

## ANALYZE THIS

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Barbara Sturm's line for kids.

## Baby Care Goes Clean

"We're trying to appeal to a customer that doesn't want the same products their parents used that seem out of date and out of touch." BY ALLISON COLLINS

**THE CLEAN** beauty movement has officially permeated baby care.

A collection of new brands that aim to meet the needs of modern parents has emerged in recent years. These companies are creating specialty products meant to protect children's skin barriers and treat ailments like baby eczema while eschewing steroids, parabens and other ingredients that the current generation of caregivers view as no-nos.

Retailers — both in baby and in beauty — have taken notice. Specialty shops Maisonette and The Tot have broad assortments of better-for-you children's personal care products, and mainstream beauty retailers, including Nordstrom and Credo, have also built up sizable assortments in the category, which is small, but growing.

Sales in the children's personal care category are up 35x year-over-year at Maisonette, and triple digits at Credo, according to the companies, respectively. According to Euromonitor, U.S. baby and child-

skin care products rose slightly to \$348.2 million.

Celebrities are getting in on the baby care market, too. Jessica Alba was early to launch clean baby products with The Honest Co., and has since been joined by Gabrielle Union and Dwyane Wade who plan to launch a children's personal care brand later this year called Proudly, and Kylie Jenner, who is also plotting baby care.

"The market has really risen to the demand," said Sylvana Durrett, cofounder and CEO of Maisonette. "This is a very fast-growing sector within baby and child, and there's no lack of clean and wellness-inspired brands coming out."

She and Luisana Mendoza, Maisonette's cofounder and president, said that they've seen an uptick in interest in baby and children's personal care, and an influx of brands. The duo aim to have "a selection for all the issues that come up," Durrett said, and the assortment spans from broad care products, like,

Maisonette's shopper is similar to the Whole Foods shopper, Mendoza said. "There's a trust that whatever you buy there is the best you can do for your family," she said.

Credo is also aiming to provide niche products that new parents may want for themselves or for their children. The beauty retailer has seen solid sales of belly oils, said merchant Elizabeth Albrecht, as well as products that can be used by both parents and children.

"Anything that's going to prevent or correct things like stretch marks are really selling very well," Albrecht said. Baby sunscreen is also popular, she noted — "it's something she could throw in her bag and feel good about putting on both of them. There's some crossover there."

Earlier this year, Credo started stocking baby products in stores, in addition to online. Right now, the assortment is in four of Credo's 10 locations, according to Albrecht, but may roll into more in the future.

"Continually we were hearing from our store staff that people were coming in saying, 'we want baby and mama products,'" Albrecht said. So far, she says it's been a "huge success."

"Since last year, we've experienced triple-digit-percent growth, so it's a massive growth, but on a very small number," Albrecht said. Right

At Credo — and in the baby care market in general — consumers are looking for simple formulations with ingredients they can understand, experts agreed.

"There's no need to overpower kids' skin. What do kids need? Some extra protection, extra hydration, extra lipids ... they have complete skin but it's not quite as developed as adults, so it's more vulnerable and more prone to problems," said Barbara Sturm, who released a five product Baby & Kids line in 2018, priced from \$35 to \$60.

Sturm said she started creating products when she was pregnant with her daughter, Pepper, and wound up sending them out to friends. "I said, 'OK, we need to put this in packaging now because the requests are so high and I cannot just keep producing these samples,'" Sturm said.

The assortment has a small but dedicated consumer base, Sturm said. "Not that many people want to spend that much money on kids' products," she said.

"People are looking into this area because they want to stay healthier," Sturm said. "These days when you have children, it's a big deal to to make sure your kid is OK and they learn everything, Mandarin Chinese and skiing and good skin care."

Megan O'Neill, a new mom and the

eight weeks old, she'd yet to put any products on him at all.

"I haven't used one thing," O'Neill said. "Everyone talks about baby soft skin and babies are overflowing with collagen, they don't need much — I don't even use shampoo, I just use water."

Goop sells a small assortment of baby products on the site, from brands including Babo Botanicals and Baeo Baby, and O'Neill said she also liked the lines from Tierra & Lava, Beb Organic, Kiss Kiss Goodnight and Furtuna Kids.

"Goop shoppers are a bubble still, but definitely it's becoming more widespread that you want to put things on your body that are not harmful," O'Neill said. "Clean beauty has become such a movement for adults, so it makes sense that you'd want it for your babies."

At Palorama, founder Jane Keltner de Valle is aiming for the products to "make up the backbone of [a kid's] daily routine," she said. "No child needs to have 20 products," she said.

Keltner de Valle, the former style director for Architectural Digest and fashion news director at Glamour and Teen Vogue, launched Palorama in 2020 with Cloud 9 Daily Cream, \$21, Smooth Sailing Gentle Cleansing Bar, \$12 and Clean Bean Wash, \$25. Products are fragrance-, paraben-, phthalates- and silicone-free, and housed in whimsical yet minimal packaging.

Keltner de Valle said she went on her own journey into clean beauty when she was pregnant. Then, when her son developed eczema, she didn't like the products recommended from an ingredient or branding perspective.

"We're trying to appeal to a customer that doesn't want the same products their parents used, which seem out of date and out of touch," Keltner de Valle said. Palorama shoppers are modern, discerning, and research ingredients, Keltner de Valle said. "They want to connect emotionally to a brand. The brands that have always existed are more transactional, and brands today have to do more."

To do more, many emerging baby and children's care brands are leaning into ingredient stories.

The team at Gryph & IvyRose has a focus on including high levels of medicinal herbs in their products. The brand was launched by Karolina Kurkova in 2019, and has already seen an evolution in its shopper base.

"We got into Whole Foods just last year, in the middle of COVID-19. People are coming around, and clean is the basic standard now for most people," said Rachel Finger, who cofounded the line.

Gryph & IvyRose is sold in select retailers, through Amazon and direct-to-consumer. Best-sellers are the Children's Chocolate Probiotics,

\$29, Daily Embrace Shampoo & Conditioner, \$29, and Poppin' Bubbles bubble bath, \$24. The line is meant to be hydrating and soothing, and does not contain parabens, sulfates or phthalates. Kurkova and Finger started the line with Orion Nevel, who operates an herbal shop in Miami.

"At the beginning, it was a pioneer-type consumer, but as our brand matured and we learned more about our consumer we did see great adoption with a much bigger group of people," Nevel said.

Sweta Doshi, who founded Bubbsi, took her background in product development for L Brands and translated it into baby care after her daughter developed eczema, she said. She had a hard time finding plant-based products with natural ingredients, so she made them. Formulations are based around organic, cold-pressed coconut oil, and free from parabens, phthalates, sulfates, mineral oil and dyes.

"In the natural space and coming from a body care background, I felt I could create something better," Doshi said. "I felt like you could get your Darth Vader bubble bath, but then it was full of all this crap [synthetics, dyes and fragrances] that you didn't want to put on your kids."

Bubbsi products come in refillable silicone packages shaped like animals that are meant to appeal to children.

Zoë Foster Blake's Gro-To also has packaging meant to entice kids to use the products. Foster Blake, a former beauty editor in Australia, said her brightly colored packages with funny faces on them are meant to help children "build the connection to self care and looking after themselves."

Foster Blake said the baby care market has evolved faster toward clean in the U.S. than Australia, and when she had her children, she wound up using her adult skin care oil from Go-To on them.

"I found out with my first son, babies are very rashy. They're very rashy, mysterious little creatures," Blake said. "They flare up at anything."

Gro-To's line includes Sud Bud Bubble Bath, \$25, Skin Wizard Nourishing Baby Oil, \$32, Super Softy Nourishing Body Lotion, \$26, and a lavender room spray called Bad Dream Buster, \$15, that kids use in their "arsenal against anxiety and night terrors and bad dreams," Foster Blake said. "Sleep and babies is a really big area we might explore as well."

Chemical engineer Shelly Ann Winokur, the founder of Kiss Kiss Goodnight, launched her line with a focus on plant-based products that work on sensitive skin.

"We want to ensure they're developing a ... healthy microbiome, healthy skin barrier and healthy pH," she said. Kiss Kiss Goodnight's



Palorama's baby care line.



products include Peace of Mind protective balm, \$14, a dual-tasking diaper balm and belly balm for expecting mothers made with cupacu butter and pracaxi oil, as well as Sweet Whispers Hydrating Face and Body Lotion, \$32, made with nilotica shea butter and sea buckthorn oil.

Winokur's customers have been especially impressed by Lullaby Melting Balm Cleanser, \$24, which mimics moisturizing oil cleansers for adults sold in the prestige beauty space. "At the end, you have a cleaned, moisturized baby with really nothing on the skin," she said. ■