

URBANATOMY®

urbanfamily



GROWING A FAMILY IN SHANGHAI

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PLUS
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Family Members: Raefer Wallis, Sherry Poon and children Ruohan (9), Saïa (6), Aoran (10 months), as well as Gingy (the 4-year-old cat)

Home Country: Canada

Years in Shanghai: 14

Children's birthplace: All 3 of our children were born in Shanghai. Two of them in our house!

Occupations: Raefer is partner of a design firm, AOO Architects and runs a green tech company called GIGA (Green Ideas Green Action). Sherry is the owner and designer of Wobabybasics, an organic children's wear brand. She is also the founder and one of the organizers of the Eco Design Fair in Shanghai.

Factors that helped determine family size: (Raefer) Trial and error. Nothing scientific.

(Sherry) Intuition and hormones played a big role. We felt that three kids would create the right family dynamics (and craziness) for us.

Family mode of transportation: We rely mainly on biking and walking to get around the city. For longer distances, we take the subway or taxi. We were able to take one and two kids on one bike easily. Now with three kids, we've had to buy more bikes. We either have the kids seated with us on two bikes or have the older two ride their own bikes.

Three Kids: Officially Outnumbered

Living arrangements: We live in a renovated lane house in the former French Concession area. It's only 85-sqm but we designed it so that all spaces are used efficiently. It is also open concept design where all the 'living' takes place in our living room/dining room/kitchen. We can cook and help with the girl's homework while the baby plays with toys all in the same space.

Our two eldest daughters share a bedroom. The smallest one is in a crib in our bedroom. The house was fully gutted and renovated, including insulation and high-performance windows, which makes it comfortable all year round which is unusual in Shanghai. Skylights bring in lots of light (even on the north side) and provide views of the skyline.



Red Rooster Photos