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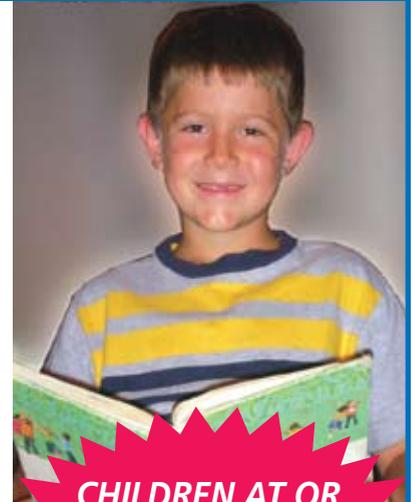
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Politics and kids

This election seems to have been going on even longer than usual, or perhaps it's the insane media coverage and the circus-like atmosphere that accompanied a good deal of it. One can only hope it hasn't affected our children with long-term negativity, because participating in the electoral process is an important part of our citizenry, and one should be engaged and proud to have the right to vote.



Unlike any past election I can recall, the tone of this went beyond decency and professionalism almost repeatedly. It seemed to grow quite ugly from the first, with vitriol usurping sensibility as the tabloids and other media practically salivated and ratings skyrocketed. We were bombarded with sexual innuendo and tasteless personal references almost from the start, and I was left wondering how families were coping with

the inappropriateness of it all and ensuring their children's attention was elsewhere.

When I was a child I went to the polls with my parents and we voted "together." They instilled in us a sense of voter privilege and politics was a hot topic around our dinner table, sometimes pleasantly, and sometimes not so pleas-

antly. As we youngsters began to think for ourselves, our opinions didn't always coincide with the parental stance around us, and great debates took place that could become quite passionate.

Taking my daughter to vote with me over these past years has been a ritual that has really paid off. She is very vested in the process and is one of many politically engaged millennials. We talk about politics and we discuss the candidates and the issues regularly, and I know she will do the same with her children one

day. This is as it should be.

But she is a grown young woman now, yet still I am embarrassed for all the personal smutty negativity she has had to hear in this election. Grown people behaving without cordiality and hurling insulting personal slurs at each other is no intelligent person's idea of true campaigning. This election has truly been a circus, not completely, but enough so to turn off a new young voter and to have to close the ears or the media outlets so that very young children didn't get exposed.

One can only hope that the the outcome of the election is respected and that we can move forward with some sense of dignity. Our country is dependent on this and so are our children. The show needs to end and governing on behalf of our electorate needs to commence.

Thanks for reading.

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Changing screen habits

Is there life without electronics? Part two of a series

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Perhaps you've encouraged a variety of social activities and have found creative outlets for quality family time, but you still find that your child is spending too much time with his face glued to a screen. You would prefer that he learns to control his own behavior, but you are finding that he is unable to do so.

It's time that you monitor his tech time, set specific guidelines and, if necessary, utilize parental controls so you can be certain he is not spending all of his free time with his smartphone, iPad, gaming device, or other tech toy.

Why monitor tech use time?

According to a 2015 national survey conducted by Common Sense Media, tweens spend approximately six hours a day with technological media and teens spend approximately nine hours per day. This included gaming, cellphone use, social media, watching TV and videos, listening to music, and computer use (including making digital art and programming), but it excluded time spent with technology doing homework.

However, many experts agree that children learn best by real-world experience and interaction, and that limiting technology use in order to maintain a balance of non-tech social experiences is extremely important for a child's social and emotional development.

"When you hear the statistics about how much kids are attached to their social media, text messaging, and all things

Parental controls: Are you lost as to where to begin?

Here are some additional resources to find out more about controlling what your child sees and participates in throughout cyber world:

- Everything You Need to Know about Parental Controls (Common Sense Media): www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-parental-controls
- The Best Parental Control Software for 2016 (PCMag.com): www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2346997,00.asp
- Activate Parental Controls Around your Home (Internetmatters.org): www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/interactive-guide
- Using Parental Controls for TV (TVguidelines.org): www.tvguidelines.org/parentalcontrols.htm

tech, it can be quite concerning," says Sue Scheff, a nationally recognized parenting advocate, author, and founder and president of Parents' Universal Resource Experts Inc.

She says it's easier with younger kids because parents are the ones arranging and monitoring play dates.

"However, with your tweens and teens it comes back to communication. If you feel they are spending too much time online,

share your concerns and give them some ideas for constructive offline activities," she says.

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) warns parents of the affect long periods of time using electronics can have on kids' brains.

"The longer kids are connected — and studies now show over six hours a day — the more it's affecting their brain development."

She reports that MRI studies show that the brain starts to atrophy with obsessive, prolonged technology use.

"Addiction to technology during the teen years will also affect students going off to college."

She reports that kids have the highest susceptibility to create change in their brains between the ages of 13 and 20. So, these are critical years for brain development.

Setting guidelines for kids and teens

As with all other aspects of parenting, it's all about setting up rules and being involved with your children, according to an October 2015 article written by Dr. Ari Brown, Dr. David Hill, and Dr. Donald Shifrin, titled "Beyond Turn it Off: How to Advise Families on Media use" (American Academy of Pediatrics).

"The same parenting rules apply to your children's real and virtual environments. Play with them. Set limits. Be in-



involved. Know their friends and where they are going with them,” they write.

Common Sense Media suggests a screen-time schedule.

“If you’re concerned about heavy media use, consider creating a schedule that works for your family. This can include weekly screen-time limits and the kinds of screens kids can use. Get your kids’ input so the plan teaches media literacy and self-regulation.”

And the early you start, the better.

“For those who have young children, start early with device boundaries and guidelines,” advises Scheff. “Set up tech limits that fit your individual family. Starting early can really help your kids with a healthy digital life.”

For parents who have already given their tweens and teens smartphones without limits, she reminds, “You’re paying the bill for their privilege.”

Scheff also suggests family meetings to go over expectations:

- Set a time to unplug (i.e. during homework time)
- Find a place where devices are stashed

during meals

- No devices during social events
- Set consequences for breaking the rules

Privacy and parental controls

It’s true that it can be extremely difficult to physically monitor your children’s tech time. Therefore, some parents opt for parental control software and devices to monitor and limit their children’s tech or online activities.

“Let your kids know their actions online are public and permanent. It’s not about ‘I think you’re making bad decisions.’ It’s about safety,” says Strohman.

She explains that more kids are now getting cellphones by age 6, and that children at this age cannot possibly understand the complicated aspects of online safety and protocol. “Children should be told as early as possible that cellphones and technology are not equal to privacy.”

Scheff says that while setting parental controls can certainly help, parents

should always stay involved.

“I do believe in parental controls; however, it should never replace parenting,” Scheff states. “My philosophy has always been: when safety trumps privacy, that’s when you have to take it to another level of possible snooping. This is when you suspect your child is in danger or at risk, and they aren’t opening up to you.”

She stresses that parents must continue their offline chats every day to check in with their child about cyber health.

“New surveys are coming out regularly about how much time kids are spending online and how it can cause depression and possible addiction, not to mention cyberbullying. Growing up is hard enough without having to deal with social media pressure, too. As a parent, you must be present on all levels.”

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.mynahaskell.com). She is also cofounder and managing editor of “Sanctuary” (www.sanctuary-magazine.com).

Uniquely ROSIE

A mother of a special-needs son pens a series of books starring a pink hippo

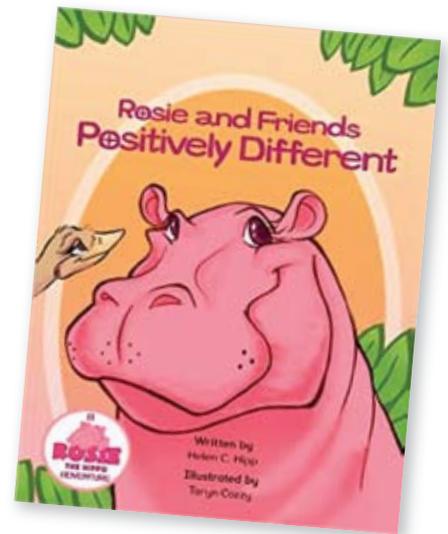
BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Mom and author Helen Hipp writes vivid books about whimsical characters that encounter real-life issues. Her own encounter with a pink hippopotamus while on safari birthed the idea of her character Rosie the Hippo, and led to a series of children's books about differences starring the rosy mammal. Hipp's experience raising a child with special needs led her to complete a Master of Arts in clinical psychology. She committed to never letting anyone but her son define his ability or potential. Because of this, her life's work as a mom evolved into her professional practice.

Hipp's book concept created an effective way to motivate kids (of all ages and abilities) to meet their challenges with self-acceptance, confidence, and under-

standing. The tomes are a creative and fun teaching tool for parents, caregivers, and teachers to use with children who may feel different than their peers. They encourage children to have a positive outlook and use their personal challenges to help them grow. Hipp's books are designed to help children see that being different can be an asset.

The first, "A Different Kind of Safari" (released in 2013), introduced Rosie, and encouraged the reader to transform personal challenges into opportunities. Her latest book, "Rosie and Friends Positively Different," addresses issues such as anxiety, fear, physical differences, and poor self-esteem. Hipp presents the issue of being different in a way that children can relate to and understand. She encourages happiness in spite of the challenges. Her message "uniqueness is not a weakness" truly puts into perspective that others'



perception of you depends mostly on how you see yourself.

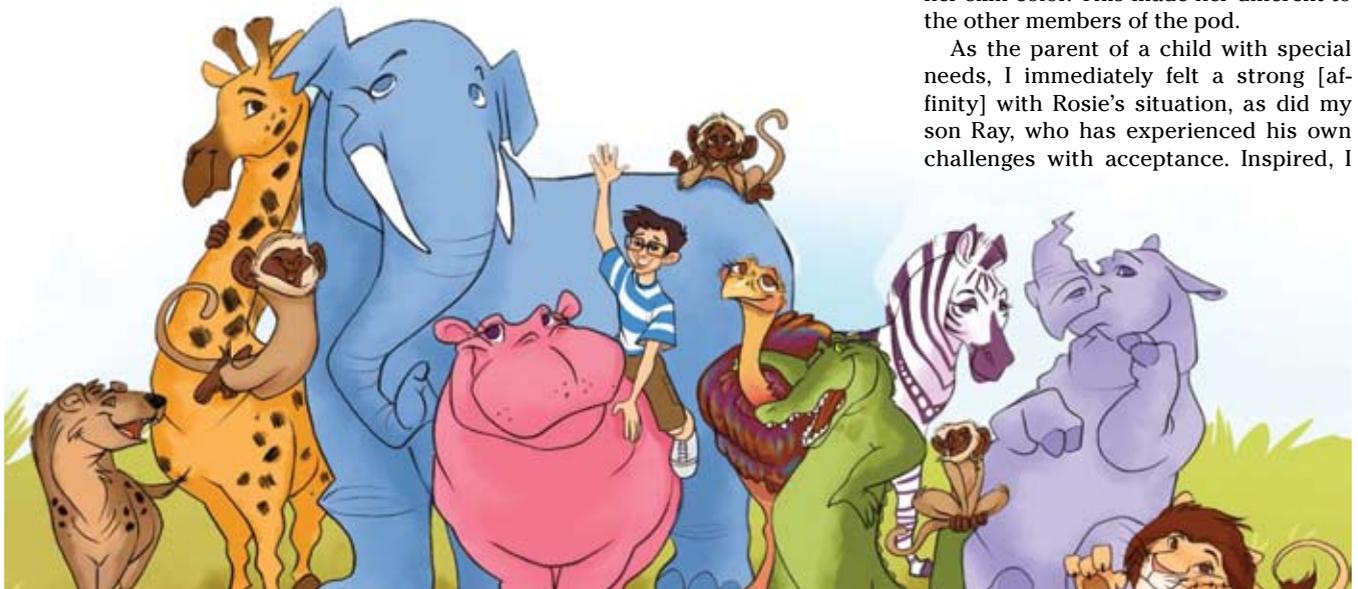
Shnieka Johnson: What led you to write children's books?

Hellen Hipp: My father had a dream to share an African safari experience with his family. Little did I know then that this trip would encourage me to write children's adventure books.

The storyline made its appearance when my family spotted a pod of hippos and one stood out because of her lack of color. She was pink! All of the other hippos were dark gray. My son Ray, 14 at the time, immediately named her "Rosie."

Curious and wanting to learn more about this hippo, we asked the guide many questions about hippos and hippo behavior. Specifically, I wanted to know why the pink hippo stood so far outside of her pod. The familiarity of the guide's answer took me by surprise. He explained that "Rosie" was tolerated, but not necessarily accepted by the herd because of her skin color. This made her different to the other members of the pod.

As the parent of a child with special needs, I immediately felt a strong [affinity] with Rosie's situation, as did my son Ray, who has experienced his own challenges with acceptance. Inspired, I



decided to share the story of Rosie with the world by weaving it into children's adventure books that celebrate differences.

SJ: What appeals to you most about children's books?

HH: I find the presence of innocence, imagination, and creativity that is woven into many children's books to be very captivating. I guess you can say I am a child at heart.

SJ: Why this particular topic?

HH: Perceptions shape your reality. Rosie and Friends help children to understand that their uniqueness is not a weakness.

SJ: Which children's books have inspired you as a writer?

HH: Maurice Sendak's "Where the Wild Things Are" is a book that I often think about when developing an ageless storyline that I want my books to be — fun and pertinent to readers young and old.

"Blueberries for Sal" by Robert McCloskey and "Angels on Horseback" written by Norman Thelwell were also instrumental, influencing me with simple, yet compelling, creative expression styles that brought the characters to life for me. As a child and now as an adult, I continue to enjoy all of these books immensely.



"As the parent of a child with special needs, I immediately felt a strong [affinity] with Rosie's situation, as did my son Ray, who has experienced his own challenges with acceptance. Inspired, I decided to share the story of Rosie with the world."

SJ: What vision do you have for your book series?

HH: My adventure books have already taken me on a journey that has given me the opportunity to meet a large number of wonderful people, all of which I refer to as my "Safari Family."

I cannot imagine anything more rewarding than bringing more of Rosie's adventures and their powerful message onto the stage and into schools to create an atmosphere of happiness, understanding, and acceptance.

SJ: Is there a need for more books like this?

HH: Yes, there is a need for books of all types. Particularly books that expand upon and challenge thoughts and foster imagination.

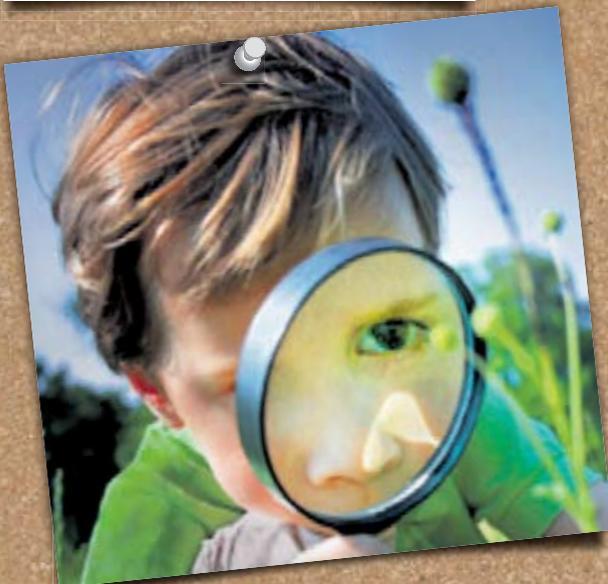
SJ: Where can your books be found?

HH: My books are available on Amazon and at Barnes & Noble.

SJ: What else do you want parents to know about Rosie the Hippo?

HH: Rosie puts things into perspective!
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.shnieka-johnson.com.

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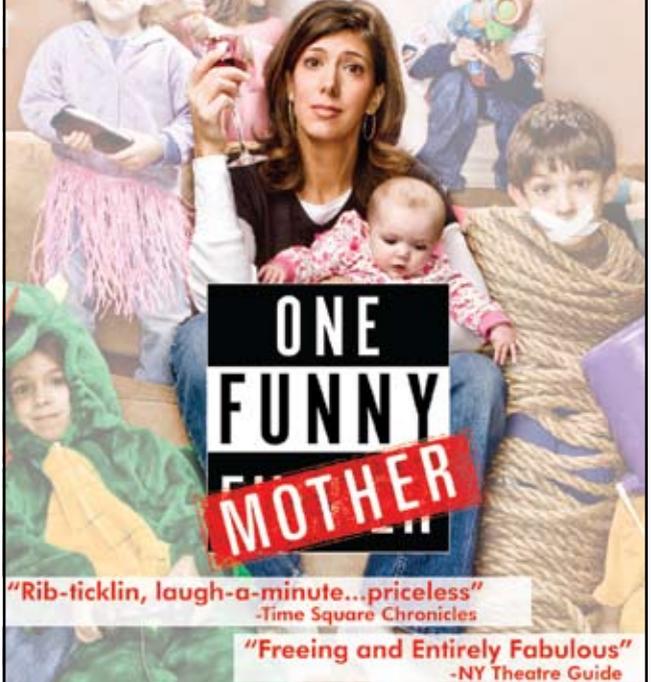


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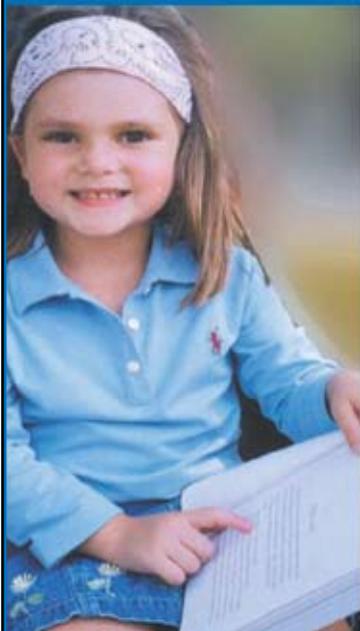
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The new debate over **homework**

Many parents think their kids have too much. Is the answer to have none at all?

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Is homework good for our children? Does it boost learning and encourage higher achievement? Or does it cause added stress in your kids' already-over-scheduled lives?

Would a no-homework policy at your child's elementary school hinder her academic progress?

And how can parents and teachers better manage students' workloads to ensure their well-rounded development?

In a controversial, nationwide trend, a handful of elementary-school teachers have been going rogue by taking a "radi-

cal" approach to their curriculum, and saying "no" to homework assignments.

Experts such as pediatricians and WebMD medical editor Dr. Hansa Bhargava, believe that youngsters can benefit emotionally and physically when they spend more free time with their families, or engaged in creative play. While some parents love that idea, others feel homework should take priority.

The great homework debate

Ask any young New York City student if he likes homework, and most likely, with a few exceptions, the answer will be a resounding "NO!" In kids' minds, there's nothing good about the "H" word. After hours of working in school, who wants to come home to more work? In fact, if you ask parents, many would probably admit that they secretly hate homework, too.

The heated homework debate — for or against — is indeed sparking quite a bit of controversy lately, as elementary school students seem to be coming home with more and more assignments each day. Some parents are questioning whether all of that extra work is worth the extra stress. And many believe that their kids



Pediatrician and WebMD medical editor Dr. Hansa Bhargava with her twin fifth-graders.

are getting much more homework than students did 20 or even 30 years ago.

Finding a balance

If too much homework is assigned, it can get overwhelming. Not only for youngsters, but for the entire family. Too little or none at all, and many parents worry that their kids aren't learning enough or getting a good education.

Other parents are wondering if no homework is a better alternative.

Author's aside

When my smart, well-rounded son, Brian (now 23), attended elementary school, he usually got good grades, even though he hated studying. Then one day, he and homework became arch enemies.

My rule was: When he got home, he could have a snack and relax for a while (maybe watch a little TV), but he had to get his homework done, neatly and correctly. The system worked for a while, but as my son got older, getting him to start and complete assignments turned into a daily battle. Like most kids, he felt (somewhat justifiably), that homework was getting in the way of his valuable free time.

I spent many years stressing out about it: arguing, coaxing, negotiating, and trying to reason with him. I even offered

rewards to get him motivated and excited about doing homework. Nothing seemed to work. He just wanted to get it over with.

We made sure his free time was spent doing what he liked. He loved baseball, video games, and spending time with friends and family. Weekends were great.

But when he got more homework, he couldn't handle it, and his behavior caused a lot of tension at home. My husband and I would bicker a lot; both of us were working, juggling household chores, and always feeling tired. Looking back, homework was just one more thing that made life more difficult and stressful.

In addition, we had different parenting styles, which added fuel to the fire. My husband was more laid-back than me, and his "Leave him alone, it'll get done"

approach would drive me crazy. Back then, I was a "get it done, or else" helicopter mom who didn't believe in that laissez-faire philosophy when it came to raising kids. Perhaps I should've taken the hands-off route, but then, who knows how many homework assignments wouldn't have been completed or handed in on time?

It took me a while to figure out that my son actually resented having to do his homework. He seemed to have an arrogant, "How dare they make me do it, when there are so many other things I'd rather be doing now?" attitude.

If I could, I would have said "NO" to homework!

With all due respect to my son's teachers, years later, I'm really grateful that all of those dreaded homework assignments are finally behind us!



Did you know?

Studies have shown that having dinner together as a family three times a week has many benefits and can lead to more grounded children, and also to better education and less likelihood of later drug abuse.

“This dynamic can impact kids at all levels, but specifically younger kids,” Dr. Bhargava noted.

What can teachers do?

Teachers have rules dictated by the National Education Association, including a standard homework rule of 10 minutes per grade. Dr. Bhargava suggests they try to stay within those parameters, and “be more aware that there are other things going on in the child’s life, so they can be a bit more realistic.”

In an ideal world, homework shouldn’t be a one-size-fits-all, because kids learn differently and handle assignments differently. So teachers could modify their workload with that in mind, says Bhargava.

She also suggests more project-based learning, in which students would get more real-world learning rather than filling out worksheets.

Of course, if your child is unable to complete the volume of assignments because of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, or any number of special needs or learning disabilities, by all means, advocate for your child.

“If you’re the parent of a child who isn’t able to handle homework, advocate for your child,” says Bhargava. “Absolutely talk to teachers and see what you can do. I would say, don’t take away homework, let’s keep it in regular parameters and make it reasonable.”

In the end, Bhargava says, academics, activities, and family time can happily co-exist with proper balance.

“We have to have some trust in education and hope they do know what they’re doing,” says Dr. Bhargava, who agrees that homework isn’t the be all and end all, but reminds parents: “At this point in time, the bigger problem is just creating time for families.”

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

Additional reading

www.webmd.com/hansa-bhargava
www.webmd.com/news/breaking-news/teen-stress

“The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing” by Alfie Kohn.

Bhargava, who doesn’t advocate for removing homework from school curriculums, suggests parents look over all of those after-school activities they’ve got lined up for their kids. Is their schedule too overloaded with all the homework they’re getting?

As the mother of twin fifth-graders (a boy and girl), who get an hour and a half of homework every night, she knows firsthand what it’s like to help her kids balance school responsibilities with leisure time. Family time is crucial for kids’ emotional development, says Bhargava, who enjoys lots of it with her twins.

She says it’s all about balance.

“When we did a survey here at WebMD, the majority of parents reported that the number-one stressor for younger kids was homework,” she noted. “We do need to be mindful that there are other things going on in a child’s life as well; a lot of activities, screen time, devices. So, I think that competing priorities for that time after school is not just about homework.”

In fact, she says the idea of today’s kids

having more homework to do than those of past decades is just not so.

“When you actually look at the numbers, there’s essentially not a lot of it,” she notes. “And interestingly, the amount of time spent on homework has been consistent over the decades. We need to put this in perspective based on the data.”

Kids have a lot going on, with competing priorities: activities, time with family and friends, and homework. And that’s much more so today than in the past. They are overscheduled. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, family time and creative play for younger children — when the brain is still developing — are essential.

To alleviate stress, Bhargava suggests:

- Re-examine your kids’ entire schedule and think about re-prioritizing or removing some activities altogether.

- Know your kids and how they handle homework — some take longer, and some do better resting or playing before diving in.

Healthcare proxies — why do you need them?

A healthcare proxy allows you to communicate your end-of-life choices if you cannot speak for yourself. It is important to create a healthcare proxy before a crisis hits. If you receive a dire medical diagnosis, the last thing you want to be thinking about is addressing these documents.

It will allow you to appoint another person (whether family member or friend) to make healthcare decisions for you if you are no longer able to communicate with doctors, or lack the capacity to make decisions. In the absence of a proxy, the statutory law in New York provides for a hierarchy of persons who make medical decisions for another person. The first is a spouse, and then a child — without specifying which child, which can lead to ambiguity with adult children who don't get along or agree.

We like to have clients prepare healthcare proxies for their children under the age of 18, who by definition “lack capacity” to make their own decisions. In the parents' absence, or incapacity, parents can appoint another person to make medical decisions for that child.

Even if a person lacks healthcare decision-making capacity, he can still designate a healthcare agent and sign a proxy if he is “competent.” According to Public Health Law 2981.1, every adult is “presumed competent” to appoint a healthcare agent unless determined incompetent by a court.

The requisite “competence” standard for making the proxy is different from the standard of “capacity to make healthcare decisions.” “Capacity” in that context means “the ability to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of healthcare decisions, including the benefits and risks of and alternatives to any proposed healthcare, and to reach an informed decision.”

What this means is that a person who cannot make his own medical decisions because he cannot process the information and make reasoned decisions, can

still grasp that he is appointing someone to make those complex decisions.

Advance directives such as healthcare proxies and powers of attorneys are intended to avoid the need for a guardianship proceeding under the law of Mental Hygiene Law Article 81. A proceeding is costly and time consuming, not to mention emotionally burdensome for going through the process of asserting that a loved one lacks competence. This often angers the person over whom a guardianship is sought, and causes strife among adult children of that person or other family members. That said, a guardianship proceeding is sometimes still necessary, as where a person has signed conflicting documents or is believed to have been susceptible to undue influence.

Another complication can arise where there is a guardianship in place but a person executes a healthcare proxy. Decisions by a healthcare agent take priority over decisions by any other person. Nor does an Article 81 guardian have the authority to revoke a designation of an agent. The written designation of an agent is presumed valid, and the person making it is presumed to have had the requisite competence. Court intervention is required to revoke the designation.

New York State does not recognize the designation of “co-agents” on a healthcare proxy. Policy dictates that only one person be imbued with decision-making authority. To do otherwise imposes risks on the health of a person who is in need of clear direction to medical personnel. A person may designate an “alternate” or successor agent, but the law is clear on the appointment of a single agent.

A healthcare agent's authority is not triggered unless and until the person lacks decision-making capacity. The agent may not supersede the principal's own decision making simply because they've been appointed as agent. The physician may only take direction from the patient and



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.

no one else when the patient is able to communicate.

The agent's authority is not unfettered. An agent cannot override a decision already made by a patient. If a patient has communicated a “do not resuscitate” order to a physician and later loses capacity, in general, the agent cannot change plans.

An agent also cannot limit visitation to the patient, although in circumstances where a client is concerned about strife among family members, or unwanted persons coming to visit, language to that effect can be included to persuade the medical facility that the patient would exclude those persons if she were able to do so.

A healthcare proxy is a brief document but can still be fraught with potential for conflict and complexity. It is important to consult an attorney to answer questions you may have regarding the implementation of a proxy in various contexts.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate planning needs. Visit her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

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Hunger in America

When children have nothing to eat

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

Our pre-school director informed us at the beginning of the school year that the school had taken on a new weekly service project. Each Thursday we would pick up 20 backpacks from a coordinator and fill them with food to send home with needy children for the weekend.

Without these backpacks, these children and their siblings would likely not have anything to eat until breakfast at school the following Monday morning.

That, in itself, is heartbreaking. But what she told us next brought me to tears.

“We will provide boxed milk and juice, canned foods, fruit cups, granola bars. They all have to be able to be easily opened by a child 5 and under. Often, these are young children and they will be alone, perhaps with younger siblings to also feed.”

I have a 6 year old, 3 year old, and 1

year old. The thought of them coming home on Friday night, looking through the bag, and planning how to make the food last throughout the weekend just takes my breath away. Imagining my 6 year old opening a fruit cup for my daughters — I cannot bear it.

Yet, this is a common occurrence.

Our children deserve better. We live in one of the most affluent countries in the world. Hunger, especially amongst children, should never be a problem.

And yet, it’s an enormous problem.

November 12–20, 2016 is Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 46.5 million people live in poverty in our country!

Nationalhomeless.org reports that one in five children go to bed and wake up hungry. And in my very own city, we have hundreds of children who rely on the free breakfast and lunch program for their warm meals. In my neighboring school dis-

trict there were more than 1,200 homeless children last year.

It breaks my heart. Again, I imagine a 5 year old fending for himself and taking care of younger siblings.

Here is one of the craziest statistics of all: in South Carolina, a worker earning the minimum wage of \$7.25 must work 79 hours per week, 52 weeks a year in order to be able to afford a two bedroom apartment at the Fair Market Rent. *Seventy nine hours* a week, every week of the year. And in Columbia, in order to afford that, they have to make \$14.34 per hour.

What can you do to help during Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week?

There is a national backpack program through Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org) if you want to get involved, or you can start your own local program by working with the social workers at your child’s school.

Thanksgiving is coming soon. Please consider donating to your local food shelters to give back. It’s so easy to donate a “Thanksgiving pack” — a canned ham, yams, boxed potatoes, and green beans. You might spend \$8 on that, and you can feed a family.

Today, and every day, I am so thankful that my children and I have never known real hunger. And I pray we never do.

Download the Awareness Week Organizing Manual (<http://nationalhomeless.org/about-us/projects/awareness-week>) or look for an event to attend!

Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother of three young children and is a freelance writer. She writes about her experiences through motherhood and advocates regularly for children.



Five (temporary!) parents' struggles

My kids are five years apart, which can make for some very good experiences, like having time with the baby while the older one is in school. But it can also make for some unpleasant experiences, like having to start over again, knee-high in diapers and late-night feedings, once you have finally exited the baby stage with your older child. With my youngest just reaching the teen years, I am now experiencing a multitude of newfound freedoms.

Take it from someone who has been down deep in the trenches just where you might be right now, frantic from non-stop crying, sweaty, exhausted, and depleted. Rest assured, there will come a day when all the things you are going through right now will cease (and dare I say you may even miss it!).

I won't lie; the freedom I have now is amazing. I can barely remember the days when I couldn't shower, sleep at night, watch my favorite show, or even read a book whenever I wanted. At the time, I thought those long, busy days would never end.

You will get here, and until you do, keep these five things in mind, because they will go away (I promise!):

Being awakened at a godforsaken hour each weekend. Whether you are now accustomed to being awakened by a harrowing squeal from a screaming toddler or you have a more calm start to the day upon hearing footsteps and rummaging around the kitchen in search of Frosted Flakes, there will actually come a day when you will wake up — on your own — before your child does. And just like that, it will be closely followed by your preteen or teen sleeping in and you will be the one waking them up (after you relish that newfound morning silence).

Being at a social gathering and not having to constantly watch your child at every moment. I can remember the first time my husband and I attended a party, and I didn't have to run after a curious toddler. I actually had conversations, sat down, and chatted at length with friends while my daughter happily and safely entertained herself close by. I had never even known this was something I would have given up for those baby and toddler years. I also didn't quite realize how sweet it would be until I was able to hang up my safety hat around the time my last child reached school age.

Having to take your child every-



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

where. Gotta run to the grocery store, visit a friend, or gasp ... go to a movie? You won't always have to take your child with you or preplan ahead of time and hire a babysitter. There will come a time when your child will be able to stay home alone. And I know it seems like right now when you are bogged down in diapers and spit-up, that you might not see it, but it will happen, and likely before you are ready for it to happen.

Having a scared child crawl into your bed. It may be after a nightmare, or every night, depending on the personality and sensitivity of the child. You think that may never ever sleep with your partner alone again but trust me, it will happen. (And with three children with different sensibilities who are five years apart, I can happily assure you it will.)

Having to oversee homework and studying. With enough effort in the early years, by the time a child gets a few years of school under his belt, there is really no need to micromanage his school life. Not only is it up to the kids to do their work, metaphorically and literally, but also, if they learned good school habits early on, it is already instilled in them. So all of those homework sessions, countless study reminders, and oral quizzes the night before a test will eventually fade away.

And once all of these little nagging, annoying inconveniences cease and your growing kids are independent and self-sufficient, well, you are going to wonder how fast they have grown and in all likelihood, only wish you had just a few more of those hectic days!

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

Put technology away and play

I have many fond childhood memories of doing puzzles with my family. My favorite one depicted different candy bars and was 1,000 pieces. It took us weeks to complete. After finishing the border, we went right to the easiest part of the puzzle: the words on the wrappers.

There was a stack of puzzles that was in the corner of the dining room. As soon as we finished one puzzle, we began another.

We never got bored of doing the same puzzle over and over again, as it always felt like a new challenge. It was always heartbreaking when we had to clean up an unfinished puzzle so that the dining room table could be used for holiday dining.

It was the best time! We each had a role to play. My dad hates puzzles, so he simply sat at the end of the table and chatted with us while we put pieces together. My sister and I fought to sit in front of the puzzle and my mom calmly watched it all unfold. She was more dedicated than all of us and often snuck

down late into the night to fit in one more piece.

What a great time that was! A time of family bonding that taught me about teamwork, project planning, patience, and how to share. It taught me to celebrate team members' success while I struggled. When I sometimes became frustrated — puzzles can be hard! — I learned to take that emotion in stride. I'm a better person for having done puzzles with my family!

During long weekends, I sometimes spread a puzzle across my living room floor. The activity warms my heart and brings me right back to my childhood.

Do you regularly complete activities like this now with your family? For many families, these types of bonding activities have unfortunately been replaced by video games and watching the plethora of offerings available on the various screens around the house.

Regular family bonding time that requires everyone to put their devices away and for all members to interact is part of what glues a family together.



BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

This creates opportunities to teach your children skills that can only be learned through experience. Time when your family accomplishes something together is critical.

Considering our busy schedules, it can be challenging to find time to connect like this. My biggest tip for you: commit small amounts of time each day. Some days, my family and I only had five minutes to work on the puzzle before we had to go to school, or 10 minutes at night before bedtime. Those small and consistent pieces of the day made a huge impression on me. This can happen for your child!

The kind of time you spend with your family is more important than the amount of time you spend. This means that there is no multitasking — including checking e-mails while your small one does an activity near by. Try to create clear, uninterrupted, and focused time when you and your small one can accomplish something together.

If you want more details on how to create better behavior in your home, check out my new book, "Love Your Classroom Again." Although the examples are based on a classroom setting, the strategies are applicable to any environment.

For a special gift for New York Parenting readers, please visit: bit.ly/vid-nyp

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





On becoming a 'mother-by-love'

Because 'mother-in-law' is antiquated!

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Last month, I joined ranks with one of the most maligned groups in the civilized world. Members of this sorority are stereotypically described as conniving, undermining, competitive, superficial shrews. Historically, they have been the butt of jokes, fodder for stand-up comedians, and a staple of classic sitcoms. Perhaps the only other familial role depicted as equally villainous is that of stepmother. Yet, in spite of all the unpopular press associated with this group, I could not wait to join!

There are no prescribed qualifications for membership. During the initiation cer-

emony, I was not even required to make a pledge. However, my son was asked to take a series of vows. That's right! You guessed it. On the first Saturday of October, I officially became a mother-in-law.

My first order of business is to make an adjustment to this antiquated moniker. The name "mother-in-law" smacks of an obsolete patriarchal system that identified everything in terms of its relationship to property. The property, in this case the bride, was transferred from ownership by the father to the husband, so that the husband could track, with confidence, the distribution of his wealth to his legal heirs. Well, hooley on that!

For six years, I have witnessed my son

and his now-wife creating a vibrant relationship that is extraordinary to behold. Law had absolutely nothing to do with it. Their devotion to each other and their future together has been inspired, motivated, guided, and enhanced by love. It is through love, with love, and by love that her presence has been added to our lives. And so, that is how I plan to refer to myself, as her mother-by-love.

The next order of business is to avoid perpetuating the myth of the stereotypical mother-in-law. Fortunately, my own mother-by-love has provided an exceptional role model for conducting myself in this new facet of my parental identity. From the very beginning, she welcomed my involvement in her son's life. Over the years, we have become friends and confidants. We have walked miles and talked for hours. We

Fortunately, my own mother-by-love has provided an exceptional role model for conducting myself in this new facet of my parental identity. From the very beginning, she welcomed my involvement in her son's life.

have recommended and discussed books with each other. We have traded recipes, shared parenting strategies, and travelled and vacationed together. We have debated politics and religion. We have elected to agree to disagree because keeping our relationship intact has been more important than asserting our point of view. We have helped each other find humor in the most trying of circumstances. We have comforted one another when no humor could be found. In her, I discovered what Anne Shirley called "a kindred spirit."

Underlying the success of our 34-year association has been mutual respect, genuine affection, and a shared conviction that when it comes to love, there is always room for more. My love for her son has not diminished, nor was it intended to replace, her love as his mother. Her love for my husband has not threatened, nor was it intended to usurp, my love as his wife. My husband's

love for his mother is not a sign of disloyalty to me, nor is his loving me being disloyal to her. It is because of her love that he is capable of loving me and accepting my love in turn. Each of us has benefitted from the love abiding between the other two.

Love does not exist in limited quantities to be doled out incrementally. Love is a quality of character we learn to demonstrate toward others because of the way we have experienced it ourselves. The quality of love is not strained by the presence of additional people in our lives. Love deepens and expands to embrace all those who seek it. Love begets love. Each of us is better for the love we have known from each other.

As parents of young children, you may be wondering what any of this has to do with you. Well, after 26 years of parenting a son — meeting his basic needs, surrounding him with people who loved him, providing him with opportunities to explore

and develop all of his abilities and talents, encouraging him to always do his best, guiding him through making decisions, coaching him in creating and nurturing relationships with others — and six years of observing his courtship, engagement, marriage preparations, and wedding, I have come to the conclusion that this is the role we have been preparing him for.

There is tremendous pressure to raise our children to be successful. And when people say successful, they are primarily referring to financial success. Well, statistically speaking, of all the things our children could become, they are most likely to become spouses. I tell you right now, there is nothing like having your son whisper in your ear, during the mother-son dance at his wedding reception, "Thank you for being such great parents. I am ready for this. Thank you for preparing me so well." And when he presents you with a young woman whom you are honored to call your daughter-by-love, you know you have done something good.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Ky. She has been married for 29 years and has two sons. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

The timeline and costs of mediation

Bill and Angela have been married 10 years and have decided to divorce. They have two children, ages 6 and 9. They also own a home, other assets, and have joint credit cards. In this and upcoming articles, we'll follow this realistic albeit hypothetical couple as they deal with their conflicts, assisted by a mediator.

Since the couple has decided to use a mediator for their divorce, they will pay \$3,350 for services. By contrast, in many litigated divorces, each spouse pays more than twice that amount (\$7,500 or more) for the lawyer's retainer. That's \$15,000 between them. And very often, that is just the beginning of the court process.

In mediation, many spouses will incur costs lower than \$3,500 for their sessions. For couples who split the cost in half, that will be about \$1,750 each.

Mediation usually costs about \$300 an hour.

Mediation ends when parties have reached their agreements. The agreements then need to be written and filed with the court.

Here's a timeline of how Bill and Angela's mediation will start:

Nov. 1

Angela calls the mediator, who answers several questions.

Nov. 2

Angela tells Bill what she has learned about mediation:

- This mediator, who has a sliding scale, will charge \$300 per hour; and work with both of them, together.

- They can split the fee, and there is a \$50 consultation that they will attend together.

- The mediator is paid at the end of each session (unlike most attorneys, who require a retainer upfront).

- Bill and Angela will make decisions about their children and everything else. The mediator won't decide for them.

- If they begin mediation, either party can end it at any time.

Nov. 8

Bill and Angela discuss mediation.

Angela wants to try it. Bill is reluctant, thinking it a waste of time. But, since the consult is \$50, and he would pay \$25, he agrees. What's to lose?

Nov. 15

Angela and Bill attend the consultation.

They both like the idea of saving money — as opposed to what litigation costs. And they would like to be amicable (as much as possible), because they'll have to interact with each other for years to come since they have fairly young children.

They learn that many couples complete mediation within six to 12 hours.

Since Angela and Bill have children, own a home, and other assets — and have major disagreements — the mediator offers that the case will probably take longer

than six hours.

"Let's say it takes 10 hours," the mediator suggests, noting that it could be shorter or longer. "That would come to \$3,000, plus \$50 for the consultation."

The mediator adds that finishing mediation doesn't mean couples are divorced. There are things that follow:

"Whether you mediate or go to court, you'll need a separation agreement (essentially all of the agreements spouses come to, written in a format that courts require). There is a separate fee for that service."

"I encourage parties to each meet with their own review attorney to go over the agreement before signing it," he adds.

A review attorney is someone who will review the agreement, and may charge hundreds of dollars — a small fraction of the tens of thousands of dollars that the same lawyer might charge to litigate the same case.

He also adds that each party may hire a lawyer at any time.

Angela and Bill read the "Agreement to Mediate" form, which largely sets out how mediation works, and sign the form.

Bill and Angela each pay \$25 for the consultation fee, and they schedule a first working session for early December.

Next time: Parenting discussions

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

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Calendar

NOVEMBER



Photo by Ivo Vermeulen

See a different 'size' of New York

Hop aboard and catch a ride at the New York Botanical Garden for the annual Holiday Train Show from Nov. 19 through Jan. 16, 2017.

More than 150 New York City landmarks are recreated in miniature out of bark, nuts, leaves, and other plant parts. Large-scale model trains zip around such familiar sites as the Statue of Liberty and Rockefeller Center. A recent addition of 3,000-square-feet of exhibition has made

room for new trains, bridges and tracks.

Holiday Train Show, Tuesdays through Sundays, Nov. 19 to Jan. 16, 2017; 10 am to 5:30 pm (see website for extended hours). Closed on Thanksgiving. Tickets \$20, \$10 for children; and \$30, \$18 children, on weekends. Reservations strongly recommended.

New York Botanical Garden [2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road in Belmont, (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.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

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!

WED, NOV. 2

IN THE BRONX

Nature walk: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 2 to 3 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Enjoy colorful foliage at its seasonal peak. Horticultural interpreter Charles Day shares some of his favorite trees and shrubs in their vibrant fall finery.

FRI, NOV. 4

IN THE BRONX

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

Enjoy the Latin Jazz sounds of Bronx Arts Ensemble's teaching artist and critically-acclaimed guitarist Greg Diamond and his band Amalgama from 6 to 8 pm. Explore the museum, and stroll the garden; light refreshments available. The trolley makes an hourly loop starting at 5:25 p m from the 6 train Pelham Bay Park subway station to the museum to City Island. Registration requested.

SAT, NOV. 5

IN THE BRONX

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

Papermaking in Autumn Color. Families have fun making creative and colorful works of art. Artist Randy Brozen leads a family workshop in making richly colored paper, using red, orange and yellow pulp. Hand-made paper is then fashioned into a leafy autumn decoration.

FURTHER AFIELD

5K Birch Family Run-Walk: Hudson River Park, Pier 64 at W. 24th Street, Manhattan; (212) 616-1801; www.birchfamilyservices.org; Noon to 2 pm.

The fourth annual Family Day and 5K Run-



Photo by Joshua Bright

Take in the fall foliage

The leaves are turning glorious shades of red, gold, and brown — and it's the perfect season to take a family nature walk at Wave Hill on Nov. 13.

Join naturalist and educator Gabriel Willow on a family-friendly walk through the gardens or woodlands to explore and discover the blooming fall foliage and migrating birds passing through this way to warmer weather. No regis-

tration required. Kids ages 6 and older are welcome as long as they're accompanied by an adult. Canceled in case of severe weather.

Family Nature Walk, Nov. 13, beginning at 1 pm. Free with admission to the grounds.

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

Walk is a family-friendly event that celebrates the abilities of the 1,500 children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities supported daily by Birch Family Services throughout New York City and the surrounding areas. All ages and abilities are welcomed.

SUN, NOV. 6

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 5.

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze: Van Cortlandt Manor, 535 South Riverside Ave.; (914) 366-6900; 11 am to 4 pm; \$20 (\$16 seniors and children).

A bright and blazing display of more than 7,000 hand-carved illuminated jack-o-lanterns set the Halloween season on fire! These artfully carved pumpkins portray flying ghosts, spider webs, snakes, and monsters. It's a fabulous display to view while strolling through this historic riverside landscape; tumbling acrobats and circus characters add

to the festive fun. For all ages. Reservations required.

Nature walk: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 2 pm to 3 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Enjoy colorful foliage at its seasonal peak. Horticultural interpreter Charles Day shares some of his favorite trees and shrubs in their vibrant fall finery.

Civil War Living History: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 4 pm to 5:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors and students; free for members).

Actor and historian Patrick Falci portrays Confederate Lieutenant General Ambrose Powell (A.P.) Hill in costume to illuminate the life and times of "Lee's Forgotten General," highlighting Hill's service under Robert E. Lee and his leadership at several major engagements. Falci is known for his role as A.P. Hill in the film "Gettysburg," produced by Ted Turner. Registration requested.

Calendar

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

THURS, NOV. 10

IN THE BRONX

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze: 11 am to 4 pm. Van Cortlandt Manor. See Sunday, Nov. 6.

FRI, NOV. 11

IN THE BRONX

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze: 11 am to 4 pm. Van Cortlandt Manor. See Sunday, Nov. 6.

SAT, NOV. 12

IN THE BRONX

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

Toss fall leaves in the wind, walk through a giant leaf pile, or use them to fashion a festive crown. Make artful arrangements to carry home, and explore the earthy colors of fall in paper leaf-prints and framed hangings.

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze: 11 am to 4 pm. Van Cortlandt Manor. See Sunday, Nov. 6.

SUN, NOV. 13

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 12.

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze: 11 am to 4 pm. Van Cortlandt Manor. See Sunday, Nov. 6.

Family nature walk: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; 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. For ages 6 and older accompanied by an adult. Severe weather cancels.

SAT, NOV. 19

IN THE BRONX

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

Celebrate corn and harvest time! Listen to Native American tales, and hear about the power of a talking stick. Then tie, weave, and shape our dried husks into a single cornhusk doll or corny doll family. Storytelling at noon. Harvest Weekend event.

Native Americans: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

The Lenape Indians lived in the Bronx for

Running for special needs

Put on your trainers and get ready for the annual 5K Birch Family Run-Walk on Nov. 5.

Birch Family Services is inviting you to this family-friendly walk that celebrates the abilities of the 1,500 children and adults with autism and other developmental disabilities that are serviced through the many programs provided at Birch Family Services in New York City and surrounding areas.

The event brings together the community that is dedicated to supporting those with special needs. All ages and abilities are welcomed.

Sponsors include Pfizer, Jackson Lewis, Sterling Risk, and Juice Press, The New York Post, and New York Parenting.

New York City trainer Ngo Okafor is the special guest runner and will lead participants in warm-ups prior to the start.

At the end, awards will be presented to top teams and runners. All runners and supporters are invited



to an after party at Jake's Saloon, located at 2012 Ninth Ave. in West Chelsea.

Participants may register online or at the site the day of the event.

Birch Family Run-Walk, Nov. 5 from noon to 2 pm. Kick off is at Hudson River Park, Pier 64 at W. 24th Street.

Birch Family Services [104 W. 29th St. between Sixth and Seventh avenues in Korea Town, (212) 216-9780, (212) 616-1801; www.birchfamilyservices.org].

thousands of years before European settlement pushed them out. Come learn how native tribes used the local waterways and native plants and wildlife to survive. Rangers will point out many of those vital plants and animals still found in parks today on this moderate hike. Learn how the Lenape legacy lives on today through their words and artifacts still being discovered.

SUN, NOV. 20

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 19.

THURS, NOV. 24

FURTHER AFIELD

Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade: Macy's 34th Street, Herald Square and W. 34th Street, Manhattan; 9 am to noon; Free to watch.

Come on down to this time-honored tradition. Beginning at 9 am this year's parade offers the same characters and loads of new ones. The parade signals the beginning of the holiday season when Santa and Mrs. Santa arrive in their sleigh.

SAT, NOV. 26

IN THE BRONX

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

Gather fall leaves, cones, pods and seed heads. Weave them together with other materials from the gardens and meadows to create a decorative wall hanging celebrating the bounty and beauty of the season.

SUN, NOV. 27

IN THE BRONX

Family Art project: 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Nov. 26.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

Bronx Zoo: 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; Daily, 10 am to 4 pm; Now - Thurs, Dec. 8; \$19.95 (\$12.95 children).

Come see giraffes, lions, birds, penguins, and more. As a special treat, there are now five toddler gorillas at the Congo Gorilla Exhibit — watch their playful interactions with

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

their parents and each other. Open daily. Check website for fall schedule. All ages.

Fall Foliage at the Gardens: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 30; \$20 (\$8 children).

Fall Foliage at Botanical Gardens. With more than 30,000 mature trees on its 250-acre landscape, The Botanical Garden is the perfect site for catching the last of the changing colors of nature.

Mario Batali's Kitchen Gardens: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817-8700; 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.

Le Petit Art: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; 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.

Youth program: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Ave. and 145th Street; (311); www.nycgovparks.org; Weekdays, 3 pm to 7 pm, Now – Fri, Dec. 30; Free.

Children and youth ages 8 years to 17 years are welcome to participate in a variety of sports, crafts, and learning opportunities including: computer resources, arts in parks, and youth swim. Learn to play flag football and basketball. There's also teen fitness (supervised use of fitness and cardio rooms), hula aerobics, and more.

Dance and Fitness: St. Mary's Recreation Center, St. Ann's Ave. and 145th Street; (311); www.nycgovparks.org; Tuesdays, 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Now – Mon, Dec. 12; Free.

Learn the newest routines popular in current music videos all while getting toned. This class is designed for children 8 to 17 years old. Membership is free and registration is required.

Garden Centennial Exhibit: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, Noon to 4pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 6; Free.

The outdoor exhibit of sculptures celebrates 100 years of its formal garden designed by Delano and Aldrich in 1916. Showcasing 15 artists whose work draws on the site's history, architecture, and surrounding natural environment, the exhibition encompasses artworks of steel, wood, fiberglass, ceramic, and recycled plastics, including augmented-reality interventions and kinetic art choreographed by elements of nature.

Creative 3D Arts: Poe Park Visitor Center,



Associated Press / Diane Bondaroff

Turkey Day's big show

Get ready for the 90th annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade on Nov. 24.

The giant event features balloons, floats, marching bands, performance groups, and loads of entertainers.

The 2.5-mile march kicks off at W. 77th Street and Central Park West, 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 goggling at the giant balloons floating high above the avenue. Bringing up the rear as always is 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. 24 from 9 am to noon. Free.

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

2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Thursdays, 2:30 to 4:30 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 29; Free.

Have fun creating 3D arts using various mediums. Create the illusion of a 3D hand on paper. This program is best for ages 6 to 12.

Bird walks: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th St. at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; 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.

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.

Intended for parents of special-needs children. This is a friendly group of parents interested in learning crochet to teach their child. Materials needed: 1 skein light colored #4 yarn, 1 pair short knitting needles #8, tapes-

try needle for weaving, and measuring tape.

Paper Arts & Crafts: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 2-3:30 pm, Now – Sat, Jan. 28, 2017; Free.

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

Holiday Train Show: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5:30 pm, Sat, Nov. 19 – Mon, Jan. 16, 2017; \$20 (\$10 children). Weekends \$30 (\$18 children).

More than 150 New York City landmarks are recreated in miniature out of bark, nuts, leaves, and other plant parts. Large-scale model trains zip around such familiar sites as the Statue of Liberty and Rockefeller Center. A recent addition of 3,000-square-feet of exhibition has made room for new trains, bridges and tracks. Closed on Thanksgiving. Reservations strongly recommended.



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

DAWN LERMAN

Smarter snacking

There's something so warm and comforting about the taste of fall — warm soups, seasonal muffins, and decadently sweet drinks. While many food and beverage companies advertise their products as healthy snacks, most pre-packaged fast-food items are actually loaded with sugar and contain very little nutritional value. But with a couple of easy tricks, you can transform your kids' diets and help them power through their busy days while boosting their mood and immune systems:

Re-think your family's snacks. A smart snack is meant to be a mini meal: containing good quality protein, a brain-boosting fat, and a complex carbohydrate. Try a turkey roll up with avocado and cucumber,

or an almond butter and banana sandwich on whole-grain toast, or a pumpkin yogurt smoothie.

Turn fresh-baked goods into nutritional power houses. With busy schedules, we're often lured by convenience foods and fall prey to the the closest vending machine or fast-food establishment. But if we prepare homemade muffins, cookies, and brownies with superfoods like oats, chia seeds, and coconut oil, we satisfy our kids' sweet cravings without compromising their health.

Fill your thermos together. If your children are involved in their snack preparation from start to finish, they will be more inclined to make healthy choices when

they are not with you. Pick a day of the week to cook together. Most kids love the idea of a stone soup, throwing a variety of vegetables and herbs together to produce a hearty broth. I always include a thermos of soup in my daughter's lunchbox for after-school. She says it fills her heart as well as her belly. Anything interactive with children makes it more delicious.

In the words of my maternal grandmother, Beauty, who taught me to cook at age 9, sending me a weekly recipe card and \$20 bill: "Good food is not fast, fast food is not good, and if you know how to make a pot of soup, you can nourish yourself for life."

Dawn Lerman — also known as "The Snacking Mama" — is a top Manhattan nutritionist and the author of the best-selling book, "My Fat Dad: A Memoir of Food, Love, and Family, With Recipes." Follow her on Twitter@DawnLerman.

Vegan, protein-packed butternut squash soup

Yield 6-8 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 tablespoons olive oil or coconut oil
- 1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 cup (150 grams) raw cashews
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large butternut squash (about 2 pounds), peeled and diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 5 cups vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons minced, fresh ginger
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 cup coconut milk, plus additional (optional)

1 sprig fresh rosemary

DIRECTIONS: In large stockpot or Dutch oven set over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil until shimmering. Add the onions and cook, stirring, until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the cashews and cook, stirring, until the onions are translucent and the cashews have slightly browned, about 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the squash, broth, ginger, cumin, coriander, curry powder, turmeric and stir to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and bring the soup to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and cook the soup until the

squash is easily pierced with a knife, 20 to 25 minutes. Uncover the soup and let it cool for 15 minutes.

Starting on slow speed and increasing to high, purée the soup in small batches in a blender until smooth. Place a towel over the top of the blender in case of any splatters. You can also use an immersion blender (let the soup remain in the pot), but it will take longer to purée until smooth.

If using a blender, return the soup to the pot, add the coconut milk and rosemary sprig, and cook over low heat, covered, until slightly thickened, for about 15 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready. If serving the soup later, while reheating the soup, thin it out with more broth or coconut milk until the desired consistency.



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Giving thanks for superfoods

Whether you sit down to a vegetarian meal on Thanksgiving or the traditional turkey with all the trimmings, chances are there is some guilt involved in anticipation of the feast.

Estimates abound on the typical number of calories consumed during that one meal. Numbers range from an eye-popping 2,000 to 4,000.

For example, one estimate for a Thanksgiving dinner that includes a turkey drumstick, rolls, corn, candied carrots, green beans with almonds, stuffing, mashed potatoes, candied sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie was 2,057.

Yet, it may not be Grandma's recipes that are to blame, but the large portion sizes we're consuming.

Several years ago, Cornell University's Food and Brand Lab analyzed cookbook recipes from the 1950s and compared them to contemporary versions. Calorie counts for five of the eight recipes tested actually dropped by almost one third

when comparing Better Homes and Gardens recipes from 1956 to the 2006 edition of the "Better Homes and Gardens New Cookbook."

While many of us groan at the possible calorie disaster if we overeat, many of the items that make an appearance on your Thanksgiving table can be considered nutrient-rich superfoods:

Turkey. Fresh turkey is low in fat and rich in vitamins niacin and B6. While dark meat is slightly higher in fat than the breast meat, it provides more iron. And if your budget allows, serve a fresh turkey that is free of basting juices and sodium-laden additives.

Tofu turkey. A popular option for vegetarians, this soy-based option can be a tasty and nourishing substitute for a traditional turkey.

Roasted root vegetables. A toss of roasted sweet potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, and beets along with a little chopped onion and herbs is burst-



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

ing with nutrients and can be a healthful substitute for candied sweet potatoes dripping in fatty marshmallows and butter.

Pumpkin. The deep orange color is a tip-off that this fruit is rich in beta-carotene and vitamin C. It also provides plenty of potassium, phosphorus, and fiber. When eating pumpkin pie, keep the calories under control by eating it sans ice or whipped cream, and leaving most of the crust on the plate.

Nuts. Put out a bowl containing a variety of shelled nuts before or after dinner. Nuts are harvested in the fall and a fresh crop can be found in your store's produce section. Pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, and Brazil nuts provide heart-healthy unsaturated fats, protein, vitamin E, potassium, L-arginine, phytosterols, and fiber.

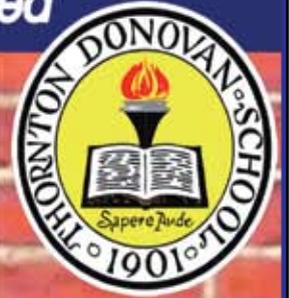
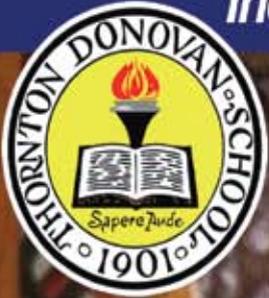
Cranberries. Unlike most traditional Thanksgiving foods, these tart berries actually were served at the first Thanksgiving in 1621. Loaded with vitamin C, bioflavonoids, and fiber, they're best served in a sauce or relish with some added sweetener. My favorite way to serve them is chopped in a food processor with a whole orange, some walnuts, and just enough sugar to taste.

And about that monstrous calorie count? By limiting your portions and cutting back on the gravy, desserts, and alcohol, you can whittle down your Thanksgiving feast to about 1,000 or less.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics whose favorite holiday is Thanksgiving because of the foods. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

THORNTON-DONOVAN SCHOOL

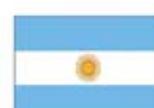
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