyone's world upside down. If you are the primary caregiver for a newborn, your life and schedule are no longer your own. You have a tiny human counting on you for feedings, changings, comforting, holding, rocking, swinging, being sung to, and whatever else it is that your baby will need from you.

We like to think that our own baby will be easy, especially if that is our own personality. The reality is that most babies are high maintenance. They require round-the-clock care, and that itself makes the first year challenging.

2 Sleep When Baby Sleeps

Because babies are so much work while they are awake, take the opportunity to sleep when they sleep. You can't take a nap while they are awake. Therefore, don't miss the opportunity to catch up on sleep while they are sleeping.

3 Allow for Normal Household Noise

When you whisper while your baby sleeps and insist on silence in your home for your sleeping baby, then your baby becomes a sleeper who is easily woken by any sound. If you condition your baby to sleep through normal household noise, they will learn to be good sleepers despite the noise.

4 Don't Get Hung Up on Advice From Others

New parents get a lot of unsolicited advice, especially from family and friends. Keep in mind that they are giving advice because they love you and they are trying to help. However, you don't have to follow the advice of others just because they offer it. Do what is best for your own baby.

5 Accept Help When Offered

Babies and small children are a lot of work. They all require lots of time, energy, effort, and love and when you have trusted people in your life offering to help, then accept their help. It's often survival mode in the first few months.

6 Breastfeed or Formula: Do What Works Best for Your Situation

The benefits of breastmilk have been proven by science to be better than formula. However, how much better? And at what cost? There are too many women who beat themselves up emotionally because they are unable to breastfeed for one reason or another.

If your baby is being fed, you are doing a good job. Do what is best for your own situation. If you end up giving your baby formula, remind yourself that millions, if not billions, of babies have grown up on formula and end up being healthy, intelligent, well-adjusted people.

7

Don't Compare Your Baby to Other Babies

All babies are different. It is not good or bad. Some babies have colic. It doesn't mean that they will have issues later. Babies develop at different rates. You can have one baby who walks at nine months and another that doesn't until 14 months, and they are both healthy and happy.

8

Take a Shower, It Will Make You Feel Better

We often don't take care of ourselves as new moms or dads. Many parents spend their lives caring for their children to the extent that their own self-care goes by the wayside. As a new parent, one way to care for yourself is by showering daily. It will help you feel refreshed. Even if it is a five-minute quick shower, it will help you feel better.

9

Get Out of the House and Meet Fellow Moms/Dads

Don't think you have to parent alone! There are so many parent groups to join. Look for local parent groups in your area. Connection is helpful to all of us—especially connections with others who are going through the same phase of life and have similar experiences.

10

Get Outside and Walk

If you are the one who gave birth, then getting up and becoming active can be hard at first. Birth is really hard on our bodies. A simple way to get active that will help with your mood as well is to get outside and go on walks.

Put the baby in the stroller and get yourself walking outside, even if it is just around the block to get started. You will find that the fresh air and blood pumping through your body will help brighten your mood and spirit.

11

Find the Humor in Your New Life

Don't take your life too seriously. Be willing to laugh at the humorous things when they happen. For example: a dirty diaper immediately after you have bathed and dressed your baby. Your little one is happily cooing and smiling at you when it happens. These things are bound to happen. Be willing to laugh and find the humor in life.

12

Take Photos Because Time Flies

The days may seem long, but the years are short. Time goes by quicker than you will realize. Take photos and videos, even when nothing special is happening, because they grow up fast. You will blink and they are no longer babies. Blink again and they are no longer toddlers. Capture life as it is happening, because tomorrow they are another day older, and you can't get that day back.

13

Bond with Your Baby and Enjoy the Present

Enjoy life with your baby and cherish the small moments as they happen. Take the time to breathe in the baby smell that comes from the top of their head, gaze at them as they sleep peacefully in your arms. Soak up the baby giggles. These are the precious moments and memories that will keep you fueled through the many days and nights that will be a struggle.

They are only babies once, so be sure to take mental snapshots of those precious moments that you want to capture for a lifetime.