

MEET THIS EDITION'S *contributors*



Sister Ann Richardson

is a qualified nurse and midwife with over 30 years' experience. She introduced the first private well-baby clinics in South Africa, focusing on child health, immunisation, nutrition, growth and development. Her specialisation is the treatment of 'difficult babies and toddlers', in particular those with feeding and sleeping disorders. The author of the international best-seller *Toddler Sense* (and co-author of *Baby Sense* and *Sleep Sense* with Megan Fauré) is also a regular guest on TV parenting shows. See www.toddleronline.co.za.



Sam Scarborough

not only runs her own kids' decor company specialising in product design of creative play spaces and play ideas for children, but she's also an author and decor consultant focusing on children's rooms. She's motivated to inspire other moms to be more creative with their family and home environments—sharing ideas in her books (published both locally and in the UK) and through her creative decor workshops. Sam believes a child's environment is the first step to a creative experience and expression. Follow her on www.inspiringmoms.com/kidsdecor or www.facebook.com/kidsdecor/design.



Sally Michener

is a septuagenarian with three children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, living in Florida in the United States. She worked as an administrative assistant for one firm for 33 years before retiring in 2000. Currently, she keeps herself busy with her Internet business, RagSlogBabyCarries.com, while finding time to write articles on pregnancy and child care.



Elsabé van der Colff

is a crafts blogger also known as KraftMama. She home-schools her twins and has a weekly crafts meeting with moms and kids, so everything is aimed at educational material that inspires moms to have fun with their children. She tries to make it simple by using printables and materials you can find in your home. Check out blogkraftmama.com.



Lizzie O'Halloran

is a therapist, writer, speaker and mother of two—dedicated to helping mothers wake up each morning feeling energised, organised and happy. Having been a professional athlete, counsellor and nanny, and having worked in the corporate world for many years, she has a unique take on helping parents develop and maintain well-being, happiness and a career while raising balanced, happy and successful children. Lizzie's organisation, Happy Life, is dedicated to empowering professional new mothers to feel successful; it has been expanded to incorporate www.HelpForMoms.com, a website that supports mothers during their emotional journey into parenthood and when returning to work after maternity leave.



Tania Griffin

has been editing grammar and spelling since 2003—or way earlier than that, if you count her younger years pointing out errors on documents, signboards and memos to her English-teacher mom. She does her own writing on travel, health, wellness... and basically anything her managing editor asks. When Tania's not typing away on the laptop in her home office, she's baking and cooking for family and friends. And shopping online.

MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

We really love how our contributor Lizzie O'Halloran sums up motherhood: Being a Perfect Mum is not the goal of parenting; the goal is being the Best Mum you can be for your child.

We all have such great expectations, but no one said motherhood and parenting would be easy! Things won't always go according to plan—and that's perfectly alright. Arm yourself with knowledge, take advice from those with experience, trust your sixth sense... and simply be the Best Mum you can be.

If you're a soon-to-be mommy grappling with doubt and mixed emotions, Lizzie's article is a great place to start. She has some good advice on how to prepare yourself mentally while still pregnant, so that you're ready to face the wonderful journey of motherhood.

And what fun awaits! We take you through the world of hails and nappy changes (could get messy, but there'll be plenty adorable moments to bring a smile to your face) and teach dad the art of infant massage so that he can bond with baby in a special way. Learn how to spot and eliminate troublesome foodstuffs in your breastmilk that may be upsetting your little one's tummy—remember, you're still eating for two. We also have

advice for toddlers who wake at the break of dawn, ready to *enjoy* when you're still snug under your duvet.

What's more, we give you a taste of some recipes from a new cookbook (this time around we dish up Marlene van der Westhuizen's *Pâtis*); put our best foot forward in the season's must-have boot styles; page through a few of the latest books for young and old; turn our GPS toward some welcoming winter destinations around the country; and show you what's new and nifty on the shelves—beautifying products, must-have goodies for babies and toddlers, and novel items to help give you a hand during pregnancy and after your bundle of joy has arrived (like a nasal aspirator to... mmm... suck out snoot).

Once again, we hope you find some inspiration, motivation and information among these pages.

From all of us at *Mother & Child*

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GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Motherhood is often a shock for many new mums. Here's how to prepare yourself mentally for the arrival of your child

BY LIZZIE O'HALLORAN





We have a strange misconception about parenting: that it should be easy.

When you're pregnant, all you can think about is how wonderful life's going to be when your baby arrives.

Of course, there are the usual anxieties about how things may change and how you're going to cope with sleep deprivation and so on. However, no one really talks about the expectations of parenting and that life cannot possibly stay the same; that it's essential to make your child, yourself and your relationships a priority otherwise stress, depression and anxiety can easily set in.

We have a strange misconception about parenting: that it should be easy. That mums should be able to seamlessly work full time or part time, run the household, look after their health and happiness, be on top of their finances, maintain healthy relationships and just be a calm, happy, fun, energetic and

consistent parent all the time.

But this isn't the reality that befalls 99.9% of moms in this world. Due to the fact the expectations don't meet reality, motherhood is often a shock for many new mums. Mums can easily become confused about why it seems so tiring, difficult or not as seamless as expected, and therefore can be left asking themselves regularly: "Why can't I cope as well as I expected I would?"

Wouldn't it be great if you were able to alter expectations while still pregnant, and become more prepared for motherhood as a result?

HAVE THE RIGHT EXPECTATIONS.

The first thing that needs to be altered in pregnancy is expectations. Specifically, the expectations that a child will just fit into your lifestyle, will always behave and will always give you time to yourself. The expectation should be that you have a child

who needs you to make her your first priority—but not at the expense of yourself.

You still need to look after your health and happiness, but it's important to understand there'll be times when you plan to do things a certain way and your child decides she needs you right now. These instances are prime targets for high levels of stress.

For instance, let's say you have to pay some bills; you've been putting this off and now finally have a minute to do online payments while your child sleeps. But she wakes up after 20 minutes and won't settle down—she needs you right then. You start to feel resentful and angry that you can't get a minute to yourself. However, if instead of letting this resentment build up, you took a breath and remembered your child has to be priority no. 1, you'd be able to think clearly for a minute to work out your best course of action to look after her needs and your own. You may put your baby in her sling and rock her to sleep, and



then sit at the computer to complete your bills.

MAKING YOUR INFANT A PRIORITY DOESN'T MEAN NEGLECTING YOUR OWN NEEDS.

One of the things that many moms neglect is looking after their own needs. They push through exhaustion; fail to maintain a healthy diet, or emotionally eat or drink to soothe negative feelings; worry about whether or not they're meeting the expectations of friends, family members or the wider community; spend money they don't really have in order to appear to be coping, or to have the best dressed child and so on...

When moms neglect their own physical and mental health, it's very easy to feel insecure and allow self-doubt to impact confidence in parenting. Feeling insecure often leads to snappiness and fighting within relationships, too.

So, the key to maintaining a happy home and to achieve the goal of positive and consistent parenting is to look after yourself as a mother so that you feel calm in the face of stress (e.g. when your baby won't go to sleep or is having a tantrum in public), or to feel energetic when your

child wants you to get down to her level and play. Your health and happiness is paramount to the health and happiness of your child.

MOTHERHOOD ISN'T MEANT TO BE PERFECT.

You're going to make mistakes. This is part of being a human being. It's really important to trust that being a Perfect Mum is not the goal of parenting. The goal is being the Best Mum you can be for your child.

When you make mistakes, don't criticise yourself. Just think through the situation and ask yourself: "Is there anything I can change that would make things easier or better?" That's all you can ask of yourself.

PRIORITISE TIME FOR FUN WITH YOUR CHILD.

This is really important. Often mums feel guilty about all the tasks they 'should' be doing when they're playing with their child. Then they feel guilty when they're undertaking those tasks—thinking they 'should' be playing with their child at that time. So they don't allow themselves to really enjoy the opportunities to have fun together, and never feel as though they're

bring 'present' with their child.

If you can relate to this, take a few minutes to schedule your day so that you can take opportunities to have fun with your child (for example, going to the play centre or park together) and then feel relaxed and happy about having 'me-time' or spending time on work or tasks during other times in the day. That way, you create a balance—and you and your child create special moments together that will last for ever in your memory.

THE KEY TAKE-AWAY

Always remind yourself why you're having a child. What's the reason you want to have a child, and how can you alter your mindset to create more realistic and calming expectations of parenting?

Being a parent is very taxing because children crave your attention. However, when you become mindful and set time together to have fun and relax, when you look after both your needs and the needs of your child, and when you feel okay that things won't always go to plan, your life will become easier and much less stressful. Plus, you'll cope so much better when things don't go the way you want! 🌟