
DOING THE WRITE THING

TWO MOMS BLEND FAMILY AND FEMINIST POLITICS

"He is completely in my life, and everything that was happening in my life before, he has to be a part of." Jennifer Baumgardner is referring to her one-year-old son, Skuli, whom she is raising as a single mother with help from Skuli's dad. A journalist and speaker, Baumgardner writes books with Amy Richards (most recently, *Grassroots: A Field Guide for Feminist Activism*), and the two travel to college campuses throughout the country to address audiences on women's issues.

The firsthand knowledge Baumgardner (left) and Richards (right) have gained about motherhood has actually deepened their pro-choice politics: The pair's commitment to reproductive rights is reflected in Baumgardner's recent documentary, *I Had An Abortion*, and in Richards's painfully honest essay about her selective reduction of triplets, which inspired vitriolic letters to the editor of *The New York Times Magazine* after it ran on the back page.

Meanwhile, feminist sensibilities inform the style in which Baumgardner and Richards raise their children. The women, who both work from home, take their babies wherever they go (two-year-old Webber and Skuli have often traveled together). Richards has even breastfed while giving a reading. "And when I'm home writing, Skuli's kind of part of the deadline," Baumgardner says.

Of course, her life has had to adapt to baby demands. (During this writer's interview with Baumgardner, she'd occasionally take a break to read a line or two of a book to her son.) "Before he was born, there were a million things that I would distract myself with. Now, if he's awake and needs attention, I just can't work on the piece."

This spring, when Baumgardner and Richards embark on another round of back-to-back speaking engagements, they'll have a newborn with them—Richards is pregnant again. How do the women manage? "You just deal with it, because you have to," Baumgardner muses. "And there's definitely a cool, exciting part of it, which is having this new, wonderful baby around." HOWARD HALLE

"Before making a work-related call, I just try to get him situated with either a snack or lots of books, or I'll even let him ruin the kitchen cupboards."

JENNIFER BAUMGARDNER

