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The big baby name survey



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For many parents, choosing a name for their child is one of the first major challenges they face as a parent.

They want the right name — one that conveys their child's unique identity. And that's no small task, said the 6,000 BabyCenter readers, both pregnant and parenting, who answered our 2007 Baby Names Survey.

Read on to find out what BabyCenter parents and parents-to-be shared with us about the tricky task of baby naming, from how they settled family disagreements to whether to bring in professional baby-naming help.

58% of you said yes, a name does matter when it comes to success in life.

The power of a name

"It's hard picking a name — it's one of the hardest decisions of your life," explained one parent-to-be. "It will affect another person who has no say in what you decide."

That choice is made all the more difficult by the fact that the majority of you — 58 percent — believe a child's name contributes to his or her success in life.

One parent wrote that "girls with names that could be boys' seem to be more successful and outgoing in life." Another agreed: "How many CEOs named Bambi do you know?" Other parents expressed the belief that "a terrible name leads to bullying and lack of self-worth."

But 42 percent of you see things differently.

New trend? Some of you said you'd hired a consultant to help you pick a name.

"I've seen brilliant children with awful, meaningless names," reasoned one parent. Another added, "A name is something you are called, not who you are." And another parent wrote, "Look at all the people in the world with weird names who are successful."

So what meaning should your child's name carry? For the most part, you believe your child's name should reflect their gender first and their individuality second. For boys, parents and parents-to-be said it's most important that your baby's name convey strength (55 percent), followed by individuality (47 percent). For girls, the qualities most frequently cited were femininity, individuality, and kindness.

Is it easier to name a girl or a boy? While more of you said you think naming a girl is easier (33 percent) than naming a boy (17 percent), about half said you believe that naming a child is equally difficult no matter what the child's **sex** is.

Where you find ideas

You use all manner of resources to find possibilities to add to your name lists. The top source of naming ideas? Most of you said your spouse (74 percent), followed by relatives, websites, and books.

And here's a possible up-and-coming trend: professional baby-naming consultants.

We found 54 parents who said they'd hired someone to help them pick a name. [Would you pay someone to help you pick a baby name?](#)

About 26% of you said that the mom's vote has more weight in baby naming.

How you choose

What's the most important factor in choosing your child's first name? "We just like how it sounds" was the top answer (25 percent), followed by the unique or unusual quality of the name (22 percent). For a middle name, honoring a family member (34 percent) and carrying on a naming tradition (20 percent) were the key criteria.

According to our survey, most of you (57 percent) didn't name your child after anyone or anything in particular, but those of you who did overwhelmingly honored a family member (44 percent) with your choice.

Check out the top 100 baby names!

All of you agreed that the opinion you relied on most in naming your baby — the one that carried the most weight — belongs to your spouse (51 percent). The vast majority of you reported that your opinion and that of your spouse carry equal weight (66 percent).

Still, about 26 percent of you still believe that the mom's baby name vote carries more weight. Dad's vote carries more weight only about 7 percent of the time.

Overcoming conflict

That doesn't mean coming to an agreement happens easily. About 27 percent of you said you've disagreed about names with your partner.

Interestingly, parents who are still struggling to pick a name said that they've disagreed with their spouse *more* (47 percent) and value the baby-naming opinion of their spouse *less* (28 percent) than parents who have already named their child (57 percent).

Those who have chosen a name for their baby said the way they resolved the conflict was to just keep trying (51 percent). Eighteen percent said they've agreed to disagree and decided that they will take turns naming their babies — one will choose the name this time, and one will choose the name next time.

Most of you — 67 percent — fell in love with a name and stuck with it come hell or high water. But a sizable minority (33 percent) decided against a name you otherwise loved, mostly because your partner didn't like it or because it was too trendy.

Other times, it was a matter of simple intuition. "When our baby was born, she didn't look like the name we picked for her," explained one mom.

3% of parents would change their child's name if they could. Why? "It's become way too popular!"

And while about 97 percent of you have no regrets about the name you chose, about 3 percent of you said you'd change the name if you could. The top reason? "It's become way too popular!" Another reason is "it gets mispronounced a lot," and a few parents lamented that the name just doesn't seem to fit their child. "She just doesn't look like a Georgia-Belle to me!" said one parent.

Making the announcement

Once you settled on a name, most of you were ready to share it with family and friends pretty much right away. Most of you picked and announced the name before your baby was born (67 percent), and a sizable minority (15 percent) said you had the name picked out before your baby was even conceived.

85% of you like your own name, because it's unique, meaningful, or just suits you.

"We had a name picked out for each gender," explained one parent-to-be. "We decided before we even thought about having kids. So when we found out we were expecting, we didn't struggle. We had five years to think about it before we had any kids."

What about your name?

Just out of curiosity, we also asked readers whether they like their own names. The majority — 85 percent — said yes. You said your name is unique, meaningful, or just suits you. You like that it was what your parents picked for you, it's not too common, or that it has family significance.

And the 14 percent of you who don't like your name? "It's too common!" you lament. "It's boring," "it's trendy," "it gets mispronounced." And one of you said, "It's a name for a person who has a different life than I do."

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