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Health coverage

What is health? The word gets thrown around so much that everyone is confused about it. People say health coverage when they really mean "illness care." Grocery items called health foods are just real foods rather than processed, manufactured pretenders. Health is not only physical, but mental and spiritual, too. To have good health is to be largely without stress, depression, inactivity, and, of course, to have freedom and mobility.

We write a lot about health in these magazines. Every month we have at least two columns from experts in our communities talking about health, and that's not mentioning the columns we have that give diet, food, and recipe ideas. To me, it all starts with food, and who hasn't heard the expression "you are what you eat"? As parents, it's really important that we start



our children off eating right and that we show them that "nutritious is delicious."

In this issue, our writer Golda Smith talks about achieving health goals for the new year and Tammy Scileppi has contributed an important piece about the dangers of mercury poisoning and how it's affecting our children. Her

interview with Albert Wilking is compelling and informative and a must read.

February is Children's Dental Health month and we acknowledge this every year. Our writer Jamie Lober tells us how important it is to develop early oral health habits and for children to visit a pediatric dentist earlier than most people might imagine. The baby teeth are just as important as the permanent ones, and care and diet can determine the long range health and appearance of both. Setting an example for your children by taking care

of your own dental needs and decay prevention will go a long way to helping them with their own.

And then there is our intellectual and artistic health, and there is no finer food for that than family visits to our wonderful museums. Family programming tailored to kids is in abundance throughout NYC. We are so lucky! Contributing writer Shnieka Johnson highlights 15 of our finest museums that do just that.

It's Valentine's Day month and I'm certain we should love each other as much as possible. We should hug and kiss and hold hands and identify with our neighbors. We should think positive thoughts and stand firm in our commitment to equality and inclusiveness. We should make sure everyone has access to a decent way of life. That would be great for our health in every way.

Thanks for reading!

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Healthiest you ever

How to achieve your health goals well into the new year

BY GOLDA SMITH

This is about the time where the newness of the new year is starting to wear off. The goals you set a month ago still have your undivided attention OR they have started to lose their luster. The best example that I think everyone can relate to is the new-year gym membership. Most gyms are packed in January, and by February the crowd has begun to disappear ... until around May when there is the mad dash to develop the bikini body or get ready for a wedding.

Now, certainly, I am not talking about you. Rather, it's someone you know, like your sister, co-worker, or bestie. If it is you, there certainly is no judgement from me, because I was right there. That's why I would like to share some tips that have helped me, and I think will assist you in remaining consistent with your health goals.

Let's make a plan together. Are you ready for a FIT? No, I don't mean an episode when your child has a complete meltdown in the cookie aisle but a Focused Intentional Transformation.

I'm not talking about the over-used "new year, new you." Instead, let's work towards a better you! In a few steps, I would like to show you how you can easily remain consistent with your health goals once and for all.

The first and most important step is to decide what your core determining motivation is. Really take time to figure this out and dig deeper than the knee-jerk response of "I just want to lose weight" or "I want flat abs," because your response is what will push you to keep going when you are ready to give up.

DO NOT skip this step.

Once you have determined your core determining motivation, the next step is to share it with someone you love. It is one thing to write a goal down or to cut it out and post it on your vision board, but to speak it out loud and

share it with someone else takes it to another level. You have now given your goal life and you have given that person permission to hold you accountable. Scary? Yes, sometimes change can be scary, but if you want something different, you must do something different.

The third stage is to be consistent with SMALL daily steps. You want to know the reason why many people start and then give up on their health goals? Good, because I'm going to tell you. They set themselves up for failure by trying to do too much too soon. For example, they may overhaul their diet or commit to going to the gym five days a week, when, in reality, they may work full time and have small children to take care of. A more realistic goal is to commit to working out three to

four days per week at home or at the gym with a workout plan.

Working on your nutrition? Focus on what you can add instead of what you are subtracting. Let's say your goal is to increase the amount of greens in your diet. Look at your current diet and see where you can add greens. Maybe you can start having a simple green smoothie or adding greens to a morning omelet. You could also commit to having a green salad with dinner at least four or five nights per week. What you will soon discover is that, as you continue to add things, you just naturally stop doing other things.

The next step is to have an easy-to-implement plan. Yeah, I know, you don't like plans, because you're the spontaneous type. Well, how has that worked for you? As I stated before, if you want something different, you must do something different.

Creating a plan will not only create consistency, but will also save time. Do you want to eat better? Decide to begin meal planning and prepping. What day and time will you commit to this activity? Get it on your calendar. Do you want to use your gym membership beyond January? Predetermine what days and times you can realistically commit to this activity, put it on your calendar, and make it a non-negotiable appointment with a very important person. (HINT: That very important person is you.)

These are some simple, yet tried-and-true things you can implement right now to help you remain consistent with your health goals. Remember, the key is consistent, small daily steps and simplicity. I dare you to make this YOUR best year on purpose and become the best version of yourself.

Golda Smith, a mom of two, is a certified personal trainer and health coach living in Brooklyn. She blogs at FitMommyBlog.com





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Settling into parenthood

Anyone who has ever been a parent knows that one tiny baby can instantly change your life forever. The arrival of your newborn will foster countless wonderful memories, yet, along the way, you will naturally encounter some roadblocks. Part of this is inevitable because babies cry, get sick, and sometimes don't eat. However, distress can build from new parents putting too much pressure (and resulting stress) on themselves.

It's important to remember that learning to become anything takes an adjustment period. You can read everything there is to know about parenting during the pregnancy period, but nothing will ever fully prepare you for the first few nights, weeks, and months at home with your child. Becoming a parent is a trial by fire, but gradually, you will get to know everything you need to know about that delightful little baby.

"Understanding that the transition to parenthood can be challenging and allowing yourself some emotional space to face those challenges is important," says Dr. Deena Blanchard, a mom of three and pediatrician at Premier Pediatrics. Here are Dr. Blanchard's tips to create a positive experience as you transition to parenthood:

You can't control everything

Wouldn't it be amazing if babies came with recipes, and you knew if you just put in the right ingredients and time it would all work out? Being a type-A person myself, coming to terms with the lack of control that parenting brings was really hard for me.

Newborns are often unpredictable. You may do the same thing you did the day before but get a different result. The more you can wrap your head around and accept the randomness of infants, the easier this transition will be.

Plan ahead

While you can't control everything about parenting, there are some things you can plan for that will make your life easier. For example, you can choose your pediatrician before you have your baby. Knowing that you've met with and selected the doctor who will play a key role in helping you transition to parenthood can be very soothing.

Choose a pediatrician who you feel will partner with you and who you feel genuinely cares. Never feel like you are being



rushed or unable to ask all your questions.

Create your village

Previously, when women had babies, they were often near their mothers, aunts, and siblings who would help them. In this global world, we now often need to create our own villages. Join a mom group, whether online or in person. Having friends who are going through the same stages of parenting that you are and that are supportive is priceless. Your village may also include your pediatrician, doula, lactation consultant, and family.

It's your personal village, there is no "right" way to create it. The most important thing is to surround yourself with empathic, supportive, and helpful people. You will be thankful you can transition to parenthood with help from the experts and those who have been through it. This will also allow you to scream for support (to get sleep or even a shower!), or rest easy just knowing it is there for you!

Ask for help

Your family, partner, and best friends may be the most amazing people on earth, but they cannot read your mind. You don't need to "do it all." There is no shame in asking for help. In fact, you will likely be a better and more emotionally available parent for doing so.

Be direct when asking for help. For example, you can ask someone to please bring dinner or do the laundry or hold the baby, so you can shower. You get to decide what



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

kind of help you need and ask for it. Taking care of yourself both emotionally and physically is a great gift to your little one.

Best-laid plans can change

It's great to have a plan for how you want to give birth or feed your baby. By preparing with classes and talking to your healthcare providers ahead of time, you will increase the likelihood that these plans will happen. Understand though, that sometimes, no matter how much you want and prepared for something, when dealing with the human body, it may not turn out exactly the way you imagined.

Try to be flexible. Reframe your thinking. If your birth plan didn't turn out exactly as planned, it's okay to feel disappointed but understand it's not your fault. Avoiding self-blame when hiccups or bumps occur on the road of parenting is extremely important.

Baby blues are normal

There is this pressure to always be happy; after all, you just had this adorable baby. The reality is, more than 80 percent of women will have baby blues in the first two weeks after giving birth. Another 30 percent will have a postpartum mood disorders.

Feeling down, sad, anxious, or any other feeling that isn't sheer glee is normal, and there is no shame in it. If you do feel great, that's awesome, but if you don't, please speak up to whomever you feel most comfortable with.

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Mercury poisoning

An advocate lays out the danger to your children

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Albert Wilking's "toxic" past was riddled with a series of weird, and at times, "poisonous" experiences. Growing up, he was plagued by relentless illnesses and a puzzling assortment of maladies. But after years of questioning, rigorous self-discovery, and extensive research into harmful toxins, this amazing New Yorker finally found himself in a place of healing and wellness — and knew he had a calling: To educate the public about the dangers of mercury poisoning, with a goal of having all children mercury-free by the year 2020.

Imagine a perfect, toxin-free world in which kids everywhere can live, play, and learn — forever safe and protected from all of the bad stuff that can harm them, such as lead, free radicals, hormone-filled and pesticide-laced meats and produce, as well as genetically modified foods. They'd even be safe from potential mercury poisoning due to leakage from amalgam dental fillings.

What would this awesome, environmentally friendly utopia — where parents don't ever have to worry about what their children consume or inhale — look like?

It's fun to imagine, but let's face it, the harsh reality is that no matter how hard we try to protect them, kids can't live in a bubble. And if they could, they'd break free!

Still, that's the kind of wonderful world wellness expert and mercury-free advocate Wilking, 53, dreams of and hopes for (in theory). Like the hundreds of parents he educates, he's especially concerned

about the potentially harmful effects of mercury in children, but says he can actually imagine a time, in the not too distant future, when moms and dads may worry less about toxins.

His motto, "mercury-free kids," describes a life-long wellness mission that he has embraced since his younger days, after dealing with a wide range of diseases and medical illnesses that he believes were mostly due to mercury poisoning.

The parent of 15-year-old son Felix says when he's not teaching mercury poisoning and recovery, he's studying it, and believes, "It's a tragedy that modern-day healthcare continues to administer to unwitting consumers — mercury in dental fillings, and vaccines, and that much of the 'science' they give us is misinformation."

His website www.mercuryfreekids.org is chock full of helpful information and suggestions based on Wilking's own personal journey and fascinating findings. (Mercury Free Kids and Mercury 101 do not offer medical advice. Parents and caretakers should consult their child's pediatrician and dentist if they suspect mercury poisoning, which may turn out to be something else entirely.)

Wilking's past was often riddled with a series of strange, toxin-related experiences that compelled him to investigate the connection between those and his ongoing health problems. For a while, that past would define him. But in time, he found himself in a much better place, and he knew he wanted to help others.

On his site he writes, "I have a history of living and working in toxic environments. When growing up, my family home had a

photography studio, and a painting studio with toxic artist paints. The family regularly adventured into abandoned factories, industrial sites, and ghost towns. It was exciting but toxic.

"During my middle school years, playgrounds included the town dump and climbing over mounds of brightly covered chemicals at the Middlesex Chemical factory. I played with mercury from broken thermometers, and remember losing the mercury beads into the floor boards of our house. Wounds were occasionally treated with Mercurochrome, and vaccines were administered."

Young Albert had chronic ear infections, severe allergies, and almost constant colds. As a teen, his emotional problems became more apparent.

"As an adult, I regularly worked with toxic paints," he writes. "I soldered copper pipes with lead, refinished furniture with toxic chemicals, and renovated two dentist offices. I had a very expensive sushi habit, was a tuna sandwich junkie, regularly drank Gatorade (bromine), and used cold medicines (bromine)."

"My life-long, severe allergies and emotional instability continued. I cried almost every day of my life until my mid-20s. I could fly into a rage for the smallest of reasons."

Wilking has started an important conversation about this crucial but mostly forgotten issue, mercury poisoning, and in this in-depth interview, provides NY Parenting readers with his valuable input. He says he has consulted with other mercury experts, including dentists, chemists, scientists, and policy experts, like Michael



T. Bender, director of the Mercury Policy Project <http://mercurypolicy.org>.

Tammy Scileppi: Is a mercury-free USA a realistic goal? And what about other countries?

Albert Wilking: My mission has all children mercury-free. I have my work cut out for me to get enough adults educated to protect all of our beautiful babies going forward.

Some countries like Norway and Sweden are mercury-free in dentistry. Unfortunately, countries like the Philippines have a huge problem with mercury from mining.

The U.S. is now allowing coal fly ash to be used in household products like sheet-rock and carpet backing. Another hidden place for mercury is in high fructose corn

syrup. About 20 percent of fructose is mercury tainted. Mercury poisoning isn't going away any time soon. The best thing we can do is to educate ourselves.

I've made a comprehensive list of mercury sources on my website (www.mercuryfreetkids.org/hg-poisoning-sources).

TS: Dentists still use fillings with mercury, so how do parents get around that?

AW: Unfortunately, the American Dental Association still requires those on social services, including little children, to have mercury fillings placed, or they will have to pay for services out of pocket. There are dentists that have been in the business for a long time, who claim a small amount of mercury is harmless. You may notice I call amalgam dental fillings mercury fillings, and that's because they are

50 percent mercury. There is only nine to 12 percent silver in the filling, so they should never have been called silver fillings. They should be called what they are, mercury fillings.

TS: So, why is mercury potentially harmful to kids and adults?

AW: Mercury interferes with our proper usage of the essential elements. These elements can protect us from mercury, but only to a certain extent. Our systems and bodies can become deranged in the presence of mercury. To get our systems in top shape, we need to get the toxins out of our bodies by making sure we are flush with needed elements. It's a balancing act.

TS: Regarding those elements, how does your site's two-hour interactive workshop with Q & A sessions work? How can

parents access it?

AW: My current workshop is called “The Building Blocks of Life” and is at www.mercuryfreekids.org/life-building-blocks.

I use lots of easy-to-understand stories and metaphors to explain the essential elements and vitamins we need for survival. Let’s compare a brick building to that of a human body. You may have heard we need lots of calcium. However, most of us have all the calcium we need. If we view calcium as the bricks in our building, what we need more of is the mortar between those bricks to make our walls solid. Magnesium is that mortar. It’s needed in more than 300 of our vital cellular processes. It gives our bones and teeth strength.

Iodine makes the longest bonds known to man. Seventy percent of a thyroid hormone is made up of iodine. Iodine is the architectural plan for our bodies. It tells us where to put our walls, how tall we will grow, what goes in the rooms, and when the garbage is taken out. Without enough iodine, the body loses direction and order. We can see that when the thyroid starts backing up, growing into a goiter. Without iodine, the thyroid starts swelling up with half-baked hormones; it’s as if the service staff in our building has gone on strike.

TS: Talk about your “mercurial” past and your leaky dental filling.

AW: My entire life, I had some kind of constant chronic infection: Lyme disease, conjunctivitis, allergies, constant colds. I was on antibiotics for two years for Lyme disease; I couldn’t get rid of it. Because of that leaking filling, I learned about bacteria and methylate mercury. When the body or the antibiotic kills off the bacteria, the mercury is released, and then the body has to deal with the mercury. So there is this chronic level of inflammation, and the body doesn’t get better. The bacteria will not die off until the mercury is removed. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercury\(II\)_reductase](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercury(II)_reductase).

Today, I’m one of the healthiest people I know. My knees and joints had ached since I was a child. No more. You can see a list of my problems, at www.mercuryfreekids.org/about.

TS: How did your “toxic” past define you for a while?

AW: At one time in my life, I had a problem with self-medicating, whether it was drinking too much alcohol, taking a bunch of vitamin supplements, or spending too much money on sushi. Think of these common sayings, “I really tied one on last night” or “he/she really knows how to hold their liquor.” I thought I was fearlessly, heroically approaching life. Now I see it for what it is: ego, and putting myself in a constant state of stress through toxic

Bromine: Toxic and pervasive

Children’s health advocate Albert Wilking claims that some of his health problems stemmed from exposure to mercury and bromine which could be found in his Gatorade and cold medicines. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Bromine works by directly irritating the skin, mucous membranes, and tissues.

“The seriousness of poisoning caused by bromine depends on the amount, route, and length of time of exposure, as well as the age and preexisting medical condition of the person exposed,” states the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

The Centers describe Bromine as “a naturally occurring element that is a liquid at room temperature. It has a

brownish-red color with a bleach-like odor, and it dissolves in water.”

Bromine can be found in a number of places in your everyday world, including:

- Pesticides (specifically methyl bromide, used mainly on strawberries, predominantly in California).

- Bakery goods and some flours often contain a “dough conditioner” called potassium bromate.

- Soft drinks (including Mountain Dew, Gatorade, Sun Drop, Squirt, Fresca, and other citrus-flavored sodas), in the form of brominated vegetable oils.

- Medications such as Atrovent Inhaler, Atrovent Nasal Spray, Pro-Banthine (for ulcers), and anesthesia agents.

- Fire retardants used in fabrics, carpets, upholstery, and mattresses.

ingestion. I think it’s addictive. Mercury poisoning is actually called mercury intoxication.

TS: What about emotional issues stemming from mercury poisoning?

AW: The phrase “emotional lability” was first coined in reference to mad hatters. They were quite common in Danbury, Conn. and Newark, N.J. In the hatting business, mercury nitrate would steam the felts for hats, rise up to the ceiling, condense, and drip back down onto the heads of the workers, staining their hair and skin orange. Johnny Depp played it quite well in “Alice and Wonderland.” Many hatters were off their rockers and their emotions would flip on and off. About 60 percent of the deaths in the industry were men under the age of 30! www.mercuryfreekids.org/mercury101/danbury-shakes.

We all know people who can fly into a rage or start crying over the smallest things. I was one of them. (Emotional lability is also listed as a symptom of acrodynia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acrodynia>)

TS: What should parents do to avoid mercury exposure?

AW: The best way is to be educated on the subject. I have a great page with almost all the sources of mercury possible: www.mercuryfreekids.org/hg-poisoning-sources.

Mercury is 500 times more dangerous than lead. It has an affinity for sulfur, and we are loaded with sulfur. If a thermometer breaks inside a school, the entire school can be closed while men in clean suits do remediation. The amount of mercury in a thermometer is about equal to the amount of mercury in a large dental filling!

Old-school dentists that drill mercury

out of people’s mouths, with very little in the way of safety precautions, are in denial of putting the health of themselves and their patients at risk.

Today, conscientious, educated dentists are using clean-room technology to protect themselves, their staff, and their patients from mercury.

If you go to www.dentalwellness4u.com/layperson/symptoms.html, you can read about holistic, mercury-free dentistry of Dr. Tom McGuire. He has been a mercury-safe, holistic dentist for more than 35 years, and is an innovator and leader in holistic dental wellness, having spent the last 20 years researching mercury amalgam fillings and studying their effects on overall health.

In addition, the doctor’s extensive research into mercury detoxification has resulted in the development of his mercury detoxification program. (Click on, “Mercury Detoxification: The Natural Way to Remove Mercury from Your Body,” to review the book and read chapter excerpts.)

And you can also check out this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO_6W-Hnt64.

Once a parent or anyone else sees the safeguards these dentists use in this video, good luck going back to an old-fashioned dentist.

• • •

For additional reading, check out this 2014 article on forbes.com about other harmful toxins, titled “11 Toxic Chemicals Affecting Brain Development In Children” www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2014/02/15/11-toxic-chemicals-affecting-brain-development-in-children/#75c4001e79e3.



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Love February with these finds

February is the month of hearts and roses and lots of DeLyssious love and kisses. I remind my children each and every day how much I love them. On Valentine's Day, I just add a little more chocolate to their day!

Talking about sweet, I am going to take my kids to a family-friendly restaurant I recently learned about, Buns Bar. I hear their milkshakes are out of this world! This should complete their Valentine's Day with a yummy tummy.

Buns Bar [263 W. 19th St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in Chelsea, (646) 370-4321, www.bunsbar.com].

...

On Feb. 5, join the Kids Challah Bake at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. They have partnered with WIN, a city organization that helps homeless women and children rebuild their lives. Each participant will bake a challah for themselves and another for the women and children of WIN. Steve Max, famous for his halftime "Simon Sez" show, will be the entertainment for the event. I look forward to bringing my children to bake challah, and I know it will be a DeLyssious time had by all. To purchase your tickets, visit www.kidschallahbake.com.

At the Grand Hyatt Hotel [109 E. 42nd St. between Park and Lexington avenues in Midtown East, (212) 883-1234]. Feb. 5, 11 to 12:30 pm.

...

I want to share a new FabuLyss find with you. My friend from college, Erica Daniels,

wrote "Cooking With Leo: An Allergen-Free Autism Family Cookbook." This heart-felt book also tells the story of a mother desperate to heal and connect with her severely autistic son. Erica finally engages her hard-to-reach child through the most vital, everyday activity — cooking. You will be touched by this beautiful story.

For many years, Erica had been in search of a successful dietary intervention for her 11-year-old son Leo, who suffers from significant food allergies, gastrointestinal disease, and autism. Through trial and error in her own kitchen, she finally hit her gastronomic stride preparing nourishing meals for her entire family without gluten, dairy, soy, nuts, additives, or genetically modified organism — with Leo by her side. Part cookbook and part love story, you will laugh and cry along with Erica and Leo as they cook, create, laugh, dance, act silly, and, most importantly, bond.

Available at www.amazon.com/Cooking-Leo-Allergen-Free-Autism-Cookbook/dp/1510708537.

...

Another Diva Moms Book club that I

Red-velvet popcorn

Here's a sweet recipe for red-velvet popcorn from Sarah Khandjian's blog that's perfect for your Valentine's Day celebration. (I love all things red velvet!) sarahhearts.com/2016-01-19/red-velvet-popcorn-recipe.

INGREDIENTS

2 oz cream cheese, softened
1 tbs corn syrup
1/2 cup powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 bag popcorn, popped
4 red-velvet cupcakes, unfrosted

DIRECTIONS: In a large mixing bowl, combine the softened cream cheese, corn syrup, powdered sugar, and vanilla. Use a stand or hand mixer to combine into a creamy glaze.

Fold one bag of popcorn into the cream cheese glaze.

Use your hands to crumble four unfrosted red-velvet cupcakes into the mixing bowl. Use a spatula to gently fold the cupcake pieces into the popcorn mixture.

Spread it out on a baking sheet lined with a silicone mat or wax paper, and allow it to harden for about 10 minutes. Then, enjoy!



FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN



want to share with you is written by my friend Wendy Sachs — "Fearless and Free: How Smart Women Pivot and Relaunch Their Careers." The FabuLyss new book helps you dream big and act now, empowering women by showing us how to lean into our strengths, increase our confidence, and follow successful lessons from Silicon Valley that can help us pivot in any career — and unlock

a world of possibilities.

Sachs talked to a wide range of women (yes, I am in the book) who faced fears, roadblocks, and failures to reinvent themselves. The book weaves their insights and experiences together with current research and actionable advice. You will learn how to capitalize on your skills and expand them:

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- And much more.

Available at www.amazon.com/Fearless-Free-Pivot-Relaunch-Careers/dp/0814437699.

Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLyssious Moms (www.divamoms.com).



FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

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Dental health for kids

February is National
Children's Dental
Health Month

BY JAMIE LOBER

The Department of Health for New York State says that it is important for children to develop good oral health habits at an early age because practicing healthy habits can prevent or reduce tooth decay in infants and children.

"Parents often do not think of the value of what they are doing for their kid's oral health at home until an issue arises," said Dr. Jonathan Shenkin, dentist and spokesman for the American Dental Association.

Teeth tend to appear between 6 to 8 months-old and by age 3, all 20 primary teeth should be in the mouth. Starting around age 6, baby teeth are replaced by permanent teeth, but it's important to remember that both sets of teeth matter.

"When teeth first come they are exposed to saliva and the minerals that exist in the saliva and fluoride that enables minerals to be deposited completely into the tooth," said Shenkin.

You have to give the teeth time to become strong. Diet plays a big role, and soda can be one of the worst culprits.

"If you are continually consuming sugars throughout the day you are constantly reducing the acid level in your mouth making teeth more susceptible to decay processes, so it is about the frequency



and consumption,” said Shenkin.

“Poor oral hygiene combined with poor nutrition can cause tooth decay in kids that could be easily avoided.”

Set an example of how children should take care of their teeth by taking care of your own.

“If you do not have appropriate behaviors that improve oral health you put your kid at great risk for developing disease,” said Shenkin.

To do so you’ll need to have the right tools. “A big change we made in the last year and a half is recommending fluoride toothpaste for children as soon as the first tooth erupts in the mouth,” said Shenkin. “We used to say age 2 was the first time you would provide fluoride toothpaste, but we changed it based on the amount you use and the age of the child.”

And you should know your measurements.

“We recommend at the eruption of the first tooth to start using a piece of toothpaste the size of a piece of rice to help parents visualize the amount, which is extremely small to minimize ingestion. And then at age 3 we recommend a pea-size amount,” said Shenkin.

Your child should be brushing twice a day. “Morning and night is imperative and it is not just about putting the toothbrush in the mouth, it is about removing the plaque on the teeth and the sugars that cause the decay,” said Shenkin. “It is important that parents monitor toothbrushing until kids tie their own shoelaces, which is at 6 to 7 years of age, because they do not have the manual dexterity to appropriately remove plaque,” said Shenkin.

Sometimes the right toothbrush can make a big difference.

“Electric toothbrushes can inspire children to brush their teeth and they do a better job if they are excited about the process,” said Shenkin.

You’ll also need a trustworthy dentist who can help with

the cleaning.

“We typically recommend at age 1 or within 6 months of the eruption of the first tooth to have the first visit to find out what kind of risk factors exist,” said Shenkin. “We recommend seeing the dentist based on your risk level so some kids go once a year and some need to go 4 times a year.”

The dentist may have some individualized recommendations that consider your child’s needs.

“Parents do not realize the importance of dental sealants at the age of 6,” said Shenkin. Evidence shows they work wonders. “The most decayed tooth in the mouth for all of us is the adult first molar on the biting surface and the most effective way of reducing risk for tooth decay in young kids is to put a dental sealant or a little plastic coating on it to dramatically reduce the incidence of tooth decay,” said Shenkin. It is advised to do that on all permanent molars for kids.

If your child wants sugar, it is best with a meal.

“Do not have sugars in between meals because having it with meals would expand the time period that there are higher levels of acidity in the mouth,” said Shenkin. “Mistakes parents make are putting kids to bed at night with a bottle with fermentable sugars, juices, or milk because it can result in decay.”

February is National Children’s Dental Health month, making it the perfect time to talk with your child about why taking care of his teeth matters. And it may sound basic, but folks easily overlook the importance of dental health.

“The most important thing we have recognized is how kids can come to the dentist earlier to reduce disease levels, educate parents, and redirect behaviors in the household,” said Shenkin.

Jamie Lober, author of “Pink Power” (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women’s and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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Childcare bliss

How to select the right caregiver for your family

BY KRISTEN J. DUCA

Selecting a caregiver for your child is one of the most important decisions many families will make. Whether you need childcare because you are returning to work, craving some time to yourself, or spending some time with your significant other, you will want to find the ideal caretaker for your child. Below are a few tips to help you navigate the nanny search:

One size does not fit all

A multitude of childcare possibilities exist for you to consider, and of course

there are pluses and minuses to each of them. Just remember that you are in the driver's seat and can choose the path that best fits your family's needs. Hiring a caregiver to look after your child is a very personal decision. Every family has its own dynamics and unique views on

parenting. Feel secure and confident in your child-rearing decisions.

Be patient

Do not rush the childcare search. Finding the ideal person to take care of your little one will take time and patience. It is important to be prepared and detailed in your search. Finding the ideal caretaker for your child requires a lot of time and hard work. However, if you put the effort into the search up front, you will be rewarded with the result.

Lay groundwork

Laying the foundation toward building the ideal childcare situation is critical.

Formulating a clear description of your childcare needs now will save you loads of future frustration. You can zero in on exactly what type of situation you need to make sure your household runs smoothly and happily.

The ideal or "perfect" childcare situation depends on you and how specific you are in recognizing and expressing your needs, as well as on how your family spends its time. It is important that before you start your childcare search you set aside time to sit down and ponder what it is that you are hiring for and develop interview questions based on your needs.

Interview candidates thoroughly

Always remember to conduct a thorough interview and check references. You will want to conduct interviews (by phone, in person, or via webcam) with potential candidates in order to screen them through a series of questions. You need to ask prospective candidates the right questions in order to narrow down your list and eventually pick a suitable nanny for your family.

If possible, try to interview candidates



in person so you can see their immediate reactions, facial expressions, and overall poise. These interviews do not have to be conducted in your home. You can always meet up at a local diner or coffee shop or get together at another mutually convenient location such as a library or bookstore.

Be reasonable

Be aware of what assistance you are asking for, and make sure it is reasonable. To put it bluntly, if you are not willing or able to do it all, then your childcare provider should not be expected to either.

Childcare providers are not superheroes. They are humans who have strengths, weaknesses, and feelings, just like you. As a rule of thumb, it is generally never a good idea to ask your childcare provider to do tasks that you cannot handle yourself.

Understand that your childcare situation will evolve

As your child changes or your family dynamics change, your childcare needs will change. These childcare needs will constantly evolve as your child blossoms

Finding the ideal caretaker for your child requires a lot of time and hard work. However, if you put the effort into the search up front, you will be rewarded with the result.

through the stages of life. It is important to realize that you are not pigeonholed into the first childcare situation you created at a specific point in time.

A situation that works for your newborn child will likely need to be scrapped, tweaked, or revised as your child starts school. You may have to realize that expecting the unexpected and having the ability to be nimble is crucial to formulating the right childcare situation at any given point in time.

Go with your gut

You may luck out and hire the first nanny you meet, or you might have to interview several candidates. Everyone

has a different experience, but if you are dedicated to the childcare search, you will find the best candidate for your family.

Always go with your gut, and trust your instincts.

Trial

Suggest the nanny candidate you are interested in start working with your family on a trial basis so you can ensure you find the right fit for your family.

A trial period of a few days, a few weeks, or even a month is a good way to find out if your nanny's personality and style fit well with your family's. Remember that a happy child makes for a happy parent!

New York-based working mother Kristen Duca and her husband are the parents of two girls. Duca has worked in the financial services industry for two decades in addition to serving as a contributing writer for New York area publications. She is the author of "Ultimate Nanny: How to Find, Interview, and Manage the Most Important Person You Will Ever Hire – Your Child's Nanny" available on amazon.com now. Get the inside scoop on how develop the right criteria, identify, and select the ultimate nanny.


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Catholic Schools

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**718-297-2120
www.tmla.org**

**Principal – Sister Kathleen
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The Mary Louis woman is offered an array of intellectually challenging courses that provide academic foundation. Each student develops her program incorporating honors and advanced placement courses focusing on her

strengths and interests and leading to a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation. SMARTBOARD Technology is used throughout the school. Over 100 computers are available for student use. Guidance Counselors offer personal and academic counseling beginning in the first year.

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Our Lady of Pompeii School

**240 Bleecker Street
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**212-242-4147
www.ladyofpompeii.org**

**Principal- Sister Diane
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**420 East 87th Street
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**www.sjyorkville.org
Principal: Ms. Theresa Bernero**

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Continued on page 22



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Continued from page 20

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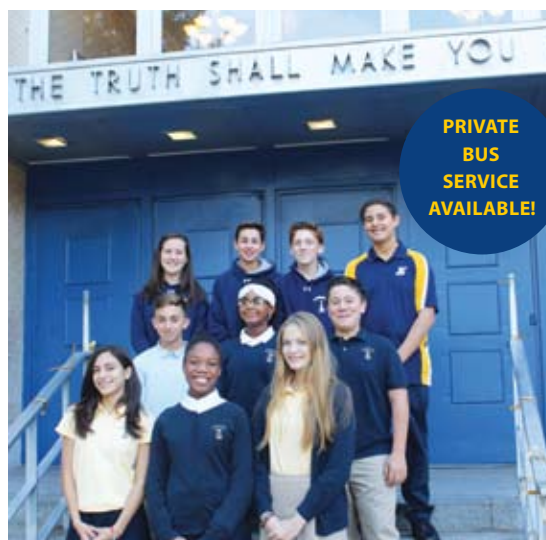
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Teaching savvy snacking



In the comfort of our kitchens, it can be easy to serve an assortment of veggies with dips and homemade snacks. On the go, it is slightly more daunting. While running from school, to sports practices, and to other enrichment activities, we are constantly bombarded with flashy boxes and bags that call our kids' names. To keep temptation and non-nutritious choices at bay, teach your little ones to be savvy snackers with these tips.

Find the 'yes' snacks

Point out all the beautiful colors of fruit at the farmers' market, let kids choose their favorite nuts to make their own creamy spreads, or let them determine if

they like hard or soft cheeses.

By encouraging your kids to make their own decisions about what to eat from an assortment of healthy options, they start learning to take responsibility for their nutrition.

Teach them to be label detectives

Even before kids can read, you can have them compare labels to find the one with the fewest ingredients. And when they can identify words, have them detect the sugar grams, or the ingredients with the hard-to-pronounce names.

Educate them on what foods are good for their bodies. Pick a plain yogurt, and

in a bowl and mix well.

Take a spoon and scoop mixture onto a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper and place in the freezer for 30 minutes. Melt chocolate in a double boiler or a microwave safe bowl.

When the chocolate starts melting a little, add the milk of choice to thin the chocolate. Remove from heat, stirring rapidly.

Take your nut butterballs out of the freezer and carefully dip each one in the chocolate until they are fully coated. Then place them back onto the parchment paper and place in the refrigerator.



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

DAWN LERMAN

toss in some dried fruit. Or go to the bulk section of a grocery store and make your own trail mix. Make friends with the people at the deli counter, and ask them to roll up a couple of turkey slices. Even Starbucks is touting a snack box with a hard-boiled egg and nitrate-free jerky. Also, stick to drinks such as water, herbal teas, and unsweetened milks of choice.

Don't ban sweets

Having a no-sweets rule is an invitation for cravings and overindulging when given the chance. Instead, have a weekly outing to a delicious bakery or a local ice cream parlor. Make these days extra special and differentiate a special treat from a snack.

And at home, bake muffins and cookies with superfoods like flax seeds and chia seeds, or try making your own candy with organic dark chocolate, protein-rich almond butter, and fiber-filled oats.

Snacking provides needed fuel between meals, both super charging kids' immune systems and stabilizing their moods. Involving children in the shopping and cooking not only helps to create smart snackers, but it also helps increase self-esteem and math and reading skills. It also fosters a sophisticated palate, so you will not have to be a short-order cook.

Dawn Lerman, also known as the Snacking Mama, is a top Manhattan nutritionist, founder of Magnificent Mommies, and the author of the best selling book, "My Fat Dad: A Memoir of Food, Love, and Family, With Recipes." Follow her on Twitter@DawnLerman

Chocolate-covered peanut butter truffles

Yield: 8 truffles

INGREDIENTS:

3/4 cup of unsweetened peanut butter, almond butter, or sunflower butter

1/4 cup of oats

1 tbs of maple syrup

1 tbs^o of nutritional yeast

1/4 bag dark chocolate chips

Splash of almond, soy, or coconut milk

DIRECTIONS: Place first four ingredients



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Go to sleep!

Tips to shorten your nightly routine

You've heard all the standard bedtime behavior strategies: keep walking your child back into bed or let him cry it out. When your child was in a crib, these strategies might have worked, but for your kiddo in a toddler bed, they are useless.

You dread bedtime, not only because the process takes more than 75 minutes, but also because once you say "good-night" and walk out the door, you know it is not the last time you are going to see your small one. In less than five minutes, your child will be in the doorway of your kitchen where you are frantically trying to have dinner while catching up on work e-mails that piled up while you were in the middle of an insanely long bedtime routine.

There's a way out of this mess.

The first step to change any behavior is to handle the most extreme parts first. You want to immediately reduce the yelling, screaming, crying, and fighting. The best way to get rid of these problem behaviors is to preemptively deal with what causes your child to lose control. This could be demanding a glass of water, an extra story, an extra bathroom trip, or an extra five minutes with you. Make sure you give him

all of these, preferably before he asks.

The bedtime routine will still take a long time at this point — but that's okay. The trick is to make all bedtime tasks streamlined and predictable.

Now that the small being knows what to expect, you can start shortening the routine by removing one element at a time. You could, for example, remove the extra book and only read what you say you are going to read. It is important that you only take out one element at a time. If you do too many at once, it won't work.

If you find yourself trapped in the bedroom, waiting for your small one to fall asleep, it is now time to change the routine so you can get out fast. Again, you want to take small steps. Let's say that your small being asks you to lie down next to him while he falls asleep. Your first step would be lying down but not touching his body, or sitting up in his bed. Once you can do that for five or six days in a row without any pushback from your small being, then start sitting on the floor right next to the bed as he falls asleep. Then you might want to move to a chair. Each move gets you closer and eventually outside the door.

Creating an ideal bedtime routine is a



BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

slow process that will take time, but once it is in place, you will have a short and efficient bedtime ritual for the entirety of that child's time with you. The extra time up front is minimal compared to that long-term reward!

If you're ready for more proven behavior tips and strategies for a better bedtime, check out the Better Bedtime program here: www.behaviorandbeyond.net/bedtime-package.

Dr. Marcie is a behavior specialist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 20 years and has condensed her observations into her private practice and online programs. Her book "Love Your Classroom Again" was a bestseller. You may have seen her as a guest expert on WCBS and Fox.

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Estate planning guide

Minors as beneficiaries to retirement, insurance accounts

How should I name the beneficiary of my retirement accounts? My children are 9 and 5 years old. Should I name them? What happens if I have another child?

Estate-planning clients frequently ask about the proper designation of a beneficiary on their non-probate assets, such as life insurance and retirement accounts. Often, they want their heirs to inherit the non-probate asset. When those individuals are minors, certain issues need to be considered in weighing not only the tax consequences, but other issues such as the ability of the child or guardian to have access to the funds.

Understanding age

The first question is what constitutes the age of “majority” in New York State. The answer: it depends. For the purpose of a Uniform Gift to Minor’s Act or Uniform Transfers to Minors Act, the account terminates, and the minor takes control of the account, at the age of 18 and 21, respectively. The age of termination of the account is not necessarily the same as the age of majority, which refers to the age at which a person is legally competent to sign contracts. Although the age of majority for contracts is 18, for Uniform Transfers Act and also child support purposes, the age of majority is 21.

Insurance contracts are treated somewhat differently. New York Insurance Law deems a minor above the age of 14 years and six months competent to be the owner or donee of a life insurance policy. This means that not only can a parent, grandparent, or anyone else name the over-14 ½ minor directly as a beneficiary, but that the same child is deemed competent to contract for, own, and exercise all rights relating to a life insurance policy. A child below that age lacks the capacity to purchase, own, or be the designated beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Nevertheless, a child under 14 ½ years may be a donee of a life insurance policy pursuant to Uniform Gift Act or Uniform Transfers Act. In order to

effectuate such a designation, the adult may make a gift of the policy indirectly to a child by designating a custodian to receive, hold, and manage the gift on behalf of the child until he reaches the age of majority. A living trust can also be the owner or beneficiary of a life insurance policy and hold that policy for the benefit of any person, including a child under 14 ½ years. Alternatively, the life insurance policy can name a testamentary trust or living trust as a beneficiary, with that trust in turn being for the benefit of any individual, including a minor younger or older than 14 ½.

Using an Uniform Transfers Act means, however, that the child will technically have access to the account when he is 18, which may still not allow a level of maturity necessary to manage a large sum of money.

Retirement accounts

Additional considerations come into play when addressing the disposition of a retirement account (referred to generally herein as an “IRA” although also applicable to ROTH IRAs and 401(k) plans). Certain options would allow the IRA to grow tax-free and avoid a lump-sum payment of income tax. As with life insurance, one option is to name a custodian under an existing or not-yet-created Uniform Transfers to Minors Act account as the beneficiary of the IRA. The named custodian can establish a new inherited IRA in her the name of the custodian for the benefit of the minor, into which the primary IRA is “rolled over.” The IRA owner may also name a living trust or a testamentary trust as the designated beneficiary. However, the trust must have specific language to qualify as a “conduit” or “accumulation” trust in order to be a recognized repository for the IRA that would allow the proceeds to “stretch out” and grow tax-free until withdrawn. If the custodian makes a timely election (on or before Dec. 31 of the year following the account owner’s death), the inherited IRA will stretch over the minor’s lifetime and required minimum distributions (the



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ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.

minimum amount you must withdraw from your account each year) will be calculated on the minor beneficiary’s lifetime.

With a Uniform Transfers to Minors Act account, the custodian will receive the annual minimum distributions as custodian (ideally, to be deposited into a separate Act bank account). Once that minor reaches the age of majority, he will have full access to the IRA and the bank account, allowing him to continue holding the inherited IRA (the smarter option) or withdraw all remaining funds. This type of unfettered access at the young age of 21 may not be desirable. Accordingly, naming a trust as beneficiary may be the better option.

Terms of the trust

The U.S. Treasury imposes four requirements which must be satisfied for a trust to qualify as a beneficiary of the IRA for tax purposes: (1) the trust must be valid under state law; (2) it must be irrevocable or become irrevocable upon the death of the account holder under the terms of the trust; (3) the beneficiaries must be identifiable from the trust instrument; and (4) the beneficiaries or their representatives must provide to the plan administrator or custo-

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dian either a copy of the trust instrument or provide a certification that the trust complies with these regulations.

The terms of the trust must comply to establish what is known as a “see-through” or “conduit trust” in order to permit the “stretch-out,” meaning, calculating minimum distributions based on the minor beneficiary’s presumably younger age. The designated beneficiary must be an individual and not an entity because an entity (such as the estate, a charitable organization, or a trust) does not have an actuarial lifespan to determine minimum distributions. If the trust is drafted as a conduit trust, it allows the plan to “see through” the trust to its beneficiaries. If a trust is for the benefit of one beneficiary, his age is used to determine the minimum distributions. If there are multiple beneficiaries, such as in a “sprinkle” or “spray” trust, the minimum distributions are determined by the age of the eldest beneficiary.

If the trust does not meet the requirements, then it is deemed to have no designated beneficiary for the purpose of the “stretch out” and the IRA must be withdrawn within five years (if the participant has not yet reached the age of taking minimum distributions) or based on the owner’s calculation if the owner had been taking the distributions at the time of his or her death.

Distributions

Many trusts for minors are drafted to allow discretionary distributions, with mandatory or forced distributions only at certain ages. This can present problems for the purpose of calculating the minimum distributions. In determining the minimum distributions through a trust, the designated beneficiaries are reviewed as a snapshot upon the death of the original owner. For example, if the trust states that distributions may only be made at age 25, and the minor is currently age 12, the plan administrator must also look at the contingent beneficiaries. In the case of a minor at the age of 12, who has no siblings, although the trust terms may say the contingent beneficiary is to the child’s issue, since the child has no issue at that snapshot of time, the contingent beneficiaries will be that child’s parents and therefore the eldest beneficiary for the purpose of determining the minimum distributions will be one of the child’s parents, thereby losing the intended stretch-out of the IRA. In order to cure this defect, the draftsman might consider naming another younger family member as the contingent beneficiary of the trust; however, in doing so, it may lead to an unintended beneficiary receiving the corpus of the trust.

The better option may be to use a conduit trust. By definition, a conduit trust requires

that all minimum distributions received in the trust must be distributed to the beneficiary or beneficiaries. In the case of a legal minor, they may be distributed to the child’s guardian if the trust instrument allows the trust to distribute funds on behalf of a minor to the guardian. If the child has siblings, particularly if those siblings are older, the draftsman might include terms that allow the minimum distributions to be distributed to and among the minor beneficiary and his or her siblings. In such case the minimum distributions will be calculated by the eldest beneficiary as mentioned above. The key to a conduit trust is that the instrument must require all minimum distributions to be distributed out of the trust to designated beneficiaries, even if the trust accumulates income from other sources.

Some plan administrators will not permit the designation of a trust as beneficiary. They may also require certain terms to be included in the trust instrument, or may prohibit an inherited IRA stretch-out. As always, you should consult an attorney before making any decisions that impact your estate plan or the legal consequences of naming a beneficiary.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., Find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

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Go places

Discover museum family programs for winter break

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

The New York City public school mid-winter break is fast approaching. If you are looking for ideas on how to fill those days without leaving town, then consider spending time at the city's acclaimed museums, where your children can experience art, history, and have a bit of fun.

A little-known fact is that many museums offer family programming tailored to kids, such as art classes, performances, or special tours. During your next visit to any museum, ask if it offers a family guide, booklet, or pamphlet. Also, keep an eye out for touch carts or teaching carts in the galleries. For example, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum has a Family Activity Kiosk where families can request a pack of materials to help navigate the exhibits throughout the space.

Some museums also offer designated spaces for children's exploration of the arts or content on display. From digging for dinosaurs in the Discovery Room at the American Museum of Natural History to drawing in the Uris Education Center at the Metropolitan Museum of Art to building sculptures in the Art Lab at the Museum of Modern Art, families can bring their children to not only see what is on display, but discover it in a multimodal way. All of these spaces are run by trained educators familiar with the content and child development, ensuring your child is engaged and learning.

Need more help figuring out which museums to visit and exhibits to see? Here's a list of 15 museums and their best family-friendly attractions for this exhibition cycle:

American Museum of Natural History

Central Park West and 79th Street on the Upper West Side, www.amnh.org

Suggested exhibit: Cuba! is a vibrant exhibit that offers various pockets of information on the country. From food to sports to nature, your children will enjoy this interactive exhibit that runs through

Aug. 13. The museum also offers an expansive permanent collection and Discovery Room for children.

Brooklyn Museum

200 Eastern Pkwy in Prospect Heights, www.brooklynmuseum.org

Suggested exhibit: Offering a large permanent collection and a full calendar of public and family programs, the museum stays buzzing. Currently on display, Beverly Buchanan — Ruins and Rituals (closing March 5) has around 200 objects on display, including sculpture, painting, photography, drawing, and notebooks of the artist. Take advantage of Creativity Lab drop-in class the first Sunday of the month.

Bronx Museum

1040 Grand Concourse in Concourse, www.bronxmuseum.org

Suggested exhibit: The museum offers a vast permanent collection and various temporary exhibits. For teens, consider The Neighbors, Part Two, in Two Parts: Sanctuary: Andrea Bowers and Home: Andrea Aragón, which addresses immigration through the work of American artist Bowers and Guatemalan photographer Aragón and closes Feb. 12. Also, take a look at the events calendar to register for Family Affair, a hands-on workshop provided on select Saturdays.

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

2 E. 91st St. in Carnegie Hill, www.cooper-hewitt.org

Suggested exhibit: Teens may like the current exhibit Scraps: Fashion, Textiles and Creative Reuse, an exhibit on sustainability and design, open through April 16. The museum also offers workshops for families, children and teens. Target Family Day(s) will be offered throughout the mid-winter break.

El Museo del Barrio

1230 Fifth Ave. in East Harlem, www.elmuseo.org

[elmuseo.org](http://www.elmuseo.org)

Suggested exhibit: Teens may enjoy Rotative Repository of Latin American Video Art: Mono Cana, which is a collection of works by video artists, on display through April 30. ArtExplorer Activity Cards are available for families and mark the third Saturday of the month for "Super Sabado!" which includes performance, storytelling, and art making.

The Jewish Museum

1109 Fifth Ave. in Carnegie Hill, <http://the-jewishmuseum.org>

Suggested exhibit: Families will enjoy programming offered for various ages. Currently on view is Masterpieces and Curiosities: Memphis does Hanukkah, an exhibition of objects closing Feb. 12. Remember, Sundays are for families at this museum. Kids can participate in hands-on activities.

Long Island Museum

1200 Route 25A in Stony Brook, NY, www.longislandmuseum.org

Suggested exhibit: Opening on Feb. 24, Colors of Long Island is an exhibit that showcases student work. Check the calendar for Drop-In Days for families, and you can join a Museum Educator for art making and other activities.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Ave. on the Upper East Side, www.metmuseum.com

Suggested exhibit: The expansive permanent collection takes more than one hour to cover everything that you would need to see, especially since the admission includes entry to the Met Breuer, as well as the Cloisters. A current exhibition that may interest young artists and art lovers is the Velazquez Portraits: Truth in Painting which includes several riveting portraits of 16th-century children. This exhibit is on display until March 12. Don't forget to ask for information for families and stop by the



Scenes from the American Museum of Natural History. There's plenty for families to see at the city's museums this winter break.

Uris Education Center.

Museum of the City of New York

1220 Fifth Ave. in East Harlem, www.mcny.org

Suggested exhibit: Through April 23, the architecture buff in your family may enjoy the exhibit *Mastering the Metropolis: New York and Zoning 1916–2016* which showcases the formation of the city's neighborhoods. Kids may also like watching "Timescapes," a 28-minute film of the history of New York. Check the calendar for family-friendly workshops.

Museum of Modern Art

11 W. 53rd St. in Midtown, www.moma.org

Suggested exhibit: The extensive permanent collection of the MoMA is enough to fill your day, and a visit to the family-friendly interactive space will make your child's day. Teens may like the current exhibition Francis Picabia: *Our Heads Are Round so Our Thoughts Can Change Direction*, which is open through March 19.

New York Historical Society

170 Central Park West on the Upper West Side, www.nyhistory.org

Suggested exhibit: The DiMenna Children's Museum, housed in the lower level, is a can't miss for families. However, kids and grownups alike will be intrigued by the two Muhammad Ali exhibits currently on display on floor 2. Muhammad Ali, LeRoy Neiman and the Art of Boxing showcase watercolor portraits of the historical

figure. "I Am King of the World: Photographs of Mohammad Ali by George Kalinsky" showcases the famed boxer from his youth to late adulthood, and is open through March 26.

Queens Museum

NYC Bldg – Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Flushing, www.queensmuseum.org

Suggested exhibit: The panorama of the New York City skyline is a favorite for kids and adults alike. Currently on view through Feb. 19 is Mierle Laderman Ukeles: *Maintenance Art*, an exhibit that includes 50 years of the artist's portraits and multimedia works that document the indispensable workers and city agencies that keep our city clean and running smoothly. The exhibit closes Feb. 19. If visiting on a Sunday, families can participate in drop-in art workshops.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

1071 Fifth Ave. on the Upper East Side, www.guggenheim.org

Suggested exhibit: *Visionaries: Creating a Modern Guggenheim* is an exhibit that includes works from artists Vasily Kandinsky and Hilla Rebay. It opens Feb. 10. Just a few weeks later, Jackson Pollack: *Exploring Alchemy*, opens on March 1, and will offer video footage and interactive kiosks related to the famed artist. Don't forget to request a family pack!

Staten Island Museum

1000 Richmond Terrace – Snug Harbor

Campus, Building H, in Snug Harbor, www.statenislandmuseum.org

Suggested exhibit: *Of Human Feelings: Portraits by Warren Lyons* is a powerful series of paintings of figures from American history and the arts, opening Feb. 18. The exhibit features portraits of Frederick Douglass, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Sojourner Truth. The museum offers family workshops on the first Saturday of the month.

Whitney Museum

99 Gansevoort St. in the Meatpacking District, <http://whitney.org>

Suggested exhibit: The Whitney's permanent collection offers opportunities for families to request a copy of the Family Guide to aid children's exploration and interaction with the works on display. Current exhibits will have staggered closings throughout February and the Biennial show opens in March. Keep an eye out for family weekend activities led by educators and artists.

Please remember that stroller policies vary from museum to museum. If applicable, check museum websites to research services for visitors with disabilities or special needs. Contact the museums you plan to visit to arrange access accommodations.

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: www.shnieka-johnson.com.



Mediation tackles equity distribution

In previous articles, I have written about different stages of a mediation case: The decision to try mediation, and the consultation (Part 1); discussions on parenting (Part 2); and dealing with income and expenses (Part 3). I continue here as the mediator assists Angela and Bill, a hypothetical couple, in regard to their assets and debts, and child support.

Feb. 16th – Session 3

The next session takes place almost a month after the previous one. Meeting earlier hadn't been possible or practical, because Bill and Angela had a lot of financial information to gather in regard to assets and debts.

The mediator asks about what has been happening since the last session. Learning that there haven't been what either party considers significant changes or problems, the mediator asks Angela about the clothing expenses discussed at the last session. Angela gives a new (and lower figure), which Bill accepts as accurate.

With income and expenses taken care of, the mediator works with the couple on their assets, again writing the figures on a flipchart. Angela and Bill both say that the numbers are correct. They quickly agree on how to deal with the bank accounts, retirement money, and other investments. There is a small dispute over the cars they own, which the couple quickly resolves.

The big issue is the house. Angela would like to keep it, but buying out Bill may be impossible. Bill says that Angela can have the house, but she'd need to pay him a fair price. There is some discussion regarding the house.

The mediator asks whether Angela has checked into getting a mortgage. Angela says she hasn't. Bill suggests that since a buyout may not even be possible, maybe it would be best to go on to the next issue; Angela can do some investigating, and then they can come back to the house question. Angela agrees to Bill's proposal.

Having reviewed the asset information, and having reached many tentative agreements, the mediator begins helping them share information on debts and liabilities for the remainder of the session.

Feb. 28 – Session 4

The spouses arrive. They continue sharing information on debts, and then review it with the mediator.

They reach a decision on how to handle the credit cards, the biggest debt, aside from the mortgage on the house. They agree on several other debt-related issues as well.

Angela begins to talk about the house, saying that she would be able to get a mortgage. Discussion continues, and then a disagreement arises concerning the



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

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value of the house. Two disagreements, actually, dealing with:

- The fair market value of the house.
- What percentage of that value should go to Bill. (Angela had assumed that they each had an equal share, but Bill is asking for more.)

Angela's surprise quickly turns to anger. The mediator intervenes when it becomes clear that a productive conversation about the matter isn't possible at the moment. He helps the spouses turn their attention to finding out the house's value, a task that both agree is necessary. After a lengthy and heated discussion, Bill and Angela agree on how to have the house valued.

The spouses want to talk about child support. They've managed to discuss this issue on their own and have a plan. The mediator asks for the details, which Angela and Bill share with him.

The mediator tells them about the Child Support Guidelines. (New York State requires parents to learn what amount of child support the guidelines would require, even if parents decide not to follow the guidelines.)

Bill and Angela decide that their own agreement is better for their family than what the guidelines provide.

Next time: Agreements reached and reviewing the costs

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Out of the freezer

Are frozen veggies as good as fresh?

Frozen. It's how we feel now that we're in the depths of winter. It's the name of a popular family movie. And it's a way to purchase our vegetables and fruits. But is frozen produce as good as fresh?

On the one hand, we're encouraged to purchase whole fresh vegetables and fruits and minimize the processed types. On the other hand, frozen produce is so convenient. At this time of year, family cooks find themselves facing a produce dilemma.

Is it preferable to buy fresh produce out of season, which could have spent days or even weeks in transit and storage before you purchase them from the local grocery store? Or turn to the freezer aisle for a package of berries, broccoli, or Brussels sprouts?

There are numerous benefits to frozen:

- You can take out just what you need, close the bag, and pop it back in the freezer for next time. No washing is required and there's no food waste.
- A variety is available year-round.
- The price is usually quite reasonable.
- Pre-cut mixes of recipe-ready vegetables, such as pre-sliced onions and peppers for fajitas and blends with whole grains and beans, are offered.

Yet, there's a trade-off: The texture

suffers. While it's not a problem for all dishes, the characteristic softness of previously frozen vegetables can be a turn-off. Why does this happen? Well, the water in fruits and vegetables expands during freezing and breaks down the plant cells, resulting in a mushy texture in some vegetable types.

Nutrients

What about the nutrition? Isn't there some nutrient loss during the freezing process?

Not really. Immediately after picking, the veggies and fruit get a quick blast of hot water or steam that blanches them and kills microbes that are present. Blanching stops browning and loss of nutrients.

Several studies, including one published in the *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*, found that fresh and frozen can be nutritionally equal, depending upon how the produce was stored and processed. Another study at the University of Georgia compared nutrients in fresh produce the day it was purchased and after it had spent five days in the refrigerator. The frozen produce packed as many nutrients as the fresh and in some cases — broccoli, strawberries, and green peas — even more than what was kept in the home fridge for five days.

There were even greater levels of se-

lect fat-soluble nutrients — vitamins A and E and lycopene — that were released from their cell structure after being frozen.

Most people don't realize that fresh produce destined for supermarkets is picked early, so it isn't overripe when it arrives at the store. The full spectrum of vitamins and minerals is developed when it is fully ripe. What's in the stores may be lower in nutrients due to early harvesting. As soon as produce is picked, the level of some nutrients begins to decline.

What do I keep in my own freezer? Several types of green vegetables such as spinach, sugar snap peas, corn, plus chopped onion and green bell pepper. And I always keep berries, such as blueberries and raspberries, ready to toss into a smoothie, cottage cheese, or oatmeal.

Cooking frozen peas, beans, and other vegetables is a snap. Place them in a skillet on medium-high heat with a little olive oil, a bit of sliced garlic if you wish, and about two tablespoons of water. Cover the pan and cook until heated through and the moisture has evaporated.

You can also toss frozen vegetables into stir-fries, soup, casseroles, stews, sauces, and lasagna.

While fresh is good, the convenience of frozen vegetables and fruits make it easier to boost your family's recommended servings every day.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

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Tips on evaluating a sprained ankle

My 8-year-old son is always running, jumping, or climbing on something. I am particularly worried about him slipping on ice. He has twisted his ankle this way before, and I have always been able to treat him at home with an ice pack and a children's pain reliever. When should I be concerned that a sore ankle might be something more, and what are the signs that he needs to go to the emergency room?

Twisted ankles (or sprains) are a very common concern — and can cause much confusion — for many parents. Like you, they want to take the best care of their child without making unnecessary trips to the emergency room.

The rule of thumb for ankle injuries is watchful waiting. Should your son twist his ankle, keep a close eye on the affected area — some symptoms may appear immediately, others may develop over the next hour or two. It is important to pay attention to what he says he is feeling. If a few hours after treating your son with an ice pack and a Tylenol or ibuprofen he is not complaining of pain and feels well enough to play, it is unlikely that any medical attention is required.

However, if symptoms such as pain and swelling persist, you should be prepared take him to his pediatrician or an outpatient clinic or, in the case of a severe sprain, the emergency room.

Sprains are one of the most common types of ankle injuries. They occur when stress is placed on the ankle at an angle it cannot sustain, causing a stretching or tearing of the ligaments, the fibrous tissues that connect bones to each other. At the time of injury, a sprain may cause a popping sound, and cause swelling, bruising, and tenderness in the ankle to develop.

A sprain can range in severity from minor to major. Some ankle sprains just need rest to resolve; others may be very painful, with the ankle unable to bear weight. In cases in which the ligaments are badly torn, the ankle may have severe bruising, increased swelling, and be unable to bear weight without significant pain and may feel slightly unstable. In this case, immediate medical attention is needed, and depending on what facility is most accessible, possibly a visit to the emergency room.

With a physical examination and, al-



FAMILY HEALTH

DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD
Chairman of Pediatrics
NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn
Methodist Hospital

most surely, an X-ray, a physician will be able to determine the full extent of the injury and recommend the best course of treatment. Minor sprains can be treated using the RICE method to reduce swelling and pain:

- Rest the ankle
- Ice the area
- Compress the ankle with an ace bandage to keep it stable
- Elevate the ankle when sitting or lying down

These sprains will usually heal within a few weeks. More severe sprains may also require some physical therapy and/or the use of an elastic bandage or a cushioned plastic brace, or even the temporary use of crutches. These more serious sprains may require between six weeks and three months of recovery time.

Some of the symptoms of a sprained ankle, such as swelling and bruising, overlap with those of a fracture. There are some key ways to tell the two apart. A fracture, or breaking of a bone in the ankle, will cause a cracking sound rather than the pop associated with a sprain. Fractured ankles may also appear crooked or otherwise deformed after the event. Additionally, the pain will emanate from the bone itself rather than the area around it. In some cases a sprain and a fracture occur simultaneously. The X-ray will reveal the exact nature of the injury.

You may not be able to stop your son from jumping off tables or sliding on the ice, but you can be prepared to treat the consequences. With luck, they won't require much more than some ice and a hug.



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Calendar

FEBRUARY



Love and heartbreak

Love and heartbreak is on the table at Gotham Comedy Club on Feb. 12, when the kids are in the house.

Kid's N Comedy presents teen comics who explore the heartbreak and joys of teen love. Hey, they just had to watch Zayne leave One Direction, you know. Come and celebrate the holiday of ro-

mance and humiliation the teen way. Appropriate for children 9 to 18 years old.

Love and Heartbreak, Feb. 12 at 1 pm. Tickets are \$18, plus one item minimum (food or drink).

Gotham Comedy Club [208 W. 23rd St. in Chelsea, (212) 877-6115; www.kidsncomedy.com].

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Calendar

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Send your listing request to manhattancalendar@cnglocal.com — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

THURS, FEB. 2

IN MANHATTAN

Chinese New Year Ornaments: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Noon to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

It's the Year of the Rooster! Help the museum ring in the Lunar New Year and make an ornament using recycled materials to honor the Chinese zodiac animal from the year you were born.

FRI, FEB. 3

IN MANHATTAN

Chinese New Year Ornaments: noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Thursday, Feb. 2.

Figure Skate geometry: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Noon to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Using drawing tools, young artists will map out their own figure-skating routines! Experimenting with compasses and rulers, visitors will make their own small figurines and play with shapes like spirals, swizzles, and spins as they move around the rink. For children 5 years and older.

SAT, FEB. 4

IN MANHATTAN

"Ghana Ballet": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; call for times; \$30, \$40, \$50.

As cultural heirs to the dance and drum legacies of pioneers such as Asadata Dafora, Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu, Chief Bey, Olukuse Wiles, Baba Kwame Ishangi, Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, Nana Kimiti Dinizulu, Asase Yaa's new production is sure to be one to remember!

Artists at the Atrium: Lincoln Center's Passport Family Program, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5456; 11 am and 2 pm; Free.

The Okee Dokee Brothers are back! The Grammy winners return to Artists at the Atrium with their signature blend of Ameri-



Stories Under the Stars

Take a journey under the stars at 6 River Terrace on Feb. 4.

Featured storyteller Julie Pasqual explains the wonders of the stars in this fun story hour.

Ever wonder how the constellations got their names? Why does the amount of daylight change every day? Evoking the spirit of a family campfire under the night sky, spend the evening celebrating camping while exploring the mysteries of the cosmos.

Indoor astronomy experiences and explanations, storytelling, art projects, and camping-themed play promise a series of fun evenings.

Activities are designed for children ages 6 and older. Preregistration required.

Stories Under the Stars, Feb. 4 from 4 pm to 6 pm; free.

6 River Terrace (6 River Terrace off North End Avenue in Battery Park City, registration@bpcparks.org).

can folk music, witty lyrics, and stories of their thrilling outdoor adventures. Recommended for ages 2-5.

Shadow Play: David I Koch Theater, 20 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212)-875-5456; 11 am and 2 pm; \$25.

Have you ever wondered what happens to your shadow while you sleep? Well, it turns out that some shadows are more mischievous than others. Soon after moving to his new home, Flash discovers that his shadow has moving plans of its own! Shadow Play is an early-years, multimedia performance that enchants and engages.

Chinese New Year Ornaments: noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Thursday, Feb. 2.

Figure Skate geometry: noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Friday, Feb. 3.

Family concert: Lincoln Center's Passport Family Program, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza New

York, NY 10023; (212)-875-5456; 1 pm and 3 pm; \$9-\$25.

Children discover the talent and genius of jazz musician Louis Armstrong through stories, recordings, and live music.

Family Film - "Fantasia": Whitney Museum of American Art, 99 Gansvoort St.; (212) 570-3600; whitney.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; \$22 (\$18 for seniors; free for children and members).

Children 4 years and older enjoy this special screening of the 1940 animated flick. This is a rare opportunity to experience Disney's classic concert film on the big screen with immersive surround sound! Tickets are required and include admission to the gallery. Pre-purchasing tickets suggested.

"All Balanchine": Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5374; <http://www.lincolncenter.org>; 2 pm; \$30 - \$175.

From classic to contemporary, the New York City Ballet performs spectacular showcases of

Calendar

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his work.

Under the Stars: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; registration@bpcparks.org; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Featured storyteller Julie Pasqual explains the wonders of the stars. Spend the evening celebrating camping while exploring the mysteries of the cosmos. Indoor astronomy experiences and explanations, storytelling, art projects, and camping-themed play promise a series of fun evenings! Activities designed for children ages 6 and up. Preregistration required.

"Winter Blaze": The Herb Alpert Center, 645 St. Nicholas Ave.; www.hanyc.org; 7 pm; \$25 (\$15 students and seniors).

The dance concert is presented by the Harlem School of the Arts Dance Ensemble — featuring the ensemble and junior ensemble students and hosted by Shahadi Wright Joseph.

SUN, FEB. 5 IN MANHATTAN

Figure Skate geometry: noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Friday, Feb. 3.

Symphony Space – Book Club: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 1 pm; \$16.

Aspiring young artists and authors are invited to join the wildly imaginative French-born author of "Press Here" and "Let's Play" in an interactive afternoon of art and storytelling. Ages 5–10.

"All Balanchine": 3 pm. Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts. See Saturday, Feb. 4.

"Winter Blaze": 3 pm. The Herb Alpert Center. See Saturday, Feb. 4.

Astronomy: North Side of Great Lawn, Central Park, 85th Street and Mid Park; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

The wonders of the universe are ready to be discovered and New York City parks are the perfect place to stargaze and explore the night sky. Our Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe. Astronomy programs feature the use of telescopes and binoculars to observe the night sky.

MON, FEB. 6 IN MANHATTAN

Figure Skate geometry: noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Friday, Feb. 3.

TUES, FEB. 7 IN MANHATTAN

Tour of Gracie Mansion: Gracie Mansion in Carl Schurz Park, 88th Street and East End Avenue; (212) 676-3060; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am to 10:50 am; Free.



Lauren Adler

'The Painter's Journey'

Take a fantastic journey to the Museum of Jewish Heritage on Feb. 12 and enjoy a performance of "The Painter's Journey."

The original play and hands-on workshop is based on the PJ Library book "Anna and Solomon" by Elaine Snyder.

The show is perfect for families with

children ages 3–7, and siblings are more than welcome.

"The Painter's Journey," and workshop, Feb. 12, beginning at 11 am. Tickets are \$8, and free for children and grandchildren of members.

Museum of Jewish Heritage [36 Battery Place at First Place in Battery Park, (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org].

Older children will enjoy this tour of the Mayor's home. RSVP required.

THURS, FEB. 9 IN MANHATTAN

Figure Skate geometry: noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Friday, Feb. 3.

FRI, FEB. 10 IN MANHATTAN

Wind spinners: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; 2 pm to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Influenced by Mia Pearlman's use of paper, positive and negative space, and acknowledgement of weather influences, young artists will add a twist by creating wind activated kinetic sculpture.

SAT, FEB. 11 IN MANHATTAN

"Baobab": David I Koch Theater, 20 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212)-875-5456; 2 pm; \$25.

Théâtre Motus tells the story of a hero's quest in West Africa, where there is a serious drought. There stands an ancient baobab tree. One day, the tree brings forth an egg, from which a boy is born. The villagers discover that he is the only one who can free the water! Baobab shows that a child's courage can save the world. Recommended for children 6 and older.

SUN, FEB. 12 IN MANHATTAN

"The Painter's Journey": Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Pl. at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 11 am; \$8 (Free for children and grandchildren of members).

Enjoy an original play and hands-on workshop based on PJ Library book "Anna and Solomon" by Elaine Snyder. For families with children ages 3–7, siblings welcome.

Valentine Workshop: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; registration@bpcparks.org; 11 am to 1 pm; Free.

Love is in the air! Create your own valentines using various materials to collage, cut and paste, and decorate cards for your special

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someone. Must be 5 years old and up. Supplies provided. Space is limited. Pre-registration required.

Kids 'N Comedy: Gotham Comedy Club, 208 W. 23rd St.; (212) 877-6115; www.kidsn-comedy.com; 1 pm; \$18 plus one item minimum (food or drink).

Love and heartbreak are nothing to joke about — but these teen comics find the humor in the holiday of love. Appropriate for children 9 to 18 years old.

TUES, FEB. 14

IN MANHATTAN

Tour of Gracie Mansion: 10 am to 10:50 am. Gracie Mansion in Carl Schurz Park. See Tuesday, Feb. 7.

SAT, FEB. 18

IN MANHATTAN

Eagles: Payson Center at Inwood Hill Park, Payson Avenue and Dyckman Street; (212) 628-2345; nycgovparks.org; 9 am to 10:30 am; Free.

Sick of being cooped up indoors? Set out with our Urban Park Rangers on one of the many hikes and birding tours they offer. Winter is a great time to spot bald eagles. Our Urban Park Rangers will guide you to the best wildlife-viewing spots in the urban jungle. To enhance your experience, we encourage you to bring binoculars and field guides, or ask a park ranger to borrow a pair. For older tweens and teens.

Storytime at the Atrium: Lincoln Center's Passport Family Program, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5456; 11 am; Free.

Jerry Pinkney has the rare distinction of being the recipient of five Caldecott Honors and the winner of the 2010 Caldecott Medal. He has won the Coretta Scott King Award five times, the Coretta Scott King Honor four times, and has been nominated for the prestigious Hans Christian Anderson Award. He was also the first children's book illustrator elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. For children 2 to 5 years old.

Family Day: Morris Jumel Mansion, 65 Jumel Terrace; (212) 923-8008; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am to 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Come celebrate our Founding Father's birthday at his only Manhattan Revolutionary War headquarters! Make Washington-themed crafts and explore his war room in the mansion. Advanced registration is recommended. To register, please email education@morrisjumesel.org.

She's on Point: Hansborough Pool & Recreation Center, 35 W. 134th St.; (212) 402-0262; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Join NYC Parks in celebration of girls and women in sports. A day of water sports demonstrations, clinics and workshops for girls and



Jump back in history

Have you ever wondered what the famous, and not-so-famous, were like as children? In "The History Mystery," running now through Feb. 20 at TADA Youth Theater, you will find out.

"The History Mystery" is a musical time travel adventure in which the cast will take you back in time to meet famous and not-so-famous people — including Eleanor Roosevelt, Ben Franklin, the Wright brothers, and many more — as kids before they went on to change the world.

The show was specifically chosen

because its message is even more relevant today! It's up to you and me to make history. Performance is under one hour and is suggested for families with children 3 years and older.

"The History Mystery," Friday, 7 pm; Saturday, 2 and 4 pm; and Sundays noon and 2 pm, now through Feb. 20. Tickets are \$15 for children and \$25 for adults.

TADA! Youth Theater [15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue in Nomad, (212) 252-1619 X4; www.tadatheater.com].

women to participate in. All ages welcome. Please bring bathing suits and caps.

Chocolate Day!: Morris-Jumel Mansion, 65 Jumel Terrace; (212) 923-8008; publicprograms@morrisjumel.org; www.nycgovparks.org; 3 pm to 5 pm; \$30 (\$25 members).

Come celebrate Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum's ninth annual Chocolate Day, which will include a tour of the new exhibition A Taste for Chocolate led by Curator and Director Carol S. Ward. Following the tour, Ms. Ward will lead a tasting of different varieties of chocolate. Reservations required.

SUN, FEB. 19

IN MANHATTAN

Washington's Birthday Ball: Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Gardens, 421 E. 61st St. between First and York avenues; (212) 838-6878; www.mvhm.org; 1 pm to 3 pm;

\$15 (\$10 members & children under 12).

Celebrate the birthday of our nation's first president with music and dance as New Yorkers did in the 19th century. Costumed dancers will perform and teach traditional country dances and encourage visitors to join in. Festivities include toasts to George Washington, historic refreshments, and museum tour. All ages welcome.

MON, FEB. 20

IN MANHATTAN

Kids Week: Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum; 10 am to 5 pm; Call for tickets.

This year, Kids Week has game! Play cutting-edge digital games, design your own games, and explore interactive displays at this weeklong festival for families. You'll learn about the logic and imagination that goes into game design as you build, tinker and play.

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Mad Science, Games for Change, Institute of Play, FIRST, and other special guests will offer activities, performances, and demonstrations at the museum all week long.

Balto's Winter Wonderland: Dairy Gift Shop at Central Park, Center Drive; (212) 794-6564; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am to noon; Free.

With Central Park's most famous canine resident leading the way, we'll explore the park's wintery landscape. Bring your family for a guided walk and discover why Central Park is a sanctuary for plants, animals, and humans alike. Pre-registration required as space is limited. Ages 5 and up. Families only, and maximum of three children per parent or guardian; no groups, please. Please arrive at walk location 15 minutes before the start to allow time for check in. Terrain: Uneven, with hills, stairs, and wood-chipped trails; may not be suitable for strollers.

Geology walk: Dana Discovery Center at Central Park, 110th Street between Fifth and Lenox avenues; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

From its ancient bedrock to fault zones that cut across the city to its geographic position at the edge of a glacier, the geologic history of the city can be found in its parks. Join the Urban Park Rangers for a look into how geology influenced the landscape and design of New York City's Central Park.

TUES, FEB. 21

IN MANHATTAN

Kids Week: 10 am to 5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 20.

'Fantasia' on the big screen

It's fantastic, it's fabulous — it's "Fantasia" at the Whitney Museum of American Art on Feb. 4.

Families will enjoy this special screening of the 1940 animated flick. The event is in conjunction with the exhibition *Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905-2016*. This is a rare opportunity to experience Disney's classic concert film on the big screen with immersive surround sound! Grab a bag of popcorn, watch the film, and then join us for a gallery exploration



and an art-making workshop.

Suitable for children 4 years and older. Tickets are required and include admission to the gallery. Pre-purchasing tickets is strongly suggested.

"Fantasia," Feb. 4 from 2 to 4 pm. Tickets are \$22 for adults, \$18 for seniors, and free for children and members.

Whitney Museum of American Art [99 Gansvoort St. in the Meatpacking District, (212) 570-3600; <http://whitney.org>].

Take a trip to Healthyville

Children learn healthy habits when they visit Healthyville, the mini exhibit now through March 26 at the Museum of Chinese in America.

Healthyville was created by Stepping Stones Museum for Children in Connecticut, and is a small, portable exhibit promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

Children shop at the Good Food Market, use a pulse meter, balance food choices with physical activity, practice



brushing and flossing a big mouth, and more.

Healthyville, the mini exhibit, daily through March 26 at 11 am. Free with general admission of \$10 seniors and students, \$5 for children under 12. Free for museum members.

Museum of Chinese in America [215 Centre Street between Grand and Howard streets in Chinatown, (855) 955-MOCA, www.mocanyc.org/exhibitions/healthyville_mini_exhibit].

Reptiles & Amphibians: Payson Center at Inwood Hill Park, Payson Avenue and Dyckman Street; (212) 628-2345; nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

Join our Urban Park Rangers to learn about the unique characteristics of reptiles and amphibians.

WED, FEB. 22

IN MANHATTAN

Kids Week: 10 am to 5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 20.

Trees & Winter: Dana Discovery Center at Central Park, 110th Street between Fifth and

Lenox avenues; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

Join the Urban Park Rangers for a winter walk looking for wildlife clues while identifying winter trees.

THURS, FEB. 23

IN MANHATTAN

Kids Week: 10 am to 5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 20.

Eagles & Winter Birds: Payson Center at Inwood Hill Park, Payson Avenue and Dyckman Street; (212) 628-2345; nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

Winter is a spectacular season for observing bald eagles in New York City parks. See if you can spot any on this adventure with our Urban Park Rangers.

FRI, FEB. 24

IN MANHATTAN

Kids Week: 10 am to 5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 20.

Workshop for parents: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; registration@bpcparks.org; 1:30 pm to 3 pm, and 6 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

Focusing on the educational value of block play with parents in mind, this workshop will offer hands-on experience and explanations of the connections between building and different intelligence types. Participants will see how to apply what they learn to fostering the development of their children. Led by Doug Van Horn, BPC Parks Senior Manager of Education and Nature Programs. Pre-registration required.

Owl Pellets & Animal Tracking: Dana Discovery Center at Central Park, 110th Street between Fifth and Lenox avenues; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

Owls are creatures who swallow their prey

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whole. Parts of the prey, such as bones, feathers, and fur, are bound up during digestion into a tight pellet which the owl regurgitates. Join the Urban Park Rangers for a walk while looking for signs of owls and other winter animals.

SAT, FEB. 25

IN MANHATTAN

Kids Week: 10 am to 5 pm. Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 20.

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

Winter Village: Bryant Park, 42nd Street and Avenue of the Americas; (212) 768-4242; www.bryantpark.org; Daily, 8 am to 10 pm; Now – Thurs, March 2; \$27 (adults), \$22 (students/seniors), \$16 (children); Member discount: \$13.50 adults; \$8.50 children; Free for Voyager-level members and above.

The rink is open for ice skating. Lace up those skates and get gliding around.

Wonders of the Arctic: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; tccopens@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10:30 am; Now – Thurs, March 2; \$27 (adults), \$22 (students/seniors), \$16 (children); Member discount: \$13.50 adults; \$8.50 children; Free for Voyager-level members and above.

Through compelling stories told by scientists and Inuit leaders, viewers will discover the impact of ice on the Arctic's inhabitants, both animals and humans.

Healthyville Mini Exhibit: Museum of Chinese in America, 215 Centre St.; (855) 955-MOCA; slo@mocanyc.org; www.mocanyc.org/exhibitions/healthyville_mini_exhibit; Daily, 11 am; Now – Sun, March 26; \$10 seniors (with ID) and students (with school ID), \$5 children under 12 (in groups smaller than 10); free MOCA members.

Healthyville is a small, portable exhibit promoting healthy choice. Shop at the Good Food Market, use a pulse meter, balance food choices with physical activity, practice brushing, and flossing a big mouth and more.

Teen Night: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; registration@bpcparks.org; Fridays, 4 pm to 7 pm, Now – Fri, April 7; Free.

Drop by for a few hours to meet friends and make new ones. Play table tennis, foosball, life-sized chess, and more! Also introducing trivia, karaoke, and Community Center night. Check our website for latest information. Registration required. (No class Feb. 17).

"The History Mystery": TADA! Youth Theater, 15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue; (212) 252-1619 X 4; www.tadatheater.com; Fridays, 7 pm, Saturdays, 2 pm and 4 pm, Sundays, Noon and 2 pm, Now – Mon, Feb. 20; \$15 (\$25 adults).

The cast takes you back in time to meet famous and "not so famous" kids who went on to change the world. Performance is under one hour and is suggested for families with



Christine Butler

Heating up the stage

The stage is ablaze with "Winter Blaze" at the Herp Albert Center on Feb. 4 and 5. The dance concert is presented by the Harlem School of the Arts Dance Ensemble and hosted by Shahadi Wright Joseph. It features the ensemble

and junior ensemble students.

"Winter Blaze," Feb. 4 at 7 pm and Feb. 5 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$25 for adults, and \$15 students and seniors.

The Herb Alpert Center (645 St. Nicholas Ave. in Harlem, www.hanyc.org).

kids ages 3 and up.

Shababa Saturdays: 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; Saturdays, 10:30 am, Now – Sat, March 4; Free.

Sing, dance, and celebrate the joys of Shabbat with this intergenerational family experience!

"Rapunzel": Galli Theater, 151 W. 26th St., seventh floor; (212) 731-0668; www.gallitheaterny.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 pm, Sat, Feb. 4 – Sun, Feb. 26; \$20 (\$15 children; \$35 combo).

When a husband sneaks into a garden for his wife he makes a promise to a witch. Will his promise be kept and his daughter doomed to live in a tower, or will a prince come along and save her from her fate? For children 5 and up.

Jazz for Kids: Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. between Park and Lexington avenues; (212) 576-2232; www.jazzstandard.com; Sundays, 1 to 3 pm; Free (\$5 donation requested).

Come and listen to a jazz concert and help benefit the Jazz Standard Discovery Program. Jazz Standard donates \$1 from each kid's menu sold to Spoons Across America. Table reservations requested.

"Sleeping Beauty": Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza; (212) 875-5374; www.lincolncenter.org; Tuesdays –

Thursdays, 7:30 pm; Fridays and Saturdays, 8 pm; Sundays, 1 pm, and 7 pm; Wed, Feb. 8 – Sun, Feb. 19; \$30-\$175.

This enchanting tale unveils the story of a charming prince on his quest to unbind a cursed princess, with aid from a cast of miraculous fairies and fanciful storybook characters.

"Sesame Street Live": The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 4 Pennsylvania Plaza; (212) 465-6741; www.box-officetickets.com/madison/new-york; Thursdays – Mondays, call for times, Thurs, Feb. 16 – Sun, Feb. 26; \$15-\$147.

Celebrate the universal joy of friendship in this fun-filled, interactive live stage show! Sing and dance along with your favorite characters — Elmo, Grover, Abby Cadabby, and Big Bird — as they welcome Chamki, Grover's friend from India, to Sesame Street.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: —Thailand: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road, The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Sat, Feb. 18 – Sun, April 9; \$20 (\$8 children).

The show features thousands of orchids in a classic Thai garden setting. The grand centerpiece of the design will be the façade of a sala, a traditional pavilion used for shade and relaxation, with a signature sweeping gabled roofline festooned with exquisite orchids.



What happened to love stories?

I miss romantic movies.

I realized this only recently over Christmas break when I had some downtime. It was the first time in a full year that I had one entire week in which I did not have to get up to the sound of my phone alarm. It was glorious. During that splendid week, once the hustle and bustle was over, I noticed that there were so many movies that I loved on various channels, and I happily indulged (albeit often while checking e-mails, but still).

There was “Prelude To A Kiss,” “Moonstruck,” and “The Family Man.” While none of these are particularly life-changing, they are entertaining and relatable family tales in which one person loves another person. Yes, they have trials. Yes, they have fights. Yes, they question whether they should be together at times. But in the end, they love each other.

Love.

The characters aren’t scouring Tinder for a new hook-up or late-night texting to

plan for a friends-with-benefits situation. They actually found a person attractive — in real life, and (gasp) spoke to them (!), and then essentially got to know them. They fell in love and decided to spend their life with that one person.

I have not been to a good movie in ... wait, let me think ... I honestly can’t even remember the last time I went to a good movie. The theaters now seem packed with action flicks, superhero remakes, and, well, utter crap: trashy material aimed at teens, which ironically attract countless middle-aged people, too.

Where are the true love movies? Where are the stories that show us, especially our youth, that although relationships are tricky, falling in love is possible — that any relationships, romantic or otherwise, require sacrifice and dedication, and that life is more than liking half-naked photos on your phone?

We need to be reminded that relationships are work, whether we are talking about friendships, romantic relation-



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

ships, or even work partnerships. Being in any relationship requires us to grow and move beyond our comfort zones. A good relationship will challenge you, but the rewards are immeasurable.

The good thing is that February is the month of love, so the cable networks will be playing all the favorites — get ready for the marathons. While I do love stories, I’ve never seen the one that so many swear by, “The Way We Were.” I know the story, but I want to see it for myself, from beginning to end. Or course, if “The Notebook” happens to find its way to my TV, well, I’ll happily indulge in that, too.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City.

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Eat your heart out

CucinaPro's Heart-shaped Waffle Maker makes it possible for you to bake a ticker-warming, photo-worthy Valentine's Day breakfast. To me, serving warm, heart-shaped waffles to children on a chilly winter morning is pretty much the epitome of the recent craze for "hygge" (pronounced hoo-guh), the Scandinavian love for cozy things. If you're — understandably — not willing to cut short your beauty sleep to wow the kids with a heart-shaped breakfast, that's OK, because with the help of a Pinterest recipe (just search for "red velvet waffles"!), you'll be cranking out dessert waffles in no time! Or bake chocolate waffles with a recipe included in the instruction manual (which can be downloaded from <https://cucinapro.com/product/classic-heart-waffler/>). CucinaPro's waffle maker is stainless steel on the outside and has non-stick baking grids on the inside. Bake your waffles just the way your kids love them with the help of the adjustable browning control. Measuring 7.75-inches wide by 10.75-inches deep by 4.5-inches high, this waffle maker serves up five hearts at a time, making it even easier to share the love.



Heart-shaped Waffle Maker by CucinaPro, \$39.95, www.crateandbarrel.com.

Say 'Yes' to 'Nope!'

In his new picture book "Nope!," cartoonist Drew Sheneman tells the story of a young bird who resists leaving the nest. The fledgling is frightened by the idea of flying and what might be waiting for him. His mother remains steadfast, positive, and reassuring... until she finally gives him a kick out of his comfort zone.

The story, which is told with very few words, will delight children ages 3 to 5, but it's also a poignant graduation gift for kids transitioning from pre-K to elementary school and even those leaving the cocoon of college for The Real World.

The amusing book illustrates how natural fear of new experiences can be, and how empowering loving encouragement from a parent can help a child take wing.

"Nope!" book by Drew Sheneman, \$17.99, www.amazon.com.



Flower power

I first discovered Cicely Mary Barker's whimsical, lush illustrations of flower fairies when I was looking for inspiration for handmade Valentines. But British poet-illustrator Barker (1895–1973) and her winged magi-

cal creatures have been capturing the imaginations of generations who appreciate and collect her illustrated books of poetry, since 1923's "Flower Fairies of the Spring."

With the new "Flower Fairies Coloring Book" — which Warne released on Jan. 31 — colorists of all ages can employ pens, crayons, markers, or colored pencils on 96 pages of Barker's intricate line art illustrations. These drawings can be traced or photocopied and incorporated into your family's handmade Valentines. Whether your aspiring artist is a fan of fairies, flowers, gardening, fantasy, or magical worlds, this is an enchanting gift that's sure to delight and inspire.

"The Flower Fairies Coloring Book" by Cicely Mary Barker, \$14.99, www.barnesandnoble.com.



Savoring his memories

In "The LoFrisco Family Cookbook," Brooklyn native Anthony LoFrisco shares the recipes of his favorite dishes, collected from his family, friends, and his own adventures in dining.

Sandwiched between the recipes for "stuffed cherry tomatoes," "stuffed mushrooms," and "stuffed fried olives" (are you detecting a trend here?) are the octogenarian's "intermezzos," his anecdotes about growing up in Dyker Heights.

LoFrisco's recipes are quite personal — and one even comes with a curse! If you dare boil eggplant (rather than saute it in oil) when making his beloved "caponatina" recipe, he threatens, "all of the descendants of your maternal grandmother will grow hair on their

chest"! One of the most endearing pages is a montage of photographs of his grandchildren, when they were very young, grappling with spaghetti, their faces and hands covered in sauce. LoFrisco's cookbook is a moving tribute to his mother who employed thrift, ingenuity, and love to create meals and memories that continue to delight the very newest generations of her family.

"The LoFrisco Family Cookbook" by Anthony F. LoFrisco, \$39.95, www.amazon.com.



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