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FEB/MAR 2017

PREGNANCY

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THE Health ISSUE

"I felt completely robbed of my self-esteem."

One mum shares her battle with Post-Partum Depression

The Super Vitamin
for Baby's Brain
Development

**Auspicious
Chinese Names**
for 2017 Rooster
Babies

**Giving birth
naturally at
home:**
How this
mamma
did it



NEW AGE

PREGNANCY CONTENTS



03 Editorial note

04 Auspicious Chinese Names For 2017 Rooster Babies

08 Does Pregnancy Affect Your Skin?

12 How I Had A Water Birth At Home

16 Let's Talk About Post-Partum Depression

20 Why Post-Partum Care Is Important

22 Maternity's Over, Back To Work

24 The Super Vitamin For Your Baby's Brain

28 I Care For Infant Care

30 Don't Ditch Those Flashcards Just Yet



HEALTHY MAMA, HEALTHY BABY

Happy Lunar New Year!

To usher in the lunar year of the rooster, we asked Feng Shui Master Jo Ching to share with us **Auspicious Chinese Names for 2017 Rooster Babies**. What's more important than to spend the new year with good health? A recent study conducted by Abbott researchers revealed new findings of natural vitamin E and how it affects your baby's brain development. Flip to our article **The Super Vitamin For Your Baby's Brain** to learn more.

Ever wondered what it's like to give birth at home? We interviewed one mummy (**How I Had A Water Birth At Home**) to find out how she successfully gave birth to her second child at home, in a tub of water! Motherhood is often celebrated. But what happens when it starts to eat you up and rob you of your self-identity? A brave mother shares with us about her battle with **Post-partum depression (PPD)** and how she picked herself up.

We each have our own battles to face. But I believe half the battle is won once we are able to embrace and accept our own weaknesses. Also, don't forget that you're not in this alone. Whatever that comes your way this year, I wish for you to have the necessary support and inner strength to overcome them!

P.S. Like what you read on our e-mag or website? Receive our latest articles and giveaways when you sign up on our mailing list here.

My best,
Michelle Ang



Do you have any stories, tips or any feedback to share?

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Auspicious Chinese Names for Newborns in the Year of the Rooster

By Master Jo Ching, Founder of DestinyAsia Global Consultancy and Master Trainer of Destiny Academy Pte Ltd

Mr and Mrs Tan got married in 2016. I helped to pick an auspicious date for their wedding, and consulted them on their home Feng Shui. The young couple recently asked me when it would be an auspicious year for them to have a baby.

Apart from analysing their BaZi, I also factored in their Chinese surname, which is Tan or 陈 in simplified Chinese. I wanted to make sure that their child will inherit a suitable surname that can bring luck to him or her in future – especially in the academic and career developments.

Why is one's surname so important?

In the study of Chinese Name Analysis System (八字生肖姓

名学), surname represents one's relationship with parents, whether he or she is well provided for by the family, a person's intelligence, academic performance during school days, creativity, status, reputation etc. Having an appropriate surname enables one to enjoy a good head-start in life. For the lady, surname determines the quality of the husband.

For Mr and Mrs Tan, I advised them to have a rooster baby. Based on their surname, a rooster baby will grow up to be intelligent, more outstanding and possess leadership potential. What makes the surname Tan so special? Here's why.

The Surname 'Tan / 陳'

The Chinese character of Tan, which is also written as 陳 in the traditional way, comprises components that belong to 耳 and 日. In our Chinese Name system, it is deemed as very auspicious for a rooster to see 日 which is the Chinese word for Sun. This implies that the rooster is conferred with the authority to command the world. After all, rooster crows and wakes every one up when the sun rises.

What's interesting to note is the Chinese radical 耳 (which means ear) in the surname further equips the person with an extra talent or Midas touch. Another zodiac sign that likes

to own a pair of ears is snake since both rooster and the snake do not have physical ears sticking out like other animals.

Unfortunately, most of us are not able to change our surname if things turn out to be against what we want. In this instance, we would have to rely on the careful selection of middle and last Chinese characters in the name to neutralise the negative influence of the surname and simultaneously enhance other aspects of the child's destiny path.

General Characteristics of people born in the Year of the Rooster

Among the 12 Zodiac Signs, rooster occupies the 10th position. Its element is metal and it represents the western direction. This beautifully feathered fowl is considered to be slightly luckier as compared to some of its zodiacal counterparts since it is usually well fed and raised by people. It lives in a sheltered and protected environment and generally does not need to risk its life to look for food in the wild. In terms of diet, it feeds on grain and rice and it is never a meat eater.

The rooster, or also known as the cockerel, is regarded as trustworthy simply because it never fails to crow at daybreak. Besides, it carries an air of elegance and class but could be deemed as arrogant and egoistical at times.

People who belong to the rooster sign are generally good-looker and skillful in words. They receive good supports from the elders, bosses and colleagues. Although they may look

gentle from the outside, they can be quite resolve and principled as they have a mind of their own. They do possess leadership quality but they should be mindful not to over assert their authority and appear to be condescending. Otherwise, this will become the pitfall in their life.

By knowing the intrinsic behavior of the rooster especially from the Chinese astrological aspect of it, the ancient masters developed this Chinese Name system with the aim to improve a person's well-being. Every Chinese name character carries certain energy which can cast either positive or negative effect on the child or adult depending on their destiny chart.

Which Chinese Surname will provide a good head-start for your Rooster Baby?

Let us now take a deeper look at the dos and don'ts when you are selecting the name for your baby. First of all, it would be preferable for rooster babies to be born into families carrying surname such as: 張、龐、龍、龔、農、顏、顧、康、賀、石、孟、丞、袁、侯、鈕、司、吳、谷、祝、商、方、鄭、鄔、譚、彭、潘、常、陳、牟、連、毛

It does not favour surnames such as: 熊、柳、劉、成、盛、狄、馬、馮、丁、洪、汪、江、孔、游、池、沈、溫、梁、徐、倪、佟、呂、高、麥

The approach to selecting good names for your baby is a rigorous and holistic one because not only there is a need to ensure the names complement the baby's destiny chart, individual Chinese character within the name must also contain the right

sound, right shape that ultimately create the right result for the child in all aspects of his or her life. It is also of paramount importance that the given name is compatible with both parents' Chinese Name and zodiac sign. In fact, many today are seeking help from name experts to enhance or improve their study, romance, career luck and even one's behaviour.

Which Chinese characters are suitable for babies born in the year of Rooster?

The following Chinese characters or radicals are some examples that are considered inauspicious for people born in the rooster year:

1. 逸、勉、月、朋、仰、青、柳、春、四、木、森、罗、林、卿、有

It is considered a taboo to use radicals or characters that contain 卯 which suggest the presence of rabbit or wood element. In the study of Chinese Astrology, Rooster and Rabbit have conflicting energies. Having such character in the name implies poor inter-personal relations with peers, accidents and lack of helpful people. Such type of conflict is also known to be one of the 6 clashes in the study of BaZi.

2. 成、戈、忠、茂、城、威、國、狀、獄、獻、武、猶、然、盛、誠

Considered as a serious violation of the Chinese Name principle to see radicals like 戌 and 犬 as it is a punishment on Rooster sign from BaZi point of view. If such word exists in the middle name, it will lead to stress in marriage and relationship with peers. If it is present in the last name, it will lead to issues with personal finances,



challenges in career and even strained relationship with subordinates and children.

3. 惠、慧、蕊、思、念、想、憲、朋、膨、鵬、騰、宥、育、有、怡、情
Not good to see 心 or 月 or 亠 radical because such words are associated with heart which is deemed as part of our flesh. Rooster does not feed on meat. In this situation, the person having this character in their name will find that they are not able to receive help from people.

4. 文、政、典、兴、光、贤、宽、雯
Radicals that have shapes like 八,

又, 儿 imply the rooster is sick since a strong and healthy rooster stands on one leg. It denotes lack of focus or determination. Overall, this signals instability in one's life.

5. 駿、挺、森、燊、炎、骅、琳、然、杰、柳、材
Rooster sign belongs to metal element and therefore it will be inauspicious if the name contains radical that belongs to fire and wood element since it results in conflicting energy. For instance, radicals that carry shapes like 木, 火, 灬, are to be avoided.

6. 伸、伶、仁、佳、仕、任、伯、住、

佩、來、儂、依、行、徐、介 Radicals such as 人, 亻, 彳 is a symbol of human. This is definitely not a positive sign because it means the rooster is going to be slaughtered for offerings. So, the person having such character in the name can be defensive in his or her dealings with others or the person often has to make sacrifices in relationship or at work.

7. 装、欣、莊、成、代、知、芹、劉、勇、力、颖、柔、刚、分、芬 Radicals such as 刀, 刂, 矛, 匕, 戈, 矢, 斤, 片 represent weapon. It has the same implications as above sub paragraph. In addition, it can also lead to bodily harm,

surgery and crises in life.

8. 永、孟、孫、存、孔、學、汪、承、
淳、丞、享、泰、潔、沛、冰

In the study of BaZi, such characters or radicals that contain 子 or 宀 symbolises water element or rat zodiac sign which is detrimental for the rooster. In the study of BaZi, rat and rooster form a punishment. Chinese also has a saying that this is an image of drenched chicken. The outcome is disastrous in terms of finances and one will suffer great losses once in a life time.

The below Chinese characters are considered auspicious for people having rooster zodiac sign:

1. 通、建、廷、庭、起、宛、強、融、
虹、凡、弘、引、凱、川、之

Good to see radicals like 几 or 弓 because such characters symbolises 蛇 or snake and it forms a 三合 [San He] or 3-Harmony relationship with rooster which is extremely powerful and auspicious. For your information, Snake, Rooster and Ox form this trinity.

2. 妞、紐、鈕、俎、扭、牢、生、牲、
筮、性、星

Good to see radicals like 丑 or 牛 because such characters symbolises ox which forms a 三合 [San He] or 3-Harmony relationship with rooster which is extremely powerful and auspicious.

3. 和、利、莉、秀、香、蘇、秉、豆、
登、米、菊、凱、科、益

Rooster feeds on grain, cereal, maize and rice. The presence of radicals like 禾, 豆, 米 in a person's name allows him or her to receive continual support and help from friends and colleagues.

4. 晨、宸、農、麗、麒、君、龙、尤、
雨、言、震、霏、吾、麟

Radicals or words that symbolises or represent dragon form a 六合 [Liu He] or 6-Harmony relationship with rooster. This is another auspicious combination that boosts a person's luck in career, marriage, fame and status.

5. 布、市、帛、帝、常、彩、彭、彬、
衫、祺、福、珍、礼、裕

It is good to see 糸、衣、采 radicals as this implies that the rooster is dressed up and promoted to be a phoenix and this will lead to a rise in status in the society and gain of respects from others.

6. 容、宏、宇、安、宸、室、戶、門、
冠、國、園、圓、康、廉、珊

Rooster enjoys staying in cave and feels protected with roof or shelter over its head. Having radicals or words like 口, 穴, 门, 广, 册 in one's name means stability in career and relationship, supportive relatives, friends and smooth sailing life.

7. 昇、堤、曾、章、彰、星、旭、
吳、同、司、和、名、尚、合、周

The list of characters here either contains one 口 or 日. There is a saying in Chinese that when rooster open its mouth, it commands the world. It is very good for career and reputation. However, do note that having more than one of such radicals will lead to petty people instead.

8. 華、單、章、平、奉、筆、宇、卓、
干、十

All these words, if you observe carefully, are standing on 'one-leg'. There is a phrase in Chinese known as 金鸡独立

or Golden Rooster Resting on One Leg. This means the rooster is strong and healthy. In another word, the person is steady, outstanding and healthy.

9. 均、基、培、場、塞、境、堆、坤、
在、堂

In the study of BaZi, Rooster belongs to metal element. So, it will be very good and very auspicious to use above characters or radicals that contain earth element such as 土 simply because earth will produce and enhance the metal element.

The list of examples above is not exhaustive but has addressed the essence on some insights and perspectives on Chinese Name Selection for babies.

‘姓名两三字, 影响你一世’

This is a sentence I usually tell my clients. In English, it means although our Chinese name consists of 2 to 3 characters, it has an everlasting influence on our life journey. I wish you good health and great abundance in 2017!



Master Jo Ching (莊裕善老师) is the founder of DestinyAsia Global Consultancy and

Master Trainer of Destiny Academy Pte Ltd. Besides providing advice on home and office Feng Shui, destiny analysis and auspicious Chinese Name selection, he also conducts professional Feng Shui courses and corporate talks. His has been quoted by several media publications over the years. Visit his company website at www.masterfengshui.com or contact him at joching@destinyasia.com.sg



Does Pregnancy Affect Your Skin?

We ask **Jodi Ayre from The International Dermal Institute and Dermalogica Australia** for skincare tips during pregnancy.

Pregnancy is an exciting journey, but with it comes its own set of skin challenges and concerns. Every part of the body goes through changes during pregnancy, and the skin is no exception. Skin changes occur in about 90% of pregnant women, in one form or another, due to the surge of hormones.

1 PURCHASING SKINCARE PRODUCTS

INGREDIENTS TO LOOK OUT FOR

Many women during their pregnancy will experience different skin concerns and challenges, often for the first time. Acne breakouts or congestion, redness and hyperpigmentation are common concerns that an expectant mother may not only be surprised by, but also experience difficulty in working to control due to the constant surge of hormones both during and post pregnancy.

Visiting a skin therapist is the best way to help to decide what type of skin care ingredients and treatments will be the best option for an expectant

mother. Here are ingredients to look out for, according to the various skin conditions:

REDNESS, HEAT AND INFLAMMATION

- Anti-inflammatories to reduce irritation and redness in the skin, for example Calendula, Canadian Willow Herb, Oatmeal, Cucumber, Balm Mint, Butcherbroom.
- Bioflavonoids to strengthen capillaries and potent antioxidants such as Grapeseed, Red Raspberry, Green Tea.

ACNE, BREAKOUTS AND CONGESTION

- Clays to draw out impurities and balance sebum, for example Kaolin, Bentonite, Fuller's Earth
- Enzymes to gently digest skin cells without friction or irritation, look out for ingredients such as Papain, Bromelain, Bacillus Ferment.
- Lactic Acid to resurface, smooth and brighten your skin.
- Antibacterials such as Tea Tree, Zinc Sulphate and Spiraea are brilliant to help control bacteria on the skin's surface as well as in the follicle to help to control the infection causing the inflammation.

PIGMENTATION

- Stop the signals that trigger the pigment producing cell in the skin to start making more pigment with ingredients such as Oligopeptide 34, Niacinamide, sunscreens like Zinc Oxide, Titanium Dioxide.
- Slow down and weaken the density and quality

of pigment being produced with key cosmeceuticals such as Vitamin C derivatives, Oligopeptide 34, Glucosamine, Ferula Foetida.

■ Help to slow down and limit the amount of pigment that reaches the skin surface that results in the blotchy, uneven skin tone appearance with ingredients such as Niacinamide, Lactic Acid, Pumpkin Ferment.

INGREDIENTS TO AVOID

We often hear the question from our expectant mothers “Is this product safe to use while pregnant?” In general doctors may recommend to our expectant or breastfeeding mothers to avoid ingredients such as vitamin A (for example retinol or isotretinoin), salicylic acid, essential oils and hydroquinone. To determine if a product is safe to use during your pregnancy, seek the advice of your doctor or medical professional.

Because your doctors know you and are aware of your medical history, they will be able to best advise you of any health and safety issues particular to you and your pregnancy.

2 CAN MOTHERS USE BABY PRODUCTS AND VICE VERSA?

NEW BORN AND INFANT SKIN

A baby’s skin is very different to an adult skin and therefore have different needs. A baby’s skin requires protection from the sun, gentle cleansers and support with strengthening the barrier function, or strength of their skin as they grow.

Tips to care for your newborn skin:

■ Support your baby’s delicate skin

HOW TO HAVE GLOWING... SKIN ACCORDING TO DERMALOGICA

- ✓ Wear an SPF daily! Sun exposure can worsen skin conditions associated with pregnancy, particularly melasma.
- ✓ Check your products and ensure they are free from any harmful of ingredients such as SD alcohols, soap, artificial colours, artificial fragrances, hydroquinone or congesting mineral oils.
- ✓ During pregnancy it is normal to experience a heightened sensitivity. In addition to your morning and nightly routine, pack Dermalogica UltraCalming Mist in your bag throughout the day to immediately calm and cool any hormonal flushes.
- ✓ To maintain your skin health, incorporate Dermalogica Phyto Replenish Oil into your homecare routine to replenish, strengthen and shield your skin and enhance your pregnancy glow!
- ✓ When in doubt, check with your doctor or medical professional.

with products to promote hydration and protection. Oats, emollients, oils, pH balanced gentle cleansers for face and body and physical SPF.

■ Protection would also be needed to help to calm and soothe skin rashes from heat or friction (nappies) as well as in some cases ‘milk pimples’ on the cheeks and forehead.

If you are considering

incorporating an adult skin care range into the care of your baby’s skin, you should look for options that promote skin calming, repair and protection.

MOTHER’S SKIN

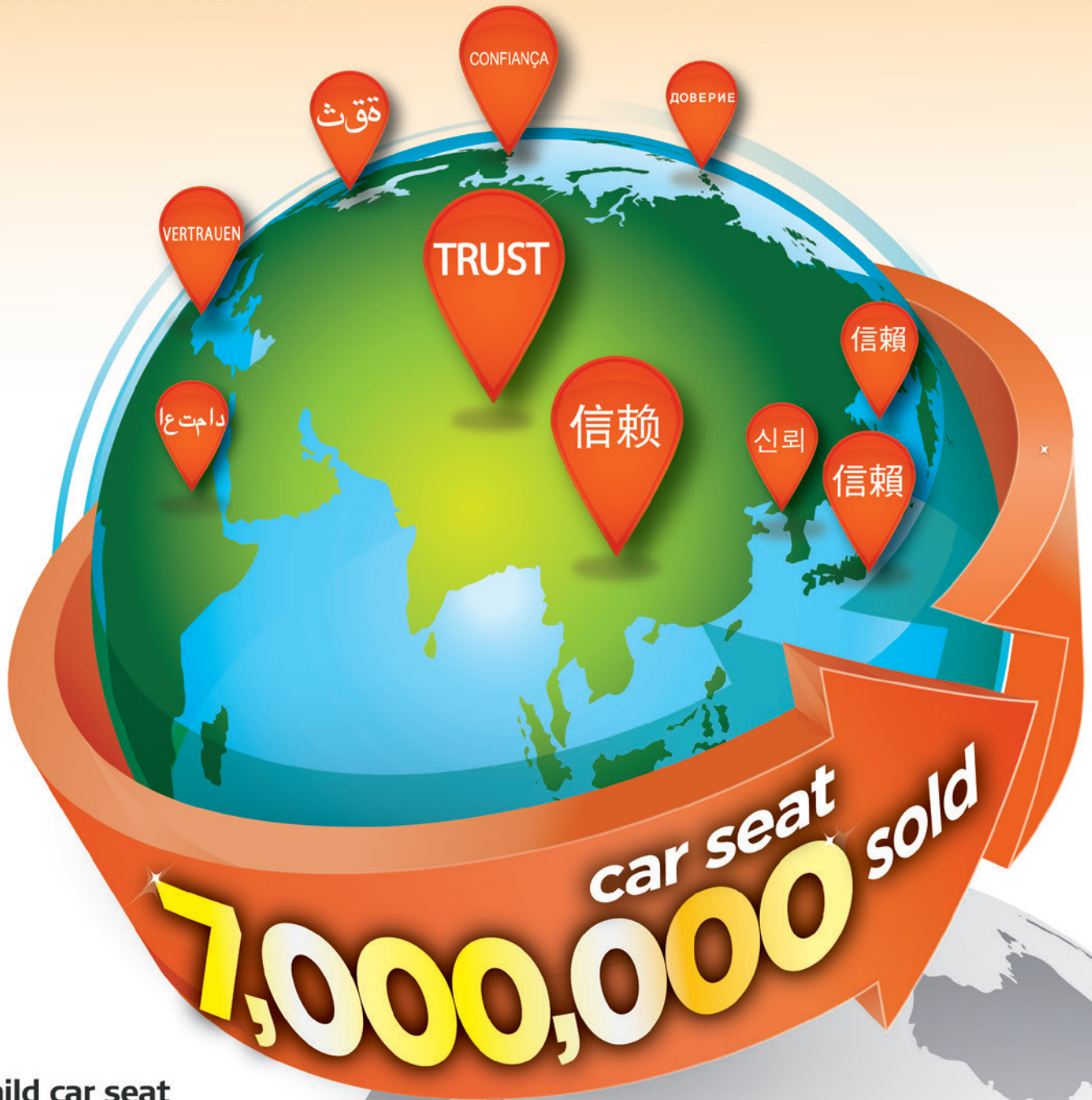
The needs of a mother’s skin will require more advanced support from a skin care range that is formulated with sophisticated ingredient technology to help to challenge more stubborn skin concerns and balance skin health. A mother’s skin concerns could be anything from pigmentation, sensitivity, breakouts or fine lines/ wrinkles. Key ingredients to target these would be of more concentration, active and of advanced technology which would not be as suitable for a baby/infant.

Regardless of any age, you should ensure that you select a skin care range that does not use any harmful ingredients such as SD alcohols, congesting mineral oils, artificial colours or fragrances.

3 MASK OF PREGNANCY (MELASMA), INCREASE PRODUCTION OF OIL DUE TO HORMONAL CHANGES AND INCREASE BREAKOUTS - WILL THESE CONDITIONS IMPROVE AFTER BIRTH? HOW CAN I TREAT THEM?

Unfortunately, as long as your hormones are surging either during or post pregnancy, this will continue to be a trigger for any or all of the skin concerns listed above. While you can’t control your hormones, you can prevent these conditions from becoming worse during pregnancy with help from professionals.

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Cradling 360
Isofix
0-4
years old



Coccoro
0-4
years old



Malgott
0-7
years old



Mamalon
0-7
years old



Joytrip
1-11
years old



Buon Junior
3-11
years old

Combi
子育てに、イノベーションを。





Photos courtesy of Sapphira Pay.

How I Had A Water Birth At Home

When 29-year-old Sapphira Pay was pregnant with her first child, she wanted a natural birth experience but ended up having to be induced.

When she was pregnant with her second child, a water birth at home was her obvious choice. “I wanted a natural birth experience - drug-free,

with little to no medical interventions and decided to do a water birth at the hospital. But in spite of all my preparations and intentions, I ended

up having to be induced.”

After 24 hours of contractions at home, she went to the hospital, only to find out that her cervix had dilated only 1-2 cm. She chose to be warded so she could relax to enable her labour to progress. But when her water bag burst, there was evidence of meconium. Her rest turned into distress, as the nurses and other personnel got frantic as they rushed her to the delivery suite. “I thought I was going to get a Caesarean section right away!”

Two Whole Days of Labour

At the delivery suite, she started out in the water tub, but because she was progressing so slowly, the doctor administered Pitocin, to hasten labor. It was delivered through an ‘IV lock’ (a catheter tube threaded into a vein in the hand, for feeding medication intravenously) which required that she get out of the water. The water birth was cancelled.

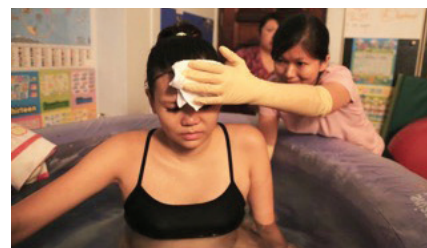
“The hospital environment made

me very nervous, because of all the interventions. There were so many things to worry about. Because of all this I believe my labor took even longer than necessary,” she shares. “A lot of things were restricted,” she said. To her relief, she ended up delivering naturally, but only after two whole days of labor in the hospital.

“When my doula de-briefed the birth with me, I found out about the option for home births, that we have a choice here in Singapore.” When she got pregnant with her second child, Shania, now 22 months old, a water birth at home was her obvious choice. **SARA ROGNSTAD** speaks to Sapphira about her home birth experience.

What did you do to prepare for your water birth?

I didn’t do much. I just invited a couple of my friends to come over and take pictures! I explained a little to my son, Shino, but he was too



Sapphira in the water tub, with her doula behind her.

young to really understand. At my obstetrician’s instructions I had to rent an oxygen tank and have it ready in case it is needed for the baby or me. He loaned me a Fetal Doppler to monitor the baby’s heart-rate, with a chart to interpret the results. All my pre-natal check-ups were done at the obstetrician’s clinic.

How was the labour experience?

I went into labour while at home. The feeling was different as compared to how I felt at the hospital). When the contractions became regular and intense, I called my doula and she came within an hour. I had two doulas. One took care of me, while the other set up the bathtub in the room. She filled the tub with water at the right temp (38 degrees Celsius). The other doula got me into the tub. With a home water birth, you can dress any way you want. I wore a sports bra.

And that was it! I just stayed in the tub. I could rest, eat, sleep, do whatever I wanted. When the contractions came, my doula would do what are called comfort measures, consisting of various kinds of massages. The tub was big enough, and soft enough that I could lie in any position I wanted,



Sapphira's husband, Steven, checking the baby's heart rate with a Fetal Doppler.

and still feel perfectly comfortable.

Having my friends and family there helped me with the process, to take my mind off the contractions. We hung out, talked and laughed. My son and husband were there, too. My son, Shino, kept trying to get into the tub!

How did you deal with your contractions?

When I was in the water, the intensity of the contractions was less than what I experienced when I was at the hospital. The water helped to relax me greatly. When I had to get out of the tub for the doulas to change the water, I could feel that excruciating 'pulling sensation' of the contractions, similar to how I felt during my first birth at the hospital.

But when I was in the water, I didn't feel much of this sensation. Also because of the Pitocin I took during my first birth, the contractions were so intense and came one after another, I couldn't

even breathe. I found myself struggling with the urge to fight the contractions and I just tensed up.

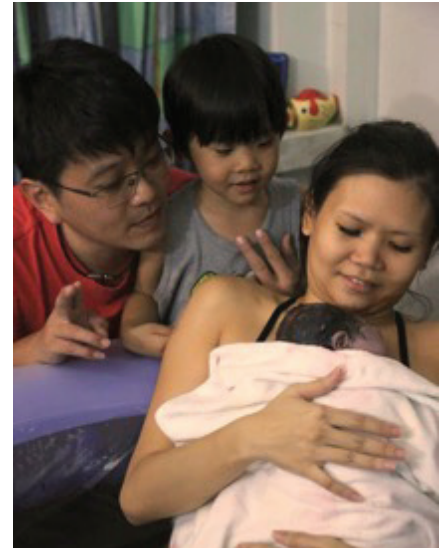
With this home birth, the contractions came in waves that were spaced apart, so I was better able to cope. When each contraction ended, I knew I could relax, let go for a little while and even nap. Being submerged in the chest-level water soothed me, unlike at the hospital where the tub was hard and had shallower water. With my home birth, I could breathe easily, and breathing is so important!

The doula would assess the rate of contractions to determine how fast I was progressing and update the obstetrician. He came around 5 pm to check on me. My dilations were at 4 cm so he expected I would deliver after dinner. He was right! After dinner around 7 pm, the contraction got more intense.

Welcome to the world Shania!

In a home birth, you go by how your body feels - when you get the urge to push, you know you're ready, and you just follow your instincts. I was the one who determined when to start. I told my doula, 'Okay I feel like pushing.' This was at 8 pm, while the obstetrician was still on his way. He arrived in time for Shania who came out within 30 minutes.

Immediately they placed newborn Shania on my chest, and we both rested for about 15 minutes. Later, I asked my husband, "If we have number three, do you want a home water birth? He said "yes."



Sapphira holding on to Shania, right after her birth. Sapphira's husband, Steven and her son, Shino, looks on.

Cost of water birth in Singapore

In Singapore, water birth is one of the several options available for mothers to give birth at home. Currently, there is one obstetrician-gynecologist in Singapore, Dr Lai Fon-Min, licensed to oversee home births. Sapphira's home water birth costs consisted of a flat \$5,000 for the obstetrician's fees, while the doulas' services were part of a \$2,000 package that included the use of the inflatable tub. The oxygen tank, which was unused, costs \$75 to rent.

Inspired to help other mothers enjoy a naturally-supported birth experience, Sapphira herself become a doula. She is registered at Thomson Medical Centre and National University Hospital. She can be contacted at 9029 9750.



Placing her newborn on her chest for skin-to-skin contact. Helping her are her doula (in pink), her obstetrician, Dr Lai Fon-Min (in grey) and her husband (in red).

Breastfeeding

A comprehensive e-guide for mothers

WITH LOVE

Ready, Latch, Go

Preparing for your
breastfeeding journey

Breastfeeding in Public

How a first time
mama did it

Pumping at Work

**MYTHS AND
MISCONCEPTIONS**

Q+A

WITH OUR EXPERTS





*“I felt completely
robbed
of my
self-esteem”*

31-year-old Lim Mei Hui was a social work graduate. Post-partum depression (PPD) was something she had studied. Yet when it hit her, she was as unprepared as the next mother. She opens up on her battle with PDD.

It All Began On A High

Immediately after my first birth, I experienced an immense high. I had a relatively quick, natural birth with no complications; no need for epidural; my baby was extremely good-looking. Many people commented how he looked like a Caucasian baby. I was breastfeeding exclusively and had no latching, supply nor mastitis issues. I would lie awake at night not being able to sleep, even when the baby was sleeping.

Soon however, the negative emotions began to wash over me. I became extremely stressed caring for the baby. His incessant cries were too much for me. They were like the constant admonishments of my failings as a mother. I tried using ear plugs, mufflers, closing the door – none of it worked.

Many times out of sheer tiredness, I just stared at my crying baby. I couldn't do a thing. And I started crying too. Some nights I even experienced sleep paralysis which was extremely shocking for me. I researched it and saw that stress and sleep deprivation were some contributors – a daily affair for me.

I cooped myself up in the house all day, convinced that I was nowhere near capable of getting out the house lugging a baby. I was determined to continue direct latching for fear of breast rejection from bottle feeding. I stopped going to church, and before I knew it, five months had passed before I finally stepped out of the house.

Completely Robbed

I felt completely robbed of my self-esteem and personhood. My

weight was especially depressing. I had also made the decision to be a stay-home mother to give the “best possible care” to my children, and I constantly bemoaned my lack of earning power. I enjoyed taking my time to eat, to bathe, to travel to the gym (the journey itself was therapeutic). Now, I could only eat foods that could be wolfed down quickly so that I could attend to the relentless demands of my children. Whatever happened to sipping my favourite bowl of hot soup?

I would be taking a pee, and the children would barge through the door. If it was locked, they’d threaten to break it down – and I’d threaten to break them if that happened. I would be bathing, and with soap in

my eyes, be told that “it’s time to feed the baby”. I can’t stand a messy house – and sometimes I can’t even find a space to stand. Exercise was the last thing on my mind, but the very thing I needed – and I couldn’t. Motherhood was tearing me down bit by bit.

I began fighting back. I became nasty. Phrases like “get out of my life” and “you’re killing me” were quickly picked up by the children, and when they repeated them, the feelings of inadequacy just got reinforced. I call this the “bad mother cycle”. You never get out of thinking you are a bad mother.

I also became hypersensitive. I chased my mother out of the house for “giving me a black face”. She helps to care for the children and I hate it that I can’t manage on my own. Yet I know that I am blessed with one of the most self-sacrificial mothers out there. I also know that I’ve been blessed with one of the best husbands in the world and an absolute hands-on dad.

He feeds the baby, changes diapers, prepares the food, does the dishes, washes the clothes, bathes the children, plays with them, reads to them, gives me massages, wakes up with me in the middle of the night, prepares the breast pump – I really couldn’t ask for more. Yet at times I find myself snapping at him, especially when he messes up every now and then.

My sharp tongue goes, “Just let me know you don’t wish to feed the baby/change the baby/bathe the children. You don’t have to screw it up on purpose just to make me do it

myself!” Sometimes I message my husband, “I wish I could just throw the baby down!” He offers to come back from work to help, but I refuse. He tries to comfort me over the phone or via messages, but his words have no impact. I constantly fear that I’m actually pushing him away, and possibly into another woman’s arms – but I still can’t help myself.

Before I became a stay-at-home mother, I used to work in a context where I saw parents get arrested for Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS), and would think to myself, “How could they do this to a child, their own child?” Oh how I empathise with them right now!

Picking Myself Up

It has almost been 6 years since staying home, and I have three children now. While I probably do function normally from day to day, PPD doesn’t really ever go away. It’s constantly there at the back of your mind, ever ready to rear its ugly head at the right trigger. At the same time, I’ve learnt to manage little pockets here and there.

Instead of having zero exercise due to the time constraints, I’ve picked up High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and can get a good workout in just half an hour at my lift landing. I begin to believe that the parenting design is for a child to have a mother and a father, and not two mothers; so I become less uptight about how my husband interacts with the children. These small victories along the way truly help in this journey of life – especially life with PPD.



Mei Hui, with her husband and her second-born. Photo courtesy of Lim Mei Hui.

LET'S TALK ABOUT POST-PARTUM DEPRESSION

PDD affects about 10-15 % of women after childbirth. It is a feeling of sadness, misery, loneliness, insecurity and incompetence usually felt by women after giving birth. Signs include:

- Loss of motivation
- Restlessness or irritability
- A lot of crying
- Eating beyond normal amount (either too small or too much)
- Feeling guilty or worthless
- Loss of interest in engaging in pleasurable activities
- Isolation

CAUSE

Although it is commonly believed that the mother's age and breastfeeding are linked to postnatal depression, the exact cause is unclear. Some women may be genetically more

vulnerable than others to postpartum depression, especially for those with past psychiatric history. Some studies have shown a relationship between postnatal depression and obstetric complications or complicated delivery. If not properly treated, it may indirectly have dire effects on an infant's growth and development.

SEEK HELP

Refrain from being alone and seek the company of close friends and family. Ask someone you trust to be by your side as much as possible.

Singapore Association of Mental Health Helplines

- Pregnancy Crisis Service: 6339 9770
- Postnatal Depression Group: 6836 0063

- Pertapis Centre for Women and Children: 6284 4707

Other helplines:

- Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE): 1800 774 5935 (Mon to Fri, 3pm to 9.30pm)
- KK Women's and Children's Hospital offers consultation and treatment for postnatal depression. Call 6294 4050



WHY POST-PARTUM CARE IS IMPORTANT

After birth, your body needs time to recuperate from the physical and mental stress. Proper recuperation lies in a holistic post-partum care.



RECUPERATING AFTER BIRTH

The physical strain of labour. Stress of caring for a newborn. Lack of sleep. Second-time or seasoned mothers know this well. But to a first-time mother, the above combinations can pack a powerful blow. Wu Zhao Ling gave birth to a baby boy late last year. While she did not receive any

post-partum recovery treatment for her first two children, she was starting to feel the strains and stress on her body, especially after going through three caesarean pregnancies. She wanted to have a proper and wholesome recovery. Through a recommendation, she discovered Madam Partum.

WHO IS MADAM PARTUM?

Madam Partum is part of Chien Chi Tow, a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) healthcare provider originally founded as a Martial Arts Institute in 1969. With close to 50 years of heritage and experience in TCM, Madam Partum was formed to cater to the needs of expectant and new mothers.

Adopting a holistic approach to pre and post-partum care, it offers Meridian Massage (*tui na*), and freshly packed herbal soups, teas and baths.

HOW DOES MERIDIAN MASSAGE HELP IN POST-PARTUM RECOVERY?

The delivery process can deplete your body of energy (*qi*) and blood. Stimulating certain acupressure points along your Meridian channels can help to improve blood circulation and rebalance your *qi*. Madam Partum's Post-Partum Massage Therapy is specially created for a post-partum full body recovery. It not only aids in womb recovery; reducing lochia and blood stasis, it also reduces wind and water retention, and boosts a healthy breastmilk supply.

Although she has a low threshold for pain, Zhao Ling went ahead and signed up for the Meridian Massages 6 weeks after her Caesarean section. The 30-year-old mother felt and saw the benefits for herself. It not only helped to

relieve her aches and soothe her nerves, it also reduced her tummy fat.

“What I like was how each massage was accustomed to my needs. My head felt really ‘heavy’ after giving birth for period of time. When I shared this with my therapist, she focused on my face, neck and head for that particular session. I felt so much lighter, more energetic and totally refreshed after. For my other sessions, I requested her to focus on my thighs, back, stomach and uterus area. To my surprise, my tummy became visibly smaller after several sessions.”

INTENSIVE TRAINING FOR THERAPISTS

Besides having 4 years of experience, therapists undergo 350 hours of Madam Partum's Meridian Massage training, which includes proper breast massage techniques by Lactation Consultants; to prevent engorgement and increase milk flow. All therapists are certified by the International Therapy

Examination Council or the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications.

Mother Charlene Wong, who gave birth 3 weeks ago via natural birth, can vouch for the professionalism and quality of the therapists. “She (therapist) was professional, attentive, friendly and knowledgeable in her field of work. She was able to pin-point my tight spots and soothe my muscles.” After several sessions, the 38-year-old mother felt less bloated, and her water retention was reduced. Her joint pains and lower back aches were also alleviated.

REGAIN YOUR HEALTH AND ENERGY



MADAM PARTUM
by CHIEN CHI TOW

Madam Partum offers pre and post-partum services.

Appointments can be made at any of their 12 outlets, or you can request to have it at your

home. For more information, visit madampartum.com or call 6293 3933.



HEADS UP MUMMIES!

Madam Partum will be participating at the SuperMom Baby Fair on 17 - 19 Feb 2017 at Marina Bay Sands. They will be offering a special post-partum package during the fair. Catch them at booth C09!



Maternity's Over, Back To Work

By Som Yew Ya

Having back-to-work jitters after your maternity leave? Here are pointers to help you get back to the grind.

Prepare yourself mentally

You may have a return-to-work date in mind beforehand. Assess the time you have from your maternity leave to your return-to-work date. Have you made the necessary childcare arrangements and preparations? Would you be comfortable with leaving your baby in someone's care by that time? Manage your expectations and feasibility of your choices with your caregiver and family. If you feel you need time to re-adjust back to work, speak to your employer about it. You can clarify your job role or suggest alternatives to make your adjusting smoother.

Timing

Allow your baby to adjust to a new routine before returning to work. Whether it is transiting into infant care, or familiarising your baby with another caregiver, do it gradually. For example, you can start off with half days at the infant care centre. Or be physically present when the other

caregiver is around to help you take care of your baby.

Several parents have specific 'tag-team' tactics with their spouses. For example, mummy can be the one who goes to work early, but returns earlier to pick baby up and daddy can be the one to drop baby off at the day care and head to work slightly later. If your job has the flexibility to enable you to work from home, arrange something with your employee. Mum and dad can alternate to take turns of looking after baby. This sort of arrangement may not seem like a drastic affair but if you add up the extra pockets of time spent with your little one, it will make a significant difference.

Gear Up

Stock up on supplies before you head back to work. Are you planning to breastfeed at work? Have you bought your breastfeeding pumps, storage bags and other nursing accessories? Do you require new work clothes? Or thinking of getting a compact monitor camera so that you view and check in on your baby real time? These are a few considerations.

Ease In

Don't expect to get into your work groove immediately. Take it at a comfortable pace and don't be overly ambitious. Instead of diving straight into a full-fledge hectic work week, pace yourself. For example, you can schedule your return date to be a

Wednesday or a week where there is a public holiday. Some mothers do a 3 to 4-day week for a month before resuming to a 5-day work week. This will help you ease in to work after a few months of break.

Going back to a full-working mode may come as a rude shock to you and your baby, as you now spend less time with each other. This transition also allows you to make any necessary tweaks in between along the way, so you can find what arrangement works best for you and your family.

Back-Up Plan

Even with a full routine and predictable schedule, there may be traffic jams, transport breakdowns or a walk-in client when you want to leave. Have a back-up plan ready in case something crops up at work. Ensure someone reliable is able to take your place for times when you are held up at work. It can be your parents, in-laws, maid or spouse. This will minimise your anxiety when something happens unexpectedly.

The decision to return to the workplace is a personal one and differs for every mum. For some, considering not to work is not a choice. Going back to work after maternity leave can be a breeze or an uphill trek. No matter what the circumstance, it's important to remind yourself of your motivation and intention – to allow your baby to grow up in the best environment possible.

The Super Vitamin For Your Baby's Brain



The first few years of a child's life are crucial for brain development. Besides DHA, AA, choline, taurine and lutein, another key nutrient that supports normal brain development is vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol).

A recent study conducted by researchers at Abbott revealed that the infant brain discriminates against synthetic vitamin E in favour of natural RRR-vitamin E (NVE). NVE was found to accumulate in parts of the brain associated with visual, memory and language development.

DID YOU KNOW THAT VITAMIN E EXISTS IN VARIOUS FORMS?

Each has a different potency or level of biological activity - in other words, they are absorbed and retained differently by the body. The type of vitamin E that occurs naturally in food is known as RRR-alpha-tocopherol, or NVE. It is more biologically active than the synthetic forms of vitamin E, which are typically found in fortified foods and supplements. It was found to be the predominant form of vitamin E in breast milk. Other foods rich in NVE are shown in the table on the next page.



EXAMPLES OF FOOD RICH IN NVE	
Nuts and Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Almonds ■ Hazelnuts ■ Peanuts ■ Sunflower seeds
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spinach ■ Broccoli ■ Kailan ■ Kangkong
Vegetable oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sunflower oil ■ Safflower oil ■ Soybean oil
Seafood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Salmon ■ Trout ■ Shrimps

On food packaging and labels, NVE is commonly listed as “RRR-alpha-tocopherol” or “d-alpha-tocopherol”. The synthetic forms are usually listed as “all-rac- α -tocopherol” or “dl-alpha-tocopherol”.

TIP FOR PARENTS

Select an age-appropriate diet that provides all the nutrients in the right amounts. NVE is found in a variety of natural foods and must be part of every individual's diet, particularly young children.

Dr. Matthew Kuchan, Senior Principal Research Scientist, Global Cognition Platform Lead, Center for Nutrition Learning and Memory, University of Illinois answers our questions on this super vitamin.

TNAP: When is a good age to start introducing vitamin E foods to my baby?

Brain development is most rapid and therefore most sensitive to a baby's

nutrition between mid-gestation and two years of age. According to the U.S. Institute of Medicine, the recommended dietary allowances for vitamin E for children are as follows:

- Birth to 6 months - 4 mg (6 IU)
- Infants 7-12 months - 5 mg (7.5 IU)
- Children 1-3 years - 6 mg (9 IU)
- Children 4-8 years - 7 mg (10.4 IU)
- Children 9-13 years - 11 mg (16.4 IU)

The values above refer to the natural form of vitamin E; a higher intake of synthetic vitamin E is needed to match these recommended amounts, since the synthetic forms (e.g. found in most supplements and fortified products) are less potent compared to natural vitamin E (NVE) found in food.

TNAP: For a baby who is just starting on solids, what vitamin E rich foods would you introduce?

To meet the daily recommended intake of NVE, a 1-year old child for example would need to consume 1.5 cups of boiled spinach or 2.5 cups of chopped, boiled broccoli in a day. In the local context, vegetables such as ‘kangkong’, ‘kailan’ and sweet potato leaves are good sources of vitamin E. These can be boiled and mashed with porridge, retaining the water used to boil the vegetables so that the nutrients will not be lost.

Plant-based oils such as sunflower or canola oil are also rich in NVE; using these oils in food preparation will help to meet the child's vitamin E requirement. For variety, you

can also add in egg yolk or seafood such as salmon which has a softer texture and can be easily chewed or swallowed – these contain NVE as well.

TNAP: Can my baby get an overdose of vitamin E?

Having a well-balanced age-appropriate diet that provides all the nutrients in the right amounts is important for children, regardless of age. You should always check with their pediatrician or a dietitian if they are concerned that their child is not consuming enough of or too much of vitamin E. The United States Department of Agriculture Food Composition Databases has a very comprehensive list of foods and their respective vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol) composition that you can check against.

TNAP: How does nutrition impact a child's brain development?

Nutrition serves as building blocks in a child's development and neural function. It is essential for growth and it supports normal brain development in infants. The study I led revealed that the infant brain discriminates against synthetic vitamin E in favour of RRR-alpha-tocopherol, which we call NVE. NVE is better absorbed by the body than synthetic vitamin E.

NVE is an antioxidant and plays an essential role in protecting DHA from damage by free radicals. DHA, an important building block for brain development, is particularly vulnerable to oxidative damage. We

have also found that NVE, lutein and DHA are found together in important areas of the infant brain. These areas are important for visual processing, memory and language.

TNAP: What is a common nutrition misconception when it comes to feeding a child?

A common misconception is that some children simply do not like foods that are good for them, like spinach and broccoli – which are rich in NVE. My children are now older, and as I think back, I believe the best approach in this situation is gentle persistence. Avoid making food dislikes an issue, because in my own experience children eventually begin to like these foods when gently and patiently reminded.

TNAP: What all parents should know about food or nutrition

I think one important thing for all parents to understand is that nutrition is foundational to health at every phase of life, and particularly important in the first few years of life, where children are rapidly developing and growing not just in the brain, but in all aspects. The brain continues to develop through the toddler years, into adolescence, and even into the teen years.

Nutrition serves as building blocks for the brain and these nutrients are found in what the baby or child is fed in the process. This leads me to my favourite topic which is that some building blocks are more interesting than others, such as NVE. In cases when nature selects a certain structure or nutrient out of



a pile, it's telling us something very interesting and exciting. I think that would be something new to parents.

In short, parents should be selective and persistent in the types of food they give their children, ensuring that their diets are well-balanced and age-appropriate.

TNAP: Why is taking NVE crucial during pregnancy?

Pregnant women should follow the same general dietary guidelines as

everyone else – try to eat a diet rich in leafy green vegetables, fruits and grains. The importance of practicing this sort of diet is enhanced during pregnancy as many key nutrients are absorbed by mom and then transported to the baby by the placenta. In the case of vitamin E, research has shown that the placenta more easily transports NVE to the fetus. Many green leafy vegetables and whole grains are good sources of NVE.

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I Care For Infant Care

By Charlotte Wong, Senior Manager of Kinderland Educare Services

When deciding which infant care centre is appropriate for your family, consider these 3 E's.

ENVIRONMENT

Parents are naturally concerned about their child's well-being and routine care during their day in infant care. You first need to be comfortable with the environment, checking if

it is clean, safe and homely for your infant. The classroom has to be age appropriate, highly functional and aesthetically appealing.

Things to consider include good ventilation, sufficient lighting,

spaciousness and cleanliness.

Furniture used such as sleeping cots should be safe for young infants.

Equipment used in the food-preparation area has to be in good working condition, including the sanitising of milk bottles and utensils.

The layout determines how much exploratory play infants are exposed to. It should provide infants with various opportunities to challenge them through what they see, touch and feel as this is what develops



their gross and fine motor skills. Such environments allow infants to safely explore their environment independently.

EDUCARERS AND EDUCATION

These two E's go hand-in-hand. Education cannot begin without a qualified and passion educator. It begins with a healthy, open relationship with parents.

What is the mode of communication between parents and the educators? What is the frequency of it? Once a week or more? Chat with the educators and understand their motivations for being an infant care

teacher. Their passion for children would exude through their actions and care for infants. Their personal values and perception of a baby also determines how your young ones are cared for.

Observe the educators and look at how they handle and take care of other infants in the centre. Do they talk to the babies as they are changing their diapers or feeding them?

Having 100 billion brain cells at birth, babies are born ready to learn. An infant care should have a schedule with stimulating activities to engage your child. They use their daily experiences to make sense of the world; from the sounds they hear to the cuddling they receive. These two-way interactions help to develop their brains as they make crucial neural connections. Even as your infant's diapers are being changed or having his milk, communication between educator and your infant provides immense language development.

Are your baby's senses stimulated during the day? Are there activities that engage the senses such as music and movement? Simple musical 'instruments' can be provided for children to make sounds and learn about rhythm. Research has proven that children who learn to play a musical instrument perform better in cognitive skills. At Kinderland infant centres, classical music is played when infants are napping and other music genres are played during activity time. Teachers sing interactive nursery rhymes in English and Chinese to help infants learn the languages.

Research has shown that an infant care in a preschool setting offers abundant opportunities for important cognitive development, through communication between adults and child conversational partners.

HOW YOU CAN PREPARE YOUR BABY FOR INFANT CARE

When preparing for infant care, it is good to reflect on the difference between the younger and older infants. Younger infants below 6 months need familiarity and would benefit from a familiar item from home. It will be even better if it was mum's t-shirt so that baby can "sense" the closeness of her presence.

Parents who are ready to trust educators with openness will be able to ease the child into the centre better. Communicate with your child's educators if you have concerns about their sleeping and eating patterns.

Older infants, who already start to recognise caregivers, may need their parents to explain the transition to them in an age-appropriate manner. Bringing them to the centre for an orientation and getting to know the educators will help alleviate fears and anxieties.

CHARLOTTE WONG is a Senior Manager with Kinderland Educare Services in Singapore. Her rich experience in education and training energises her passion for language development and metacognition - learning how to learn. She works closely with children, parents and teachers to communicate effectively by understanding themselves and others better.

Don't Ditch Flashcards Just Yet

By Selene Diong, Principal Instructor of Sparkanauts

Howard Gardner, an American developmental psychologist suggests that each individual has a distinct learning style. He categorised them into three main areas - visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

Using flashcards not only helps to develop and improve the connection of synapses in your child's developing brain, it also appeals to various learning styles. Here's how.

Visual learners

Visual learners are obvious beneficiaries of the flashcard

system. They enjoy looking and observing things; they have a preference for maps, pictures and diagrams. They enjoy reading and sitting through flashcard sessions.

Auditory learners

Auditory learners need to hear something out loud in order to absorb content. Children with an auditory preference will be receptive to knowledge presented to them when it is read out loud.

It is common to have auditory learners in our class who are not looking at the flashcards while they

are being presented. But, to the amazement of many parents, their child seems to have understood everything from the class even though they may not look like they are paying attention.

Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners need to move and touch things in order to learn. It is commonly misunderstood that kinaesthetic learners do not respond to flashcards and it is almost impossible for them to sit through a reading session.

Many young children fall under this learning group as their brains are not fully developed. Reading can be made interesting when combined with movements and games. So don't be disheartened or drop your flashcards yet. Here are activities to do at home that will appeal to your kinesthetic learner.

(A) MATCHING WORD CARDS TO PICTURE CARDS

Flash the picture and word cards to your child quickly. Lay out the picture cards and hand out a word card for your child to match them to the correct picture. It will be even



better if you can provide a real item for the children to match the picture with. When learning how to spell or when learning how to identify letters, children can learn to re-arrange letter cards as they look at the word on the flashcards.



(B) SING, MOVE AND CAST A SPELL

When teaching how to read and spell, make a song out of the word. Print the lyrics of the song, flash it and encourage your child to sing with you. Create alphabet cards for children to jump on as they learn how to spell. Many of our students overcame their



fear of reading words because the flashcards were used in such a manner in our classrooms.



(C) LET'S GO FISHING

Add some magnets to the back of your flashcards. Make a simple magnetic fishing rod. Encourage your child to read the cards with you. Ask them to 'fish' for the words you called out. This game is always a hit in our class!

(D) HOP ON

Reading flashcards can be made a meaningful experience when children begin to realise that the printed words on the flash cards have meanings. In the picture below, children are learning their verbs "come", "go" and "stop" as they read and move accordingly.



FLASHCARDS

can be dull and ineffective when used in an unappealing way. But when used properly, flash cards can appeal to children with different learning styles.

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