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Family January 2013



FEATURES

- 8 Children & tragedy**
When the unthinkable is in the news, what do you tell your kids?
BY GAYLA GRACE
- 10 Stop the violence**
A parent and teacher tries to make sense of the Sandy Hook Elementary shootings
BY GREGORY KEER
- 12 Time to rework homework**
Part two of our discussion of homework
BY RISA C. DOHERTY
- 16 Value of Catholic schools**
Why parents choose this effective alternative
BY CANDI SPARKS
- 24 Night fright**
Tips to help your child catch some zzzz's
BY KIKI BOCHI
- 26 Girls & depression**
How parents can protect their teenage daughters
BY KIKI BOCHI
- 28 Why is autism on the rise?**
More kids are diagnosed with autism today than ever before
BY DANA J. CONNELLY
- 30 Anne Frank's legacy**
Children can learn about her history, courage, and hope, right in Manhattan
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

COLUMNS

- 14 Healthy Living**
BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN
- 18 FabuLYSS Finds**
BY LYSS STERN
- 20 Dear Teacher**
BY PEGGY GISLER AND MARGE EBERTS
- 22 Ask an Attorney**
BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.
- 32 Good Sense Eating**
BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD
- 34 Dear Dr. Karyn**
BY DR. KARYN GORDON
- 36 Mommy 101**
BY ANGELICA SERADOVA
- 37 Growing Up Online**
BY CAROLYN JABS

CALENDAR

- 38 January Events**

SPECIAL SECTION

- 42 The Marketplace**



Letter from the publisher

Keeping the children safe

We send our children off to school and hope we are leaving them in a safe place. We trust that the teachers and staff are capable of protecting them and keeping them nourished in a variety of ways and that we will see them later in the day.



For generations parents across our nation have done this and it has been fine. Sometimes there was a storm or a blackout or a hurricane or something like that for the educators to deal with and there were drill systems set up, like in case of fire, to help evacuate if needed. When I was growing up in the Midwest we had tornado drills and air raid drills. It was scary sometimes, but

we grew used to it and nothing happened. We were safe.

Suddenly, we have crazy stuff to deal with. We have people stealing airplanes and steering them into skyscrapers and we have other people outrageously armed with a cache of weapons who commit genocide and then suicide. We have seen a day care center in Oklahoma City blown to bits and now yet another school mass shooting. It is unbearable to all of us, as citizens and as parents. It is unbearable to think of the mindset that made that young man shoot his mother and then the innocent victims in the elementary school.

We don't have all the answers. There are massive amounts of weap-

ons throughout our country and we are told that after the shooting, more assault weapons were sold than ever before. My contention is to stop manufacturing and dispensing ammunition. Who then would care if the guns were there? They would be rendered largely harmless. But even if we could accomplish that and get anyone to agree to anything anymore within a consensus, there is still the matter of the disturbed minds that would do such a thing. We still have to deal with that issue and that's a biggie.

As a parent and as a neighbor, I know we can't just forget about this. We can't just wait a few weeks and move on without doing some things to set a plan in motion. We need to continue the dialogue, the outrage, the mourning so that we don't forget, so we don't get complacent and it be-

comes business as usual. We need to seek out answers from professionals and we need to identify the troubled souls among us and try to help them before they strike.

We need to act and continue to act before any more children are lost. This must be our highest priority. We must put politics aside and find answers before more lives are snuffed out in the horror of these violent acts. We all need to listen to each other and find a way to keep the children safe.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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From our readers

The homework conversation

Dear editor:

Homework is a battle I continue to face on a daily basis, so I enjoyed the many points of view expressed in your November article, ("Homework: A conversation with parents

and experts").

As a working parent, I sympathize with parents and their children, but as an educator I understand the reason behind the madness. Homework should be carefully thought out in order to review new concepts learned, but also, and more importantly, indicate where your child needs help. Homework re-enforces basic skills, comprehension, time management, and discipline.

It is not the responsibility of parents, caregivers, or teaching assistants to get homework done. Parents who take charge of homework and parents who ignore it do incredible damage to their child's ability to achieve through success and to learn powerful lessons through mistakes. It is up to parents and teachers to have faith in each other, their methods and

judgment, and to work together to make homework and school a valuable experience for all children with all types of needs.

If academic achievement and self-esteem is the common goal for our children, then homework, including tutoring and extra help, should be the first, and most important, activity after school. Once this routine has been established, other activities, such as sports, music lessons, etc., can follow. It becomes engrained that after one's work is done, and done well, there is time to play. A well-balanced day combining school, homework, and enrichment activities creates strong, independent children, and a better opportunity for families to enjoy and share free time together.

*Alicen Harrad, After School Director
Rhineland Children's Center*

EDUCATION

HOMWORK

A conversation with parents & experts

What is its value, and how much is too much?

BY RICK C. DOHERTY
Parents and educators disagree about the value of homework. Some argue it's essential for learning, while others believe it's a waste of time. The conversation around homework has become increasingly heated in recent years, with parents and educators often at odds. Some parents believe that homework is essential for their child's education, while others believe it's a waste of time. The conversation around homework has become increasingly heated in recent years, with parents and educators often at odds. Some parents believe that homework is essential for their child's education, while others believe it's a waste of time.

Is homework worth it?
The homework debate is a complex one. On the one hand, homework can help reinforce what is learned in class and provide additional practice. On the other hand, it can be a source of stress and frustration for many students. Parents and educators should have an open conversation about the benefits and drawbacks of homework for their child.



High school in an over-populated city. **Richard Family** says, "I support their child's education, but I don't want to be the parent who forces homework on their child. I want to be the parent who supports their child's learning and helps them understand the value of education." **Richard Family** says, "I support their child's education, but I don't want to be the parent who forces homework on their child. I want to be the parent who supports their child's learning and helps them understand the value of education."

Teenage smoking

Dear editor:

I was very pleased to read your October issue on teenage smoking ("Teenage Smoking," October, 2012). I was alarmed to read that one third of smokers who begin smoking as teens will die prematurely due to a smoking-related illness.

I am in agreement with lung cancer specialist Shahriyour Andaz,

who said that it is very important to be proactive in preventing teen smoking.

I have been working with teens for almost 10 years at the YM-YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood. I believe that parents could do more to act as role models for their children. As they say, education starts at home. Without this kind of familial support it is difficult for an adolescent to understand the harmful effects of smoking. After all, we're working to counteract a tobacco industry that spends billions of dollars on marketing.

There are currently 11,500 licensed tobacco retailers in the city that are located within 1,000 feet of a school. What bothers me the most is that pharmacies that are supposed to promote healthy habits, sell tobacco products. We should follow the model of other counties like Canada and Ireland, where tobacco products are banned from pharmacies. These countries have seen a decline in youth tobacco use.

I think communities have a responsibility to educate our parents and youths about tobacco marketing. It is also important to educate them on the solutions being proposed to reduce the impact of tobacco marketing, such as reducing the visibility of tobacco products or removing tobacco advertisements in stores fronts.

The teen group I work with has done work to this effect. In addition, in collaboration with the Manhattan Smoke-Free Partnership, I have presented at Community Board 12 in Manhattan, regarding raising awareness and educating the public about the impact of tobacco.

Despite the great steps we have taken and the reductions in tobacco use we have seen, our work is not over. There is still much to be done in order to protect our children from the impact of tobacco use and keep them tobacco-free.

*Abraham Palma
Teen Director, YM-YWHA of
Washington Heights and Inwood.*

HEALTH

Teenage smoking

Six helpful tips for parents trying to prevent teens from taking up a bad habit



According to the Surgeon General, one in three teenagers in the U.S. are smokers. This is a concerning trend, especially since smoking is a leading cause of death and disability. Parents can play a crucial role in preventing their children from starting to smoke. Here are six helpful tips for parents trying to prevent teens from taking up a bad habit.

1. Be a good role model. Add to the fact that teenagers are more susceptible to peer pressure than adults. If you are a smoker, your child will see you as a role model. If you are not a smoker, your child will see you as a role model. Be a good role model.

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Children & tragedy

When the unthinkable is in the news, what do you tell your kids?

BY GAYLA GRACE

The horrific scene from the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings in Connecticut flashed across TVs for days, broadcasting terrifying images for all to see.

Making sense of what happened didn't surface quickly, and kids and adults were left to speculate why a 20-year-old would go into a school with the intent to kill defenseless children; 27 people dead, 20 of them first-grade students cut to the heart of every parent.

As our children begin asking questions in the aftermath of tragedy, the subject must be broached.

What do you say? How much emotion do you show? How do you help your child make sense of the senseless?

There are no easy answers, but there are a few dos and don'ts to help your child when tragedy strikes. The biggest consideration revolves around how we, as parents, react to the event. Our children watch and take cues from us.

"If you make it seem like it is something

that needs to be discussed, the more your child will get the idea that it is something that they need to be upset or distressed or fearful of," says family psychologist Shannon Bruno, Ph.D.

Here are other suggestions to help your child cope in the aftermath of tragedy:

- Monitor media coverage. Young children can't process media replay of tragic events and may begin to think the event is happening repeatedly. There is nothing gained from allowing children to watch media

coverage of a tragedy. If older children are curious and look to the TV for information, monitor how much they watch and be ready to discuss what they see.

- Be honest and specific about the event. Don't try to hide what happened. Our children need to understand the world they live in, based on their developmental age. But don't over explain, or dwell on the details of the tragedy. Answer questions honestly and give your children the freedom to ask whatever they need to defer their fears.

- Embrace their emotions. Allow your children to "feel" their feelings. It's OK to feel sad. It's natural to feel some anxiety. Acknowledge their feelings with expressions such as, "I understand this event makes you feel scared. I feel sad about what happened also." Offer words of comfort to relay their fears or sadness.

- Be available and offer reassurance as often as necessary. Let your children know they're safe. Recognize their needs and respond accordingly — some children need more reassurance than others. My oldest daughter was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder when she was 5 years old. Throughout her childhood, she was likely to respond to difficult circumstances with more anxiety than our other children, and my husband and I knew to always be available for her during challenging circumstances. Children are also more vulnerable if they've recently experienced difficult events, such as a parent's divorce, re-marriage, death of a family member, or another stressor.

- Recognize what feelings look like in children. Younger children may regress to behavior they've grown out of, such as sucking their thumb or soiling their pants, when troubled. Older children are more likely to show their feelings through a defiant attitude or irritability. Children don't have the ability to process feelings like adults. Watch for anything unusual in your children that could indicate they are experiencing high anxiety or fear.

- Keep routines as normal as possible.

Children thrive with routine. When tragedy strikes, it's especially important to keep a sense of normalcy with school, meals, and bedtime schedules. Children may have trouble sleeping or eating, which can help alert a parent to troubling emotions your child is experiencing.

- Depending on your religious practices, it may be helpful to pray with your child regarding the tragedy. After the Connecticut shootings, my 11-year-old son and I prayed for the families affected by the tragedy and the residents of Newtown. It can be reassuring for a child to pray and ask for God's help for a distressing situation.

- Suggest doing something with your child that shows compassion or offers help for those affected. Many families have sent cards to Sandy Hook Elementary School to offer their thoughts and prayers for those families. Some lit a candle for each child represented. Children experience a sense of well-being by showing compassion and offering help in a situation that appears hopeless.

- Seek professional help for your child if troubled emotions don't subside after a period of time. Mental health professionals are trained to help children of all ages cope with difficulties. Depending on the level of exposure to tragedy or other challenges children are dealing with, they may get stuck in their anxiety or grief and unable to move forward. Don't hesitate to find help sooner than later if this happens.

Tragedies such as the Sandy Hook shootings carry a weight heavy to bear. They're especially difficult for young children to make sense of or cope with.

Helping our children process their emotions, while shielding them from graphic details, offers them healing and the gift of hope to continue on their young journey with renewed strength in their ability to cope with life's next challenge.

Gayla Grace is a freelance writer, wife, mom and stepmom to five children in her blended family.



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Stop the violence

A parent and teacher tries to make sense of the Sandy Hook Elementary shootings

BY GREGORY KEER

As hard as it is, the only way for me to sort through what happened in Newtown, Conn., is to put myself in the middle of the tragedy.

Because I am a parent, I imagine I am the perpetrator's mother who looks at her son in the instant before he shoots her. I die before I can even think.

I am a teacher, and I shudder at what runs through my mind in the last minutes as I sacrificed my life in a desperate attempt to stop a madman.

I am a child in one of those first-

grade classrooms. Perhaps I have a fleeting blip of time to fear this man. Maybe I am the first to die, or maybe I am one of the other 19 children. In this case, I think, will he shoot me? Can I run away? He hurt my friend! Will someone save me?

Now, I am a parent who hears my child has died. I feel blinding pain, hopelessness and anger, among so many other emotions — all of them searing. I think: my child is gone forever? I sent my child to school, and he never came back. How can that be? How can I keep breathing? Please tell me this is not real.

By the grace of God, I am none

of these participants. Yet, I am still a parent, a teacher, an American, a human being. And I feel so many things.

As I write this, the news is still horrifyingly fresh. There are so many unanswered questions. Some things we will never know. What could have been in the mind of a young man, barely out of his teens, that would prompt him to slay 20 innocent children, six staff members, and himself at Sandy Hook Elementary?

Even though we may never understand, I feel motivated, more than ever, to work to prevent this kind of tragedy from ever happening again. I

We have to turn the discussion around so that we are not just acting to prevent tragedy but working to promote goodness.

fiercely believe this requires long-term thinking, and I worry too many people lack the patience and dedication to commit to that. Already we are caught up in debates over whether better gun control will stop the demented from doing what they want to do. I believe we must improve background checks before selling guns to anyone, but I want to focus on something we can all agree on.

As adults, we have a duty to fashion a world that is safer and healthier for our children. We must make things better.

We have to care more about the well-being of people than we do now. We may never be able to stop a lunatic hell-bent on destruction, but we can try much, much harder to do better as a society. We have to turn the discussion around so that we are not just acting to prevent tragedy, but working to promote goodness.

I know that to some this may sound Pollyanna. I know I am flirting with idealism and optimism.

So be it.

What good is constantly reacting defensively to what is wrong in the world? Let's go on the offensive to crush the kind of disconnection that makes outcasts of the mentally ill and socially misfit. We do woefully little to help those we cannot understand, and then we cry and shout when they hurt us.

Among the strategies is making mental health check-ups as normal as physical check-ups. They need to be affordable and not stigmatized. As a society, we are so averse to having anyone question whether we're equipped to handle the ups and downs of life. We're still supposed to fight through it without well-trained health professionals, and that's not working — especially in an age where the resources exist but are not nearly as accessible or socially accepted as they should be.

Then, there are even more painstaking tasks we, as parents, must tackle with a firm commitment. As President Obama said days after the shooting, when he announced an interagency federal effort to combat violence, "Any ac-

tions we take must begin inside the home and inside our hearts."

On a regular basis, we need to talk with our kids about their friends. We need to teach them how to be fair and caring. We must work with them on the nuances of resolving conflicts and understanding each other's feelings. We must help them recognize and reach out to those who seem alone, and educate them about physical and mental differences that make people unique, but no less worthy of our attention. In these ways, we might help our kids at the ground level and improve society's connectedness.

We need to speak with the parents of our kids' friends and classmates about their children. We should take notice when they are in need of support. We often get so wrapped up with our own needs, we fail to reach out the way our parents or grandparents did when society seemed smaller and more manageable. We have to create a village-like atmosphere where we help each other so that no parent or child feels outside the circle. If we encounter parents or children who resist social connection, then we should seek counsel or assistance to ascertain what might be causing it, and do something to assist them.

We must rely on each other and on the professionals who can make our lives better, and be willing to seek help. Children come with a wide range of emotional and physical challenges. What matters is that we be proactive. This may result in our children needing therapy or medication — or even in us needing those things ourselves. If we make the effort to get help and act in our children's best interest, we will not only be aiding them and ourselves, but the society around us.

It could take years, even decades for these strategies to take effect. But I have to believe that if we work together, we can create a better world for our children. The alternative is just too horrible.

Gregory Keer is an award-winning columnist, teacher, and publisher of a fatherhood website, www.familyman-online.com.



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Time to rework HOMEWORK

Part two of our discussion of homework

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

When my high schooler started coming home without social studies homework, my first thoughts were, “Why would a teacher not assign homework on a regular basis?” and “Is the teacher really teaching anything in class if there is no homework?” I subsequently discovered that this teacher had the students actively involved in learning in the classroom so that they were voluntarily motivated to engage in ongoing, substantive discussions after hours. “Homework” was not assigned, but the students were engaged and learning more than ever. I was beginning to understand how effective a thoughtful educator could be.

Much has been said about “the homework wars:” some claim it is excessive and none of it is necessary, and others say it is an important component of educational success. Still, most people agree that if homework is given, it should be meaningful, appropriate, and necessary.

Healthy homework guidelines

Last spring, homework activists submitted the “Healthy Homework Guidelines” petition to the National PTA, recognizing the damaging effects of homework, including sleep deprivation, stress, and compromised mental health, noting “homework lacks many of the benefits commonly attributed to it,” and it encroaches on parental rights, family time, unstructured time, and outside activities.

As a result, the guidelines encourage teachers to reduce homework, and only give assignments that advance the spirit of learning, are student-directed, and promote a balanced home and life schedule.

Their aim is to improve teachers’ approach to designing and assigning homework.

Whether or not the guidelines are adopted as a position by the National PTA, schools around the country are beginning to address homework issues individually. Maryland’s Gaithersburg Elementary School adopted a no homework policy, finding that homework worksheets do not correspond with classroom instruction and instead encourage students to read 30 minutes a night, thereby creating a “real reading community.” The principal was quoted as saying that the change has sparked students’ maturation and motivation.

According to San Diego’s North County Times, students at Cardiff Elementary School are routinely not assigned homework, unless there is a clear purpose for it with regard to student learning. The principal there distinguished this from a no homework policy, hoping instead to impact the quality of the assignments.

If more schools replace their homework policies with Healthy Homework Guidelines, supporters hope for a ripple effect as more schools recognize the benefits for their own populations.

Foreign language exception

Many more issues still swirl around the homework debate. Parents who agree that rote homework in math or English may not be worth the incursion into family time, may still believe that foreign language homework is necessary.

Faith Garfield, who has taught foreign language in Queens schools, asserts that language homework “reinforces the knowledge students acquire in school, which will be lost

otherwise, as it is a cumulative endeavor.” She says that when students practice writing in a foreign language for homework, it helps them begin to think in the new language, as class time is limited and teachers use it to teach structure.

Some anti-homework activists would include foreign languages in their general ban. One proponent remarks that language proficiency is never obtained from mere school study.

Alfie Kohn, author of “The Homework Myth,” opposes rote foreign language homework, but would support some homework in that area, so long as it is “in a context and for a purpose.” He differentiates between the way a child becomes proficient playing an instrument or a sport from the way he may learn an academic subject. Continual practice is necessary for the former to achieve more fluid behaviors. Moreover, Kohn warns that rote repetition in academic subjects creates a pattern of sidestepping emphasis on concepts and understanding ideas.

Staggering project deadlines

An age-old issue that persists in middle schools and high schools is multiple assignments and projects, which always seem to be due on the same day. Teachers assign work as if they rule their own fiefdom, without regard to simultaneous assignments in other subjects. Although Kohn categorizes this as a minor point, students continue to suffer. Bennett proposes that teachers coordinate their assignments, using a board in the staff lounge. Etta Kralovec, co-author of “The End of Homework,” tells me it is a larger problem that goes beyond homework, indicative of “the teach-



ers' lack of time to work together to structure aligned, integrated learning experiences and curriculum."

What is 'Partnering With Parents?'

The real question is, "Why is homework assigned in the first place?" Sara Bennett, co-author of "The Case Against Homework," contends, "If parents didn't help, that would be the end of homework in elementary school," noting that continued assistance leads to dependency and children lose ownership of their work. Bennett and Kralovec say that self-disci-

pline and personal responsibility are learned not by the student, but by the systematically supervising parent.

Kralovec also points to programs like Teachers Involving Parents in Schoolwork programs and the Homelink Initiative, as signs of a growing trend to train parents to help with assignments. Kralovec tells me that homework handed in incorrectly with parental input requires the teacher to unteach and reteach, wasting more precious class time.

Personally, I resented having to master a textbook chapter and re-teach it or learn unfamiliar math for-

mulas late at night, when I had been relying on my children's teachers to cover the material with them.

Bringing homework under control

Even though research indicates little or no benefit from homework, parents continue to believe that it will lead to academic success, and they are resigned to it, according to Kralovec and co-author John Buell.

Unfortunately, Rome wasn't conquered in a day, and it is hard to change any ingrained way of thinking. Parents and teachers continue

to expect homework to be assigned, despite its intrusion into family life. As a result, Kralovec and Buell say that parents are "caught in a state of cognitive dissonance, asking for something that is fundamentally at odds with their own interests."

Experts suggest various ways to ease the homework burden until the issue is fully addressed. Kohn invites teachers to teach a single unit without homework and analyze the comparative results. In a recent conversation, he challenged teachers to offer more than just a "Goldilocks survey" to determine an appropriate homework amount, but instead to ask parents for in-depth feedback about assignments' necessity. Kohn advocates for student participation in homework creation, including how much to give, when it should be due and when to stop, before achieving mastery of the material.

Kohn believes teachers should avoid randomly assigning work right out of a book, telling teachers, "if you didn't design it, you shouldn't assign it." He further recommends teachers learn each student's needs, avoiding a "one size fits all" assignment.

Finally, Kohn is a strong proponent of meaningful, interdisciplinary learning experienced through in-school projects such as "design your own room," which teaches budgeting, area, perimeter, and applied math.

Vicki Abeles, director of the film "Race to Nowhere," encourages educators to re-evaluate the way in which we use the school day. She suggests schools schedule a study hall period daily or set aside one school day per week for supervised study. In this manner, students will have the time to study and receive guidance from trained professionals. She would like schools to designate one person to provide support to students and families by monitoring adherence to homework policies.

Kralovec and Buell stress the need to recognize homework as a public issue — not a private one. Abeles tells me, "It will take some courageous school leaders to eliminate unhealthy homework practices. We have the responsibility to create change, and we need a new and healthy definition of success."

Risa C. Doherty is an attorney, freelance writer, and mother of two. She is a member of the American Society of Journalists and Authors. Read more at www.risadoherty.com.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

When it's more than morning sickness

When it was announced that Kate Middleton was pregnant and hospitalized with morning sickness, the media was quick to jump on the story portraying a diva attitude. Many stated that nearly every pregnant woman experiences morning sickness at some point in her pregnancy. Then, it was determined that the Duchess of Cambridge was suffering from hyperemesis gravidarum, a very serious condition that only certain pregnant women experience.

"I almost thought I was dying," says 34-year-old Manhattan mom, Dana Goldberg, who also suffered from the condition. The mom of 2-year-old Bryson says that merely hearing about Middleton's story made her feel queasy, because it brought her right back to the days of her pregnancy when she couldn't keep even a tiny sip of water down. "I threw up 12 to 15 times a day ... every day. I felt completely depleted."

Most pregnant women get nau-

seous at some point in the first trimester, but hyperemesis gravidarum is an entirely different situation. So how do you know when it's just normal pregnancy nausea or a serious condition?

Dr. Joanne Stone, professor of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at Mt. Sinai Medical Center, and director of the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine and Perinatal Ultrasound, points out that "with hyperemesis, the degree of nausea and vomiting is severe. Patients feel weak, often have significant weight loss, and when seen by their healthcare provider, they are dehydrated. They are often tested for the presence of ketones, which is a sign of severe dehydration and starvation."

Dr. Stone — who along with Dr. Keith Eddleman, wrote, "My Pregnancy and Baby, The Pregnancy Bible and Your Second Pregnancy" — says it is vital to seek help if you think you might have it.

"If you are constantly vomiting, unable to keep food down, feel de-

hydrated and are losing weight, see your doctor and go to the emergency room."

"Next time, I would ask — no, demand — help sooner and not just chalk it up to normal pregnancy symptoms," says Goldberg. "I think, as women, we are so reluctant to speak up for ourselves. It took me until I was physically unable to leave my bed to convince my doctor that something was very wrong."

There is no need to suffer silently. Now, there are several treatments available.

"Some treatment options involve non-pharmacologic therapy, such as acupressure or P6 wrist bands. Lifestyle changes, such as trying to eat small, frequent meals, bland foods, and avoiding spicy foods, may be helpful. Ginger supplements of 250 milligram tablets four times a day is worth a try," says Dr. Stone. "If the nausea and vomiting is persistent, trying various combinations of medications may be successful. Pyridoxine, 25 milligrams every six to eight hours, plus Doxylamine once a day, can do the trick.

If this doesn't work, stop the Doxylamine and substitute another antihistamine. You can also try other agents, such as Metoclopramide. Many women find Ondansetron (Zofran) a real lifesaver, taking four to eight milligrams every eight hours. Some studies show steroids given by IV may work for some women."

For Goldberg, a mix of Zofran, ginger supplements, and a lot of rest, eventually helped lessen her symptoms.

Luckily, in most cases, hyperemesis gravidarum improves by the 12-week mark, although rare cases have been reported in second and third trimesters.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find her on Facebook and Twitter @DanniSull-Writer, or on her blog, Just Write Mom.



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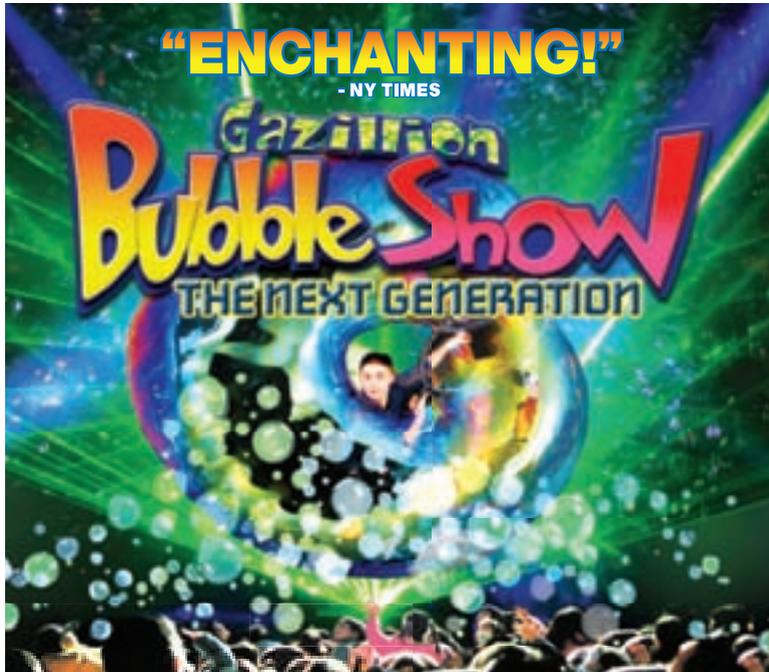
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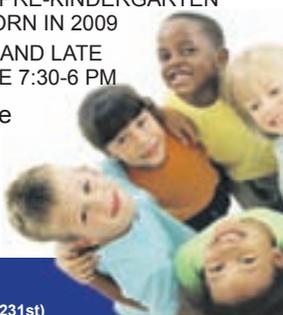
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Value of Catholic schools

Why parents choose this effective alternative

BY CANDI SPARKS

At a time when the New York City public school system is under so much criticism and revision, working families have found an alternative in the Catholic school system. These schools have historically been the ones to reach out to and support communities in need.

Years ago, hundreds of thousands of immigrants came to the New World to have a fresh start. They put in long hours at low-level jobs, striving for greater opportunity and a better life for their children. It was a financial sacrifice for these immigrants to send their children to Catholic schools, rather than through the public school system, but to them, it was well worth it.

The public schools in their working-class neighborhoods were largely overcrowded and not necessarily providing top-notch education. In order to be more assured that their children would be taught their values — including discipline, which was a rigorous part of their children's life at home — they decided to send their children through a parochial school system, even if it meant struggling to find the extra money to pay for it.

In the early days of the immigration wave, it was primarily Irish and Italian immigrants that sent their children to Catholic parochial schools. As the years went by and new immigrants came from more



countries and continents, the demographic shifted and one didn't necessarily have to be Catholic to choose this educational option. As a result, many Catholic schools throughout the city have continued as an integral part of our citywide school landscape.

Currently, Catholic schools serve more than 160 nationalities. With each wave of immigration — Hispanic, Asian, Slavic and many others — Catholic schools offer diversity. These schools are not just racially diverse; there is also religious diversity in the Catholic school system. In fact, non-Catholics comprise about one quarter of the student body.

"Catholic schools are not just meant for the faithful. We are here to grow faith by building community and reaching out to those in need," says Tom O'Brien, of the Brooklyn Diocese, which is involved in raising scholarship funds to help families offset tuition. "But not every Catholic school family is in great economic need. Our demographic is changing. We have seen an influx of middle income families who choose Catholic school because of the class size, excellence in education, and for a safer environment than what most par-

ents think the neighborhood public school would offer."

Patty, a public school teacher from the Bronx, sends her son Ronald to a Catholic elementary school.

"The environment stresses academics and doing the right thing," she says. "The teachers set high standards for the children. They are expected to do well and they rise to the occasion."

Many Catholic school students are the first ones in their families to graduate from college. In low-income neighborhoods, this means that the school is providing the lion's share of educational support for children who do not have access to private tutoring or help at home.

There is a 99 percent graduation rate for Catholic high schools, followed by a 97 percent college graduation rate for those who graduated Catholic high school. Compared to the 41 percent public high school graduation rate, Catholic school students have a better success rate. They are guided up the ladder of growth and achievement, making a real difference for present and future generations. Overall, Catholic school seems to outperform public school and is a viable, less-expensive sys-

tem of education in the private sector.

In fact, the only two private schools in New York State that were designated by the U.S. Department of Education as Blue Ribbon — a program that honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools whose students achieve at very high levels, or schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap — in 2011 were both Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York. The honorees were St. Ignatius Loyola School on E. 84th Street in Manhattan and St. Ignatius on Mott Street in Manhattan. This year's honorees show the excellence in education and the diverse population served by Catholic schools. The incentives for getting a Catholic school education are different than what they used to be, and this is changing the demographics of Catholic school students.

"Families that don't have money don't usually have many choices. We needed to find a school with the right mix for Benny. He really wanted to play baseball. The only school that we could find to bridge the gap was a Catholic school. We are all very happy with the switch," says Elizabeth, a Brooklyn mother of two, who chose to send her son to a Catholic school with solid academics and a baseball program.

Likewise, Patty, of East Harlem, sends her daughter Amber to a bilingual Catholic school.

"My daughter goes to a school that gives her [education] in both languages," says Patty. "Sure, they speak the same languages in the public school around the corner, but it is unofficial. The public school does not have the same structure." Amber's Catholic school is also closely related to other parish activities and offers bilingual masses, events and service projects for the community. This makes the Catholic school a great way for Patty and Amber to meet people of similar backgrounds and build a community. Parochial schools celebrate the tradition of faith, family and community.

Unfortunately, keeping these schools open has become a challenge. The Catholic school sector is no different than any other, and closings have been publicized. In response, Catholic schools are researching and developing new educational business models. Some Catholic schools have closed their

doors, only to reopen as academies. For example, in South Ozone Park, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary School and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr School closed their doors, only to be succeeded by the Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. Because the school involves more than one parish, the school is called an academy to differentiate it from a single-parish school. Since 2005, the Brooklyn Diocese has opened many Catholic academies in Brooklyn and Queens.

The Brooklyn Diocese has also implemented the program "Preserving the Vision." The name means exactly what it says: preserving what has always been an integral part of Catholic life: the education of children. This vision includes developing schools that will be better able to meet the diverse and changing needs of students and parents, and providing competitive compensation and benefits to teachers and staff.

Even though two schools in the Archdiocese of New York have won the 2011 Blue Ribbon Award, the organization is still committed to improving. The Archdiocese has initiated the "Pathways to Excellence" program, aimed at professional development for principals, teachers and staff at schools that already do outstanding work. Because of the diverse population, there is still more than can be done to close the achievement gap. The program is aimed at raising standardized test scores and providing teachers with new classroom tools, such as the digital teaching program for fourth and fifth grade math, "Time to Know," which provides online learning, data collection and feedback for the school.

Personally, I am proud to share that my fondest childhood memories revolve around a humble beginning, in a humble neighborhood. My siblings and I attended a Catholic elementary school, Our Lady of Victory, for eight years. I am pleased that Catholic schools are committed to remaining vibrant institutions for generations to come.

Candi Sparks is the author of children's books about money including "Can I Have Some Money? Educating Children About Money," "Max Gets It!" and "Nacho Money." She is a Brooklyn mother of two and is on Facebook (Candi Sparks, author) and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author). Her website is www.candisparks.com.

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Every FabUlyss mommy needs to treat herself once in a while to some downtime that includes a lot of pampering. This is why you are going to get an incredibly relaxing, renewing, and rejuvenating facial at Vicki Morav on Madison Avenue, and then get your much-needed haircut at the Roy Teluck salon on East 57th Street with the (in my world) wonderfully famous Olivier. Plus, you will allow yourself to indulge in some true celebrity gossip magazines while you get your locks washed, cut, and colored. Believe me — you need and deserve it!

So, about that family time you

crave: what kid doesn't love to ice skate? Better yet, what mom doesn't? Come on, ladies; we all know you were the star skater in that ice skating class you took when you were 10, just like Jill Zarin! So, grab the kids (and the husband, if he'll oblige), bundle up, and hit the rinks at Bryant Park or the famous Rockefeller Center! We live in New York City, so let's not forget to take advantage of all that we have at our fingertips to make beautiful, lasting memories.

Here's the one you're waiting for: date night! Try visiting one of the DeLysscious Felice restaurants (Felice 64, Felice 83, or Felice 15 Gold Street). Hire your favorite babysitter, kick back, and enjoy some wine, good food, and music.

Whatever you do this year, think of yourself. You are a mother, and that automatically qualifies you for Divahood. And, of course, remember the wise, wise words of everyone's best girlfriend, Madonna:

"No matter who you are, no matter what you did, no matter where you've come from, you can always change, become a better version of yourself." Happy New Year!

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Side, (212) 327-1217]; Viki Morav [762 Madison Ave. at East 66th Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 744-4753]; Roy Teluck [5 E. 57th St. between East 57th and East 58th streets in Midtown, (212) 888-2221]; Felice restaurants [www.felice-nyc.com].

Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLysscious Moms (www.divamoms.com) and co-author of "If You Give A Mom A Martini ... 100 Ways To Find 10 Blissful Minutes For Yourself."



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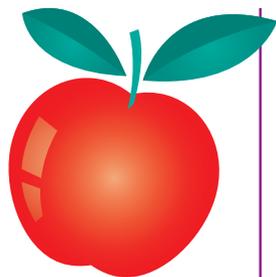
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Dear teachers,

How can I help my third-grade son, who just gives up at the first sign of difficulty? What can I do to help him stop being a quitter?

Dear parents,

Children usually start giving up after experiencing a cycle of failures at school. Your son is only in the third grade; he more than likely wants to do well in school. Very sadly, not all bright children succeed in school. Some begin tasks very halfheartedly and give up at the first sign of difficulty. Psychiatrists call this “learned helplessness.” It can happen in the early grades because of emotional immaturity, low frustration level, or over-dependency on adults.

It can also happen when children start fourth or sixth grades because these are points when learning requires more effort, and some bright children have no strategies for handling difficult assignments and give up too quickly. It’s not easy for these children to overcome the tendency to give up when the going gets tough, but they can with continued help from teachers and parents.

By modeling how to approach a problem and giving specific instructions at every step along the way, parents can help their children learn how to tackle difficult assignments. They will need to teach them:

- Effective problem-solving strategies.
- To look for more than one approach when solving a problem.
- To retrace their steps to find errors.
- To use self-talk as a guide for solving problems.

Help with math**Dear teachers,**

My granddaughter failed

math in sixth grade and got a failing grade the first semester this year in seventh grade. She hasn’t mastered multiplication, and her addition and subtraction skills are poor. She has just been passed along — the school did not have summer school, and the teacher is a poor communicator. I’m trying to work on helping her learn the basic facts. What else can I do?

Dear grandparents,

The best thing that you can do right now is to see that the child gets the help that she so obviously needs. The individual responsible for this child, whether it is you or a parent, must immediately contact the school to see that help in math begins at once. It would be a good idea to meet immediately with this teacher. Find out why an intervention or testing for a learning disability has not been done.

If you do not receive a helpful response from the teacher, contact a counselor or the principal. This child’s skills sound so weak that an individual tutor or math learning center may be needed. Nothing but serious problems in math are going to occur in the future without considerable help. How will this child ever be able to handle math in high school to fulfill graduation requirements?

You can supply some help to your granddaughter. To work on addition and subtraction, use manipulatives — counters, coins, etc. — so she can actually see problems. If she is strong enough to work on multiplication, try this technique: for a problem like 3×4 , have her draw three parallel vertical lines and cross them with four parallel horizontal lines and then count the intersections (12) to get the answer. You will also find it helpful to search on our website for math under the elementary level, as you will find a variety of suggestions about ways to teach basic math facts, starting with addition.

Do not consider your granddaughter’s math skills strong in any area until she can solve basic addition,

subtraction, and multiplication facts in three seconds or less.

Overcrowded class**Dear teachers,**

My daughter’s first-grade classroom is overcrowded. The children are not getting quality instruction from the teacher, and the teacher does not have time to accomplish all that she wants to do. Volunteer parents are the teacher’s only help. Who can we (a group of concerned parents) approach to improve this situation? A few of us have written letters to the principal, but nothing has been done to address the issue.

Dear parents,

First grade is an extremely important year in school. During this year, time will be spent teaching children to read and do basic addition and subtraction. Realistically, the children will have wildly diverging skill levels, from those who can read to those who are just starting to learn the sounds of letters. And the same is true with math abilities. It is difficult for a teacher to make sure that every student gets all the individual help needed when classes are very large.

School districts recognize the importance of having smaller classes in the primary grades. Unfortunately, they are finding it very difficult to do so with smaller budgets. Of course, parents should voice their concerns, even though it may be difficult for the school to change things.

There are some things that parents can do. They may work with the administration to set up a well-organized and trained volunteer program that can assist the first-grade teacher.

They may also raise funds through the parent-teacher organization to pay for an aide for this teacher, as well as others in the school.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask the columnists at www.dearteacher.com.

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Resolutions for 2013

Without fail, my busiest months are January and December. In January, clients want to get started on their New Year's resolution to get their legal documents prepared and signed. In December, clients who resolved to "get prepared" in the New Year can't believe that year has gone by, and are determined not to let another one pass without fulfilling their promise!

In addition to getting your estate planning documents in order, or up to date (your will, health care proxy, and power of attorney, among others), this month's column is dedicated to some other manageable resolutions to make for 2013.

January – *Max out your flexible spending accounts and recover the funds you spent in 2012:* You can submit for reimbursement for expenses up until March 31 for expenses incurred prior to Dec. 31, 2012. Take a moment to schedule your annual appointments with your primary care physician, pediatrician, dentist, eye doctor, and others.

February – *The tax man cometh:* Don't wait until April to get your taxes in order. April 15 will be here before you know it. If you haven't done so already, make an appointment with your accountant and start gathering all the documents you'll need. If you have money management software, start running reports and cleaning up your data. The sooner you file, the sooner you'll get back any refund you're entitled to.

March – *Looking for hidden treasure:* Find some money you didn't know you had, just in case you owe taxes! Banks, insurance companies, utilities, and other businesses are required by law to surrender inactive accounts which are "lost," "abandoned," or "unclaimed" to the state. The state comptroller serves as custodian of the money and if you can prove you're entitled to it, it's yours. Search your name to see if the state is holding your money, and to complete the necessary forms. <http://www.osc.state.ny.us/ouf/index.htm>



www.osc.state.ny.us/ouf/index.htm

April – *Insure your peace of mind:* Review your life, disability, homeowners and auto policies to make sure they're sufficient for your needs, and that your beneficiaries are correctly named and up to date. Consider getting a free audit from an advisory firm to see if you need to make any adjustments. Maybe you need an umbrella policy on your homeowner's insurance, or convert your term policy to a whole policy

May – *Renew your passport:* Are your passports up to date? Do you have passports for your children? Believe it or not, you need passports for your infant children if you are planning to travel overseas in the summer months. In addition to other requirements, the process for children requires the child or children to be physically present with both parents (or for one parent to have a properly signed authorization and a copy of the other parent's drivers license). http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/get_4855.html

June – *Medical authorizations:* Make sure all your children's camps, childcare facilities and caregivers have a medical authorization in the event that you or your spouse or partner cannot be reached. Parents should also have a "standby guardian" form for instances where they are unable to communicate, due to distance or medical emergencies. Adults should also have their health care proxies up to date.

July and August – *Relax at the beach knowing you've crossed so many important items off your "to dos!"*

September – *Back to school! Purge the clutter!* Deciding what to keep and what to toss? It's a good idea to keep tax returns and back-up documentation for five years. Insurance policies should be kept indefinitely. Utility bills should be tossed within one month. Everything else can go. If you're still not sure, consider scanning everything and ditching the paper.

October – *Tax loss and profit selling:* Don't wait until Dec. 31 to sell underperforming investments as tax-losses to offset capital gains, such as those that accrue from mutual fund dividends at the end of the year. You can purchase the same or a similar asset 31 days after the sale (keep in mind that purchasing at a lower price will reset your cost basis). The last quarter of any year is a good time to consider selling profitable stocks that can be set-off against losses and repurchased in 31 days (see above).

November – *Make annual gifts:* The federal government allows tax-free gifts of \$13,000 (\$26,000 if you are married and "split gifts") to each individual per year. If you are so inclined, this is a good opportunity to start shifting some of your own assets to your children – preferably by setting up a minor's trust that dictates how and when the money gets spent and distributed to the children. You can also use bank products, such as custodial accounts; however, keep in mind that those accounts technically become the child's property when they reach age 18.

December – *Spend wisely:* While in the mode of holiday shopping, consider some tax-smart purchases, such as charitable contributions, paying tax-deductible expenses, such as real estate taxes, quarterly state, or local income taxes, investment-related expenses, and dues before the year's end, or buying a new car. Evaluate how your spending went, plan for the year, and set a new budget for the year ahead.

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Night fright

Tips to help
your child
catch some
ZZZZ's

BY KIKI BOCHI

There's a shuffle in the darkness that wakes you from a deep sleep. You're afraid to open your eyes. You don't want to know what lurks at the foot of your bed. And then that chilling wail comes.

"Mommeeeeeee, I had a bad dream..."

Not again.

Nightmares are common among children, especially elementary ages and younger. But what should you do if your child says he is too scared to go to sleep? The National Sleep Foundation offers these suggestions:

- Listen. Try to understand your child's fears, and don't dismiss or make fun of them.

- Be comforting. It is important to reassure your child if he is afraid. Communicate the idea of safety over and over again.

- Seek simple solutions. Many families use "monster spray," air freshener or water that can be sprayed under the bed and in closets to soothe bedtime fears. Some children are comforted by having a pet nearby for nighttime company—even a fish tank may help. Whenever possible, have your child be actively involved in coming up with solutions to help him gain a sense of mastery and control.

- Security object. Help your child become attached to a secu-

rity object such as a stuffed animal or blanket. This can help your child self-soothe and feel more relaxed at bedtime and throughout the night.

- Light and love. No matter what your child seems to be afraid of, a nightlight can help. Also, try leaving the bedroom door open so that your child doesn't feel isolated.

- Check in. If your child is anxious about you leaving, check on him frequently. It is better to check on him on a predictable schedule, every five or 10 minutes, so that your reassuring him is not based on him crying or calling out for you.

- Back to bed. Don't encourage your child to get out of bed. He should stay in bed to find out for himself that he really is safe. If your child gets up in the middle of the night and comes into your room, it is better to take him right back and gently tuck him back in.

- Face fears together. If your child is too frightened to stay in his room alone, it is OK to occasionally stay with him until he falls asleep. However, don't do this too frequently, as he may come to depend on your presence.

- Switch the focus. Some children get reinforced for being scared at night by getting lots of attention for being afraid. If this is the case, switch the scenario. Tell him how proud you are of him for being brave. Set up a star system, so he can earn stars for sleeping on his own. After earning a certain number of stars, he can turn them in for a treat, such as watching a favorite video, going to the park, or baking chocolate-chip cookies.

KiKi Bochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of health reports monthly to bring readers the best advice and latest developments in family health and child development.





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Girls & depression



How parents can protect their teenage daughters

BY KIKI BOCHI

It's not your imagination. If your pre-teen or teenage daughter seems more moody than ever, pay attention.

A new government report shows that the number of girls who experience a major depressive episode triples between the ages of 12 and 15, putting them at risk for substance abuse, academic problems, sexually promiscuous behavior, and family issues. Some 15 percent of girls in this age group may have a serious problem with depression, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The teen years, in general, are fraught with risk for girls. An average of 1.4 million adolescent girls ages 12 to 17 experience a major depressive episode each year, according to

the federal agency. In addition, teenage girls in general are almost three times more likely to experience a major depressive episode than their male counterparts — 12 percent versus 4.5 percent.

Depressive episodes can affect a young person's functioning, creating problems with sleep, eating, energy, concentration, and self-image. Teens may withdraw and become difficult, or may express their depression through hostile, aggressive, risk-taking, and self-destructive behavior.

"It is crucial that we provide adolescent girls the coping skills and social supports they need to avoid the onset of depression, and to offer behavioral health services that foster resilience and recovery if they experience it," said Pamela S. Hyde, an administrator with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration, when the report was released. "These efforts are a sound investment in girls' health and well-being, and in our nation's future."

The report indicates that parents may have a tendency to dismiss the possibility of their daughter having a serious issue if she is young. It found older adolescent girls were more likely to receive treatment than younger ones — about two-fifths of girls ages 15 to 17 received treatment, as opposed to only one-third of the girls ages 12 to 14.

Depression can be difficult to diagnose in teens, because adults may expect teens to act moody. Also, adolescents do not always understand or express their feelings well. They may not understand what is happening to them and may not seek help.

The National Mental Health Association recommends parents watch for these symptoms of possible depression, particularly when they last for more than two weeks:

- Withdrawal from friends and activities that she previously enjoyed
- Sadness, hopelessness, and lack of enthusiasm, energy, or motivation
- Anger, rage, overreaction to criticism, and problems with authority
- Poor self-esteem, guilt, or feelings of being unable to satisfy ideals
- Indecision, lack of concentration, or forgetfulness
- Restlessness and agitation
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Substance abuse and a decline in school performance

If you suspect your child — male or female — has a problem with depression, seek help. Start with your child's pediatrician or guidance counselor and ask for recommendations for a licensed mental health counselor, psychologist, or psychiatrist. Assistance is available through many local clinics on a sliding fee, based on income. Another resource is the National Mental Health Association, which can be found online at www.nmha.org.

Kiki Bochi is an award-winning journalist who brings readers the latest insights on family health and child development.

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TACHS I.D. #215

Why is autism on the rise?

More kids are diagnosed with autism today than ever before

BY DANA J. CONNELLY

It used to be one in 500 children. Then, it was one in 110. Now, autism occurs in one in 88 children with four times more prevalence in males. Autism is a spectrum disorder ranging from mildly to profoundly debilitating forms. The question on the minds of many is, "Why is it increasing?" Having worked with individuals with autism for 12 years has given me a certain amount of insight.

Autism, from the Greek word "autos" meaning "self," was first used by Dr. Eugen Bleuler to describe a population of schizophrenic adults. With regards to children, it was first diagnosed in America during the 1930s by Dr. Leo Kanner, who noted similar symptoms in a group of his patients, which involved withdrawn, ritualistic (rigid routines and forms of play), and self-stimulatory behaviors (body rocking, hand flapping, echolalia, and perseverative behaviors). These behaviors were further accompanied by limited language skills, as well as a lack of empathy or awareness of others. This is not to say this is when autism first existed, but merely when it was first formally diagnosed.

Autism has been present for as long as man has been in existence. Interestingly, there is a belief that several renowned figures displayed autistic characteristics without being formally diagnosed, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Lewis Carroll, Charles Darwin, Thomas Jefferson, and Stanley Kubrick.

Autism is not a life sentence of being mentally retarded, insane, or even unsuccessful. It involves the

processing and perception that an individual has of his surroundings.

Population growth

An important consideration when questioning why so many more children are diagnosed nowadays involves probability. Today, there are triple the amount of people on the planet compared to when it was first diagnosed, and that number continues to increase.

More children are diagnosed because, quite simply, there

are more of us in existence. Furthermore, the resources for families to have their children diagnosed are more readily available than they were in the past.

Due to an increased awareness of the red flags in child development, families from all socioeconomic, educational, religious, and cultural backgrounds have better access to appropriate testing for proper diagnosis, leading to better access for treatment.

Older parents

Research has also revealed a correlation between higher rates of



More children are diagnosed because, quite simply, there are more of us in existence. Furthermore, the resources for families to have their children diagnosed are more readily available than they were in the past.

autism and having children later in life. The ideal time to reproduce is age 30 and earlier. When a woman becomes pregnant for the first time after age 35 it is considered a high-risk pregnancy. Furthermore, an expectant mother under the age of 18 is considered a high-risk pregnancy by many western medical professionals. Modern medicine has prolonged life expectancy, and as our life expectancy has clearly increased, so has the rate of re-marriage.

Consideration should be given to the increasing incidence of second life partners and second spouses. A recent study highlighted how men over the age of 50 becoming parents with younger partners is also a population at risk for producing a child with an autistic spectrum disorder, as well as bipolar disorder.

Genetics

As with all ailments, diseases, and disorders, genetics play a frontier role. If there is a member of the family, distant or otherwise, with symptoms associated with autism, future generations run an increased risk of possessing the same. I refer to this as The Faulty Wiring Theory. Imagine a home with all the aesthetic attributes you desire (the child) but the wiring in the home is compromised (the genetic make-up). When you begin to turn on or neglect the appliances in this home (various forms of stimulation) something in the wiring can short circuit (the regression or lack of development of age-appropriate skills). Again, this is a personal hypothesis, and I am working on it.

Toxins

Toxins have been attributed to autism by way of many studies, but one of the most popular was the theory of Dr. Andrew Wakefield, who credited the rise of autism to the presence of mercury as a preservative in vaccinations. This theory was long held by families and professionals and was

recently discredited due to proof that Wakefield forged his data. Further studies yielded test results derived from hair follicle samples of autistic patients implicating the presence of toxic metals. Elements in our ever-increasing industrial and technological times are more present in our environment than ever before. A child at risk of autism (involving genetics) exposed to such elements has an inability to properly eliminate these toxins from his body, causing chemicals to affect brain development.

Dated theories

At one point in time, around the 1950s, autism was attributed to "Frozen Mothers" or "Refrigerator Mothers," terms also developed by Kanner, but spread en masse by the articles of Bruno Bettelheim. The core principles of the theory were that there was a lack of maternal warmth given to the child during infancy and toddlerhood. The theory was argued to be an attempt to place blame on mothers entering the workforce, decreasing their time spent at home child rearing. This, too, is a school of thought that is no longer valid.

The true "fault" that would rest on the parents of an autistic child would be their inclination to deny the struggles that their child is facing and refuse or postpone treatment.

Ultimately, knowing the reason why a child has become autistic is not as crucial as gaining the earliest possible intervention. Of course, one would find comfort in knowing its origin. Especially with it occurring at greater frequencies. The studies of today could very well be tomorrow's punch line, so let's focus instead on how to get a person treatment as soon as possible.

Dana J. Connelly holds dual master's degrees in education and special education, working as an educational evaluator for TheraCare Inc. She specializes in Applied Behavior Analysis and is the proud single mother of a 5-year-old boy.

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BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

There's a place in Manhattan where kids and teens can learn a thing or two about tolerance, courage, hope, and strength of spirit in the face of adversity — and even a bit of history.

It's the Anne Frank Center at Park Place and Church Street, where young visitors can find out who this special girl was and what the world was like during WWII, when six million Jews were wiped out by a plague called the Holocaust — driven by hate and racism.

Through various programs, interactive workshops, and exhibits, the center offers visitors a memorable, multi-dimensional experience.

"A lot of our visitors are from foreign countries and different cultures. Anne is very hard not to like and identify with. Her words are true and stay with the reader forever," says Yvonne Simons, executive director. "Her diary has been translated into 68-plus languages, emphasizing its global relevance."

These days, with so much happening in our country and the world, Frank's story is especially meaningful to young people who seem to

relate very strongly and personally to her ordeal.

Although it has been in the U.S. for 35 years, the center only recently opened its beautiful new gallery, which put it on the map in the city with educational and public programming.

According to Simons and Robert Levin, director of education, for many young people who visit the center and discuss Anne Frank at school, Anne's story is their first exposure to the Holocaust. The center carefully differentiates how it presents this history, depending on visitors' ages.

For younger children, Frank's bravery in hiding, how she dealt with uncertainty and isolation, why she loved to write, and what she taught us about goodness and hope, is emphasized.

At the middle grades, the center provides more historical background about the Holocaust, but continues to place Frank's story at the center, including her specific accounts of conditions in hiding and in the war-torn outside world, what she gradually came to know about the concentration camps, her insights about good and evil, and her

growing identity as an independent, young thinker.

High school-age students are fascinated to combine what they have learned about the Nazi period with broader issues of discrimination, intolerance, hatred, and the prospects for peaceful resolution of conflict.

Anne Frank

Tolerance, courage, hope, strength of spirit. These powerful words still ring true today, as they did when Frank wrote them in her diary back in the early 1940s, when she and her sister Margot, and their parents spent two arduous years in Amsterdam hiding from Nazi soldiers in the Secret Annex behind a warehouse. The family fled Germany for the Netherlands after anti-Jewish laws went into effect. Tragically, in 1944 they were put to death in concentration camps after they were betrayed and caught. Otto, the father, survived. Eventually, he made his daughter's wish come true by having her diary published.

Between 1942 and 1944, the Franks and another family learned how to get by in cramped quarters, eating meager meals while they heard sounds of destruction and violence everywhere. How does a young girl make sense of this chaos? On July 5, 1942 Frank received a diary for her 13th birthday. It was her salvation.

According to Levin and Simons, Anne's authenticity, bravery at expressing character dilemmas we all face, especially during adolescence, resonate with children and teens. Anne, they say, had a talent for language that brings the events of the Holocaust to the present. She expresses herself as a typical, ordinary teen caught up in a horrific cultural cataclysm.

Today's kids

So, what do parents tell their children when violence shatters the calm of everyday life, and when schools become vulnerable to unexpected attacks by shooters? When you hear stories of students suddenly faced with the threat of death? How do you talk to your kids about good vs. evil?

The story of Anne's diary

The story behind Anne Frank's diary rising from reject pile to best seller — with more than 30 million copies sold worldwide — is a fascinating one, filled with serendipitous events.

More than 60 years after Frank's father published, "The Diary of Anne Frank," in Amsterdam in the summer of 1947, it has become the world's best-known memoir of the Holocaust.

"The founder of the Anne Frank House, Otto Frank, the only person of the group in hiding at Prinsengracht 263 which survived the Holocaust, lived in Manhattan as a young man. His friend, Nathan Strauss, invited him to work in his family's department store company,

Macy's," says Simons.

The ties between Otto Frank and New York were strengthened in 1959 when he founded the American Friends of the Anne Frank House, based in Manhattan. He lived in Switzerland at the time. This organization was incorporated in 1977 as the Anne Frank Center U.S.A. and has been a 501(c) three nonprofit since that time.

"Anne delivered a strong, core message: justice comes from personal commitment. Strong communities are built from strong individuals. Anne Frank encourages individual consciousness and action," says Levin.

Simons feels that Frank's writing was wise beyond her years,

and her words and thinking can be applied to questions all of us have, making the application of her words ageless.

"One message rings clearly in 'The Diary of a Young Girl' — individual character and consciousness are keys to halting intolerance and hatred," she says.

Additional programs at the center will focus on women journalists covering war and recovery from war correspondents, scholars, and diplomats engaged in peacemaking initiatives, and young people making a difference in the world.

"I still believe, in spite of everything that people are truly good at heart," Frank wrote.

All programs are open to the public, with a modest admission charge that includes touring the museum.



Photo by Yoanne Simons

Students use information on life in the attic on iPads in a simulation of Anne's bedroom.

Like Anne, kids and teens live in a confusing world that is, at times, scary and violent. Eventually, they come to understand that bravery is not relegated only to the battlefield, but that ordinary, daily living takes bravery, adds Simon, especially in big cities like New York, and even in unexpected places like small, peaceful towns way out in Newtown, Conn.

For teens and children who are old enough to understand the tragedy that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School — what better example of bravery by ordinary people than this horrific event? — there's sad but valuable lessons in heroism beyond the battlefield: beloved teachers and a principal were killed as they tried to defend innocent students, and the courage of parents who must cope with devastating loss as they go about their daily lives.

Perhaps our children can learn from Frank that there are times when we all need to find that strength of spirit — until things get better. And, that hope and faith are valuable during challenging times.

There are many lessons to be learned from Frank's horrific experience and her coping abilities: she once said she was able to shake off all her cares when she wrote in her diary — and that's how she dealt with her reality.

Levin and Mike Clary, marketing manager at the Center, both agree that young people are ready and

eager to stand up for justice and fairness once they have an opportunity to get beyond headlines and worrisome stories, know that their own insights matter, and find avenues to pursue action.

They may discover this in school, church, in community or educational groups, or at home — there are many outlets.

And there are excellent organizations teaching tolerance and encouraging action. Levin explains that the center's approach is to use the beautifully-recorded experiences and ideals of a profound young writer who began with a simple, day-to-day diary, but whose work became an international example of confronting difficult issues and seeking solutions.

What are the results of people taking action against injustice and intolerance?

"It's amazing to see how a conversation with a Holocaust survivor about having endured personal intolerance during WWII resonates with students today in regard to issues that they can identify with," says Simons. "We talk to students about the importance of each individual making a difference — 'change' begins with you — the individual. Do not be a bystander and have your voice not be counted."

She believes that action works, and "at the very least it begins dialogue, moves questions and issues into the public eye and awareness, and actions do move the needle."

Simons and Levin are both convinced that because Anne is straightforward and bares her soul, young readers take the events destroying her world, very personally.

According to Levin and Clary, strong leaders, teachers, parents and role models counteract lies and misinformation across the Internet, for example. Anne Frank remains one of those role models. Programmed hatred, propaganda and misinformation can be best combatted and shown for what they are by trusted, unbiased sources, they state.

"Anne was after all one voice; her words impact people all over the world," says Simons. "The fact is that her voice is that of a teenager asking adolescent questions about life that resonate with children her age — 13 through 15-year-olds."

"At the same time, younger and older audiences connect to Anne," adds Levin.

'Conversations'

On a recent Saturday the most active audience participant at a center event called "Conversations with Anne," was an 8-year-old boy, brought by his mother for his first orientation to Anne Frank.

He was totally focused on the 40-minute production and asked the most and the best questions during the talk-back," says Simon.

"Conversations with Anne" is the Center's signature, one-actor show

that draws directly from Frank's diary. It speaks directly and personally to all audience ages. The theme changes monthly; in December it was "A World of Gifts," as Frank observed the holidays in captivity, but also thought deeply about the meaning of gifts and gift-giving.

On Saturday, Jan. 12, there's a new two-person "Conversations" show, honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and called "Letters from Anne and Martin." The performance is based on text from Frank's diary and Dr. King's letters from a Birmingham jail, followed by a discussion led by educators who are passionate about this theme. As with all shows in this series, "Conversations" travels off-site; "Letters from Anne and Martin" has already been booked by a local college in February.

School programs

The Center offers a vibrant series of Artist-in-Residence and Writer-in-Residence programs to schools and community groups throughout the year. In "The Art of Self Discovery," students in the upper elementary and middle grades study appropriate sections of her diary, with a special focus on how she matured and developed her sense of self.

Each participating school or organization then hosts one of its visual or performing artists, or writers, for a five-to-10-week residency to guide students toward such expressive projects as portrait-making, murals, sculpture, photography, oral history, poetry, or playwriting. Students typically present their projects at celebratory community events in their neighborhoods, and the most exemplary projects are honored at the center.

Preparations are also underway for a special Art of Self Discovery outreach to students in the city's hardest-hit areas of Hurricane Sandy's path, and will be able to offer selected schools this program at no cost in March, April, and May 2013.

The Anne Frank Center, USA [44 Park Pl. and Church Street in Manhattan, (212) 431-7993 X 301].

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based writer and journalist who has interviewed and profiled many interesting people, including several celebs. She has been covering arts and entertainment in New York City, but also enjoys sharing her insightful articles with NY Parenting readers. As a mom, she has lots of parenting experience under her belt, having raised a bright and independent teenage son (in college), and his older brother, who is a super-talented actor and comedian.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Food that can keep the doctor away

When Chicago area resident Venessa Tornabene felt under the weather as a child, her mother soothed her with chicken noodle soup or honey-sweetened hot tea. Today, she serves her own two daughters Grandma's homemade minestrone soup recipe — loaded with fresh vegetables — whenever they show signs of any illness.

During these dark winter months, it's not uncommon for multiple children — or even the entire household — to fall sick with a nasty cold or the flu. What if there are foods that can treat or even prevent illness?

There are many plant foods that can boost your immune defense, says registered dietitian Sharon Palmer, author of "The Plant-Powered Diet."

"Plant foods have potent phytochemicals — plant compounds — that appear to offer particular healing properties," she explained.

It's not only the phytochemicals. "Fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds are also rich in fiber, which can help feed your 'healthy' bacteria, which in turn can boost your immune de-

fense," she says.

For example, a research paper published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in 2010 concluded a high-fiber diet contributes to preferential gut microbiota, which is linked with better immune function.

It's important to start with a healthy plant-based diet, rich in nutrients, phytochemicals, and fibers that promote a good immune defense to protect against acquiring a disease.

"The beauty of whole foods for healing is that they offer no adverse effects when eaten in moderation, compared with the potential for drugs," adds Palmer.

Luckily for us, it happens to be the tastier option as well.

Healing foods

- **Chicken soup.** A 2000 study in Chest suggests that "Jewish penicillin" may contain a number of substances with a variety of medicinal properties, including anti-inflammatory effects, that could help ease symptoms of upper respiratory tract infections. The study found it may inhibit immune cells, called neutrophils, which play a role in the dis-

charge from mucous membranes that lead to coughs and excess sputum during a cold or flu. Both homemade or canned chicken soup worked, as did vegetable soup.

- **Extra virgin olive oil.** It contains the compound oleocanthal, which provides a similar anti-inflammatory property as ibuprofen.

- **Fresh ginger.** A decongestant, ginger can also reduce the pain associated with muscle injury after intense exercise. It also quells upset stomachs, nausea, and motion sickness.

- **Herbal tea.** People have been sipping herbal teas as a health remedy for eons, and now research shows that some of these botanicals may have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.

- **Mushrooms.** These fungi help fend off viral infections. White button mushrooms provide significant levels of selenium, niacin, and riboflavin.

- **Tart red cherries and pomegranates.** These fruits can reduce muscle soreness after intense physical activity.

- **Tea with honey.** Honey contains phenols, which possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Other compounds help prevent bacterial growth and reduce inflammation.

- **Yogurt.** Yogurt with active cultures of beneficial bacteria can help prevent and treat certain types of diarrhea. If the diarrhea is a side effect of antibiotics, which kill both good and bad bacteria, it's especially important to replenish the good ones.

Tornabene is convinced of the healing power of the homemade soup for her girls.

"We absolutely feel it helps them. My husband says it's evidence-based feeding. We've seen it work firsthand," she says.

Christine Palumbo, RD, is based in Naperville, Ill. She swears by any type of soup when she's under the weather. Contact her at Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com. Her Facebook page is Christine Palumbo Nutrition and her Twitter handle is @PalumboRD.

Beet & pomegranate seed salad

This glistening ruby salad highlights beets and other winter plant foods. It's certainly sophisticated enough for your holiday table and beyond. The compounds responsible for beets' deep red hue, called betalains, are anti-inflammatory, too.

Makes four servings (about 9 cups)

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups packed mixed baby greens
- 2 cups packed assorted microgreens
- 2 cups sliced baby beets, cooked and chilled
- 1 cup fresh pomegranate seeds
- 3 tablespoons coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice



- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced

DIRECTIONS: Arrange the baby greens in a salad bowl or on a platter. Top with the microgreens. Arrange the beets on top of the microgreens, and sprinkle with pome-

granate seeds and walnuts. Whisk together the orange juice, olive oil, black pepper, and garlic in a small bowl. Drizzle the vinaigrette over the salad and serve immediately.

NOTE: If you don't have time to cook fresh beets for this recipe, use drained canned beets (preferably with no added salt) or refrigerated, cooked beets, which are available in many supermarkets.

NUTRITION FACTS: (about 2-1/4 cups): 152 calories, 18 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 3 g protein, 9 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 160 mg sodium, 31 percent DV vitamin A, 34 percent DV vitamin C, 16 percent DV manganese.

Recipe used with permission from "The Plant-Powered Diet" by Sharon Palmer, RD.



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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Kids & friendship

Dear Dr. Karyn,

My 11 year old seems to make friends easily, but my 5 year old has no friends at all, which concerns me. What should I do to help my daughter, and when should parents worry about this?

Dear Parent,

Developing friendship skills are important for kids of all ages to learn! That being said, some kids find it easier to make friends than others. So focus on setting up play

dates with other children and parents so that your kids are getting “practice” socializing, sharing toys, and spending time with others. If you notice your kids are not being good friends (for instance, not sharing their toys, interrupting, constantly talking about themselves), gently talk with them about this after the play date.

Also, try to get them plugged into activities in which they will meet other kids who share their interests. For example, if your child is highly artistic, she may not easily connect with kids who are heavily into sports. Finally, remember to invest in your own friendships, because modeling healthy friendships is the best way to teach these skills to our kids! Don't shy away from talking about the benefits of your friendships and what it takes to develop them — your kids will be listening!

When should you worry? Only after you've tried the suggestions above and the many tips from Dr. Michele's book, “Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me: The Top 25 Friendship Problems and How to Solve Them.” Developing friendship skills is a process, so remember to be patient as your child learns them.



Dear Dr. Karyn,

I really need your help, since I do not like who my teens are hanging out with. I'm sure deep down they are good kids, but to me they are rude, inconsiderate, and constantly put each other down. I've tried to raise this with my son, but he rolls his eyes and tunes me out. Any suggestions for how to get through to him?

Dear Parent,

Developing healthy friendships is one of the most important (and diffi-

cult) tasks for a young person, so here are three tips to understand about friendships and adolescence.

Understand that kids choose their friends

It's important to understand that kids choose their friends! Often, parents focus on the poor qualities of their kids' friends instead of understanding that our kids have chosen that person for a reason! The saying “Friends are a mirror of ourselves” is important to remember.

At an unconscious level, we are drawn to people who have the same self-esteem and level of confidence as we do (so if I have low self-esteem, I'm often going to be drawn to others with low or false self-esteem). So instead of focusing on the “bad” friends as the problem, focus on developing your child's confidence! When kids and teens feel good about themselves, they are drawn to friends (and dating partners) who will treat them well!

Discuss, don't dictate

When you don't like your teen's friends, try to discuss this with him. Do NOT dictate or forbid him to hang out with them. (Often, this creates a “Romeo and Juliet” situation where teens do it behind their parents' backs.) Find out why your teen is drawn to certain people. What are the qualities about them that he likes and admires? You can voice your concerns, but be very careful in how you word it. (Teens are extremely protective of their friends, as they see them as an extension of themselves.)

Make your home teen-friendly

Get to know your teen's friends! Sometimes parents have placed judgments on their teen's friends without really getting to know them. And the best way to get to know these friends (and even your kids) is to make your home “teen friendly.” If possible, create a space that is just for them. Make yourself available, but be careful to give them plenty of space, and be friendly to their friends without asking hundreds of questions.





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MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

Foul play in the Park

Recently, my husband and I took our daughter Olivia to Central Park. It wasn't our first time, but I was particularly excited because it was a warm day, and we were headed to the playground for the first time. I remember being a bit nervous upon walking inside the gated playground. As much as I wanted her to run around and explore, I wanted to protect her and make sure she didn't hurt herself. But more importantly, it was one of our "firsts," so I was having an exciting mommy moment.

I glanced around the playground and tried to find a safe zone. The slide? Maybe the jungle gym? I decided on my own childhood favorite, the swings. We headed over to what seemed like an empty swing, but were stopped by a 5 year old who proclaimed that it was HIS swing. It was a baby swing. You know, the ones that have a harness and are for younger children. (He clearly didn't fit inside of the swing.)

I said, "OK," as I looked around for the boy's mother, hoping she would see the teachable moment that had presented itself and show him how to share. She was on the phone and made no sign of coming over to her son, so we headed over to the jungle gym.

There were a bunch of kids there, and I figured it would be fun to "socialize" Olivia. (Yes, just like we did with our dog when she was a puppy.) Her smile was so big as she looked at the other kids and tried to play with them. This playground stuff was fun.

I brought her to the steering wheels of the pretend "boat" on the jungle gym since no one was there. She tried turning the wheel and turned to me and laughed as we steered it together. Then, out of nowhere, a little boy (well, he was a "big kid" at about 6 years old) pushed my daughter out of the way and made it known that this was HIS ship,

and he was playing there first. I was appalled. I looked around for a sign of his parent but got nothing.

My next and final attempt at enjoying our park day was on the slides. A few little girls were going down the slides, so Olivia and I waited until it was her turn. Again, the excitement in her eyes was priceless. I helped her down the slide, she giggled, and just as I was about to pick her up, another little girl slammed into her and pushed her off the slide with her feet.

I'll pause for reaction.

I grabbed Olivia and told the little girl that it was not OK to kick other children.

"She was in my way!" she responded. Again, no mom or dad in sight.

What hurt me most about that day wasn't the rudeness of the kids but the fact that what happened is just a small example of what's happen-

ing with the majority of kids today. When I tell friends this story their reaction is, "Oh, yeah, we get that a lot." With all due respect to my friends, when did this behavior become acceptable? When did parents start becoming such pushovers? Trying to teach your own kid manners and how to interact politely with other people is extremely difficult when other children are not being taught the same. Or worse, their parents are too "busy" to even care.

Angelica Sereda is a working mother and freelance writer. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and 15-month-old daughter, Olivia.





GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Flipped classrooms

If you've noticed something different about the homework your child is doing lately, you're not alone. More and more teachers are flipping their classrooms so events that have traditionally taken place inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom, and vice versa.

Although college professors have been experimenting with flipping since then, the movement really picked up steam in the last two years because of two intersecting trends. On the one hand, teachers were complaining that they simply couldn't get students to do traditional homework. On the other hand, they were

research about their effectiveness, though small studies show promising gains, especially in science and math. The benefits seem most obvious in high school, though some middle and even elementary schools are adapting flipped techniques for their students. If your child's school has introduced this new approach, you'll want to ask some very specific questions:

- What kind of technology will my child need? Some teachers put materials online so your child will be able to study with any internet-ready device, including a cellphone. Other teachers distribute materials on DVDs or flash drives. Ask about what arrangements can be made for students who don't have access to technology at home. Can students stay after school or go to the local library to view teaching materials?

- What type of materials will be assigned? Some teachers create their own podcasts, videos, and powerpoints. Others depend upon materials developed by a textbook company or teachers from another school. Still others take advantage of the rich variety of online resources, assigning students to watch everything from TED talks to materials from the Khan Academy. Because your child will use these materials at home, be sure to sit in occasionally so you'll have a deeper understanding of presentation style, as well as the content your child is expected to master.

- How much time should my child spend on homework? Some students (and parents) may be under the impression that flipped homework is easy because all that's required is watching a video, or a visiting a website. Most teachers expect students to treat these materials in the same way they would a class lecture. Often students will be asked to take notes, answer questions, or write a short summary after watching the presentation. Parents can help by treating flipped work as seriously as they would any other kind of homework. Encourage your child to give the assignment his or her full attention, pausing and rewinding if something is hard to understand.

- What support will my child need

at home? Provide a quiet place where your child won't be distracted while studying. Headphones may be helpful, especially if there are other children in the room. As you would with other homework, encourage your child to block out a study time when he is alert. After 10 pm is usually not a good time for mastering new material in any form.

- What goes on in class? In the best flipped classrooms, students don't spend much class time doing passive listening or paperwork. Depending on the subject, teachers may lead discussions, assign collaborative work, or give students problems and projects that ask them to apply what they learned the night before. This encourages deeper thinking that is often more satisfying for students who can instantly enlist the help of the teacher or even a fellow student.

- How does your child feel about learning? In a flipped classroom, students stop treating education as a spectator sport, and instead connect with a subject, ask questions and seek out answers for themselves. Gifted students often thrive because they can delve deeper into interesting subjects. Struggling students are also likely to benefit because they get more individualized attention from the teacher, and they can pause and rewatch materials at home.

- How are your child's grades? If your child seems disengaged or you see grades dropping, schedule a conference with the teacher.

If your child's teachers haven't discovered flipped learning, take the initiative and access some of the terrific, online instructional materials. An excellent list is available at open-culture.com. However, it is only the first step. Help children to evaluate and make sense of new knowledge by engaging them in conversations and activities that add context. It will help them become lifelong learners.

Carolyn Jabs, MA, raised three computer-savvy kids, including one with special needs. She has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years and is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Visit www.growing-up-online.com to see past columns.

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trying to hold the attention of easily distracted students by showing online lectures and presentations.

Flipping the classroom frees teachers to interact more directly with students.

Instead of standing at the front of the room, knowing they are boring some students and confusing others, teachers turn lectures and presentations over to gifted and inspiring communicators. In the classroom, they take advantage of face time to personalize education, answering questions, leading discussions, encouraging collaboration, and coaching students through challenging material. Many teachers find they prefer being the guide on the side, rather than the sage on the stage.

Flipped classrooms are relatively new, so there hasn't been systematic

Calendar

JANUARY



Photo by Joshua Bright

Learn about hibernation at Wave Hill

Pack up your teddy, put on your favorite PJs, and learn all about hibernation at Wave Hill the weekend of Jan. 12 and 13.

Children can hear tales of hibernating creatures and listen to musician Jon Samson share songs about animals, winter, and sleepy time. After singing and stories, children then make their own furry bear,

bat, or hedgehog mask or make a woodsy home to take home.

All the fun starts on Jan. 12 from 10 am to 1 pm, and again on Jan. 13 from 10 am to 1 pm. The event is free, and thanks to the support of Target, admission to the grounds is free all weekend.

Wave Hill [W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue in Riverdale, (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org].

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to bronxcalendar@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!

FRI, JAN. 4

Game day: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4–5 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old play a variety of board games.

SAT, JAN. 5

Ice Skating: Van Cortlandt Park Conservancy, Broadway and 241st Street; (718) 430-1890; vcpark.org; 9:15–10:15 am; \$15 per skater.

Freestyle skating open to the public.

Seal exploration: Orchard Beach Nature Center, Orchard Beach; (718) 885-3466; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10 am; Free.

The perfect activity for any age. From falcons and salamanders to deer and seals, view the landscape and explore the wildlife.

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Design and paint scenes on tissue paper.

TEAK information session: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; www.teakfellowship.org; 10:30 am–noon; Free.

Parents of sixth graders learn all about the TEAK program and admission requirements.

Alastair Moock and the Rowdy Roots: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$20, \$13 for children.

Delta blues meets traditional folk and rowdy roots, with timeless music from yesterday and today.

Pop Up cards: Morris-Jumel Mansion, 65 Jumel Terrace; (212) 923-8008; 1–2:30 pm; \$10 (\$5 children).

Cartoonist Felipe Galindo helps children make one-of-a-kind cards using paper and cardboard.



Warm up with a sizzling concert

Warm up the cold, winter air with a hot, sizzling Winter Music Festival at the Harlem School of the Arts on Jan. 25 and 26.

Under the direction of music educator Judith Insell, the music department presents its Winter Music Festival, featuring faculty and staff. Celebrate the new year with the school's newest artist-in-residence, Arturo O'Farrill, and his award-winning Afro-Latin Jazz orchestra.

The upbeat concert features the Harlem of the Arts Advanced Jazz Combo and the Dorothy Maynor Singers. The festival is sure to have you dancing in your seats.

The concert is on Jan. 25 from 6:30 to 8 pm, and Jan. 26 from noon to 1 pm and 6 to 8 pm. The best part is that it's free.

The Harlem School of the Arts [645 St. Nicholas Ave. at 141st Street in Hamilton Heights, (212) 926-4100; www.hsany.org].

SUN, JAN. 6

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Jan. 5.

Decoding architectural shapes: The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. (917) 492-3371; www.mcny.org; Noon–2 pm; Free with general admission.

Children learn about vocabulary and styles and then have a family-friendly scavenger hunt. Recommended for children 7 to 12 years old. Reservations required.

Flip book workshop: The Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard; (212) 864-4500; www.studiomuseum.org; 2–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children create their own flip book, inspired by performance artists in Fore.

MON, JAN. 7

Electronic game day: Kingsbridge

Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4–5 pm; Free.

Children 7 to 12 years old play with Wii, PS3 and Xbox. Pre-registration required.

TUES, JAN. 8

Film day: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4–6 pm; Free.

Children view age appropriate movies.

WED, JAN. 9

Theater workshop: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children learn about acting and theater. Registration required.

THURS, JAN. 10

Story Time: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 11–11:30 am; Free.

Preschoolers 3 to 5 years old enjoy picture books.

Comets: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old explore composition and movement of spatial objects; discover how gravity and planets affect comets.

FRI, JAN. 11

Game day: 4–5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Jan. 4.

SAT, JAN. 12

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Pack up your teddy bear, and make an animal mask and hear tales of hibernating creatures. Musician Jon Samson shares songs about winter and sleepypime.

KamiKaze FireFlies: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$25, \$15 for children.

Whether spinning gigantic metal cubes, juggling, stilt-walking, performing daring stunts, breathing fire, or breaking into contortionist backbends, the KamiKaze FireFlies' performances incite awe and laughter for the whole family.

Native Americans workshop: Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte St. and Crotona Park East (718) 378-2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm; Free.

Urban park rangers lead a discussion on ice-age glaciers, native Americans, Dutch traders, and British Redcoats.

Collage workshop: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 6 years old and up use buttons to make a collage project.

SUN, JAN. 13

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Jan. 12.

The Art of Poetry: The Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard; (212) 864-4500; www.studiomuseum.org; 2–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Continued on page 40

Calendar

Continued from page 39

Children learn different techniques of writing poetry.

Stam-Pede: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 3 pm; \$15.

Introduce the kids to the world of percussive dance with everything from tap to Irish dance to innovative body percussion, with over half-a-dozen celebrated dance companies.

MON, JAN. 14

Electronic game day: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Monday, Jan. 7.

TUES, JAN. 15

Winter botanicals: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Explore the winter workspace of artist Asuka Hishiki's crate process and explore the landscape as a source of inspiration. Recommended for children 12 years and older when accompanied by an adult. Space is limited — reservations recommended.

Film day: 4-6 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Tuesday, Jan. 8.

WED, JAN. 16

Theater workshop: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, Jan. 9.

THURS, JAN. 17

Story Time: 11-11:30 am. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Jan. 10.

Snowman arts and crafts: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old use a variety of skills and materials to make projects.

Birthdays celebration: Riverdale Public Library, 5540 Mosholu Ave. at W. 256th Street; (718) 549-1212; 5 pm; Free.

Historian Dr. Hermalyn will speak on the occasion of Edgar Allan Poe's birthday so families can learn about the poet.

FRI, JAN. 18

Game day: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Jan. 4.

SAT, JAN. 19

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue;



Courtesy of Children's Museum of Manhattan

MLK Day for budding peaceniks

Children celebrate famed civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., with a slew of activities at the Children's Museum of Manhattan on Jan. 21.

Little ones, younger than 4 years old, can create a collage at 10 am and 1 pm, featuring the many different places and faces in the community.

Older kids can pledge to make a difference after they listen to a reading of "Through My Eyes" by Ruby Bridges and explore the legacy of Rev. King. The story will

be read at noon, 2, 3 and 4 pm.

To end the festivities, all ages are treated to a concert performed by the Harlem Gospel Choir at 3 and 4 pm.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, on Jan. 21 from 10 am to 4 pm. All events are free with general museum admission of \$11 for adults, \$7 for seniors, and free for children ages 12 years and younger.

Children's Museum of Manhattan [212 W. 83rd St. at Broadway on the Upper West Side, (212) 721-1234; www.cmom.org].

nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 5 years old and up learn about African tales and listen to master storyteller Caren Calder.

SUN, JAN. 20

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Jan. 19.

Decoding architectural shapes: Noon-2 pm. The Museum of the City of New York. See Sunday, Jan. 6.

Vistas in motion: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org;

1-4 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Winter workspace artist Manuel Acevedo discusses his work and explains his methods of animation. Recommended for children 12 years and older accompanied by an adult. Space is limited registration recommended.

Ecology hike: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansion-museum.org; 2-3 pm; Free.

Join with Urban Park Ranger Grant Wheeler and take a hike along the trails of the grounds. Then, stop by the white pine grove area and maybe if you are lucky, you can glimpse a view of the great horned or long eared owls that roost and hoot.

TUES, JAN. 22

Film day: 4-6 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Tuesday, Jan. 8.

WED, JAN. 23

Theater workshop: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, Jan. 9.

THURS, JAN. 24

Story Time: 11-11:30 am. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Jan. 10.

FRI, JAN. 25

Game day: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Jan. 4.

Winter Music Festival: The Harlem School of the Arts, 645 St. Nicholas Ave. at 141st Street; (212) 926-4100; www.hsanyc.org; 6:30-8 pm; Free.

Faculty and students perform classical and jazz music. Arturo O'Farrell performs Afro-Latin Jazz music.

SAT, JAN. 26

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Give a winter bird a home feeder. Using recycled materials like plastic bottles and juice cartons, visitors learn how to make a bird feeder, then decorate it with natural materials.

Mista Cookie Jar and the Chocolate Chips: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$25, \$15 for children.

With songs and music bound together by the perennial concept of love, Mista Cookie Jar blends hip-hop, reggae, and folk-rock together for lively shows filled with great music and awesome visual style.

Calendar

Winter Musical Festival: 12–1 pm and 6–8 pm. The Harlem School of the Arts. See Friday, Jan. 25.

SUN, JAN. 27

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Jan. 26.

Body movement: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 1–4 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Visit with winter workspace artist Zachary Fabri and explore his process that uses the body as a tool for creativity. Recommended for children 12 years and older accompanied by an adult. Space is limited registration recommended.

Black and white: The Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St. and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard; (212) 864–4500; www.studiomuseum.org; 2–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children view the photos of Goardon Parks: A Harlem Family 1967, then create a collage using a variety of markers, paper and fabrics.

MON, JAN. 28

Electronic game day: 4–5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Monday, Jan. 7.

TUES, JAN. 29

Snow globe jars: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Visitors explore the works of Maria Hupfield, then make a personal souvenir inspired globe to take home. Recommended for children 12 years old and up. Space is limited — registration is recommended.

Preserving flowers: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 1–4 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Visitors explore the works of Linda Stillman and learn how to preserve flowers through art. Recommended for children 12 years old and up. Space is limited — registration is recommended.

Film day: 4–6 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Tuesday, Jan. 8.

WED, JAN. 30

Theater workshop: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, Jan. 9.



Photo by Tiffany Oelke

Sundays rule at the Guggenheim

Beat the cold and Sunday blahs at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum with lots of fun stuff to do.

From Just Drop In to the Open Studios for Families, young and old can explore the arts, create interactive projects, and make their own masterpieces.

Most events are free with general museum admission.

Just Drop In for ages 3 to 10;

Open Studios for Families for ages 5 to 14.

Both events are on Sundays from 1 to 4 pm.

General admission to the museum is \$22 for adults, \$18 for student and senior citizens, and free for children under 12.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
[1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 423–3500; www.guggenheim.org].

THURS, JAN. 31

Story Time: 11–11:30 am. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Jan. 10.

Book workshop: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579–4244; www.nypl.org; 4–5 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old use a variety of skills and materials to make a book.

SAT, FEB. 2

Family Art project: Wave Hill, W. 249th St. and Independence Avenue; (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with museum admission.

It's Mardi Gras, come and celebrate with instructor Paul Deo and make a colorful pastel hat, parasol or nature mask.

Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864–5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$13–\$20.

A hip-shaking, head-bopping morning

of music from award-winning singer and songwriter Lucky Diaz.

African Children's Choir: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960–8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; 7 pm; \$15–\$35 (\$10 children any seat).

Twenty talented children from Kenya and Uganda perform traditional music of hope.

SUN, FEB. 3

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

I Love "Harriet the Spy": Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864–5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 1 pm; \$15.

Kirsten Miller, author of "Kiki Strike," leads a group of mysterious writers in a lively discussion of a spunky kid sleuth, perfect for kids and parents who love "Harriet the Spy."

Vistas in motion: 1–4 pm. Wave Hill. See Sunday, Jan. 20.

LONG-RUNNING

"Thomas and Friends": New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard; (718) 817–8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, check for times; Now – Sun, Jan. 27; Check website for pricing.

Thomas the Train and all his friends will be making an appearance and chugging into the park.

Swamp: Poe Visitor Center, Grand Concourse and E. Kingsbridge Road; (718) 365–5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Daily, 8 am–4 pm; Now – Fri, Jan. 18; Free with museum admission.

Poe Park Visitor center is hosting Swamp, an art exhibit that explores the shifting relationship of the natural world. The works are curated by Kari Adelaide.

Winged Tapestries Moths at Large: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769–5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; \$24 (\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

This exhibition features 34 striking and dramatic images of moths, displaying the arresting beauty and surprising diversity of moths from Ottawa-based photographer Jim des Rivières. Runs through September 2013.

Creatures of Light: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769–5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; Now – Sun, Jan. 6; \$24 (\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

This interactive exhibit explores organisms that produce light, from the flickering fireflies to alien deep-sea fishes.

The Butterfly Conservatory: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769–5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:45 pm; \$24 (\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

The annual exhibition, "Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter" returns and celebrates its 15th year.

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard; (718) 817–8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10 am–6 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–7 pm; Now – Sun, Jan. 13; \$20 (\$25 holiday pricing)–\$10 (\$15 holiday pricing).

The annual show is celebrating its 21st year of showcasing a spectacular display of iconic landmarks in miniature. New this year, the exhibit has cable cars travel over vignettes in the conservatory's reflecting pool. Children delight as the miniature train (set to scale) travels through the meticulous diorama of the city.

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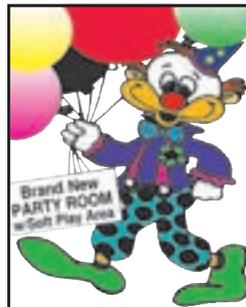
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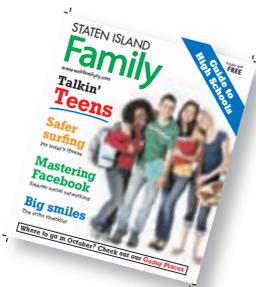
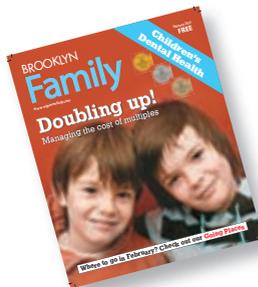
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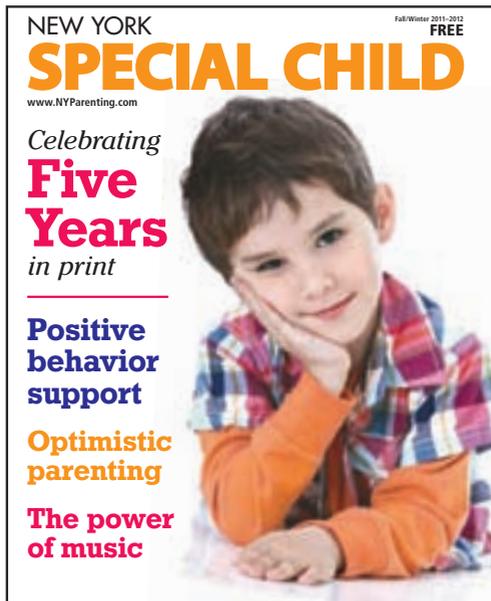
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