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Letter from the publisher

Giving thanks and remembering

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. I love everything about it; the food, the spirit of appreciation for our bounty and the coming together of family. The celebration of the harvest is universal and every culture seems to have a ceremonial experience built around it.

I also love that it is the one holiday in our culture that is inclusive of everyone and is about being human, not about religious affiliation or patriotic awareness and memory or about commercialism.

The first Thanksgiving for the early settlers must have been extraordinary if not exhausting both physically and emotionally. They had been welcomed by the indigenous tribes and had been taught



by them what to grow, how to grow it and how to harvest it. They were shown good cheer by the generous tribes of the northeast and we should all be remembering them as we celebrate in our contemporary manner.

Native Americans have played an enormous role in our lives, and they made it possible for those settlers to last through very difficult times. They shared their knowledge and their land. They were wise and innocent to the future that lay in store for them.

It's what I generally think about as winter begins. Maybe it's because I was an avid student of history, or maybe it's because all around us are Native American memories and names. I'm always aware of their

role in this nation.

As a second generation American, whose ancestors came from various parts of Europe, we were "greenhorns" to the American experience, although we caught on quickly; quickly enough to experience a few world wars, the Great Depression, and to lose a loved one in Vietnam.

My grandmother was in charge of food in our house as I was growing up and having survived starvation in Europe and the Depression here, a full larder and food on the table was a sign of security to her and to our family. I have largely stayed the same and have enough food backed up in my house as "possibility" to put together a good small banquet at the drop of a hat.

There have been times I had an invite to a Thanksgiving dinner and times I didn't. Someone long ago

suggested I volunteer to feed others less fortunate or ill on Thanksgiving, and I did and it was great. It felt wonderful to be a giver and to help make someone else's holiday possible.

Whatever your family does on this holiday, let's remember how lucky we all are to have children as we celebrate these special days. All holidays are enhanced by the presence of our children and they take on new meaning with each passing year.

We extend our best wishes to you and yours for a very Happy Thanksgiving.

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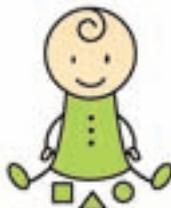
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Gay families

Becoming a more familiar sight

Part one of a series profiles three New York couples

BY ALLISON PLITT

The gay and lesbian rights movement has made great strides in New York in recent years. Under the Marriage Equality Act, passed by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Cuomo, same-sex marriage became legal in New York on July 24, 2011.

Two years later, the movement won a national victory on June 26, 2013, when the United States Supreme Court ruled that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act — a 1996 law that denies legally married same-sex couples more than 1,100 protections and responsibilities of marriage — was unconstitutional. By striking it down, the Supreme Court affirmed that all committed couples who marry deserve equal, legal respect and treatment.

As more and more states legalize gay marriage, U.S. citizens are growing accustomed to seeing same-sex couples and their families. I interviewed three gay, married men with children, who live in different areas of New York City, to find out how these changes have impacted their lives. I asked all of them the same set of questions and got some very thought-provoking answers.

Howard and Darren

Howard May lives with his husband, Darren Rosenblum, and 4-year-old daughter in Manhattan's Chelsea, where many gay and lesbian couples live. Howard was born in Forest Hills and grew up in Long Island. He is a psychologist who helps both gay and straight patients deal with a variety of mental health issues.

Howard and Darren had their daughter through gestational surrogacy, in which one woman is the egg provider and another woman carries the fetus. Although they all live in different parts of the country, Howard and his husband are still in contact with their egg donor and surrogate.

Howard and his family have traveled overseas and lived in Seattle before settling in Chelsea.

"We have not suffered overt harassment, although we have received uncomfortable stares at times," observed Howard.

Other than an occasional question, he says his daughter has never been teased by her classmates for having two fathers. But, the father does say he has a "heightened awareness for possible danger" after there were six recorded incidences of "gay-bashing" last summer in New York City, in which the victims were badly beaten and one man was shot to death by a homophobic gunman.

Of course, words can hurt, too, and Howard says there's one insensitive query that he and his husband are asked "a lot": "Who is the biological father of our child?"

"It doesn't annoy us, because we discussed it in advance and came up with an answer, which is that we're both her parents," said Howard. "We don't really want to identify [the sperm donor], because we don't want people to think one of us is more of a parent than the other. It's really not important. When it's important for our daughter to know, she'll know."

The subject that Howard speaks most positively about are the new opportunities for him and his family, thanks to the change in Defense of Marriage Act legislation.

"Now that DOMA has been found unconstitutional, we can file a joint federal income tax return. We also now have the comfort of knowing that when we do die, our assets can pass to the other without tax burden," Howard explained. "It is so significant that our federal government is saying that anti-gay dehumanization won't be tolerated. The emotional implications of this are immeasurable."

Boaz and Gal

The next person I spoke with was Boaz Adler, who was born and

raised in Israel. He moved to Chicago, where his father was living, when he was 18. Boaz is married and he and his husband, Gal Adler, adopted a boy from Guatemala, who is now 8 years old. They also adopted an infant boy from Florida last December, and he is now almost a year old. Boaz is studying for his master's degree while his husband works for the federal government. Since the historic Supreme Court ruling, Boaz now receives many benefits from the federal government that were once only granted to married couples, such as medical insurance and survivor benefits.

Boaz and his family live in Forest Hills, Queens, which is a predominantly straight community.

"We feel very comfortable living here," said Boaz. "We feel that we're part of the community. We don't see ourselves as any different."

When asked how he would feel if his family moved to another area of the country, he answered, "We used to live in Texas, and we would travel all over the South, and I never felt persecuted in any way. I don't know if it's just my kind of narrow tunnel vision of the world, 'Hey, it's just who I am,' but people don't care or care enough to bother me."

Boaz finds that most kids are just inquisitive, and since his older son doesn't talk a lot about having two dads, Boaz answers a lot of his friends' questions about their family. He does believe, however, that his son has been teased by other children.

"When my son was 4 or 5, a girlfriend came to our home and said sort of tauntingly, 'Well, you don't have a mom,' and my son paused for a moment, and I stopped breathing. Then he said, 'But I have two dads. You barely see your dad, because he's at work, but I have two dads.' That was his response. It wasn't something I manipulated in any way, but it made my heart swell."



William and Estevan

Lastly, I interviewed William Sherr, who was born in Georgia and grew up in Texas. While living in Texas, he was a school teacher for the Dallas Independent School District. After William married 13 years ago, he and his husband, Estevan Garcia, decided to have children. His husband adopted their

first son, but the state of Texas would not allow a joint adoption, so William researched areas where joint adoptions were possible. Eventually, they moved to Washington State, where William was able to adopt their son as well.

William and his husband later moved to Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn, close to Park Slope, where many

gay and lesbian families live. William now has three children — a 13 year old, an 11 year old, and a 6 year old. Two of his children were adopted, while one joined his family through foster care. Estevan is employed as a pediatric emergency physician at a hospital while William stays home and takes care of the kids, but he also runs a business from his home

that caters to the needs of gay and lesbian families.

William has health insurance from Estevan's employer, but in the past, he had to pay tax on its imputed value. Because of the change in laws, the hospital recently announced that all domestic partner benefits would be converted to spousal benefits.

Since William has been a stay-at-home parent for the last 13 years, he hasn't been able to contribute to his Individual Retirement Account during his unemployment years. Now that William is federally recognized as a spouse, he can contribute to his IRA, regardless of his income.

When William travels with his family, they sometimes encounter people asking inappropriate questions of his children, such as where their mother is or if they are really brothers and sisters. Since William and his husband's children have different birth families, they do not resemble each other.

"It doesn't happen so much here in New York, but more when we travel, we get questions like that."

William says he enjoys living in Brooklyn, because his children's school in nearby Park Slope is so friendly to his family. He thinks it would be difficult for his family to live anywhere else.

"I do think our children have been bullied and harassed a few times, and I think our school has stepped up and eradicated the problem. If I have an issue with the school, I can go to the administration, and I know the administration is going to be on my side. They're not going to side with the bully. They're not going to side with someone's belief that my family is wrong. If we lived in another community, I don't know if we would have that luxury."

As advocates of adopting and fostering children, William and his husband have fostered more than 20 children in their home over the years.

His advice to gay and lesbian couples who are considering becoming parents?

"It's not nearly as difficult as you think," said William. "I would advise them to think about adoption and foster adoption and think about trying to help all the kids out there that don't have a home that need a home."

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

Be your child's best influence

Keeping your children on the right path can be a challenge, but these tips can help

BY KIKI BOCHI

With all the recent hullaballoo about Miley Cyrus's twerking and her music video in which she swings naked from a giant pendulum, what she is actually singing about may have gone unnoticed. The once-popular Disney star who was idolized by kids everywhere is now singing about taking the street drug Molly, doing "lines" of cocaine in the bathroom, and partying all night.

Hannah Montana has grown up, and it's a scary thing.

With those kinds of messages in popular media, keeping your children on the right path may seem like a challenge, but it is possible. And the biggest step is to set yourself up as the most important influence in their lives. The sooner you start, the better.

"Parents are the number one reason why kids don't do drugs," says Peggy B. Sapp, president of Informed Families, an organization that works to reduce drug use among kids.

Sapp wants parents to know that

Scary numbers

A recent report by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shed light on how many adolescents, ages 12 to 17, used illegal substances on an average day in America:

- 7,639 drank alcohol for the first time.
- 4,594 used an illicit drug for the first time.
- 4,000 adolescents used marijuana for the first time.
- 3,701 smoked cigarettes for the first time.
- 2,151 misused prescription pain relievers.

no one is more powerful in influencing their children than they are.

"Drug education is about teaching children self-control and responsibility. It's not so much about talking about drugs as it is about positioning yourself as the parent and authority figure," Sapp says.

Here, from Informed Families and the National Crime Prevention Council, are some ideas on how to build stronger relationships that will keep your children on the right track.

Establish good communication

The better you know your children, the easier it will be to guide them towards positive activities and friendships. Develop a genuine interest in your child as a person. Make time for his questions and comments, even if they seem silly to you. Talk to your children every day. Share what happened to you and ask what happened to them during the day. Ask your children their opinions and include them in making decisions. Show your children that you value their thoughts and input.

Get involved in your children's lives

Young people are less likely to

get involved with drugs when caring adults are a part of their life. Spend time doing something your children want to do every day. Support your children's activities by attending special events like recitals and games. Praise their efforts, not just their successes. Most important, when you are with your child, be present in the moment. Put away your cellphone. Don't worry about something else while you are talking with your child. If you are preoccupied, you will send the message that you don't think your child is important.

Be a source of support

Help your children manage problems by asking what is wrong when they seem upset and letting them know you are there to help. Listen to your child's or teen's concerns without judgment. Repeat them to show that you heard and understand. Even if you disagree, don't preach. You want your child to feel comfortable and confident in coming to you.

Make clear rules and enforce them consistently

Share your views about life, what is right and wrong, and what you aspire to for your family. Discuss rules, expectations, and consequences in advance. If a rule is broken, be sure to enforce the consequences such as taking away television or video games. This teaches children that they are responsible for their actions. Give praise when your children follow rules and meet expectations.

Be a positive role model

Demonstrate ways to solve problems, have fun, and manage stress without using alcohol or drugs. Children really do notice what their parents say and do. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions. This includes how you deal with strong feelings, emotions, stress, and even minor aches and pains. Actions speak louder than words.

Help your children choose friends wisely

When children have friends who don't engage in risky behaviors, they are likely to resist them, too. Get to know your children's friends and their families. Involve your children in positive group activities, such as sports teams, scouting troops, and after-school programs.



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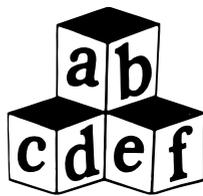


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Scheduling the season

Letting go in
the holiday
tug-of-war

BY BETH FORNAUF

It's the most chaotic time of the year. With the start of November, parents start feeling the pull of the holidays. The stress of budgeting for presents, travel, and holiday events is enough to rattle anyone's holiday spirit, and trying to manage invitations, obligations, and special events has many parents changing their tune from "Let it Snow!" to "Let it be over!"

For many, it all starts with a simple question: what should we do for the holidays? This quickly snowballs into a never-ending list of follow-up questions. Should we travel? Should we stay home? Should we host friends? Should we visit family? What can we afford? Competition for your and your family's time — from in-laws, siblings, friends, and work — has many parents wishing they could skip the holiday hoopla altogether.

Yet, there are ways to navigate the murky seas of familial and social obligations that accompany the holidays. All you need are a few strategies for getting organized, staying honest, and knowing when to say "no thanks, but..." Read on to find out how to let go in your holiday tug-of-war.

Define non-negotiables

Every family has certain commitments that are non-negotiable. You simply need to make time for them in your schedule. Do yourself and your family a favor by determining what these are as early as possible.

Does your oldest child have final

exams to study for? Or maybe your little one has a speaking role in the holiday pageant? Consider both scheduled events like parties, and ongoing ones like music lessons or sports.

Compile a list of not-to-be-missed events for all of your family members, and note dates, venues, and times so you aren't frantically

searching for them at the last minute.

Put it (all) in writing

Once you've established your family's non-negotiables, put every



Should we travel?
Should we stay
home? Should we
host friends? Should
we visit family? What
can we afford?

single one of them in writing. But don't stop at a list. Write the dates on the family calendar. (And if you don't have one of these, please create one immediately!)

This does not mean simply logging things in your smartphone or personal planner. Important family events need to be visible to parents and kids. This helps avoid conflict because everyone can see when something is happening, and also gives everyone a sense of ownership in making holiday plans. So if you expect your partner to attend your holiday office party, don't just assume it's a go — put it in VISIBLE writing.

Check in

As tempting as it might be to reply “yes” to the first ugly-sweater party invitation that lands in your inbox, resist the urge. It's unfair of you to commit to something without talking it over with the rest of the family. You may be thrilled at the prospect of having Thanksgiving dinner with your parents at a nice restaurant, but your kids may want to relax and stay home.

Check-in with your home team before you make any decisions. You'll avoid making assumptions, and are less likely to encounter whining and grumbling down the road. By seeking out other's opinions and ideas in the planning phase, you may find yourself on the receiving end of the same respectful consideration in the future.

Consider your kiddos

When making holiday plans, it's often easy to assume that your kids, especially if they are young, will roll with whatever you decide to do. But stop and think for a minute: do you really want to fly (and risk delays and overbookings) across the country when your kids want to cozy up with you at home?

For many, the magic of the holidays dwindles as we get older. If

you have little ones, consider taking it easy and establishing traditions at home over the holidays. If your kids are older, you need to talk with them about their school work, activities, and sports schedules — many of which do not take a hiatus over winter breaks.

Put forth a Plan 'B'

Refusing an invitation, especially from a family member, can be tricky. You don't want to hurt anyone's feelings or make things awkward.

Instead of simply saying “no thank you,” or “sorry, we can't make it,” offer an alternative. So maybe you can't attend Christmas dinner at your in-laws'. Offer to host them for a New Year's Day brunch instead. Better yet, save yourself some stress and plan a get-together for later in the month. Why not take advantage of one of the long weekends in January or February for a low-key visit?

Take time for the team

Amidst the chaos of holiday shopping, decorating, and socializing, keep in mind that one of the goals of this time of year is to celebrate with loved ones, especially your immediate family. That's difficult to do if you're always worrying about catching a flight to somewhere, or spending days trapped in the kitchen preparing a meal.

Make it a point to carve out some family time with your kids, whether they're toddlers or teenagers. You won't have them home with you forever, and now is the time to make some memories that they can cherish. Schedule a game night, have a cookie-baking party, or get outdoors and build a snow family. Whatever you decide, make that time sacred and family-only. You'll all be thankful you took some time to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Remember, the holidays aren't about accepting every invitation that comes your way. Take some time, before the frenzy begins, to think about what you and your family should hold on to, and ways you can let go.

Enjoy the season.

Beth Fornauf is a freelance writer. She plans to celebrate the holidays by hosting family, relaxing with her husband and two children, and enjoying some fun in the snow.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Celebrities' effect on your child's diet

It's no secret that kids trust celebrities. But can an endorsement from a celebrity spur your child into making unhealthy food decisions?

The answer is yes.

Children viewing a commercial featuring a famous soccer player ate considerably more potato chips than kids who had seen ads for toys and nuts, according to research published in *The Journal of Pediatrics*. Past research has shown kids are more likely to pick foods endorsed by celebrities, even when it's fruit.

Researchers also found that children will eat more of an endorsed snack food when they saw the celebrity on TV in a context other than a commercial.

This is worrisome, since most foods advertised on TV are unhealthy and could affect a child's future weight and health.

"Parents need to be aware that exposure to any food marketing for high fat, sugar and, or salt foods



may have a detrimental impact upon their child's food choice, intake, overall diet quality and therefore health," explains Dr. Emma Boyland, lecturer in Appetite and Obesity at the University of Liverpool, who led the study.

All ages vulnerable

While the study was done on children ages 8 to 11, children at

any age are vulnerable to food-marketing effects.

Research suggests that TV commercials have an influence over the food choices of even very young children. Major food-brand logos are thought to be recognized by children before they can even speak.

"It is not until children are around the age of 12 that they are likely to start understanding the persuasive intent of food-promotion activities (i.e. that somebody is trying to sell them something)," says Boyland. "For some, this understanding will not be fully developed until much later."

What can a parent do?

It is clear that more study needs to be done to explore this phenomenon with other celebrity endorsers, products, and marketing elements such as brand characters, but there are some steps parents can take.

- Be aware of the extent and nature of your child's exposure to marketing messages.

- Reduce the amount of television your child watches.

- Critically discuss the promotion of foods with children in an age-appropriate way.

- Help them understand both the persuasive intent of commercials and the importance of making better choices.

"In the context of an obesity epidemic, the food promotion environment is one factor we should seek to effectively control to safeguard the next generation's health," Boyland adds.

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



Waffle-iron grilled cheese

If you don't own a panini press, an old-fashioned waffle iron makes a tasty grilled sandwich that holds up in a lunch box. If you don't have either, cook this on the stove top as you would an ordinary grilled cheese. Makes one sandwich

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1/3 cup coarsely grated Gruyère cheese

2 slices whole-wheat or rye bread

3 thin slices tart apple such as Granny Smith

Oil for the waffle iron

DIRECTIONS: Preheat the waffle iron. While it heats, assemble the sandwich. Sprinkle half of the cheese over one bread slice.

Lay the apple slices over the cheese. Top with the remaining cheese and remaining bread slice. Brush the waffle iron with oil. Put the sandwich in the waffle iron and close tightly. Cook until the bread is browned and the cheese is melted, two to three minutes. Remove from the waffle iron and let cool for five minutes. Cut in half and wrap well or store in a container.

NUTRITION FACTS: 410 calories, 43 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 10 g sugar, 21 g protein, 18 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 350 milligrams sodium, 45% DV calcium, 15% DV iron.

Source: Katie Sullivan Morford, "Best Lunch Box Ever: Ideas and Recipes for School Lunches Kids Will Love," Chronicle Books (2013)

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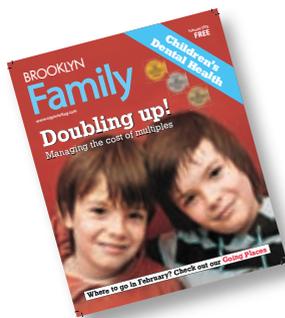
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The *write* stuff

How to help
a child with
dysgraphia
succeed at
school

BY SUE LEBRETON

Does your child avoid homework or become distressed when that homework involves printing or writing? Does he have an awkward pencil grasp? Is his printing or handwriting difficult to decipher? Can he communicate his ideas verbally, but struggles to organize thoughts on paper? If any of this sounds familiar, your child may have a learning disability called dysgraphia.

Students with learning disabilities have normal intelligence but have difficulty with their brain's ability to receive, process, store, or analyze infor-

mation. These disabilities are usually diagnosed after children enter school — when parents and teachers see the gap between affected children and their peers. If not addressed, this gap increases over the years as learning becomes more complex. The sooner children are identified and receive help, the better they do in school and in their social life.

There are three distinct types of dysgraphia: motor, spatial, and processing. Children can have one or more of these types of dysgraphia. Helen Painter, occupational therapist and author of “Dysgraphia: Your Essential Guide,” says that it is crucial to determine which form of dys-

graphia your child has so you can choose the appropriate treatment and accommodations.

Motor dysgraphia is the easiest to recognize, as it is when a child struggles due to poor motor skills, such as a poor pencil grasp. Often, a child will be screened and will begin working on those fine motor skills with an occupational therapist. Painter suggests that the motor issue (if it occurs as the only form of the disability) can be almost fixed in a month or two. If issues continue, she says parents should have their child seen by a medical doctor or a psychologist, the professionals who are qualified to assess spatial dysgraphia and

Signs of dysgraphia

Top-10 signs of dysgraphia (ages 4–6)

- Difficulty learning the alphabet and identifying letter sounds to the letter.
- Difficulty learning the letters in the child's own name.
- Avoiding drawing and writing.
- Avoiding fine motor centers or stations.
- Poor ability to cut with scissors.
- Awkward pencil grasp.
- Poor pencil control for curved letters.
- Good at copying, but cannot compose own words.
- Frustration and shutting down behaviors.
- Self-esteem slipping, feelings of being stupid.

Top-10 signs of dysgraphia (ages 7–12)

Children in this age range display poor overall legibility, which is:

- Mixing upper- and lower-case letters.
- Poor spelling.
- Poor spacing between words.
- Poor placement of letters and words on the line.

- Tiring when writing due to awkward pencil grasp.
- Saying letters and words out loud while writing.
- Difficulty thinking of words to write.
- Poor comprehension of what is written.
- Self-esteem slipping further.

Top-10 signs of dysgraphia in teens and adults

- Mixing print and cursive styles of writing.
- Difficulty brainstorming main idea, supporting sentences.
- Poor organization of writing ideas in general.
- Difficulty organizing what has already been written down.
- Widening gap between speech and written work.
- Work avoidance.
- Taking huge amount of time for work completion.
- Decreased comprehension when writing requirement increases.
- Difficulty with grammar and spelling.
- Lowered self-esteem.

Source: "Dysgraphia: Your Essential Guide," by Helen Painter

processing dysgraphia.

In processing dysgraphia, there is a missing link between working memory and the muscle movements required to do the printing or writing. People with this form say they cannot see the letters or words in their "mind's eye." Spatial dysgraphia occurs when the person has difficulty understanding what the eyes are seeing. People with spatial dysgraphia struggle to see how objects are positioned relative to each other and how things are similar or different.

Unfortunately, both spatial and processing dysgraphia remain with children throughout their lives, so parents must work with educators to provide modifications and accommodations.

"It will help your child develop sound study habits and realize this is a condition that can be worked with, and it is not something that needs to be disabling. Today's children are fortunate to be able to benefit from technology, compared

to kids in the past who could only have dreamed of such help," says Painter.

Despite the availability of a wide array of technology, Painter has noticed that both parents and educators are hesitant to use the technology, because they fear that children will not learn the skills if they use this crutch. Her practical experience disproves this.

"Anybody can succeed if they are given the right tools, lifelong tools. There is no excuse for not helping these kids today," says Painter.

If you suspect your child may have issues with dysgraphia, have a physician or psychologist perform testing so that your child can get the appropriate support.

Sue LeBreton's son was finally diagnosed with dysgraphia after many years spent focusing on motor skills. He has both motor and processing dysgraphia and has become a happier, more engaged student with the help of technology.

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The difficult truth about parenting

From celebrity moms to parenting magazines to moms on the playground, whenever most women talk about parenting, they say the same thing: “Parenting is the hardest, but most rewarding, job in the world, and I wouldn’t give it up for anything!”

There are few of us who would

dispute the overall premise of that, but I wonder if every one of us who says it really means it?

Meaning, do we always think that parenting is rewarding all the time, even though it’s something we say all the time? Or, is it something we have to say? Why is it that we feel so compelled to say how rewarding parenting is whenever we talk about the difficulty? Are we not allowed to complain? Or is it that we always have to be “happy moms?”

I am the mom of 3-year-old triplets, and my life with them has been exhilarating, but it has also been incredibly exhausting.

During my days with them, my kids consume all of my energy and at night, they still want more! I struggle daily to keep up with the demands of parenting, on some days more successfully than others.

I also struggle to maintain other aspects of my life outside of parenting. I struggle to keep lunch dates with friends (assuming I can remember I had a lunch date), and I struggle to keep up with the demands of my professional life.

So parenting is hard, and it’s in those moments when it doesn’t feel very rewarding. Instead it feels like I’ve been duped. That said, if I had a conversation with a fellow mom I would say, “it’s the most rewarding job in the world,” even if I didn’t think so at the time — and I know that I’m not alone in that.

At some point, every one of us feels drained, confused, and exhausted by our roles as mothers. There are moments in all of our lives when we are not “happy moms,” and in fact, we may be downright miserable (at least momentarily), and yet, it feels like we are not allowed to say it. It feels like whenever we talk about our lives as mothers everything has to seem perfect.

I wonder if fewer moms would feel less guilty or isolated if they knew that they weren’t alone, and that having feelings of dissatisfaction is completely normal. It is also possible that by reflecting on the difficulty of parenting without talking about the joys of it in the same sentence, it would cause more of us to feel inspired by the importance of our job. Would we all feel a greater sense of purpose, satisfaction, and accomplishment by simply talking about parenting in a different way, by just saying that “parenting is the hardest job in the world”?

Notoya Green is a parenting expert and former family law attorney. You can read her blog at www.tripletsintribeca.com. You can also follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/tripletsintribeca and on Twitter @NotoyaG.



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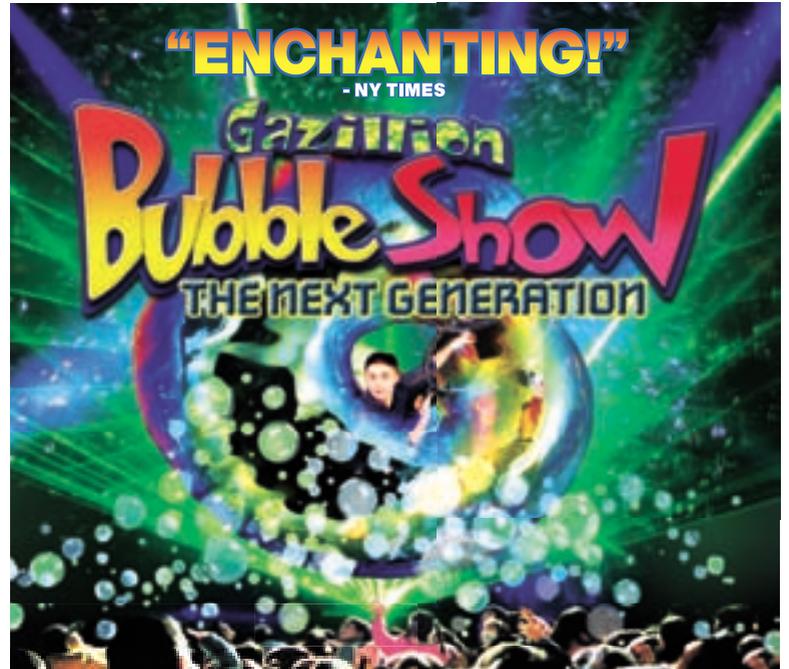


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Heads UP

What parents of athletes should know about head injuries and concussions

BY KIKI BOCHI

Brooke de Lench was watching one of her sons play in a high school football game, and what she saw worried her. He looked slow. Confused. Uncoordinated.

No one else seemed to notice, but she saw enough to set off alarm bells. It wasn't just that he was having an off day. She later took him to the doctor, and results confirmed her fears — her son was suffering from the residual effects of at least one concussion, and possibly more.

"I was told to never let his head be in a collision again," says De Lench, the founder of MomsTeam.com, a website whose mission it is to empower parents of young athletes through information and resources. During her son's recovery, the experience was frightening enough to launch De Lench on a mission of spreading the word

about the dangers of concussions and other sports injuries.

With the announcement of a \$765-million settlement agreement last month between the NFL and more than 4,000 retired players who claimed the league hid the dangers of concussions, many parents may be wondering about the long-term effects of head injuries sustained by youth athletes. Many of the professional players have shown evidence of a degenerative brain disease similar to Alzheimer's disease that is believed to be caused by repeated head trauma.

"I think parents really need to understand the ramifications," says De Lench, author of "Home Team Advantage: The Critical Role of Mothers in Youth Sports."

Concussions can happen in any sport, not just football. They occur in soccer, baseball, lacrosse, basketball, wrestling, hockey, cheerleading, and volleyball, among other sports.

No activity is immune. With kids playing harder than ever in today's ultra-competitive world of youth sports, it only makes sense.

Concussions are brain injuries that occur when a blow to the head or body causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Concussions can also be caused by a fall, a collision between players, or with an object such as a goalpost. Even a mild blow to the head — a "ding" or "getting your bell rung" — can have serious consequences.

Recent research has shown that because of the way their brains are growing, adolescents are more sensitive to the effects of a sport-related concussion than adults or children. In addition to long-term damage, youth athletes who have suffered a concussion are at risk of Second Impact Syndrome, a rare but usually fatal condition. If a child who has not completely recovered from a concussion receives a second blow to the head, it can cause massive swelling in the brain that can lead to sudden death.

Various studies reveal some frightening facts: brain changes in children who have sustained a mild traumatic brain injury, or concussion, persist for months following injury — even after the symptoms of the injury are gone, according to a study published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*. The research suggests that, among other things, concussions alter the brain's white matter — the long fibers that carry information from one area of the brain to another.

Yet 41 percent of student athletes returned to play too soon after a concussion, according to another report. The study found that a shocking 16 percent of high school football players who lost conscious-

Learn the signs of concussion

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed here after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be kept out of play until a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and ready to return to play.

Signs observed by coaching staff or parents

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness, even briefly

- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events either prior to hit or fall, or after

Symptoms reported by athletes

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"





ness during a concussion returned to the field the same day. More than 20 percent of concussions in boys' and girls' soccer and basketball were repeat concussions. In fact, 16.8 percent of high school athletes suffering a concussion had previously suffered a sport-related concussion, either that season or in a previous season.

De Lench, a former athlete herself and strong supporter of youth sports programs, understands the desire for kids to return to play. For many kids, being an athlete is how they define themselves. It is not only part of their identity, but is also a huge part of their social life.

"Kids should not be pulled out of sports. Sports are critical — critical! — for some kids. Pulling them out is not the remedy here," she says. "We need to empower parents to make sure coaches are trained properly, to make sure kids get the

right kind of physical training such as neck-strengthening, and to make sure kids are taught to self-report symptoms."

Some school districts around the country are requiring young athletes to undergo cognitive testing prior to participating, so they can have a "baseline" to determine when a player can safely return to play, but such information is only useful if students understand the importance of reporting symptoms and if parents and coaches are vigilant about taking note of possible injuries.

So what are the most important things a parent — and coach — should know about concussions? First, seek professional medical attention if your young athlete shows any sign of injury, such as appearing dazed, stunned, confused, or clumsy, or if she exhibits a loss of memory, mood and behavior changes, or even a brief loss of consciousness.

Some symptoms may not show up for hours or days, so parents need to be tuned in.

A young athlete with diagnosed concussion should not be allowed to return to play on the day of injury, regardless of the medical resources available or her level of athletic performance. All concussion management guidelines, old and new, agree that no athlete should be allowed to return to play while exhibiting post-concussion signs or symptoms. Some call for at least one symptom-free week before returning to practice or play. Because activities that require concentration and attention might exacerbate the symptoms and delay recovery, children should limit exertion and school-related activities until symptom-free (e.g. no homework, no text messaging or videogames, and staying home from school).

For young people ages 15 to 24,

sports are second only to motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of brain injury, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But even far younger children have suffered concussions on the field and on playgrounds.

"The more parents know, the more they can make a difference," De Lench says. "I always tell parents to think about the life-cycle of their child. Think about how that child will feel when they are 30 or 40 and they have cognitive issues or pain from injuries.

"You as a parent need to understand that you are the guardian of your child and their future."

Additional information on concussions and youth sports, including an online training course for coaches, can be found on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html. For more, visit www.MomsTeam.com.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

A clean home for an asthmatic child

As parents, we want to keep our home as clean as possible for our kids, as well as for ourselves. When babies enter the picture, many moms and dads clean more than before in order to give their babies the healthiest environment possible. When you have children who have allergies or suffer from asthma, your cleaning load increases exponentially.

Every single day brings more dust and a new opportunity for an allergic reaction. Some parents go overboard and spend more time than necessary attempting to keep allergens at bay. This not only leaves already overscheduled, busy parents with a much longer to-do list, but it also brings about more daily anxiety by trying to adhere to maniacal standards.

Mary Stockton of Brooklyn Heights can relate.

“After I had my son a year ago, I became obsessive about making sure every particle of dust was immediately removed. I vacuumed daily, even my curtains, and I drove myself crazy.”

Already exhausted from late night feedings, Stockton explains that when her son was diagnosed with asthma at 8 months of age, she went into overdrive and saw every speck of dust as a deathtrap.

“My husband saw me in the throws of frantic cleaning and pointed out that I couldn’t live like this. I was spending all my time dusting and wiping down furniture rather than enjoying my baby. That’s when I stopped being so preoccupied with dirt and dust.”

So what is absolutely necessary when it comes to cleaning routines when you have an allergic or asthmatic child? We asked Dr. Paul M. Ehrlich, a partner at Allergy and Asthma Associates of Murray Hill,



and clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine. Ehrlich, also the co-author of “Asthma Allergies Children: A Parent’s Guide” and co-founder and blogger at AsthmaAllergiesChildren.com, explains that with a little prevention, a parent can certainly protect her child without driving herself insane in the process.

What are the basics when it comes to cleaning your home with an asthmatic or allergic child? What absolutely needs to be done in terms of cleaning daily and weekly?

The most important thing is to know what your child’s allergies are. For example, we all know that getting rid of visible dust is a matter of good housekeeping, but if your child is allergic to dust mites, you should use special dust mite-resistant mattress covers and bedding.

Also, avoid cleaning supplies that have added scents. “Lemon fresh” may sound attractive, but as far as your child’s allergies are concerned, it can irritate the sinuses and the skin when used in detergent.

What is not necessary? What are

some of the extremes that parents go to that they don’t need to do?

The emphasis on antibacterial cleaning supplies is oversold. Soap and water remove both allergens and bacteria from hands, dishes, bathrooms, and kitchens very effectively. Antibacterial agents do not neutralize allergens.

What other precautions need to be taken when you have pets?

This is a huge dilemma. There is no such thing as a truly hypoallergenic dog or cat. There’s an urban myth that “hypoallergenic animals” have hair, not fur. This ignores the fact that the allergenic proteins in and on these animals emanate from other tissue besides hair or fur, particularly skin and in saliva.

If regular bathing is possible — very hard, particularly with cats — do it, and brush shedding dogs regularly to keep shedding to a minimum. There are also preparations marketed under the Allerpet name that can reduce dander.

Above all, keep the pet out of the patient’s room to keep allergen bombardment to a minimum during a healthy eight or nine hours of sleep. Beware, however, that cat dander is particularly sticky and travels from room to room on clothing. Better for your child to change out of day-time clothing into fresh PJs outside the bedroom.

If you have any doubts whether your child might be allergic, do not get a dog or cat. It is in no one’s interest (especially the poor pooch or kitty) to have to give up a pet.

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 Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.

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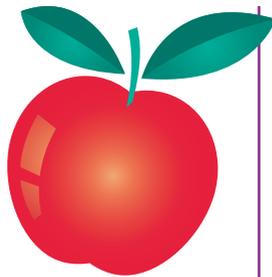


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- A greater trust in adults. By finding out that other adults will care for him, a child learns that he can trust adults other than his parents. This makes the world feel like a safer place.

- A greater sense of independence. At home, a child receives a great deal of one-on-one attention. Learning that attention must be shared with others makes the child more self-reliant.

- Improved listening and speaking skills. A child has to develop these skills to communicate successfully with the teacher and other children.

- New experiences. From trips to a bakery to new songs and dances, a child is introduced to activities that help him learn more about the world.

- Stimulation and activity. A child gets to play with a variety of equipment and materials in a place primarily designed for play.

- Increased self-esteem. By succeeding at school tasks, a child becomes more confident of his abilities.

- The satisfaction of belonging to a group. A child gains an appreciation of what school is like and develops a positive attitude toward school. He also becomes more comfortable with being away from home for part of or the whole day.

- Solid preparation for kindergarten. With today's kindergartens turning into yesterday's first grades, preschool now offers the background for success in school that children used to get in kindergarten.



Developing awareness of geography

Parents: The third week in November (Nov. 17 to Nov. 23) is Geography Awareness Week. It was established 26 years ago to encourage citizens, young and old, to think and learn about the interconnectedness of the world. Unfortunately, many of today's schools do not focus on teaching geography. So this week is a good time for parents to start taking up the slack and help their children learn more about this subject.

By visiting the Geography Awareness website, parents can find a wide array of activities, events and volunteer opportunities to participate in with their children. The most appealing aspects of this site are the missions that will help you and your children explore your own communities, looking at them through geographic activities. Some intriguing missions from last year include: making a "smell" map of your neighborhood, living on a budget of just \$1.25 a day, watching sunrise at sunset, and keeping a ship's log for five days. Completing different missions will enable your children to earn skill badges.

The videos on this website are another very educational aspect that will increase your children's knowledge of geography on such topics as earthquakes, tsunamis, and the wildest weather in the solar system. Your children should also enjoy the cartoons on the website.

Use this week and subsequent

weeks for all of your family to learn more about geography and have fun together completing the missions. Good luck!

Visit www.geographyawareness-week.org.

Helping children organize their writing

Dear teachers,

My fourth-grade son has a very difficult time trying to organize his writing. He is a great little reader, but getting his thoughts down on paper seems to be an impossible task for him. What suggestions do you have, so I can help him to improve his writing skills?

Dear parents,

Since your son is a good reader, this is definitely the place to start. Get some good short children's books out of the library, like a Curious George or Clifford book. Read a book with your son.

Encourage him to tell you what happened first in the book, next, and then at the end of the story. By doing this, your son has just completed a verbal outline. Explain that this is one way that authors organize their thoughts, and it is a way that he could organize his own writing.

Read another book together and show him how to make a timeline of the events that happened in the story. Have him write the beginning and ending events on the line and then fill in the middle of the line with a few other events that happened. Point out that this is another way to organize his writing.

Another technique that almost writes a story or report is simply talking to your son about what he wants to say or what he knows about a topic. What he says should then be written down on 3-by-5 cards and placed, by him, in the order of their importance. He can then complete his writing assignment.

Remember this: The more your son writes, the better his writing skills will be.

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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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Relocating with kids after divorce

One of the toughest situations a family can face during or after a divorce involves one parent wanting or needing to move far away from the other. Often, the reason for considering relocation is financial — living in two homes is more costly than living in and maintaining one. For most couples, divorce usually means a financial hit.

Making a new start elsewhere in the hopes of providing the basics that a family needs can make sense.

For sure, non-monetary reasons are frequently factors as well. One spouse may return to live where she grew up in order to have the emotional support of her parents, other relatives, and friends.

Whatever the underlying reasons, relocation involves hard questions. Given the school schedule, how will the child maintain a strong and healthy relationship with both mom and dad? How will the travel expenses (flights, hotel accommodations, etc.) be handled?

When relocation is an issue, the “remaining” parent may feel abandoned, and perhaps betrayed. The parent planning a move may feel that he has no choice, and that he can’t continue living in the same geographic area.

Rarely are there easy answers, and perhaps that is a reason why different judges have issued inconsistent rulings from one court to the next. It is most challenging to predict whether a judge will give more weight to the ongoing relationship between the parent who is staying and the child, or to the new opportunities of the spouse wanting to move.

Still, parents can influence the odds one way or the other. Let’s take the recent case, *Matter of Davis v. Ogden*, August 2013, Appellate Division, Second Department.



In my view, this was an “easy case” in that the remaining parent, in this instance the father, apparently did very little to help himself prove to the judge that the children should stay with him. Still, there are clear lessons to be learned.

The mother argued that 1) by moving from New York to Florida, she would be living in a place where the cost of living is lower, and where the quality of life would be greatly enhanced; 2) she was struggling financially, and so providing the high quality of life that children deserve was difficult if not impossible in New York; and, 3) her mother and other relatives in Florida could give her and the two children the support they need.

The mother made a strong case for relocation, and the father’s own behavior only bolstered her case. He had spent little time with the children — only 30 hours during

the preceding year. He didn’t have much phone contact with them, and wasn’t there for appointments with doctors or for extracurricular activities. He also wasn’t in contact with the kids’ teachers.

The judge might have ruled differently if the father had been very involved with the children, giving his time and attention to them in every possible way. Judges make their decisions based on “the best interests of the child” (a vague concept that leaves judges with a great deal of discretion in weighing various factors).

Under these circumstances, does a higher standard of living and help from family outweigh the relationship of the children with their father? What if *his* parents are a big part of the children’s lives? What if the father is willing and able to financially assist so that

the kids’ standard of living can be raised right where they are?

Again, a very difficult matter to decide.

A parent wishing to relocate with a child has the burden of establishing that the contemplated move would be in the child’s best interest. In New York, the burden (a preponderance of the evidence) may not be very stringent. When the remaining parent is largely uninvolved with the children, it is even easier to reach.

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

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

From Haiti, a story to encourage kids to dream

Your child has a dream to do something great.

Some want to be football players, or stars on a stage. Maybe he dreams of visiting Europe, driving a hot rod, being an astronaut, riding a horse, writing a book, or helping others. Keep him dreaming of doing great things by sharing the new book “Serafina’s Promise” by Ann E. Burg.

Eleven-year-old Serafina had a secret that she thought about while carrying water four times a day, emptying chamber pots, sweeping the floor, gathering wood, and piling charcoal. Her secret kept her mind busy while her hands were working.

She wanted to be a doctor ever since the physician Antoinette Solaine took care of her baby brother, Pierre. And though Pierre died, Serafina saw that being a healer was something special. Her papa even said she had a gift for it.

But she knew that she needed an education, and that was very expensive. Her mom said that there was no money for a uniform or shoes and, besides, she needed Serafina

at home, because she was about to have another baby, and there were things she couldn’t do.

So Serafina spent her days doing chores and turning her secret over in her head. Serafina knew that she needed to speak to papa, who would talk to her mom about school. A trip to the city for Flag Day seemed like a good chance to ask.

And ask she did, on their way to Port-au-Prince. Papa listened — Serafina loved that about him — and though she wasn’t sure what would happen, he smiled when she promised to find ways to earn her own money for school. It would take the rest of the summer, but once the new baby arrived, Serafina was sure she’d have time to do it.

And then the ground began to shake.

Page through “Serafina’s Promise,” and you might think there’s not much here. Indeed, the pages are largely empty and the words are spare, but don’t let that fool you: young readers won’t be able to help but be affected

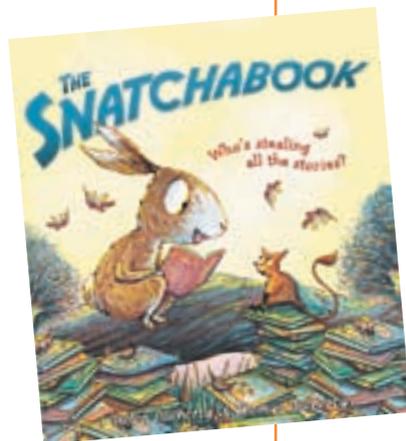


by this powerful little tale.

In a matter-of-fact manner befitting her optimistic young character, author Burg portrays Haiti’s poverty and problems without making the story one of weepy drama. In the end, those bare pages packed a huge punch, and I think kids will like that a lot.

Meant for children ages 10 to 14, I think a slightly younger good reader will find this a nice challenge. For her, or for any child who wants a quick, enjoyable novel, “Serafina’s Promise” will be a dream.

“Serafina’s Promise,” by Ann E. Burg [304 pages, 2013, \$16.99].



Grab ‘Snatchabook’ off the shelf

The other night at bedtime, there was big trouble.

Your child went to grab his favorite storybook — and it was gone! You both looked under the bed. Where could it be? You’re not sure, but if you read “The Snatchabook” by Helen Docherty and Thomas Docherty, I think you’ll know.

It’s late at night and little Eliza Brown has chosen a book to read before bedtime. That happened every night in every house all over Burrow Down because, well, who doesn’t love a good story before they go to sleep?

So Eliza and her neighbors were all in their quiet houses, all in their quiet beds, getting ready for a quiet night. But what they didn’t know was that something strange was just outside their windows.

Eliza noticed it first. A breeze moved the curtains in her bedroom just a bit, and when she grabbed for her storybook, it was gone!

The book that Mommy Owl was reading — POOF!

The story that Papa Squirrel was reading — ZIP!

Just like that. Everyone was convinced that “book thieves” were hiding in their houses. They were sure it was bad.

They were missing their books.

But Eliza wasn’t going to take this lying down — besides, she loved a good mystery — so she set a trap. She wanted that stealing to end and she wanted it to happen “RIGHT NOW!”

Eliza then heard a tiny voice that seemed sad. It seemed to be apologizing, like it needed to make things better, but there was just one problem. Could Eliza and the residents of Burrow Down fix what was very wrong?

With a lighthearted and oh-so-

clever rhyme, and illustrations that are absolutely beyond charming, “The Snatchabook” is very likely going to be your child’s new bedtime BFF. In this story of someone who loves books so much that he can’t help but take them, the authors build excitement by adding a very gentle scare — but don’t worry. When your kids see the reason for the fright, they’ll be too delighted to do anything but laugh, thanks to Tom Docherty’s artwork.

I think early grade-schoolers will love it, and so will you. If a brand-new bedtime book is just what your family needs, then “The Snatchabook” is a steal.

“The Snatchabook” by Helen Docherty and Thomas Docherty [32 pages, 2013, \$16.99].

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was 3 years old, and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill with two dogs and 12,000 books.

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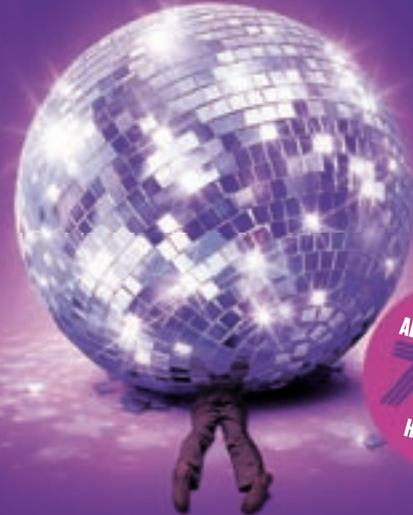
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Becoming fluent

Seven tips to help English-as-a-second-language kids thrive

BY JENNY CHEN

English-as-a-second-language students are the fastest growing population within the student community, according to the National Council of Teachers of English. From the 1997-'98 school year to the 2008-'09 school year, the number of English-language learners enrolled in public schools increased from 3.5 million to 5.3 million, or, by 51 percent. With growing diversity in the United States, those statistics continue to grow.

However, learning English can

be a tough endeavor, so we asked experts across the country what their top tips are.

1 Be patient and adjust expectations. Learning a new language takes a lot of time. Not only are students learning grammar and vocabulary, but they're also learning a new culture and way of doing work, says Dr. Anne Pomerantz of the Penn Graduate School of Education. Frustration hinders progress, and the best thing to do is simply adjust your expectations and trust that your child will soon become proficient.

2 Shop around for schools. Not all schools are well equipped for these students. Many public schools do not have the resources to work individually with your child. However, says Dr. Pomerantz, "Public schools tend to be more diverse than private schools. Some private schools don't even have ESL staff." Some questions to ask when looking for a school are:

- Is there a full-time English-language specialist at the school?
- What is the school doing to engage parents of English-lan-

The best way to learn is still the way we all learned our first language as a child — through practice. Encourage children to speak English as much as possible, without worrying about making mistakes.

guage students (e.g., resource fairs; translation services; adult courses)?

•What is the school doing to promote interaction between these students and their English-speaking peers?

3 Be your child's advocate. Unless you're lucky enough to have your child go to a school well equipped with English-language resources, you're going to have to fight for your child's own English-learning education.

"Some parents come from places where they may not be used to the parent-teacher involvement, and they don't understand that they have the right to join a PTA, or they might not realize that they need to speak up on behalf of their child," said Dr. Pomerantz.

However, says Robyn Schulman, professional development academic and career advisor at the Illinois State Board of Education, and a seasoned English-as-a-second-language instructor, parents new to this country may not know where to start.

Shulman recommends presenting every previous school record you can to your new school because English-language students are often mislabeled as learning disabled. She also recommends asking for a translator if one is available.

4 Expose your child to as much English as possible.

The best way to learn is still the way we all learned our first language as a child — through practice. Thomas Dalton, owner of the company English in Denver and a professor at the University of Denver, says that he focuses on primarily encouraging kids to stop feeling self-conscious and practice as much as possible. He recommends that parents encourage their children to speak English as much as possible, without worrying about making mistakes.

"In order to learn something, you have to be free to make mistakes. Just blast through and make mistakes," he said.

5 Make it fun. Vanessa Wade, a private tutor in Texas, encourages students to speak as much English as possible. She has a game in which she picks a word and tries to get a student to say anything and everything about the word for three minutes. This helps students get over their self-consciousness and forces them to talk as much as they can.

"When it's fun, they forget that they're learning," Wade said.

She also recommends letting kids watch cartoons and movies in English to expose them to the language.

6 Help them be good observers of their environment. Being an English-as-a-second-language student isn't only about learning a new language — it is also about learning a new culture.

Dr. Pomerantz emphasizes the importance of teaching kids to observe their new environment. She encourages parents to ask kids about the specific details about their day, and ask questions about why certain things happened, rather than making assumptions about their new culture or about their own limitations.

"Take an inquiring stance rather than an evaluative stance," she said.

7 Take risks yourself! Parents set an important example for their kids, said Dr. Pomerantz. It's important for parents to take risks and be willing to make mistakes. Dr. Pomerantz also encourages parents to make an effort to speak English to their children, no matter how limited it is.

Jenny Chen is a freelance writer specializing in education and parenting. She has written for Washington Parent and Mothering Magazine.

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Calendar

NOVEMBER



Hop aboard a magical model train adventure

Hop aboard and take a magical tour of the world of miniature trains and scaled-down buildings at the annual Holiday Train Show at the New York Botanical Garden from Nov. 16 through Jan. 12, 2014.

Children and adults alike will marvel at the miles of track that model trains weave, and wander around intricately designed miniature models of famous sites in-

cluding the Statue of Liberty, Rockefeller Center, the Brooklyn Bridge, and many others.

Holiday Train Show, open weekly Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 am to 6 pm. Admission is \$20 for adults and \$8 for children.

The New York Botanical Garden [200th Street and Kazimiroof Boulevard in University Heights, (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org].

Calendar

Submit a listing

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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, NOV. 1

Holiday Book drive: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 9 am; Free.

Help give the gift of literacy.

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 enjoy games.

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

Take the trolley to the mansion, enjoy a concert by violinist Kenneth Edwards, a tour of the mansion, and savor light refreshments. The Birdhive Boys perform.

SAT, NOV. 2

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 learn how insects protect themselves.

SUN, NOV. 3

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

MON, NOV. 4

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

Twins 7 to 12 years old play board games and electronic games with friends.

TUES, NOV. 5

Movie day: Kingsbridge Library Cen-



Musical choices

It's recital time at the Bronx House School for Performing Arts on Nov. 10.

The concert includes a variety of music from classical and contemporary selections and diverse dance styles performed by the staff. Last year's recital featured belly dance instructor Noora E. Shams. Following the performance will be a reception for the performers and audience.

The school is comprised of professional active musicians and dancers who hold degrees

from prestigious schools such as Julliard, The Manhattan School of Music, New York University, and Mannes, and offers year-round music and dance classes for all ages.

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WED, NOV. 6

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

Creative writing and digital storytelling are on the menu at the library. For children 9 to 12 years old. Pre-registration required.

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THURS, NOV. 7

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

Children 7 to 12 make a leaf book using a variety of materials and skills.

FRI, NOV. 8

Game Day: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Nov. 1.

SAT, NOV. 9

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 gather beech nuts, acorns, leaves, and other fallen wonders.

Family day: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Avenue; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 11 am-noon; Free.

Parents with children read and listen to stories. Pre-registration required.

Bird Day: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 2:30-4:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors and students; free for members).

As the leaves turn to beautiful shades of red, gold, and brown, fall migration enters its final stage. Take a hike with a naturalist and see how many of our fine, feathered friends you can name. Registration requested.

SUN, NOV. 10

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 9.

Faculty recital: Bronx House, 990 Pelham Parkway South; (718) 792-1800; 2 pm and 6 pm; Free.

The concert includes a variety of music from classical and contemporary and diverse dance styles.

WED, NOV. 13

Global Partners Jr: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

Story time: 6 pm. Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

THURS, NOV. 14

Story time: 11-11:30 am. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Nov. 7.

Toddler time: Noon-1 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Nov. 7.

Computer workshop: Kingsbridge
Continued on page 32

Calendar

Continued from page 31

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

Children 7 to 12 are introduced to basic computer skills.

FRI, NOV. 15

Game Day: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Nov. 1.

SAT, NOV. 16

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.

Fashion a festive crown from fall leaves and leaf rubbings.

Terrarium Workshop: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansion-museum.org; Noon-2 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors and students; free for members), plus \$20 materials fee.

Join horticulturalist Maria Colletti and learn how to make a miniature garden and take it home.

SUN, NOV. 17

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 16.

Harvest fair: Van Cortlandt Park, Mosholu Avenue and Broadway; (718) 601-1553; 10 am-1 pm; Free.

Enjoy the taste of the garden and help prepare the site for the winter.

Art projects: Hudson River Museum, 511 Warburton Ave.; (914) 963-4550; Noon-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Build a bridge, an arch, a truss or a suspension bridge.

Hungarian State Folk Ensemble: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960-8833; www.Lehman-Center.org; 8 pm; \$30, \$30, \$35 (\$10 children under 12).

Take a spirited journey through time and view the ensemble perform in colorful traditional costumes to traditional folk music.

MON, NOV. 18

Game on: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Monday, Nov. 4.

TUES, NOV. 19

Movie day: 4-6 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 5.



Photo by Alexis Buatti-Ramos

Tapping into greatness

Dancers from Minneapolis make a special visit to tap their feet in funky costumes at the New Victory Theater from Nov. 15 through Dec. 1.

“Feet Don’t Fail Me Now” features a group of dancers from Minneapolis who bring a trunk full of

tap shoes, funky costumes, and the big-brass sound to the stage. “Heat-box” the human beat box joins the seven-piece Root City rockers to accompany each tap, shuffle, and stomp with a clang, riff, and refrain.

“Feet Don’t Fail Me Now,” Nov. 15 through Dec. 1 with perfor-

mances at noon, 2, 5, and 7 pm. Check listings for exact dates and times. Tickets are \$25, \$18, \$12 and \$9 for members.

The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth Avenues in Midtown, (646) 223-3010; www.newvictory.org].

WED, NOV. 20

Global Partners Jr: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

Story time: 6 pm. Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

THURS, NOV. 21

Story time: 11-11:30 am. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Nov. 7.

Toddler time: Noon-1 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, Nov. 7.

Gobble, gobble! 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 make a turkey book using a variety of materials and skills.

FRI, NOV. 22

Game Day: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Nov. 1.

SAT, NOV. 23

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.

Celebrate the harvest and make corn husk dolls.

Art projects: Noon-4 pm. Hudson River Museum. See Sunday, Nov. 17.

SUN, NOV. 24

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 23.

Art projects: Noon-4 pm. Hudson River Museum. See Sunday, Nov. 17.

MON, NOV. 25

Game on: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Monday, Nov. 4.

WED, NOV. 27

Global Partners Jr: 4-5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

Story time: 6 pm. Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

Calendar

THURS, NOV. 28

87th Annual Thanksgiving Day Parade: Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, 77th Street and Central Park West, down Sixth Avenue to 34th Street; 9 am–Noon; Free.

Giant balloons, unique floats, and special live performances are just some of what you'll see as Macy's kicks off the holiday season.

FRI, NOV. 29

Game Day: 4–5 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, Nov. 1.

SAT, NOV. 30

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.

Gather fall leaves and weave them together with other materials to make a beautiful wall hanging.

Art projects: Noon–4 pm. Hudson River Museum. See Sunday, Nov. 17.

SUN, DEC. 1

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 30.

Art projects: Noon–4 pm. Hudson River Museum. See Sunday, Nov. 17.

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, Nov. 3; 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.

Seasonal crafts: Poe Pak Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse at E. 192nd Street; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Fridays, 3–4 pm, Now – Fri, Dec. 27; Free.

Make fun projects for all the seasons.

Football and cheerleading registration: Einstein Ballfield, Elgar Place and Einstein Loop; (718) 684-4903;

nbcowboys@gmail.com; www.nbysa.net; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6–8 pm, Saturdays, 10am–3pm, Now – Tues, Nov. 26; Registration \$275.

For children 5 to 14 years old for the North Bronx Cowboys.

Boo at the Zoo: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Saturday, Nov. 2, 10 am; Sunday, Nov. 3, 9 am; \$16.95 (\$11.95 children 3-12 years old; \$14.95 seniors and children under 3 are free).

It's that time again, a visit to the zoo is a visit to the UnNatural Mysteries, 3-D pumpkin carving demos, costume parade, music, magic, and so much more. You can also see the new Komodo dragon exhibit introducing the newest residents.

Ice skating: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; Mondays – Wednesdays, Noon–4 pm, Thursdays and Sundays, Noon–8 pm, Fridays and Saturdays, Noon–10 pm, Mon, Nov. 4 – Fri, Jan. 31, 2014; \$5 weekday (\$8 weekend) plus skates.

Open skating season has begun, so

strap on your blades and get sliding.

Paper arts and crafts: Poe Pak Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse at E. 192nd Street; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays, 3–4 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 26; Free.

Have fun creating paper crafts using multiple mediums.

Art projects: Hudson River Museum, 511 Warburton Ave.; (914) 963-4550; Saturday, Nov. 9, noon; Sunday, Nov. 10, noon; Saturday, Nov. 16, noon; Free with museum admission.

Children learn how to design a subway, an airport, a highway, and explore the different building materials.

Holiday train show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Sat, Nov. 16 – Sun, Jan. 12, 2014; \$20 (\$8 children).

Large-scale model trains cover a wide variety of ground and scaled-down replicas of favorites city landmarks include the Statue of Liberty, Rockefeller Center, the Brooklyn Bridge, and many others.

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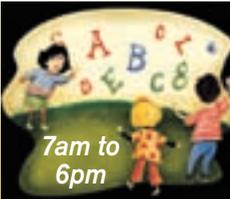
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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Teaching kindness

Like many parents, my husband and I will soon be receiving our children's report cards and will be eager to see how they are doing. Throughout the years, I have stressed how important education is and that trying your best is always the goal. I clearly remember my own school years and struggling through some tough classes, like algebra, and studying as much as I could to keep my grade-point average up. My grades were extremely important to me. I felt that school was the one thing I really excelled at, and my education provided me so many wonderful opportunities. So when I had kids, I naturally wanted them to do well in school (in fact, very well). I'm no tiger mom, but I do expect good grades.

Growing up, my mother was my biggest cheerleader and always told me

how proud she was of me, but she also told me she was proud of me even when I blew a test or received a grade lower than I wanted. No matter what, she related that it meant a lot to her when the teachers would say I was a nice girl and a kind person. She said that mattered even more than grades. Back then, I thought she was crazy — who cares about goodness when I didn't get that grade I was hoping for?

You know how they say daughters become their mothers? Well, then you must see me raising my hand right now proclaiming, indeed, I have turned into my mother in many ways. And yes, as a mom myself, I now believe that goodness counts for more than grades.

When I read my kids' report cards, I always pay attention to the teacher's comments. On a regular report card, the majority of the spaces are reserved for grades with a very small portion for personal progress. That is where they list things like conduct, compliance with school policies, and respecting the rights of others, but the teachers can

write anything they want in the comments section. So when I see the teachers have written that my children are kind, good-natured, and sweet, it makes me happier than their grades do. I praise them for their grades, of course, but I also make it a point to tell them that I am proud of who they are and how they conduct themselves in school, not just the grades.

Education is vitally important, but being a good person is essential in my book. It reminds me of when author Amy Chua was in the news a couple of years ago writing about extremely strict parenting ideals. Back then, many parents came out

to say it was more important that their kids be happy than get into Harvard.

I agree but would take it one step further. Of course, we all want our children to be happy, but how about placing an importance on being a kind, engaged, and helpful person? I have known quite a few Harvard grads who may have smarts, but lack compassion and decency; I would never want my children to emulate them. Of course, one does not wash out the other. I also know quite a few Harvard grads who are using their talent to positively contribute to the world. They are people that I would be thrilled to have mentor my kids. You can absolutely be an intelligent and compassionately caring person. That should be the goal.

As parents, shouldn't we strive to at least equate goodness and grades, so that our kids are just as valued for learning how to be genuinely kind and decent human beings as well as smart and successful?

I admit that I am pleased when my kids bring home good grades, but I am even more delighted when I hear that they are thoughtful and considerate people who will make a difference in this world, who will help rather than harm, and who will think about others. I do believe that compassion is taught in many, small ways from infancy on, and we should reward it right along with all those As on the report cards.

Like grades, compassion and consideration sometimes take effort and hard work, especially for young children as they grow up and start to think of others, rather than just themselves. Think of how many adults you know who still only focus on themselves, and what a better place this world would be if everyone learned compassion and empathy as a child. Acquiring a good education is vital, but developing integrity and consideration is fundamental.

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 Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.



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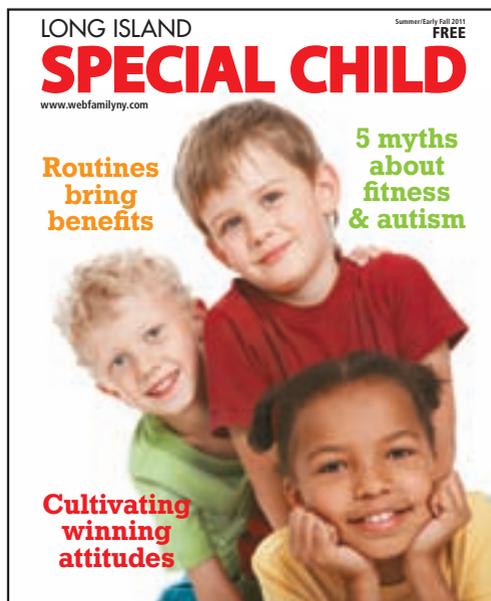
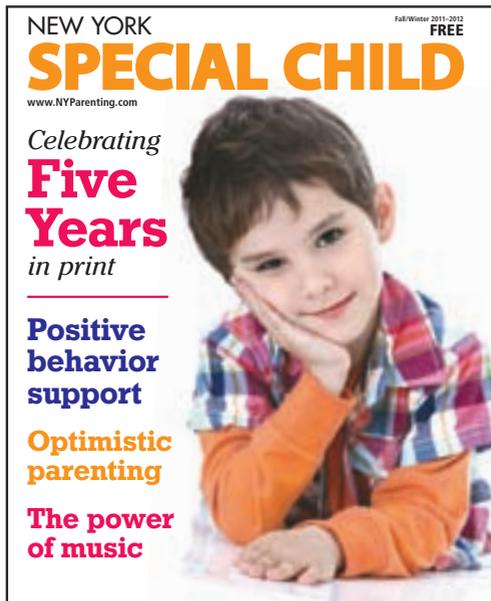
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