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The Mom factor

As spring moves in and the days grow warmer, there will be parks to visit, ball games to play in and attend, and farmer's markets to shop in. The role of mothering our kids will move from always indoors to often outdoors and then we will all celebrate Mother's Day.



Being an engaged Mom is a big job. Our kids are our kids even when they are grown, taller than us, and living on their own, and maybe parenting their own kids. But when they are new, little and young, the job is more than full-time. The importance of what we do, how we direct them, what lessons of life we teach and what exposure we offer them to the world around our families, can determine their future to a large degree.

New York City kids are lucky! A mix of almost anything you might think of is available in our city. All kinds of educational opportunities and a diverse population makes growing and living here loaded with languages, cuisines, cultures, and varied arts, all of which are presented throughout the boroughs by not only terrific After school programs, but also incorporated into many of our more interesting and challenging academic institutions.

The truth is that in New York City lots of options are available and parents are wise to take advantage of them. A well-rounded start in life is extremely important, and we need to give our kids all the positive exposure they can absorb.

Being a Mom is being a part of a larger community. One of the great things about social media and media in general, ours for example, is that you don't have to feel isolated. You can be having dialogues, seeking advice, and enjoying a sense of being in a larger family that aids, instructs and sometimes even comforts.

That said, we have begun a Mom to Mom Facebook Group with just that intent. Check it out.

Wishing all of you a very Happy Mother's Day! Happy Spring! Thanks for reading.

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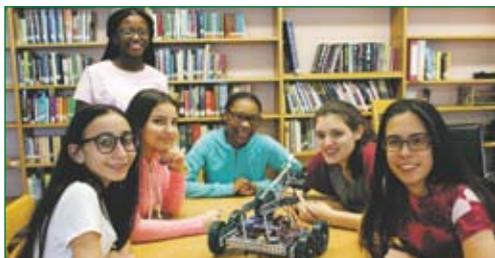
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Short Stuff

Getting kids ready for spring sports

As the spring sports season kicks off, parents of young athletes need to get ready, too, to help their kids avoid injury and be ready to respond if there is an accident on the field.

PM Pediatrics Senior Medical Advisor Dr. Christina Johns has the following tips for parents:

1. Prepare to play. After a winter stuck inside, get young bodies ready by heading to the park for an informal practice. Re-learning how to use muscles and reflexes that might have gotten rusty over the colder months will help kids avoid injury and excel on the field.

2. Pack your game bag. Injuries are rare, but they happen. Packing a small bag with Band-Aids, antiseptic

ointment, hand sanitizer, sunscreen, insect repellent, gauze bandages, and water will be helpful if there is a minor injury on the field — and give parents peace of mind even if there's not. Make sure your cellphone is charged, and you have things like your medical insurance card with you in case a trip to the hospital happens.

3. Remember your meds. From prescriptions to epipens, make sure you have the medications your child might need while you are at a game or

traveling to and from competition. This is especially important when playing with travel teams that can keep you out of the house all day (and sometimes sitting in unplanned traffic jams).

4. Bring your documents, too. If you don't normally carry it, bring along your health insurance card and a copy of the card of any children traveling with you. Storing information on your phone like relevant medical history including health conditions like asthma or allergies are also helpful. Healthcare apps can store this information, too.

5. Arrive early for the game. Nothing helps avoid injury more than properly warming up with the team. Even athletes as young as 5 years old need to stretch and prepare for competition. Don't arrive two minutes before game time and expect your child to be ready to play. It's also courteous to the coaches who have a whole team to look after.

6. Plan ahead. Try to not have your athlete "eat on the way" to the game. A healthy, balanced breakfast eaten two hours before play will boost energy and won't cause any stomach aches.

Kids' sports games are all about fun and skill-building. By making these simple preparations, parents can prepare for the unexpected and keep the focus on enjoying the game.



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Power mantras for mothers

Positive self-talk for moms for the whole family's sake

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

In case of an emergency while in a plane, we are instructed to put on our own oxygen masks first, before assisting our children. We hear this advice so often, it eventually becomes a mantra we repeat to ourselves as soon as we board an aircraft.

But how often, in the midst of hectic times in our lives, do we jettison all the healthy instructions we know we should be repeating to ourselves right then, when we need it most?

For busy moms, the answer is too often. Enter these 10 mom-power mantras to help you remember the magic words that can quickly restore order and sanity to your life no matter how much hustle and bustle you are facing today.

So sit yourself down and commit these phrases to memory. This list of notes-to-self will remind you how to take care of you in the short run, so you can better take care of your whole family in the long run — and set a good example for a lifetime of healthy self-talk:

1. I am allowed to say 'No thanks'

If you feel harried and hectic, running from one family activity to the next, you may have forgotten how to bow out gracefully. All you likely need is a little practice in the “No, thank you” department. Once you get back in the habit of weighing and measuring before you commit, your schedule will calm down and you can better choose how to divide and conquer your time. Just remember, in times of distress, the cure is often the shortest word you know.

Repeat: Sometimes I say, “Yes,” and

sometimes I say, “No.”

2. My health and energy matter

Expect to feel happy and healthy every day. And if you don't, seek solutions and improvements immediately. If you are not feeling your best, don't ignore niggling symptoms. Maybe a small adjustment in diet and exercise is all that is needed. Or maybe you need to consult with a healthcare professional. If you carry invisible hurts from the past, you owe it to yourself and others to seek healing support.

Repeat: I take care of health concerns in a timely manner.

3. Oops, I am not perfect

If you are putting yourself under too much pressure, or believe that others are holding you up to impossibly high standards, you may have trouble accepting yourself as you are. You are human, so, naturally, you will sometimes make mistakes. Forgive yourself for past errors in judgment or action, make amends with others swiftly as needed, and resist the tendency to be too hard on yourself. A penchant for self-recrimination will hurt you in the long run.

Repeat: I am human, therefore, I make mistakes.

4. Home is sacred

Creating a safe, secure, stress-free home helps everyone in the family feel more loved and loving. Undercurrents of strife can undermine a family's need for relaxation and rejuvenation. Try to make your home a relaxed respite where everyone feels welcome and appreciated. Then family members can carry that feeling of sacred space out into the world when they

leave home, too.

Repeat: There is nowhere as precious as home.

5. I keep in touch with my needs

Are you feeling fuzzy and muddled, as though you are not really certain what matters and what doesn't? If you can't remember the last time you did anything for yourself; then it's time. Making space for yourself is not selfish; it's necessary. When you spend time doing things you enjoy, your energy goes up. For caregivers, it takes conviction to carve out time for self-expression, otherwise it inevitably falls to the bottom of the priority list.

Repeat: I make regular time for myself.

6. My voice counts

Sometimes we convince ourselves that our opinion does not matter before we have even had a chance to share it. The truth is that everyone's opinion matters, ours just as much as anyone's. Sometimes it's hard to share what you think, especially if your opinion goes against the grain, and speaking up is a risk that's always worth taking.

Repeat: My opinion deserves to be expressed and considered.

7. Acceptance is sanity

Practice accepting situations and others as they are. When things don't work out the way you'd like, remember that we can't ultimately control other people and situations. If you feel beholding to everyone and everything, maybe you have forgotten how to let the world spin on without your input. Sometimes we need to be reminded that the world will keep spinning without our expert micro-managing. Today, just tackles what's already



on your plate.

Repeat: I am only responsible for what I choose to take on.

8. My example inspires

You matter. Often we look for role models without remembering that we are all setting an example, for better or for worse, every day. Sacrificing self is not a requirement; it's an unhealthy habit that needs to be broken. If you relentlessly practice self-sacrifice, then that's the legacy you pass along. You are all called to be an example for someone. Start with what you want to embody for your children and family and then move on to the rest of the world from there.

Repeat: I strive to be a person I would admire.

9. Tomorrow is going to be great

Things don't stay the same, so it's important to expect life to be an adventure in growth and change. If you have a very traditional mindset and you like routine, it may take courage to embrace the idea of life as a continual evolution. But if you start by looking forward to tomorrow, and can simply let it be different from today, you will enjoy the journey instead of resisting it. If you want to raise brave, optimistic, adventurous children, you are going to have to be brave, optimistic, and adventurous yourself.

Repeat: I look forward to every day of the future.

10. I appreciate this moment

Of course, we all want to live as long

as possible. But we never know how long we are going to be here. Rather than worry about it too much, why not just embrace today? Happiness in this moment isn't about how much money you make, what you look like, or what kind of car you drive. It's not about how clean your home is, your waistline, or what grades your kids are earning. Enjoying the moment is about finding something to appreciate right here, right now, and sharing that joy with whoever is right in front of us.

Repeat: I surrender to the joy of this moment.

Author, journalist, and writing coach Christina Katz tries to remember to slow down and smell the roses in her own yard, but she can always use another reminder.

Viva DIY!

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with fun craft ideas

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Cinco de Mayo is a day set aside to celebrate Mexico's monumental victory over the French in 1862. On May 5, Mexicans celebrate with parties, parades, and other festivities. Even if you don't have Hispanic heritage, you can celebrate with these activities:

Showy serape

A serape is a colorful wool blanket or shawl worn by Mexicans.

Items needed: Large brown paper bag with flat bottom; scissors; pencil; ruler; old newspaper; paintbrushes; tempera paints (bright colors); hole punch; colored yarn cut in six-inch pieces.

Directions: Open up the large bag and cut straight up the back seam. About two-thirds of the way up the bag, branch out into a "V," gradually shifting to an arch shape when you reach the bottom of the bag so your head and shoulders can fit through. On both sides of the bag cut out armholes measuring approximately four-inches long by five-inches wide. Place the paper serape over old newspaper and paint the outside with large, bright stripes using different colored paints. When dry, punch holes about one-half inch from the bottom edge, making them one-inch apart. String three pieces of yarn through each hole and tie in a knot.

Eternal eyes

"Ojo de dios" is an ancient symbol



used by Mexican Indians to remind them that God was watching over and protecting them.

Items needed: Two Popsicle sticks; different colors of yarn; scissors; glue.

Directions: Place Popsicle sticks together to form a "plus" sign, then glue together to make the frame. Let dry. Working in order, assign a number (1, 2, 3, 4) to each of the four sides. Take a long piece of yarn and wrap it around side 1,

tie a knot in the back to secure, and push close to the center of the frame. Wrap the free end of that piece of yarn around side 2, close to the center frame. Repeat this step with sides 3 and 4, so the yarn is back to side 1. Continue to wrap around each side, making sure you always wrap in the same direction and pushing the yarn close together. After about 10 rotations, tie off the yarn and change to a new color, following the same procedure.

Use three colors or more until the frame is full.

Paper posies

Items needed: Tissue paper (bright colors); pipe cleaners; scissors; ruler.

Directions: Cut tissue paper into rectangles measuring six- by eight-inches. Stack eight pieces of tissue paper, then take the long side of the stack and begin making accordion pleats that are approximately three-fourths inch wide. Wrap one end of the pipe cleaner around the center of the accordion-pleated paper. Twist to secure in place. Carefully separate paper layers, pulling them up toward the center. Repeat to make more flowers.

Prize-packed pinata

Items needed: Large paper bag; wrapped candies, small toys and coins; old newspaper; stapler; hole punch; string; tissue paper; glue; scissors; crepe paper streamers.

Directions: Fill the paper bag about one-third full of goodies. Crumble up old newspapers to add

Fun factoid: Viva Mexico!

Some people think Cinco de Mayo is to Mexico what the Fourth of July is to America. But it's not. Mexican Independence Day is actually celebrated on Sept. 15, when, in 1821, the Mexicans declared freedom from Spanish rule. Forty years later, however, the country's independence was threatened when a French army of 8,000, under the rule of Napoleon III, came up against 4,000 Mexican soldiers. On May 5, 1862, the Mexicans valiantly fought and defeated the French at the Battle of Puebla.

Since that time, Cinco de Mayo has become a celebratory event amongst Mexicans and even Americans. Festivities include parades, parties, carnivals, battle reenactments, cultural food, mariachi music, and folk dancing.

The country's colors — red, white, and green — are also an integral part of the celebration.



fullness and finish filling the bag. Fold down the bag opening and staple shut. Punch two holes along the top. Cut strips of tissue paper that fit all the way around the bag. Fringe strips to about half way up the width of the tissue paper. Starting at the bottom of the bag, glue the tissue paper in place. Repeat with different colored tissue paper, gluing from the bottom up until the entire bag is covered. Tie a long string through the two top holes to hang the piñata. Glue long pieces of crepe paper from the bottom.

Reveling reads

- "Cinco de Mayo" by Lola M. Schaefer.
- "De Colores and Other Latin-American Folk Songs for Children" by Jose-Luis Orozco.
- "Horse Hooves and Chicken Feet: Mexican Folktales" by Neil Philip.
- "Cooking the Mexican Way" by Rosa Coronado.
- "Mexico & Central America: A Fiesta of Cultures, Crafts, and Activities for Ages 8-12" by Mary C. Turck.

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

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Discussion

VS. discipline

Five practical parenting tips about setting limits

BY DR. MARK BERTIN

Here is a typical child's opinion of ice cream: I want it. I want it, because I see it. I want it when I don't see it, too. I want it now, and I want more in 10 minutes. Ice cream is good for breakfast and even better for lunch or dinner.

Depending on your child, the same can be said about video games. Or maybe staying up late. Or not sharing. Or lots and lots of other choices and behaviors that, in the end, just aren't good for them.

Fostering emotional attachment is not an excuse for a child to rule the house. Children are not born with innate self-control; they cultivate this skill. They are impulsive by nature and have no time window linking choices made now to the future. They also do not possess the full ability to defer gratification: Ice cream tastes good. Why not eat it all the time?

A parent's job is to teach through limits while modeling healthy ways to deal with any frustrations that come up in response. When enforced in a positive, loving manner, these limits build self-regulatory skills that foster brain development. Setting clear, understandable boundaries does not need to feel punitive. Through limits, children develop patience and an ability to regulate emotions. Reasonable limits increase the likelihood that children will manage challenges well and live a happy life as an adult.

Here's how young children learn behaviorally, in a nutshell: Something happens, whatever happens next makes it either more or less likely that behavior is repeated. Discussion with children fosters communication and explains our perspective, but acute behavioral management stems from immediate feedback. That's the reality of executive function — the developmental path related to self-manage-

Modeling good behavior

A structured behavioral plan will help you stay calm when children push back. It's like the ABC model for adults:

1. First, there's a trigger — your child misbehaves.
2. Instead of falling back on habitual behavior (I yell to control a situation, or I shut down and give up), you have a mental checklist to manage the situation (I'm going to remind her about the reward system, and then fall back on a time-out if that fails).
3. The consequence leads to a calmer household and well-behaved children — a reinforcement of your own behavior.

ment skills — for even the brightest child often all the way into young adulthood.

Discussion is discussion, and discipline is discipline — they aren't the same. Discussion represents a long-term path to collaboration and emotional understanding. "It's disrespectful to hit me, please don't do it again." You explain the "why" of your choices after the fact. Over the years, you share your ideas about how to live. With teens, when possible, you collaborate in decisions while offering more independence. Even at that age, a serious talk isn't always useful discipline. Influencing behavior today means tying whatever happened now to whatever happens next.

Without the benefit of executive function, young kids cannot fully tie now to the past or future. "Wait until mommy comes home" doesn't change behavior in a 4-year-old. He may seem upset when the punishment finally happens, but it

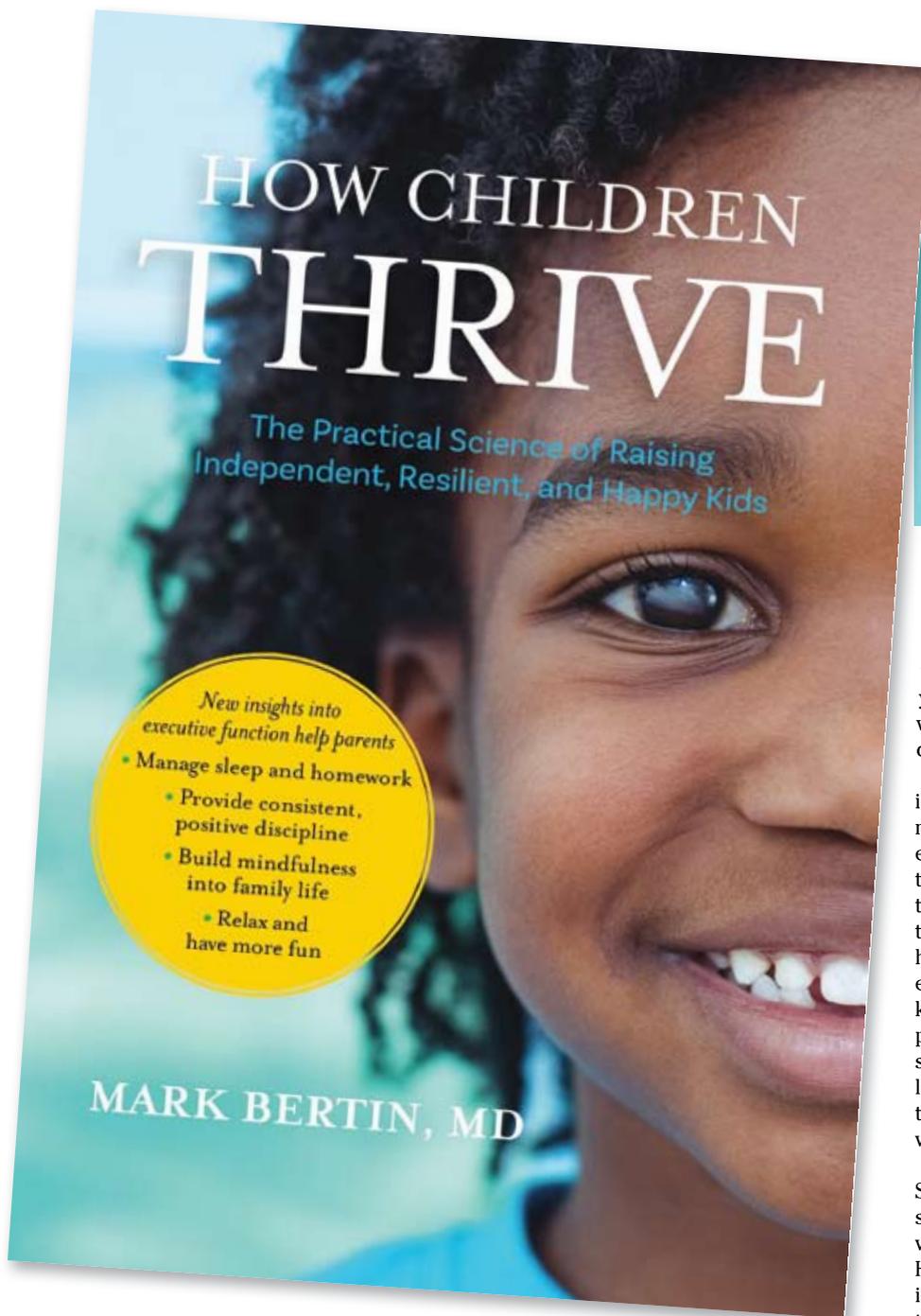
doesn't tie concretely to his earlier misbehavior. Conversely, from elementary school through high school, any student enjoys hearing in the moment, "Great job studying so hard for that test."

Discipline does not only relate to misbehavior or a tantrum, it's a way of modeling healthy relationships. It teaches children to set boundaries on their own behavior, to use language to express anger, and to feel comfortable with intense feelings. When you're compassionate and calm while maintaining appropriate limits, you embody traits your children will, hopefully, emulate themselves.

As close as you may be with your child, you are a parent, not a friend. Adults make decisions, some of which children may not understand. Even when kids have a real reason to complain, you should be treated with respect. You make the rules, you uphold them, and that's how children learn.

Respond calmly, redirect, but don't give in. It's okay to be upset, but not to act like that. It is normal for toddlers and young children to test boundaries, to get frustrated, or to cry. Ignore whining, tantrums, and similar behaviors, and they disappear quicker — and you've reinforced a message about managing emotions, too.

Young brains don't necessarily understand "why" a behavior is wrong. A child hitting or not treating other kids with respect needs prompt, consistent discipline, limits, or alternatively rewarding the opposite, appropriate behavior. Reasoning or rationalization isn't enough — kids don't stop speaking nasty to peers in the short run because someone explains it makes someone else feel bad. They gradually learn from discussion over the years, and open conversation over the years shares your perspective and beliefs about how to live well. Discipline,



Stephanie Diani

Dr. Mark Bertin, author of "How Children Thrive."

though, remains immediate.

Consider these five practical tips about setting limits and discipline:

1. Steer behavior through immediate feedback. Seek a balance between lovingly meeting a child's needs, but firmly saying "no" when appropriate. "That was great, nice job listening." "That wasn't okay at all, please go sit in time out." Use verbal feedback to keep kids on track; praise them just before they get distracted or upset and you help them hold themselves together. Whenever possible, pause and insist your child respectfully ask for what she wants, even if you've already decided to say "yes."

2. Create opportunities for children to be in control, make choices, explore, and be creative. Creating two acceptable choices allows children to feel a sense of control, but still gets you, the parent, what you need. "Do you want to come inside now or in five minutes?" feels a lot better than "get inside this instant!" Especially in younger children, that diversion may be enough to "enforce" your decision.

3. Avoid empty demands. Limit the number of rules when you can, but enforce the ones you choose. If you bend the rules every time your children fuss, it makes sense for them to kick and scream. If they

gain 20 more minutes of play while waiting you out, they'll continue playing. Wouldn't you do the same? Children will learn that what you say and what you mean are two different things.

4. Remain empathetic but firm. Most infants, toddlers, and young children have not yet learned how to express themselves emotionally. They may really, really want to stay downstairs two hours past bedtime, and get really, really upset when told to go to bed. Getting upset is normal, healthy even, while learning to manage emotions and frustration. Tell them, "I know you don't want to leave, but we can play again tomorrow; now it's time for sleep." As long as your child is happy and living in a home full of affection and positive feedback, you are not doing anything wrong if sometimes he gets upset.

5. Model remaining calm yourself. Show children an appropriate way to respond when frustrated and how to recover when you have a bad moment yourself. Habitual yelling teaches children that yelling is the best response during confrontation; it comes back at you one day. Don't expect perfection of yourself, but do your best and reconnect with honesty about your own behavior ("I wish I hadn't lost my cool, let's talk about what happened") when you feel the need.

Dr. Mark Bertin is a pediatrician, author, professor, and mindfulness teacher specializing in neurodevelopmental behavioral pediatrics. He's a regular contributor to Mindful.org, HuffPost, and Psychology Today. He is the author of "How Children Thrive: The Practical Science of Raising Independent, Resilient, and Happy Kids".

Dr. Bertin will be giving a talk at the Manhattan JCC on Tuesday, June 5. For more, visit developmentaldoctor.com.



Remembering our strength

I come from a long line of strong women. My grandmother scrounged and scrimped and worked multiple jobs to raise her three children. She later went on to take care of my sister and me when we were young, while my mother trotted off to Spanish Harlem to work as a pioneer high-risk ultrasound tech Monday through Friday, and then at a private clinic in Midtown as a nurse on Saturdays. My grandmother battled and beat stomach cancer, just as my mom battled and beat breast cancer many years later.

Through it all, they never faltered in cooking us amazing home meals, reading bedtime stories, playing games, and tucking us in each night no matter what was going on in their individual worlds. Throughout their life challenges — including the financial stress that comes from raising children alone in New York City — they never lost their ability to fascinate us with their overwhelming love, hugs, and fun.

My story is profound, but it's not unique. I bet you can probably think of a similar story in your family.

Most moms don't give themselves nearly enough credit for what they do each and every day. Despite the incredible amount of tasks we perform — like waking up kids; helping with homework; feeding them; getting them to appointments, after-school activities, and sporting events; as well as some moms also going to work — on top of all that, we arrange social calendars, take care of our homes, and try

to find time to help our friends and family. And this is just a tiny taste of what we do. We all know there is so much more.

What gets me is when I see moms selling themselves short, and not giving themselves enough credit. Women are so strong and powerful, and we need to realize our own worth. Early on in my publishing career, I quickly grasped how many of our female employees would apologize, not speak up for themselves, and settle for less than wanted, whether it be workload or salary. In stark contrast, male employees — even those with little experience — would rally for themselves consistently. The more I looked, the more I saw this dynamic repeat itself in various settings, and not only magazine staffrooms, but also doctor's offices, train stations, and supermarkets.

Worst of all, I saw it in myself. Little by little over the years, I looked to the strong women who did not settle, who fought for their rights, and who stood up for themselves, from my own mother and grandmother to my mentor and boss and friend, and I learned. And after so many years of being non-confrontational at all costs, what finally made me push through the uncomfortable feelings and fight for my rights was my kids, because what hope did they have, if they didn't see me do it for myself?

The funny and surprising and wonderful thing was that the more I stood up for myself, the more I liked myself and the more life seemingly blossomed into new



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

and exciting experiences. Was it hard? Of course! Is it still hard? Yeah, it is. But anything worth fighting for is always hard, and it helps you grow and develop into being what you were destined to be, and become who you were meant to become.

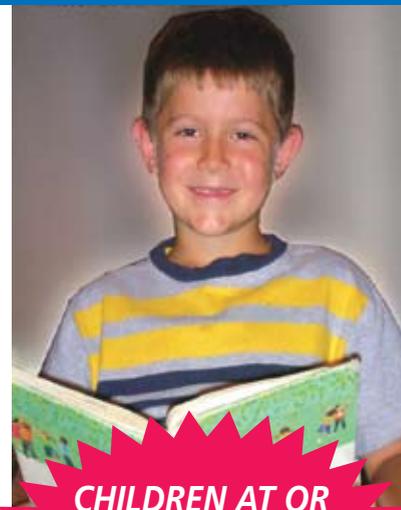
The quote, "She believed she could, so she did" should be hung up in every little girl's room. We need reminders of our strength, and there is no better reminder than those innocent eyes that look up to us each day for guidance.

Happy Mother's Day to all those strong mamas out there!

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

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The Montessori mind

How this educational approach promotes mindful learning

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Young children aren't usually known for intense concentration. To the contrary, kids are expected to bounce from one activity to another with the attention span of a gnat. That's why parents are surprised by what they see when they tour Eton Montessori School in Bellevue, Wash.: Children as young as 3 happily engaged in independent, focused work for long stretches.

Parents are just as surprised by what they don't see — no lecturing teachers prodding reluctant kids to complete assigned work.

"Our children are self-motivated. Our teachers don't stand over them, telling them to be quiet and get back to work," says Feltin, who founded Eton School in 1978.

This ability to focus at a young age is a hallmark of Montessori education, but it's revolutionary to parents who haven't seen a Montessori classroom in action.

Montessori learning is hardly novel — Maria Montessori's first school opened its doors in 1907. But a trend toward mindfulness in education is sparking new interest in this century-old style of education, and new science is showing how this type of learning benefits today's young minds.

Mastering mindfulness

In the past decade, organizations like Mindfulness in Education Network, Association for Mindfulness in Education, and Mindful Schools have sprung up, training teachers, hosting conferences, and producing research aimed at helping children become more focused, motivated, and intentional in the classroom.

Just what is mindfulness, exactly, and why does it matter? MindfulSchools.org paints mindfulness as a deep, in-the-moment focus, characterized by self-aware-

ness and internal motivation. In a world filled with chaotic distraction, advocates of mindfulness say it can be a salve for the conflict, impulsiveness, and stress plaguing modern students and schools.

Dr. Steven J. Hughes, a pediatric neuropsychologist specializing in attention, concentration, planning, and organizing — a set of traits known as executive functions — defines mindfulness as "sustained positive engagement." Other scientists refer to a "flow" state of prolonged, energized work that produces both calm satisfaction and profound joy in learning.

Whole body, whole mind

Maria Montessori didn't coin the term "mindfulness," but she was an early advocate for sustained focus and internal motivation. Her methods deliberately encourage intense concentration as the best context for early learning.

Montessori's approach to motor development actually stimulates cognitive development and deep concentration, says Hughes. When children begin Montessori education at age 3 or 4, they work on motor-skills activities like sweeping, polishing silverware, and pouring. These aptly-named "practical life" activities prepare kids for greater independence and self-reliance in daily tasks, but there's something bigger going on — the development of higher cognitive functions essential to concentration and attention.

Montessori tasks like wiping a table or washing dishes develop fine-motor control, but they also activate areas of the pre-frontal cortex essential to executive function, which paves the way for greater concentration and focus, he says.

"Dr. Montessori wrote about the close relationship between cognitive development and motor development in 1949. Fifty years later, scientists made the same connection."

This whole-body approach is part of the reason numerous studies show that Montessori-educated children have an academic edge over children educated in traditional classrooms, he says.

Happy work: Environment, schedule, and shared focus

One way Montessori promotes focus is through a carefully-prepared environment, a key component of Montessori learning. In Montessori classrooms, specially-designed materials — from child-size brooms to lacing cards to counting beads — are prepared to be aesthetically appealing and accessible for young children; simplicity, beauty, and order are paramount.

"Montessori environments are designed to be attractive and appealing, and to allow children to make a choice. Children get to look around and choose what they want to do," says Feltin.

This important act of choosing one's own activity promotes sustained engagement, says Dee Hirsch, president of the Pacific Northwest Montessori Association and director of Discovery Montessori School in Seattle. Montessori-taught children choose their own work from a palette of developmentally appropriate options that grow progressively more complex and challenging.

Montessori schools incorporate concrete learning goals into a child's educational plan, but children are free to choose when and how to complete their work within a specified time frame.

"That act of choosing is what allows a child to make a wholehearted commitment to their work. It's what makes Montessori education child-centered," says Hirsch.

When children are motivated by their own interests, deep concentration is a natural result, she says: "Kids are choosing what they want to focus on."



Maria Montessori was an early advocate for sustained focus and internal motivation. Her methods deliberately encourage intense concentration as the best context for early learning.

During a 90-minute work period, children can take their work through its beginning, middle, and end. Working through this natural sequence promotes competence and mastery; children can repeat the activity as many times as they want, without being told to hurry up and move on to something else.

Though the terms focus and concentration conjure up images of a child working alone, mindfulness is not always a solo pursuit. Montessori-style learning helps kids learn the fine art of shared concentration by encouraging them to engage in tasks with a classmate or two — a critical skill in the age of teamwork.

Mindful together

How does this Montessori-style mindfulness benefit children? Greater confidence, longer attention spans, and natural self-motivation are a few of the rich rewards, according to Felton.

“What’s so wonderful is the confidence they gain. Their attention spans have been lengthened. They’re going to meet their academic goals, but they’ll do it more naturally because their motivation comes from within.”

But mindfulness isn’t something teachers can achieve for students — like every other outcome in Montessori learning, students have to work toward it themselves.

“They’re not going to reach that state of mindfulness unless they get there themselves,” says Hirsch. “We can’t take them there, but we can go there with them.”

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published freelance writer specializing in parenting. She’s working on adopting Montessori-inspired principles of mindfulness at home.



Tips for parenting those picky eaters

When expanding the foods your picky eater will try, it is best to go slow and steady. Taking more time with the setup is key. It can feel frustrating going at a snail's pace, but the short, steady progress will win out in the long run. Here are the steps you'll need to get your picky eater to expand her palate:

Step 1: Stop saying your kid is a picky eater. Your words are powerful, and if your child hears you say this, he may work to make it true. Stop pushing super hard for new foods and talking in front of your child about how frustrating it is that he won't eat anything.

Step 2: Pick one new food. Choose a food that you want to give to your child every day for the next 30 days. When picking a new food, have it be something close to what he already eats. Think about texture, temperature, taste. Also, make sure it is a food you are willing to eat and can easily have on hand daily.

Step 3: Model the behavior. Sit down with your kids at least one meal a day and eat this food in front of them. Comment about how delicious it is and how much you think they will enjoy it, too. Modeling

is powerful!

Step 4: Make the new food an appetizer. Put one bite of this new food on an otherwise empty plate in front of your small one. Set a timer to have the appetizer last just three to five minutes. When the timer goes off, take the plate away, and give your child his regular dinner.

Step 5: Expand the focus on the new food. Keep up the appetizer routine, and in addition to it, put one bite of the new food on your child's dinner plate. For him to eat dinner, he needs to keep the new food on the plate. No more throwing food or casually dropping it on the floor.

Step 6: Take one bite. If your kiddo has not decided to independently try the new food yet, now is the time. Now that she can tolerate mashed potatoes on her plate, she needs to take one bite. Just like Step 3, you will give a time frame for this to happen. If she does eat it, amazing. Have a powerful reinforcer ready. (I'm a fan of ice cream!) If not, don't comment or engage around it. Just don't deliver the reinforcer, and try again tomorrow.

Step 7: Build up a bite at a time. Keep going until this food is something that is



BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

regularly part of your kiddo's diet.

Once you get past Step 7, it is time to pick another food and start back at Step 1. As you move through the steps over and over again for each new food, remember to go slow. This is how you build a good eater for a lifetime!

Dr. Marcie Beigel is the founder of Behavior and Beyond, a company dedicated to behavior change. She brings realistic ideas to real-life behavior that results in lasting changes for families, schools, businesses, and relationships. She is the best-selling author of "Love Your Classroom Again" and "Love Your Family Again." Visit DrMarcie.com/freegift.

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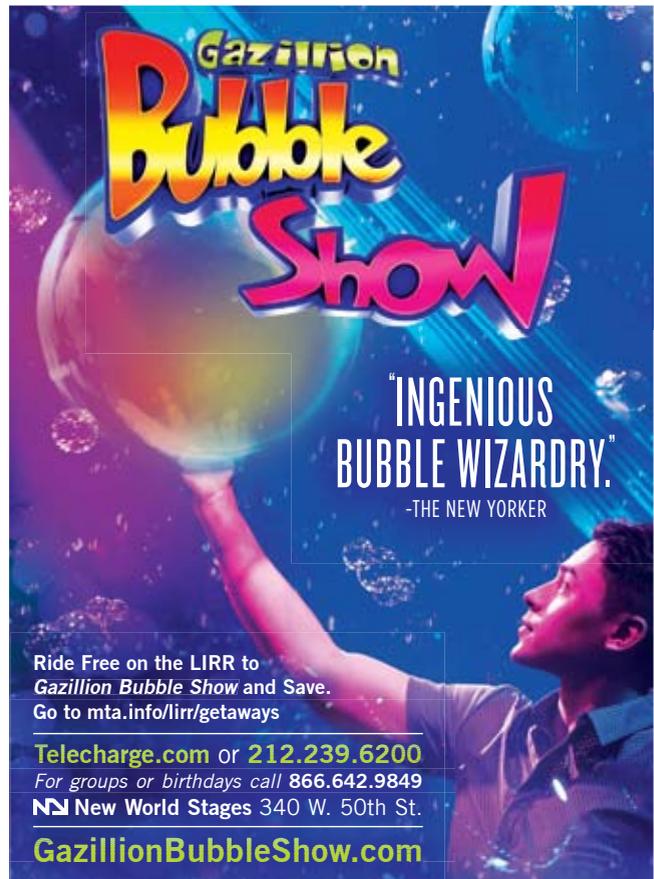
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'Autism Uncensored'

Mom tells her son's story in new autobiography

BY ALLISON PLITT

Whitney Ellenby was a very driven child. She constantly studied and excelled in school and college. Fearful of losing physical and emotional control, she abandoned parties to return to her dorm room to chart out her future.

With her life going as expected, Ellenby graduated from Georgetown University Law School and landed a job as a civil rights attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. Around this time, Ellenby met her future husband, Keith Reuben, another successful lawyer working at an esteemed law firm.

Ellenby and Reuben fell in love and got married. She had wanted more time to focus on her career before starting a family, but Ellenby unexpectedly became pregnant. During her tranquil pregnancy, her unborn baby passed every developmental and genetic test. When Ellenby gave birth to a healthy, beautiful boy, she was ecstatic. She and her husband named their first-born child Zack.

Like most overachievers, Ellenby had high expectations for her child. She envisioned what his life would be like, just like the map she had created for her own life, filled with hard-earned diplomas and jobs. However, her perfectly controlled world soon unraveled when she noticed that something with Zack was not quite right, as she describes in her riveting autobiography, "Autism Uncensored: Pulling Back the Curtain" (Koehler Books). Not only does Ellenby's book let other parents of autistic children empathize with her experiences, it encourages all readers to embrace the idea of inclusion of autistic children and adults in our everyday lives.

Something is not right

Although Ellenby had never had a baby before, she noticed abnormal behavior in her child. Zack would nurse from her so vigorously that he didn't seem interested in eating as much as in enjoying the physical sensation of mouthing.

When Zack turned 1 year old, his development seemed "sluggish." He could babble, but didn't seem to vocalize any distinct words. With no desire to stand



Whitney Ellenby and her son Zack.

or walk, Zack preferred to crawl across the floor. Ellenby also witnessed her son's "seemingly flat affect and lack of animation when others tried to engage him playfully."

Zack would, furthermore, flutter his hands at his food, expecting his mother to feed him as she observed his "genuine inability to execute the simple pincher grasp." The only thing Zack responded to at this age was music, but he still could not respond to his own name. Assuming that perhaps Zack could not hear her voice, Ellenby had his hearing tested. His ears worked, so what was delaying his development?

The evaluation

By the time Zack reached 19 months, he still could not speak and preferred to crawl. Growing increasingly concerned by his lack of maturation, Ellenby took him to the pediatric neurology division at Georgetown University Hospital, where he was evaluated by "an entire team of therapists — occupational, speech, physical."

As they coaxed Zack along to perform simple tasks, Ellenby became distressed as she saw her son fail "early level motor and language assessments, shuffling across the floor with his peculiar crawl, refusing to bear weight on his feet, slapping away books and turning his indifferent nose up at educational toys."

After her son's evaluation, Ellenby was

asked by one of the doctors, "Does [Zack] line up objects, or seem fascinated by spinning objects?" Ellenby responded, "Um yes ... We have these little round stacking cups and he actually takes my wrist and directs my hand to spin them over and over while he watches."

"Does he point to direct your attention to favored items?" the doctor inquired. Ellenby embarrassingly answers, "Zack has never pointed, not once."

When asked what Zack's general behavior was on a daily basis, Ellenby barely whispered, "Flat."

The doctor then asked if Zack ever looked excited to see her after time apart. Without hesitation, Ellenby shouted, "Yes!"

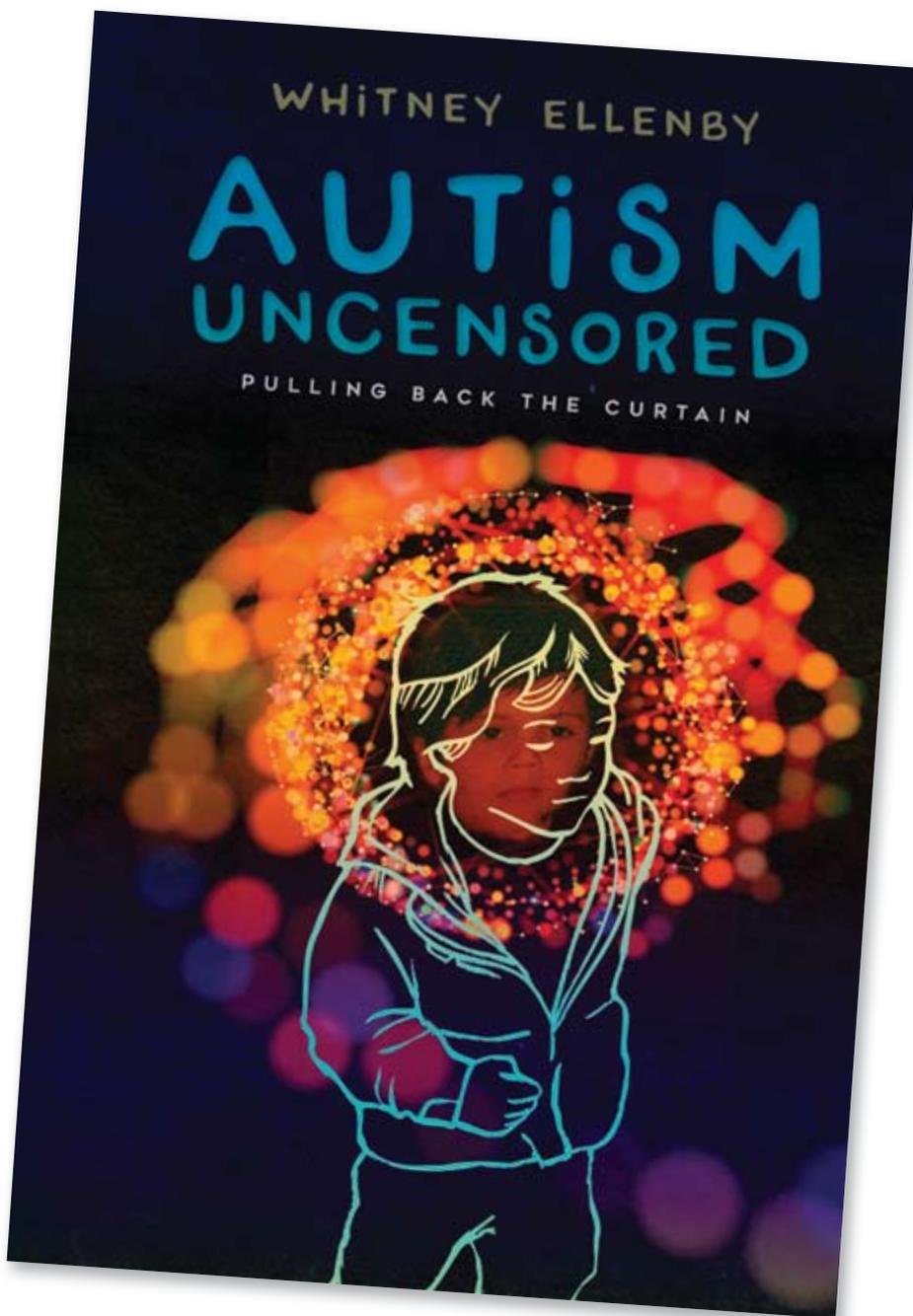
Closing the door to his office, the doctor said to Ellenby, "Zack meets the medical criteria for autism spectrum disorder. Zack has autism."

At that moment, Zack was shuffling on the floor to his shoes to rearrange the laces and then shuffling back to a cabinet door. Then he crawled back to his shoes to adjust his laces again, like a structured routine he kept repeating over and over.

Speaking in a softer voice, the doctor explained, "There are many indicators of a developmental delay, but there's a certain constellation of symptoms that warrant a diagnosis of autism. They present what we've classified as three categories: social deficits, language delay, and preservative behaviors, which is what he's doing now, that going back and forth in the identical pattern. It's an almost ritualistic mode of behavior, what we call 'self-stimulating,' which children with autism tend to engage in, because it gives them a sense of comfort and predictability."

After receiving the evaluation results, Ellenby fell to the floor in sadness and disbelief. What had upset Ellenby the most was the mystery of autism. Nobody knows what causes autism, and there is no remedy for it. Although about one percent of the worldwide population has autism, less than 10 percent of the people with the condition actually recover from it.

While Ellenby's husband felt responsible for Zack's condition, because he thought he gave Zack a concussion, she reassured him, "What Zack has is innate



What had upset Ellenby the most was the mystery of autism. Nobody knows what causes autism, and there is no remedy for it.

ing, “ABA etiquette is spelled out in authoritative pieces.” First, the therapists helped Zack identify “emotions, objects, people, or colors via flashcards and manipulative objects.” These drills were repeated over and over until Zack correctly answered the questions “without prompting.”

As Ellenby explained, “Positive reinforcement for correct answers is supplied to Zack continuously throughout the sessions in the form of food — M&Ms, Doritos, anything Zack is willing to work for.” Any self-stimulating behavior he used to calm himself down (such as hand flapping or staring up at lights for long periods of time), had to be suppressed. ABA also adhered to the concept of teaching by imitation as Ellenby and the therapists constantly told Zack, “Do this.”

After six months of therapy, Ellenby was delighted that her son was finally beginning to succeed in the drills. While he became compliant to sit at the table, he still could not speak by age 3, although he and his mother had developed a physical connection by the exhaustive regimen of therapy.

As Zack turned 4, his only verbal success had been in the phrase “I want,” which he did not use with its proper meaning. Ellenby began to lose faith in the program as her son’s eyes showed “a flatness, a dead stare, stoic obedience has replaced fierce resistance: we have beaten him down and drained his fight.”

Ellenby knew her son was no longer showing progress in the program. Every time she saw a child who was the same age as Zack, she was amazed by their verbal expressions. Comparing her son to his peers, Ellenby fell into an isolated depression confined to the walls of the therapy room in her home.

[Editor’s note: This is part one of a two-part story about Whitney Ellenby and her new book “Autism Uncensored: Pulling Back the Curtain.” Look for the conclusion in our June issue.]

Allison Plitt lives in Queens with her 12-year-old daughter and is a frequent contributor to this publication.

and developmental. It was there all along, but we didn’t know it.”

Applied behavioral analysis

Following the recommendations of the doctors at Georgetown University Hospital, Ellenby decided to create a home therapy program for her son following applied behavioral analysis methodology. She sadly abandoned all thoughts of returning to work, as her husband would now finance this intervention program, which would cost their family \$80,000 annually — with not one expense covered by insurance.

According to the Lovaas Institute website (www.lovaas.com), the program was developed by psychologist Dr. O. Ivar Lovaas and “is based on 40 years of re-

search and showing half of children with autism who receive this intensive treatment becoming indistinguishable from other children on tests of cognitives and social skills by the time they completed first grade.”

Because of the “dearth of professionals trained to administer Lovaas,” Ellenby flew in a specialist from New York every month to train her and four “in-house” therapists. In order for Zack to succeed in the program, he needed to sit in an isolated room in his home 40 hours week. As Lovaas observed in his experimental groups, anything less than 40 hours a week would result in failure.

Ellenby had a different perception, writ-

Six things to stop fighting about with your kids — now!

Ever walk into a room to approach your spouse with something that you know will set him off, some subject that you have fought about before, and you know full well will fan the flames again the minute you bring it up? As with any relationship, the obvious thought is to change how you operate, because it's pointless to keep having the same fight over and over again. A good therapist will advise couples on this. Did you ever consider that the same goes for your kids?

Just because our children are in our care and are not yet adults does not mean that they don't deserve the same respect that your partner does, or that fighting with them will cause any good to come out of the situation. We all have subjects that need revisiting where our kids are concerned, and there are useful ways to stomp out the frustration.

Here are six things to stop fighting about right now:

Food

Of course, you want your kids to consume a healthy diet packed with vitamins, designed to give them energy and a strong immune system ... and then you realize that sweet-natured baby is an intensely stubborn picky eater! Some kids only have picky phases, while others remain selective throughout childhood.

Food is one of the few things young children have control over, and you simply can't force anyone to eat something she just does not want. However, you can fill your kitchen with only healthy foods, circumventing the fight and the constant struggle. Then you can rest assured knowing that whatever your child chooses will have some nutritional value.

Sleep

Kids need sleep. Without sufficient amounts, they will slack in every area and feel generally terrible and cranky (just like us!). Sleep should be non-negotiable. From the time a baby begins to sleep on his own, bedtime should be as consistent as possible. As he grows, he will know that you don't play



around with bedtime. However, if your child suddenly just cannot seem to sleep, it merits a physical exam. Many issues — from anxiety to thyroid disorder — can impact sleep, no matter how hard the child tries.

Homework

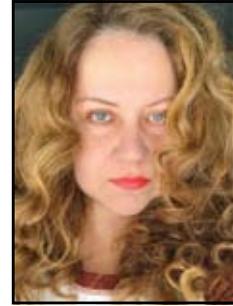
Like sleep, homework is a priority. Teaching children from pre-K that school is their job helps them understand this, and that it is their responsibility. Fighting over it is counterproductive. Let them know you are always there to help, but it is up to them to get it done. The majority of kids who learn this lesson as preschoolers grow into teens that follow through.

Chores

Whether you consider chores part of a functioning family or you pay your kids for helping out, doing chores is not up for debate. Take a lesson from teachers. They don't fight with their students. If the student doesn't do what is expected, there is a penalty: a bad grade or detention. Create consequences and follow through every single time, but don't argue.

Afterschool activities

School is hard, and much more difficult



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

than when we were kids. The pressure to keep up with academics, activities and clubs, social pressures, and the basics of sleeping and eating well can be overwhelming for any kid. And it only increases as children go to middle and high schools. Some kids handle it well, but many don't.

If your child tells you he doesn't want to participate in an activity, take his concerns seriously. Maybe he just doesn't like the activity, maybe he prefers painting to sports, or vice versa. Have an honest conversation with no pressure, and together figure out his needs.

Personal preference

Yes, your child might have different taste than you in music, movies, television, and clothing. Kids need freedom to figure out who they are, not become your carbon copy. Everyone has the right to be themselves, so, as long as what your child wants to do or wear is not inappropriate, let it go.

Personal expression

With all the news and politics at the forefront of daily life, we each have our own beliefs, and our kids are no different. Let them be free to support whatever beliefs and causes they feel are important. Don't put your own agenda onto them. Instead, feel proud that you are raising a kid who feels comfortable and close enough to you to openly disagree and choose her own path.

There is always a balance that needs to be achieved between getting our kids to do things they might not want while teaching them life lessons. Fighting and arguing never helps, so keep calm, knowing that doing so teaches kids by example. You're modeling how to lead a calm and productive life.

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



Financial lessons of the Great Recession

Last month was the 10th anniversary of the collapse of the investment bank Bear Stearns. The fall was part of the 2007–08 stock market crash, when markets fell nearly 40 percent from their highs and left an indelible mark on the psyche of investors.

Many people were panicking and selling investments at their lows during the crash, but most investors who maintained their saving and investing plans during those tumultuous times have performed well. Simply put, investors who did not get scared out of the market during the rough times saw much better results than those who did.

In fact, a Fidelity study of retirement plan savers who did not panic and sell through the 2007–08 period grew their balances by an average of about 240 percent; that was about 50 percent more than investors who bailed out of stocks at any point in 2008 or the beginning of 2009.

So the next time there is uncertainty, remember the following lessons learned from the past downturn:

Keep a long-term view. What may look like a huge loss on a short-term stock chart is really just a blip over a full business cycle. From late 2007 through early 2009, the S&P 500 lost about 40 percent of its value. Many investors at the time thought the market would never recover in their lifetime. However, since those lows, stocks have made record highs, up nearly 100 percent since the bottom. Which leads me to the next point...

Don't panic. Selling into a crashing mar-

ket is rarely a good idea. As the legendary investor Warren Buffett is fond of saying, "Be fearful when others are greedy and greedy only when others are fearful." In other words, when everyone is panicking and selling their investment, it might be a good time to consider buying more.

Time in the market, not timing the market, is still the best way to take advantage of long-term market gains. Selling into the panic might have a dramatic impact on your investment performance. A study conducted by Putnam Investments for the period from 2003 to 2017 showed clients who stayed fully invested in the S&P 500 index had a 9.2 percent annualized total return. Missing just the 10 best days dropped performance to 5.03 percent. And missing just the best 30 days in the market wiped out any return at all. By the time those who bailed started saving and investing again, it was too late to overcome the effects of lost savings and growth opportunities.

Maintain a diversified portfolio to help manage risk. A well-diversified portfolio of stocks, bonds, and cash can help manage the volatility of your portfolio. Diversification is a technique that reduces risk by allocating among different assets, classes, and aims to maximize return by investing in different areas that would each react differently to the same event. Although it does not guarantee against loss, diversification is an important component of reaching long-range financial goals while minimizing risk.

Invest regularly, despite volatility. If



FAMILY FINANCIAL PLANNING

ANTHONY N. CORRAO

you invest regularly, short-term downturns will not have much of an impact on your overall performance. Instead of trying to judge when to buy and sell based on market conditions, take a disciplined approach of making investments weekly, monthly, or quarterly to avoid the perils of market timing. While it won't guarantee positive returns, investing through downturns — when prices fall — may actually benefit you in the long run. When the market drops, the prices of investments fall, and your regular contributions allow you to buy a larger number of shares.

In fact, what seemed like some of the worst times to get into the market turned out to be the best times. The best five-year return in the U.S. stock market began in May 1932 — during the Great Depression. The next best five-year period began in July 1982, during one of the worst recessions in the postwar period, featuring double-digit levels of unemployment and interest rates.

Consider working with a financial advisor. Sometimes the hardest part of being a successful investor is controlling your emotions — getting overconfident at the top of markets and too fearful at the bottom. An objective financial advisor can help you try to reach your financial goals.

Anthony N. Corrao is an independent advisor with Corrao Wealth Management. For more than 25 years, he has helped families with their financial goals by developing financial, educational, and retirement-planning strategies. He can be found at www.corraowm.com.

Securities offered through First Allied Securities Inc., a registered broker dealer. Member FINRA-SIPC. Advisory services offered through First Allied Advisory Services, a registered investment adviser.

Calendar

MAY



Christine Butler

A celebration of jazz in Harlem

Celebrate the Harlem School of the Arts with the performance “Jazz Land,” from May 11 to May 20.

The Harlem School of the Arts presents this eclectic concert featuring The Dorothy Maynor Singers, the school’s dance ensemble, and the junior dance ensemble. Suitable for all ages.

“Jazz Land,” Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, from May 11 through May 20. Friday and Saturday, 7 pm; Sunday, 3 pm. Tickets are \$20 at the door and \$15 for students.

Harlem School of the Arts Theater (649 St. Nicholas Ave. at 145th Street in Harlem, www.hsanyc.org).

Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. NYParenting.com

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

SAT, MAY 5

IN THE BRONX

Learn to Ride: Pelham Bay Ranger Station, Pelham Bay Park, Bruckner Boulevard and Wilkinson Avenue; (718) 319-7258; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 10 am to 1 pm; Free.

Bring a bike, a child, and a helmet for this free, fun event! Show your child, 5 years of age or older, how to ride a two-wheeler using the "balance first" method. Please pre-register at <https://www.bike.nyc/education/programs/learn-to-ride-kids>. For accessibility information, contact Gustan O'Neal three days before the event at (718) 430-4696.

Family Art Project – Confetti Nests for Bluebirds: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6–18, children under 6 free. Admission is free until noon on Saturday.

It's the time of year when little nestlings appear. Learn how to sculpt little bluebirds and vibrant nests from paper pulp and colorful, shredded confetti. Add raffia, pine needles, and sticks and build a nest to keep little birds cozy. Make one bird or make a brood. Led by paper maker Randy Brozen.

SUN, MAY 6

IN THE BRONX

Family Art Project – Confetti Nests for Bluebirds: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 5.

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

Catch-and-release fishing is a great way to get outdoors and discover nature just a few blocks from home. Our experienced Urban Park Rangers teach the ethics of fishing and the ecology of our waterways on every fishing program. You can try to hook a pumpkinseed sunfish, carp, or chain pickerel. Whether you choose to grab a simple bamboo pole at a quiet lake or join more advanced saltwater programs, we have a program that fits your skill level. All equipment is provided; this program is recommended for ages 8 years and older. Participation is first-come, first-served.



Learn to ride a bicycle!

Put the pedal to the metal and learn to ride a bike, on May 19 at Shoelace Park.

Bring the kids, a bike, and a helmet for this free fun event! Show your kids, ages 5 or older, how to ride a two-wheeler. Please pre-register at: [bike.nyc/education/classes/learn-to-ride-](http://bike.nyc/education/classes/learn-to-ride-kids)

[kids](http://bike.nyc/education/classes/learn-to-ride-kids). For accessibility information, contact Gustan O'Neal three days before the event at (718) 430-4696.

Learn to Ride on May 19, from 10 am to 1 pm. Free. Suitable for children 5 and older.

Shoelace Park in Bronx River Park [216 Bronx Blvd. in Olinville, (718) 430-4696].

FRI, MAY 11

IN THE BRONX

A Rose is a Screen is a Rose: Pelham Art Center, 155 Fifth Ave.; (914) 738-2525; anki@pelhamartcenter.org; www.pelhamartcenter.org; 6:30 pm–8 pm; Free and open to the public.

In a world in which nearly all sight is modified and mediated through a screen, how do artists both embrace and push back against this? This group exhibition explores artists' responses to an ever consuming digital world, one that is reshaping the way we experience and comprehend our natural one. Featuring art by Richard Munaba, Sacha Vega, Roxana Azar, and Paula Morales.

FURTHER AFIELD

Diva Moms' Mom Moguls Breakfast: Lord & Taylor, 424 Fifth Ave. between 38th and 39th streets, Manhattan; RSVP@diva-moms.com; 9 am to 11:30 am; \$75.

For a busy mom, the work day never ends. If you're also growing your own business, it can feel as if you're raising another child. Is it really possible to juggle both home and work life successfully? At the sixth Annual Diva Moms Mom Moguls Breakfast, you'll hear from our esteemed panel of working moms

who are managing it all. Their wisdom and tips will inspire and empower, as they share their trials and tribulations. A percentage of ticket sales will be donated to the March For Our Lives Action Fund. RSVP@divamoms.com — space is limited.

Jazz Land in Concert: HSA Theater, 649 St. Nicholas Ave. at 145th Street, Manhattan; www.hsanyc.org; 7 pm; \$20 (at the door); \$15 students and seniors).

The Harlem School of the Arts presents this eclectic concert featuring The Dorothy Maynor Singers, the school's Dance Ensemble and the Junior Dance Ensemble.

SAT, MAY 12

IN THE BRONX

Birding Bonanza: Randall's Island Park, 20 Randall's Island Park, (212) 830-7722; Jennifer.wainwright@randallsisland.org; <https://randallsisland.org/events/birding-bonanza>; 10 am; Free.

Randall's Island Park is home to more than 180 species of birds. Join us for a day of free, family-friendly bird watching! Learn about the amazing adaptations of birds as they thrive in the Island's restored habitats. Binoculars and bird guides provided. Featuring crafts, games,

Calendar

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

and refreshments. Suitable for ages 7 and up (with an adult).

Family Art Project – Messages for Mother Earth and Mom: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6–18, children under 6 free. Admission is free until noon on Saturday.

Celebrate all mothers this weekend, including Mother Earth! Bring photos of the moms in your life whom you wish to acknowledge through notes and images on special papers. Learn about Pachamama, revered in South America, who teaches moderation in what we take from the Earth. Make an inspired painting on a card with pop-out elements. Place it in a translucent envelope for a gift mom can treasure.

Mother's Day Weekend Garden Party: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817–8700; www.nybg.org; 10 am–6 pm; \$30 adults, \$18 children 2–12, children under 2 free.

Love blooms for mom at the biggest garden party ever! Enjoy live music, kid-friendly performances, games, picnicking, tours and more.

FURTHER AFIELD

Sou Sou: Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, 120 E. 125th St., Manhattan; cccadi.org/sousou; Noon to 4 pm; Free.

The family-oriented program is inspired by the savings clubs tradition of the African diaspora with a twist — a culture savings club for the entire family. Attendees get to enjoy art, dance, music workshops, and many more activities that elevate the history and traditions of the African diaspora. Callaloo Kids is on residency, a children's media brand that promotes culture literacy, social awareness and puppet theater. This month, Mami Sou-sou, celebrate our mothers.

Jazz Land in Concert: 7 pm. HSA Theater. See Friday, May 11.

SUN, MAY 13

IN THE BRONX

Family Art Project – Messages for Mother Earth and Mom: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 12.

Mother's Day Weekend Garden Party: 10 am–6 pm. New York Botanical Garden. See Saturday, May 12.

Kids Salamander Exploration: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548–0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am to 12:30 pm; Free.

Our Urban Park Rangers connect children with nature to encourage active exploration of the natural world. This program is specifically designed for young children and families.

Family Nature Walk: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549–3200; www.wavehill.org; 1 pm to 2 pm; Free

The beauty of differences

“Addy & Uno” is at Theatre Row, Saturdays now through May 5.

As Uno, a child with autism, faces the challenge of competing in his school's math competition, his friends with varying disabilities — attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; visual, hearing, and physical impairments — rally in support. Through puppets and soaring music, “Addy & Uno” is

a heartfelt and hilarious journey celebrating hope, big dreams, and the beauty of differences. Run time is approximately 50 minutes.

“Addy & Uno,” Saturdays, now until May 5, at noon. Tickets are \$42.25. Suitable for all ages.

Theatre Row [410 W. 42nd St. Midtown West; (212) 239–6200; www.addyanduno.com/]

with admission to the grounds.

Join naturalist and educator Gabriel Willow on a family-friendly walk through the gardens or woodlands. Registration is not required. Ages 6 and older are welcome with an adult. Severe weather cancels.

FURTHER AFIELD

Mamita's Day: United Palace, 4140 Broadway at W.175th Street; (212) 568–1157; <https://www.unitedpalace.org/upca-calendar/eventdetail/5046/-/ballet-hispanico-en-familia>; 2 pm; \$15–\$25 (free for children 12 and younger).

Celebrate Mamita's Day with Ballet Hispánico. This is a fun-filled journey through Latin American dance and culture featuring a special appearance by Univision 41 news anchor Katiria Soto. Families can enjoy music and children's crafts in the grand foyer. The

first 100 people to arrive may join Ballet Hispánico Artistic Director & CEO Eduardo Vilario on stage for Baila Con Mami (Dance with Mommy) at 2:30 pm. Whether you want to bring your mom as a special gift or your favorite dance partner, this class will get you up, energized, and moving to the beat in no time! There will also be a flamenco performance by students of the Ballet Hispánico School of Dance, as well as excerpts from Ballet Hispánico repertory performed by members of BHdos.

Jazz Land in Concert: 3 pm. HSA Theater. See Friday, May 11.

MON, MAY 14

FURTHER AFIELD

NYC Autism Charter Schools Board

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

Meetings: NYC Autism Charter Schools, 433 E. 100th St. Manhattan; 977 Fox St., Bronx; (212) 860-2580; csecharan@nyc charter-school.org; www.nyc autism charters school.org; 5 pm; Free.

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

FRI, MAY 18

FURTHER AFIELD

Jazz Land in Concert: 7 pm. HSA Theater. See Friday, May 11.

SAT, MAY 19

IN THE BRONX

Learn to Ride: Shoelace Park, Bronx River Park, 216 Bronx Blvd.; (718) 430-4696. 10 am to 1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Bring a bike, a child, and a helmet for this free, fun event! Show your child, 5 years of age or older, how to ride a two-wheeler using the "balance first" method.

Learn to Ride: 10 am to 1 pm. Pelham Bay Ranger Station. See Saturday, May 5.

Family Art Project – Bird Calls Mural: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free. Admission is free until noon on Saturday.

Construct and paint a collaborative mural with sculptural branches — a forest mural that will be animated with bird calls! Make your own individual, lightweight, cardboard bird that will flutter into the mural or hover on sticks on the ceiling. Led by visiting artist Virva Hinnemo. Feathers and Flora Weekend event.

FURTHER AFIELD

Jazz Land in Concert: 7 pm. HSA Theater. See Friday, May 11.

SUN, MAY 20

IN THE BRONX

Family Art Project – Bird Calls Mural: 10 am-1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 19.

Family Walk – Avian Adventures: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free.

A special family walk focused on birds. Go bird-watching, using binoculars to closely observe birds in their natural habitat, with Wave Hill Environmental Educator Olivia Kalin. Through investigation of feathers, feet and skulls, discover how birds' adaptations help them thrive in their special niches at Wave Hill. Feathers and Flora Weekend event.

Nature Presentation – Meet the Birds: Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org;

Meet 'Bob' at the Thalia

Tweens and teens meet "Bob" at the Thalia Kid's Book Club event at Symphony Space on May 6.

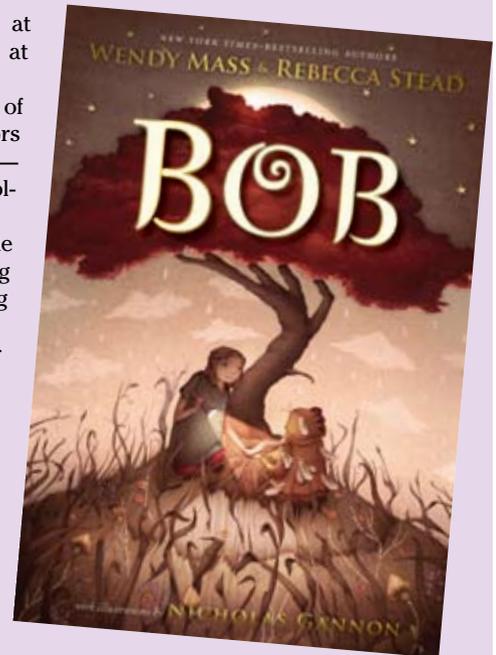
Clubbers will interact with a pair of New York Times best-selling authors — Rebecca Stead and Wendy Mass — who will share the story of their collaboration on a new novel, "Bob."

This magical story tells the tale about growing up, and the enduring power of friendship between a young girl and an unusual creature.

This highly interactive author and book event is produced in cooperation with Bank Street Bookstore and unites avid readers with the authors, illustrators, and books that inspire their imaginations. Participants will be treated to a creative writing project, an audience discussion, a performance from the book, and a book signing.

"Bob" Book Club on May 6 at 1 pm. Admission is \$17 for non-members, \$14 members.

Symphony Space [2537 Broadway at



W. 94th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org.

2-3 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free.

Many species of birds make their homes in the varied habitats in and around New York City. Meet birds of all shapes and sizes and learn about the unique adaptations that enable them to adapt and thrive in the Bronx and beyond. Live birds and their human escorts courtesy of Volunteers for Wildlife, a wildlife rehabilitation and education center. Feathers and Flora Weekend event.

FURTHER AFIELD

Jazz Land in Concert: 3 pm. HSA Theater. See Friday, May 11.

FRI, MAY 25

IN THE BRONX

Family Camping: Van Cortlandt Nature Center, W. 246th Street at Broadway; (718) 548-0912; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 7 pm to 7 am; Free.

The Urban Park Rangers celebrate the tradition of camping and we look forward to welcoming your family. Family Camping programs take place in all five boroughs, but space is limited and families are chosen by lottery. Participants are chosen by lottery. To register, visit our Urban Park Rangers' Registration Page. Lottery registration begins on Wednesday, May 16.

FURTHER AFIELD

Outdoor Movie Nights – "Moana"

(PG): Randall's Island Park, 20 Randall's Island Park, Manhattan; (212) 830-7722; Jennifer.wainwright@randallsisland.org; <https://randallsisland.org/events>; 8:30 pm; Free.

Randall's Island Park is an amazing setting to watch a movie under the stars! May through September, select weekend days, starting at sunset.

SAT, MAY 26

IN THE BRONX

Family Art Project – At Home in the Sky:

Wave Hill, W. 249th Street and Independence Avenue; (718) 549-3200; www.wavehill.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free with admission. \$8 adults, \$2 children 6-18, children under 6 free. Admission is free until noon on Saturday.

With watercolor brush in hand, find a place to perch and view the vistas unique to Wave Hill. What do you see flying off into the wild blue yonder? Experiment with the scale of birds near and far, and with brushy, atmospheric strokes in our outdoor sky-painting project. Rain or shine!

Croquet Day!: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Rd.; (718) 885-1461; www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Calendar

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

Spend a delightful afternoon at our croquet party, which includes light refreshments and seasonal libations. Equipment and instructions will be provided. As is customary, please wear your best white sporting attire.

SUN, MAY 27

IN THE BRONX

Family Art Project – At Home in the Sky: 10 am–1 pm. Wave Hill. See Saturday, May 26.

LONG-RUNNING

IN THE BRONX

Spring Fun: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 1:30–5:30 pm, until Fri, May 18; Included in All-Garden pass. \$28 adults, \$12 children 2-12, children under 2 free (weekends). \$23 adults, \$10 children 2-12, children under 2 free (weekdays).

Watch the Garden's plants and animals wake up from winter with buds bursting, birds nesting, and seeds sprouting. Investigate the ways that nature signals spring and help feathered friends build their nests with special nesting bags to take back to your neighborhood. Activities in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.

Kid's Le Petit Art – Dioramas and 3D Art: Poe Park Visitor Center, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; Tuesdays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, until Tues, June 12; Free.

Kids create adorable miniature art and miniature worlds as gifts for others, or to keep. Parents and kids may participate together.

Imaginative Arts for Kids: Poe Park Visitor Center in Poe Park, 2640 Grand Concourse; (718) 365-5516; Thursdays, 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm, until Thurs, June 28; Free.

Kids will learn various techniques for creating imaginative arts, including kirigami, collage, tissue work, pointillism, and 3D illusion. Drop in for a program, or try them all!

A Closer Look – Georgia O'Keeffe and Hawai'i: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, beginning Sat, May 19; Included in All-Garden pass. \$28 adults, \$12 children 2-12 (weekends); \$23 adults, \$10 children 2-12; children under 2 free (weekdays).

Inspired by O'Keeffe's unique style of representing close-up views of flowers and fruit, children investigate botanical specimens and create art. Play in a Hawai'iian sandscape—a sandbox inspired by O'Keeffe's landscape paintings featuring real shell and rock specimens to uncover. Pot up a tropical ginger cutting to take home and observe its growth! Activities in the Everett Children's Adventure Garden.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Frozen" on Broadway: St. James The-



Andrew Kist

Studio workshop for teens

Teens get creative at the Open Studio at the Whitney Museum of American Art on May 4 and May 18.

Bring your works-in-progress or create something entirely new at this free drop-in art-making program at the Whitney on most Fridays. All supplies

are provided and no previous art experience is required.

Open Studio on May 4 and 18, from 4 to 6 pm. Free.

The Whitney Museum of American Art [99 Gansevoort St. in the Meatpacking district, (212) 570-3600; www.whitney.org].

atre, 246 W. 44th St., Manhattan; (866) 870-2717; frozenthemusical.com; \$100 and up.

A musical worth melting for! If you loved the movie "Frozen," you'll love seeing Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, and Olaf come to life on stage to tell the timeless tale of two sisters who are pulled apart by a mysterious secret. Of course, there's the classic song "Let It Go," plus many new numbers for this new production.

Governors Island open: New York Harbor, Manhattan; <https://govisland.com>; Weekdays, 10 am–6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–7 pm, Ferries run from Manhattan and Brooklyn. Check website for schedules and fares. Entry to the island is free.

This unique New York City destination is open for the season! The 172-acre island in the heart of New York Harbor has something for everyone, from biking, slides, play fountains and hammocks to tours of historic Fort Jay and Castle Williams.

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

The City Parks Foundation presents the original marionette play based on J.M. Barrie's iconic Peter Pan tales. This version is a spin on the beloved children's classic. Leaving their parents behind, the Darling children follow Peter Pan back home to Neverland for the

adventure of a lifetime. When the cunning Captain Hook turns Peter's pals Tiger Lily and Tinker Bell against him, the children team up with the Never Boys to save the day, learning the value of forgiveness and friendship.

Fourth annual Scholastic Art & Writing Award Exhibition: The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education, 1000 Fifth Ave., Manhattan; alivingston@scholastic.com; artandwriting.org; Daily, 11 am to 6 pm; until Tues, May 29; Free.

The nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers and The Metropolitan Museum of Art will host an opening reception for the fourth annual New York City Scholastic Art & Writing Awards exhibition at The Met's Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education. The exhibition features more than 600 original works of art and writing from New York City-based Gold Key recipients in the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, the country's longest-running and most prestigious award and recognition program for creative teens.

2018 Fleet Week New York: Various locations around Manhattan, Manhattan; fleet-weeknewyork.com; Free.

Nothing says summer is approaching quite like New York's Fleet Week! Ships are open to public visitation and aviation events, military band concerts and exhibits are held throughout Manhattan and the other boroughs in this week-long celebration of the sea services. Plus, meet sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen and thank them in person for their service.

Over-scheduled?

There has been a lot of buzz around the idea of children being over-scheduled these days. How do I know if my child is over-scheduled and what can I do to avoid it?

Take cues from your child. If she is constantly tired or can't seem to find the time to get her homework done, those are two clear signs of over-scheduling. There are so many great activities available to children in the city that it may seem hard to narrow down what your child does.

As a family, you can sit down and decide which activities are non-negotiable, such as religious school, and which may be able to be put on hold for now. Some children are very invested in sports, which is great for them physically, socially, and emotionally. However, some teams have a lot of requirements, which can include a commitment of many hours, days, and even travel. Before signing your child up for any activity, it is a great idea to be aware of what the commit-



ment will look like with the activities your child already has in place.

Keep track of your child's activities on a weekly calendar and fill in everything they have going on so that it is easy to see.



TIPS FROM A TEACHER

LAUREN ROSEN

A great rule of thumb is to make sure your child always has a minimum of one weekday afternoon and one weekend day without a pre-scheduled commitment. Other than that, just remember to keep checking in with her to make sure she doesn't feel overwhelmed by her commitments and that she has a balance of activities and free time.



Private & Independent School Guide for NYC

Check it out on NYParenting.com

New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Songs about motherhood

Don't miss singer-songwriter Cheri Magill's third album, "Tour Guide" — inspired by the wild ride that is parenting.

"I felt drawn to write about motherhood, because it has stretched me more than any other thing I've been a part of in life," said Magill. "I write about it because many times I've struggled and grasped at straws... But I have also found my heart bursting and doubling in size as I've watched my children grow and teach me how to love unconditionally.

"I believe that mothers need to feel they aren't alone," continued the "I Am Momma Hear Me Roar" blogger, "And they need to know someone else feels the same way they do."

It's hard not to commiserate with the raw truth that is in Magill's joyfully exasperated song, "Crazy." Mothers around the world can identify when she croons, "I slave away to make a meal that you refuse to eat/ When I've put it all away, you tell me you're starving." Although those munchkins can test her patience, Magill maintains her sense of humor throughout, with a reassuring "At least I'm crazy about you!"

Produced in Nashville by Cason Cooley (Ingrid Michaelson), "Tour Guide" will be released on May 4, just in time to be the soundtrack to your Mother's Day fete, on Sunday, May 13.

"Tour Guide" CD by Chery Magill, \$12.97, Cherimagillmusic.com.



Art of the gift

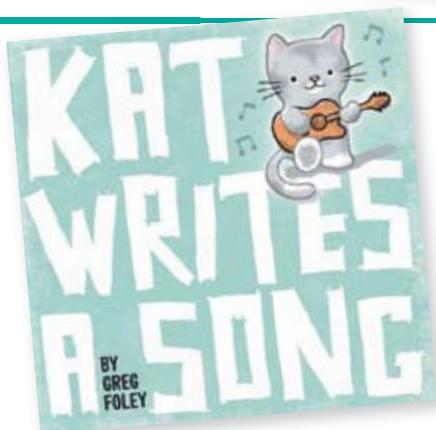
Every gift for the special mother, grandmother, aunt, or babysitter in our children's lives seems less than — until you visit the Etsy shop Mariaela.

The Poland-based artist at the helm, Ela, offers a unique gift idea that's sure to be cherished — and worn — by the mother of all mothers in your family. Ela creates double-sided pendants featuring your child's miniaturized artwork or photograph. She offers a choice of several handmade pendant shapes, ranging in size from 1.79 to 2.76-inch long. They can be attached to a key chain or a 31.5-inch-long necklace chain, both wrought from a tin alloy that's styled to look like timeless, antique silver.

Personalized picture necklace or key chain by Mariaela, \$24.50, Etsy.com.



Maja Jurczyk



Purr-fect story

A new picture book by Manhattan author-illustrator Greg Foley charms readers with its musically inclined feline protagonist.

Ideal for ages 3–7, "Kat Writes a Song" (Little Simon) hits bookstores on May 1, with its tale about the title character who takes advantage of her isolation — imposed by a rainy day — by working hard on writing the music and lyrics to a song. Her persistence pays off when she completes the "Amazing Song to Make Things Better," which is published in the hardcover's end paper.

"Kat Writes a Song" hardcover book by Greg Foley, \$14.99, amazon.com.

True blue

When moms-to-be start feeling blue about their swelling belly, they can turn to Good American's line of maternity denim for some effective retail therapy. Co-founded by reality star Khloe Kardashian (pictured in her Honeymoon Mid Rise Raw Stagger) and Emma Grede, this premium denim is designed with "curvier, sexier" moms in mind.

"We set out to make a denim line that's sexy and flattering, and made to fit you — not the other way around," explains Kardashian on the duo's Goodamerican.com website.

This clothing company, founded by women, to help expectant moms of all sizes feel stylish while sporting their baby bumps, is long overdue.

Honeymoon Mid Rise Raw Stagger maternity jeans, \$159, Goodamerican.com.





NEW YORK SPECIAL CHILD

LONG ISLAND SPECIAL CHILD

WESTCHESTER/ROCKLAND SPECIAL CHILD

Trusted since 2008

Informing & enriching
"Special Needs"
families
throughout NYC,
Long Island
& Westchester/Rockland

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contact us at 718-260-4554
or e-mail us at family@nyparenting.com

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CHAMPS FOR AUTISM

Fashion Show

Come to the Mall at Bay Plaza on **Sunday, May 6th, 3pm - 6pm**



Mother's Day FREE KID'S EVENT

Come join us at The Mall at Bay Plaza for a DJ Dance Party and Arts and Crafts!

FRI. MAY 11TH, 4 PM – 7 PM

3RD LEVEL IN THE FOOD COURT



BRONX FASHION WEEK

Affinity Health Plan

LEGACY

FASHION SHOW

HOSTED BY CARIDAD DE LUZ

SATURDAY, MAY 12TH | 4-6PM

1ST FLOOR CENTER COURT AT THE MALL AT BAY PLAZA

BP

The Mall at Bay Plaza

OVER 100 STORES & RESTAURANTS

MallatBayPlaza.com [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) #2018inStyle #BrandsYouLove

MTA BUSES SERVING THE MALL AT BAY PLAZA: BX5, BX12, BX23, BX26, BX28, BX29, BX30, BX38, BXM7, Q50

SUBWAY #5, 6 SUBWAY TO BUS STATION

200 Baychester Ave, Bronx, NY 10475, Exit 11, Off I-95 or Exit 4N off of Hutchinson River Parkway South