



Xander Therrien Hawkins
Day 0
August 7, 2008
6:19pm
Weight: 8lbs 13oz
Height: 20 inches



Xander Therrien Hawkins
Day 369
August 11, 2009
8:30am
Weight: 22lbs 7oz
Height: 31 inches

Amy Lynn Therrien and Dolphin Moon Hawkins
with a lot of help from family and friends

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First Entry

OK. I am being unoriginal. I saw a friend's blog¹ for her family, and stole the idea. I've had a couple of other blogs before, but I haven't updated them in a while. One blog covered the building of our first home. The second recorded the beginnings of my photography hobby. Now, I am trying to share the story of our family.

Dolphin 'n' Amy (DNA) recently added a new addition to our family, Xander. Born in August, Xander impacts everything about our lives every day.

Welcome and enjoy!

Amy



Poor sick bean

Little Xander-bean has been suffering his first cold the past few days. He has a pretty bad cough and a runny nose. Fortunately, he still seems pretty content and has no fever.

At the recommendation of one of his day caregivers, we bought some of the saline nose drops. I absolutely hate using them because Xander screams. He doesn't like it at all. The drops do help clean out his nose though and he is always much happier afterward. Giving him drops has proven to me that babies his age really do not have good memories. As much as he hates the drops, he never anticipates it.



The cold is making nights pretty exhausting. He gets up more than usual, which is not that bad in isolation. He seems to have a harder time getting back to sleep. This morning, we could not get him to go back to sleep with Dolphin while I got ready for work. (His normal routine). His nose didn't look blocked but we tried suctioning anyway. A lot of mucus came out, and of course, he started crying a lot. With the trauma of the suctioning, I thought he was awake for good. However, we popped in a pacifier and he went right back to sleep. It seems like the stuffy nose was keeping him awake. Tonight, I might try suctioning him when he gets up to nurse to see if that helps him stay asleep longer.

¹ <http://www.thesutherbaums.blogspot.com/>



I spoke too soon

So much for baby memories, Xander has started to recognize the evil blue bulb syringe. He started crying when he saw it this morning.

I had to use the nose drops and bulb syringe this morning to clear out his nose. He was having problems eating because he couldn't breathe through his nose. The nose drops that his day-caregivers recommended really do work well. Xander hates them and screams when I use them, but it is necessary evil. I hate doing it though. I really, really hope he gets better soon.



BTW, speaking of the bulb syringe, I think I need to buy some more. Our dogs are fascinated by the syringe. I don't know if it is the smell of the rubber or the shape, but they treat it like a ball. Both of them have tried to steal it for a toy, and I saved it just seconds before it came to a chewed destruction. It's hard to wash the dog slobber off, too. For now, I have to remember to put it up on a high place. I should have some backups though in case they succeed in destruction.

Jo I was laughing at your previous post saying that he didn't seem to anticipate the horror of the evil blue bulb...I was thinking, "just wait... he will!" I can remember little Dolphin's terror at the sight of that blue bulb coming at him. The sensation of having bodily fluids sucked out of your nose must be really creepy!

Bulb syringe drama continues

Yesterday morning, I left the bulb syringe out and instructed Dolphin to clean out Xander's nose before taking him into day care. He decided that Xander did not need it, and the bulb syringe was left out. Last night, I was looking for it and could not find it. We suspected the dogs were involved, of course. So, Dolphin looked outside in the backyard. Sure enough, they had destroyed it. I still needed to suction Xander's nose so I drove to the near by CVS to get a replacement (in fact, I bought 2).



This morning, I set the new syringe down for just a minute while I dressed Xander. In the just the second that I looked away, Copper grabbed the syringe and started taunting Peanut with it in the other room.

I'm convinced it is the smell of the rubber that makes the dogs think that the syringe belongs to them. We buy racket balls in bulk for them to play with. Usually, they play fetch, but sometimes Copper destroys them. The smell is similar. They stay away from all of Xander's other plastic toys.



Hook 'em Horns

Dolphin surprised me this morning when he suggested we wanted to go shopping for more clothes for Xander. Dolphin? Shop for clothes? It just started to turn cold in Austin. While we were at Baby 'r' Us, we saw the section of burnt orange long horn and red aggie outfits. We are not football fans at all but couldn't resist. We bought 3 warm outfits for him and a couple of miscellaneous items.

While we were there, we saw a couple of types of baby seats that are supposed to help babies sit up. We were tempted, but they are really expensive. He's been doing well sitting with the support of a boppy so we'll stick with that.

At the checkout, an older lady (grandma maybe) was buying an enormous stack of clothes. There's no way that one baby could wear all of the clothes before he outgrew them. Then, we noticed that she was actually buying two of every outfit. Twins! A few minutes later, mom showed up with the twins in a huge two-baby stroller. I can't imagine how hard it must be to drive around.

The Dogs and Xander

People are always asking about how our older children, the dogs, are with Xander. Aside from the bulb syringe fiasco, they are quite good. Here are a couple of cute pictures.

Copper snuggling with Xander and Mom

Peanut trying on one of Xander's bibs



Something Xander learned from day care

Xander has been taking bottles of breast milk while he is in day care.

Dianna mentioned to me that he could hold his bottle a little bit. Last night, I went out for a girls-night-out. Dolphin tried to see if Xander could hold his own bottle. He could for about 10seconds and not necessarily at the right angle to get the milk out.



BTW, the girls-night-out was quite fun. We went out to dinner and then to see "Twilight"¹. It was a cute little movie. It was the longest that I had gone without nursing or pumping, and perhaps a little too long. By the time, I got home I thought my breasts were going to explode.

¹ <http://www.twilightthemovie.com/>



Upside down

Xander seemed to enjoy playing with Daddy upside down.

The outfit he is wearing is size 6 to 9 months. Our little 3.5 month old Xander isn't very little anymore. I think his growing is starting to slow down a little bit thankfully. I remember during his 3 week and 6 week growth spurts that I could visibly see a difference in size from one day to the next. Now, he is growing much more gradually. We'll see what happens when he hits that 6 month growth spurt.

Exersaucer

Grandma and Grandpa Therrien gave Xander this exersaucer at the baby shower. We have been dying to get Xander into it. He is just starting to sit a little bit so we decided to try it out. Dad assembled all the parts, but we are still shy a few batteries. This thing takes 10 AAA batteries. I think this is Xander's contribution to excessive energy consumption in America.

He liked looking in the mirror and the hanging objects. He also liked all the noises that the various pieces make. I'm sure he is really going to grow to love this toy.

Carla And you thought it would be a while before he could use his exersaucer! He is getting so big!

Amy 17lbs 4oz with clothes on as of 11/24



Who needs sleep?

"Who needs sleep? Well you're never gonna get it. Who needs sleep? Tell me what's that for." Every time that I think about the sleeping challenges of new parenthood, that Barenaked Ladies lyric pops into my head. Am I ever going to get it again?

One of the last purchases that we made before Xander was born was this side-car mini-crib. If you'll notice in the picture, he has grown to almost the full length of the crib.

Soon he will outgrow this, which has me wondering what is the next step. Will he move to his big crib in his own room? Should we move the big crib into our room? Should we move into his room?

So far, I have taken a laid-back approach to developing his sleep habits. We try to make bedtime a routine and he has fallen into the habit of going to bed at roughly the same time every night. Neither he nor I are ready for any sort of cry-it-out methodologies to get him to sleep through the night. I'm not sure that we will ever be. I'd much rather we just get there when we get there.

Until that time comes when he sleeps longer, I've gotten into the habit of bringing him to bed with me after his 1am wake up. This makes life easier for me. When he wakes up to nurse, I just turn my body, get him to latch on, and then fall asleep. I really don't see an alternative given the amount of times that he likes to wake up between 3am and 6am. I think I would be miserable if I had to sit up and be awake that whole time.

It's possible that Xander will outgrow his side car crib before he outgrows frequent night nursing. I'm not sure what we'll do then. Maybe we'll just put him straight into our bed at night.

All roads lead to Xander's mouth

All things end up in Xander's mouth:

- 1) The phone rattle
- 2) The monkey lovey
- 3) His hand





Dad gets the parent-of-the-week award!!

Saturday, Sunday, and Monday nights we observed some strange behavior from Xander. He just would not go to sleep or stay asleep without being held. Even when he was held, he was squirming and trying to wake up. This is unusual behavior for him. Normally, he falls asleep with a pacifier and only wakes up to eat and then fall back asleep again. In addition, his day caregivers said he was unusually fussy and they could not figure out what he wanted. Finally, he was having a hard time eating. He would take two sucks and then delatch, then repeat over and over. It was almost like he couldn't breathe through his nose but I was unable to suction anything out. We couldn't figure out what was wrong, but we were exhausted from staying up all night trying to get him to sleep. We needed a solution.

Since he had been coughing and that wakes him up, I decided to take him to the pediatrician. I stayed home with Xander and after 45 minutes on the phone finally got an appointment. The doctor checked him and ruled out teething, pneumonia, bronchitis, rashes, and ear infections. He said that Xander was very congested and that all we could offer was saline drops and a vaporizer for the congestion. He also suggested elevating his crib to improve drainage.

The rest of the day, Xander was perfectly normal. He was happy, ate well, and took good naps. Then, as we got close to bed time, he started with the fussiness. He fell asleep but when he drifted out a deep sleep, he woke up almost screaming. As soon as we picked him up, he would stop crying and fall back asleep. Nothing else would stop the crying though.

Then, Dad decided they maybe we should try swaddling because he seemed to be flailing his limbs a lot. We had transitioned him from swaddling to a sleep sack a little over a month ago and he had no problem. We only have one receiving blanket (a homemade hand-me-down from 10 years ago) that is big enough for Xander. We tightly wrapped him up and victory! He quickly fell asleep and had a normal remainder for the night.

I can't say that I understand why Xander wants to be swaddled again. Maybe it is just something we need to do while he is sick or for a little while. The important thing for now is that it works. It is amazing that 2 and 3 hour sleep increments feel so much better than 30 min. to 1 hour increments. I can almost say that I feel refreshed today.

Carla I love the family photo! How did you get Dolphin to agree to be in it? Xander looks so happy between his mom and dad!

Amy I am surprised that Dolphin agreed to be in this photo. I have a very cute one of him holding Xander while playing Wii that he will not let me post.

Carla I think there are a couple of grandma or more that would love to see the cute picture of Dolphin and Xander playing Wii. Can we outvote Dolphin and have you post it.

Amy I'd like to keep on living for a while



Margie I am enjoying your Blog especially 'cause it's the only way I can see & relate to Xander.

Cyber Grandma

Sarah That is a fantastic family picture! Your baby is so beautiful, congratulations!

Happy Thanksgiving

We had a really nice Thanksgiving dinner with our friends Shelby and Dave. The food was excellent, and we are totally stuffed. Xander enjoyed playing with Shelby's mom. We also met Laura and Simon, who were very cool. I can't wait until next year when Xander can have some of the Thanksgiving traditional cuisine.

Steph i love this picture--you look terrific! I hope you don't mind-- I sneakily found your blog through my blog's sitemeter.

Can i confess that I laughed out loud at the bulb syringe fiasco? the cats have coopted a few of R's things, too. I usually find them covered with dust bunnies underneath the radiator, ick!

Amy Hi Steph,

Thanks...every time I look in the mirror lately, I feel like I look 5 years older. Sleep deprivation is not a good look. Wow...a sitemeter. I need to figure that out.



Getting ready for the holidays

We're not putting up the Christmas tree this year, but I did invest in some stockings¹ from Pottery Barn. I really like the products that PB sells, but I rarely purchase anything from there because it is so expensive. I wanted some really nice, matching stockings though so I splurged. I even spent the extra \$5.50 per stocking to have our names embroidered on them. In case our family grows in the future, I also purchased an extra "blank" stocking. I figure that I can find a place like Things Remembered to embroider that stocking some day...or maybe I'll learn how to use my sewing machine.



Musical Tastes

There are many things that I wonder about Xander and can't wait to find out. One of those things I look forward to learning is what kind of music Xander will like. Will he be a punk teenager playing his music so loud it annoys everyone around him? Will he be a musician into the classics? Will I like what he listens to or will be the stereotypical parent and tell him to turn the music down? One thing I do know is that he will have more access to varied music than any generation before him.

Regarding music, my friend Dave sent me this interesting article about baby lullabies: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7760186.stm>. It seems that a lot more moms are using recent popular music to sing to their babies. I don't really sing to Xander to calm him down. To him, singing is just like talking and he considers that something interesting to listen to. It is good distraction from fussiness, but I don't think it would put him to sleep.

While I was on maternity leave, Xander and I would spend about an hour a day listening to '80s and '90s music from the TV. We would dance around the house while I belted out all those retro tunes. I think it was the first "rewarding" parenting moment for me. Singing is something that always makes me feel good, and Xander enjoyed it, too.

1 <http://www.potterybarn.com/pbimgs/rk/images/p2/products/200849/0045/img23l.jpg>



Copper doing her Longhorn impression



Get him good Xander!

Shopping like a big boy

Today, we went grocery shopping at Central Market, and Xander sat in the shopping cart like a big boy. Previously, he would sit in his infant carrier/car seat. While he enjoyed the carrier, it did not let him look around very well. He could only look straight ahead. Sitting up in the cart, he a nice 180 degree view. He really enjoyed looking around at the store so much that it wore him out and he slept on the way home.

Poor Copper and Peanut

I took the dogs to the vet this week. Both gained a lot of weight since their last visit. Copper gained 10lbs and Peanut gained 5lbs. I feel bad. I'm pretty sure this is because I haven't been giving them enough walks. It is impossible to walk them both and push Xander's stroller at the same time.

The receptionist at the vet said that weight gain would probably get worse when Xander starts feeding himself in a high chair. They will be catching anything that falls overboard. Dolphin suggested that if they are eating enough from those droppings that we might drop them down to one bowl of dog food a day instead of two.

Speaking of high chairs, I think we are going to have to get one soon. In just a couple of months, Xander is going to be ready to try some solid food. Oh wow, he's growing up so fast.

4th month well-child visit

Xander had his 4 month well child visit today. He's 26.5in long(95%-tile), 17lbs 7oz (90th %-tile), and his head is 41.5cm around (30%-tile). I am really not sure why they use different units for head circumference and length. Go figure.

The doctor requested that he see an ear, nose, and throat specialist because of some snorting that he made while he was being checked. The specialist will check just to make sure the soft tissues in his throat are developing correctly. I think it all sounds kind of normal to me, but we'll see how mom's intuitive measures up against medical science.

Birds and Bees - Carrots and Peas

Between 4 and 6 months, we can introduce Xander to solids. I was reading some information on this (all the rules) and I'm so intimidated. The whole time I was learning to breastfeed, I kept thinking "I can't wait until he starts solids." Now I kind of consider myself a breastfeeding pro (pat on back) , and I am not looking forward to solid foods. I would rather just skip to teaching Xander about the birds and the bees or how to tie shoes.

There is so much information out there about how to introduce solids. It's a bit overwhelming. I feel that parenting should be at least somewhat intuitive for basic needs or we wouldn't survive as a species. However, all these rules about starting solids seems very non-intuitive. Oh my. Xander's not quite ready for solid food yet, but it is probably time to start looking for a high chair.

Steph i actually thought solid foods were fun! although, like you, i was not into starting her on solids very early. we only did it at 5 months because Jamie really wanted to try. we started with cereal and she absolutely went for it-- i mean, really LOVED it. but i hear you on the easy-ness of breastfeeding. once you and baby get a hang of it it's the easiest thing in the world.

also, i'm sure you've come across this site in your research, but in case you haven't, i really liked wholesomebabyfood.com for recipes and strategies for making homemade baby food, which is actually surprisingly easy. we used jars too, for convenience, but it was nice to just make some of our own food too.

i'm not sure if you're looking for high chair recommendations, but here are some I really love.

we have the fisher price healthy care aquarium high chair. Pros: it's super-comfortable, reclines easily, the tray and attachments are awesome and easy to manipulate, even with squirmy baby in hand, it moves easily on rollers (and the rollers lock too). Cons: it's really big and bulky. if you have a small place, this is not the high chair for you.

My brother and Jamie's brother both have the Fisher Price Healthy Care booster seat. It's awesome. It straps on to a chair so it doesn't take up any more room than your regular kitchen/dining table furniture does, and you can use it for infants as well as older babies. Cons: it doesn't recline (really only important for very young babies).

I have heard hundreds of good things about the Fisher-Price Space Saver High Chair as well. (I promise I don't work for fisher-price. I just happen to have the most experience with their products--seems to be what everyone I know has).

The other recommendation-- if price is no object-- is a Stokke Tripp Trapp High Chair. I secretly covet one of these chairs. But the \$250 price tag makes it little more than a dream. They are chairs that grow with the baby, so that even when they are 17, if they want, they can sit in the chair. Check it out. Very clever design, and it looks like actual furniture, not a big plastic obviously-for-a-baby item taking up room in your house.

Sorry, I wrote a novel! Just wanted to throw those out there.

Amy Thanks for the recommendations, Steph. The wholesomebabyfood site looks really cool. I looked at the some of the winter squash recipes and they look tasty...like I might want to make them for myself. Haha! Thanks for the reassuring story about starting solid foods. I am mostly worried that he will not like. I was going to give him baby drop vitamins but he screamed so much after multiple attempts, I gave up. I did notice the past few days he was totally fascinated while watching me eat. So, that's promising.

Thanks for the high chair recommendations also. I'm hoping I can find something on craigslist. I've seen a few of the fisher price models you mentioned. Hopefully, since I am starting early, I can get a good deal.



Making noise

Steph that video is *awesome*. i actually think he sounds like he's lifting weights. that toy is pretty dang heavy. Him lifting it is probably the equivalent of me bench pressing 100 lbs :)

Carla I say we have found the next American Idol

Tom It is plain to hear that Xander is asking for a bailout! He makes as much sense as those sitting in front of Congress!

Amy So, maybe he will be an athletic, musical lobbyist. :-)

Preparing for Christmas

This will be a pretty low-key Christmas in our house this year. Here is a picture of our only decorations. We might forgo some gifts this year and tighten the economic belt a little bit. These sure are pretty to look at though.

Steph i love the stockings! if i only did one christmas decoration that would be it, too. with work and a newborn, I completely empathize with the not decorating. i wish i was better at tightening the gift belt though.. so hard!

Exersaucer Try 2

We tried the exersaucer again. This time we raised it up and put his legs through the little leg holes. He immediately turned right towards the little mirror toy and started staring at it. He also like the noisy spinning toy with beads.

This past week he has started to be able to bare weight on his feet for maybe 5-10s. He also seems to be getting close to rolling over from back to front. I have seen him roll on to his side, but just not all the way over yet.

Carla Just think in a couple of months he could start crawling. Then Peanut and Copper will have to start being his guardian angels

Mother's Intuition Wins

We took Xander to the ear, nose, and throat specialist per the recommendation of our pediatrician. The specialist said that his snorting was perfectly normal and that we should not have to do anything about it unless it bothers Xander. Fortunately, it does not bother him at all. Xander was spared having some kind of scope threaded threw is nose. That sounds awful!!!





Found that thumb

Last night, Xander was so cute. He was laying in my arms just staring up at me. He took his free and put it in my mouth. Hey, mom has a mouth, too, but it feels different...there are pokey white things in her mouth. Then, today, Xander discovered sucking his thumb. He switched between thumbs and even tried two at once. Thumb sucking is fine in my book as it helps him to self-sooth.

Also, this morning, he was awake before mom and dad, as usual, but he just stayed in his bed playing with his lovey. Of course, he still made enough noise that mom couldn't sleep through it.

Amy It think thumb sucking is pretty cute, too. In the first ultrasound where Xander actually looked more like a human than a blob, it looked like he was sucking his thumb. My heart melted.

I have read from multiple sources the same guidance about thumb sucking. It seems to be ok until about 4 years old and the permanent teeth start to come in. Then after that is when orthodontic problems can happen.

Xander does use an orthodontic pacifier. Maybe soon he'll figure out how to get it into his mouth at the right angle for sucking. :-)

So, Mom, I used a bottle like a pacifier? So, I just had a bottle hanging out of my mouth or just the nipple?

Carla you would let the whole bottle hang out. I don't know if Playtex still makes the bottle with the bag inserts but that is what you would like to have. We finally made you give it up for a cup around 14 mos of age. At that time the doctor would hound you about getting off the bottle at a year old.

He seems to be doing a little bit better today. He's been sick with some kind of virus. In fact, we all have. This virus had all sorts of symptoms. I had a sore throat and nausea. Xander and I both had really itchy eyes and coughing. Xander has spots in his mouth, and was eating less. Today, I have had uncontrollable sneezing and Dad just got the sore throat. We're all surviving though. I am looking forward to when Xander and I are both well at the same time again.

Carla I think the only thing I have heard against thumb sucking is if they continue to do it while getting their teeth they can mess up their bite. Not sure if that is true but you and Chris learned to put your pacifier in your mouth to self sooth. Actually you liked your platex bottle. You were so cute then, thanks for the memories! Oh and you still are cute didn't mean to imply that you aren't anymore.

Steph don't hate me! but i think thumbsucking is totally cute! my friend Georgianne's daughter sucks her thumb - she takes what they call "five-minute breaks" and lays down on the floor and sucks her thumb for a little bit and then gets up again... it's so cute.

i sucked my thumb when i was growing up. my mom still thinks it caused my overbite. But I have a friend whose dad is a dentist and he says that before babies get their adult teeth this stuff doesn't really matter. (I don't know if he is an authority on the matter, but that is what he told her about her daughter). But it is harder to take away a thumb later than it is to take a pacifier away.

BUT, you just never know. you don't know if he will become a thumbsucker or not, and you don't know if it will be hard to get him to quit or not later. i was so worried about getting R to quit the pacifier and it ended up being a non-issue.

So who knows. Mother's intuition wins, right? :) I say let him do what he needs to do to calm down. R sucked her thumb a few times when she was little but she never really relied on it at all. do you use a pacifier too?



Childproofing

We're going to have to do some child proofing very soon. For the major danger categories, here is what I am going to do:

- Poison - cabinet locks for 3 cabinets (2 bathroom and 1 kitchen)
- Water - I wasn't going to do anything special here. Supposedly, kids can drown in a dogs water bowl, but I'm not sure what I could do to prevent that other than keep a close eye on Xander
- Electricity - I need to get some outlet covers
- Fire - I think we need something to prevent him from accidentally turning on the stove burners. The dogs have accidentally turned on the burners before. If they can do it, so will Xander eventually. I think there is some kind of lock you can buy for that. I don't think we need to do anything for the fireplace. We never burn anything in it.
- Heavy things - We have some precarious shelves in the living room that need to be strapped to the walls
- Sharp things - We ditched the scary glass coffee table for an ottoman last year. The sharp kitchen items are all up high.
- Stringy things - I need to shorten the chords on all the blinds since they are a strangulation risk

Did I miss anything?

Carla You want to make sure the key for the gas fireplace is not accessible for Xander to turn the gas on and blow up the place. Ours is on the wall outside the fireplace and would be something a child would love to turn to see what happens.

Steph this may not matter right now but once he starts walking (and tripping a lot) you may want those cushy little corner things that go on the end of your coffee table or dining table. We weren't going to get them b/c i thought they were ugly but then one day she banged her head hard enough on one of our corners that if it had been her eye that hit i would have been REALLY worried. We have big thick ugly gray ones we got at Tar-jay but friends of ours found much nicer looking ones that match the tone of their wood table from One Step Ahead (their catalog, if you don't already get it, is pretty awesome. A friend of mine orders a ton of things from them and the stuff is actually really nice quality. Because I'm cheap I tend to look at the catalog and then look for cheaper alternatives elsewhere). haha.

Amy One Step Ahead is a great catalog. We have a store here in Austin called Terra Toys that sells a lot of the items in the catalog. I love it.

The cushy corner protectors is a good thing. The only thing that we have that is pointy are these shelves in the living room. These shelves are a total baby hazard.



Christmas Cards

Yay! I finished all my Christmas cards. I bought just the perfect amount this year including the envelopes that I screwed up. All the grandparents are going to receive a special little treat in their card.

Let me know what you think!

More childproofing

I remembered one more childproofing item. Glass beads. I have some of those glass bead things that you put in the bottom of a vase. When a friend of ours came over with their 2 year old daughter, she started eating them. Thank goodness we caught her before she swallowed!

Planning for the big trip

Next week, we are going on our first long trip with Xander to Uncle Chris and Auntie Laura's house for Christmas. I am not sure how this is going to go. We've gone for a 45 min drive before and that went ok. This will be a 3-4 hours trip. Maybe if we do it at the right time, Xander will sleep most of the way. To make matters even more exciting, we'll have both dogs in the back, too.

Now, I am thinking about what I have to pack. I think minimum of 2 changes per clothes per day, sleepware for each night, a boatload of burp clothes and bibs, diapers. There's a lot of stuff...we might have to leave Dolphin at home to fit it all. :-P

Carla Remember our shopping trip when we got this and that cause Dolphin liked it! I tried to warm him, Xander would take his place as number one soon! Use space bags we would hate not to see Dolphin at Christmas.

Amy Hahahaha...I went shopping for the Chinese gift exchange today. I was looking for small gifts that wouldn't take up too much space. I haven't found anything good yet though. It's kind of fun shopping for random generic gifts with no specific person in mind.



Calm after the storm

OK, I don't want to jinx anything, but I think Xander is on the verge of sleeping longer. Unless my sleepless memory failed me, I think he might have slept for a 5 hours stretch last night from mid-night to 5amish. Sometimes I find it hard to remember exactly when and how often he gets up though. I do everything possible not to really wake myself up. I hope this wasn't a freak event...only time will tell. Lately, I "think" he has been getting up every 2 to 3.5 hours, eating every 4 hours at night, and comfort in between. We still had a day this week that he was awake every hour, but I think that might have been the peak of his illness. He didn't take good naps that day either, only 15 min. at a time.

I did finally breakdown and read a book on baby sleep called *The No Cry Sleep Solution*¹ by Elizabeth Pantley. I was trying to avoid too much "advice" about baby sleep and try to be a more intuitive parent about it. The book doesn't really talk about amazing magic bullets. It's mostly pretty obvious advice. What I did like was that it was encouraging. Sometimes, when you are exhausted, and you hear about other perfect angel babies that sleep through the night from birth on, it can be really frustrating. Hopefully, there is some karma involved with Xander. Maybe I'll be able to sleep better when Xander's a teenager and those perfect angel kids will keep their parents up fretting. Hehehe...

Carla Keep those good thoughts you will need them. He is a boy and he will turn fifteen. Dad will think everything he is does is just fine and mom will fret that her little boy doesn't need her anymore. Be thankful he needs you every couple of hours that will change, he will meet another women.

Amy "Sunrise, sunset, sunrise, sunset..."

¹ <http://www.pantley.com/elizabeth/>

Very first Christmas Present

Xander received his very first Christmas present today by mail. This came from Great Auntie Sue in Colorado. It looks like it will be a lot of fun for Xander. I can't wait until he sit up and take paths in a regular bath tub instead of the infant bath tub. This toy should make it really fun for Xander. I love taking baths so if he takes after me, I'm sure he will, too.

I hate dishes

We've got bottles for day care, pumping parts, and milk storage. I need to get a better dish-waster that can handle all this stuff automatically. Our dishwasher doesn't get the nipples clean. If wash those by hand, I might as well wash all the other parts, too. At least, I have started making the human dish waster Dolphin do it every other day.

As for the increase in laundry, I don't mind that so much. Our washer and dryer work very well. I just keep the washer open all day and throw Xander messes in there until it gets full, then wash. I initially folded all his clothes, now I just stuff them into his closet shelves unfolded. It's kind of a waste of time to fold. In fact, I don't even do it for my own clothes. I'm sure my employees think I'm a real mess these days. I looked in the mirror the other day at work and my hair was going every which way.



Every day, here is the pile of plastic that I have to wash



Comrades

Today, Dolphin's company had a potluck holiday celebration. This is a big change from last year. Previously, they took out everyone to a very nice, expensive restaurant. Due to economic constraints, this year was a lot different. They had a small lunch at the office and everyone could bring their families. At the last minute, I decided to go. I didn't bring Xander because taking him out of day care and putting him back in would be a huge hassle and disruptive to his routine. I felt bad though because all the other families brought their kids. In my defense, they are stay-at-home moms.

One of the little ones at the party was 13 month old Milo. He was super cute. He looks a lot like I imagine that Xander will be at that age. His eye color is blue-grey like Xander's is right now. He has the lightest strawberry blond hair. I believe Xander's hair is going to be that color, too. Dolphin disagrees. He thinks that Xander is going to have dark hair because the current hair (which isn't very much) on his head is dark.

Milo's parents were fun to talk to. He is their first and still has yet to sleep through the night, and yet, he is a perfectly happy and healthy little boy. I love to hear stories like that. I get tired of telling people that Xander doesn't sleep through the night and them looking at me like I'm some kind of failure as a parent.

Speaking of sleeping through the night, that one 5 hour sleep stretch does seem to be a freak occurrence. Xander was back to him 3 hourish stretches against last night. He also started a new kind of cry sound last night. I'm not sure what it means yet. It not a really urgent sound cry like pain or hunger or fear. It sounds like it's got more complex thought associated with it...if that makes any sense. I hope it is not because he is getting sick like Dolphin. Dolphin had ringing in his ears last night. How is Xander supposed to let me know if he has ringing ears or not? Poor guy...



Poor Dolphin

Poor Dolphin finally received a video game gift that he has wanted for 6 months last night and he's too sick to play. He has a viral infection causing a cough and ringing his ears. Whatever is going on with his ears is messing with his balance so he's also dizzy and nauseous. I think both Xander and I had the same infection last week, but we didn't have it as bad. I hope Daddy Dolphin recovers before Christmas. Xander and I took good care of him today.

Maybe Dolphin can sleep in another room tonight so he can get his rest without Xander waking him up. I have been very sick twice since Xander was born. On those two occasions, I slept in a separate room from Dolphin and Xander. Dolphin would bring Xander to me when he wanted to eat and couldn't be comforted any other way. Those two nights were the only 4 hours stretches of sleep that I have had since the beginning of August. It really helped me to recover more quickly. I should definitely return the favor to Dolphin with a peaceful night of sleep.

I read all about ear infections on line today trying to determine if Dolphin should go to the doctor or not. I ended up making him go because everything online said he should have started to get better after a few days. The doctor didn't really have much to offer except some really expensive medicine. The medicine appears to be every kind of cold relief medicine that I have ever heard rolled into one pill. Fortunately, he does not have an ear infection (bacterial) after all...just a virus related ear ache.

Speaking of ear infections, this is the one area where my boss gave me parenting advice. He told me that I should get one of those scopes that the doctors use to look in the kids ear. He said that once you have seen one ear infection, you will be able to use the scope to self diagnose. He has triplets so I guess anything he can do to save one trip to the doctor would be good. I saw some of those scope things online for about \$30. I undecided if I should follow his advice. Right now, I'm just hoping that Xander never has any trouble with his ears....

John hey, we just had an ear infection experience. We didn't even know Angela had one. Aijuan had noticed that she wasn't 'talking' as much for the past few days, (at the time), and she was quieter. Since there is already apparently some "mild hearing loss", (still being investigated), we called her pedi and she said to bring her in just to give her a once over. She was doing ok otherwise, but she said she had some fluid in her middle ear, both sides. Got her started on some baby amoxicillin 2x/dy and after a few days, she started 'talking' again. Took her back after 10 days and ears were cleared up. The thing was that there was no real external clue that would have made us think "ear infection". She wasn't fussy, or showing any other signs. Maybe we happened to have caught it before it got worse, but I was surprised how it could come up so fast and subtle.

Cuter than this??

Milo's mom said that babies start to get really cute at 6months. If Xander is cuter than this picture in two months, we are REALLY in trouble.



Christmas Elf

I hope the grandparents have all received their Christmas cards by now. We included some magnets that we made of the picture above.

Originally, we were going to put Xander in the box for the picture, but we couldn't get him into a good position. We took about 50 shots, and this was my instant favorite. I doctored the colors a bit with GIMP¹ and the printed them on a page of magnetic paper. The hat came out of the \$1 bin at Target and just barely fit. Dolphin thinks the hat makes him look like a little pope.

Neighborhood full of little ones

Last night, our neighbor, John came over with some really excellent cranberry bread. He caught us up on the latest news with his new little baby, Angela. Angela just had her 6 month visit. She and mom, Aijuan, are doing very well. I remembered that they have a blog, too. Here's the link <http://mesquitemonkey.wordpress.com/>.

¹ <http://www.gimp.org>



Christmas Firsts

It's been an interesting week filled with Christmas firsts:

1. First Christmas Gifts - Xander received some really nice gifts this year. From mommy and daddy, he got some heat monitoring spoons, bibs, a new outfit, and a blinky key toy. From great grandparents, he received money. From grandparents, he received blocks, books, and money. From S & D, he received a cute Christmas ornament. From Auntie Laura and Uncle Chris, he received two cool fisher price toys.
2. First overnight trip from home - The trip to Ft. Worth went very smoothly as he slept almost the whole way. On the way back, it was a little more challenging because he was awake. He kept getting bored and lonely in the back. Eventually, he did fall asleep so we could make it the rest of the way home. Auntie Laura and Uncle Chris were kind enough to let us borrow their bed while we visited and that made things a lot easier.
3. First ear infection and medicine - On the 23rd, Xander was really fussing and inconsolable. We took him into the doctor to check for an ear infection. Since Dad was suffering through one (and still is), there was a good chance. We were right. The doctor gave us some antibiotics and we have a check up in 3 weeks.
4. First accident in the bath - This one is pretty gross so you might want to skip it. The antibiotic that we gave Xander for his ear infection also has a side effect of loose stools, which he accidentally had in the bath tub. I have to say that is the grossest thing our little boy has done so far. Daddy helped me hose him off with the kitchen sink sprayer and we had a 2nd bath. Yuck! Then, I spent an hour disinfecting the sink.



You have no idea how hard it is to get all three of them to look at the camera at the same time.







Fun with cousins

Here's a picture of Xander with his cousin Trevor. Trevor was so sweet with Xander. He was trying to keep the drool off of Xander's chin. We decided Xander's mouth is like a broken faucet "drip, drip, drip...."

Carla Wow I am honored with all those snazzy cameras clicking away my picture made it to your blog!

Amy Yep, this one was cuter than the one I had of Trevor and Xander.

Bipolar Baby

Today, Xander was pretty fussy. I think it is because he is sick. You know how you feel really cold when you are first sick even though your body temperature is warm. I think he was feeling that way because he wanted to be attached to us all day long. We couldn't even put him down for a second to change his diaper without him screaming. This is not typical Xander.

We did manage to get a few moments of laughter out of him and tried to distract him from feeling bad. Copper helped us entertain him by licking his toes. That cracked him up. He also grabbed onto her ears and fur. She was very tolerant of all of it, which is good because I'm sure he's got more in store for her.

He also liked playing with one of his new Christmas toys from Aunt Laura and Uncle Chris. I put half of the legs on so it is kind of propped up. Then, I hold Xander in a seated position in front of it. He bangs on it which produces all sorts of interesting sounds and makes lights blink.

Dad's technique for keeping Xander happy today was to sing Snoop Dog songs to him. Let's just say I hope that Xander's musical abilities take after mom instead of dad. :-)

Carla Wow! the mother instinct in Copper came out!

Baby Mystery

Wouldn't it be great if human babies came out of the womb knowing how to communicate? Xander has been a challenging mystery to us the past few days. I had thought all of his new fussiness was because of his ear infection. However, I had the doctor check today and his ears look much better.

Here are the strange things we have observed:

- Extreme fussiness - He will go from laughing to pain cries (screams) in seconds. He is soothed by holding him and walking around or nursing him. The baby bjorn carrier seemed to help a little with this. At least, my arms have a rest. He will spit the pacifier out. He starts to cry if you lay him down for a diaper change or to change his clothes. I hope this isn't just his true personality coming out.
- Frequent nursing - The past two days & nights, he has nursed every 2 hours, both breasts. Could this be a growth spurt need for more food or comfort nursing?
- Extreme drooling - Trevor mentioned that his mouth was like a faucet. I have read that this could be teething but then other sources say that drooling has nothing to do with teething.
- Clawing at his head while laying down - He has scratch marks and cuts on the back of his head. I have cut his nails super short which prevents any more damage. I have slathered on every kind of cream that Target sells in case it is itchy. It's hard to say if he really is itchy. The pediatrician told me to try 50% dandruff shampoo just once to see if that helped...in case his mild cradle cap was actually itchy. It may be cradle cap or it may be he just discovered his hands. He seems to do this mostly when in the back laying position, so mostly at night.

So, he could be teething, he could have GERD, he could have cradle cap itch, and/or he could be a super needy baby with an emerging personality. I just hope that I can find some way to make my little boy happy.

Carla I have a notion on what it could be but since I am not there to observe full time I will keep it to myself.

John hey, y'all, the drooling thing made me think "teething", (like I'm an expert!), but we've been doing that for a few weeks over here, too. Angela wants/needs to be held more during those times of fussy/crying and eventually she settles out. Maybe it passes after awhile and she just needed to be held, I don't know. But our thing is if not hungry, need changing, some other thing, and we've tried everything else, we fall back on this and she does settle down. She's not howling crying but it does sound like something is hurting her. Also she seems to be comforted a bit by biting on something, which leans me to think "teething". Don't know if that's what's going on with Xander, but that's what came to mind when I read your description.

Amy Thanks, John. Dolphin did see some bumps on his gums so that might be it. I don't know. It seems a bit early, too.





Like father like son

One moment of fun with Xander today, here is a picture of him taking after his dad.

Xander is in his World of Warcraft¹ onesie playing with an Xbox360² controller. He was REALLY interested in this controller. It kind of looks like a baby toy with the nobs and bright, primary colored buttons.

Bumbo, bumbo, bumbo

Thank you, Grandma Carla and Grandpa Tom. Xander spent his Christmas money on a bright green Bumbo chair. He loves it. Here is a picture of him on his first time sitting in it.

He also likes it because it gives him a different view of the world, one where he can pet the dogs. Here is a picture of him with Peanut.

It also has a little tray that hooks on. It's nice because we can put toys on it and he practices picking them up. It might also work for an early high chair. We have a window seat in the kitchen. If we put him in his chair in the window seat it should be a good height for feeding.

¹ <http://www.worldofwarcraft.com/>

² <http://www.xbox.com/en-US/?WT.srch=1>



Terra Toys

We found a cool local toy store called Terra Toys. Here is a link to their blog¹. In Austin, there is a very anti-chain mindset in the community so we have a lot of cool local stores that do very well. This store has a lot of toys that you would not see in a Toys 'R' Us or major department store. It's fun to shop. We went there with Grandma Jo a few months ago to shop for Mary and Jonah.

BTW, the other advantage of the anti-chain mindset in Austin is that there never a wait at The Cheesecake Factory². We have waited 3 hours to get into the The Cheesecake Factory in San Fransisco. In addition to SF, I have been to TCF in Austin, Kansas City, Ft. Lauderdale, Las Vegas, San Jose (2 locations), Palo Alto, Chicago, Chandler, St. Louis, Ft. Worth, and Denver. The average wait being around 45 minutes for a table everywhere except Austin. Obviously, I don't share an anti-chain philosophy when it comes to TCF.

John HA! Glad y'all discovered that place. It used to be on south Congress back when. They have a lot of cool stuff. My brother used to come up with the coolest stocking stuffers from there. There's another one kind of like that at 29th and Guadalupe, (ToyJoy?), don't know if it is still there. Yup, still there: <http://www.toyjoy.com/info.html>

Amy Toy Joy...thank you for the suggestion!

Missed Milestone

Darn, I missed it...I mean I missed seeing it. Today, I decided to give Xander a shot as sleeping in his big boy crib. He only had an inch to spare length wise in his mini-crib. The poor guy really needed more space. 15 minutes after I laid him down, we heard him on the baby monitor. I went into check on him and he was kicking his legs up in the air. He wasn't crying so I gave him a chance to get back to sleep on his own. A few minutes later, I heard him again and went to check on him. This time, the pacifier was out and he was on his side. I put the pacifier back in and again, gave him a chance to fall asleep again. Just a minute later, I hear him again. This time, he was on his stomach. I missed seeing him roll from back to front all on his own for the first time. Darn it! I think he had grabbed on to the sheet saver and used it to pull himself over.

Anyhow, the roll-over woke him up. He has never slept on his stomach before so he doesn't know how. The only time he is on his stomach is when he is awake and usually when he is very a wake and ready for the extra workout of tummy time. So, I think this will basically give him one more reason to wake up at night. Like we needed more. :-)

We'll see how the rest of the night goes...

Big boy crib

The big boy crib lasted maybe 1.5 hours last night. Then, it was into bed with mom. We'll keep at it though. He needs to learn to sleep on his own if he ever wants siblings. Haha!

I think we knew this was going to be a challenge. Xander doesn't sleep in his crib at day care. He sleeps in a boppy in the middle of the classroom. One good thing is that once he is asleep, he is oblivious to all the baby chaos around him. When he is at home, we have him nap in the living room with dog noise and TV going on. Maybe we can try the crib for some day-time naps on the weekends and see how that goes.

¹ <http://www.terratoys.com/news>

² <http://www.thecheesecakefactory.com/>



Rice cereal

Daddy fed Xander some rice cereal mixed with breast milk today. Xander seemed to like it. I imagine it tastes mostly like breast milk, but is just a different texture... mushy milk.

It was kind of nice in that he didn't spit up like he usually does. Of course, there was still plenty of mess from the eating process to keep the laundry full.

Carla OMG! before you know it he will be going away to college. What a big boy!

Steph he is SOOOOOOOOOO cute in that chair!

Amy This week we tried squash. The first time he made a "OMG, are you trying to poison me?" face, but he ate about 4 bites. The second time he was much more receptive to it. I think he was hungrier the 2nd time also.

'Tis a gift to be simple

It's cool how the simplest things are entertaining for Xander. In this picture, he's playing with a sushi soy sauce bowl and a plastic lid.

Watching Xander play with these simple things, reminded me of a Quaker song that I sang back in middle school called Simple Gifts.¹

Carla That is the reason adults like to take children to disney world. It allows you to experience old things as if they are brand new again. Just think of all the experiences Xander has in front of him.....a whole lifetime. The joys of being a parent never run out.

Steph i don't remember singing tis a gift to be simple in school but i remember the song because it was sung as part of a hallmark movie i saw once. i don't remember the movie but i remember the song.

¹ http://www2.gol.com/users/quakers/simple_gifts.htm



5 months old

Today, Xander is 5 months old and wow, he is on a roll...literally. As a new mom, I am quite watchful of all the literature on what Xander is supposed to have learned to do at certain ages. Experienced parents had told me that babies don't do much until around 4 months. Xander certainly fit that mold. He was, as Jenny McCarthy described, kind of blob albeit a very cute blob. In the past month, he has started to really do all sorts of new things:

- Play with his feet like a yogi - I'm so jealous he can do yoga poses that I couldn't manage to do with years of practice.
- Use his legs to roll his body
- Locate the direction of where sounds come from - I saw him move his eyes back and forth between two people talking at his day care today as they had a loud conversation.
- Devour semi-solid food - He is in love with the rice cereal so we've decided to try a few new things
- Grasp large objects with one or two hands - Now we have to be careful when we hold him as he grabs dangerous objects
- Shows an interest in what I'm doing with my mouth when I'm talking
- Looking at pictures in books; although, he still prefers to learn by eating the books so we have to be careful
- Locking his legs and supporting his own weight with only balance help
- Play with the water while taking a bath
- Feel the fur of and laugh at the dogs
- At so much more...

Baby Mystery Update

I mentioned previously¹ that Xander was unusually fussy and we didn't know why. Fortunately, he has been a lot happier the past couple of days. I am not sure, but I think some of it may have been my fault. I didn't realize until I came back to work after the holidays that I was having a severe milk production problem. I went from pumping 3.5-4oz at a time to 1-1.5. This is at the same time that I think Xander is going through a growth spurt. At day care, they had to thaw some frozen milk just to satisfy his need. In addition, he is totally scarfing down the rice cereal that we have introduced.

So, I'm working on the milk production problem. I'm going to give the corporate sponsored lactation consultant a call. I have been pumping like crazy (9 times between 9am and 5pm) to make sure that I have at least as much as I used to even though I know I need more. I am trying to be a human pacifier and make sure Xander is constantly sucking. I hope I can get things going. It is very stressful.

I'm not sure what caused the supply problem really. I know it wasn't the introduction of solids because it started to happen before that. It might be that Xander had loss of appetite while he was sick. It could be the major stress that I have been having at work the past couple of weeks. I did rule out that it is not because I am pregnant again...whew!!!! I definitely am not ready for that.

Lynn Sorry to hear you're stressed out at work, Amy, and that the whole low milk production problem is not helping your stress level. Hang in there. I know you're doing all that you can and you're doing really well at it. XOXO.

Amy Thanks for the support, Lynn. Are you maybe thinking about kids soon? :-)

Steph The stress at work definitely sounds rough. I hope you have a good place to pump while at work and are able to relax while doing it. hugs! good luck with getting your supply up. I had supply issues for awhile too-- and just did exactly what you're doing.

Amy Thanks, yes fortunately I have a good place to pump. I have an office with no windows and a mute button on my phone. So, most of the day I'm pumping while on a conference call in my office. Since most of the people that I work with are in other countries or states, they don't even know that I'm pumping.

1 <http://dnadigitaldiary.blogspot.com/2008/12/baby-mystery.html>



Va, va, va...

Xander is having fun with consonant sounds this week. Over and over and over and over "Va, va, va...Ba, ba, ba...".

Dolphin and I were debating whether it is easy to say "Mama" or "Dada". "Da" uses the tongue and "Ma" uses lips. What do you think?

Xander also enjoys when mom says "Zzzzzzzzz" for "Xander". I think that sound might be one of the harder ones to learn. His 4 year old cousin, Jonah, calls him "Sander."

Carla Most of the time babies say Da-Da first. I think it is easier to say, and I am sure that they don't know they are saying dad. I know for a long time you were ma-mee cause Christopher couldn't say your name right. You would say Chris as Kiss. I know that both of you said da-da first. The one word you are going to wish he never learns is WHY. I can remember all the questions such a cute and innocent age.

Amy Yes, that's what I'm thinking, too. Da-Da should be easier. Was it hard to teach Chris that is his full name was Christopher? I'm kind of wondering how to do that with Xander's full name being Alexander.



Carla I think it was harder to teach him to write his whole name since I wanted him to be Christopher and not Chris. I tried to get Trevor to call me Maw-Maw cause that is how he started saying Grandma, but then he changed it to grandma and I would say no maw-maw and he would look me in the eyes and say grandma. Maybe Xander can call me maw maw!

Lynn My nephew learned to say ba-ba (Cantonese for Dad) first as





Craigslist is the best

I had some clothes and cloth diapers that Xander isn't using. I thought about selling them to a consignment store. However, after reading online reviews for several of the local consignment shops, I decided against it. There were a lot of negative reviews for the shops. So, in the end, I decided to cut out the middleman. I went to Craigslist and posted the diapers. I instantly received 5 emails of people who were interested. I ended up selling them to someone who offered \$12 than my asking price. Who needs a consignment store! Now, I can go shopping for new stuff. Yay!

Squash

Here is a picture of Xander trying squash. You might see that he has a little between his eyes above his nose.

I used his Christmas bib. Yes, I know it's past Christmas. He goes through bibs so fast every day that I don't even notice what is on them. He's developed an interesting technique for eating. Between each bite, he sticks his thumb in his mouth to help himself swallow. Then, he pops his mouth open for the next bite. It's pretty darn cute. I'll have to record some video.

Carla Now there is a little engineer if I ever saw one. Already using that brain to figure out how to eat!

Yum toes

Daddy took this picture today. We've turned Xander's old mini-crib into the diaper changing table now.





Haichair

We bought a high chair today. For the past month, I have been looking for a high chair. I checked craigslist weekly. Craigslist did not have much close by and I didn't want to drive over 30 miles for a high chair. The local consignment stores were not much help either as they only had two and the prices were not great. So, I finally broke down to purchase new.

There is a picture of the model that we bought below. It is the Chicco Polly with the Candy pattern. I picked it after reading a personal review on Target.com and reviewing recommendations from Consumer Reports.

The high chair comes in multiple colors and patterns. I purchased this pattern because it was \$40 less. It is not exactly my style, but none of the high chairs are what I would consider to be stylish. Then again, I'm not really stylish...haha.

I am excited to use the high chair for non-mealtimes also. It's nice to have Xander in the kitchen while I'm cooking. I talk to him and show him what I am doing. He seemed very interested in watching me make salad and bison burgers. This chair will get him up a little higher so he can see what I am doing, but still be safe.

Steph it is totally cute! i know what you mean about not having a "style". i don't really, either. but i think this pattern is adorable.

i will be interested in hearing how you like the chair. How well does it move around in your kitchen? how well do the wheels lock/unlock? How easy is it to use the tray-- one or both handed? How comfortable does Xander seem in it? (I know this seems like 20 questions, and I do already have a high chair but I like being able to tell people what I've heard about these products from individuals who have personally experienced them!)

Carla Wow I wish there had been wheels on high chairs back in the seventies. I guess they hadn't invented the wheel way back then.

Amy Hey, Steph. No problem. I'll let you know how this works out for us.

Mom, haha! We'll see if wheels are a good thing or not.

Cuties bathing

I found this old picture of Copper when she was a puppy.

Carla It was a hard decision but babies smell better wet than dogs! Sorry Copper!

Babies Win!

Babies win 7 to 1 over puppies. What about kitties?

Steph oh, babies hands down! kittens look kind of scraggly and drowned when they have baths, even if they are adorably cute and fluffy when dry.

Carla Max votes for babies! He doesn't like kittens. I vote for babies also.

Amy Awww...Max would be a great uncle for a kitten. I think kittens or even cats looks so pathetic when wet. It is so cute. OH, BTW, Xander's about out growing the sink bath, too. I hope he gets really good at sitting pretty soon because we're going to have to transition to the big bath tub.



Babies



Puppies

Shake your ta-tas

So, I previously posted about a milk production problem¹. I finally had 5 minutes to talk to my corporate sponsored lactation consultant. She had some really good suggestions.

1) Reduce stress. Don't look at the bottles. Looking at the amount of milk is stressful and that milk production. Being stressed about milk makes work successful, which hurts milk production. She actually suggested reducing the amount of times that I pump during the day and pump a few more times at night. This will help reduce the stress of balancing work and pumping.

- Results so far: I am getting less milk through pumping during the day, but more milk per pumping. I'm still working on reducing stress, but this is helping.

2) Take "More Milk Plus"² an herbal supplement.

- Results: I haven't tried this yet. I will try to pick up some from Whole Foods tonight.

3) Change pumping technique. She suggested shaking the breast to get all the milk out and pumping for 15 minutes even if there was none coming out.

- Results: Shaking my ta-tas works...I get a little bit more out. 15 minutes seems like an eternity, but I'm doing it.

4) Listen to a hypnotherapy CD from Sheri Menelli³. This is suppose to help with the stress. Supposedly the consultant helped a mom go from 100% formula to 100% breast milk through the use of this CD.

- Results: I am all for relaxation techniques and positive thinking. I do think that thinking positively will help. I'm not charged up about hypnotherapy though. I think I will try to call upon some things that I have learned in my yoga practice to help.

Lactation consultants are work their weight in gold. It was such a relief to talk about my concerns with Rose and here some suggestions. I have renewed hope and will keep on trying.

Steph wow, your work is awesome to have such a good lactation consultant. there's some advice in there that i hadn't heard (the shaking bit) but it kind of makes sense! glad to hear things are looking up--and hopefully a little less stressful.

Amy Yes, it is cool that my company is so supportive. Although, one piece of advice, I'm not sure they would agree with. The lactation consultant also suggested that I call in sick to work for a couple of days. I understand why she made the suggestion, but not sure my company would appreciate her handing out that advice. Anyhow, the advice wouldn't work. People would still call me at home and work would pile up...I can't even hide from the stress at home...I just have to deal with it head on and not let things bother me.

¹ <http://dnadigitaldiary.blogspot.com/2009/01/baby-mystery-update.html>

² http://www.motherlove.com/product_more_milk_plus.php

³ <http://www.menelli.com/>



Exorcist on the excersaucer

Warning if you are easily grossed out, don't watch this video. At the end of this video, Xander spits up. This sometimes happens if he has too much pressure on his stomach shortly after eating. At least his head is not spinning around.

What I think is cute in this video is how he looks back and forth between the camera and my laptop screen. Every time, he looks down to the right he is look at the laptop screen which is displaying the video that I capture of him. He really likes to look at himself, but who can blame him?!?!

Carla I think that is pretty cute. I also think he waved at me. He really takes after Dolphin but that spittin up is all you Amy. Ha Ha! It brings back the memories. I don't think he is that big for his age. You were about that same size at Christmas as Xander was.

Amy You know...I think that means I was really big because typically girls are supposed to be slightly smaller than boys.

Carla Actually boys don't get bigger than girls until about age 12. In elementary school a lot of the girls are taller than the boys.



High chair eating

The high chair is working well. I set it up a few days ago and it was really easy to put together. Normally, I delegate the assembly job to dad because he really likes to build things. This time, I couldn't wait for dad. It assembled very easily with no tools required. Too bad cribs are not as easy to assemble or it would have saved us a lot of time back then.

I have been putting Xander into the seat to play while we eat dinner or while I'm cooking. I likes to play with toys or just play with safety straps. Tonight, we fed him in it for the first time.

I really like it so far. It is very easy to adjust all the different positions. He hasn't made a huge mess, but it seems like it should be easy to clean. It moves easily around our kitchen. We have a big kitchen so I don't ever fold it up, but it does close up to a very small foot print.

One of the main reasons that I picked this high chair over others is the foot rest. I personally hate having my feet dangle on stools or tall chairs. A lot of the high chairs had these tiny worthless footrests. I wanted Xander to have a comfy place for his feet. Xander is kind of a big boy so this chair's big foot rest should do well. It's also adjustable as he grows.

Carla How sweet! Your lucky he looks like he a good eater so far!

Steph i'm glad you're liking your chair! so far your chair seems not to have the two major complaints I have about mine: it doesn't fold up well at all-- it folds, but it's awkward to do, and it doesn't stand upright unless you lean it, and because of the wheels, when it leans, it has a tendency to slide. Very annoying. the other is that the wheels lock *constantly* even when I'm not trying to lock them. Just bumping the chair seems to cause some of the locks to go down, which is obnoxious when you have a baby in your arms that you're trying to put in the chair or need to move it out of the way. ah well!

Amy You know...this high chair might not be that much better for locking wheels. I mean the wheels lock, but on the slick floor, I bet they might still slide if I leaned it up folded against the wall. I think they need to develop something you put on the floor to lock it into when you are not using it.

Big boy

I mentioned in the previous post that Xander is kind of a big boy. Last Monday, he measured around 18 and 1/2 lbs with clothes on at the doctors office. They didn't take his length because he was just there for a follow up on the previous ear infection. However, he's now in the 9 months size clothing. I had to switch to this size because his pants were starting to look like shorts.

One of the other moms at Xander's day care remarked about him getting so big. I don't know what to say about that. He is certainly as big as some of the kids that are walking and crawling already, but he obviously does not do either yet.

I do worry how long he will fit in his rear facing car seat. It's only good up until a certain size. However, if Xander gained as much weight as he has since birth, I think he'll be under that limit. I think he is slowing down growing a little bit, too.

Steph just fyi though, most kids can be in rear-facing car seats until 30-35 lbs. so it may be awhile yet. you should do as much reading as you can about rear vs. front-facing car seats so you can make the best decision about when you want to make that switch.

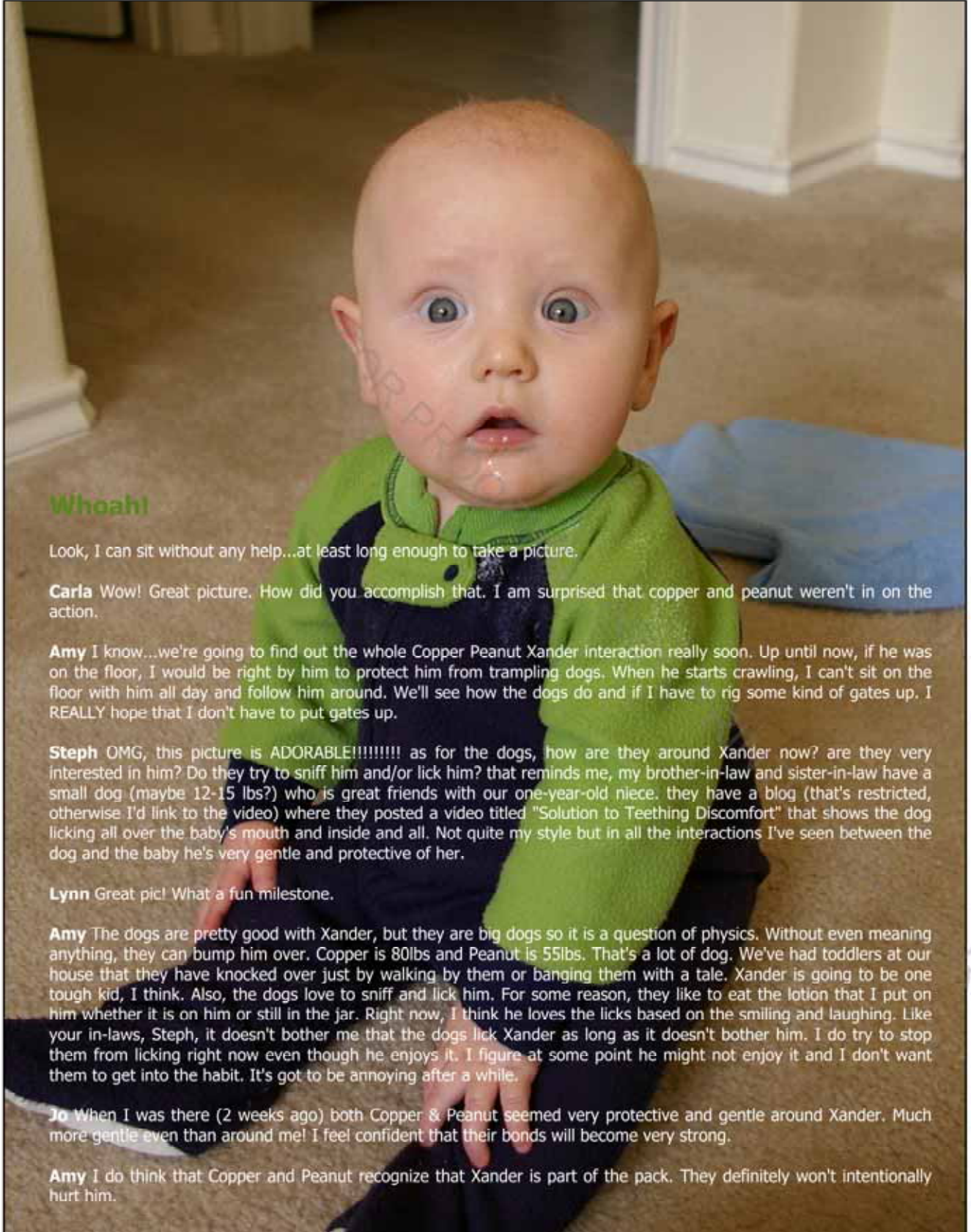
Steph p.s. i have heard lots of stories of babies being at all ends of the growth charts. one piece of advice that i thought was useful to remember is that if he is *on the chart at all* he is normal! plus, growing out of clothes just means more cute styles to try out, right? haha. i know when R was young I couldn't get enough of the new clothes. now, though, she grows out of things much more slowly.

Amy Oh, that is very reassuring. I'll try to remember that. He is is on the chart...not off the charts. :-)

Yes, it is fun to shop for clothes, too. Although, I think it is a little bit harder for boy clothes sometimes. If you go to a dept. store, 2/3 of the clothes are for girls...I suppose that is similar to the gender split for adults also.

I did a little retail therapy this weekend though and it was fun to pick out some new clothes.

On the car seat, I definitely need to do some research. We borrowed a carseat for my 4 year old nephew (who wears size 2T btw so he's little) and it was so huge. With Xander's car seat, the big carseat, I barely fit in the back. Definitely something to consider if we want to have another little munchkin before Xander grows out of a car seat.

A close-up photograph of a baby sitting on a light-colored carpeted floor. The baby has light skin, blue eyes, and is looking directly at the camera with a wide-eyed, open-mouthed expression of surprise or awe. The baby is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt with a dark blue collar. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a white baseboard and a blue object on the floor to the right.

Whoah!

Look, I can sit without any help...at least long enough to take a picture.

Carla Wow! Great picture. How did you accomplish that. I am surprised that copper and peanut weren't in on the action.

Amy I know...we're going to find out the whole Copper Peanut Xander interaction really soon. Up until now, if he was on the floor, I would be right by him to protect him from trampling dogs. When he starts crawling, I can't sit on the floor with him all day and follow him around. We'll see how the dogs do and if I have to rig some kind of gates up. I REALLY hope that I don't have to put gates up.

Steph OMG, this picture is ADORABLE!!!!!!!!!!!! as for the dogs, how are they around Xander now? are they very interested in him? Do they try to sniff him and/or lick him? that reminds me, my brother-in-law and sister-in-law have a small dog (maybe 12-15 lbs?) who is great friends with our one-year-old niece. they have a blog (that's restricted, otherwise I'd link to the video) where they posted a video titled "Solution to Teething Discomfort" that shows the dog licking all over the baby's mouth and inside and all. Not quite my style but in all the interactions I've seen between the dog and the baby he's very gentle and protective of her.

Lynn Great pic! What a fun milestone.

Amy The dogs are pretty good with Xander, but they are big dogs so it is a question of physics. Without even meaning anything, they can bump him over. Copper is 80lbs and Peanut is 55lbs. That's a lot of dog. We've had toddlers at our house that they have knocked over just by walking by them or banging them with a tale. Xander is going to be one tough kid, I think. Also, the dogs love to sniff and lick him. For some reason, they like to eat the lotion that I put on him whether it is on him or still in the jar. Right now, I think he loves the licks based on the smiling and laughing. Like your in-laws, Steph, it doesn't bother me that the dogs lick Xander as long as it doesn't bother him. I do try to stop them from licking right now even though he enjoys it. I figure at some point he might not enjoy it and I don't want them to get into the habit. It's got to be annoying after a while.

Jo When I was there (2 weeks ago) both Copper & Peanut seemed very protective and gentle around Xander. Much more gentle even than around me! I feel confident that their bonds will become very strong.

Amy I do think that Copper and Peanut recognize that Xander is part of the pack. They definitely won't intentionally hurt him.



Grandma's Blog

Hey Grandma Carla has a blog.¹ She posted about a quilt that she made for Xander. Here is a picture of him laying on the quilt.

He's in a new Oshkosh B'Gosh² outfit. I have a little soft-spot in my heart for Oshkosh B'Gosh clothing since I used to live in Oshkosh, WI where the company started. I remember going on a field trip to visit the design shop in elementary school. I recently learned two disappointing things though. First, Oshkosh B'Gosh is now owned by Carter's--probably the biggest childrens clothing corporation. Second, the clothing is made in China. So, much for small town business and childhood memories!

Carla That is so sad about Oshkosh B'Gosh! I remember how cute you used to look in your bibs. It was a great little factory in a great little town. Xander looks very happy you can tell he is feeling better. Just think someday, you can point to the embroidered blocks and he will say the words. Isn't it all such a

miracle!

Steph I lived in wisconsin for six years and while i knew plenty of people from oshkosh i never really made the connection between oshkosh b'gosh and oshkosh, wi! how funny. and sad that it has lost its family connection.

Margie I'm certainly enjoying you Blog. As far as nursing I was a failure! But I tried and developed mastitis and had to be hospitalized. Cal had to take care of Sam.....he did a good job and all turned OK. After that I put Sam on the bottle and he slept!

Amy Grandma! You figured out how to leave comments. That's great! Steph, where did you live in WI?

¹ <http://budsgram.blogspot.com/2009/01/grandsons-quilt.html>

² <http://www.oshkoshbgosh.com/about/index.aspx>

Teeth!

Xander's right bottom tooth poked through his gums yesterday. I'd like to post a picture of the tooth, but it is a bit hard to get him to open his mouth to look at the tooth. Taking a picture of it is not really an option right now. I do think that a couple of other teeth in the front are not far behind. He's been a bit unhappy during the day and waking up a lot at night from the teething. He and one of his day care mates, Aidin, took turn crying on Wednesday. Poor Diana

I did get Xander one of those classic teethers, the clear round ring of circles with liquid in them. He likes that one best. I figured classic was classic for a reason.

Carla Wow! Soon he will have a smile full of teeth. Those teethers have been around forever, sometimes it is hard to improve on something when it works!

Jo Teeth are great! Expect some surprises around nursing time though, Mama-Amy!



Green Bean



Silicone!

Improvement

Just an update that the "More Milk Plus" with fenugreek and some relaxation is really helping with the milk supply. The MMP is rather awful tasting, but it works very fast. I got my 12oz in 4 pumpings as I did before things started to go awry. While I'm pumping I try to think about vacations that I have been on or sing songs in my head. I think the relaxation helps too because it helps me get the 2nd let down.

As a side note, I received a couple of other pieces of advice on this subject:

- 1) eating oatmeal
- 2) drinking beer
- 3) eating more sugar - which was suggested based on Grandpa Tom's experience raising pigs. They would feed sorghum¹ to the pigs to help with milk production.

I think these are all based on the effect that extra polysaccharides have on milk production. I definitely have that covered thanks to my sweet tooth.

Steph interesting about the sugar. i didn't know that. but very glad to hear things are better!!!

Carla Glad to hear that you GOT MILK!

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorghum>



Tummy Time

In this video, I was moving a toy back and forth from right to left and watching Xander track the toy.

Xander's been working on tummy time at day care a little more. I remember at his 2 month appointment, the little pamphlet that we received from the pediatrician suggested that Xander get 30 minutes of tummy time every day. Ha! I could not get him to do more than 5 minutes at a time. He really wasn't a fan. I still don't think he is a fan. He would much rather sit or stand. At least now, he can do about 15 to 20 minutes at a time without getting fussy.

In this video, I was moving a toy back and forth from right to left and watching Xander track the toy.

Carla Wow! I think he will start crawling soon! That is when the fun begins.

Jo Y'know what's spooky? Dolphin & I have both had dreams of Xander just going right from sitting to walking... just bypassing the whole crawling thing! Amy & Dolph: I would suggest getting real serious about "baby-proofing" your house ASAP!

Steph i definitely think they start to like tummy time more when they realize all the stuff they can do on the floor that they can't do on their back.... get ready!!!



Taking after mom and dad

Xander is totally into the laptop keyboard. Dolphin wrote Xander a little screen-saver game. So, as Xander hits the keys, the letters pop-up on the screen in random colors and the background colors change. He's still working on the game and is looking for suggestions. Do you have any? I think he needs to add some kind of educational aspect to it, but I am not sure what to suggest.

I think it is kind of cute that Xander likes to look at the screen and beat on the keyboard. I am a little worried that he will accidentally break something when he is older. We're going to have to put the laptops in a safe place so that he can only use them when supervised..

Jo Wow...what a great introduction to the computer! Hmm...I'll have to think about what could be added. Maybe sounds? Maybe, if he pushed the "M" a Monkey would show up? You're a fun Dad to have, Dolphin!!

Carla On my quilting forum this morning someone was looking for a geek to help her with her electronic sewing machine etc. I hope you don't mind but I had to post the picture of Xander on the laptop! Here is the comment that was added: "Good Golly Molly..... there is a baby using a laptop!" ROFLOL!

My question is, is Xander the reason IBM was up 12 percent last quarter? You know there are child labor laws!

Jo ummm...could drool fry a laptop??

Amy Jo, Dolphin did find a game like that already online somewhere, where the letter shows an animal picture. I think it would be cool if we took picture of things Xander recognized like "C" is for Copper and "M" is for Mommy.

Dolphin I'm not too worried about baby drool, but it is always a concern.

Bloody Toes for Art's Sake

A while back at daycare Xander got to make his first masterpiece. We were very excited to see the pictures Ms. Ashley took, but she kept forgetting to send them when she was at the computer. When she finally did get them out after the winter break, Xander's bad daddy forgot to check his email and so we didn't get to see them for another few weeks.

I don't know if I woulda picked red paint (it looks a little bit too much like evidence of deplorable conditions in Austin Childcare), but it is certainly cute and a creative was to let Xander take part in the finger painting the older kids were doing.

I asked Xander what he was painting but, as usual, he just laughed and stuck out his tongue at me.

Jo Sue & I were laughing about Xander's "blood spatter" art when Jonah came in to look at the picture and said, "Dexter?" Gotta keep that kid away from my dvds...

Carla How cute! Michelangelo in the making!

Amy Haha, so where are you in "Dexter" now? I think it would be cool if Xander were an artist. I would encourage him to get an FA degree, but I'd accept if he chose a life of the starving artist, too. I want to not be a parent who forces their kid into some path they don't want to go. Some friends in college were forced this way and they ended up dropping out, in debt, and picking up nasty drug/alcohol problems.

Jo Oh, I am pitifully hooked on Dexter now. I have seen the season one and two DVDs at least 3x, and am on Amazon's email alert waiting list for season three. I was terribly upset that they killed off that gorgeous piece of man-candy, Doakes, though. But, then again, we all knew that Dexter had decided that it was time for Doakes to "go away."

Amy Doakes is pretty hot. Dolphin says it is the Smallville/Superman formula. Anyone that finds out that Superman is Clark Kent has to die so that the secret is safe.



Sorry, but your princess is in another castle

Tonight, Dolphin put Xander to bed. I'm only writing about it because he did it in such a cute way. He told Xander a bedtime story. Can you guess which story? He told the story of the hero Mario and his battle to save Princess Peach. Do you recognize that story? He only made it to the part where Toad tells Mario "Sorry, but your princess is in another castle."

I think these kind of bedtime stories, from memory, work better for Xander right now. Books are exciting things to chew on and really do not relax him to sleep.

Jo I had to Google "Sorry, but your princess is in another castle" to find out what you were talking about. Y'know I'll bet Dolphin has lots of fun stories put to memory from his gaming experience!

Steph i LOVE it! fond memories....

Carla I think it is very creative of Dolphin to tell a story that I am sure he knows a lot about. Xander is very lucky to have such a great dad!

Lynn That's adorable. Good one, Daddy D!



Peas and Prunes

This week, we have introduced Xander to peas and prunes. The prunes were left over from his baby shower back in July. Our host had devised this game where she bought several different kinds of pre-made baby food. Then each guest would taste the food and try to guess the ingredients. In the end, I won the game having guessed the most correct ingredients. Perhaps it was a heightened sense of smell from pregnancy? Anyhow, I do remember the prunes were the easiest to guess because they were only one ingredient. Most of the others were a mixture of fruits and vegetables. Xander enjoyed the prunes, but I only gave him a little bit due to the gastrointestinal consequences of eating them. :-)

Xander also really enjoyed the peas. These were also pre-made baby food that Dolphin had picked up a few weeks ago. I was impressed when he ate the whole serving. This was in addition to having rice cereal at day care. So, I guess we're going to have to start doing two solid food feedings per day.

With the introduction of these various solid foods, I am beginning to realize why it is hard to find 6-12 month sizing clothing in the resale shops. This is a messy, messy time. This food stains unlike spit-up. Plus, babies probably wear the 6-12 month sizes a lot longer and the clothes get more abused.

Oh...one final thought on the peas. No, Grandma Jo, we did not have to put mayo on them.

Jo ;-)

Steph mayo on peas? EW! who does that?

i hear you on the 6-12 month clothes being harder to find in resale bins. i have learned to live with stains though. now that R is eating just about everything we eat there seem to be mysterious stains that appear on her clothes. I'm vigilant if the clothes have been borrowed from someone else, but less so if they are mine, and honestly, the day care probably prefers that we send her in clothes that are stain-able.

I do feel bad though because one shirt I particularly liked (and meant to presoak/apply stain stick to) got tomato sauce on it, and J threw on a load of laundry, brought on by me being immobilized by the flu and also having gotten vomited on by R, and the shirt sure enough got pink stains all over it. Ah well.

Carla I got the ribbing today to make those bibs I promised you. I also picked up a couple of more towels. I will see if I can get them put together tomorrow. They don't take very long so I should get them done. Sounds like you will be needing them now!

Jo Steph: Amy was teasing me because when my 4-yr. old, Jonah, wouldn't eat his peas I put mayo on them and he gobbled them right up! (My father used to put mayo on spinach & got me doing it too.) With my 2 new kids, I've found that if they won't eat their veggies, mayo helps them go down! I know...Dolph & Amy say, euww, too!

Baby lead weaning

I was ready some web articles about how to introduce solid foods. There is this one methodology where the baby leads the way. The baby only eats solid food that he or she can feed to herself. This way, the introduction is slower because baby is uncoordinated at first. Slower is better nutritionally.

I am not hard-core into any particular methodologies, but reading about this does inspire me to give self-feeding a try. Xander does grab at our food and at the food we feed him with a spoon. I am wondering if I put some blended veggies in front of him, if he would put his hands in it and try to eat it. It's going to be messy I'm sure, but something we can try on the weekend when things are not so rushed. I am going to give it a try. Is this bad? Is he going to have a hard time learning to use utensils because I'm letting him do it the hands-on way?

I'm sure the bibs¹ that Grandma Carla sewed will come in handy.

Carla I would think it isn't the greatest idea just for the reason you mentioned. It is hard enough to get them to use their spoon and fork when they are ready for that. Enjoy the fact that you have control right now, because if he is anything like you and Trevor were you will be hearing " Me do it! Me do it!" soon enough.

Steph i think it's fun for babies to play with food. I think we let rosemary hold/play with her food quite a bit when she was little. I didn't think of it as baby-led anything as much as just letting her experience different textures and sensations, that sort of thing. she's 19.5 months now and can eat comfortably with a spoon and fork although not always accurately and still makes messes.

i don't know if I would do this baby-self-feeding thing exclusively but we certainly did plenty of just plopping mushy foods on her tray and letting her experience it herself, but looking back I don't think we did very much of that until she was older-- maybe 8 or 9 months or so?

Margie Amy, I am sure enjoying your Blog. Xander is lucky to have such good parents.

Audrey (Joe & Dana's girl) will only eat whatever you put on her tray and as I understand has not eaten prepared baby food.

Amy Thanks for the feedback, all. I have decided to wait on the self- feeding just a little bit longer for Xander to get a little more coordinated. He's still very content with us feeding him with a spoon right now and there is plenty of time for him to get his hands into things when he is more coordinated. I don't want him accidentally getting food in his eyes, which he would probably do right now.

It sounds like Joe and Dana are doing quite well with Audrey. I can't remember...how old is she now?

¹ <http://budsgram.blogspot.com/2009/01/bibs.html>



Alaska Socks

I really like these socks. Dolphin's college friend Sarah sent them for Xander all the way from Alaska. They stay on much better than any other socks. We tested them out and they stayed on for a whole grocery shopping trip full of kicking.

Steph they are completely awesome!

Carla I love the socks! The lost and found bin at Target was always filled with baby socks. It really is hard to find socks that won't get kicked off and are so cute!

Amy I guess you have to have good socks in Alaska. I can't imagine having a baby there. I think I would stay home all the time.

Sitting

Xander is sitting so well now. He still occasionally falls over. This makes carrying him around a little bit easier, too because he balance his upper body well.

In this picture, Xander was playing with a plastic loofah. This was an idea that I got from his day care. They have all sorts of non-toy toys like this. I have also seen old cordless phones and silk scarves among their toy collection. Xander loves playing with these items. At his age, well, everything is cool.

Eatings carrots

Dolphin likes to scoop the pureed veggies into a plastic measuring tablespoon and then feed Xander spoonfuls out of the tablespoon. I prefer one of our tiny sushi soy sauce bowls to hold Xander's portion. These are pre-made carrots. I was going to make Xander's first carrots and squash at home until I learned that nitrates¹ were a concern for babies...well, I guess it is a concern for everyone, but more for babies. The manufacturers have access to low-nitrates carrots that most people cannot buy in stores. So, for the first few months, it is safer to buy the pre-made carrots. Squash and a couple of other vegetables also have similar nitrate issues.

Speaking of cooking, I have been wondering about making Xander's 1-year birthday cake. I was thinking of maybe making a jello cake with fruit and whipped cream instead of the traditional cake and frosting. Kind of a strange thing to think about, I suppose, given that is half a year away still.

Carla Glad you came to that conclusion, even mother birds feed their babies. When he gets a few more teeth and starts chewing better, he will be all about picking up food and eating. When you sure he has good control and he won't poke his eye out he will start with the silverware. Six months is a bit young to pick up mushy food and try to get it in their mouth.

Jo The jell-o cake sounds great...he'll have such fun playing with it too! You should make a half-cake or half-jello on Saturday for his half-birthday. :-)

¹ <http://www.wholesomebabyfood.com/nitratearticle.htm>





Carla Look at those teeth! Wow! Parker doesn't have any yet but Sam said they have to keep a bib on him because he is drooling so much. He is thinking about getting ready to crawl. Sam said he has been up on his knees. Won't be long now! Too bad we can't get those two boys together I bet they would be so cute together!

Guacamole

Yesterday, I was making guacamole to take over to our neighbor's house while we watched the Superbowl. I gave Xander some of the avocado. I don't think he liked it very much.

If you look really closely, you can see his bottom teeth. Overnight, the right one came out a little bit more. They are quite sharp.

You probably also notice the big scratch on his forehead. I don't know what the deal is but Xander likes to scratch his head at night still. He does this when he is tired. I have to keep his nails really short so he doesn't hurt himself. This time, I didn't quite keep up. I wish I knew why he does this.

Jo well of course he didn't like the avocado...ya dint put any mayo on it...

Amy Eww...mayo on avocado! Yuck! I wish Parker had a blog so I could keep up. It would be cool to get Parker and Xander together.

Hooked!

Ahhhh...I should never let Dolphin use my computer. He was playing this game¹ on my computer and left it on. Now, I'm hooked. Something about my brain loves pattern matching.

Lynn That IS an addictive game!

Dolphin You are just mad because I can usually complete it more quickly :-P

Jo yikes...I did not need to see that right now...studying for a quiz!

Amy 1 min 40s.....beat that!

¹ http://www.setgame.com/set/puzzle_frame.htm

Bath time and toy time

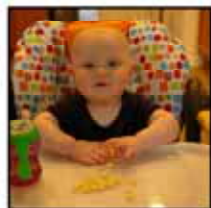
Xander outgrew his blue infant bath tub. So, we've tried a couple of new bathing techniques.

Xander is sitting pretty well so we put a towel down in the sink and Dolphin bathed him in the sync. With him sitting, it was a lot easier to wash his neck than when he was in a reclined position. I think it was a good idea to put the towel down because we have stainless steel sink. The metal is not a good insulator. That is probably why you don't see a lot of stainless steel bath tubs these days. Brrrr....cold metal.

I have also tried bathing with Xander right in our master garden tub. Xander did very well in the big tub. He floated the lower half of his body while I held his upper half. That was fun. We have some floating turtles toys and he enjoyed playing with.

I made the temperature of the water a little bit cooler. We have this nifty infrared laser thermometer gun that I used to get the bath exactly 100 degrees. Using this cool toy, I found out that the temperature I like is 110 degrees, but I think that is too hot for Xander. I think I am being a bit geeky by using a thermometer to measure the temperature as it is just as easy to do it by feel. What can I say...it's a fun toy.





BTW on the the thermometer above, I think Dolphin originally bought this thermometer for engine tuning, but it has turned out to have some other fun uses. We use it to play with Peanut in the backyard. The thermometer shoots out a red laser dot (like a laser pointer). Peanut loves to chase the dot around. It's good exercise for him and hilarious entertainment for us.



Jo You should pass that cool baby tub along to the next newborn you know...it is really great. I know I would've loved something like that with a new baby.

Jo ...and, omigod...is that boy gorgeous or what?!



Carla Actually your hand is not a very good test. I have read studies that women can stand higher temps with their hands than men. So what might feel good with your hand may not be so good for others. Xander looks so cute in the sink. Just think some day soon he will be too big to bath in the sink, they grow up so fast.

Dolphin yes, a hand is not a good measure, since your skin is really only good at measuring *relative* temperature and having cold or warm hands can make a big difference.

I am still not convinced that the IR thermometer works on water, though the temp of the tub should be close if you give it time to equalize.



Jo Yes, but Xander will surely let you know if the water feels uncomfortable...and unless it's drastically too hot or cold, it won't hurt him. Enjoy your together-bath time... what fun!

Amy That's interesting about women and temperature. I like TX hot weather more than Dolphin so that makes some sense.

On using your hand, I heard you were supposed to use your elbow or wrist. Obviously, we are not big bottle feeders but don't you always see people drop some milk from a bottle on their wrist or something like that?



Anyway, I think I am pretty good at feeling temperatures at this range. I make bread with yeast without using a thermometer. Yeast are even more sensitive than a baby.

Regardless, I pay very close attention to Xander's body language and can tell if he is too hot or too cold. It's pretty easy for mommy to tell. Thank god there is something easy about reading Xander.



Steph ok, you guys are officially really geeky about the temperature of the bath water-- ALL of you! haha :)

Jo ...glub, glub... :-S



Before and After

Early in the morning, all charged up and ready for the day:

Then, after a long day:

I dress Xander in these outfits with feet quite a bit since the weather has turned colder. I guess they are probably supposed to be pajamas. I think they solve the problem of socks not stay on and keep his feet warm. I like the outfits with zippers more for bedtime though. Xander likes to kick his legs out of the outfits with snaps and it wakes him up. Zippers are something he hasn't figure out how to get out of yet.

Jo Has his neck-rash subsided since he's learned to sit up?

Amy His neck rash is better. There is still a little under his chin, but it is better. I think when he stops drooling it will go away completely.

This is not a chew toy!

This book was new until Xander got a hold of it. He really likes to chew on this book a lot. I offered him some other things to chew on, but he loves this for chewing the best. This is not exactly the love of books that I was hoping for. Well, at least he doesn't not chew up my shoes like Copper used to do.

Steph R did this too! drove me batty, especially because I got a few mini-size board books for her thinking they'd be great for her to hold herself. Not so much. They are pretty much destroyed from all the times she stuck them in her mouth. We also have books where the pages got stuck together because she drooled or licked the page and then closed it. ha-ha. the eating impulse does go away though. she likes reading books now, but I would say that didn't completely happen until she was more than a year old. in contrast, however, my friend T has a little boy who LOVES books and requested that they read to him all the time--and this was from the time he was 9 months or whatever. so you never know. :)



i often give board books as baby gifts because now I know how beat up they get even if the parents already have a couple of kids!

Carla I remember one of your first books was one Grandma Margie had that was homemade. It was made of fabric and it had different feel and touch things on each page and the last page had a pocket with a hidden piece of candy. I know you always wanted her to get it out when you went to her house. I also had one that was fabric but coated with something so it was virtually indestructable. It was about farm animals and the only book I know that could withstand a baby!

Amy Dolphin said that he's never seen these books that weren't chewed up. I guess there is something about the book texture that is really nice to chew on. I do look forward to when this oral fixation is over.

I do remember the books from Grandma's house. I think they are called activity books. I'm glad you reminded me. I found some internet sites where they sell homemade activity books. Of course, there are plastic versions now on Amazon, but I think the cloth version would be better.

Happy Half Birthday

We got Xander this Select-a-Show soother¹ for his half birthday from Target². We also got him a toy that suctions to his high chair. Xander like to look at the lights but it didn't really put him to sleep. It did help mommy fall asleep though.

Yeah...half birthday...we just really needed an excuse to spoil him. It's hard to resist. Tomorrow he will be 6 months old...wow, time flies.

Lullaby

I have had luck with two lullabies with Xander. I think they kind of have the perfect rhythm for putting him to sleep. The lyrics are not necessarily traditional lullaby fair.

Paint it Black - The Rolling Stones
Michelle - The Beatles

Setting the trend

Xander is setting a new trend, non-matching clothes. This fabulous out fit is comprised of pastel shirt, neutral brown pants, and bright colored socks. Definitely time to do laundry.

Jo Dolphin's always been GQ-fabulous...his son is could be expected to do no less.

Steph oh, pish on the matchy-matchy. rosemary is hardly ever matchy matchy anymore-- a lot of it is because (a) she gets her clothes dirty and they need to be changed (b) we get a lot of hand-me-downs that don't all coordinate and (c) she doesn't really care!

i'm over it :) besides, look at that cuteness! matching clothes--totally unnecessary :)

¹ http://www.target.com/Fisher-Price-Select-a-Show-Soother/dp/B000EUMONM/sr=1-5/qid=1233973008/ref=sr_1_5/181-1616260-9975210?ie=UTF8&index=target&rh=k%3Asoothe&page=1

² <http://www.target.com>





1/2 year old

Whoohoo! Xander is 6 months old. Tomorrow, he goes in for his 6 month well-child visit. I can't wait to find out how long he is. I swear he's grown inches overnight. Here's a picture of our 1/2 year old boy playing with a LeapFrog toy that he received from Christmas from Aunite Laura and Uncle Chris. Mommy and Daddy liked this toy too as we tried to play name that tune with all of the banjo songs.

In this picture, Xander is wearing a San Diego Chargers onezie from our friends Jack and Susan in Encinitas. The tag says 12 month old size...whoah. Yesterday, we upgraded him to the large size sleep sack because he was too cramped into the medium size.

Xander is learning new things every day. The past few days he has been working on rolling from front to back. He had the opposite figured out a while ago. I wouldn't say he is much of a roller though. I know that some babies are really in to rolling to get around. I'm not sure that is going to be Xander. He does seem to be scootching a little bit and seemed to crawl/scootch backwards a step or two. If daddy, puts his hands behind Xander's feet and mommy sits in front of Xander, he will push off with his legs to scootch forward to mommmy. No real crawling though.

Doggy Park

We all went to the doggy park today. Xander really enjoyed it. On the drive over, he giggled at the dogs as they poked their noses over the back seat. At the park, there were quite a few moments of toe-licking as I wore him in a front carrier.

Copper and Peanut loved it too, of course. They were their typical selves. Copper ran around loving all the people and all the dogs. Every 2 minutes or so she would run back over to us to check on us. She is so well-behaved at the dog park...all that training since she was a puppy paid off, I think. Peanut played fetch with some strangers, acted like he didn't know who we were, and spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to try to get to the other side of the fence. He is getting a little better about coming when we call him at least.

We met a dog there, who could've been one of Peanut's long lost litter-mates. She looked almost exactly like him except her ears were a little pointy and her tail was docked. She wasn't a very friendly dog though. She made me wonder again about about Peanut's history. It would be nice to at least know how old he is.

Carla Sounds like you had fun! Poor Peanut, he can't help it he has that bit of hound in him. I wonder what embarrasses him about his family that he has to act like he doesn't know you. You all seem very nice! Too bad he doesn't realize that you saved him, he probably sees it as I was free and they ended that! He was King of the Road for a bit! Max wanted to go to Pa for the dog show when he heard they had a spa for dogs set up in the hotel. Peanut should just face the fact and enjoy being spoiled maybe he needs a doggy therapist!

6th month well child visit

We took Xander to his 6 month checkup today. He weighs 18lbs 15 oz (75th percentile) and is 26.75 inches long (75th percentile). His head circumference is 43.6cm (50th percentile). The doctor was happy with all of our reports on his behaviors smiling, laughing, squealing, rolling, and sitting. He sat very well while the doctor checked him out. He didn't much care for the oral vaccine that he received, but he eventually ate it all. When it came to the shot vaccines, he was a total champ. He received one in each leg. He cried for about 2 seconds (eh, eh, eh...) and then he was done and happy again.

One bummer of the visit is that Xander still has fluid in one of his ears. I wish it would go away. There is really not much we can do though. It's not infected, which is good, but it is probably not comfortable for him and could mess with his hearing.

Carla Wow what a big boy he is! He is brave like Mommy used to be. Chris and you were always brave at the doctor's. Some mother's have told me their horror stories, but then, you guys were never really sick just a few ear infections so most of your visits were routine. I suppose if your child is sick enough they could get to hate the doctor's office. Wow I just realized how lucky I was. No tubes, no surgeries, no hospital stays. I guess Chris had a few stitches once but nothing big. I was either lucky or just good at mothering. I guess luck makes more sense. Hope that your luck will be as good as mine was.

Lynn Yay, good for Xander. What a trooper. I think it would be harder for me than for the child to see him get a shot - haha.

Amy It sure is hard, Lynn. That is why when it came to shot time, Dolphin handed Xander over to me. I try applying some Cesar Milan (Dog Whisperer) logic to the whole thing though. I figure if I remain calm and act like it is no big deal, that will psychologically help Xander stay calm about it, too.

Steph i'm impressed with how well he did with the shots. i like your zen approach too. i really can't hold her while she gets a shot though-- i'm very needle-squeamish myself.

what did the doctor say about the fluid in his ears? how does he get that? and is that related to tubes in the ears?

Carla I see the common sense is taking you the right direction!

Jo Xander is so lucky to have you for a mom. I think I may have traumatized Dolph during his early life shots... just because I was so horrified at those evil people coming at my boy with their evil needles. Good for you & your unselfish sensibilities.

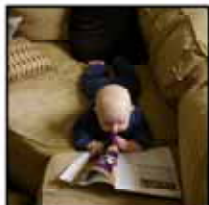
Amy Hey needle fearful, I used to not like needles either. Then, I started donating blood. At first, I would look while the nurse stuck the needle in. Now, I look and it doesn't bother me. It just takes a few time to get over that fear. It really doesn't hurt that bad.

Steph oh yes, donating blood is excellent. i did it really regularly for a long time once I found out I was O-. it really does help with the squeamishness. i still can't watch other people getting shots, and i can't really look at the needle in my arm when i am giving blood. i haven't donated since i got pregnant with R though. i should get back into it again.



Junk mail

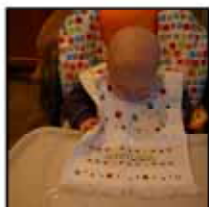
At least someone appreciates junk mail. Here is Xander reading my college alumni magazine, the "Truman Review"¹. Sometimes there are interesting things in this magazine and occasionally I recognize a name, but usually not. He really likes to crinkle and turn the pages, and I don't have to worry about him destroying it.



Carla Xander is lucky to have so many wonderful people who think about him. He looks like a little geek though reading a college newsletter. I wonder if he is already thinking about what he wants to be when he grows up.

Grandma Barbara's Bib

Great Grandma Barbara cross-stitched Xander's name on a bib. It is almost too pretty to use. ALMOST! We go through bibs so quickly now that we had to breakdown and use it. We'll try to use it for non-staining foods.



Auntie Linda's Outfit

Here's Xander in an outfit from Auntie Linda in Arizona. For those of you who don't recognize the name, Linda was my maid of honor.

He's sitting on a dolphin blanket that Great Grandma Barbara sent before Xander was born. The maker of these blankets makes several different kind of animals. You can guess why she got of Dolphin, of course.



Anyway, back to the outfit from Linda. I like it because it has a Shark on it. Linda and I used to work on product that had the code name Shark².

Guess who is about to get a big wet kiss

Jo I'm guessing they both came away from this encounter a little moister.



Mr. Mom

Today was Dolphin's first day of being Mr. Mom. This was really the first time he has taken care of Xander by himself for more than a couple of hours.

Thinking about Dolphin's adventure today made me think of an old favorite movie of mine: Wow, I can't believe how old this movie is.

Jo Ok, Mr. Mom...I want all the gory details of your first solo day with Xander!



¹ <http://alumni.truman.edu/trumanreview/>

² <http://www-03.ibm.com/systems/storage/disk/ds8000/index.html>



First cars

What little kid doesn't like playing with toy cars at some point. Here Xander is playing with his first cars. Unfortunately, the wheels on these cars do not move. I remember Xander's cousin Trevor always liked toys with wheels. I'll have to keep an eye out for something with wheels to see if Xander has similar tastes. Speaking of cars, I saw a commercial for a really cool new toy. Zero Gravity Air Hogs¹ are cars that drive on walls. They look kind of cool. Of course, Xander is too young and our walls are too textured.

Carla You noticed that they need smooth walls, who has smooth wall these days. I thought of Trevor when I saw the commercial.

Kid's Radio

Xander is so lucky. XM Radio has channels² just for kids. He was a little fussy today on the way home and we were still pretty far from home. I figured that I would see if he liked the kids channel. It sort of worked. He stopped fussing and fell asleep. I kept listening and I think I like the channel. One song really cracked me up. It was "Welcome to the Jungle Gym"³ by Mr. Saxophone to the tune of Guns 'n' Roses' "Welcome to the Jungle".⁴

Oh my cute!

This is Xander's raspberry blowing face. I think the camera that I bought before Xander was born was a great investment. I love it when I get these great pictures.

Carla How can you not love that! BTW, have you seen the pc commercial with the 4 1/2 year girl. Xander has her beat!

Steph i LOVE this picture!

Amy I think Dolphin showed me that PC commercial. She is pretty cute, but of course Xander is cuter.

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kQjeyUY8z0I>

² <http://www.xmradio.com/onxm/channelpage.xmc?ch=116>

³ <http://www.amazon.com/Welcome-to-the-Jungle-Gym/dp/B0019IV25>

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welcome_to_the_Jungle



He likes it!

I made Xander some homemade food with the Breville mixer that I got for Christmas. This this is pretty awesome. It is easy to clean and quite powerful. Besides baby food, we've used it for a lot of other random kitchen tasks including: pancakes, hollandaise sauce, barbecue sauce, and smoothies. For Xander, I cooked some acorn squash and mixed in a ripe banana and a tiny bit of prune juice. He liked it a lot.

We started bringing in veggies for him to eat while he is at day care. This week they told me that he really likes the veggies with cereal better than cereal with milk.

Carla Well, he does have some Therrien in him, we all love food!

Dolphin We had another stick blender and it made a horrible mess, flinging whatever you were blending all over the place. It seems the makers of this one spent a bit more time getting the blades and housing right because it doesn't splatter at all, it's great.



Mommy preference

Xander has been a little mommy focused the past couple of weeks. Even though we try to share responsibilities for Xander, I seem to be the one Xander prefers for comfort right now. That's understandable at this I age, I suppose.

Because I am the one who takes care of him all night long, I am the only one who can get him to go to sleep without crying. At day care or with daddy, when he gets tired, they just have to let him cry for 5 minutes and then he'll fall asleep. No amount of rocking, pacifier, or anything they try makes a difference. I wish I could figure a way to make it easier on Xander and everyone else.

Xander also only naps for 20 minutes at a time. When I tell people this, they usually react about how weird it is. The only time he has ever taken a long nap is if someone lays with him. I guess he just is one of those trouble sleepers on the spectrum of baby sleeping.

I am so jealous of those parents with the easy sleeper babies that sleep for 4 hours in a row coming home from the hospital. The last time I slept 4 hours in a row was July 2008. I think it is starting to affect my ability to think clearly during the day. I find it difficult to focus and make decisions and I get head aches a lot. I am blaming sleep deprivation for those things, but I suppose it could be something else. There are more frequent days though that I think it would be a blessing to be laid off from work.

Steph I'm sure you've tried all kinds of things to get him to nap longer. but my feeling is that he'll get to a point where he can nap longer or just starts doing it. I know other people who have had babies who don't nap for long. I hope he doesn't wake up every 20 minutes all night long!

Jo Do you ever sneak off to the spare bedroom to sleep & just let Xander & Dolphin go it alone? Poor mommy. Sleep deprivation is the worst..

Carla I agree with Grandma Jo you need to let Dolphin have a sleepless night at least once or twice a week. Not getting your sleep can really affect your health. I think Xander would prefer to cry for 5 minutes than not to have a mommy around! So take a warm bath, drink a hot cocoa and spend a night sleeping the whole night through.

Amy Thanks for the responses. I apologize for the whining. I have tried the gentle techniques for lengthening naps, but have not had much success. I kind of agree that things will happen naturally....or at least I'm still hoping for that.

As for Dolphin, he has offered to be helpful with the sleeping in separate rooms thing. Part of the reason I don't do this is that I need the night time nursing to keep up my milk supply and to prevent engorgement. Also, no house in the world is big enough for me not to hear Xander. When he is with dad, he will scream for a long time. So, I'll be woken up anyway. Finally, the few times that Dolphin has helped out more at night, he becomes super irritable. Then everyone in the household is miserable.

So, anyway, when Xander is ready for night weaning, which will happen eventually, that is probably when things will start to improve. After he is a year old, I will try more aggressively to wean him if he doesn't spontaneously take some initiative on his own.

Dolphin I really wish Amy would take turns with me, but she won't. When I tried to have Xander half the night in rooms on separate ends of the house Amy got really upset after a few nights, and we haven't tried it again, even though I feel like I was taking more on AND getting better sleep. Amy seems okay with nursing him to sleep all the time, but I don't think it is helping him learn to sleep.

Amy Sorry, that came across wrong before. I didn't mean to imply that Dolphin was unwilling to do what you suggested or unhelpful.

Jo I know Amy. There's only so much even a wonderful dad like Dolphin can do. After all, you ARE the boobyperson. :-)

Carla May I remind you Amy of a conversation I once had with you about listening to Daddy sometimes, they really are quite capable of handling their children. Mother's don't think so sometimes, I know I was that way myself. Especially when it involves their little boys! Dolphin I hope you don't think I thought you were not willing, I know my daughter!

Amy Thanks for the advice, anonymous. I am impressed that your neighbor can get 8oz of milk breastfeeding. Wow! At 2.5 months, Xander could only eat about 3oz without spitting up from overfeeding. He recently just started to get to about 5-6oz at day care. On a good night, Xander will sleep 3-3.5 hours before being hungry enough to eat. I would be happy with that...it's not too bad. I don't think his waking up is related to being hungry. His nursing is for comfort and not for eating. He wakes up every 1-2 hours on non-good nights. It seems there is more of these kind of nights than the 3-3.5 hour nights.

Steph I just saw all the comments on this post now (so sorry for the late ish reply)... i don't know if this would work (and it sounds like something you're already trying) but you COULD think about just going in and rubbing his back and letting him know you're there, but not actually nursing him. i forget how old rosemary was when we tried this. i had just about had it with the waking up 2-3 times a night to nurse by the time she was 9 months old or so, so we gradually started trying some more drastic measures. i think we actually did use the Ferber method when she was close to a year. (i wish I'd had my blog back then so that I'd know exactly when we did do it, but I think it was either shortly before her year birthday or right around then. It is not exactly "cry it out"--you don't just leave the baby to cry and cry and cry. but there is crying involved. and anxiety because you're not 100% sure things are going to work and you doubt what you're doing until it starts showing results. i'd say within 3-4 days she was sleeping peacefully at night and going down super-easy. I still nursed her before bed until she was 16 months and she still used a pacifier after that for another few weeks.

But with Xander, i don't know that you need to do these things YET! he is still really young and things are definitely going to change-- i don't know when/how yet, though. My friend told me one thing about "problems" and babies and the basic idea was, if it isn't broken, don't fix it.

if you are basically okay with the frequent waking then go with it and maybe try to stretch them out or skip a nursing session or something. you COULD try having dolphin take him at a time when you don't want to nurse him and you know he isn't going to really eat, just nurse for comfort. (but i know EXACTLY what you mean about feeling like you can get him settled in just a few minutes which makes it so hard to listen to the baby crying while dad is in there!)... but you will know when it comes to a point where you say, "this is it. i just have to do something about this. things need to change" and that's when you'll really jump into action. so many things about rosemary just kind of changed on their own without us having to do anything about it, while there were other things that were fine for awhile but then just became problems that we needed to change. you'll get it sorted! :)

Amy Thanks for the response, Steph. I like that saying, if it isn't broken, don't fix it. The best peace of parenting advice that has really panned out for me is wait two weeks. Whatever issue it is, if I still feel the same way about it two weeks later, then I do something about it. Babies are developing so fast. Having a two week checkpoint makes it a lot easier to be patient. That doesn't mean I don't try to better the situation in between.

I tend to agree that Xander is a bit young for the Ferber method. I'm not opposed to the method, but I know that neither he nor I are ready for that. We may get to use it or not...we'll see. I'm glad to hear that it worked pretty well for Rosemary.



Dry run

Look what's Xander is learning to use. So far, he did figure out how to get the right part into his mouth. I've been letting him play with it empty so he'll get used to it.

Carla He looks like such a pro! Won't be long and he will be sipping away!

Jo Sippy cups didn't make sense to Jonah till he was almost 2. Jonah's first years must have been so unstimulated.

Favorite toy

Xander's favorite toy this week has to be the dogs.

Peanut's tail is so fun.

This jingly collar is pretty cool, too.

Peanut doesn't seem to mind the attention.

Buddies!

Carla Xander looks very interested in everything even Peanut's jewelry, it won't be long he will figure out how to crawl all over the place. Have you figured out how to secure you shelves yet? He is so cute, I wish I was there to give him a big hug. I thought you were pretty fair skinned but that boy has such a beautiful irish complexion. Hope that you have stocked up on sunscreen.

Jo Carla: I give Xander hugs every day...I close my eyes and feel his soft skin against mine. It's still not the same as grabbing him up in person tho, is it, Grandma? Xander's Irish skin will, most definitely, take a lot of care from his doting parents.

Steph best blog post ever! i love how cute he is crawling around Peanut!

Carla I keep coming back to the picture of Peanut and Xander. They both have such happy faces. I guess I will have to have a print made of that one. Grandmas need to have granddog pictures out to view too! Your right look like they are going to be real buddies.

Amy Yes, Xander is super pale just like daddy. He's already starting to get freckles. I found one on his leg the other day. It wasn't there when he was born.



Green beans make me angry...

Look at that brow. Some one doesn't like green bean baby food very much.

It might be the green beans or it might be some of his top teeth are coming in. Two of the top teeth look they they are about to burst through the gums any day now.

Jo put mayo on 'em. hehe.

Carla I agree with Xander baby food green beans are yucky! Mommy if you like them so much you eat em! Have you seen the new show on about lieing.....team of FBI agents who figure out cases just by reading faces. Xanders face in that photo would surely get their attention.

Object permanence

Xander is learning object permanence, I think. When the dogs go out of site, he looks around for where they went. Then, he laughs when they come back into the view. I don't think the dogs know it but they are playing accidental peek-a-boo with Xander.

We've been playing a lot of peek-a-boo and where's Xander lately. He loves these games and has the best laugh. Today, Dolphin was recording the laugh. I think he is going to turn it into a ring-tone for his cell phone.

Jo Dolphin: If you can get Xander's giggle into a ringtone you KNOW you must send it to me!

Scary car wash

We went through the car wash at the gas station today. Xander and I were in the back seat looking at the water spraying all over the car. His eyes were big and wide. He looked kind of scared. I think he might have started to cry if I hadn't been in the back seat with him.

Jo What is not scary, is exciting. You made it exciting, Mama!

Xander the Ringtone

I managed to get a recording of Xander giggling¹ and turned it into an mp3 to use as a ringtone (for phones that support it). There are some applications/services online that can turn an mp3 into a ringtone and send it to your phone, but most of the ones I have seen seem pretty shady, and I am not totally convinced that they won't spam my phone with text messages. If anyone knows of a good (trustworthy) source service, lemme know.



Margie I love hearing that giggle! The pictures of Xander with the dog are priceless! Thanks for keeping me up to date.

Carla Great giggle! What a cute idea turning it into a ringtone.

Jo But I still can't figure out how to apply it to my phone...ARG!

¹ <http://www.cs.unm.edu/~dolphin/XanderGigging.mp3>



Ouchie

Yesterday, Xander got an ouchie. The picture isn't that great, but there are teeth marks on his arm. One of the 12 month old kids in his class is teething and used Xander as a teether. Poor Xander. According to Diana, this kid is a repeat offender. What can you do though! Hopefully, Xander won't do this when he gets to be that age.

For dogs, being with siblings is an important step to learning not to bite. Puppies bite on each other and learn that biting hurts. I wonder if the same works with kids. If they are bitten, are they less likely to be biters?

Jo Oh, but just look at that yummy little arm! Makes me want to taste it too.

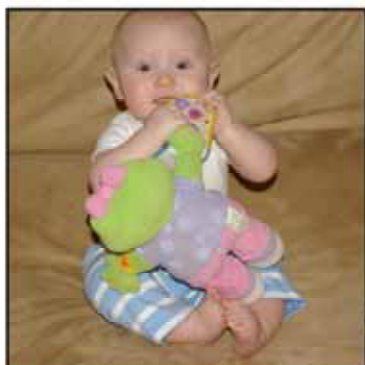
Y'know I think, unfortunately, that biting among kids becomes more of a learned behavior than a learning experience. Bites become biters...



Carla I have heard that alot of parents bite their kids back when they bite and I believe I did that to you once. It might have been Chris, and you didn't do it again. I also remember I didn't bite hard, but I think toddlers soon realize there are consequences to their actions, just the same as the puppies do. When they don't get the reaction is when you go wrong and they decide they can do anything they want to do to anybody. Not sure the reaction should be biting back, but to me it is the easiest thing for a toddler to connect to the situation. Worked for me, I only remember doing it once, and it was very very hard!

Amy I am going to speculate that Xander will not be a biter, because I think he is more of a communicator. You have observed that he is very noisy compared to other babies. I am starting to feel bad about the dog comparisons all the time, but this is the bark v. bite dog analogy. The dogs that learn to bark tend not to be biters. Much of what I have read about children biting is that they don't have the ability to communicate through other ways. We have all heard that Xander is a very loud communicator. Maybe it is in his nature or maybe it is because mommy and daddy are very responsive to his noise. I am going to keep trying to keep him on the communication path in hopes that prevents him from being a biter. Communication development is a very individualized thing, but I can try my hardest.





Lily

Dolphin's boss's daughter, Gabby, donated this Leap Frog toy that she was too old for. Her name is Lily...as in lily pad. She talks about counting and colors when you squeeze her tummy. Xander always smiles at her. He hasn't figured out how to make her talk yet.

I wish there was some way to wash her without ruining the electronic mechanism insider her. There doesn't seem to be a way to take it out though. It's a conspiracy! If they were washable, people wouldn't hand them down as much.

Jo hmmm...usually there's some way to get at the mechanisms to remove them or replace batteries in them. Then I put the toys in a garment bag on the gentle cycle & tumble-dry. I'd wash it anyway...if the mechanisms crap out, it's still a cute toy! btw...HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DADDY DOLPHIN!!!



Tennis anyone?

One of my employees is taking his daughter to regional tennis championships this weekend. I decided to get Xander started training early...just kidding!

Jo ...and Xander's score is...LOVE!

Developing a sense of humor...

I think Xander is developing a sense of humor. In the past, he's laughed and giggled with funny faces, funny sounds, tickling, and bouncing. This past weekend, he laughed at Dolphin when Dolphin put on a pair of 3D glasses. (These were the 3D glasses to view the Superbowl commercial/episode of "Chuck")¹ Dolphin did look pretty funny with the paper glasses on.



Oooo what's in here

Xander loves finding and digging the little cars out of this toy. It's a supposed to be a bath toy, but it's hard to play in the bath tub. He does need rescuing sometimes when his hand gets stuck inside, and he can't figure out how to get it out. I think Xander might be the kind of kid who can't resist sticking his tongue to the flag pole in winter. :-)

Jo Nah...tho he might be the kid who talks some OTHER kid into trying it...

¹ <http://tvbythenumbers.com/2009/01/03/3d-glasses-for-super-bowl-and-chuck/10150>

Thank you, cousin Mary

Cousin Mary sent Elmo's head to Xander with Grandma Jo during her last visit. Mommy likes it because Elmo's head doesn't make any noise. :-> Xander likes it tossing Elmo's head around. The only problem...the dogs seem to like Elmo too. I don't know how long he will survive.

Carla What a cute picture!

Jo Mary is so pleased to see Xander playing with it. "Long Live Elmo-head!" (or not...as long as Elmo gave pleasure!) That picture is sooo great!

Hair

Grandpa Tom may be jealous soon. Xander is starting to get some hair on that head.

Carla Grandpa Tom had hair on his head for about eighteen years. He wants me to remind you the baldness gene is carried by mother's to their children. Christopher has my dad's hairline, Xander may get your dad's hairline. Enjoy the hair while it is there.

Jo Thanks for reminding us that Xander's gorgeous red hair is probably gonna have an early expiration date, Carla...I'll be treasuring it even more now!





Visual Aid for Amy's Poll

We saw this little outfit on My Name is Earl and thought it was so cute we had to put it up. I am going to have to remember this one for Halloween (well, in a year or two).

Amy No way my baby is going in space!!!! Don't you know "In space, no one care hear you scream." --Alien

Jo That's what I'M sayin'...

Carla What if he really wants to be an astronaut, would you discourage him? Maybe they will have cell stations up there by then and he could call home.

Amy I am going to show him "Alien" and ever other space horror movie so he will have his own paranoia. Hahaha.

Funny glasses

Here are those glasses that I was referring to earlier.

Carla Dolphin you look like some kind of superhero. I guess you are Xander's superhero. I just made a 3-D quilt it would be cool to look at it thru your 3-D glasses.





The weather out side is delightful...

Daddy went to see "Watchmen" yesterday with a friend. The weather was nice and warm without a lot of sun, so Xander and I went for a nice long walk. This was the first time that we used the stroller without the plug-in car seat. I'm sure it is more fun to look out a the world that stare at boring old mommy.

Kristen We have the same stroller, but in orange and grey! Great minds think alike. Paige too is using hers without the carseat and I finally had to put down the foot rest so her legs/feet could hang down. So big, but yet so small. :) Isn't walking wonderful?!

Amy Walking is great. Xander and I both enjoy it. It is a bit tough to bring the dogs at the same time. I can usually only handle one dog + stroller. I bet the weather in AZ is great for walks. The only worry I have is how to protect my little porcelain boy's skin. He has his daddy's super white coloring.



Soccer

We'll have to get Aunty Laura to teach Xander how to use this when he is a little older. That is...if Copper and Peanut don't destroy it before then.

Jo Copper is saying, "That ball WILL be mine..."

Amy Yeah, both Peanut and Copper really want to play with the ball. We can't even say the word "ball" without Copper going nuts. We're going to have to call it something else. Sphere?

Carla Look at Copper being so patient. I know how much she loves to sink her teeth into a big ball.



Astronaut poll results

It's a toss up on the astronaut poll. I asked blog readers if we should "encourage Xander to be an astronaut". The results are 50% no, 37% yes, and 12 % maybe with 8 people voting. It's not exactly conclusive, but leaning towards not encouraging him. I didn't even know that 8 people read this blog. How exciting! Now, I'm more motivated to keep posting.

Jo Yay! LET'S KEEP XANDER ON THIS PLANET!

Dolphin Xander didn't have a vote, and his is the most important one.

Carla That is why I voted maybe. I think if Xander really wanted to be an astronaut you would let him fly away.

First fever...

:-) Xander has his first fever today. He's been sick before without fever. Poor guy. I'm not sure what caused this fever as he doesn't have any other symptoms. He was a little bit fussy this afternoon and slept a lot today. No gastro-intestinal or respiratory symptoms though. Poor guy has such a newbie mom...Hopefully, I'll figure it out what ails him or he gets better on his own soon. If he is not feeling better tomorrow, daddy's mandatory time off from work is going to come in handy. There is a silver lining...

Jo What's his temp now?

Lynn Oh, poor little guy. I'm sure you're doing much better than you give yourself credit, Amy.

Carla Sorry to hear that Xander is sick. One of the hardest things to do as a mother is see your baby sick and try to make them comfortable and feel better. I hope he is doing better this morning. Give him a hug from grandma. I am sure that you and Dolphin are doing everything you can to help him feel better, he is a very lucky little boy.

Amy He was at 101, now down to 99 this morning after sweating all night long. We'll see how things go today.

Amy We got this notice from day care today:

"Good Afternoon A3 Infant Families:

There is a child in A3 who has been diagnosed with Herpangina; it is very similar to hand-foot-mouth. Check out the link below to learn more details. If you notice any signs or symptoms in your child please contact your child's pediatrician. As always if you have any questions let us know.

<http://www.drreddy.com/herpangina.html>

"

Carla Never heard of that one. Sure hope the daycare is disinfecting everthing in sight. Xander is doing better isn't he?

Amy I would say he is 75% better. It's hard to say with babies...you are just trying to read the signs. He looks physical well and has no fever. He is a little sad though, needing to be held more than previously. That could mean he is sick or it could be the starts of separation anxiety. I think it is probably a little of not feeling good lingering and he needs extra comfort.

Starting...

Untying shoes...you have to start somewhere.

Carla That picture makes me want to get on the floor and play too. Xander looks like he is having a good time. Do you have to keep Copper and Peanut away when they toys are out? I am just thinking about how Max would respond, he would be in a frantic pantic state trying to figure out how to get all those toys into his possession. He loves toys and you know how selfish he is, but then he has never been around siblings he would have to share with, I guess he would adjust.

Dolphin The dogs are usually pretty good with the "leave it" and "drop it" commands, so it hasn't been too bad so far. They have sneaked a couple when we aren't around, so they haven't totally accepted that they are Xander's.

Jo Oh just look how proud he is that he can untie mommy's shoes!

Kristen Paige is doing the same thing! I'm constantly retieing my shoes! :)

Nice Pootie

Peanut is a bit more tolerant of Xander yanking on his whiskers. (I made this post from my phone and for some reason only the first sentence came through). Copper generally just heads for the hills when Xanders starts poking her in the eye.

I was just about to give up taking pictures, since my phone doesn't handle motion too well, and Peanut looked like someone from 'The Ring' who only has less than 'seven days' left:

Carla What buddies!

Jo Wow...love the "Picture of the Second". It's just like my wifi frame...how did you do that?



Seven Days!

Stranger Danger

Bruce Schneier¹ makes an interesting case for why the common advice of "don't talk to strangers" is bad advice to give to children.

When I was growing up, children were commonly taught: "don't talk to strangers." Strangers might be bad, we were told, so it's prudent to steer clear of them.

As it turns out, this is profoundly bad advice. Most people are honest, kind, and generous, especially when someone asks them for help. If a small child is in trouble, the smartest thing he can do is find a nice-looking stranger and talk to him.

The advice in each of these paragraphs may seem to contradict each other, but they don't. The difference is that in the second instance, the child is choosing which stranger to talk to. Given that the overwhelming majority of people will help, the child is likely to get help if he chooses a random stranger. But if a stranger comes up to a child and talks to him or her, it's not a random choice. It's more likely, although still unlikely, that the stranger is up to no good.

Penn and Teller also did an interesting show² on the subject.

Amy How do you teach the distinction to kids?

Jo This is a subject I've thought about a lot. When I lived in New Mexico, I saw the fear on the faces of the Native American children when they looked at me. They had been told that all white people were devils and it made me so sad. I see the fear on the face of any child who hides behind the skirt of his mother, who has warned him about "strangers." Irrational fear for any reason, makes cowards in all situations. A timely example is the fear-mongering of the Bush administration: "What if that Muslim wants to kill me???"

I imagine if Xander got lost and couldn't find his way home--I would much rather that he felt comfortable enough to ask a kindly-looking person for help (really--they ARE probably kindly) than to think of him cowering in fear behind a bush somewhere.

As far as teaching him the distinction, Amy, you & Dolph are both smart enough to pass your smarts on to Xander. If he ever felt uncomfortable around someone, I'm sure his smarts would kick in.

Carla It is sad that our world has gone so overboard with everything. I am laughing because as I type I am listening to a report on hand sanitizer, now it is bad for children because of the high alcohol content. The poor sheep won't know what to do!

¹ http://www.schneier.com/blog/archives/2009/03/the_kindness_of.html

² <http://www.sho.com/site/schedules/product.do?episodeid=131001&seriesid=134&seasonid=0>

Time changes...the good and the bad

So, we recently had a time change to one hour later. In one respect this has been good. Xander has his own rhythm and it didn't change with the time zone. So, now we have more awake Xander time in the evening and he sleeps a little later in the morning. The extra time in the evening is great. An extra hours of Xander play time is great. Yay!

On the other hand, my body was so exactly tuned into making milk at exact times. Now my schedule for pumping at work is completely off. I am surprised how exactly timed my milk production is. I always have done it at approximately the same time everyday and even put it into my calendar. I may be crazy, but I swear if I adjust my pumping to one hour later than normal production is better. Weird eh?

Sooooooo cute...

Daddy put his glasses on Xander. He's a little nerd! It's so cute.

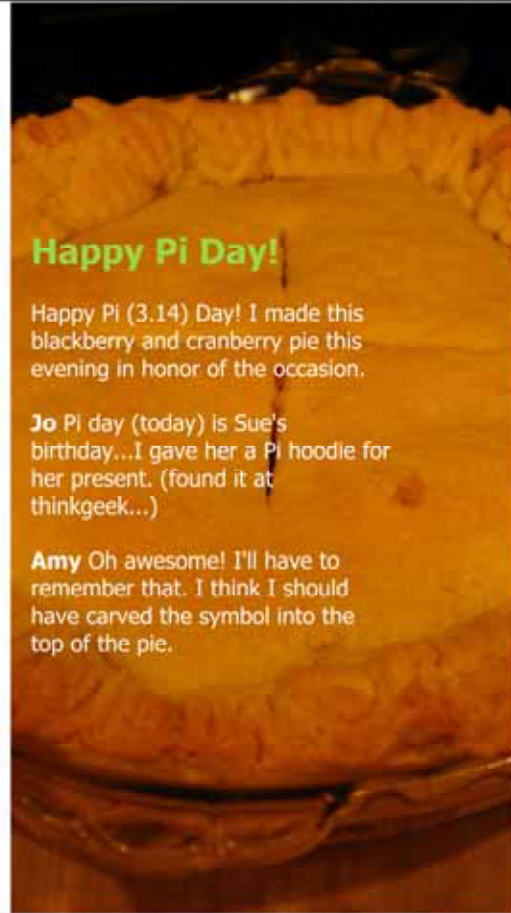
Jo "oh, how wonderful...to be able to see through Daddy's eyes..."

Happy Pi Day!

Happy Pi (3.14) Day! I made this blackberry and cranberry pie this evening in honor of the occasion.

Jo Pi day (today) is Sue's birthday...I gave her a Pi hoodie for her present. (found it at thinkgeek...)

Amy Oh awesome! I'll have to remember that. I think I should have carved the symbol into the top of the pie.





All these months of putting everything I can get my hands on into my mouth finally pays off!

Xander got about half of the sweet potato puffs into his mouth. Copper and Peanut got a few, too. We decided that these treats are really too sweet though. The second ingredient is sugar. We need to find some puffs that are whole grain or veggie.

Jo You'll be sure to find some more nutritious puffs at Central!

Amy I hope so. We did find some really good pre-made food there. One of them was called peach and rice pudding. Xander loved it.

Carla For some reason Xander is looking alot like Trevor did sitting in his high chair. How cute!

Kristen We are giving Paige the Earth's Best Teething Crackers. She really likes the barley, but she'll eat the wheat too. They say they are for 9 mos and older, but she has teeth and the motor skills, so I give them to her. All natural ingrediants. Whole Foods has them.

Amy Thanks for the suggestion on teething crackers. I really do like the Earth's Best brand. They have some interesting jar foods.

Long lost brother?

The picture of Xander with my glasses on made me think of this guy (from the 1940s!)

Jo "now lookee here, son...I say, I say, lemme show ya how ta fly that thing.." roflmao

Carla Another egghead? Poor baby, he can't even defend himself.



Messy boy

This is what happened when I let Xander feed himself. I didn't start out intending for him to feed himself. However, after a few bites, he kept going for the spoon. When he got a hold of it, he would get mad when I took it away. I didn't feel up to the battle so, I figured what the heck. He's needs a bath anyway. I helped him scoop out the food from the bowl, but he did everything else. He put the spoon in his mouth. He also put it to the bowl when he was ready for more.

We followed up with a nice bath with daddy. You get to see a few seconds of him splashing, which is one of his favorite bath time activities these days. I had to put a towel on the floor as he was getting water everywhere.

Jo My god that's great! (keep those videos comin')

Margie That is SO cute.....he looks happy & so content.....every day is a new adventure

Steph dang, he's really got that motor control going good. one thing i did with R a lot was have two spoons on hand and I could hand her one filled with food and let her feed herself while taking the empty spoon away. this is especially useful when feeding hot foods.

Kristen You're brave! Paige always goes for the spoon but I don't give it to her. You have the same exact high chair as us too! He's a cutie pie.

Amy Steph, thanks for the suggestion on two spoons. Great idea!

Kristen, how is Paige liking the high chair? Does she like playing in it, eating in it, taking naps? I have seen pictures of kids taking naps in the high chair. Xander doesn't do that, but he does fall asleep in the stroller.

Blackmail pictures

Doesn't it seem like I post a lot of bath pictures? I asked Dolphin to take this picture. It seems like all parents have these kind of bath pictures that they keep (for blackmail purposes) and pull out when their child hits the teenage years.

Lynn This is a classic pic to show his prom date.

Carla What's not to love, he is even cute in the tub

Amy Haha, yep...pulling out this picture for sure with the first date.



Xander loves Diana!

Xander appears to be starting the whole separation anxiety phase. He will start crying if mommy leaves his sight, and sometimes if Daddy leaves his sight. He seemed to be ok this morning with Diana. Diana and Ashley are his primary caregivers at his daycare. As soon as I handed him to Diana, he could care less than mommy was headed out the door. Does this hurt my feelings? Nope. I am happy that he has an attachment to Diana. Then, I know he is in good hands during the day.

Sometimes the separation anxiety is funny. I picked him up from day care last week and I needed to get gas. I had the back window and was talking through the window to him to keep him happy. If I just looked at the gas gauge, he would start crying, but when I looked back he was fine. Good thing that eye contact is good enough to keep him happy. Sometimes, he does need physical contact, but not 100% of the time. That would be really a lot of work. I am getting some awesome upper body strength carrying Xander around though.

I was reading some strange psychology article on separation anxiety. Sorry, I lost the link already. It said something about that you could test the child's sense of security by how easily they were comforted after separation (reunion with mom) around 10-12 months. It will be interesting to watch Xander and how his personality develops.

Kristen Ah yes, separation anxiety. Paige started really early, like 5 months. The pediatrician said it was a sign of intelligence because it shows she knows who her caretakers are for survival. With them out of sight she worries that she will not survive. It's a good thing mom! I cherish the moments and love that she depends on me so much and knows that I will take care of her. But yes, I hear you about the carrying thing...good thing Paige is little. :)

Carla Amy you and Christopher had big time separation anxiety. I don't know if it was worse because you were always with me. I agree with you that it is a good sign that he is also attached to Diana, after all she spends a lot of time with him when you and Dolphin are at work. She must do a good job. I hope you let her know your very appreciative of her care for him. Is there such thing as caregiver's day, because there should be, they do a great service for a lot of children out there.

You should try carrying around a ten month old days before your due with her little brother. I guess that is why they say being a mother is one of the hardest jobs out there, and I will add one of the most rewarding.

Amy Interesting, I never thought about separation anxiety being associated with intelligence.

Mom, I definitely think you were crazy/brave for having kids so close together.

I learned, sort of after the fact, that breastfeeding impacts your ability to get pregnant. It's not foolproof birth control, but it sort of naturally helps space out the babies I guess....as if exhaustion from taking care of a baby isn't enough birth control...haha. Maybe you have more energy when you are in your 20s! :-)

Jo oh my yes...Xander is intelligent enough to know who to trust...when to be scared...when to feel ok.

I agree that you should really consider giving Diana a special gift. Caregivers like her are rare & wonderful.

Comment on breastfeeding=birth-control: keep on doin' the boobey-thing. Is there anything about Xander that is not perfect & enough? (Sorry...this is just the mommy of a single child coming out.) :-)

DB Sandwich

Dog Baby Sandwich - when I'm down on the floor with Xander, the dogs insist upon being there, too. When I'm checking his diaper, Peanut will sit right on my feet. When I am feeding Xander, sometimes Copper will rest her head on Xander. We move around the house as a pack.

Jo You're a mother of 3!

Carla Nobody is going to mess with that baby, he has two personal body guards.

Laughter is infectious

Laughter is infectious. The little bus toy on the lower right makes giggling noises every third button press. I think it is supposed to be kids giggling in the bus. Xander always smiles for the giggles.

Margie What a beautiful smile! So many toys.....I'd like to be a baby in that home.!

Kristen Ok, now this is getting really weird...you have the same exact Exersaucer as us! Too funny. Paige loves the bus too...she immediately goes for it and presses the button. She likes the "honk, honk" noise. Very fun.

Amy Hehehe, I can't take credit for this one. Grandma and Grandpa picked out the exersaucer for Xander. I can't believe how many batteries were required for this thing!

Little Chopin

Xander had fun pounding out some tunes on my old keyboard. I wonder if he will play a musical instrument one day. Mommy played piano and sang. Daddy didn't have the patience to learn. Right now, his hands are not really big enough for this keyboard. While I was pregnant, I joked that I was hoping for the next Miley Cyrus so I could retire early. :-)

Carla Makes me remember your first recital.

Jo Music allows your soul to dance, little man...



Thankful

I was really thankful that Xander fell asleep on the ride home from day care today. I ran into a terrible storm about 2/3rds of the way home. I saw the squall line up ahead and started to slow down because it looked scary. The other cars next to me did the same. Within seconds, we were in the middle of a hail storm with cranberry and grape sized hail. I was really scared that it was going to crack my windshield or cause me to slide off the road. I made it home ok and I couldn't find any dents on my car thankfully. Dolphin's car wasn't so lucky. He also saw a car with it's rear window broken out. Xander slept through the whole thing, which is good. I think if he were crying on top of the scary drive home, I would have freaked out.

Carla I was in a hail storm like that once and they can be very scary. I am glad to hear that all of you are safe.

Jo Your hailstorm turned into a tornado that touched down in Mississippi...eek.

Margie We were in our motorhome one time up in North Dakota when a hailstorm hit us at 5 in the morning and sounded like someone was throwing rocks at us.....that got us out of bed in a hurry! So I can imagine how scared you must have been.

Lynn Glad you and Xander made it home safely. Sorry to hear about Dolphin's car :(.

Kristen I have a friend who is also on FB with me. She posted pics of the hail next to a quarter, nickel and dime...the hail was all bigger than any of the coins. Crazy! I'm glad you made it home safe and soooo happy that Xander slept through it! I agree, that would have been REALLY scary. You're a great mom! I'll talk to Dolphin on FB, get him to post pics of his car. :(

L'oeil rose

Sounds better if you say it in french...blah....pink eye. Is there such a thing as 24 hour conjunctivitis from infection? Last night, Xander started having some eye drainage in both eyes. By morning, his eyes were glued shut. He wasn't rubbing them so there must not have been any of the itching. I wiped the gunk away and took him to the doctor because there was a little bit of redness in his eyes. The doctor agreed that it was conjunctivitis and gave me a prescription for antibiotics. By the time I got to the pharmacist though, his eyes looked almost normal. I don't know how long pink usually lasts. I was thinking that if it was from some kind of allergic reaction, it might explain why it hasn't lasted very long. I don't know what it might be a reaction to really. It just doesn't seem like an infection. On the other hand, one of Xander's classmates was diagnosed with pink eye earlier in the week so....

In the end, I'm doing the antibiotic drops as recommended by the doctor. With all the modern technology, it is frustrating to me that doctors can never tell if problem is caused by bacteria or virus. I hate using more medicine than absolutely necessary.

I was so scared the drops would be hard to put in his eyes. Both the doctor and the pharmacist were giving me suggestions on how to do it. I braced myself for a battle, but Xander didn't even care. One quick drop in each eye and he didn't even fuss. He did better than I would...seriously, I can't put drops in my own eyes. Sometimes, I have to get Dolphin to do it.

Dolphin's boss recently went through pink eye that he got from his daughter. His suggestion was for us to pre-emptively take the drops. I think I'll risk it.

Carla Hope Xander is feeling better.

Texas Blue Bonnets

It's an Austin parents' tradition to take pictures of your kids with the Texas wild flowers. We've always seen parents of the side of road or near railroad tracks with their kids and a camera. I theorized that the wild flowers thrive off the CO2 from the engines. We found a safer field of flowers by the parking garage at my office. There's no traffic here on the weekends, but we did see another family with the exact same idea that we had.

March and April are the best time to visit Austin...well, except for the threat of hail.

Afterwards, we headed over to The Cheesecake Factory for some lunch. The waiter was totally in love with Xander. We had to give her a little extra tip for that. :-)

Jo What a breath-taking photo! April is the best time to visit Texas??? I'll be right there! :D

Lynn Gorgeous! We really need to find a time to visit.

Carla What a great smile! Good shot of that tooth! Apparently, he get his hair from Grandma Margie's side of the family.....LOL!

Steph the wildflowers are amazing. i miss them a lot not living in texas anymore. LOVE LOVE LOVE the bluebonnet photos. We took some of R in the middle of some daffodils but it's not the same at all :P



Magical Motrin

Well, something we learned this week is the magic of Motrin, Xander's conjunctivitis (from last Friday) turned into congestion and ear infections. Once the ear infection started, his fever was up to 102 even with infant Tylenol drops. Both Dolphin and I received independent advice from experienced parents that once the fever hits 102, you use Motrin instead of Tylenol. Then, when we saw the ENT specialist yesterday, he told us that Motrin has anti-inflammatory properties that help with the pain of ear infections that Tylenol does not. Plus, Motrin last longer and has fewer side effects. Good to know!

We learned a lot from the ENT Specialist, Dr. Spencer. Unfortunately, the bug that Xander got was resistant to amoxicillin. After 3 days of high dosage amoxicillin, Xander was getting worse plus he was getting the bad side effects of amoxicillin. I seriously hate that stuff. There are side effects and then there are secondary side effects. We switched to Suprax anti-biotic and he has started to improve. The fever is gone and he is in a much better mood. He still needs the Motrin for the ear pain. He also needs his nose to be bulb syringed a few times a day so that he can eat and sleep.

Poor Xander...he was really miserable this week. Not only was he suffering from illness, but cutting his 6th tooth at the same time.

Margie Poor Xander....I know it's hard to see a baby sick. Amy, your Dad was our sick one during his first year. He had so much penicillin in his body that he got hives. He was always the sickest when it came to things like chicken pox.....look at him now!

Lynn Sorry to hear Xander is sick. Hope he starts feeling better real soon.

Carla Hugs and kisses to Xander! Hope your feeling better

Kristen Hang in there Mommy! I'm thinking about you.

Amy Thanks for the support and kind words, all!

The new antibiotic did the trick. No fever, no running nose, and I think the ear infection is gone too. Now, what I am left dealing with is the antibiotic side effect...yeast. I'm not sure which is worse being ill or the yeast. We spent a few minutes giving his bum some air and UV rays this afternoon. I'm giving him yogurt to eat and using the special cream on his poor bottom. Hopefully, this will pass quickly.

As I was looking for ways to help his yeasty bottom online, I learned that some babies get this from neglect. That just pisses me off. Why any mom would let that happen to their child is beyond me!

Jo Dolphin's little butt was prone to rashes & the best remedy was always to let the sun shine on where the sun don't shine!

Margie Also Vitamin A & D ointment is good for rashes.

Amy Haha, like the wording, Jo.

Grandma, I agree A&D is good stuff. We use it a lot.

Steph boy i'm glad to hear he's feeling better-- but ick on the yeast. those aren't pleasant. at least it is nice out this time of year so you can go outside w/ a blanket and just let him go :)



also, not that you're looking for more cream recs but we LOVE aquaphor just as a general ointment. safe to use on her face, too, if there's dry skin or rashy areas there as well. we just bought a huge tub of it at target the other day. i don't even think we really use diaper rash cream anymore since the aquaphor does such an amazing job clearing her up.

Amy Hi Steph, I love aquaphor also. I used it quite a bit on Xander's head. For a while, it was the only thing that would help with the dry skin from cradle cap.

I think at this point I've got a little bit of every kind of lotion and ointment. I went through a trial of different things for his head. Aquaphor was the best.

I haven't found a good sunscreen yet though. The first one I used was Aveeno and it didn't react well with his skin.

Steph we have the aveeno sunscreen, but my favorite was arbonne. my sister-in-law used to sell arbonne products and if she still did i would be buying their sunscreen. i've heard good things about california baby sunscreen but haven't bought any yet (it's spendy!!!)

Steph also, about sunscreen, i just saw this post on safemama-- you might find it useful in looking at sunscreens, esp. if xander is sensitive: <http://safemama.com/2009/04/13/safemamas-2009-safer-sunscreen-cheat-sheet/>

i'm thinking i may order (online, as most of these brands aren't locally available in the stores we have) one of the trukids types and see how we like them.

Bear hat

We bought this hat online before Xander was born. We wanted something special for his first picture. Well, it was one-size and that size was too big for his new born head. Between then and last week, I lost it in his closet. I was cleaning out his closet and rediscovered it just in time for it to barely fit. It's also just a little bit too warm outside to be wearing a yarn hat.

Jo My boys: little bear & big bear. :)

Carla What a very very cute picture. I'm also glad that Daddy has gotten over getting his picture taken, I guess being a Daddy is what it took. Now we need a picture of all of you together, I bet Jo would agree, a nice little Easter treat for grandmas and grandpas.

Jo consider it done Gramma Carla!



More teething

Xander's has quite a few teeth popping out lately. He has started scraping his front teeth together. It's like listening to nails on chalk board. So, I try to give him a lot of things to chew on like this spatula.

He also tried some teething crackers. I think they smell like dog treats and so do Copper and Peanut.

Jo Y'know, I kinda remember Dolphin doing that. I was concerned that he was gonna grind his purty new teeth down...but then it just seemed like he was experimenting with what he could do with 'em!

Carla I see the hair, how cute! I guess we will see a picture soon of two front teeth, the way he is going at it. What a little trooper. You know I haven't seen one picture of Xander on the family blog, I'm sure everyone would love to see how cute he is.





Probiotics

OK, I'm impressed with probiotics. When Xander was ill last week, he was on some pretty strong antibiotics. The antibiotics killed the good bacteria in his intestines and skin. This causes diarrhea and yeast diaper rash. Yeast are evil itchy things. I got some lactobacillus acidophilus probiotics. These are "good" bacteria that kill yeast and "restore the balance of the flora in the gut". They are the kind of bacteria found in yogurt. I gave Xander just one oral dosage and put a little topically on his yeast diaper rash. The diarrhea was gone and the yeasty diaper rash was gone in one night. This was after several days of trying to air out his bum and trying all sorts of creams and ointments without any luck.

I had first tried giving Xander yogurt, but he wouldn't eat very much of it. Plus the only kind that I could find at the store had sugar in it, which is sort of counter-productive to killing yeast. So, that's when I headed back to the store and found some straight probiotic powder.

Anyhow, I'm really impressed and I'm glad that Dr. Spender recommended them.

Jo As more info is coming out about the downside of the over-prescription of antibiotics, the (really pretty obvious & easy) benefits of probiotics is surfacing. Kudos to you--my most astute young parents of Xander--to being proactive with this! http://www.buyprobiotics.net/Probiotics_Friendly_Bacteria_baby.shtml jeez...my grandson is so lucky. That FAGE (total classic) yogurt you told me about doesn't have a whole lot of sugar...

Lynn Glad to hear that Xander is feeling better. Way to go Mommy!



Roomba chasing

The next few posts are some pictures from Dolphin's iPhone since my camera is currently dead. Here dad thought that the Roomba would be good motivation for Xander to crawl. Xander is creeping around these days, but not crawling much. When he does crawl, it is backwards.

Happy Easter - Belated

We had a nice Easter brunch yesterday at Z-Tejas¹. This is one of the few good restaurants in Cedar Park. There was an Easter Bunny there, but Xander slept through most of the meal and didn't get to seem him. I was thinking that he probably would be scared of a man-sized bunny. People in bunny costumes kind of creep us out every since we saw "Donnie Darko"².

No candy for Xander this year. Although I have been trying to give him a lot of different flavors lately. He recently tried cheddar cheese. He likes that because it is a finger food (entertainment). I have been mixing some different spices into some of his veggies like tumeric in squash and cinnamon in sweet potatoes. I have avoided chile-related spices yet. I think he needs to be really good at using utensils before we go there. I don't want him accidentally rubbing his eye after eating some chile. At school, he has just switched to 3 solids a day (sounds like something from prison). Last week, there was left over milk every day. I am wondering if this is the beginning of weaning. I have mixed feelings about that.

1 <http://www.ztejas.com/>

2 <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0246578/>

Climbing and standing

The couch is perfect height for pulling up and holding on to while standing.

Kristen Paige just did this today! She pulled herself up on the ottoman. My baby is growing! So sad, but happy too. She crawled about 4 strides too. They are doing the same things!

Dolphin I think Xander has only got about 1.5 knee steps crawling. He usually gets over on to his hands and knees from a sitting position, thinks about it for a bit, then tries to take off. Generally he gets so excited that he straightens his legs out and he plops to the ground.

Carla I remember Christopher when he learned to crawl, he would get up on his hands and knees and rock back and forth. It took him a while to figure out he had to pick up one of them to get going. They can be so funny when they are learning.

Jo I remember Dolphin doing that rocking thing! Thanks for the memory jog Carla!

Amy Yes, we need to get Paige and Xander in the same room. Ms. Diana from day care puts Xander next to this little both named Aidan. I know it's a bit early to have friends, but Aidan cried when Dolphin took Xander away. Kinda cute!

Starting young

Uh-oh, what is daddy teaching Xander now?

Jo I just had a hard day at daycare, Dad...Isn't it happy hour?

Dolphin The scary thing is that he even know what to do with it. If he gets his had on it, he puts his mouth on the proper end and tilts it back!

Carla A bottle is a bottle!





Clowns!

Xander met his first clown today, and I think he handled it pretty well. The Waterloo around the corner from our house (which happens to be owned by an old co-worker of mine) has a clown out on the patio some evenings. She was making balloon animals and doing face painting for all the kids running around. Xander was staring at her and the big commotion of all the kids in line, and she kept making googly eyes at him. When she finally got a break she ran over to come say hi and made him a little puppy and asked if she could take a picture with him.



Xander was very sad when we had to take away the balloon animal, though i think we would have cried harder if we had left it with him until he chewed a hole in it and popped it.

Jo Nice clown...nice redheaded clown. (Not a killer clown from outer space.) No potential for Xander developing coulrophobia with this encounter!



Lynn Xander is much braver than me - clowns freak me out.

Carla It's not always easy to be good parents, Max says, he wishes he could have been there with a clown and balloons, sounds like a lot of fun.

ohhhh...those are so great! I'm dyin' here! IS I...

ohhhh...those are so great! I'm dyin' here! IS IT TOMORROW YET???



Full body work out

Daddy and Grandma Jo helped Xander practice walking today. He seemed to really enjoy it. Handy Manny and Xander worked on their abs. Here, he did just a few push-ups (next week maybe with one-hand behind the back).



Carla Love the abs workout with Handy Manny! Too cute!

Lynn That's adorable. Looks like the dogs were also helping protect Xander from falling :).

Jo Oh, the pooters keep an ever-vigilant eye on Xander. I think they will be his BFFs.

Super Cute

We made another trip Terra Toys today. Daddy found these cute little construction vehicles. There's a tow truck, cement truck, and dump truck. They all have googling eyes on the front instead of headlights. He hasn't really pushed them around on their wheels yet, but he still thinks they are pretty cool.



Tummy sleeping

Xander has started sleeping on his tummy. Almost immediately after I put him into his crib on his back, he turns over onto his tummy. I figure if he does it on his own, he can stay that way. I'm not going to flip him back and risk waking him up.

As it turns out, he sleeps a bit better on his tummy. Before, on his back, he would not sleep longer than 60 minutes in his crib before waking up. In fact, you could said your watch to him waking up and crying. On his tummy, he all of a sudden sleeps 2 hours.

Too bad he hated being on his stomach for the first 7 months of his life or maybe we would have gotten a little more sleep. Well, and too bad about the whole SIDS things and needing to put him on his back in the first place.

It's nice to have the time back from having to try to put him back to sleep so frequently. It is a little weird though. I keep feeling the urge to go check on him.

Kristen Ah yes, tummy sleeping. I read that once they can turn themselves over it's ok to sleep on the tummy. But your pediatician knows more. I was delighted when Paige started doing it. She is definitely a side sleeper now, perhaps remembers the comforts of BFing. I do always check on her tho. I think it's a natural mommy response. Enjoy the quite time. :)

Amy You could be right about that BFing thing. Xander side sleeps a lot, too. Are you still doing it at all or cut it out totally? I'm wondering how the whole weaning process goes.

Kristen I finally stopped at 6 mos. You know I was exclusivly pumping for her, which was double the work. She still has some in the freezer tho! I weaned by using hours, ie I was pumping every 3-4 hours, so I spread it to 5, then 6, etc. I think for those who are actually feeding, drop by feeding, ie, you give up a night one, then the day ones. Amy, I can't tell you how good it feels to have my body back. It is so hard to give up, but my body feels so much better. I can sleep on my stomach too now! LOL. I fit in my preprenancy bras and shirts can actually be buttoned. It is a great feeling, but BFing is very difficult to give up. However, the physical feeling after the sadness & guilt go away is fabulous! Let me know how it goes and when you decide. Keep with it as long as you can!





Dry run

Daddy picked up the coolest new toy last night. I think it needs to be a little bit warmer outside to take it for a wet run. It's plenty of warm in the sun, but the shade is still cool. I think I want Xander to try this out in the shade of one of our live oak trees.

Kristen He looks like he's crawling! Hope he enjoys the pool! Ours was up to 76 last night and we have a 92 degree day today and expect 100 tomorrow! Perhaps next week we can dip in!!! Enjoy!

Carla I am seeing a baby Amy in this picture, except you had some cute blonde curls around the back of your head. How cute!

Amy Grown up Amy got into the pool with him today....still without water. I felt like a giant. :-)

Carla I would have loved to see that picture.

Purple Water

Grandma Jo introduced us to Color Dotz¹. These are little tablets that turn the bath water colors without turning babies colors. Xander's reaction was interesting. He definitely noticed that it was different. He stared at the water and then looked at me and Grandma Jo. "Whoah...something weird is going on with this bath!"

¹ http://www.crayolastore.com/product_detail.asp?T1=CRA+021442



First movie

Xander saw his very first movie this weekend. Daddy and Grandma Jo took him to the Alamo Drafthouse¹ to see a movie. On Tuesdays and Fridays the Drafthouse has Baby Day. They are supposed to turn the lights up a little bit and turn the sound down. Dolphin said that the sound was louder like someone actually turned the sound in the wrong direction. Oops!

There were a few other families there as well. All were watching a rated "R" movie. Given the language involved with the movie, I think that once he gets a little better with words, we might have to avoid those kind of movies.

Jo It was a hilarious movie--Observe & Report--but I was kind of surprised that it was offered on Baby Day...considering they dropped the f-bomb about 300 times! I'm thinking that the whole idea of Baby Day at the Alamo though is for parents to actually be able to go out & watch something THEY want to see without other people giving them dirty looks for bringing along their "noisy baby." A terrific idea.

Amy I'm pretty sure that is the case since they don't allow children under 18 without an adult at all. I think this is why many adults like Alamo. They can avoid the teen crowd that is at a lot of other theaters. I'll take babies over hormonally charged teens any day.

First Steps

There's video of Xander's first steps on Grandma Jo's Blog².

Kristen That's incredible!

¹ <http://www.drafthouse.com/lakecreek/>

² <http://xandygranny.blogspot.com/2009/04/walkin-man.html>

Lop-sided crawling

Inspiration/Motivation - Mommy & Daddy

Jo Yay! Lookit him go!

Carla The fun begins! Now Copper and Peanut will have someone to follow around. I wonder if he will try to follow the dogs out the doggy door? LOL

Margie Good job, Xander. Your Mama & Dada won't be able to keep up with you before too long!

Jo OMG. You're right, Carla. Better figure out how to secure that doggie door!

Jo <https://www.softtiles.com/?gclid=CLaivK-hjZoCFRKAXgodtGzz9w>

We got some of these interlocking foam mats for our patio & steps when Jonah was little. They saved his coconut more than a few times! I was thinking you might want to get some to put outside the doggie door...in case Xander decides to tumble out. We got them at Sam's Club.

Amy Yep, we're in trouble. Xander's friend at day care is 4 months younger than Xander and able to move around equal to Xander. At least I got 4 extra months of reprieve. :-)

Speaking of doggy doors, I knew I kept the dog gates we got Copper for some reason. I think they will come in handy.

Books

Xander was having one of those must-be-in-mommy's-lap-at-all-times moments this morning. So, I decided to see if he was interested at looking at some books. We hadn't really looked at any of his little picture board books in a while. He seems so much more interested in them then when we looked at them previously. He used to only want to chew on them. Now, he kind of puts his fingers on the pictures when I talk about them. He even picked out and pointed at a sun on one of the pages. It's so much more fun to look at books with him now.

On his languages skills, I'm starting to think that he is recognizing some words. I think he knows what Da-da and Xander mean. Every chance I get, I point at Dolphin and say Da-da. I don't know if he gets Ma-ma. Sometimes he says it but it's not consistent.

Margie Great! I remember how much I liked to read to you, Amy, when you were about Xander's age.

Carla I know that reading to you and Christopher was a daily activity when you were young, I think I did it to be able to have some time to sit down and relax. Remember how we used to walk to the library in Oshkosh. Those were some fun times.

Amy Yes, I remember both. I have been looking for that book you used to read to me Grandma about the fish, the cat, and the bicycle. I don't know the title but I can't seem to find that book anywhere.

The library is great. I hope Xander likes to read a lot. Dolphin and I both like to read but we have different preferences. I like non-fiction and Dolphin likes sci-fi/fantasy.

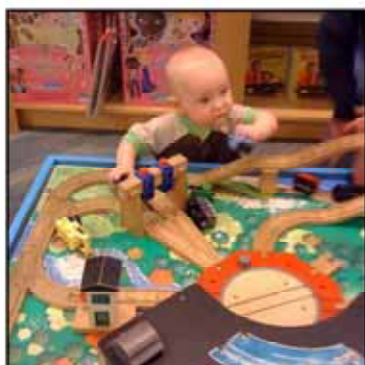
Xander's not really into ready stories yet. It's mostly looking at picture books.

Shopping

Xander has always been really good with shopping. Bright lights and noise don't seem to bother him. He loves watching people and looking around. Here are a couple of shopping pictures.

This was at Barnes and Noble. There was a little boy there, maybe 2 years old. Who kept saying "share" and "baby" as he handed trains over to Xander. It was so cute.

Daddy put Xander on this tricycle. I think it is so funny that he can reach the handle bars and not the pedals.



No bink?

Xander seems to be very anti-pacifier the past couple of weeks. He will immediately spit it out if I try to give him one. I don't know if this is a temporarily thing or if he is just done with it. One of his teachers at school asked if I was trying to wean him. Um...no, but I guess I will take it if he is giving it up. That one less worry to think about.

He doesn't seem to be replacing it with his thumb or toys. He still has about the same amount of mommy sucking need though. He's figured out he can crawl right over to me and bury his face in my chest to get the real deal.

Jo Not surprising! Dolphin never had a lot of use for substitute boob. In fact, he pretty much went right from nursing to a sippy cup. Binks & bottles just irritated him...



Kristen How cute to have him crawl to you! I never got to experience that. Enjoy it! Hopefully I will with #2. :) Paige is still REALLY attached to her pacifier. She's an artificial nipple girl!

Steph this sounds like good news to me! if he's sleeping and everything else just fine w/o it, i'd go ahead and just keep it away.

i love that he crawls up to you-- that is SO sweet!!

Amy Haha, I think I just confirmed today that in addition to crawling up to me for meals, Xander is now crawling up for me when he wants a diaper change. I need to teach him to go to Daddy for that one. :-)



Chores

Look who is ready to start helping out with the dishes. OK, maybe not...if we don't want broken glassware.

Carla Is that suppose to be Mini Me? It kind of looks that way!

Dressing...

Oh my...I thought dressing Xander when he was a newborn was tough. I remember I had to change his clothes a lot because he leaked a lot during the first month. I always thought it was tough as he was so fragile. Well, boy oh boy, it is definitely tougher now that Xander is mobile.

Tonight, I was trying to put his pajama pants on. He was squirming every which way. After several minutes of trying everything (including belly-raspberry-distractions), I just laughed and gave up. It was like one of the common phrases that we use at work quite frequently, "hearding cats". Xander and the PJ Team score 1, Mommy Team score 0!

Thank goodness for sleep sacks. I was able to distract him with some nursing, while I zipped the sack around him. Whew!

Speaking of his mobility, he's getting really fast. I came home today and he came racing towards the door for me. Maybe Copper and Peanut taught him that one. I hope he doesn't start jumping on me and licking me in the face. Then, I'll know he is spending too much time with them.

Kristen I need to have Brian read this one...he can relate. He gives Paige her bath and gets her dressed in her jammies every night, which is full of bucking on the changing pad. Yes, she is a buckner. She frequently is referred to as the "bucking bronco." You're not alone.

Carla I remember those days! Wait till they want to dress themselves and show up somewhere without their underwear on. I don't know who we would be talking about????? Grandma Margie are you still laughing, I am.

Jo I'm at that stage with Jonah now, Carla. We try to encourage him to get himself dressed, and the results can be hilarious. Last week he outdid himself...3 shirts (2 of them on backwards), pants on backwards & 2 different shoes, sans socks!

Yay..pooltime

We tried out the kiddie pool and swim diapers today. The water was a bit cold so we added a kettle full of hot water. Xander had quite a fun time splashing. We used the color dots again, but there was so much water that it just kind of made the water look dirty.

The swim diaper are a little weird. They are a necessity if we want to bring Xander into the neighborhood pool. Half of our HOA rule book is about baby diaper rules in the pool. It must really be a problem, I guess, to have so much associated literature.

The human king

I think Xander could be in a Disney cartoon. Recognize this pose?

Jo Simba!

Jo omg...have you seen this? Just had to share!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIJ3p5TDKpA>

Steph but he's much cuter!





Fast crawler

Dolphin is so smart. He was watching Xander's lopsided crawl. He was studying the mechanics...one of those physics lover kind of things. He realized that because Xander uses his right foot, he crawls a lot faster. The right foot step has 3 times the stride length of a kneed step.

So, we've got a speed demon of a son. I guess I should be surprised as he came from his auto-cross racing, Ducati riding Dad. Oh boy, I'm dreading those teenage years already. Maybe if I'm lucky, we'll run out of fossil fuel before then so I don't have to worry about him getting behind the wheel or on a bike.

Kristen I love it! Tell Dolphin thank you for figuring out why Paige does the same thing. She uses her right foot to get around too when crawling. Perhaps the babes know more than we do without needing study!?!

Steph spoken like a true geek. sounds like something my husband would do too. interestingly, r never picked up on the foot trick-- she was a late crawler though and it was only a month or two between

crawling and walking, really. is xander cruising a lot, too?

Carla I remember when you got your license Amy is was metal to the petal.....a mother's nightmare. Maybe some of that speed comes from Mommy too!

Amy Uh-oh, Paige is another speed demon? We are in trouble.

Xander may be taking a little after both mommy and daddy with the speeding.

Yes, Xander is cruising a bit. This weekend, he was playing with a cardboard box. He was standing behind it and kind of pushing it around as he followed. It was a low-tech walker for him. I think he really does want to be walking around.

Dining out

We have taken Xander out to a few restaurants now, and seem to have a good way of doing it. We have disposable placements that are made of Calcium and environmentally degradable. They give him a clean place to eat and put food. Then, we found these trough-bibs that have a little pocket him them. They catch most of the food that misses his mouth.

We usually bring some kind of dry food snack like cheerios or yogurt puffs. Then, we look for things on the menu that we can cut up and give him him. So far he has liked fish, green beans, rye bread, sourdough bread, wheat bread, and french fries. I am sort of excited that I might have someone to eat fish with since Daddy doesn't like it.

It's not a pretty site to watch Xander eat, but we only take him to places where kids are welcome. So far, we've only had positive interactions with other guests. People range from smiling and waving to coming over to sharing personal tips/stories of their own kids. Who could really be upset with such a cute boy anyway?!

Jo I especially like the tape on the back of those placemats that stick 'em to the table...what a great idea.

Margie It pays to start training early in dining out. Do you remember your outings with Grandma Alice & Grandpa Harold? I don't remember if you had some favorite names for them.



Blueberry Surprise

Separation Anxiety...even more

Just when I thought separation anxiety was peaking, it gets even stronger. This week, Xander is just physically attached to us or Miss Diana at all times. He's figured out how to crawl around obstacles to find us. Not like we are hiding from him, but he will follow us around the house. Before, if one of us left the room, he would just start crying. Now, he takes matters into his own hands and looks for us. It's super cute to see his little round head peer around the corner. Once he sees us, he kicks in the high gear and crawls over to us and pulls up on us.

There is even a little stranger anxiety starting to show up. Actually, I don't even know if I would consider it anxiety in my opinion. I don't think it comes across as a fear thing. It really looks like he is asserting his opinion and preference for certain people and a lack of interest in others. This behavior isn't too extreme though. I have seen some babies that start bawling if a stranger looks at them. That seems more like anxiety to me.

One thing is for sure, it sure is heartbreaking to have to leave him at day care when Ms. Diana isn't there. She's not allowed to be sick. :-)

Jo I wouldn't categorize it as "stranger anxiety" necessarily. "Critical

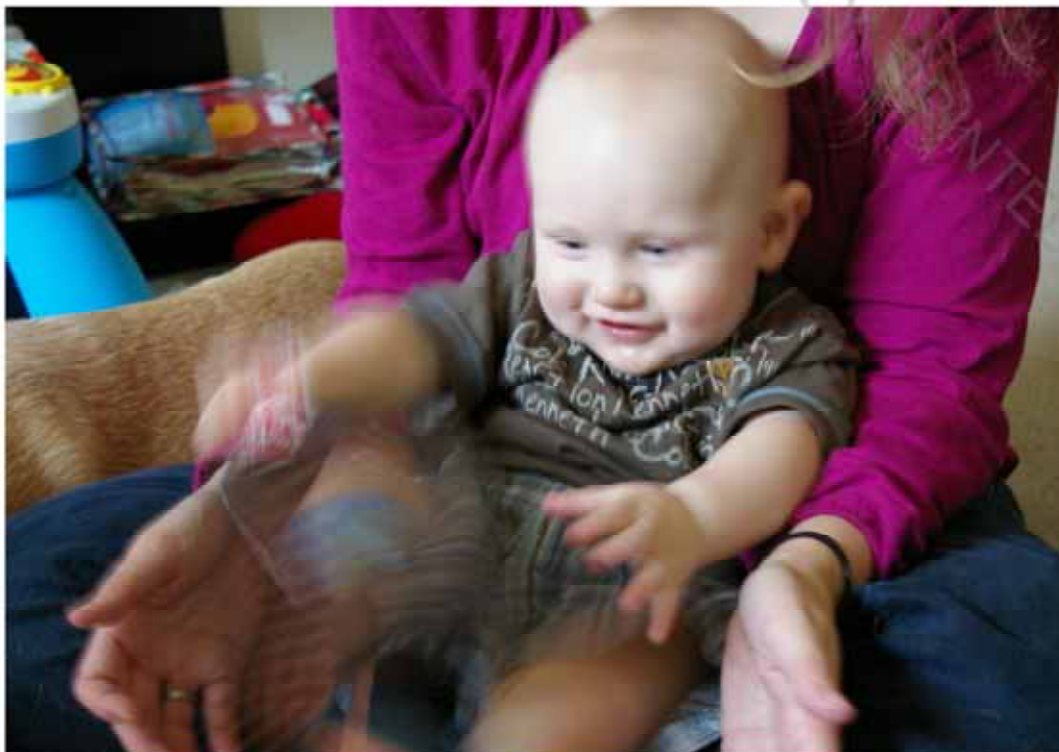
First Shoes

Dolphin has a little obsession with Vans shoes. He was ordering a replacement pair for himself, and found out there are itty bitty sizes, too. So, now, Xander has a matching pair.

He got a kick (literally) out of them when I put them on. They were a bit big still.

Lynn That is absolutely adorable, Amy.

Carla Good job catching him in action!





Thank you Ms. Diana and Ms. Ashley

emotionally specific discrimination" may be what my super intelligent grandson is expressing. :-)

Kristen Piage was one of those babies that cried if a stranger looked at her. She's getting better now, especially in the grocery store. But I've learned not to go on the days when the elderly folks are shopping. They tend to really like to come right up to the cart. It actually freaks me out too! Isn't it sweet when he crawls up to you?! I love it when Paige does it. Sweet, sweet, sweet! Ready for another one!

Amy Kristen, I know what you mean about people coming up to see your baby. This weekend, several people were just tickling and grabbing Xander. I'm thinking...eww, germs! I never thought I would be a person to care about germs, but here I am getting grossed out by strangers touching Xander. I think I'd be freaked out too if random people starting grabbing at me.

Happy Mother's Day

Look what my sweet boy made for me!

A coworker told me that as he gets older I have to start asking for what I would like for Mother's day. She has two boys. Every year, she asks for them to help plant flowers in the garden. How cute!

Lynn Hope you had a wonderful Mother's Day, Amy!

Monday May 11

Pick me up....NOW!

Look at all those teeth! He's had 8 (4 on top and 4 on bottom) since 7 months. Then, we got a break from the teething. I think he is about get some more. He been kind of gnawing the past couple of days.

Kristen Ah, teething. Paige is getting three right now. Two on top and one on the bottom. Plus she caught my cold. Fun day today. :(Yep, the gnawing is a good sign, Brian had to put tape on the end table to keep her off of it. But now, she pulls herself up to gnaw on the upper shelf. It's never ending to stay one step ahead. I love it...and it sounds like you do too. :)

First Game of Tag

Last night, Xander and Copper provided the entertainment. First, Xander found one of Copper's nylon bones. He was waving his trophy around when Copper noticed. After a few attempts, she managed to get it out of his hands. She proceeded to lay down and chew on it. Xander crawled over to get is trophy back from her. When he got within a foot of her, she ran into the next room. Then, Xander followed her to the next room and attempted again. Whenever he would get within a foot of her, she would run away and he would follow. It was pretty hilarious.

Carla I bet that was cute. It is nice when they can start entertaining themselves. Hope you took a minute to sit back and relax and enjoy the moment.



Checkup time

Xander went in for his 9 month check up appointment. He is 28.75 inches long (75th percentile), 20lbs exactly (50th percentile), and his head is 45cm in circumference (50th percentile). I was a little concerned that his weigh percentile went down. I think this is because of 1 week of stomach flu and 1 week of ear infections with antibiotic side effects. We got to keep my boy healthy.

The doctor was happy with of his development (gross/fine motor, babbling). He passed his anemia test. He didn't even cry for the finger prick. He is so brave as long as I was holding him. He did do something new this time. He basically cried through the whole examination because I couldn't hold him for that. He wanted nothing to do with the doctor. At all previous visits, he couldn't have cared less what she was doing.

We also found out that he has a little bit of oral thrush. Two weeks ago, he seemed to stop wanting is pacifier¹. Maybe that is when it started. It's not too far along. For a nursing mom, the word thrush scares the heck out of me. This is one of those things that Xander and I can give back and forth to each other. We've both got medicine now, and I'm disinfecting everything that touches his mouth daily. Hopefully, we'll be done with this by next week. I'm not sure if he will be back to wanting a pacifier again after this. I feel bad for not noticing the thrush before. I need to figure out a way to get a good view of Xander's mouth.

Kristen Sounds like a perfect growing boy. I got thrush from pumping, I think I didn't clean my pump as well as I should have one day after using it at work. Our pediatrician prescribed Dr. Newman's cream for me. It worked immediately. I highly recommend it. I'm not sure what they give the babes since Paige didn't get it because she was getting milk from the bottle only. Keep up the good work mama for that beautiful growing boy.

Jo From what I've read, it sounds like thrush may be a side effect from antibiotics that you or Xander took. And then it may spread back & forth between you & Xander during nursing? I'm thinkin' more probiotics might be the ticket...??

Dolphin I can understand why he doesn't like the prescription they gave him, it tastes like lotion with sugar in it, yuk.

Amy Thanks for the suggestion Kristen. Sorry to hear you had to deal with thrush. I have heard it can be really painful, irritating. So, far just Xander is showing symptoms, but I have to use his medicine as a preventative measure.

Xander hasn't been on antibiotics recently so I don't know if that is the cause. Still, I have been giving him some because the help with the yeast.

¹ <http://dnadigitaldiary.blogspot.com/2009/04/no-bink.html>



Resistance is futile

So, Xander has figured out how to communicate quite clearly over the last two months how little he likes getting a diaper change. For a few weeks, I was able to distract him with toys. Even then, it had to be some new object that was completely new to him to distract him.

Now, toys are useless. As soon as he sees the changing pad, he starts making noise to indicate his dislike. After laying him down, he starts yelling and squirming like crazy. I learned that if I gently hold him in a laying position for about 5 seconds, he calms down and gives up the fight. He will then stay in the laying position until I pick him up.

I hoping in a few days he'll learn that "resistance is futile" and give up the fight altogether. I hope that I don't have to look forward to a couple of years of battling for every diaper change.

We're having a similar situation with the car seat, also. I am hopeful that this too shall pass. It's kind of the first couple of lessons in obeying mom and dad, I guess. We're teaching him the lesson of the Rolling Stones "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you'll find out, you get what you need."

Carla He definitely is showing signs of being a little boy. They never have time for things like diaper changes.

John hey! Angela has been doing the same thing for weeks. She wants/needs to get changed, but when lay her flat she starts squawling and flipping over and squirming. Makes for a challenging adventure sometimes. We've used little toys, etc, but those have diminishing effect over time. Have found that if lay her down slowly, cradle her head/neck for awhile, she eases into it. Hilarious was when Aijuan was using one of those party horns that has the thing that rolls out and comes back. She had that in her teeth blowing that thing in and out while changing Angela. Should have got a picture.



3-in-1 Toy

...And it's not even his birthday. What a spoiled boy! Xander's favorite part of this toy so far are the megablocks that came with it. Go figure! He knows how to take the blocks apart. He wants to put the blocks back together, but he can't quite get it.

I had been shopping around for a walker for a couple of weeks for Xander. I really couldn't find the one that I was looking for. I was looking for a wooden one with a large base with blocks in it. I couldn't find one. Dolphin found this one at Target.

Margie That LOOKS like fun ! Wish I could be there to play with him.

Carla dump trucks rule!

Dolphin I am sure Xander would love to spend some time getting spoiled by his Great (or just pretty darn good) Grandparents anytime!

One for the crazy old cat lady.

Jo awww...he wants one! he NEEDS one! purrrrrrrrrrrrr.

Carla Life could be very exciting if you added a cat to the household. Max says he would come visit so he could chase it up a tree!

Hand painting

Xander painted this at school this week. This was his first time painting with his hands. His teachers said that he didn't really want to touch the paint at first. Once he did, he really got into it.

Dolphin said that it's a landscape, which problem means I have the picture rotated the wrong way.

Carla That masterpiece needs to go on the family blog.....at last a family member with major talent LOL!

Jo I agree...but DO rotate it. It is most definitely a landscape. :D



These are a few of my "dangerous" things...

Xander favorite toys these days seem to be the most dangerous things he can find. Here are a few of his favorites:

- Power cords
- The dog door
- The dog water bowl
- Window blinds
- Standing in the bathtub

He likes these things much more than any toy.

Jo and just when you think you've adequately child-proofed your house, he will find more "fun" stuff...!

Kristen We live in a parallel universe. Ditto for Paige. The standing in the bath tub thing...UGH! Good luck!

Carla Wait till he learns to drive and falls in love.....this is all practice for the fun stuff that comes later.

Amy Yeah, learning to drive...scary. I bet Dolphin is going to be even more scared knowing how crazy teenagers are. No street motorcycles...only off-road, that's my rule. The falling in love, I am excited about. If he can do that, then I've done my job right. I can't control what other people do with his heart, but if he has a heart to give away, that is good. Better to have loved and lost than to never at all, right?

Learning to share

Uh-oh, someone just learned how to give treats to Copper. I think he just enjoys the Copper attention. What's funny is that I would be more upset about other people sharing food with Xander than Copper. It's not that I have a fear of germs. It's just that I would prefer that Xander doesn't get sick again...ever. It's wishful, unrealistic thinking though. There are a lot more human shared illnesses that inter species disease. On the other hand, I might have to worry getting Copper more exercise soon. All those scraps are starting to pack on the pounds.

Carla I know Max packed a few more last weekend when there was a great grandpa and grandpa that were sharing with Max, I guess it runs in the family.

Margie Well, at least you have a clean floor !



Soccer Parents

We went to San Antonio this weekend to watch cousin Chase play a game of soccer. Xander tried on his sun glasses with Uncle Chris. They didn't stay on very long.

While we were there, I learned a very important soccer parent lesson. DO NOT PARK YOUR CAR NEAR THE GOAL. Halfway through the game, I went back to the car to nurse Xander in some A/C. As I was sitting in the car, I saw several balls fly over the goal and hit cars. Then, I saw a goalie accidentally kick one out and laughed when it hit a car. "They shouldn't park there" one of the girls yelled. I guess they shouldn't!

It was a good game. The team played right up until a storm rained the whole tournament out. One minute we were sweating in the heat of the sun about 90 degrees and the next it was 67 degrees and pouring. What luck!

Jo what a handsome group of men...:-)

Margie It looks like Xander is trying to take a picture.....cute!

Dolphin those are actually the sunglasses we got for Xander, he likes 'em about as much as he likes his hat.



Sleep? Knock on wood...

OK, I don't want to jinx myself, but I think Xander's sleep is improving a little bit. He seems to have started to have somewhat consistently a 4-4.5 hour stretch of continuous sleep from about 10:30pm to 3:00am. Woot! He still tends to get up a lot between 8pm and 10:30pm or 3:00am and 7am. He also seems to be taking a long afternoon nap...over an hour! We haven't really changed anything so this new behavior is all his doing. Way to go Xander!

I also noticed him do something really cute in his sleep. He was laughing in his sleep. He had the hugest smile...it was hilarious. It must have been a good dream.

Kristen Hello. Don't want to jinx it either, but Piage too, just started sleeping through the night. It's been about a month. From 7:30pm - 7am(ish). It's great. Perhaps it's secondary to the crawling and standing and cruising that makes them more tired. You also might want to try more healthy fats in your diet to make your milk fattier. Fat holds them longer since it takes longer to digest. Just ideas. :) I'll stay positive that he keeps sleeping

To boldly go..

WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE. We took Xander to see his very first "Star Trek" movie. He did ok, slept through some key parts, but at least got to see some pointed-eared guy. It was a definitely a tag team event but between Mommy and Daddy we collectively saw the movie. It was very good, classic Trekkiness.

WHERE SOME PARENTS WOULD NOT DARE TO GO. This weekend, we took Xander to a white tablecloth restaurant. We were hungry and it was the first restaurant on the Paseo del Rio that we came to after arriving in San Antonio. It was a really loud restaurant so I thought it was ok. When we left the tablecloth was no longer white, but it was a good dinner.

Steph i love this post. dh and i have been talking about going to see the star trek movie but it hasn't happened yet. i have a lot of fun taking R to restaurants too -- but i do sometimes feel bad when there's more food on the floor than on the table at the end!



Hand



Foot



Mouth

Poor Xander Bug

Our little bug has caught a bug. It's one of the hand-foot-and-mouth viruses. Supposedly, once you get this, you are immune. So I suppose that is the silver lining. Evidently, both Dolphin and I have had this sometime in our past because we are not breaking out in a rash like Xander.

The bad thing about this is that the spots are inside his mouth also and they hurt. So, it is very painful for him to eat or suck, which is normally very comforting for him. Poor little guy.

Normally, this virus comes with a fever. Xander has not shown any fever. He's been a little bit irritable when he is hungry and can't eat without pain. However, he's generally in good spirits. In fact, this evening he was super excited, laughing, and crawling all over the place. I hope that is a sign that he's on the mend.

Carla I hope he gets to feeling better soon. He is getting to look like a little boy and not a baby anymore.

Lynn Poor little guy - hope it clears up soon.

Steph oh no! i hear the rash is pretty mild, but the sores in his mouth don't sound pleasant at all.

on a more cheerful note, though-- he is a GORGEOUS little boy. i can't believe how much older he looks with those teeth!! i love how blue his eyes are, too.

Steph eek! i mean green! (i was thinking of a different baby when i said blue. but his eyes in that 2nd picture are really striking!)

Margie Poor baby.....I like that pensive look and then the happy face. Grandpa would probably say "Put some Balm Bag on it and it'll go away" the rash, that is.

Jo those eyes are downright ELECTRIC!

Amy Yay! Xander is feeling much better. We didn't have to break out the bag balm this time...haha.

I'm not sure what to call his eye color. Sometimes they look green, some times hazel, sometimes grey-blue. What the color is called, I love this eyes. I really caught him off guard with the camera this time. I think that is why the picture turned out so well.



Tiny Dancer



Octopus



Surfer Dude

Tiny dancer

My boy is foot loose these days. Whenever he hears some rhythmic noise, he start dancing. His form of dancing is kind of bumping up and down. I think he learned the from the PB&J Time dancing banana¹ and my attempt at mimicking the dancing banana. He danced when some music came on the TV, when he accidentally turned on the percussion accompaniment on my keyboard, and when daddy repeatedly presses the horn on his toy truck.

Octopus

I love this Octopus outfit on Xander. He's so cute. I guess pastel plaid is IN for boys: I started to pay attention to guy fashion now...even more so than my own. When I shop for Xander, I look at cute things. When I shop for myself, I look for comfort only.

I don't actually recall the last time I wore heels. I'm not a hot soccer mom or a MILF, and I'm ok with that.

Surfer Dude

Look Xander's got his own wet suit! We had fun in the kiddie pool again this weekend. This time it was plenty hot for swimming. We would have gone swimming in the big pool except I was afraid that chlorine would bother his rash.

I did run into a bit of a mystery though. On Saturday morning, I filled up the pool and set it out in the sun to warm up for later. We went out for lunch and shopping. Then, when we came home, I went out to test the water. Almost all the water was gone. It couldn't have evaporated that quickly. One explanation I can think of is that the dogs might have gotten into the pool and splashed the water out and even tipped it over. I didn't come home to wet dogs though. There wasn't a leak. The only other idea was that the hose acted as a siphon and sucked the water back out due to some heat or pressure differential. Hmmm...

Margie That looks like so much fun!

¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3ZAGBL6UBA>



Potty mouth

Ok, so Xander knows a word that I probably shouldn't have taught him. If you are sensitive to language you may not want to read further. So, I kind of got into the habit of saying "you want some boob, little man?" when I was about nurse Xander. That got reduced to "booboob?" Anyway, he says it now when he is about to nurse or if I'm wearing a low cut shirt. He's not to the point where he is randomly asking for "booboob" when he is hungry, but he is consistently saying it. So, yeah, mommy has a crass mouth and she's passed it on. I suppose now I should stop listening to Cosmo-Radio in the car, too.

Kristen I was talking to someone else the other day that called it that. I was mortified. :) It's such a beautiful thing...name it something else...please. :)

Amy Aw...it sounds pretty cute coming from Xander. Maybe not so cute from me. :-)

He actually said it to request nursing tonight. I was putting on his sleep sack and he definitely used to what comes next. He started saying "booboob" and patting my chest.

For some reason, maybe all the Autism news, I am super worried about language delays...not like worrying does any good. I'll take what I can get language-wise though. I've been trying sign language, but haven't been too successful with that yet.

Kristen I understand about the language delay scare. I have a friend who that happened too and her son was diagnosed. Very sad.

I'm doing the sign language too. Paige seems to understand the signs for "finished", "more", & "milk" but cannot do them back to me yet. Also verbally working on "dada" which of course, she almost has down and "mama" which we are still STRONGLY working on. :)

I'm so glad you have the nursing experience. Treasure it. I'm hoping #2 will be a good eater. :)

Jo Is "booboob" his first word, then?!

Handy Daddy

Heck with Handy Manny! Look what Handy Daddy did!

We used to have these faucets in our bathroom that were so short that they were practically useless. We wanted to be able to wash Xander's hands in the bathroom after a diaper change. It was impossible to get his hands under the old faucets without him laying down. Now, these new faucets are nice and high. We can lift him up to wash his hands under them much more easily. In addition, the knobs are much more easy to turn the water on/off while our hands are full (with squirming boy) than the old faucets. It turns out that these higher faucets work a lot better for us, too. They also look a lot prettier. Daddy did a GREAT job!

Carla Wow! I know who to call if I need a plumber. Does he do painting too?



Fear

When I was out for a girl's night a few weeks ago with some other mom's, the subject of fear came up in relation to new parenthood. We talked about how some parents, upon becoming parents, found all sorts of new fears. I have to agree. In fact, I would be interested in such scientific studies of the brain to show the impact of parenthood on brain development.

Here is my experience. I have always loved scary movies and books. I loved being scared. When I became pregnant with Xander, I remember going to see "I Am Legend" starring Will Smith. During the movie, I almost ran out of the theater. I had never experienced such a "flight" reaction before in my life. It's not that the movie was any more realistic or scary than anything that I had come across before. It was that my own brain was more sensitive to it. It's like my brain now had enough fear for two. It wasn't even a rational thought like "I need to protect my unborn child". It was a completely irrational "I need to RUN away."

Last night, after Xander went to bed, we watched a scary movie called "Mirrors" starring Keifer Sutherland. As I was watching, I kept thinking thinking and worrying about Xander. I had an overwhelming need to protect him. Outside of movies, I am more careful and paranoid about things that I never concerned myself with. I give strangers a second look when I used to be oblivious. I drive more cautiously. I worry pest control and diseases. One of the other mothers said her husband worried a lot about what would happen to his kids if he died so he became more concerned about his own life. All of this is instinctual, I believe. We would not survive as a species if mothers and fathers did not increase their fear for their kids. Some kids, like Xander, are pretty darn fearless. Even those kids who are super sensitive need someone to worry about them. I don't know if it really ever goes away or if it is a permanent brain change.

Having gone through this change though has given me so much insight into other people. I never understood why some people at work would make the decisions that they did. They always seemed to be so paranoid about losing jobs and I was so carefree about "Well, we'll just get another one if that happens". I was frustrated by people who had fears that didn't seem "rational" to me. I get it now. I feel a little bit bad for not being more empathetic to it before. Now, I even recognize a new generation of people getting frustrated with me for the same reason. - Ok, enough said for one ramble.

Carla I think your stuck with your worries for the rest of your life. Just because your kids grow up and move out, you don't stop worrying about them. Your dad and I were lucky that both of you were very mature and had made great career choices, but we still worry about major things that could or might happen. I sure am glad I am not a parent of a total loser, what a bummer that would be.

Steph i understand this completely. my fears shifted too once we had R. And things happening to children in movies impact me so much more than they ever would have before getting pregnant. There are a lot of movies that I haven't been able to sit through or watch in the last two years.

Kristen Oh yes, the fear factor is alive and well in our household. I cannot even take Paige to the gym's child care for the fear and guilt of having someone else take care of her. And that would be for only an hour! The insticnt of protection and love & nuture is overwhelming, but wonderful too.

Another thought that kind of goes along with this is altering the body. I have always thought that girl babies with pierced ears are adorable. But I cannot do it to Paige. I think, I wanted this person so much, grew her in my body for 39 weeks and care and nuture her now...how can I possibly permantly change this perfect little body? What will I do when she wants a tattoo?! Just trust your instincts and always love your baby, no matter how old he/she is. :)

Amy Oh I didn't think about tatoos and earrings. I hope Xander doesn't want to get either. Ouch!



Jury Duty

A couple of weeks ago, I received my first summons for jury duty. How exciting! I forgot about it for a while until this week. I called up the county jury office to ask for accommodations during jury selection and serving for breast pumping. There is an exemption for parents for children under 10 who had no alternative supervision, but I didn't think that really applied to me since Xander is in day care. Anyway, the jury office suggested that I go for an exemption. They really could not accommodate a breast pumping juror. I'm not sure if I should be relieved or upset for women's rights. In any case, I don't really have much energy to worry about it and I'm going for the exemption as she recommended. It is an interesting subject for thought.

Steph I got a questionnaire to determine my eligibility for serving on jury duty last week! i kind of hope I get summoned-- I've never been called for jury duty and I kind of want to see what it is like. we'll see! how funny that you got one around the same time. a month or so ago jamie got summoned for jury duty for the court where we used to live in Texas but we had to write and tell them we don't live there anymore.

Kristen Well, I understand both sides. Yes, it's nice to be exempt, but women absolutely should the right to do their civic duty. I know that TX seems to a RED state. I wonder if BLUE states have facilites for nursing mothers so they can serve? I also wonder if you let your local state legislator know about the situation if changes could be made?

Amy I thought it would be kind of interesting to serve. I'm sure I'll have another opportunity. I wonder if any other states or counties have a good set up worked out for nursing moms.



Swimming!!!

Grandma and Grandpa came all the way from Arkansas this weekend. We took Xander to the neighborhood pool for his first swim. We went early and it was maybe a little too chilly. No one else was at the pool though so it was pretty peaceful.

At first, Xander was a little apprehensive. He didn't want to get into the baby pool. The water was tool cold. The big pool was warmer though and he got into his boat.

Then, he had fun going back and forth between Daddy and Grandpa. Especially, when Grandpa made a boat engine noise. That was cool.

Jo How precious!!! Xander looks like he doesn't want to get too far away from the safety of Daddy's arms... Tom & Carla: isn't he getting so fun to play with?!

Margie That looks like fun....I am so jealous that we can't be there. I am looking forward to seeing Audrey soon as Joe, Dana, & Audrey are coming here for a visit.

Kristen That pool looks awesome! Motor boat noises are the best. :) Good job Grandpa. I get to sign Paige up for swim lessons next week. Now that will be an experience! Glad he liked his raft and the water. Fun fun!

Amy Swimming lessons sound awesome. Let me know how it goes. I recently saw this toddler girl who was just an amazing fish. Here parents were kind of crazy coaches though. As I watched them, I kind of felt like I was at seaworld and they were teaching her aquatic "behaviors". I almost expected to see them giving her fish to eat after picked up rings off the pool floor. Haha.

Carla Jo, I got a couple of his open mouth maul you kisses. Nothing better! He is so adorable!

Swinging

Xander likes swinging. He was a bit tired and started to fall asleep on the swing so we did not go very long.

Woof

Here are some of Xander's discernible spoken words so far:

- Mama
- Dada
- Dog (which comes out variably as da or ga)
- Booboo

I'm thinking his next word might be "Woof" because he gets a really big kick out of Copper barking. He also loved it when I read him "Doggies" by Sandra Boynton¹ and made all the variety of dog sounds. Thank you, Jack and Susan, for this fun book!

Big Surprise, Xander's first sign is....

MILK!!! Amy and I have been noticing him performing a recognizable sign. It is pretty close to the sign for 'milk', but of course his take on it is a little bit different. I asked his day care teachers and they confirmed that it looks like he is signing 'milk'. Xander's version uses both hands with his palms facing up. I think this one is mostly thanks to Ms. Diana and Ms. Ashley since I don't think he gets this one much at home.

Amy I am so proud of my boy. I have been trying to teach him "eat" and "more" at home, but he hasn't done those yet. I think I need to find out Ms. Diana and Ms. Ashley's tips.

¹ <http://www.amazon.com/Doggies-Boynton-Board-Books-Schuster/dp/0671493183>



Mama



Dada



Ga

Look--No hands!

Xander is getting really good at standing up without having to pull up. He just stands up in the middle of the room, usually with something in his hands. In the picture above, he took two steps before falling over into the couch. He's getting quite good at cruising and walking with walker-toys. I'd say he's officially toddling!

Oh, btw, these are 18month size clothes on him! His legs are quite 18 month sized yet, but his torso and arms are there.

Lynn That's really awesome! WTG Xander!

Jo MY WALKIN' MAN!!! I've had similar problems buying clothes for Jonah. I would really love to buy some of the cute matching shirt & pants outfits (especially those darling 3-piece suits they sell around Easter), but his top & bottom have always been different sizes! He's now in a 3T top but still a 24 month pant. Seems like it would be a good idea for retailers to keep this, apparently common, phenomena in mind when displaying suits for kids.

Amy Hey Jo, did they ever tell you Jonah's percentiles in growth?

The whole clothes industry has a lot of practical problems. Unfortunately, they get away with it because it so hard to resist buying some of the stuff...it is just too cute.

Kristen WoW! Big Boy! Fun, fun. :)





Little Criminal

Nothing is safe from this little explorer. He can now get into everything at home including the cabinets. We put little magnetic childproofing locks on the cabinet with soap in it. Unfortunately, we already lost the little special magnetic opener required to by pass the childproof lock. Shoot!

Kristen Oh yes, we did the same last week. We left the tupperware and pots/pans without the safety locks so she actually could explore and play. Still need to do the bathroom tho. :)



Blue jello

are you trying to poison me, Mommy? Blue food? Really?

Oh, hey! This is pretty good.

Mommy's Blue Jello Recipe

2 packets unflavored jello
1 cup water
1 cup pear juice (just juice, no additives)
A few drops Blue Food Coloring



Memory

Xander's little memory is growing. Today, after his bath, he went over and grabbed the bottle of baby lotion. He remembered that it is what I put on him after a bath. He's also remembering to run away from mommy when she is holding a clean diaper or clothes. Nothing is more boring or un-fun then getting dressed. You can't catch me, Mommy!

Poor Peanut

Xander was very bad twice today. He was playing with Peanut. He was grabbing on Peanuts face and giving me open mouth kisses. Then, he nibbled on Peanut's ear. Poor Peanut yelped, but just laid there like a good dog (no retaliation). We removed Xander from the situation and then gave Peanut extra love and attention.

Carla Tell Peanut good dog for me, he is so good with Xander. Looks like Xander might be heading into the I like to bite things phase. Not sure why toddlers do it, maybe they are just bored with the toys they usually bite and want to try something new. Most of them respond when they get negative feedback.

Step, step, step, boom

Today, Xander spent a lot of time wobbling around. He would stand up, step a few times in place, and fall. It's a good thing he's not too far off the ground. He's got a good technique for standing up and sitting down. He always seems to do it with some object in his hand. Do you think the object helps? Is it like a tight-rope walker's pole? Maybe it is just reassuring to have something in hand.

Carla I always thought it gave them confidence, since they first learn to hold on to something to stand up. Sounds like it won't be long and he will take off!

Steph that's an interesting hypothesis, carla. i wonder if that's it! r did this as well. i thought it was adorable.

Amy Yesterday, he did it by lacing his fingers together in front of him (holding on to himself).

Splash and bubbles

I took Xander swimming with one of my friends today. We had a blast. I would tell Xander "kick, kick, kick" and he would kick his legs. Then, I'd tell him "splashy, splashy" and he would splash with his hands. I don't think that he wanted to leave the pool, but I was tired and hungry.

He's now a big-splasher, too. He used to just gently splash. Now, he knows how to stick his hands WAY up in the air over his head and bring them down for a big splash. He does this big-splashing in the bath tub and makes a huge wet mess.

Xander is enjoying some bubbles in his baths also. The other night, I put in quite a bit of soap and made lots of bubbles. He was staring at some bubbles that were stuck to the side of the tub. I said "look at those bubbles." He turned around looked me right in the face and said "Bubba". Today, Xander also thought he would be a jokester in the tub. He pushed the soap bottle off the side to the floor. I laughed and picked it up. Then he started to push everything off the side and laugh. My little comedian thinks it is funny to make mommy laugh.

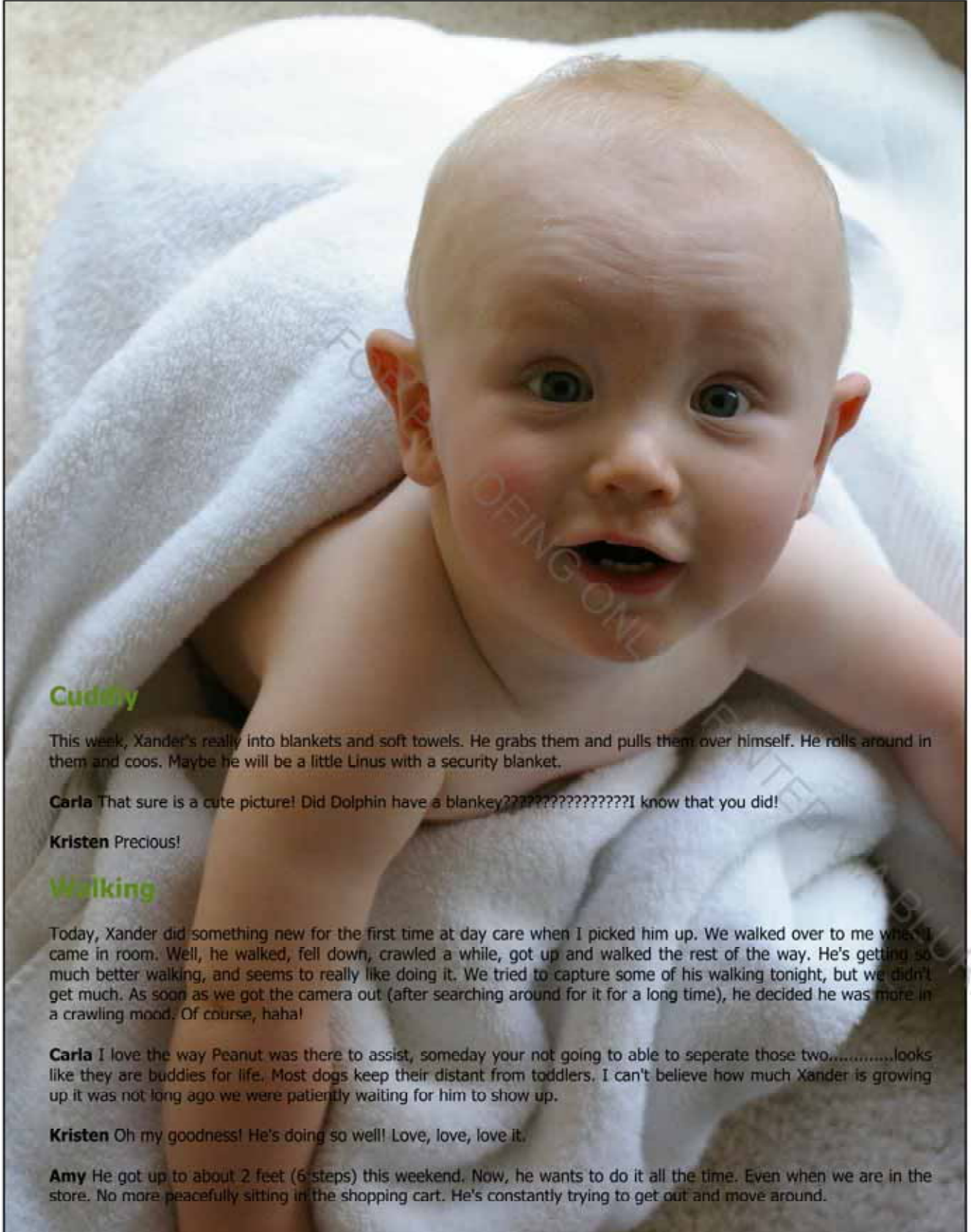
Kristen Such a smart boy!

This one is for you...chomp!

Xander has just started his first gift giving. This weekend, he was offering me food: cheez-its and cooked sweet potato cubes. What a sweet boy sharing with mommy. While I was trying to put him to bed last night, he offered me his pacifier. I took his pacifier and pretended to suck on it. He thought that was hilarious.

As a side note, I was using the pacifier because my breasts were worn out(hurting) from gnawing. The little guy bit me so hard this weekend, and I've been a bit sore since. He's just now got his first molar coming through on the bottom right. As I understand it, the molars can be a bit more painful than the front teeth (whatever they are called, bicuspid or something...I can't remember). So, he is chewing like crazy. Just chew on inanimate objects, ok, Xander? Please! Ouch!





Cuddly

This week, Xander's really into blankets and soft towels. He grabs them and pulls them over himself. He rolls around in them and coos. Maybe he will be a little Linus with a security blanket.

Carla That sure is a cute picture! Did Dolphin have a blanket?????????????I know that you did!

Kristen Precious!

Walking

Today, Xander did something new for the first time at day care when I picked him up. We walked over to me when I came in room. Well, he walked, fell down, crawled a while, got up and walked the rest of the way. He's getting so much better walking, and seems to really like doing it. We tried to capture some of his walking tonight, but we didn't get much. As soon as we got the camera out (after searching around for it for a long time), he decided he was more in a crawling mood. Of course, haha!

Carla I love the way Peanut was there to assist, someday your not going to able to seperate those two.....looks like they are buddies for life. Most dogs keep their distant from toddlers. I can't believe how much Xander is growing up it was not long ago we were patiently waiting for him to show up.

Kristen Oh my goodness! He's doing so well! Love, love, love it.

Amy He got up to about 2 feet (6 steps) this weekend. Now, he wants to do it all the time. Even when we are in the store. No more peacefully sitting in the shopping cart. He's constantly trying to get out and move around.



Traveling

Next week, we are going to take our first plane flight with Xander. I am kind of worried about how it will go. There is so much "stuff" that we have to bring along (stroller, diaper bag, sippy cups, bibs, snacks, toys, and books). Then, I worry about how things will go at the airport and on the plane. Anyone have tips for traveling with a kid Xander's age?

At least, Dolphin and I are traveling together. One of my coworkers told me about a trip she took when her daughters were 6 and 19 months old. She was by herself and ended up getting stranded at an airport. She had to spend the night there sleeping on the floor with her two daughters. That kind of experience would have driven me to tears for sure. We are looking forward to seeing Xander's grandma Jo and Adam's family in Colorado. We're also really glad to be getting out of TX. This week the weather has been over 100 degrees every day. I think that means we need to go swimming with Xander tomorrow!

Monkey and Puppy

We were shopping/researching a new car seat when I saw this outfit at Babys 'r' Us. It's SO cute. The shirt fits nicely but the pants are way too long. I love the camo pants though so I rolled them up. When I put it on Xander, he stared and patted his tummy. I think he likes the monkey, too.

Shopping for car seats is a pain in the butt. Sometimes it is really hard to understand the difference between one model and another. I think we have a little bit of time before Xander outgrows the infant seat, but maybe not much longer. I think he will with the height limit first.

At another shopping adventure this weekend, we got Xander this little dog. (I know...such a spoiled boy!) It looks just like our real dogs. We're still trying to think of a name. Dolphin suggested "Copnut", a combination of "Copper" and "Peanut". Any other suggestions?

Fun with stickers

We received some free stickers in the mail. I don't recall what advertisement the stickers were attached with, but I thought Xander would like the stickers. We stuck them on our faces and hands and then looked into the mirror. Xander thought they were pretty entertaining.

Champion Eater

Xander is such a hungry boy these days. One night this week, he ate a whole banana, and a whole, adult-sized bowl of pasta and veggies in one meal!

In the process of trying to find good finger foods for Xander, I have rediscovered frozen fruits and veggies. We have a whole freezer full of different kinds. For veggies, I put a couple of different kinds in the microwave and add herbs or Parmesan cheese. Right now, we have peas, green beans, broccoli romanesco, carrots, and bell peppers. We also have some corn and mushrooms, but I don't think he could eat those very well yet. I think needs some more molars first. For fruits, I thaw them and sometimes add all spice, ginger, or cinnamon. We have blueberries (very messy), strawberries, mangoes, and peaches. Yummy!

We also have a few proteins like quorn, morning star "chicken", and fish. I'm so happy that someone else in the household will eat fish with me!

I messed up one of Xander's meals today though. I added Thai seasoning to his veggies. I tried the seasoning first to make sure it wasn't spicy. It mostly tasted like garlic and cilantro. I must have not tasted it enough. Xander got a really spicy bite was quick to let me know. I gave him some cold applesauce to sooth his mouth and he was happy again. Whew!



Not just for safety

I have discovered that childproofing is not just for safety, it helps with cleanliness also. Xander loves to get into the kitchen cabinets and pull everything out. I imagine if we childproofed all the cabinets, we'd have a lot cleaner kitchen. On the other hand, I don't mind that he wants to explore all the safe items in the cabinets. Maybe I'll take some time to teach him how to put things away so we can still have fun.

Now that he is quite mobile, he wants is ok spending a little more time away from us. He volunteers to go into other rooms and leave us behind. So, evidently, there are things more interesting to life than being held by mommy. Of course, he is passionately attracted to some things that we do not want him to get into and we have to constantly redirect him. He loves the doggy door, tackling Peanut, and the dog water bowl. He knows that there is something special about these things with mommy and daddy. Right before he heads towards them, he always looks back at us.

Carla They are so bright! We so often underestimate what they understand.

Dancing baby and reading

No, I'm not referring to the old CG-generated baby on "Ally McBeal". I have mentioned before that Xander is a little dancer. Any kind of rhythm gets him bouncing.

Recently, I was watching an interview of Oliver Sacks about his book Musicophilia¹. He said that you can lose music just like you lose language from a stroke, but you cannot lose rhythm. Rhythm is deeply embedded in the brain. He also mentioned that it impossible for any other species to dance rhythmically. It is a uniquely human brain characteristic.

After watching this interview, I totally want to read this book now. The topic is so fascinating. I love books about the brain. I still have to finish some other books though first. In fact, I'm currently reading another brain book called Bozo Sapiens². I don't seem to find enough time to read everything that I want.

¹ <http://www.amazon.com/Musicophilia-Tales-Music-Oliver-Sacks/dp/1400040817>

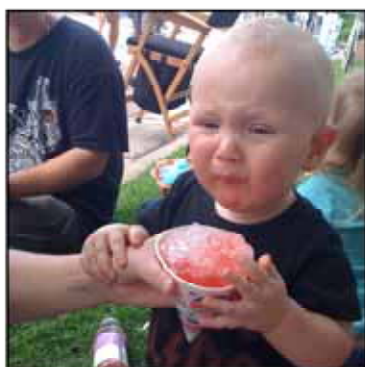
² http://www.amazon.com/Bozo-Sapiens-Why-Err-Human/dp/1596914009/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1246401747&sr=1-1



Something I am too BIG for?



Pay no attention to the legs behind the curtain.



Sugar > Brain Freeze

Tiny Town

For the 4th of July holiday, we flew to Denver. On our first day there, Dolphin suggested going to Tiny Town¹. He going by it in his youth, but had never been. At first, I didn't want to go because I didn't think the place would allow Xander to touch the houses. After we looked at the website, we found out that kids are allowed to go right up to the buildings and that convinced me.

We had a good time. Tiny Town is in a steep valley in the foothills of the Rockies. It was nice and cool. We road the train, looked at the houses, and played on the playground a bit. I thought it was really fun and very affordable, too.

Lowry Air & Space Museum

During our stay in Denver, we met up with Dolphin's old buddy and his family for a tour of the "Wings Over the Rockies Air Museum".² It was quite fun. There was a nice little play area with toys for Xander to explore.

I laughed at this picture after I took it. It sure looks like Xander has some big legs for a little boy.

After the museum, we had an excellent Mediterranean meal at Ya Hala³. I had the vegetarian combination and it was the best tabbouleh I'd ever had. Xander tried some of the hummus and he really liked it. He sort of sucked it off of the pita bread pieces.

Brain Freeze

On our hottest day in Denver, we headed over to the Cherry Creek Arts Festival⁴. I was hoping for some food-on-a-stick. Surprisingly, there wasn't any, but they did have snow cones. Although Xander's first reaction isn't pretty, he quickly figured out that he liked it. He was mostly just sucking on the ice part. This is really the first cold thing that he liked. It was REALLY hot so I don't blame him.

Jo That's gotta be my favorite shot!

¹ <http://www.tinytownrailroad.com/>

² <http://www.wingsmuseum.org/>

³ <http://www.yahalagrill.com/>

⁴ <http://www.cherryarts.org/RelId/33637/ISvars/default/Home.htm>



Peekaboo

Xander is totally into peekaboo right now. He initiates the game by hiding. In our hotel room in Denver, he kept going over to these drapes. He would hid behind them, and then pull them out of the way and laugh. Such a silly boy!

He also got a lot of enjoyment from playing with the corded phone in the hotel room. I was surprised how well baby-safe the hotel room was. Not every place we visited in Denver was so safe. Auntie Georgia's house was a total hazard. It was fully of choking hazards and breakable things. Mommy decided that Xander needed a stroller walk during that visit...for her own sanity.

Margie Thank you for all the interesting tidbits & pictures about your Denver trip. WE had a quiet 57th Anniversary..ordered Pizza & wings for our treat. On the 4th we watched 2 music & fireworks shows and listened to neighbors fireworks.

Amy Yum, pizza and wings. Sounds great! Happy Anniversary!

Denver Children's Museum

Denver's Children's Museum is awesome!! We spent about 2 hours in the young children's area. It was fully of fun things for Xander to explore. After driving around a lot, it was great to give Xander some free space to run around and play. The only thing we had to worry about was making sure that he didn't bother the other kids. Xander loves other kids and will go right up to them to explore the other kids. Not all kids want to be explored.

Also during our trip to Denver, Xander got a chance to play with some older kids and he loved it. I think we need to get Xander an older brother...haha. He was crawling all over 8 year old Aidan. When Aidan had to go in the other room for a bit, Xander was searching all over for him. He couldn't get enough.

Jo DOLPHIN! GET YOUR FOOT OFFA YER WIFE!



Close call

We took this picture at Bellview Park where we let Xander play in the mulch. He had fun with it, but we had to keep him from eating it. It was the park where we were supposed to see fireworks for the 4th, but we were rained out. So, we went on the 5th to enjoy the park facilities.

There was a nice little petting zoo with ponies, calves, pot belly pigs, goats, lambs, and an assortment of farm fowl. It was a nice place to visit, but we had a close call. On the way to the petting zoo, we had to cross over the kiddie-train tracks. I was carrying Xander. As we crossed the tracks, my foot got caught in the tracks and we went tumbling over. Fortunately, for Xander, mom instincts kicked in. I imagined to completely protect him from anything. I, on the other hand, didn't fair so well. I tore a whole though my jeans and scraped my knee. I also scraped my hand. I survived though. I would have felt much worse if Xander had been hurt.









First Thai Food

Xander had his first Thai food today at Madam Mams. We both ordered spicy items Pad Ped Nor Mai and Panang, but a non-spicy dish for Xander. I don't think that penne are exactly authentic Thai, but whatever. He loved to suck the sauce off of the noodles. One waiter came by and suggested that we take a picture, so we did. Messy, messy!

First airplane

I was pretty nervous about flying with Xander. I filled my carryon bag with books and toys to help keep Xander entertained. I used them all on the trip out. He was awake the whole time. The top two entertainment attractions were the little boy in the row in front of us and Xander's busy book. On the way back, Xander was screaming before the flight as he was way overtired. We had to wake up super early for the flight. However, as soon as we got him in his seat, he went out and slept the whole trip back. He didn't seem to have any trouble with his ears, which was surprising. Given that he and I both have some congestion, I thought we might be in trouble. We did try to keep him swallowing during the ascent and descent.

Paying for Xander's seat instead of carrying as a lap child turned out to be pretty good. We had the extra room for Xander to crawl around while he was awake. We also had our hands free while he was sleeping. Also, you don't have to have any special identification to prove age if you purchase a seat. Of course, we didn't find that out until after we went through the trouble of getting him a birth certificate. Well, we needed to get one anyway.

Jo I'm so glad Xander conked out on the flight home. He had a very busy week! Thanks so much for the visit...I'm still smiling!





Feeding John

We have this head statue that Dolphin's mom made. I think it is supposed to be a Beatle, maybe John Lennon? I put it in on a lower shelf. It's really heavy. I could just imagine Xander bumping the shelf and it falling on his head. So, the lower shelf seemed safer to me. Yesterday, Xander tried to feed cheerios to the John head. It was pretty cute.

I wonder if I should get Xander a baby doll for his first birthday. Maybe he would want to feed a baby some cheerios. It might be a handy teaching tool to help to teach him to be gentle and nurturing.

Jo It's so funny you think it was supposed to be John! I think I made it before I was into the Beatles, but John was always my favorite Beatle. I remember putting the "Beatle" haircut on it "cuz I thought it looked cool...& maybe to piss off my art teacher a little... I think I just made it to look like a "cute boy" that I would want for a pre-teen crush! Do get Xander a doll that he could interact with. I was always a bit of a tomboy when I was little (now too, I guess...) & was never into dolls that much, but I do remember having fun with dolls that I could pretend

to take care of. My favorite was a doll that I could pretend to take care of when she was hurt: it came with a cast to put on her arm, band-aids for owies, & even stick-on dots to pretend she had chicken pox! Anyway, there are plenty of options for dolls for boys these days--doesn't have to be a G.I. Joe anymore. I'll bet there are some good ones at that toy store I always go to when I am there...Tetra Toys?

Kristen Cute! Paige feeds everyone Cheerios too. Even the dog. So sweet. What you you getting him for his bday? I'm debating between a wagon, rocking horse and an easel.

Amy Haha...I like Paul better. I think a doctor playing doll sounds cool too. Kristen, those give ideas sound really great. We're undecided on the birthday gift, but I think we are going to do strawberry shortcake for dessert. Xander really likes strawberries.

Kristen Oh, I'm doing the real smash bday cake thing. She'll probably get an allergy, just because I haven't given her anything that causes allergies yet. But it's so darn cute! And I want the pictures. Such a bad mommy. :)



Denver

I posted some more pictures from our Denver trip here¹. I had used some of those recyclable cameras and it takes about a week to get the digital CD back.

I noticed in one picture we caught Xander using a sippy cup. He's finally figured out the whole tip-the-head back motion to get the liquid to flow out.

Margie Enjoyed all your pictures of Denver. Looks like you all had a good time. We have spent many good times in Colorado when Sam and then Dan were in the AF Academy. Also our last trip when we did a lot of "jeeping".

Walking

Xander is getting so good at walking. He is walking across rooms. Staying up even though the dogs that weigh 3 to 4 times his own weight brush by him. He is walking outside on different textures. His most recent challenge was walking up hill in the grass. There were many falls but he finally made it up the small hill. Yay, Xander!

I guess we're going to breakdown soon and start putting him some shoes once in a while. I like my little barefoot boy, but I think he needs some practice with shoes on, too. Fortunately, we have a long summer ahead of us still.

Kristen Robeez! (Or "faux" robiez that are less expensive.) They protect their feet but still give them that barefoot feel. However, I must say, I did look at Striderite today. :)

Margie Way to go, Xander....how about a video? And by the way, we only live about 2 hours from the Nashville airport?!?

Jo This was the first real shoe we got for Jonah when he was learning to walk...note: the "squeaky" part comes OUT so parents can regain their sanity...!

<http://www.comfykid.com/Pipsqueaks.htm>

Amy Thanks for the shoe recommendations! We may need them soon. Xander this weekend switched from preferring crawling to primarily walking.

Carla Buying shoes for little ones is not fun. Both you and Christopher required wide widths. Those flintstone feet are hard to fit sometimes. I always ended up with striderites. I am sure there are more options out there now days.

¹ <http://picasaweb.google.com/xander.hawkins/Denver?authkey=Gv1sRgCJftj42s-JjbvAE#>



Sunday July 12

More on walking

Ok, just a little bit more of an update on the walking. Today, Xander seems to have decided that walking is his primary method of locomotion. He walked all over the place today, and even started go fast. Of course, he gets going to fast and then falls over. I know...I need to get some video going.

I've also noticed that now that he gets the walking thing, he wants to moving around all the time. No more content Xander in the shopping cart. He wants to be running around the store, too. He's also figured out this, I want to be put down thing. If you pick him up under his arms and he wants to be moving around, he throws his hand straight up trying to slip out of yours. I think we're in trouble now!

Play Date

Xander had fun playing with (next to) our neighbor Angela. Angela is about 5 weeks older than Xander. She is the cutest little girl. Definitely, sugar, spice, and everything nice. Xander loved playing with all of her toys and exploring her house. They exchanged a few pats and grabs at each other's face, but we're mostly more interested in exploring their surroundings. John, Angela's dad, captured this video of Xander walking. Nothing gets Xander walking faster than an opportunity to play with an iPhone. Dolphin never lets him play with his iPhone and my cell phone apparently is too boring, so Xander was so excited to see another iPhone.

Jo I love it!!! (especially the Jaws attack accompaniment..)





Uh-oh, now how to I get out?

Little Xander is quite the climber these days. He managed to climb into his toy box (a.k.a. a laundry basket). He can sometimes climb onto the couch if there is a dog nearby to use as a stepping stool (poor Peanut).

I also keep having to keep things higher and higher for him not to reach. He's get so tall, and he is very good at reaching up and grabbing things off shelves. Thankfully, he's not yet tall enough for the kitchen counters.

Going to Mars

Dolphin signed up for Xander to go to Mars.

Jo EEEEEKKKKK!!!!



Animals Talk to Me

I pulled out this book from great grandma, one that she read to me when I was little. Xander loves "Animals Talk to Me".¹ Our copy is copyright 1966. He really likes the pictures. I like them, too. They are very well drawn. Of course, he likes the dog picture the best. It's a long dachshund that takes up TWO pages.

Lights Off

I let Xander turn off the light in his room with the light switch. It took a bit of effort for him. Once he did though, he thought it was HILARIOUS. He was so proud of himself. It's going to be a long time though before he can reach them without assistance.

Jo But be assured--he will try! Finding "the power of the lights" is quite an attraction!

¹ http://www.amazon.com/ANIMALS-TALK-ME-Sue-Mason/dp/B000QA8G2I/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1247887877&sr=8-1



First food allergy

I'm sad to say that Xander has encountered his first allergic reaction to food. It's such a good wonderful food, too. :(Yesterday, I decided it was time to see if he could have some peanut butter. I put the tiniest amount on a cracker and gave it to him. He chewed on it a bit to taste it and then spit it out and threw it at the dog. So, I just gave him a couple more plain crackers. After a few minutes, he started getting bit red hives all on his chin, neck, head, and sides. He also started blowing raspberries so I think his lips felt funny, too. His eyes also turned a little red. He was perfectly happy though and fortunately, there didn't seem to be any signs of breathing problems or anaphylaxis. That would have been scary.

I nursed him a bit and then gave him a bath to wash off any trace of the peanut butter-saliva he had drooled on himself. After about an hour, he was completely back to normal. There was no sign that anything had happened.

We'll have to share this with his doctor at is upcoming 1 year test. I was so worried that Xander would be allergic to peanut butter because I love it so much. What a bummer! Supposedly, some kids can grow out of though so I hope that is the case. It's so yummy good. For now, I bought some sunflower seed butter to try instead. It's still pretty tasty stuff, but not the same.

On a positive note, there's only a few more common allergy foods to try for Xander: shellfish, chocolate, cow's milk, and tree nuts. He's kind of had a little bit a chocolate, so I doubt that will be a problem. I think he might be ok on tree nuts, too. I had given him a banana nut muffin that I had picked the nuts out of (choking hazard). Also, as I had a little cow's milk while he was nursing without reaction, he's probably ok on that, too. We made it past soy, wheat, gluten, and pretty much every fruit and vegetable imaginable.

Supposedly, people with peanut allergies can also have reactions to other legumes, but he seems fine with lentils, beans, and peas. I think he's also probably had some foods that were "manufactured" near peanuts and nothing happened. So, I guess it could be worse.

From what I have read, allergies tend more common when 1 or both parents had them. Dolphin has pretty bad airborne allergies(cats, cedar, pollen). I have a contact allergy (chlorine). So, it seems to be true for us. Poor Xander.

Jo Bummer! I'm with you, Amy...there are so many wonderful peanut products...maybe you can introduce a little bit of peanut stuff later.

Almond butter is also quite good.

Carla Glad that you got thru that without too much of a scare, but I remember the things that would go thru my head when you and Chris would bump your head,etc. You often hear of the horrible reactions some people have to peanuts. I did hear a report yesterday that said most people who think they are allergic to something really aren't, hopefully Xander will be able to enjoy some peanut butter cookies with mommy some day.

Amy If you can believe it, I think Dolphin was the more worried one. I just felt bad because I was the one who did it TO him by giving him the PB.

Kristen With my background, I would recommend staying away from the sunflower butter too until you talk with his pediatrician. It the proteins in soy, nuts, eggs, & cow's milk that cause it. Their guts are still "loose" and these proteins "leak" through and can cause an immune reaction creating the allergy. I'd wait until his gut gets a bit more mature before introducing any more nuts. The ped might do an allergy test too. Good luck. Call me or email if you have more questions. I have a ppt that I did a while ago about this....will look at it and send it to you.

Amy Thanks for the info, Kristen. Very interesting stuff! Peanut allergies are related to parasite defense. I love reading about that kind of stuff...great book "Survival of the Sickest".

I hope Xander does grow out of it. I keep reading about how 20-25% do.

Heather, thanks for the recommendation on Nutella. I LOVE Nutella. Fortunately, peanut allergy doesn't necessarily mean tree nut or hazelnut allergy so I am hopeful.

Water playscape

After 30 days of triple digit weather, we needed to cool down. We went to a park near our house where they have a water playscape. Basically, it's an area with a variety of fountains. I didn't get many pictures because I wanted to join in the fun instead of standing by with the camera.

The water felt really great. Xander was a little bit afraid and was close to Dolphin or me most of the time. He got really excited watching some of the big kids playing in the water. I wish they had the fountains active at night. It would be nice to play in them and not have to wear so much sunscreen.





Mr. Pointy's words

No, I'm not referring to Buffy's wooden stake. Xander is turning into Mr. Pointy. He has started a little bit of pointing at stuff. He mostly wants to point at things that he wants to point at of course. A ball, a balloon, a toy car. So, that's what we do. We point at things and then mommy says something about whatever we point at. Sometimes, Xander says something about these things, too.

In the bath, we talked about his splash ball ("baaaaw"). We read a book about a wolfing howling ("aaaaoooooo"). On a play mat, we talked about a kitty cat ("t-t"). Sometimes daddy leaves or comes into the room, and we yell "da-da!" Many, many, many times a day we talk about "ma-ma" when Xander wants to be picked up or nursed or get a diaper change or get cuddled or is scared. Sometimes when mommy or daddy leave or try to put Xander in the car seat, he tries to tell us no ("nnn-nnn").

He's also starting to use some hand motions a little more correctly. "Bye-bye" is reserved for people that he doesn't care if they leave...feel fortunate if you don't get this one because that means he is sad that you are leaving. Clapping is sometimes his version of "more". Milk sign is now used for any kind of drink. One hand out means he "wants" something. "High-five" is mommy's way to stop getting hit and give Xander a safer target.

Carla It sounds as if you are really enjoying watching him develop. I think that is why I always adored the toddler years. They are just little sponges that want to explore and experience everything.

Amy Yes, he is a total sponge. Someday he is going to be a know-it-all and battle with his dad....I can't wait!

Carla So, are you hinting that this trait came from Daddy!

Jo :D!

To everything there is a purpose

The past couple of weeks, Xander has demonstrated that he understands what some things are for. He tries to put the cover over the doggy door. This is probably because everything he goes over by the door, I cover it up. He tries to put lids on things; although, those darn twisty lids are pretty complicated. He takes things in and out of containers...and cabinets...mostly out though to make the biggest mess. He is fascinated exploring bags and purses. Evidently, though, crayons are still tastier than they are for drawing. Yuck!

Sneaky, sneaky

Xander is all about feeding himself with spoons these days. If he is really hungry, he might let me feed him for a few bites before he wants to take over. In order to increase the odds of him getting food into his mouth, I make sure that whatever food is thick enough to stay stuck to the spoon at all angles. He likes to wave the spoon around a bit before making into the mouth so the food needs to be pretty sticky to survive that trip.

I even managed to get him to feed himself his medicine tonight. He's taking some antibiotic for another ear infection. I mixed it into some applesauce. It was infinitely less of a battle than trying to syringe squirt it into his mouth. He hates that!

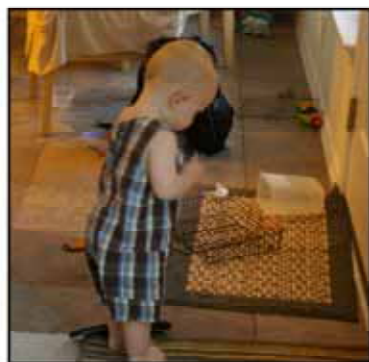
Big foot

We went shoe shopping this weekend. Checkout Xander's new big boy shoes. He's managed to walk in them though it is much harder than walking bare foot. It's also harder for him to stand up with them on.

I wanted to get sandals, but we ended up getting this pair of leather shoes and a pair of lighter weight tennis shoes. We'll keep one pair at school and one at home. These shoes were SO expensive. More than most of my shoes cost! I hope they last a little while, but somehow, I doubt that will be the case.

Carla Peanut is so patient with Xander, your lucky.....where's Copper licking up crumbs

Jo Tender feet require expensive shoes...Don't even want to tell you what I just paid for comfortable shoes to work in!





Let's check out those gums



I can almost reach it

What do you think about my future?

A future dentist or vet?

Or maybe a plumber or mechanic?

Friendly Play

We were eating lunch at a restaurant the other day. Xander had fun playing (sort of) with another little boy that was seated just a few tables away. They were looking, waving, and laughing at each other from about their respective high chairs. It was so cute to watch. I think the boy was a tiny bit older than Xander, but sometimes it is hard to tell. You definitely have to ask.

Dolphin I actually thought he was a bit younger :)

More "dooks"

We bought some more "dook", as Xander says, at the bookstore today. I'd prefer to go to the library, but Xander is way too rough on books. At least it was a used book store. I just wonder why the used baby books are in such good shape.

Anyhow, at the store, Xander was pulling books off the shelves left and right. It was hard to keep him from making a total mess and still look at books at the same time.

I was looking for some good picture board books without the flips. The flips can be a bit frustrating because Xander likes to rip them out of the book. I didn't really find a whole lot, but we did end up picking out 3 board books. One was about animals, one about babies, and one about gardening (that Grandma Carla would like).

I have to admit that the books are a little bit for me. Xander is perfectly fine looking at the same books over and over again, but I was getting bored. Now we have slightly more variety to add to the rotation.

Margie Wish I could be there to read books to him. I remember how much I enjoyed doing it with you, Amy.

I'm ambidextrous



Forkin'

Well, my camera is broken because some little guy pulled it off the fireplace mantel and crashed it on the floor. Fortunately, no one was injured but the camera is temporarily out of service. So, I've resorted to cell phone pictures. Blah!

Xander had a go with eating off a fork. Well, he had a spoon in one hand for mushy carrots and a fork for the chicken. I poked the chicken for him. He hasn't figured that part out yet. He's using one of the bowls that great grandma and grandpa gave to us for the baby shower. I really like them as they are nice and shallow...and plastic so that Xander doesn't break them when he throws them on the floor.

Kristen Those look like cool flatware. Big handles to hold. Sounds like he's eating things that can be stabbed! Wow! Paige is still only tolerating pureed food. She gags when we try solids. It really is not a pretty site. I did see some really cool bowls at Homegoods that had suction cups on the bottom. Very good idea.

Dolphin We have some suction cup bowls and they work okay on a smooth surface. We recently got rid of the highchair tray and just push him up to the kitchen table, and the wood is rough enough that it doesn't stick too well. Xander is kinda hard on stuff though, so YMMV. Xander is pretty much eating anything that doesn't take molars. Pasta of all sorts, grilled cheese sandwiches, cheese-its, fish sticks, string cheese, quorn and real chicken nuggets and lots of fruit and veggies. It is a lot less messy if we can get him finger food since he doesn't let you spoon food into his mouth too much these days. He knows the spoon goes in the bowl but he doesn't really know how to get the stuff on the spoon (or into his mouth).

Margie Well, Amy, I remember what a good eater you were.....you ate steak at a young age and even salads.

Carla No Hamburgers! Make it a fish sandwich which would drive her Daddy crazy when we traveled and we had to wait on her fish sandwich. LOL

Amy One hamburger a year...that's enough for me. They just aren't that good! I must be food snob in addition to a beverage snob. I think Xander's success with food has been helped by those early teeth. He actually chewed the chicken last night and swallowed. It took a long time, but it was oh-so-grown up! He's got 11 teeth now including 3 molars. I can't wait to give him some salad. It really is annoying to have to make cooked vegetables when it is 100 degrees out.

Fun stuff

John, our neighbor, sent us this cool website Zero to Three¹. It has a whole bunch of fun activities. We'll definitely be doing some of them with Xander. He is such a curious boy.

This one looks nice and messy:

"Make bubble art. Mix about a 1/2 cup of bubble solution with about 1-2 tablespoons of washable tempera paint. Hang a piece of paper outside (use binder clips to hang on a fence) and have your child blow bubbles at the paper. An alternative is for a grown-up to put a plastic straw into the bubble-paint solution and blow, forming lots of bubbles (careful, don't swallow). Children can then press the paper into the bubbles that are overflowing out of the bowl."

Dolphin I was just reading an article the other day about making colored bubbles (that won't leave a stain). Not so good for art, but a little less messy You can buy em (<http://www.zubbles.com/>) or make your own (<http://chemistry.about.com/od/chemistryhowtoguide/ht/colorbubble.htm>).

Jo good times!!! I wouldn't worry about the mess..especially if you do it outside. Great thing about kids (& clothes): they're washable!

¹ http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_key_play_year&AddInterest=1154#august





The Test

Here the items that Xander needs to do to move out up to the toddler room at school:

- Responds to simple 1-step instructions
- Demonstrates simple signing and language
- Puts small objects through a slot into a container
- Drinks from a cup without a sippy-lid
- Has the ability to get in, out and sit in a chair without support
- Is walking steadily, can carry large object
- Plays independently of other children, occasionally interacting with them
- Transitions to a new environment exhibiting stability and self-assurance

And, of course, there needs to be room in the the toddler room. I think he is on his way for some of these things and probably needs a little work in others. I'm excited for Xander to be the little fish in the big pond again...there will be so much new to learn in the toddler room. I have no idea when kids typically move up age wise. It's probably better that I don't know. I'd probably just obsess about making sure Xander gets there "on-time".

Carla Wonder where you got that obsessing trait? LOL

Jo Go Xander-bean Go!!

All that Petsmart Dog Training is coming in handy

Sorry for the bad picture quality. We can't seem to keep Xander away from the dogs when they are eating. He likes to go after the food and also play in the water bowl. Our dogs are not food aggressive. We learned the training from Petsmart doggy school on how to prevent that. I still try to keep him away from them while they are eating.

Apparently dog food is a child choking hazard from what I have read. Fortunately, our dogs don't leave leftover food lying around for Xander to get a hold of. One day Xander did get a hold of piece while they were eating though. He tasted it and then spit it out. Yuck!

Carla Many a child has tasted or even eaten dog food! LOL

Birthday Shopping

We went shopping for Xander's birthday present today...with Xander. I think it will still be a surprise for him. Anyhow, while Dolphin was paying, Xander and I checked out some things at the front of the store. There was this little tricycle that he tried pushing around. It was SO tiny. Then, I sat him in this firetruck in the front. I didn't have quarters to turn it on, but it was still fun.

BTW, we ended up getting Xander this fold up fort set. It is made up of tunnels and rooms that he can crawl in. I hope he likes it.

Utensil Mania

Xander is totally into utensils this week. He likes to have a utensil in his hand even if he isn't using it. In fact, he threw a fit at a restaurant last night until he could hold my fork and eat off my plate. (He liked the salad BTW.)

He also practiced eating with a spoon this afternoon. He had pulled a plastic spoon and a small lid out of the kitchen. He sat scooping some air into his mouth. He flipped the spoon over in his mouth just like he does when he uses it to eat.

Sneaky, sneaky

This little boy just found some of his birthday presents. I guess I didn't put them up quite high enough! He tried to unwrap one of them. Not yet, buddy! He did enjoy riding around the wrapping paper tube like a horse. It was really cute. He also tried to use the paper tube to get to stuff that he normally cannot reach...smart boy!

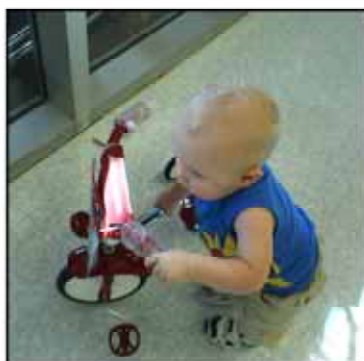
Carla Oh boy you guys are going to very busy for the next few years. I guess the Therrien tradition of doing anything to open gifts early has been passed on once again!

Lynn Very smart boy, indeed. I can't believe he is turning 1 already.

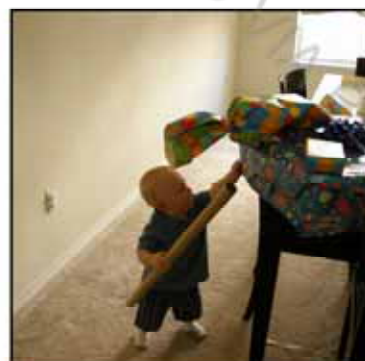
Amy I know! I can't believe it either. His middle name is Therrien, right? Of course, he has no patience.



Where's the fire?



Let's ride!



Almost got 'em



Possible reaction to cow's milk

Xander got his second introduction of cow's milk today at school mixed with his usual breast milk. By the time that I picked him up, I noticed a red rash around his neck. Two weeks ago, a sub teacher accidentally gave him straight whole milk one day. That day, he had an even worse rash on his neck. I think it might be an allergic reaction. I'm going to have to check with his doctor next week.

He's been fine with cow's milk cheese of which he eats some almost every day. He's also been fine with whipped cream and milk-based formula. So, hopefully, this is just a mild thing.

Amy Nope, peanuts were even worse. I suppose it could be a lot worse. Most kids grow out of the milk allergy. The peanut allergy has a 20% chance. So, I have hope!

New car seat

Xander's testing out his new, big boy car seat! Doesn't he look so grown up! Next, he'll be driving. BTW, he absolutely loves sitting in the front seat and playing with the turn signal and windshield wipers.

Jo Love the smile...it is my new desktop wallpaper! Jonah used to love to come up to the front seat when we were waiting in the van for Mary to get out of school. I didn't think much of letting him twist all the knobs he wanted to...until the van wouldn't start later! I'm sure it was my fault--left the key on or something--but I was much more careful afterward about what thingy he was turning.

Amy Hahahaha!

MORE!

Xander appropriately used the sign for "more" today. We were sitting in the living room and he noticed a little plastic container of yogurt bites. These are one of his favorite treats. He will eat them even if he is not hungry for anything else. He signed more to me and then I gave him one. He was so happy that it worked. We've been practicing more for a LONG time so I was so excited to see him use it finally.

One thing I wonder about is if he knows the general meaning of "more". It's one thing to know that "more" applies to food, but does he know that "more" can be used generally. That still remains to be seen.

He's also previously used the sign for milk, but I realized that he was using kind of for the wrong thing. At day care, they always give the older kids solids first then a bottle. The older kids sign for when they want the bottle and they get to leave the table to drink it. Xander associated the sign with leaving the table instead of the bottle. So, he used to always sign milk to me when he wanted out of the high-chair.

So, anyhow, he's not an English scholar yet, but my little boy is definitely communicating more and it is SO exciting!

Jo Learning to sign "more" is so empowering for him. God help you when he learns to sign "NOW!"



Strange potty behavior

The past two days, Xander has had some strange behavior. After his bath, he kind of plays around in the bath tub for a while and doesn't want to get out. Then, while he is in a squatting position, he does a #2. Besides being really eww, I am wondering if this is just a timing thing or something else. I don't think he is ready for potty training, but if he keeps doing this, I might try sitting him on a potty or something..."capture the behavior" if you will. I don't exactly want him to associate the tub as THE place to go. I suppose that I should be happy that he is doing it in the correct room of the house.

Jo That's so bright of him, really. We squat over a pool of water to poop. He may just be trying to emulate his parents.

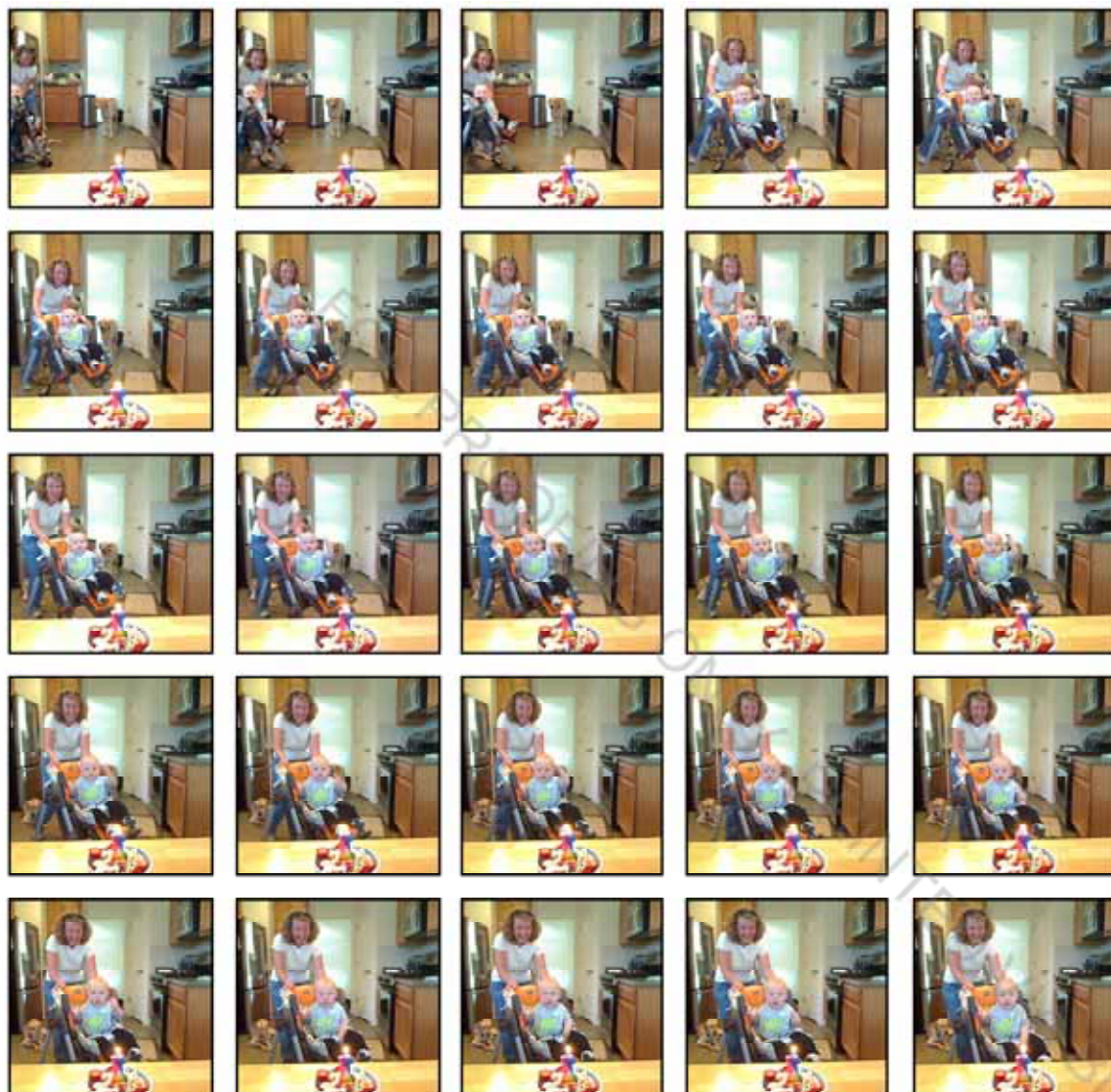
Jonah was getting into the habit (last time I was with him...don't get me started...) of requesting the potty as soon as he got his clothes off for a bath...so he could pee. I think that the air hitting his pee-pee reminded him that he should go in the potty...so he wouldn't pee in his bath-water.

I think that Xander may be closer to potty-training than you think!

Amy OK, if he's potty trained before he sleeps through the night, I'm going to go crazy!



No, this is a *before* picture



Happy Birthday, Xander!

Kristen So cute! He needs to come and teach Paige how to eat! Whole slices of strawberries....amazing. Paige is barely tolerating tiny bits of banana this week. Happy Birthday Xander!

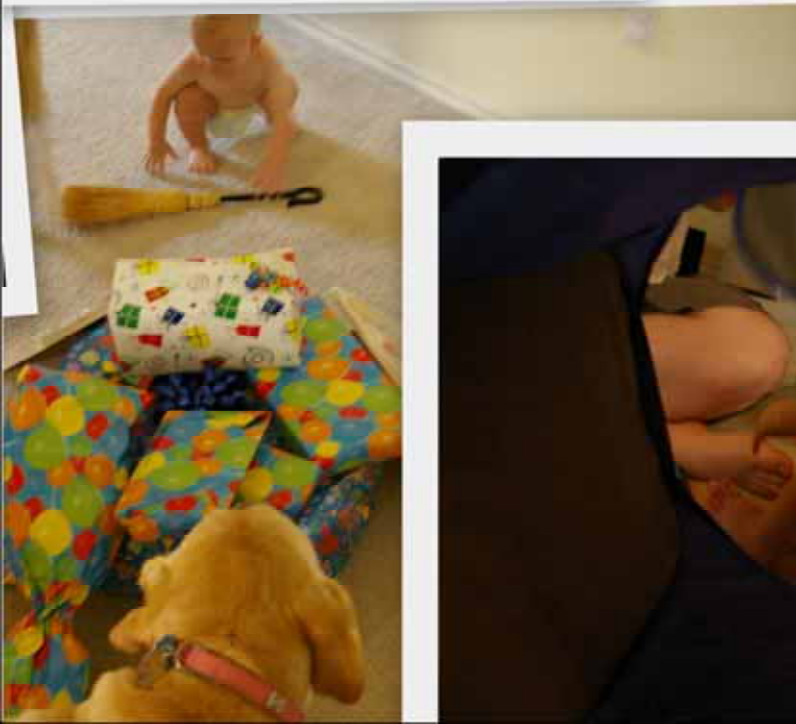
Margie Looks like a great birthday party! and Xander is really enjoying the goodies. Kisses and hugs from me!!

Amy He loved the strawberries! He picked them out and ate all of them. He didn't much care for the cake part, but at least tried it. Poor Paige, she is missing out on the fun of eating new things. With Xander, eating is so entertaining for him...it's like the only break we get.

Bryna So cute! He's very grown up!

Jo My big boy...he finally has "numbers!" Jonah remembers when Xander had "no numbers"...now has has One.







Opening of the next Bond flick?

Dolphin seems to have found another use, perhaps a costume



The puzzle is from Grandma and Grandpa T



Birthday Toys

This first one is from mommy and daddy. It's a serious of fold up rooms and tunnels that connect together. Xander's already ventured through it a few times,. It is nice that it folds up into a small little bag.

In this next picture, you see a mouse and keyboard from G-Jo. We plugged the mouse in and it lights up... way cool! The puzzle is from Grandma and Grandpa T. Xander likes to point at the all the animals as I saw the names. Sometimes, he tries to say the animals, too. Xander also got a cool dress play pirate doll, books, a shape puzzle, crayon holders and big paper to draw

on, money, and a cool toy that comes with a hammer (watch out, Copper & Peanut!). He opened all his presents in his birthday suit...why not? He really wasn't as in to the paper as as we thought he would be. It might be because he has already been there, done that with packages that mommy and daddy have received in the mail.

Lynn So much fun! I cannot _believe_ Xander is 1 already. Looks like he had a great b-day. Hopefully, we will get to meet him some time soon.

Amy We're coming out for E&A's wedding in February for sure. I can't wait to meet Mr. Peanut, but I bet you are even more excited to meet him. :-)

Tunnel fun

Today, Xander received even MORE birthday presents. Shelby and Dave brought over Rudy's for lunch and some fun birthday gifts. Xander loved the Rudy's creamed corn and sausage. He also loved the electronic caterpillar. Our neighbor's also brought over some fun toys for Xander as well including a boat with blocks and an electronic musical book. Later in the day, Xander and I played in his tunnel a bit as the dragon (yellow dog Copper) tried to get us. Dolphin would say "where's mommy" whereupon Copper would go nuts trying to get to me. Xander fit in the tunnels much better than I did, but I did manage to make it through.



Carla How is Xander liking his new tunnel? It looks like a toy his age would love. Playing hide and seek and just exploring.



Some things I've learned in the first year of parenting

10. Giving birth is not nearly as scary as one would expect after watching TLC shows.
9. Nursing is natural and wonderful, but not necessarily easy to learn.
8. I can actually be nurturing. After all those years of being cold-hearted, who knew!
7. Pets do NOT prepare you for parenting...even needy pets!
6. Brown eyes plus brown eyes equals green-grey eyes?
5. Tylenol infant drops are worthless cherry flavored liquid. Motrin is the only thing that really works.
4. Probiotics are amazing.
3. Apparently, I prioritize convenience over the environment. I phailed at cloth diapers.
2. Egalitarian, my a\$\$\$. Maybe over the long run, but the first year was definitely mommy centered.
1. Life is so much better after I traded in vanity for loving my little boy.
0. Any sacrifices are worth it for my sweetest boy in the world.

Ann Yeah for you! You're right on the money with these... Glad you're enjoying the journey!

Kristen Perfect. Couldn't be said better. I agree with No 9 completely...wish both her and I were better at it. But after 3 months of trying and a hungry baby, I gave into the Ameda. Glad life is happy for you. We miss you!

Jo "There is no falling in love like falling in love with a child." You're the Mom every Gramma hopes for!

Lynn Lessons well learned and well shared.

One-year wellness visit

Wow...Xander is such a tall boy. He measured 31" (80th percentile), 22.7lbs (50th percentile) and a head circumference of 46.4 (55th percentile). So, he has definitely outgrown his old car seat, which had a maximum of 30" and 30lbs.

We talked to the doctor about possible allergic reactions. She suggested that we wait a while and try nuts later just because those can be the strongest reactions. She said we should keep some benadryl around and read labels to make sure there were not products made with peanuts. That seems reasonable. I also need to layoff the PB until Xander is weaned...boo!

As far as cow's milk goes, she thinks it is probably not a milk allergy and said we should try milk for about a week. If after a week, it is causing problems, we can talk about soy milk. So, we're trying cow's milk again.

She was generally pleased with everything that he could do skill wise, and he was in good shape. He received three shots including the chicken pox vaccine. I'm so jealous. I wish that there would have been a vaccine for chicken pox when I was a kid. Lucky, lucky boy!



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