



The long awaited announcement for the Second Annual Flats and Handwashing Challenge is finally here and a date has been set. Mark your calendars for May 21-27 as the 7 days you will be handwashing your flat cloth diapers.

A little background for those new to this event:

The Flats and Handwashing Challenge 2011 was an idea that came about after numerous articles referenced the practice of reusing disposable diapers.

Families with no money for new diapers were scraping out the solid contents or using a hair dryer to dry the diapers for reuse. Not only is this unsanitary but it is also extremely dangerous. The media neglected offering the suggestion that families use cloth diapers. Why? Who knows. {[read the original article](#)} It was my personal mission to educate others that, although not ideal, hand washing the inexpensive flat cloth diapers was an option to families who had no other way to diaper. No baby should have to suffer when there are ways to diaper for less than \$50.00.

THERE ARE NO GOVERNMENT FUNDED PROGRAMS TO HELP BABIES IN NEED OF DIAPERS.

Why Flats?



Sloppy Flats Application

Flats are very large squares of fabric, usually birdseye cotton, that can be folded in various ways to create a trim and absorbent diaper. They can usually be snapped on but can always be secured using pins. They need a waterproof cover. Because they are 1 layer of birdseye cotton they dry far faster than a prefold, which has 4-8 layers. On a sunny and breezy day outside they can take a little as 2 hours to dry.

Indoors, depending on the humidity and how well you wring them out, it can take 5-9 hours. Being thin also makes them easier to hand wash; the thicker the fabric the more vigorous the agitation you need to get them properly clean.

Last year 500 people hoped to take the challenge and 200 successfully completed it [{read the completion survey results}](#). Considering I expected one or two others to sign up this was an unexpected outcome. I compiled an enormous amount of information on flats including ways to wash them by hand, how to prepare a camp style bucket washer for hand washing, how to fold flats, and why they make the perfect cloth diaper for families on a budget. Each day of the challenge I vlogged my thoughts on hand washing, tips I was learning along the way, and showed my trick for softening the air dried flats. Dozens of other bloggers did the same and together we created a new internet full of helpful information. Flats were the new black last May and hundreds of families discovered there is something to be said for this simple diapering method.

One twist on this year's challenge is an effort to bring more purpose. We all learned a great deal from our week of hand washing last year and appreciated our washing machines a lot more when it was over. Many of us used this experience to become better cloth diaper advocates. By understanding what must be done to keep a baby in a clean diaper when there is no option to buy disposables or use a washing machine it gave us a new perspective.

In order to make the efforts of all of the participants count towards more than just experience I am hoping to use this challenge as a way to fundraise for various cloth diaper charities.

I am personally pledging \$1.00 per participant (up to \$200.00) who completes the Flats and Handwashing Challenge to Giving Diapers, Giving Hope, a non-profit that supplies cloth diapers to families in need.

How can you help? If you are a business you can do the same. Pledge to donate any amount per participant and to your chosen charity. If you are a Diaper Charity or Diaper Bank you can ask your local store to support your efforts by pledging. Please contact me to set this up. These businesses will be listed on this page as donors along with a link to the charity they are donating to.

You can also sign a petition to get cloth diapers or cloth diaper education covered by WIC- a government funded program that assists low income families by supplying food and other baby needs but not diapers. Sign the Petition. There is also another petition to show support for the DIAPER ACT (H R 3134) that could help get more babies access to cloth diapers (cloth and disposable). Jenn Labit, creator of bumGenius, explains it best in her post. Sign this Petition.

Use #FlatsChallenge on twitter to keep up with the challenge and meet other participants.

Now that you know the why, the how, and the when, let's discuss the rules. There have been some changes since last year.

Materials Allowed

The following diapering items can be used:

- Any flat cloth diaper, store bought or handmade. A flat should be only 1 layer of material for easier handwashing and faster drying.
- 1 night time diaper per night of your choice although you are asked to make flats work for you (this diaper must also be handwashed)
- Doublers (not inserts meant to be absorbent enough to stand alone) if you absolutely must.
- A diaper sprayer.
- Wet bags/diaper pails for storage.
- Handmade "washing machine" for diapers such as the camp style washer I made last year.
- Non Electronic Portable washing machines (must be powered by you and cost less than \$100.
- Commercially available or handmade covers.
- Commercially available or handmade detergents.
- Snappi, Boingo, and Pins for closure.
- Pocket diapers STUFFED WITH FLATS. *(note that the potential for repelling on the stay dry lining could make your challenge harder but you can see what*

happens)

- Homemade or store bought fleece liners.
- Iron (to use in order to expedite drying time or sterilize)

Materials Not Allowed

- Electronic washer/dryer.
- Pockets with inserts other than flats, AIO's, Fitteds, Contours, Prefolds, A12's, etc.
- Flushable liners.

Rules for Everyone

- You cannot use your washer or dryer.
- If for some reason something arises and an exception is made you need to disclose in the Conclusions Survey or on your blog if you are a blogger.
- There is no limit on the number of flats or covers you can use. Should you purchase 100 flats for \$100 and go a whole week without washing? No. Use your common sense on this one. *As a tip the more diapers in your camp washer/ sink/ tub the harder the washing will be.*

Rules for Bloggers

- You cannot be sponsored by received free flats or covers to use. Bloggers will see a link to the rules in the form of a .pdf after signing up within the sign up application.

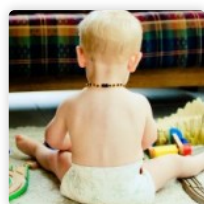
Now that you have read the rules you can

Sign Up!

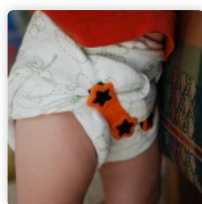
Grab the button for your blog if you are participating



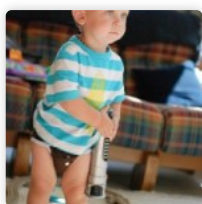
There's more to see!



2nd Annual Flats and Handwashing Challenge Day 6: Going Out, Babysitters, and Husbands



2nd Annual Flats and Handwashing Challenge: Day 5- What Have We Learned So Far?



Flats and Handwashing Day 3- How Do You Use Your Flats?



2nd Annual Flats Challenge: The "Jo" Fold Tutorial in Pictures and Video



3rd Annual Flats and Handwashing Challenge May 20-26

Bio

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kdrosas



Kim Rosas began Dirty Diaper Laundry in 2009 out of a desire to help more parents understand modern cloth diapers. She lives in Florida with her husband of 5 years and her two boys. Even though none of her boys wear diapers anymore she is still just as committed to promoting them. In her spare time Kim enjoys video editing, photography, and coffee.