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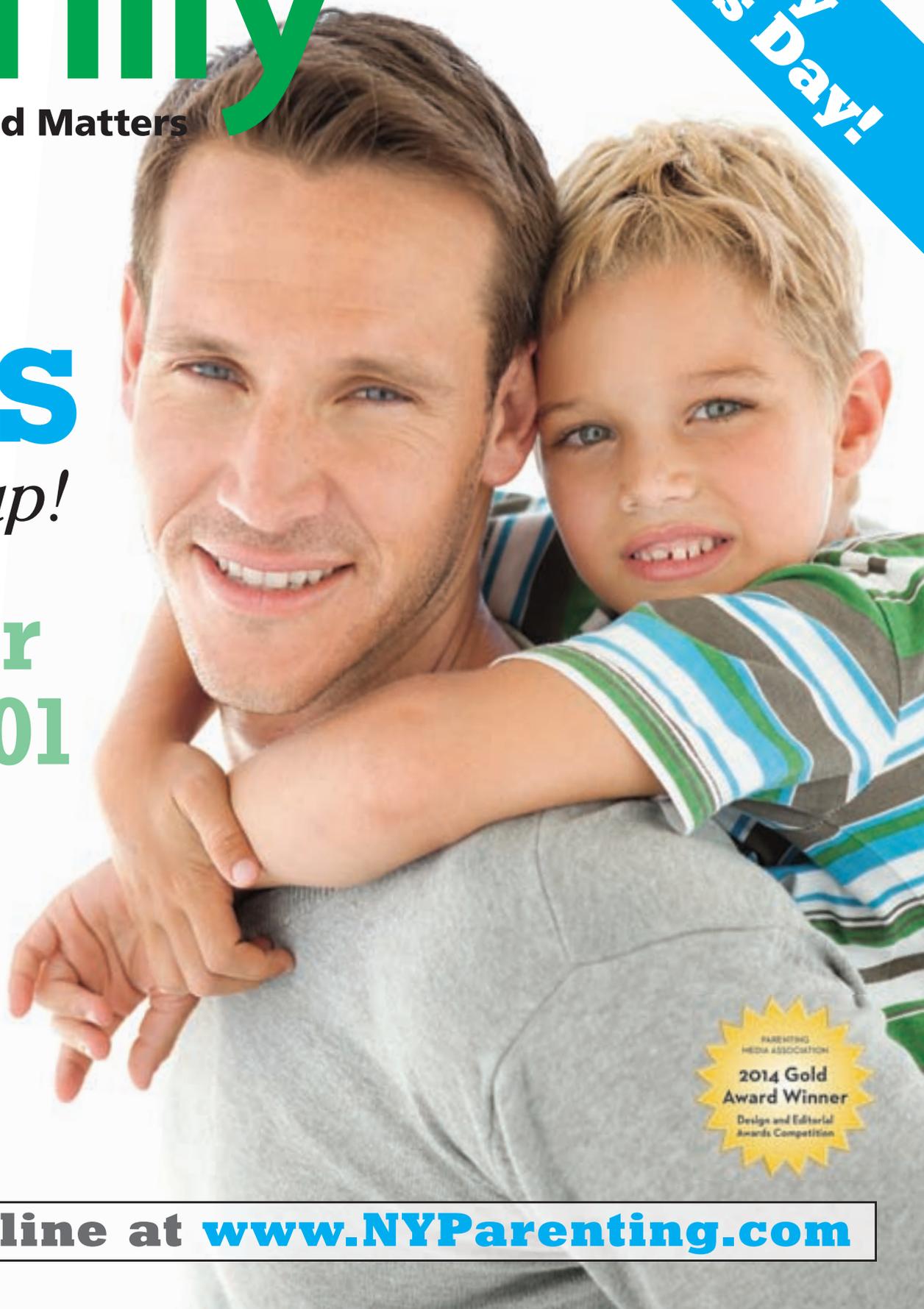
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# Family June 2014



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# Letter from the publisher

## Considering fathers

**T**oday's urban fathers are setting a new tone and are more active in the daily parenting experience than ever before.

One sees it all the time especially in the streets of our communities. Fathers are pushing carriages and strollers,

are in the playgrounds, dropping kids off and picking them up; one sees today's fathers in a whole new light. They are primary caregivers and more and more of them are opting to take on greater responsibilities with the day-to-day decision-making.

They are shopping in the markets and making meal plans. They are wearing slings and Snugglies and buying and changing diapers. They are packing lunch boxes and doing laundry.



They are sitting in pediatric offices and signing kids up for programs and waiting until the swim class or the music lesson is over.

This issue talks a lot about Dads and has a lot written by Dads. So many fathers want to communicate about their kids and about the issues they as parents are confronting. It's no longer, "Ask your mother" in most families. How lucky these children are in the new family structure, to have multiple parental love, interest, guidance and input.

How fortunate for our society that we have all kinds of Dads too. We have single Dads and double Dads and with newly created extended families, many kids have two Dads.

All of this is good for everyone it

seems to me. No longer is anyone's role so clearly defined. Urban parents are changing the landscape and it can't help but be good for both men and women. It most certainly will be more interesting and more inclusive for the children as the new role models emerge and they have more input from both the masculine and feminine, the yin and the yang. Balance and harmony and shared responsibilities, love and devotion sound like a positive recipe to me.

I'm personally impressed with many of today's progressive families and I admire their mutuality and shared nature. It's not easy to be both worker and parent and finding the right rhythm to benefit the whole family is not an easy task. It takes enormous commitment and lots of patience. It also takes having a game plan and finding a way to positively implement it.

Every Father's Day I naturally think of my own Dad, and who doesn't? Times have changed a great deal since I was a kid and fathers spend a lot more quality time in every way with their families and children than they use to. The whole society is sure to benefit from this as we move forward.

To the very generous, thoughtful, dedicated and knowledgeable Dads who write for this magazine, we're grateful to you for shared struggles and wisdom.

Happy Father's Day to all of you.  
Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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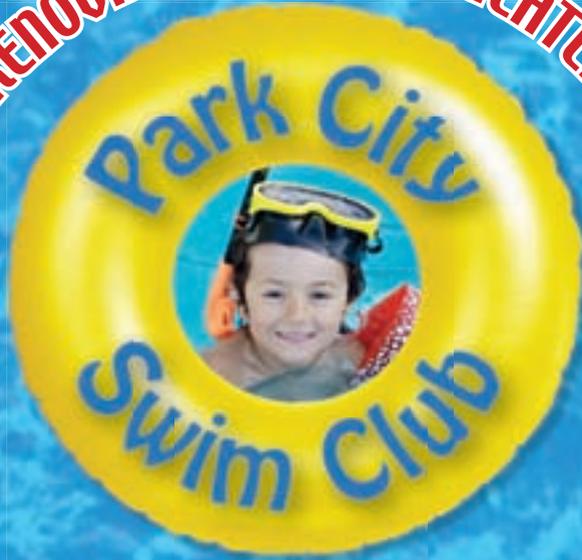
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# Dear Dad, Your kids need you!

Being the  
best father  
you can be

BY GAYLA GRACE

**R**ick Hoyt was born a quadriplegic with cerebral palsy. His parents, Dick and Judy Hoyt, were told he would be a vegetable for life and should be institutionalized. But his dad refused to believe it.

Dick noticed Rick's eyes followed him everywhere he went and determined to find a way to communicate with him. He solicited help from Tufts University, where a skilled group of engineers built

Rick an interactive computer. Rick controlled the cursor by touching a switch with the side of his head, finally able to communicate with those around him.

Rick immediately relayed his love for sports and at 15 years old, asked his dad to participate in a five-mile benefit run for a classmate paralyzed in an accident. Although not a distance runner, Dick agreed to join in the run and push Rick in his wheelchair. That day changed their lives. After the run Rick said, "Dad, when I'm running it feels like I'm not handicapped" ([www.teamhoyt.com](http://www.teamhoyt.com)).

Inspired to offer Rick more opportunities for that feeling, Dick began training every day with a bag of cement in Rick's wheelchair while Rick was at school. The two began participating in marathons, triathlons, and other grueling athletic events.

They have now completed more than 1,000 races together, including 247 triathlons and 70 marathons. Rick knows he has an incredible dad whom he refers to as "The Father of the Century."

Most dads don't have the same opportunity Dick Hoyt had with his son. But every dad has the chance to show love and acceptance to his children, giving of his time to provide nurturing and guidance.

Children gain security from a dad willing to make time for them. I love watching dads with their sons at the baseball fields playing catch, practicing batting, or offering encouraging words. Athletics offer a great way

for dads to be part of something their children enjoy while teaching sportsmanship, teamwork and respect for others in the process.

Children benefit from a dad who provides consistent love and discipline.

Discipline teaches children self-control and right from wrong, while helping them feel secure and cared for. Boys, in particular, need more guidance from fathers due to their nature toward "out of bounds" behavior. Dr. James Dobson, author of "Bringing up Boys," says, "Boys are more likely to get off course when they are not guided and supervised carefully. When left to their own devices, they tend to drift toward the center divider or into the ditch, toward misbehavior or danger."

Children gain healthy standards from a dad with spiritual principles. Studies show that children who actively engage in a community of faith increase their odds toward a happier, healthier, and longer life, while significantly reducing the likelihood of life problems and risky behavior.

Children need a dad who reflects a stable male role model. We've all heard the saying, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day." Children mirror their parent's behavior and learn relationship skills and healthy social skills, including how to treat others, by watching them. They benefit from a father who regularly shows them physical affection and treats his marriage partner with love and respect.

Our generation sees too many children reared without fathers. A high divorce rate, unbalanced career priorities, and prevailing addiction rates contribute to an absent father for many, emotionally and physically. However, study after study reflects the impact of a child's well-being from the influence of his father.

It's not always possible to be an active dad on a daily basis, but it is possible to stay involved in your child's life in other ways. A dad's role is a high calling that not everyone gets to experience. But for those who do, it's a role to be honored and cherished, carried out with intentional purpose.

*Gayla Grace is a freelance writer, wife, and mom of five children. She is thankful for the role her husband plays as their children's father.*



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(Above) Kids and their dads get into the spirit at the group's annual Halloween celebration. (Right) NYC Dads Group co-founder Lance with his wife Jessica and son Jake at Victorian Gardens in Central Park. (Opposite) The NYC Dads Group's families visit a CitiField Mets Game for the "Big League Dads" program.



# Devoted dads

The NYC Dads Group helps fathers take care of their children — and themselves

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**T**hey say the hardest job in the world is being a parent. So, this Father's Day and every day, dads who step up to the plate and go above and beyond the call of duty deserve a big thumbs up — and a great big hug from the kiddos (and ladies) who love them.

Cool New York City dads Lance Somerfeld and Matt Schneider are co-founders of a very special support playgroup — NYC Dads Group — for papas who bond over their children and have a collective desire to change the face of modern fatherhood through the group's multi-channel platform: blogs, meetups, workshops, and a podcast.

The idea was conceived one boring winter afternoon in 2008, when the two adventurous at-home dads decided to take their cozy little playgroup to the next level. After teaming up — babies and toddlers in tow — the group was created, and now it's nearly 1,000 dads strong and growing.

Somerfeld, 40, was a public school teacher at an elementary school in the Bronx when he took

on the challenging role of stay-at-home dad, after his son, Jake (now 5) came on the scene.

"It was extremely important for our family to have my wife Jessica or me providing quality child care for our son the first few years. Consequently, we made the decision that was the most practical for our family: that I would take a child care leave of absence from the Department of Education, and she would continue working full-time," Somerfeld recalls.

But after his wife (a corporate actuary) returned to work, the newbie dad discovered how isolating staying at home could be.

"I wanted to avoid the common pitfalls of isolation, and find my people — a social group of fathers looking to connect, share ideas, vent frustrations, and go on adventures together with our children," he explains.

He'd hang out occasionally with good friend and fellow pop Matt Schneider, who had been an at-home dad for three years.

"Looking back, I realize how isolated I felt from the world outside my family. Helping to build NYC

Dads Group and now City Dads Group has given me a new identity beyond my role as Max and Sam's dad," said Schneider, who lives in Battery Park City with his wife and two boys (ages 8 and 5). "I'm proud to be finishing two years as the PTA president at my kids' school."

So, what's it like being a stay-at-home dad?

"I absolutely love spending quality time with my son," says Somerfeld, who lives on Manhattan's Upper East Side. "I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to relish in all of those small, wondrous moments that occur each day. Being an at-home dad really helps me appreciate seeing things through my child's eyes. I get to be a kid again."

"My challenges are probably similar to those of other stay-at-home parents: I'm so involved in caring for my child that I often neglect carving out personal time for myself to pursue hobbies, be spontaneous with my wife, or make plans with friends. And, I have those frustrating moments where my child won't stop crying or he pushes my buttons to the brink of insanity. I need to walk away and give myself a time-



NYC Dads Group

out to decompress.”

And so NYC Dads Group was born.

### About the group

The group meets several times each week, membership is free, and it’s all about having fun and doing exciting, stimulating things together with the kiddies, who enjoy spending time with their dads and learning new things.

“It’s a diverse and active community of dads who are looking for the same kind of parental camaraderie and network that the mothers they encountered had built and relied upon,” says Somerfeld. “Dads Group members include stay-at-home and working, married and single, gay and straight, young and old, freelancers, teachers, and even a few professional clowns.”

Activities include:

**Group playdates:** Parent and me classes at Gym at Gymboree or New York Kids Club; soccer with Super Soccer Stars; and music with Music Together. There’s also yoga, fencing, and sign language classes with the little ones. They also hold an annual Halloween party and Father’s Day picnic. This year’s picnic is on June 7.

**Outings to museums, parks and playgrounds:** Including the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park Zoo, Jane’s Carousel at Brooklyn Bridge Park, and taking the tram to Roosevelt Island. The

group recently visited LEGOLAND Discovery Center in Westchester.

**Dads’ Nights Out (movies, sporting events, bars):** Recently, 50 dads went to a sports bar to watch the NCAA Basketball Tournament.

**Special events:** These include family picnics, trips to ball games, and sponsored fairs and events. Visit the website for details

**Educational workshops:** The group hosts a variety of parenting workshops, including child passenger safety, potty training, healthy and happy sleep habits, introduction to nursery school, positive discipline, travel with babies, and the featured weekly class for expectant fathers: New Dad Boot Camp.

New Dad Boot Camp is offered almost every weekend at the group’s partner locations: 92nd St. Y (92Y), Tribeca Parenting, and CityBirths.

“Being engaged from pregnancy through the diaper years sets the foundation for a man to be an involved father and active parenting partner for life. New Dad Boot Camps offer expectant and new dads a frank discussion along with practical advice and hands-on training in essential parenting duties, such as holding, changing, and comforting your baby,” Somerfeld says.

These three-hour workshops, facilitated by a nationally certified trainer, connect experienced dads (and their babies) with newbies to talk about the opportunities and re-

wards of caring for our children.

They also discuss:

- Developing a bond with your new baby.
- Being supportive of your baby’s mom.
- Navigating work as a new parent.
- Developing a parenting partnership.
- Creating a baby-safe environment.
- Managing relatives.

### How important is a father in a child’s life?

“Very important!” says Somerfeld. “Research shows that when a father is involved in his child’s life they’re more likely to graduate from college; that fathers are more physical with their children (in a good way, and kids need it); that we might push them to take more risks; that although we might do less housework, and we are the ‘fun’ parent, we are more strict disciplinarians.

“Bottom line?” he adds, “Parenting is challenging work, but it’s so much easier when you’re able to tackle and navigate all of the responsibilities together, as a team, with your significant other.”

This June, in an effort to spread the message that fathers matter, the city’s program Fatherhood Initiative will present the fourth annual Dads Matter Awards. These awards will recognize 10 fathers from across the city who have overcome challenges

to become positive and consistent forces in the lives of their children.

The awards will be one of many opportunities to show that, despite the crisis of father absence facing communities across the country, these New York dads show up every day and are present and active in the lives of their child and communities.

The Fatherhood Initiative was established in 2010 to focus on important issues, such as:

- Make all city agencies as “father friendly” as possible.
- Uncover and remove any barriers that fathers may face in interacting with the city.
- Assist in the creation of memorable moments between fathers and their children.
- Support fathers as they improve their capacity to be good dads.

• • •

If you’d like to get involved with NYC Dads Group’s events, here are some upcoming dates:

- Annual Father’s Day family picnic on Sunday, June 7.
- Central Park Stroller Walk with Britax Affinity on Sunday, June 7.
- Summer “playground tour” (visits to different playgrounds in the five boroughs each week).

For specific details, visit: [www.nycdadsgroup.com](http://www.nycdadsgroup.com); the Meetup page [www.meetup.com/New-York-City-Dads-Meetup-Group](http://www.meetup.com/New-York-City-Dads-Meetup-Group); on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/NYCDadsGroup](http://www.facebook.com/NYCDadsGroup); or on Twitter, [twitter.com/#!/NYCDadsGroup](http://twitter.com/#!/NYCDadsGroup).



## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# A dad from day one

If you are a sports fan or not, you may have recently heard criticism about Daniel Murphy, a baseball player for the New York Mets. The digs weren't about his fielding or streaky hitting. Rather, they dealt with Murphy's taking a few days off from his job to be with his wife and child after the birth of their son.

I admire Murphy for his choice. Moreover, I look forward to a future where more fathers are involved in their children's lives, literally from day one. This was my own experience, and I couldn't be happier about it.

Being a father has been the best experience of my life. It is more important than any job I have ever held, or ever will. And by being involved right from the start, I was able to develop a bond with my daughter that I might not have otherwise.

Let me explain: I was a stay-at-home father.

The situation provided me — someone not then experienced with children — with the responsibility of caring for a newborn largely on my own. It was an incredible opportunity.

From the time we brought our girl home from the hospital and all through those early years, I changed most of the diapers and brought her to almost every appointment with the pediatrician. When she didn't sleep (every night for the first few months) or didn't feel well, I stayed up and cared for her. We lived in playgrounds and pointed to the passing buses.

I was with her on the lazy spring day when she stood crouching over a dandelion for 15 minutes straight, fascinated by what she saw. I was there for her first word. I was there when she stood up in her crib, frightening herself before quickly learning how much fun standing can be. The list of our shared experiences is happily endless.

If I hadn't had the blessing of this full immersion into fatherhood, I think that I might have looked to my daughter's mother for a lot of the answers. How do I change a diaper? What do I do when she's crying? Is it time to call the doctor? Many men may have this insecurity about caring for their



children, and it isn't necessary.

Don't get me wrong. Participating early on doesn't require being a stay-at-home parent and changing most of the diapers. And a man who becomes more active in his child's life when his son or daughter is old enough to start playing catch can be a fantastic father. But I would think that many dads lack confidence in important areas of parenting, and that mom is the go-to person. For instance, how many fathers are comfortable talking to their children — especially their daughters — about where babies come from and the questions that follow?

When couples stay together, this being ill at ease with our kids may not matter a lot. In many happier families, mom does some things, dad does others, and parents and children alike are cared for, safe and loved.

But what about when adult relationships end? On top of every other

stress and strain, many fathers feel that they don't know how to care for their children without mom being there to help.

During my own divorce, I never had these doubts, which was good because divorce is hard enough without them.

More importantly, my daughter and I are close. And, I have every reason to believe that we always will be. I wouldn't trade that for anything. Maybe Daniel Murphy wouldn't either.

*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](mailto:lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com), (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/lchabin](http://www.facebook.com/lchabin).*

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# Summer camp

# 101

Children from every age group can reap the benefits

BY GAYLA GRACE

**S**ummer camp offers all kinds of fun and character-building experiences for kids of any age.

Whether you're looking for a few hours of entertainment or weeks of intentional skill-building for your child, you can find it at camp.

### Age 0-5

Day camps offer the perfect opportunity for young kids to experience time away from mom and explore new activities. Camp for preschool children focuses on free play, sharing with others, group games (inside and outside), and

simple arts and crafts. If you're sending your child to camp for the first time, make sure the schedule matches her personality and routine to prevent a stressful experience. Does there need to be nap time? Should your child be potty trained to attend? Would your child adjust more easily by starting with a one- to two-day camp instead of full day? Are there appropriate breaks for snacks and changes in activity?

It's important to find out what the counselor-to-camper ratio is for children this age. You want to ensure your child will be adequately cared for with a friendly, well-staffed team. You also want

to determine if the counselors are trained to help with issues common to preschoolers, including separation anxiety, potty training, and temper tantrums.

The best place to find camps for young children is through day cares, churches, nursery schools, and local elementary schools. Specialty camps also abound through gymnastic centers, music schools, and sporting centers. Consider

your child's interests and find a camp that fits to give your pre-school child a chance to make new friends and explore new experiences.

### Age 6-11

Elementary-age children thrive at camp, whether it's day camp or stay-away camp. It's the perfect solution to sibling squabbles and long summer days. But it pays to do your research and find the right fit for your child.

Camps for this age range from sports camps to music camps to academic camps to church camps. Don't let the variety intimidate you as you research; start with the interests of your child and ask friends and neighbors to give opinions on camps their kids have attended.

At this age, our kids have had the most fun at away camps that gave them the opportunity to try activities not available at home such as zip lining, archery, rock wall climbing, in addition to swimming, arts and crafts, and campfire sing-alongs with friends. Kids gain independence as they make decisions and meet new friends outside of the comforts of home. They gain self-confidence in trying new activities. And they learn to appreciate the beauty of nature as they unplug from technology. They may experience periods of homesickness, but they learn to forge through their feelings with caring camp counselors and new friends.

Specialty camps close to home also help kids explore new hobbies or create opportunities for parents and kids to enjoy camp together. A mother-daughter sewing camp or father-son golfing camp allows great bonding time while developing a skill enjoyed by both.

If your child has never experienced camp, start with a day camp or send a friend along for an away camp. It's important that their first camp experience be a good one. If you find it wasn't a perfect fit, try a different one next year. But don't give up on the beauty and benefits of camp for elementary-age children.

### Age 12-15

Tweens and teens have better focus than younger children and benefit from camps that more closely match their interests and personalities.

Sports and music camps are

great for this age and help kids advance athletic skills and enhance musical talent. Academic camps offer youth advanced-learning opportunities in subjects they might want to explore for long-term focus. And church camps offer character-building and self-awareness experiences not learned in school.

Camps provide a safe place for teens and tweens to hang out while parents work during summer break. Not yet able to drive or find a summer job, kids this age too often allow technology to rule or walk into unsupervised trouble unless parents intentionally seek out creative options.

Junior high and high schools provide information for local camps worth investigating as the school year draws to a close. It's also easy to scour the internet for camps that match your child's interests. Some camps provide certification such as lifeguard training or first-aid certification that can enable your youth to successfully find a job upon completion.

Encourage your child to research camps with you to find one that fits.

When kids attend camp, they develop resilience and flexibility that benefits them later in life. An article in *Psychology Today*, "Creating Advantage in College," by Steve Baskin parallels the experiences of summer camp and the adjustment of college. He cites that kids work through similar adjustments at camp and college such as, "Being away from home and your traditional support system (family, friends, familiar places), and dealing with large amounts of uncertainty (what will classes require, how will I fit in socially, can I deal with this new roommate)." Baskin proposes that kids who find success working through these challenges at camp adjust easier when presented with the transition to college.

Summer camp offers unique experiences and character-building opportunities for every child. Whether your child is 2 or 15, camp is the perfect place to find adventure and make lifelong memories in the process. Don't delay — find a camp your child will enjoy today!

*Gayla Grace, freelance writer and mom to five, has sent her kids to camp every summer and continues to find new camps for her one child still at home to enjoy.*

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## LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

# Ideas for graduation

**W**ith my daughter's graduation day looming, I can't help but reminisce about my son's big day almost two years ago.

We planned a big party that would take place at our home a few hours after the ceremony's conclusion. We set up the back yard the day before, and we decided to cater the event to save time and to avoid unnecessary stress.

After the ceremony, our family and close friends packed into a half-dozen cars to head home. While chatting with my daughter's godmother, she casually asked who took my daughter. Panic quickly set in because I had no idea. Fifteen minutes later, we found an exasperated 16-year-old waiting impatiently at the entrance to an almost empty parking lot. Even though I thought we had everything under control, the inevitable chaos of the occasion had caught up with us.

Whether you intend to plan a big bash or celebrate in another way, take in every detail of this special day, which symbolizes the infinite possibilities the future holds for your graduate.

### Party time tips

Parties can send the calmest of parents into a tailspin, so preparation is key.

**Timing:** Plan the party several hours after the ceremony. You will have time to regroup or change your clothing. Other options: Party on a different weekend or host a "graduation eve" or "open house" get-together.

**Food:** Unless you have several relatives willing to donate casseroles, a catered event will ease the stress. Finger desserts served buffet style (in lieu of cutting a large cake) is a simple alternative.

New trend: party-size pizzas — simple and inexpensive.

**Service:** Consider hiring one or two servers so you can enjoy the celebration. Money saver: young teens in your neighborhood might be willing to work for a "tip."

**Photos:** Photo booths provide instant fun and party favors for your guests. Other options: place instant cameras on tables for guests to capture special moments. Ask your younger kids to snap random photos. Afterward, create a poster-size collage for her dorm room wall.

**Activities:** Sunshine calls for volleyball, KanJam (a Frisbee game), water balloon tosses, or tug of war, but plan for rain just in case. Guess the teacher: teachers' names are taped to graduates' backs — guests offer clues until the graduates guess correctly. Jar of M&Ms: ask graduates to guess the number of M&Ms in their school color or colors. Winner takes home the jar.

### Don't break the bank:

- Dual hosting: Share costs with another family.
- Print your own invitations.
- Skip the rentals: Borrow extra tables and chairs.
- Bake cupcakes in lieu of ordering a cake.
- Skip the DJ: Play party selections from an iPod hooked up to wireless speakers.

### Lose the stress

You want your teen to remember that you were all smiles on her graduation day, so avoid potential stress triggers.

"Graduation day marks a major life passage," says Jean Fitzpatrick, a marriage and individual therapist in Manhattan.

"It's natural for parents to feel the pang of knowing that their child is growing up and becoming more independent. Focus on staying in the moment and enjoying the day's events together," she suggests.

Dr. Jeffrey Guterman, a Florida-based licensed mental health counselor and author of the best-selling book "Mastering the Art of Solution-Focused Counseling," points out, "If parents are excessively stressed, it can help to encourage them to tap into their own natural effective coping skills. I encourage parents to

think about what has worked effectively for them in the past when dealing with stressful situations."

If you plan well, accept help when it's offered, and focus on your teen, graduation day will garner a lifetime of precious memories. Just don't forget the Kleenex!

### Tips and tales

"We had a taco food truck come for my daughter's graduation party. Everyone loved it, and it was an easy cleanup!"

*Joan Bullock, Hopkinton, MA*

"We plan a graduation brunch."

*Debbie Yaeger, Saugerties, NY*

"Set up a 'photo booth.' You can rent a set up but it would be pretty easy to D.I.Y. All you need is a plain back drop, a camera on a tripod, consistent lighting under a tent, and lots of props-dress ups."

*Victoria Kane, Hyde Park, NY*

"We had a backyard picnic in August when the June flurry of parties was well past. I made a massive quantity of pesto — easy to serve at room temperature. We kept it simple: salads and made-ahead desserts."

*Wendy Meade, Hyde Park, NY*

"We went on a trip with a few of his friends."

*Eileen Heller Sarter, Kennett Square, P.A.*

Check out these websites for more creative ideas:

- [www.punchbowl.com/party-ideas/graduation-parties](http://www.punchbowl.com/party-ideas/graduation-parties)
- [www.hallmark.com/graduation/ideas/graduation-party-ideas/](http://www.hallmark.com/graduation/ideas/graduation-party-ideas/)
- [www.delish.com/entertaining-ideas/parties/graduation/](http://www.delish.com/entertaining-ideas/parties/graduation/)

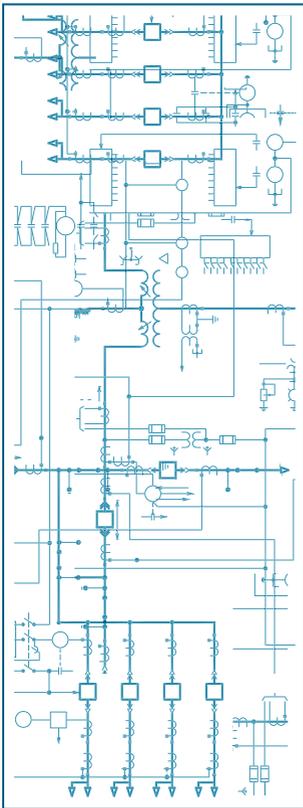
### Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips to encourage your teen to get involved in politics.

Please send your full name, address, and brief comments to [myrnahaskell@gmail.com](mailto:myrnahaskell@gmail.com) or visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com)

*Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer, columnist and author of, "Lions And Tigers And Teens: Expert Advice and Support for the Conscientious Parent Just Like You" (Unlimited Publishing LLC, 2012). For details, visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com).*





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# 11 THINGS every child should do this summer



Getting the most out of the season!

**BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES**

**T**he lure of slowing down over the summer sounds idyllic in the whirl of hectic school schedules, but what do you do if your child is already singing the summertime boredom blues?

Try filling his dance card with this head-spinning assortment of creative, educational, and exhilarating activities.

Not only will you fight off boredom, but you'll also create plenty of new memories while relaxing, playing, and learning together as a family!

Here are 11 things to do this summer:

### **Tend a garden**

Together with your child cultivate containers of herbs, tomatoes, or peppers. Take a digital photo each day to track the progress of the plant's growth. Have your child put the photos in order in a journal and write down any observations. Together, prepare a meal using your child's homegrown produce.



### **Sleep outdoors**

Chris Starnes, a mom of three, says her family loves to camp. They look forward to hiking, biking, swimming, and a break from electronics. Want to take your family? Starnes suggests downloading a camping checklist from the internet and reserving a site at a state park.

"State parks are cleaner and well-patrolled and there are usually activities for the kids at some point during the day or weekend," she says. "Go where there is a playground. And, don't camp too far from restrooms — think evening or

middle of the night trips!"

### Stare at the stars

On a clear night, direct your family's gaze toward the heavens. Try identifying a few of the 88 different constellations, many of which are named after mythological men, women, and animals. Is your child interested in learning more about the characters dotting the celestial night sky? Read "D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths" by Ingri and Edgar Parin D'Aulaire.

### Pick berries

Bring summer home in a bucket of berries. Check out [pickyourown.org](http://pickyourown.org) to find a farm near you. Celebrate the fruits of your labor by baking muffins or enjoying berries over homemade ice cream!



### Go local

Area farmer's markets offer an assortment of colorful, seasonal produce. There's no better time to taste locally grown foods and experiment with new wholesome recipes in the kitchen with your child.

### Build and fly a kite

"The experience never fails to fill adults and kids with wonder every time they fly a kite," says

Sean Beaver, a kite enthusiast and father of two.

Kite flying is an inexpensive and relaxing activity. Check out the American Kite Association website, [aka.kite.org](http://aka.kite.org), which

provides educational resources,

including the history of kites and the science and math behind kite flying.

### Cook up a story

Recipes help kids practice math and reading skills, but also try giving cooking a literary twist that will delight even preschoolers.

Read a book like "If You Give a Pig a Pancake" by Laura Joffe Numeroff and make pancakes together. An older child who likes "The Little House on the Prairie" series might enjoy "The Little

House Cookbook: Frontier Foods from Laura Ingalls Wilder's Classic Stories" by Barbara M. Walker. Got a "Star Wars" fan? Check out the "Star Wars Cookbook: Wookie Cookies and Other Galactic Recipes" by Robin Davis.

### Tour a working farm

Show your child how foods make it to grocery store shelves by touring a local farm or dairy. Many places offer tours by appointment and schedule themed events.

### Chase fireflies

Fireflies like grassy, humid areas near ponds and lakes, as well as tree areas and fields, away from urban lights.

To attract fireflies to your garden or yard try turning off your home's exterior lights. If you capture any fireflies, put them in a ventilated jar with a wet paper towel to keep the jar humid and allow the fireflies to breathe. Due to light pollution and insecticides, firefly populations have decreased. Be sure and let them go after you're done admiring their flashing lights.

To learn more about fireflies, visit [www.firefly.org](http://www.firefly.org).

### Birdwatch

Learning about birds local to the area helps children appreciate and build interest in their natural surroundings.

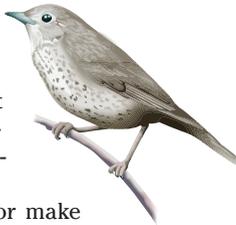
Purchase or make a bird feeder to attract birds to your backyard.

Use a local bird guide and listen for different bird song to try and identify the birds visiting your yard.

### Plan hometown field trips

New experiences help kids learn, grow, and feel a connection to their community. Check out the multitude of museums on topics that might interest your child and explore historical landmarks.

*Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines and her family are doing lots of exploring this summer! Christa is the author of Confidently Connected: A Mom's Guide to a Satisfying Social Life.*



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# *No more* **tug of war!**

After divorce,  
how to work  
together  
although you  
live apart

BY GAYLA GRACE

**T**he back-and-forth routine that accompanies many children who have a mom and dad living in different homes often brings exhaustion. For kids, it can create confusion, anxiety, and turmoil.

Our children need a stable home environment, free of tension and chaos, to develop a healthy self-image and succeed in school. If you spend any time at your child's school, particularly middle and

high schools, you'll notice the pressure and demands they face. Minefields at home only create more stress.

As parents and stepparents, what can we do to enable healthy interactions and positive self-esteem? One of the best ways to promote success is to commit to do your part in maintaining a friendly relationship with your ex.

I know — you'd rather eat a cockroach than talk about how to live in harmony with your ex or your spouse's ex — but it's vital to

the well-being of your children and stepchildren to maintain an amicable relationship. That doesn't mean you have to be best friends with your ex-husband, or your stepson's mom, but you do have to commit to being cordial with them.

I will be the first to admit this hasn't come naturally. I maintained a contentious relationship with my ex-husband for too long after our divorce. Although I tried hard not to speak badly of him to our girls, I'm sure they could sense my disapproval of his lifestyle and critical

## Happy home(s)

Here are seven tips to help enable healthy interactions and positive self-esteem in your own kids and your stepkids:

- Don't meddle in the affairs of the other home.
- Maintain a cooperative and flexible attitude with your ex when discussing the kids' schedules.
- Keep conflict with your ex-

**Top  
Tips**

spouse away from the ears of your children.

- Encourage your children to be responsible with their belongings.
- As a stepparent, offer grace and understanding to your stepchildren.
- Consider the needs of your children and stepchildren as they transition.
- Commit to a new tomorrow when you fail.

spirit toward him when we negotiated visitation. It's important to remember that our children are half of their other parent and when we speak badly of that parent, they turn the negative remarks inward, leading to a negative self-image.

As your children move between homes, help them learn responsibility by reminding them to stop and think about what they need to pack when they leave one home and move to the other. As a stepfamily coach, I often hear stepparents complain about their stepkids making multiple trips to their house on the off week because they left supplies, a project, a uniform, etc. Don't enable irresponsibility by allowing them to return multiple times for items they forgot.

As a stepparent, recognize the adjustment your stepchildren go through when they travel between homes. Allow extra time on transition days for kids to settle in, focus, and adjust to the routine of your home. Give them space if you sense they're struggling emotionally.

Don't maintain an overly ambitious schedule on weeks your stepchildren are in your home. Allow time to help with homework, run kids to ball practice, or sit down for a home-cooked meal. Stepfamily relationships are strengthened as family members spend time together in a relaxed environment.

Also, consider what it feels like to a biological parent to have someone else take part in raising their child. And be sensitive to how your stepchildren feel toward you and whether they want you at every function, or whether you should bow out and let the

biological parents take the lead.

As a mom and stepmom to five children, I understand the challenges that accompany kids moving between homes. My husband and I spent years negotiating schedules and seeking to provide a safe environment in which our kids could thrive.

My stepchildren and two of my biological children have now completed school and exited the nest, leaving my husband and I with only an "ours" child left at home. Some days I consider what I would do differently if all our kids were at home again.

I think I would offer a softer side toward my stepchildren when they've had a bad day at school. I'd be more understanding on transition days when they've just come back from their mom's house and need time alone. I'd extend grace more freely when my own kids didn't do their chores to my satisfaction. And I would insist on fewer extracurricular activities to allow more time at home for relationships to grow and bond.

Our child-rearing season passes quickly, and we're left with fond memories. Seek to enjoy the hassles! Step back, take a deep breath, and snap a few pictures of your growing child. Then consider what you can do to sow peace with those around you. Will you commit to take the high road as often as possible? Will you do your part to co-parent in harmony?

Yes, it's harder when kids move between homes, but it's not impossible to find peace.

*Gayla Grace is an author and stepfamily coach with a his, hers, and ours family. She loves helping non-traditional families learn to thrive in their relationships.*

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# Parenting a challenging child

Sanity-saving  
advice and  
solutions for  
concerned  
parents

BY MICHELE RANARD

**I**f you are parenting a behaviorally challenged child — one who is highly inflexible, defiant, and in trouble much of the time — then you may be all too familiar with the confusion, anger, guilt, and shame

that go with the territory.

Challenging kids make life significantly more difficult for their families, teachers, and others with whom they interact. They are often poor problem solvers with rigid interpersonal styles. They may have meltdowns and explosive episodes a few times a week or dozens of times daily.

But there is help — and hope.

## Snapshot of the challenging child

Because of the variety of symptoms and severity, challenging kids may receive a diagnosis of Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, Conduct Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, or others.

Challenging kids may get in trouble

for non-compliance at home, school, or both. They have difficulty following instructions, switching gears, getting along with others, and responding appropriately to a variety of social situations. They have outbursts and may swear, hit, spit, throw things, or assault others.

Parents of challenging kids often feel stuck and desperate when the use of rewards and punishment is ineffective, especially given that such strategy is often prescribed and is at times effective with less-challenging children. Challenging kids may embarrass their parents with noncompliance so much that they become convinced their child enjoys being hostile and mean!

## What causes the outbursts?

Too often, parents mistakenly blame themselves for their child's misbehavior. Blame may also come from well-meaning friends or school personnel who believe their parenting is not strict or consistent enough.

But parenting techniques are only one factor impacting children's behavior.

Author of "Lost at School" (Scribner, 2008) and "The Explosive Child" (Harper, 2010), Harvard Medical School instructor and pediatric psychologist Dr. Russ Greene writes, "Challenging behavior occurs when the demands of the environment exceed a kid's capacity to respond adaptively. In other words, it takes two to tango."

In "When Your Kids Push Your Buttons" (Grand Central Publishing, 2004), parent educator Bonnie Harris explains, "Children feel under attack from negative judgments and criticisms and are often left with no choice but to engage in counterattack."

On the surface, challenging kids



may appear to be attention-seeking, manipulative, limit-testing, and poorly motivated, but this may not be the case! Children often harbor unsolved cognitive problems, which they lack the skills to solve on their own.

Experts who work extensively with defiant children and families insist that challenging kids do not enjoy tormenting or offending people. Harris states, "Children want to be successful. No child is happy being manipulative or out of control."

These kids frequently have trouble reading social cues and use aggression and defiance for self-preservation.

### The importance of empathy

Being responsive and showing empathy is critical to managing challenging behavior. Dr. Greene asserts that when parents show empathy and teach skills for adaptive behavior, behavior improves.

On Greene's Lives in the Balance site, he teaches the definition of good treatment which is "being responsive to the hand you've been dealt" and is not "treating every kid exactly the same."

Philip and Nancy Hall, who wrote "Parenting a Defiant Child" (AMACOM, 2007) believe parents need to display empathy and "the know-how to help their children develop and sustain meaningful relationships."

And in "Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids" (Adams Media, 2008), Harris explains that parents' expectations of their child must be based on who he is, not on who they wish he would be. She writes, "To affect their behavior, their internal state must first be understood, then accepted, then addressed."

### Help for families

Because of varying philosophies and approaches to helping challenging kids, parents should educate themselves to choose experts and solutions which offer a good fit.

A fairly new approach is Greene's Collaborative Problem Solving, which involves three parts: learning about your child's perspective, clarifying your own concerns, and brainstorming solutions. The role of parents is to figure out what is getting in their child's way of not doing well.

Greene stresses that solutions to behavior problems take great

effort, bravery, and practice. But since this method eliminates any power struggle, the outcome is win-win. To learn more about it, visit [www.livesinthebalance.org/what-collaborative-problem-solving-and-why-it-important](http://www.livesinthebalance.org/what-collaborative-problem-solving-and-why-it-important).

Harris also endorses a collaborative approach with kids who push your buttons, and her excellent tips for coping include:

- When emotions are heated, stop dangerous actions only. Do not react.

- Never try to teach a lesson or solve a problem in the heat of the moment.

- Walk away if you think you will yell, blame, or shame.

- Count to 10.

- Inhale and exhale deeply at least three times.

- Find a word or phrase to repeat to yourself that will hold you back from reacting even for a second.

- Remind yourself that your child is having a problem not being a problem.

- If your emotions are high, acknowledge that you are having a problem as well. Own it.

- Don't make your child responsible for your feelings or reactions.

- Don't take it personally. Do be a sounding board.

- Appeal to your child's sense of fairness and logic.

- Remember, this too will pass.

Because challenging and defiant children come in all shapes and sizes, there is not a one-size-fits-all treatment or prescription. An important first step, even if you are struggling to define the problem, is to seek help, stay positive, and cling to hope.

*Michele Ranard has a husband, two children, and a master's in counseling. Visit her at [hellolovelychild.blogspot.com](http://hellolovelychild.blogspot.com).*

### Resources:

Greene, Russ W. "The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children." Harper, 2010.

Greene, Russ W. "Lost at School: Why Our Kids With Behavioral Challenges are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them." Scribner, 2008.

Hall, Philip S., and Nancy J. Hall. "Parenting a Defiant Child: A Sanity-Saving Guide to Finally Stopping the Bad Behavior." AMACOM, 2007.

Harris, Bonnie. "Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids: 8 Principles for Raising Kids You'll Love to Live With." Adams Media, 2008.

Harris, Bonnie. "When Your Kids Push Your Buttons: And What You Can Do About It." Grand Central Publishing, 2004.

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# Sweet nothing

New book explores how a sugar-loving family shunned all fructose for a year

BY ALLISON PLITT

**W**riter, cook, and mother Eve Schaub managed to get her family to agree to eat no sugar for an entire year. More specifically, during all of 2011, she, her husband, and her 6- and 11-year-old daughters attempted to avoid eating sugar. She wrote about her experiences in a blog which she then developed into her first book, “Year of No Sugar,” published by Sourcebooks last month. There were a few exceptions to the rule — the family could eat one sugary dessert together every month, and her daughters could eat whatever was given to them at their school, as long as they told their mother about it.

When Schaub says no sugar, she doesn’t just mean the usual list of culprits — cake, candy, and ice cream. She means anything containing fructose. Schaub says she was first warned about the dangers of fructose from watching a YouTube video by Dr. Robert Lustig, professor of Pediatric Endocrinology at University of California-San Francisco, called, “Sugar: The Bitter Truth.” In his video, Lustig says, “fructose is a poison ... and fructose is in sugar — all kinds of sugar.”

According to Schaub, “Lustig calmly drops facts like precision bombs” such as,

- “As a society, we all weigh 25 pounds more than our counterparts did 25 years ago.

- Even as our total fat consumption has gone down, our obesity has continued to accelerate.

- Americans are currently consuming 63 pounds of high-fructose corn syrup per year.”

Another person Schaub refers to in her book is David Gillespie, who didn’t eat sugar for a year and lost 90 pounds. He chronicles his year without sugar in a book called “Sweet Poison: Why Sugar is Making Us Fat.”

In the beginning of her own book, Schaub creates a list of facts in which she presents evidence that fructose should be treated as a health hazard just like cigarettes. Besides citing Lustig and Gillespie as her sources, she uses statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Journal of the American Medical Association to make the following statements:

1. “All sugar (i.e. table sugar, fruit juice, maple syrup) contains fructose.

2. Fructose does not satisfy hunger, so you eat more food than your body needs.

3. Fructose may not be used by any of the cells in our body, except the liver.

4. In processing fructose, the liver produces bad things: uric acid and fatty acids.

5. Too much uric acid causes gout and hypertension.

6. Too many fatty acids cause non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (cirrhosis), cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance and type II diabetes, and obesity.

7. The clustering of two or more of the four conditions above is called Metabolic Syndrome. Virtually unheard of only a few decades ago, one

in five Americans suffers from it today.

8. Additionally, circulating fatty acids have been proven to speed the growth of cancer cells.”

From what I could infer from Schaub’s book, no one in her family has a weight problem, but she was so concerned about the food her family was eating, and she was so inspired by Gillespie’s book, that she convinced her family to not eat sugar for 12 months starting on Jan. 1, 2011.

Underestimating the amount of sugar in processed foods, Schaub initially spends a lot of her time in supermarkets reading the ingredients on product boxes. She is in shock when she finds fructose in products she never imagined would contain it — bread, salad dressing, mayonnaise, soup, even chicken broth. When she goes to sub shops to get sandwiches, Schaub finds there are glazes and additives (i.e. sugar) on the meats.

Restaurants are just as hard for her family. On one of the first excursions



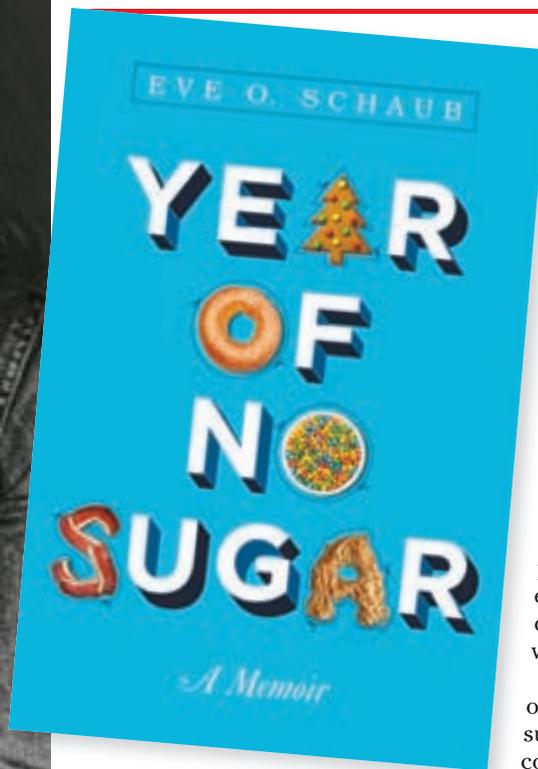
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When Eve Schaub looks over the breakfast menu at her daughters' school, she realizes that 97 percent of the items that the school cafeteria serves the children for breakfast have fructose in them.

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Photo by Stephen Schaub



out during the year of no sugar, the family had to leave several restaurants because of the lack of available food not containing sugar. Frustrating the staffs at these restaurants with their no-sugar requests, the Schaub family was finally able to eat in a local German restaurant, which can accommodate their no-sugar policy with a plate of wiener schnitzel and noodles.

It seems that no matter where Schaub and her family go, fructose is pervasively present. For example, when Schaub looks over the breakfast menu at her daughters' school, she realizes that 97 percent of the items that the school cafeteria serves the children for breakfast have fructose in them. Let's not forget about the drug industry. How many kids do you know who take gummy vitamins daily? Another shot of pure fructose.

This inevitably leads to Schaub cooking every meal from scratch. She tries to find sweeteners without fructose to cook with to sweeten some of her meals and is surprisingly discouraged by the lack of options. She researches coconut water, carob chips, and agave as possibilities, but she later learns they all contain fructose.

Finally, Schaub comes home exhausted one evening without a planned meal and serves her family a bag of frozen Bertolli chicken with cream sauce and bow-tie-shaped pasta. After the meal, she reads the ingredient label and discovers a word she didn't know: dextrose. After consulting with Dr. Lustig, she finds that dextrose is the Holy Grail she had been searching for — a non-fructose sweetener.

Before you know it, she buys a huge jar of dextrose from Amazon.

com and starts adding it to all sorts of foods to make them taste sweet. However, by July, the entire family finds they can no longer finish eating their monthly sugar-laden dessert choices because of their excessive sweetness.

When Schaub and her family travel to Italy for two weeks in August, they realize the fructose dilemma is really an American epidemic. For example the family doesn't have to ask the waitstaff in the restaurants if sugar is in any of the foods, because they can taste the authentic freshness of the ingredients. When the family eats their August dessert in Italy, they can actually taste the ingredients as Schaub recounts, "The apple strudel tastes like apples; the birthday chocolate pie tastes of pastry and cream. No explosion of sweet; no King Kong-sized portions."

Honestly, I was disappointed by the number of pages Schaub devoted to describing how she could make desserts with dextrose, the reasons behind why her family chose their monthly desserts, and how much she craved foods with sugar in them.

I was hoping to read more about the unsweetened foods she was

cooking for her family. I finally got my wish at the end of the book when Schaub describes how she makes spaghetti and meatballs, which involve her baking bread to use in the meatballs. She also makes her own sauce by adding cans of diced and crushed tomatoes together with a whole bunch of other fresh ingredients.

Nevertheless, I still hold Schaub in high regard. She sews her girls' Halloween costumes, grows a garden in her backyard (so she can use the plants in her recipes), cooks everything from scratch, cans her own jams, and then eloquently writes about it all.

So what does 12 months of eating no sugar lead to? In sum, Schaub becomes a better cook, the family feels healthier, and her children are less sick and less absent from school. Even Gillespie remarks in his book, "Sweet Poison," how sick American kids get right after Halloween. On a personal note, Schaub notices she can go to the bathroom regularly at least once a day. Forget the fiber bars — just eliminate fructose from your diet.

After their year of deprivation, the Schaub family settles back into a routine of moderation in 2012. Schaub finds she doesn't need to eat foods coated in sugar anymore.

"Sodas, ice cream sundaes, carnival cotton candy all now strike me as slightly gross," Schaub writes. "However, I can order the mango sticky rice at the Thai place and simply enjoy it."

Schaub also admits that she used to bake desserts for people to show her affection for them, "a concrete manifestation of love." Now she knows she has other options.

For more information about Eve Schaub and her new book, visit her website <http://eveschaub.com/>.

Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to *New York Parenting*.



Photo by Don Pollarelli

Matilda Cuomo with her family on her birthday.

# A mom that inspires

## How Matilda Cuomo gives back to the community

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**G**iving back seems to run in families.

Inspiring mother of five and former New York State First Lady Matilda Cuomo taught her children the value of giving back.

Throughout her life, the former teacher has worked hard to improve the lives of many New Yorkers, and continues to be a mentoring champion through the organization she founded, Mentoring USA.

Since its inception, the organization has provided mentors for more than 5,000 children.

Matilda and her husband Mario Cuomo, the former governor of New York, live in Manhattan.

Here, Matilda Cuomo shares her wisdom and giving back experiences with New York Parenting's readers.

**Tammy Scileppi:** How can mentors help build positive attitudes and self-confidence in youngsters?

**Matilda Cuomo:** There is no question that a child benefits from the support of a caring adult. We know that attitudes toward school, teachers, academics improve, as do family and social dynamics. Every child needs the support of school, home and community working together.

Numerous studies provide powerful evidence that caring adults can positively influence youth. As role models, mentors demonstrate the tangible rewards of completing an education and the responsibility and benefits of being a productive member of society. The individual attention provided by a mentor can introduce a child to new interests, talents and opportunities; improve school per-

formance, and reduce the rate of school drop-out, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy.

Most importantly, a mentor provides reliability in a child's life. A mentor is a positive, adult role model who can help build and maintain a consistent and trusting relationship with a child.

This invaluable relationship is something a child will carry with him or her for the rest of his or her life.

**TS:** What was growing up in Brooklyn like?

**MC:** I am very proud to be a Brooklyn girl and I feel blessed to have grown up there at the time I did.

We shared a sense of community, discovery and creativity that has contributed to some of the greatest achievements of our city. And it was great, great fun.

**TS:** Why did you decide to embark on this cause?

**MC:** In 1982, when Mario became governor, the state was faced with serious social and economic problems, including an escalating high-school dropout rate in our public schools.

I led an effort to bring mentors to children in grades kindergarten through 12th, in the strategic effort to support youth, with a trained, committed mentor.

**TS:** What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

**MC:** Mario and I are blessed to still be busy with matters and issues we feel passionately about. I remain committed to finding mentors for every child who can benefit by the support of a caring adult. I also love to share time at home with my family and dear friends — and, of course, to travel (mostly to Italy.)

**TS:** Your grandchildren?

**MC:** Mario and I have 14 jewels: 13 girls and one boy (diamond in the rough) — our precious little Mario. Each one is a treasure and inspiration for the dreams that can still come true in America.

**TS:** What do you like to do in New York City? How did you spend Mother's Day?

**MC:** I enjoy everything about New York City. I try to just walk the fascinating streets and neighborhoods as much as possible. We have many wonderful mothers in our family and we love to celebrate together.

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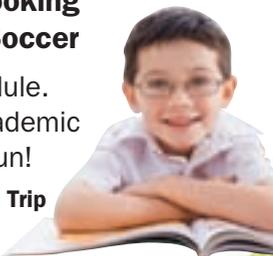
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# Know the score

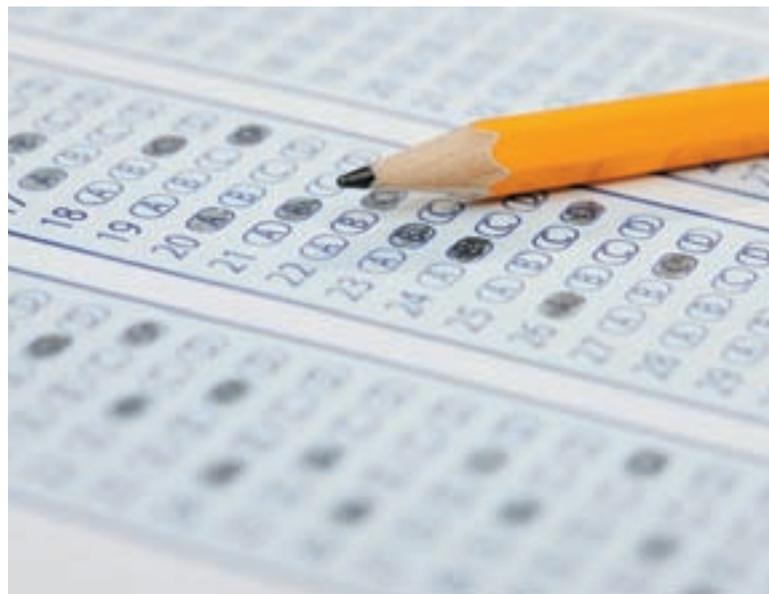
## Uncloaking specialized high-school testing secrecy

BY FRANCES KWELLER

**F**or many New York City parents, finding the right high school for your child to attend can be a daunting and exhausting process. There are several specialized high schools in New York City — Stuyvesant, Bronx High School of Science, Brooklyn Technical School, Queens High School for the Sciences at York College, Brooklyn Latin School, LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts, Baccalaureate School for Global Education, and High School for Math, Science and Engineering at City College — whose success can be measured by where its students go to college: Yale, Columbia, Brown, Michigan, Barnard, and Sarah Lawrence, to name just a few.

Not surprisingly, gaining admission to Baccalaureate School for Global Education and several other specialized high schools is serious competition. For Baccalaureate, for example, prospective students must pass a multiple choice, tightly timed, advanced math and English-based entrance exam as step one of the admissions process, which is held in January of sixth grade. Students must also present the school with their current teacher's letter of recommendation, and provide both their entire fifth grade report card and first quarter of sixth grade report card, including state test scores. The top percent of students are then selected for a group interview, generally held in March of that year, hosted by current Baccalaureate admissions officers, teachers and students.

In 2014, although more than 1,000 students applied for admission, and not even 100 were selected. Parents need to pay particular attention to when exactly their children can apply to this school — and carefully watch for deadlines. The percentage of students selected might be smaller if more parents were aware of the admissions process. This year, Baccalaureate



laureate scheduled its entrance exam for Jan. 27. On Jan. 2 — less than four weeks earlier — the school posted the time and location of the exam on its website (surprise!). Sticking fliers on the windows of parked cars would have been more effective in spreading the word.

All of the specialized high schools are free, all are excellent, but even parents of current and former students say that gaining admission is like joining a secret society. Unfortunately, several of these elite schools do a poor job advertising to their target clientele: families who can't afford a private education. The younger siblings of current students, or the children of former students, have no trouble getting the date of the next big entrance exam. What few parents know is that the secret society of New York Public Schools opens its doors as early as fifth grade. To remove the secrecy, I compiled a list of the city's best public schools along with their test dates. Here they are:

### **Grade 5** (all tests given in the fall)

- The Nest Plus M (Brooklyn)
- Anderson (Manhattan)
- Mark Twain (Brooklyn)

### **Grade 6**

- Hunter College High School (Manhattan). Tests are in January and are invitation-only. You can only register if you score in the 90th percentile on the math and English state exam in the fifth grade. The cost to register is \$32.

- Baccalaureate High School (Queens). Tests are in January. Admissions officers look at a student's grade five and six report cards, state scores, and a letter of recommendation.

- Anderson (Manhattan). This is a new testing opportunity given in the spring. The school sends an e-mail invitation to parents of fifth-grade students who score in the sixth percentile on the English and math exams.

### **Grade 7**

- Independent School Entrance Examination and Scholastic Achievement Test for private schools and scholarships. This test is in December.

### **Grade 8**

- Specialized High School Admission Test. Test is in late October for all seven city specialized math and science high schools.

- Test for Admission into Catholic High Schools exam. Test is in November. Free tuition is available if a student scores in the top percentile.

Early awareness is a key component for parents to learn about the admissions process and testing opportunities that are available for the New York City specialized high schools. But success doesn't just start with awareness, alone. Parents need to be involved in encouraging their children to take on extracurricular activities and expose their children to as many cultural events as possible, all of which helps them to become as well-rounded as possible. This, coupled with a strong educational foundation, can help parents successfully motivate their children to achieving the future of their dreams.

*Frances Kweller is not affiliated with any New York City specialized high schools mentioned in this article. She is an education and testing standards expert and CEO and founder of Kweller Prep.*

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## MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SEREDA

# The value of a nanny

**S**ince returning to work from maternity leave we've gotten a nanny and I have to say, it's been the best decision ever.

I was in such denial about how soon I would have to return to work that I didn't even bother to look into childcare up until about two weeks before I had to return (okay, it was the week before), at the suggestion of my husband. At a subconscious level, I knew that once I started making childcare plans, returning to work would be very real, instead of

something I'd be doing in the somewhat distant future. I wasn't ready to physically leave my babies, nor emotionally. After some phone calls, I soon realized that many day cares in the area don't accept infants. The ones that do, I just didn't have a good feeling about. I was told that the one day care I did like had a lot of violations (staff hitting the children and neglecting the children, so no, thanks). When

my dad recommended a nanny who was a friend of a friend, and had just stopped working for another family, I decided to meet with her. I wasn't too keen on having the girls stay with a nanny at home, but I decided to meet with her anyway.

I met with her in her home, which was immaculate — always a good sign — and she was very warm and kind. I learned that she had years of experience caring for children, was first aid-certified, and had references available. Not only was she great on paper, but I also had that good feeling that I had the first time I had to choose a day care. When I was looking for day care for Olivia, I literally chose the first one I walked into (sorry, Mom. I know I told you that I did an extensive search and background check, but the truth is I didn't). It was one of those moments where my mother's intuition kicked in. Turns out, it truly does exist.

It's been about a month now with our new nanny, and my home and its members couldn't be happier. She's been such a great help to us. She's there first thing in the morning and helps with the kids while my husband and I are getting ready for work.

She plays with Olivia and makes learning fun for her.

Each night when I get home,

Olivia's eager to tell me about her day.

Yes, the nanny is expensive, but we noticed such a huge change in just the first week of her being there that we feel the cost is worth it.

Coming home to a tidy house with bathed and fed children is probably the best gift for a working mom. My husband is ecstatic with her, too. He no longer has to leave at dawn to beat traffic before getting to a noisy day care (I truly appreciated you taking that on, baby), and I'm less stressed when I come home.

Truthfully, we don't know how we got along before her and I'm so glad that I decided to give her a chance, even if it just encouraged my procrastinating ways. Timing is everything, right?



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*What is a “trust” and why would I need one?*

**A** living trust (also called an inter-vivos trust) is funded with assets during your lifetime and can be a useful tool to minimize an estate for New York State estate tax purposes. Living trusts can be revocable or irrevocable. In truth, even irrevocable trusts are not completely irrevocable, but are more inflexible, as they can be amended, modified, or revoked with the consent of all of the adult beneficiaries.

The current federal estate tax exemption is \$5.34 million and will annually adjust for inflation. The New York State estate tax exemption was recently amended and is now \$2.065 million, and will also be annually adjusted. However, whereas New York once did not have a gift tax, now New York State will “add back” gifts made within three years of death into a decedent’s gross estate.

Aside from taxes, there are other incentives to create a trust. Maintaining assets in a trust rather than in your individual name helps to avoid probate, a court process that is required in order to transfer assets from the name of someone who has died into the estate, where it can be distrib-

uted to the heirs. A trust can also help minimize disputes among your heirs, particularly if you intend to disinherit one of your children. It can also help control your assets seamlessly if you are incapacitated or when you die. And, in the case of second marriages, a trust can insure that you can leave assets for the benefit of your second (or third) spouse during the spouse’s lifetime, while protecting those assets and ensuring that they will be left to your children (and not the spouse’s children) when he or she dies.

Trusts can be tailored to meet a client’s specific objectives. Not all trusts are the same and there is no one-size-fits-all trust. Here is a brief explanation of some types of trusts that are commonly used:

**2503 (c) Trust:** This is a minor’s trust for the benefit of minor children. The trust by its terms must terminate when the beneficiary reaches the age of 18 or 21. This trust is preferable to making gifts to a Uniform Transfer to Minors Account or an Uniform Gift to Minors Account account as it can protect assets from creditors. Furthermore, the investment opportunities are unlimited.

**Inter-vivos Bypass-Credit Shelter Trust:** This is the same type of trust that is included in a last will and testament for a spouse and descendants, only it is created during the donor’s lifetime. If funded now, the transferred amount and all the appreciation will escape gift and estate tax. Another added bonus — the spouse can be both a beneficiary and a co-trustee.

**Health Education Expense Trust:** A “Heet” is used to pay beneficiaries’ health and education costs. Both contributions to the trust and distributions from the trust will be tax-free. This is a good option for people inclined to gift money who have already exhausted their generation-skipping tax exemption.

**Intentionally Defective Grantor Trust:** This trust is created for the benefit of descendants and others, but may also include the donor’s

spouse. It can be drafted for the donor to pay the annual income tax for the trust without that payment being considered an additional gift. The benefit is that the trust principal appreciates and grows faster outside the donor’s estate.

**Life Insurance Trust:** This is created to avoid estate tax on insurance proceeds at the insured’s death. The common misconception is that life insurance is “tax free.” Whole life insurance policies are income tax free, but whole and term policies are not estate tax-free. They are taxable if the insured and decedent has an “incident of ownership” in the policy. If a trust owns the policy, the insured no longer has an incident of ownership in the policy. Annual payments to the trust will qualify for the annual exclusion and can be used to pay insurance premiums.

**Supplemental Needs Trust:** These are trusts created for disabled beneficiaries. Assets transferred to this trust is not counted as an asset of the beneficiary and therefore, does not render the beneficiary ineligible for Supplemental Security Income or Medicaid. When the beneficiary dies, the trust proceeds are payable to the donor’s named beneficiaries.

**Retirement Trusts:** These trusts are drafted to receive required minimum distributions and additional principal from retirement funds. There are very specific IRS rules for naming a trust as a beneficiary of qualified funds. If drafted correctly, the trust can preserve the ability to stretch out the IRA payments over the beneficiary’s life expectancy and name alternate beneficiaries upon the primary beneficiary’s death.

*Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate planning needs. Her firm assists clients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. You can find Alison Besunder on Twitter @estatetrust-plan and on her website at [www.besunderlaw.com](http://www.besunderlaw.com).*



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# Unlikely summer

Studying can't stop in June when there's a big test on the horizon

BY FRANCES KWELLER

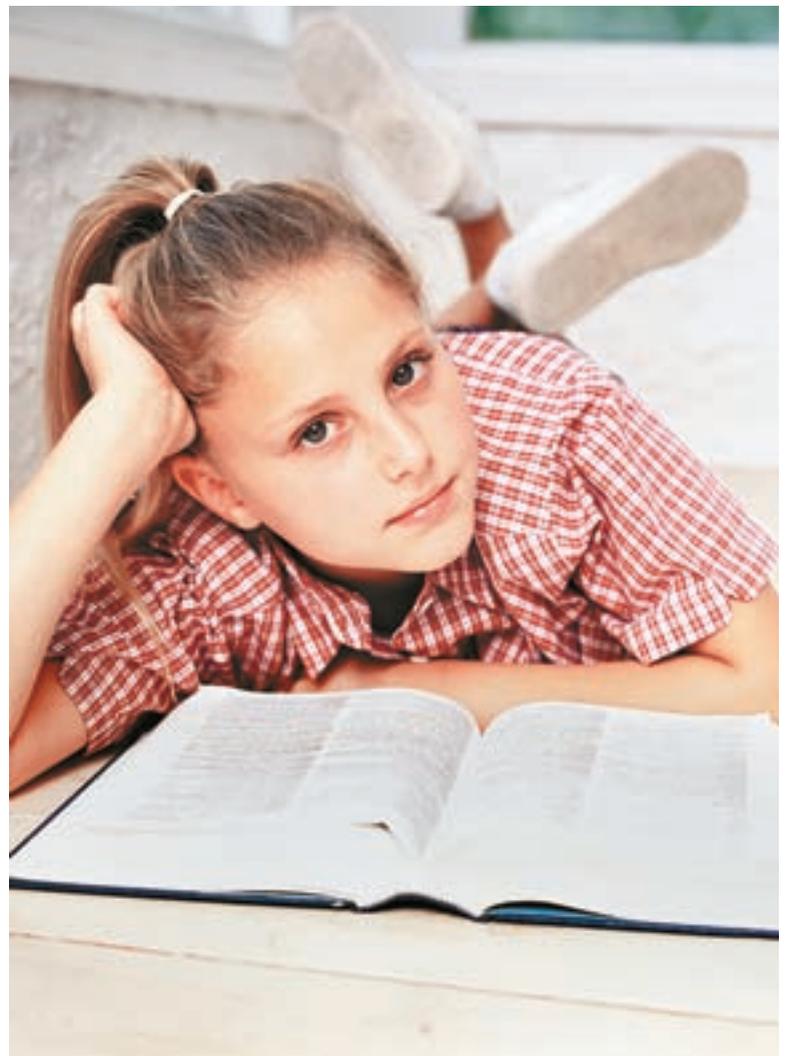
**W**inter has turned to spring and with the warm weather comes thoughts of summer. For many New York City parents, this is the time to start thinking about planning summer activities for the kids. Your children have worked hard for the past 10 months, and visions of hot summer days, ice cream cones, and water sports dance in their heads. It's tempting to let them sit back, relax, and watch the days fly by. After all, isn't this the time in their lives to let them lounge at the beach with their friends and get a tan?

The answer: your kids have the rest of their lives to do those things. But they only have this one moment to prepare for the New York City Specialized High School Admissions Test program. This is the time to make preparations for the future — preparations that will have significant and profound effects on their lives.

In an increasingly competitive world, getting into a specialized high school can make a pivotal difference in your child's future. As former New York City Comptroller John C. Liu wrote for *The Huffington Post*, "The Specialized High Schools are the equivalent of New York City's Ivy League. Admittance to these schools is a ticket to success. They bring an almost certain guarantee of high school graduation, in a city where the graduation rate is 65 percent, and an almost certain guarantee of college acceptance. More than a quarter of the graduates of Stuyvesant and Bronx Science go on to university in the real Ivy Leagues, at Harvard, and Yale, and Brown, or other top-tier colleges."

Getting a high score on the test is the only way to gain possible entrance into a New York City specialized high school and enrolling your child in a competitive test prep course gives your child the strongest advantage.

There are many local test prep companies that offer comprehensive summer camp tutoring programs that have had tremendous success in helping students get into



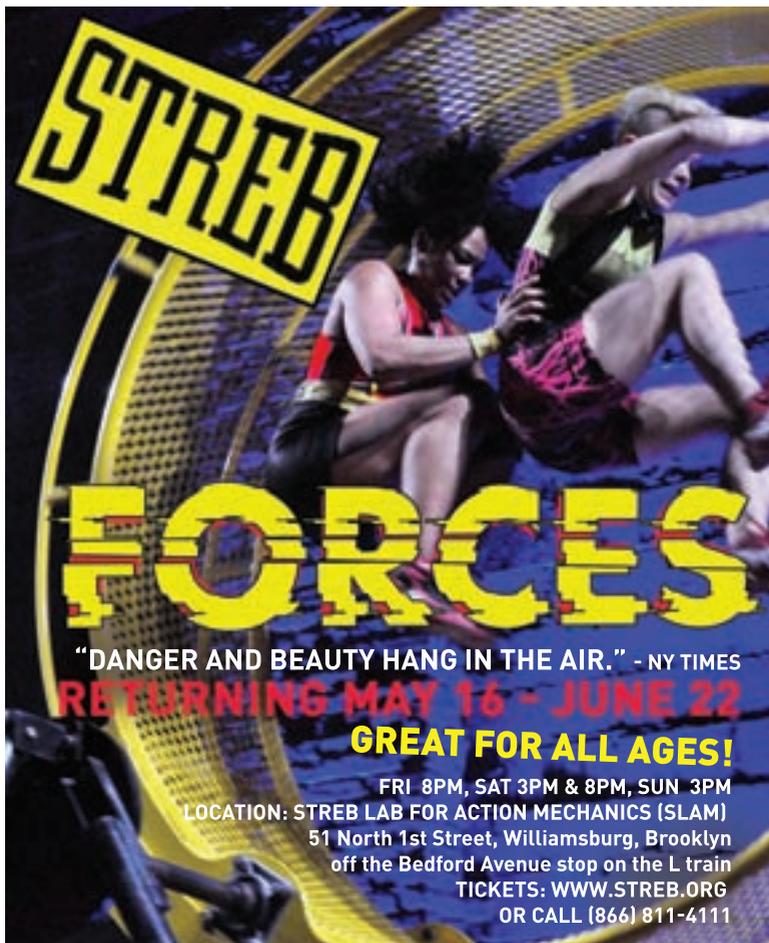
top New York City high schools. Classes often take place four days a week, with both morning and afternoons sessions offered. In addition, students can elect to attend weekend sessions instead. Some even offer trips for both high school and college tours on Fridays.

You may be thinking that your child can simply study for the test on their own, in their spare time, and ace it nonetheless. This is not a mistake you or your child can afford to make. Even the most disciplined students need a structured setting in order to properly prepare for this challenging exam. Especially during the summer, procrastination is far too easy of a trap to fall into, and these classes are necessary to keep your child focused. In addition, top-notch tutors will help

your child truly grasp the material to an extent that no prep book can match.

And if you're still not sure that you want your child to sacrifice his endless pool-lounging, just think about it. There is, in fact, still plenty of time to lounge by the pool or at the beach this summer. And that relaxation will feel so much better after a hard day of working and learning, knowing that you are taking key steps towards a successful future for your child. Over indulging won't make you happy — but your child's admission to Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, or the college of his dreams most certainly will.

*Frances Kweller is an education and testing standards expert, and founder of Kweller Prep.*



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# Calendar

JUNE



## Jazz soiree with Catherine Russell

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Louis Armstrong at the World's Fair with a performance by Grammy-award winning artist Catherine Russell on June 29 at the Queens Museum. Her performance will mark the opening of the exhibit "Ambassador Satchmo at the World's Fair," on display at the museum. The exhibit

will feature never-before-seen images of Louis at the World's Fair. These pictures, taken by Jack Bradley, captured the true essence of Armstrong.

June 29, from 4 to 6 pm. Admission is \$8 for adults and children 12 and older. Children under 12 get in free.

*Queens Museum [New York City Building in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, (718) 592-9700, <http://louisarmstronghouse.org/news/article.php?Ambassador-Satchmo-at-the-World-s-Fair-on-exhibit-at-the-Queens-Museum-beginning-June-29th-featuring-our-Jazz-Soir-e-with-Catherine-Russell-135>].*

## Submit a listing

This calendar is dedicated to bringing our readers the most comprehensive list of events in your area. But to do so, we need your help!

Send your listing request to [queenscalendar@cnglocal.com](mailto:queenscalendar@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!

## SAT, MAY 31

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Meet the authors:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta-museum](http://www.mta.info/mta-museum); 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Poets Paul Dubois Jacobs and Jennifer Swender share their prose with children 3 years and older.

**Family walk:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 3-4 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Celebrate 100 years of the children's garden with an interactive walk and hands-on activities.

## SUN, JUNE 1

### IN QUEENS

**Second Annual New York Tennis Expo:** USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows Corona Park Rd.; (718) 760-6200; [www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-new-york-tennis-expo-tickets-10902929957](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-new-york-tennis-expo-tickets-10902929957); 10:30 am-4:30 pm; Free.

Families will enjoy an expansive "Activity Zone," with indoor on-court games, plus an outdoor carnival area and expanded "Kids Zone" featuring face-painting, balloon animals and more.

**"Peter Pan":** Queens Theatre, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; Box Office (718) 760-0064; Administration (718) 760-0686; [www.queentheatre.org](http://www.queentheatre.org); 1 and 3 pm; \$14.

Families with children of all ages will enjoy this retelling of the classic story.

**Luminescent Night Light Workshop:** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; [www.ny-science.org](http://www.ny-science.org); 1:30 & 3:30 pm; \$10.

Children ages 10 and up will learn about LEDs, resistors, sensors and mi-



Photo by Lynn Lowell

## Arts on the block

Celebrate local arts on June 21.

This block party will be the inaugural event for the Kaufman Arts District, and will feature a variety of Queens-based artists, live music from Make Music New York musicians, food from local restaurants, an outdoor movie

screening, poetry slam, and much more.

June 21, from 4 to 10 pm. Admission is \$35, free for children under 12.

*Kaufman Astoria Studios on the BackLot, (35th Avenue and 36th Street in Astoria, <http://queenscountycilarts.org/qcablockparty/>).*

crocontrollers, and solder them to a PCB board designed by Hall of Science staffer Reid Bingham.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Garden tour:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 2-3 pm and 3:30-4:30 pm; \$12 (\$15 non-members).

Family-friendly peek inside the gardens, learn about garden plots, and make a tasty treat. Pre-registration required and available online. Cancelled in case of inclement weather.

## MON, JUNE 2

### IN QUEENS

**Dancing Under the Stars:** Wallenberg Square in Forest Park, Metropolitan Avenue and Park Lane South; (718) 235-4100; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/02/dancing-under-the-stars](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/02/dancing-under-the-stars); 6 pm; Free.

Free ballroom dancing lessons for the family.

## THURS, JUNE 5

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Lost Battalion Hall, 93-29 Queens Blvd.; (718) 263-1163; [www.nycgovparks.org/parks/Q401](http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/Q401); Noon; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

**"A Year With Frog & Toad":** Jackson Pond Playground in Forest Park, Myrtle Avenue and Park Lane South; (718) 235-4100; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/05/a-year-with-frog-toad](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/05/a-year-with-frog-toad); 6 pm; Free.

A live performance by Plaza Theatrical Productions about four seasons of friendship and life lessons.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Antique Car Collection:** Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St. at Clinton Street, Brooklyn; (718) 222-4111; [www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org); 6:30 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

Explore Lenny Shiller's collection of antique autos, including a 1929 Durant rumble seat coupe, a 1953 Packard

convertible and a 1947 international soda truck. Reserve tickets in advance.

## FRI, JUNE 6

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Bowne Park, 32nd Avenue between 155th and 159th streets; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/06/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/06/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood); Noon; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

**"Frozen":** Rochdale Park, Guy R. Brewer Blvd., between 130th and 137th avenues; (718) 393-7370; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/06/movie-night-frozen](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/06/movie-night-frozen); 5 pm; Free.

Start off the evening with crafts and games, then watch an outdoor showing of "Frozen" at sundown.

**"Brave":** Crocheron Park, 35th Avenue and Cross Island Parkway; (718) 352-4793; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/06/movies-across-from-golden-pond-in-crocheron-park](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/06/movies-across-from-golden-pond-in-crocheron-park); 8 pm; Free.

Catch an outdoor showing of the popular movie.

## SAT, JUNE 7

### IN QUEENS

**Community Conversations for Kids:** Kingsland Homestead, 143-35 37th Ave. off of Parsons Boulevard; (718) 939-0647; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/07/community-conversations-for-kids-environmental-stewardship](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/07/community-conversations-for-kids-environmental-stewardship); 1 pm; Free.

Karyn Mooney leads children and their family members through Jeanette Winter's book, "Wangari's Trees of Peace," followed by a discussion and planting activity.

**The Spectacular Magic Shawn:** Carousel in Forest Park, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/07/the-spectacular-magic-shawn1](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/07/the-spectacular-magic-shawn1); 2 and 4 pm; Free.

Adults and children alike will enjoy this magic show.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Sproutfest:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Noon-4 pm; \$10 (\$5 seniors and students; free members and children under 12).

Children enjoy 100 years of the garden with music, storytelling, face-painting, workshops and games for all

*Continued on page 38*

# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

Continued from page 37

ages. Entertainment by the Ebony Hillbillies and Shine and the Moonbeams.

**Mils Trills:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Amelia Robinson plays her electric uke with surprise musical guests — join in for interactive songs that feature urban funk, honky-tonk, and calypso beats.

## SUN, JUNE 8

### IN QUEENS

**Genealogy Workshop:** Queens Historical Society, 143-35 37th Ave.; (718) 939-0647 X17; [kmooney@queenshistoricalsociety.org](mailto:kmooney@queenshistoricalsociety.org); 2:30 – 4:30 pm; \$5-8.

Wilhelmina Rhodes Kelley and the Daughters of the American Revolution give a genealogy discussion and workshop. The Queens chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution is one of the first in the organization's history that was started by a black woman: Wilhelmina Rhodes Kelly.

## MON, JUNE 9

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Baisley Pond Park, 116th Avenue between 150th Street and Baisley Boulevard South; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/09/cityparks-puppet-mobile-presents-little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/09/cityparks-puppet-mobile-presents-little-reds-hood); 11 am; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

**Dancing Under the Stars:** 6 pm. Wallenberg Square in Forest Park. See Monday, June 2.

## TUES, JUNE 10

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Detective Keith Williams Field House, 106-16 173rd St. at Liberty Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/10/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/10/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood); 11 am; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

## WED, JUNE 11

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** A.R.R.O.W. Field House, 35th Street between 35th



Photo by Lois Greenfield

## Young dancers take flight

Ballet Tech Foundation presents Kids Dance for five performances at The Joyce Theater from June 12 to 15.

Forty talented dancers, ranging in age from 9 to 14, will dance three works of Elliot Feld, an amazing

choreographer and dancer who started at the age of 11 himself. "KYDZNY," "A Stair Dance," and "Apple Pie" are all designed to showcase the innate talent of the Ballet Tech students.

June 12-15, Thursday at 8 pm,

Friday at 7 pm, Saturday at 2 and 7 pm, and Sunday at 2 pm. Tickets are \$10-\$39.

*The Joyce Theater [175 Eighth Ave. between W. 18th and W. 19th streets in Chelsea, (212) 242-0800, [www.joyce.org](http://www.joyce.org)].*

and 36th avenues; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/11/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/11/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood); Noon; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

## THURS, JUNE 12

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Dry Harbor Playground in Forest Park, Myrtle Avenue and Forest Park Drive; 718-235-4100; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/12/little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/12/little-reds-hood); 6 pm; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

## FRI, JUNE 13

### IN QUEENS

**"Tangled":** Crocheron Park, 35th Avenue and Cross Island Parkway; (718) 352-4793; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/13/movies-across-from-golden-pond-in-crocheron-park](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/13/movies-across-from-golden-pond-in-crocheron-park); 8 pm; Free.

Bring a blanket and pack a picnic to watch this classic animated movie in the park!

## SAT, JUNE 14

### IN QUEENS

**Friends of Fort Totten Parks' Family Day:** Crocheron Park, 33rd Road and 215th Place; (718) 352-4793; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/14/friends-of-fort-totten-parks-family-day](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/14/friends-of-fort-totten-parks-family-day); Noon-3 pm; Free.

Families will enjoy a fun afternoon

of free activities including games, rides, crafts, and more.

**Jesse Jams Sing Along:** Carousel in Forest Park, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/14/jesse-jams-sing-along](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/14/jesse-jams-sing-along); 2 & 4 pm; Free.

Families can jam along with Jesse and her guitar to a mix of children's music, original songs and pop music.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Birthday Bash:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-4952; [51281.blackbaudhosting.com/51281/subway-birthday-bash](http://51281.blackbaudhosting.com/51281/subway-birthday-bash); 9 am to 11 am; \$55 (\$30 children; Free for children under 2).

The New York City subway system is celebrating 110 years of service. Ride historic trains, meet costumed interpreters, do craft projects and enjoy live

entertainment.

**Block Party:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Children enjoy erecting new buildings with an assortment of blocks.

**Craft workshop:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 1-4 pm; \$31 (\$28 members) includes \$8 materials fee.

Make your own journal using nature's materials; then explore the gardens and collect specimens for your book. Pre-registration required.

**Father's Day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate the daddy in your life, listen to jazz music and make a great gift to dear-old dad. For children under 5 years old.

**Family Camping:** Central Park, Near 79 Street Transverse, Manhattan; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/14/family-camping](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/14/family-camping); 6 pm; Free.

Camp out with your family in Central park! Tents are provided, participating families will be chosen by lottery.

## SUN, JUNE 15

### IN QUEENS

**QBG Craft Table:** Sky View Center, 40-24 College Point Blvd.; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/15/qbg-craft-table-at-the-shops-at-skyview-center](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/15/qbg-craft-table-at-the-shops-at-skyview-center); 2-4 pm; Free.

Participants will make colorful twig wind chimes to celebrate the start of summer.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Block Party:** 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, June 14.

**Father's Day:** 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, June 14.

## MON, JUNE 16

### IN QUEENS

**Dancing Under the Stars:** 6 pm. Wallenberg Square in Forest Park. See Monday, June 2.

## TUES, JUNE 17

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Juniper Valley Park, 80th Street between Juniper

## Living History

Take a trip back in time with the Living History tours at the Vanderbilt Museum this summer now through Aug. 31.

Museum members will double as actors, depicting life as it was in the mansion during the 1930s. Visitors will tour the 24-room mansion while hearing stories about the family that once called the museum home, and listen to the details of their many adventures.

Saturdays and Sundays through Aug. 31, at 1, 2, 3, and 4 pm. Tickets are \$5, in addition to regular museum admission.



Vanderbilt Museum [180 Little Neck Rd. in Centerport, (631) 854-5579, [www.vanderbiltmuseum.org](http://www.vanderbiltmuseum.org)].

Boulevard South and Juniper Boulevard North; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/17/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/17/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood); Noon; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

## THURS, JUNE 19

### IN QUEENS

**"The Lion's Whiskers":** Jackson Pond Playground in Forest Park, Myrtle Ave. and Park Lane South; (718) 235-4100; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/19/the-lions-whiskers](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/19/the-lions-whiskers); 6 pm; Free.

Families will enjoy this musical adaptation of a traditional folktale by Catskill Puppet Theatre.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Celebrate Haiti:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

What would you eat if you lived in a place surrounded by water? What would you wear? Children discover the wonder of Haiti by viewing art forms like Drapo flags. Little ones — 5 years and younger — make a craft inspired by the Haitian art.

## SAT, JUNE 21

### IN QUEENS

**Summer Solstice Festival:** King Manor Museum in Rufus King Park, Jamaica Avenue between 150th and 153rd streets; (718) 206-0545; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/21/summer-solstice-festival](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/21/summer-solstice-festival); Noon-4 pm; Free.

Families will make ice cream the old-fashioned way, create sun-inspired art and crafts, and play historic games to

celebrate the longest day of the year.

### "The Sammie & Tudie Show":

Carousel in Forest Park, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/21/the-sammie-tudie-show](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/21/the-sammie-tudie-show); 2 and 4 pm; Free.

Get ready to laugh with Sammie and Tudie during this all ages comedy show featuring fun, magic, and zany props.

**Family Camping:** Alley Pond Park, 76th Avenue and Springfield Boulevard; (718) 229-4000; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/21/family-camping](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/21/family-camping); 6 pm; Free.

Camp out with your family in Central Park! Tents are provided, participating families will be chosen by lottery.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Jamaica!:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Caribbean-American Heritage Month continues with an exploration of the island nation of Jamaica. Discover the rich culture by sampling Jamaican buns, desserts and snacks. Children 2 and a half to 5 years old chew on sweet sugar cane, then wash it down with Jamaican Punch.

**Krik Krak, storytelling:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate Haitian art and culture with songs and stories that tell the oral history of the island.

## SUN, JUNE 22

### IN QUEENS

### Festival de las Flores & Summer Solstice Celebration:

Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 539-5296; [www.queensbotanical.org](http://www.queensbotanical.org); 11 am-6 pm; \$4 (adults), \$2 (children ages 3-12).

queensbotanical.org; 11 am-6 pm; \$4 (adults), \$2 (children ages 3-12).

Families will enjoy bi-lingual story reading, face painting, and old-fashioned games.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Jamaica!:** 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, June 21.

## MON, JUNE 23

### IN QUEENS

**Dancing Under the Stars:** 6 pm. Wallenberg Square in Forest Park. See Monday, June 2.

## FRI, JUNE 27

### IN QUEENS

**"Little Red's Hood":** Noonan Playground, Greenpoint Avenue at 42nd Street; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/27/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/27/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-little-reds-hood); Noon; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile is partnering with the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre to present this retelling of the classic tale with hand-made marionettes and modern twists.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Superhero day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 10 am-2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate the Man of Steel and other comic book legends by making a fun cape, honing detective skills, and for the ladies, make the lasso of truth with Wonder Woman. Children who come dressed as their favorite character get half off admission. Children also sing Happy birthday and create a craft to take home. For all ages.

*Continued on page 40*

# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

Continued from page 39

## SAT, JUNE 28

### IN QUEENS

**Freshwater Fishing:** Kissena Park, Rose Avenue and Oak Avenue; (718) 846-2731; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/28/freshwater-fishing](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/28/freshwater-fishing); 11 am; Free.

Families with children ages 8 and up can participate in this fishing workshop where rangers teach about the ethics of fishing and the ecology of our local waterways.

**The Amazing Captain Faust:** Carousel in Forest Park, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; [www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/28/the-amazing-captain-faust](http://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/06/28/the-amazing-captain-faust); 2 & 4 pm; Free.

Straight from Coney Island, The Amazing Captain Faust brings his amazing magic show to Queens.

## MON, JUNE 30

### IN QUEENS

**Dancing Under the Stars:** 6 pm. Wallenberg Square in Forest Park. See Monday, June 2.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN QUEENS

**Science Playground:** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; [www.nyscience.org](http://www.nyscience.org); Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$4, plus museum admission.

Children are encouraged to explore science through slides, seesaws, climbing webs, a water play area, sand boxes, and more, weather permitting.

**Rocket Park Mini Golf:** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; [www.nyscience.org](http://www.nyscience.org); Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$6 (adults), \$5 (children and seniors,) plus museum admission.

Golfers of all ages can learn about key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more!

**"Princess Particular!":** The Secret Theatre, 44-02 23rd St.; (718) 392-0722; [www.secrettheatre.com](http://www.secrettheatre.com); Saturday, May 31, 2 pm; Saturday, June 14, 2 pm; Saturday, June 28, 2 pm; \$15, \$10 (children).

Children and adults alike will enjoy watching the story of Princess Particular come to life on the stage.

**Little Hatchlings:** Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St.; (718) 271-1500; [queenszoo.com](http://queenszoo.com); Wednesdays, 10:15 am, 11:45 am, Now - Wed, June 4; WCS



## Park's biggest show

The largest free festival celebrating the performing arts of the city is back! City Park's Foundation SummerStage 2014 will feature a variety of performances at Rumsey Playfield in Central Park.

With food and drink options from Brooklyn Flea, and your choice of local music artists — ranging from American pop, Latin and World music to dance,

comedy and theater — there's something to please everyone in your family. You and your family will be having a great time all summer!

June 3 to Aug. 24, various times. Admission is free.

*Rumsey Playfield [69th Street and Fifth Avenue in Central Park on the Upper East Side, (212) 360-2789 <http://cityparksfoundation.org/summerstage/>].*

Membersfree, \$250 non-members, \$270 for classes in one session.

**Little Hatchlings** is an early education program for children ages 10 to 23 months with an adult. The program will provide a fun and engaging introduction to animals, nature, and the environment. Participants will explore the zoo with their children and learn about animals through songs, arts-and-crafts, and guided visits to animal exhibits designed especially for toddlers. Each session is led by an early childhood education zoo instructor.

**Youth Adaptive Swim:** Roy Wilkins Family Center, Baisley Boulevard and 177th Street; Fridays, 4 pm.; Free with recreation center membership.

Children and teens with disabilities can practice swimming skills in this adaptive swim program.

**"Pirate Pete's Parrot":** The Secret Theatre, 44-02 23rd St.; (718) 392-0722; [www.secrettheatre.com](http://www.secrettheatre.com); Saturday, June 7, 2 pm; Saturday, June 21, 2 pm; \$15 (adults,) \$10 (children).

This new musical pantomime show will take audiences on an adventure

with Pirate Pete as he searches for his missing parrot.

**35th Annual Gregorian Festival:** St. Gregory the Great, 87th Avenue & Cross Island Parkway.

Rides, games, prizes, food.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Little Kids, Big Stars:** MCU Park, 1904 Surf Ave. at W. 17th St., Brooklyn; (718) 37-BKLYN; [info@brooklynclones.com](mailto:info@brooklynclones.com); [www.brooklynclones.com](http://www.brooklynclones.com); Now through Sunday, June 7. Free.

Baseball is back and the Cyclones want the little ones to experience the game. Coaches of little league and softball leagues throughout the boroughs can nominate one player their team to be named Little Kids, Big Stars of the week. For boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. The child should have a passion for baseball/softball, serve as a leader to the team and be helpful to the coaches. The winners will receive an invitation to a baseball clinic with the Cyclones a chance to throw out a first pitch and a commemorative t-shirt.

**Dinosaur Safari:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com); Weekdays, 10 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-5:30 pm.; \$20.95 (\$16.95 children; Free for children under 3; \$18.95 seniors).

Mysteries Revealed features more than 30 dinosaur species and how scientists reconstruct the fossil pieces. The ride runs through the zoo and has fully animatronic dinosaurs as they move and snarl. The 40-foot T-Rex is joined by deinonychus, prodohadros, stegosaurus and edmontonia.

**Touch tank:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 31; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages touch a starfish, a horseshoe crab, or a sea snail.

**The Art of Math:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 31; Free with museum admission.

Children learn all about shapes, triangles, squares.

**"Bessie's Big Shot":** Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, 79th and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays - Fridays, 10:30 am and noon, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Now - Sun, June 29; \$10, \$7 (children under 12).

It's a bird, it's a plane, no — it's Bessie the cow! Based on the Puppet-Mobile show of the same name, this popular production is making its debut at the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre.

**Urban gardening:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1:30 pm, Now - Sun, June 1; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years and older learn about seeds, planting, and how to make a garden more efficient.

**Living History Tours:** Vanderbilt Museum Carriage House, 180 Little Neck Rd., Long Island; (631) 854-5579; [www.vanderbiltmuseum.org](http://www.vanderbiltmuseum.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1, 2, 3, & 4 pm, Sat, June 7 - Sun, Aug. 31; \$5 plus museum admission.

Visitors will take a trip back in time to see what life was like for the famous family who once called the mansion home in the 1930s.

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## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Get your mojo back

**Y**our child is thriving and hitting all his developmental milestones. But what about you? Are the demands of motherhood taking their toll?

The way many of us cope with stress is by loading up on caloric, nutrient-poor foods (hello, big ice cream bowl!), drinking too much alcohol, or consuming too much caffeine. But that often exacerbate stress, make us feel worse and sabotaging our health and spirit.

“In order to make any successful changes in how you cope, moms need to first identify how stress affects them and their food, fitness, and lifestyle habits,” says Elisa Zied, MS, RDN, author of “Younger Next Week.”

For example, does stress make you go to the nearest drive-through for fast food? Do you reach for a sleeve of cookies or have one too many cocktails? Do you skip your workout or spend more time watching television or surfing the internet? Do you sleep less (or worse) because you have too much to get done or your mind races?

Once you realize how stress affects your personal habits, work towards tweaking one or two of these behaviors at a time to get back on track, Zied says. For example, set an alarm every hour to remind you to take 10 minutes to stand, stretch, take a short walk or



climb some stairs if physical activity is lacking.

Zied is a fan of snacking on nuts.

“I especially love nuts for moms because they’re portable and pair well with so many other nutritious foods such as whole-grain cereals, yogurt, and dried or fresh fruit.” Eating a small amount of nuts may protect against weight gain. “They can fill you up and help your body burn more calories during digestion,” she says.

### Nutrient-rich plus a treat

“Mad Men” viewers were shocked by the scene of a pregnant Betty Draper smoking and enjoying a glass of wine. Yet, two generations ago, women’s lifestyles were healthier in other ways than they are now. A Mayo Clinic Proceedings study found today’s mothers are less physically active than mothers in the 1960s. Today’s moms need to eat 175 to 225 fewer calories to prevent weight gain than the “Mad Men” era moms.

You know the drill. Focus on a dietary pattern that includes fruits and vegetables, protein-rich foods, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and healthy fats.

What about treats? Zied says to give yourself permission to include small amounts of chocolate, cookies, wine, or even some French fries daily.

“Not every calorie moms consume has to be nutritious. As long as most of the foods and beverages are power-packed, a few items that don’t fall into basic food groups can fit in just fine.”

*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.*

## Peanut butter fruit Napoleon

**PREP TIME:** 15 minutes

**COOK TIME:** 0 minutes

**SERVES:** 4

### INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 Granny Smith apple
- 1 pear
- ¼ cup creamy peanut butter
- ¼ cup seedless raisins, plus 4 teaspoons for garnish

**DIRECTIONS:** In a small bowl, com-

bine the yogurt, honey, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Quarter the apple and pear and remove the core. Slice each quarter into 4 thin slices. To build the napoleon, lay 4 pear slices onto each of 4 plates. The pear slices should be facing in the same direction and touching each other to create the bottom layer of the napoleon. Top with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter and, using the back of a spoon, spread evenly to coat. Sprinkle over 1 tablespoon of the raisins. Layer 4 apple slices over the peanut butter and raisins. Spoon over 1 tablespoon of the yogurt mixture and, using the back of a spoon, spread evenly to coat. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon of the raisins over the yogurt to garnish.



Serve immediately.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** (per Napoleon): 218 calories, 34 grams carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 8 g fat (2 g saturated), 7

g protein, 0 mg cholesterol, 91 mg sodium

Source: Toby Amido for the National Peanut Board

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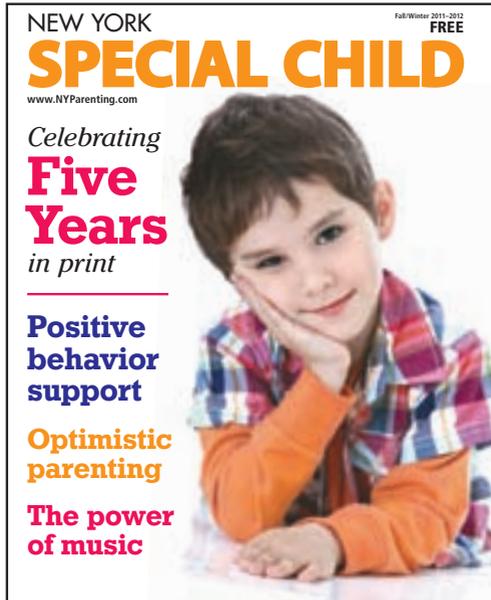
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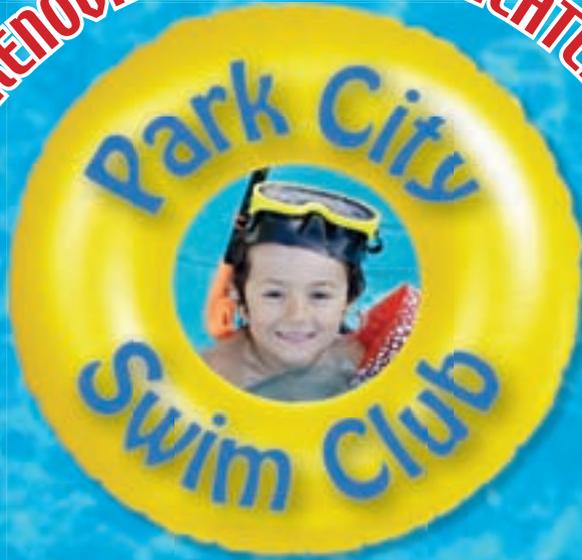


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