



TOP TEN BABY ESSENTIALS

From Kimberly Shore Levin, “The Connoisseur of Everything Baby”

- 1) **CAR SEAT(S):** A properly installed car seat is a must-have before leaving the hospital with your new bundle of joy. A bucket type seat is ideal from birth until your baby is about 5-7 months old (depending on your baby’s size). You will then need a convertible type car seat that can face backwards (until at least one year old and/or 20 pounds) and then forwards. Look for a seat that has been rated highly for safety and fits well in your car.
- 2) **STROLLER(S):** The strollers out on the market are limitless, but there’s one (or two!) for every lifestyle and budget. For infants, a snap-n-go stroller is a quick way to go from car seat to stroller – the seat easily fits right in the stroller frame. Once your baby outgrows the infant seat, you will need a new stroller to accommodate a larger child. Whether it’s a jogger, umbrella or hybrid-type model, I recommend taking it out of the store to push on the sidewalks, practice folding and unfolding and placing in and out of the trunk (if applicable) to see how cumbersome it might be. Remember, when you have a wriggling, crying baby the last thing you need is to be struggling with collapsing a 40-pound stroller into your trunk.
- 3) **A PLACE FOR BABY TO SLEEP:** Some parents prefer their baby to sleep in a separate room in a crib from the beginning, others want their little ones as close to them as possible. Either way you have many choices such as a crib, mini-crib, pack-n-play, bassinet, arms reach co-sleeper or your own bed! Think about your home set up and lifestyle before you make any sleeper purchases.
- 4) **A DIAPER BAG... OR SOMETHING FOR YOU TO SCHLEP ALL THE NEW THINGS YOU MUST CARRY FOR AN OUTING WITH BABY:** You can go crazy with diaper bags – from a basic carry-all to a designer fashion statement. When purchasing a diaper bag, consider your lifestyle and budget, and who will be using it (i.e., something your husband/partner won’t be embarrassed to carry too!) Other options include a backpack or even a larger purse you already own. It is helpful from the beginning to have a bag with several separate compartments. You will be lugging a lot of stuff initially but as your little one grows along with your confidence, you’ll be able to get by with bringing less.

- 5) **BABY BATHTUB:** This really will make your life easier. You can put it in your kitchen sink or in your tub and it keeps your little one confined in a smaller space. You will probably be using your tub for six months, if not longer, until you feel comfortable with your baby sitting up in the big tub. Another bonus of using the infant baby bathtubs is that there is usually room to keep the essential items close at hand (shampoo, baby wash, washcloth) in a designated space. This is key when you have a wet and squirmy baby in the tub whom you need to keep a very careful eye on.
- 6) **BOTTLES/NIPPLES:** Even if you are planning on exclusively breastfeeding, I recommend having a few bottles/nipples already sterilized and ready to go. You never know how breastfeeding will go and you may be beyond exhausted and want your partner/family member to give the baby a bottle of expressed milk or formula. The last thing you want to do in your tired, hormonal state is look for and clean bottles. Have it all in a convenient spot ready to go!
- 7) **SWING/BOUNCY SEAT:** This is a great item to borrow from friends or purchase second hand, as they are usually gently used for a short period of time. Swings and bouncy seats make an ideal option when you need to put your baby down so that you can take a shower, fix yourself lunch or take a break! If you go for a swing, look for the kind that swing from side-to-side as babies seem to like this motion best.
- 8) **8-10 SLEEPERS/OUTFITS/ONESIES:** It's good to have a week's worth of outfits on hand, washed and ready to go. Again, the last thing you want to do as you are recovering from childbirth is do multiple loads of laundry each day. Babies tend to spit up, poop and leak out of their clothes so don't be surprised if in the first weeks, your little one goes through 2-3 outfits/per day. Have enough so that you only have to do laundry every 4-5 days if possible.
- 9) **DIAPERS/WIPES:** Have a supply of at least a package of diapers at home ready to go. I recommend having a stash of diapers on every level of your home so that you aren't running around looking for what you need. If you can, set up a changing station in another room you use often to make life easier. You can keep a spare outfit or two, diapers, wipes, crèmes, etc. right there.
- 10) **A SENSE OF HUMOR:** Your life has just changed for the better but it is still crazy and overwhelming the first few weeks. Try not to get so wrapped up in being the "perfect" parent, and remember, your baby loves you and it really will be okay! So what if you have 40 thank you notes to write, last night's dinner dishes in the sink and dirty clothes all over the house. It's all about surviving day to day the first three months so do whatever it takes to be balanced and happy. This will go by so fast and you will look back and wish time moved more slowly!