

Dallas child

THE MAGAZINE PARENTS LIVE BY IN DALLAS COUNTY
february 2016

meet mom next door
OWLEGORIES'
JULIE BOTO

DATE NIGHT

why you should
court your spouse,
plus 12 fun ideas

**ROAD
TRIPPING:**
family fun
in austin



**IS PRENATAL
GENETIC
TESTING
RIGHT FOR
YOU?**

BEST
FOR
MOMS
AND
BABIES
WINNERS!

81

REASONS TO LOVE
february

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR:
**2016
CAMP FAIR**
FEB. 27TH



BEST FOR FAMILIES:

Moms & Babies 2016

WORDS JULIA BUNCH + ALEX MITCHELL

Whether you're pregnant with your first or adding to a growing brood, finding the perfect resources for you and your little one — from baby sitters to birthing centers — can be overwhelming. So we took the motherlode of work and research off your plate. We polled Dallas County moms to compile a comprehensive list of favorite classes, shops, services and birthing teams for you, then did some digging to find out what makes these the top picks among local moms. Consider it a labor of love for you, our readers.

BEST HOSPITAL TO HAVE A BABY

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER AT DALLAS

While every birth comes with a level of uncertainty, you and your little one are in good hands at Baylor, which assures unmatched care for high-risk pregnancies and a level III neonatal intensive care unit — the highest level of care available. Each of the 18 labor and delivery suites has a bathtub, an iPod docking station and access to birthing balls and other relaxation tools to make laboring moms more comfortable. After delivery, you and your new bundle stay in a private room in the New Family Center, which has a daybed for Dad, a flat-screen TV and wireless Internet (so you can announce your arrival to all your Facebook friends). Grab breast-feeding supplies and free tips and advice at the on-site boutique, which is staffed by lactation consultants.

Dallas, 800/422-9567; baylorhealth.com

BEST BIRTHING CENTER **BIRTH AND WOMEN'S CENTER**

The Birth and Women's Center, located in a 100-year-old home just three blocks from Baylor University Medical Center, offers moms-to-be prenatal care, delivery support and postpartum care from a nurturing staff that includes certified nurse-midwives and birth and postpartum assistants. The center supports natural deliveries, water births and the ability to design your own birth plan, and boasts low numbers of mothers requiring transfer to the hospital or C-sections. After delivery, plan to attend one of the MaternaTea events (held every six to eight weeks), where new moms share birth stories, introduce their new additions and connect over shared experiences.

Dallas, 214/821-8190; birthcenter.net

BEST DOULA **NORTH DALLAS DOULA ASSOCIATES**

Melissa Espey-Mueller, the founder of North Dallas Doula Associates (NDDA), has topped this category individually twice before, but this year the honors go to Espey-Mueller's entire practice, serving Dallas moms since 1999. Fourteen doulas make up NDDA to provide an unparalleled range of pregnancy, labor and postpartum services, including loss and infertility support, lactation consulting and mom-to-mom lunch events. NDDA works with all birth plans and birthing teams, whether you will receive an epidural in the hospital or deliver naturally at home.

Dallas, 469/360-3810; northdallasdoulas.com

BEST MIDWIFE

KRISTINE TAWATER, DALLAS BIRTH CENTER

Previously the owner of MotherMe Midwifery, Kristine Tawater, who has been a midwife for five years, recently opened Dallas Birth Center and is known as the pick of the midwife litter. What separates Tawater from the rest? She doesn't fill her calendar with clients. She takes on fewer mamas-to-be so she can give each the attention and care needed throughout pregnancy, delivery and the fourth trimester. Plus, she still travels throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area for home births. And Tawater's new birth center offers expectant moms chiropractic, massage and lactation consulting services too.

Dallas-Fort Worth Area,
469/399-64290;
dallasbirthcenter.com



BEST CHILDBIRTH CLASSES **DALLAS ASSOCIATION FOR PARENT EDUCATION**

Dallas County mamas love the private, four-part childbirth class at Dallas Association for Parent Education (DAPE), where parents-to-be spend as much or as little time as they want covering the need-to-knows of labor and birth and what to expect in the hospital and after baby arrives. DAPE also offers a Baby Care Basics class to help newbie parents learn newborn essentials such as bathing and diapering. Sign up for one or both classes online, but we recommend calling beforehand to speak with the instructor about what you want your private classes to include.

Mesquite, 972/699-0492;
dallasparents.org

BEST PRENATAL WORKOUT **OH BABY! FITNESS**

Pregnancy exercise comes with limitations. The instructors at Oh Baby! Fitness help keep expectant moms fit with water aerobics, yoga and toning classes designed to reduce swelling, soothe the sore muscles and make you sweat — safely. There's also a pushing workshop to prepare moms for delivery. Register online for classes at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas, Texas Health Finley Ewing Cardiovascular & Fitness Center Dallas and Farmers Branch Aquatic Center.

Dallas area, 972/251-0888;
ohbabyfitness.com



BEST PRENATAL MASSAGE

LA BELLA BELLY PREGNANCY SPA

If anyone deserves a good massage, it's the mother-to-be. While traditional massage parlors only offer massages after the start of the second trimester, the massage therapists at La Bella Belly undergo intensive prenatal training that allows them to massage safely throughout pregnancy (even those first few months). A special side-lying support system provides complete safety and comfort, while special techniques are used to target leg cramps, sciatic nerve pain and headaches and alleviate other common pregnancy woes.

Rockwall, 972/772-7212;
labellabellyspa.com

BEST MATERNITY STORE

◀ **A PEA IN THE POD**

The days of frumpy and shapeless maternity clothes are long behind us thanks to designers like celebrity stylist Rachel Zoe and actress Jaime King, both of whom created fashion lines for A Pea in the Pod last year. Find flowing maxi dresses, structured moto jackets, tailored pants, chic tops and luxe denim that you'll want to wear long after the baby weight has been shed.

Dallas, 214/346-9140;
apeainthepod.com



BEST BABY FURNITURE STORE

BUY BUY BABY

If you haven't settled on your nursery design and want to peruse a variety of furniture styles, head to Buy Buy Baby. Find cribs that run the gamut from modern Scandinavian looks to traditional versions with arched lines, changing tables that have loads of storage and dressers and armoires that can grow with your kids — all at prices to fit a range of budgets (plus an online registry makes it easy for out-of-town family).

Dallas, 972/386-6809; buybuybaby.com

BEST BABY CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

▼ **A TINY HINEY BABY BOUTIQUE**

Tucked into the Preston Forest Village, A Tiny Hiney is an upscale shop stocked with trendy apparel and gifts for babies and toddlers.

The boutique offers printed footed jammies, smocked dresses, reversible rompers and

graphic tees, but they also have lots of options for whimsical gifts, like a pint-sized, feathery, bedazzled birthday hat or a soft tummy-time rug in the shape of a colorful animal. Better yet, get the new mom a BabyBriefcase, a plastic case with folders for memorabilia and important papers such as birth certificates and immunization records. See lots that you want — or need? Register in store or create a wish list online.

Dallas, 972/818-2000; atinyhiney.com

BEST RESALE SHOP

ONCE UPON A CHILD

If there's no older sibling to rely on for hand-me-downs, head to Once Upon a Child, a multiple-time winner that sets the standard for what a kid's resale shop should be: There's a large selection of toys, baby gear and furniture that meet both mandatory and voluntary safety standards; you can find an array of products from clothing (sizes preemie and up) to swings and strollers, all in good condition and with no visible damage or missing parts; plus, you can either sell or trade in gently used items. Call ahead to see what items are most wanted at the time.

Multiple locations; onceuponachild.com

BEST MOMMY & BABY WORKOUT

◀ **BABY BOOT CAMP**

Losing baby weight is hard enough, nevermind finding the time to actually exercise and figure out the child care thing.

Baby Boot Camp makes working out simple with outdoor exercise that incorporates your new addition in his or her stroller. Each franchise owner structures schedules differently, making it easy to find nearby classes that work for you — and junior's schedule. Try the yoga-inspired STROLLGA, full-body STROLLFIT or a 5K training program. Plus, the StrollerFriends moms group serves as an informal playgroup for you and your kiddos.

Multiple locations; babybootcamp.com

BEST MOMMY & BABY CLASS **THE LITTLE GYM**

Winning for the third consecutive year, The Little Gym is the place to go for fun parent-infant classes, according to our readers. Classes are divided into three sections starting as young as 4 months: Bugs (4–10 months), Birds (10–19 months) and Beasts (19 months–3 years). The Little Gym works to boost baby's motor skills and spatial and perceptual awareness at each developmental stage. Additionally, classes help little ones develop a sense of independence and

foster social interactions — not just for babies but for new moms hoping to make friends too.

Dallas, Mockingbird Lane, 214/515-0800;
Dallas, Preston Road, 972/644-7333;
thelittlegym.com

BEST INFANT SWIM SCHOOL **EMLER SWIM SCHOOL**

Get babies comfortable with the water early at Emler, a swim school mainstay for more than 40 years. Enroll babies between 2 and 6 months in free Bathtime Babies lessons, where singing songs, playing games and splashing in the water with you make the pool a fun, safe place. Then sign up for the Waterbabies class for kids 6 months to 35 months (you get in the water at this level too) for more songs and activities, including going under water, that help kids build confidence in the pool.

Dallas, 972/851-7946;
emlerswimschool.com



BEST BABY- SITTING SOURCE

▶ **MOM'S BEST FRIEND**

Whether you're in dire need of a date night or looking to hire a full-time nanny, this baby-sitting service might literally become your new best friend. Mom's Best Friend is a membership-only resource, so in addition to the cost of the sitter, you'll pay an annual fee. In return you get access to caregivers who are up-to-date on first aid and CPR certifications and have passed a 10-step screening process (including five different background checks and numerous reference checks). In a pinch with a day care closure or a sick kid? Mom's Best Friend offers holiday and sick care too.

Multiple locations, 972/446-0500;
momsbestfriend.com

BEST CHILD CARE CENTER FOR BABIES

PRIMROSE SCHOOLS

While it may be hard to leave your baby with someone else, you'll have peace of mind entrusting your kids to the care of five-time winner Primrose Schools, which takes babes as young as 6 weeks. Infant-to-teacher ratios are kept small (about one teacher per four babies) and toys are developmentally appropriate. Plus, teachers read to the babies, create art with them and spend time outdoors with them in an infant-specific yard. Need additional reassurance? The open-door policy means you can swing by on your lunch hour to play with or nurse your little one. ☺

Multiple locations; primroseschools.com