



ORANGE PULP >

Walking Tall

The first time my toddler's head had a major collision with a door frame, I seriously considered purchasing a crash helmet for her and anti-anxiety medicine for myself. If only I had known about the Walk-O-Long, the brainchild of Orange father Jeff Zinger, made by CaddyO Products of Irvine. Constructed out of flat nylon webbing, the same material used by search and rescue professionals worldwide, the Walk-O-Long fits gently but securely around your small child's chest, and has a leash-like strap that allows parents to keep their child safe and help them develop coordination and confidence, without having to constantly stoop and pull off last-minute rescues. Weighing only two pounds, its unique design is comfortable for the child to wear. Zinger swears his daughter



ICKY IS A GOOD THING

There are two kinds of moms out there: Those that love their daughter is spotted, dressed with checks on them, and those that wouldn't be caught dead with their kid sporting a checker. For the latter mom, we have two words for you: Icky Baby.

The Costa Mesa-based apparel and gift accessory company has attracted a national following of moms who want their kids to look modern and fun. "We're not uptight at all," says owner and mother of three Kass Sorenson. "We don't do baby and dicky."

The company originally had a noncommercial beginning. They started with just one product: the Icky Bag, a designer deposable sack for kids

who get out sick. Consumer loved it because it appealed to contemporary parents' sense of style and also spoke to the humorous and challenging nature of child rearing. Other products such as disposable changing pads and colorful-print travel placemats with pockets for tissues followed. Today Icky Baby's apparel and gifts are in 1,500 boutiques across the country — locally in All the Rage Baby Boutiques

and the Red Balloon — and also Barneys New York and Neiman Marcus on the West Coast starting in fall 2005. Sorenson attributes their success to their unique, funky price (they just launched Icky Baby signature prints) and their understanding of how moms really like to shop.

"I'm in Target buying whatever basic I can find for my daughters," Sorenson says. "But then I see these basic jeans with a wide stripe over a wrap top (from our line). I sell my kids, you don't want to be head-to-toe designer, that's not dicky."

Applying the rules of adult fashion to baby and kids lines is part of what makes Icky Baby so appealing. For spring 2006, the company will offer a line with bohemian flare: dried apple shirts, peasant sequined tunics. But the clothes will have soft, childlike edges.

Luckily children don't have to stop being icky once they gain toddlerhood. The line has just expanded to include sizes up to 6x. "As our customer base grows up, so does we," says Sorenson. But that's likely they'll have a growing up too much.

Icky Baby's Corporate Headquarters, which include their small company store carrying just women's line of accessories, is located at 1300 McCormick Avenue Costa Mesa, Calif. (714) 424-8940.

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she loves it. "At 23 months, my daughter is learning to ice skate. She's walking onto escalators. We can walk near water without worrying," he says. It also makes amusement parks more manageable. Find the Walk-O-Long at www.thewalkolong.com, stand up straight, and take a deep breath.

—AMANDA ANDERSON

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