Meltdown makeovers

Greenie Awards!
The best all-natural stuff for your fam

Did you pick the right pediatrician?

Tyler Florence cooks dinner tonight

If your kids sleep in bed with you, turn...
"I'm so sorry!" Jessica Alba is late—and looks frazzled. "My washing machine exploded and my three-year-old fell down the stairs wearing my high heels. We had to have a chat about why we don't wear heels on the stairs."

It's a sun-soaked Santa Monica day at the offices of the Honest Company (honest.com), Jessica's latest project: a nostalgic monthly diaper and baby-wipe delivery service that's anything but old-school. The plant-based disposable diapers and other products contain no toxic chemicals whatsoever—and they're cute with a capital C! The former Dark Angel and star of both Fantastic Four and Spy Kids reaches across the table and grabs some diaper designs to show me.

There are funny skulls for baby boys and ice cream cones for little girls. "I don't know why people think natural products have to be ugly," she says. If you've ever run out of diapers ("It's the worst moment ever, especially when it's late at night," says Jessica), you'll love her new website. Just log on, shop, and go! A box of adorable baby goods shows up on your doorstep a few days later.

As I listen to her talk about babies, I'm reminded she gave birth to her second daughter, Haven, a mere five months earlier. She looks, well, a-ma-zing. Her hair is pulled back into a high bun, showing off the chiseled cheekbones and pouty lips that have helped land her on lists reserved for some of the world's most beautiful people. "I put on a lot of weight with [my firstborn] Honor; it took a long time to get back in shape," she says, only half-jokingly. "My husband [producer Cash Warren] made bacon for me every morning, and at night we ordered a minimum of five desserts." Now in slim leggings, combat boots, and a loose-fitting black coat with deep pockets, where she's hiding her hands (a tiny tattoo peeks out from one wrist), it's hard to imagine
On weekends, we wake up and go to our favorite deli, where Honor has pancakes, bacon... and matzo ball soup!

1. Don't put a brown paper bag on your kid for nothing. When I was pregnant with Honor, my mom said, "You have to pre-wash all the baby's clothes in such-and-such brand detergent, because it's for infant wear." So I did... and I had a massive allergy attack. I had hives, sneezed my head off, and my eyes were tearing. And this detergent was geared toward babies! There was no way I was putting clothes washed in this on a newborn! If I'd made me feel that bad, imagine how a baby with no immune system would react! Then I did some research and learned there are petroleum-based chemicals in a lot of babycare products, even some of the so-called "earth-friendly" brands. Once I had bought brown diapers, telling myself, "You know what, they're not cute, but they're all-natural." I was resigned to the fact that anything healthy wasn't going to be attractive. But then I found out that the inside of the diaper had that same petroleum-based stuff in it that the other diapers had. I'd put an ugly brown diaper on my kid for nothing!

2. Sometimes, you have to do things yourself. I went to see Christopher Gavigan—he's a leader in environmental health, and his book, Healthy Child, Healthy World: Creating a Cleaner, Greener, Safer Home, had taught me so much. I asked him if he'd be interested in starting a babycare-products company with me. Cash thought it was a great idea, too, so Christopher and I set about building the Honest Company. We deliver diapers, wipes, cleaners, and toiletries—all free of harmful chemicals—right to your door. And they're cute! No brown diapers here!

3. Kids don't always have to know the truth. I serve Honor flavored sparkling water—she thinks that it's soda, and that's what I let her think. I told her that "brown soda" is only for adults, and she believes me. Ha! And when the paparazzi follow us, and she asks me what they're doing, I tell her "They're just taking pictures. Isn't that silly?" I don't want her to have anxiety, so I tell her they do that to everyone, not just our family.

4. Nobody else has to know the truth either. You'd think that the best way to protect my family from the lies and criticisms the press can print about me would be to angrily deny them at every turn. But I've found out it's better to do nothing, as long as it doesn't deeply affect my family and their happiness. Whether it's true or false, I won't say anything. I think that's just feeding into it, and it's going to create more press than it needs to. My mom's like, "It's not true! That's an outright lie!" And I tell her, "Yeah, but if I come out and say that's an outright lie, then it's going to be circulated again."

5. I'm turning into my mom! When I was a kid, I told myself, "When I become a mother, I'm never going to say 'Do it because I said so!' to my children. I'll definitely give them my reasons." Yep, I've totally said it—and without giving reasons.

6. In our house, I'm the bad cop. I'm the disciplinarian. I think it's because I was kind of a naugthy kid myself. I'll push my parents' buttons and test them to see how much I could get away with. Cash, meanwhile, was always the perfect kid—the straight-A student who was everyone's sweetheart. It was never in him to be naughty. I think I just know, from me being that other kind of child, how to cut off bad behavior and redirect it. So when Honor tries to do something she shouldn't, I have to say to Cash, "Let her know right from the beginning that she can't." I'll put her in time-out and tell her, "Think about the choices you've made." Then I'll come back and say, "Now it's time to stop crying and think." Then I'll come back again and say, "Now, what did you learn?"

7. Getting nominated for a Golden Globe is cool. Saving the planet? Even cooler. But nothing seems as monumental as being a mom. Before I had kids, I was always so focused on my career, and it was always such a big thing for me. But once I had kids, it changed. That's probably the thing that surprised me the most about motherhood—just how secondary everything else is. Nothing else really matters to me aside from my children and their well-being.

Oh, and another thing... Going from one child to two is easier. Having your first baby is just a complete and total mental shift!

To prep Honor for big sisterhood, we'd say things like, "You know, when the baby comes, babies can't have lollipops or go on a swing. They can't play dress-up." Honor realized she was going to be the cool sister. Now, she's really into being my helper. When I change Haven's diaper, I ask her, "Can you throw this away for Mommy?" or "Can you get me the wipes?" She's really into it. I tell her, "Oh, you're such a good big sister" and give her a high-five.

My husband, Cash, is a super dad. If I'm with Haven, he'll make Honor's lunch or take her to the park. They see movies or draw together—they'll even watch sports with him.

On weekends, we wake up and go to our favorite deli, where Honor has pancakes, bacon... and matzo ball soup. She's obsessed with that soup!