

Written by Gail Metcalf

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Becoming a parent is one of the most important and exhilarating experiences of your life. Along with this wonderful event comes increased expenses, adding to your family budget. There's the initial investment for baby furniture and the ongoing expenses as your child grows. Becoming a parent is one of the most important and exhilarating experiences of your life. Along with this wonderful event comes increased expenses, adding to your family budget. There's the initial investment for baby furniture and the ongoing expenses as your child grows.

If you're on a budget, you'll be looking for ways to keep your expenses to a minimum. Most of the items you will need for a new nursery can be purchased new or used. If you're interested in purchasing used items, be sure to take a few weekends and attend yard sales in your area. Many people sell their baby furniture and accessories when they know they will not be having more children. Make a point of checking the item(s) out closely to ensure nothing is broken or compromised that could be a danger for your baby.

Be sure to check eBay before spending money on new items. You can find new purchases the buyer did not use being sold in their original packaging for a fraction of the original cost. Thrift and Dollar stores are another good resource.

Of course you'll want to give the baby's room a cheerful new look. Painting the room is much cheaper than decorating with wall paper. If you find a wall paper that you like, consider using it as a room border to keep the cost down. Before investing in the least expensive paint, do a little research. Using a more expensive product could mean less expense on the long-term because you won't have as many touch ups to cover wear and tear. Cheaper paint is made with cheaper products and requires more work to keep it looking fresh.

If you have decided not to know the baby's gender in advance, you have a little more of a decorating challenge. But since we're not only decorating with blue and pink today, you still have a whole rainbow of colors to choose from. You could go with the soft and soothing colors of green, blue and yellow. These could be used to paint soft and lovely scenes on the walls and/or the ceiling. Think of clouds, sky, nature, sunrise, sunset, balloons or even animals.

When you find baby furniture you like, you can select matched pieces or go for individual pieces that match in style. You'll need a crib, changing table and a dresser. Extras you may want to consider include a cradle, rocking chair for mom and dad, a dresser and a nightstand with a lamp. Natural wood tones are nice when you don't know the baby's gender as painted furniture is usually gender specific.

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Many of the furniture sets today are convertible to grow with your child. The crib turns into a toddler bed, etc. This will save money in the younger years until you have to invest in furniture to get through the teen years. Look into the dressers that have a detachable changing table. These sit on top of the dresser and should be at a comfortable height for you when standing in front of it. The top of the changing area should be just below your arms to reduce back strain.

Don't forget to think about making the nursery comfortable for you and dad, also. You'll be spending a lot of time in there and will need a large blanket or afghan for you to use late at night and on cold days. Consider a CD player or radio in the nursery that will be beneficial to both the baby and parents. Creating a comfortable environment for mom, dad and the baby will help create those special memories while getting to know each other.

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