

WFWP USA: Nurturing New Beginnings

Naomi Tanaka

April 15, 2026

Each season of motherhood brings its own kind of “new”—whether you’re preparing to welcome your first child or adjusting to life with growing little ones. Even if you’ve done this before, new rhythms, new challenges, and new emotions can quietly unfold. In the midst of caring for others, it’s easy to forget that you, too, are navigating something new. Here are a few gentle tips and meaningful resources to support you in this ever-evolving journey of motherhood.

Practical Tips

“As the baby leaves the womb... it is born into the bosom of its new mother, the planet Earth.” - Mother Han

Small things to bring ease into your everyday routines:

Anchor your day with one or two predictable rhythms (morning, mealtime, bedtime) to create a sense of stability

If this is not your first addition to the family, involve older children in small tasks to build connection and lighten your load.

Set up little “support stations” around your home (snacks, wipes, essentials) to make busy moments smoother.

Want to go deeper? Explore a practical guide on blended vs. solid foods supporting your baby’s feeding development → [The Blended Diet: A Practical Guide for Parents](#)



Caring for Your Heart & Relationships

“Your heart is your closest teacher. In the face of difficulty or confusion, ask your heart. Your heavenly parent who loves you resides deep in your heart” - Mother Han

Motherhood changes with each season, and so do you:

It’s natural to feel stretched or even unseen at times, especially while balancing multiple needs.

Stay connected with your spouse through small, consistent check-ins rather than waiting for the “perfect moment.”

Give yourself grace as you adjust. What worked before may look different now, and that’s okay.

Taking care of yourself isn’t separate from motherhood—it sustains it.

Want to go deeper? Read more on staying emotionally connected and supported through changing family dynamics → [Rebuilding Connection and Intimacy After Baby: How Family Systems Can Help Us Navigate Relationship Challenges](#)



A Few Thoughtful Reads

For wherever you are in your journey:

Birthing from Within: An Extra-Ordinary Guide to Childbirth Preparation by Pam England and Rob Horowitz

Wife for Life: The Power to Succeed in Marriage by Ramona Zabriskie

The Empowered Wife: Six Surprising Secrets for Attracting Your Husband's Time, Attention and Affection by Laura Doyle

My Mother's Voice Journal: 40-Day Spiritual Practice Journal for Empowered Motherhood by Dr. Katarina Connery

(Even revisiting something you've read before can feel new in a different season.)

A Little Wisdom to Hold Onto

A gentle reminder for every stage of motherhood:

Quote from Holy Mother Han

Women have the important role of bearing children, raising them, and guiding the family as God's representatives -- with the uniquely feminine sense of affection and love that God has granted to women. This original feminine nature is something God endowed each woman with. By nurturing the fruits of love and investing in her children's upbringing, a woman connects and extends the traditions and lineage of her family. For this reason, although her external efforts are important, the role of the mother in cultivating character and raising her children to have healthy, wholesome natures is the highest function of motherhood. In fulfilling this role, mothers truly represent the heart of God. April 10, 2002

< Guides

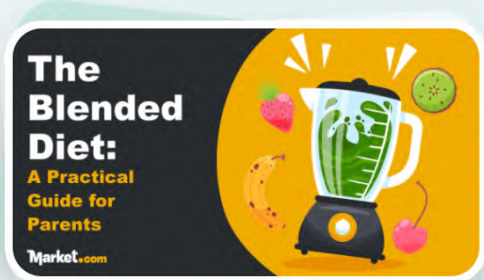
BLENDERS

The Blended Diet: A Practical Guide for Parents



Maya Maceka

Updated 30/03/2026



In many households with young children, blended meals and baby smoothies are a staple, and for good reason. They’re quick to prepare, easy to eat, and far less messy than a handful of blueberries or a bowl of spaghetti! Whether it’s a pouch on the go or a homemade veggie purée, blended foods can make starting solids more manageable for parents and babies.

Blenders are incredibly useful tools in these early stages of development. They let you control ingredients, introduce new flavors, and meal prep larger batches of food. But not all blending is equal. Relying on smooth foods for too long can delay important developmental skills for babies, including chewing, speech, and oral motor control.

This guide covers what you need to know about blended vs. solid foods. We’ll look at when purées are most helpful, when to move on, and how to support your baby’s feeding development without overusing the blender.

What Is the ‘Smoothie Trap’?

Purées and smoothies are a common starting point when introducing young children to solids. They’re safe, familiar, and convenient, especially during the early months of eating solids, offering an easy way to introduce new flavors and nutrients. Used appropriately, blended foods can support feeding development and nutrition in the first stages of eating.

But before we get into all the benefits, it’s important to address one common pitfall. Many parents fall into what’s known as the “Smoothie Trap,” relying on blended meals well past the stage when babies should be introduced to textured foods. It’s an easy habit to form, especially when food pouches are everywhere and your baby can slurp them down on the go.

The problem is that babies need to chew, even if they don’t yet have teeth. By around 6 to 9 months, most babies are ready for soft, lumpy textures that encourage them to move food around their mouths. Chewing strengthens the jaw, helps align growing teeth, and builds the oral muscles needed for speech.

Chewing also plays a critical role in digestion by activating saliva, triggering gut hormones, and improving nutrient absorption. A scientific journal from 2024 found that [chewing significantly shapes the gut microbiome](#), boosting microbial diversity and digestive health.

When babies eat real food, like soft vegetables or small chunks, they’re also naturally cleaning their teeth and stimulating gum health. Prolonged reliance on purées has been linked to delayed speech, underdeveloped jaws, and higher risks of misaligned teeth. [Delaying solids can also increase the risk of picky eating](#), especially when children become used to smooth, sweet foods.

A 2019 study found that [baby pouch foods contained significantly more sugar per serving](#) than similar foods from other sources, and that prolonged exposure can increase mouth acidity, erode teeth, and lead to cavities. These pouches are sometimes marketed as “veggie blends” when the main ingredient is actually fruit. While purées have their place, they shouldn’t be the meal of choice beyond 10 months.

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Comparing the Nutritional Value of Whole and Blended Foods

A common concern among parents is whether blending fruits and vegetables reduces their nutritional value, especially their fiber. This idea, the “fiber myth,” suggests that purées lose fiber or that fiber becomes ineffective once blended. But research shows that blending doesn’t destroy fiber. It simply reduces particle size, much like chewing. The fiber stays intact and continues to support digestion, regulate blood sugar, and feed beneficial gut bacteria.

In fact, blending may make some nutrients more available. Breaking down plant cell walls can release antioxidants and vitamins that are harder to access when eating whole foods. One [study](#) found that blending apples and berries led to lower blood sugar spikes compared to eating them whole because the crushed seeds released more fiber and slowed sugar absorption.

Blending foods retains vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, especially when served soon after preparation; [nutrient loss from oxidation is minimal](#) in the first 15–20 minutes. Unlike juicing, which removes pulp and fiber, blending keeps all of the edible parts. Here are a few common baby- (and blender-) friendly foods that offer high nutritional value:

- **Carrots:** Packed with beta-carotene and vitamin A to support healthy vision and immune function.
- **Sweet potatoes:** Rich in fiber and antioxidants that aid digestion and regulate blood sugar.
- **Spinach:** Full of vitamin K and iron, important for bone growth and oxygen circulation.
- **Green peas:** Provide plant-based protein, fiber, and folate to support brain and gut development.
- **Blueberries:** High in vitamin C and antioxidants that help build the growing immune system.
- **Lentils:** A great source of iron and protein to support growth and prevent anemia.

Many parents also wonder whether it’s better to prepare food at home or rely on store-bought options. A 2023 study in the U.S. found that [60% of commercial baby foods failed to meet nutritional standards](#) due to added sugars, and a 2021 congressional report flagged [concerning levels of heavy metals](#) in many products. While homemade meals offer more control over ingredients and texture, both options have pros and cons.

Homemade vs. Store-Bought Baby Food: What's Better for Your Baby?

Homemade Baby Food

Control of the ingredients



You can choose exactly what goes into each meal, ensuring there are no added sugars, salts, or preservatives.

Lower cost option



Preparing food at home is typically more affordable, especially when cooking in bulk.

Shared family meals



Babies can eat versions of the same fruits and vegetables served to the rest of the family.

Store-Bought Baby Food

Convenient and portable



Prepackaged pouches and jars are easy to store, transport, and serve.

Fortified nutrition

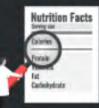


Many products are enriched with essential nutrients, such as iron and vitamin D.

Safety assured



Commercial foods undergo testing for bacteria, contaminants, and shelf stability.

Short shelf life  Homemade food must be refrigerated or frozen and used within a short time.	More expensive  The price of prepackaged baby food can add up.
No safety testing  Without commercial processing, risks like improper handling or contamination are higher.	Environmental impact  Single-use packaging contributes to landfill waste.
Possible nutrient gaps  Unless carefully planned, homemade meals may lack key nutrients like iron.	Less ingredient control  Some products may contain additives, thickeners, or added sugars.

Sources: Cleveland Clinic, Larkin Community Hospital, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and What to Expect

Market.com

Homemade vs. store-bought baby food: What's better for your baby?

For most families, a mix of store-bought and homemade foods, paired with informed choices, can offer the best balance of nutrition, safety, and practicality.

What Foods Can You Blend?

Blending is a practical way to prepare baby food, especially in the early months when babies haven't yet developed the coordination to chew. But not every food is safe to blend raw. Some need to be cooked to ensure they're soft enough to digest and won't pose a choking risk.

Some of the best options for first purées include:

- **Soft fruits, such as bananas, avocados, ripe pears, peaches, and mangoes:** Can be blended raw and are rich in healthy fats, fiber, and vitamins. Firm fruits should be peeled and steamed, or baked until soft, before blending.
- **Cooked vegetables, including carrots, yams, beets, peas, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, and kale:** Must be fully cooked to soften texture and aid digestion.
- **Boiled grains and cereals, such as oats, quinoa, brown rice, barley, and iron-fortified baby cereals:** Blend with water, breast milk, or formula to reach a baby-safe consistency.
- **Plant-based proteins, like well-cooked lentils, split peas, and beans:** Provide iron and protein for healthy growth.
- **Fully cooked meats, such as chicken, beef, and turkey:** Should be blended with a small amount of water or broth to make them easier to swallow.

Foods that you should avoid when blending your own baby food:

- **Raw hard fruits and vegetables, such as apples or carrots:** Hard to digest and pose a choking risk unless fully cooked.
- **Processed meats, like ham, bacon, or deli meat:** High in salt, nitrates, and additives, not suitable for infants.
- **Sticky or thick foods, like nut butters:** Difficult to blend safely and can block airways.
- **Honey:** Unsafe for babies under 12 months due to the risk of botulism.
- **Unpasteurized or soft cheeses, such as brie or blue cheese:** May contain harmful bacteria and aren't suitable for blending.
- **High-mercury fish, such as tuna, swordfish, or marlin:** Should be avoided due to toxicity risks.
- **Cow's milk:** Not suitable, even as a blending base, as it lacks the right nutrients and may strain a baby's kidneys. Use breast milk, formula, or water instead.
- **Rice drinks or rice milk:** Can contain unsafe levels of arsenic for babies.

Globally, blended foods look a little different, as babies often eat blended or mashed versions of their family’s staple foods. Some common dishes from around the world include:

- **Koko (Ghana):** A fermented maize porridge that’s smooth, easy to digest, and rich in probiotics.
- **Congee (China):** A mild rice porridge often served with mashed pumpkin, tofu, or white fish.
- **Kheer and khichdi (India):** Sweet rice pudding made with milk (kheer), and a savory mix of rice, lentils, and vegetables cooked with mild spices (khichdi).
- **Hummus and baba ghanoush (Israel):** Blended chickpeas with tahini (hummus) and roasted eggplant purée (baba ghanoush).

Regardless of the region, the idea stays the same: finding nutrient-dense foods tailored to your baby’s age and abilities, often made with ingredients you already have at home.

When to Blend and When to Offer Whole Foods

Blended foods are a great starting point when introducing solids to your baby, which is typically at around 6 months.

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), babies are generally ready for solids when they can sit upright with good head control, show interest in food (like reaching for it or opening their mouth when food is offered), and move food into the back of their throat without spitting it out.

Gradual texture transitions help develop chewing, oral strength, and self-feeding skills, so knowing when and how to progress to textured foods is important.

A Timeline of Baby’s First Foods

6–7 Months: Smooth purees



Introduce single-ingredient purees like carrots, apples, or chicken.

7–9 Months: Mashed and lumpy textures



Gradually increase texture with mashed veggies, thick porridges, and scrambled eggs.

9–10 Months: Soft finger foods



Most babies can handle soft, bite-sized foods like mango cubes, shredded chicken, and steamed carrot sticks.

10–12 Months: Table foods with modifications



Baby can eat small, soft, low-salt versions of what the family eats, including whole grains, cooked beans, and soft meats.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Frontiers in Pediatrics, National Health Service (UK), Pampers, and Strong4Life

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A timeline of baby's first foods 6-12 months

6–7 Months: Smooth Purées

This is the stage where most babies begin their solid-food journey. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends [introducing nutrient-dense purées alongside breast milk](#) or formula at six months.

There's no single “best” first purée to give a baby. The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) suggests offering a variety of foods in these early months, like meats, cereals, vegetables, fruits, eggs, and fish, while continuing with breast milk or formula. These can be homemade or store-bought, as long as they are age-appropriate and free of added salt or sugar.

To safely monitor for food allergies, the [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) recommends offering only one new single-ingredient food at a time and waiting three to five days before adding another. Start with a small amount, increasing gradually if no reaction occurs.

Common allergens (like peanut, egg, dairy, wheat, or soy) should be introduced in baby-safe forms and only after your baby is tolerating other foods well.

7–9 Months: Mashed and Lumpy Textures

As babies become more confident eaters, texture should be gradually increased. During this window, mashed fruits and vegetables, thick porridges, soft scrambled eggs, and well-cooked grains like oatmeal help develop oral-motor skills.

This is also a good time to introduce safe finger foods like soft tofu, steamed vegetables, and banana slices. At this stage, many babies enjoy holding their own spoon, even if they haven’t quite figured out how to use it. Letting them experiment with self-feeding helps build coordination and independence.

9–10 Months: Soft Finger Foods

By this age, most babies can sit unassisted and bring food to their mouths confidently. You may begin to notice some signs that your baby is ready to move beyond purées and explore more challenging textures. For example:

- They chew or gum food rather than just swallowing
- They handle small lumps without gagging
- They show interest in self-feeding or using a spoon
- They're eager to try what's on your plate

Offer small, soft finger foods that dissolve easily or can be gummed, like mango cubes, steamed carrot sticks, and shredded chicken. This stage is less about perfection and more about practice. Babies refine their hand-eye coordination and learn how to manage different textures in their mouths.

10–12 Months: Table Foods with Modifications

By the end of the first year, most babies are ready to join in on family meals, with a few modifications. Offer chopped or shredded versions of what the rest of the family is eating, ensuring everything is soft, easy to chew, and low in added salt or sugar.

[Studies](#) show this is also a good time to increase dietary variety by adding soft meats, whole grains, and cooked beans to meals. Encourage self-feeding with a spoon or fingers to further support fine motor development and mealtime independence.

Choosing the Right Blender for Baby Food

Preparing baby food at home doesn’t require a fancy blender, but the blender you choose does need to work well for the kinds of meals you’ll be making. The right blender can make the process faster, safer, and more effective.

Here are some of the features parents should look for in a baby food blender:

- **Ease of use:** Choose a model with simple controls and minimal setup. One-touch or two-step operation reduces hassle, and built-in timers or texture presets can be helpful.
- **Texture control:** Multiple speeds or a pulse function allow you to adjust consistency as your baby transitions from smooth purées to thicker textures.
- **Easy cleaning:** Dishwasher-safe parts and wide containers with few crevices make

- cleaning easier. For steam units, ensure the water tank is easy to access and rinse.
- **Size and capacity:** A 2–3 cup blender suits small batches, while a 4–6 cup is better for bulk prep. Make sure it fits your storage or counter space.
 - **Noise level:** Quieter models can be useful for prepping food during naps or nighttime.
 - **Safety and materials:** Look for BPA-free or glass containers, locking lids, auto shut-off, and safeguards that prevent use when parts aren't properly assembled.
 - **Durability:** Stainless steel blades, strong motors, and sturdy containers last longer. Glass bowls and metal parts usually hold up better than plastic. Check customer reviews too, as these can sometimes reveal hidden issues like leaking parts or premature motor failure.

Once you know what features matter, the next step is choosing the type of blender that best fits your routine. Here's how the main types compare:

Which Blender Is Best for Baby Food Prep?			
			
	High-Speed Blender	Immersion Blender	Baby Food Maker
Functions	Blends only (for fruits, cooked veggies, meats, grains)	Blends only (used after steaming/boiling)	Steams, blends, defrosts, reheats (some also sterilize)
Capacity	4–8 cups (ideal for batch prep)	Varies (depends on the container used)	2–4 cups (suited for small batches)
Price Range	\$40–\$400+	\$20–\$150+	\$25–\$150+
Benefits	Versatile for long-term use	Compact and easy to clean	All-in-one convenience for early feeding months
Limitations	May not blend small amounts well without attachments	Less powerful and requires caution with hot foods	Limited use after puree stage
Sources: BabyGearLab, GoodTo, Parents, and The Spruce Eats			
Market.com			

Comparing baby food blenders

1. High-Speed Blenders

These are traditional countertop blenders with strong motors and variable speed settings. They can blend soft and cooked ingredients into a very smooth texture, which is useful during the early purée stage. Most models support texture adjustments as feeding needs change. However, they do not steam food, so ingredients must be cooked separately before blending.

2. Immersion Blenders (Hand Blenders)

These handheld blenders allow you to purée food directly in the pot or bowl after cooking. They're compact, lightweight, and easy to clean. Immersion blenders work best with soft, cooked foods and are a practical option for small batches. They are less

best with soft, cooked foods and are a practical option for small batches. They are less effective for harder ingredients or tougher textures.

3. Baby Food Makers (All-in-One Units)

These appliances combine steaming and blending in one machine, often with additional functions like reheating, defrosting, or bottle warming. They are designed specifically for baby food preparation and tend to have smaller capacities. While not as powerful as high-speed blenders, they simplify the cooking process and reduce the handling of hot food.

Things Every Parent Should Know Before Making Baby Food at Home

Making baby food at home gives you more control over ingredients, freshness, and texture — but there are a few key things to keep in mind to make sure your approach stays balanced, safe, and developmentally appropriate.

- **Store homemade food safely:** Refrigerate purées within 2 hours of cooking and use them within 1–2 days. For longer storage, freeze in small portions (like ice cube trays), then transfer to labeled freezer bags. Most frozen purées last 1–2 months.
- **Handle and reheat food properly:** Reheat food until steaming, then cool to a safe temperature. Never refreeze thawed food. If your baby doesn't finish a serving, discard the rest—saliva introduces bacteria that are invisible to the naked eye, but can spoil food.
- **Check for spoilage every time:** Throw food away if it smells sour, looks discolored, has mold, or separates into watery layers. When in doubt, toss it out. Babies are more sensitive to foodborne illness than adults.
- **Time meals strategically:** Try solids when your baby is a little hungry, but not overly tired or full, so about 30 to 90 minutes after a milk feed. Avoid offering purées as the fallback if they refuse new textures. This window between 6–9 months is critical for texture development.
- **Watch for signs of over-reliance on purees:** If your baby consistently refuses lumpy foods, gags on texture, or waits for smoother backup meals, they may be too reliant on blended foods. Try mixing small whole foods (like minced meat) into purées or offering soft mashed foods alongside their usual meals.
- **Include texture variety throughout the day:** A balanced day might include smooth oatmeal in the morning, mashed veggies and soft meat at lunch, and steamed finger foods at dinner. Even if purées are still part of the meal, include at least one food that encourages chewing.
- **Offer safe opportunities to chew:** Choose foods that are soft enough to mash between your fingers, like steamed vegetables, ripe fruits, or baby puffs. Let your baby gnaw on safe options like a soft carrot stick or mango pit under supervision. Once they develop a pincer grasp, introduce small, soft finger foods.

Preparing baby food at home can be simple and rewarding with the right approach. Planning ahead, gradually introducing new textures, and storing food safely helps ensure your baby gets the nutrients they need while building important eating skills.

Conclusion

Blended foods can play an important role in the early stages of feeding, especially when made at home with safe textures and nutritious ingredients, but they should be used with intention. Supporting your baby's development means knowing when to thicken textures, introduce chewable foods, and encourage self-feeding.

The key is balance. Blended meals can be helpful, but they shouldn't replace opportunities to chew, explore, and engage with food. With the right tools and a bit of planning, you can build healthy habits from the start.

And remember, every baby is different. If you're unsure about what's best for your child, speak with a pediatrician or feeding specialist for guidance that's right for your family.

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Maya Maceka

With nearly 10 years of experience, Maya Maceka is a freelance writer who creates detailed, research-backed articles that explain products, industries, and related topics. She focuses on uncovering the complex details behind seemingly simple topics, helping readers make confident and informed decisions.



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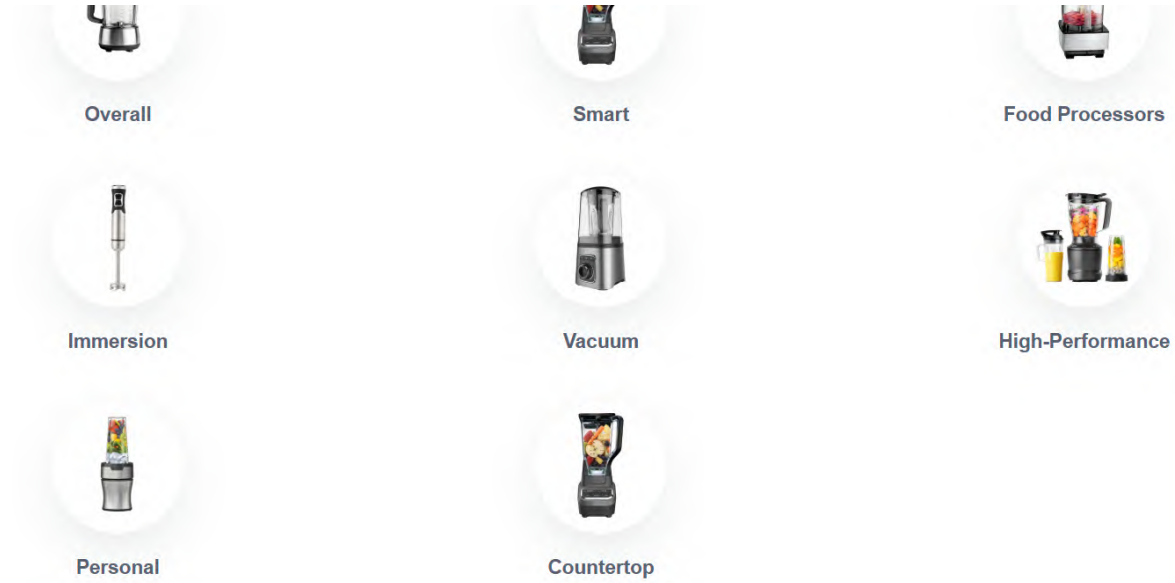
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October 18, 2023

| Relationships | Invisible Load

Rebuilding Connection and Intimacy After Baby: How Family Systems Can Help Us Navigate Relationship Challenges



WORKSHOPS FROM QUALIFIED MENTAL HEALTH THERAPISTS

★★★★★

4.9/5 Ratings



with Aaron Steinberg
Co-Founder of Babyproofing Your Relationship



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We discuss how we can foster teamwork and emotional intimacy after having a baby.

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What You'll Learn

- How the Distribution of Labor Impacts Our Emotional Intimacy After Baby
- How Family Systems Can Help Us Share Labor Fairly
- Why Accountability Matters When It Comes to Relationships
- Why the Postpartum Period Is So Hard on Relationships
- How to Maintain Connection and Emotional Intimacy After Baby
- Understanding Each Other's Emotional Needs

New parents are often blindsided at the toll having a baby takes on their relationship. What once came easy—sharing labor and working together—can now feel like an uphill battle. And we might feel like connection and intimacy after baby are impossible.

I've seen this pattern play out for so many of my clients. Their expectations of what their relationship will look like as a parent often don't match reality.

There are many reasons why this happens—[gender norms](#), a lack of foundational communication skills, and societal pressures [placed on both partners](#). The distribution of labor and the resentment that comes with it can drive a wedge before we even realize it's happening.

When this happens, couples often find themselves doubting their relationship. But more often than not, there are ways to work together to navigate these challenges. It takes intention, communication, and connection—all of which are difficult to focus on with young children.

But what if we could lay the foundation for stronger connection and communication before we became parents? What if we could create family systems that allowed everyone to feel heard and

becoming parents. What if the social media systems that alerted everyone to new news are valued? Navigating those challenges could be much easier.



Today, I'm joined by Aaron Steinberg, MA, co-founder of [Babyproofing Your Relationship](#).

Aaron came into the space fascinated by relationship dynamics. He ended up becoming a relationship coach, often helping couples reconnect through the difficult transition into parenthood.

I was excited to chat with Aaron to discuss family systems, staying connected after baby, and how we can come together to share the invisible load in the home.

How the Distribution of Labor Impacts Our Emotional Intimacy After Baby

Aaron pointed out that becoming parents is the largest voluntary transition we ever go through. It's a metamorphosis that not only reshapes individuals but also profoundly impacts relationships. It's hard to be prepared for what is to come.

So when we encounter new [invisible labor](#) and responsibilities, we often fall back on the [gender roles](#) that were modeled for us—especially in a society where we are largely undersupported as new parents.

Before parenthood, many couples may have had a fairly equal distribution of responsibilities. But the dynamics shift dramatically when a baby enters the picture. Moms often begin bearing the [brunt of the invisible load](#) as early as conception, then continue to carry the bulk of the labor in the postpartum period.

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Moms often begin bearing the brunt of the
invisible load as early as conception.

When we fall into this pattern unintentionally, resentment can breed. Aaron pointed out that it's hard for a relationship to thrive when we're harboring a feeling of disconnection and resentment.

That's why it's important to be intentional about how we share the labor and who handles not just the physical tasks, but also the mental and emotional ones. Aaron's work often focuses on developing family systems for distributing labor.

How Family Systems Can Help Us Share Labor Fairly

Aaron said that family systems are a foundation for anything that each partner, and even each child as they get older, cares for, owns, or maintains.

But creating a family system is also about stepping back and establishing structure, systems, and processes that ease the burden of labor and allow everyone in the family to have space for their wellbeing.

Aaron said that an important piece of the puzzle is addressing feelings of connection and a sense of teamwork. When we build connection into the system, we can create structures and processes that support everyone and foster mental and emotional wellness for everyone.

If we don't focus on connection and teamwork, it's common to slip into scorekeeping, gatekeeping, or generally not being on the same page. Both partners might feel resentful of relationship dynamics and the distribution of labor. We can start to feel as if it's us against our partner rather than us and our partner trying to figure something out together.

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We can start to feel as if it's us against our partner rather than us and our partner on a team.

But leading with connection and teamwork can help us validate each other's feelings, maintain a more neutral perspective and grace for each other, and avoid falling into patterns of resentment.

Why Accountability Matters When It Comes to Relationships

Two foundational pieces of fostering connection and emotional intimacy after baby are accountability and agency. We should hold our partners accountable for their part—but that doesn't mean we should position them as the problem.

Aaron said that he has seen countless couples who put the blame on their partner. This can feel like the right thing to do if we're living with resentment. But if we view our partner as the problem, there is no solution—it's a lose/lose situation. Instead, we can work together to problem-solve.

That requires acknowledging our own agency and our own contribution. Relationship dynamics are co-created—and more often than not we're being impacted by our upbringing, past relationships, and societal pressure.

For example, if we've fallen into an overfunctioning and underfunctioning dynamic, where it feels like we are taking everything on and our partner isn't pulling their weight, it's easy to blame them. But in reality, we've co-created the situation unintentionally. And we're not likely to feel emotionally intimate or connected when we're maintaining that dynamic.

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The more we criticize or blame, the greater the problem becomes

The more we criticize or blame, the greater the problem becomes. But if we can work together and release the blame, acknowledging both our personal responsibility and external influences, we can troubleshoot the issue together.

Why the Postpartum Period Is So Hard on Relationships

One of the reasons why we find ourselves falling into patterns of unequal distribution of labor and resentment is that the postpartum period often feels like survival mode. We're sleep-deprived, physically and mentally exhausted, and consumed by our babies—it's hard to find the time to feel connected or prioritize our relationship.

It can be helpful to remember that this is a temporary season. When we feel more conflict or struggle during this time, it feels very high-stakes. But the truth is that we're in a difficult time—a time where we are both learning, changing, developing skills, and figuring things out.

We also often have body image issues or identity loss during this time. And when we're already not feeling the best about ourselves, it's easy to interpret our partner's behavior through a negative lens.

But we might both be feeling like we're drowning. We might both struggle to meet our emotional needs during this time. When we feel like our needs aren't being met, we might be hurt. It's okay to feel anger or hurt or confusion—but it's important to come together and openly discuss our needs, our feelings, and how we can support each other.

One of the small things we can do that can pay off for our relationship is to pause and practice

curiosity rather than falling into knee-jerk reactions. For instance, if our partner walks by us without acknowledging us, we might feel like it's a personal slight. But what if we asked, "Hmm, I wonder what's going on with them? Maybe they're distracted? Maybe they need something? Let's talk about this together."

“

When we approach with curiosity instead of blame it makes it easier to see the good in our partner.

When we approach with curiosity instead of blame it makes it easier to see the good in our partner.

How to Maintain Connection and Emotional Intimacy After Baby

Aaron said that maintaining a connection through the difficult stages of having young children is important. When we're in survival mode, we might both be tempted to focus on other things. Our relationship might not be the top priority.

But if we overlook our relationship for years, we might find ourselves feeling like strangers by the time our kids are older. If we can acknowledge what's happening and work together to stay connected in little ways along the way, it becomes easier.

Our connection and intimacy might not look like they once did. [Spontaneous intimacy](#) or regular date nights could be unattainable. But that doesn't mean we can't be connected and intimate.

Aaron shared that when he and his wife are exhausted after a long day with the kids, often all they want to do is watch TV and turn off their brains. But they have committed to spending just ten minutes talking first, checking in with each other and connecting. Even just that little time and effort go a long way to fostering emotional intimacy and a sense of teamwork.

“

Think of the little things you can do to recreate connection.

If you and your partner are unable to plan big date nights or trips together, or if you're touched out and just want your space, that's okay. Think of the little things you can do to recreate connection. It might be sitting down to drink your coffee together in the morning before the kids wake up, or checking in with each other, or writing a quick positive message to one another.

The more we do to build up our connection, the less high-stakes it will feel when we do experience conflict or disconnection.

Understanding Each Other's Emotional Needs

It's also important to remember that our emotional needs are not always the same as our partner's. We need to spend time thinking about what we need, what our partner needs, and what adjustments we can each make to meet each other where we're at.

For example, if one partner craves affirmation or connection and the other one values alone time, neither partner is wrong. Perhaps each partner has to work to offer their partner what they need. Maybe the two come together for 20 minutes of quality time and then go off and do their own thing, so that each feels that their needs are being met.

Aaron said that even if it seems like you have opposing needs, and even if it seems like there's no time, there *is* enough time to give each other the gift of what you each need for at least a few minutes.

“

There is enough time to give each other the gift of what you each need for at least a few minutes.

It also might involve some self-exploration of [our own needs](#) and creativity for how we can work to meet them in different ways. If we really need to talk about our day but our partner needs some alone time, perhaps we can call a friend first to meet our need to be heard. Our partner doesn't have to be the sole meeter of our needs.

Ultimately, if we prioritize the connection, if we think about our partner's needs, if we are both upfront about ours, and if we approach connection with openness and creativity, it becomes much easier to stay connected and maintain a strong relationship, even when it feels like our lives are

consumed by the current season.

If you're feeling disconnected in your relationship, our mom therapists can help! We offer virtual relationship support to couples and individuals. [Book a FREE 15 minute virtual consult today.](#)

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AARON STEINBERG

Co-Founder of Babyproofing Your Relationship

Aaron F. Steinberg, MA, PCC is a relationship coach, group facilitator, and father of two young boys. He is the Co-Founder of a relationship education and support organization, Babyproofing Your Relationship. In addition to his MA in Psychology, he has certificates in leadership development and sex education, is a NARM Complex and Developmental Trauma Practitioner, and is trained in couples counseling through the Gottman Institute and the Couples Institute. He has helped thousands of people learn to feel truly fulfilled in romantic relationships through individual and couples counseling, group workshops and courses, and his guidebook to working through romantic conflict called The Honesty Practice.



HOST

ERICA DJOSSA

PMH-C | Founder of Momwell

Erica is the founder of Momwell, providing educational resources and virtual therapy for moms. She is a mom of three boys and a registered psychotherapist. Erica's work has been featured in the Toronto Star, Breakfast Television, Scary Mommy, Medium, Pop Sugar, and Romper. how they want it.

RESOURCES MENTIONED

- [Grow Together Co course](#)

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MOM CONFESSION

I don't want my partner to 'help' me around the house. I want them to take the same **initiative** I do to see what needs to be done and take **ownership** of it.

@MOMWELL

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PARTNER WHO HELPS AND A PARTNER WHO OWNS.

ADHD hyperfocus can be a superpower until you realize you forgot to eat, missed the pickup window, and have been down a rabbit hole for three hours.

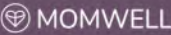
The mental load requires a brain that can plan ahead, hold multiple things at once, switch between tasks without losing the thread, and remember what it was doing ten minutes ago. ADHD affects every single one of those things. And yet somehow you're still the one running it all.

@MOMWELL

LET ME DEINFLUENCE YOU

You weren't just bad at school. You weren't too sensitive. **You weren't too much.** You were undiagnosed.

Those are completely different **things**.



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