

**Sara Feenan** meets an occupational therapist combining advice for new parents with an online children's clothing business

# A PERFECT combination?

**B**ecoming a mother for the first time inspired Linn Brynildsen to set up a new business combining her career as a psychologist with her desire to find quality children's clothing.

The result is the Mayamin website where parents can find practical and fashionable Scandinavian clothing while also reading research and advice about their youngsters.

Norwegian-born Ms Brynildsen said: "When you have small children around life can be a bit of a whirlwind and for first-time parents this can be daunting."

Ms Brynildsen has always been passionate about fashion and when her daughter Maya was born, she decided to combine it with her job as a qualified occupational therapist and set up the website.

She found it hard to find credible parenting tips online, so turned to psychology journals and books and decided to share what she had found.

The parenting section of Mayamin is split into sections ranging from sleep to tantrums and tips and advice are categorised by age.

Ms Brynildsen, from Yarnton, would like the site to also act as a support network for parents.

She added: "I welcome comments and would love parents to be able to share stories and enter into a discussion on the site."

Mayamin means 'my dream' in Norwegian as well as including Maya's name.

When her sister started having children ten years ago, she noticed the difference between clothes for children she found in England and the clothing she used to wear growing up in Norway.

In England wool was considered as a material unfriendly to the sensitive skin of children.

"Wool is used more readily in Norway and Scandinavia in general. Many of the clothes I stock use Merino wool, which is a super soft type of sheep wool that absorbs moisture and helps regulate temperature," she said.

Using the right combination for underwear and outer wear to reduce the layers children wear is important, she claims, and she has thoroughly researched the brands she stocks down to details such as zips being placed differently depending on the age of the child.

Ms Brynildsen has found juggling home life with setting up a business means long days and she often works into the night. But a year on from contacting the web-designers Mayamin was launched last month and already Ms Brynildsen is keen to expand the business.

Whether it be her occupational psychology experience in coaching when she worked for



OPP in London and Cheltenham-based JCA Occupational Therapy, or her penchant for selecting cute and practical Scandinavian attire for little people, she is excited to see her Maya grow in both senses of the word. **ib**

■ **Contact:** Linn Brynildsen, 07545 220 847  
**Web:** www.mayamin.co.uk

# Cakes and kindness

**E**ntrepreneurial duo Linda Williams and Julia Atkinson have found their baking business is just the right recipe for them to balance home and work life.

The pair met seven years ago, when they both had just had their first child and Ms Atkinson was delivering leaflets after developing her love of baking cakes into a micro-business. They became firm friends when they found they were both originally from the north-west of England.

Ms Atkinson used to work as catering manager at St Cross College, Oxford, and always brought cakes to social events, sometimes even sneaking them into cafés.

They were both looking to go back into employment and they were investigating opportunities to balance work and the demands of their growing families without compromising either. Ms Williams, who worked in marketing for

3, the mobile phone company, before leaving her career to have children, realised they could start a business selling Ms Atkinson's cakes to cafés, personalising them for birthdays and arranging corporate contracts.

The result was Happy Cakes based in the kitchen of Ms Atkinson's Summertown home, which, in a neat twist, they have since found was built on the site of the Oliver & Gurden cake manufacturer, which became part of the Lyons Group in 1968.

They worked for two years selling the cakes to cafés and a chain of delicatessens and using leaflet drops to build-up a customer base. Then they decided to set up a website.

"We have never turned down business and we always deliver on time and by hand," said Ms Williams. "Our motto is: cake and kindness go a long way!" **ib**



Linda Williams and Julia Atkinson presented David Williams with a box of cup cakes during his marathon Thames swim for Sport Relief last month

**Contact:** 07908 826946 ■ [www.happy-cakes.co.uk](http://www.happy-cakes.co.uk)