your stress-free guide to raising a baby who’ll EAT anything

the sleep routine you should start tonight

colon! The secret is on p.13

highchairs you won’t want to hide
a natural fit

I'm the last person you'd expect to have a doula. I'm far from the model of a natural parent. The only thing I consistently buy organic is milk. My most natural quality? My hair color. Oh, wait. I recently started coloring that too. Ha! Just like natural types find their tribe, I found mine. So when my friend Kathryn announced she had become a doula, I was shocked. I didn't know Kathryn even liked kids. She seemed amused by other people's, but she and her husband decided long ago they weren't going to have their own. As Kathryn explained exactly what a doula is, I realized I had no idea what she was talking about. I had visions of a woman grasping my leg at the foot of a hospital bed, encouraging me to time my breaths to the rhythms of Enya in the background. She had a much more pragmatic approach. "You might be in labor for hours," she said. "You're going to want a buddy there. Having emotional support from a source other than your husband is a good idea in case, you know, he passes out or something." Then came the clincher. "I can cook meals way better than the hospital food you'll be getting." Sold!

When I developed high blood pressure and delivered 10 weeks early, Kathryn swooped into my hospital suite with casseroles, magazines and the most priceless thing of all: good cheer. She reassured me that everything I was feeling — fear, concern, excitement, joy, determination, guilt — was completely normal and that I would not feel overwhelmed forever. Her positive energy had an incredible effect. It calmed me during the months my son was in the hospital, one of the most confusing and difficult times of my life. When I was released from the hospital, Kathryn checked in on me regularly and stocked my fridge. Of course my husband and mom had my back too. But unlike family, Kathryn was able to stay positive while we dealt with the roller coaster of emotions that come with having a premature baby. When Javier finally came home two months later, Kathryn came by often — to see me. She was always good with adults. That, after all, is what a doula does best.

My doula's positive energy had an incredible effect. She calmed me — and stocked my fridge.

Stuff I Can't Stop Thinking About

"I'm greening up my act with The Honest Co. cleaning products." p. 28

"Mixie may be the smartest bottle ever!" p. 35

"How perfect is this for first photos?" p. 36

April Sweepstakes
No purchase necessary. The contests and sweepstakes are sponsored by Babytalk magazine, a division of Bonnier Corp. Prizes are indicated where you see the "WIN IT!" icon. Sweepstakes are open to adult (18 and over) residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia and are void where prohibited by law. For official rules, descriptions of prizes and to enter, go to parenting.com/contests. Enter by 4/30/2013. Each prize will be awarded to three readers. p. 19: Snuggle Highchair (retail value: $140)
Ready to green up your (and baby’s) life—without spending a lot of time or effort? Eco expert Alan Greene M.D., shares his top tips and picks. And the awards go to...

**imagination starters**

I recently found a box of my baby toys in my parent’s attic—simple toys that still inspire. They don’t make them like they used to. Or do they? Begin Again’s plant-based play things spark creativity—no batteries needed! (Pushes around, $13 each, amazon.com)

**easy eat guides**

Personalize ShopWell with dietary needs (like peanut-free) to get a list of healthy products. (free, shopwell.com)

Zipongo sends personalized coupons for healthy items right to your store club card. (free, zipongo.com)

**green-spiration**

“At the fair end of town, where the Griddlegrass grows...” starts a Dr. Seuss classic. The Lorax was green before green was cool. Read it now—studies have shown babies can remember rhymes even before birth. (pop-up version, $10, randomhouse.com)

**storage solution**

Where does your baby food live? I love Wean Green glass cubes, bowls and tubs. The tempered glass is five times stronger than regular glass, has no plastic chemicals and makes baby food look appetizing—even mashed meat! (sets from $12, amazon.com)

**top color coating**

Painting the nursery? Fresh paint can have high levels of volatile organic compounds. Sherwin-Williams’ newly enhanced Harmony paint has zero VOCs, and it even lowers airborne VOCs from other sources, such as insulation. It also has a washable finish in case you have a crayon Picasso. (from $49, Sherwin-Williams)

**baby bump protector**

Your baby can protect your bean from many things, but some everyday radiation (like from your laptop) can pass right through. Belly Armor Belly Blanket has integrated silver-textile as efficient as a 14-inch thick plate of aluminum. (876, amazon.com)

**good clean fun**

“Tub time? I love Babytime! By Episencial’s Peaceful Bubbles from $10, diapers.com) and Baby Guncies’ Foamin’ Fun Shampoo & Bodywash ($2, target.com). Enjoy the suds!

**best finger food holder**

Packing snacks? Cos Lunchskins (from $8, diapers.com). The bags are food-safe, dishwasher-friendly and slim enough to slip into a packed diaper bag. Plus, they’re good for the environment. So far, they’ve saved 120 million plus plastic pouches from landfills.

**clean scene**

Seventh Generation has the first full line of nontoxic USDA-certified biobased home cleaning products (from $8, drug stores). For dishes, nothing is better than The Honest Co.’s Auto Dishwasher Gel. ($6, honest.com)

**safer sleeping**

Most babies spend more than half of their first year asleep—often on their backs just a few inches from the crib mattress, which may contain chemical fumes. One of my top recommendations is a green mattress, like Naturepedic’s Organic Cotton Lightweight Crib (from $99, naturepedic.com). Not in your budget? Just airing out a regular mattress can reduce fumes.

**the greenest wheels**

Talk about a cool ride! The Bumblerdie Indie’s exterior fabric is made from 50 percent recycled material. The stroller also has bamboo fiber in the seat to regulate moisture and temperature. The bamboo doesn’t just keep baby comfy on the go, it also has natural antibacterial properties, and it is replenished very quickly since it is one of the world’s fastest-growing plants. Now that’s what I call a win-win-win. (8229, bumbleride.com)

**mama milk**

Breastfeeding is one of the greenest choices you can make as a parent. It’s the ultimate in eating local. You reduce your carbon footprint in terms of transportation, energy and the costs involved in manufacturing, packaging, shipping and storage. You also lower the lifetime risk of cancer for you and your baby and reduce the odds that your baby will need antibiotics or surgery during the first year—super mom!

**bare necessities**

The bodysuit is baby’s little black dress, and organic cotton is the healthy, natural choice. I like Manny & Simon (shown) for style, Under the Nile for value and Super Sproutz bodysuit gift baskets. ($28, manyandsimon.com, from $18, underthenile.com, $28, supersproutz.com)

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