

You Can't Name Your Baby That!

I found this article on [cnn.com](#) a few weeks ago detailing the laws that foreign countries have about baby names. That's right – here in the fifty nifty United States we have the freedom to name our kids pretty much whatever we want, but in other countries, they actually have strict laws specially crafted regarding this kind of thing. I found the following article interesting and amusing, and at the same time, I gratefully celebrate the freedoms in my country. And an interesting note – this blog post is being written by the mother of a little girl named Disney... I couldn't help but notice in how many of the following countries my sweet little Disney's name would have been rejected.

For the article in its entirety, [click here](#).

1. Sweden – Enacted in 1982, the Naming law in Sweden was originally created to prevent non-noble families from giving their children noble names, but a few changes to the law have been made since then. The part of the law referencing first names reads: "First names shall not be approved if they can cause offense or can be supposed to cause discomfort for the one using it, or names which for some obvious reason are not suitable as a first name." If you later change your name, you must keep at least one of the names that you were originally given, and you can only change your name once. Rejected names: "Brfxxccxxmnpccclllmmnprxvclmncckssqlbb111163 (pronounced Albin, naturally) was submitted by a child's parents in protest of the Naming law. It was rejected. The parents later submitted "A" (also pronounced Albin) as the child's name. It, too, was rejected. Also rejected: Metallica, Superman, Veranda, Ikea and Elvis. Accepted names: Google as a middle name, Lego.

2. Germany – In Germany, you must be able to tell the gender of the child by the first name, and the name chosen must not be negatively affect the well being of the child. Also, you can not use last names or the names of objects or products as first names. Whether or not your chosen name will be accepted is up to the office of vital statistics, the Standesamt, in the area in which the child was born. If the office rejects your proposed baby name, you may appeal the decision. But if you lose, you'll have to think of a different name. Each time you submit a name you pay a fee, so it can get costly. When evaluating names, the Standesamt refers to a book which translates to "the international manual of the first names," and they also consult foreign embassies for assistance with non-German names. Because of the hassle parents have to go through to name their children, many opt for traditional names such as Maximilian, Alexander, Marie and Sophie. Rejected names: Matti was rejected for a boy because it didn't indicate gender. Approved names: Legolas and Nemo were approved for baby boys.

3. New Zealand – New Zealand's Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act of 1995 doesn't allow people to name their children anything that "might cause offence to a reasonable person; or [...] is unreasonably long; or without adequate justification, [...] is, includes, or resembles, an official title or rank." Officials at the registrar of births have successfully talked parents out of some more embarrassing names. Rejected names: Stallion, Yeah Detroit, Fish and Chips, Twisty Poi, Keenan Got Lucy, Sex Fruit, Satan and Adolf Hitler. Approved names: Benson and Hedges (for a set of twins), Midnight Chardonnay, Number 16 Bus Shelter and Violence.

4. Japan – In Japan, one given name and one surname are chosen for babies, except for the imperial family, who only receive given names. Except for a few examples, it is obvious which are the given names and which are the surnames,

regardless of in what order the names have been given. There are a couple thousand “name kanji” and “commonly used characters” for use in naming babies, and only these official kanji may be used in babies’ given names. The purpose of this is to make sure that all names can be easily read and written by the Japanese. The Japanese also restrict names that might be deemed inappropriate. Rejected names: Akuma, meaning “devil.”

5. Denmark – Denmark’s very strict Law on Personal Names is in place to protect children from having odd names that suit their parents’ fancy. To do this, parents can choose from a list of 7,000 pre-approved names, some for girls, some for boys. If you want to name your child something that isn’t on the list, you have to get special permission from your local church, and the name is then reviewed by governmental officials. Creative spellings of more common names are often rejected. The law states that girls and boys must have names that indicate their gender, you can’t use a last name as a first name and unusual names may be rejected. Of the approximately 1,100 names that are reviewed each year, 15-20 percent of the names are rejected. There are also laws in place to protect rare Danish last names. Rejected names: Anus, Pluto and Monkey. Approved names: Benji, Jiminico, Molli and Fee.

6. China – Most new babies in China are now basically required to be named based on the ability of computer scanners to read those names on national identification cards. The government recommends giving children names that are easily readable, and encourages Simplified characters over Traditional Chinese ones. Parents can technically choose the given name, but numbers and non-Chinese symbols and characters are not allowed. Also, now, Chinese characters that can not be represented on the computer are not allowed. There are over 70,000 Chinese characters, but only about 13,000 can be represented on the computer. Because

this requirement is a new one, some citizens are having their name misrepresented, and some have to change their names to be accurately shown on the identification cards. Rejected names: “@”: Wang “At” was rejected as a baby name. The parents felt that the @ symbol had the right meaning for them. @ in Chinese is pronounced “ai-ta” which is very similar to a phrase that means “love him.”

Name Origins

With the revelation that we will be parents of a baby boy for the first time ever, I guess this puts the great ‘Frances’ debate to rest – at least for now. Since we already have 3 lovely girls and have gotten to name them all of our favorite names, I thought I’d like to name our fourth girl after my deceased grandmother Frances, even though neither me nor my husband really like the name itself. But, since we’re now having a boy and I got my husband to let us name the baby after him and his father, we don’t have to worry about the Frances issue anymore – but I wonder if getting to name the baby Christopher has me losing leverage if we were to need any baby girl names for the future? While thinking about all this name business, I searched through my email for our arrival announcement of our third daughter who has quite an unusual name, and if you’re wondering, here is the email we sent out when she was born about how we came up with it:

How did she get the name Disney?

Well... We took our honeymoon (back in 1999) at Disney World in Florida and a few weeks after we returned we discovered we were pregnant with our first-born Taylor!

The next time we would go to Disney World in 2003 we would return home to learn that there was again some “Disney magic” and baby Samantha was on her way! In late 2004 we decided we wanted another baby but we were disappointed month after month; it seemed we were having trouble getting pregnant for the third time... But wouldn't you know it – we took a trip to Disney World in early 2006 and guess what? MAGIC – AGAIN! So in October of 2006, we welcomed Disney Alyssa!

As I've said to people many times, her name seems to have worked, because it truly fits the child. Disney is our most mild-mannered, sweet, and happy child so far. But it makes me wonder, since little Christopher is the only one who was conceived without Disney World magic, could this be the secret to us finally having a boy?!?

Baby Names – Part II

Well, we have narrowed down our choices for baby names!
(Insert drum roll here) They are:

FIRST NAMES:

Mallory

Lindsay

Evangeline

MIDDLE NAMES:

Autumn

Athina (or Athena as it's usually spelled; I like the first one better)

Alexandra

We know we want a middle name that starts with an “A” because all of our girls have one. We’re just not sure which name we like with which middle name. If you’ve read my previous posts, especially the one called Baby Names, you can see that I’ve given up my ideal name of Frances. Ok, it’s not my ideal name, that’s why I gave up on it, but I did want to name the baby after my late grandmother. I just wish she had a name that was a little easier to convince my husband to name our baby and for me to WANT to name the baby. Anyway, these are the final three so we’ll see how it turns out. I am the one who signs the birth certificate in the hospital, so I can always sneak whatever I want on there, including Frances if I so desire... JUST KIDDING! I wouldn’t do that... unless they pump me full of some crazy drugs to get through the labor... then I can’t be held accountable for my actions. But nothing is set in stone yet; we’re still a few months away – I will site the example of my youngest-for-now. Her name was going to be Sydney until I was about 7 months pregnant... then all of a sudden I said to my husband, I don’t think I like that name anymore! I thought it was the hormones causing my sudden change of heart, but to my surprise, my husband agreed that HE didn’t like the name anymore either! We think it might have had something to do with our other daughters calling her Cindy – they could not grasp the concept of reversing the sounds. So anyway, these are the finalists in the name race for now, I will keep you posted on any changes!

Baby Names

Ok, with a baby on the way, I’ve got baby names on the brain. With 3 girls already, we’ve exhausted our supply of favorite

girls' names. Since we just found out this one is also most likely a girl, we have been pondering ways to name the baby. Our first 3 all have middle names that start with "A"s, so we'd like to keep that pattern. The problem is, since we've used up all of our top choices by now, I would like to name this baby after a relative. My relatives don't have the best sounding names... I don't want to offend anyone here, so no offense, but Dolores (my grandmother), Phyllis (my mother), or even Lisa (my name = my husband's idea to use it) just don't appeal to me, to say the least. I was very close to my deceased grandmother whom my husband never met, but her name was, GULP, Frances. Now, I do not regret using the middle-names-start-with-A pattern at all, I think it's cool and all of our girls have pretty names; so far anyway, but if we didn't have to stick to the pattern, we could name her something we like with Frances as a middle name to use as the namesake. But, with our lovely pattern at stake, if we're going to use the name Frances, it has to be a first name. After being blessed with 3 beautiful girls and getting to give them 2 names each of our choosing, I think it'd be nice to use a namesake this time. But my husband HATES the name Frances. I can't say I blame him, he never met my grandmother, and I'm not a big fan of the name either, but I think it would grow on us and we could also call her by her middle name or a nickname. And, let's face it, we can't get more flak than we've already gotten for naming our third child Disney! That's a long story, best to be saved for another post... but let's just say little Disney is our happiest baby yet, so who has any right to say what's in a name?