

First Time

FIRST BABY

Julie and Tony Moesenthin bring their new baby, Kendall, home

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This is the first in a year-long series offering a look at various "firsts" for people around the region.

By RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

It's 9 a.m. on the day after. Julie can finally relax.

The baby is sleeping, cradled comfortably in her husband's hulking arms, and she can sit down on her green couch with a cup of coffee from a Speedway gas station - decaf for now.

"That's the first thing I said to him - you've got to go get coffee," she says, pointing to Tony, her spouse.

It had been a long night, the first one at home for the Moesenthins and their new baby, Kendall, three days old and fresh from Toledo Hospital. The tiny girl with her father's lips and chubby cheeks is 19 inches; 6 pounds, 2 ounces, and 100 percent cute.

"I'm tired, but she's so new and exciting," Julie says of her first child. "Just when we see her and she's opening her eyes and it's so exciting."

"Until she rolls her eyes," Tony chimes in. "We don't know if that's natural."

Other doubts and uncertainties dogged the young, cheerful couple throughout the night as they struggled to get their newborn to sleep without the help of nurses and trained professionals, though all in all, they said it wasn't so bad.

They never expected the first night home to be easy. The 24-year-olds know tough - they both work in law enforcement for Lucas County and Tony spent time with the Marines - but their training hadn't prepared them for this.

"I don't know if we're doing things right," Julie confided.

These kinds of worries came to a head when they tried to put Kendall to bed around 10:30 p.m. That's when things got frustrating. Not as bad as their one friend who had to drive around town with the heat on full blast to get the baby to sleep, but for a while Kendall was a puzzle they just couldn't solve.

She just didn't want to sleep. Anytime they put her down, she started to cry. Not the intermittent screaming of that first night in the hospital, but fussy nonetheless.

They tried giving her a pacifier they call a NUK. They tried letting her suck on Tony's pinkie, knuckle, even his nose. No luck, not for very long at least.

They tried walking around upstairs and laying her on Julie's stomach. They tried feeding her and changing her diapers. Kendall would have none of it.

Without panicking, Julie couldn't help wondering: Will the baby get dehydrated? Could she roll over and suffocate? Should they call someone if Kendall doesn't go to sleep soon?

Throughout the night, taking turns in and out of bed, Tony's suggested solution remained the same, always pleaded with the confidence that this time it would work: "Give her a NUK! Give her a NUK!"



Julie and Tony Moesenthin with their newborn daughter, Kendall, on their first night home from the hospital. (THE BLADE/LUKE WARK)

Kendall dozed off at 2 a.m., and was back up at 3. Finally around 4:30 she snoozed for a few hours cradled in bed next to daddy.

"We know we're not supposed to, but she slept in his arms last night," Julie said. "As soon as she went into his arms, she just fell right asleep."

You might not have guessed this would be an issue had you peeked in the window earlier that night - past the brilliantly-lit Christmas tree and stockings on the chimney, past the sink full of dishes from a dinner of beef and cheese enchiladas, past the chocolate Lab named Parris who still has her doubts about the newest member of the family.

You would have seen a baby just laying there, peaceful in Tony's arms, like the cutest poseable doll. You would have seen him fiddle with her arms, covered in a shirt with extra-long sleeves to keep her from scratching herself, and then see them stay for a little while exactly where he put them - straight up, just like the ref does when the Minnesota Vikings score a touchdown.

"She's a big-time football fan," Julie said.

"She likes the Vikings," her husband, a Minnesota native, added. It must be true. The baby's wearing a Vikings onesie and spent most of her first day home sleeping through football games.

The new parents, like all those who came before them, have plenty of questions. Who knew that a meeting at a coffee shop in high school (Whitmer for her; Bedford for him) would lead to this - 2 1/2 years of marriage and a baby they learned they would have the day after they closed on their house in South Toledo?

"I don't think anybody's ever really ready for kids," said Tony.

Still, now that Kendall's here, it's hard to believe she wasn't always. Now they just want to share the joy - with each other, with family who always seem to be around holding the baby, and friends.

"We've been trying to convince our friends to get pregnant," Julie said. "Now that they all hold her, they want one."

As the last friends left the house that first night, leaving the couple alone with the baby for practically the first time, one of them passed Kendall back to Julie, saying, "Here she is, unless I can take her with me."

Julie's response? "Make your own."

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: ryansmith@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.

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