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FOR THE LOVE OF PLANTS



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UPSCALING!**

**GETTING STARTED WITH
CLOTH DIAPERS**

MAY 2023

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A young girl with long hair tied back is playing a green Yamaha drum set. She is wearing a white shirt with a blue and white checkered vest over it. She is looking down at the drums. The background is dark.

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Welcome to BAMBI

"Support and friendship through the common bond of parenthood"

- Mel Habanananda



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

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

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

Mission Statement

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

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

For more information on CBFT, contact:

English speaking, Tel 05-310-4573;

tanitmel@btinternet.com

Thai speaking, Mobile: 081-776-9391;

info@cbfthai.org or

sobsamai@yahoo.com. Or

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



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Yuika, Year 4, Regents International School Pattaya

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This term, Yuika and her Year 4 classmates are working on a STEAM project to design and build a scale model of a traditional hill tribe house of northern Thailand.

See how your child can be inspired at
regents-pattaya.ac.th



Lynda Suchintabundid

Hello BAMBI families!

I can't believe it's already May! I feel like the year has just started.

On the topic of time, doesn't it fly so fast, especially when you're watching your children grow up? In our fast-paced, technology-driven lives, it's easy to overlook the importance of sustainable growth, but it's crucial for securing a better future for the next generation. So, how do we make ourselves and our children aware of this? For me, it has become a huge part of my life to think about how every single one of my actions impacts others. I also teach my son to be responsible and think differently, and to see the world in different ways. I believe that my family's personal growth should not come at the expense of our planet. Thinking before acting, and then taking action, can all start with us and start today if we want to make our community and our world a better place.

The BAMBI committee is also aware of the importance of sustainable growth, so we are reducing our use of paper and using emails and online files to update our teams. I feel these actions are the right step towards demonstrating our thoughts and care towards others. We'll definitely maintain our way of doing things while working towards continual growth and improvement.

My role in BAMBI is as the benefits coordinator, which simply means I take care of member benefits. If you or your friends run a business which is related to or supports parent and baby lifestyles, please feel free to email me and let me know so we can partner with them. This year, I've started working as the charities coordinator as well. I look forward to seeing BAMBI continue to grow as an eco-friendly and sustainable organization.

To all our BAMBI parents, let's have a happy month and a less busy schedule so we can meet at BAMBI playgroups!

Lynda
Benefits and charities coordinator



OUR COVER KID JULIETTE

NAME: Juliette

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

My mom is Nigerian American, and my dad is British, but I was born in Thailand.

HOW LONG DID YOU LIVE IN THAILAND?

I lived in Thailand for almost five years.

FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT IN THAILAND WITH YOUR FAMILY?

I love all the islands and beaches, especially Phuket.

IF YOU VISIT IN THE FUTURE, WHAT'S ON YOUR THAI BUCKET LIST?

I really want to try snorkeling in the ocean with my daddy.

WHAT DOES BAMBI MEAN TO YOU?

A place to meet many friends and play and have snacks!

Cover photograph by Mai Suzuki

"We knew no lack, experienced no want, and I knew no other way. I had never looked from the outside in; never thought about how we lived."

I recently came across this quote while reading Judith Kinghorn's book "The Last Summer". It really made an impression on me because until the age of five, I lived in a bubble of sorts too.

My family and I lived in Dubai till I was nearly eight. My father, hailing from a humble background, worked hard to ensure we lived relatively comfortably. In our apartment, we had air conditioning, hot water, healthy meals, cable, and for me, personally—not a care in the world.

The summer I was five, we visited Bangladesh, and I came across a bathtub filled with water in my aunt's home. They were storing water because there wouldn't be any available later; many others did the same. There were also frequent power cuts at odd hours of the day and night, and so much pollution and poverty in the streets. I didn't know it then, but these were my first experiences of the harmful impact of rapid urbanization and scarcity.

When we moved back to Bangladesh two years later, I got a front row seat to these problems. In school I learned about deforestation, floods, oil spills, and global warming. In uni, as a student of economics, these lessons were magnified, and I learned more about climate change and sustainable development. Now, as a mother wanting better for her children and succeeding generations, I believe we all have to do our part for the environment. We should also teach our young ones that looking out for yourself also means looking out for the environment you find yourself in.

So I send my daughters on "room checks" to see if they've left any lights on. We recycle and reuse as much as possible, and I speak to them about where the food on their plates comes from, why we mustn't keep the tap running while brushing our teeth, and how the access we have to clean water, fresh air, and abundant resources is a privilege.

Most of all, I try to show them that we can achieve growth and fulfill our needs without harming our planet. With this in mind, the magazine team has focused this month's issue on "growing with our world". Turn the pages and take a look at what we have put together.

In "Upcycling is Upscaling!", Maheshika Mackenzie-Baker talks about how her love for fashion is now fueled by the joy she finds in upscaling existing clothes; Rachel Ofo shares a delicious vegan banana bread recipe; and in "For the Love of Plants", Anelia Van Zyl discusses the benefits of plants and how we can all enjoy them. This month's Fun Corner gets our young readers thinking about recycling, reusing, and composting; and Liz Pond gives us an introduction to sustainable diapering in Bangkok in her article "Getting Started With Cloth Diapers".

In Readers' Corner, Angela Chen reviews "To Change a Planet" by Christina Soontornvat and "A Zero Waste Life: in thirty days" by Anita Vandyke. The former gently guides children on the different ways they can help protect the planet, and the latter presents clever ideas and strategies that we can adopt in an effort to reduce waste and go green. In Creation Station, Anelia Van Zyl shows us how to repurpose some everyday household items into cute little bird feeders to hang in our gardens. And on a different note, we have "Falling in Love With Myself", again by Maheshika, in which she highlights how she overcame her struggles with negative body image.

We're also delighted to introduce a new column, The Poetic Journey, by Cecilia Yu. Here, she'll be reflecting on being a modern woman juggling motherhood, life, and relationships through poems from her heart.

With so much to read and learn about in this issue, we hope we leave you with some compelling food for thought. As I sign off, a big thank you to all the contributors, our graphic designer, and the editorial team for their hard work in producing the BAMBI Magazine May 2023 issue. Hope you all enjoy the read!

Sanam
Editor



Sanam Raisa Rahman



Spark

the

inner

curiosity

CURIOS KIND

Early Childhood Centre

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Anastasia Leeks
Annabelle Heugas
Aticha Sirichuwong
Atsuko Ikeda
Chelsea Polanco
Claire Nash
Cosima Stahr
Daniel VerSchneider
Daranee Orawanchaikun
Ed McConnell
Ekaterina Dorofeeva
Elena Zadorozhnaya
Hanna Kim
Hikari Mizuno
Hyeyoung Cho
Isares Vongsutiroj
Junthira Petchausavanil

Kathy Nguyen
Kristen Dickerson
Marcus Herndon
Momoe Kuriyama
Nanami Kawasaki
Nisarat Djordjevic
Nithipoom Durongwattana
Nonderval Punyanitya
Nuntiya Chunothaisawat
Panjarat Kulsitthchaiya
Pathomporn Chongcharueyskul
Pattra Winaipanich
Pimpisa Sringamprom
Pitchatorn Rattanabunditsakul
Ployphapat Tanarutpinun
Priya Ajmera
Punnyarass Akranarawin

Ratthar Sriduam
Sakurako Li
Shashank Bhagavathula
Siriluck Ongarj
Siriluck Subcharoendeeapa
Stella Choo
Suchaluck Boonipat
Suparada Laohapongchana
Supawan Sukwatayananont
Thanyathorn Chaiwongkhajorn
Wananya Taetrongjit
Wisarawadee Janthasrikham
Worawoot Umpin

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FROM BAMBI!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Agam Daniel
Aiden Schultz
An Tran Enomoto
Ava Khoo
Benjamin Oxland
Chaitanya Agrawal
Emmett Malone
Evan Lennox

Kiaan Bhargava
Kimi Zayne Kennett
Kittikan Charoenvorawat
Mai
Mei Fujibayashi
Nickolas Hinde
Ravisara Sripurijarnya
Rayana Begaly

Seoyoon Bang
Waedi
Wooju Ban
Yam Daniel
Yoohwan Cho
Zhanel Begaly



HOW TO BECOME A BAMBI MEMBER

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

Alternatively, you can make an ATM or online payment to our bank account, and then send us your proof of payment using the form on the BAMBI website. We will activate your membership within a few days of receiving your submitted form, and you will receive your membership card by mail within two weeks of activation.

New membership fee: ₩1,400 | **Renewing membership fee:** ₩1,000

1-YEAR VALIDITY

Your membership is valid for 12 months. The expiry date is written on the back of your membership card. Please renew when the year is up.

SIGN UP AT ANY BAMBI PLAYGROUP/EVENT OR SIMPLY GO TO THE BAMBI WEBSITE!

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ACCOUNT NAME: CHILDBIRTH AND

SWIFT CODE: TMBKTHBKXXX

(as shown on ATM/online banking)

STAY UP TO DATE

Make sure to check www.bambiweb.org and the BAMBI Facebook page (@BAMBIBangkok) for regular updates.

Want to know more? For more information about joining us, visit our website:

WWW.BAMBIWEB.ORG/FAQ

If you have any membership issues, please email: database@bambiweb.org

BAMBI MEMBER BENEFITS

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**10% OFF
CURTAIN UP
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MAGIC**

Scan the QR code to find out more about what amazing benefits and discounts are on offer for our BAMBI members.

These include discounts from the below organizations:

Johny Live, Niche Salon Bangkok, Jumping Clay, Little Pea, Musical Theater for Kids, Playville, Kid Able the Mall Ngamwongwan Language School, Banana Thai School, Little Legend, Plan Toys, Bangkok Dolphins, Kiddy Kicks, Little Gym, Swimming Bangkok, Antique Cafe and Cakes, Baby Bib Cafe, Blue Parrot, Hilton Sukhumvit Bangkok & Doubletree by Hilton, Klong Phai Farm, Steps with Theera, Bumrungrad Hospital, J Clinic, Painaway Clinic, Iasnaia Maximo, Physio Clinic, Bangkok International Dental Hospital, Bangkok Self Storage, Ayasan Service, Kids Home and Family Services, Kidu, Nick & Nishka Kids Concept Store, Ergobaby, Neilson Hays Library, Amy Diener, Lilli by Lilli, Move Well with Anna, SRC Health, Haji Café, Little Big Dream, Wonder Woods Kids Cafe, Hegen Thailand, Curtain Up Drama & Magic



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UPCYCLING IS UPSCALING!



Learning designer and sustainability advocate, Maheshika, explains how by upcycling clothes we can look good, feel good, and help the planet!

Little me versus big me

A five-year-old girl living in a village in Sri Lanka giggled with glee because the school handed her a bag of used clothes. That little girl was me, and I still remember that moment so clearly because getting new clothes, used or not, was such a big thing to me back then. We did not have much growing up, and rich people from the city would often donate clothes to schools in the villages. This was back in 1991 and to me, this is a bittersweet memory because it reminds me of how poor we were.

Fast forward to 2023 and here I am living in a very comfortable home with a complete wardrobe of clothes which I bought for myself. A change in life circumstances brought me here, but I can't seem to shake that feeling of humbler beginnings.

For so long I had this inferiority complex where I felt like I did not belong in a rich world. Eventually, when I started earning my own money, buying new clothes for myself gave me a sense of accomplishment. I felt amaz-

ing when I wore something that gave me a look of sophistication—a jacket, a new pair of heels, or better yet, a beautiful bag! Over time, that inferiority complex became smaller and smaller until it turned into pride. I feel proud of my journey from that shoeless little girl to the lady I see in the mirror today!

What is upcycling?

One day, I was browsing online for a costume when my five-year-old daughter said to me, "Did you know that buying new clothes is not good for the Earth, Mommy?" She had been learning about pollution and how we can make small changes to help our planet at school. I asked her to tell me more, and then we researched the topic together.

Were you aware that the fashion industry's production is responsible for 10 percent of global carbon emissions, and that it has the potential to deplete water sources and contaminate streams and rivers? To add to that, 85 percent of all textiles get dumped every year, and

washing some types of clothes results in thousands of plastic particles being washed into the oceans (1).

My daughter, who is obsessed with the ocean, was upset to hear that we could be contributing to the pollution of the sea. She has been learning about sea life; her current obsessions are anglerfish and sea urchins. Her five-year-old mind could not comprehend that if it was possible to help her favorite sea animals, why on earth would we not?

I tried to explain my life story to her, and brought up the memory of how some people donated clothes to me when I was younger. She could not fully understand what "poor" meant, but she insisted that she wanted to give away her clothes to those in need and also help the planet by stopping them from buying new clothes. So together we made a plan. We decided to donate our clothes to those in need, and that every time we are on holiday we will go through our wardrobes and get rid of clothes that are too small or big for us, or that we don't wear anymore.



Picture of author as a young girl in Sri Lanka



Author as a grown woman

Following this little chat, I made some of my own changes so that I could upcycle more. If I needed to buy something, I would ask a friend or look on Facebook Marketplace before I looked in a fast fashion shop. Although my daughter is too young to understand the concept of fast fashion, I researched it myself.

Fast fashion has three main components from the buyer's perspective: it's trendy, cheap, and disposable (2). Fast fashion makes purchasing clothes on impulse easy and affordable. With an increase in social media, fast fashion has become very popular.

However, as easy and convenient as it is to purchase a top from an online shop or at the mall, fast fashion

items have an enormous environmental footprint for both production and disposal. So, my friends and I began to organize quarterly clothes swaps where we would give away anything we did not want. We began to upcycle by reusing old items or taking them to a tailor to change up the style.

I also found a wonderful café called Early Cafe near my house that promotes upcycling. The owner allows clients to sell their clothes and uses a small percentage of the proceeds to buy food for stray dogs. They also promote recycling, reusing, and reducing. They sell bulk washing detergent and soap, so customers can come and fill their containers with what they need. What's fascinating about Early Cafe is that most of it is

made from recycled materials—the walls, the counters, and even some of the doors!

Although I was shocked at first to find all this information, I feel very proud that my eco-warrior daughter inspired me to help our planet. I took this information and passed it on to my students as well. Together, we made a promise to help our planet, starting now. Don't wait for others to do it, you can start now too. Together all of our small changes can amount to something big!

Photos courtesy of the author and Canva.

References

- (1) Geneva Environment Network (2023) Environmental Sustainability in the Fashion Industry. genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/resources/updates/sustainable-fashion
- (2) Healthy Human (2022) What is Fast Fashion and Why is it Bad? healthyhumanlife.com/blogs/news/what-is-fast-fashion



Early Cafe

About the Author



Maheshika Mackenzie-Baker (Myshi) lived most of her life in Sri Lanka but went to Scotland to receive her masters in Psychology. After eight years there, she and her husband moved to Thailand. They have lived here for over ten years and now have two little kids of their own. Myshi has been an educator in Thailand for over ten years and is currently a learning designer at VERSO International School. Her family has enjoyed learning about and living in a new culture. You can reach her at: Email: maheshi.mackenzie@gmail.com; LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/maheshika-mackenzie-baker-56564532; Twitter: @BakerMyshi



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If so, we are looking for a new database coordinator to maintain BAMBI's membership database and serve as a member of our committee, helping to make important decisions for BAMBI and our members.

To learn more about the role and express your interest, please email: database@bambiweb.org

BAMBI

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OUTDOOR FUN

It was wonderful to celebrate the start of the summer season with a Pop Up Playgroup at Precious Learners World International Nursery and Kindergarten on 25th March. Although the weather was super hot, it didn't stop the children and their families from having plenty of fun in the spacious outdoor area! There were lots of activities prepared for them: a magic show, face painting, slime-making, sensory play, and more! Thank you so much to all the teachers who provided us with lots of activities in a safe outdoor environment, and thank you to Precious Learners World International Nursery and Kindergarten for letting us use your beautiful facility.

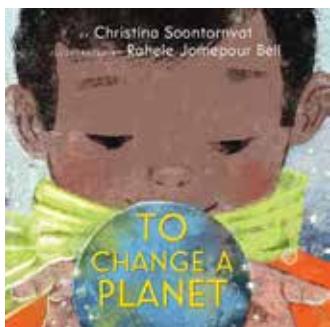


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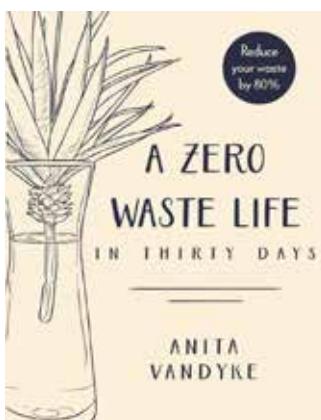
TO CHANGE A PLANET

by Christina Soontornvat, illustrated by Rahele Jomepour Bell

It's never too early to learn about protecting our precious planet. Thai American author Christina Soontornvat's latest picture book is a love letter to the Earth and shares many ways that we can work individually and together to improve our environment. "To Change a Planet" gently introduces challenging issues including climate change and endangered animals. The book ends with an encouraging message about the power of personal actions and collective advocacy.

Soontornvat is a three-time Newbery Honor recipient. Her expertise as a STEM educator blends perfectly with illustrator Rahele Jomepour Bell's mesmerizing artwork. "To Change a Planet" is simultaneously educational, practical, and poetic.

Published by Scholastic Press in August 2022. Thai American author Christina Soontornvat has been awarded three Newbery Honors for her acclaimed books "A Wish in the Dark", "All Thirteen", and "The Last Mapmaker". She is also the author of several other delightful children's books. Illustrator Rahele Jomepour Bell is originally from Iran and is now based in the United States. Bell uses several different mediums to create her whimsical illustrations. "To Change a Planet" is suitable for ages three to eight. A hardcover copy and Soontornvat's other books can be found in the Children's Corner and Young Adult sections of the Neilson Hays Library.



A ZERO WASTE LIFE: IN THIRTY DAYS

by Anita Vandyke

"Zero waste" is perhaps too ambitious for most; however, this book provides practical and accessible ways in which we can all reduce waste and simplify our lives. "A Zero Waste Life" helps readers consider small changes in our daily routines of eating, shopping, traveling, and cleaning that can make a big difference. From simple recipes for household cleaning supplies to tips on conscious shopping, this book is a family-friendly guide to sustainable living. Rather than preach about sacrificing lifestyle, author Anita Vandyke frames mindful living as a means to gain more time, more money, and more space, while also saving the planet.

Vandyke presents her ideas and tips in a straightforward and encouraging way, meeting the reader at their baseline. Older children can even join parents in reading this book to engage in more mindful ways of living together. "A Zero Waste Life: in thirty days" is an easy page-turner providing great motivation for anyone who is interested in leading a greener life.

Published by Penguin Random House Australia in 2020. Author Anita Vandyke is a Chinese Australian rocket scientist who is based in San Francisco. Her personal experience of shifting into a greener lifestyle inspired her to write this book. A hardcover copy of "A Zero Waste Life: in thirty days" can be found in the non-fiction section of the Neilson Hays Library.

Prepared by Angela Chen, a Neilson Hays Library Board Member and the Children's Program Chair.

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



DESIGN FUTURES

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

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

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



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

elc international schools

The City School
Ages 3-11 years

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The Purple Elephant 55
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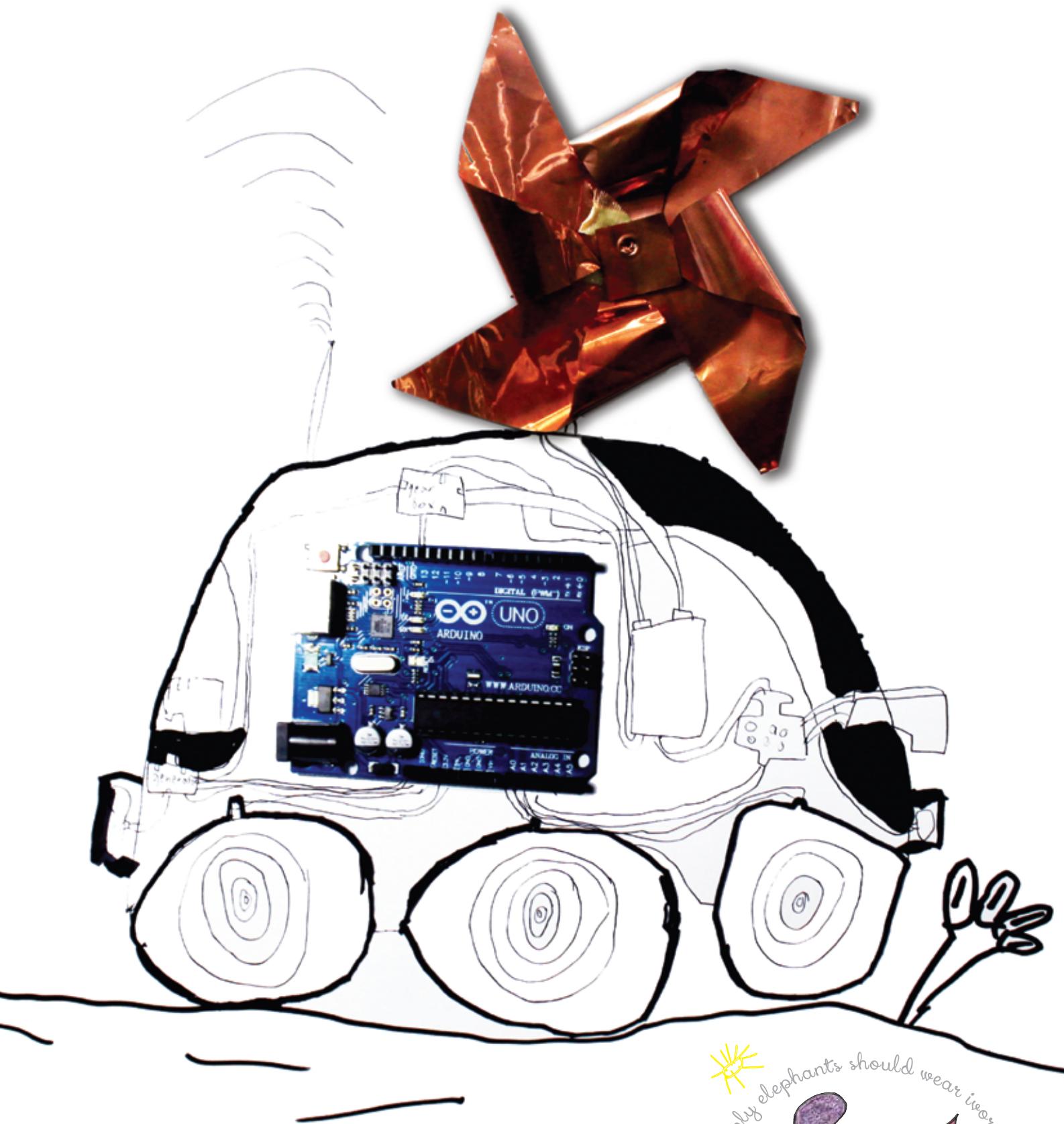
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elc international schools

A Dance Through This Life



Tai Chi is not just a physical exercise but also a way of life. Its principles of balance, harmony, and flow can teach us valuable lessons about navigating the journey of life with grace and ease. In this poem, Cecilia explores Tai Chi as a metaphor for the ups and downs, the twists and turns, and the beauty and wonder of life.



There is grace.
One leg up
Another rooted.
Heart led by this.
Mind swooned by that.

For awhile,
you balance,
you glide,
you twirl.
You even soar.

Unexpectedly...
You fall
out
of rhythm.
You wobble.
You adjust.
You still...
fall.

On your way down,
fright,
guilt,
relief.

Finally, no choice but to
Pause.

Lay still.

Rest.

In your pause,
You look up.
Gaze
down,
Scan around.

Not with your mind.
But with your heart-noticing
moments dosed with sorrows,
periods indulged in joy.

Pause or go?
Savor or calibrate?
What is your next move?

This poem was inspired by my recent park walk. I noticed a group of ladies gracefully moving, during a Tai Chi session. None of them seemed to have any problem balancing and simultaneously extending their bodies in different directions as they moved that sunny morning.

That is exactly it! "Seemed." I only watched them for a few minutes; would they have kept their balance and finished the sequence without tripping, falling, starting over?

Pondering Points:

Do we wish to be parents who "seem" to have it all, balance it all with grace and smiles?

How much effort do we place into "seeming" like we have it all together, swaying, and balancing as if the typhoon of responsibilities is a mere gust of wind?

How willing are we to just go with the flow, succumb to the "fall", pause, and rest when family responsibilities become too overwhelming?

How forgiving are we of ourselves when we hibernate after our "fall"?

Photos taken from Canva.



About the Author



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



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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



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. As many of them are moving away from Bangkok, there are a number of critical roles to fill to ensure ongoing service to our members. BAMBI is a fun and a welcoming community of like-minded parents trying to support and improve the parenting experience for all families in Bangkok. If you have some time and passion to spare, come and join us. To apply or if you have any questions about these volunteer opportunities, please email vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org, detailing which position(s) you are interested in.

The following opportunities are currently available:

CHAIRWOMAN

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

Responsibilities & duties

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

WEBSITE ASSISTANT

The web team provides a daily overview of the webpage and works diligently to ensure that all advertisements, classifieds, forums, events, etc. are up to date and site appropriate. The website assistant works under the guidance of the website coordinator for all website technical functioning.

Responsibilities & duties

- provides assistance with the content design and layout of the website, and updating these as needed
- maintains communication and coordinates with the committee members regarding website layout, content, financing etc.
- attends monthly committee meetings as a voting committee member and participates/assists with events, fundraisers and other organizational activities



DATABASE COORDINATOR

The database coordinator attends monthly committee meetings as a voting member and participates and assists with events, fundraisers and other organizational activities.

Responsibilities & duties

- ensures that the online database is maintained, membership details are up to date, and distributes this information to the committee as needed
- provides different member reports (number of new members, expired members, renewals, etc.) at the committee meetings

FEATURE WRITER—BAMBI MAGAZINE

The feature writer will work under the guidance of the BAMBI Magazine editor, and be responsible for researching and writing feature articles for every issue.

Responsibilities & duties

- meets with the editor to generate ideas for new content
- drafts creative and original content that appeals to BAMBI's target audience
- follows BAMBI Magazine's print cycle and ensures timely delivery of completed drafts
- provides the editorial team with occasional editing and proofreading support

EVENTS COORDINATOR

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

Responsibilities & duties

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





EVENTS ASSISTANT

The events assistant supports the events coordinator with the planning of events and organizing the BAMBI parties.

Responsibilities & duties

- assists the events coordinator with the planning and delivery of BAMBI's large events such as our splash party and Halloween party
- coordinates with other teams within BAMBI like media and website teams

MEDIA ASSISTANT

The media assistant supports the media coordinator in building meaningful connections between BAMBI and all our members and affiliated organizations on our main social media platforms, Facebook and Instagram, and on the email marketing service we use, Mailchimp.

Responsibilities & duties

- creates and shares engaging and timely content relating to all BAMBI social events, playgroups and activities
- disseminates information and general announcements about BAMBI activities, playgroups and social events
- tracks and responds to communications and inquiries (in coordination with other BAMBI departments) from members, non-members and the general public

PHOTO EDITOR

The photo editor works in coordination with the editor and deputy editor of BAMBI Magazine, and is the first point of contact for anything picture-related.

Responsibilities & duties

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

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FOR THE LOVE OF PLANTS

Thailand is abundant in plants that are not only beautiful but also have a variety of uses, and can boost our health, happiness, and productivity. Anelia shares her expert tips to help us enjoy them and their many benefits both outdoors and inside our homes.

Plants and flowers are a fundamental part of the natural world and play an essential role in the lives of humans and animals alike. From the oxygen they provide, to the beauty they add to our surroundings, these living organisms are a source of fascination and wonder. Whether it's the majesty of trees or the delicate intricacy of a flower's petals, there is a wealth of diversity and complexity to be found in the plant kingdom. This article will explore the importance and wonders of plants and flowers, and delve into their amazing features and functions.

THE WONDER OF THAILAND'S FLORA

Thailand is home to a huge variety of plant species, many of which are unique to the region. The country's tropical climate and distinct landscapes have given rise to a wide range of flora, from towering trees to delicate flowers. Some of the most famous and beloved plants native to Thailand are the exotic orchids which come in a dazzling array of colors and shapes, and the fragrant jasmine which is used at religious ceremonies and celebrations. Other notable species include the teak tree, which is highly valued for its durable wood, and the spiky durian fruit, which is

notorious for its pungent odor but considered a delicacy by many. Thailand's flora is not only a source of natural beauty, but also of cultural significance, with many plants being deeply intertwined with the country's traditions and way of life.

Plants have been an integral part of Thailand's culture and economy for centuries, with many species used for medicinal, culinary, and industrial purposes. For example: turmeric and lemongrass are commonly used in Thai cuisine for their aromatic flavors and health benefits; the leaves of the pandan plant are used to add fragrance and color to desserts and drinks; and the bark of the cinnamon tree is used in traditional herbal medicine. In addition to their culinary and medicinal uses, plants also play a crucial role in Thailand's economy, with crops like rice, sugarcane, and rubber being major exports. Moreover, Thailand is known for its thriving ornamental plant industry, with orchids, bonsai, and other decorative plants being grown and sold both domestically and internationally. Overall, plants in Thailand are deeply ingrained in the country's daily life and economy, and their diverse uses reflect the importance of nature in Thai society.

GROWING OUTDOOR PLANTS

Growing outdoor plants in Thailand can be a rewarding experience, given the country's warm and humid tropical climate. However, it's important to keep in mind that the weather can vary significantly depending on the region, with some areas experiencing heavy rainfall and others drought. To ensure successful growth, it's important to choose plants that are suited to the specific climate and soil conditions of your area. Popular outdoor plants in Thailand include tropical fruit trees like mango and papaya, as well as flowering plants like hibiscus and bougainvillea. Many Thai households also grow herbs and vegetables such as chili peppers, basil, and eggplant for use in cooking. With the right care and attention, outdoor plants in Thailand can thrive and bring beauty and abundance to your garden.

Tips for growing outdoor plants (1)

Soil:

The fertility of your garden's soil is crucial for the growth of plants. It is important to choose the best soil composition for your plants, especially in a tropical climate where well-drained soil is necessary. In Thailand, it is recommended to ensure that the soil in your garden



can retain moisture for extended periods after watering.

Fertilizers and manure:

While nitrogen fertilizers should not be overused on tropical plants, fertilizers that contain phosphorus and potash are highly recommended. While tropical plants love manure, the high heat in Thailand means that organic manure decomposes quickly, resulting in fewer nutrients for the plants. It is, therefore, advisable to use manure frequently, but in moderation. Human urine can also be used as a source of manure due to its high nitrogen and mineral content.

Shade:

Creating shaded regions in your garden, by adding trees or building garden features, for example, can help plants grow more successfully in open outdoor areas. Consult with local plant suppliers for optimum growing conditions for specific plants.

GROWING INDOOR PLANTS

Houseplants are not just a beautiful addition to your home decor; they also have a plethora of benefits for your health and well-being. From purifying the air you breathe to boosting your mood and reducing stress, houseplants have been shown to

have a positive impact on both physical and mental health. In recent years, the popularity of houseplants has surged, with more and more people seeking to bring nature into their homes.

Tips for growing indoor plants (2, 3)

Growth:

Ensure even growth of your plants by rotating them every week. Avoid fertilizing during colder months. Use copper fungicide plant food during the summer for optimal results. If you are new to gardening, use pots with holes to help with drainage. Boost growth by moving houseplants outside in the summer and placing them in shaded areas. If you tend to overwater, use a moisture meter to determine the correct amount of water for your plant. While saucers can collect excess water, try to avoid letting the water sit in them for too long as it can lead to soggy roots.

Plant health:

Keep bugs at bay with a systemic insecticide that's absorbed into the plant by sprinkling it on the soil surface. To tidy up your plants, trim off browned bits following the natural shape of the leaf. Dusting leaves can be done by wiping them with

a wet cloth or, in colder months, taking them to the shower for a quick rinse; in hotter months, a garden hose can be used instead. Some sick houseplants may not be salvageable, but others can be propagated by pinching off the ends or tips to create a new plant. For example, spider plants produce new starts off a hanging stem, which can be used to create new plants.

Repotting:

If the roots are coiling around the interior of the container, it may be an indication that it's time to repot the plant. If the plant has outgrown its container, you can relocate it to a slightly bigger one. Alternatively, if you prefer to keep it in the same container, you can prune some of the roots using a sharp, sterilized knife and replant it with fresh potting soil. When you repot your houseplants, it is also the ideal moment to split those with several stems to generate new plants.

House plant diseases:

To prevent the spread of disease, it is important to remove and discard any diseased houseplants, leaves, or stems as soon as they are identified. Keeping insect populations under control can also help prevent disease transmission. Keep an eye



out for common houseplant diseases such as powdery mildew, which appears as white spots on leaves; fungal leaf spots, which can be identified by yellow, brown or black spots on the leaves; and root rot, characterized by dark-colored, mushy roots, often caused by overwatering.

Benefits of indoor plants (4)

1. Indoor air pollutants can be reduced by having houseplants. Studies have shown that certain houseplants can effectively remove harmful pollutants from indoor air. Some of the top plants for this purpose include dwarf date palms, lady palms, ficus trees, rubber trees, Boston ferns, and spider plants.
2. Houseplants can be beneficial in reducing signs of stress. Performing easy tasks like watering or repotting your houseplants can help decrease respiratory rates and calm racing thoughts. For those who lack convenient access to nature or outdoor gardening spaces,

placing a couple of houseplants on a sunny windowsill can reduce anxiety and encourage a peaceful atmosphere.

3. Incorporating plants into your bedroom can promote better sleep. Although all plants release oxygen during photosynthesis, certain plants are particularly effective at oxygenating the air in your bedroom. These plants include snake plants, gerbera daisies, Chinese evergreens, money plants, and areca palms.
4. Engaging in activities related to plants, such as gardening or caring for houseplants, can be helpful in combating symptoms of depression and anxiety.
5. Plants can help to mitigate noise pollution. Plants with broad leaves, such as rubber plants and weeping figs, are particularly effective in reducing sound. Strategically placing a few larger plants against an exterior window or wall can act as a buffer against

unwanted noises such as sirens, cars, and barking dogs, thereby creating a peaceful and soothing atmosphere in your home.

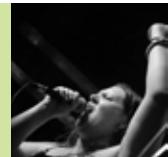
6. Research has shown that incorporating plants into workspaces and classrooms can enhance concentration, creativity, and productivity among employees and students.

In conclusion, incorporating plants and flowers into your home and work environments can have a multitude of benefits for your health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

Photos from Canva.



About the Author



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

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BANGKOK SUPPORT GROUPS

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

The groups listed here are run independently of BAMBI, except where otherwise noted.

This listing is provided for informational purposes only, and inclusion does not constitute endorsement by BAMBI. Please contact the respective groups for more information.

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



FALLING IN LOVE WITH MYSELF

Sometimes we are our own worst enemy. Maheshika gives a moving account of her battles with negative body image and shows us how we can be kinder to ourselves.

How it all started

Can anyone remember those late night feeds when it's just you and your baby while the rest of the world sleeps soundly? Some wonderful moments just like those are etched in my memory, like those of little fingers grasping my hand, or big brown eyes gazing at me like I'm their everything. Mixed in with these precious memories, I also remember moments of isolation and sadness. It felt like I had nothing to keep my mind active, so I would scroll through my Facebook feed and look at stories on Instagram till my wrist went numb! When I look back, this is probably where it all started.

What began as something to keep me busy turned into a bit of a negative spiral for my mental health. Along with breastfeeding days (and nights) came a sense of body shame. Seeing photos of my friends in bikinis, or even old memories of me in mine, fueled this shame. I was always very tough on my appearance and thought that discipline was one of my biggest strengths. So, if I gave in to unhealthy

foods or overate while breastfeeding, I would feel so much disgust towards myself.

After having two children, my body felt alien to me, especially my stomach. I didn't recognize myself in the mirror. I would punish myself and work out intensely to make up for the "cheat days". "I will get my body back," was my daily mantra. At the time, I was proud of my mindset, but it quickly became clear that this was not the right or healthy mindset for me. I would look at myself in the mirror and feel like I was never good enough. I tried everything—from diets to fasting, and strength training to cardio. Despite losing weight, I continued to be tough on myself.

It's never too late!

As my daughter began to grow, those breastfeeding nights turned into hours of rocking her to sleep. She did not make it easy for me; in fact, I remember some nights it would be over two hours before she would give in to sleep. My body-image-obsessed

self would use this opportunity to do squats or some sort of exercise so I didn't lose out on exercise time. But when my daughter was about ten months old, my body became very sore. My ankles, knees, and wrists were so painful that I would take daily anti-inflammatory medication, which did not help.

Eventually, I went to the doctor, and after six months of tests with a rheumatologist, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. According to my doctor, rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is an autoimmune and inflammatory disease, causing inflammation most usually in the joints. One of the biggest contributors to RA is stress. Hearing the doctor say this was a bit of a reality check; it finally hit me that perhaps I was overdoing it, and for the wrong reasons.

Over the next few years, I worked really hard on building healthy habits. My goal of being active changed from wanting to look good to wanting to be pain-free. My diet changed organically as I learned through trial and error that certain things like fried



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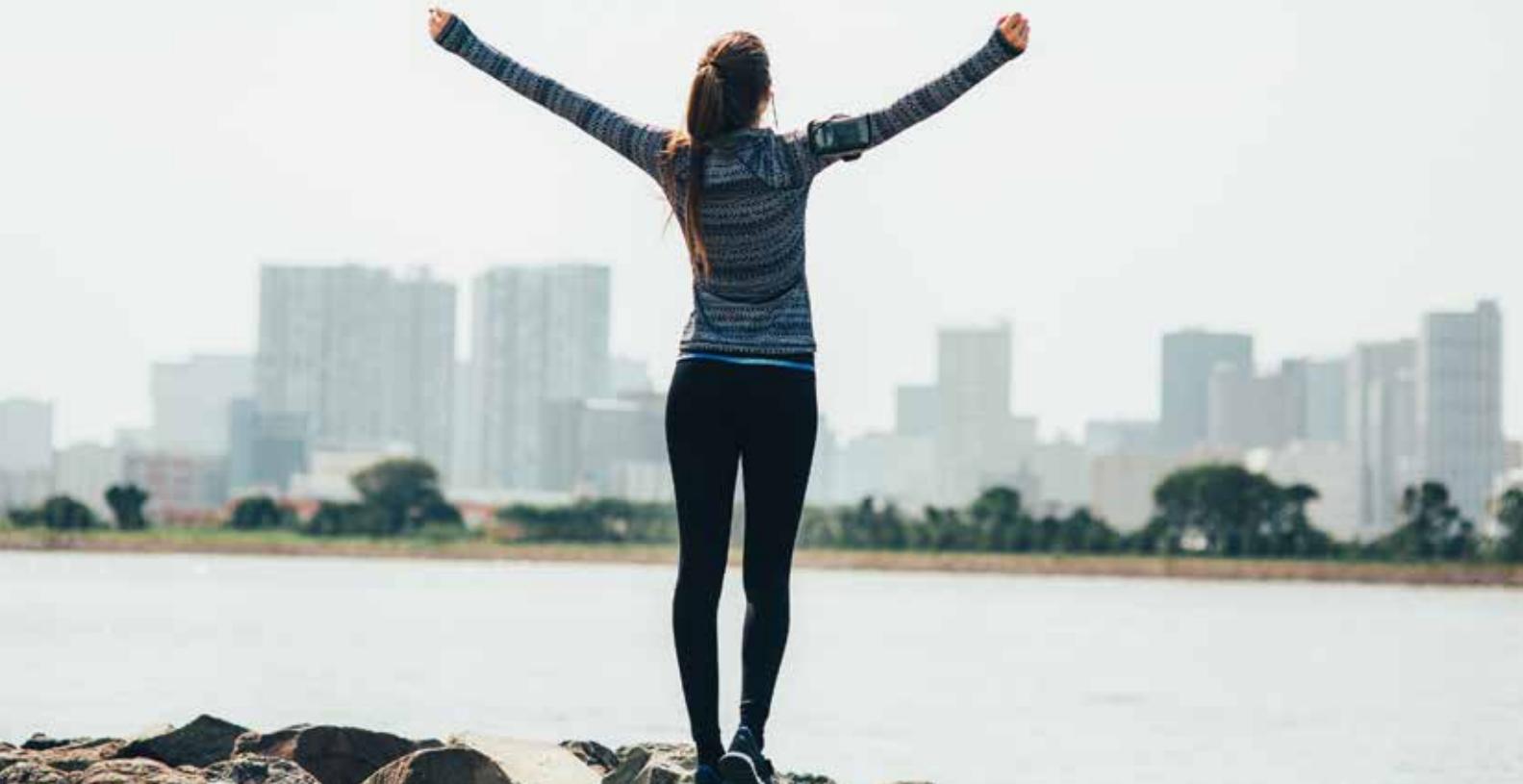
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food, alcohol, and gluten would cause me joint pain.

It's not easy

Although it seemed like I had made progress, the old me started to creep out again when I had my second child. I started comparing my body to my post-baby body from before, and I began to feel disappointed that this time around my stomach was even flabbier. I had to remind myself daily to stay on track and be kind to myself. It dawned on me that I had a lot more work to do to rewire my brain and my mindset. I made a new year's goal to be kinder to myself, accept my new body, and just be realistic about what I can do with my time.

Over time, I saw RA as a blessing in disguise because those habits that I developed became habits in my family. I was able to explain to my daughter, through research and practice, why exercise is good for our bodies, why a balanced diet is important, and above all, how to love ourselves for ourselves and not for other people. Seeing my daughter make balanced

choices and love herself for who she is makes me so proud; I'm proud that I am able to be a role model for her and proud of the choices she continues to make. If you read this and can relate, remember that it is never too late to fall in love with yourself again.

SIX WAYS I LEARNED TO REWIRE MY BRAIN

1. Accept your body and remind yourself of it

It felt weird and clichéd to tell myself that I love my body. Instead, I started with small reminders to accept my body:

- I might not look the way I want to, but I feel strong and pain free.
- Having a flat belly is not that easy to attain for some people. It might work for her, but it's OK that I don't have it.
- Thank you for everything you have done for me; for carrying two children and still being so healthy.

- I am not a doll.

2. Find and follow relatable influencers/fitness instructors

Each time I follow a fellow mom who has made fitness a habit for their mental health, I get reminded of my own journey. Seeing them show their stretch marks or realistic stomachs reassures me that this is completely normal for some people.

Here are two people who have positively impacted me:

- Instagram - Johanna Sophia - growwithjo
- Instagram - Fabiana Ferrarini - fabiana_ferrarini (Queen Warrior)

3. Consider that you may not have a realistic image of yourself

Have you ever looked at yourself in a photo and thought, "Gosh, is that what I really look like?" Or do you ask people not to take photos because you dread having to see yourself?



Picture of author before and after giving birth

Ask yourself: "What if I look different from the way I think I look to myself?"

A big part of accepting yourself is to be OK with this. This is much easier said than done and is still a work in progress for me.

4. Stop gaslighting yourself and start complimenting yourself

I found out that complaining about myself would not make me skinnier or more beautiful. It only resulted in me disliking myself. Consider asking yourself: "Would I say these things to someone else?" If the answer is no, then the chances are that you are gaslighting yourself.

It didn't matter how many compliments I received; I needed to believe them myself to feel good, so I started complimenting myself daily. Pick one thing you like every time you look in the mirror. It doesn't always have to be a physical attribute either.

5. Choose your clothes wisely

You know those clothes you can't let go of because you want to fit into them one day? Chuck them out! Having too-small clothes in my wardrobe didn't motivate me to lose weight, and it didn't help me love my body. Don't buy clothes that you need to lose weight to wear. Instead, accept your body size and buy something

that fits you well. If you don't feel completely comfortable, you won't be confident either.

6. Compliment others

Have you ever judged other people's bodies or compared yourself to others when you felt self-conscious? I know I used to. This might be a clue that you are feeling judgmental towards yourself.

Now I try to compliment others and accept others' bodies as much as I am trying to accept my own. Try it—it might help!

Photos courtesy of the author and Canva.



About the Author

Maheshika Mackenzie-Baker (Myshi) lived most of her life in Sri Lanka but went to Scotland to receive her masters in Psychology. After eight years there, she and her husband moved to Thailand. They have lived here for over ten years and now have two little kids of their own. Myshi has been an educator in Thailand for over ten years and is currently a learning designer at VERSO International School. Her family has enjoyed learning about and living in a new culture. You can reach her at: Email: maheshi.mackenzie@gmail.com; LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/maheshika-mackenzie-baker-56564532; Twitter: @BakerMyshi

VEGAN BANANA BREAD

This bread will make you go bananas for more! Rachel shares a delicious vegan banana bread recipe that is tasty and easy to make.

As we slowly move away from a world racked by lockdowns, we can sit back and smile at all the trends and fads that consumed us when we were stuck inside. From countless Zoom meetings to endless banana bread recipes, we all found ourselves in a whirlwind of the same activities every single day. However, the latter is one trend that I loved before the pandemic and will hold onto for as long as I can. Banana bread—the sweetness, the cinnamon scent, fresh out of the oven, delicious! It can make the perfect breakfast item, snack, or even dessert. And because bananas, the star of the show, are readily available in Thailand, whipping this up should be no problem.

As you'll have noticed from the title, this is a vegan recipe so you won't need eggs, butter, or milk to make it. Bonus points for sustainability! And for extra points in honor of May, our month dedicated to growth, make sure you reuse or recycle your banana peels. I've been told they're great for compost, fertilizer, and even smoothies!

Equipment

- Blender or food processor or fork
- Measuring cups and spoons or kitchen scale
- Large bowl
- Greased 20cm x 20cm baking pan (or muffin tin)
- Spatula

Dry ingredients

- 1.5 cups of all-purpose flour
- 1.5 cups of oat flour—I just blend whole oats, but you can purchase oat flour from a store
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon of baking soda
- 2 teaspoon of baking powder
- ½ teaspoon of salt
- 2 teaspoons of cinnamon

Wet ingredients

- 2 cups of blended or mashed ripened banana
- 80 ml of neutral oil such as vegetable, grape-seed, or canola
- 60 ml of golden syrup or maple syrup or honey
- 2 teaspoons of vanilla extract

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 175°C.
2. Mix dry ingredients together in a large bowl.
3. Blend wet ingredients together, and fold into the dry mixture using a spatula. Don't overmix—it should be thick and lumpy.
4. Scoop the batter into your greased baking pan or muffin tin.
5. Bake for 37–45 minutes or until completely cooked—insert a skewer into the middle of the bread. If it comes out clean, it's good to go! (Baking times may vary, depending on pan size.)
6. Allow to cool before removing from the pan.
7. Slice, serve, and enjoy!

Notes

- I blend my bananas because I don't like chunks, but if you prefer chunks, you can use a fork to mash them.
- It's best to use well-ripened or really brown bananas.
- By subbing all-purpose flour for

oat flour, you get a crumblier bread.

- Some of my favorite toppings include caramel sauce, chocolate chips, and cream cheese icing; vegan versions can be made or purchased from markets around Bangkok. Other fun mix-ins and spreads include nuts, sliced banana, butter, and nut butters.



Photos courtesy of author and Canva.



About the Author

Rachel Ofo moved from the US to Bangkok in 2016. She has a daughter, whom she loves dragging around the city on various adventures. In her free time, she enjoys reading, watching movies, and trying new restaurants. She also enjoys being out in nature with her daughter. She looks forward to her time with BAMBI.

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BAMBI YARD SALE

SATURDAY 11TH MARCH



On 11th March, BAMBI's first Yard Sale and Swap Shop of 2023 took place at the High School campus of St. Andrews International School Bangkok. We were excited to meet and interact with many families!

We were really overwhelmed by the positive response to the event we received from the community, and we are proud our hard work paid off.

We are really grateful to all the vendors who came with a positive attitude despite such hot weather, to the families who came to shop, to the BAMBI volunteers who worked tirelessly to help everyone involved, and last but not least, to St. Andrews International School Bangkok for supporting us and arranging the facility as needed. Thank you all for making it happen!





BAMBI YARD SALE

PHOTOS BY KANA WAKAIKI



BAMBI PLAYGROUPS & ACTIVITIES



British Club
Playgroup

PLAYGROUPS

BAMBI holds regular playgroups around town, open to both BAMBI members and non-members. BAMBI playgroups are characterized by free play, and the use of venues' toys and playgrounds.



Honey Bear Playgroup

Montessori Playgroup



SCAN NOW TO READ MORE

To find out more about all of our Playgroups and Activities please scan the QR code to head to our website. We look forward to seeing you soon at one of our events.

ACTIVITIES

BAMBI Activities provide a wide range of activities for children ages 1 to 6 years old to develop their athletic, creative and cognitive skills.



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BRILLIANT BIRD FEEDERS

Anelia loves to sit back and watch the birds in her garden, and soon, with these simple-to-make bird feeders, we'll all be relaxing in the company of our feathered friends.

Each morning when I sit outside and sip my coffee, I am entertained by a beautiful operetta. The cast includes sunbirds, cuckoos, sultan tits, black drongos, and mynas. As their enthusiasm echoes through my lush garden, I thank these tone-perfect little performers for welcoming a new day and reminding me that "every little thing is gonna be all right".

I pay my garden-theater ticket fee by providing my operatic stars with

cute bird feeders. These homemade bird feeders are a great way to attract feathered friends to your garden, and the kids can bird-watch and study each species that visits. It's a fun way to learn about the native birds in your area! These feeders are easy to make, and making them is a good sensory exercise for the kids. Through activities such as this, we also have the opportunity to educate children on recycling and repurposing materials for crafts, and teach

them about environmental conservation.

TOILET ROLL BIRD FEEDERS

Supplies:

- 1 tablespoon of lard or peanut butter
- Butter knife
- 3 tablespoons of birdseed
- 1 empty toilet paper roll
- Twine or ribbon
- Plate

Process:

1. First, remove any excess pieces of paper from your toilet paper roll, then use the butter knife to apply a light coating of peanut butter or lard all over the outside of the roll. The fat will make the seeds stick and also make the feeder waterproof.
2. Pour the birdseed onto the plate, and then carefully roll the toilet paper roll over the plate, so it collects the birdseed. Make sure the entire outside of the roll is covered.
3. Pass a length of twine or ribbon through the center of the roll and tie a knot to form a loop.
4. Head to the garden and hang it where your feathered friends can enjoy it!



PLASTIC BOTTLE BIRD FEEDER

Supplies:

- empty 500 ml water bottle
- 2 mixing spoons (plastic or wooden)
- Birdseed
- Twine
- Scissors
- Decoration—optional

Process:

1. Near the bottom of the bottle, cut a little hole into the side of the bottle near the base. Insert the spoon handle through the hole until it hits the other side of the bottle, and cut another small hole so the spoon handle can go through. Remember to keep the spoon holes level so that the spoon does not slip out.
2. Now repeat this step a little higher up the bottle. You can change the direction of the spoon handle to create an interesting feeder.
3. Tie a piece of twine around the neck of the bottle as a hanger for the feeder.
4. Fill your bottle with birdseed and close the cap.
5. The spoon will automatically fill up with seed as the birds eat away.
6. You can decorate the bottle with twine and natural objects such as small shells, twigs, and dried flowers.
7. Hang the feeder in the garden for your feathered friends to enjoy!



Tips for feeding wild birds:

- Make sure you hang your feeders high enough and at different levels, so the birds can feel safe while enjoying their seeds, especially if you have little hunters like cats

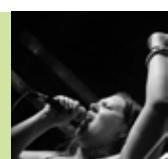
around.

- Use more than one feeder to avoid overcrowding. The bigger the garden, the more feeders you will need.
- Plant flowers and shrubs native to your area to attract birds, bees, and butterflies. Lavender, goldenrod, asters, and jasmine are easy-to-grow flowers, and our little friends love them!

Photos courtesy of the author and Canva.



About the Author



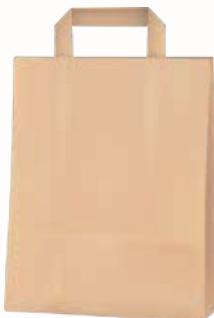
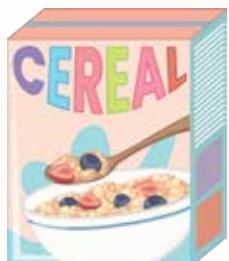
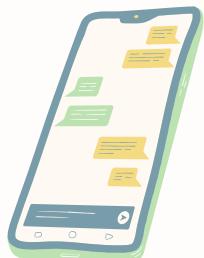
Anelia is a performing artist from South Africa. She has been living and working as a teacher in Thailand for eight years. She also writes educational children's books, makes music, and loves to spend time in the kitchen. Follow her adventures on IG @aneliavz.

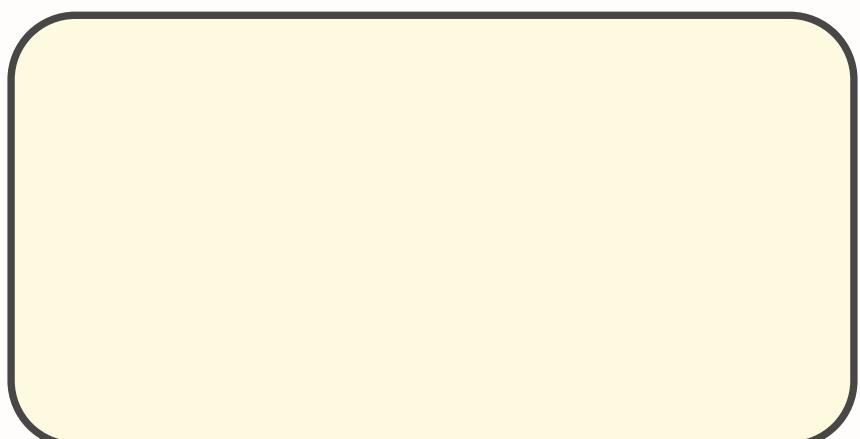
RECYCLE, REUSE, OR COMPOST?

We use many different items every day. You can find some things you might use below.

When you're finished with them, would you recycle, reuse, or compost them?

Cut them out and paste them in the correct bins on the next page, or simply list them.





Answer key: Recycle- cola can, plastic water bottle, batteries, glass bottle, cell phone, cereal box, paper bag, soup can, newspaper, juice pack, laptop. Reuse- clothes, shoes, cell phone, laptop, toys. Compost- apple, carrot.

NEW MEMBERS' COFFEE MORNING

Thank you to all the families that joined us for the New Members' Coffee Morning at Aster International School Bangkok on 17th March. Some had recently moved to Thailand from overseas and came to see what BAMBI is all about, meet other moms, and make new friends! The moms were able to let the children play freely while chatting and learning about BAMBI. The school's nursery teacher led a fun circle time with simple nursery rhymes, which the kids and their parents enjoyed. Big thanks to Aster International School Bangkok for hosting BAMBI New Members' Coffee Morning.





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GETTING STARTED WITH CLOTH DIAPERS

Thought about trying cloth diapering but don't know where to begin? Liz shares the essentials to get you off to a good start.

When my eldest was born, all I knew about cloth diapers was that they seemed like a pretty big investment and looked like a lot of work. And washing poop out of a diaper multiple times a day? No, thanks! But when my baby turned four months old, I made a new mommy friend who used cloth on her babies, and I started exploring the idea. My friend gave me a few pointers, and it all became a lot less

overwhelming. If you're curious about cloth, I hope this brief guide will help you get started.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BEGIN?

First things first—supplies. There are three main things you'll need to begin cloth diapering: a stash of diapers, a dry pail, and a good laundry detergent.

1. Diapers

The number of diapers you'll need will depend on your baby's age (they poop a lot in the early days) and how often you do laundry. If you use cloth full-time and wash every second day, 30 complete diapers should be plenty for a baby over three months old.

Buying new

There are a few different styles of reusable diapers on the market, but the easiest ones to find in Bangkok are flats and pocket diapers. See Table 1 for more information on these.

Buying preloved

You might get lucky and find someone ready to pass on their cloth stash. However, there are some things you should always do when buying pre-loved diapers:

- Before you buy, check the PUL for any cracks, tears, or signs that it's pulling away from the fabric. Damaged PUL = leaky diapers!
- Check if the elastic in the waist and around the leg holes is intact. If it's not, prepare for leaks! Diapers with elastic that has lost





its stretch can be salvaged by replacing the worn elastic.

- Always sanitize preloved diapers before first use (1).

2. A dry pail

The second thing you'll need is a

dry pail. This is a container to store dirty diapers in before washing. Your dry pail needs to allow air to circulate, so an open laundry basket with large holes is ideal. Never soak your dirty diapers or store them inside a lidded bucket or they'll become stinky in no time!

3. A good laundry detergent

All that pee and poop means you'll need the right amount of a good detergent to get your cloth diapers clean. Bangkok water contains a lot of minerals, so you'll get a better clean with powder detergent, which contains a water softener. You may need to try a few to find one you like.

Table 1: Flat and pocket diapers

Style	What is it?	Where can I buy it?	Anything else I should know?
Flat	A large square of fabric that you fold around your baby's bottom and secure with a special fastener. They're often made from a natural material like cotton or bamboo. They're worn under a waterproof cover to keep any wetness inside.	Flats are fairly cheap and easy to find in Bangkok department stores and large local supermarkets.	They're easy to wash and dry. It can take a while to learn how to fold them for the best absorbency and fit. Check YouTube for a tutorial or two!
Pocket	A polyurethane laminate (PUL) cover shaped like a disposable diaper with an absorbent multilayer insert placed inside a pocket. Pocket inserts are often made of synthetic materials like microfiber and natural materials like cotton, bamboo, and hemp.	Local business BABYKIDS95 sells a selection of pocket diapers with synthetic inserts. Imported brands are sometimes available in larger department stores.	The inserts are made from multiple layers of fabric, so a good wash routine is essential. They may take a while to dry (synthetic fabrics dry faster than natural). You can add more absorbency to a diaper by adding multiple inserts. They are as easy to put on as disposables once you've got the hang of it!



Note: Check you have the right kind of detergent for your washing machine. There's usually a picture on the front of the bag that will tell you what type of machine it was designed for. Avoid detergent with added fabric softener because this will affect the absorbency of your inserts.

HOW DO I USE THEM?

So, you've got your stash ready, but how do you actually put them on your baby? Fitting a cloth diaper takes a little practice initially. YouTube will be your friend for this part! Take the

time to get a snug fit to ensure your baby is comfortable and minimize the chances of poo-plosion!

HOW DO I CLEAN MY DIAPERS?

The next thing to think about is cleaning, and this is the part that often goes wrong and makes a lot of parents abandon cloth diapering. But keeping your diapers sanitary is easy if you establish an effective laundry routine (2). The tips below are for a front-loading machine:

1. Dry pail: After rinsing any poop off

into the toilet, put the dirty diaper into your dry pail. You don't need to rinse pee nappies—put them straight in the pail. They'll stay there until you're ready for the next step: the prewash.

Note: If your toilet is fitted with a handheld bidet, you're in luck! This is a handy tool for rinsing poop.

2. Prewash: Give all the diapers from the day a short wash (30 mins long) in warm or hot water with a small amount of detergent. When finished, return these diapers to your dry pail until it's time for the main wash. You don't need to dry them in between.

Note: In the Bangkok climate, you'll get the best results if you prewash daily in hot water.

3. Main wash: When you have a full load of prewashed diapers, put them in the machine for a long wash the longest cycle your machine has is best) in warm or hot water with the full amount of detergent needed for a heavily soiled load.

Note: the size of the load for this wash is crucial to getting





your diapers really clean because they need to be able to rub against each other during the cycle. Aim to fill the drum loosely with dry items so that when everything is wet, the drum is about two thirds to three quarters full. If you don't have enough diapers to fill your machine to this level, you can add other small items like kids' T-shirts. In the Bangkok climate, you'll get the best results if you do your main wash at least every second day.

4. Dry: Allow your diapers to dry fully before using them again.

Note: Drying in the sun works well for inserts and flats but keep your PUL covers out of direct sunlight.

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WHAT DO I DO IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG?

If your diapers start to smell like ammonia or your baby develops a rash, you may need to tweak your routine. This might mean trying a different detergent, using hotter water, or checking that you've been loading the machine correctly. To reset your diapers, you will need to sanitize them (3). If your baby develops a persistent rash, seek professional medical advice (4).

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

For more in-depth information on the aspects I've mentioned, check the references listed below.

There are also many excellent online resources with detailed information on all things cloth diapering. One

of my favorites is "Clean Cloth Nappies", an educational site developed by parents and chemists. Facebook groups can also be a place to find support, but bear in mind that the advice shared may not be based on evidence or what's best for your baby.

My babies have been out of diapers for a few years now, but I have fond memories of using cloth on them. From this cloth mama to you—good luck, and I hope you enjoy your cloth journey!

Photos from Canva.

About the Author



Liz is a mother of two, a professional editor and proofreader, and a former BAMBI volunteer! She loves great food, karaoke, and helping small businesses, indie authors, and organizations like BAMBI communicate their ideas clearly and effectively with their audiences.

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A young girl is riding a bicycle on a paved path through a park. She is wearing a yellow t-shirt, yellow shorts, and a white helmet. A glowing yellow neon-style outline of the word "uniquelyISB" surrounds her. The background shows trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves.

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