

# YOUNG PARENTS

SINGAPORE'S NO. 1 PARENTING MAGAZINE MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR 2017 RANKINGS, MARKETING RESEARCH

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Seoul, Hong Kong,  
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bullyproof  
your kid before  
Primary 1



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almost bled to  
death from a  
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so lonely?**

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of self-discovery  
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look out for





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preparing  
for the  
arrival of  
your  
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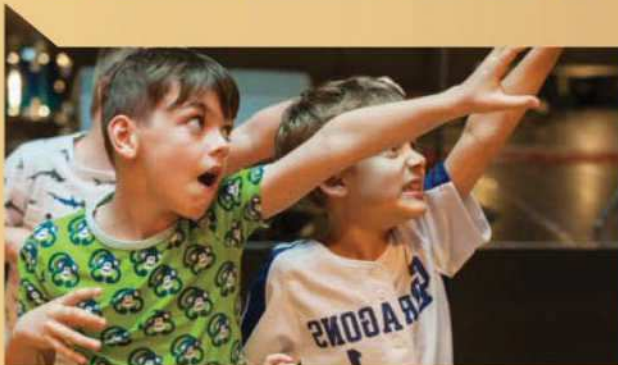
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# YOUNG PARENTS

  
**SINGAPORE'S NO. 1  
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# Drink The Benefits

Goat's milk can be a nutritious alternative to other types of milk like cow's and soya. Here's why.



**C**ow's milk is a staple in most of our refrigerators. Packed with calcium, essential fats, protein and essential vitamins, it's touted as a nutritious drink for the whole family, particularly for growing children.

But cow's milk isn't the only type of milk that's out there. There are many other alternatives that you may want to consider for yourself and your child that are just as delicious and nutritious. Goat's milk is one such example. Here are all the great reasons why you might want to stock up on it the next time you're at the supermarket.

## **1 It's easier to digest and gentler on the tummy**

Milk contains two kinds of proteins – casein and whey. Unlike in cow's milk, the type of casein in goat's milk results in a softer curd that's easier for our digestive enzymes to process. For example, the enzyme trypsin, which is found in the stomach, breaks down 96 per cent of goat casein, compared to only 76 to 90 per cent of cow casein.

Both cow's and goat's milk also contain fat, namely saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. These fatty acids, also called triglycerides, are metabolised to provide energy. Goat's milk is believed to contain a high proportion of short to medium chain saturated fatty acids, which are easier for our intestinal enzymes to digest.

## **2 Its secretion process is the same as that of human milk**

When milk is made in the mammary gland, it forms tiny droplets within cells. These milk droplets, which contain proteins, are typically released from the mammary cell in two different ways. Cow's milk is secreted via a merocrine process, whereas goat's milk, like human breast milk, is secreted via the apocrine process. Milk that's produced by the apocrine process contains more amino acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids, including conjugated linolenic acid (CLA). This means that goat's milk and human breast milk have a similar nutritional profile.<sup>1</sup>

## **3 It's rich in nutrients for a healthy immune system**

Compared to cow's milk, goat's milk is naturally rich in nucleotides, which are the building blocks of DNA. Nucleotides are bioactive substances that help promote the growth and development of the immune system.

Goat's milk is also higher in oligosaccharides<sup>2</sup> (a form of carbohydrate), which are said to be effective prebiotics. Prebiotics are an important part of the digestive system, and play a crucial role in preventing infections and maintaining good digestive health.

With the wide array of formula milk in the market, it may be a mind-boggling exercise to decide the best option for your child. If you are unsure about making the switch to goat's milk, consult your family doctor or paediatrician.

<sup>1</sup>"How Does Goat Milk Measure up to Other Formulas?" *Journal of Family Health*, [www.jfhc.co.uk/goat-milk-measure-formulas](http://www.jfhc.co.uk/goat-milk-measure-formulas).

<sup>2</sup> Martinez-Ferez, et al. "Goats' Milk as a Natural Source of Lactose-Derived Oligosaccharides: Isolation by Membrane Technology." *International Dairy Journal*, Elsevier, 6 July 2005, [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0958694605000385](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0958694605000385).



# editor's note



Velda, Bella, Melody, Jamie. You know them as Singapore mummy celebrities and social media influencers who lead seemingly flawless lives. It's easy to envy the filtered perfection they project.

But as we found out (page 38), there's a lot more to these women. Many went through challenging pregnancies to become mothers, while others faced life-changing events.

Read about their inspiring parenting journeys in our #Mumgoals Issue, which also includes a thought-provoking column on how lonely motherhood is (page 44), gorgeous gift ideas you'll want to show Hubby (page 15), as well as Mother's Day dining promotions (page 79).

Also in this issue:

- The best kid-friendly hang-outs in popular Asian cities (page 62)
- What you need to know about Montessori preschools (page 58)
- A must-read story on how a toddler almost bled to death because of a stomachache (page 34).

Now, you're all set for May!

Stephanie Yeo  
Editor



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25.5.2018  
星期五 Friday  
10.30am

26.5.2018  
星期六 Saturday  
2.30pm, 5pm

新加坡大会堂音乐厅  
SCO Concert Hall

音乐会前45分钟将有  
音乐会前活动。  
There will be a pre-concert  
activity 45 minutes before the concert.

SCO  
新加坡华乐团

# 儿童音乐会2018: 华乐大发现 之 敲敲打打大汇演! Young Children's Concert 2018: DiSCOvering Treasures of Chinese Music - Carnival of Percussion!

各位小朋友! 让我们一起来华乐大发现! 这次我们会由《音乐历险记》和《响宴》开始, 听听看看不同种类的打击乐器! 有没有想过, 核桃会翻滚, 鸭子会拌嘴? 打来打去, 什么是《十八六四二》? 为什么我们听到《拉特茨基进行曲》就一定会拍拍手打拍子? 我们敲敲打打, 像万花筒一样五彩缤纷! 小朋友们想得到的问题, 都会由勇德哥哥为您好好解“打”!

Little adventurers! Let us come together to discover new music! In this musical adventure, we will take you on an aural banquet (Matsuri) showcasing a wide range of percussion instruments. Have you ever thought of how a walnut could tumble musically, and that ducks can bicker? Or that a number game of Ten, Eight, Six, Four and Two can be a world of fun rhythms? Why do we clap our hands whenever we hear Radetzky March? Let us bang our drums together, and kick up a colourful storm! Whatever questions or puzzles about music that you have, bring them to Brother Quek to solve!

指挥: 郭勇德  
Conductor:  
Quek Ling Kiong



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# we're on instagram!



Welcome to sunny Singapore, Olaf! The summer-loving snowman was part of the cast at the Disney On Ice show.



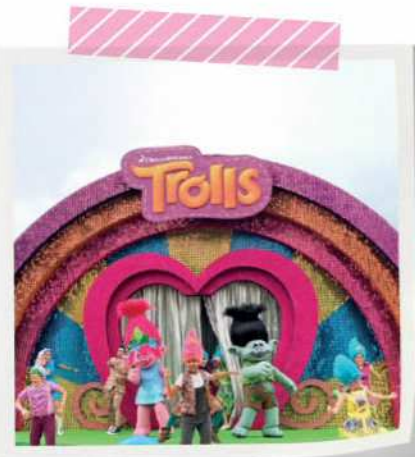
This charcoal waffle dessert at Tokidoki X Kumoya cafe tastes as good as it looks!



Thumbs up for the new Kipling X emoji bag collection. Sales proceeds during the launch period went to charity.



Young Parents' Fun, Play, Learn event at Rochester Mall was a hit with parents and kids. Read more on page 77.



Poppy and Branch from Dreamworks animation Trolls visited Universal Studios Singapore recently.



This adorable pony made an appearance at Bright Path Preschool's open house. The new inclusive school offers equine therapy.



Follow us and find out what the Young Parents team is up to.



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- Fab ideas for family fun (and videos, too!)
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## In this issue

- Watch our video of the cool new Buds playground at Shangri-La Hotel.
- Get more ideas for Mother's Day gifts and dining promotions.
- See more photos of kid-friendly places in Asia and beyond.
- More cute teethers to buy for your toddler.

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# our experts



## THIS MONTH, WE ASK

**What's a future-ready skill that I should equip my preschooler with?**

We live in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world where the shelf life of existing skills is increasingly shortened. Rather than focusing on a specific skill, what is vital at this age is to encourage your child to "play well with others".

Dr David Deming, a professor of Public Policy, Education and Economics at Harvard, presented evidence of the growing importance of social skills in the labour market.

When children play with one another, they are honing their social skills such as cooperation, negotiation, empathy and adaptability. These would certainly stand them in good stead for the future.

As parents, this sometimes mean taking a step back to let the little ones negotiate among themselves when they get into a scuffle, giving them space to solve their problems and to compromise, and allowing them to make mistakes and learn from them.

**Dawn Lim, Star Learners**

### EDUCATION

**Brian Caswell** is the dean of Research and Program Development at Mindchamps. He has 15 grandchildren.

**Helen Marjan** is the CEO and director of Studies at Lorna Whiston Schools. Her three children are in their teens.

**June Rusdon** is the chief executive officer of Busy Bees Asia. She has three kids in their 20s.

**Fiona Walker** is the group managing director of Julia Gabriel Education – Julia Gabriel Centre, Chiltern House Preschool and Chengzhu. Her son is aged 14, and her daughter is 11.

**Dawn Lim** is the curriculum advisor at Star Learners. She has four children aged eight to 16.

### PSYCHIATRY

**Dr Cornelia Chee** is a psychiatrist and director in the Women's Emotional Health Service at the National University Hospital. Her daughters are in their teens.

### CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

**Dr Richard C. Woolfson** is a child psychologist based in Britain. He has written 15 books on child and family development, and is *Young Parents'* long-standing Age by Stage columnist. He's also a grandfather of five.

### PAEDIATRICS

**Dr Chan Poh Chong** is the head and senior consultant with the Division of General Ambulatory Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at the Khoo Teck Puat-National University Children's Medical Institute, National University Hospital.

**Dr Natalie Epton** is a specialist paediatrician and neonatologist at SBCC Baby & Child Clinic at Mount Elizabeth Novena Specialist Centre. She has three kids aged five to 12.

### GYNAECOLOGY

**Dr Goh Shen Li** is a senior consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist in the S L Goh Women's Clinic at Mount Alvernia Medical Centre. She has three children aged four to eight.

### LACTATION & PARENTCRAFT

**Kang Phaik Gaik** is a senior nurse manager and parentcraft/lactation consultant at Mount Alvernia Hospital's Parentcraft Centre. Her two children are in their 20s.

### NUTRITION

**Pauline Xie** is a principal dietitian with the Clinical Services Division at the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics. Her three daughters are aged five to 12.

### DENTAL

**Dr Rashid Tahir** is a paediatric dentist at The Kids Dentist. He's also the president of the Pediatric Dentistry Association of Asia and an adjunct associate professor in the Faculty of Dentistry at National University of Singapore. His two daughters are in their teens.

### FAMILY

**Alfred Tan** is the chief executive officer of Singapore Children's Society. His two children are in their 20s.

*Any views expressed by the Members of the Editorial Advisory Board in this magazine are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of, or are sanctioned by, this magazine. Members of the Editorial Advisory Board do not, by virtue of their membership, endorse or support any product or service advertised or articles featured in this magazine. The articles in this magazine are for your information only. Do not substitute them for the advice of a qualified health-care practitioner or professional adviser.*



# smalltalk

SMART BUYS  
FOR THE  
SAVVY  
PARENT

## ● one of a kind

Like natural pearls, every mother is a unique individual. Show her how precious she is to you this Mother's Day with these exquisite pearly shell macarons that will surely make her smile. Turn the page for more thoughtful gift ideas for the most important woman in your life.

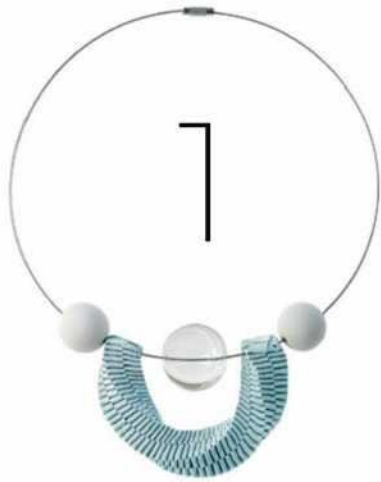
Pearly shell macarons, \$3.50 (minimum order of 12 pieces)  
from [www.sensationalcakes-online.blogspot.sg](http://www.sensationalcakes-online.blogspot.sg)





# only the best for you

It's Mother's Day – the perfect reason to go shopping and spoil yourself with these stylish, practical gifts.



1 Wavy series – Aurora necklace, \$80, from [www.theloremipsumstore.tictail.com](http://www.theloremipsumstore.tictail.com) 2 Madison Layden Floral Mackie satchel, \$600, from [www.tinyurl.com/KateSpadeSG](http://www.tinyurl.com/KateSpadeSG) 3 Paperdaise Accessories modern geometric wooden rabbit brooch, \$14, from [www.naiise.com](http://www.naiise.com) 4 Blksheep Empire mateo oxford shoes, \$160, from [www.cocotakumi.com](http://www.cocotakumi.com) 5 Peranakan bangles US\$345 (S\$453) for a set of three, from [www.edenandelie.com](http://www.edenandelie.com)



7

8



9



10



11



12

13



6 Fossil RFID passport case, \$109, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com) 7 Spur Moments PXI earrings, \$85, from [www.ade-g.com](http://www.ade-g.com) 8 Click & Grow smart garden 9, \$299, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com) 9 Binary Style samsui ladies scarf, \$65, from [www.naaise.com](http://www.naaise.com) 10 Crystalline Pure watch, \$799, from [www.swarovski.com](http://www.swarovski.com) 11 Woouf blue mineral beauty pouch, \$70, from <https://shop.nanaandbird.com> 12 Paula Cademartori x Kartell Claudia slippers, \$399, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com) 13 Polaroid snap touch camera, \$399, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com)



**Left** Voon & Daughters cotton blouse, \$59.90, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Cotton paperbag pants, price unavailable, from [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com). Polyester headband, \$14.90, from [www.zara.com/sg](http://www.zara.com/sg). Patent leather embroidered sling bag, \$29.95, from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Leather sneakers, \$590, from [www.dolcegabbana.com](http://www.dolcegabbana.com)

**Right** Levi's denim cotton off-shoulder blouse, \$49.90, from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Cotton paperbag shorts, price unavailable, from [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com). Synthetic leather owl sling pouch, \$19.95, from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Canvas Mary Janes, \$24.95, from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com). Felt zoo wallhanging elephant, \$79.90, from [www.deerindustries.com](http://www.deerindustries.com)

# ADVENTURE TIME



Get your little ones excited about a wild day out with these bold outfits.

PHOTOGRAPHY ZAPHS ZHANG  
ART DIRECTION JOYCELYN KOH  
ASSISTED BY LOY SZE JIN  
STYLING SHARON TAN ASSISTED BY  
JESSICA KHOR & ZEN CHYE  
HAIR & MAKEUP JENNIFER XIE  
USING COLOURHAPPYME MODELS  
CHEN YE, YVES SARTE LEONARD &  
CHARLYNNE YUEN SHI EN  
PLANT & SPOOLS STYLIST'S OWN

Polyester windbreaker, \$49.95, and suede loafers, \$44.95, both from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Cotton tee, \$17.95, from [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com). Cotton shorts, \$18.95, and paper straw hat, \$18.95, both from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com). Jellycat sloth plushie, \$57.90, The Century Atlas of the World, \$79, and Hokus Pocus large bag (used as plant pot), \$49.90, all from [www.deerindustries.com](http://www.deerindustries.com).



Cotton polyester parka, \$79.90, from [www.zara.com/sg](http://www.zara.com/sg). Cotton tee, price unavailable, from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Levi's denim cotton shorts, \$49.90, from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Herschel printed survey backpack, \$89, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Synthetic leather sneakers, \$39.95, from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com). Bandana and binoculars, stylist's own. Felt zoo wallhanging zebra, \$79.90, from [www.deerindustries.com](http://www.deerindustries.com).



**Left** Polyester bomber jacket, price unavailable, and cotton trousers, \$69, both from [www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com). Polyester tee, \$70, from [www.ralphlauren.com/kids](http://www.ralphlauren.com/kids). Herschel printed cap, \$39, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Acrylic sandals, \$16.95, from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com).

**Right** Cotton dress, price unavailable, from [www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com). Denim cotton embroidered backpack, \$44.95, from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). New Balance trainers, \$89, from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Jellycat snake plushie, \$79.90, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Safari hat, stylist's own

**Left** Adidas cotton tee, \$35, Puma X Hello Kitty acrylic visor snapback hat, \$49, and Puma X Hello Kitty sneakers, \$105, all from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Cotton paperbag skirt, price unavailable, from [www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com). Carryall bag, stylist's own

**Right** Cotton shirt with diagonal pocket, \$59, from [www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com). Baby B'gosh denim cotton jeans with suspenders, \$59.90, and New Balance trainers, \$89, both from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Cotton scarf, \$17.90, from [www.zara.com/sg](http://www.zara.com/sg). Zebra cushion, \$89.90, from [www.deerindustries.com](http://www.deerindustries.com). Straw hat and bracelets, stylist's own







**Left** Polyester bomber jacket, \$49.95, cotton chino shorts, \$39.95, and cotton sun hat, \$24.95, all from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Cotton tee, \$16.95, from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com). Sunglasses, stylist's own

**Right** Polyester tropical printed bomber jacket, \$34.95, and pompom straw bag, price unavailable, both from [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com). Cotton gathered panel blouse, \$59, from [www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com). Carter's khaki cotton shorts, \$49.90, from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Jellycat monkey plushie, \$42.90, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Sunglasses, stylist's own



Polyester windbreaker, \$210, from [www.ralphlauren.com/kids](http://www.ralphlauren.com/kids). Cotton tee, \$17.95, from [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com). Pony Enfants cotton pants with belt, \$79.90, and Jellycat snake plushie, \$79.90, both from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Glitter strap sandals, \$19.95, from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com).



**Left** Cotton eyelet dress, price unavailable, from [www.hm.com](http://www.hm.com). Synthetic leather owl sling pouch, \$19.95, from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Puma sneakers, \$89, from [www.kidstyle.com.sg](http://www.kidstyle.com.sg). Safari hat, stylist's own

**Right** Poney Enfants cotton button-up shirt, \$69.90, from [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com). Cotton tee, \$19.95, from [www.seedheritage.com](http://www.seedheritage.com). Cotton elastic shorts, price unavailable, from [www.cosstores.com](http://www.cosstores.com). Synthetic leather sandals, \$24.95, from [www.cottonon.com](http://www.cottonon.com). Polyester backpack, \$45.90, from [www.zara.com/sg](http://www.zara.com/sg). Safari hat, stylist's own



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SPHmagazines

# The **B** **A** **B** **Y** years

## One piece wonder

What's unique about these rompers? There are no zips or buttons, so dressing up your wriggling baby becomes hassle-free. The team behind this Singapore brand Oeteo (say "ee-TAY-o") has filed a patent for the design, which is available in sizes for newborns to 18 months old.

Easyeo long-sleeve cotton romper, \$17.90, and short-sleeve, \$16.90, from [www.oeteo.co](http://www.oeteo.co)

TEXT ELISA CHIA PHOTOGRAPHY ANGELA GUO STYLING LOY SZE JIN BLOCKS STYLIST'S OWIN

# Too cute to chew

We can't get over how adorable these teethers are!

**Silli Chews**  
Pizza teethers  
\$16 each, from  
[www.littlebearnie.com](http://www.littlebearnie.com)



**Personalised**  
chew ring \$26,  
from [www.anniealex.com](http://www.anniealex.com)



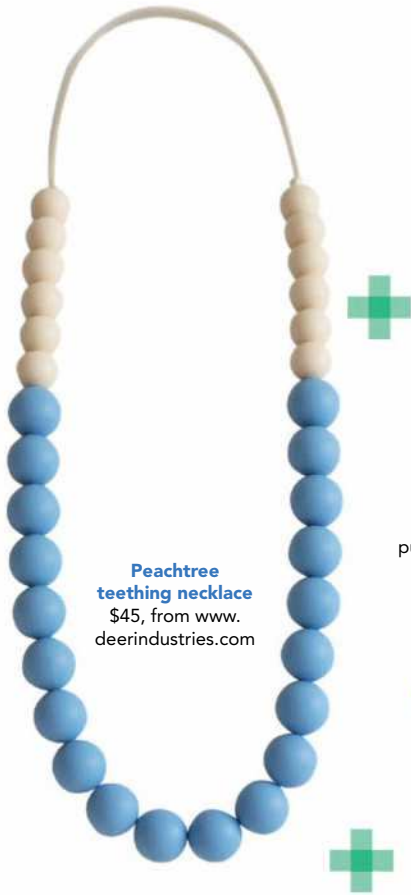
**Itzy Ritzy x Tokidoki**  
Mermicorno Sirena  
teether \$22, from  
[www.pupsikstudio.com](http://www.pupsikstudio.com)



**Innobaby Teethin' Smart EZ Grip**  
Robot teether \$12.90, from  
[www.pupsikstudio.com](http://www.pupsikstudio.com)



**Bunnies By the**  
Bay Bao Bao Bear  
teether \$29.90, from  
[www.naiise.com](http://www.naiise.com)



**Peachtree teething necklace**  
\$45, from [www.deerindustries.com](http://www.deerindustries.com)

**Innobaby Teethin' Smart EZ Grip Flower rattle teether**  
\$10.90 each, from [www.pupsikstudio.com](http://www.pupsikstudio.com)



**Loulou Lollipop Unicorn Donut teether** \$16, from [www.littlebearnie.com](http://www.littlebearnie.com)



**Oli & Carol XL Carl the Car toy** \$46.90, from [www.ohhappyfry.com](http://www.ohhappyfry.com)



**Panda Donut teether clip** \$30, from [www.ohmyheartbead.com](http://www.ohmyheartbead.com)



**Dr. Brown's Ridgees Giraffe teether** \$9.90, from [www.mumsandbabes.com](http://www.mumsandbabes.com)

# The search for super (confinement) nanny

You've booked the gynae, now find the right helper to care for your new baby and yourself after birth. Here's your guide to hiring one.





Good gynae? Check. Affordable yet luxurious maternity hospital? Check.

Now comes the next big decision that many Chinese mums in Singapore have to make: Which confinement nanny to choose?

This grandmotherly helper usually lives with the family during the traditional “confinement” period that ranges between 28 and 44 days.

Most couples are relieved that there’s someone who can understand and soothe the crying newborn, and attend to countless rounds of diaper duties, especially in the middle of the night.

The nanny also takes care of the new mum’s diet, so the latter can focus on breastfeeding Baby and recuperate after the delivery.

Your search for a nanny should begin in the first trimester of pregnancy. Popular ones are always in high demand, so you’ll want to book yours early. Most expectant mums rely on word-of-mouth recommendations from friends or parenting groups on social media.

You can also use an agency. The advantage is that you won’t have to handle the paperwork, such as applying for a work permit if the nanny is from Malaysia. The obvious drawback is that you have to trust that it will assign you the “right” nanny.

If you’re pregnant and wish to engage a nanny to look after you and your soon-to-be-born baby, here’s what you should know.

**The salary** A full-time, live-in nanny can cost from about \$2,300 to \$2,800 for 28 days. Some parents have reportedly paid up to \$5,000 for a very experienced and popular nanny.

If your husband is willing to help out after work – and wake up at night to tend to the crying baby – you can consider hiring a daytime nanny, who may charge around \$1,600 to \$3,200.

As you can see, this is not much of a discount. That is why many couples prefer to go for full-time ones.

Take note, though, that most nannies do not do housework, and there are various factors that can add to the fee. For instance:

- Does the nanny have to cook for your family members? Most are willing to prepare your spouse’s meals, but if you have a large family, it’s likely that she would increase her fee.
- Is she expected to look after your older children?
- Is your home very big? Do you live in a multi-storey or landed home?
- Did you give birth to twins or triplets?
- Has she received formal training at a hospital?
- Is she expected to work over Chinese New Year? During the festive period, be prepared to pay up to \$1,000 more.

**The red packet** It’s also a tradition to give the confinement nanny a red packet on the first and last day of the job. If you’re getting your nanny through an agent, ask if this is covered under her fee.

Just like at wedding dinners, there is a market rate for the red packet. Be prepared to fork out between \$30 and \$200. Most mothers give a smaller red packet on the first day, and a bigger one on the last.

**The work permit** If the confinement nanny is from Malaysia, you must apply for a work permit, which costs

\$30. This is either paid directly by you, or by an agency. If you’re using an agency, make sure you confirm if the \$30 is included in the fees.

Besides the work permit, you must also pay a \$60 monthly levy to the government if your newborn is a Singapore citizen, and \$265 a month if your baby isn’t.

**The insurance** Finally, you must buy medical insurance for the nanny, offering coverage of at least \$15,000. This applies whether she is Singaporean or not.

Some couples will also want the nanny to go for a medical checkup to ensure that she is in good health. You’ll have to bear the cost for this, of course.

**Before she arrives** A full-time confinement nanny will be staying with you, so you’ll need to prepare her room or sleeping area. Be aware that some couples have complained about their nannies blasting the air-con all day and wasting electricity.

You’ll also want to brief her about all the household tasks she is expected to do. Besides caring for your newborn, these might include the family’s laundry, cooking and cleaning. Make sure you’ve bought all supplies, such as detergent, before the nanny’s arrival.

She may also want you to buy certain traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) herbs or special ingredients for your confinement meals, which are not included in the fee.

Finally, don’t forget the red packet. You’ll want to set things right on her first day of work.



## If you don't want to hire a nanny

So, a confinement nanny sounds like an angel to have at home after childbirth, but what if you're not willing to fork out hundreds of dollars, or just don't like the idea of having a stranger in the house?

Thomson Medical Centre and some caterers can deliver confinement meals to your doorstep. It's not going to ease your fatigue from breastfeeding and lack of sleep, but at least you won't have to prepare your own meals.

But if your husband or mum is happy to cook for you, direct them to the wide variety of confinement recipes on *Young Parents'* website ([www.youngparents.com.sg](http://www.youngparents.com.sg)), or follow these from Mount Alvernia Hospital.

### GREEN PAPAYA & FISH BONE SOUP

Serves 6

#### INGREDIENTS

500g threadfin fish bones (also known as *ngoh he*)  
1 medium green papaya (get the large Hong Kong or Malaysian variety, not the small Hawaiian type)  
2 slices ginger  
10 pieces red dates (optional)

#### METHOD

1. In a medium pot, bring water to a boil.
2. Add ginger and fish bones. Boil for half an hour.
3. Peel papaya skin and remove seeds. Cut papaya into chunks.
4. Add papaya and red dates to soup and boil for 15 minutes only. Do not over-boil.

5. Drink the soup. There is no need to eat the ingredients.

**TIP** Add 500g fish meat to increase protein.

#### NUTRIENT ANALYSIS

<b>Energy</b>	202 calories
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	31 g
<b>Total fat</b>	3.1g
<b>Protein</b>	16 g
<b>Fibre</b>	2.8 g

**NOTE** The calories, protein, carbohydrates and fibre content will be negligible if the soup ingredients are not consumed.

### PORK RIBS WITH BLACK BEANS SOUP

Serves 4

#### INGREDIENTS

1 cup black beans  
500g lean pork ribs  
Salt, to taste

#### METHOD

1. Soak black beans for a few hours.
2. In a medium pot, bring water to a boil.
3. Add pork ribs and simmer for half an hour.
4. Add black beans and cook till the beans and meat are soft.
5. Add salt to taste. Serve.

**TIP** You can drink the soup as often as you like, and eat the ingredients. They provide a very good source of proteins, which is good for promoting lactation.

#### NUTRIENT ANALYSIS

<b>Energy</b>	335 calories
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	30g
<b>Total fat</b>	6.7g
<b>Protein</b>	38g
<b>Fibre</b>	7.4g

**NOTE** The calories, protein, carbohydrates and fibre content will be negligible if the soup ingredients are not consumed.



### STEAMED TOFU WITH EGG & MINCED CHICKEN

Serves 2 to 3

#### INGREDIENTS

1 block soft tofu  
1 egg  
200g minced chicken  
Salt or soya sauce, to taste

#### METHOD

1. Mash tofu into fine pieces.
2. Beat the egg.
3. Mix tofu, egg and minced chicken together in a microwavable bowl.
4. Add salt or soya sauce for taste.
5. Steam for 10 to 15 minutes. Or microwave for 10 minutes.
6. Serve hot.

**TIP** This dish is high in protein and the tofu provides a good source of plant-based omega-3 and 6 fatty acids.

#### NUTRIENT ANALYSIS

<b>Energy</b>	174 calories
<b>Carbohydrates</b>	3.1 g
<b>Total fat</b>	9.8g
<b>Protein</b>	18.5 g
<b>Fibre</b>	0.1 g

Mount Alvernia Hospital's **Kang Phaik Gaik**, head of Alvernia Parentcraft Centre, contributed the recipes and **Tan Shiling**, dietitian at the Nutrition and Dietetics Services Department, shared the nutrient analysis.

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# “My son almost bled to death because of stomachache”

His repeated episodes of stomachache were mistaken for constipation and masked his undiagnosed medical condition. One mum shares the harrowing experience with **EVELINE GAN**.



For three weeks, little Zayden Tok had an on-and-off stomachache that was so intense, it would wake him in the middle of the night.

His mum, Tan Zilan, also noticed something unusual about his stools; they were purplish-red in colour and coated with mucus.

Despite raising her concerns to a paediatrician, she was told that it was “just constipation colic”.

“We gave him prune juice and stool softeners, rubbed Ruyi oil and applied garlic paste on his stomach, but the pain persisted,” the 35-year-old logistics executive recounts. She took her toddler to see the same doctor three times.

But what was thought to be constipation almost killed Zayden, then two, who was in fact, bleeding internally from a condition known as Meckel’s diverticulum. This is due to an abnormal bulge or pouch in the small intestine that is present at birth.

Zayden ended up getting two blood transfusions and had to undergo surgery that left him with a 7 to 8cm-long scar.

## Gut instinct saved her son’s life

By sharing her child’s health scare, Zilan hopes to warn other parents not to take their little ones’ stomachache complaints lightly.

In September last year, Zayden was at his grandma’s house when he started having one of his episodes of intense tummy pain.

“He asked for Ruyi oil, then started crying very loudly. The pain seemed worse than usual. When the pain subsided, we could see he was thoroughly exhausted and his whole face had turned very white,” says Zilan, who has a younger son aged one.

This time, maternal instinct spurred her to send Zayden to Mount Alvernia Hospital’s emergency department. That decision saved his life.

Noting that the toddler had looked very pale, the doctor ordered a blood test.

“He also looked at the photo of Zayden’s unusual stools, which I had kept in my phone, and said it wasn’t normal. When the results of the blood test came back, we were shocked to learn that his haemoglobin level was so low,” Zilan says.



## Tummy ache or sign of something serious?

“Mummy, my tummy hurts.” Every parent hears this complaint from time to time.

In kids, reasons for tummy troubles can vary widely, and trying to figure out what’s causing the pain can be challenging.

For instance, diarrhoea and gastroenteritis (commonly known as stomach flu) are common reasons why kids with tummy pain show up at the children’s emergency department. Even constipation or emotional issues like stress and anxiety can cause stomach aches.

In some cases, it may signal more serious illnesses like Meckel’s diverticulum, which is due to an abnormal bulge or pouch in the small intestine that is present at birth.

This can lead to dangerous complications like bleeding and blockage in the intestines.

So, how can you tell when something is seriously wrong?

If your child only has abdominal pain without other symptoms, he

By then, her son’s haemoglobin level had plummeted to around 5.2, which was less than half of the normal reading of around 12 to 13 for children, she adds.

“The doctor at the emergency department suspected that Zayden had been bleeding internally for some time as most people would faint if their haemoglobin level went so low suddenly,” she shares.

In hindsight, Zilan feels “terrible” for not taking her son to the hospital earlier. Although Zayden started looking increasingly pale after his tummy issues started, he had continued going to school and playing as usual, which lulled her into a false sense of security.

“When his tummy wasn’t acting up, he

will probably need to be checked by a doctor, advises Dr Kao Pao Tang, head and senior consultant at NUH’s Children’s Emergency.

Most common illnesses have other accompanying symptoms. For example, a child with gastroenteritis would probably have fever, vomiting and diarrhoea, or had contact with an infected person, while those with constipation would have a history of not moving their bowels, Dr Kao says.

And if the severe isolated pain persists, it may be a sign of a more serious condition. “Even if the pain is not persistent, but your child looks unwell between bouts of abdominal pain, then he definitely requires medical attention,” he adds.

In babies, look out for bouts of inconsolable crying, tensing or distension of abdomen, Dr Kao says. They may also curl up their legs. And if they look pale or unwell, you should at least consult a general practitioner, he adds.

The American Academy of Paediatrics advises heading for the emergency room immediately if your child passes lots of blood in his stools, vomits blood, or has tarry or black-coloured stools.

behaved normally. Plus, during those three weeks, his paediatrician did not say anything (about Zayden’s pale appearance) so we did not suspect anything,” she says.

“Imagine our confusion upon learning he had been probably bleeding internally for some time, and the guilt we felt for letting him go through the pain for so long.”

## Not one, but two blood transfusions

The boy was then rushed to the National University Hospital (NUH) children’s emergency, where he received a blood transfusion to increase his blood count. He was also referred to the paediatric gastroenterology department.



## Did you know?

Every unit of blood you donate can save three lives. Some 120,000 units of blood are needed every year to meet the transfusion needs of patients in Singapore.

This is equivalent to more than 400 units of blood a day. To learn more about blood donation, visit [giveblood.sg](http://giveblood.sg).

The whole situation had felt like a nightmare to the Toks, who had no clear answers as to why their son was bleeding internally at that point. The next day, they were horrified to see Zayden passing out copious amounts of watery and bloody stools.

A series of tests later revealed that he had Meckel's diverticulum, which could lead to life-threatening consequences.

Affecting about 2 per cent of the population, Meckel's diverticulum is a small bulge left over by the umbilical cord. It is a common malformation of the gastrointestinal tract, and NUH sees a "handful" of such cases each year, says Prof Quak Seng Hock, head and senior consultant of NUH's Division of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Nutrition and Hepatology.

Most people with Meckel's diverticulum do not have symptoms, and can live healthily without problems, Prof Quak explains.

On the other hand, it can also cause complications such as bleeding, abdominal pain and intussusception of the intestine – this occurs when a part of the intestine folds into the section next to it, and causes a blockage.

Just hours after he was diagnosed, Zayden underwent surgery to remove the abnormal bulge in his small intestine. A second blood transfusion was required as his blood count was still low after the first one.

Understandably, his parents were a bundle of nerves while waiting outside the operating theatre.

"I remember feeling very nervous.

We felt so much heartache for our son who not only had to undergo blood transfusions at such a young age, but also general anaesthesia for the surgery," Zilan shares.

Although he was well enough to be discharged a week after the surgery, his ordeal did not end there. He was readmitted two weeks later as he started vomiting and experiencing tummy pain again, which could be due to the intestines "sticking together" after the surgery, Zilan explains.

"Thankfully, the problem resolved after he fasted for around two days. Otherwise, the doctors would have had to 'cut him open' again," she adds.

Zayden's health scare had been both frightening and exhausting for his parents, who had to leave their second child, then eight months old, with the grandparents.

Still breastfeeding her younger son at the time, Zilan shuttled to and from the hospital and her in-law's home to deliver expressed breast milk.

"We were lucky that my parents-in-law were able to help us care for the baby. We were also fortunate that the insurance policy we bought for Zayden helped cover his hospital bill, which amounted to more than \$10,000," she says.

Throughout the entire ordeal, Zilan was amazed and proud to see how brave her little boy was. Despite the pain and discomfort, Zayden had been "an easy patient" during most of the hospital procedures.

"He cried once or twice at first when he got pricked for a blood test and when they put him on drip. But we explained to him that the doctors and nurses were doing their job to make him feel better.

"Although you could see he was nervous when they had to do all those tests on him, he remained quite calm," his proud mummy shares.

### All better now

Zayden has recovered well, and is now an active three-year-old. His parents recently lodged a complaint to the Singapore Medical Council about the paediatrician who had initially misdiagnosed her son's tummy issues despite repeated visits to the clinic.

"Although we understand that it can be difficult to diagnose an uncommon condition like Meckel's diverticulum, we feel that the doctor could have at least referred Zayden to a hospital for a blood test," says Zilan, who has declined to comment further on the case as investigations are ongoing.

She has switched to another paediatrician and advises parents to consider seeking a second opinion if their child does not seem to be getting well after several weeks.

"It is also a good practice to take a photo of your child's stools, if you notice anything unusual. Luckily for Zayden, I did not delete the photo of his bloody stools as that sounded the alarm bell for the emergency department doctor," she says.

The incident also spurred Zilan to donate blood for the first time in January – her way of paying it forward. The altruistic act had always been at the back of her mind, but she had put it off as she had anaemia in her youth, and subsequently got pregnant and was breastfeeding.

She points out that without the precious contributions from donors, Zayden would not have received his blood transfusions in time.

"If no one wants to donate blood, then there won't be any available when the need really arises. I'm thankful their life-saving donations," she says. 🍀



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# they are our #mumspiration

These celebrities and influencers inspire us – but not because they seem perfect on social media. We love them because they’ve all overcome challenges in their motherhood journeys, as **LYNN WEE** discovers.



## Velda Tan

This social media maven seems to have it all: A lovely baby girl, Ellery; a fashion brand, Collate The Label, and an immaculate social media account, @belluspuera, which boasts more than 154,000 followers.

But this 30-year-old new mum said the “road to conceiving wasn’t quite a walk in the park”. Diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) – a condition that affects a woman’s hormone levels and may result in infertility – it took her 2½ years, several visits to gynaecologists and numerous cycles of medication to stimulate her ova-

ries before she finally got pregnant.

Her condition was also made worse when she had a bout of depression after leaving her former business – online fashion label Love, Bonito – which she started with her sister, Viola, and best friend, Rachel, at age 18.

“Looking back, this whole journey makes me feel extremely grateful for our little miracle. I’m so thankful we hung on and didn’t lose faith, because God works in the most marvellous ways we can never comprehend,” she shared on social media.

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM ACCOUNTS



### The Duchess of Cambridge

Kate Middleton's life seems to have come out of a fairy tale – she married her university sweetheart, Prince William, and has two gorgeous children (with Baby No. 3 on the way) – Prince George is now four years old; and Princess Charlotte is two.

But the stylish royal suffered from hyperemesis gravidarum throughout her pregnancies. The debilitating condition causes severe vomiting in the early stages of pregnancy and may cause dehydration, weight loss and a build-up of ketosis – toxins in the blood or urine.

It was so unbearable that she was hospitalised while carrying Prince George in 2012, and had to miss his first day of school last year while expecting Baby No. 3.

Kate's pregnancy announcement came as a surprise to many, who thought she would stop at two because of her past struggles with the disease.



### Audrey Ooi

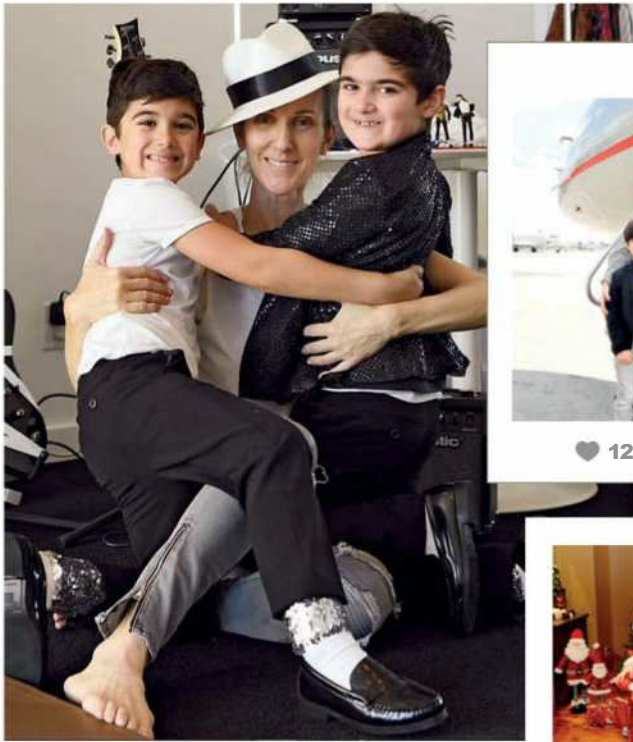
Similarly, this popular blogger or more commonly known as @fourfeetnine, was also diagnosed with PCOS. However, it didn't take long for the newlywed to conceive her firstborn, Jude – or better known as Fighter – who is now four years old.

But the good news didn't last long. At 29 weeks, she was diagnosed with preeclampsia – a life-threatening condition that may cause seizures, strokes, blindness, and even death. The only way to protect both mum and child was to deliver the baby.

The gutsy mum fought against this, but succumbed to the condition at 31 weeks and had to deliver him prematurely. The preemie weighed only 1.1kg and had to be placed in the neonatal intensive care unit for five weeks.

Thankfully, Audrey's second pregnancy was less dramatic. Other than the occasional episodes of nausea and vomiting, she delivered a healthy baby, Penny – now two years old – at 36 weeks.

Today, the 32-year-old is co-founder of Colony, a co-working space where working mums with kids in tow can build their careers.



### Celine Dion

She is widely known for her powerhouse vocals and is a five-time Grammy award winner. But if you think everything has worked out well for the Canadian singer, think again.

Her journey to conception was a challenging one – she underwent two operations to improve her chances of conceiving before she gave birth to her firstborn, Rene-Charles, in 2001.

And it was only after six IVF attempts and a miscarriage that she became pregnant with twin sons Nelson and Eddy in 2010.

But before the pop diva could enjoy her family life to the fullest, her music producer-husband, Rene Angelil, died of cancer in 2016. Two days later, her brother, Daniel, died of the deadly disease, too.

Today, the 50-year-old is soldiering on bravely. She shared that the kids are growing, they are good, and they feel strong.



### Jamie Yeo

You know that the Gold 90.5 DJ and TV host is one blessed woman. She has a loving husband, is a mum to two beautiful kids; Alysia, seven; and Luke, nine months old, and has an enviable post-baby bod.

But did you know both her pregnancies did not come easy? Alysia was born 10 weeks early, weighing only 1.2kg and measuring 36cm.

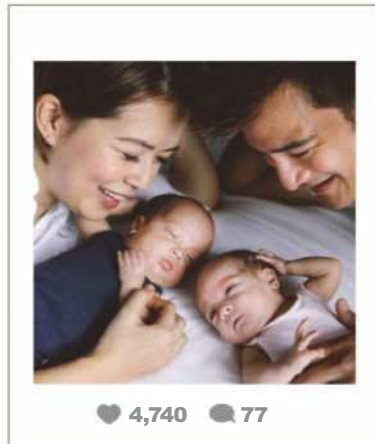
The then-new mum was also unable to produce enough breast milk and had to feed her preemie a mixture of breast milk and formula for six months before putting her on formula.

She beat herself up about it repeatedly as breast milk was important to Aly, because it's Nature's customised

nutrition from a mother to a child, she shared in an interview.

The second pregnancy was a difficult one for the 40-year-old, too. Her water bag started leaking at 30 weeks, and she was put on bed rest in hospital for a month before giving birth to Luke early at 35 weeks.

“But (he is) healthy and at a respectable 2.35kg,” Jamie shared on Instagram.



♥ 4,740 💬 77

### Melody Chen

After trying for a baby for nine years, experiencing a miscarriage in 2012 and a failed in vitro fertilisation (IVF) attempt, the One FM 91.3 DJ finally conceived twins naturally.

And although a miracle, it had been a delicate pregnancy for Melody, who was

placed on strict bed rest at home since she was 20-weeks pregnant.

The 40-year-old had previously undergone a loop electrosurgical excision procedure surgery, a process to remove abnormal cells in the cervix. This meant that she was more likely to have a preterm birth, which she did.

She had an emergency C-section delivery at Mount Elizabeth hospital, and shared that “it was truly a dramatic and harrowing experience trying to save them (the twins)” – they were later transferred to Singapore General Hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit before reuniting with the new mum three months later.

“Even though it was hectic and emotional, I am thankful that the challenges have made our little family stronger and even more fearless about life with each passing day,” she wrote.

### Ang Chiew Ting

The social media star, who goes by the moniker, Bong Qiuqiu, had the life any mum would be envious of.

That was before she was entangled in a lawsuit with a social-media advertising network and faced up to \$250,000 in legal fees.

While she has given birth to two healthy girls – three-year-old Meredith and one-year-old Amelia – her second pregnancy was both physically and mentally trying.

She not only had to deal with pregnancy symptoms like breathlessness and heartburn, but stress and abuse as well, when she turned to crowd-funding to raise her legal fees – one person even asked her to miscarry or abort her unborn child.

“Not sure if it’s worse physically dealing with the pregnancy or mentally having to prep for trial for the lawsuits,



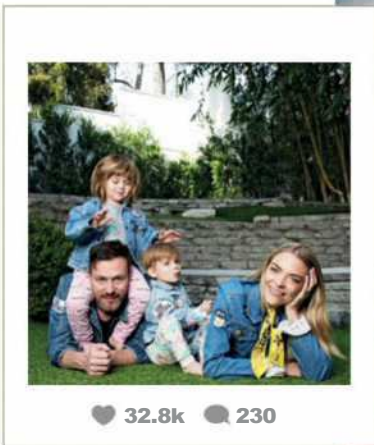
♥ 3,844 💬 40



and having to anticipate how my life will change again with Baby number 2,” she shared on social media.

The 30-year-old has settled the court case, with both parties dropping all legal proceedings made against each other, and is now the co-founder of Cereal Citizen, a cereal cafe in Singapore.





### Jaime King

Take a look at the popular actress' Instagram account, @jaime\_king – which has amassed 1 million followers and counting – and you'll spot adorable pictures of her two sons, James Knight, four; and Leo Thames, two.

But having kids was not an easy process for the 39-year-old. At age 28, she was diagnosed with endometriosis – a painful disorder where tissue that is

normally found in the lining of the uterus, grows outside the uterus – and PCOS, which made it difficult for her to conceive.

Over the span of seven years, the Hart of Dixie star underwent five rounds of IVF treatments, 26 rounds of intrauterine insemination and suffered five miscarriages before she conceived her firstborn naturally.

The challenges didn't stop there. Jaime was said to be in labour for 26 hours and had to deliver James early because of sudden preeclampsia.

She also suffered from postpartum depression. Thankfully, her second pregnancy was a lot smoother, and the plucky mum is now an inspiration to many couples.

### Lindy Tsang

Affectionately known as Bubz, the Chinese-Northern Irish beauty guru and vlogger has nearly 4 million followers on both her Youtube channels, Bubzbeauty and Bubzvlogz.

She also owns her own line of beauty products and is the author of the bestselling book, *A Beautiful Mind, A Beautiful Life: Guide To Being Unstoppable*, in which she talks about her childhood and lessons learnt along the way.

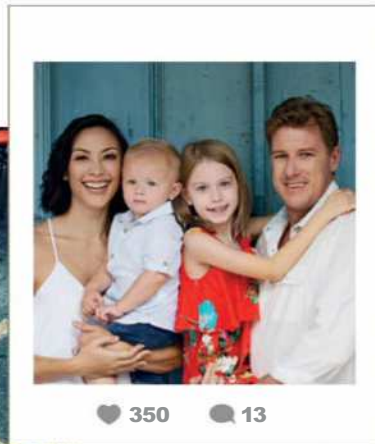
Her current success masks the scars of her past. The 31-year-old was a victim of racial bullying when she was younger and suffered a miscarriage in late 2016.

Her pregnancy wasn't an easy one, either. Lindy suffered from polyhydramnios – an abnormal level of fluid that surrounds the baby and may cause shortness of breath and preterm labour – as well as pubis symphysis dysfunction, where the ligaments that keep her pelvic bone aligned become too



stretchy – making it excruciatingly painful for her to sleep.

Despite all the challenges, she is now a mother to two adorable tots – three-year-old Isaac and 10-month-old Ayla.



### Jaymee Ong

The Chinese-Australian model and host of AXN's entertainment show, eBuzz, had reportedly no issues with both of her pregnancies. But things changed after she gave birth and her life became a downward spiral.

Jaymee suffered from mild baby blues after delivering her daughter Juliet in 2010 – it took her three months to fall in love with her – and severe postpartum depression three days after she gave birth to her son Harrison in 2015.

“I thought I would love my son right away. When I felt detached, I was devastated,” the 38-year-old shared in an interview. It was only after a visit to the psychiatrist who prescribed her anti-depressants that she felt “1,000-per-cent better”.

The tough mum has since rebalanced her life and wants to share that mums who suffer from postpartum depression should not be ashamed to seek help.

### Bella Koh

Scroll through her beautifully curated Instagram account, @catslavery, and you'd think full-time mum Bella Koh has nailed her multifaceted life effortlessly.

Besides being the sole caregiver to her two-year-old daughter, Alessandra, the 36-year-old is also the founder of Slowhouse – a one-stop platform where she sells accessories and kitchenware, and shares nutritious recipes and stories. (Turn to page 70 for Bella's recipes)

She also conducts workshops on topics such as how to make homemade milk for toddlers and dashi broth.

But in December last year, Bella confessed to her over 74,400 followers on Instagram that she was “running on a mere four hours of sleep each day and had almost fainted in public twice because of insufficient rest”.

However, she does not regret her decision to be a stay-at-home mum and claims it was the best choice she ever made for her and Alessandra. She is learning to let go and delegate responsibilities. 🌟





# why is motherhood so lonely?

As a busy mum of two, **JESSICA LIM** is never alone, yet she has never felt more lonely. What's missing, she wonders.



It has been a puzzle of a morning.

My son has progressed a level in swimming – a good thing. The only slot available for the new class coincides with his afternoon nap – a bad thing. Do we dare shift his nap back? Should we look for another swim school? Or should we stop the lessons?

My three-and-a-half-year-old daughter drinks three bottles of milk a day, too much by most paediatricians' standards. We need a plan to wean her.

We have just bought a house and must carve out time to relook our savings plans. There are groceries to do, meals to plan and bills to be paid.

I am prioritising this mental to-do list as I sit in front of the dressing room table at 8am on a Thursday, applying make-up so I can look half-alive at work, with my son at my feet.

The two-year-old clambers onto my lap and grabs my lipstick. I now look like Heath Ledger's Joker in *The Dark Knight*.

My work e-mail box needs taming. I have a separate to-do list for work. The items on this list must be ticked off before noon – when I have to shuttle my daughter back from school.

My son pokes at a toy digger on the floor. I have a few minutes to indulge in the bad habit of browsing my Facebook feed.

I see photos posted by carefree friends on a weekend getaway in Hong Kong. I see the smiling faces at a wedding I wasn't invited to. A mummy friend pulls out of our playgroup date. Her son is sick.

I try to go to the bathroom. My son clings onto my leg. I go anyway.

## THE MISSING PIECE

At this point, it dawns on me that I've never been so lonely in my life. Most of the pieces of the morning are in place, but it appears that one is missing.

You need some balance, say my well-meaning family and friends, and learn to compartmentalise like so-and-so.

So I try – is this the missing piece? Instead of rushing home to see the children and put them to bed, I make an appointment with a friend to watch a movie. Daddy agrees to take over child rearing as well as bedtime duties that night.

When I reach home, the children are already asleep. In the morning, they ask for Daddy. Daddy is at work I tell them, Mummy is here. They bawl. My head (and heart) hurts.

Last week, while I was out on a grocery run at Fairprice with the children – my son in my arms, my daughter screaming that she wanted to be carried too, neither willing to get into the cart – I spot another mother about to lose her mind.

I felt the urge to ask this stranger: "Are you overwhelmed trying to keep it all together? Do you sometimes feel like running away and leaving it all behind? Will you judge me if I tell you that I once fed my children Coco Pops cereal for lunch to avoid a food battle? Do you want to hang out some time to, maybe, cry together?"

But I don't. I begin to give her a smile instead, to show her that I understand. But then my son makes a beeline for a shelf stacked with glass bottles. I run after him.

Motherhood is lonely. Plain and simple. This is the missing part of the puzzle.

I am grateful that I have friends who care about me and I wish I could spend time with them without glancing at the clock every few minutes and feeling as if I have abandoned my offspring.

Yes, at this stage of my life, I am finding it extraordinarily hard to maintain friendships.

## THIS, TOO, SHALL PASS

One thing I am well aware of, however, is that I have chosen this situation.

I am lucky enough to be able to afford a helper and could very easily ask her to put the children to bed every night, read to them and change their soiled diapers.

Grandma, I am sure, would not mind pitching in more on weekends. And on Friday nights, I could sneak out of the house to hang out with friends after

"I could, if I wanted to, spend much less time with my children. But I am keenly aware that this bed-wetting, piggy-backing, lap-reading phase will soon pass, and that every single moment is a precious one to savour."

the children have gone to bed. I would be zoned out on Saturday, but, hey, something has got to give.

I could, if I wanted to, spend much less time with my children.

But I am keenly aware that this bed-wetting, piggy-backing, lap-reading phase will soon pass, and that every single moment is a precious one to savour.

It is a time when my little ones need me and truly enjoy being around me.

A time of unadulterated joy and passion for the everyday – when funny faces draw shrieks of laughter, when the neighbour mowing the lawn is the most interesting thing ever, when they want yet another kiss or cuddle in bed, when they hug and just won't let go.

They are awed by the simplest of things and thrilled by the mundane. (Really, cardboard boxes and toothpaste tubes shouldn't bring this much joy, but they do.)

It may be that I am living much of my life now for my kids, but what an amazing experience it is.

The puzzle, it seems, was complete all along. It just needed rearranging. 🍌



# “really? i don’t believe it”

Caring for a new baby under six months of age can be overwhelming at times. Don’t let these nine myths confuse you further, says **DR RICHARD C. WOOLFSON**.





**THE MYTH** Your baby should sleep through the night by six months

**THE FACT** Sleep patterns vary greatly. Statistics suggest that only about half of all babies sleep through the night by the age of five or six months; some don't do so even at one year. She (and you) will get an unbroken night's sleep when she is ready for it.

**THE MYTH** She will become overly attached to you if you use a baby carrier

**THE FACT** It's true that a carrier allows you to go "hands free" and also brings your little one close to your chest, which can help her fall asleep. But as time passes, she'll naturally grow out of this method because she would much rather be able to move and look around without restriction.

**THE MYTH** The only way to make her feel secure is by swaddling her in a blanket

**THE FACT** Swaddling your little one in a blanket keeps her warm. Her sense of security, however, comes from knowing that she is loved, not the way her blankets are arranged. Help her feel secure by soothing her when she is upset and by giving her loving attention.

**THE MYTH** Your baby nurses only when she is hungry

**THE FACT** Feeding provides important nourishment for your baby and satisfies her hunger. It is an instinctive reaction, yet it also provides comfort to her. That's why she sometimes sucks for milk even though she obviously doesn't really want it; the sucking motion helps relax her.

**THE MYTH** A breastfed baby has a closer bond with her mum than a bottle-fed one.

**THE FACT** There is no evidence to support that myth at all. What matters is the way you hold your baby during feeding, the loving way you handle her, and the soothing words you use with her. The feeding method itself has no specific effect on bonding.

**THE MYTH** The only time your baby can form a bond with you is at birth

**THE FACT** Bonding between you and your baby doesn't have to occur at birth. True, some parents do feel a close connection with their newborn the moment they first meet. But mostly,

bonding takes days, weeks or even months. So there is plenty of time to let your relationship develop naturally.

**THE MYTH** The only reason your baby cries is because she is hungry, again.

**THE FACT** Of course, she wails when she needs milk. But the reality is that there are many possible reasons behind her tears. She might simply be uncomfortable, scared, or bored, for instance.

**THE MYTH** Baby always forms a stronger attachment with Mummy than with Daddy.

**THE FACT** That's mostly because mums typically spend more time with their babies compared to dads. But if the men are just as hands-on with baby care duties, they will share a strong bond with the little ones, as well.

**THE MYTH** A six-month-old baby can be potty-trained.

**THE FACT** A baby who can sit up on her own is also able to sit on a potty; and at some point while sitting on it, she will empty her bladder and bowels into it. But she has no control – she can't get on and off the potty by herself. As soon as she walks, she'll cease to be "trained". 🍌



About half of all babies sleep through the night by the age of five or six months; some don't do so even at one year.



age by stage 1 year

# be kind, be nice

If your little one has a tendency towards behaving violently, **DR RICHARD C. WOOLFSON** has suggestions on how you can help him.



ILLUSTRATION CHENG PUAY KOON

Toddlers show their aggression in different ways. Some strike furniture, some lie on the ground screaming, and some simply lash out, bite or even pull your hair.

Here are five reasons why your toddler may be hostile, and how you can help.

**He is self-centred** The typical one-year-old is full of his own self-importance. He sees the world only from his perspective and he expects everyone else – children as well as adults – to do precisely what *he* wants, when *he* wants.

As far as he is concerned, the world revolves around him, and if he doesn't get what he wants, he becomes aggressive.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP** Teach your toddler that other people have feelings, too. For example, tell him that he can't play with that valuable, fragile ornament because you will be unhappy if he breaks it.

He needs you to point this out so that he begins to understand everybody in the family is important, not just him.

**He lacks control** At this age, your little one hasn't yet gained control over his temper, and so he struggles to keep his anger in check.

He is on a very short fuse, ready to explode with rage

at a moment's notice. Once his tantrum has started, it becomes hard to manage.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

Don't take his violent behaviour personally, even if it physically hurts you – his fury is almost certainly an involuntary action.

When he has an outburst, speak to him soothingly and reassure him that he's safe. Do this until he has calmed down.

**He thinks it is funny** It is possible that your little one finds it highly amusing to pull someone else's hair or to slap his sibling in the face. It may not occur to him that the individual on the receiving end of his bullying might not find it funny. (Of course, he doesn't laugh when someone is aggressive to him.)

**HOW YOU CAN HELP** If you notice that he smiles or giggles when he strikes his sibling or friend, point out that this is no laughing matter.

Tell him that his action has hurt the other person, and encourage him to consider how he would feel if someone did that to him. Say to your toddler, for example: "Your friend will not play with you any more if you hit him."

**He copies others** Consider the possibility that your one-year-old behaves aggressively to others when he can't get what he wants because he has seen others behave like that.

For example, he saw this in his playgroup, or maybe he has observed hostile behaviour from his sibling at home.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP** Set a good example yourself and try to reduce negative behaviour among your other kids, as well. Don't lose your temper when your toddler is acting up. Stay in control, and act firmly, quickly and rationally – remove him from the victim while repeating "no".

**He has learnt that aggression works** It may be that your toddler has learnt from previous experience that bullying is a very effective means to get what he wants.

He could have found that when he issues a threat, he usually gets his own way.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP** Stand your ground in the face of his temper. If you give in to his raging demands, you'll simply teach him that his anger is effective.

There will be times when he deals with his frustration without acting up – use these moments to praise him for showing control. This focuses his attention on how you want him to behave. 🟡



Don't lose your temper when your toddler is acting up. Stay in control and act firmly.



# look how you've grown

Don't focus on the infamous "terrible twos" stage. This year, your toddler will achieve lots of amazing milestones that you'll want to celebrate, **DR RICHARD C. WOOLFSON** reminds.



Your two-year-old is even more inquisitive than before – she is ingenious enough to use a chair as a stepping-stone to climb up, and she’s dexterous enough to be able to pull a safety plug out of the electric wall socket.

There are also physical changes that occur this year, too. For instance, she puts on approximately 2.25 kg and grows about 10cm taller. Most of her 20 baby teeth have broken through her gums and she munches away quite happily with them.

Here are some other milestones of development, which occur during this exciting period in your growing child’s life:

### 24 months

- Now that her leg muscles are stronger, she likes to drag a pull-along toy across the grass, or to sit astride a large toy that has foot pedals.
- She starts to talk about herself using her name. Instead of saying, for instance, “Want doll,” she might say, “Debbie want doll.”
- Give her some hats to play with, such as a toy police’s helmet and a chef’s hat. She will have great fun using these in her pretend-play.
- Your attempts at toilet training are probably proving to be successful, although she still needs to wear a diaper at night. She responds well to praise for success.

- If you take note of the number of words she speaks over a two-day period, you’ll discover she uses at least two dozen, usually in short sentences.
- When she sits at a table, put a small piece of soft food (the size of her fingernail) in front of her. She won’t have a problem lifting it to her mouth.

### 30 months

- Your child can stand on her tiptoes for a moment or two, which really is quite a difficult task, requiring good muscle strength and fine balance.
- Give her with a lacing card – the type with a picture on it and holes round the perimeter – and a strong, coloured lace to thread in and out the holes. She enjoys this type of play.
- Listen for personal pronouns (for instance, “her”, “him”, “it”, “me”) beginning to appear in her speech. This is linked to her increased ability to understand symbolism.
- Your child can pick herself out from a group photo that she is in. She may also be able to point out other people whom she knows well and tell you their names.
- She shows an interest in dressing herself in the morning. She still needs help, of course, but at least she’s making an effort to manage on her own.

- When she sees you bring out a handful of small change, she may tell you that this is money. However, she won’t be able to tell you names of the coins yet.

### 36 months

- Show your child how you can jump off the ground with your legs and feet tight together on take-off and landing. You may find that she can jump this way.
- Whereas before she generally used only nouns (such as “table”, “bed”) and verbs (such as “went”, “eat”), she now starts to use adjectives as well (such as “big”, “good”).
- Pile small blocks in front of her (for example, five red blocks and five blue blocks). Then hand her a blue block and ask her to find one the same in the pile. She’ll match it.
- Her copying skills have improved. If there is a circle printed on the page, she can probably trace it reasonably well.
- By now, she is probably able to undress without your help, with the exceptions of buttons, zips, laces and other difficult fastenings.
- Give her a pair of child-friendly scissors, which have rounded ends and bigger handles. Let her try to cut a sheet of paper. She might manage this successfully. 🍌



If you take a note of the number of words she speaks over a two-day period, you’ll discover she uses at least two dozen.



age by stage 3-4 years

# same but different

Now that your twins are preschoolers, you'll begin to see how different they are. Celebrate them as individuals, advises

**DR RICHARD C. WOOLFSON.**



ILLUSTRATION CHENG PUAY KOON

Just when you think one baby will be challenging enough, along come two! You are not alone in having twins, however – the birth rate for twins has steadily increased over the past decade or so, mainly as a result of successful fertility treatments.

As you have discovered, twins can be twice the usual expense and twice the usual work – but also twice the usual fun! And that makes family life very special for you. Here are 10 things you should know about parenting twins:

**Twins tend to “run” in families** A woman who is a twin is more likely to give birth to twins than one who has no family history of twins. And a woman who conceives after the age of 40 is four times more likely to have twins, compared to a 20-year-old.

**They are physically tiring** The most common complaint of parents of twins is the physical strain of managing two sleeping and feeding schedules simultaneously. You need a lot of energy to keep up with the routines of two different babies of the same age, at the same time.

**Identical twins are not identical** Although they look the same to most other people, you’ll probably notice some differences. For instance, frequently one twin is left-handed, while the other is right-handed, and the left-handed child is likely to be the smaller of the two; the children often develop different styles of handwriting and have their own personalities.

**They can devise a secret language** They may communicate with each other in a way that you don’t understand. However, there are instances when siblings who are not twins, but who are close in age, also develop a secret spoken code for the deliberate purpose of excluding adults. It’s their special connection.

**Balance their similarities with their differences** Each twin should be allowed to become a unique individual, to develop their own particular blend of characteristics, skills and talents. So, do your best to encourage them to grow in their unique ways, even though that can be very demanding to achieve.

**Each has to learn to stand on their own two feet** Temporary separation from each other has to happen at some stage in their lives. The start of playgroup, kindergarten or school may be the point when you decide to specifically encourage their individual identities, perhaps by placing them in different classes.

**They may have different interests** For example, one might enjoy stories, while the other prefers jigsaws. Your challenge is to provide opportunities to meet these different interests when possible, even though this can be costly (because they don’t share the same equipment) and hectic (because they have different schedules).

**They may need support to develop their social skills** Your twins may have difficulty mixing with others their own age when they reach the preschool stage, because they are so used to being with each other, and they may need extra help from you when settling in to playgroup or nursery.



Try to spend some time alone with each child regularly, rather than spending time only with them together.

**Language-based activities are important** Talking, singing to them, and reading them stories are especially important, as research shows that twins often develop language at a slower rate than non-twins. So, the more you stimulate their language skills, the better.

**Each kid needs to feel special** Although they are twins, they are also individuals. Try to spend some time alone with each child regularly, rather than spending time only with them together. All it takes is a few minutes of your time alone with each of them every day, to make them both feel they are important. 🍌



# who's afraid of the big, bad bully?

How do you bully-proof your six-year-old so he'll be more confident when he starts Primary 1 next year? **DR RICHARD C. WOOLFSON** offers these practical tips.





### Take complaints of bullying seriously

Remember that it takes a great deal of courage for your child to admit to you that he is being bullied – he may be worried that you will think he is making a big fuss about nothing.

This aggressive behaviour can take many different forms, including verbal threats, racial harassment, teasing about his clothes or appearance, or social exclusion.

### Avoid asking him to fight back

Physical retaliation rarely has any positive impact on the bully – and often, it completely backfires on the victim. You can never be sure of the bully's physical potential.

There is no guarantee that a momentary overpowering of the aggressor will stop his tormenting – he could return with a large, powerful group of his friends.

### Look for tell-tale signs

Your child may not tell you he is being bullied, so look for the signs such as regular loss of pocket money, unexplained bruising on his arms and legs, damage to his school bag, or reluctance to attend school without a sensible explanation. If you suspect he is being bullied, chat with him about this.

### Persuade him to walk away discretely whenever the bully appears to be moving in his direction.

The adage, "He who walks away lives to fight another day", is true.

Too often this type of avoidance strategy is mistakenly construed by the victim as an act of cowardice when, in fact, it is sensible. He should move away slowly, without running.

### Show minimal response

Encourage your child to react as little as possible to the bully's threats. It's a cliché, but the truth is that teasing and bullying often stop eventually when the victim displays indifference to the actions against him. Ignoring verbal and physical threats is difficult, but it can be done successfully. Practise this with your child at home.

### Stick with friends

Tell Junior to spend as much time as possible in the company of other children. This especially applies to free-play situations either in the school playground or outdoors after school.

Bullies pick on children who seem solitary and isolated. Therefore, a child standing alone in the school playground is a potential target.

### Keep moving in the playground

This is a very practical strategy. Victims tend to remain static in the playground during school breaks. Reduced self-confidence glues them to one spot.

Far better for your six-year-old to be on the move, even if he is on his own, than to be seen standing still in the school playground as an easy target.

### Show positive body language

Your child probably looks afraid, because he anticipates the bully will attack again. Teach him more positive body language so that he looks assertive and confident.

For instance, he should walk with his shoulders held back, his back upright, his eyes looking directly in front of him, and with a relaxed facial expression or a smile.

**Be there for him** You can also help your little one deal with bullying by playing your part. He doesn't have to cope with this on his own.

If you think that bullying occurs in school, talk to his teachers, but do insist that they act discreetly without mentioning his name. They should respond positively to your concern.



Your child may not tell you he is being bullied, so look for signs such as regular loss of pocket money, unexplained bruising, damage to his bag, or reluctance to attend school.

**Supervise his social media habits** Cyber-bullying is increasingly common in this age group, as more and more young kids have access to smartphones.

If your kid is involved with social media, check the messages he sends and receives. Be especially alert if he appears to have a sudden surge of incoming texts, and looks unhappy whenever his phone pings. 📱



# enough is enough!

Your tween is old enough to take care of himself, so why is he whining so much? **DR RICHARD C. WOOLFSON** decodes the different reasons behind this behaviour.



## “I’m bored.”

There are times your primary schooler whines because he is bored and can’t think of what to do to keep himself busy. It starts whenever he has free time (because he hasn’t got a clear plan of action) and it stops the moment he is occupied.

**HOW TO RESPOND** Distract him as best you can. Giving your child an activity that attracts his interest will stop him in his tracks. Suggest a toy or game that he can play with and, if necessary, start the activity off with him until he is fully engaged. Then you can leave him to get on with it on his own.

A few hours spent with your whining tween is guaranteed to leave you drained and exhausted. It gets on your nerves, and if you’re not careful, you could end up whining just as much as he is.

However, there are several explanations for his behaviour. Here are the five main reasons why your child does this, along with advice on the best ways to respond to him.

## “What are you doing?”

Your child whines sometimes because he just wants your attention, and he knows his complaints will eventually bring you over to him. He doesn’t mind if you scold him because that means he still gets your attention all the same.

**HOW TO RESPOND** If you suspect that he’s doing this, try your best to ignore

# BE A YOUNG PARENTS MODEL!

his continuous complaints (though that can be difficult). When he doesn't whine, give him your positive attention, and make sure you tell him you're pleased he didn't complain.

## "I don't feel good."

Just like you, your child has physical needs. Hunger, for instance, will make him whine, as will thirst. And if he is incubating an illness or is about to come down with a cold or flu, he may be irritable as well.

**HOW TO RESPOND** Attend to his physical needs until he is more comfortable. A hungry eight-year-old's mood can be improved quickly with a snack or a drink of juice; a kid with a full bladder feels better after visiting the toilet; and an ill child doesn't feel so bad when given a cuddle and is tucked into bed under a warm duvet.

## "This isn't very good."

It is amazing how easy it is for your child to get into this bad habit, just for the sake of it. Perhaps he learnt the habit from his sibling or maybe he whined once and found that he liked the noises he made – some kid whine for no apparent reason.

**HOW TO RESPOND** Try to break this habit. Explain that you want him to stop whining needlessly and that you will help him achieve this target. Tell him that, today, you don't want him to whine for the next 30 minutes. Praise him when



Your child whines sometimes because he just wants your attention. He doesn't mind if you scold him because that means you're responding to him.

he manages this, and then gradually extend the time limit each day.

## "I don't want to go."

If your child feels emotionally insecure – perhaps because he fell out with his classmate, or because he thinks other children don't like him – he'll complain that he wants to stay at home instead of an activity that involves him mixing with others.

**HOW TO RESPOND** Try to find out what's troubling him. Think about all aspects of his life, chat with him about his friends, school and leisure activities, and persist until you identify the source of his anxiety.

Once you do that, you may be able to solve the problem quite quickly. He'll feel happier now that he knows you are involved. ☺



We're looking for photogenic children with the X factor! If your kid is between 5 months and 5 years old, e-mail a recent photo (no headgear, please) to [magyoungparents@sph.com.sg](mailto:magyoungparents@sph.com.sg) with the subject line, "kid models".

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# the montessori way

In the second instalment of our preschool series, **EVELINE GAN** finds out what makes the Montessori method unique among preschools.

When Dr Maria Montessori, the first woman in Italy to become a physician, opened her first school in a low-income district in Rome in 1907, her child-centred educational method was considered radical.

But despite going against the grain of conventional education, the Montessori way has churned out numerous movers and shakers in the last century, among them Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page and Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos.

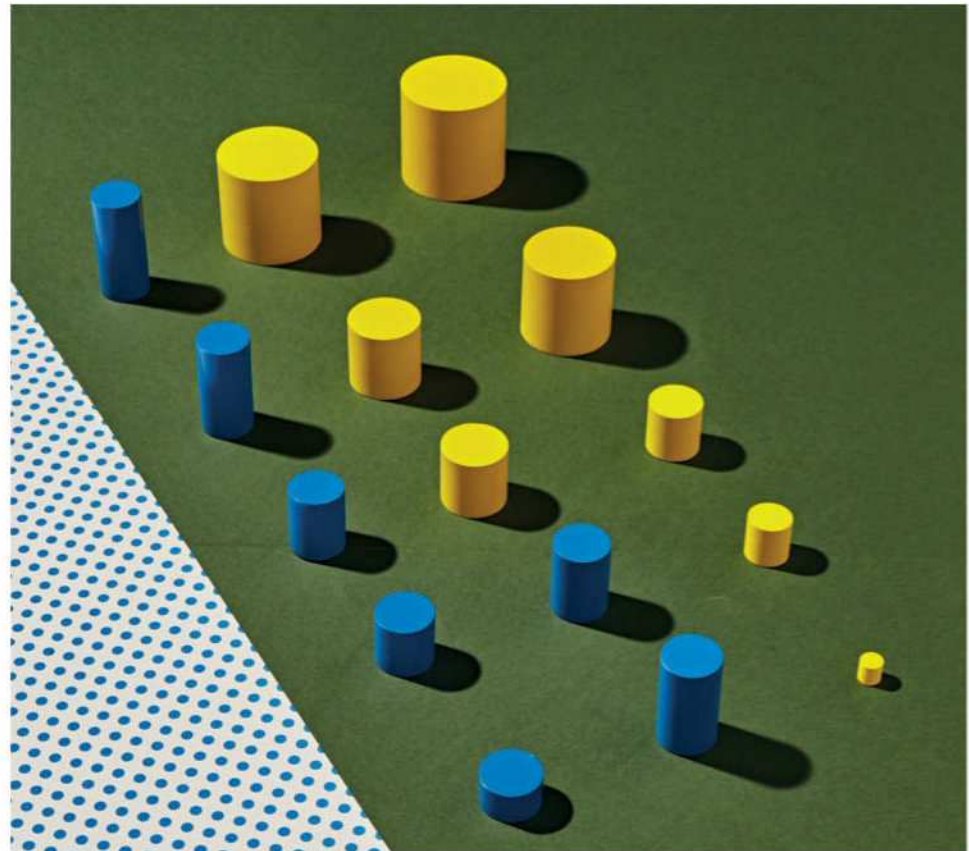
What's all the fuss about the Montessori method, and how can parents choose the right school? Here, we get the lowdown on this unique learning approach.

## How did the Montessori method come about?

The child-centric educational approach is based on Montessori's observation that all children are instinctively curious and constantly use their hands and bodies to connect with the world around them, says Charmaine Soh Chian Mui, founder and director of Greentree Montessori.

That spurred her to design a child-friendly environment in which kids could freely choose from various developmentally-appropriate activities. This encourages active learning at their own pace.

"What's inspiring to note is that Dr Montessori developed her range of learning materials



only after observing countless children and recognising their learning needs," says Charmaine.

"In her expectations, a Montessori teacher should always observe her students' needs before designing the classroom environment and introducing or designing materials for the class. A Montessori classroom is therefore made to suit the needs of the child, and not the teacher."

## How is it different from traditional preschool programmes?

Spoon pasta from bowl to bowl, or sort and stack blocks? Work on a task alone or with a friend? At a Montessori preschool, your kid gets to decide what he wants to learn, as well as when and how to learn it, Charmaine shares.

"An authentic Montessori experience is one where children are able to fully exercise their freedom of

choice in school, have full access to various tools and Montessori learning materials," she adds.

For example, at Greentree Montessori, children may start their learning at any time without waiting for assembly or other children. If they need help on using the tools, they may ask the teacher to demonstrate for them, she explains.

Children at the centre are also provided with blocks of

three-hour “uninterrupted” learning time, which allows them to self-direct their work, and placed in a mixed-aged class, she adds.

“In this case, ‘uninterrupted’ means that adults are not allowed to shorten the session or conduct any other group activity,” Charmaine says.

Your child will also be grouped together with kids of different ages, forming communities in which older and more advanced children will mentor their peers, says Ivy Kwan, supervisor at Tulip Montessori School. Children are typically placed in three-year age groups such as infant to three years old, and three to six years old.

Another hallmark of a Montessori programme is its personalised way of learning. This means that learning instruction is carried out mainly on a one-on-one basis, or in selected small groups, at each child’s pace.

### How can my kid learn anything if she does her own thing?

To the uninitiated, it might seem like a waste of precious learning time. But this freedom in the classroom is what Dr Montessori described as “the key to the process of development”, Ivy says.

It is this self-directed learning approach that Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page, who attended Montessori school as kids, have both credited their current success to.

“It allows children to naturally become involved in their personal learning goals, and motivates them intrinsically to confidently explore, experiment, make decisions, solve problems and develop their own routines and processes,” Charmaine explains.

In fact, she adds, it is through freedom of choice that the child will develop not just independence, but also mental resilience, a sense of order, self-awareness and self-discipline.

That said, it is a misconception that kids end up running amok and doing whatever they want in school.

“While the school encourages children to freely choose the activities they want to work on, the teacher sets limits within boundaries. For example, when working on a craft activity, children can work on a wide range of materials but keeping to the theme in mind while working on their end product,” explains Stacy Yeo, senior principal at Brighton Montessori River Valley.

Moreover, each Montessori activity or learning tool, such as a knobbed puzzle map, box of coloured beads or solid geometric forms, is designed with a specific learning goal in mind.

For example, Practical Life – one of the most important aspects in a Montessori curriculum – provides opportunities for kids to work on tasks such as washing

bowls and towels or serving meals, Charmaine shares.

“That doesn’t mean simply scooping and pouring incessantly for fine and gross motor development, but rather, whether children are able to work on real-world tasks of caring for themselves, others and the environment,” she explains.

### Is a Montessori preschool right for my introverted kid?

Every child is suitable for Montessori education, say our experts. This is largely due to its individualised learning approach. Rather than rote learning, kids with different strengths, interests and personalities learn at their own pace.

“So while a teacher may have six children under her care, for example, all of them will be moving at a different pace and she will set learning goals according to their needs,” Stacy says.

In fact, even adults can benefit from the Montessori learning style, Charmaine adds.

“Opportunities for freedom and active learning are not fads that will go out of fashion,” says Charmaine, citing Google’s world-famous offices and workspaces that are designed and managed using the Montessorian concept.

### Will my kid have trouble transitioning to structured lessons in Primary 1?

A Montessori curriculum typically covers five core

areas, including Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics and Culture, which expose children to the world around them.

However, many Montessori preschools here also integrate traditional academic elements into their curriculum, typically from the kindergarten years onwards, so that the child is adequately prepared for primary school.

For instance, at Brighton Montessori, children start bringing reinforcement worksheets and readers home from Nursery 2. This helps parents get a better insight into concepts their child has mastered in school, Stacy shares. Kindergarten 2 kids also undergo a P1 preparatory programme.

### How can I tell which Montessori school is the real deal?

The Montessori name was never trademarked, so this means a school may use its name without offering an authentic Montessori programme.

When looking for a school for your child, the experts advise parents to do their research into the learning method and take time to tour the school’s facility. This helps them to get a better idea of how the teachers run the programme, Ivy says.

The first thing you should look out for, Stacy advises, is whether the environment is aesthetically-pleasing. Montessori classrooms are



typically geared to a child's size – think low, open shelves instead of locked, hard-to-reach cabinets.

“The materials should be arranged in a way whereby they are easily accessible to the children. You should also check with the principal how the teachers encourage independence and allow for freedom of choice within boundaries,” she adds.

From the tour, you can check out the type of materials provided in school, and whether there is a good range of activities to keep your child engaged, regardless of his personality, Stacy says.

Most importantly, observe if your child likes the place and is comfortable entering the classroom and/or working on the activities calmly, Charmaine adds.

Other things to tick off include:

- Does the school have qualified Montessori teachers?
- Does the school provide fixed daily two to three-hour uninterrupted work cycles/ learning time?
- Are classes grouped in mixed ages? For instance, children are typically placed in three-year age groups (such as zero to three years or three to six years old) due to similarities in their developmental needs.

### Are Montessori teachers specially trained?

Just like how art teachers are required to know their subject matter before they can teach it well, Montessori teachers require additional training.

In Singapore, preschool teachers must first obtain a local Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education to become a certified preschool teacher here, says Charmaine, who

is an American Montessori Society-certified trainer.

Those who choose to become a Montessori teacher are required to take an additional course to learn the method and become a certified Montessori teacher, she adds.

There are centres in Singapore that offer such training for teachers, which covers topics ranging from the principles of Montessori philosophy to the use of Montessori classroom materials and design.

### How can I practise Montessori learning at home with my kid if we don't have the materials?

Most of the Practical Life exercises – one of the most important aspects of a Montessori education – that are carried out in school can be done at home, Stacy shares. And you don't need to splurge on pricey equipment to do that.

“In fact, most of these materials can be readily found in your own home. For example, a pair of sugar tongs is all you need to let your kid work on transferring exercises,” she says.

Bringing Montessori principles into the home can “bridge” what your kids learn in school, according to the American Montessori Society.

One way is to create an ordered environment, on a kid-friendly scale, like providing low shelves or drawers, a step stool in the bathroom and kitchen, sorting and arranging toys and games into trays or baskets. Having a place for everything encourages both independence and self-discipline. 🟡

## Check out these Montessori preschools in Singapore

### Brighton Montessori

In line with the child-centric Montessori educational method, individualised learning plays a big part at Brighton Montessori.

Here, teachers evaluate each child's progress daily, which allows them to set the next set of learning goals according to his learning pace, interests and strengths at different stages of development.

And don't be surprised if your toddler pours herself a cup of water or puts on her own shoes. The school focuses on practical life skills and independence for children aged 18 months to three years.

For older ones from four to six years, there is a greater focus on academics in terms of phonics and Mathematics. From Nursery 2, children bring home reinforcement worksheets and readers.

In Kindergarten 2, they undergo a Primary 1 prep programme. The school also organises field trips, special events and festive celebrations, water play sessions and holiday programmes for an all-rounded learning experience.

**VISIT** [www.brightonmontessori.com.sg](http://www.brightonmontessori.com.sg)

### Greentree Montessori

Established in 1990, Greentree Montessori is a pioneer in Montessori education in Singapore that supports a mindful approach to education, parenting and human development.

Classes are kept small (1:8 for 18 months to three years and 1:10 across all other age groups) and learning instruction is provided on a one-to-one basis.

The school is supported by faculty trained under Association Montessori Internationale and American Montessori Society. It also adopts the Resources for Infant Educator approach for toddlers aged 18 months to three years, which focuses on respectful interaction with infants and toddlers.

It offers holiday programmes featuring weekly field trips, as well as activities like science projects and young artist classes that are suitable for children aged three to nine years.

**VISIT** [www.greentreemontessori.com](http://www.greentreemontessori.com)

### Tulip Montessori

Using Montessori learning materials imported from Holland, the school provides a prepared environment that allows children to explore, learn, ask questions and figure out answers without the need to be “spoon-fed” by an adult.

It runs a Montessori playgroup for children aged 16 months to 2.5 years, a Montessori workgroup aged 2.5 to 3.5, as well as a variety of enrichment programmes, including phonics, maths, Chinese language, Hindi, creative art and speech and drama in English, Chinese and Hindi.

**VISIT** [www.tulipmontessori.com](http://www.tulipmontessori.com)

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# play around the world

Are you visiting any of these six cities during the school break? Keep your little ones happy with these fun, creative and engaging activities.

By SASHA GONZALES



## KUALA LUMPUR

### Have fun indoors

Check out Berjaya Times Square Theme Park – Malaysia’s largest indoor theme park, according to the Malaysia Book of Records. It is located on levels five and seven of Berjaya Times Square.

Your kids will have a whale of a time trying all the different rides, which range from a merry-go-round and the Flying Bumble Bee, to bumper-car rides, mini roller coaster rides, an exhilarating Crazy Bus ride and a drive through the Fantasy Garden on a safari jeep. All rides and attractions have minimum height requirements.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets start from RM11 (S\$3.70); family packages start from RM113.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.berjayatimesquarethemeparkkl.com](http://www.berjayatimesquarethemeparkkl.com)



### Go fishing in the city

If Junior loves animals, he will love Farm In the City, a petting zoo with a variety of animals. There are 19 stations to choose from, including Longkang Fishing, which takes visitors back to the old days when kids would catch fish from big drains (Junior will get to catch his own fish at this station).

Pet Village is made up of cute and cuddly rabbits and guinea pigs, while Reptiles Cavern is a large enclosure housing crocodiles, monitor lizards and mangrove snakes. There’s also the Ostrich Farm.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are RM48 (S\$16.10) per child and RM58 per adult; family packages are also available.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.fitc.com.my](http://www.fitc.com.my)

### Get lost in a world of science

Spend the afternoon at Petrosains Discovery Centre, located in Suria Shopping Centre at the base of the iconic Petronas Towers. Here, your little ones can check out the hands-on interactive and educational exhibits and catch exciting science shows.

The centre’s newest gallery, Space, teaches kids about the latest in space science and technology – they can discover how astronauts live and work in space, programme a rover to search for signs of life on Mars, or travel to Jupiter and step into a hurricane.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets start from RM8 (S\$2.70). Admission is free for kids aged two years and below.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.petrosains.com.my](http://www.petrosains.com.my)







## BANGKOK

### Play and learn

Located in Emporium Mall, Imaginia Playland is a technology-centric centre that caters to children from toddlers to teenagers. There are a variety of zones, each offering a “learning through play” experience.

At Dream Jungle and Dragon Cave, for instance, kids can bounce on interactive trampolines and crawl over massive elevated nets before sliding down a giant slide.

In the Time Tube Slider zone, they get to journey down a make-believe mountain range at full speed, and at the Builder’s Studio, kids are invited to create something new from specially designed wooden toys.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets start from 100 baht (S\$4.20).

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.imaginiaplayland.com](http://www.imaginiaplayland.com)



### Ride a go-kart

Race with – or against – your kids at Easy Kart Bangkok, an indoor go-karting track. There are three different go-kart sizes to choose from, depending on how fast you want to go.

Safety is a priority here – a team of engineers, technicians and mechanics maintain the go-karts daily, and all go-karters have to be properly attired and wear crash helmets.

If you prefer to just watch your kids instead of take part with them, the track has an air-conditioned viewing area.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets start from 450 baht (S\$18.90).

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.easykart.net](http://www.easykart.net)



### Play with snow

Dream World has plenty of theme-park rides and attractions for children young and old. The little ones will love playing in the indoor ball pit, riding the old-fashioned train that travels around the park, and taking a spin in the motorised bumper boats.

For the older kids, there’s a “haunted” mansion, thrilling roller coasters and the hair-raising Viking ship ride. But what makes this park unique is Snow Town, which maintains a temperature of -8 deg C and is filled with powdery snow, slides, snow sleds and a giant snowman.

All rides and attractions have minimum height requirements.

**HOW MUCH** From 1,100 baht (S\$46) per person for unlimited rides

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.dreamworld.co.th](http://www.dreamworld.co.th)

### Have a splashing good time

Located on the sixth floor of Central Plaza in the Bang Na district, Pororo Aqua Park is a themed rooftop waterslide park, named after the South Korean cartoon penguin.

Highlights include Tong Tong’s Magic Slide, which has a double splash pool landing; the award-winning Pororo’s Funnel, a 158m-long tubular waterslide; and Eddy’s Adventure, a convoluted slider ride.

There are also a variety of pools for kids of all ages – Porong Porong’s River takes you all around the aqua park in a special tube float.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets cost 280 baht (S\$11.80) per child and 400 baht per adult. Admission is free for children 90cm and shorter.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.pororoaquapark.com](http://www.pororoaquapark.com)





## HONG KONG

### Try figure skating

With an area of 1,482 square metres, Mega Ice in Kowloon Bay is said to be the largest ice rink in Hong Kong. If your kids already know how to ice skate, they can rent a pair of skates and have a go by themselves on the ice.

But if they want to learn how to glide like a professional figure skater then Mega Ice also offers lessons. Choose from three types of skating coaches – a regular, a senior or a star coach.

**HOW MUCH** A private, 30-minute lesson starts from HK\$280 (S\$46.90).

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.megaice.com.hk](http://www.megaice.com.hk)



### Burn energy in countless fun ways

Superpark in Kowloon is every child's dream come true. Designed by a Finnish dad, and with locations all over the world, this indoor activity park has three zones, each built for a specific purpose.

The Adventure Area features obstacle walls, trampolines, zip wires, slides, play towers, and a pedal car racing track. Over at the Game Arena, kids play sports like baseball, basketball and golf.

In the Freestyle Hall, kids can skate and scoot, play in a foam pit, climb a wall, and do gymnastics on the special floor. The best part is, you're welcome to join your little ones. There is no minimum age to enter the venue.

**HOW MUCH** A one-day ticket costs HK\$180 (S\$30) per person on weekdays, and HK\$250 per person on holidays. Cheaper tickets are available if you only plan to stay in the venue for a few hours.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.superpark.com.hk](http://www.superpark.com.hk)



### Build a "house" from scratch

The Children's Gallery at the Hong Kong Science Museum features a number of interactive exhibits, including the Big Kids' Work Site.

Here, Junior can pretend to be a construction worker and build a small house, using bricks and equipment such as a crane, a wheelbarrow and a conveyor belt.

The role-playing work site accommodates up to 25 children, so your little one will also get to

"work" with other kids. This exhibit is only open to children who are 80cm to 120cm tall.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are HK\$20 (S\$3.35). Admission is free for kids under four years old.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.hk.science.museum/](http://www.hk.science.museum/)

### Create original ceramic art

If your kids are artistically inclined, they will enjoy the workshop at Loveramics at The Pulse in Repulse Bay. First, they get to pick one item from a range of unglazed ceramic mugs, bowls and owls.

Then, they can decorate their item any way they want, using the paints, stamps and stencils provided. The decorated item is left with the store to be glazed, polished and fired. No experience is necessary.

The workshop is open to all ages, but kids under three years old must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

**HOW MUCH** Each session lasts about two hours and costs HK\$400 (S\$67), including one ceramic item and all tools and brushes.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.loveramics.com](http://www.loveramics.com)



## SEOUL

### Experience farm life

Anseong Farmland is located about 70km from Seoul. Here, kids can ride on tractors, pet farm animals, practise archery, tour a livestock paddock, watch dog shows, ride a water bumper tube, learn about harvesting and even go horseback riding.

There are also many green open spaces in which to run around or have a family picnic (there are restaurants and snack shops on-site where you can purchase food), and you can also rent bicycles and ride around the property.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are 10,000 won (S\$12.15) per child aged three to 18 and 12,000 won per adult.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.nhasfarmland.com](http://www.nhasfarmland.com)



### Explore a 3D world

Seoul's Trick Eye Museum is an optical illusion paradise, filled with three-dimensional paintings and installations. There are five main spaces, with names like Water World, Synchro Zone and Fantasy, where your little ones can pose alongside the exhibits and take funny and mind-bending photographs.

There is also an ice museum that boasts ice sculptures and a 10m-long slide made from ice. Kids aged three to 10 years old will also enjoy the creative workshops, from mask making to toy making.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are 12,000 won (S\$14.60) per child under 18 years old and 15,000 won per adult.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.trickeye.com/seoul](http://www.trickeye.com/seoul)

### Spend the day at a museum for kids

The Seoul Children's Museum offers a variety of inspiring activities and workshops. For instance, on weekends, kids four years and older can learn how to make simple dishes with their parents at the Family Cooking Class, while those five years and older can express themselves at the Performance Workshop.

There are also exhibitions, most of which are educational and designed to spark your child's creativity and imagination.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are 4,000 won (S\$4.90) per person. Admission is free for children under 36 months old. Workshop and class fees are extra.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.seoulchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.seoulchildrensmuseum.org)



### Go on safari

Located in Yongin, Everland is South Korea's largest amusement park. There are numerous attractions here, including roller coasters, virtual reality adventures and water-themed rides.

One of the more unique ones is the Lost Valley Safari Adventure, where visitors travel

through a safari-style park on a specialised, convertible amphibious vehicle.

There are numerous animals to spot along the way, including zebras, sable antelopes, cheetahs, pink flamingos and giraffes. Everland also has a Safari World attraction, where visitors can get up close to lions, tigers and bears.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are 43,000 won (S\$52.30) per child and 54,000 won per adult.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.everland.com](http://www.everland.com)



## SYDNEY

### Go on a wild ride

The iconic Luna Park Sydney promises hours of fun for kids of all ages. The entertainment precinct, which has been around since 1935, is home to an array of exhilarating rides and attractions, like the Wild Mouse, which dips and zips you around a 400m-long circuit, high above Sydney Harbour; Wonky Walk, which challenges you to walk straight on a path with moveable floors and other obstacles; and Hair Raiser, which raises you 50m into the air before dropping you down at full speed.

If your children prefer something tamer, no worries – check out the carousels, mini Ferris wheels and bumper cars.

**HOW MUCH** An unlimited rides pass starts from AU\$22 (S\$22.30) per child who is 85cm-105cm tall. All rides have height requirements and tickets are priced according to height.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.lunaparksydney.com](http://www.lunaparksydney.com)



### Enter the world of Snugglypot and Cuddlepie

Visit May Gibbs' Nutcote, a house-museum that was once the home of the famous Australian children's author and illustrator. Gibbs is best known for her iconic story, *The Complete Adventures of Snugglypot & Cuddlepie*.

Located by the harbour in Neutral Bay, this attraction is perfect if you have a couple of hours and just want to relax – watch a short film about Gibbs' life and book characters, take a tour of the museum, and play with the kids in the gardens overlooking Sydney Harbour.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are AU\$4 (S\$4.05) per child and AU\$10 per adult, or AU\$20 for a family of four.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.maygibbs.com.au](http://www.maygibbs.com.au)

### Learn to surf

With its exquisite beaches and impressive waves, it's no surprise that Sydney is a popular destination for surfers. There are many surf schools near the city, offering private as well as group lessons for children of all levels of fitness and ability.

In addition to receiving instruction on how to surf and perform various moves on the water, your kids will learn surfing etiquette and how to engage the ocean safely. The schools provide surfboards and, if the temperature calls for it, wetsuits.

**HOW MUCH** Manly Surf School, on Manly Beach in the Northern Beaches area of Sydney, runs group classes daily. Lessons are suitable for children aged five and older. The cost is AU\$55 (S\$55.80) per child per two-hour group lesson.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.manlysurfschool.com](http://www.manlysurfschool.com)



### Be an astronomer for a night

Take your budding astronomers to Sydney Observatory, where they can experience the oldest working telescope in Australia – it was installed in 1874 – and learn how to spot stars and planets with help from the experienced guides.

After exploring the sky in the telescope domes, head to the 3D Space theatre or the digital planetarium to witness constellations, listen to Indigenous stories about the Milky Way, ride a spaceship to the Moon, and even travel to a distant galaxy.

**HOW MUCH** A day tour ticket starts from AU\$8 (S\$8.10) per child; and a night tour ticket starts from AU\$20 per child. Family packages are also available.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.maas.museum/sydney-observatory](http://www.maas.museum/sydney-observatory)

## TOKYO

### Meet Hello Kitty and her friends

Experience everything *kawaii* (Japanese for “cute”) at Sanrio Puroland, home of Hello Kitty, My Melody, Kiki and Lala, Gudetama and other iconic Sanrio characters.

This unique theme park offers several attractions, from a 10-minute boat ride through the Sanrio world; a ride around My Melody’s neighbourhood in the Eco Melody Car, with plenty of photo-taking opportunities along the way; and a visit to Dream Star Cloud, where the Little Twin Stars, Kiki and Lala were born.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets start from 2,500 yen (S\$31.30) per child and 3,300 yen per adult.

**FIND OUT MORE** <https://en.puroland.jp>



### Train like a ninja warrior

Receive full ninja training at the Ninja Trick House, located in Shinjuku. The session includes a number of activities and experiences, from learning how to throw shurikens (small concealed weapons) to uncovering secrets in the ninja house, engaging in swordplay, and learning how to use a ninja sword (note: the swords are not real).

Your children will also get to take photographs with a ninja. As the space is small, tours are kept to a maximum of 12 people. Each tour lasts 30 to 45 minutes.

**HOW MUCH** Tickets are 1,100 yen (S\$13.80) per person. Admission is free for children aged three and younger.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.ninja-trick-house.com/en](http://www.ninja-trick-house.com/en)



### Learn to cook Japanese food

If your little one enjoys cooking and baking, why not sign her up for a short cooking class at ABC Cooking Studio? The classes are conducted in English and suitable for children aged years and older.

Learn simple Japanese dishes, like *onigiri* (rice balls), *tamagoyaki* (rolled omelette) and *wagashi* (traditional Japanese sweets); baked treats like Fruit Roll Cake; and decorative sushi rolls and pretty matcha (green tea) desserts.

**HOW MUCH** A 90-minute lesson starts from 5,000 yen (S\$62.60) per person.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.abc-cooking.co.jp](http://www.abc-cooking.co.jp)



### Make food samples

Japan is known for its fake food displays, and what better place to learn how to make them than at Ganso Sample, the country’s top food replica manufacturer?

At its Kappabashi store, visitors can learn how to make prawn tempura and a small head of lettuce using wax.

The food replica-making workshop is open to participants aged seven and up. Children aged 10 and below must be accompanied by an adult (the adult must also participate in the workshop and pay a workshop fee).

Each workshop lasts from 60 to 75 minutes and reservations are recommended. Although the workshops are conducted in Japanese, they are easy to follow because there are employees to guide you and demonstrate the techniques.

**HOW MUCH** Workshop fees cost 2,300 yen (S\$28.85) per participant.

**FIND OUT MORE** [www.ganso-sample.com](http://www.ganso-sample.com)



# way to glow

Every time-starved, sleep-deprived mum needs these lavish beauty gifts that actually work, says **ELISA CHIA**. Get them for yourself this Mother's Day.



## ENGINEERED FOR FAST DRYING

I'm kicking myself for not taking the plunge and buying the Dyson Supersonic (\$599) when it was launched two years ago – imagine the time I would have saved on hair-drying.

I adored its sleek, modern design, but I wasn't sure about parting with good money just for aesthetic pleasure. That is, until I recently had the chance to see the efforts that its team of engineers took to understand the science of hair.

Here's what I also learnt about the "reinvented" dryer: The Supersonic promises not to overheat and damage hair. This is thanks to a smart thermal sensor, which measures the temperature 20 times every second and keeps it under control.

It's safe to let your child handle it because the surface always remains cool, no matter how hot the dryer gets. It's more lightweight than conventional bulky dryers, as well.

What's most impressive, though, was how it cuts drying time significantly. Its digital motor works in combination with its patented Air Amplifier technology to produce a high velocity jet and volume of air.

Now, I was sold. Time saved on mundane routines like hair-drying means I can spend more time bonding with my kids or go to bed sooner. This Mother's Day, it comes with a free special edition pale rose case. From [www.shop.dyson.com.sg](http://www.shop.dyson.com.sg) and major department stores

## CONCEAL AND TREAT

It's makeup and skincare in one product. Developed with plastic surgeons, the IT Cosmetics Your Skin But Better CC+ Cream with SPF 50+ (\$62 for 32ml) helps correct skin redness and conceals dark spots while hydrating skin with an anti-aging serum.

As its name suggests, it also protects skin from the sun's harmful rays. It recently launched two new shades, Light Medium and Neutral Tan, to suit more Asian skin tones.

Tip: For more even coverage, apply it with the brand's Heavenly Luxe Complexion Perfection Brush No. 7 (\$60), a dual-ended foundation and concealer brush. With that, I find myself using less of the CC+ Cream as it blends more smoothly than fingers can. From [www.sephora.com.sg](http://www.sephora.com.sg)





### DIY FACIAL TREATMENT

Who has time to visit the facial salon fortnightly when you have young kids? That's why it's especially important to give your skin the TLC it needs at home.

Unlike other electronic cleansing brushes, the Refa Clear (\$360) doesn't just vibrate or spin; its 3D Sonic Motion produces micro-movements both horizontally and vertically.

I like how ultrasoft the brush head feels on my skin. In fact, its tapered tips are said to be thinner than skin pores, ensuring that dirt and grime can be removed effectively.

Use the device with the Refa Cream Wash (\$70 for 150g) that is formulated with fruit extracts to rejuvenate skin and to create rich, fine bubbles.

Next, slather on your favourite serum, eye cream and moisturise, but don't stop there. Spend a minute or two to massage your face with the shiny silver rollers that the brand is known for. I tried its smallest size, the Refa S Carat Ray (\$300) that is designed to replicate the fingertip kneading action that salon therapists are trained to do.

It feels so good with the compact rollers stimulating the circulation under my tired eyes. When used regularly with its Eye Veil Cream (\$88 for 20g), it promises to lighten dark eye circles and reducing the appearance of fine lines. Roll the massage tools from the eyebrows to the hairline, as well as the laugh lines to firm skin, too. From retailers including [www.mtg-sg.com](http://www.mtg-sg.com) and [www.tangs.com](http://www.tangs.com)



### ABSORBS LIKE NO OTHERS

Another time-saver: the Aquis Waffle Luxe towel (\$54) and turban (\$62). Made of uniquely woven ultra-fine microfibers, the super absorbent material is said to help wick water away from wet hair five times faster and more thoroughly than cotton towels. This means I can further reduce time on blow-drying. From [www.sephora.com.sg](http://www.sephora.com.sg)



### GET EVEN NOW

Why won't the dark spots that developed during my pregnancy go away? If you're also bothered by stubborn pigmentation, try the Lierac Lumilogie Day & Night Dark-Spot Correction Double Concentrate (\$108 for 30ml).

Each bottle comes with two pumps: use the gel balm from the white one in the morning and from the grey one before bedtime. They contain slightly varied active ingredients, but share the same main botanical formulation, with

extracts of sea daffodil and plantain. It is free of parabens and colourants, and is suitable for all skin types.

A month after using, the dark spots under my eyes actually lightened and my skin felt smoother. I can't wait to see the long-term results. From retailers including [www.fb.com/BeautyByNature.Sg](http://www.fb.com/BeautyByNature.Sg) and [www.lazada.sg](http://www.lazada.sg)



family fun

# real simple

Eating clean is mummy influencer **BELLA KOH**'s mantra when it comes to feeding her daughter. Here, she shares some easy recipes you can replicate at home.





## smoked salmon frittata

Makes 12 servings

### Ingredients

- 12 free-range eggs, beaten
- 1½ cup coconut yogurt
- ½ cup smoked salmon
- 1 cup organic spinach
- ¼ cup organic dill, chopped
- ½ tsp pink Himalayan salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 organic leeks, sliced thinly
- 1 cup potatoes, sliced

- 1 Heat oven to 180 deg C. Combine eggs, yogurt, smoked salmon, spinach, dill, salt and pepper in a bowl. Set aside.
- 2 On medium heat, add oil to pan. Add leeks and saute until slightly brown.
- 3 Add potatoes and cook for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium low. Add egg mixture to leeks and potatoes. Once it sets, turn off the heat and bake in oven for 20 to 30 minutes.
- 4 Transfer from oven and let cool for 5 minutes before dishing out with a spatula and placing on plate. Cut into 12 wedges and serve.



**Bella Koh** of @catslavery fame on Instagram contributed these recipes. The mother of a two-year-old founded [www.theslowhouse.co](http://www.theslowhouse.co), which offers workshops, recipes and products to help you live consciously.



## claypot brown rice with scallops

Serves 4

### Ingredients

- 3 cups Kinnemai brown rice
- 3 cups dashi stock
- 3 tbsp mirin
- 2 tbsp sake
- 2 tbsp pink Himalayan salt
- 3 tbsp tamari (Japanese wheat-free soya sauce)
- 1 stalk Japanese leek, cut into 2.5cm lengths
- 10 sustainably sourced scallops
- 1 bunch mizuna (Japanese mustard greens)
- 1 tsp organic white sesame seeds

- 1 Pour the rice into a *donabe* claypot (or rice cooker) and cover with dashi stock.
- 2 Add *mirin*, *sake*, salt, *tamari* and leeks, then stir. Cover and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes.
- 3 Add scallops, cover lid and steam for another 5 to 7 minutes, until cooked.
- 4 Turn off heat, add *mizuna*, and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve hot.



## hormone-free chicken stew with organic jasmine rice

Serves 1 to 2

### Ingredients

- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1 clove organic garlic, minced
- 2 pieces organic leeks, cut into 2.5cm lengths
- 1 cup organic carrot, cubed
- 1 cup shiitake mushrooms, quartered
- 1 cup baby potatoes, halved

- 1 cup hormone-free chicken fillets, cut into 2.5cm pieces and marinated in *dashi* sauce and arrowroot starch
- 1 tbsp *sake*
- 1 tbsp *mirin*
- 1 tbsp *dashi* sauce
- 1 tsp non-GMO sesame oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup *dashi* broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp pink Himalayan salt
- Dash of pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup organic jasmine rice, steamed
- 1 cup organic *mizuna* (Japanese mustard greens)

- 1 Place coconut oil in a large pan and heat over high heat.
- 2 Add garlic, leeks and saute till brown. Then add carrots, mushrooms and potatoes to the pan. Cook for 5 minutes.
- 3 Add chicken and fry till browned. Add *sake*, *mirin*, *dashi* sauce, sesame oil and, lastly, broth.

- 4 Cover and cook until vegetables are tender.
- 5 Season with salt and pepper to taste. Turn off heat and serve with steamed rice on the side, garnished with *mizuna*.

## no-bake cacao and almond butter tart

Makes 1 tart

### Ingredients

#### Top layer

135g coconut oil  
100g raw cacao powder  
75g almond butter  
60g raw honey  
60g coconut sugar

#### Second layer

150g almond butter

#### Base

200g organic oats  
40g coconut oil, melted  
30g almond butter  
30g raw honey

#### Garnish

Slivered almonds  
Dried fruits and nuts

**1** First, make the top layer by popping all the ingredients in a medium pan and melting together over low heat. Make sure it doesn't burn and it'll turn into a glossy mixture. Set aside to cool.

**2** For the base, blend the oats in a food processor. Then add the rest of the ingredients and blend again.

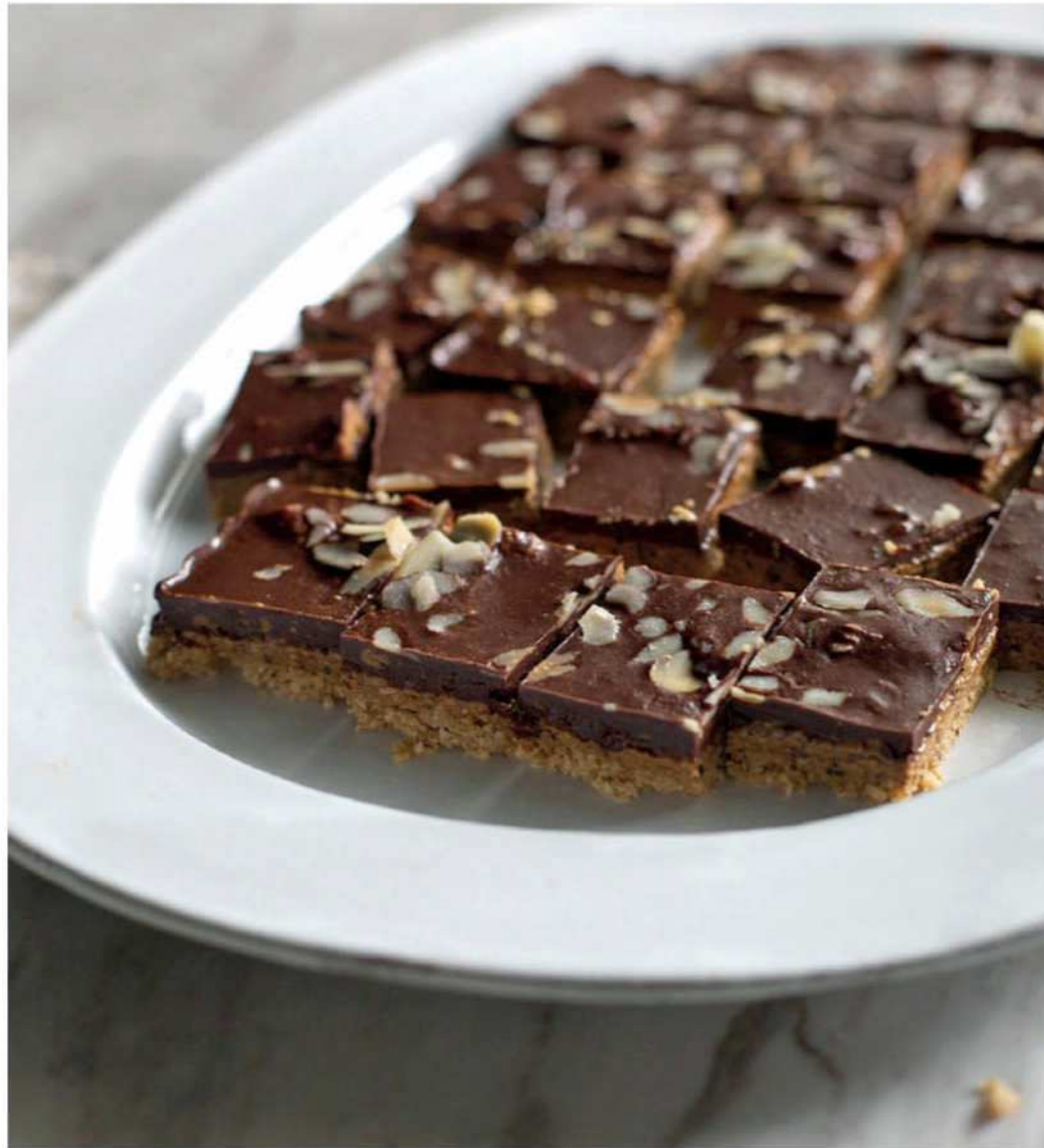
**3** Press the base mixture into a 12 by 8-inch rectangular tart pan, or a 10-inch round tart pan.

**4** For the second layer of the tart, spread almond butter over the base and leave it in the freezer for 30 minutes or until hardened.

**5** Lastly, pour the cacao mixture to create the top

layer, and spread it out evenly. Garnish with slivered almonds or your preferred dried fruits and nuts.

**6** Store in the freezer for 2 to 3 hours before serving. 🍯





# you won't want to leave

It is branded as Singapore's largest play space designed and built for kids in a hotel. **ELISA CHIA** explains why you should plan to spend the day there.

Did you know that Shangri-La Hotel near Orchard Road has launched a huge indoor and outdoor playground for kids? It isn't just for hotel guests; it welcomes the public, too.

During a recent visit with our kids aged five and 10, we had planned to spend the afternoon there, but ended up leaving only at 9pm when it closed. That's how engaging it was!

**SECURITY FIRST** Before the fun starts, everyone is assigned a radio-frequency identification wristband. The adults get the yellow ones, which allow them to tap in and out of the entrance.

Kids wear the blue and pink ones, which don't have the same access level. If they want to leave the playground, they'll have to inform the staff if their parents or guardians are not around. The staff can help to call them.

**DON'T FORGET SOCKS** Adults and kids must wear anti-slip socks before entering.

Remind your children to bring their water bottles into the play area – with all that running around, they should drink regularly to stay hydrated. The bottles can be left on a trolley just after the entrance.



## SIZZLING ACTION

Explorer Zone, its indoor play space for kids aged four and up, has specially curated installations to suit five themed areas: Fire Mountain, Waterfall, Underwater, Space and Mesh Cave (pictured above).

**AIM AND SHOOT** Children can slide into a giant ball pit at Fire Mountain zone, as well as play with the ball blasters (pictured right). Parents can join in, too, and have a friendly match with the little ones.



PHOTOS SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, SINGAPORE & ELISA CHIA



filled play pit at the Waterfall zone (pictured above). Look how pretty the wall decor is!

**HELLO THERE, BABY** Little ones below four years old aren't left out. Toddler zone, a dedicated play space for them (pictured centre left), has jumpers that let them bounce up and down, gentle slides and kiddy rides.

**LET'S BAKE** For an additional fee, children can sign up for special activities, such as a hands-on cookie baking class. A hotel chef will take them through the full process, from whipping cream in a Kitchenaid stand mixer to kneading the dough and icing the cookies. This one-and-a-half-hour class is recommended for kids from age six. Fees start from \$58.

**SING OUT LOUD** If your children aspire to be superstars, they will love the song-and-dance workshop at Stage. My kids learnt to sing from their diaphragm and picked up two musical numbers from The Sound of Music. The fee for this one-hour session starts from \$25.

**SPACE TRAVEL** On the second level of the play structure, which is strictly for kids, young ones enter the mysterious Space zone (pictured top left). While navigating the rope course, they can pick up fascinating facts about the planets, too.

Our 10-year-old came back and shared proudly: Venus is the only planet in the solar system to spin backwards!

**GROW A FLOWER** Encourage your kids to pick up the toy spades and role-play as gardeners at this cassia seeds-



### GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

We love the Muddy room as well (pictured top), where kids can channel their inner Picassos. After a storytelling session, they can learn to make crafts and even doodle on the wall. This lovely room has a low sink for young ones to wash their hands in after painting – with Mustela cleansing gel, no less.

The fee for this one-hour session also starts from \$25. Hotel guests enjoy one free activity at Muddy or Stage.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LITTLE ONE

Celebrating your kid's birthday soon? Book its cool party room with balloon-shaped colour-changing lights.

The basic package costs \$988 nett for 12 kids and 12 adults. It includes a choice of three food items and one drink, as well as three hours of indoor playtime at Buds.

The premium package is at \$1,388 nett for 12 kids and 12 adults. It includes a choice of five food items and one drink, as well as four hours of playtime. It also comes with a themed activity for your little guests.

Choose from three themes: Superstar (a music themed party where little guests get to record a music video), Wild

Wonder (an animal-themed art party) and A Royal Fiesta (a knight and princess themed art party).

**HAVE A CUPPA** While your kids run loose at the playground, you can enjoy coffee and snacks at the Recharge cafe beside the entrance. A cup of latte and a slice of salted toffee brownie cost \$6 each.

You can ask the staff to refill your water bottles here, for free.

At the cafe, you'll find electric sockets and USB power ports. Bring along your laptop to watch Netflix, if you like.

**SPLASHING FUN** Pack your kids' towels and swimwear or

extra outfits because there's an outdoor water play area, as well.

Walk past the hotel's main pool and you'll see signs leading to this wet wonderland that is exclusive to Buds' guests. There are toilets with changing rooms nearby. These are air-conditioned, though, so your little ones might find it a bit chilly.

**AHOY, MATEY!** If you'll rather have them stay dry, steer them towards the pirate

ship structure, which has slides and a shaky bridge. That's lots of fun, too!

Buds by Shangri-La is open daily from 9am to 9pm. The public rate is at \$48 for three hours for kids aged four to 12, \$28 for tots aged one to three, and includes one adult entry per child. Babies below 12 months enter free. Hotel guests can enjoy preferential rate.

**FIND OUT MORE**  
[www.tinyurl.com/BudsByShangriLa](http://www.tinyurl.com/BudsByShangriLa)

## when the family is famished

Located at the hotel's Tower Wing, Level 1, Buds by Shangri-La is right next to The Line buffet restaurant. Bring an empty stomach and feast on Western, Chinese, Indian and Japanese cuisines. Lunch is priced from \$65 per adult and \$32 for kid from age six to 11; dinner is from \$80 per adult and \$40 per kid.

But if you prefer ala carte food items or are not that hungry, head to the pool-facing Waterfall Ristorante Italiano, whose mainstay is classic southern Italian food.

The restaurant's woody interior provides an intimate and welcoming atmosphere.

A must-try is the Linguine Allo Scoglio (\$32), where the fresh pasta is simmered with a variety of seafood and cherry tomatoes. Our kids also couldn't get enough of the Tagliata Di Manzo Rucolae Grana (\$45), a dish of grilled sliced beef tenderloin with rocket leaves and parmesan cheese, as well as Pizza Margherita (\$23). End on a sweet note with Profiteroles – a chocolate sphere that you melt with hot chocolate sauce to reveal a lemon cream core. *Perfectto!*

# how fun-tastic!

Rochester Mall's Fun, Play, Learn event – organised by *Young Parents* – was a big hit with families.



Talk about an enriching weekend! So many excited kids and parents turned up at Rochester Mall on March 10 for an afternoon of Fun, Play, Learn. Judging by the happy faces all around, it certainly lived up to its name.

These families were among the lucky ones who scored a coveted spot at the event organised by *Young Parents*.

The children enjoyed not just one, but three free classes offered by the mall's myriad of enrichment centres.

These include programmes in music (by Aureus Academy), art (Da Little Arts School), dance (The Joyful Steps & Rhythm), brain development (Advo), sensory play (Busy Table) and gym (My Gym).

After the classes, families were also treated to yummy Thai rolled ice cream and nachos. They walked home with professionally drawn caricatures and prizes from sure-win lucky dips, as well.

Thank you for your support and follow us at [www.fb.com/youngparents](http://www.fb.com/youngparents) to get first dibs on our next fun-filled event. 🌟



# time out



If the mere mention of **Unicorno, Donutella and Cactus Friends** gets your kids (and you) excited, check out this Tokidoki pop-up cafe. It's said to be the world's first – even the characters' Italian co-founder and chief creative officer Simone Legno flew in to officiate its March opening.

The team behind Kumoya, which previously collaborated with Cinnamoroll, Miffy and Care Bears, runs this cafe. Tuck into Instagrammable burger, curry rice and ramen, and slurp up fluffy cotton candy drinks – all curated by food artist, Shirley Wong, better known as Little Miss Bento.

The Tokidoki X Kumoya tieup will end in late June. Visit [www.facebook.com/kumoyasingapore](http://www.facebook.com/kumoyasingapore).



## Meet the S.E.A. Aquarium's newest residents,

the sand tiger sharks that are famed for their rows of ragged teeth and vicious appearance. Teach your kids to get the perfect shot of these and other marine animals by using the underwater photography tips that can be found around the aquarium.

These are contributed by National Geographic, which has also put up an Ocean Record Breakers exhibition till May 20. It features facts and videos of six amazing species – the blue whale, giant squid, great white shark, blue marlin, mola mola and leatherback turtle. Usual admission fees to the S.E.A. Aquarium apply. Visit [www.rwsentosa.com/oceanwonders](http://www.rwsentosa.com/oceanwonders).



## You're never too young to appreciate the arts,

Act3 International believes. Its second instalment of the ACT3i Festival for Children features six original theatre performances from all around the world for babies and preschoolers. Tickets are priced at \$38 for one child and one adult, or \$22 for a single ticket (child or adult). Family packs are available.

There's also, Grow, Garden, Grow, an interactive storytelling workshop for ages seven to 17 months. It costs \$38 for one child and one adult. The festival runs from May 22 to June 3. Visit [www.act3international.com.sg](http://www.act3international.com.sg).



Mother's Day eats



**Too shy to express themselves?** This cake's name helps Hubby and the kids say it all: I Love You Seoul Much. Beneath the chocolate coating is ice cream made from chestnuts imported from Korea. A trail of gold-dusted berries completes the look.

This Mother's Day exclusive comes in two sizes – 1kg (\$53) and 250g (\$23). Get it from Swensen's or Earle Swensen's outlets from April 21 to May 13. Members also enjoy 20 per cent off. Visit [www.swensens.com.sg](http://www.swensens.com.sg).



**Treat the family to an epicurean spread of favourites at Porta Fine Food & Import Company.** Its Mother's Day brunch features a selection of fresh Fine de Claire oysters from France, savoury chicken Waldorf salad and fascinating rainbow salad, as well

desserts such as tiramisus, lemon tarts and assorted shooters.

Little ones will be kept busy in the kids' playroom with activities from keychain-making to balloon sculpting and caterpillar tunnels. It's available on May 13 at Park Hotel Clarke Quay and costs \$38++ per adult and \$19 per child aged five to 11. Children below five get a free kid's dish of the day. Diners will be eligible for a lucky dip, where they can win staycations. Visit [www.porta.com.sg](http://www.porta.com.sg).



**Gordon Grill at Goodwood Park Hotel has a three-course set lunch menu for Mother's Day.** It features a selection of fresh seafood, premium meats and melt-in-your-mouth French desserts.

There's also a mothers-only treat in the form of the classic Lobster Thermidor poached in bechamel sauce and parmesan cheese. The set lunch is available on May 5 to 6 and 12 to 13 at \$68++ per person. Visit [www.goodwoodparkhotel.com](http://www.goodwoodparkhotel.com).



**Tuck into more than 70 Singaporean treats at Marriott Cafe's decadent Mother's Day high tea buffet,**

from bak kut teh and Hokkien mee to oyster omelette and nasi lemak.

There's also a Western station and a large variety of fresh seafood, as well.

Leave room for sweet treats like strawberry shortbread, baked mango cheesecake and chocolate apricot gateau. The high tea buffet is available on May 13 for \$55++ per adult (with free-flow of mocktails and chilled juices) and \$30++ per child. Visit [www.singaporemarriott.com/dining](http://www.singaporemarriott.com/dining).



## fashion in the garden

Uniqlo's clothing collaboration with designers isn't limited to the adult range. Its latest tieup with iconic British brand Studio Sanderson, known for wallpaper and interior design, is designed for girls, babies as well as women. Expect timeless pieces with classic hand-drawn patterns, in fresh English garden colours. The collection is slated to launch in two phases on April 30 and June 4. Prices range from \$9.90 for toddler leggings to \$49.90 for a woman's bra dress. Visit [www.uniqlo.com/sg/store](http://www.uniqlo.com/sg/store).



## gold standard

With a name like Gold Pants, you'd expect a lot from this pull-up diaper from Huggies. Check out its five-layer dry structure, which is made with "magic" gel that locks in urine, promising up to 12 hours of absorbency.

Its airy top sheet and breathable waistband allow multidimensional air circulation around the diaper so Baby's waist bum is well ventilated, and two-layer leg guards prevent leakage. The yellow patterns in the centre turn blue when Baby urinates, so you always know when to change her diaper.

Gold Pants are available from sizes M (six to 12 kg) to XXL (15 to 25kg). Get a pack for \$21.95 from major supermarkets and e-commerce sites. Visit [www.huggies.com.sg](http://www.huggies.com.sg).



## baby's first skincare

Keep your little one's delicate skin healthy with Merries' baby skincare range. It helps to retain ceramides, which keep Baby's skin soft and moisturised. Plus, it is free of fragrances, hypoallergenic, dermatologically-tested, pH balanced, and is suitable for even newborns.

The Baby Foaming Wash (400ml) retails for \$18.95, the Baby Lotion (300ml) for \$18.95 and the Baby Cream (60g) for \$12.95. Find them at selected Fairprice outlets and Fairprice online. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/MerriesSkincare](http://www.tinyurl.com/MerriesSkincare).

## glow with it

If you're always blotting your oily skin to keep shine at bay, try these two new products from Bioderma's Sebium range. Sebium Mat Control (\$36.90 for 30ml) is a moisturiser that has glycerin to hydrate for up to 12 hours, and mattifying micro powders and silicones for shine control of up to eight hours.

The Sebium Lotion (\$33.90 for 200ml) is a non-sticky toner that regulates your skin's pH level and inhibits the growth of acne bacteria. Its salicylic acid gently exfoliates, while mushroom extract tightens pores.

The entire Sebium range is free of soap and alcohol and noncomedogenic, and lightly perfumed with an allergen-free fragrance. Find them at major Guardian and Watsons stores, Unity and Lazada. Visit [www.bioderma.sg](http://www.bioderma.sg).





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