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THE PERCENTAGE OF AMERICAN PARENTS WHO HOPE THEIR CHILDREN WILL ONE DAY OWN THEIR OWN COMPANIES, ACCORDING TO A 2005 SURVEY FOR OFFICE DEPOT. EIGHTEEN PERCENT WOULD LIKE THEIR KIDS TO BE DOCTORS, AND ELEVEN PERCENT HOPE THEIR CHILDREN WILL TEACH.

REBECCA FINELL HAS BEEN PARTICULAR ABOUT DESIGN SINCE HER LATE teens thanks to her mother, who passed on a passion for midcentury modernism. The interest was still strong by the time Finell had her own daughter, Ryann, five years ago, and found herself frustrated by the mass-market baby products she could afford on her premed-student income. "I couldn't find anything I wanted to buy for my home," the 30-year-old recalls. "And when I did, I could see there was room for improvement." Two years later, Finell had her second child, Vivian—and the predictable multi-colored bath toys, potties, and high chairs still failed to impress.

But by then she could do something about it. She had left medicine and was studying industrial design at Arizona State University when she created the Frog Pod, a bath-toy caddy that's playful but mod, functional but stylish. In 2004, Finell partnered with a local businessman to form Boon, the company that launched the product. Soon Target came a-calling, and within a few months more than 100,000 Frog Pods had sold in 15 countries.

REBECCA FINELL

How a med-student-turned-mom-turned-designer started a product line that's a Boon to parents everywhere

BY STACIE STUKIN PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID TSAY



Rebecca Finell at home in Tempe, Arizona, with her daughters, Vivian and Ryann



Clockwise from top left: Finell's first product, a bath-toy caddy called the Frog Pod (\$25, target.com); Finell works on an arts-and-crafts project with daughters Ryann and Vivian (left), who is seated in Boon's new high chair; playing in the bath, with Boon's training potty-tub stool (in foreground); the designer's computer displays sketches of a future bedding line.



Tucked inside an industrial park in Tempe, Arizona, the Boon offices are splashed with color, the walls painted in the company's trademark orange and grass green and decorated with artwork by Ryann and Vivian. Here, Finell and her six staffers spend their days solving motherhood's countless quotidian dilemmas: how to get the kids in the bath, where to hide the toys, how to scrape the caked-on applesauce off the furniture. To that end, Boon's latest products include a bubble-bath dispenser that fits over the faucet, an oversize bag that stores stuffed animals while doubling as a beanbag seat, and a streamlined high chair with a tray small enough to fit in the dishwasher.

The girls are frequent visitors to the office, but they spend most of their days at home with Finell's husband, Brian. Two years ago, when it became clear that Boon was a viable business, he gave up his job working for Arizona's secretary of state to take care of the kids full-time. "At first I was worried, because a lot of men gauge success by their careers, but the experience has been great," says Finell, who takes tremendous satisfaction in knowing that "our girls are in good hands." (For his part, Brian proudly calls himself a "kept man," adding that his friends are jealous of his role as a stay-at-home dad.) Although Boon's frontwoman sometimes misses the daily duties of motherhood—especially, she says, when her daughters call her "Dad" by mistake—she still makes time for important rituals, from eating breakfast with the family every day to the Tuesday nights when she transforms her kitchen into a classroom to teach art to Ryann, Vivian, and their friends.

Finell and her husband are contemplating having a third child, joking that it would be good for business. "Face it—my having kids is an inspiration for Boon," she says. But conceiving ideas doesn't seem to be a problem: Finell is already planning an entire collection of crib bedding, which promises to stand out, like most of the company's products, as both chic and affordable. "Boon means an unexpected gift, and I thought that was perfect," Finell says. "We want all our products to be gifts for parents who don't have a lot of money but want good design." ☺

FINELL'S FAVORITES

What she uses to control kid clutter at home and on the go



FOR THE STROLLER

"This insulating tote attaches to any stroller and provides easy access to moms' and kids' drinks." Double-Thirsty tote, \$15, Built, builtny.com.



FOR THE BEDROOM

"It's a bench, a toybox, and a bookshelf! Plus, it comes with wheels, making room-rearranging easy." Fuji toybox, \$370, argington.com.



FOR THE PLAYROOM

"I didn't know what this was at first, but I decided it was just the thing for storing the girls' kraft paper." Vurm wine rack, \$10, ikea.com.