

Expectant and Parenting Youth Recommended Essential Baby Items

As a youth in foster care who is expecting or parenting a child, you are eligible for specialized support to help you prepare for the birth of your child and care for them. See the Expectant and Parenting Youth (EPY) Resources guide for additional information on financial assistance, services, and resources available to you. The following list of essential baby items may help you prepare for the birth of your child and to care for your child following the birth.

Before and After the Hospital

Baby Hospital Bag

In most cases, OB/GYNs recommend packing a hospital bag sometime between 37 and 38 weeks. This way, your basics are ready if the baby comes early. Of course, if you want to get a jumpstart on planning, start earlier — when to pack a hospital bag is up to you! But it's a good idea not to leave it for later than 38 weeks: You want to have your hospital bag ready to go whenever baby is.

Your Hospital Bag Should Include:

- Photo ID, insurance information (Medi-Cal, etc.), any hospital forms
- Your birth plan (print a few copies)
- Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, lip balm, hair ties, face wipes)
- Cell phone and cell phone charger
- Any entertainment/diversions for labor
- Snacks
- Eyeglasses and or contacts, if you need them
- 2-3 pairs of socks
- A warm robe or sweater (to wear after labor)
- 2-3 maternity bras and nursing pads (whether or not you plan to nurse)
- 2-3 pairs of maternity underwear
- Sleepwear
- Going home clothes for you
- Going home clothes for baby:
 - two undershirts
 - a sweater or light fleece jacket (in the winter)
 - socks or booties
 - a receiving blanket
 - a hat
- 3-5 diapers (although the hospital will probably provide some)
- Infant car seat

Baby Wardrobe Essentials

Select practical baby things that will keep your newborn comfy and cozy, including these must-have items:

- 4-8 onesies (envelope folds at the shoulders and snaps at the crotch)
- 4-8 shirts (kimono-style with snaps or envelope folds at the shoulders)
- 4-8 pants (booties can be a great option)
- 4-8 one-piece pajamas
- 1-3 rompers or other dress-up outfits
- 1-3 sweaters or jackets (front buttoned)
- 4-7 socks or booties
- 1-3 newborn hats (broad-brimmed for a summer baby, soft cap that covers ears for a winter baby)
- No-scratch mittens
- 2 wearable blankets for the winter
- Bunting bag or fleece suit for the winter
- Lightweight and heavy stroller blankets
- Gentle laundry detergent

Baby Nursery Essentials

A baby's room calls for decorations for sure, but you'll also need furniture and baby bedding that will make infant care all the easier (and safer).

- Crib, cradle or bassinette
- Firm, flat mattress that fits snugly in the crib (less than two fingers should fit between the mattress and crib)
- 2-4 fitted crib sheets
- Swaddle blankets
- Rocking chair or glider
- Baby monitor
- Diaper changing table or dresser with changing pad
- Toy basket
- White noise machine (optional)
- Diaper pail (optional)

Baby Diapering Essentials

Changing a diaper may seem daunting at first, but you'll get the hang of it—and these baby must-haves will help you pick it up even faster.

- 2-3 large boxes of disposable newborn-size (1 small) and size 1 & 2
- 2-3 large boxes of unscented baby wipes
- 2 large tubes of diaper cream
- Diaper bag

Baby Bath Essentials

Bath time can be tons of fun—at least, once you get a handle on that slippery baby. Be prepared with all the right gear.

- Baby bathtub
- Baby shampoo and body wash
- 2-4 hooded baby towels

- Soft washcloths
- Baby lotion

Baby Feeding Essentials

Be prepared to feed your newborn around the clock—which means, whether you’re breastfeeding or bottle-feeding, you’re going to need a lot of baby things for mealtime.

- 8-10 bottles and nipples, both 4- and 8- ounce (more than 1 brand: some good brands are Dr. Brown, MAM, and Avent)
- Bottle brush
- Dishwasher basket for small items
- Formula (if not nursing)
- Breast pump (if you plan to breastfeed)
- Milk storage bags (if you plan to breastfeed)
- Nursing pads (if you plan to breastfeed)
- Nipple cream (if you plan to breastfeed)
- Highchair
- 4-8 bibs
- 4-8 burp cloths
- Baby feeding pillow (boppy)
- Bottle warmer (optional)
- Bottle sterilizer (optional)

Baby Health Essentials

Don’t forget: Babies need occasional grooming too. And if your child happens to get sick, you’ll want to have the right baby essentials on hand.

- Baby nail clippers or file
- Baby thermometer
- Petroleum jelly and sterile gauze (for circumcision care)
- First aid kit
- Cradle cap brush
- 4-6 pacifiers (optional)

Baby Gear Essentials

Whether you’re on the move or relaxing at home, you’ll need to need have some key baby gear at the ready. After all, at some point you’re going to need your arms back!

- Infant car seat or convertible car seat
- Stroller
- Baby carrier
- Baby swing or bouncer
- Play mat

How to Ask for Help Getting Essential Baby Items

Ask your social worker, probation officer or other supportive adults (members of your CFT, your attorney, mentors, CASA, teachers, coaches, school counselors, etc.) what they can do assist you in getting essential baby items and supports, including:

- Expectant Parent Payment
- Infant Supplement
- EPY Conference (if offered by your county)
- Parenting Support Plan (if nonminor dependent living in a Supervised Independent Living Placement)