

BANGKOK MOTHERS & BABIES INTERNATIONAL, A PROJECT OF CHILDBIRTH AND BREASTFEEDING FOUNDATION OF THAILAND  
www.bambiweb.org

NOVEMBER 2013

# BAMBI NEWS



**LONELY IN  
THE BIG  
MANGO**

**ASD EARLY  
INTERVENTION:**  
WHAT PARENTS NEED  
TO KNOW

**Dads that Rock:  
A Peek Inside Daddy's Playgroup**

# Our Next Adventure: Evaluating My Son for

This BAMBI mom shares her journey to get a diagnosis and treatment for her son.

By Becky Horace

## Our Next Adventure

We are moving forward in the next phase of working on Killian's delays. Like I mentioned last month, we went to a specialist at the hospital that told us he was delayed and kept saying, with her sweet Thai smile "oh, no good." I have tried to implement every recommendation that she gave us. She assured me that I would not be able to find a speech therapist that speaks English and I was Killian's best option. After a month and half, my son has become a little more social with improvements with his eye contact but his speech has not improved. It does not matter what I do to change this, he is simply choosing not to talk to us with words we can understand. He does currently have a special language that he uses.

We have decided that we are not the best teachers for Killian in helping him to speak. I started to search out different options for help with developmental delays in Bangkok. Yesterday I visited the Reed Institute in Bangkok. I met with the director and explained everything that has happened with Killi. How he was talking, went mute when we moved to Bangkok, our disgruntled nanny that was clearly affecting him, our new nanny that he loves and the progress he has made in the last two months with his babbling.

I understand that some kids do not speak until they are three, every child is different and everyone is quick to tell me that I am worrying over nothing. The doctor confirmed that it isn't a big deal if a two year old isn't talking yet but because my son was talking and

isn't now, there was a clear regression that is a point of concern. He explained that it is better to put the work in now instead of waiting to see if he does have delays that need to be addressed.

We started our program today, which consists of a two-week evaluation, five days a week for two to three hours of playtime for Killi. During the evaluation the doctor is going to check everything possible in regards to his development, the previous doctor did this same test in 10 minutes in the hospital. During our first two hours today, Killian had a blast and really clicked with the doctor.

“Get up-to-the-minute updates on Killian's progress on Becky's blog, <http://beckyhorace.wordpress.com>”

After two weeks, the doctor will provide me with reading materials that we will go through together and a step-by-step plan to help Killian improve in the areas where he needs help, obviously speech being the main concern. Finally someone that will actually teach me how to help my son. We will be going back to the center five days a week for two to three hour sessions until December.

This evaluation is used to diagnose autism although my doctor isn't looking to label him, he simply wants to give me the tools to help my son. So either way, if he is or isn't, whatever delays we find he will have help and Killian will show massive improvements by December.

It was great to watch my son play today, with the doctor there to observe and explain everything that is going on and how he is reaching certain markers. It's an amazing feeling when someone is telling you "oh that's good! you see what he did just then?" instead of "ooh, this no good".

At the end of our first day, the doctor looks at me and says "Killian is a very clever boy, he is persistent and a problem solver. I am confident we will see massive improvements before December." I explained I will read, study, watch and do anything it takes to help my son.

I do ask that you keep all of us in your prayers. As we move through this process I will continue to write so that other parents that might be in this similar situation can have some information to compare it to. I see how God is guiding me and is making it very clear that I am to be focusing all of my efforts on my son at the moment. This is our next big adventure.

## Evaluation Complete

The two week evaluation period is complete. The doctor is very pleased with what Killi can do but at the same time there are several areas we need to work on. Thank the Lord, our son has not been diagnosed with autism but with developmental delays in several areas and for the sake of having to call

# Autism

it something the doctor said he would diagnose him with PDD-NOS.

Here is the definition of PDD-NOS from the autism speaks website:

PDD-NOS stands for Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified. Psychologists and psychiatrists sometimes use the term “pervasive developmental disorders” and “autism spectrum disorders” (ASD) interchangeably. As such, PDD-NOS became the diagnosis applied to children or adults who are on the autism spectrum but do not fully meet the criteria for another ASD such as autistic disorder

“I was hoping that the doc would say at the end of two weeks “There’s nothing wrong here! He will be fine.” but at the same time I guess I knew this was coming.”

toms in another core area such as restricted, repetitive behaviors.

Our doctor explained that we would call it this for the fact that there is something going on with Killian and his development but we can’t necessarily put our finger on it. I was hop-

first two weeks the plan can be altered quickly.

It breaks my heart that this wonderful life experience in another part of the world that is so culturally enriching has become such a massive life change that has affected my son in a negative way. It makes me wonder if we hadn’t moved what would be his current condition but really there is no way to know this. I am so happy and grateful that we have a place to go that will help us work with our son, get him to where he needs to be and have him preschool ready in a very short time.

“This evaluation is used to diagnose autism although my doctor isn’t looking to label him, he simply wants to give me the tools to help my son.”

der (sometimes called “classic” autism) or Asperger Syndrome.

Like all forms of autism, PDD-NOS can occur in conjunction with a wide spectrum of intellectual ability. Its defining features are significant challenges in social and language development.

Some developmental health professionals refer to PDD-NOS as “subthreshold autism.”

In other words, it’s the diagnosis they use for someone who has some but not all characteristics of autism or who has relatively mild symptoms. For instance, a person may have significant autism symptoms in one core area such as social deficits, but mild or no symp-

ing that the doc would say at the end of two weeks “There’s nothing wrong here! He will be fine.” but at the same time I guess I knew this was coming.

The next three to four months we will be working with Killian on specific developmental goals that children his age are reaching but he is not, through play therapy. The doctor has established goals based on the milestones he should be reaching and while we play we will be focusing on two to three at a time. Once the doctor figures out what Killian will respond to in the form of play and his ability to learn, he can teach me how to do it at home during our everyday activities. The good news is that you can tell within two weeks if the method you are using is working and if nothing has changed within the

As our therapy progresses in the next few weeks I will be posting on his progress and the methods we are using at home. It is very encouraging that just within the two weeks with the very little we have learned during the evaluation period my son has said “dog,” “bye bye,” “movie,” “juju” (juice) and “please.” The doctor has expressed how pleased he is with Killian’s ability to problem solve, his gross motor skills, balance, the appropriate use of toys and his conniving... I mean clever ways. As parents, we only want what’s best for our children. This move to Bangkok and the help we will be receiving is a two for one deal that I believe is the best thing possible for my son and our family. ■