

ISSUE 151 | JANUARY 2024 | DHS15

# Mother Baby & Child

**SUPPORTING  
NEW MUMS BACK  
TO WORK**

**KEEPING KIDS  
HEALTHY IN WINTER**

**WHY 'ME TIME'  
MATTERS**

**INTERIOR DESIGN  
TRENDS FOR 2024**

**THE WEIGHT  
OF NEW YEAR'S  
RESOLUTIONS**



**HOW  
BIRTH ORDER  
AFFECTS  
PERSONALITY!**



62970001070223

**CPI**

Publication licensed by  
Dubai Production City, DCCA



# Durham School Dubai

600 Years of  
British Education

## Admissions Open

Education First

---

Small Class Sizes

---

Outstanding UK  
Experienced Teachers

[www.durhamdubai.com](http://www.durhamdubai.com)

Call : 800 DURHAM (387426)



## EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Ella Naseeb Ryan  
ella.ryan@cpimediagroup.com

## ADVERTISING & SPONSORSHIPS

Mathew Tharakan  
mathew.tharakan@cpimediagroup.com  
05 05 34 95 94

Kay Marham  
kay.marham@cpimediagroup.com  
05 67 68 62 68

## MARKETING

marketing@cpimediagroup.com

## DISTRIBUTION & SUBSCRIPTIONS

info@cpimediagroup.com

## DESIGN

Froilan A. Cosgafa IV

## FOUNDER

Dominic De Sousa  
(1959 - 2015)

## PRINTED BY

Al Salam Printing Press LLC

## FOR OTHER ENQUIRIES, PLEASE VISIT:

motherbabychild.com



MBCMagazine

## PUBLISHED BY



## HEAD OFFICE:

Office 1307, DSC Tower,  
Dubai Studio City, Dubai, UAE  
P.O. Box 13700  
Tel: +971 4 568 2993  
Email: info@cpimediagroup.com

A publication licensed by Dubai  
Production City, DCCA

© Copyright 2024 CPI Media Group FZ LLC.  
All rights reserved.

While the publishers have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all information in this magazine, they will not be held responsible for any errors herein.

cpimediagroup.com

# EDITOR'S LETTER

## *Hello Mum!*

Happy New Year to you and your family! I'm wishing you a prosperous, fun-filled and healthy one too. This time of year often brings plenty of talk of resolutions and self-improvement and, while that's often a good thing, it can lead to lots of pressure! I spoke with Kamelia Salimi, CEO and owner of Zoga, about her top three ways to stay grounded when it comes to goal-setting for the year ahead. Give it a read on page 20 - I hope the pointers help you on your way to success! And if your goals involve setting aside a little more time for yourself, there are some important ideas to take on board, on page 16, as you embark on your journey.



For any new mums out there who are facing the daunting transition back into the workplace, you'll be very interested in a thought-provoking article on page 26. It delves into the challenges facing women as they balance motherhood and their professional roles, as well as the supports that can make this reintegration much smoother.

With the new year getting underway, you may notice that your child's homework load is also heating up. This can lead to some tension between you both and you'll find some great advice on page 39 about guiding your child to get on top of their homework tasks if they're currently finding it a struggle.

Elsewhere, we go through the seven design elements that are set to make a statement in homes this year (page 42), as well as the power of saying "Yes..and" to your child when they ask for something you need them to compromise on. You can check it out on page 30.

You may have noticed our front cover features siblings and for good reason! I'd love to draw your attention to a fascinating piece we've carried addressing the ways birth order influences children's personalities. You already know that being the eldest is a completely different experience to being the baby of the family, and these nuances can have a profound effect on how kids develop. This is a must-read for any parent who wants to be more mindful of balancing out these dynamics with their parenting style. You can read all about it on page 31.

This month, I share my rejuvenating beauty ritual for the new year with you (page 49), as well as introduce a new skincare brand on page 50 that I think could become a mainstay for glowing skin! As you know, I like to leave some things for you to discover for yourself in every issue, but this time, I also sincerely hope that you discover more of the health, hope, laughter, strength, joy and prosperity that you and your family deserve in 2024!

Happy New Year!

Editor

Mother, Baby & Child Magazine



# CONTENTS



Editor's Letter 03

## THINGS TO DO 08

A Selection Of Our Favourite Things To Do This Month! 09

## WELLBEING 12

The Benefits Of Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing 13

Five Ways To Keep Kids Healthy This Winter 14

Why 'Me Time' Is Essential 16

Perinatal Mental Health In Fathers 18

The Unspoken Weight of New Year's Resolutions 20

The Relationship Between Indian Food And Veganism 22

Nutritious, Sustainable Meal Solutions 23

## Editor's — PICK —

### DETOX AT COYA SPA & SALON

If you're anything like me, you're on the lookout for ways to kickstart 2024 feeling refreshed and revitalised. Let me tell you about Coya Spa & Salon, located in the heart of Mirdif, a spacious beauty haven that can help you enter this year looking your best. I recommend revelling in the powerful benefits of lemon and juniper essential oils with their 'Bloat Buster' treatment. Designed to target any leftover festive puffiness and promote overall wellness, this detox massage with lymphatic drainage is the perfect solution for anyone looking to reset after overindulging during the holidays. The 'Bloat Buster' treatment combines the power of massage therapy with the gentle, effective technique of lymphatic drainage. By stimulating the lymphatic system, this treatment helps to eliminate unwanted toxins, reduce water retention and improve your circulation, leaving you feeling lighter and more energised for the year ahead. Priced at AED 350, this treatment is sure to put a spring in your step this January.

*Call +971 4 6015555 or visit  
[www.coyaspa.com](http://www.coyaspa.com) to find out more.*



PAEDIATRICIAN  
RECOMMENDED

# Bond of love that grows with every touch

A Gentle range  
for baby's delicate skin

QV<sup>™</sup>  
baby

SOAP, COLOUR,  
FRAGRANCE FREE



#SkinToHeart

AVAILABLE IN PHARMACIES &  
ONLINE STORES

MADE IN  
AUSTRALIA

# CONTENTS

Editor's  
— PICK —



42

## PARENTING

Sustainable Parenting: Choosing Eco-Conscious Baby Care	24
Supporting New Mothers Getting Back To Work	25
The Power Of Saying "Yes, And..."	26
How Birth Order Affects Personality	30

## EDUCATION

Inside Victory Heights Primary School	31
Play, Learn, Thrive: Dibber's Family Fun Day	34
A Look At Green Grass Nursery	35
What To Do When Homework Is A Struggle	36

## HOME & GARDEN

Accent Walls: Four Unique Colour Options	39
The Top Interior Design Trends For 2024	40

## GOOD LIVING

Kenwoods Farmstay: An Interview With Desiree Gonsalves	41
Editor's Beauty Picks	42



## STROLL IN STYLE WITH LA PARISIENNE

For any parents looking to elevate their stroller style this year, take a look at La Parisienne by CYBEX, an homage to the eternal legacies created by the greatest Parisian couturiers: Coco Chanel, Christian Dior and Yves Saint Laurent. La Parisienne presents a set of contemporary iconic strollers, made to inspire generations who value true quintessential chic, class and style. The luxurious nature of the collection lies in the craftsmanship used to create each piece, meticulously made to recall the most iconic Parisian décor. The main design features a crystal pattern with six different types of stones for each item, while hand-cut organza embellishes the exquisitely crafted windows of the canopy.

Inspired by Parisian femininity, this collection includes PRIAM, the comfort stroller that seamlessly blends luxurious comfort with unmatched manoeuvrability, MIOS, the compact stroller with a sleek, elegant design and COYA, an ultra-compact buggy that folds into a hand-luggage compatible size in seconds, making it the perfect companion for every fashionable little explorer.

Visit [www.cybex-online.com/en/row/cybex-la-parisienne.html](http://www.cybex-online.com/en/row/cybex-la-parisienne.html) for further information.



# I AM FUTURE EMPOWERED



Discover the world of  
South View School!



**International, British Curriculum School  
for Ages 3 - 18  
Located in the heart of Dubailand**

**Admissions Open for Academic Year 2023 - 2024**



# THINGS TO DO



A host of exciting digital shows; a Bhangra-inspired workout class; cutting-edge spa treatments and a day out at Kalba Mall!





# FAMILY FUN AT THEATRE OF DIGITAL ART

Your little art enthusiast or culture connoisseur is in for an extraordinary treat as the Theatre of Digital Art (TODA) proudly presents 'From Monet to Kandinsky' - a groundbreaking exhibition that promises to unravel the mysteries behind the art revolution that spanned a century.

Featuring the works of iconic artists such as Van Gogh, Monet, Seurat, Klee, Munch, Cézanne, Delaunay and Kandinsky, this immersive experience is set to take you and your aspiring artiste on a 360-degree journey through the masterpieces that defined an era. The exhibition goes beyond mere observation, offering a unique perspective quite unlike anything else.

Step inside the canvas and witness the brushstrokes that ignited controversy, explore the colours that mesmerised, and uncover the stories behind the pieces that were once considered unworthy. The exhibition dares visitors to question preconceived notions and invites them to appreciate the profound impact these rebels had on the world of art.

Don't miss the opportunity to witness art history happening right before your eyes. 'From Monet to Kandinsky' is open until the 31st of January at Theatre of Digital Art. This is a unique chance for you and your family to experience the brilliance of these masterpieces and gain a deeper understanding of the pioneers who shaped the art world.

The excitement at TODA doesn't stop at 'From Monet to Kandinsky' either. Here are some of the other amazing shows and experiences taking place this month for your family to enjoy!

## The Little Prince

Experience the enchanting 'Little Prince Digital Show,' a groundbreaking journey through a magical universe. Combining modern technology and hologram live performance, this innovative production brings the timeless tale to life. Follow the Little Prince as he encounters fascinating characters, navigating the perplexing world of grown-ups. Your little prince or princess is sure to love it!

**When:** Throughout January at selected showtimes.

## History of the UAE

At TODA, you have the opportunity to witness the inspiring tale of the UAE's development in 'Vision, Progress & Pride at 360°.' Here you will have a front row seat to watch the evolution from barren deserts to iconic skylines. This unique experience unveils the rise of iconic landmarks, the spirit of unity, and the relentless pursuit of excellence that shaped the UAE.

**When:** Throughout January at selected showtimes.

## Immersive meditation

Embark on an introspective voyage within yourself through the 'Breathwork Meditation Session' at TODA. Led by certified meditation facilitator Elisabeth Bohler, this session offers a profound exploration of mindfulness using lights, sounds and specialised breathing methods. Delve into the practice of circular breathing, a potent technique that enables a reconnection with your inner essence while alleviating stress from both the body and mind. What a wonderfully relaxing adventure!

**When:** January 11th, 17th and 25th at 7:30pm.

*For bookings and more information, visit [www.toda.ae](http://www.toda.ae).*

# ENERGETIC BHANGRA CLASSES AT PAD



Aventura Parks, UAE's largest nature playground, is launching two new winter camps for children between 5-12 years of age. Both the Olympics-themed camp and the Jurassic-themed camp are places where learning goes outdoors and the magic of nature takes centre stage. These are sure to be thoroughly enjoyable (and educational!) camps for your little ones. Upon completion each child also gets a certificate of participation to proudly take home!

## Olympics-themed week

Hey dance lovers! If you're up for some Punjabi beats or a workout that feels more like a party, head over to PAD by Yasmin Karachiwala, a boutique Pilates and Dance Studio in The Greens. They're teaming up with the awesome Pure Punjabi for Bhangra classes three times a week, so it's time to get your dance on! The Bhangra class is priced at AED 100 and you get a 50% discount when you book your first class. These classes are all about fun and energy - don't miss out on the good vibes and great moves at PAD. Get ready to dance, laugh and feel amazing!

**When:** Tuesdays at 8pm, Thursdays at 10am and Saturdays at 3pm.

**Price:** AED 100 per class (50% discount off first class)

**For bookings or more information, visit 906, The Onyx Tower 1 in The Greens, call 04 294 1745 or visit [www.thepadfitness.com](http://www.thepadfitness.com).**

# A WORLD OF EXCITEMENT AT FUN CITY KALBA MALL



Fun City's brand-new branch in Kalba Mall, Sharjah, is the latest hub of entertainment for all ages. This multi-level venue is packed with adrenaline-inducing rides, interactive video and arcade games, a vibrant play area and a new thrilling inflatable park that's designed to cater to fun-loving adventurers.

Fun City's indoor play areas meet the highest safety standards and have trained staff to ensure that you can enjoy your day while your kids are at play. With its fresh and vibrant ambience, this trendsetting space has not just revamped Fun City's brand image but taken it to an entirely new level.

Fun City at Kalba Mall is far from your average family day out, it's a place where fun and enjoyment truly come to life. Whether you're a thrill-seeking child eager to explore the play area and rides, a teenager seeking super-cool adventures in the inflatable park, or a parent looking to spend quality time with family and friends, this store has it all in one place!

**For more information, visit [www.funcity.ae](http://www.funcity.ae) or call into the branch located on the ground & first floor at Kalba Mall, Sharjah.**

# AN INDO-ITALIAN PIZZA FESTIVAL AT DHABA LANE



Prepare your taste buds for the meeting of two cultures at Dhaba Lane's 'Indo-Italian' Pizza Festival, running until January 15th. Unbelievably,

these uniquely delicious pizzas are half price every Tuesday! Chef Harangad Singh has crafted irresistible blends of flavours, resulting in creations including the Napoli Butter Chicken Pizza and Pandara Road's Murgh Khatta Pyaaz.

Veggie wonders like Punjabi di Haryali start from AED 45 while meat-lovers can indulge in the Ashok Meat Keema Khansa, priced at just AED 50, among other meat-topped offerings. Treat your family to this special meeting of two of the world's finest cuisines exclusively at Dhaba Lane's Al Nahda outlet.

**For bookings and more information, contact 056 822 8300.**



# INNOVATIVE TREATMENTS AT TALISE SPA



Talise Spa at Burj Al Arab Jumeirah and Jumeirah Al Qasr have launched new treatments and therapies to help guests switch off and rejuvenate in the utmost luxury. At Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, you can enjoy a range of face treatments by luxury skincare brand Swissline. Talise Spa at Jumeirah Al Qasr is the first in the region to introduce the Satori Wellness Lounger as part of its wellness offering, a complete natural vibrational and binaural sound treatment designed to fully synchronise the body and mind.

## Swissline

Nine new revitalising and luxurious Swissline facial treatments, including one created exclusively for Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, are now available at the award-winning spa. Swissline brings three decades of cellular-therapy experience in its award-winning formulas and treatments, which revitalise and nourish your skin. Each of the treatments provides incredible results by uniting natural actives and skin-identical ingredients together with high-tech therapies, including radiofrequency technology and LED light, to regulate the skin's cellular metabolism, address inflammation and strengthen and protect the skin barrier.

## Clinic Le manic Sublime Youth Infusion

The 90-minute Clinic Lémanic Sublime Youth Infusion is a de-aging treatment that is available exclusively at Talise Spa and utilises plant-based stem cell cultures to increase the skin's natural collagen production, instantly plumping the skin and filling in lines and wrinkles. Charged with precious plant stem cells and colloidal gold, the treatment promotes DNA repair, while positively affecting the expression of the skin's sirtuins that regulate cellular metabolism and ageing. This ritual is further elevated by a face-lifting massage with radiofrequency

technology that strengthens the underlying structure of the skin, firming, lifting, contouring and sculpting while reducing the signs of puffiness, inflammation and fine lines. The treatment also incorporates LED therapy to restore the skin's original radiance. The treatment is priced at AED 1,950.

Other skin-transforming Swissline treatments include collagen treatments, LED therapy, a detox facial with ultrasonic spatula exfoliation, a brightening facial, a repair and recovery treatment for pre-and post-aesthetic procedures, and express treatments for those short on time and looking for a quick boost of luxurious revitalisation. Rest assured that these Swissline treatments will have you looking and feeling your vibrant, youthful best!

## Satori Lounger

The Satori Wellness Lounger, by German wellness-tech brand Gharieni, is now available at Talise Spa Jumeirah Al Qasr. A vibroacoustic treatment, the lounger is clinically proven to support better sleep as well as help combat stress and anxiety, promoting a calmer state using an advanced technology called Quantum Harmonics. The lounger uses sound frequencies to give a complete mind-body stimulation, which can help change neural pathways and create healthier behaviours.

Additionally, synchronised binaural sounds and music, sometimes accompanied by guided meditation, guide brainwave patterns to states of relaxation, meditation, deep sleep and heightened mental focus. Guests booking the new Swissline or Satori Lounger treatments can also enjoy all of Talise Spa's award-winning facilities. This is a truly innovative way to treat yourself to some well-earned relaxation!

**To book, contact +971 4 366 6818 or email [mjtalise@jumeirah.com](mailto:mjtalise@jumeirah.com).**

# WELLBEING



Ways to keep kids healthy this winter; why resolutions can be tricky; the necessity of ‘me time’ and more!







# THE BENEFITS OF NON-INVASIVE PRENATAL TESTING

*We look at how new developments in prenatal testing can help parents to be as prepared as possible.*

Expecting a child is one of the most beautiful experiences in life. However, it can spark a number of concerns. Many women seek answers to their worries through prenatal genetic testing, but some choose not to do so because these tests come with risks. Fortunately, expectant parents now have a safer and more accessible alternative to traditional prenatal testing, with the option of non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT). This cutting-edge technology, available at the National Reference Laboratory, an M42 company, allows healthcare providers to screen for a wide range of conditions in a non-invasive manner, early on in your pregnancy.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Dr. Sara Bisari, Head of Cytogenetics at HealthPlus Fertility Center and the National Reference Laboratory in Abu Dhabi, says “NIPT stands out from traditional prenatal testing methods due to its non-invasive nature. Unlike other procedures like amniocentesis or chorionic villus sampling (CVS), NIPT analyses foetal DNA present in the maternal bloodstream. This foetal DNA becomes detectable as early as ten weeks into pregnancy, eliminating the need for invasive procedures that carry a risk of miscarriage.”

While NIPT covers a wide range of genetic conditions, its primary focus is on common syndromes such as Down, Turner and Patau syndrome. However, it can also screen for all chromosomes, offering a thorough examination of the foetal genetic makeup.

The test is performed through a simple blood test, where a sample is collected from the expectant mother, and the baby’s DNA is then isolated and analysed. This circumvents the need for riskier procedures, making it a safer and more comfortable option for pregnant women.

Dr. Bisari adds: “The accuracy for this test is 99 percent for the common syndromes and that is why it is recommended by the American College of Medical Genetics to be performed for all pregnancies. While we’re not the only entity providing the service, we are in a privileged position of providing a comprehensive service surrounding prenatal care.”

## ADVANTAGES

The technology’s main advantage is its ability to detect chromosomal abnormalities. However, ongoing research is looking at its potential for targeting single-gene diseases in the future. NIPT is able to provide expectant parents with valuable information at a very early stage in their pregnancy journey.

NIPT also stands out as an exceptionally safe procedure with no associated risks or side effects, offering reassurance to pregnant women without subjecting them to the potential complications of invasive tests. Moreover, results from NIPT are generally reported within a week, ensuring a prompt assessment of your baby’s genetic status.

The test is recommended for all singleton or twin pregnancies, providing a safe and accessible option for all pregnant mums. In the case that issues or syndromes are found, healthcare providers can recommend further tests to help understand your situation better. The National Reference Laboratory further enhances this process by offering in-house counselling to support informed decisions.

The innovative procedure empowers expectant parents with a safer and more accessible way to gain valuable insights into their pregnancy journey, offering better preparation or peace of mind for parents-to-be.



# FIVE WAYS TO KEEP KIDS HEALTHY THIS WINTER

*Children are most susceptible to picking up colds and illnesses in the winter season. Here are a few top tips to make sure your little one is at their best.*

Winter truly is a wonderful time of year. It brings lovely, crisp evenings and a welcome break from the intense summer heat. Unfortunately, this time of year can also place quite a lot of strain on your little one's (and your own) immunity, thanks to flu season and a whole host of other bugs that take hold in the winter months.

Picking up colds, bugs or viruses usually leads to days off school for kids or missing work for parents. These bouts of sickness can impact the regular flow of routine in the household and make it difficult for each member of the family to get back in the swing of things. Everyone wants to stay well throughout winter to make the most of the season and spend some time outside in the cooler air.

## FIVE TIPS TO KEEP THE BUGS AT BAY

Thankfully, there are some steps you can take to ensure that both you and your little one have the best possible chance of avoiding illness this winter.



## Sleep

As the old saying goes, 'sleep is the best medicine'. It's only in relatively recent years that we see the wisdom in this statement. Sufficient sleep is a key component of keeping your little one healthy and well. During sleep, your child's body gets the opportunity to tackle any bugs before they take hold and to replenish energy, to make sure your little one is fighting fit.

In order for your child to get the best possible night's sleep, try to set up a sleep routine for them. This doesn't need to be particularly complicated. A simple, repeatable routine, such as changing into their pyjamas, brushing their teeth and a bedtime story can work well. The goal is to get them used to falling asleep at the same time each night and getting a full night's rest.

## Vitamins and minerals

Ensuring that your child is getting the proper amount of vitamins is another step you can take to keep them in the best of health. Certain vitamins are key components for a strong and healthy immune system. Among these are vitamin C, vitamin D and zinc.

Vitamin C is an antioxidant, which aids the immune system in working properly and also maintains the health of the immune system itself. Evidence suggests that if your little one catches a common cold, you can reduce the length and severity of it by helping them get enough vitamin C throughout their illness.

Studies have also shown that insufficient levels of vitamin D can increase the risk of



catching an infection, while zinc is known to support the growth and function of immune cells. If you find it difficult to ensure that your child is getting their daily dose of vitamins and minerals through food alone, there are plenty of supplements available. Consult with your little one's doctor to find the best option for their specific needs.

## Hygiene

A simple way to help your child stay well and avoid picking up a cold is to teach them to wash their hands properly. It's generally accepted that it takes a lot longer than you might think to thoroughly wash your hands. Two renditions of 'Happy Birthday' is a suitable measurement for most kids, as they know the song well and can sing along to make the process a little more fun.

Children are exposed to so many different kinds of germs in school and at the playground. If they can develop a handwashing habit, perhaps before and after each activity (especially mealtimes!), then they'll be in a much better position to avoid catching a cold or infection.

## Nutrition

Healthy food helps make a healthy child. It's especially important throughout the winter season to make sure that your little one is

receiving a balanced and varied range of nutrients from their food. Keeping colour in mind when choosing food is an easy way to manage this. The aim here is to have a wide variety of colours in your child's meals throughout the week.

These should include leafy greens, bright red, orange or yellow vegetables and more. A broad range of colours can be a good indicator of a varied nutritional profile, providing your little one with the healthy boost they need this winter.

## Ventilation

Air quality is an often underestimated factor in keeping yourself and your children healthy in winter time. Lots of families forget to circulate air in their homes and stagnant air means that any airborne viruses or bacteria will hang around for a longer time. Consider using an air purifier to address this. Air purifiers can keep the air in your home circulating and will filter out any harmful elements. You may even notice that the air smells cleaner too! Clean air is a must for keeping your little one well this winter.

Catching colds may be part and parcel of wintertime but it doesn't have to be that way. These five tips can help you to give your children the best possible chance of dodging colds and beating bugs, leaving them free to make the most of the magical winter season.



# WHY 'ME TIME' IS ESSENTIAL

*We spoke to Flora Castillion, a limiting belief specialist in the region, on the very apt topic of 'me time' and how it impacts your life.*

In the midst of the whirlwind of parental responsibilities, the constant tether to social media and the increasingly pervasive professional expectation to be available outside of office hours, coupled with the relentless pursuit of success, the profound importance of 'me time' often eludes us. It is not merely a luxury or an unattainable utopia, but a fundamental necessity for your wellbeing, especially as a mother. From the vantage point of being a limiting beliefs specialist, Flora is convinced that the world would operate more efficiently and our relationships would flourish if we embraced more moments for ourselves. This article aims to delve into the intricate dynamics of sacrificing 'me time', fostering a dialogue about the imperative responsibility of carving out time for a deeper connection with ourselves and our loved ones.

## CULTURAL NORMS

In a culture that glorifies busyness, the act of sacrificing 'me time' is often applauded as heroic. However, the paradox lies in the silent toll it takes on us, leaving us yearning for breathing space, time to reflect and understand our emotions, and engage in activities that bring us personal joy - sometimes, it's as simple as taking a breath. The stigma surrounding self-care is not just a subtle societal expectation; it's a resounding voice in our minds, convincing us that prioritising ourselves is a betrayal, selfish, or indicative of not doing a good enough job to deserve that time.

In the relentless pursuit of success, many driven professionals dismiss self-care as a weakness or a frivolous concept, a reality that Flora encounters with clients on a daily basis.



## PROFESSIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Consider the case of Kelly, a lady whose unwavering dedication to her career led her to a point of suffocation, characterised by overwhelming fatigue, mental fog and constant self-doubt. This not only affected her mental wellbeing, but also dimmed the clarity she once possessed to lead her team. The repercussions were felt across the team - a decline in morale and collaboration. Kelly's fatigue and lack of clarity cast a shadow on the once-vibrant work atmosphere, resulting in misunderstandings, breakdowns in communication and an overall sense of unease within the team.

## PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES

This suffocation at work extends into personal relationships, as neglected





wellbeing bears its weight. Take James, for instance, who, on the brink of emotional collapse, had allowed the lack of 'me time' to insert a wall between him and his loved ones, creating a void of disconnection. This disrupted the foundation of his marriage and left his partner feeling like a stranger in their own home. The long-standing belief in James' mind was that giving more was the key to success and being worthy of love. Ironically, this had the opposite effect, leading to oversaturation, an inability to connect with his own state of mind and ultimately, a disconnection from himself. Through concerted efforts and a focus on the importance of 'me time', James underwent a transformation. He shifted from a dangerous belief system, to placing 'I matter' at the forefront of his mind. He now recognises that he is worthy of love even when he prioritises himself, breaking free from the wired belief that neglecting his needs would result in rejection.

### THE NECESSITY OF 'ME TIME'

Reclaiming 'me time' is not a mere indulgence; it is a critical component of maintaining mental and emotional wellbeing. Putting yourself first minimises the harm caused to others due to overwhelming stress. A lack of 'me time' can manifest in anger, poor communication, blame, distance and a general lack of patience. Flora's primary advice is to stay aware of your internal dialogue and the language you use with others. The brain tends to believe what it is repeatedly told, turning words into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Saying "I don't have the time" becomes a cycle of perpetual distractions, depriving oneself of self-care. While days may be short, creativity knows no bounds. Be resourceful, seek assistance and create small pockets of time for yourself consistently.

### GET CREATIVE

Marwa, a parent juggling family life, discovered creative ways to carve out moments for herself amidst the chaos of parenting. By communicating with her partner and expressing the need for self-care, she witnessed significant improvements in her wellbeing. This, in turn, strengthened her family bonds, with her happier and calmer presence fostering a closer connection with her husband. The importance of 'me time' for self-satisfaction is often overlooked. Feeling overwhelmed can lead to a lack of patience and unjust reactions, creating tense atmospheres where everyone is on edge. By prioritising 'me time', Marwa transformed her entire family dynamic, positively impacting all involved.

### LIMITING BELIEFS

Limiting beliefs surrounding 'me time' and the fear of being perceived as selfish act as tight nooses, restricting our ability to be free. Taking ownership of 'me time' is not selfish; it is a responsibility, a declaration that we are beings of connection who are not designed to be constantly tethered to others. The incessant demands of social media (often masquerading as 'me time') contribute to stress rather than genuine rejuvenation. The best advice is to slow down, turn inward and address your needs.

### FIND YOUR SOLITUDE

Identify an activity that brings you solitude - whether it's cycling, walking, sewing, cooking, reading, drawing, listening to music, writing or learning a new skill. This is something exclusively for you, that brings you joy. Work is demanding for most people and commitments can consume us; do not miss that meeting, the football match, the doctor's appointment, the gym class or the social gathering - keep going until the list is clear. The silent suffocation caused by sacrificing 'me time' is a lonely existence that demands our attention. It's not just about reclaiming personal wellbeing; it's about breaking free from the shackles that hinder our relationships, cloud our professional success and leave us yearning for the life-giving breath of self-care.



# PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH IN FATHERS

*PANDAS Foundation, a perinatal mental health charity, is shedding light on the underappreciated issue of the psychological struggles that can come with fatherhood.*

PANDAS Foundation is launching a groundbreaking campaign to address the often-overlooked issue of postnatal depression and anxiety in fathers. The initiative aims to recruit male volunteers who can provide crucial support to dads experiencing perinatal mental health challenges. PANDAS currently offers various support services including phone, WhatsApp, email, Facebook and weekly Zoom calls, connecting parents with trained volunteers who offer peer support based on their own experiences with perinatal mental illness.

## HELP FOR FATHERS

While the majority of service-users are mothers, there's a growing awareness of the need for support among fathers. PANDAS acknowledges the unique pressures faced by dads, who might hesitate to express their



struggles, having not gone through the physical trauma of giving birth, all while feeling the pressure to have everything in place for the wellbeing of their partner and newborn. This can build up to an overwhelming sense of pressure. Annie Belasco, head of PANDAS, emphasises the urgent need to address the gap in mental health support for men during the parenthood journey, which is why the charity now hopes to recruit more men to join its volunteer network, so greater support can be given to fathers.

## A LACK OF SUPPORT

Annie Belasco tells us, “There is a gaping hole in mental health support provision for men, who are about to be or are parents. Men are overlooked and therefore are at the risk of downplaying their own struggles. But what we know is that perinatal mental illness affects dads too.”

The Institute of Health Visiting says that between 25 and 50 percent of men with a partner who suffers with their mental health or illness will then go on to develop their own perinatal mental illness. Of course, families are made up of many different shapes and dynamics and dads should be able to get the help and support they need regardless. This charity aims to dismantle the stigma surrounding fathers seeking help for their mental health and highlights the real need for expanded support services.

Belasco stresses the importance of funding to facilitate the growth of PANDAS’ services, making them accessible to every man struggling with mental health challenges throughout parenthood. The charity anticipates a rise in demand for their services as public resources are generally stretched or unavailable at an early intervention stage.

## SYMPTOMS

Recognising the symptoms of perinatal mental struggles in fathers is crucial for early intervention and support. While the signs can vary, some common indicators include persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety or irritability that extend beyond the normal challenges of adjusting to parenthood. Dads may also experience changes in sleep patterns, appetite and energy levels. Difficulty concentrating, withdrawing from social interactions and a sense of hopelessness are additional warning signs. Physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach problems may manifest alongside emotional distress.

Furthermore, fathers might grapple with intrusive thoughts, excessive worry about the baby’s wellbeing, or feelings of inadequacy in their parental role. It’s essential to recognise that perinatal mental health struggles in men can present differently than in women, often involving irritability or anger rather than overt sadness.

## FEAR OF JUDGEMENT

Men who have previously availed of PANDAS’ support talk consistently about the fear of judgement that many fathers experience when discussing their mental health. Dads often feel reluctant to open up due to concerns about how friends, family and

others might perceive them. They worry that it would make people uncomfortable around them and awkward about asking general ‘how’s it going?’ questions for fear of getting into a conversation that could lead to the sufferer becoming upset.

## A SHARED STRUGGLE

Influencer Dean Walker, a supporter of the charity’s work, shares his own experiences of mental health struggles as a father. He says, “The pressures of supporting our families financially, emotionally and carving out some time for ourselves can have a huge effect on our mental health. I have struggled at times with my mental health since becoming a dad – lots of anxiety and panic attacks. As great as being a parent is, it’s hard. And not enough conversation is had about how hard it can be for dads. The problem is most men put on a brave face for our family and pretend everything is sweet. If you are not feeling right, there is help.” Walker encourages fathers not to wait until they reach rock bottom before seeking help, pointing to organisations like PANDAS as valuable resources for dads.

The PANDAS Foundation aims to shed light on these realities and encourage open conversations about mental health among fathers. By fostering awareness and understanding, the charity seeks to create an environment where dads feel comfortable reaching out for support without shame. Acknowledging the struggle of perinatal mental health in men is important for dismantling societal stigmas and ensuring that every father receives the support he needs during the transformative journey of parenthood.

*Visit [pandasfoundation.org.uk](https://pandasfoundation.org.uk) for more information about PANDAS Foundation and their work.*





# THE UNSPOKEN WEIGHT OF NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

*Here, Kamelia Salimi, CEO and founder of Zoga, shares her top three ways to stay grounded when it comes to goal-setting.*

As the calendar turns to a new year, it's not just a time of celebration, but can also be a period fraught with silent pressures and unspoken expectations. The ritual of setting New Year's resolutions, a tradition embraced worldwide, often becomes a high-stakes endeavour, where personal goals are ambitiously set, only to fall by the wayside in the first few weeks of the year. A recent survey by Drive Research reveals striking statistics - 38 percent of us annually commit to our resolutions, yet only 9 percent of people are able to maintain them throughout the year, with an astonishing 80 percent of resolutions forgotten by February. The survey also highlights the societal pressure these resolutions may bring, especially among the younger generation, of whom a whopping 40 percent feel compelled to participate.

With this in mind and the first month of 2024 upon us, it couldn't be a better time to look at a different way to approach self-improvement, to set yourself up for success!

## KEEPING THE PEACE

Beneath the veneer of optimism of our resolutions lies a more insidious reality. The rush to establish ambitious goals can breed stress and anxiety, undermining the essence of personal growth and wellbeing. As we stand at the threshold of another year, a critical question arises - how can we find a balance between striving for betterment and maintaining inner peace and stability?



## A shared ethos

Kamelia Salimi knows all about the importance of this as the founder of Zoga, a distinguished sanctuary that offers people a transformative journey of self-discovery and self-care through a wide range of holistic experiences.

At both its locations in Downtown Dubai and Dubai Internet City, Zoga welcomes visitors into a relaxed, warm environment with a chic vegan café and beautiful studios, a retreat space that places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of balance, groundedness and self-betterment. Zoga's aim is to provide a sanctuary from the fast pace of daily life where self-improvement is fostered in a sustainable way - exactly the approach needed to maintain our New Year's resolutions! So, let's delve into Kamelia's top three strategies to move beyond the superficiality of annual resolutions and enrich our lives year-round.



## A BALANCING ACT

The secret is in striking the right balance between ambition and realism. One of the key reasons New Year's resolutions fail is because we tend to set overly ambitious goals without considering realistic constraints. Studies indicate that 92% of people have failed to achieve their New Year's resolutions this year, an outcome that often stems from setting targets that aren't properly aligned with one's lifestyle or capabilities. To counter this, it is essential to practise mindful goal setting. This involves setting SMART goals and regularly assessing your own progress. You may have heard the phrase "that which you measure will improve." It is a well-known truth that the majority of people will struggle to succeed because their goals are too vague or hard to measure, whereas SMART goals are those that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. By setting realistic and attainable resolutions, each of us can avoid the common pitfall of overcommitment and the subsequent stress that follows when these goals are not met.

## THE ROLE OF SELF-COMPASSION

The importance of self-compassion is often overlooked in the pursuit of our New Year's

resolutions. Self-compassion involves treating yourself with kindness rather than harsh self-criticism during times of failure or difficulty. This approach encourages a healthy and sustainable relationship with one's goals. It involves recognising that setbacks are a natural part of the growth process and that being overly critical will generally lead to demotivation, which eventually results in the abandonment of your resolutions.

## MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

Lastly, it's good to examine the benefits of integrating mindfulness practices for sustainable change. The incorporation of mindfulness practices into daily routines can greatly enhance the sustainability of your New Year's resolutions. Mindfulness practices, such as yoga, meditation, or even deep breathing, can help you maintain your focus and clarity,

even under stress, preventing the common resolution pitfall of burnout. By staying mentally and emotionally centred, you are much better equipped to handle the challenges that come with pursuing new goals, leading to a greater chance of success in maintaining your resolutions.

Kamelia has gleaned these valuable personal development lessons in her journey leading Zoga and we are so thankful she shared her wisdom with us. These strategies emphasise the importance of a balanced and compassionate approach to setting and pursuing resolutions, offering a more sustainable path to your personal growth and wellbeing. Her three simple, yet powerful tips can be used as tools that can help guide us all toward true transformation and sustained inner harmony for 2024 and beyond.

*To learn more about Zoga and all that it offers, visit [www.zoga.ae](http://www.zoga.ae).*

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIAN FOOD AND VEGANISM

*With plant-based lifestyles on the rise, we talk to Sandeep Ail, Executive Chef at Punjab Grill, about how Indian food stands out as an unparalleled choice for those exploring vegan diets.*



With 'Veganuary' upon us and a rise in plant-based and flexitarian diets globally, more people are looking for vegan dining options and Indian restaurants stand out as a wonderful choice, offering a harmonious blend of tradition, flavour and nutrition.

## A PERFECT FIT

India is celebrated for its kaleidoscopic array of cuisines and is well-suited to vegans for several reasons.

## Ingredients

Firstly, a significant portion of traditional Indian dishes are inherently vegetarian or vegan, with a rich variety of vegetables, legumes and grains taking centre stage. Staples like lentils, chickpeas and a range of beans serve as excellent sources of protein for vegans.

## Flavour

Secondly, with an ancient culinary heritage deeply rooted in the use of vibrant spices

and herbs, there is huge depth and flavour added to dishes without relying heavily on animal products. Diverse traditional cooking techniques, such as grilling, sautéing and simmering, also help to enhance the textures and flavours of plant-based ingredients. This paves the way for satisfying vegan meals that don't compromise on taste.

## Norms

India has a long history of accommodating various dietary preferences, including vegetarianism. Many Indians follow vegetarian or plant-based diets for cultural, religious or ethical reasons, leading to a robust repertoire of vegan-friendly recipes that have stood the test of time.

## Nutrition

Beyond the delectable flavours, the nutritional richness of Indian vegan dishes cannot be overstated. Bursting with essential vitamins, minerals and protein from sources like tofu, mushrooms and

legumes, these dishes present a well-rounded and balanced approach to plant-based dining.

## Ethos

Moreover, the environmental consciousness ingrained in veganism finds resonance in the ethos of many Indian restaurants. The minimal ecological footprint of plant-based ingredients aligns seamlessly with the sustainable practices championed by many establishments, contributing to a culinary culture that is not only delicious, but also mindful of its impact on the planet.

## Punjab Grill

Punjab Grill is one such vegan culinary oasis that aims to elevate vegan dining to an art form. It is committed to crafting dishes that not only honour tradition, but also embrace the modern shift towards plant-based living, making it a great option for vegans in Dubai seeking a culinary adventure.

From their 'Tofu Tikka Masala', a delightful ode to a classic dish, to their innovative 'Phulka Tacos', which showcase spiced Indian yam skewers on fluffy traditional flatbread, whether you're a committed vegan or curious taster, these dishes are a testament to the creativity and versatility inherent in Indian cooking.

## AN OPEN INVITATION

In a world where choices often reflect values, Indian food, with its treasure trove of vegan delights, emerges as an ambassador of culinary inclusivity. As your family savours the compassion inherent in each bite, you'll also be celebrating the vibrant tapestry of an ancient and traditional cuisine. For families seeking greater health or sustainability through plant-based eating, Indian food offers an easy path into a world of sumptuous vegan possibilities that are tasty, nutrient-dense and good for the planet!



# NUTRITIOUS, SUSTAINABLE MEAL SOLUTIONS

*Bumblebee Food can help busy parents on days when they simply need a quick, tasty dinner for children, that doesn't compromise on nutrition!*

The positive impact of good quality nutrition on kids' development and wellbeing is undeniable. However, feeding children healthy food can be a challenging daily responsibility, especially for mums who are always in a time crunch, juggling both work and home life.

Fortunately, Bumblebee Food, known for its 'smart food' approach, quality ingredients and innovative concepts, might be the perfect solution! Carefully developed by a paediatric nutritionist and a certified chef, their latest range of wholesome microwave-friendly meal pots are a lifesaver, eliminating the hassle of overnight defrosting or going through additional food preparation time, so you can get healthy food on the table fast!

## MEALS IDEAS

On a mission to provide healthy and nourishing food for the youngest members of society, Bumblebee Food caters to various palates and dietary preferences. Their meals taste incredible and are also free from salt, sugar and preservatives. Some of the newly launched meal pots include:

### Veggie Lasagne

Ideal for vegetarians and even the pickiest of eaters, the cleverly hidden veggies ensure your little one gets the nutrients they need, making it a go-to option for busy mums.

### Red Mac and Cheese

A delightful twist on the classic mac and cheese, and sweetened naturally with capsicum, this vibrant, flavorful dish is sure to leave your children satisfied.



### Mediterranean Pasta

Bringing the bold and mouth-watering flavours of Sicily to your child's table, this Mediterranean pasta is simply delicious.

These meals require no cooking and are ready within minutes, ensuring that busy parents can easily prepare a wholesome meal without sacrificing on quality or nutrition.

## A SUSTAINABLE CHOICE

Bumblebee Food focuses not just on nurturing the wellbeing of little ones, but also on the environment. The brand has adopted a variety of sustainability initiatives.

### Local and organic sourcing

At Bumblebee Food, they prioritise sourcing their ingredients locally and organically. By doing this, they are not only supporting their local community, but also reducing their carbon footprint.

### Reduced packaging waste

The packaging is both recyclable and reusable. Bumblebee's new packaging pots can also be repurposed into plant pots, promoting a circular economy and minimising waste.

### Low-impact delivery

To combat their carbon footprint, the company have taken steps to minimise fuel usage. The ingredients are sourced from local farms, including their own, which avoids the use of harmful chemicals. They also arrange weekly deliveries, reducing the number of trips and are actively exploring the use of electric cars for future deliveries.

### Waste reduction

To combat food wastage, Bumblebee Food grows their own ingredients and sources remaining produce from local farms that would otherwise go to waste.

### Community

The company is deeply involved in the community. They actively engage in green programs, such as beach cleanups and awareness campaigns, while also seeking partnerships with local charities and startups dedicated to the preservation of nature.

With Bumblebee Food, you can take advantage of easy-to-prepare, nourishing meals for your little ones, safe in the knowledge that it's also an environmentally sustainable choice - a win-win!

# PARENTING



Supporting new mothers  
re-entering the workforce;  
the ways birth order  
influences children's  
personalities and more!



## SUSTAINABLE PARENTING: CHOOSING ECO-CONSCIOUS BABY CARE

*Parenthood is evolving, and with it comes a shift towards sustainable baby care. The choice of plastic-free wipes and minimal ingredients reflects a global commitment to a healthier planet.*



In the dynamic world of parenthood, a noteworthy transition is unfolding among both manufacturers and consumers away from conventional baby care, towards a more sustainable approach. At the heart of this transformation lies a growing awareness of the environmental impact of our choices.

Globally, the impact of plastic waste is alarming. The environmental repercussions of plastic waste are now well-documented, with millions of tonnes ending up in our oceans and landfills each year. Moreover, studies indicate that if current trends continue, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish by 2050.

As realisation around the reality of environmental issues has grown, so has the emphasis on creating products that are better for children and the planet. This lifestyle shift is making waves, setting the stage for a new era in parenting, one that prioritises both health and sustainability.

## KNOWLEDGE

Today's parents aren't just consumers; they are informed guardians of the future. Recent insights from a WaterWipes survey tell a

compelling story. An astounding 93 percent of parents are now leaning towards plastic-free baby wipes, driven by their concerns about the environmental footprint they're leaving behind for children. Furthermore, 69 percent of parents meticulously examine product ingredient lists.

## HEALTHIER PLANET

By incorporating the following tips into your parenting journey, you can lead a more conscious lifestyle, reduce your environmental footprint and ensure the wellbeing of your child and our planet. Remember, these choices aren't just about baby care; they're about the kind of world we want to create.

### Plastic-free

Opt for plastic-free baby wipes and diapers, joining the eco-conscious movement to reduce plastic waste.

### Minimal ingredients

When shopping for baby products, become an ingredient detective - examine labels for minimal ingredients and seek safety certifications from reputable sources. Avoid products laden with harsh chemicals and artificial fragrances.

### Bath time

Make bath time an eco-friendly ritual by choosing natural and biodegradable baby bath products. Keep bath time short and sweet, not only to conserve water, but also to reduce energy consumption.

### Clothing

Give your baby's wardrobe an eco-conscious makeover by opting for organic, sustainable and natural fabrics for their clothing. These materials are gentler on the skin and have a lower environmental impact.

### Second hand

Embrace the power of second-hand finds; explore thrift stores, online marketplaces and community swaps for second-hand baby items, like strollers, cribs and toys. It's both eco-friendly and budget-friendly!

### Recycle and upcycle

When your baby outgrows clothing, gear or toys, consider recycling or upcycling them. Get creative with DIY projects to give old items new life. These thoughtful, interesting choices not only contribute to a healthier planet, but also give your little one some unique belongings.

By choosing products that are backed by research and a commitment to sustainability, you're fostering a world where your choices reflect a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of health and environmental wellbeing, embracing a happier, healthier future for your children and the world they will inherit.





# SUPPORTING NEW MOTHERS GETTING BACK TO WORK

*We tackle the important and underdeveloped topic of helping new mothers ease back into their professional roles, looking at the progress that's still needed to help working women with families.*

Motherhood is a great equaliser, transcending societal boundaries and personal backgrounds. Regardless of your social status, education, nationality or income, the uncharted territory of parenthood is always an unpredictable journey, from the potentially difficult path to pregnancy, to nine months of childbearing and everything that comes after.

## HELP AND EQUALITY

Supporting new mums back to work is not just an issue that deeply affects many women – it can also be framed as a societal obligation. Empowering women to smoothly reintegrate into their professional lives after the life-altering experience of motherhood is crucial for fostering gender equality, a varied talent pool to draw from all the way up the company structure and the overall wellbeing of women in our society.

## A BIG DECISION

Whether it's your first little one or you're expanding your family, the dynamics shift dramatically, catching even the most prepared woman off guard. In this modern world where many families rely on two incomes, returning to work after having children is a necessary step for most and for plenty of women, it's also a continuation of their self-identity and career. The decision to return to work after maternity leave is inherently fraught with mixed emotions - excitement at embracing the professional realm once again, but also guilt at leaving little ones behind. In the UAE, where family values are deeply rooted, this struggle is very common. Employers, communities and regional policy all play pivotal roles in ensuring this transition is as accessible as possible for new mums.

## NEW NEEDS

The reality for many is that bearing a child and becoming a mother is a sea change, physically, mentally, emotionally and in terms of responsibilities. It's unrealistic of society to expect women to return to their previous role exactly as they were before without any help to do so. Priorities must be completely reordered and your body and hormones are also in the process of healing and balancing - it's a lot to manage! This shift echoes across multiple parts of women's lives and is precisely why mothers returning to work need some accommodations so they can realistically fulfil their roles.

This doesn't imply a lack of readiness on the part of a woman to resume her professional duties but it underscores the importance of assistance in reintegrating into the workforce, facilitated by a supportive company with a well-structured maternity program. There is certainly a need for a wider conversation around the fact that women need some understanding in order to be able to give their best to their job, and it's an enormous expectation to assume they will return to work as they were, juggling the healing process and their maternal responsibilities, without any additional help.

## HELPFUL STEPS

Supporting pregnant or new mothers at work doesn't have to be an expensive endeavour. It can be as straightforward as seeing and accepting their dynamic needs and keeping the channels of communication open and genuinely helpful.

Companies and employers treating mothers returning to work positively tend to witness a decline in absenteeism and a notable increase in employee retention - but it's vital to understand that this involves more than just keeping women's positions open.

Giving women support easing back into the workplace involves thinking about details that are often overlooked. Returning mums might need time and access to suitable spaces for expressing breast milk, or slightly less rigidity in working hours to navigate childcare challenges or family sickness.

## Flexibility

A useful element in supporting new mothers back to work would be the implementation of flexible work arrangements. Forward-thinking companies recognise that a rigid 9-to-5 schedule may not be conducive to the needs of new parents. Offering flexible working hours, remote work options or compressed work





weeks allows mums to balance their professional responsibilities with the demands of a growing family. Even in workplaces where flexibility is not standard practice, offering suitable time off for appointments is vital.

In the UAE, where the business landscape is diverse, embracing flexibility sends a powerful message - that family matters. By fostering an environment that accommodates the needs of new mothers, companies not only retain valuable talent but also contribute to building a corporate culture that promotes a decent work-life balance.

### Support programs

Companies could consider creating more thorough parental support programs. These might include on-site childcare facilities, dedicated breastfeeding spaces or healthcare benefits that make some provisions for women healing from the physical demands of pregnancy. Investing in these kinds of initiatives not only supports parents, but also signals strongly that the company values its employees - plenty of which are likely women. In the UAE, companies are increasingly recognising the importance of providing robust parental support programs. By

acknowledging the unique challenges faced by working mothers and actively working to address them, these businesses contribute to a more inclusive and compassionate work environment and a positive company culture that people genuinely enjoy working in.

### ADVANTAGES

When women feel helped in the workplace, the loyalty to their company and the resulting rewards speak for themselves. Keeping a valued employee is far more economical than recruiting a new one. Studies indicate that American companies with supportive maternity programs stand to earn \$3 back for every \$1 invested, and that's before we account for the fact that there is a subsequent 67% rise in talent retention.

### IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Management and those with power in a workplace would make the world a better place if they would ensure that mothers are treated with more respect. Bearing children is the basis for life and this should be



seen as a positive, not simply an imposition on company resources. Advocating for better understanding and more sustainable expectations, as well as proper support to excel is sorely needed. Mums shouldn't have to navigate this maze alone and the collective necessary effort involves help from a wider 'tribe', together with community efforts, regional policies and proper, progressive support in the workplace.

## Community

Beyond the corporate realm, communities play a vital role in supporting new mums back to work, building a network of understanding and encouragement. In the UAE, where the sense of community is deeply ingrained, establishing these networks can make a significant difference to a mother's wellbeing during this transition.

It would be wonderful to see local communities and groups organising workshops, seminars and events tailored to the needs of new mothers. These initiatives

would not only provide valuable information on navigating the professional landscape post-maternity leave, but also foster a sense of solidarity among women facing similar challenges. Community-driven efforts can create a supportive ecosystem that empowers mothers to pursue the professional aspirations they can manage, without compromising their preferred family roles.

## Policy and maternity leave

Government policies play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape for working mothers. In the UAE, recent strides have been made to enhance maternity leave benefits and create a more conducive environment for mothers returning to work. Recognising the importance of allowing new mothers ample time to bond with their infants, the UAE government has extended maternity leave benefits, but there is still more progress to be made in order to support and acknowledge the role of mothers as key contributors to both the workforce and society. Last year, the

labour law increased paid maternity leave to 60 days, with 45 days of full pay and another 15 days at half pay. While this is a step in the right direction, it's easy to understand that 60 days of leave isn't always enough time for a woman to get back on her feet professionally and personally after birth.

In terms of maternity leave, the UAE is behind much of the world. Iceland offers both parents four months of parental leave. Many European countries allow the option of between 25 and 50 weeks of maternity leave. On the other end of the scale, the USA offers absolutely none by law. Regardless, there are plenty of challenges facing women navigating maternity leave in the UAE. Many feel caught between wanting to heal, adjust and bond with their little bundle of joy, and feeling pressure to return to their workplace earlier than they would like. This is a result of the fact that there is often unspoken judgement on those who don't opt to come back after just 45 days, the misconception being that the woman doesn't want to return at all or doesn't value her professional role. This kind of thinking forces many women into a position where they feel pressured to quit their careers in order to raise families instead. It would be wonderful to see companies in the region falling in line with international standards in maternity care. While legal requirements may fall short, private companies have the autonomy to implement their own policies around parental leave. Ultimately, women should not have to make the choice between being a mother and having a career. We should have an environment where it is encouraged to do both if that is what the woman wants.

## A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

Supporting new mums back to work in the UAE is not a solitary endeavour; it's a collaborative effort that requires commitment from individuals, companies, communities and the government. By recognising the multifaceted challenges faced by mothers and actively working to address them, we can raise the benchmark for gender inclusivity and family-friendly workplaces.

As you navigate the delicate balance of motherhood and professional life, remember that each empowered mother returning to the workforce contributes not only to the growth of her family, but also to the prosperity of the nation. Progress is woven into the fabric of society and so the journey of supporting new mothers back to work is a shared responsibility - one that elevates us all.



# THE POWER OF SAYING “YES, AND...”

*Certain sentences are particularly useful to parents. This month, we look at how “Yes, and...” could help your family’s interactions.*



Parenting is a journey filled with challenges, triumphs and the everyday magic of watching your children grow. Amidst the chaos and unpredictability, it can be useful to have a few key phrases on hand that help you transform potential conflicts into positive interactions with your children. These handy parenting sentences tend to bridge the gap between discipline and encouragement, making for a better emotional environment for your little ones that also works with your needs as a parent. One such phrase is “Yes, and...”

## WHY IT WORKS

At its core, “Yes, and...” is about validation and setting limits kindly. When your child approaches you with an idea, a request or even a seemingly outlandish dream, the initial response of “Yes” communicates

acceptance. It tells your little one that their thoughts and feelings are acknowledged and that their voice matters to you. This affirmation sets the stage for a positive interaction, allowing you to nurture a sense of security and confidence in your child.

## STAYING ENGAGED

The magic doesn’t stop there. The “and...” is the transformative element that elevates this phrase from just agreement to active engagement. Instead of shutting down your child’s request or idea with a flat “no” or a dismissive response, the “and...” opens the door to possibilities. It invites a conversation, or gently explains the reasons behind a compromise.

For example, imagine your child asks to have a sleepover on a school night. Instead

of an outright refusal, consider responding with, “Yes, I understand you’d like to have a sleepover and we need to make sure you get enough rest for school the next day. How about we plan it for the weekend?” This approach shows kids understanding while steering the conversation toward a more reasonable solution.

## WORKING TOGETHER

The power of “Yes, and...” lies in its ability to create a collaboration. It encourages children to share their thoughts and feelings openly, knowing that their ideas will be met with consideration rather than immediate rejection and it leaves them with the impression that you both want to find a solution that works for everyone. This collaborative spirit is a great ingredient in growing a healthy parent-child relationship.

## A LIFE SKILL

“Yes, and...” also teaches valuable life skills. By using this phrase, you will automatically demonstrate the importance of flexibility, problem-solving and compromise to your little ones. These skills are not only essential for navigating the ups and downs of childhood, but also serve as a great foundation for success in life.

In essence, “Yes, and...” is a useful sentence for parents as it has the capacity to transform moments of potential conflict into opportunities for compromise, resolution and connection. It’s a tool that allows children to feel heard, respected and able to express themselves, but it also allows you, as the parent, to choose the outcome you think is best. So, the next time your child approaches you with an idea or an ask, try using “Yes, and...” and see how it works for your family.





# HOW BIRTH ORDER AFFECTS PERSONALITY

*Birth order can play a huge role in the type of personality your children will have. Let's take a closer look at what this means.*

Differences between eldest children, middle children and youngest children have been debated countless times around the dinner table in homes all over the world. Each child earnestly speaks about how they have it the hardest, or how they're the least understood. This is often disregarded as simply general disagreements between children, but it turns out that birth order has a genuine effect on the personalities of little ones.

The first major influence is that parents generally tend to treat their children differently based on their position in the family. Secondly, a child's personality can be affected by their place in the hierarchy with their siblings. In order to address any imbalances in how children are treated, it's best to become aware of these dynamics and to understand the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses that often go along with being in the position of eldest, middle or youngest child.

## ELDEST CHILD

Let's dive into why the first child develops the way they do.





### Characteristics

Whether parents like to admit it or not, it's usually the case that the firstborn child is raised in a way where many of the parenting decisions are improvised and instinctual at first. Some things will go well and others not so well. For those that don't go so well, there'll be a period of trying different approaches, repeating those that work and adjusting those that don't. While this may sound pretty good, it can present a number of issues. The lack of consistency, coupled with a constant feeling of adjustments being made can be uncomfortable and not reassuring for little ones.

Growing up like this can result in the firstborn child becoming a perfectionist who is determined to make their parents happy. As a result, firstborns tend to be high-achieving and reliable, while remaining quite cautious and controlling.

### Strengths

Firstborns inherently spend more uninterrupted time with their parents by virtue of the fact that they are the only child

in the family for a period of time. They will receive more attention from their parents, including more time being read to and taught. The following children can't have a repeat of this experience because there will always be another child who needs to be looked after. Due to the extra care and attention, firstborns often have higher IQ levels and tend to earn more income than their siblings when they become adults.

### Challenges

Eldest children can often be very hard on themselves. While they may achieve great things, they might also refuse to accept praise and instead worry about doing even better. The pressure that they place on themselves sometimes leads to an attitude of playing it safe. One of the biggest challenges that firstborns experience is inflexibility. When something doesn't go as planned or demands an alternative solution, it can cause them a great deal of stress.

An oldest child may also come across as slightly bossy or controlling of their siblings. This isn't

necessarily their fault, and is most often a result of the extra responsibility granted to them by their parents. In the child's eyes, they are simply doing what they think is expected of them.

### MIDDLE CHILD

Why does the middle child grow up with certain traits that their other siblings don't have? Let's take a look.

### Characteristics

By the time the second child is born, parents will have a good idea of what it takes to nurture a newborn. There are less unknowns and less worries. As a result, the approach tends to be less strict. Due to this, parents often pay slightly less attention to their second child than they did to their first. This isn't necessarily a bad thing - it might just mean that they were overdoing it the first time around due to fear of making mistakes. The reduced amount of attention produces a desire within the middle child to please the people around them in order to be noticed and to feel loved.

Middle children can feel like they are exactly that - stuck in the middle. They're not the firstborn miracle, nor are they the adorable baby of the family. They might think they are the least favourite and therefore turn to people outside of the family for the attention they require. Middle children are usually intent on making others happy, developing a lot of friendships and can have a rebellious streak.

### Strengths

Middle children are usually more flexible than their siblings. Once a younger brother or sister arrives, their stint as the youngest is abruptly cut short and they're expected to find their place in the middle. The need to adapt can make middle children better equipped to compromise and accept that things aren't always going to go their way. They are often the most amenable to the needs of the household. Middle children focus a lot on fostering good friendships and are comfortable being more involved with people outside of the family unit.

### Challenges

The middle child is the most likely to experience feelings of being left out or unloved. They never received the unbridled attention of the eldest, and they only briefly experienced being the youngest child, until their little brother or sister came along. This sense of falling into the gap between firstborn and youngest can instil a sense of being less important in the middle child. They may notice that they don't get treated with the same level of support as the others and develop feelings of insecurity or inadequacy.

### YOUNGEST CHILD

The baby of the family has their own personality. Let's investigate what this is.

### Characteristics

The youngest child in the family has avoided the stressed out and worried approach that many parents adopt when trying to raise their firstborn. Parents usually apply a more relaxed and self-assured approach when it comes to raising the youngest child, and this can be seen clearly in their characteristics. The youngest tends to be the most individual, nonconforming and outgoing out of the children. They may also have some attention-seeking or selfish traits.

### Strengths

With a lack of parental attention, the youngest child may come up with different ways to be noticed. They might develop a charming, sociable nature that will attract the attention that they need. They're more likely to seek the limelight and can often take risks in order to become the focus of attention. The baby of the family tends to be the one who is most likely to chase unconventional adventures.

### Challenges

The youngest child can often feel the least special or the most overlooked. For them, it's common that all of their achievements have already been completed by their older siblings. Their first words, first steps or first day at school just aren't quite as big a deal for many parents. From day one, there is a slight pressure to catch up with the rest of the siblings and less time for them to be the baby of the family. In contrast, the youngest may lean into their place in the sibling hierarchy in order to get favourable treatment or to avoid being held to the same high standards as their older siblings.

### WHAT ABOUT AN ONLY CHILD?

Only children are most similar to eldest children. They are both firstborns, and only children receive the uninterrupted parenting of a firstborn for the duration of their childhood.

While they share many characteristics with eldest children, there are a few differences. Some aspects of their childhood will be much more straightforward and they will be the main priority. However, they can develop a real difficulty when it comes to sharing.

Also, being the sole focus of their parents' attention doesn't come without downsides. Only children also have to bear the full weight of their parents' expectations. There aren't any siblings to share this pressure with; the only child has to try to be the brainy one, the sporty one and the fun-loving one, all at the same time.

Furthermore, the only child is aware of the fact that the responsibility of looking after their parents in older age lies solely with them. This can enforce quite a self-critical mindset, where the child has to work extra hard to ensure the stability of the whole family for years to come.

### EVERY CHILD IS DIFFERENT

Every position in the sibling hierarchy comes with positives and negatives. Each child is unique and may not necessarily slot neatly into these roles and family dynamics can result in quite different personalities. It's helpful to be aware of the trends that result from birth order so that you can help your child to overcome the associated challenges. Above all, it's important to love each of your children for who they are and to allow them to flourish into the best version of themselves.





# EDUCATION



A look at the bilingual  
Green Grass Nursery;  
what to do if homework  
is a struggle for your  
child and more!







# INSIDE VICTORY HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

*This month, we take a look at all that Victory Heights Primary School has to offer your child.*

Victory Heights Primary School is a true community focused primary school, based in the heart of Dubai Sports City. The school's ethos of 'nurture, challenge, excel' speaks directly to the experience that children enjoy - a wonderfully happy school, where children are encouraged to be themselves, supported and challenged by their teachers to do their very best. These principles have led to outstanding academic progress, a varied and creative curriculum, and students who develop into confident and well-rounded individuals.

## THE VICTORY HEIGHTS VISION

The vision at Victory Heights Primary School is to create a school which is at the centre of the local community and is bursting with happy learners, who are enthusiastic about exploring the world around them. The aim is to create a fun and stimulating learning environment, where every day is a magical voyage of discovery for children.

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

The school wants to nurture responsible global citizens who are sensitive to other cultures and people. The students at Victory Heights are encouraged to respect their environment, develop a social conscience and give something back to society. In keeping with the traditions of the best British schools, there is an emphasis on the importance of an 'all-round' education. As a result, there is strong importance placed on character development, leadership skills and the ability to be a team player.

## CURRICULUM

At Victory Heights Primary School, the British Curriculum is followed, with an appreciation and respect for Dubai and the culture of the UAE embedded throughout. The curriculum is regularly reviewed to ensure it is impactful, purposeful and enables all children to flourish. Whether your child's talents lie in the expressive arts, on the sports field, in the sciences, languages, literacy or numeracy, all achievements are celebrated! Teachers assess each child individually and draw upon their particular skills and interests.

Victory Heights believes in giving children the key tools and knowledge to succeed, as well as the skills to apply this in real life situations. Whilst the curriculum is innovative, challenging and supports all learners to be the best they can be, the basics are never overlooked and the teaching staff firmly believe that the fundamentals must be grasped; which is why their students continue to make exceptional progress.

## BELONGING AND COMMUNITY

Heavily invested in community and the importance of belonging, the power of positivity for children is a value that resonates throughout every school activity. The 'why' at Victory Heights is to give young souls the strength to contribute and to make a difference to the choices that their generation will make. For the quiet, the expressive, the creative and the analytical characters, VHPS nurtures all eclectic personalities, guiding individuals to form groups, teams, villages, towns, countries and nations, now and into the future.

Visit [www.vhprimary.com](http://www.vhprimary.com), call +971 4 423 1100 or email [admissions@vhprimary.com](mailto:admissions@vhprimary.com) to learn more.



# PLAY, LEARN, THRIVE: DIBBER'S FAMILY FUN DAY

*We discuss the Scandinavian nursery, Dibber, and everything it offers at its Family Fun Day this month.*



In the dynamic landscape of education, fostering academic success is not solely about textbooks and exams; it hinges on the delicate balance of students' mental wellbeing. Parents and educators play a pivotal role in steering children toward triumph by prioritising their emotional health.

## ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Dibber is not just a name; it's a promise to set the stage for a transformative learning experience for young minds. At the heart of Dibber's philosophy lies a commitment to play-based learning and holistic development, making it the first choice for parents seeking an enriching educational journey for their children. Founded in Norway in 2003 by the visionary educators Hans Jacob Sundby and Randi Lauvland, Dibber set out on a mission to develop lifelong learners with a heart for the world.

## ESTABLISHED ROOTS

Fast forward to 2014, when Dibber planted its roots in the UAE, introducing itself as CreaKids by Dibber. Today, the group proudly oversees six nurseries strategically located in Al Barsha South, Damac Hills Mudon, The Sustainable City, The Sustainable Pavilion, Jumeirah Golf Estates in Dubai, and Khalifa City A in Abu Dhabi.

## A NORDIC ETHOS

Drawing inspiration from the Nordic educational philosophy, Dibber believes that children can become the best version of themselves through playful learning, interaction and mastery. Dibber's classrooms are vibrant ecosystems teeming with curiosity and exploration.

## THE FAMILY FUN DAY

One standout event on Dibber's calendar that perfectly encapsulates their commitment to holistic development is the much-anticipated 'Family Fun Day'. It's not just an event; it's a carnival of experiences where families come together to celebrate the spirit of childhood.

The schedule for the 'Family Fun Day' at Dibber's various locations is as follows:

Date	Dibber Nursery Location
13th January, 2024	The Sustainable City, Dubai and Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi
20th January, 2024	Al Barsha South and Jumeirah Golf Estates, Dubai
27th January, 2024	Damac Hills, Dubai

Dibber invites everyone to join the fun from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM with their family and friends. This year, 'Family Fun Day' at Dibber promises to be a delightful array of activities, featuring diverse partnerships that are bound to create moments of joy for both children and parents.

## Little Yogis

For the little ones who love to stretch and bend, Little Yogis will be providing yoga sessions tailored for young children. These sessions





are designed not only to enhance physical flexibility but also to instil a sense of mindfulness and wellbeing from an early age. Little Yogis brings a perfect blend of fun and relaxation, allowing children to connect with their bodies in a playful and enriching way.

### Picky Pickle

Picky Pickle, the eco-conscious partner at 'Family Fun Day', invites children to explore the wonders of nature, through planting kits. These kits allow kids to plant seeds and witness the magical journey of growth first-hand. In addition to planting kits, Picky Pickle also provides colouring kits for sensory play, adding a creative touch to the learning experience. Their focus on sustainability aligns seamlessly with Dibber's ethos of fostering a love for all living beings and our planet.

### Maxims Baby Store

Maxims Baby Store joins the celebration with a pop-up showcasing locally produced, sustainable children's clothes in a distinct Norwegian style. This collaboration reflects Dibber's commitment to supporting local businesses and promoting sustainability. Parents can explore a range of thoughtfully crafted clothing options for their little ones, ensuring both style and environmental consciousness.

### Thrift for Good

For families with a heart for giving back, Thrift for Good brings a unique dimension to 'Family Fun Day'. Renowned for their

commitment to upcycling and recycling clothes, Thrift for Good is a zero-waste initiative that processes everything through their doors. What's even more heart-warming is that 100% of their profits go towards children's charity projects through Gulf for Good, under Islamic Affairs Fundraising Approval, reinforcing the spirit of community and compassion.

### The Dibber Meal

But the magic doesn't stop there; families attending the event will also get a taste of the Dibber Meal experience. The Dibber Meal is an integral component of their educational approach, providing children with daily joyful and healthy communal meals. It fosters fellowship, enhances learning abilities and imparts valuable life skills. By offering nutritious and sustainable food options, children learn to make lasting, responsible food choices, promoting overall wellbeing and a positive relationship with food.

Through these thoughtful partnerships, Dibber ensures that families create lasting memories while reinforcing the values of play-based learning, sustainability and community support. As the sun sets on this joyous day, it leaves behind a trail of laughter, learning and the promise of more magical moments in Dibber's nurturing embrace.





# A LOOK AT GREEN GRASS NURSERY

Located in Jumeirah, Green Grass Nursery is a bilingual nursery that offers a high-quality education to children between one and five years old. With years of experience as early education providers, they shape children to grow, make friends and explore who they are and the world around them.

## EYFS BRITISH CURRICULUM

The Early Years Foundation Stage is at the core of their educational philosophy. The nursery is deeply committed to providing a nurturing and stimulating environment for children in Dubai, and the EYFS British Curriculum guides the staff in achieving this goal. As a leading institution in early childhood education, Green Grass Nursery believes in more than just teaching - they believe in laying a strong, holistic foundation for children's educational journey.

Their commitment to fostering holistic development means that children learn and grow at their own unique pace, preparing them for a successful transition to formal schooling and beyond. The EYFS framework encompasses the following seven essential areas of learning and development:

- ✓ Communication and language
- ✓ Physical development
- ✓ Personal, social and emotional development
- ✓ Literacy
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Understanding the world
- ✓ Expressive arts and design

By starting with EYFS as a cornerstone, children can develop into well-rounded individuals who are curious, confident and equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world.

## THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an educational philosophy that places children at the centre of their learning journey, acknowledging them as capable individuals brimming with natural curiosity and boundless creativity. Forming a core part of the nursery's ethos, the Reggio Emilia Approach champions hands-on discovery learning, allowing children to engage all their senses in the pursuit of knowledge.

## BILINGUAL TEACHING

At Green Grass Nursery, Arabic classes are an essential component of their commitment to fostering linguistic diversity and cultural awareness in young learners. The nursery believes that bilingualism fosters stronger problem-solving skills, enriched cultural awareness and even lays the foundation for more effective communication. Children have alternating Arabic and English days to ensure



they are exposed to both languages equally. These sessions are thoughtfully integrated with the ongoing themes in the class, making the learning experience both meaningful and enjoyable. Students cover core aspects of the Arabic language, including greetings, letters, vocabulary, colours and numbers, all facilitated through music, playful activities and interesting stories.

## NATURE AS A TEACHER

At Green Grass Nursery, the learning doesn't stop at the classroom door. Their outdoor classroom transforms the natural world into an open-air learning environment. Surrounded by the sights, sounds and textures of nature, children engage their senses and develop a deep appreciation for the world around them. Whether it's observing birds in the trees, planting seeds in the garden, or building with sticks and stones, every moment outdoors is a lesson waiting to be discovered, helping children develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking, learn about cause and effect, the consequences of their actions and the interconnectedness of the natural world.

***Email enquiry@greengrassnursery.com or visit  
www.greengrassnursery.com for more information or to  
book a tour.***

# WHAT TO DO WHEN HOMEWORK IS A STRUGGLE

*Many parents try to encourage good homework habits, but what approach should you take if homework is a challenging issue between you and your child?*

Homework can be a real sticking point between many parents and their children. It's an all too common experience for hours to be wasted trying to get kids to focus and do their homework. The end result can upset everyone's evening - your child's homework is incomplete, or they no longer have enough time left to decompress before bed, and for parents, you're more stressed than necessary and your own work has piled up too!

Does this sound familiar to you? Know that you are not alone in this experience. Here are some easy tips that anyone can employ to encourage kids to do more homework in an organised and focused way. Let's take a look.

## PICK A TIME

Make a scheduled time for homework. Different children work best at different times of day. Some kids may prefer to do their homework in the afternoon as soon as they arrive home. Others may prefer to do it after a set amount of playtime where they can reset after the demands of the classroom before tackling their homework tasks. It's important to ascertain what works best for your little ones. Decide a time together and then stick to it. By doing this, children will realise that you are being serious about them completing their homework and over time, they will become accustomed to knuckling down when the appointed time arrives - meaning there will be less and less resistance as the habit sets in.

## PICK A PLACE

Set up a homework friendly area. Ensure kids sit down to do their homework in a well-lit place and keep all the usual school supplies nearby: paper, pencils, scissors and such, so that



their concentration isn't disrupted or fragmented by having to fetch necessary items now and then.

## MAKE A PLAN

Oftentimes, children can feel overwhelmed by their homework and don't know where or how to start. It's recommended to sit with your child for a few minutes at the beginning of homework time and make a plan together to tackle each task. Break up the work into small chunks that your child can manage and complete. It'll give them a sense of accomplishment and motivate them to keep going.

## PRAISE THEM

Most parents assume a reward means giving their little one a sweet or some

extra playtime when they complete their homework. However, this will only work for a short period and will make the child care more about the prize rather than actually developing a homework habit. Instead, try to give your child verbal praise and encouragement that especially celebrates their efforts.

## STAY ALIGNED

Children are less likely to do their homework without complaint if you're watching a movie or playing loud songs in the next room. Instead, consider using their designated homework time to get your own work done. This way, kids will feel conditioned into a whole house 'work time', imitating your habits and hopefully seeing more productive results from the quiet environment around them.

# HOME & GARDEN



The elements of interior design that are set to define 2024 and four stunning colours for your feature wall!

## ACCENT WALLS: *FOUR UNIQUE COLOUR OPTIONS*

If you're looking to add a touch of flair to your home this year, an accent wall is an accessible and affordable option that can take the design of your space to the next level. Accent walls, also called feature walls, are those whose design or colour differ from other walls in the room. By sporting a statement design or colour, accent walls help add personality to spaces, while drawing your focus to specific areas in a room. These walls can also provide an additional decorative element to complement the current interior style and furniture in unique ways.

One of Jotun Paints' latest additions to their premium interior textured paints collection, Lady Design, is called 'Touch of Suede'. This paint offers a unique matt finish with a brushed rustic look - the simplest way to introduce an element of texture into your home. With accent walls growing in popularity, Jotun's Lady Design 'Touch of Suede' collection offers a plethora of colour choices that revitalise your spaces, while giving you the opportunity to experiment with bold or adventurous wall colours.

Here are the shades that particularly stood out from this collection for your accent walls this year:

### **Petroli**

Exhibiting a sense of tranquillity and contentedness, this hue brings comfort and serenity into spaces. By presenting a calm and harmonious vibe, an accent wall with this colour would add a touch of sophistication, especially when styled with funky décor in complementary colours, such as orange.

**Jotun Color Code: 4625**







### Organic Red

Organic red is a gorgeous yet subdued shade of reddish pink. This colour appears warm and burnt, but when combined with brighter toned accessories, it balances the visual appeal and results in a refined look. Consider using this colour with rustic wooden furniture and flooring for a classy look, alongside neutrals like white, grey or beige.

**Jotun Color Code: 20120**

### Masala

A strong, clear ochre-yellow tone, this colour immediately brightens up the area of the accent wall with a sunny vibe. It works especially well when used in a room with plenty of natural light and combined with more muted, greyish tones. Minimalistic furniture and potted plants can also elevate the room for a natural look.

**Jotun Color Code: 10428**

### Belgian Brown

This muted, golden brown tone exudes a warm and grounding ambience. With an understated elegance, this hue is complemented by similar neutrals and symmetrical furniture, creating a modern theme for your accent wall. You could consider adding metallic accessories with a bit of shimmer to add an extra touch of style and flair.

**Jotun Color Code: 10385**

*Visit [www.jotun.com](http://www.jotun.com) to learn more or purchase the paint from any of Jotun's authorised retailers in UAE.*





# THE TOP INTERIOR DESIGN TRENDS FOR 2024

*These are the seven diverse design elements that are predicted to gain a lot of popularity this year, bringing fresh inspiration into your home.*

As we step into 2024, the world of interior design is undergoing a noticeable transformation. This year, the trends are all about creating a home environment that not only exudes elegance but also embraces a harmonious blend of the traditional and the contemporary. Let's delve into the key interior design trends that are set to redefine living spaces this year.

## EARTHY BROWNS

Brown, sometimes underrated in the past, has made a triumphant return to the forefront of interior design. This warm, earthy colour is being celebrated for its timeless grace and versatility, replacing the grey

tones that we have seen as the dominant neutral tone for a number of years. In 2024, you can expect to notice brown taking centre stage in various shades and in different applications. From chocolate browns that add depth to a room, to lighter, caramel hues that bring warmth, incorporating brown into your interior palette is a surefire way to achieve a sophisticated, grounded aesthetic.

## ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS

In an era that champions sustainability, interior designers are increasingly turning to alternative materials to not only reduce environmental impact, but also lend a unique character to spaces.





Reclaimed wood, bamboo and recycled metals are finding their way into furniture, flooring and general decoration. The beauty of these materials lies not just in their eco-friendly nature, but also in the stories they tell, adding a distinctly natural, rich feel to your living spaces.

## CELEBRATING CRAFTSMANSHIP

In a world dominated by mass production, the artisanal movement is making a strong comeback and this is set to continue across the next twelve months. Handcrafted furniture, textiles and accessories are gaining popularity as people seek one-of-a-kind pieces that showcase the skill and dedication of the artisan maker. Whether it's a handwoven rug, a bespoke ceramic vase, or a meticulously crafted wooden chair, choosing artisanal elements for your home both elevates the aesthetic and also fosters a connection to the human touch behind each creation.

## ROMANCE IS BACK

This year, interior design is taking a trip down memory lane, embracing romantic and period features with a modern twist. Think ornate mouldings, vintage-inspired wallpapers and soft, whimsical elements reimagined for present-day spaces. Feminine colours, florals, lace and ribbons can be sensual and beautiful when done with conviction and a light touch. Those that already love this carefree style will be delighted to find that maximalist florals are on the rise as part of this trend. Botanical inspiration is making its way into textiles, from bedding and cushions, to rugs, replacing the more muted 'cottagecore' style that has enjoyed a firm spotlight over the last number of years. With this trend, homeowners are creating interiors that are not just visually appealing, but also tell a story of timeless elegance.

For some, this takes the form of vintage furniture, mid-century modern elements and 'old-world' colour palettes that evoke a sense of nostalgia in the home, while seamlessly blending with contemporary design. This one is all about embracing the charm of the past while enjoying the conveniences of the present, for a timeless and stylish interior.

## A TACTILE EXPERIENCE

Texture takes centre stage in 2024, with designers emphasising the importance of the tactile experience in interior design. From plush velvets to rough-hewn stone surfaces, incorporating a variety of textures adds a lot of personality and interest to a space. This trend invites you to touch and feel, creating a sensory-rich environment that goes beyond the visual. Feel free to experiment with textured fabrics, intricate wall coverings and different materials to easily bring a tactile dimension to your interiors.

## CONNECTION TO NATURE

As our awareness of environmental issues grows, so does our desire to bring the outdoors in. Biophilic design, which seeks to connect us with nature, is a prominent trend in 2024. Natural finishes, such as raw wood, stone and terracotta, are being celebrated for their organic beauty. Additionally, the continuing rise of indoor plants and greenery inside the home is not just a nod to sustainability, but also a way to create a calming and rejuvenating atmosphere for your family.

## JEWEL TONES

Bold and opulent, rich shades and jewel tones are making a statement this year. Deep emeralds, sapphire blues and regal purples will likely adorn walls, furniture and accessories, infusing spaces with a sense of luxury and drama. This trend is all about embracing colour fearlessly and creating a visual feast for the eyes, a reaction to the oversaturation of neutrals that we have experienced over the last number of years. Whether you prefer to use these rich shades as an accent or as the main colour scheme, jewel tones are sure to add a touch of opulence to your rooms.

In 2024, interior design is a celebration of individual touches, sustainability and timeless elegance. From the resurgence of brown, to the support for artisanal craftsmanship and the incorporation of natural elements, this year's trends are an invitation to curate a space that reflects not only your personal style, but also what feels good in your daily environment as you navigate the ever-evolving landscape of design.





# GOOD LIVING



Everything it takes  
to start a homestay  
business and our  
recommended beauty  
products for January!





# KENWOODS FARMSTAY: AN INTERVIEW WITH DESIREE GONSALVES

*We sat down with Desiree Gonsalves, entrepreneur and owner of Kenwoods Farmstay, to discuss what goes into creating a homestay business and her advice for others who want to do the same.*

## HI DESIREE, CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF?

My formal career started and ended as an Associate Professor in St. Andrew's College, affiliated to Mumbai University. I spent 35 wonderful years teaching students business and marketing, and enjoyed the company of wonderful colleagues.

Much later, a parallel career in interior design started for a lark when a friend visited our new home and insisted I do up hers. I eventually began helping my dad with the house he built on his farm. That's where it all began.

Sadly my dad Ken passed away in 2017 and I was left with the inheritance of his farm that he so loved. With one-way spending, it certainly was a bleeding artery on the monetary front; maintaining a 3.5 acre property isn't easy.

## WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND KENWOODS?

My dad bought the property in 1981. It was a two hour drive from Mumbai, and as a city businessman who loved the outdoors, he was extremely proud of it. Honestly, my husband and I were horrified when we first saw it. Located on a remote hamlet with just a few rural houses, it was a huge barren plot without any trees.

The area had no power, pumps or bathrooms, and so water was drawn from the nearby lake. It wasn't an easy beginning. My dad camped on the property, building one room at a time with local help, finally finishing an entire house where we took many wonderful family trips together.

Over the years my dad painstakingly planted every conceivable tree that he could source. Chikoo, mango, bay leaf, drumstick, tamarind, jackfruit, guava, mulberry, lemon, pepper, love apple, even a sour cherry tree. He set up bokashi composting, a Japanese method of vermiculture fermentation, which helped us fertilise the farm.



## Changing hands

In 2009 Dad knew that age was against him and asked me if I could take the farm over. I was busy with my academic career but didn't think too hard. It would have broken dad's heart to sell it off and I loved being immersed in nature. That's how my husband Sid and I started our regular journeys to the farm.



Improving the aesthetics organically, bit by bit was very important to me. I filled in big pits with trucks of mud, added a pathway, seeded patches of lawn and slowly refurbished the house, adding a number of modern conveniences so urban folks could have a local, rustic experience without compromising on comfort.

## WHAT FEATURES MAKE KENWOODS SPECIAL?

Kenwoods is truly nature at its best - 3.5 acres of land with 40 year old trees, or older. The twitter you wake up to in the morning is the feathered, not the digital kind! Clean air, visible stars at night and the peace and tranquillity that's missing in the city is yours there!

## Sustainable, homegrown food

No chemicals are used in the growing and nurturing of trees, fruit and vegetables. Instead, simple techniques like ploughing dried, fallen leaves

back into the tree's dug up base and homemade bokashi compost are used. The veggies are grown in the cooler months of October to March. Every February to June, the sweetest chikoos and mangoes are brought back to be marketed to local friends and acquaintances who delightfully look forward to this produce, and guests are treated to the same!

## Eco-friendly practices

Other practices include separating garbage into glass, plastic, metal and paper, which is then collected by a local 'bangarwalla' (scrap dealer) and a vermiculture pit is also used for some of the fallen leaves. In keeping with the ethos of sustainability, what started with solar heated water has now transitioned to solar power for all requirements.

## Upcycling and artisanal design

Here's where my 'creativity' comes in. I thrive on the ethos of 'reuse, recycle and repurpose' when it comes to old furniture or what gets thrown away. I have the dubious distinction in the family of being the 'recycle queen', so most of what's discarded is offered to me. I happily accept it; an eighty year old teak drawer frontage has ended up as a bed





headboard on the farm. Beds, curtains, bar cabinets, old doors and windows, my nana's old cupboards and dressing tables have been put to good use too. Most pieces have a story behind it and many guests love asking for these tales.

## WHY DID YOU START YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

I retired as the Vice-Principal of the Degree College at St. Andrew's in 2020. Retirement age at 60, is a must in India in the public sector. You may be brimming with energy and creativity, but there's not much of a choice and most people in this boat plan on a soft post-retirement 'career'. I didn't fancy sitting on a beach or voraciously reading most days, nor taking a couple of guest-lectures a week which is often the usual route. Travelling was part of my plan and interior projects, of course. I had given the farm out to an Airbnb-like aggregator to accept bookings for a farmstay two years earlier which helped sustain the property and keep it going until I decided what the future plans would be.

## WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES?

The biggest challenge in this project was going solo. Handling marketing, finance and HR on this project on my own wasn't easy. The farmstay was never intended to get to this scale when I first started but the revenge tourism market post-covid presented a big opportunity. People were ready for staycations near the city and the bookings kept coming in, very often back-to-back.

## Local economy

I had to figure out how best to work with local labour who are predominantly from a farming background, with no experience in hospitality. Training was the answer, as well as hiring a full-time manager and a residential chef, once accommodation was built for them.

## Investment

Working out whether I should invest more funds to raise the standard, without any project report or feasibility study is a conundrum. Having grown organically, there were no projections made of possible long-term income in a very nascent market. The expenses are constant and improvements are a must for any business - this is always an ongoing challenge for business owners.

## Marketing

Marketing with ad agencies was too challenging and expensive at an early stage. I decided to save on costs by doing it myself; after all that's what I taught in college! The instagram handle and ads were my responsibility and I worked with a professional to create a new website, put the site on Google maps, did a bit of SEO and went from there.

## Infrastructure

'Infrastructure development' for me meant adding a new centralised kitchen, a poolside cabana, a games room and staff accommodation, alongside a little more landscaping and solar power.

## Expansion

The dilemma I face today is whether to expand to corporate offsites, wellness programmes and events or just do the farmstay at the comfortable pace it sits at now, where it's mainly a weekend business model.

## HOW DO YOU ENRICH THE LOCAL ECONOMY?

As of now, about twelve local farmers work on the farm, taking pride in maintaining the place as well as serving city visitors. Guests who start up a conversation with them are intrigued by their polite demeanour, honesty





and sense of obliging hospitality. I've come to discover that each farmer has their own talents. Where one person is good at cooking and helps the chef, others are trained electricians. We have expert masons, welders, tree-climbers and more on this team.

The local next-door neighbour comes to help with cooking when numbers are large and she is also adept at head and foot massages. A young man from the next village once worked with a spa and also offers massages for us too.

Sourcing labour from the local village has been a win-win situation, convenient for me and an economic opportunity for them. Additionally, our infrastructure building is done with materials available around the area and we even work with the village contractor who owns a tractor for farming purposes. He now offers our city guests the experience of a tractor ride to a nearby dam!

### WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE FOR OTHERS?

My advice would first be to figure out your cup of tea. Is it a job or a business? Job advantages include fixed timing, public holidays, stable income and perhaps less responsibility in many respects. Business advantages include challenging and motivating work, rewarding pursuits with good feedback, lots of flexibility and of course, you're your own boss.

A farmstay or homestay may not be as profitable as you would imagine. It's more of a weekend business and if the set up is small, with limited rooms, the 'economies of scale' do not kick in. A home on a small plot of land would definitely be far easier to handle than a more expansive place that needs constant monitoring and maintenance. Be genuinely ready to finance all the lofty ideas you have for 'upping the game' and know that it may take you a few years to recover costs. However, this is certainly for you if:

- You'd like a challenge
- You're a 'people person'
- Hospitality is your forte
- You have or can purchase a second home that's not used very often

### WHAT HAS HELPED KENWOODS SUCCEED?

I figure that, though Kenwoods has what every nature lover is looking for, it's the personal attention to detail that's the draw. Interior decor from recycled materials, colour coordination, interesting trees that city-dwellers are not familiar with are all important. Multiple areas for families and friends to wander around and a cabana with music and poolside lounging adds to the appeal. City folks definitely look for cleanliness at getaways like these and that's important to me. Good marketing has been a game-changer, as is the constant innovation to stay ahead.

Visit [www.kenwoodsfarmstay.com](http://www.kenwoodsfarmstay.com) or @kenwoodsfarmstay on social media, or check out <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/fa275baeca.html> to learn more.





I'm entering 2024 with a selection of beautiful perfumes, some sporty eyewear and a new skincare line that promises to make your complexion glow!



## START YOUR YEAR ON THE RIGHT NOTE

Perfumery has been a medium of expression for many women for thousands of years. There's something about a spritz of a beautiful scent that instantly gives me a confidence boost! I always like to purchase a new perfume at the start of the year - a personal ritual of renewal that I think lots of ladies will resonate with.

With that in mind, I would love to draw your attention to three fragrances that won't break the bank but are absolutely gorgeous, created by the ever-reliable LUSH. Their perfumes are hand-blended and use the best essential oils and absolutes from around the globe. Conceptualised and hand-made in Dorset, UK, these scents make a lovely gift to yourself for 2024, with a range that promises something to suit every taste. Here are my favourite options to start 2024 on the right note!

### Karma

Karma is a unique signature scent, priced at AED 250 per 30ml, that combines intoxicating layers of orange, spices and patchouli. Meant to embody a trip to London in the 1960s, clouds of groovy patchouli mingle with uplifting Brazilian orange and Siberian fir needle oils. In my opinion, this is a lingering perfume for free spirits.

### Dirty

A fresh fragrance loved by pretty much everyone, Dirty is a multi-layered sandalwood, tarragon and thyme aroma priced at AED 175. Sandalwood is the earthy, invigorating note that brings calm, while lavender adds a floral, woody note to this fragrance. A single spray also brings out the oak moss, a complex scent that seems to shift, capturing our ever-changing dynamic selves.

### Lord of Misrule

A musky patchouli note opens this unusual cologne, with sweet and creamy vanilla, tempered by a herbal aroma. Somehow

mellow and spicy, a final dash of stimulating pepper adds a little kick and gives it just the right amount of energy. Priced at AED 225, this is a versatile perfume that will take you from day to night.

Happily, any ladies looking for a bespoke new scent for the year ahead can visit their local LUSH shop and sample these lovely perfumes before buying. Designed to uplift, inspire and delight you, I can't think of a simpler way to put a spring in your step as you start your new year!

Visit [www.lush.com/mena/en\\_ae](http://www.lush.com/mena/en_ae) for more information.



### Baby fragrance

As a bonus addition to my January picks, if you want to share this new year ritual with your little ones, I love the 'Baby Fragrance collection' by Sophie La Girafe. This adorable collection features a range of perfumes that have been specially designed for new-born age and upwards. Made in France, the skincare water features gentle scents like sweet orange blossom and vanilla, and can be used to gently perfume a baby's crown, body, clothing and sleepwear, while the Eau de Toilette can be used by children from age three.

**Priced from AED 135, these scents are available at Mamas & Papas and Elli Junior.**



## FACE THE FUTURE WITH OAKLEY

The Oakley® 2024 Lunar New Year collection celebrates the rich tradition of welcoming the good and the new in Chinese culture. Drawing inspiration from the powerful spirit of the Wood Dragon, the Chinese zodiac of 2024, the collection is a sporty nod to tradition that hopes to inspire its wearers to boldly embrace the future.

As the only mythical entity in the Chinese zodiac, the dragon is an emblem of uniqueness. Possessing inherent courage, tenacity and intelligence, dragons are distinguished for their daring and future-forward nature, traits which the brand embraces and brings to life in this cool collection.

The four-piece range reimagines two iconic eyewear styles, Holbrook® and Sutro, each outfitted with fiery Prizm™ 24K



lenses and a custom microbag adorned with a hand-drawn dragon logo print. The styles feature a captivating geometrical pattern on their stems, symbolising lunar shadows and moon phases derived from the lunar calendar, with a distinctive lunar dragon logo adorning the lens. Step out in style this year with Oakley!

***The collection will be available from January 2nd at [www.oakley.com](http://www.oakley.com) and in select Oakley stores.***

## GLOWING SKIN WITH GHANYA COSMETICS



I predict that Ghanya Cosmetics, a new skincare brand born out of a mother's unwavering dedication to resolving her daughter's stubborn acne, is set to make a splash in the UAE beauty scene over the coming year. I consider beautiful skin to be the ultimate beauty accessory and this company offers two lovely products designed to pamper and rejuvenate your complexion until it glows.

The emerging brand places a strong emphasis on ethical and sustainable practices, committing to products that are free from parabens, sulphates, fragrances and animal products, as well as being recyclable and ethically made. Based on a powerful fusion of research, rigorous testing and premium ingredients, their products promise to nourish and hydrate your skin, bestowing you with a radiant, well-balanced tone, free from any impurities. Positioning itself as the new go-to for premium skincare, Ghanya Cosmetics offers highly effective products at a compelling price range that feels too good not to try.

Their Absolute Cream, infused with plant stem cells to expertly perfect uneven pigmentation, tones your face and acts as an anti-aging super hydrator too. The Age Defying Booster, a water-based lightweight serum also made from stem cells, serves as a rejuvenating booster shot that combats both ageing and rosacea. The two products are aloe vera based, cleverly eliminating the need for multiple creams as both can be used on your eye, face and neck area, offering a comprehensive skincare solution in one go.



Both products are tested by dermatologists, suitable for all skin types and genders, and formulated with science-backed ingredients. Happily, to celebrate its launch, the company is offering worldwide free shipping, and with three more additions in the pipeline, Ghanya Cosmetics is a brand I will be keeping an eye on this year!

***All products are available for purchase at [www.ghanyacosmetics.com](http://www.ghanyacosmetics.com).***

# READY, SET, CHEF!

مزارع العين



Al Ain Farms

IN goes  
the bag



OUT comes  
the cooked  
chicken!



**100% Fresh Chicken**  
**5 Delicious Flavours!**

- STEP 1  180°C PRE-HEAT OVEN
- 2  OPEN THE BOX
- 3  PLACE BAG IN OVEN TRAY AS IS
- 4  45 mins COOK FOR 45 MINUTES AT 180°C





OVS  
kids



SHOP ONLINE  
[WWW.OVSFASHION.ME](http://WWW.OVSFASHION.ME)



OVSUNITEDARABEMIRATES