



How Will I Survive Early Parenthood?

My Quick Guide For Thriving & Not
Just Surviving



My Top 6 list

- **Stop trying to control what you can't** and focus on what you can control. You can't make a baby sleep if they're not ready for sleep, as sleep is a biological function, but you *can* control learning their sleep cues, preparing them for sleep "coming soon" via routines, their sleep environment, where they sleep, how calm you can remain(your own self-regulation), and how you soothe them to sleep.
- **Baby-wear** whenever you can. If baby wearing is a possibility for you physically, then I highly recommend you give it a try. Not just because of the very promising research on the benefits of baby-wearing in facilitating healthy attachment, but also because it can offer you freedom of mobility throughout your day. This can be especially helpful if you have older kiddos! Now, before you say your baby hates carriers or that you do I would suggest talking to a baby-wearing instructor and specialist(yes, that's a thing!). Much of the distaste for carriers has to do with picking the wrong one that's not suited for your body or lifestyle. Baby's age factors into it too. Newborns, for example, do better in soft structured carriers of lighter/softer materials and adapt better to them if also combining skin-to-skin for the first few days you use the carrier. There are also many different carrying positions you can use with both wraps and structured carriers that can feel more supportive and comfortable depending on your lifestyle and what feels best to your unique body type. Heck, you can even breastfeed with baby in a carrier! This is one of my favorite tips if you find yourself feeling trapped on a couch or rocking chair and are ready to get back out into the world. It also provides benefits to parents of multiple children and those needing to get some chores done occasionally. Babies, once adapted to the carrier, love to snooze in them as you move about your day.

- **Set realistic expectations** for both yourself and baby! This is a big one and it can make all the difference in the world. Shifting your expectations and managing them is going to help relieve some of the stress and tension you may not even realize you've been carrying. That sh!t will bring you down! Don't let it. For example, most babies don't sleep through the night within the first year. Not something you probably want to read, but it's true. You also can't spoil a baby or create "bad habits" by parenting your baby to sleep or responding to their cries. Another truth bomb for you...you probably won't be able to keep the house clean or cook fancy dinners or go on romantic dates with your partner for a long while. This is all OK and realistically the norm. There are lots of other expectations you may have had about parenthood that don't match up to your current reality. Instead of trying to desperately hold on to those expectations, it's healthier to just readjust and change them. There's nothing wrong with doing so. This phase of your life is temporary and you'll be shocked with how fast it actually goes by (even if the minutes feel like hours right now).
- **Follow and trust your intuition** even while you accumulate new knowledge. *"Intuition is a form of knowledge that appears in consciousness without obvious deliberation. It is not magical but rather a faculty in which hunches are generated by the unconscious mind rapidly sifting through past experience and cumulative knowledge"* --Psychology Today. The unsolicited advice and recommendations will pour in if you're a new parent (and even if this isn't your first rodeo). That's fine because you don't have to follow every suggestion over your own intuition and continued learning and growth. You don't have to do something that doesn't feel right or good, regardless of who's suggesting it.

It's important to remind yourself that you already have most of the answers you need when it comes to your littles because YOU are their answer. And when you make a mistake, that's part of parenting too, you can always repair and use it as a learning and growth opportunity because that's exactly what it is.

- **Put the phone down and delete that app!** Seriously, you will thank me later. I find it a special kind of torture to keep a device close to you at all times telling you exactly how many times your child is waking and how little sleep you're actually getting. In fact, that phone with the sleep app is often making it harder for you to get back to sleep and adding to your stress. So, set the phone away from you during the night so that you're not tempted to check it at wakings. You really don't need an app to tell you when your baby is tired. This just gets in the way of you truly tuning in and getting to know your baby and their unique cues. It does take some time, but you will learn their cues. Trust yourself.
- **Comparison is the thief of joy.** The neighbor's baby is sleeping through the night at 4mos? Great! Your sister's child is walking at 9mos? Awesome! Your co-worker's kid is reading Hamlet at 4yrs old? Fantastic! You know what's also fabulous, that every baby/child is so unique-- including yours! Your baby will meet their milestones and will develop in their own specific way and in their own time. No need to rush it. Yes, this applies to sleep too! There is only misery and discontent waiting for you when you start playing the comparison game. Placing that unnecessary pressure on yourself and on your baby is not fair to either of you. It will literally steal your ability to enjoy your child for exactly who they uniquely are, leave baby unnecessarily stressed, and will kill your confidence as a parent. It's just bad news bears all around! Just say no.

An Added Mental Health Note!

Postpartum anxiety and depression, as well as other perinatal mental health disorders, are very common and are NOT a failing on your part or your fault. 1 in every 5-7 women experience a perinatal mood disorder--You are not alone. You CAN start feeling better with help. I'll provide some helpful resource links below.

Perinatal Mental Health Resources:

PSI Helpline:

1-800-944-4773

#1 En Espanol or #2 English

OR

TEXT:

English: 503-894-9453

Español: 971-420-0294

Postpartum.net: For helpful resources and information on perinatal mental health.

Psidirectory.com: For an international directory of specialized providers.

I hope these tips prove useful to you. Remember to be gentle on yourself and your littles. You're both learning who you are in this new world and you'll both figure it out together in good time. You've got this!