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Motherhood in a Digital Age of the Self

As I walked past a playground this morning I noticed families enjoying the warmer weather. Kids were running, climbing, swinging, playing with bubble guns and each other. I also noticed five adults who I assume were the children's parents. Instantly my thoughts of optimism at the jovial experience the children were having was crushed as I noticed four out of the five adults were hypnotized behind screens of their electronic devices. To give credit, the fifth adult was actually playing with the children, whereas the other four were obviously not even in the same reality but rather fading away into the never land of the hypnotizing screen.

Electronic devices and social media are no doubt brilliant tools which have proven to provide many benefits to our evolving society and more specifically mothers. However, their place in this modern society has impacted mother's roles imploring an ethical and moral dilemma. Women's roles as mothers have been impacted and formulated for centuries as seen through depictions of mothers in art history, and the evolution of baby manuals in the 20th century and the eruption of social media and blogs. This history of an imposed formula for mothers has climaxed today in an environment of intensive and competitive mothering which is encouraged through social media and blogs in a digital age.

Representations of Motherhood Throughout History

As far back as the fifteenth century, women were encouraged to behave a certain way as mothers in the home. This "ideal" style of mothering and womanhood is seen in many depictions of the Mother Mary or Madonna. Stemming from constructs of female characteristics, cultural conventions of the time, as well as the emergence of the Catholic church, Renaissance artists portray Mary, a maternal figure, as the embodiment of the ideal mother. One work which can be used to show this embodiment is the *Madonna Litta* by Leonardo DaVinci (Fig. 1). "Surely paintings of the Madonna and Child were also viewed in part as illustrations of exemplary maternal behavior-what a mother should do, what her child might hope for." ¹ These

characteristics within the paintings acted as tutorials for young mothers to learn how to properly raise their children and behave. “Renaissance women-both brides and nuns-were given dolls of the Christ Child with which to role-play at loving motherhood. Renaissance parents were advised to display sacred images in their homes so that their children might be inspired by these examples of virtue.”² This is clearly displayed in the iconic domestic scene of Mary as she demonstrates her most innate maternal instinct to feed her baby Jesus. The baby Jesus suckles his mother’s breast absorbing her nutrients. “From Plutarch to Barbaro, authors asserted that a mother will come to love her child as she nurses. The mother's breast "gives a store of food that is comfortable for the infant's mouth and pleasant for it to touch and to grasp," as Plutarch explained, and as Lorenzetti and Leonardo show us.”³ Mary is conducting a natural and human act thus allowing the viewer to relate to her humanity and look to this image for their own guidance. According to Rona Goffen, mother’s milk was seen as the best nourishment for a baby throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by theologians and physicians, both physically and spiritually with what is described as its moral and intellectual ingredients.⁴ Mary gazes solemnly towards her child with a calm reverence which can allude to the expectation for mothers to commit to their child as a source of spiritual guidance and physical nourishment. “As Kristeva has recognized. His mother is completely absorbed with her baby; it is he that makes her exist.”⁵

Davinci’s composition is loaded with undertones to suggest piety and purity such as Mary’s modest dress and calm, balanced gaze. In addition, he has composed a dominating triangular composition to show strength and the triad of the trinity. “Only one Man was crucified for the salvation of humankind, however, whereas every man and every woman has a mother, and so the ways in which images of the Madonna and Child were conceived and the ways in which we view them are determined as much by human experience as by theology.”⁶ The

Madonna, as a female symbol, forms a connection for contemporaries of the time to their own experiences in a heterosexual society. In addition, this image is relatable and understandable to women throughout time who are mothers. I have experienced myself this moment as illustrated by DaVinci, nursing and holding my child in my arms and gazing lovingly at my child who was formed in my womb. The gaze of Mary towards her baby, Jesus, is relatable to the human experience but it is also a strong religious image alluding to themes within the Catholic church. “Pensive or joyful, Mary's sweet face answers the fundamental question of how the artist is to visualize the two female archetypes of virgin and mother, which are combined in the person of the Madonna.”⁷ Mary has no interest in the viewer as all of her attention is given to her child. This can be portrayed as the absence of sexual desire, alluding to Mary’s virginity. However, Mary’s devotion to her child and apparent modesty reveals a dichotomy between Mary as a virgin and an embodiment of the ideal mother. The Madonna, as an example of motherhood, is seen, heard, and read about by contemporaries of the Renaissance but it was rarely an actual experience of motherhood. According to Rona Goffen, the reality of life in the Renaissance shows high infant mortality rates as well as high percentage of deaths in childbirth. In addition, many mothers rejected the duty to breast feed by substituting wet nurses in their place. Michelangelo Buonarroti himself was sent to be fed by a wet nurse just shortly after he was born.⁸

Moving into the seventeenth century in another part of the world, we see depictions of mothers and domesticity that similarly create an idealized image of the mother. In contrast, Dutch seventeenth century domestic scenes accomplish this ideal less through religious imagery and more through depictions of daily life.

When painting domestic subjects, Dutch artists (who were mostly male) invariably represented women as types. Very often they are generalized and objectified, their individuality and psychic dimension minimized, in

the interests of having them embody an idea or, more accurately, an appropriate feminine virtue.⁹

Dutch artists, according to Wayne E. Franits, reveal the meaning in their domestic images through ekphrastic poetry, realistic nature of the paintings and visual properties rather than hidden symbols. “This is compounded by an unavoidable element of subjectivity that affects both the selection of themes and the interpretation of individual paintings.”¹⁰ Franits explains that in seventeenth century Dutch society, women, specifically those of the upper class, were believed to be ordained as domestic, childbearing, housewives. In addition, authors composed manuals to instruct women on proper life stages. Specifically, Jacob Cat’s *Houwelyck* was a family book for women describing and illustrating marriage and family life. To the Dutch, childbearing and home-building was seen as an important duty to your state.¹¹

“Protestants..consider[ed] the home the foundation on which society rests - a true microcosm of the state as a whole - and hence the most effective agent in accomplishing its moral and spiritual transformation.”¹² Similar to Renaissance physicians, Dutch humanists, doctors and theologians agreed that a mother’s milk had powerful properties imperative to the development of the child and the passing on of behavioral traits to the child. “To them (humanists, doctors, theologians) the practice of hiring wet nurses was repugnant, a serious breach of maternal obligation.”¹³ In addition, there is a symbiotic relationship between mother and child in Dutch seventeenth century society in which the desire of a child to their mother’s milk is also seen as consoling to the mother.

The code of motherhood began to assume its present form between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries when, according to Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality*, medical, scientific, and political developments reformulated foundational beliefs about biological sex and human sexuality. As a result, new ‘gender fictions’ of masculinity and femininity emerged that profoundly changed the meaning of motherhood, in part, by framing maternal instinct, domesticity, sexual disinterest, empathy, morality, and self-sacrifice as ‘natural’ female characteristics.¹⁴

As artists portrayed all aspects of domestic life for the mother, also included in that mix were images of mothers with ill children. An example of this type of work is seen in Gabriel Metsu's *The Sick Child* (Fig. 2). The mother and child are casually placed in a home as was common for Dutch domestic imagery. The pose is quintessential to a mother's expected responsibility to foster the needs of her child especially while the child is sick.

Joannes de Swaef, a Middleburg schoolmaster who authored an important pedagogical treatise published in 1612, offers the following advice: "Such kindness of the parents pleases the children greatly, so that they think that they are half-recovered when they sit in their mother's lap, nestle against their body, or feel her hand."¹⁵

We also see an image of the crucifixion behind the mother and child. This can encourage mothers to heed the suggestions to care for, comfort and be available for their child while they are sick but also to impress piety. "Periods of illness were thought to provide excellent opportunities for parents to instruct their children in spiritual matters."¹⁶ As seen in Metsu's painting, the child is quite pathetic and feeble mannered, while the mother's embrace and concerned gaze reveals a sympathetic attitude towards her child. However, just as was seen in Italian depictions of ideal motherhood, reality of daily life in a Dutch home may have been somewhat short of ideal.

We cannot assume that emotional standards have remained constant since then. In fact, the scant surviving evidence indicates just the opposite: emotional life in earlier times was quite complex and even paradoxical in that expressions of parental love combined with flashes of rage in a manner that would be quite disconcerting to present-day parents and psychologists.¹⁷

Baby Manuals

In the 1940's Dr. Spock created the manual *Baby and Child Care* laying out specific tutorials of child rearing. Spock instructs mothers through sketched out scenes of daily life paired

with lengthy description of what to expect at certain stages of development, what a child needs and how a mother should act. For example, the caption below a drawing of a small child reaching towards an electrical cord while the mother stands in the back waving her hand to say no reads, “Better to move and distract him than to just say, “No, no!”¹⁸ In addition, his book according to Nancy Potishman Weiss “includes themes such as “the increased emotional demands on the mother, the depoliticization of a once political domesticity, the shift from reliance on a network of women to dependence on a patriarchy of doctors, the nagging sense of worry and guilt that underlie self-confidence.”¹⁹ Spock’s manual is very similar to the painted Madonna or Dutch paintings which show the “ideal” mother because he describes a specific way to raise a child and a specific way for a mother to behave. “In one serious sense child rearing manuals may be renamed mother rearing tracts. Behind every rule concerning desirable child behavior, a message to mothers was couched, advising them on how to act and recommending the right, proper, and moral way to conduct their lives.”²⁰

In today’s motherhood, there are a number of resources for mothers similar to Dr. Spock’s book, such as the popular *What to Expect When You Are Expecting*. This book and others like it act as tutorials for mothers, explaining what will happen when a new child is in their life and what to do. The variety of tutorials such as this has expanded meticulously since Spock, from books on breastfeeding, scheduling, parenting, to online forums posting week by week on how your baby should be developing. In addition, there is an increase in so called mommy blogs and online forums for mothers to also use as resources. Online forums also include group chats and boards to post thoughts and questions.

Some parents are simply savvy enough to capitalize on the growing demand for solutions to typical parenting challenges, argues Pamela Savoy-Weaver, a Detroit psychologist. “More people are reading about parenting in order to reduce their anxiety by seeking a ‘recipe’ to follow,” she says. “As more parents seek the information, the supply—via blogs and posts—has boomed.”²¹

The societal convention is created by a drive to explain and know all aspects of the “ideal” way for parents, and more specifically mothers, to raise a child.

Intensive and Competitive Mothering

I argue that the influx of information providing a ‘recipe’ for parenting and more specifically motherhood has given birth to what is called intensive mothering. Intensive mothering refers to the burden mothers put on themselves to make critical choices for their child. Mary Sauer is a contemporary painter who addresses this concept as created by a “pressure of perfection in today’s social structure”²², touching on motifs such as social media, age, and manufactured media. Sauer’s paintings mirror the overwhelming quality of social media and the age of information in which we are living today (Fig. 3). Sauer suggests that, “we allow social media to control the expectations of the path our lives should lead.”²³ In the so called age of the self, we are obsessed with ourselves, our own image and our own perfection because we are constantly comparing ourselves to others. We see this in the selfie image as well as the ease of posting our thoughts or accomplishments of the day on any online forum. The comparative culture through digital media makes cause for an entirely new perspective of one’s place in society. This extends to the concepts of motherhood and a mother’s desire for perfection. “While in the Western world, we have some of the greatest rights and privileges as women and mothers than anywhere else in the world, yet we have an insidious burden working against our empowerment and freedom. It is the deeply entrenched ideal of the Good Mother.”²⁴

Mommy Blogs and Mommy Groups

Through digital media, mothers have used online forums such as blogs and social media groups to connect, share and learn. “In essence, blogs allow anyone with access to the necessary technology to produce and publish multimodal texts to a local and/or international audience who, in turn, may comment and interact with each other and the blog’s creator.”²⁵ There is an

endless amount of mommy blogs and mommy groups, both private and public paving the way for intensive mothering. “Brooke Miller, a San Francisco-based advice columnist, believes social media have triggered an onslaught of parental insecurities. “Even if [parents] are fairly secure with their parenting and their children’s successes,” she says, “social media has become the official second opinion: ‘I think I’m doing a good job raising my kids ... but let me find out for certain [by sharing on] Facebook.’”²⁶

Anthony Giddens has suggested that we are now living in a post-traditional time where individuals are increasingly adrift from the kinds of narratives and traditions around gender, family and state that once predetermined life pathways. We have moved, instead, to a time when each of us actively builds a narrative of our lives-what he calls the ‘reflexive project of the self’. It is through these self-narratives that we depict ourselves to those around us. These narratives of self take up the spaces left as institutions and traditional social roles recede.²⁷

This ‘reflexive project of the self’ as Anthony Giddens suggests, is not only taking place of the identity of the person controlling the narrative but also is now forming the identity of many children. As mothers post about their experiences, they are posting images of their children on social media creating an online presence for children before they are aware of the concept of online. “According to a 2010 study by Internet security firm AVG, 81 percent of children around the world have an online presence before the age of two. In the United States, that figure jumps to 92 percent. Such an astounding number of young children with parents blogging, Facebooking, or tweeting about them is surely a cultural milestone.”²⁸ In my own research, I found that women have mixed view of the importance of sharing or not sharing and when it is too much. When asked the question, do you ever think women post too much about their children? One mother responded, “It’s not possible to post too much about your child. They are the center of our lives and our proudest achievements.”²⁹ Whereas another mother responded, “I do think some women post too much about their children, nobody should show their whole life to the world. Leave some things just for you and your family.”³⁰

Sharenting

“Parents who share details of their family life online, ostensibly to give other parents advice”³¹ has been termed as “sharenting”. “The average parent will post almost 1,000 photos of their child online before he/she turns five, according to another recent survey of 2,000 parents by The Parent Zone, a U.K.-based site devoted to Internet safety and parenting in the digital age.”³² Sharenting proves to be problematic when it effects the well being of the child and many argue that sharing too much on social media can put your child at risk. “The majority of parents who use social media (74%) say they know of another parent who has shared too much information about a child, including parents who gave embarrassing information about a child, offered personal information that could identify a child’s location or shared inappropriate photos of a child, a 2014 survey of 570 parents by C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital found.”³³ In addition, mothers who “sharent” may be spending more time on social media than actually fulfilling the role of mother. “80% of adults say they’ve seen parents put their attempts to get the perfect photo ahead of their child’s enjoyment of an event.”³⁴

Can Social Media Benefit Motherhood?

Despite the facts that social media has some negative impact on women in motherhood inspiring intensive and competitive mothering as well as inversely impacting children through sharenting, there are also some benefits. Social media can also provide a community of collaboration and support for new mothers as well as advocate and raise awareness for issues that may have not been seen or known. The motivation behind creating a group for mothers can give hope that it may be worthwhile. Stacey Wells, creator of Mommy Life, a private mom’s group on Facebook says, “The goal of the group is to provide a safe, nonjudgmental environment for moms to ask questions, seek and offer advice, share helpful information and resources and encourage each other.”³⁵ In addition, when asked why are you a part of a mom group on social

media? Mothers responded as follows. “I like to read others advice and stories. It's the best place to get first hand advice from many different types of moms.”³⁶ “It's my best form of communication to the "outside" world being a stay at home mom. It also helps to relate to others who can help me figure things out because we've gone through the same things. I also like helping other mothers.”³⁷ “Because I feel if I need advice I could ask, or if I know the answer to help someone else I can help.”³⁸ “For advice, honesty, adult interaction and someone to relate to.”³⁹ On social media, mothers can seek advice from other parents as well as advocate for their children.

A mother who advocated for her child via the most public of forums believes that parents who share are motivated by three basic ideals. “We all want to feel as if we are a part of something, as if we are loved and understood, as if we are doing the right thing,” says Sarah Manley, who gained worldwide celebrity after posting “My son is gay” in response to nosy mothers at her son’s preschool who questioned his desire to dress up as Daphne from Scooby Doo for Halloween. After her post went viral, Manley was both praised and vilified for sparking discussion about gender, bullying and acceptance. However, she says the response was “overwhelmingly positive.”⁴⁰

As mother’s have evolved throughout history there has always been a motivation to impose the “ideal” mother. As seen through this research, the existence of the “ideal” is rarely achieved in reality. In addition, the implications of striving for an “ideal” are evident in intensive and competitive mothering. Today, digital media impacts these implications but also can have a rejuvenating impact as mothers can build community and support as Stacey Wells reports. “There is a whole lot of help and encouragement happening on a daily basis, which is wonderful!”⁴¹



Fig. 1. DaVinci, Leonardo. *Madonna Litta*. 1490-91. Hermitage Museum



Fig 2. Metsu, Gabriel. *The Sick Child*. 1660. The National Gallery of Art



Fig. 3. Sauer, Mary. *Expectations*. 2014

End Notes

- 1 Pg 36: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
- 2 Pg 36: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
- 3 Pg 43: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
- 4 Paraphrase: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
- 5 Pg 37: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
- 6 Pg 35: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
- 7 Pg 35: Rona Goffen. "Mary's Motherhood According to Leonardo and Michelangelo." *Artibus et Historiae* Vol. 20. No. 40 (1999) : pp. 35-69. Web.
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- 9 Pg 14: Franits, Wayne E. *Paragons of Virtue Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.
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- 16 Pg 120: Franits, Wayne E. *Paragons of Virtue Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.
- 17 Pg 122: Franits, Wayne E. *Paragons of Virtue Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.
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- 23 Mary Sauer. <http://www.marysauerart.com/>. 2014. Web. Nov 3, 2015.
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- 36 Miller-Bakhuyzen, Rachel. Interviewed by Alyson Rodriguez. *Facebook*. 2016. Web. April 2016.
- 37 Traore, Erica. Interviewed by Alyson Rodriguez. *Facebook*. 2016. Web. April 2016.
- 38 Tingler, Hannah. Interviewed by Alyson Rodriguez. *Facebook*. 2016. Web. April 2016.
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MOTHERHOOD

“The institution of motherhood is not identical with bearing and caring for children any more than the institution of heterosexuality is identical with intimacy and sexual love. Both create the prescriptions and the conditions in which choices are made or blocked; they are not “reality” but they have shaped the circumstances of our lives. The new scholars of women’s history have begun to discover that, in any case the social institutions and prescriptions for behavior created by men have not necessarily accounted for the real lives of women. Yet any institution which expresses itself so universally ends by profoundly affecting our experience, even the language we use to describe it.”



Adrienne Rich. *Of Woman Born Motherhood as Experience and Institution.*



**LEONARDO DAVINCI.
MADONNA LITTA. 1490-91.
HERMITAGE MUSEUM**

According to Rona Goffen, mother's milk was seen as the best nourishment for a baby throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by theologians and physicians, both physically and spiritually with what is described as its moral and intellectual ingredients.

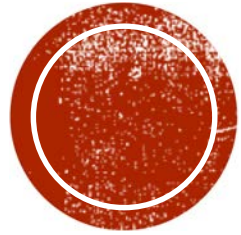




**GABRIEL METSU.
THE SICK CHILD. 1660.
THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART**

The code of motherhood began to assume its present form between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries when, according to Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, medical, scientific, and political developments reformulated foundational beliefs about biological sex and human sexuality. As a result, new 'gender fictions' of masculinity and femininity emerged that profoundly changed the meaning of motherhood, in part, by framing maternal instinct, domesticity, sexual disinterest, empathy, morality, and self-sacrifice as 'natural' female characteristics.





DR. SPOCK

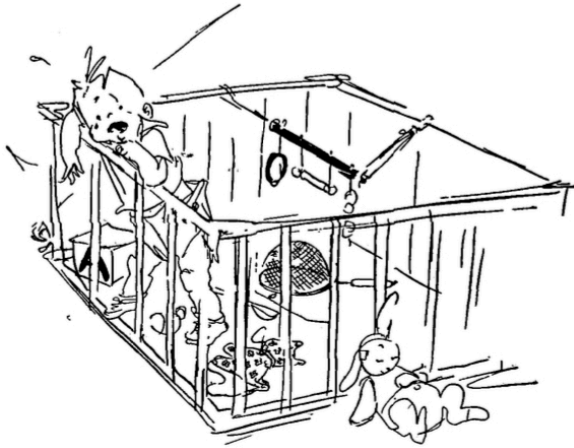
BABY AND CHILD CARE



Includes themes such as “the increased emotional demands on the mother, the depoliticization of a once political domesticity, the shift from reliance on a network of women to dependence on a patriarchy of doctors, the nagging sense of worry and guilt that underlie self-confidence.”

Weiss, Nancy Pottishman. “Mother the Invention of Necessity: Dr. Benjamin Spock’s Baby and Child Care.” *American Quarterly*. Vol 29, No. 5. (1977): 519-546.

he has to retreat to his mother for protection. Then it takes longer for him to work up his courage to be friendly. I think it helps for a mother to remind a visitor in the beginning, "It makes him bashful when you pay attention to him right away. If we talk for a while, he'll try to make friends sooner."



Let him out when he's had enough.

When your baby is old enough to walk, give him plenty of chances to get used to strangers and make up to them. Take him to the grocery store a couple of times a week. If possible, take him every day where other small children play. He isn't able to play with them yet, but at times he wants to watch. If he is used to playing near them now, he will be ready for cooperative play when the time comes, between 2 and 3. If he's never been around other children by 3, it will take him months just to get used to them.

foods. Then at around 9 months, when he gets chopped foods, he wants to pick up the pieces and put them in his mouth. The baby who has never been allowed to feed himself with his fingers is apt to be delayed in taking to spoon-feeding.



Feeling is learning.

A polite baby of 10 or 12 months may just want to rest his hand on his mother's when she's feeding him. But most babies, when the urge comes, try to yank the spoon out of their mother's hand. A mother may think this has to be a tug of war, but she can give the baby that spoon and get another to use herself. The baby soon discovers that it's more complicated than just getting possession of the spoon. It takes him weeks to learn how to get a speck of food on the spoon, and weeks more to learn not to turn it upside down between the dish and his mouth. He becomes bored with trying to eat, and stirs or slops the food instead. Then it's time to move the dish out of reach, perhaps leaving a few crumbs of meat in front of him for him to experiment with.

Even when he's trying very hard to feed himself correctly, he makes plenty of accidental messes, and this you've got to

have to be lamps on tables. He mustn't pull them off by their cords or push tables over. He mustn't touch the hot stove, or turn on the gas, or crawl out a window.

404. "No" isn't enough at first. You can't stop him by just saying No, at least not in the beginning. Even later, it depends on your tone of voice and how often you say it and whether you really mean it. It's not a method to rely on heavily until he has learned from experience what it means—and that you mean it. Don't say "No" in a challenging voice from across the room. This gives him a choice. He says to himself, "Shall I be a mouse and do as she says, or shall I be a man and grab the lamp cord?" Remember that his nature is egging him on to try things and to balk at directions.



Better to remove and distract him than to just say, "No, no!"

that if you are nervous taking the temperature of a struggling baby, you can take the thermometer out in less than a minute and have a rough idea what the temperature is.

It takes longer to register the correct temperature in the mouth—1½ to 2 minutes. This is because it takes the mouth a while to warm up after being open and because the bulb is partly surrounded by air.

606. Taking the temperature. Before taking a temperature, shake the thermometer down. You hold the upper end of the thermometer (the opposite end from the bulb) firmly between your thumb and finger. Now shake the thermometer vigorous-

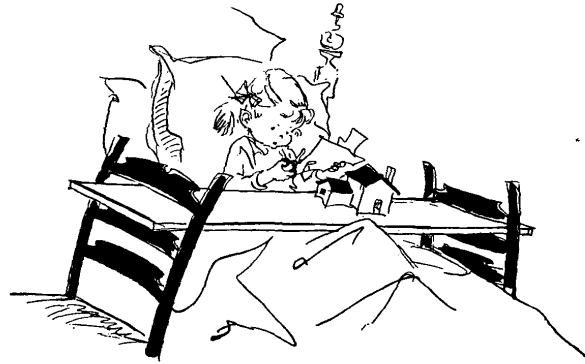


ly, with a sharp, snapping motion. You want to drive the mercury down at least as far as 97°. If it doesn't go down, you aren't snapping hard enough. Until you get the hang of it, shake the thermometer over a bed or couch. Then if it slips out of your hand, it won't be broken. The bathroom is the worst place of all to shake a thermometer because of the hard surfaces.

If you are taking a rectal temperature, dip the bulb of the

light on the talk except for a firm reminder, and put the effort into getting him busy with something else.

If you are buying new playthings, look particularly for the ones that make him do all the work and give him a chance to use his imagination (blocks, sets for building, sewing, weaving, bead-stringing, painting, modeling, stamp collecting). These make demands on him and occupy him for long periods, whereas toys that are merely beautiful possessions quickly pall and only whet his appetite for more presents.



Help an invalid to remain independent and outgoing.

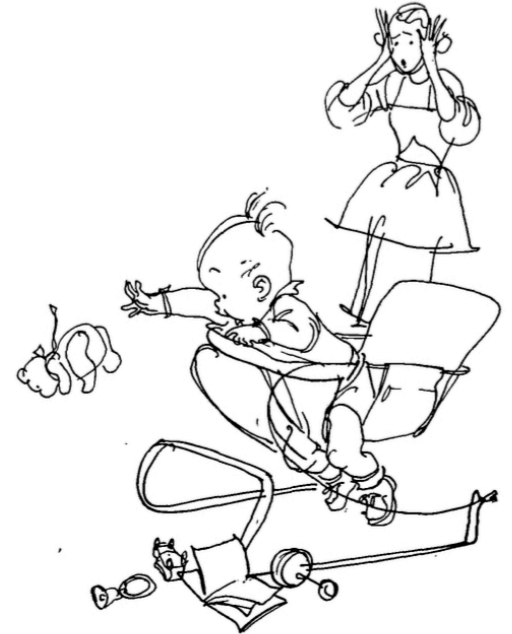
Deal out one new plaything at a time. There are lots of homemade occupations, like cutting pictures out of old magazines, making a scrapbook, sewing, whittling, building a farm or town or doll's house of cardboard and glue.

If a child is going to be laid up for a long time, but is well enough, get a teacher or a tutor or the best teacher in the family to start him on his schoolwork again for a regular period each day, just as soon as possible.

If he's human, he wants company part of the time, and you can join in some of his occupations or read to him. But if he wants more and more attention, try to avoid arguments and bargaining. Have regular times when he can count on your

A small child who is feeling miserable and making a scene is comforted underneath by sensing that his mother knows what to do without getting angry.

406. Dropping and throwing things. Around the age of 1 year, a baby learns to drop things on purpose. He solemnly leans over the side of his high chair, and drops food on the floor, or tosses his toys, one after the other, out of his crib. Then he cries because he hasn't got them. An irritated mother is apt to think he's deliberately making a monkey out of her. But he isn't thinking of her; he is fascinated by a new skill. He wants to do it all day long, the way a boy wants to ride



Dropping is a new skill.

“In one serious sense child rearing manuals might be renamed mother rearing tracts. Behind every rule concerning desirable child behavior a message to mothers was couched, advising them on how to act and recommending the right, proper, and moral way to conduct their own lives.”

Weiss, Nancy Pottishman. “Mother the Invention of Necessity: Dr. Benjamin Spock’s Baby and Child Care.” *American Quarterly*. Vol 29, No. 5. (1977): 519-546.



Question

Abortion (yes or no)

Share

I am currently in a situation that is quite complex. I was dating this amazing guy and come to find out we share the same exes! we continued to date after that but i found out a couple weeks later that i was pregnant. I already have a son and he has two kids with his previous girl (who is crazy btw) and he feels its to soon and we will have a lot of issues if we keep that baby. I have issues with carrying the baby and will need to get my cervix stitched and to top things off had many abortions in the past. Im 31 and feel like an abortion is not the answer yet everyone around feels i should because of all the problems. I dont know what to do and really need good advise. Im conflicted. He makes me feels bad about keeping it yet if i dont i may not have the chance to be pregnant again because of my previous issues. What do i do?



babycenter®





INTENSIVE MOTHERING





Expectations
Oil on Canvas 48x60 2014
Mary Sauer





INTENSIVE MOTHERING

COMPARATIVE CULTURE HAS FUELED A MOTHER/BABY CONSUMERISM IDOLIZING WOMEN'S SELF-IMAGE IN THEIR ROLE AS MOTHERS. ADRIENNE RICH DESCRIBES THIS AS A "PRESSURE ON WOMEN TO VALIDATE THEMSELVES IN MATERNITY."





- There's another way Micah's just like his mom, who has also modeled for Target, Old Navy and more. "I never thought I would meet someone as stubborn as me," she said. In Micah, she's met her match. He's not yet caught up to his mom in terms of [Instagram](#) followers — she has almost 50,000 — but for an 11-month old, he's doing pretty well. Already Micah has almost 7,000 followers.
- <http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/model-mom-baby-syndrome-share-love-camera/story?id=32255281>



SHE...DID HER EYEBROWS



10. Kids are now expected to be fashionable straight out of the womb – that's a lot of pressure on a newborn.



- Is blogging about one's child simply the modern-day version of pulling out the wallet photos, or does the "tell-all" nature of social media put the phenomenon in a league of its own?





Some of us eat popcorn during a movie.. Others prefer their milk *smile emoticon*



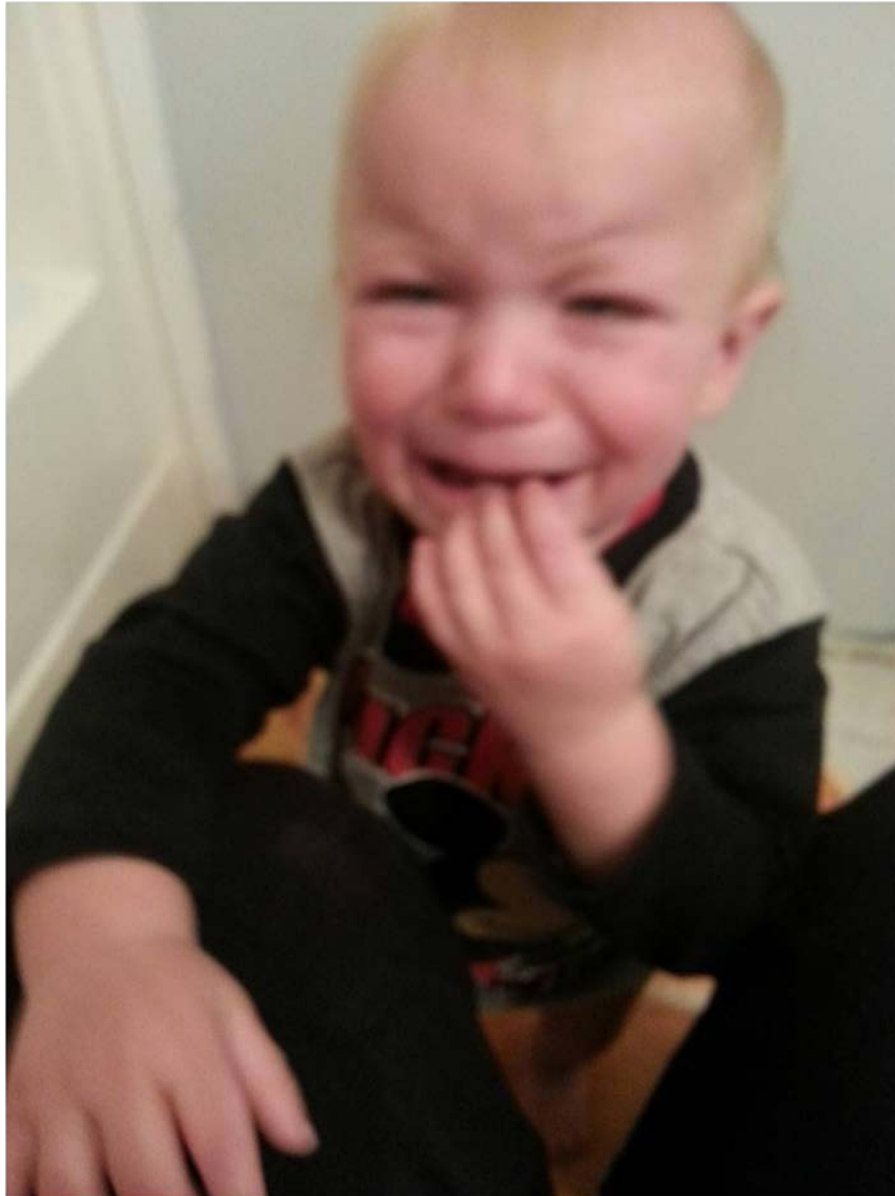


- 80% of adults say they've seen parents put their attempts to get the perfect photo ahead of their child's enjoyment of an event
- People who chase 'likes' on social media are also likely to regard themselves as less happy.
- The average parent will post almost 1,000 photos of their child online before he/she turns five.

“SHARENTING”

PARENTS WHO SHARE DETAILS OF THEIR FAMILY LIFE ONLINE, OSTENSIBLY TO GIVE OTHER PARENTS ADVICE



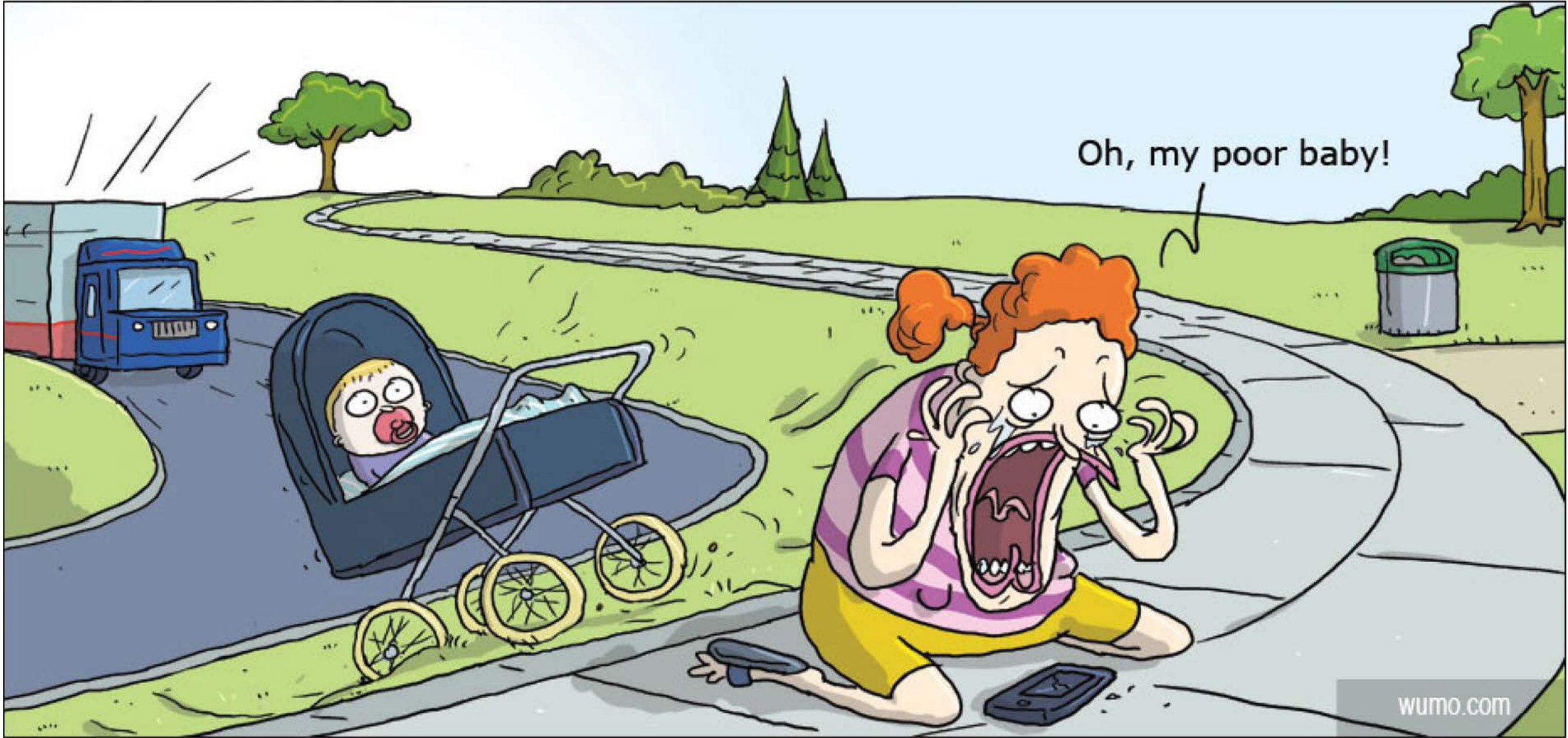


I said no to play in with the toilet cleaning brush.. Lord help him. [#MeltdownMonday](#)

”SHARENTING”

- One mother of a 3-year old child told researchers, “I disciplined my son and he threw a tantrum that I thought was so funny that I disciplined him again just so I could video it. After uploading it on Instagram I thought, ‘What did I just do?’”
- Another parent snapped photos of a crying child who had lost a tooth rather than console him.





Oh, my poor baby!

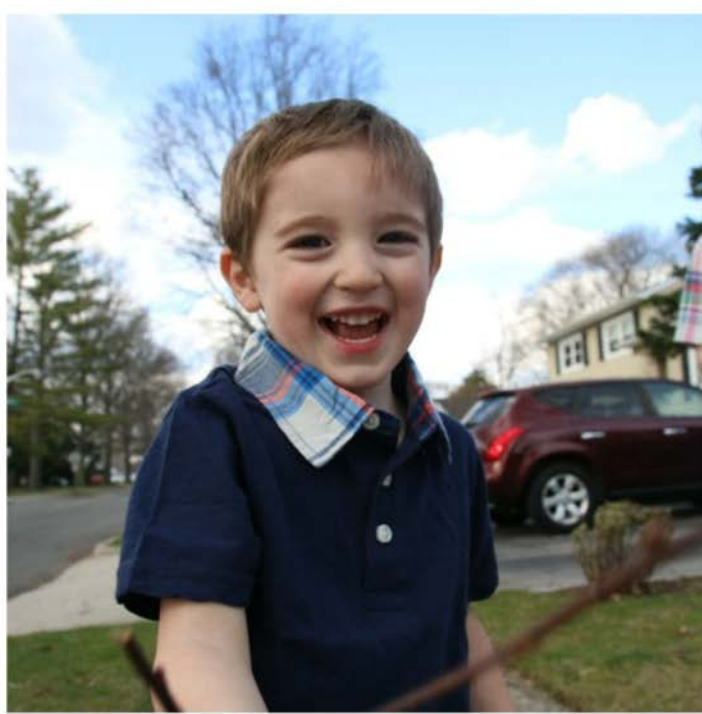


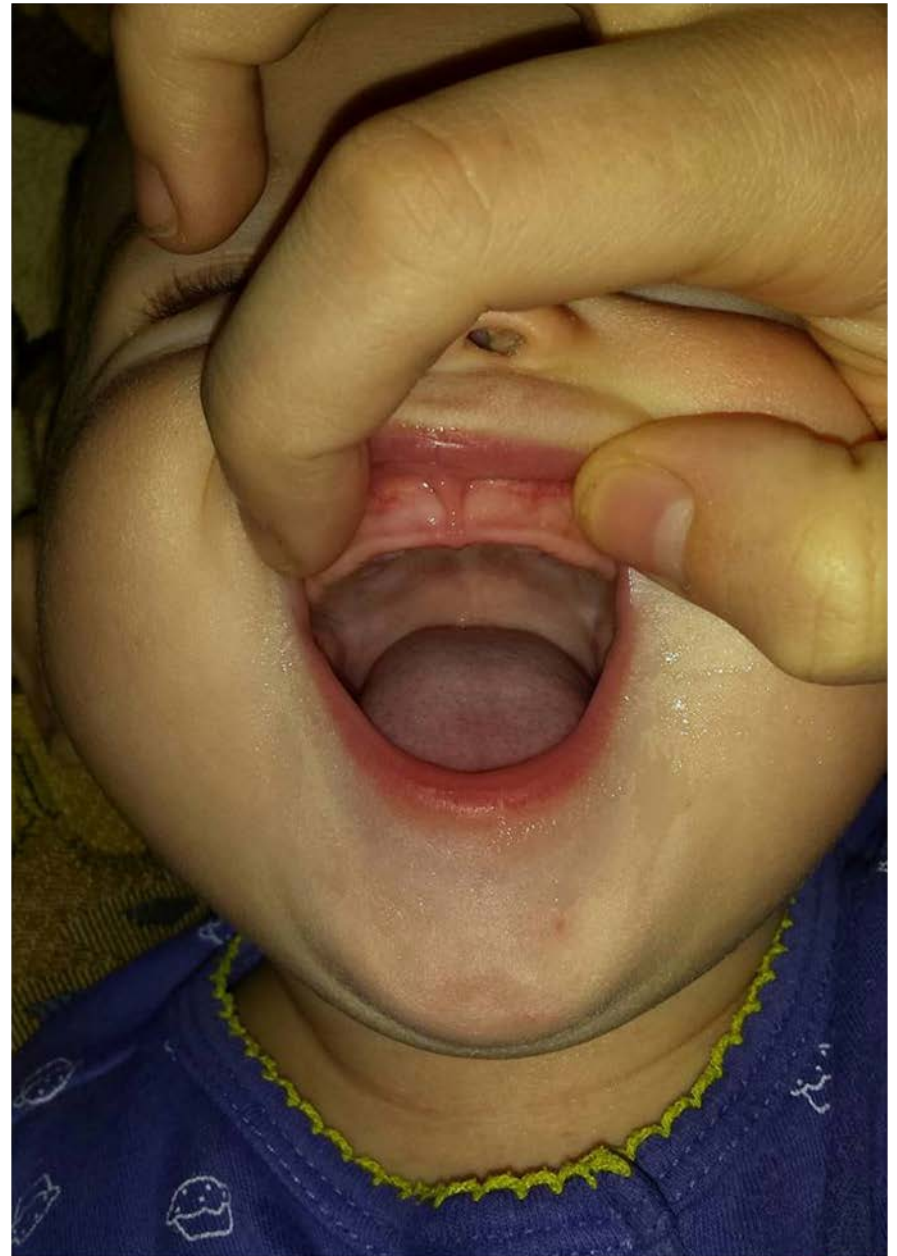
“Not everything has to be captured. Some things can be kept in your heart and your mind. My son is a separate human being, and I respect his autonomy and privacy. Narcissism in our culture is so destructive, but it’s never been so accepted.”

Where is humility in the age of the self?

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/read-this-before-posting-photos-of-your-kids-on-facebook-2015-08-05>









- <http://offbeathome.com/2010/11/my-son-is-gay>





- Pros: <http://momblogsociety.com/>



- https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=effects+of+social+media+on+young+generation&hl=en&as_sdt=0&as_vis=1&oi=scholart&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiawYHug8bLAhVouoMKHfsRD8cQgQMIGjAA
- <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/read-this-before-posting-photos-of-your-kids-on-facebook-2015-08-05>
- <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/765622681/Dear-mom-on-the-iPhone-Let-me-tell-you-what-you-dont-see.html?pg=all>
- <http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/model-mom-baby-syndrome-share-love-camera/story?id=32255281>
- <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/read-this-before-posting-photos-of-your-kids-on-facebook-2015-08-05>

