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I can't do it all as a SAHM—and that's okay

Am I going to eat, shower, or sleep in the 20 minutes I have of overlapping nap times?

By Rachel Babcock | October 10, 2019



Feed the kids. Get everyone properly dressed (if you're lucky). Educate the kids. Entertain the kids. Cook constantly. Clean constantly. Manage finances. Do the 100th load of laundry that day. Plan all the parties for all the events. Meet mom friends. Join mom clubs. Socialize your kids. Save all the money. Make money. The list goes on and on and on and on.

When I first dreamed of being a stay-at-home mom, I visualized that I would have it all together. I would have our days planned every day, filling them with stimulating and engaging activities.

I would be a part of a huge circle of awesome moms and awesome kids. My house would be spotless *and* I would look cute every day doing it all.

I truly felt it would be amazing to be home and that I could do it all. News flash: I'm on kid #2, and I *do not* have my stuff together. I do okay most days, but there are also really hard days.



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After chasing my toddler and nursing my newborn all day, I'm pretty sure a bird could mistake my hair for its nest. Let's face it; my appearance is often a hot mess. This is just a chaotic time of life having two littles.

I'm always picking and choosing what to focus on:

Is the house going to be cleaned or are the kids going to have fun?

Is the laundry or the dishes the one "fun chore" I have the kids "help" me with that day?

Am I going to eat, shower, or sleep in the 20 minutes I have of overlapping nap times?

Most days, when I finally put my feet up, I feel like a complete failure. I didn't get any of the perfect mom things done that I had planned that day.

On these days where I only manage to play with my kids, there is one thing that reminds me of my worth: my husband. When he arrives, he always asks about my day and we begin doing chores together. We clean the kitchen and switch off entertaining the kids, and we talk about our workdays. He's always interested in hearing about the silly things our son said and the new toys our baby likes, and he praises me for the work I did being a mom.

Because that's the reality, we *both* worked all day! My husband worked in an office contributing to medical advancement, and I worked in our home contributing to our children's advancement. Being a team with my husband at the end of the day and having him just as interested in my activities as I am in his reminds me that my work is important, too, even when we play all day.

After spending a lot of my nights feeling bad about my lack of accomplishments each day based on the standards I gathered from society on what I should be able to get done, I realized I was not a failure based on my family's standards.

No, I'm not doing it all, and that's okay.

Because what I am doing is *important*. It might not be getting all the chores done and teaching my kids a second language, but it's important work, nonetheless. It's important for my kids' development. My value as a stay-at-home mom is not only in the quantifiable output of tasks in addition to child-raising. There is immeasurable value in the indispensable time spent in raising little humans.

I get a lot done in one day. I kiss owies, push swings and teach how to share. I give bear hugs, play chase and tie shoes. I make meals, sing songs and show love to my babies day in and day out.

But no I can't do it all, and I'm not supposed to, despite what society says. As much as I hear the message or believe that "I'm not getting anything done" during my days as a stay-at-home mom, I know that I am doing my most important work being present with and raising my babies. The things I do with my children matter more than checking off everything on my to-do list.



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- If SAHMs were paid, their salary would be \$162K/year
- The invisible work of a stay at home mom
- Being a SAHM during the summer can be so hard—so I came up with a plan

Stay At Home Mom

This incredibly soft comforter from Sunday Citizen is like sleeping on a cloud

My only complaint? I've slept through my alarm twice.

By Sara Goldstein | September 01, 2021

When it comes to getting a good night's sleep, there are many factors that, as a mama, are hard to control. Who's going to wet the bed at 3 am, how many times a small person is going to need a sip of water, or the

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I've always been a down comforter sort of girl, but after a week of testing the ridiculously plush and aptly named Snug Comforter from [Sunday Citizen](#), a brand that's run by "curators of soft, seekers of chill" who "believe in comfort over everything," it's safe to say I've been converted.

Honestly, it's no wonder. Originally designed as a better blanket for luxury hotels and engineered with textile experts to create this uniquely soft fabric, it has made my bed into the vacation I so desperately want these days.

The comforter is made up of two layers. On one side is their signature knit "snug" fabric which out-cozies even my most beloved (bought on sale) cashmere sweater. The other, a soft quilted microfiber. Together, it creates a weighty blanket that's as soothing to be under as it is to flop face-first into at the end of an exhausting day. Or at lunch. No judgement.

Miraculously, given the weight and construction, it stays totally breathable and hasn't left me feeling overheated even on these warm summer nights with just a fan in the window.

Beyond being the absolute most comfortable comforter I've found, it's also answered my minimalist bed making desires. Whether you opt to use it knit or quilted side up, it cleanly pulls the room together and doesn't wrinkle or look unkempt even if you steal a quick nap on top of it.

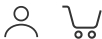
Also worth noting, while all that sounds super luxe and totally indulgent, the best part is, it's equally durable. It's made to be easily machine washed and come out the other side as radically soft as ever, forever, which totally helps take the sting out of the price tag.

My only complaint? I've slept through my alarm twice.

Here is my top pick from Sunday Citizen, along with the super-soft goods I'm coveting for future purchases.

1

Woodland Snug comforter



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The bedroom anchor I've been looking for— the Snug Comforter.

SHOP

\$249

2

Braided Pom Pom Throw



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Because this degree of coziness needs portability, I'm totally putting the throw version on my list. It's washable, which is a must-have given my shedding dog and two spill-prone kiddos who are bound to fight over it during family movie night.

SHOP

\$145

3

Lumbar pillow



Win free diapers for a year!

What's a cozy bed without a pile of pillows?

SHOP



\$65

4

Crystal infused sleep mask



Win free diapers for a year!

Promoting sleep by creating total darkness and relaxation, I've bookmarked as my go-to gift for fellow mamas.



We independently select and share the products we love—and may receive a commission if you choose to buy. You've got this.

Home

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Activist Elle Moxley gives parents advice on how to talk to their kids about race, sex and gender

Moxley founded the Marsha P. Johnson Institute and is also a co-founding member and former strategic partner of the Black Lives Matter network

By Motherly + H&M | August 26, 2021



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[elle_moxley/Instagram](#)

Elle Moxley has had a hard life. She's been homeless, incarcerated, and fearful for her life as a black trans woman. She put her own dream on hold while she fought for survival, and her tenacity led to becoming a co-founding member and former strategic partner of the Black Lives Matter network and founding the Marsha P. Johnson Institute—an organization that advocates for black trans people.

On the latest episode of The Motherly Podcast, Moxley talks to Motherly co-founder Liz Tenety about the importance of talking to kids openly and honestly about race, sex and gender.

WATCH THE INTERVIEW:

"A lot of times parents go into conversations with their minds made up around what the end outcome should be. And with an assumption made that children, young people, young adults have no knowledge of race or class or gender. And I think that's the falsity of parents' own ignorance. And what they are unwilling to face," she explains to Tenety. "The beautiful thing about children is that they face everything in the most honest and tender ways. And sometimes we interrupt them so that we can still be the dominant force in their lives and in their minds."

So what's her suggestion? It's simple: *Listen*.

"I think about my own relationship with my mother in particular. And I think one of the things that certainly didn't exist for her was a rubric on how to raise a young black trans girl," she says. "It didn't exist for me. And so I do wish that we would have been able to go on that journey together, but I was forced to go on it alone. And, you know, I think when you, as a parent have not been on a journey with your child,

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I assumed, based on how I saw myself in comparison to other kids, that's who I was. But I didn't know what that meant."

As an activist, Moxley believes a cultural shift is possible, but only if parents are willing to let their children lead the way and feel heard and respected when they share those experiences. If she was able to communicate like that with her family, she thinks her life would've ended up much differently.

"Having the opportunity to explore what that meant for me would have been eye opening and it probably wouldn't have been such a violent journey along the way," she says.

When it comes to the topic of race, Moxley explains why a white parent teaching their kid "not to see race" is problematic.

"I'm not teaching my kids to not see any race. That doesn't even make sense based on visually what we're experiencing. If you have the privilege to see, then you see race. And you see it in your mind before you actually see it with your eyes. So you've already created an idea around someone's identity based on your perception of their skin color," she says. "And so this idea that we don't teach people race and we don't teach our kids race is actually just something that we say to be politically correct. And you will never hear that said from any person of color. There's a particular privilege and experience that is associated with being able to say such a thing that I don't think white people are ever thoughtful about when they engage people of color."

She also points out the fallacy in using the "colorblind" card as a way to promote equality.

"I think there is a responsibility for those who abide by 'I don't see race' to acknowledge it in a way that moves it beyond 'we're all equal'. Because that's just not the experience we've had," she says bluntly.

"There were over 500 years of colonization that interrupted an entire world's opportunity to create the equity that we like to see exist. So I would always suggest that people root their experiences not only in love, but in truth. And the only way that there will ever be any conversations honestly had about race, class and gender is if it is one that is rooted in what has happened to people across race, class, and gender over time. And that doesn't happen enough, which is why people can deny that race even exists."

Aside from educating listeners about how to talk to kids about these sensitive subjects, Moxley also gives advice on how parents can best advocate for their children.

"I think it's so important to surround yourself with people whose experience is similar so that you don't feel alone and that you don't get resentful for not having the answers because the resentment leads to even more devastation when you're trying to support your child, who's already devastated by being different," she says. "And so that's the thing that I would always say is, seek community, find community, find resources that will encourage more opportunities for knowledge, as opposed to opportunities for you to resist the essence of who your child is."

To hear more about Moxley's experiences, listen to The Motherly Podcast for the full interview.



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14 toys that will keep your kids entertained inside *and* outside

They transition seamlessly for indoor play.

By Sara Goldstein | August 12, 2021

Plan Toys

Keeping kids entertained is a battle for all seasons. When it's warm and sunny, the options seem endless. Get them outside and get them moving. When it's cold or rainy, it gets a little trickier.

So with that in mind, we've rounded up some of the best toys for toddlers and kids that are not only built to last but will easily make the transition from outdoor to indoor play. Even better, many are Montessori-friendly and largely open-ended so your kids can get a ton of use out of them.

From sunny backyard afternoons to rainy mornings stuck inside, these indoor outdoor toys are sure to keep little ones engaged and entertained.



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Tiny thrill-seekers will love this kid-powered coaster which will send them (safely) sailing across the backyard or play space. The durable set comes with a high back coaster car and 10.75 feet of track, providing endless opportunities for developing gross motor skills, balance and learning to take turns. The track is made up of three separate pieces which are easy to assemble and take apart for storage (but we don't think it will be put away too often!)

SHOP

\$139



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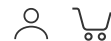
1 Secret Agent play set

This set has everything your little secret agent needs to solve whatever case they might encounter: an ID badge, finger scanner, walkie-talkie handset, L-shaped scale and coloring comic (a printable file is also available for online download) along with a handy belt to carry it all along. Neighborhood watch? Watch out.

SHOP

\$40

2 Mini golf set



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Fore! This mini golf set is lawn *and* living room ready. Set up a backyard competition or incorporate into homeschooling brain breaks that shift focus and build concentration.

SHOP



\$40

3

Stepping Stones



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countless configurations to create obstacle courses, games or whatever they can dream up.

SHOP

\$99.99

4

Sand play set

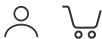
Whether you're hitting the beach or the backyard sandbox, this adorable wooden sand set is ready for action. Each scoop has an embossed pattern that's perfect for sand stamping. They're also totally suitable for water play in the wild or the bathtub.



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5

Sensory play set

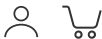


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SHOP

\$19.95

6 Vintage scooter balance bike



Win free diapers for a year!

SHOP

\$121

7 Foam pogo stick



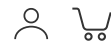
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Designed for ages 3 and up, My First Flybar offers kiddos who are too young for a pogo stick a frustration-free way to get their jump on. The wide foam base and stretchy bungee cord “stick” is sturdy enough to withstand indoor and outdoor use and makes a super fun addition to driveway obstacle courses and backyard races. Full disclosure—it squeaks when they bounce, but don’t let that be a deterrent. One clever reviewer noted that with a pair of needle-nose pliers, you can surgically remove that sucker without damaging the base.

SHOP

\$16.99

8 Dumptruck



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Whether they're digging up sand in the backyard or picking up toys inside, kids can get as creative as they want picking up and moving things around. Even better? It's made from recycled plastic milk cartons.

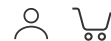
SHOP



\$22

9

Hopper ball



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Burn off all that extra energy hippity hopping across the lawn or the living room! This hopper ball is one of the top rated versions on Amazon as it's thicker and more durable than most. It also comes with a hand pump to make inflation quick and easy.

SHOP



\$14.99

10

Pull-along ducks



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SHOP



\$16.99

11

Rocking chair seesaw



Win free diapers for a year!

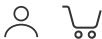
This built-to-last rocking seesaw is a fun way to get the wiggles out in the grass or in the playroom. The sturdy design can support up to 77 pounds, so even older kiddos can get in on the action.

SHOP

\$79.99

12

Baby forest fox ride-on



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Toddlers will love zooming around on this fox ride-on, and it’s a great transition toy into traditional balance bikes. If you take it for a driveway adventure, simply use a damp cloth to wipe down the wheels before bringing back inside.

SHOP

\$79.99

13

Meadow ring toss game

Besides offering a fantastic opportunity to hone focus, coordination, determination and taking turns, lawn games are



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\$24.75

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It's science: This is why many postpartum moms don't feel like having sex

It's normal to have a low sex drive postpartum.

By Anne-Marie Gambelin | July 22, 2021

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gonna. Don't wanna... *What's wrong with me?*" *Sigh.*

There's nothing wrong with you, mama. Having a low sex drive for a period of time postpartum is a **normal evolutionary adaptive response** designed to ensure that you survive to continue to reproduce.

Here's why so many new moms experience low sex drive postpartum.

You're likely too tired to have sex, but also too hormonal to want it.

You're probably exhausted. Maybe you feel sore—and sex isn't pleasurable at the moment. Maybe you're worried about changes to your body or getting pregnant again. Or maybe you're just touched out and feel like the only thing you have control over is your body.

But underneath all of these perfectly legitimate reasons is a current of raging and waning hormones that have an even more powerful impact on your sex drive.

When you're pregnant, the levels of your reproductive hormones are at time 1000 times higher than when you are not pregnant. And once you give birth, those hormones come crashing down to menopausal levels. The low estrogen that results can cause uncomfortable vaginal dryness—especially if you are breastfeeding—and a loss of sex drive.

This is how evolution ensures that you "don't want it" while you are healing and investing your energy into keeping your new baby alive before you start to work on the next.

You're being fulfilled in other ways.

Oxytocin is the bonding hormone released when you hug, have sex and breastfeed. Before birth, touching your partner triggers the release of oxytocin that helps you feel good and bond to each other. But after giving birth, with all the snuggling and feeding, "the mother winds up getting her oxytocin from her kid," explains clinical sexologist, Dr. Kat Van Kirk. "This transfer of emotional energy is thought to decrease sexual desire and increase responsiveness to infant stimuli in postpartum women by activating the brain regions associated with reward."

Whether breastfeeding or bottle-feeding, the skin-to-skin contact between you and baby increases the release of oxytocin, causing you and baby to bond, ensuring that you will take care of them and they will survive.

The hormone prolactin also plays an important role in maternal behavior. Prolactin causes your breasts to grow during pregnancy and prepares them for the milk production starting after birth. This hormone helps you relax while you are nursing, but it also depresses your libido. This is biology once again making sure you remain focused on the biological investment you just made in your baby.

Your partner may be affected by low sex drive, too.

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Studies have shown that the more dads interact with their baby, the lower their testosterone levels dip, decreasing libido and causing them to focus less on wanting to have sex and more on wanting to nurture. This serves to ensure that dads invest more energy in parental care than in making a new baby, while helping them relax and enjoy their newborn.

Breastfeeding can diminish libido.

Not wanting to have sex postpartum is perfectly normal, and in any case, it's temporary—especially if you're breastfeeding. In a study published in the journal *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, researchers found a significant decrease in tiredness, an improvement in mood and an increase in sexual activity, feelings and frequency within four weeks of stopping breastfeeding, once hormones return to pre-pregnancy levels.

When to start having sex postpartum is up to you.

Even once you've been medically cleared to have sex, it might be a while before you feel like you want to have sex again, and it's completely OK to wait. However, when the time is right for you and your sexual desire has returned, you may still harbor some concerns about getting things going. Here are some tips to help you restart your sex life after baby:

- **Carve out couple time.** Make time to be alone to remember that you are still a couple, even after you've become parents.
- **Be honest with each other.** Talk about your physical changes, how it might feel to have sex or be intimate now, and anything else you might be worried about.
- **Get closer.** Look for other ways to express affection while you work up to having sex. Spend time just being close to each other, kissing and cuddling—without the pressure.
- **Use lubrication.** When you are ready, using lube can combat vaginal dryness and make sex more pleasurable.
- **Get in touch with yourself, first.** Rediscovering your body and what feels good to you alone is an important step in regaining intimacy with a partner postpartum. Check out the toys from our friends at Dame Products below for inspiration.

Bottom line: You are not alone if you lack the desire for sex postpartum. And like many other things that may be challenging about pregnancy and postpartum, this will pass. But for now, low sex drive is likely just evolution ensuring your reproductive success—protecting the enormous physical and emotional investment you have already made and ensuring the survival of you and your baby so that you can pass along your genes to future generations. Pretty powerful stuff.

Editor's note: Other medical conditions can contribute to your lack of desire. And it is important not to confuse lack of sexual desire with postpartum depression. So be alert for signs and symptoms, like severe mood swings, loss of appetite, overwhelming fatigue and lack of interest or joy for the things that are



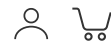
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If you're hoping to rev things up, or just looking to take a little time with yourself, explore the vulva-approved options from [Dame Products](#). As a women-owned sex toy company, they are on a mission to cultivate pleasure—and we're here for it. Motherly readers can save 15% on Dame Products with the code MOTHERLY.

1

Pom Flexible Vibrator

Finally, a vibrator that can bend to your needs. Brilliantly shaped for targeted or broad stimulation, the five vibration patterns and five vibration speeds will ensure you hit *just* the right spot. Rechargeable and powerful-yet-compact, Pom is a great way to get in touch with your body—whether for solo or coupled time.



Win free diapers for a year!

2 Aer Suction Toy

With pulses of air and a gentle seal, the Aer Suction Toy delivers the arousal of oral stimulation even if you aren't ready to share your body in that way yet—or want your partner's attention focused elsewhere. With multiple intensity levels and vibration patterns, your road map to the big O will be easy to follow.

SHOP



\$95



Win free diapers for a year!

By delivering dual sensations, the Fin Finger Vibrator is a great way to synchronize the pursuit of pleasure. Just the right size for all the right places, Fin won't get in the way of any positions. The unique shape and vibrations empower users to get the sensation they want during foreplay, sex or solo time.

SHOP

\$85

P.S. Dame *literally* guarantees your satisfaction with hassle-free returns within the first 60 days. Take 15% off your purchase with the code MOTHERLY.

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Fourth Trimester

15 kids' books perfect for calming first day of school



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one may be feeling about this new adventure.

By Ellen Schmidt | September 03, 2021

Amazon

The first day of school is monumental in so many ways—for kids AND their parents. Nervous excitement and jitters are totally normal when you start something new for the first time. And going to school for the first time (or back to school after a year of remote schooling) checks all of these boxes—new people, new classroom, new friends. New is both exciting AND potentially anxiety-inducing for children.

Reading books about the first day of school can be helpful to prepare children for what is to come. While we all know the benefits of reading are numerous, books about school are a great way to calm those first day of school jitters. New adventures and experiences await. You've got this, kiddo!

Here are 15 of our favorite books about the first day of school for preschoolers through first grade.

Best first day of schools books for preschoolers:



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Mo Willems is one of my favorite children's book authors, and while his Elephant & Piggie series will always be my personal favorite, Pigeon is a close second! In this book just perfect for little ones starting preschool, Pigeon wonders why he has to go to school. After all, he already knows everything! And what happens if he doesn't like school? What if the teacher doesn't like him? What if he learns TOO MUCH!?! So. many. questions. (just like every toddler I know)

Age range: 3-6

SHOP



\$7.78

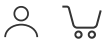


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2

Lola Goes to School by Anna McQuinn

In this sweet book, Lola and her family prepare for the first day of school the night before, then get up early, take



Win free diapers for a year!

Age range: 2-5

SHOP

\$13.72

3

Pete the Kitty's First Day of Preschool by Kimberly and James Dean



Win free diapers for a year!

Pete the Kitty fans will love when Pete heads to his first day of preschool! In this story, Pete meets his teacher, sings a few fun songs, and even gets to paint. Who knew preschool could be so much fun? Little ones will enjoy exploring what the first day of school is like with Pete the Kitty.

Age range: 2-4

SHOP



\$7.99

4

Curious George's First Day of School by Margret and H.A. Rey



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Curious George is a favorite children's book character, even though he's always finding a way to get in to trouble. In this story, Curious George has been invited to Mr. Apple's class to be a special helper. Uh oh... we know something silly is about to happen! George "helps" with painting, so you can imagine what kind of disaster occurs. Well, at least he learns what fun you can have when you go to preschool! This book includes bonus activities, like an "Ants on a Log" recipe, a word search, and a "Color Your World" craft idea.

Age range: 2-5

SHOP

\$4.99

5

Daniel Goes to School by Becky Friedman



Win free diapers for a year!

Everyone's favorite tiger is excited to go to school! But, he's worried when his dad can't stay with him. Perhaps your little one already knows this song, "grown-ups come back", which the story is based on? Daniel has lots of fun with his teacher and classmates in this sweet 8x8 storybook that will ring true for children just starting school. Perfect for the little one worried about leaving parents for the first time.

Age range: 2-4

SHOP

\$3.78

Best first day of school books for kindergartners:

6

The Night Before Kindergarten by Natasha Wing



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A favorite of my kids', this story is takeoff of the classic Christmas poem, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.

'Twas the night before kindergarten,
and as they prepared,
kids were excited,
and a little bit scared.

Join the kids in this sweet story as they prepare for kindergarten, packing school supplies, posing for pictures, and the hardest part of all--saying goodbye to Mom and Dad. Luckily they'll soon find out how much fun kindergarten is!

Age range: 5-6

SHOP

\$4.99

7

The Day You Begin by Jacqueline Woodson



Win free diapers for a year!

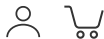
In this *New York Times* bestseller, National Book Award winner Jacqueline Woodson and award-winning illustrator Rafael Lopez tell the story of how a child feels when they are starting something new. While not school-specific, going to school for the first time certainly applies. In this story, we are reminded that we all feel like outsiders sometimes, but how brave it is to go forth anyway, even when we're scared. When we reach out to share our stories, others will be happy to meet us halfway. Quite frankly, this is a great book for adults, too!

Age range: 5-8

SHOP



\$14.56



Win free diapers for a year!

Did you ever think that maybe your school gets nervous for the first day of school, too? It’s true! In this story, it’s the



Win free diapers for a year!

Age range: 5-6

SHOP

\$15.01

9

Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes

Another favorite in my household, Wemberly is a little mouse who is always, you guessed it, worried. And she's especially worried about going to school for the first time. Her parents say, "Worry, worry, worry. Too much worry." But when it's time to go back to school and she meets a fellow worrywart in her class, Wemberly realizes that school is too much fun to waste time worrying!

Age range: 3-6

SHOP

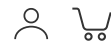
\$7.74



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10 **Amanda Panda Quits Kindergarten by Candice Ransom**

Amanda Panda (I love this rhyme, for starters!) has BIG ideas for her first day of school. But when things don't go according to plan, and when a "pesky girl in a pink bow decides to be her best friend", she decides to quit kindergarten and join her brother in second grade. How do you think that will turn out? Amanda Panda perfectly captures the spirit, motivations, and humor of a headstrong girl headed to kindergarten—and will be sure to soothe back-to-school jitters.



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Best first day of school books for first graders:

11

The Name Jar by Yangsook Choi



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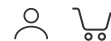
I love this sweet story about a girl who is the the new kid in school, who worries that no one will be able to pronounce her name. Having just moved from Korea, Unhei is anxious that American kids will like her. According to the Amazon description, "So instead of introducing herself on the first day of school, she tells the class that she will choose a name by the following week. Her new classmates are fascinated by this no-name girl and decide to help out by filling a glass jar with names for her to pick from. But while Unhei practices being a Suzy, Laura, or Amanda, one of her classmates comes to her neighborhood and discovers her real name and its special meaning. On the day of her name choosing, the name jar has mysteriously disappeared. Encouraged by her new friends, Unhei chooses her own Korean name and helps everyone pronounce it—*Yoon-Hey*."

What a wonderful story of acceptance and openness from children, an important lesson for school and every day life.

Age range: 5-9

SHOP

\$7.99



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In this adaptation of "The Twelve Days of Christmas", kids learn about how fun it is to be in the first grade! This book shares all the excitement of "big kid" school, and all the "firsts" there are to look forward to. Saying good-bye to mom and dad can be hard, but when the school bus pulls up, it's time for some first grade fun!

Age range: 4-8

SHOP



\$9.99



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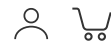
Uh oh. As Mae's first day of school approaches she decides she IS. NOT. GOING. After all, school is scary! What if the other kids don't like her? Or what if she's the only one who doesn't know how to write? Or what if she misses her mom? Mae's anxiety only builds as she walks to school. What will she do? But, then she meets Rosie and Ms. Pearl. Making friends helps Mae conquer her fears.

Age range: 3-7

SHOP



\$16.99



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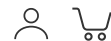
For all those little ones with nervous jitters about the first grade, this book is for you! In this story, a young boy is about to enter first grade and doesn't know quite what to expect. Will his friends be there? Will he have to know how to read and spell? What if he can't understand anything his teacher says? Looks like a case of first grade jitters!

Age range: 5-6

SHOP



\$10.39



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In this tale, Beatrice is a little girl in a blue tutu who is afraid of being her unique self when she starts first grade. With gorgeous illustrations, this story will encourage little ones to face their fears and "be brave, be bold, and be big." Beatrice begins her first day of first grade alongside Benjamin the butterfly, who encourages Beatrice to be big and reminds her that she is not alone. Great for children who are overcoming their fears when it comes to a new adventure like heading to first grade.

Age range: 5-7

SHOP

\$9.95

Entertainment

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The complexity of breastfeeding is what photographer Sophie Harris-Taylor set out to explore in her now-viral portrait series, *Milk*.

By Heather Marcoux | June 18, 2020

Sophie Harris-Taylor

Breastfeeding is beautiful, but it can also be really lonely and difficult. The complexity of breastfeeding is what photographer Sophie Harris-Taylor set out to explore in her now-viral portrait series, *Milk*.

"The response since the work came out last month has been really positive, and has had quite a bit of coverage—including [British] Vogue earlier this week," Harris-Taylor tells Motherly, adding that "it's been lovely" to hear from mothers who see their own experiences reflected in her art.

"This isn't a guide to breastfeeding in any way, but I hope that women who have breastfed, or in particular are currently breastfeeding, can realize they aren't alone and it is a minefield that for many brings up lots of emotions both positive and negative. And for anyone seeing the series, really I'd hope it gives people a slightly more rounded understanding of the ins and outs of it all. For some people, they find it kind of gross... I guess women's breasts have become so sexualised, that actually what they were originally for has almost been forgotten. So maybe it's just about showing something that's so natural in a bit more detail than what we might be used to seeing."

Here are the images Harris-Taylor captured for *Milk*, along with statements from the



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"The most challenging part of breastfeeding has been gaining confidence to breastfeed in public or to breastfeed around people who are not supportive of breastfeeding." - Chaneen

Hannah



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fills it with joy as I'm watching her gain independence and come to me less and less for that closeness and comfort." - Hannah

Elizabeth



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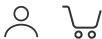
Sophie Harris-Taylor

"The most challenging thing would be staying consistent and carrying on even when I'm ill or just have a bit of a low day because it can drain you out and it's difficult to have a balanced diet while looking after a baby, as I have to make sure I'm eating right to keep my supply up." - Elizabeth

Aisha

Sophie Harris-Taylor

"I think the most unexpected thing I've found in breastfeeding is down to Raya's personality. The images of breastfeeding I have seen always show the baby lying peacefully in mums arms, feeding away serenely.



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Alice



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"I'm her greatest comfort. Everything can be wrong with the world but she can curl up on my lap and find a bit of calm." - Alice

Anna



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"I love the closeness of it. How our eyes lock, the skin to skin. I love that I can cure almost any sadness or outburst by nursing her. Breastfeeding also gives me confidence that she gets all the nutrients, good bacteria and antibodies she needs to stay at optimum health. Breastfeeding has also boosted my body confidence. I feel that my body is a superpower." - Anna

Anna



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"It becomes challenging when Yona-Gray has a growth spurt, is ill or there is a sleep regression. Then she is often glued to my boob, sometimes all night. I get so touched out. Nursing at this age can be challenging and I had to set certain boundaries. Yona can become very possessive over my body, almost disconnecting that it belongs to me. But she understands a lot now and we have our groove." - Anna

Bella



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"Just the sheer size of difficulties that I have learned about. I think there definitely needs to be more education on what to expect and what can go wrong. There is so much emphasis on preparation for pregnancy and birth and so little that goes in to educating about breastfeeding. Because of this I definitely thought it was going to be easier that it has been." - Bella

Bella



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For us it was really difficult at the beginning because Cosmo had a tongue tie that was diagnosed late. The only thing that enabled us was using a nipple shield. I felt ashamed to use one, and was under the impression that their use was temporary and only as a last resort. 5 months later we're still using them and I'm so grateful for them as they are the thing that has actually made me able to breastfeed." - Bella

Bella

Sophie Harris-Taylor

"The feeling of being connected to him, intrinsically, like when I was pregnant. It brings me so much joy that I am his safe place and I can tell how happy he is when he feeds." - Bella

Chaneen



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"When I had my first daughter I would have said I most enjoyed the slowness and closeness of breastfeeding but now I'm breastfeeding two at once there's no more slowness." - Chaneen

Elizabeth



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"Some people just don't like the fact that I'm feeding my child and think that I should go hide away or just stay home, which I think is ridiculous, and I feel as though it should be embraced more in the public eye so it's not seen as a problem." - Elizabeth

Elodie



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"I like to know that what I've been eating - all the nutrients are now being passed on to her." - Elodie

Elodie

Sophie Harris-Taylor

"It would be great to be able to express more, it's hard to find the time and a bit of a hassle with the constant sterilising and then only getting 40ml at the time..." - Elodie

Emma



Win free diapers for a year!

Sophie Harris-Taylor

"The most challenging part for me has to be the heavy ugly, uneven boobs. I just hate the feeling of being soooo full at times. I've never had big boobs and I find it uncomfortable" - Emma

Lizzie

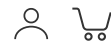


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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"You can go to every lactation class, read every book, have super long, teat shaped, perfect nipples and it can still be bloody difficult. The feeling of failure that I couldn't get breastfeeding to work and having to exclusively pump for almost 3 months. I made myself sick with bladder infections, mastitis & nipple thrush. I really imagined myself as some earth mama that would breastfeed her baby until 6 months and beyond, I'll probably always feel guilt that I wasn't able to do that." - Lizzie

Nicole



Win free diapers for a year!

Sophie Harris-Taylor

"I enjoy fulfilling Oki's purest and most basic need - knowing that all she needs to grow is my milk. I love the intimacy, for instance, feeding her in the bath and feeling her soft body on mine as the milk dribbles out from her mouth into the bathwater. I am grateful that I'm able to feed Oki and connect with her on



Win free diapers for a year!

Misli

Sophie Harris-Taylor

"Every day is a new challenge. At first she fed constantly and I was trapped, then she didn't feed enough and it was a battle to get her on the boob. Breastfeeding is constantly changing and shifting every day, and I hope I can keep up with it for as long as possible." - Misli

Thea



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"Nova had tongue tie for the first 8 weeks which made breastfeeding very tedious for me. He'd feed for very long periods and never seem satisfied afterwards. I was constantly questioning my ability and supply as well as dealing with sore nipples, exhaustion and over all discomfort.. I built a negative relationship with the whole thing that is hard to break even though things are better after his tongue tie surgery." Thea



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"I never imagined how tough it would be. Throughout my pregnancy I had visions of how easy it would be and how much I'd enjoy whipping my breast out in public without a care in the world. I never, ever thought I wouldn't enjoy it. Whenever I thought about it, my head was set on breastfeeding for a year with a 'breast is best' attitude. In reality, I'm counting down the days until we can start weaning and I'm not sure I'll even make it to six months. I've realised that 'best' is whatever makes me happy and relaxed because only then can I be the best mum to Nova." - Thea

Rosie



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Sophie Harris-Taylor

"Everyday since Sunny was born we have this huge unspoken dialogue with each other just around eating. As he grows and I try to understand what it is he wants out of each feed, I am amazed how each time its really just about us listening to each other more then I could have imagined." - Rosie

Breastfeeding
