

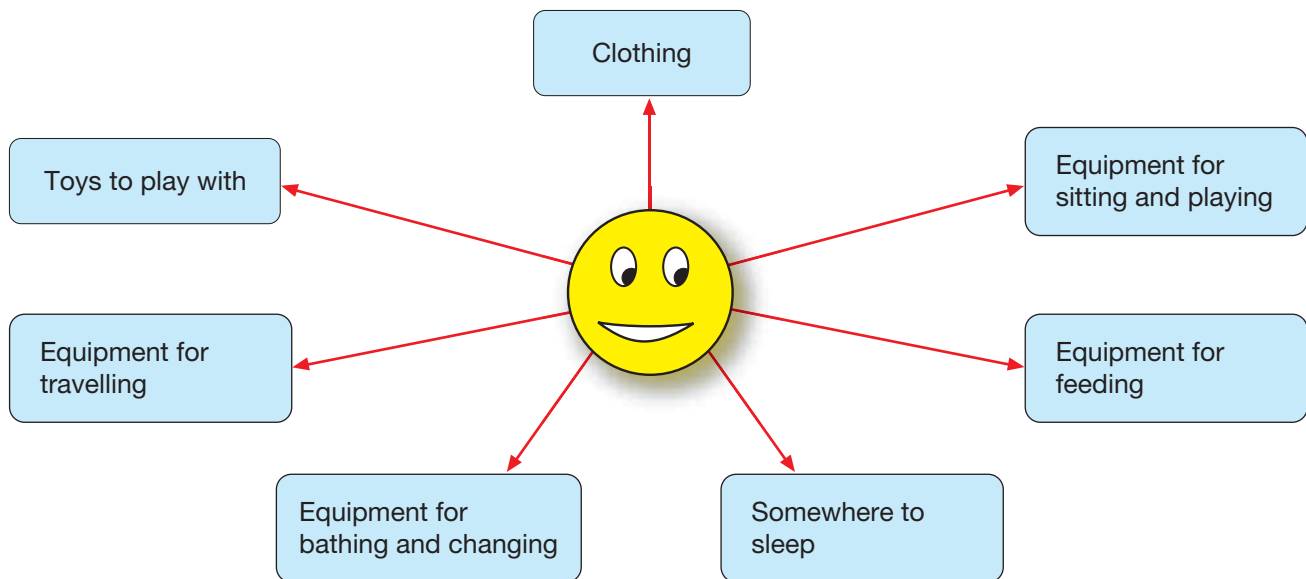
## 4 Preparation for the Baby

Planning and preparing for the arrival of a new baby can be an exciting time, especially for those expecting their first baby. Although it is possible for the parents to find out the sex of their baby before it is born, some choose not to be told whether the baby is a boy or a girl. They may, therefore, choose equipment, furnishings and decor that are unisex (suitable for a boy or a girl). If parents are preparing for their second or subsequent baby, there is a good chance that some of the equipment and furnishings they already have could be used again.

Shops have a wide variety of attractive and often expensive ideas for equipment and clothing for new babies, while parenting magazines are full of articles and ideas of what should be bought. It is very easy (and costly) to 'impulse buy' and while this is not a serious problem for small items such as clothes or toys, larger items need to be thought about very carefully.

Parents need to think realistically about what they *need* for the baby and then consider whether what they have decided is actually essential or simply desirable!

### What might a baby need?



### Choosing items in preparation for the baby

There are many choices available for the baby, and it can be quite difficult to decide which piece of equipment will be best. It is important to look around to compare different makes and prices from different shops, and to talk to other parents who have recently had babies.

Very often, grandparents or other relatives may offer to help and support financially with larger items.

Sometimes, second-hand items can be passed on or bought, and it is important that these are checked thoroughly to ensure they are safe. Many friends and relatives may purchase gifts for the new baby.

There are four main factors parents could consider when buying larger items of equipment for a new baby. These are discussed in the table below.

### Cost

- Consider the cost of large items and buy something that is within budget.
- Look for value for money.
- Compare prices – either using the internet or consumer magazines, or simply by looking in different shops.
- Consider buying second-hand.

### Hygiene

- Fabric items need to be machine washable.
- Surfaces need to be easy to clean.

### Safety

- Look for safety labels such as the Kitemark.
- Buy items that are suitable for the age and weight of the baby.
- If flat-pack items are bought, make sure they are easy to assemble.
- Make sure large items are secure and stable.
- Items such as prams and pushchairs should have secure brakes.

### Suitability

- Look for items that have multiple uses (e.g. pram/buggy/cot).
- Consider how long the item will be of use.
- Think about the size and space available in the room/house.
- Consider whether an item will store easily when not in use.
- Think about whether it can be assembled easily.
- Consider whether it will fit in with the style/decor of the nursery.

### Environmental issues

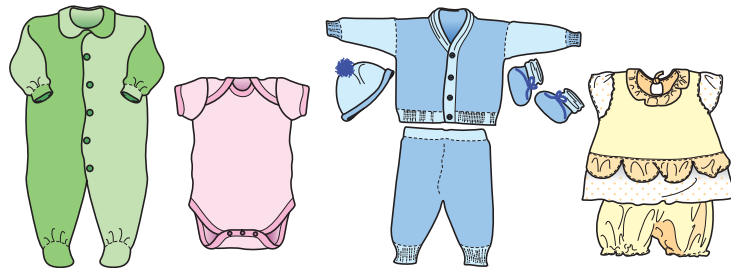
- Consider using reusable nappies instead of disposable nappies.
- Choose clothing and bedding made from natural fibres (e.g. cotton and wool).
- Use second-hand furniture where possible to save on new materials being used, and to save money.
- Choose furniture made from pine, oak or beech as these trees can be replaced.

### ***Baby clothes***

The most important thing to remember is that babies need to be kept warm and comfortable, and that they need their nappies changed often! They also don't really like to be dressed and undressed or moved around a lot.

When choosing baby clothes look for items that are:

- machine washable
- easy to put on and take off (e.g. with 'popper' fastenings) and 'envelope' neck openings
- loose and comfortable
- soft
- warm
- flame resistant (will not catch fire easily)
- non-irritant (will not itch or irritate the skin).



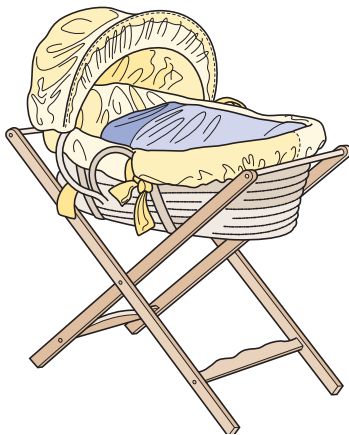
Baby clothes

**REMEMBER!**

Several layers of lightweight clothing will be warmer than one thick layer. The amount of clothing needed will depend on the weather and temperature. All clothing bought for babies up to three months must have a low flammability label (see page 39).

**What is needed?**

<b>Vests</b>	Babies are not very good at keeping themselves warm and will need vests in both summer and winter. These need to be soft and should have a stretch neck.
<b>Stretch sleep suits</b>	These make dressing and changing nappies easier because they have popper fastenings. They also keep babies warm, but it's important to remember that babies grow quickly. Wearing a stretch suit that is too small can damage the feet.
<b>Knitted clothes</b>	Cardigans and shawls can be useful when extra warmth is needed. Open lacy patterns should be avoided as toes and fingers can get caught in them.
<b>Socks, mittens and hats</b>	All of these will be needed during colder weather, while a summer baby will need sunhats for protection. New babies often need 'scratch mittens'. These are made from soft, thin fabric and prevent babies from scratching their faces.
<b>Other clothes</b>	An all-in-one suit that is fleecy or padded can be useful for a winter baby especially if using a buggy instead of a pram.

**Equipment for sleeping**

Moses basket

<b>Moses baskets, cribs and carrycots</b>	Young babies will be comfortable sleeping in these for the first few months. Carry cots can be bought separately or as part of a 'travel system'.
<b>Cots</b>	By about four or five months babies may need to be moved into a cot. When buying both new and second-hand cots the following safety checks should be carried out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bars should be 45–67 cm apart to prevent baby's head from getting trapped</li> <li>• mattresses should carry British Standard labels (see page 39)</li> <li>• mattresses should fit snugly, with no gaps of more than 4 cm so that arms, legs and head cannot be trapped</li> <li>• catches on drop-down sides must be secure and too difficult to be undone by a baby or child</li> <li>• paint must be non-toxic</li> <li>• pillows should not be used until after two years old.</li> </ul>
<b>Travel cot</b>	These are useful for holidays or when visiting. They usually fold away and can double as a playpen.

### Equipment for travelling



(a) Baby seat



(b) Carrycot with chassis

#### Prams and buggies

These are usually one of the most expensive items needed and will often be used for more than one child.

It is important to choose something that will fit in with your lifestyle. If travelling with the baby involves using mainly a car or public transport a pram is probably not a good choice.

Modern travel systems, although quite expensive, are very versatile and can double as buggies, cots, pushchairs and so on.

Whatever is chosen it should:

- carry British Standard labels
- have good brakes
- be easy to handle and steer
- be very stable, especially when carrying shopping
- have anchor points for a safety harness
- be comfortable and have good suspension as babies will spend a lot of time in it
- be easy to clean
- have swivel wheels to make it easier to move in tight places
- be easy to store in the available space.

#### Car seats

These must always be used when travelling by car, including taxis. Rear-facing seats can easily be attached to existing seat belts (see page 45).

When choosing and using child safety restraints in cars the following points must be remembered:

- all restraints should conform to the United Nations standard, ECE Regulation 44.03 or 44.04, or have a British Standard Kitemark
- for babies that cannot sit up and who weigh less than 10 kg (22 lb), rear-facing restraints are the best option
- once a baby can sit up a child safety seat can be used; these are usually front-facing and adjustable, and suitable for children weighing between 9 and 18 kg (20–40 lb)
- once a child weighs more than 18 kg (40 lb) or is four years old, a safety harness can be used; these should be adjustable, have a quick-release button and should be used with a special booster.

### Equipment for feeding



Various feeding bottles

<p><b>Bottles</b></p>	<p>Bottles come in a variety of shapes and sizes – most hold 225 ml (8 fl oz) of milk. Most bottles are made from plastic (see below) as glass breaks and splinters easily.</p> <p>No one bottle has any great advantages over the others; it is just a matter of personal choice. But it would be sensible to choose a bottle that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is made from a clear material</li> <li>• has clear, easy-to-read measurements on the side</li> <li>• has a wide neck for easier filling</li> <li>• includes a cap to protect the teat.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teats</b></p>	<p>Teats are made from either latex or silicone. Latex feels more like a real nipple, while silicone lasts longer.</p> <p>How fast the milk goes into baby's mouth is known as the 'flow rate', and depends on the number and type of holes in the tip of the teat. Newborn, slow, medium, fast-flow and variable-flow teats can be bought, but choice is not really related to age.</p> <p>A slower-flow teat is needed if the baby is spluttering or seems to be choking on the milk; a faster one if the baby is sucking hard but seems to be getting frustrated.</p>
<p><b>Sterilisers</b></p>	<p>Whether breast- or bottle-feeding, a steriliser is essential (see pages 197–198). The main types of commercial steriliser are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• electric steam sterilisers</li> <li>• microwave steam sterilisers</li> <li>• cold-water sterilisers.</li> </ul> <p>An alternative and cheaper way to sterilise bottles is to use a pan of boiling water.</p>

#### Plastic feeding bottles

Most feeding bottles are made from plastic. Recent research has suggested that a chemical known as BPA, often used in reusable plastic bottles to stop them shattering, *could* cause changes in children's behaviour and affect the age at which females reach puberty. Although the Food Standards Agency says that the amounts used are well below levels that could be harmful, some manufacturers are now producing ranges of BPA-free bottles.

### Equipment for bathing

<b>Bath</b>	The first time new parents bath their baby is probably one of their scariest moments as the baby seems so small and the bath so big! For this reason many choose to buy and use a rectangular washing-up bowl for the first weeks until they become more confident. A bath is needed for a relatively short time so it is best not to spend too much on it, but choosing one with a non-slip bottom can help to stop baby sliding about as much. Once a baby can sit up – usually about six months – a bath seat can be bought and used in the big bath.
<b>Plastic bowl</b>	Until a baby is six months old, the eyes, ears, mouth and face should be washed with cool boiled water. A small plastic dish or bowl should be kept and used only for this.
<b>Top-and-tail dish</b>	This has two sections – one for washing the face and one for the bottom.

And, finally, a word about . . .

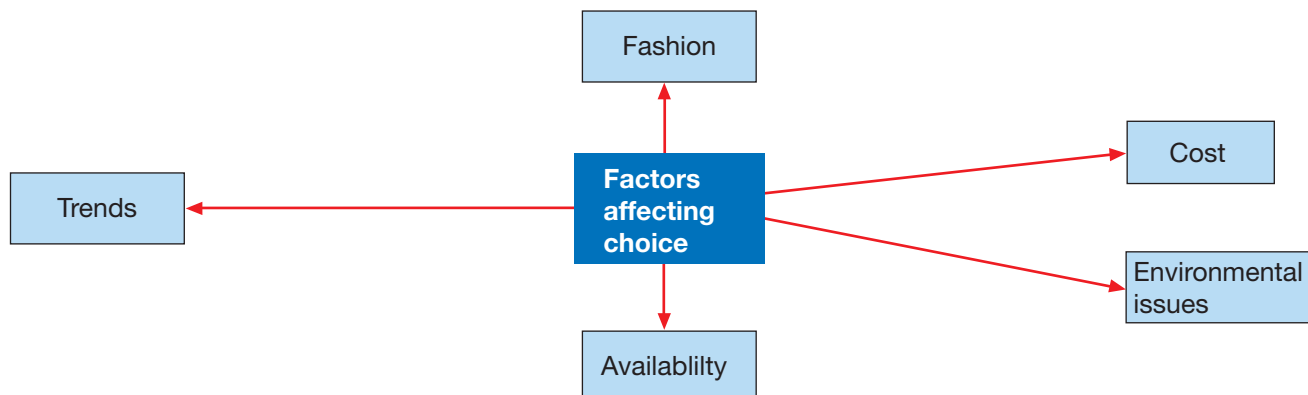
### Nappies

Nappies are probably one of the biggest ongoing expenses. They are available in a variety of materials, shapes and sizes, but they can be divided into two main groups: disposable and washable. In recent years many parents have been using disposable nappies but as people become more aware of environmental issues a move back to the classic terry towelling squares is gathering pace.

#### Some nappy facts

- Each baby is estimated to have around 5000 nappy changes before becoming toilet trained.
- In the UK, approximately 3 billion disposable nappies are thrown away each year.
- Disposable nappies create approximately 700,000 tonnes of waste, which is 4 per cent of all household waste.
- Disposable nappies can take up to 500 years to degrade.

When choosing the type of nappy suitable for the baby, parents will need to think carefully and decide which is best and most convenient for them. Some of the factors that may affect their choice are noted in the following diagram.





Disposable nappies

There is a very wide and confusing range of disposable nappies available. The major manufacturers are constantly trying to improve their products.

#### *Disposable nappies*

Disposable nappies are simple to use. There is no folding, no pinning and no plastic pants are needed. They are completely discarded when they are wet or dirty. Disposable nappies might appear expensive but remember there are no costs for water, detergents, sterilising solutions, etc.

Disposable nappies come in a range of sizes to suit different ages and weights, and can be for boys or girls. Their advantages and disadvantages are listed in the table below.

#### Advantages

- ✓ Very absorbent – the absorbent granules in the nappy attract urine away from the baby's skin, preventing a sore bottom.
- ✓ Very convenient – the soiled nappy is put in a nappy bag and thrown away.
- ✓ No folding, no pinning, no liners, no plastic pants.
- ✓ They are quick and easy to use.
- ✓ They fit different-sized babies.

#### Disadvantages

- ✗ They are expensive.
- ✗ They are bulky to store.
- ✗ There are environmental issues because the nappies are not biodegradable (the materials will not break down).



Washable nappies are becoming more popular because of environmental concerns

#### *Washable nappies*

These nappies involve more work but they are kinder to the environment. It is wise to buy the best you can afford as these usually last longer and are more absorbent, and are therefore more comfortable for the baby.

Traditionally washable nappies were white, cotton, terry towelling squares; they needed to be folded before use and were generally used with nappy liners; they had to be pinned with nappy pins, and plastic pants were needed to prevent leakages.

Modern washable nappies are more user-friendly – they can be bought in bright colours and designs, are shaped and filled with an absorbent inner material on a waterproof backing, and use poppers or Velcro instead of nappy pins.

There are two basic types of reusable nappy.

1. Two-part nappies: these consist of a nappy part and a 'wrap' part. The nappy may be a traditional terry or a folded nappy (called a pre-fold), or a shaped nappy. Around it goes the wrap – this is waterproof and could be pull-up or wraparound. These can be used from birth to potty training.
2. All-in-one nappies: with these the inner nappy and the outer waterproof are combined. They look like disposables and are usually fastened with Velcro or poppers.

There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to this type of nappy but one of the most appealing benefits is that they can reduce the number of disposable nappies that are disposed of in waste sites, and are therefore environmentally friendly. One of the biggest disadvantages is that they do cost more to buy in the first place, although some people would say that, in the long run, they work out cheaper.

These nappies need to be sterilised and washed, so nappy buckets, sterilising powders or liquids, washing machines and drying facilities are all essential.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Cheaper in the long term than disposable.</li> <li>✓ Kinder to the environment.</li> <li>✓ No folding of nappies.</li> <li>✓ Modern designs are colourful and attractive.</li> <li>✓ New designs are quick to wash and dry.</li> <li>✓ Two-part nappies can last from birth to potty training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Cost more at the beginning, whereas disposable nappies are paid for week by week.</li> <li>✗ Have to be sterilised and laundered.</li> <li>✗ Need to buy extras (e.g. nappy liners, bucket for sterilising).</li> <li>✗ Not as easy to use if out shopping or on holiday.</li> </ul>

#### *Pull-up nappies*

These are sometimes known as ‘trainer nappies’ and are very similar to disposable nappies. They have elasticated waists and can be pulled on and off by the child. The idea is that children who are potty training may use them instead of underwear. The child has the independence to go to the potty or toilet and be able to pull the nappy up and down by themselves. Two-part reusable nappies can be used as pull-up nappies.

#### **Other items**

As the baby gets older and becomes more mobile she or he will need other pieces of equipment – for example:

- high chair
- play pen
- baby walker
- safety gates and fireguards.



#### RESEARCH ACTIVITY

1. Visit a retail outlet that sells baby equipment. Research how much it would cost to buy the basic equipment needed for a new baby.
2. Present your findings, using ICT if possible.
3. Carry out some research into the cost of and advantages and disadvantages of using both disposable and washable nappies.
4. Include a survey or questionnaire. Use your information to produce a fact sheet that would help parents make an appropriate choice.

**QUESTIONS****Question 1**

When preparing for the arrival of a new baby what items might parents need?

**Question 2**

Name four factors you might consider when buying larger items of equipment for a new baby.

**Question 3**

a What factors should be considered when choosing baby clothes?

b What items of clothing would a new baby need?

**Question 4**

One of the most common pieces of equipment bought for the new baby is a cot. List six considerations when buying new and second-hand cots.

**Question 5**

What should a parent think about when choosing a pram or buggy?