

NEWSWORTHY TRENDS

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Trading In The Traditional Baby Shower For A New Model: The Co-Ed Version

by Allana Baroni, Gift Giving and Party Planning Expert

(NAPSA)—Just a generation or so ago, dads weren't even allowed in the delivery room. Today there's a growing trend for dads to be more involved in pre-natal preparations than ever before. They are helping out with everything from registering for baby gifts and attending the doctor's appointments to preparing the baby's nursery. In fact, many dads are even getting to experience what has traditionally been viewed as a celebration just for mom—the baby shower.

More and more couples are choosing to have co-ed baby showers. Here are some tips on throwing a co-ed baby bash.

Getting Started: A baby shower for a couple should be more like a casual family party—perhaps at night instead of midday. Make sure a hearty menu is served and try to steer shower talk to topics like how they're going to handle their new parent status. One topic that's sure to arise is what dad will do when mom's away for the first time. In fact, a spin on a traditional shower game might be to have attendees write down their best advice for this challenging problem—such as Baby Einstein videos and bouncy seats.

Invitations: Keep invitations light and humorous and make sure the men know they're invited. More importantly, remember it's not a couples-only party. Invite your single friends to join



Videos are popular shower gifts that please mom, dad and baby.

in the fun, too.

Food and Beverage: Putting together a menu that makes everyone's mouth water is not as hard as it sounds. Think *Boy Meets Grill*, drag out the BBQ and whip up a buffet-style meal including fish, steak, sausage, chicken and vegetables. Everybody loves appetizers, so serve up party favorites such as "pigs in a blanket" and chicken wings alongside a not-so-veggie pasta salad.

Décor: Make the party about the people and don't get too worked up about the décor. Set up favorite childhood games and activities to bring out the guests' own inner child. Go for marbles, hopscotch, game boys, board games, bocce ball, cards, etc. Then, have a Polaroid camera around to capture the laughable behavior.

Gift Ideas: When choosing that perfect gift for baby, think of items both mom and dad will love, like a rugged baby recreational vehicle. The thick tread on the wheels makes for a smooth ride on any

long walk, whether at the neighborhood park or the mall. Toss in some running shoes, a radio, or matching sweat suits for mom and dad and you've got the makings of a theme gift.

If guests really want to impress the parents-to-be, consider videos/DVDs, books, CDs or puppets developed by The Baby Einstein Company. This top-selling infant video series helps keep baby cooing and engaged—which makes for happy parents. From re-orchestrated musical classics to examining color from famous works of art, Baby Einstein products, such as "Baby Neptune Discovering Water," introduce babies to the colors, shapes and sounds that surround them. The best part is that the tools are specifically designed as interactive, playful products, providing an opportunity for mom and dad to spend quality time with baby.

Now That's Entertainment: Just because guys are involved in the party doesn't mean shower games are out of the question. Put mom and dad on the spot by having guests ask each parent-to-be a series of silly questions to quiz their knowledge of what life with a baby will be like. You can also ask guests who are parents to bring a funny gift for the parents-to-be, like a diaper changing kit that includes rubber gloves and a clothespin for their noses.

So, don't leave dad out of the fun—a co-ed shower is a great way to include all of your friends and family, and celebrate both of the proud parents-to-be.