**6 Months In: Milestones, Solids & Work-Life Balance with Julia S6|5**

This week we welcome back our regular mum, Julia De Silva, to chat about her little six-month-old daughter, Aurelia. This week Julia shares her experiences of the six-month milestone of sitting. We talk a little bit about feeding transitions, the work-life balance and motherhood, and then we focus on introducing solids and what that can look like.

We look at a specific focus of how to introduce solids to prevent allergies. So if allergies are something that you're concerned about, this is definitely an episode for you. We do a deep dive in there.

We also look at the emotional transition of stopping breastfeeding, and I think no matter when you do it, six weeks or six years, it can be tricky and emotionally difficult. And then we also look at how to find creative ways to incorporate a little one's feeding and weaning journey into family meals. Julia is about to go on her first trip away from her family, and she talks about the challenges of balancing her career and motherhood, and the importance of having a support system in place.

This conversation is a must-listen for any mum who's looking for real and relatable and inspiring stories. So join us as we explore the world of parenting with Julia Da Silva. Grab a cup of coffee, get comfortable, and let's dive in.

Welcome to Sense by Meg Fora, the podcast that's brought to you by ParentSense, the app that takes guesswork out of parenting. If you're a new parent, then you are in good company. Your host, Meg Fora, is a well-known OT, infant specialist, and the author of eight parenting books.

Each week, we're going to spend time with new mums and dads, just like you, to chat about the week's wins, the challenges, and the questions of the moment. Subscribe to the podcast, download the ParentSense app, and catch Meg here every week to make the most of that first year of your little one's life. And now, meet your host.

Welcome back, mums and dads. This is Sense by Meg Fora, and I am delighted to have Julia join us again. Julia's our regular mum.

Mum to two little ones. Her second little one, Aurelia, is... How old is she now, Julia? Welcome, and how old is Aurelia? Thank you. 27 weeks, which I have to check every single time on the app.

I'm not going to lie. Second time children, there's a whole other thing. It's absolutely true.

So 27 weeks, she's over six months, which is hard to believe because we've been tracking her journey for the last six months, and she has been an absolute cherub, hasn't she? She has. I can't complain. She's extremely... I'm going to say the word easy, and I'm sure it'll come back to bite me, but certainly compared to my journey with my first, it's been very straightforward so far.

Yeah, it's interesting how we get these really easy little ones. I had a very similar journey to yours in that James was from day one a lot, and he still is. And that lot is actually amazing.

I mean, he was very busy, very adventurous, very creatively mischievous little boy, and he's now an entrepreneur. So I can tell mums who are having a tricky time with some of the little ones that actually this can end up being a kind of a secret sauce and something that makes them successful. But second time around, I had the easiest little girl, and that was a real blessing.

So I think you do get easy babies, and then you get ones that are more of a challenge. So what have been the big changes for our little six-month-old? Well, let's see. So she had her six-month check up with the PE last week, which all went very well.

He referred to her as a model baby. Thank you very much. He didn't mention anything about her being the most beautiful baby you'd ever seen, but I assume that maybe he just wasn't concentrating, but she remains the most gorgeous child that's ever existed.

So that all went very well, and he was very happy with her growth, and everything was in proportion, which is important, obviously. And she's growing very well. I think it was seven and a half kilos or something like that, which is crazy because she continues to grow very, very well.

She has started sitting by herself. She's a little bit wobbly, but she's sitting by herself for a few minutes at a time now. So she's making good progress there.

And that's actually, and that's a really interesting milestone, that sitting milestone, because it's the milestone that is pretty hard-coded. There are a few milestones that you can hang your hat on. One of them is smiling at around six weeks, and the other one is sitting at around six months.

So for moms whose little ones are around about six months old, some little tricks there, pop a whole lot of cushions around them from about five and a half months old, and let them, and put them in a sitting position. They will fall over, which is fine, and they generally kind of fall over in slow motion. So it's not like a whopping fall over, but it does happen in slow motion, and then you have to prop them back up again.

And then by six months, most of the ones are sitting. So she's spot on there, so that's good. Yeah, so she's doing well.

And it's, as with a lot of the developmental things, it's just about practice, right? The more that she's sitting and practicing sitting, the stronger she gets. And obviously, her now being on solids and being in a high chair quite regularly, I think, offers her a bit of extra practice in that regard. And one of the things there, before we go into the solids, one of the things that I just want to mention there is that one of the things that a lot of parents do at this age is put their little ones into what are called bumbo seats.

And they're kind of those structured seating devices that generally are supposed to be used on the floor, and I really am not wild on them. And I don't know do you have one, Julia? I do have one. She doesn't use it often, to be honest.

It was usually when I needed her to be not moving anywhere for a few minutes, but yeah, not often at all. Yeah, because they really aren't great. And there are two reasons for that.

The one is that they make their tummy muscles super lazy. So we actually see that babies who put in bumbo seats tend to have late sitting. So moms, if you're worried about your baby's sitting and you're using a bumbo seat, get her out of the bumbo seat, because it isn't a great seating device for activating tummy muscles.

And the other thing that we don't like about them, and I know that we all do it, it's kind of one of those things that we, you know, what we do a little bit guiltily is that we pop those bumbo seats up on the kitchen counter, because we can then kind of, they're at our eye level, and we put them sitting there. And sometimes moms will feed their babies in the bumbo seat on a kitchen counter, or just prop them there while they're cooking or whatever. And that is exceptionally dangerous.

Baby's heads are top heavy. It doesn't matter that the bumbo seat's heavy and it's got a wide base of support. If your baby throws himself forward or sideways, they then topple off the kitchen counter.

And there's actually evidence that bumbo seats along with walking rings are two of the leading causes of head injury in babies in America. So they kind of topple off the top of the counter onto their heads, and it just is very, very dangerous. So aside from the developmental part, I'm not very, very, I don't really favor them in terms of safety either.

So yeah. Yeah. You were talking in the episode that you and I discussed briefly, the previous episode to this, which was not to this when it comes out, but the last one that came out as we're recording, which was about starting solids and feeding.

And you were talking about the high chair that you had that attached to your counter, like the sort of one that where they sit in and the kind of weight keeps it on. And actually, when you said that, I thought that's actually a really good idea for us, because in reality, we don't sit at our dining table to eat. We actually sit at the counter for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, quite honestly.

And so Santi sits in his sort of bar chairs. But it means that when she's sitting on her high chair, she's actually lower than us, which isn't ideal. I'd much prefer to be at the same level.

So I was actually saying to my husband, we need to get hold of one of those, because I think that's actually a very good idea for us. Yeah. And they're not very expensive.

And the other reason why I loved them was that they're the thing that you can take with you when you're going away on holiday, or if you're off to the spur or whatever restaurant you can take it with as well. So they're actually fabulous. And they also, I think, foster better eating habits, because then they are sitting and having family meals, whether it's just with her and Santi, just with siblings, or whether it's you and your partner and your husband.

They definitely see that eating is social, and they tend to be better eaters. So yeah, I really love those clip-on ones. Yeah, I must track one of those down.

Um, yeah, so well, in terms of the solids, I'm definitely feeling a bit more organized. I, yeah, it sort of ran away from me the first few weeks, I was really struggling to remember to have all the things I wanted to try and apply my mind to allergens and all this stuff was a bit overwhelming. So now I've made an effort at the beginning of every week, I've always done a meal plan for our family, but I wasn't really applying my mind to what she needed to be eating.

So I've now created a system. And so far, that's going very well. And I now know exactly what I've going to be trying every single day with her, which is awesome.

So can you tell us what does that look like? So I mean, like your plan for this week? How have you planned it out? So what I try and do is as far as possible, I will try and integrate something that I want her to try into our meal. So for example, yesterday, I knew we were going to put broccoli into our meal. And I thought, right, when I'm preparing that meal, I'm going to set aside two or three stalks of broccoli, I'm going to steam those separately, and then she can eat those while we're eating our meal.

And I try and do it like that, so that I'm not creating a work for myself. And it also means that there is that element of not only she's sitting with us in a social sense, but she's also kind of eating the same thing as it were, which will obviously become more, you know, as she grows older, she literally will start to eat what we're eating. So it's a case of planning things like that.

And then also trying to think about when I want to introduce allergens. So for example, last week, I tested a fin fish with her. And I made sure that we were having fish that night so that I had had it in the fridge, essentially, for when I wanted to try it with her.

So it's just a case of kind of thinking about the most streamlined, efficient way to do it so that I'm not making three meals every night, or every day. So yeah, that's that's the strategy. And it seems to work quite well.

And every now and then, obviously, there are things that we're not eating that I want her to eat. And then I'll just make sure that I have those on the grocery list. Yeah, that's great.

And that introduction of allergens is so important. You know, the old fashioned style of introducing solids was that you would introduce allergens really late. And in actual fact, when my son was little, it was like, no flour and gluten before nine months and no egg whites until nine months and fish was delayed and nuts were delayed.

And now we know that all of those all of that ancient advice from 20 years ago is actually incorrect. And the babies actually had more allergens when they were introduced like that. So what you do need to do is introduce them early.

Another thing with allergens just to chat about while we're touching on it is that I like to have moms introduce their allergens at lunchtime at the lunchtime meal or the breakfast meal. And the reason is that if they are going to have a reaction, you're awake, they're awake, you know, you can keep an eye on them. Whereas, you know, popping in an allergen in the evening is probably not the best idea because they'll be asleep.

And so you might not necessarily see any reaction. And then also, I don't know if you know, but allergens do not don't present as allergens until the second or third introduction. So you will never have an allergy reaction in your first exposure.

And the reason for that is that what has to happen inside the body is the body has to mount a defense reaction to an allergen. And it only it kind of the body goes, I don't like that, that that fish is something that I'm going to react to. So I'm going to mount a little army against that fish.

And then the next time you have the fish, the army gets activated. And that's when you start to see allergic reactions. So what we actually say with allergen introduction is do it at lunchtime or breakfast and do it for two or three days in a row without anything else being new, because otherwise you don't know which allergen they're reacting to.

So if she had fish yesterday, I would do fish today, do fish tomorrow and watch her in the after those meals and then go for it. And then also just to add that, I mean, it's a huge freak out for most parents, the two things around feeding that freaks us out. The one is an allergic reaction.

The other one is choking. And actually, most babies won't have an allergic reaction. And we only really track very carefully our babies where there's a family history or where the baby themselves has shown some sort of allergies or, you know, kind of reactions earlier on to something.

So if any of you are allergic, you would then watch a little bit more closely, which I don't think any of you are allergic, are you? Yeah, we're very lucky that certainly myself and my husband and son don't have any known allergies. So we're quite fortunate in that regard, although I am absolutely vigilant about them, obviously completely paranoid, because obviously you hear about these stories of other children at school and so on who have terrible peanut allergies and how scary that can be. So I am quite aware of it.

But it's very interesting. I didn't know that the allergy could present and often did present further down the line on sort of second, third, fourth exposure. I didn't realise that it didn't ever present on first exposure.

So that's actually quite reassuring for me because it means I don't have to have a complete freak out and sit there watching her like a hawk when she's eating her peanut butter and yogurt, which is the next sort of. The only time that that isn't true, and I'll tell you this, is if she's had exposure that you don't know about. So I'll give you an example of a child that I knew that I still do know who is extremely, extremely anaphylactically allergic.

And her anaphylaxis is to egg, which is just hidden in everything. And what was very interesting was that this mom at the time when she had her baby was living in London and her baby had quite a bad bum rash early on in her life before she had solids introduced. And mom's disclaimer, do not do this.

What this mother was advised to do and again, do not do this was actually put egg white on her baby's bum for some unknown reason. So that was what happened was that she was told to put egg white on the bum in order to deal with the nappy rash for some unknown reason. Now, obviously what's happened in the bum is that it's open.

Your skin is your biggest protection around your entire body. And when there's a skin lesion, an open skin area, that means that anything can penetrate your body. It then becomes like an open gateway into your body.

And so these egg proteins, the egg white proteins had then gone into her body. And so the first time she had egg, she reacted, but it wasn't because she was reacting to that egg the first time. The reason was that she had had egg put on her bum for, you know, and obviously that's an absolutely crazy thought, but unfortunately, I know, well, you can't be, yeah, exactly.

In parenting, the type of parenting advice that people get is quite frightening. So, which is exactly actually the motivation behind our ParentSense app and our AYA chatbot is that we just want really reliable parenting advice going out there. Yeah.

Gosh, that's very interesting. Yeah. No.

So the journey into feeding and solids and stuff is going very well. And yeah, it's a bit less stressful for me now that I've sort of found my rhythm. And another big thing to do with feeding is that I've wrapped up breastfeeding, which look, it wasn't necessarily my plan.

I didn't really have a plan, but my hand was forced a little bit because I have to go away for a week next week for work. And I had initially planned to. This episode is brought to us by ParentSense, the all-in-one baby and parenting app that help you make the most of your baby's first year.

Don't you wish someone would just tell you everything you need to know about caring for your baby? When to feed them, how to wean them, and why they won't sleep? ParentSense app is like having a baby expert on your phone, guiding you to parent with confidence. Get a flexible routine, daily tips and advice personalized for you and your little one. Download ParentSense app now from your app store and take the guesswork out of parenting.

My hand was forced a little bit because I have to go away for a week next week for work. And I had initially planned to just continue feeding as usual. And then she would just drink the breast milk from the freezer, which I still had a bit of.

And then I just got to the point where I had a few weeks ago, I dropped a feed. So I was only pumping to, I think it was twice a day, but relying on the milk in the freezer. And then I just thought, you know, taking my pump and managing the cold chain and having to keep everything clean for a week of flying to Jo'burg, driving for seven hours to the Kruger, doing that trip in reverse, being in a conference the whole week was just going to actually push me over the edge.

So I just thought it's not the end of the world. It's been six solid months. I have been incredibly committed.

And it's actually, maybe this is just a good excuse to now, you know, wrap it up and bring it to an end. So that's what I've done. So I wean myself off the pumping over the course of about two weeks.

And we're about to finish the last two or three sachets of milk in the freezer. And otherwise I've been introducing formula into a bottle in varying amounts over the last three or four weeks. So yeah, that's been quite interesting.

She's been okay. And that's quite emotional, isn't it? Your last kind of feed. I suppose your last actual breastfeed was a long time ago.

So it's a little bit less painful, but I think for most moms, whether you stop at six weeks or six years, your last feed is, you know, you feel it. Yeah. And it's not something I can imagine you ever doing lightly.

And I think I'm, you know, I am probably on the one end of the spectrum where I'm sort of the least bothered by it. And I can certainly understand, especially for women who have fed on the breast for months and months, that that is very difficult. Funnily enough, with both my children, I didn't know the last time I breastfed them that it would be the last time I had them on the breast.

So I sort of emotionally got to skip over that. So, you know, I had to, for practical reasons, go on to formula and that was the priority. So, you know, what it is, is a, it's a difficult choice to make, not only for the emotional reasons, but also because I know that it has other impacts.

Like, for example, I know that my breast milk was offering her a lot of support in terms of her immunity. And that's something, you know, you sort of have to wave goodbye to, but, you know, she'll be fine. Formula is a wonderful thing.

So, you know, and she's going to get sick and it's, there's no guarantees. It just is what it is. Life goes on.

And this is just the only chapter for us. Yeah. And, you know, it's interesting.

So immunity develops, first of all, she will have had, she will have had banked immunity from pregnancy until about six months. So, so she's, she's had that just from being, you being pregnant with her, she got all of your immunity, anything you were exposed to then. Again, similar to what I spoke about with the allergens, you know, anything that you're exposed to, her body gets a little forewarning and she mounts a little army early on.

And so when she is exposed to it, COVID or flu, or, you know, any of the virus and bacterias, her body knows what to do with it. And so she's going to fight it. So that comes through from pregnancy.

It then comes through from breastfeeding, but actually from six months old, their immunity is quite robust. And so, you know, her body knows what to do now. It knows that, okay, this is something foreign that Santi's brought home from school.

I'm going to, you know, get a little sniffle, run a very small little fever and she activates immunity. So it, it does make a difference. Breast milk does make a difference, but it's not the be all and end all at this age for sure.

The other thing I picked up on, on what you were saying there, which is so interesting. And, you know, we see these massively emotive posts on TikTok and Instagram about, I wish I knew it was the last time and it can be anything, you know, and I saw one last week that really tugged at my heartstrings. It was a mom who posted of her kind of maybe four year old little boy, you know, climbing in and giving a cuddle with her, you know, in the morning or in the evening or whatever it was.

And she said, I just don't know when this will be the last. And I think that feeling travels through the whole of your life with you. You know, you never know which is the last time.

And, you know, you wish it away often, you know, like I wish he wouldn't come into my bed in the middle of the night. And then one day you wake up and you go, Oh my goodness, it's, what has it been like three or four weeks? And he hasn't come through to my bed. And that was the last time he's came through, you know, and it's part of our journey of life.

But I guess as your kids grow up, you embrace the fact that there are the only people and they are independent of you. But yeah, it doesn't take away from the fact that I wish I knew sometimes that that was the last moment. Yeah.

And I almost think that that's harder, you know, to have to make a choice to stop breastfeeding and to have to kind of plan that moment is almost more difficult than what I had to go through, which was for practical reasons, not being able to feed suddenly. So, yeah, but it's, it is, it's the whole journey is just full of these moments where you're grieving and you are excited for what's coming next. And it's just this constant push and pull of feeling sad and feeling happy.

And, you know, it's a, it's a, yeah, it's, it's a rollercoaster. Yeah. It's very interesting, Julia.

There's so many parallels between your journey and my journey. My husband, when Emily, my third child, so she was my last. And I think that Aurelia might be your last as well.

My husband and I went away, we had to go on a business trip of his to Namibia. And she was exactly six months old, very similar to you. And I really tussled with the idea of actually leaving her.

Like, do I go or don't I? Because unlike you, you probably have to go for work. I didn't have to go, but Philip and I had always prioritized and still do our marriage over our, over our children in some respects, because we knew that we were going to, that that marriage had to survive longer than the kids were going to be in the home. And also the kids need a solid base.

And so we've always prioritized one-on-one time. So I went with him to Namibia and I gave her the last breastfeed before I went away. I'd left some express breast milk and I had made the decision that I would stop breastfeeding her while I was away.

And then while I was, when I came back, I had this overwhelming need to feed her again, because I just, I just said, I can, I'm sure I can reactivate my milk supply. I'm sure I can do this. And I put her to the breast and she just was like, what the heck? And she'd moved on.

And I can remember feeling like, oh no, you know, just come on, come on, let's, let's try once more. And then realizing actually it's all right. You don't have to hold onto their littleness.

You don't have to hold onto everything. And of course, Emily was just fine not being breastfed, but it is, you know, it's certainly, I can remember it very, very clearly. And also the dilemma I went through when I decided to go away, you know, should I be going away? She's under a year of age.

Yeah. It is a bit of a challenge. Who's going to be looking after your kids? So Vito will be here.

He's going to work half day. So he'll be working in the morning. For example, he'll take Santi to school and then he'll pick him up from school.

He will be working from home though. And then he'll have the afternoons free. And then Tsitsi, who is the light of my life, our nanny, she will be, you know, here every single day, of course.

And she, she does stay with us. So she'll be here in the evenings to help out as well. And Vito's mom lives around the corner.

So she's also helpful and we have lots of extra sets of hands. We're very, very fortunate in that regard. I think I would have gone insane a long time ago if that wasn't true.

I really do feel for people who don't have that village. We are very lucky to have it. So the kids will be fine.

They probably won't even notice. I, the first time I left Santi, he was about two. So I've never left a baby before and I am dreading it.

It's, she's just, I think because she's so delightful. I mean, Santi was so hard. I was, I could not wait to leave, to go on that first work trip.

I was like, bye. So it was actually, it was a bit of a holiday for me. But with her, I just, yeah, she's just so delicious.

And I've told, I said to Tsitsi, can you just take 5,000 videos and photos every day? I want to see what she's wearing. I want to see what she's eating. I want to see her smiling.

I just need to be topped up emotionally. You know, it's so interesting. So I had a mom who wrote to me.

So I don't know if you know, we have the courses inside the ParentSense app. And one of our moms had done a course. She did our BabySense course.

And underneath the courses, you can actually write comments about what you learned and what you're feeling. And this mom wrote this comment and I posted it on LinkedIn recently. I took a screenshot of what she sent me, obviously without her name.

And she said, I'm really nervous about this because my baby loves my nanny, loves her nanny very much. And I'm at work all day. And I think she might love her nanny more than she loves me.

And, you know, I really feel, you know, I feel sad about this. And I don't know what I should do about it. And my response to her was, first of all, little ones in secure relationships with primary caregivers can love more than one person.

And I think, you know, people, the word primary makes us feel like it is only one, but actually primary caregivers can be a village, exactly as you say it. You know, there's dad, there's granny, and there's tzitzi, and she will, and you, and she will love all of you.

And that's, first of all, very important to recognize. The second thing that is very important that I think moms sometimes don't, they just don't place enough importance on it, is that any primary caregiving relationship is so incredibly important that a fracture in any of them is a problem. And there is, unfortunately in South Africa, and for those of you who are listening from overseas, you might think that Julia might be one of the very, very privileged who has servants, but actually in South Africa that, you know, in every social echelon, people have nannies who assist them with their children, all the way down, you know, down the whole chain.

And so there is a culture of having nannies support us, which is an incredible gift to moms because it is a support system. But unfortunately, in some, you know, I don't want to say spoilt woman, but I think there are sometimes women who don't give enough credit to these nannies who actually have these incredibly loving relationships. And so I've come across a couple of moms who've been very quick to hire and fire.

So, and this one isn't really working out. She's not cleaning very well. She arrives late for work.

She doesn't get there at the right time with the taxis, or whatever it is. So I'm going to fire her, or I'm going to get rid of her. I'm going to suggest to her that she can go and work at my other friend's house who doesn't have children, or whatever it is.

And I think moms cannot realize that that is a really meaningful fracture in a primary relationship. So I have a lot of, I really feel very strongly that hiring and firing nannies, when our little one's a little, is you need to do very, very consciously, and you need to protect that relationship and not be jealous of it, to celebrate it for what it is, and to really make sure that that person is valued in your family life. You don't want her disappearing on your child at any point, because it really is a very important relationship.

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, look, we are super fortunate in this country that that is the culture. And I, you know, context I think is also important.

I was so lucky from when I was three months old, there was a lady called Sophie who worked in our home, and she was essentially the, I mean, Susan referred to as the housekeeper, but she was really kind of in charge of running that house while my mom was at work and my dad was at work, and looking after us kids. There were four of us, so she had her hands full. And obviously I had a twin brother as well, so it was quite hectic, especially when we were little.

So she started when I was three months. She is still part of my life. She comes and visits me regularly.

She's obviously met my children, my brother's children. She's incredibly special. And she, you know, has been part of our lives for now 40 years, 41 years.

And I was so conscious when I had Santi of trying to recreate that setup because Sophie was my benchmark. Unfortunately, Sophie cannot be cloned. And I struggled initially to find someone that I connected with the way that I connected with Sophie.

And it took me a long time, and our first nanny didn't work out. She was with us for a couple of years, but she didn't emotionally connect with Santi either. So there was definitely sort of something going on there that didn't sit right with me, and I put it off and put it off and put it off.

And then as luck would have it, when I had finally made the decision that it wasn't right anymore and that we would need to let her go, Tsitsi came into my life through a recommendation from a complete stranger. And I met with her, and I was just absolutely immediately struck by her manner and also her, she has the most fantastic education. She's done early childhood development at a tertiary level.

She's an older woman. She's in her 50s. She doesn't have her own children, so she's always cared for other people's children.

And she's just the most wonderful, caring presence in our house. And I honestly, I thank my lucky stars for her because she is, for me, she is Sophie, the Sophie that Santi and Aurelia will grow up with. And I could not be happier because I just think it's critical to who both of them will be one day, is that relationship.

It absolutely is. And we had one as well, Nancy. She's very much in my children's lives still as well.

And they're adults. And it's very sweet because my daughter lives in London. And whenever she goes to South Africa, she takes Nancy to go and have a pedicure and takes her out for lunch.

And they do that together. And that relationship is, I mean, she really is their other mom. And I think it's just very important to recognize that.

One of my partners in one of my businesses is Lara Schoenfeldt. And she started a business called Nanny and Me, which I know your kiddies go to, don't they? Well, I'm aware of it in the neighborhood. For one reason or another, Santi went to PlaySense actually, to a PlaySense school.

But lots of moms I know go to Nanny and Me. Do Nanny and Me, yeah. So Nanny and Me, you can start much younger.

PlaySense is very much more of a play school. This is a kind of weekly activity that your nanny goes to. The reason I love it so much is that, first of all, Lara's heart is 100% in scaling up the ladies, the nannies, actually.

And so these nannies actually learn all the way along how to interact with little ones, a little bit about early childhood development. They don't all have the privilege of having what Tsitsi's had, which is a kind of tertiary education in early childhood. And so any mom who's listening, who isn't in Nanny and Me, you must put your little ones into Nanny and Me.

It's wonderful for the nanny and for the little one. And if you're a mom who's interested in starting a business, Lara actually franchises Nanny and Me. So you can actually take over a region and actually run the Nanny and Me in your region.

So go and look it up. And it really is a wonderful way to kind of nurture those amazing women on our children's lives. And yeah, and just to respect them and protect them.

And we had a few things that I think are very important. One is that my children were never allowed to be rude to her. And it was a hard line in our house.

Like if anybody told Nancy to do anything or instructed her, they were told down. Because it was for me to let, because I was the employer, to let Nancy know what was expected. But it was for nobody else in the house ever to speak down to her or instruct her.

And she was the boss of the house. She always has been, you know, and she ran my house. And that relationship is just very important.

So I think it's wonderful that your little ones have got that. So yeah, very, very lucky. So I think you can go away knowing, well, first of all, I mean, Daddy's not going as well, but yeah, Daddy, Nanny, Granny, they've got a good support system while you're away.

Yeah, no, I'm sure Noel will even notice that I'm not there. I'm going, obviously I'm going to have to do all that prep work though, right? Like all the heavy lifting of having to do the meal plans and make sure that everything's ordered and make sure that, you know, the milk is in the fridge when it needs to be there and the stuff that, you know, quite frankly, you know, God bless him, but it wouldn't occur to me to have to do that because, you know, the world just, certainly in this house, just unfolds around him seamlessly. So I'm going to have to do all that.

But, you know, again, that's the work, right? Yeah, and that's such an interesting topic because, I mean, just recently, I had a podcast session with Dr. Jenny Rose. I don't know if you've come across her. Oh my gosh, she is just fabulous.

She's a psychiatrist focused on perinatal mental health and women's issues. And she is a, I mean, in the podcast, she says to me, I am a feminist. And so we get onto this conversation about what it is to be a feminist and actually what that does to women in life.

And one of the things I said to her is, you know, in some ways, obviously feminism has been very important. We are emancipated. We are free to choose.

We can choose to be, you know, we can choose to be at home moms and focus everything on our little ones, or we can also focus to have our careers and there are no kind of ceilings to where we should be able to go. Of course, that isn't entirely true, but let's just say that that's where we were going in theory. But the really tough part is that while we take on all these massive roles like you have, and, you know, we run our careers, at the end of the day, our mind is always on our children.

And so we carry the double load. And, you know, my husband, I can never say this in front of him because he gets very irritated because he feels like he really does carry half the load. But the reality is that it didn't matter where I was in the world, what business trip I was on, I always knew who was fetching my child that afternoon.

He has never, even if he was the person who was staying at home, it's never occurred to him. I was the kid getting home from school, you know? So yes, I know. Unfortunately, the load in some respects for us, and that's why we talk about the juggle being hectic for moms, like because we carry both.

We carry the workload and we do carry other kids no matter where we are. Yeah, I know, it is a lot. And I remember when I first had Santi, the thing that really surprised me, because a lot of my friends have had kids already and my brother's older than me and I have older nieces and nephews, and I was fairly realistic about what was going to happen.

I wasn't under any illusions it was going to be kind of rainbows and butterflies. But the thing that really surprised me when I had Santi was how much extra admin was involved in just day-to-day life. So that was quite difficult.

And I now find that with Aurelia where while the admin is, it's not just twice as much admin, it feels like 10 times as much more admin because you're having to kind of manage sometimes opposing schedules as well. So it's thinking about when she needs to go to the doctor and when Santi needs to get picked up and I've got to buy a birthday present for so-and-so and having a party on Saturday. Can she come to that party or must she stay with Vito because I don't know if it's a feeding time and then will we have time for him to come home and have a nap? I mean, yeah, it's just the endless brain going round and round and round and round to make sure life is nice and easy.

Yeah, no, I mean, it really is. It's a massive juggle. I actually used to have a, I've always worked.

And so around baby since in the early days of my children's life and now, you know, if I've got other businesses but I always used to try when my kids were little don't have to do it anymore thankfully. On a Friday morning, that was my morning where I would put aside three hours and I would plan the whole of the next week. So whether it was the rowing schedule lifts for James for the next week or what food was going to be eaten or birthday party plans, Friday morning, three hours like I went deep on household admin because otherwise, yeah.

I mean, you really are being a household executive as well as running your businesses. So it is hectic, but so wonderful to touch base with you, Julia because it just brings back so much of my journey as well. And yeah, it's very special.

And I think it's very common for most moms at this stage. So wonderful and enjoy your trip. When do you leave in just a couple of days? Thank you.

So yeah, so what is it? Wednesday when you're recording this, I leave on Sunday morning and I get back on Friday night. So it is quite a long one and it's going to be very, very busy. So, but I'll get to sleep for the night.

So that's nice. Well, we didn't get onto her sleep. We'll have to talk about that next time.

It's been wonderful to chat. Thank you so much for sharing so freely. The moms will tell me that these are their favorite episodes to hear what real moms are getting up to.

So thank you for sharing. Great. Thanks, Meg.

I'll see you next time. See you next time. Thanks to everyone who joined us.

We will see you the same time next week. Until then, download ParentSense app and take the guesswork out of parenting.