

Have you organised something to do with your Child/ren on NZ Children's Day Sunday 1 March or are you involved in Well Child Week starting 2nd March?

Get behind both of these great organisations and have a fantastic time with your family.

Bronwyn van Hooijdonk  
Company Director



WellChild/Tamariki Ora is about our babies, infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers under 5 years old and keeping them well, growing and developing to their fullest potential.

See [www.wellchild.org.nz](http://www.wellchild.org.nz) for more details.

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### antenatal classes

pregnancy, childbirth & early parenting information  
13 Porter Drive Havelock North  
from 7-9pm Tuesday night

### birth support

continuous physical & emotional support during your labour & birth

### postnatal care

emotional & practical support in your own home after the birth of your baby

for further details or to enrol telephone  
hb doulas on **06 8778282** or **027 677524106**  
**bronwyn@hbdoulas.co.nz**

New Zealand's Children's Day is a national, non-commercial day to celebrate how special and important our children are. The most important gift an adult can give to a child is the 'gift of time'. The key theme for 2009 will be 'LISTENING AND TALKING'.



Things you can do with your children could include -

#### Three things I love about you

Parents, tell your child three things that you love about him/her. Write them on a sheet of paper or a special piece of card and give it to your child to keep.

#### Bake a cake

Bake a special Children's Day cake together. Put some fun decorations on top.

#### Give old toys and clothes to charity

With your child choose some old toys and clothes to give away to charity so that other children can enjoy them.  
See [www.childrensday.org.nz](http://www.childrensday.org.nz) for more details.

#### St Matthew's Whanau Day Hastings

A Children's Church Service at St Matthew's Church at 10am and then on to Twyford for a Family Picnic with swimming, tennis, face painting, petanque etc  
Contact Rachelle Fowler at St Matthew's Early Childhood Centre on 8786924 or email [smecc@extra.co.nz](mailto:smecc@extra.co.nz)

#### National Aquarium Children's Day

From 9.00am to 4.00pm  
Free entry to all children 14 and under with a paying adult.  
Contact Carol Larson on 833 5424

A small study of women's encounters with a midwife during childbirth, with data collected by tape-recorded interviews two to four days after delivery, found that "presence" by the midwife was the most important factor in a good experience. This included the need to be seen as an individual, a trusting relationship—obtained by good communication and proficient behavior, and supporting the women on their own terms by providing a sense of control.

*Midwifery* 12(1): 11–15, 1996



"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words."

**Rachel Naomi Remen**

## The Path of a Midwife

I gave birth for the first time, well before the crack of dawn, on a chilly November morning in 1991. I birthed in the comfort and warmth of my own home, surrounded by people of my choosing, guided and supported by two loving midwives, also of my choosing.

In the cold darkness of that November morning, not only was a beautiful baby boy born, so too was a mama, a papa and a midwife. It was a profound transition in my life.

I did not make this choice out of rebellion or fear of hospitals, but rather from my heart. I hadn't read any "your path to better birthing" books or "what to expect" books. I didn't want to. As a matter of fact, I just couldn't imagine birthing any other way. I felt that my baby wouldn't allow it.

Birth is a rite of passage for the whole family. For the partner, who has been there through the tender emotional outpourings, the queasy days, the first fluttering kicks, the frolics felt just beneath the ribs and, finally, the labor and birth - the grand event. For the baby, who is profoundly affected in ways that we are only beginning to recognize. Everyone is moved by this transition of life, from womb to room.

Pregnancy and birth are natural physiological processes that open and move through a woman's body, mind and spirit. Pregnancy and birth are parts of the deeply personal and intimate journey involving every aspect of a woman's being. This journey can be a time of great vulnerability and a time of great empowerment.

As a midwife, I have seen birth in all her unfettered force, unimpeded and oh, so safe. I have seen, while looking into many a woman's eyes, in the midst of her lucid struggle, the eternal, universal recognition of her own strength. I have witnessed many a woman shift from "I can't do this" to "I am doing this." I have witnessed brilliant-faced partners awed and transformed while infused and bathed in the glow of the mama's intense birthing energy. I have witnessed contractions, waves, primal rushes, uterine pulses and mamas moaning, singing, resisting, rocking and rolling right into birthing their babies. I have witnessed babies, wet and warm, born into the welcoming arms of the eagerly awaiting family. Through bearing witness and bearing babies, I believe that birth is safe.

For every woman birthing and believing in herself, a baby is born imprinted with the same self-confidence. Every baby born into an environment of safety and peace is a person imprinted with that same sense of peace. What better way to enter the world? I can imagine no other beauty or grace, aside from mothering, to which I can commit myself.

I walk this path with all my heart, with every cell in my body, one baby, one mama, one family at a time.

**Brenda Frankenfeld** is a homebirthing, homeschooling, homeloving mother of three lovely children, Cypress (15 years), Estrella (8 years) and Oliver (5 years), and partner with Mikey (42 years), four core inspirations on her midwifery path. She is a proud student of Ancient Art Midwifery Institute and currently offering her midwifery services to families in Northeast Kansas. Reprinted from The Birthkit Issue 55

## Can Humanity Survive the Safe Cesarean?

Human beings react differently from other mammals to interference with the birth process. When delivery of non-human mammals is disturbed, the effects are immediate and easily detected. For example, when animals give birth by c-section or with an epidural, the general rule is that the mother is not interested in the baby. Among humans, on the other hand, we need extensive statistics to detect what are mere tendencies and risk factors. These are much more complex in our species.

We speak and we create cultural milieu. In certain situations, particularly in the perinatal period, human behavior is less directly under the effects of the hormonal balance than the effects of the cultural milieu. For example, a human mother knows when she is pregnant and can anticipate maternal behavior, while other mammals must wait until the birth when they release a flow of love hormones to kindle their attachment to their newborns.

Today, we understand that to have a baby, a woman—like any other mammal—has been programmed to release a cocktail of love hormones. Today the number of women who actually "give birth" to babies and placentas thanks to this hormonal release is ever-decreasing. First, because many women give birth by cesarean. Second, most of those who give birth vaginally receive pharmacological interventions. Unfortunately substitutes block the release of the natural hormones and do not create the same behavioural benefits.

We have to wonder what will happen, in terms of civilization, if this trend continues in future generations. Can humanity survive the safe cesarean?

**Michel Odent** Excerpted from "The Future of Obstetric Technology," Midwifery Today, Issue 85

