

Talking About Pregnancy: The Preparation

The pregnancy really changed the way we looked at our lives. We've gone from being two adults to being the beginnings of a family. And, of course, it's a change that's not going to come automatically or even super-easily. And even worse, it's a change that neither of us have had before and so we're mostly guessing what we have to do.

Now that we have announced the pregnancy, we can ask our parents what they did. And we have asked them. But now I'm asking you. Do you have children? How did you prepare for your children? What do you think I should do to prepare for my children? What do you think the minimum is a family should have before the child is born? And do you have any specific advice for the first several months of being a parent?

And I can tell you what we have planned so far. First, we started thinking about what do we need? At the bare minimum? We think it's better to buy a little bit—you can always buy more later—and we don't want to be completely unprepared, so we said: a stroller, a crib, maybe a . . . a playpen. A playpen is where you put a baby during the day. And, obviously, the equipment of having a baby: bottles and diapers and . . . little bit of clothing. Though clothing is difficult to buy until you know how big the baby is.

But, we've begun making these plans and even that has made me realize how expensive babies really are. A baby costs money. Wow. And so, we've gone from planning what we need to making plans of how cheaply can we get what we need? I've become an expert on eBay. There is a website only for Dresden where we can find used stuff. And the trick now is deciding what we want, watching for it online, and saying how much are we willing to pay? We know the new price of the things we like. And if something is only a little bit cheaper than new, then it makes more sense to buy it new because it's sturdier and has a guarantee. So, how much will we pay for quality that is used? And because Germans only have one child, there are a lot of things that are only used once.

And so, the big part of preparing now, or the first part of preparing now is watching our pennies and trying to figure out how to get the things we need for the lowest price. But of course, that's not the only thing. Christine will tell her work this week that she's pregnant and a lot of things will change for her at work. And we have to prepare for the time when she's not working and she's at home. That means, thinking about money. And, of course, we have to prepare for the idea that we're carrying a baby into our apartment every day. I mentioned once that our apartment is on the sixth floor of a building with no elevator. That means six flights of stairs. So far, it's been no problem, but when you think about having a baby in one arm, a dog in the other, and groceries to

carry, it's a lot. So we have to think about if we're going to move or not. And, if we don't move, how are we going to manage the baby-dog-groceries problem?

We don't have answers, yet. I think we're going to do our best and then say “when the baby comes, we'll do what we can.” And, obviously, we're not going to die. I'm not panicking over the coming baby. But, I think our job is to do the best we can without going crazy and then, when the baby comes, obviously we'll see what has to be changed and what doesn't.

But still, one more time, I'd like to ask you what your advice is for a coming baby?