

Expecting Another Baby? Tell Your Children What to Expect

After a new infant arrives, an older child sometimes resorts to baby-like behavior. For example, he or she may follow you around, talk baby talk, or carry an old teddy bear again. If your child regresses like this, realize that it is normal behavior and his way of ensuring that he still has your love and attention. Positive reinforcement works well here. Praise big boy behavior and ignore the baby talk. It will eventually go away.

Over the next few months, you can help your children get more comfortable with the idea of a new brother or sister. Of course, how they react will be, to some degree, age dependent, but here are some suggestions you may find useful.

Help children feel like it's their baby, too. Take them shopping for baby items and find ways to include them in the preparation. Take them to a doctor's appointment so they may hear the baby's heartbeat. Allow older siblings to feel they have a role to play in caring for the baby.

Make any changes in rooms or sleep situations well ahead of time so that the older child does not feel that the baby has "taken" their bed, room, chair, etc.

When you are out and about, point out other "big siblings" and babies as an example or how it will be when the baby arrives.

Most importantly, set aside one-on-one time every day for you and each child. Read, play games, take walks, cuddle, show them their own baby pictures. After you bring the new baby home, keep up this routine so kids continue to get the attention and reassurance they need.