

Gear & Kit: The Dad's Buying Guide

What you actually need, what you don't, and what works in London specifically

The baby gear industry will try to sell you approximately everything. The reality is that you need far less than you think — but what you do buy matters, especially in London where space is limited, pavements are uneven, and you'll be navigating the Tube with a baby more often than you'd imagined.

Here's a clear-eyed guide from a dad's perspective.

The Buggy: Your Most Important Purchase

Your pushchair will be used every single day for the first two to three years. It's worth spending time (and money) on getting it right.

In London, you need: - A fold that's genuinely quick and one-handed — you will be wrestling with it on buses, in lifts, on rainy kerbs - Wheels that can handle cracked pavements and cobbles (London streets are brutal) - A size that fits through narrow café doors and shop aisles - Something you can collapse and board the Tube with — [TfL buggy guidance here](#)

Top picks for London:

Buggy	Best for	Notes
Bugaboo Bee 6	City use from birth	Compact, good fold, great wheels — handles London kerbs brilliantly
Babyzen YOYO3	Tube & travel	Folds into overhead luggage, tiny footprint, excellent for public transport
Silver Cross Dune	All-round city use	Upright fold, newborn-ready, looks sharp, very manoeuvrable
iCandy Peach 7	Longevity	Converts to double, top-end build quality, popular with London parents

Buggy	Best for	Notes
Baby Jogger City Mini GT2	Rough terrain	One-hand fold, bigger wheels for London's less-forgiving pavements

Where to try before you buy in London: - [John Lewis Oxford Street](#) — huge range, knowledgeable staff, free returns - [Mothercare & Mamas & Papas stores](#) — test drives welcome - Facebook Marketplace and [Vinted](#) — great for barely-used premium buggies at half price

The Baby Carrier: Hands-Free and Bond-Building

A good carrier is genuinely transformative — especially in the first three to four months when babies want to be held constantly. It leaves your hands free, keeps the baby calm, and works on the Tube when a buggy is a nightmare.

For dads specifically: - Look for something adjustable that works across a range of body sizes - Structured carriers are easier for dads than wraps (which require practice)

Top picks: - [Ergobaby Omni 360](#) — works from newborn without an insert, multiple carrying positions, genuinely comfortable for longer wear - [BabyBjörn Harmony](#) — premium, very easy to get on and off, great for quick in-and-out use - [Tula Free-to-Grow](#) — great value, grows with the baby, wide hip seat - [Connecta](#) — UK-made, compact when not in use, good for travel

Try before you buy: The [London Sling Library](#) lets you hire and try different carriers before committing — a brilliant resource and genuinely worth a visit.

Car Seat: Don't Compromise Here

Car seat safety is non-negotiable. The rules in the UK are based on height/weight rather than age, and i-Size (EU R129) seats are now the standard.

Key rules: - Babies must be in a **rear-facing seat** until at least 15 months (and ideally much longer — rear-facing is significantly safer) - i-Size seats are now the gold standard — look for the R129 label - Never buy a second-hand car seat unless you know its full history — if it's been in an accident, it must be replaced

Recommended seats (with installation options in London): - [Cybex](#)

Cloud T i-Size — rear-facing infant carrier, top safety ratings, works with most travel systems - **Joie i-Gemm 3** — excellent safety record, good value - **BeSafe iZi Go Modular** — Norwegian brand, exceptional safety performance

Get it fitted professionally. Many Halfords branches and independent car seat specialists offer free fitting checks: - [Halfords Car Seat Fitting](#) — free checks at participating stores - [In Car Safety Centre, Milton Keynes](#) — widely regarded as the UK's best

The Changing Bag: Yes, You'll Be Carrying It

Get over it. A good changing bag is essential and there are plenty that don't look like a changing bag.

What you need in it: - 3-4 nappies (you'll think 2 is enough until it isn't) - Wipes (always more than you think) - A change of clothes for the baby (minimum two outfits) - A change of clothes for yourself (at least a spare top — one blowout will convince you) - Nappy bags, hand sanitiser, a muslin or three - Snacks for you — early parenthood is hungry work

Good options that don't look like a baby bag: - [Dagne Dover Indi](#) — backpack style, genuinely stylish - [Storksak Bobby](#) — smart, organised, works as a regular bag too - [Fawn Design](#) — backpack, popular with dads

The Stuff You Actually Need (and Don't)

You need:

- **Baby monitor** — the [Owlet Dream Sock](#) is popular but pricey; [BT Smart Baby Monitor](#) is a reliable budget option
- **Bouncy chair / rocker** — gives you somewhere to put the baby down safely that isn't the floor. The [BabyBjörn Bouncer Balance Soft](#) is worth every penny
- **Moses basket or next-to-me crib** — [Chicco Next2Me](#) is excellent; the [Snüzpod 4](#) is another great option
- **Swaddles / muslins** — [Aden + Anais](#) are the gold standard; buy at least six

You probably don't need (yet):

- A Jumperoo or Exersaucer (useful from 4 months, not before)
 - A wipe warmer (really)
 - A nappy bin with special bags (a regular bin with a liner works fine)
 - A baby food processor (a regular blender is identical)
 - More than two or three 'newborn' outfits — they'll outgrow them in weeks
-

Where to Buy and Save Money in London

- **NCT Nearly New Sales** — seasonal sales across London, brilliant for nearly-new gear at a fraction of the price
- **Mamas & Papas** — frequent sales, good trade-in scheme
- **John Lewis** — premium but reliable, excellent customer service
- **Kidly** — curated, often better value than department stores
- **Facebook Marketplace / Gumtree** — brilliant for big-ticket items like prams and Moses baskets
- **Vinted** — good for clothing; babies outgrow things so fast that most items are barely worn

Sources: *TfL Buggy Guidance* · *London Sling Library* · *Halfords Car Seat Fitting* · *NCT Nearly New Sales*