



# Family Time Work Time

A B A L A N C I N G A C T

## Building Strong Families

### A New Baby in the House

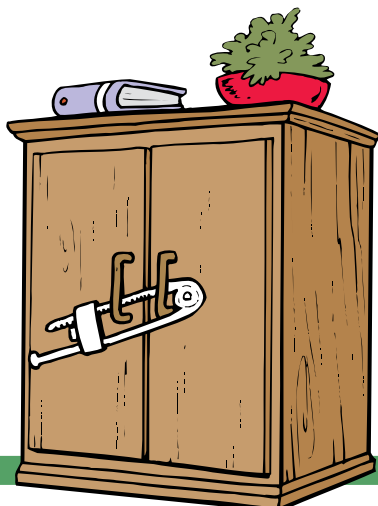
If you are expecting a new baby, there will be some changes for your family. You need to prepare your child for the big event and about changes that will happen. Prepare ahead. Read stories about new babies. Have your child practice taking care of a baby with a baby doll. Show your child how to gently hold the baby doll. Talk about when your child was a baby. Get out some of her baby pictures. Tell your child what to expect from a newborn. Talk about how babies cry when they need something, are hungry, or need to have their diapers changed.



Older siblings need assurance that parents can love more than one child. It is hard to share parents with a new baby. Jealous and resentful feelings are normal. Understand that love can mix with jealous feelings and sometimes your older child may have mixed feelings about the new baby. Be sure to talk about how it is ok to feel angry, sad, and upset at times, but it is not ok to hurt anyone. Be aware that sometimes after a new sibling is born, your child may try to act like a baby again. She may also lose some learned skills for a while. You may see some changes in behavior in your child. Ask for hugs from your older child. Be sure to give lots of hugs and attention, too. Your older child can help with the new baby by getting diapers, playing peek-a-boo, picking out clothes, and gently patting the baby. It is important to spend some regular one-on-one times with your older child.

### Keeping Baby Safe

Baby-proof your home to keep your baby safe. Then your baby can be free to explore without you needing to say “no” too many times. Here are some suggestions for making your home safe for your baby:

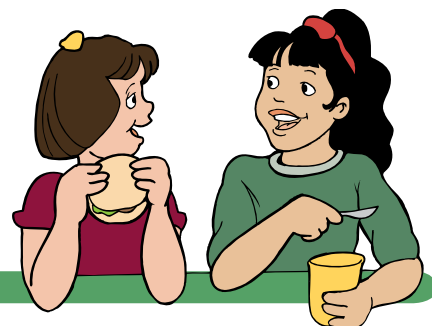


- Place safety caps on electrical outlets.
- Have a safety gate where you have stairs.
- Put away breakables until your baby is older and can learn about not touching things.
- Be sure electrical cords and window blind cords are safely out of reach.
- All medicines, cleaning materials, and even make-up and perfumes need to be where your baby can't reach them. Locks on cabinets are a good idea.
- Tools and electrical appliances should be put away.
- Keep houseplants out of your baby's reach because some are poisonous.
- Post the **National Poison Control** number, **1-800-222-1222**, by your phone.
- Keep toys and other things with small pieces that can be choking hazards away from your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone when she is awake.
- Drowning accidents happen. Always be within an arm's length of your baby around any source of water, including toilets and pails of cleaning water.

## Apologies

Most parents, at one time or another, have probably insisted that their young child apologize for doing something wrong. Have you heard yourself saying things like, “Tell your sister you’re sorry for hurting her” or “Apologize to Jason for taking his toy”? It is good to remember that young children do not understand what “apologize” means. Also, they may not really be sorry for what they have done. An apology needs to be sincere.

The best way to teach your child about apologizing is to model it yourself. Children learn best from what they see their parents do and say. Encourage your child to help comfort someone who is hurt or upset by his actions. That is how to help him understand that his actions were hurtful. Eventually your young child will learn to be sorry for that. Then he will understand what it means to apologize.



## Sports Safety for Kids

Many children participate in school or extracurricular sports activities. If you have a child who wants to take part in a sport, it’s time to think about some things before getting started. You want your child to enjoy participating, but you want your child to be safe. Listed below are precautions for all children playing or practicing any individual or team sport:



- Get a general physical exam before signing up for a sport.
- Wear appropriate protective gear for the activity. Make sure it is the right size and properly adjusted.
- Make sure your child knows about and does warm-ups. They are important before practice, as well as before a game.
- Is there enough adult supervision?
- Your child should never “play through” an injury. Get immediate help from a coach or a trainer.  
Be sure to mention everything that hurts or aches.
- Everyone needs to follow the rules. In most sports, the rules are based not only on sportsmanship, but also safety.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water before and during the activity. Rest frequently during hot weather.

## More from Better Kid Care

The Better Kid Care Web Site at [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu) has more information for parents. Look for other *Family Time-Work Time* issues, *Parents Count*, child care and activity tip sheets, snack ideas, choosing child care tips, school readiness information, and the monthly Better Kid Care E-Newsletter. To sign up for the E-Newsletter, send a request to [BetterKidCareNews-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu](mailto:BetterKidCareNews-subscribe-request@lists.psu.edu).

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**Resources:** Nancy Wilson, 2007, *A New Baby in the House, Keeping Baby Safe, and Apologies*, Better Kid Care Program, Penn State University; *The Parent's Role in Sibling Rivalry*, Parents as Teachers, St. Louis, MO; Fred Rogers, 2002, *The New Baby, The Mister Rogers Parenting Book*, Family Communications, Inc., Running Press; *Gear Up and Warm Up for Sports Safety*, Spring 2007, Safe Kids Pennsylvania, PA Department of Health

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