



Tip Sheet

Tips for new parents at home

Same Sex couples

We all need love and encouragement when we make the transition to parenthood.

Parents need equal support and acknowledgement that we all react to parenthood differently. Some new parents find it easier than their partners and there's nothing wrong with that - we are all different. The aim is mutual support which also brings best results for babies.

If you are concerned about your partner, ask them if there's anything bothering them. Listen and nod and don't interrupt. Ask questions to show you are interested in understanding what's happening for them. Talk about what they think it means to be a parent/mother/father/carer, and share your feelings too.

Many partners who are working outside the home are concerned about the pressures of 'providing'.

It can be helpful if you are the main carer to show some gratitude that they are bringing in the bacon at the moment, and acknowledge that they may feel a bit alone and often miss their new baby while at work.

They also need to be grateful for your work with baby at home. Discuss the fact that you are both working hard - one of you is just in an unpaid working role for now. Gratitude, a cuddle and word of thanks does wonders for all parents.

It's not easy in either role - main carer or main provider - so have some empathy for one another and discuss the many pros and cons. Talking things through is good.



www.ds.org.au/our-services/brimbankdads



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Reconnect physically if you feel comfortable, that doesn't mean necessarily having sex (although that can make you feel like you have reclaimed your body again). Just aim to be intimate and kind to each other.

Your partner may be missing the physical closeness, as babies tend to take all they can get of your attention. Talk about this – it's a normal issue for new parents. Be clear if you do not want sex, and explain why - but also reassure them of your feelings. It is normal for parenthood to delay or change your normal sex life.

Main carers rarely feel displaced by the new baby but the other parent may, so try to be understanding. A massage, a hug, or a kiss can help parents who feel a bit left out.

Try to lighten up and have a laugh. Let the little things go and focus on enjoying your new family and setting up some fun routines.

It is important that the stay at home parent has adequate access to money. This can be awkward to negotiate as those who are earning may feel more comfortable to spend than those who aren't, but give it a go. This is not the time to be tight with money or refer to it is "mine" rather than "ours", nor is it a good time to complain about how you wish your partner earned more. If they are working, it's great that they have a job. If they are not working, support them to spend the time between connecting with you and baby and seeking work. Criticising someone never strengthens a relationship.

Be aware that it is often harder for the person who is working to admit they need extra help. They may or may not have close friends that talk about feelings or mental health, so if they seem depressed broach the subject with them. Offer to go with them to the GP.



It is not unusual for partners to experience depression in the first year of baby's life. In Australia 5 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women have post-natal mental health issues. In many ways the issues aren't so different for same sex parents – multiple changes and pressures, mixed with joyous moments.

Handy websites

<https://ds.org.au/queerspace>

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au>

<http://gaydadsaustralia.com.au/>

www.panda.org.au (the peri natal anxiety and depression site for women and men)

www.raisingchildren.net.au (the go to place for accurate information on babies)

www.mensline.org.au (check out the relationship advice section)



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