

Budget Baby: 8 Tips for Saving Money on Those Precious Little Ones

“Mama, can you ask Miss Natalya if I can hold the baby?” my 6-foot-4-inch son asked with hopeful expectation.

Moments later, he was holding the pretty little 3-month-old baby girl and smiling proudly, “Now, take my picture.”

Ever since he was a teenager, he absolutely loved babies. Holding them. Having his picture made with them. Then giving them back when they made the tell-tale popping sounds that let him know the infant was filling up her diaper.

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“Why are you picking up the baby when he’s sleeping?” I watch my son cuddle his 4-day-old son, the infant’s tiny features pronounced next to his big father’s duplicate profile.

“Because I’m the dad, and I can hold him whenever I want.” He holds him. He has his picture made with him. And when the tell-tale popping noises indicate little Robbie is filling his diaper, he’s suddenly changed. He goes from a boy who has never changed a diaper to a man who changes every single one his tiny son fills (and his namesake filled six of those bad boys in only 24 hours.)

I’m proud of my man-child who grew up so quickly, met a beautiful mermaid, married her before she got away and made me a “Glam-ma” to a tiny human who has my Hispanic hair, my

husband's name, his mother's nose and his father's legacy.

My daughter-in-law is a precious asset to the Kay family, and not surprisingly, she's great with money. Here are eight new-mom tips that come from her recent experience and my background as a mom of many.

8 Ways to Save Bucks on Babies

- **Amazon Baby Registry:** Whether you have three baby showers or none, it's smart to have a list of items you can use for baby. Even if friends and family don't buy off the list, they can still mark it as "purchased" to minimize duplicates. Once everyone buys what they want, the new parents are entitled to 10 percent off one order (60 days before and up to 180 days after the baby's arrival) and 15 percent off if you are an Amazon Prime Member. My daughter-in-law used this discount to buy eligible items off her registry that had not yet been purchased, and she used Amazon gift cards to further minimize their out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Return Duplicates Promptly:** Get a store credit or exchange items for something else you can use right away. If you wait until after the baby arrives, you may not have the chance to get around to returning the items in a timely manner, and you'll lose out.
- **Don't Open Those Diapers!:** My first son, Daniel, weighed 11 pounds and was 24 inches long. He never wore newborn diapers. My last son, Joshua, was 10.5 pounds. He never wore newborn diapers. Even if you don't give birth to a sumo wrestler, you still need to be careful on your timing in opening new bags/boxes of diapers. Once you open them, they can't be returned for a larger size. This is especially true when you open a 180-count box. Exchanging a brand name diaper is easy at Walmart or Target, where you don't need a receipt to get a larger-size package. But not if they're opened.
- **Calling All Freebies:** I went out to Annapolis to nest

before the baby arrived, and it seemed like every day, my daughter-in-law was getting freebies delivered to her door—especially baby formula. She also got free toiletries, diapers, books and more from the hospital. Manufacturers of baby products and hospital auxiliary groups provide freebies for new moms. Look inside the baby bassinet cabinet in the hospital, and you'll probably find diapers, swaddling blankets, alcohol swabs, a nasal aspirator, disposable nipples for bottles, a thermometer and more. These are valued at \$30 to \$40, and you can always use them.

- **Nurse if Possible:** Not only will your baby get colostrum, which helps to fight infections and illnesses, but you'll get valuable bonding time with your little one. It's been estimated that nursing moms save \$1400 in the first year over those who use formula. My daughter-in-law got reimbursed for a pump through Tricare, and other insurance plans cover the cost of a pump as well. Don't take the one from the hospital because those (usually) aren't free, and nothing can ruin a peaceful day at home with your newborn than the breast pump police at your door, asking why you stole an \$800 breast pump. Don't give away your sample formula, either; 85 percent of nursing moms stop by the time their babies are 6 months old.
- **Free Advice:** Many hospitals have a lactation expert who makes the rounds and helps new moms learn how to nurse a baby. When Anne, the lactation consultant, came by to see my daughter-in-law, I learned a few things as well. Even after nursing five babies, I didn't know that "Infants are nocturnal beings." Um, yeah. I should have figured that out. This service is free and can cost \$200 if you pay a lactation advisor. Ask about free hotlines and even volunteer services that may pay for a home visit. Plus, check your insurance provider's coverages as well. One of the nurses, Leslie, was helping my daughter-in-law, and when she realized I had raised five

infants, she pointed at me and said to my son and daughter-in-law, "You are blessed to have her in your life. She's one of the greatest resources of knowledge you have at your disposal." I loved Leslie; she was my favorite.

- **Double Duty Accessories:** When you're filling out a wish list, try to get items that have more than one function. Like a Graco Pack 'N Play that also has a changing table built in as well as a bassinet. We got my oldest son a crib that converted into a toddler bed for his son, Liam, and we bought the conversion kit when we bought the crib. These styles are new every 9 months, and if you wait to buy the conversion kit when you need it (2 years or so), it may no longer be available.
- **You Have Not Because You Ask Not:** Be sure you ask the OB/GYN and the pediatrician for product samples. Not only will you discover whether you like the product before you purchase a full size, but you may only need a little of it to get you through the current crisis. Sign up for baby food company newsletters and coupon offers. Go to Gerber, Beechnut, Earthsbest and Stonyfield to get these offers.

CoThree Generations of Robert Philip Kay

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My husband and I are and thankful for our children and now our children's children. We are often asked how we raised so many successful children, with success being measured as kids who are living their purpose and making the world a better place.

We usually answer this question with, "We tried to think of what was best for the child. I didn't think about what I wanted to do, I thought about what was going to be the best option for my child."

Gotta go check Instastories for the latest baby video-until

next time!

Ellie Kay is the best-selling author of 15 books, a media veteran of 2800+ interviews and the founder of the nonprofit, *Heroes at Home 501(c)(3)*. As a speaker at more than 1000 events, she's earned the elite Toastmaster Designation of Accredited Speaker, an honor she achieved in 2015 out of four million Toastmasters past and present. She is married to the world's greatest fighter pilot, and they have seven financially smart Millennials as well as six grandchildren. To follow her blog or contact her, go to [and](#) . The Kays make their home in Los Angeles County, California.

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