

Pointers For Parents

Six Steps To Prepare Yourself For Parenthood

(NAPSA)—Having a baby changes everything—and it's a good idea to be prepared, whether it's your first or fourth child.

Asking other parents for advice and observing how they meet new challenges can be excellent ways to prepare for a new addition to the family. Here are a few tips to help with the transition:

- **Take parenting classes or read up on the subject.** Basic parenting skills such as changing diapers or getting your child to cooperate can be more challenging than they appear. It is not easy to change the diaper of a squirming baby or to calm a toddler's tantrum. Practice makes perfect—or at least close to it.

- **Stock up.** You will have plenty to do when the baby is born, so get the essentials—car seat, crib, clothes, diapers and bottles—in advance.

- **Learn CPR.** Also, find out how to babyproof your home.

- **Select a pediatrician before your baby is born.** You may need a doctor sooner than you think, so it is best to have one you like and trust before you have to visit with a sick or fussy baby.

- **Establish a support system.** Know before your baby arrives who can assist you with the newborn—whether it's a nanny, a neighbor, a babysitter or a relative. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

- **Talk to other parents and learn from their experience.** You can learn a lot from your peers. Other parents can also provide a helpful support system, making it easier to socialize and stay connected. Learning more



Ready or not, baby makes three or four—or even eight.

about other parents' experiences can also be entertaining.

Two popular television shows explore what's involved in becoming parents and coping with the challenges—and both are now available on DVD:

“A Baby Story: First Time Parents” follows the intimate and emotional journeys of 10 couples as they enter into parenthood. The show goes inside the delivery room for a firsthand look at the drama of labor and the joy of the unforgettable birth moment.

The adorably chaotic Gosselin clan has returned for another year of fun on “Jon & Kate Plus Eight: Season 4.” Quick on their feet, the Gosselins learn as they go and always manage to stay ahead of the 8-year-old twins and 4-year-old sextuplets that outnumber them four to one. You can also check out how the Gosselins have managed over the years in Seasons 1-3, also available on DVD.

Both “A Baby Story: First Time Parents” and “Jon & Kate Plus Eight: Season 4” are available from Genius Products and TLC.