



## What's new @ OutsideTheCrib.com

### In this issue:

- A SAHD's changing role
- Coping with ADHD
- Lunch Box Packing 101
- Surviving the School Year

### Top 5 List

#### Things to NEVER say to a pregnant woman:

- Wow, you've popped!
- Are you sure you're only 3 months along?
  - Is it twins?
- Gee, I didn't think your belly could get any bigger!
- That maternity shirt reminds me of a tablecloth.

**Don't forget to share!  
Forward this  
newsletter to a friend.**

First, what's new inside-the-crib: I recently gave birth to my third daughter. Those hot weeks in July made for some cranky days - hence my Top 5 List this month! These were all actually said to me. I kid you not. After taking some down-time with the new bambino, the site is now fully refreshed!

New to the site is the *Birthday Party Ideas* section and information has been added to the *Health Info* section. The *Family Fun Calendar*, *Birthday Party Ideas* and *Things To Do* sections are added to frequently as we discover more to do in our area so check back often. We also have more bilingual content for our francophone OTCribers. For all you crackbook (read facebook) addicts, we have created an OTC fan club which has loads of stuff that just won't fit on the site. It's also a great way for parents to

connect with each other.

Also, coming soon, look for more hard hitting news items. Who's kidding who, I'm referring to celebrity baby news. Another new feature: "In a New-Born Minute" (insert Don Henley vocals here) a "when I get a chance" blog related to the good times of rearing newborns.

This month's newsletter is devoted, fittingly, to the school year. The time of year when we shift gears and say goodbye to the lazy days of summer and rev up our family schedules.

And speaking of schedules, check the side panel of page 2 for upcoming events. Of special note is the Family Fun Day at the Coliseum Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>. The OTC will be hosting a "Princess Make-Over" booth at the event so be sure to stop by!

## Dads and the Empty Nest. by Paul Merrigan

It's only a few short weeks now until I can no longer define myself as a stay at home dad. Once the youngest is off to school, it can be a difficult adjustment for any parent, and fathers are no different when it comes to the anxiety that arrives when one loses a piece of their identity.

In the past two years, I have grown a lot, both as a person and as a dad. I feel that there is no price that can equal the experience of being so directly involved with my sons as they have grown. My intention is to still work a flexible enough schedule to still be involved as much as possible outside of school and to be aware of how things are in each of my sons lives.

I think one of the best things any dad can do when facing an 'empty nest' after

staying at home with their child or children is to reflect on what they have taught their children, but also what they have learned. Our direct influence on our children diminishes the moment they step on the bus for their first day of school, but this doesn't mean that we aren't still a major player in the way our children continue to mature and change. Stay involved, continue to show them how important they are and model how you want them to be. It's a large investment, but the returns are immeasurable.

*Paul Merrigan is a S.A.H.D. to two boys. He has a M.Ed. in Counselling Psychology and is a certified private personal counsellor. Visit his blog at <http://www.dadinreallife.com> or contact him at [paulmerrigan@hotmail.com](mailto:paulmerrigan@hotmail.com).*



## My dirty little secret... by Tracey Stephenson

### ADHD Resources

Family Service Moncton offers the program "Parents taking Charge of ADHD". For more information, contact 857-3258 ext. 0 or visit [www.fsmoncton.com](http://www.fsmoncton.com)

[www.adhd.ca](http://www.adhd.ca)

[www.aboutkidshealth.ca/ADHD](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/ADHD)

[www.chaddcanada.org](http://www.chaddcanada.org)

### September Events

Visit the OTC's [Family Fun Calendar](#) for details.

1<sup>st</sup> - Riverview Labour Day Country Picnic

2<sup>nd</sup> - First Day of School!

5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>: Atlantic International Balloon Fiesta

13<sup>th</sup> - NB Youth Day

20<sup>th</sup>: Family Fun Day (Christmas Daddies)

20<sup>th</sup>: Sharon & Bram - Family Show

23<sup>rd</sup>: NHL Exhibition Game - N.Y. Islanders vs. the Boston Bruins

Before having children my vision of parenthood resembled that of a sitcom. In this world when a child misbehaved, it was a tender moment between parent and child, discussing the "crime". The parent would sternly tell the child this was unacceptable behaviour and of course the child, would vow to never do it again. The parent would then bestow a loving hug or reassuring pat on the back.

Yeah right.

I'm a mother to two wonderful boys who I love dearly. My older son has been diagnosed with ADHD. This has been a long battle for us. In the past two years we have received some bad advice and medical opinions. Finally we have a great doctor who confirms this diagnosis.

Nathan has always been an aggressive, impulsive child with behaviour that was out of the realm of normal five year old behaviour.

## Lunchbox Ideas

With the start of the school year comes the dreaded task of packing the lunch box! Your child's lunch should be nutritious to help fuel their physical and mental activities and varied and enticing enough for them to eat it rather than trade or toss it - no pressure! It's hard to be creative and healthy day after day, but here are some tips to help you:

- Remember to keep things fun: Add a colourful napkin, straw or cup. Include a photograph, joke, sticker, note of encouragement on game or test day, or start a game like hangman or tic-tac-toe that you and your child can play all week.
- Be mindful of allergies at the school.

Last spring we sought professional help and it suggested we medicate him. I was shocked. I was not going to be *that* mom who had to drug her child. But after a very stressful first year at school and home...we tried it. The initial medication was a disaster and now our doctor is recommending an alternative. I hesitate to go down that road again. I never wanted to resort to medication and we have tried other behaviour modification tactics but with little success.

We just want our son to be happy and to be able to function in this world. I know I need to get over my mommy guilt of medicating him and focus on what's going to make his life easier for him.

*Tracey is mom to two boys. She's putting her computer science background to good use in an advertising career. You can contact her at [traceygs@hotmail.com](mailto:traceygs@hotmail.com). Watch for future columns from Tracey.*

- Watch lunch box sized packs & pre-packaged meals. These treats often contain a ton of sodium, sugar or trans-fats.

- Be creative: use cookie cutters to cut sandwiches or get inspired by a theme like all orange-coloured food for Halloween.

- Include your child: make a list of foods your child likes and choose from these categories. Let your child pack the lunch.

- Prepare the night before: mornings can be hectic with sometimes unexpected surprises. The quality of the lunch will be better.

Visit [www.familyfun.com](http://www.familyfun.com) for 16 great mom-tested lunchtime ideas or [www.kraftcanada.com](http://www.kraftcanada.com) for other inspiring ideas & nutritional info.



### Opening Soon in Greater Moncton:

- **Peekaboos Playhouse** will re-open soon at a new location.
- **My Gym** - children's fitness centre
- **Bulldog Interactive Fitness For Youth**

The OTC's [Top Stories](#) will keep you posted as details become available.

### Monthly Sites Picks:

[www.thecraftykid.com](http://www.thecraftykid.com)  
arts & crafts come to you

[www.justthefactsbaby.com](http://www.justthefactsbaby.com)  
your go-to guide for all things mom and baby

[www.breakoutbras.com](http://www.breakoutbras.com)  
the name says it all and there's free shipping!

[www.bullyingcanada.ca](http://www.bullyingcanada.ca)

### Got Something to Say?

The OTC newsletter is looking for different takes on various parenting issues. Don't be shy, put those witty comments, keen observations, or frustrating pet peeves on paper. The pay isn't great but you'll get to tell people you've been published! Simply email [outsidethecrib@rogers.com](mailto:outsidethecrib@rogers.com)

## My Baby is Starting School? by Alison Davidson

September is my favourite month. Despite being out of school for awhile, it signals the beginning of my "calendar year". I doubt I'm alone when I admit that I love shopping for back to school essentials. Although my children haven't started school yet, I'm already feeling the anxiety of sending my "babies" off to school, via my friends who are going through it now. It's all well and good for me to chuckle as fellow moms worry about their child confusing their snack and lunch food items, sitting on a bus alone or not being included on the playground. (These are real fears people!) But I'll be in their shoes next year turning to them for advice.

Here are some tips to help both of you through the school year:

- Meet the bus driver, crossing guard, teachers & school staff and familiarize yourself with the school and playground.
- Don't dismiss your child's concerns. What they are feeling is very real. Acknowledging them can alleviate stress. Listen, ask questions and offer solutions.
- Avoid showing your child your own concerns and emotions. Refrain from telling them again and again how much you missed them. Your child could start to feel badly about leaving you.
- Stay positive and excited. Talk about goals. Ask your child what they want to learn and what extra-curricular activities they may want to try.
- Evenings and mornings can be harried. Slow things down and take the time to show interest in their experience and let them know how much you love them. Turn off the tv and talk about the day that passed or is about to begin, but ask questions in a creative manner. "What did you do today?" wears pretty thin after a few days.
- Set a night time and morning routine and stick to it. Consistency helps with expectations.
- Get enough sleep. This applies to parents and children!
- Prepare the night before. This can be tough due to energy levels but make sure homework is complete, permission slips are signed, pack school bags and lunch boxes, and pick outfits.
- Understand that everyone wakes up differently and make adjustments. You may be a morning person but your 7-year-old may need 15 minutes to ease out of bed.
- Celebrate with your child's favourite treat! Whether it's the first day, another milestone or just a random good day, show your child you're watching, involved and proud of something s/he has accomplished at school.

