

A Father's Reflections on Welcoming a New Baby

The arrival of our baby girl marked a new experience for me and was definitely an exercise in patience and self-sacrifice. The experience was like no other.

The homebirth of our daughter Mila three months ago was wonderful, thanks to a few key people. All the dramatic ingredients were there...the phone call at work...trying to find the correct nozzle to inflate the wading pool...the 911 call (where's the midwife?)...I want to push...not yet...paramedics arrive...I really want to push...(WHERE'S THE MIDWIFE?)...not yet...not yet...Dave, I need a towel - Hey, look it's a baby girl!!!!

And so it began in a bit of whirlwind fashion. Shakespeare could not have foreshadowed the event any better.

The time I spent bonding with Mila during the first month was restricted to diaper changes and an hour or so after our two year old son Ben was asleep in bed. Those diaper changes were my favourite time - I could look at her blue eyes and talk to my baby girl - I never really looked at changing diapers as a bad thing because I always saw it as time when I had Mila's undivided attention. My nighttime hour with Mila was special

because I could just hold her and stare at her stunning perfection. (She takes after her mother.) Just to watch her breathe and squeak was breathtaking.

The second month, I started to spend much more time with Mila. Sara needed to be with Ben more and so I gladly (after waiting my turn), began some bottle feedings and even putting her down for the night. It felt really good when she took the bottle from me; being able to feed my child like that. There really is no other feeling like the one I get when I just hold her in my arms and she's perfectly comfortable - smiling and cooing at me.

I really found that with Mila's arrival, my bond with my son Ben grew as well. After the first week I was spending almost all day with Ben. We would be out of the house early so Mom and baby could sleep in (yeah...right!) I really enjoyed my long tiring days exploring with Ben.

What has made the past three months easier is realizing how much I love Sara and that we did actually like each other before we had 2 children. Little did I know that bonding with Mila would lead to increased bonding with Ben and Sara.

David Head, Windsor, Ontario

