



{ Babe Watch }

When we have playdates, my pal ignores her kid. It's hard to chat while keeping two babies out of danger. Help!

The next time you find yourself diverting double trouble, call the situation to your friend's attention with something like: "Gosh, Lisa, I really want to hear more about your tennis match, but I have to save your Joshie from tearing down the curtains. Hold that thought!" If she laughs and intercepts Joshie herself, you've opened the door to changing her habits. But if she just waits for you to return to the conversation, or cluelessly keeps talking, you need to speak to her seriously. Bring it up when things are calmer; say, when the babies are quietly occupied and you're not chasing down a tot who's got your cat by the tail. Or later, over the phone, you might say: "Lisa,

when we're together, I feel as if I'm the only one keeping an eye on the kids. I'd hate for something to happen to Joshie, and it's hard for me to cover them both *and* enjoy our get-together." I have a hunch she'll be more tuned in next time, but if she becomes defensive or brushes you off after a few tries, you might have to decline further playdates for now.

{ Three's a Crowd }

Q Our son, who is almost 1, is in a crib in our room, and when I hear him cry at night, I can't help but nurse him back to sleep. My husband thinks the baby should be in his nursery. Who's right here? Well, neither of you is really *right*. Where baby sleeps is a matter of choice. Having my boys in their own room worked for me. If you put your son in the nursery, you and your husband won't be awoken by every gurgle, moan, or cry. But if you're not ready to show Baby the door, you can try this compromise: Keep the crib in your bedroom, but stop picking him up at every whimper. You could feed him once during the night, and then eventually skip that and just pat him when he wakes. Soon enough you can start shushing him softly from your bed. You may have more sleepless nights ahead, but he'll get the idea.

Let's be honest: An almost 1-year-old doesn't *need* to eat at 2 A.M. Nursing your son won't hurt him, but it will prevent him from learning to sleep through the night. You have to teach this skill—and scooping him up at every squeak primes him to keep squawking. Ask yourself: *Would I rather not get up three times tonight? How will I feel if he's 2 and still not sleeping through the night?* Your answer is exactly the motivation you need to let him settle himself down.

a.b.
quick
fix

I'm pregnant, and I run—with my OB's okay. My neighbor shakes her head when she sees me. Got a comeback?

Don't say anything. You won't change her mind. Instead, wave merrily and smile brightly as you jog on by.

DELICATESSEN

{ Up in the Air }

Q We're going on our first airplane trip with our baby, who is 8 months old. I'm in a panic about nursing, changing, and soothing him for five hours without making the other passengers (or myself) nuts. Got any advice for me?

Don't worry, Mama: Between the full-body pat-downs and the \$14 turkey sandwiches in flight, your fellow passengers have plenty of reasons to be nuts! Your priority is to prepare yourself as best you can to make your baby comfortable in flight.

Some travel tips: Time a feeding to coincide with takeoff to ease ear pressure. (If you're lucky, he'll fall asleep during it.) If you pump and can bring a bottle in a cooler bag, do it; the more soothing ammo you have, the better. Fill your carry-on with small toys, board books, a paci, and a blankie. And pack extra clothing for both of you. I've heard friends' war stories of their babe throwing up on them in midair—and they had no spare shirt. Walking a fussy baby up and down the aisle can quiet him, too, and keep him from potentially annoying neighbors.

Above all, maintain your sense of humor. It's the best way to deal with grumpy strangers. One time, my cousin and her husband took their baby to Mexico. He was screaming and flailing as they boarded, and to defuse the panic in the eyes of the other passengers, my cousin's husband announced: "Hi! I'm Mike, and this is Thomas, and we'll be on your flight today!" Maybe your

If your husband knows what "dessert" might entail, he'll be on board with hiring a babysitter!

cabin mates will laugh, or at least smile and turn up the volume on their iPods. As for those who don't? Frankly, you've got enough on your mind, what

with trying to unwrap that \$14 sandwich with one hand.

{ Two-Stepping }

Q I'm dying for a date night with my husband, but he says we don't have the money for a sitter. How can I convince him our alone time is worth it?

Promise him sex when you get home? That usually works for me. Listen: Every couple needs QT. It's just not in a baby's nature to allow her parents to have a real conversation. So figure, you're both busy all day, and post-dinner is about bathing and bedtime and maybe a little DVR action. Soon enough, weeks (or months) have passed and you haven't said anything to each other aside from "Can you pick those dried-out peas up off the floor?" Sounds like your husband could use a little reminder of what pre-kid coupledness felt like. Start by batting around options that are less pricey than four hours of babysitting. How about half that time, enough to scoot out for a latte at the local coffee shop? Or trade sitting with a friend? Show your guy that getting out doesn't need to break your budget. If he has a glimmer in his mind of what dessert might entail after you get home in that relaxed, date-night state, he'll be right on board! ●



HAVE YOUR OWN STICKY SITUATION?

Email your relationship quandaries (regarding people big or small) to momadvice@americanbaby.com. We'll help you out of any bind!