

# Fourth Trimester Podcast

## Episode 79: Preparing For Your Second Baby

**Sarah Trott:** [00:00:05] My name is Sarah Trott. I'm a new mama to a baby girl and this podcast is all about postpartum care for the few months following birth, the time period also known as the Fourth Trimester. My postpartum doula, Esther Gallagher, is my co-host. She's a mother, grandmother, perinatal educator, birth and postpartum care provider. I've benefited hugely from her support. All parents can benefit from the wisdom and support that a postpartum Doula provides. Fourth trimester care is about the practical, emotional and social support parents and baby require, and importantly, helps set the tone for the lifelong journey of parenting.

When I first became pregnant, I had never heard of postpartum Doulas, let alone knew what they did. So much of the training and preparation that expecting parents do is focused on the birth and newborn care. Once a baby is born, often the first interaction parents have with medical or child professionals, other than the first pediatrician visits, is the six-week checkup with the OB/GYN. *What about caring for mama and family between the birth and the six week doctor visit? What are the strategies for taking care of the partner and the rest of the family while looking after your newborn?*

Our podcasts contain expert interviews with specialists from many fields to cover topics including postpartum doula practices, prenatal care, prenatal and postnatal yoga, parenting, breastfeeding, physical recovery from birth, nutrition, newborn care, midwifery, negotiating family visitation, and many more.

First-hand experience is shared through lots of stories from both new and seasoned parents. Hear what other parents are asking and what they have done in their own lives.

We reference other podcasts, internet resources and real-life experts who can help you on your own parenting journey. Visit us at <http://fourthtrimesterpodcast.com>

**Sarah Trott:** [00:00:40] Hi, this is Sarah Trott on the Fourth Trimester podcast and I'm here with Esther Gallagher and we're talking about a really great topic today, which is the second child transition. It's very close to home for me because it's exactly what I'm going through at the moment, I'm happy to say. How are you doing, Esther?

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:01:00] I'm just great. It's lovely to be here with you again, Sarah, and your gorgeous bump and getting ready for our next adventure together. And I've been thinking about this topic a lot because you're in this transition and because I'm often in it with second time clients. So it's one that's near and dear to my heart. I, of course, have two children. So I also went through this myself.

And I want to start by saying that I think it's a surprise to people often that during a pregnancy with a second child, they find themselves worrying. Concerned perhaps is a better word, but also maybe a little sad about their relationship with their first child. And they're not sure. They're kind of confused. Can you speak to some of the thoughts you've had about welcoming this new baby, but thinking about your other daughter and really you have an older daughter as well. And that so that's another thing in the mix.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:02:10] It's true. I've been aware of feeling like things are going to change. Of course they are. Of course they're going to be different. It's one of those things where I think most of the time I feel like everything's going to be the same and it's all going to be different. I have that feeling like I've done this before so I know what's going to happen. I've been through this, right? I already know there are things I'm doing differently. I'm reading fewer books, I'm buying fewer items. I have stuff. I know what stuff I like, what stuff was useless and I have opinions. So all of that's great.

I feel like a more confident parent this time, and I'm experienced relative to the first time, which is great, and I'm also very aware of how close my relationship is with my first. And this is a topic that came up with some other people we've talked to on the show too, like going into their second, second time around, you know, some of that closeness that's there just isn't physically possible. I don't have the time.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:03:05] Basically, you don't have the body space. Yeah, right. Like you literally don't pick up a big kid anymore the way you used to and you don't snuggle in bed the way you used to and hope to get any sleep. Yeah.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:03:19] Our episode with Jeni Diaz, who founded the app Parenthood. She shared a story on the show about how she would snuggle in bed with her daughter and she had routines with her daughter along the lines of walking her to preschool every day. And those are things that just changed suddenly. And she I think she was saying she hadn't anticipated those changes. Yeah.

And as a result, it was harder to cope with at the time. And instead of co-sleeping as a family, her husband and her daughter ended up going to another room. And so she missed them. And, you know, there's a lot there's a lot to be said for routine. Kids love it. Parents love it. And so having changed routines is something I'm pretty aware of. And I think that the routine changes and the changes in closeness are closely intertwined. And I've been lucky enough to be aware of some of the stuff early before. So I'm trying to prepare as much as possible beforehand, but there's no fully prepared State that's ever going to be possible.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:04:19] Well, and it is the nature of being an animal is that we're in a state of constant development. You know, what's appropriate for your daughter right now won't be in four weeks, perhaps. Like I mean, that's not a predictive date so much as just throwing one out, but she's going to be ready for the next thing. You have a young adolescent in the house as well.

She's going to be really ready for new and different things, you know, on to the next thing. So you and your partner are evolving alongside these people who are growing and developing in spurts all the time. We talked a lot about newborn growth spurts in previous programs, but those don't stop, you know, and it's not just the school year happens and then there's summer vacation and then the school year happens. That is not a developmental timeline.

It tries to mesh up with one, but it's kind of a gross exaggeration of a developmental timeline. Kids are going to be doing what they're doing or need to do along their own personal lines. And this is one of those places where, as I've talked about many times before, we're going to run into somewhat of a conflict of needs. Right, like. Pregnancy. You just can't do necessarily everything that your older child might be up for. Then you give birth, right? The whole labor and birth process may or may not be one that you want your child or children to be part of and witness.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:06:00] I certainly have no prescription for that. I think do it if you want them there, they can be there. But whoever's in labor isn't going to have the bandwidth to address someone else's needs. If they're able to do that, they're probably not in labor or not in a labor that's going to allow for them to actually release the baby. You can't do both at once.

You know, you really need to fully focus on bringing that next kid in and then your post partum right, you have very special needs and they are not different than what you had before. You need the same run out room to sleep in. The baby sleeps and even the baby eats and get your hygiene needs met and rinse and repeat. And that's 24 seven. Right? Meanwhile, alongside you, there's someone else in a totally different cycle of her day or his day or their day. Right.

And so you're right, we can't fully prepare for that. I think one thing that often happens in families where there's two adult parents is that the birthing person or the feeding person, let's call them that, is fully consumed with the new baby. But the other parent is fully consumed with caring for the older child or children because they're the safe person for those children when everything else is a little chaotic. So if you have an anticipated both parents needs for eating with the baby, seeing, eating, sleeping when the baby is sleeping, you know, being cared for.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:07:47] You pretty quickly have two parents who aren't getting their needs met because the partner isn't available to do those nighttime things that are so helpful. And the other thing that happens is and you alluded to this, you miss them because they're just not with you in this with this new baby thing. And there's another

kind of sadness that's often unanticipated. It might be perfectly pragmatic, right, to be with you, with a baby and then with the other kids. But it's sad. It's a little sad. And so, I mean, of course, this is why we invented grandparents.

For those who are lucky enough to have able bodied nearby grandparents, that's handy, especially if those able bodied grandparents are really, really have developed a relationship that's going to feel really safe to the older children, right? Yeah. But maybe, you know, second and early third trimester are a good time if you have the run out room to explore who are the other people, right. Who can take up some of the slack with older children during the day and how will that work and what are those discussions to be having?

Because I will say that I think it's nice when at least for part of this whole early healing and recovery period, people can kind of come in close without being terribly disruptive, just like always, you know, you want you want your peeps around you, but you want them to know how they can be supportive and not disruptive.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:09:27] What's the example of that?

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:09:28] The person who may be willing to do that play date with your child is somebody who really can come to the door quietly, receive your child without having you have to wake up or wait for them to get there, be willing to take them off on their journey and their adventure, bring them home at the appropriate time, not have to communicate a ton about every detail while they're gone, right, so that you don't feel obligated to leave your phone on while you're trying to sleep and breastfeed. And I know these things sound like, well, why wouldn't I leave my phone on? Well, you know, because you need that sleep.

So really, really asking yourself, am I fully my fully invested in this person? Do I fully trust them to do this thing with my with my other precious cargo? Right. That will be wonderful and not disruptive. You know, just like we said with the first, like, can they bring the delicious, nutritious meal and not ring the doorbell and not have to talk to you and not. That's the person you want to show up in just that way, being really protective

of you and your need to heal and recover. You don't get to do it two weeks later. You're doing it right now, right? So buffering that and really making sure that the people you choose really can do this with savoir faire. That's an example.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:11:04] I mean, the big takeaway is really how do we incorporate help into our lives in the way that we need it? That is truly help.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:11:14] I thought of another example, actually, and that is what about cultivating a relationship with somebody who's willing to be on call for your older child? And of course, depending on how old that child is, they could call them up and say, You know what? Everyone's sleeping around here. I need somebody to be with. Can I come over?

But the equivalent for somebody for a child who's not old enough to do that for themselves, that you can say, okay, this this is a day when this person needs to be out and about. We don't have the bandwidth. Who's our person who's fully available over the next three weeks or so, six weeks that we can call at a moment's notice and just say, Hey, you're really great. If you could show up within the hour, take this person on an adventure, they're going stir crazy. We can't help them.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:12:08] Yeah. And there's practical considerations to to prepare around that. So something like having a lightweight but very good, highly rated safe car seat that can go with the older one because a lot of the older ones are toddlers. Right. So your friends, if they are going to pick up and take someone to a playground for a couple of hours, they're going to need to have that set up and be willing to do that for you. Thinking through some of the practicalities beforehand could be really useful.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:12:36] If they're public transportation people, then there's already a clipper card or the equivalent like those sorts of things. Maybe, maybe you construct a go bag for your little one that has the stuff they need in it, you know, easily replaced. And you don't have to think about that too much.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:12:56] Yeah, the lunch, the activity bag kind of stuff.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:13:00] Sunscreen, whatever. Yeah, yeah. Lots of, like, non-perishable snacks in there.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:13:06] Water bottle. And I want to come back to this idea of routine for a second, because families do get into good rhythms with their little toddlers and little kids. And some of the routines to think through might be bedtime routine. Who is going to put the older one to bed? What does that look like? Or in the morning? Do you have something you always do in the morning? Is there always someone who makes breakfast or someone who makes the lunches or someone who does X, Y and Z and actually sketch that out? Talk with your partner or whoever it is that you live with about who's older kids or whomever it may be about how things will be different.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:13:40] Sara I love that you just said sketch it out because I found the delightful little sketch in the bathroom that your daughter gets to review. It's adorable. And it's the how the nighttime routine will be going to stay the same, even though daddy's going to be more of the person who's facilitating those same rituals or routines. It's brilliant. Yeah. And that the two of you have been thoughtful enough in advance on behalf of your daughters to say, okay, we're going to start doing this now. So it doesn't just kind of avalanche when the baby comes, you know, I think that's so thoughtful and great. Yeah.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:14:30] Well, I have to give Daniel Tiger credit for some of that idea that confess.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:14:35] Oh, yeah, that's fantastic.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:14:38] Drawing pictures and telling stories and then repeating the story over and over has been very useful for us as a tool.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:14:46] Yeah. Isn't that great?

**Sarah Trott:** [00:14:47] Yeah.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:14:48] Good old Mister.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:14:49] Rogers.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:14:51] Rest in peace. Thank goodness we have the legacy of everything he did. Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. And you know, these what we're talking about, albeit in quite practical terms, are things that are meant to address the social emotional being of everyone in the family. You know, your family style might be more take it as it comes or even more regimented.

You know, everybody's on a continuum. Every person is and every family is and every community is. But I think understanding that that's so that change is a wonderful, challenging opportunity is great. And I think it's important to. Address these things because it's helpful in smoothing this social emotional transition. I think so often this grieving we spoke of very early on, that it happens during the pregnancy can be experienced as just a real break in relationship once the baby arrives. Right. And that's not what we're aiming for, of course.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:16:04] And you're referring to the grieving of the change in relationship with other children.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:16:08] Yes, exactly. And suddenly the baby's there and often parents will report, wow, it's all about the baby. Now, I feel like I don't even talk with my other kids, don't even see them. They're off and doing their lives. And and in some families, that would be perfectly great. Nobody's heartbroken. It's all fine. You know, they check in when they need to. Everything's covered. And in other families, it's really experienced as kind of a desperate situation. So I think it's important to acknowledge these changes and find loving ways to address them. You know, it's great if they're also very practical ways, but it's certainly the kind of thing that we can all be talking about.

So, so often the way we address little children and ourselves kind of reflexively is it's all about this new baby. And what a great thing that we're going to have this other person



in the household. And yeah, we all want to celebrate all of those things. Fair enough. And that's a great, great thing to do. But I think being in denial of the other kinds of feelings we might be experiencing around it isn't quite fair either. There are going to be moments when people resent each other. Little babies get resentment cast on them for just being born, right?

So being able to talk about, well, what's going on that we're not liking the baby today, you know, baby's just being a baby. What might be getting missed that needs some support, some nourishment so that it doesn't feel like a big gaping hole now the baby arrived.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:17:53] It's another way of saying that maybe when people are feeling stressed or their needs are being met, that's going to come through as negativity in some way, shape or form. And it could be directed at anybody or it could be directed inward.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:18:07] Right.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:18:07] But paying attention to those signals of negativity are important because it's a flag that someone needs something.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:18:15] Yeah. And you know, as I've said before, we can start with basic human needs. Everybody getting fed when they need to be fed and getting fed nourishing food that they need. Is everyone getting enough sleep when they need sleep? Is everyone getting seen, witnessed and validated in what they're experiencing? And I have to necessarily do anything huge different. Right. We may have to remember to do the basic human needs. Right. With babies that really can so quickly fly right out the window. So really in a little bit, you know, make it about doing less, but making the less that you're doing free up time to meet those basic needs.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:18:59] You know? Yeah. Simplify exactly one thing I've researched that sounds like a fantastic idea. I'm going to try with the older sibling is to make sure that I'm dedicating a certain period of time most days if I can. That's my goal, to just spend

one on one time with her, not a ton of time, even if it's just 15 minutes. Yeah, it's. Daddy can hold the baby. This is our time. It's our special time. We can read a book, we can talk. You can show me things. Let's talk about your day.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:19:26] Dega. 15 minutes worth it. How'd your day go?

**Sarah Trott:** [00:19:29] Right? Yeah. Having a conversation. Sing a song and make sure that that connectedness is maintained.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:19:36] Absolutely. I think that's really.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:19:38] Important to me and to her.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:19:41] Absolutely.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:19:42] And I want to tell her that. I want to I want her to expect that as well and know that and have lots of conversations beforehand about what it means when there's someone else. And I know you can kind of Google and find lots and lots of lists online of practical things to do, like the baby gives a present to the siblings, you know, that kind of stuff, which, you know, this is all great ideas.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:20:03] Yeah, but I find that one confusing. But if it works, it works. Like I'm not going to question it so much as like I'm actually asking myself if I were three, would I wonder how the heck a baby went to the store and got a biscuit? That's how my mind goes.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:20:22] Who knows? Yeah. And there are all these practical things, which I think if it doesn't hurt, why not? Oh, sure. And I think as I focus, what I'm thinking a lot about are more of the emotional preparedness pieces of having the conversations, thinking about how things will change. Preparing for routines, being different, and really emphasizing that maintaining of connectedness, even if it's different, you can still stay connected. That is part of the need. That is part of the need.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:20:51] It is it is a basic human need. We have to have connectedness if we're going to grow to right. I mean, it's one of the basic human needs, right, is connection. And I think when you said if it doesn't hurt, why not? And I agree with that. I also think another way to think about it is in terms of say, yes, as much as you can. Right? Like if you've if you've constructed a life where you're saying no all the time, it might be time for a reboot, a real analysis of why life looks like that and how it could look different because our our children need to be able to say yes to their lives as much as possible.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:21:34] It's common advice for working with little babies, right? You need to have them give them a space where there's a part of the house where everything is. Yes. Yes, they can touch that. Yes, they can play with that. Yes, they can explore over there, like have a safe space where it isn't. No, no, no. All the time.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:21:49] Exactly. I do baby proofing sessions with clients all the time and just talk about like this the principle. And now let's look at what we've got. Can we say yes to this? If we can't, how do we change it so that we can?

**Sarah Trott:** [00:22:06] Well, this has been a really great conversation.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:22:09] Thank you. Thanks for taking the time, Sarah. Hey, I'm in this any minute now. Situation you're in here.

**Sarah Trott:** [00:22:15] I am at 39 weeks thinking about all of these things. Yeah, I know. Some of you out there listeners are thinking about the same things as well, so we hope it's been a useful conversation for you. You're always welcome to reach out to me and Esther. Our contact information is on our website, which <https://fourthtrimesterpodcast.com/>. You can find us on Facebook. You can find us on Instagram. Please find us like us. Follow us. Talk to us. We'd love to hear from you. Thank you so much.

**Esther Gallagher:** [00:22:43] Much. Thank you, everybody. See you next time.

**Sarah Trott:** You can find out more about Esther Gallagher on <http://www.esthergallagher.com/>. You can also subscribe to this podcast in order to hear more from us. [Click here for iTunes](#) and [click here for Google Podcasts](#). Thank you for listening everyone and I hope you'll join us next time on the Fourth Trimester. The theme music on this podcast was created by Sean Trott. Hear more at <https://soundcloud.com/seantrott>. Special thanks to my true loves: my husband Ben, daughter Penelope, and baby girl Evelyn. Don't forget to share the Fourth Trimester Podcast with any new and expecting parents. I'm Sarah Trott. Goodbye for now.