

# BAMBI NEWS

**THE BEST TOYS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

**A FUN DAY OF ROLE-PLAY AT KIDZANIA**

**HOW TO KEEP THE KIDS JOYFUL DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**

**One BAMBI Mom's Story: Killian's Therapy Begins**

**Happy Holidays!**



# And So It Begins...

BAMBI Mom, Becky Horace, shares honestly about the journey her family faces as they help their son with his developmental delays

By Becky Horace

**F**ollow one BAMBI mom's story as she seeks professional help to guide her little boy through the first 12 weeks of ESDM Therapy.

## Week 1

I probably won't post about every week of the program but I wanted to share some exciting events during this week and reassurances from our doctor that has me thrilled about this journey we are on.

During our first week, Killi's doc wanted to work with him without the nanny or me in the room. So for Monday-Wednesday, Odie (our new and awesome nanny) and I sat and read for about two hours in their guest room. Killian, the doctor and his staff played inside and outside with the other children and really had a great time! On Thursday and Friday, we had rain in Bangkok and there was a little flooding at the institute so we couldn't sit in the guest room so we were more involved in the play therapy. Killian's progress after one full week is astounding.

Turns out Killi does consider the doctor an authority figure and responds very well if I am not there (he doesn't even notice when I'm not there), but when mommy and Odie are in the room, the doc can't really get any of his objectives accomplished. So for next week, I

will give them Monday and Tuesday without mommy and will then join towards the end of the week. This is very hard for me to not be there but I told the doc whatever it takes. He said he will send me homework to continue to work with Killi at home. Luckily, me not being around is only for a few sessions.

We work for two hours at the institute every day, and after nap time Killi and I work for the rest of the afternoon until bedtime. It is a very full and tiring day but man does it pay off. My son now takes my hand, says mom and shows me what he wants or needs help with. He can actually play little games now, just little high five games, but he interacts and looks at me and is seeking a response. He says "dog" very clearly when asking to see the dogs at the institute. He waves bye and blows kisses on command now. He pointed to the tree (he doesn't point normally and this is a huge step for his communication) and said "tree." When he wants his apple sauce pouch opened or to see a movie he will bring it to me and say "please." He is babbling, which is his way of talking, a lot more during all play activities.

There have been more exciting things that have happened, but to be honest this week has been a blur. The doctor said to me, what Killian

has done this week is the equivalent of what he normally sees after 4 weeks of therapy. With that being said he will be revamping my son's developmental objectives and stepping it up next week. I can't wait to see what happens next week!

I know this opportunity and finding the resources here to help Killi is a huge blessing for my family, but I didn't realize how lucky we really are to have gotten in with the Reed Institute.

Turns out Killian's doctor turns down 7 out of 10 families that come seeking help for their children. He only picks the people that he truly believes will put in the work at home to help make the difference. I guess he could see my desperation and willingness to do anything to help my son when I first spoke with him! Thank the good Lord!

He says with Killi's progress so far he will soon be out of a job, but I told him not to worry, we can use the sessions to teach Killian Shakespeare and maybe at this rate he will. I said if he can get him quoting Shakespeare I'll gladly pay double!

## Week 2: To Tantrum or Not to Tantrum

My son can throw an epic tantrum. To me they are so awful I would rather have bamboo shoots shoved

under my fingernails than to have to listen to a tantrum. Something about the tantrum sets me on edge; I hear this is normal for mothers, but that does not make it any easier to deal with. I have been told by two different medical practitioners that mothers are wired in such a way that our cortisol, the stress hormone, levels go through the roof when our kids cry or throw a tantrum. I can attest to this because I feel like I can't function when my son throws one.

In our case, tantrums are the one sure-fire way that Killi knows how to communicate. Since we have no words to work with, we have screaming and tears. He knows now that the louder he cries the more likely he will get his way. The tantrums are what finally put me at my wit's end and catapulted me into action to find help, which luckily I have found at the Reed Institute.

For some reason last week, my toddler spent every morning throwing a fit. I couldn't quite figure out why, but then I realized he is having some serious separation anxiety leaving for therapy without me. After a couple of days of no mommy at therapy, he figured out what was going on and freaked out all morning until he would have to leave. If he could have physically crawled under my skin to be closer to me he would have. I couldn't take anymore so I emailed our doctor to see if this was normal behavior.

He assured me that tantrums were very normal for kids this age, but for the sake of our treatment plan with Killian we have to make some adjustments.

The next day, I had a meeting with our doctor to get some tips on how

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to help with the tantrums at home. My son is a perfect angel on the way to and from therapy with our nanny and during his therapy sessions. Since Killi does not have the ability to communicate, he cannot negotiate to get his way. I have been instructed to stop the tantrums before they start. To be honest, I was a little nervous about this idea. All I can think is I am going to create a monster or spoiled brat just giving this holy terror his way all of the time.

The doctor must have seen the concern in my eyes when he said this and he reassured me this is only temporary until my son has a few more vocabulary words. He said there is no way that saying yes to going outside or watching a movie when Killian wants to will create a bratty child.

He did say that if we keep saying no and let the tantrums continue

“My son now takes my hand, says mom and shows me what he wants/needs help with.”

and then give into whatever the kid wants mid tantrum will create the whiny, bratty kid that will come to learn all he has to do is cry and throw a fit to get his way.

If we prevent the tantrums before they start everyone is happier! This seems so silly when you say it out loud... Duh! Everyone's life will be happier and will have a peaceful house, but why couldn't I come up with this on my own? When I asked our doctor, he laughed and asked if I had gone to school for 15 years to learn this.

As soon as I stopped trying to be so controlling with Killi and his play schedule, life really became a lot easier. There are some things I will not give in to, for example cookies for breakfast – sorry kid not happening (if your daddy won't let me eat Oreos for breakfast there is no way you get to), coloring on the walls -- not happening.

On the other hand, when my beautiful boy brings me 101 Dalmatians, hands it to me, smiles and says please, instead of saying “no it's too early for a movie” I have a doctors permission to give my boy that movie time without any guilt and everyone is happier for it. It has only been a few days of this, but mentally I feel much better and I know my kid is happier.

So for now I choose no tantrums and a happier household! It really should be “happy toddler, happy life,” but I guess that doesn't rhyme as well. ■

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