

# BAMBI

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**HELPING KIDS  
NAVIGATE  
BODY IMAGE**

**FUELING YOUR  
BODY WITH  
LOVE AND  
CARE**



Cover photograph by Jana Capek

A project of Childbirth and Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand

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## Welcome to **BAMBI**

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We are a group offering support and companionship to families 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](mailto:vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org) or visit [bambiweb.org](http://bambiweb.org).

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**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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Hello BAMBI members!

"October is a symphony of permanence and change." – Bonaro W. Overstreet

These words remind me of the transition into motherhood—the miracle of bringing a child into the world and the changes that follow. When I became a mother, the time I had once devoted to self-care shifted to caring for my newborn. My body had carried life and nourished my child yet I found myself struggling with insecurity when it no longer fit the image I once knew. I longed for the "old me", forgetting the incredible journey my body had taken.



Then one day, I paused and truly acknowledged the miracle of what my body had done—it had given life, sustained a tiny human, and kept me going through sleepless nights and endless care. That realization shifted everything and transformed how I approached body shame. I began by giving myself permission to heal. I focused on nourishing my body with better food, practicing patience, and allowing myself grace. Slowly, I learned that caring for myself was also a way of caring for my child.

This October, we embrace the theme "Love Your Body" and celebrate the strength, resilience, and beauty inherent in every form. Loving your body is not about chasing perfection or fitting into old clothes—it is about gratitude, compassion, and honoring what your body allows you to do each day.

This idea of self-love is so important for us as parents and for our children. Whether it's body positivity, healthy eating habits, mindful movement, or improving our mindsets, how we think and feel about ourselves affects how we are present for our children, and models to them how they should treat their bodies and minds. Positive habits ripple outward, shaping the environment for the people around us.

As the leaves change and the season turns, October reminds us that transformation is both constant and beautiful. Our bodies carry us through every stage, every challenge, every joy, and every moment of growth. May this issue inspire you to pause, reflect, and meet yourself with kindness. To love your body is to honor the life it has carried, the strength it holds, and the love it allows you to give.

Shivangi Tripathi  
BAMBI Secretary

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Many of us have at least one part of our body we feel less comfortable with. For me, it's my arms. At age ten, I stopped wearing sleeveless clothes after a relative called them "fat". More than twenty years later, her comment still lingers. Whenever I try on an outfit, the first thing I check is how my arms look, and most days, I end up picking clothes with longer sleeves.

I know my arms are one of the strongest parts of my body. They powered my volleyball serves in school, hauled heavy suitcases as I moved into university life, and now they hold and comfort my children. Without them, I'd be lost. And yet, even with this knowledge, the sleeveless top tucked away in my closet only sees the light of day once in a blue moon. As a mother, I most certainly don't want my daughters feeling like this, but I worry that this is inevitable.

In a world where we're constantly exposed to "ideal" body images on our screens, where cultural and societal standards and limited representation of diverse body types, skin tones, or abilities can make children compare themselves and feel inadequate, what can we as parents do to raise them with body positivity, while also healing from our own body-image traumas? To start this conversation, BAMBI Magazine's October issue focuses on the theme "Love Your Body". We explore how body positivity and healthy habits go hand in hand, and offer practical advice on fostering self-love, promoting mindful movement, embracing diverse body types and skin tones, and building healthy eating habits.

The first themed article is Anatta Zarchi's "Helping Kids Navigate Body Image", a guide to how parents can support their children in shaping a positive sense of self as they encounter body image pressures online. Next, we have "Fueling Your Body With Love and Care" by Keren Granit, a must-read for parents seeking strategies to help their children build a positive relationship with food. For practical ways to replace self-criticism with kindness and compassion, turn to "Building a Daily Routine for Positive Body Image" by Claudia Gomes.

In personal reflections, Deshna Bhansali shares how her daughter's words left her questioning her own inhibitions in "Learning Self-Love Alongside My Daughter". In "A Colorful World", Rachel Ofo discusses the complexities of raising her biracial daughter in a world shaped by race.

Readers' Corner by Kit Lang and Fun Corner also showcase books ("Wellmania: Extreme Misadventures in the Search for Wellness" by Brigid Delaney and "The Yoga Game in the Garden" by Kathy Beliveau) and activities focused on celebrating one's body.

Off-theme articles this month include "Leaving on a Jetplane" by Joe Barker, a witty take on surviving (and sometimes even enjoying) long-haul flights with little ones; "Literacy on the Go" by Kelly Patten, presenting tips on sneaking in literacy lessons to while away the time when stuck in traffic; "The Mental-Physical Connection" by Jeannie Kim, explaining how small shifts in sleep, food, movement, and mindset can help parents feel stronger, calmer, and more present; and "Your Child is Fine. You?" by Sheena Low, a firsthand reflection on Dr. Shefali's wake-up call for parents: presence over praise, and self-love over ego-driven expectations.

We hope this month's curated mix of themed and off-themed articles inspires you to approach parenting with curiosity, compassion, and a little bit of fun. Embrace your body, take pride in your journey, and remember that every little step you take towards self-love makes a big difference for you and your little ones.

Sanam Rahman  
Editor



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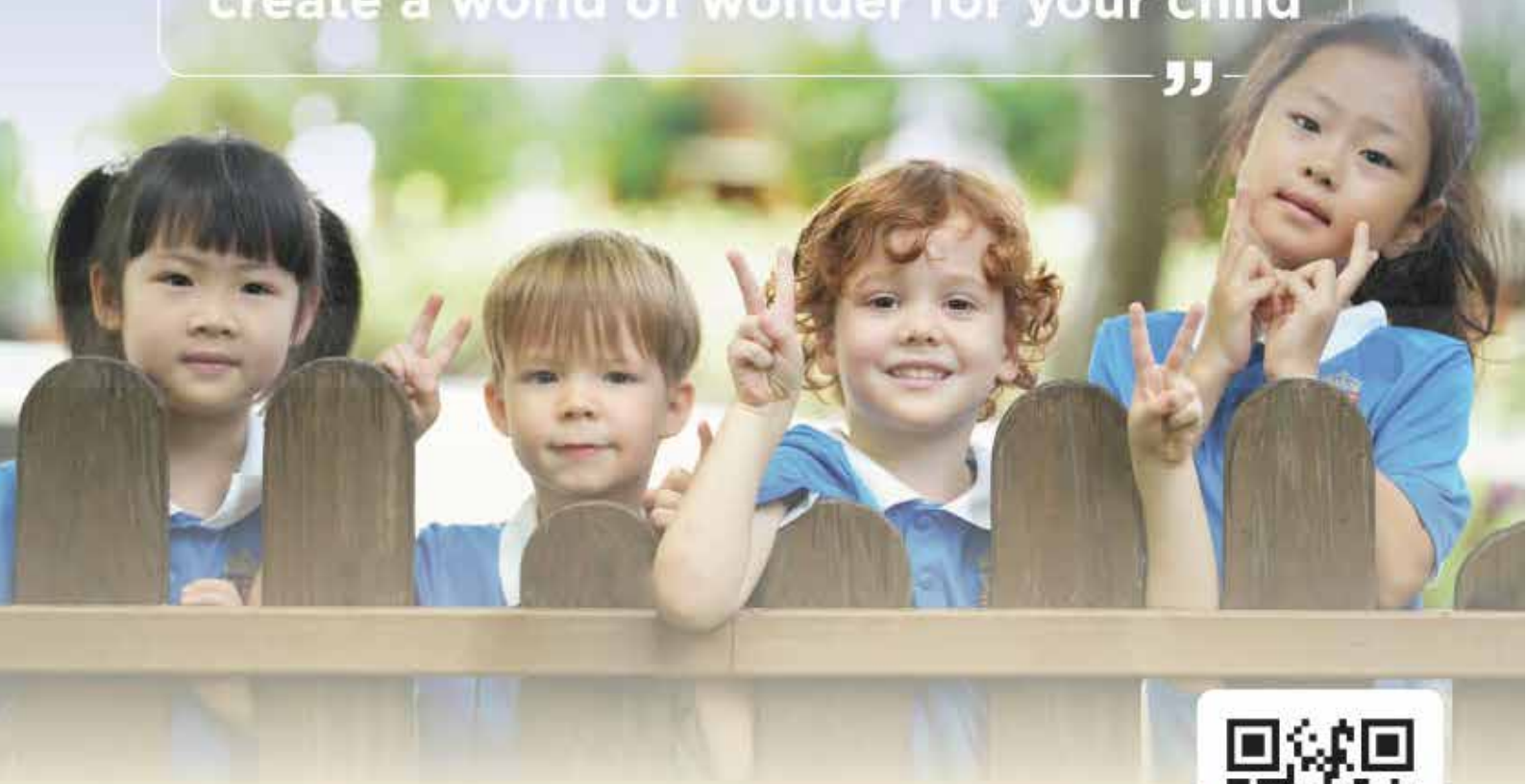
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# MEET ARCHNA YADAV

Archna misses family and friends from home, but she is excited to be exploring all that Thailand has to offer with her beloved daughter, and delighted by the friends she's found through volunteering with BAMBI.

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

We are from Delhi, India—the land of love, happiness, and family gatherings. It's comfortable, familiar, and filled with people who are just a phone call—or even a loud “Maa!”—away. There's something about being surrounded by childhood friends, extended family, and your favorite snack on every street corner that just feels like home.

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

I work in IT as a project manager so basically, I juggle tasks, people, deadlines, and the occasional mini-crisis, all while smiling on Microsoft Teams. My spouse is also in IT, heading the IT function for a region.

## Please tell us about your family.

We have a daughter who's about to turn four. Time has absolutely flown, and she's growing up so fast that I sometimes get a bit emotional—okay, very emotional. Of course, the tears also come when her naughtiness reaches peak chaos. But she's full of personality, and I love how she already knows how to boss her dad around—something I've never quite mastered!

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

About a year ago. What I miss the most is the comfort of dropping by a friend's place without warning, and



family being just a short drive away. Oh, and the food! As a vegetarian, I've grown fond of Thai vegan dishes, but nothing compares to the joy of Indian food. I also deeply miss a temple back home that's very close to my heart.

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

Eat. Sleep. Repeat. I wish!

Weekday mornings are a whirlwind—our daughter heads to school, my husband goes off to work, and that's when my workday begins. On weekends, I usually attend BAMBI playgroups or activities. They're a great way to meet new people and recharge socially.

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

The people! Thais are so warm, respectful, and genuinely kind. And they love babies, which, as a parent,

is always a bonus. So far, we've been to Pattaya and Hua Hin—both lovely. We've got Phuket and Krabi on our travel wishlist for this year. Thailand is stunning, and we're really happy to be here.

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

I'd say food and language—the classic duo! I still remember going to 7-Eleven to buy milk and having no idea which one was cow's milk. I asked a lady, “Is this cow's milk?” and she confidently said, “Yes.” So I asked, “Oh, do you read Thai?” and she said, “No, but there's a cow on the label—so... cow's milk, right?” That was my very first lesson in Bangkok: trust the packaging. Fast forward to today and what once felt unfamiliar is now second nature, but the language is still a challenge.

## How did you find out about BAMBI?

Through a close friend who volunteers with BAMBI. Because of her, I found this amazing community. It's been such a great way to connect, especially when you're new and figuring everything out.

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

First of all, congrats—you've made a brilliant decision by joining! My only suggestion is to get involved. Attend the playgroups, participate in activities, talk to people, and say yes to new experiences. And don't forget to spread the word about BAMBI—good things are meant to be shared!



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# HELPING KIDS NAVIGATE BODY IMAGE

This month, Anna explores how parents can support their children's developing sense of self through navigating body image in a social media world.

Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels



## About the Author

Anna works for New Counseling Service (NCS), an internationally recognized mental health center in Bangkok with a diverse team of licensed counselors. NCS has provided counseling services in Thailand and surrounding regions for over 20 years, with therapists specializing in a wide variety of issues such as anxiety, depression, work stress, relationships, and more. [ncsbkk.com/ncs/](https://ncsbkk.com/ncs/)

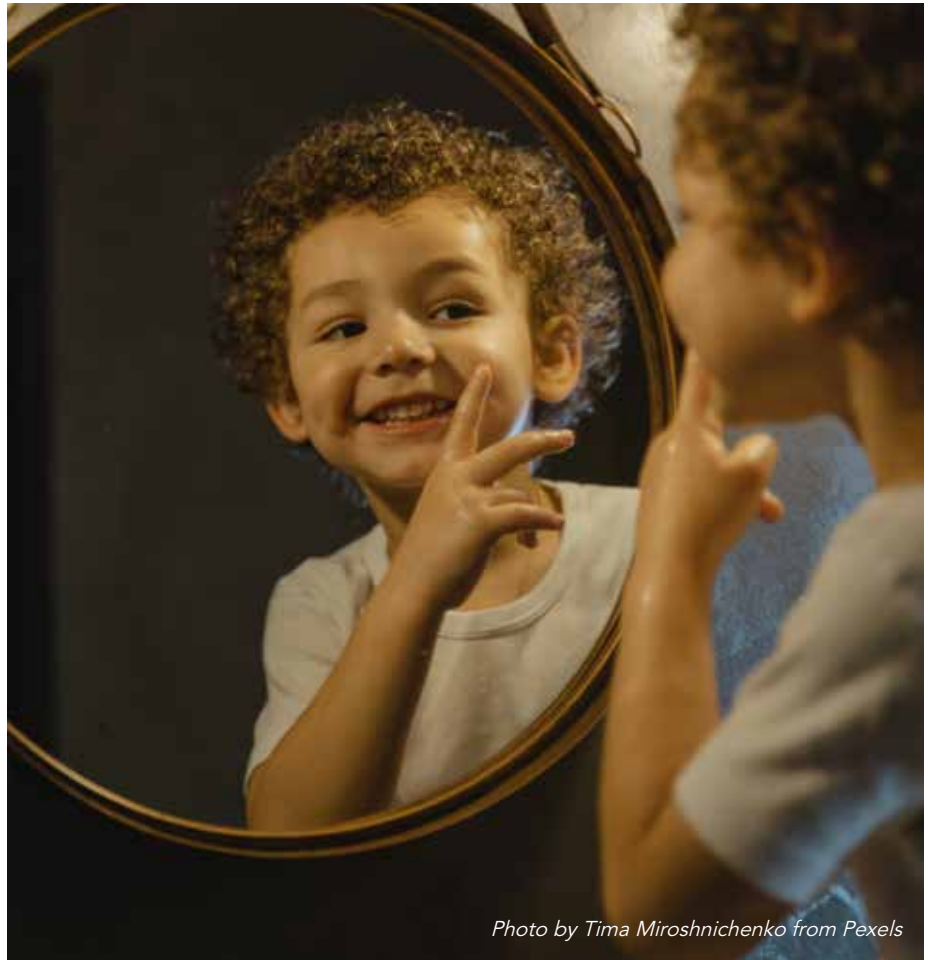


People come in all different shapes and sizes, yet society seems intent on telling us what a beautiful body should look like, especially online. Social media allows people to edit absolutely everything about their appearance, from their body to their face. You already know how this goes—those who fit conventional beauty standards are prized above others, which pushes the message that we need to fit these ideals in order to be worthy of love. Children and teens can be especially susceptible to this message as they are still developing their sense of self. Being exposed to unrealistic body types early on can alter the way they view themselves, and helping them navigate this can be tricky.

## SOCIAL MEDIA IMAGES

I've seen friends refuse to post a photo without editing some tiny detail that I thought looked normal. I've seen people online talk their bodies down, reinforcing to others that there must be something wrong with their bodies too. But here's something else I've noticed: people often criticize themselves for things they find normal in others. Someone might hate their body, but think that someone else with the same body looks great. We scrutinize ourselves for things we are told are unattractive, but the way we view these things in others shows that we might not actually think they're unattractive. Pointing out these inconsistencies can be a good first step to helping children realize this—it's not a switch that will immediately change their body image, but it can help start what is often a long process.

It is sometimes hard to remember that what we see online is very curated, whether that's through editing, posing, or just what the algorithm shows us. Here are some gentle reminders you can give about why online content may not be realistic: photos and videos can be edited; they can be filmed as many



*Photo by Tima Miroshnichenko from Pexels*

times as needed, until the person is satisfied; people can hold their bodies or pose in a certain way that might not be how they usually look, even though there's nothing wrong with how they usually look.

The algorithm tends to push what is popular, but that doesn't mean other body types aren't beautiful as well. It's not that certain bodies are objectively more beautiful than others—it's that society makes us think that. Think about it: different body types have been considered beautiful at different times in history. The mere fact that beauty standards change shows that they are not objective. But that doesn't mean you have to change with them—we are all unique for a reason.

These are conversations you can have at home that may help change how social media influences your child's body image and ingrain in them that all bodies are beautiful. Be open but gentle; if they resist

or argue, don't react defensively, but help them explore why they're thinking the way they do.

## SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR

It is normal to a certain extent for children and teens to think about their bodies even without the influence of social media. But there are certain signs that may indicate a deeper pressure to change their body to fit unrealistic ideals. "Change in food intake is a big one," says NCS counselor Tatiana. Worrying appetite changes are often accompanied by a change in attitude, or specific, rigid rules towards food. For example, "I cannot eat after 7pm or I will look ugly," or "I can only eat dinner if I do an hour on the treadmill afterwards." Of course, not all changes in appetite signify an unhealthy body image. Exam stress, for example, can lead to changes in appetite, but these cases are unlikely to involve specific rules and rituals around eating.

Another big one is social anxiety regarding how people view them or how they present themselves. If they are struggling with their body image, they may feel the need to hide behind baggy clothes or isolate themselves because they feel ashamed of their body. Again, this can be normal to a certain extent. Children and teens are exploring how they express themselves through their clothes, trying to find what feels right, dealing with changing bodies, and trying to follow the latest trends. Something that could be indicative of deeper body image issues is if they say they don't feel good enough or confident enough to wear something even if they want to, or if they say things like "I can't wear this skirt until I lose five pounds."

### **SUPPORTING HEALTHY BODY IMAGE**

Here are some ways you can help them navigate this and encourage realistic, diverse, and healthy body ideals:

- Help them be conscious of editing and realistic beauty standards—that what they see isn't always real and that conventional beauty standards don't actually make someone better.
- Introduce diverse role models. Start pointing out how attractive someone is, even if they don't fit conventional beauty standards.
- Discourage comparisons.
- Highlight that beauty is subjective and that everyone is worthy of love, regardless of societal beauty standards.
- Encourage them to hang out with people they feel comfortable with. Not feeling comfortable around other people can lead to self-consciousness.
- Limit social media—seeing unrealistic body ideals all the time is unhealthy and increases comparison. If your child is still very young, it might be a good idea to monitor what they are watching and make sure what they're seeing is diverse and realistic.
- Look into your own beliefs surrounding body ideals as these can indirectly influence your children. For example, complaining about your own body, pointing out other people's bodies or physical flaws, obsessive beliefs about food, and so on can fuel comparisons and encourage them to examine their bodies and eating habits in an unhealthy manner.
- Encourage healthy eating—this does not mean demonizing junk food! Healthy eating is making sure you're eating enough to fuel your body and getting enough different nutrients.

What can you do if you notice your child may be struggling with body image? NCS counselor Savinee says her number one rule is to have open conversations about it; ask open-ended questions and avoid asking "why" or directly telling them what they should or shouldn't do, as that could trigger a defensive response.



*Photo by Nicola Barts from Pexels*

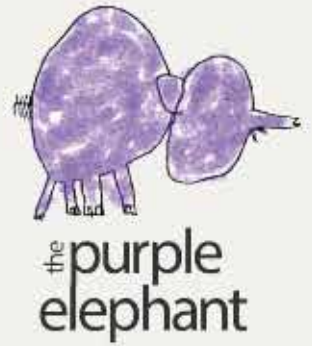
For example, ask "What do you feel like eating instead?" or "How do you feel about this meal?" instead of "Why won't you eat?". The things we discussed above can be a good starting point to help them reflect on how social media may be influencing their body image.

Finally, remember this is a deeply sensitive topic, so it's not unusual for them to react by snapping or withdrawing. Judgment and anger can make this worse. Instead, try to be gentle and understanding so as to create an environment of trust and safety. This can be both preventative and healing. It is understandably frustrating for a parent to see that their child is unhappy with their body, or that they don't see themselves the way you see them, but your understanding and support can go a long way in influencing their relationship with themselves and their bodies, even if it may not feel that way right now.



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# FUELING YOUR BODY WITH LOVE AND CARE

Children's eating habits can be a source of great frustration to parents, but registered dietitian Keren's insightful guidance can help our children develop a healthy relationship with food.



Photo by Nadin Sh from Pexels



## About the Author

Keren Granit is a dietitian based in Bangkok, specializing in family and pediatric nutrition. She helps parents confidently guide their children's eating habits, from picky eating to healthy growth. Passionate about evidence-based, practical advice, she shares resources and guidance at [EatWithKeren.com](https://EatWithKeren.com).



All parents want their children to grow up strong, confident, and healthy. But in today's world, where social media, peer pressure, and conflicting messages about food surround us, it can be hard to know how to guide kids toward a healthy relationship with eating.

This article is not about rules or restrictions. It's about helping children see food as a way to care for their bodies, not something that brings guilt, shame, or fear. By approaching nutrition as an act of love and using evidence-based strategies, parents can lay the foundation for lifelong well-being.

### WHY A KID'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOD MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Children today are growing up in a world where messages about food are everywhere and many of them are confusing or even harmful.

**Social media influence:** TikTok and Instagram are filled with "what I eat in a day" videos, fad diets, and body-image trends that can leave kids comparing themselves to unrealistic ideals.

**School environment:** Friends' lunchboxes, vending machines, and even casual comments from peers or teachers can shape how children view "good" and "bad" foods.

**Diet culture at home:** Even well-meaning comments like "I shouldn't eat that, it's too fattening" can trickle down and influence how kids feel about their own food choices.

Research shows that children who develop a negative relationship with food are more likely to struggle with overeating, emotional eating, or restrictive behaviors later in life. On the other hand, children who see food as fuel and nourishment tend to have healthier eating habits, more positive body image, and more balanced nutrition overall.



### SHIFTING THE FOCUS FROM RESTRICTION TO CARE

Many parents worry about sugar, snacks, or picky eating—and understandably so. But when food becomes a constant battle, mealtimes turn into stress instead of opportunities for connection. The key is to shift the conversation away from restriction and guilt and towards care and respect for the body.

Instead of saying, "You've had too many cookies, that's bad for you," you could try saying, "Cookies are yummy, but we also need foods that give our bodies energy to play and grow. Let's balance it out with some fruit."

This framing teaches children that all foods can have a place, but nourishment comes first. It also prevents the "forbidden fruit" effect, where restricted foods become more tempting and often lead to overeating when finally available.

### THE DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY—A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

One of the most effective, evidence-based approaches for raising competent eaters is Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility

in Feeding. At its core, it draws a clear line between the parent's role and the child's role when it comes to food. Parents are responsible for deciding what food is offered, when it is offered, and where it is eaten. Children, on the other hand, get to decide whether they want to eat at all and how much they choose to eat from what is provided. This simple but powerful framework reduces the pressure that often happens around meals, while teaching kids to listen to their own hunger and fullness cues. For example, if you serve a balanced dinner with chicken, rice, vegetables, and bread, your child might only choose bread and rice. Instead of seeing that as a failure, the division of responsibility encourages trust that, over time—while still maintaining constant exposure—children will expand their eating patterns. Forcing bites or making comments about what they should eat often backfires, while consistent exposure and a relaxed atmosphere help kids learn to enjoy a variety of foods in their own time.

### TACKLING REAL-WORLD CHALLENGES IN 2025

Even with the best intentions, modern parenting comes with unique challenges around food.

Here are a few common situations, and how to handle them with love and care.

### **Social media pressures**

Kids may see influencers promoting unrealistic “clean eating” or dieting trends. You can respond to this by talking openly about how not everything online is real or healthy. Remind your kids that bodies need variety and balance, not perfection. Model this by enjoying a wide range of foods yourself.

### **School influence**

Children often compare lunchboxes or feel embarrassed if their food looks “different”. If this is a problem, try involving your child in packing their lunch, so they feel ownership and pride. If they ask for trendy or packaged foods, find a middle ground—sometimes it’s OK to say yes, while still including nourishing staples.

### **Food marketing and junk food**

Fast food ads and colorful packaging are designed to attract kids. It’s OK to acknowledge the appeal—“That ice cream does look delicious!”—and then remind them of balance—“Ice cream is fun sometimes, but our everyday foods are what keep us strong for soccer and school.”

### **Picky eating**

Instead of battles, use repeated exposure without pressure. Research shows that children may need to see or taste a food up to 15 times before accepting it. So keep offering them different foods, sit together, and model enjoyment of a variety of foods, but don’t force them to try things.

## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO AT HOME**

Practical steps to help children build a positive relationship with food:

**Model balanced eating:** Children learn more from what you do than what you say. Enjoy vegetables,



*Photo by Alex Green from Pexels*

fruits, proteins, and treats without labeling foods as “good” or “bad”.

### **Create structured mealtimes:**

Predictable meals and snacks prevent grazing and help kids tune in to hunger and fullness cues.

**Encourage body respect:** Talk about food as fuel. Avoid weight-focused talk.

**Involve kids in food prep:** Let children wash vegetables, stir ingredients, or choose between two healthy options. This builds confidence and curiosity.

**Keep variety visible:** Family-style meals, where children can serve themselves, encourage independence and exposure to different foods.

## **A NEW DEFINITION OF HEALTHY EATING**

Healthy eating should never be about strict rules, cutting out entire food groups, or striving for perfection. Instead, it is about balance, variety, and the enjoyment of food. When children are taught that food is both fuel for the body and a source of pleasure, they learn to see eating as an act of self-care rather than a moral choice.

Parents play a vital role in shaping this perspective by focusing on nourishment, not guilt, and by celebrating food as something that connects families and cultures. A child who learns that vegetables give strength for sports, rice provides energy for school, and ice cream can be enjoyed simply because it tastes good, grows up understanding that all foods can have a place at the table. This broader, more compassionate definition of healthy eating sets the stage for a lifelong positive relationship with food, where care for the body takes priority over fear or restriction.

## **FUELING WITH LOVE, NOT FEAR**

Raising children with a positive relationship to food is one of the greatest gifts we can give them. In a world where diet culture and media pressures are louder than ever, parents have the power to shift the narrative away from guilt and toward nourishment, care, and joy.

By practicing the division of responsibility, addressing real challenges with empathy, and focusing on love over restriction, we can help our kids grow into adults who trust their bodies and see food as a lifelong friend.

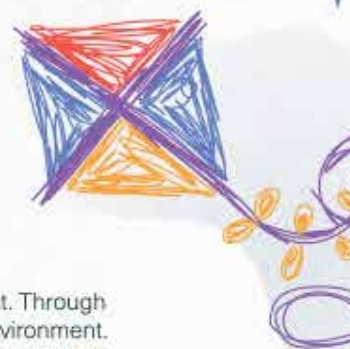




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Bright Explorers



Bright Tumblers





# LEARNING SELF-LOVE ALONGSIDE MY DAUGHTER

Sometimes our kids seem wiser than us. When Deshna started to think about how she was modeling body-positivity to her daughter, she realized she was learning as much—if not more—than she was teaching.

Photo by Mütecevil from Studio Turkey



## About the Author

Deshna Bhansali is a finance professional and storyteller, originally from India and now building a life in Bangkok. With quiet grit and relentless effort, she's created her own support system. Her daughter, Avira, is her joy and mirror—reflecting the strength and self-belief behind her journey.



When I became a mother, I thought my job would be to teach my daughter about the world—how to be kind, brave, and curious. What I never expected was how much she would end up teaching me, especially about something I've quietly struggled with all my life: loving myself.

I'll be honest—I've never been very good at self-love. Like many women, I grew up surrounded by subtle messages about what a "good body" should look like—slim, flawless, never tired, always glowing. Even as an adult, those whispers sometimes still echo in my head when I glance at the mirror. That's why the idea of raising a body-positive child felt overwhelming. How could I teach my daughter something I was still struggling to practice myself? And then, one quiet evening, Avira, my daughter, taught me a lesson.

### THE MOMENT THAT STOPPED ME

I was getting ready for bed, brushing my hair in front of the mirror. I sighed without thinking and muttered to myself, "Mama doesn't look nice today."

Avira, only three, was sitting nearby playing with her clay. She looked up at me, tilted her head, and said with complete certainty, "But Mama, you are pretty. You make me happy."

I froze. Her words landed heavier than any lecture, heavier than all the self-help books I'd skimmed. To her, I wasn't imperfect; I wasn't flawed. I was simply her safe place, her source of joy.

At that moment, I realized something: children don't measure us by the lines on our face or the shape of our body. They measure us by our love, our warmth, our laughter. And if Avira could see beauty in me, maybe I could learn to see it too.

### WHAT OUR KIDS TEACH US ABOUT BODIES

Watching Avira move through the world is like watching freedom. She runs with abandon, never worrying



Photo by Winnie Bruce from The Winnie Collection

about how she looks. She squats low over her clay projects for hours, completely absorbed, her little fingers strong and steady. She bursts into giggles when she jumps a little higher than yesterday.

She doesn't care about "body image". She simply uses her body—with joy, curiosity, and gratitude. She reminds me that our bodies aren't ornaments to be judged; they're instruments for living. That, I think, is the first step to body positivity—noticing what our bodies can do, not just how they appear.

### CHANGING MY WORDS

Since that evening, I've tried to be more mindful of the language I use. Children soak up words like sponges, and if I constantly criticize myself, my words may become Avira's inner voice one day.

So instead of saying, "I look terrible," I say, "I'm tired and need to rest." Instead of telling her, "I ate too much," I say, "That meal made me feel full and happy."

These may seem like tiny shifts, but they matter. They teach her that food isn't guilt, and that bodies need care, not criticism.

### LITTLE RITUALS OF SELF-LOVE

Avira and I have started some simple rituals together:

- Saying one thing we like about ourselves before bed.
- Doing "happy stretches" in the morning.
- Smiling at the mirror, even if mine feels forced some days.

She giggles when she tells me she loves her "fast legs" or "strong arms". And hearing her makes me want to join in, even if my answer is shaky. In truth, I think she's teaching me more than I'm teaching her.

### MODELING IMPERFECTION WITH COMPASSION

There are still days when I slip. Days I catch myself sighing at my reflection, or binge-eating due to stress, and then regretting it. But instead of hiding those feelings, I'm learning to show her what compassion looks like in practice.

I'll tell her, "Mama is being a little unkind to herself today, but I'm going to rest and try again tomorrow."

I don't want her to think self-love is a perfect state you magically arrive at. I want her to see it as a daily practice—messy, imperfect, but worth the effort.

### GROWING TOGETHER

That night when Avira told me, "You make me happy," I realized that maybe raising a body-positive child isn't about being the perfect role model. It's about being willing to learn with them.

She may not remember every word I say, but she'll remember the way I tried—the laughter during our silly dances, the gentle language, the rituals of love. And maybe, through raising her, I'll learn to raise myself too, with more patience, more kindness, and more love. Because in the end, children don't just inherit our habits. They hold up mirrors to the parts of us we forget to love. And sometimes, all it takes is the honesty of a child to remind us that beauty is not in perfection, but in presence, warmth, and connection.



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Wonderkids	Wonder Woods Kids Café & Co-Learning Space
Little Seeds <b>new!</b>	The Tiny Seeds International Pre-School
Kiddiezilla	Market Place Nanglinche (3rd Floor)
Kiddieville	Playville
Little Steps <b>new!</b>	Future Steps International School Bangkok
Little Panda	Nancy Language School
Little Treehouse	Little Treehouse Nursery
Saturday Nana	Storytime Preschool Bangkok
Yenakart	Noddy by Elizabeth International Playgroup
Little Tots <b>new!</b>	Tiny Tots International Learning Centre



## ACTIVITIES

Name	Location
Toddler Music	Skyview Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit24
Football	Noah Futsal
Little Athletes <b>new!</b>	Noah Futsal



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# A COLORFUL WORLD

Whether we like it or not, race is often a defining feature of the modern world. Rachel reflects on the challenges of helping her daughter navigate her self-identity when she is part of several different cultures and races.



## 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.



**B**“But Mommy, I’m not black,” my daughter innocently commented from the backseat. I was so taken aback; I didn’t know how to respond. I simply continued driving, trying to navigate the situation while navigating the road ahead. She eventually finished off with, “I’m light brown.” Turns out, I allowed my overthinking to get the best of me. In her six-year-old mind, her skin was not actually “black”. She didn’t understand the concept of race and the terms that came with it. However, at that moment, I realized that even if she didn’t understand it now, she would eventually have to, especially living in a society where things like race, ethnicity, and nationality are driving forces behind decisions made every day.

The conversation took another turn when I relayed what happened to my husband, and he replied, “But she’s white too.” Again, I was stuck. In all my daughter’s years of being alive, I had never thought of her as white. I automatically attributed my race to her when she was indeed 50% white. I knew nothing about growing up white. I knew nothing about growing up biracial. I realized at that moment, I had to determine how I would raise my daughter in a world I was completely ignorant of.

Now, before anyone gets offended because I “should be raising her to be a good human being”, true. However, we live in a society where people can’t look at you on the train and discern that you’re a good person. What they can probably tell, though, is what general part of the world you’re from, and from that, stories and preconceived notions will build in their minds with little to no effort at all. So yes, my daughter is being raised to be a decent human being, and I’m hoping her personality shines through everywhere she goes. However, I also understand that when people see her, they will know that she is biracial.



The idea of race, ethnicity, and nationality has a long, sometimes bitter, sometimes sweet history. Without boring you with historical details, I’ll keep this simple by saying that even when we don’t think it’s relevant, race, and, more importantly, self-identification is what the world around us sees. Living in Thailand, it was a constant stream of “Where do you come from?” Then, when I traveled anywhere else, there was an added layer of complexity, because although culturally I’m Nigerian, I’m an American citizen, but I also lived in Thailand. People are curious. People want to find and make connections. But to connect with

a person, that person has to know who they are.

Being a black woman has allotted me a variety of experiences. Every part of the world I’ve travelled to, I’ve had stories to share that were very specific to my race. Some were pleasant, some were struggles. One thing I never struggled with, though, was knowing who I was. It can be quite different for someone who is biracial.

Having been raised in Southern California and then moving to Bangkok, I have a lot of biracial and multicultural friends. One thing they all shared with me was their need to



fit in. Unfortunately, many never felt completely welcomed where they were. They were either too much or not enough of one side. There was a constant battle within themselves to embrace each side, without forsaking the other. Many of my friends were left feeling less than or othered. Now, as an adult, my task is to help my child either completely forgo feeling this or at least keep those feelings to a minimum.

From that short conversation with my daughter, I realized what not to do, which was force my daughter into a box she didn't necessarily fit in. As much as I wanted to scream, "You are black!", that would've just led to a very confused child whose idea of color came from a crayon box. Fortunately, society today is obsessed with searching and seeking. One of the best things you can do to help your biracial/multicultural child have a sense of self is to research. Find other parents in similar situations, chat with other adults who have navigated the various worlds that multiculturalism brings, and finally, talk with your child. Avoiding the conversation simply because you haven't lived it may prove to be damaging to both you and your child, so keeping the communication line open is most beneficial.

One mom shares how, although her daughter leans towards one side, she takes steps to ensure her daughter gets a healthy exposure to both sides. This included moving from a culturally homogeneous state to California, where there was plenty of everything. She's also done her due diligence to learn certain practices from the side she's not familiar with, to teach her daughter. This is a great example of how we can help our children understand their identity without compromising on any of their backgrounds. Plenty of books and trips around the country have helped her daughter meet the goal of never feeling inadequate.



This is a similar route to that my husband and I have taken. We've been fortunate enough to be able to visit both sides of the family. My daughter has met her cousins in the UK and her cousins in Nigeria. She will start taking Igbo lessons to ensure her connection to the culture, while holding a British passport. Everything we do now will hopefully help her build a strong sense of self.

Racial and ethnic backgrounds shouldn't be used as a way to judge, but as a way to open up doors to possible connections. In a world that's becoming ever more connected, it's important to understand where to draw boundaries and how to navigate racial spaces even when you're not directly connected to those spaces. My daughter will get first-hand experiences from my life as a black woman, but she will also build new experiences that she

will get to share with me. My only hope is that I will do all I can as a parent and give her the proper tools to get through those lived experiences that I've never had to deal with. I hope that wherever she finds herself, she feels loved and accepted. And that when she finds herself in places where warmth isn't prevalent, she understands the importance of removing herself. The world is a big place with lots of people, so let's do our part to help those we come in contact with feel part of our world, regardless of which part of the world they came from.

*Photos courtesy of the author*





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Source: ICS Parents Survey 2026



# BUILDING A DAILY ROUTINE FOR POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

Claudia shares her daily rituals for increasing her self-love and building a positive body image.



Photo by Arina Krasnokova



## About the Author

Claudia Gomes is an expert in emotional intelligence and intercultural awareness, and an ICF-certified Level 2 transformative coach. With 19 years of international experience in Spain and Thailand, Claudia is an expert in bridging cultures and fostering global collaboration. She has spent the last 15 years in Bangkok. [contact@claudiagomes.coach](mailto:contact@claudiagomes.coach); [linkedin.com/in/claudiagomes-coach/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudiagomes-coach/)





*Photo by Lina Vanessa Merchán Jimenez from corelens*

How often do you look in the mirror and go straight to criticizing yourself? I don't know about you, but for me it used to be very, very often.

This is not an easy topic to talk about because it affects women all over the world. It is hard to find a woman who feels truly confident about how she looks and about her body image. The reality is that beauty comes from within, especially when we are talking about body image.

Your body image is shaped by many things: the willpower to change, the beliefs you hold about yourself, the stories you hear, the images you choose to look at, the way you allow people to talk to you, and the energy you transmit to others.

Your body is not just appearance—it is memory, history, resilience, and presence. It is a combination of factors, and step by step you can learn to heal, to embrace the beautiful person that you are, and to recognize the beautiful body that you already have.

Before we dive into my daily rituals for a positive body image, I want to share what someone once said to me that changed the way I see myself:

"Your body is the only friend who

will accompany you from the day you were conceived to the day you die. They are the friend who knows your story. The one who has been through everything you've been through. The one who suffers with you, laughs with you, walks your path with you, shows your pain, and helps you do whatever you want to do. They never truly complain, unless you are pushing the boundaries too far with them. They love you, and do everything for you. They will always be there for you."

When you realize you have a friend who is always there for you, how would you treat them? How would you talk to them, look at them, defend them, and love them? For me, this was a game changer. It wasn't perfect—nothing in life is—but I began to look at my body with more kindness and compassion. I decided to become the friend they deserved to have, and to stop abandoning them because of what other people think or feel about them.

Now, back to the daily rituals. Below, I'll share simple practices to help you reconnect with your body, and yourself in the process.

### **1. Be present with your body**

Intention is key. It will support you when tough times come, when

doubts, low self-esteem, negative thoughts, and uncertainty show up.

Understand that the process is not a straight line. It has many ups and downs, just like life. Some days you will feel aligned with your rituals; other days they may feel impossible. That's normal. Every change requires a transition, a time to let go of old habits so new ones can find space.

Be present. Accept and allow yourself to feel what you need to feel. Be compassionate with yourself and your body during the process.

### **2. Starting the day**

Breathe. Calmly, mindfully. Start the day by connecting with your lungs. Give yourself time to adjust to the new day. Talk kindly to yourself. Maybe repeat affirmations. Stretch. Dance to your favorite song. Sing along.

The start of the day is personal—but what works for you? I'm sharing what works for me, without pressure. I don't do everything every day, because I need to adapt to my schedule. But music and singing always help my body start with good energy.

We often spend more time worrying about how our body looks rather than how it feels. But exercise and

movement, done with love, not punishment, make all the difference. Your body is intelligent, adaptable, and capable of learning new things. Try different types of movement—yoga, swimming, walking, dancing, strength training. Notice what connects best with your body.

It's not about size or shape. It's about feeling good, being energized, and presenting yourself confidently to the world.

### 3. Nourishing your body and soul

I'm not here to tell you what to eat. You've probably researched diets, tips, and trends already. Instead, I want to invite you to eat more mindfully. Respect your limits. Appreciate the textures, smells, and colors of your food. Let your senses experience it fully. And if it feels right to you, give thanks for your meal.

Eat without guilt and without shame. Eating is not a punishment or a reward—it is care. Slow down, chew well, and enjoy each bite as much as possible.

### 4. Skincare and self-touch

Your skin is your largest organ and the most visible expression of your body. Skincare can be a ritual of tenderness, not vanity. Take time to apply lotions or oils slowly, paying attention to sensations. Massage your arms, legs, shoulders. Take warm, relaxing baths. Touch your body with respect.

This simple act of self-touch helps regulate the nervous system and supports emotional well-being. It reminds you: "This is my body, and I'm here with it."

### 5. Closing the day

The way you finish your day matters. Journaling can help you release stress, process emotions, and put your mind at ease. Write one thing you appreciated about your body today. You could light a candle, sip a cup of tea, or listen to gentle music. These signals tell your body it is safe to rest.



*Photo by Canva Natural Women from Natural Women Collection*

### 6. Rest

We talk a lot about productivity but not enough about rest. Sleep is not a luxury; it is essential. Quality sleep regulates hormones, improves mood, and supports both physical and mental health.

Try to reduce screen time an hour before bed. Create a comfortable environment. Slow down, stretch, read, or repeat affirmations. Respect your body's rhythm. Some days it may ask for extra rest, and that's OK.

### 7. Protecting your circle

Loving your body is not easy when you are surrounded by negativity. Make sure your circle is filled with people who cherish you and support your journey. Choose carefully the media, conversations, and spaces you allow into your life. Unfollow accounts on social media that trigger comparison or shame and follow those that uplift you.

Self-love grows stronger in community. Share your experiences with others, and learn from those walking the same path. Find a group that feels like home.

### 8. Healing deeper wounds

Body self-acceptance is even harder if you have been through abuse or trauma. Please remember: you are not alone. There are therapists, coaches, healers, and communities ready to support you.

Allow yourself the possibility of a new chapter in your story, with the right support. Healing is not linear, but it is possible.

### 9. Facing bad body image days

Bad body image days are normal. Everyone has them. What makes a difference is how you respond. When you catch yourself criticizing your body, pause and ask: "Would I say this to a friend?" If not, why say it to yourself?

With practice you can shift your inner dialogue.

### 10. The butterfly effect of self-love

Self-love is contagious. When we begin to care for ourselves and feel good in our own skin, we give others permission to do the same. It is a beautiful ripple effect like a butterfly spreading its wings.

Make each ritual your own. Adjust them to your day-to-day life. Choose what makes you feel aligned with who you are. We are all different, and that is the beauty of life.

You matter. Slow down when you can. Feel your life, your breath, your body.

Love yourself, because you are the real love of your life.



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# LEAVING ON A JETPLANE

After a much-needed summer holiday back home, Joe shares his travel tales as he and his wife navigated a long-haul trip with two kids in tow.

Photo by Gustavo Firing from Pexels



## About the Author

Joe and his wife Diane moved to Thailand in 2018. Since the arrival of their son Martin in 2021 and daughter Alice in 2024, Joe has been a stay-at-home father. The whole family enjoys BAMBI playgroups and beach holidays. Find Joe on SubStack: BangkokDad.





Photo by danielgonzalezphotographer

As I'm writing this, the horrors of air travel with small children are starting to fade from my memory. I dare say I'm even starting to look forward to our next trip to the UK. This is a very different state of mind to just after we'd landed, when I swore—as I do every year—that henceforth my feet and family were staying firmly fixed to the ground. In the tearful, zombie-like state that jetlag induces, it seemed perfectly reasonable to decide that my traveling days were done; that nevermore would I board a plane. The joys of home did not seem worth the 24 hours of door-to-door purgatory that the journey requires.

Time heals and now I can look back in a more emotionally balanced fashion and reflect on our airplane experience. Maybe it wasn't even all bad; after all, I got to catch up on a lot of blockbuster movies that my children wouldn't normally leave me time to watch.

In other positives, at no point on our trip was I, or either of the planes, copiously pooped on. Changing a baby in an airplane toilet remains an act of contortionist magic that would grace any Cirque du Soleil show, but I am proud to share that Alice was not dropped down the toilet nor on her head. She did pee all over me and the changing table, but at least it wasn't poop, and, not by chance, I had packed a spare T-shirt. Plus

people were really nice and let me jump the queue for the loos when they saw me dangling a smelly, screaming child.

### THIS LITTLE PIGGY

The highlight of the flight for me was undoubtedly the four meals I got to choose between. With two children who were mainly asleep and a wife with a palette too discerning for airplane food, all four meals were mine to enjoy. As a big believer in quantity over quality, this was an exciting time to be me. With plate-balancing skills worthy of any circus professional, I juggled and sampled my cornucopia of trays and dishes without waking the children. A pig in muck couldn't have been happier than me.

### STANDING ROOM ONLY

Sadly, one can't spend an entire 12-hour flight eating, and the time between meals inevitably dragged. While more important passengers—my children—were well provided with seats, I spent much of the outbound flight standing. Nice though it would have been to sit down, Marty had made his bed on my seat and I dared not risk waking him; a dilemma that any parent can well understand. At least I could still watch the TV while leaning on the back of my seat and envying Marty's luxuriant stretching across the two

seats he'd commandeered. Plus, I'm always looking for an opportunity to portray myself as a heroic and self-sacrificing father, and what could seem nobler than giving up my seat for much of the flight? My wife even told me what a kind dad I was—no one must ever tell her that standing let me stretch my back and was much more comfortable than sitting.

In fact, I was to spend much of the inbound flight yearning for those happy standing hours. Having foolishly taken a screaming Alice off my wife, for what I thought was a moment, I found that both ladies promptly fell asleep. Five hours of agonizing mattress impersonating followed as I found myself nap-trapped between Alice and the incredibly uncomfortable airplane chair. I'd cautiously inch Alice down into my lap and breathe a sigh of relief at getting some of the weight off my arms, then the plane would rock or someone would sneeze and Alice would shoot upright and swarm into my arms. I'd gently rock her back to sleep and she'd soon settle down, but now the whole process of trying to find a slightly less torturous position had to begin all over again.

Meanwhile, my back was getting stiffer and stiffer. Sometimes I'd lean over to the left, sometimes to the right, stretch out this leg or that, but despite my best efforts it was becoming clearer that I am



not compatible with airplane seats. Every so often, I'd find an almost comfortable position and start to really enjoy whichever movie I was watching, then a flailing limb would rip out my headphones and I'd have to spend ten minutes carefully freeing a hand, untangling Alice and the leads, and trying to rewind the movie, which on in-flight touch screens is its own special challenge. It was a merciful relief when the cabin crew turned up the lights and started serving another meal; with a cry of delight I passed Alice to my freshly awoken wife and enjoyed a blissful, unencumbered stretch.

### MAKING FRIENDS

Much like Marty at her age, Alice does not believe in sitting down on planes—if one is not eating or asleep, one should be out and about meeting the many other fascinating passengers. As a one-year-old she has a pretty direct approach to greeting new acquaintances, especially as she is still a little unsteady on her legs. She finds grabbing any protruding body parts and using them as walking aids is a remarkably effective ice breaker—although perhaps not one I would recommend you try. Fortunately, her winning smile and clear joy at meeting all these new people soon smoothed over these slight social faux pas. Alice also showed a grand appreciation for the finer things in

life, and of her own importance, by making repeated and determined efforts to break into business class. Thankfully her delighted giggles at ripping through the class curtain were well received and prevented any awkwardness that this socially revolutionary act could have caused.

### TELE TRAGEDY

The greatest joy in Marty's life is watching Tom and Jerry, something he does with unbridled enthusiasm. So, he was very excited when we promised him unlimited Tom and Jerry on the plane, possibly more excited than he was about going to visit Granny and Grandfather. You can imagine our shock and horror when we found the plane only had two episodes. This was certainly not an adequate supply of entertainment for a long-haul flight.

Now you, like all my friends, will probably shrug unsympathetically and say what kind of idiot doesn't take an iPad full of cartoons on a flight. To which I can only say: we know, that's what we did last year, and we didn't watch any of it because there were so many cartoons on the plane. How were we to know that in six months they were going to gut their Tom and Jerry provision and leave us with a very upset sleep- and cartoon-deprived boy? For the return flight we considered buying a tablet, but

that seemed excessive for one flight. I'm still not sure that was the right decision, especially when it turned out to be the same two episodes of Tom and Jerry again.

Nonetheless, Marty wholeheartedly committed to enjoying those two episodes to the full. Sadly, the spatial constraints of an airplane meant that he could not express himself as he usually does by shrieking with laughter while jumping on the couch and running around the house. But I think the other passengers, to whom I should probably take this opportunity to apologize, would agree that he still showed his appreciation of this fine example of the animator's art loudly and clearly. This was particularly obvious to the poor students sitting in front of us whose seats were repeatedly buffeted as he squirmed and bounced in hysterical delight. Fortunately, regular visits from the drinks trolley kept them in a tolerant and forgiving mood.

Perhaps, in hindsight, the flights weren't so bad; at least Marty and Alice slept for most of the journey. Maybe next year they'll even sleep in their own seats and give me a chance to get some rest. Although I would miss my 12-hour movie binge, I'd probably be a much less grumpy traveling companion with a bit of sleep.



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# YOUR CHILD IS FINE. YOU?

Sheena is always trying to improve as a parent and a person. This month, she shares some lessons she recently learned about the importance of being present with your child, and about loving yourself enough to realize that you are enough for them.



## About the Author

Sheena is a mother to three-year-old August, runs Super Fly Honey, a brand that makes technical activewear for pole dancers around the world, and dreams about writing children's books. After three years with a lot of yoga, deep friendships, purposeful retreats and IFS therapy, she realizes that becoming a mother is actually a superpower.





*"Out of all the parenting experts I've ever interviewed, Dr. Shefali has been one of my favourites."*

– Oprah Winfrey

So yeah—when Oprah says that, you show up.

20 August 2025. There I was. Bangkok. Parenting workshop. Clutching a \$130 matcha that tasted like regret. Mostly because it took ten minutes to arrive, which made me late. And in those ten minutes, I missed Dr. Shefali's opening.

Apparently, she began by warning the audience not to expect the polished, poetic voice from her books. In person, she's brusque, hilarious, and bordering on politically incorrect. Which, honestly, made me think popcorn and soda would've been a better choice than my matcha.

Luckily, I caught the rest. And wow. It wasn't a cosy parenting pep talk—it was a spiritual slap. The good kind. I walked in expecting gentle tips on being a "better mum". Instead, I got a mirror. One that was thought-provoking and, in many ways, reaffirmed what I already knew and felt instinctively. Probably because

I've been wading in inner work for the past three years.

### STEP ONE: FIRE YOUR EGO AS CEO

Shefali's big theme was ego. How it sneaks into parenting. How it makes our children responsible for our self-worth. How it whispers, "Fix your kid so you can feel like a good parent."

Parenting from ego is really just parenting from fear: fear of judgment, fear of not being enough, fear of your child reflecting something in you that you haven't healed. Her antidote? Stop parenting from fear, control, and expectations.

But here's what left me pondering: why does the ego exist and how do we stop worshipping it?

I think the ego exists because we're addicted to external validation. Praise, applause, likes, gold stars. Instead of trying to crush it, I'm learning to give it what it's actually craving: self-love. Deep, grounded, internal validation. When I do that, the toxic grasp of "Do they see me? Approve of me? Think I'm enough?" loosens.

How annoying that yet again self-love is the answer to almost every personal question I've had lately.

### THE PRESSURE OF BEING YOUR PRIDE AND JOY

Then came this line: "To be the child of an amazing mother, do you know how amazing your child has to be?" At first it sounded poetic. Then it sank in. That's a heavy burden to put on a kid. The expectation to be "amazing" all the time can be crushing.

I thought of my own daughter. How often I go into full cheerleader mode over her most average achievements. On the surface it looks like love. But underneath? I'm teaching her that performance equals worth. That love comes when she shines, not when she's simply herself.

That realisation hit home. Because if I want her to feel enough, I have to believe I am enough too... really believe, and that requires real work.

### CHEER LESS, CONNECT MORE

At five months in the womb, girls turn toward their mother's voice.

Girls are wired for connection. They tune in early. They catch the unsaid. The other day, Augie asked me, "What makes a sound?" She asks these curious, wondrous things all the time. And sometimes, I'm not fully there. Maybe I'm scrolling. And she says, "Mommy, I'm talking to you. Why are you not answering me?"

Knife to the heart. Served with a side of mom guilt.

That's when I realised: she's not just making conversation. She's checking if I'm present. And presence, not praise, is what she really craves.

## STOP TAMING THE WILD

Even though I'm raising a girl, I couldn't stop thinking about what Shefali said about boys. If we truly want to take care of our girls, we need to take better care of our boys.

She described boys as "25 monkeys in a room." That's their raw energy. And she's not saying control it—she's saying guide it. Honor it.

When we scold or shame their natural loudness, curiosity, and chaos, we don't teach discipline; we teach disconnection. And disconnected boys often grow into men who don't know how to name their emotions. Who confuse dominance with strength. Who explode or implode in the face of failure, leading to the risk of violent behaviour in adulthood.

If we want our daughters to live in a safer world, we must raise boys who are emotionally whole. Which means letting them be wild and messy, while also modeling tenderness. Conscious parenting isn't about being softer. It's about being braver. And that scares me, but it's also where the change begins.

## THE ALGORITHM IS NOT HER PARENT

Shefali confessed she gave her daughter a phone too early. "I



didn't know she'd outsource her self-worth to likes and comments. The curve of her neck is completely changed." Her daughter is now 22. Her hindsight is our warning.

She says 16 is about the right age for social media because kids need a solid sense of self before handing it over to an algorithm.

And it's not just about them. She also said, "If your lap isn't vacant, your child has nowhere to land." Obviously it's a metaphor for the all-too-familiar scenario of a parent doom scrolling. Your lap isn't free. Your child notices. She needs you available. Not perfect. Just available.

## A FINAL TRUTH BOMB FROM A RANDOM BOOKSHOP DETOUR

Later that afternoon, I wandered into Kinokuniya. Total impulse. I rarely buy physical books, but I picked one up. That night, I opened it to this line:

*"The culture we have does not make people feel good about themselves. And you have to be strong enough to say if the culture doesn't work, don't buy it."*

– Mitch Albom, "Tuesdays with Morrie"

I immediately pictured Shefali on stage, arms raised, shouting: "DO. NOT. WORSHIP. CULTURE."

Because culture sells us shame in shiny packaging. And conscious parenting is about refusing to buy it.

## TL;DR: BE LESS PERFECT, BE MORE PRESENT

Shefali doesn't give parenting hacks. She gives wake-up calls. She doesn't tell us how to raise perfect kids. She invites us to raise ourselves.

And maybe that's the hardest part. Not just loving our children but loving ourselves enough to show up real.

Our kids don't need us to be amazing. They just need us to be here.

*Photos courtesy of the author*

## Further reading

Follow Dr. Shefali on Instagram @doctorshefali or explore her work at [www.drshefali.com](http://www.drshefali.com).



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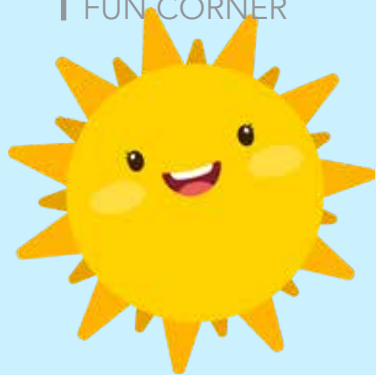
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**Nose** .....

**Ears** .....

**Skin** .....

**Hair** .....



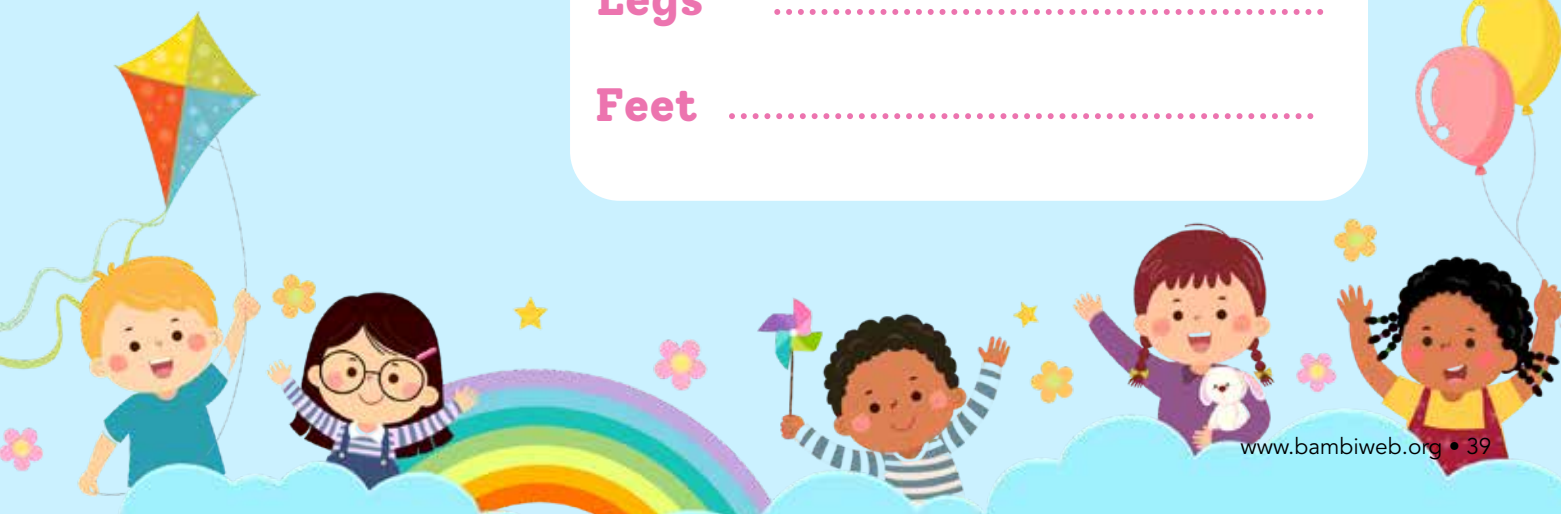
**Arms** .....

**Chest** .....

**Tummy** .....

**Legs** .....

**Feet** .....



# BOOKS TO INSPIRE

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## WELLMANIA: EXTREME MISADVENTURES IN THE SEARCH FOR WELLNESS

By Brigid Delaney

What happens when the quest for wellness turns into a full-on obsession? In "Wellmania" Brigid Delaney dives headfirst into the bizarre world of juicing, fasting, and silent retreats—all in her hunt to become her "best self" or at least less of a hot mess.

With sharp wit and honest reflection, Delaney shifts from self-punishment to self-acceptance, discovering that true wellness isn't about looking perfect or following every rule. It's about balance, kindness, and actually listening to what your body wants—yes, even that extra slice of cake.

"Wellmania" perfectly blends body positivity with healthy habits, encouraging families to embrace wellness as a flexible, joyful journey. It's a funny, empowering reminder that being well starts with loving yourself just as you are.

"Wellmania" by Brigid Delaney was published in 2017 by Schwartz Publishing and later by Greystone Books, then adapted into a Netflix series. This witty nonfiction title is available in Neilson Hays Library's nonfiction section.



## THE YOGA GAME IN THE GARDEN

Written by Kathy Beliveau;  
illustrated by Denise Holmes

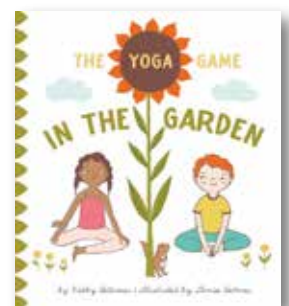
"The Yoga Game in the Garden" is a gentle, imaginative introduction to yoga and mindfulness for young children.

Through rhyming clues and nature-inspired poses, Kathy Beliveau invites readers to stretch, breathe, and move their bodies with joy and curiosity. Each page reveals a new creature or element of nature, encouraging kids to connect with the outdoors and their own physicality.

Denise Holmes's warm, inclusive illustrations reflect a diverse range of children, reinforcing the message that every body is worthy of movement and self-expression. The book promotes mindful movement not as exercise or performance, but as a way of celebrating the body.

Perfect for families and educators, this story supports positive body image, self-awareness, and emotional well-being. "The Yoga Game in the Garden" helps children build healthy habits rooted in fun and self-love, reminding them that their bodies are strong, unique, and something to be cherished.

"The Yoga Game in the Garden", written by Kathy Beliveau and illustrated by Denise Holmes, was published in 2014 by Simply Read Books. It is available in the children's section of Neilson Hays Library.



Prepared by Kit Lang @mskitlang for Neilson Hays Library, 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. The library is 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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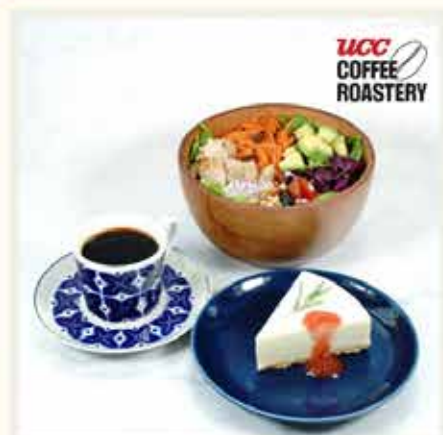
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# THE MENTAL-PHYSICAL CONNECTION

Jeannie explores the mind-body connection and gives real strategies for parents who want to feel better able to meet the challenges of modern parenting.

Photo by Camila Barrio from diversifylens



## About the Author

Jeannie is currently pursuing an honors degree in psychology with a focus on clinical applications. Prior to this, she was an acupuncturist specializing in fertility, stress management, and pain relief in Sydney for 12 years. With her unique blend of Eastern and Western therapeutic approaches and maternal perspective, as feature writer, Jeannie promises a valuable contribution to BAMBI Magazine.





*Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels*

**W**hen I was working as an acupuncturist, one lesson stood out time and time again: our mental and physical health are inseparable—like Yin and Yang, each shaping and responding to the other. I saw it in my clients every day. When they felt calmer and less anxious, they made healthier choices. They moved their bodies more, slept soundly, and ate food that truly nourished them. But when stress crept in, everything shifted. Exercise slipped away. Sleep turned restless. Food became more about quick fixes than fuel. And the body always responded—with pain, fatigue, or illness.

What struck me most was how easily this cycle spiralled in either direction. A tired, inflamed body made it harder to think clearly or feel calm. A low mood made it harder to care for the body. And I didn't just witness this in my clients—I felt it in myself, especially after becoming a mom of two.

Parenthood brings its own kind of beautiful chaos, but it also taught me this: caring for our bodies and minds isn't indulgence—it's survival. When we make small shifts to support one, the other follows. Better sleep, more movement, or simply a little compassion for ourselves can ripple outward—shaping not only our

health but also the way we show up for our families and daily lives. Here are four everyday strategies, backed by science, that can help strengthen your own mind-body connection.

### **BE MINDFUL OF YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE**

Everyday challenges can feel much heavier depending on our emotional lens. A toddler's boundless energy, for instance, might be seen as "destructive" on a stressful day—even if their behaviour is perfectly normal. High anxiety or stress makes us more reactive; snapping at loved ones, reaching for "comfort" food, or withdrawing altogether. Research shows that stress is closely linked with unhealthy coping behaviours like emotional eating (1).

The good news? Simply pausing to check in with yourself can break the cycle. Mindful parenting research shows that this small pause before reacting leads to calmer, warmer parent-child interactions and even helps children regulate their own emotions (2). Over time, these moments of reflection not only protect your relationships but also shape healthier personal habits—whether that's resisting stress-fuelled snacking or putting your phone aside to be more present.

### **AIM FOR BETTER SLEEP QUALITY AND QUANTITY**

Sleep is when both body and mind reset, making it one of the most powerful tools for well-being. Yet in our digital age, it's often the first thing to slip. One simple shift is to switch off devices at least an hour before bed. The blue light from screens suppresses melatonin—the hormone that signals sleep—and disrupts your circadian rhythm. By dimming the lights and setting your bedtime around 10pm, you give your body the best chance to align with its natural rhythms.

When we push bedtime past 11pm, cortisol (the stress hormone) can spike, making it harder to fall and stay asleep. Research shows that restricting sleep to about five hours a night significantly raises evening cortisol levels—leaving sleep fragmented and you moodier and more fatigued the next day (3). This sets up a vicious cycle: poor sleep fuels a low mood, which then makes sleep harder. Protecting your sleep hygiene—consistent hours, no heavy late-night meals, and a calming routine—can shift this cycle in your favour. You'll wake up steadier, less craving-driven, and more energised to face the day.

## MAKE HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES

What and when you eat has a direct impact on how you feel. A few simple adjustments can go a long way:

**Start with protein:** Eating protein and vegetables before carbs slows glucose absorption and helps keep blood sugar stable—preventing the crash that fuels fatigue and irritability.

**Favor complex carbs:** Whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables are digested more slowly and steadily, giving you longer-lasting energy than refined sugars or white flour.

**Watch your timing:** Large, late-night meals keep your body working when it should be resting, leading to grogginess the next morning. Aim to finish dinner two to three hours before bed, and if you're hungry later in the evening, keep it light.

These small shifts support steady energy, stable moods, and even better sleep, making nutrition a powerful piece of the mind-body puzzle.

## MAKE TIME FOR REGULAR EXERCISE

Exercise is often thought of as something we “should” do for our bodies, but its impact on the mind is just as powerful. A recent review of more than 1,000 trials found that physical activity was not only beneficial but, in many

cases, more effective than standard treatments for depression and anxiety (4). Whether it's walking, strength training, or yoga, regular movement boosts mood, lowers stress hormones, and helps release the neurochemicals that leave us calmer and more resilient.

Exercise also creates a positive ripple effect—improving sleep quality, regulating appetite, and sharpening focus. Even 30 minutes of moderate activity most days helps people fall asleep faster and enjoy deeper rest (5). And you don't need a gym membership—dancing in your living room, walking with your kids, or stretching before bed all count. The key is finding movement you enjoy and making it part of your rhythm.



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

These four strategies—mindful emotions, restorative sleep, nourishing food, and regular movement—don't exist in isolation. They reinforce each other, creating an upward spiral for both body and mind. And while the science is clear, the real magic happens in the small, everyday choices you make.

Pay attention to your inner state. Honour your body's need for rest and real food. Keep moving in ways that bring you joy. Over time, you'll likely notice you feel calmer, more energised, and more present with the people who matter most. That, to me, is the essence of the mind-body connection: caring for your body to uplift your mind, and calming your mind to strengthen your body.

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BAMBI Committee, 2025

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](mailto: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.

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# LITERACY ON THE GO

Getting stuck in Bangkok traffic with your little one is rarely much fun, but Kelly has some games to keep boredom at bay with the added bonus of building literacy.

Photo by Marcus Winkler on Pexels



## About the Author

Kelly is mom to Freya and Daisy and recently went back to work as an early years teacher. She previously worked as a primary educator and literacy specialist. Kelly loves reading fiction books, listening to true crime podcasts, and watching Disney princess movies.





Photo by Aflo Images from アフロ (Aflo)

I grew up in a rural area of New Jersey, USA, and perhaps because of my quiet, quaint upbringing, I have craved city living ever since. There's a certain charm to the vibrant chaos that you can't find anywhere else. I love our corner motosai drivers who help us cross Sukhumvit, the family of cats that seem to be fed by everybody who crosses their path, and the cheerful old man who sells breakfast and helps my daughter practice her wai on our walk to school. That being said, there's an aspect of Bangkok that I think we all universally despise—the traffic. While the poor urban planning might add to the charm of cozy, dead-end sois, the congested gridlock of Sukhumvit can make a ten-minute journey take an hour. Add a toddler or two to the mix and it can be a rough ride.

Recently, we made the poor choice to taxi home from Central World in the rain on a Saturday afternoon. Did we eventually put on "Peppa Pig" to keep the girls happy? Yes, we definitely did. There is absolutely no shame in using screens to keep the peace in bumper to bumper traffic. But it's also valuable to have some quick, practical ideas in your back pocket. One of the easiest games

to play is I-Spy. You can tailor it to any variety of ages, locations, and skillsets. Stuck in traffic with a two- or three-year-old? I spy something green! Sitting in the Samitivej waiting room for ages with a four- or five-year-old? I spy something that starts with the /d/ sound! Consider also incorporating rhyming words. I spy something that rhymes with bee! Is it a knee? Is it a key? No, it's a tree!

Another great activity for children from about three years old is to go on a sign hunt in search of environmental print. Environmental print is the printed words we see in everyday life. These are often logos or signs that are very familiar to children, such as the McDonald's logo, a LEGO label, or the ubiquitous 7-Eleven sign. Children might not be able to read the words yet, but they can begin to make connections with letters and symbols having sounds and meaning. This is one of the main building blocks of early literacy development. As children develop letter recognition skills, you can take it a step further. I am searching for a sign that has the letter /m/. I am searching for a sign that starts with the letter /s/. Not only does your child get literacy

practice, but they begin to develop deeper observations of their local community.

One of my daughter's favorite car games is interactive storytelling. Creating ongoing stories fosters a love for creativity and also helps develop comprehension and vocabulary. We love to practice sequence words and pretend to cook or bake in taxis. First, let's crack the eggs. Next, let's mix in the flour, sugar, and milk. Then we stir it all up. Finally we pour the batter into a pan and flip our pancakes! My daughter loves to add funny details and sound effects to each story. Another one of her favorites is "Spooky 7-Eleven". We pretend we're going shopping in a haunted 7-Eleven and take turns describing the weird things we see and buy. I have no idea how this strange story game developed, but it has become an essential part of our car journeys!

Creating opportunities for exploring and playing with letters, sounds, and words does not have to be hard work. Take advantage of your local environment and turn basic everyday tasks into simple literacy games that are engaging for everyone, parents included!

# **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](mailto:vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org) with inquiries.

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