

Sink or Swim...

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Well, if you're asking me that question in respect to how I am coping with the toddler at the moment, I'd have to say, Sink.

The terrible 2's are in full flow and his meltdowns are currently reminiscent of Mariah Carey when she requested her dressing room was to be filled with white kittens and someone said that might be a little tricky...how dare they. He's literally unreasonable. You'd have more chance of reasoning with a house brick.

Last week, 'Tantrums 'R' Us' was visited by my toddler in epic style, to the point I even contemplated running away to hide in the most disgusting toilets known to mankind, the school swimming pool toilet.

Let me tell you all about it (I suggest you get a cup of tea and least 15 custard creams to dunk in it for this little tale of woe).

Every Wednesday evening, my eldest 2 boys have their swimming lessons. Their lessons aren't until 6:30pm, which is a pretty naff time when you have a toddler who no longer naps in the daytime and who, by about 6pm, is about as happy as a grown man who is being kicked in the testicles by someone wearing spiked running shoes . Yep, that happy.

I am normally very lucky and my amazingly fabulous, don't know what I'd do without, mum often helps me out and will take the boys swimming for me so I can lob the toddler in the bath to de-germify him and then put him to bed before he turns into a

mini version of the Incredible Hulk. I'm honestly so lucky to have my mum about to help.

Anyhow, last week, Nanny was busy having a meeting with a nice man who she had organised to come over to her place in order to tell her how much money she was going to have to hemorrhage for a new conservatory, so I was tasked with taking all 3 boys by myself for the first time in a while. (The last time I took the toddler with me, he was under the weather so just laid down on me and went to sleep – it was obviously very sad he was a bit poorly, but on the same hand, it was very helpful that he wasn't running off everywhere and being a pain in the arse...you have to find the silver lining in these things).

I prepared myself as well as I could by packing snacks, drinks, toys, iPad, a traveling circus (ok, maybe not the circus but everything else was packed) and I dressed him in his Paw Patrol onesie in the vain hope that he might fall asleep in the car and then he was at least ready for bed.

We set off for swimming and did he fall asleep in the car? Did he testicles. He was the opposite of asleep, he was so excited it would appear to an outsider that he survives solely on a diet of Blue Smarties...



“Brace yourself Gemma”, I thought to myself as I undid the car seat and unleashed him onto the school car park path, “this is going to be bad”. How right I was.

The 2 older ones set off running the 2 minute walk to the pool like they are going to be rewarded with a lifetime supply of Haribo if they get to the swimming pool door first, which encourages the toddler to do the same. He’s pretty sturdy on his feet now but, as his momentum increases, he is often prone to weaving like a drunkard in a bumper car and often goes splat on the ground, and no sooner have I thought it than,

“Splat!” – he’s down.

“Waaaaaa!!!!”, he yells.

Arse, I think. Here we go.

Incident number one.

I scoop him up and brush him off. He’s completely fine, just a pair of dirty hands, no damage and no sooner than I pick him up, he’s off again like poop off a trowel.

We reach the swimming pool and, despite it being overcast and drizzly, as soon as we step foot in the pool, I realise it’s actually still sweltering in there. Fiddlesticks – maybe dressing the toddler in a fleecy Paw Patrol onesie wasn’t the best idea after all...ho-hum, it’s too late now.

We go in the changing rooms and the toddler sits nicely on the bench while his brothers get unchanged. I think it’s all going well until the toddler pipes up, “me go!” he says with big puppy dog eyes.

“No, poppet, it’s not Ben’s turn today I’m afraid. We have to sit and watch Luke and Zak swim, but mummy has some yum yums and the iPad, is that ok?” I say, eagerly.

“No, mummy. Me go?” he replies again.

Hairy goolies. Now what do I do?!

I get a snack out for him and this pacifies him enough to distract him and I manage to get him out of the changing rooms still in his cosy, fleecy, onesie. Just what you want to be wearing when it’s 30’c in there ☐☐☐

The older 2 shower and then walk off to their teachers ready for their lessons to begin. And this is when the faeces hit the fan my friends, this is when sh*t goes down.

“Waaaaaa!!!!” yells the toddler. “Waaaaa!!!!” as he points at

the pool. "Me go!" he says, "Me go!".

I tell him once again that he can't get in and he makes a break for the water. I manage to grab the hood of his Paw Patrol onesie and retrieve him. I'm now starting to sweat because I haven't had a chance to take my jacket off and I'm now wrestling with a slippery, onesie wearing, tantrum throwing, toddler. Wow, I'm living the dream here people.

Living. The. Dream.

I go to sit down next to a good friend of mine in order to have a long awaited catchup chat whilst I let Ben watch the iPad. Well, that was the plan anyway, no such luck was to be had.

"Waaaaa!!!" he yells again, as he wriggles away from me whilst performing a jelly move (you know the one, where a kid makes themselves so floppy you can't physically get a grip on them? That one).

"Sorry..." I tell my friend, "I might have to take him outside to watch from the window", and I stand up so I can drag the toddler out. Because our kids are still young and may need toilet visits etc, you have to remain poolside for the lesson, which is normally fine but the toddler was causing such a scene, that exiting the pool seemed like the only sensible option left to me. That or drinking some gin, and sadly I had none of that to hand.

We get to the door at the back of the pool and I tell the toddler that if he can't behave we are leaving. He doesn't like this idea so yells at me a bit more so the majority of parents watching their kids swim throw me the sympathy glance. You know, the one that says, "sorry this is happening to you but I'm so glad it's not happening to me right now", look. ☐

I ask if he wants food or drink and he yells at me to say no he doesn't, thanks very much. I start sweating some more and

my face now feels like it is on fire. Why are toddlers such unreasonable little douche bags at times?!

My last ditch attempt, after the total rejection of the iPad (much to my shock!) is to get the cars out of the bag to see if they distract him. Thankfully, by some miracle, they do, and the Tasmanian Toddler sits down on the floor – but sadly this floor I speak of is the shower floor which is sopping wet and also a bit fusty smelling – to play. Delightful. I have to join him down there to play cars and now we are both sopping wet and smell as bad as a used husbands gym kit that's been left in a greenhouse for a year. Totally grim, but at least he's quiet I suppose.

I manage to drag out playing cars until the very end of the lesson – it's been smelly and damp, but worth it so the toddler wasn't on the rampage.

I get the boys dry in the changing room and I manage to ignore the toddler who is now, once again, screaming his head off because I have removed him from his damp and smelly play area. How very dare I.

I restrain him on the bench in the changing room by using my foot/leg to pen him in, as I use my hands to dry the other two boys off. How's that for multi-tasking, eh?!

Then we have the same race back to the car that we had to the pool door when we arrived. Within 6 metres of the pool, the toddler is down in a screaming heap and I'm scooping him up and brushing him off again. When will he learn?! Wait, what am I saying? He's male. Probably never.

Back in the safety of the car, I swig one of the kids Capri-Sun cartons and imagine it's an apple infused gin – it's totally not, but a girl can dream – and I de-sweat myself with a baby wipe. I'm so glam I am. Thank the lord for baby wipes!!!

Later on my mum texts to see how I got on. I toy with being kind (lying) and telling her it was fine and that I rock at being a mum and that's we all had a wonderful time, but actually, I decide keeping it real is best and fill her in on all the horrors of my evening. She then says she is able to help me again next week and I cry a little inside. Seriously, I know I've said it already, but I totally would be lost without my lovely mum around to help me out. I hope I manage to do as good a job as she has. At the moment, I've still very much for my 'L' plates, and every day I face a new challenge thanks to my boys, but if it is all part of my 'mum training' to enable me to be like her one day, I guess I'll carry on taking the children/toddler crap for now ☐☐☐



Will it be Sink or Swim?

Let's see...

Gem . x

