

Welcome
Editor's note



I

have a confession: Before I started working on this issue, I knew very little about parenting resources in Orange County. And that's because I'm new to the area, and I'm not a parent (yet!).

One reason I love writing is its ability to take you places, and this special issue's subject took me to people and places I was not expecting—yes, pun intended.

As I interviewed people, I learned something you likely already know: Orange County is an exciting, innovative, and downright fantastic place to raise kids. Sure, we've got year-round sunshine and Disneyland. But I'm most impressed with the people. There's a passionate subset of women here—many of them mothers themselves—whose work improves and enriches the child-rearing journey. They were generous with advice and ideas, and a genuine pleasure to learn from.

Among the highlights: Dr. Allyson Brooks “went there” with honest answers to questions about postpartum health (Page 20), while Bri Moysa, an interior stylist, introduced me to removable wallpaper for nursery decor (Page 18), and it's stunning. I spent more time than I'd like to acknowledge browsing the designs. I laughed reading food blogger Anita Lau's op-ed on diversifying her son's culinary palate (Page 22). As a former picky eater (sorry, Mom), I agree with Lau's advice on gently encouraging new meal options.

O.C. has much to offer on the chaotic, entertaining journey of parenthood. Whether you're preparing for your first child or sending your third to elementary school, my hope is that these pages answer your questions, equip you with useful knowledge, and inspire you with new ideas. I wish you joy and extra sleep. ◉



Aliese Muhonen
Editor

Aliese Muhonen

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

FirstWord
Baby Talk



You can find a complete breakdown of which fish are safest plus other nutritional information at [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov).

Vitamin Sea

You don't have to give up fish and seafood while you're pregnant; you just need to be cautious with your choices.

WRITTEN BY ALIESE MUHONEN

GOOD NEWS to anyone who missed chowing down on fish tacos during pregnancy: You can eat them. In fact, you're likely not eating enough fish. For years, pregnant women and nursing mothers have avoided seafood out of concern that mercury levels in the fish could harm their babies.

However, the FDA released updated guidelines in July 2019, recommending that pregnant women eat a minimum two to three servings of low-mercury fish per week. You've heard that fish is brain food: Apparently its omega-3 fatty acids and high levels of vitamins D and B12 can be helpful in fetal brain and nervous system development. For mothers, a healthy dose of omega-3s can also lower the risk of preeclampsia and postpartum depression.

It's time to take advantage of the fresh and delicious seafood here. Among the recommended low-mercury fish are salmon, shrimp, cod, tilapia, and canned light tuna. Avoid larger fish like swordfish and orange roughy, whose size correlates with higher mercury levels, as well as raw fish. A complete chart of safe seafood choices and more information can be found on the FDA website. ◉

Pot Predicament

Babies and toddlers will put anything in their mouths. In recent years, emergency rooms and poison control centers have noticed a national increase in children accidentally ingesting edibles. As reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, in California alone the number of calls to poison control centers concerning child-related marijuana emergencies rose 69 percent in three years: from 347 in 2015—the year before pot was legalized in the state—to 588 in 2017. According to the *Times*, almost half the calls in 2017 were for children 5 and younger. Though the number of calls leveled off in 2018, there's still cause for concern.

Edibles are especially beguiling because they're often the same treats kids enjoy: brownies, cookies, and candies. They're also especially dangerous. According to the nonprofit Center on Addiction, the higher amount of THC in edibles can lead to lethargy, slurred speech, respiratory depression, and even seizures in pediatric patients. If you have marijuana edibles in your home, store them as you would medication. Make sure they are contained in opaque packaging and kept out of children's reach. ◉

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK

Inclusive Movies

A number of theaters nationwide have added “sensory friendly” showings of movies to their lineups. AMC theaters has featured the showings since 2007, and Regal Cinemas started “My Way Matinee” in 2018. Geared toward viewers on the autism spectrum, the films are shown in theaters with house lights slightly turned up and sound slightly turned down to make for a more comfortable experience for sensitive attendees.

During the showings, audience members can walk around, dance, shout, cry, or sing without judgment. It’s also an inclusive environment for viewers who have a hard time sitting still, or who want to make noise while watching their favorite films. In Orange County, participating AMC theaters are in Orange and Tustin and offer showings on the second and fourth Saturdays (family-friendly films) and Tuesday evenings (mature audiences) of every month. ◉

Momming 101

Need more information on the baby experience? Thankfully there are many organizations to support and educate you along the way, from prenatal to postpartum. The best part? Meeting other parents in the same boat.

Check with your **hospital or health care center** for recommendations first, as many offer free classes. In addition, here is a sampling of O.C. companies that offer parental education classes and postpartum community:

At the **New Mom School** in Newport Beach, mothers attend 10-week educational classes that are grouped by the age of their babies, from pregnancy to toddlerhood. There’s even a class for second-time moms. thenewmomschool.com

Attendees of the **Mama Bear Club** learn how to navigate the complexities of life with a newborn in six-week classes, offered virtually online. They can also attend free social events and playdates with other members throughout Orange

County. mamabearclub.com

Formerly known as “Granola Babies,” **Giselle Baunet’s** self-named company offers a variety of prenatal and postnatal classes as well as play groups, all with a holistic approach in mind. Classes are taught in Mission Viejo, Newport Beach, and privately at clients’ homes. gisellebaunet.com

All of the above companies also work with pediatricians, therapists, social workers, and mental health professionals. ◉

There’s an App for That

Behold, the most helpful apps we could find for new moms. All named apps are offered on iOS and Android.

There’s a lot to keep of track of for a newborn—feeding and changing times, sleep routine, doctors’ visits—and this app makes it easy. With **Baby Connect**, Family members and nannies can add information and updates, and all the data is backed up to a website. \$4.99

It’s never been easier to coordinate multiple schedules than with this award-winning shareable calendar app, **Cozi Family Organizer**. Family members can access joint and individual calendars, create and add to shopping lists, and store recipes in one place. *Free*

Fit Mummy Project, created by Australian postnatal fitness expert Kimmy Smith, offers 35 short but powerful strength, cardio, and yoga workout videos designed for new mothers. Unlike other fitness apps, the price is a one-time cost and doesn’t require a subscription. \$9.99

Raising children can be lonely. **Peanut** is touted as “Tinder” for moms seeking friendship and playdates. This social networking app helps moms swipe right to meet other local mothers with similar interests. *Free* ◉



Raising the Barre

Sonya Kwon is a boss in every area of her life: as a business owner of the elite dance studio PAVE School of the Arts in Aliso Viejo, senior managing director of consulting firm Ankara, and mother of two daughters.

WRITTEN BY ALIESE MUHONEN

Best part of your work?

» I love working with and challenging people at both of my jobs, and I manage teams that are composed of a lot of talented individuals. I love creating and helping to create the paths for women in my industry.

Best time-savers?

» Having flexibility and finding a schedule that helps me to be productive is key. I don't work typical hours. I find pockets of time in the day when I'm by myself—super early in the morning or in the evening—that are my most productive times.

I also think it's really important to have a strong support network. All of my staff at the studio pretty much manages my life and

my kids. Then my parents live two blocks away!

Describe your style.

» For work, I love putting on a good suit, a classic with a little bit of an edge to it. My everyday would probably be a Ted Baker suit.

For the dance studio, I love trendy, edgy, fun clothes. There are a few brands that I specifically love, like Vici.

How do you maintain your look and schedule?

» I always have a change of clothes. I never know when I'm going to get a last-minute client meeting that I wasn't expecting. I always have a suit in the car, and I always have a backup, more relaxed outfit for the studio. ◊



PHOTOGRAPH BY MELISSA VALLADARES

FirstWord Spaces



"The majority of my clients are requesting at least one wall with wall paper. Removable wall paper is the easiest creation, ever," Moysa says.

If Moysa could splurge on one thing in decorating, it would be a rug. "There are so many amazing vintage rugs out there. For me, the rug's got to be big. I would not suggest getting a rug that is small and it looks like this little doormat in a room. It needs to fill your space."



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEXIS ALEMAN

For large art on a budget, Moysa recommends printing pieces yourself. After buying and downloading an image from online stores such as Etsy, you can print pieces in blueprint size for less than \$10 at Staples.

Get Inspired

Need nursery ideas? Get them from Bri Moysa, owner of Aliso Viejo-based Emerson Grey Designs. Moysa managed a high-end baby boutique in Costa Mesa for 13 years before starting her interior decor business, and nurseries are among her specialties.

WRITTEN BY ALIESE MUHONEN

A neutral base with pops of color

Moysa's 2019 clients want nurseries designed with a calming neutral palette, "with touches of textures, and then colors being brought in that are more gender-specific when it comes to the rugs, the pillows, the textiles."

Large-scale art

Moysa has noticed an upward trend in art that "makes a big impact on a wall." Among her clients' favorites: bold murals, large florals, or huge ombré washes of color. She suggests using art that's removable, like decals.

Nurseries that are less ... nursery-ish

Moysa recommends incorporating pieces and art that you enjoy looking at, and that will last into your baby's childhood.

"Nurseries are an extension of your home; you shouldn't feel like you step into this room and it doesn't work with your home at all," she

says. "So many people are wanting these spaces to have longevity to them. They want these pieces within the space to be able to last longer than the max three years that a child is in a crib."

Wallpaper

But not the kind that involves paste-intensive hassle. Moysa is a fan of removable wallpaper, which she has used in her own children's rooms. "It's basically just big stickers, and great for renters because it doesn't damage the walls. If you want to have that accent wall but can't paint, removable wallpaper has become such a huge element."

Statement lighting

"No longer is it just a simple ceiling fan or a central light in a room. People are wanting that big rattan pendant in their space, which I'm all for," Moysa says. "And it's not expensive. Places like Target, Ikea, or World Market have amazing lighting for \$60!"

Fourth Trimester

What you don't expect when you're expecting.

WRITTEN BY ALIESE MUHONEN

POSTPARTUM CARE, nicknamed the “fourth trimester” by obstetrics professionals, takes place in the first three months to one year after a baby's birth. It's a hot topic in maternity circles; the consensus is that plenty of concern is shown for newborns, but not enough for the mothers who care for them.

We chatted with Dr. Allyson Brooks about what moms need to know.

Many health professionals consider the fourth trimester to be the most difficult time for new moms. As a mother of three, did you feel unprepared for the months after delivery?

» I did! That experience was undefined. I was an OB-GYN, having my first baby, and thinking that having a baby was all about the delivery. I did not know when I had my first child that there was a before and after me. That was something that was never discussed. And I don't know that we really discuss it (enough) now.

What transitional challenges do women face that surprise them?

» In my personal and professional experience, the impact of sleep deprivation or interrupted sleep is understated. That would be No. 1. No. 2 is your time is never your own.



Dr. Allyson Brooks
OB-GYN

An OB-GYN for 26 years, Dr. Allyson Brooks is the Ginny Ueberroth Executive Medical Director Endowed Chair and Chief Quality Officer of the Women's Health Institute at Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian in Newport Beach.

Your new responsibilities are with you 24/7, 365. The third is your relationships—with yourself, as well as your relationships with family and friends—change.

Postpartum depression: When should women seek help?

» The “baby blues” or the postpartum blues occur in 100 percent of women.

Wait, really?

» Yes. That's just emotional changes and swings due to hormonal fluctuations, and every single one of us experiences it in some fashion. But how extreme those symptoms are and how long they last determines whether you want to call your doctor, call a hotline, or ask family or friends to rate you for an evaluation. There are really good online screening tools for postpartum depression. Last year, we saw 800 new moms who were experiencing postpartum depression, anxiety, panic attacks, adjustment disorders, etc.

What would you recommend to new moms to protect their health?

» Know what is available in your community. Do research, ask your friends and other people in the community. I think that it's critical that we raise awareness of the unique needs of a new mother and her family in those first six months. ◉

ILLUSTRATION: ADOBE STOCK

Freebies in O.C.

Creating lasting memories with kids doesn't have to be expensive. Here are experiences that your kids and wallet will love.

WRITTEN BY ALIESE MUHONEN



BEST MUSEUM

There are few museums more fun for kids than the **Children's Museum in La Habra**. In addition to interactive exhibits designed for preschoolers through fourth graders, the museum offers chances to play dress-up, ride a hand-carved carousel, and see wild animals (taxidermy) in an indoor nature walk. Children under 2 get in free. The first Sunday of the month is free for all.

Admission is half off after 4 p.m. at **Pretend City Children's Museum** in Irvine. Kids will love the 17 interactive exhibits and activities, laid out like a small city.



BEST PLAYGROUNDS

North County—**Fullerton Sports Complex**: There are plenty of climbing options with fake rock walls, ropes, net bridges, and moving "toadstools" to walk on, all surrounding a wooden structure with multiple levels.

On the coast—**Marina Park, Newport Beach**: There's ocean-theme and climbing equipment galore, plus a huge tunnel slide from the second floor of the iconic lighthouse. Adults: Enjoy perfect views to relax beachside while keeping your eyes on small children.



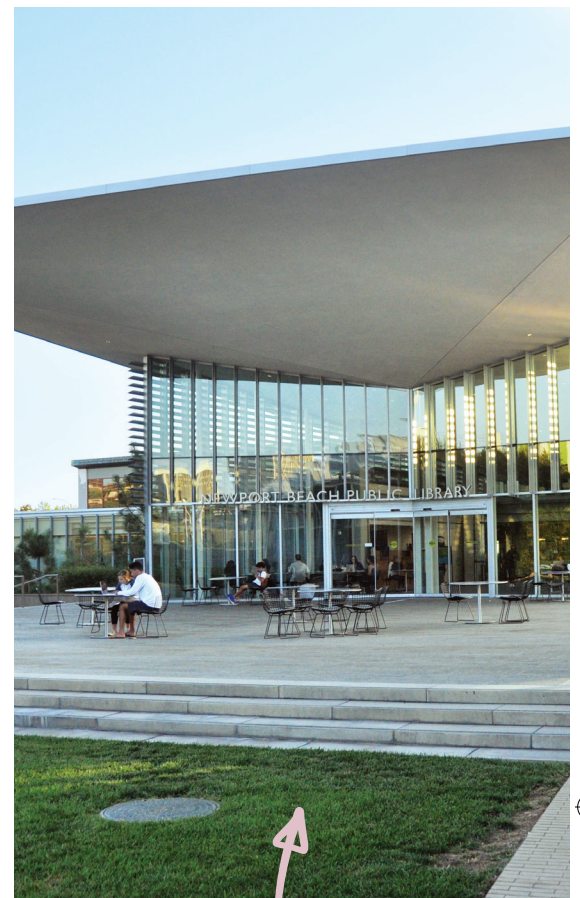
BEST STORYTIMES AND ART CLASSES

Start by checking out the nearest branch of the **OC Public Library system**. With free baby lapsits, storytimes, and educational and art classes offered at most of the 33 locations in Orange County, it's a great resource for a multitude of kid-friendly activities.



BEST BEACH

Nestled in a sheltered cove, **Little Corona del Mar Beach** boasts gentle waves, nearby bathrooms, and tide pools where the whole family can check out marine life. Make sure to bring comfortable shoes, as the pools are rocky. Park at the Corona del Mar State Beach lot for a fee, or street parking in the neighborhood is free.



LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Make a day trip of visiting either the **Newport Beach Public Library** or the **Huntington Beach Central Library**. In addition to storytimes and classes that most other libraries have, both of these outposts feature dedicated play and performance spaces and are near kid-friendly parks and beaches, perfect for picnics once your time at the library is done.



NEED MORE IDEAS?

Visit the **Plan a Day Out** website, where you can search a database of family-friendly things to do in Orange County. Don't miss the Editor's Picks button on the home page, which features an extensive list of free offerings. planadayout.com

NEWPORT BEACH LIBRARY PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE NEWPORT BEACH LIBRARY; "BEST STORYTIMES," "BEST BEACH," AND "NEED MORE IDEAS" PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADOBE STOCK; LA HABRA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM COURTESY OF LA HABRA CHILDREN'S MUSEUM; "BEST PLAYGROUNDS" PHOTOGRAPH BY PRISCILLA IEZZI