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## **How to Pick the Best Name for Your Baby**

**By Nancy Wurtzel**

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Expectant parents spend hours preparing the nursery, poring over pregnancy and delivery books and going to childbirth classes. Yet surprisingly, many decide their child's given name within a matter of minutes, often spending more time selecting the right car seat or stroller.

What should parents-to-be consider when choosing a baby name? All About Baby, a personalized children's products company that has seen all types of name combinations, has come up with helpful tips to make the process interesting, fun and successful.

First, start with the experts. The choices today are staggering with more than 50,000 common names and spelling variations. Begin with some basic homework by buying a few baby-name books or a baby-name software program. Check online for the best buys.

You can also use the internet by tapping into dozens of internet sites that list popular baby names, some websites even offer customized search programs, complete with the meaning and origin of the names.

Somewhere during the middle of your pregnancy, start jotting down some of your favorite selections.

Next, begin mixing and matching the first and middle names along with the baby's last name to see how you like various combinations. How do the names sound together? How do they look on paper? This is the time to ask others for their opinion, so keep an open mind and have a little fun considering a wide range of names for your little one.

At the same time, keep in mind that names often bring up a myriad of emotions, and sometimes parents can have very different reactions to their partner's favorite choices. So we advise being respectful of your partner's feelings.

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Trendy names are really in fashion — especially with celebrities. However, there is always something to be said for the old standards that have endured the test of time. For instance, Bambi Nevada might seem like a cool choice today, but consider what is the best selection for an entire lifetime. What will this name look like decades later on a business card?

Along these same lines are exotic spellings and invented names, which are also in wide use today. Remember that kids can sometimes be cruel and a highly unusual name could be fodder for playground teasing.

As an adult, just think how many times during an average week you give and spell your name. Do you want to give your child a name that he or she could really resent later?

If you absolutely love a name, but can't tolerate the nickname that often goes with it, then think twice.

For example, I have a friend who named her son Michael, even though she hates the nickname, 'Mikey'. Now the mom spends far too much time and energy correcting kids, teachers and other parents who refer to him by the dreaded nickname. It's just not worth it.

Since ultrasound tests are not always interpreted correctly, All About Baby recommends choosing names for both sexes. Even when you think the gender is a certainty, it is still a good idea to have a back up name. Why? Sometimes the name that seemed perfect during your pregnancy just isn't the right match when the new baby finally arrives.

This actually happened to another mom that I know, who was having her second son, a boy. They learned the sex of the baby during pregnancy and planned for months to name their new son, Cameron Michael.

However, when I visited their home a few days after the baby's birth, I learned the parents had named him Matthew John. His mother's explanation was that after his birth, they all realized 'he just didn't look like a Cameron.' And you know, she was right, he looked like a Matthew John!

Everyone seems to have an opinion when it comes to baby names, and family members can be especially outspoken. While it's fun to hear suggestions, especially during the first part of your name search, keep in mind that ultimately your child's name is your decision. It is impossible to make everyone happy.

Naming your infant is one of the most important tasks you will ever undertake. A person's name is truly a lifetime gift, and it helps define your child — within the family, to friends, at school and to the outside world. If you consider the options carefully and select with love, you really can't go wrong.

For a complete list of 20 Helpful Baby–Naming Tips as well as a wide variety of other interesting child–related content, visit

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Nancy Wurtzel is the owner and founder of All About Baby, an ecommerce site located at

. All About Baby specializes in personalized and memorable gifts for children

as well as interesting and helpful child-related site content. Ms. Wurtzel has over 20 years of marketing and communications experience. She consults with small businesses seeking to enter the marketplace or grow their existing ecommerce business.

## **Your Guide To Baby Shower Planning**

**By Stephen Kreutzer**

With baby showers, as with all important events, often the details can get in the way of the hosts enjoyment of the party! Don't let yourself get overwhelmed. Take it one step at a time and enjoy yourself. A baby is on the way and the baby shower is your welcome home gift. Answer these questions before you begin and your baby shower is sure to be a success.

Who Does What?

Assign tasks. Delegating duties will let you direct and handle mishaps rather than handle everything as well as mishaps. Of course, enlisting friends and family requires their agreement so ask them well in advance of the baby shower.

How Much Will You Spend?

Set aside a certain amount of money for each part of the baby shower and stick to it. Make sure your list is thorough and that your expected expenditures are realistic. Don't forget the paper plates and cups and napkins! Assigning others to bring things you need will help you cut down on baby shower expenses.

Who's Coming?

Ask the new parents who they want at their baby shower and get the addresses at least a month in advance. You will need addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. Get the invitations out no less than 3 weeks before the day of the baby shower.

What's Your Theme?

1930s Flapper baby shower? Maybe a picnic in the park? Whatever you choose, make sure that your guests know what to expect.

What Food Will You Serve?

The food for your baby shower should reflect the theme, but make sure you choose something that the Mom to be likes. Pregnant women have aversions and cravings and catering to these is an essential

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aspect of the baby shower.

### Where Should You Hold the Baby Shower?

Wherever you choose, it should be easy to find, comfortable for the number of guests you've invited and inexpensive to you.

### When Should You Hold the Baby Shower?

It's the new mom's choice! She may want to hold it in the middle of her pregnancy or wait until after the baby is born. When you pick a date and time, stick with it!

### What Games Will You Play?

What prizes will you give away? What will you need so that all of your guests can play the games? Make sure you choose plenty of back up baby shower games in case things go a little too slow and need some livening up!

Stephen Kreutzer is a freelance publisher based in Cupertino, California. He publishes articles and reports in various ezines and provides baby shower tips on

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