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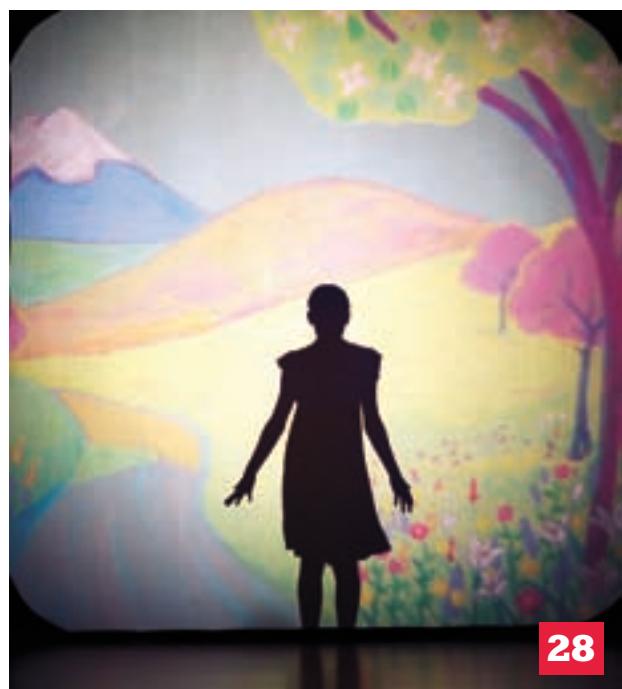
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Letter from the publisher

Mother's Day musings

I've been watching this wonderful series on PBS that airs on Sunday nights with the title "Call the Midwife." It takes place in the east end of London in the 1950s and reflects the changing experience of birthing and parenting as the war years dimmed into the past. It's one of the most socially relevant shows I've ever seen about being a Mother and birthing a child and the network of community.

Reliving all the pregnancies and the births every week has rekindled my own maternal experience from the first fluttering I felt in the bath one night, to the hours of labor and birth, to the 23 years since that moment when my daughter at last



and the loss of control over the child you had that is now often taller than you and more influenced by friends and the media than by you.

But most of it is sheer bliss. The tiny infant that suddenly develops a personality; the first steps; the first time you hear your child say Mama; the first day of preschool; the graduations; the growth spurts that make yesterdays clothes and shoes a thing of the past; the young adult

emerged after an exhausting 13 hours.

Being a Mother is not always fun. In the early weeks after birth there are the every few hours wake-ups, feedings and a baby sometimes crying and you don't know why. There is the frustration of the teen years

that matures out of the adolescent that drove you crazy and wouldn't listen anymore and the mutual bond of adults who happen to be parents and their children.

It's an amazing miracle and whether you're a natural Mom or an adoptive Mom or a Step-Mom, the miracle is the same. To watch the development of another human being is truly awesome. To have a major role in that development is a privilege and a gift and it's hard to imagine a role in life that could be quite as satisfying, quite as fulfilling over a lifetime.

The celebration of Mother's Day offers an opportunity for our children to make us a breakfast or buy us a meal in a restaurant or at the very least to recognize our constant love in their lives and say thank you. For us, it's a day to be grateful for a

miracle that changed our lives forever. I, for one, can honestly say that it was the best thing that has ever happened to me.

Wishing all of you the Happy Mother's Day you most likely generously deserve. Enjoy all the memories and all the milestones, those that have passed, and those yet to come. Let someone pamper you a bit this Mother's Day if it comes your way, and enjoy the best part of all, the fact that there is someone in this world who calls you Mother.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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The science of moms

Six surprising things you may not know about mothers

BY KIKI BOCHI

Mothers may be the glue that holds many families together, but no two mommies are alike. Still, there are some things moms do have in common — and at the top of that list is the huge impact they have on the lives of their children. To get to the core of these very important family figures, moms are the subject of scientific studies all over the world. Here is the good news in some of the findings.

Good moms have smarter kids

School-age children whose mothers nurtured them early in life have brains with a larger hippocampus, a key structure important to learning, memory, and response to stress, according to research in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The research, by child psychiatrists and neuroscientists at Washington University School of Medicine, was the first to show that a mother's nurturing is linked to this critical region of children's brain anatomy.

"This study validates something that seems to be intuitive, which is just how important nurturing parents are to creating adaptive human beings," research author Dr. Joan L. Luby, said when the study was released. "I think the public health implications suggest that we should pay more attention to parents' nurturing, and we should do what we can as a society to foster these skills because clearly nurturing has a very, very big impact on later development."



Being an empathetic mom goes a long way

Nurturing mothers have always garnered accolades for kissing boo-boos and soothing children to sleep with lullabies. Now they're getting credit for their offspring's physical health in middle age.

In a long-term study published in the journal *Psychological Science*, psychologists found that even among groups that would have higher rates of chronic illness in adulthood, adults who had nurturing mothers in childhood fared better in physical health in midlife. It's just more proof of the huge impact good moms can have.

Attentive moms help keep kids off drugs

Through daily interactions, good moms help children understand healthy boundaries, learn self-control and make good decisions. But it goes beyond that.

A strong mother-child bond in childhood, especially in the first three years of life, develops the brain chemistry that can help people resist drug and alcohol addiction later in life. The research, conducted in Australia, found that some people's lack of resilience to addictive behaviors may be linked to poor development of their oxytocin systems.

"The public health implications suggest that we should pay more attention to parents' nurturing, and we should do what we can as a society to foster these skills because clearly nurturing has a very, very big impact on later development."

The antidote? A loving and nurturing mom, of course.

Moms teach their children without even trying

Scientists have discovered that babies only hours old are able to differentiate between sounds from their native language and a foreign language. This finding indicates that babies begin absorbing language while still in the womb during the last 10 weeks of pregnancy, earlier than previously thought.

"The mother has first dibs on influencing the child's brain," said Patricia Kuhl, co-author and co-director of the Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences at the University of Washington. "The vowel sounds in her speech are the loudest units, and the fetus locks onto them." Now, if we could just start training them to pick up their room while in the womb.

Mom's voice is as comforting as a hug

A simple phone call from mom can calm frayed nerves by sparking the release of a powerful stress-quelling hormone, according to researchers. The study, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, looked at a group of 7- to 12-year-old girls who were challenged to answer math questions in front of a panel of strangers. A third of the girls were comforted by their mothers in person with a hug or pat on the back, a third were given a neutral video to watch, and a third were allowed to talk to their mom on the phone.

The results were dramatic: the children who got to interact with their mothers had virtually the same positive hormonal response, whether they interacted in person or over the phone. The girls' levels of oxytocin, often called the "love hormone" and strongly associated with emotional bonding, rose significantly among the girls who had contact with their moms,

while the stress-marking cortisol washed away. The video-watching group did not experience the same benefits.

Sometimes, less mom is more

When you plop on the floor to play with your child, there's more going on than just a game. In a study that looked at the dynamics of play, researchers found that the more moms tried to control the content and pace of the game, the more children pulled away. Children in the study also expressed more negative feelings toward their mothers when the mothers were highly directive. For example, during play with her child, a highly directive mother might make her toddler put the plastic cow in the toy barn through the barn's door instead of through its window. While mothers often think they are helping their children by correcting them, they are limiting the children's creativity and taking the fun out of the game, said Jean Ispa, lead author of the study.

"Children flourish when they have opportunities to make choices about what they do, particularly in play situations," said Ispa, and professor of human development and family studies at the University of Missouri. "Mothers who are highly directive do not allow that kind of choice."

Moms can counter that effect with affection, however.

"Children take in the meaning of what their mothers are trying to do, so if a mom is being very directive and is generally a very warm person, I think the child feels, 'My mom is doing this because she cares about me, and she's trying to do the best for me,'" Ispa said. "If that warmth is missing, then the child might feel, 'My mom is trying to control me, and I don't like it.'"

KiKi Bochi is a mother of two who still marvels at her power. A long-time journalist, she writes about family health.

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Photo by Don Pollard

Lessons in volunteering from mom

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Kids learn about helping others at home. As a mom, you have the ability to inspire your children through positive actions, such as volunteering in your community.

It can turn into a family activity and is a great way to get your kids and teens away from their phones and computers.

And for kids, interacting with other young volunteers is cool, especially for kids and teens who would like to make new friends or boost their social skills. They can also learn about a field they might be interested in as they head off to college, and even advance their career goals while they're in college, by helping out with an organization that matches their interests and passions. They may even get a job offer.

Helping those less fortunate also puts things in perspective: when kids are feeling down or sorry for themselves, they can appreciate what they have when they're exposed to someone who is truly needy or homeless.

Take it from the Cuomos — one philanthropic family with volunteerism in its veins.

Inspiring mother-daughter duo — former first lady of New York State Matilda Cuomo and daughter Maria Cuomo Cole — have made a big difference in the lives of many New Yorkers.

Maria and her husband, popular fashion designer Kenneth Cole, have three daughters: Amanda, Catie, and Emily. Maria's father is former Gov. Mario Cuomo, and she is the sister of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, CNN journalist Chris Cuomo, Margaret Cuomo and Madeline Cuomo.

Growing up, Maria learned the value of giving back by watching her mother, a teacher. Matilda has always championed important causes in her community and beyond. She founded Mentoring USA, a leading national, one-to-one, site-based mentoring program that provides caring, trained mentors to young people ages 7 through 21 — including children from foster care programs — to enable them to realize their full potential.

Maria, who says she is still inspired by her mother, has followed

Maria Cuomo Cole (second from right) with her mother Matilda, nieces and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand.

in her footsteps.

As an active, hands-on chair of HELP USA — a leading provider of homes, jobs, and services to homeless families, veterans, and victims of domestic violence — Maria, who is also a film producer, shares with NY Parenting's readers why the work HELP USA does for the homeless and at-risk community, nationwide, is so important.

Tammy Scileppi: Why did you embrace HELP USA?

Maria Cuomo Cole: When my brother, Andrew, became involved with solving homelessness in the mid-1980s, our friends were all excited to be part of his important mission. My father had completed his first term as governor and we were now working in the private sector, but pining for more public service. Andrew and my father's mission inspired me.

The issue of homelessness is growing at an alarming rate. For children, homelessness can be traumatic at so many levels.

Across the top 13 major cities in the US, there was an increase of three percent in homelessness last year, according to the US Conference of Mayors 2013 report on homelessness.

TS: Please describe a family's or single parent's experience, and how they benefited from HELP USA's services.

MCC: I could name numerous families; mothers, fathers, children, who have gained a fresh living in HELP USA's quality and caring shelter environment, and in our permanent housing, with an array of supportive services. Many of our facilities have extensive and customized programs for families and single mothers, including early childhood education, daycare, after school programs, mentoring, and many others.

Perhaps, part of the reason HELP USA has been so effective is due to their innovative strategies in addressing the alarming problem of homelessness. They address all aspects of life. HELP USA offers job training, employment counseling, and after-school care. They even have a street soccer program.

TS: How do you celebrate Mother's Day?

MCC: Despite our busy schedules, we make family a main priority. We try to spend the holidays together.

A second interview with Matilda Cuomo will be coming next month.

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Mother's Day ideas

On Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11, treat the mom in your life to a FabULyss day in New York.

Scheduling the perfect Mother's Day will take some work, but with our DivaMoms suggestions below, Mother's Day planning can be made a little easier!

Brunch. Take the special mom in your life to a beautiful, special brunch spot! Aureole on W. 42nd Street — the city's famous theatre district — is a gorgeous and DeLuscious option for a Mother's Day brunch, and one of my personal favorites! Dining at the contemporary Aureole is staged in two venues: the formal dining room and more casual bar room. In the dining room, terra-rich colors and golden lighting combine to create a comfortable environment and opulent warm glow, reminiscent of Aureole's original townhouse intimacy. The menu is FabULyss-for American food, and even the DivaKids will be able to find something they like! The Arlington Club, Sarabeth's, Laconda Verde and Gina La Fornarina are also great suggestions.

[135 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Sixth avenues, (212) 319-1660, charliepalmer.com]

Not to mention, the location segues perfectly into our second Mother's Day celebration suggestion:

A Broadway Show! Taking the special, hardworking mother in your life — whether she be your wife and the mother of your kids or your own mom — is a treat that will inevitably result in wonderful memories for years to come. There are such FabULyss shows out on Broadway right now that the whole family can enjoy, including "Matilda," "Wicked," "If/Then," "Newsies," "Aladdin," "Rocky," or, if she is into the more unique and less mainstream shows, something like "Stomp," "Lady Day," or "Act One" may be something she would enjoy. Either way, you cannot beat the quality and thoughtfulness of a Broadway show on Mother's Day!

Shop. There isn't a DivaMom out there who doesn't enjoy a day or two out of the year shopping for little luxuries! If you are stuck on what to buy her, make hunting for her gift part of the fun of the day! Strolling around Barney's, Bergdorf Goodman, or any of the shops on

Madison Avenue on a sunny spring Sunday is something all moms enjoy — and need every once in a while for all their hard work! When mom picks out something special, hand her a card from you and the kids — and signed by other family members — to go along with her new gift she handpicked and will cherish.

Top of the Rock. Living in New York, we seldom visit tourist attractions. Taking the kids and mom to the Top of the Rock is a sweet way to show her she deserves only the most beautiful things; if you haven't seen it, the view is breathtaking! This is also a great spot to snap a few family photos that will go in your most precious family photo albums. Tickets are \$20 for an adult, but completely worth it!

[30 Rockefeller plaza between W. 50th and W. 49th streets, (212) 698-2000, www.topoftherocknyc.com]

Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa (or the spa of her choice!). End the day by treating the hard-working mom in your life to a premium spa in the city — like Elizabeth Arden Red Door, which is absolutely wonderful and luxurious — and hand her a gift certificate to use for a massage, facial, or whatever her favorite treatment is! This will let her unwind from the day's fun activities and let her know that her family appreciates everything she does! Show her how much you love her.

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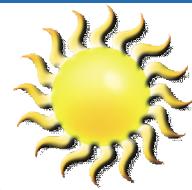
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Circle of friends

Thirty days
to a healthier
social life

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

Relocations, new babies, and other life transitions can throw a wrench in your social network, leaving you feeling disconnected and lonely. Use the adjustment period as a chance to make a fresh start. Carefully consider your priorities and build connections that support your personal health and the well-being of your family.

Women who feel a balanced sense of connection are healthier and more resilient to stress, anxiety, and depression. According to a recent Gallup poll, stay-at-home moms are more vulnerable to depression compared to women who work outside of the home, and isolation could play a factor. Overall, women are twice as

likely to suffer from depression compared to men.

"When there is a lack of social interaction and a decrease of peer-to-peer contact, there is great potential for depression, which is a combination of sadness and anger," says Lisa Bahar, a marriage and family therapist and professional counselor.

One day at a time, rev up your social engine for increased happiness and satisfaction. Here are a few suggestions.

- Join a mother's group. Your sense of self-worth and sense of belonging increases when part of a group of supportive friends.

- Call an old friend. Reconnecting helps you rebuild your confidence as you meet new moms.

- E-mail a mom you'd like to know

better. Arrange a time to meet with you and your kids for a play date at the park or the mall play area.

- Send a Facebook friend request to a mom you've met recently. Initiating friendships shows you welcome new friends and boosts your self-confidence.

- Volunteer. Your efforts will positively impact others, and you'll derive satisfaction and joy from helping out.

- Shake out the welcome mat. Greet your new neighbors with a plate of warm cookies. They'll appreciate your thoughtfulness and a friendly face in a new neighborhood.

- Strike up a conversation. Kids are great icebreakers. Even a casual conversation with another mom can cheer you.

Stay-at-home moms are more vulnerable to depression compared to women who work outside of the home.

- Brighten a friend's day. Send a card to let her know you're thinking about her or call just to chat.

- Click into an online moms' group. Find comfort knowing your situation is not unique. Reaching out to other moms online who can relate can help you feel less isolated.

- Text a friend with a new baby. The first few weeks can be a rough adjustment. By reaching out, you'll help her feel less alone. If possible, arrange a time to stop by with a meal.

- Coordinate a meet and greet. Got school-aged kids? Invite other classroom moms to a "seasoned moms" lunch to build a sense of community.

- Sign up for a yoga, zumba, or jazzercise class. Exercise releases mood-boosting endorphins and wards off stress. Group fitness helps you feel a sense of accountability.

- Spring for a girls' night out! You may feel a little tired the next day, but recalling all the laughs and stimulating conversation will put a skip in your step.

- Surround yourself with positive people. Move away from draining one-sided friendships that zap your energy.

- Seek balance in your yeses. Stress less by saying "no" to requests that aren't a priority or don't interest you. Your family will thank you.

- Go on a mini-adventure. Explore another part of town, discover a local museum, or take a class that interests you. Stepping out of your normal routine juices your creativity.

- Make time to play. Carve out 15 or 20 minutes to pursue an activity you love. Playing is candy for the soul.

- Start a walking group. Walking and talking for an hour is great exercise and like free therapy!

- Dine and play. Invite other moms, whose husbands travel or work late, for a two-hour afternoon play date and potluck dinner.

Dinner done, kids sleep well, and you're rewarded with a quiet evening ahead!

- Coordinate a group outing at the zoo or a children's museum. Both you and your kids will appreciate the social interaction, exercise and education these venues offer.

- Check out the library. Libraries often feature interesting presenters, book clubs, and other activities. Attend a few discussions to meet others with shared interests.

- Organize a game night or book club with your friends. You and your friends will love the excuse for a lively evening escape!

- Reach out to a receptive member of a group of moms. If she is an active volunteer at your child's school in activities that interest you, ask how you can get involved.

- Rejuvenate at the spa. Soothing for the mind and body, a study at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center found Swedish massage in particular reduces the stress hormone cortisol, boosting immunity by increasing white blood cells, which fight infection and disease.

- Reconnect with your spouse. Find a sitter, get dressed up, and head out for a date night. Feeling sociable? Invite another couple to join you.

- Throw a neighborhood backyard BBQ. Provide outdoor games like badminton, horseshoes, volleyball, chalk, bubbles and hula hoops for the kids to play together.

- Support a friend who sells makeup, jewelry, cookware, or candles by accepting an invitation to one of the parties. Go with a budget and enjoy hanging out with other women.

- Take a break. Schedule time alone to head to a pottery place and paint; go clothes shopping; or watch a movie.

- Regroup with your kids. Set aside a relaxing afternoon to reconnect with your kids. Head to the park for a picnic lunch, play a board game, try ice skating, or go bowling.

- Touch base with your family around the dinner table. Communication builds stronger families. Talk about your day's highs and lows, discuss frustrations, and celebrate successes.

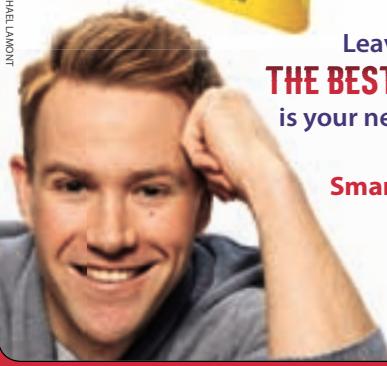
Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines is the author of "Confidently Connected: A Mom's Guide to a Satisfying Social Life." Join her in the "Confidently Connected Moms" discussion group on Facebook.

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Take note

How to tell
when your
child is ready
for music
lessons

BY LEILA VISS

Not every person is destined to be a concert musician, but everyone can be a music maker, enthusiast, and supporter. Giving your child the gift of learning music on any instrument is something to treasure, but finding the answers on how to provide this gift is not always easy.

You may be unaware of your youngster's readiness for making music, but there are some signs that should help you make that assessment.

Here are some steps toward unlocking your child's innate musicality and readiness.

How can I tell when my child is ready?

Encourage exploration

- Purchase a keyboard instrument (a portable digital keyboard may do the trick, but plan to upgrade when lessons begin) and let your child explore sound before enrolling in lessons.

- Once this exploration begins, notice how your potential musician gravitates and experiments at the keys.

- Download some music game apps such as Piano Dust Buster 2.0, The Most Addicting Sheep Game or Magic Piano and invite your child



to explore. It won't take long for a youngster to be drawn into these magical games that also teach music fundamentals.

- If the keyboard and favorite apps receive regular visitation, this is strong evidence that your future maestro is ready to engage in lessons.

Prime the potential

Some basic skills are involved in learning any instrument, and it's important that these fundamentals

are developed before enrolling in lessons.

An ideal candidate for instrumental lessons can:

- Say and sing the alphabet.
- Count at least to 20.
- Match pitch and sing songs with ease.
- Identify the left from the right hand.
- Cut with scissors.
- Color and draw with markers, pencils, etc.

- Dance and move freely to music.

- Clap and march with a steady beat.

Consider early music education groups, which are perfect for young learners.

How do I know what instrument is right for my child?

The piano is the easiest instrument to begin exploring and eventually making music. Therefore, enrolling your child in piano lessons may be a place to begin her music education.

Once your budding musician is introduced to other instruments in school around fourth or fifth grade, a shift in interest may occur.

How do I choose the right teacher?

Referrals from friends and acquaintances are your best bet for a good teacher. If they are happy with a teacher, there's a good chance that you will be as well. Also, ask to arrange an interview with several teachers, and you'll discover that each owns a unique studio. It's important for you to determine what your priorities are for your child's music education. Here are some things to consider:

- Some teachers may excel at preparing students to compete, while others may lean toward a more relaxed approach with fewer opportunities to compete or perform formally.

- Some may remain set in a traditional approach with standard repertoire, and others may emphasize lessons in creativity beyond the page and various styles other than classical.

- Group lessons are a popular social setting which may best suit those who are still on the fence about studying an instrument. Private lessons usually accommodate schedules more easily and offer one-on-one instruction.

- Music should be shared, so ask if the teacher offers encouragement and opportunities to perform, even casually. Although difficult, performing instills discipline, motivation, confidence and good experience for public

speaking.

- Teachers usually use a method book or series to teach an instrument. A good question to ask during your chat with a teacher is "What methods and tools will you use to help my child progress in his/her music skills?"

How do I balance being a supportive parent without becoming overbearing?

Here are a couple of tips to help you maintain a healthy attitude:

- 1) Some teachers may require you to be present at lessons to take notes, so consider this as a free lesson for yourself and learn right along with your child. You will re-

alize that building musical skills is a long-term process with peaks, valleys, and plateaus.

- 2) Regardless of whether you attend lessons or not, it is important for you to remember that this is your child's endeavor and not yours. Allow your budding musician to:

- Learn how to learn
- Read all assignments
- Take charge and ask the teacher questions themselves when they forget a concept
- Be responsible for collecting books prior to the lesson, etc.

- 3) The best support you can offer your child is providing a structure.

- Make daily practicing a priority, so it becomes a habit by setting up a schedule.

- Instead of setting the timer and demanding practice, ensure that the teacher's instructions are understood and completed during practice time by reviewing the assignment with your musician. The amount of daily time at the instrument may vary, as consistent practice will make the assignment easier to play by the end of the week.

- Arrive promptly for each lesson and be on time for pick-up.

- Show teachers the respect they deserve by following all studio policies and submitting timely payments.

Music lessons are a worthy investment toward a gift that lasts a lifetime. Happy music making!

It's important for you to determine what your priorities are for your child's music education.

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nyparenting.com**



Three ways to nurture creativity

Ignite their imaginations with these helpful tips

BY MICHELE RANARD

"Creativity is a lot like looking at the world through a kaleidoscope. You look at a set of elements, the same ones everyone else sees, but then reassemble those floating bits and pieces into an enticing new possibility." — Rosabeth Moss Kanter

The ability to see "floating bits and pieces" comes more naturally for some than others, yet parents play a vital role in enhancing their child's ability to do so.

Nurturing creativity may not only improve your child's achievement in academics, but as author of "The Creative Family" Amanda Blake Soule explains, it creates deeper connection with family members.

"You'll make meaningful connections with your children in large and small ways; your children will more often engage in their own creative discoveries; and your family will embrace new ways to relax, play, and grow together."

Consider these three ideas for

nurturing creativity and connecting with your child:

• **Model a creative life.** Nurturing your own creative spirit will not only improve the quality of your own life, but according to Soule, "It will also serve as a guide and model to your children on finding their creative selves." Many avenues exist to explore your artistic side, but a good start is an excellent read. Soule recommends "The Starving Artist's Way" (2004) by Nava Lubelski, which offers 100 "far-out, appealing, and interesting" suggestions. For instance, have you ever made felt from cat hair?

• **Prioritize unstructured time.** Watching television rarely helps the imagination to bloom. Blogger Tracy O'Connor warns, "Television not only encourages children and adults to be passive consumers of entertainment, but it can also promote materialism and obesity." Conversely, unstructured time allows children to engage. Dr. Markham says, "Kids need practice with unstructured time, or they will never learn to manage it." She suggests parents focus on play and

process, not productivity.

Unstructured time does not mean boring or unentertaining time. Do make it fun — the process of creating should be joyful, not necessarily the end product. O'Connor says to choose toys promoting creative play, such as LEGO bricks and blocks. These are superior choices to toys that only do one thing.

If kids know where to find materials for creating, they will use them. Have an organized storage system, and teach them how to properly take care of art items. Soule recommends buying quality art supplies such as a few good quality crayons over a box full of hundreds of mediocre ones.

"It's much more satisfying to work on something when the materials you are using actually 'work' and assist in what you are doing, rather than hinder and slow you down."

Make basic instruments available at home (hand drums, whistles, maracas, harmonicas, recorders, triangles, shakers) so as Soule writes, "They'll naturally discover and play with them as they do with their toys."

• **Head into the kitchen.** There are so many opportunities for creative cooking beyond Tollhouse cookies. Soule recommends "Fairy Tale Feasts" by Jane Yolen (2009), featuring 20 stories, each with at least one recipe (the recipe for "Very French Toast" accompanies the French folktale "Diamonds and Toads"). Another fun option is Georgeanne Brennan's "Green Eggs and Ham Cookbook" (2006) filled with silly recipes for Cat in the Hat pudding and Moose Juice. (You've got to love that the pages of this cookbook are laminated!)

Creativity's pay-off is huge. If improved academic achievement and deeper connection were not reward enough, all of these nurturing experiences are pure fun!

Michele Ranard has a husband, two sons, and a master's degree in counseling. She is a creative dynamo who blogs as a hobby at hellolovelystudio.com.

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DANIELLE SULLIVAN



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Moms owe themselves the love they give

For years on Mother's Day, many of us have enjoyed being lavished with cards, gifts, and love from our family to show their gratitude to us for all we do, day in and day out, all year long.

It is sweet, and any of us who are lucky enough to enjoy such appreciation should feel cherished and respected. Wouldn't it be nice if we did that for ourselves — everyday?

It is a fact that for many women, myself included, becoming a mother became synonymous with becoming a caretaker, an unelected fixer of all things, and a selfless being. Many times it is a self-imposed sentence placed on us by societal demands because what is a good mother other than always there for her family? And don't get me wrong, I firmly believe that we need to attend to our children's needs and recognize them for the complicated individuals they are, but somewhere along the way (and preferably as soon as we get home from the hospital), we need to keep ourselves in the mix.

When was the last time you spent a whole day doing exactly what you liked doing? Or had a beauty night the way you used to when you were single, or simply curled up with a good book or movie? When was the last time you delegated one of your endless responsibilities to your spouse or kids? When was the last time you said "no" to a friend?

Too many of us have become so absorbed in building a family that we have forgotten we owe it to ourselves to build a happy person from the inside out. A mar-

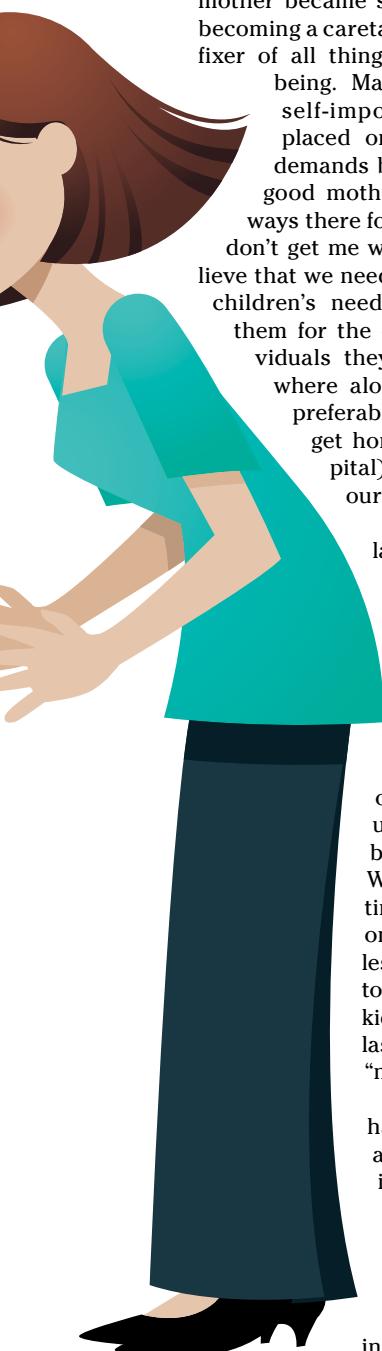
tyr is the very opposite of who we want to model to our children, and after a while we can't help but feel overburdened and exhausted, and then no one is happy — not us, our spouse, or our kids.

It might be difficult, hell, it IS difficult. I am in the process of doing this right now. But I know it CAN be done because, like you, I know many women who never relinquish their vitality to the role of mother. They deliver a baby and still keep up with friends, museum exhibitions, parties, and hobbies that make them feel good. They delegate and don't put it upon themselves to have to do everything. They take turns with childcare with their spouse and friends. In other words, they treat themselves with regular doses of T.L.C., and that is just as vital as nutrition and vitamins for good mental and physical health.

I am not saying it is easy, but if I were to mentally tack up my female friends, the majority of them put themselves last behind their spouse, children, and even relatives and friends. We need to ask ourselves if that is what we want our own daughters to do because what they live, they will duplicate.

It is that age-old airplane analogy: put your own oxygen mask on first so you can save your kids; but in this case we need to put our own happiness first so we can foster enough of it to share with those in our life that mean the most. So, while you are enjoying that half-cooked breakfast in bed and scribbled crayon cards, and after you thank those special people, try to take a minute to thank yourself for doing a fabulous job — right after you promise to treat yourself with all the compassion and love you heap upon those gorgeous little people that made you a mother in the first place!

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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DEAR DR. KARYN

DR. KARYN GORDON

Teens and dating

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I have a 19-year-old son who is attending university. He has decided to go back out with an old girlfriend who is not good for him and doesn't treat him well. Is there anything I can do?

Dear parent,

The simple answer: there is nothing direct you can do. Since your son is 19, you obviously cannot control who he chooses to date. But you can be an incredible support for him, which is very powerful. The interesting thing about dating is that we choose who we want to date. So, when I coach teens through their relationships, I get very curious about what it is about their partner that they are attracted to.

What does it say about your son that he is drawn to a girl who does not treat him well or who is not "good for

him?" I've coached teens for nearly 20 years and when I see this pattern, there is often a common theme, which comes back to self-esteem.

There are three different kinds of self-esteem. There is low self-esteem, or people who put themselves down, which I call the "blind." There is false self-esteem, or people who put others down, which I call the "disguised." And there is healthy self-esteem, or people who treat themselves and others with respect, who I call the "lifers."

The fascinating aspect of self-esteem is this attitude that we have of ourselves radically impacts every decision we make, including the kind of person we choose to date. Often, the blind are attracted to the blind or disguised while the lifers are often attracted to the lifers. When parents don't like who their son or daughter is dating, it is often because the partner is the disguised or blind.

The real issue is that your son may be struggling with a self-esteem issue, and until this is addressed, my concern is that he will continue to choose partners that don't treat him well or who are not good for him. My number one encouragement for you is to be a safe place for him to talk. Share with him your concerns and ask him what you can do to be helpful for him through this time. If he is open, ask him if he would like to see a counselor to help him sort through his relationship. Relationships are tough and the more help, wisdom, and support we can get, the better!

Youth and the psychology of music

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I can't stand the music my son is listening to — it all sounds so angry. Is this just a phase? How can I put restrictions on my son's music without being too controlling? Out of frustration, last week, I told him to turn down his music, because it's disgusting. As you might suspect, he got extremely angry. I'm confused with what my role as a parent should be in this.

Dear parent,

I've got a few suggestions. First, it's important to understand the psy-

chology of music for youth, and even adults for that matter. We all choose music because we are drawn to it for one reason or another. When I coach youth, one of the first questions I ask them is, "What kind of music do you listen to?" What youth choose to listen to speaks volumes of who they are. After all, music is an expression of personal taste and values. Therefore, putting down your son's music is often misinterpreted as a personal attack.

The worst thing you could do is put down your son's music, or say it's disgusting because, chances are, your son interpreted that comment as you saying he was disgusting. Very few youth can differentiate between who they are and what choices they make. I'm not saying parents should be silent on this issue. But how parents raise this topic is equally, if not more important, than what they say.

My second suggestion is to use your son's music as a tool to open up dialogue with him. What kind of music he listens to reflects a lot about where he is at emotionally. Many youth I've coached listen to angry-sounding music, because they can relate to it; they also feel a lot of anger inside of them. So learn to ask the right questions. Really seek to understand where your son is coming from. Ask questions such as: What is it you like about this music? What does it mean to you? Why are you drawn to it?

Third, talk about the issue of respect as it relates to his music, specifically content and volume. Obviously, if there is content that puts down other people, I would encourage you to not let it be played in the home. As it relates to volume, discuss with your child what is a respectful volume he can play in his room, so it doesn't bother others. The key is to discuss this with him.

Dr. Karyn Gordon is one of North America's leading relationship and parenting experts. She is a regular contributor to "Good Morning America," founder of dk Leadership, best-selling author of "Dr. Karyn's Guide To The Teen Years" (Harper Collins), and motivational speaker to a quarter of a million people. Visit her at www.dkleadership.org and on Twitter: @DrKarynGordon.





DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Unsettling mistakes

How misunderstandings can stall a divorce

The Hacketts were divorced: on January 12, 2006, the parties settled their divorce action and executed a written settlement agreement.

Then why, eight years later, in March, 2014, was another court issuing a decision and order related to the 2006 divorce settlement?

In January, 2008, Mr. Hackett brought an action “seeking to reform the settlement agreement on the ground that an alleged mutual mistake had resulted in the unequal division of the marital assets.”

“Mutual mistake” refers to a misunderstanding involving every party (in this case, the spouses) in a contract (here, the divorce settlement).

Mr. Hackett’s argument to the court was that the 2006 agreement between him and his former wife contained a “computational error.” Whereas the parties had intended that each receive an equal share of the property, the former Mrs. Hackett ended up with a windfall “in excess of \$100,000.”

In the end, the Appellate Division of the Second Judicial Department rejected Mr. Hackett’s claim.

One factor that the court apparently relied on was that, “The parties acknowledged in open court that they had read and understood the terms of the settlement agreement, and had not been forced” to sign it.

The court cited earlier case law stating that “marital settlement agreements are judicially favored and are not to be easily set aside,” and that the mutual mistake must be “so material that it goes to the foundation of the agreement.”

Additionally, the court said that “to overcome the heavy presumption that a deliberately prepared and executed written instrument manifested the true intention of the parties, evidence of a very high order is required.”

Here, Mr. Hackett “failed to meet his high burden of proof of demonstrating that, as a result of a mutual mistake, the settlement agreement did not reflect the true intent of both parties with respect to the distribu-



tion of the marital estate.”

Our judicial system likes finality, but doesn’t always provide it. It is a tough road to prove that there was a mutual mistake and to set aside a settlement agreement, but that doesn’t mean that someone won’t try to get there.

The Hackett case is evidence of this.

Other mistakes:

How long will it take?

The Hacketts had already settled back in 2006. They may have litigated before then. Did the wife, or even the husband, imagine at that time that their settlement would be challenged, leading to more years of litigation?

Many parties hire litigators and then are shocked, even after hearing the horror stories, to find that they themselves are spending years of their lives in a legal battle.

The law is clear, I am right, and the judge will find in my favor.

Basically, whenever a case is “reversed,” it means that a judge (or panel of judges) disagrees with what another judge decided earlier about the same case.

Often, a client meets with a law-

yer and says, “Tell me what will happen in my case.” But the law is much too nuanced for this. Litigators spend their professional lives arguing about how the law should be applied in one case after another. Many would happily argue either side of a matter, and there is nothing unethical about this.

The point is that even judges can and do disagree with one another at times. How then, can you as a (potential) litigant, be so certain of the outcome? Certain that a judge will agree with you?

Even if the judge does rule in your favor, might the other party return to court? Might an appellate (“higher court”) judge decide against you? The only certainty is that it will take years to find out.

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.



Safe in the water

Tips to help prevent drowning

US SWIM SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Drowning is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. On average, 3,533 people die as a result of drowning each year, and most of those deaths are children under the age of 4, who drown in backyard swimming pools. The tragedy of these statistics is that nearly all drowning deaths are preventable.

To help educate children, parents, families and swim instructors on preventive measures to avoid a drowning incident, US Swim School Association, the preeminent swim school organization in the country, has compiled the latest life-saving water safety and swim instruction tips for National Water Safety Month in May.

There are several standard water safety precautions recommended to parents including: keeping children under constant supervision,

enrolling children in swimming lessons, knowing CPR, and having pool fences and barriers installed. In addition to these vital steps, here is a list of tips parents can use to build extra layers of protection for their children around water from Sue Mackie, executive director of the United States Swim School Association.

Drowning prevention and water safety tips

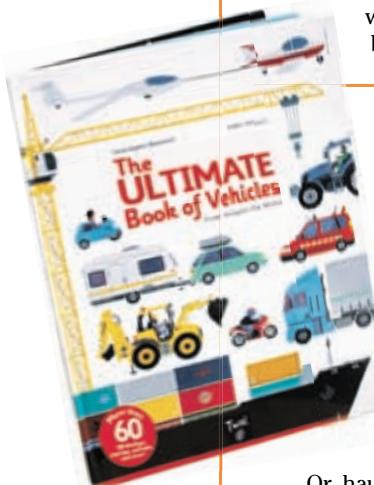
- Create a verbal cue for your toddler or child that must be given by you before he can enter the pool.
- Never allow your baby or toddler in the pool without a swim diaper.
- Create a process the child must go through before entering a pool, such as putting on a swim diaper, a swimsuit, and applying sunscreen.
- Never use flotation devices or water wings when swimming or when teaching kids to swim.
- Children should learn to swim without goggles. Teach your children to open their eyes under water; if they fall in, they can find the side of the pool or a step and get out safely.
- For very young children, practice having them put their entire face under water in the bathtub and blow bubbles to build their comfort with water.
- Create a water safety plan for your family and have water emergency drills with your kids — covering how to recognize the signs of someone struggling in water and what to do in this type of emergency.
- Make sure your guests and kids' friends know your pool rules before they go outside and get in the pool.
- Start swim lessons at 6 months of age and continue them year-round.
- Always make sure your children wear life jackets on boats, personal watercraft, and in open bodies of water.

For more information on US Swim School Association, visit: <http://www.usswimschool.org>



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER



Kentucky Derby from A to Z

So you've got a couple of horse lovers around, but they want different things from the books they read. And that's why you'll love giving them "D is for Derby," by Helen L. Wilbur, illustrated by Jaime Corum.

Just two minutes.

That's about how long it takes for the Kentucky Derby, from opening gate to finish. You probably can't think of a quicker sport, because there probably isn't one. And in this book, the very first letter of the alphabet stands for the very first Kentucky Derby winner, Aristides, a thoroughbred horse ridden by an African-American jockey. When Aristides raced in 1875, most jockeys were black, in fact.

You might wonder why Kentucky is the "horse capital" of the world. It's because the state's "limestone-rich soil" grows grass that gives the horses good bones and strong muscles:

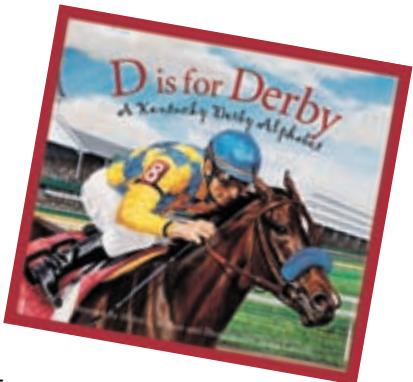
B is for Bluegrass, which is what it's called because the buds of the

grass have a bluish tint.

Those powerful horses need people to care for them, so G is for Groom, which is the person who brushes the horse, works with him, gives him baths, and makes sure he's "happy, healthy, handsome, and ready to race." Of course, no horse can race without a jockey in the saddle, so J is for Jockey.

Long before the horses get to the opening gate, there's a great celebration in Louisville. D is for Derby Festival, which includes boats, parades, fireworks, and concerts. Everyone's excited and on race day they gather by the spires. The Derby attracts celebrities and royalty; even Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip have attended, which is why Q is for Queen. And wouldn't you know that H is for hat because wearing wild, colorful hats is a Derby tradition for women, just as wearing splashy ties and flashy clothing is tradition for men who attend the festivities.

But then comes the most impor-



tant part of the day: the race. The horses line up, their owners hoping for the Triple Crown: P is for Preakness, and together with the Derby and the Belmont Stakes, it could mean a big win!

Author Helen L. Wilbur wrote this book to appeal to two age groups on the same page: children who enjoy a good picture book and need the basics, and older readers who want solid information and a chance to really understand horse racing. Add in amazingly life-like illustrations by Jaime Corum (my favorite part!) and you've got something that kids will enjoy and that adults won't mind reading, too.

"D is for Derby: A Kentucky Derby Alphabet," by Helen L. Wilbur [32 pages, 2014, \$16.95].

Big book of vehicles for little drivers

You call your son your little back-seat driver.

That's because he likes to sit in the back in your car, and keep an eye out for anything he might like to drive someday.

Or haul. Or dig. Or float, run, lift, pump, and tow. Anything with wheels, that's what he notices.

He can't wait until he grows up. But, if he has "The Ultimate Book of Vehicles From Around the World" by Anne-Sophie Baumann and Didier Balicevic by his side, he can pretend to drive, dig, or haul right now.

Let's say he loves construction equipment. Big trucks that haul and dump. Gigantic machines that bust up buildings and dig holes in the ground. Machines that move dirt — that's what he loves and he'll find them all on the first pages of this book. Have he ever seen a scissors lift? If he hasn't, he'll get an idea of what it's like by mov-

ing the one in this book. He'll also see what happens when recycling trucks and garbage trucks pick up their big loads.

Or maybe he's a fan of farms. Does he love tractors and combines? Then he'll like the ones in this book, because he'll see how the insides of some machines work.

Does your child and his grandfather share a love of trains? Then he'll want to show grandpa what's here: two big pages of trains complete with a chance to peek inside to see what they haul.

There are even more big trucks inside this book. Your child will see ambulances and fire trucks and a fire lift so he can help save someone's life. He can look inside a great big freight ship, a luxury cruise ship, a medium-sized fishing boat, and a fancy yacht. If he wants to be an airplane pilot someday, then he'll like seeing the inside of a jumbo jet, a cargo plane, and a glider. Be sure to spin the helicopter propeller!

And finally, if his need for speed is

out of this world, check out the last page of this book. It's going to send him over the moon!

So you say you've got a wheel-wild youngster in the house — one who can't get enough of big machines that go? Then you're going to want to go find "The Ultimate Book of Vehicles From Around the World."

There's more!

On just about every page, there are tabs to pull and flaps to lift. Your kids can deliver cargo, roll a cement mixer, raise a scissor truck, dump garbage, make hay, feed their neighbors, douse a fire, and captain a ship.

And what 3-to-5-year-old wouldn't love all of the above? *"The Ultimate Book of Vehicles From Around the World," by Anne-Sophie Baumann and Didier Balicevic [23 pages, 2014, \$19.99].*

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.

The missing

Renew your commitment to safety this Missing Kids Awareness Month

BY JAMIE LOBER

As May is Missing Kids Awareness Month, this is the prime time to renew your commitment as a family to safety.

This past year the number of kids reported missing in New York State increased slightly, from 21,390 to 21,656. It is a very real issue in our community, and many families are surprised to learn that all missing kids cannot be lumped into one category.

"There are family abductions, non-family abductions which include stranger abductions, runaways, throwaways and the issue of lost or missing children for short periods of time," said Pam Weaver, director of community education with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, New York Regional Office.

The predators are not always who you may think.

"It is important for people to understand that children are more at risk of being abducted by a family member or someone they know instead of a stranger," said Weaver.

There are about four times as many family abductions as non-family abductions.

"A child is usually taken because of custody issues or issues with divorce or hurt feelings between people, but it is not always in the best interest of the child," said Weaver. A parent may be able to rationalize his choice to take the child away, but that does not mean that there are no consequences. "Even if a child is taken by a family member they still could be unfortunately a victim of physical, emotional or sexual abuse in the hands of the parent who takes them," said Weaver.

There is no stereotypical child that predators approach.

"Research is telling us that chil-



dren that are by themselves walking or playing outside are more at risk because it is a crime of opportunity," said Weaver.

One of the most valuable safety rules you can instill in your child is to always take a friend with you because there is safety in numbers.

"There are more attempts of abductions when children are going

to and from school or school activities," said Weaver.

Kids who are unaccompanied are logical targets because they are more vulnerable and look like easy prey.

"Usually it is children between the ages of 10 and 14 that are more likely to be abducted in those situations because the reality is that

One of the most valuable safety rules you can instill in your child is to always take a friend with you because there is safety in numbers.

younger children usually are supervised," said Weaver.

Teaching the concept of stranger danger in the schools has become a thing of the past since kids are at greater risk of being abducted or sexually abused by someone they know.

"Ninety percent of sexual abuse occurs by someone the child knows," said Weaver. There are a few basic ground rules you can set with your child. "The first rule is to check first, which means that children should always check with a grown-up that is in charge of them before they go anywhere," said Weaver. This applies to anyone who stops them or tries to get them to go in the car. "The second rule is to take a friend if they are riding a bike or playing and if they are real young, it should be a grown-up friend like mom, dad or a teacher," said Weaver.

One of the hardest things for kids to do can be to say no but they must figure out how.

"If anyone is making them scared, uncomfortable or trying to take their hand to take them somewhere and they know that is not the person they should be with, they should yell no," said Weaver.

The final rule is for kids to always tell a grown-up what has happened if they ever feel uncomfortable so the grown-up knows about the potential danger.

You can talk about the fact that some kids wind up missing in our community at an age-appropriate level with your child, but it can be more constructive to empower them with safety skills rather than fear tactics.

"Instead of saying, 'Look at all these bad people in the world,' instead, say that 'mom and dad love you and want to make sure you are safe just like you wear a seat belt when you are in the car

or bike helmet when you are riding your bike,'" said Weaver.

It can complicate things that kids are trusting.

"They might think it is okay to get in the car with a teacher or coach because they know them, but the reality is that they should not get in the car with someone even if they know them unless the adult in charge of them says it is okay," said Weaver.

Runaways are a huge issue in our state.

"Sometimes kids run away because home does not feel like a safe place or they are being victimized, parents have drug or alcohol issues, an adult coming into the household that might be touching them inappropriately or just because they do not like the rules," said Weaver.

It is a good idea for kids to reach out to an adult that can help them.

"Often times once they are out in the community the people that befriend them may take advantage of them or get them involved in prostitution, pornography or selling drugs," said Weaver.

Online relationships are another reason that kids may run away and that is particularly concerning because the person on the other end of the computer could be an online predator. Speak up. Parents need to monitor what their kids are doing online and see if they are talking to strangers or making poor choices.

"If you are having issues with your child, quarrels or your child does not want to obey the rules, you may want to reach out and get some help from school," said Weaver. "It is really about parent communication and talking to kids about safety in the real world and online world as well."

If your child were to go missing, the first thing you should do is call 911.

"There is no waiting period if a child is missing," said Weaver. It is also wise to call the National Center at 1-800-THE-LOST as they can help with the investigation as well. "It is important that parents always have a current, updated, close-up picture of their child's face," said Weaver.

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

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Changes to tax laws

I have heard reports that the new state budget includes changes to the estate tax laws. How does this affect my planning? Do I need to redo my will?

You heard correctly. Gov. Cuomo commissioned a task force to examine the impact of taxes on New Yorkers and to propose reform. The Commission concluded in December 2013 that many New Yorkers were fleeing the state to places like Florida that do not have an estate tax. Until recently, New York imposed an estate (or "death") tax on assets in a decedent's estate exceeding \$1 million. The tax was imposed only on the excess. New York also did not impose a gift tax on lifetime transfers and has not done so since 1999. After a flurry of activity, the powers that be in Albany included estate tax reform in the Executive Budget, which was passed at 11 pm on March 31, effective April 1. Among other provisions (pre-K funding!) the estate tax reform will exempt almost 90 percent of all New York estates from estate tax. This will provide relief to those whose estate value is largely made up of their homes, or for the nearly 2,800 farms in downstate and upstate New York, many of which would otherwise not have been able to be passed down

to the next generation, because it would have had to be sold to pay estate taxes.

On the positive side: New York will allow a higher estate tax exemption, raising it immediately from \$1 million (the third lowest exemption in the nation) to \$2,062,500. Starting April 1, 2015, the exemption will annually increase by \$1.0625 million through Jan. 1, 2019, until it reaches the original federal exemption of \$5.25 million on Jan. 1, 2019. At that point, the exemption will be annually adjusted for inflation as is the federal exemption.

However, "grave" dangers lurk.

Cliff-hangers and phaseouts: Decedents have a narrow window to escape, pushing the entire estate off a tax "cliff" into an abyss. Before April 1, a New Yorker's estate paid tax only on assets above the \$1 million threshold, not on the entire taxable estate. Under the new law, if an estate exceeds the exemption amount by less than five percent, the tax is between 6.5 percent and eight percent on the excess above the threshold. Once the taxable estate exceeds the five percent, the full value of the estate is subject to the tax, not just the amount exceeding the exemption. The tax is then computed on a sliding scale from 3.06 percent to as high as 16 percent for estates exceeding \$10 million.

This translates into what is being referred to as the "marginal 164 percent tax." For example, in June 2017, a decedent with a New York taxable estate of \$5,512,500 (five percent more than the then-\$5.25 million exemption) would pay New York estate tax of \$430,050. That is effectively a tax of \$430,050 on the extra \$262,500 in the decedent's estate, as opposed to the roughly \$26,250 that would be due if the tax was imposed solely on the amount exceeding the exemption. This can pose serious problems for New Yorkers with assets exceeding five percent of the exemption, inclusive of any gifts.

Gift tax: The new law increases

the overall exemption, but claws back lifetime gifts into the gross taxable estate. Now, the gross estate of a New Yorker will include any taxable gifts made on or after April 1, 2014 but before Jan. 1, 2019 if they were made within three years of death, and made while the donor was a New York resident.

Taxes on trusts: The law closes loopholes on trusts that were previously not subject to New York tax. First, distributions of accumulated income on or after June 1, 2014 to New York beneficiaries of non-taxable New York resident trusts are now taxable. This does not change to income accumulated before Jan. 1, 2014 or to non-resident trusts created by a non-New Yorker. Second, the law targets Incomplete Non-Grantor Trusts. These are trusts established in another jurisdiction by a New Yorker who is the grantor and remains a beneficiary. The law now treats these trusts as "grantor trusts" for New York income tax purposes, taxing all income to the grantor.

In addition, New York still lacks "portability," allowing spouses to automatically pass exemptions between each other.

The reform is expected to save New Yorkers \$380 million over three years. Yet, the state expects overall state tax revenues to increase by \$1.4 billion this year based on expected economic growth.

It is always important to review your estate plan every year to ensure that it continues to meet your needs in light of changes to the tax laws, as well as changes to your family or assets.

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

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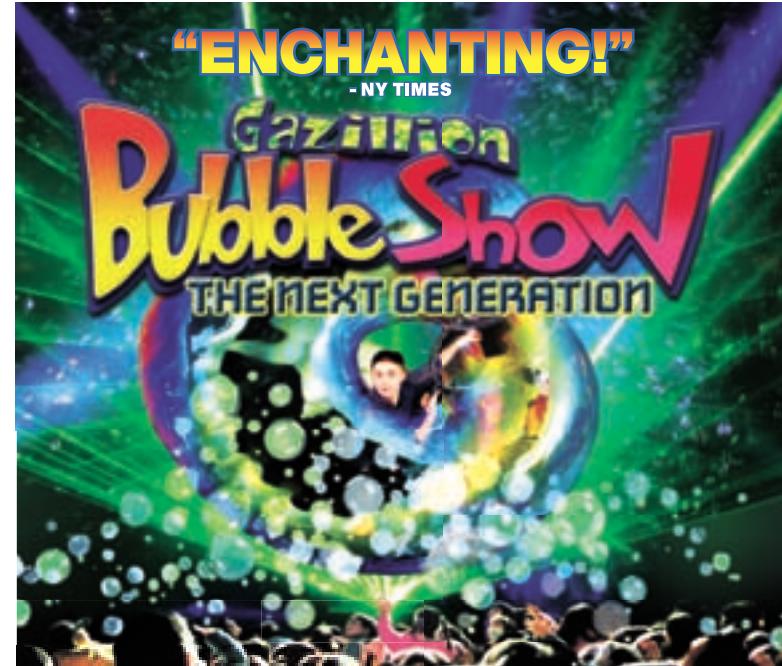
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Calendar

MAY



Shadow Box Theatre.

Children celebrate Mother Earth

Celebrate Mother Earth in this flowing tapestry of song, dance, and puppetry — “The Earth and Me” at Hostos Center for the Arts and Culture on May 6, 7, and 8.

The beautifully presented puppet play by Shadow Box Theater inspires children with hope and empowerment. The children learn how to help protect our Earth and

its delicate balance of harmony, tolerance, and peace.

“The Earth and Me,” on May 6, 7, and 8, at 10 and 11:30 am. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the door.

*Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture
1450 Grand Concourse at 149th Street,
(212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org*

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

THURS, MAY 1

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 11 am; Free.

Children from birth to 5 years old can enjoy interactive stories, fingerplay, and action songs.

Toddler time: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; noon; Free.

Children 18 to 36 months with parent or caregiver play games.

Movie day: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 3:30–5 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens enjoy an age-appropriate flick.

Whale book making: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 7 to 12 years old use a variety of skills for hands-on projects. Limited to 30 children.

FRI, MAY 2

IN THE BRONX

Game on: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 3:30–4:30 pm; Free.

Bring a friend and take the Xbox 360 challenge.

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

Children 5 to 12 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 members.

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



Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum

Clang, clang, goes the trolley

Time seems to stand still at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum. And now that it's officially spring, you can take a trolley back to the past at the beautiful Pelham Bay Park space as its First Friday! excursions are back in business.

On May 2, tour the mansion, stroll the garden, savor light refreshments, and hop on the free Bronx Seaside Trolley for a ride to City Island.

You can further enjoy the magic of the mansion at night with the help of music and savor

the evening air.

First Friday! May 2 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm. Tickets \$10, \$8 seniors and students.

Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum [895 Shore Rd. near Orchard Beach Road in Pelham Bay Park, (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org].

SAT, MAY 3

IN THE BRONX

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

Visitors to join with sculptor Matt Bua and make a small outdoor dwelling inspired by Mark Twain.

ComicCon 6: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; 11 am–7 pm; Free.

Children enjoy a day of comics, meeting creators, and show off their work.

Story time en Espanol: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 12:30 pm; Free.

"Bienvenidos!" Features Te Lo Regalo, with practice of Spanish words and stories.

FURTHER AFIELD

Citizen Science Series: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org.

org; Noon–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Citizen Science Series introduces audiences to a range of science projects.

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

Brian Biggs shares his colorful characters. For children 3 years and older.

Picture book time: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 2–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Educator James Giovan leads a tour of Borough Hall. Suggested for children 9 years and older. Pre-registration required.

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

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

SUN, MAY 4

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 3.

Study zone: Kingsbridge Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd. at Briggs Ave.; (718) 579-4244; www.nypl.org; noon; Free.

Children in grades three to six can enjoy a quiet place to study, type a paper or just relax.

May Open House: Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse; (718) 681-6000; www.bronxmuseum.org; 2–5 pm; Free.

Help the staff open up for the summer season with a performance by Moebius, dance by Sally Silvers and sound designed by Bruce Andrews.

FURTHER AFIELD

Meet the author/illustrator: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 3.

Continued on page 30

Calendar

Continued from page 29

MON, MAY 5

IN THE BRONX

Presley and Melody: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 4 pm; Free.

The singing duo performs for children 18 months to 12 years old with songs and fun.

TUES, MAY 6

IN THE BRONX

The Earth and Me: Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, 450 Grand Concourse at 149th Street; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$10 (\$15 at the door).

A child celebrates the Earth through dance, music, and puppetry.

Toddler time: Riverdale Library, 5540 Mosholu Ave. at W. 256th Street; (718) 549-1212; www.nypl.org; 11:30am – noon.

Children walking age to 36 months with parent or caregiver sing, play and listen to stories.

Unplugged: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn how to have fun without electronics. Bring a friend and play board games.

WED, MAY 7

IN THE BRONX

The Earth and Me: 10 am and 11:30 am. Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture. See Tuesday, May 6.

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

Children 8 to 12 years old use iPads for book discussion group. Workshops are limited to 12 children. Pre-registration required.

THURS, MAY 8

IN THE BRONX

The Earth and Me: 10 am and 11:30 am. Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture. See Tuesday, May 6.

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Toddler time: noon. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, May 1.

Movie day: 3:30–5 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Bristly Bots: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley

Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 3:30 pm; Free.

Students create their own robots and learn about live creatures. Limited to 15 participants. Preregistration required.

Computer basics: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; 4 pm; Free.

For children 7 to 12. Pre-registration required.

FRI, MAY 9

IN THE BRONX

Game on: 3:30–4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, May 2.

Game Day: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 10

IN THE BRONX

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

Honor mom with paper flowers, sachets and flowery gifts. Make a fragrant sachet filled with lavender and tied with love for your mom.

Mother's day: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Join in for a special Mother's Day story featuring "Oh, the Things My Mom Will Do," then make a card for mom to take home.

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

Parents with children 3 to 6 years old are invited to attend a reading aloud and craft event. Pre-registration required. Limited to 25 participants.

Jose Feliciano: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960-8833; www.lehmancenter.org; 8 pm; \$25, \$40, \$45 (\$10 children any seat).

Mix of soft rock and Latin pop.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Children enjoy erecting new buildings with an assortment of blocks.

Cultural connections: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages view a dance of

traditional Chinese dancers in authentic costumes. on -stage demos and audience interaction.

Picture book time: 2–4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 3.

Family walk: 3–4 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, May 3.

SUN, MAY 11

IN THE BRONX

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

Mother's Day brunch: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 11 and 11:30 am; \$40 (\$45 non-members).

Treat mom to a classic breakfast and lunch event. Payments must be made in advance, no later than May 8. Reservations required.

Study zone: noon. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Sunday, May 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

Block Party: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 10.

I love mommy: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children celebrate moms for Mother's Day.

TUES, MAY 13

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11:30 am–noon. Riverdale Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Tech time: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 4:30 pm; Free.

Need an extra computer? Use library laptops for help. For children 13 to 18 years old.

WED, MAY 14

IN THE BRONX

E-book discussion: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, May 7.

THURS, MAY 15

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Toddler time: noon. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, May 1.

Movie day: 3:30–5 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Bristly Bots: 3:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 8.

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

Children 7 to 12 years old use a variety of skills for hands-on projects. Limited to 30 children.

FURTHER AFIELD

Thursday night: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm; Free.

Enjoy the museum after hours and have fun exploring.

FRI, MAY 16

IN THE BRONX

Game on: 3:30–4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, May 2.

Game Day: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 17

IN THE BRONX

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

Make your own puppet and its own little home.

Summer adventure: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Oh, the places you will go is the theme this storytime.

FURTHER AFIELD

Math Mania: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Pre-school tots learn counting and discovering how much fun shapes are.

Concert: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

MetLife Early Learner Performance presents a Force Majeure Quintet Family concert. learn all about wind instruments.

Family walk: 3–4 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, May 3.

SUN, MAY 18

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 17.

Calendar

Study zone: noon. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Sunday, May 4.

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

Rani Arbo and Daisy Mayhem perform a mix of fiddle, guitar and bass.

FURTHER AFIELD

Math Mania: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 17.

TUES, MAY 20

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11:30 am–noon. Riverdale Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Book chat: Parkchester Library, 1985 Westchester Ave. at Pugsley Avenue; (718) 829-7830; 4 pm; Free.

Teens share their favorite books. For 13 to 18 year olds.

WED, MAY 21

IN THE BRONX

E-book discussion: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, May 7.

THURS, MAY 22

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Toddler time: noon. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, May 1.

Movie day: 3:30–5 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Bristly Bots: 3:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 8.

FRI, MAY 23

IN THE BRONX

Game on: 3:30–4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, May 2.

Game Day: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 24

IN THE BRONX

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

Visiting artist Em Rooney helps you create an environment for the great outdoors. Make a patio take home fossil of an imprint of leaves and other natural objects.

FURTHER AFIELD

Circle secrets: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

What makes a circle unique? Discover the structure of the amazing shape.

Flip books: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

All sorts of books are on the agenda for children 4 years and older.

NYC Atlas: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 2–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years and older learn about maps, then make a map of their own.

SUN, MAY 25

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 24.

FURTHER AFIELD

Circle secrets: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 24.

Flip books: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 24.

NYC Atlas: 2–4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 24.

MON, MAY 26

IN THE BRONX

Memorial Day: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–5 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

The grounds are open all day — come visit for a special guided garden walk or browse through the gallery.

TUES, MAY 27

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11:30 am–noon. Riverdale Library. See Tuesday, May 6.

Tech time: 4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Tuesday, May 13.

WED, MAY 28

IN THE BRONX

E-book discussion: 4 pm.

Kingsbridge Library Center. See Wednesday, May 7.

THURS, MAY 29

IN THE BRONX

Learning time: 11 am. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Toddler time: noon. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Thursday, May 1.

Movie day: 3:30–5 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 1.

Bristly Bots: 3:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Thursday, May 8.

FRI, MAY 30

IN THE BRONX

Game on: 3:30–4:30 pm. Parkchester Library. See Friday, May 2.

Game Day: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library Center. See Friday, May 2.

SAT, MAY 31

IN THE BRONX

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

Visiting artist Virva Hinemo creates a child-sized forest with movable parts made out of cardboard and tempera paint.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

Family walk: 3–4 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, May 3.

SUN, JUNE 1

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 31.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

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

Mysteries Revealed features more than 30 dinosaur species and how scientists reconstruct the fossil pieces.

The ride runs through the zoo and has fully animatronic dinosaurs as they move and snarl. The 40 foot T-Rex is joined by deinonychus, prodrohadros, stegosaurus and edmontonia.

Learn to draw: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 2–3:30 pm.; Free.

Children 10 years and older learn the basics of still life pencil drawing, including volume, tone, value, and sketching.

Seasonal crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Fridays, 2–3:30 pm.; Free.

Make holiday arts and crafts.

Paper Arts & Crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays, 1–3 pm.; Free.

Children have fun creating collages using decoupage, origami, kirigami and more.

Story time: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; Wednesdays, 6 pm, Now – Wed, June 4; Free.

Join in for a weekly sesion of fun reading and activities.

Bronx week: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); Sunday, May 11, 12 pm; Monday, May 12, 12 pm; Tuesday, May 13, 12 pm; Wednesday, May 14, 12 pm; Thursday, May 15, 12 pm; Friday, May 16, 12 pm; Saturday, May 17, 12 pm; Sunday, May 18, 12 pm; Free.

Celebrate beauty in the borough with a guided tours.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

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

Golfers of all ages can learn about key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch

Continued on page 32

Calendar

Continued from page 31

window, gravitational assist, and more!

The Butterfly Conservatory:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; Now - Mon, May 26; \$27, \$16 (children).

This annual favorite features up to 500 live, free-flying tropical butterflies from Central, South, and North America, Africa, and Asia.

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

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

Toddler Storytime: Nolen Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at E. 81st Street, Manhattan; (212) 570-3788; www.metmuseum.org; Mondays -

Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:30 am-11 am, Now - Fri, May 2; Free.

Look, listen, and have fun with picture books - for children 18 months to 3 years old.

Storytime: Nolen Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue at E. 81st Street, Manhattan; (212) 570-3788; www.metmuseum.org; Sundays - Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:30 am-11 am, Now - Sun, May 4; Free.

Look, listen, and have fun with picture books - Children 3 to 7 years old start with a book and then explore the museum on a self-guided gallery hunt.

Art Kid: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30 am, Now - Fri, May 30; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years and older explore a new style each week.

Little Kids, Big Stars: MCU Park, 1904 Surf Ave. at W. 17th St., Brooklyn; (718) 37-BKLYN; info@brooklynclowns.com; www.brooklynclowns.com; Saturday, April 12 - Saturday, June 7; Free.

Baseball is back and the Cyclones

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

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

Touch tank: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Sun, June 1; Free with museum admission.

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

The Art of Math: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm, Sat, May 3 - Sun, June 1; Free with museum admission.

Children learn all about shapes, triangles, squares.

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

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

Arty facts: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm, Now - Sun, May 18; \$10 materials fee plus museum admission.

Children 4 to 7 years old explore the galleries, enjoy an activity and take an art class.

Bug out!: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Tues, May 6; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages meet grasshoppers, worms, and Madagascar hissing cockroaches.

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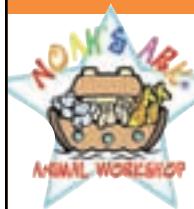
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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Top Tips

'Cool parent' dos and don'ts

Here are some more tips for being a "cool" parent.

- Do don a "Walking Dead" costume for Halloween.
- Don't drink alcohol in front of your teen and his friends.
- Do try waterskiing with your teen.
- Don't mimic teenager banter on social networking sites.
- Do host a party for your teen and her friends at your house, but don't leave the premises.

Be the 'cool' parent

Advice for staying connected with your teen

Have you watched "Mean Girls" with your teen daughter? There is a memorable line in the movie when Mrs. George states, "I'm not like a regular mom. I'm a COOL mom." Of course, Mrs. George is a caricature of a mom trying too hard to be "one of the girls." She makes mocktails for "happy hour," wears skimpy clothing, and allows her daughter to occupy the master bedroom suite.

Are "cool parents" more in tune with their teens? What does it really mean to be a cool parent?

Cool parents are truly connected

A cool parent is someone who can relate to teens, but still establishes a position of respect and authority. Cool parents know that the key to staying on the same page as their teenagers is to stay involved and interested in their dreams and goals.

Dr. Ilene Val-Essen, author of "Bring Out the Best in Your Child and Your Self: Creating a Family Based on Mutual Respect" (Quality Parenting, 2010) and creator of the "Quality Parenting Program" (www.qualityparenting.com), believes that teens want to stay connected with their parents.

"Respect is the link," she explains. "Respect yourself, your children, and



those with whom you interact."

Dr. Christina G. Hibbert, a clinical psychologist, mother of six, and author of "This is How We Grow" (Oracle Folio Books, 2013), points out, "One of the worst things parents can do is try to be their teen's friend. They have plenty of 'cool' friends. Instead of trying to be like your teen, focus on being open to your teen. Do activities with them that they enjoy. Make time to listen whenever they need you."

Dr. Grace Malonai, a psychotherapist specializing in parenting and family relationships, explains, "It is common for people to think that in order to connect with their teens, they need to get down on a teen's level by wearing similar clothing or talking the lingo. However, parents are older and different than their teens, and trying to look and sound like them may seem fake. Parents can connect with teens by being authentic and empathetic."

Val-Essen describes, "Cool parents are parents teens can be proud of. Parents engaged in meaningful activities — those that keep them alive and passionate about life — are cool parents teens admire."

Parents should be aware of the latest teen trends. Educate yourself about new social networking sites, music, movies, as well as anything illicit or unhealthy teens might be exposed to. You can't advise your teen if you don't know what is going on.

Staying connected with your teen also means that you are familiar with

his current circle of friends and his social activities. Allow your teen to have friends over regularly, so you can get to know them on a more personal basis. Take your teen on regular outings doing something he loves.

What's the buzz?

Teens don't always talk to their parents about what is going on, but parents must keep trying to break that barrier.

Malonai, recommends, "Listen to your teen with all that you have, and make sure you are available when the time is right." She also advises parents to show interest in their teen's feelings without using accusatory language. For instance, a parent might say, "The words in that song tell a sad story, yet you are smiling. This makes me curious."

Being a cool parent shouldn't mean that you haven't forgotten what it is like to be carefree, and you can still find your sense of humor. Understand your teen is changing and desires more independence, but still insist that he follows your rules and expectations.

Tips and tales

"I try to remind my son that I was his age once and have 'been there' — even though it was during the age of the dinosaurs!"

Lori Ann Jones, Salt Point, NY

"To stay connected with my teen daughter, I get up to take her to the bus. It's when we talk without interruptions from siblings, pets or the phone."

Lynda Radano, Berlin, NJ

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips to encourage your teen to have healthy sleep habits.

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



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Taste the rainbow

After the darkness of this year's brutal winter, we welcome the first bright burst of spring and look forward to adding color back to our wardrobes. It's also a good time to colorize our diets.

But how exactly is that done without breaking the bank and spending loads of time on cooking? What are the myths about eating the colors of the rainbow? And how do you appeal to your picky eaters?

'White foods aren't good for you' and other myths

For years we've heard the message to eat the colors of the rainbow. But where does that leave white and brown foods?

"While it's true that deeply pigmented produce is especially healthy, there are plenty of foods that aren't colorful in the traditional sense that are still incredibly good for you," advises registered dietitian nutritionist Frances Largeman-Roth, author of "Eating in Color: Delicious, Healthy Recipes for You and Your Family."

She points to black and tan ingredients "like chia, hemp and flax seeds, as well as barley, coconut and chocolate," as being healthful. White foods such as cauliflower,



onions and mushrooms also hold incredible nutritional power.

You can still add color to your family's diet while staying on a budget. Don't forget frozen fruits and vegetables are picked at the peak of freshness with a nutritional value just as good as fresh. Largeman-Roth, a mother of two (with one on the way), recommends Community Supported Agriculture shares to obtain lower-cost, high-quality, local fresh produce.

Isn't it time consuming to cook healthy? Not necessarily. Large-man-Roth suggests making a weekly date with your kitchen.

"If you're ready with ingredients and have blocked out time in your calendar, you'll find that you can prep enough food for three to four meals plus snacks," she says.

Picky, picky, picky

Playing up the fun factor of colorful and nutrient-packed foods can help kids with even the most discerning palates dig into what's good for them.

Even picky eaters (kids and adults, alike) can be tantalized with beautiful-looking food. And don't be afraid to serve veggies with cheese on top or with a dip. A little bit of extra flavor can go a long way toward encouraging little ones to try new things.

Vibrantly colored foods found in nature can be healthful and taste yummy, too. So add a pop of spring color not only to your wardrobe this month, but also to your family's meals.

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.

Salad in a Jar

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/4 cup walnut oil
- 1/4 cup cranberry juice
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon agave nectar (light or dark)
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1-15 ounce can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 1 head radicchio, sliced crosswise into ribbons
- 1/2 head red leaf lettuce, chopped

DIRECTIONS: In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, cranberry juice, mustard, agave nectar, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Place the beans in the bowl with the dressing, stir to coat, and set aside. Place 1/4 cup of the bean mixture in the bottom of a tall mason jar. Follow with 2 tablespoons feta, 1 tablespoon cranberries, one-quarter of the radicchio, and one-quarter of the red leaf lettuce. Repeat with the remaining jars.

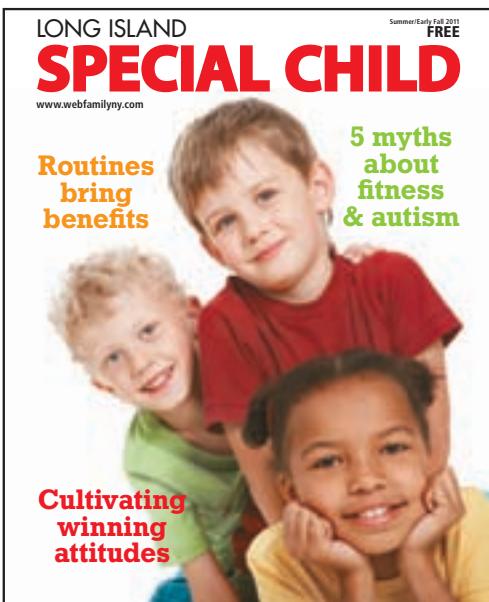
NUTRITION FACTS: 330 calories, 32 g carbohydrates, 5 grams fiber, 7 grams sugar, 9 g protein, 18 g fat (4 g sat fat), 17 mg cholesterol, 428 mg sodium

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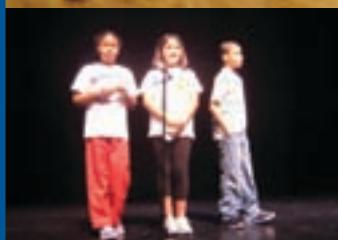
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