



*Dad's Guide to*  
**Fatherhood**



# Welcome to Fatherhood!

## Getting Started

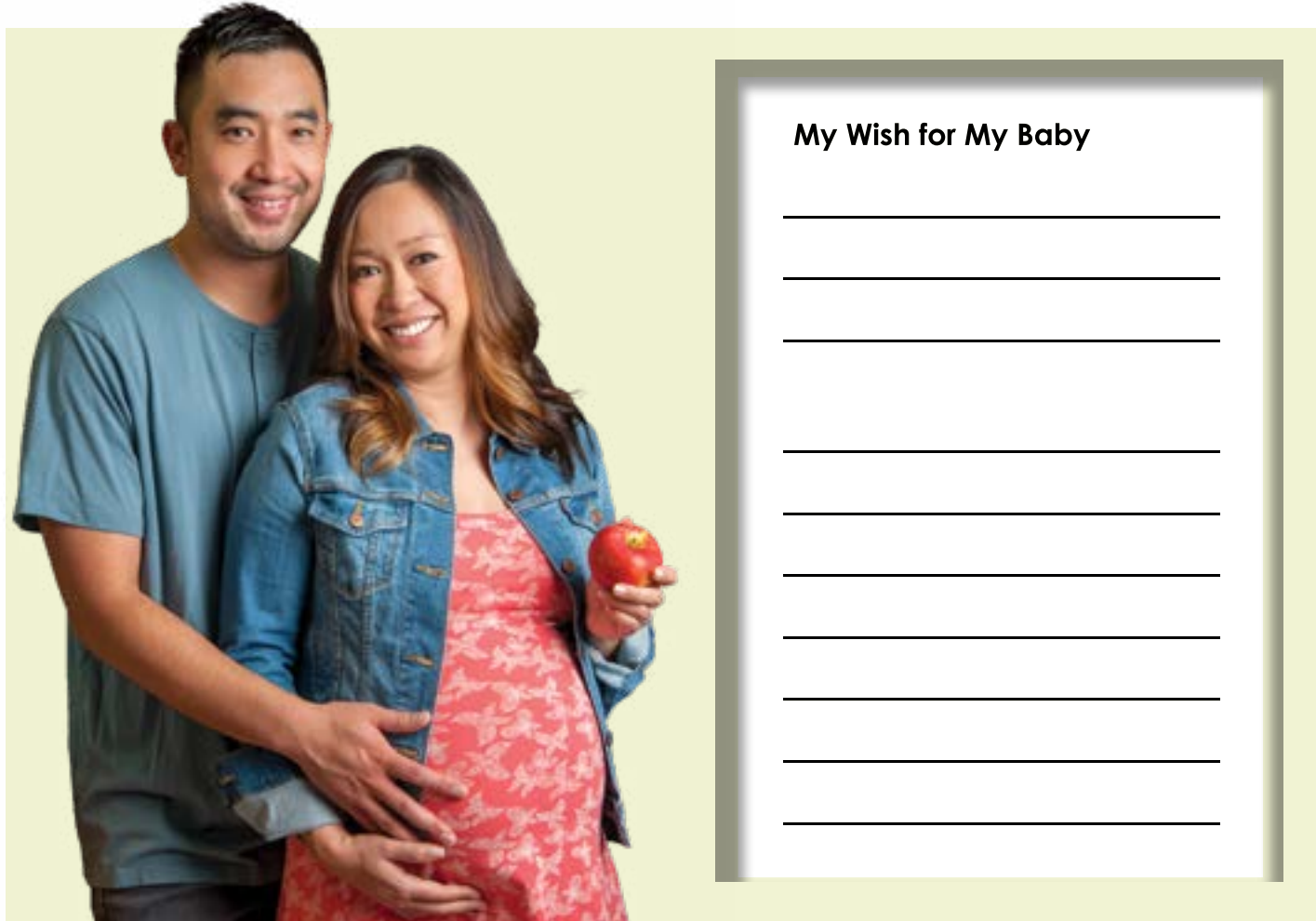
Congratulations! You are about to start a wonderful new journey.

**Dad's Guide to Fatherhood** is an informative and useful guide to help answer the many questions you may have about becoming a father. This guide is produced by the Texas Office of the Attorney General – Child Support Division and the Texas Health and Human Services – Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. Some of the content for this publication was adapted from Maps for Dads, copyright and produced by Healthy Families San Angelo.

Throughout the publication, you will find resource boxes directing you to helpful worksheets in the resources section. These worksheets were designed to help you and your partner celebrate the joy of having a new baby and discuss important topics for your journey.

Learn about what happens in the months leading up to the birth of your child, how to prepare for your baby's arrival and what to do when your baby arrives.

You will learn a lot of new things on the road to fatherhood. **Dad's Guide to Fatherhood** will help you become one terrific dad!



# Table of Contents



## 2 Before Your Baby is Born

- How Do You Feel About Being a Dad?
- Parenting Together
- Stages of Your Unborn Baby's Growth
- Going to the Doctor
- Welcome to the Women, Infants, and Children Program

## 10 Preparing for Your Baby's Arrival

- Making a Safe Place for Your Baby
- Budgeting for Your New Baby
- Self-Care

## 16 When Your Baby Comes

- When Babies Cry
- Understanding Your Baby's Development
- Developmental Milestones
- Newborn Safety
- Taking Care of Your Baby

## 27 Being a Dad

- Bonding with Your Baby
- Supporting and Understanding Your Partner
- Supporting and Understanding Mom and Dad's Emotions
- Benefits of Establishing Paternity

## 36 Resources

# Before Your Baby is Born

## How Do You Feel About Being a Dad?

Having a baby is a big deal. You might be happy, afraid, confused, concerned — or all of these things (and more) at the same time.

### Here is a short list of things new dads worry about:

- Will I be able to pay for everything my baby needs?
- How can I help my baby learn?
- Am I ready to be a dad? I haven't done everything I planned to do.
- What kind of dad am I going to be?
- Will I be able to tell what my baby needs?
- If I talk about what scares me, will my partner think I am not committed to our new family?
- How is my life going to change? Will things be different between my partner and me?
- How can I help my partner throughout the pregnancy?



**Relax.** It is normal to have worries when you learn that you are going to be a new parent. Your partner likely has the same worries and some of her own. Talking to each other will help you both start developing your game plan for parenthood.

## Parenting Together

Families form in many different ways. You and your child's mother may be married. You may be in a committed relationship, at the beginning of a relationship or no longer together romantically. No matter your relationship status, you and your child's mother can be excellent parents to your new baby by creating a strong and healthy co-parenting relationship. This publication will refer to the mother of your baby as your partner. Even if you and mom are not romantic partners, you can and should be involved from pregnancy to birth and throughout your child's life.

Co-parenting is when two parents actively work together to raise their child. The way that the two of you interact with each other will influence your child's emotional, physical and social well-being from early childhood into adulthood.

Healthy and open communication is important in any relationship. Below are some tips to help you and your partner develop a positive and effective co-parenting relationship. Please also refer to the Resources section for the "Co-parenting Roles and Responsibilities" worksheet to help you get the conversation started.

### Keys to Successful Co-Parenting:

- Open communication! Share parenting information with your partner consistently, accurately and on a timely basis.
- Discuss and agree on parenting time schedules.
- Discuss and agree on financial responsibilities.
- Keep household rules, schedules and behavioral boundaries consistent.
- Speak positively about your partner around your child(ren).
- Discuss and agree on discipline styles.
- Keep parenting styles consistent. Don't purposely try to "outshine" your partner.
- Discuss what roles extended family (grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc.) will play in raising your child.
- Understand that co-parenting takes practice; sometimes it will be easy, other times it will be hard.
- Find a way to compromise.

## Resource

Check out page 38 for the "Co-Parenting Roles and Responsibilities" worksheet.

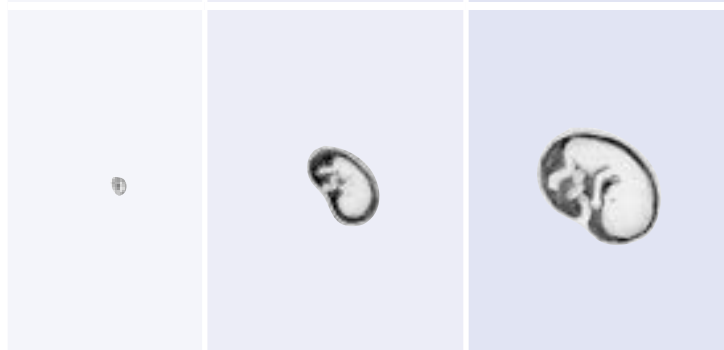
# Before Your Baby is Born

## Stages of Your Unborn Baby's Growth

This is an exciting time — your partner and your baby are going to grow a lot in the next several months! Use this handy timeline to see what is happening throughout the pregnancy.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester

	Weeks 1 – 4	Weeks 5 – 8	Weeks 9 – 12
<b>Baby is Growing</b>	Your baby is about the size of a poppy seed.	Baby is the size of a grain of rice.	Baby is about the size of a grape.
	Baby's heart and brain are starting to grow.	Your baby's eyes, nose and lips are starting to form.	Your baby can make a fist and move his legs.
		Lungs and kidneys are also starting to grow.	Fingernails and toenails are growing.



### Mom's Changes

Your partner might feel tired or nauseated.	She might need to go to the bathroom more than usual.	She may be constipated.
Her breasts may be feeling tender or heavy.	Some things might smell or taste different.	She might start feeling extra hungry and thirsty.

### Tips for Dad

If you smoke, start trying to quit.	Attend the ultrasound to hear your baby's heartbeat.
-------------------------------------	--

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester

Weeks 13 – 17	Weeks 18 – 22	Weeks 23 – 27
Your baby is about the size of an apple at around 15 weeks.	At 18 weeks, your baby is the size of a sweet potato.	Around 23 weeks, baby is the size of an eggplant.
You can hear baby's heartbeat with a stethoscope.	Baby's eyebrows and eyelashes appear.	Your baby can open his eyes and see light.
Baby is starting to hear sounds.	Baby might suck his thumb.	
	Baby's sex can be seen on an ultrasound.	



Your partner is in the second trimester! Nausea should lessen, but she might have some indigestion.	Leg cramps and backaches are common.	Your partner might notice stretch marks on her breasts or stomach.
She might begin to feel baby moving or fluttering.	She will begin feeling baby move more.	She may be hungrier than normal. She may have back pain or swelling in her ankles and feet.

Start thinking about your budget and financial options.	Attend the ultrasound to learn if you are having a boy or girl.	Start buying necessities for your baby, if you haven't already.
	This is a good time to start talking about the benefits of breastfeeding.	

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Trimester

Weeks 28 – 31	Weeks 32 – 35	Weeks 36 – 40
Your baby is growing fast, and at 28 weeks, baby is the size of a head of iceberg lettuce.	Your baby has grown to the size of a pineapple by 33 weeks.	Baby is about to make his appearance in the world.
Baby's bones are fully developed this month.	Your baby can blink. He closes his eyes during sleep and opens them while awake.	He will grow a lot in this last month, and his organs and brain are still growing.
Your baby is familiar with your voice. Talk and sing to him.	His brain and lungs are still developing.	It is best to wait until at least 39 weeks before your baby is born unless the doctor recommends delivery sooner for medical reasons.
Baby can also taste some flavors from foods, so encourage your partner to eat healthy.		



Your partner is now in the third trimester!	She might be feeling more back pain.	Her belly will get lower as baby gets into the birth position. She might talk to her doctor about signs of labor.
She might have mild contractions, called Braxton Hicks. Call the doctor if she is having more than five contractions in an hour.	She may be constipated, and need to urinate more often.	Breathing may get easier but she might still be achy.
Breasts may leak milk — this is normal.	She might get short of breath and have problems sleeping. Sleeping on her side with pillows for support might help.	

Attend parenting classes. Ask your partner and the doctor what your role will be during delivery. Register at the hospital. You and your partner can also do a walk-through.	Start getting your baby's space together. Put up the crib. Organize clothes, diapers, burping cloths, etc.	Help your partner pack her "go bag" for the hospital. Have car seat properly installed and keep go bag by the door and ready.
--	--	---

# Before Your Baby is Born

## Going to the Doctor

### Why are Prenatal Visits Important?

A woman needs a prenatal check-up as soon as she thinks she might be pregnant. The prenatal visit is an important way to make sure your partner remains healthy and your baby is growing and developing properly.

### What Happens at Prenatal Visits?

The doctor will check your partner's and baby's physical condition, listen to the baby's heartbeat and on some visits, do an ultrasound — that's a picture of the baby inside the womb. You can get lots of information and instructions at the prenatal visits, such as how the baby is developing, the gender and any health issues. Don't be nervous about asking questions at these visits. This is your opportunity to learn as much as you can about what is happening in real time with your child.

Most women see an obstetrician/ gynecologist (OB/GYN) for prenatal visits. In Texas, certified nurse-midwives, licensed midwives, and family practice physicians can also give prenatal care and help with



births. Have a conversation with your partner about which type of birthing professional will help deliver your baby.

### How Often Will She Have Prenatal Visits?

Some women go for a prenatal visit once a month at first, then every two weeks, then every week when it gets close to time for the birth. Your partner will have her own schedule for these visits. How often she needs to see her doctor depends on her and the baby's needs. Some dads have work schedules that won't allow them to attend every visit. Milestone visits are a great way to catch up on your baby's development. You may also be able to speak to your partner about telling the doctor to allow you to receive some information about her and the baby's health over the phone.

## Tip

Go to the prenatal visits and ask questions. This is your time to learn about your child's development. Take a look at the prenatal test chart on page 39 for common prenatal tests done for baby.

### What Questions Should I Ask the Doctor About Pregnancy?

- What are signs and symptoms that something is wrong with my partner or the baby?
- What is the difference between normal pregnancy emotions and depression?
- What is the number for the 24-hour nurse in case we have questions?
- What is healthy weight gain, and how can I help her?
- What are things that she shouldn't do while pregnant?
- How can I help her stay physically healthy?
- What are the important visits I will want to attend?

### What Questions Should I Ask the Doctor About the Hospital Experience?

- Where will you deliver my baby? If you are not available when my partner goes into labor, who will deliver my baby?
- Can we visit the hospital or birthing center before the baby is born?
- Who can be present during delivery?
- How will we know when it's time to go to the hospital?
- What classes are available to new and expecting parents? Are any offered at the hospital or birthing centers?
- What is a scheduled delivery and how do we prepare?
- How can I help during contractions?
- What are the risks and benefits of using anesthesia, such as an epidural, during labor and delivery?
- What are other options to reduce pain for my partner during labor and delivery?
- How do you decide when to give my partner anesthesia?



*(Continued on next page)*

# Before Your Baby is Born

## Going to the Doctor

### What Questions Should I Ask the Doctor About the Hospital Experience?

(Continued from previous page)

- How many days should we expect to be in the hospital after the baby is born?
- Under what circumstances will you have to do a C-section?
- Can I stay with my partner if she needs a C-section?



**What Is a Cesarean Birth?** It's the birth of a baby by surgery. A Cesarean is also called a C-section. The doctor opens the mother's belly, cuts through the uterus — or womb — and lifts the baby out. The doctor cuts the cord and then stitches up the mother's incision. A C-section is a major operation. Full recovery from a C-section usually takes 4-6 weeks, much longer than recovery from a vaginal birth. Your partner will need rest and she won't be able to lift or carry things, including your baby. In other words, she'll need more help after a Cesarean birth.

**Whooping cough** (also called pertussis), is a highly contagious respiratory infection that spreads easily and can cause severe illness and even death. It is especially dangerous for infants under 6 months of age, who are too young to be well-protected by vaccines for whooping cough.

It's important for parents, grandparents or anyone who will care for your baby to get a DTaP vaccine, which protects against whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria. If you've never gotten a DTaP vaccine, you should ideally get it at least 2 weeks before visiting the baby. And your partner should get the DTaP vaccine during her third trimester of pregnancy.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) immunization schedule, DTaP shots are recommended at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 through 18 months and 4 through 6 years old.

To learn more about whooping cough and vaccination, visit [www.cdc.gov/whoopingcough](http://www.cdc.gov/whoopingcough), or talk with your health care professional.

## Welcome to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program

**The Texas Women, Infants, and Children Program supports your partner and your child from pregnancy to delivery, to raising a toddler.**

WIC is a nutrition program that helps pregnant women, new mothers and young children eat well, learn about nutrition and stay healthy. Nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding support, healthy foods and help finding health care are provided to low-income women, infants and children.

Fathers of children under the age of 5 are encouraged and welcome to bring their children to appointments, attend nutrition classes and receive and redeem benefits for their children. Active participation by fathers is a great help in keeping WIC children healthy.

### WIC is Here for You Too, Dad.

Texas WIC:

- Shares ways to stay healthy by offering nutrition classes, shopping tips and information on making well-balanced food choices.
- Answers questions about good nutrition for your partner and your child.
- Answers questions about the benefits of breastfeeding for your child and your partner.
- Helps you find other health care close by.
- Helps you buy the foods that your partner and your child need to stay healthy.



## Resource

To locate your closest WIC clinic, call 800-942-3678 or visit [www.texaswic.org](http://www.texaswic.org).

# Preparing for Your Baby's Arrival

## Get Involved Early

The months before your baby arrives are a great time to start connecting with your new child. Ensuring that you have the essential things for your baby's arrival will help parenthood feel real for you during the pregnancy. This section introduces you to the "to-do" list to prepare for your baby's arrival. You will need to:

- Help your partner plan and set up a safe place for baby to sleep.
- Get a crib and put it together.
- Get a car seat.
- Make a checklist of things your baby will need and be sure you have the essentials.
- Organize the baby's new things and arrange them for easy access and use.
- Talk to your partner about what you will do when it's time to go to the hospital. List the people you'll call and make sure their phone numbers are saved in your phone.
- Pack the hospital bag with your baby's essentials and clothes for your partner.

## Making a Safe Place for Your Baby

### A Safe Place for Your Baby to Sleep

Whether you have a separate room for your baby or you prefer to have your baby sleep in the room with you, babies need a safe place to sleep. Setting up the crib can be a lot of fun and a great way to bond with your partner. The crib is also a safe place for your baby to be alone when you're doing other things. The crib should be clean, up off the floor, away from hot or cold drafts and it should protect your baby from pets and other small children. Setting up your baby's safe place is definitely something you'll want to complete before you bring your baby home.



## When Deciding on a Crib, Safety Comes First

- Be sure that the bars on the crib are not more than 2 3/8 inches apart. If the space is bigger, the baby's tiny head could get stuck between them.
- Make sure all joints and parts fit tightly.
- Select a crib with no moving parts. Manufacturers may be able to supply crib locks if you are given a crib that has a drop-down rail.
- If you and your partner have selected a crib that adjusts with the baby's development, make sure that the mattress is 9 or more inches from the top rail at all times.
- Inside the crib, the mattress must fit well. If you can fit two fingers between the mattress and the side, it's too loose and your baby can slide into the space and get stuck or even hurt.
- If you plan to paint your baby's crib, make sure you use paint that does not have lead in it. Lead poisoning can cause brain damage and developmental delays in children.
- If your crib is made of wood, sand any rough spots to protect your baby from splinters.
- Pick a crib that does not have corner posts that stick up higher than the side rails. Babies can catch their clothes on the posts and choke.



# Preparing for Your Baby's Arrival

**Car Seats** – Texas State Law requires that your baby be in a car seat at all times when riding in a car. In fact, the hospital will not let you take your baby home without one.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents keep their infants and toddlers in rear-facing car seats until age 2.

The Safe Riders program works with community organizations statewide to provide car seats and education on proper selection, installation and use. Pregnant women in their last trimester are encouraged to participate. Safe Riders does not provide "infant carriers" but provides convertible seats which can be used rear-facing for young children and then converted to forward-facing use when appropriate. Booster seats for older children are also available.

## Tip

Call Safe Riders at 800-252-8255 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. You will be referred to a program in your area to get scheduled for the next available child safety seat class. Please understand that seats are not always available in every area of the state and programs do not always have a supply of seats. <http://dshs.texas.gov/saferiders/distribution.shtm>

If you are considering using a secondhand car seat, make sure it meets all the standards below. If each one of these statements is true, then the secondhand seat may be OK to use.

- The seat has never been involved in a moderate to severe crash.
- The seat has labels stating date of manufacture and model number. You need this information to find out if there is a recall on the car seat or if the seat is too old.
- The seat has no recalls. If you do find a recall on the car seat, you should contact the manufacturer as some problems can be fixed.
- The seat has all its parts. If the seat is missing a part, contact the manufacturer as some parts can be ordered.
- The seat has its instruction book. You can also order the instruction manual from the manufacturer.



## Budgeting for Your New Baby

You will have baby expenses: doctor bills, baby food, clothes, diapers, nursery supplies, child care and furnishings including a crib, a chest for clothes, a diaper-changing table and a rocking chair. The list will grow, but don't get overwhelmed. You don't have to rush out and buy everything brand new. Friends and family can lend some things; some items will be welcome gifts. This is a good time to start a budget and plan for the cost of bringing up a baby.

The Preparing for Baby Questionnaire on page 40 will help you and your partner decide which items you will need to buy new, which will be provided by family and friends, items that can be decided on later and the expected cost of those items.

### Income Withholding

Financially preparing for your baby can feel overwhelming and might bring back some of those worries mentioned earlier. You can provide for your new family without breaking the bank. You also may be able to adjust the withholdings on your W-4 form at your job because of your growing family. This could help you bring home more of your paycheck during the year. Speak to your employer's HR Specialist for more information on adjusting your withholdings.

### Tax

During tax time, you may also qualify for additional deductions that you did not qualify for before, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or the Child Tax Credit. Speak with a tax professional before filing your taxes to see if you and your family qualify and how to claim these credits. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program assists low-income families with tax preparation and information to help you claim all your qualifying credits and deductions. Locate a VITA site near you by calling 1-800-906-9887.

### Financial Obligations

As financial obligations increase, it becomes even more important to budget the money you earn versus the money you are spending. The Our Family Budget sheet in the Resource section of the workbook will help you to create your own budget and get a better understanding of where your money is going throughout the month. Budgeting is important at any income level. Creating a written budget document and updating it monthly will not only help you keep track of the money you are spending, but will also allow you to see areas where you are paying too much and could find savings.



# Preparing for Your Baby's Arrival

## Self-Care

You are one of the most important people in your child's life. Your health, well-being and behaviors directly affect the health and well-being of your child. Living a healthy and positive lifestyle will help ensure that your baby develops healthy habits and attitudes that will last a lifetime. Your healthy habits will also encourage and inspire your partner to adopt those habits if she hasn't already.

**Eating for a Healthy Baby** - Eating well is important for your partner to give your baby the best start possible. Practicing your own good eating habits sets a great example for your growing family. It will also help you have the strength and health to participate in your child's life to the fullest. A well-balanced diet includes a variety of foods like fruits and vegetables, whole grains, protein and dairy. Making healthy meals at home is a great way to bond with your partner and talk about your hopes, plans and dreams for your baby. Visit [www.texaswic.org](http://www.texaswic.org) for helpful tips on cooking and recommended foods and recipes.

**Exercise** - Staying active is important for your family. It can help your partner have more energy and make having a baby easier. Exercise can help with body aches and pains, and will make losing weight after delivery easier. Activity can also lower the risk of high blood pressure and diabetes during pregnancy. Exercising regularly also helps you maintain healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Something as simple as an evening walk for 20 to 30 minutes has heart health benefits for both of you and can help manage stress. This can lower the likelihood of bigger health issues later, such as heart attacks, heart disease and diabetes.



**Drinking Alcohol** - Alcohol use can cloud your judgement and change the way you make decisions. Severe alcohol use can lead to other serious health risks that can reduce your bond and involvement with your new baby. Women should not drink any type of alcohol during their pregnancy. Even a small amount of alcohol can hurt your baby's brain, heart, kidneys and other organs. Babies can get Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) if a woman drinks alcohol while pregnant. FASD can cause life-long problems, including intellectual disabilities and learning problems. You can support your partner by not drinking. Staying away from alcohol and other harmful substances is a healthy choice you can make for yourself and your family.

**Smoking** - Babies should never be around secondhand smoke.

Smoke can cause breathing problems for babies putting them at risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In fact, babies are twice as likely to die of SIDS if they are around smoke. Babies of smokers have more lung problems, allergies and ear and nose infections than babies in smoke-free homes. Ask your guests who smoke to move outside, away from doors and windows.

If you still smoke, you may want to consider quitting for your health and for the health of your family. Even if you do not smoke directly around your baby, the smell and residue will still be on your clothes, under your nails and on your breath.

## Resource

Do you use tobacco and need help quitting? Check out page 37 for proven support from the Texas Quitline.

# When Your Baby Comes

## When Babies Cry

**Crying is Normal** – Most babies cry for a total of about two hours a day, and many get more fussy between the hours of 6 p.m.-10 p.m. This is how babies communicate and is the only way a newborn can tell you he's uncomfortable or wants something to be different. Sharing skin-to-skin contact with your baby by laying him on your chest as a newborn can help him be less fussy as he grows older. If crying lasts for hours at a time, you may want to call your pediatrician to make sure your baby isn't sick, injured or colicky. Colic is when, for unknown reasons, your baby cannot self-regulate. This causes abnormally long periods of crying. Figuring out why your baby is crying takes some trial and error, but as you continue to bond with him, he will guide you to what he needs.

**Calming a Fussy Baby** – Sometimes it may seem that your baby is crying for no reason at all. It's your job to show your baby that he lives in a terrific world full of people that care about what he needs. If you stay calm and treat him with care when he cries, he starts to learn how to communicate. When you consistently respond calmly to your baby's crying, you will build a stronger bond between you and your baby. If you have gone through the When Babies Cry checklist and nothing seems to soothe him, try these calming tips.

- Hold your baby close: Your voice is familiar and comforting to your baby.
- Repeat the same action and sounds: Try one of the following –
  - Speak softly, repeating "It's OK baby, It's OK baby, It's OK baby."
  - Sing softly.
  - Gently rock, sway or bounce your baby in your arms while supporting his head.
  - Gently massage his back, arms and legs.
- Keep repeating the same sound or action. It may take a few minutes for your baby to calm.
- If the first thing you try doesn't work after a few minutes, move on to the next.
- White noise, or a low hiss in the background, imitates the constant noises heard in the womb and can also be comforting.

## Resource

The When Babies Cry chart on page 43 will help you remember to check for common things that could make your baby cry.

## Understanding Your Baby's Development

Babies go through a lot of changes in their first year of life. They begin to understand and display emotions. They start making sounds and gestures to communicate with you. They also begin to master many developmental milestones. As a new dad, you play a major role in your child's emotional, mental and physical development. The behavior, language and emotional control that you model teaches your child how to interact in his new world and helps him speak, think, move and control his emotions properly.

Babies and children also pick up on nonverbal cues and expressions. They may not yet understand the words that you are saying, but they will pick up the meaning from your facial expressions, voice tone and body language. As you are going through your day-to-day routine and bonding with your new child, make sure to pay attention to those things as well as your tenseness and stress levels. Your baby will pick up on these and react to them positively if you are showing positive emotions and negatively if you are showing negative emotions. Understanding your strengths and challenges with communication will allow you to be mindful of your words, actions and tone when interacting with your child. The more positive nonverbal cues you show your baby, the more he will learn that the world is safe and that he can trust the people around him.



# Developmental Milestones

## Social and Emotional

## Language

## Mental

## Physical

2

Months

- Begins to smile at people
- Can briefly calm himself (may bring hands to mouth and suck on hand)
- Tries to look at parent

- Coos, makes gurgling sounds
- Turns head toward sounds



- Pays attention to faces
- Begins to follow things with eyes and recognize people at a distance
- Begins to act bored (cries, fussy) if activity doesn't change

- Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy
- Makes smoother movements with arms and legs

4

Months

- Smiles spontaneously, especially at people
- Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops
- Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning



- Begins to babble
- Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears
- Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain or being tired

- Lets you know if he is happy or sad
- Responds to affection
- Reaches for a toy with one hand
- Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it
- Follows moving things with eyes from side to side
- Watches faces closely
- Recognizes familiar people and things at a distance

- Holds head steady, unsupported
- Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface
- May be able to roll over from tummy to back
- Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys
- Brings hands to mouth
- When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows

6

Months

- Knows familiar faces and begins to know if someone is a stranger
- Likes to play with others, especially parents
- Responds to other people's emotions and often seems happy
- Likes to look at self in a mirror



- Responds to sounds by making sounds
- Strings vowels together when babbling ("ah," "eh," "oh") and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds
- Responds to own name
- Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure
- Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b")

- Looks around at things nearby
- Brings things to mouth
- Shows curiosity and tries to get things that are out of reach
- Begins to pass things from one hand to the other
- May be ready to start solid foods

- Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front)
- Begins to sit without support
- When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce
- Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward



9

Months

- May be afraid of strangers
- May be clingy with familiar adults
- Has favorite toys



- Understands "no"
- Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"
- Copies sounds and gestures of others
- Uses fingers to point at things

- Watches the path of something as it falls
- Looks for things he sees you hide
- Plays "peek-a-boo"
- Puts things in his mouth
- Moves things smoothly from one hand to the other
- Picks up things like cereal o's between thumb and index finger

- Stands, holding on
- Can get into sitting position
- Sits without support
- Pulls to stand
- Crawls



12

Months

- Is shy or nervous with strangers
- Cries when mom or dad leaves
- Has favorite things and people
- Shows fear in some situations
- Hands you a book when he wants a story
- Repeats sounds or actions to get attention
- Puts out arm or leg to help with dressing
- Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake"

- Responds to simple spoken requests
- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech)
- Says "mama" and "dada" and exclamations like "uh-oh!"
- Tries to say words you say

- Explores things by shaking, banging, throwing
- Finds hidden things easily
- Looks at the right picture or thing when it's named
- Copies gestures
- Starts to use things correctly: drinks from a cup
- Puts things in container, takes things out of container
- Lets things go without help
- Pokes with index (pointer) finger
- Follows simple directions like "pick up the toy"

- Gets to a sitting position without help
- Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture ("cruising")
- May take a few steps without holding on
- May stand alone



# When Your Baby Comes

## Newborn Safety

**Holding a Newborn Baby** - When you hold your baby, always remember to support his neck and head.

**Safe Sleep** - During the first few months, your baby will sleep between 15 and 20 hours a day.

- Never lay a baby on a pillow, a soft couch, an adult bed or a waterbed.
- Always put your baby to sleep on his back in a crib.
- Never put your baby to sleep on his stomach or side.
- Don't put toys, blankets, pillows or bumpers in the crib.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

- Always placing your baby on his back for every sleep time.
- Always using a firm sleep surface, like a crib.
- Never use car seats and other sitting devices, like a sofa or chair for sleeping baby.
- The baby should sleep in the same room as the parents, but not in the same bed (room-sharing without bed-sharing).



## SIDS

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than a year old. SIDS is sometimes known as crib death because the infants often die in their cribs. For more helpful information on safe sleep, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website at [www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.asp](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.asp)

## Newborn Safety

### Put Your Baby in a Safe Place

If you are feeling frustrated by your baby's crying, put the baby in a safe place and leave the room. Let your baby cry alone for 5 to 10 minutes.

A safe place can include a crib or a play pen/play yard. Never leave your baby alone in a swing or a bouncy chair. Take deep breaths to calm yourself down. Things you can do to calm down include:

- Stretch and take deep breaths.
- Call a friend, neighbor or your partner.
- Do 5 minutes of exercise (push-ups, sit-ups, jumping jacks, etc.) to let your nervous energy out.
- Just sit still and breathe.

If you don't think you can calm down after 5 minutes, check on the baby to make sure he is physically okay, then call a friend, neighbor or family member to come and help you. Every parent should have a plan in case they are in a situation where they cannot get their baby to stop crying. Fill in the following box to help you think about what your plan will be.

### When my baby won't stop crying:

- A safe place I can leave the baby for 5 minutes is \_\_\_\_\_.
- A calm and understanding person I can call to talk to is \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing I can do to calm myself down is \_\_\_\_\_.
- If I need help caring for the baby I will \_\_\_\_\_.

## Tip

Consider sharing this information with your baby's caretaker and find out how they handle a baby who won't stop crying. Also, consider sharing it with your partner and other friends with babies to help them plan.

### No matter how upset you feel, never shake your baby.

Shaking or treating your baby roughly can cause brain damage, blindness, hearing loss and death. Abusive Head Trauma (Shaken Baby Syndrome) is the name for all the different problems that can happen when a baby is shaken. This occurs most often in children 6 to 8 weeks old, which is when babies cry the most.

If you are worried that someone you know is having a hard time when their baby cries, offer to help. You may be able to offer new ways of calming the baby. Also, you may be able to give the caretaker a break. If you think someone is hurting a child, you need to report it. You can call 1-800-252-5400 or use the Department of Family and Protective Services' secure website: [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org).

# When Your Baby Comes

## Newborn Safety

### Never Leave a Baby Alone in a Car — Not Even for a Minute!

No matter what the temperature is outside, the sun heats the inside of a car. With the windows up, your car can get hot enough to cause serious injury — even death.

Believe it or not, routines and distraction have caused people to mistakenly leave children behind in cars.

- Place your cell phone, gym bag or whatever is to be carried from the car on the floor in the back seat. This will remind you to see the baby when you open the rear door to reach for your stuff.
- Teach your child that a car is not a playground. Never allow him to play in any car.
- Lock the car after everyone has exited — especially at home. Keep keys out of your child's reach.



## Taking Care of Your Baby

### Feeding Your New Baby

**Is Breastfeeding Healthier than Formula?** - Absolutely! Every mother makes milk that is custom designed just for her baby. A mother's milk is loaded with live ingredients that protect her baby from illnesses and infections. Babies who are not breastfed will get more ear and respiratory infections. This means many more trips to the doctor and less money left in your pocket. Babies who are not breastfed are also more likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or develop diabetes, obesity, asthma and certain types of cancer as they grow older.

Breastfeeding is also great for mom. Breastfeeding burns up to 600 calories a day, so mothers have an easier time maintaining a healthy weight. Mothers who breastfeed have a reduced risk of diabetes, heart disease and breast and ovarian cancers later in life.

**Ways to Help Your Partner Increase Her Milk Supply** - The key to building a strong supply is nursing every time baby is hungry. If mom is present when baby shows hunger cues, bring the baby to her to nurse rather than feeding him a bottle. Maintaining a well-rounded diet with the recommended amount of calories can also aid in milk production. If mom thinks she is not making enough milk, encourage her to see a lactation consultant. Tell her she is doing a good job! If she has any problems breastfeeding, remind her she can receive help from a breastfeeding professional at WIC.



## Resource

Do you or your partner need breastfeeding information? Visit [breastmilkcounts.com](http://breastmilkcounts.com) to learn more about breastfeeding. To find a WIC clinic near you turn to page 37.

# When Your Baby Comes

## Taking Care of Your Baby



**Dads Can Feed Baby, Too** – Direct breastfeeding, at the breast, is the best way for your partner to keep up a large milk supply, but you can offer breastmilk from a bottle when your partner needs a break. Experts typically recommend waiting about three weeks, or until breastfeeding is going well, before introducing breastmilk in a bottle. After that, feel free to help feed your baby. Newborns eat small, but frequent meals. Start with 2 ounces of breastmilk in a bottle and if your baby still seems hungry, offer a little more.

If you want to warm a bottle of breastmilk or infant formula, hold the bottle under warm (not hot) running water right before feeding. Always test by dripping some on your wrist to be sure it's not too hot. Do not use a microwave oven to warm the bottle. Test your bottle nipples from time to time to make sure the right amount of breastmilk is coming out. It should come out in drops, not make a stream.

Burp your baby at a natural break or at the end of a feeding by gently rubbing his back while supporting him in an upright position. If there is any breastmilk left in the bottle after feeding your baby, the leftovers can still be safely used within 2 hours. If you are formula feeding, throw out any formula left in the bottle after feeding your baby. Thoroughly wash bottles after every use. The germs from your baby's mouth will get into the milk in the bottle and could make your baby sick if you feed him the same milk later.

After you've fed, burped and changed the baby's diaper, let him nap on your bare chest. Tell your baby a story. Even while asleep, your baby's brain is learning about language. Babies love skin-to-skin contact with their dads and they like to hear their dad's deeper voice. Be proud to support your baby's breastfeeding mom. Breastfeeding is the best thing for your baby's health and hers.

**When Does My Baby Need Other Foods?** – Your baby should have only breastmilk or formula until he is about 6 months old. Speak with your pediatrician before you introduce baby food to your child. Your doctor may refer you to WIC or give you general information about which foods to begin with and a schedule for introducing each new food type.

Do not give your baby cow's milk, soft drinks, tea, fruit juices or anything besides mother's breastmilk or infant formula that's been prepared properly.

Do not add baby cereal or other thickeners to your baby's diet unless your child has special medical needs and your baby's doctor recommends it.

## Taking Care of Your Baby

**Dressing Your Baby** – Newborn babies can't control their body temperature like older children. Undress and re-dress your baby a little at a time so that he never has to be naked and get too cold. You can put a towel or light blanket over the baby's bare tummy to help him feel safe and calm.

**Grooming Your Baby** – All newborns have peeling, flaky skin. This is normal. Talk with your pediatrician before using lotion or oils on your baby. Newborn babies also do not need a bath every day, and in most cases there is little need to use soaps or other cleansers. Just wipe your baby down with a damp cloth using warm (not hot) water. Any time you place your baby in water, make sure that the temperature isn't too hot. Testing with your elbow should allow you to see if the temperature of the water will be just right for your child.

Your baby's fingernails need to be kept short. Using a nail file or emery board is the safest method. However, it can be time-consuming. A second alternative is to trim nails carefully with baby nail clippers that have rounded tips. Do not use adult-sized nail clippers — you may accidentally clip the tip of your baby's finger or toe instead of the nail.

Don't put anything in your baby's ears or nose. These places will take care of themselves. Just wipe around the outside. Never use Q-tips or cotton swabs. They can damage the ear. If you are concerned that your baby's ears have an abnormal amount of wax build-up, speak with the pediatrician. The doctor may decide to do a cleaning in the office or give you instructions on how to clean your baby's ears.

## Baby's First Doctor Visit –

You will need to schedule a visit with your baby's pediatrician before you leave the hospital. During this visit, the doctor will check your baby's height and weight to make sure he is growing properly. The doctor will also ask questions about your baby's eating, sleeping and diaper soiling patterns. Use this visit to ask questions about your baby's health and development.



## When Your Baby Comes

### Taking Care of Your Baby

**Changing Diapers -** Diapering your baby is easy. Gently lay your baby on a flat surface, like a changing table or bed. Always keep one hand on the baby. Babies can roll off in the blink of an eye.



Remove baby's old diaper by pulling the adhesive tape tabs loose. Lift your baby's bottom off the dirty diaper by taking his feet in your hands and pulling him up.

Wipe your baby's bottom clean from the front to back with a baby wipe or wash cloth. Get into the folds and creases of your baby's skin. Be sure your baby is clean everywhere.

Pull the diaper out from under his bottom, place the used wipes in the dirty diaper, roll it up and put it in the trash.

Diapers have a front — the narrow side — and a back — the wider part. Place a clean diaper on the changing surface and lift your baby's legs so his bottom sits on the back part of the diaper.

Pull the front up between his legs to cover him. Pull the adhesive tape tabs and fasten the back and front so the diaper fits snug around the tummy.

Slide two fingers inside the diaper's waist to check the fit. If the fingers slide easily, you are finished.

Now, put your baby in a safe place, like the crib, and go wash your hands.

**How Often Do I Change My Baby's Diaper?** - Change your baby's diaper as soon as you notice he has a wet or dirty diaper. If you check him after feeding and burping, or about once every hour, he won't be wet or dirty for long. This is the best way to make sure your baby doesn't get diaper rash.

Many babies like diaper changing time. It's a relief for them to be clean and dry again, and it is a way for you to get to know each other. Take time to tickle your baby, kiss his tummy or tug gently on his toes and tell him, "This little piggy went to market..." You might learn to like diaper time, too.

## Being a Dad

### Bonding with Your Baby

One of the best ways to begin bonding is to spend special time with your baby in the hospital or as soon after birth as possible. In fact, bonding only happens between people who spend a lot of time — even most of their time — together.

Stay at your partner's bedside after your baby is born, when she and the baby have their first skin-to-skin contact. Smile at your baby, look into his eyes and talk to him. Babies like skin-to-skin contact with dads too, after they've had their first feeding. The sooner you start holding, feeding, talking to — being a dad to — your baby, the more deeply you'll bond.

Soon, you will start to pick up your baby's cues and you will know what he needs from you. Does he move his arms when he wants to be picked up? Does he make a certain sound when he wants to play? Does he coo when he wants you to rock him to sleep? As time goes by, your baby will learn that he can count on you. He'll feel safe and you'll feel good that you understand how to take care of him.

Bonding doesn't happen all at once. There's nothing wrong with you if you aren't comfortable with your baby right away — or if he's fussy or doesn't pay much attention to you.

What's important is that you show your baby he is wanted and loved and that he can count on you to meet his needs.



## Bonding with Your Baby

### What Can I Do to Create a Strong Bond with My Child?

There are lots of things that help dads bond with their babies.

- Cuddle him in your arms.
- Burp him after feedings.
- Change his diapers.
- Give him a bath.
- Spend time “skin-to-skin” with him on your chest.
- Gently rock him to sleep.
- Get up in the night with him, pick him up and soothe him.
- Talk to him — all the time — about anything.
- Walk with him when he cries or is fussy.
- Make silly faces that make him laugh.
- Read and sing to him.



Another way to help you bond with your baby is to help your partner give him the best start in life by breastfeeding. You can:

- Tell your partner you are proud of her for breastfeeding your baby.
- Do chores and other things allowing her time to breastfeed your baby.



## Supporting and Understanding Your Partner

Being a dad is the most important job you'll ever have. Part of that job is being a good partner by offering support to your partner. When she comes home from the hospital she will have to rest. Giving birth is different for every woman, but anyone who just had a baby has been through a lot. She may feel wiped out and more tired than ever before. You can help get things back to normal.

Your partner will feel better faster if you:

- Give her time to rest.
- Make sure she keeps her follow-up appointments with her doctor.
- Show her that you care how she feels.
- Encourage her to spend time with her friends and family.
- Support her effort to breastfeed.
- Play with the baby, together with your partner and on your own.
- Help with the day-to-day baby and household needs.



### Pay Attention to Your Partner — Do Things Just for Her

- Make her favorite meal or snack.
- Sit next to her and enjoy watching a movie she picked.
- Give her a massage.
- Ask how her day went.
- Do something small to be nice to her every day.
- When she's ready, find a sitter and take your partner out to dinner or to a movie.

## Resource

Healthy Texas Women is a program dedicated to offering women's health and family planning at no cost to eligible women in Texas. These services help women plan their families, whether it is to achieve, postpone or prevent pregnancy. [HealthyTexasWomen.org](http://HealthyTexasWomen.org)



# Being a Dad

## Supporting and Understanding Mom and Dad's Emotions

### Postpartum Depression

Pregnancy and motherhood bring a lot of different emotions. It is normal to feel excited, joyful, anxious, sad or overwhelmed as you adjust to a new baby. Your partner may even feel all of these emotions in a short period of time. Hormonal changes, lack of sleep and new responsibilities can make your partner feel like she's on an emotional roller coaster.

A pregnant woman's hormones will change after her baby is born. It can give some new moms strong or strange feelings and can cause postpartum depression. If you think your partner might be going through this, talk to her. Ask if she is worried about what she is thinking or feeling. If she keeps feeling bad or seems worse, call her doctor and say you think your partner might have postpartum depression. Ask the doctor what you can do.

Most of the time, these symptoms pass in a few days or a couple of weeks and never get so bad that moms or dads feel afraid. But, if at any point you become concerned your partner might harm herself or your baby, call 911 immediately to get help.

### Dads Get Baby Blues, Too

Did you know that men can have postpartum depression, too? Dads will usually start showing symptoms around a year after the birth of their baby. If your partner experienced postpartum depression, this could double the chance that you will experience it, too. Up to 25 percent of dads experience depression. If you notice that you are increasingly angry, have started using alcohol or other drugs, are frustrated or more irritable than normal, sad, violent or feel like isolating yourself, please get help from a medical professional. These could be symptoms of your own postpartum depression. Ask your partner to help look out for your mood changes like you did with her.



## Resource

You and your partner are not alone. Get more information about postpartum depression at 1-800-944-4773 or [postpartum.net](http://postpartum.net).

## Get Involved and Stay Involved!

When dads spend time with their kids — from pregnancy on — and when they work to be close, kids do better in so many ways.

- They are more active.
- They are healthier and stronger as babies, toddlers, preschoolers and when school-aged.
- Many do better on development tests.
- They tend to be less violent.
- They become sexually active at a later age.
- They go to school more often and stay in school longer.
- They are less likely to repeat a grade.
- Boys and girls are both more independent. They have better self-control and are more likely to be leaders.
- Girls have healthier relationships later in life, especially with guys. You, dad, are the first man they get to know. Set the bar high!

## Tip

There are lots of resources in this guide to help new parents — don't be afraid to reach out to one or more of them if you have questions or need support! A good dad gets help when he needs it. The people at the other end of these lifelines know that's true because they help great dads all the time.



# Being a Dad

## Benefits of Establishing Paternity

Establishing paternity builds an important bond between a father and his child. Children and fathers gain valuable emotional and social benefits by having a legally recognized father-child bond, such as:

- The child has a stronger sense of identity.
- The child may have the opportunity to bond with extended family members.
- The child can receive health insurance, certain social security benefits, military benefits or inheritance from either parent.
- The father can exercise his parental rights.
- The father can have his name placed on the child's birth certificate.

## How do I Establish Paternity?

In Texas, there are three ways to establish paternity for your child:

- The child is born during the marriage.
- By signing the Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) form.
- By court order.

If you do not establish paternity, you will not have any legal rights to your child.



## Marriage

If you and your partner are legally married when your baby is born, paternity is already established. Texas law presumes that you, the husband, are the biological father of your child. You will automatically receive certain legal rights and your name will be placed on your baby's birth certificate.



If you and your partner are not married, you have the option to sign an AOP form or have the court establish paternity for you.

# Being a Dad

## Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP)

An Acknowledgment of Paternity is a legal document that allows parents who are not married to establish legal paternity. The AOP can be completed before the baby is born, at the hospital or any time after the baby is born. By signing the AOP, you and your partner are voluntarily agreeing that you are, without a doubt, the biological father.

### Important facts about the AOP process:

- It establishes paternity at no financial cost.
- A DNA test is not required.
- The AOP form can be completed at any local child support office, vital statistics office or at a hospital.
- A certified professional will explain the process to you and your partner before you both sign the form.

The AOP only establishes paternity. After you and the mother sign the AOP you will have equal rights. Conservatorship, child support and parenting time (visitation schedule) can be addressed separately through a court order. Signing an AOP in your local child support office will not automatically open a child support case.

If you or your partner have doubts about you being the biological father, an AOP may not be the best route to establish paternity. You both may prefer to have a DNA test ordered. You can personally get DNA testing by an American Association of Blood Banks accredited lab, but you will be responsible for any fees charged by the lab. Another option available to parents seeking to establish paternity is a court order.



## Court Order

There are a few different ways parents can seek to establish paternity through a court order:

- The Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General
- Private attorney
- Pro se (without an attorney)

No matter the route, paternity cases established by court order will also generally include child, medical and dental support, conservatorship and a parenting time schedule.

The Child Support Division (CSD) of the Office of the Attorney General of Texas can help customers establish paternity by court order. To access CSD services, you or your partner will need to open a child support case by completing a child support application, which can be found on the Child Support Division website located at [www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cs](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cs). The Child Support Division will request and perform DNA testing unless you waive testing or have already signed an AOP. The first DNA test is free of charge.

The CSD can establish an order in a local child support office (if there is no history of family violence), or parents can appear before a judge in court. Parents who do not come to an agreement in the office, or have a history of family violence, must appear in court. If a court appearance is scheduled, show up! Paternity can still be established by a judge even if you are not present at court.

The other options for parents when seeking to establish a paternity order is to hire a private attorney or file motions themselves (pro se) through their county clerk's office. Fees for establishing court orders through a private attorney or pro se can sometimes be expensive. Additional information about this court process and helpful tool kits are available at [texaslawhelp.org](http://texaslawhelp.org). Texas Law Help is not affiliated with or endorsed by the Texas Office of the Attorney General.



## Contents

36 Your Resources

38 Co-Parenting Roles and Responsibilities

39 Important Prenatal Tests

40 Preparing for Baby Questionnaire

41 Our Family Budget and Contact List

42 Building a Positive Future for My Family

43 When Babies Cry

44 Baby's First Year

## Your Resources

### Alcohol and Drug (Substance) Abuse Services

Texas Outreach, Screening, Assessment and Referral Centers  
[www.dshs.texas.gov/sa/OSAR/](http://www.dshs.texas.gov/sa/OSAR/)  
 Dial 211 or 1-877-541-7905

SAMHSA - Administration Facility Locator  
[www.samhsa.gov/find-help](http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help)  
 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Department of State Health Services - Find Services  
[www.dshs.texas.gov/Services.shtm](http://www.dshs.texas.gov/Services.shtm)

### Baby Blues/Postpartum Depression

Postpartum Support International (PSI)  
[www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net)  
 Warmline: 1-800-944-4PPD (4773) The PSI warmline does not handle emergencies. Call 911 if you are in an emergency.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

For information and resource about mental health services in Texas  
[MentalHealthTX.org](http://MentalHealthTX.org)

### Breastfeeding

Breastmilk Counts  
[www.breastmilkcounts.com](http://www.breastmilkcounts.com)  
 Hotline: 1-855-550-MOMS (6667)

### Child Care Services

Department of Family and Protective Services: Child Care Search  
[www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Search\\_Texas\\_Child\\_Care/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/)

Texas Workforce Commission: Child Care Program  
[www.twc.state.tx.us/students/child-care-program](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/students/child-care-program)  
 Phone: Dial 211

Texas Child Care Solutions  
[texaschildcaresolutions.org](http://texaschildcaresolutions.org)

### Domestic Violence and Healthy Relationships

National Domestic Violence Hotline  
[www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org)  
 Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Get Child Support Safely  
[www.getchildsupportsafely.org](http://www.getchildsupportsafely.org)

### Employment

Texas Workforce Commission  
[twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers](http://twc.state.tx.us/jobseekers)

### Paternity and Child Support

Office of the Attorney General of Texas  
[www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov)  
 Child Support Division: 1-800-252-8014  
 Paternity Opportunity Program: 1-866-255-2006

### Fatherhood Services

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse  
[www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)  
 1-877-4-DAD-411 (1-877-432-3411)

Texas Home Visiting Programs  
[www.texashomevisiting.org](http://www.texashomevisiting.org)

Access and Visitation Directory: Co-Parenting and Fatherhood Classes  
[www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cs/access-and-visitation-help](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/cs/access-and-visitation-help)

### Free Tax Assistance

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)  
[www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers](http://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-you-by-volunteers)

Locate a VITA site near you:  
<https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/>  
 1-800-906-9887

### Health Care

Texas Associations of Community Health Centers: Find a Community Health Center  
[tachc.org/find-healthcare-center](http://tachc.org/find-healthcare-center)

### Locate Your Closest WIC Clinic

[www.texaswic.org](http://www.texaswic.org)  
 1-800-942-3678

### Parenting Legal Services

Access and Visitation Hotline  
[www.txaccess.org](http://www.txaccess.org)  
 Hotline: 1-866-292-4636

Texas Legal Services Center  
 Family and Kids  
[texaslawhelp.org](http://texaslawhelp.org)

### Parenting Resources

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: Help for Parents. Hope for Kids.  
[www.HelpandHope.org](http://www.HelpandHope.org)

Texas Department of Health and Human Services  
 Early Childhood Intervention Services  
[hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services](http://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/early-childhood-intervention-services)  
 1-877-787-8999; option 3

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: Prevention, Early Intervention and Outreach  
[www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention\\_and\\_early\\_intervention/about\\_prevention\\_and\\_early\\_intervention/programs.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/prevention_and_early_intervention/about_prevention_and_early_intervention/programs.asp)

American Academy of Pediatrics: Safe Sleep Guide  
<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx>

American Academy of Pediatrics: Healthy Children  
[www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

Department of State Health Services: Safe Riders  
[www.dshs.texas.gov/saferiders](http://www.dshs.texas.gov/saferiders)  
 1-800-252-8255

### Smoking Cessation

Texas Quitline  
[www.yesquit.org](http://www.yesquit.org)  
 1-877-YES-QUIT (1-877-937-7848)

### Texas Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation Reporting System

Texas Abuse Hotline  
[www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org)  
 1-800-252-5400

### Texas Resources

Texas Health and Human Services Commission - 211  
[www.211texas.org](http://www.211texas.org)  
 Dial 211 or 1-877-541-7905

# Co-Parenting Roles and Responsibilities

Raising a child is a team effort. Both mom and dad play very important roles in their child's life. When forming a new family, moms and dads should talk about what roles they think they should play in raising their child and what expectations they have for each other. This worksheet is designed to help parents talk about and decide what is best for their family.

## DAD:

Complete the following on your own. Then share with mom to start the conversation.

I think my role as a dad is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I think my child's mother's role is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My expectations for myself are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My expectations for my child's mother are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## MOM:

Complete the following on your own. Then share with dad to start the conversation.

I think my role as a mom is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I think my child's father's role is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My expectations for myself are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My expectations for my child's father are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Mom and Dad Together:

Mom's roles will be \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Dad's roles will be \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We will both \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Together we want our child to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Important Prenatal Tests

What is the test?	What is it looking for?	Why?	What happens afterwards?
STDs - Sexually Transmitted Diseases	STDs like syphilis, chlamydia and gonorrhea	STDs can cause serious problems for the baby's organs if not found early.	If an STD is found, doctors usually treat it with antibiotics.
Urine protein	Signs of high blood pressure because of the pregnancy	High blood pressure can cause liver and kidney problems for your partner.	Her doctor might recommend bed rest or early delivery.
Diabetes	Blood sugar level	Diabetes can cause birth defects in your baby.	Doctor might put your partner on a low carbohydrate diet or insulin shots.
Rh test	The protein in your partner's red blood cells. Most people are Rh+ (positive).	If your partner is Rh- (negative) then her red blood cells could attack the baby's red blood cells.	Your partner gets a shot called RhoGAM.
Toxoplasmosis	A bug that is found in cat feces and raw meat	If not treated, it can cause damage to your baby's brain, liver and eyes.	If the test shows your partner is not immune to toxoplasmosis, help her stay away from cats, litter boxes and any meat that isn't fully cooked.
Alpha fetoprotein	Looks at how much protein is made by your baby's liver	Too much protein can cause birth defects. Levels of protein that are too low may cause other problems.	Talk with your doctor.
Group B strep	Bacteria in your partner's reproductive tract	In rare cases, it can cause death to the baby.	Talk with your doctor.
Anemia	Tests for oxygen/iron in your partner's red blood cells	Low levels of iron in your partner's body are not good for her or the baby.	Talk with your doctor.

## Preparing for Baby Questionnaire

The following table should be used to discuss the items that you will need for your baby. This is not an all-inclusive list. You and your partner may decide on additional items or that some listed are not necessary. Start the discussion with your partner and get an idea of what the necessities will cost. What method of child care will we use? What items for our baby are needed? What items would be nice to have? What items do we HAVE to buy new? What items can be handed down or purchased from discount stores? Buying items for your new baby can be very exciting, but the costs can add up! Planning ahead of time will help you enjoy preparing for your child's arrival while sticking to your budget.

Expense	Buy New	Hand-Me-Down/ Free	Cost of item
			Our Baby Budget: \$_____
Car seat			
Crib			
Crib mattress & sheets			
Baby first aid kit			
Nursing pillow			
Burp cloths			
Cotton bibs			
Diapers			
Wipes			
Changing pad			
Blankets			
Clothes			
Bottles and breast pump			
Total			

## Our Family Budget

### Monthly Income

Income 1	.....	
Income 2	.....	
Other	.....	
<b>Total</b>		

Amount

### Monthly Expenses

Rent/Mortgage	
Utilities (electricity, water, gas, cable, phone)	
Insurance (car, home, life)	
Car payment	
Gas for car	
Groceries (including diapers and baby supplies)	
Child care	
Personal grooming (haircut, clothing, etc.)	
Savings	
Other	

Amount
<b>Total</b>

## Contact List

### Doctor's Name

Appointment line	
Nurse line	

### Hospital

### Pharmacy

### Family & Friends


# Building a Positive Future for My Family

Dads play a very important role in the health, well-being and success of their child. In many ways you will help set the tone for how your child views the world and its possibilities. Many dads set goals for themselves, their child and family but when the reality of being a parent hits, oftentimes these goals are set aside. This worksheet is a guide to help you identify your goals and monitor your progress. It is a way for you to document the work you are doing to live and create the life you want for you and your family. Consider the statements below and what you are doing every day to accomplish those goals. Feel free to add your own goals or keep a journal and record on a daily or weekly basis to continue identifying and acknowledging all of your accomplishments.

What did I do to show my child that I love him?	What did I do to teach my child something new?	What did I do to make sure I am healthy?	What did I do to support my family?	What did I do to help my child build confidence?	What did I do to build upon my legacy?
---	--	--	-------------------------------------	--	--

# When Babies Cry

(What are they really saying?)

What are some things you could do if your baby cries for a long time?



CHECK FOR THIS	THEN	DO THIS
Wet/dirty diaper? No ☞	Yes ☞	Change your baby's diaper and check for diaper rash. Apply zinc oxide if needed.
Is baby hungry? No ☞	Yes ☞	Fix your baby a bottle or take him to your partner for his feeding.
Uncomfortable? No ☞	Yes ☞	Pick him up and move him around. Check to see if he is hot or chilly. Adjust clothing as needed.
Gas bubble? No ☞	Yes ☞	Hold your baby to your shoulder. Walk around, gently stroking his back until he burps. If he is still gassy, try bicycling his legs.
Bored/angry/wants to be held? No ☞	Yes ☞	Hold, hug, cuddle, kiss, tell stories, read, sing, show baby interesting pictures, go for a walk. Tell him you love him!
Tired? No ☞	Yes ☞	Gently rock your baby, telling him how much you love him or singing lullabies until he falls asleep.
Colic? No ☞	Yes ☞	Contact your pediatrician to make sure it isn't something more severe. If it is colic, try the five soothing methods.
Sick? No ☞	Yes ☞	Check for fever. What are your baby's symptoms? Call doctor or after hours nurse line.
Schedule change? No ☞	Yes ☞	Hold, cuddle and talk gently to him. Get back on schedule as soon as possible.
Teething? No ☞	Yes ☞	Allow your baby to teethe on a cold washcloth or teething toy.
Constipated? No ☞	Yes ☞	Massage his tummy. Give him a warm bath. Bicycle your baby's legs.
Unusual poop? No ☞	Yes ☞	Monitor your baby's bowel movements. Consult your baby's physician.
Nothing is working. No ☞	Yes ☞	Sometimes your baby needs to cry. It's OK. You can show your love anyway.

# Baby \_\_\_\_\_'s First Year

**The World Around You** — Here's what the world was like the year you were born.

Newspaper headlines on your birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Who was president \_\_\_\_\_

What was trending in:

Music \_\_\_\_\_

Television \_\_\_\_\_

Movies \_\_\_\_\_

Food \_\_\_\_\_

Fashion \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome Home!

Our favorite story about the day you came home \_\_\_\_\_

Date you came home \_\_\_\_\_ The weather was \_\_\_\_\_

## Your First Week and Beyond

Where you slept \_\_\_\_\_

Our favorite memories about your first week \_\_\_\_\_

**First Visitors** — Our family and friends were eager to meet you!

**Expressing Yourself** — We couldn't wait to get to know you!

You first smiled on \_\_\_\_\_

Your first laugh \_\_\_\_\_

What made you laugh \_\_\_\_\_

Things that made you happy \_\_\_\_\_

Things that upset you \_\_\_\_\_

**Eating and Growing** — You were so excited to try new foods!

Your first solid food was \_\_\_\_\_

Your favorite foods were \_\_\_\_\_

Your least favorite foods were \_\_\_\_\_

You got your first tooth \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite mealtime memories \_\_\_\_\_

**First Accomplishments** — You learned to do all sorts of new things.

You first held up your head \_\_\_\_\_

You first slept through the night \_\_\_\_\_

Your first played with your hands and feet \_\_\_\_\_

The first thing you grasped \_\_\_\_\_

You first sat up on your own \_\_\_\_\_

More memories of you on the go \_\_\_\_\_

## Favorite Things

Your favorite toy \_\_\_\_\_

Your favorite book \_\_\_\_\_

Your favorite songs \_\_\_\_\_

Your favorite games \_\_\_\_\_

Your favorite playmates \_\_\_\_\_

Your favorite animals \_\_\_\_\_





**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
Services



This institution is an equal opportunity provider. © 2019 All rights reserved.

Stock No. 13-06-15131 Rev. 9/19