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'Smart' products can make life with baby more manageable

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It doesn't take long for a newborn's parents to become a little harried.

Suddenly, they've got so little time for their chores. Their sleep is often interrupted by the feeding schedule. And who wouldn't worry that a child's breathing might become irregular during the night?

As a result, technology has become the live-in help for many caregivers as they look for ways to ease their anxieties and make the most of their time. Baby products with "smart" features that address safety, security, comfort and parental convenience have a position of trust in many homes, especially at the most bewitching hours.

Here are several items that have caught our attention:

Engage and entertain

A plush teddy bear that brings music and stories into the nursery is what you get with **Cuddletunes MP3 Teddy Bear with Cloud Recorder**. Use it to create a personalized bedtime soundtrack for your little one. Lullabies are sung with the child's name in the songs and with familiar voices (yours). The bear has a 1 gigabyte MP3 player inside. Speaker and controls are embroidered into the feet. A built-in USB port lets you change the soundtrack. Cuddletunes stores individual tracks in a cloud server, and authorized adults can access the tunes anytime. The suggested retail price is \$59.95 for the bear, personalized lullabies and unlimited use of the cloud recorder. Available at Amazon and www.cuddletunes.com.

- Technology in the nursery
- Infants should not be left unattended. Monitoring devices are not meant to be substitutes for trusted adults being present in the home.
- Be certain that electrical cords are kept out of your child's reach.
- Products that come in contact with infants should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

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The **Magic Stargaze Playmat** activity gym from **mamas&pappas** gives your baby a mental and physical workout at home. Sound, light and touch are used to encourage sensory development. Built-in touch pads, pull toys and moveable soft components keep your baby moving and entertained with soft bursts of light and fun sounds. Time spent on the “tummy-time” cushion encourages infants to raise their heads to promote neck strength. Multiple “magic” cards give you variation in programming, making each experience different. A storage pocket for an MP3 player means you can listen to your favorite music and stories. The gym has 15 features, including an interactive and light-up kick pad and teething toys. Operates on 3 AAA batteries. \$159.99 at <http://us.mamasandpapas.com>.

Comfort and calm

If your little one has trouble falling asleep, Munchkin’s **Lulla-Vibe** vibrating mattress pad may be worth a try. Winner of the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association innovation award, the Lulla-Vibe slips easily under the crib mattress. It creates gentle vibrations at two speeds. The vibrating unit is cordless and battery operated. The 30-minute timer has a feature for gradual shut off. \$31.99 at www.munchkin.com. Also at Amazon, BabiesRUs and Walmart.

The **Infant Tub** by 4 Moms gives you a simple solution for occasions when tub water gets dirty before baby is clean. You can drain this tub from several plugs as clean water flows in. A color-coded temperature gauge makes it easy to draw a bath at a safe temperature. \$49.99 at shop4moms.com, BuyBuyBaby.com and BabiesRUs.

Duux brings its compact room **Air Purifier** to market this month. The 1.5-pound orb is equipped with a nightlight, HEPA filter and ionizer. It removes most allergens and pollutants, which can be harmful to a child’s immature immune system. Designed to work in rooms up to 400 square feet, the air purifier operates silently and also has a reservoir for aroma therapy fragrance. \$75 at www.svan.com.

Safe and sound

The **Peek Plus** Internet baby monitor system lets you keep watch over your little one from another room – or anywhere else if you’ve got Internet access from a smartphone, tablet or computer. The infrared LED



system lets you watch even in the dark. Use the free iPhone, Android or Blackberry app that comes with the product to assign passwords to family members and friends. So the grandparents also can peek into the nursery when you're away and the sitter is in charge. The system's microphone filters out background noise so you can hear your baby's sounds. Easy plug-and-play setup. \$299.99 at BabiesRUs.

www.summerinfant.com.

The **Sleep & Breathing Monitor** sends alerts if a child's breathing becomes irregular or if the baby stops breathing. Fiber optic technology senses baby's breathing rate and relays the data to a smartphone or tablet or to the monitor provided. Reports generated by the system's app (bundled with the product) provide insight into the quality of sleep the baby experiences, including actual sleep time. \$329 at

www.safetosleep.com. Also available from Target.com and BabiesRUs.com.



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