

Should You Have a Grandbaby Shower?

by Charlotte Latvala

Posted: Jun 07, 2010



In 2006, Jorj Morgan was about to become a grandmother for the first time but didn't have a Pack 'n Play or baby monitor to her name. So her friends got together and threw her — yes — a grandbaby shower.

"It was almost like a Tupperware party, held at my girlfriend's home," says Morgan, 57, of Banner Elk, N.C., who is now a grandmother of two, with a third on the way. "My pals — most of whom were becoming Nanas themselves — stocked my nursery so that my new granddaughter would have everything she needed when she came to visit." Gifts included a portable crib, cuddly toys, and sippy cups. "It was fun to start over," says Morgan, a cookbook author. "With all the technology in the past 20 years, everything is brand-new!"

A Growing Trend?

So, is the idea of holding grandmother-to-be showers sweeping the nation? Not yet. "Grandmother showers are an upcoming trend, but definitely still unique," says Melissa Leonard, a New York City-based etiquette consultant. "However, it is a fun idea for a party, as well as an excuse for guests to bring their own brag books."

[bluebox DELIVERY]Grandparents who've attended the showers are enthusiastic. "It's a great idea," says Sue Johnson, of Lancaster, Va., a grandmother of six and author of [Grandloving: Making Memories with Your Grandchildren 5th Edition](#) (Heartstrings, 2010). "Becoming a grandparent is such an exciting, wonderful event that it should be celebrated!" Johnson's friends and neighbors threw her a shower when her first grandchild was born a few years ago. Gifts included books about grandparenting, diaper-changing gear, a teddy bear, and a mobile. "We lived in upstate New York at the time, and our grandson was in California," she says. "So not only was I touched by the thoughtfulness of my friends, but it made the arrival of our grandchild seem much more real."

A grandbaby shower can be a simple gathering of friends, an elaborate celebration, or a tongue-in-cheek night out. Morgan recently threw a lingerie shower for a friend who was becoming a

grandmother at the tender age of 40. "It was hysterical," she says. "We went to a fancy French restaurant for lunch; celebrated with a bit of wine, and opened box after box of silky somethings."

[poll] **The Flip Side**

There are those, however, who find the very idea of having a shower for a grandma to be silly, offensive, or both, including some of the potential guests of honor. "The grandmother has to be on board with the shower," says etiquette consultant Diane Gottsman, owner of The Protocol School of Texas. "If she is reluctant or uncomfortable, don't force the situation." Typically, she notes, women who aren't excited about a shower don't want to steal attention from the mom-to-be. But if there is to be a grandbaby shower, she advises, the mom-to-be ought to be there, or at least be consulted. "Whoever plans the shower should get her input on what she would like to have at Grandma's house when she and the baby come to visit."

New moms may find the shower ridiculous, says Sally Shields, author of [The Daughter-in-Law Rules](#) (Safflower, 2008), but should take a step back and allow Grandma her moment. "Honestly, I think anyone who would be upset by a grandmother shower is just being hormonal and needs to chill," she says, but if a new mom seems put out by the idea, she adds, just make sure she's a big part of the day, and that she gets a major gift. "It could be a certificate for a prenatal massage, or a manicure/pedicure," Shields says. "The message is that you realize that mom-to-be is really the star."

Another possible pitfall: Your potential guests may resent the idea of being put on the spot to buy a gift (especially if they've also been invited to the mom's shower). To limit that, propose a theme of small gifts like pajamas or bath gear, Gottsman says, but don't specify a dollar limit. "Most people won't adhere to it," she says, "and it makes others feel uncomfortable if they did stick to the amount." One easy alternative: Make the shower gift-free, Gottsman says. "Maybe each friend could bring a card with a piece of advice and a funny anecdote of their own experience if they are already grandmothers."

Continue the debate in our [Mothers-in-Law Anonymous](#) group.

Do you and your grandkids' parents have issues?

- [How to choose your battles](#)
 - [10 reasons to be glad they're the parent, not you](#)
 - [Have you ever gotten babysitting instructions like these?](#)
-