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Giving thanks every day

A must-read essay is in this issue: Stewart J. Frimer, a local clinical social worker, has written a provocative piece on how we raise our sons. "Boys, Guns and Violence" is an important and timely serious look at how we raise men. This ties in very well with Part II of our series on Teen Girls and dating violence. How we raise our men affects how they interact not only with women, but with the whole world around them. Parents need to be more and more educated about the important role they have in the ultimate social development of their children. Our writer, Tammy Scileppi, has once again taken on a topic of enor-



mous impact that our whole society has to address.

Violence inhabits the nightly news and the daily headlines. It is our duty as parents to educate ourselves to the best of our ability to raise a healthy and functional family. Our future depends on it. We are here to evolve and it takes guts and determination to step outside of the status quo.

Another important reality is divorce. More and more prevalent, the question remains, how to talk with your children when the decision has been reached? When marriage is over, the conversation is not. Children are not exactly blind to the realities, especially if they

are older. The younger children, however, may not be acknowledging the signs around them and communication is key. Then again, when is it not?

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday and I think I'm not alone. Even when I was a vegetarian, we made a super holiday feast, just minus the turkey. With all the hype from the media, it almost seems as if Thanksgiving is about the turkey and the holiday shopping. It's good to try and keep in mind what it's really about, the crops coming in and having sustenance for the winter ahead. Every culture has their own version of our Thanksgiving and as a result it's perhaps the most inclusive of our holidays. Celebrating the harvest is an important acknowledgment of our good fortune and something we must never take

for granted.

This year my daughter will not be at our table for the first time. I am feeling a bit weird about that although I knew eventually it was coming. The chicks leave the nest. This Mama bird wishes sometimes that they didn't.

Every day is reason for thanks, but setting aside a special day to do it is, I think, a great priority deserving of our attention and respect. Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Thanks for reading.

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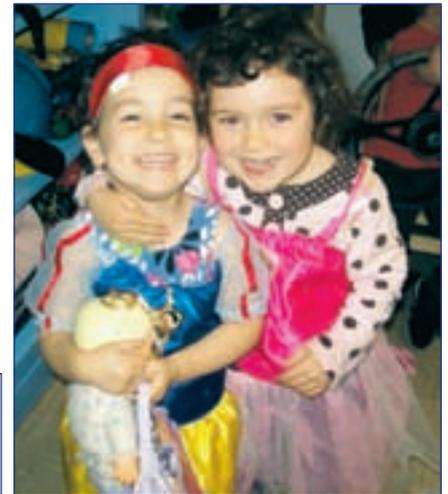
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Healing scars

Part two in
our series
on teens and
domestic
violence

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

In 1967, Aretha Franklin said it all when she belted out her hit song about wanting a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

In their heated quest for love (or sex), many young people seem to ignore or forget that basic notion — one that's at the core of every healthy relationship. Perhaps we parents should keep reminding them that "old-school" values are always cool and never go out of style.

According to recent statistics, one in 10 teenagers reported experiencing violence in their romantic relationships in the last year, and one in three say that they've been verbally, emotionally, sexually or physically



(Above) Rainy survived an abusive older boyfriend. (Below) Former Bronx resident Mari Santos got help for her sister.

abused by a dating partner.

In September, WNYC's Radio Rookies program — a New York Public Radio initiative that provides teenagers with the tools and training to create radio stories about themselves, their communities, and their world — partnered with Day One, an organization that aims to end dating abuse and domestic violence, to help illuminate the pressing issue of teen dating abuse and take listeners behind the scenes.

Rainy shared her story of survival, and Mari spoke about help-

ing her sister end an abusive relationship.

Rainy

On her high school ID card, Rainy has a black eye. When her guidance counselor inquired, Rainy just told her, "It's a long story, you'll get to know me."

Rainy's first-person audio diary spanning two years chronicles her sad and painful but, ultimately, positive journey. It aired nationally on the acclaimed public radio show and top iTunes podcast "This American Life," over the weekend of Sept. 19 and 20. The young teen talks about her roller-coaster relationship: separating, reuniting, and separating again from her older, abusive boyfriend.

Rainy, now 19, hails from Brooklyn but currently lives out of state. She met "Tony" when she was just 14 and he was 21. She says at first, he was sweet. On their first date, he didn't even try to kiss her. But suddenly, his behavior changed dramatically and he became verbally abusive. Rainy withdrew; she wouldn't go to school and stopped hanging out with her friends, even her mom. By the time Tony became physically abusive, the scared teen was isolated from anyone who could have helped her.

Rainy opened up about her experience and started reporting her story in 2013, when she and Tony had been broken up for five months. As the piece progressed, she got back together with him then quickly disappeared. Occasionally, she'd show up at school and kept a diary. She was so confused about why she felt compelled to stay. It took a lot of gumption and courage to get out of that messy relationship, especially because she was so young, but Rainy finally left. Even when you're older, leaving a bad



relationship can be hell when you're a victim of abuse.

Hear Rainy's story, "Why Do I Stay?" at <http://www.wnyc.org/story/why-do-i-stay/>

Mari

How do you help someone in an abusive relationship? Figuring that out can be scary and frustrating for a teen. Mari Santos's older sister Alison always went out with the same type of guys: controlling, possessive, and self-centered. At 18, Mari just figured that when you're dating someone, you cry, argue, and break up every few weeks. She knew something wasn't right with that idea, so she joined Relationship Abuse Prevention Program, a school-based, peer education group run by the city. Mari, who now lives in Florida, was living in the Bronx at the time.

Knowledge empowered her, and she soon realized her sister was actually in an abusive relationship. Although terribly worried, she was afraid to talk to Alison, but the sisters wound up having their first open and honest talk on tape.

Listen to Mari's account, "We Just Don't Talk: One Family's Silence About Dating Abuse" at <http://www.wnyc.org/story/we-just-dont-talk-one-family-s-silence-about-dating-abuse/>

The entire series can be found at: <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/rookies/series/crushed/>

Young women at risk

According to a June 2015 report by the U.S. Dept. of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics:

- Twenty-five percent of women have experienced domestic violence.
 - Women ages 20 to 24 are at the greatest risk.
 - On average, three women and one man are murdered by their partner each day.
 - Two out of 10 female high school students reported being physically or sexually abused by a dating partner.
 - Fourteen percent of teens reported threats from their boyfriend or girlfriend to harm them or themselves to avoid a breakup.
- And youth who experience dating violence are more likely to experience the following (according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):
- Symptoms of depression and anxiety.
 - Engagement in unhealthy behaviors, i.e. tobacco, drug use, al-

cohol.

- Involvement in antisocial behaviors.
- Thoughts about suicide.

Young people who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

How to help

How can you help? Parents and guardians should do the following:

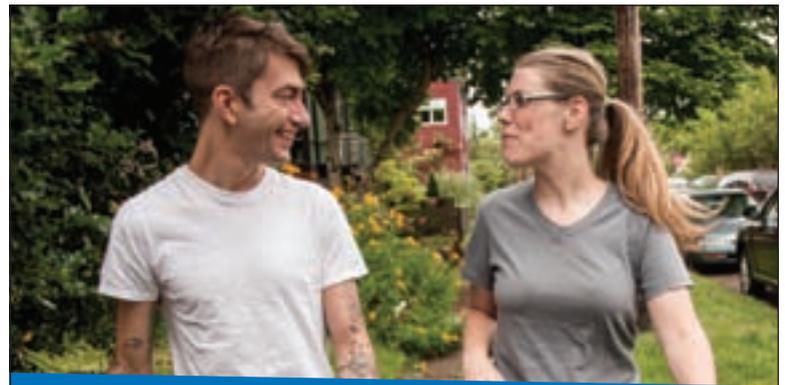
- Tell your teens and young adults that abusing someone is a choice. People commit domestic violence because they choose to do so, not because they can't stop themselves.
 - That positive, healthy relationships are all about trust and respect. And in time, if that special someone genuinely cares about you, he will show you that he's sensitive to your needs and feelings.
 - Explain that controlling behavior isn't love.
 - Finally, if you or your teen notice that a family member or peer is in a violent relationship, help her get help. Pursuing a protective order reduces the likelihood of a physical attack by about 80 percent.
- Teens, remember that no one deserves to be abused. The abuse is never your fault. Everyone has the right to a safe, healthy relationship. In order to protect yourself, you should know the warning signs of an abusive dating partner (see dayoneny.org):

- Extreme jealousy or insecurity.
- Constant put-downs.
- Possessiveness or treating you like property.
- Telling you what to do.
- Constantly checking in on you.
- Explosive temper.
- Making false accusations.
- Isolating you from your friends and family.
- Preventing you from doing things you want to do.

Dating relationships are complicated, especially for teens — and things can easily spiral out of control, so knowledge is power. At Day One, young people between the ages of 16 and 24 learn how to identify and maintain healthy relationships. They can obtain legal protection when necessary and assist others experiencing abuse.

Day One toll-free hotline: (800) 214-4150.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer/journalist and parent and a regular contributor to *New York Parenting*.



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Boys, guns, violence

Taking a look
at how we
raise our sons
to deal with
anger and
frustration

BY STEWART J. FRIMER

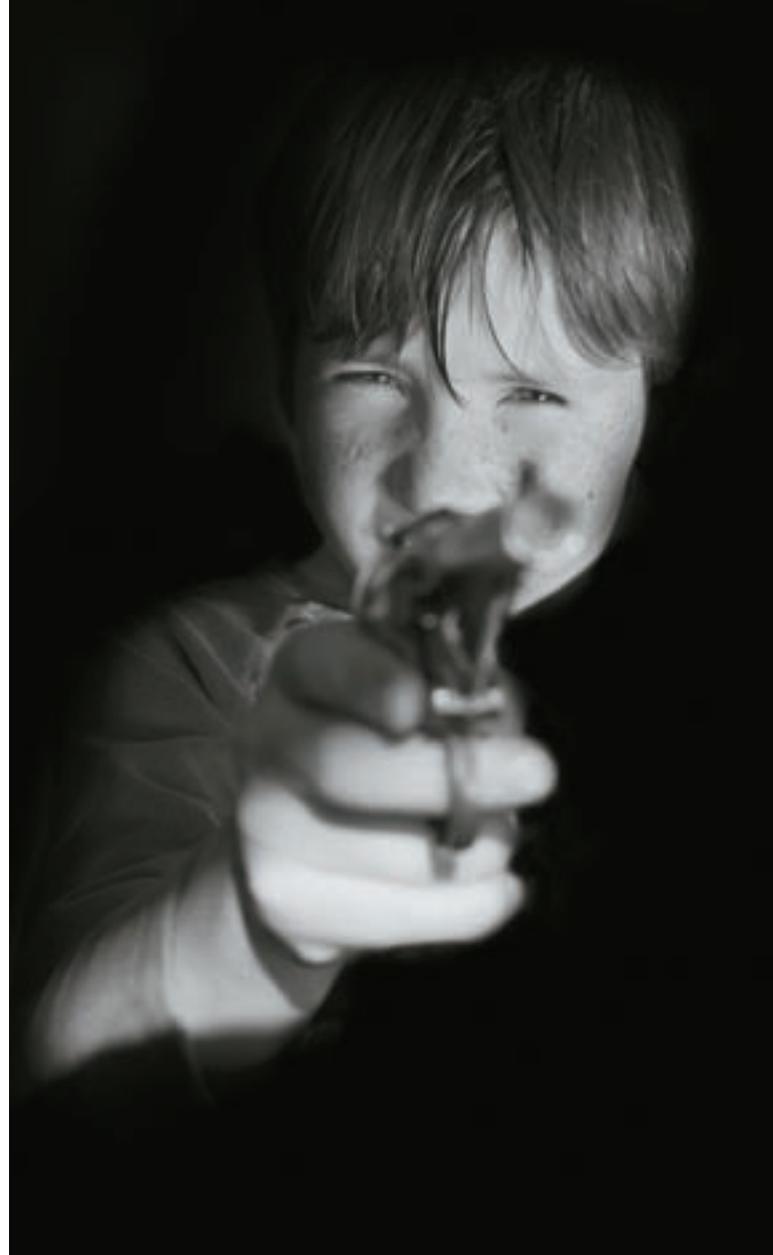
The recent and unfortunately recurring mass shootings by mostly white males is not, to me, an issue of gun control, but rather a sign that we have to take a more serious look at how we, as parents, teachers, and society, raise men.

Boys are taught that to take on the “man” role, they are not supposed to show their feelings, that they are not supposed to cry. To do so would bring on shame, as a boy who is emotional is weak — a baby, a sissy, and, heaven forbid, “a girl.” Boys are stuck in limited behavioral and emotional repertoires in becoming a man.

But repressing feelings is pretty dangerous. Think of the body as a box — the box, like the body, has a shape and size. We put things — feelings — inside it, and things also come out — expressing emotions. But if the box is expected to continually hold emotions inside, at some point, the box can’t contain them anymore, and it explodes. That’s what happens to our boys. We all have our limits, and for boys, it’s pretty toxic.

The issue of shame is a huge one here. When a man cries, we hear, “He broke down and cried.” I remember how ridiculed Dan Rather was when he expressed feelings when 9-11 broke. This whole concept has to change — crying is a *breakthrough*, not a *breakdown*. Guilt is feeling bad about something you did (a good thing) and is correctable. Shame is a sense that there is something wrong with you and is not correctable — which means there is no hope.

I can’t tell you how many boys I have worked with — in my job as a social worker — who acted out in school out of frustration that they couldn’t do their work and felt hopeless, and out of shame, got themselves out of those situations. Show me an oppositionally defiant kid, I will



show you a shame-based one.

We keep hearing about men blaming women for their behavior and why they acted out. (A perfect example of this was the recent hearings on Planned Parenthood where the committeemen bullied Cecile Richards.) A huge part of it is about power, control, and men struggling with their own “unacceptable” feelings. Several things happen to boys here: the inability to control the girls’ behavior connects to the sense of male entitlement (an issue we see in spousal abuse). Another issue for the young boy is how a wider range of feelings are allowed in girls. They can cry, and it is accepted, they will even get nurtured for it (though thinking of all girls as overly emotional can hurt just as much). But as teachers and parents comfort girls when they cry, boys crave the same nurturing attention, and when they don’t get it, they are further hurt. By not being taught how to deal with his emotions and

shame, the boy expresses his rage at — guess who? — the girl who rejected him and “made him do it.”

Shame becomes blame — and that is dangerous, as we’ve been seeing. We need to make it a part of our parenting, schooling, and culture to validate and accept a wider range of feelings in our boys, making sure we do not let the “box” fill up. I do have some sense of hope. The New York Mets’ Wilmer Flores became a sports folk hero when he showed tears upon thinking that he had been traded from the only home he’s had since age 16. Our hearts went out to him — to me he was the most-valuable player in baseball.

We need to do the same for all of our boys.

Stewart J. Frimer has been a clinical social worker for more than 40 years, working in child welfare, education, and in the prevention of child abuse and neglect using role theory and role play in his work.

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A brave

new world

Looking at options and resources for same-sex couples pursuing adoption

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Just a half decade ago, same-sex marriages were considered quite controversial. We've come a long way since, and in this new "age of enlightenment," laws are gradually changing in favor of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities. The conversation is expanding and now veering toward a thornier, more complex topic: same-sex couples and adoption.

A couple's desire to grow their family and have children of their own — by whatever means possible — is one that transcends gender and sexual orientation. It's an intrinsic human need that's embedded in our DNA.

Manhattan-based, licensed Clinical Psychologist Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown, agrees that the process of conceiving a child can be stressful between two heterosexual people, but she points out that with same-sex couples, there are inevitably other parties involved that ultimately add to those stress levels.

"Whether that be the adoption agency, a surrogate parent, a sperm or egg donor, another biological parent, or a lawyer, someone else is necessary to make having a child possible," she says. "These processes are often time-consuming, monetary burdens, and emotionally-laden affairs." She notes that while the outcome is often worth the stress, "it's important to recognize the emotional toll that this can have on any couple."

According to recent statistics, approximately four percent of adopted children are being raised by gay and lesbian parents. Dr. Robinson-Brown notes that literature

"It's been an amazing journey getting to help people experience the joy of becoming parents. Some didn't feel it was an option until recently, as marriage equality spread and services for LGBT people building families became more available."

suggests that when compared to children of heterosexual parents, children of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer parents show no differences in adjustment, peer relationships, depression, or anxiety. In fact, in some instances, Dr. Robinson-Brown said children of lesbian and gay parents tend to have better outcomes in terms of social and academic functioning. Moreover, they tend to have less behavioral difficulties. Overall, though, these children may face more external challenges from peers and society versus in their own homes.

"Probably one of the most important aspects of this process is seeking out legal counsel that is well-versed in the laws of the state in which the parents reside and attending to all necessary points as identified by the couple's attorney," she adds.

Brooklyn-based adoption lawyer Brian Esser, who regularly works with same-sex New York City couples, is raising two happy, high-energy sons with husband Kevin O'Leary in Park Slope.

"The fact that I'm an adoptive dad really resonates with people — gay and straight," says Esser, 40, father of Keith, 4, and Jason, 17 months, both adopted at birth.

Esser has been a lawyer for more than 15 years. He started his career at large law firms handling complex litigation matters for major corporations. About three years ago, he started doing adoption-related work, after he and his husband adopted Keith, he launched his solo practice two years ago.

Tammy Scileppi: You say you empathize with your clients, because you've been in their shoes.

Brian Esser: When I started my practice, I was surprised to learn that there were no out LGBT lawyers who worked with families pursuing independent adoption in New York City. There are many who do second-parent adoptions, but none who focus on birth parent placement adoption. They see that I understand where they are coming from, and that I can sympathize with their concerns, without them having to articulate them, because I've been in their shoes.

It's been an amazing journey getting to help people experience the joy of becoming parents. Some of my clients always knew they wanted to be parents, and it was just a question of when and how. Others didn't feel it was an option until recently, as marriage equality spread and services for LGBT people building families became



Park Slope husbands Brian Esser and Kevin O'Leary adopted sons Keith, now 4, and Jason, now 17 months, at birth.

more available.

Living in New York, we're fortunate that there are services for LGBT people, and our courts are generally welcoming to these families. We like Brooklyn, because

there are all kinds of families here and our children don't stand out because they were adopted, or because they have two gay dads.

As my clients network with potential birth parents and deal with

professionals in other states, I see firsthand the discrimination families face in other states.

I really found my calling when we began the process of adoption. I felt I could take the information I'd learned

— and the empathy I had developed as an adoptive parent — and share it with the world. I immersed myself in family building information — not just adoption, but also surrogacy, sperm, egg, and embryo donation. I wanted to learn all the different ways people build families.

TS: What was your adoption process like?

BE: We were waiting for a match for about seven months with our older son and about six months for the younger ... really quick wait times by most standards, but it didn't feel fast.

Then there is a whirlwind of activity. You try to learn everything you can about the child that might be your baby. You want to know everything about the birth-parents. Then you meet them — which was amazingly emotional.

Then comes another wait. The wait from when you think you have a match until the baby is actually born. We were mostly certain that neither of our sons' birth mothers would re-think their adoption plan, but you never know. The births of both boys were truly amazing!

TS: What has the adoption process been like for other families?

BE: A recent success was obtaining a second-parent adoption for a Brooklyn gay male couple who welcomed their son via surrogacy in India. My most recent independent adoption placement was for a gay male couple in Queens.

When we started the process of adopting, we didn't know a lot of people who were adoptive parents. Since then, people have "come out" to us as adoptive parents and as we've been at various preschools and day cares, we've met other adoptive parents, with kids our boys' ages.

My two boys are the light of my life. They give me purpose and make me want to be a better person. People were incredibly supportive of us becoming parents. I think people could see that we were very happy together and wanted us to share that love with a child.

For families looking for adoption information, contact the Law Office of Brian Esser [540 President Street, third floor, between Third and Fourth avenues in Park Slope, (718) 747-8447, www.esserlawoffice.com]

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance journalist and parent.

Why I loved returning to work



After years as a stay-at-home mom, a refreshing experience

BY SUE LEBRETON

When I began to tell people that I was returning to work full time in a downtown office after 14 years as a stay-at-home mom, their eyes would widen, and after congratulating me they would inevitably say, "Oh your life is about to change." Their tone implied that my life was not about to change for the better.

On my optimistic days, I reassured myself that I had once successfully returned to work after a six-month maternity leave and this was just a very long maternity leave. On my less optimistic days, I considered calling to say I'd made a mistake and would not be arriving for my first day of work. I reminded myself that the people who hired me knew about that big hole in my resume and wanted me anyway.

In the days before my official start date, I felt like I was about to bungee jump off a cliff. Would the thrill of the jump overcome my fears?

I put on a brave face, determined not to let my anxiety show to my children. It was time to heed the advice I had always given to my children, now teens, who have faced so many new teachers and

new schools with my assurance that all would be well, once they settled in.

Six months later, I can admit, yes, some parts are difficult. As every mom has heard more times than she can count, there is no such thing as having it all, but for me, the pleasures have outweighed the burdens.

As I step off the train in the morning, I weave between people threading in all directions. I lift my face up to the skyscrapers greeting me. Each day a slightly different hue bounces off that hammered glass blue building that it is my current favorite. I soak in the sights that still feel foreign to me after so many years in the suburbs. I want to spin and fling my hat exuberantly into the air like Mary Tyler Moore did in the opening credits of her old television show.

As it turns out, all of those wide-eyed, "life is going to change" people were right. My life has changed since returning to work, but mostly in ways that I love:

1 I feel like a grown up again. I know, it sounds weird. My teenagers don't get it either. For more than a decade I've been living life immersed in theirs, some days feeling like I was stuck in whatever developmental age they were.

2 I actually have less responsibility at home. Now that I'm commuting to downtown, my husband is the closest parent to the children's schools. Bonus! When I leave the house every morning, I shed my parenting responsibility to a degree that's not been possible for many years.

3 I feel valued and validated. Mothering may be the most important job in the world, but I sometimes struggled to feel valued. I no longer need to wait for Mother's Day to get a pat on the back. My colleagues' praise fills my self-esteem bucket, and I enjoy being on the receiving end after so many years of giving daily encouragement.

4 I earn money. Let's face it, for many of us, working is about the money. We live in an expensive city, and university is only three years away for my oldest. When I see the bank

account growing, I feel as if I can finally relax a little about the future. Every deposit increases my sense of personal power.

5 I have a new wardrobe. Building a wardrobe beyond yoga pants is time-consuming and challenging, but also fun. I still love my yoga pants, but now I also have a professional wardrobe. And who doesn't love great shoes? My teen daughter, who is usually quick to curl her lip and ask, "Are you wearing that?" now sometimes even gives me a nod of approval. She recently commented, "You are more fashion forward since you went back to work."

6 I learn something new every day. When my children would moan and complain about homework, or chorus that "school is boring," I would tell them I wished I could go to school. "Yes, we know you love to learn," they would say with a heavy sigh and a headshake. Going back to work feels like getting paid to go to school.

7 I have more personal time. When I worked at home, I often felt guilty about sitting down to read. Chores beckoned all day long. Now I have a total of 60 minutes every day on a commuter train where I read guilt free.

8 I have more confidence. I have been pleasantly surprised at how quickly my professional skills and my confidence have returned. In the past, my husband's work functions picked away at my self-esteem when people slithered away to seek more interesting conversation after hearing I was a stay-at-home mom. Now when people ask what I do, I am excited to tell them.

...

As it turns out, all those eyebrow-raisers were right. My life has completely changed — but for the better.

And I was also right during all those years when I coached my kids through tough situations. I told them everything would be fine once they settled in. And as it turns out, this was the best advice of all.

Sue LeBreton is a health and wellness writer and mother to two teens.

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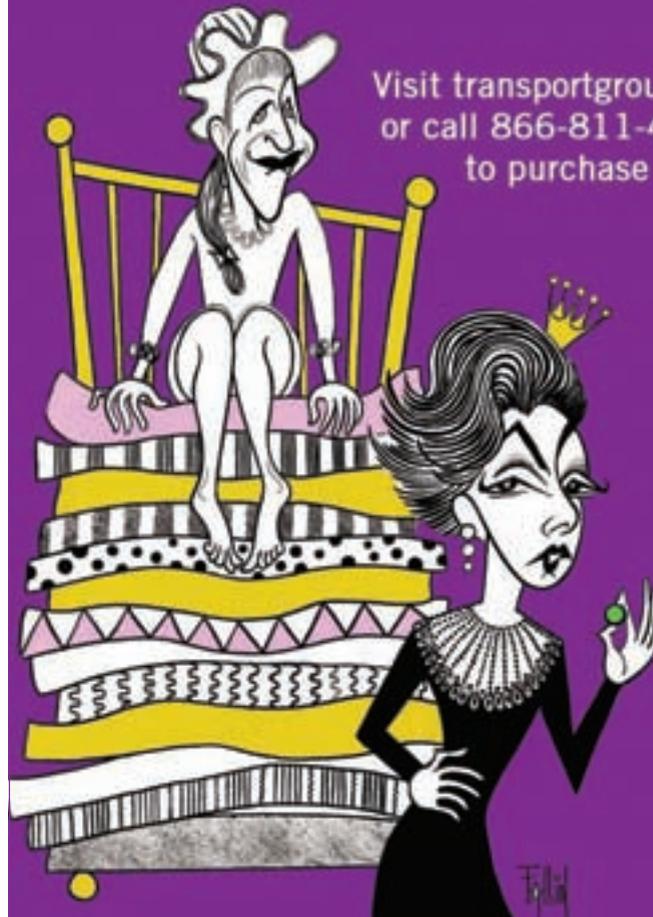
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After miscarriage

How to provide support

Helping a loved one with a very private pain

BY JUDY M. MILLER

A miscarriage happens in an instant or over days, however, its lasting effects can continue through the years. I am now blessed and wonderfully busy with four amazing kids, but pinches of sorrow revisit me every year: on the anniversaries of the day I discovered I was pregnant, the day I lost my child, Mother's Day, and the day I would have given birth. I view these days of grief and my consum-

ing mother's joy as two branches of the same tree, as intertwined reminders to be present and grateful.

What would have been, could have been, proved the most challenging to reconcile. I found it tough to cope with my grief over my miscarriage 18 years ago, along with the dreams of giving birth to and knowing my child, in part because I had virtually no support at the time.

My husband did not want to talk about the baby. In fact, for months he denied she had ever existed, and this distressed me deeply until I realized how much he hurt. He lost a child, too.

Family members and friends were often silent after they expressed their condolences. I desired more, expected more, but did not know how to ask others for what I needed. I did not have the emotional strength to ask. I stewed in the silence until I realized they did not know what to do.

I share this advice that follows from my perspective as a woman who has miscarried, to help you support your family member or friend who has miscarried. These are the things I would have expressed 18 years ago, if I only knew:

Encourage her to talk

Your family member or friend needs to talk; she may tell you her story over and over. Be patient. She is processing. Be attentive. Connect with your eyes, gestures, and touch. Be compassionate. Know when to remain quiet. Listen, listen, listen.

Encourage her to express and name the emotions she feels

I experienced denial, bargaining, anger, sadness, guilt, and shame. I felt hollow and adrift. My arrival to acceptance took many, many months.

Accept all feelings. What she feels are part of her grief process. Validate your friend or family member's emotions and feelings by having

conversations with her about her miscarriage and about her dashed hopes and dreams. Acknowledge her spouse or partner; be sure to ask how he is doing.

Ask about the baby

Your friend or family member was pregnant. The baby, regardless of its gestational age at the time of the miscarriage, was real. Acknowledge and respect her sense of loss. She may have named the baby; refer to the baby by name if she did. Just hearing you say the baby's name validates that it existed; this can help her heal.

Encourage her to take care of herself

Grief takes a toll on the mind and body. Accompany your friend or family member on a walk in a beautiful area. Watch a happy or funny movie with her, and encourage her to laugh by laughing yourself. Make dinner for her and her spouse or family. Hold her hand or put your arms around her shoulders when she cries. Inquire about her sleep, activity, and diet.

Stay in touch

Grief has a way of hanging around; it ebbs and flows, sometimes more pronounced during an anniversary or a milestone. A card, hand-written note, or time spent together talking communicating your remembrance will be much appreciated.

Take care of you

Supporting someone who is grieving can be emotionally and physically taxing. Be sure to take care of yourself. Have someone you can talk to, eat well, drink a lot of water, exercise, and get plenty of sleep.

Judy M. Miller is a freelance writer living in the Midwest with her husband and four children. She is a Certified Gottman Educator, and the author of "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween" and "Writing to Heal Adoption Grief: Making Connections & Moving Forward."



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Understanding premature births

November is Prematurity Awareness Month

BY JENNIFER DEGL

My daughter, who we named Joy, was born at 23 weeks gestation in 2012. She weighed just one pound and four ounces, and was only 11 and three-quarters inches long. The reason for her premature birth was a condition I suffered from, called placenta percreta (a severe type of placenta previa) and both of us almost lost our lives. However, I am happy to report that today, more than three years after her delivery, we are both doing very well!

A premature baby is generally categorized as one that is born before 37 weeks gestation. A micro preemie, as my daughter was, is a baby born between 23 and 26 weeks gestation. Micro preemies suffer the most complications from their early birth, and also have the highest mortality rate of premature babies.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2012, the year my daughter was born, preterm birth affected more than 450,000 babies — that's one of every nine infants born in the United States. These premature babies will spend weeks or months hospitalized in the neonatal intensive care unit. According to the March of Dimes — an organization that strives to fund lifesaving research and programs and works to end premature birth, birth defects, and infant mortality — premature births are the number one killer of babies.

Not all premature babies experience complications, but being born too early can cause short-term and long-term health problems for preemies. Generally, the earlier a baby is born, the higher the risk of complications.

Problems to watch for

Some problems may be apparent at birth, while others may not develop until later.

According to the Mayo Clinic, many

premature babies will suffer from the following short-term complications:

Breathing problems. A premature baby may have trouble breathing due to an immature respiratory system. If the baby's lungs lack surfactant — a substance that allows the lungs to expand — she may develop respiratory distress syndrome, because the lungs can't expand and contract normally.

Preemies may also develop chronic lung disease known as bronchopulmonary dysplasia. In addition, some preemies experience prolonged pauses in their breathing, known as apnea.

Heart problems. The most common heart problems premature babies experience are patent ductus arteriosus — a persistent opening between two major blood vessels leading from the heart — and low blood pressure.

Brain problems. The earlier a baby is born, the greater the risk of bleeding in the brain, known as an intraventricular hemorrhage. Most hemorrhages are mild and resolve with little short-term impact. But some babies may have larger brain bleeding, which causes permanent brain injury, including cerebral palsy.

Temperature control problems. Premature babies can lose body heat rapidly; they don't have the stored body fat of a full-term infant and can't generate enough heat to counteract what's lost through the surface of their bodies. If body temperature dips too low, hypothermia can result.

Gastrointestinal problems. Preemies are more likely to have immature gastrointestinal systems, leaving them predisposed to complications such as necrotizing enterocolitis. This potentially serious condition, in which the cells lining the bowel wall are injured, can occur in premature babies after they start feeding. Premature babies who receive only breast milk have a much lower risk of developing necrotizing enterocolitis.

Blood problems. Preemies are at

risk of blood problems such as anemia and infant jaundice. Anemia is a common condition in which the body doesn't have enough red blood cells. All newborns experience a slow drop in red blood cell count during the first months of life, but the decrease may be greater in preemies, especially if the baby has had a lot of blood taken for lab tests.

Metabolism problems. Premature babies often have problems with their metabolism. Some preemies may develop an abnormally low level of blood sugar (hypoglycemia).

Immune system problems. An underdeveloped immune system, common in premature babies, can lead to infection. Infection in a premature baby can quickly spread to the bloodstream causing sepsis, a life-threatening complication.

Also according to the Mayo Clinic, a high number of preemies will suffer from the following long-term complications:

Cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy is a disorder of movement, muscle tone, or posture that can be caused by infection, inadequate blood flow, or injury to a preemie's developing brain either during pregnancy or while the baby is still young and immature.

Impaired cognitive skills. Premature babies are more likely to lag behind their full-term counterparts on various developmental milestones. Upon school age, a child who was born prematurely might be more likely to have learning disabilities.

Vision problems. Premature infants may develop retinopathy of prematurity, a disease that occurs when blood vessels swell and overgrow in the light-sensitive layer of nerves at the back of the eye (retina). Sometimes the abnormal retinal vessels gradually scar the retina, pulling it out of position. When the retina is pulled away from the back of the eye, it's called retinal detachment, a condition that, if undetected, can impair vision and cause blindness.

Not all premature babies experience complications, but being born too early can cause short-term and long-term health problems for preemies.

to the effects of respiratory viruses on her lungs. Most common colds will evolve into pneumonia for Joy, and she will be rehospitalized and put back on oxygen. These are always dark days, but the clouds eventually break, and Joy is back home once again.

Prematurity is something that can be overcome, but its scars are always visible.

My goal in writing this article is to spread awareness about the reality of premature births, and the effects it has on both babies and their families. No preemie makes it through the neonatal intensive-care unit unscathed.

I also want to mention that many parents of very premature babies (micro preemies) will later be diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, due to the fact they watched their child suffer and almost lose her life on many occasions, and also may have come close to losing their own life during pregnancy or delivery.

Organizations that help

World Prematurity Day is on Nov. 17 — in fact, the entire month of November is recognized as National Prematurity Awareness Month — and I would like to highlight some of the top organizations, both locally and nationally, that either help to prevent premature births or support the families of premature babies and medical research being done on how to lessen the effects of prematurity:

The March of Dimes. It began as an organization to prevent the spread of polio, but it has evolved into one that supports research into preventing premature births. It also funded the research that led to the development of surfactant therapy, which allows premature babies to have a better shot of surviving by increasing their lung capacity after birth.

Hailey's Hope Foundation. A New York-based foundation that not only financially supports families of premature babies while they are in the neonatal intensive-care unit, but also purchases needed equipment for hospitals.

The Tiny Miracles Foundation. A Connecticut-based organization that supports families of premature

babies both financially and emotionally. It offers parent mentor programs and support groups for parents struggling with the reality of premature births, as well as provide them with financial assistance.

The Morgan Leary Vaughan Fund. A Connecticut-based group that raises money for medical research into the prevention of and treatment of necrotizing enterocolitis in preemies. I am on the Board of Directors for this organization, and I can say that it is contributing to medical progress in the area of necrotizing enterocolitis research.

Nurtured By Design. This company makes The Zaky and the Kangaroo Zak, products that help soothe a baby confined to an isolette and ease the stresses of kangarooing a premature baby. These products are both purchased for and donated to many area hospitals.

Graham's Foundation. Graham's Foundation empowers parents of premature babies through support, advocacy, and research to improve outcomes for their preemies and themselves.

Hand to Hold. Hand to Hold provides ongoing support, education, and navigation resources to parents, and serves to fill the service gap that currently exists for families who have had a child in the neonatal intensive-care unit, or who experienced a loss.

NICU Helping Hands. It has not only served its local Texas community, it has also served families all across the country who are looking for education, support, and a helping hand during one of the most difficult journeys they will ever make.

Premature babies are some of the strongest humans in the world that can teach us all a lot of lessons. Let's use November to spread awareness on the reality of premature births, and maybe one day, with your help, they can all be prevented!

Jennifer Degl is a mother of four — including a 23-week micro preemie — and author of "From Hope to Joy: A Memoir of a Mother's Determination and Her Micro Preemie's Struggle to Beat the Odds." For more, visit www.micropreemie.net. You can also connect with Degl at www.facebook.com/jenniferdegl and www.twitter.com/jenniferdegl.



Jennifer with premature baby Joy.

Hearing problems. Premature babies are at increased risk of some degree of hearing loss. All babies will have their hearing checked before going home.

Dental problems. Preemies are at increased risk of developing dental problems, such as delayed tooth eruption, tooth discoloration, and improperly aligned teeth.

Behavioral and psychological problems. Children who experienced premature birth may be more likely than full-term infants to have certain behavioral or psychological problems, such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. However, more recent research suggests that — at least for late preterm babies — the risk may be the same as it is for

children who were born at full term.

Chronic health issues. Premature babies are more likely to have chronic health issues — some of which may require hospital care — than full-term infants. Infections, asthma, and feeding problems are more likely to develop or persist. Premature infants are also at increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome.

Joy suffers or has suffered from nine of those listed above, but considering how early she was, she is amazing!

My daughter spent 121 days in the neonatal intensive-care unit at Maria Fareri Children's Hospital in Valhalla, N.Y., and has returned to the emergency room and pediatric intensive care unit several times due

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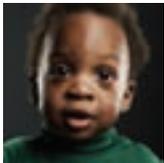
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Divorce

How to tell your kids

BY CHRISTINA MELNYK HINES

Your marriage is over and now you have the heart-wrenching task of telling your children.

How should you break the news?

Tell them together. Barring a

harmful or abusive situation, your children need you both to continue parenting together.

Even if your children are at different ages or maturity, they need to hear the announcement as a family, says Dr. Martye Barnard, a pediatric psychologist.

After that, you and your spouse should talk to each individual child. When you discuss your break-up, keep in mind that different age groups typically require different approaches:

Preschoolers

"It's amazing how much (preschoolers) understand," Barnard says. "They're pretty insightful, but

they don't understand the time element quite like the grade schooler or high schooler would. When you say this is going to happen this month, it doesn't make sense to them."

Adrienne Dreher, a family counselor, suggests using a calendar to help your preschooler count the days to when she will see each parent.

"Children need to have stability and know what to expect. The sooner a regular parenting plan that works for everyone can be set up, the better," she says.

Wondering what your child is feeling? Children often express feelings through play, Dreher says. Also, read age-appropriate books together, like "The Way I Feel" series, to help your child learn to share his feelings, including anger, sadness, and loss.

School-age

Define what divorce means by explaining that you and your spouse will no longer be living under the same roof. Again, explain that the divorce is not about your child, but avoid blaming the other parent for the divorce.

"None of the adult stuff should be shared with the kids," Barnard says.

Questions to anticipate

When preparing to tell children you and your spouse are divorcing, expect to hear the following, or variations of these common questions:

- Does this mean that Daddy (or Mommy) isn't going to live with us?
- Does this mean we won't see him (her) anymore?
- Does this mean we won't do things as a family anymore?
- Did I do something wrong? (Your child might not ask this question aloud, but she may wonder if she's somehow to blame.)

Source: Dr. Martye Barnard, University of Kansas Hospital

Children's books about divorce

Need additional resources? Local bookstores, your library, and Amazon.com have an assortment of helpful books geared for both adults and children. Look for these titles:

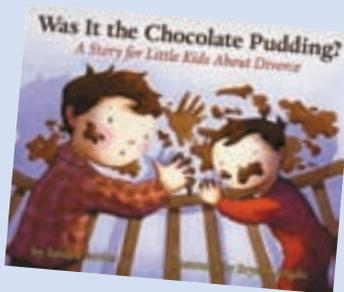
"Two Homes" by Claire Masurel

"It's Not Your Fault, Ko Ko Bear" by Vicki Lansky

"Was it the Chocolate Pudding? A Story for Little Kids about Divorce" by Sandra Levins

"Standing on My Own Two Feet: A Child's Affirmation of Love in the Midst of Divorce" by Tamara Schmitz

"Dinosaurs Divorce (A Guide for Changing Families)" by Marc Brown and Laurie Krasny Brown



Films dealing with divorce

Movies can help facilitate conversation between parent and child. Check out these flicks:

- "Because of Winn Dixie"
- "Mrs. Doubtfire"
- "Hope Floats"
- "Step-Mom"
- "Trevor Romaine: Taking the 'Duh' out of Divorce"

Check out CommonSenseMedia.org for comprehensive reviews of movies and to decide if a film is age-appropriate for your child.

"Those kids really need to be reassured that they have parents that love them."

behavior at home and school.

Manage wishful thinking

Children often fantasize about their parents getting back together and may continue to harbor these hopes for years.

"It's very, very difficult for kids to put closure on that and to understand that that's not going to happen," Barnard says. Gently remind your children periodically that you and your ex won't be remarrying.

Help children cope

Whenever possible, continue to partner as parents to your children by attending school activities, parent-teacher conferences, and birthdays together. And, don't turn your child into the go-between messenger.

"If you have a message to give your former spouse, that should be done by phone. If that's not possible because of anger, then e-mail or text," Barnard says. If possible, avoid dating for at least a year to help your children adjust.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines specializes in family communication issues. She is the mom of two boys and the author of "Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World."

Adolescence

As children enter adolescence, parents may be tempted to explain the divorce. Barnard urges parents to avoid sharing details of why the divorce happened.

"I know adults that aren't old enough to understand it," she says.

Address guilt

Reassure your children that they did nothing to cause the divorce. Explain to them that even though you are no longer married, you are their parents first and your love for them won't change.

Grief is normal

Grief associated with divorce occurs without closure since, unlike death, there's no funeral.

"Children grieve very much like they grieve if one of the parents had died or if they had lost a sibling," Barnard says.

If your child's grief doesn't lessen over time or if she expresses a wish to die (even a preschooler), consult with a counselor or child psychologist. The most common sign of depression among school-aged children is irritability, including acting out, disrespect, and mis-

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Put an end to your child's procrastination

How to get ahead of them running behind

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Many parents grow weary of prodding their children to do homework, get ready for school, or complete household chores. But it doesn't have to be that way. Kids who procrastinate can break the habit if parents teach them the skills and self-discipline needed to start and complete tasks. Here are 13 tips to help:

Consider the source. Think about why your child is procrastinating. Could he be challenged by a lack of motivation, distractions, disorganization, or fear of failure driven by perfectionist ten-

dencies? Once this is determined, you can help him begin breaking the habit.

Stick with the S.T.I.N.G. approach.

"S": Select one task you want your child to do. If it is a large, overwhelming job, break it down into smaller, manageable tasks.

"T": Set a timer in keeping with your child's developmental level — five or 10 minutes if he's younger, longer if he's older.

"I": Ignore everything else while the timer is ticking. Help him stay focused and free from distractions. Don't let him start another task until the first one is done.

"N": No breaks allowed until the timer goes off.

"G": Give him a reward when the timer sounds. This can be a snack, a break to play outside, or special time to read a book with Mom or Dad.

Maintain rules. Establish house rules and follow through with consequences when rules are broken. Even if your child never sees the value of a clean room, he needs to know it's a rule.

Teach technique. Don't just assume your child knows how to do something. He may need to be taught how to organize a closet, clean out the toy box, or tackle a long assignment. Discuss the project with your child and guide him toward successfully completing it. Check in with him from time to time to see how he's doing.

Reinforce positive behavior. Recognize when your child is taking steps toward being responsible and proactive. Praise the progress along the way.

Maintain daily routines. This is particularly true for young children. They will be less likely to procrastinate if their structure is familiar.

Make a list. Some children feel a sense of accomplishment and stay on task when they make a list and cross items off.

Consider teachable times. Wait until your older child is feeling the

natural consequences of his procrastination — being late for school, having to miss an activity, or getting a poor test score. Then, rather than chastising him, suggest and encourage use of tactics to break the procrastination habit.

Work as a team. If you are a procrastinator, suggest teaming up and breaking the habit together. Share successes and mistakes in the journey.

Add variety and options. If your child procrastinates because of chores, rotate jobs on different days of the week or with different family members to give kids some flexibility and options.

Look at the long haul. Realize the long-term impact of procrastination on your child's self-esteem and confidence. Young people form their identity based on experiences and beliefs. If they continually see failing grades, get punished, or are yelled at for procrastinating, it becomes a vicious cycle that chips away at their self-esteem.

Allow trial and error. Remember there is no one-size-fits-all technique when it comes to motivating children to break the procrastination habit. Discuss with your child what method works best for him and allow some trial and error until he settles into a routine.

Gradually turn over the reigns. Breaking the procrastination habit is a gradual process that occurs over time and many children need to be taught how to do it. Once they learn how to break down tasks or organize information, gradually up the level of expectation and let your child become more independent while you continue to provide guidance and coaching.

Most important, remember, whatever effort you invest now in breaking the procrastination habit will positively impact every area of your child's life — now and in the future!

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





BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL



Channel their energy

Adjust your child's body to school schedule

Now that it's fall and there's less time to spend outside, are you noticing a shift in your child's behavior? Is she having a harder time falling asleep? Perhaps she's running around during dinner time? Maybe she's not listening to directions as well as a month ago?

As winter creeps closer, it becomes too cold to be outside for very long. Perhaps more importantly, your child is in school for more of the day, which requires her body to be still. Consider what needs to be done to maintain your child's positive behaviors. This includes considering her physical needs and coming up with ways to get them met within your home.

Taking care of our bodies helps maintain positive behavior! Ensuring your small being is using up her physical energy will help maintain the behaviors you want to keep.

Here are my top five tips for keeping small bodies moving:

Take the stairs or walk whenever possible. Does your child's school have stairs? Do you live in an apartment building with stairs? It might feel strenuous for you to walk up the five flights to your apartment, but your small being will thank you for it.

Can your child walk to school instead of taking a stroller or bus? Sometimes the distance is simply too far, but sometimes it is simply about allocating time for the slow stroll your child requires. Building in the time will pay off big time!

Have a dance party at home. It's simple! Take 10 minutes in the afternoon, turn off all videos, and turn up the music! Take turns picking some great dance tunes and get your bodies moving. You will all feel better after a good dance break. This will not only get your small beings moving, but gives them your attention also. A double win for your family!

Create routines. A solid routine can provide structure and clarity that children crave in order to be successful. Providing some clarity and options around the free time that exists at home can be helpful for children to learn how to occupy their time. Playing alone and coming up with ideas can be tricky, so give them options and choices for open-ended time. For structured time like dinner or bedtime, create a routine that is the same each night. This will allow your child to know what the expectations are and to succeed behaviorally.

Include your small being in your regular exercise routine. If you tend to run, could you do a short run with your child once a week? If you do yoga, could your child join you in a home practice? If you do aerobic videos or classes, can your child join in? Get creative on how to include your child in your physical activity.

Consider the food that is fueling your child's body. It might be time to reduce sugar and sweets, especially at the end of the day. Provide your child with food that will nourish their body and help relax them, not rev them up. Cooking or ordering fresh veggies and whole foods will help their bodies regulate, digest, and sleep. Behavior can be significantly affected by the food that is consumed.

Want more behavior tips? Visit <https://drmarcie.leadpages.co/quick-video-for-ny-parenting> for a free gift for NY Parenting Readers.

Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 15 years and has condensed her observations into her practice and programs. For more on her, visit www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Ready for another?

Five questions to ask before adding to the family

A few months ago, my husband and I were at an event, seated next to a baby and preschooler. As parents who are well finished with the diaper stage, we were enthralled with the kids. My husband began to reminisce about when our kids were babies and for a minute (and I mean a teeny, tiny few seconds), I considered what life would be like to have another.

It's such a tempting fantasy to imagine the little baby feet, the delightful powdery smell that you can endlessly inhale, and the sweet chuckle that comes from a first laugh. It's also so incredibly easy to get caught up in the sweetness of a new baby, but before deciding on another child, there are some concrete and practical things to consider:

Are you willing to handle another pregnancy and baby?

A first pregnancy can be hard enough, but when you have another child to care for, it can mean less rest and recovery time. If you've already had a difficult pregnancy, you might want to reserve some extra hands to help care for your first child on days when you need extra rest.

The same goes for after the baby is born, because if you are feeling overwhelmed from the constant demands of caring for a newborn, adding another child to the mix can feel like the equivalent of adding 10 on some days. And we all know every pregnancy is different. If your first was a walk on easy street, it doesn't necessarily mean that your second one will be just as carefree.

Are your finances in order?

Let's face it. Raising kids is incredibly expensive. Some estimates round out the cost of raising one child to age 17 to be somewhere around \$225,000. Yikes!

Making sure you have enough money allotted for everything from food and clothes to college will



make growing your family more enjoyable and less stressful.

Are you and your spouse both on the same page?

If one of you does not want another child, it's never a good idea to have one. Sure, he may change his mind when he sees the little bundle, but he may not. In the worst-case scenario, he may grow to resent the child ... and you.

In addition, Dr. Christine Lee says you must also consider your other child or children.

"Having another child will literally double your responsibilities. If it has been a long time since you had a baby, you might not have considered just how much work a new baby is, or you might have forgotten. Diapers, bottles, midnight feedings, all of the etc. ... that comes along with a new baby. Also remember that your other child will still have needs that need to be met, so make sure that you consider everything before you have another baby."

Will you regret not having one more child?

When my oldest daughter was

potty trained and talking, I missed having a baby in the house. More than that, I wanted her to have a sibling.

We had another daughter and they are best friends even in their tumultuous teen years. We went on to have a son after that for a total of three.

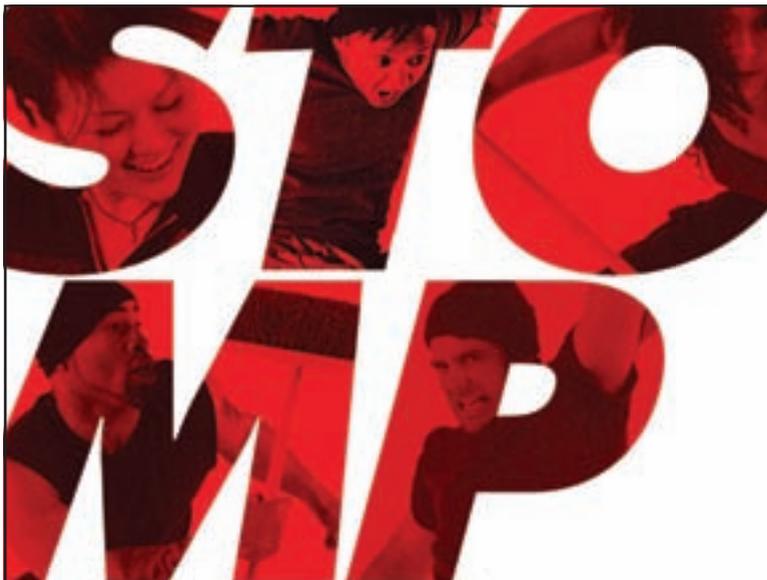
I'm sure I would have regretted not having another child after our first daughter.

Are you trying to fix something?

How many times have you heard someone say they wanted a baby so it would strengthen the relationship? If anything, the opposite is true.

Late-night feedings, constant crying, and nights spent inside tend to dampen already troubled relationships, not make them better.

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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ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

How to protect your online legacy

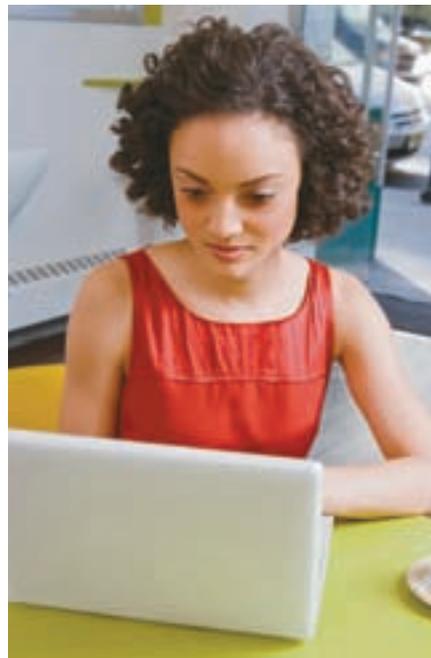
I have a variety of social media accounts — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, not to mention my blog, website, and other various sign-ins! What happens to my digital accounts if I die?

We live in a digital age. Most of our lives are online. Even the least tech-savvy among us has some degree of digital assets. Digital assets include any online account requiring a username and password; any file or other intangible work stored electronically, whether on a computer, compact disc, flash drive, or in the cloud. It has been said that there is more data and information created since 2003 than in all of civilization put together.

Planning for your “digital afterlife” is important for two reasons. One, the identities of 2.5 million deceased Americans are stolen annually. Two, preserving your stories and memories is important. Your heirs will likely want to have access to your digital content — not just on Facebook and Instagram, but also your pictures, videos, and documents, or e-mails.

Many of us have more than one e-mail account, from Gmail to Outlook to Apple. In the course of a single day, you leave a wide swath of digital footprints. You check Facebook when you wake up, then you do some online banking. You place an order on your iPad for fresh direct and diapers.com. Your electric and gas bills are paid automatically. Your photos and videos are stored on a cloud server. These moderate online activities add up to a significant digital presence. They also leave little, if any, paper trail.

The number of passwords required to access this digital media is dizzying, impossible for each of us to



keep up with our own methodology for setting arcane combinations of lower and upper case letters, numbers, and symbols. There is little, if any, paper trail, for obvious reasons. To write down passwords is to invite thieves or other unauthorized access. Yet, those very same requirements designed to prevent identity theft and hacking are the very same insurmountable hurdles. When you die, that information dies with you. This impedes family members from accessing accounts in the event of incapacity or death. The terms of use of most online companies rarely if ever allow for the immediate or automatic transfer of the account data to the personal representative of an estate. Many of them actually provide for deletion of an online account within a certain amount of time after a user’s death. This can jeopardize the ability to recover information, marshal assets, and otherwise ad-

ministrates your affairs. For example, without access to a decedent’s bank and investment accounts, a fiduciary will encounter difficulty in obtaining the necessary information to distribute a person’s estate. This also risks overlooking an asset or account. Importantly, anyone with a Pay Pal account may have a balance left in that account that needs to be transferred.

Enter digital estate planning. Digital estate planning is the creation of a plan where a person chosen by you can access your digital assets and implement your wishes. Some practical sense and a minimal amount of effort can ease a potential burden on you and your loved ones. For the average user, this includes anything stored on a laptop

or computer server, like business and financial documents, personal photos and stories, or recipes, or even purchased e-books and music. Some, but not all, terms of use grant a purchaser a non-transferable license to use these works during the purchaser’s lifetime. For some people, usually creative, digital assets can have significant monetary value. For example, Stieg Larson (author of “The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo”) left behind a laptop computer. His girlfriend, who had possession of the computer when he died, claimed that his last close-to-finished novel resided on the hard drive of that computer, giving rise to questions as to whether she had authority to sell the material and whether she owned it. Consider also that when the renowned composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein died in 1990, he left an electronic, password-protected draft of his memoir, titled

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“Blue Ink.” The password was so strong that apparently no one has yet cracked the code!

Of course, with every dilemma arises a budding industry. There are businesses that service people looking to pass on their online presence. For a fee, you can upload all your passwords into an online account. In the event of disability or death, the designated individuals are notified and can access the information. Other sites like AssetLock (formerly YouDeparted.com) provide an online vault to store important documents and passwords. The account can be unlocked once a number of people set by the owner sign in and confirm the owner’s death. Last Pass is also a great solution.

The best practice is to take steps to do digital estate planning rather than letting the uncertainty of law in this area and the policies of individual online companies dictate a result. Here are some steps you can take on your own:

Inventory your digital assets: This can be done just as you would inventory your household items for insurance purposes (also a good idea for estate planning purposes!). You can keep a separate worksheet in an Excel spreadsheet for this purpose.

Create a list: Using the same spreadsheet, create a list of all your devices, accounts, usernames, passwords, and the answers to the “secret questions.” This is good practice not only for your agents but to jog your own memory when you change and update passwords! If desired, you can password protect this list with an easy-to-remember PIN that your spouse or trusted family member or friend will know.

Leave instructions: Leave information — either in the spreadsheet or a separate document — that includes instructions on how to access mobile devices, computers, e-mail accounts, and other online subscriptions. This letter of instruction can be kept in a safe place with your will and advance directives. It would convey information that an agent or executor needs, such as logins and passwords.

Grant authority: Some online sites — like NY Saves for 529 accounts — allow you to designate a limited power of attorney to access an account on your behalf. You can also include language in your power of attorney to allow your agent to handle your digital

assets. You can bifurcate the powers granted to an agent, so that one person is designated as a “digital assets” representative.

Identify your wishes: You should specify your wishes as to each online asset. Do you want your social media shut down, or continued after your death and for what purpose? Do you want your computers and all of its data given to a particular person, and for what purpose? For example, you might want your writings to be compiled in a memoir, or your digital photographs compiled in albums. You might not want those assets to be made public or posted anywhere, or you may want them disseminated openly and often. Make those wishes known, either in your Will or a personal property memorandum referenced in the will. You can also appoint a “digital executor” to deal solely with these digital issues.

Facebook recently enabled an option to allow users to add a “legacy contact” to manage their account after they die, or elect to have the account terminated and deleted. This can easily be designated in the member profile area. The legacy contact has no authority to edit material that was posted during the decedent’s lifetime. Google has allowed a similar option since 2013. As of now, there is no federal legislation addressing the issues relating to digital property. However, nine states (including New York) have legislation addressing access to digital assets. Delaware grants an executor complete access to digital assets in its Fiduciary Access to Digital Access Act. However, many internet service providers are in California, which lacks digital asset legislation.

Our reliance on digital information will grow, and so too will the value of digital estate planning. The law is slow to evolve to keep up with modern developments. In the meantime, taking the time to organize this information will, in the long run, ease any burden on your loved ones, avoid confusion, protect priceless memories, and avoid any unnecessary conflict and the resulting legal cost.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists parents with their estate planning needs. You can find Alison Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.



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Calendar

NOVEMBER



Photo by Ivo Vermeulen

See a miniature New York City

All aboard!
The New York Botanical Garden presents its annual Holiday Train Show now through Jan. 18, 2016.

The magic of New York City during the holidays is conveyed with G-scale model trains zooming by miniaturized New York City landmarks decked out in twinkling lights. This year's display returns with more trains and more tracks — dazzling families with an additional 3,000 square feet of exhibition space.

The New York landmarks are meticulously crafted of natural materials by designer Paul Busse and his team. Visitors will want to look for the original Yankee Stadium, The Statue of Liberty, and the John F. Kennedy Airport.

Holiday Train Show now through Jan. 18. Daily, 11 am to 5 pm. Included with an All Garden Pass.

New York Botanical Garden [200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard in Bronx Park, (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org].

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Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

TUES, NOV. 3

IN THE BRONX

Eight ball tournament: St. James Recreation Center, 2530 Jerome Ave. and Creston Avenue; (718) 367-3657; Christopher.Suarez@parks.nyc.gov; www.nycgovparks.org/events/bronx; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Come and watch or compete in the tournament! Recreation Center members from the Bronx compete for the title, and the chance to play in the championship! The top players from the tournament make it to the championship on Nov. 13 at Chelsea Recreation Center. Championship prizes are being generously provided by Predator Cues, with support from professional pool player Tony Robles. Space is limited RSPV required.

THURS, NOV. 5

IN THE BRONX

Drawing workshop: Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center, 3225 Reservoir Oval East at 208th Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 6 to 8 pm; Free.

Learn how to draw and ink your own cartoon characters. You will have fun building expressive characters through gesture, movement, and line quality. No prior knowledge of drawing is needed. Beginners are welcome. Supplies will be provided. RSPV required.

FRI, NOV. 6

IN THE BRONX

"Ghostbusters": St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; nycgovparks.org; 6:30 to 8:30 pm; Free.

Who you gonna call? Come and see this great movie with Harold Ramis, Dan Aykroyd, and Bill Murray. Come early for a good spot.

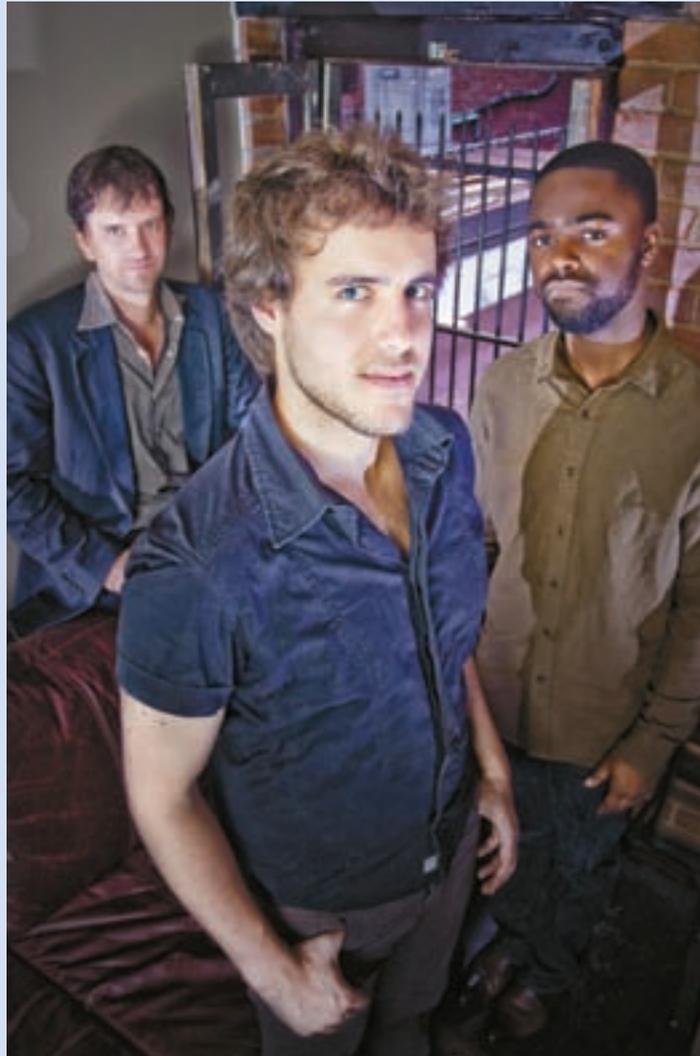


Photo by Derek Branscombe

Music at the museum

The 40th season of the Neighborhood Concert series continues at the Bronx Museum of Arts with the Gilad Hekselman Band on Nov. 6.

Israeli guitarist Gilad Hekselman brings his lively, fluid sound and skillful improvisation music to the museum as part of Carnegie Hall's Neighborhood Con-

cert series. He balances a relaxed style with technical precision and has been praised for his "warm and clean guitar tones."

Gilad Hekselman Band, Nov. 7 at 7:30 pm; free.

The Bronx Museum of the Arts [1040 Grand Concourse at E. 165th Street in the Concourse, (718) 681-6000; www.bronxmuseum.org].

Gilad Hekselman Band: The Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse at 165th Street; (718) 681-6000; bronxmuseum.org; 7:30 pm; Free.

A lively, fluid sound from the Israeli artist Gilad Hekselman. Part of the Live Music in the Community hosted by Carnegie Hall.

SAT, NOV. 7

IN THE BRONX

Kids Get Moving: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; www.nycgovparks.org; 9 to 11 am; Free.

Children ages 8 through 12 years

old will learn fundamental basketball and soccer skills, and training.

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.

Join visiting artist and papermaking expert Randy Brozen to make richly colored paper using red, orange, and yellow pulp. Use a simple process to fashion your handmade paper into a leaf shape, or add a found leaf for fancy decoration.

Fall Forest workshops: New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Blvd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; 11 am to 5 pm; Free for admission.

Explore the 50-acre Thain Family Forest, take a canoe trip, and bird boxing.

SUN, NOV. 8

IN THE BRONX

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

Fall Forest workshops: 11 am to 5 pm. New York Botanical Garden. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

TUES, NOV. 10

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street, Brooklyn; (917) 618-6100; www.barclayscenter.com; 7 pm; Tickets begin at \$21.

Grab your Mickey ears and get ready to celebrate 100 years of magic. All your favorite Disney characters are live and on the ice skating to Disney's best music, including themes from "Frozen," "The Lion King," and "Toy Story." Presented by Stonyfield YoKids Organic Yogurt.

WED, NOV. 11

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

THURS, NOV. 12

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 10:30 am and 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

FRI, NOV. 13

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 7 pm. Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

SAT, NOV. 14

IN THE BRONX

Kids Get Moving: 9 am to 11 am.
St. Mary's Recreation Center. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

Fall Forest workshops: 11 am to 5 pm.
New York Botanical Garden. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm.
Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

SUN, NOV. 15

IN THE BRONX

Fall Forest workshops: 11 am to 5 pm.
New York Botanical Garden. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Disney On Ice": 1 pm and 5 pm.
Barclays Center. See Tuesday, Nov. 10.

The Doo Wop Project: Queensborough Performing Arts Center, 222-05 56th Ave., Queens; 718-631-6311; VTical@qcc.cuny.edu; www.visitqpac.org; 3PM; \$40.

Back by popular demand! Charl Brown, Dominic Nolfi, and their fellow "Motown The Musical" and "Jersey Boys" performers comprise the cast of The Doo Wop Project, and return to celebrate the songs of the great vocal groups of the 1950s. Artists subject to change.

SAT, NOV. 21

IN THE BRONX

Kids Get Moving: 9 am to 11 am.
St. Mary's Recreation Center. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

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.

THURS, NOV. 26

FURTHER AFIELD

Thanksgiving Day Parade: Macy's at Herald Square, Manhattan; 9 am to noon; Free.

Presented by Macy's, the 89th annual event heralds the holiday season with a fun parade. The 2.5-mile march kicks off at 77th Street and ends in front of the store at Herald Square.



Photo by Heinz Klutmeier

The magic of 'Disney on Ice'

"Disney on Ice" comes to the Barclays Center on Nov. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

Grab your Mickey ears and get ready to celebrate 100 years of magic.

All your favorite Disney characters are live and on the ice

skating to Disney's best music.

Selections include "Frozen Heart" from "Frozen," "Hakuna Matata" from "The Lion King" and "You've Got a Friend in Me" from "Toy Story," plus many others.

"Disney On Ice" is presented by Stonyfield YoKids Organic Yogurt.

"Disney on Ice," Nov. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Shows are 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, and 7 pm. Tickets start at \$21.

Barclays Center [620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street in Prospect Heights, (917) 618-6100; www.barclayscenter.com]

SAT, NOV. 28

IN THE BRONX

Kids Get Moving: 9 am to 11 am.
St. Mary's Recreation Center. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

SAT, DEC. 5

IN THE BRONX

Kids Get Moving: 9 am to 11 am.
St. Mary's Recreation Center. See Saturday, Nov. 7.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

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

am-10:45 am, Now - Fri, Jan. 29, 2016; Free.

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

Hatha yoga: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse and E. Kingsbridge Road; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Tuesdays, 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 29; Free.

Children of all ages are encouraged to participate in the yoga and meditation program.

Go Girls!: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; nycgovparks.org; Tuesdays and Fridays, 4 pm to 6 pm, Now - Thurs, Dec. 17; Free.

Improve, and practice athletic skills

by combining cardio and weight training. For young girls 12 to 17 years old.

Youth Run Farm Stands: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers.

Locally grown produce from the very own Friends' Compost and Garden Site, tended to by the Garden Crew and the Kids Garden Crew.

NYC Sparx - Technology and Dance: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays and Fridays, 2 pm to 6 pm, Now - Fri, Dec. 25; Free.

Young girls who like fashion, dance, sports, fitness, and technology will love this ongoing program.

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

For girls 12 to 17 years old. Registration online required.

Skills and drills: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; www.nycgovparks.org; Wednesdays, 4 pm to 6 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 17; Free.

Youth 12 to 17 years old learn the basics. 10 week program-

Learn to Knit: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 1 pm to 2 pm; Free.

Learn the basics of knitting — choosing your yarn, needles, measuring gauge, and yardage. Learn to read patterns and create a simple project. You'll need some materials: wosted weight (#4) yarn, pair of #8 knitting needles, measuring tape and measuring tool. No experience needed, beginners welcome.

Teen Fitness: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 4 pm to 6 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 17; Free.

Youth 12 to 17 years old utilize the cardio and weight training rooms to build strength.

Story, arts and crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Fridays, 10 am-10:45 am, Now – Fri, Dec. 25; Free.

Children listen to an interactive story with songs, and poems followed by a craft and activity related to the reading. For toddlers and preschoolers.

Kids Art class: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Fridays, 2:30 pm to 3:45 pm; Free.

Children use multiple mediums and learn drawing and painting techniques.

Basketball workshop: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 9 am to 11 am, Now – Sat, Dec. 19; Free.

Children 6 to 12 years old learn the basics.

Soccer workshops: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Avenue and E. 145th Street; (718) 402-5155; nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, Noon-2 pm; Free.

Learn the fundamentals of the game with Coach Victor Campbell. For children 6 to 12 years old.

Paper Arts & Crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 2-3:30



Associated Press / Diane Bondareff

Thanksgiving's giant kickoff

Get ready for the 89th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on Nov. 26.

The giant event features balloons, floats, marching bands, performance groups, and loads of entertainers. The 2.5-mile march kicks off at 77th Street, winding

its way downtown to the viewing stands in front of the world famous Macy's of Herald Square. Children of all ages will love watching the marchers and ogling the giant balloons floating high above the avenue. Bringing up the rear is always the ever popular Mr. and

Mrs. Santa Claus, with Rudolph at the head. Santa and sleigh heralds the end of the parade and the beginning of the holiday season.

Thanksgiving Day Parade, Nov. 26 from 9 am to noon. Free

Macy's Herald Square (Broadway and W. 34th Street in Manhattan).

pm; Free.

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

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Blvd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Daily, 11 am – 5 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 18, 2016; Included with an All Garden Pass.

The annual event returns with more trains and more tracks with an additional 3,000 square feet of exhibition space. Displays include: Grand Central Terminal, Radio City Music Hall, the historic Hudson River Valley houses, Brooklyn Bridge, and Rockefeller Center.

FURTHER AFIELD

Heart and Seoul: Brooklyn Chil-

dren's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Now – Sun, Jan. 3, 2016; Free with museum admission.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum will ride Hallyu (the Korean Wave) with a new exhibit that brings modern-day South Korea to New York City.

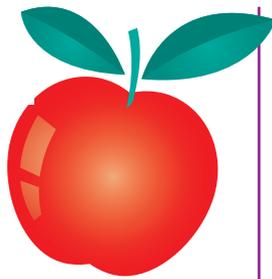
Needlework and games: Leferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1-3 pm, Now – Mon, Dec. 28; \$3.

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

"Elf": The Theater at Madison

Square Garden, 4 Penn Plaza at Eighth Avenue, Manhattan; (800) 901-4092; www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/theaters/madison-square-gardentheater/elf.php; Wednesdays, 7 pm, Thursdays, 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm, Fridays, 11 am and 7 pm, Saturdays, 2 pm and 7 pm, Sundays, 1 and 6 pm, Wed, Dec. 9 – Sun, Dec. 27; Starting at \$51.

Santa accidentally picks up an orphaned baby boy and brings him to the North Pole. The little boy grows up and realizes he is really not like the other elves. What is an elf to do? Buddy goes on search to find his real parents and winds up in NYC where he meets a host of characters, including his dad, step brother, and true love. Along the way he saves the Big Apple by bringing joy and the Christmas spirit.



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Spotting signs of hearing loss in kids

Dear parents,

So much learning that your children do in school comes from listening to teachers and classmates. It is important to identify the signs that may indicate a possible hearing loss in your child as quickly as possible so that the next steps can be taken: testing followed by appropriate treatment and management.

According to the Hearing Health Foundation, it is more difficult to identify hearing loss in children who have developed speech skills, as they may have unconsciously developed coping techniques to compensate for their loss. Watch for these signs in older children:

- Your child seems to hear fine some of the time and then not respond at other times.
- Your child wants the television volume louder than other members of the family.
- Your child asks “What?” or says “Huh?” more often than he used to.
- Your child moves one ear forward when listening, or he complains that he can only hear out of his “good ear.”
- Your child’s grades fall, or his teacher notes that the child doesn’t seem to hear or respond in the classroom.
- Your child says that he didn’t hear you. Many parents assume their children are not paying attention, when in fact, there may be an unidentified hearing loss.
- It seems as though your child is just not paying attention.
- Your child starts to speak more loudly than previously.
- Your child looks at you intently when you speak to him. He may be depending on visual cues.
- You just have a feeling. Sometimes you just can’t put your finger on what your concern is.

There are many possible causes of acquired hearing loss that appear months or years after birth. Most hearing loss in children without obvious risk factors (such as premature birth) has a genetic cause. If



you have concerns, contact your pediatrician for a referral to an audiologist, a professional who is specially trained to identify hearing loss in children of all ages, for a complete hearing evaluation.

Simple games to enhance math skills

Dear teacher,

Do you know any simple games that reinforce math skills that are not played on the computer? I would like to wean my children away from being online so much of the time.

Dear parent,

One way to lure children away from thinking that they can only have fun by being online is to play games with them. There are many board games that they should enjoy playing with you. Younger children can enjoy games that stress counting. Candyland and Chutes and Ladders are just two easy first games for children to play. In fact, any game that uses a spinner will have the youngest children practicing their counting skills.

As children get older, they can play more sophisticated games. Dominoes is a great choice for children who need to improve their adding skills. In addition, there are many dice games

and experiments that children can enjoy. Here are two:

The block game: Get out a lot of building blocks. They can be different sizes. Have your children take turns throwing a pair of dice and adding up the numbers that come up. The child then stacks that number of blocks. The winner is the player who stacks the highest block tower in 10 or 20 rounds of play. And, of course, a player loses if his or her tower falls down before the end of a round of play.

Dicey experiment: This game will introduce your children to probability. You’ll need a pair of dice. Have your child roll the dice 36 times and find the difference between the number of dots on the top faces of the dice each time. Record the results on a graph that shows the differences and the number of times that difference was rolled. Repeat the experiment three more times. Then ask the child the question: What difference is most likely to show up when you roll a pair of dice?

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

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Keep it or toss it?

My friend, Gail, called me with a question: “I have a container of eggs in my refrigerator with a sell-by date of two weeks ago. Are they safe to eat?”

I get a lot of food and nutrition questions from friends and family. But how long food can be kept is the top query. Cooks want to stay safe, yet, they don’t want to throw away perfectly good food.

Surprisingly, food scientists agree that many foods, if stored properly, can be consumed for days or even weeks past the package date.

A 2013 study out of Harvard Law School and the Natural Resources Defense Fund found consumers falsely believe sell-by and best-by dates indicate food safety.

Fact: It’s the manufacturers that often decide on their own how to calculate shelf life — and they’re basically a guess. These dates confuse consumers, leading many to throw out food before it actually goes bad.

What the terms mean:

Sell-by. These are used to tell retailers how long to display a food. You should purchase it before this date, but the food can still be eaten after it. For example, milk has no off-flavor up to five days after its sell-by date and can be consumed until then.

Best-by. These are based on sensory evaluations by product developers and do not reflect food



safety.

Use-by. These dates indicate the last day of peak food quality. Food stored properly is not necessarily unsafe to eat after this date according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

How long is it good?

Lunch meat. Three days for fresh-sliced meats. Ditto for prepackaged deli meats once you open them.

Ground meat. Cook within one to two days of purchase. After cooking, three to four days.

Leftovers or prepared foods. Four days in the fridge. *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacteria linked

to food-borne illness, can grow at refrigerator temperatures as low as 40 degrees.

Packaged cookies and crackers. If they have a paint-like smell or taste, their oils have turned rancid and should be tossed.

It’s important to note foodborne illness (a.k.a. food poisoning) comes from bacterial contamination and not spoilage. Eyeballing and sniffing just detects the presence of spoilage microorganisms, not necessarily food pathogens. Most of the organisms in food that can make you sick do not create slime, stink, and smell.

Common sense dictates if a food looks moldy or smells awful, it’s time to toss.

Gail was relieved when I reassured her that eggs, if kept refrigerated, should last at least three to five weeks after the sell-by date stamped on the carton.

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

Spinach wild rice salad

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pouch Uncle Ben’s Ready Rice Jasmine Rice
- 1 pouch Uncle Ben’s Ready Rice Brown, Red, Black Rice
- 1 pouch Uncle Ben’s Ready Whole Grain Medley Brown & Wild

- 4 cups baby spinach
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 cup crumbled goat cheese
- 6 Tbsp balsamic vinaigrette

DIRECTIONS: Prepare rice according to package directions. Refrigerate and cool until just before serving.

For each serving of salad, toss 1/2 cup cooled rice with 1 cup baby spin-

ach, 1/2 cup cherry tomato halves, 2 ounces crumbled goat cheese, and 1 tablespoon balsamic vinaigrette.

NUTRITION FACTS: 310 calories, 43 g carbohydrate (2 g sugar), 9 g protein, 12 g fat (3.5 sat), 4 g fiber, 670 mg sodium, 60 percent DV vitamin A, 30 percent DV vitamin C, 10 percent DV iron and eight percent DV calcium.

Adapted from UncleBens.com

SANTA *arrives!*

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Visit Santa beginning November 21st in
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For children 12 years old and under.

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