

Family Room

A close-up photograph of a bird's nest. The nest is constructed from a dense, intricate web of dry, light-brown sticks and twigs. Two smooth, light blue eggs are nestled in the center of the nest. The background is a soft, neutral beige color.

Cancel the Baby Shower. Plan a Nesting Party Instead.

I didn't need more stuff for baby number two, so I invited my closest friends and family members over. Bringing together my community was the best gift I could have gotten.

by **LINDSAY TIGAR**



If there is one universal truth I've learned since becoming a parent, it's that you don't need much in motherhood, but you do need a supportive village to rally behind you. My first pregnancy and my initial postpartum experience were challenging, as I struggled with anxiety and the significant identity change that comes with birthing and raising a human. To cope and adapt, I pushed myself out of my comfort zone to invest in new friendships and find like-minded women raising babies at the same time I was.

So when I was expecting my second baby and my friends asked if they could do something to help me, I knew exactly what I wanted: a nesting party, or a “mama shower” as we called it. Considering that I already had a daughter and was welcoming another, I didn't need anything material for this new addition, but I did need an afternoon of celebrating another chapter in motherhood and doing practical tasks that would help me in navigating those first few chaotic weeks.

I wasn't the only mom-to-be who decided to opt out of the traditional baby shower in

favor of a more personal, thoughtful and purposeful gathering of friends and loved ones. According to Pinterest's 2025 Predictions report, searches for “nesting party” are up 205% and searches for “nesting party ideas” are up 105%. Gina Jokilehto, owner and creative director of Shi Shi Events, confirms this shift in showers, crediting the uptick in the popularity of these different options to the need to build and foster a community for new parents. “New parents need a village, and a nesting shower is a way to feel supported by that village before the baby even arrives,” she says. “The

parties also allow members of your village with specific strengths to shine: Your friend the organizational wizard can tackle closets, dressers and diaper caddies. Another friend or family member might be really handy with tools and can help assemble the stroller, the crib and other baby gear.”

Help, Not Gifts

This was the case with my mama shower, at which three of my closest friends teamed up to create a sweet experience focused on stocking our freezer and blessing my belly. Since we already had all of our gear built and the nursery setup our first daughter had used, my shower was focused on cooking a bunch of meals and snacks for my husband and me to heat up quickly so as to remove for a time the stress of meal planning while caring for a newborn and a toddler.

One of my friends volunteered as head chef, coming up with a game plan for recipes and soliciting monetary donations from friends far and wide to contribute to the cost of groceries. This not only allowed friends who couldn't attend in person to be part of my shower but also meant more

meals for us. During the shower, the head chef printed out recipes and instructions and groups of friends signed up for what they wanted to do: chop ingredients, cook, package and label, etc.

While some groups were working magic in the kitchen, others kept me company by painting my belly and writing birth affirmations for my upcoming delivery. A friend who was an excellent organizer secured the paints, gave instructions for the affirmations and generally kept the afternoon running calmly and smoothly.

Everyone Can Lend a Hand

Another benefit of this type of gathering was the opportunity to give those friends who were child-free by choice or who had yet to have children a way to feel included. Baby showers can focus too much on cutesy baby stuff, leaving some friends and family

members uncomfortable. What everyone can relate to—and, frankly, what women need more—is the chance to support someone they love through a significant life transition. Considering that the new baby will likely have the undivided attention of two parents, spotlighting the pregnant woman for a day seems appropriate.

If relatives insist on having a traditional baby shower, let them throw one in your honor and handle all the details. But if you want a cozy, intimate day with your closest friends and family members, consider asking one of them to throw you a mama shower or nesting party, particularly if you already have at least one child. I thought of my mama shower as an alternative to a “baby sprinkle” and asked specifically that guests not bring gifts. The gift, for me, was feeling my village lift our family up during this time.

There are only so many ways in which a mother can stretch herself, and when expecting another child, a nesting shower provides extra hands to accomplish the organization and preparation needed to welcome a new baby, Jokilehto notes. “While first-time mothers may have a lot of gifts to put away and rooms to prep and organize, second-time mothers may have a lot of culling, repurposing and making room for another baby to do,” she says. “Nesting showers offer support for the family as a whole, whether it’s baby number one, two or even three.”

Prepped and Ready

My mama shower was held right around my 38th week of pregnancy, and the timing felt perfect. This meant the freezer food would spend, well, less time in our freezer, so it would seem flavorful and fresh when we reheated it. Also, it matched my energy. Jokilehto says this is another reason why nesting parties are becoming more mainstream and preferred: They lean into the natural urge many expectant mothers feel in the third trimester. “By having a nesting party, the mama-to-be gets her house fully prepped and ready without feeling as if all the tasks fall on her,” she notes. “It’s an uplifting, celebratory way for her to prepare, clean and organize the home for the baby’s arrival.”

My second daughter was born 12 days after my mama shower, with all the affirmations from my friends taped to the wall for me to see and read. When we came home and started navigating our new normal as parents of two, we savored having shepherd’s pie and Italian meatball soup already prepared and ready for a quick dinner. And breakfast burritos come in extremely handy when, ahem, you’re a mom who often has one hand to use. (And when you’re wrangling a toddler as well as a baby, sometimes you don’t even have one!)

What I’ll remember and cherish most from my nesting party is looking around my living room, admiring the women who had helped me grow into motherhood, given me grace during the changes and been there to celebrate and honor my journey—the good, the hard, the bad, the beautiful and the messy. After all, motherhood is all those things and more, and not only am I lucky to have our village, but my daughters are too.★



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