

WORKING MOTHER



The Mommy Diaries
How we really feel about our caregivers

Feeling Strapped?
We've got deals on gifts for everyone on your list

Home for the Holidays
Celebrating your culture with family and friends

comfort
& JOY

+
Friends don't let friends stay depressed
What every working mom needs to know

work | executive moms



The most anticipated night for Hasan is the last night of Ramadan, the eve of Eid ul-Fitr. Each year, we get together with friends and break this last fast of the month together. And then the fun begins—the exchanging of gifts! All the children sit in a circle as gifts from friends are bestowed upon them. And within moments, there is wrapping paper everywhere. (Sounds kind of like Christmas morning, doesn't it?)

In the morning on Eid ul-Fitr, the same group of friends gathers at my parents' house for morning Eid prayers and breakfast. Then Hasan, his grandparents and I spend the rest of the day together. I always take the day off from work to make Eid special, and Hasan takes the day off from school. We go out for lunch and enjoy a relaxing day after a tiring month of fasting.

Traceè Jones

Senior Manager, Assurance
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Children: Jalen, 4, Chase, 2

A: We teach our children about our culture through the food we eat, by taking them on trips and in our everyday life at home. We are African American, but both my husband's family and my family are from Louisiana, so we have a strong Creole heritage as well.

Our extended families are very large, and we get together often. The biggest events are the family reunions. Jalen has already been to four, and Chase has been to two. At a recent reunion in Atlanta, we took the boys to the King Center and to the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Chase was still a baby, but Jalen was old enough to understand that this was a place to be proud of. When we attended a reunion in New Orleans,

we toured the city, showing the boys the rich history it had to offer and the great food there was to enjoy.

The boys absolutely love the exotic foods we eat. At all the family reunions, birthday parties and holidays, there is an enormous spread of dishes from both the African-American and Creole cultures. While I don't always have time to cook all the wonderful foods within our culture from scratch, we are lucky that so much of our culture can be found near our home in Houston.

Also, Jalen loves books. His collection includes those that tell about the African-American culture and have pictures of kids that look just like him.



As the boys grow older, we will expose them to more of our culture, explaining to them the struggles that our ancestors went through so that we can live as we do today. We want them to be proud of who they are and where they come from, but we also want them to have fun in the process.

Yesenia Morillo-Gual

VP, Municipal Securities Division
Citi
Children: Branden, 9, Nicholas, 6

A: As Dominican immigrants, my family was challenged with capturing the American dream while maintaining our cultural roots. That challenge continues with my children, who think Spanish sounds funny and my favorite dish of fried plantains is "yucky." But when I speak of the sandy white beaches, the

calming weather, the hand-carved masks and the best coconuts ever, they listen.

Intrigued by what it's really like, they beg to go to the Dominican Republic on vacation to taste those coconuts, visit dozens of family members and surf those beaches. I think they're still too young to go. So until we get there, I focus on teaching them the language through reading and music, showing them the culture through museum and gallery visits and embracing our people by appreciating the masks, ceramic plates and imported paintings that cover our home. But most of all, they love visiting my old Dominican-rich neighborhood of Washington Heights in New York City, where they can indulge in their favorite *pastelitos* and fruit colas.

This past fall, the perfect learning opportunity arose when my older son was given a project to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month. The assignment called for a poster of any Latin American country; Branden chose the Dominican Republic. This gave me a chance to help him research the country's uniqueness: the climate, the people, the huge celebration on Independence Day and the meaning behind the beloved flag.

While Spanish still sounds a little strange and some of our Dominican cuisine is pushed aside, my heritage is surely instilled in my children. It's important that they know who they are and where they're from, that they remain proud to be Latino and, more importantly, that they, too, impart their culture to future generations. ■

