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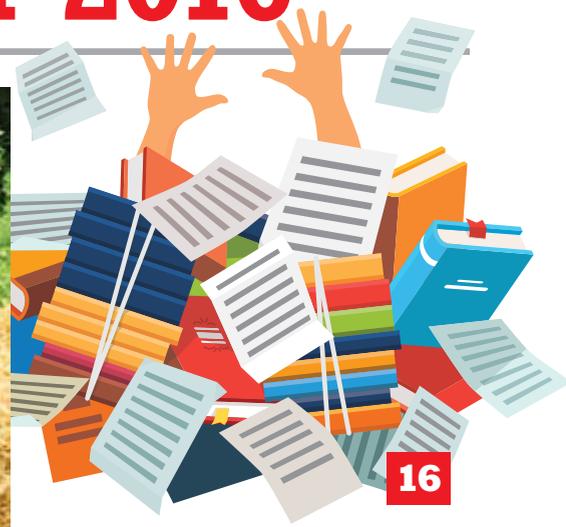


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# Family October 2016



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## Teens, screens, and prepping for the future

This is our annual Teen Issue, and although they say that parent magazines are geared more to the issues of the very young children in our families, having been through it myself, I would have to say that the real challenges begin when kids enter puberty. That's when they stop listening to what we say, rely mostly on their friends and peers for advice and guidance, and start pulling away from our lead.

Some families find it more frustrating than others, and of course, no two kids are alike, and so, even within families, kids will develop and behave differently. Getting your youngsters ready for high school is not only about them getting the grades to matriculate, but it's also about picking the right school for their needs. There is a special advertising section in this issue offering many of the finer choices your family might want to explore. Open Houses



are throughout October and even beyond.

Our writer Allison Plitt has reviewed a new book on internet safety that should help parents long before the teen years kick in. How important is that for all of us! Certainly every parent should be doing as much as possible to get "hip" to the realities of social media and what their kids are up to online, which changes from day to day.

Myrna Beth Haskell has contributed Part 1 of a series on "Hooked on Screens," a subject I addressed in my column in last month's issue. It relieved me to know I'm not the only one who is concerned about the dependence factor in our connection to electronic media.

There's so much to discuss when it comes to our preteens and teens. Concerns about body image, approval and influence of friends, and the pressures of school and grades are only some of them. It's not easy

as a parent to feel them pulling away from us, and they do, but not only do they need preparation for that, but so do we.

Separating from our kids should not be a startling reality when we become "empty nesters" but be a process the whole family is in training for years before it actually occurs. In getting our kids ready for adulthood, we will also be getting ourselves ready for their eventual independence. I know from personal experience how shocking it can be even though you know it's coming, and sometimes, even though you've been waiting for it with your breath held.

Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
Publisher/Executive Editor  
Susan@nyparenting.com

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## LETTER FROM A READER

# The right amount of screen time

Hello Ms. Weiss-Voskidis,

I wanted to express my appreciation for your letter in this month's issue. I have three children: 20, 8, and 2 years of age with varying degrees of exposure to screens. It has definitely been a struggle to limit screen time for all of them, especially the youngest two. While my 20-year-old uses her screen time mainly to access work- and school-related things, she also spends a great deal of time on social media, which has concerned me. For all three of them though, we encourage spending time together doing different things such as playing games, doing arts and crafts, and even reading books to each other.

We see this as a work in progress, for not only them, but also for us parents.

Thank you again for addressing this growing issue.

Best regards,

Josefina S.

Queens

### Screen time, families, and children



It's something for us all to consider. Are we making books our main activity for our children? Are we limiting screen time to only educational content? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough exercise? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough sleep? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough social interaction? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough reading time? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough play time? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough outdoor time? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough family time? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough love and attention? Are we making sure that our children are getting enough of everything?

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# Raising a baby without Dr. Google

I have done something unheard of in today's age of modern parenting. And if you have kids who are in their late teens or are young adults, you probably have, too. We survived parenting without consulting the internet for Every. Single. Thing.

I was talking with my oldest the other day and speculating on the fact that when she was little, I didn't have a Facebook page filled with moms, or a community message board to throw out questions to at 3 am when she wouldn't sleep or was cutting a tooth. In many ways, I'm glad I didn't. The sheer amount of answers, suggestions, and warnings you will find on every aspect of raising a child is purely overwhelming, and can be quite alarming. Sure, your baby could have colic or pyloric stenosis, but he could also just be overtired and having a rough night. For new moms, the combination of sleep deprivation and a glowing computer screen with pages and pages of doomsday could-bes is a terrifying combination.

Back when my daughter was a baby, I had to wait until the morning to either call the pediatrician or my mother for any worries I had.

Sure, there are a myriad of ways that consulting the internet is helpful as a parent. You can read about generalized information, milestones, uplifting stories, and also heartfelt essays to let you know that you're not alone.

You can meet other moms from across the country and develop a kinship and bond due to your children's age or condition. The support groups can be a lifesaver to parents who have a child with a health issue.

However, the amount of misinformation from well-intended (and also not so well-intended) people can also drive a new mom mad.

There are many amateur doctors out there who will swear by an odd technique or try to convince you that your doctor's advice is wrong.

Even among the reputable websites, which offer oversimplified health advice, it can be easy to get sucked into fearing



the worst over a seemingly normal situation like your baby having gas or a rash. Dr. Google (especially in the wee hours of the night) can be a place to develop unwarranted fears and worries. Sometimes, it's best to not panic, and let your natural instincts kick in. A new mom's brain is actually wired to not only be hyper vigilant about perceived threats to her baby, but also to amplify them. As in the case of most things in life, it helps to start with a clear — rather than anxious — mind.

So instead of scouring 18 random pieces of advice at night when baby is sleeping, get some sleep yourself, and if you have a worry, call your doctor — and then your mom — in the morning. Everyone knows that is really the best medicine!

*Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City.*



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DANIELLE SULLIVAN

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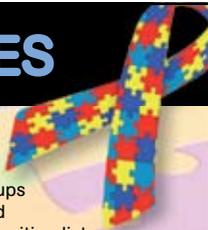
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# Internet safety

## A new primer for parents

BY ALLISON PLITT

**A**ccess to the internet is a given for most of today's children. New information is available at the touch of a button. Kids can follow — and be followed by — friends and strangers alike on social media sites. And the rise of cyberbullying, and its sometimes tragic endings are certainly alarming.

As Amber Mac writes in her new book with Michael Bazzell, "Outsmarting Your Kids Online," kids are "adapting more quickly than we ever imagined ... we are living in a unique time when we aren't properly equipped to handle the questions kids are asking; in fact, we are frequently turning to them to learn how all these shiny new things actually work."

So how are parents to ensure their children's safety when using new-fangled technology that comes so easily to young children and teens?

In this new book, the writers state that the crimes perpetrated by cyber predators and bullies reported in the news are not aberrations. Mac, who is a bestselling author and technology entrepreneur, and Bazzell, an internet security expert, use their combined experience to provide parents with helpful how-tos for working with their kids in navigating the most popular social media platforms, keeping their home computers safe from cyberattacks, learning how to identify cyberstalkers, and knowing when it is necessary to contact the police.

### Safety first

In the first half of the book, the authors review the most commonly used online social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. They also mention newer apps that have become popular with teens, such as Snapchat and Vine, where pictures and videos are created and e-mailed to friends. Their philosophy is simple: parents can start using these apps to familiarize themselves with how the product works, how to set safety measures, and to keep an eye on their children's activity on the sites.

Mac points to the CNN series "#Being13," which found that the "heaviest users in the



Amber Mac's handbook offers suggestions for parents on dealing with their children's avid use of technology.

group checked all their social media accounts more than 100 times per day. This group explained that they closely monitored social media to keep on top of their popularity status." The authors encourage parents to have children and pre-teens use computers in the living room or gathering places in the house, so they can monitor what their children are doing online.

### The internet is permanent

To avoid being patrolled by their parents, sometimes teenagers activate an account with their real name, but are secretly active on another account under a fictitious name. Assisting parents in finding where their child is actually posting online, Bazzell created a database search tool. After the parent collects as much information as possible about her child on a social media site, she can input the information into the database and then receive a list of links online that provide the location where she can find her child

is actively posting.

Mac notes that some parents might find this and a few other topics discussed as a breach of privacy, and writes, "We believe that you cannot have privacy without security and vice versa." It's up to each family to decide what is the right approach for them.

The reason for parents checking up on their kids, says Mac, is because they must help kids realize that if they post something to the internet, it is permanent, and may come back to haunt them. The authors say that both college admission placement personnel and job placement recruiters do check names online for any suspicious activity. Parents must teach their children that everything posted online is public information. (Fortunately, search engines such as Google and Bing can be contacted and will remove any sexually explicit material about a child online.)

### Tracking tools

Unfortunately, apps like Instagram use a navigation system, which, if not turned off in the child's app, can let a viewer know where the post or photo was taken and at what time. It is necessary to disable the tracking system on kids' smartphones and on these apps. If your child has any followers or friends who look suspicious or have sexually implicit or explicit usernames, it is necessary to delete them as soon as possible. If parents don't warn children about these protective measures, a sexual predator can easily track down the location of your child.

Children can also make their Instagram account private, which only allows your child to choose which friends to follow, and Twitter even has accounts for families so each member is aware of what is being shared online. The book has many such tips to help entire families protect themselves online.

### Girls and the internet

Instagram is popular with kids 13 to 17 because it allows them to take pictures of themselves and share them with friends. Research has shown that while boys prefer computers for playing games, girls use

their smartphones for sharing visual imagery. There is an downside, however, to all of this female photo sharing.

The book says, "The Girl Scout Research Institute has also studied the connection between girls and social media, indicating that 68 percent of girls have had a negative experience online (including bullying and harassment)."

The sharing of nude photos is a slippery slope. The authors point to news stories about sexual predators obtaining the photos and blackmailing young girls with the threat of posting the photo online or telling their parents. Likewise, these photos can fall into the e-mail inboxes of classmates who will harass the girl.

Whether it's in reaction to a nude photo or not, online bullying has become a huge issue. Since some sites have anonymous posting, the comments from peers can be very cruel. If a child ever receives a physical threat in online statements such as, "I'm going to kill you. I'm going to beat you up tomorrow. I'm going to hurt you. I'm going to have someone else hurt you," this is considered a crime. Parents and teens should report these incidents to local and state police.

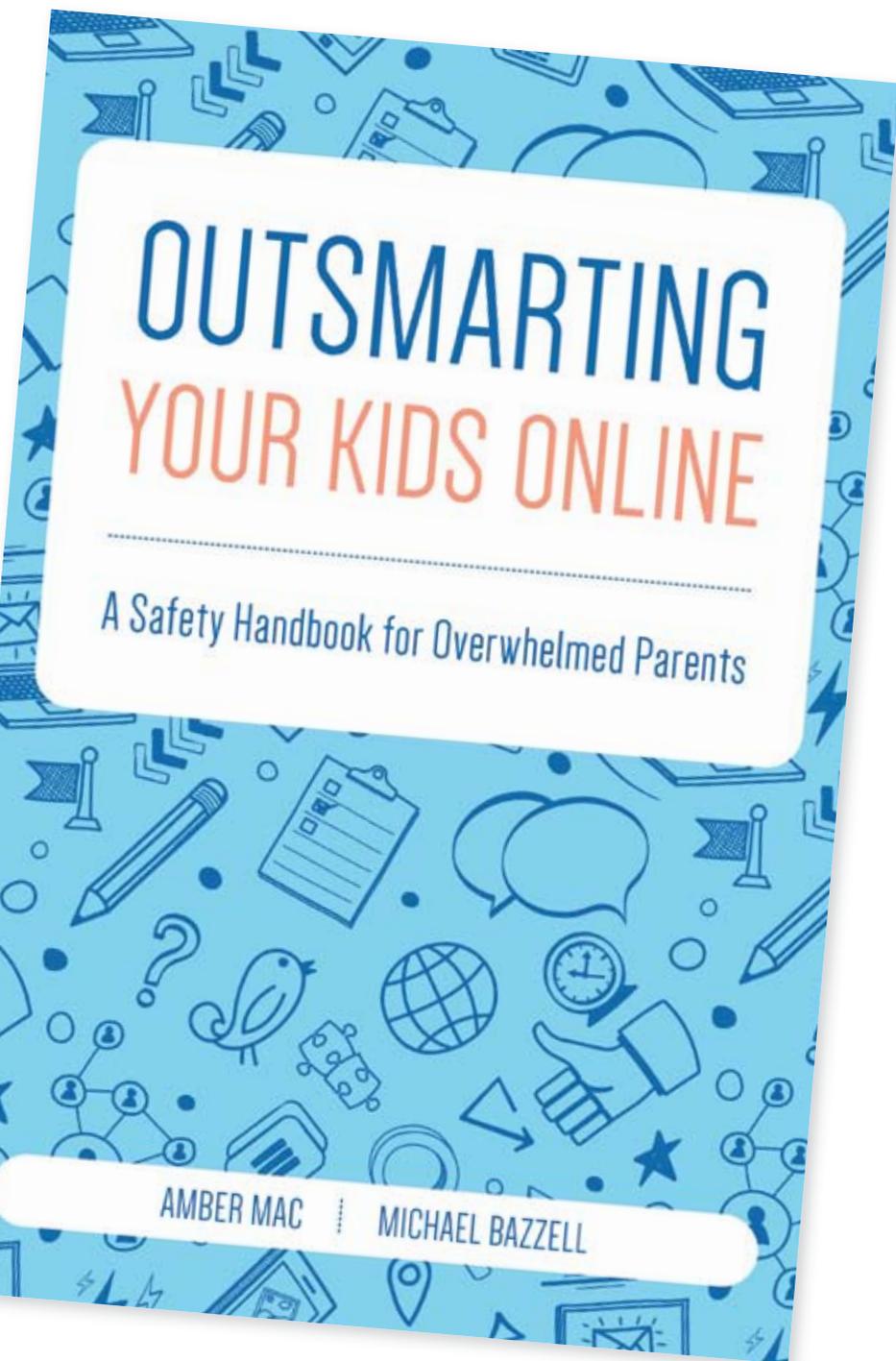
Half of all children who are cyberbullied never report it. Parents, of course, will want to protect their children and tell them to block the bully online, but kids, especially older teens, are afraid of retaliation. One of the main reasons teenagers don't report bullying is because they often feel embarrassed or humiliated.

The book provides resources for parents, so they can learn how to help children deal with online bullying.

"One of the best resources online for both parents and teachers when it comes to bullying is TheBullyProject.com," the authors write. "This site includes a parent action toolkit to explain how to talk to your children, how to approach the school, and other next steps."

Besides TheBullyProject.com, the authors constantly cite the website Common Sense Media ([www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)), which provides information about educational and age-appropriate websites, as well tips to help parents establish limits and boundaries with children when they use computers.

When it comes to online protection and etiquette, the authors advise both parents and their children to avoid "oversharing, overreacting, and bullying." Parents can model positive online interactions by sharing interesting information with their kids. In doing so, children will respect their par-



ents' willingness to learn about how they communicate with the world.

### **Protecting your home**

Within the home, parents need to protect their computer from hackers and intruders. If you own a Windows-based computer, install antivirus software. With any type of Mac, such antivirus software is unnecessary.

Work with family members to create complex passcodes to lock and unlock any type of gadget, and use multiple hard-to-guess passwords for online accounts. Store

the list of passwords in a safe place.

The authors want to give parents the necessary knowledge and tools to start safe internet habits early in a child's life.

"Too many parents give up when it comes to managing screen time, but it's a battle worth fighting as early on in your child's online life as possible," they write. "A young child without boundaries is going to run into potential problems later in life on the internet."

*Allison Plitt is a frequent contributor to NY-Parenting.com and lives in Queens with her 10-year-old daughter.*

# What **POLITICS** can teach our kids

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

**F**rom yelling newsroom pundits and vigorous dinner party debates to divisive Facebook exchanges, 'tis the season when there's virtually no escape from politics. Your kids may come home with questions about opinions overheard at school or elsewhere. From a parenting perspective, the democratic process — and political shenanigans — provides plenty of fodder for teaching kids lessons in independent thinking, respectful discourse, values, and civics.

## **Nurture independent thinkers**

Take advantage of the political process to help your children learn to think for themselves. Ask your children open-ended questions to hear their point of views.

"Find out what they're thinking. What you want to do is stimulate their analytic, natural human curiosity," says Dr. Fran Walfish, a child and family psychotherapist and author of "The Self Aware Parent: Resolving Conflict and Building a Better Bond with Your Child."

Watch the speeches and debates together. Ask your child who he thinks is telling the truth based on body language or who seems more respectful during a debate.

Whether you agree or not, ask her: "Why do you feel that way? How would you solve the problem?" Share your opinions with your children by prefacing your comments with "I feel" or "I think" and ask questions like: "I wonder how he'll make that happen? What do you think? How would you make it fair if you were president?"

## **Avoid anger**

As hard as it may be, try to refrain from making judgmental comments or calling candidates with whom you disagree colorful names.

"Shouting at the TV, or at one another, presents a very negative example of responding to conflicting opinions," says Mary Jane McKittrick, author of the "Boomer and Halley" children's series (written for ages 4 to 8), including



the Mom's Choice award-winning book "Boomer and Halley: Election Day."

Through humor and embedded life lessons, McKittrick's books tell stories of families and communities resolving difficult challenges by working together.

## **Model respectful dialogue**

Not all parents agree on politics, but what matters is how they discuss the issues in front of their children without raising a child's anxiety. Make ground rules with your spouse before engaging in the discussion: No interrupting; take turns listening; and no put-downs, insults, or blaming. And, if you come to an impasse, agree to disagree.

"I would love for parents to respect

each other's point of views. I would also hope that they will respect their children's point of view," Walfish says. "Be able to tolerate differences. We still love each other, and I can tolerate you having powerfully different feelings than mine."

If you find yourself getting drawn into a heated argument around the table with loved ones, keep your cool and suggest you pick up the conversation at another time.

## **Play nice — in politics?!**

Political rhetoric may be difficult for your child to comprehend, but behavior in politics can often parallel real-life situations your child can relate to about how we should treat each other and who we can trust.

“Here we are: two political figures. They’re going to say their beliefs right out front, but wouldn’t it be nice if that was all they were doing,” Walfish says. “Instead, what they’re doing is using put-downs, criticisms, (and) willing to go forward at all costs to win.”

Perhaps the vindictive nature of politics will never change, but parents can use examples of how politicians conduct themselves to teach values about what it means to win honorably, treat others with respect, and be a trustworthy friend. For example, on the playground, a child might promise your child that he can have the ball next, but then passes the ball to an ally or continues to hog the ball. Even a young child understands that the other child’s actions are unfair.

“A good friend is someone who treats you right all of the time. And that’s what we’re looking for in politics,” Walfish says. “And a lot of times people will say anything to get what they want, which is to win. Our job is to try to figure out who’s telling the truth, who’s going to deliver on the goods.”

**Civics 101**

Talk to your kids about the democratic process. Take your child to the voting booth and follow the results on election night together to help her see the election

**Looking for more?**

Check out these books, movies, and websites for kids interested in learning about politics and government:

**Children’s books**

- “Duck for President” by Doreen Cronin
- “This Little President: A Presidential Primer” by Joan Holub (board book)
- “That’s Not Fair!: Getting to Know Your Rights and Freedoms” (Citizen-Kid) by Danielle McLaughlin (release date April 1, 2016)
- “Doodles U.S. Government Coloring Fun” by Setria James (release date April 1, 2016)
- “One Vote, Two Votes, I Vote, You Vote” by Bonnie Worth (release date Aug. 2, 2016)

**Political movies**

- “1776” (ages 8 and up)
  - “Young Mr. Lincoln” (ages 10 and up)
  - “Gandhi” (ages 12 and up)
  - “Dave” (ages 12 and up)
  - “All the President’s Men” (ages 13 and up)
- Source: *CommonSenseMedia.org*

**Websites**

- KidPresident.com featuring 12-year-old Robby Novak, a YouTube sensation, television star, and co-author of “Kid President’s Guide to Being Awesome.”
- Kids.gov: <https://kids.usa.gov>
- Ben’s Guide to the U.S. Government: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov>
- CongressforKids.net: [www.congressforkids.net](http://www.congressforkids.net)

process in action and the connection between your vote and why it matters.

Explain that politicians are public servants, and they usually enter the political process in an attempt to make a difference in the lives of citizens.

“Parents can offer examples from their lives to illustrate giving to others as a positive way to explain politics,” McKittrick

says. “After all, politics exist in our families, communities, schools and workplaces — not just at the ballot box.”

*Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines resides with her opinionated family — which includes her husband, two rambunctious boys, and a pair of playful dogs. She is the author of “Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World.”*

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# Five effects of 'pregnancy brain'

**M**oms know how much pregnancy affects a woman's body, both physically and emotionally. A pregnant woman may be naturally preoccupied with the baby growing inside of her, but she is also adjusting to the changes in her own body, which include so much more than back aches, swollen feet, and exhaustion.

During this time, there are specific hormonal changes taking place that cause an expectant mother's brain chemistry to alter.

This is commonly known as pregnancy brain, and there is scientific evidence showing these significant changes that occur during a pregnancy. While these changes cannot be prevented (and you wouldn't want them to, because they are necessary), knowing exactly why you sometimes feel irritable or absent-minded definitely helps! Here's what you need to know:

## Hormones reign

"There are 15–40 times more progesterone and estrogen marinating the brain during pregnancy," says Dr. Louann Brizendine, author of "The Female Brain." Progesterone actually induces calmness and has a sedative-like effect. This can make some women not only fatigued but also absent-minded.

Getting good sleep and proper nutrition helps. Now is also an ideal time to review your stress management — before the baby arrives.

## Shrinkage

It might sound like a sci-fi movie, but the hormonal surge is swift and strong. Some estimates report that brains shrink by six to eight percent! Rest assured, your brain will regenerate fully by the 24th week postpartum.

## Wonder Woman

Thought you could handle many things before becoming pregnant? Well, thanks to a boost in the prefrontal cortex, expectant moms can multitask like a superhero. This part of the brain helps people perform sev-

eral tasks at once.

It's a case of perfect timing, as you are planning your delivery, nursery, work demands, and a host of other arrangements all within a relatively short period of time.

## Hormones revisited

Remember those hormones that caused you to feel calm? Well, they also work in reverse. This can cause any perceived threats to you or your baby to become amplified. (We'd like to say this passes once the baby is born, but a mother's instinct to protect her child is not to be messed with, no matter how old he or she is!)

## Head of the class:

Along with those tiger mom protection skills come a new set of neural pathways, which enable new moms to hold more information in their brains, and also increase their intelligence.

Thankfully, this helps us absorb the abundance of new information we'll need to parent our precious baby.

*Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City.*

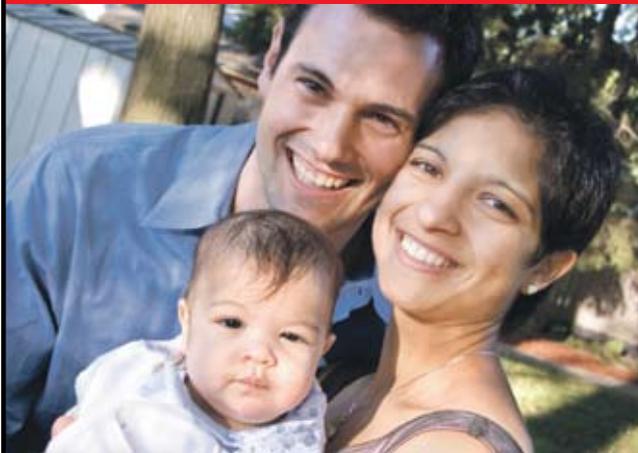


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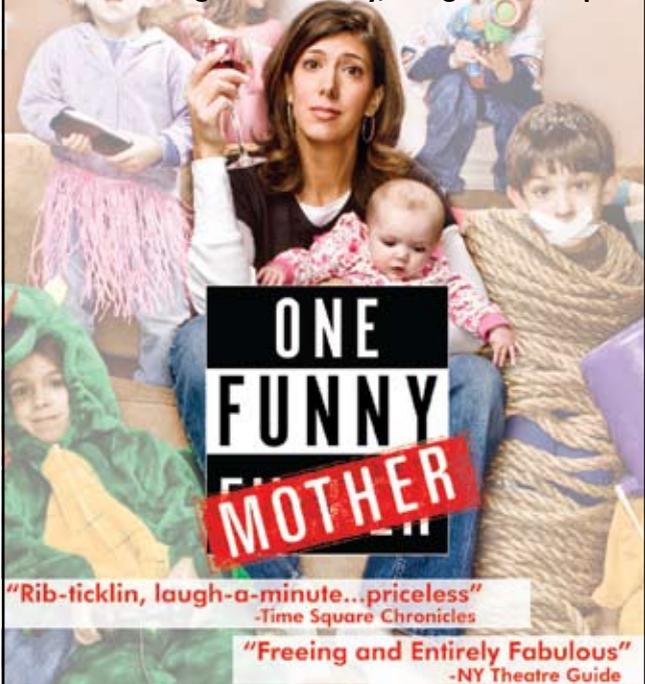
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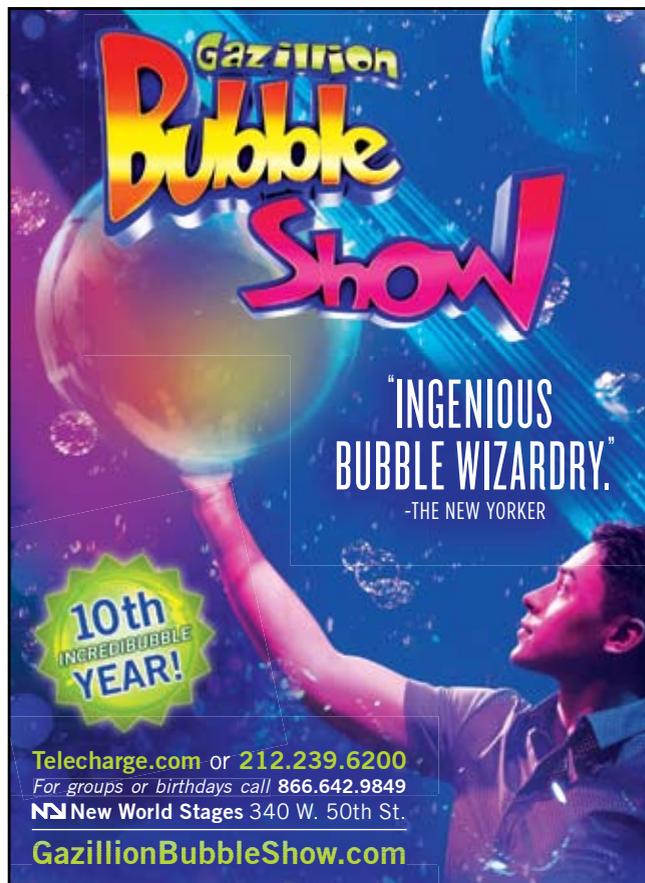
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# Hooked on the screen

## Is there life without electronics? Part one of a series

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

I recently had a discussion with my husband about “the good ole days.” So many kids today have their heads buried in something with a screen. We used to immerse ourselves in creative play. I remember creating haunted houses and charging neighborhood kids 10 cents to enter. Sometimes we’d build tree forts with twigs and rope — not the sturdiest things in the world, but a lesson in the fine art of construction just as well. We’d decorate the road with chalk art and hold major league jump rope contests.

For kids today, free time often presents a different scenario. Instead of taking advantage of the warm weather or creating an indoor carnival, many kids obsessively engage their cellphone, iPad, laptop, game

console, or watch marathon re-runs of “SpongeBob SquarePants.”

Parents should encourage their kids to ditch the electronics on a regular basis and enjoy life the old-fashioned way. This may be easier said than done, due to the fact that life in general this millennium is a technological one; but it is doable — not to mention healthier — for your children no matter what their age. Here’s how:

### Encouraging non-tech activities

Dr. Lisa Strohman, a clinical psychologist, co-author of “Unplug: Raising Kids in a Technology Addicted World” and founder of Technology Wellness Center ([www.technologywellnesscenter.com](http://www.technologywellnesscenter.com)) reminds us that parents have to practice what they preach by monitoring their own

tech use. Strohman shares that her family practices “tech-free Tuesdays,” and she uses positive reinforcement for alternative activities.

“I reward them when I witness them doing other things, such as going out on their bikes.”

Strohman points out that it’s critical that kids get used to stepping away from technology early on and that they also learn the importance of finding alternative pastimes.

Sue Scheff, a nationally recognized parenting advocate, author, and founder and president of Parents’ Universal Resource Experts Inc., agrees that parents need to be cognizant of their own behavior in order to be positive role models for their kids.

“Mom and Dad, it’s about leading by example. If your kids watch you check your devices at mealtime or rudely in front of guests, that’s a green light for them to mimic this behavior,” she states.

Scheff also advises parents to encourage activities that provide for intellectual and social growth, such as summer internships and community service.

“Offer suggestions such as volunteering at a nursing home or animal shelter. Exercising is another great activity to get disconnected.” She advocates going on regular power walks with your children. “It’s about unplugging.”

Technology isn’t all bad. When it is used in conjunction with other creative activities, it can definitely be positive, but parents need to make an effort to join in on the fun.

“We’ll read a book, then watch the movie up until the section we’ve reached

### Positive tech time that includes physical and social activity

We are surrounded by technology, and it’s not going away. Families need to strike a balance. Here are some positive ways to incorporate technology into family life:

- Find a new recipe online and watch videos together for how to prepare it. (For example, [foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com) has kid-friendly videos.)
- Plan your vacation using the internet: study various destinations with your kids.
- Exercise with your kids using video games such as Wii Dance, etc.
- Keep track of friends in other coun-

tries — their cultures, language and lifestyles — via social media.

- Play electronic games and watch movies that have an educational focus. (See Common Sense Media for ratings and reviews of products.)
- Use technology to create gifts for special people in your lives (photo calendars, digital art, etc.).
- Build a family tree and find out more about your family history (i.e. [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)).
- Use texting for convenience and safety as opposed to a substitution for in-person connection.



in the book. Then we discuss how the book is different from the movie,” Strohmman offers. She also encourages parents to suggest do-it-yourself activities that inspire team work, such as writing short plays and then filming it together.

### **Obsession and red flags**

Common Sense Media reports, “More research needs to be done to help us understand when, how, and why people use the internet and other devices in harmful ways. The American Psychiatric Association has identified only one internet-related condition, internet gaming disorder. Sometimes, what looks like addiction is simply problematic behavior. A balanced approach to using media can correct problematic behavior.”

Common Sense Media suggests that parents pay attention to how children act during and after watching TV, playing video games, or hanging out online.

“If they’re using high-quality, age-appropriate media, their behavior is positive, and their screen-time activities are bal-

anced with plenty of healthy, screen-free ones, there’s no need to worry.”

### **Unique issues with special-needs children**

According to Autism Speaks (a worldwide autism and advocacy organization), “Parents and autism therapists have long noticed that many children and teens with autism become deeply engaged with video games and other forms of screen-based media.”

Special-needs kids might also react more outrageously (i.e. tantrums) if technology is taken away. However, the organization reports that video games can be useful for teaching social skills and other behaviors. Therefore, finding a balance is pertinent.

Parents should work together with their child’s therapist and other professionals to assess whether or not their child’s electronics use is stymieing his social skills development.

Strohman suggests that parents have consistent communication with their

child’s classroom teachers.

“Teachers can easily assess your child’s social skills in relation to their peers,” she says.

### **General signs of addiction for all children**

- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Lying about or hiding use
- Loss of interest in social interactions
- Inability to self-monitor time spent on cellphone, video game, etc.
- Keeping devices accessible at all times

•••

In next month’s issue, part two of “Is There Life Without Electronics?” will focus on setting guidelines, monitoring usage, and parental controls.

*Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer. Her work has appeared in national and regional publications across the U.S. as well as internationally ([www.mymahaskell.com](http://www.mymahaskell.com)). She is also cofounder and managing editor of Sanctuary ([www.sanctuary-magazine.com](http://www.sanctuary-magazine.com)).*

# Apply pressure

## Helping stressed-out teens find a cure for ‘college application blues’

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**I**t's senior year and emotions are running high. Extreme stress and excitement intermingle with raging hormones, 24-seven texting, and endless social media posts.

Before you know it, you and your high schooler will find yourselves smack in the middle of the mind-boggling process of college applications: considering schools, going on tours, filling out endless applications, and drafting well-written essays.

Most high schoolers who grapple with the challenging, multi-faceted, and time-sensitive college application ordeal find it extremely stressful and overwhelming. Staying up late can backfire during the school day, and re-writing essays is really hard when they're trying to make an impression and stand out from the crowd — on top of making time for all of their high school homework and after-school commitments.

And, as a caring parent, you may feel compelled to push, prod, nag, encourage, and make suggestions. But then you get stressed out as well.

In the end, the hard work will pay off. But in the meantime, how can teens and parents keep their health and sanity in check?

There are ways to alleviate all of that stress, according to Dr. Yamalis Diaz, clinical associate professor of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at NYU Langone's Child Study Center. She offers valuable tips on how you and your family can help your teen beat the college application blues.

**Tammy Scileppi:** So, how can parents help?

**Dr. Yamalis Diaz:** First, let me say that one way parents and teachers often attempt to provide “support” may actually be counterproductive to the teen's ability to develop effective coping mechanisms — they provide excessive reassurance. (“It'll be fine ... you'll do great ... don't worry about it... you'll figure it out,” etc.) This is a natural thing to do when a teen tells you they are stressed or worried about something.

The problem is that this does not allow

the teen to explore, process, and problem-solve the source of their stress, and instead, [it] works to brush it aside or minimize it before effectively coping or problem-solving. If you do this enough times throughout their lives, the learned coping mechanism is to avoid thinking too much about it and just set it aside. That's not coping — it's avoiding. There needs to be a healthy balance.

Thinking too much and actually worrying or ruminating is unhealthy ... not giving it any thought and failing to problem-solve or learn to cope with stressors is also unhealthy. Parents and teachers can best help by finding ways to allow the teen to effectively think about and process their sources of stress and avoid providing excessive reassurance.

**TS:** What are other ways parents and teachers can help alleviate college application-related fear and anxiety?

**YD:** Being careful about the “messaging” related to college and avoiding a message that feels too intense. For example, saying things like, “You HAVE to get into a good college. If you don't get into the best college, X will happen, etc.” can really set the stage for the pressure to build. Instead, discuss college expectations in realistic and hopeful terms:

- Validate their feelings of stress and be open to discussing their stressors.

- Help them identify effective coping strategies that work for them — exercise, time with friends, engaging in hobbies, etc.

- Help them develop a system for getting organized and manage multiple demands effectively.

- Provide assistance to help get things done, without doing it for them.

**TS:** Discuss your own experience working with high schoolers in your practice.

**YD:** One of the biggest issues we see is teens experiencing significant stress and anxiety that leads to avoidance. Unfortunately, it is a natural tendency to avoid things that make us feel anxious. Setting it aside or distracting yourself for a bit is not a bad thing, but avoidance means you're simply not doing anything to address the stressor, which creates a circular process of

increasing stress without resolution (worrying vs. avoiding, doing nothing vs. more to do, time running out, stress increasing and intensified worrying, and so on).

Unfortunately, when they finally get to it, they either don't do nearly as good a job as they could have done, or they decide not to do it at all (e.g., taking some of the colleges they wanted to apply to off their list, because they're short on time).

**TS:** What are some steps students can take to get through this difficult process?

**YD:** Get organized! This is the perhaps the single best way to both manage the process and prepare for the transition to college. One of the reasons many students have such a hard time transitioning is that once they start college, they are suddenly left to their own devices to manage their time and tasks independently. Thus, they are suddenly managing almost every aspect of their daily lives for the first time, with significant consequences hanging in the balance if they fail to manage it effectively. Instead, they should:

- Start developing a realistic timeline to help you manage the multiple aspects of the applications with plenty of time to get them done.

- Don't procrastinate. Learn to tackle things that make you anxious first vs. last. Everything after the hardest thing feels easy, and once you have momentum, it'll be easier to get things done.

- Talk to parents, teachers, and other college students to get advice on how to manage the process.

- Learn to recognize signs of chronic stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns and get help. Many people don't realize how susceptible college students are to mental health problems. In fact, this is the period of development with the highest level of mental health problems, most notably anxiety, depression, and substance use disorders. It's important for parents and teens to know and understand important signs in order to get help before the concerns spiral.

**TS:** Why can academic achievement lead to under-achievement?

**YD:** Unfortunately, teens who have been “over achievers” (or simply highly focused on achievement) can sometimes develop perfectionist tendencies or really unreasonable expectations for achievement. When I talk with parents about this issue, I highlight the difference between having a conscientious work ethic vs. being a



perfectionist. There is a big difference between the two, with very significant implications.

Perfectionist standards are hard to meet. (After all, there's no such thing as perfect all the time.) And they require levels of effort that just can't be sustained as work and demands get harder. As a result, it may lead them to burn out and buckle under the pressure and begin avoiding or disengaging from things, because they feel too stressful. Thus, teens may begin to underachieve instead. This is one of the ways that otherwise smart and talented young students may end up failing courses or even dropping out in their early college years.

**TS:** What about teens with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder?

**YD:** For teens with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, the process is slightly different. What first gets overwhelmed for them are their executive functions (organization, time management, planning, decision-making, problem-solving, etc.) as these are deficits related to the disorder in the first place. Once they lose their footing, or fail to establish it at all, the cycle of anxiety may begin and proceed similarly to what I just described.

What is particularly difficult for teens with ADHD is the unfortunate combination of anxiety/perfectionism plus the disorder. This is a tough combination in the brain because anxiety can make you too focused on

relatively small details (e.g., each sentence of a big paper being exactly right) while ADHD makes it hard to focus and complete tasks. Using this example, can you imagine how long it would take to write a good paper when you're striving to make it "perfect" but having a hard time concentrating? Either way, very little to nothing gets done. And this is just one paper for one class among the many other things they need to manage. And, again, that cycle of avoidance may ensue, leading to underachievement and mounting pressure.

In addition, they should be sure to visit their college's disability support services center as soon as possible to get appropriate academic accommodations (e.g., extra time to complete assignments) and other support services such as study skills workshops. Parents can help with this by helping to identify the appropriate center and help the teen schedule an appointment in advance.

**TS:** After the application process is completed, what are some tips for high schoolers and parents, as they head off to college?

**YD:** The number one tip is to develop a system for getting organized early on. Habits are hard to develop if you don't already have them, so find small organization strategies that work for you and practice them.

Another, often less discussed issue, is the changing relationship between parents and their college-aged kids. While teaching the class I co-developed at NYU, aptly named "twentysomething," I have discussed this topic with many college students and have heard that students sometimes feel that their parents can be a significant source of stress for them.

There are many reasons for this, ranging from the parent's own anxiety about what their kids are doing at college to understandable conflicts about real issues (e.g., misuse of money, failing grades). It can also be because there is a bit of a gray area as teens progress into what is now called emerging adulthood (not quite adults, but no longer adolescents). This means they may pull for independence in some ways, but rely heavily on their parents in other ways and, as a result, both sides may have trouble knowing how best to navigate the changing relationship, which can lead to conflicts and stress.

I recommend having calm and open discussions about expectations and realistic ways for teens to meet those expectations, including how often to "call your mom!" (a source of disappointment for many a college student parent).

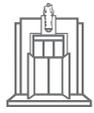
**TS:** In your opinion, does pre-college stress and its impact on teens carry more weight today than it did say, 20 or 30 years ago?

**YD:** Absolutely! We have the highest rate of college attendance in history, which means we have a highly educated millennial generation. In the context of current economic conditions, this means we have a highly educated generation but not enough jobs.

This sets the stage for a very competitive environment, both in college and in the workplace, and that sense of extreme competition is trickling down to teens (and kids). As a result of this dynamic, there are both subtle and very overt messages at school, at home, in the media, etc. that you have to get into a good college and then compete for a good job.

This is a simple summary of how the pressure to go to college has ratcheted up significantly, and the pressure is beginning to mount among younger and younger children. Just ask some of the kids who have gone through the middle school application process, and you'll quickly get a sense of the intensity of that stress and pressure.

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



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*Continued on page 20*

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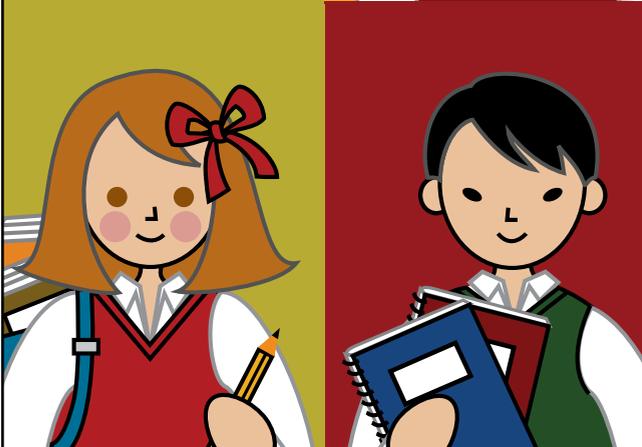
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# Private/Independent School Guide



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## High School Choices

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*Continued from page 18*  
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# Fall's freshest flavors

**F**all is officially here. It is time to embrace the chill in the air with earthy fall veggies; long, home-cooked stews; and juicy, crisp fall fruits. Running around to different fall activities can overwhelm us. A few days of cooking can yield a full week's worth of soul-satisfying meals to share as a family.

## Go for pears while they are sweet!

Pears tend to be hard and flavorless for much of the year. Fresh, ripe pears in October are a whole other story. When I have more pears than my family and I could possibly eat out of hand, I poach them.

Make a poaching liquid using white or red wine, water, sugar, honey, agave or maple syrup, and warm spices such as cinnamon stick, star anise, cloves, vanilla bean, and nutmeg. (If you don't want to use wine, just leave it out.)

Boil the poaching liquid until the sugar dissolves and the alcohol in the wine (if using) cooks off, about 15 minutes on a low simmer.

Peel the pears and cut in half. With a teaspoon, scoop out the seeds on the inside. Place the pears into the poaching liquid and allow to cook very gently until pears are tender but not mushy or falling apart. Take the pears off the heat and let them cool in the poaching liquid.

You can use the poached pears to top a fancy tart or just eat as is. Either way, they make an elegant dessert. Strain the poaching liquid and save for other uses, such as mixing with prosecco for a fall-themed brunch cocktail.

## Squash and pumpkins everywhere!

Try some creative uses for squash. Cut squash in the shape of french fries and cook on high in the oven with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Serve these "butternut squash fries" on your next burger night. Or steam, peel, and puree any orange squash and use this as a substitute for canned pumpkin. Your recipe will taste super fresh!

## Slow cook it

Take some time to do a slow-cooked braise when you have the chance.

Cold days mean more time inside. Make your home smell great with a batch of pork carnitas, soy and mirin-braised beef, or

vegetarian bean chili. Put the braise on in the morning and enjoy as a late lunch or dinner. Enjoy leftovers all week, worked into different dinners and lunches.

## Pizza time

Utilize leftover cooked squash, braised meats, local cheeses and charcuterie, and fresh herbs for a pita bread pizza-bar.

Make little bowls of all of your family's favorite pizza toppings, and let everyone build their own pizza by topping whole-wheat pita bread with whatever they like. Bake on a sheet tray and dinner is ready in minutes! Serve with a crisp green salad and some cut-up, freshly picked apples to round it out.

## Pick up some pomegranates

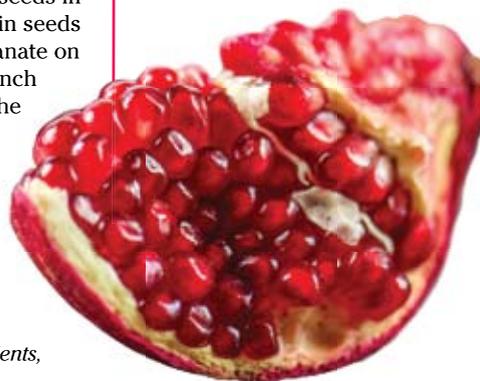
These delicious fruits are finally coming back into season. Extract the seeds and eat them just like that! Or use the seeds in a green salad with toasted pumpkin seeds and feta cheese. Sprinkle pomegranate on guacamole for a sweet, juicy punch at your next get together. (See the guacamole with pomegranate recipe.)

*Joanna DeVita is executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School. DeVita is the mother of two children and loves nothing more than spending time with them outdoors and sharing with them her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking.*



## TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA



## Guacamole with pomegranate

### INGREDIENTS:

4 ripe avocados  
 ½ serrano chile pepper, seeds removed  
 1 small plum tomato, diced  
 ¼ red onion, diced small  
 Juice of one lime  
 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro  
 3 tablespoons pomegranate seeds  
 Salt and pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:** Split avocados in half and remove the pit. Scoop out the avocados and place into a bowl.

Using a potato masher, mash the avocado with salt and pepper, lime juice, and cilan-

tro in a mixing bowl.

Fold in the diced tomatoes, chiles, onions, and pomegranate seeds, reserving a sprinkle of pomegranate for garnish.

Continue to fold together the ingredients, tasting for seasoning. Add more salt and lime juice as desired.

Transfer to a bowl for serving, and garnish with remaining pomegranate seeds. Enjoy with chips, fresh tortillas, or cut-up carrots and bell peppers.



# Separation anxiety

## Getting your teen ready for adulthood starts in high school

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

**D**on't hold onto your teens too tightly, parents. The high-school years are meant to be a preparation to launch them from home out into the world. Bear in mind that entire books have been written to help adults recover from the behavior of their misguided parents, who unconsciously clipped their wings because they couldn't cope with the uncomfortable feelings that come with letting go. Your goal is to stay alert as you bravely prepare for a separation that is inevitable.

If you feel weepy and clingy about the physical distance that will arise between you and your future young adult, you will set her up for feelings of guilt and obligation that won't serve her as she forges her own path in the world.

Teens need incremental independence and appreciate your assistance getting used to the consequences of their choices. If you coddle your teen, do all her thinking for her, intercede in the face of every life challenge, swiftly grant every whim, and then abruptly withdraw your assistance after college, your child is bound to struggle.

Don't set your child up for a big fall, especially if you have a well-behaved or reticent teen, skilled at avoiding parent disappointment. A rebellious or strong-minded teen will be less concerned about hurting her parents' feelings and can make choices that please herself more easily. But teens of any disposition need support and encouragement to make a smooth

transition from the safe haven of home into self-reliance. Besides, there are ways to keep teens close to your heart while gently encouraging the independence that will help them grow the wings they will need to soar out into a world full of happy life choices.

### **Illuminate paths to earning**

Most teens like money. Money means, among other things, freedom to a teenager. Modern money skills include exploring the possible ways to earn as well as the savvy ways to save, spend, and invest. If you find you spend a lot of time discussing managing money, maybe it's time to educate yourself on current paths to earning. Try to keep your fearful assumptions about possible career paths in check.

If your teen is an artist, explore the plethora of online earning opportunities that exist today. If your teen enjoys physical movement, research the jobs that allow her to be on her feet rather than sitting behind a desk. And try not to obsess about future job security. Get a career counselor involved to help your teen explore jobs that maximize her natural talents and curiosities.

### **Create a "Say Anything" space**

Don't shy away from serious topics with your teen. Drugs, alcohol, date rape, sexual assault, gender identity, sexual preference, and birth control are just a few topics that need to be faced squarely and

### **Ten movies to discuss with your teen**

- "Parenthood"
- "Say Anything"
- "Anywhere But Here"
- "Father Of The Bride"
- "Terms Of Endearment"
- "Juno"
- "The Family Stone"
- "Dead Poets Society"
- "Pitch Perfect"
- "28 Days"

discussed openly with your teen before she leaves home. One way to broach these topics might be to watch and discuss topical films together that you wouldn't necessarily share with younger children. (See the "Ten movies to discuss with your teen" sidebar.)

The key here is to establish an open door of communication through which no topics are off-limits. If this makes you squeamish, it's time to deal with uncomfortable topics whether you like them or not. Enlist your spouse's ear to get your concerns off your chest first, and share the responsibility of holding challenging discussions. Everyone in the family will likely become more accepting, mature, and open-minded thanks to your willingness to open up.

### **Discuss relationship wisdom**

Intimacy with another person requires a strong sense of individuality. Encourage your teen to see all relationships as learning opportunities. Use high-school social situations as opportunities to discuss what she needs and wants in various types of relationships, to consider what at-



tracts and repels her, and to explore which groups feel the most comfortable. Peer pressure is strong in high school, so if you don't ask these questions, your teen's self-awareness may not increase.

Conversations about the role of relationships encourage self-knowledge, which can lead to happier connections in the long run. When it comes to creating lasting relationships with others, self-awareness is paramount. Therefore, don't place too much emphasis on finding "the one" or being part of the popular crowd. Your acceptance of the needs and wants of your teen will go a long way towards her future happiness.

### **Interrupt anxiety with spontaneity**

Making the leap from home into the big, wide world is a major life transition that can trigger worry. A helpful technique for any parent to learn to help break the cycle of negative thinking is anxiety interruption.

When you notice the tight shoulders or the snappy disposition, why not suggest a little walk or drive — or maybe even a spontaneous shopping trip.

This may seem like a strange parenting habit, but what you are helping your teen do is break the cycle of stress before it

starts affecting the decision-making process. Focusing constantly on the problems at hand blocks spontaneous solutions from bubbling up. So when your teen is struggling with what feels like a big decision, teach her how to move away from stress, let go of anxious thinking, and shift focus until clear thinking returns. Sometimes the easiest way to have a breakthrough is by getting into a calmer, more receptive state of mind.

### **Reconsider ultimatums**

Let your teen decide where she stands on family traditions and rituals. "As long as you are living in this house, you will go to church every Sunday along with the entire family," is one possible approach. But another way is to establish a cut-off date for family obligations.

Perhaps after the age of 16 your children could decide whether or not they will attend a family commitment like religious services or not. If your teen does not wish to join in, let her experience what it's like to abstain. Then, if she decides to come back around, you will know it's because she wants to rather than because she must. And if she does not wish to participate right now, it's your job to get used to the idea. Your teen will grow up and make her own choices in the future, anyway. If this is a hard truth for you to swallow, perhaps you need to start practicing relinquishing pressure now.

### **Emphasize ways to decompress**

Anticipate alone-time shortages, especially during the emotionally intense graduation year. Then strive to instill self-reflection, self-care, and self-expression, so these habits will be there to comfort your teen in the future. Writing, drawing, biking, and knitting all induce a state of creative flow.

As the departure date to leave home approaches, you may notice teens are more absorbed with friends and social activities than interested in spending time alone. But moments of quality down time are when people connect with inner guidance and are crucial to leading a healthy, well-rounded life. And remember, if you want your teen to discover and follow her bliss, you are going to have to set a good example.

Your hobbies will come in handy, as you both cope with the natural feelings of grief that are sure to arise as you and your teen prepare to part on happy terms.

*Author, journalist, and writing coach Christina Katz is readying herself for the inevitable day she has to say "goodbye" to her teen. But, like many parents, she can't say she's looking forward to it.*

# Painting a brighter future

In a city of cultural riches, opportunities for teens

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**I**s your teen an aspiring artist? If so, then area museums want to tap into his potential and offer a learning space for his talent to flourish. Students can drop in and sketch in the galleries of many of the city's highly regarded art institutions. Many offer art courses with the guidance of a highly trained instructor, who is usually a practicing artist. This is a great way to expand a young artist's practice, approach, and technique. Several large institutions have robust offerings for teens, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum. Each institution offers scheduled and drop-in classes as well as special perks for teens only.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art offers young people a chance to find inspiration and make friends in its teen programs. From gallery talks to art-making workshops, students are exposed to centuries of art history. Teens can also receive unlimited free admission by obtaining a "Teen Pass" (valid with a middle or high-school identification card).

The Museum of Modern Art offers free studio art classes to high-school students, and during the course, they create contemporary art and create their own exhibit. They will learn technique and put it into practice when creating their own pieces. Teens also have the opportunity to view and discuss artwork with peers while being guided by a museum professional. The course meets multiple times a week.

## For young artists

Here's a list of area museums that offer programming for teens:

**Brooklyn Museum** (200 Eastern Pkwy. in Crown Heights, [www.brooklynmuseum.org/education/teens](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/education/teens))

**Bronx Museum** (1040 Grand Concourse in Grand Concourse, [www.bronx-museum.org/education/teen-programs](http://www.bronx-museum.org/education/teen-programs))

**Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum** (2 E. 91st St. on the Upper East Side, [www.cooperhewitt.org/education/teen-programs](http://www.cooperhewitt.org/education/teen-programs))

**Jewish Museum** (1109 Fifth Ave. on the Upper East Side, <http://thejewish-museum.org/programs/teens>)

**Metropolitan Museum** (1000 Fifth Ave. on the Upper East Side, <http://met-museum.com/events/programs/teens>)

**Museum of Modern Art** (11 W. 53rd St. in Midtown, [www.moma.org/learn/teens](http://www.moma.org/learn/teens))

**New York Historical Society** (170 Central Park West on the Upper West Side, [www.nyhistory.org/education/teen-programs](http://www.nyhistory.org/education/teen-programs))

**Queens Museum** (New York City Building, Meridan Road in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, [www.queens-museum.org/queens-teens](http://www.queens-museum.org/queens-teens))

**Staten Island Museum** (1000 Richmond Terrace – Snug Harbor Campus, Building H in Randall Manor, [www.statenislandmuseum.org/about/volunteer](http://www.statenislandmuseum.org/about/volunteer))

**Whitney Museum** (99 Gansevoort St. in the Meatpacking District, <http://whitney.org/Education/Teens>)

The Whitney Museum's teen programming, "Youth Insights" (open to high schoolers), aims to have students, museum staff, and artists work collaboratively. There are a range of offerings and an opportunity for teens to expand their circle of friends and their perspective on art. Students that participate in the program are later eligible to apply for internships to work aside museum professionals, teaching others about the works exhibited. The internship requires a commitment of at least three hours per week. Other opportunities include serving on planning committees to host more teen events and also writing for the teen blog, known as the "Whit Blog." If

your teen is not ready to commit to a full semester, there are also free drop-in art-making sessions on Friday afternoons, from 4 to 6 pm. Teens can create works or bring in their works-in-progress. Each offering provides materials for the students to use.

It is also the perfect way to build a portfolio for middle schoolers that are considering a specialized arts high school or high schoolers looking to enter an arts program in college. Looking ahead to the college application process and exploring careers, teens that participate in courses can also utilize this time to explore careers in the arts by interacting with museum staff and teach-



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The programming is the perfect way to build a portfolio for high schoolers looking to enter an arts program in college.

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ing artists. Select programs offer teens the opportunity to develop professional skills through docent programs and internships. So, aside from providing a fun and safe space, participation in these programs could lead to resume-building experience. This is huge for college applications.

A number of museums throughout the five boroughs offer classes, workshops, and events specifically for teens. These offerings are typically grant-funded and free for the students with perks like snacks, activities, and even a MetroCard. Many classes are drop-ins (typically on Saturdays), but there are other classes with a set schedule in the after-school



(Above and right) The Jewish Museum offers art programs for teens.

hours that require an application and can be a competitive admission process. By participating in a series of classes or workshops, the teens develop their art-making skills. These programs are not just offered by the large institutions, so aspiring artists (and their parents)

should take a look at the offerings of each museum.

*Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: [www.shniekajohnson.com](http://www.shniekajohnson.com).*

# Calendar

OCTOBER



## Jaw-dropping acrobatics from China

Experience the thrill of the Shanghai Acrobats of the People's Republic of China on Oct. 23 at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts.

Thrilling feats; dazzling costumes; and jaw-dropping, impeccably timed stunts will delight all ages. The troupe, direct from Shanghai, makes its debut in the Bronx.

Shanghai Acrobats of the People's Republic of China, Oct. 23, at 4 pm. Tickets range from \$25 to \$45, children's seats are \$10.

*Lehman Center for the Performing Arts [250 Bedford Park Boulevard West between Goulden and Paul avenues in Fordham Manor; (718) 960-8833; [www.LehmanCenter.org](http://www.LehmanCenter.org)].*

## Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. [NYParenting.com](http://NYParenting.com)

# 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](mailto: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!

### SAT, OCT. 1

#### IN THE BRONX

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

Join us for this classic Family Art Project. Outfit yourself with wings, antennae, a pollen cup, and a kazoo to hum with. Buzz around in a hive of six-sided cells and forage in the flowers. Join in a bee parade and do a bee dance in a cardboard hive. Parade starts at 12:30 pm, weather permitting.

#### FURTHER AFIELD

**Story Hour:** Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art, 898 St. Nicholas Ave., Manhattan; (212) 335-0004; [www.sugarhillmuseum.org](http://www.sugarhillmuseum.org); Noon to 5 pm; Free.

A fun-filled family day will include art-making and face painting; storytelling through dance, music, theater and the oral tradition; food trucks, and more. To complement our programming, we will be inaugurating two new art exhibitions.

**Fantastic Beasts:** The Met Cloisters, 99 Margaret Corbin Drive, Manhattan; (212) 923-3700; [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org); 1 to 2 pm; Free with general admission.

Dragons, unicorns, centaurs, and harpies are just a few of the fantastic beasts lurking in the galleries of The Met Cloisters. Come find these creatures and learn what people in the Middle Ages thought about them.

### SUN, OCT. 2

#### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art project:** 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Oct. 1.

### FRI, OCT. 7

#### IN THE BRONX

**First Friday - Music & Trolley:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); 5:30 pm; \$12 (\$10 seniors & students; members free).



Photo by Julie Larsen Maher

## Halloween at the zoo

Boo at the Zoo is back, and just in time to put the chill into the thrill of visiting the Bronx Zoo! This wickedly fun event occurs every weekend, Oct. 1 through 30, with extended days for Rosh Hashanah and Columbus Day.

Children ages 1 and up can enjoy a haunted hayride, dance to the music of Gigi and Lend Me a Hand Band, hear weird and scary stories, watch deliciously "gourd-geous" pumpkin-carving demonstrations, and more.

Old favorites are back — including the World of Darkness, which will be transformed once again into an amazing illumination filled with thousands of hand-carved and lit jack-o'-lanterns; the costume parade, where giant grasshoppers on stilts will march; and magic shows with internationally acclaimed magician David Levitan. At Keeper Chats & Enrichment, guests will see the bears wake up and enjoy their morning treats.

Enjoy the music, the museum, and stroll the garden. Folk singer Scott Test is supplying the tunes. Light refreshments will be available. The trolley makes an hourly loop starting at 5:25 pm from the 6 train Pelham Bay Park subway station to Bartow-Pell Mansion to City Island. Registration requested.

There will also be five treat stations throughout the park where visitors can enjoy safe trick-or-treating — treats include Welsh's Fruit Snacks, Gummy Bears, Pirate's Booty, Sour Jacks, and more.

There's so much to do that you'll have to visit each weekend just to get it all in!

Boo at the Zoo festivities begin the weekend of Oct. 1 for Rosh Hashanah, (Oct. 1-4) continuing onto Columbus Day (Oct. 8-10), and every weekend through Oct. 30, from 10 am to 5 pm. All events are included with the purchase of a Total Experience Ticket — \$33.95 for adults, \$23.95 for children 3 to 12 years old, and \$28.95 for seniors 65 and older, and free for children under 2 years old.

*Bronx Zoo [2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road in Belmont, (718) 220-5103, [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com)].*

[www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org); 1 pm to 2 pm; Free with general admission.

Join us as we discover the stories and legends behind the clever and courageous knights, ladies, and other medieval heroes, and hear about their adventures.

### SAT, OCT. 8

#### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art project:** Wave Hill, W. 249th

#### FURTHER AFIELD

**Heroes:** The Met Cloisters, 99 Margaret Corbin Drive, Manhattan; (212) 923-3700;

# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 10 am to 1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Make your own raptor puppet resembling the migrating hawks circling and gliding above the Hudson River. Then join visiting artist Andrea Lomantoon in a group puppet project creating a giant raptor, complete with our feathery friend's unique and powerful features. With winds in our favor, we'll form a procession of raptor puppets in flight, leading up to an outdoor, group soar!

**It's My Park Day:** St. Mary's Park, 146th Street and St. Ann's Avenue; [www.nycgov-parks.org](http://www.nycgov-parks.org); 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Outdoor community event of family-friendly fitness, arts, and volunteering.

**Fall Harvest Festival:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); Noon to 4 pm; \$5 (children under 3 free).

Come to this indoor and outdoor festival of fall delights for all ages. There will be music, crafts, games, a giant hay-bale tower, and seasonal treats including fresh cider from our outdoor press. Meet some birds of prey, help harvest our season's final bounty from our organic vegetable garden, ride in a horse-drawn wagon and pick your own pumpkin! (Rain date is Oct. 9).

## SUN, OCT. 9

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art project:** 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Oct. 8.

**Nature walk:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Join naturalist and educator Gabriel Willow on a family-friendly walk through the gardens or woodlands. No registration required. Ages 6 and older welcome with an adult. Severe weather cancels.

**Clothing and toy swap:** Riverdale Y, 5625 Arlington Ave.; (917) 792-0984; [www.momshood.com/events](http://www.momshood.com/events); 3 pm to 5 pm; \$25 per family.

Participants bring new or gently used maternity wear, kid's clothing (sizes 0-5), books and toys that their children have outgrown or no longer use, and in return they take home items that they currently need. Bring at least eight items to take part in the swap, all remaining items are donated to charity. The event is family-orientated with kid's activities and music.

## MON, OCT. 10

### IN THE BRONX

**Falconry presentation:** Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; [www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org); 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Hunters in flight provides an opportunity to

watch a demonstration with master falconer Brian Bradley.

## SAT, OCT. 15

### IN THE BRONX

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

Visiting artist Ariel Jackson, whose work is on view in the Sunroom Project Space in Glyndor Gallery and whose family lost most of their farmland in rural Louisiana during the 1970s and 1980s, explores the history of farmland in America.

**Discover the Mansion:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); Noon to 4 pm; Free.

Come and discover all it has to offer — including mansion and carriage house tours by costumed docents, garden walks, wigwam explorations, trail hikes, and children's crafts.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**The Middle Ages:** The Met Cloisters, 99 Margaret Corbin Drive, Manhattan; (212) 923-3700; [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org); 1 pm to 2 pm; Free with general admission.

From the roar of lions to the twitter of birds and the patter of unicorn hooves in the forest, The Met Cloisters is full of the sounds of the medieval world. Explore the sounds that you can see in paintings, stones, and tapestries and learn about the music of the Middle Ages.

## SUN, OCT. 16

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art project:** 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Oct. 15.

## SAT, OCT. 22

### IN THE BRONX

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

Make a wand of ribbons to twirl through the autumn air and then be captivated by Rama Mandel's enchanting fairy stories. Venture into the woodlands to create your own tiny, fairy-sized dwelling using found sticks, leaves and bark — and behold the magic! As a special treat, musicians from the Bloomingdale School of Music also perform.

## SUN, OCT. 23

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art project:** 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Oct. 22.

**"Shanghai Acrobats of the People's Republic of China":** Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Bou-

levard West; (718) 960-8833; [www.Lehman-Center.org](http://www.Lehman-Center.org); 4 pm; \$45 orchestra, \$40 mezzanine and center and side balconies, \$25 rear balcony; \$10 children under 12 for any seat.

Experience the thrilling feats of this talented troupe, featuring jaw-dropping feats of acrobatics, impeccably timed stunts, and beautiful costumes.

## SAT, OCT. 29

### IN THE BRONX

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

It's not easy to spot a bat flying at night. If we shine a light, will we see its shadow? Make miniature, paper shadow puppets of these important pollinators, with bat wings, ears, masks, and fur. Learn about this shy, flying mammal, and join the bat roost in a shadow-puppet cave theater.

**Gravestones and Goth:** Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; [www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org](http://www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org); 6 pm to 8 pm; \$15 (\$10 seniors and students).

Take a candlelit stroll to the Pell gravesite and learn the true story of Goodwife Pell's involvement in a 1650s witchcraft trial. Continue the exploration of the supernatural throughout history with staged readings of 19th-century horror literature in the mansion parlors. Space is limited. For older teens.

## SUN, OCT. 30

### IN THE BRONX

**Family Art project:** 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Oct. 29.

**Howl-O-Ween:** Van Cortlandt Park, 252nd Street and Broadway; (718) 796-4541; <https://drafthouse.com/nyc>; Noon to 2 pm; \$10 per dog.

Come to the Howl-O-Ween dog costume contest! Dress up your dog to compete in this paw-tastic Halloween event. Pre-registration is required.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN THE BRONX

**Bird walks:** Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; [www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers](http://www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers); Saturdays, 8 am to 9:30 am, Now - Sat, Nov. 26; Free.

The walks focus on wildlife happenings in the park and identifying more than 230 different feathered species throughout the grounds. Wear comfortable and appropriate clothing. Recommended for older children.

**Boo at the Bronx Zoo:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com); Saturday, Oct. 1 - Tuesday, Oct. 4, 10 am;



## A ghostly Japanese dance

Get a wicked Halloween fright with “Butoh Beethoven – Eclipse,” running Oct. 26–31 at the Producer’s Club, Royal Theater.

Artist Vangelina performs the Japanese dance art *butoh* (“dance of darkness”) in which dancers first appear as humans — then as ghosts. In this solo piece, she’ll conjure the spirits of butoh founder Tatsumi Hijikata and composer Ludwig van Beethoven.

The award-winning show features cutting-edge lighting technology such as a fiber-optic costume by the French

company Lumigram.

Celebrate Halloween week with the haunting art form and come dressed in your own costume to any show.

Beware, this performance could be a bit too much for younger children. Suggested minimum age is 14.

“Butoh Beethoven – Eclipse,” Oct. 26–31 at 8 pm. Tickets are \$20 for general admission and \$18 for students and seniors.

*The Producer’s Club, Royal Theater (358 W. 44th St. in Midtown, [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2582224](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2582224)).*

Saturday, Oct. 8–Monday, Oct. 10, 10 am;  
Saturday, Oct. 15–Sunday, Oct. 16, 10 am;  
Saturday, Oct. 22–Sunday, Oct. 23, 10 am;  
Saturday, Oct. 29–Sunday, Oct. 30, 10 am;  
All events are included with the purchase of a Total Experience Ticket (\$33.95 for adults, \$23.95 for children 3 to 12 years old, and \$28.95 for seniors 65 and older, and free for children under 2 years old).

The zoo is hosting five weekends in October celebrating nature with loads of kid-friendly activities including pumpkin carving, a costume parade, live music, and Hay Maze.

**Scarecrows – From Heartland to Horror:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817–8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; \$25

(\$10 children).

Sculptor and artist Ray Villafane returns to New York Botanical Garden to create an original installation that explores the evolution of the scarecrow in the United States, from its everyday role in agriculture to its status as a cultural icon in films and comic books. This art display, presented by the Tri State Cadillac Dealers, features larger-than-life sculptures crafted from natural materials and set amidst the Garden’s landscape.

**Pumpkins:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817–8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; \$25 (\$10 children).

Celebrate the season by putting on a festive fall puppet show and having a spooky

tea party in the Victorian playhouse. Guided activities feature making a sprout-a-seed necklace and exploring flowers, fruits, and seeds. Weekends bring interactive demonstrations featuring bats, reptiles, and other creepy creatures.

**Mario Batali’s Kitchen Gardens:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817–8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 1:30 pm to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 20; Included in All Garden Pass Admission.

Garden beds are filled with plants featured in the favorite recipes of the chefs from Mario Batali’s restaurants. Kids can explore the gardens to solve Mario’s Menu Mystery.

**Dig, Plant, Grow – Corn, Beans, Squash:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817–8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Daily, 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Now – Fri, Oct. 7; \$20 (\$18 seniors; \$8 children).

Plants and imaginations grow at the Howell Family Garden, where kids are allowed — no, encouraged! — to play in the dirt. Display gardens, such as the Global Gardens, Bean Tunnel, and Salad Bowl, and daily interactive gardening activities delight and inspire.

**Le Petit Art:** Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Tuesdays, 2 pm to 3:30 pm, Saturdays, 2–3:30 pm, Now – Sat, Dec. 31; Free.

Create miniature works of art using multiple mediums like acrylic paint, water color, pastel, pencil, ink, and surfaces like wood, canvas, paper, metal, and glass.

**Paper Arts & Crafts:** Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Saturdays, 2–3:30 pm; Free.

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

**Crochet meet:** Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365–5516; Saturdays, 10:30 am to 11:30 am, Now – Sat, Dec. 31; Free.

This is a friendly group of parents interested in learning crochet to teach their child, and is intended for prents with special needs children. Materials needed: one skein light-colored #4 yarn, one pair short knitting needles #8, tapestry needle for weaving, and measuring tape.

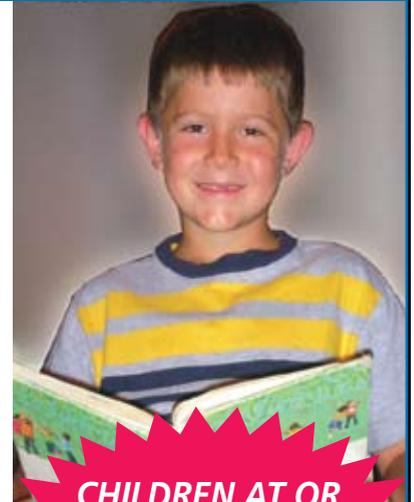
### FURTHER AFIELD

**“Hansel & Gretel’s Halloween Adventure”:** Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, W. 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988–9093; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon, and 2:30 pm, Saturdays, 1 pm, Sundays, 1 pm to 5 pm, Thurs, Oct. 13 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$7 (children under 12) \$10 for all others.

Presented by the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, this holiday show is based on the adventures of the classic fairytale duo.

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