

Jealousy is an emotion that can be very damaging to any relationship. It can also prevent you from growing emotionally. It is not the same thing as envy. Jealousy wants what someone else has. Envy is when you don't want someone else to have what you don't have. If a person is jealous, they already have what is desired but they are afraid of losing it.

Dealing with Jealousy

Real jealousy will almost surely rear its ugly head sooner or later among children younger than school age. Busy and independent older ones will probably take the new arrival in stride, suffering little if at all from feelings of rejection. Very likely they will be proud to have a baby in the family. They will look upon the infant as a sort of live plaything to be loved and cuddled and shown off to their friends. The best way to help the little ones through their feelings of displacement and rejection are to show them your love in every way you can and to spend as much time alone with them as you possibly can.

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Your toddler is too unsophisticated to be anything but up-front about his or her feelings; life with the interloper who makes so much noise and takes Mommy's time is unbearable. He or she will likely ask you to take the baby back and will be frankly envious of the attention the baby is getting. You may be able to cheer up the child a little by stressing how lucky the baby is to have such a fine big brother or sister and by letting him or her help you care for and entertain the baby. This child isn't old enough yet to have developed much feeling about right or wrong, and pinching, hitting, or sitting on the baby won't seem a crime to him or her. You'll need to watch the child closely and lay down a no nonsense law that the baby must not be hurt. This may be one of the rare times you choose to use strong discipline.

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Showing anger through tantrums, are normal with the arrival of a baby sibling. Make sure you underscores the importance of never imposing a timeout on toddlers for having a tantrum. The toddlers may begin to associate anger with something that makes the mother, or the main caregiver, disappear. They then may link anger with abandonment and despair.

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By the age of three, your child understands that deliberately hurting the baby is wrong. Do however, watch the pats and squeezes and hugs, they may be a bit too hard. This child

may be so angry about the baby's appearance that he or she won't talk to you, won't cooperate in any way. Or, he or she may be afraid to displease you by showing the anger. The child may be excessively good or fake exaggerated and unfelt love for the baby. You can admit to this child that yes, the baby can be a nuisance, bothering you when you two are reading or playing. Be careful not to give the idea that there's any solution other than the baby's ultimate growing up into a reasonable child.

Your preschooler will probably try to take your attention away from the baby by showing off his or her feats of strength and skill and cleverness. The child feels rejected and cannot understand what you see in this infant who can't do anything interesting or worthwhile. A little girl may be particularly jealous of Mommy, a boy of Daddy, and each may try to take over the other parent. Feelings are strong and you will do well to acknowledge them and encourage the child to talk about them.

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