

Yes, Having One Baby Can Be Harder Than Three (or Four)

www.babble.com/baby/yes-having-one-baby-can-be-harder-than-three-or-four/

Channie Brusie

July 17, 2014



Earlier this week, my mother invited our older girls over for a fun sleepover at Grandma's — an unprecedented and much anticipated event for all parties. (Mostly me.) After I dropped the girls off with their 18 overnight bags, I drove home with our youngest, our 2-year-old son. As I rolled down the windows and turned up the radio, I felt almost giddy.

Only one kid in the house? No fighting, screaming, or sassing? Just the baby who couldn't care less how much of *The Bachelorette* I exposed him to or ask to eat my dessert? Only one bath and one bedtime routine? Heck, it was practically date night. (And in fact, we did turn it into date night — a late dinner out, nary a diaper bag in sight, a trip to Home Depot, *and* ice cream at 10PM. One kid freedom!)

There is no denying that my life has changed drastically from the birth of our first daughter six years ago to my current now-pregnant-with-baby-number-four status. *A lot* has changed. But there's one thing I refuse to ever do, despite the "experienced" mama tag some might try to slap on me.

I will never, ever say that having that first baby is easier than having three or four. Because, in many ways, it's actually *harder*.

I came across [this post](#) the other day by a first-time mom who constantly feels judged by other mothers with more kids and it really struck me, because *man*, I remember those days.

I remember the days of feeling afraid to go to the grocery store with one baby— what if she cried? How would I feed her? How many snacks did I need to get her through the trip?

I remember the days of feeling frantic over her first big fall and that high fever we couldn't break.

I remember the days of lugging every baby item in our house along for even the shortest trips out. Playpen? Check. Five extra outfits? Check. Every skin cream she could ever need? Double check.

But mostly, I remember the insecurity.

There was a lot of insecurity in my early mothering days. Part of it was because I was a younger mom, having my daughter only a week after I turned 22, but mostly, I was just a typical first-time mother. I didn't have the experience that comes with years of parenting, I hadn't had the circumstances yet that would help me see that I was a good mom, I hadn't yet heard the little "I love you's" that would teach me that no matter what anyone else thought, I was the mother my children needed.

And so, I will honestly admit that in a lot of ways, that first year of having just one baby was so much harder than my life now. Not in necessarily a physical sense, because there's nothing really easy about having four kids in six years, but because I have changed as a mother:

I don't feel that intense need for validation like I used to.

I have the ability to discern what works for our family and stick with it. Heck, I can even chuckle a little bit at the grocery store comments that always seem to land on us mothers.

I don't feel the pressure to entertain my baby 24/7 ...

... and fill her days with educational, enriching experiences all.the.time. True story: I can seriously remember feeling stressed out that I wasn't talking enough to my daughter. I'd narrate my entire way through folding a load of laundry. It was exhausting. These days, I can just plop the baby in the swing and watch the older siblings fight over who gets to make the baby laugh.

I have help.

Well, kind of. Sometimes, little hands create more trouble, but when you're knee-deep in a diaper explosion and a three-year-old wanders in who is just the perfect height to grab you the wet wipes, your life can suddenly get a whole lot better.

The standards are so much lower.

Haven't showered in a while? Well, you've got three kids! Kids running in opposite directions at the grocery store? Most people expect it. Exhausted all of the time? Gee, I wonder why! Put simply, people expect less out of you when you have more kids — which makes any

semblance of normalcy in your life, like exercising or (gasp) well-behaved children at a restaurant, that much more praise-worthy.

So, no dear first-time mothers of one: I don't judge you. I may smile fondly over you for the memories of where I once was and the mother you will inevitably become, but I don't look down on you.

Because parenting is hard enough. No matter whose diaper bag is more well-stocked.

Image via Chaunie Brusie/[j&j brusie photography](#)

MORE BY CHAUNIE:

Article Posted 4 years Ago