

The London Baby Directory Awards 2011

After 15 years of scouring the streets of London and the internet for the best services, reviewing products and sourcing ideas that any new family could need in London, the Baby Directory celebrates the best products that will make any new family's life better in the weeks and months ahead. Many other parenting awards invite companies to pay to nominate their own products but here we have selected the winners based purely on our experience of these items as used by real parents.

From established brands and tried and tested baby equipment to new names in fields such as pushchairs and skincare, our Urban Parent awards not only take into account high performance and thoughtful design, but innovation and imagination in this vast field. All this, plus the unique perspective of being the only parent product awards which are specifically looking for those winners that perform well in city homes and within an urban lifestyle. After all, the funkiest pram might never fit into an apartment lift, a city car boot or get you safely round your favourite boutique!

We were delighted to work with **BabyList** on these awards. Matching our years of experience as London-based parents and parenting journalists, the team at **BabyList** are specialists in advising parents to be and new families on the whole range of baby goods they might need, according to each different family's needs and style. Sourcing these goods for over 15 years, **BabyList** have their eye on tried and tested quality, what urban families really need, and what new ideas are evolving within the market all the time.

After hours of shortlists and re-drafted shortlists – and the

most pedantic discussions around feeding, baby bed-times and car journeys – we hope you find our urban baby awards inspiring and genuinely useful.





'A visit to Babylist should be as compulsory as a 12 week scan.'
Caroline



When you are drawing up that first nursery shopping list who do you turn to for advice and inspiration? Experienced parents and friends are invaluable, but while they might be able to tell you what they like or dislike about their particular pushchairs, they are unlikely to have taken an entire fleet of different prams, three-wheelers and combis out for a spin to compare theirs with. And while taking a stroll around the maternity department of a big store, will the sales assistant

lead you to what's right for you, or just to whatever the store has too much of in the stock room?

Fulham-based company Babylist offers the best of all these worlds, completely unbiased advice plus the warmth, knowledge and personal service to make your visit a truly memorable experience. The team at Babylist, led by husband and wife Anita and Joey Worlidge, have 16 years experience advising parents to be and new parents on what they might

need and what to buy, from the first pram and cot, to nursery décor and baby clothing. Having advised so many parents in that time, they know what brands can be relied upon, what features to look for in a product, plus they have a wealth of customer feedback as well as connections to all the established and up and coming manufacturers and designers.

Call Joey on 020 7371 5145 for further information, and he'll look after you.
www.babylist.com



Winner from birth UPPABABY VISTA

Relatively new to the UK, this from-birth combination has already picked up a 'best buy' recommendation from Which? and is an established 'high-end entry level' favourite in the US.

Two-way pushchair seating, a cosy carrycot with a ventilated mattress, and voluminous basket tick the right boxes, as do the nifty touches like a snack tray for toddlers, a fitted UV-protective hood that folds into the main hood of the pushchair, and little pockets in the basket and zipped into the hood for your essentials. But our favourite plus-point is the wheels – chunky and easy to manoeuvre, they have the bounce of air tyres without the hassle of punctures thanks to technology inspired by the Vista founders' background in product development at Reebok!

www.uppababy.com



Winner double BABY JOGGER CITY SELECT

This pushchair can be used from birth and in single or double mode with a carrycot, infant carrier and pushchair seats in different modes at the same time, and the seat sizes accommodate older toddlers well, so it's ideal for twins or other siblings. In double mode it's relatively light (15.5kg) and more narrow than the popular Out N About Nipper Double. We also particularly love that it folds with one simple one-hand motion, it goes into the back of any car and it has one handlebar for parents on the move – perfect for city life.

www.babyjogger.co.uk

Pushchairs

Winner buggies
and lightweight strollers

MACLAREN TECHNO XT

Take the lead from experienced mums – once your child can sit up, you will yearn for something nippy and simple to get from A to B on those days when your from-birth behemoth just won't do.

Most brands now offer an umbrella-fold pushchair but Maclaren can't be beat – especially with this higher-range model – for something nippy that will last until you no longer need a toddler chariot. The Techno XT is more padded than cheaper Maclarens, so it's comfy enough from six months up.

www.maclarenbaby.com



Winner three wheelers QUINNY ZAPP XTRA

For some, a three-wheeler is all about a big, strong pushchair for yomping through the countryside, but for the city, the Quinny offers the funky 3-wheeler look but without the space headache. It's light (7.8kg), it folds really compact and the Xtra is a comfy ride from birth, addressing one of the few quibbles new parents had with the popular original model.

Usually weight and compact design comes at the cost of other design features, but the Xtra can be used in three forward-facing modes and two rear-facing options for the earliest months.

www.quinny.com



Winner from birth
MAXI COSI PEBBLE

With deep sides for impact-protection and with 10cm longer in the seat, the Pebble lasts far longer than other carriers – suitable for infants from birth up to 13kg (around 12 to 15 months) – so your child can sit safely rearward for longer, too.

It can be fitted using a regular three-point seatbelt, a FamilyFix base (Isofix), and with an EasyBase 2. If you use it with the FamilyFix Base there are light and sound indicators that also reassure you that you've fitted the seat correctly, and even in other settings it can't be threaded wrongly.

www.maxi-cosi.com

Winner from 9 months

**KIDDY GUARDIAN
PRO STAGE 123**

Designed to be safe from as young as nine months to 12 years (when your child no longer needs a car seat), the Guardian Pro is unusual because it features a shock-absorbing barrier to secure your child rather than a 5-point harness, allowing a safely yet minimal movement in case of a collision. It's light and easy to fit, making it a useful option as babies become toddlers and children, who more often need to travel in other family cars at weekends and after school.

www.kiddy.de/en



Car seats

Winner from 4yrs

CONCORD TRANSFORMER XT

For use from 15kg until your child no longer needs a car seat, the Transformer XT is one of Concord's best car seats yet. Sporty-looking enough to appeal to the most reluctant passenger who believes he longer needs a 'kiddie seat' and easy to recline if even a bigger child has fallen asleep thanks to its gas hydraulic system, the side-impact, head and shoulder protection make it a reassuring seat for children as young as three.



Winner carrier ERGOBABY

Although BabyBjörn's brand new Miracle carrier might give this model a run for its money in the coming months, the ERGObaby carrier is a well-designed model that's proved kind to baby and parent alike for many happy families.

It can be used from four months (or earlier, using the Infant Insert), without any risk of hip displacement, and up to an amazing four years. It can be used on your front or back – popular especially with dads on walks.

www.ergobabycarrier.com





Winner *cots* **BABYLIST**

Growing babies last only a few months or just weeks in a Moses basket or small crib, so planning forward, a cot that converts into a toddler bed and lasts around five years is the best investment for parents. The Babylist Mia cotbed is a wonderfully sturdy piece of furniture made in beech or oak wood and offered in several different colours. It is compact for London homes, excellent value for money and what we really like is that it converts into an adorable little toddler bed with well proportioned lower foot and head boards and a side rail which prevents little tots from falling out. www.babylist.com

Winner *monitors* **TOMY DIGITAL PLUS**

Along with BT models, TOMY's monitors are easy to use, reliable and durable. The Digital Plus automatically selects a frequency, it's easy to charge up and gives off a clear sound in its docking station, it has a multicoloured night light, offers two-way talk back at a good price (around £85), and its vibrate and light signals mean you can see when your baby stirs even if you have the vacuum cleaner on or need to turn the sound alert down.

www.tomy.co.uk



Winner *changing bag* **STORKSAK**

They have won over the celebs, but us regular mums and dads love Storksak too, for their classy simplicity and enduring quality – from funky designs for less than £80 to their classic Elizabeth leather bag. The best changing bags not only feature nifty details to make them easy to use when tackling the worst changing incident on the go, and a touch of gorgeous glamour to remind you that you haven't completely abandoned femininity for motherhood, but also will continue to give pleasure as a favourite bag long after you have trained your toddler out of nappies.

www.storksak.co.uk



In the nursery

Winner nursery chair

OLLI ELLA

Gliding nursing chairs take up less space than traditional rocking chairs, yet offer support and comfort to grouchy babies and their tired parents alike. The Olli Ella, with its small range of differently shaped armchairs and made-to-order features, boldly ventures into the most chic end of nursery furniture.

Handmade in the UK, and with soft suede upholstery in vibrant raspberry or orange hues or pale pastel options, we love how Olli Ella's chairs dare you to maintain your highest interior décor standards in the face of baby sick and milky feeds.

www.oliella.com



Winner sleeping bag

BAMBINO MERINO

Made from soft, breathable natural merino wool, Bambino Merino's range of sleeping bags are ideal for our quickly-changing climate – allowing a baby to stay comfortable for a good night's sleep. In delicate designs, we especially like the fact that this sleeping bag can be adjusted so you need just one model to fit babies from two or three months up to two years.

www.bambinomerino.com

Winner nursery gadget

BRAUN THERMOSCAN

Babies and toddlers like to keep parents on their toes but mustering a high temperature out of the blue, usually for it just to soothe back down in no time at all. Reliable, easy to use and with a memory setting, the Braun Thermoscan can give quick results without discomfort for even the most sickly child or adult. A nursery gadget you'll come to treasure in the parenting years ahead.

www.braun.com



Winner
reusable nappy
BUM GENIUS

Answering so many of those 'I'd love to but...' niggles of new parents who are tempted by the idea of trying reusable nappies, Bum Genius has a great-looking, comfortable range of options all of which are as easy to use as disposables.

From room for extra layers at night, to flexible-fitting popper fittings, you can tell Bum Genius nappies have been designed by an experienced parent.

www.bumgenius.com



Winner *disposable nappy*

**NATY NATURE
BABYCARE**

With biodegradable features and being made from 100% GM-free natural materials, the Naty Baby range of nappies fit and perform like regular disposable nappies, and even look lovely and white despite being 100% chlorine-free (thanks

to corn starch bleaching), yet they are a much kinder option for parents who are concerned about landfill waste. Their ECO disposable bibs, disposal bags and nursing pads are great, too.

www.naty.com

Essentials

Winner

training pants

BAMBINO MIO

Another stylish and easy to use name in reusables, we love the simplicity of this brand's unisex training pants that are easy to wash, encouraging independence, and mean you can continue to avoid disposables during potty training.

uk.bambinomio.com



Winner babywipes

DERMA H2O

In the earliest months, many parents avoid using baby wipes because they don't like to use chemicals on their child's new skin, yet when you are on the go, wipes are a lot easier to carry than cotton wool and water. All hail, then, the arrival of Waterwipes from Derma H2O, which have been designed to stay moist without going mouldy in their packet, avoiding preservatives or perfumes.

www.dermah2o.com



Winner toiletries

LITTLE ME ORGANICS

Brands like Weleda offer excellent natural skincare for adults and infants, but we like the pregnancy, new baby and new parent ranges developed by Little Me in association with respected aromatherapist Glenda Taylor. For new parents concerned about using the wrong products to cleanse, soothe and relax their child, the Little Me range is easy to navigate and a delight to use. Plus it offers organic skincare luxury for high street prices at many major supermarkets, John Lewis and Boots.

www.littlemeorganics.co.uk



Winner breast pump

MEDELA FREESTYLE

Medela's breast pumps are reliable, easy to use and wisely developed with a pumping motion that better mimics how a baby feeds. This 2-Phase Expression enables more comfortable expressing even in the earlier weeks. The Freestyle allows both breasts to express at the same time and can be used hands-free, which is especially good for mothers who are recovering from a caesarean operation. www.medela.com

Winner steriliser

AVENT

Whether you choose their 24-hour or their regular steam steriliser, Avent's simple cleaning system fits all kinds of bottles, teats and expressing pumps, and it gives clear, reassuring signals that the bottles are ready and safe to feed with. Plus, given that it might well take pride of place in your kitchen for at least four to six months, it looks pretty good, too.

www.avent.com



Feeding

Winner high chair **STOKKE TRIPP TRAPP**

Many other manufacturers have been inspired by the design of the Tripp Trapp, but for simplicity, ease of use and the fact that it encourages your child to always be at the heart of the family table from babyhood to teen, we love this chair! It adjusts with your child and will eventually double as an adult stool... or as we have discovered, a kitchen book shelf.

www.stokke.com



Winner bottles **NUK**

You might think there's little to choose between bottles, so long as they don't leak, but NUK reigns supreme. Developed more than 50 years ago, the NUK teat is designed to better mimic the shape of a mother's nipple when breastfeeding, and the air vent on the upper side of the teat is intended to improve the air pressure inside the bottle during the baby's feed, to reduce the risk of the child taking in air and causing discomfort. Plus, importantly, they are still easy to assemble and clean!

www.nukbabyshop.co.uk

Winner weaning food **PLUM BABY**



Where other innovators have come up with chic, intelligent options in nursery interiors, pushchairs and babywear, Susie Willis has done the same for baby food! Whether you only want readymade options for when you are out and about, or you never quite bring yourself to mash carrots at home, the Plum Baby range offers nutritious and varied meals from first foods to toddler breakfasts. With organic ingredients and a passion for quinoa, the menu is always tempting. (The muesli gets the grown-up vote, too.)

www.plum-baby.co.uk

Winner bouncers

BABYBJORN BABYSITTER BALANCE

The classic that launched the Swedish nursery company 50 years ago! In that time this simple, curved day chair for babies of all ages has been honed to perfection, but its ability to support a child, pack flat for travel and it's simplicity still can't be beat.

www.babybjorn.com



Winner playgyms

MAMAS & PAPAS GINGERBREAD 5 IN 1 PLAYMAT

Playmats with stimulate shapes, colours and safe playthings for even the youngest babies come in all shapes and sizes, but we like the adaptability and sheer prettiness of the M&P range.

www.mamasandpapas.com



Toys

Winner toys 1-2's

LULA SAPPHIRE

Babies aren't likely to interact with even the cutest cuddly toy for their early months, but for sourcing quirky alternatives to gooey baby gifts and beautiful toddler-friendly treats to inspire imaginative play, this online store is a joy.

www.lulasapphire.com



Winner toys 2-3's

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Whilst a room filled with hand crafted wooden toys is a lovely idea, your child's first forays into art, garden games and make-believe worlds is going to need some durable, washable plastic too – and ELC stocks bright, colourful ideas just perfect for this stage.

www.elc.co.uk

Winner toys 3-5's

FUNKY MOOSE

As your child wants to stretch out to garden playhouses, toys that have a little more intrigue to them, creative kits and more enduring wooden classics, this Wiltshire-based, online company is perfect.

In fact we'd like to request they make the Ruby Sequin Ballgown dressing-up costume in mum sizes too, please.

www.funkymoose.co.uk



funkymoose



Winner maternity jeans
SERAPHINE

For those who are never out of their denim except when they're in their PJs, pregnancy can be a trying time. Thanks to Seraphine, a growing bump doesn't have to ruin your jeans style. Favoured by the likes of Jessica Alba, Jodie Kidd and Dannii Minogue when they were with-bump, the range includes classic jeans cuts, a choice of maternity mini skirt and a stretchy leather jeans belt. As they say themselves – 'jeanius'.

www.seraphine.com

Winner nursing bra

AMORALIA

From those who are still looking for a little padded plunge in pregnancy, to the breastfeeding mum who craves some lacy glamour, Amoralia's maternity lingerie offers function, fun and flattering camisole for the nursing months. Our heroes!

www.amoralia.com



Maternity



Winner evening/occasion MAMAS & PAPAS

Alongside essential separates, Mamas & Papas never fails to throw in a few glamorous blouses and dresses into their ranges, throughout the seasons.

Whether you want something funky or more formal, there will be a collection you can draw on, and importantly, a few accessorising pieces to match without you having to trawl the high street.

www.mamasandpapas.com

Winner work EVA ALEXANDER

Made in the UK, the Eva Alexander range is excellent quality for those times when you really need something simple yet smart.

The range is select, but in blacks, blues, creams, and browns, it's flattering and classy. The Wrap Tie Maternity Jacket is the star.

www.eva-alexander.com

