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NOVEMBER 2022

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Mel Habanananda



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

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

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

Mission Statement

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

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

For more information on CBFT, contact:

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



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Chiaki Takegawa

Dear members,

Welcome to our November issue. It's hard to believe that we are towards the end of 2022!

This issue, we explore the theme of 'Parenting for You'. As a mother of two, although not perfect, I constantly remind my children that I'm always there for them whenever they need me to show my unconditional love. Being a positive role model for my children is not always easy because they are always watching how I handle stress, how I treat other people, and how I deal with my feelings. Children learn so much more from what we do than what we say! Thus for me, parenting is more about actions and how they match what you say.

At the beginning of March, we were finally able to reopen our playgroups and activities for our BAMBI community and now we are planning for the BAMBI 40th anniversary and Christmas celebration at the end of this month. I feel like time is moving too fast but at the same time, I have achieved so many things.

This past month, the Thai government finally made an official announcement ending the COVID-19 emergency decree which had been in place since 2020. We have all been waiting to hear this great news. I'm looking forward to the removal of both masks and ATK requirements in a safe and measured way.

Recently, BAMBI finally reopened the kung fu activity for older kids, three to six years old, every Tuesday from 3:30–4:30pm at Thai-Chinese Shaolin Kung Fu School in Interchange 21. The school teaches not only martial arts, but also sentimental cultural philosophy, friendship and personality development. As a BAMBI volunteer, I have been fortunate to give children, ages three to six, access to a wide variety of after school activities like kung fu. Our team is always looking to add new ones in various locations, so stay tuned!

And as a whole, BAMBI is also looking forward to welcoming new volunteers to run this amazing community together. We've said goodbye to many of our volunteers during the COVID closure. Without volunteers we are not able to run as many playgroups and activities as we would like. If you can spare a little time to help or are looking for a way to give back to our community, we'd love for you to join our team.

Chiaki
Executive Board Member



OUR COVER KID KEITO

NAME
Keito

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?
Japan

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN THAILAND?
A little over a year

FAVOURITE PLACE TO GO AS A FAMILY IN THAILAND?
Benjasiri Park, Honey Bear Bistro

WHAT'S ON YOUR THAI BUCKET LIST?
Koh Lipe

WHAT DOES BAMBI MEAN TO YOU?
A cozy home

Dear readers,

For every road that I choose to take when I parent my daughters, there are at least two other roads that I forgo. Some roads I turn to confidently, knowing that they've guaranteed the best possible outcomes in the past. Others are less traveled and full of uncertainty. Sometimes I make it through unscathed; sometimes I'm left wondering where I went wrong. But that is parenting—you win some, you lose some, you learn a little and question more as each day passes.

Then there are days when I just want to set sail across the seas or take flight into the sky; do a little something just for myself, for the person I was before I became 'Mom'. Easier said than done though, right?

When we become parents, we tend to lose our sense of self a little bit. Our needs, wants, motivations and ambitions become secondary to those of our children's. We want the best for them and we work hard to achieve it. This can bring on stress that we may inadvertently project on our children. To add to that, we live in a world where people are often quick to judge our parenting skills. Hence, it's not surprising to find ourselves wondering who we are actually parenting for.

This month, recognizing that each of our parenting styles and how we interact with our children is heavily dependent on who we are as

individuals—our attitudes, interests, aspirations, and so on—BAMBI Magazine is here to say, you should be 'Parenting for You'. This means parenting in a way that takes into account who you are as an individual and what your needs are, as you continue to ensure your family's well-being and happiness.

We have articles that talk about different parenting styles and what to expect if you adopt them: 'Positive Parenting: Smarter, Not Harder' by Rachael Smart, and 'Montessori Style Parenting' by Rachna Singhsachakul. Ha Trinh shares how she found the strength and inspiration to embrace and enjoy motherhood, despite initial concerns about the impending break in her career in 'Motherhood Abroad, Challenge Accepted'; Debora Giacomelli puts forward the different strategies parents can practice to control feelings of overwhelm in 'Overcoming Overwhelm'. And finally, if you're looking for things to do in Bangkok with your children that are tailored to different personality types—active, quiet, inquisitive, and so on—turn to 'Parenting for Parents' by Rachel Ofo.

Other articles we have include: 'Gross Motor Development' by Jade Molloy on helping our little ones properly develop the skills needed to complete big tasks, 'Precipitous Labor' by Emma McNerlin that highlights what to expect with a quick labor,



Sanam Raisa Rahman

and if you're thinking of giving DIY Christmas gifts to friends and family this year and want to get started, check out Anelia's instructions to make some beautiful, natural soap. Books are also wonderful gifts to give to those who love reading, so do check out the titles and their reviews in our Readers' Corner, which we are excited to bring back in partnership with the Neilson Hays Library.

All of the above make for some really compelling content, and I would like to thank all the contributors, editors and our designer for yet another month of hard work. Enjoy reading and continue being the best 'you' you can be!

Sanam
Editor

ERRATUM: Please note that the bio in the article 'The Fourth Trimester: Heading Home With Baby' in last month's print issue was incorrect. The article was written by Jo Cox.

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

We sincerely apologize to the author and our readers for any confusion encountered due to our misprint.

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Huttaya Daroonart

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Preechayan Prapinwong

Rachel Stevens

Rebeca Mora

Rebecca Fousset

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Rui Wang

Sabrina Pacheco

Saeko Omura

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Si Yao

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NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

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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.

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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.

STAY UP TO DATE

Make sure to check www.bambiweb.org and the BAMBI Facebook page (@BAMBI Bangkok) 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

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POSITIVE PARENTING: SMARTER, NOT HARDER



Parenting isn't always easy. However, there may be a solution to parenting in a way that will save you time and mental energy. Follow EAL teacher, Rachael Smart, as she explains the benefits of the positive parenting style.

As working parents, it can be tricky to juggle it all. Between the early starts, ever-changing timetables, and managing your home, you'll probably find yourself with only a few precious hours left in the day to spend on the small business of raising your humans. With these few hours, you are left trying to figure out the best way to raise the most empathetic, but strong-minded children. A way to achieve this is with the positive parenting style. It's impossible to 'make every second count', but positive parenting is doable by prioritizing how you use your time.

But what is positive parenting? A simple way to understand the gentle, positive style of parenting is with this definition: positive parenting is an empathy-based approach that involves techniques such as encouragement and problem-solving (1).

Positive parents concern themselves with realistic and age-appropriate expectations, often allowing natural consequences to do the teaching for you. This involves allowing consequences to play out naturally, "in response to your child's behavior without parental involvement" (2). For example, if you told your child to take a jacket and they were adamant about not bringing a jacket, the natural consequence is that when they

step out, they would feel the cold. Additionally, positive parents don't offer rewards to coax out desirable behavior. Here, I've broken down some other key features of positive parenting.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

Nothing is out of bounds in conversation and everything can be adjusted to an age-appropriate level. Although three-year-olds and thirteen-year-olds may inquire about similar things, it's important to reply in a way each of them would understand. And because positive parenting is about mutual respect and understanding, you don't have

to always agree with what's being said, but you do need to listen. This allows for stronger communication and connection. Another positive aspect of this is that answering questions directly and truthfully will usually reduce the amount of follow-ups because all the information was given from the beginning; there are no blanks left to wonder about.

EMPATHY

All feelings are valid. Tired, angry, stressed, excitable, or bored. You can't change them so just take a breath and deal with the emotions, and walk through the tunnel of big feelings together. Empathy is about sharing





feelings. Positive parents see that all behavior is communication, and when that behavior seems undesirable, it's usually due to an unmet need like the need for attention. A screaming child may not necessarily be sad, but may just want a hug. As an adult, your empathy and compassion is required to help little ones navigate their feelings. Feeling *with* the child, as opposed to against them, may result in a quicker regulation of emotions for the child.

ACCEPTANCE

Children just want to be validated and accepted for who they are, exactly the way they are. So positive parents should focus on not comparing their children to each other, or other children, as this won't encourage change. However, embracing children with all their quirks and idiosyncrasies can foster closeness and empathy. Also, understanding that some children often have limited verbal filters, and are usually being honest, allows parents to not take

things personally. This also opens the discussion of social awareness and grace. Although you want our children to be their natural selves, you also want to discuss the consequences of how saying things, albeit honest, may affect someone's feelings.

HUMILITY

Own your mistakes. You've shouted after a stressful day? It happens. Children need to see that you are only human. So apologize to your kids, explain the situation and what you were feeling, and move forward. Showing vulnerability, while expressing yourself constructively will actually help strengthen your relationships with your children (3). It will also teach them how to take responsibility for their actions, emotions, and mistakes they may make.

MODELING

Save yourself from the drama of giving your children a lecture, because they

typically learn best by example. Children need to see you acting in the ways you desire from them. If you want a more positive and empathetic child, you must be a more positive and empathetic parent. All the key features listed above connect to this basic principle of acting and doing with hopes that your child will see and follow.

This is a light-hearted view of positive parenting, but once I discovered, learned more about, and practiced this method, I felt like there was one less parenting ball to juggle. For further information on gentle and positive parenting styles, I highly recommend the writings of Alfie Kohn, Sarah Ockwell-Smith, and Janet Lansbury.

Photos from Canva.

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About the Author

Rachael Smart is an EAL teacher at Bangkok Prep and mother to eight-year-old Reuben. Before teaching in Bangkok, she taught in Bournemouth and Beijing. In her spare time, she reviews vegan food at hotels around Thailand on @veganfriendlyhotels.



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PARENTING FOR PARENTS

Although we become parents for our kids, it's just as equally for us. Deputy editor Rachel Ofo highlights fun activities around Bangkok that'll help you spend and enjoy time with your children based on your personalities and parenting styles.

Parenthood is a place we've all managed to find ourselves. Some of us planned our trip here, complete with itineraries and pitstops. However, some of us just kind of ended up here; hopped in the car and drove, till the lines on the test read WELCOME. Alas, here we are, learning, adjusting, and growing. Every day there is a new ideology to consider or a practice we're encouraged to reconsider, all in the name of giving the best to our children. Yes, circumstances, personalities, wants and needs all vary, but the one common goal is to raise upstanding, happy, and empathetic citizens of the world. Of course, just like there are several different routes to get to a location, there are plenty of ways to raise our children, especially based on who we are. So, let's look at a few popular parent-children activities around Bangkok that may fit your style, personality, and needs as well, because parenting is just as much for you as it is for your child.

LOW-KEY LEISURE

For the parent and child who both appreciate a bit of peace, Bangkok has a few places where silence and tranquility can be enjoyed. Check out a local library like the Bangkok Public Library, situated within Lumpini Park, to find books and reading corners for you and your child to just

get lost in your own worlds, while still being in each other's company. It's a great way to bond because even after your reading is finished, the activity can continue with meaningful conversation about favorite parts of your books. And if sitting inside the library isn't your thing, grab the books and head to a shady part of the park to get some fresh air.

LET'S GO!

On the other hand, for adventurous, more hands-on parents with even wilder children, you may prefer to get moving and partake in activities like hiking and hands-on exploration. This can be accomplished in Bangkok, as there are several parks

scattered around, but shh, make sure not to disturb the readers under the trees.

If man-made parks don't interest you, rent a car, get a driver, or hop on a train to check out any of the hundreds of national parks in Thailand. Many offer trails that are easy enough for you to take your child and spot the various wildlife sneaking about. Khao Yai is a popular destination for families as there are plenty of trails and you might even spot some elephants! For more ideas on family-friendly trails nearby, have a read through the article 'Beyond Thailand's Beaches' in BAMBI Magazine's June 2022 issue, pages 18-19.





SEE YA LATER, ALLIGATOR!

Some parents just need to step back and remove themselves from the rowdiness that is their child. And that's okay. So where to go if you want a bit of quiet, hands-off parenting? A place where your child can let out some energy and maybe a few screams. Fortunately, Bangkok has plenty of classes for the active child and you can either watch from the other side of the sound-reducing window or completely step away, only to return at pick-up time. Everything from karate to football to dance can be found. You might want to check out BAMBI's activities calendar to find classes that may interest your child. I especially enjoy dance classes at Little Pea off Thong Lor because there's a nice café next door where I can go to write articles like this one, and not hear a peep from my child. After she's finished her hour-long class, she's ready to relax (just for a little while).

SIT BACK AND ENJOY

Not all children are nonstop balls of energy. Some children like to just sit and chill, while their parents do all the flipping and jumping and diving. If your parent-child personalities are like these, you would benefit from activities like bicycling, where you can do most of the work while your child

grabs a seat on the back and enjoys the ride, or even fishing. With plenty of ponds, rivers, and beaches around Thailand, you can rent a rod and fight the bite while your child enjoys an activity on the side. There is a nice location in Bangkok called Bueng Maruay. This a seafood restaurant and fishing pond mix, where you can rent all the necessary fishing gear along with a private cabana. So setting up a book, some paper and paint, or an iPad for your child is easy enough.

PARTNER UP!

So what if you prefer hands-on parenting, but don't want to partake in strenuous activities? Art is a great mixture of mental and physical activities, plus getting messy and creating something is always fun.

Around Bangkok, you can find classes for things like pottery making and painting. Companies like PCHA Ceramic offer private classes so you can book for just you and your child. And if you prefer to stay home, check out assistant editor Anelia's Creation Station activities for fun, DIY projects. Although chatting might be minimal, it's still a great experience for artistically inclined parents and children alike.

You have to choose not only what's best for your child's growth, but for

your growth as well. Who we were as people before children and who we've become after children have to balance, because yes, we're parents now, but we're still human beings; we're still us.

The best way to parent is to try different things out. Find out what works and stick to it until it doesn't work anymore. This requires being flexible. Because we're constantly changing, and so are our children, we might find that what used to be a wonderful activity for us, the children, and our parenting styles, is no longer ideal. It's as simple as adjusting. Regardless of who you or your child become, there will always be something for you two to do and grow together. Parenthood is here to stay, so why not make it enjoyable for everyone?

Photos from 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.





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)

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Area: Phrom Phong
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+66 (0)2 662 4570
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The Purple Elephant 49
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Area: Phrom Phong
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+66 (0)2 392 3190
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only elephants should wear ivory



elc international schools

MELT-AND-POUR SOAP MAKING

Natural products are everywhere, but even those may contain questionable ingredients. Making your own soap instead is a sure way to remove all the guessing, along with the grime. Read on as assistant editor Anelia Van Zyl gives step-by-step instructions on how it's done.

If you're a beginner, the easiest way to make soap is the melt-and-pour method. This method uses a premade soap base where saponification (the chemical process that occurs during soap making) has already taken place.

All you have to do is melt the premade base of your choice by double boiling it. This involves filling a pot with several centimeters of water, then placing a dish or another pot containing the soap base into the water. The boiling water and steam from the bottom pot will help the contents of the top container melt. You can then add your spices, scents and any other ingredients you wish, pour the mix into the mold, let it set for a few hours, and ta da, your own homemade soap!

First, let's look at the basics we need for melt-and-pour soap making.

Soap bases:

Bases you can use include oatmeal, goat milk, shea butter, honey, coconut milk/glycerin, or natural glycerin (which I use in the recipes that follow). However, do not add milk to your soap base because it will spoil. It's best to buy ready-made milk bases.

Pigments/dyes:

Mica pigment powder, water-based liquid or powdered dye, natural clays (which also act as a natural exfoliants), herbs and spices (for example, turmeric, beetroot powder, and butterfly pea powder) are all good choices to add some colour to your soap. Just mix your color with a small amount of rubbing alcohol, glycerin or distilled water—enough to form a paste—and then add it to the melted soap base.

Natural exfoliants:

There are numerous natural exfoliants you can add. Some of my favourites include salt (the high mineral content of pink Himalayan makes it a popular choice), ground coffee (a great option that also adds smell), oats (natural whole oats work best), and coconut flakes (a lovely choice when using a coconut milk soap base).

Herbs and botanicals:

Herbs are another favorite in soap making and it's best to experiment with them to get comfortable with how they behave. Some great choices are mint, rosemary, basil and sage.





Flower petals work well for tint, texture and appearance. When used as a tint, you first need to make a puree with the flowers and distilled water, which you then add to the melted soap base. You can also stir petals into the mixture, but note that some flowers will turn brown after a while and can also grow mold. Rose, cornflower, chamomile, lavender, calendula and daffodil flowers are your best options.

You can experiment with different herbs and botanicals. There are many excellent choices for health properties and appearance.

Essential oil blends:

Popular choices include tea tree (great for skin infections and rashes) and orange (for smooth and bright skin), myrrh (promotes healthy complexion) and rose, cedar wood (soothes eczema) and frankincense (promotes skin and cellular health), lemongrass (detoxifying properties) and grapefruit (antifungal properties), ylang-ylang (antioxidant properties) and geranium (treats skin infections). Not only are these blends scent-laden, but their compounds may also have some health benefits for the body and mind (1).

References

1. <https://www.healthline.com/health/essential-oils-find-the-right-one-for-you#Essential-oil-accessories>

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. If you have any concerns regarding dermatology, please contact your doctor.

General equipment:

- Kitchen scale
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Wooden spoon
- Stainless steel container (for double boiling)
- Pot (for double boiling)
- Cooking thermometer

So, now we know what we need, are you ready to try some soap making?





COLOR, SPICE AND EVERYTHING NICE

Time: 50 minutes to make; 3–4 hours to set

Special equipment:

- Rectangular silicone mold (18 cm x 12 cm)
- Kitchen knife/soap cutter

Ingredients:

- 800 g premade glycerin soap base (200 g per layer for four layers), cut into cubes
- 8 ml (approx 1½ teaspoon) ground paprika
- 5 ml (1 teaspoon) turmeric powder
- 8 ml (approx 1½ teaspoon) ground cinnamon
- 10 ml coconut oil
- Isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) to spray between layers to prevent bubbles and to help the layers stick
- basil seeds for sprinkling

Method:

1. Have all your ingredients measured and ready.
2. Slowly melt the first 200 g of premade soap base in the double boiler at 48–51 °C. A higher temperature will scorch your soap and turn it yellow when it sets.
3. Remove from the pot and stir in the paprika. Make sure there are no lumps.
4. Slowly pour the mix into the mold and spray the top with isopropyl alcohol. When a skin forms on top of this layer, and the new mix has cooled down to 45°C, pour on the next layer.
5. Repeat steps one to four for the second and third layers, adding a different spice each time.
6. The top (fourth) layer will stay clear with only the coconut oil added.
7. After you have added the coconut oil mix, spray it with isopropyl alcohol and sprinkle on some basil seeds.
8. Wait 3–4 hours before removing the soap from the mold.
9. Cut into desired sizes and give it a 'test wash'.

FLOWER POWER

Time: 30 minutes to make; 3–4 hours to set

Special equipment:

- Four-cavity square silicone mold (11½ cm x 11½ cm)

Ingredients:

- 400 g premade glycerin soap base (200 g per layer for two layers), cut into cubes
- 12 drops vintage rose essential oil
- 5 ml vitamin E oil
- 1 ml (1/5 teaspoon) pastel pink powdered dye (for bottom layers)
- 20 dried rose petals
- Isopropyl alcohol

Method:

1. Follow steps 1–2 from the previous recipe.
2. Remove the melted soap base from the pot. Mix a few drops of isopropyl alcohol with the powdered dye to form a paste, and then mix with the melted base.
3. Equally divide the pink mix between the four cavities and spray the tops with isopropyl alcohol.
4. Lay three dried rose petals on top of each square.
5. Melt the remaining soap base. Remove from the pot, and let it cool down for 4 minutes before stirring in the vitamin E oil and the rest of the dried rose petals.
6. By now the pink layers will have formed a skin. Spray each top with another round of isopropyl alcohol and then slowly add the vitamin E mix in equal parts.
7. Wait 3–4 hours before removing the soap from the mold.

Wrap all soaps in plastic and store in an airtight container. Enjoy using the results!

Photos courtesy of the author and Canva.

About the Author

Anelia Van Zyl 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. IG: aneliathegreat.



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— Albert Einstein

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CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS



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

We have a number of exciting opportunities currently available:

CHAIRWOMAN

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

Responsibilities & Duties

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

TREASURER

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

Responsibilities & Duties

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



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ASSISTANT TREASURER

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

Responsibilities & Duties

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

MEDIA COORDINATOR

The media coordinator attends monthly committee meetings as a voting member and works in partnership with all teams within BAMBI.

Responsibilities & Duties

- plans and oversees the marketing and communication of BAMBI Playgroups, Activities meet-ups and Events directly to members through social media platforms and the BAMBI website.
- organizes plans and sends mailshots to approved mailing lists
- answers online inquiries from the public in a timely manner

PHOTO EDITOR

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

Responsibilities & Duties

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

CHARITIES COORDINATOR

The charities coordinator attends monthly committee meetings as a voting member and identifies and evaluates potential charities to be recipients of BAMBI sponsorships according to BAMBI guidelines.

Responsibilities & Duties

- works with the events team to hold BAMBI fundraising activities and initiatives
- arranges the collection and distribution of monetary and material donations to BAMBI charities



BENEFITS COORDINATOR

The benefits volunteer works with organizations within Bangkok to gather special discounts for BAMBI members and volunteers.

Responsibilities & Duties

- keeps current benefits list up to date by checking in with businesses ensuring our discounts are still valid
- contacts local organizations asking if they would like to add their business to our list of benefits
- works within deadlines to ensure magazine listing is up to date
- liaises with schools and non-BAMBI playgroups, updates current listings and looks for new opportunities

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

PLAYGROUP LEADERS

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

Responsibilities & Duties

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

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS



FREE PLAYGROUPS



ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS



EXPAND YOUR NETWORK

BAMBI PLAYGROUPS & ACTIVITIES

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



**KIDDIEVILLE
PLAYGROUP**



**SATHORN
PLAYGROUP**



**THONGLOR
PLAYGROUP**



FOOTBALL



**TODDLER MUSIC &
TODDLER TUNES**



KUNGFU



BAMBI PLAYGROUPS

SCAN NOW

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



**NON-BAMBI
PLAYGROUPS**

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MOTHERHOOD ABROAD: CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

For many of us, raising children abroad came as a surprise with its own set of challenges. However, we did it and continue to do it, making changes we've needed along the way. In this article, Ha Trinh shares her experiences going from a hard-working woman to an even harder working mom.

IDENTITY STRUGGLE

Eight years ago, I left my home country Vietnam to embark on a new career path. Throughout that time, I had the privilege of working in international schools and my new career took me to places such as Mozambique, Laos, and Thailand. I also found myself surrounded by inspiring people and a supportive community. At that point in my life, my sole focus was to be a young, devoted educator. Looking back, being a mother was the farthest thing I could think of. Then one summer, while once again changing jobs and countries, everything else changed.

In July 2017, while moving from Vientiane, Laos to Phuket, Thailand, and spending time with my family in the US, my husband and I found out I was pregnant. I was over the moon and terrified at the same time! I have always been a passionate person. Life to me is exciting and full of potential; however, I didn't know who I would be as a mother. Our new life, or rather, our whole life,

in Phuket had completely changed. My intended gap year turned into a micro-credential in motherhood. I was ready for the ocean waves of Phuket, but not for the tsunami of impending emotional and physical changes of motherhood.

At the beginning of settling into our new life in Phuket, I began to worry about maintaining my identity; my sense of self. I'd often think, "No one knows the whole

you, they only know this you, the pregnant woman they see now." I worried about missing out on career opportunities or making connections in a new community. I understood the competition and that my ethnic and professional backgrounds weren't always preferred in international schools. I thought, "You won't be able to get back to work. You are an Asian woman with a finance degree, and even though you are almost done with your Master's in





Education, you might not finish it.” These voices and thoughts in my head went on and on. I blamed myself for deciding to take a year off from work in the hope that I could enjoy myself for a little bit. I wondered why I put myself in a position like this. I was convinced that my career was doomed. Little did I know that these meaningless ruminations were part of me embracing the fear of the unknown and the transformation that lay ahead.

A CHANGE OF HEART

The reality couldn't have been further from what the voice in my head played. What I gained during my time in Phuket was more than anything that could possibly be measured. I was very fortunate to have found an amazing network of new mothers who welcomed me with laughs and tears. This strong network of mommies in Phuket helped me become the mother I am today. They were always there for one another to make sure concerns were heard and solved. Once again, I found myself surrounded by





inspiring people and a supportive community. Only this time, unrelated to school or career and completely devoted to motherhood. I was inspired and supported to trust my instinct. I wasn't rushed to read books about parenting, but watching them gave me some initial ideas of what and how I wanted to do it. I can proudly say that I had the best motherhood bootcamp! That year allowed me to understand two things: reconnecting with womanhood and embracing a new identity.

Fast forward to life in Bangkok with a baby—I was committed to breastfeeding my daughter until she was two years old and I became a full-time, stay-at-home mom. All the fears I had before tried to sneak into my head (again!). But this time, I got better. I immediately knew what to do. I actively searched for mommy groups and this city was very resourceful.

I found BAMBI. I went to playdates even though I barely knew anyone. I just felt safe and supported being around other moms. Then I had my very first close mom-friend, then two,

then a big group of women. It was amazing how my community grew. For the first time in my experience abroad, I had Vietnamese friends. That meant I could celebrate my culture with them and introduce it to my daughter. How wonderful! We had the best parties; the kids dressed in our traditional *áo dài* outfits and they could try all kinds of dishes from around our country, thanks to the variety of our backgrounds. That was the best thing I could imagine for having my kid grow up abroad. I felt so much more confident and proud to be Vietnamese here. It made my husband and I realize how important customs and cultures were and that they were key factors in helping us overcome our identity crisis as a mixed-culture family in general.

JOURNEY, NOT DESTINATION

In constant amazement at how things turned out, I've become grateful and humble for our lives. From having my plan changed suddenly, I've found that I'm a woman who wants to embrace life as it goes on. I've also realized that it's okay to be scared. I don't have to

try to be strong all the time. I might have obstacles getting back on my teaching path, but I've explored my passion for business. The fears of missing out on life or job titles out there were based on false beliefs. And my worry about identity, change, or friends turned out to be some of the best parts of the experience. Most of all, I found self-love, and I learned to take care of my daughter and my family.

Photos courtesy of the author and Canva.

About the Author

Ha Trinh, an international educator from Vietnam, has been living and working abroad in Africa and Asia since 2013. She received her Master's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies/International Learning Styles, with a focus on Social Emotional Studies from the State University of New York, USA, during her first year as a mom to daughter, Amelie who is now four years old. Currently, Ha is a Learning Assistant at VERSO International School.





**HONEY BEAR
PLAYGROUP
EVERY WEDNESDAY
9:30-11:30AM**

"We like coming here because it has both outdoor and indoor spaces to play in. I like that the open space is not too big, so I can keep an eye on my son. I can also have lunch afterwards if I want to."

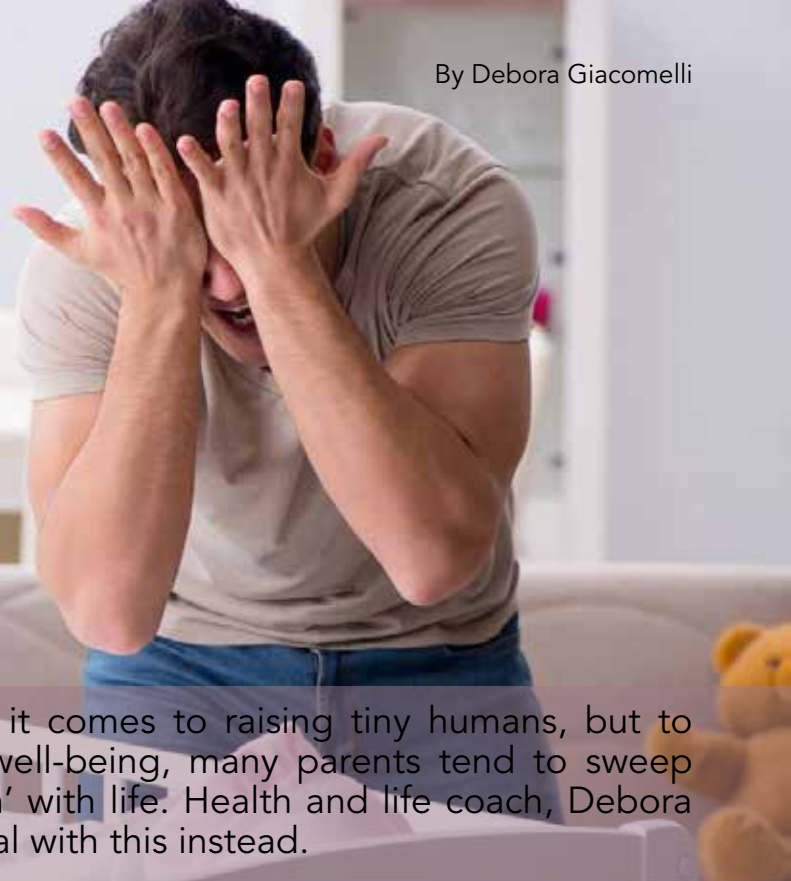
- Aoi Nagazawa



"We like this playgroup because of the circle time and free coffee for parents. It is also not too far from my house. Thank you very much for all the fun we have always!"

- Takako Toyama

OVERCOMING OVERWHELM



Feeling overwhelmed is the norm when it comes to raising tiny humans, but to the detriment of their own health and well-being, many parents tend to sweep their emotions under the rug and 'get on' with life. Health and life coach, Debora Giacomelli, suggests healthier ways to deal with this instead.

Being a parent is wonderful, but coping with a changing lifestyle, as well as everyday life—whether it's with work, school, social obligations, or just family life in general—can sometimes be overwhelming. The stress from parenting might push you to the limit, where you end up doing something unpleasant like yelling at your children because they are not behaving the way you want them to. However, it is important to give yourself grace when having these feelings. Of course, when it comes to family, that's easier said than done.

In his book, 'The Whole Brain Child', Daniel Siegel suggests pausing and considering two things in such instances: 1) Is this kind of behavior appropriate for your child's age? And 2) Are you in a calm state of mind? Reviewing these two points may change or help us understand how we're feeling, and if you are indeed overwhelmed, here are some suggestions to help (1).

LET IT OUT

It is worth it to try something to help yourself respond mentally and

emotionally to your problems. In coaching, there is a process called 'journaling' which is a way to just dump your thoughts out onto a paper.

It doesn't matter if your thoughts are logical or more emotional. You can't effectively deal with them when your mind is cluttered because you can't think straight. To start journaling, just grab a pen and paper, and start writing. Don't worry about the order or number of things that come spilling out. And for those who may struggle with getting the words out of your brain, there are plenty of apps and blogs which can provide you with writing prompts. However, the most important thing is to write, not just about your experiences, but how they make you feel. Putting your feelings on paper may help you realize and understand their existence, therefore helping you feel lighter.

The key is to just give your mind some space and gratitude for what you have been doing. This space is needed because sometimes minds can be surrounded by chaos. However, if you are grounded, like a

tree attached with its roots deep in the ground, nothing can shake you; you will be mentally and emotionally stable. But what happens if you just can't stabilize yourself? What if you find yourself being overcome with the guilt that comes with being overwhelmed?

STEP BACK

Be gentle to yourself. This matters because mom-guilt (and dad-guilt too) is real, and sometimes it is overwhelming as well. Where it stems from varies as widely as what it's about—from breastfeeding, to too much screen time, to not enough quality time, and so on. Raising a little human is hard! And that's why taking some time for yourself, going on a date with your partner, or just taking time to breathe is needed, and these are not things you should feel guilty about.

SEEK AND ACCEPT HELP

Another important aspect of parenting that you should not feel ashamed about is asking for help. It's necessary to admit: a little help is needed to survive. Whether it



comes from your partner, childcare, a relative, or friend; don't feel bad about asking for help. You might also reach out to a professional like a therapist, doctor, or coach, in order to get the support you need to organize your new, demanding lifestyle around your and your family's needs. There is a limit to what you can accomplish in a day, and stretching yourself too thin might mentally and physically exhaust you, especially if you are sleep deprived.

GET SOME SHUTEYE

This might be one of the hardest points to accept when becoming a parent; that you are just sleepy. Sleep deprivation can worsen postpartum depression (2), which affects many new mothers. One of the things that worked with both of my children is trying to get them on a sleep routine. Besides the massive scientific benefits for your baby like language development and emotional regulation (3), you will get enormous advantages from that too. Talk to a professional about baby sleep, and the one thing you will hear repeatedly is the importance of establishing an infant sleep schedule.

In fact, getting your baby on a sleep schedule early on could be the key to healthy sleep and routine for both parents and baby.

In the early days, while your baby is sleeping, you might try to catch some sleep too. This plays a huge role in remaining calm and aware of the new changes in your life. Later on, once a routine is established, you can use this precious time to complete some work, clean the house, or simply take more needed rest; often parents try to fit everything in during nap times

at their own expense. And if you'd rather not sit down or work, exercise is also a good idea.

EAT HEALTHY

One of the most common challenges I hear from my clients is not being able to maintain a fitness routine or balanced diet. It is common for people to turn to food for comfort, or as a way to cope with big emotions. But healthy eating gives you the energy you need during the day and keeps your body nourished





so it can run at its peak performance. Preparing balanced meals might sound like a big task when you are a busy parent, but once you know which foods give you the nutrients and the stamina you need, it can be easier to choose better options that will provide you with the motivation to eat well.

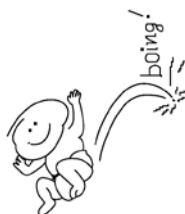
For your children, your good health and well-being means you can give them what they need to grow and develop. How you take care of yourself influences your child's attitudes to health and well-being.

Overall, being overwhelmed comes with the territory of being a parent. However, we shouldn't allow it to take over our lives. Overcoming these feelings may seem impossible,

but the first step is knowing what to do. Sometimes all you need is a good rest, a nice meal, and a deep breath. Sometimes you need a professional. Whatever your case is, even the smallest solution is a solution to helping yourself mentally, physically and emotionally. Developing emotional resilience can help you learn to better cope with stressful situations, find more balance, and build positive relationships—now and in the future.

Photos from Canva.

Here I am!



About the Author



Debbie Giacomelli, a mom of two, is a certified health and life coach, specifically supporting women in their health journey. She provides practical tools that enable clients to find balance in their relationships and thrive in their environments. She focuses on the importance of a healthy and strong body for women as they navigate into motherhood with strength and grace. For assistance regarding pre-, mid- and post-pregnancy support, please contact her via:

Email: Debbie.healthlifecoach@gmail.com
Website: debbiehealthcoach.com
IG: [@debbie_fitcoacheshealth](https://www.instagram.com/debbie_fitcoacheshealth)

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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.

PRE & POST NATAL SUPPORT

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ADOPTION
SUPPORT
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TWINS
AND MULTIPLES
GROUP

DISABILITY & NEURODIVERSITY SUPPORT

LEAP
(LEARNING
& EDUCATIONAL
ADVOCACY
PROGRAM)

RAINBOW
ROOM

SUPPORT TO WOMEN

BEYOND
BOOBS

BANGKOK
BREAST
CANCER SUPPORT
GROUP (BBCS)

SCAN NOW TO READ MORE

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





"We like the tables and chairs for eating, the sand pit and different slides in the garden plus the water play is nice also."
- Cindy Cheung



SATURDAY NANA PLAYGROUP

EVERY 2ND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH
9:30-11:30AM
AT STORYTIME PRESCHOOL



"We like that there is sand play, water play and the playground is spacious so we can play without feeling crowded. The shuttle service makes it easy to get there. We like it there and we will go again."
- Kana Wakaiki





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PLAYGROUP

**Mondays & Fridays
9.15 – 11.15 am**



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Ruamrudee Branch

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Email: dr.lek@kidskingdom.ac.th

Website: www.kidskingdom.ac.th/ruamrudee

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PLAYGROUP

**Saturdays
9.15 – 11.15 am**



MONTESSORI-STYLE PARENTING



Rachna Singhsachakul shares the philosophy behind the Montessori Method and how we can incorporate its principles into our parenting approach.

You may have heard of the Montessori Method for educating young children, but did you know that Dr. Maria Montessori also founded Montessori-style parenting?

Just like the Montessori Method, Montessori-style parenting involves caregivers being 'hands-off' to give their children more control and encouraging exploration and learning (1). This parenting approach places a central focus on preparing children for every aspect of life (2). It involves adopting a few simple principles into your everyday life and can be applied by any parent or caregiver, regardless of their training or previous experience with children.

Montessori-style parenting incorporates a few key principles:

- 1) Respecting children as the unique individuals they are;
- 2) Giving children plenty of opportunities for hands-on learning;
- 3) Fostering independence by encouraging children to think for themselves and develop a sense of self-respect and responsibility.

Below are some of the ways in which you can incorporate these principles into your day-to-day parenting.

1. PROVIDE A CHILD-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Montessori parenting creates an environment that encourages independence and responsibility from an early age. The two main kinds of freedom necessary to promote independence are:

Freedom of movement—providing a safe, child-friendly environment in which children are allowed to play and move independently and freely without any danger;

Freedom of choice—children are at liberty to choose an activity they wish to partake in within a safe, child-friendly, prepared environment (3).

Practical suggestions

- Use child-sized furniture such as floor beds, kids' wardrobes, weaning tables and small tables, and chairs. Child-sized furniture helps children become more independent by encouraging them to take ownership of their space. A

local source for child-sized items is 'A Child Story' (@achildstorybkk on IG).

- Childproof your home to provide children with as much freedom as possible.
- Allow your child to make small, age-appropriate decisions. For example, let them choose their clothes, what they would like to eat, and the book they want to read before bed.

2. ENCOURAGE HANDS-ON EXPLORATION OF THE WORLD

The power of hands-on learning must not be underestimated! Children should discover the world around them through a hands-on approach, rather than having information simply handed to them by an adult.

When a child uses their hands to explore something new, their discoveries become more meaningful. When they have firsthand experiences, the things they learn become much more deeply ingrained than with rote learning. Children will create more natural connections to the environment if



they are allowed to touch, feel, and explore rather than just be told about what something is or how it works. Later on, more abstract learning will develop spontaneously from their concrete experiences.

Practical suggestions

- Offer several possibilities for tactile stimulation. For example, let them play in the mud, use playdough and explore different textures.
- Give them hands-on experience by involving them in meal and snack preparation. Encourage them to self-feed and drink from open cups rather than sippy cups. Keep things as real as possible. Allow them to see and interact with real objects rather than toy versions.
- Explore new topics with your children in a variety of ways. For example, if your child is interested in butterflies, read books about them, look at them in the garden, and even adopt some beautiful caterpillars (there are a few places in Bangkok where you can get them) and let your child see how

they transform. It's fascinating for both parent and child!

“What the hand does, the mind remembers.”

*—Dr. Maria Montessori**

3. 'FOLLOW THE CHILD'

'Follow the child' is one of the main principles of Montessori parenting (4). The phrase is sometimes misunderstood, with some parents believing the concept involves giving the child complete control over the family or the opportunity to do anything they choose. However, this is inaccurate. What it actually means is to take a step back and observe your child. You'll soon begin to notice what they are interested in and how they like to explore and learn.





The beauty of this phrase is that it incorporates other key Montessori principles, such as promoting independence and allowing for freedom of movement.

Practical suggestions

- As you observe your child, pay attention to repeated behaviors.
- If you notice that your child is interested in a certain activity, try to provide them with the right environment or materials to explore it further. For example, if your toddler is interested in running and climbing, go outside with them as much as possible. Or in an indoor setting, provide a child interested in helping with household chores with water, a spray bottle, and a window

squeegee, and let them clean the windows. Another fun activity is to have them help with vacuuming.

- Refrain from pressuring your child to participate in an activity merely because it is age-appropriate or because other kids like it.

Instead of imposing your notions about what and when your children should learn, I encourage you to observe and accept your children's paces and interests.

Parenting isn't easy; it's an art, and a lot depends on your creative response to an everyday challenge. If you are new to Montessori-style parenting, please don't be overwhelmed by all the information out there. Instead, sit back and set reasonable expectations for yourself and your child. You don't

have to be the 'ideal' parent for a Montessori child. As you develop and grow together, the most important thing is to be kind to yourself and each other. You will be fascinated by the transformation.

Photos from Canva.

About the Author

Rachna Singhsachakul is an entrepreneur and mom to three beautiful children.

Although it's challenging, she enjoys balancing work and family life. She believes a positive mindset is the key. Her mantra towards life is "always dream big, accept it with an open mind and always make decisions with your wild heart".



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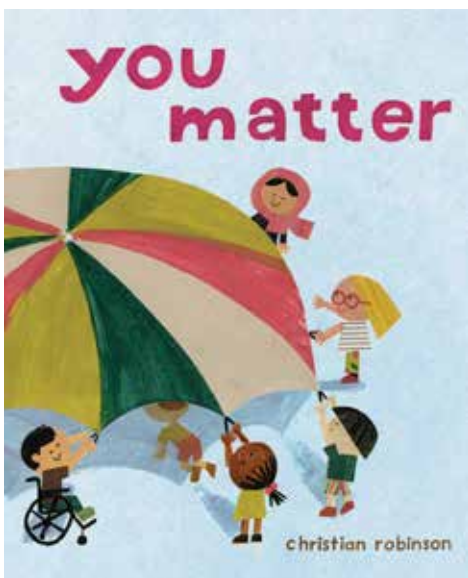
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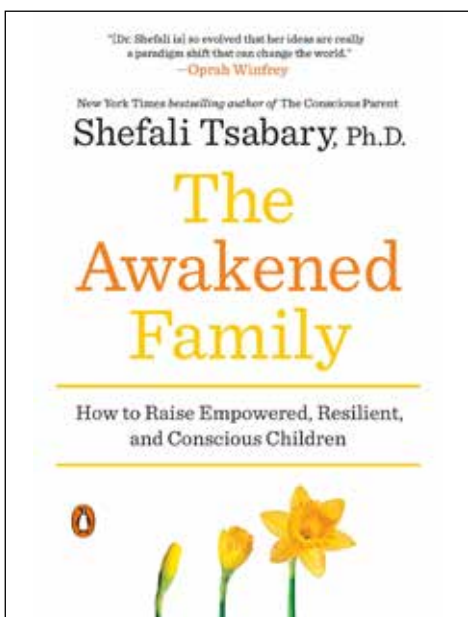


YOU MATTER

written & illustrated by Christian Robinson

A gem that delights children and parents alike! This book is packed full of lessons in self-esteem, diversity, identity, and elementary science. The vibrant illustrations are whimsical and thought-provoking, with new details sure to pop out with each subsequent reading. From ant farms to dinosaurs to outer space, these images will especially capture the attention of young science lovers. At first glance, one may overlook the deep meaning within the simple prose. However, the simplicity leaves room for questions and deeper discussion between parent and child. From the first page to the last, readers of all ages are reminded to celebrate individuality, embrace differences, and find the ways we're all interconnected. The resounding lesson is that each individual plays a precious part in our vast universe.

Published by Atheneum Books in June 2020. A bestseller from Caldecott honoree Christian Robinson. His other beautifully illustrated works include "Last Stop on Market Street" and "School's First Day of School". Suitable for ages 2-8. Hardcover copies can be found in the Children's Corner of the Neilson Hays Library.



THE AWAKENED FAMILY

by Dr. Shefali Tsabary

It's no wonder that 'The Awakened Family' is recommended by countless family therapists. Using her real-life experiences as a clinical psychologist and as a mother, Dr. Shefali Tsabary provides practical tools that can be easily implemented in daily life. The book goes a step further than most parenting books by brilliantly breaking down the root causes of common parenting frustrations. Dr. Tsabary shares the power of breaking cycles to form transformative family relationships where children and parents authentically embrace their identities. Readers are left empowered to be more conscious partners and parents, and perhaps more importantly, to be more compassionate with oneself. We also highly recommend the audiobook version read by the author herself.

Published by Penguin Books in May 2016. This is the third book from Dr. Shefali Tsabary, an award-winning author and clinical psychologist specializing in family dynamics and personal development. Her work blends the best of both Eastern philosophy and Western psychology. A hardcover copy can be found in the non-fiction section of the Neilson Hays Library.

About the Author

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

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

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GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

Being able to use and coordinate their body on a gross motor level, are some of the most important skills your baby can develop. Let's look at a few suggestions from early years physical development specialist, Jade Molloy, on how to help develop your little one's body awareness.

Physical development underpins all areas of a child's learning and development from birth. As a parent or caregiver, you play a huge role in supporting your child to build the connections between their brain and body. Creating an environment where children of all ages can freely explore, both independently and with an adult, is key to developing gross motor skills.

WHAT ARE GROSS MOTOR SKILLS?

Gross motor skills involve the larger muscles of the body, like those found in the arms and legs. They usually require whole-body movement, engaging the core-stabilizing muscles. Gross motor skills are also used when different parts of the body are needed to work together to achieve a task successfully, for example, throwing, catching, or kicking a ball, riding a bike, or swimming.

SOMETHING FOR ALL AGES: SWIMMING

How old was your little one when you took them for their first swim? We are so privileged here in Bangkok to regularly have access to pools! Swimming uses all the major muscle groups and is a great way to start strengthening not only muscles but also babies' hearts and lungs too (1). It's also a great way to cool down in this crazy heat! Check with your pediatrician, but usually, little ones can have their first swim experience as early as you feel comfortable. Check NHS guidance for clarification (2).

0-6 MONTHS

At home, try to keep your baby stimulated by changing their environment regularly. Especially in the early days,

you can find yourself spending a lot of time at home, so keep it fresh for you both by setting up camp in different places for variety and multiple opportunities for movement. I made bases on the sofa, in the bedroom, and in the corner of the living room. Have a few different things ready to interact with: black and white books (3), muslins, teddies, colorful scarves, and musical toys. These can encourage babies to move their heads, engage core muscles, and also get arms and legs moving as they begin to attempt to reach for and kick targets.

New mom needing to get out of the house? Did you know that Harborland, a popular indoor playground in Bangkok, has a baby and toddler section? It's brilliant! There are some fantastic, visually stimulating and sensory features, as well as a mixture of surfaces for your baby to have some tummy time exploration. Babies under six months are free of charge, and the prices for adults range





between ฿130 and ฿170, depending on location. So, if you need a change of scenery, and want to meet up with some other mommas, go and try it out!

6–12 MONTHS

Most soft play centers have separate areas that are specifically designed for crawlers and new walkers. Again,

living in Bangkok, we are so incredibly fortunate to have plenty of options that are generally inexpensive to access. Bright colors, lights, and music are all used to encourage little ones to explore. Navigating a ball pit, moving foam blocks, learning to climb stairs, and safely making their way down slopes and slides are activities that are accessible to all and can be tailored to suit the developmental stage of your child. Living in an apartment, as many of us do here, I found it especially useful to have access to soft steps/stairs for some exposure to this common household feature that we just don't have the opportunity to work on at home.

12–18 MONTHS

One of my favorite investments for this age range was our Pikler Triangle. A Pikler Triangle is a triangle-shaped indoor climbing frame. As they start to develop coordination skills and balance, children can begin to climb up and down the ladders. Using their arms, legs, and core muscles in their torsos, the Pikler Triangle is great for all-around strength. Most come with a slide too, and I'm yet to find a little one who doesn't get excited whizzing down in a variety of ways! If the idea of buying a new one is a little daunting, keep an eye out on the second-hand mom groups—they often pop up at some greatly reduced rates.

Once walking, try to spend some time outside every day. Bangkok is littered with some fantastic parks. Although it can be hot, most have shaded play spaces or areas/paths to walk with tree cover. As with adults, walking has so many physiological benefits. Those little legs will be getting stronger with every step they take; their core





muscles engage to navigate new and potentially tricky terrains—like the unpredictable Bangkok pavements!

18–24 MONTHS

A super fun age, they love to move and explore! If you have a balcony or garden space, encourage them to help you with planting, watering, and moving pots around. I bought a giant container/tub on Lazada to create a sandpit—hours of fun and so many opportunities for gross motor development: digging, building, scooping, lifting buckets, and pushing trucks/tractors. Scooters, balance bikes, and trampolines are also fantastic and fun, outdoor, whole-body movement activities for your growing toddler.

Gross motor development doesn't need to be daunting and can easily be incorporated into your daily life and routine with your little one. Keep your eyes peeled for my next article focusing on fine motor skills.

Photos courtesy of the author and Canva.

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About the Author

Jade Molloy is a former international swimmer turned Early Years Physical Development specialist. After nine years in Asia, she now has two sons (three years and four months) and loves to explore Bangkok and the surrounding areas. Taking a break from international teaching to be a full-time mom, Jade can be found on IG; @boundless_foundations.



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PRECIPITOUS LABOR: THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

Last time we examined the phenomenon of prodromal labor, where labor starts and stops over days or weeks. This time, midwife Emma McNerlin explores precipitous labor, when labor and birth happen unexpectedly fast.

When listening to women's stories about their experiences of labor and birth, they are sure to share just how long the process took. Some will report that labor took the best part of 18 to 24 hours, sometimes longer; many will recall the emotions felt, the support they received, the exhaustion experienced, and the relief when it was all over. However, for some women, labor will have been extremely fast. In obstetrics, this is referred to as 'precipitous labor'. This means labor and birth that take less than three hours from the onset of regular contractions to the birth of the baby and placenta (1).

Let's return to our analogy from last time,* of childbirth as a great voyage in which you set sail on the seas of labor, heading for the birthing shore, not knowing how long the journey will take. If we imagine that in prodromal labor the boat feels like it's coming in to dock, but it's still a mile from the shore, then in precipitous labor, the waves are high and hard and the boat is speeding straight for shore.

THE FACTS

Statistics on the incidence of precipitous labor vary from anywhere between 3% and 14% of pregnancies (2). This wide range may be due to the

data collection methods. When labor onset was determined with an objective assessment by a health professional, the reported incidence of precipitous labor was higher: between 12% and 14% (3). On reflection, this is feasible, as confirmation by a health professional only will discount any labor pains experienced before arrival to the hospital.

In typical labor, contractions increase gradually in length, strength, and frequency, growing closer together and more intense over a period of 6-12 hours (4). In precipitous labor, from the onset, contractions are abnormally strong, sometimes experienced as constant pain. Precipitous labor causes contractions that are long (at least one minute) and are spaced no more than one to two minutes apart. Precipitous labor can be attributed to several physiological factors. This pattern of labor may be due to higher circulating levels of oxytocin (the hormone responsible for labor contractions) or a greater sensitivity to oxytocin by the uterine muscles, though more research is needed to test this hypothesis (5). Fast labor can also be caused by low tone in the muscles and tissues of the birth canal, resulting in rapid descent of the baby on full dilatation. In rare instances, women report a to-

tal absence of any painful sensation before experiencing an overwhelming urge to bear down as the baby is ready to be born (6).

Research has identified many risk factors that predispose women to precipitous labor, finding it to be slightly more common in teenage mothers, women who have had a baby before, those giving birth to a baby under 2.5 kg, and also those with high blood pressure, including preeclampsia. Pregnancies resulting from fertility treatment are also more likely to cause fast labor, though it is not fully understood why (7).

Placental abruption can also cause precipitous labor. This rare and serious complication—affecting less than 1% of pregnancies (8)—occurs when some or all of the surface of the placenta detaches from the wall of the uterus. Placental abruption is often experienced as a strong, painful, almost constant contraction, sometimes accompanied with vaginal bleeding. Not all cases of precipitous labor are caused by placental abruption, but it's important that it is ruled out. Therefore, anyone experiencing sudden onset of strong painful contractions, closely spaced or constant, should immediately contact their OB/GYN for assessment.

* Please head to *BAMBI Magazine June 2022*, pages 26–28, for Emma's first article in the series *Love's Labor's Lost—An Examination of Prodromal Labor*.

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It might seem reasonable to assume that babies born from precipitous labor would experience complications or difficulties from such a fast entry into the world. However, most are unaffected by their speedy journey to birth. Their Apgar scores aren't lower, nor do they experience higher incidences of breathing difficulties (9).

PHYSICAL SIDE EFFECTS

There are a number of physical maternal complications associated with precipitous labor and birth. There is an increased risk of perineal lacerations, third- and fourth-degree tears, caused by the uncontrolled descent and crowning of the baby's head, powered by the strong uterine contractions. The muscles and tissues of the pelvic floor are not given sufficient time to stretch before the baby reaches the perineum.

Although the time in labor is short, the work of the uterus in a fast labor is constant and intense. For this reason, there is a higher risk of postpartum hemorrhage (PPH) among women with precipitous labor (10). Maternal age may have an impact on the risk of developing these complications, as later research with a much higher percentage of younger mothers found no significant increase in perineal or cervical tears or PPH (11).

POTENTIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SIDE EFFECTS

On paper, having a short labor and birth may seem an attractive option, especially to those who report an 18-hour marathon. However, in reality, the psychological impact of having a rapid labor and birth can be distressing and can impact the postpartum period (12). For first-time moms experiencing this phenomenon, it's often not what they had been led to believe and prepare for during their prenatal classes.

When labor starts and intensifies so quickly, there isn't time to gradually build your natural pain-killing endorphins to help you cope with the labor (13), things are moving too fast for pain relief to be administered, and the birth that was planned is overtaken by what is often stressful, overwhelming and full of emotional turmoil. It can also be frightening for birth partners who feel unprepared and also in some cases worried that the baby will come before getting to the hospital. For second-time mothers, a precipitous labor may be very different from their previous birth experience and that can cause stress and anxiety because they may feel that something is wrong. The potential for postpartum trauma and PP-PTSD symptoms is increased (14), so imagine feeling that way about your birth, only to be told how lucky you are that it is over in under three

hours! The physically overwhelming sensation and massive adrenaline rush associated with precipitous labor and birth, and the subsequent crash, can appear almost like disbelief and disassociation afterward. It can take some women days, weeks or months to address their birth experience (15).

Psychologist Dr. Kristen Kjerulff found in a study of 3,006 first-time moms that 47% reported they felt that they or their baby were in danger during labor and birth. From this, they were found to be displaying symptoms of childbirth-related post-traumatic stress disorder (CR-PTSD). In this study, these participants scored lower in the maternal-infant bonding assessment at one month postpartum than the other 53% (16). It is important therefore, that women and their partners who have experienced precipitous labor are given an opportunity to debrief their experience with a trauma-informed health-care professional and be referred for counseling, if necessary.

WHAT TO DO

For anyone experiencing precipitous labor, when contractions start strong and intense, and there is a minute or less between them, it is important to go straight to the hospital for assessment to rule out placental abruption and to be properly and medically supported for birth.



Childbirth is transformative to all who experience it. When you get in the boat to journey to the destination of birthing a baby, you can never really know how it will go. So much of what we prepare for is 'average' for many women. It is important to recognize that births also take place at the extremes of labor length, prodromal at one end of the scale and precipitous at the other. Both of these experiences can be traumatic, physically and emotionally, and can impact maternal-infant bonding. Talking about those experiences

with a trauma-informed specialist can help women process their birth experience and facilitate them to bond with their babies and thrive with their parenting.

Photos from Canva.

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

About the Author



Emma McNerlin is a UK-trained and registered midwife, first aid instructor, and owner of Bumpy Daisy Café and Community; a cafe and parenting community center for new and expecting parents, offering birthing classes, hypnobirthing and first aid workshops, and baby classes.

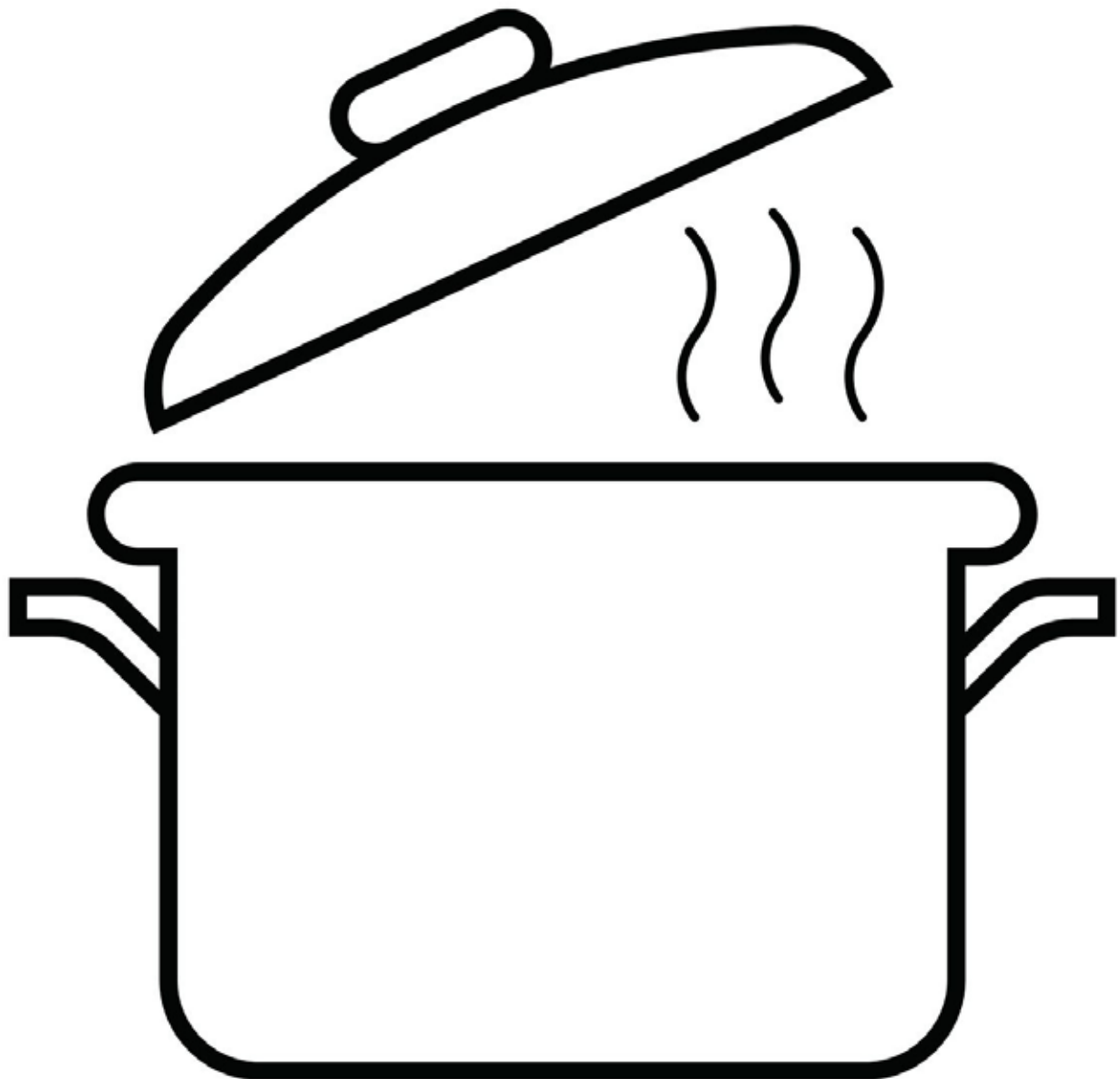
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HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

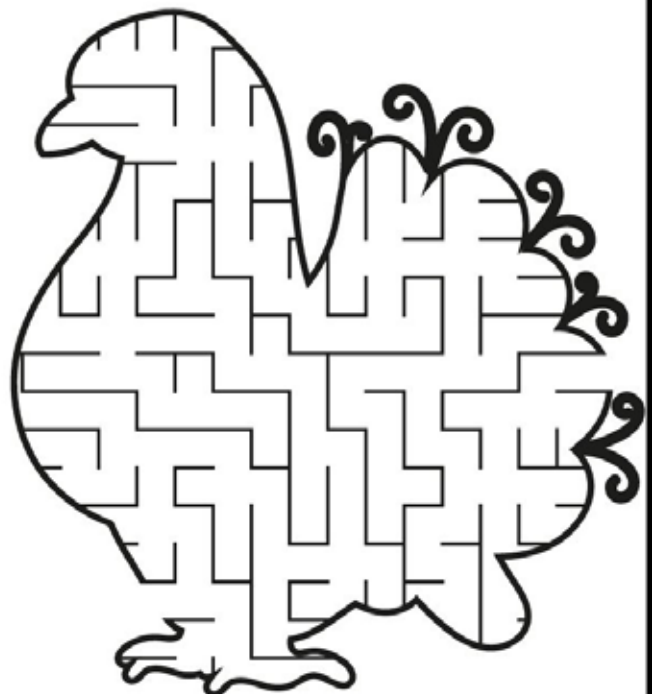
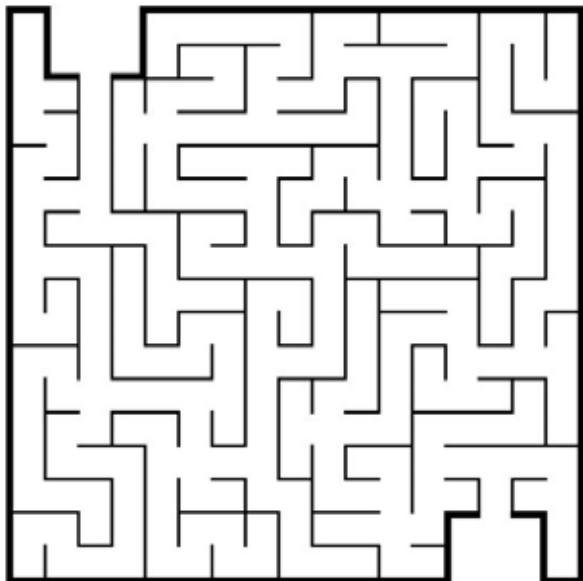
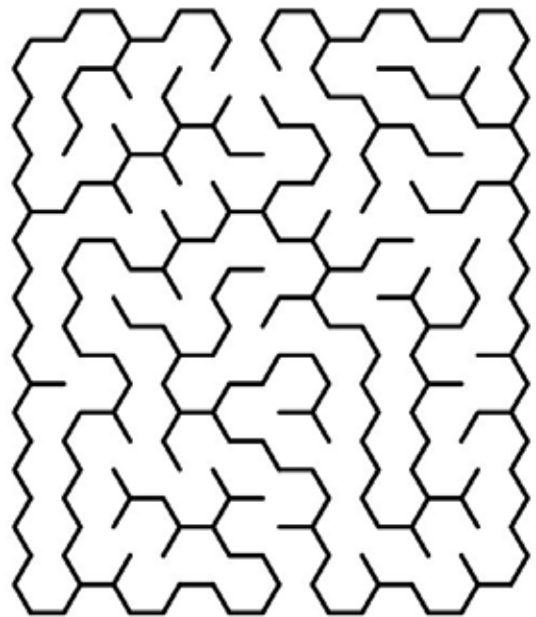
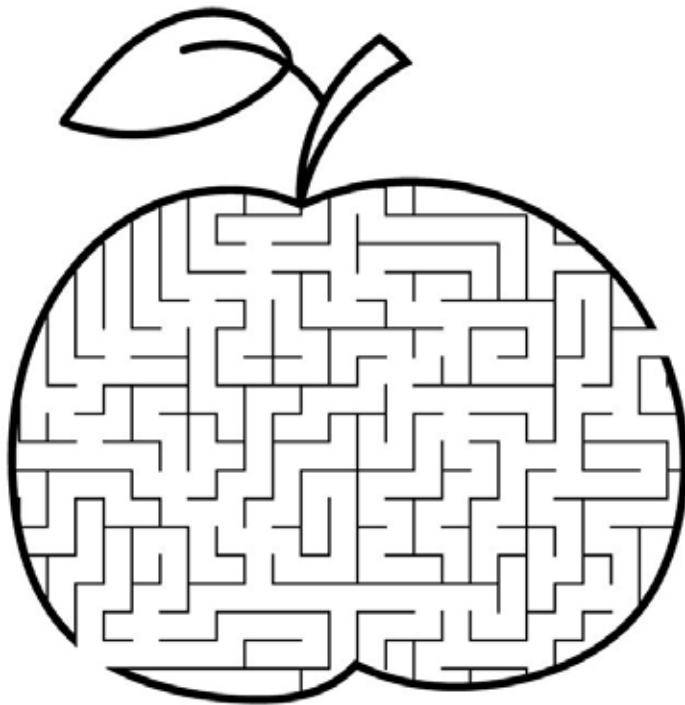
Thanksgiving is typically a time for recognizing the things, people and parts of our lives that we are grateful for.

In the pot, draw all the things you feel thankful to have.



MAZE MADNESS

While waiting for the turkey to roast,
pass the time with these mazes.



MEET NAO

Carefree and friendly Nao talks to us about how, with determination and positivity, she overcomes language and cultural barriers while navigating life in Bangkok.

Where are you from and what's your nationality?

I am Japanese, but was born in Jakarta, Indonesia. However, I returned to Japan soon after birth, so I have no memory of that time. As for the experience of living abroad, I lived in New Jersey, United States for three years when I was in elementary school. Other than that, I've spent nearly all my life in Japan. This is the first time our family has lived abroad.

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

I used to be in charge of exhibition management and secretarial work for a trading company. I left that company after moving to Thailand. Since I liked that job, I hope to go back to it someday, or perhaps my new life in Thailand will give me the opportunity to challenge myself in a different field! We came to Thailand because of my husband's work. He works for a joint venture with a Thai financial company.

Please tell us a little bit about your family.

We are a family of four, with two children—Rumi who is eleven years old and Keito who is two years old. Raising children with a big age gap has its pros and cons. Rumi is very caring and loves her little brother, so this is a big help for me. However, on weekends it often becomes difficult because the children's interests don't match, so we end up going out separately. One of the best things about Thailand though is the year-round access to the swimming pool! The four of us enjoy playing and swimming together.

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

We came here in May 2021. I miss the beautiful four seasons of Japan. Although I love the tropical climate of Thailand, I long for the cherry blossoms in spring, the autumn leaves, and the wonderfully comfortable weather. I also miss my family and friends.

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

My routine mostly revolves around my children's schedules. On weekdays, I get up at 5:50am to prepare breakfast. Rumi's school bus picks her up super early. After that, I take Keito somewhere to play, like the BAMBI playgroups, Benjasiri Park, and so on. Bangkok has many fascinating places to visit, shop, and eat out, but I'm also thankful that many kids close to my children's ages live in the same building, so they can have fun and make friends without having to go far.



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

I love the warmth of the Thai people. Especially for kids, as we all know! Furthermore, compared to Tokyo, Bangkok is far more multicultural. I'm glad to have made friends with people from different backgrounds, and I love conversing with them on various, interesting topics. Our family loves to travel. We've gone to Hua Hin, Khao Kho, Phuket, Koh Samui and a few other places. Among these, Hua Hin's relaxed atmosphere was my favorite. This year we are planning to go to Chiang Mai to participate in the Loy Krathong Festival.

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

We arrived in Bangkok during the worst COVID lockdown period. Restaurants were all closed, we couldn't use our apartment's facilities, and even the public parks had 'no entry' signs. The challenge was finding new, fun ways to channel the children's energy. I remember just going to Big C and being very happy. I often danced at home with my daughter, which is a good memory now.

How did you find out about BAMBI?

Bangkok has a huge Japanese community, and BAMBI is quite well known amongst us. I heard about BAMBI from several friends as soon as I arrived in Bangkok.

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

My English isn't as strong as my Japanese, and I often can't say what I want to say. Maybe some of you reading this also don't feel very confident about communicating in English, but don't be afraid to come to BAMBI playgroups and events! Even if you can't speak well, you'll receive positive energy from the smiles of the children and the way they play. You may even make friends with people who speak the same mother tongue as you. I'll be waiting for you at the Honey Bear playgroup on Wednesdays!



BAMBI 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.

PATRON

Mel Habanananda
mel@bambiweb.org

HONORARY MEMBERS

Paula Young
Anna Ingham (Bumps and Babies Founder)
Kathy Leslie
Ravit El-Bachar Daniel

VOTING POSITIONS

Chairwoman | VACANT
chairwoman@bambiweb.org

Executive Board | Chiaki, Sara, Terry
vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org

Secretary | Rocky
secretary@bambiweb.org

Treasurer | VACANT
treasurer@bambiweb.org

Activities Coordinator | Miki
activities@bambiweb.org

Editor, BAMBI Magazine | Sanam
editor@bambiweb.org

Charities Coordinator | VACANT
charities@bambiweb.org

Database Coordinator | Briana
database@bambiweb.org

Events Coordinator | VACANT
events@bambiweb.org

New Members Coordinator | Chiaki
newmembers@bambiweb.org

Playgroups Coordinator | Sara
playgroups@bambiweb.org

PR/Media Coordinator | Marianna
media@bambiweb.org

Website Coordinator | Jung
website@bambiweb.org

VOTING/EXOFFICIO/BY-INVITATION

Bumps & Babies Coordinator | Jo
bumps@bambiweb.org

NON-VOTING POSITIONS

Advisor |

Simmi: advisor@bambiweb.org

Assistant Bumps and Babies Coordinator |

Yaz: bumps@bambiweb.org

Assistant Playgroups Coordinators |

Gienna: playgroupassist@bambiweb.org

Sassy: playgroupassist1@bambiweb.org

Assistant Treasurers |

Boramy : treasurerasst2@bambiweb.org

Saeko: treasurerasst4@bambiweb.org

Takako: treasurerasst5@bambiweb.org

VACANT: treasurerasst3@bambiweb.org

Assistant Website Coordinator |

Frances: websiteasst@bambiweb.org

Bookkeeper |

VACANT: bookkeeper@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Assistant Editors |

Anelia: assisted1@bambiweb.org

Monisha: assisted2@bambiweb.org

VACANT: assisted3@bambiweb.org

Sadef: assisted4@bambiweb.org

Lily: assisted5@bambiweb.org

Rachel B: assisted6@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Deputy Editor |

Rachel O: depeditor@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Japanese Editors |

VACANT: japaneditor@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Photo Editor |

VACANT: photoed@bambiweb.org

BAMBI Magazine - Photographers |

Sayuri/ Kana

CBFT Advisor |

Cherry: advisor1@bambiweb.org

Chinese Coordinator |

Sara: chinesecoordinator@bambiweb.org

Events Team |

Donna: eventsasst3@bambiweb.org

Sneha: eventsasst2@bambiweb.org

VACANT: eventsasst@bambiweb.org

Japanese Coordinator | Aya

japancoordinator@bambiweb.org

Me-Time Coordinator | VACANT

me-time@bambiweb.org

Member Benefits Coordinator | VACANT

benefits@bambiweb.org

New Members Team |

Vana: N/A

VACANT: newmembersasst2@bambiweb.org

Pop Up Playgroups Team |

Upasana / Karin / Jane / Aya / Emiko

Promotional Designer | Yumi

design@bambiweb.org

Thai Coordinator | Lynda

thaicoordinator@bambiweb.org

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The views expressed in the articles in this magazine are not necessarily those of BAMBI committee members and we assume no responsibility for them or their effects.

Advertising Inquiries to:

Finn Balslev

Phone: 02 943 7166-8 Ext. 116

Mobile: 081 866 2577

Fax: 02 943 6618

Email: finn.scandmedia@gmail.com

Artwork Inquiries to:

Scandinavian Publishing Co., Ltd. (Dao)

Phone: 02 943 7166-8 Ext. 106

Mobile: 086 788 2050

Email: disraporn.scandmedia@gmail.com

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INFO@KAIS.AC.TH
02 047 7400
WWW.KIDACADEMY.AC.TH

ASTRA ACADEMY
INFO@ASTRA.AC.TH
061 734 5556
WWW.ASTRAACADEMY.SCHOOL





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A man in a white t-shirt and dark shorts is jumping high in the air, reaching up with his right hand to catch a frisbee. The background shows a grassy field with a chain-link fence and stadium lights. A large, glowing yellow outline of the ISB triangle logo is superimposed over the scene, framing the man and the frisbee.

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#4. ISB's Open Campus ethos welcomes the whole family to enjoy the facilities, host events and even play the odd game of Ultimate Frizbee with teachers. #uniquelyISB



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