

# Careers and kids

Society has moved on from the days when a couple married after a sensible courtship, saved diligently, bought a home and then had children.

Today's young couple is probably more focused on developing both careers, enjoying nice restaurants, travelling overseas together and possibly taking on a mortgage. Not everyone wants a permanent relationship, children and suburbia, but if they do, they're tending to leave it until their late 20s and into their 30s.

Ideally, wanting to have children is a sign of a deeper level of commitment between two people who care deeply for each other and want to have a long-term future that includes family.

However, watch for the red light of danger if one partner is ready for this commitment and the other is not. Even if the reluctant partner agrees to have children, the road ahead can be difficult.

When a couple feels they are ready to have a family, there are still issues to be addressed. Women today have the opportunity to study and develop interesting and high-flying careers. Having a child can compromise that career.

Even if she is able to return to her job once the baby is older, a woman may worry she will not be able to return to the same rung on the career ladder. If she feels resentful about that, it will affect her parenting, the couple's relationship – or both.

She must accept that if her priority is a baby, her career may go backwards for a while. And her partner needs to realise that for a time, he will be stepping into a more traditional role as provider while she is a full-time parent or working only part-time.

Both partners need to realise they will have to give up some of the freedoms and luxuries of their couple lifestyle to meet the demands of the baby.

But there must also be some negotiation to achieve individual time and couple time once the baby arrives – and that may require something like the skills of a UN negotiator.

It can be done, as long as both partners are realistic. Take time to decide what you both want, but don't leave discussions about having children so late that you run out of options because the biological clock has ticked on for too long.

## Survival tips

- **Make sure both of you, not just one of you, want to have children**
- **Remember that even after the baby arrives, you still need couple time and individual time**
- **Realise you will need to renegotiate your roles to cope with the changes a baby brings to your daily lives.**