

The Ultimate Checklist for a Successful 4th Trimester

Learn the 5 Crucial steps on how to make your new family go from surviving to thriving after having a child.



Reviewed by
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Introduction

When a baby arrives there is pure joy. This being full of love and magic has just entered the world.

As a parent, you're thrilled and slightly overwhelmed. Thoughts of, "I don't know enough" or "what do I do in this situation" fill your mind as you try to be everything to your child.

There are so many big feelings that surround a baby, from the highest highs to the lowest lows. Feel safe in knowing that these thoughts and emotions are completely normal.

Parenting, especially a newborn is challenging.

Whether you're a first-time parent, or this is your second, third or fourth child, it's always wise to have a plan for the baby's arrival. You can do this by creating thoughtful space to make decisions on the most important aspects of the 4th trimester.

By taking time to meditate on what you want and need as a new parent you will save yourself from heartache.

As a Newborn Care Specialist and Doula, it is my life's work to accompany growing families, giving them much-needed support and cultivating a calm and nurturing environment.

It's my mission as your birth and family care professional to make the transition as smooth and joyous as possible.

I do this by taking care of each family as a whole, with the understanding that all of your lives have changed immeasurably through this experience. From my years of working and learning, I've gathered some key advice to share with you so that you feel prepared as your family grows.

I offer this checklist to you with the hope that you'll use it as a guide to help plan the 4th trimester of your dreams.

With Love,

Leanne Spronberg

Infant Feeding Plan



A newborn needs to feed 8-12 times a day. That translates to every 2-3 hours in the first month of life. Creating a plan that includes the type of feeding filled with trusted resources is critical.

Please keep in mind, the most important part of feeding your child is that they are nourished - not the way in which you choose to feed them.

Breastfeeding/ Chestfeeding:

If you decide you want to breastfeed/chestfeeding it's encouraged to take a lactation class before your child is born.

In class, you will learn different positions to hold the baby, as well as tips on latching and how to increase flow.

After your lactation class, make sure to keep your lactation consultants' information in an easily accessible place. Even parents with babies that latch easily might have bumps along their feeding journey.

Having a professional that you can call and feel comfortable asking questions to is key.

Sometimes a parent tries to breastfeed/chest feed but comes to the conclusion it's not the best choice for them.

In this case, if you desire to use breastmilk, there are companies that provide this service. It's wise to contact them before your child arrives to learn their process, turnaround times, and delivery options.

Formula:

There are more than 50 formulas in the US available to parents. These formulas range from organic milk to soy-based formulas that relieve colic.

There's also the possibility of looking at brands overseas. Some parents prefer the EU's guidelines when it comes to formula. The overseas brands I offer for consideration are Hippe and Holle.

Whether your formula is from overseas or stateside, it's important to review the ingredients, nutrients, and processes the company takes to create the product.



Being Intentional About Sleep and Recovery

A newborn doesn't know the day from the night when they arrive. This can be an exhausting new normal for parents. Discussing with your partner or support person a sleep and feeding schedule is crucial to make sure you have the ability to rest and recharge.

Please note, due to a newborn's feeding schedule, the sleep schedule would coincide with feeding times.

If you're breast or chestfeeding, you have the option to pump so that you can "skip a feeding". You can achieve this "skip" by using a lactation pump. The advantage of pumping is it relieves the lactating partner from the responsibility of being present at every feeding.

This creates space for each person to have longer periods of rest.

If your baby is being formula-fed, you can adopt a schedule of every other feeding at night or doing two feedings back to back.

This is a great alternative if one person is more of a night owl and the other a morning person.

Either way, prepare yourself with the knowledge that in the first few weeks your sleep will be disrupted.

Decide which schedule you want to try first and be open to flexibility.

Sleep Schedule Example:

12am - Partner 1
2am - Partner 1
4am - Partner 2
6am - Partner 2



New Sibling Introductions



You have the power to set the energy you want your family to share around this life event.

The most important part of parenting any child is for them to be safe, loved, and secure.

But how exactly do you do that when their world looks completely different and is much louder?

Adding a new baby to a family where there are already children can be its own struggle.

It can also be an opportunity for familial bonding and growth. It can also be an opportunity for familial bonding and growth.

Talk to your child about what your growing family will be like with the baby. Encourage questions and let your child help in the preparation process.

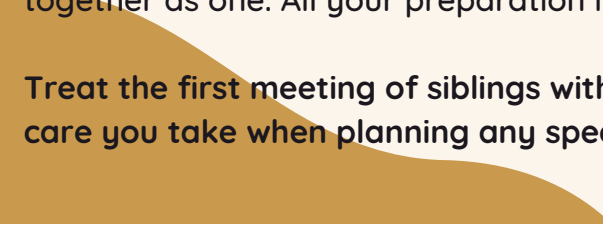
Tasks such as picking out clothes, toys, or names can be a whole family ritual. Inclusion in these tasks will help every member feel secure with their place in the family.

Remember, big feelings will come in and out like waves.

Meet your child where they are at emotionally during this process. One way to have a smooth transition and extra support is employing a Doula that specializes in early childhood development for sibling care. A Doula can fill in the space of extra quality time by fulfilling developmentally specific activities.

Once the baby arrives it's time for the family to come together as one. All your preparation has led to this moment.

Treat the first meeting of siblings with the same level of care you take when planning any special event.



Things to Consider -

- **Have the baby in a bassinet or the crib the first time your child meets the new baby. This can avoid any triggers the older child sees with their parent holding the baby.**
- **When your children are all in the room together, introduce all of them by name.**
- **Tell your elder child how excited the new baby is to meet them.**
- **Purchase a gift or card that is from the baby to your other children.**

Nourishment

After birth, your body will need nutrients to replenish and restore. After all, it just completed an incredible feat. Reward your body by giving it exactly what it needs. .

Reward your body by giving it exactly what it needs.

Consuming superfoods, proteins, and fats helps your body regain its strength post-birth.

If you're breast or chestfeeding it's important to be conscious of calorie intake and types of food. Be mindful of your dietary decisions since your nutrition has a direct effect on your milk supply. If your body doesn't receive the needed calories or nutrition while lactating it will draw from stored nutrients to feed your baby.

This can strip your body of nutrients leaving it depleted.

You can restore your body and keep it replenished by consuming foods that nurture lactation. Foods such as dairy, lean meat, eggs, lentils, and beans help fuel lactation.

Of course, if you're not lactating then your meal options don't have the same restrictions.

A good tip is to stock your fridge with healthy foods ahead of time.

Taking the time to grocery shop, stock up on food, and buy household essentials before the baby arrives will allow you more time to rest. Especially, if you have limited support.

Another great way to save time and energy once the baby is born is by prepping meals. Make ready-to-eat meals and place them in the freezer so you have more time for your baby and your healing journey.

Foods to Avoid

- Fish that are high in mercury
- Alcohol
- Highly processed foods
- Caffeine
- Garlic (can make your baby gassy)

Further Reading:

A book that reviews nutrition specifically to nourish the body post-birth is **The First 40 Days, The Essential Art of Nourishing the New Mother**, by Heng Ou.



Building Respected Boundaries



The best way to have everyone on board with a visiting plan is through clear and thoughtful communication.

Once this new being arrives, your loved ones and friends will want to meet them as soon as possible.

It can be hard to tell people you're not ready.

However, you have the choice of when and how people will meet your child.

As a parent, you can make your wishes heard and respected by setting healthy boundaries.

Informing family and friends regarding what you do and don't want upon the baby's arrival will help set expectations. It also leaves space to have a dialogue with people who might not understand your boundaries.

So often people want to help new parents and don't know how. It can also be challenging for new parents to know what they need when they're over-tired.

One way to fill in the communication gap is by creating an itemized list of support tasks.

This list can be shared and posted by the door to give others instructions and ways to help. You can even leave a cooler by your door for people that drop off perishable items.

Sample Support List

- Grocery shopping
- Preparing a meal
- Laundry
- Holding the baby so parents can shower
- Making a cup of tea or refilling the water glass
- Providing sibling care

4th Trimester Plan

GOALS FOR SELF

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶

GOALS FOR MY FAMILY

- ▶
- ▶
- ▶
- ▶

GOOD RULES & HABITS I WANT TO TRY

● MIND

Mental health

Spirituality

● BODY

Self-care



Checklist

1. Attend Lactation Class/Hire Consultant
2. Purchase bottles, pump & accessories
3. Breastmilk or Formula Research
4. Discussion with a partner on a sleep plan
5. Create a nighttime feeding schedule
6. Plan Sibling Introduction
7. Create a ritual of preparation with your child
8. Decide on a gift or card for your child from baby
9. Grocery shopping for household essentials
10. Stock fridge and pantry
11. Pre-made meals
12. Hire or download app for delivery service
13. Decide on visitation conditions
14. Dialogue with family and friends about visiting
15. Appoint a support person to hold boundaries

Notes:

NEED MORE INSIGHT?

Hire Modern Newborn Family Care



I truly hope that this checklist has helped you formulate a plan for your baby's arrival.

If you would like more information on how to prepare your expanding family or get support, I'm here to answer all of your questions.

I'll compassionately share my heart and wisdom as a Doula, PMH-C, Newborn Care Expert, Certified Lactation Educator, and Early Childhood Educator. I enter every new family situation with a full heart, allowing connection for the intimate and profound experience that is a new child.

I will lovingly hold space for you to experience all of your emotions, knowing you are supported.

Encouraging you that it will get better.

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