

# Bright Start

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a light green long-sleeved shirt and a white headband, is leaning forward with her hands on a large blue ball. She has black and orange face paint on her face, including a large black eye shape and orange spots. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

ISSUE 1 APRIL 2008

When a  
**new  
baby  
arrives**

**Fun things** to do with your children

My baby's brain  
**does what?**

**A Parent's First Aid Kit**



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### FROM THE EDITOR

## Welcome to the first edition of Bright Start, Kidicorp's new publication.

CEO of Kidicorp, NZ's largest private early childhood provider, Wayne Wright says: "Bright Start has been launched to increase our sense of family amongst our teachers and to better connect us with our parents and their families. It is a way for us to tell everyone the great work our people do to help children love learning."

The magazine is named for favourable, intelligent and happy beginnings for children aged 0 to five. We will be a voice for our wonderful teachers – so that they can share their good ideas. We also want to provide parents with quality parenting ideas and practical ways to entertain, educate and have fun with pre-schoolers.

We welcome your ideas on topics you would like to know more about. Please email me at [t.ewing@kidicorp.co.nz](mailto:t.ewing@kidicorp.co.nz).

### A little about me...

I have a background in linguistics and teaching, and just recently completed a postgraduate diploma in Communication and Public Relations at AUT. As a mother of three young children, I am delighted to join Kidicorp and help develop a magazine that is all about improving the quality of children's care and education.

One of the most challenging times for parents is when a new baby arrives in the family. In our feature article on this topic, Valerie Davies looks at the issue of sibling rivalry and ways to help ease the transition of a new baby in the house for the eldest child.

My first son turned 23 months on the day his baby brother and sister were born. He wasn't too impressed. With three baby car seats wedged in a row on the back seat of the car, we had to put a piece of cardboard up between him and the newborns to stop him from scratching their faces.

It was a busy time trying to meet all their needs and there was always somebody on my lap, in my arms or on my hip. The trouble with laps, there is only room for two, one on each knee. It's the same with arms and hips.

When they were two and four years old, I increasingly noticed a difference in my children: the twins were hugely affectionate and demanding of my attention, whereas my eldest son rarely asked me for a cuddle when the twins were there.

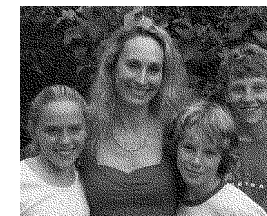
It was only then that I realised the impact his siblings had really had on him. After a talk with my husband, we decided to make things a bit clearer to the twins.

The next time my eldest took his place at my side at story time while the twins climbed boisterously onto my lap, I said: "Hey, what about your brother? He's got just as much right to a cuddle as you two!" And so, one of them moved over. You should have seen his smile...

Two weeks later, I had my confident, affectionate boy back, and ever since then the battle has raged for fairness and equality in the house!

I hope you enjoy this issue and getting to know more of our Kidicorp people through the magazine.

Tamsin Ewing - Editor.



*Tamsin*



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### Publishing Details

Editorial direction: Victoria Carter.  
Editor: Tamsin Ewing.  
Contributors: Valerie Davies, Maureen Hawke.  
Design: DEVA.  
Printer: Geon Limited.

FOR ADVERTISING AND ENQUIRIES,  
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Bright Start is published by Kidicorp Ltd.  
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Kidicorp is New Zealand's largest private early childhood provider. Over 8,000 children are enrolled annually in Kidicorp centres around New Zealand.

# Shorts

## TOP PARENTING TIP

### Focusing on Positives

One of the golden rules of parenting is to say YES as often as possible and NO only when it's really necessary. Try to find ways to show children what they *can* do in a situation, before you tell them what they can't do. The child then feels cooperative, and knows that when he or she does hear NO, it's because it really matters.

#### A TRUE STORY:

An uncle tells two under-fives not to swing on the hammock on the verandah.

To soften the blow he says:

"D'you know why?" Meaning to tell them the hooks were loose and they could be flung out and hurt themselves, he was taken aback by their answer:

"Because it's fun?"

Their answer was based on a childhood of constantly hearing the word 'NO'.



### VARIETY ARTSPACE

If you have a new baby in the family, are looking for a gift for that 'hard-to-buy' person, or want to create unique and personal gifts for family members using your own artwork or photos, take a look at a great new idea:

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### THE RULES OF PARENTING

By Richard Templar, 2008

If you think kids should come with an instruction manual, Richard Templar's *The Rules of Parenting* may just give us one! The 100 wise, witty and practical rules covered in this book put parenting in perspective and are more like a list of simple guiding principles that you can adapt to suit your individual child than hard and fast rules.

Templar says: "The Rules of Parenting aren't intended to be a revelation – they are a reminder. Many are common sense, but it's easy to lose sight of them when you are dealing with a two-year-old having a tantrum or a teenager who thinks the world and everything in it exists solely for their benefit."

The book begins with the Rules for Staying Sane and subsequent sections include the Attitude Rules, the Discipline Rules, the Sibling Rules, the School Rules, the Teenage Rules, the Crisis Rules, going all the way up to the Grown-up Rules. This book makes the tough job of parenting – for which none of us get training – seem a little less bewildering. At the end of the day, there is not a parent (or grandparent) in the world that wouldn't benefit from a gentle reminder every now and again as to how to remain sane, keep a sense of humour and be a great parent.

239 pages, RRP \$30.00  
Penguin Group (NZ)

## BRIGHT START GIVEAWAYS

### WIPE CLEAN, FARM and WIPE CLEAN, COLOURS AND SHAPES

By Dorling Kindersley, 2008.

Have hands-on fun helping your toddler learn about life on the farm or colours and shapes with these two no-mess, wipe-clean book and pen sets.

With lots of activities and fun things to find together, your toddler will love learning using these interactive board books. Read them together and help them sort the shapes; they can trace, match colours and even join the dots, then wipe it clean and try again!

The chunky pen, wipe-clean pages, and special slate mean practice makes perfect. Plus, there are special pages for children to draw whatever they like! 24 pages, RRP \$24.00 each, Penguin Group (NZ).

We have three copies each of *Farm* and *Colours and Shapes* to give away in April. Tell us which one you'd prefer and send a stamped addressed envelope to: **Tamsin Ewing, Bright Start, PO Box 276 177, Manukau City, 2104.**



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# When a new

# baby arrives

**How to help your siblings cope.** By Valerie Davies.

**The arrival of a second baby changes family life almost as much as the first.**

It's a lot harder to pop two babies in the car with all their paraphernalia, and suddenly you feel grounded as well as twice as busy...

But if life changes for the parents with the arrival of a new baby, it can be literally life-shattering for the existing child.

It's hard for parents to imagine the emotional impact of this experience on a toddler, or even an older child.

Unless this stage is handled carefully, it can have a life-long impact on the oldest child, leading to jealousy, eternal squabbling and a sense of inferiority which can manifest in a dozen different ways - from negative attention-seeking as a toddler to rebelliousness that can stretch into adulthood.

If the second baby is especially demanding, for example if they are sick or have special needs -or even if they turn out to be twins! - it just accentuates the anxiety and sense of displacement in the first child.

**And it doesn't have to happen!**

There are ways to make it easier for the eldest. Watching a little vignette of family life reminded me of this...

It was the sort of scene you see on every beach every summer - mother and grannie sitting on a rug under the trees by the beach.

A toddler was taking a few uncertain steps towards the sand, and another child - not far off a toddler himself, perhaps, eighteen months older - stood on the edge of the rug.

What made this different was that suddenly the older child turned to his mother and put his arms fiercely around her neck.

"Stop it," she cried, "you're hurting me." Obediently, he let go, and circled around the other side, and flung his arms around her again, hugging her determinedly.

"Let go," she almost shouted this time. "I didn't bring you to the beach for you to hang around my neck."

I walked on saddened by the little vignette, which spoke volumes. The little boy loved his mother as wholeheartedly as every child, and for some reason he took this opportunity, when he felt she was relaxed and when she was within his reach, to show her how much he loved her. Probably, like most mothers, when she had her second child, the first suddenly seemed huge and mature compared with the tiny newborn.

More often than we like to think, mothers unconsciously withdraw from this big child because they feel the baby needs them more. Even if their mothers don't withdraw, most eldest children feel they've slipped back into second place.

So often at this critical stage for a tired mother with a new baby and toddler, she loses her patience with the toddler for the first time, and in a hundred subtle ways he notices he doesn't come first any more.

Some people would say, he has to learn. But an old cartoon illustrates just how hard that lesson is, even for an adult.

Picture a husband, relaxing in his armchair and in comes his wife. "I am going to have

a "new husband", she tells him. "I haven't stopped loving you. I love you as much as ever, but wouldn't it be lovely to have another husband!"

If you can imagine the hurt and dismay of the husband, you can begin to understand just a little of the pain the eldest child feels, at a very vulnerable stage of his life when he's still emotionally dependent on his mother.

**SEEDS OF SIBLING RIVALRY**

One of the most difficult things about it is that he's still very much a baby himself. Too often, he's no longer allowed to be a baby and this causes great resentment and jealousy when he feels like one, sees the baby is allowed to be babyish, and he isn't.

The seeds of sibling rivalry are sewn very early and, once sewn, are almost impossible to eradicate. Sadly, this makes the situation worse for the hurting eldest child. When he shows his feelings, which is perfectly natural, he is often punished for them and this drives him deeper into his pain. Being angry with a child for biting his baby sister or hitting his baby brother does not solve the problem, it exaggerates it.

**ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS**

Better to acknowledge his feelings by asking "Are you angry with the baby?" Better still, "Are you angry with mummy for having the baby?"

Whatever his answer, whether he acknowledges or denies his feelings, comfort him, because he doesn't enjoy feeling so bad that he wants to hurt his sibling. And while he's being cuddled,

and told that you do understand, also add, with no anger or judgment, that because he's such a good boy, he knows it's not okay to hurt the baby.

I sometimes think the words "I understand" are the most comforting ones in our whole language, and your child certainly needs to know that you understand at this critical time in his life.

Better still, try to avoid the situation altogether by trying some of the steps in the checklist opposite.

Remember, even adults like to be babied and cherished when they're feeling vulnerable, and your toddler will certainly still feel like a baby when he's under stress.

If his toilet training regresses, don't worry, it's part of the stress he's under, and if you make no comment, but gently support him in this, his hour of need, he'll take the next steps on his life's journey feeling loved and supported. And when he flings his arms around your neck at odd moments, it won't hurt you if you relax into his love and cuddle him back. These moments are precious.



## Pets

There's another casualty of developing families, but this one is at the arrival of the first child.

If your dog, cat, parrot or other domestic pet has been your surrogate child, they are going to have exactly the same feelings of hurt, anger, jealousy and finally depression that the eldest child has when the second arrives.

There's nothing sadder than to see a previously doted-on dog hanging anxiously around, conscious he or she has been displaced, and desperate for some time and love from his previously doting owners.

Try to remember to give your pet his or her old treats, and some special time and loving, even though you are stretched and challenged by the biggest thing in both your lives – the new baby. Let your pets know and feel that they are still loved and valued.



## Checklist

- ✓ Ask all your family and friends, when they first visit you and see the new baby, to bring a little toy for the first child, who needs it so much more than the new baby.
- ✓ Ask them to greet the child first, before they peer into the cot, and to make a great fuss of him as well as of the baby.
- ✓ Try to include your toddler in everything you do with the new baby. Give him a doll to feed and bath and change when you are busy with all these things.
- ✓ Try to keep your toddler's routine as unchanged as possible, and while he's napping, give the new baby your undivided attention. Don't forget to give the toddler his regular bouts of undivided attention, which he will crave for now that he has to start sharing his parents with someone else.
- ✓ When baby gets to the crawling stage, understand how trying it is for the eldest, having his toys snatched or invaded. Sharing is a hard word to learn when you're defending your territory. (This was the stage I used a playpen – to put the older child and her toys in, out of the way of the crawler.)
- ✓ Above all, be conscious of your own feelings.
- ✓ Notice if you have switched off to your eldest child, and use your imagination to put yourself in his or her place. Remember, we all like to be 'babied' when we feel vulnerable.

All research shows that animals have the same feelings that humans do, and not to acknowledge these feelings means that we have simply used the animals for our own emotional purpose, unless we honour and respect their feelings and the unalterable love and devotion they give us.

If we really care about our pet, he or she should remain our "first child" and continue to be joyfully included in our family life.

Odd Bodkin's *Little Proto's T.Rex Adventure* is a CD/story tape that deals wonderfully with this subject. It is the tale of a young dinosaur who learns that, despite his fears when his new baby sister is born, there really is enough love to go around.

Odds Bodkin is a children's author and musical storyteller who writes beautiful songs and plays a 12 string guitar. Themes in his work are jealousy, compassion, friendship, courage and resourcefulness.

Available online from:  
[www.kiddomusic.com/BodkinOdds.html](http://www.kiddomusic.com/BodkinOdds.html)

## OUR People

**Paula-Mae, 23, has been teaching for six years and has a 14-month-old daughter. She is currently the centre manager at Natural Learning in New Lynn.**

*Q. When the children seem rowdy what do you find settles them?*

A. Sometimes, when things are getting rowdy, I will just sit down with the kids and talk – children love to communicate and the most rewarding thing for them is to be listened to! It is really important to share your own experiences with them and engage authentically with them.

*Q. Do you have any advice for parents enrolling their children at a centre?*

A. I manage my centres with a lot of compassion. I see parents come in to drop their children off and they look so strong. But I know how hard it feels inside and a piece of me is crying for them.

I think the best piece of advice I can give parents to help their child settle in happily is to encourage them to make visits to the centre beforehand, so that the children can spend a little time with the teachers while their families are with them. We do see parents that don't feel this is necessary and that's their choice. It's true that many kids adapt smoothly. But some children don't cope so well. Parents can rest assured, though, that our teachers do their best to nurture and comfort all the children in our care.

*Q. Can you share anything inspiring that you've developed or supported at your centre?*

A. One of the most important areas for any centre is around communication. Sometimes we might have a communication breakdown and I will get a teacher who is from that culture, say, a Samoan, to help address the issue, as someone who understands the cultural aspects is more likely not only to be heard, but also to be the person who may initiate a great, future parent/teacher partnership...and that is important to me.

Getting to know the children's families is really important. In some centres it's not enough just to know who the parents are; you might need to get to know five different members of the family, who all come in to pick up the child at different times, and create a relationship with them all!

Another example of a successful strategy involves coping with how some children don't speak English at home. I'm really open for one of our teachers to make these children feel comfortable by speaking to them in their language, with the expectation that everything is then repeated in English. This means other people around them understand what is going on and, additionally, get the opportunity to become familiar with other languages. Most importantly, this helps the child gradually learn the English language.



*Q. What is the most common question parents ask you?*

A. Parents often ask: "Are you telling me the truth?"

We believe in telling parents everything they may like to know about how their child's day went – whether or not they were settled or if they ate three bowls of fish pie or vegetables at lunchtime. Of course, sometimes parents can't believe it since they don't do this at home.



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# My baby's brain **does what?**

BY MAUREEN HAWKE

**At birth your baby has an estimated 100 billion brain cells. They've already made 50 trillion (50 million million) connections with other brain cells and parts of the baby's body!**

In the first month of life, as your baby's senses react to its world, new synaptic connections are made at the rate of 3 billion per second! The 100 billion brain cells or neurons can each develop up to 20,000 branches or dendrites. They store information. They talk with other cells. And the neurons are sending messages along major 'motorways' called axons. Your baby's messages are hurtling along these 'brain motorways' at up to 100 metres per second!

A synapse is the electrical/chemical contact point – between the dendrites and nerve cells. There is a tenfold expansion in synaptic connections between two and four months of age. If you and your baby don't make the most of this time to develop connections, the opportunity is lost.

Now is your chance to develop not only brain motorways but start super highways – making an immense difference in your child's later life. By eight months, researchers now estimate 1000 trillion connections will be made in your baby's brain. If you're not



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stimulating your baby correctly, the new connection rate will then start to drop.

Some say half the new connections will die off by the time your child is ten. The more experiences – and more varied experiences – your baby has the more the dendrites will grow and be able to make better and faster connections.

By three years, your child's brain will be twice as active as your adult one. So encouraging your young child to do certain activities will deliver a lot of benefits now and later.

And, best of all, the activities needed to make the most of this awesome brain development needn't take any extra time, while the discoveries you make about diet and health, and about baby's spine and muscles will make your child's life a lot easier.

In following editions of *Bright Start*, Maureen Hawke will be talking about the many simple activities you can do to help your child's brain develop to its maximum potential.

## Footnote

New Zealand born Maureen Hawke has been promoting child development for the past 25 years and has presented papers on this subject at international conferences. A registered nurse, mother of three and grandmother of one, she is now a director in Australian non profit organization Learning Connections Centre.

For more information on how to make the most of your baby's brainpower, visit <http://www.brightstart.com.au>

## Why tummy time is very important

It is on the tummy that baby very quickly learns to move. To make it easier, keep the feet bare. Let baby learn that it has feet and they help you get along.

As your baby digs toes into a surface at a few days of age it raises its bottom and wriggles forward. This push off reflex can be stimulated by putting your fingers on the soles of baby's feet – which triggers the leg to straighten. And the body to wriggle forward!

At around 6 months old, baby will lose this push off reflex, so it is important baby is tummy moving by then.

The more your baby moves, the more it learns about its environment. Through seeing, touching, tasting and hearing sounds from different perspectives, all the senses are stimulated.

Forward tummy movement is the first and most important step in baby's development. It lays the foundations for the more refined movements baby will soon need, like creeping on hands and knees and walking and talking.

Movement activities build myelin and interconnections within the brain. These early experiences are laying down the building blocks for later learning.

(©From the 'Let Your Child Shine' Bright Start' three-part online child development programme available only at [www.brightstart.com.au](http://www.brightstart.com.au)!)

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# Fun things to do with your children

There are lots of fun and economical things you can do with a houseful of children. Here are some ideas for creative play for your kids so that you can get your jobs done!



## IMAGINARY PLAY

Collect a range of boxes, different shapes and sizes, dress-up clothes, scarves, hats and so on. Pull them out every now and again for children to play make-believe and pretend. Put them away after a few hours play so that it is a novelty when they come out again. When children role-play it is a way for them to develop an understanding of their environment and to make sense of their world. It is important for children to have positive experiences in order to develop good self-esteem. Role play is one way of doing this. Encourage your child and play along with the character they are pretending to be.

## SOUNDS

Get children to tape familiar sounds and then make or find pictures to match the sound. Let children tape themselves on a tape. Tape a range of different sounds, like keys, an egg beater, scissors cutting paper, filling a glass with water and get children to guess the object or activity.

## SELF POSTER

Let children have a look at themselves in a full-length mirror and then draw a picture of themselves. You could use a piece of newspaper opened out and then cut out pictures from a magazine, collage, fabric pieces and so on to fill in the body.

## FINGER PAINT

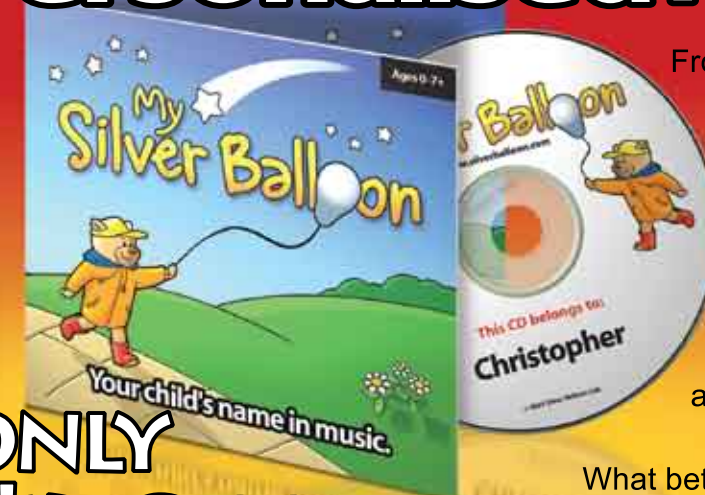
This recipe makes enough for one child: Take 12 tablespoons of cornflour and mix with enough cold water to form a stiff paste. Add about 2 cups of water and stir over a low heat until the mixture thickens. Or use boiling water and pour into the stiff paste of cornflour and cold water, stirring until the mixture thickens and clears. Colour with food colourings. When the mixture is cold, for 10 minutes quiet, pop your child and the bowl of finger paint in the empty bath or shower. When they have finished you can wash it all away!

## Make a dream catcher

Go for a walk with your child in a park and look for a stick that might make a good dream catcher. Look for bark, feathers, seed pods, anything that might be interesting to attach to the stick. When you get home, or on another day, get your child to tie feathers, wool, and some shells - whatever interests them - onto the stick.



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# A Parent's **First Aid Kit**

## HOW TO TEND TO YOUR CHILD'S MINOR INJURIES

Bumps, bruises and scrapes on a child are often a natural result of growing up and exploring limits. Luckily most of these injuries are minor. Here is a guide to treating the most common accidents.

### Bumps and Bruises

Contusions (the medical term for bruises) are the outward signs of injury beneath the skin surface. A fall or blow may break tiny blood vessels; the vessels then ooze blood into surrounding tissues causing swelling and discolouration.

A blow to the head is different because it results in a large swollen bump. Skin fits snugly around the skull and because there is little tissue to absorb the leaking blood the fluids empty outwards. These 'egg-size lumps' don't indicate the

severity of the bruise, just that the outer tissues have absorbed much of the shock, rather than the deeper tissue where an impact might hurt the brain.

### What to do?

Press a cold pack gently onto the bruised area. Cold constricts the damaged blood vessels and minimises swelling. Depending on the severity of the bump, this could take five minutes to an hour. Keep a damp face cloth in the freezer for such emergencies or use crushed ice but make sure it is well wrapped in a towel.

If your child won't let you put the cold cloth on, explain that it will stop the bruise getting bigger and ease the pain. If they still refuse, don't worry, it will just slow down the healing.

### Warning signs

Beware of concussion. Call your Doctor if your child loses consciousness for even a moment. Vomiting, sleepiness and unequal pupil sizes are other danger signs.

### Cuts and Scrapes

The most common injuries to the skin are lacerations (cuts) and abrasions (scrapes). If not properly looked after they can get infected.

### What to do?

The first step is to stop the bleeding. Press gently on the cut with a sterile pad, clean paper towel or even a clean hand. The idea is to apply pressure continuously (up to five minutes) so that the broken blood vessels constrict and the blood can clot. Next wash the cut in warm water and antiseptic if you have some. The dirtier the cut the longer it should be soaked.

## A QUICK GUIDE TO TREATING MINOR INJURIES

### Bumps and Bruises:

Press cold pack gently on the bump.

### Cuts and scrapes:

Press gently onto the cut to stop bleeding. Wash thoroughly with warm water.

### Nosebleeds:

Apply pressure by pinching nostrils closed and pressing inward just above the nostrils for five minutes.

### Splinters:

Soak affected skin in warm water until the splinter comes out. If it doesn't, use tweezers, a piece of sellotape or, if necessary, a sterilised needle.

### Burns:

Immerse first- and second-degree burns in cold water until the pain is relieved. This can be longer than 5-10 minutes. The longer the injury is left in water the more relief may be found. For third-degree burns see a doctor immediately.

### Definitions:

**First-degree burn** = damage extends into the dermis, the dense inner layer of skin beneath the outer layer of skin, or epidermis

**Second-degree burn** = as above, with blistering

**Third-degree burn** = destruction of the epidermis and dermis, extending into the deeper tissue with loss of pain receptors.



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