



Yes, your lives and your relationship will change when you have a baby.



Human Development and Family Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078-6117
Phone (405) 744-6701
www.okstate.edu/hes/bsr



Oklahoma Marriage Initiative
301 NW 63rd Street, Suite 600
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
Phone (405) 848-2171
www.okmarriage.org

This tip sheet was prepared for the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative by Courtney Harrison, MPA of Public Strategies; Pamela Jordan, PhD of University of Washington; Steven Nock, PhD of University of Virginia; and was approved by the OMI Research Advisory Group.

We're Having a Baby! Will it Change Our Marriage?

This is a very happy time, but it can also be hard on your romantic relationship. The good news is that there are some things you can do to make sure your couple relationship stays strong after the baby is born.

Having a baby will change how you live your life. Roles in the house change. Jealousy occurs because the baby demands time and attention. Commitment issues may come up. Partners may resent the non-stop demands of parenting. Having a baby also changes what you and your partner do together. A baby may decrease the amount of time you have to go out, sleep, eat and talk together about things other than the baby.

Your marriage is the nest that your baby will grow and learn in. These tips from experts can help you focus on your couple relationship and keeping your friendship strong.



Listen to each other and make time to talk. Ask how your partner is feeling about the baby and your relationship.

Work as a team. You are both parents with equally important roles to play in your baby's life.

Take care of yourself. Take time to exercise, sleep and reduce your use of caffeine, alcohol and cigarettes. You can't be in a healthy relationship with your partner or your baby unless you take care of yourself.

Discuss your expectations of yourself, each other and life with a baby. You will be a happier parent if your expectations are realistic.

You and your partner are growing a family. You will need to decide who will take care of the baby, who will make the money, how the baby will be raised and who else can help with the baby when you need a break. You each come to parenthood with your own ideas of how a family should or should not be and you need to work together to develop common goals and expectations.

To learn more about healthy relationships and marriages, go to www.okmarriage.org