

Monday, March 3, 2008 | [Read more at BabyShopMagazine.com](http://BabyShopMagazine.com)

Renee Raab Whitcombe, Budding Family Publishing



In May, 2000, I moved from Southern California to Sagamore Hills, OH with my husband Mike and 17 month old daughter Alex. At the time, I was six months pregnant and thought this would be a terrific chance to bond with Alex and who had been accustomed to a full-time working mom before the move. With several life-changing transitions going on at once—moving cross-country, putting a 13-year career "on hold" and getting ready for baby #2—I was dedicated to nurturing a smooth landing for my whole family.

Alex and I spent the summer in pursuit of a great tool that would explain to Alex what it means to become a Big Sister. We canvassed every bookstore, library, gift boutique and the Internet. We bought and borrowed lots of books about other families expecting a baby. On August 29, 2000, Alex became a Big Sister. She arrived at University Hospital to meet the baby and walked right past her. She proceeded to press every button on the cool hospital bed, ate her snack and returned home. She didn't say so much as hi or goodbye to little Sydney.

Five minutes later, I truly had an epiphany--all those books, the ones we read 15 and 20 times each, had been about *other* families--none of them were about ALEX.

So right there in the hospital, in a matter of a day, I wrote *Look Who's Going To Be A Big Sister*. And even though it wasn't full of laminated pocket pages, gorgeous artwork, flap doors and insert cards—YET—I knew I was coming home from the hospital with two new babies to nurture and introduce to the world.

With that, Budding Family was born!

I spent the next three years in product development while working with pediatricians, pre-school educators and child psychologists on age-appropriate content and tone. The reactions, validation and encouragement I received from extensively seeking out professional opinions indicated that meaningful, high-quality resources for siblings were lacking in the marketplace. My mission evolved into creating a series of top-quality, solution-oriented transition tools and resources for young children and families.

My roots as a television producer proved to be a great training ground for publishing, manufacturing and marketing. Multi-tasking with deadlines was a familiar routine, which allowed me to ignore everyone's advice that I would never be able to create and build a business while raising two kids under two. (Actually, "everyone" excludes Mike, who genuinely supported my endeavor). I quickly fell into the entrepreneur's juggling act, keeping my mission squarely in full view.

My first two keepsake albums (for Big Sisters- and Big Brothers-to-be) launched in 2004 and immediately won an iParenting Media Award for juvenile products. The panel of judges included parents, pediatricians, educators and psychologists--I felt instantly understood by the whole world! 16 months later my third title (*Look Who's Moving to a New Home*, 2005) was introduced, and most recently I have expanded the Budding Family line with a series of keepsake photo greeting cards for soon-to-be siblings. The new cards solve a dilemma I had trying to create a product that worked for traditional *and* non-traditional family scenarios like adopting a second baby or welcoming a new baby

into a blended family. My goal is to expand the card line up to 12-16 designs in the first year.

It's been almost four years since Budding Family entered the marketplace, and we are in our fifth printing of our original titles and poised for continued growth. I am focused on slow, incremental growth – kind of the marathon approach—and hope to share my business with my daughters one day. After all, they've grown up along side Budding Family and enjoy knowing they were my inspiration from the very beginning.

To learn more about Budding Family's products and history, visit www.buddingfamily.com. To contact Renee Raab Whitcombe, send an email to renee@buddingfamily.com.

Spindle Publishing Company, Inc. • 2275 Swallow Hill Road, Building 800 • Pittsburgh, PA 15220
[Subscribe](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Advertise With Us](#)