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Mel Habanananda



We are a group offering support and companionship to each other through the early years of parenting.

We offer prenatal and postnatal support, regular playgroups, fundraising for charities and more. If you wish to join, come to our New Members' Coffee Morning or any other regular BAMBI activities. To volunteer or serve on the committee, email vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org or visit bambiweb.org.

BAMBI is a project of the Childbirth & Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand (CBFT).

Mission Statement

The CBFT is a non-profit networking and resource center dedicated to ensuring the best possible start in life for our babies. We believe that this can best be achieved through:

- Encouraging the appropriate use of technology and medication for all births.
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- Providing information and training to health professionals involved in maternity care.
- Supporting parents through the pregnancy, birth and postnatal period.

For more information on CBFT, contact:

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visit: www.cbfthai.org and www.facebook.com/pages/ChildbirthBreastfeeding-Foundation-of-Thailand



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Terryn Schlenther

Dear members,

Can you believe we are just a couple of weeks away from Christmas?! Where did the year go?

This month, we continue to explore the theme of parenting. If I'm honest, I feel my parenting always evolves with life changes like going from one child to two, and then going back to work. For example, my first born would never miss her 7pm bedtime, but lately, if it means I can get the last cuddle of the day or read a bedtime story together, I'm more flexible with a slightly later time.

The team held the first Halloween event since 2019, and most recently, the Festive 40th. I would like to thank you all for your continued support of BAMBI. A lot of work goes into organizing these events to ensure our members and their families have a great time, and I would like to personally thank Chiaki and Sara for leading the events. I would also like to thank the entire volunteer team for their assistance.

Again, thanks for a wonderful year to our members and to our wonderful volunteers who contribute to the running of BAMBI each and every day.

Merry Christmas and Happy 40th year, BAMBI.

Terryn
BAMBI Executive Board

OUR COVER KID MARIA CECILIA



NAME

Maria Cecilia

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

I was born in Thailand. I am half German and half Filipino.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THAILAND?

My whole life (two years).

FAVORITE PLACE TO GO AS A FAMILY IN THAILAND.

The Craft at Velaa Sindhorn Village.

WHAT'S ON YOUR THAI BUCKET LIST?

To visit farms and see the beautiful provinces of Thailand.

WHAT DOES BAMBI MEAN TO YOU?

Play. Fun. Family

COVER PHOTO BY SAYURI

Dear readers,

The end of the year is finally upon us, and I'm sure many of you are gearing up to head home for the holidays, if not already there.

This month, we are continuing with the theme of 'parenting for *you*', with the focus extending to parenting third culture kids, and managing parenting pressures when traveling home for the holidays. BAMB! Magazine is delighted to present some exciting reads on these topics as well as others, in the hope that you are able to gain some valuable insights and ideas from them all.

We have 'Parenting Away from Home' by Maheshika Mackenzie-Baker, where she reflects on growing up in a mixed-culture family and raising her daughter in a foreign country. Indeed these experiences can often leave the best of us wondering how to help ourselves and our children. If you find yourself in this conundrum, the books reviewed by Angela Chen in our Readers' Corner, 'Lunch at 10 Pomegranate Street' and 'The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read' can perhaps shed some light on your dilemma.

And speaking of light, if you're looking for personalized gifts that will brighten up your loved ones' homes and hearts when you visit them for the holidays, check out Anelia Van Zyl's recipes for homemade candles in 'All I Want for Christmas is... A Homemade Candle!'. To prepare yourself for the trip and to learn how best to navigate parenting boundaries with extended family, you can look at Angela Hilderbrand's article 'A Happy Ho-Ho-Holiday Christmas Guide'.

'Mommy Honesty Hour' will give you an honest depiction of how modern moms balance motherhood with their personal identities—four mothers from the Bangkok expat community offer a candid glimpse into their lives before and after kids. Fathers also often struggle to balance work and family time, but local dad, Napon Eamcharoenying, seems to be acing the juggling act, as seen in 'Creating Wonders at Home and Work'.

Lastly, Anna Downs takes the guesswork out of exercising during and after pregnancy by explaining what is safe and how to go about it in 'Do Or Don't: Pre- And Postpartum Exercise'.



Sanam Raisa Rahman

Readers, I hope this year has been one of growth, learning and recovery from all the COVID-related hardships of the last two years for you and your families. It has been a pleasure producing the BAMB! Magazine for you. I am deeply thankful to all our contributors, our publisher ScandMedia, and the entire magazine team for making this possible. We've had a busy year, and from all of us, happy holidays and warm wishes for 2023!

Sanam
Editor

PHOTOGRAPHY
BY SAYURI

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Charinrat Prachaya

Chatraporn Robinson

Chisa Honda

Daeun Ahn

Danee Panutaiwat

Doungkamol Boonyasettakul

Emi Torigoe

Gunnon Chongpeerapieng

Helene Marre

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Wilasinee Pratsuchanai

Xixi Su

Yating Guo

Youngeun Jang

Yuliia Bauer

Zhou Zhiru

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FROM BAMBI!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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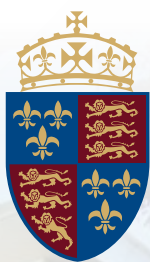
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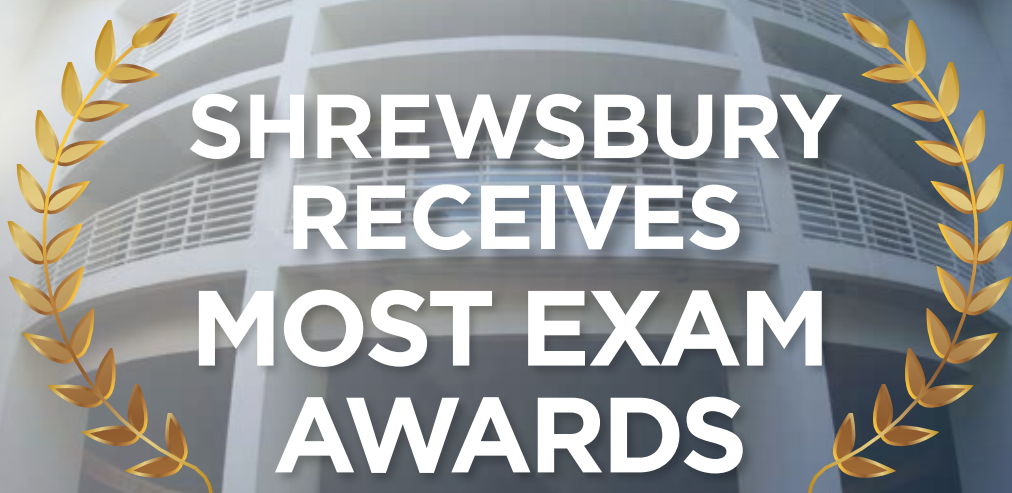


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PARENTING AWAY FROM HOME

Parenting is full of trial and error. Throw in a new home and there's another level of complexity. Maheshika Mackenzie-Baker shares her experiences of balancing her cultures with her parenting in her new home country.

One day, my five-year-old turned to me in the car and asked, "Mummy, where am I from?" She had spent some years listening to me speak to my mom in Sinhala, one of Sri Lanka's official languages, and to my dad in English, while people around her spoke in Thai. It made me think about my journey so far. Having been raised by parents from two different cultures, and never fully feeling like I belonged to either, then spending many years in Thailand, I could relate to how third culture kids feel. It dawned on me that my daughter might be going through the same thing.

My husband and I traveled to Thailand and fell in love with the country. We decided to make it our new home and in 2012 made the move. Having my first child in a foreign land has been a challenging but wonderful experience. It has helped me learn not only about my parenting style, but also more about who I am.

One of my earliest memories with my daughter was when she was just a few months old and we were walking to the park. A woman walked up to us, looking quite worried, and said, "Hot". I smiled and replied, "Yes, it is". But then she proceeded to pull down the top hood of my baby's stroller. I pulled it back up, saying, "It's OK—the morning sun is good for her". She pulled it back down and walked away, shaking her head. I smiled on the outside but felt infuriated on the inside! I was a sleep-deprived, new mother who had just realized she was going to be raising a kid in a culture with completely different views from her own.

Similar incidents followed where strangers would come

up and try to keep my child 'safe'. I would always try to respond with, "It's OK—it's good for her to learn through mistakes", but my insecurities and lack of Thai vocabulary would fail me.

It took me a few months (or years) to accept that what other people said or did was not within my control, but my own actions and what I taught my children were. Also, upon reflection, on that hot day the woman was just trying to help me, and my reaction came from how I was feeling within myself. I realized then that to be able to stand up for myself and my kid, I needed to feel secure in what kind of parent I wanted to be.

I began researching various parenting styles, and the more I learned about gentle parenting, the more it resonated with me. I was raised in Sri Lanka, where the culture cared a lot about the image we portrayed to others, while my Scottish dad taught me to always stand up for myself. Here, in Thailand, although it is similar to where I was raised, confrontation is not encouraged. All three cultures, along with my choice of parenting style, have taught me so much, and have had a huge part to play in building my identity. However, it hasn't been easy. There have been times when I have questioned myself a lot, and raising my daughter has been hugely challenging.

At the age of two, my daughter went through a hitting phase, and she was immediately deemed the 'bad' child in class. She was the only non-Thai kid in the class, which made me feel like the other parents assumed we were not doing anything about her actions. What they did



not know was that we were reflecting with her daily after school, with help from her teachers, to teach her it was not okay to use hands, and to encourage the use of words instead. Unfortunately, she had not yet learned to speak by then, so we taught her signals to show when she was frustrated. We even told her she could scream into a pillow if she felt angry.

But rumors kept spreading, and being a teacher in the same school, I was really tested. At this point, I did not feel like I was equipped with the mental tools to deal with this type of thing because it was my first time really feeling that ‘momma bear’ protectiveness over my child. What I wanted to do was shout, scream, and tell everyone off: “She is a child who is just learning! Remember we were all children once!”

However, the teacher in me learned to see it from the other parents’ perspectives. They were just protecting their children, too. Luckily, my daughter eventually became less ‘handsy’ and more ‘wordy’. This testing time, along with counseling, helped me understand myself better and really solidified this idea of being okay with having control over only myself and not other people’s thoughts or actions.

Someone once told me that no parent can ever get it right, but they learn from their own parents and try harder themselves. And that’s just what I did. I thought about all the wonderful things my parents had taught me and also the aspects that I did not like. They taught me to be grateful each day because we did not come from much money. In fact, the house I was born in was a mud hut.

This gratitude for life has stuck with me to this very day.

But with that, came the idea that I was not allowed to feel disappointed or angry. If I felt that way when I was younger, it did not feel like I was allowed to express it. It led to me bottling up my negative emotions. I want to make sure I allow my children to express themselves, and know that I am a safe person to feel angry or sad around. I decided I had to be confident in this way of parenting, and that’s why gentle parenting was the way forward for me.

Don’t let the word ‘gentle’ fool you; this style of parenting is not the same as ‘permissive parenting’. In a nutshell, my understanding of gentle parenting is that it encourages children to feel safe to express themselves while boundaries are made clear. This is achieved by following a process, which might look like this example from my own experience:

There have been many times when my daughter would cry uncontrollably because she did not want to leave the playground or even the bathtub. I would begin by validating her feelings by saying something like: “I understand that this must be very frustrating for you because you are having so much fun. Is that right?” Then I would explain my reasoning or give my boundaries: “But we need to leave now because it is getting late, and if it gets too late, you won’t have enough time for the next part of our routine.” Finally, I would make an agreement that was realistic: “So I will give you five more minutes and then we will leave, OK?” When my daughter was younger, I would have a visual aid, like a timer, but now she can look at the



clock and know what five minutes represents.

Consequences are a big part of it, too. If my child would not stick to an agreement we had both made, I would explain that this meant there would be a consequence, like leaving immediately, even if it meant physically picking her up to go, while she cried. In this instance, I would ask if she would like a hug, and this would usually help her calm down.

It is important to remember that the brains of children this age are not yet developed enough to allow a child to self-regulate or think the way adults do. Our job, in my opinion, is to guide them in an understanding manner. This has led to my child trusting me wholeheartedly, knowing I will abide by agreements and treat her fairly. In turn, she's become more responsible, caring and empa-

thetic. Now, my little girl has become my best friend, and she even helps me get through some difficult times.

So, my advice to any parents out there who are going through the same thing, is to first look within yourself. The rest will follow. It will not always be easy; you will often come across people or whole cultures who disagree with you. But find a way to mold all that you are with the culture that you are in. This will be passed on to your children, and they will pass it on to theirs one day.

My answer to my little girl's question was: "Your mummy is Sri Lankan, your daddy is Scottish, and we live in Thailand. One day, this will all mean something to you. But for now, you are whoever you want to be!"

Photos courtesy of author and Canva



About the Author

Maheshika Mackenzie-Baker lived most of her life in Sri Lanka but went to Scotland to receive her masters in Psychology. She and her husband have lived in Thailand for over 10 years, and have two little kids of their own. She is a learning designer at VERSO International School. Her family has enjoyed learning about and living in a new culture. You can reach her at: Email: maheshi.mackenzie@gmail.com
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MEET ANELIA VAN ZYL

From South Africa to Southeast Asia, assistant editor Anelia Van Zyl shares what life was like back home compared to life now. Wherever she finds herself, she makes sure life is full of color, culture, and creativity.

Where are you from and what's your nationality? Can you tell us about your life back home?

I was born and raised in beautiful South Africa. My first language is Afrikaans, and I'm proud of my heritage and culture. I grew up on a rooibos tea farm in the heart of the Cederberg Mountains in the Western Cape. I'm fortunate to have had a childhood in unspoiled wilderness; between sandstone boulders, mountains, valleys, and waterfalls.

Can you tell us something about your career and work?

After high school, I went on to complete my degree in drama. During my studies, I experienced some of the best days of my life. It was a time of road trips, rock festivals, bands, late nights to early mornings, adventures, art, and lots of interesting, creative people. Since then, I've worked as an actor, a singer, and a producer in film and theater. I also had a guesthouse and restaurant on the farm. I have a keen interest and love for culinary arts and have assisted restaurateurs in starting their hospitality journey. This process has involved creating menus, training staff, interior designing, ergonomic running of space, and so on. I'm single, and have been teaching in Thailand for eight years.

Please tell us a little bit about your family.

I have one older brother who resides in Canada and works as a medical doctor. His wife is an occupational therapist, and they have three very bright and creative kids. My sister-in-law and I are very close. I also have a younger sister who lives in Cape Town. She is a teacher at a private school. Her husband is an entrepreneur, and they have two awesome and bubbly kids. We lost our parents at a young age; something that changed our lives forever.

When did you come to Thailand? What do you miss the most about your country?

I first arrived in Thailand in December 2011, with my best friend from university. We made an impulsive decision to teach in Thailand. After a few trips back and forth between South Africa and Thailand, I returned in 2018 and have been here since. It turns out that impulsive decisions are sometimes the best decisions. What I miss most about my country are my culture and people, music festivals, theater, good wine, and my sister!

Can you tell us a bit about your routine here in Thailand?

I live in Chumphon, with my dog, Kolletjies, and my cats, Saartjie and Trompie (they have Afrikaans names). I work as an English and visual arts teacher. In my free time, I bake, cook, paint, make ceramics, make music, and spend time in my garden. I have banana and papaya trees. I also like to grow different cultivars of vegetables from seeds. I used to have ducks and chickens too, but my new place doesn't allow for poultry farming. I would love to spend every single day working the soil and raising animals, and every night being creative in my art studio.

What do you love most about Thailand? Which parts of Thailand have you traveled to?

I appreciate the safety here. Parts of South Africa can be dangerous, so it's amazing to be in a place where I don't have to live in fear. Back home, I've had awful experiences with crime and violence. Here, my life is peaceful, and I'm grateful for it. The weather in Thailand is also lovely, especially when it rains and you can hear thunder rumble. I've been to a few places in southern Thailand. I still have to visit the north. I'm fascinated by mountains and really want to pack a backpack, take my tent, and



explore the natural wonders of the north.

What were your main challenges when you first arrived in Thailand?

I'm lucky to be a person who adapts very quickly. I can't really think of anything culturally that was challenging. I'm a 'when in Rome' type of person. So if I had to choose, then maybe the food. South Africa's cuisine is a mix of many influences due to our diverse culture and ethnic groups. I really believe we have the best food.

How did you find out about BAMBI?

My friend used to work for BAMBI as an assistant editor and introduced me to the lovely magazine.

Are there any specific suggestions you can give to BAMBI's new members here in Bangkok?

I don't live in Bangkok, so I can't offer any Bangkok-related suggestions. I would encourage new members to get involved in their communities. It's a great way to meet people and share common interests.

BAMBI PLAYGROUPS & ACTIVITIES

BAMBI holds regular playgroups and activities around town, open to both BAMBI members and non-members. BAMBI playgroups are characterized by free play, and the use of venues' toys and playgrounds. BAMBI activities provide a wide range of activities for children ages 1 to 6 years old to develop their athletic, creative and cognitive skills.



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To find out more about all of our playgroups and activities please scan the QR code to head to our website. We also have a non-BAMBI playgroup listing. We look forward to seeing you soon at one of our events.



BAMBI PLAYGROUPS



HOW TO BECOME A BAMI MEMBER

Becoming a BAMI member is very simple. Go to any BAMI playgroup or event, including New Members Coffee Morning, and pay the membership fee in cash. You will get a membership card and receipt on the spot.

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MOMMY HONESTY HOUR

With motherhood comes emotions, confusion, and sometimes tears. But all of that is normal. Read along as a few Bangkok-based moms open their hearts and share their struggles and triumphs since becoming moms.

PADONDA ALI

My name is Padonda Ali. I am 34 years old, and a mom of three boys aged 14, 4, and 2. I am from the US where there are many styles of parenting, with gentle parenting being a popular one right now.

I became a mom at the young age of 21. I was in Japan, and I was enjoying the nightlife. I would basically go to work, come home, then head out to party. Since becoming a mom, I miss being able to come and go whenever I want without worrying about the kids, but I feel like I am now more patient and understanding.

My favorite part of parenting: Watching my children grow and learn. I started homeschooling because I love watching the moments my kids master a new task or skill!

My least favorite part of parenting: Having to adjust my parenting tactics for each child as they grow and change. I feel like I research some new way for some new challenge my child has every other day. When my oldest was little, I was young, and just went off of how I was raised. Now I research how to work with each child's developing personality.

Something about motherhood that's been different than what I imagined it would be: With my first child I struggled a lot with guilt; I didn't expect that. He has ADHD. He was always in trouble in school and struggled to make friends. I thought it was something I had done. I just wanted him to have a 'normal', struggle-free life, yet here he was, struggling at such a young age. It was heartbreaking. I found a mom group that helped me overcome that.

One time I wanted to completely pause on being a mom: This is going to sound bad, but when I first moved to California with my oldest (he was four then), we went to the



San Francisco boardwalk. Things with him were so bad that I thought about leaving him there and just walking away. Instead, I spoke to my mom. She told me she had felt like that with me and each of my siblings. Normalizing and talking about it helped me feel less guilty. I now feel no shame in feeling like I don't like my kids. Finding a good mom group helps too. I never have to say "I love them, but...". I can just tell them exactly what is breaking me and they understand.

How living abroad has changed my approach to parenting: Since moving to Thailand, I think I have become more cautious because the sidewalks are terrible and motorbikes drive on them, whereas in the US, sidewalks are a safe space. And even malls can get so crowded that I have to hold on to my children so they won't get lost in the crowds.

Advice for moms struggling with losing or maintaining their identity: A) find a non-judgmental mom group. Mine is awesome. They help when days are hard, and b) give yourself self-care every day, even if it's just five minutes. As your kids get older you will get more time.

Some things I enjoy doing in my own time without kids: Getting my nails done and browsing shops.

An area in life where I'd like to grow more: I would like to be a better mom. I did the career, I did school. I want to be with my kids experiencing life. I missed out on so much with my oldest because I was working such long hours. I barely saw him. With my youngest I want to be there for everything.

Something the 'past me' would praise 'present me' for: Being able to plan new adventures and execute them. I once planned and moved my whole family across the country in less than two months. I also just started a homeschool co-op here in Bangkok.

Some non-conventional or controversial (but safe and legal) things I practice or allow in my home to help keep my sanity: I openly speak to people about how hard it is. I don't hide it. I struggle, every mom does. Just breathe, be in it, and move on. Talk about it!

Where I'd go if I had the PERFECT nanny to stay home with the kids and unlimited funds to travel: My family and I already travel full-time. It's our current lifestyle. If I had unlimited funds and a nanny, I would want to tour Europe very slowly. I would go on date nights and sit in cafes and eat everything in peace.



CHANTAL FERNANDO

I'm Chantal, a stay-at-home mom who's been living in Bangkok for the last four years. I'm from Sri Lanka where kids are raised with lots of love, under the belief that it takes a village to raise a child, and a definite focus on discipline, respect, and achievement.

Before becoming a mom, I was an adventurous, happy, well-rested teacher and traveler who loved eating out and spending time with friends. As a mother, I am happy and still love doing the same things, but less adventurous with my routine of early mealtimes, bedtimes and scheduled everything. I miss the spontaneity and relaxed traveling. Late nights out or off-the-beaten-track travel are doable, but tough.

My favorite part of parenting: Seeing my kids become friends.

My least favorite part of parenting: Discovering I'm not as patient as I thought I was.

Something about motherhood that's been different than what I imagined it would be: I've done so many things I swore I never would, but accepting that I am going to make countless mistakes and that

my preconceived notions and grand plans were honestly just laughable have been an exercise in humility!

One time I wanted to completely pause on being a mom: The newborn phase. I had to state super explicitly that I didn't need help doing what I was already doing. I needed someone to really take over for a few hours so I could be in a different room, have a shower, nap, and recover.

How living abroad has changed my approach to parenting: With so many different approaches to parenting in the expat community and relatively less judgment, I feel more comfortable to find my own way.

Advice for moms struggling with losing or maintaining their identity: It gets easier. They need you intensely for what seems like forever, but it will pass, and you will have your life (and hands) back. But in the meantime, don't feel guilty using any resources you can to take time for yourself so that you're not pouring from an empty cup.

Some things I enjoy doing in my own time without kids: Yoga, Krav Maga, early dinners with girlfriends and date nights.

An area in life where I'd like to grow more: I'd like to make time for something creative again. Without popsicle sticks or pipe cleaners.

Something the 'past me' would praise 'present me' for: 25-year-old me would not believe how well we can function on five hours of sleep before caffeine.

Something the 'present me' would praise 'past me' for: Really making use of her freedom.

Some non-conventional or controversial (but safe and legal) things. I practice or allow in my home to help keep my sanity: Quiet time. If my son plays in his room on his own for an hour after lunch he gets TV for 30 minutes, which for me is 90 minutes of peace. He'll now get really into his Lego, and sometimes ask for an extension, so I have zero guilt now.

Where I'd go if I had the PERFECT nanny to stay home with the kids and unlimited funds to travel: I'd go to Japan. I don't think my kids will enjoy the cultural things I'd want to experience for a while. I'd fill time with slow meals, fast trains, and travel without rigid plans.

KIS

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“

Think of playtime like an innovation lab where tomorrow's civilization is being actively designed.

— Jordan Shapiro ”

Inspiring Individuals

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ANONYMOUS

I have a 20-month-old daughter and I work in sales. I'm Chinese and I consider myself a 'soft' mom. Meaning, I help my kid to do almost everything, because my mom was a bit hard on me. I am almost her opposite in parenting style, and I am not sure if that's a good thing or not.

Before becoming a mom I loved socializing, having fun, and drinking wine—which I didn't do for one year while I was pregnant and breastfeeding. Now, as a mother I'm a bit more anxious about things like how much food my daughter eats and her safety. I miss going out and not having to check the time to relieve the nanny. I also miss freely traveling, as traveling is not as practical with a toddler.

My favorite part of parenting: Watching my daughter grow and learn so many things has been amazing.

My least favorite part of parenting: Taking care of her without any time off.

Something about motherhood that's been different than what I imagined it would be: I imagined raising a child with the same strict style I had grown up under but it's been quite different. My daughter has allowed me to be able to show love and be flexible. I love cuddling her.

One time I wanted to completely pause on being a mom: During her sleep regression at four months; I was constantly exhausted.

How living abroad has changed my approach to parenting: Thailand has made things easier for me because we can afford a nanny and I can take more time for myself. I also have access to different resources (such as parent coaching) to guide me to be a better parent, and create the right boundaries.

Advice for moms struggling with losing or maintaining their identity: Keep taking time for yourself weekly.

Some things I enjoy doing in my own time without kids: Hanging out with my young friends, child-free.

An area in life where I'd like to grow more: I'd like to set firm rules for my daughter.

Something the 'past me' would praise 'present me' for: Past me would praise present me for being able to still remain easy-going and social, while building a meaningful relationship with my baby.

Something the 'present me' would praise 'past me' for: Present me would praise past me for being able to allow room for growth, and letting myself become a loving mother and expressing that love with gestures and words, which is something I didn't have growing up.

Some non-conventional or controversial (but safe and legal) things I practice or allow in my home to help keep my sanity: I enjoy relaxing with a glass of wine and special herbs.

Where I'd go if I had the PERFECT nanny to stay home with the kids and unlimited funds to travel: I would go to South America, and try to make new friends over there. I would read and relax in a fancy hotel, and video chat with my daughter daily.



SANAM RAHMAN

I'm Sanam, a stay-at-home mom to two little girls, nearly seven and four years old, and have been living in Bangkok for almost ten years. I'm from Bangladesh where, while the general belief is that it takes a village to raise a child, traditional norms have seen the responsibility of childrearing falling primarily on the mother. However, this is now changing and fathers can be seen taking a more hands-on approach to parenting.

Pre-children, I was pretty much the same attitude-wise as I am now, but definitely more put-together mentally; 'mom' brain isn't fun! One aspect that's changed after kids is that my emotional intelligence is more frequently put to the test and staying patient is always a bit of a struggle unfortunately. However, I've found that I'm able to do almost everything I loved doing before having kids if I actively plan and prepare ahead. This includes reading books and traveling. Traveling with kids isn't easy, but if you're organized, it isn't impossible. Reading's easy enough,

although there is less time, peace, and quiet to do it.

One thing I miss is easier and quieter mornings where I could just wake up and not have to rush to get the kids ready for school, 'debate' over the importance of wearing a school uniform or brushing your teeth, explain why "your sister didn't mean to knock your bag over, it was an accident", the list goes on.

My favorite part of parenting:

Parenting gives me the chance to relive and assess my childhood, and draw parallels between my daughters' experiences and mine.

My least favorite part of parenting:

Parenting has made me more aware of my limitations—physical and psychological.

Something about motherhood that's been different than what I imagined it would be:

I entered motherhood quite unexpectedly and without any preconceived notions, so everything about it felt like something I just had to deal with as best as I could. Having said that, I

remember thinking we would never co-sleep, and I was dead wrong about that! Getting a baby to sleep through the night on their own is pretty difficult; my younger one still crawls into our bed in the middle of the night.

One time I wanted to completely pause on being a mom:

One day my younger daughter was throwing a tantrum, and this was one of those times where I had made plans for myself and nothing was going the way it was supposed to. Right on cue, the self-pity card played itself in my head and I decided she could continue wailing; there were other grown-ups to help her, it didn't have to be me. So I told her I was going away because she had told me to, and then just went and hid under the bed. It was not my most mature moment, and after she'd calmed down a bit, I went and talked to her about it.

How living abroad has changed my approach to parenting:

I became a mother while living abroad, so for me parenting has always been about raising my children in a way that



suits the entire family's needs and circumstances. How my husband and I were raised doesn't always apply to the setting we find ourselves in now, so I try to be as flexible as possible.

Advice for moms struggling with losing or maintaining their identity: I struggle with this myself, and the only way to overcome this is to PUSH yourself; push yourself to try out new things, and push yourself to reconnect with your non-mom friends and ex-colleagues. And if that seems too much or fails, call your mother or another mom-friend who will remind you of all the important things you are doing now.

Some things I enjoy doing in my own time without kids: I like the work I do for BAMBI because it's a place where I can exercise my creativity and passion for writing and self-expression. I have always enjoyed working with like-minded people to produce something meaningful, and being a part of BAMBI has given me that opportunity. Other than that I like hanging out with my friends, reading and binge-watching TV shows late at night or during school hours.

An area in life where I'd like to grow more: I would like to be a little more patient with the kids, and better organized in general.

Something the 'past me' would praise 'present me' for: For taking motherhood in stride...on most days, haha!

Something the 'present me' would praise 'past me' for: I would say, "Thank you for training your mind to believe that 'this too shall pass'".

It means that all things, good or bad, are temporary. Because of it, I always know to count my blessings and never lose hope.

Some non-conventional or controversial (but safe and legal) things I practice or allow in my home to help keep my sanity: Lately, breakfast on school days has become milk and oreos in front of the TV, but if it means we can head out the door on time without any fights, tantrums, or tears—and (bonus!) happy—I allow it.

Where I'd go if I had the PERFECT nanny to stay home with the kids and unlimited funds to travel: With unlimited funds, why just stop at one place when you can travel the whole world, right? However, that takes a lot of time and then I'd miss the kids too much, and not have any fun. So I'd probably take them and the nanny with me, give us all a break from rules and structure, explore new places, sleep late, wake up late, and eat to our hearts' content.

Photos courtesy of Canva

Here I am!





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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



BAMBİ is run by a group of lovely volunteers. Want to have fun, work together with other great parents, brush up on your professional skills, and do something for the BAMBİ community? This is your chance. As many of our current committee members are moving on from Bangkok, BAMBİ has a number of critical roles to fill to ensure ongoing service to members. BAMBİ is great fun and a welcoming community of like-minded parents trying to support and improve the parenting experience for all families in Bangkok. If you have some time and passion to spare, come and join us. To apply or if you have any questions about these volunteer opportunities, please email vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org, detailing which position(s) you are interested in.

We have a number of exciting opportunities currently available:

CHAIRWOMAN

The chair is our CEO, our liaison with CBFT and other volunteer groups in Bangkok, and acts as BAMBİ's official representative in the wider community.

Responsibilities & Duties

- coordinates the work of the committee and chairs the monthly committee meetings
- prepares annual reports for the AGM and CBFT
- together with the treasurer, sets the budget for each area of BAMBİ
- is responsible for recruiting new volunteers and is the first contact for new people interested in volunteering
- writes a bi-monthly column for the magazine
- ensures compliance with accounting/bookkeeping

TREASURER

The treasurer attends monthly committee meetings as a voting member and takes care of all day-to-day financial aspects of BAMBİ.

Responsibilities & Duties

- supports BAMBİ volunteers on financial aspects
- processes payments and receipts
- together with the chair, sets the budget for each area of BAMBİ
- ensures compliance with accounting/bookkeeping

ASSISTANT TREASURER

The assistant treasurer helps the treasurer take care of the financial aspects of BAMBI related to playgroups, activities, and events. Financial background is not mandatory, but preferred.

Responsibilities & Duties

- receives and checks reports from playgroup leaders, activity leaders, and event managers
- organizes and forwards all paperwork to the book-keeper monthly
- may assist the treasurer with other financial duties

PHOTO EDITOR

The photo editor is the first point of contact for anything picture related in BAMBI Magazine.

Responsibilities & Duties

- works directly with the BAMBI magazine and Bumps teams and Playgroups and Activities leaders to source photos for articles and photo feature pages in the magazine
- takes photos at events or coordinates with event staff and photographers to have photos taken
- organizes and oversees the magazine cover photo-shoot
- designs the magazine cover in coordination with the BAMBI Magazine editor and deputy editor

PLAYGROUP LEADERS

The BAMBI playgroup leader runs a weekly 'free play' playgroup. Positions are available at various locations throughout Bangkok, Sukhumvit, Sathorn, and Silom.

Responsibilities & Duties

- attends and manages the playgroup: collects entrance donations, welcomes new and current members
- takes photos of the playgroup for BAMBI Magazine
- can voluntarily introduce circle time or short activities to their playgroup at their own discretion

DEPUTY EDITOR

The deputy editor works with the editor to deliver the monthly magazine, both print and online.

Responsibilities & Duties

- works with the editor to plan magazine themes and article topics
- assigns and assists with article editing and proofreading
- publishes articles on the BAMBI website via WordPress

EVENTS COORDINATOR

The events coordinator attends monthly committee meetings as a voting member and organizes and coordinates BAMBI's parties and events.

Responsibilities & Duties

- coordinates the planning and delivery of BAMBI's large events such as our splash party and Halloween party. This includes sponsor solicitation, setting up and tidying up before and after the events, organizing volunteers to help during the event, and organizing kids' activities and food vendors.
- organizes internal team events

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS



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PAST VOLUNTEERS: WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

"After learning the ropes and refining my skills as a volunteer editor on the magazine team, I'm now the proud owner of my own editorial business!"
- Liz from LJ Pond | Proofreader

ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS... A HOMEMADE CANDLE!

Cinnamon, clove, and homemade pumpkin pie. These are just a few scents we associate with Christmas. Assistant editor Anelia Van Zyl warms our homes and hearts by showing us how to capture these smells with homemade candle recipes.

Smells awaken our senses and create sensory memories that remind us of unforgettable times with our friends and family. Candles are super easy to make and will add light, warmth, and atmosphere to your Christmas. They also make beautiful, thoughtful gifts! All that's needed is some wax and lovely scents. You'll also need to do a bit of double boiling which involves filling a pot with several centimeters of water, then placing a dish or another pot containing the wax into the water to melt the wax. So, ready to try your hand at some candle making?



EQUIPMENT

- Kitchen scale
- Kitchen thermometer
- Measuring cup or beaker
- Stainless steel spoon
- Stainless steel container and pot
- Cooking thermometer
- Microwaveable glass jar—500 ml for the glass jar candle
- Mold—for the pillar candle. I like to use a small, clean, and empty Pringles jar. Alternatively, you can cut a large container down to 10 cm.
- Glass cup—for pillar candle. Anything like a stemless wine glass that holds at least 400 ml.

Ingredients

- Soy wax—500 g for the glass jar candle and 400 g for the pillar candle
- 15 cm cotton wick—two for the glass jar candle and one for the pillar candle
- Glue dots or double-sided tape
- Wick bars—I use chopsticks and sticky tape
- Fragrance oils—any Christmas scent like forest pine, ginger or orange. You can buy a premade Christmas scent online or mix your own.



Instructions

1. Weigh out the appropriate amount of soy wax.
2. In the double boiler, bring the wax to 85°C. The melted wax must hit this temperature to ensure that the fragrance binds with it.
3. Once the wax reaches 85°C, remove it from the heat source and slowly add the fragrance oil—40 ml for the glass jar candle and 30 ml for the pillar candle.
4. Thoroughly stir this mixture with a stainless steel spoon about 20 to 30 times, and set it aside to cool down to the pouring

5. For the pillar candle, continue to step 6. For the glass jar candle: pop the empty jar in the microwave and heat for 30 seconds on high. Heating the jar will ensure that the wax doesn't pull away from the sides once hardened.
6. Apply sticky tape to the wick tabs, and firmly press them down to the center bottom of the container. It might be helpful to use a chopstick to make sure it's pushed down firmly.
7. Attach the wick(s) to a wick bar or chopsticks with sticky tape to hold it in place, and place across the top of the jar or container, so that once you add the melted wax, the wick(s) stay upright and centered.
8. Once the wax is at the pouring temperature, slowly pour it into the mold or container.
9. Set aside overnight to cool down.
10. For the glass jar candle: continue to step 11. For the pillar candle: once wax has cooled, remove it from the mold.
11. Cut the wick down to about 1 cm.

Cure (rest) your candle for four to five days before burning to produce the

perfect-smelling candle!

GLASS JAR CANDLE DECORATION

I used a dried orange slice, a tiny pine cone, and some raffia string. Tie the orange slice and cone to the raffia string, and then wrap the raffia string a few times around the rim of the jar.

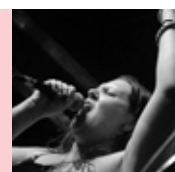
PILLAR CANDLE DECORATION

I used a stemless wine glass from my cupboard, two tiny pine cones, and some more raffia string. Tie the cones to the string, making sure they hang at different lengths. Then wrap the string (with cones) around the glass rim and secure it with a simple bow.

Photos courtesy of author

About the Author

Anelia is a performing artist from South Africa. She has been living and working as a teacher in Thailand for eight years. She also writes educational children's books, makes music, and loves to spend time in the kitchen. Follow her adventures on IG @aneliavz.





DESIGN FUTURES

ELC international schools are places where children are active protagonists in their own learning. They comprise a family of unique schools where students base their research, discovery, and experimentation within the context of contemporary culture and learning. Those within strive to resolve dilemmas of individual and shared importance in their quest for knowledge and understanding but most importantly, imagine possibilities for a better future.

In the daily life of ELC schools, we can perceive a pronounced increase in children's creativity, the quality of their research, and their ability to access information. This facilitates the development of complex digital projects and products of knowledge, which are elaborated between children and between children and adults.

digital bicycles for enjoyment in the park using arduino technology
designed by
Pop and Anna
(ages 8 to 9 years)



automated solar and wind-powered street cleaner using arduino technology
designed by Caden, Fabian and India
(ages 10 to 11 years)

elc international schools

The City School
Ages 3-11 years

Area: Thonglor
18 Soi Sukhumvit 49/4
Bangkok 10110

+66 (0)2 381 2919
info@elc.ac.th

The Purple Elephant 39
Ages 18 – 36 months

Area: Phrom Phong
61 Soi Phrom Mit
Bangkok 10110

+66 (0)2 662 4570
purpleelephant@elc.ac.th

The Purple Elephant 49
Ages 18 – 36 months

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The Purple Elephant 55
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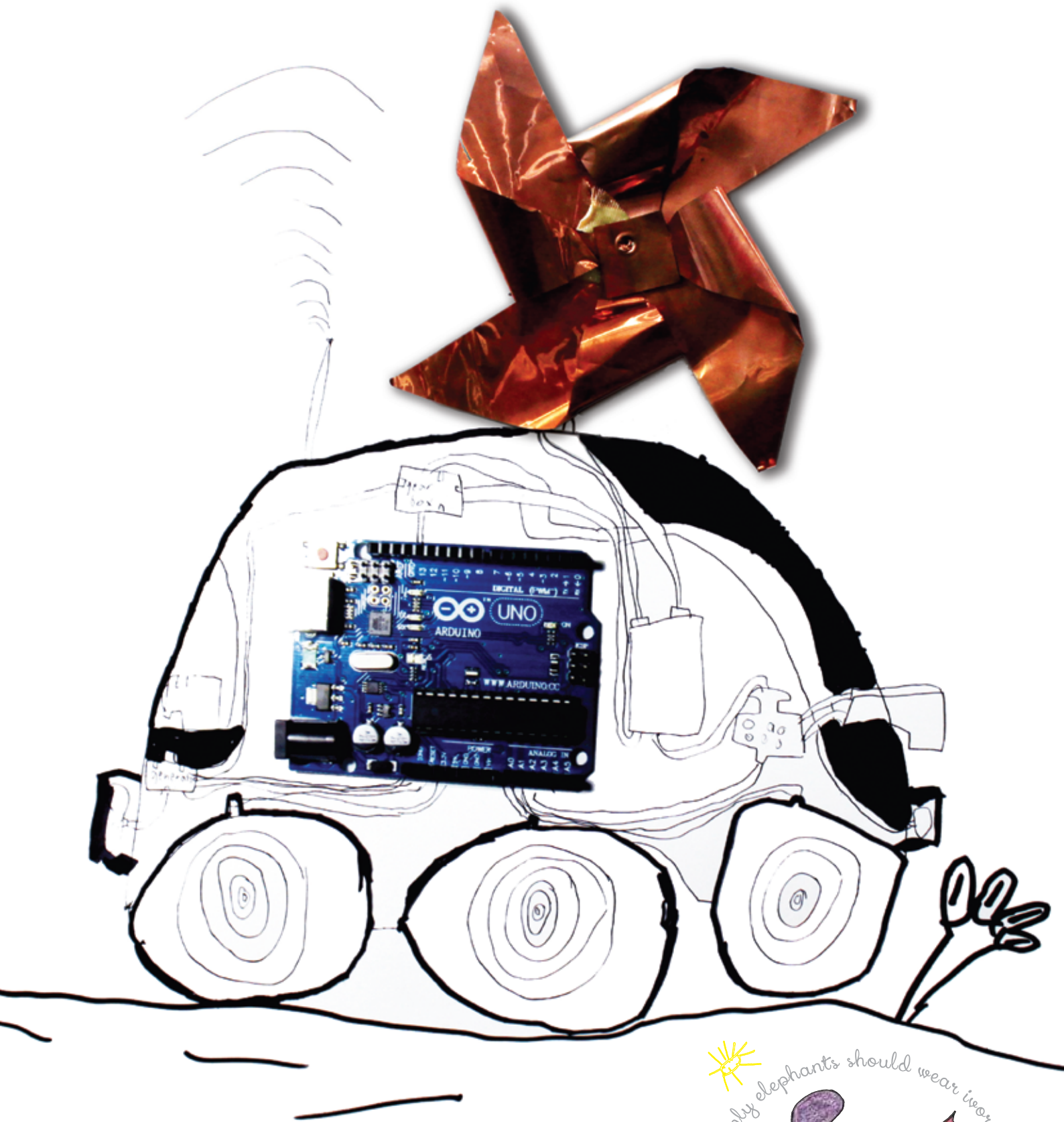
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Ages 18 months - 5 yrs

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Nonthaburi 11000

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countryschool@elc.ac.th



only elephants should wear ivory



elc international schools



HALLOWEEN BASH

It was a perfect Saturday morning with fresh air, sunshine, and lots of excited people looking forward to a fun-filled day on 29 October, when we held our popular Halloween party. The event was co-hosted with St. Andrews International School, Sathorn, who opened up their premises to BAMBI, and also provided support with planning and prepping for the big day.

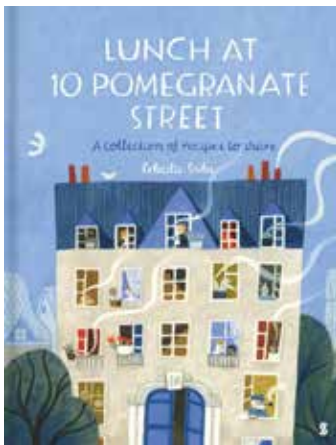
Activities enjoyed by all the attendees included puppet craft from Nancy Language School, art and tie-dying activities from KIDS Mindfulness, games by BAMBI volunteers, a haunted dollhouse and pumpkin art activities for toddlers, and trick-or-treating from various candy stations sponsored by Banana Thai Language School, Novotel Bangkok Platinum Hotel, Bangkok Dolphins, Shirokumaya Cafe, ORIGAMI by N.O.K. real estate company, Ayasan Service, Pain Away Clinic, Nancy Language School and SweetChew. There was also a gymnastic demo from Alyn Munchkin, which everyone enjoyed with rapt attention.

Thank you to all the families who joined us for this joyous event, and a special shout out to St. Andrews International School, Sathorn, and all our sponsors and volunteers for contributing to the event's success!



BOOKS TO INSPIRE

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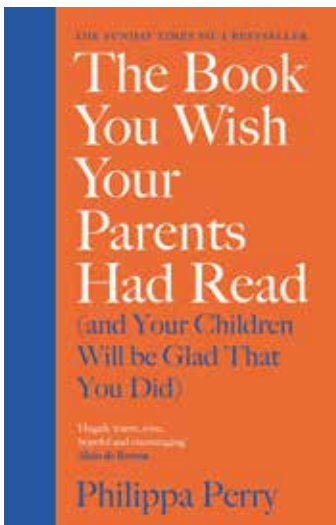


LUNCH AT 10 POMEGRANATE STREET

Written and illustrated by Felicity Sala

Visually stunning, *Lunch at 10 Pomegranate Street* follows a group of neighbors from all corners of the world busily preparing lunch. Their many mouthwatering creations include *guacamole*, *quiche*, *baba ganoush*, coconut *daal*, *oyakodon*, and a variety of sweets. Within colorful two-page spreads, readers are invited into the unique kitchens of each neighbor followed by a simple illustrated recipe. The heartwarming story and vibrant illustrations are sure to spark conversations about food, culture, and community, and perhaps even inspire a cooking or baking project at home. The final pages reveal a heartwarming ending that brings together all of the characters and their delicious dishes. *Lunch at 10 Pomegranate Street* is a celebration of diversity through the sharing of food. A perfect book for expats and third culture kids growing up in melting-pot communities.

Published by Scribble Books, UK in September 2019. Originally published in French as "Au 10, Rue des Jardins" and translated into English, Italian, Spanish, Korean, Greek, Polish, Russian, German, and Traditional Mandarin. A bestseller from award-winning author and illustrator Felicity Sala who was born in Rome, Italy, and grew up in Perth, Australia. Suitable from ages two and up. Hardcover copies can be found in the Children's Corner of the Neilson Hays Library.



THE BOOK YOU WISH YOUR PARENTS HAD READ

By Philippa Perry

Expats and multicultural families raising third culture kids often face uniquely complex challenges such as physical distance from family, conflicting cultural norms, and amplified intergenerational differences. This international bestseller offers valuable insight for parents of all backgrounds, and at any stage of parenting from pregnancy to empty nesters. With humor and honesty, author and psychotherapist, Philippa Perry, shares wisdom on fostering a healthy lifelong relationship between parent and child. Rather than play the blame game, readers are encouraged to develop empathy for themselves, their children, and their parents who raised them during a remarkably different generation. The core ideas of the book are:

- 1) Parenting legacy: understanding how one's childhood informs parenting style;
- 2) Childhood environment: creating a nurturing home with healthy boundaries;
- 3) Feelings: supporting children in understanding, processing, and expressing emotions as a life skill;
- 4) Mental health: an emphasis on emotional well-being for the entire family.

An easy and engaging read packed with practical lessons that children may thank their parents for later.

Published by Penguin Books in March 2019. This is the third book from Philippa Perry, an award-winning author and psychotherapist with over 20 years of experience in the mental health field. A hardcover copy can be found in the non-fiction section of the Neilson Hays Library.

About the Author

Angela Chen is a Neilson Hays Library Board Member and Children's Program chair.

The Neilson Hays Library is Thailand's premier English-language library. The Children's Program offers Saturday Story Time, a cozy Children's Corner, and special holiday events. Adult programs include concerts, art exhibitions, book club, and book sales. Located in a beautiful historic building with a garden and cafe on site: 195 Surawong Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand. Follow us on IG @neilson.hays.library and FB @NeilsonHaysLibrary.

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*Terms & conditions apply on all BAMBI benefits & discounts.



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Mark Leonl, Doctor of Chiropractic (USA)

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A HAPPY HO-HO-HOLIDAY CHRISTMAS GUIDE

This month, educator, former flight attendant, and mother Angela Hilderbrand shares her cross-cultural and intergenerational tips for surviving family holidays with your peace of mind intact.

"It's the most wonderful time of the year..."¹

Imagine your flight is on time with no missed connections, cancellations, or rerouting due to bad weather.

Imagine your children are perfectly behaved.

Imagine your luggage arrives at your destination as expected.

Imagine your parents and in-laws anxiously waiting and embracing you at the airport.

Imagine you and your children with no jet lag.

Imagine "parties for hosting, marshmallows for roasting, and caroling out in the snow"².

Doesn't this all sound idyllic and beautiful?

The reality is, some things are not within our control. As a former flight attendant who is in a cross-cultural,

biracial marriage, and having raised children in a third culture for over 20 years, I understand the dynamics and difficulties that the holiday season can present. Here are a few tips to help you make the most of each moment and enjoy your holidays.

Make your list and check it twice

Before heading to the airport, download an app that can be accessed offline (you'll be on a plane with no internet) on your child's device with child-friendly activities. Check your airline to see if you can order your child special infant or children's meals for the flight. Don't forget to bring a small cuddle toy, coloring or sticker books, and snack-sized, non-sticky, non-greasy finger food such as trail mixes, fruit rolls, dried fruit, or cereal bars. An empty water bottle can be refilled in many airports and on the airplane. Make sure that you stay hydrated. If you want to bring a stroller, you can check it in at the gate (not the check-in counter). This allows you to wheel your child from gate to gate rather than carry them. A stroller also provides

your child with a clean and safe place to rest if there's a layover between flights. Oh, and don't forget plastic bags for dirty wipes or accidents, and at least one extra set of clean clothes for each child and yourself; you never know what can happen on a plane. I've had a passenger throw up on me during a flight.

It's beginning to look a lot like an intercultural Christmas

Those who live overseas have experienced different cultures, but many extended family members have not. Patience may be required while you are visiting. If it is your child's first time visiting Grandma and Grandpa, then take this opportunity to teach them what they need to know and what to expect while on holiday. This will vary from country to country, and from family to family.

In Thailand, you take your shoes off before entering a home while many other cultures do not. When eating, you may use a fork and spoon; other cultures may not. Children have

¹ Andy Williams. Lyrics to "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year". Genius, 2022. <https://genius.com/Andy-williams-the-most-wonderful-time-of-the-year-lyrics>

² See ref 1



priority over adults when riding public transportation in Thailand, while other cultures teach children to give up a seat for an elder.

Children won't learn about other cultures unless they're taught. Teaching them will help them approach cultures politely and respectfully. Think about potential scenarios and role play them, if possible. Focus on what you want them to actually do. For example, instead of saying, "Grandma and Grandpa don't like when people shout, run in their home, or jump on the furniture" say, "Let's use our indoor voices. Remember to walk while indoors. Sit with our bottoms on the furniture". Grandma and Grandpa will appreciate the effort you made, and it will help to avoid misunderstandings in the future.

Of course, there are some things you can't prepare for, and if something as such arises while you are there, make it a 'teaching and learning moment'. I know a family that had been working in a rural environment and took their children to the USA. While playing in the garden of their host family, the eldest child urinated in the flowerbed because that was normal

and expected behavior in the rural environment that he came from. While unexpected in their host family's home, this incident became a teachable moment. While your experience may not be as extreme, look for the silver linings and those teaching and learning moments.

Have a holly, jolly (and sensible) Christmas

Continue to learn/teach about the country you are visiting, especially if it is your home country and culture. My children didn't know anything

about American football, so I taught them the rules and how to pass and catch the ball while visiting family in the USA.

Think about your personal experiences and memories as a child, and share them with your children. It might be a conversation starter for your children and their grandparents. For example, a discussion about holiday cooking, Christmas caroling, or volunteer work may become an intergenerational holiday tradition for your family in the future.





Schedule family time and downtime for yourself and your children. Try not to pack too many activities and events into a short amount of time for young children. This includes travel time. It is better to be rested and pleasant than tired and grumpy.

If there are several people you are expected to spend time with, schedule them in. You may not be able to visit everyone on your list. However, you can call (or Zoom) them to say hello, and let them know that you were thinking of them, even if you couldn't meet them in person.



// Be appreciative and lower your expectations—of events, of people, and all situations. //

If you need more privacy and downtime, stay at a hotel instead of your family home. In some cultures, this may seem rude, but explain that the children need space and naps. This small move may help your peace of mind and relationships.

If your child is a picky eater and you are attending a dinner party, make sure your child eats a light, healthy snack before going to the party.

Avoid political, religious, or controversial topics, unless your family loves and thrives on these types of discussions. Note that political correctness varies between countries, cultures, and families.

Festive food for thought

Ultimately, be appreciative and lower your expectations—of events, of people, and all situations. Choose to have a thankful heart and you will never be disappointed, come what may.

This can be “the most wonderful time of the year” with “much mistletoeing and hearts will be glowing when loved ones are near”³. So, make the most of it, and have a wonderful holiday!

Photos courtesy of Canva

About the Author

Angela Hilderbrand is a mother of grown children, so she knows what it is like raising expat children in Thailand and how to help them acclimate to their home culture. As a former flight attendant, Angela knows how to travel with children. She has written previous articles for BAMBI, has a Master of Education degree, and is an international school teacher at Bangkok Prep.



³. See ref 1



St. Stephen's
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"Where East meets West"

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holistic

St. Stephen's International School provides a truly international education whilst maintaining the values and customs that are so important to our Thai community; East certainly does meet West at St. Stephen's in the best possible way. Our campus communities are happy and caring. Whether in urban Bangkok or in the beautiful environment of Khao Yai, staff, students and parents all contribute to the special family atmosphere which is apparent to even the casual visitor.



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WONDERKIDS PLAYGROUP



IN OCTOBER, WE SAW THE LAUNCH OF OUR WONDERKIDS PLAYGROUP AT WONDER WOODS CO-LEARNING SPACE & KIDS CAFE !

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THE VENUE OFFERS A BEAUTIFUL PLAYSPLACE WITH LOTS OF THINGS TO HAVE FUN WITH —AN INDOOR AREA WITH A BALL PIT AND SLIDE, A READING CORNER, MONTESSORI TOYS, AN OUTDOOR AREA WITH A WATER PLAY STATION, AND A SENSORY ACTIVITY AREA IN THE SHADED GARDEN; NOT TO MENTION, THE DELICIOUS MENU AVAILABLE AT THE CAFE TOO!

THANK YOU TO ALL THE FAMILIES WHO JOINED US AT THIS PLAYGROUP!

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BAMBI'S FESTIVE 40TH

On Saturday, 26 November, BAMBI partnered with Kids' Academy International School to host BAMBI's Festive 40th Anniversary and Christmas event. 114 member families joined us on the day. Our founder and patron, Mel Habanananda, also came to celebrate with us, and gave a speech expressing her gratitude to all the committee members, volunteers and BAMBI members.

The school set up lots of Christmas-themed activity stations such as the snowman sensory play, igloo play, and gingerbread house and cookie decoration, sponsored by Bumpsy Daisy Cafe. Second Chance Bangkok, a charity organization based in Klong Toey, was invited to sell Christmas-themed products to help support the community. Other participating vendors included Glück, Asian Tigers, Amy Diener, Melody from Paris, Hunny Bunch Bakery, and Feltwonderful. The event also saw the launch of BAMBI's new logo.

BAMBI has currently grown to over 900 members, offering playgroups, activities, and hosting annual events such as the Halloween and Christmas parties. BAMBI also supports parents, pregnant women and their partners, and postnatal moms and their babies with help from professionals in the BAMBI Bumps team.

Along with hitting this amazing milestone, BAMBI is proud to continue supporting the community, empowering one another, and providing a safe community for children. We wish BAMBI continuous growth for many more years!





CREATING WONDERS AT HOME AND WORK

Meet Napon, who took a leap and opened a kids' cafe in Bangkok. Despite challenges and insecurities, he's created a safe and relaxing zone for children and parents.

PERSONAL

1. Tell us a little bit about yourself and your family.

Hi, I'm Napon. My wife and I have a two-and-a-half-year-old son. Our family business involves baby products and running a kids' cafe.

2. Was raising a child in Bangkok always part of the plan? Do you think Bangkok is a good city to raise kids?

Since our family and business have always been in Bangkok, the plan was always to raise kids here. However, I wouldn't say Bangkok is a very child-friendly city. There is a lack of public spaces for children to explore, play, and develop during the first six years.

What is an activity you enjoy doing with your son?

We do many things together like cooking, singing, playing instruments, etc., but enjoy reading the most.

CAREER AND WORK

1. Tell us about your work. How did you get into the baby product business, and how did that lead into the hospitality field? (Ergobaby, Hegen, Wonder woods)

We have always been in the toy business, but when we became parents ourselves, we were introduced to many useful products like Ergobaby carriers and Hegen baby feeding supplies, and we realized first-hand how beneficial they were in raising a child. We felt that we wanted to make them available to other parents in Thailand. As for Wonder Woods, we felt that there was a lack of public space for children under six, somewhere that we could take our son to play and learn.

2. What were some of the challenges you faced and what helped you get through them?

Starting a business during COVID has had many challenges. I find that family is the greatest source of support, motivation, and inspiration.

3. What do you think of the baby market in Thailand and its potential? Is it an easy market to get into, especially for expats?

I've observed a current trend for parents is to have fewer children. However, they spend more per child instead. It has potential, as more and more parents are becoming aware of the significance of child development during the first six years.

4. What was the inspiration behind Wonder Woods Kids Cafe?

In preparation for the birth of our son, we read up a lot on child development, and learned about the significance of the first six years. From there, we decided to prioritize his development, which brought about the idea for Wonder Woods. Furthermore, during COVID we extensively considered homeschooling our son, so we wanted a safe space where children could spend quality time with parents. But as we began

planning, we found how much time, energy and money was required to properly prepare an effective learning environment. That has been the inspiration for the concept of Wonder Woods, a co-learning space where we provide parents all the learning tools and toys for child development. To ensure that children's development is fostered holistically, we base our learning activities on one of Finland's early year curriculums, which has been co-developed with the University of Helsinki.

5. How did you come about the name 'Wonder Woods'?

We wanted to create a space where children can be filled with wonder and be close to nature.

6. What kind of experience do you wish to give to the community?

We want to provide a safe haven where parents can relax, take a breather, and focus on spending quality time with their children. A community where parents can meet up and share problems and solutions.

We believe that at the end of the day, parents are the best toys for their children, and the first 1000 days are crucial, in which over 80% of brain growth takes place, so we want to provide a learning space that is fun for children, where parents can engage fully without having to worry about cleaning up afterwards.

7. Plans for the future...?

We want to see more Wonder Woods branches in Bangkok. And if one can dream, throughout South-east Asia, too.





WORK-LIFE BALANCE

1. What are the biggest pros and cons of owning your own business? How much time a day do you spend working?

The benefit of owning your own business, especially for the kids cafe, is that we spend nearly the whole day together, and we can be quite flexible with our time. The time spent working and time spent with family have kind of been merged together. So there is no clear split between work time and non-work time. However, the con is that we work every day.

2. How do you split time between work and family?

I believe I've been lucky to be in a position where I can focus on work and family simultaneously.

3. As a parent, would it have been more difficult for you to establish and grow your businesses if you were the mother instead of the father?

I don't think parenthood is about gender. I don't think there would be much difference.

4. Any tips you can share for parents looking to start their own business in Bangkok?

Do something that you passionately believe in.

5. Lastly, is there anything you wish you could've done differently, as a parent and as an entrepreneur?

I try to do my best every day as a parent and an entrepreneur, so there is not much I would have done differently.

Photos courtesy of author



WE ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW

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BAMBI



WE ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW

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To apply for the role and/or for more details, please contact editor@bambiweb.org.

BAMBI

DO OR DON'T: PRE- AND POSTPARTUM EXERCISE



The general understanding is that exercise, however light, is beneficial for our health. However, many question the safety of exercising while pregnant and after giving birth. Pregnancy and postpartum trainer, Anna Downs, clears misconceptions about working out before and after giving birth.

Evidence shows that exercise during pregnancy can increase the likelihood of:¹

- Successful vaginal delivery
- Better mood and energy levels, due to the release of endorphins
- Better sleep, due to lowered levels of the 'stress hormone', cortisol
- Better muscle tone, strength, and endurance
- Healthy weight gain.

It can also lower the incidence of:²

- Excessive gestational weight gain
- Gestational diabetes
- Preeclampsia
- Preterm birth
- Cesarean birth
- Lower infant birth weight
- Aches and pains
- Constipation, bloating, and swelling.

So while we know it's good to exercise during this period, the real confusion comes from knowing what is deemed 'safe and appropriate'.

OFFICIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY³

1. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate-

intensity exercise per week (7-8 out of 10 on an effort scale).

2. Include muscle strengthening and resistance exercises; for example, using weights to perform movements such as deadlifts, upper back rows, squats, and lat pull downs.
3. Include cardiovascular exercises like walking up stairs, swimming, dance exercises, and low-impact interval training.
4. Ensure the minimum time per bout of activity is 10 minutes to experience the most benefits. However, if this is too challenging, just do what you can.
5. Keep hydrated and cool.
6. Avoid activities that could bump your bump, like contact sports or anything with a fall risk.
7. Be mindful of your posture. You should aim to:
 - Keep your feet hip-width apart, toes facing forward.
 - Make sure your knees are 'soft' and not locked straight.
 - Tilt your pelvis forward and back a couple of times before ensuring it comes to rest in a neutral position.
 - Check to make sure your ribs

are not lifted and flared. Is the circle of your bra strap stacked perfectly over the circle of the top of your pelvis?

- Roll your shoulders up towards your ears, then backward and down, leaving a big space between your shoulder and ear lobe.
- Imagine the crown of your head being pulled up towards the ceiling, lengthening the back of your neck.

My suggestion to help develop mindfulness is to stick small stickers around your apartment or office to serve as visual reminders.

WHY IS EXERCISE IMPORTANT?

Blood volume: By the end of your pregnancy, you will be carrying an additional 50% blood volume!⁴ That's a lot of extra work for your pulmonary circulatory system (your heart and lungs), so it's important to keep it healthy. Exercise is a proven way to maintain heart and lung health.

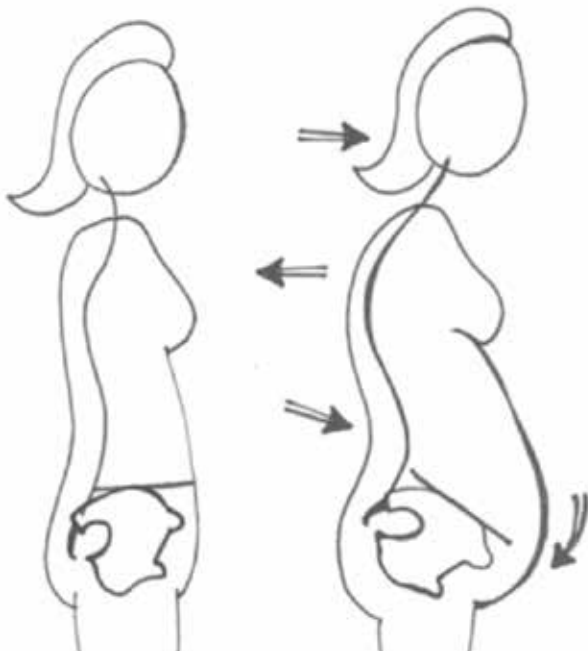
Hormones: During pregnancy, levels of progesterone—the 'pregnancy

¹ RCOG (2019) Physical activity and pregnancy. [rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/browse-all-patient-information-leaflets/physical-activity-and-pregnancy/](https://www.rcog.org.uk/for-the-public/browse-all-patient-information-leaflets/physical-activity-and-pregnancy/)

² ACOG (2022) Physical Activity and Exercise During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period. [acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2020/04/physical-activity-and-exercise-during-pregnancy-and-the-postpartum-period](https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2020/04/physical-activity-and-exercise-during-pregnancy-and-the-postpartum-period).

³ See refs 1 and 2

⁴ Soma-Pillay, P. et al (2016) Physiological changes in pregnancy. *Cardiovasc J Afr.* 27(2):89-94. [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4928162/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34928162/)



While these changes are normal and necessary, there are actions we can take to minimize and avoid discomfort, and ensure our core works to its full potential.

STRENGTHENING YOUR CORE DURING PREGNANCY AND AFTER BIRTH

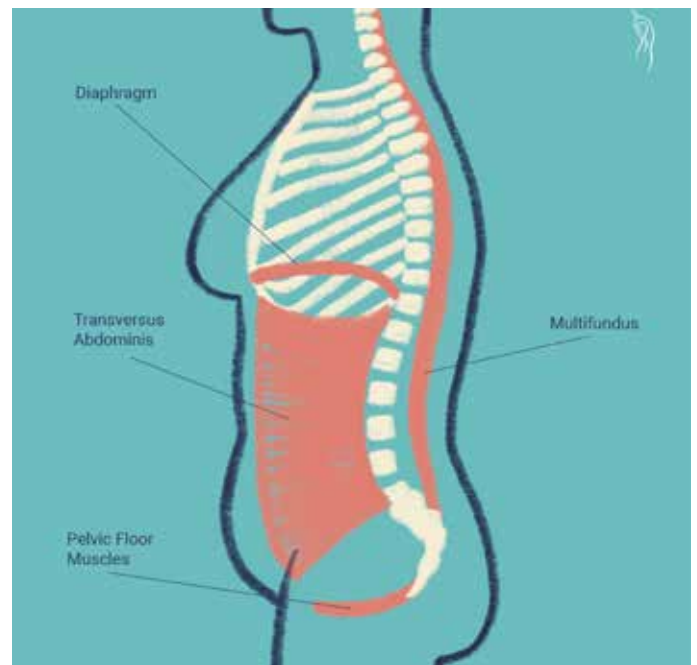
Discovering how to coordinate the primary muscles in your core with your breathing is a game changer. Once you've mastered this technique, you can turn almost ANY movement into a core-strengthening exercise.

Think of your core as a can of soda. The lid is the diaphragm, a dome-shaped muscle that acts as a pump for the lungs. The base is the suite of eight pelvic floor muscles that support the openings of the pelvic organs, while the walls of the can are the transverse abdominis muscles. These act like a corset, supporting the abdominal organs and providing stability between the ribs, and upper and lower body. These muscles work in synergy to control the pressure we create in the abdomen.

hormone' which helps establish and maintain a healthy pregnancy—increase to ten times the usual amount, and together with the reproductive hormone relaxin, they assist in relaxing the body's soft tissues.⁵ Unfortunately, they are indiscriminate in the soft tissues they affect, so while laxity in the pelvis is helpful to allow the baby's delivery, it's not quite so desirable in the digestive tract (which can cause constipation and heartburn), or in our drainage system (causing swollen feet).⁶ Exercise can assist in reducing both of these unpleasant experiences as it encourages good circulation and massages the digestive tract, helping it to move waste matter through your system more efficiently.⁷

Core and pelvic floor: As your baby grows, more pressure is placed on the muscles that make up your core. This means that to keep it strong, flexible, and functional, we need to understand how to engage them all correctly to control pressure in the abdominal cavity. Simple core, pelvic floor, and breathing exercises can help (see below).

Postural changes: As your pregnancy progresses, changes to your body result in postural changes. Your pelvis tilts forward, creating more space in your abdomen for your growing baby. This leads to an exaggerated curvature of your lumbar spine (lower back). As your breasts grow, they pull your shoulders forward. These changes affect your center of gravity and therefore, the way your muscles work together, which can lead to strain on various parts of your body, and cause pain or discomfort. You may experience an achy lower back, tight muscles in the upper back, neck, and shoulder, nerve/sciatic pain in the glutes or down the legs, and even tension headaches and jaw pain.



YOUR GAME-CHANGING CORE ACTIVATION EXERCISE

Do this core activation exercise when you perform any movement that creates pressure in your core, like standing up from the sofa or toilet, picking up your child, or getting out of bed.

1. In your initial position, inhale through the ribs. As you fill your lungs with air, you want your ribs to spread 360 degrees. As your lungs expand upwards, downwards,

⁵ McKenzie, LJ and Buster, JE. (2004) Progesterone in early pregnancy: measuring it, giving it. Contemporary OB/GYN. contemporaryobgyn.net/view/cover-story-progesterone-early-pregnancy-measuring-it-giving-it

⁶ Fertility Center (2022) What Does Progesterone Do In Pregnancy? myfertilitycenter.com/progesterone-and-pregnancy/

⁷ American Pregnancy Association (2021) Constipation during Pregnancy. americanpregnancy.org/healthy-pregnancy/pregnancy-health-wellness/constipation-during-pregnancy/



and outwards with each breath, your diaphragm (at the bottom) and your ribcage (around the side and the top) expand. This is how they are designed to move, but a lack of tension in the oblique and core muscles post birth can result in a limited range of movement.

2. Before you begin your movement (exertion), exhale, making a 'shhh' sound.
3. As you exhale, gently draw the anus and vulva up into your abdominal cavity.

HOW TO EXERCISE DURING PREGNANCY AND BEYOND

It's worth remembering that labor is an athletic event (whether you deliver vaginally or by C-section); so the stronger and fitter you are, the better equipped you will be to cope with its physicality, and the faster you will recover afterwards.

Let's consider the movements you will need to perform in labor and parenthood. Let's think about the movement patterns we undertake in everyday life. You don't need to spend hours at the gym once you understand what you're working towards.

All these movements should be integrated into your prenatal program and discovering how to perform them correctly—with good posture, optimal breathing, and core and pelvic

floor activation—will help limit aches and pains, and minimize the risk of core and pelvic floor dysfunction. The following list shows how some specific exercises equate to your everyday movements:

- Squatting with weight—moving from sitting to standing when holding your baby
- Deadlifting with weight—lifting your baby and other items from the floor
- Hip hinge—leaning forwards to change diapers, washing bottles, and bathing your baby
- Push—pushing a stroller

RECOMMENDED TIMELINES FOR RETURNING TO EXERCISE AFTER GIVING BIRTH

Weeks 0–6 for both vaginal and C-section delivery

Prioritize rest and recuperation as your body and stitches need time to heal. Your organs need to move back into their pre-pregnancy position, your sleep is minimal and disrupted, and your hormones are running riot.

Vaginal delivery

Day 2 onwards

- Pelvic floor exercise
- Core activation breath ('shhh')
- Walking
- Stretch and release work

Week 6 onwards

- Get the all-clear to exercise from your doctor
- Gentle Pilates/yoga-based movements
- Increased walking intensity
- Gentle introduction of bodyweight movements

Week 12 onwards

If you have followed all the steps above AND show no signs of pelvic floor or core dysfunction or pain, you can increase the intensity, impact, and weight.

Cesarean delivery

Week 1 onwards

- Pelvic floor exercise
- Core activation breath ('shhh')
- Walking
- Stretch and release work

Weeks 6–8 onwards

- Continue with the above
- Scar massage—desensitization training; which involves helping the scar tissue's hypersensitivity and allowing the skin and scar tissue to remember 'normal' sensation.⁸

Weeks 10–12 onwards

- Get the all-clear to exercise from your doctor
- Scar massage—The drag-and-hold method involves breaking up the adhesions that contribute



to inflexible scar tissue. With this method, the aim is to separate the different layers of tissues (skin, fat, fascia, muscle, and organ) from each other.⁹

- Gentle Pilates/yoga-based movements
- Increased walking intensity
- Gentle introduction of bodyweight movements

Weeks 12–16 onwards

If you have followed all the steps above AND are showing no signs of pelvic floor or core dysfunction or pain, you can increase the intensity, impact and weight. You should also seek to increase scar massage intensity and contact over the incision.

If in doubt when it comes to knowing if you can perform an exercise safely, do this:

1. Perform the movement and either look at or feel your belly. If your tummy ‘domes’ or becomes ‘pointy’ like a tent apex along the vertical midline, this indicates you are not effectively controlling the pressure in your abdomen.
2. Perform the movement again, but this time apply the core activation technique described above. If the

doming disappears, you can safely continue the movement.

3. If the doming persists, try a modified version of the exercise, and repeat steps 1 and 2.

*Modifying a push-up might look like this:

Easiest version: stand with your hands on the wall to perform the exercise (wall push-up)

Next step: perform it while standing but at more of an incline (for example, with your hands on a kitchen counter-top)

Next step: perform it on your knees at an incline (knees on the floor, hands on a chair)

Next step: perform it with hands and knees on the floor

Next step: full push-up

There are hundreds of variations on every exercise AND alternative movements for each result you are trying to achieve, so exercising during pregnancy and postpartum should NEVER feel like a list of things you cannot do.

I sincerely hope this has given you

some inspiration and direction. Movement should be bespoke to your body, your needs, and your goals, and most importantly, it should be nourishing because if you move well, you feel well, and then you can live well.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this article is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute or replace medical advice. If you have any concerns about your pregnancy or health, please contact your doctor.

Photos courtesy of author and Canva

About the Author

Anna Downs is a UK-certified, award-winning specialist pregnancy and postpartum trainer with over 10 years of experience supporting people through pregnancy, birth, and beyond. It’s her mission to empower and educate women to enable them to become their own, most powerful advocates.



Anna offers free workouts, downloadable resources, and training tips on her website and social media. Find her at: movewellwithanna.com; FB: Move Well with Anna; IG: [movewellwithanna](https://www.instagram.com/movewellwithanna); or email her at: hello@movewellwithanna.com.

⁸. ProTailored Physical Therapy LLC (2022) How to Decrease your Pain and Hypersensitivity QUICK. <https://protailored.com/scar-management/>

⁹. Gilbert I, Gaudreault, N, and Gaboury, I. (2022) Exploring the Effects of Standardized Soft Tissue Mobilization...of the Cesarean Section Scar. *J Integr Complement Med.* [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9051872/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9051872/)

CHRISTMAS COLORING PAGE

Create a Christmas color palette
and use it to color the pictures





CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH



Can you find the words hidden in the puzzle?

C	A	N	D	Y	C	A	N	E	R	D	C
H	X	L	P	N	H	F	H	O	S	T	S
J	P	I	C	A	R	O	L	S	I	R	T
I	O	U	N	T	I	L	O	T	C	I	O
N	M	Y	M	G	S	A	N	T	A	C	C
G	S	J	U	M	T	O	H	K	I	K	K
L	T	B	G	S	M	E	R	R	Y	O	I
E	L	F	B	O	A	N	D	K	R	T	N
R	R	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	E	G
P	T	R	A	E	I	C	T	T	R	I	S
D	F	C	O	N	F	H	S	A	A	E	N
R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R	X	Y	E	E

CANDY CANE

JINGLE

CAROLS

JOY

CHRISTMAS

SANTA

REINDEER

ELF

STOCKINGS

MERRY

PRESENTS

TREE



BAMBI SPLASH BASH

BAMBI and Bangkok Dolphins hosted the BAMBI Splash Bash at the Bangkok Dolphins infant pool on Monday, 21 November, 2022.

The sun came out for us, and about 20 families attended with babies and children ranging from the age of 3 months to 3 years. James, from the Dolphins team, provided instructions in the pool, where the little ones were divided by age. The youngest group started at 1-2 years, and many of the children in this group were experiencing the pool for the first time. All groups had at least 30 minutes in the water. It was a lovely and fun-filled way to pass the morning, welcomed by parents who were keen to familiarize their children with swimming to build confidence.

The BAMBI and Bangkok Dolphins partnership intends to repeat this event in the new year. Keep an eye out for future Splash Bash events!







BANGKOK SUPPORT GROUPS

There are a range of support groups in Bangkok. Most are open to everyone, some ask for a small donation, and some require a reservation.

The groups listed here are run independently of BAMBI, except where otherwise noted. This listing is provided for informational purposes only, and inclusion does not constitute endorsement by BAMBI. Please contact the respective groups for more information.

PRE & POST NATAL SUPPORT

BAMBI BUMPS
AND BABIES
BANGKOK

PARENTING

ADOPTION
SUPPORT
FOR FAMILIES
IN THAILAND

DISABILITY & NEURODIVERSITY SUPPORT

LEAP
(LEARNING
& EDUCATIONAL
ADVOCACY
PROGRAM)

SUPPORT TO WOMEN

BEYOND
BOOBS

DOULAS IN
BANGKOK

TWINS
AND MULTIPLES
GROUP

RAINBOW
ROOM

BANGKOK
BREAST
CANCER SUPPORT
GROUP (BBCS)

SCAN NOW TO READ MORE

To find out more about some of these amazing support groups, please scan the QR code for more information.





BAMBI

THE TEAM

BAMBI is managed by an elected committee of volunteers and all BAMBI members are encouraged to volunteer. Vacancies can be found on the Call for Volunteers page in this magazine and are posted online; you are welcome to contact vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org with inquiries.

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Anna Ingham (Bumps and Babies Founder)
Kathy Leslie
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The views expressed in the articles in this magazine are not necessarily those of BAMBI committee members and we assume no responsibility for them or their effects.

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