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***I Love My Baby Because ...* by Paullina Simons** illustrated by Cassia Thomas

Publisher: HarperCollins

RRP \$29.99

Mothers love their babies - of course they do. Although, it seems inevitable that even the smallest child can create a trail of destruction of cyclonic proportions. This beautifully illustrated book reminds readers that even though the challenges can be never-ending, a baby brings much love and joy into daily life.

The contrast between the text and the warm-hearted illustrations is delightful. For example, a double-page spread with simple text proclaims, "I love my baby because she bakes with me." The mother is valiantly decorating cup cakes while the young child is seated at a table waving a spoon and sending lumps of pink icing flying about and smearing it on the tablecloth.

"I love my baby because she loves to paint," shows the inevitable experiments of a budding artist straying from the child's own easel to using a wall as a canvas for blobs of paint and handprints.

There's a nostalgic touch to scenes like the spacious backyard, picket fence, and a single clothesline propped up with branches and flapping washing secured by wooden clothes pegs. The happy child is well-matched by the slightly harassed, smiling mother who obviously cherishes her daughter while doing her best to cope with everyday tasks.

This would make a lovely gift for a new mother or a child's first birthday. It would also be a useful resource for a parents' centre to highlight the chaos and rewards of living with a busy toddler.

Reviewed by children's book author, Jean Bennett

Author's website:

<http://paullinasimons.com/>

Illustrator's website:

<http://cassiathomas.blogspot.co.nz/>

