

# Ep #90: How to Set Up Your Home for Baby Without Losing Your Mind



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Devon Clement**

## Ep #90: How to Set Up Your Home for Baby Without Losing Your Mind

Are you expecting a baby and wondering how you're going to set up your house to accommodate this new roommate? Stay tuned.

Welcome to *Parenthood Prep*, the only show that helps sleep-deprived parents and overwhelmed parents-to-be to successfully navigate those all-important early years with their baby, toddler, and child. If you are ready to provide the best care for your newborn, manage those toddler tantrums, and grow with your child, you're in the right place. Now here's your host, baby and parenting expert, Devon Clement.

Hello and welcome back to the Parenthood Prep podcast.

What's going on over here? It's cold. Actually, when this episode comes out, it might be starting to be better weather. I freaking hope so because this weather is just absolutely criminal. Yeah, I don't have a lot to say in the winter. I'm going to Florida. That'll be exciting. Fun little getaway to some warmer weather, so looking forward to that.

Talking about traveling with baby, we have an episode about this, but the topic I'm going to talk about today is room and house setup when you have a baby coming, or two babies, or more. And what that looks like and some suggestions and tips that can also really apply if you were traveling as well. And I'm going to talk a little bit about that. Yeah, so let's get into it.

So first of all, in the twin episode, I left out something really important, and I'm going to get into that in a little bit. But first of all, I want to talk about the bedroom setup because that is where I think people focus the most, and it is important. It's not so important right out of the gate. Like I love that everyone's so into having like a beautifully decorated nursery and putting the art up on the walls and getting everything ready to go.

But when you have a tiny newborn, you're not going to really be using all that stuff. You're not going to have them in their own room. They're not going to be in the crib from day one. Sometimes people do that. Sometimes people encourage

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that. I am not a crib from day one girly, even though I am all about creating good sleep habits.

I think as long as they're in a safe sleeping space, at that age and size and level of awareness and level of vision, as long as they're in a safe, flat sleeping space, they don't care or know if it's their crib or their bassinet or the bassinet that goes on top of the stroller or cradle or a Moses basket or whatever. As long as they're approved for sleep and they're a safe surface, they do not actually care. And trying to start them in the crib from day one and struggling with that is not going to make your life easier down the road.

Any parent who's like, "We put our baby in the crib from day one and that's why we never had to sleep train," has a unicorn baby that they were never going to have to sleep train anyway. So yes, as long as they're on a safe surface and we encourage them to sleep in their own bed as much as possible, crib, bassinet, etcetera. When I say the word bed, that is what I mean, a safe baby bed, not your bed or an adult bed or anything like that, but the place where the baby is sleeping.

It is strongly recommended for safety and also just for practicality that you room share with the baby for the first couple of months, year. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a year. That's up to you, but definitely the first few months. It just makes more sense to be right next to your baby because they need a lot of attention. You know, they need more feedings during the night. They need to be, you know, sort of soothed and tended to more during the night. Does it have to be the baby's parents that are in the room with them?

Absolutely not. It can be a caregiver. It can be a newborn care specialist, a postpartum doula. It can be a family member, grandma, whatever. You just want to make sure that whatever adult is sharing the room with the baby is not hindered in any way by maybe like medication that makes them overly sleepy or they're like blind drunk or you know anything like that.

So, you know, having the baby room sharing with an adult. Now, what that also means and what I strongly recommend for twins especially, but also for one

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baby, if you have the space, many people don't, but many people do, is to set your baby up in the guest bedroom. Or if you're converting the guest bedroom to the nursery, leave that bed in there and put in a bassinet. Wait to set up the crib. Don't convert the room until the baby's three months or four months and is sleeping longer stretches overnight.

This way, whoever is sharing the room with the baby, parent, other parent, grandparent, caregiver, can sleep comfortably in the room with the baby, and the parent can sleep, whoever is getting sleep that night, whether it's both parents, one parent, whatever, can sleep in their own room comfortably.

Also, if you start doing what I recommend and starting a bedtime routine pretty early, like three weeks or so, your baby's going to be settled into bed and you're going to want your room to be pretty dark. So you're not going to want to be like watching TV in the room where the baby is sleeping. You're not going to want to be like turning the lights on super bright and like changing into your pajamas and taking your shower and brushing your teeth, doing all the things you might do at night after your baby is tucked in.

So if your baby is safe in another room and there's a comfortable sleeping space in there for a grownup, you can switch off or, you know, if you have a caregiver, you can, you know, have the caregiver stay in there. So that is really nice if you have the space for it.

If you're in a one bedroom, you're in a one bedroom and you got to do what you got to do. That being said, there is no shame, no harm in putting your baby in the closet, in the bathroom, in any kind of alternate space. I've been in hotel rooms with babies where I put them in the closet area, the bathroom, whatever because they needed a dark space to sleep starting at 7 p.m., and I wanted to live my life in the room. And I didn't want to wake them up or, you know, have them wake up lightly in the night and see me, you know, so close to them in the bed and then wake up and be like, "I want to get up and play with you."

So having the baby in the room with you, totally great and fine, but if it's an option, and this is my absolute number one thing I recommend to twin parents,

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try as hard as you can not to have them in your bedroom because someone needs to be getting sleep. And if both parents and the two babies are all in the room together, no one is going to be sleeping. And it's so critical that someone be well rested in the situation. So just think about that.

In our house, when we first looked at it, I saw that the second bedroom, the sort of smaller on-suite bedroom, had this big walk-in closet and it faced the front of the house, so it had a window. And I was like, this walk-in closet would be the perfect little nursery for our friends' kids when they come to stay.

So the parents could stay in the room and the babies or the kids can stay in this closet. I had it painted like a fun nursery color. I have all the baby stuff in there. I got a room-darkening curtain for the window. And it's just this neat little nursery. We have our Pack 'n Play in there. Now that our friend's son is older, like he's three, she just makes him like a little nest on the floor and he sleeps in that. And it's great and it's such a nice thing.

So thinking a little bit outside of the box. I mean, I live in New York City. I work with families in New York City. I have sleep-trained babies in closets. I've sleep-trained babies in laundry rooms, annexes, alcoves, hallways. There's a lot of ways to be creative and you don't necessarily need a whole big nursery to set your baby up in, especially if it means giving up your guest room, your office, whatever. You know, in those early days, you're going to have visitors, maybe your family's out of town, they're going to come and stay.

You want to keep that guest room available while also creating a space for your baby. So keeping that guest bed in there or switching to a pullout sofa or a Murphy bed. Baby Audrey, you know who I always talk about, they're in a two bedroom condo and they have a Murphy bed in her room. So whenever I come and stay, I pull out the Murphy bed and just sleep there and it's fabulous.

And they have the option to have her in the room with them. Now she's bigger, she's in her crib in her own room. I would always take her overnight and have her be in her crib and sleep in the room with her so that they could get a break and I could do the night wakings. So, you know, there's really a lot of options,

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but basically my main takeaway is do not feel like you have to have a full crib all set up for your brand new newborn baby on day one, especially if it means making sacrifices that you don't necessarily want to make.

So that is my diatribe about bedding and all that stuff. Obviously, sleep safety, nothing in the crib, you know, nothing soft. It should be a firm mattress, no loose bedding or sheets or anything like that.

What about window treatments? Well, the beauty of having a baby in a closet or a bathroom is that sometimes there are not windows, and then the room is nice and dark. We love a dark room for baby sleep. Now, does this mean that the baby will never be flexible and never sleep in the stroller because they just absolutely can't sleep unless they're in a dark cave, you know, that's the perfect temperature and the perfect white noise and everything? Of course not. We want them to be flexible.

But at the same time, they do not sleep as well, especially in the early morning, if their room is super bright. They may take a great nap. They may, you know, have no problem with that, but if the sun is coming up and shining right on their faces and they've had like eight hours or nine hours of sleep, they are going to be up and raring to go for the day, even if they have not had enough sleep, which eight hours and nine hours of sleep is not enough.

Especially as they get a little older and into that toddler phase. So I strongly recommend having a room-darkening option for baby as well as for yourself. And if they're in your room, you definitely want to get some blackouts even if you don't already have them. I mean, you know I'm huge about sleep hygiene, adults sleep training themselves. I think having darkness in your room is just so helpful and so useful and really important for sleep. And listen, at the end of the day, you want your baby to be flexible for travel or, you know, if you're out and about, things like that.

But how often are you in a different place as opposed to in your home? A couple weeks out of the year? Unless you're like a nomadic family that's constantly traveling, constantly moving around, you don't need the baby to be that flexible.

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You may sleep worse in a hotel, but it's fine because you're like, "I'm on vacation."

Now, that being said, if your baby is properly sleep-trained, they will sleep well in any circumstance. A family I worked with years ago, I'm sure I've talked about them, I call them my Magnum Opus, they had a two-and-a-half-year-old and baby twins, and I got all three kids sleep-trained and sleeping in the same room. And then they went on this family vacation and they were all going to be in the same hotel room, all five of them. And I was like, "Okay, when you get back, we're going to have to do some cleanup." And guess what? It was perfect. There were no issues. Everybody slept great the whole time, blown away.

So besides the baby's room, what about the rest of your space? What about the rest of your house? Depending on the size of your house, your space, you're going to want to think about it in different ways. Like, are we in a small apartment where we're trying to be as efficient as possible and space-saving, get as many things together as we can, or do we have a bigger space where we want to think about having a changing station both upstairs and downstairs?

Do you want, especially in the first few weeks after birth, to be going upstairs every time you want to change the baby? I don't think so. I mean, I think you want to have that available to you downstairs. Also, you want a safe place to put the baby down in all of the places that you are going to be. So, you know, the kitchen, have a little bouncy chair or a little bassinet in the kitchen so that when you're in there, you have someplace the baby can safely sit and watch you do stuff.

In your bathroom, while you're showering or you're using the bathroom, you want a place that you can set the baby down. Maybe that's in the bedroom next to the bathroom or whatever, but you're not going to feel right having the baby across the house, downstairs in the living room in a bassinet or in their nursery in a bassinet in that those early weeks while you are taking a shower or whatever.

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And then when they're a little older and they're awake and playful during the day, you know, they'll just watch you do stuff. Like when I have baby Audrey and she sits in her little bouncy chair while I'm like fixing my hair or getting ready, you know, we look at each other, I make faces at her. She does her own thing. She plays with her hands, she plays with her toys, she chills. Once in a while, I'll look over and she's fallen asleep. You know, them watching you live your life is such an essential part of their learning and their process.

So think to yourself, I'm going to be carrying this baby around everywhere. As you're walking around living your life before the baby's born, think if I was holding a baby right now, where would I put them? You're not supposed to put them on adult beds. You're not supposed to leave them on the changing table. Now, in the very early days, newborns, they're not going anywhere. You can put them in the middle of the bed and they'll probably be fine. If your newborn baby rolls off the bed, don't say I said it was okay because I told you not to. But many people do it and it is usually fine.

However, the warning I always give to clients and friends and anyone who has a baby is they are eventually going to do something for the first time. They are going to roll for the first time. They are going to crawl for the first time. And you do not want their first roll to be off the couch or off the changing table. They will likely survive. Everybody has a story of a time they fell off this, that, or the other thing. But if you can avoid it, why not try to avoid it? And know that crummy little seatbelt strap on the changing table is not safe enough to hold them in place.

So yeah, think about even if it's just like a blanket or a mat on the floor. The floor is a great place to put a baby, super safe. You know, you definitely want a barrier between them and the actual floor just for like germs and dirt and stuff like that. But that being said, when they're seven, eight months old and they're crawling around everywhere, they're going to put dog hair in their mouth and eat the cat food and, you know, find the dust bunnies and whatever else, and that's totally fine.

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But, you know, you want a little bit of a softness for them to lay on. So a little rug or a little mat. Also, you want to protect your floors from the baby. I mean, they spit up, they are gross, they drool. So having a little blanket or a play mat or something is great for that.

Changing station. A lot of people throw a changing mat on top of a dresser and then you store all the baby's stuff in the dresser. That's great. You can get a changing table. They're usually pretty inexpensive and they're great because they hold stuff. You can keep the extra diapers under there, things like that. You don't need like a whole dresser in the middle of your living room if you just get like a little changing table on Facebook marketplace or something. And that's totally great and fine. You can also just change them like on the bed.

Like when we have baby Audrey, I don't have a changing table. I just throw down, I have like a little bath mat, I throw it down on my bed and I just change her on the bed. And I have a little cart, like one of those three-tiered carts that I keep all her supplies in. So it's easy to have her diaper stuff, her clothes, her socks, everything is like on this little cart.

Now, this is a short-term baby. She's not with us all the time. Obviously, at home, she has a lot more supplies. But it is a practical option for grandma's house or the upstairs or the downstairs or whatever space you're not normally in. Keep some outfits on both floors. Keep some extra sleepers, some extra burp cloths, all that stuff.

Make sure you are well stocked on both floors because sometimes the last thing you want to do is be like, "Oh crap, you're on the changing table, you have no diaper on and we're out of wipes. I cannot go into the other room to get the wipes and leave you on the changing table. I also don't want to take you naked and covered in poop into the other room so I can get the wipes." Make sure you are well stocked in every space.

What else? They just don't need that much in the beginning. You need a safe place to put them down, you need a safe place for them to sleep, and you need somewhere that you can change them that isn't going to hurt your back. I

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actually think it's important to note that our bed is very tall, so it is not like, I'm not hunching over to change her.

But also, if I have a client where, you know, we're in the guest room with the baby, but the changing table is in the nursery, which is down the hall, I'm just going to bring a travel changing mat or even like a bath towel and some diapers and wipes and diaper cream, and I'm just going to change the baby while I'm sitting on the bed because that makes it so much easier for us and we don't have to like trek all over the house and wake everybody up walking around.

So that's it. That's what you should do. If you have any questions about setting up for a baby or specific needs for your house, let me know. DM us on Instagram at Happy Family After. Leave them in the comments. We love answering your questions. And I look forward to talking to you soon. Bye.

To be sure you never miss an episode, be sure to follow the show in your favorite podcast app. We'd also love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Instagram @happyfamilyafter or at our website [HappyFamilyAfter.com](http://HappyFamilyAfter.com). On our website you can also leave us a voicemail with any questions or thoughts you might have, and you can roast your baby. Talk to you soon.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of *Parenthood Prep*. If you want to learn more about the services Devon offers, as well as access her free monthly newborn care webinars, head on over to [www.HappyFamilyAfter.com](http://www.HappyFamilyAfter.com).