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Love is the answer — always

The world has changed so much and being a parent to a pre-teen/teen these days offers far less control over their behavior and interactions than ever before. The world of electronics, social media, and instant connection has altered everything, plus the fact that kids are so much more astute than in past generations.



they're very young and needing boundaries.

Love is truly the answer. And real loving as parents is to lay the groundwork for healthy emotional, psychological, and physical well being. A complicated but worthwhile task. So many experts in a variety of fields help us to contribute to this

effort through our editorial. It is intrinsic, and our devoted mission to make life and loving a healthier experience for both children and adults.

For this Valentine's Day and every day in the name of love, I wish all of our young ones a more trusting experience with the men and women around them than many of the recent news items have revealed. Sexual misconduct and molestation of our

kids has been a hidden reality for too long. Adults have covered up their crimes against our children and now the doors to their misdeeds are being opened. Very brave young men and women are at last telling their stories. Respectfully, we must help them in every way we can.

It takes a great deal of courage to grow up. It takes even more courage to help someone else grow up. It also takes devotion, patience, and belief.

Love is the answer. Thanks for reading.

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Forecast: Snow babies

Extreme weather to blame for an increase in baby showers

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

We've all seen television shows and movies that include a dramatic scene of a pregnant woman going into labor at the most inopportune time — during a storm or natural disaster. It turns out this is not so far off from reality. Labor pain is not only hormonal, but can also be affected by environmental changes that cause great stress. Given the right situation, external stress could cause early labor.

Women going into labor prematurely only has a mild correlation with winter storms or natural disasters. However, physicians and hospital staff vividly remember these most eventful days (and nights) in labor and delivery.

“Natural disasters such as Hurricane Sandy in 2012, snowstorms, [and] earthquakes all increase the amount of stress levels on patients, and therefore increase the amount of catecholamines released by pregnant patients leading to possible premature birth,” notes Dr. Reyna Payero, a physician in obstetrics and gynecology at Advantage-Care Physicians. “Moreover, the physiological response to stress in a pregnant woman is to release hormones that increase her heart rate and also her blood pressure, therefore potentially increasing her risks for infection and possible early birth,” she adds. Because a woman’s body stress level can impact when she goes into labor, significant natural disasters are known to cause women to go into early labor.

“During Hurricane Irene in 2011,” she says, “the storm caused multiple mothers to undergo early delivery or premature contractions in Staten Island,” where Dr. Payero worked at the time.

But it’s not only during or immediately after a natural disaster that spikes in birth rates can be observed — as the urban legend goes, they can also rise around nine months after a storm. Winter storms and natural disasters are said to cause a baby boom, of sorts, nine months later. The validity of this urban legend depends on the severity of the storm or disaster. For example, if a winter storm leaves you and your partner snowed in or a natural disaster limits your activity outside of the home — intimacy is inevitable. Many assume that when couples have a lot of time indoors, it leads to an increase in babies born about nine months later. So, is it



true that being home in a snowstorm puts couples in the mood to make babies? According to Treetopia, it is true. In its study, Top 10 Steamiest Snowstorms (<http://blog.treetopia.com/2017/12/top-10-steamiest-snowstorms>), it used a combination of government data and reported birth rates to come to that conclusion — though it looked at more than just snowstorms.

Some think that the noticeable increase in births is due to the fact that couples simply have too much time on their hands when snowed in, or have limited forms of entertainment when hunkered down at home. According to Medical Daily, hospitals began bracing for an increase in birth rates in the last weeks of July and early August of 2013, nine months after Superstorm Sandy hit in the fall of 2012. And just as expected, local hospitals reported spikes in birth rates up to 30 percent. In fact, Treetopia ranks Superstorm Sandy the “sexiest storm” of all time due to that spike. The second sexiest storm on Treetopia’s list was “Snowvember” of 2014, which also caused birth rates to rise up to 30 percent about nine months later.

Put simply, sex is a way of coping with stress (or boredom, in some cases). Whether it is a blizzard, hurricane, or power outage, disasters give couples a lot of time together indoors, and that can lead

to a spike in the number of babies born in the area nine months later. This is not a new concept — this phenomenon is known as the “Fertility Effect of Catastrophe.” Studies show anecdotal evidence that suggests increased fertility rates result from catastrophic events. A 2008 study from Johns Hopkins University states that this can be traced back decades, with New York’s own blackout of 1965 as a prime example. Nine months after the blackout, there was an increase in the birth rate.

There are certainly storms and events where there are no birth spikes, such as low-severity storms, winter storm warnings, and the like, which leads to a debate of whether spikes in births are just perceived or are actually measurable. The debate arises every time there is a sizeable snowstorm that dumps inches — and sometimes feet — of snow. For the 2017–18 winter season (which we have already witnessed a portion of), there is a lot more snow expected in our forecast. If the urban legend is true, there will be a spike in births up and down the East Coast in the fall of 2018!

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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Preteen dating

Advice for parents in navigating little romances

BY DENISE YEARIAN

The age kids begin to become attracted to one another varies tremendously from one person to another. For some, those feelings start in late elementary school. For others, it's not until high school.

So when a child 9- or 10-years-old begins to show romantic interest in another, parents need to be proactive in communicating and establishing guidelines. Here are some tips to help:

1. Set the stage. Take your preteen's

relationships seriously. Attractions are normal and will only increase as children grow. Remember the way he or she views and conducts relationships now paves the way for future dating relationships.

2. Get their view. Ask your teen how he or she defines "dating," "going out," or "having a boyfriend or girlfriend." Then share your views. Reinforce the need to always respect others and oneself.

3. Keep the line of communication open. If the relationship has gelled, continue dialoguing, so you know how it is progressing. Ask open-ended questions

in a casual way: "What do you like about this boy?" "What do you have in common?" "How does he treat you?" "Who are her friends?" "How do you feel about her?" "Do you feel respected by this person?" This gets your child thinking about what is important in a relationship.

4. Establish and discuss relationship boundaries. These could include not being alone with the boy or girlfriend, having parental supervision at home, not being allowed in each other's bedrooms, no touching, staying in group settings, and having a curfew, to name

a few. Equally important is to help your preteens understand why these boundaries are there, so they begin to develop an internal compass.

5. Set expectations in other realms of life. Remind your preteen the importance of remaining focused on academics and extra-curricular activities, as well as maintaining current friendships. Set guidelines about phone and internet use, too.

6. Monitor media exposure. The messages young people receive from music, television, movies, books, and magazines are laden with love, sex, and relationships. Make sure these messages line up with your family's values. If you see or hear something questionable with your child's media, use it as an opportunity to discuss your values in a non-confrontational way. Realize your preteen may question your values, particularly if they don't line up with media messages or her friends' values. This is normal and means she is questioning, but not necessarily rejecting, what you embrace.

7. Know their friends. They have a tremendous influence on the way your child thinks, talks, and acts. Open your home and encourage your preteen to invite his or her friends over, so you know them and see how they interact.

Resources

For more on helping your preteen navigate relationships, check out these books:

- "For Young Women Only" (Multnomah) by Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa Rice
- "How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk" (Scribner) by Adele Faber
- "How to Talk so Teens will Listen and Listen so Teens will Talk" (William Morrow Paperbacks) by Adele Faber
- "You and Your Adolescent, Revised Edition" (Simon and Schuster) by Lawrence Steinberg, Ph.D.
- "Raising a Thinking Preteen: The 'I Can Problem Solve' Program for 8- to 12-Year-Olds" (Holt Paperbacks) by Myrna Shure and Roberta Israeloff
- "Roller-coaster Years" (Harmony) by Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese

8. Discuss dress. Share with your preteen that the way we dress sends a message to others. Clothing should be modest and should not have provocative

messages written on it. Set the standard by being a good role model in the way you dress.

9. Honor privacy to a point. Reserve the right to inspect your preteen's backpack or room if he or she becomes secretive or begins to show other signs that concern you.

10. Allow expression of emotions. Don't minimize your preteen's feelings, no matter how trivial they may seem. This is particularly true for boys who may think they need to suppress it. At the same time, teach him or her to make decisions based on careful thought, not heartfelt emotions.

11. Lend emotional support. Most preteen relationships are short lived. When the relationship ends, your child may or may not be hurt, but your sensitivity and empathy toward the situation will build a healthy trust and bond between you.

12. Know when it is time to intervene. If the relationship moves beyond innocent, the preteen becomes obsessive, or you begin to see unhealthy behaviors, contact your school counselor or other professional for advice.

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

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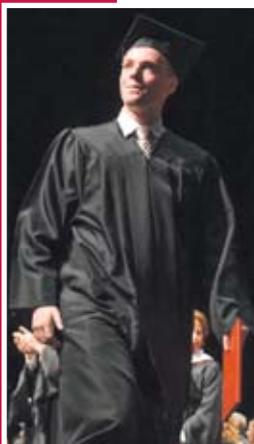
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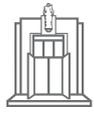
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Time: 10am-1pm

Date: February 3rd

Place: Cardinal Hayes High School
650 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10451

For more info contact Craig Joseph at 718-292-6100 x 187
or visit www.cardinalhayes.org

Catholic Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 14

whole child is a priority and we offer an exemplary academic curriculum supplemented with visual arts instruction, weekly music lessons, physical education and technology classes. We provide an early drop-off breakfast program and after care services until 6:00pm. Scholarships are available.

St. Helena School

**2050 Benedict Avenue
718-892-3234, www.sthelenaschoolbronxny.org
Principal – Rich Meller**

A culturally diverse Middle School Accredited Catholic school that educates children from full day Pre-K – 3 years to 8th grade in the Park Chester/Castle Hill section of the Bronx. The school motto is “It’s Fun to be Good!” Students in grades 1-8 have a schedule from 8:00 to 2:35 daily. Students enjoy 2 periods of gym, computers and library each week in state-of-the-art facilities. Extracurricular activities include boys as well as girls’ basketball, track, bowling, volleyball, cub scouts and summer camp. The graduates have earned over \$200,000 in high school scholarships.

St. Simon Stock School

**2195 Valentine Avenue
718-367-0453
www.stsimonstockschool.org**

Is a private co-educational Catholic School for children in Pre K 4 through 8th grade. We provide a quality education along with a challenging curriculum. We are departmentalized in our 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Our school is an “oasis in the desert” as the late John Cardinal O’Connor was known to say in talks to educators everywhere. We are a stabilizing influence in the community and a beacon of hope for the inner city neighborhood. All of us at St. Simon Stock believe in what we do, like what we do and are proud of what we do. This is evident in the fact that the majority of our teaching staff has been part of our school’s community since the 1980’s. Our students are involved in curriculum based class trips, where they can visualize what they have read about

in their textbooks and many other innovative programs. Ask about our Cardinal Scholarships for the new school year for new students from public schools.

St. Theresa School

**2872 St. Theresa Avenue
718-792-3688, www.sttheresaschoolbronx.org**

Children who pass through our doors are eager to learn and are challenged by a stimulating academic, social and athletic curriculum infused with Catholic values. The program reflects an integrated learning experience for Pre-K for 3-year-olds, Universal Pre-K for 4-year-olds, Kindergarteners and students in grades 1-8. Teachers, administrators, aides and other professionals all impart their knowledge and extensive experience with enthusiasm and a truly caring respect for the children in their charge. Providing before and after school programs, breakfast and lunch, a children’s choir, art, music, Italian language studies, computer classes, physical education and an accelerated mathematics program. We also offer a wide variety of after school activities. Our school offers children a place to grow and blossom with discipline and guidance.

St. Thomas Aquinas School

**1909 Daly Ave.
718-893-7600
www.staschoolbx.org**

Our school was founded by Mother Butler and the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary in 1907. Over these years the school has been a mainstay in the neighborhood. It continues to provide a Roman Catholic curriculum and a quality education addressing the changing needs of the student population. Catholic values are infused in every aspect of their students’ educational experience. The faculty and staff are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all. St. Thomas Aquinas school is committed to the mission of Catholic education. Registration is ongoing. Inquire about scholarships. The school has full day Pre-K4 and Kindergarten, grades 1 to 8. Early drop-off and after-school are also available.

St. Helena Elementary School

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11:00 – 1:00

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A Safe Passage Through Childhood/A Solid Religious Foundation

As seen in the Daily News on December 19, 2006 - Catholic school keeps faiths "All God's children" welcome "There is a wonderful family atmosphere here. In the Parkchester area, you have all these faiths. It doesn't matter if your neighbor is Muslim or Catholic. They're still your neighbor." — Richard Meller,



2050 Benedict Ave.

*School entrance on Benedict Avenue
between Pugsley Ave. & Olmstead Ave.*

Bronx, NY 10462

718-892-3234

www.sthelenaschoolbronxny.org

STEM for all

Making science accessible for English language learners

BY HANNAH THELEN

Learning a new language is hard. Trying to learn complicated math and science concepts in a new language is even harder.

With almost five million English language learners in U.S. public schools facing this near-impossible challenge, it is difficult to believe that bilingual science, technology, engineering, and math resources are still not readily available. The rate of high school graduation for English language learners is only 63 percent, almost 20 percent lower than the national average. These students often fall behind in basic subjects due to insufficient language accommodations.

Wendi Pillars, an experienced English language learners teacher from Chatham County Schools in North Carolina, says, “Teachers continue to report that they feel unprepared to work with students who are language learners ... even though English language learners enrollment continues to increase annually in most states.”

This issue also causes educators to overlook English language learners who may be candidates for advancement, evidenced by the paltry two percent enrolled in gifted programs.

Even as English as a second language, bilingual, and dual-language immersion schools become more popular, these programs almost universally face a lack of resources.

This is particularly frustrating for Spanish-speaking English language learners, who make up a significant portion of this population. Spanish speakers comprise over half of all English language learners in the U.S., with more than 3.8 million students. In the U.S. today, one of every four public school students is Hispanic — and this number increases daily. In fact, the U.S. is now home to more Spanish speakers than Spain.

Science, technology, engineering, and math subjects are vital to helping students succeed in school and in daily tasks like understanding mortgages and using electronics. The National Science

The need for bilingual education

- Nearly one in 10 students in U.S. public schools are English language learners.
- The U.S. is home to 52.6 million native or bilingual Spanish-speakers.
- Seventy percent of Hispanic students speak a language other than English at home.
- Students in two-way dual language programs show higher reading and math scores.
- Bilingual adults experience less cognitive decline as they age.

Foundation stresses that “to succeed in this new information-based and highly technological society, students need to develop their capabilities in STEM to levels much beyond what was considered acceptable in the past.” Careers in science, technology, engineering, and math are growing quickly, and typically provide high salaries. It is more important than ever to ensure that all students are receiving quality education, yet English language learners have notably few resources that deal with these subjects.

Fortunately, educators and educational publishers are beginning to address this problem.

There is now a resource designed specifically to help Spanish-speaking science, technology, engineering, and math students learn these subjects.

A set of middle-grade books offers literature-based science and math brain-teasers in both English and Spanish, with easy side-by-side comparison that allows students to develop their language and science and math skills at the same time. Having a resource like this, which clearly explains science and math concepts in a fun, accessible way, can be game-changing for these students.

These books are part of the five-book “One Minute Mysteries” series, written by father-daughter team Eric and Natalie Yoder. They challenge kids to solve real-life brain-teasers using their knowledge



Bilingual resources: Where to begin

These great websites curate quality Spanish language and bilingual resources for parents and educators:

- De Colores: The Raza Experience in Books for Children, <http://decoloresreviews.blogspot.com>
- ¡Colorín colorado!, <http://www.colorincolorado.org> (For educators and families of English language learners)
- Bilingual Books for Kids: Multicultural Connections y Cosas Hispánicas, <http://www.bilingualbooks.com>
- Common Sense Media, commonsensemedia.org (List of bilingual & Latino books)
- Goodreads, www.goodreads.com (List of popular bilingual Spanish books)

of science, technology, engineering, and math subjects.

Previously only available in English, the bilingual edition of the science mysteries book was released last year, titled “More Short Mysteries You Solve With Science! – ¡Más Misterios Cortos que Resuelves con Ciencias!” The second bilingual book was just released in August, this time offering math mysteries, “Short Mysteries You Solve With Math! – ¡Misterios Cortos que Resuelves con Matemáticas!”

Dr. Carmen M. Martinez-Roldan, from



English language learners face a unique challenge in science, technology, engineering, and math classes.

the Bilingual Education Program at Columbia University, writes of the book set, “Bilingual materials addressing STEM topics are long overdue. These books give kids the vocabulary and confidence they need to succeed in the classroom.”

For more great bilingual resources, take a look at the websites listed in the sidebar.

It’s important for these books and other bilingual resources to be easy enough to use at home as well as in the classroom. Bilingual resources are especially helpful for kids who speak English at school, but use only Spanish at home with their parents. The development of language skills should be encouraged beyond the school day, for both Spanish

speakers learning English, and English speakers hoping to become bilingual.

Bilingual education is not just for English language learners. Many English speakers are discovering the powerful positive impact that knowledge of a second language can have on academic and personal success. Reading and math scores of students in two-way dual-language education are higher than those of monolingual students, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, proficiency in English, or special education skills. Bilingual children also demonstrate an increased sense of self-worth and identity, and tend to relate to others better than monolingual students.

The handful of websites and books

mentioned here fill only a small portion of the bilingual science, technology, engineering, and math resources that this country needs. That being said, it’s an important start.

As educators and educational publishers become aware of the shortage, more bilingual resources will become available and, more importantly, make their way into the hands of students who need them.

Hannah Thelen graduated from Bowling Green State University with a bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing. She lives in Washington, D.C., where she generally enjoys reading, writing articles or short stories, and drinking too much bubble tea. Contact her at Hannah@PlatypusMedia.com.

Charter Schools

DIRECTORY

(AECI) NYC Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering & Construction Industries

838 Brook Avenue
646-400-5566
www.aecicharterhs.org

An academic program that provides students with a foundation of the necessary skills, knowledge, and practical experience to pursue a path leading to college and/or a career in the architecture, engineering, or construction industries. AECI's offerings are focused on providing a rigorous college preparatory sequence of classes while also preparing students for success on industry-recognized certification exams. All students receive double periods of Math and ELA in freshman year to prepare for long lasting success. All staff members are tasked with developing the whole child by working together to ensure that all students' academic, emotional, and social development is supported, cultivated, and challenged.

Brilla Public Charter Schools

Brilla College Prep
413 E. 144th Street
Brilla Veritas
500 Courtlandt Ave
347-273-8439

www.brillacollegeprep.org

Brilla is a network of high-performing free public charter schools located in the South Bronx. Students at Brilla Charter Schools outperform Local District Schools, and New York State Schools, ranking in the top third in both Math and Literacy across the state. Our Students grew more than 3 times as much as other charter school students across the state in Literacy.

Bronx Charter School for Excellence

Parkchester Campus: Bronx Excellence 1 (K-4), Bronx Excellence Middle (5-8), 1952-1960 Benedict Ave. 718-828-7301

Morris Park Campus: Bronx Excellence 2 (K-3), 1804 Holland Ave. 718-892-1276

Wakefield Campus: Bronx Excellence 3 (K-2), 3956 Carpenter Ave. 718-882-0231

New Campus: Bronx Excellence 4 (K-1), LOCATION TBA
bronxexcellence.org/

We are Bronx Excellence 1-4, a network of free, public charter schools serving the Bronx, NY, the most ethnically and linguistically diverse borough in New York City. Bronx Excellence 1 (K-8) is among the top-performing charter schools in New York. In 2012, Bronx Excellence 1 gained recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School – the U.S. Department of Education's highest honor for schools across the country. Bronx Excellence 1 houses

Continued on page 22

Apply to Brilla Public Charter Schools!



What Is Brilla?

Brilla Charter Schools is a network of high-performing free public charter schools located in the South Bronx.

- Students at Brilla Charter Schools outperform Local District Schools, New York City Schools, and New York State Schools, ranking in the top third in both Math and Literacy across the state.
- Students at Brilla Charter Schools grew more than 3 times as much as other charter school students across the state in Literacy.



Join us for an Open House!

February 1, 2018 9:00 – 10:00am BCPE	March 1, 2018 9:00 – 10:00am BCPE	March 13, 2018 6:00 – 7:00pm Veritas
February 15, 2018 9:00 – 10:00am Veritas	March 1, 2018 6:00 – 7:00pm BCPE	March 15, 2018 9:00 – 10:00am Veritas

BCPE is located at 413 E 144th Street | No RSVP necessary
Veritas is located at 500 Courtlandt Ave

413 E. 144th St., Bronx New York 10454 • 500 Courtlandt Ave, Bronx, NY 10451 • (347) 273-8439 • brillacollegeprep.org



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Parkchester Campus

Bronx Excellence 1 (K-4)

Bronx Excellence Middle (5-8)

1952-1960 Benedict Ave., Bronx, NY 10462
718-828-7301

Morris Park Campus

Bronx Excellence 2 (K-3)

1804 Holland Ave., Bronx, NY 10462
718-892-1276

Wakefield Campus

Bronx Excellence 3 (K-2)

3956 Carpenter Ave., Bronx, NY 10466
718-882-0231

New Campus!

Bronx Excellence 4 (K-1)

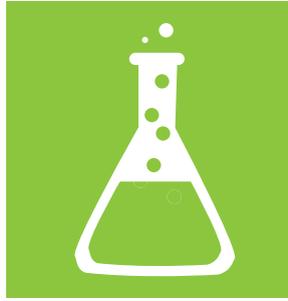
LOCATION TBA

Bronx Excellence 1-4 applications are available between 10:00am and 2:00pm at the front desk of every school and Online.

Every Bronx Excellence campus is a free, public charter school open to district residents. Candidates are selected through a blind lottery system.

Bronx Excellence and its parent organization, Excellence Community Schools, are based on a K-8 National Blue Ribbon Award-Winning program that began with Bronx 1.

BRONXEXCELLENCE.ORG



Online Activity Guide
on
www.NYParenting.com



Charter Schools

DIRECTORY

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a full elementary school (K-4) and a middle school (5-8) in Parkchester. Bronx Excellence 2 completed its inaugural school year in June 2017 and now serves Kindergarten to 3rd Grade in Morris Park. Bronx Excellence 3 opened to Kindergarten and 1st Grade scholars in the Wakefield area this past Fall. We are pleased to announce that Bronx Excellence 4 will be our newest addition to the Excellence family, welcoming Kindergarten and 1st Grade scholars in Fall 2018. Bronx Excellence 2-4 will add a new grade level each year until they reach 8th grade, creating educational sustainability for neighborhood families. Bronx Excellence 5 is slated to open in 2019.

Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School

718-402-0081 x227
www.cmccs.org

The countdown has begun! In September 2018, our new Charter School will open its doors in District 10 in the Bronx. The school and curriculum are non-sectarian, encouraging children and families from all backgrounds. Applications are now being accepted for both kindergarten and first grade and a new grade will be added every year. Each grade will have 3 classes with 20-25 students per classroom. The school will offer an extended day program and staffing models that promote personalized

Continued on page 24

Applications are now being accepted!

The Cardinal McCloskey Community Charter School

Opening in September 2018

Applications are being accepted for Kindergarten and 1st Grade



- A safe and supportive school based on a trauma informed approach for children who have suffered trauma and neglect
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For more information

please email us at

Admissions@CMCCS.org

or call us at

718-402-0081 x 227

Visit us at

CMCCS.org



The New York City Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering & Construction Industries

838 Brook Avenue, Bronx, New York 10451
646-400-5566 | aecicharterhs.org | Fax: 718-585-4780

ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

Parents and Guardians are cordially invited to attend this annual open house event for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year. We invite families to our school to preview our school environment and tour the building to see the program currently available for incoming freshman students.

Saturday, February 10, 2018 10:00am – 1:00pm



EVENTO ANNUAL DE PUERTAS ABIERTAS

Los padres y tutores están cordialmente invitados a asistir a este evento anual de puertas abiertas de nuestra institución para el próximo año escolar 2018-2019. Invitamos a las familias a nuestra escuela a realizar una vista previa para conocer nuestro ambiente escolar y recorrer el edificio para ver los programas que están disponibles para los estudiantes del primer año.

Sabado, Febrero 10, 2018 10:00am - 1:00pm



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Charter Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 22

instruction. Comprehensive wrap-around services will promote each child's educational, emotional and behavioral growth. To apply, or for more information, please visit CMCCS.org, email admissions@CMCCS.org or call 718-402-0081 x227.

The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

116 East 169th Street

347-735-5480

www.yalowcharter.org

The school's mission is to eliminate the learning achievement gap for poor urban children—including special needs students and English language learners—by using an engaging and demanding curriculum to graduate students at or above grade level in literacy and math. We believe all children will learn and thrive in an environment that provides a wide array of learning supports to both children and their families. Recognizing the connection between social emotional support and student achievement, our school uses the collaborative teaching approach—a lead teacher and one with a background in social work for grades K-2. Students will be provided a strong foundation in literacy, using the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program (assessed through the STEP Literacy Assessment) and Singapore math (assessed through NWEA). The extended school day will run from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.—filled with rich extracurricular activities (arts, chess, fencing).

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The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

A MODERN CLASSIC GRADE SCHOOL

2018-2019 School Year
Grades K-2

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yalowcharter.org/apply
116 East 169th St. Bronx, NY
347-735-5480



The Rosalyn Yalow Charter School

Una Escuela Clasica Moderna

Ano Escolar 2018-2019
Grados de K-4

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Excellence-Community-Schools.Workable.com

Meet the dentist

How to prepare your child for the first dental visit

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Jane and Drew Tamassia love going to the dentist. They think it is fun. Perhaps it's words like "tickle toothbrush" and "sugar bug remover" that make these preschoolers giggle. Maybe it's the mini-movie theater or Downtown Disney decorations that draw them in.

"I think they like going because I started them early and chose someone who knows how to work with children," says Suzanne Tamassia, whose own childhood dental fears drove her to find a dentist who works specifically with children.

"Getting children in at an early age is key," says pediatric dentist Lawrence Louie. "I like to see them when the first tooth erupts. It gives me a chance to get a good look at the child's mouth and lets me share oral health care and nutrition information with the parents."

Jennifer Luzader, pediatric dental hygienist, agrees.

"We recommend children have their first dental exam by their first birthday, and their first dental cleaning by age 2."

Even before that first appointment, there are things parents can do to prepare their child for their visit.

"Use books, videos, and role play at home," says Luzader. "Talk with your child using good, positive terms, and remind him how important it is to take care of his teeth and eat the right kinds of foods."

That is what Susan Magasiny did.

"Before Jake's first appointment, we talked about how the dentist was a doctor for his teeth and that to keep them healthy, he needed to have check ups," says the mother of two. "I told him the dentist was going to look at his teeth, count them, and maybe take a picture. It was no big deal."

"I remember sitting at home [and] role-playing with Jane," recalls Tamassia. "I would say, 'Open your mouth, and let me see your teeth,' then I would pretend to be the dentist. She liked that."

Role-playing did prepare Jane for that first visit, because when she went, she knew just what to expect.

"When a child comes in, we try to make it a fun experience," say Luzader. "They get to pick out things like fluoride flavor, sunglasses for eye protection, and a new toothbrush and floss. Then we go through



each step of what we are going to do, first on their fingers, then in their mouths. We count their teeth, scale those that are covered with plaque and tartar, and then polish. We finish with a fluoride treatment and have the dentist come in for an exam."

Louie talks children through the procedures, too.

"We call it, 'Tell. Show. Do.' First we tell them what we are going to do, show them on our hands, then do it — that way there are no surprises."

Even without so-called "surprises," sometimes anxiety sets in.

"Crying through the first two years is very expected, even at 3," says Luzader. "One way to ward off tears is with distraction. We have puppets we use and will talk with children on their level to gain their confidence. We also try to make it fun — 'What kind of animal is down your throat today?' Even when children come in crying, 95 percent of them leave with a smile."

"What is really important is that parents not relay any fears they have about going to the dentist," says Louie. "Every once in a while, I see where parents have elaborated on what happened to them, and it comes through to the children."

On occasion, dental emergencies arise which cannot be avoided.

"One week after Jake's first appointment, he fell into a picnic table and had a

severe dental injury. His gum was pushed up to the top of his mouth and his whole front tooth was exposed," recalls Magasiny. "I called the dentist and they took us in right away."

But it was a wait-and-see injury. In the months to follow, Jake had to return several times so the dentist could evaluate the situation.

"I started to prep him about losing his tooth early, which he did about six months later," she continues. "But through it all, Jake built trust and confidence in the dentist."

So much so, if you asked him today, he would tell you he looks forward to his dental visits. His mother does, too.

"What I appreciate most about our dental practice is that they have given me tools to teach my children preventative dentistry," says Magasiny.

Tamassia agrees.

"I like how our dentist takes a sincere interest in children," she says. "Everything is catered to them — there's an indoor climbing playhouse, video room, and lots of books. They even get to take home a goodie bag and report card!"

"The goal is to have the child enjoy his first, second, third — whatever visit it is," says Luzader. "Because if he does, he'll want to return again and again."

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

Continued...

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Questions to ask when choosing a dentist

Here's what the Academy has to say:

Before the visit:

- Do you have special training or interest in treating children?
- Are you a member of the American Dental Association or the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry?
- Is the dental office set up for children? Does it offer toys, books, games, and/or child-sized furniture?
- How does your office deal with dental emergencies?
- Is the office conveniently located to your home or your child's school?
- Does the practice accept dental benefit plans?

After the visit:

- Was my child seen promptly?
- Was I asked for a complete medical and dental history of my child?
- Was the dentist gentle but thorough when examining my child's mouth?
- Did the dentist or staff talk with my child, encouraging his involvement in dental health?
- Was I informed about my child's tooth development, the causes and prevention of dental disease, and appropriate dental care at home?
- Were my questions treated with concern and respect?
- Was the visit a positive experience for my child?

Frequently asked questions about visiting the dentist

When should my child first see a dentist? At the eruption of the first tooth and no later than his first birthday.

How often does my child need to go? Every six months.

When should I first clean my child's teeth and what should I use? Clean your child's gums right from the start. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush with a small head and water, at least once a day before bedtime.

When can I begin using toothpaste? Fluoridated toothpaste should be introduced when your child is between the ages of 2 to 3.

How do I know if my child is getting

10 tips to prepare for the first dental visit

Here are some suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry:

1. Start early to get your child acclimated to visiting the dentist and prevent future dental problems.
2. Consider a "get acquainted" visit to introduce your child to the dental office before the first appointment.
3. Choose a pediatric dental practice. Pediatric dentists have two to three years of specialized training beyond dental school in treating children. Plus, the offices are child friendly.
4. Select an appointment time when your child is alert and rested.
5. Explain before the visit that the dentist is a friend and will help your child

keep his teeth healthy. Add that the visits will be fun.

6. Answer all your child's questions positively. (Keep an ear out for scary stories from peers and siblings.)

7. Avoid using scary words. Check-ups and 90 percent of first visits do not have anything to do with "hurt," so do not even use the word.

8. Read your child a story about a character that had a good dental visit.

9. Write out questions in advance about your child's dental health on such topics as home care, injury prevention, diet and snacking, fluoride, and tooth development.

10. Make sure your child has regularly scheduled dental visits twice a year to maintain good dental health.

Resources to prepare children for visits with the dentist

- "Barney Goes to the Dentist" by Linda Cress Dowdy; Publishing Lyrick
- "The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist" by Stan & Jan Berenstain; Random House
- "Brush Your Teeth Please Pop-Up" by Leslie McGuire; Reader's Digest
- "Curious George Goes to the Dentist" Margaret Rey; Houghton Mifflin
- "Doctor DeSoto" by William Steig; Farrar, Straus & Giroux
- "Going to the Dentist" by Fred Rogers; Putnam
- "Have You Ever Seen a Moose Brushing His Teeth?" by Jamie McClaine; Partners Publishing Group
- "How Many Teeth?" By Paul Show-

ers; HarperCollins Publishing

- "Just Going to the Dentist" by Mercer Mayer; Golden Books

- "Show Me Your Smile!: A Visit to the Dentist (Dora the Explorer)" by Christine Ricci; Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.

- "Smile! Says the Crocodile" by Jane Belk Moncure; Child's World

- "The Tooth Book" (Bright & Early Board Books) by Dr. Seuss; Random House

- "A Trip to the Dentist Can Be Lots of Fun!" (Videorecording) by Robert Wortzel and Rob Garner; Night Media Group, Inc.

- "A Trip to the Dentist Through Pinata's View" (Videorecording); Boggle-Goggle Enterprises

- "What to Expect When You Go to the Dentist" (What to Expect Kids) by Heidi Murkoff; Harper Festival

enough fluoride? Ask your dentist to evaluate your primary source of drinking water. If the fluoride level is deficient, he may prescribe fluoride supplements.

What can be done to alleviate pain during teething? Give your child a clean teething ring; cold spoon; or cold, wet washcloth. Or rub his gums with a clean finger.

When should a child stop bottle feeding? Between 12 to 14 months of age.

What is baby bottle tooth decay, and how can I prevent it? Baby bottle tooth decay is caused by nursing a child to sleep or putting him to bed with anything other than water. To prevent it, have your child drink from a cup by his first birthday. Do not let him fall asleep with a bottle. Night-time breastfeeding

should be avoided after the first primary teeth erupt. Drink juice from a cup instead of a bottle.

When should my child stop sucking his thumb or fingers? Most children stop by age 2. If your child is still sucking his thumb after age 4, discourage it and talk with your dentist or pediatrician. Prolonged thumb sucking can create crowded and crooked teeth, or bite problems.

What should I do if my child has a toothache? Rinse the irritated area with warm salt water and place a cold compress on his face if it is swollen. Give your child pain reliever for pain. See a dentist as soon as possible.

— *the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry*



Riverdale Pediatric Dentistry

Liraz Spear, DDS FAAPD

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Dr. Asadi is a highly experienced and passionate dentist who is always learning the latest dental advances to provide her patients with the highest quality of care. As a mother of two, she knows the importance of the kind of place you take your family for their dental care. That is why she makes sure her staff is friendly, gentle and family-focused and the environment is calm and peaceful.



Dr. Pincus loves being a pediatric dentist, believing that enjoyable experiences at a young age will pave the way for a positive dental future. She enjoys singing songs and talking TV or sports with her patients as she works.

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Dr. Liraz Spear is a Board Certified Pediatric dentist who completed Columbia University's School of Dental and Oral Surgery in 1998 and then furthered her pediatric dental training at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Dr. Spear regularly attends continuing education courses and is on the faculty at Lenox Hill Hospital. She also has a certificate in sedation. Dr. Spear is dedicated to making your dental experience comfortable, and to educating you and your family on good diet and oral health practices.



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Not taking 'No' for an answer

Bump on son's neck leads to hyperthyroidism diagnosis

Five-year-old Jason was crankier than usual. Everything seemed to bug him — even things he previously loved, as well as sleeping and eating. Suddenly, he had trouble falling asleep and when he finally did, he couldn't stay asleep. Foods he previously loved made him feel sick or he was starving so much, he couldn't get enough food. He seemed more hyperactive, swinging his leg back and forth constantly, talking very fast, and was feeling hotter than usual, often sweating when it was cold out.

The pediatrician said he was simply having a growth spurt, or “just being a regular active boy.” Jason's mom, Lindsey Moynihan, knew there was something else going on, but trusted her doctor. However, when Jason grew more restless and irritable, she sought out a second opinion from another pediatrician a few weeks later, and was given a clean bill of health once more.

“I was infuriated, because I knew Jason was just not himself,” she says.

A few days later, Lindsey noticed an ever-so-slight bump on Jason's neck, and when she felt it, she instantly felt cold to her bones, not knowing what it was, but knowing that it shouldn't be there.

At an Urgent Care facility, the doctor in charge ordered an immediate ultrasound of Jason's neck, which showed a very large nodule directly on his thyroid gland, and bloodwork. Lindsey was directed to an endocrinologist who did more bloodwork, which showed that Jason was hyperthyroid, meaning that he was producing too much thyroid hormone, which was causing his anxiety, rapid heart rate, mood swings, and more.

The endocrinologist discussed the possibility that a nodule of this size could also be malignant. The American Society of Clinical Oncology reports that “thyroid cancer is the most common cancer in women 20 to 34. About two percent of cases occur in children and teens. The incidence rates of thyroid cancer in both women and men have been increasing in recent years, at a rate of about five percent more a year.”

“To learn that Jason had a thyroid problem was bad enough, but to consider that it might be stemming from cancer was devastating,” says Lindsey.

Lindsey was then referred to a thyroid



surgeon and a biopsy was performed in the surgeon's office in the form of fine needle aspiration. The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends that fine needle aspirations should be considered for nodules larger than 10 millimeters in diameter. Jason's nodule was more than three centimeters. After three agonizing days, Lindsey got the phone call that the nodule was benign. She was “extremely relieved and thankful,” however, Jason still suffered with the hyperthyroidism.

The thyroid is a vital organ and responsible for every system in the body, so hyperthyroidism causes every body system to work in overdrive. Jason's heart rate was 130 at rest and his metabolism was so sped up that he was losing weight despite eating more. Graves' Disease, an autoimmune disease, can cause hyperthyroidism, but Jason's blood test showed he did not have this, so the next step was a radioactive thyroid uptake scan. This requires the patient to ingest a radioactive pill and then have a scan done to see how the thyroid is working.

Lindsey was not thrilled with the idea of her son having to ingest a radioactive pill, but she was assured that the amount in the pill was a safe level, and it was crucial to finding out where the hyperthyroidism was coming from.

This thyroid uptake scan showed that



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Jason had a toxic nodule, a solitary nodule that was producing extra thyroid hormone. There are two options when faced with a toxic nodule: radioactive iodine treatment or surgery. Children are not candidates for radioactive iodine treatment (and many adults opt out of this as well as it contains a massive amount of radioactive iodine and necessitates isolation for three to seven days). Anti-thyroid medication may also be given to help alleviate hyperthyroid symptoms initially, but it will not be a permanent solution. Surgery was the recommended choice.

“The surgeon explained that toxic nodules do not go away on their own, and surgery is often inevitable, and it's a long-term solution. I was so on the fence about it, but when I heard this, I knew it had to be done.”

A month later, Jason underwent a partial thyroidectomy. His hyperthyroidism resolved almost immediately and the surgery discovered that the nodule had been pressing on his trachea, another reason why removal was the best option. Lindsey feels relieved now that the six-month ordeal is over, and happy that she did not take “no” for an answer when her son first became sick.

“Jason did wonderful with the surgery, and says he can even breathe better now,” says Lindsey. “I am so glad it is all over, and also glad that I discovered the lump before his condition worsened.”

Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.

Too much sports?

How to tell if your child is overdoing it

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Football, hockey, and basketball youth teams are in full swing, and before you know it, it's going to be the time to plan your youngster's athletic activities for spring and summer.

Soon, they'll be winning trophies and ribbons. And that's fantastic. Young athletes feel a great sense of achievement and pride when they get recognition. And when kids are involved in any kind of sport, they develop social skills and learn life-long lessons in teamwork and good sportsmanship; even how to incorporate fitness into their daily lives as they get older.

Plus, compared to two decades ago, kids are participating in organized and recreational athletics at a younger age and playing a lot more — even year-round.

All positive things, right?

Well, as they say, too much of a good thing isn't necessarily good for you, and unfortunately, there's a downside to all that positivity: sports injuries and emergency room visits have become all too common.

As parents, we should ask ourselves: How much is too much? Are our kids overdoing sports? And, are we partly to blame for pushing them too hard?

Sometimes, it seems as if loving, doting parents look for ways to keep their kids overly involved with after-school, week-end, and summer sports activities, because they don't want them feeling bored, or they feel it's good for them, and it's what other families are doing. Perhaps it's what they themselves were doing as children. Maybe some of us are guilty of living vicariously through their offspring. Are we lovingly encouraging them to be more and more competitive? To run or swim or throw a ball faster and harder? Urging them not to quit no matter what? Telling them that missing a game is unsportsmanlike — even if they're feeling sore or would rather sit this one out?

Every child is different. So, ask yourself: Is my Liam overdoing it? Can Isabel's soccer injury lead to future problems? How much is too much for my growing teen?

Numerous studies done in the U.S. and abroad have shown that there is a definite increase in sports-related injuries in young children and teens. Some can lead to life-long issues if not addressed properly.

According to the American Academy

Cover all your bases

Before starting a sport, a pre-participation physical evaluation should be done to make sure youngsters are ready to play and compete, according to healthychildren.org. Get them checked out at least six weeks before the season begins to allow for any extra evaluation or rehabilitation.

During the season and offseason, it's important to keep up their fitness level. Warm-up and cool-down exercises are essential. Make sure to allow time for general and sport-specific conditioning during pre-season training.

And remember, great athletes — no matter their age — need a balanced diet, adequate sleep, and should be well-hydrated at all times.

of Pediatrics, half of all sports medicine injuries in children and teens are from overuse. And they are at increased risk for overuse injuries because growing bones are less resilient.

Is your Little League pitcher or Olympic-hopeful swimmer having shoulder pain caused by repetitive motion? Watch for these types of overuse injuries, which can occur from damage to a muscle, bone, ligament, or tendon. It's important that kids take time off from activities to allow their bodies to heal.

Don't hesitate to talk to your pediatrician if something doesn't look or feel right. Is there pain or discomfort in the affected area during and after physical activity that may limit your athlete's performance? Or constant pain even while he or she is resting?

Along with physical therapy, treatment plans involve controlling painful symptoms and modifying hectic sports schedules. The more you know about potential issues and how to prevent them, the better for your sports enthusiast.

According to www.healthychildren.org, excessive training programs are a no-no. And make sure your budding athletic star has enough time to heal from a sports injury. It's all about a commonsense approach, and experts say the key to preventing overuse injuries is maintaining a

healthy balance of activities.

Doctors are warning about those long-term health issues from overuse in youth sports, especially for those who suffer from bone, joint, and spine-related injuries while playing, according to a study from the Centre for Sports and Exercise Medicine at The London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

Weighing in on this timely and important topic with valuable suggestions for parents is Dr. Leon E. Popovitz, a top-rated orthopedic surgeon at New York Bone and Joint Specialists, a New York City-based, multi-specialty orthopedic practice providing high-quality care to its patients.

According to Dr. Popovitz, "if a young athlete, whose growth plates are still open, suffers an anterior cruciate ligament tear, then a reconstruction may often be delayed until growth plates close. This is because reconstruction when growth plates are open may affect the growth of the limb. During this time the child typically is recommended to limit sports activities. Eventually, the anterior cruciate ligament is reconstructed when the child further matures, because if the knee is unstable, then the protective cartilage will tear away and arthritis may develop at a premature age."

When signing your kids up for youth sports, here are some things the good doctor says you should consider:

- Is your child playing multiple contact sports?
- Has your child been previously injured?
- Is she playing multiple sports in a season?

If your child is heavily involved in youth sports and has experienced injuries in the past, here is what he recommends:

- Add a non-contact sport into your child's schedule.
- Pay attention to his body and his aches and pains.
- Make sure there is an offseason between sports, so her body can rest.
- Keep in mind that following a sports injury or an illness, a speedy return to activity depends on early recognition and treatment.

Of course, it's always a good idea for youngsters to have an annual medical checkup before the sports season begins. Especially if they have an injury; a history of medical problems, like asthma; or are taking medicines regularly.

So, what is considered too much when it comes to youth sports?



Be cautious

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that before adolescence, young athletes should avoid specializing in one sport. So encourage them to try a variety of activities, and consider the following:

- They should play one sport no more than five days per week.
- Sign them up for only one team and one sport per season.
- Cross-train. Make sure your kids vary their endurance workouts to include multiple different activities, like swimming, biking, or elliptical trainers.
- Keep practice fun and age appropriate.

“It has been documented that excessive participation for children in one sport (as opposed to various sports) increases the chance of injury,” says Dr. Popovitz. “Examples include Little League elbow and Little League shoulder. These are painful conditions that occur from excessive throwing. Often treated very well with rest.”

In his practice, he says he is finding overuse injuries, such as Little League shoulder, more and more common.

Parents and caretakers should also keep an eye out for these other issues:

- Inability to fully move a joint, arm, or leg.

- Inability to stand or walk.
- Joint swelling, locking, or instability.
- Visible deformity or mass in arms, legs, or joints.
- Back or neck pain, especially if accompanied by numbness, weakness, or pain that runs down the arm or leg.
- Pain that does not go away.
- Pain that disrupts activity or sleep.

Remember, kids bones are still forming and are more vulnerable to injuries.

“Often, when there is an injury but no sign of fracture in a child with open growth plates, and there is pain in or around the growth plate, then it is typically treated as a fracture. Thus, the limb is braced or casted or a sling is used to protect the growth plate. This allows healing of the growth plate,” Dr. Popovitz explains.

The doctor points out that it’s those growth plate injuries — like fractures and cartilage injuries, such as meniscus tears — that have long-term effects or cause permanent damage. He explains that ligament injuries (such an anterior cruciate ligament tear) can lead to cartilage damage. Thus, these injuries need to be addressed and treated as soon as possible.

Dr. Popovitz has performed many meniscus repairs and repaired damage to the cartilage lining (example: osteochondritis dissecans).

“This is important, because the meniscus protects the cartilage lining of the bone,” says Popovitz. “We are born with only a finite amount. So, we need to pre-

Burnout

Burnout (overtraining syndrome) includes mental, physical, and hormonal changes that can affect your child’s performance (especially during puberty). Over-planning sports activities seems to be based on today’s “keep ‘em busy and active” mindset. So, what do you do if your child wants to quit?

First of all, don’t panic! Talk about it, and find out why and what happened. There’s usually a good reason and they should be part of the decision-making process. If you feel it may help, have a talk with their coach.

Two in five youngsters drop out of a sports program, according to the American Psychological Association. Reasons most often include:

- Lack of enjoyment
- Loss of interest
- Conflicts with the coach
- Would rather play another sport
- Too much stress and pressure
- Not performing up to the standards they’ve set for themselves
- Not enough playing time
- Too much else going on in their lives
- An overly competitive atmosphere
- Pain or discomfort

serve that cartilage for a lifetime. So, we take that very seriously in children.

“I also perform anterior cruciate ligament reconstructions. This is particularly challenging in children with open growth plates because the surgery involves drilling holes in the bone to create new attachments of the new ligament in the proper position in the bones. Thus, in children, this procedure needs to be modified so to avoid compromising the growth plates.”

Despite the uptick in youth sports injuries, participation in sports is actually safer than ever, thanks to improvements in the quality of protective equipment, such as padding and helmets, but remember that young bodies are still prone to injury. It’s more a problem of overuse that is contributing to kids’ injuries.

Sports are wonderful, but certainly not the be all and end all. Making time to pursue other interests and different pastimes, and enjoying time with friends — or even some alone time — is also an important part of growing up.

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

Understanding the 2017 tax reform

Wait, what just happened? Many of you surely said this as 2017 came to a close. There was much talk about tax reform toward the year's end. The nuts and bolts of the bill changed as frequently as some people change their clothes, making it hard to keep track of what was in and what was out. But now that the bill has passed and the dust has settled, we can digest it in the bill. Here is an overview of the changes, with some things to consider and potential steps to take if they make sense for your situation:

When will it take effect?: The provisions of the bill are effective from Jan. 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2025, with some exceptions and phase outs. After Dec. 31, 2025, the law sunsets to that which existed as of Dec. 31, 2017. This is not unprecedented; Bush the First used a similar mechanism to gradually increase the federal estate tax exemption before it sunset in 2010.

How Does the tax rate change?: The maximum tax rate will drop from 39.6 percent to 37 percent. There are still seven tax rates — 10 percent (for \$0 to \$9,525, and \$19,000 for married couples), 12, 22, 24, 32, 35, and 37 percent (more than \$500,000, and \$600,000 if married). The Internal Revenue Service will publish the official table at the end of January 2018.

What happened to the Alternative Minimum Tax?: The Alternative Minimum Tax is still around, but the threshold of when it kicks in was increased to \$1 million (married) and \$500,000 (single). In other words, under the Alternative Minimum Tax, a taxpayer begins to lose the potency of certain deductions like real property taxes and mortgage interest at a certain income level. The thresholds under the old law were \$164,000 (married) and \$123,000 (single). Under the new law, higher income earners can continue to benefit from deductions.

Can I take an itemized deduction?: For taxpayers who did not want to itemize deductions or did not have them available

to deduct (such as real property tax and mortgage interest, or charitable deductions), the government allows a “standard” deduction amount. The bill nearly doubles the standard deduction from \$13,000 to \$24,000 (married) and from \$6,500 to \$12,000 (single).

Can I take medical expense deductions?: If you think that you will have increased medical expenses, 2017 and 2018 would be the years in which to aggregate them, if you have that option available. Under the prior law, medical expenses needed to exceed 10 percent of adjusted gross income. The bill reduces that threshold to 7.5 percent for the 2017 and 2018 tax years.

Is there an estate tax?: The bill changed the federal estate tax from about \$5.6 million per person to \$11.2 million per person until 2025, at which point the provisions sunset and the federal estate tax exemption reverts to where it was as of Dec. 31, 2017, with adjustments for inflation. However, the bill impacted only federal estate tax. Most states also impose an estate tax, which remains unchanged absent state-law changes.

What about state and local tax deductions?: State and local tax deductions such as real property taxes, state income taxes, and municipal income taxes are capped at \$10,000. However, if you were subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax previously, it is likely that you were phased out of the impact of these deductions anyway.

And what about the kids? What provisions impact them? This being a parenting magazine, here are some of the ways he bill changes your taxes as it relates to your children:

The “kiddie tax”: The “kiddie tax” is the rate at which unearned income of children under the age of 19 (and college students under 24) is taxed. So, in other words, if you gifted stock to your kids when they were born, and it throws off \$10,000 in income per year in dividends, the income is “unearned,” unlike wages and salary.

Child tax credit: The tax law allows for



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a tax credit (an amount to offset the tax you would otherwise owe, as opposed to a deduction, which offsets the overall gross taxable income) for the number of children you have. As with the Alternative Minimum Tax, under the prior law, the potency of the child tax credit was phased out above a certain income threshold. The bill increased the child tax credit to \$2,000 per qualifying child and is refundable up to \$1,400 subject to phase outs (meaning that even if you do not owe any taxes, the government will refund you the money from the credit).

Deduction for Student Loan Interest: The maximum amount that can be deducted for interest on student loans is \$2,500, with phaseouts for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income exceeding \$65,000 (\$135,000 for married filers).

529 Accounts: You may now access 529 funds to pay for educational expenses for kindergarten through grade 12 schools, not just college.

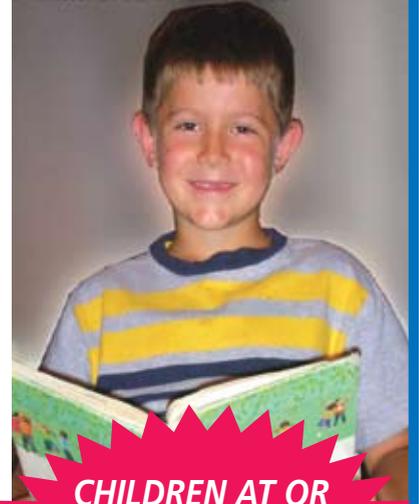
These are just some of the aspects of the elements of the new law. How the bill will impact you and your family depends on your situation. You should consult your accountant to determine how the bill affects your tax situation and determine what, if any, changes to make in your tax planning in 2018.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C. Find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

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The well-rounded CAMPER

Thirty life skills kids build while away from home

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

Feeling anxious about sending your child away to camp this summer? Fret no more. This list of life skills reminds you of all the reasons to send kids to camp in the first place. Remember, being away from the comforts of home offers your camper growth opportunities in a wide variety of competencies. Best of all, once kids are safely dropped off at camp, parents can sit back, relax, and enjoy some much-needed down time, knowing kids will return home transformed by their experiences.

Here are 30 skills to remind parents why camp is always a good idea, as well as a panacea for 21st-century predilections:

Physical skills

Fitness. If your child is passionate about virtual realities, camp is the perfect motivation to get off the couch and get moving. You will be pleased when your child returns home tan, fit, and inspired to keep moving.

Proficiency. Does your child complain of boredom? Exposure to skill-building activities can convert kvetching into pride. Aptitude, discipline, and confidence come from doing new things.

Safety awareness. Do you find yourself fretting about your child's wellbeing? Then send her to camp to learn about first aid, water safety, and other safety protocols that go hand-and-hand with learning new things. When she gets home, she can teach you a thing or two about safety awareness.

Eye-hand coordination. Concerned your child may be a tiny bit klutzy? Send him to camp to participate in activities that encourage process mastery like archery, horseback riding, or rowing. Having to learn an ordered series helps dreamy kids focus and execute tasks.

Healthy risk-taking. Is your child an

adrenalin junkie? Do you worry that she will go too far testing the limits of what's humanly possible? Camp is the perfect place to wear out a child with excess energy. Counselors can help campers channel a zest for risks into safe outlets while honoring camp rules.

Intellectual skills

Decision-making. Does your child waffle when making decisions, take polls of other people's opinions, or go along with the crowd too easily? Then camp is the perfect practice-ground to determine what he wants and needs on a regular basis. Choosing is a crucial ability for creating satisfaction in life.

Accountability. Do you wonder if you do too much for your child? Whether she has to pack her own backpack for an overnight hiking trip or show up wearing activity-appropriate shoes, being prepared for what's coming next in life is important. When it comes to accountability, daily practice is always on tap at camp.

Time management. If your child is often running late, camp is a great place to learn timeliness. Your child will swiftly master punctuality when engaged in activities she enjoys. And this proactive habit can carry over into everyday life during the rest of the year.

Tolerance. Kids sometimes live in homogeneous rather than diverse environments. If all the other kids are the same race, class, and social status where you live, how will your child learn to be open-minded? Camp is a great place to immerse kids in diversity, so tolerance can take root.

Assertiveness. When kids' lives are scheduled from morning to night year-round, they miss out on opportunities to speak up for what they think, need, and desire. Camp offers kids opportunities to practice healthy communication all day

long, because no one is smoothing the path before them.

Emotional skills

Self-care. Kids can't learn to take care of their needs unless they learn to pay attention to them. Going to camp puts kids' self-care muscles to the test. Navigating a new environment with unfamiliar people helps kids learn to trust their intuition and honor their instincts.

Listening. Do you get weary of nagging and feel your child just doesn't listen anymore? Kids can certainly develop listening fatigue with parents and other everyday authority figures. But after tuning in closely to some new-to-them camp leaders, they just might bring better listening abilities back home.

Playfulness. Got a perfectionist kid on your hands? Sometimes within the rush and rigors of daily life, families forget how to relax and enjoy life to the fullest. Camp is a great place to remember how to lighten up and enjoy the day.

Grit. This trendy term means the combination of courage and resolve. If your child does not bounce back quickly from disappointments, camp is a great place to learn tenacity, conflict resolution, and problem solving.

Self-appreciation. Do you appreciate the heck out of your kid but wish he would esteem himself as much as others? Camp is a place where kids can discover new things to like about themselves. Increased self-reliance is often the first step towards building higher self-esteem.

Social skills

Sociability. Do you have a shy or introverted child? If she lacks peers who are enthusiastic about her passions, an interest-based camp can help her meet more like-minded people. Socially awkward kids feel more accepted and appreciated every time they make a new friend.



Emotional intelligence. If you have siblings who bicker quite a bit, they may benefit from getting along more easily with kids who are not kin. Camp counselors have a way of expecting thoughtfulness and encouraging kids to practice it.

Lasting connections. Remember pen pals? At camps, kids can make new friends and find ways to keep in touch until they meet again. This is a great way for kids to maintain long-distance friendships and build an extended social network.

Self-expression. Parents may unwittingly hold kids back from finding new forms of self-expression. At camp, kids find fresh audiences for the countless ways to share who they are and what they think and feel. Increased self-expression leads to unfolding self-discovery.

Co-habiting. If you want your child to learn new things, put him in a tent with roommates and watch the lessons unfold. Sharing space and resources with others is a crash course in self-awareness and peacekeeping.

Occupational skills

Mentoring. Camp counselors provide excellent examples of what a constructive mentor-mentee relationship is like. Go ahead and encourage kids to become counselors in the future if they wish to experience both sides of this

educational relationship.

Collaboration. Perhaps during the school year, teamwork is limited to sports and cooperation is confined to the classroom. At camp, every endeavor from cleaning a cabin to climbing a rock face becomes a new way to understand the importance of working together.

Negotiating. Your kids benefit from learning how to sort things out between themselves at camp. Discussing, bargaining, and coming to agreements that make sense for everyone involved are tools for creating a richer life.

Leadership. Camp provides opportunities for kids to discover and nurture the leader inside. Every child is a boss at something. You may not think of a prolific reader as a leader, but what a terrific example she can set at camp for those who avoid books altogether.

Diplomacy. With bullying behavior at an all-time high, diplomacy is more needed than ever. Camp offers ample opportunities to find common ground, share mutual respect, and practice win-win-win relating.

Environmental skills

Unplugging. Virtual realities are great when balanced with the real world. If you cannot seem to make a dent in your child's obsession with technology, why not let the

trained staff at camp take a whack at it?

Groundedness. The first step to recovering from too much anxiety is a sense of earthiness that comes from being in touch with the natural world. Kids benefit in numerous ways from slowing down the speed of life and keeping their feet firmly on the ground.

Navigation. You won't likely be able to convince kids that they need to learn old-school map techniques while they have a navigation system in their pocket. But put them in the middle of the woods with no internet connection, and they just might feel differently.

Survival. Would your child know how to build a shelter, purify water, start a fire, and find food if lost in the wilderness? Learning naturalism empowers kids to feel competent and confident in every area of life.

Earth stewardship. One of the best ways to teach kids about personal responsibility is to teach them about wilderness conservation. Learning about flora and fauna can spark kids' innate respect for the natural world.

Author, journalist, and writing coach Christina Katz spent ample time outdoors as a child, which fostered her love of nature, gardening, and trees. She believes children of all ages deserve to regularly experience the wonders and richness of the wilds.



What are lectins?

Looking at the latest dietary ‘villain’

Two food groups — beans and whole grains — that mostly enjoy a healthful reputation are being slammed both online and in a book because they contain lectins. What are lectins, and why should they be shunned?

Lectins are a group of proteins found in most plants. They're plentiful in beans and whole grains. Lectins are also found in smaller amounts in both white and sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini, carrots, berries, watermelon, nuts, coffee, chocolate, and select herbs and spices (such as peppermint, marjoram, and nutmeg).

In growing plants, along with other compounds, they serve as a defense system against invaders,

Lectins are sometimes referred to as anti-nutrients. The claim is that lectins incite a “biological warfare” within our bodies, ultimately causing weight gain, digestive maladies, elevated cholesterol, acne, arthritis, and even brain fog.

What does the research show?

Over the years, lectins have been the subject of a great deal of research; they are not newly discovered. Certain lectins can be toxic, while others have no ill health effects. Online health sensationalists and book authors paint lectins with the same brush claiming they're all dangerous. The truth is their so-called evi-

dence is weak and lacks peer-reviewed science to back it up.

Here's the thing: The majority of lectin studies were done on isolated lectins and not actual foods. While it's a fact that lectins damage the digestive tract in studies in which animals were fed raw beans or pure lectin, the reality is that we don't consume beans that are raw. And we certainly don't consume isolated lectin. We cook our beans and whole grains — or ferment or sprout them — before eating, which deactivates most lectins. So that's a moot point.

In addition, few studies have been conducted on humans; rather they've been done on animals or in test tubes. How can book and online health gurus link lectin-containing foods to certain health maladies when no clinical trials on humans have been completed?

Safely consume lectins

When cooking dry beans take these steps: Soak them in water for at least five hours, pour it off, then bring the beans to a roiling boil in fresh water for at least 10 minutes. At that point, reduce the heat and simmer on the stove or in a slow cooker. Using canned beans instead? No worries since they are already fully cooked.

But when you cook dry beans — espe-



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

cially red kidney beans — only in a slow cooker, they may not reach a high enough temperature to break down all the lectins present. The result may be several hours of gastrointestinal upset such as nausea, vomiting, gas, and diarrhea, especially if eaten in large quantities.

Fermentation and sprouting also decreases lectin content. “Friendly bacteria” present during fermentation digests the anti-nutrients, reducing lectins by up to 95 percent.

Beans are superior sources of iron, B vitamins such as folate, magnesium, zinc, and potassium and other minerals and are an inexpensive and sustainable way to obtain protein. Whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa, wheat, and barley, provide ample amounts of B vitamins, iron, magnesium, and selenium. Both food groups are excellent sources of dietary fiber.

While there are people who feel better when avoiding beans and whole grains, most of us can safely eat them and enjoy the myriad of ways they are prepared.

What about pricey supplements that promise to neutralize the negative effects of lectins? Don't waste your money on these scare tactics; they're simply not necessary.

In short: Don't let pseudoscientists scare you away from eating legumes and whole grains. Some of the healthiest populations around the world center their diets around these two food groups.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville, Ill.-registered dietitian nutritionist who enjoys whole grains on a daily basis and tries to fit in beans whenever possible. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.

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Love is a behavior

Building loving habits in your family

Love is not just a feeling or a warm fuzzy sensation inside your heart. Love is a behavior, an action, an experience. It is how you demonstrate that warm fuzzy sensation as an interaction between you and another.

Parents will say, “Of course I love my kids.” You know it is the right answer, and it’s true most of the time.

But rather than asking if you love your kids, my question is how do you love your kids? What actions do you take? If love is, as I say, an experience, how do you experience love with your children?

If this question has you stumped, then perhaps my top three ways to love your children will help:

1. Keep your temper in check!

Your words have a big impact. The day-to-day demands of parenting, with your small one always pushing your buttons, can be frustrating. And I know it is hard to always keep your cool, but your children are listening. The words you use when you are upset cannot be unsaid.

So, even when upset, don’t berate, be-

little, or insult your kids. Find ways to correct and direct them, or simply wait to speak until you have relaxed. You may not be able to use loving words in the moment, but you can avoid using hurtful words. This is an act of love!

2. Set up date night

Date night is not just for your partner. No matter how much time you spend with your children, set up a specific date night with them — ideally, individually and weekly. Knowing that they get to have dinner with you every Tuesday or brunch each Sunday is special for them, and you’ll both look forward to it. This special time will be something you both cherish as they grow up.

3. Small steps have the most impact

The big moments are easier to remember. Birthdays, holidays, and graduations all have love built-in. It is the small moments that can have a huge impact. Start your days off with a snuggle. Put a note in your little one’s lunch box. Leave a paper heart on her pillow. Draw a card for him that says “I love you.” Hang up a picture



BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

she drew. It does not need to cost a thing to show your small ones love. Day-to-day moments can be packed with love.

Building more love in your family will increase amazing behavior. Start building loving habits in your family, one day at a time!

Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavior specialist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 20 years. Her book “Love Your Classroom Again” is a best-seller, and her new book, “Love Your Family Again,” is available on Amazon. Find out more at DrMarcie.com.

Boy on the edge

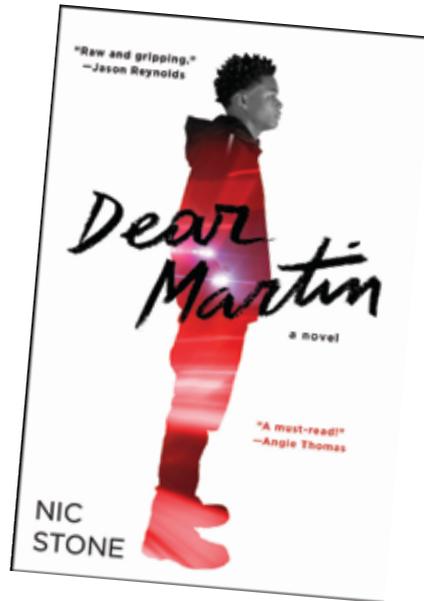
When Justyce McAllister saw his ex-girlfriend Melo next to her car, drunk and half-dressed, he knew there was no way she could drive herself home, and he wasn't about to leave her in that neighborhood. She hollered when he took her keys. She smacked him as he poured her into the passenger seat, which was nothing compared to what happened when the cops stopped and cuffed him, thinking he was hurting Mel, whose skin was more light than his was black.

He'd never forget the feel of those cuffs, which led him to a search for understanding through the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. Justyce felt that if he could live like Martin, he might be able to tolerate things like being guilty until proven innocent because of his race.

He might also be able to withstand guys like Jared, who was in Justyce's debate class. From his head to his toes, Jared was racist, hiding behind fake equality in his pathetic arguments and complaints about reverse discrimination.

Couldn't everybody see through people like that?

No, Manny couldn't. Manny was Justyce's best friend, but he was Jared's friend, too, which was something Justyce couldn't understand. He didn't get why



Manny agreed with Jared's comments or why he hung out with Jared's crowd. Manny was black. He had a cousin who was gang-banging, but he stayed friends with a fool.

What can you say about a book that surprises, gives you goosebumps, makes you happy, and then makes you sad?

Through an observant narrator and the spot-on voice of a teenage boy, "Dear Martin" author Nic Stone takes national news and gently twists it into a believ-



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

able tale that's smooth and somewhat unruffled he drops a gigantic bomb into the story. If your teen hasn't fallen for her perfectly-created characters by that point, she'll have their complete attention there. What happens next, and after that is unexpected — don't even try to guess — and it'll have your teen riveted and turning pages. Indeed, they'll absolutely need to know how this tale ends and how a man who's been dead nearly five decades impacted it.

"Dear Martin" is a winner.

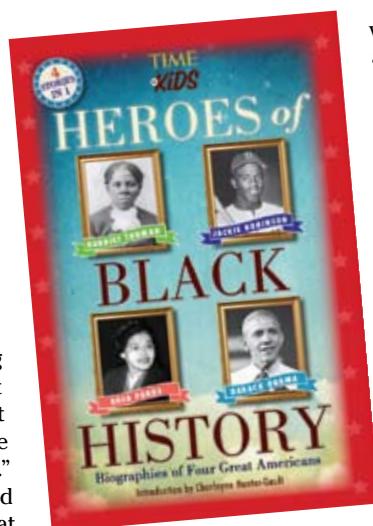
"Dear Martin: A Novel," by Nic Stone [211 pages, 2017, \$17.99].

The perfect read for this month

Who does your child look up to? Do they look up to someone close to them now, or as in "Time for Kids: Heroes of Black History," is it someone much bigger than that?

Born in 1820, Araminta was a slave because her parents and grandparents were slaves. Called by her mother's name, young "Harriet" worked hard at everything she did, but she was beaten, because she was also "rebellious." It was that rebellion — and fear of being sold — that made her escape. It was freedom that made Harriet Tubman want to help others to escape, too.

When Jackie Robinson began playing baseball, there were "rules" that told him



where he could eat, live, and even get a drink of water. But Robinson wanted to play ball, so he smashed a few rules to be the first African-American major-leaguer.

Even before he was born, "Barry" Obama's mother believed in him: Barry's real name is Barack, which means "blessed" in his father's native language. Barry was a good student, and had a sense of humor, but he was teased because he was the only black

kid in his school. That was all just a memory when Barack Obama became President of the United States.

And "On Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks stepped onto a bus — and into history."

The first thing kids will notice about this book is its easy-to-understand narrative and easy-to-read print; it's just enough of a challenge, but not overly so. Kids will also like the artwork, including photographs from different eras. The four subjects here are examined with a young audience in mind: each mini-chapter includes a bit about the childhoods of Tubman, Robinson, Parks, and Obama, which keeps the information relevant. Parents will appreciate that there's a glossary and bios of other black heroes for further learning.

Although it can surely be read by anyone, "Time for Kids: Heroes of Black History" is really meant for kids ages 8 and older, especially those who love history. If you know a child like that, you might as well find it now. It's a book your kids will want to look up.

"Time for Kids: Heroes of Black History," by Editors at Time for Kids Magazine [192 pages, 2017, \$9.99].

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was 3 years old, and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill with two dogs and 12,000 books.

Calendar

FEBRUARY



Joshua Bright

Love that's as big as a whale

Celebrate love on Valentine's weekend at Wave Hill with the event Hearts and Flowers, Love for Belugas on Feb. 10 and 11.

Spread the love like a pod of belugas! Listen to touching tales about these small, gentle, gray-white whales, then make a stuffed beluga sock-puppet for a heartwarming Valentine's gift.

Add a special notecard crafted from an abundance of hearts and paper flowers, or even decorate it with some arctic ice or ocean waves for belugas.

Hearts and Flowers, Love for Belugas, Feb. 10 and 11, from 10 am to 1 pm. Admission \$8 adults, \$2 children ages 6–18, free under 6. Free admission until noon. Reservations not required.

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

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Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

THURS, FEB. 1

FURTHER AFIELD

16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:

New York Transit Museum at Grand Central Station, 89 E. 42nd St. at Park Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 878-0106; 8 am to 8 pm; Free.

The display features Lionel trains traveling along a 34-foot long, two-level, "O" gauge model train layout. Departing from a miniature replica of Grand Central Terminal on their way to the North Pole, this year's exhibition showcases the Transit Museum's Lionel Metro-North, Polar Express, and vintage subway train sets.

FRI, FEB. 2

FURTHER AFIELD

16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:

8 am to 8 pm. NY Transit Museum at Grand Central Station. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 3

IN THE BRONX

Hoot and Howl Weekend: Wave Hill, 675 W. 252nd St., (718) 549-3200; 10 am–1 pm; \$8 adults, \$2 children ages 6-18. Free under 6. Admission free until noon.

It's a weekend devoted to owls and coyotes. Participate in a Family Art Project, attend a coyote and owl information session, or dissect an owl pellet. Extended programs this weekend include: Get an in-depth look into the fascinating world of local owls and enjoy up-close observation of owl's amazing, nocturnal hunting adaptations on Feb. 3 at 2 pm. Discover how owls adapt to life in the forest and the city and meet a live owl from the museum's collection on Feb. 3 at 2 pm.

Shelter Building Workshop: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319-7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Our Urban Park Rangers are well-versed in outdoor lore. Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world, and might just save your life.

FURTHER AFIELD

16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:



New York City Parks Department / Daniel Avila

Gimme shelter, a tutorial

Urban Rangers will teach children how to build a shelter in a wilderness workshop on Feb. 3 at the Pelham Bay Ranger Station.

The Urban Park Rangers are well-versed in outdoor lore. Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world — and might just save your life.

Whether you are preparing for an ex-

tended journey through the woods or just want to be more prepared for any situation, an outdoor skills program is the perfect fit for you.

Shelter Building Workshop on Feb. 3 from 1 to 2:30 pm; free. Recommended for children 8 years and older.

Pelham Bay Park, [Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue in Pelham Bay, (718) 319-7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers].

10 am to 6 pm. NY Transit Museum at Grand Central Station. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

SUN, FEB. 4

IN THE BRONX

Hoot and Howl Weekend: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Feb. 3.

FURTHER AFIELD

16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:

10 am to 6 pm. NY Transit Museum at Grand Central Station. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 10

IN THE BRONX

Hearts and Flowers, Love for Belugas: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am to 1 pm; \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, free under 6. Free admission until noon.

Spread the love like a pod of belugas! Listen to touching tales about these small, gentle, gray-white whales, then make a stuffed beluga sock-puppet for a heartwarming Valentine's gift. Add a special notecard crafted from an abundance of hearts and paper flowers, or

even decorate it with some arctic ice or ocean waves for belugas.

Victorian Valentine's Day Craft: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 11 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 (\$10 non-members).

Show that you care — not with a boring store-bought card but with a handmade, full-of-charm, sure-to-woo original creation. Learn about the history of valentines and the printed "scraps" used to make them in the 19th century while you craft your own memorable card. A fun workshop for the whole family. Registration required.

Seal Exploration: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319-7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

New York City is home to an amazing abundance of wildlife. Our Urban Park Rangers will guide you to the best wildlife viewing spots in the urban jungle. We offer programs throughout the year which focus on unique wildlife viewing opportunities during particular seasons. To enhance your experience we encourage you to bring binoculars and field guides, or ask a Ranger to borrow a pair.

Calendar

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

FURTHER AFIELD

Fifth Annual Masters Agility Championship at Westminster & AKC Meet the Breeds®: Piers 92–94, 711 12th Ave. at 55th Street and West Side Highway, Manhattan; www.westminsterkennelclub.org; 10 am to 5 pm and 7 pm to 9 pm; Tickets range from \$32–\$100 for adults, depending on the event; \$10–\$20 for children under 12, depending on the event. Package tickets also available.

The show offers some of the country's greatest canine athletes and their handlers as they face a challenging obstacle course of jumps, tunnels, weave poles and more in a timed competition, open to all breeds and mixed breeds. AKC Meet the Breeds®, along with The International Cat Association, gives dog and cat lovers a unique opportunity to meet and visit with hundreds of adorable dogs and cats while learning about responsible pet ownership and various breeds.

SUN, FEB. 11

IN THE BRONX

Hearts and Flowers, Love for Belugas: 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Feb. 10.

The Broadway Boys: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960–8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; 4 pm; \$25 (\$10 seniors and children 12 and younger).

A collection of the hottest male voices currently working on the New York stage. Through their dynamic vocal prowess and redefining arrangements, the Boys add elements of pop, funk, gospel, jazz, and folk to show tunes and classic pop songs.

MON, FEB. 12

FURTHER AFIELD

The 142nd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show: Piers 92–94, 711 12th Ave. at 55th Street and West Side Highway; Madison Square Garden, W. 33rd St. and Seventh Avenue, Manhattan; www.westminsterkennelclub.org; 8 am to 4 pm and 7:30 pm; Tickets range from \$32–\$100 for adults, depending on the event; \$10–\$20 for children under 12, depending on the event. Package tickets also available.

The 142nd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show Activities include breed judging; in the hound, toy, non-sporting events as well as junior showmanship finals and best in show. (Check Kennel website for exact times and locations).

NYC Autism Charter Schools Board Meetings: NYC Autism Charter Schools, 433 E. 100th St., Manhattan; 977 Fox St., Bronx; (212) 860–2580; csecharan@nycacharterschool.org; www.nycacharterschool.org; 5:00pm; Free.

The NYCA Charter Schools Board Meetings are open to parents, staff and any other members of the public.

TUES, FEB. 13

FURTHER AFIELD

The 142nd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show: 8 am to 4 pm and 7:30 pm. Piers 92/94. See Monday, Feb. 12.

FRI, FEB. 16

FURTHER AFIELD

U.S. Lego Live!: Pier 36, 299 South St., Manhattan; (888) 512–7469 (SHOW); info@parallevlivegroup.com; https://legolive.frontgategtickets.com/#label_fragment; 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm; \$30 to \$75, plus fees.

The inaugural live experience is the first time the international sensation will bring Lego Master Builders, Minecraft, Star Wars, and millions of bricks to the same place at the same time for fans of all ages to enjoy.

SAT, FEB. 17

IN THE BRONX

Josephine Baker Dances Out the Winter Blues: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Ave. (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am to 1 pm; \$8 adults, \$2 children 6–18, free under 6. Free admission until noon.

In conjunction with Black History Month, celebrate the renowned entertainer Josephine Baker, famous for her activism and for refusing to perform for segregated audiences in the U.S. Make handmade musical instruments and join visiting storyteller Channie Waites, who reinterprets Jazz Age Josephine, by Jonah Winter, through interactive movement and sound. Interactive storytelling at noon.

FURTHER AFIELD

U.S. Lego Live!: 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm. Pier 36. See Friday, Feb. 16.

SUN, FEB. 18

IN THE BRONX

Josephine Baker Dances Out the Winter Blues: 10 am to 1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Feb. 17.

Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra of Sweden: Lehman Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Park Boulevard West; (718) 960–8833; www.LehmanCenter.org; 4 pm; \$25 (\$10 seniors and children 12 and younger).

Sweden's oldest Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1912. Today it consists of 51 musicians and gives about 75 concerts a year in Helsingborg and around southern Sweden.

Astronomy – The Night Sky: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319–7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 6 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

Our Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe. Night Sky programs highlight the history and folklore of

the solar system, using the naked eye to locate stars and planets.

FURTHER AFIELD

U.S. Lego Live!: 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm. Pier 36. See Friday, Feb. 16.

MON, FEB. 19

IN THE BRONX

Kids week – Orienteering for Kids: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319–7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

The Urban Park Rangers will teach you how to navigate to hidden objects placed around the park using a map and compass.

TUES, FEB. 20

IN THE BRONX

Kids Week – Nature Exploration Hike: 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 natural world is the best playground in New York City. Join the Urban Park Rangers on a hike through the wonders of Van Cortlandt Park.

WED, FEB. 21

IN THE BRONX

Kids Week – Birds of Prey: Crotona Nature Center, Charlotte Street and Crotona Park East; (718) 378–2061; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Red-tailed hawks are the dominant raptors in NYC. The Urban Park Rangers will discuss the life cycles and habits of these spectacular urban predators. Binoculars will be distributed to better view these majestic animals.

THURS, FEB. 22

IN THE BRONX

Kids week – Urban Forest Exploration: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319–7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Pelham Bay is the largest park in New York City. Explore the areas where Native American settlements existed centuries before our great city existed. Walk through one of the most bio-diverse forests in NYC, including the majestic 450 year old “Granny Oak.”

FURTHER AFIELD

“Marvel Universe Live! Age of Heroes”: Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street, Brooklyn; (917) 618–6100; ijbanks@brooklynynets.com; www.barclayscenter.com; 3 pm; \$15 - \$97.

Marvel fans, assemble for this live, action-packed battle to defend the universe from evil. This all new show unites Spider-Man, the Avengers, the Guardians of the Galaxy



David E. Frith

The ultimate Lego set

Get ready! It's stupendous, it's fantastic, it's the first of its kind in New York — it's U.S. Lego Live on Feb. 16, 17, and 18 at Pier 36.

Introducing the all-new, official Lego Live! This is a must go-to event for every Lego fan. Experience hours of building, creating, and coding with all your favorite Lego characters. Learn tons of designer tips and tricks from a Master Builder, with millions of bricks and loads of fun!

Four-hour general admission tickets are available for the whole family as well as special VIK (very important kid) with accompanying VIG (very important guest/parent/grown-up) pack-

ages featuring exclusive swag, a meet and greet with a Master Builder, and an extra hour of play.

The inaugural live experience is the first time the international sensation will bring Lego Master Builders, Minecraft, Star Wars, and millions of Lego bricks to the same place at the same time for fans of all ages to enjoy.

US Lego Live, Feb. 16, 17, and 18; 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm. Tickets range from \$30 to \$75, plus fees.

Pier 36 [299 South St. in the Downtown Seaport District, (888) 512-7469 (SHOW); e-mail info@parallellivegroup.com; www.legolive.frontgatetickets.com/#label_fragment].

nycgovparks.org/events/2018/02/01/a-celebration-of-the-blues-exhibition; Tuesdays – Saturdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Thurs, Feb. 1 – Sat, Feb. 24; Free.

This is a collection of 25 black line illustrated portraits depicting great legends of the American blues, from Muddy Waters and B. B. King to Bonny Raitt and Howlin' Wolf. The collection is part of a larger series of portraits representing Volume 2 of American Music Pioneers.

Wintertime Wonders: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd.; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Weekdays, 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 4:30 pm, until Sun, March 18; Free with Garden Pass.

Inside the cozy Discovery Center, kids of all ages can take a closer look at the wonders of plants and animals in winter. Make bark rubbings, count tree rings, craft a bud necklace and head back into the winter garden to discover the vital sparks of life that lie just below the surface of this quiet season in the Northeast.

Imaginative Arts for Kids: Poe Park Visitor Center – Poe Park, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; Thursdays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, until Thurs, March 29; Free.

Kids will learn various techniques for creating imaginative arts, including Kirigami, Collage, Tissue Work, Pointillism, and 3D Illusion.

Kids Express: Poe Park Visitor Center – Poe Park, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; Fridays, 2:30 pm to 3:30 pm, until Fri, March 30; Free.

Kids go on an expressive arts journey inspired by times, current exhibition, season, language, literary works, and their own ideas.

Kids Le Petit Art: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; <https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2017/08/01/tiny-tots-stories-and-art>; Tuesdays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, until Tues, March 27; Free.

Kids create their own miniature art to take home. The piece is small enough to carry in your pocket or in your hand. For ages 6 to 12 years old. Parents or adults welcome with their younger child.

Recycle to art: Poe Park Visitor Center – Poe Park, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; Wednesdays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, until Wed, March 28; Free.

Participants will create cute arts and crafts projects to keep, or give as a gift to their favorite person. (Ages 6 – 12 years old).

FURTHER AFIELD

"Neverland: Peter Returns:" Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, West 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; www.cityparksfoundation.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:30 am and 11:30 am, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, beginning Tues, Feb. 6; \$12 (\$8 children).

The City Parks Foundation presents the original marionette play based on J.M. Barrie's iconic Peter Pan tales.

and Doctor Strange in a race against time to recover the Wand of Watoomb before Loki gains control. This ancient artifact would allow Loki to achieve his eternal quest to crown himself ruler of the universe.

FRI, FEB. 23

IN THE BRONX

Kids Week – Winter Scavenger Hunt:

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

Winter season is unpredictable, but animals and plants adapt to the changes. Let's find some of these adaptations on a scavenger hunt through the trails in the park.

SAT, FEB. 24

IN THE BRONX

Exotic Desert Dwellers Art Project:

Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence

Ave. (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; \$8 adults, \$2 children ages 6–18. Free admission until noon.

Visit Wave Hill's Cactus and Succulent House in the Marco Polo Stufano Conservatory and leave winter behind as you dream of warmer places. Spend some time sketching and painting exotic desert dwellers and tropical inhabitants, then, using sand and vibrant tempera paint, make a desert or tropical mirage.

SUN, FEB. 25

IN THE BRONX

Exotic Desert Dwellers Art Project: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, Feb. 24.

LONG-R UNNING

IN THE BRONX

A celebration of the Blues Exhibit: Poe Park Visitor Center – Poe Park, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; <https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2018/02/01/a-celebration-of-the-blues-exhibition>

New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Lovable, hairy Shnook

A Shnook is a sweet Valentine's Day gift idea for kids ages 3 and older. These collectable, ball-shaped creatures with two fluffy paws and wild, Troll-esque hair have touching slogans just right for this sweet holiday. For example, Shnuggles "gives cuddles so true," and Shmiley, pictured, "brings happiness you can't hide." Even pulling the plush toy from its bubble and shaking it until it grows "eight times its size" is part of the fun. Then, kids can style their Shnook's wild mane with the included comb, elastic bands, and barrettes. The Shnooks' fairly flat packaging makes it conveniently portable alternative to screen time while traveling over this month's school vacation.

Whether they're with your child on the go or shuggling up at bedtime, Shnooks are disarmingly charming.

Shnook by Zuru, \$9.99, www.walmart.com.



Friends 'Walk' this way

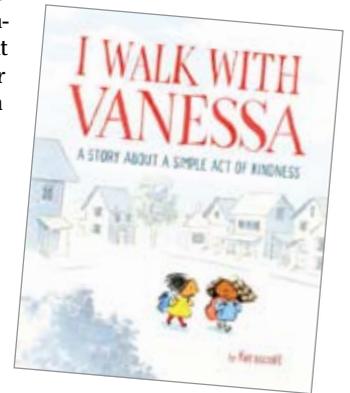
A new picture book, "I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About A Simple Act of Kindness," by husband-and-wife illustration team Kerascoet, moved me to tears — and they hadn't written one word.

This series of illustrations depicts a new girl at school, Vanessa, who has a difficult time fitting in. On her way home from school, she is isolated and targeted by a bully.

The incident was witnessed, and the observer decides to go to Vanessa's house the next morning and walk with her to school.

This empowering book, published by Schwartz & Wade, shows how an act of concern, no matter how small, can ignite a wave of thoughtfulness, generosity, and sympathy.

I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About A Simple Act of Kindness book by Kerascoet, \$17.99, www.barnesandnoble.com.



A positive playmate

Little kids can feel stress, too, but how can parents help them to practice anxiety-reducing, mindful practices like breathing exercises?

That's where Luna Petunia, a new talking toy from Funrise, really shines. When Luna runs into problems in her animated show on Netflix, she reminds herself not to panic by repeating her mantra, "Stop, breathe, believe!" Children can hear the 14-inch-tall doll repeat this catchphrase (among others) by pressing her key-shaped necklace.

In the show, Luna passes from real life to the animated world of Amazia through a petunia portal, where she has adventures with her friends. The show's floral motif is incorporated in her tutu-style skirt which is topped with satin flower petals.

Luna has shimmering blue hair, and sports glittery purple, translucent rain boots and lots of bracelets. A colorful toy for children ages 3 and older, Luna's movable arms and legs make her akin to an action figure with an adorably oversized head. Luna Petunia is a comforting gift idea for a special tot that could use an encouraging word and a smile.

Luna Petunia doll by Funrise, \$15.99, www.target.com.



Blaster is a barrel of fun

Cupid might win hearts with an arrow, but you can win their love over and over again with 96 foam darts that come with the ridiculously fun X-Shot Turbo Advance blaster from Zuru. The barrel of this behemoth holds 40 darts, which allows for a satisfyingly long battle between dads and their blaster-wielding progeny. If friends and family are busy, Turbo



Advance can also be enjoyed solo by setting up plastic cups or other targets easily scrounged from around the house. The Turbo Advance's barrel is a cinch to detach and reload. Safety

glasses (sold separately) are a must for these toys which clear a distance of 80 feet — and bounce off walls and trees with gusto! Recommended for kids ages 8 and older, the X-Shot Turbo Advance successfully entices kids to put their devices down and run around outside. What's not to love?

X-Shot Turbo Advance set by Zuru, \$29.99, www.X-Shot.com.



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