



5 Ways to Prepare for Parenthood When You Have a Disability

Parenthood is one of the most rewarding experiences in life, but it can also be exhausting and isolating if you don't have support. The best thing you can do is prepare now so you're ready for the [challenges](#) and the joy that's coming. These preparations aren't all that different when you have a disability. It's simply a matter of adapting to meet your family's needs.

- 1. Establish good self-care that continues into parenthood.** You already know that balanced nutrition and drinking plenty of water are important throughout pregnancy. Starting these habits now is also the best way to make sure you continue taking the best possible care of yourself as a new parent. New parents often ignore their own needs to focus on the high demands of an infant, but according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, taking care of yourself makes you a [better parent](#) because you're able to give your baby your best.
- 2. Make connections with other expectant parents.** Through the highs and lows of those early days of parenthood, the reality is that you are not alone. All parents go through a similar experience, so having a network of [parent friends](#) will help you find peace of mind that what you're going through is normal. Joining a parenting group also makes it easier to get out of the house with a new baby and feel like yourself again. You may also want to connect with other parents who have disabilities because they can give you support and helpful tips.

3. Asking for help is smart. It really does take a village to raise a child, and this is true for all parents. Trying to do everything on your own could get in your way of being the best parent for your child, so be willing to seek out and [accept help](#). It's normal to feel stressed, especially in the early days, but letting a friend or family member give you a hand can really help. Go ahead and give yourself permission to not only meet your basic needs, but to find time for self-care, too. Make a plan to carve out time for yourself, even if you need help to make that happen.

4. Set up your home the way that works best for your family. Every family is different, so the way you adapt your home to care for a baby will need to work for your unique situation. Instead of looking at a baby-care list as one size fits all, use it as a starting point to think through which items will really work best for you. Depending on your limitations and capabilities, you might want to look into [adaptive gear](#), like an accessible crib or stroller. Keep in mind that babies outgrow everything fast, so check your local consignment stores for secondhand items, which you can often find in great shape since they're used for such a short period of time.

5. Keep your baby's safety and your own safety in mind.

If you buy any baby gear secondhand, the U.S. Office on Women's Health recommends checking for recalls and making sure it meets [current safety standards](#). You will need to babyproof your entire home before your baby is mobile, but the biggest safety concern in the early days is a safe sleep space that is free from blankets, stuffed animals, and anything else that could be a suffocation hazard. Your safety is just as important, so do a check throughout your home so that a handrail on the stairs and anything else you may need is in place to keep you safe when carrying your baby.

Much of the true experience of parenthood is universal, regardless of whether a parent has a disability. We all have our own unique lifestyle and parenting styles, but we all also need to take time for self-care and get support from other parents. Start preparing your home and your life for the journey ahead now to make the most of those precious days when they come.

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