



INTRODUCING A NEW BABY

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn to understand their child's possible reaction to a new sibling and helpful ways to prepare a child for a new sibling.



AGENDA

- Introduction
- Developmental Considerations
- Understanding Your Child's Reaction
- Preparing for the New Baby
- In Conclusion
- Summary



INTRODUCTION

- A new baby in the family is an exciting event. However, if the new baby is also a new sibling, it can be a challenging adjustment for everyone.
- Many children adjust easily, but for those who don't, preparing young children for the new baby can help facilitate the adjustment.



DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Children from 1-2 years old:

- Usually cannot fully understand what it means to have a new brother or sister
- Still need a lot of time and closeness from their parents
- May be having separation anxiety



DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

CONTINUED

Children from 2-4:

- May have a better understanding of what a new brother or sister means
- Still very attached to parents
- May not understand how to share you with others

School aged children 5 and over:

- Are usually not as threatened
- May resent the attention the new baby gets



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S REACTION

To get a sense of how your child might feel about a new baby, imagine this:

- Your spouse tells you he/she is bringing home a new spouse to be part of the family
- He/she is younger than you are
- When the three of you are out together, people acknowledge you but then they say to the new spouse, “You’re so adorable!”
- Then they ask you, “How do you like the new wife/husband?”



PREPARING FOR THE NEW BABY

- Tell your child about the pregnancy when you tell your family and friends – the child needs to hear this from you, not someone else
- Check with your hospital about sibling preparation classes and hospital tours
- Have them hold a doll and show them how to hold and touch a baby
- Get them involved in preparing for the baby
- Read children's books to them about having a new sibling



PREPARING FOR THE NEW BABY

CONTINUED

- Allow your child to regress
- Try not to introduce any other significant changes during this time
- Have some special time with your child before and after the new baby is born
- Children tend to respond better when family and friends bring small gifts for them at the same time they bring gifts for the baby
- Visit friends or family who have recently added another child to their family
- Check out parenting websites and blogs



PREPARING FOR THE NEW BABY

CONTINUED

- Help your child identify and express their feelings
- Let your older child help take care of the baby while you are present
- When the baby is a little older teach the older sibling how to play appropriately with the new baby
- Let them know how important they will be to the new sibling
- Talk with them about what it will be like to have a new baby in the family



PREPARING FOR THE NEW BABY

CONTINUED

- Discuss possible changes to the family routines before they happen
- Talk about what will happen when Mom has to go to the hospital
- Give your child a “baby” of their own



IN CONCLUSION

- Remember that many children adjust well to their new sibling, but no matter how well you prepare your child, you can still expect to have some challenging times along the way
- If you become overwhelmed, reach out to friends and family for support, or contact your pediatrician or a behavioral health specialist



SUMMARY

- A new sibling in the family can be challenging for a young child
- Preparing your child for a new sibling can help
- Talk to your child about how it will be when the new baby comes
- Let your child participate in preparing for the baby
- Help your child identify and express feelings
- If your child does not adjust well, and you begin to feel overwhelmed, seek help and support





QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE www.Tricare.mil
- Behavioral Health Services



REFERENCES

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- *New Baby Sibling: Helping Your Older Child (or Children) Adjust*, University of Michigan Health System
www.med.umich.edu
- *Bringing Home baby: Preparing Young Children*, Lain Chroust Ehmann,
<http://pregnancyandbaby.sheknows.com>
- *How to Introduce a Newborn to the Family*, Michael Meyerhoff, EDD, <http://health.howstuffworks.com/how-to-introduce-a-newborn-to-the-family1.htm>





THANK YOU