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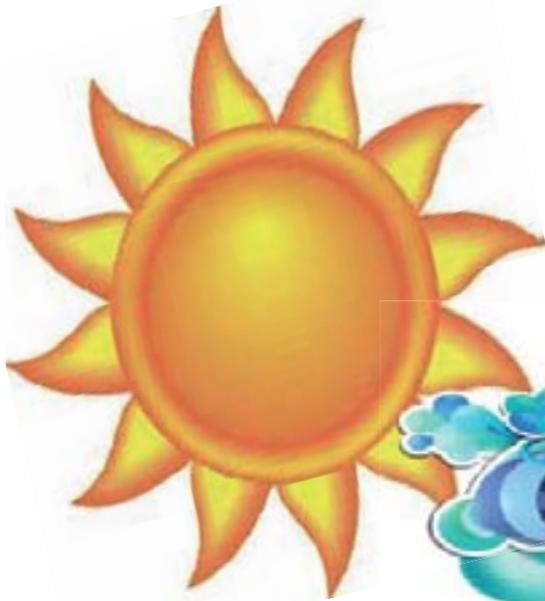
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FEATURES

- 6 Teacher's tips**
Advice for students taking the Common Core English Language Arts exam in third through eighth grades
BY ALLISON PLITT
- 10 How to be a better cheerleader for your young athlete**
What mom and dad can do to support their kids' athletic endeavors
BY DENISE YEARIAN
- 12 Under their skin**
When acne is spotted, these tips can help
BY JAMIE LOBER
- 13 A whale of a tale**
BY KIDS FIRST! FILM CRITIC
- 14 When Mom & Dad have camp anxiety**
Terrified about sending your child away? Here's how to ease those fears
BY DR. HEIDI SMITH LUEDTKE
- 19 What to know about hand, foot and mouth disease**
This virus is a pain for preschoolers
BY ALEXA BIGWARFE
- 20 Dos & don'ts at the doctor's office**
BY DR. MATTHEW WEISSMAN
- 24 New York International Children's Film Festival**
The country's largest film festival for kids and teens is happening right here in New York City
BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON



20



24



10

COLUMNS

- 8 Healthy Living**
BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN
- 22 Ask an Attorney**
BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.
- 26 Parents Helping Parents**
BY SHARON C. PETERS
- 34 Good Sense Eating**
BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

CALENDAR

28 March Events

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- 16 Camp Directory
- 23 Charter School Directory
- 33 The Marketplace

Letter from the publisher

Parenting choices all month long

Who in New York isn't ready for a change in the weather? When those first pussy willows come up and we see some buds, we will be much happier. In the meantime, the days are growing longer and the quality of light will tell us that spring is just around the bend.



Our March issue offers a look ahead at Summer Programs & Camps as well as at Charter School tours. With April registration dates looming, now is the time to begin doing the research necessary to select choices for further investigation. One great thing about being a parent in New York is that there is an abundance of choice. Finding out your options and then going on tours is part of the responsibility of parenting. One needs to be a strong advocate for one's children, although it's a balancing act

every day in every way between being a working parent and working as a parent. I know from firsthand experience.

Although I didn't set out to be a single parent, it turned out that way, and the responsibilities I had combining a very necessary career with raising my child were daunting to say the least. Somehow, however, in spite of the full load, I managed to become the head of our school's parent body, drive my daughter to soccer games all over Long Island for two years, while also managing to take trips, visit museums, and go to the theater and ballet with her.

We are enormously fortunate to have so much intelligent stimulation around us and that we owe it to our children to participate with them in the myriad of possibilities that will further enhance their education and

well being. I argued with teachers sometimes (while being fully respectful of their objectives and priorities) that no, my daughter had not done her homework because we had gone out the night before to the ballet, or had seen a play. I considered us very lucky to have that even as an option, so saying no to the invite would have been nuts. That's what life in New York means to me and why I came here long ago from Chicago.

I believe in the enhancement of a total education that does not always take place in a classroom, but is found on the road on a family trip, in a museum, in front of PBS quality television programming, hearing music, seeing a family show, or reading a book together. Family time used well and fully is an integral piece of life and creates a foundation that is profound.

That said, please make use of our Calendars, both in print and online

at our helpful and informative website, www.NYParenting.com. Our Calendar Editor Joanna makes a big effort to put together an exciting and full monthly guide to great events around the five boroughs. Speaking of our website, there is more information and helpful and provocative articles on our site than we are able to offer in print. If you like what you read here in the magazine, you will love the site. If you need any help in navigating to find what you're looking for, give us a call.

Have a great month. Watch for the signs of spring. It's definitely around the bend. Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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Teacher's tips

Advice for
students taking
the Common
Core English
Language Arts
exam in third
through eighth
grades

BY ALLISON PLITT

My daughter is enrolled in the third grade at a Queens public elementary school. For the past two years, she has come home with report cards saying she performs above grade level in writing. Since I work as a writer I have been trying to help her formulate her ideas into words and then into coherent sentences. Although my daughter is conscientious about doing her homework, I have found she is not receptive to listening to my advice when it comes to helping her compose sentences and essays.

This year I finally made the decision to hire a tutor to help her place her words onto paper. I found a woman through an online tutoring service who had been teaching English Language Arts to middle school students at a Brooklyn public school for 11 years. The New York City Department of Education's English classes are comprised of speaking, listening, vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar, and writing.

The tutor, Lisa Quercia, also prepares her own students for their yearly state exam, and last year was the first time she taught test preparation for the New York State Common Core Standards English Language Arts exam.

"This is the second real year for the Common Core Exam because the first year is really transitional," she observed.



The Common Core Standards English Language Arts exam for grades three through eight is a three-day test on April 14, 15, and 16. It is comprised of the same types of questions for all six grades. Students are given three booklets: one to complete each day of the test. On the first day, there will be reading passages and multiple-choice questions. On the second day the test booklet is comprised of reading passages, multiple-choice questions, short-response questions, and one extended-response question. The third day's booklet will have reading passages, short-response questions, and one extended-response question.

Students in grades five through eight will have an hour and a half

each day to respond to all the questions in their booklet. Students in grades three and four will have an hour and 10 minutes each day to respond to the questions.

"There is just so much information packed into the English Language Arts testing booklet, so timing is important," Quercia advises.

The night before the exam, Quercia tells parents to make sure their children get enough sleep.

"It's also important to build confidence in your children, so tell them to do the best they can do," she says. On the day of the exam, Quercia advises that students eat a healthy breakfast. "If students eat any sugary foods or drinks for breakfast, then they get tired in the middle of the exam," she observed.



The reading passages are separated into four categories: expository (explanatory), argumentative, instructional, and narrative. Creating a seven-step guide for answering the multiple-choice questions, Quercia says, “I always tell my students to read the directions first. Then, take a look at the title of the piece and also see if there are any pictures to scan over. Sometimes the directions might give them a hint. They might say ‘read this article,’ then you know it’s non-fiction and you’ll probably learn something. If the directions say ‘read this story,’ then you know you’re going to have characters, settings, problems, and solutions.”

Another tip Quercia tells her students is to preview the question before reading the passage.

“I tell them to read the questions first because it gives you an idea about what the passage is about and an idea about what you should be concentrating on,” she said.

After the students preview the questions, Quercia recommends that they read the passages actively.

“Students should be looking for key details from the questions as they read. They can bring and use highlighters on the exam and highlight information that is part of the answer later, but they shouldn’t get carried away with highlighting because it can slow them down.”

As far as answering the multiple-choice questions, Quercia encourages students to use process of elimination. Encouraging students to go back to the passage to find the an-

swers, she says, “They can flip back as much as they need to.” Because an electronic machine scores the multiple-choice part of the test, she says it is important that children fill in all of the bubble for their answers.

As Quercia has proctored the test for many years, she has seen every possible problem happen.

“Every now and then I would catch a kid just answering in the test book and then waiting to transfer the answers to the answer sheet. That can be a disaster if the student puts one answer in one wrong spot — then the whole test is wrong. It’s important that students put their multiple-choice answers on the answer sheet right away.”

In regards to leaving answers

blank, Quercia advises, “Never leave multiple-choice questions blank. The teacher will give you a two-minute warning at the end of the test. With two minutes left, finish the question you’re working on and then you might be able to start one more. Bubble in answers if you have five blank answers left. Just guess. Bubble in ‘C, C, C’ or ‘A, B, C, D.’ There’s no penalty for guessing.”

In regards to the extended-response questions, Quercia uses a formula that her school has been using for years called RAFT. As she explains, “R stands for ‘restate the question.’ A is ‘answer the question’ or parts of the question. F stands ‘for example.’ That’s where you give, for example, your text details. Students can quote the text details or paraphrase them. T is to ‘tie it together,’ to conclude it. Tie your conclusion back to the topic sentence in the introduction. Use summary type phrases like ‘as you can see.’ Those four steps should give you a good solid essay.”

Quercia warns about a part of the exam where students are asked to read two passages on the same topic.

“There will be a paired passage in one of the test booklets. It’s probably the third day. It’s two passages on a similar topic. You’ll read the passages and then there will be questions only about the first passage. Then there will be questions just about the second passage. Then there might be a short-response question about both. Then you write an extended-response question and you must include details from both passages as it says it in the directions.”

Since teachers from other schools will grade the short- and extended-response questions, Quercia says handwriting should be neat and legible.

“I’ve scored the test for the city and you’re sitting in this room with all of these other teachers reading test after test after test. Once you come across that test that’s sloppy, you really have to keep deciphering it. You can ask the other teachers to come over and have this whole group discussion about this one test book because you can’t read it. The truth is the test is easier to grade when it’s legible.”

To obtain more information about the New York State Common Core Standards exams, educators, parents and students can visit the website www.engageny.org.

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



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Debating vaccines

If your pediatrician sent you a letter that said if you didn't follow his vaccination schedule, your child could no longer be a patient, would that bother you? Or would it upset you more to know that your newborn was sitting next a family of children who weren't vaccinated ... ever? The recent measles outbreak confirmed by the Health Department has sent not only a flurry of angst to an already overfilled and angry internet, but also poses real questions that parents and even doctors are mulling over. As with many hot parenting debates, there is no easy answer that will appease all groups.

A couple of years ago, even before the current measles outbreak was top news, eight pediatricians at a Chicago pediatric office informed their patients by mail that they will "no longer see children whose parents refuse to follow the childhood immunization schedule developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics."

Dr. Scott Goldstein, one of the pediatricians who participated, explained why: "All of the available research shows that the safest and most effective way to vaccinate children is on the schedule set by the CDC and AAP. To go against that schedule goes against proven scientific research and puts patients who do follow the schedule at risk."

"I would want my pediatrician to refuse unvaccinated patients. It is for the safety of all children in the practice," says mother of two, and Staten Island resident, Christina Colombo. "If parents choose not to vaccinate, then they will have to do the legwork of finding a doctor who will take them despite them not following medical advice."

It seems that more pediatric offices are following suit. In addition, the Wall Street Journal reports that, "In a study of Connecticut pediatricians published last year, some 30 percent of 133 doctors said they had asked a family to leave their practice for vaccine refusal, and a recent survey of 909 Midwestern pediatricians found that 21 percent reported discharging families for the same reason."



But the question to do so is not simple. Pediatricians are called to care for the children, even the children (or perhaps, especially the children) whose parents have difficult views, or ill-fitted opinions. Pediatrician Dr. Sydney Spiesel discusses the difficulty of the situation in a recent Slate article:

"On the one hand, we profoundly believe in the value and importance of vaccines. On the other hand, we profoundly believe in the value and importance of caring for all children who need us, and some of those children have parents who refuse to vaccinate."

Emily Patterson, who lives in the West Village and is a mom to a 2-year-old who has just finished up his set of scheduled shots, says that she would not want to go to a pediatrician that turned away children who need help.

"I choose to vaccinate my chil-

dren, so they are protected. If the parent sitting next me chooses not to, that's her business. I highly doubt the whole office will be infected just from taking in patients that haven't been vaccinated. I mean, think about how many people you encounter on the subway, or coffee shop, or plane. Can you safely say that everyone you come into contact with has been vaccinated?"

Does your pediatrician mandate that you must follow the vaccination schedule? Would you leave his practice if he did? Does it bother you to think your child is sitting next to an unvaccinated child? Have you ever thought about it at all?

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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How to be a better cheerleader for your young athlete

What mom
and dad
can do to
support their
kids' athletic
endeavors

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Children who participate in sports programs can maximize their potential physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. But it doesn't just happen. Although good coaching and league administration are important, nothing can replace knowledgeable, interested, and supportive parents. So how can moms and dads make the most of their athletic endeavors? Here are 10 tips:

Recognize game rules. The more you know about the sport your child is playing, the calmer and more at ease you will be. Some rules for a given sport may have been modified due to age and developmental level. So when you sit on the sidelines, it will help you know why a call was or wasn't made.

Assess developmental milestones. Be aware of the developmental milestones for the activity, so you can ascertain if your child is physically and mentally ready to take on the sport (see below).

Assist with goal setting. Help your child set realistic goals for himself. Just make sure they are goals he can own for himself. The more personal goals he sets and achieves, the more successful he will be and the more fun he will have.

Collaborate with the coach. Coaches may be a good source for providing drill pointers, but collaborating with them has even greater value. Know who's coaching your

kids and make sure he is in a safe environment and is being instructed in appropriate ways — that the coaches aren't too tough on him and are giving lots of positive reinforcement.

Volunteer to help. One of the best ways to know your child's coaches is to volunteer. Ask if the team needs an assistant coach or administrator, offer to spearhead a fund-raising event, or sign up to bring snacks for the kids after the game. Or volunteer to be the team journalist. Bring your camera and take pictures of the kids at practices and games. Then create an online photo album for the entire team. This can encourage communication and unity among team members, their families, and coaches.

Communicate a life lesson. Communication is a key role in sports parenting, especially when it comes to talking with your children about life lessons such as winning well, dealing with defeat, cooperation, perseverance and the like. For example, talk about how players have to work together to protect the goal, and how it's important to pass the ball, particularly if another player is near the goal. Also, discuss the need to be patient with everyone, because we all make mistakes.

Listen up. Listen to your child's frustrations and excitements. Sometimes he doesn't want you to solve his problem, he just needs you to listen.

Maintain proper nutrition. For children who are involved in rigorous athletics, it is particularly impor-

tant to have proper nutrition and hydration. An appropriate diet includes getting adequate complex carbohydrates, a lean protein source, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. During dinner, your child's plate should have 50 percent fruits and vegetables, 25 percent whole grains, and 25 percent protein. Think ahead on how you can provide healthy food options in the car. Also, make sure your child is staying hydrated. If the team isn't taking a water break during practice, speak up.

Live it out. Be a good role model for your kids, so your words and actions align. Workout on a regular basis and eat healthy, and encourage your kids to do the same. When you are in the stands, keep a positive attitude and cheer everyone on, even the other team if it has made a good play.

Be a good cheerleader. Make it to as many games and practices as you can, offer encouragement and support, and look for little ways to let your child know you are his greatest fan. After weekend game days, do something special — get a bite to eat, take in a movie, or go swimming. In everything, let him know you are his biggest fan.

Developmental milestones for children in sports

Preschool. Many children at this age are beginning to get involved in organized sports. To see if your child is ready, assess his basic skills such



as running, throwing, and tracking objects in motion. Also consider his attention span. Is he focused enough to learn from group instruction? Most children aren't ready to participate in organized sports until they are around 4 or 5. Even then, practices should be short and allow time for free play. Programs should focus on the fundamentals of skill de-

velopment and emphasize fun over competition.

Early elementary. By now, most children have had at least one experience with an organized sport. The emphasis should continue to be on skill development and having fun, not on competition. This is a good time to analyze what you want your child to get out of sports participa-

tion. Ask him and he will more than likely say to have fun, be with his friends, and learn a new skill. Make sure this philosophy lines up with your child's coach and league's instruction. Let him sample different sports activities until he finds one he truly enjoys.

Late elementary. At this age, children are beginning to get a grip on

coordination and have a better concept of team effort. This is also a time when relative age factor comes into play and those who mature physically and mentally may seem to have an advantage. If not handled properly, it may put extra pressure on the mature child to perform, which could lead to burnout.

Children who mature later may have to work harder on skill development and may not initially get their coaches' attention, but given time and encouragement they often catch up with their counterparts. Because children mature at different rates, it is important to continue to emphasize the process, not the results, and to praise effort instead of outcome. This is especially important as competition elevates. Look for programs that adhere to this philosophy and make sure the entire team has an opportunity to participate in play, regardless of skill level.

Middle school. This is a time when children are beginning to master skills and techniques. This can also be a time when league politics, controlling parents, and abusive coaches may dominate an activity, though it happens earlier. If the child feels as if he has lost control over his activity or is being pressured by others, he may be in danger of burnout.

Kids at this age are better able to understand and handle the pressure of competition, but performance and self-esteem issues are closely tied now and can affect how youth feel about themselves in other facets of life. They may also need encouragement and information to deal with the awkwardness of changing bodies and minds.

Resources for parents

Books:

"Home Team Advantage: The Critical Role of Mothers in Youth Sports" by Brooke de Lenche

"How to Win at Sports Parenting: Maximizing the Sports Experience for you and your Child" by Jim and Janet Sundberg

"101 Ways to be a Terrific Sports Parent: Making Athletics a Positive Experience for Your Child" by Joel Fish and Susan Magee

Websites: www.sportsparenting.org, www.momsteam.com, www.nays.org

Denise Yearian is the former editor of two parenting magazines and the mother of three children.

Under their skin

When acne is spotted, these tips can help

BY JAMIE LOBER

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, acne is one of the most common skin conditions in children and adolescents. We all remember the feeling of embarrassment and self-consciousness that comes with a pimple — and we wish it would clear up over night. But the American Academy of Pediatrics said that it can take three to six weeks or longer to see a change, and 12 weeks for maximum improvement. However, with time and intervention from a dermatologist, your child's skin can improve.

"We wish that patients realized that we are generally going to treat acne rather than cure it and that it takes time to do so," said Dr. Seth Orlow, chairman and professor at the Ronald O. Perleman Department of Dermatology at NYU Langone Medical Center. "Even the most effective treatments work slowly, so you need to stick with them to see the benefits."

Acne can be part of growth and development.

"Adolescent acne is a skin condi-

tion of puberty when the body is producing increased levels of hormones called androgens, which in turn cause increased production of oily sebum and increased blockage of the oil glands facilitating the growth of acne bacteria," said Orlow.

When the oil gets trapped, you have acne inflammation.

"Some individuals are more susceptible to this problem and that is why some have worse acne than others," said Orlow.

Remind your child that nobody is to blame for the acne.

"It has little if anything to do with cleanliness, and you cannot scrub it away," said Orlow. Some kids are at higher risk than others.

"In women, irregular periods, excess facial hair, and obesity may be linked to acne," said Orlow. Time is the best medicine.

"Red marks that are left as inflamed acne lesions go away with continued treatment, so please do not pick at your acne lesions because we want to avoid scarring, and not foster it," said Orlow.

When it comes to treatment, peo-

ple usually start with over-the-counter medications for mild acne.

"I suggest something that contains benzoyl peroxide, which helps prevent the formation of acne pimples, or salicylic acid, which helps open up the clogged pores," said Orlow.

If over-the-counter treatments don't seem to work, make an appointment with a dermatologist. Prepare for your appointment by making a list of "everything you used before, and try to recall what worked and what did not," said Orlow.

Be an active participant in your healthcare.

"Do not be afraid to ask questions like how much to put on, exactly how to use the medications, and if something seems so impractical that you cannot make it work, let your doctor know rather than just not using it," said Orlow. Topical retinoids are often prescribed to help, or, oral antibiotics may be given for moderate to severe cases.

Patients failing to comply with treatment regimens are one of the biggest obstacles that dermatologists face.

"Too often, patients become frustrated with slow progress, and as a result, lose interest in following recommendations," said Orlow.

While there are always new remedies, the idea behind treatment is the same as it was years ago.

"The focus is on three key factors: preventing dead skin cells from blocking the oil glands, reducing excessive oil production, and reducing acne-causing bacteria," said Orlow.

While most over-the-counter medications take care of skin cell shedding and acne bacteria, they do not all attack the excessive oil production. Finding a doctor that you trust can make a difference as well.

"Board-certified dermatologists are well-trained to treat even the most severe acne, but you need a doctor with whom you feel comfortable and who can serve as both quarterback and cheerleader simultaneously," said Orlow.

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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A whale of a tale

KIDS FIRST! FILM CRITIC

If you enjoy seeing a documentary movie that will educate, inspire and amaze you, then you will love MacGillivray Freeman's "Humpback Whales."

I learned more about the humpback whale from "Humpback Whales" than if I had studied this unit in school for a month!



This 40-minute, large-format documentary on humpback whales tags along with leading whale researchers using new methods to see what the whales do when no one's watching them.

The documentary follows the whales to the tropical kingdom of Tonga, to summertime in Alaska and then to the warm waters of Hawaii. The audience has a chance to follow the cetaceans' migration,



while experiencing their incredible songs and underwater acrobatics.

One unique thing among humpback males is the singing that they engage in. In fact, the recordings of whale songs are what helped save the mammals from extinction as people became interested in the animals who could make these beautiful and unique sounds.

The humpback whales do cooperative food gathering known as "bubble net fishing,"

in which they work together to release bubbles and loud "feeding calls" to herd and trap herring. This makes it easier for them to gulp down the herring or krill in large quantities — because they can eat up to two tons of food a day.

My favorite part of the movie was seeing and learning about the different researchers who have spent their lives studying the humpback whales. One scene showing the males cir-

cling a female whale in an effort to mate is usually seen once every 10 years. Nobody has ever seen the humpback whale actually mate, so there are many unanswered questions surrounding this aspect of the marine mammals.

Ewan McGregor narrates with a sense of wonder that inspires us to want to know as much as possible about the humpback whales. The upbeat music throughout the movie peaks our interest and curiosity about these extraordinary creatures.

The film teaches us to admire and appreciate the complexities and sheer beauty of the humpback whales. We also see how a whale is rescued when it becomes entangled in life-threatening fishing gear. This rescue requires a lot of skill and understanding of how to free the whale while the rescuers stay safe. We learn the important things we must ensure so that they do not become extinct. We must never again have a whaling industry, have safer fishing gear, less trash in the ocean and take precautions not to have collisions between ships and whales.

I give this movie 5 out of 5 stars and recommend it for ages 5 to 18.

— Adam C., age 9

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When Mom & Dad have **camp anxiety**

Terrified about sending your child away?
Here's how to ease those fears

BY DR. HEIDI SMITH LUEDTKE

If your kids are going to sleep-away camp this summer, you may be wrestling with worries and what-ifs:

- What if he wets the bed?
- What if the other kids are cliquish or mean?
- Will the camp director call me if she's miserable?

Why parents worry

"Much of our anxiety as parents stems from the fact that there are so many things we cannot control in our children's lives," says Dr. Paul Donahue, a clinical psychologist and author of "Parenting Without Fear."

You may worry that without structure, kids won't be able to handle routine tasks like showering, brushing teeth, or getting dressed. One mom I know felt so sure her son wouldn't change clothes at camp that she packed his items — one pair of underwear, shorts, shirt, and socks — in gallon-size Ziploc bags, labeled with the days of the week.

Because parents focus so much on kids' needs, it's hard

Ultimately, parents want kids to become self-reliant, and building self-reliance requires parents do less — not more — for their kids. Camp builds competence and independence. Give your kids time to stretch beyond their comfort zones.

to step back. Coverage of natural disasters and child predators makes the world seem scary.

“Concern about the safety of children has become something of a national obsession,” Donahue observes. Even though our protective instincts keep us on edge, sometimes we have to trust others to care for our kids, and trust our kids to look out for themselves.

Fear of letting go can also be driven by our own uncertainty about who we are without our kids and what we’ll do while they’re away. Without baseball practice, piano lessons, bedtime routines, and movie night, our lives would be slower and saner and ... emptier.

How to stop it

Don’t let worries weigh you down. Use them as an opportunity to confront your own needs for safety, control, and closeness. Here’s how:

Step back. Anxieties have a way of sucking you in. Your thoughts and emotions may be swirling like a tornado around you. Get out of the eye of the storm and reflect on your feelings. What (exactly) are your worries? Write them down, so you can face them head on.

Question your assumptions. Fears may be fueled by irrational beliefs. Kids don’t suffer serious malnutrition from week-long candy binges. And wearing dirty clothes won’t kill them either. Concerned your temperamental child won’t fit in socially? Allow for the possibility she’ll find buddies to hang out with all on her own. Don’t let your beliefs limit kids’ potential.

Keep goals in mind. Ultimately, parents want kids to become self-reliant, says Donahue, and building self-reliance requires parents do less — not more — for their kids. Camp builds competence

and independence. Give your kids time to stretch beyond their comfort zones.

Have a plan. Keep anxieties in control by making a plan for how you’ll use your “time off.” Schedule special time with siblings who aren’t going camping. Plan a romantic date or overnight getaway with your spouse. Learn something new or catch up on your favorite shows. Stay busy (but in a good way). You deserve a change of pace, too.

Share stories. One sure-fire way to break out of anxiety is to remember and share the fun times you had at camp with your kids. Tell them where you went and what you did. The time you flipped your canoe over and got sopping wet in the lake shouldn’t be a secret. Kids love to hear about parents’ camp adventures.

Stay connected. The kids will be gone but not forgotten. Find fun postcards, print pictures of family pets, and collect care-package items to send. Getting mail from home makes kids feel special. Resist the urge to check in every day: kids need space. Don’t forget to send supplies so your kids can send letters home. They’ll want to share their experiences and you’ll treasure their letters forever.

Anxiety is understandable, but it shouldn’t stop you from sending kids off to camp. It’s likely that many of your cherished childhood memories involve nature, new friends, and time to explore on your own — summer camp offers all these opportunities and more.

It’ll be okay if they stay up too late, eat burned marshmallows, or lose their swim goggles in the lake. Really.

Heidi Smith Luedtke is a personality psychologist and mom of two adventurous kids. She is the author of “Detachment Parenting.” Learn more at HeidiLuedtke.com.

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Bronx Zoo Summer Program 800-433-4149 or www.wcs.org/summer-camps

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Continued on page 18



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Continued from page 16

general Sports Program where campers are rotated through a whole variety of sports.

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ESF offers 2-8 week options. An optional extended day program is available. Optional bus transportation from New York City and Westchester County

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718-893-8254 ext. 249 or www.kipsbay.org

Kips Bay Boys & Girls Club Summer Day Camp is your child's home away from home. It is seven weeks of fun-filled days where your youngster will thrive with knowledge, skills and life-long friendships. It serves youth between the ages of 6-13 years in our very own state-of-the-art facility where each child will experience the five core areas of our clubhouse; Aquatics (swimming), Education (computer literacy), Physical Education (basketball, volleyball, street hockey), Performing Arts (dance) and Social Recreation (billiards, table tennis and foosball). In addition, weekly field trips, Summer Olympics, Family Day, and show stopper performances are included as well as a daily nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack.

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What to know about hand, foot, and mouth disease

This virus is a pain for preschoolers

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

Not to be confused with hoof and mouth disease, a very nasty disease that affects cattle, hand, foot, and mouth is a virus that your toddler or preschooler (and sometimes even older children) may contract this spring. You'll want to be on the lookout for a variety of symptoms, of which your child may experience some or all. Be prepared for your

children to have completely different symptoms.

What exactly is hand, foot, and mouth disease?

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is a highly contagious viral illness most prevalent during the spring and fall seasons. It usually affects infants and children younger than 5 years of age. It has a wide variety of symptoms, including fever, sore throat, vomiting, reduced appetite, sores, and red bumps. The child may have a variety or all symptoms, or may carry and pass the virus with no symptoms at all. There is currently no vaccine to prevent it, and not much that can be done once the child has it, beyond keeping them comfortable and waiting it out.

How serious is it?

It's more gross than serious, and the itching can be extremely irritating. It can cause high fever, and a large concern for many is the child becoming dehydrated and not eating if the sores in their mouths and throat hurt too badly. (In rare cases, they can develop some very scary, fatal complications — like brain inflammation and polio-like diseases.)

A week or two after the virus is gone, your child may lose his fingernails and toenails and may also have the skin peel off of his hands and feet.

How does it spread?

It is highly contagious and can be passed through mucus,

saliva, the blister fluid, and feces. You are most contagious for the first week. Children can get it by:

- Close contact, such as kissing, hugging, or sharing cups and eating utensils.
- Coughing and sneezing.
- Contact with feces, for example when changing a diaper.
- Contact with blister fluid.
- Touching objects or surfaces that have the virus on them.

How long should your child stay home from school?

Follow all fever rules — don't send them to school within 24 hours of the fever.

Watch the blisters. If they have oozing blisters that can't be covered, keep them home.

For little ones, keep them home until it's cleared up, if that's possible. There's no need to infect other children.

Treatment:

It's a virus, and, unfortunately, just has to run its course. However, the pain and discomfort can be treated with over-the-counter, age-appropriate fever reducers and pain relievers.

Prevent dehydration with plenty of fluids.

Ice cream, Jell-O, and Popsicles can soothe sore throats.

Can it be prevented?

To prevent the spread of hand, foot, and mouth disease, follow the same protocol as you would for preventing flu or any other virus:

- Wash hands frequently with warm, soapy water.
- Avoid contact with infected people.
- Disinfect surfaces regularly if someone has been sick.

Will my child get this more than once?

Very generally speaking, once your child has had it, he should build an immunity.

However, there are multiple strains, and it is possible that your child could become ill again with a different strain.

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov, for all you could possibly want to know about hand, foot, and mouth disease.

Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother of three small children. She has taken a special interest in child, maternal, and newborn health and writes regularly on these topics.



Symptoms include sores and red bumps.



Dos & don'ts at the doctor's office

BY DR. MATTHEW WEISSMAN

As every parent knows, children, especially younger children, spend a lot of time at the doctor's office. Whether it's for a check-up or a sick visit, it seems like you and your child are in and out of the doctor's office on a regular basis.

Your child's routine doctor visit is the time to check up on growth and development, get up-to-date on vaccines, and raise any health-related questions or concerns. But, with all the information out there and different options for different tests, a visit to the doctor's office

can quickly become confusing. So, what should parents always do? Never do? Be cautious about?

As an internist, pediatrician, and a father of three, I've seen healthcare in a lot of different forms. Here's my advice on what parents should stick to and what they should question or avoid:

Do this:

Get vaccinated. It is important to vaccinate young children and adolescents from potentially life-threatening diseases. Schools require certain vaccinations for attendance, and that's a great thing.* You may have recently heard about

the HPV vaccine, which helps protect children from human papillomavirus — a virus associated with multiple types of cancer. It's recommended for all children and young adults between the ages of 9 and 26, and children need to get three doses over the course of six months. I highly recommend that you add this to your child's list of vaccinations. (You may want to update your own vaccines, including hepatitis A and B, influenza, tetanus, and pertussis.)

Ask for the flu shot. Younger children are at the top of the list, along with the elderly, for high risk of hospitalization from the flu. The

Center for Disease Control reports that approximately 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized with the flu every year. The New York City Department of Education now requires the flu shot for all children, so be sure to get your child vaccinated. The flu shot is never 100 percent effective, but you should still get it 100 percent of the time. Most healthy children over age 2 can get a nasal spray flu vaccine, so needles are not even required.

Find out Body Mass Index (BMI). This simple number that measures body fat based on height, weight, age, and gender will reveal whether or not your child is at a healthy weight. If your child's Body Mass Index falls into the "overweight" or "obese" category, she is at greater overall risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, breathing problems, and serious health problems as she gets older.

Check up on vision and hearing. Medical researchers have estimated that one in eight Americans over the age of 12 have some degree of hearing loss in both ears, and approximately 12 million adults in the US who are in need of vision correction are not using any. It's important to screen children regularly for hearing and vision impairment, as problems can come to the surface from early on.

Talk with your child's doctor about developmental milestones — and get anticipatory guidance. You need to make sure that your child is developing at the proper rate. And, since young children grow so quickly, they should be visiting the doctor much more often during their first few years, where someone can assess whether they are meeting their milestones. After that, a child should see the doctor at least once annually, not just to check her development, but also to talk about what to expect over the coming year, and how to best prepare.

Skip this:

Annual blood test. Healthy children typically do not require a regular blood test, as long as they maintain a balanced and nutrient-rich diet. An exception should be made for children with certain risk factors such as a personal or family history of medical problems or deficiencies.

Annual urine test. Unless a

child is showing potential symptoms of a urinary tract infection — such as pain while urinating, the frequent urge to urinate without urination, or a fever or abdominal pain, or has particular family or personal risk factors — there is likely no need for a urine test.

Annual tuberculosis test. Tuberculosis has become less common with time, and most children are at very low risk of having the infection. A child's risk for developing it is heightened if she has HIV or another condition that leads to a weakened immune system, if she lives with an adult with tuberculosis, and if she was born in or is visiting a country where the infection is prevalent. Tuberculosis testing (through a skin test or blood test) should be reserved for those at highest risk.

EKG or chest X-ray. Radiation exposure is linked to increased risk of cancer, so it is important to limit the amount of X-rays a child receives to only what is necessary. While the risk from a single X-ray is low, cumulative radiation exposure should be avoided. If your child has not demonstrated any risk factors associated with heart problems or heartbeat irregularity, a routine EKG is not necessary or recommended. In general, unnecessary screening tests can drive up medical costs and lead to more invasive testing down the road.

Finding out your blood type. For many children, this is part of the birth and vaccine record. If not, there is generally no need to do a blood test just because someone "wants to know." Save your child the blood draw and she can find out her blood type if and when it really matters.

For more information:

- New York State Immunization requirements chart: www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf

- For information on what vaccines are required or recommended for school children by New York State, visit www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/childhood_and_adolescent.htm

- For other avoidable tests for children, check out www.choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/american-academy-of-pediatrics/

Dr. Matthew Weissman is the chief medical officer at Community Healthcare Network.

Private/Independent School Guide



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Death, the law, and stored sperm & eggs

I stored my eggs and have fertilized embryos stored at a reproductive fertility clinic. What happens to my genetic material if I get sick or when I die?

The advancement of assisted reproductive technology has transformed the meaning of parenthood and biological relationships in a “family.”

Many states have struggled with the complex legal issues presented by children who are conceived before a parent’s death, but born after the parent’s death. Even more vexing is the question of children who were conceived after a genetic parent’s death using that parent’s genetic material.

State law dictates inheritance rights, Gov. Cuomo recently signed a law to address the issue of inheritance rights of a posthumously conceived child in New York. The legislation allows New York to join 20 other states that have addressed this thorny issue revolving around reproductive technologies.

Children conceived before a parent’s death but born after her death inherit in intestacy from that genetic parent as if they were born in her lifetime. The law also states that “posthumous children are entitled to take in the same manner as if living at the death of their ancestors,” if “a future estate is limited to children, distributees, heirs or issue...” The only case in New York dealing with the issue arose in 2008 and addressed whether a provision dealing with out-of-wedlock children encompassed posthumously conceived children. In that case, a person created seven trusts in 1969. He died in 2001 survived by two of his three children. His predeceased son had left behind preserved semen for his wife’s use. His wife later gave birth to two sons. The grantor’s trusts provided for his descendants to be beneficiaries of the trusts. The case



grappled with whether a child conceived by in vitro fertilization with sperm of a predeceased child fell within the class of persons contemplated by the trust. The court held that the children born with a parent’s consent is entitled to the same rights as a natural-born child. Accordingly, held the court, the after-born child was included in the class of beneficiaries of the trust.

Gov. Cuomo then enacted a second law under which a posthumous child of a genetic donor (called a “genetic child” in the statute) will be recognized as a distributee of the genetic parent if one of four conditions are met:

- The genetic parent expressly consents in writing to the use of the genetic material for posthumous conception and authorizes a specific person to make decisions about its use.
- The parent must give notice to the personal representative of the estate within seven months of the issuance of letters.
- The authorized person must record the consent-authorization with the Surrogate’s Court within seven months of the genetic parent’s death.
- The child must be in utero within 24 months of the genetic parent’s death or born no later than 33 months

after the genetic parent’s death.

The statute includes various prerequisites for the writing and provides a sample form that would behoove anyone to follow closely. It also provides mechanisms for revoking the consent.

A related bill is working its way through the New York Legislature to address this issue in the context of marital relations (more particularly, divorce proceedings). The bill would amend the Domestic Relations Law and enact provisions relating to the execution of written forms, prior to assisted reproductive technology services, for consent and directives for the transfer, use, and disposition of cryopreserved embryos or gametes. It would provide for notice prior to the implementation of the terms of such directives. As of Jan. 28 the bill was referred to the judiciary.

This new legislation will help guide the courts in addressing the needs of children, parents, donors, and other beneficiaries of the estate, as well as preventing abusive use of genetic material to improperly gain access to an estate’s assets. That said, it remains unclear how the new legislation will impact a specific bequest in one’s last will and testament of such genetic material; or whether such a bequest would be deemed to comply with the bills. It also does not address posthumous use of cord blood, which can be used to treat certain conditions. It is still critical to consider your genetic material and take steps to ensure that your intentions are carried out.

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

Disclaimer: This column is provided by the Law Offices of Alison Arden Besunder P.C. and New York Parenting Media as a public service to inform readers of legal issues. It is not intended to advise. Since legal issues vary with an individual’s situation and needs, one should consult with an attorney. It is impossible to cover all aspects of the law in an article. Please be advised that the laws are constantly changing. The content in this article reflects the current law. Nothing contained in this article is intended as advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship between the reader and the firm. Individual consultation with an attorney is required to determine the specific facts and circumstances of any particular situation. A written retainer agreement between you and the firm is required before any attorney-client relationship may be created. Circular 230 Disclosure Notice: To ensure compliance with Treasury Department rules governing tax practice, we inform you that any advice contained herein (including in any attachment) (1) was not written and is not intended to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalty that may be imposed on the taxpayer, and (2) may not be used in connection with promoting, marketing or recommending to another person any transaction or matter addressed herein.

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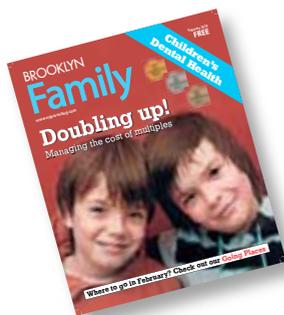
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New York International Children's Film Festival

The country's largest film festival for kids and teens is happening right here in New York City

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Rather than just taking your kids to the movies, take them to experience a film festival just for them. The country's largest film festival for kids and teens happens right here in New York City. Established in 1997 New York International Children's Film Festival serves as an Oscar-qualifying event for live-action and animated short films. The four-week event takes place Feb. 27 to March 22, showcasing more than 100 films from around the world. Throughout the festival, there are filmmaker question and answer sessions, filmmaking workshops, and audience voting. Best of all, it's all kid friendly!

With more than 3,000 short film entries, selected films are organized by the following categories:

- Shorts For Tots (Ages 3 to 6)
- Short Films One (Ages 5 to 10)
- Short Films Two (Ages 8 to 14)
- Flicker Lounge: For Teens & Adults Only (Ages 12 to adult)
- Heebie Jeebies: Spooky, Freaky & Bizarre (Ages 10 to adult)
- Girls' POV (Ages 10 to adult)

The festival ends with a fun, culminating event, the Closing Night Celebration, where award winners are announced and there is a screening of the "Best of the Fest" short films.

The festival itself is a non-profit organization that offers year-round engagements. If you have a future filmmaker on your hands, investigate the workshops for kids that take place during public school mid-winter and spring breaks as well as summer camps.

The 2015 Festival's schedule of films, many of which your kids will surely enjoy, is detailed below.

"Ballet Boys" – Kenneth Elvebakk

Documentary, Norway. In Norwegian with English subtitles.

"Ballet Boys" takes us through four years in the lives of three young dancers. The only boy dancers in a world of girls, they strive to get into Norway's most prestigious ballet

academy. Beautifully constructed, slow-motion dance sequences, and life-altering auditions provide a pulse of drama throughout their journey, but the film is ultimately the story of their friendship, disappointments, victories, first loves, dreams, and doubts.

Recommended ages: 9 to adult

"Belle And Sebastian" – Nicolas Vanier

Live action, France. In French with English subtitles.

A story of friendship, courage, and loyalty set against the jaw-dropping scenery and alpine panoramas of the Haute Maurienne-Vanoise region of France. Sebastian lives with his grandfather, César, in a vertiginous mountain village, where he crosses paths with a giant and dirty Pyrenean Mountain Dog who the locals have dubbed "the Beast" for allegedly killing their livestock. But Sebastian sees something good in the misunderstood canine and befriends the animal, renaming her "Belle." Their budding friendship is put to the test when Nazis march into town looking to root out a band of resistance fighters who are guiding Jewish refugees to neighboring Switzerland.

Recommended ages: 7 to adult

"Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins" – Torril Kove

Animation, Norway. In English.

Academy Award-winning director Torill Kove's first feature film is a refreshingly warm and intimate tale based on beloved children's book character Alfie Atkins. Seven-year-old Alfie dreams of owning a dog, but his father insists that he is too small for such a big responsibility. Undaunted, Alfie finds an unlikely ally in George, a kindly magician who performs tricks for the neighborhood kids and has just adopted a puppy of his own. Lovingly animated with thoughtful, honest character interactions, "Hocus Pocus" offers an emotionally and visually rich cinema experience for audiences of all ages.

Recommended ages: 3 to 8

"Jellyfish Eyes" – Takashi Murakami

Live action and animation, Japan. In Japanese with English subtitles.

Pop art superstar Takashi Murakami makes his feature film debut with a campy, genre-defying adventure that mixes lo-fi Japanese disaster movie, new kid-on-the-block coming-of-age story, and Pokémon-style anime with a delirious abundance of wonderfully imagined magical creatures. Setting Murakami's fantastical animated designs in an otherwise live action film, "Jellyfish Eyes" tells the story of Masashi, a young boy who moves to a sleepy town in the Japanese countryside in the wake of a natural disaster.

Recommended ages: 9 to adult

"Landfillharmonic" – Brad Allgood and Graham Townsley

Documentary, USA. In Spanish with English subtitles.

The world generates more than a billion tons of garbage a year, much of it ending up in poor rural communities like Cateura, Paraguay, where more than 2,000 families survive by separating garbage for recycling. When a teen music program there can't afford new instruments, a garbage picker named Cola fashions a violin from an empty oil tin — thus inspiring the Recycled Orchestra. The film follows the young musicians as they reach even greater heights, performing concerts in the US, Europe, and Asia — even sharing the stage with heavy metal super-group, Metallica.

Recommended ages: 8 to adult

"Lou!" – Julien Neel

Live action, France. In French with English subtitles.

Twelve-and-a-half-year-old Lou lives alone with her absurdly immature mother, Emma. Her mom has been in a funk lately, eating junk food in her pajamas, playing video games, and generally behaving more like a teen than her on-the-cusp-of-adolescence daughter. But all this changes with arrival of the new bohemian neighbor, Richard, who ignites her goofy mother's romantic



(Above) A still from "Ballet Boys." (Left) "Mune" is a contestant in this year's festival.



the heir apparent is passed over, and the title Guardian of the Moon is bestowed on the waif-like Mune, a small and frightened forest faun who seems wholly unprepared to take on such a weighty responsibility.

Recommended ages: 5 to adult

"Satellite Girl And Milk Cow" – Chang Hyung-yun

Animation, South Korea. In Korean with English subtitles.

Festival award-winning "Wolf Daddy" director Chang Hyung-yun has created a wholly original, exuberantly outrageous, sci-fi love story unlike anything before it. An orbiting, out-of-commission female satellite picks up a lovelorn pop song on its radio antenna and descends to Earth to try to discover who could be the source of such heartfelt emotions. On the way, it is transformed into the titular Satellite Girl, complete with Astroboy-like rocket shoes and weapon-firing limbs, while the balladeer in question — a loser 20-something playing at an open mic in a coffee shop — meets the fate that befalls all broken-hearted lovers: he is turned into a farm animal (albeit one who can walk around in a poorly-fitting human suit).

Recommended ages: 8 to adult

"Secrets Of War" – Dennis Bots
Live action, Netherlands. In Dutch with English subtitles.

Netherlands, 1943. Best friends Tuur and Lambert spend their time dreaming up adventures and discovering secret passages in the caves and forests that surround their close-knit village. Homemade wooden pistols serve as props in their playful war games, as they make light of the conflict that is building all around them. When new girl Maartje enters their social circle, the boys' friendship faces a challenge typical of adolescence — and Lambert begins to feel more and more like the third wheel. "Secrets of War," with its lush backdrops and strong emotional performances from three young leads, expertly balances the universality of shifting young friendships with the moral complexity of war.

Recommended ages: 9 to adult

"Wolfy, The Incredible Secret" — Grégoire Solotareff and Eric Omond

Animation, Belgium/France. In English.

Though they're from opposite ends of the food chain, Wolfy and Tom (a wolf and rabbit, respectively) are best friends. Wolfy has always believed he was an orphan, until one day a gypsy tells him that his mother is still alive in the distant dynasty of Wolfenberg, Land of the Wolves. Despite his fear, Tom agrees to accompany his friend as they venture far from their peaceful countryside home. They arrive in the midst of Carne Festival — a grand meeting of the world's most renowned carnivores — and Wolfy's quest for self-discovery quickly turns into Tom's quest for survival. This beautifully animated film is based on the wildly popular French children's book series "LouLou" from writer and director Grégoire Solotareff.

Recommended ages: 5 to 10

Additional information:

New York International Children's Film Festival, Feb. 27–March 22. Schedule: www.gkids.com

Locations: DGA Theater [110 W. 57th St., (212) 258–0800, www.dga.org]

IFC Center [323 Sixth Avenue, (212) 924–7771, www.ifccenter.com]

Scholastic Theater [557 Broadway, (212) 343–6215, www.scholastic.com]

SVA Theatre [333 W. 23rd St., (212) 592–2980, svatheatre.com]

Village East Cinema [189 Second Ave., (212) 529–6998, www.villageeastcinema.com]



Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer based in Manhattan.

interests. Neel has turned the French comic and animated TV series into a quirky, mom and daughter buddy movie, with vibrant and brilliantly kitschy bubble-gum production design and plenty of cringe-worthy, awkward comedic situations.

Recommended ages: 8 to adult

"Moomins On The Riviera" – Xavier Picard

Animation, Finland/France. In English.

Sixty years ago, when Finnish author and illustrator Tove Jansson launched the Moomin comic strip, little did she know it would reach 20 million daily readers in more than 40 countries. In celebration of her 100th birthday, French director Xavier Picard brings Jansson's carefree and adventurous Moomin family to life, with delicately animated characters set within beautifully designed and

colored backgrounds, and the comic's traipsing storylines translated to the screen with just the right amount of absurdity and humor.

Recommended ages: 5 to 10

"Mune" (3D) – Alexandre Heboyan and Benoît Phillippon

Animation, France. In English.

A world of wonder, magic, and mythology is the setting in this sumptuously animated CGI adventure about a land divided between the realms of day and night. As legend has it, the first Guardian of the Sun threw a harpoon into the cosmos and roped the sun to bring light and warmth to all of humanity. Then the Guardian of the Moon lured the moon to the Land of Darkness to provide a balance to the sun and supply the world with dreams. At a momentous ceremony to appoint the two new guardians, an accident seems to occur;



PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA



Dear Sharon,
We have a 3-and-a-half year old and are having some difficulty getting him to toilet train. Do you have any words of wisdom?

Toilet-training tips

Dear Parents,

Strong-willed 3 year olds can make toilet training challenging. Here are some strategies that can help.

Before tackling toilet training, it is important to sort out when children (and their parents) are ready for toilet training. Even when a child is a little older than usual there may be underlying factors that need to be taken into consideration. If a child is having a hard time at school, getting used to a recent move, adjusting to the birth of a new sibling, working through complex developmental delays, or handling other challenges, then it might make sense to wait for an easier time to begin training. It is often wise to delay things if parents are overwhelmed or busy as well.

When you are ready to tackle training, find a relatively pressure-free time to focus on the project (probably at least a week). Pick a period when it is possible that all adults involved can stay focused on the “mission” and able to avoid distractions — social occasions, work pressures, extended family obligations, etc.

It can also help to involve children

in the planning process. Encouraging your child to help decorate a potty chair, select training pants, or talk through other details that can help him feel part of the project rather than the subject of someone else’s plan.

Concrete rewards can increase the chances of success as well. Parent and child can create a rewards chart together and choose the prize for completing the goal. If there have already been a series of failed attempts at toilet training it can help to offer small rewards for each accomplishment along the way rather than just working towards a “super duper” prize when “accidents” are over. (Three-and-a-half year olds who have avoided training for a while often need a “super duper” reward and motivator to lower their resistance.)

Before starting, many parents agree on a “plan of action” with their partner. As every child has his own unique personality, the specifics of plans may greatly vary. I know of families who have found it useful to have their child go pantless through this period while others have visited the bathroom every 30 minutes. Moms and dads should sort through an approach that could work for their little one.

Probably the most important part of any plan is an agreement to sup-

port each other to stay calm and clear throughout the process. Although difficult, parents who can stick to their plan and stay calm in the face of their child’s mistakes or upset usually are more effective.

It can also help to tell a child ahead of time that the end of diapers is coming. Use a confident, calm, and succinct tone to explain your ideas to the child — he’ll be more likely to believe that change is on the way. Of course, children often complain if given advance warning, but having a chance to “get ready” and let off steam beforehand can help the actual process go well.

Toilet training is much harder to do when everyone involved is tense or upset. It can be useful to get some especially exciting games or toys to play with during the process. The family can play together, take a break for toilet time, and then resume playing until the next break is needed.

Parents often inform their child’s school of their efforts so that teachers can encourage and reinforce their efforts. An “all hands on deck” approach can make a bigger impact.

Even if this is not the best time for your son to finish toilet training, I guarantee that he will eventually get the hang of it, probably much sooner than it feels to you right now.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, www.PHPonline.org.

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at Family@cnglocal.com.



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Calendar

MARCH



Photo by Joshua Bright

Mandala-inspired art workshop

Celebrate spring with a Mandala family art workshop at Wave Hill on March 7 and 8.

As a tree grows it produces a new ring of growth each year, creating a beautiful Mandala-like pattern of its history. Mandala is a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the universe. Children will use

special papers and natural materials to create their own Mandala project with a unique ring for each year of their life.

Mandala art workshop, March 7 and 8 from 10 am to 1 pm. Free with admission to the grounds.

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

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 bronxrivdalecalendar@cnglocal.com — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

SUN, MARCH 1

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.

Using recycled materials make a little home or feeder for your fine-feathered friends.

"Into the Woods" Jr: The Bronx House, 990 Pelham Parkway South; <http://www.bronxhouse.org>; 2 pm; \$10.

The Rivrdale Children's Theatre is presenting the junior version of the Sondheim classic. More than 30 children and adults take to the stage in this whimsical original story.

FURTHER AFIELD

Winter Bird Stroll: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am–11 am; Free with garden admission.

Fun for the whole family. Spot where the winter birds are.

Cosmic creations: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am and 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Learn about astronomy and the planets, stars, and space with Dr. Neil Degrasse Tyson, a contemporary African-American astrophysicist. Make a shooting star to take home.

Drop in Drawing: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 1 pm to 3 pm; Free with garden admission.

Visitors are invited to tour the gallery and then sketch what they see. No reservations necessary and suitable for all ages.



Photo by Paul Martinka

Erin go bragh in the Bronx

Grab your shillelagh, don your kilt, and tune up the bagpipes for the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 15 — when everyone is invited to be Irish.

Come celebrate the saint's day

at the Throggs Neck parade. The Line of Assembly begins at 11 am on E. Tremont Avenue and Harding Avenue. At noon, marchers promptly step off and travel down E. Tremont Avenue onto Harding

Avenue and conclude at Harding and Bainsbride avenues.

St. Patrick's Day parade, March 15 at noon. Free.

Kick off E. Tremont Avenue and Harding Avenue in Throggs Neck.

MON, MARCH 2

IN THE BRONX

Wii gaming: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4–5 pm; Free. Video games.

Read Across America: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 7 pm; Free.

This special event celebrates Dr. Seuss with a special reading of "The Cat in the Hat."

WED, MARCH 4

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Stories, songs, fingerplays, and puppets for toddlers 18 to 36 months with parents and caregivers.

THURS, MARCH 5

IN THE BRONX

Puppet workshop: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718)

548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children create a duck stick puppet using cotton and tissue paper sing songs of the "Six Little Ducks" and then take the puppets for a swim. Limited to 25 children. Pre-registration required.

Game On: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens sharpen up their Xbox skills.

FRI, MARCH 6

IN THE BRONX

Teen Advisory Group: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Let your voice be heard. Brainstorm with other teens on how to improve the library; help choose free programs to be offered; review books, movies and more; and earn an hour of service credit for each session attended.

First Fridays: The Bronx Museum, 1040 Grand Concourse at 165th Street; (718) 681-6000; [\[museum.org\]\(http://museum.org\); 6 pm to 10 pm; Free.](http://www.bronx-</p>
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Celebrate the music of La Santa Cecilia, the winners of the 2014 Grammy Award for Best Latin Rock album with music, art-making and gallery tours.

SAT, MARCH 7

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.

Children create a Mandala using papers and natural materials.

"Once Upon a Cloud": Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

This is a story of a girl that wants to give a special present to her mother. Activities to follow.

Read aloud: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 1 pm; Free.

Presented by the Rotary Club of Riverdale. Children 5 to 12 enjoy a

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

book.

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

The Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe.

FURTHER AFIELD

Mike Carbo's Big Apple Con: Penn Plaza Pavilion, 401 Seventh Ave. at 33rd Street, Manhattan; www.nycbm.com; 10 am - 6 pm; \$20 (\$10 children).

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the city's longest-running comic book sci-fi/fantasy convention where collectors and enthusiasts will find hundreds of vendor tables, top comics, celebrities, pro wrestlers, dealers, panel discussions, costume contests, and more.

SUN, MARCH 8

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, March 7.

Spring walk: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave.; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Explore the gardens with educator Gabriel Willow and look for early signs of spring. The walk follows the family art project. Children 6 and older are welcome with an adult.

TUES, MARCH 10

IN THE BRONX

Nature Hike: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 1 pm; free with museum admission.

Rangers lead you on a hike through the grounds of the estate. Wear comfortable attire. For older children. Registration required.

WED, MARCH 11

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, March 4.

THURS, MARCH 12

IN THE BRONX

Game On: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, March 5.



'Renewal' for spring

Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre opens its 2015 season with a world-premier performance of "Renewal" on March 13, 14, and 15.

This production features a series of shorts that offer fresh and vibrant movements, athleticism, energy, and balance.

Each short highlights signature structures and elements. Her dance moves activate emo-

tional expression and offer many in-roads for audiences to make meaning for themselves.

"Renewal" on March 13 and 14 at 7:30 pm and March 15 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$25. Recommended for older teens.

BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center [199 Chambers St. and Harrison Street in Tribeca, (212) 220-1460; <http://tribecapac.org/amanda-selwyn-dance-theater>].

FRI, MARCH 13

IN THE BRONX

Teen Advisory Group: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, March 6.

Teen showcase: Montefiore Hospital Grand Hall, 107 E. Gun Hill Rd.; (718) 405-1312; viv@covedevelopment@gmail.com; 7-9 pm; Call for admission.

Presented by the Knox Gates Neighborhood Association, COVE is a safe space for teens. This is the Spring 2015 presentation of short films by teens. RSVP required.

SAT, MARCH 14

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.

Stylish seed pots allows children to take an ordinary terracotta pot and make it extraordinary with tiles buttons, ribbons and beads.

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

Special storytime, with activities to follow.

SUN, MARCH 15

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, March 14.

St. Patrick's Day Parade: Bronx parade kick off, E. Tremont and Lafayette avenues; 11 am; Free.

Come on down to the 17th annual celebration of the Irish saint.

"Romeo and Juliet": Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960-8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; 4 pm; \$25-\$45.

Presented by the Moscow Festival Ballet.

TUES, MARCH 17

FURTHER AFIELD

St. Patrick's Day Parade: Kick off, 44th St. and Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; 11 am; Free.

Come on down to the world-famous parade, kick up your heels, listen to the bagpipes, and be Irish for the day.

WED, MARCH 18

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11 am. Kingsbridge Library. See Wednesday, March 4.

THURS, MARCH 19

IN THE BRONX

Game On: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, March 5.

FRI, MARCH 20

IN THE BRONX

Teen Advisory Group: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, March 6.

SAT, MARCH 21

IN THE BRONX

Game Day with Princess for Lifetime: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; nycgovparks.org; 10 am-noon; Free.

Participants enjoy crafts, games, and other activities using sand art and paper.

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.

Children observe the unusual shapes of the enchanting orchid flower. Working with large pieces of construction paper, simple templates and contrasting backgrounds, we'll make simple, bold and brushy orchid-inspired prints that are easy for all! Orchid Day event.

Pysanky workshop: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 11 am-3:30 pm; \$20 (\$15 members).

Learn the art of Ukrainian Easter Egg dying. Bring a bag lunch, and tools. Space is limited.

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

Children discover the wonderful word around them, activities to follow.



Photo by Kate Hesler

Puppets get a giant surprise

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater hosts “Jack and the Beanstalk,” now through June 28.

This fresh retelling of the Swedish Cottage original production presented by the City Parks Foundation takes Jack on an enchanting adventure up a magical beanstalk.

Jack encounters the notorious giant Milford whose thieving

ways have brought misfortune upon Jack and his mother, but with help from friends, he risks his life to take back what the Giant stole.

The play is approximately 45 minutes long and is suitable for children 3 to 9 years old.

“Jack and the Beanstalk,” now through June 28, showtimes are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays,

10:30 am and noon; Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon, and 2:30 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm. Tickets are \$7 for children under 12; \$10 for all others.

Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater [W. 79th Street and West Drive on the Upper West Side; (212) 988-9093; www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/swedish-cottage-marionette-theatre].

Art workshop: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; 1-3 :30 pm; Free.

Comic book and illustrator Chris Duckett provides young adults and teens with critiques of their works.

Owl Prowl: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 4-5:30 pm; Free.

Naturalist Debbie Becker helps you find out just where these birds are nesting. Wear appropriate clothing. Registration required.

FURTHER AFIELD

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Event: Pacplex Sports Recreation and Educational Complex, 1500 Paerdagat

Ave. at Paerdagat 13th Street, Brooklyn; (347) 831-5688; ajones.dtbe@outlook.com; www.daretobeextraordinary.org; 12:30-3 pm; \$25 adults, \$15 kids, free for kids 6 and under.

Games, entertainment, and photo shoots with Olympic gold medalist and TNA professional wrestler Kurt Angle.

SUN, MARCH 22

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, March 21.

WED, MARCH 25

IN THE BRONX

Toddler time: 11 am. Kingsbridge

Library. See Wednesday, March 4.

STEM project: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old experiment with engineering, math, science and technology.

THURS, MARCH 26

IN THE BRONX

Pajama night: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548-5656; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children and families 5 to 12 years old read aloud, do a craft and enjoy light refreshments.

Game On: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Thursday, March 5.

FRI, MARCH 27

IN THE BRONX

Teen Advisory Group: 4 pm. Kingsbridge Library. See Friday, March 6.

SAT, MARCH 28

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.

Camouflage is nature's way for animals like moths, lizards, birds and coyotes copy their surroundings for the purpose of protection. Using cardboard-box dioramas, we'll create a nature stage to serve as a secret hideaway for the critter of your choice.

East Egg hunt: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 10:30 am - 1:30 pm; \$15 (members \$10).

Children 2 to 12 years old hunt for treasures then go to the arts and craft table to decorate. Bring your own basket, light refreshments offered. The Easter Bunny will also be on hand for photo ops. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Rain date March 29.

“Duck & Goose”: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862-3945; barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Who finds it first and what happens to the egg? Find out in this fun illustrated book. Activities to follow.

SUN, MARCH 29

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, March 28.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

Bug Carousel: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Daily, 10 am - 4:30 pm; Now - Fri, April 3; \$5 plus zoo admission.

Children enjoy a ride around the fun carousel.

Photo exhibits: Museum of Bronx History, 3266 Bainbridge Ave. and E. 208th Street; (718) 881-8900; www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org; Saturdays, 10 am-4 pm, Sundays, 1 pm to 5 pm, Now - Sun, April 5; \$5 (\$3 students, children & seniors).

Presented by the Bronx County Historical Society photos of High

Continued on page 32

Continued from page 31

Bridge – New York City’s Oldest Bridge & Newest Greenway, and Bridge to the Fair – 75th Anniversary of the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge will be on display.

Identification enrollment: Bronx Business Center, DOF, 3030 Thid Ave. at E. 156th Street; www.nyc.gov/idnyc; Weekdays, 8:30 am–4:30 pm, Now – Fri, June 26; Free.

Make your appointment today for a free ID Card for all city residents. Enrollment in the program provides access to services and programs offered by the city as well as by businesses. Holder may gain access to all city buildings that provide services to the public and is an accepted form of identification for accessing numerous city programs and services. Benefits also include a free one-year membership at many of the city’s leading museums, zoos, concert halls, and botanical gardens.

Storytime: Barnes & Noble Bay Plaza, 290 Baychester Ave.; (718) 862–3945; barnesandnoble.com; Mondays, 11:30 am, Now – Mon, April 27; Free.

Stories come to life on the Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook.

Youth Made Media (Y2M2): Hunts Point Recreation Center, 75 Manida St. at Spofford Ave.; (212) 360–3327; jheffler@ciyparksfoundation.org; www.cityparksfoundation.org; Weekdays, 3 pm – 6 pm, Now – Sun, May 31; Free.

Students 11 to 15 years old receive instruction in Media Arts linked to Environmental Science. In addition, children receive homework help, go on field trips, watch movies and so much more. Registration is required.

Story, arts and crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Tuesdays, 10 am–10:45 am; Free.

Children 6 months to 4 years old enjoy a story followed by a craft and activity related to the reading.

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.

Recycle to art: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays, 2–3:30 pm; Free.

Have fun turning junk to treasure. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult. Wear appropriate clothing.

Learn to draw: Poe Park Visitor



A historic whodunnit?

Join in the mystery at the New York Historical Society on March 8 and find out the culprit in “The Pinkertonian Mystery” interactive production.

Live in Theater presents this interactive and immersive mystery experience with the play set in 1875. Families are invited to solve this Victorian-era crime by traveling throughout the museum galleries and interacting with actors to solve the crime inspired

by the criminal mastermind El Diablo and the real-live Pinkerton National Detective Agency. The event is suitable for children 8 years and older.

“The Pinkertonian Mystery,” March 8 from 3 to 5 pm. Tickets are \$35.

New-York Historical Society, Dimenna Children’s History Museum [170 Central Park West at 77th Street in Central Park West, (212) 873–3400; www.nyhistory.org]

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.

Teen Advisory Group: Kingsbridge Library, 291 W. 231st Street; (718) 548–5656; www.nypl.org; Friday, March 6, 4 pm; Friday, March 13, 4 pm; Friday, March 20, 4 pm; Friday, March 27, 4 pm; Friday, April 3, 4 pm; Friday, April 10, 4 pm; Friday, April 17, 4 pm; Friday, April 24, 4 pm; Free.

Let your voice be heard. Brainstorm with other teens on how to improve the library; help choose free programs to be offered; review books, movies and more; and earn an hour of service credit for each session attended.

Paper Arts & Crafts: Poe Park Visitor

Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 2–3:30 pm; Free.

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

FURTHER AFIELD

From Here to There: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735–4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–5 pm, Now – Sun, May 10; Free with museum admission.

This innovative exhibit teaches the science of how things move by land, sea and air. Visitors can heat up and launch a hot air balloon, operate an authentic canal lock system to move a boat and experiment with pneumatics, pulleys, hydraulics, and levers to move objects mechanically.

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

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

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

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

Ice skating: Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594–7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Tuesdays – Thursdays, 11 am–6 pm, Fridays, 11 am–8 pm, Saturdays, 10 am–9 pm, Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Tues, March 31; \$6 (\$8 on Sat. and Sun) plus \$6 skate rental.

Families have a great time twirling and skating and enjoying the rink .

“Galapagos – Nature’s Wonderland in 3D”: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 11 am & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 & 3 pm.; \$6 adults; \$5 children.

In this 3D movie, travel to the Galapagos archipelago to meet giant half-ton tortoises and marine iguanas that spit sea-salt from their noses, hunt fishes with the colorful blue-footed boobies, and swim with tiny penguins.

Needlework and games: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 789–2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm; \$3.

Join in with staff and make a small sampler and play board games.

Ice skating school: Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594–7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Mondays and Wednesdays, 4–6:30 pm, Now – Tues, March 10; Free.

Instructions, fitness, homework help and lots more. Preregistration required.

Art Kids: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735–4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Now – Fri, March 6; Free with museum admission.

Children explore a new style of art and discover the artistic process while developing artistic skills.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Boning up on health

As long as their children are growing normally, most parents are largely unconcerned about the health of their kids' bones. After all, osteoporosis is for old people, right?

Not so fast. According to a recent report by the American Academy of Pediatrics, osteoporosis may have its roots in the bone mass acquired in childhood and adolescence.

Lifestyle factors — consuming enough calcium and vitamin D, plus weight-bearing activity — all factor in.

It's no secret that physical activity has changed for many children compared to a generation ago. Recess is short, physical education is often weak, and kids don't necessarily walk to school or play outside with their friends.

The Academy report urges kids to exercise to strengthen their bones. Jumping, skipping, running, and dancing are some enjoyable weight-bearing exercises. Some sports that include these are rowing, tennis, volleyball, karate, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, and cheerleading.

Nutrition

Today's parents are increasingly



choosing plant-based milk beverages in lieu of dairy milk because of perceived health benefits, milk allergies, or lactose intolerance.

And this has Debra Barone

Sheats, director of dietetics programs at St. Catherine University in Minnesota, concerned.

"Many parents think they're equivalent, but they're not equal at all," says Sheats. "Dairy milk contains nine essential nutrients. The white beverages made with plant sources don't necessarily contain these nutrients."

Children who drink alternative milks are twice as likely to have low vitamin D levels, according to a new study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.

"In Canada, as well as the U.S., vitamin D levels vary in non-cow's milk beverages," says Dr. Jonathon Maguire of the University of Toronto.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble hormone necessary for calcium absorption and utilization. Without it, only 10 to 15 percent of dietary calcium is absorbed.

Another nutrient of concern to Sheats is calcium.

"Often, these milk substitutes have calcium added. But there's a fair amount of data that the form of calcium is not absorbed as well as dairy milk. It probably has to do with the fact that milk has lactose and vitamin D. Often, these milks are lactose free."

The pediatricians' report does not recommend calcium supplements.

Other nutrients of concern highlighted in the report include protein and sodium. Diets too low in protein or too high in sodium tend to reduce the body's retention of calcium.

Finally, caffeine, found in energy drinks, colas, and coffee drinks, is also linked to decreased bone mass, the study found.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She's grateful she did plenty of weight bearing activity as a kid. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

I beg your parsnips

Serve these matchstick fries as a super tasty and healthy alternative to French fries. They're fun to eat and packed with flavor.

Serves 2 (1/2 cup per serving)

INGREDIENTS:

Olive oil cooking spray
1 large parsnip (about 9 inches long, 5 ounces), peeled
Cracked black pepper
Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. To make "matchsticks," cut the parsnips into



long, thin strips, using a very sharp knife, or a mandoline if you have one. Spray the parsnip sticks with

olive oil and lay them on the baking sheet. Lightly sprinkle with cracked pepper on both sides. Bake the fries for about 25 minutes, flipping them over halfway through. They are ready when they are cooked completely, crispy, and slightly brown. As you allow them to cool, sprinkle with pepper and salt to taste.

NUTRITION FACTS: 50 calories, 0 g total fat and cholesterol, 7 mg sodium, 12 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugars, 1 g protein. Percent Daily Value: Vitamin C 19 percent, calcium 2 percent, iron 2 percent.

Used with permission from The Nutrition Twins' Veggie Cure by Tammy Lakatos Shames, RDN & Lysie Lakatos, RDN.

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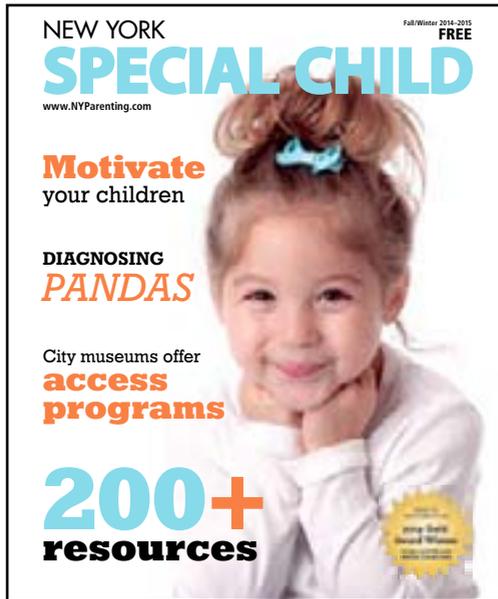
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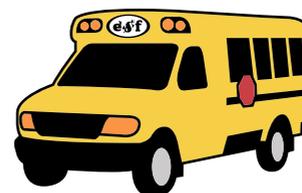
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