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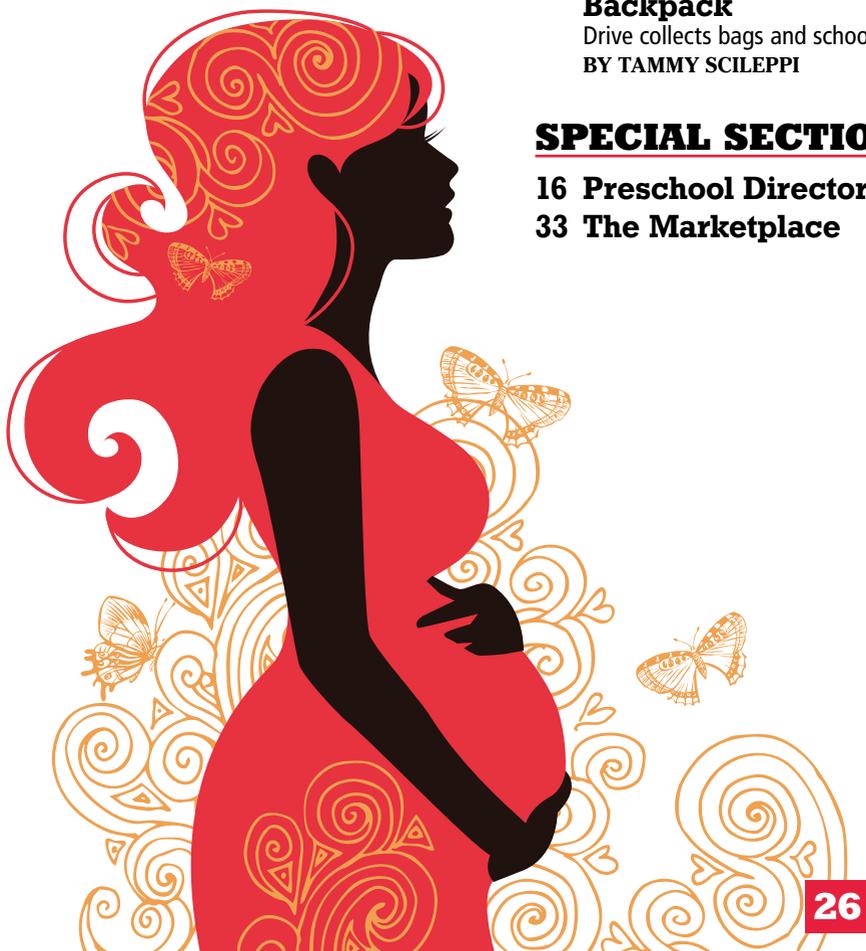
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Letter from the publisher

Babies and beyond

This issue has a focus on two things in particular that tie into each other sooner than you'd think: babies and preschool, and there's no better time than July to be considering where you might elect to begin early childcare. It's a great time to investigate and explore the possibilities as you perhaps think about fall and enrollments in programs.

You'd think that babies wouldn't necessarily conjure up preschool, but they do, and even if you're going to stay home and be the primary care giver (which is getting rarer and rarer an option for a lot of Moms), before you know it, the time will pass and you will be needing to find a



playgroup or a Mommy class or some kind of socializing program that begins the process of adjusting your child to the world at large.

I always say that perhaps the most important responsibility anyone will ever take on comes with no training

and we are expected somehow inherently to know how to be a good parent. No time in our parenting experience is more daunting in this regard and shocking than in those weeks after we bring home a new baby. This tiniest of creatures (more tiny than we could ever have imagined), who hardly sleeps and doesn't let us sleep either, can be more work and cause more feelings of inadequacy than you've ever experienced before.

In New York City, with so many of us not being near our parents or siblings, and possibly having moved here from other places, we are not able to rely on their experience and expertise, and support groups with other parents are not only helpful but rather essential. Forming bonds with others will not only help you determine your "new normal," but also be a great way of establishing early on playgroups for your baby and future friends and buddies.

I often miss having a baby and find myself continually melting when I see babies on the street or out shopping. Watching their personalities emerge after weeks of basic stuff like crying, sleeping and nursing is a gift and a privilege. Suddenly, there is a person, and that person comes with nuance and temper and all that goes into the formation of a whole

individual. What a miracle!

School's out and vacations are here and camp and summer programs. The days of summer pass all too quickly and suddenly we'll be getting ready for school again and all that fall schedules require, so we have to enjoy these weeks to the fullest. Make sure to put sunscreen on your kids and don't forget those sunglasses. Enjoy the beach or the country or whatever family outings/picnics you have planned.

Have a great 4th of July and thanks so much for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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Advice for
breastfeeding
moms when
faced with
resistance

BY MALIA JACOBSON

More babies are starting life with nature's perfect food: breast milk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that 75 percent of American newborns are now breastfed. That's good news. Breastfeeding has amazing benefits for both mom and baby. But when a happily breastfed baby starts putting up a fight at every feeding, it brings anxiety and drama into an otherwise peaceful relationship.

Nursing resistance and nursing strikes — brief periods when a baby resists or refuses breastfeeding — are frustrating, disheartening, and stressful.

Most babies will go through a phase of fussy nursing as some point, says Dr. Susan Rothenberg, associate director of Obstetrics at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York.

What's going on?

Nursing resistance is commonly misinterpreted, says Rothenberg. Moms often blame dwindling milk supply, but that's usually far from the truth.

"Once breastfeeding is well established, inadequate supply is rarely an issue, but a very common misconception," she explains.

It's also easy to assume that a baby is ready to give up nursing, but successfully breastfed babies

under 1 year old seldom self-wean. Instead, says Rothenberg, a baby who resists or refuses nursing may be reacting to common, treatable conditions: hyperlactation, a slow letdown reflex, discomfort, or changes in the mom's diet or hormone levels.

Hyperlactation: Too much of a good thing

Hyperlactation is the result of an overly strong milk letdown reflex that causes milk to flow too quickly and forcibly for a baby to comfortably swallow. According to lactation consultant and registered nurse Laura Burnett, nursing supervisor at Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital, hyperlactation

can overwhelm a nursing infant, sending them into a sputtering, coughing tizzy.

How to help: Burnett suggests nursing in a reclined position to relax both mom and baby. If an oversupply of milk is contributing to the problem, she recommends nursing on one breast per feeding. After a few days, the body will reduce its milk production to a more manageable level.

Slow letdown: Going with the flow

A slow milk letdown reflex can frustrate babies, particularly those who receive bottles, which provide instant milk gratification.

Babies will latch on momentarily, only to dissolve into a teary tantrum if milk doesn't appear within seconds. A fussy baby contributes to mom's stress and intensifies the problem.

How to help: While tactics like gentle massage, heat, hand expression, or pumping can help get milk flowing before feedings, they won't resolve an underlying issue.

"It's important to explore reasons for a slow letdown," says Burnett. Returning to work, changing a nursing routine, or starting new medication are factors that can contribute, she says.

A slower-than-normal letdown reflex is often a sign of stress or distraction, notes Rothenberg. Her advice: "Take time to relax, ignore the chores piling up, and focus on your special bond with your baby."

Pain and suffering: Discomfort drama

You may not feel up to eating when you're experiencing pain or tummy troubles, and your baby is no different. Teething, earache, nasal congestion, or mouth pain caused by thrush can make nursing difficult.

Occasionally, a baby's dairy protein sensitivity can lead to uncomfortable gas and fussiness at the breast. This is not lactose intolerance, says Burnett, but a sensitivity to milk proteins in the mother's diet.

How to help: If you've ruled

out other causes and your little one is still unenthusiastic about nursing, see a pediatrician to check for pain or illness. A dairy elimination diet can help relieve symptoms of dairy protein sensitivity, says Burnett, but it may take several weeks to see an improvement.

New tastes: A changing menu

If you consume a varied, flavorful diet, your breastfed baby probably does, too. Breastmilk varies in taste depending on a nursing mom's diet. Hormonal changes resulting from birth control, a resumed menstrual cycle, or a new pregnancy can also affect milk's taste.

Most babies show no reaction to these changes. A few will voice their displeasure if a new taste isn't to their liking, and temporarily resist nursing.

How to help: Taste variations in milk are generally temporary. If a baby has a strong reaction to a particular taste, eliminating the offending food should resolve the problem.

Feeding while baby is very sleepy, feeding in a warm bath, and skin-to-skin contact during nursing can help minimize resistance to breastfeeding during these changes.

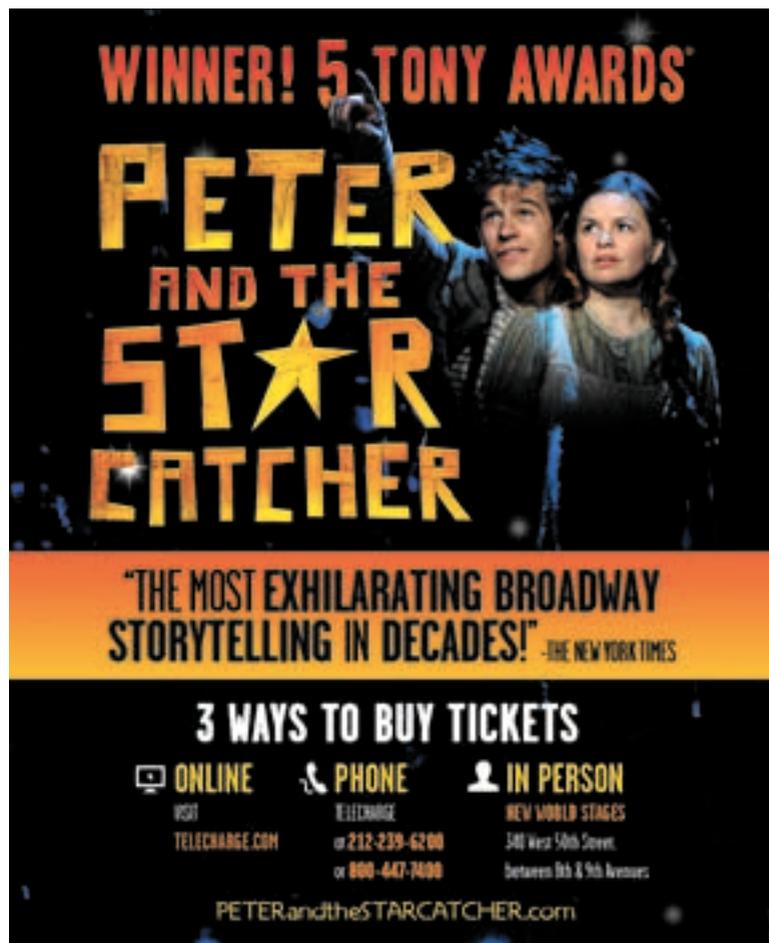
Getting back to happy

Pump or hand-express to stay comfortable during nursing refusal. If you're worried that your baby isn't getting enough to drink, do a wet-diaper count. At least five to six wet diapers per day mean he's probably taking in enough fluid.

Like most babyhood phases, nursing resistance is usually short-lived. And it has a silver lining: once you weather this minor breastfeeding storm, you'll be rewarded with more confidence, patience, and a greater knowledge of your breastfeeding babe.

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published sleep and health journalist and author of "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."

A baby who resists or refuses nursing may be reacting to common, treatable conditions.



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An ounce of prevention



Steps you
can take
now to avoid
postpartum
depression
later

BY OLIVIA BERGERON

Sitting in a circle, surrounded by other pregnant couples, Samantha and her husband sat quietly.

“Irritability, sadness, guilt, exhaustion,” a childbirth educator at their birthing class described the symptoms of postpartum depression. The list continued, but Samantha was only half listening.

“How could I ever get postpartum depression?” she asked herself. Samantha overcame a rough first trimester, but now in her seventh month, she felt great. “That won’t be me,” she thought confidently.

Unfortunately, many couples experience a kind of magical thinking when it comes to unpleasant possibilities following the birth of a child. They hope that by not thinking about it, postpartum depression won’t happen to them. And yet, one in five postpartum women experiences a mood disorder more serious than the baby blues, such as postpartum depression. The term “postpartum depression” is an umbrella term that includes depression, anxiety, panic disorder, and obsessive compulsive disorder following the birth of a child. Symptoms can be mild to severe. So, while it’s startling to hear how common these illnesses are, it’s more shocking to know how often they go undiagnosed. More than half of women suffering do not get treated. All too many women suffer in silence, either because of shame and stigma, or ignorance as to the symptoms and treatment available. So looking around her birthing class, Samantha was surely seeing one if not more future sufferers. Maybe it would even be her.

In her memoir of her experience with postpartum depression, “Down Came the Rain,” Brooke Shields wrote, “if I had been better

informed, I might not have considered myself candidate [for postpartum depression disorder], but at least I would have been armed with some important information. I recognized early on that something was wrong and that I was able to find help. I hate to think about the women who endure this type of depression for long periods of time without knowing that there is assistance available.”

The good news is that the disorder is extremely treatable, particularly when therapy or medication are started early. Therapists and doctors who specialize in working with new moms are well worth seeking out, as they understand the unique needs of postpartum women. Associations such as Postpartum Support International (www.postpartum.net), and the Postpartum Resource Center of New York (www.postpartumny.org), are excellent sources of information about where to go for help.

And yet, as a therapist who treats pregnant women, as well as new moms with the disorder, I’m sometimes asked if there are ways to prevent it. While I can offer no magic bullet, there are definitely ways to minimize the risk of experiencing it. And the best part about taking these steps? You’ll also be making the transition to parenthood much easier by preparing yourself and your partner for the huge changes ahead.

Here are six things you can do before and after baby arrives:

- Line up as much postpartum support as you need, and then

The best part about taking these steps? You'll also be making the transition to parenthood much easier by preparing yourself and your partner for the huge changes ahead.

some. I tell my pregnant clients to prepare as if they were having twins. Somehow the idea of having two babies really motivates parents! Get family, friends, neighbors, postpartum doulas — and anyone else you can think of — ready to help you with chores and caring for the baby in the first months. There is no such thing as too much help, and certainly no shame in accepting it.

•Schedule a mental health “check up.” If you have a history of depression or anxiety, schedule a session with a therapist or psychiatrist before the baby arrives to discuss a postpartum plan in case of a relapse. Talk about what worked best to overcome the depression or anxiety the last time you got treatment and look at ways to incorporate these tactics after you give birth. It can be a huge relief to know you have a plan prepared in advance, just in case. Early intervention also results in a faster recovery, should postpartum occur, so don't wait to get help.

•Don't isolate yourself. Many new parents are surprised at how lonely and isolating it can be when you have a baby. This is particularly true if you are the first among your friends to have a baby, or if you live far from family. The internet can be a real lifeline for new parents looking to avoid isolation. Sign up for one of the local Yahoo parenting groups in your neighborhood (groups.yahoo.com) to find out news and information about parent gatherings. Look for new parent support groups and “baby and me” classes at the library, religious center, or baby gym, all great places to meet other parents. The sooner you develop a network of other new

parents to commiserate with, the more connected you'll feel.

•Nurture yourself with quality, nutritious foods. New parents are sleep deprived as a rule, and most don't have time to cook or eat elaborate meals. Oftentimes, they end up relying on caffeine and unhealthy snacks as a crutch. Caffeine can seriously exacerbate anxious feelings and sharp spikes in blood sugar can contribute to moodiness. Make sure you have healthy, quick meals, and snacks on hand and minimize or avoid caffeine altogether.

•Begin gentle exercise once you get medical clearance. Exercise has been shown to be as effective as antidepressants in some studies. Once you get the green light from your healthcare provider, begin gentle exercises, outside if possible. Sunshine and fresh air are great mood boosters as well. Note: if you are prone to panic attacks, avoid strenuous exercise, which can trigger an attack.

•Put off big life changes. Stress is a postpartum risk factor, so try to avoid major life stressors, such as changing jobs or moving, until you get settled as a family, if at all possible.

But even with all the preparation possible, some women will still fall victim to postpartum depression through absolutely no fault of their own. Stress, isolation, and fatigue are all contributing factors, but so is biology or a family history of depression and anxiety, which is completely out of our control. However, armed with the knowledge of where to go and what to do, new parents can get treated and go on to experience the joy they always hoped a child would bring. By seeking help early, new moms can give themselves and their new baby the best gift of all: a happy, healthy parent.

Olivia Bergeron, is a licensed clinical social worker and the founder of Mommy Groove Therapy & Support (MommyGroove.com). She is a psychotherapist who specializes in helping parents — particularly moms — to become less anxious and depressed, and more confident, so that they can best enjoy their children and families. She has an office in Park Slope, Brooklyn, and makes home visits for clients in Manhattan and Brooklyn. She lives in New York City with her husband, daughter, and twin sons. She can be reached at (917) 397-0323 or at Olivia@mommygroove.com.



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Made in the shade

Sunglasses
are very
important at
every age

BY KIKI BOCHI

Sunglasses are more than just a fashion statement. Especially in the summer, they are protection for your child's precious peepers. The sun's rays don't just damage the skin, they can harm the eyes, as well. As you apply sunscreen to protect your children's skin, don't forget to protect their eyes. Studies show that exposure to bright sunlight may increase the risk of developing cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, and growths on the eye, including cancer.

Kids are particularly vulnerable, and the sooner they begin to protect their eyes, the better. Many experts believe our eyes get 80 percent of their total lifetime exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays by age 18. Especially during the summer, when the level of radiation is at least three times higher than during the winter, sunglasses are an important part of everyone's wardrobe.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology offers these tips to protect the whole family's eyes from the sun:

- Don't focus on color or darkness of sunglass lenses. Select sunglasses that block ultraviolet rays. Don't be deceived by color or cost. The ability to block light is not dependent on the price tag or how dark the lenses are.

- Check for the level of protection. Make sure your sunglasses block 99 to 100 percent of all dangerous rays.

- Choose wrap-around styles. Ideally, your sunglasses

should wrap all the way around to your temples, so the sun's rays can't enter from the side. Wrap-around sunglasses offer five-percent more protection than regular shades and can reduce sun-induced cataracts if used regularly.

- Tie one on. Protect your kids'

peepers — and your investment — by fastening shades to a strap so they stay on your child and don't get lost.

- Wear a hat. In addition to your sunglasses, wear a broad-brimmed hat to protect your eyes.

- Don't be fooled by clouds. The sun's rays can pass through haze and thin clouds. Just because you don't see the sun shining brightly, it doesn't mean it can't damage your family's eyes.

- Protect your eyes during peak sun times. Sunglasses should be worn whenever you're outside, but it's especially important to wear sunglasses in the early afternoon, when light is more intense.

- Consider how much you want to invest. Many inexpensive children's sunglasses provide excellent protection. This is especially true if they include polycarbonate lenses, because polycarbonate lens material blocks 100 percent of rays without the need for added lens filters or coatings. However, if you are willing to invest more, desirable features include impact resistant lenses, unbreakable frame material, and spring hinges.

- Be patient. Start as young as you can, and don't get frustrated if children want to push their sunglasses off.

Just be consistent. Eventually, wearing sunglasses will become a habit — one that will serve your child well throughout his life.

Luckily, getting children to wear sunglasses is not that tough, especially if you allow them to select their shades. To them, sunglasses are a fashion statement, but you know they are so much more.



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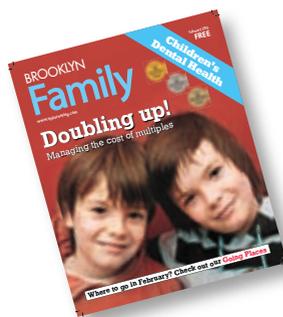
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Parting with the pacifier

How to help your child give up his pacifier

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Ready to help your child give up a pacifier? Here are some tips for navigating the tricky transition.

Whether they're crystal clear, neon-bright, or covered in rhinestones, pacifiers are the modern baby's accessory of choice. Thanks to studies showing that they reduce the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, most pediatricians have given pacifiers the green light. A study in Pediatrics found that a whopping 68 percent of parents give them to their babies before six weeks of age.

Babies aren't the only ones who love them; parents quickly become addicted to the pacifier's soothing effects on their offspring. Unfortunately, it often becomes a habit that overstays its welcome.

Why wean?

Some children give up non-nutritive or comfort sucking on their own, but others cling to the habit well into the preschool years. According to Dr. Lotus Su, of Pediatric Dental Associates, using a pacifier too much or for too long can contribute to dental problems, including deformation of the palate and shifting of the teeth, as well as mouth breathing and dry mouth, which may increase susceptibility to tooth decay.

Many doctors and dentists recommend ending the habit before permanent front teeth begin to emerge, which can happen before kindergarten.

"I recommend stopping pacifier use by age 3," says Dr. Su. "The earlier a pacifier habit is stopped, the less likely that there will be any den-

tal problems."

Potential problems extend beyond the teeth. Pacifier use is associated with otitis media, or middle ear infections. Minor health upsets like gastrointestinal infections and oral thrush are also more commonly seen in pacifier users.

Parents may be swayed by medical data and dentists' recommendations, but kids often need some coaxing to give up the long-held habit. Guilt-inducing lectures about dental problems or germs may be counterproductive, causing them to dig in their heels. Instead, help them become confidently pacifier-free with these tactics.

Literary lesson: Before embarking on a pacifier-purge, check out some

children's books on the topic. After listening to stories like "The Last Noo-Noo" by Jill Murphy or "Pacifiers Are Not Forever" by Elizabeth Verdick, your child may be more receptive to the idea.

Pacifier bear: When 3-year-old Violet was ready to give up her pacifier, mom Bec Langham took her to a popular build-your-own-stuffed-animal store. Violet deposited her last pacifier safely inside the teddy bear before it was sewn up. The bear now serves as both a cuddly friend and a unique reminder of Violet's younger days.

Baby charity: Your child may be willing to donate her pacifiers to a good cause. Gather up the pacifiers, and pay a visit to a friend with a young baby. Have your child "gift" the baby with the pacifier collection, and shower her with praise for her generosity.

The Paci Fairy: Steal this idea from Supernanny Jo Frost: have your child place her pacifiers in a large envelope to mail to the "Pacifier Fairy." Put the envelope in the mailbox together before bed. Once she's asleep, swap the envelope for a new toy. When she wakes up, excitedly take her to the mailbox to find her new treasures.

Make the cut: Snipping a small hole in a pacifier can help it lose its appeal quickly, encouraging a child to give it up on her own. Be sure to dispose of a broken pacifier promptly, because it can harbor bacteria or become a choking hazard if a child continues to use it.

Out of sight, out of mind: Parents seeking the quickest route to pacifier-freedom can simply throw them all away. Kelly Stallings opted for the cold-turkey approach with daughter Taylor.

"The first night was rough, but after that, she didn't care," she says. Just make sure to get rid of each and every one, so your child isn't tempted to relapse (and you're not tempted to cave in).

No matter how stubbornly your child clings to a beloved binky, eventually it will be a thing of the past. Once your child is free of the pacifier habit, you're free as well — from relentlessly searching for them, washing them, and buying them. Enjoy your well-earned liberation. At least, until the next must-have item comes along.

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published sleep expert, health journalist, and mom. She blogs about sleep and family health at www.thewellrested-family.com.



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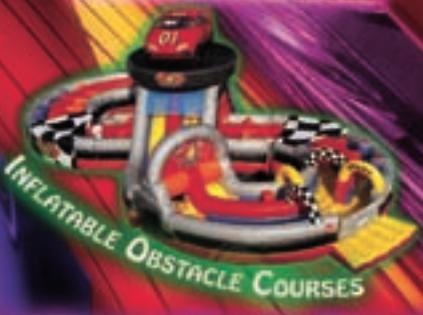
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Chew on this

How to care for baby's teeth

BY MONICA DICLERICO BROWN

It's a milestone that lots of parents love, and they like to document it with lots of cute pictures.

Baby's new teeth are adorable, but their care and maintenance routine can be confusing for many new parents. Here's the scoop on the best way to properly clean those little pearly whites and the right time for that first visit to the dentist.

Dr. Frederick Stange, of City Dentist, says the perfect age for a child's first visit can depend on how much room they have between their teeth.

"Children have spaces between their baby teeth — and that's supposed to be the case," says Dr. Stange. "That's what makes those teeth 'self-cleaning.' Minimal care from the caretaker will keep the teeth healthy. Start with a flexible finger cot that is sold in most pharmacies — it helps keep

the hands close to the child and offers more control. As the infant grows accustomed to this habit, you can switch to the brush."

A toddler with spaces in between his teeth usually has his molars by the

time he's 2 years old, and that's when Dr. Stange recommends bringing the child in for the first professional evaluation.

But children who don't have spaces in between their teeth should be seen by a dentist much earlier — usually around his first birthday, or when you can see eight to 12 teeth in his mouth.

"Just like an adult, the touching teeth allow plaque and bacteria to grow in between. The children I see with little to no space between their teeth are usually the ones with decay."

For all children, wiping the teeth clean before bedtime is important, even if you're not comfortable using toothpaste right away.

"Start one thing at a time: finger cot, toothbrush, then toothbrush and paste. And never allow a child with teeth to fall asleep with a milk or juice bottle in their mouth. Sugar that will remain in the mouth overnight will cause decay. This usually starts in the front teeth and turns the teeth dark, but it's so easily prevented."

And the Midtown Manhattan dentist says parents can make it easier for children who may be anxious or uneasy about visiting the dentist for the first time.

"Preparation for a toddler's first dental visit starts at home," he says. "If this is the first time anyone is looking in the child's mouth, the new experience with a stranger will most likely not be received well. I have my 4-month-old daughter hold and explore her little toothbrush, even at this young age. This way, she's somewhat familiar with it, and it doesn't become something that's forced into her mouth. Rather, the experience of the toothbrush is almost akin to her pacifier, in that it's accepted as normal."

You can also prepare them at home by going through some of the same motions the dentist will go through: have your child open his mouth wide, so you can make a game of counting his teeth. Let him do the same for you. Give him a flashlight, if it makes the "game" more fun.

"If they are in control and understand the situation, you have removed the fear," says Dr. Stange.

Going a step further, Dr. Stange recommends bringing your child with you when you see the den-

tist, so that he can see the dentist or hygienist is working on mom or dad, and that it's ok.

"Start as young as you can. If they see that it's easy with you, then it will be easier to relate to the dentist," he adds.

At the very least, Dr. Stange urges parents NOT to threaten their children with a trip to the dentist.

"Children have excellent memories — if you tell them, 'Brush your teeth or you will have cavities and then the dentist will have to pull out all of your teeth,' they'll remember that! Make it a positive experience and use positive reinforcement when your child is brushing correctly. You don't want anything negative attached to the dental visit."

If your child is using a toothbrush and is actually learning how to brush, Dr. Stange says it's a good idea to do it while he is in a playful and inquisitive mood.

"Right before bed while your child is tired and fussy is probably not the time to try to brush the teeth. It's best after dinner and after breakfast. Remember that the cavity and odor-causing bacteria are always growing in our mouth. We are controlling their population by brushing them away. It is not as much about brushing at 9:04 pm and again at 7:56 am as it is about removing bacteria twice a day.

"It is okay to brush and have one more bottle as long as — again — we don't fall asleep with that bottle. Brushing effectively while a child is accepting is much better than fighting that cranky child at 11 pm. Ultimately, it is best to brush, then go off to bed, and in the morning after breakfast would be best as well."

Bottom line? Make oral hygiene an important part of your child's daily routine, and you'll never go wrong.

"We find ways to have our children enjoy reading or coloring daily, so we should be doing the same with our oral health routine," says Dr. Stange. "But timing is very important. We usually don't ask them to wait till bedtime to start reading, playing, or learning, so we should take care of their teeth throughout the day as well."

Monica DiClerico Brown is a television news anchor and freelance writer who lives in Pearl River, NY, with her husband and two children.

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The children have an enriched curriculum of Montessori lessons alongside crafts, music, movement and outside time. The staff is loving and attentive, the families are diverse, and the atmosphere brings a supportive environment to all members of Edgehill Montessori.

There is a year-round program from September through June, and a summer program from July to mid-August.

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Continued on page 18

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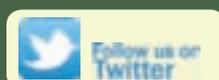
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Preschool

DIRECTORY

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program. It strives to develop competent, independent and resourceful students, who possess a strong sense of self, and a lifelong commitment to learning and to Judaism. The school prepares students to successfully function on the present, while helping them develop the necessary skills for dealing with the future. With students in nursery through eighth grade, it is an inclusive Jewish community day school, serving children from liberal to traditional families.

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Continued on page 20

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Preschool

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Continued from page 20

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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Promoting reading

Most parents do a great job of introducing young children to books. A recent report from the Pew Research Center found that more than half of all parents read to their young children every day and another 26 percent read several times a week.

Around middle school, many young readers become illiterate. They can read, but they don't. The reasons for this disconnect are numerous. Middle school kids become involved in an increased number of extracurricular activities, especially sports. Schoolwork becomes more demanding, so reading seems less like fun. And, of course, the siren call of social media discourages attention to text that's longer than a sentence or two.

Whatever the reason, illiteracy is worrisome. Research suggests that young people who read for pleasure have an advantage. Their vocabularies are bigger, their powers of concentration and analysis are greater, they tend to be better writers, and they have a deeper understanding of other people and the world around them.

Of course, lecturing kids about the importance of literacy isn't likely to turn them into enthusiastic readers. But here are some suggestions that are likely to be more effective:

- Take e-books seriously. The fourth edition of the "Kids and Family Reading Report," released by Scholastic earlier this year, found that half of children ages 9 to 17 said they would read more books for fun if they had an e-books reader. Boys in particular seem more motivated to read on a screen. If your children have already become screenagers, help them develop good habits. The only way to get lost in a book is to defer the urge to fool with apps and check social media.

- Don't give up on print. Among the kids in the Scholastic survey who use e-books, 80 percent still did most of their for-fun reading in print. If your child no longer cares to go the library, pick up books and leave them on the kitchen counter. Get inexpensive copies of classic books by going to garage sales or library sales. Websites like betterworldbooks.com also make it easy to acquire gently used books for your home library.

- Offer variety. As pre-teens begin to discover their special abilities and interests, help them zero in on fiction and non-fiction that connects with their passions. Expose them to cookbooks, graphic novels, newspapers, special interest magazines, and travel guides. Social media is an especially good way to find books with pre-teen appeal. Just typing "good books for middle schoolers" into the search box on Pinterest pulls up excellent lists curated by other parents, educators, and even librarians.

- Carve out time. Some middle school students stop reading because they don't have much free time. Help your child be selective about activities. Establish a daily reading time when you turn off TV and even music. Power down cellphones, too. At the very least, establish "Nothing but Books Before Bedtime." Be lenient about lights out if your child is engrossed in a good read.

- Designate space. If possible, create a dedicated reading room or corner in your home. Have a comfy chair, a good light, and a bookshelf close at hand. Be sure it's free of digital distractions.

- Read together. Hold onto family reading rituals as long as you can. In her book, "The Reading Prom-

ise," Alice Ozma, national manager for reading programs for Scholastic, writes about how she and her father read together for 3,218 days before she went to college. As she puts it, "Good authors find the words for the things we feel deeply but cannot express. They open conversations." Anything that opens a thoughtful conversation with a pre-teen is worth doing.

- Make it social. If you're excited about what you're reading, you'll want to talk to other people about it. That's what makes book groups so popular. Unfortunately, middle school students sometimes feel anxious about admitting to their peers that they have a reading habit. You can try to influence the culture at your child's school by encouraging teachers to form book clubs. (Suggestions about how to do that are available at the Great Schools website, <http://tinyurl.com/83cucw9>.) Or, you can encourage your child to find like-minded peers at social media sites dedicated to reading. Goodreads.com, for example, lets members join and form age-appropriate book groups.

- Practice what you preach. If you want your kids to be readers, be one yourself. Let them see you reading and enjoying a wide variety of books. Text a quote that catches your attention to your child's phone. Share interesting ideas you've come across in your reading at dinnertime or when you're driving together.

Given the number of distractions available to children today, parents can't be certain their kids will become lifelong readers. Still, there are enduring benefits for young people who can engage with the characters in fiction and follow the arguments in non-fiction. Helping your child develop a satisfying, ongoing relationship with books is still one of the best ways to prepare her for whatever the future may hold.

Carolyn Jabs 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 read other columns.

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The backstory on Operation Backpack

Volunteer drive
collects brand-
new bags and
school supplies

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

As a surge of grassroots volunteering sweeps the country, more and more folks are choosing to devote their time and energy to help those in need, as evidenced by the thousands who stepped forward after Hurricane Sandy's devastation and, more recently, after the Oklahoma tornadoes.

Giving back to those less fortunate can also benefit children by helping them to appreciate what they have. So, if you're dealing with "bored kids syndrome" this summer, how about getting them involved in some community work? After all, charity begins at home. Through participating, parents can find a fun and fulfilling summer activity for the whole family.

Operation Backpack: A great family project

Fast forward to September, and before you know it, it's back-to-school time. As a parent, can you imagine sending your child or teen off to school without a backpack, filled with the essential supplies they need to help them get off to a good start?

This summer there are more than 20,000 children living in homeless shelters, and every year, thousands of homeless students in the city face a new school year without those basic supplies.

Volunteers of America's Operation Backpack helps close this gap by collecting and distributing thousands of new backpacks full of grade-specific and essential school supplies to those kids. Last year, more than 13,500 backpacks were distributed!

And volunteering at Operation Backpack has become an annual back-to-school tradition for many

children over the years.

Spear-headed by Rachel Weinstein, Operation Backpack came to be when she decided to re-brand the small effort, back-to-school drive 10 years ago.

Rajani's story

Rajani was a high school junior when she and her family fell on hard times, and the only way they could remain together was to enter a shelter. The shelter was not a Volunteers of America shelter, but while there, the children were instructed to get their backpacks for school. Rajani didn't want to go, thinking she was going to be given a "shelter backpack," but her mother insisted she take her little brother to get his.

Rajani says the quality of the backpack she received was totally unexpected, and to this day she has the dictionary and thesaurus.

"I couldn't believe someone cared about me enough to do this for me — give me a backpack that had everything I needed to go to school," she said. "It gave me the incentive to go to school and I decided that even though I was sitting in a shelter, I could still have a good time ... and that year, I excelled. It propelled me to apply for the scholarship I received."

Rajani has since graduated from Fordham University.

"The success of Operation Backpack lies with the generosity of the New York City community," says Weinstein, Vice-President and Chief Development and Communications Officer at Volunteers of America-Greater New York. "I don't necessarily think of community service as 'giving back,' so much as I just see it as good citizenship — the right thing

to do; helping to make the world a better place."

The backstory

Weinstein says she was working as a consultant 11 years ago when her daughter Madeline attended school at Metropolitan Montessori, across the street from Volunteer of America's headquarters on W. 85th Street in Manhattan. One of the moms who happened to work at there asked Weinstein if she would plan an employee recognition event. Then, when she joined full-time, she had responsibility for the volunteer function — and the project going on at the time was the back-to-school drive.

One summer, while shopping for young Maddie's school supplies, Weinstein noticed "the difference between what my daughter would be taking to school and what our kids in shelter would have — a plastic bag with perhaps some pencils — was a huge disparity, and I vowed to develop a more targeted and comprehensive approach the following year. This was 2003."

Her goal was an ambitious one: a backpack filled with a specific list of supplies recommended by public school teachers, for every one of the 11,000 children served by Volunteers of America-Greater New York.

"We would ask the general public to donate their gently used backpacks (and ask the corporate community to donate supplies)," she said.

"Well, as I learned, no child's used backpack is in any shape to recycle for another child, and next year I established a new standard — we would only accept new backpacks that we would put on our own kids' backs," said Weinstein, adding, "We also wouldn't accept branded backpacks (backpacks emblazoned with a company's name). For that same reason we didn't indicate on or inside the backpack that it was donated by Volunteers of America, or otherwise associated with Operation Backpack. We rebranded the campaign that year, Operation Backpack."

Then, Weinstein says, she got Madie involved with Operation Backpack.

"Not to expose her to volunteerism, initially — but because I was desperate for help and had already worn out all my adult volunteers, after three days of sorting supplies into backpacks. The public's response was so much greater than anticipated, that I wasn't prepared for the hundreds of backpacks that had continued to come in, even after the drive officially ended," Weinstein recalled.



(Clockwise from top right) Rachel Weinstein and her daughter Maddie. Maddie sits amongst hundreds of donated backpacks. The proud owner of a brand-new backpack.

So, she called Maddie and asked her if she could come in next morning to help, and to see if she could enlist any friends. “The only person she could rustle up quickly was Julian, a friend from the Metropolitan Opera Children’s Chorus, who lived in New Jersey. Well, Julian and Maddie worked a good eight hours straight; quality controlled, labeled and sorted every backpack (about 300). By the end of that day they were nearly too exhausted to walk to dinner. Seeing how quickly and conscientiously they had worked, I realized kids were a good source of help for Operation Backpack, and it reinforced for me the appropriateness of engaging kids in this particular volunteer effort,” Weinstein said. “After seeing what an incredible job Maddie and Julian did, an annual tradition was born: one day during sort week each year would be dedicated to youth volunteers.

Leveling the playing field

“The point after all, was for these [homeless] children to go to school that all-important first day, looking

and feeling more like their housed classmates,” Weinstein explained. “We had to educate the public not only about the needs of homeless families and the devastating impact it has on a child’s education, but the concept of ‘normalizing’ life for these kids; helping them look and feel like other kids.”

And most people got it. She said they understood and supported the objective to help these children fit in; to level the playing field.

“What was most important was that the children arrive at school with their new backpack full of new supplies.”

Weinstein says seeing the children open their backpacks is heartwarming, and Volunteers of America is grateful for the generosity of the New York City community.

“One of my mantras is: ‘It’s never too early to begin a tradition of giving.’ For it to really stick though, philanthropy — in whatever form it takes — needs to be part of the fabric of the family,” says Weinstein.

“Parents need to model kindness

City Department of Homeless Service Commissioner. “Operation Backpack helps ensure that homeless children have the best possible start to their school year by making certain they have the proper supplies, and we are grateful to [Volunteers of America] for that.”

According to Weinstein, who juggles her super-busy personal life with her important role with the organization, a number of families said they take their children back-to-school shopping for their own school supplies and have them select and fill a backpack for a child who might otherwise go without.

“A family can hold a party or other event, and ask everyone to bring specific school supplies then hold a mini-sort day, resulting in a number of filled backpacks (which they can then bring to our office),” she suggests. “Kids have raised money and donated it to Operation Backpack, which is very helpful during sort week, so we can replenish supplies we run out of.”

Students at Hunter College High School formed a club, Hunter Backpack Organization, and for several years raised close to \$2,000 each year, through raffles and other creative methods. Some of those kids have volunteered for years but are about to leave for college this year.

Operation Backpack, which began as a project to outfit only Volunteers of America children, has expanded to include nearly every homeless or domestic violence shelter in the city — about 150 shelters in total.

Duane Reade stores operate as official drop locations and post signs inviting the public to drop off their donations of backpacks and school supplies. For grade-appropriate supplies and drop locations, visit www.OperationBackpacknyc.org. Donations can be made from July 15 through Aug. 9. Financial donations can still be made after Aug. 5.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and parent who loves New York City. She has been a contributing writer for several community newspapers and writes book cover copy for a well-know publishing company. Her consumer-focused articles appear on the AngiesList website, and other stories by her have been published in the New York Daily News and the New York Post.

and volunteerism, starting at home: phone calls to grandparents just to say ‘hi’ or giving one’s seat on the bus to an elderly passenger; offering to stop by a neighbor’s apartment to play with their pet. These are all simple activities that can generate good discussions about the value of kindness, caring for others and putting that caring into action. Volunteering outside of one’s home, takes it a step further,” she says.

How you can help

Volunteering begins when individuals, families, and various groups shop for and donate backpacks and school supplies, organize drives, hold fund-raising events, and take it upon themselves to spread the word about the needs of homeless children.

“The key to a good education is showing up and showing up prepared,” says Seth Diamond, New York



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

An 'Independence' day, then and now

Exactly 21 Julys ago, I remember waddling out to the backyard to watch fireworks.

Because of the earth's mounting vibrations, the slugs in the ground escaped and were lying all over the concrete, so my steps had to be

balanced and mindful. Their world was vibrating while we were blasting booming displays to celebrate our country.

My world, however, was on the verge of combustion in more ways than one. July is always exciting, but on that Independence Day, all I remember was giddy expectation mixed with immense trepidation, coupled with feeling hot, sticky, and exhausted. Just a few days later, our first daughter Amanda arrived.

As a young mom, there were so many judgments passed along. Would we know how to raise a child when we were so young ourselves? Did we have any place having a child at this age (which was barely 20)? I only wish I could have pointed out other strong and young moms who raised incredibly strong and smart people (President Obama's mother was 18 when he was born) back then, when I was

a naïve, young mom. While the naysayers were irritating, my concerns were more immediate: was Amanda eating enough? Sleeping enough? Was she comfortable? Was she safe? Largely because I was so immersed in her day-to-day care and partly because of my determination (AKA stubbornness), I chose to ignore the negativity. I knew that I would forever do anything I had to do to make her life the best possible.

I finished college and leaped into my publishing career all the while learning the ins and out of parenting 101.

Surely, it would have been easier, if my husband and I had been more settled with a few extra years under our belts, but I firmly believe that when it comes to babies, god

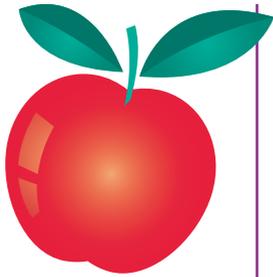
gives us exactly who we are supposed to be with in this life, and when.

As Amanda grew, I watched her quickly go from baby to toddler to big kid, in the blink of an eye. There are countless memories: school, friends, dances, graduations, and the prom. With each milestone, I reveled not only in witnessing this little amazing person blossom right in front of me, but also shared in her joys and heartaches. People say that, as a mom, your job is to teach your child to be able to thrive in their world, and to that extent, my job is done. She turns 21 this month. She is a senior in college, and holds a part-time administrative assistant job, as well as an internship at a non-profit women's organization, among a host of other accomplishments. She is a leader, but also a caring, kind, and fun-loving young woman.

Twenty-one supposed to be the magical age where you, as a parent, are finished, but we all know you never really are. While "Independence Day" has finally been reached for her, this year holds special meaning. Amanda is just starting out, and as a young person, many expectations will be placed on her. She will go off on her own, leaving that little girl in the pink Barney t-shirt behind her. And yet, I will still sometimes wonder — is she sleeping enough, working too much, is she safe? Except now I have to remain steadfast in the belief that what I have done the past 21 years has been enough. And while I can't quite wrap my mind around how incredibly (almost obscenely) fast it has soared by, I know that it has. Now it is her time to fly.

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 @ DanniSullWriter, or on her blog, Some Puppy To Love.





DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Math in the summer

When the school doors close for the summer, most students lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in mathematical computation skills during vacation, according to the National Summer Learning Association. To help keep your children's math skills sharp, we are giving you a list of activities this month that will give them ongoing opportunities to practice these skills.

Math drill activities

If your children in elementary school and even middle school cannot answer basic fact problems in less than three seconds, some drill is in order. These facts, especially addition and multiplication, must be automatic for children in order for them to handle more advanced math easily. So this is your starting point for a summer of building math skills.

Drilling activities can be done using flash cards, worksheets, computers and apps. You'll find a wealth of free materials as well as suggestions using a search engine to find "math drills." Visit several websites with your children and bookmark the most appealing ones. Search on our website (dearteacher.com) for "math drills" and you'll find several columns pointing out different ways to teach children basic math facts.

If your children are truly struggling to learn the basic facts, you may wish to enroll them in a learning center, especially one that stresses the teaching of math.

Beyond drill

Drill, even on the computer and other electronic devices, can be boring after a while. When this happens, both children with weak basic math skills and those who just need to keep their

skills sharp should have fun playing math games that reinforce the learning of basic facts. Search online for "math games" and bookmark the ones your children like best. You'll also find suggestions on our website under "Learning Activities."

Math activities should not be confined to drill. Games like Monopoly, Dominoes and Twenty-one are great for older children, while much younger children can enjoy Uno, Go Fish and Bingo for number recognition. In fact, any game involving numbers and scorekeeping has children using their math skills.

Mental math is fun

Doing mental math is an excellent way for children to show off their skills with numbers and to build new skills. "Secrets of Mental Math" is a great book for older children wanting to learn amazing math tricks — such as finding out the day for any date, from their birthday to the Declaration of Independence.

Easy mental math multiplication

All children know how to multiply by 10. Teach them that it's also easy to multiply by 5. All they have to do is multiply by 10 and then divide by 2. Then, to multiply a number by 25, they need to multiply by 100, which is adding 2 zeros to the end of the number being multiplied. Then to get the answer, they can either divide by 4 once or by 2 twice. Visit our website to find more easy mental math tricks in "Skill Builders."

More challenging mental math

Here's how to multiply a two-digit number by 11. Example, 11×24 : Add the digits of 24 together and you get 6. Place the 6 between the 2 and 4 to get the answer 264. If the digits of the number to be multiplied by 11 add up to more than 9, there is another step you must take. Example, 11×75 : Add the digits of 75 together and you get 12. Put the 2 between the numbers

after adding the 1 to the first digit ($7 + 1$). The answer is 825.

Silly and challenging math puzzles

Math puzzles can be fun. The following puzzles may be a bit silly, but they will challenge your children. The answers are at the end of the column.

1. How can you make half of 12 equal to 7?
2. In the schoolyard, there are 16 bicycles and tricycles. The total number of wheels is 39. How many tricycles are there?
3. How many 9s are there between 1 and 100?
4. Use mathematical terms to answer these questions: What did Noah build? What do you say when a parrot is dead?
5. The number 8,549,176,320 is like no other. Why is that?

Perimeter and area

The perimeter (distance around an object) can be very simple to find, or can require quite advanced math concepts. Have your young children find the distance around a variety of things in your home: a door mat, a towel, the backyard, or a table top. Your question always is: How far is it around the object? Then, depending on their ages, children can measure using blocks, paper clips, steps, a finger, or a measuring tool.

Area is the surface inside a shape. Young children can find the area of a newspaper or table top by finding out how many sponges or playing cards are needed to completely cover the object. Older children should find the area of irregular figures by dividing them into squares and triangles and finding the area of each one and then adding the areas together.

Answers to puzzles: (1) Write 12 as a Roman numeral, and draw a horizontal line through the middle. (2) 7 tricycles. (3) 20 (two 9s in 99). (4) arc, polygon. (5) It's the only number having all of its digits in alphabetical order.

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

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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Teens and piercings

I got my ears pierced on my 12th birthday. I was petrified — envisioning a needle the size of a twirler's baton being punched through my tiny earlobe. Nonetheless, I was determined to get my ears pierced, because all of my friends had already done it. Of course, it turned out to be no big deal ... except for the aftermath. My left earlobe got infected, and the infection festered for what seemed like an eternity. Instead of designer jewelry, I sported a swollen lobe.

Today, teens are getting many parts of the body pierced — eyebrows, noses, tongues, nipples, and navels. Some parents don't want their teens to pierce anything besides earlobes — what would a college admissions officer think? Others feel body piercing is not an issue they care to grouch about.

Although parental viewpoints differ on this issue, body piercing is certainly not something that should be taken lightly. No matter what your position is on this topic, it's best to be informed.

Self-expression

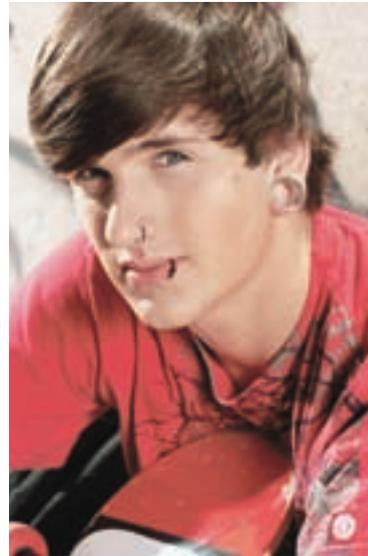
Teens like to dare to be different. Piercing, like orange hair highlights and tattoos, is a path to self-expression. Parents who disagree with these choices need to tread carefully when voicing their opinions. Teens should be given freedom to develop their own styles. However, there are many safety issues that both parents and teens need to be aware of.

Cause for concern

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, "New York prohibits body piercing on a person under 18 years of age unless a parent or legal guardian provides written consent in the presence of the owner of the body piercing studio or a body piercing specialist."

Dr. Elizabeth M. Alderman, a nationally recognized specialist in adolescent medicine and professor of clinical pediatrics at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University in Bronx, NY advises, "Anyone who plans to get a piercing should discuss it with someone else."

Teens who have diabetes, hemo-



philia, an auto-immune disorder, or any condition that might interfere with the healing process should find another way to express themselves. Furthermore, teens should not get pierced on areas of the body that have skin irritations, unusual lesions, rashes, or moles.

All teens should learn about potential complications in order to make an informed decision.

"There is always a risk of infection and scarring," Alderman warns.

Potential risks (Teens Health: Nemours Foundation):

- Chronic infection
- Uncontrollable or prolonged bleeding
- Keloids (thick scarring at the piercing site)
- Hepatitis B and C
- Tetanus
- Skin allergies
- Abscesses or boils (pus that can form under the skin)
- Inflammation or nerve damage
- Dental damage caused by tongue or lip piercing

Talk it out

Since the risks vary depending on a teen's health and other factors, there is no simple answer as to how parents should approach this subject.

"It is hard to be the parent of a teenager," Alderman says.

"Teens should understand the risks and benefits, and parents should explore the reasons why their

teen wants the piercing done."

Parents should provide guidance to help their teen make an informed decision.

"Make it about health, not youth culture," Alderman suggests.

Safety checklist

Considerations:

- Immunizations should be current.
- Don't take aspirin or blood thinners within a week of getting a piercing.
- Allergies to metal? Ask what is used in advance.
- Athletes: "No jewelry rule" goes for ALL piercings. Don't get newly pierced before season begins.
- Be aware of signs of infection (i.e. prolonged bleeding, pus, or change in your skin color around the pierced area).

Evaluating the specialist:

- Is the shop certified by the Association of Professional Piercers?
- Does the piercer have a license?
- Piercing guns cannot be sterilized and should NOT be used for body piercing.
- Specialist washes hands and wears disposable gloves.
- Needle is being used for the first time.
- Needles and other materials are disposed of in biohazard containers.

Tips and tales

"Belly button piercing is different from getting a nose or lip done because you can show it off when you feel it's appropriate. The downside: navel piercings look ridiculous once you're over 25."

— *Chrystal DeLisio, Woodstock, NY*

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips and ideas for Halloween activities for teens who are too old to trick-or-treat.

Please send your full name, address, and brief comments to myrnahaskell@gmail.com or visit www.myrnahaskell.com

Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer, columnist and author of "Lions and Tigers and Teens: Expert advice and support for the conscientious parent just like you" (Unlimited Publishing LLC, 2012). Available at Amazon.com.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Dietician dads dish

Nutritionist fathers on what they feed their kids

Fathers have an enormous impact on their children's food choices. So, I reached out to four experts — dads who are registered dietitian nutritionists — to find out how they do it.

"I make them think twice about how much they are eating; asking if they are eating, because they are hungry or bored, and making sure they get in as many fruits and veggies as possible," says David Grotto, author of "The Best Things You Can Eat" and the father of three teen girls.

Rick Hall, senior lecturer of nutrition at Arizona State University and the father of three elementary school-aged children, focuses on moderation and variety.

"We never force them to eat foods they don't want to," he says.

"They have to try everything, and if they don't like it, it's called a 'no thank you' bite. They eat what we're eating. We're not short order cooks," says Dr. Chris Mohr, of MohrResults.com and the father of a preschooler and a toddler.

Dr. Milton Stokes, assistant professor of nutrition at University of Saint Joseph in Connecticut, had to learn to tolerate messiness as the father of two toddlers.

"It's especially true for meal times,



and that's fine, because kids need to feel food, play with food, and spit out food."

Value of family meals

With everyone's schedules, eating together as a family every day is very hard to accomplish, Grotto says.

"We find that we enjoy the eating experience much more when we can

eat together and often have our most deep and meaningful conversations at that time."

Hall's family eats together at least once a day.

"Meal time is an opportunity to sit as a family with no distractions," he says. "We do not allow books or computer devices at the table. Meal time is an opportunity to connect."

Stokes likes to offer a snack while putting the main dinner together.

"For pre-dinner snacks, my daughter's really into diced pears and baby carrots. My son is into kiwi fruit."

Three tips to try

- My kids are not allowed to claim that they don't like a food until they've tried it; and they have to try it every time we have it.

- Don't overeat. When our kids say, "My tummy is full," they are allowed to be done.

- Drink water. They've always known that soda isn't an option, despite what "all of the other kids do."

— Rick Hall

Christine M. Palumbo, registered dietician, is a Naperville, Ill.-based nutritionist who is on the faculty of Benedictine University. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.



Peanut Apple Toastie

Makes one serving

INGREDIENTS:

2 slices bread, toasted and buttered
2 tablespoons peanut butter
1/2 apple, sliced
Lemon juice
Cinnamon
1 teaspoon brown sugar

DIRECTIONS: Spread peanut butter on one side of each of the two slices of toasted bread. Dip apple slices

in lemon juice. Arrange apple slices on peanut butter and sprinkle with brown sugar and cinnamon. Put on a baking sheet and place under broiler. Broil three to five minutes or until lightly browned.

NUTRITION FACTS: 254 calories; 8 g protein; 54 g carbohydrate; 6 g fat (1 g monounsaturated; 2 g saturated); 10 mg cholesterol; 5 g fiber; 179 mg sodium.

Courtesy of NationalPeanutBoard.org.

Calendar

JULY



Milo and friends save the day

“My City Park,” comes to the Melrose Public Library on July 9. Puppet masters from Making Books Sing present the endearing tale of Milo and his friends, and what happens when they find out that their favorite park is going to

close. Perfect for children 3 to 10 years old, who will learn the value of working together to accomplish a common goal.

“My City Park,” July 9, at 2 pm. Free.

Melrose Public Library [910 Morris Ave. (718) 588-0110, www.nypl.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!

TUES, JULY 2

Stories in the Garden: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wave-hill.org; 11 am; Free with museum admission.

Children 3 years and older listen to a delightful story.

"Madagascar 3": Willis Avenue Community Gardens, 401 E. 143rd St.; www.nycgovparks.org; 8-10 pm; Free.

Grab a blanket or chair and come and enjoy a night with Marty and the whole gang in this third installment of the franchise.

FRI, JULY 5

First Fridays: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansion-museum.org; 5:30-8:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors and students; Free for members).

Take the trolley to the mansion, enjoy a concert, a tour of the mansion, and savor light refreshments.

SAT, JULY 6

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

Children make a fancy welcoming pineapple hat.

Welcome home weekend: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wave-hill.org; 10 am-4:30 pm; Free.

Wave Hill opens its doors again after its two-year renovation. Come and enjoy activities, tours, music, and a family art project.

Camping: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm-7 am; Free.

Urban park rangers provide an evening in a tent under the stars. Families chosen by lottery.



All aboard for fun!

The annual Summer Nostalgia Ride is back, and it's chugging to the Bronx on July 13.

Train enthusiasts hop aboard a vintage IRT, low-voltage choo-choo that departs from Grand Central terminal in Manhattan at 10 am and travels to Pelham Bay Park. There, visitors can hop on a vintage bus and take a ride to Orchard Beach to explore the magnificent coastline, historic

houses, and nature trails.

Rides are suitable for children age 2 to 17 and their parents. Sorry, no strollers.

Nostalgia Ride, Grand Central Terminal, 87 E. 42nd Street on July 13 from 10 am to 5 pm. Tickets are \$50 for adults and \$25 for children ages 2 to 17.

New York City Transit Museum [Boerum Pl. at Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 694-1600, www.mta.info/mta/museum].

SUN, JULY 7

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, July 6.

Welcome home weekend: 10 am-4:30 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, July 6.

TUES, JULY 9

"My City Park": Melrose Library, 910 Morris Ave.; (718) 588-0110; 2 pm; Free.

Presented by Making Books Sing, the play is about Milo and his friends who save their favorite park and learn how to work together.

WED, JULY 10

The Carpetbag Brigade: Mount Hope Playground, Jerome Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am-11:30 am; Free.

The group seeks to create bridges of understanding by sharing its craft of synthesizing acrobatic stiltwalking, butoh dance, improvisation, musical composition, and physical theater.

Nemcatocoa Teatro: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

From Bogota Columbia the group uses stilts and song to express their sound.

"Hotel Transylvania": St. James Park, 192nd Street and Jerome Avenue; (718) 965-8935; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Grab a chair or a blanket and enjoy this child friendly movie with the voice of Adam Sandler as Dracula.

THURS, JULY 11

Mr. Chris' Musical Experience: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10:30-11:30 am; Free.

Enjoy this high energy, interactive one-man show, featuring hip hop, stories, and dance.

"Little Red's Hood": River Park, E. 180th Street and E. 177th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am - 12:30 pm; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile presents the classic fairy tale with the a modern twist.

Paper making: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse at E. 192nd Street; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; 1-2:30 pm; Free.

Children learn how to make a greeting card from handmade paper. Parents must be present.

FRI, JULY 12

Mr. G: Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10:30-11:30 am; Free.

Popular international artist performs songs from his bilingual album, "Chocolalala."

SAT, JULY 13

Nostalgia rides: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 10 am - 5 pm; \$50, (\$25 children); \$35 members (\$20 children members).

Hop on board and take a trip back in time. Board an IRT Low Voltage train and travel to Pelham Bay Park then visit the museum's vintage buses.

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

Children explore the green grounds and then make a collage.

SUN, JULY 14

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, July 13.

Freshwater fishing: Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm; Free.

Urban park rangers help you master new skills.

MON, JULY 15

Butterfly boogie: Haffen Park, Ely Avenue at Hammersley Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am-11:30 am; Free.

The Central Park Zoo theater group teaches students all about insects using a giant cockroach puppet.

WED, JULY 17

"Little Red's Hood": Mount Hope Playground, Jerome Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am - 12:30 pm; Free.

CityParks PuppetMobile presents the old fairy tale with a modern twist.

"The Gizmo Guys": Pelham Bay

Continued on page 32

Calendar

Continued from page 31

Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am–noon; Free.

They're back those fun guys performing juggling, and lots of magic.

"The Lorax": West Bronx Recreation Center, Cross Bronx Expressway at Mt. Eden Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm.

Grab a blanket or a chair and enjoy this Dr. Seuss movie.

THURS, JULY 18

Double Dutch Dreamz: River Park, E. 180th Street and E. 177th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am–11:30 am; Free.

Get out your ropes and enjoy this schoolyard sport.

Mr. G: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10:30–11:30 am; Free.

Popular artist shares his songs from his bilingual album "Chocolalala" that blends Latin rhythms and traditional music.

Paper making: 1–2:30 pm. Poe Park Visitor Center. See Thursday, July 11.

FRI, JULY 19

"New York Chinese Cultural Center": Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10:30 am–11:30 am; Free.

The group performs popular traditional dances.

Camping: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm to 7 am; Free.

Urban park rangers provide an evening under the stars in a tent. Families are chosen by lottery.

SAT, JULY 20

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

Children view the river then use paint, crayons and collage to create their own landscape.

"Wreck-it Ralph": St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue at E. 143rd Street; (718) 965-8935; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Grab a chair or a blanket and enjoy this animated flick.

SUN, JULY 21

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm.



Photo by Colin Hattersley

Muggles & wizards come to Broadway

Muggles beware! "Potted Potter" and the Wizards Clarkson and Turner are swooping into the Little Shubert Theatre, now through Sept. 1.

"Potted Potter" takes on the ultimate challenge of condensing, or "potting," all seven Harry Potter books into 70 madcap minutes, featuring multiple costume changes, brilliant songs, zany props, and a generous helping of Hogwarts' magic.

Audiences can also duke it out in a real game of Quidditch.

This is the ultimate show for Potter fans who camped outside a bookstore for three days

awaiting the release of the last book, or know the difference between a horcrux and a hufflepuff — or a muggle from a wizard. Everyone from age 6 to Dumbledore's age — really old! — will be spellbound.

"Potted Potter," now through Sept. 1. Showtimes are Mondays at 7:30 pm, Tuesdays at 7:30 pm, Thursdays at 2 pm and 7:30 pm, Fridays at 8 pm, Saturdays at 2 pm, 5 pm, and 8 pm, and Sundays at 2 pm and 5 pm. Tickets start at \$39.99.

Little Shubert Theatre [422 W. 42nd St. between Ninth and 10th avenues, (212) 239-2656, www.pottedpotter.com/nyc].

Wave Hill. See Saturday, July 20.

MON, JULY 22

"Little Red's Hood": Haffen Park, Ely Avenue at Hammersley Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am; Free.

The CityParks PuppetMobile presents the old fairytale with a modern twist.

TUES, JULY 23

"Madagascar 3": Hunt's Point Recreation Center, 765 Manida St. at Tiffany Street; (718) 965-8935; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Grab a blanket or a chair and join with Marty on this third installment of the franchise.

WED, JULY 24

Ken Waldman: Mount Hope Playground, Jerome Avenue at W. Tremont Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am – 11:30 am; Free.

The artist presents old-time Appalachian style music with original poetry and Alaska set stories.

"Little Red's Hood": Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

The CityParks PuppetMobile presents the old-time fairytale with a modern twist.

Nature crafts: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm; Free.

Children make projects and learn about the world around them.

THURS, JULY 25

Ifetayo: River Park, E. 180th Street and 177th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am–11:30 am; Free.

The group performs an awarding winning show including dance, and music.

Ken Waldman: Van Cortlandt Park, W. 246th Street and Broadway; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am–11:30 am; Free.

The artist performs a blend of Appalachian style string music with Alaska set stories.

Paper making: 1–2:30 pm. Poe Park Visitor Center. See Thursday, July 11.

Young Dancemakers Company Free Performance: Fieldstone School, 3901 Fieldston Rd.; (718) 329-7300 X 3358; aliceteirstein@gmail.com; 2 pm; Free.

A company of 18 exuberant, ethnically diverse high school dancers and choreographers, under the watchful eye of director Alice Teirstein, gather for the 18th

Calendar

year of Young Dancemakers Company, and perform their own works.

FRI, JULY 26

Get Hip: Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378-2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10:30-11:30 am; Free.

Interactive introduction to jazz.

SAT, JULY 27

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

Children discover how different cultures and religions express peace and friendship.

SUN, JULY 28

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, July 27.

MON, JULY 29

Daniel Carlton: Haffen Park, Ely Avenue at Hammersley Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30-11:30 am; Free.

Storyteller Carlton and guest rappers tell tales with music.

WED, JULY 31

Lucky Bob: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 885-3467; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am-noon; Free.

He acts, juggles, reads minds and turns a volunteer into a magician — he's the magical, marvelous Lucky Bob.

THURS, AUG. 1

Radio Jarocho: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway;

(718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10:30 am-11:30 am; Free.

Musicians play a blend of original and traditional Mexican music.

FRI, AUG. 2

Mr. Chris: Grand Concourse Park, E. Kingsbridge Road and E. 192nd Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am-11:30 am; Free.

The artist brings his blend of high energy and interactive music to the stage.

First Fridays: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansion-museum.org; 5:30-8:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors and students; Free members).

Take the trolley to the mansion, enjoy a concert, a tour of the mansion and savor light refreshments.

LONG-RUNNING

Dinosaur safari: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Daily, 10 am-5 pm, Now - Sun, Sept. 8; Free with zoo admission.

The new attraction includes a ride through the Cretaceous and Jurassic periods with more than two-dozen animatronic dinosaurs up to 40 feet long, which move, snarl, roar and spit.

Naturally curious: New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Blvd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Weekdays, 5:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-5:30 pm, Now - Sun, Sept. 8; Free with admission to the grounds.

Children learn about science with fun activities like mixing paints and creating notebooks.

Story time: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; Wednes-

day, July 3, 6 pm; Wednesday, July 10, 6 pm; Wednesday, July 17, 6 pm; Free.

Children enjoy a new story each week and do a craft.

Art recycling: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 2-4 pm, Sat, July 6 - Sat, Sept. 28; Free.

Children learn to turn junk into usable works of art. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Play Streets: Castle Hill Playground, Castle Hill Avenue between Parker and St. Raymonds avenues; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Mon, July 8 - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Thanks to the Police Athletic League, children can enjoy traditional sidewalk games and learn from a wide range of recreational and cultural arts programs. Features activities include Double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, nok hockey and basketball as well as art and crafts. Play streets closed on July 26.

Play Streets: Mott Playground, College Avenue between E. 166th and 167th streets; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Mon, July 8 - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Thanks to the Police Athletic League, children can enjoy traditional sidewalk games and learn from a wide range of recreational and cultural arts programs. Features activities include Double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, nok hockey and basketball as well as art and crafts. Play streets closed on July 26.

Play Streets: Mullaly Park, Jerome Avenue between E. 164th St. and McClelland Street; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Mon, July 8 - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Thanks to the Police Athletic League, children can enjoy traditional sidewalk games and learn from a wide range of

recreational and cultural arts programs. Features activities include Double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, nok hockey and basketball as well as art and crafts. Play streets closed on July 26.

Play Streets: Parque De Los Ninos Park, Morrison Avenue at Watson Avenue; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Mon, July 8 - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Thanks to the Police Athletic League, children can enjoy traditional sidewalk games and learn from a wide range of recreational and cultural arts programs. Features activities include Double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, nok hockey and basketball as well as art and crafts. Play streets closed on July 26.

Play Streets: Space Time Playground, Lafayette and Bolton avenues; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Mon, July 8 - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Thanks to the Police Athletic League, children can enjoy traditional sidewalk games and learn from a wide range of recreational and cultural arts programs. Features activities include Double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, nok hockey and basketball as well as art and crafts. Play streets closed on July 26.

Play Streets: University Family Shelter, 1041 University Ave. at 167th Street; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm, Mon, July 8 - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Thanks to the Police Athletic League, children can enjoy traditional sidewalk games and learn from a wide range of recreational and cultural arts programs. Features activities include Double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, nok hockey and basketball as well as art and crafts. Play streets closed on July 26.

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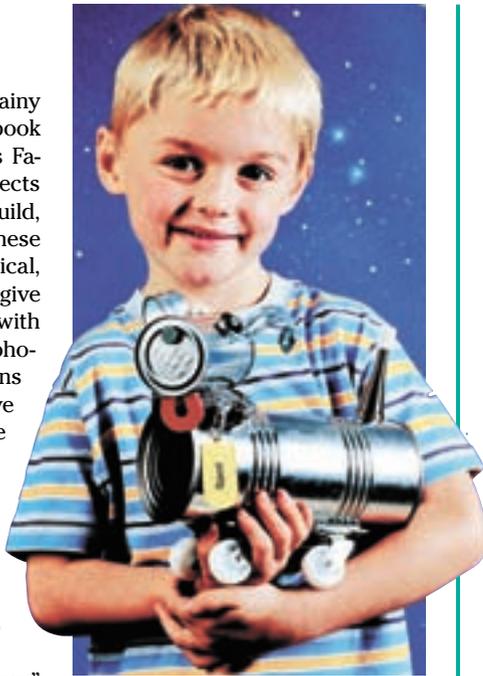
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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

DIY fun

Be prepared for the next rainy day with a delightful new handbook of activities, "Martha Stewart's Favorite Crafts For Kids: 175 Projects for Kids of All Ages to Create, Build, Design, Explore, and Share." These tasks are fun to make and practical, too, resulting in things kids can give as gifts, wear, decorate, or play with after they make 'em. Lots of photographs and precise directions make it easy for kids to achieve craft nirvana. The pages are filled with enriching tasks, such as how to design and sew an original stuffed animal; create a dog from recycled tin cans (pictured); or make a snow globe, musical instruments, papier-mache UFOs, superhero costumes, and more.



The "Experiment and Explore" chapter includes crafts with a scientific-spin, like how to make a thaumatrope, a "wonder turner" that creates the illusion of two images merging into one when you spin the handle.

And just in time for summer vacation, the book proposes a variety of craftastic ways to store and

display souvenirs from your travels and staycations in the "Keep It Together" chapter.

"Martha Stewart's Favorite Crafts For Kids: 175 Projects for Kids of All Ages to Create, Build, Design, Explore, and Share" by the Editors of Martha Stewart Living (Potter Craft, \$24.99), www.barnesandnoble.com.

Just seahorsin' around

Enjoy rollicking fun on the high seas with Recess Monkey's latest CD, the marine-themed "Deep Sea Diver." Kids can't help but be carried away by Jack Forman and Drew Holloway's tide of clever lyrics and engaging mix of musical styles.

My favorite tracks include "Beach Ball," an ode to this ubersafe toy: "No matter where it hits

you, you won't need an ice pack!"; "Fish Sticks," which shows off the drum stick-wielding talents of Monkey's new percussionist, Korum Bischoff; "Shrimp," with its words of encouragement for the vertically challenged; the rollicking "Seven Cs," about a gang whose names begin with the alphabet's third letter; and "Periscope Up," a sweet song about making a friend.

Recommended for ages 2 to 8, this indie rocker (a follow-up to Recess Monkey's widely adored "In Tents," a circus-themed album) is a salty-sweet treat for adults, too.

Fans of Recess Monkey will want to dive into the band's free concert at Madison Square Park on July 16 at 10:30 am.

"Deep Sea Diver" CD by Recess Monkey, \$14.99, www.recessmonkey.com.



Beat the clock

It may seem that the "get out of bed," "get dressed," "eat breakfast," "brush your teeth" routines of September are far away, but it's not too early to get the tool that will make the job easier! Moschel Kadokura's On-Task On-Time For Kids looks like a cousin of a See-and-Say, but it's a one-foot-tall timer that parents customize with easily repositioned stickers illustrating their child's daily routines.

After creating the one-hour to-do list, you turn the timer on and watch as your child races off to complete his tasks.

The ticking sound and slowly turning wheel add excitement, as it reminds him that time is passing.

You'll teach your little one time-management skills, build self-esteem, and be glad to be doing less



nagging during your day. Kadokura's time-saving device is long overdue!

On Task On Time For Kids timer, \$49.95, www.timelymatters.com.

Puzzle paradise found

The new Pirate's Paradise wood puzzle by Maple Landmark Woodcraft is a treasure map-styled tray puzzle that will help your crew chart a

course for an adventurous afternoon. Measuring 11- by 14-inches, the toy is crafted in America from birch plywood. The 15 laser-cut pieces come together to show a proper pirate galleon and its route toward a treasure island and the "X" that marks the spot. Ideal for scallywags ages 3 and up, the puzzle is printed with non-toxic ink.

Anchors aweigh!

Pirate's Paradise puzzle by Maple Landmark Woodcraft, \$20, www.maplelandmark.com.



Solar powered art maker

Your child can harness the power of the sun to create a unique wall-hanging with Eye Can Art's Fabric Sun Photo Kit. Each reusable paper can contains sun-ready cloth, a plastic plate, a china marker, backing board, hemming tape, ribbon, and instructions — everything needed to make nine photo prints. The kit teaches an authentic art technique and encourages the use of imagination rather than relying on templates or stencils.

Eye Can Art also offers a Sketch



Foam Printmaking Kit, Book in a Box Kit, Sumi-e Ink Painting Kit, and more.

Fabric Sun Photo Kit by Eye Can Art, \$30, www.eyecanart.com.

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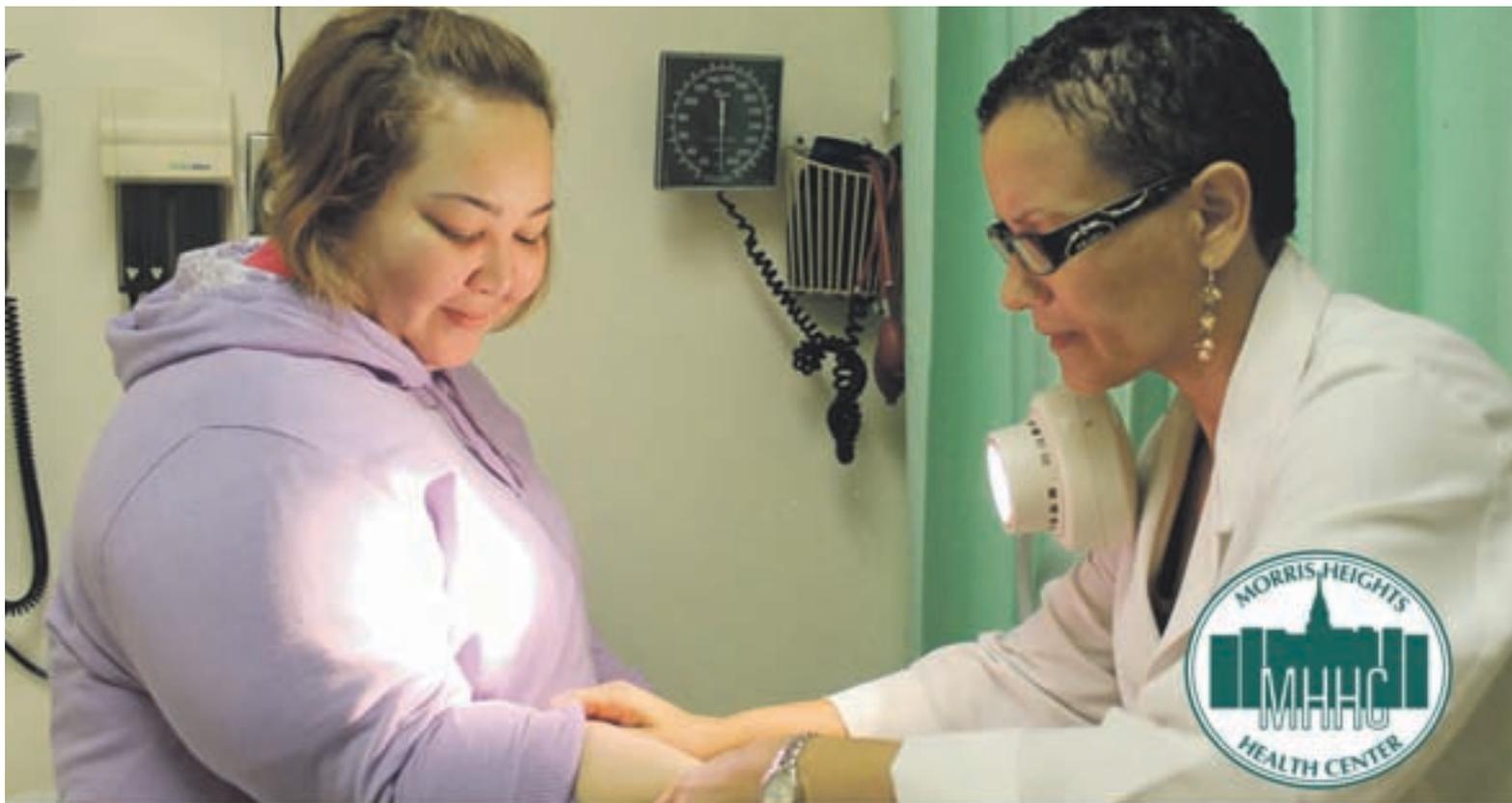
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MHHC AT WALTON
25 E. 183rd Street
Bronx, NY 10453

MHHC AT ST. ANN'S
625 E. 137th Street
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