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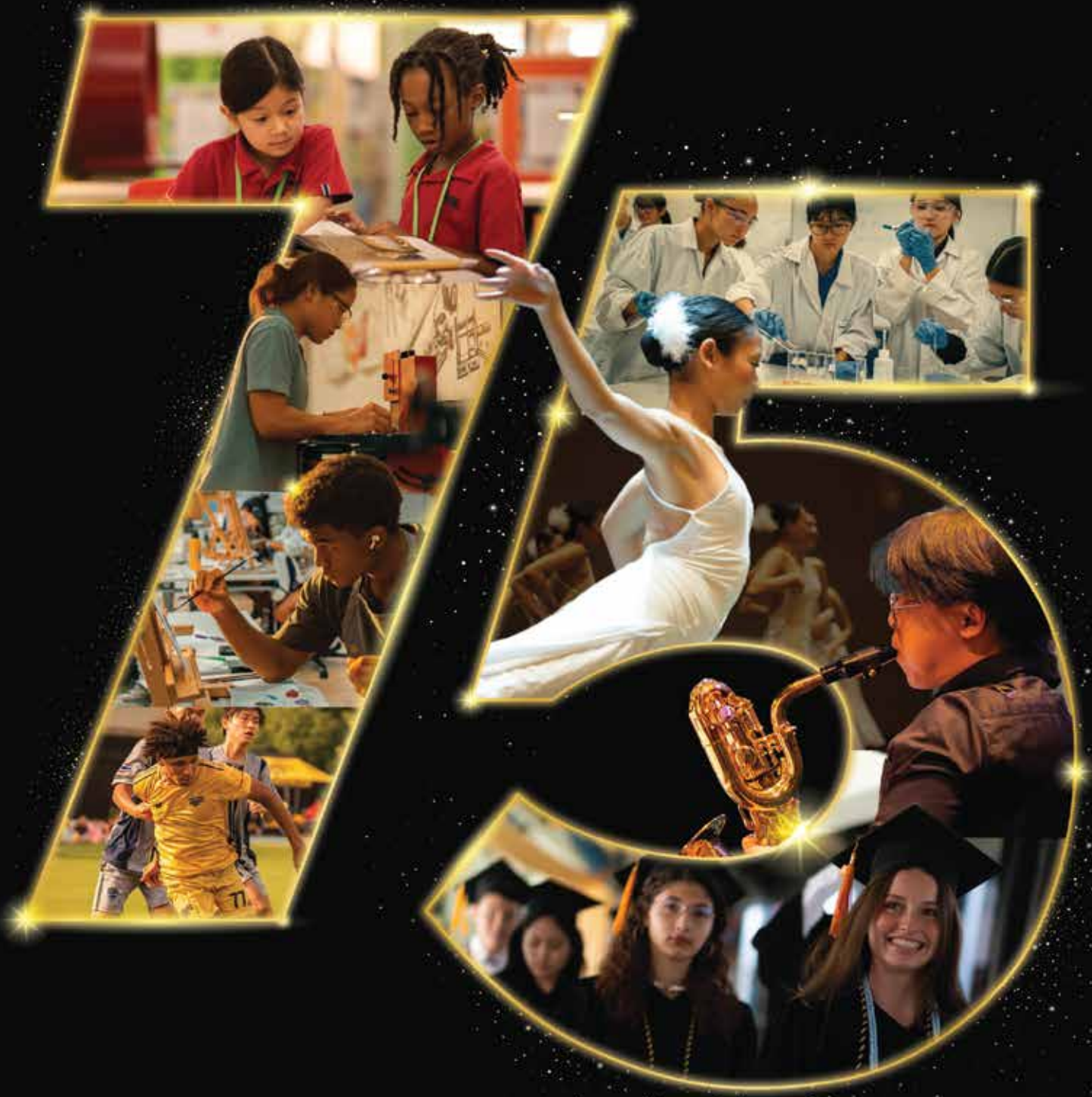
WHEN WORK COMES HOME

MAY 2026

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

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

- Encouraging the appropriate use of technology and medication for all births.
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- Providing information and training to health professionals involved in maternity care.
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Dear BAMBI families,

I wish everyone comfort and peace of mind in these especially trying times. Our theme for this month, "Seasons of Work and Care", could not be more on-point for the phase I have reached in life. As I think about what this means to me and my family, I remember the first few months of my shift from being a full-time working expat to a stay-at-home-mom: I went from traveling all around Asia meeting C-level executives from across the region to making my way across Sukhumvit in search of playgroups for my daughter where I met parents from across the globe—every single one of them trying to navigate parenthood while living in a foreign country.



It was brutal, mentally and emotionally. Seeing my old colleagues' work photos online made me question if I had made the right decision leaving a job I loved and enjoyed so much. They reminded me of what I was missing out on career-wise. Why did I have to choose? Why did I need to leave my old self for this new life? It took a lot of soul-searching and emotional healing to reaffirm my reasons, and to finally understand what success meant to me in this new season of my life. I look at my daughter, and I know deep in my heart that I made the best choice for her and our family.

Fast forward almost eight years and I am back in the workforce. Success feels very different now: having a fulfilling day at work and coming back home in time for dinner; going on business trips and doing fun things with my daughter on the weekends; attending client meetings online, while being able to rearrange my schedule to attend school programs.

As I look back on those years I spent at home, I know they gave me the biggest triumph of my life: time. Time with my child. Time getting to know her personality. Time to witness her childhood up close from a front-row seat. Returning to my "old self" taught me something vital: I did not lose my identity; I redefined it. Success varies in different seasons of life, and whenever we feel lost and unsure, all we need to do is remember who we are doing it for.

Wishing you success in whichever season of your life you are currently in.

Sassy Bairan
BAMBI Benefits Coordinator

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People often assume that the hardest transition is moving from one place to another. In my experience though, the most challenging shift is one where you give up a well-defined part of your identity for something far less clearly mapped. That's what happened to me 10 years ago when I stepped away from full-time work to become a stay-at-home mom to my first child.

On a Monday, I worked my final eight-hour day, nearly seven months pregnant. By Tuesday morning, I was on a flight to England, where my husband was pursuing his postgraduate degree. And on Wednesday, I woke up in a new apartment, in a new city, with no routine to anchor me—no office to get to, no emails to respond to, no report or review to complete. The structure I had relied on and the familiar sense of accomplishment that came from wrapping up a presentation or project was suddenly gone.

A few months in, I began to understand that "structure" would have to take on a looser meaning, and that "achievement" would be measured very differently—sometimes in the quiet satisfaction of mastering a diaper change in the dark or finally settling a fussy baby back to sleep just minutes before dawn.

This situation is not unfamiliar to parents. Many of us take a career break to focus on our children and growing family needs at some point in our lives, thinking we can always rejoin the workforce in a few years. When the time comes though, we often hesitate and feel guilty; do I really want to miss school events because of work commitments? Will I be too tired to enjoy their company after a long day of work? Am I ready to miss the firsts—first time pulling up to stand, first time waving, first recital, first day of high school...

Parenthood changes everything including how we work, rest, and define success. The relationship between parenting and work is constantly evolving, playing out in different ways for each family—from full-time jobs to full-time caregiving and from career breaks to comebacks. This month, with the theme, "Seasons of Work and Care", BAMBI Magazine explores these transitions and the art of finding balance in the messy middle of it all.

In "Shifting Ambitions", Natasha Duffin-Jones talks about how motherhood reshaped her identity, challenging her belief that she could have it all. Through matrescence and a career pause, she discovered a new purpose in balancing family and work, ultimately redefining success around presence, growth, and evolving personal values. We know that working from home offers flexibility for parents, but it can blur the line between work and family, making boundaries harder—and more important—to maintain. Anatta Zarchi acknowledges this in "When Work Comes Home: Tips for Remote-working Parents to Create Healthy Boundaries", and explains how parents can reduce guilt, stay productive, and be more present with their children.

Balance between partners is also important when it comes to navigating work-care transitions. In "Changing Partner Dynamics", Kelly Patten shares her family's experience, showing how open communication, empathy and shared responsibilities can help couples build a stronger, more balanced partnership.

In Readers' Corner, Kit Lang presents reviews of "The Push" by Ashley Audrain and "Love You Forever" by Robert Munsch. The former delves into the often unspoken doubts, pressures, and identity shifts that can accompany motherhood, while the latter is a story that captures the enduring, evolving bond between parent and child with simplicity and emotional depth.

In non-thematic content, we have a "Lazy One-pan Pork and Vegetable Bulgogi" recipe from Jeannie Kim that is effortless, nutritious and guaranteed to be a hit with your family, and "The Nanny Question" by Joe Barker who after much dithering, concludes that while having a nanny can stir guilt and questions of identity, it isn't "cheating" because their support ultimately makes parenting more balanced, manageable, and joyful.

We also have "Becoming the Parent You Needed" by Sheena Low which serves as a strong reminder that prioritising self-care and emotional balance helps create calmer families and more resilient children; "Coping With Loss and Bereavement" where Claudia Gomes highlights grief as a personal, non-linear process that unfolds through self-compassion and support; and "Beyond Thailand's Beaches" by Rachel Ofo that details child-friendly nature escapes near Bangkok for the whole family to enjoy.

This month's stories remind us that identity is not something we lose, but something that evolves, quietly reshaped by the roles we step into and the choices we make along the way. No matter what role you may be transitioning into, we hope you give yourself the grace to define success on your own terms, and the space to be present for the moments that matter most. Here's to you, and to every season you're going through.

Sanam Rahman
Editor

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SHIFTING AMBITIONS

What happens when the career you worked so hard to build no longer fits the family life you have? Natasha reflects on matrescence, identity, and the unexpected power of pressing pause.



Photo by Yan Krukau from Pexels



About the Author

Natasha Duffin-Jones is a mother of two children, an early years and primary teacher with a Masters Degree in Early Childhood, and a deputy designated safeguarding lead. She is also a children's yoga teacher with her company, Story Time Yoga, specialising in teaching yoga with children's stories developing literacy and emotional literacy. She likes visiting different places in Bangkok with her children and documenting their adventures on her Instagram page @bangkokmamayogi.



Photo by Katerina Holmes from Pexels

As a millennial approaching motherhood, I was absolutely adamant that my life, my career, and my aspirations would remain the same after I became a mother. Raised in a period where we were told we could have it all—a career, a family and a thriving social life—at the time I could not envisage a stage where I would want to give up the career I had worked so hard to build.

For years, I had worked at building up my career in different leadership roles, taking on extra responsibilities, completing various professional qualifications, studying for a Master's degree alongside teaching. My career felt like a huge part of my identity.

THE EMOTIONAL REALITY OF RETURNING TO WORK

Then, along came my daughter. Throughout my maternity leave, I felt like a black cloud was hanging over me as I dreaded returning to work and leaving my daughter. Returning to work in a position with significant responsibilities, with a four-and-a-half-month-old baby, was one of the most challenging times of my life. I found that my focus was no longer on my career. Each day, I was just missing my baby, worrying about

missing out, and trying to juggle a million tasks just to get through the day. I ached for the baby classes and playgroups that I was missing, and I no longer cared for the long meetings I felt I was simply enduring.

MATRESCENCE: A PROFOUND TRANSFORMATION

The fact of the matter is that, as a mother, I had changed. My child was born, and I was different. Matrescence is defined as the profound, multi-dimensional process of transitioning into motherhood, encompassing physical, hormonal, emotional, and social changes. The term matrescence was coined by anthropologist Dana Raphael in the 1970s and represents a developmental passage similar to adolescence, often marked by shifts in identity, relationship changes, and a complex mix of vulnerability and growth.

Through this process, I fundamentally changed as a person. I wanted time with my children. I wanted to be the one to go to the playgroups and baby classes with them, to be the one to feed them, comfort them, and be there for them. I softened. I empathized. My heart grew. I saw the subtle shifts in people. I became

kinder, more forgiving and I simply needed my children as much as they needed me.

CHOOSING FAMILY OVER WORK

My husband and I knew that we wanted two children and we were fortunate enough to quickly get pregnant with our second child. Then I was pregnant with a one-year-old and a busy job. I knew something had to give.

Luckily, things lined up as my contract was ending and the leadership roles were being restructured, so I decided to take a year out—something I would never have dreamed of before having children. I resigned from my job and stepped out into the unknown. Then, I had a baby and a toddler at home and life was, if I am honest, totally crazy. My memory of that whole year is of it being a bit of a whirlwind! Balancing naps, feeding, playgroups, baby classes, meltdowns and more was overwhelming and also deeply lonely at times.

I absolutely loved being a stay-at-home-mom, but I also missed using my brain. Fortunately, I managed to find various ways to keep myself sane, such as leading playgroups



Photo by Vlada Karpovich from Pexels

and writing articles for BAMBI, making friends and organising playdates with other moms, starting my toddler and baby yoga classes, and finding some brief time for myself with weekly workouts with mom friends.

Still it was hard for me. For so long a part of my worth, in my mind, was attached to my efficiency and productivity, and these concepts were no longer part of my world. Moreover, asking my husband for money was just something I really struggled with after being financially independent for so long. While my time at home with my children was so precious to me, my own self-esteem and self-worth were pretty heavily impacted.

A SURPRISING SHIFT IN PERSPECTIVE

After a year, we needed more financial stability, so I returned to cover teaching—teaching other teacher’s classes—for three days a week. Suddenly, I had a job, but not a career. Another shift in perspective I had not imagined.

Yet, this phase brought its own growth. Teaching across different classes and age groups helped me develop professionally, while the absence of planning, assessments,

and administrative responsibilities made the work far less stressful. My daughter started school, and it was wonderful to be able to collect her from school and be involved in her life by supporting her through the transition as well as having more one-on-one time with my son before he started school.

The following year, I moved to four days a week and had a class of my own. By working four days a week, I was also able to take on a role with a small level of responsibility and this helped me evaluate how I wanted to grow as a professional and decide which areas I am most interested in. My passions have shifted towards supporting families and the pastoral care of children.

THE VALUE OF A CAREER PAUSE

Neha Rauch coined the term “Power Pause”, reframing pausing a career for parenthood to empower parents to take a career break. As parents in the workforce, we can support mothers and fathers in taking a career break and returning to work by educating and empowering each other compassionately.

I have been a full-time working mother, a part-time working mother, and a stay-at-home mother and each role has its own challenges. There is

no easy path, and everyone needs a different path depending on their family and financial situations.

For me, a career pause has been a powerful way of reframing my identity and goals—for both my family and myself. I am a better teacher because I am a parent. It is important that workplaces value the wealth of knowledge and skills that come with being a parent, while also supporting parents in pausing and redefining their careers.

My children are still very young, so maybe one day, I will feel the drive to achieve more, but for now, I am enjoying being present and learning to focus on the small valuable family moments which are quickly turning into memories.

FURTHER READING

Tolley, Z., *What is Matrescence and Why Does it Matter?*, 2020, available online at: <https://birthtrauma.org.au/what-is-matrescence/>

Rauch, N., *The Power Pause, How to Plan a Career Break after Kids and Come Back Stronger Than Ever*, 2025.



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WHEN WORK COMES HOME:

TIPS FOR REMOTE-WORKING PARENTS TO CREATE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

When your office and home are one and the same, healthy boundaries don't just happen on their own. In this article, Anna and her NCS colleagues offer practical tips for creating boundaries and restoring balance that work for the whole family.

Photo by Mizuno K 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. For more information visit ncsbkk.com/ncs/



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Working from home has many benefits: less commuting, more flexibility, and for parents, being able to care for your children during the day. But those same benefits can sometimes turn out to be a headache. The term “work-life balance” originated from the concept of work being outside the home, but now, with remote work in full swing, that balance can be harder to achieve—especially if you have children at home with you. But that doesn’t necessarily mean this is a bad thing, it just means you might need to re-adjust some boundaries.

When you’re at home, you might constantly alternate between working, fixing your child a snack, washing the dishes, or handling other household tasks. Some parents might feel guilty for not being present for their children, even though they’re under the same roof. This feeling of guilt can make it harder to maintain boundaries, which is why it’s important to be especially mindful of where things are at and how it’s affecting you.

HOW TO SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES WHEN WORKING FROM HOME

You might be wondering how to set these boundaries when work and home are literally in the same building, or even in the same room. NCS counselors Savinee and Tatiana have some tips to share that have worked well in their practice. Keep in mind that every household is different, what works seamlessly for one family may not suit another. Think of these as starting points to experiment with rather than rigid rules, and feel free to adapt them to fit your own rhythm and circumstances:

Signs: Make a sign (or signs) to put on your door. For example, you could make a green sign that indicates to your family that they can come in, and a red sign with “do not enter” or “do not disturb” that signals you’re in the middle of something important and need full concentration. You could also ask your children to help you make the signs and color them. This can help them feel included even as

you set boundaries and may help them better understand the sign’s function.

Set your working hours: If you have flexible hours but are struggling to maintain boundaries, it may be beneficial to set your own working hours. For example, you may find that you often end up taking care of the house during the day and then cramming to do work right before bed, or that you’re constantly multitasking. If complete flexibility leaves you feeling drained or unmotivated, it’s okay to create a schedule separating work time from family time.

Schedule regular breaks: Aside from setting your working hours, it can also be helpful to schedule breaks. For example, if you are caring for a young child, you might want to schedule a ten minute break once every hour to check in on them. This ensures that you balance both responsibilities without spending too much time on either one.

Avoid multitasking: You might be thinking, “That’s not an issue for



Photo by Maria Kray from Pexels

me, I'm great at multitasking," and unfortunately that's a common trap many people fall into. It's good to be able to multi-task when you need to, keyword: need, but if you can avoid multitasking, especially if you are working on something important, then it is better to do so. When your brain has to constantly switch back and forth between different things, it can be harder to focus on the task at hand. If you can avoid multitasking by using the techniques above, then we encourage you to do so.

The work corner: Boundaries also extend to your physical workspace. For example, it will probably be easier for you to maintain boundaries with your children during work hours if you are working from your desk, office, or specific designated "work" spot, rather than the couch or dining table, which might signal to them that it's okay to interrupt you, and may also make it more difficult for you to refuse them.

Communication: Communicate your boundaries and any methods you're using, such as signs and schedules, to your children. If your child comes up to you while you're working, you could say something like, "I'm

working right now, but I have a break in one hour. We can eat lunch and play together then, okay?"

Being a role-model: Try to remember that it's beneficial for your child to see you in the other roles of your life. You are one of their models for what a good work ethic looks like. Part of development is also learning that the universe is not centered around you all the time—this isn't a cause for guilt, even if you find yourself feeling that way. If your child is a little older, or in their adolescence, then this would be a great time to discuss these work values with them. Remember, these values can be cultivated from a very young age, not only through words, but also through observation.

Boundary-setting benefits both you and your children in all aspects of life. Boundaries help you focus more and do better at work, while also preventing burnout and creating a healthy balance where you don't feel like work and home have morphed into one big indistinguishable, entangled lump. If you are feeling guilty, remind yourself that this is also good for your children, even if turning them away makes you feel

bad in the moment. As mentioned above, this is a part of development and can help create a positive model for them. A healthier, more balanced version of you is also more equipped to take good care of your children and to be more intentional in how you engage with them. For example, it's a lot more meaningful if you can be fully present when you spend time with them, rather than if you're answering emails at the same time.

It's also worth being patient with yourself as you find your footing. Establishing new routines and habits takes both time and effort, and there will be days where the boundaries slip, the schedule goes out of the window, and everyone ends up a little frazzled. That's OKAY. The goal isn't perfection, it's progress. Even small, consistent steps toward a healthier structure will compound over time, both for your own wellbeing and for the environment your children grow up in.

Finally, please remember boundary-setting doesn't mean you're choosing work over your children. Instead, it's about taking care of yourself so that you can take the best care of them.

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CHANGING PARTNER DYNAMICS

Kelly explains how, by communicating clearly and openly with each other, she and her husband try to balance work and parental responsibilities without letting resentment build or undermine their partnership.

Photo by RDNE Stock project from 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 Sarah Chai from Pexels

As new parents, we expect a myriad of changes all centered around the tiny human who has suddenly appeared. Nap routines, feeding schedules, diaper changes—does this poo look funny to you?—suddenly take center stage. Frankly, like most parents I was unprepared for all of the highs and lows of parenthood. Catching puke in my hands? Sucking snot through a gadget reminiscent of crazy straws from childhood parties? The ridiculous giggles that emerge when you play the piano on your child's tummy? We've all been there, and it's easy enough to commiserate, sorry, communicate with other parents about child-centered experiences. However, the changing roles and expectations of partners often get pushed aside once your marriage is no longer front and center.

Our first daughter was born during the height of Covid lockdowns. I resigned from my job to become a Stay-At-Home-Mom (SAHM), but my partner was working from home. Our bubble of isolation seemed to keep us in a healthy balance. Both of us taking turns for night time wake ups, sharing domestic responsibilities, and being generally supportive of one another.

This balance shifted once lockdown lifted. My husband left for work everyday, interacted with friends and colleagues, and generally maintained the same life as he had before. Meanwhile it felt like my life had been turned upside down. I deeply underestimated the isolation of staying at home and how much I'd previously enjoyed connecting with coworkers for casual chats. My days were suddenly filled by singing "Hop Little Bunnies" on repeat, embracing baby-led weaning and the ensuing mess, and trying to connect with other moms and babies. The mental load of motherhood took over, and I was somehow always busy. Being a SAHM was satisfying in its own ways, but my husband and I both found the evening hours an ever increasing challenge. I was eager for a moment to myself, my husband wanted to relax after work. But there's no clocking out of parenting and without clear and direct communication, we quickly learned that this was a recipe for resentment.

Around the time our second daughter was eight months old, I found myself unexpectedly heading back to work. This was a huge shift for our family, as our roles didn't automatically reset. My husband continued his role as a working

parent, but once again I faced a transition. Suddenly, I found myself maintaining my domestic responsibilities, while also going to work each day. After a few months of exhaustion, we realized something needed to change.

It's easy to brush shifting power dynamics under the proverbial rug. Rebalancing our dynamic didn't happen overnight. Communicating openly, and consciously redistributing responsibilities helped us immensely. The first step we took was listing out every task or job whether physical—doing the laundry—or invisible—managing clothing sizes. Being flexible and verbally recognizing each other's workload helped make the transition smoother. We have also tried to avoid the comparison trap. Debating who slept more or whose day was more demanding only leads to bickering and defensive attitudes. Of course all of this is easier said than done, but taking steps to recognize and verbalize shifting roles and identities can help families to thrive.

Transitions after kids are never going to be perfect. Leading with empathy and openness strengthens the partnership and ultimately the family.

BOOKS TO INSPIRE

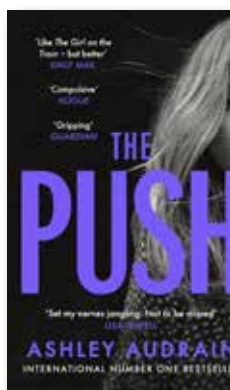
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THE PUSH

By Ashley Audrain

Ashley Audrain's *The Push* is a tense, unsettling novel that challenges comforting ideas about motherhood. It follows Blythe as she raises her daughter while grappling with a growing sense that something isn't right. Rather than presenting caregiving as instinctive or fulfilling, Audrain explores uncertainty, self-doubt, and the quiet erosion of identity.



What makes the novel compelling is its focus on the unspoken side of parenting—the pressure to appear composed and the internal conflict that often goes unseen. Blythe's experience reveals how easily confidence and a sense of self can shift under the weight of expectation.

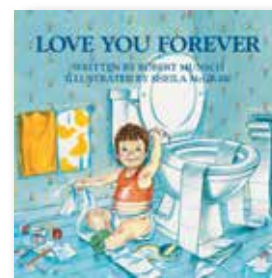
Audrain offers no easy answers, instead presenting a raw and ambiguous portrait that lingers with the reader. It's a powerful read for anyone interested in more honest, complex portrayals of family life, and in questioning the stories we are often told about what parenting should feel like.

The Push by Ashley Audrain was published in Canada by Penguin Random House in 2021. A copy can be found in the fiction section of Neilson Hays Library.

LOVE YOU FOREVER

Written by Robert Munsch and illustrated by Sheila McGraw

Love You Forever by Robert Munsch is one of those books that many parents end up coming back to again and again. It follows the relationship between a mother and her son as he grows, using simple, repetitive language that makes it perfect for reading together. There's something really comforting about the rhythm of the story, and it naturally creates a moment of closeness between parent and child.



As a parent, it's easy to connect with the deep love at the centre of the book—that feeling of wanting to hold onto your child even as they grow and change. At the same time, there's a quiet intensity to that love that can feel both beautiful and a little overwhelming.

It's a lovely choice if you're looking for a story to share at bedtime, one that opens up space for connection, conversation, and those small, meaningful moments together.

Love You Forever by Robert Munsch was published in Canada by Firefly Books in 1986. Munsch is a Canadian author known for his engaging, heartfelt children's stories that often explore family relationships and emotional connection. A copy can be found in the children's section of most libraries.



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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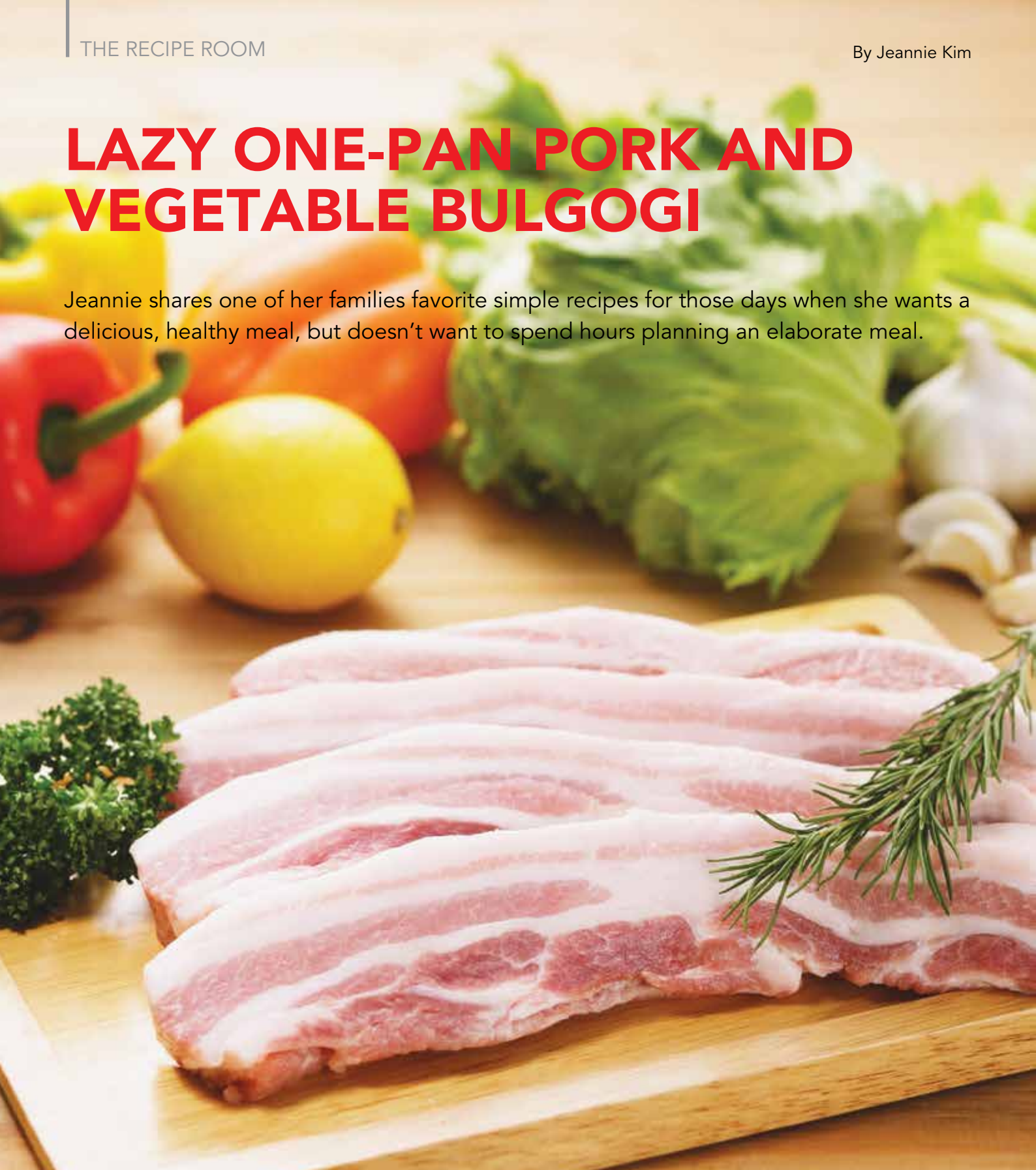
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LAZY ONE-PAN PORK AND VEGETABLE BULGOGI

Jeannie shares one of her families favorite simple recipes for those days when she wants a delicious, healthy meal, but doesn't want to spend hours planning an elaborate meal.



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.

This is one of my favorite go-to lazy recipes when I want a low-effort but highly nutritious dinner for my ever so picky three-year-old. I originally found it on a Korean forum, but made my own tweaks to make the preparation faster and the recipe relatively easy to make. The marination is incredibly effortless and requires a blender to smoothly blend the bulgogi marinade. Pork loin shabu can be found in Tops or Villa, either in the butcher section or the frozen meat section.

There are a few essential tricks to making this recipe super tasty: first, marinate the pork for at least one hour—overnight is even better; second, let the pork marinate sit out at room temperature for 30-60 minutes before cooking; and lastly, cook the vegetables with the pork in stages to retain their texture.

I tend to serve this pork bulgogi with rice and mix it with egg so it becomes an even lazier bibimbap without the hassle of having to cook vegetables separately.

INGREDIENTS

Serves 4 adults

Marinate ingredients

- 1 peeled apple (remove core)
- 4 large cloves garlic
- 1 tablespoon white sugar or honey
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 4 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 2 tablespoon cooking sake
- 2 cm piece of peeled ginger

Pork and vegetable ingredients

- 300g pork loin shabu
- Cooking oil—Olive or Avocado are my preferences.
- 1 tablespoon oyster sauce
- 1 thinly sliced brown onion
- ½ carrot (thinly sliced)
- ½ pack green beans (chopped into 2 cm pieces)
- 1 pack of shiitake mushrooms (chopped into 2 cm pieces)
- 1 pack of spinach (washed and chopped)



PREPARATION

1. Blend all the Marinate ingredients. If you don't have a blender, then grate the apple, mince the garlic, and combine with the remaining ingredients in a stainless steel bowl.
2. Add the pork loin Shabu to the marinate in a large mixing bowl and combine thoroughly until all of the pork is covered in the marinate.
3. Place the pork bulgogi marinate in the fridge overnight to marinate. If pressed for time then leaving it out of the fridge to marinate for one hour is OKAY.
4. Put carrots and onions in one bowl, beans and mushrooms in a second bowl, and keep the spinach in a third bowl.

COOKING

1. Take the pork bulgogi marinate out of the fridge 30 minutes before cooking.
2. Heat a large frying pan to medium high heat. Add avocado oil or olive oil when the pan is hot.
3. Stir fry the carrots and onion until slightly soft.
4. Then add the pork bulgogi to the carrots and onion and stir fry.
5. When the pork is slightly pink stir in 1 tablespoon of oyster sauce and add the beans and mushrooms.
6. Once the beans and mushroom are soft add in the spinach and cook until the spinach is slightly soft
7. Serve with rice

If you want to try something a little different these are a couple of other vegetable combinations that I've tried and my family has loved:

Eggplant, capsicum, oyster mushrooms, bean sprouts (add the bean sprouts last)

Napa cabbage, broccoli, sugar snap peas, bok choy (add the bok choy last)

Any of these combinations make a delicious and healthy meal that can be prepared at any stage through the day and then quickly cooked when you're ready.

Here I am!



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THE NANNY QUESTION

To nanny or not to nanny? That is the question Joe Barker ponders as he enjoys the perks of having extra hands to help at home while cherishing the time he spends alone with his kids.



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 Thai beach holidays. Find Joe on SubStack: BangkokDad bangkokdad.substack.com/

"Is having a nanny cheating?"

No, of course not. Whether it is helping with the cleaning, cooking, laundry or childcare, anything that reduces our workload makes us more relaxed, present, attentive and happier parents. Nannies are definitely one of the perks of parenting in Thailand. In fact, long ago, before I even knew we were going to be married let alone having children, my future wife told me that we would be raising our children in Thailand as then we would be able to afford a nanny. At the time, foolishly, I doubted her, clearly I didn't appreciate how thoroughly my life was planned.

I'm sure that those without nannies imagine they bring an almost Mary Poppins' level of joy and happiness to lucky parents. Children immaculately dressed, polite and smiling, houses shining and clean. While the reality is a little less magical, having a nanny certainly makes parenting easier. Parents without any help must feel that the amount of child-free time we get is the stuff of myths. If I want to go climbing or need a couple of hours alone with a laptop, all I have to do is tell our nanny that she's in charge, something that she has long assumed, and then, so long as I can sneak out of the house before the children notice, I'm a free man!

More importantly, the laundry and cooking are all someone else's responsibility. Like enchanted furniture in a rather dull fairy tale, our drawers are always full of clean clothes, and, rather more excitingly, our table overflows with delicious meals.

Nannies are undeniably great. Ours makes my life so much easier, and yet one of my favorite things about going on holiday is not having a nanny. There are numerous reasons for this, mainly linked to my wobbly ego.

Having a nanny leaves me writhing with self-doubt as to whether or not I'm a proper father. I claim to be a Stay-At-Home-Dad (SAHD) but surely this is simply a sop to my pride; wouldn't, Father-Lounging-On-The-Sofa (FLOTS) be a more accurate title? After all, our nanny would do all this childcare better and with a lot less swearing than I do. As much as I reassure myself that I am a real parent, it is hard not to feel a hypocritical fraud when I'm lying by the pool, children home with Nanny, sipping cocktails and moaning to friends in the UK about the challenges of parenthood. I may have to work harder when we travel but at least the relentless childcare quietens those nagging questions of self-worth.

As if the way she forces me to confront my missing *raison d'être* wasn't enough of a reason to dislike employing a nanny, there is the sneaking suspicion



that she knows she is better at parenting than me and resents having to watch my bungling attempts to change a nappy or remember how many meals to feed a four-year-old.

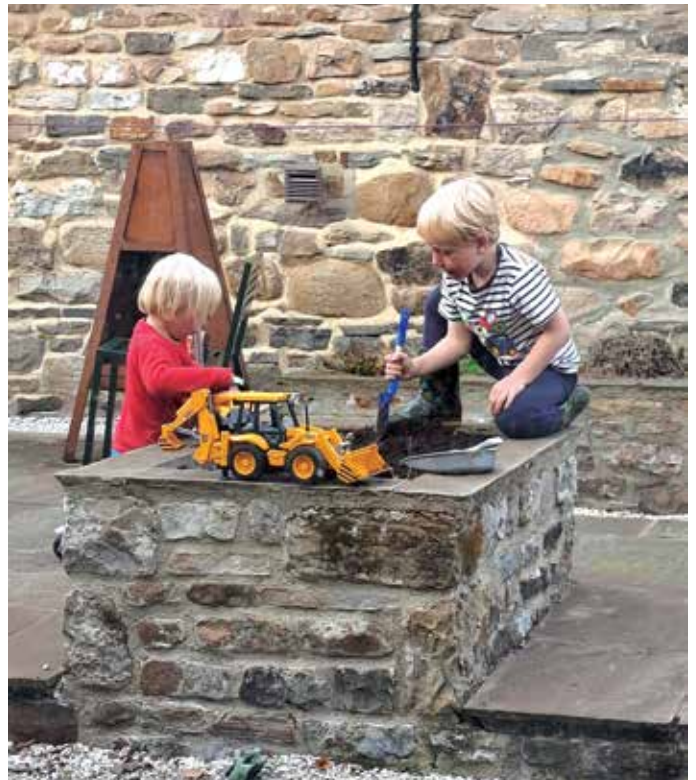
When Marty was born she certainly didn't think I was capable of caring for her precious new charge. If my wife said she was going to leave me with Marty for a while, Nanny understood that as, "let daddy hold the baby, but make sure he doesn't drop it, and take the baby off him as soon as you can." It was several months before I could change a nappy without finding her hovering over my shoulder, and feeding Marty was almost impossible because as soon as he cried and I went to make his milk she would sweep him into her arms and be sat ready to feed him with the bottle I'd made. Such menial tasks, said her contented smile, were all I was to be trusted with. Eventually, after many patient explanations, it was accepted that I was allowed to look after Martin. In fact, by the time Alice came along it was expected that I would look after Marty so that she could concentrate on feeding her new baby, and thus my battle to hold the baby began again.

Much of my first few months as a parent was spent fighting the nanny for a little time with my children. Then, suddenly, I found myself struggling to find her when I wanted a bit less time with them. Marty was waking me at 4 am, so by 9 am I'd had plenty of quality

time with my son and the thought of passing him onto his nanny, so that I could shower and nap, was delightful. It was precisely at this point that no nanny could be found. Similarly I would arrive home sweaty and exhausted after a hard morning on playground swing duty, our run home powered entirely by the promise of fresh clothes, a cool drink and a Marty-free-hour. At which point the nanny would invariably have gone to the market. Frazzled, I would have to face that most crushing of disappointments: finding that the child-free moments you are longing for have been cancelled.

It's easy to think that my dislike of nannies is the fault of our nanny and her suspicion of me as an interloper into the ancestral home. After all, she started as my wife's nanny over forty years ago so is far more a member of the family than I'll ever be. Really she is more of a paid, bonus mother-in-law than a conventional nanny, with all that entails for her hapless and inadequate pseudo son-in-law. She certainly has strong views on how our house should be organized and very much prefers my wife to me. While this could be a source of tension, we're actually incredibly lucky to have a nanny who has such a strong link to our children.

The real problem is that I'm uncomfortable sharing my home. When I'm dragged from bed to look after Alice I'm not really dressed for company and I don't want to be worrying about stumbling half naked into Nanny while I'm trying to change a nappy, juggle a screaming baby, make a bottle of milk and avoid waking anyone



else up. Even when I'm decently dressed I don't want my semi-comatose morning hunt for caffeine interrupted, not even by the kindest of nannies.

It will seem strange to those who find themselves constantly battling housework, but one of the things I find most annoying about a nanny is the way chores I'd been saving up get done. I'm not saying I usually want to wash up, cook, or do laundry—who does?—but, if I'm honest, some days chores sound more fun than yet another hour of directionless childcare. Completing simple household tasks gives me a sense of achievement, and often the kids love helping. Washing up in particular is really just water play by another name. If we come down from naptime and discover that the pile of dirty dishes we'd been planning to play with has magically disappeared, we're all disappointed.

Thus while nannies are certainly not cheating, they can make me feel cheated out of the peace and privacy I want at home and deprived of the time and chores I want to share with my kids. Which might make you think that I want to get rid of our nanny, but you would be absolutely wrong. Much as I love having time away from Nanny, going back to her afterwards is amazing. After the exhaustion of perpetual parenting, it's wonderful to pass over child-rearing duties, and to rest, recharge and find time for ourselves.

Having a nanny may make me feel like a fraud of a SAHD, but it undoubtedly makes me a better, nicer and happier parent.

Photos courtesy of the author



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BEYOND THAILAND'S BEACHES

With so many beautiful beaches in Thailand, we may find ourselves spending all our vacation days on the sand, soaking up the sun, and listening to the crashing waves. Avid adventurer Rachel explores what more Thailand has to offer beyond the beaches.

Thailand is a tropical country, which boasts average yearly temperatures in the 80s. So heading out on a nature walk isn't always the first thing on people's minds. However, with popular destinations like Khao Yai, Kanchanaburi and Hua Hin just a few hours away from Bangkok, it's easy enough to take a trip out and spend the day splashing in waterfalls, inhaling fresh air and taking in what Thai forests have to offer. Below are a few places that are ideal for nature lovers and their mini nature lovers. The following locations are particularly child-friendly, so order your child a pair of bird-watching binoculars and get on your way!



PHRAYA NAKHON CAVE, KHAO SAM ROI YOT NATIONAL PARK

approximately 260 km from Bangkok

This park can be found about an hour outside of central Hua Hin. The amazing thing about Sam Roi Yot is that it's situated on a beach. So those struggling with giving up a beach day for a hike can have both here! You can hike all the way, or you can rent a longboat that zips through the ocean to the beach, shortening the hike time by about 30 minutes. Upon entering the trail, keep your eyes peeled for monkeys swinging from branches overhead. The hike itself isn't particularly long or difficult, but with the elevation and heat you might need to stop for several water breaks. About 300 meters up the trail, there is a breathtaking lookout point overlooking the beach, and a cave another 300 meters up. Inside the cave, you can rest, enjoy a significant drop in temperature, and gaze upon a pavilion constructed over 100 years ago. And if you're worried about taking your children, there are plenty of toddlers leading the way for their parents. My four-year-old basically ran up.



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.

NAMTOK HAEW NAROK, KHAO YAI NATIONAL PARK

Approximately 150 km from Bangkok

Situated in Khao Yai National Park, this is the largest waterfall in the area. The hike itself is short, with lots to see on the way. There are five bridges that children will surely enjoy crossing. You'll also see plenty of lizards scurrying across the trail. To reach the waterfall, you descend a fairly steep stairway. This definitely requires rail holding and possibly hand holding. My child stayed on my back. There isn't much to do besides looking at the water as swimming is prohibited, so it's probably best to stay in Khao Yai, or tie in a visit to another nearby waterfall. There are also picnic areas in fields or next to nearby lakes, which would be great to further enjoy the outdoors. Maybe you'll even spot an elephant or two since they're known to frequent the area. Between the drive and park entry fees it's probably best to plan on spending several hours in the park.



NAMTOK SAM LAN NATIONAL PARK

approximately 125 km from Bangkok

Located in Saraburi Province, this park is fairly close to Bangkok and has a little bit of everything, from camping to hiking to bike paths. There are three waterfalls which draw plenty of crowds, even during the dry season. Upon arriving at the park, you're greeted by a small lake in the center where many people set up tents to relax. You can rent camping gear, but if you're not into sleeping on the ground, there are also bungalows available for rent. For those more interested in getting active, there is a paved road, ideal for walking and biking. This road leads to the trailhead. The path heading to the first waterfall is fairly easy, flat and short, making it a favorite among children. And if you're not up for returning to Bangkok immediately, you can order some Thai food from the restaurant and have lunch near the lake.

Overall, with millions of acres of forests in Thailand, there are almost unlimited opportunities for nature lovers. Hundreds of trails and waterfalls are sure to keep you and your little ones busy. And although they all share similar geographic features, each forest has its special characteristics, keeping you exploring beyond the beach.

Photos courtesy of the author.

This article first appeared in BAMBI June 2022.

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BECOMING THE PARENT YOU NEEDED

Sheena talks to psychotherapist LJ Jones about the emotional load that modern mothers carry and shares some simple ideas and practices to help ease their mental burden and allow them to be more relaxed and present parents.

Photo by Karol G from Pexels



About the Author

Sheena is a mother to four-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.



Photo by Karola G from Pexels

Motherhood in modern day society is high pressure. Whether you are leading a team from a skyscraper in Sukhumvit or managing a household of staff and young children as a stay-at-home mother, the mental load is heavy. On top of trying to exercise, even when there's a heat wave, and trying to be a 'conscious parent' and trying to get your kids to eat healthy, there's a lot of striving and not enough relaxing. We are often told to enjoy every moment, yet many of us spend those moments in a state of high alert.

Psychotherapist LJ Jones understands this weight. As a BACP-registered counselor with eleven years of clinical experience across Thailand, UK and Beijing, she specializes in maternal mental health and somatic therapy. She is a mother and a grandmother. Her work focuses on the body's role in emotional health so I asked her for her thoughts on the challenges modern mothers face and how we can focus on our emotional well-being as mothers.

THE INVISIBLE LOAD

The reality for many mothers is a life of dual roles. You might be a stay-at-home mother managing a

complex domestic schedule or an entrepreneur running a business from a home office. Regardless of the job title, the mental work is twice as high as it was for previous generations.

This creates a physiological state of constant stimulation. Many women are living in a body that forgets how to stand down. This high-alert state is a biological imbalance. It leads to a "victim mindset" where the schedule runs the person. When you are stuck in this cycle, admitting you are tired feels like a betrayal of your love for your children.

Mom guilt is the result of this conflict. It is a mix of biological maternal instincts and the social pressure to look perfect. Social media makes this worse by presenting a fake, filtered version of parenting. The physical intensity of pregnancy and delivery changes a woman's brain. When we add the pressure of the modern lifestyle, the nervous system becomes overwhelmed.

THE MOTHER IS THE ANCHOR

A child does not have the ability to regulate their own emotions. They rely on the mother's nervous system

to feel safe. If the mother is vibrating with anxiety, the child will match that energy. Jones explains that a regulated mother allows her child to "borrow" her calm.

This makes your own wellbeing the most important factor in your child's development. You cannot provide a sense of safety if your own body feels under attack. Self-care is a requirement for a healthy home.

HOW TO STEADY YOUR SYSTEM

Regulation does not happen during a yearly vacation. It happens in the small, daily choices to pause. These actions help move the body out of a state of alert and back into a state of connection. Here are some small simple actions you can try.

Set a morning intention: Before the chaos of the day starts, decide how you want to feel. Choosing an intention gives your brain a sense of agency.

Practice five minutes of stillness: Do not wait for a spa day. Find five minutes every day to sit in silence and breathe. Notice where your body feels tight.

Acknowledge the tiredness: Stop fighting the fatigue with guilt. Admit that you are exhausted. This honesty reduces the internal pressure on your nervous system.

Find three specific gratitudes: Every morning, identify three things you are thankful for. This trains your brain to look for safety instead of threats.

Accept help without guilt: If you have a partner or a helper, let them take the lead. Stepping back is necessary so you can return to your children with actual presence.

YOUR PHONE IS A BARRIER TO CONNECTION

The current generation of parents is the first to raise children while living in a virtual world. This creates a specific challenge for connection. We use apps to track feedings and naps, which can turn parenting into a data-driven task.

True presence is about being fully attuned to your child's inner world. It is found in the "messy" moments rather than the planned ones.

Phone-free zones: Create specific times, like meals or the hour before bed, where phones are put away. This signals to your child that they are your priority.

Small moments: Connection happens during a walk outside or while drawing on the floor together. It does not require grand gestures or expensive outings.

Mindful awareness: Take a moment to see the world from your child's perspective. Put aside your to-do list for ten minutes and just be in their world.

REPARANT YOURSELF

One of the most underrated parts of the parenting journey involves looking backward. To be a conscious parent, you must examine your own



Photo by Yan Krukau from Pexels

childhood wounds. This is called "reparenting".

We all carry thorns from our past. These might be insecurities or patterns of behavior we learned from our own parents. If you do not address these wounds, you are likely to transfer them to your children. Becoming the parent you once needed allows you to provide the safety you might have lacked. This work is what prevents generational cycles from repeating.

RAISING RESILIENCE

The goal of this emotional work is to raise autonomous, healthy individuals. Resilience is the ability to handle the thorns of life without breaking.

Emotional freedom: Children need to know they are safe to express a full range of feelings. This is especially vital for boys, who are often taught to hide their vulnerability.

Secure attachment: When a parent is regulated and present, the child

develops a secure base. They learn that their feelings are valid and that they can return to safety when life gets difficult.

Autonomy: A healthy child is one who feels empowered to grow and explore while knowing they are supported.

A FINAL WORD

The years when children are small pass very quickly. In a fast city like Bangkok, it is easy to spend these years just surviving the schedule. Jones encourages mothers to lock in and be present.

Your happiness and your health are the foundation of your family. When you choose to heal your own nervous system and look at your own story, you give your children the best possible start. Focus on the small moments. The work starts with you, but the benefits will be seen in the healthy, resilient adults your children become. Enjoy them while they are small.

References

L.J., Jones, (2026) Become The Parent You Needed: Heal Yourself to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children. Shadowscript Group.

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GROUP

COPING WITH LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT

Loss is an inevitable part of life, yet no two experiences of grief are the same. With her background in emotional intelligence and coaching, Claudia explores the realities of bereavement and how to cope without trying to “fix” what we feel.

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About the Author

Claudia Gomes is an expert in Emotional Intelligence and Intercultural Awareness, and an ICF-certified Level 2 Transformative Coach. With 20 years of international experience across Spain and Thailand, 17 of them based in Bangkok, she specializes in bridging cultures, strengthening human connections, and fostering meaningful global collaboration. Contact Claudia at: contact@claudiagomes.coach; [linkedin.com/in/claudiagomes-coach/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/claudiagomes-coach/)

In life, we will all go through many different types of loss. It could be the loss of a loved one, a relationship, a job, an identity, an image of ourselves, a physical possession, along with many other forms of loss.

The reality is that we will all need to process losses, but we know that everyone processes bereavement in different ways. Grief is deeply personal, each person moves through it in their own way and on their own timeline. The stages can vary, and there is no one-size-fits-all process.

Although we will all grieve at some point in our lives, the way we respond to it can make all the difference.

WHAT BEREAVEMENT REALLY IS

Bereavement is often a topic of discussion among friends, and these conversations can help us understand that we all move through grief in the way we need to. Grieving is a very individual process, and we will all experience it in different ways. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross developed a framework that helps us understand the five stages of grief. These stages are not linear, and we may experience all of them or only some. There is no timetable. People can grieve for days, months, or even years. Kübler-Ross's five stages of grief are:

Denial: When we struggle to believe what happened is real.

Anger: When the pain starts to surface, and is often directed toward ourselves, others, or the situation.

Bargaining: When we start asking "what if" or "if only" questions. For example: "If I had worked more hours, maybe I wouldn't have lost my job."

Depression: When we begin to process the loss, allowing sadness and other emotions to come through.

Acceptance: When we reach a point of understanding and are ready to move forward into the next chapter of our lives.



Photo by Karola G from Pexels

Each stage requires different types of care and can bring both emotional and physical symptoms. Grief can manifest as fatigue, insomnia, tension in the body, and a general sense of heaviness. It is not always easy to recognize which stage we are in, as sometimes they overlap.

THE REALITY OF COPING (NOT FIXING)

We often want to move through grief as fast as possible, but there is a need to go through it so that we can reach the other side feeling more balanced within ourselves.

It is not about fixing grief—it is about learning how to cope while you are grieving. It is okay not to be okay. It is okay to keep going even when you are not feeling your best.

The waves of feelings, tiredness, insomnia, disbelief, anger, sadness, will not be easy, but you are more than capable of handling it. And if it becomes overwhelming, you can always seek support from professionals who can guide you.

Our lives do not stop because we need to grieve. Life continues. We adjust ourselves to manage everything that is happening at the moment. We need to normalize the inconsistencies and imperfections.

THE HIDDEN STRUGGLE—LIVING WHILE GRIEVING

Life moves on. We go back to work. We return to our routines. But we know it is not the same, because our thoughts and feelings are not the same. We may disconnect emotionally or over-function to avoid dealing with difficult feelings that surface from time to time: the crying, the missing, the frustration, the emptiness, the loneliness, the numbness, the negativity.

We often feel pressure from the world to move on faster, to be okay now. People want to support us and bring positivity to the situation. However, as those who have experienced loss understand, other's words do not change how you feel, there words can't make you ready to transform and adapt to your new reality.

EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES IN BEREAVEMENT

Grief can generate many different emotional experiences:

Guilt: We may judge ourselves harshly, believing we are not coping well enough or moving forward quickly enough.

Anger and confusion: As we adjust to a new reality that we did not choose.



Photo by Satrio Ramadhan from corelens

Deep sadness and emptiness: As we remember that things are no longer the way they used to be.

Relief: This can appear when we begin to reach acceptance, but it can also bring guilt as we feel bad for being okay again.

All of these emotions are part of the process. What supports us most is not judging what we feel when emotions arise. Our feelings are not wrong. They are a compass that helps expand our understanding of ourselves and what our loss means to us.

It also helps to slow down your expectations and quiet the internal voice that says you should know what you are doing. Believe me, you don't. And that is okay.

Be there for yourself during the process and adjust to your needs as they arise. Create space, internally and externally, to say goodbye, to let go, and to allow a new version of you to emerge.

Ask for help when you need it. Take time alone when you need it. Breathe. Journal. Reflect. Cry. Talk to yourself. Walk. Take a bath. Above all take care of yourself with kindness and patience.

GRIEF AT WORK

Not everyone is ready to deal with your grief. They may try to protect themselves, give advice, push you away, ignore the situation, talk about their experiences or try to turn everything into a positive. This does not mean they are bad people. It often happens because they lack emotional awareness and do not know how to handle emotions.

Workplaces are often environments where emotions are not openly addressed. They may not feel like safe spaces to process what you are going through. Do not be discouraged. Not all environments are designed to support grief.

We also need to remember that every culture deals with grief differently. Some are open and expressive. Others celebrate life. Some remain quiet to avoid discomfort.

LIVING WITH LOSS (NOT "GETTING OVER IT")

If we are grieving something, it means it mattered. Grief is not about closing a chapter completely, but about integrating that experience into who we are, with gratitude for what it represented in our lives and then learning to live without it.

We slowly get used to the absence. It is not about forgetting, but about missing without falling apart. It becomes a different kind of missing, a softer one, a more integrated one.

When we learn to live with absence, we begin to understand our own strength. Our capacity to start over again. Confidence is built through action. When we show ourselves that we can go through something difficult, we begin to trust ourselves more deeply.

CLOSING REFLECTION

We never truly know what someone is going through at any given moment. Be compassionate with yourself and with others. Grief comes in seasons. Let them move through you with care. There will be good days and hard days. Some moments will feel heavier than others.

Give yourself what you need. Tell others what you need. Allow yourself to receive support. You are not alone. There is always someone within reach, or a professional who can support you.

Loss can be painful, but it can also be transformative, especially when you are open to the lessons it brings. Change is inevitable. Grief is part of life. Trust, you will be okay.



PLAYGROUPS & ACTIVITIES

BAMBI holds regular playgroups and activities around Bangkok, open to both BAMBI members and non-members. BAMBI playgroups are characterized by both structured and free play, and the use of venues' toys and playgrounds. BAMBI Activities provide a wide range of opportunities for children aged one to six years old to develop their athletic, creative, and cognitive skills.

PLAYGROUPS

Name	Location
Wonderkids	Wonder Woods Kids Café & Co-Learning Space
Little Seeds	The Tiny Seeds International Pre-School
Kiddiezilla	Market Place Nanglinche (3rd Floor)
Kiddieville	Playville
Little Steps	Future Steps International School Bangkok
Little Panda	Nancy Language School
Little Treehouse	Little Treehouse Nursery
Saturday Nana	Storytime Preschool Bangkok
Little Tots	Tiny Tots International Learning Centre
Niko Niko	The Prestige 49 (Sukhumvit Soi 49)



ACTIVITIES

Name	Location
Toddler Music	Skyview Hotel Bangkok Sukhumvit24
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Little Athletes	Noah Futsal
Lego Construction STEM new!	Bricks4Kidz - K Village
Junior Tennis new!	The Lobb Club

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For the latest information and further details on our playgroups and activities, scan the QR code on the right. Bookings are required to join playgroups and activities. Register today for unlimited fun and a welcoming community!





BAMBI: THE TEAM

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

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29 Jun - 21 Aug

English Explorers

Camp 3 & 4 (4 - 6 years only)

Dive into adventure as we explore wildlife, oceans, and conservation while building phonics skills, practising guided reading & joining exciting early writing activities.

**English
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Camps**

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27 Jul - 21 Aug

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Camp 7

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