Preparing for a new brother or sister.
There was a time before you were born when it was just mom and dad.

2 people.
We decided to have you.
You grew in your mommy’s tummy for 9 months.
After you were born we brought you home from the hospital.
And you grew and grew.
There is a baby brother / sister growing in mommy’s tummy now.

As your baby brother / sister grows, my stomach will grow bigger.
We are going to get the house ready for the new baby.
When the baby is ready to come out, daddy will take mommy to the hospital.

You will stay with ____________________
Really smart doctors and nurses will help deliver the baby.
We are going to bring your brother / sister home.
Babies cry a lot.

It can be loud.
And sleep a lot.

We need to be quiet.
And Eat a lot.

They are too young to feed themselves.
Sometimes they have a stinky diaper that needs to be changed.

Mommy and daddy need to stop what we are doing to take care of the baby.
Sometimes, you might need to wait, but mommy and daddy will still have plenty of time for you.

Please wait patiently.
Big brothers / sisters can be a big help.

You can hold the baby when he / she is little and play with the baby when he / she gets older.
You will have a new playmate forever.
And we will still do fun things like go to the zoo or bowling.

Always remember that we love you.
Tips to prepare a child with autism for new sibling.

**PREPARE**

- Use this picture story to start preparing your child for a successful transition.
  - During the time leading up to the new arrival, we recommend that you read the social picture story every day at the same time of day.
  - Customize the picture story by adding or eliminating elements. Make it relevant for your child. Put pictures in of yourself and your child.
    - We will send you a free Powerpoint version of this story upon request.
- If you have friends with young babies, introduce your child to them.
- Have a signal
  - If your child can communicate, have a verbal or a gesture signal that tells you that your son / daughter needs a break from his brother or sister.
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**PLAN**

- Make sure your child with autism gets the rest he or she needs even if you are not.
  - Tired children are more prone to meltdowns.
- Meltdowns happen so always be prepared
  - Keep something that will soothe your child near by, like a favorite toy or blanket.
  - Keep headphones close by if the baby starts crying loudly (if necessary).

**RELAX**

- Plan for the best and deal with any problems.
- If your child has a meltdown, don’t take it personally. Focus on your children and don’t worry about explaining the issue to other people.
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**BE METHODICAL**

- Babies are not always predictable, but try to get into a routine for both children.
  - This can be a stressful time for someone with autism because they do not know what to expect.
- Use picture schedules.
  - Pictures schedules outline the day visually for the child with autism.
  - Here is a link to some tools to make picture schedules.
- Use First...then picture boards or apps that show the child with autism the sequence of events.
  - First you color (while baby is eating)…then we play legos® together.
  - Here is a link to First...Then templates.