

Welcome

Editor's note



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Let's get real. Becoming a parent for the first time is full of surprises. There are sweet surprises, like the tiny cuddles you soak up during quiet moments, and the painful ones, like when the cuddles turn into nonstop screaming (and from 3 to 6 a.m.). There are also nasty surprises, like the bodily fluids—baby's *and* yours—and wondering just how many dirty diapers you'll change. The answer: It's thousands.

In those early days, while we're sleep deprived and just trying to make it through, we may take for granted that we have a sufficient supply of diapers to keep our baby clean, dry, and healthy. Unfortunately, thousands of babies in Cincinnati don't have enough diapers, and social services programs don't cover them.

Thankfully, one local mom stepped up to help. In this issue of *Cincinnati Baby and Beyond*, we spotlight Megan Fischer (page 20), a "Mom Boss" who launched Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank, a nonprofit that has donated more than a million diapers to low-income families. She is making a difference for babies and moms during those first years, when every parent is adjusting to life with a little, and all while rocking her main job as Mom.

Back to those surprises for a second, because we go there in "Not-So-Great Expectations" on page 40, with real moms sharing the ways having a baby changed their life (and not necessarily for the better). From trying to embrace your post-baby body, which is worse than you expected, to finding balance when you go back to work, these are the struggles we all face.

Hang in there, mamas. Now that my son is 9, and his tiny cuddles have turned into a quick "I love you" every day as he rushes off at school drop off, I look back fondly on his baby years. Even with all of the diapers, and all of the surprises. Just not the lack of sleep—I don't look back fondly on that, and that's OK. Parenting has its challenges but, no matter what, you'll still be bursting with love for that little human being. ◊

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