



Mum's the word:

A survival guide for the modern mum

Kleenex
Mums



hello

I'm a wife, a mother, a blogger and a full-time editor. I'm also sleep deprived, time poor, in love with my little family and in need of a bit of 'me' time. I am constantly attempting to master the juggling act of being a parent whilst trying to avoid the always lingering mother guilt. I often drop a few balls.

I hope you enjoy **Mum's the Word** and that it brings a little sunshine to your day.

From one mother to another, enjoy. xx

Chantelle

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Mum's the word: your survival guide

**Time poor? Love your kids?
A little frazzled? Craving "me" time?
Want the best for your family?**

We've got a sneaking suspicion you answered 'yes' to at least one of these questions. How? Well, earlier this year the team at [Kleenex Mums](#) gained an insight into the minds of many Australian mums by surveying over 4000 mothers online. The enthusiasm of many mums to have their voices heard was amazing, but even more brilliant was what we were able to learn for all the responses.

We know mums have quite a juggling act on their hands with running a household, making sure the kids are happy & healthy, and trying to care for themselves as well, among the many other things on mum's minds.

So how are we going to help? We've created **Mum's the Word** to help you out and make life a little lovelier. It's a little bit of something for you, something for the kids and a whole lot about making your life a little bit easier.



How life has changed since becoming a mum:

Life changes a whole lot once we've given birth, and in more ways than one. When we asked in our survey how things had shifted, this is how mums answered...

understanding real love

being on call 24/7

sleep... oh how I miss it!

stress

less going out

more washing!

complete change of priorities

every-
thing

less
me'
time

eating
better

using
every
second
of the day

creating
balance!

toys
everywhere!

being able
to just "go"
out the door

my
body!

overwhelming
feelings of
love and pride

thinking
wisely

weight
gain

lifestyle

you're
never
alone

giving
up work

putting
myself
last

it's not
all about
me

patience

early
mornings



A Tetris life

Mums wear many hats, and not all of them quite fit at the one time. We're seeking balance whilst trying to organise our hectic households. We're donning the chef's hat and trying to make sure our kids eat their dinner, whilst being fulfilled nutritionally. We're cultural curators, trying to expose our kids to cultural experiences, whilst constantly playing umpire, making sure their on thier best behaviour. It's not easy wearing all of these hats, or even some of them at once.

"How do you do it all?", people ask me.

And my answer is, I don't do it very well.

Days are jam packed, quality sleep is a distant memory, to-do lists are constantly running though my head and multi-tasking is the new black. Life is a huge game of Tetris.

What's that? A spare 3.5 minutes? I could probably slot in baking a batch of muffins in there. Four minutes? I can have a quick game of playdough with my daughter. There's a block of 14.3 minutes there? I could probably get the vacuum out and give the house a quick once over.

Tasks are done in a hurry, without much love or thought. But they're done. Most of the time. Some of the time. Mediocre is my new standard. I no longer strive for perfection. Mediocre suits me just fine. Most of the time. Some of the time.

And this is life. It's one big juggling act. Managing life, and trying to slot in work, being a good parent/wife/friend/person, and trying to find a perfect balance of everything seems to be an elusive goal for many. I know I'm not alone. I hear the cries from mothers near and far.

Just when you think you have it mastered, something comes undone, or something else pops up and you realise you have to figure it all out again {or restart the whole game of Tetris} until you've got everything worked out again.



Motherhood: the juggling act

What stresses you out? Is it a lack of sleep? Keeping on top of the housework? Your bank balance? Progressing in your career? Making sure your kids are well behaved? Being the best mum you can be? Finding time for yourself? Through the [Kleenex Mums](#) survey we discovered that all of these things and more stress mums out. Here are 10 tips to help make life a little easier...

1. Just Say No!

Decide on your priorities and stick to them. Don't be afraid to say no every now and again, and again (if needed).

2. Give Yourself A Time Out

Take a little time out every day for yourself. Just fifteen minutes a day to yourself, can make a world of difference.

3. Call A Friend

Your mummy friends will understand if you haven't called in weeks; they're also drowning in chaos and clutter. Steal a moment to catch up. It's socialising without having to do your hair. Bonus!

4. Ask For Help

Don't be afraid to reach out and ask for help, and when it's offered don't knock it back. Accept any offers of assistance; a helping hand makes life a whole lot easier.

5. Create A Routine

Put together some sort of routine that works for you and your family, and stick to it. Creating order amongst the chaos helps clear the clutter that can sometimes occur in your mind.

6. Turn Off The TV

Make family time quality time. Turn off the TV during dinner, and talk to each other. Switch off from everything else, and switch on to your family.

7. Get Rid Of The Guilt

Toss the mother guilt in the bin. Not as easy as it sounds? You're right, but make an effort to take it easy on yourself. You're doing a great job, and guilt is very unproductive.

8. Keep It Simple

Make it easy for yourself. Forget the three-course dinners, and the fancy meals; the kids don't like them anyway. Keep things simple and make life easier for you.

9. Plan Ahead

Take ten minutes on a Sunday night to plan your week ahead. Get out the diary and pencil in who is doing what, and who is going where.



weekly planner

Create your own personalised weekly planner

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

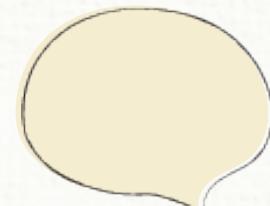
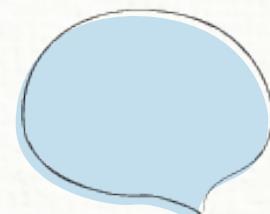
FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

mum

dad

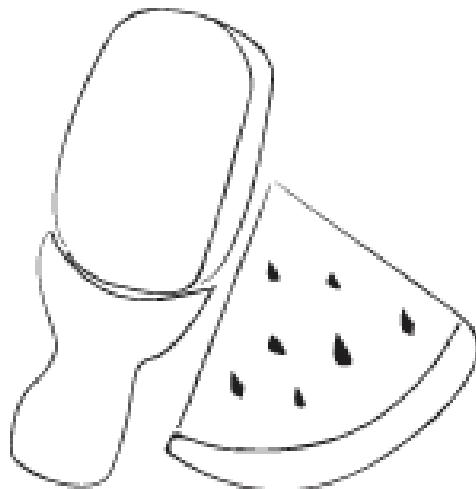


MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

4 Healthy Snacks

Finding food that the kids will love to eat isn't always easy. Melissa from [Frills in the Hills](#) has gathered up four scrumptious snacks that the kids will gobble up in no time.





Watermelon Sorbet

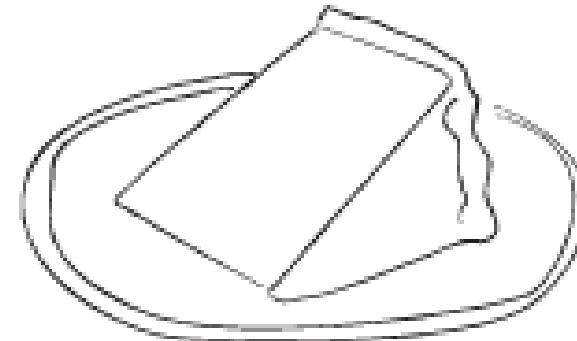
Ingredients:

- 4 cups watermelon, diced
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup white sugar

Method:

1. Place diced watermelon in an air-tight container and into the freezer for a minimum of 6-8 hours, until completely frozen.
2. Place water into a saucepan and add sugar. Bring to a boil and when the sugar has dissolved, turn the heat off and allow the mixture to cool.
3. Add watermelon and cooled sugar syrup into a food processor and process until smooth. You may need to do this in stages with just $\frac{1}{4}$ of each (watermelon/syrup) at a time.
4. Return mixture to the airtight container and put back into the freezer for 2 hours minimum. Serve and enjoy.

Hint: You may wish to fill iceblock moulds instead of/as well as an air-tight container.



Lime Coconut Cake

Ingredients

CAKE

- 2 limes, zest and juice
- 50 grams desiccated coconut
- 175 grams butter, softened
- 175 grams caster sugar
- 175 grams self raising flour
- 3 eggs, beaten

ICING

- 2 cups icing sugar, sifted
- 1 lime, zest and juice

Method:

1. Zest 2 limes, set aside zest
2. Juice the limes and add the coconut to the lime juice and leave to sit for one hour.
3. Preheat oven to 170 degrees c
4. Grease and paper baking tin (This means inserting baking paper onto greased tin to prevent sticking)
5. Sift flour into large mixing bowl, add coconut, butter, zest, eggs and sugar.
6. Beat with electric or stand mixture until light and fluffy
7. Pour into baking tray and smooth into corners/edges and flatten down with a spatula
8. Bake for 35-40 minute until the centre springs back.
9. Let cool until completely cold.
10. To ice, zest your lime first. I use a citrus zester, but you can zest however you like! Sift sugar into a bowl, and with a fork, mix in the juice until it resembles a thick paste, spread over the cake with a knife. Sprinkle the zest and a little bit of coconut and serve.



Oat and Raisin Cookies

Ingredients:

3 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup raisins
250g softened butter
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
2 1/2 cups plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp bicarbonate soda
1 1/2 cups rolled oats

Method:

1. In a mixing bowl, whisk the vanilla essence into your eggs, add the raisins. Set aside covered for 1 hour.
2. Preheat oven to 200 degrees c
3. In your mixer or large mixing bowl, cream the butter with the brown and white sugar until light and fluffy, add your flour, baking powder and bicarbonate of soda, then mix until well combined.
4. Lastly add the rolled oats and mix well.
5. Roll into balls with the same diameter of a 50c piece (about 3.5cm) and place on greased baking trays with about 8cm between each ball.
6. Bake in oven for 15 minutes - I bake 50/50 time on bottom to top rack - I rotate them as I take one tray out/put one tray in. Cool on rack for 10 minutes. Eat a little warm or cold.

Makes 60 - freeze in lots of 12 in the freezer if you like!



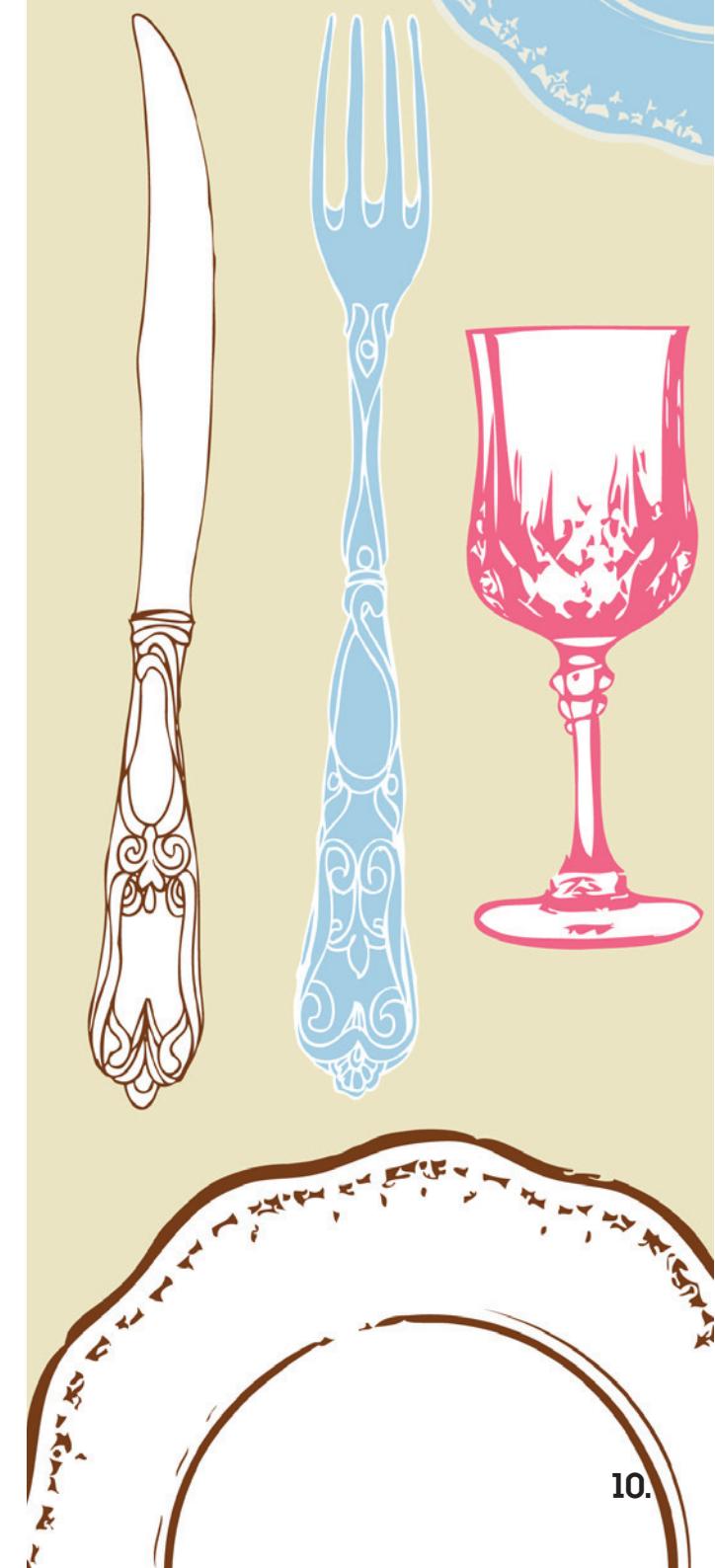
Quick Chocolate Brownies

Ingredients:

1/2 cup plain flour
1/3 cup cocoa
1 cup white sugar
1/4 tsp baking powder
125 grams butter, melted
1 tsp vanilla essence
2 large eggs
1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees c
Sift flour, cocoa and baking powder into a medium sized mixing bowl
2. Melt butter in a saucepan and mix the sugar in until fully melted/combined
3. Pour the butter/sugar mix into the dry ingredients and mix with wooden spoon until all combined. Add eggs, walnuts, vanilla and stir until totally combined.
4. Pour into tin/pan greased and lined with baking paper, bake for 30-40 minutes until top is crunchy.
5. Leave to cool for 20-30 minutes and then cut into desired squares.
6. Dust with icing sugar and store in airtight container for up to 5 days.



[More yummy meal ideas](#)



4 quick and healthy dinner ideas

By Melissa from [Frills in the Hills](#)

Spanakopita Cheese and spinach pie!

Ingredients:

- 1 packet filo pastry (from the fridge section, not frozen)
- 1 large bunch of silverbeet/spinach
- 2 onions (I like to use one red and one brown, but it's up to you and what you have!)
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 200 grams ricotta cheese
- 200 grams feta cheese
- 5 eggs
- 2 tb breadcrumbs
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground pepper
- 100 grams butter, melted

Method:

1. Cut all leaves off stalks of spinach, reserve soft stalks, and chop all in ribbons. Thinly slice onions, saute in frypan with 2 tb olive oil, add 2 handfuls of spinach at a time until wilted, once all cooked and soft, set aside.
2. Preheat oven to 180 degrees c
3. In a bowl, crumble feta with a fork until in small pieces, add ricotta, eggs, pepper, nutmeg, breadcrumbs. Stir to combine. Add onion and spinach mix and set aside.
4. Open your filo pastry. You'll need to work at a fast-ish pace as it dries out quickly (you could lay it on top of a damp tea-towel if you feel you might get a lot of interruptions). Depending how big your baking dishes are, try and cut your filo to roughly the same size. (Cutting in half usually fits most baking dishes)
5. With a pastry brush, brush melted butter on the bottom of your pan. Then brush butter on 1 piece of filo pastry at a time, and place in the bottom of your pan. Repeat this with each layer until you get to roughly 1/2 way through your filo. Add your spinach/cheese mix and spread out evenly over the filo.
6. Butter and layer each sheet of the remaining filo and lay on top.
7. Either pre-cut your filo pieces (it makes it easier to dish out later) In either square or diamond pattern. Or, with the tip of your knife, mark out filo pieces and cut into it in some places to allow the spinach/cheese mix to vent.
8. Bake for 40 minutes, cool, and cut up.



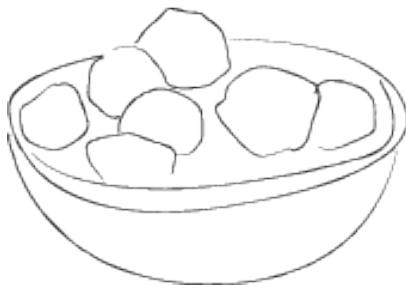
Gai Yang Thai BBQ Chicken!

Ingredients:

- 1 kilo chicken breasts/thighs, de-boned cut into 4cm squarish-chunks
- 2 tb peppercorns
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 stalks coriander, chopped
- 2 tb fish sauce
- 1 cup coconut milk

Method:

1. In a mortar and pestle crush the garlic and peppercorns until they make a paste (about 1 minute) Add the coriander and continue to pound until a greenish paste.
2. Add the paste, coconut milk in a airtight container and stir until well combined.
3. Add chicken to mixture, seal the container and shake vigorously to ensure chicken is coated. Leave in a refrigerator for 1-2 hours. To cook: (at which time start cooking your rice)
4. Preheat griddle/frypan or BBQ and cover with oil (peanut oil is best, but use canola oil, macadamia oil or rice bran oil if you wish)
5. Lay down marinaded chicken and cook for 4 minutes or until golden brown on each side.
6. Set to rest while you plate up rice. Perhaps add some snow peas and then serve.



Swedish Meatballs

Ingredients:

MEATBALLS

500 grams beef mince
500 grams pork mince
3 potatoes, peeled, boiled, and mashed
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 cup breadcrumbs, lightly toasted
(or make breadcrumbs from toast!)
2 eggs
3/4 cup cream
salt and pepper

SAUCE/GRAVY

1tsp beef stock powder
200ml water
100ml cream
splash of soy sauce
pepper
2 tb cornflour

Method:

1. Mix all meatball ingredients together in bowl. Mix thoroughly at first with a spoon, then when liquid is evenly distributed, mix it up with your hands!
2. Heat about 3 tb butter in a frypan, when hot, add walnut-sized meatballs and fry for about 2-3 minutes and turn over gently. Transfer to baking tray, add butter to frypan as required, and repeat until all done.
3. Then make your sauce! Combine water, cream, stock powder, soy sauce and pepper, sprinkle cornflour on top and whisk over medium heat until smooth
4. Allow to simmer and thicken.
5. Pour over your meatballs, or in bowl to dip if serving as canapés



Sausage Rolls with sneaky bits

Ingredients

500 grams beef sausage mince
(or just skin sausages if you have some!)
1 medium carrot, grated
1 small potato, grated
10cm leek, finely diced
1 slice grainy bread, grated
1/2 tsp curry powder
1/2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tb tomato sauce
Pepper
1 egg
2 sheets frozen puff pastry
egg wash or milk to brush rolls with
(egg wash is 1 egg yolk + 1 tb milk)

Method:

1. Take puff pastry out of freezer and allow to defrost whilst preparation takes place
Preheat oven to 200 degrees c
2. Mix all above ingredients except the puff pastry - with a fork and make sure well combined
3. Place onto pastry about 3cm from edge in logs of about 3cm circumference allowing some extra at the ends that you can chop off to ensure meat goes all the way through.
4. Roll edge of pastry onto log and then roll until completely covering meat with a 1cm overlap. Cut excess off, place with overlap underneath on greased tray.
5. Prick with fork to allow venting and brush with egg wash or milk.
6. Bake for 30-35 minutes until completely cooked and browned on top.

Makes 8 medium sausage rolls or 32 mini sausage rolls



[More fabulous meal ideas](#)

Food pyramid!

Nutrition matters to many mums. Here is a fresh look at the food pyramid for you to share with the kids. Hopefully it will make them want to eat their vegetables!



Food is an integral part of family life.

Choosing what to eat, shopping for the ingredients and preparing the meals - you can spend a significant part of your day ensuring that your family eats well. While it may take a little while to find your own routine with menu planning, it is worth persevering as it will save you hours every week. Nicole, from [Planning with Kids](#) offers these 4 top tips to get you started:

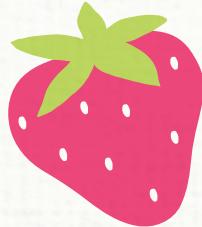
1. Start With A Framework: Even if you have planned what meals to cook for the week, with after school activities, playing with kids, housework and commuting, actually finding the time to cook the meal can be a challenge in itself. So the first and most important tip for menu planning is to use a framework to plan, that factors in your regularly weekly activities. You can then allocate a style of meal that you will be able to cook for that day which takes into account what you have on.

2. Keep it simple: The first week that you try menu planning, don't also make it the week to try five new recipes! Go with meals that you know well and can easily list the ingredients that you will need.

3. Make It A Family Affair: When you're putting the menu plan together, ask the kids to put forward their favourite meal for inclusion. This way you will receive far less complaints about what you're cooking plus it takes out the need for you to think of every meal yourself.

4. Research The Specials: Check out what items are on special at the supermarket and think about what meals you could use them for. You can also use the supermarket's catalogues as prompts for the kids if they are not sure about what meal to suggest.





Meal planner

Create your own meal planner

MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY SUNDAY

breakfast

lunch

dinner

snacks

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

Shopping list



10 creative play ideas

Playing with the kids should be fun, and we know from our survey results that it's one thing that is constantly on your mind.

Children are inherently creative and imaginative. Supporting creative play which encourages a child to express their thoughts and ideas in their own unique way or which allows them to find solutions to problems or new or better ways of doing things, teaches children that life is not just about providing the right answer, that thinking creatively is a much valued skill in the modern world we inhabit today. In this piece Christie, the mum behind [Childhood 101](#) shares 10 simple ways to encourage your child's creative play...



1. What Switches Your Child On?

The #1 place to start thinking about creative play is considering what your child is most fascinated by? Is there an animal, character or subject he/she talks incessantly about? Using a child's interest as a jumping off point for creative play means they are instantly switched on and engaged to do, try or learn more. Many of the ideas above can be simply adapted to include your child's area of interest; in moments a simple sheet cubby becomes a deep, dark dinosaur cave or a silk scarf a superhero cape, a row of nappy boxes becomes a train with soft toys as passengers or a collection of paper bags a family of pony puppets. The possibilities are endless and as individual as your own child.

So why not factor in some creative play into your child's day. With simple materials from around the home and the guidance of your own child (as often their ideas will be the best ones!), it really is easy, lots of fun and they are learning important skills along the way.



2. Roll Play Time and Snack Time into One

Kids love to cook so why not bake simple cupcakes or muffins and let your child get busy decorating them with icing, sprinkles, shapes cut from thin slices of apple with cookie cutters, sultanas and lolly snakes. If you are not in the baking mood, decorating milk arrowroot biscuits is an oldie but a goodie.

3. Getting Messy

Mums are often put off by the mess factor of creative activities like painting or collaging with glue but all it takes is a little preparation to keep the mess under control. Make sure your child has a good child-sized apron (which covers their clothing) or old clothes, use small containers of washable, non toxic children's paint or glue, good sized sheets of paper, and have a moist wipe on hand for messy, sticky fingers.



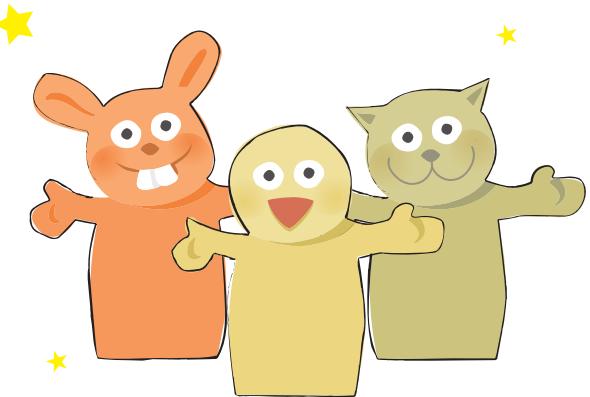


4. It's not a box!

Similarly, boxes large enough for a child to sit inside (or larger) are easily transformed into imaginary vehicles. Add a paper sail and flag to sail the seven seas or stick on four paper plate tyres and a steering wheel and you are ready to hit the open road.

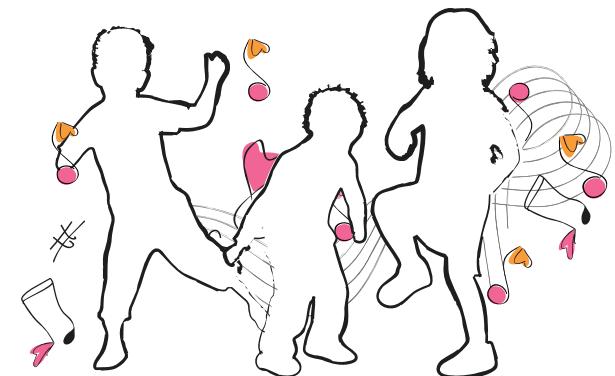
5. Putting On a Show

Puppets are a wonderful way to encourage a child's imagination, creativity and oral language development. Simple puppets can be made from paper plates or brown paper bags decorated with felt-tipped pens or collage materials. Old fashioned sock puppets make use of those pesky odd socks and can be easily embellished with buttons, sequins and wool, hand stitched into position.



6. Toe Tapping Fun

Children love making, and moving to, music. Choose some upbeat tunes and simply dance. Or add some percussion instruments to make your own marching band - an empty ice cream container or cooking pot and wooden spoon instantly becomes a drum for tapping, a plastic bottle partly filled with rice or pasta a shaker, two pot lids make easy cymbals, even tapping two large, metal spoons together makes a fun sound. As an added Mummy bonus, dancing is an excellent way to iron out excess wiggles and jiggles, especially after a rainy day stuck at home.



7. Start a Useful Box from Your Recycling

Provide your child with a simple box of recycled items and see their creativity shine. Start with small, empty boxes - tissue box sized and smaller, paper towel rolls, plastic lids, yoghurt containers, foil pie trays, small plastic bottles and shop catalogues; add some masking tape or glue, scissors and felt-tipped pens.



8.

No Adults Allowed - the Magical World of Cubby Houses

It is fascinating to watch children create their own imaginary world inside a simple sheet cubby house draped over the dining table or a collection of chairs. Whether it be a secret place for a teddy bear's picnic, a tent for camping out, a home for a family of dolls or a rocket shooting for the stars, children love the feeling of being apart from the world which comes from hiding out in a cubby house.



9.

Let's Dress Up

A dress up box allows your child to explore a range of social roles. Start with a collection of colourful, silk scarves raided from Mum's (or Grandma's) wardrobe or your local op shop; you will be amazed what children will use them for – a dancer's skirt, butterfly wings, Little Red Riding Hood's hood, a wizard's cape, or a pirate's bandanna just to name a few. Other easy to collect items which make for dress-up fun include hats, sunglasses, handbags and old mobile phones. If you are feeling creative, why not decorate a simple cardboard crown, make a paper plate mask of your child's favourite animal or fold a pirate hat from newspaper.

10.

Take It Outside

Taking any of the above activities outdoors adds an extra element to any creative play adventures (and also helps Mum not to mind the mess quite so much). However outdoor play also offers loads of creative play potential of its very own; think of the playful goodness of baking mudpies or cooking up a gooey, brewy muddy stew, making a little home for worms or snails found around the garden, or lying on the grass and making up stories about the shapes you see in the clouds above.



More play ideas

Christie Burnett is the Mum and Early Childhood Teacher behind award winning blog [Childhood 101](#). Christie aims to provide information, education and inspiration for parents about all things 'childhood,' including play ideas, art and craft activities, toy and book reviews, and information about everyday issues like nutrition, health and behaviour. She is always on the lookout for simple, cost effective ways to play and have fun as a family, both at home and out and about.

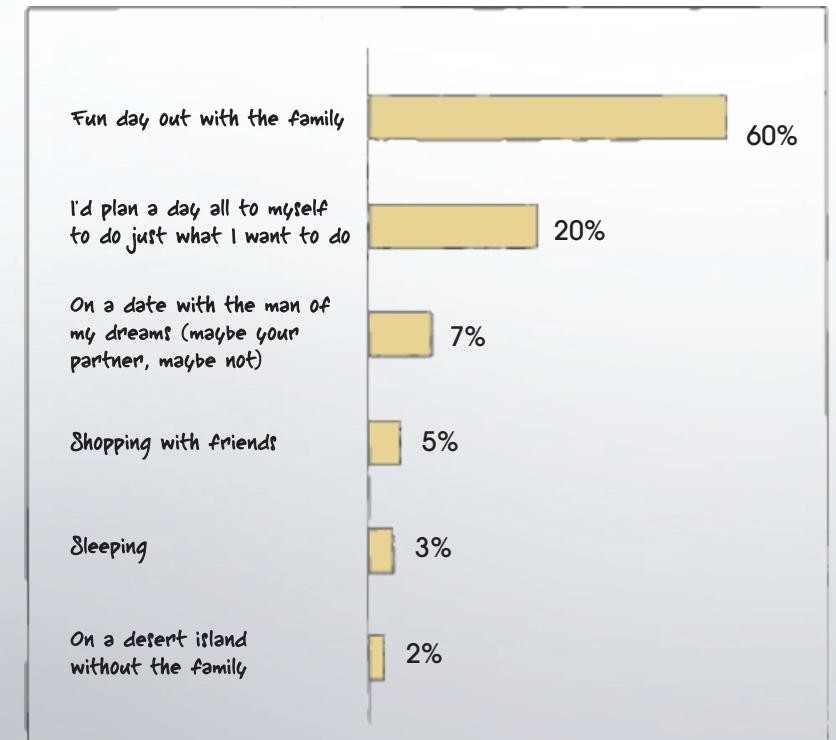


survey results: magic fairy



If a magic fairy waved her wand and granted you a day to do as you pleased, what would you do?

Here is how our survey respondents would spend their day...



FAMILY FUN DAY IDEAS



Sixty percent of the mums we surveyed said that if a magic fairy gave them a free day to do whatever

they pleased, they'd choose to spend the day having fun with their family.

Here are some fun ways to spend the day without breaking the bank.

[More stuff for family fun](#)

no-cook playdough

2 cups plain flour
1 cup salt
4 tablespoons cream of tartar
2 cups boiling water
1 tablespoon oil
Food colouring of your choice

Mix dry ingredients in a large bowl {no need to sift}.
Combine oil and water, and slowly pour into dry ingredients.
Mix until dough comes together.
Add colouring and knead.
Refrigerate until cool.





Interview with Melissa:

Melissa is one of the mums behind Kleenex Mums. She helped create kleenexmums.com.au as source of advice and therapy support for mum's just like herself, trying to navigate the crazy, fun and immensely challenging rewarding world of motherhood.



Name: Melissa
Age: 36 (but only just!)

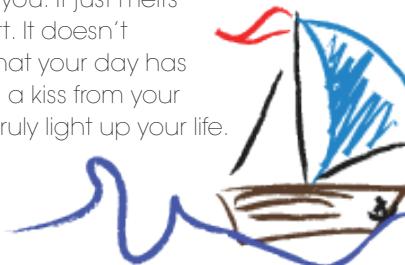
Kids {names & ages}:
Two gorgeous boys: Oscar 3 & Sam 1

I spend my days... trying to get out of the door on time, trying to leave work on time, trying to get dinner ready on time, trying to get the kids in bed on time... My days off work are far more relaxed and are spent playing with my kids and taking them out to the beach, the park or the playground. I'm always trying to keep our home in some kind of order (which is why I take the kids out so often!) and I'm forever packing up toys and washing clothes. At the end of the day I try to find some time for my husband and myself (and a bottle glass of wine!)

Being a mum is... about always being there for your kids. To answer every question, to kiss away every tear, to scare away monsters and to be the monster on demand. To cheer them up and cheer them on. It's about being totally selfless and it is fabulous.

The hardest thing about being a mum is... being creative on cue. And hitting the ground running, often at 5am.

The best thing about being a mum is... when your kids come running up for a cuddle or spontaneously announce that they love you. It just melts your heart. It doesn't matter what your day has been like, a kiss from your child will truly light up your life.



The best advice I got about being a mum is... to make sure that you find some time for yourself. As a mum you always seem to put everything else before 'you': your kids, your partner, your job, the housework... You really need to invest some time in 'you' to be able to recharge and be up for it all. Although having said that, these days I rarely get a chance to go to the bathroom myself let alone get to the hairdresser!

My kids love it when I cook... cupcakes. They both go crazy for cupcakes (even if they only ever just eat the icing). We make them together: it's messy, but fun and they love it.

My perfect weekend would involve... a sleep-in (past 7am would be pure luxury), finishing a coffee while it was still hot, taking the kids to the beach and not having anything much to do except play and have fun. No housework, no demands. Getting the kids to bed early and having some downtime with my husband would top it all off.

My tip on juggling motherhood & life would be... lower your standards! Don't try to do be perfect – it's impossible and not worth the stress. If you do what you can and you do it with love then you are doing pretty well.

Follow Melissa at - twitter.com/kleenexmums



Making the most of your 'me' time

The Kleenex Mums survey results showed that finding time for ourselves is a major stress for many mums. When we finally get our hands on some 'me' time, we feel the pressure to use it wisely.

Here are five tips on how to make the most of your 'me' time. So go on, enjoy it...

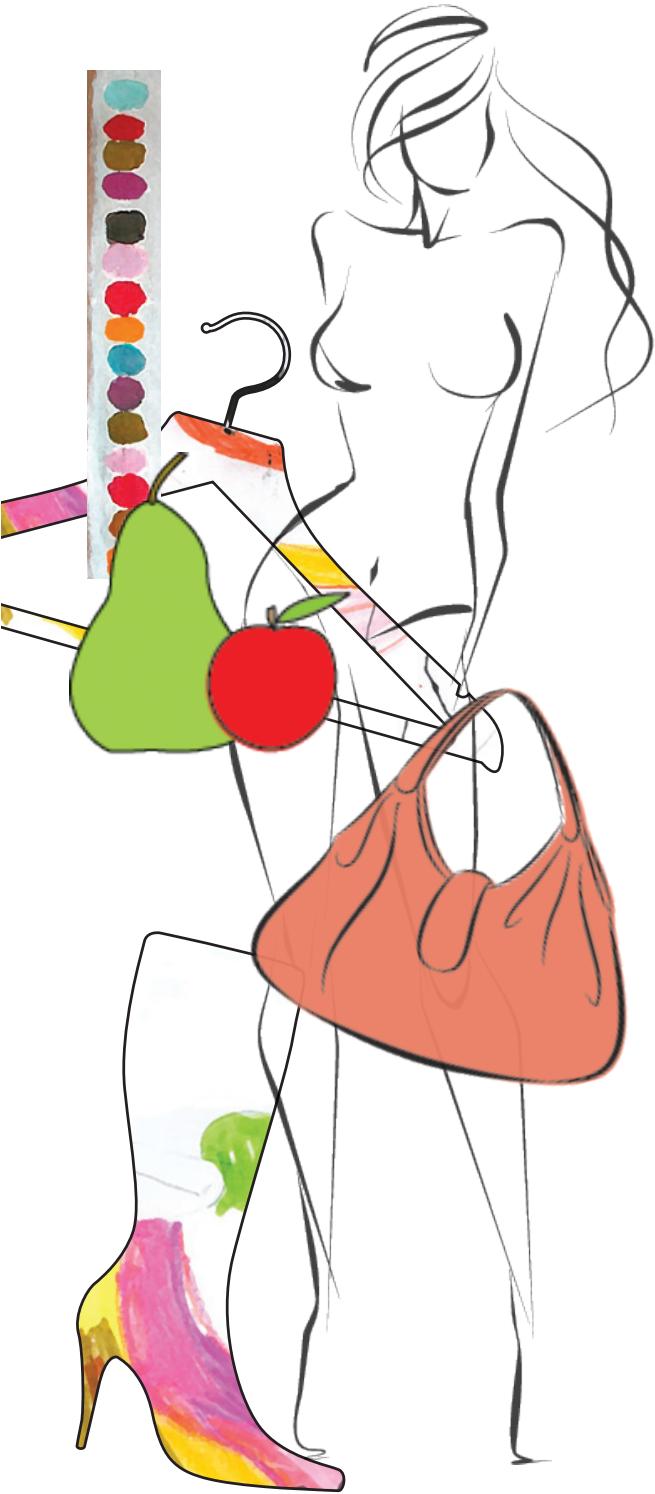
1. Savour the moment. Steal just 15 minutes for yourself in your chaotic day, and recharge your batteries. Step away from the laundry, take a moment away from picking up the toys and head outside. Breathe in some fresh air, and sip on a cup of tea. Enjoy the peace and quiet, and savour the moment, and your 'me' time.

2. Do something active. Schedule in some exercise. A little bit of exercise each day (or every second day) is good for the soul and amazing for your health.

3. Do something enjoyable. Fill a small part of your day doing something you enjoy. Listen to your favourite song, drink your favourite drink, or read a magazine. Whatever it is that you enjoy, make sure you schedule it into your day.

4. Do something challenging. Set small goals for yourself and conquer them. Whether it be finishing a crossword, or learning something new, the sense of achievement you feel from challenging yourself will give you quite the buzz.

5. Pamper yourself. Give yourself a quick manicure, a facial mask, blowdry your hair or soak in a big bubble bath. Pamper yourself at least once a week.



Flattering your figure

Another thing that's constantly on many mums' minds is losing weight and feeling good about our post-baby bodies. Jenny, mum and creator of The Shopping Diva shares her top 10 tips for feeling good and flattering your figure.

1. Know your body shape! The most important rule in dressing to flatter your body is to recognise your body shape and learn its basic rules for 'illusion' dressing.

Pear: You carry the most weight on your hips and thighs. Basic Rule: Correct the balance by drawing the eye up and elongating the leg. Minimise your hips and thighs and ensure your top half flows through to your bottom half.

Apple: You carry the most weight on your bust and tummy. Basic Rule : Accentuate the positives such as your amazing legs, slim arms and décolletage, whilst bringing some shape to your waist and balancing your torso.

Hourglass: You carry the most weight on your hips and bust but never waist. Basic Rule: Show off your best assets stylishly to slim your torso and create balance by avoiding unwanted bulk added to your lower half.

Slim Athletic: You are naturally balanced. Basic Rule: To create curves to your top half and either a little more curve or embracing your slim line to the bottom half.

Petite: You are short and may be any of the above. Basic Rule: To create the illusion of height. Mix and match your basic rule with other basic rules above.

2. Your clothes should fit you! Now that you know what body shape you are, get rid of clothes that are too tight which may make you look bigger or too loose which will make you look frumpy. Plan for a better wardrobe!

3. Set the foundation with shapewear! What lies beneath is the key to flattering your form. Muffin tops and tummies are gone and curves appear in all the right places with shapewear. Poorly fitted underwear can ruin the look of an entire outfit so make sure you are wearing the correct size and style of bra and underwear to maximize the fabulous look of your outfit.

4. Bringing sexy back with heels! Heels make you look and feel sexier in any outfit instantly ! In addition to making you look taller, heels make your back arch, pushing your breasts forward and your butt back, accentuating your female form. Wedges are an alternative day style to give you a casual look.

5. Rediscover your waist! Create an amazing hourglass silhouette by cinching in your tops, dresses and cardigans with a belt that suits your shape and in the right size, style and place. By not doing so, you may accentuate the wrong parts which you'd prefer remain hidden.

6. Bag size matters! In addition to bringing an entire outfit together, a bag can also create the illusion of a slimmer frame depending on its size. For thin frames, a small bag is proportionate whilst large rounded bags create a contrasting and flattering look. Average frames, medium is proportionate to your frame and bigger creates a slimming effect. Plus size, large is proportionate whilst long rectangular enhance bone structure and your shape.

7. Back to basics! These classics flatter all body shapes and can be worn for a smart casual or professional look, so add them to your wardrobe plan! A pencil skirt creates height and shape; Wide leg pants conceal large legs and hips as it evens out the width at the bottom of the leg.

8. Hair Length Petite and want to look taller ? Shorter hair is the way to go as your body will look elongated when your neck shows. You will look shorter if you have bulky hair around your neck.

9. Colours Pear: darker colours minimise width and lengthen the leg. Apple: wearing all one colour will seemingly add two sizes to your appearance, so avoid. Hourglass: Monochromatic keeps you looking proportioned. Slim Athletic: Little prints, contrasting colours and mixed and matched prints all add texture which means curves in all the right places. Petite: One colour will create proportion, lengthen your figure and create a great silhouette.

10. Textures Top heavy (large bust/waist), hourglass and plus size shapes should avoid large knits and bulky textures to avoid looking 'boxy'. Finer knits are best to flatter your shape.

Cheap Date Night

A frantic family life can often leave little time for love, with it quite often appearing very low down on the priority list. Setting time aside once a month for date night should bring the spark back into your love life, especially with these affordable and fun ideas:

1.

Movie Night:

Put the kids to bed, and cuddle up on the couch with a new release flick. Be sure to have your favourite snacks on hand, including the all-important popcorn.

2.

Coffee Catch-Up:

Spend an hour at your local café without distractions, and just chat. Quality conversation is just what the love doctor ordered.

3.

Rollercoaster Love:

Go to the theme park and ride the rollercoaster. Cuddle up to each other with fear. Unleash your inner child.

4.

Sip it up:

Attend a wine tasting. Learn a little about the local wines and indulge without breaking the bank. It's a fun way to spend the afternoon.

5.

Dance-a-thon:

Remember when you first started dating and you used to dance at nightclubs together? Bring it back. Visit your old favourite and dance the night away.

6.

Sweet Tooth:

Head out just for dessert. Something sweet and indulgent will get the heart beating a little faster, and love will soon be in the air.

7.

Sunny Days:

Watch the sunrise or the sunset. Is there anything more romantic?

8.

Indoor Picnic:

Can't get a babysitter? Put the kids to bed, lay out a blanket, light some candles, turn the TV off and have a picnic inside.

9.

Beachy Keen:

Head down to the beach for some fish and chips. There's nothing better than a few fish cocktails between lovers.



Real Friends -

A story of a friendship created online.

Women go online for many reasons. Our survey showed that 72% go online to search for information, 54% log on to have some 'me' time and 71% go online to keep connected with friends and family.

Online communities are emerging as the modern mother's group - they are around the clock havens for mums seeking friendships and conversation. Here is a story of friendship found online.

I searched frantically for number 6. I walked up and down the street. I walked down alley ways. I searched high, and I searched low. Being riddled with nerves didn't help with my sense of direction.

I dialled her number into my phone, and flustered, "I can't find number 6. Are you there yet?"

"I'm just approaching in the taxi. Wait for me on the corner and we'll find it together."

A sense of relief washed over me. She sounded lovely. The nerves were still there though. What if we didn't recognise each other? What if she didn't like me in person?

And then I saw her, and I felt calm. It felt like we'd known each other forever, because we almost had.

We met online years earlier, in an online type mother's group. We'd talked about the interesting and not-so-interesting parts of our lives. We'd shared stories of sleepless nights, tantrums, dinner ideas and life in general.



We knew each other, but we'd just never met in person. Until now.

We found number 6, tucked away from the main street. There weren't enough hours for all the conversations we wanted to have. We talked, ate and laughed. Like it was just another night among friends.

I arrived home, with Hubby waiting for me. "Did you have a good time?" He smirked.

To him, online friendships are for dorks. He's old school when it comes to making friends. I try to explain, "It's not like that. It's normal now. It's the way of the future. People will continue making friendships online. It's time efficient, and fun. It's easy..."

I see his eyes glaze over, but I see he's still smirking. He's just glad to see me so happy. And I am. I have a friend for life. Another friend in real life.



FUNNY FACEBOOK STATUS UPDATES

It's 8pm. The kids are asleep, the kitchen is closed and the dishwasher is humming along. Where are 50% of mums spending their time online? Facebook! That's where. Here are some funny Facebook Status Updates to get you laughing...



...is wondering if they could invent a self cleaning oven,
why can't they invent a self-cleaning house.

...is trying to keep her eyes open when she sneezes.

...if my house is clean, it means Facebook is broken.

...is now on two diets... because I was hungry after the first one.

...never judges a book by its cover. She uses the paragraph
on the back, it tells you what the story is about.

...feels like getting some work done... so is sitting down until the
feeling passes.

...went to the book store earlier to buy a 'Where's Wally' book.
When I got there, I couldn't find the book anywhere.
Well played Wally, well played.

...is cle'a)ni.ng he'r ke)yb29oa;rd

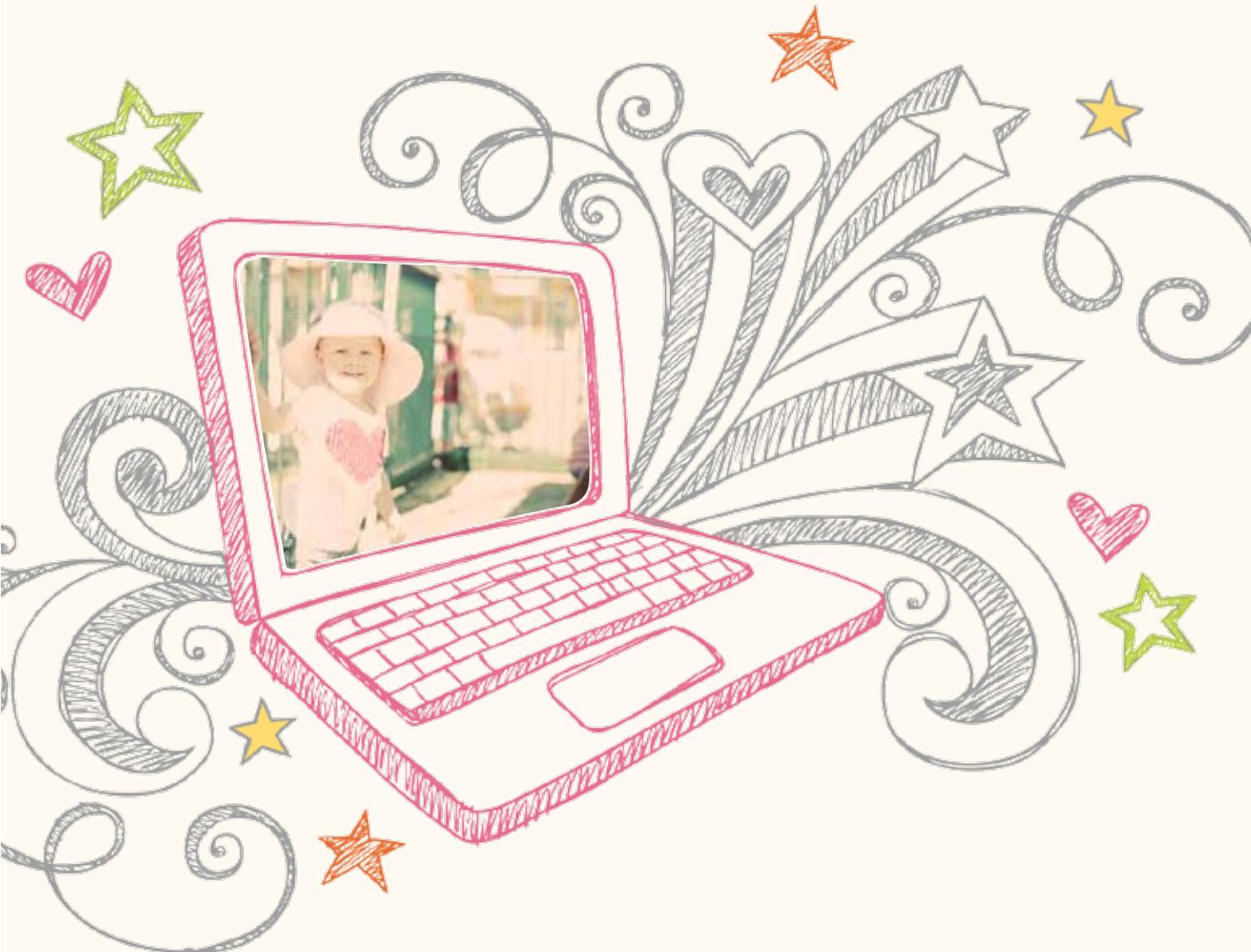
...had a brief but terrifying bout of sanity,
but everything is back to normal now.

...will not be responsible for her actions if she doesn't
get some chocolate soon.

...Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarfs aren't happy.

...Do you know what really makes me smile?
Facial muscles.

blogs for mums



Blogs are popping up everyday with women sharing their lives online. 46% of mums who answered the Kleenex Mums survey said they like to read blogs. Here are 12 blogs that we love, that hopefully you'll love too...

- fatmumslim.com.au
- mummy-mayhem.blogspot.com
- squigglemum.com
- goodgoog.com
- hearmumroar.com
- theshoppingdiva.com.au
- mamamia.com.au/motherhood
- beafunmum.com
- planningwithkids.com
- thehappyhomeblog.com
- childhood101.com
- frillsinthehills.com



Kleenex
Mums

Thanks for joining us on this Mama Trip! We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. While the statistics in our Kleenex Mums survey did tell us a great deal, it's important to remember that every mum (and dad, for that matter) is different. And while we all share common joys and difficulties, no parent, child or experience is ever going to be the same. Toilet training might be one mum's struggle; while another may have a fussy eater, a bad sleeper, or a spectacular tantrum thrower.

Regardless of our individual experience, it's how we mums support each other that matters: with plenty of encouragement, empathy, and virtual cups of tea.

So don't forget that you can connect with other mums from all over Australia, and get oodles of real advice anytime you like, at kleenexmums.com.au

You can also follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/kleenexmums)
and Facebook (facebook.com/KleenexMums)

They're pretty special little people, our kids, aren't they? And it sure is one fantastic trip.