

YOUR STORY



OUR GIRL Summer

Vivienne Pearson takes a little heat over her daughter's name.

We named our daughter Summer. We have no regrets – we love her name, and it suits her beautifully. However, like all expectant parents, especially first-timers, we were happily oblivious to the wider implications of our decision. Naming our daughter after a season has raised some unexpected hurdles.

The inspiration for her name came when I overheard a baby being called Somerset. I was taken by the cadence and originality of the name, and so was my husband. However, we figured the name Somerset would be abbreviated, leaving her with the awkward 'Somer'. To avoid having to repeatedly spell out her name, we decided we'd simply call her Summer.

The first unexpected hurdle came from my nephew. Max's logical brain could not cope with the fact we had named our

baby Summer, when she was actually born in spring. Each time we saw him he requested we explain this disparity, which according to my sister was the source of much family discussion. By the time Summer was about two months old, Max came to some internal resolution and declared to all who would listen, "It is okay for a baby born in spring to be called Summer".

Then spring turned to summer (the season), and we found ourselves caught in a linguistic puzzle. Any discussion about summer clothes, summer holidays or hats for summer caused confusion about whether we meant the baby or the season. Calling the weather 'summery' didn't help, as this had become my mum's nickname for her. We decided to give priority to our daughter and started referring to the months from December to February as the 'warm season'.

Over the next few years we overcame this hurdle by differentiating between summer the season and Summer the girl.

We realised we'd taken this to extremes when we overheard Summer telling a friend her middle name was "the girl". And, ironically, thanks to her white-blond hair and translucent skin, we spent summer the season vigilantly protecting Summer the girl from the power of the sun.

While we intended to save our daughter from having to spell out her name, I am always asked to, especially over the phone. I usually say, "Summer, like the season".

Summer is now six years old. She has always been perfectly happy with her name, and has never had a problem understanding the difference between herself and the season. Apart from the occasional compliment about the beauty and suitability of her name, we're all used to the season-related issues.

So I was highly amused the other day when Summer's younger brother added a new twist. While playing with dolls named after each member of our family, I whizzed the 'Summer' doll around like a gymnast, commentating on the moves. I finished her display with a leap and a somersault. My son followed suit and spun the 'Daddy' doll around. He also finished with a leap, and then, without an inkling of his mix-up, a "daddysault". ●

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