

# Jealousy and Sibling Rivalry

## Newborn Edition



Your older child may show a variety of reactions when a newborn arrives

It is normal for an older child to feel jealous and out of place when you have another baby. This change can be hard for an older sibling to handle and they may react by:

- thumb sucking
- wanting to breastfeed or drink from a bottle
- wanting to wear diapers
- not wanting to have anything to do with you or the baby
- becoming upset and fearful
- soiling their pants or bed even if they are toilet trained
- whining
- wanting to return the baby

### What can I do?

You can help lessen these feelings of jealousy by providing a supportive, nurturing environment that allows your child to feel secure and loved. Let your child know that you understand their feelings and that it is good to talk about how they feel. Here are a few other tips:



- Maintain your child's routine as much as possible when the baby arrives.
- Plan alone time with your child. Give your child extra attention while someone else looks after the baby.
- If your child slips backward in something he previously accomplished (such as sleeping in their bed all night or being toilet-trained), do not punish them.
- Give your child praise and attention when they show positive behaviours.
- Recognize and acknowledge your child's feelings. If your child says that they do not like the baby, agree that it is not always fun to have a baby around. Talk about how you love the baby, but also find it hard sometimes.

## Show your child how to care for the baby

Your child will be watching as you handle the baby and learning from your actions. You are your child's most important teacher. You are demonstrating in everything you do, and your child will learn most from watching you.



- Teach soft touches: show the older sibling how to give the baby a back rub. Tell how this kind of touching calms the baby, and praise the older child for a job well done. This teaches your child how to be physical with the baby in a positive way.
- Let your child help you care for the baby. They can get diapers, clothes and toys. They may be able to push a stroller. Do not force your child to help. Praise your child when they do help.
- Be sure to tell your child that it is never okay to hurt the baby.

Take a deep breath and be calm. This is a time of adjustment for everyone in the family.

In time and given the right encouragement, your older child will learn how to deal with their feelings toward a new baby sister or brother, to share, to feel responsible for other family members, and to get along with others.

For more information or assistance:



You can speak with:

- Your Community Health Nurse
- Your Physician/Nurse Practitioner



Or Visit:

[EasternHealth.ca/YourHealthAtoZ](http://EasternHealth.ca/YourHealthAtoZ)

Or call the HealthLine:

- 811 / TTY 1-888-709-3555

