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## **To Welcome Home Baby**

Parenthood is a life-changing -- and certainly sleep-changing -- event, but a new book suggests ways to help minimize the disruption and disorganization of the first few weeks and beyond.

Laura Forbes Carlin and Alison Forbes are sisters and co-authors of "The Peaceful Nursery: Preparing a Home for Your Baby With Feng Shui" (Delta, \$15). They argue that well-organized and peaceful surroundings can smooth the transition for parents and children.

Feng shui is the Chinese art of arranging your surroundings to enhance your life. The authors say they realize that not everyone will embrace the philosophy. But the book "focuses on the common-sense aspects of feng shui," says Forbes, "making the link that your home affects your well-being." It offers simple

steps that any parent can take to create a calm, welcoming nursery for a newborn.

"By creating this room, you're already caring for your child," says Carlin. "The parenting has already begun."

*Organize, clear clutter:* Clutter -- physical or mental -- can zap time and energy. "If your home is already cluttered, it's going to be 10 times harder once you have your baby," says Forbes. Look at each object in a room and ask: Do I need this? Is this useful? Do I love this? If you don't answer yes to at least one of the questions, pitch it.

*Preparing the room:* Make repairs and renovations early, and clean the room using all-natural products. Sleep should be the priority in the nursery, so choose soothing wall colors (blues encourage relaxation; greens represent serenity and growth). Use brighter, more stimulating colors as accents.

*Make choices with health in mind:* Babies crawl around the floor and put almost anything in their mouths, so materials containing toxins (synthetic carpets, lead paint, pressed wood) should be removed. Try to avoid wall-to-wall carpeting, which can attract mold and dust mites; opt instead for smaller area rugs that can be cleaned easily. Open windows to ventilate regularly.

*Proper crib placement is crucial.* "Naturally and instinctually, we feel safer when we can see who is coming from the door," says Forbes. The crib should have a view of the door and have at least one side against a solid wall.

*Have the necessities:* The only things you really need in the first few months of a baby's life are diapers, wipes, blankets, some onesies that snap and nourishment. Most of the other stuff is just clutter.

**Terri Sapienza**