

Back To School And Redirection

Today is the first day back to school (already?!?), and it's really quiet around here. I guess my oldest two are my loudest two, and we have reduced the traffic in the house by 50% since half the kids are now at school during the day. Thank goodness for school; I'm enjoying myself already. So far, I've gotten two loads of laundry done – folded, put away and everything, and I have somehow also found the time today to put away most of the clutter that's been haunting our dining room table for the last week and a half. I even got to work on my e-book a little bit, and it's not even 1 o'clock! And, the kids at school are learning stuff, getting exercise, and socailizing with their friends; they're not vegged out in front of the tv or outside fighting in the wading pool. Everyone wins!

While the oldest 2 kids are in school, I also have time to focus on my toddler, Disney, while her baby brother is napping. Today, I got to sit on the floor and play puzzles with her; something we haven't done together in months, almost a year because of my pregnancy and c-section. And she was down for her nap by 12:30, which not only means some quality time together for me and baby Christopher, but also that my toddler should be to bed at a decent hour tonight. Win-win! While I was on the floor playing with my daughter, I was getting up to tend to the laundry and whatnot. My daughter was following me around the house, and this is where my day becomes challenging – trying to keep our clingy almost 2-year-old out of my husband's home office so he can work. The home office isn't a room where he could close the door and utilize the out-of-sight-out-of-mind tactic. The office is on the landing on our second floor, so if my toddler begins to head up the stairs or even *looks* up the stairs, she sees

her best friend, Daddy, and it's over. She tantrums until he holds her, and he can't get any work done. Today she got upstairs and in the clutches of Daddy, so when I chased her down, of course she was upset. But I used one of my favorite child-rearing techniques: redirection. I taught her how to clean the toothpaste off the kids' bathroom counter, which she happily did. We went downstairs for a popsicle, puzzles, and Barney, and all was forgotten. Wow. I had totally forgotten about the magic of the redirection technique because the last 2-year-old I had in the house was our "spirited" child, Samantha. Sammie was **never** re-directable. She has always been so strong-willed that it's literally impossible to re-direct the kid, let alone being able to trick her into helping around the house. To this day, she will fight for her cause, whatever it may be, until she gets what she wants or she passes out. And now that she's older (she's 4), the crying doesn't last as long, but she will remember what it is she wanted and bring it up throughout the day (or week or month) until she gets it. So I am actually *enjoying* Disney's terrible twos a little bit – it's so refreshing to have a kid who listens. I know, she's not yet 2 and things could get worse – so much worse. But I've been there, done that, and after what Sammie put us through, no wonder Disney seems like a breeze. And even if she does get completely crazy, soon she'll be old enough to go to school, and we'll start the terrible twos all over again with Christopher. After 3 tantruming girls in their terrible twos, I'm curious to see what a boy will be like. Probably no big deal, at least compared to Sammie ☐

Weird Pregnancy Symptoms

Since this is my fourth pregnancy, I've experienced a wide variety of the symptoms that go along with being "with child". It's amazing to me how every pregnancy is different, even when they are experienced by the same woman. Pregnancies are as different as the personalities of the children that result. Is it possible then, that a child's personality can actually be displayed through the symptoms of the mother's pregnancy? For example, my aunt told me that when she was pregnant with my cousin, she craved spicy food after not really liking it before. My cousin, the result of the spicy food pregnancy, is now 31 years old and has always been a fan of spicy food!

When I was pregnant with my oldest daughter, my husband would blend a huge glass of juice for me every morning with lots of fruits and veggies in it. My oldest daughter now prefers snacks of fruits and vegetables to junk food. I didn't really crave the fruits and veggies, so that's a different example, but it's still an illustration of how womb behavior may affect the child throughout life.

My second daughter was, for lack of a better word, crazy in the womb. She was the last thing I felt before I fell asleep at night, and the first thing I felt in the morning, and let's not forget all those middle of the night bathroom trips... she was kicking and rolling during those too. I would often joke that I didn't know if this baby ever sleeps. Once she was born, I got the answer: she doesn't ever sleep and never did apparently. It felt like she was tearing me apart from the inside out with her strong movements in the womb, and to this day, she is our strong-willed, "spirited" child.

My third daughter was very gentle as a fetus. She rarely moved – compared to her older sister at least – and when she did, it was always in one spot. As a toddler, she has a very

sweet, patient, and obedient demeanor. So, as for #4... so far she moves a lot. I don't want to jinx anything here, but her movements remind me of our second daughter – the spirited one. But I've also experienced some strange symptoms with this pregnancy that I haven't felt before. First, I've been having nightmares. It's common in pregnancy to have more vivid dreams, and I've experienced that, but lately I've had lots of nightmares, ones where I actually wake up too creeped out to go to the bathroom... Strange. And with this pregnancy, red fruit has been especially tasty. I don't crave it, but things like tomatoes, strawberries, and especially red grapes (I've always preferred green to red until now!) taste extra yummy to me. It's so weird to me how tastes can change during a pregnancy. I've never liked bologna and still don't, but during my first pregnancy, I liked it and ate it quite often.

There is probably some scientific research out there that speculates about how much a mother's pregnancy symptoms impact the resulting child, but rather than research it, I think I will just wait and see what my girls are like when they enter adulthood and we can sit down and read my pregnancy diaries together, compare their personalities with that of their womb behavior, and share some good laughs.

Spring is in the Air = BABIES!!!

CONGRATULATIONS to my sister in Illinois, who gave birth to a healthy 8 lb. 15 oz. baby boy today!!! I can't wait to see pictures of the little darling, and I will post them when I get them (HINT HINT – no, just kidding, I know you have much more important things to do right now than to worry about sending pictures) I just wish I could hold him! And Congratulations to Austin on becoming a big

brother - it's an important job buddy; I know you'll be a great one! Welcome, Ryan Timothy!

Other baby news - our kids' babysitter's cat had kittens the other day. Look how unbelievably cute they are:



See if you can count 'em - makes a good picture puzzle, doesn't it? There are 6 - the little orange one kinda blends in with the towel - he's unique!

My daughter's teacher had her baby, and my two cousins also had their babies, which means 3 of my grandmother's 4 expected great-grandchildren for this year are here already! I am the last one standing ☐

Seriously, I feel left out, being the only one left pregnant out of all the women I knew who were expecting. I am ecstatic that all the babies are healthy and thriving though - that is truly something to be thankful for! For the most part, I love being pregnant, though I have to say this one is the most difficult pregnancy yet in some ways. Also the easiest in some ways too, so it's not all bad... But my feet are killing me constantly... I feel like I can't stand for more than 10-15 minutes at a time, and with a toddler and 2 other little kids to care for, that is a

tough feeling to have. Plus I'm exhausted much of the time, and have terrible heartburn a lot... all this and 3 months to go, not to mention the fact that the weather is only getting nicer, then it will get really hot and then I'll just be miserable. I hate not having the energy or the desire to go outside to enjoy these nice days... it makes me feel guilty, especially because it means my toddler can't enjoy them with me. Is it mean for her to be couped up in the house with me on gorgeous days like today? She doesn't seem to mind though, and we do play together lots while I'm sitting down, so it can't be all bad... I just tell myself that in August I will have much more energy and time to enjoy the weather. It's hard to imagine now, but some of the fatigue and aches and pains will lift, I HOPE!

There's An Awful Lot You Can Tell About a Person By Their Shoes...

Where they're going. Where they've been. I've worn lots of shoes. I bet if I think about it real hard I could remember my first pair of shoes... — FORREST GUMP

The preceding quote comes to mind because Disney, our youngest-for-now, got her first pair of shoes yesterday! She loves them! She always asks to wear them, even if it's just for around the house. But she always ends up just wearing one somehow and losing the other, so I wonder what Forrest Gump would think of that? At first when she got them on, she just stood there, as if locked in cement. Her big sister Taylor helped her learn to walk in them — it was adorable. She was so patient with her without doing too much for her and giving in by picking her up. Finally, Disney learned to walk in her new shoes and loves them. Pretty soon she'll be running around in her new shoes with me waddling behind her trying to

keep up!

Seeing her “stuck” there when she thought she couldn’t walk reminded me of my other daughter Samantha, who is now almost 4. When Sammie was learning to walk, it was summertime, and she was wearing sandals, so she’d be walking, walking, then as soon as she hit the grass – STOP! And she’d be stuck there too, just like Disney was in her new shoes. It’s strange how learning to walk is such a huge new experience, yet I’ve never met anyone who remembers going through it... I think it’s much more fun being on the parent side, this time around, but then again, I can’t really name an experience that isn’t!

Toddler Talk

WHEW! I didn’t mean to take a weeklong blog hiatus, but due to the kids being on spring break, that’s what happened! We were SO busy, I haven’t really been in front of my computer... I hope this isn’t what summer break is going to be like! It was fun and all, but SO busy! During the week, we did have LOTS of fun, and we got to spend lots of family time together, which gave me time to put together the following translation list of Toddler Talk. Our youngest (until July, anyway!) is currently at one of the cutest ages there is: 17 months. She walks around (finally!) babbling about all kinds of stuff, and she answers almost every question with a definitive “no”. Sometimes she means it, sometimes she doesn’t. Here is a guide to help you communicate better with Disney or any 17 month old:

oove = move, you’re in MY way!

down = means up or down, just depends on where she is at the moment.

yum-yum-yum-yum = can sound like mom, mom, mom, mom – is usually used very loudly to “ask” for a food she wants.

no = self-explanatory. At this age, it’s used constantly.

DOP = STOP. Because she has 2 older sisters, this was one of her first words.

oovie = movie. Usually used to request a dvd in the car.

mama = actually means Grandma. She calls Mommy “Mom”.

gink = drink. I’m thirsty!

baa = bottle. I know, she should not be using these anymore... But it’s so hard to take them away when she loves them so much!

cookie? = give me a cookie or I will cry.

candy = see above. She learned this word around the Easter holiday.

cake you = thank you. She says this almost every time you give her something – it’s SO cute! I hope it doesn’t lead to her being spoiled...

ack = snack

ankey = blankie

mere = come here. She uses this to call the dogs, or she holds out her arms and says it when she wants to be picked up. A favorite sentence is “Mom mere.”

She says lots of things, and her vocabulary grows every day! These are just some of the cutest things right now... I love this age; the calm before the storm of the terrible two’s!

Finally, a Walking Baby!

She finally did it! Tonight was Disney's first serious attempt at walking! Well, she has tried before, but tonight she was doing it over and over, 5 steps or more at a time! I tried to get it on video, but as soon as I took out the camera, she got all distracted and started crawling toward the camera saying "cheese, cheese" – it was really cute, but I had to put the camera away and get back to walking! It's like she knew the deadline was nearing, because we have a Dr. appointment on Monday just because the Dr. wants to make sure she's walking – she was really surprised she wasn't walking at her 15 month appointment so she asked to see her again in a month to make sure... Now she has until Monday to practice, and her sisters are a big help with that! Since tomorrow is her 16 month birthday, I was wondering, how late is she? Beyond average, I know, but I'm curious about how late kids start walking... let me know if you know of any lazy late walkers – it's kind of like a poll, let's see the latest we can find, hope it's not Disney though ☐