

A Name Game

We test out a few baby nameologists on two pairs of soon-to-be parents.

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An increasingly popular reference tool for soon-to-be parents, a nameologist suggests baby names based on everything from family history to numerology. With the help of two local couples, *Chicago* tested out one of the country's most-sought-after practitioners, Maryanna Korwitts of Naperville, author of *Name Power 101*, and two of her competitors, a California couple and a Cleveland-area mother of two.

The Halbachs: Sara and Shane, both 27, of Woodlawn. Sara is a genetic counselor at the University of Chicago; Shane is a software engineer at Argonne National Laboratory. They recently welcomed their first child, a daughter. They want to name her something traditional that is not highly common.

The Waldrons: Lisa, 37, and Jim, 38, of West Bucktown. Lisa is a freelance advertising creative director; Jim, a former goalkeeper for the Chicago Sting, owns Them, a company that represents film directors. They are expecting a baby boy; they'd like to name him something unusual but masculine.



THE HALBACHS



THE WALDRONS

NAMEOLOGIST

Maryanna Korwitts bases everything on numerology—every letter equals a number in the universe—and three key points: how a name looks and sounds (is it a tongue twister?); societal association (the name “Bambi” sounds like a hooker, she says); and the silent mood or feeling of a word. From \$150. babynamingcentral.com

Whitney Walker and Eric Reyes, of San Leandro, California, break down the surname phonetically and listen to sounds and rhythms. Their book, *The Perfect Baby Name*, organizes 3,500 names by sound. From \$50. theprecfectbabyname.com

Jennifer Cook, of Cleveland, focuses on what kind of person the parents envision their baby will grow up to be. For a politician, Cook suggests simple but common names (John, Jane); for a performer, easy to spell names (Justin Timberlake); for athletes, last names for first names (Peyton Manning). From \$65. cooknaming.com

THE PARENTS SAY...

Eliza. “It has a nice feel, and it has a very strong subliminal quality of being expressive and academic and having financial stability and independence.”

Veronica. “‘Veronica’ has the short ‘o’ sound in the middle of it like ‘Halbach.’”

Violet, Vivian, and Aurora. “Aurora,” she says, is “a beautiful name that is not common. They have a great last name, a flowing name that has a hard sound at the end so it’s easy to pair with other names.”

Evelyn (but they’re calling her Evie)

Dell and Riley. “‘Dell’ is short and to the point. It’s a name that could work well in the sports arena. Subliminally, ‘Riley’ carries many of the same traits as ‘Dell.’ Additionally, the name has a wonderful sound quality with the two syllables and soft sounds.”

Darius. “It shares the short ‘o’/‘ar’ sound that ‘Waldron’ makes. If they use Lisa’s maiden name, ‘Leone,’ for his middle name, it would flow well because they both share the ‘yes’ sound.”

Dean, Edward, and Harvey. Cook says she chose strong names with strong sounds. She doesn’t think an athlete’s name should be “flowy.”

Finley, August, or Keller (the favorite). After watching the Bears play, Jim jokingly said, “Why don’t we just name our son Coach Michael Keller Ditka Waldron?”