

BAMBI

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Cover photo by Jana Capek

A project of Childbirth and Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand

**RESOLVING TO
READ MORE
IN 2024**

**SURVEY:
BREASTFEEDING
AND BIRTH IN
BANGKOK**

**NEW YEAR,
SIMPLY MARTY**

JANUARY 2024

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Welcome to **BAMBI**

**"Support and
friendship through
the common bond of
parenthood"**

- 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.
- Promoting breastfeeding for every mother and baby in the community.
- 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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bambibangkok

- 5 Committee Letter
- 6 Editor's Corner

On the Cover

- 10–12 The Dad Diaries: New Year, Simply Marty!
- 14–16 Resolving to Read More in 2024
- 38–42 Bumps & Babies: Breastfeeding and Birth in Bangkok Survey, 2021–2023

Special Features

- 8 Photo Feature: New! Small World Playgroup for Pre-Walkers
- 8 Photo Feature: Little Birds Playgroup at Nest by Little Treehouse, EKM6
- 18–19 The Poetic Journey: Giving Our Best
- 20 Readers' Corner
- 24–25 Photo Feature: BAMBI's Cosmic Christmas
- 28–30 It's Time to Begin
- 32–34 From Paper Trails to Inner Peace
- 44–45 Creation Station: Stitching Stories: Handcrafted Bookbinding

In Every Issue

- 5 Our Cover Kid
- 22 How to Become a BAMBI Member
- 23 BAMBI Member Benefits
- 26 Member Profile
- 31 BAMBI Playgroups & Activities
- 36 Call for Volunteers
- 43 Bangkok Support Groups
- 46 BAMBI Team



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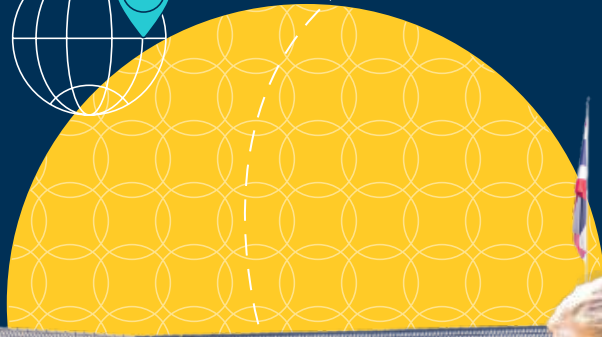
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**CREATE
YOUR
FUTURE**



Eva Ngolo

Dear BAMBI members,

Happy New Year!

As we start 2024, it's a joy to extend warm wishes to each one of you. A new year symbolizes a fresh start, bringing new hope and opportunities for the future. It's also a time for reflection, looking back on the journey of the past year and both its triumphs and challenges.

In 2023, we shared moments of joy and weathered some sad times; a testament to the tapestry of life. As we step into 2024, let's collectively embrace the chance to start anew. Bring forth your hopes and dreams and let the renewed energy within us propel us toward achieving them.

As parents, we all share the dream of raising healthy and confident children who will make a positive impact on the world. In the face of challenges, let us not grow weary or discouraged. Together, we can create an environment that nurtures the growth of our families and fosters a sense of community.

At BAMBI, we have some exciting plans in store for you and your family this year. Anticipate exciting family events and engaging children's activities throughout the year. Be on the lookout for our fun weekly playgroups and activities, our popular seasonal family events, and our monthly New Members' Coffee Mornings where you can get all the information on how you can be a part of BAMBI. While you focus on caring for your loved ones, don't forget to carve out some "me time" to recharge; rest assured, BAMBI has got you covered with the return of our popular Me-Time workshops for parents.

From the media desk, we look forward to keeping you up to date with all the happenings at BAMBI. Stay tuned for great articles, information on events, and collections of happy memories captured from our various activities. We also invite you to connect with us on our social media channels—your input and engagement are vital to our vibrant community.

As we embark on this new chapter, all of us at BAMBI wish you a year filled with happiness, success, and the fulfillment of your dreams. Here's to a fantastic 2024!

Eva
BAMBI media coordinator



OUR COVER KID

NAME

Sakunosuke

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

Japan

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THAILAND?

My whole life—four weeks!

FAVORITE PLACE TO GO AS A FAMILY IN THAILAND?

Benjasiri Park, Bumpy Daisy, and Playville

WHAT'S ON YOUR THAI BUCKET LIST?

Beautiful beaches as I love the water.

WHAT DOES BAMBI MEAN TO YOU?

Making new friends and joining fun activities



Sanam Raisa Rahman

For many people, a new year marks the perfect opportunity to set personal and professional goals and kickstart plans to achieve them. Truthfully, I have never been one of those people. Sticking to resolutions has never been my forte, so I stopped making them a long time ago. Instead, I got into the habit of going with the flow, focusing more on what needs to be done “now”, and relying on multiple, never-ending to-do lists.

The problem with this, I realized at the end of 2023, is that without a long-term vision and a concrete plan of action to achieve it, it was difficult to see how my daily actions were stepping stones to something bigger, rather than just daily routine tasks. I also missed out on that proud feeling of accomplishment when I asked myself: “What do I have to show for all the things I did in the past year? What did I do this past year?”.

So this year, I have decided to try and do things differently. I set some simple resolutions, and plan to undertake everyday actions and targets with conscious intent and purpose, by asking myself: “How is this task helping me meet my resolutions?”. Lucky for me, the contents of this issue of BAMBI Magazine put me in the right state of mind to get started with my plans. I hope you will find the same inspiration from them as I did.

We have “New Year, Simply Marty” by Joe Barker. Joe echoes the way we all feel about our children as he shares the habits he’d like little Marty to improve this year, but after much thinking, decides that Marty is perfect just the way he is. This is followed by Kelly Patten’s “Resolving to Read More in 2024”. If you’d like to spend more time reading this year, check out her ideas on how this can be easily achieved.

If your kids are starting to understand how time works—days of the week, weekends, how many months till their birthday comes, etc.—take a look at “It’s Time to Begin” by Rachel Ofo. This can pave the way for discussions on how time has been conceptualized throughout history, and how you can make the most of it this year.

And speaking of making the most of time this year, what are you doing to manifest the goals and desires you’ve set for yourself? Judy King suggests journaling to achieve this in “From Paper Trails to Inner Peace”. Explore how you can journal to build a growth mindset and be the best version of you this year.

You might also like to pick up a copy of “Atomic Habits” by James Clear where he explains how small changes can help you achieve the positive long-lasting behavior changes you’d like to see in yourself. Details of the book can be found in our Readers’ Corner this month, which also has a review of “Measuring a Year: A Rosh Hashanah Story” by Linda Elovitz Marshall and Zara González Hoang. Through beautiful illustrations and touching words, this book encourages all children to embrace the changes in their lives in the past year and happily move on to the next one.

In non-thematic content, we have “Giving Our Best” by Cecilia Yu in The Poetic Journey, and the BAMBI Bumps survey report on breastfeeding and birth practices in Bangkok between 2021 and 2023. Cecilia reminds us that giving our children the best of everything starts with looking out for ourselves so that we can effectively be there for them. The survey, undertaken by Jo Cox and Iasnaia Maximo, gives you a look into the care and support given to new and expecting mothers at private hospitals in Bangkok.

So enjoy the first BAMBI Magazine of 2024 and I hope this year turns out to be one full of joy and beautiful memories for you and your families. If you have set resolutions, good luck and remember it’s the journey not the destination that measures success! Have a blessed year ahead!

Sanam
Editor

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NEW!
**SMALL WORLD
 PLAYGROUP
 FOR PRE-WALKERS**

After requests for a regular playgroup for babies six months and up, the Bumps team organized our first Small World Playgroup held at Hidden Space in Ekkamai. The session was a success and attended by over 15 families, some new to Bangkok and some well-established here. The studio space offered the perfect environment for active babies to explore while the less active were entertained on mats by a variety of sensory toys.



The playgroup was a great opportunity for adults and babies to mingle and make friends through conversation and free play. A mid-session circle time with a short interactive story and a sing-along was enjoyed by all!

Check the BAMBI website calendar for up-to-date information on the next Small World playgroup. We're excited to welcome you!

**LITTLE BIRDS PLAYGROUP
 AT NEST BY LITTLE TREEHOUSE, EKM6**

In November, BAMBI launched a new playgroup called Little Birds at Ekkamai's Nest by Little Treehouse at EKM6. This structured playgroup is co-hosted and led by the Nest team, with circle time, story-telling, sensory play, and a variety of fun-filled activities aimed at toddlers from one to three years old.

This playgroup has been immensely popular and fully booked for all the sessions we've held so far.

Little Birds Playgroup will be running twice a month in 2024, so head to our website calendar to find the next session. We hope to see you and your little one there next time!



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NEW YEAR, SIMPLY MARTY!

What's a New Year without resolutions? Joe is here to share his lighthearted take on the resolutions and goals he hopes his two-year-old will aspire to in 2024.

About the Author

Having enjoyed taking his son to BAMBI playgroups over the past months, Joe is excited to volunteer with BAMBI. He and his wife moved to Thailand from the UK in 2018. In 2021 they were delighted to be joined by their son, Martin. They love exploring Thailand as a family, especially anywhere with a playground or sand.



It's January, which means time for New Year's resolutions. Hurrah! I love a good resolution: a chance to reset and refresh. In the past I would have seen this as an opportunity to set unrealistic goals in the expectation that within weeks I'd be the fit, healthy, dynamic person I dreamt of being. This year, however, is different; I've finally realized that I'm pretty perfect just the way I am. So rather than pointlessly trying to improve upon perfection, I'm going to get my resolution fix by providing helpful goals and constructive criticism for my wife and son. What could go wrong?

Apparently, after a quick, frank and relatively painless conversation, quite a lot could go wrong, so I'll just be writing resolutions for Martin since he isn't yet old enough to have frank conversations. At this stage I've been advised that if I'm claiming that I'm perfect, a view very few people have been prepared to concede, then firstly, my wife, who is obviously better than me, must also be perfect, and secondly, I clearly have a very poor understanding of the word "perfect". I've realized the wisdom of this advice and am grateful to everyone who contributed to the list: "Ways Joe's wife is better than him." Please stop now.

Resolution 1: Ban the bite!

We start with a new entry that has really shot up in my priorities in the last few days. Stop biting daddy! Ideally don't bite anyone, but for now, prioritize not biting me. Others may enjoy this experience, but I really don't like it. If you absolutely have to bite someone, bite mummy or your nanny or the dog or passing strangers—just please stop biting me. (By the way, suggesting my son bite other people rather than me was just one item on the aforementioned list.)

Martin did a bit of biting when he was younger, but I thought he'd stopped. Turns out he was just lulling me into a false sense of security, growing more teeth, and working on his jaw strength. Now I will, all unsuspecting, welcome him with open arms as he asks for a



cuddle. "Aww, how sweet," I'll think. "Perhaps this whole parenthood thing isn't so awful after all." Then suddenly there'll be a searing pain in my arm as he clamps his teeth down, giving every impression of never intending to let go. Perhaps he's part terrier or crocodile? I must ask my wife if that's possible. So resolution 1: don't bite daddy. I guess that should be don't bite anyone, but to be honest, at the moment everyone else can take their chances.

Resolution 2: Walk the walk!

Learn to walk. Marty is two and loves running, so when I say learn to walk, I don't mean those first, heartbreakingly intense, tottering steps that we'll always cherish the memory of. No, what I mean is stop being so lazy and making daddy carry you everywhere. You're 16 kg and daddy is a runner who has never been to a gym and looks at upper body muscles as useless weight. With the constant lifting there is a risk I might develop actual muscle definition, or, more probably, a hernia.

I think this might have been my fault; when Marty was younger and lighter, it was cute balancing him on my shoulders and pretending to be a horse. Now though I spend every walk dodging Marty as he backs into me insisting that he needs picking

up. Once he's up, the challenge isn't over. If I don't go fast enough he starts bouncing on my shoulders. When that gets boring, he'll lean sideways or backwards with a total disregard for my neck or his personal safety. Finally, and most fun of all, he can pull daddy's hair, steal my glasses, and use my head as a drum. At least so far he's resisted biting my ears, but it's surely just a matter of time.

So please learn to walk independently, sit in your stroller, or, as it has just occurred to me, get someone else to carry you. Yes, mummy or your nanny or the dog or even passing strangers should carry you! In fact, if you get someone else to carry you, you can even bite them if you like...

Resolution 3: Down with indecisiveness!

Make up your mind! I know decisions are hard; indecision is very much a part of daddy's life. I realize watching me struggle to order from a menu, choose a Netflix series, or plan a day out might be why you also struggle to make up your mind, but once you've made a decision, could you stick to it, please?

Currently my life is a fairground ride of change and uncertainty. "Go upstairs," Marty instructs. It

seems reasonable; bouncing on the bed is fun, and we can read books and visit mummy in her office. "Good decision," I say. "Just let me get—" and then I'm abruptly cut off by a cry of "Go outside!". "OK, let's find—" and the plan is changed again. "Make a cake!" No sooner have I got out the ingredients and pans than I realize I've lost my sous-chef. Judging from the thumping noises above, he's found mummy and gone to jump on the bed. It's exhausting following Marty's constant changes of plan. So for resolution 3, Marty please, let's decide on something and then see it through to the end, or at least spend a few minutes on it.

Resolution 4: Let them eat cake (or not)!

Stop baking so many cakes. Now, I love baking cakes with Marty. The whole process is messy fun with a delicious cakey reward at the end. His banana peeling and mashing is slowly improving, and his egg breaking is a thing of beauty: there's barely any shell in the batter and only some of the egg goes on the floor. I can just about weigh out the sugar and butter quicker than he can eat them, although it is a rare day's baking that doesn't leave teeth marks in the butter. I certainly don't mind that we liberally coat the kitchen with flour, and his vigor with the cinnamon shaker is a joy to behold.

While the house fills with the smell of fresh baking, we get to wash the dishes—water play with purpose. My only concern is whether we'll get everything clean before flooding the kitchen. So far, so good, but it's been close a couple of times. Whoever says that the water should stay in the sink clearly doesn't know how to really enjoy their dishwashing.

However, every silver lining has a cloud, and the cake-baking cloud is that we then have cake in the house. Now, for Martin this isn't a problem: he has loving parents who ignore his pleading and limit, to some degree, his cake intake. For mummy and daddy though, there is no such benevolent oversight; our consumption is controlled only by our own feeble self-discipline. Since we have all the willpower of diletante gnats, this means we eat a lot of cake. This is not good for our waistlines or blood sugar levels. So, Marty, in the interest of your parents' continued good health, you need to bake fewer cakes.

Resolution 5: A change is as good as ... Marty!

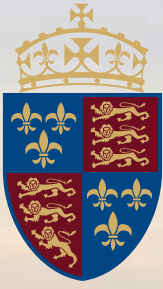
Finally, and most importantly, although it rather invalidates the rest of this article, whatever you do, don't change. We love our energetic, adventurous little boy, with his love of books and building sites. His little smiles and kisses. His running and jumping, biking and dancing. Keep that joie de vivre and keep bringing that love and happiness into our lives. That should be your only resolution.

Happy New Year.

*Photos courtesy of the author;
title image by Kana Wakaiki.*



Here I am!



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RESOLVING TO READ MORE IN 2024

Do you want to read more? If so, Kelly has some great suggestions on ways to make reading part of your life, no matter how busy you are!

About the Author

Kelly is currently a stay-at-home mom who has lived in Bangkok for over seven years. She previously worked as a primary educator and literacy specialist. Kelly loves reading fiction books, listening to podcasts, and exploring Thailand with her family.





Each January we ring in the New Year by promising to exercise more, stop eating so much takeout, take a break from alcohol—the list of unmet resolutions goes on. I realized early on in my life that these types of goals and resolutions were not for me. I hate the gym and my list of Foodpanda favorites is pretty extensive. James Clear writes in his book, “Atomic Habits”: “The implicit assumption behind any goal is this: Once I reach my goal, then I’ll be happy. The problem with a goals-first mentality is that you’re continually putting happiness off until the next milestone.” (1) Clear says we need a mindset shift where we enjoy the process rather than just waiting to achieve an outcome.

I never achieved success with my New Year’s resolutions until I changed my perspective. Instead of trying to take up running or give up sweets, I focused on something I already loved: reading books. The first year I decided I wanted to read a book of poetry; another year I joined a book club. This year I chose to incorporate more non-fiction, and over the past 12 months, I’ve managed to read eight non-fiction books, which fills me with pride. Whether you’re an avid reader,

making the most out of reading “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” over and over at bedtime, or somewhere in between, here are some ways to incorporate more books into your daily routine.

Prioritize reading time

Our day is built around many habits or behaviors that we repeatedly perform. Researchers from Duke University have found that habits represent about 40% of our behavior each day (2). When building a reading habit, we want to prioritize its importance in our day. Start small—I’d like to read for five minutes today or read two pages of my book. Many of us already read books with our kids as part of a bedtime routine. Instead of scrolling through your phone in bed, consider using that time to read before sleeping. Sometimes we might feel pressure to read that dense and wordy bestseller that everyone’s talking about. Choose books that you genuinely want to read and pick back up. I love a trashy historical romance with the “bodice ripper” cover. I used to feel slightly embarrassed, but now I’ve embraced it! Even better if it takes place in the Highlands, so I can screenshot

pages to send to my gruff Scottish husband.

Parenthood doesn’t always lend itself to peaceful, quiet alone time. Reading doesn’t have to be a solitary habit. Instead of starting another series on Netflix, consider listening to an audiobook with your partner. Model reading behaviors for your kids by picking up a book or Kindle instead of your phone. Set up a family reading time when everyone takes out a book—even if it’s just for five minutes. The more you practice reading as a family, the more you’ll increase your stamina for resisting phones, toys, and emails in exchange for exploring books together.

Use an app

Goodreads is the classic reading tracker app. It’s filled with thousands of book reviews and recommendations. You can also use it like social media to connect with friends, set reading goals, and curate your own TBR (To Be Read) list. I personally love their monthly newsletters, which are filled with trending books and quirky book lists to peruse. Looking for a cozy holiday romance? Maybe dark and morbid



non-fiction? Young adult fantasy? They've got you covered!

My favorite tracking app is Storygraph. I love the rewarding feeling when I finish a book and pull open the app. Not only does it track the books you read, it provides graphs and charts that illustrate your reading stats—moods, pace, genres, and authors. You also can search for personalized recommendations by turning on various filters.

Libby is a free borrowing app for e-books and audiobooks. In order to access the treasure trove of books on Libby, you will need a United States library card. There are a few work-arounds here as we live abroad and you might not be American. Do you know anyone with a US address? Many states will give you free access with an address. You can also register for a free library card in Broward County, Florida, and

get access to their extensive library database.

Make it easy

Between school drop-offs and pickups, sitting in traffic on Sukhumvit, working full-time jobs, and being full-time parents, it's not easy to find time to curl up with a book. It's far too easy to pull out your phone and mindlessly scroll Instagram when you have a few spare minutes. I always keep my Kindle in my bag for easy access. Don't have a Kindle? You can download and use the app for free on your phone. Accessible reading material helps cue your brain to pick up the book and just start reading. Prior to being a mom I never gave much thought to audiobooks. However, parenthood has proven the power of the audiobook. Just popping in headphones allows me

to multitask and enjoy books while I go through my daily routines. Laying with my daughter while she falls asleep? Now it's also time to relax with a book. Stuck in traffic? Pop in your audiobook! You can access many free audiobooks through Libby and Spotify.

Join a reading challenge

Some of us enjoy a good social media challenge. Consider joining a reading challenge this year. Perhaps you want to read at least one book each month. Maybe you want to expand your tastes and explore new literary genres. The A to Z Reading Challenge pushes you to read one book for each letter of the alphabet. Whatever you choose, I hope that 2024 brings you and your family a year full of books and reading!

Photos from Canva.

References

- (1) Clear, J. (2018) *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*. Avery.
- (2) Clear, J. (2023) *The Habits Guide: How to Build Good Habits and Break Bad Ones*. [jamesclear.com/habits](https://www.jamesclear.com/habits)



OPEN HOUSE

 THE CITY SCHOOL

SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY 2024



Please join us at The City School Open House to explore the highly personalised, empowering, and impactful learning experiences we can offer your child.

Our Head of School and dedicated team of educators will guide you through our programmes for Kindergarten and Y1-6, which interweave the Ontario Curriculum with a Reggio Emilia-inspired philosophy to our unique Project work. By placing conceptual development through inquiry-based learning at the centre of our programmes, we provide children with the essential dispositions and skills to thrive now and in their future.

You will get an opportunity to engage in interactive experiences inside our ateliers - research centres - and to explore our beautiful campus, an environment designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning!

Our Open House will take place on Saturday 3 February 2024, 8:45 - 11am. Your children are welcome to join us at the event provided they have supervision.

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GIVING OUR BEST

We all want to provide the best for our children and parent in the best way we can. Many of us look outside for opportunities to help us do that. We climb mountains to access those opportunities for our little ones, and when we're lucky enough to have disposable income, we spend it on further opportunities for them. Sure, oftentimes in this race where there is no time to snooze (because you will lose, as many will remind us), we help our children create a polished CV. But are we truly doing the best for them? For the people they will interact with, the ones they will love, form lifetime partnerships with, or even give birth to one day? Are we? What if we start with ourselves, giving ourselves the best we know how?

About the Author

Cecilia Yu is a self-compassion enthusiast and coach. Certified in Integrative Nutrition Coaching, Culinary Nutrition, Goddess Yoga and Women's Circle Leadership, Cecilia empowers mummies and their loved ones to lead a healthy, soulful life through anti-inflammatory dietary lifestyle, meditations, yoga, journaling, and her Self-Compassion Circles for Moms. For inspiration, follow her on @CeciliaADoseofVitaminL (FB/IG).



Giving Our Best

We want to give the best to our children.

Best food.

Best school.

Best activities.

Best clothes.

Best experiences.

Best of everything we can afford.

But do we really know what is best for them?

What is best for their friends?

For their future partners?

For their children some years from now?

What if we can plant the seeds for that best?

What if planting these seeds requires us to only

Pause, listen.

Accept, reflect.

On who our little ones really are?

What if we let them

Speak...

Yell!

Cry,

Agonize.

About what truly aches them?

What if doing this exemplifies that
their feelings are not too big, not too small,

they just "are"?

That their hurts are normal, and never

to be shushed?

Our expectations aren't always
for them to bear.

Their behaviors do not impart a
permanent impression;

their reactions are not badges
of shame to be worn.

And what if holding space for them
to do all of this starts with Us:

Pausing

Listening

Accepting

Reflecting

Forgiving

Ourselves?

What if we start with us?

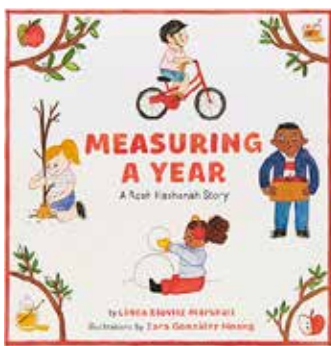
What if that is the best we can give
our children?

Photos from Canva.



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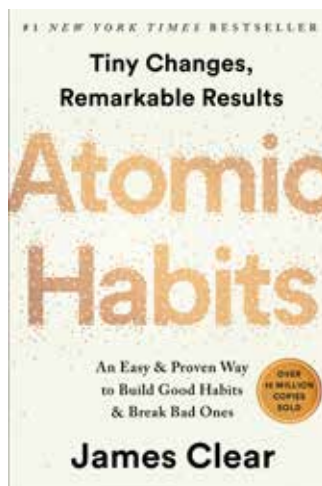
MEASURING A YEAR: A ROSH HASHANAH STORY

by Linda Elovitz Marshall and Zara González Hoang

A beautiful book about reflecting on the good and the bad of a year well lived. Although centered around the Jewish New Year holiday of Rosh Hashanah, the themes are universal and relevant to families of all backgrounds. Topics include moving homes, fear and courage, regret, accomplishments, traveling and returning home, and celebrations big and small.

The whimsical and detailed illustrations by Zara González Hoang are inclusive and diverse: from a baby in a cranial helmet and a girl in a wheelchair to multicultural and multigenerational households. There is something for everyone in this book, which aids as a conversation starter for families celebrating the past and looking forward to the future.

Published by Abrams Appleseed in 2022. "Measuring a Year" is suitable for ages 3–10. A hardcover copy can be found in the Children's Corner of the Neilson Hays Library.



ATOMIC HABITS

by James Clear

After the holiday celebrations fade, it's easy to feel pressure as social spaces become abuzz with conversations about New Year's resolutions. From eating healthier to improving sleep hygiene, "Atomic Habits" is an international bestseller that aims to help with breaking bad habits and building good ones. The book focuses on the power of small incremental changes that lead to lasting improvements.

Author James Clear started his career as a performance coach for professional athletes. He now uses his techniques to guide executives and employees of Fortune 500 companies including McKinsey & Company, General Electric, Honda, LinkedIn, and Lululemon. In "Atomic Habits", Clear shares his four laws of behavior changes that are backed by scientific evidence: 1) make it obvious; 2) make it attractive; 3) make it easy; and 4) make it satisfying.

Published by Avery in October 2018. A hardcover copy can be found in the non-fiction section of the Neilson Hays Library.

Prepared by Angela Chen, a Neilson Hays Library Board Member and the 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 Instagram and Facebook.

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SAT. JAN. 27TH, 2024
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*Terms & conditions apply on all BAMBI benefits & discounts.



**BAMBI'S
COSMIC
CHRISTMAS**
09.12.2023

Our 2023 Christmas celebration was out of this world!

With Santa giving away gifts to the children, we created lasting memories and a sense of community that embodies the true spirit of the holidays.

A warm thank you to the 100 families who brought joy to our Christmas event. Your presence transformed the party into a heartwarming celebration. Thank you for being a part of BAMBI's Christmas magic!



HEARTFELT THANKS FOR A MAGICAL BAMBI CHRISTMAS!

This event could not have happened without the support of our community partners and members.

Immense gratitude goes to Astra Academy International School, Kids Academy International School, and Asian Tigers for their invaluable support, which ensured the event's success.

Copel's engaging activities added joy to the festivities, and the face painting sponsored by Bumrungrad International Hospital was also a big hit!

Special appreciation goes to The Gymnastics Academy of Bangkok (GAB) and Wonder Woods Kids Cafe for their generous gift vouchers, spreading cheer, and making the season brighter.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the vendors that participated in our event.

Finally, BAMBI owes its success to the invaluable contribution of its dedicated volunteers; it would be remiss not to express a heartfelt and immense thank you to them for their unwavering support, as always.



SEE YOU AT MANY MORE FUN BAMBI EVENTS IN 2024!

MEET RIEKO

A Japanese mom of two, Rieko tells us about her favorite things to do and how joining BAMBI has changed her experience living here in Bangkok for the better!

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

I'm Japanese, from Osaka in the center of Japan. When I lived there, going to parks with my first son to either ride an electric bicycle or push his tricycle was part of my daily routine.

Can you tell us something about your career and work? And what about your spouse?

Before the birth of my five-year-old son, I worked as an English teacher at a junior high school in Osaka. After leaving this job I worked at City Hall. My husband works in the R&D department of an electronic appliance company.

Please tell us a little bit about your family.

We are a family of four, with a five-year-old-son and a two-month-old son.

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

I came to Thailand in February 2022. I really miss seasonal Japanese fruits. Though I like many of the fruits here, I think Japanese fruits are juicier and sweeter. When I went home last summer, I was amazed at how delicious Japanese fruits are.

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

I gave birth at the end of October. I breastfeed every two or three hours. I hope to go out for a walk, go shopping, and join playgroups to meet other people with my baby boy soon.

What do you love most about Thailand? Which parts of Thailand have you traveled to, and which did you enjoy the most?

I love Thailand's warm weather and people who are kind to children. I have traveled to Pattaya, Chiang Rai, Koh Samui, Hua Hin, Ayutthaya, and Khao Yai. The place I love the most is Khao Yai as I love the mountain scenery and refreshing air. I enjoyed hiking in Khao Yai National Park and watching wild animals and birds there.

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

When I arrived in Thailand my main challenges were taking out my (then) three-year-old and speaking Thai. As my son hadn't attended any kindergarten yet, I wanted to find a playroom for him to play in. I also found that pushing a stroller was quite difficult because the roads are not ideal for walkers and strollers. I struggled



to speak Thai in taxis and often ended up getting out 400 m away from home with my sleeping boy!

How did you find out about BAMBI?

I was looking for something to do in Bangkok other than taking care of my son. I talked about it to Aoi, who is a volunteer at a BAMBI playgroup and lives in the same apartment building as me. Then she invited me to BAMBI's New Members Coffee Morning.

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

I suggest joining BAMBI playgroups, activities, and events, and meeting as many people as you can! I'm not good at making friends, but through BAMBI, I have met wonderful people from all over the world with different backgrounds. It was a bit difficult for me to raise a kid in an unknown area, but thanks to BAMBI, there was always someone who supported me and I haven't felt lonely. I couldn't join many playgroups when I first joined BAMBI as my older son was already in kindergarten, so I'm very excited to be part of the many BAMBI playgroups and meet more people as my younger son grows.



JOIN THE FUN!

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IT'S TIME TO BEGIN

Rachel takes us on a whistle-stop tour of time through the ages before calling on us to move forward and seize the new year with all its potential for change and success.

About the Author

Rachel Ofo moved from the US to Bangkok in 2016 and spent six and a half years there. She has a daughter, whom she loves dragging around on various adventures like hikes and fishing trips. In her free time, she enjoys reading, watching movies, and trying new restaurants. She also enjoys being out in nature.



“Leaping” into the new year

Welcome to 2024! Another 365, or this year 366, days to make changes, learn new things, and live life. This year we welcome a leap year, when an extra day is added to the end of February.

You may have learned about leap years through the “months” song and know that they happen “whenever the year divides by four”, although this depends on which calendar you follow.* Many of us have followed the same calendar all our lives, but what some fail to realize is that people have a variety of calendars and perceptions of time and history.

Coming from the US, where the Gregorian calendar is used most, it is currently 2024, but in Ethiopia it is 2017, and in Thailand, 2566. Are those in Ethiopia stuck in the past while Thailand residents are living in the future? As exciting as that would be, no! Ethiopia, the United States, and Thailand are all sitting on the same Earth that started at the same time.

With nearly 40 types of calendars being used worldwide (1), the history of timekeeping is fascinating.

The sun and the moon

Most calendars either follow the earth’s rotation around the sun (solar calendars), the moon’s phases (lunar calendars), or a combination of the two. Some have their own rules altogether. But one thing is certain, time never stops. Though it seems to slow down when our child is dysregulated and seems to speed up while we’re out with friends, the truth is, regardless of which year our phone is set to, time is constant.

The sun will consistently rise and fall (in most countries), and the stars will dance across the night skies, stealing the attention of our little ones. Every night my daughter excitedly exclaims, “Look, Mommy! The moon is out!” This actually allows me to pause and appreciate the splendor of the moon, the sun, and time in general.

We know that each month has a certain number of days. We have all agreed that every day has a set number of hours. We accept that every four years, our beloved February has an extra day, although many of us don’t understand why.

A brief history of calendars

The history of calendars is an interesting one (2), and to avoid boring you I’ll give a condensed version. Many

* Every fourth year is a leap year, except for years that are divisible by 100 but not by 400. So 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years, but 1600 and 2000 were.



calendars were created throughout history because, naturally, humans need something tangible to look at when it comes to time. We know it’s here, but we like to see it. So clocks and calendars were created to feed this need. Unfortunately, many of the first calendars were slightly off, whether it was by a few days or some hours.

Different solutions to this problem were created. The ancient Egyptians partied at the end of the year to make up for the few days they were missing (3). Julius Caesar added a whopping 80 extra days in the year 46 BC, along with slightly longer days in the following years, but this didn’t completely fix the issue. Important dates, holidays, and seasons continued to shift. Finally, Pope Gregory XIII did some math, dropped some days, added the leap year every four years, and in 1582, he gave us the Gregorian calendar. This calendar has stood the test of time—so far.

Learning the time

Despite time being a topic we learn about in our youth, it’s quite abstract. I can’t tell you how many times my child has asked me why there are minutes and seconds,

days and years, hours and weeks, and months. The questions are like time itself: nonstop! Fortunately for my child (but mainly for my sanity) there is a world of resources and activities available to help her understand the fourth dimension of time.

One of my favorite Bangkok museums to take my daughter to was the Science Center for Education in Phra Khanong. This is a planetarium, full of activities and information centered around space. I found the easiest way to explain time to my child was with big suns, moons, and stars, which makes this place perfect. Although I haven't seen it myself, I've read there's a giant sundial in Lumpini Park, which would also be a fun way to explore the ideas of time and calendars.

If you can't get to these places, making sundials at home is also a treat. All you need is a Hula-Hoop,

some chalk, and of course, the literal star of the show: the sun. Any activity where children get to use a Hula-Hoop and their shadow is a win. And for older kids who love to read, there are plenty of online resources, like National Geographic Kids, where the history of time and leap years are explained.

Back to the future

So, we've explored the basics of time, but what does the leap year ahead mean for us?

The last few years have been a bit rough for many of us. However, a new year gives us the chance to start again, embrace life, and do things without hesitation—not just for our children but also for ourselves. There's always some nervousness when starting something new. We don't want to waste time chasing dreams and reaching for stars that seem too far away. But how do

we just "leap" right in, ignoring all the anxieties and stresses that may come with beginning again without seeing complete outcomes? True, we don't know what 2024 will bring, but we can try our best to steer it in our favor. Look at it as 12 months to embrace the coming challenges. And remember, if one day doesn't go how you planned it, this year there are 1,440 extra minutes to try again.

Time never stops, and neither should you. Our bodies and minds may change or even slow down, but that shouldn't stop you from leaping into new experiences and enjoying the little things like staring at the moon at night. And if you need a complete restart, there are plenty of other calendars to pick from. Although time waits for no one, you can make it work for you.

Photos from Canva.

References

1. Longstaff, A. (2005) Calendars from Around the World. National Maritime Museum. rmg.co.uk/sites/default/files/Calendars-from-around-the-world.pdf
2. Nasa (2023) What is a leap year? spaceplace.nasa.gov/leap-year/en/
3. National Geographic Kids (2023) What is a leap year? kids.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/leap-year

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 aged one to six years old to develop their athletic, creative and cognitive skills.



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BAMBI PLAYGROUPS

SCAN NOW

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



**NON-BAMBI
PLAYGROUPS**

FROM PAPER TRAILS TO INNER PEACE

The act of journaling allows us to look within. As we start the new year, Judy guides us through different ways we can unlock our true potential and find inner peace.



About the Author

Judy King, a disruptor of the status quo, passionately guides women to craft and live extraordinary lives. A champion of big dreams and having it all, Judy unleashes untapped potential through profound conversations and world-class coaching. Judy's work is laser-focused on inspiring women to courageously declare what they want with no limits, fostering rock-solid belief and relentless pursuit of a life by design.



J

ournaling is an incredible self-love practice that allows you to operate from a deep place of awareness within. It's a simple practice of putting pen to paper and writing down your thoughts and feelings to understand them more clearly. It can be used as a way of declaring who you desire to be and calling in what you desire more of in your life.

It's a must to prioritize ourselves, as women, mothers, business owners, caretakers, and make time to practice self-care. By bringing in your vision, your focus, and your awareness, and carving out this time for yourself every morning or evening, I guarantee you will notice a shift in your own energy and mental state.

Beginning your day with journaling allows you to create your day with intention, setting yourself up to show up in your power or locking in a vision for yourself that pulls you forward. It also gives you new perspectives for possible challenges you are facing, allowing you to peek into the future of where you are going and shifting into the energy of the desires you have for your day.

Journaling can also help uncover deeper thoughts that are going around in your head. What you might begin to notice are repeating patterns in your behavior that are not serving you or behaviors that are stopping you from growing to your full potential.

Ultimately, the end goal is for you to let go of old ways of being and lock in new, empowering beliefs, create new stories, and discover new behaviors and ways of being. These will support your creation of new futures and opportunities and will attract your deepest desires into reality. The other option is to continue letting your old way of being dominate you, stay stagnant, and remain uninspired and immersed in the problems of your life or reactive to those around you. Instead, I would



encourage you to reclaim your power and become grounded. It is the simplest daily practice that can transform your world when done right. Consider it a sacred meeting with yourself.

Even if it's only five minutes a day before everyone else in the home wakes up, make the time by simply remembering this: "I'm as important as everyone else in my family and I deserve to take care of myself."

Whether you have never journaled before, you've been journaling for a long time, or you only journal sometimes, wherever you are at, let's take you to a new level. Remember, this is about shaping your day and setting yourself up for success by unlocking so many new levels of who you are.

THREE TYPES OF JOURNALING

1. Morning Pages (from the book "The Artist's Way" by Julia Cameron)

This is what is known as "stream-of-consciousness journaling"—a constant stream of writing with no rules: you simply put your pen to paper and write. It's free-flowing writing in which you get out whatever wants to come out, with zero judgment and no analysis; just love and compassion.

It could come out as dot points or a constant stream. Just remember to empty out the tank and let it go; whatever is going on in your mind, get it out. This helps to get your imagination flowing, especially if done when you first wake up. And if nothing comes up, simply say, "I have nothing to say", "I don't know what to write", or "What is obvious to me is a void".

Allow it to be messy as this is what brings out the artist within. The main thing is that you give your artist brain a chance to take over. As Cameron says, "Embrace your flaws, stop being afraid of making mistakes. Your artistry brilliance depends on your capacity to take risks, go beyond the tag that has been used to define your art." When you journal in this way, your imagination takes the lead while you follow.

2. Guided journaling

This is simply asking yourself powerful questions which open up a new perspective or a new belief. You could sit with one question for a few weeks or a month, or change it daily. As you write, allow what's there to come through and encourage yourself to look at things differently and think differently.

Here are some of my clients' most-loved questions:

If I was living in my full power, what would I do?

This can help you if you are feeling stuck, playing small, feeling afraid, or when you know you are elevating to a new level, as this question calls you forward to a new way of being.

If I was living in my full power and I [your answer to the first question], what else would I do / what would be next?

When you feel like you have fully answered the previous question, ask yourself again but this time go deeper. You will blow yourself away with what you find.

If I was fully being the next level version of myself, what would I be / do / have?

There is something about this question that makes us get real and be truly honest with ourselves. This then allows us to see the truth, showing us what needs to change or shift, and it calls us forward to completely step into our full power.

The answers are always within you. We tend to outsource our power; give it away to others unconsciously. When you are not deeply connected

to yourself and your truth, this is the end result. So in essence, these questions and reflections will help you connect with yourself and the highest version of you. They help you notice how you are choosing to act, highlighting what decisions you're making, and they allow you to easily access your innate wisdom or inner nudges—your intuition—and get it all out for you to see clearly.

What am I grateful for? (100 things)

Writing a hundred things you are grateful for can be such a powerful process. To do this, you will need to think outside the box, be specific, and expand your thinking, and thus, you will be deeply connected to the feeling of gratitude.

What do I appreciate or want to acknowledge about myself? (100 things)

My clients often get to number 50 and say, "I can't think of any more," and I tell them, "Yes you can—keep going". Think about who you are as a woman, mother, friend, sister, daughter, lover, cousin, aunt, human being. There are so many reasons why you should be appreciated and acknowledged. Don't hold back, get specific, and remember how incredible you are!

If I knew I wouldn't fail, what would I choose?

This is one of my favorite questions. It's powerful and potent. I also love to keep asking, "...and then what would I choose? And what else? Then what else?" This takes us deep into our imagination (where all things are created) and calls us forward into our power.

Pick a question and sit with it for a full day, for a week, a month, or longer. Play with whatever feels the most powerful for you that day.

3. Daily devotion declaration

This is also a great one to add to either 1 or 2.

Ultimately, this is future-self journaling. You write what you are calling in and want to set in place for

yourself. When you begin to play for your next level, who you need to be in order to exist at that level, it helps when you tell yourself that every day. What happens is you start to realign yourself from within and start to become a match for your desires.

You can write statements which start with:

- I am
- I can't wait
- I am excited about
- I love

Write in story form or make declarations in paragraphs or bullet points. As you write them, feel them within every single cell of your body to anchor it in!

Other prompts to consider are:

- Who do I need to be?
- What do I need to devote time to daily to be a match for who that person is?
- What is my standard for my health or fitness?
- What is my standard for my business, systems, team, support?
- Where am I spending my time and energy?
- How do I need to communicate?
- If I was being her now, I would...

DEDICATION AND CONSISTENCY

You could do this for a few days and see the benefits. However, true and sustainable change takes time, and so my recommendation is to commit to this for at least a month. Journaling is a beautiful self-care practice that is led by devotion to self, and to notice the internal and external shifts that happen in your world, you must give it time. If you want to get mentally fit, you need to be consistent and devote time and energy to your practice, just like you would when becoming physically fit. I would advise you to simply start and see how it feels, and to see what results show up for you. Remember this: consistency is key to all results.

Photos from Canva.



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Want to have fun, work together with other great parents, brush up on your professional skills, and do something for the BAMBI community? This is your chance.

BAMBI is run by a group of lovely and dedicated volunteers, and from time to time, a number of critical roles need to be filled to ensure ongoing service to our members. BAMBI is a fun and 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. Please note that as per BAMBI's constitution, interested candidates are required to have an active membership at the time of applying.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



Please scan for more details about the available positions.

The following opportunities are currently available:

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- Activities Coordinator
- Photographers
- Photo Editor

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BREASTFEEDING AND BIRTH IN BANGKOK SURVEY, 2021–2023

Preparing for the arrival of a child comes with a host of things to think about and research. Thanks to Jo and Iasnaia, we can know what to expect at Bangkok hospitals.

In December 2022, the BAMBI Bumps & Babies team launched a survey to gain a greater understanding of the experiences of women giving birth and establishing breastfeeding in Bangkok.

Based on a similar survey carried out in 2016, with some new questions added related to COVID-19 and its impact on labor, delivery, and the postpartum period, our survey explored the prenatal, birthing, and postpartum experiences of mothers who delivered their babies in Bangkok between 2021 and 2023. Our questions helped us to collect data on:

- place of delivery;
- birth order;
- mode of delivery;
- to what extent the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) (1) has been adopted within the hospitals of Bangkok, specifically in regard to:
 - prenatal preparation for breastfeeding;
 - information and support given by healthcare professionals at the time of and after birth to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding;
 - actions taken by healthcare professionals before, during, and after delivery that can impact the establishment of breastfeeding.

The questionnaire was posted on the Typeform platform and promoted through monthly birth WhatsApp groups and Facebook groups, including but not limited to The Expat Mummy Club and Thailand Babies. The final number of respondents totaled 100 women—35 who gave birth in 2021, 60 in 2022, and five in early 2023.

We will share the findings with both the respondents and the main hospitals offering maternity care, with the hope of providing helpful information to birthing families on the adoption of BFHI within Bangkok hospitals, and offering invaluable feedback to the hospitals to encourage ongoing improvement in the services offered.



About the Authors

Jo Cox is a UK-trained nurse and midwife. Over the past 20 years, she has spent significant periods of time overseas (Asia and Africa) with MSF and the Red Cross. Jo is the current Bumps & Babies Coordinator for BAMBI and is keen to engage with the pregnant and new mums' community in Bangkok to offer doula/midwifery care to anyone seeking support and advice.



Iasnaia, a Brazilian with a pinch of Irish, started her career as a lawyer and now dedicates her time and passion to empower and support women in all aspects of motherhood as a doula, HypnoBirthing® educator, yoga teacher, and breastfeeding counselor. Living in Thailand since July 2016, she and her German husband and their two Amsterdam home-born boys enjoy eating their way through Bangkok and beyond. She is part of the BAMBI Bumps & Babies team. To know more about Iasnaia, please visit maedoula.com.

Figure 1: Place of delivery

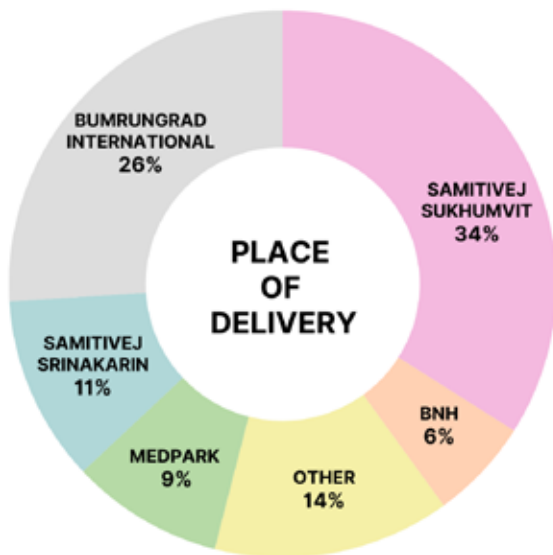
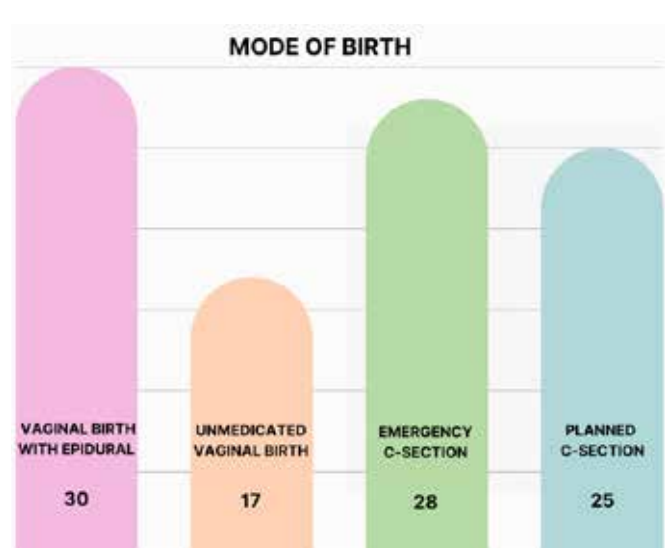


Figure 2: Mode of delivery



PRENATAL CARE AND PLACE OF DELIVERY

We asked women to report on all the hospitals they attended for prenatal care as well as the hospital in which they delivered. For 69 of the respondents, this was the same hospital for both prenatal care and delivery.

Twenty women, however, reported attending at least two hospitals for prenatal care. The introduction of new protocols around birth and postpartum care during the COVID-19 pandemic saw a number of obstetricians moving between hospitals to offer care. As women tend to select an obstetrician for the duration of pregnancy, a number of them chose to follow their doctors to different hospitals.

Respondents attended a total of 13 different hospitals within the city (Fig. 1). More than half of those reporting birthed in either Bumrungrad International Hospital or Samitivej Sukhumvit Hospital, the latter being the only hospital in Bangkok currently holding “baby-friendly” status. Two of the respondents experienced precipitous labor (delivery within three hours) and delivered their babies before reaching hospital.

BIRTH ORDER

55% of respondents were first-time mothers while 40% were having

their second child. The remaining 5% were having their third child.

COVID-19

Despite all the natural concerns expressed regarding hospital protocols and policies for COVID-19, no women reported any deviations from their planned birth resulting from a positive COVID-19 result. Very few women were affected by COVID-19 at the time of delivery.

MODE OF DELIVERY

Planned mode of delivery

Studies show that the rate of cesarean sections (CS) performed in Thailand has been on the rise for a number of years, and this is predicted to continue (2). With this data in mind, we asked our survey respondents to report on their preferred mode of delivery during their third trimester.

- 34 women hoped to deliver vaginally using an epidural for pain relief.
- 43 were aiming for an unmedicated vaginal birth.
- 20 opted for a planned CS at term.
- 3 did not report their preferred mode of delivery.

Actual mode of delivery (Fig. 2)

Among the respondents, 47 women gave birth vaginally, with 17 birthing without medication and the remaining 30 choosing

epidural analgesia. The remaining 53 respondents delivered via lower segment cesarean section (LSCS).

Of the 20 women who had planned a CS, 17 delivered at term, and three required an emergency CS. A further eight women consented to CS prior to delivery for a variety of factors. The other 25 women opted for an emergency CS based on events arising during their labor. 53% of the women who delivered by CS were classified as having had an emergency CS.

The main reasons for requiring an emergency CS during labor were failure to progress / fetal distress (11 women) or an unsuccessful induction of labor (10 women). Other reasons included preterm labor, preeclampsia, and the position and size of the baby.

As well as learning the proportion of CS births to vaginal births, we were interested in finding out how mode of delivery impacted the implementation of BFHI. It is commonly understood that recovery usually takes longer following a cesarean delivery and can impact the initiation of breastfeeding, for reasons such as postponement of skin-to-skin contact while in the operating room and difficulty in finding the optimal position for latching and feeding due to post-operative pain and discomfort.

BABY-FRIENDLY HOSPITAL INITIATIVE

Prenatal preparation for breastfeeding

a) Breastfeeding policy sharing

Women were asked whether the individual hospitals' breastfeeding policies were shared during the prenatal period—either verbally or in written form.

- 59% of women received information regarding breastfeeding policy.
- 41% did not receive any specific information.

b) Education on the benefits of breastfeeding

Only 38% of women were informed by staff of the benefits of breastfeeding while they were still pregnant, predominately at prenatal hospital visits.

Advice and support in hospital

a) Support or training in breastfeeding

Only 51% of women reported that they received any support or training in breastfeeding during their stay in hospital. Of the 49% of women not offered support, almost half were first-time moms, who may have needed additional support. Only 31% of all respondents reported feeling empowered to breastfeed their infants independently prior to their discharge from hospital.

b) Skin-to-skin contact (Fig. 3)

Within the mother's body, a cascade of hormonal activity is activated following the baby's birth, initiating milk supply and production. Actions such as skin-to-skin contact and early initiation of breastfeeding reinforce these processes (3). Only 44 women were offered skin-to-skin contact with their newborn babies for the golden hour—the first hour of life when baby is extremely alert.

Among the women who delivered vaginally, 60% reported being able to enjoy skin-to-skin contact in the golden hour. The remaining 40% did not have this opportunity. For the 14% of women whose babies required immediate NICU transfer, it is clear that NICU was the priority.

Of the 56 respondents not given the opportunity for skin-to-skin contact for the first hour after birth, approximately 70% had either a planned or emergency cesarean delivery. We know that immediate skin-to-skin contact tends to be offered less routinely after CS, so it was encouraging to see that 30% of respondents who delivered by CS reported that skin-to-skin time was offered, either in the operating room, with fathers, or in the recovery unit.

c) Establishing and promoting successful breastfeeding (Fig. 4)

71 women reported being shown how to correctly position and latch baby onto the breast within 30 minutes of birth; however, 44% of these mothers reported that staff would assist by attaching the infant to their breasts without explaining the principles or giving instructions on what was being achieved.

We also asked our respondents about the advice offered to them on the optimal frequency of breastfeeds. It is highly likely that a baby will demand nursing more frequently than every three hours, especially in the early days when establishing feeding. 33% of respondents were encouraged to feed their babies on demand; however, 80% of mothers reported being told by a member of hospital staff to breastfeed their babies at three-hour intervals. Conflicting advice may be misconstrued by new mothers, so it is crucial that the advice on frequency of feeds is clear and cannot be misinterpreted. If a new mother were to understand it to mean "offer a feed no longer than every three hours", it would be less detrimental.

When encouraging on-demand feeding, it is also important to inform new mothers of the cues and signs of feeding displayed instinctively by a newborn. 22% confirmed they were given this information. The same proportion reported they had been shown how to manually express breast milk.

As the first few weeks of establishing breastfeeding can be extremely challenging, we asked our survey respondents if they had been

Figure 3: BFHI: Skin-to-skin contact



offered advice on how to manage after being discharged from hospital. 22% of new mothers were signposted to potential external community support should any problems arise, and only 14% of all respondents were referred for lactation support, either to lactation consultation services or individual lactation consultants operating in the community.

d) Actions detrimental to protecting breastfeeding

We also asked our respondents a selection of questions to determine whether certain actions known to negatively impact the establishment of breastfeeding were recommended to them while in hospital. These included actions such as offering a pacifier, introducing a nipple shield, and offering supplementary feeds to

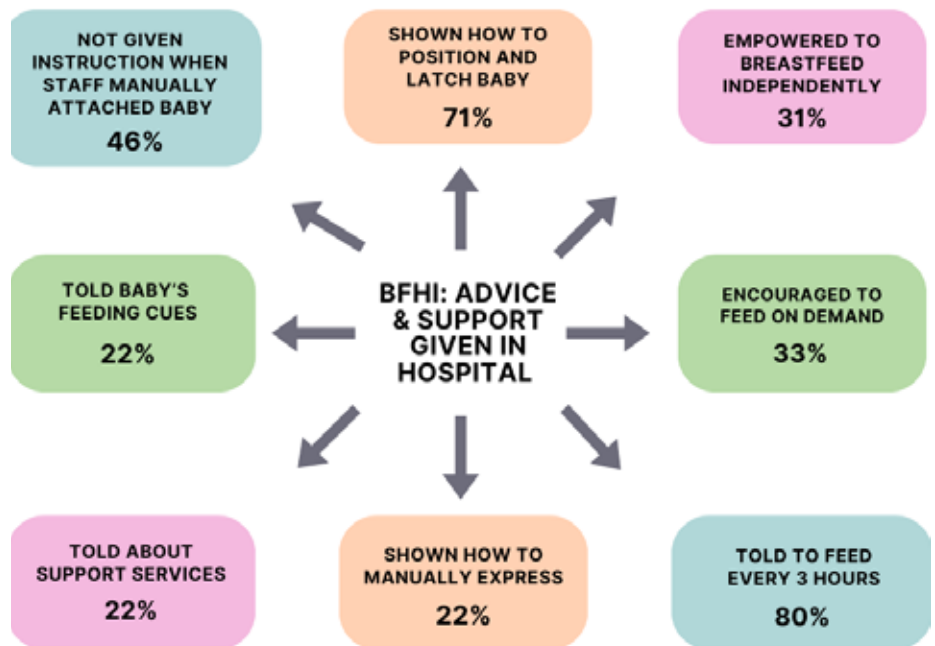
the infant without it being medically indicated.

6% of new mothers were advised to offer a pacifier to their baby, 18% were advised to use a nipple shield, and 24% were encouraged to supplement their infants' feeds with glucose or formula.

There are times when providing supplementation is medically indicated, but what is imperative is that the mother is informed as to the reason supplementation is offered and that parents consent to it. Most full-term babies are born with sufficient reserves to maintain them on minimal amounts of colostrum until the milk production / supply is established on about day three if the breasts are regularly stimulated through the infant latching. 29% of the women who reported that glucose or formula was offered to their babies were not informed of any medical reason for supplementation.

We also included a question related to the prescription of domperidone (also known as Motilium), a medicine known to be prescribed to women to stimulate their milk supply. Premature prescription of this drug potentially reinforces the insecurity that many women experience that their milk supply may be insufficient to satisfy their baby. Furthermore, using this medication to increase milk supply remains controversial as there is limited evidence to support its safety or efficacy (4). Among respondents, 29% were offered domperidone to increase their milk

Figure 4: BFHI: Advice & support given in hospital



supply while still in hospital following delivery and before adequate time had been allowed for supply to be established.

CONCLUSION

Establishing, supporting, and protecting breastfeeding in the first few days is about empowering new mothers with accurate information, promoting confidence, and reassuring them as they adapt to their new role. This includes offering the opportunity for skin-to-skin contact and early initiation of feeding, encouraging feeding on demand over feeding every three hours, and advising mothers to seek support after being discharged from hospital.

The results of our survey provide a good indication of the current breastfeeding practices within Bangkok hospitals and offer an opportunity to open dialogues with healthcare providers to ensure BFHI are being implemented more widely and effectively.

We intend to repeat the survey in 2024 to track progress and are happy to provide support to all pregnant women and new parents here in Bangkok.

We would like to thank all the families who contributed by filling out the questionnaire, and we hope that any specific issues that were shared will be reflected upon by healthcare providers following our feedback.

Photos from Canva.

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Tens steps to successful breastfeeding (5)

1. Have written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all hospital staff	Hospital policies Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not promoting formula, bottles, or teats;• making breastfeeding care standard practice;• keeping track of breastfeeding support.
2. Train all healthcare staff in the skills necessary to implement this policy	Staff competency Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• training staff on supporting mothers to breastfeed;• assessing healthcare workers' knowledge and skills.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding	Prenatal care Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• discussing the importance of breastfeeding for mothers and their babies;• preparing women in how to feed their babies.
4. Help mothers to initiate breastfeeding within 30 minutes of the birth	Care immediately after birth Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• encouraging skin-to-skin contact between mother and baby immediately following the birth;• helping mothers put babies to their breast right away.
5. Show mother how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they are separated from their infants	Supporting mothers with breastfeeding Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• checking position, attachment, and suckling;• giving practical breastfeeding support;• helping mothers with common breastfeeding problems.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breast milk unless medically indicated	Supplementing Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• giving only breast milk unless there is a medical indication;• prioritizing human donor milk when supplementation is needed;• helping mothers who want to formula feed to do so safely.
7. Practice rooming-in—allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours of the day	Rooming-in Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• letting mothers and babies stay together day and night;• making sure that mothers of sick babies can stay near their baby.
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand	Responsive feeding Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• helping mothers know when their baby is hungry;• not limiting breastfeeding times.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers to breastfed babies	Bottles, teats, and pacifiers Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• counseling mothers on the use and risks to breastfeeding of feeding bottles, teats, and pacifiers.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge from hospital	Discharge Hospitals support mothers to breastfeed by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• referring mothers to community resources for breastfeeding support;• working with communities to improve breastfeeding support.



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.

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ADOPTION
SUPPORT
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IN THAILAND

TWINS
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GROUP

DISABILITY & NEURODIVERGENCE SUPPORT

LEAP
(LEARNING
& EDUCATIONAL
ADVOCACY
PROGRAM)

RAINBOW
ROOM

SUPPORT TO WOMEN

BEYOND
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CANCER SUPPORT
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Embark on a journey through the art of bookbinding—an ancient craft that brings together the essence of creativity and practicality. There's something magical about holding a book in your hands, especially one you've crafted yourself. With just a few materials and a touch of creativity, you can create a unique and personalized book in just a few stitches. It's quick and easy, and the kids can also join in!

MATERIALS

- 70–90 GSM sheets of paper for the inside pages (These can be any size you desire for your book. I chose A4.)
- Pencil
- Awl or hole punch
- Scissors
- Thread, durable and thin, like linen thread or waxed thread
- Medium-sized embroidery needle
- Strong tape
- Cardstock for the covers (the same size as the front and back of the signatures*)
- Glue
- Decorative paper, fabric, photos, paints (optional)

STEPS

Preparing the pages

1. Gather your paper and arrange the sheets for the inside pages by folding them in half.
2. Create the signatures*—a set of pages—by organizing the folded sheets into small groups (usually three to five per signature). Ensure they're in the order you want them to appear in the book.

Creating holes

3. Take the first signature, and on the folded edge, make marks with a pencil where you'll create the holes for sewing. Make three equidistant marks along the fold (middle, top, and bottom), leaving a 3cm space at both the top and bottom.
4. Use an awl or hole punch to pierce holes at the marked spots. Repeat this process for all the signatures.

Note: Make sure to create the holes in the same place as in the first signature. You can use an extra piece of paper to create a template to ensure the holes align.

Sewing the signatures

5. Cut a piece of thread that's roughly three times the height of your book.
6. Thread the needle and starting from inside each signature, go out through the middle hole. Leave a tail of thread inside.
7. Then, sew in through the bottom hole and back out through the middle hole. Now sew in through the top hole, back out through the middle hole, and again back in through the top hole. Once your needle and thread are back inside the signature, you will be left with two loose ends. Tie them together fairly tightly with a double knot and cut the long ends. Then, move to the next signature and repeat the same stitching process (5-7).

Finishing up

8. Place the signatures together in a neat pile with the sewn edges together to create the spine of your book. Secure the spine with strong tape.
9. Now add the front and back covers by applying glue to the two cardstock pieces and fixing to the front and back pages. Sandwich your book between two heavy books or anything else that can apply pressure on both sides and leave it to dry completely.

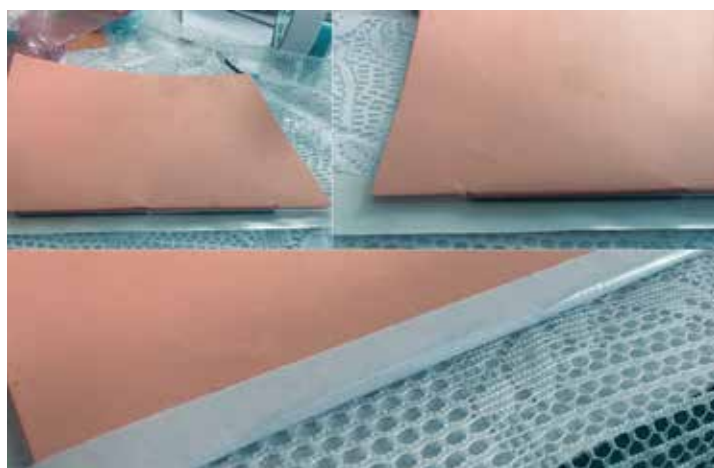
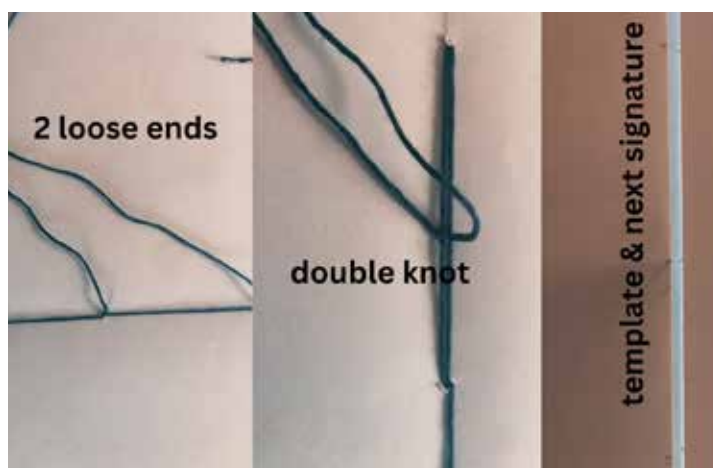
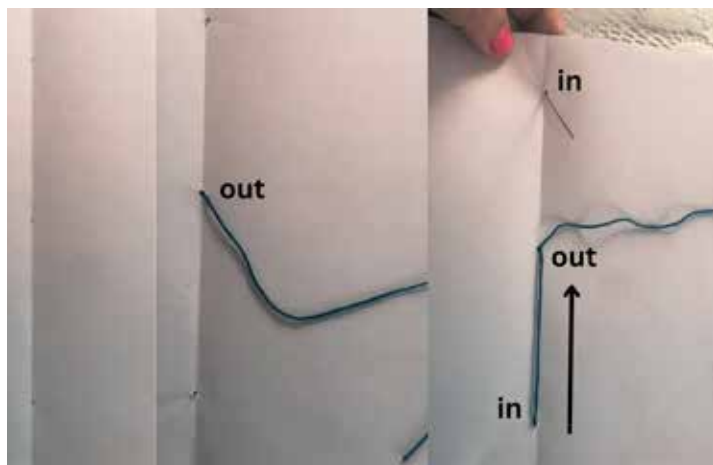
Final touches

10. After the covers are dry, you can start adding decoration. I used watercolor paper for my covers and painted a quick picture on it, then I added washi tape in complimentary colors to the sides. You could also use photos or pictures to create a collage cover.

Now your new book is ready, you just need to decide what you're going to use it for. Will it be a diary? A scrapbook? A children's story? A picture book? A sketchbook? With blank pages to fill and a new year ahead, the choices are endless!

*Signature: A group of pages folded and bound to form a section of a book

Photos courtesy of the author.



About the Author

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



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