

YOUR **Baby**

**BREASTFEEDING A
BABY ON THE GO**

ISSUE 227 MARCH/APRIL 2017

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ADHD
DEMYSTIFIED
IT CAN BE TREATED

**HAVE YOUR
BABY &
KEEP YOUR
FRIENDS**

**THE IMPORTANCE
OF PLAY AND PLAY
MILESTONES PG74**

**+ FREE
MILESTONES
CALENDAR**
WITH STICKERS
INSIDE

**THE MAGIC
OF MUSIC**

PAGE 56

HOW TO

- ✓ **BABY-PROOF YOUR HOME**
- ✓ **READ GROWTH CHARTS RIGHT**
- ✓ **RAISE A HAPPY CHILD**

8

THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT TANTRUMS





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March/April 2017

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Photographer: Lizelle Krige. **Stylist:** Joanita Cillié. **Model:** Arabella Grace Richardson - born 17/11/2016 and five days old on day of shoot



HELLO

TSHOLOFELO
MODISE
EDITOR



It's true what they say; once you become a parent everything changes. It's not so much that the world changes, but rather that you see the world through different eyes. You quickly learn to take a back seat as your choices become more and more about this precious life you're now responsible for. You learn to do better and be better in order to shape their lives for greatness. We don't always get it right though. In fact, at times it feels a lot like you're getting it all wrong; all the time. It's during those moments that we can teach our children valuable lessons about being human, while reinforcing our love for them. An invaluable lesson on how to handle

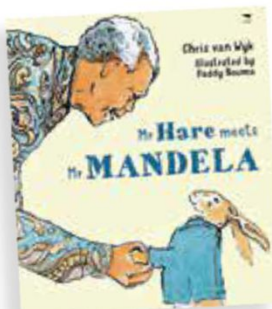
setbacks gracefully and what it means to rise above and make a better choice next time. Often times you'll find that those wrong choices bring you to the very places you need to be; the right places. Take your parenting journey one day at a time. Savour the moments, appreciate the many lessons and don't ever forget to have fun along the way. In this issue we bring you a beautiful letter from a mom who fell in love and got two for the price of one, in Blended Love on page 80. We pay tribute to the angels who look after our babies in the Neonatal ICU with a story about Sister Mary Kgetse on page 94. Also look out for our Music and Play Dossier on page 51. Enjoy this issue and let us know your thoughts. We want to be a part of your journey. Until we meet again...

Tsholo

COME AND CONNECT WITH OTHER MOMS

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Giveaway!



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Mr Hare finds a R200 note on his doorstep. When he turns the note over he sees Mr Mandela's face and decides to brave the big city of Johannesburg to return it to Mr Mandela. But Mr Hare cannot read and he comes across many people along the way who want to get their hands on Mr Mandela's money. This book is also for sale in isiXhosa and isiZulu. R120, Jacana. Three lucky readers can each win a copy. SMS the code YB227MH to 36480 before 30 April. Remember to include your name, email address and postal address. Each SMS costs R1,50.

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INBOX

SHARE YOUR STORIES & CONNECT WITH MOMS. SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO LETTERS@YOURBABY.CO.ZA

WINNING LETTER

I'M READY TO BE A MOM AGAIN

On the 29th August 2015 my journey of being a parent started after finding out we finally conceived after one year of trying. As a first time mommy I was determined to do my best. While my baby girl was growing in my tummy I sang, prayed and spoke to her, but you know these little rascals; when they become quiet you know they're up to something! And of course mommy's instincts are always right – at just 25 weeks into the pregnancy on 14 February 2016, our baby girl Isabella Valerie Kissoon was born at 780g. The practice session was over and our journey of really being parents had begun. We spent three months in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU).

Having the title parent was very difficult because every time I walked to the NICU doors I had to smile, be strong, close the door to my emotions and be the strength, prayer warrior and mother that my baby needed. I had to be my baby's comfort, strength, teacher and more. This first part of our parenting journey taught me that when you're a parent you embrace the moment no matter what obstacles, think positive and allow your circumstances to make you stronger. On 9 May 2016 our baby girl went to heaven. She suffered too much, had too many tubes, blood transfusions and way too much medication. Finally I had my first and last chance to carry my baby girl before she passed in my husband's arms. Yes, being a parent was the most difficult experience of my life but one that enriched me in so many ways. Now I am 28 weeks pregnant with my second baby girl and I am ready to get this parenting thing on – no matter what lies ahead on this path!

KAMANIE KISSOON



R700 BABY CITY GIFT VOUCHER GOES TO THE BEST LETTER EACH MONTH. SO SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON PARENTING, AND YOUR STORY COULD MAKE YOU A WINNER!

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Sometimes when you go through hard times it is difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel. You feel like nothing will ever go right, that perhaps happiness was not meant for you. This was me four years ago. I can honestly say it was the darkest time

of my life. After struggling to conceive I managed to fall pregnant, only to lose the baby at 18 weeks. I went into a severe depression and broke up with my partner. I knew I had to accept that I would probably never have children. About a year of counselling, learning to love myself again and lots of prayer followed.

Out of the blue I met the man of my dreams who said he knew from the moment he met me that I would be his forever girl. We had been together for eight months when we went away for a long weekend. While I thought I had a big surprise for him, he was planning something too. He proposed at the end of an evening walk on the beach. I took the opportunity to tell him that we were going to be parents. We weren't even trying! Now we are the proud parents of a little girl called Mireille which means "miracle" in French. Every time we look at her we see how blessed we are. She truly is our miracle baby.

MARGAUX WILLIAMS

WE ALL HAVE A PLACE IN THE WORLD

I was pleasantly surprised to see the two new pages added to the magazine. Both pages speak to me because my sister is raising a five-year-old son with special needs, while I have just added to our family of four by adopting a little boy. It is great to see that the magazine remembers those families who are not "cookie cutter" perfect. We too have a special place in this world.

ZINHLE ZULU

LOVING MOTHERHOOD

My daughter is 10 months old already and it feels like yesterday that my husband and I brought her home from hospital. While most ladies are scared of labour, my biggest fear was taking this newborn home. I felt so completely out of my depth. "How was

TWEETS WE LOVED



My new year's resolution is to teach my kids about sleeping in...
@4handfuls

UPDATE: My wife's resolution to yell at the kids less this year has just taken a very bad turn.
@moooooog35

#KidsIn5Words: noise with dirt on it.
@BBblazkowicz

My little 2-year-old niece put a popcorn bag in the microwave and it burnt a little, and when my grandma asked who put it in there she blamed me.
@FattyLukaku

#KidsIn5Words: Mom, Mom, Mom... Mommy... Mom...
@TomMalvaso

My 2-year-old nephew: Gave me a kiss and said: Love you damnit! Hehehehehe
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INBOX

SHARE YOUR STORIES & CONNECT WITH MOMS. SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO LETTERS@YOURBABY.CO.ZA

I going to keep a child alive, when I can't even keep a cactus alive?!" is what I said to my husband when we found out I was pregnant. When we were leaving the hospital to take our new bundle home, I kept looking over my shoulder. I was convinced that a nurse was going to come running out and take "her" Emily away from these two people who have no business being parents. That first night was terrifying. I literally did everything I could think of to soothe her cries – changed her nappy, gave her a feed, burped her, even changed her pyjamas in case she was too cold! But within a week my husband and I had a sort of rhythm. I was so blessed that he was able to take two weeks off work to help me at home with our daughter. He was up for every nappy change and feeding session. We took turns rocking her to sleep. Yesterday I was looking at my daughter's birth photos, and I still can't believe that my active, strong and laughing child used to be this tiny baby. It honestly hasn't been all sunshine and rainbows, but with the assistance and support of family and friends my journey as a mother has been a smooth and exciting one. Each new milestone my daughter reaches is absolutely awe-inspiring.

KAREN MARAIS

PRACTICAL ADVICE

I'm quite sure the *Things Your Doctor Wishes You Knew* article was meant just for me. Even before I had a baby, going to the doctor was not on my top

ten list of favourite things. I have always found it quite daunting and stressful. Add a sick baby to that and my anxiety levels went through the roof. I always take our nanny with us to the doctor but I still have to listen, ask the right questions and soothe my baby at the same time during the appointment. So from now on I will definitely be taking Dr Moore's advice to record the doctor's visit on my phone. That way I can play it back to hear what exactly the doctor diagnosed and how she would like the treatment to be carried out at home.

MASEGO TSOTETSI

I DID IT!

The 8th of January 2017 marked the first birthday of my baby girl. It was this day one year ago that the most emotional, challenging and rewarding year of my life started. Being in the delivery room with my mom by my side, having to go through the pain of childbirth with no pain meds, and then having no idea what to do when my baby cried was rough. Yep, you guessed it, I was a single mom who had no clue what was in store for me. Sleepless nights and tearful days were all I knew in the beginning. Postnatal depression got the better of me and each day felt like the end of the world. But here I am one year later and all I can say was I MADE IT! Being a single mom is all too

common these days and it may feel like you will never make it through the day, but when I look at my little girl all I can say is it was all worth it!

TANIELLE HOWLETT

DADDY'S GIRLS

Kagiso Medupi's story (*Celeb Dad*, January/February issue) made me think I have been blessed in my life to grow up with a loving, present father. He was a hands-on dad who didn't mind cooking and cleaning too. He would even organise fun tea parties for my two sisters and I. Sadly, he is no longer with us but I am so fortunate to have found a husband who is a real doting dad to our two daughters. At first he was not sure if he would be able to be the right dad for girls but with some help he is the perfect dad for our two girls. So ladies, be patient and help their partner be the best possible dads to their children. It is possible!

BOITUMELO POOE



TWEETS
WE
LOVED



The most honest people ever #KidsIn5Words
@Solely_Toya

Nothing like your 2-year-old jumping for joy into your arms...30+ times...way past bedtime...wife giving you 'the eye'
@DeanOlivet

Took abs, gave me kisses #KidsIn5Words
@AlikaHope

What don't you get with a 1-month-old and 2-year-old? Sleep.
#dadjokes
@jalerico

Pre-kids: My life purpose is to give them unconditional love.
After kids: My life purpose is to turn off electrical appliances in empty rooms.
@samcowen

#KidsIn5Words: small wonders with wide imaginations
@BloggerTalk



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- Now with Hygienic Lids



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New



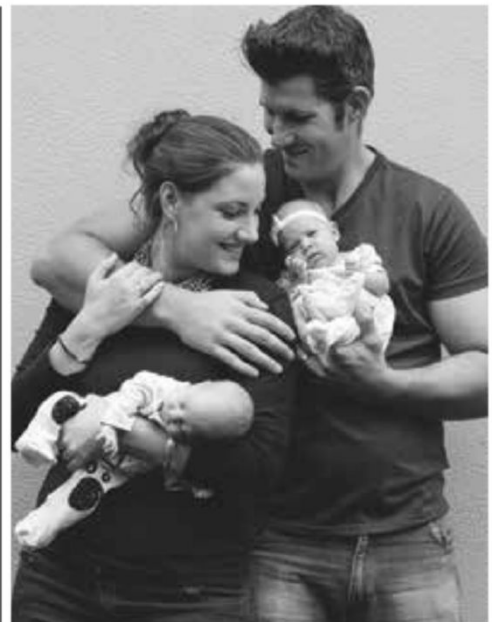
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Mark, Tracey & baby Carter Stoffberg



Lindsay, Darryn & Elijah Hendricks



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FAMILY ROOM OASIS

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and dedicated basins, two private breastfeeding rooms complete with rocking chair and changing station and a family bathroom that caters for dad too! You don't even have to worry about your toddler running off while you change the baby as the facility is access controlled with a staff member on duty. Once you see it you will wish every shopping mall across the country had one of these.

YAMBU DOMESTIC CARE

The sad truth is that many domestic workers spend more time with other people's families than they do with their own. What's worse is that, even though they work very hard, they have little to leave their dependants if they pass away, and have nothing to fall back on if they fall pregnant, have an accident or become disabled. Yambu offers a Domestic Care cover that can cover your nanny, gardener and even your children's driver with benefits of up to R30 000 for as little as R149 per month. Take care of those that take care of you.

SPEEDY ALERT!

Pro-Active South Africa has introduced new technology which can considerably speed up the time it takes to issue an alert for a hijacked or stolen car. In just 7 seconds, their intelligence-sharing database distributes pre-loaded information on any hijacked or stolen car via their website to 137 security service providers. If your vehicle is stolen or hijacked, you can enter information using your PC, or use the GPS co-ordinates from your cellphone to release the information.

SUPERWIPES

Who doesn't wish they had a super wipe that would take care of all the mess these little ones make? Joining other international brands on our shelves is cleaning brand Chux. Watch out for their Original Superwipes when you do your month-end shopping again. Apart from being super absorbent, the Superwipes are great for washing dishes, cleaning kitchen appliances and windows, and can be used around the bathroom, on laundry and even on your car. They are made from a specially designed open weave cloth with double action holes that easily pick up dirt and food particles and allow for the cloth to be hygienically rinsed for use over and over again. The best part is, they can be washed in the washing machine!



DAD'S CORNER



Andrew and Mikayla Lillie

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BABIES R US

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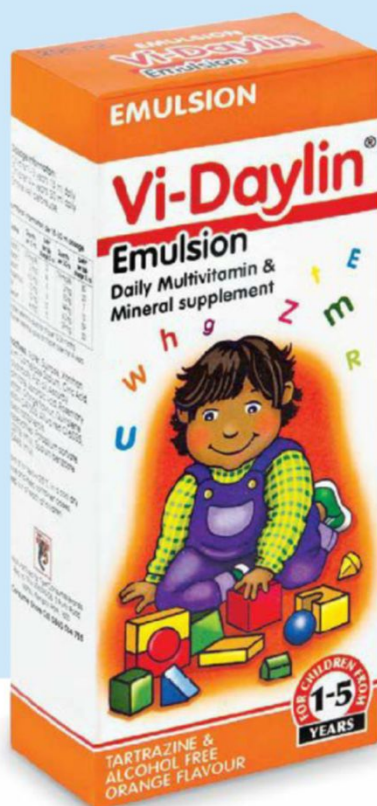


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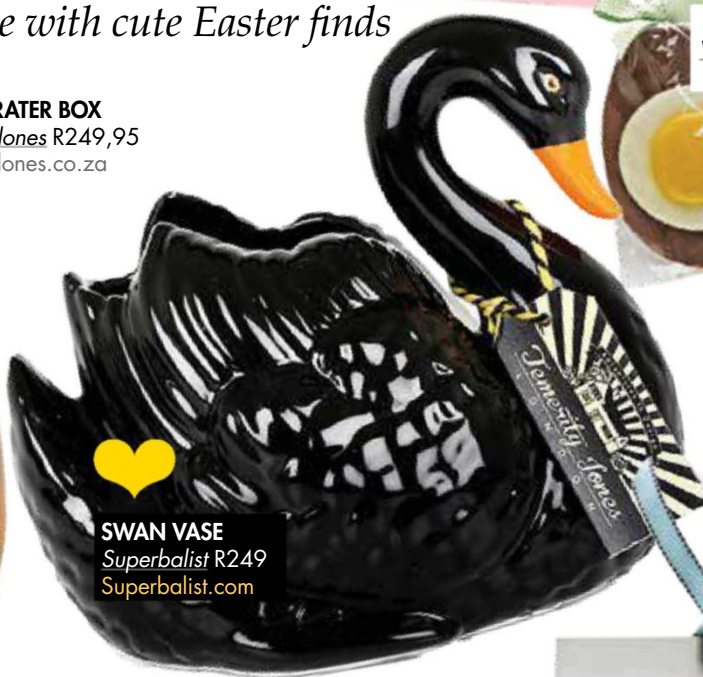
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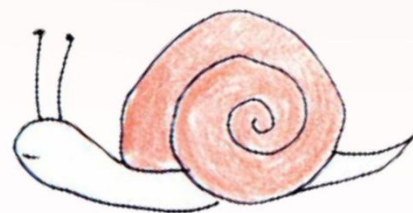


Autumn Easter Treats...

The header features the title 'Autumn Easter Treats...' in a mix of yellow and orange script fonts. To the left of the text are two simple line drawings of five-petaled leaves. To the right are two line drawings of raspberries, each with a small green leaf attached to its stem.

Easter is synonymous with food, family and fun. Treasure hunts in the garden, time with granny and grandpa and the last holiday in the sun before winter comes around. Here are some child-friendly recipes to help you make this family celebration a time to treasure.

All recipes serve 4.



RECIPES AND STYLING: ZISKA BAUMGARTEN
PHOTOS: ADELE FERREIRA



Bunny milk



White hot chocolate

4 cups full-cream milk

1 slab (100g) white chocolate

2-4 drops pink gel food colouring
(optional)

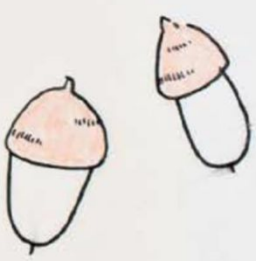
1 Place milk in a medium saucepan and bring to a gentle boil (just until bubbles start forming around the edge of the saucepan).

2 Remove from heat and stir in chocolate and food colouring one drop at a time until you get the desired shade of pink.

3 Whisk well (using a balloon whisk or stick blender), pour into small mugs or bunny bottles and serve.

To make the bunny bottles:

Cut bunny ears out of white paper. Cut inner ear out of pink paper and glue to white paper. Attach to bottles using double sided tape.



To make crowns:
Cut crowns out of paper in the colour of your choice.

- 4 eggs
- Paper crowns to decorate
- 4 slices of toast
- butter
- Marmite (optional)

1 Place the eggs in a saucepan filled with cold water. Make sure the eggs are completely covered. Place the saucepan over high heat and bring the water

to a boil. As soon as the water boils, turn off the heat and place a lid on the saucepan. Leave for 5 minutes, then drain off the water.
2 Let the eggs cool slightly, then place each one in an egg cup and decorate with a crown.
3 In the meantime, toast some bread and spread with butter (and a light smear of Marmite if your child likes it). Cut into thin strips and eat with the boiled egg.



Easter biscuits



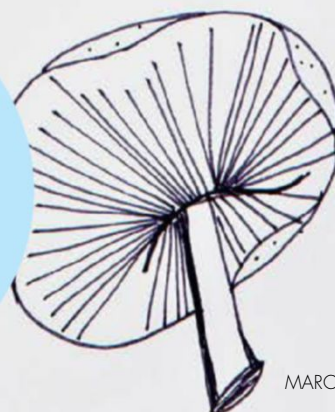
1 cup butter (at room temperature)
1 cup white sugar
1 egg
3 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Store-bought royal icing
Gel food colouring in variety of colours

1. With an electric beater, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add egg and mix well.
2. Sift flour and baking powder together and whisk into butter mixture. Then stir in the vanilla extract.
3. Press the dough into a ball and cover with cling film. Let it rest in the fridge for about an hour.
4. Preheat the oven to 180C. Line a baking sheet with silicone baking paper.
5. Roll out the dough between two sheets of silicone baking paper (or on a floured surface) and use animal-shaped cookie cutters to cut out shapes.

6. Place biscuits on the lined baking sheet and bake for 8-10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool on baking sheet until they are set enough to transfer to a cooling rack. Let cool completely before decorating.
7. Mix royal icing according to package instructions. Divide into 3 bowls and add 1 drop of gel food colouring of your choice to each bowl. Mix well and ice biscuits by first piping an outline onto each biscuit. Then add another ½ teaspoon of water to the left-over icing of each colour and fill in the blank middle of each biscuit.

Tip:

You can also use store-bought plastic icing instead. Just roll out the icing on a surface dusted with icing sugar, cut out the same shapes you used to cut out biscuits. Brush a little water onto the side that needs to stick to the biscuit or use a little icing sugar mixed into a paste with water to 'glue' the rolled-out icing to the biscuits.



Eggbox Snacks

Tip:

You can use any treats you like in the eggbox snacks, but with so much sugar around at Easter, it's a good idea to have some healthier options for your children. Other options to consider: cocktail sausages, mini frikkadels, celery sticks with nut butter (if there's no nut allergy in your family), grapes and berries.



Mini carrots

Mini corn

Sugar snap peas

Mozzarella cheese, cut into cubes

Popcorn (only for older children)

Baby tomatoes

1 Choose any snacks that your child adores, but keep it on the healthy side by using fruit and vegetables cut into bite-size pieces (you can also use a small cookie cutter to make it fun).

2 Use a pottery egg holder or line an egg carton with mini muffin paper cups and fill with an assortment of snacks.

Finger food is a great way to keep toddlers busy – they love feeding themselves. And it helps with hand-eye coordination and to develop fine motor skills!

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HOP TO IT

*Autumn weather can be unpredictable;
be prepared with some clever layering*

PHOTOGRAPHER: EMIELKE

STYLIST: JOANITA CILLIÉ

MODELS: JANO COETZEE AND SAMIYA ISMAIL OF KIDS INC

Jano wears a T-shirt **R255**, from Woolworths and pants **R249**, from Cotton On Kids. Samiya wears a jacket, **R250**, from Candyfloss Clouds; tutu **R250**, Another Planet; and cable knit leggings **R49,95**, Ackermans. Tan leather Dhurrie carpet, **R1 999**, Airloom. The soft toys are from the French Moulin Roti range, see Timbertoys for details.

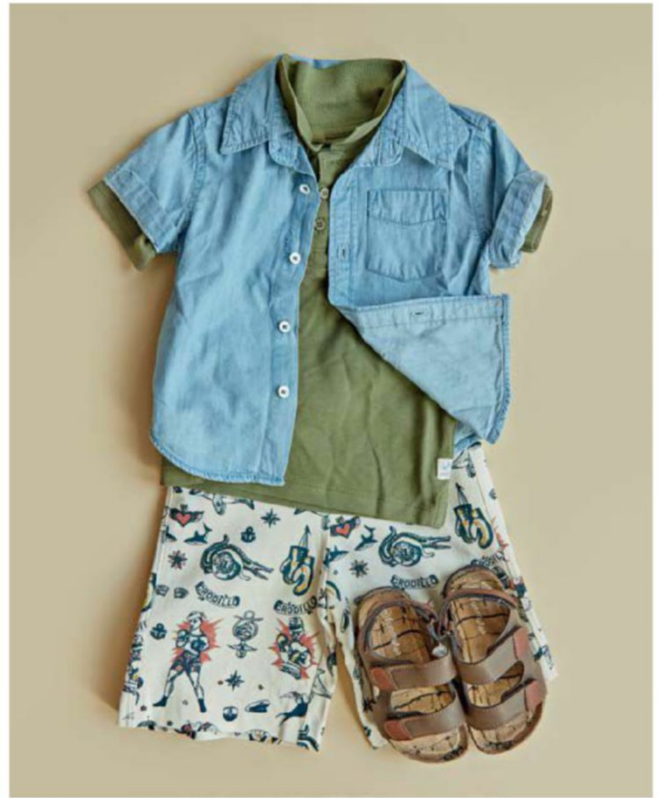


Samiya wears a Potter vintage dress **R255**, from Candyfloss Clouds; tights **R149**, Cotton On Kids; shoes **R34,99**, Pep.





Top **R279**, and socks **R129**, H&M Studio Collection; wings **R299**, Cotton On Kids; fur vest **R189** (part of set with tights and T), Ackermans; shorts **R225**, and shoes **R350**, Woolworths.



Polo T-shirt **R189**, and denim shirt **R229**, Cotton On Kids; shorts **R279**, H&M Studio Collection; and sandals **R140**, Woolworths.



T-shirt **R199**, Cotton On Kids; sweater **R199,99**, and pants **R119,99**, Mr Price; skipping rope **R229**, H&M Studio Collection.



Long-sleeved T-shirt **R199**, and sweater **R399**, Cotton On Kids; skirt **R629**, H&M Collection; and sandals **R89,99**, Pep.

KIDS FASHION



Sweatshirt **R130**, Woolworths; track suit pants **R59,95**, Ackermans.



Hoodie **R34,95**, Ackermans; jeans **R369**, Cotton On Kids, shoes, **R330**, Woolworths.



Sweatshirt **R59,95**, Ackermans; pyjama top and leggings **R130**, Woolworths.



Long-sleeved buttoned-up shirt **R39,95**, Ackermans; T-shirt **R169**, Cotton On Kids; chinos **R99,99**, Mr Price; ankle boots **R360**, Woolworths; dominoes **R249**, H&M Studio Collection.

T-shirt **R229**, H&M Studio Collection; sleeveless hoodie **R299**, Cotton On Kids; track suit shorts **R160 for a set of two**, Woolworths; sneakers **R49,99**, Pep. Taupe super natural carpet (1,8 x 2,8), **R1 799**, Airloom.

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Airloom Airloom.co.za
Another planet
Kerry@anotherplanet.co.za
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10 COMMANDMENTS FOR TAKING CHILDREN SHOPPING



Inspirational speaker and best-selling author Nikki Bush shares her tips for taking the anxiety out of shopping trips with the little ones.

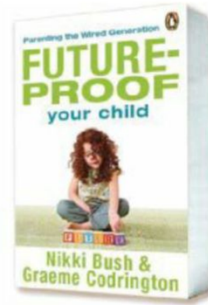
1 AVOID RUSH HOUR – According to Bush, any time after 5pm would be incredibly difficult for both parents and their tots.

2 MAKE SHOPPING AN OUTING AFTER NAPTIME – when children are refreshed they are much more relaxed and responsive to the experience.

3 WORK THE VISIT TO THE SHOPS INTO YOUR CHILD'S NORMAL ROUTINE – your child will be more manageable and responsive to the experience.

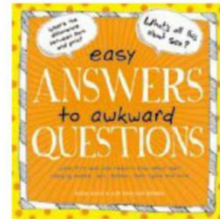
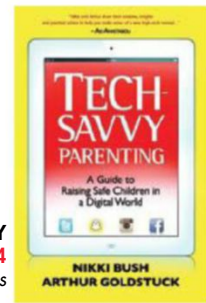
4 NEVER TAKE A HUNGRY CHILD SHOPPING – this will likely result in delaying the experience until after you have found a place to feed them.

5 ALWAYS KEEP SOMETHING TO EAT AND DRINK ON HAND – this is to avoid situations where you succumb to buying fizzy, sugar-laden drinks.



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6 HUNT IN PAIRS WHERE POSSIBLE – this makes the experience a lot easier to handle, particularly when you have more than one child.

7 PLAN YOUR OUTING STRATEGICALLY SO THAT YOU ARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME – if you do this, you will avoid wasting time going back and forth in a shopping centre and be purposeful in your mission.

8 TAKE A BREAK IF IT'S A MARATHON SHOP – breaks are important as they allow for children to refresh and handle the experience better.

9 SET THE SCENE/RULES/BOUNDARIES BEFORE YOU ARRIVE – giving your children a breakdown of what they can expect allows them to behave in the best way possible.

10 BE THE BOSS – guide your children through the experience, engage with them so that they feel comfortable and confident, knowing you are in control.

ADHD

BY LORI COHEN

DEMYSTIFIED

Although we still don't have a cure, ADHD can be successfully treated and managed

Unsurprisingly, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most studied areas of child health. Yet despite all of the research available, it's clouded in myth and stigma, with many parents fearing that a diagnosis of ADHD sounds a death knell for their child's academic performance and career prospects. But this just isn't the case anymore.

WHAT IS ADHD?

There's an area at the front of the brain called the orbito-frontal cortex, and it's here that our self-control resides. In children with ADHD, this area either doesn't develop as fast as it does in other children, or in extreme cases, never develops at all.

This isn't simply theoretical. If you compare PET scans (a type of brain scan) of a child with ADHD and a child without, the reduced metabolism in the orbito-frontal cortex is apparent even to a layman.

Children with ADHD struggle to concentrate. They have extremely short attention spans – if something isn't immediately entertaining or engaging, they'll lose interest, making them great at Xbox, terrible at homework, and murder on road trips.

Their lack of impulse control means they'll behave like little terrors. Where other kids might consider something and then decide against it, a child with ADHD will act without hesitation. Their condition also prevents them from learning from mistakes – no matter how many times you tell them not to do something, they'll be unable to resist if the urge takes them. This also makes them significantly prone to accidents.

We aren't talking about children who simply don't behave themselves – these are children who can't, even if they want to.

DIGGING UP THE ROOT CAUSES

We can't say with absolute certainty what causes ADHD. We do know that moms who smoke or eat fish while pregnant have a statistically higher chance of having an ADHD kids than those who don't, and that the condition manifests more in premature babies than those carried to full term.

Increasingly, evidence is pointing at a genetic explanation. There isn't a single ADHD gene, but rather a combination of genes that, if present in the right environment, produce ADHD. Put simply, it looks like an inherited condition.

It's estimated that around six percent of the current adult population has

ADHD. If one parent suffers from it, or had it growing up, there's a 30 percent chance that a child of theirs will develop it. And if both parents have it, that risk rises to 80 percent – a compelling statistic. If one twin is diagnosed with ADHD, there's a 75 percent chance that the other suffers from it too.

HOW DO WE FIX THIS?

There isn't a cure for ADHD yet, but there are ways of managing it. A holistic approach is best – good parenting strategies and diet play important roles.

There's some evidence that children who eat healthily (fewer processed foods and additives) find it easier to concentrate at school. This is also true for children without ADHD, so it's considered a best practice rather than a specific treatment.

Right now, our best approach is to manage the symptoms with medication, which in most cases gives children with ADHD – and, by extension, their families – their lives back.

Some parents are reticent about medicating their children, and that's understandable, especially given that the word Ritalin has basically become a swearword. But it's by no means the only option out there, and a competent health professional will be able to advise you on the best course of treatment for your child.

"Ritalin is no longer the gold standard for treating ADHD," says Dr Michelle King, a psychiatrist and early childhood intervention specialist working in Polokwane. "It can be effective, but we have a much better selection of medications available today than when Ritalin was first introduced. No two children are alike, so which medication is right for a particular child has to be assessed on a case by case basis."

IS ADHD REALLY SO WIDESPREAD?

The short answer is that it probably isn't – it's estimated that less than



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kids the edge whatever the cost, and if they can find a tame GP, it's easy to see how this behaviour spikes the apparent prevalence of ADHD.

DOES MY CHILD HAVE IT?

Don't jump to conclusions. "I always recommend that parents have their children's ears and eyes tested first," says Dr King. "If a child doesn't appear to listen, it could simply be that they don't hear well. If they're struggling at school, maybe they're actually struggling to see."

It's also impossible to diagnose ADHD before a child is at least four years old. "Toddlers are busy," says Dr King. "Before the age of four, the brain is still forming, and what may seem to be a hyperactive child could just as easily be explained by the normal exuberance of being a child."

Once you've ruled out the basics, if teachers are raising the issue, it may be time to seek a professional opinion. If your child genuinely has ADHD, a diagnosis and treatment plan could be the best thing you ever do for them.

ADHD MYTHS BUSTED

AS QUICKLY AS ADHD BECAME A BUZZWORD, IT GAINED STIGMA. SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTIONS INCLUDE:

✓ **YOU'RE A BAD PARENT** Your child blurts out socially inappropriate things, so you clearly haven't set boundaries

for them or taught them manners – shame on you. This is patently untrue, because a child with ADHD literally has no impulse control.

✓ **THEY JUST NEED TO FOCUS** Except they can't, even if they understand why they should. Their brains won't let them. Shiny things automatically take precedence over boring things.

✓ **THEY'LL GROW UP TO BE JUNKIES** Because most ADHD therapy involves some sort of stimulant, your kids are doomed to be crackheads – *No*. But the evidence shows that ADHD sufferers who receive treatment are far less likely to abuse drugs than those who don't.

✓ **THEY'LL GROW OUT OF IT** There's some evidence that, with treatment, the symptoms of ADHD can decline in adolescence. But around 60 percent of sufferers will continue to battle the disorder into adulthood, which can manifest in dangerous driving, serious debt caused by impulse shopping, and difficulty in holding down a job. **YB**

eight percent of children have the disorder. The reason why it appears to be overdiagnosed may have to do with diagnoses being made by professionals who don't have specific experience with ADHD, but another explanation is surfacing in a darker shade of ethical grey entirely.

In October 2012 the *New York Times* published an article drawing attention to a growing phenomenon of doctors making diagnoses of ADHD in order to prescribe medication for off-label uses – specifically, school performance. The same drugs that make it possible for an ADHD child to function at all give kids without ADHD a significant academic edge. To them, they offer improved focus, the ability to concentrate for longer, and some studies indicate they may temporarily raise IQ scores. In other words, these drugs make your kids smarter.

Naturally, prescribing medications for academic boosting is both unethical and illegal (nevermind dangerous to your child's health) – it's the scholastic equivalent of sports doping. But some parents feel compelled to give their



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ARE YOU *baby-proofed?*

BY DIMAKATSO MOTAU

Are you aware of all the hazards in your home? New dads share their most practical baby-proofing tips to help keep your precious bundle safe and sound as she grows

Any new parent knows the utter terror you feel when you leave the hospital with your bundle of joy – the world is, after all, filled with accidents waiting to happen. Just wait until you get home and see your home for the potential vortex of mishaps it most likely is! As each new milestone is reached, you see more potential for calamity. Enter Dad – the man with the plan to get everything baby-proofed in a jiffy.

New dad Muntu Maseko remembers feeling overwhelmed when he heard that he and his wife were expecting a daughter. But as soon as preparations for the nursery were underway, he started thinking of ways to take safety in all areas of their home to the next level.

New parents tend to think that hazards

are big things but something as small as a toothbrush can also cause harm if the baby has access to it. “They can poke things in their eyes and this can lead to damage. Just put your mind into baby mode and think about things that are used every day but can also be dangerous if a baby accesses them,” he says.

THE KITCHEN

By their nature, kitchens are a major focus when it comes to family safety. “We had to buy a steel bin as our former plastic bin was easily accessible and posed a huge danger for our daughter Owethu. The sink and kitchen appliances like the microwave, the fridge and stove were not a risk as they were higher up. Even if she could use a chair to stand on when she was a bit older, she wouldn’t be able to access them easily.

“We had to remember to always lock the burglar door that leads out of the kitchen as there’s a drain just next to the kitchen window. Babies are curious and we didn’t want a situation where Owethu could get to the open drain and put her little feet and body in there, thinking it’s a bath, and end up drowning in the drainage system,” he says.

He said his biggest baby safety fear was accessibility to pots, as they are often overlooked as a hazard but can pose a threat to tiny hands reaching for the handles and overturning boiling liquid onto themselves. “We learnt to put

the pots away in the cabinets instead of leaving them on the stove and I had to make sure extension cords in the kitchen were no longer on display or across the floor as she could easily pull on them and get electrocuted,” he says.

THE BATHROOM

Muntu identified this area as his biggest worry and felt that the best way to avoid mishaps was to keep the bathroom door closed at all times, as there were just too many potential hazards to cover.

“My biggest worry was the bathroom, as babies are curious and we had heard of incidents where babies drowned in a bath or toilet bowl – both scary situations for new parents. Since we live with extended family I had to sit them down for a meeting and ask them for cooperation in ensuring added safety efforts,” he said. “We have the bath and the toilet in the same room. This is where harmful cleaning detergents and bath items are kept and even without the water being a risk, babies tend to eat everything they pick up. Keeping the door closed at all times prevents these things from happening.”

THE BEDROOM

“We think of the bedroom as our safe space, and so tend to leave things like hairspray and other cosmetics within reach. A little side mirror is a convenience to me, but with a baby around I had to start thinking about such little things. The





television was also on a lower stand so I had to get a taller one in case she could pull it off and it fell on her little body," he explains.

Muntu says with time he learnt to also remove anything from the bedside tables, as Owethu tore pages from books and destroyed them. This didn't really pose a hazard to her but it did cost him valuable reading material.

THE LIVING ROOM

Not only is this the room where cables for the entertainment system abound, it is also a room packed full of vases, picture frames, flowers, and CDs and DVDs – all just waiting for baby to discover them.

Muntu bought a wide entertainment stand that would block all the electric plugs and wiring from being accessible for the baby. "We made it easy for ourselves, as even looking away for a second or quickly getting water from the fridge gives the baby an opportunity to pull at something." A CD and DVD stand with a lock are an added bonus in this room. Also remember to get a round-

“ THE BIGGEST SHOCK WAS LEARNING THAT PETS CAN ALSO POSE A DANGER TO BABIES IF NOT PROPERLY SUPERVISED. ”

edged coffee table or corner covers (from a baby store). Those sharp edges can be quite dangerous if your baby falls and hits their head.

The last thing you expect is for your comfy couch to be a hazard – something Paul Mokoka and his family learnt the hard way. "When our daughter started crawling she enjoyed climbing on and off the couch. One day she missed her step and landed head first on the floor. We spent 12 hours at the hospital casualty department because of that oversight," he says.

SAFETY DOESN'T STOP THERE

Muntu further cautions about small toys. "I wanted to buy every toy under the sun for my daughter, but with time I realised that some toys are just not baby-friendly. A friend ended up in hospital when their son swallowed a small piece of plastic

from his toy collection. It was a scary experience," he says. Age-appropriate toys are a must.

Sometimes baby-proofing requires making structural changes to your home. Paul explains that their home had always had a steep stoep, and only realised how dangerous that could be for a baby when their youngest daughter lost her front tooth from falling off it. "We had to adjust that feature quite quickly."

But, he says the biggest shock was learning that pets can also pose a danger to babies. "Our puppy once bit my daughter while they were playing. It must have understood her cry for help as a sign of enjoying their game, and she got hurt."

At the end of the day, anything can pose a danger, so keeping an eye on your little one really is the best way to guarantee her safety. **YB**



BABY PROOFING CHECKLIST

Make a point of looking at the world from your child's perspective and act accordingly. Be proactive and work on the assumption that you can simply never be too careful or too cautious. Check out your home on your hands and knees to see the dangers that could be lurking and tick off the following:

- ✓ Are there safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs?
- ✓ Are all the floor-level electrical sockets covered?
- ✓ Are all doors and windows lockable?
- ✓ Are all possible poisons such as medicines, vitamins, cleaning materials, cigarettes, toiletries and other toxic substances out of reach or locked away?
- ✓ Have you moved poisonous or prickly plants out of reach – or got rid of them? Common poisonous South African plants include syringa, erythrina (lucky bean), castor oil plant, chinchinchee, foxglove, stinkblaar/jimson weed, larkspur (delphinium), oleander, acokanthera and many fungi, especially mushrooms and toadstools.
- ✓ Are there child-proof catches or locks on the fridge, toilets and kitchen cupboards?
- ✓ Are sharp knives and scissors stored in a safely locked drawer or up out of reach?
- ✓ Are flexes and cords such as those on lamps, kettles and irons well out of reach? Anything dangling down could be pulled down on top of your baby's head. Make sure pot handles are turned inwards too, so that baby can't pull them off the stove.
- ✓ Don't carry your child and a hot drink at the same time.
- ✓ Keep hot drinks and other objects well away from the edges of tables.
- ✓ Keep hair dryers, toasters and other appliances unplugged and out of reach.
- ✓ Never, ever leave your toddler alone in (or near) the bath or near a pool, a toilet or a container of water – including buckets. A child can drown in only a few centimetres of water.
- ✓ Make sure you have layers of safety around dangerous areas, especially the pool, which should have a fence, net and alarms. Ensure that your baby doesn't play on the driveway behind cars.

Source: www.parent24.com



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I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

BY MEG FAURE,
OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPIST

Could a sensory processing disorder be causing your toddler's meltdowns?

Being a toddler is all about learning, taking in the world around you and converting these experiences into knowledge. In the first three years of life a child takes in a phenomenal amount of sensory data that her developing brain processes and interprets. This results in her development, intelligence and positive play skills.

But while play and stimulation are vital for development, it's not always a case of the more, the better. In fact, too much stimulation can result in sensory overload and distress for your child.

FILTERING THE CHAOS

The human brain is a wonderful thing. It governs movements, gives intent to actions, learns language and develops intelligence, helping to make sense of the world. However, this amazing system can also make the world seem completely disorganised and overwhelming. The reason for this has to do with the filters that govern how much sensory input we take in at one time.

Your child's senses are taking in sensory input during all her waking

moments, and to a lesser degree while she sleeps. The cacophony of sounds, touches, smells and visual input would be too much to make sense of if the brain consciously perceived it all. For this reason, the brain has a natural filter that habituates and blocks out sensory input that isn't necessary. Our amazing brains filter all irrelevant information, preventing us from becoming overloaded with too much stimulation. This habituation occurs without us knowing and prevents sensory overload.

An example of habituation occurs when you are at a toddler's busy birthday party – you are able to filter all the noise from the various toddlers out so that you can focus on a conversation with a friend. But if your little one (whose voice you are attuned to) yells out in pain, your brain actions you to respond immediately to your child.

OVERLOAD HAPPENS TO US ALL

Of course there are times in our day and certain situations where habituating sensory input is just not possible. Attend a baby expo with a toddler in tow and before the end of the outing,

you are bound to be fractious and feel overloaded by all the sensory input. For your toddler it is even more overwhelming. A tantrum induced by sensory overload could be expected after such a stimulating outing – and this would be considered a normal response to too much sensory input.

By making sure your baby sleeps regularly and keeping her from being overstimulated from a young age you can prevent sensory overload. However, for some children, even with the best intentions, overstimulation is a regular and very distressing experience. These children are often diagnosed with sensory processing disorder (SPD).

SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDER 101

We know that each person has a different sensory filter, unique to his or her brain. Some toddlers are just more sensitive to sensory input than others. They may also be more sensitive to specific sensory input, such as sound, light, smell, taste or touch input. When sensory input is not habituated and filtered, and your toddler's brain decides that this innocent input is threatening, the world



“BY MAKING SURE YOUR BABY SLEEPS REGULARLY AND KEEPING HER FROM BEING OVERSTIMULATED FROM A YOUNG AGE YOU CAN PREVENT SENSORY OVERLOAD”

feels dangerous to her. This results in levels of sensory overload that make all interactions difficult and overwhelming.

For these little ones, touches and sounds that are really not dangerous are perceived as a huge threat to their brains and result in their having a flight-or-fight response:

✓ **FLIGHT** (AVOIDING SENSORY EXPERIENCES) Your toddler withdraws from and avoids social situations or runs away when you want to dress him, for example.

✓ **FIGHT** (ATTACKING OTHERS OR

YOU) A toddler who bites others consistently or hits out at you when you try to change his nappy.

✓ **FRIGHT** (SHOUTING AND SCREAMING) in response to an unexpected dog bark or touch from behind.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Managing a child with sensory overload takes understanding and insight on your part. First, understand your baby's behaviour in the context of overstimulation and try to help her to engage or play in calmer settings for

shorter periods with more down time.

If your child's sensory sensitivity is affecting her function – for example, you find that she has no friends, or you can never drive in the car, or she is aggressive and moody all the time – seek the advice of an occupational therapist specialised in sensory integration who will give you what's called a sensory diet to help your little one cope better with sensory input.

Coping with a child with SPD is a tough challenge. Knowledge, empathy and advice from a qualified professional is the best way to create an environment in which your little one can engage, learn and make sense of her world. **YB**

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Skin DEEP

Your baby's skin is very different from yours, and needs specialised care. Here's why and how to look after very young skin

BY MARGOT BERTELSMANN

Skin is skin, right? And if your baby was born at full term, you probably thought her skin was pretty much like the rest of most of her organs: fully formed, and ready to take on the outside world. In fact, while it does act as your baby's first line of defence (protecting her from harsh temperatures, microbes and infections), your baby's skin is different from your adult skin.

Dermatologists now know that a baby's skin as a whole actually continues to develop outside the womb, and specifically the skin's ability to act as a water barrier continues to develop after birth for the first year of life.

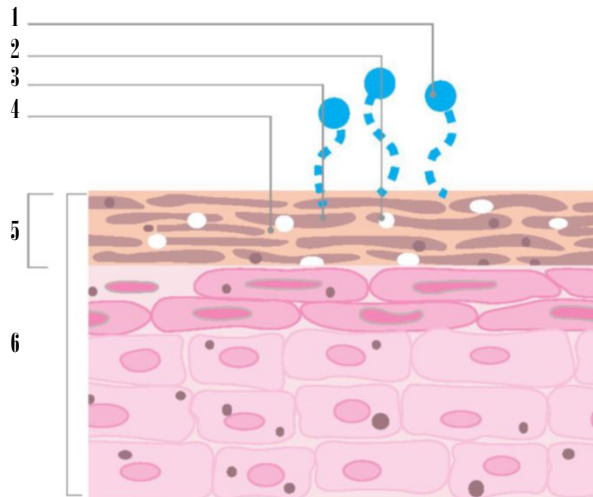
The world inside the womb is a wet one. When in utero, your baby was surrounded by amniotic fluid and her skin prepared to protect her from that by forming a waxy substance, called vernix, to cover and insulate her. Some vernix will still be on her at

birth – and you needn't be in a rush to wash it off, by the way. Vernix has been found to contain antimicrobial substances (effective against group B strep and e.coli bacteria) similar to the immune-boosting, protective substances found in breastmilk, so leaving the vernix layer on to absorb into the skin and delaying a baby's first bath for a day or two is a good post-birth option.

“THE WORLD INSIDE THE WOMB IS A WET ONE. WHEN IN UTERO, YOUR BABY WAS SURROUNDED BY AMNIOTIC FLUID AND HER SKIN PREPARED TO PROTECT HER FROM THAT”

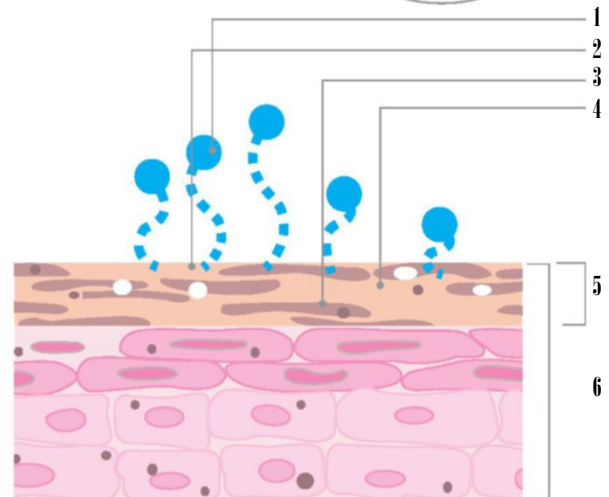


THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BABY AND ADULT SKIN



ADULT SKIN

- 1: Slower rate of water loss
- 2: More NMFs (natural moisturising factors)
- 3: More melanin pigments
- 4: Larger corneocytes
- 5: Thicker stratum corneum
- 6: Thicker epidermis



BABY SKIN

- 1: Faster rate of water loss
- 2: Fewer NMFs (natural moisturising factors)
- 3: Fewer melanin pigments
- 4: Smaller corneocytes
- 5: Thinner stratum corneum
- 6: Thinner epidermis

Cleansing baby's skin and hair

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IT'S DRY OUT THERE!

After birth, your baby's skin has to adjust to a brand-new, relatively dry environment. Studies measuring the rates of transepidermal water loss (TEWL) found that three- to six-month-olds had the highest rates of infant TEWL, as did those babies with diseases that manifested in skin barrier abnormalities, such as atopic dermatitis. The reason for this water loss? Baby skin is structurally different to adult skin. The cells are smaller and the collagen fibres thinner. It contains fewer natural moisturising factors, fewer lipids and less melanin than adult skin, which also makes it lose water faster. Baby skin also has a higher pH than adult skin, leaving the skin barrier less mature and more prone to dryness than that of adult skin.

An infant's skin is able to absorb more water than adult skin, but it also loses that water at a faster rate, says dermatologist Dr Rakesh Newaj (go to dermatologistjohannesburg.com). "The ratio of the skin's surface area to the body weight of the baby exposed to external environment is high," he explains. "There is more heat exchange and water loss by conduction, convection and evaporation."

As a baby's immune system is still developing, she also has a greater chance of developing skin irritations and infections. Her skin is more vulnerable to the environment than adult skin. If not properly cared for, the skin becomes susceptible to diseases such as nappy rash, atopic dermatitis and other skin infections. This is why baby skin needs special care.



For all these reasons, says Dr Newaj, “of course it is essential to maintain a skin barrier. The skin barrier helps regulate the baby’s body temperature, maintain her water balance and also protect the internal organs from the sun and pollution [from the environment], as well as micro-organism invasion.”

You can help protect your baby’s skin by minimising water loss. That’s achieved by giving baby enough fluids, cleansing any dirt off with appropriate products, and keeping the skin hydrated using moisturisers and barrier creams which, as their name suggest, form a protective

barrier between porous baby skin and the harsh environment outside of it, keeping water in and the bad stuff out.

THE ATOPIC MARCH

Allergic diseases often begin and progress in similar ways in different people – a process doctors call the allergic, or atopic, march. Atopic dermatitis is one of the first symptoms (the first step in the march), and most children with asthma or allergic rhinitis first showed symptoms of atopic dermatitis. Whether or not your child will join the atopic march depends on many aspects: environmental factors such as exposure to endotoxins, early infections, pets, pollutants, tobacco smoke, antibiotics and chemicals, as well as heredity components. Scientists are actually busy isolating the genes responsible for atopic diseases in an effort

TIP: PROTECT BABY’S SKIN FROM THE SUN

While keeping your baby’s skin moisturised is key, protecting their delicate skin from sun damage is just as important. Cape Town-based dermatologist Dr Vanessa Lapiner says the best way to protect your baby’s skin from the harmful rays of the sun is to keep them away from the sun. “For babies up to six months old, use physical barriers against the sun, such as long-sleeved clothing, hats, umbrellas and other covers, and a mineral-based sunscreen cream such as zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, which reflects light and isn’t absorbed by the skin. More important than any physical or chemical barrier against sun damage is keeping your children out of the sun during the hottest part of the day – between about 10am and 4pm,” Dr Lapiner advises.

For older toddlers, chemical sunscreen creams, which are made with larger molecules to enable less absorption, can be used. Chemical sunscreens work by changing the sun’s UV rays into heat, then releasing that heat from the skin. “Look for those containing the organic sunblock mexoryl or the blocking sun filter tinosorb,” advises Dr Lapiner. “These have properties that both absorb and reflect rays, and have the lowest incidence of skin irritation.”

Remember, the rule of thumb is that your child can never have too much sun protection.

to understand it, and therefore treat it, better. Specifically mutations in the Filaggrin gene seem to play a part in atopic dermatitis.

Professor Michael Cork, a leading UK dermatologist, believes that the atopic march can be prevented by maintaining the skin barrier and preventing allergens and harmful substances from entering through the skin. The best way to do this is with routine skincare using products specially formulated for a baby’s delicate skin. While you may not be able to avoid it if your baby is prone to allergic diseases, you may well lessen her chances by taking very good, careful care of her skin. Environmental factors such as some skincare products, surfactants, air pollution, and food can have a positive or negative effect on the skin barrier. Harsh products can irritate or even break the thin

baby skin and must be avoided.

ALL SOAPS AND CREAMS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL

Avoid using adult skincare products on your baby for a start, says Dr Newaj, though luckily, “creams that are too harsh for a baby’s skin tend to have a warning on them.” Also avoid antibacterial or sterilising solutions, as well as creams that contain retinol, or chlorhexidine solutions. Exfoliant scrubs are, of course, a no-no.

Go simple. “The best is not to have perfumes, alcohol or strong detergents in creams,” says Dr Newaj. Alternative, natural skincare remedies are popular, precisely because additives cause concern for many parents. But bear in mind that products that are “natural” are also not necessarily ideal for baby. Olive oil, for instance, is not

Protecting baby's delicate skin from the sun

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a good skin barrier because it contains too much oleic acid, which can irritate and even break the skin. Some parents feel anxiety about using baby skin products with preservatives in them. However, it is very important to prevent products from becoming infected with micro-organisms, many of which can cause serious illness. There are proven safe preservatives that have been recommended for usage by global regulatory bodies, and any water-based product must have preservatives in it to prevent spoiling.

The other option is to skip all artificial cleansers and just use water instead of soap. It's the simplest, isn't it? But water is not a good cleanser on its own. In fact, it dries out skin. Although water does hydrate the skin, the effect is temporary, lasting only about

30 seconds. Once the water evaporates, the skin begins to dry. Dirt particles on your baby's skin are usually fat-soluble and so need to be removed by surfactants, which are agents that lower the tension between the skin and the water used to wash the skin. Water alone is less likely to "pick up" the dirt off the skin and carry it off. **YB**

WHAT TO USE ON BABY

When it comes to washing your baby, use products that are as delicate as possible. "Of course, products made specifically for babies are great. Creams that are occlusive, containing ceramides or aquaporins, are excellent. Even barrier creams containing zinc can be very effective," says dermatologist Dr Rakesh Newaj.

Lastly, do not keep your baby in the bath for very long periods of time: "This causes the natural moisturising factors to dissolve and the skin becomes drier," says Dr Newaj. "Moisturise soon after a bath, as this seals in the humidity and keeps the skin moisturised for longer. Also do not bath your baby too often (like, several times a day) as this causes loss in the natural moisturising factors."

"Eczemas often develop within the first year of life and can be easily treated if identified," notes Dr Newaj. "But do not start by restricting foods if you notice a skin rash. The best is to consult a skin specialist, because it is rare that foods are the causes of skin rashes."

As your baby gets older than a year and more robust, you can let down your guard a little. Still maintain a good cleaning regime, "with no overzealous cleaning and no drying with harsh towels," says Dr Newaj. "At that age the advice is to continue using no harsh soaps, to moisturise and to watch for skin rashes," he adds.



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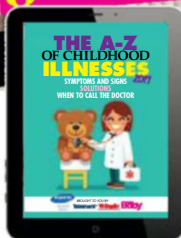
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THE BIG MUSIC & PLAY *guide*

PLAY

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FOR EVERY AGE

FANTASY PLAY

GET YOUR CHILD'S CREATIVE
JUICES FLOWING

THE MAGIC OF MUSIC

HOW MUSIC SHAPES
YOUR BABY'S BRAIN ▶

*It may look like all
fun and games, but
perfecting the art of
play is essential for a
child's development*

PLAYING IT **FORWARD**

BY LORI COHEN



Those minutes spent stacking Duplo blocks, or mucking about in the sandpit, do more than put a smile on your kid's face. The more hours of play clocked in a day, the better for your child, says occupational therapist Rebecca Wallis. We need to shift our thinking from considering play to be a break from learning, to being a primary occupation of childhood. In short, when your child is playing, they are actually hard at work fine-tuning essential skills. "Play provides children with rich opportunities for learning and is vital for physical, cognitive and spatial development," says Rebecca.

BUILDING THE BODY

Playing may be all about fun in the early days, but it pays off in later life. Physical development is motivated by play. Think about an infant reaching out for a toy that is placed out of his reach. He will eventually roll in order to grab that toy.

All types of play provide important feedback to the infant brain about their

“EARLY PLAY EXPERIENCES PROVIDE THE FOUNDATIONS REQUIRED FOR A CHILD TO EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO SIT AT A DESK, LISTEN TO HIS TEACHER AND FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS, RESULTING IN A WRITTEN LETTER OR WORD ON THE PAGE THAT STARTS ON THE LEFT AND PROGRESSES TO THE RIGHT AND IS LEGIBLE”

MOMMY WORRIES

YOUR BABY ASKED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST **REBECCA WALLIS** TO TACKLE SOME COMMON PLAY ISSUES

Q I fetched my two-year-old early from crèche recently and watched her in the playground for a while. She didn't seem to play or interact with any other children. Should I be concerned?

A Children's play is predominantly parallel between the ages of one and three years. This means that when placed in the play space together, children of this age will generally play alongside one another. They may play with the same objects and may be able to share these objects, but will not be playing together in a cooperative way. Cooperative social play starts to emerge more between the ages of three and four and children are able to play more complex cooperative games with rules by the time they are five.

Q My 18-month-old son cannot jump yet. His older brother could jump by the age of two. Should I get him assessed?

A A child's ability to jump is determined by several factors, including their physical strength, coordination, bilateral integration and motor planning. A child should start attempting to jump at 18 months to two years, but will not experience much success and this will depend on when they reached their other gross-motor milestones. By the age of three the child should be able to jump on two feet and land on two feet. If a child is unable to jump at this age, and is experiencing other gross-motor delays, such as having difficulty with running or standing up from sitting, then an assessment is recommended.

Q My daughter is at preschool, but she is too scared to go down the slides or play on the jungle gym. I'm worried that this will affect her ability to make friends. How can I build her confidence?

A Once again this could be the result of several different factors. The child's overall anxiety levels should be considered, as should their confidence in other gross-motor play activities. A fear of jumping or going down a slide, particularly in a child who is very cautious in walking down stairs, or who avoids swings, is likely due to a lack of integration in the vestibular system. An occupational therapy assessment (sensory integration practice) would be recommended in this case.

“A CHILD’S SENSORY SYSTEMS DEVELOP THROUGH BEING PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR SENSORY-RICH EXPERIENCES, SUCH AS PLAYING IN A SANDPIT. PHYSICAL PLAY DEVELOPS THEIR PROPRIOCEPTIVE AND VESTIBULAR SYSTEMS.”

environment and the impact that they can have on their environment. “Early play experiences provide the foundations required for a child to eventually be able to sit at a desk, listen to his teacher and follow instructions, resulting in a written letter or word on the page that starts on the left and progresses to the right and is legible,” explains Rebecca.

The skills required to achieve these goals are gained bit by bit each day as a child explores and interacts with his environment through play. “The development of the basic sensory systems leads to the development of more complex skills such as bilateral integration (the use of the two sides of the body in a coordinated way), postural control, visual perceptual skills, motor planning skills, midline crossing, maintenance of concentration and attention, auditory processing and fine motor skills,” she says.

THE BRAIN AND BODY AT WORK

“Play provides you with opportunities to test your environment, the impact your body can have on the environment, as well as what your body itself is capable of. It provides a safe, creative space for these to be tested,” says Rebecca.

A child’s sensory systems develop through being provided with opportunities for sensory-rich experiences, such as playing in a sandpit. Physical play develops their proprioceptive and vestibular systems. The proprioceptive system, which has its receptors in the muscles, joints, bones and skin, provides your child with an

awareness of his body and how his body takes up space. The vestibular (movement) system, gives us a sense of where our head is in relation to gravity, as well as the speed at which we are moving. It plays a strong role in balance and the tactile (touch) system. Feedback from these sensory systems tells the body where it is, how it is moving and how this space can be negotiated. Why is this important? “Spatial awareness on a body level is a precursor to spatial awareness and organisation in smaller tasks, such as performing puzzles, or fine-motor tasks, such as cutting and colouring in,” says Rebecca.

FUN WITH A FOCUS

All explorations and play also become a way of learning about cause and effect, explains Rebecca, and this takes many different forms, including play such as pushing a button on a toy to elicit a noise, or banging on a pot with a wooden spoon to create a satisfying sound. It can also include social learning, such as: “If I say or do something cute or funny my caregivers will have an overwhelming positive response”. Yep, your baby’s reward is your laugh.

Play also provides many opportunities for problem solving. This might include games that provide basic opportunities for trial and error, such as a shape sorter, or using their memory to recall past experiences, which may help them to negotiate a situation. This is fundamentally learning – allowing them to have daily experiences where they practise and develop their cognitive skills.

YOUR MINI SOCIALITE

Many moms laugh at the fact that their kids have a better social life than them, but having the neighbours’ toddler round for a play date, or even interacting with other children in the local park, plays a developmental role. “Play provides children with the opportunity to learn how to successfully interact with one another, a skill vital for adult life. This might include skills such as sharing and listening to one another, which will be important if the particular game is to go on successfully. This also provides children with opportunities to develop their empathy. For example, learning how it would feel if someone took their toy away,” says Rebecca

A WORLD OF FUN

Both indoor play and outdoor play are equally valuable as they provide different learning opportunities – all of which are necessary for well-rounded development. “Outdoor play provides good opportunities for gross-motor play and the development of physical skills. Indoor play provides good opportunities for play that might access more of the cognitive skills such as building blocks and colouring in – generally the types of play that provide opportunities for a child to experience maintaining attention and concentration for longer periods of time,” says Rebecca. Remember, indoor “play” does not include watching television, as this is a passive task that requires little to no cognitive involvement. Play is an active and engaged task.

“Ideally, there should be a balance between indoor and outdoor play, however, for those of us for whom outdoor play is less feasible, exciting physical challenges can be created inside. This might include something like making an obstacle course out of cushions or building a sheet fort,” adds Rebecca. As a parent you can help your baby take mini developmental steps each day – through play. **YB**



WHAT IS APPROPRIATE PLAY?

WHILE ALL CHILDREN DEVELOP AT THEIR OWN PACE, THE FOLLOWING 'PLAY' DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES ARE A GUIDE TO CHECK IF PLAYTIME IS ON TRACK.

FOUR MONTHS

- ✓ Uses hands and eyes together, such as seeing a toy and reaching for it.
- ✓ Reach for toy with one hand.
- ✓ Likes to play with people and might cry when playing stops.
- ✓ Copies some movements and facial expressions, like smiling or frowning.
- ✓ Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys.

SIX MONTHS

- ✓ Likes to play with others, especially parents.

NINE MONTHS

- ✓ Has favourite toys.
- ✓ Looks for things she sees you hide.

1 YEAR

- ✓ Plays games such as "peek-a-boo" and "pat-a-cake".
- ✓ Explores things in different ways, like shaking, banging, and throwing.
- ✓ Finds hidden things easily.
- ✓ Bangs two things together.
- ✓ Puts things in a container, takes things out of a container.

18 MONTHS

- ✓ Likes to hand things to others as play.
- ✓ Plays simple pretend games, such as feeding a doll.
- ✓ Pulls toys while walking.

2 YEARS

- ✓ Gets excited when with other children.
- ✓ Plays mainly beside other

children, but is beginning to include other children in play, such as in chase games.

- ✓ Finds things even when hidden under two or three covers.
- ✓ Builds towers of four or more blocks.

3 YEARS

- ✓ Takes turns in games.
- ✓ Shows concern for crying friend.
- ✓ Understands the idea of "mine" and "his" or "hers".
- ✓ Can work toys with buttons, levers, and moving parts.
- ✓ Plays make-believe with dolls, animals, and people.
- ✓ Does puzzles with three or four pieces.
- ✓ Builds towers of more than six blocks.

4 YEARS

- ✓ Is more and more creative with make-believe play.
- ✓ Would rather play with other children than by himself.
- ✓ Cooperates with other children.
- ✓ Plays board or card games.
- ✓ Hops and stands on one foot up to two seconds.
- ✓ Catches a bounced ball most of the time.

5 YEARS

- ✓ Wants to please friends.
- ✓ Wants to be like friends.
- ✓ Can tell what's real and what's make-believe.
- ✓ Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer.
- ✓ Hops, and may be able to skip.
- ✓ Swings and climbs.

MUSIC AND YOUR BABY

More than entertainment, music affects how the brain works and learns

If you've ever hummed a lullaby to a baby, distracted a toddler on a car journey with 14 verses of *Old MacDonald*, or clapped out a rhythm for a marching preschooler, you've seen the power of music. Making music is one of our most basic human instincts – all cultures the world over make music with their voices or instruments. Babies worldwide are sung to sleep with lullabies that have a tempo similar to that of the human heart in a relaxed state. A mother's voice has an almost magical ability to soothe and calm a baby. Music affects us in extraordinary ways, and science continues to find new evidence of its power.

A BRAIN THING

According to Dr Annette Lotter, a doctor of education who specialises in brain profiling, babies can hear and process sounds from three months prior to birth, and this has a profound effect on their emotional development. She adds that our bodies respond physically to different types of

music, and she believes that music can be used to help us all relax, concentrate, or go to sleep.

"Throughout the day, brain waves vary in any human, baby or adult. When you are experiencing alpha brain waves, both hemispheres of the brain are active and you have total access to both sides of your brain. You feel focused, relaxed and content. If you are agitated, the non-dominant hemisphere in the cortex will switch off. So you might find yourself unable to remember or recall information such as names and facts," she says.

Music has a direct impact on brain waves, she says. "A normal heartbeat is more or less 60 to 75 beats per minute. To induce alpha brain waves, where the two hemispheres are open and functioning well and primed to learn, play music with the same beats per minute – what I call active music."

To relax your baby, for instance during breastfeeding or before



FACT:

IT SEEMS THAT MUSIC PRIMES OUR BRAINS FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF THINKING. RESEARCH SHOWS A TEMPORARY INCREASE IN SPATIAL REASONING WHEN STUDENTS HAD LISTENED TO MOZART BEFORE BEING TESTED

putting her down to sleep, play slower music. By contrast, very fast and noisy music makes the heart beat faster. Dr Lotter says, "Music faster than 75 beats per minute affects the functioning of the cortex. A baby sitting in front of a noisy cartoon is not able to process information rationally. The information he sees goes to the middle brain where values and beliefs are kept, which is a problem if it is a violent cartoon image, for instance."

MUSIC AND LEARNING

Music is linked to speech and language, which in turn forms the basis of reading and writing. Like speech, music has rhythm, pitch and tone. Through listening to and joining in with nursery rhymes and simple songs, babies and toddlers learn important auditory skills.

Genevieve Ryan, a music teacher at Bellavista School, explains how music can have a positive effect on language. She says, "In music, the children listen to the beat, to whether music is fast or slow, loud or soft. I put a story to a piece of music, which helps them understand and remember. They have to focus, and listen for different instruments to come in." She says that music helps concentration, too: "When they play together, each child is keen to play but has to listen for when to come in, and wait his turn. It is good for impulse control."

Songs build vocabulary – think how *Head, Shoulders, Knees And Toes* teaches the names of body parts, or *Old MacDonald* prompts your toddler to chip

in with the names of different farm animals – and give opportunities for practising pronunciation. Rhymes and songs help young children develop phonemic awareness (the ability to hear sounds and distinguish between them), and phonemic awareness is a key skill for reading.

Songs develop memory and cognitive skills, too, as your little one remembers the words and processes their meaning. They engage the imagination, or the sense of humour. Some songs have a mathematical element (*Ten Green Bottles* or *There Were Three In The Bed*, for example), while others, like *Incy Wincy Spider* or *Two Little Dickie Birds*, give opportunities for using important fine motor skills. Setting words to music also helps the brain remember and retain those words, which is useful when children need to remember important information such as mom's cell number, or how to spell their own name.

So, what of the claim that music can actually make your baby smarter? That's perhaps a rather general statement for a complex topic. Popping a CD into a player is not simply going to create a genius, but it is fair to say that music can contribute to your child's intellectual development in various ways. Music (in particular classical music) has a complex underlying structure, which babies seem to grasp. Music is powerfully connected to other abilities, including maths and language. Music contributes to a rich and stimulating cultural environment, which can only be good for your baby's intellectual development. **YB**

*Imagination is about more than
just raising an arty child – it's
a tool for life*

RAISE A CREATIVE CHILD

BY NIKKI TEMKIN



With the world changing daily, and futurists and trend spotters the world over predicting a radically changed job market in the future, part of your role as a parent is to equip your child with the life skills he'll need for success. Future forecasters espouse flexibility, imagination and creativity as must-have, lucrative skills. The time is ripe to nurture and grow these abilities that children are actually born with.

A GOOD MANY PARTS TO IT

"An active imagination helps your child in many ways," says Sarah Cohen-Schwarz, a registered counsellor with a special interest in art therapy for children. She says that studies have shown that children whose creativity had been actively developed over time were found to be more resourceful when it comes to dealing with life's challenges. Creativity partly means being able to think on your feet, approach tasks from different perspectives and thinking outside the box. "It gives children a place for expression and connection, which are central in identity formation, relationships and agency formation," says neuroscientist Luke Lamprecht.

"Creativity builds confidence," says Sarah. It allows children to make mistakes and learn from them. Children also learn that constructive feedback is a helpful part of learning, and not something to be taken personally. It creates empathy too when other kids enter the play, and your child learns communication, social skills and the art of negotiation. Asking

questions like "How do I turn this clay into a sculpture?" or "What do I need for Teddy's bedtime?" also develops skills in reasoning and understanding, which are also necessary tools for success in life. "Problem-solving is another major natural benefit of creativity," says Sarah. Other skills developed through creativity include perseverance, dedication and the ability to focus. "Research has shown that participation in the arts improves concentration," says Luke. Through artistic expression, children practise collaboration, sharing responsibility and compromising for a common goal. "If it's nurtured throughout childhood, creative thinking will come naturally in the future," says Sarah.

DOWN TO BRAIN TRAINING

While imagination and creativity are skills that children are generally born with, it takes practice for the brain to turn it into second nature. "During the first few years of life, a child has many more neurons than are necessary. As a result, the brain is pruned on the basis of 'use it or lose it'. Although there is some plasticity (the ability to mould the brain) later in childhood, what hasn't been developed is lost," explains Luke. To put it simply, the more creative ways of thinking are developed, the more those neural pathways in the brain will light up and grow – and the easier it becomes for your child to think that way. "Children learn via experience. Creativity allows the brain to develop in unique ways," says Luke. "In fact, creative play may function as an important, if not crucial, mode for learning."

MORE BENEFITS OF CREATIVE PLAY...

- ✓ Improves memory and stimulates the growth of the cerebral cortex in the brain, which is responsible for higher-order actions such as language and information processing.
- ✓ Triggers the secretion of BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor), a substance essential for the growth of brain cells.
- ✓ More attention is paid to academic

tasks when children are given frequent, brief opportunities for free play.

- ✓ There's a strong link to language development and better vocabularies.
- ✓ Promotes learning experiences of exploration, investigation and self-motivation.
- ✓ Music helps with mathematical processing and develops neural pathways for cognitive development.



“WHEN IT COMES TO THE IMAGINATION, THERE NEEDS TO BE NO COMPETITION. YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO KNOW THAT THERE ARE NO LIMITS WHEN SHE’S EXPLORING HER CREATIVITY — IT’S A SPACE WHERE ANYTHING GOES”

FLIGHTS OF FANCY HAVE A REAL-WORLD PURPOSE

Have you ever watched your little one play make-believe? The bath becomes a mermaid’s cove, the bed turns into a dragon’s lair and grey playdough transforms into a scrumptious piece of cake. This kind of fantasy (or pretend) play is a key part of her learning. “Self-expression as part of pretend play is a way of working things out that happen in life,” says Sarah. It gives children a chance to work out big-world rules about sharing, social interaction and conflict resolution.

“Pretend play has also been correlated with the crucial ability to self-regulate impulses, emotions and attention and the ability to reason,” says Sarah. Dreaming up imaginary situations – like where he rescues his friends from aliens – gives your child a sense of control even in unfamiliar or scary situations. Or while pretending to be a doctor, she’s developing social and verbal skills. Re-enacting events that have happened is a way of roleplaying that teaches her how to manage situations, practise discipline

and develop an understanding of cause and effect.

“Pretend play, also called symbolic or imaginative play, usually first appears between the ages of 18 and 24 months,” says Luke. The self-expression of make-believe teaches courage and curiosity. “This phase is instrumental in your child’s physical and intellectual development,” says Luke. Additionally, two thirds of toddlers between two and five years of age invent an imaginary friend. This doesn’t mean that your child is lonely or a social outcast, but rather signifies his burgeoning sociability and creativity.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

You may be wondering what roles you get to play in this exciting world of your child’s growing imagination. There are many ways that you can engage with and help grow this skill. It comes down to supporting her and encouraging the process as it happens. “As a parent, your attitude is crucial. Our children look to us for guidance, feeling good and

learning how to behave and believe in this world. Creative confidence relies on self-confidence,” explains Sarah. “Abundant and specific praise, buying into their fantasies and extending trust in their creative abilities is crucial.” So, for example, if your toddler wants to create a castle in your lounge, give her freedom to do it how she wants (within limits) and let her know that you’re available if she needs help. Once she’s finished, compliment her on the finished product and her creative use of everyday materials to make her castle (using the pillows as a tower, or a sheet on the floor as a moat). Ask her questions about her process in creating the castle.

When it comes to the imagination, there needs to be no competition. Your child needs to know that there are no limits when she’s exploring her creativity – it’s a space where anything goes. “Removing the anxiety of winning, perfection or being the best frees a child to create without fear of judgment,” says Sarah. And while you’re at it, try to find your own playful spirit! **YB**



PRETEND PLAY NORMALLY FOLLOWS THESE STEPS:

■ **AROUND EIGHT MONTHS** Your baby enjoys making "music" (noise) by banging and shaking her toys.

■ **AROUND 18 MONTHS** You'll notice your baby starts to act out things she's seen you do, like talking on the phone or "nursing" her doll. You can encourage this phase by offering toys that resemble real world objects (like a toy phone).

■ **AROUND 24 MONTHS** Your child is now able to use one object in a way that represent something completely different – like putting a block to her ear as a cellphone.

■ **FROM TWO TO THREE YEARS** The imagination is at full tilt, and as your child advances linguistically, cognitively and socially, her play starts to include fantasy, drama, and imitation. You'll notice she starts to re-enact scenarios from stories or real life occurrences. Dress-up toys and storybooks are key items now.

■ **FROM FOUR YEARS** At the most advanced form of socio-dramatic play, make-believe will now become more elaborate with extended storylines and character acting. Imaginary pals can also become part of your child's fantasy world.



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your *practical advice for ages 0-3* **baby files**

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BY TORI HOFFMANN

TUMMY time

Even though she's likely to put up a fuss, this is a crucial activity for the early days

Mention the phrase tummy time to your mother, and she probably won't know what you're talking about. Because back in the day, "tummy time" (which is awake, supervised playtime on baby's tum) didn't exist as such, and it wasn't something that she had to consciously do with you. Instead, it happened involuntarily when she put you down to sleep on your stomach or left you to lie freely on a blanket. But things have changed. As a result of the Back To Sleep campaign initiated by the American Academy of Pediatrics – which encourages parents to put their babies down to sleep on their backs – and restrictive infant car seats, bouncy chairs, swings and saucers, babies are spending more time on their backs and less time on their tummies, where they need to be to develop.

WHY THE FUSS?

"Let's be honest, life is pretty hectic. As a result, babies are sometimes left to fend for themselves on their backs, in their prams or in their baby equipment. It's the easier option – especially when they're fussy – while mom or dad tackle a million and one things," says Cape Town based occupational therapist Kirsty Beamish.

"This, and the fact that the American Academy of Paediatrics recommends babies sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of SIDS, means that being on their tummies is very hard work for babies,

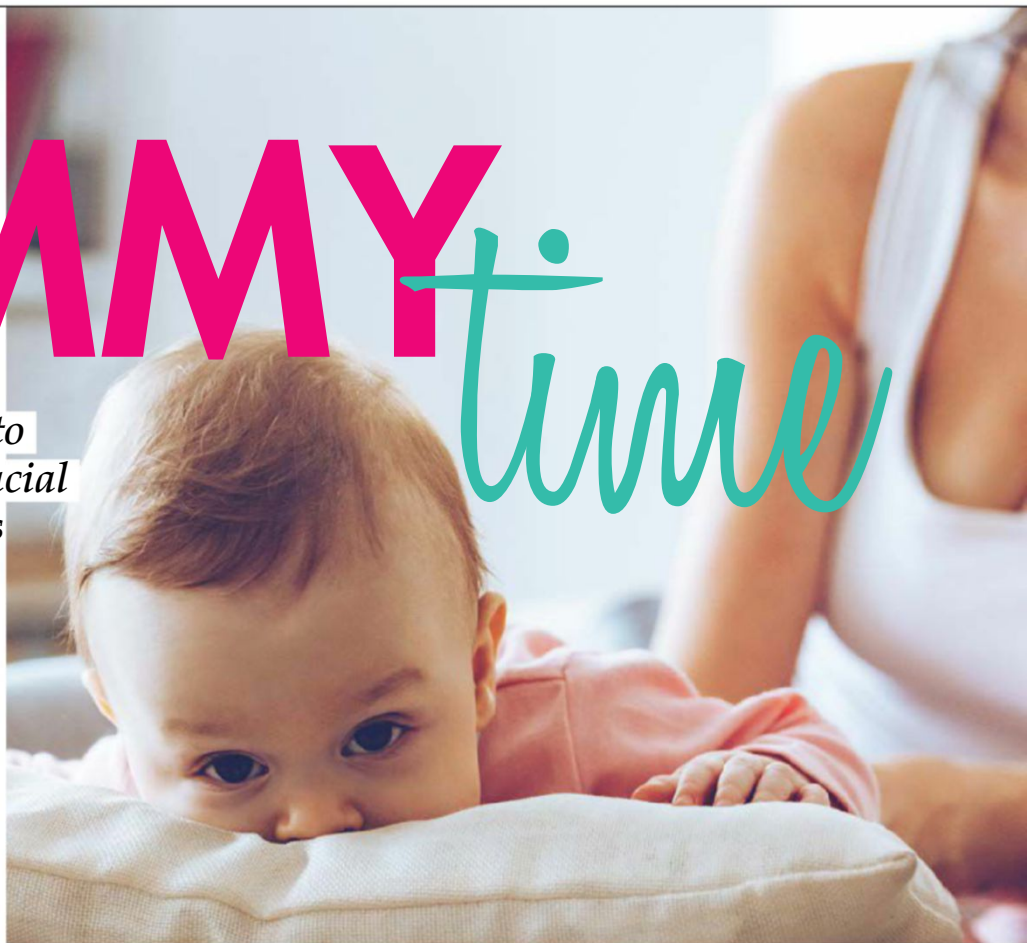
as they very often don't have the head control and upper body strength that they need for this position," says Kirsty. She adds that reflux babies often have issues with tummy time too as it's a very unpleasant position for them. "It squashes their stomachs, forcing their stomach acids back up and out of the oesophagus. If your baby cannot tolerate even a few minutes of tummy time, perhaps get her checked out and treated for acid reflux", she urges.

FIVE BENEFITS OF TUMMY TIME

- ✓ Kirsty says that you want your baby to be on her tummy so that she can work against gravity and build up her muscles. "Tummy time strengthens your baby's neck muscles and gives her head control – something she needs to feed well and meet all her milestones: rolling, sitting, crawling and walking."
- ✓ Tummy time aids visual development. Your baby needs strong neck muscles and head control to track movement and focus

on objects.

- ✓ It also helps to strengthen your baby's arm muscles so that she can develop upper body strength, push herself up and ultimately crawl, explains Kirsty, adding that she will use that upper body strength for the rest of her life to read and write, hold a pair of scissors properly, or even climb a jungle gym. "Every milestone builds on the next – they don't happen in isolation."
- ✓ If your baby has had consistent tummy time, by the time she's sitting, she's had practice working against gravity, which allows her to bring her two hands together to her midline. "This is called bilateral integration, where the two sides of the body are used together. Babies need it to bring their hands (and toys) to their mouths. It's how they explore and learn," she maintains.
- ✓ Tummy time will help avoid flat head syndrome. Babies who spend too much time on their backs or in baby seats can develop flat spots on their heads, which sometimes needs medical intervention.



TAKE THE TRAUMA OUT OF TUMMY TIME

NO TUMMY TIME – WHAT NOW?

If your baby doesn't have enough of it, or completely foregoes tummy time, it doesn't necessarily mean that she'll miss major milestones. "You may, however, notice that she doesn't have great head control, that she isn't very stable when sitting, that she struggles to bring her hands together or to her mouth, or that she's mildly delayed in rolling or pushing herself up. Not doing tummy time can have an impact on a child," cautions Kirsty.

That said, children develop at different ages, and there's a range over which milestones need to be met; so try not to stress if your baby doesn't hit every milestone exactly on the mark. "If you're worried that your child is delayed in a particular area, then get her assessed by your paediatrician or an occupational therapist as it's better to address a problem early on before it leads to another one." **YB**

START EARLY The earlier you start tummy time, the better, and the more chance there is that your baby will enjoy it. So put your newborn on your chest. In this position, the neck and back-strengthening benefits of tummy time are gained.

PROP HER UP For a slightly older baby, roll a towelling nappy under her chest to raise it up a little and make her more comfy. You can even use a breastfeeding cushion, a pillow or a small 55cm gym ball. Lie your baby across one and roll her gently over it from side to side and from back to front.

TIME IT RIGHT Time her tummy time for after naps and when she's been fed – just not straight afterwards. A content baby is much more likely to cooperate and have fun on her tum

than a fussy one.

BREAK IT UP Do as much tummy time as your baby can tolerate, and alternate tummy time with back time. Start with three to five minutes three times a day and gradually build it up. Eventually, your baby should be able to do about 30 minutes throughout the day, perhaps even more.

PLAY WITH HER Distract your baby from the fact that she's on her tummy and get down on your tummy too. Make eye contact with her, play with her – blow bubbles, play peek-a-boo or read to her. If you're busy, place her at your feet on a blanket with a mirror as babies love looking at themselves. Lots of toys scattered around to look at and reach for work well too. And don't forget about interactive playmats – a fabulous buy.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR EXPERTS

TINA OTTE MIDWIFE AND CHILDBIRTH EDUCATOR

I FIND CLEANING MY BABY'S UMBILICAL CORD STUMP SO SCARY. I DON'T WANT IT TO GET INFECTED BUT I ALSO DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM. AND HOW DO I KNOW I'M DOING IT RIGHT?

The umbilical cord is the lifeline through which your baby receives everything he needs to grow while inside you. After your baby is born, the umbilical cord is clamped and cut close to the baby's body. There are no nerve endings in the cord and this procedure is completely painless for you and your baby. A plastic clamp is then applied to the cord and is usually taken off before you leave the hospital. A small umbilical stump is left and as days pass the stump dries out further and becomes hard and turns a brown, black

colour. It takes about 7 to 14 days for the stump to dry up and drop off, leaving a small wound that may take a few more days to heal and close completely.

The cord must be kept clean and dry. Fold the baby's nappy below the stump so it's exposed to the air and not to urine. When the stump falls off, you may detect a little blood on the nappy, which is normal. At every nappy change, carefully clean around the base of the cord with surgical spirits, making sure that the spirits do not touch the healthy skin. Using a dropper, drop a few drops of spirits over the cord so that it runs down deep into the base of the cord. You can use cotton wool soaked in spirits, but using a dropper is more effective and controlled.

Avoid giving your baby deep, extended tub baths until the stump falls off. Dry well after bath and then apply the spirits or wound healing powder.

Cord care tips

- ✓ Clean cord care in the postnatal period includes washing hands with clean water and soap before and after care, and keeping the cord stump dry and exposed to air or loosely covered with clean clothes.
- ✓ Only apply spirits or Healing Wound Powder onto the wet and yellowish area. Avoid contact with skin.
- ✓ In warm weather, have your baby wear just a nappy and vest to let air circulate and enhance the drying process. Never attempt to pull off the cord, even if it looks like it's hanging by a little thread.

Consult your doctor if:

- ✓ Your child develops a fever or appears unwell.
- ✓ The navel and the surrounding area become swollen or red.
- ✓ Pus appears at the base of the stump.

Email your question for our experts to: Tsholofelo.Modise@media24.com. Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.





GROWTH CHARTS

BY MEGAN FAURE

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW

Knowing your baby is growing well is a big deal, but so is knowing exactly what his growth chart means

There are few aspects of parenting that create quite as much anxiety as making sure that your baby is getting enough food and growing the way he should. Because so much of parenting is immeasurable, it is tempting to look to growth and weight gain as a measure of your success as a parent. Weighing and measuring your baby weekly can verge on an obsession if you are feeling anxious. The reality is that growth

charts need to be kept in perspective and used with common sense.

GROWTH CHARTS ARE FOR INDIVIDUALS

Growth charts reflect the average growth and weight of babies. Many growth charts use American statistics and may not be relevant to your baby, especially if he was born prematurely. In addition, the growth chart of a healthy breastfed baby will not follow the same trajectory as a bottle-fed baby. The growth charts for boys and girls also differ. So if you are going to use a growth chart, be sure it is appropriate for your individual baby.

HOW TO USE THEM

In the first month, especially if your baby was premature, you will probably weigh your baby at a clinic or doctor weekly and plot these measurements on the chart. It is important to weigh your baby on the same scale each time as scales can differ, resulting in undue cause for concern. It's also important to watch for the trend over time and not to panic if your baby has poor weight gain for a week. If your baby has gained weight steadily in the first month, you can weigh him monthly until six months and thereafter every second month until a year.

Your baby's height and weight should be recorded on a growth chart. (Your baby's vaccination card has a growth chart on the back.) The growth chart contains centile lines, which reflect how many babies weigh that amount. If your baby is on the 75th centile line, it means that out of 100 babies, only 25 weigh more than him, in other words, he is a big baby.

NORMAL GROWTH

On the day that your baby is born, his weight will be recorded on the chart. Your newborn will lose weight in the early days but most babies will have regained their birth weight by 14 days.

Once your baby has regained his birth weight you can expect steady growth over the next year. Some months your baby will gain more, and others he'll gain less. The important thing is that your baby should be on a continuous upward trend.

If your baby is happy, sleeping, feeding well and has eight to 10 wet nappies a day, his growth is probably fine. There is nothing to worry about.

WHEN TO WORRY

Speak to your doctor or clinic sister:

✗ If your baby was premature or had a very low birth weight. Your baby will be carefully monitored in this case – you don't want your baby to lose weight, but you also don't want him to gain weight too quickly.

✗ If your baby's growth curve has a sudden change in path over two weights, gaining much more than usual or much less.

✗ If your baby's growth curve starts to cross a centile line above or below the centile they have been on (in other words your baby has always been on the 50th centile and puts on so little weight that he is now in the 25th centile range).

✗ If your baby's weight and height proportion changes – for example, his

weight increases a lot but his height does not keep up with this growth – this would indicate he is becoming too fat for his height. If your baby loses weight from one weigh-in to the next, this needs to be explored.

Baby growth is an emotive issue and if you find the growth chart is causing undue stress, try to go with your instinct and rely more on your baby's activity level and happiness as an indication of his health. **YB**

WHAT TO READ TO YOUR NEWBORN



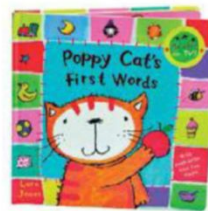
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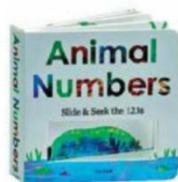
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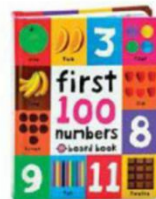
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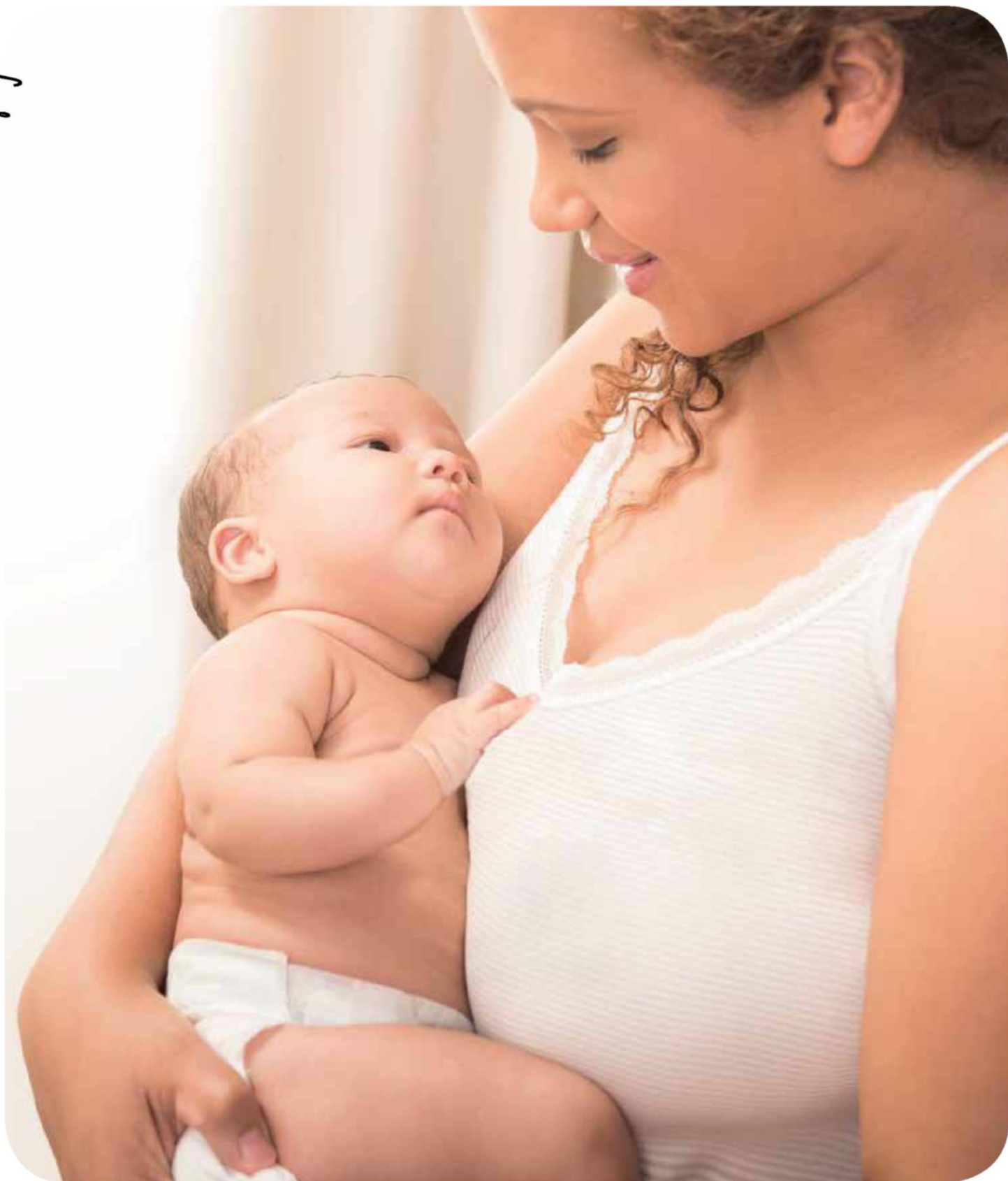
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Time to get up and go out into the sunshine! Stretching those legs, breathing in the fresh air and seeing the sky can be good for both you and your baby

BY LIZ SENIOR, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST AND FOUNDER OF CLAMBER CLUB

LET'S GO OUTSIDE

It's time to take advantage of our fair weather with your little one. Occupational therapist and mother of four, Ayelet Gochin, believes that it is healthy for babies to be outdoors: "As newborns, babies are oblivious to the world around them. All wrapped up and protected, they are insulated from external sensory input. As babies get older, they start to engage with their senses; they are able to turn their faces away from sunlight or the wind, notice new sounds and will move their heads towards them. Gently exposing babies to the world around them, while respecting their very new and still maturing sensory systems, helps

to pave the way for them to experience their environment in a positive way."

Ayelet believes it is important to encourage babies to explore the outside world slowly. As parents our role is to enable engagement with the environment, ultimately facilitating a baby's ability to process sensory input efficiently. This will help babies make sense of things around them with joy, clarity and a sense of adventure. "This week my three-month-old Anna noticed the movement of the birds on the grass and watched them hop around for ages," says Ayelet. "She enjoys walking around the garden with me, or lying under a tree. On our recent holiday she loved watching

the waves on the beach and listening to the sound of the surf. This soothing noise helped her to enjoy long deep naps."

WHY IS OUTSIDE PLAY BENEFICIAL?

Research shows that babies sleep better when they are exposed to natural light during the day. A study by the Liverpool School of Psychology has found that babies who slept well at night were exposed to significantly more light in the early afternoon. So everybody gets more sleep!

Your baby learns everything through his senses. There are different sights, sounds, and smells outside: the smell ▶

of fresh grass, the change in light from in and outdoors, and the sounds of twittering birds. Even the sound of traffic is different to sounds in and around your home. Enjoying outdoor play gives him the chance to experience a multisensory environment. Furthermore, fresh air and sunshine are healthy for both you and baby. A brisk walk with your baby in a sling or a pram can help to relieve the baby blues and improve energy levels.

USE ALL OF YOUR BABY'S SENSES

There are loads of ideas you can use to incorporate all of your baby's senses in outdoor play for optimal benefit.

■ LOOK

- ✓ Lie your baby under a tree so that he can watch the leaves move and see the shadow patterns the branches make.
- ✓ Walk around the garden, street or park together and look at the different colour flowers, leaves and plants, as well as any other interesting visuals.
- ✓ Point to objects that are close by, but also help your baby to look for things in the distance, such as a dog running by or a car coming down the road.
- ✓ Birds flying, hopping or digging beaks

into the soil will fascinate your baby.

- ✓ Tie some colourful ribbons on a frame, along a chair or table and let baby watch them flutter in the breeze.

■ LISTEN

- ✓ Bring sounds into your environment to your baby's attention. Think of aeroplanes, birds, dogs barking, and the wind in the trees. Listening to different sounds teaches auditory discrimination, the ability to tell differences between sounds.
- ✓ Help your baby to identify where the sound comes from.
- ✓ Talk about the things you see while using repetitive words to teach your baby the meaning of sounds and words.
- ✓ Sit baby on your knees and sing a song, swing or rock baby in your arms and sing, make your voice softer and louder using different tones as you describe the environment.
- ✓ Hang chimes in a tree for your baby to hear.

■ TOUCH

- ✓ Feel the grass – from about four months of age, show your baby how to rub, tug and pull the grass, help him open his hands and feel the grass.

TIPS FOR OUTDOOR SAFETY

- ✓ Never leave your baby alone outside.
- ✓ Make sure that ponds and pools are covered with nets or are fenced well so that your crawling baby cannot get to them.
- ✓ Your exploring baby will love to put everything in his mouth. Make sure that there are no potential choking hazards nearby.
- ✓ If it's hot, don't leave your baby in the sun. Make sure he is in the shade and wearing a hat. Put sunscreen on your older baby.
- ✓ In cold weather, wrap your baby up warmly.

- ✓ Remember that it's not just the hands that feel. If it's warm enough let baby lie in his nappy outdoors and feel the breeze on his skin.
- ✓ If it is a hot day, run the hosepipe gently and let your baby feel the water, or sit baby in shallow tub of water, and pat, tap and splash together. Remember, never leave your baby alone in water.
- ✓ Make your own tactile nature basket for your baby to feel, adding pine cones, dry leaves, chunks of bark and large pebbles.
- ✓ Put out a basket of balls for baby to crawl after and to feel. Use different sized and textured balls.
- ✓ If you feel like being messy, put some cake flour on a tray for your baby to pat and experience some messy play.

■ MOVE

- ✓ Babies love the calming motion of swinging. Use a bucket swing or a hammock to relax in.
- ✓ Brisk walking will energise you! Push baby in the pram, or put baby in a back pack or a pouch.
- ✓ Dance, spin and lift your baby up and down like an aeroplane
- ✓ For your nearly walking baby, give him a walker to push along on the grass. **YB**

“ ENJOYING OUTDOOR PLAY GIVES HIM THE CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE A MULTISENSORY ENVIRONMENT. FURTHERMORE, FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE ARE HEALTHY FOR BOTH YOU AND BABY. ”

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR EXPERTS

LINDA BRITZ
MIDWIFE, NURSING SISTER AND
LACTATION SPECIALIST

MY 14-MONTH-OLD SON LOVES HIS BREASTMILK BUT I THINK HE IS READY TO LET GO. HE IS A BUSY LITTLE BOY WHO WOULD RATHER BE RUNNING AROUND THAN BE TIED TO MY HIP. SHOULD I WEAN HIM? I REALLY WANTED TO BREASTFEED TILL HE TURNS TWO.

It can be quite a concern when your baby starts to show signs of weaning himself and you are not at all prepared for this process. It catches you off guard sometimes, doesn't it? You may even experience some feelings of rejection.

The World Health Organisation recommends that you continue to breastfeed your baby for the first two years of his life and beyond, alongside the nutritious solid foods that your baby should start eating from no sooner than four months old. And even though this may be your goal, your baby may ultimately make the decision.

Each child is different and unique, and as they grow through their second year as a toddler, and meet the required developmental milestones, they each begin to show their individual characters.

At this age your baby starts to walk, and as his separation anxiety settles, he becomes more independent in exploring his world. He may even be selective at mealtimes and choose to eat what he prefers and wants, rather than just willingly have whatever is offered. However, if a good foundation has been set, and he is eating a good variety of nutritious wholesome foods from all the food groups, and drinking water when offered often, then he only needs to breastfeed in the morning on waking, and in the evening before going to bed. These two breastfeeds can continue for as long as he demands, and will meet the emotional bonding needs for both of you.

There is also the immunity benefit for your baby. Although he may only be breastfeeding twice a day, his immune system is boosted by the large numbers of antibodies contained in those feeds, preparing him to cope with exposure to various illnesses as he comes into contact with others.

If he has naturally indicated to you that he only wants to feed at these quiet, special moments together, then keep offering the breast, until your child now selects a different way of waking or going to sleep. This is considered adequate, and is a normal appropriate behaviour for his age.

Email your question for our experts to: letters@yourbaby.co.za. Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.



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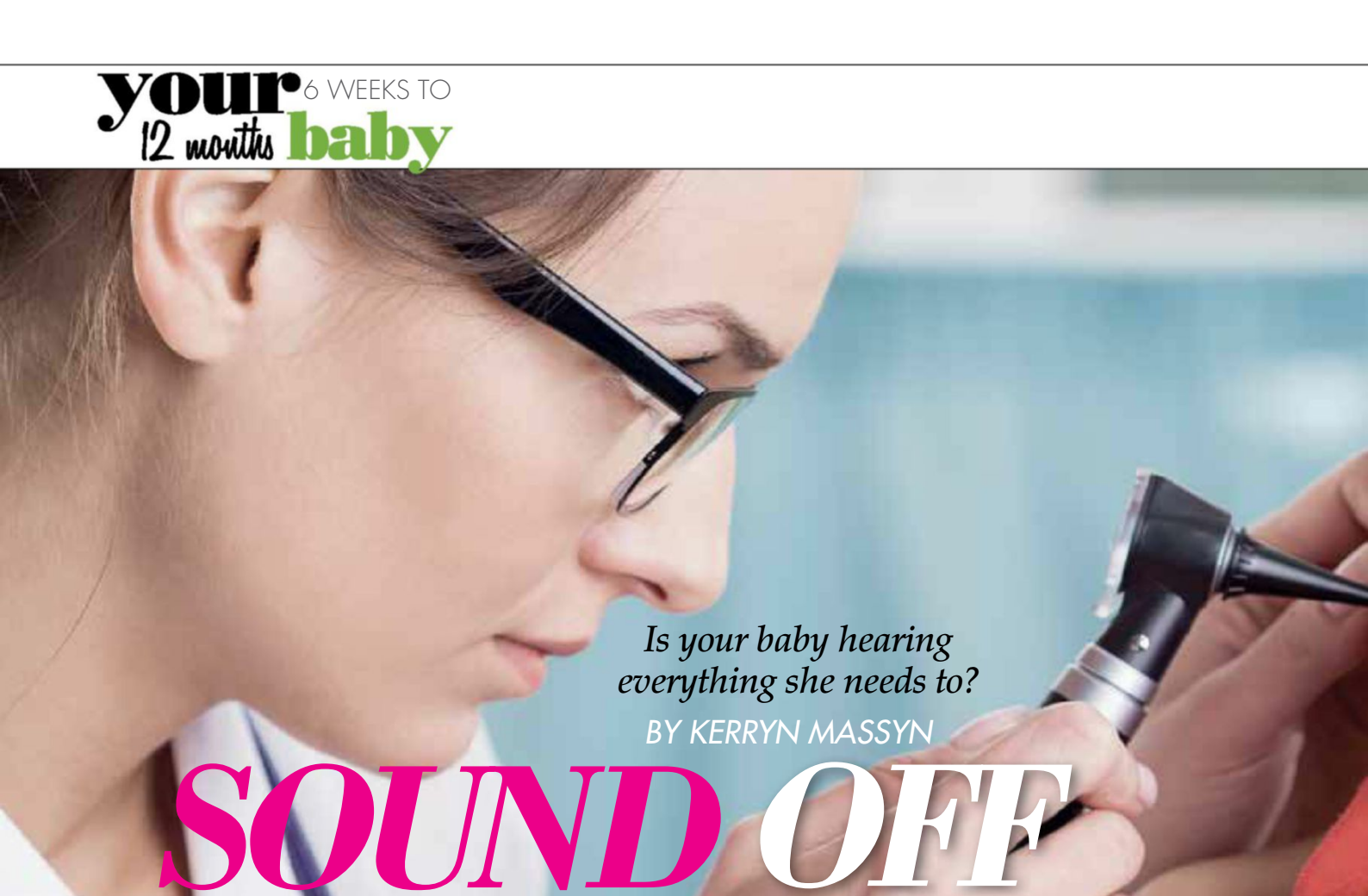
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Is your baby hearing everything she needs to?

BY KERRY MASSYN

SOUND OFF

Believe it or not, your baby has been hearing things since before she was born. In fact, your baby has been responding to the sound of your voice with an increased heart rate from the third trimester. Around one month of age, your baby is already able to tell the difference between certain sounds, like “ba” and “da”, and by the age of six months she is able to recognise and respond to her own name. But just because your baby was probably born with a pair of ears in perfect working order, doesn’t mean those little organs don’t need taking care of. Hearing tests, ear infections and protective measures all form a part of her first year.

TESTING, TESTING

In a 2012 paper by Dr Iain Butler published in *Continuing Medical Education*, hearing loss is identified as the most common birth defect affecting newborn babies across the world. He estimates that about 6 000 babies are born in South Africa each year with hearing loss, and says that this number increases throughout early childhood as a

result of infections or other causes. This is why hearing tests are necessary.

“Hearing tests are vitally important in order to promote early intervention for hearing loss,” says Mandy van den Berg, an audiologist at Johannesburg’s Flora Clinic. She goes on to explain that the sooner any hearing loss is identified, the sooner action can be taken. This is very important as hearing loss can lead to delays in speech and language development, and can lead to difficulties at school later on, especially where intellectual and socio-emotional development is concerned. “If a hearing loss is identified, and appropriate management (hearing aids or cochlear implant) put in place before six months of age, your child has the auditory capacity to develop normal speech and language,” she adds. However, too many children are diagnosed with hearing impairment later in life, which is often too late for these core skills to take root.

Your baby’s first hearing test should take place in hospital shortly after birth. It’s a quick test that your baby doesn’t even feel. It’s often done when your baby

is sleeping and the results show whether all the structures that your baby needs to hear well are present and in working order.

“The next test should be done at around 12 months of age, at an audiologist’s office in a soundproof booth,” says Mandy. “Although the test done at birth told us about baby’s hearing organs, in most cases the auditory nerve is not tested at this time. This is what makes this second test so vital. At the one-year test, the auditory nerve and the way in which the brain processes sound is tested. Best of all, you can see your baby’s reaction to really soft sound inputs. Unless you notice any further change in our child’s hearing, it is safe to leave the next hearing test until when they go to school.”

PROTECTION IS BETTER THAN CORRECTION

Sound is a delicate sense and hearing loss can occur quite easily. “The idea of hearing loss may bring up an image of a grandparent, but our actions as adults, teenagers or even younger impact how well we hear (or don’t hear) later on,”

Great buys for baby



WHAT ABOUT EAR INFECTIONS?

Audiologist **MANDY VAN DEN BERG** explains that middle ear infections, which are quite common in babies, can cause temporary hearing loss. "The swelling and pus-like discharge from these infection may block sound from travelling to the inner ear, but hearing usually returns on its own after the infection goes away. The danger is that untreated middle ear infections can damage to the structures of the middle ear, which then may in permanent hearing loss. This is so important to have any infections treated by your GP or an ear, nose and throat specialist (ENT)."

SIGNS OF AN EAR INFECTION – ALSO KNOWN AS OTITIS MEDIA – INCLUDE:

- ✓ Your baby is pulling at her ears.
- ✓ Fluid draining from the ear, usually yellow or white.
- ✓ An unpleasant smell coming from the ear.
- ✓ Fever and/or irritability.
- ✓ Reduced appetite.
- ✓ Crying whenever you put her down and difficulty sleeping, as the pain gets worse when lying down.
- ✓ Ear pain and/or a headache.
- ✓ Lack of balance.
- ✓ Diarrhoea and vomiting – the infection can also affect the gastrointestinal tract.

explains Mandy. "What's tricky about noise-induced hearing loss is that it can happen gradually and often has no symptoms. Yet, once there is damage it's too late – hearing doesn't come back. About five million children worldwide have noise-induced hearing loss or damage as a result of loud sounds, most of which is entirely preventable." She suggests the following preventative measures to protect those tiny ears:

✓ **Be careful of noisy toys** Have a look at the annual Sight & Hearing Association's Noisy Toys Study (at sightandhearing.org/Services/NoisyToysList) to see if any of the products listed are in your baby's toy box.

✓ **Use hearing protectors when mowing the lawn or at a concert** For babies and kids, this is a no-brainer. Ear muffs are best, and for older children you can use ear plugs.

✓ **When using earphones, turn it down** Ear buds have affected hearing in a real way – and not a positive one. We have no control over how loud our children are putting the sound on the phone or iPad. Noise-cancelling headphones are often a good idea, as kids won't need to turn the



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volume up to drown out outside noise.

✓ **Teach your older children that noise today impacts their hearing later** Noise-induced hearing loss doesn't occur overnight. What they do now may keep them from needing hearing aids at all or needing them earlier than expected.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Watching your baby to see how she responds to sounds is probably the easiest way to spot a problem. "If by 6 months of age your baby doesn't turn her head towards a sound or is not soothed by your voice when she can't see you, it is a good idea to have her hearing tested. Another major factor is delayed speech – if your baby is not starting to babble by around nine months of age, or if she screeches in a monotonous way instead of using 'baby talk', all may not be well." She adds that a complaint of ringing in the ears should set alarm bells off, as it often indicate hair cell damage in the cochleas.

If you're worried by anything it's best to have it checked out by your baby's paediatrician or an audiologist sooner rather than later. **YB**

BY TORI HOFFMANN

EIGHT THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

TANTRUMS

Top tips to curb toddler strops

Meltdowns are a regular part of toddler life, but that doesn't mean they can't be dealt with. Here are our top eight tips for dealing with a toddler frothy.

1. IGNORE THEM, AND THEY SHOULD GO AWAY

Why carry on performing if no one's watching, right? The same can be said of toddler tantrums that, according to baby expert and author of *Toddler Sense* Ann Richardson, should be ignored. "By ignoring the tantrum, you're giving your toddler the message that his behaviour doesn't affect you, and he'll most likely stop. Rather focus on the reason for the

tantrum in the first place and if his wilful behaviour persists, then simply remove him calmly from the scene of the crime," she maintains.

2. TIME OUT WORKS

Avoid sending your toddler to the bathroom as the naughty corner if he's having a tantrum as "these areas may make him feel embarrassed, uncomfortable and insecure," says Ann. However, a time out – where a toddler is temporarily removed from the situation – is a useful tool for a toddler from two years of age who uses a tantrum to openly defy your authority or displays a behaviour that he knows is not acceptable. "Wait until he can understand that rules need to be followed, so that he'll

understand why time out is happening," she cautions. "Time out must not be seen as punishment. It should rather be seen as an opportunity to teach your toddler how to cope with his feelings of frustration and anger. Once he has learnt how to cope with these feelings, he'll be able to start to modify his behaviour."

3. REASONING IS FUTILE

"When your child reaches tantrum mode, he's not hearing a thing. This is why your actions (turning your back or simply ignoring him) speak volumes and are much louder than words," explains Ann. When he's in the throes of a tantrum, don't plead, beg or negotiate with your child – it'll only give him the message



TANTRUM TAMERS

that you're anxious and not in control. Rather give him a time out or allow the meltdown a few minutes to play itself out, and then offer all sorts of comfort and love. Discuss the issue afterwards when everyone is calm. "Always remember to reward positive behaviour too," she advises.

4. THERE'S MORE THAN ONE TYPE OF TANTRUM

While a tantrum generally follows the same pattern – shouting and screaming, throwing of objects, whining and crying – there are three different types of tantrums that you can expect your toddler to throw. The "attention tantrum" is the most common type, says Ann, where your toddler misbehaves in order to get your attention, especially if you're busy doing something that doesn't involve him getting that attention. "Tangible tantrums," Ann points out, occur when a toy is taken away from your child or when treats are refused. And lastly, "command avoidance tantrums" erupt when your clever little tot tries to get out of doing something that he doesn't want to do, like getting into his car seat or putting his shoes on.

5. TANTRUMS ARE NORMAL, NOT NAUGHTY

Tantrums are a normal part of a toddler's psyche and a necessary and healthy (albeit difficult) part of growing up. "It's how you and your child's caregivers respond to the tantrum that sets the way forward towards your child realising that what he's doing is wrong," explains Ann. She also points out that toddlers have a low level of frustration and their tempers are easily triggered when things don't go according to plan. "In younger toddlers under the age of three, most tantrums are triggered by frustration with their inability to perform certain tasks, such as putting on their own shoes. This is when a helping hand from you, and not punishment, is all that is needed, and the tantrum soon abates."

6. TANTRUMS CAN SOMETIMES BE AVOIDED

We're all a bit tired and cranky at the end of the day and this is something you should bear in mind when you quickly nip to the shops after work with your hungry, overstimulated toddler. When he spots the sweets in the queuing aisle, can you really blame him for having a mini meltdown when you tell him he can't have them? Fortunately, this is easily avoided. "Modulate your child's stimulatory environment or remove him from it if you see any signs of overload," says Ann. Other ways to avoid tantrums would be to watch awake times, be consistent in your routines, avoid hunger, prevent a situation of frustration from arising, offer him choices whenever possible and pick your battles, she says. After all, it isn't really the end of the world if your toddler goes out with his T-shirt on backwards, so leave him be.

7. IT'S ACTUALLY OKAY TO CAVE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES

Ann doesn't feel that any parent should ever give in to a tantrum – by doing so, you'll only reinforce the negative or bad behaviour and teach your child that all she needs to do is have a "frothy" in order to get what he wants. However, she says that it is indeed okay to cave if the tantrum is causing dysfunction in the environment. For example, if your tot is making an undue scene at a restaurant and causing discomfort.

8. SMACKING DOESN'T SOLVE ANYTHING

Giving your child a smack when he's in the throes of an emotional outburst really is a bit like kicking a dog when it's down. "All smacking does is teach your child that violence and aggression are appropriate and acceptable ways to gain control," stresses Ann. It also reinforces negative behaviour by giving your child attention. If you are tempted to smack rather take a deep breath and walk away. **YB**

Toddlers are notorious tantrum throwers – it's all part of asserting their newfound independence, but it's enough to drive you crazy. Short of throwing yourself on the floor and joining his kicks and screams, we have a few ideas to stop the tears in their tracks.

1 TURN A BLIND EYE The fact is that during a tantrum your toddler's emotions are ruling his brain, so reasoning with him will not help at all. It'll just make things worse. Rather ignore it completely, wait until he's calmed down and then address the issue calmly.

2 CREATE A DIVERSION Sometimes all a tantrumming tot needs is to have his attention pulled towards something new. Keep a few exciting goodies in your bag for moments like this, or if your tot's major meltdown is happening in the cereal aisle say something like, "Hey, I think we need some cooldrink, come with me to choose which kind!"

3 GIVE HER A BIT OF LOVE Because of their intrinsic emotional roots, a bit of loving can go a long way in stopping the tears. A firm hug just helps make your toddler feel secure in this big scary world, which is probably part of what got the tantrum started in the first place.

4 OFFER FOOD OR SOME QUIET TIME Hunger and overtiredness are two leading causes of tantrums. Because your tot isn't feeling too perky physically, his emotions aren't far from falling off the edge too. If you find tantrums happen at around the same time every day, feed him, give him some water and let him chill out a bit.

5 LAUGH IT OFF Getting angry or visibly frustrated during a tantrum gives your toddler the attention he wants, so do something he won't expect to surprise the tantrum away. Start giggling loudly or tickle your tot – the laughs will follow soon!



your
1 to 3 years **toddler**

Make smiling a normal part of your day with this book extract from Growing Up Happy



RAISE A

HAPPY CHILD

We might not know all the good that a simple smile can do but we now know enough to say that smiling can actively boost our happiness. It's a two-way benefit: smiling improves our mood, but looking at smiling faces can also make us happier and more optimistic about the future. On top of that, smiling at others can make us seem more approachable and friendlier, giving us a social advantage too.

Common sense tells us that people who are happier smile more, but could it be that a smile is only the first part of a virtuous, happy cycle? Does a smile have to be genuine to benefit the mood of the giver or receiver? And how can we best nudge children towards simply smiling a little bit more?

THE RESEARCH

Babies' smiles are one of the earliest rewards of parenting. In return, most babies see a higher proportion of smiling faces during their earliest months than

they ever will again. What effect does this reciprocal smiling have, and when do babies start to understand what a smile means? Of course babies cannot tell us directly what they see or understand. But by studying what they choose to pay attention to, we have learnt a lot about how the developing brain and visual system lets babies learn about the significance of smiling faces.

At just a few days old, newborn babies prefer to look at faces than anything else, and by three months old, they can tell the difference between happy, surprised and angry faces. This is quite remarkable given how immature the visual system is at birth, and reflects just how important a cue faces are during development. By four months, babies prefer to look at happy faces than faces with other expressions. At around five months, they start to understand that two different people's happy faces are in some way similar, although they don't seem to learn about other categories

of emotion for a couple more months, perhaps because they see more happy faces than any other kind. This categorisation is the beginning of the path to understanding that "happy face" is a universal reaction to a particular kind of situation, teaching babies something about cause and effect in the world around them. By around one year, infants use other people's smiles and other facial expressions as social reference cues, helping them interpret the emotional significance of events.

As language and other skills develop, smiles become just one of the child's tools to understand the world and express his or her own feelings. Young children quickly become adept at understanding and expressing feelings through words, tone of voice, body language and gestures. Yet facial expressions, particularly smiles, seem to retain a uniquely important role. We process them incredibly quickly: studies measuring the electrical activity of the brain show that it takes less than one-

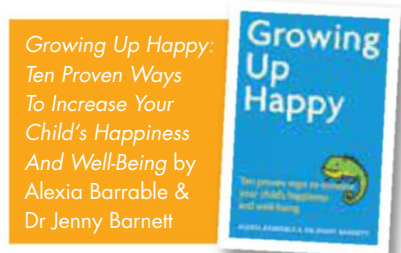
seventh of a second for the brain to respond to pictures of people smiling.

Facial expressions are also a key communication tool for our primate relatives, where the ability to express emotions vocally is limited. Primates “smile” using a facial muscle structure that is almost identical to ours, producing a bare-toothed grin that is used to communicate and strengthen social bonds in just the same way as our smile.

So how does smiling more promote happiness? One way is that, when it comes to smiling, faking it really does make you feel better. In one classic psychology experiment, participants were asked to rate how funny different cartoons were while either holding a pencil between their front teeth – which forces a smile-like facial expression – or between their lips, which prevented them from smiling. As you’ll have guessed, those with the pencil between their teeth found the cartoons funnier than those who were prevented from smiling. This is one example of a bigger truth: our psychological and cognitive experience of emotion is irrevocably mixed up with our physical, bodily experience.

Smiles are particularly important when dealing with kids because emotions are contagious. We often, unwittingly, mimic the facial expression and posture of someone we’re talking to. People who get along well – such as partners in happy marriages – are more often seen to do this, while those who find social interactions more difficult, such as people with autism, do it less. In fact re-enacting the physical expression of someone else’s emotion with our own body causes us to feel, psychologically, a little bit of their emotional state.

Recently it has been suggested that there



PRACTISING THE HAPPINESS HABIT AT HOME

START YOUR DAY WITH A SMILE

When my baby was about six months old he still spent the night in a cot attached to our spousal bed. Aside from the practical benefits of having him so close at night one of the reasons I loved having him there was the gummy smile I got every single morning.

His smile made me smile. It still is one of the happiest memories of babyhood I keep close to my heart.

So I have tried to take this lesson from my baby: a day that starts with a smile is a happy one. I take his smile and raise him my own! I make a point to greet every member of the family with a smile first thing in the morning and, unsurprisingly, I get a smile back in return. I’m not sure if this increases my sons’ well-being but I can feel my heart lift when we start our day like that.

SURROUNDED BY SMILES

I realise that some of our favourite family pictures are linked to this weird tradition that we have. We don’t visit shopping malls often, but when we do go to one of the ones close to us we have set up a tradition that we take a photo in the photo booth that they have there. The pictures now span several years from when Duncan and I were a carefree couple, to the arrival of Joe and then Oliver, as well as some extra strips with much-loved family members and friends (we take our guests to the booth too). It is a wonderful collection and the pictures are all truly happiness-capturing. They are mostly of smiley faces, but also some silly faces too. I catch myself smiling at these pictures every time I see them, so I decide to put them somewhere prominent and share them with the kids often. On the fridge they go!

A RITUAL OF HAPPY THOUGHTS

As I find myself more and more aware of when I smile (and when I don’t) I realise that a lot of the time my smiles are not only connected to what is happening in the moment, but are also linked to happy memories. I take the thought a little further: there are things, actions and phrases that I associate with people I love... Thoughts of my loved ones pop into my head every time I do any of the above actions... The thought of them unfailingly puts a smile on my face. It is not difficult to share these thoughts with my kids, in the hope that they too associate an action with a loved one. It is easy and ends up being lots of fun. It is also a way for me to share with my kids family traditions and stories that would otherwise be lost for ever.

TECH IT UP

Smilefy your mobile phone: pick a picture of a loved one with a smile on their face and make it your screensaver on your mobile phone. Every time you look to see if there’s a message, or even just look at the time, you should get a boost of happiness! On some phones you can go further and add pictures to your closest contacts – I have a lovely picture of my husband and youngest son set up so every time he calls they appear, all smiles.

Choose a joke app and put it on your mobile or tablet. You will get the joke of the day automatically to your device every morning and you can share a laugh with the whole family!

your 1 to 3 years **toddler**

may be specific neurons in the front part of our brains that are directly responsible for the effect that watching another person's action has on you. Mirror neurons are nerve cells which fire both when you perform a specific action and when you see another person performing that action. Although discovered originally in primates, direct recordings from wires inserted into the brains of people who were having surgery for epilepsy suggest that they also exist in humans. Mirror neurons may be important in many aspects of our social development, including empathy and bonding: we know, for example, that we like people more if we imitate them. Mirror neurons may also be one of the means by which children can learn by watching others rather than through direct experience – something that could be helpful or unhelpful, depending on the model they are learning from!

Feeling an emotion yourself and recognising it in another person's expression are quite similar at the level of brain function. To demonstrate this, in one experiment participants underwent brain scanning while smelling a disgusting smell, and then again when watching a video of

someone else expressing their disgust. The two experiences were found to activate much of the same neural circuitry. Other studies have shown that remembering an emotion activates much of the same system as experiencing it in the first place. This is probably why reliving emotional moments can be as intense as experiencing them for the first time (and why remembering happy times can be a considerable mood boost to kids and adults alike!).

Not all smiles denote happiness. Some people smile when they lie, when they flirt, are embarrassed or frightened. Paul Ekman, the psychologist who first documented how universal human facial expressions are, described seventeen additional types of smile. Faked smiles are relatively easy to detect, because they don't usually activate the cheek raiser muscle that creates crow's feet around the eyes. But even non-experts rate real smiles, and the people that give them, as more genuine, attractive and trustworthy.

So, smiling is definitely a good way to boost your and your kids' day. And if you really don't feel like smiling, it's probably worth faking it from time to time. **YB**

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YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY OUR EXPERTS

PETRO THAMM SLEEP CONSULTANT

OUR TWO-YEAR OLD REFUSES TO SLEEP ON HIS OWN, EVEN AFTER THREE MONTHS OF TRYING. HAVE WE LEFT IT TOO LATE?

Toddlers are creatures of habit, so change makes them feel uncomfortable. They pick up on your emotions and will take the lead from how you are handling the change.

First, balance out the level of control. Put parameters in place so that your toddler knows what is acceptable and what is not. Have rules for yourself too. For example, is it OK for the child to climb into

our bed during the night? Do we take him back to his bed after he falls asleep? Then, allow your toddler to make decisions too - Does he want a toy in the bath, or some bubbles in the water? Let him choose his pajamas and bed time story too.

Secondly toddlers are all about fun. Make the change a fun experience that involves them so that they can get excited about the transition. Take him shopping for bedding or a special teddy bear to sleep with. Talk about

it with your toddler and create some enthusiasm.

Thirdly, implement a consequence and reward system. Reward him for sticking to the boundaries and have a consequence for not sticking to the boundaries. A sticker chart can work well here.

In the beginning your toddler will challenge you endlessly, but consistency is key. It does take time so be patient, he will catch on eventually.

Email your question for our experts to: Tsholofelo.Modise@media24.com. Please note that experts unfortunately cannot respond to each question personally. The answers provided on these pages should not replace the advice of your doctor.



YOUR *social butterfly*

How can you teach your toddler the ins and outs of social graces? BY ANN RICHARDSON

Do you remember the days before you were a parent, when you would shake your head and purse your lips when witness to a badly behaved toddler? So, how do we ensure that our toddlers will have the necessary social graces and learn to behave?

TIME TO GET SOCIAL

According to Dr Melodie de Jager, author of *BabyGym*, the emotional brain, which mainly drives behaviour, matures at around the age of four years. This is why it is so important to expose your child in the first years of her life to lots of social experiences such as play dates, shopping and church outings, family events and community activities so that you will be able to teach her how to behave around other people.

MAKE FRIENDS

See outings to moms and tots groups or friends as a developmental date with your toddler where you will be able to teach her right from wrong, social norms and kindness and consideration to other people. Make it a habit to discuss your outing or event with your toddler before you leave home to prepare her.

CLEAR THINGS UP

Explain to her what your expectations of her are, for example, "We are not allowed to throw balls inside the house." Warn her that there will be a consequence to her action if she doesn't listen: "If you throw the ball inside, I will take it away." Your body language will give your child a cue how to behave in certain instances,

such as not pulling things off the shelves and throwing them onto the floor when shopping, or gently patting an animal to say hello at a friend's house. Whenever you discuss anything with your toddler, get down to her level and maintain eye contact with her. This will make her feel safe and secure.

MAKE IT A TEAM EFFORT

Toddlers love to be involved in household chores and even though it will be quicker to finish the job on your own, understanding and following the rules of orderliness – "Put your cup into the

sink when you are finished with it" – will help to organise your toddler's brain for every learning opportunity that comes her way (as well as being a help to you).

Praise and encouragement for good behaviour that pleases you will enhance your toddler's feelings of accomplishment and wellbeing.

One of the most exhausting tasks of parenting is that good behaviour has to be taught, reinforced and acknowledged constantly. Yes, you will feel like a stuck record at times, but persevere, it will be worth it! **YB**



BLENDED LOVE

Young mom Phophi Phakathi writes a letter from the heart to the daughter who grew in her heart

Dear Siphokazi,

My dearest baby girl, from the first day I met you, you put a smile on my face. I knew right from the beginning that I was blessed. I had fallen in love with one person and received two, who loved me back just as much. I have watched you grow into such a bright and beautiful young girl.

The respect and love you have for me is immense – I don't think anyone in my shoes would have felt any differently. You make it so easy to love and adore you; and oh-so-hard not to miss when you are not around.

To be honest, I had some real fears about becoming an instant mom when I married your dad. Luckily for me, you were too young to see my parenting mistakes... I remember your dad having to teach me how to discipline you

because, truth be told, I had no idea how to handle you when you were being naughty.

Of course you took advantage of the fact that I didn't know how to discipline you! Being the clever little girl that you are, when Daddy would say "no," you would come try your luck with me, knowing full well that I couldn't say no to you! I eventually realised that I would have to stand up to that cute little face and know when to put my foot down. When I look back I see that it was really about fearing that you would dislike me if I disciplined you. You know, there are lessons for me on every part of our journey. So when I learnt that I do it because I love you, because I want you to know better and to know the difference between right and wrong, I was able to step up and do better for you. It took a really long time, but I eventually learnt how to be your mom and parent you as I should. Fortunately for me, our mother/daughter bond was so strong you didn't even notice the change.

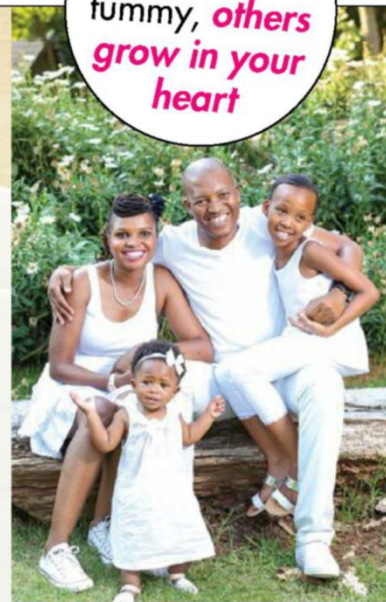
Spho, I truly believe that you prepared me to be an even better mom to your sister. When she arrived, I hardly felt like I was a new arrival to these motherhood streets. I remember the day I went to the hospital to give birth. You gave me a little note that you had written to your new baby sister, welcoming her into the world and our family. While we all fell in love with your little sister when she was born, it was clear that her addition to the our family just rocked your world! You took on the role of big sister so well. I doubt there is a big sister who is more caring, not to mention extremely overprotective! Mudodzwa is so blessed to have you as an older sister. I look at you two play together and I feel so proud, so blessed.

My parents and siblings warmed up to you so naturally, I think your contagious giggle and your tight hugs were enough to immediately wrap them around your little finger. I pray every day for you, for our family, that our relationship will never change, that as we both get older it will only get stronger.

My prayer is for you to grow up to be a beautiful, successful, God-fearing young lady. Your dad and I also pray for you girls together – for our beautiful blended family to keep loving each other the way that we do. I will always love you; I can't imagine my life without you, my princess.

Lots of love, Mama

Some
grow in your
tummy, **others**
grow in your
heart



Phophi Phakathi with her blended family – Sydney, Siphokazi and baby Mudodzwa.

CUT OUT
& KEEP



HEALTH NOTEBOOK

COLDS AND FLU

With some guidelines and expert tips, we are taking the guesswork out of cold and flu season

It's a fact: the average child gets a cold or flu six to eight times a year. So, since it is almost impossible to avoid colds and flu altogether, you need a plan to fight winter coughs, sniffles and sneezes when they happen.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

"The flu is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs by influenza viruses, which are most infectious from around May to September in South Africa," explains Dr Liezl Zulke, a paediatric cardiologist.

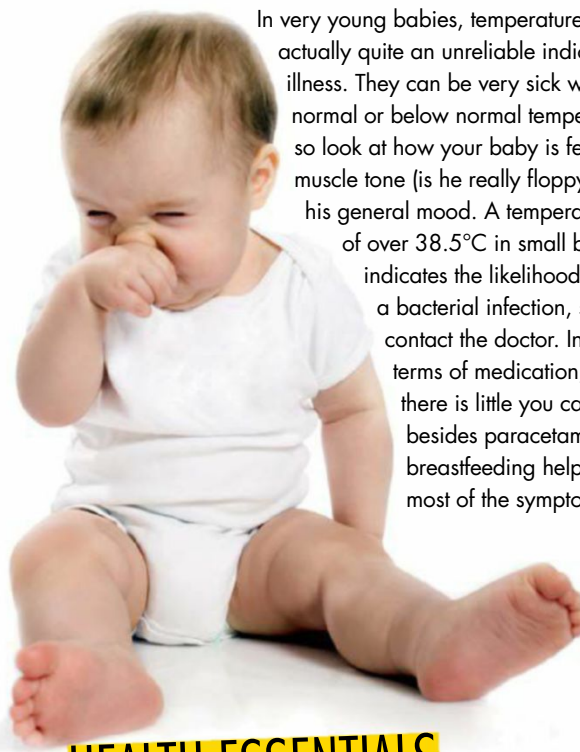
WHEN TO SEE THE DOCTOR

The flu can be very dangerous for children. Each year thousands of children under five are hospitalised with flu complications, like pneumonia, which is why parents should know the warning signs before things have gone too far. "If your child is under five or has a medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, or a neurologic problem, call your doctor right away. These children are at higher risk of serious complications from flu," explains Dr Zulke. Likewise, if your baby is younger than six months and has a high temperature that does not settle with simple flu-fighting strategies, seek medical attention. Here are additional warning signs that warrant a visit to the doctor:

- ✓ Fast breathing or she has trouble breathing.
- ✓ Bluish skin colour.
- ✓ Lethargy, not waking up or not interacting with you.
- ✓ A temperature of 40°C or higher or fever with a rash.
- ✓ Not drinking enough fluids and making fewer soiled or wet nappies than usual.
- ✓ Unable to keep fluids down.
- ✓ Being so irritable that she does not want to be held.
- ✓ Flu symptoms that improve but return with fever and a worse cough.
- ✓ When baby has a suspected earache (she may pull on her ear and fuss).
- ✓ Cold symptoms that last for longer than a week or a cough that doesn't go away within three days.
- ✓ Your baby or child has yellow or green nasal mucus.
- ✓ Forceful vomiting after feedings or for more than 12 hours, also has diarrhoea and a fever.

WHAT IF MY NEWBORN GETS SICK?

In very young babies, temperature is actually quite an unreliable indicator of illness. They can be very sick with a normal or below normal temperature, so look at how your baby is feeding, muscle tone (is he really floppy?) and his general mood. A temperature of over 38.5°C in small babies indicates the likelihood of a bacterial infection, so contact the doctor. In terms of medication, there is little you can use besides paracetamol, but breastfeeding helps with most of the symptoms too.



HEALTH ESSENTIALS



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THE COUGH EXPERT

NEXT ISSUE, **IMMUNE BOOSTERS AND THE FLU SHOT**

GIVEN TO US FOR A *REASON*

Janene Rhoda has come a long way since her baby was diagnosed with Down syndrome

BY DIMAKATSO MOTAU

No expectant mother anticipates that her baby will be born with a genetic disorder; so what happens when you find out that your bundle of joy is not who you hoped for?

This is what happened with Janene Rhoda and her husband when their daughter McKenzie was born three years ago with Down syndrome. This chromosomal disorder is caused by an error in cell division that results in an extra 21st chromosome. The condition leads to impairments in both cognitive ability and physical growth that range from mild to moderate developmental disabilities. Some of the characteristics of Down syndrome include but are not limited to impulsive behaviour, poor judgement, short attention span, and learning difficulties.

ADJUSTING TO A NEW REALITY

"McKenzie was born seven weeks prematurely, and the paediatrician at the birth suspected that she had Down

syndrome. Her eyes gave it away, as babies with Down syndrome have eyes that slant upward. Though I'd heard what was being said around me, I was hoping that it wasn't true. I didn't have any idea how to care for a baby with Down syndrome," recalls Janene. After the initial diagnosis Janene's first reaction was denial, and she spent a while just crying. Eventually she came to terms with what was really happening so that she could start to embrace her daughter.

"I had a lot of learning to do to ensure that we could give our daughter the best care, along with our other children. I learnt to celebrate small

victories and to find our own language, as communication is one of our biggest challenges. Sometimes we struggle to understand what McKenzie's saying and that frustrates her. Speech is one of the critical parts of her development and she goes to sessions with a speech therapist," says her mom. Janene celebrates the fact that her daughter started walking at 23 months and that she has now, aged three, recently started potty training.

FAMILY MATTERS

"My husband and I don't treat McKenzie differently from our other kids. We discipline and care for them equally. We just go the extra mile with her and have



21 MARCH
IS WORLD
DOWN
SYNDROME
DAY



Mckenzie Rhoda and her family love spending time in the sun.



a team that's part of her development, which includes her preschool principal, teachers and therapists. The preschool has two or three more special needs kids and it's really a supportive environment for our daughter. They have daily therapists to work on their development, which is encouraging as a parent," she says.

As a family, it's important for the Rhodas to live life to the fullest, to not be ashamed of Mckenzie or entertain the public stigma. "We all go out as a family. We never leave her behind for anything. We are a unit so we create memories together and do things together. I don't want her to feel isolated at any time. She's our child and we love her," she says.

FINDING SUPPORT

Originally from Cape Town, Janene says they have no support system except for the colleagues and a handful of friends they've made in Centurion. "We chose to lean on the very few people that were there for us. Every time our daughter reaches a milestone it's a victory for all of us and we celebrate together. I'm glad that I have people I can count on," says Janene. This small circle, she says, is really the force behind her never-die-spirit and she doesn't take that lightly. Nothing could have prepared her for what she went through emotionally after Mckenzie's birth, but learning as much as she could about Down syndrome empowered her to be able to take better care of her. She had no choice but to keep going. "I guess there's no other option. I love my daughter and I can proudly say

that I'm grateful to have her," she says.

FACING FEARS

The most harrowing thing the family has had to go through is Mckenzie's heart surgery at seven months. Children with Down syndrome often born with heart conditions. Seeing her tiny body undergoing such a massive operation really left them broken. "She's a fighter! She surprised us and two years later she's still here with us. I love that even though some days I feel down and want to just give up on this journey of caring for her, her fighting spirit lifts me up all the time. She always tries her best and if she's not giving up who am I to give up on her?" she says with conviction.

Mckenzie will be having a second heart operation in July to close off a hole that was left open during the first heart surgery. Though she survived the first operation her mother says it's not easy to just dismiss such a serious surgery as something small. Any operation on a child is quite stressful for the parents. "I try not to think about it too much. If I keep analysing what her little body is waiting for, I just break down. I've gotten this far by having faith and believing in teamwork to see my daughter live as normal a life as possible," she says.

A WORLD OF OUR OWN

Janene says she doesn't pay attention to public snares or stigma in the community – she refuses to let any negativity hamper her love for her. "If we open the door for all these negative elements; it's really not going to positively add to the everyday development of our daughter's ability to grow and be more independent," she says.

Janene says if she were to choose how to do this again, she wouldn't change anything for the world. "She was given to us for a reason. We love her and her siblings adore her. We're a normal family and we have the same challenges as other families – we just have a child who needs extra medical care and we're fine with that," she says. **YP**



Mckenzie is due for a second heart operation this winter.



HOW TO MIX **FRIENDS** with babies

BY JULIA BOLT

Before you have children, you can't imagine that it will change your relationships with your friends – but it does, and staying in touch with child-free friends takes a little more effort once Junior arrives

Having a baby turns your world upside down in so many ways. But what you may not have anticipated is how it would affect your relationships with your friends, especially those friends who don't (yet) have kids of their own. It's unavoidable – and it can be challenging to keep those friendships going.

ACCEPT THAT THINGS WILL CHANGE

When a baby arrives your life will change,

no matter what you promised yourself beforehand. You're sleep deprived and your head space often doesn't really allow the same room for your friends that it did BC (that's Before Children). You also have far less time for yourself than you did previously.

"Once you have a child, your priorities shift and the way that you think about the world changes. You more than likely won't think about your friends as much. What can become problematic is that the friend sometimes struggles to understand the shift in priorities

and can find it hard to understand the lack of effort that's being put into the friendship if they don't have children themselves," says clinical psychologist Jeanine Lamusse.

However hard it is to do when you're tired, busy and preoccupied, it's important to make space and time for your friendships, advises Jeanine. "Are you still taking care of yourself in other ways, that you have other life experiences so that you can still connect with your friends? So often, with your priorities shifting, all you end up talking about is baby, baby, baby, but obviously your friend can't relate to that," she says. If you're taking care of yourself in a multidimensional way as much as possible, particularly when you're through those gruelling first few months of newborn parenting, that gives those friendships a lot more room to grow.

TALK ABOUT IT

Even friends without children can understand the pure chaos of those first few weeks with a new baby, but when it turns into months without sustained or meaningful contact between you and them, your friendships can start to feel the strain. "It's important to communicate that 'things have shifted, time is tight for me', so that you create the room for your friends to understand what's going on in your life," says Jeanine. Easier said than done when more often than not mommy brain means you forget to return a message, but at least reassure your friends that you are keeping them in mind in some way when you finally do manage to send it. "If you wrap your head around the idea that your life is changing, and you explain that to your friends, it makes that adjustment so much easier," she adds.

MAKE A DATE

Friendships, like all relationships, need your time and effort in order to thrive. It's easy to fall into the trap of promising to meet up sometime and then somehow just not getting around to it, but the support you get from friends is important. Make a firm date, then programme a reminder into your phone, write a note on your fridge or

add it to your diary – whatever it takes. "You need to make an active effort in your own life to include your friends," says Jeanine. "It's not only for your sanity that you need to do that, but also because if you don't make that active effort to take time out for 'me', to take care of yourself, you can become very lost in that baby bubble," she warns.

Sometimes, it's all about timing. What worked for you as child-free friends is often now the worst possible time of day – drinks after work has morphed into feed-bath-bed hour. Explaining why that time of day doesn't work for you and then suggesting an alternative that fits better

into your new schedule can go a long way. Take it one step at a time and check in with yourself to see what you can manage.

And if your friends aren't the type to hang out at a child-friendly venue, getting a babysitter for the occasional evening out or afternoon away isn't such a bad thing either. "It's okay to have a few separations here and there to go and see your friends and ground yourself, because if you are not taking care of yourself, you actually have less capacity to deal with a child," says Jeanine.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH

It's easier said than done, but if some of your friends don't seem as taken with your baby as you are, try not to take it personally. It doesn't mean that they dislike your baby, but for people without children their priority isn't necessarily spending their time being with or talking about a tiny human and everything it does. This is also a time that often reveals your insecurities about yourself and your parenting abilities, and with mommy hormones raging, you can be

hypersensitive about any comments. A friend might think she's being supportive by giving you space and not being in daily contact, while you might perceive that she's disinterested in your life right now. Without being open about how you feel, these misaligned perceptions can damage or even sink a friendship.

"When things are so hormonal, we do project a lot, so if someone is giving you space to be a mom, it could be perceived as, 'She doesn't like my child'. We need to check those projections," says Jeanine. So if you're not communicating clearly with that person you can easily get caught up in your own ball of internalised anxiety,

“ONCE YOU HAVE A CHILD, YOUR PRIORITIES SHIFT AND THE WAY THAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE WORLD CHANGES. YOU MORE THAN LIKELY WON'T THINK ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS AS MUCH”

while the reality might be quite different.

NOT EVERY FRIENDSHIP SURVIVES

When you meet a new friend it's easy to assume that this will last forever, but the truth is that some friendships simply won't weather the storm of motherhood. "The notion of priorities shifting is something that a friend needs to wrap their head around. Some people can get that, and some people can't," comments Jeanine. "Sometimes friends can only support you in certain ways, so when you go through major transitions they struggle to adjust to that," she says.

If you want your friendships to last and hold onto some sanity between the baby day-to-day stuff, you need to say to yourself in a very conscious way, "I am going to make it a priority to make time to see my friends." Although your baby will always be your first and most important priority, it's important to care for yourself and actively engage with that process rather than allow yourself to be consumed totally by parenting. **YB**

LOUNGEWEAR FOR NEW MOMS

*Welcome your guests in some stylishly comfy gear
when they come to meet the baby*

BY STYLE CONSULTANT PIPPA J

You're home with your new baba, and everybody wants to come and say "Hi" and meet the new bundle of joy. These visits can sometimes feel a little overwhelming as you're still finding your feet with your new baby. You're probably not even managing to get into the shower most mornings, never mind having the

headspace or time to bother about how to make yourself look socially acceptable for visitors. Looking good falls way down your list of priorities when you have a hungry baby crying for milk, or to be burped or to be held! Not to mention the fact that your boobs have taken on a life of their own. The last thing you want to be stressing about is trying to find an outfit that is not only comfortable but

also practical.

Being able to reach for your clothes easily and without thinking too much about what to wear with what is essential. My advice to you? Allocate a space in your cupboard for clothes that you can wear during this time – almost like a mini wardrobe that is your go-to for at least that first month after having your baby. **YB**

HERE ARE SOME POINTERS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DECIDING WHAT TO INCLUDE IN THIS MINI WARDROBE

1
YOU WON'T BE
LEAVING THE HOUSE
MUCH, ESPECIALLY
IN THE FIRST MONTH

2
THE PEOPLE WHO
COME TO VISIT YOU
ARE GENERALLY YOUR
NEAREST AND DEAREST
SO YOU (HOPEFULLY)
WON'T NEED TO PUT
ON A SHOW

3
YOUR BABY
WILL LIKELY
VOMIT,
WEE OR
POO ON
YOU, AT
LEAST
ONCE
A DAY!

4
Comfort is key, particularly if
you've had a caesar as your
tummy will be sensitive, never
mind your enlarged boobs!

5
YOU MAY HAVE AN EXCESS
AMOUNT OF BREASTMILK,
AND LEAK INTO YOUR
BRAS AND
POSSIBLY
EVEN
THROUGH
YOUR TOPS
(YES, EXPECT
IT, IT HAPPENS)

We love these buys

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GOWN R600
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just for
you *spoil yourself*

TREADING WATER

Jump in the pool this summer for one of the best workouts around!

BY BIOKINETICIST CHANÉE TRIPP

The benefits of exercising in the pool are just endless: the water brushing past your muscles as you exercise stimulates blood flow and improves circulation. And you get the added benefit of cooling off after a long day of running after a little one!

Water provides resistance in every direction, so you are able to develop strength in muscles while they are contracted (shortened) and lengthened. We call this concentric (shortened muscle fibre) and eccentric (lengthened muscle fibre) exercise. Think of what your muscles do during a bicep curl: concentric contraction of the bicep muscle is achieved when you bend your elbow, while eccentric contraction of the bicep muscle is achieved as you extend your elbow. Your muscle groups always work in ratio with one another, and as a result it is important to exercise them accordingly. This way you prevent injuries and tone effectively without compromising the function of the joint you are moving. Bear this in mind while doing these exercises.

You will notice that there is often a reference to the 8-second: 4-second ratio in this exercise programme. The reason for this is that we are taking advantage of the buoyancy levels of the water to tone your muscles in a full-body workout.



1 JUMP LUNGES

This is a full lower body workout as it not only works your glutes (bum) and legs, but is also a great way to elevate your heart rate and get your blood circulation going. Position yourself in waist-deep water for this one.

✓ WHAT TO DO

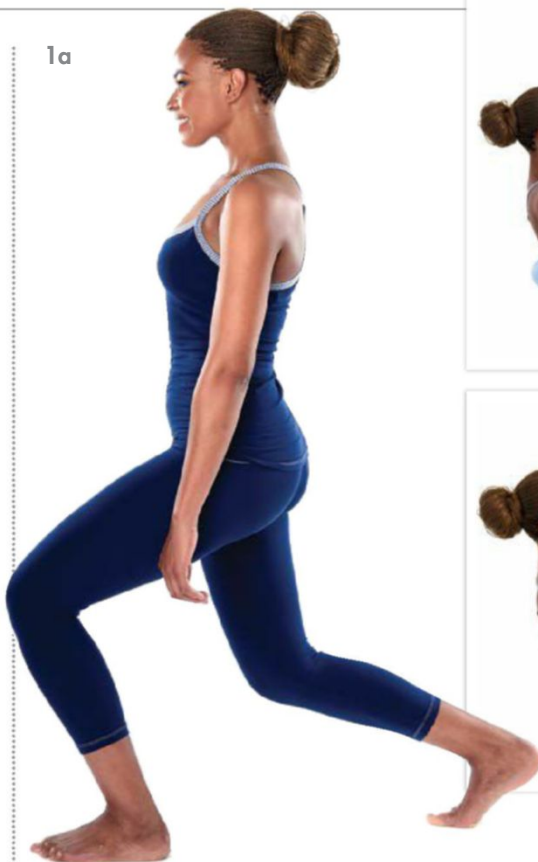
- ✓ Draw your belly button in towards your spine and pull your pelvic floor tight (tense the muscles as if you have a full bladder and can't go to the loo). This is called holding your core muscle.
- ✓ Once your core is contracted, step backwards while bending both your knees and lift the heel of your back foot off the ground (as in 1a). The water should come to just below your armpits when both your knees are bent.
- ✓ Jump up as high as you can (vertically) while still holding your core and swap your legs around before you land into the lunge position again (as in 1b).
- ✓ Lunge as deep or shallowly as you feel comfortable, but make sure that you place your weight directly down toward the ground and distribute your weight equally between each leg. This is important to remember as failure to do so will result in you either leaning back or forward – which means only one leg will be doing the work.
- ✓ Aim to complete ten lunges on each leg, remembering that quality is key.

✗ LOOK OUT FOR

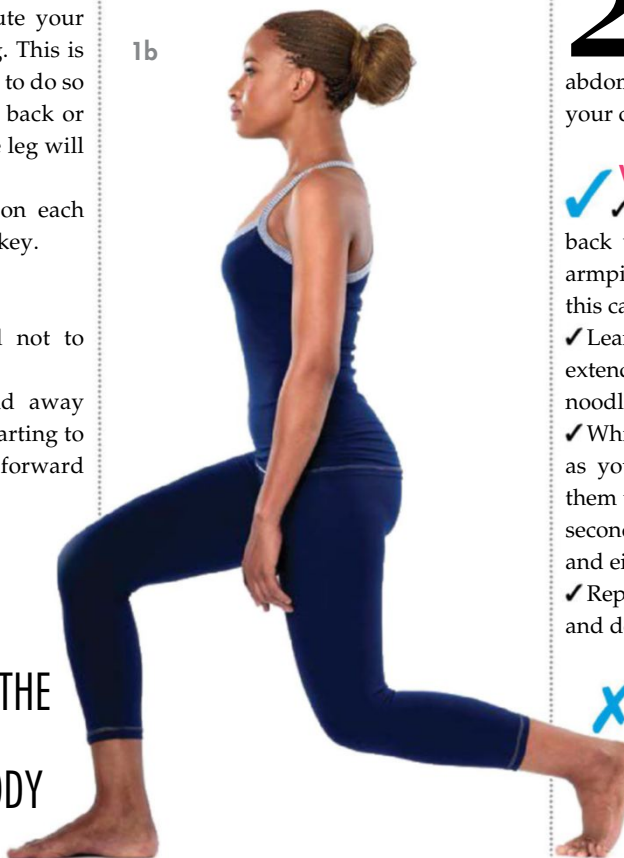
- ✗ When lunging, be careful not to arch your back or lean forward.
- ✗ Pull your shoulders back and away from your ears. If your neck is starting to hurt, your shoulders are either forward or up toward your ears.

“WE'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE BUOYANCY LEVELS OF THE WATER TO TONE YOUR MUSCLES IN A FULL-BODY WORKOUT”

1a



1b



2a



2b



2 ABDOMINAL CRUNCHES

A new take on the classic crunch, these will strengthen your abdominal muscles while maintaining your core.

✓ WHAT TO DO

- ✓ Position a pool noodle behind your back with each end tucked under your armpit. The depth of water is irrelevant in this case.
- ✓ Lean back and lift your feet up while extending your legs, allowing the pool noodle to help you float (as in 2a).
- ✓ While tightening your core, inhale and as you exhale bend your knees pulling them up to your chest (as in 2b). Use four seconds to bring your knees to your chest and eight seconds to straighten your legs.
- ✓ Repeat the process for 10 repetitions and do three sets.

✗ LOOK OUT FOR

- ✗ Remember to keep your core contracted throughout.
- ✗ Relax your shoulders and concentrate on using your stomach to pull your legs up.

3 TRICEP EXTENSIONS

You may not realise at first how hard this move works your bicep and tricep muscles while still engaging your core and pelvic floor.

✓ WHAT TO DO

✓ Grab hold of a pool noodle with both hands and stand in hip-deep water with your back towards the pool wall, feet hip-width apart where the pool floor and wall meet.

✓ Lean forward while pushing the pool noodle into the water with extended elbows (as in 3a).

✓ Keep your shoulders back and away from your ears.

✓ Slowly bend your elbows while bringing the pool noodle up with your arms (as in 3b). Bend your elbows to the point where you are still able to maintain control of your core and balance.

✓ Remember to engage your core at all times throughout this exercise.

✓ Breathe by exhaling on the elbow extension and inhaling on the bent elbow position.

✓ Your goal is to complete two sets of ten of these extensions. Take four seconds to extend your elbows and eight seconds to bend them back to your starting position.

✗ LOOK OUT FOR

✗ Relax your shoulders and make sure that your chin is slightly tucked in to avoid compressing and hurting your neck.

✗ Keep your elbows pointing directly behind you – this goes a long way in achieving good muscle tone without straining your neck and shoulders.

✗ Try not to arch your back, but keep your tail bone (coccyx) tucked in by pulling your navel to your spine.

3a



3b



“YOU MAY NOT REALISE AT FIRST HOW HARD THIS MOVE WORKS YOUR BICEP AND TRICEP MUSCLES WHILE ENGAGING YOUR CORE AND PELVIC FLOOR”

4 ARM EXTENSIONS

This move strengthens your shoulder muscles and tones your upper back. This goes a long way to helping you carry that toddler.

✓ WHAT TO DO

✓ Move to where the water is deep enough to reach your shoulders and straddle your pool noodle.

✓ Stretch your arms out to the side with your palms on the surface of the water (as in the image to the right).

✓ The way you hold your hands has an impact on the resistance levels of this exercise:

✓ **Easy** Fingers are splayed out.

✓ **Moderate** Hold the fingers of each hand together tightly.

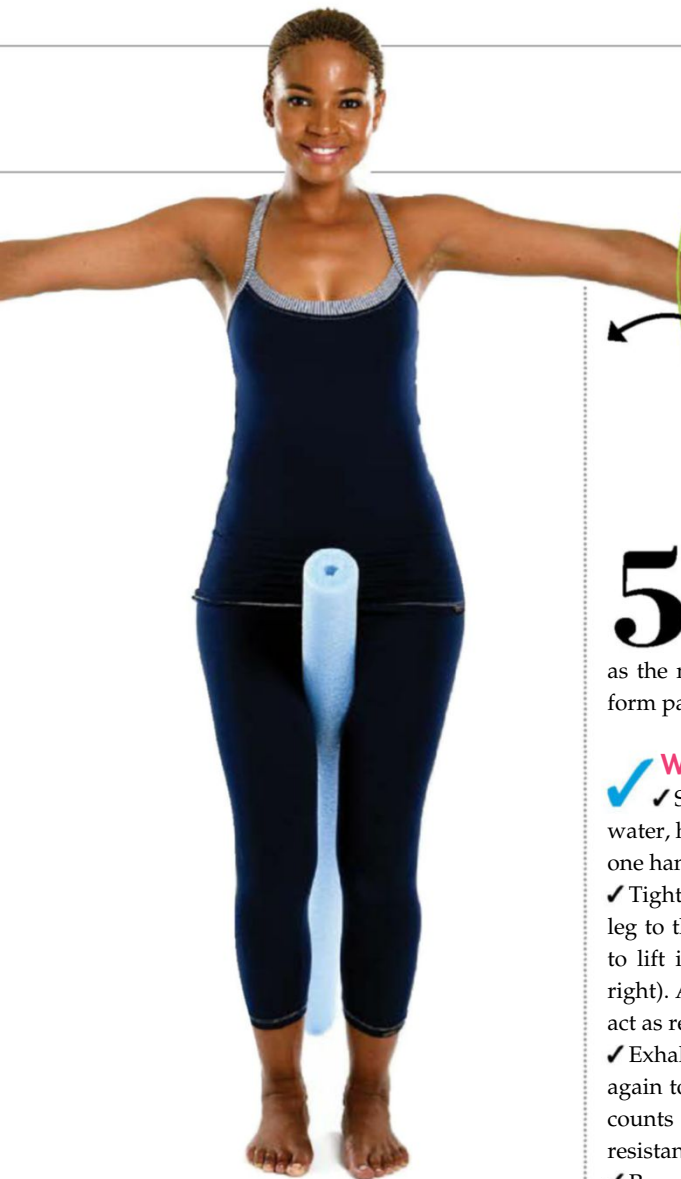
✓ **Hard** Cut up a pool noodle into two pieces of about 15 to 20cm long to use as dumbbells.

✓ Keep your shoulders back and away from your ears and push your arms down to your sides. Remember how important it is to maintain your core, as this will help you balance.

✓ Come back to your starting point and then repeat.

✓ Remember to breathe, exhaling on the down movement, inhaling on the up.

✓ Aim to do two sets of 15 repetitions and apply the 4-second: 8-second ratio.



AN EXTRA ADDITION TO THIS MOVE TO TARGET YOUR OBLIQUE ABDOMINAL MUSCLES

- ✓ Position the pool noodle behind your back with each end tucked under your armpits. ✓ Lean back and lift your feet up while extending your legs, allowing the pool noodle to help you float.
- ✓ Tightening your core, inhale and as you exhale bend your knees pulling them up to your chest. Once bent, twist from side to side. ✓ Repeat the process for 10 repetitions and do three sets.

5 SIDE LEG KICKS

This move tones the outer and inner sides of the thighs, as well as the major glute and hip muscles that form part of your hip stabilising group.

✓ WHAT TO DO

- ✓ Standing in waist- or hip-deep water, hold onto the side of the pool with one hand slightly in front of you.
- ✓ Tighten your core, inhale and lift your leg to the side while taking eight counts to lift it slowly (as in the image to the right). Allow the buoyancy of your leg to act as resistance.
- ✓ Exhale while lowering it back down again to its starting position, taking four counts to do so. Once again, use the resistance of the water to work your legs.
- ✓ Repeat the process for 10 repetitions and alternate legs.

X LOOK OUT FOR

- X Be careful not to twist your hips to the side – your hip bones should face forward at all times.
- X Make sure that your foot is flexed and that your toes are pointed forward. Failure to do so means you will be developing an incorrect muscle strength ratio between the outer and inner thigh



muscles of your legs.

- X Remember to keep your core contracted throughout this exercise, avoiding the temptation to rock your body as momentum or hike your hip up using your back. **YB**

X LOOK OUT FOR

- X It is very important to do this exercise while keeping your core contracted throughout.
- X Be aware of your lifting your shoulders up to your ears. If you are experiencing any discomfort in your neck this is the likely cause.
- X Another thing to consider is whether your weight is equally distributed on the pool noodle for balance purposes.

GET THAT ♥ PUMPING!

A CARDIAC COMPONENT IS KEY TO ANY EXERCISE REGIME, BUT MANY OF US HAVE POOLS THAT ARE JUST TOO SMALL TO SWIM LENGTHS IN. IF THIS IS THE CASE FOR YOU, TRY THESE IDEAS:

1 Create water currents by running as if you were writing your initials in the water using your body. Now turn back and walk or run through the centre of those initials. The currents you've created make it difficult to move through the water.

2 Grab your pool noodle and place it around your chest and under your

armpits. Lean forward so that the pool noodle acts as your flotation device. Now start running with your legs from one end of the pool to the next.

3 Lie on your stomach in the water and place your pool noodle lengthways under your ankles. Do breaststroke while dragging the pool noodle with your feet flexed.

Tip:

WHEN READING THE INGREDIENTS ON THE LABEL OF YOUR PRODUCT, KNOW THAT THE FIRST INGREDIENT LISTED IS WHAT THAT PRODUCT MOSTLY CONTAINS. INGREDIENTS HAVE TO BE LISTED IN ORDER.

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AFRICA ORGANICS MARULA CONDITIONER 200ML R\$8.90 Dis-Chem



PALMER'S COCONUT OIL FORMULA MOISTURE GRO R\$52.95 Clicks



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DOVE HAIR THERAPY INTENSIVE REPAIR CONDITIONER R38 Dis-Chem

LOOK OUT FOR:

- **Sulphate**, a detergent found in most soaps, has gotten a bad rep for stripping hair of its natural oils and leaving it feeling rough and grassy. Using a shampoo with sulphate could help with removing product build up, just remember to use an intense deep conditioning treatment afterwards.
- **Parabens** are a class of colourless, tasteless and odourless preservatives widely used in cosmetics. The health drawbacks from parabens have not been scientifically proven yet, but some research has claimed a link between parabens and growing cancer tissue.

BONUS CORNER

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Spoil yourself with this issue's fantastic freebies

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WE'RE GIVING AWAY 5 DREAMBABY HAMPERS VALUED AT R1057 (5 WINNERS)

Dreambaby® home safety experts have thought of everything when it comes to helping keep your family safe. Whether you're in the kitchen, bathroom or living room, in the car, out for a walk, there's a beautifully designed product that will help to make your life more convenient. Whether it's baby hygiene, nursery or pram attachments and appliances or safety devices you're after, you're at the right place.



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WE'RE GIVING AWAY 5 TINY LOVE KANGY KANGAROO CHANGING TIME TOYS: (0-18+MONTHS) VALUED AT R1 150 (5 WINNERS)

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- Stimulating & engaging break-through changing time toy that occupies your baby while being changed. Made of soft, textured fabric, it transforms diaper changing into a fun and stimulating experience.
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The Clicks Made 4 Baby Clothing collection is specially designed with your baby's needs in mind. The Made 4 Baby Clothing range is perfect for newborns, from 0-18 months. Made with baby-friendly material that is ideal for both everyday wear and special occasions, the range is stylish, yet comfortable. Featuring easy-to-wear babygrows, leggings, body vests, skirts, dresses and footwear in a playful mix of bright colours and prints, from the cutest polkadots to flowers, stars, stripes and sparkly chiffon. All conveniently available at Clicks stores nationwide and online at www.clicks.co.za.



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SMS the following information to 36480: your prize code, your name and surname, physical address, email address and your contact number. Each SMS is charged at R1.50 and free minutes do not apply. Entries close 30 April 2017. By entering a competition, you agree to receive further communication and direct marketing material from Media24 (Ltd). Winners will be published on parent24.com 15 days after closing date. Go to page 8 for terms & conditions.

A special KIND OF PERSON

BY DIMAKATSO MOTAU

There's a reason why some refer to the people who work in the NICU as angels

A modern-day Florence Nightingale, neonatal intensive care unit manager Sister Mary Kgetse (48) believes her work is a part of God's plan. She feels she was put on earth to save lives, and taking care of premature babies is her idea of living the dream. But it is by no means an easy feat. The neonatal ICU is an emotionally taxing and stressful environment that requires a special kind of nurse. Sister Mary is one.

The nursing staff in the neonatal ICU take care of babies born prematurely, as well as babies who need a bit of extra care after birth. While full term babies arrive weighing 2kg or more, the babies Mary and her colleagues see can weigh as little as 500g. These babies do the life-and-death battle on a daily basis, and this is very emotionally taxing at times. "I tend to focus on the positives. In the neonatal ward we deal with newborns and some of them are with us up until

three months. We build relationship with the parents because we spend so much time together. In the paediatric ward, we take babies who were not born in our hospital and take care of them from there," she explains. "I love seeing a baby who weighed less than 500g making it and being discharged from the wards. This job requires love, patience, understanding human dynamics and the fact that we're part of God's bigger plan to save lives," Sr Mary says.

FACING DEATH

"It's very challenging when one of the babies passes away immediately after birth. But when the babies come to the NICU and get to live before passing on, at least the parents are prepared in terms of what to expect, as we have to be honest at all times. This doesn't make death any easier but they know we would have tried our best to let the baby live," she says.

Sr Mary's naturally positive and

Sister Mary Kgetse spends her days caring for the most vulnerable babies



“THERE ARE SO MANY NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES REGARDING NEONATAL CARE BECAUSE IT’S ASSOCIATED WITH SO MUCH DEATH. SO A BIGGER PART OF MY JOB IS TO CREATE AWARENESS”

bubbly character help her take this in her stride, but her team works with a psychological counsellor who counsels both parents and staff, because as humans the nurses also get emotionally affected by the births, deaths and struggles in their wards.

A MATTER OF DEDICATION

Though she has four grown-up children of her own, Sr Mary says “her babies” in the NICU come first. Her husband keeps things on the go back in Polokwane, while she pursues her career at Arwyp Medical Centre in Kempton Park. “It’s very rare to find a partner as supportive as my husband. I love my family and they know everything I do is for them. But I have personal career goals and I’m glad I’m allowed to chase my career without being made to feel guilty about not being with my family,” she explains.

Her job requires long hours, and even when she is not on duty she is only a phone call away. This, she says, is a way of ensuring that her team can have access to her in case of an emergency or if they need recommendations while she’s

not at work. “I’m not even counting the hours because I love what I do. There are so many negative stereotypes regarding neonatal care because it’s associated with so much death. So a bigger part of my job is to create awareness that the babies are there to be taken care of until they’re healthy enough to be handed over into the care of their parents,” she says.

EXTRA SPECIAL BABIES

Her most memorable newborn is her goddaughter. During a shopping trip, while Sr Mary was home in Polokwane, a pregnant young woman just started bleeding. Mary sat her down and delivered the baby right there, without any gloves or assistance. “My nursing instincts kicked in when I realised what was happening. I delivered the baby, cut the placenta and put it in a plastic bag. Then I drove mother and baby to the nearest hospital and helped them get cleaned,” she says. “I put myself at risk because I didn’t have gloves, but it was an emergency. Today that baby is a lovely 16-year-old young lady,” she says beaming with pride.

STORIES OF HOPE

Another memorable baby was brought into her unit weighing 500g, born between 24 and 25 weeks gestational age – this is routinely classified as an abortion in medical terms. The mother of the baby went into hospital saying she felt something was wrong and almost immediately went into labour and gave birth. A nurse ran two flights of stairs to get to the NICU with the baby where Mary and her team took over.

“This is a story of hope because the parents never gave up on her child. They kept buying clothes and stayed hopeful that they would be taking their little angel home even though the odds were against them. We’re still very close friends to this day, as I am with many of ‘my moms’ because we end up spending so much time with the mothers during the time their babies are in the ward and create strong bonds. That mother taught me never to give up in life,” she says. The baby is now a young adult living with autism.

Life in the NICU is like living in a pressure cooker. Emotions run high and stress levels go through the roof – and

it's the parents of the tiny babies who take the most strain. Sr Mary says that she's often seen the high stress, blame and guilt involved end in divorce.

Part of Sr Mary's job entails counselling the parents about the work that's done in her ward. It can look quite scary, so she makes a point of explaining what the incubator, monitors and ventilators are for. For most parents, it will be the first time they see such a small baby attached so many machines, and it can be a shock.

MYTHS BUSTED

While mothers tend to stay strong in such situations, it is the dads who struggle most. Sr Mary recalls a father who came into the neonatal ICU ward to visit his baby for the first time. "All he said was, 'Such small babies, what's wrong with these babies?' before collapsing on the floor." She says fathers are generally more involved during pregnancy and at the birth, but most

stop coming to the NICU frequently in the case of premature babies – there is a widespread myth that a premature baby is disabled. She blames this on the cultural stereotype that when there's a problem with the baby, the mother or her family are to blame. Often the father becomes emotionally unavailable as a result. "Some fathers blame themselves for not being there enough or even blame cheating on their partners during the pregnancy as being the cause of the premature birth. This is not true, as a pregnancy is a medical condition and the best way to avoid any complications is to attend antenatal clinics and classes as soon as you find out you're pregnant," says Sr Mary. "This way a lot of potential health hazards that

“LIFE IN THE NICU IS LIKE LIVING IN A PRESSURE COOKER. EMOTIONS RUN HIGH AND STRESS LEVELS GO THROUGH THE ROOF”

can result in premature birth, like high blood pressure, can be monitored. Women need to know that there's help – if something is detected early enough, chances are the worst can be avoided," she says.

Life as a NICU nurse is tough, but Mary stays afloat because of her job, not in spite of it. "My staff and patients draw strength from me so I can't entertain emotions of being weak. I'm lively and energetic. I love what I do and I'm blessed to have moved up the ranks within this fulfilling profession. We deal with miracles daily. How many people get to experience what we do every day? For me this is a blessing more than anything else. Babies bring families and communities together," she says. **YB**

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IT WORKS FOR ME

Moms and dads share their tips and tricks to solve everyday parenting problems



WINNING TIP!

MY BABY REALLY DIDN'T ENJOY TUMMY TIME BEFORE SHE WAS THREE MONTHS OLD. I FOUND THAT IF I PUT HER DOWN ON HER TUMMY ON HER CHANGING MAT AND POSITIONED MYSELF JUST BELOW HER, BLOWING BUBBLES, SHE WAS DISTRACTED BY THE PRETTY BUBBLES AND WAS ABLE TO STAY ON HER TUMMY FOR A FEW MINUTES LONGER THAN USUAL. TUMMY TIME IMPROVED SO MUCH THEREAFTER!

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I FREEZE FOUR MARSHMALLOWS TOGETHER IN A FREEZER BAG SO WHEN MY KIDS FALL OR HURT THEMSELVES THERE IS A COOLING PACK. IT DOESN'T GET AS PAINFULLY COLD AS ICE, IT STARTS GETTING SOFT ON THEIR SKIN AND THERE IS ALWAYS A TREAT TO EAT AFTERWARDS TO MAKE THEM FEEL BETTER.

Bianca Moses

For moms stockpiling breastmilk in the freezer, store the milk bags in a gift bag with a slit in at the bottom, so that you can easily access the oldest ones to use first!

Bianca Naudé

If you have a picky eater, pack finger foods on a tray and let him eat in his own time – he will most likely eat and play at the same time.

Madelien Burgers

If you are out and about over a mealtime and find you are left with only one bib, use the reverse side of the bib. It is made of plastic so you can clean accidentally spilled food with one easy wipe.

Tsholofelo Rasekgala

Before I take my daughter for her immunisations I put a few wet cotton balls in the freezer. This works perfectly as a cold pack for the soreness after shots, especially in those first few months.

Luzelle Janse van Rensburg

TODDLERS LIKE TO DELVE INTO YOUR HANDBAG, SO I KEEP AN OLD HANDBAG WITH ODDS & ENDS IN IT THAT ARE NOT VALUABLE FOR MY GRANDCHILDREN TO PLAY WITH.

Gail Naudé

Submissions have been edited for length and clarity.

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