



WOULD-BE DADS: GO FOR THE ICE CREAM

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MYSFACE WITH TRAINING WHEELS: Imbee.com (for in-between?) claims to be the first free social network for kids ages 8 to 14. It's the picture of innocence, with links to videos of a Build-A-Bear Workshop and scenes from the animal kingdom. But its emphasis on celebrity -- Hilary Duff is the topic of one dedicated online group -- may be a turnoff to some parents.

EBAY FOR PARENTS: File this one in the category of brilliant ideas I wish I'd had. It's called Zwaggle.com and it's basically eBay without any purchase prices, targeted at parents with too much outgrown kid stuff. Zwaggle users earn points for shipping their stuff to someone who wants it, then use those points to redeem stuff they do need or want. The only money that changes hands is for shipping. It sounds crazy, but the highchairs, baby swings and toys that your child drooled on, pooped on, played with, bit and laughed at are saturated in sentimental value, and it's hard to just leave them on the sidewalk outside a secondhand store. I love this idea of finding loving homes for well-used baby gear.

NANNY CAUGHT ON TAPE: Ouch. This nanny got caught on tape getting abusive when one of her 2-year-old twin charges resisted going down for her nap. Angry dad Brad Roth started NannyAbuse.com to create a forum for parents to get more information. Watch this clip from NBC: <http://video.knbc.com/player/?id=192803>. Be sure to catch two other inventive nanny watch sites I wrote about last month: LANannywatch.blogspot.com/ and ISawYourNanny.blogspot.com.

TOYS AND GENDER: The ladies of ``The View'' had a fascinating discussion last week about giving feminine toys to boys and masculine toys to girls. That line of talk disintegrated into a shoutfest about children with transgender tendencies, but it brought up some interesting topics. Whoopi and Sherri Shepard really get into over whether a boy should be allowed to dress up in princess garb. See the clip at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=78ND3vqPz90

FOR LAST-MINUTE SHOPPERS: For helpful info for last-minute Christmas shopping, see www.drtoy.com for product-safety tips and holiday gift advice; <http://toyinfo.org> for toy safety, recent toy recalls and toy use advice; www.toytips.com for product reviews and gift suggestions; and www.cpsc.gov for the latest recall information.

THE ICE CREAM DIET: A serving of full-fat ice cream a day not only delights the palate but appears to boost fertility, according to a new book from the Harvard School of Public Health. ``The Fertility Diet'' says ``good'' carbs like brown rice and pasta are linked to higher fertility levels, while cold cereal, white rice, potatoes and other ``bad'' carbs are linked to infertility. Also, that old wives' tale about eliminating exercise to get pregnant? It's a myth (but you already knew that). See thefertilitydiet.com.