

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS Crib Sheet



WHAT TO KNOW: SHOPPING FOR A NEW BABY

By Angela Wynne
Blog: BabyCheapskate.com
Photo: Kristina Marie Photography



HOW CAN YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT TO BUY?

Take a breath, step away from your wallet, and think about buying for a new baby in terms of basic needs (remember learning about those in sociology class?). What products will satisfy your baby's needs for food, clothing, shelter, and safety? Whatever doesn't help meet those basic needs is not a need, but a want—and as such, it's optional. Thinking about baby items this way can really put baby shopping into perspective. It can save you big bucks, too.

Some essentials include crib and bedding, diapers and wipes, feeding items as needed (bottles, formula, breast pump, etc.), swaddling blankets, and an infant car seat (if you have a car).

WHAT SHOULD YOU REGISTER FOR?

It's easy to go a crazy with the scanner gun when you're creating your registry at the store, but you can turn your registry into a big-time savings tool by registering for practical items that you know you'll need. That way, you'll spend less out-of-pocket in the long run and not end up with a house full of clutter.

WHAT CAN WAIT?

You'll waste space *and* money if you shop for your baby with the intention of meeting every possible need before you've even met your kiddo. One of the sanest ways to save big on baby things is to wait to shop until *after* she's born. Ahead of time, buy the things you know you'll need within a month or two. Items like high chairs and convertible car seats can be bought later on or when you spot a fabulous sale... or maybe you'll decide you don't need them, after all. You'll also cut down on clutter and save space in your basement or attic.

WHAT DO YOU NEED WHEN YOU LEAVE THE HOSPITAL?

You'll need a car seat (installed, of course) when you leave the hospital with your brand-new little one by car or taxi. At home, you'll want to be sure you can focus on getting to know your new bundle of joy without having to run to the drugstore to pick up needed items. That means having things like diapers, wipes, ointment, and swaddling blankets on hand and ready to go.

WHAT ARE THE BEST WAYS TO SAVE?

Prioritizing your purchasing by sorting items into wants and needs is a huge way to save. But there are other ways you can save, too.

- Borrow when you can. Many baby gear items (bassinets, for example) are designed to be used for a few weeks before they're outgrown. That means there's generally lots of life left in them. Hit your friends up for clothing, baby carriers, bouncers, swings, and more.
- If you can't get what you need for free, try to get it second-hand, at least. If you're short on willing friends with stuffed attics, hit your local kiddie consignment shops and seasonal consignment sales. You'll be amazed at the bargains you can score—30% to 50% or more—on everything from strollers to onesies.
- If you can't get it free or second-hand, get it on sale. If you shop wisely and pay attention to sales, it's super easy to save 20% and up on baby gear, clothing, and other necessities.
- Stock up on consumables (disposable diapers and wipes) when they're on sale so you don't end up rushing out at the last minute and buying at full price. Don't feel like you need to go too crazy, though. A month's worth is plenty.

WHEN SHOULD YOU SAVE?

New parents overestimate the amount of time babies spend in their nursery. Beyond that, her eyes will be closed for most of the hours she'll spend in there! Why spend a lot of money on pricey baby furniture and bedding if nobody but grownups will appreciate it? Think basic bedding, a waterproof mattress pad, and crib sheets for the crib.

When it comes to decor, don't go overboard with design, no matter what Pinterest tempts you to do. Save by repurposing decor items and storage items from other rooms of your home. Make it cute, but don't go crazy.

WHEN SHOULD YOU SPLURGE?

I'm generally in favor of spending as little as possible, but there are exceptions. Think about your lifestyle and priorities to find them.

Moms who go back to work and are breastfeeding will appreciate a quality breast pump. Organic products such as bedding will cost you more than conventional products, but they are a priority for some families. If you'll be hoofing it a lot with your baby, it might be worth investing in a more expensive, easy-to-handle stroller or a really comfy carrier.

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