

Eight Ways Dad-to-Be Can Bond with Baby Now



How can you, dad-to-be, cuddle up with your kid-to-be--right now? Our dads and experts have some great ideas for bonding with the contents of mom-to-be's baby bump.

- 1. The art of being a dad-to-be.** So you've got a blobby, shadowy first image of your child: Now make it into a work of art. The first step: Make sure you have the sonogram in digital form. Perhaps your partner's doctor has emailed it to you. If so, cool; if not, upload that business. Then take the image and play around it. Add a cool filter, Photoshop in a party hat, or add a cute quote bubble with a message to your partner. When you're done, plaster that image everywhere--from your phone's wallpaper to that little photo window in your wallet, you'll love seeing your progeny's little mug.
- 2. Toy story.** "Since dads tend to dream of things they will do with their offspring as the baby grows, making or buying something connected to those activities is a tangible way to cement this growing bond," says Greg Bishop, founder of [Boot Camp for New Dads](#). "Maybe it's a pint size fishing pole, maybe it's something to do with their favorite sports team. When mom is [pregnant](#) and thinks about the baby, she pictures an infant. Dad pictures the baby older, as a new playmate and dreams of how he will show them their world and the adventures they'll have."
- 3. Get class-y.** Doug Gertner, author of the forthcoming *The Grateful Dad's Guide to the First Year of Fatherhood*, advises you to "attend every class and pre-natal doctor visit you can. Knowledge is power and knowing what to expect will bring a range of positive possibilities to pop before baby even arrives. You don't need to read every book if that's not your thing; really, but showing up counts for a lot." He adds, as an incentive, that gear might be involved here: i.e. the [breast pump](#). "Dads can research this important piece of gear, talk to mom about what she'd prefer, make the purchase, and become the expert in how it operates. Mom and baby will be grateful, and when baby is ready for a bottle, mom can express the milk and dad can join in the feeding."
- 4. Play DJ.** Create an ideal playlist for your forthcoming kid--and then pump the music into her cozy little apartment. That is, take some headphones and place them gently around your partner's [pregnant belly](#). This is your chance to give your kid some great musical taste. Why not make him the only fetus on the block to appreciate Kanye or Tom Waits or Phoenix or whatever you think is cool. It's a chance to make your kid a lifelong fan of (what you define as) good music. But don't crank it up too much, warns

Katherine Moore, an early childhood music educator: "The hearing of fetuses and [infants](#) is extremely sensitive, which means the sound levels we expose them to need to be on the gentle side."

5. **Sing a duet.** For the musical family: why not sing duets to the baby in mom-to-be's tummy? The good musical vibes that will reach deep into the amniotic atmosphere will surely be good for everyone involved. "Babies hear sounds from the outside world at 16 weeks gestation," says Deena H. Blumenfeld, Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator. "They also recognize their parents' voices from the moment they are born. If dad sings to the baby while baby is still in the womb, baby will know the song, calm and look to dad." The family that sings together, stays together. Cool, right?

6. **Book 'em.** Read into that bump! Choose books that you and the mom-to-be both love, and will want your child to know about. Your forthcoming kid has ears, and it's never too early to influence his or her literary tastes, in fact, the sooner you guide them to the good stuff the better off they will be (book-wise). "Reading was always something my family loved growing up, so I figured I'd start early. I bought a couple collections that were my favorites -- Dr. Seuss and Curious George -- and read to my wife's belly," says dad Matt Heinz. "Not only was it a great way to be involved in the pregnancy, as soon as our son could choose stories, he went straight for the ones he'd been hearing since before [birth](#). It was actually pretty amazing."

7. **Be a hands-on dad-to-be.** "When our son was the proverbial-bun-in-the-oven, my wife and I would hang out every evening of the last couple of months and observe his movements as if we were wildly fascinated students of [soccer](#) at the World Cup finals," says Kenneth Mossman, a life coach and dad. This might win the approval of Deborah Petersburg, a Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educator and Fellow of the Academy of Certified Childbirth Educators, who says: "Having dad place his hands on mom's growing belly is an easy way for him to experience the movements of the baby. It's fun to try guessing whether you are feeling baby's foot, knee, hand, head, or bottom! Dads are surprised to discover that the baby will even 'play' with him by kicking or punching where he lays his hand."

8. **Take the kid on a virtual road trip.** Some of your relatives will surely be far away--but that doesn't mean you can't do some in utero introductions. Introduce your baby to the sound of your grandmother in Oklahoma's voice, or that of your favorite cousin in California. Best part: you can record G+ Hangouts, so that you will have a video record of these precious meetings.

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