

APRIL 2014

BAMBI NEWS



Songkran
celebrations:
**What do they
mean to you?**

How to fake awake:
**Wake-up makeup tips for
sleep-deprived mommies**

*Also inside: easy Easter cupcakes,
Killian's therapy continues,
fitness tips for busy moms.*

A Happy Toddler makes A Happy Momma

By Becky Horace

A BAMBI Mom's Story of her family's journey through therapy continues...

Week 8: If Toddler Ain't Happy, Ain't nobody happy

My family moved to South Carolina when I was four years old. As long as I can remember and could read, we had a sign hanging over the door that I would read to myself everyday that says "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy." The sign is still there and it makes me smile every time I leave the house. As I think about it now, I have to laugh, because how it should read is "If toddler ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!"

I would be lying to you if I told you every week of therapy is perfect and something new and wonderful happens. This week was the week where it wasn't so wonderful. Don't get me wrong, it has absolutely nothing to do with therapy, Killi's doctor, or the institute. Simply put, my toddler was in a mood all week...the kid was just miserable. I think out of the entire week he had two good mornings, and then those turned into very rough afternoons.

I have a theory on this bad week: a growth spurt (he suddenly looks a lot bigger to me) with lots of long naps and early bedtimes. His dad was also gone all week to China for work. I think his body just hurt, he was tired and missing his dad.

During therapy this week, he just wanted his mom so I couldn't escape to the waiting room for his doctor to get some good time with him. One morning as soon as we got to therapy, he went to his stroller and signaled to me it was time to go! All I could say was "Son, we just got here! You are gonna play and you're gonna like it!" He was just out of it the entire week. To finish off our week, we had swim class today that started in a crying fit and ended

with us not doing any of the lesson and leaving about five minutes into it.

A week without dad and two year old growth spurts is hard for mom and toddler. I have learned that momma being happy has nothing to do with anyone else's happiness at this stage in my sons life but has everything to do with how the toddler is feeling from day to day. Maybe I will have the upper hand when he is a teenager... Well a momma can dream. Can't she?

Week 9 & 10: It's been a total blur

I will be honest week nine went by so fast I couldn't tell you what happened. We were going to therapy and everything was normal. And then we moved. Although the move was only a few sois over it still took a few days to prepare and the entire weekend to unpack and organize. Killi was a real trooper and, to be honest, I thought he handled it quite well. The first night we were in our new place, he went to bed at 6pm and didn't wake up until 6am. It was awesome. My biggest concern with this move was how it would

affect his development and I was seriously worried that this would have set him back, but it didn't.

I thought after the first night it was smooth sailing but, boy, was I wrong. The next night and for the entire following week (therapy week 10) he was waking up almost every hour freaking out, trying to open the main apartment door, and screaming at the top of his lungs. Chris and I were at our breaking point. We were walking around like zombies the entire week but luckily by Friday night it had stopped. Killi went to bed and only got up only once and we all finally slept, it was glorious!



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While we were in our zombie-like state, we attended therapy and we participated about as well as we could considering everyone was so tired. During the last two weeks, we have been focusing on the “fun factor” by trying to get Killi to see how much fun it can be playing with other people. If he goes to an object, instead of him staying with that one thing and not socializing we will go to him and really try to be involved by making funny noises or tickling him to break his focus. We want him to initiate the games and play with us. He loves this part. He will spin the bike pedals and watch the wheels turn and I will sit with him and make funny sounds and he just smiles and laughs. If we are in the playroom he will get in the play police car and run away from the big, bad mommy dinosaur that will tickle him - he eats this stuff up.

This is what we have been focusing on all week, the goal is to see how many times we can make him smile and laugh. His doctor explained to me that when we laugh and have fun we produce dopamine in our brains, which helps certain parts of our brain to develop and grow. If you are unhappy or upset this creates cortisol, the stress hormone, this causes someone to have tunnel vision and will only remember the bad stuff. For example, “this toy, with this person, in this situation was not fun and I had a bad time so there is no way I will do this again.”

We are still building the foundation for language by focusing on the social aspect of development. Killi is doing great with this and as a result the “talking” has increased, he was interactive and social today in his swimming class and since he has had some sleep, he is really happy.

Slowly but surely we will get there, and now with the move behind us we can look forward to the next phase in our therapy plan. Until next time...

