

\$The Diaper Dollar\$

The financial cost of diapering your baby.

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Figuring out the financial cost of diapering your baby can make your head spin. If story problems weren't your thing back in school, relax because we've done some homework for you and don't mind you looking at the answers we came up with. If you do like to do your own research and math, we encourage you to bring a notebook and calculator to your favorite grocery store and see what figures you come up with as well.

We've broken it down to three basic diapering phases over an estimated 30 months of diapering (some children potty train sooner, many potty train later). Your baby may pass through these stages more quickly or more slowly, depending on their size and growth.

The Financial Cost of Disposable Diapers

We chose *Huggies Supreme*, a popular pick for many parents

0 – 3 months	Size 1
10-12 diaper changes/day*	\$16.99/76 diapers or \$.22/diaper
10 diapers/day X 30 days 3 months	900 diapers X \$.22/diaper =
= 900 diapers	\$198
3 – 12 months	Size 3
7-9 diaper changes/day*	\$16.99/54 diapers or \$.31/diaper
9 diapers/day X 30 days X 10	2700 diapers X \$.31/diaper =
months = 2700 diapers	\$837
12 - 30 months	Size 5
6-7 diaper changes/day*	\$16.99/42 diapers or \$.41/diaper
7 diapers/day X 30 days X 18	3150 diapers X \$.41/diaper =
months = 3,150 diapers	\$1,292
Totals 6750 diapers	\$2327

**For your baby's health, her diaper should be changed every 2-3 hours. Even though the gels in disposables make the baby "feel" dry, the urine is still there and the rash causing bacteria is still growing. The number of diaper changes is higher in the early months because babies poop more and are often up more in the night during this period.*

You will spend \$2327 to diaper your baby with nearly 7,000 disposables for her first 30 months!

To wipe Baby's bottom clean, you'll spend about \$4.50/80 wipes, averaging about 1.5 packs/month. That's \$6.75/month X 30 months = \$203 for wipes.

\$2327 (diapers) + \$203 (wipes)=

\$2530 total

**That's an average of \$84 per month
or \$.37 per diaper change**

to diaper and wipe your little baby's bum for 2 1/2 years with throwaway products! It should come as no surprise that the **disposable diapering business is worth \$400 million a year**—and growing!

The Financial Cost of Cloth Diapers

There are several variables involved in calculating the cost of diapering your child in cloth. First, there is the cost of the diapers themselves, and then there is the detergent, energy, and water to wash and dry them. There is a wide range of quality, style and price of cloth diapers and diapering products available. At Punkin Butt, we sell only what we have used ourselves and find to be of highest quality. Yet even among the products we sell, there is still quite a range in the style and price of diapering products you might choose.

Children typically potty train at about 30 months of age (2 1/2 years). Your cloth diapers will last well beyond this time frame, but we have used this 30 month period in calculating the cost of detergent, energy, and water you would use to clean and dry your diapers.

Buying Cloth Diapers

The following package gives you an idea of what you could purchase to diaper your baby until she is potty trained. We took an average package for our cost comparison. The different combinations of diaper types and quantities are endless.

	Price/each	Total
0-3 months 8-12 changes/day		
36 Infant Chinese Prefolds Standard (4x6x4 ply)	\$1.35	\$48.50
8 Super Whisper Wraps, small	\$9.50	\$76.00
4 hemp inserts, small	\$4.00	\$16.00
2 Stacinators, small (for night time)	\$17.50	\$35.00
6 6- packs hemp washies	\$5.00	\$30.00
2 small Nylon Totes	\$6.00	\$12.00
1 large Nylon Totes	\$14.95	\$14.95
total		\$202.45
5 – 15 months 7-9 changes/day		
36 Regular Premium Chinese Prefolds (4x8x4 ply)	\$2.10	\$75.60
6 Super Whisper Wraps, medium	\$9.50	\$57.00
4 hemp inserts, medium	\$4.50	\$18.00
2 Stacinators, medium (for night time)	\$17.50	\$35.00
total		\$185.60
15- 30 months 7-9 changes/day		
6 Super Whisper Wraps, large	\$9.50	\$57.00
4 hemp inserts, large	\$5.00	\$20.00
2 Stacinators, large (for night time)	\$17.50	\$35.00
total		\$112.00

**Average financial cost of purchasing cloth diapers
over 30 months = \$505.05**

Washing Cloth Diapers

When calculating the financial cost of washing cloth diapers, you have to take into account three factors: detergent, energy and water.

Detergent

In our Easy Wash system, we use baking soda for the first cycle, and just a regular detergent for the hot wash cycle (for more on detergents, see The Scoop on Soaps and Detergents). We have found that many generic store brand detergents are phosphate free and have more environmentally friendly ingredients than some name brands. We encourage you to look at how much you spend on your detergent and estimate your spending accordingly. Just read the care instructions on your wraps or AIOS/Pocket Diapers to see if they can be safely washed using your detergent. And please do not use bleach or fabric softeners (liquid or sheet)!

With our Easy Wash system, we recommend two washes for each “cycle” of diapers. At 2 cycles a week for 30 months, you will run 480 loads of wash, but only 240 will use baking soda, and only 240 will use detergent. Therefore:

Baking soda	\$3.00/50 loads x 240 loads	= \$14.40
Detergent	\$6.00/50 loads x 240 loads	= \$28.80
TOTAL cost baking soda and detergent for 30 months = \$43.00		

There are other products that can make washing your cloth diapers easier and more effective. The above breakdown is a basic look at washing cloth diapers. To learn more about sanitizing, freshening and stain removal, read our Easy Wash article or email usinfo@punkinbutt.com.

Energy

Your energy consumption will vary according to whether you use gas, oil, coal or electricity to heat your water and to power your washer and dryer. A recent study by the National Electric Power Research Institute determined that the national average for a hot wash/cold rinse load of wash is 20 cents, and a cold/cold wash costs 10 cents. To dry for one hour on hot is 40 cents. Our Easy-Wash system involves two cycles (one cold/cold, one hot/cold) per load of diapers. That brings it to 70 cents to wash and dry a load of diapers.

To wash and dry two loads of cloth diapers each week for 30 months (240 total loads), you will spend approximately \$170 in energy costs.

Drying your clothes with a gas dryer will cost you less, and if you have a front-loading, energy efficient washer, you will spend about half the energy to wash and dry your clothes. *If you skip the dryer and line dry your cloth diapers, you cut your energy costs by nearly 60%.*

Water

Water utility prices vary a great deal across the nation, so you will have to check your water bill and figure out what you're paying. A recent water bill in our household told us we used 10 units of water in one month. One unit equals 100 cubic feet of water, or 748 gallons. The current price per unit of water in our city is 64 cents, or 85 cents per 1000 gallons. A typical top-loading washing machine uses approximately 40 gallons of water for a full wash. For two Easy-Wash loads a week, that's 160 gallons each week, or about 20,000 gallons of water for 30 months of laundering diapers. So, at \$.85/1000 gallons, we'd spend about \$17.68 on water *total*. That's about the price of one pack of disposables!

For those of you with a front-loading, energy efficient washer, you will use only about 20 gallons of water per wash, or 40 gallons per load using our Easy-Wash system. You would spend only about \$8.50 on water for 2 1/2 years of washing diapers. Not to mention your diapers will dry faster because the front-loading washers spin more water out of the clothes they clean.

Water breakdown:

80 gal/load (2 washes) x loads/week	=160 gal/week
160 gal/week x 52 weeks per year	=8320 gal/year
8320 gal/year over 2.5 years	=20,800 gal total
\$.85/1000 gal x 20,800 gal	=\$17.68

Note: Front-loading machines use HALF the water of top-loading washers.

* A typical household uses over 300,000 gallons of water in the same 30 month period. This puts the amount of water to wash diapers at 6% of a household's total water usage for top-loading washers, or 3% for front-loading.

**This is a sample rate from one city. Check with your water utility company for your region's water rate.

Summary of energy, water, and detergent costs for 30 months:

Top-loading machine:

Detergent:	
baking soda + detergent	=\$43.00
Energy:	
\$.70/Easy Wash load x 240 loads	=\$170.00
Water:	
\$.85/1000 gal x 20,800 gal	=\$17.68
Total detergent, energy and water for 30 months	=\$230.00
	or less than \$8.00/month!
Front-loading machine: \$145	
	or less than \$5.00/month!

Diaper Services: For your newborn, a diaper service will bring you 70-80 diapers a week. As your baby grows and needs fewer diaper changes (because, hopefully, he will be sleeping through the night and not pooping all the time!), diaper services decrease the number of diapers each week.

Regional costs vary, but in general, diaper services charge between \$12.00 and \$15.00 per week of service. If we average that to be \$13.50 per week, a diaper service will cost about \$1755.00 for 2 1/2 years of diapering. Add about \$337 in diaper covers and accessories and you're at \$2092. Even if you let someone else wash them for you, using cloth diapers from a diaper service rather than disposables will still save you about \$438.

The Diaper Dollar at a Glance
TOTAL Financial Cost for 6750 diaper changes

Cloth Diapers- Home Laundered	\$778.05	or 12 ¢ per change
Cloth Diaper Service	\$2133.00	or 31 ¢ per change
Disposables	\$2530.00	or 37 ¢ per change

Depending on how many you buy and how you wash them, choosing cloth diapers can save you anywhere between \$500 and \$2,100 total! And that's just for your first child! Your subsequent children will be diapered for only the cost of laundering the diapers – and perhaps replacing a wrap or two.