

There is so much baby crap in the world.

I was so relieved when a few friends narrowed down the list of what we really needed and what we didn't. Once you get over the initial horror and peer pressure of not buying the \$700 version of what you really need you will be fine. And richer!

Here is a list I based off of the one I received from my Mom friend with a few additions of my own. I hope you find it helpful! By the time I finish writing this there will be 50 cooler products out there on the market I'm sure!

I've also shared some parenting tips that should be taken with a grain of salt. Every baby is different but this was our experience and what information we share with other friends expecting babies when they ask us.

CRIB

If we lived in the suburbs we'd have the luxury of one of those giant beautiful cribs. I found a mini crib that fit our apartment just fine and the price is right. I was afraid it would look cheap and wanted to be sure it was safe. All reviews said it was good and we are very pleased. The kid can sleep in it up until two years old plus I think. The crib we got was called the **Alpha Mini Rocking Portacrib by Da Vinci** in Cherry but comes in Natural, Oak and White.

The downside to a Portacrib is all those adorable modern sheets and bedding out there (like the Dwell baby line) do not fit a Portacrib style mattress/crib. They require their own bedding. After months of research the best I could come up with for Portacrib sheets was a company called babybedding.com. If you have a pattern you like they have 'sets' you can order which include everything from crib bumper, blanket, sheets, dust ruffle, lampshade, rocking chair cover, etc. Very affordable. If you are buying for a smaller crib be sure you are looking in the right section on the web site marked "Porta/Mini Crib Bedding" otherwise you will be bummed when nothing fits.

The mattress we ordered for the mini crib was called the **Mini Crib Mattress Pad 3"** and seems to be thick enough for her comfort.

STROLLER

We were lucky enough to have friends loan us their **Graco Snuggle Ride Infant car seat** and then we bought the **Snap-N-Go** base. The car seat

literally snaps into the base and the base is collapsible and totally easy to throw into the back of a cab or on to the subway. This was also an awesome combo should you be out and about on a long walk and decide to cab it home. The kid is already in a car seat you just click in to the back of a cab.

This stroller lasted us through the winter months and allowed us to avoid going down the road of the million-dollar stroller route such as the Bugaboo. Many Moms like the Bugaboo which is fine. I just didn't like the feeling of taking over a room when I entered the doorway which those strollers always gave me the feel of.

And around 5 months old we bought the **McClaren Quest** stroller which is a total of 12bs. It changed our life. It is a fantastic lightweight stroller and cost several hundred dollars less than the Bugaboo Bee which many Moms say is not that compact after all.

OUTERWEAR

(Lili was a winter baby so this is semi-winter baby related)

-(buy 2 to alternate) – onesie snowsuits – fleece – not the parka kind. Kids get overheated very easily especially being wheeled in and out of stores or on the subway. If I did this again I'd be sure the legs had snaps or at least zipped down to the bottom so it was easier to get on and off the baby. We found 2 great ones – stylish and cheap – that we used all the time from Old Navy.

-(buy 6 -3 cotton and 3 outdoor hats) I found anything with pom poms on the top of the hat made it hard to put the baby into the snowsuit with a hood. Sometimes we used cotton hats for when she went to sleep to keep her extra warm.

-(3 hooded sweatshirts) – Lili burned through a number of zip front hooded sweatshirts in both cotton fabrics and fleece. These were great to have on hand and throw in a bag should she get cold in a restaurant or in her stroller, etc. Great cheap but stylish ones at Old Navy and Baby Gap. American Apparel has great ones for older babies which I often give as gifts. Soft and durable.

SHOES/SOCKS

-(buy 1 pair of bootie style shoes) It is great to have a pair of booties for fancy show but you don't need more than one. Your kid is not walking and most the time they are under a blanket or in their crib or in a onsie and there is no need for them to wear shoes despite how tempting it is to buy them.

-(buy 2 sets of socks – one set has 6 socks I think) Cheap baby socks are just as annoying as cheap grown up socks – falling down and off constantly. It is smarter to purchase 2 sets of really good socks for babies. I recommend Trumpette.com socks. Lots of fun styles and great quality. They also sell a gift pack which makes a great gift for new parents.

PJS

-(buy 2 five packs) I was not prepared in the area of pjs. I had only three pairs and Lili stained them so quickly – sometimes going through all three pairs of pajamas in one night. I highly recommend those cheapie 5 packs of pajamas made by Gerber. They also make 3-packs called **Gerber 3-Pack Sleep & Play**. They are a tad tacky and sometimes say horrible things like 'Daddy's Little Princess!' on them but to be honest they are worth the price how quickly they out grow pajamas. Circo also makes good pajamas and kid clothes in general. Also – don't be tempted by pajamas that have buttons on the back or complicated buttons in the front. When it is 2AM and you are changing the kid in the dark you want a simple pj you can zip on and off in a flash.

DIAPERS/WIPES

-In our attempts to be PC we bought the Seventh Generation diapers which ended up leaking and being very expensive. We were warned by several parents this would happen. Many parents I know are using the **G DIAPERS** which seem very cool. They are breathable, plastic-free and flushable. You buy the outer casing with the baby wears – look like underwear. The 'diaper' part is a sanitary like napkin on the inside that you remove and can flush. Apparently it really doesn't clog up toilets which is great. We use **Pampers Swaddlers** diapers. Diapers come in different sizes – N = Newborn, Size 1 = 8-14 lbs, Size 2 = 12-18lbs, etc. I think Lili wore Newborn size diapers up until at least 2 months old and possibly the start of 3 months. If you can buy diapers on the Internet in bulk or at a Cosco you will save money. Keep in mind babies grow SO QUICKLY so don't go nuts in buying too many diapers of one size at once. So many parents make that rookie mistake and are left with hundreds of diapers that no

longer fit your kid. As far as wipes go we use **Lansinoh Diaper Wipes**. They have no perfumes and don't smell like baby powder.

We use the **Diaper Dekor Plus** garbage pail. I liked it better than the Genie which didn't have a pedal to step on and you had to physically lift the lid while holding poop filled diaper. Gross. You will need refill bags.

Highly recommend the **Skip Hop Pro Pronto Changing Wallet**. Easy to throw in your bag when you are out and about and need to change the baby. I bought the light blue one which is cute but slightly regret it because now it is filthy looking. Darker color would have been better. I was given the Skip Hop diaper bag also which I registered for but found the bag very frustratingly small with the tiny pockets. I ended up buying a huge hobo bag from H&M and use it as a diaper bag instead.

I never used a diaper stacker but some people do. I use a mesh white hanging shoe rack on the back of the baby's door which allows me tons of compartments for diapers and wipes and extra lotions, etc. **ContainerStore.com** has tons of great options.

For her changing pad cover we use the **Carter's Super Soft Dot Changing Pad Cover- Ecru**. The quality is super soft and has held up well after many washings. And for the actual changing pad itself we used the cheap \$19.00 **Contor Changing Pad** with ramped sides should the baby roll.

BOOB STUFF

Lansinoh makes a great nipple cream should you get cracked nipples in the early stages of breastfeeding. It will save your life! It's a cream that is very gooey like Vaseline that you put on your nipples and is totally ok for babies to get in their mouth while nursing. I recommend getting a tube of the **Lansinoh Topical Breast Cream**.

You will burn through breast pads like no tomorrow. Each day if you are breastfeeding you have to wear breast pads which are like sanitary napkins in your bra because you are leaking milk throughout the day. Sexy – I know. If you buy cheap breast pads it will look like you stuffed your bra with wrinkled tissue paper so don't do this. I made that mistake. I highly recommend **Medela Disposable Nursing Bra Pads – 60 Pk**. Buy at least 2 boxes to start. You will literally use thousands of these in a month and sometimes changing them throughout the day. Ok. Not thousands but A LOT.

Nursing bras. Do not spend tons of money of expensive nursing bras! Really. They get trashed and stained and are not worth the expensive price tag. Every Mom I know found GREAT nursing bras at TARGET which were cheap and surprisingly even good looking which was shocking. I bought 2 under-wire **Gilligan & O'Malley Lace Underwire Nursing Bras** in Ebony & White. I also recommend getting some Medela Sleep Nursing bra which is NOT underwire and easier and more comfortable to sleep in. It has no snaps so makes middle of the night feedings easier.

Breast pump – I was lucky enough to inherit a breast pump and didn't have to fork over the several hundred dollars. Friends recommend the **Medela Pump In Style Advanced Breastpump Backpack Pump** and the **Medela Harmony Manual Breast Pump**. You can pump the milk into either freezer storage bags – I recommend the **Medela Pump and Save Breast Milk Bags** which are like Ziploc bags. You can also use Medela plastic containers with tops. I never used the wipes or the microwave steam bags you can buy. You will need to buy 2 breast pump tubes.

FIRST AID KIT

We use the **American Red Cross First Aid Baby Health Care Set**. I recommend one that has a pacifier thermometer which makes taking the baby's temp easier. They also make a tiny travel one which comes in a compact zip up case which is great.

BURP CLOTHS

-(buy 20 at least) I recommend the soft weave Gerber white cloth diapers called the **Gerber 6-Pack Organic Birdseye Prefold Diapers- 3Ply Center and** use them as burp cloths. I burn through TONS of these in a day. There is a current trend out there of adorable vintage style burp cloths made with amazing fabrics. I use these for going out in public or out to dinner when I don't want an ugly and stained white burp cloth hanging over my shoulder in public. But other than that most fancy burp cloths I've seen in all those cool fabrics do not absorb the spit up as well as the standard boring ones. And there is a LOT of spit up.

SLEEP SACK

-(1 Sleep sack) – we got several of these as gifts and here were our thoughts – I became slightly addicted to the white fleece **Halo sleep sack**. I think they make a cotton one too for spring/summer babies. Basically it is an armless sleeping bag that zips up the front that your kid sleeps in and comes with a 'wrap' that velcros around your kid keeping their arms to

their side while they sleep and in general keeping them snug and secure. Lili was (and is) a fierce sleeper and HATES being swaddled. We found this to be one of the only products that kept her secure while sleeping most of the time. My only gripe was after a few washings the Velcro loses its stick and sometimes she would become overheated in it on occasion but for the nights we did use it and she didn't wake herself up by batting herself in the face with her hands – it was worth it.

BOUNCEY CHAIR

There are a ton of these chairs out there but I highly recommend the **Oeuf Lounger**. They run about \$98 but will be the best investment you make. We were lucky enough to have friends loan us their lounger (among ten thousand other things). Lili still sits in it but it's used all the time when you want to talk on the phone, make lunch, read to the kid, let them take a nap during the day, etc. and have your hands free.

BLANKETS

-Blankets – everyone and their mother will give you a blanket. You do not need to buy yourself a fancy blanket. However – there are three blankets that were given to us that we use ALL the time. One is a fancy one from the baby line Dwell – a fun pattern on one side and fuzzy fabric on the inside. Another Dwell almost cashmere style blanket – very light and very, very soft that I throw in my bag wherever I go and use it as a wrap while nursing. And the last is a uber fuzzy small square fleece cheapie blanket called the **Koala Baby Ultra Soft Fleece Blanket – Ducks** that I take with me to places like the doctor's office. At the doctor's office they have you undress your baby down to her diaper and you are often left waiting there for a while. It's a nice cozy thing for the baby to be wrapped up in and smell something familiar from home while in a strange place.

BATHTIME

-(buy 1 baby bather for tub or sink) We bathed Lili in the sink – in fact we still do and she is 4 months old. It's easier on the back and we found that it was also easier to control handling a wet, slippery baby as first time parents. We live in a small Brooklyn apartment so appreciated the foldable tub bather – specifically the **Summer Infant Mother's Touch™ Deluxe Baby Bather \$17.99**. It's mesh and therefore dries quickly to prevent mold.

-(buy 5-7 hooded towels) We have 5 or so white hooded towels that feel more like the washcloth types. I think they come in a 5 pack. You do not

need to buy fancy hooded bath towels that cost \$14.99. Waste of money. Buy the cheapie five pack. We place these hooded towels in the tub bather and wrap the baby up while we bath her so she won't get cold. We also got 2 fancy monogrammed hooded towels in the shape of animals – which were great and used more for after the bath when we were drying her off and walking her to her room to get into her pjs. These were given to us as gifts and from Pottery Barn kids. You can monogram the towel which is fun also.

-(6 washcloths) – terry plain washcloths. Again – buy in bulk you will use them all the time. There are brands that are these flimsy little thin washcloths that I didn't like at all and then there were normal hearty terry cloth ones that I found worked better. A kid gets dirty and you need to really scrub them down.

Note: Many doctors will tell you a newborn does not have to be washed more than 2 or 3 times a week - which is true. Many say this is bad for the baby's skin. It depends on the baby. On the other hand some people believe (and I am one of those people) a nighttime bath before bed can establish a routine for the baby that clues them into 'oh – it's time for bed soon' even at an early age when establishing a schedule is a joke. We have bathed Lilian every night since she was born for the most part. She likes the routine, likes the sound of the water and nearing the end of the bath she often yawns once or twice after nice warm water has been poured over her skin and delicious smelling bath products cleaning her. Wouldn't you?

Another fun thing suggested to us was that Tub time was given by the Dad and not Mom. For the most part Mom has baby all day. At the end of the day when Eliot got home it was a perfect time for him and Lili to unwind and 'talk about their day' and more importantly for Mom to have a break and...a glass of wine. For the record on nights Eliot worked late I would do it. And not every tub time was a long drawn out affair. They usually last no more than 11 minutes.

Also – kids have no interest in tub toys for a very long time. Lili is 4 months old and still has no interest.

BATH PRODUCTS

A baby's skin is very sensitive to perfumes among other substances. I highly recommend the **Mustela 3-in-1 body wash** for body and hair for newborns. I used that on her body and found using the standard Johnson & Johnson's baby shampoo for her hair worked best. Babies tend to have Cradle Cap when born – some more than others – which can make their hair very greasy looking. For cream after a bath we used a non-perfume, non-scented cream called Vanicream. I also use the **California Baby Candela Cream** for diaper rash or any other dry skin and it works miracles and smells great.

MOBILE

- (1 simple one) - get a simple and nice mobile for your kid not one that sings songs or flashes lights or has huge stuffed animals hanging down. Kids get so over stimulated and believe me when it's time to put them to bed you want them to sleep. We found a vintage one off Ebay but they make plenty of cute ones. Lili just started to notice her mobile at 3 months so the kid won't even recognize it for a while.

WHITE NOISE MACHINE

- this is optional. We downloaded a waterfall MP3 from the Internet and played it on loop on an old laptop in Lili's room. It helped her go to sleep and when we have company over in our tiny apartment it helped to mask the noise, chatter, etc. from the living room which was right next to her bedroom

NURSERY LIGHTING

- you should have one overhead bright light to help with changing diapers, establishing daytime for the baby, etc. You should also have one lamp with a very, very dim bulb. You can turn this on only when you are trying to establish that it is nighttime or when the baby first wakes up so they aren't alarmed by an overhead bright light. After 5pm I only turn this light on in her room when I go in to change her even if she doesn't go down until 7:30PM or so. It's part of the plan of saying, "Hey – time to unwind. It's close to bedtime." Some people I know use **Candela** lights which come in fun colors/shapes.

BABY CARRIERS

We went through what seemed like 55 baby carriers until we each found one we liked best.

Baby Bjorn – my husband likes this one because it is small, compact and easy to get on. I found now that my daughter is 14lbs that it is hard on my back particularly between my shoulder bones.

Ergo Carrier – a friend loaned me her Ergo carrier which can be purchased with an infant insert so your baby doesn't slip through the holes. Lili was too big to fall through the holes technically but too small to spread her legs around my waist in the holes so I carry her while she sits in a position with her legs like a frog. It's great on my back. My husband hated this carrier. He said it's like wearing a complicated chick bra.

Peanut Sling – my Mom gave us a great fleece sling called the peanut sling. It was a lifesaver many nights and days when Lili literally would not stop crying until she was put in the sling and fell asleep. However after long hours it can be very hard on the back.

There are tons of others out there that friends will recommend so ask around.

TOYS/BOOKS/PLAYMAT

Toys - your newborn baby will not play with any toys for a very, very long while. At least ours didn't. Yet I still collected some toys and friends and family also gave us some. The last thing we wanted was our entire house to become jam packed with kid toys. I'm sure that will change soon the older she gets! So far I've been organizing the toys we have collected in collapsible mesh cubes bought from The Container Store. They come in a variety of colors. I think they are great.

Things that Lili likes to play with now (at 4 months) are a series of very soft cloth blocks with rattles inside. She like anything shiny – books with shiny pages. Rattles and things that make noise.

Books - Books are great at any age so babies can hear the sound of your voice which they find comforting. Books Lili has enjoyed are: Knuffle Bunny, Where Is My Friend, Dear Zoo, Tails and any photo board book with animals.

Play Mat - Your child does not need those play mats until they are at least 4 months old. At least ours didn't. Again – each kid is different. A friend loaned us her Gymini Deluxe play mat which Lili is only responding to now at 4 months old. She can only last about 15 minutes on it before getting over stimulated. They are ugly and expensive \$49.99 - but collapse and can be stored under a couch or bed when you are not using them which is nice. We have wood floors so tend to put a cushy blanket under the play mat for comfort.

BOTTLE STERILIZER

We use the **Advent IQ24 Sterilizer**. It looks like a round, white rice cooker and you place bottles, bottle parts, pacifiers, nursing supplies, etc. in it to sterilize several times a day. It comes with a little cup which you fill with water – press the button and it starts to sterilize. People have different thoughts about sterilizing. Some don't at all. I've loosened up on it now that Lili has been exposed to more germs and has her shots, etc. but do what you feel is most comfortable. I definitely used it in the early months.

BOTTLE WARMER

Some people don't use a bottle warmer. I wouldn't but Lili won't take a bottle unless we do. If you don't have to use it – don't! Your kid will then get used to only drinking a warm bottle and if you are out and about in the stroller, etc. it makes warming up a bottle a big pain. The one we use is called **The First Years Quick Serve Bottle Warmer \$19.99**. To be honest the thing is annoying and I'm sure there is a better one out there.

BOTTLES

The whole bottle thing was mind boggling to me in the beginning. How many did I need? How many nipples, etc.

We use **BornFree** bottles. They are made from Bisphenol-A free plastic which studies show at even low-levels can be harmful to babies. Who knows. If your kid doesn't use these I'm sure they will be fine. Someone gave us the **BornFree Feeding Starter Set for \$44.99** which was helpful.

In addition I bought a pack of **BornFree 5-ounce wide neck plastic bottles (2-pack)**. Lili is just now drinking more than 5-ounces at 4 months old so I never needed the bigger bottles. I guess what I'm saying is don't go nuts on buying all sorts of bottles. Newborns only need the small tiny bottles for the first few months.

BornFree Twister Bottle & Nipple Brush Set for \$10.99 which helped clean and rinse the bottles before they were sterilized very well. You will also need an extra pack of **BornFree Level 1 Slow Flow Wide Neck Nipples (2-pack) for \$6.99** each. Newborns drink from Level 1 nipples because the milk comes out much slower. As they grow older they change nipple levels. Lili is still at a Level 1 at 4 months. As far as bottle drying racks we didn't really use ours which was the **Munchkin Bottle Drying Rack for \$7.99**. They make fancy ones too which is purely for design/show such as the **Skip Hop Splash Drying Rack for \$27.99**.

LAUNDRY BAG

-1 laundry bag – hang on door – they make those cute laundry baskets but I feel you really need something you can pick up and take to the laundry mat in a hurry because you are doing laundry ALL THE TIME. Newborns – at least mine – went through 3-4 outfits a day not to mention the spit up cloths and socks and blankets, sheets, etc. This is mostly a suggestion for people that have to send their laundry out.

GENERAL PARENTING TIPS

Take these with a grain of salt. Every parenting style and baby is different. But these are a few things we found helpful:

SKYPE

Skype is a great way to keep up with the grandparents. We suggest doing so even if they live close it makes them feel more involved when you can log on and show them the baby via the web cam even if it is for a quick five minutes here and there.

SCHEDULE

A schedule with a newborn is a total joke. If you bend over backwards trying to establish any sort of schedule with them you will more often than not tire yourself out. In the first few weeks we definitely just had her hanging out with us when we hung out and putting her to bed when we slept. After a while – around 6 weeks I think – this became too unruly and frustrating a way to live for me. I was exhausted! A friend recommended this basic schedule as a 'goal' for me and what a relief! Lili took to it quite well in no time.

7/7:30AM – wake – read stories, watch a little TV – no more than 15 minutes or kid gets over stimulated, sing songs, etc.

8:00AM – feed

9:00AM – nap

10:00AM feed

11:00AM – walk in stroller after a full belly

12:00AM – feed at home

12:30AM -3:30PM – longest nap of the day – in their room if possible and not out and about in stroller. You want them to achieve a nice deep sleep during this period

3:30PM – feed

4:30PM – nap

5:30PM – feed, play, read stories, etc.

6:00PM – ½ hour nap – no longer

6:30-6:45PM - play and your goal here is to keep them up as long as possible and not feed them as long as you can so when they go to bed they will eat a huge meal filling their bellies

7:00PM – tub time

7:30PM – feed in their room not on couch – your goal is to establish that after a bath they are now in their room for bedtime

SLEEPING IN THEIR OWN ROOM/BED

You need to do what works well for you. Right from the start – well – at least by the time she was a month old - we established that Lili would sleep in her room in her crib despite YEARNING for her little warm body to be close to us. As a result she loves her room and will sleep in it for naps and bedtime. She knows when she goes in this room it is time to sleep more or less.

Some parents co-sleep which is so sweet sounding and great for some. For us we were or at least I was too afraid I'd crush her in our bed. Even the co-

sleeper that attaches to the side of the bed didn't appeal to me. I am SUCH a light sleeper not to mention paranoid first-time parent so if she was sleeping right next to me at all times I would wake up every 2 minutes to stare at her and make sure she was alive and breathing and not sleep a wink. Bottom line is – parents NEED SLEEP. At least as much as they can possibly get. By putting Lili in her own room and crib it helped me to let go a little and trust she would learn to sleep on her own away from us.

Granted I think I slept on the couch right outside her room for an entire month just so I could run in there should I even hear a peep but at least it was a start from her sleeping independently from us. Again – this worked for us and may not for you.

Feel free to email me with any questions!

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