DECLARATION OF HOLLIE SCHULTZ

I, Hollie Schulz, state as follows:

1. I am the co-creator and publisher of The Baby Gizmo website and blog has been active at BabyGizmo.com since 2006.

2. As a middle class, middle American mother, I did a lot of baby product shopping and was incredibly choosy about the purchases I made for my children.

3. Over many years, my product research skills expanded to include calls directly with manufacturers, trips to industry trade shows, and the creation of The Baby Gizmo Company.

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15. I received the Uppa Baby Vista stroller before filming the video, on or before June 12, 2007.

16. As seen in that video, the Uppa Baby Vista stroller is a luxury stroller system that came with the frame, a toddler seat, and bassinet, as seen below:



17. In that review, I demonstrated how the Uppa Baby Vista stroller seat was removable and reversible to either face the parent or face out, as seen in the screenshots below. (Exhibit 2, 1:15-1:22.)



18. I also demonstrated the foldability of the Baby Planet Unity Sport Double stroller for parents without the toddler seat or bassinet attached (Exhibit 2, 2:00-2:05) and with the toddler seat attached (Exhibit 2, 2:05-2:22.)

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23. I also demonstrated the foldability of the Joovy Caboose stroller for parents. (Exhibit 3, 1:45-2:01.)

24. On July 10, 2007, I posted the video titled “Baby Gizmo Mutsy 4Rider” on the Baby Gizmo YouTube channel, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuKXuVwCk0s and attached as Exhibit 4.

25. I recieved the Mutsy 4Rider stroller before filming the video, on or before July 10, 2007.

26. Musty, as discussed in the video, is a well-known stroller manufacturer in the Netherlands and had just made its debut in the United States.

27. The Mutsy 4Rider is a luxury stroller system that was sold with the frame, stroller seat, and bassinet, as seen below:



28. With stroller systems such as the Mutsy 4Rider, the stroller seat/bassinet clip onto the stroller frame. I demonstrated the removal and reversibility of the seat, seen below. (Exhibit 4, 1:24-1:45)





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32. The Valco Baby TriMode stroller was sold as a single stroller having three wheels: one in the front, and two in the back.



33. In my review, I discuss how with the addition of Valco's optional toddler seat that attaches, the Valco Baby TriMode stroller can turn into a double stroller. (Exhibit 5, 0:36-0:40.)

34. I explain how the toddler seat sits on the front, almost like a shopping cart, to sit up front while the second child sits reclined in the seat. (Exhibit 5, 3:02-3:14.)

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52. As seen in that video, the Peg Perego Skate Stroller had a reversible seat in which the child could face the parent, or away from the parent (Exhibit 9, 2:21-2:38) and I demonstrated its foldability (Exhibit 9, 6:22-7:17.)



53. After years of the Baby Gizmo Company blogs, reviews, and videos, I decided to write a stand-alone book that explained the ins and outs of baby products to new and old parents alike.

54. I intended the book to not be a review of individual products, as it would quickly become outdated as new products launched, but rather as an overall guide for new parents with factors and features to consider when purchasing baby gear. The book was a "how" to buy rather than telling parents "what" to buy.

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56. The Baby Gizmo Buying Guide was intended to help new and experienced parents alike select the right products for their unique needs and lifestyle, and provide an overview of various types of products available in each major baby product market.

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58. The Baby Gizmo Buying Guide was available for anyone who wanted to buy a copy at least as early as March 2008 through Amazon and at Barnes and Noble.

59. Chapter 25 of the Baby Gizmo Buying Guide is dedicated to exclusively to strollers.

60. Chapter 25 begins with a short discussion about designer stroller company Bugaboo. When Bugaboo introduced its stroller to the market and it hit the American mainstream after being featured on the television show *Sex in the City*, it caused a Bugaboo trickle-down design effect that has hit almost every major stroller manufacturer.

61. Folding strollers were prevalent in the stroller industry at the time of publication.

62. A few pages in chapter 25 are dedicated to discuss all the different terminology the stroller industry uses for the way a stroller folds, such as a flat fold, umbrella fold/three-dimensional fold, two-piece fold, compact tri-fold, one-hand fold, one-touch fold, one-step fold, five-second fold, quick fold system, and standing fold.

63. Chapter 25 continues with discussions about carriages, single standard strollers, travel systems, lightweight-plus strollers, lightweight/umbrella strollers, luxury stroller systems, all-terrain strollers, jogging strollers, double standard strollers, double lightweight/umbrella strollers, double all-terrain strollers, double jogging strollers, strollers-and-a-half, and multiples strollers.

64. These separate types of strollers generally aligned with how the Baby Gizmo website was organized.

65. Within the travel systems section of chapter 25, a “travel system” is described as a single standard stroller packaged with a complimentary infant car seat carrier designed to be clipped into said stroller.

66. Luxury stroller systems like the Bugaboo were three-strollers in one: a carriage, a toddler stroller, and an all-terrain stroller.

67. Luxury stroller systems typically came with detachable carry-cots that could be easily carried into a house and used as a Moses basket. Now, many come with infant car seat carriers.

68. Most luxury stroller systems required you clip the stroller seat onto the frame, so I cautioned readers to consider these features when buying a luxury stroller system.

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72. Again in the double all-terrain section of chapter 25 side-by-side seating and tandem seating are discussed.

73. Tandem basket seating is discussed as a newer design at the time of publication for double all-terrains strollers, where a second seat is mounted “underneath and slightly behind” where the stroller basket would be.

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I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

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Dated: 1/21/25

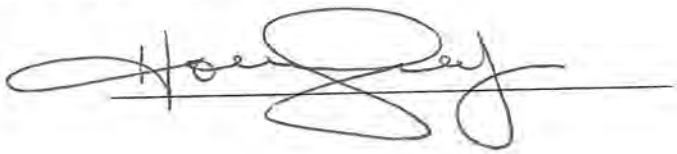


EXHIBIT LIST TO HOLLY SCHULTZ DECLARATION

Exhibit 1: Screenshot from Baby Gizmo YouTube channel – Pre-December 2008 videos

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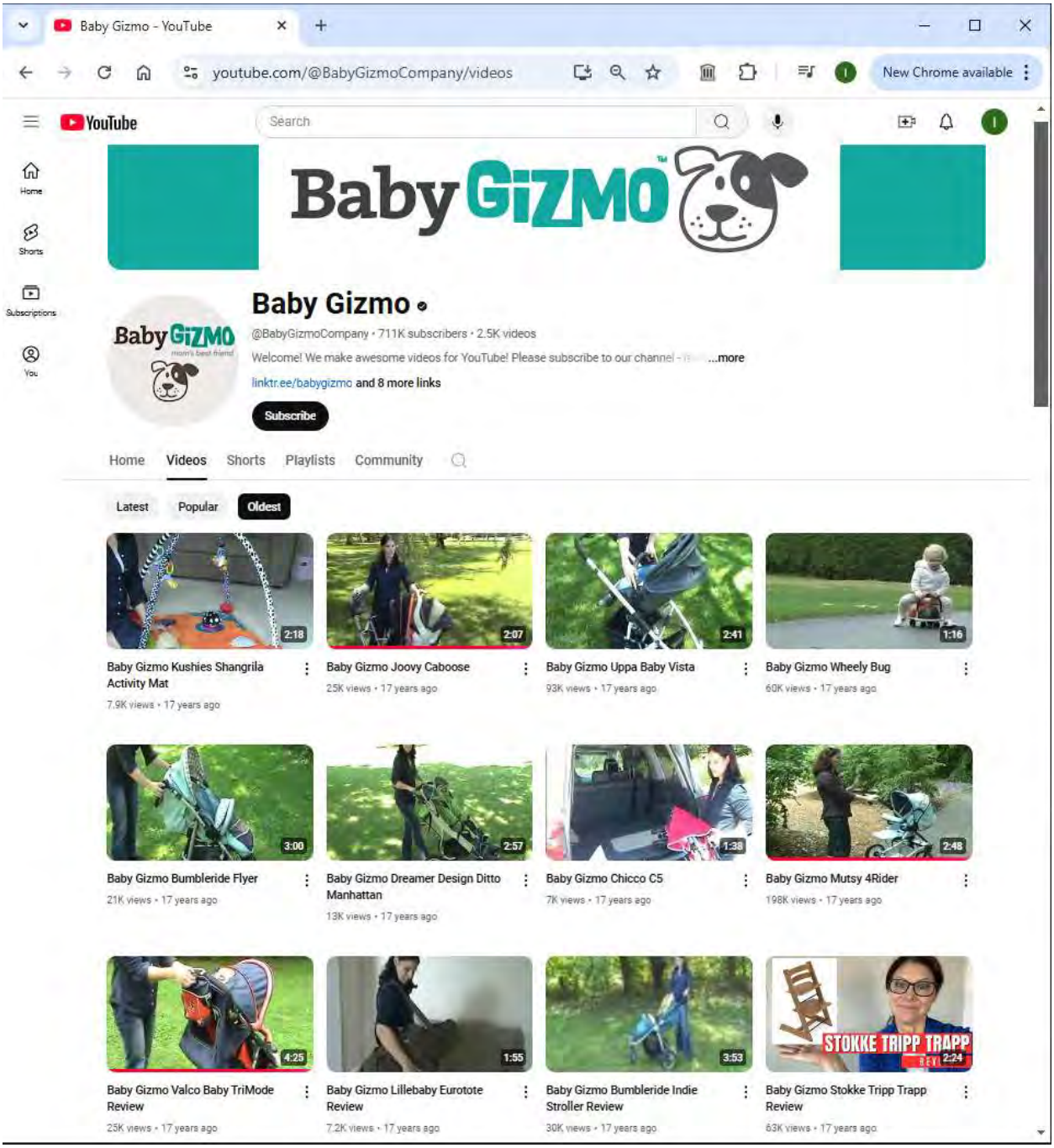
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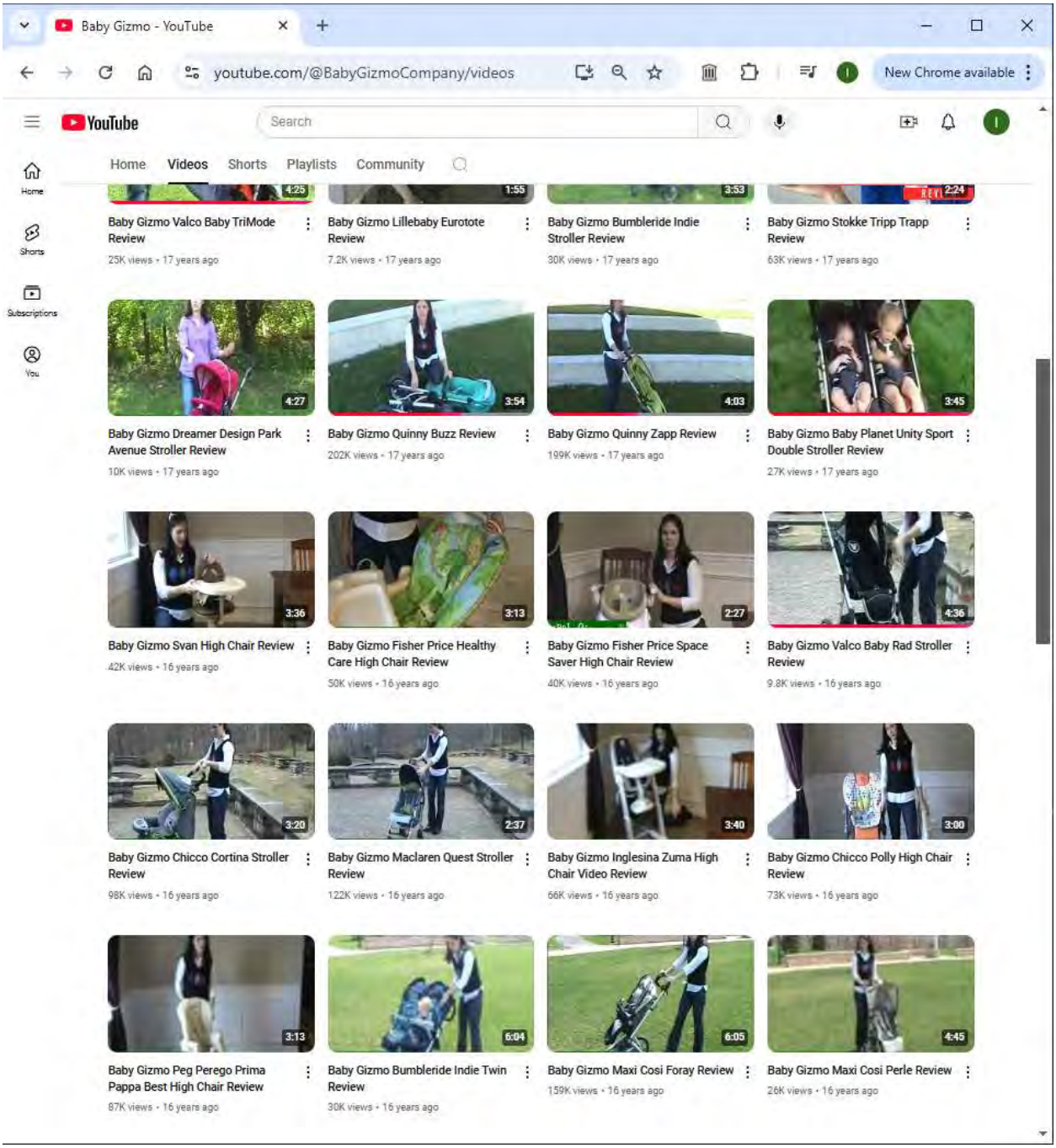
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Exhibit 10: Heather MacLean & Hollie Schultz, The Baby Gizmo Buying Guide, (Thomas Nelson, 2008.)

EXHIBIT 1
Hollie Schultz Declaration
Baby Gizmo YouTube Channel Screenshot


Baby Gizmo - YouTube
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New Chrome available
YouTube
Search
Home
Shorts
Subscriptions
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Subscribe
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Videos
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Popular
Oldest
2:18
Baby Gizmo Kushies Shangrila Activity Mat
7.9K views • 17 years ago
2:07
Baby Gizmo Joovy Caboose
25K views • 17 years ago
2:41
Baby Gizmo Uppa Baby Vista
93K views • 17 years ago
1:16
Baby Gizmo Wheely Bug
60K views • 17 years ago
3:00
Baby Gizmo Bumbleride Flyer
21K views • 17 years ago
2:57
Baby Gizmo Dreamer Design Ditto Manhattan
13K views • 17 years ago
1:38
Baby Gizmo Chicco C5
7K views • 17 years ago
2:48
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Baby Gizmo Quinny Buzz Review
202K views • 17 years ago
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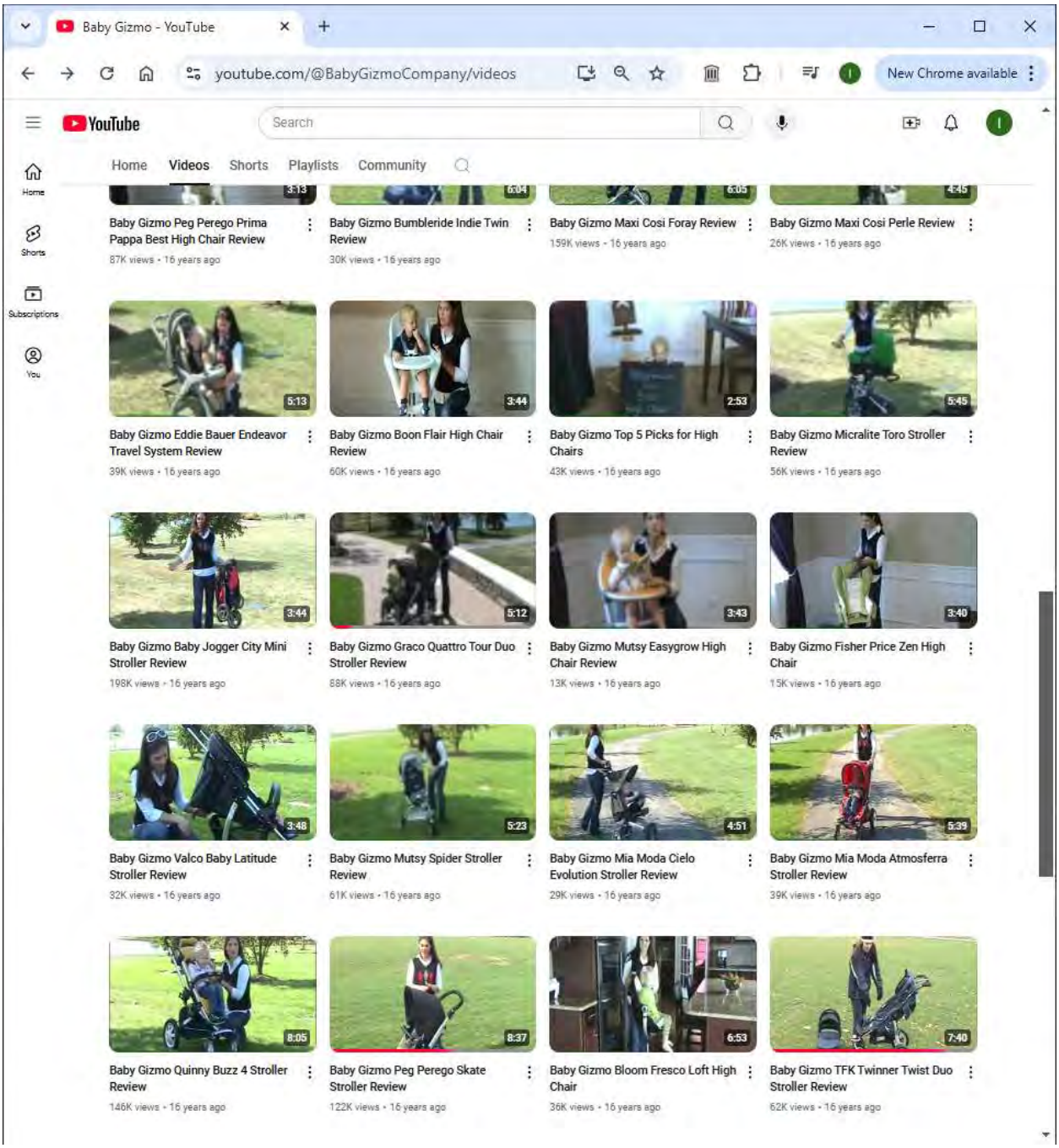

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EXHIBIT 10
Hollie Schultz Declaration
Baby Gizmo Buying Guide

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Real moms reveal the secrets to successful baby gear shopping

You've waited your whole life to get your hands on that magic baby product scanning gun. And it's brilliant fun. For the first three hours. And then it gets downright overwhelming. You know you need a crib, but what about a bassinet, a cradle, or a play yard? The stroller you love comes with a carry-cot, but can you actually carry the baby in it? Will you be able to get the green beans out of the cracks in that adorable high chair? You're a smart chick—why is this so hard?

It doesn't have to be! *The Baby Gizmo Buying Guide* is the most comprehensive guide to baby products on the planet. Heather Maclean and Hollie Schultz, the founders of BabyGizmo.com, a product-testing and research coalition of moms, pediatricians, and child development experts, walk you through not only standard purchases like car seats and high chairs, but also new generation choices like luxury stroller systems and designer diaper bags. Amidst Heather and Hollie's real-life mom stories and confessions (yes, they tasted the toys on their babies' activity centers), you'll discover:



- What you really need versus what's just nice to have
- Which products to include (and not include) on your baby registry
- The best time of the year to buy certain items
- Which products to store in the perfectly packed diaper bag
- How to avoid the "bad baby product buying cycle"
- Even which products can make you pretty (hint: see page 163)

The Baby Gizmo Buying Guide will help you select the right products for your unique needs and lifestyle, so you can bask in the bliss of a perfect purchase, stroll with confidence, and know your neighbors have diaper bag envy.

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The Baby Gizmo buying guide
Heather Maclean

The Baby Gizmo™ buying guide

From Pacifiers to Potties...
Why, When, and What to Buy
For Pregnancy through Preschool



Heather Maclean with Hollie Schultz

From the Mom Editors of **BabyGizmo.com** and the Creators of the Award-Winning **Little Laureate** Series

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the Baby Gizmo™ buying guide

From Pacifiers to Potties . . .
Why, When, and What to Buy
For Pregnancy through Preschool

Heather Maclean with Hollie Schultz

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For our children, because they made us mothers.

For our husbands, because they had a small,
rather fun role in making us mothers,
but their constant love and support helped make
us great mothers.

Do you know how many people there are
in the whole universe?
That's how much we love you.

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NOTES: *Shoes*
(continued)

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Twenty-five

Strollers

Men have cars. Moms have strollers. Equal parts comfortable ride and fashion statement, no purchase is as fulfilling or personal to a mom as her stroller. And because you will use your stroller as often as you take your child out of the house, the perfect stroller purchase is one of the most important (and most fun!) baby gear purchases a mom will make.

While safety features dictate 90 percent of the decision-making of buying other baby gear, personal preference drives stroller buys. Yes, you still need to look for good straps and a safe ride, but a good part of choosing a stroller is all about color, fabric, design, budget, and pride.

For moms who just need a quick-wheeled contraption to push pokey kids, there are $15 umbrella strollers. For moms who want a complete luxury "system" that includes bassinets, rockers, and even toddler steering wheels, there are $1,500 options. For stroller junkies like us, there are is a whole bunch of heaven in between.

Design

Strollers have never looked so fine, thanks to a little designer company called Bugaboo and a little show called *Sex in the City.* Like Manolo Blahniks, Carrie Bradshaw and company introduced the middle class mom to luxury strollers when Miranda appeared onscreen in 2002 pushing a then-$700 Bugaboo. It was too rich for most of us, but oh, how we wanted one! And enough moms responded to the graceful lines and gorgeous fabrics—ditching their clunky, navy blue plaid strollers on the way—that the mid-range stroller manufacturers sat up and took note.

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The Bugaboo trickle-down design effect has hit almost every major stroller manufacturer. Graco hired Andrew Serbinski, an industrial designer who specialized in racing bikes and motorcycles, and designer Cynthia Rowley to give their strollers some visual appeal. The results: graceful arcs and more modern fabrics. Maclaren tapped designers Kate Spade, Philippe Starck, and Lulu Guinness to make their strollers more fashion-forward. Even Fisher-Price and Kolcraft have debuted new, minimalist-looking models.

We've noticed the consumers are footing the bill for these new design advancements, as prices have gone up, but we're willing to pay for it because they're all just so pretty.

Life Cycle of Strollers

As we've alluded, and as our in-garage stroller parking lots attest, most moms need more than one stroller. In truth, the average mom ends up with up to three strollers per kid because most strollers suit a particular age and particular function well, but don't meet all needs.

Here's the typical life cycle of the strolling mom:

☆ **Newborn:** This age demands the biggest stroller for new baby protection and stability. You need a sturdy stroller that either can support an infant car seat carrier, or sports an infant bed. Because new babies need the most stuff, the best strollers for this age double as portable nurseries, giving you the most basket room and accessories, and are able to accommodate the world's largest, most overstuffed diaper bag.

☆ **Older babies:** Once baby has outgrown the infant car seat carrier or infant bed, you strip the newborn parts off a stroller. You still need a pretty hefty diaper bag and still pack the kitchen sink on every outing, but you secretly wish the stroller you bought for your newborn wasn't so darn heavy.

☆ **Toddlers:** By now, you're completely over your giant, utilitarian stroller and ready to banish it to the attic because it's so big and heavy and you simply don't need that much room anymore. Toddlers like to walk sometimes anyway, so you purchase a convenient, lightweight, umbrella stroller.

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☆ **Activity strollers:** As baby's first birthday approaches, you vow to shed the pregnancy weight once and for all, and take up jogging (or, more realistically, quick walking). You'll quickly discover the limitations of your standard or umbrella stroller, as even a brisk pace will send your front wheels aflutter. Now is when you purchase an all-terrain or jogging stroller.

☆ **Multiple-kid strollers:** As soon as baby number two starts kicking up the ultrasound, you realize all of your single strollers are for naught, as your first child is never going to make it if they have to walk full-time. There are double strollers in all categories: standard, lightweight, all-terrain, and jogging. There are even special strollers-and-a-half designed to fit one rider full-time and one part-time.

Primary Stroller Options

If you're looking for just one stroller to take you from birth through preschool, the following strollers are possibilities. You'll need the appropriate newborn accommodations, of course, and no small amount of durability, but it can be done with these types:

- Standard stroller
- Travel systems
- Lightweight-plus strollers
- Luxury stroller systems
- All-terrain strollers

Types of Strollers

To give you an idea of the scope of strollers (and better explain to our husbands why we really did need all 16 strollers parked in our garage), here's a quick summary of the types of strollers available in order of use, from birth to lazy kindergartner. Each stroller category below has its own special section in the following pages that will tell you what specific features to look for and

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more. (You can also find our Top Five picks and thousands of other moms' opinions on BabyGizmo.com.)

- ☆ **Carriages:** Giant baby baskets on wheels, carriages are traditional and usually luxurious rides for new babies. These strollers are usually bought for their heirloom qualities and don't typically travel very well.
- ☆ **Standard strollers:** The most common stroller, standard strollers are large, can accommodate newborns to preschoolers, and offer loads of convenient features. There are single and double standard strollers.
- ☆ **Travel systems:** This is a standard stroller that comes with an infant car seat carrier as part of a coordinating set.
- ☆ **Lightweight-plus strollers:** The perfect cross between a standard stroller and a lightweight stroller, they are technically a couple of pounds heavier than a true "lightweight" class, but are sturdier, can support an infant car seat carrier, and provide more features than their lighter cousins. Although most of the models are for single babies, there are a few doubles out there.
- ☆ **Lightweight/umbrella strollers:** A lightweight stroller weighs 15 pounds or less. "Umbrella" refers to the two curved handles and the way most lightweight strollers close like an umbrella, but some lightweight strollers fold flat as well. Lightweight strollers are not suitable for newborns, most have fixed seats, and they are great for travel—but stripped of many convenience features. You can choose single or double lightweight strollers.
- ☆ **Luxury stroller systems:** A new breed of stroller with advanced design and luxury fabrics, luxury stroller systems are lightweight frames that come with multiple seating arrangements you snap in as your child grows. Most come with bassinets and standard stroller seats; some also come with infant car seat carriers and even rockers for use indoors. While some do sport footboards, sadly, for now, they are only available in the single variety.

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- ☆ **Strollers-and-a-half:** A standard stroller with a single seat for a primary rider, these strollers offer a rear footboard or tiny folding seat for hop-a-long bigger sibling to hitch a ride every once in a while.
- ☆ **All-terrain strollers:** These are rugged, outdoorsy strollers with special wheels and more flexible handling that allow you to tread over uneven, unpaved, and even unusual surfaces like sand. Some all-terrain strollers will allow you to walk at a brisk pace, but are not suitable for a full jog, because the front wheels swivel. There are both single and double versions.
- ☆ **Jogging strollers:** The only stroller designed for safe running, jogging strollers have a sturdy construction to withstand the speed, a fixed front wheel, hand brakes, and parent tethers so they can't get away from you. There are singles and doubles to be had.
- ☆ **Multiples strollers:** If you have triplets or more, there are special strollers designed just for you. With multiple seats to safely sit same-aged siblings, multiples strollers are large, but a lifesaver for moms born with only two arms.

Budget

How you slice up your stroller purchases depends primarily on your budget. If you're on a tight budget, you can certainly get away with a single standard stroller that you can use for up to four years. You can even score one for $70, or less if it's slightly used (and this is the one category we will give you our blessing to beg, borrow, and eBay to your heart's content).

However, because you will shove, slam, and drag your stroller, and because your child will kick, rip, and vomit on your stroller, there's a good chance many oft-used cheaper strollers won't last from sibling to sibling.

The average mom ends up with a standard, an umbrella, and an activity stroller. If you buy them separately, nice mid-range models from a discount store will mean you will likely spend a total of between $500 and $1,000. While most middle class moms think a luxury stroller system is out of reach, we did the math, and if you add up all the separate strolling and baby activity

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gear they offer in one package, the $500 to $800 price tag can actually save you a few hundred bucks. You do get a much nicer, strut-worthy system as well, but you do have to outlay the cash all at once rather than working it into your expenses every couple of months.

Universal Stroller Features

While the construction and function might vary, all strollers share some universal features. They all have seats. They all have wheels. And if they want us to like them, they all have cup holders. Here is an explanation of the key stroller features for all types, including our comments about what we adore and what we abhor.

Safety

Look for a stroller that is stable, well constructed, and has strong safety straps. Also, check that the stroller is locked open every single time you unfold it. Some may seem locked, when in fact they aren't. The most common accidents with small children in strollers occur when strollers collapse while a baby is inside (usually because they aren't snapped and locked open properly) and when babies slip out through the seat bottom but get tangled in the straps. Always strap your child in with a safety strap between the legs, each and every time.

Height Limits

While every stroller has a weight limit, there aren't really height limits on strollers. Even so, most kids will grow too tall for a stroller long before they grow too heavy for it.

Every stroller design is different, but if you have tall children, note how easily they could squeeze into the seat or where they might comfortably rest their legs. An immobile snack tray that gets in the way of an older toddler's knees might force you to retire your stroller earlier than you might like. Some straps will be too snug between the legs too soon. And some are built so low, your preschooler's ankles run the risk of being eaten by the stroller wheels.

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Stroller Weight

Unless you live on the ground floor with no stairs in a flat state and walk everywhere, you're going to have to pick up your stroller from time to time. Suburban moms will be shoving them into the trunks of minivans, while urban moms will be dragging them down subway stairs or wrestling them into the backs of taxicabs.

While the best, sturdiest strollers used to be the heaviest, engineering advancements and the use of an aluminum chassis has cut the weight of many strollers by 10 pounds or more.

When stroller shopping, one of the first things we check is the weight of the stroller. Here's how those measurements translate into momspeak:

- ☆ **Under 10 pounds:** A dream. You can lift it with one finger. Like Superman.
- ☆ **10–15 pounds:** Still very light. You can lift it with one hand. Not forever, but you can.
- ☆ **15–18 pounds:** Light enough to easily swing up into a car's trunk by a single handle without throwing out your back. Light enough to carry through an airport without wanting to cry. But we wouldn't strap it to our backs and hike with this weight.
- ☆ **18–23 pounds:** Now you'll start to feel the stroller's weight. You're more lugging it around when it's folded than carrying it.
- ☆ **23–25 pounds:** See above. Now multiply the lugging by a factor of two.
- ☆ **25–30 pounds:** You had better really love the stroller, because you won't love this weight.
- ☆ **30+ pounds:** If you have this size stroller, you either have a carriage (and a bodyguard to carry it for you), or a double stroller that, heavy as it is, cannot be avoided. You will more pull this stroller out of your car and let it crash to the ground than actually lift it, and beg passing strangers to lift it back into your car for you (especially if you're still sporting stitches).

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Folding

Equally as important as how sturdy and heavy a stroller is, is how it folds. You want a stroller that collapses easily, with one hand if at all possible, and folds into the most compact size. (On BabyGizmo.com you can find a wonderful chart listing all strollers' folded dimensions to help you determine which ones will actually fit in your trunk and which strollers would need to be strapped to your roof. We'd love to have included it in this book, but it would be outdated by the time you are reading this. Real-time information is one of the best by-products of the Internet. Only slightly better than online Scrabble.)

Most strollers fold well, but you'll hate a stroller that doesn't. Like really hate. Like balancing your checkbook hate. A bad fold isn't necessarily a complicated one. Even complicated systems can be quickly mastered and executed in a matter of seconds. In our opinion, bad folds are the ones that require you to wiggle, spit, and pray, and sometimes just don't happen. We've been stuck in the parking lot, cursing our fancy stroller, unable to get it to fold, but afraid we'll break something if we shove it too hard. Wanna know which ones suck to fold? Drop a few brand names and people will be quick to tell you.

We're also interested in a fold that results in the smallest, tightest bundle possible. If it also ends up standing upright, we ask it to marry us.

Folding lingo can be quite confusing, because some of it refers to the final, folded shape of the stroller, some refers to the method used to fold the strollers, and some is just terminology made up by manufacturers to sound cool. To add to the chaos, many strollers will claim several different folds in one or even make up new names that are a combination of old ones because they are trying to tell you both how the stroller folds and what it will look like folded. And maybe they're hoping we just get so blinded by the jabberwocky that we buy the one with the most words on the box. Which, sadly, has worked on us before.

Let's see if we can't slog through the terminology (remember, some strollers can have more than one of these folds):

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- ☆ **Flat fold:** Basically folds forward or backward in half, so it remains just as wide as it was unfolded, but now twice as thick, only kind of flat. Kind of. This is the bulkiest of all folds. The sworn enemy of our small trunks.
- ☆ **Umbrella fold:** The stroller folds forward and inward into a thick bundle, log shaped rather than flat. While the motion is different from how you actually fold an umbrella, the end result is a tight, stroller bundle that resembles a thick, folded umbrella (the big, giant golf kind, not the cute, in-your-purse kind).
- ☆ **Three-dimensional fold:** Simply another name for the umbrella fold.
- ☆ **Two-piece fold:** Common for luxury stroller systems, this fold requires you to unclip a seat from its base, then fold the base and store the two pieces separately, usually stacked on top of one another. The most time-consuming fold, and rather large. Like twice as large as a regular flat fold.
- ☆ **Compact tri-fold:** A two-handed fold in which you lift folding levers on both sides of the handle. Result is similar to a finished umbrella fold.
- ☆ **One-hand fold:** The entire stroller can be collapsed using one hand, albeit with usually a couple of steps for the hand. You usually push a button, twist a handle, and pull on something to complete the collapse.
- ☆ **One-touch fold:** A fantastically easy, foolproof folding system that allows you to push a single button with your thumb while holding a handle; you pull said handle and the stroller collapses. Very close to the one-hand fold, but a little better. (It's no magic Jetsons fold, though. You don't just push a button and stand back; exertion is required.)
- ☆ **One-step fold:** "One step" literally refers to your stepping on something. You step on a rear bar or lever, and the entire stroller lurches forward into a flat fold. It's easy, but these folds do kind of scare us. We don't like the idea that our kid is sitting in a stroller that could fold should we stumble against a single bar near our feet.

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- ☆ **Five-second fold:** A quick fold that can be completed in five seconds, but does require the use of one foot and one hand. You step on one lever, then another, then push the stroller closed with your hands. End result is an umbrella fold.
- ☆ **Quick fold system:** A patented system for certain all-terrain strollers that allows you to grab a strap in the seat and lift up, and the entire stroller then collapses into a bundle. Unlike the one-step fold, we actually do like this one because you can't accidentally fold it on the run.
- ☆ **Standing fold:** Our favorite fold! Any of the above folds—one-step, one-handed, and so on—can also use a standing fold. Instead of collapsing away from you onto the ground, a standing fold brings the stroller toward you and ends with it in a folded, but upright, self-standing position. Genius system that keeps us from having to bend over, allows for easy loading into our car, and keeps our nice strollers looking nicer longer.

Locking Mechanism

When strollers are folded, you want them to stay that way. Not all strollers lock closed, but most do. Look for an easy-to-operate lock that holds the stroller as tightly closed as possible. One of our biggest pet peeves is loosey-goosey locks, which make transporting a folded stroller a giant pain.

Construction and Durability

Some strollers are made of steel and built to last. Others are made of plastic and will fall apart before your first kid's first birthday. More durable strollers tend to be more expensive, of course, but are a wise investment if they last longer.

Whatever stroller you choose must be sturdy enough to hold your kid. A stroller that cracks or has wheels that fall off when you're in mid-stride is not good for you and not good for baby.

All brand new strollers seem nice and solid in the store on the flat, glossy floor. But we put them to the test by bringing along a 4-year-old who is guaranteed to test the top of the stroller's weight limit. We strap our little test subject in, and then try to hop a curb. If there's not a short shelf nearby that you can push the stroller up onto, tip the stroller back onto its back wheels and pretend you're about to jump a log. Make no mistake, the salespeople hate this, but you can tell tons about the solid construction of a stroller by the way it feels tipped up with 40 pounds inside. If the stroller feels like it's about to snap in half, we move on.

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Five-Point Harness

While strollers come with three- and five-point harness straps, five-point is better, especially for younger babies. Many systems allow you to convert a five-point into a three-point—nice for older children who only need to be snapped in at the waist and hate to be held back at the shoulder.

Strap Covers

Straps covers are a very nice feature much appreciated by babies because the straps can actually be sharp enough to scratch tender skin, especially around the neck. Strap covers can be purchased separately, but they never match quite as well and tend to pop off and get lost far, far too easily. As Oprah says, "Love is in the details," and we look for strollers that offer strap covers as a sign of how much the manufacturers think about the little things.

Reclining Seat

While most stroller seats recline, some recline more than others. Many offer "multiposition" recline, but the only position we care about is a full recline. Tiny babies require a full recline, as does any sleeping passenger. While many strollers advertise a full recline, they don't always deliver it. Full recline means flat, not sort-of-leaning-backward.

We've overlooked the importance of this feature before and then hated how our children were slumped over in strollers that didn't recline enough.

How easy the seat back reclines is another important consideration. More often than not, you'll discover your child is nodding off, and you want to gently recline the seat to coax her into a permanent dreaming state. A smooth, easy recline is best.

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Stroller Color and Pattern

Let's be honest, looks are important to all of us. We'd guess a full 80 percent of our final purchase decision is based on the stroller color and pattern. They could cover a roller skate in Burberry plaid and we'd want it. Thankfully, we have hundreds of choices from solid colors to plaids to graffiti-inspired to cartoons. There are bright reds, safety cone oranges, moss greens, and simple blacks. Many upscale strollers now offer the fabric separately, so you can even swap out the color for the next gender kid, or simply when you're sick of it.

For the most part, strollers are pretty safe, they share the same set of features, and so we give you permission to choose based on nothing else than the one you thought was prettiest. We have, and we still do.

Seat Fabric and Padding

More expensive strollers show their worth immediately in the seat fabric. Fancy strollers have fancy Italian fabrics and plush seats. Cheap strollers have scratchy polyester with hardly any padding at all. Nicer fabric will wear better and is easier to care for than cheaper fabric, so consider the fabric's contribution to the overall durability and worth of your stroller. And kids do appreciate a little extra padding, especially when we have them on mall duty for six hours at a time.

Washable Fabric

Many strollers have removable fabric for easy washing; just as many do not. But all should be at least spot cleanable.

We've found that how easy a fabric cleans is directly related to the price of the stroller. Cheap strollers stain easily, not helping their overall appearance of cheapness. Nice strollers usually clean up quite well.

Pay attention to how many seams and folds the seat has, and how deep the cracks are. Some baby food combinations—wet vanilla wafer comes to mind—will dry like mortar and you won't be able to chip it out with a jackhammer.

Seat Edge

Just like on a fancy ergonomic office chair, strollers that offer a waterfall edge are better for a small rider's leg circulation. Some seats offer a curved front, while others just dead-end in a taut line.

Many strollers now offer an adjustable edge that can be raised for small babies and lowered for older riders. Our favorites are the ones that completely lift to a 90-degree angle, closing off the foot space entirely, making a cozy infant bed.

Footrest

For good posture and development, strollers should have a footrest for their small riders. Some footrests are nice, big shelves, while some are simple straps. In this case, size doesn't matter. As long as a child has something to rest the feet on, anything will do. Besides, bigger footrests add unneeded bulk and weight to the stroller.

Stroller Basket

When it comes to the basket, size matters. The bigger, the better. While most strollers do deliver in the basket department in terms of size, not all baskets are easily accessible. Pay close attention to how a basket is accessed, especially when the seat is fully reclined for an infant car seat or a sleeping child. A big basket is useless if you can't actually reach into it.

Some of our favorite baskets actually have a lower and load function that allows you to always be able to get at them. Baskets you have to access from the front? Not our friend.

Canopy

Large canopies are important for small children, especially because they can't wear sunscreen for the first six months. While the sunshade is obvious, canopies can also help shield a baby from cold, wind, and rain. Like our friend the big basket, the big canopy is best. The very best canopies rotate 180 degrees forward until they hit the baby snack tray to completely protect your child.

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We also like peekaboo windows and pockets on the back of the canopy for storing our car keys or cell phone.

We're not big fans of canopies that have locking bars on the side to keep them extended because we inevitably forget we've got them locked down, and almost break them when we fold the stroller. We know they're there to keep the canopy extended, but most good strollers have solid enough canopies that the lock isn't needed. Living in the Windy City, we've had our share of upturned umbrellas, but have never had a canopy flip open on us. We won't throw out a stroller for having canopy locks, but we will routinely refuse to lock them.

No matter what size the canopy, it should always provide adequate ventilation to your child. Stick your own head up under there and make sure it isn't too stuffy and you can still feel the breeze.

Stroller Handle

Stroller handles can be a single straight bar, a curved bar, two separate handles, or two curved hooks. Some are even ergonomic. While some moms prefer the single handle, others prefer two. It's really a matter of personal preference, and which handle you think will best accommodate your shopping bags.

When you're test-driving a stroller in the store, be sure to try it one-handed, as more often than not, you'll be lucky to have one of those free. For a complete real-world test, also try pushing the stroller with your belly, steering it with your elbow, or pulling it from the front so you can baby talk to your baby, hopefully shushing them enough so you can try on one more outfit before they kick you and your crying kid out of the store.

Some stroller handles are wonderfully padded, and some are not. Some are even inexplicably covered in a mean, ridged rubber that hurts a poor mom's hands. We like the most padded ones possible, but look for a quality covering. Foam chunks falling off the handle has prematurely aged more than one of our strollers. How can you tell if the padding is quality? Pinch at it in the store (and then blame your husband if anything actually falls off).

Height-Adjustable Handle

Many strollers offer a height adjustment setting that allows you to raise or lower the handles. This is not necessary for the average mom, but is an absolute lifesaver if you or your husband are super tall or super short, as it can save your back and keep you from kicking the stroller as you stroll.

The handle should be at a comfortable height, generally at waist level or slightly below.

While we do love to use our stroller handles to hang any and every thing, be careful never to overload a stroller from the back—especially lightweight strollers—as they can tip backward.

Reversible Handle

One of our favorite new stroller features is the reversible handle. With a few simple clicks, a reversible handle allows you flip the handle in the opposite direction and push your stroller with your baby facing you rather than out at the world. This is especially useful for smaller babies, whom we like to see at all times. In big strollers, sometimes tiny ones are hidden behind the canopies when they are front facing, and we appreciate the opportunity to remedy that.

Maneuverability

All strollers will wheel your baby from here to there, but the amount of effort it takes to push them varies greatly. Some strollers glide like a dream. Others you have to really shove. Check turning radius, remembering that more often than not, you'll be trying to squeeze your stroller down tight store aisles and into small spaces. Some strollers turn on a dime with one pinkie. Some you have to dig into so hard to take a corner that your wrists ache. When shopping for strollers, remind yourself that you're going to be pushing one for the next 1,460 days. A stroller that maneuvers well is the difference between loving those days and cursing your purchase.

Wheels

While the traditional stroller has four same-sized wheels, sometimes those wheels are doubles (for eight in all), sometimes they are double in the front only, and sometimes they are larger in the back. Some strollers now even rock the three-wheeled look.

The number of wheels is irrelevant; you're looking for a good turning radius, easy maneuverability, and quality wheels. Some wheels are rubber,

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some are air filled, some simple plastic. Avoid the plastic if you can. Like our old Big Wheels, crappy plastic wheels will wear unevenly and eventually you'll end up with flat spots. No good.

Rubber wheels are best. Some are sealed, and some allow you to fill with air accordingly; each stroller company has its own preference. Self-filled wheels have both advantages and drawbacks: filling them yourself means you can adjust for varied terrains, but it also means you can get a flat.

The bigger the wheels, the easier the stroller will be to push, but the larger it will be when folded.

Suspension

The best strollers offer suspension—a springing system over the wheels to help absorb some of the shock of bumps and potholes, giving baby a smoother ride. Some strollers have suspension only on the back wheels, but we like it in the front and the back. Note that full-wheel suspension can make a stroller seem extra "wobbly." A quality stroller will have a strong frame, even though the suspension wiggles when you shake it. A lower quality stroller will feel so rickety, you think it might fall apart (as, trust us, it eventually will).

Brakes

Any stroller you ever buy, even the $9 umbrella ones, should have a brake to prevent runaways. While some braking systems are hand operated off the stroller handle, most are levers you kick to engage. Some back wheels have individual brakes that must be set individually, but we prefer the ones with a single brake bar that locks both wheels at the same time.

You want solid brakes that will catch and hold; heavier strollers should have stronger brakes. And pay attention to the ease with which brakes are disengaged. Some are simple to undo, but others will darn near break your toe.

Cup Holders

The simple, lowly parent cup holder is the convenience feature we cannot live without. We've tried, and we truly almost died. And while there are universal, after-market cup holders available, they never work quite as well as ones built right in.

Not all cup holders are the same. Some hang off the side and get in the way when we're folding the stroller or shoving it into our trunk. Some are too shallow to hold a jumbo coffee. The best ones are nice and deep and positioned between the two handles.

Parent Consoles

Some strollers come with an entire parent console straddling the handles. Some are hard, molded plastic; others are soft, fabric pockets. We like multiple cup holders and carved-out spaces to throw our keys, but we find covered compartments, built-in glasses cases, and wipe containers to be overkill.

Sadly, most of the best strollers are sorely lacking in the parent console category. You can buy any number of pouches to hang off the back, but that's where we have our spectacular diaper bag. In many cases, we are forced to just make do with the cup holder.

Child Snack Tray

While most strollers come with a stroller bar in front of baby, many instead (or in addition) offer a snack tray. We love snack trays as they help us corral snacks. Snack trays don't have to be giant sized to be useful, and the larger ones do contribute to a bulkier fold size and end up scraping on the concrete every time we collapse our stroller.

Many child snack trays come with cup holders as well, but they are almost always too shallow, even for a sippy cup.

Look for a snack tray that can be swung open to one side so an older toddler can more easily climb in. Some snack trays remove completely for when you're looking to de-bulk your ride.

Snack Tray Toys

Some snack trays come with attached toys, which sounds good in theory, but in practice they end up in the way, extra grimy, and our kids are usually stimulated enough when they're on a roll not to care about batting at something in front of them.

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Newborn Pillows

Many strollers offer extra headrest and body pillows for newborn use, which is a great feature because newborns need all the support they can get. You can buy pillows separately, but they look nicest and fit the best when they come with your stroller.

Rain Cover

A rain cover is an additional accessory that many stroller manufacturers now include for free. It's a specially designed plastic cover that shields your entire stroller from the rain, but still allows proper ventilation for your child (which is why we highly recommend it over your regular Hefty bag).

How important they are to you depends on where you live. If you're an urban mom and have to walk a lot, they are a must-have. If you're a suburban mom who lives in her car, rain covers are a nice-to-have. We love ours, but we frequently forget to bring it. When unexpectedly caught in a downpour, we just tend to run really fast and hide somewhere until it stops raining.

Foot Muff/Weather Boot

A foot muff, also called a "weather boot," is like a tiny, half sleeping bag attached to the bottom of the stroller seat that can help keep your baby's feet and legs warm in cold weather. They are a wonderful luxury addition, not entirely necessary, but a great alternative to the receiving blanket we used to use that inevitably ended up being dragged behind us through puddles in the parking lot.

Test Drive

Finally, before you purchase a stroller, take it for a test drive. You might be able to find the best prices online, and the pictures all look great on the Internet, but when it arrives and you find that you kick the basket when you walk, you'll be kicking yourself.

We've taken more than one day trip across town just to visit a baby boutique and test drive a certain stroller. In person, you can touch the seat, feel the fabric, pull on the canopy, push it around, test the brakes, check its turning radius, and of course, learn how it folds and unfolds. Stroller salespeople

in specialty stores are notoriously well versed in not only the strollers they sell, but the strollers they don't (and they're more than happy to tell you why they don't sell certain brands).



Carriages

Created in 1733 for an English duke, the first known baby stroller resembled a small horse-drawn carriage and was meant to be pulled by small dogs or ponies. Shaped like a shell with snake patterns painted on it, the carriage did include a comfortable seat for baby and even springs for shock absorption. The cumbersome design did not become parent operated until handles were added 50 years later. A luxury toy for the upper class, baby carriages were large, ornate, nonfolding, and a nuisance to pedestrians on crowded sidewalks.

The baby carriage, sometimes called a "pram," of today has changed very little. It is still a large, cumbersome basket on gigantic wheels that does not collapse and clears quite a path on the street. Meant for urban strolls or walks around "the grounds," carriages are still beloved by the metropolitan upper class, modern-day royalty, and celebrity moms. They offer baby a plush ride and many even sport ornate curtains to deter peeping paparazzi.

Carriages are bulky and far less portable than any other category of stroller. Most do not include big baskets or any other typical stroller features such as cup holders or adjustable handles. But what they lack in conveniences, they make up for in élan.

Carriage

Also Known As
Pram, baby buggy
Age Range
Birth to 9-plus months
Total Usage
9-plus months
Recommendation
Nice to have
When to Buy
Before baby is born, so you can enjoy it immediately.

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Construction

The most famous carriage company in the world is Silver Cross, which has been hand finishing their prams since 1877. Each carriage is individually numbered and personally signed by the artisan, craftsmen who pass their skills down with each generation.

Most carriages are a study in historical nostalgia and evoke a feeling of a quieter, simpler life. The baby bed is roomy and plush, yet very open to the mom, who can take dreamy walks while actively bonding with her bouncing baby.

Snooty Vocabulary Lesson

Carriages are called "prams" in Britain and well-heeled American circles, but we bet most of them don't even know that "pram" is actually short for "perambulator." So what's a perambulator? It technically means a baby carriage, of course, but it's derived from the verb *perambulate*, which means to walk around and survey things, or to stroll.

Feeling smarter? Us too. Now if only we could figure out how to use our trivia superpowers to score one of those $2,000 prams . . .

Carriages are beloved for the protection they offer small babies thanks to their steel construction, and are known for their smooth suspension. The most exquisite carriages feature a hand-sprung chassis, leather suspension straps for extra cushioning, and even hand-spoked wheels.

Size

Traditional carriages are large, like four feet tall and 66 pounds large. Much like the Hummer, that much size may seem unnecessarily extravagant to some, but many people feel the point of a carriage is to give a baby a large, magical, traveling space.

In fact, the appeal of the carriage is mythical. Pushing it, you feel elegant, and somehow the extra space makes you feel like you've got an extra special baby. You need an extra special bank account, of course, and if you have it, we certainly don't fault you for perambulating with your baby in style.

Portability

While many carriages do not fold, more often these days, they do. In the 1970s, many manufacturers allowed for the bed portion of the carriage to be removed, and the "carry-cot" was born. The portable bassinet feature allows parents to carry their baby from the street into the house without the bulky frame and wheels.

Age Range

Most carriages have a weight limit of up to 30 pounds, although by the time babies attempt to climb out, they need to be transferred to a new stroller.

Most parents only use traditional carriages for the first few months, from birth to around 4 months. This limited age range makes them a nonnecessity, luxury purchase for most, but for many, they are quality heirlooms to be passed down from generation to generation.

Wheels

Most carriages have large, air-filled wheels that are fixed, although some modern models have added swivel capabilities, as even the toniest mom sometimes has to steer around dog poop.

There should be firm brakes on both back wheels that you can access easily.

Steering

Carriages are large, but most of them push like a dream. Look for one that steers smoothly and doesn't allow for too much give when turning corners or traversing uneven ground.

Stability

Look for a solid, durable carriage with a wide base that resists tipping over, even if baby should roll to the side (although when babies can roll over by themselves, for safety, you need to pick a new stroller).

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Material

The fancier carriages have fancier fabrics, everything from brushed linen to silk to the finest combed cotton. Look for a durable, moisture-resistant fabric that can be spot cleaned.

Baby Bed

Typically, the baby carriage compartment features plush fabrics and a soft mattress, but make sure the fabric is not near baby's face and that the mattress is firm enough for safe infant sleeping. And just like any mattress in any baby sleeping space, the mattress should fit firmly in the frame, allowing no more than one finger width of space.

Mindful of the SIDS danger of soft bedding and tight sleeping quarters, many carriages now have special ventilated mattresses and even ventilation systems in the bed.

Price

While most carriages cost around $1,000, you can find $400 and $4,000 versions.

Why we love them: Carriages are the very embodiment of rich romance. And we love pretending we're famous.

Why we don't: They're giant, not very maneuverable, and for all the money, our babies outgrow them so very quickly. Sigh.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Portability
- ☆ Wheels
- ☆ Maneuverability
- ☆ Stability
- ☆ Fabric
- ☆ Mattress

NOTES: *Carriages*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Single Standard Strollers

The workhorse of strollers, single standard strollers are the largest single stroller, the most common stroller, and for many families, the primary pick.

They usually have large, padded seats with multiple reclining options, roomy baskets, double wheels that swivel in front for a smooth ride, and tons of features. They are heavier than lightweight strollers, but still light enough to be pulled in and out of most trunks quite easily.

Price

We're going to start with the price range, because it affects so many aspects of the stroller. The more you spend, the more features you'll get, the longer the stroller will last, and the nicer it will look. Because this is the stroller most parents use the longest, we recommend investing in a good one that will actually outlast your kids. A crappy stroller will roll its way to the trash before your first kid is done with it. A well-built, well-maintained stroller can be sold on eBay or Craigslist for up to 70 percent of its original price.

Standard strollers range in price from $79 to $500. Real quality kicks in around the $120 to $200 range.

Single Standard Stroller

Also Known As
Full-size stroller, pushchair

Age Range
Birth to 4 years

Total Usage
4 years

Recommendation
Must have, unless you choose another option from birth

When to Buy
Before baby is born.

Age Range

Not all standard strollers can be used from birth because newborn babies, with no neck control, need an almost flat recline and special support.

Although the actual stroller seat might not be able to accommodate a newborn, most standard strollers do offer infant car seat carrier attachments to allow parents to snap newborns tucked into their car seats into the stroller from day one.

Ideally, with a high enough weight limit and durable enough stroller, you should be able to use a standard stroller from birth through the end of your stroller days. However, most strollers aren't that ideal, as they break down or wear out their welcome. Most likely you will be tired of lugging so much weight and room around by late toddlerhood, but in a pinch, if you're a one-stroller-only gal, the single standard stroller is for you.

Weight Limit

The weight limit of most standard strollers is generally higher than any kid you'll care to keep pushing around. Most top out at 40 pounds, although some models do go all the way to 50 pounds.

Weight of Stroller

Standard strollers are the heaviest single strollers. They range in weight from 20 to 28 pounds. Every year, manufacturers try to shave a bit of weight off their strollers without sacrificing too much sturdiness, and oh, how we appreciate it!

Folding

Due to their weight and bulk, standard strollers are all flat fold. Look for one with the easiest fold, one-handed if possible.

Reclining Seat

Especially if you're going to use this stroller with a newborn, find a seat that fully reclines. And make sure the reclining function is smooth and easy to operate.

Portability

While they are heavy, they aren't too heavy to travel with. It's not the most fun trip, but it can be done.

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Why we love them: We love strollers and standard strollers are the standard. The workhorse of strollers, they fit most purposes, most children, and most budgets.

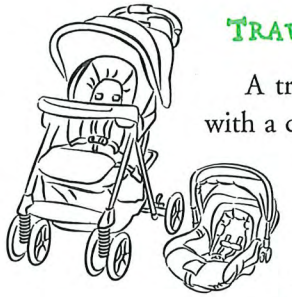
Why we don't: We don't don't.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Fully reclining seat
- ☆ Shock-absorbing wheels
- ☆ Large, easily accessible basket
- ☆ Snack tray
- ☆ Sun canopy
- ☆ Footrest
- ☆ Parent console
- ☆ Harness type
- ☆ Brakes
- ☆ Ease of fold
- ☆ Weight
- ☆ Suspension
- ☆ Locking mechanism
- ☆ Pattern
- ☆ Infant car seat carrier adapter

NOTES: *Single Standard Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade



Travel Systems

A travel system is a single standard stroller packaged with a complementary infant car seat carrier designed to be clipped to said stroller. Like peanut butter and jelly, the stroller and car seat in a travel system set are made for each other—with matching color, matching fabric, and guaranteed mechanical compatibility. It's the most popular pick for the new mom who likes all her gear to match, and for those seeking peace of mind that their infant car seat will work with their stroller.

Only a handful of stroller manufacturers make car seats as well, and many moms consider the ability to clip the infant carrier into the stroller a necessity for the first six months of baby's life. Most strollers have adapter pieces that allow the most popular infant car seat carriers to work with their model, but travel system sets guarantee a perfect match.

The Components

The infant car seat carrier and the standard stroller in the travel system set are not special models made just for a travel system. They are regular models, sold separately most everywhere, just packaged together by color and pattern, with hopefully a break in price. Don't be blinded by the pairing; each component should be evaluated individually. Read our sections on infant car seat carriers and single standard strollers to know which features to look for.

Travel System

Also Known As
Stroller system, car seat/stroller system, pram system, car seat–compatible stroller

Age Range
Birth to 4 years

Total Usage
4 years

Recommendation
Nice to have

When to Buy
Before baby is born.

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Err toward the Better Car Seat

Because the combinations of which model car seat comes with which model stroller are endless, you'll have quite a decision to pick the best match. Our advice is to research all car seat carrier and stroller models individually as if they never came in a set at all, decide which models you like best, and then see if you can find them as a travel system set. Too many moms think the planning is all done when they are presented with a travel system and just choose based on color, but not all travel systems offer the safest car seats or the best strollers.

If in doubt—you love the stroller but aren't crazy about the car seat that comes with it or vice versa—err on the side of the better infant car seat carrier, as the perfect car seat is more important for your baby.

To better prepare yourself for picking the perfect infant car seat (and to learn when to safely use and not use it), check out our detailed section on infant car seats (pages 98–106).

Beware the Bad Stroller

While we recommend you concentrate on the car seat portion, don't forget about the stroller entirely. Many travel systems are put together not for the convenience of parents, but for a manufacturer to unload unpopular strollers that aren't selling well singly. In the blush of first baby gear purchases, it's easy to think all the strollers rolling along under the car seat carriers are the same, but six months down the line, when you unclip the seat and discover you're left with an unwieldy, monstrous stroller that doesn't maneuver well and folds like a nightmare, you will not be a happy mama. And when mama's not happy, nobody's happy!

Travel Systems Sold Separately

Because some of the best stroller makers don't make car seats, those of us in love with those strollers were stuck using infant car seat carriers that didn't color coordinate. Doesn't sound like a big deal, but pushing a bright red stroller with a blue plaid car seat is hardly ideal. Thankfully, some of the car seat makers and stroller experts started working together and have released their respective products in matching fabrics and colors. You usually have to buy the pieces separately, but they look great together.

Price

Travel systems range in price from $100 to $400. Most are in the $200 range.

Why we love them: We love "matchy-matchy."

Why we don't: We love it to a fault. And sometimes get stuck with a subpar stroller because of it.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Car seat quality
- ☆ Stroller features
- ☆ Car seat attachment to stroller

NOTES: *Travel Systems*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Lightweight-Plus Strollers

A relatively new type of stroller on the market falls right between a standard stroller and a lightweight stroller: the lightweight-plus. Lightweight-plus strollers offer the strength and stability to carry your newborn or infant car seat carrier, but at half the weight.

Lightweight-plus strollers are a little bigger and a lot more stable than a lightweight stroller. An infant car seat carrier rides securely on top, but the stroller you're left with after your baby grows up is nimble, light, and easy to travel with.

Hard to Spot

Lightweight-plus strollers can be hard to find in a crowd because they are usually miscategorized—either thrown in with standard strollers or mixed with the lightweights. Most online stores don't differentiate either, but on BabyGizmo.com we give them their own, special category (because we think they are such a special stroller).

The way to spot a lightweight-plus stroller is by stroller weight and infant car seat compatibility. True lightweight strollers weigh less than 15 pounds and are not meant for newborns. (While a few lightweights do advertise they can accept an infant car seat carrier, we personally wouldn't put our newborn in a stroller that weighed less than 15

Lightweight-Plus Stroller

Also Known As
Buggy, lightweight stroller, standard stroller, midweight stroller

Age Range
Birth to 4 years

Total Usage
4 years

Recommendation
Must have, unless you choose another option from birth

When to Buy
Before baby is born.

pounds.) Standard strollers weigh over 20 pounds. Lightweight-plus strollers are between 16 and 19 pounds and can accommodate a newborn or an infant car seat carrier.

Longest Age Range

While standard strollers can be used from birth to about 4 years, they are large and heavy enough to make you regret them before your child turns 18 months. Many parents, desperate to lighten their load, turn to a lightweight stroller. Lightweight strollers, however, offer smaller baskets, fewer convenience features, and stiffer seats that can be a shocking downgrade to a mom used to having a place to pile everyone's winter coats, 12 shopping bags, two Cokes, and a diaper bag.

Lightweight-plus strollers are genius because they give you much of the room and features of a standard stroller, but in a tinier, lighter package. We actually found we never wanted to retire our lightweight-plus stroller because we didn't want to lose the big basket, the stability, and the cup holder. And because it was only two pounds heavier than a lightweight stroller, we never had to.

Maneuverability

In our opinion, due to their smaller but superior design, lightweight-plus strollers handle much better than standard strollers. Like a lightweight stroller, they fit in tight places and can turn corners more easily, but unlike lightweights, they won't tip over in a stiff breeze.

Reclining Seat

Because they are safe for newborns, lightweight-plus strollers should have a fully reclining seat. Make sure it reclines smoothly and easily.

Carry-Cots

A few lightweight-plus strollers actually make carry-cots, also called bassinets, that attach to their strollers. They are very beautiful, and allow a mom to stroll carriage-style with her newborn, but also take baby into the

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house to sleep. The bassinets are usually around $200 extra, not cheap, but cheaper than a carriage or luxury stroller system.

If you choose a carry-cot, verify that the fabric is breathable, the baby has proper ventilation, the mattress is firm, and you cannot fit more than one finger between the mattress and any side.

Price

Because they weigh less, many mid-range lightweight-plus models are cheaper than their standard counterparts. Some upscale lightweight-plus strollers cost considerably more than a typical standard stroller, but not more than a comparable quality standard and lightweight stroller purchase together. And because the lightweight-plus stroller serves as both, we think you come out ahead. Lightweight-plus strollers range from $59 to $350.

Why we love them: Pound-for-pound, they are the best single stroller purchase you can make. They last the longest, can be used for the most varied functions, and would be our pick if we could only pick one.

Why we don't: We know it defies the laws of science, but we still wish we could stuff a few more parent conveniences and a bigger basket on them without adding to the size or weight.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Carry-cot option
- ☆ Fully reclining seat
- ☆ Shock-absorbing wheels
- ☆ Large, easily accessible basket
- ☆ Snack tray
- ☆ Sun canopy
- ☆ Parent cup holders
- ☆ Harness type

- ☆ Handle
- ☆ Footrest
- ☆ Locking mechanism
- ☆ Brakes
- ☆ Ease of fold
- ☆ Weight
- ☆ Suspension
- ☆ Pattern

NOTES: *Lightweight-Plus Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Lightweight/Umbrella Strollers

Lightweight strollers earn entry into this category because they are *(drum roll, please)* light in weight. Weighing 15 pounds and less, they are not only a necessity, but also a lifesaver for short trips with tired toddlers. Their ability to fold compactly makes them a great, trunk-saving choice, and their small size makes maneuvering in tight spaces a breeze.

Not meant as a replacement for a full-size, standard stroller, most lightweight strollers are too light to accommodate infant car seat carriers; even a shopping bag hung from the back handles can tip them over. Unless they have a reclining seat, they are not to be used with infants under 6 months old.

Technically a stroller is labeled "umbrella" if it has two U-shaped handles and folds in on itself like an umbrella. A "lightweight" stroller folds flat.

Because this is the only category of stroller (and perhaps baby gear!) where $9 models are available, it might seem like a great place to give your wallet a break. However, we recommend investing in a good, feature-packed lightweight stroller because you'll use it longer and more often than any other stroller (you'll be sick of your full-size one by age 1, we promise!). The extra durability, nicer fabric, and ease of steering are well worth the extra money. Don't believe us? Try pushing a cheap one through Disneyland all day. Your wrists, back, and shoulders will not thank you. In fact, they may light torches, rile the villagers, and come after you.

Lightweight/ Umbrella Stroller

Also Known As
Buggy

Age Range
6 months to 4 years, unless it has a flat recline, and can be used from birth

Total Usage
3½ to 4 years

Recommendation
Nice to have

When to Buy
When you are tired of lugging around your full-size stroller.

Maclaren: The Umbrella Stroller That Changed History

For more than two hundred years, parents only had one choice of stroller—the heavy, unwieldy baby carriage. It's hard to believe, but the modern, folding stroller wasn't invented until 1965.

Owen Maclaren, a British test pilot and aeronautical designer, decided to try something new after a visit from his daughter, who flew from America with her baby and cumbersome baby carriage. In converted stables at his country farmhouse, he formed an ingenious frame out of aluminum that weighed just six pounds and folded compactly. And thus the umbrella stroller was born.

We love Maclarens, and we're so grateful for the superior handling and styling, we feel like sending them a small donation. And then we found out that they are releasing a black leather and gold umbrella stroller for $4,000, and we changed our minds. They seem to be doing all right on their own.

Maneuverability

We used to think all umbrella strollers were the same—hard to maneuver, flimsy little things that strained and tilted when you tried to shove them around a corner. And then we pushed our first high-quality umbrella stroller. With our breath. Unbelievable, life-altering difference. We'd wept through a trip to an amusement park because pushing our umbrella stroller was like hiking through waist-deep snow uphill, but we assumed they were all like that.

Perhaps because we grew up going to the Dollar Store with a mom who'd never dream of dropping $100 on a stroller when you could get one for $10, we never touched one until our second children. We thought the only

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difference between higher-priced umbrella strollers was in the fancy fabric. Yeah, the fabric is nice, but the real difference is in the design. Cheap umbrella strollers are crisscrossed, hollow steel tubes with a sling of fabric buttoned on them. Nice umbrella strollers are feats of engineering that carefully balance their load over the back wheels for maximum stability and mobility. You can push a good umbrella stroller with a fifth grader in it with your thumb. If you are even slightly interested and can possibly afford it, do yourself a favor and get a good one—early.

The Seat

Lightweight stroller seats are generally quite stiff, quite unpadded, and quite uncomfortable for riders. Rather than a supported seat with a stiff, reinforced frame, many lightweight seats are simple slings of fabric. Some are barely even fabric, but a ventilated mesh. Because you will use this stroller for years, and your children will spend days of their life in it, we do recommend getting a nice padded one.

Reclining Seat

Many umbrella stroller seats are fixed in position and do not recline. Make sure that if you buy one of those, it's what you want. We've grabbed one by mistake before and what a mistake it was! The only thing better than a happy toddler is a sleeping toddler, and yours will be neither in a fixed frame seat.

Plenty of umbrella strollers do have reclining seats now, even fully reclining for a newborn (although we wouldn't put a newborn in a lightweight stroller). While some offer various levels of recline, others only offer two positions: up and down. The method of recline for umbrella strollers is quite different from the mechanical methods on standard strollers. Seats on lightweights recline using zippers, hooks, drawstrings, straps, buckles, and sometimes levers.

Handles

The handles on cheaper lightweight strollers are notoriously uncomfortable; the nicer strollers have nicer handles. Some are hard plastic, but some are padded. We like the padded ones.

Be careful of anything you hang on the back of your umbrella stroller, as they are lightweight enough to tip backward quite easily. We're always extremely careful when our toddler is in one, but somehow we always forget about unloading the back first, and when we lift our child out, the stroller crashes backward to the ground. While our child is safe in our arms, our purse and the stroller take a beating.

Basket

Seriously scaled-down umbrella strollers will not have a basket at all. Some nicer ones do, and we seek those out. However, prepare for a much smaller basket than on standard strollers.

Extra Features

Lightweight strollers are lightweight because they don't offer much extra. No snack trays, no parent consoles, no cup holders. You can add some of these things with universal accessories, which we do. Oh, we do.

Stroller Weight

Under 15 pounds, they are all pretty light. So light, you won't really feel a difference between an 11- and a 13-pounder. The lightest ones weigh in at 7 pounds, but most are around 12.

Price

There are two basic types of umbrella stroller: cheap and not. The cheap ones range from $9 to $39. The higher you go on the pay scale, the better your stroller will maneuver. Period.

The not-cheap umbrella strollers range from $50 to $200. Too steep? Look online for last year's model; you can usually score a brand new one for $100 less and the only difference is generally the color.

Why we love them: They are lightweight and easy to travel with.

Why we don't: They are lightweight and easy to tip over.

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Features to Consider

- ☆ Maneuverability
- ☆ Seat
- ☆ Seat recline
- ☆ Handles
- ☆ Basket

NOTES: *Lightweight/Umbrella Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade



Luxury Stroller Systems

In 1999, Max Barenbrug, a design student from The Netherlands, set out to make a new kind of stroller that offered more functionality and a sleeker form. He pitched his concept to every major manufacturer and was turned down. He decided to make them anyway, so he and his brother started their own company, a little outfit called Bugaboo. And a new era was born.

Loved by the very starriest of celebrities—think Madonna and Gwyneth—the stroller crashed through price barriers, selling for a full $400 more than the next priciest brands.

Who would pay that much for a stroller?

A lot of people, apparently, as sales tripled from 2003 to 2004. Now almost a dozen new manufacturers are producing luxury stroller systems. Owners swear by them, reviewers swoon over them, and magazine editors can't print their photos enough.

So, are they really worth all the croaking? In a word, yes.

When we first started testing them, we were prepared to push through the hype and were even a little biased against them. We're middle-class moms, after all, and proud of it.

And while it was lust at first sight (the delicious solid-colored fabrics against the cool gray aluminum is such a relief from the 6,000 muted plaid variations of other strollers), it was true love at first push. A luxury

Luxury Stroller System

Also Known As
Designer stroller, pram system, infant stroller system

Age Range
Birth to 4 years

Total Usage
4 years

Recommendation
Really nice to have

When to Buy
If you're going to pull the trigger, do it before your baby is born, so you can enjoy the benefits of this stroller system from day one.

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stroller system surpasses every stroller we've ever laid hands on in terms of mobility, maneuverability, and just plain modern marvelousness. It responds with the slightest touch. Drives as if on clouds. And offers flexibility the likes of which we've never seen.

Only having viewed them (jealously) from afar, we were surprised to learn that luxury stroller systems are more than just a designer stroller. They are, in fact, full systems, good from birth through preschool, for use in the car, in the park, and even in the house.

They are three strollers in one: a carriage, a toddler stroller, and an all-terrain stroller. They come with detachable carry-cots that can be carried into the house and used as a Moses basket. And many now come with baby rockers and infant car seat carriers.

The core of the system is the chassis—the metal frame of the stroller—and it includes the luscious handlebar and wonderful, giant, air-filled, shock-absorbing wheels. The seats are separate pieces you attach depending on your need: a carry-cot for an infant, a regular stroller seat for a toddler, even "fun seats" for big kids with little steering wheels.

They are very sleek and modern, and sadly lacking parent convenience features. Most have started adding cup holders, but that's about all.

However, they do offer tons of accessories, many included: sun canopies, rain covers, mosquito nets, foot muffs, wheeled boards so toddler can hitch a ride, travel bags, and infant car seat adapters.

Weight

Unbelievably, all that stroller goodness weighs very little. Most luxury stroller systems weigh less than 20 pounds.

Price

Luxury stroller systems range in price from $500 to $1,000; most fall in the $700 range. Sounds like a bomb, but we added up the price of all the individual buys a luxury stroller system would save us from having to purchase:

Travel system:	$300
All-terrain stroller:	$350
Umbrella stroller:	$160
Rain guard:	$20
Moses basket:	$100
Baby seat:	$40
TOTAL:	$970

Yeah, we were shocked too. In fact, we managed to spin it to our husbands that a luxury stroller system was actually going to save us money!

We can't afford the Hermès Birkin bag. We'll never drive a Bentley. But to discover that the most beautiful, most versatile, designer strollers on the planet actually cost the same price we're spending anyway on lesser quality products was a great, great day for us middle class moms. It's not for everyone, sure. But if you can swing it, you won't regret it.

Special Features

So what special features should you look for in a luxury stroller system?

Fabric

Plush is king, but not always easy to clean. And some fabrics that look good actually turn out to be too hot. Pick a nice, breathable fabric that you can at least spot clean. Or, in the case of a diaper explosion, replace.

Easy-to-Use Clips

Because most systems require you to clip the bassinet or stroller seat onto the frame—and sometimes unclip them every time you want to fold it—look for a system that makes this easy. Some are foolproof; some make us feel like fools.

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Folding

Luxury stroller systems have been notoriously difficult to fold, but they are getting better. Look for an easy one to save time and save face.

A stand-up fold is a good, good thing on an expensive stroller, because it brings the frame up to you rather than crashing to the pavement.

Wheels

Part of the secret to their superior handling is in the wheels, which are generally air filled. However, some are puncture proof, and some are not. There's nothing worse than sporting a flat on your luxury stroller. Annoying, embarrassing, and in our opinion, inexcusable for such an expensive product.

Handle Height Adjustment

Most luxury stroller system handles are adjustable, but some move more easily than others. Especially if you're trading off with a taller dad, a single push-button adjustment is much easier than one that requires a screwdriver.

Caché

Let's be honest, part of the appeal of luxury strollers is snob appeal, and that declines dramatically if a hundred other moms are pushing the same stroller at the mall. To avoid this, you might consider looking into the hottest, newest releases. New designers, most coming from Europe, debut their American lines every day. See if you can't score one of the first. You'll definitely score points with the paparazzi.

Why we love them: Luxury strollers are like Christmas morning, full of gifts. Carry-cots and toddler seats and foot muffs, hooray!

Why we don't: They cost a wad of cash, up front. Even though we know we'll spend the same amount on each accessory separately, somehow spreading those purchases out makes them easier to swallow (and explain to our mother!).

Features to Consider

- ☆ Fabric
- ☆ Attachments
- ☆ Fold
- ☆ Tires
- ☆ Handle
- ☆ Caché

NOTES: *Luxury Stroller Systems*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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All-Terrain Strollers

The SUVs of strollers, all-terrain strollers are sportier and sturdier than their standard stroller counterparts, but are more maneuverable than joggers. The main feature of an all-terrain stroller is that it sports a triangular design with larger, air-filled wheels in back, a more durable frame, and true suspension, so it can go over "all terrains." They have large sun canopies because presumably you'll be using them primarily outdoors.

Many standard strollers look sporty these days, but take them off the sidewalk and they threaten to shake apart and they overshake the baby. The wheels on all-terrain strollers are large, pneumatic, and well-shocked, giving baby a better ride and parents an easier push through uneven terrain.

Most all-terrain strollers are not meant to be used as jogging or running strollers, however. Jogging strollers have fixed front wheels, hand brakes, and parent wrist tethers. They are constructed to withstand a great amount of rock and roll. All-terrain strollers are great for off-roading excursions: hikes, beaches, and even the uneven urban jungle.

Hard to Spot

Like lightweight-plus strollers, all-terrain strollers are frequently hard to find because they are miscategorized in stores and mislabeled, sometimes even by the manufacturers themselves, as "jogging strollers." The surefire way to spot an all-terrain is to look at the front wheels. True jogging strollers have a fixed front wheel that is 16 inches or larger; all-terrain front wheels swivel and are usually around 12 inches in diameter.

All-Terrain Stroller

Also Known As
Sport stroller, sport utility stroller, terrain stroller, urban stroller

Age Range
6 months to 5 years, unless it has a flat recline seat and can be used from birth

Total Usage
4½-plus years

Recommendation
Nice to have

When to Buy
Before baby is born if you plan on using it from day one. Or as you find you need it because you're off-roading more than you expected.

To Jog or Not to Jog?

Their bigger wheels, suspension, and sturdier frame mean you can take most all-terrain strollers for a jog around the block. They are great for power walks too. But if you're a serious runner, you should get a true jogging stroller.

Also, while many all-terrain strollers can hold newborns, you shouldn't jog with babies under 6 months old, as they don't have the neck muscles to withstand the jostling.

Age Range

Unlike more serious-minded jogging strollers, all-terrain strollers want to be your primary ride, not just a single-use activity stroller. To achieve this, many of them are packed with features and can actually accommodate newborns. If you are considering using an all-terrain stroller from day one, look for one with a fully reclining seat and infant car seat carrier adapters. Some more upscale models even offer bassinets.

Their extra durability means all-terrain strollers are almost guaranteed to last through your baby's kindergarten days, so you can get quite a lot of use out of them.

Carry-Cots

Many all-terrain strollers come with an optionally purchased carry-cot, or bassinet. If you're considering an all-terrain stroller carry-cot, you have a lucky, lucky baby. Most of them are dreamy. As with any baby bed, however, check that the fabric is breathable and washable, the interior is well ventilated, the mattress is firm, and you can't fit more than one finger between the mattress and any inside side.

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Features

Some of the parent-friendly features (sorely lacking on jogging strollers) include storage baskets, parent consoles, height-adjustable handles, all-weather boots, and even reversible seating for newborns.

Color and Fabric

If strollers were Spice Girls, the all-terrain would be Sporty Spice—a tomboy with outdoorsy qualities but girly flair. You can see this immediately in the color and fabric options. The material on all-terrain strollers is more durable and weatherproof, and mostly solid colors—more fun than the somber grays and navy blues of joggers. You will find light greens and pink trim, but never a teddy bear pattern. Many moms make the all-terrain their stroller of choice for this very reason.

The Seat

While many all-terrain strollers do have reclining seats, just as many do not. If you choose one with a fixed sling seat, realize that it is an inappropriate choice for babies under 6 months old.

Folding

All-terrain strollers do fold, but not as compactly as their standard cousins, and many require you to remove the front wheel before folding.

Size

All that all-terrain durability and feature-packed goodness will cost you in size and price. All-terrain strollers are much, much larger than standard strollers, usually as big as double strollers when folded, and they only hold one kid.

Weight

Amazingly, all-terrain strollers aren't all that heavy. Thanks to their innovative aluminum frames, they are generally as weighty as standard strollers: between 21 and 30 pounds. Not nearly as light as luxury or lightweight strollers, but completely manageable.

Price

Their superior styling and construction does lead to a higher price tag than a standard or lightweight stroller. The price range on all-terrain strollers is from $200 to $450. The most durable strollers start at around the $350 mark. Past that, they are very similar in construction and quality; you'll start to pay extra for brand appeal.

Why we love them: They allow us to leave the pavement. Sometimes a mom has to drive over the mulch at the playground or across the grass.

Why we don't: They are very big and that removing-the-front-wheel-when-folding thing is a real pain.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Weight
- ☆ Bassinet option
- ☆ Basket
- ☆ Parent console
- ☆ Handle
- ☆ Boot
- ☆ Reversible seating
- ☆ Seat recline
- ☆ Fold
- ☆ Canopy

NOTES: *All-Terrain Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Jogging Strollers

If you plan to run with your child, you should purchase only a true jogging stroller. Other strollers don't have the construction or safety features required to protect your little one. Jogging strollers have running-specific safety features built in, including parking brakes, hand brakes, and an emergency parent wrist tether for runaway strollers. However, it is important to note that pediatricians recommend not running with babies under 6 months old because they lack the proper neck strength and head control to safely manage the motion.

Jogging strollers are well-known for their size, large inflatable tires, three-wheel setup, and brightly colored fabric. Most also feature giant sun canopies for shade, although some are canopy-less.

Jogging strollers are constructed with a sturdy chassis to withstand vibration. With an aluminum frame, they are easier to push than most other strollers, but because of the fixed front wheel and considerable bulk, difficult to navigate around corners. Most feature shock absorbers and plush suspension, offering baby a very smooth ride. However, they have limited storage space and usually no convenience features—cup holders and tray toys would get in the way and add to the weight of the stroller, making it harder to push while running.

Jogging Stroller

Also Known As
Jogger, runner

Age Range
6 months to 5 years

Total Usage
4½-plus years

Recommendation
Must have if you ever plan on jogging or running with your baby; don't need, if you don't

When to Buy
Start looking just before your baby turns 6 months old, so you'll be ready to use it.

History of the Jogging Stroller

You can thank Jane Fonda for the jogging stroller. The fitness revolution of the 1980s brought about the very first jogger.

Actually, you should thank Phil Baechler, a journalist and long-distance runner who tried bonding with his new baby during runs, but instead ending up trashing his standard strollers. So he invented one specifically designed for jogging with baby. And named it, appropriately, Baby Jogger.

Baby Jogger is still happily in business, and unlike Maclaren, actually offers some of the more reasonably priced jogging strollers to this day. No bling need apply.

Wheels

With jogging strollers, it's all about the size of the wheel. A serious jogger doesn't have wheels less than 16 inches in diameter, although a couple of 12-inchers are out there.

The larger the wheel, the easier the stroller will be to push, especially on more jagged terrain. If you plan on light jogging on mostly flat surfaces, 12-inch wheels should suffice. Serious jogging should be done with nothing less than 16-inch wheels, while serious runners will take nothing less than 20 inches.

Swivel Wheels

While traditional jogging strollers have a fixed front wheel, it does make them a bear to push around corners. Some models have started offering a swivel wheel that can be locked into place. For safety, when you are running or even jogging, the front wheel should always be fixed to not swivel. Why? Ever ride down a big hill in a wagon like Calvin & Hobbes? Ever lose control of the handle, and when the front wheels turned suddenly, you and the wagon flipped over? That's why. A fixed front stroller wheel is necessary

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when jogging or running because it won't abruptly turn at high speeds, sending you, the stroller, and its precious contents flying.

But being able to flip a lever and have swivel capabilities when you are just moseying is an attractive feature to many.

Suspension

While not all joggers come with suspension, we highly recommend it to help absorb the shocks of the road so your baby's brain doesn't have to.

Brakes

Most jogging strollers come with both hand and foot brakes. We're big fans of having both. Just make sure they aren't so tight that you have to be a carnival champ to squeeze them.

Wrist Tether

A tether is a strap that goes around your wrist to keep the stroller from getting out of your reach, just in case you stumble or get so tired you lose your grasp on the handle. Because we're almost delirious near the end of even a short run and can sometimes barely manage to stay upright ourselves, we highly recommend this feature.

Aluminum versus Steel Frame

While steel frames are less expensive, they do eventually rust. They are also easily tortured by climate changes, marine environments, and mountain weather. It might cost a bit more at first, but an aluminum frame will add years to the life of your stroller, which could save you money if you plan on using it for more than one kid.

Seating

For safety, most jogging stroller seats are set to a permanent deep recline that your child might not like. Instead of facing forward, they face the sky. Younger kids probably won't mind, but older kids are apt to complain. At least, ours do.

Safety Straps

For reasons beyond our comprehension, the highest speed strollers in the world also have the worst safety straps. Many models have straps that are too loose, even when tightened as far as possible, to adequately restrain a small child. A 2-year-old being able to eject herself at any time is not something we want to worry about when we're sprinting down a hill.

Know this is a liability of many models, and check diligently for it in the store, as you can't really home sew a safe alternative.

Features

You won't find many convenience features on a jogging stroller. Many don't even have baskets, but do offer a pocket or two. We couldn't figure out why they couldn't at least stick a cup holder or something on them, but then our personal trainer aunt reminded us that you're not guzzling Starbucks when you're running. Touché, Miss Fitness, touché. (Although we are running with a water bottle and we would like a place to put that.)

Canopy

We like sun canopies to shade our babies, but they can add drag to a jogging stroller, and when you're running, you frequently run in directions that make the sun shine directly onto your rider anyway. Just be sure to use lots of sunscreen, a hat, and maybe even lightweight long pants on your little guy.

Size and Weight

Jogging strollers are big, like leave-in-your-garage-unfolded big. They aren't too heavy—about the same as standard strollers, thanks to their light frames and lack of extras. Jogging strollers typically weigh between 20 and 30 pounds.

Fold

Jogging strollers don't fold very compactly, and many require you to remove the front wheel before folding. Not an issue if you're constantly running around your own neighborhood, but if you ever plan on hauling it to the local park, find one that folds.

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Price

Unlike all-terrain strollers, many discount joggers are available. Prices range from $99 to $400. Cheaper joggers near the $100 range will not handle well or last long, but can be a good choice for the casual exerciser. Good quality models for serious athletes start at around $200.

Why we love them: They allow us to continue our pre-baby jogs with baby.

Why we don't: They allow us to continue our pre-baby jogs with baby.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Weight
- ☆ Canopy
- ☆ Pockets
- ☆ Wheels
- ☆ Brakes
- ☆ Frame
- ☆ Seat recline
- ☆ Safety straps
- ☆ Fold

NOTES: *Jogging Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

Double Standard Strollers

They're big, they're bulky, and they're expensive. But if you're having twins or expecting your next baby before your first is able to walk long distances (like through the mall), you're going to need one. Standard double strollers weigh anywhere from 24 to a whopping 47 pounds, but they're chock-full of features, offer comfortable seating for both babes, and they get the job done.

Most double strollers are unwieldy to steer, but they do offer large baskets, double sun canopies, and parent-friendly features such as cup holders, adjustable handles, and shock-absorbing wheels.

Double Standard Stroller

Also Known As
Full-size double, double stroller, twin pushchair, double pushchair, double buggy, twin buggy, twin stroller, tandem double, side-by-side double

Age Range
Birth to 4 years

Total Usage
4 years

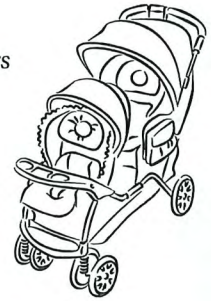
Recommendation
Must have, if you have more than one non-full-time walker

When to Buy
Just before your twins or next baby is born.

Seating

There are actually two different types of double standard strollers based on how they stack the seats: tandem or side by side.

Tandem Seating



The most popular seating arrangement in double strollers is the tandem, where one seat sits in front of the other. Many tandems go one step further and offer stadium seating, giving the little guy in back a view from the top. Tandem strollers are usually very stable, but can be a nightmare to maneuver. To make things easier, you should load the heaviest weight in the back seat, over the

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back wheels. While many manufacturers recommend placing an infant car seat carrier in the rear seat for safety (presumably so you can be closer to your baby), if you have a heavier toddler, this arrangement can be almost impossible to push. Many tandems only offer a full recline on the back seat, which is a total pain, because everyone wants to kick back sometimes. We look for tandems that allow both seats to recline. Many newer tandem strollers allow you to reverse the direction each seat faces independently, so your children can see where they're going, look at you, or even face each other.

Why we love them: Tandems are easier to fit through the door, and are more car seat compatible.

Why we don't: Tandems are the heaviest and hardest to push stroller in the free world. And if you have same-aged children, prepare for fights about who gets to sit in the front (we don't know about you, but we prepare by packing M&M's).

Side-by-Side Seating



Side-by-side seats sit, well, we think you can guess. They offer a more democratic view, although they pose a challenge for many doorways, elevators, and small aisles. While each seat reclines, more often than not, neither accepts an infant car seat. If you have same-sized kids, it's much easier to push them in a side-by-side than in a tandem, but if one kid is significantly heavier, these strollers tend to veer to the side, all crazy-like. They are a little lighter than a tandem stroller, but much bigger when folded. Make sure the side-by-side stroller isn't too wide to fit through a standard doorway; less than 30 inches wide is recommended.

Why we love them: They allow our children to play with each other.

Why we don't: They allow our children to punch each other.

Seats

Look for seats that both recline. You'll need a full recline for infant use.

Basket

Double strollers offer them, but they can be nearly impossible to access, what with four little legs in the way. Also see if you can access the basket when the seats are reclined, as it's no good trying to grab a blanket to cover a sleeping child if you have to wake that child to get to it.

Canopy

Look for a large one that adequately covers both riders.

Wheels and Suspension

Look for good wheels, as the extra weight of two riders will crack little plastic ones in no time. Also suspension on the wheels is not just nice for the rider, but can aid the pusher as well.

Handling

They are all pretty bad, but some are worse than others. No matter how big it is or how much it costs, you'll hate your double stroller if it pains you to push it. Keep test-driving until you find an adequate model.

The Handle

Because you're shoving so much weight down the sidewalk, you need a good, solid handle. A single bar is best. Ergonomically padded is even better. Just make sure it doesn't shake or wiggle too easily in the store when you're not even pushing the stroller, or when you actually try to push you'll end up wanting to push it off a cliff.

Folding

Many double strollers fold quite easily—too easily in fact. Thousands of the most popular models were recently recalled because they kept folding in on tiny riders. Check that the stroller has a foolproof locking mechanism to keep the stroller open when it's in use.

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Stroller Weight

Pay careful attention to how heavy a stroller you are committing to, because you might consider committing hari-kari on a large one after you have loaded and unloaded it about three times. Double standard strollers weigh anywhere from 24 to an upsetting 47 pounds. We're just going to go on record as saying that after you leave the 20 to 30 pound range, you leave all good sense behind.

Features

Most double standard strollers come packed with parent convenience features—thank goodness for small miracles! We highly recommend getting as many as you can, without adding too much to the weight, because being able to walk with your drink of choice can make any walk more pleasant.

Price

Double standard strollers range in price from $99 to (are you ready?) $899. Most are firmly in the $150 range.

Other Alternatives

If you have a wide enough range in the age of your children, you might not need a full double standard stroller. You can find much smaller, easier to manage products designed for the older child, think 3 and up, who like to walk but can't make it all the way through a day at Disneyland. You might also consider a toddler footboard attachment to your standard stroller (some luxury stroller systems offer them), or a stroller-and-a-half, which offers a little half seat for your bigger hitchhikers.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Tandem or side-by-side
- ☆ Seat reclines
- ☆ Car seat adaptable
- ☆ Basket

- ☆ Canopy
- ☆ Suspension
- ☆ Wheels
- ☆ Maneuverability
- ☆ Handle
- ☆ Fold
- ☆ Weight
- ☆ Parent console

NOTES: *Double Standard Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Double Lightweight/Umbrella Strollers

About the time your twins or your second baby turns 1, you'll start looking for a lighter stroller to ease your double pushing duties. Double lightweight or umbrella strollers are the lightest double strollers available, but they are still twice as heavy as a single umbrella stroller, weighing roughly the same as a single standard stroller, anywhere from 18 to 28 pounds. While they are the ultimate in convenience (especially important for the mom of multiple children who doesn't need to be weighed down by anything else), the double lightweight stroller you choose should be sturdy enough to carry two children.

Double lightweight strollers share many of the same features and options as single lightweight strollers, so take a peek at that section so you know what to look for. Just know that everything—wheels, handles, and even the folding mechanism—will take double the pressure under double the weight. Here are the features that are specific only to double versions.

Age Range

Most double lightweight strollers are meant for children over 6 months in age. Some do have newborn capabilities, and if you are willing to trust your tiny one in a tiny stroller, look for newborn head pillows, body padding, and secure straps. Babies under 6 months old also require a fully reclined seat.

Double umbrella strollers are the go-to choice for moms with older toddlers who no longer need to tote quite so much stuff. A good one should last you into the preschool years.

Seating

Due to their light construction, double lightweight strollers only offer side-by-side seating and are not able to safely hold infant car seat carriers. (Some claim to be able to hold an infant car seat carrier, but we wouldn't trust them with our newborn baskets.) The side-by-side seating arrangement makes for equal viewing—great for twins—but does make the stroller quite wide, a nuisance in narrow store aisles.

Cheaper double umbrella strollers will have only a single-stop recline, while nicer models will give you more recline positions. Look for seats that offer at least one position of recline, as the rhythmic motion of strolling could put even the most stubborn insomniac to sleep.

Sun Canopies

Make sure canopies are adequately sized to cover both little passengers. And because your riders are sitting side by side, peekaboo windows on the canopy can be especially helpful to see who really "started it."

Features

Many double lightweight strollers do have a few convenience features like moderately sized baskets and parent cup holders, but not nearly as many as a double standard. We're all about convenience, so we look for strollers with the most we can get.

Handling

Because they are wide and weighed down with two kids, double lightweight strollers don't handle nearly as dreamily as single lightweights, but they do steer much, much better than double standard strollers. Nicer, more expensive strollers will push much, much easier and actually allow you to turn corners, unlike some of the cheaper models.

Double Lightweight/Umbrella Stroller

Also Known As
Double umbrella, twin umbrella, double umbrella buggy, double umbrella pushchair

Age Range
6 months to 4 years

Total Usage
3½ years

Recommendation
Nice to have

When to Buy
Start looking just before your twins or youngest baby turns 6 months old.

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Look for a handle that is at least slightly padded, because you'll be pushing twice the weight. Handles that adjust can save your life, especially as many double lightweight strollers are awkward and can get in the way of your natural stride. Kicking the stroller every three steps does not make for a fun stroll.

Also, if you thought suspension over the wheels was important for an easy pushing experience, double that thought.

Size

Check that the double lightweight stroller you choose can actually fit through a standard door; in other words, it should be 29 inches or less in width. This size can lead to a rather snug fit for wider kids, but you can't exactly park your kids outside while you shop because their stroller doesn't fit through the front door. (We've heard moms do routinely leave their kids outside stores in Iceland, but we're pretty sure that won't fly here. They also get a nine-month maternity leave with 80 percent of their pay in Iceland. We're thinking about moving to Iceland.)

Folding

There are still clever, one-handed folds to be had on double lightweight strollers, but they do require some amount of parent patience. You are collapsing more supports and more fabric, so give yourself some time to perfect it. Seem too complicated or time consuming? Find one that isn't.

One of the biggest advantages of a double lightweight stroller over any other double stroller is how much smaller it is when folded. While other doubles take up the entire trunk on our SUV (Geo Metro? forget about it), double lightweight strollers do collapse into a pretty small size. Not as small as a single umbrella, but comparable to a single standard.

Weight

Surprisingly, double lightweight strollers aren't as light as we'd hoped, but they do have to safely support two kids. They actually weigh as much as single standard, and even some double standard, strollers. Double lightweight strollers weigh between 18 and 30 pounds.

Price

Just as with single umbrellas, double lightweight strollers have two price groups: cheap and not. Cheaper strollers cost between $59 and $139. More expensive varieties range from $150 to $350. More money will buy you a sturdier stroller, better maneuverability, more durability, and more options. For this type of stroller, we have found that great, long-lasting success starts at the $200 range.

Why we love them: Bringing two kids everywhere means bringing a lot of stuff. We appreciate not having to bring it all in a giant, heavy stroller.

Why we don't: We wish they better accommodated newborns. But then, of course, they'd have to be bigger and heavier. We can't win.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Reclines
- ☆ Canopies
- ☆ Basket
- ☆ Parent cup holder
- ☆ Handle
- ☆ Suspension
- ☆ Width
- ☆ Weight
- ☆ Fold

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NOTES: *Double Lightweight/Umbrella Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

Double All-Terrain Strollers

Just as the right all-terrain stroller can be used as your primary single stroller, you can use a double all-terrain stroller for more than just casual jogs—it can be your primary double stroller, period.

The features to consider when choosing a double all-terrain are very similar to single choices, so flip back to that section and read all about it.

The specific concerns for double all-terrain strollers include the extra size, weight, folded dimensions, and unique seating arrangements.

Seating

Double all-terrains typically offer two types of seat—side-by-side or tandem. There is, however, a weird new breed: the tandem basket seat, also sometimes called a "second seat."

Side-by-Side Seating

Side-by-side seating is the most popular arrangement for double all-terrains. It gives each child an equal view, although for better or worse, they can easily touch each other. Side-by-side seating makes for the widest stroller, both fully assembled and folded.



Double All-Terrain Stroller

Also Known As

Sport double, twin sport, sport utility double stroller, terrain double, all-terrain double, urban double, twin terrain

Age Range

6 months to 5 years, unless it can accommodate a newborn, and then it can be used from birth

Total Usage

4½ years

Recommendation

Nice to have

When to Buy

Just before your twins or next baby is born.

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Why we love them: We like it for jogging.

Why we don't: We hate it for shopping.

Tandem Seating



You won't find as many tandem seats with double all-terrains, generally because it's a harder engineering feat to pull off in a triangular shaped stroller. If you're looking at this type, choose one that is nice and stable and can't tip over easily like a tricycle.

Why we love them: They are much easier to shop with, because we can actually fit into the shops.

Why we don't: The stability thing bugs us. Especially when an overexcited front passenger unexpectedly decides to dismount.

Tandem Basket Seating



As strange as it sounds, this new seating design puts one child literally underneath the other. The front rider sits in a seat that resembles a single all-terrain setup. The second child sits in a sling seat mounted underneath and slightly behind, where the stroller basket would be (and now, most definitely is not). They have room for their legs and all, and there is a high seat back and safety straps. But we still hate it. The kid is inches off the ground. They stare at the back of the seat in front of them. And the wheels are right there, just begging to be touched. Yes, there are parents who love them and kids who swear they love to ride in them. And the manufacturers have finally started adding wheel guards. We're still not sold.

Why we love them: We really don't.

Why we don't: No matter what you say, the kid is riding in the basket and looks like an unsafe afterthought to us.

Reclining Seats

Look for a recline capability on both seats, or else you run the risk of revealing who really is your favorite kid.

Weight

Of course, double all-terrain strollers are heavier than singles. They range in weight from 28 to 35 pounds.

Price

Double all-terrains are more expensive, too. Price ranges from $300 to $700.

Features to Consider

- ☆ Stroller seat setup
- ☆ Reclines
- ☆ Weight

NOTES: *Double All-Terrain Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Double Jogging Strollers

If you are a serious runner and have two children you want to take with you, you'll need a double jogging stroller.

Read our entry on jogging strollers to learn about which features make a good one, but here are the specific specifications for doubles.

Seating

Jogging strollers only offer one seating arrangement for double riders: side by side. The positioning makes the entire stroller much wider, of course, and can make pushing more difficult, but you're guaranteed a better workout.

Look for seats that are wide enough to comfortably seat your children. As with single joggers, seats are typically very deep and tend to force riders to look up rather than out.

Safety Straps

As on single joggers, the safety straps are decidedly loose and lacking on double joggers. Check their adjustability in the store and see if you can actually strap younger children in tightly enough.

Canopy

Because the seats are side by side, double jogging strollers have one giant canopy that shades both passengers. Look for one that provides adequate shade, but beware. Some are so large, a big gust of wind, and poof, you're Mary Poppins.

Double Jogging Stroller

Also Known As
Double jogger, runner double, Duallie, Twinner, twin jogger

Age Range
6 months to 5 years

Total Usage
4½ years

Recommendation
Nice to have

When to Buy
Just before your twins or next baby turns 6 months old.

Size

The largest of all strollers on Earth, the double jogging stroller is wide as a house. Forget about being able to push it through a single, standard door. Seriously, forget about it.

Folding

Most do fold, with more steps than most strollers. And you'll still need an extra parking spot for it when it's folded.

Price

Double jogging strollers range in price from $200 to over $400.

Why we love them: Because we've never needed to continue our jogs more than after we've had our second kid.

Why we don't: Because we still hate jogging.

Features to Consider

☆ Seat width
☆ Canopy
☆ Safety straps
☆ Fold

NOTES: *Double Jogging Strollers*

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Strollers-and-a-Half

If you have two children but are worried about the size, weight, and price of double strollers, you might consider a stroller-and-a-half. Meant for moms with children of different ages, they are a great option if you have an older child who likes to walk sometimes and would leave her seat in a full double empty more often than not.

A stroller-and-a-half is a single standard stroller with a regular stroller seat and an additional area behind that seat for the occasional older hitchhiker.

When shopping for a stroller-and-a-half, employ the same tactics and look for the same features found on a single standard stroller, but also consider the following.

Age Range

While the standard stroller's seat can be used on most models from birth up (with an infant car seat carrier only, unless the seat fully reclines and is specifically suited for a newborn), the minimum age for a back passenger is around 2½ years, or when your child is old enough to not just throw himself off the little platform on a whim.

This is not a suitable stroller choice for twins, as they can't be in the back when they're younger, and they'll fight for the back when they're older.

Stroller-and-a-Half

Also Known As
Sit-N-Stand, baby-toddler ride-along stroller, Caboose stroller

Age Range
6 months to 4 years, unless you attach an infant car seat carrier, and then it can be used from birth

Total Usage
4 years

Recommendation
Nice to have

When to Buy
If you have an older toddler (2½-plus years old), buy this stroller before your second baby is born.

Front Seat

The front seat is a standard stroller seat, although with much less recline than we like. Look for adequate padding and appropriate safety straps. Many models also offer a child snack tray, which we like.

Back Board and Bench

Behind the front seat is extra space with a little board and bench seat for the older child. The back rider can either stand on the board or sit on a little bench. The bench is usually quite small and backless and resembles a tiny camping table. There is usually a strap that hooks between the stroller handles, however, that can give back support to a child when she is standing. We prefer models that have a sliding rather than fixed bench, so it can be moved out of the way when the rider stands.

While some back seats do have a little lap strap, children can easily free themselves, so let only mature kids ride in the back.

Finally, look for a stroller that doesn't allow easy, tempting access to the back wheels. Another reason to not let your 18-month-old ride in the back, no matter how smart he might be.

Basket

The stroller-and-a-half does come with a nice large basket, but it can be difficult to access when the back rider is onboard.

Canopy

The canopy on the stroller-and-a-half only covers the front seat. Back riders are left to their own hat and sunscreen devices.

Size and Weight

The size and weight of a stroller-and-a-half is comparable to a lighter standard stroller. They usually weigh between 21 and 25 pounds. They are much easier to manage, steer, and store than double standard strollers and feel much sturdier than double umbrellas.

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Price

The price ranges from $130 to $250. More money will get you a more durable, easier-to-drive stroller with more parent convenience features.

Why we love them: Because they're bigger than a single, but smaller than a double. Perfect for our baby/older toddler combination.

Why we don't: Because our older toddler sure does think it's funny to jump off midstride. We, however, don't.

Other Toddler Seats

Some standard single and all-terrain single strollers actually have their own "stroller-and-a-half" versions with the addition of attachable toddler seats. These tiny seats usually resemble little grocery cart seats and attach directly to the single stroller. The seats have no recline and are meant for older children, up to 35 pounds, but we found that kids over 2½ actually didn't like sitting in them for very long. However, they are a great option to see you through the stage of an older sibling from age 18 months to 2½ years.

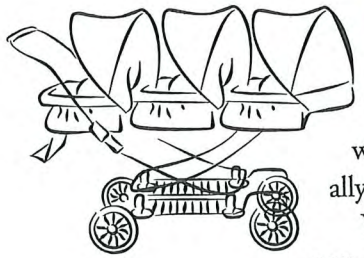
Features to Consider

- ☆ Front seat padding
- ☆ Harnesses
- ☆ Snack tray
- ☆ Basket
- ☆ Bench padding
- ☆ Bench slide

NOTES: ***Strollers-and-a-Half***

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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Multiples Strollers

You can get a multiples seat setup on almost any type of stroller, but your options will be very limited beyond that. There is usually only one or two on the market of each style. You'll have to decide which type of stroller you most prefer, and then everything about that stroller will basically be picked for you. What kind of multiples mom are you? There are carriages for city walkers, standard strollers for the budget-minded, minimalist designs for car seat ferrying, all-terrain strollers for the active mom, and even joggers.

Most multiples strollers accommodate triplets, but there are strollers for quads, and even a company that makes six-seaters, called minibuses.

Multiples Stroller

Also Known As
Triplet stroller, Triplette stroller, triple stroller, quad stroller, Minibus, Trio

Age Range
Birth to 4 years

Total Usage
4 years

Recommendation
Must have, for those with marvelous multiples

When to Buy
When you find out you're expecting twins or more, start shopping!

Seating

You can find side-by-side-by-side options, as well as inline (tandem for triplets) arrangements, even those with stadium seating. Look for seats with nice padding and as much recline as possible. A flat recline or infant car seat carrier connection is required for newborns, and we're guessing you are going to want to leave the house at some point during the first six months.

Handling

Inline strollers feel like you're pushing a semitruck, but they do fit through doorways. Side-by-side-by-sides, not so much. Most multiples strollers will get you from point A to point B, but some require a Herculean effort. Don't expect the maneuverability of an umbrella stroller, but some models made by ex-automobile engineers are modern marvels of mobility.

Size and Weight

Did we say double jogging strollers were the largest strollers around? Multiples strollers laugh at little double joggers—*ha ha ha ha!* They are heavy behemoths, weighing anywhere from 30 to 60 pounds. But they are heavy for a reason. You have lots of babies to protect!

Folding

Remember these strollers are large and bulky and will not be the easiest to fold. Some are definitely easier than others, and some are more compact when folded than others. So if size is an issue, consider the folded dimensions. Also consider if any or all the seats have to be removed to fold it.

Handles

Most have telescoping handles for easier adjustment. Because you won't know how the weight distributes until you start pushing it fully loaded, an adjustable handle is key—but choose a solid one.

Brakes

All strollers need brakes; none more so than one with the extra momentum of multiple little bodies. Most multiples strollers have hand and foot brakes. They should be solid, but not so sticky as to be hard to disengage.

Canopies

Most multiples strollers either come with canopies or offer them separately. We're big fans of big amounts of shade.

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Fabric and Color

Don't expect fabulous fabric choices. Sadly, the choice in the style department is much more limited than for other types. You can find pretty nice options, especially if you're only looking for triplets. Got six? The very name "minibus" should tell you it's not going to be that pretty.

Stroller Basket

With multiples, you have multiple diaper bags and more stuff, so look for the biggest basket you can possibly find. And make sure it's easily accessible.

Price

Prices vary according to the number of seats you require and the type of stroller you want. Carriages, jogging, and all-terrain strollers are the most expensive. As with most strollers, the more expensive models will last much longer than the cheaper versions.

Multiples strollers range from $250 to $1,500. Most good ones are in the $600 to $900 range.

Availability

Multiples strollers are hard to find in retail stores. We would drive a good two hours to test-drive one. All can easily be ordered on the Internet.

EBay, Craigslist, and multiples message boards are great resources for secondhand models at giant savings.

Why we love them: Being a product of one, we love any product made especially for large families.

Why we don't: We're not a freak show, people! Triplets are not that amazing. Quit staring! Move along, move along!

Features to Consider

- ☆ Seat padding
- ☆ Seat reclines
- ☆ Car-seat adaptable

- ☆ Fold
- ☆ Handle
- ☆ Canopy
- ☆ Brakes
- ☆ Basket

NOTES: ***Multiples Strollers***

Model Name / Manufacturer	Store/Price	My Impressions	Grade

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