

Talking to Your Child About the New Baby

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Honor Your Child's Uniqueness

Make it very clear that you love your child for who they are, and that will never change. Parents often make the mistake of saying they love everyone equally - children can't trust this, and it's not fair to ask them to. Assure your child that you know exactly who they are, and share how thrilled and grateful you are that you get to be their parent. Explain that you will love the new baby for who they turn out to be as well, and it'll be exciting to find out who they are, but that since you love each child for who they are, there is no competition because no one person can ever take the place of another.

Guide Them Toward Safe & Creative Expression of All Their Feelings

Encourage your children to express all their feelings. Help them find the language for what they're experiencing, making it very clear that you are respecting their feelings, not judging them. Show them how to express challenging emotions like anger and frustration without doing harm. Get creative with your guidance; offer your child a symbolic or creative activity, like drawing how she feels, telling a story of how he wishes things were, or making up a dance.

Empower Them to Create Peaceful Resolution

Invite your children to problem-solve with you, and include them in finding resolutions that they can feel proud of. Examples might be, "when you're feeling sad or lonely or angry, what special signal will you give me so that I know how you're feeling?" & "I see that you're wishing we could have some cuddle time, and it's frustrating for you that the baby is in my lap nursing right now. I'd love to cuddle you too. Why don't you get your favorite book, and we'll all sit on the couch. I have one arm free, and if you turn the pages I can snuggle and read to you at the same time!"

Show Guests How to Help

When visitors come, request ahead of time that they greet your older child first. Ask that they get down to their level, and say hello in a way that recognizes who they are, rather than jumping in with the "big brother" excitement. Invite your child to show guests where to wash their hands, and offer them the job of making sure everyone washes before touching the baby. Then have the guest ask the child if they would introduce them to the new baby, and remind them not rush ahead or go nuts and forget the older child as soon as they get there. Make the transition in attention as gentle as possible, and give the child lots of praise and encouragement for how well they take care of their sibling.

Educate Yourself

Read [Siblings Without Rivalry](#), by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish, especially chapter 2.

Tell the Story with Your Child

Reading books and watching videos with your children will help them prepare for and understand what is happening in your family. Some great resources are: [We Have a Baby](#), by Cathryn Falwel; [The New Baby](#), by Fred Rogers; [Our New Baby](#), by Wendy Cheyette Lewison; [101 Things to do with a Baby](#), by Jan Ormerod; [I'd Rather Have an Iguana](#), by Heidi Stetson Mario; [The New Baby at Your House](#), by Joanna Cole; [Sesame Street: Three Bears and a New Baby](#) (video).