

I make my career work by farming out the baby care to granny, admits Julia Bradbury

Best of both worlds: Miss Bradbury

By Alasdair Glennie

BALANCING the pressures of a career with raising a child is a constant struggle for most working mothers.

Julia Bradbury seems to have managed it effortlessly though, with her TV presenting career going from strength to strength since the birth of her son, now almost two.

Her secret? Outsourcing most of her childcare to her parents and her nanny.

Miss Bradbury, 42, said she feels especially lucky because many pensioners nowadays 'don't want to get involved' in raising their grandchildren as they are too busy enjoying their retirement.

And she said she has made a return promise to look after her parents when they get older rather than send them to a retirement home.

Tonight the former Countryfile host will present two primetime TV programmes - new ITV quiz show Take on the Twisters and BBC1 health series Long Live Britain.

Miss Bradbury said she was delighted to take on different types of work because she had felt 'pigeonholed' in the past, adding:

Balancing act: The TV host's son Zephyr



'I'm glad I'm no longer the woman who walks around hills in wellies. Now I wear high heels just as often as I wear as boots.'

But she admitted she would be unable to manage her hectic filming schedule and look after her son Zephyr without her 'amazing family support'.

She said: 'My mum and dad, Chrissi and Michael, are very hands-on grandparents.

They come to London at least once a week to spend time with their grandson Zeph. They are very much enjoying it.

'I also have a lovely nanny called Gemma, who is absolutely my life-saver because the problem with this job is they aren't fixed hours...I have long days and can be gone from very early in the morning until late at night.'

Miss Bradbury lives in London with her property developer partner Gerard Cunningham, 52, and their son. When they are both too busy with work to look after him, her parents drive around 100 miles from their home in Rutland to help.

The presenter said most mothers her age were unable to rely on their families for childcare, adding: 'And actually there are lots of grandparents who don't want to get involved, who are happy to say, "Isn't he cute and lovely" from a distance...I feel very sorry for my friends who are in that situation.'

'They look at me and say "You don't know how lucky you are". But I do.'

Miss Bradbury's father, 72, recently recovered from prostate cancer and her mother, 75, recovered from colon cancer.

Disney video game that could rack up a £250 bill for parents

By Keith Gladdis

IT is expected to be the 'must have' new video game for youngsters, boasting some of the best-loved characters from Disney films.

But to the dismay of parents, Disney Infinity comes with a potential price tag of more than £250 - and is said to put pressure on children to add a 'never-ending' string of extras.

The interactive game works by placing collectible toy figures on a Disney Infinity Base - a portal that operates through an existing games console to 'warp' the character on to the screen.

Starter packs, including the video game, base and three toy figures, are expected to cost between £50 and £60 on release next month.

But it costs £12 to add each of the 17 other figurines available, and £4 for add-on packs that can improve strength and speed in the game.

More figures are expected to be launched before Christmas, adding to the pressure on parents to give in to pester power.

Siobhan Freegard, founder of parenting advice site Netmums, said: 'I do worry that at the moment so many parents are strapped for cash.'

'It's not a cheap present - and to go back to school and find Little Johnny down the road has all the characters will make it

hard. It is a never-ending thing. Parents need to know what they're signing up to.'

Concerns have also been raised about the £4 add-ons that can provide new powers or change the background of the game.

Mrs Freegard said: 'I'm not sure I like that your character can be better because your parents have more money.'

The Disney Infinity concept borrows heavily from Skylanders, a hugely successful game that has more than 100 collectible character figures in a similar price range.

The Disney Infinity starter packs come with the characters Jack Sparrow from Pirates of the Caribbean, Sulley from Monsters University and Mr



Must-have: The Disney Infinity base with toy figures

Incredible from The Incredibles. Additional play sets will feature 'villains', 'sidekicks' and characters from Disney's latest live action film The Lone Ranger, starring Johnny Depp.

Disney argues the game offers value because the figures can be

'Endless possibilities'

traded between friends and used on different consoles such as the Xbox 360, Sony PS3 and Nintendo Wii.

Constantly upgrading and expanding the game with characters from existing and

upcoming films means that it cannot become obsolete either, says the US movie giant.

It is also claimed that the game educates youngsters as they learn 'basic programming' to create unique challenges, scenarios and mini games in its 'Toybox' mode.

Disney Infinity's lead producer John Day said: 'I have two boys, ages two and four, and I like the idea that they can be learning about how to do logical connections using the toys in the Toybox.'

'We can bring in toys like buttons and doorways, and you can connect the button to the doorway and have the button open the door when you step on it.'

'It seems very basic, but at the same time we're talking about logical inputs and outputs. It really is a lightweight programming language.'

A Disney spokesman said: 'Disney Infinity will deliver incredible value to consumers.'

'Each of the play sets features an original, true-to-property experience offering hours of game-play and in the Toy Box mode, players will have endless possibilities to create unique challenges, scenarios and mini games.'

'In addition, there's a lot of opportunity for exploration, multiplayer and other options that will extend play time and encourage replay-ability.'