

PLATYPUS POST

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Dia's Diary



Debi Iarussi

This installment of Dia's Diary features guest writer, Debi Iarussi, author of the just-released NICU coloring book, *Come Home Soon, Baby Brother!*

Growing up, I knew that I wanted to help people and nursing seemed like a calling. Through my career, I went into many different types of nursing, yet I kept returning to working with newly delivered babies and moms. For me, this seemed like an area in the life cycle where I could have a positive effect on the lives of others. This always fulfilled me tremendously.

As years passed, I had the opportunity to take a "sabbatical" as a stay-at-home-mom. After breastfeeding my children, Jennifer and Andrew, lactation took on a whole new meaning. It was such an amazing process and I naturally began assisting other moms to do the same.

Later, after being trained as a breastfeeding educator and lactation consultant, I felt honored to be invited into that special time and space to be a part of such an intimate and loving exchange. I have been in a variety of settings doing lactation-consulting work, and the NICU has always had a special place in my heart.

As I spent more time in NICU's helping new moms to breastfeed their babies, I realized that the other children in these families were feeling just as vulnerable,

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frightened, and confused as the parents, if not more. Watching them and talking with them inspired me to try to help these children to gain understanding about their suddenly expanding families in the NICU.

It seemed logical that a small, simple coloring book would provide an interactive yet informative media for them to share with their loved ones. My vision is that every family impacted by the NICU experience will be given the small gift of the coloring book so that they will sit together to color, learn, share, and read about what is happening. It is in that exchange that children will gain understanding and reassurance that their changing family values them as well as the new baby. The opportunity to fulfill this inspiration and vision brings me great joy, and I do so with gratitude.

Debi Iarussi

Debi Iarussi is a Registered Nurse with extensive experience in Maternal Child Nursing and Women's Services. She has been an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) since 1995.

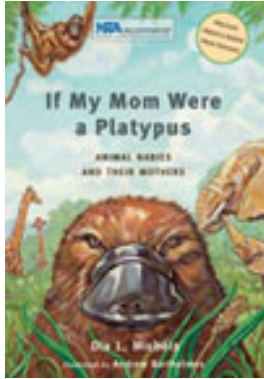
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Books for Families, Teachers
and Parenting Professionals



New Podcast

If My Mom Were A Platypus: Mammal Babies and their Mothers has been our signature book since its publication in 2001.

Dia Michels, author of the book, gives an entertaining talk about lessons from the animal world. In "If Your Mom Were a Platypus: What We Can Learn by Studying Mammal Lactation," Dia extrapolates lessons of relevance to humans from exploring the world of wild mammals. Dia's observations are now available for all to hear on a podcast produced by **Motherwear**.

Motherwear produces the only clothing catalog exclusively for nursing moms. Serving nursing moms for over 25 years, their commitment is not only quality breastfeeding clothing, but also to helping moms feel empowered about their feeding and parenting decisions. Lactation consultant, Tanya Lieberman, runs the Motherwear Breastfeeding **Blog**. She recently interviewed Dia on mammalian breastfeeding.

Listen to the podcast.

If Breast is Best, Why Are Women Bottling Their Milk?

by **Jill Lepore**, *The New Yorker*

Today, breast pumps are such a ubiquitous personal accessory that they're more like cell phones than like catheters.

There are some new rules governing what used to be called "mother's milk," or "breast milk," including one about what to call it when it's no longer in a mother's breast. A term, then, nomenclatural: "expressed human milk" is milk that has been pressed, squeezed, or sucked out of a woman's breast by hand or by machine and stored in a bottle or, for freezing, in a plastic bag secured with a twist tie.

Matters, regulatory: Can a woman carry containers of her own milk on an airplane? Before the summer of 2007, not more than

three ounces, because the Transportation Security Administration classed human milk with shampoo, toothpaste, and Gatorade, until a Minneapolis woman heading home after a business trip was reduced to tears when a security guard at LaGuardia poured a two-day supply of her milk into a garbage bin. Dr. Ruth Lawrence, of the breast-feeding committee of the American Academy of Pediatrics, promptly told the press, "She needs every drop of that precious golden fluid for her baby"; lactivists, who often



stage "nurse-ins," sent petitions; and the T.S.A. eventually reclassified human milk as "liquid medication."

Can a woman sell her milk on eBay? It has been done, and, so far, with no more consequence than the opprobrium of the blogosphere, at least until the F.D.A. decides to tackle this one.

Continued on Page 4

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Roland C. Warren, President
National Fatherhood Initiative

"Becoming a dad is a wonderful journey. It does, however, require learning new skills. Breastfeeding Facts for Fathers is great set of training wheels. Enjoy the ride!"

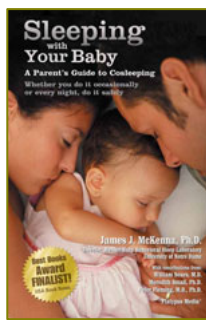
Gregory Long, New Parent Educator and Full-time Dad



Dr. James McKenna

Platypus Media Author Featured as Bed-Sharing Debate Continues

Dr. James McKenna, director of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory at the University of Notre Dame and author of [Sleeping With Your Baby: A Parent's Guide to Cosleeping](#), has been making the media rounds.



On February 3rd, he was a special guest on National Public Radio's "Tell Me More" – [Listen](#). Dr. McKenna joined the show host Michel Martin, along with regular contributors Jolene Ivey and Leslie Morgan Steiner, to discuss the CDC's findings and share perspectives on the right time to separate a child from his or her parent after saying goodnight.

On January 26th, Dr. McKenna's work was mentioned in a [Washington Post](#) article, titled "More Accidental Infant Deaths Blamed on Suffocation in Bed," written by Amanda Gardner, in response to the CDC's recent report on infant deaths.

USBC (United States Breastfeeding Committee) has a petition to encourage President Obama to place a high priority on breastfeeding as an essential public health issue. To sign the petition, click [here](#).

Best Practices in Maternity Care Not Widely Used in the U.S.

Despite best evidence, health care providers continue to perform routine procedures during labor and birth that often are unnecessary and can have harmful results for mothers and babies. The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) most recent release of birth statistics reveals that the rate of cesarean surgery, for example, is on the rise to 31.1% of all births—50% greater than data from 1996. This information comes on the heels of The Milbank Report's [Evidence-Based Maternity Care](#), which confirms that beneficial, evidence-based maternity care practices are underused in the U.S. health care system.

Research indicates that routinely used procedures, such as continuous electronic fetal monitoring, labor induction for low-risk women and cesarean surgery, have not improved health outcomes for women and, in fact, can cause harm. In contrast, care practices that support a healthy labor and birth are unavailable to or underused with the majority of women in the United States. [Full Article](#)



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Backbone and Bounce: Building Resilience

by Patty Wipfler

What can parents do to help their children bounce back under adversity, with a basic sense of confidence in themselves in spite of difficult circumstances? And when a parent has a child who collapses when things are difficult, what can be done to build his resilience?



In a sense, these are perhaps the key questions of parenting. During any ten-year period, I would venture to guess that in the lives of most families, at least one genuine crisis will develop, or smaller ongoing difficulties will gather and create real trouble. And though we work hard to prevent it, our children will be hurt by these crises. They will need a reservoir of confidence in themselves to come through well.

So how do we build resilience? Studies have shown that if just one person in a child's life is consistently supportive, a child is much more likely to overcome difficult circumstances. Just one person who is enthusiastic about the child. Just one person who lights up when the child walks into the room. Continue reading at [handinhandparenting.org](#).



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725 Eighth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
202-546-1674
877-752-8977
Info@PlatypusMedia.com
www.PlatypusMedia.com



Upcoming Conferences:

Breastfeeding: Our Families, Our Future

May 22-24, 2009
Newport Beach, CA

*Dia Michels will be participating in this event, presenting a keynote address: **If Your Mom Were a Platypus: What We Can Learn by Studying Mammal Lactation.***

*She will also present **the Culture and Politics of Breastfeeding, and Extending Attachment Parenting into the School Years.***

If Breast is Best (Continued)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, however, does provide a fact sheet on "What to Do If an Infant or Child Is Mistakenly Fed Another Woman's Expressed Breast Milk," which can happen at day-care centers where fridges are full of bags of milk, labelled in smudgeable ink. (The C.D.C. advises that a switch "should be treated just as if an accidental exposure to other bodily fluids had occurred.") During a nine-hour exam, can a woman take a break to express the milk uncomfortably filling her breasts? No, because the Americans with Disabilities Act does not consider lactation to be a disability.

Can a human-milk bank pay a woman for her milk? (Milk banks provide hospitals with pasteurized human milk.) No, because doing so would violate the ethical standards of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America. If a nursing woman drinks to excess—some alcohol flows from the bloodstream into the mammary glands—can she be charged with child abuse? Hasn't happened yet, but there's been talk. Meanwhile, women who are worried can test a few drops with a product called milkscreen; if the alcohol level is too high, you're supposed to wait and test again, but the temptation is: pump and dump.

An observation, historical: all this is so new that people are making up the rules as they go along. Before the nineteen-nineties, electric breast pumps, sophisticated pieces of medical equipment, were generally available only in hospitals, where they are used to express milk from women with inverted nipples and from mothers of infants too weak and tiny to suck. Today, breast pumps are such a ubiquitous personal accessory that they're more like cell phones than like catheters. Continue [here](#).

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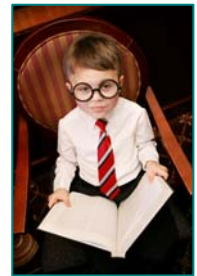
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Homeschooling on the Rise

74 percent increase in number of families teaching own children

A homeschooling movement is sweeping the nation – with 1.5 million children now learning at home, an increase of 75 percent since 1999. The Department of Education's [National Center for Education Statistics](#) reported homeschooling has risen by 36 percent in just the last five years. "There's no reason to believe it would not keep going up," NCES statistician Gail Mulligan told USA Today. [Full article](#)



NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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