

A baby. The first thought is joy, fun, yippee!! It is a special moment, but to ensure the experience is a little more than new-born, we need to prepare and plan ahead of time. Here are the lessons I learned from my experience.

I must admit, that I was unprepared for having my first baby, and did not set up my support network well, because, we moved countries when Ishan was one month old. While most other women were still in confinement, I was on a flight to London Heathrow, alone with my tiny, helpless baby, and no family in tow. So the one lesson I learned from this experience is that preparation is the most important thing for any event to be completely enjoyable.

#1- Preparation, preparation, preparation!

Now, when baby number 2 was on the way, I worked very hard with baby number 1, Ishan. I told him that we were having a baby and that I loved him even more but may get busy with the baby. I showed him the hospital where he was born, and where Nayantara would also be born. He already knew my doctor, who is my aunt, so she would come home and chat with him. The second lesson I learned was to respect my first child and involve him in the whole process by giving him plenty of information.

Books I found on Amazon, on Having a New Baby are:

1. We're Having a Baby: Adapting To A New Baby by Marion Cocklico and Campbell Books
2. What to Expect When Mommy's Having a Baby (What to Expect Kids) by Heidi Murkoff and Laura Rader
3. Baby on the Way (Sears Children Library) by Martha Sears, William Sears, et al.
4. How Big is Our Baby? A 9-month guide for soon-to-be siblings by Smriti Prasad-Halls and Britta Teckentrup
5. Mum Is Having a Baby! by Angela Dunkwu



Games you can create for your firstborn:

1. Bathing baby: Let your child bathtub baby a doll, in the same way, you would bathtub a baby - with baby soap, and towel, in a baby bathtub.
2. Let's make baby listen to music. Let your firstborn make the unborn baby listen to music, or better still sing a song for baby.
3. Let's tell bathtub baby to stop waking mamma up at night. Let your firstborn tell baby not to disturb mamma at night.

#2 - involve your firstborn

I asked my good friend to help me take care of Ishan, while I was in the hospital having Nayantara. My home was walking distance from my parents', so my father dropped in every single day to play with Nayantara and Ishan.

#3 - use the support network you have

Things were much better the second time around. I organized Ishan's schedule, so I had time alone with him, and at other times he was busy with his friends and school. Playdates and classes were planned beautifully, so he was occupied but we had our special time together - chats during the day, bath time, Storytime, and the bedtime routine, were all still my responsibility.

#4 - plan your child's schedule for the first few months

My strategy was clear, Ishan came first, at least for now, till he got used to Nayantara being a part of our lives. Do you know what happened? He became very independent, all by himself. He realized that I was busy, and slowly began doing things for himself, and even helping me out with baby Nayantara.

#5 - give your first child more attention than your new-born baby, till things settle.

Last but certainly not least, give yourself and your spouse some extra TLC. It's pretty simple; you can't take care of anyone else unless you find the time to take care of yourselves.

#6 - Children appreciate happy parents.

