



## A Special Message to New Dads

While this time can be challenging for new fathers, it can also be uniquely rewarding.

### Adjusting Priorities

Just as mothers occasionally need to readjust their priorities, fathers now have a golden opportunity to show more of their nurturing side by caring for Mom, the baby, and possibly other siblings. Although not all fathers have the option of paternity leave from work, those who do and take advantage of it may find it priceless. If Mom was the center of a sibling's universe and Dad was only an afterthought, Dad may suddenly be more "cool" once a newborn comes home.



By adjusting his priorities (at home and at work (</English/family-life/work-play/Pages/Working-Parents.aspx>)) and "rising to the occasion," Dad can strengthen an already strong bond with Mom as well as with the new child. By working as a team (</English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Roles-Within-the-Family.aspx>), parenting couples may be amazed at how well they can adapt to their new, stressful circumstances (</English/healthy-living/emotional-wellness/Building-Resilience/Pages/When-Things-Arent-Perfect-Caring-for-Yourself-Your-Children.aspx>).

### Teamwork

Of course, balancing (</English/family-life/work-play/Pages/Avoiding-Burnout.aspx>) the seemingly constant demands of the baby, the needs of other children, and the household chores is not always easy. Nights spent feeding (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/default.aspx>), diapering (</english/ages-stages/baby/diapers-clothing/Pages/default.aspx>), and walking the floor with a crying (</English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/Pages/default.aspx>) baby can quickly take their toll in fatigue for both parents. But by working as a team to relieve each other for naps, for exercise, and for "downtime," parenting couples might find that even though they share less "quality time" together, they may actually feel closer than ever. Sometimes there may be conflict and jealous feelings. These are normal, and thankfully, temporary. Life soon settles into a fairly regular routine (</English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/The-Importance-of-Family-Routines.aspx>) that will once again give you some time to yourselves and restore your sex life and social activities to normal.

Meanwhile, make an effort for just the two of you to spend some time together each day enjoying each other's company while the baby is sleeping (</english/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/default.aspx>) or somebody else is caring for her. Remember, you're entitled to hold, hug, cuddle, and kiss each other as well as the baby.

### Playing with Baby

A positive way for men to deal with these issues is to become as involved as possible in caring for and playing with the new baby. When you spend this extra time with your child, you'll get just as emotionally attached to her as her mother will.

This is not to say that moms and dads play with babies the same way. In general, fathers play to arouse and excite their babies, while mothers generally concentrate on more low-key stimulation such as gentle rocking, quiet interactive games, singing, and soothing activities. From the baby's viewpoint, both play styles are equally valuable and complement each other beautifully, which is another reason why it's so important to have both of you involved in the care of the baby.

## Additional Information & Resources

Welcome To the World of Parenting! (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Welcome-To-The-World-of-Parenting.aspx>)

- [Breastfeeding: A Message for Dads \(/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/A-Message-for-Dads.aspx\)](#) [Back to Top](#)
- [Dads Can Get Postpartum Depression, Too \(/English/ages-stages/prenatal/delivery-beyond/Pages/dads-can-get-postpartum-depression-too.aspx\)](#)
- [Childhood Looks Better When Dad is in It: AAP Report Explained \(/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Childhood-Looks-Better-When-Dad-is-in-It.aspx\)](#)
- [Fathers' Role in the Care and Development of Their Children: The Role of Pediatricians \(http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2016-1128\)](#) (AAP Clinical Report)
- [Parental Leave for Residents and Pediatric Training Programs \(http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/131/2/387.abstract?rss=1\)](#) (AAP Policy Statement)

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