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Letter from the publisher

Celebrating love & loving

Kids are starting to date in fifth and sixth grades, I'm told. The crushes of my youth were so innocent, compared to the "stirrings and behavior" of today's preteens. Watching my daughter and her friends when she



was in middle school was a real eye-opener for me, as I'm sure it is for many parents. Dating at that age is a hard one to get a handle on, and control over youngsters is often nonexistent. This month we feature an interesting and informative article about the need for parents to take the lead in discussions and be consistent with their children, in spite of other influences.

Personally, I have spent the last

10 years reeling sometimes as my tween and then teen daughter dealt with the variety of growth spurts — both emotionally and psychologically — that often daunted both of us. During those years there were issues of bullying from other

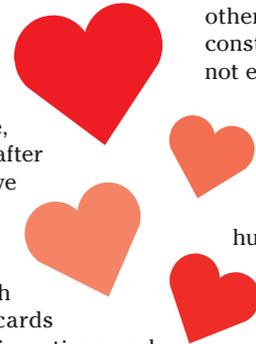
girls, claiming of friends and former boyfriends, and competition in so many ways that presented both of us with a series of complexities.

How to help our children with all they will encounter and need to deal with is an ongoing education. We need all the expert advice we can get, and here within our magazines we attempt to provide as much good advice as possible in every issue. Love is an important

topic. Learning to love and be loved with ease and delight, and recognizing real love, is what we're all after in life, and what we certainly want for our children.

In February we celebrate love with candy, flowers, cards and other romantic notions and displays.

Personally, I'm for love all the time, every day, in every way and I don't think this planet could possibly have enough of it. There is no possible overdose of true love or true devotion. Real love is displayed in many ways and sometimes it is even disguised behind impatience, arguing, jealousy and



other feelings. Nothing in life is constantly showing its good side, not even love.

Winter is a special time to extend love to the friends, neighbors and family around you who may need your help, assistance or just a good hug, and this year, here in New York, there is no doubt that we are experiencing winter. Bundle up, hug each other, and let's all hug our children in every way, every day.

Here's to love. Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher

STAFF

PUBLISHER / ADVERTISING / EDITORIAL:

Susan Weiss

PUBLISHER / BUSINESS MANAGER:

Clifford Luster

SALES MANAGER / ADVERTISING:

Sharon Noble

SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:

Tina Felicetti

SALES REPS:

Linda Smith, Stephanie Stellaccio, Jay Pelc

PRODUCTION MANAGER:

Keith Oechsner

ART DIRECTOR:

Leah Mitch

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR:

On Man Tse

LAYOUT MANAGER:

Yvonne Farley

WEB DESIGNER:

Sylvan Migdal

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS:

Arthur Arutyunov, Patty Coughlan, Mauro Deluca, Earl Ferrer, Irene Liberman

MANAGING EDITOR:

Vince DiMiceli

ASSISTANT EDITORS:

Meredith Deliso, Courtney Donahue

COPY EDITOR:

Lisa J. Curtis

CALENDAR EDITOR:

Joanna Del Buono

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: Risa Doherty, Helen Klein, Allison Plitt, Candi Sparks, Mary Carroll Winingar

CONTACT INFORMATION

ADVERTISING: WEB OR PRINT

(718) 260-4554

Family@cnglocal.com or

SWeiss@cnglocal.com

CIRCULATION

(718) 260-8336

TFelicetti@cnglocal.com

EDITORIAL

(718) 260-4554

Family@cnglocal.com

ADDRESS

Family Publications New York/CNG

1 Metrotech Center North

10th Floor

Brooklyn, NY 11201

www.webfamilyny.com



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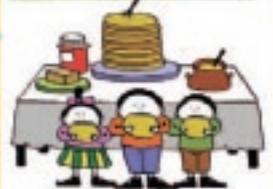
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Call it puppy

Preteen dating: trivial terrain or timely talks?

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Boys and girls have always been attracted to one another. But when that attraction begins varies tremendously from one person to another. For some, those feelings start in late elementary school. For others, it's not until high school. Although the age gap varies, experts agree that when a 9- or 10-year-old child begins showing interest in the opposite gender, parents need to sit up and take notice.

"Kids at this age may have a boy- or girlfriend, but still not know what dating means," says Shaunti Feldhahn, relationship researcher and analyst, and author of "For Young Women Only." "They are mimicking what they see played out on TV or by teenagers, but they don't have a full grasp of how a relationship works."

Parents, she says, may have a tendency to dismiss these early re-

lationships as trivial, but they should be taken seriously.

"It's an advanced signal of what is to come and needs to be addressed by mom and dad while they still have a major influence in their child's life," Feldhahn suggests.

"Parents should take the lead in facilitating age-appropriate discussions with their preteen regarding friendships, dating, decision making and sex," advises Jane Bowen, director of a statewide parent education organization. "If your son says he has a girlfriend or is going out with someone, ask what that means."

But, she says, talking about it shouldn't be a one-time deal.

"These conversations need to happen frequently so parents know where their preteens are in relationships and preteens know what their parents' expectations are," she continues.

This is what Patty Ford and her husband David did with their 9-year-old daughter Amber.

"When she was in the fourth grade, Amber would tell me that so-and-so liked her and that other girls in the class

had boyfriends," recalls Ford. "I felt like if she came and shared it with me, it was important that we talk about it."

Ford told her daughter she was too young to have a boyfriend, but she was careful to keep the line of communication open. Two years later, a bigger relational issue cropped up. With the parent-child dialogue already established, Ford was able to help her daughter navigate the sticky



love!



To-do list for parents of dating preteens

situation.

"This past fall, a boy at school gave Amber a necklace," says Ford. "Since it was right before her 11th birthday, we told her if she wanted to keep it, it would have to be a birthday gift."

But on her birthday, the same boy gave Amber a card with \$50 tucked inside of it. Amber didn't know what to do, so she brought the money home and talked it over with her mother.

"I told her there was no way she could keep it, and she understood," Ford explains. "We talked about how accepting a gift like that could make the boy think their relationship could possibly go to the next level — holding hands, giving him a kiss, that kind of thing. We agreed that I would call the boy's parents, explain the situation and tell them the money would be returned the next day."

When parents talk with their children, they should communicate their values and expectations and then lay out boundaries. Equally important is to explain why the boundaries are there.

"Rather than imposing rules preteens may resent, help them understand reasons why the rules are there, so they begin to develop that internal compass," says Feldhahn.

Parents should also try to find out what is influencing their child — be it friends, an older sibling, or some form of media — so they can address the issue as a whole.

"When Amber and I talk about relationships, I find out what is going on not just with her, but with the

entire sixth-grade class," says Ford. "It helps me understand what's influencing her. Is it persuasion from a new friend? Is she trying to fit in? Does she feel pressured?"

Although 10-year-old Jordan Adams isn't yet attracted to the opposite gender, he fell prey to a peer-induced pair off that made him uncomfortable.

"This past fall, Jordan's school organized a dance for the kids," explains his mother Amy. "It was supposed to be a reward for good grades, but things spiraled out of control. Jordan came home one day and told me he didn't want to go to school, because everyone had a date for the dance and he didn't."

Adams called the school and talked with the principal. He informed her that the administration knew nothing about the pair offs — it had been instigated by the students.

"Up to this point, I hadn't discussed boy/girl relationships with Jordan," Adams says. "I didn't think I needed to. But I'm realizing now that even if he isn't thinking about girls, the kid sitting next to him in class may be, so I've got to maintain a constant dialogue with him."

"Attractions are normal and will only increase as children grow," Bowen concludes. "If we want to prepare our kids for healthy dating relationships later on, we need to start communicating and building a trusting relationship with them now."

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

- Do realize that attraction to the opposite gender can happen any time from late elementary school to high school.

- Do take your preteen's relationships seriously and don't minimize her feelings, no matter how trivial they may seem.

- Do realize that the way your preteen views and conducts her relationships now paves the way for future dating relationships.

- Do keep the line of communication open with your preteen. Continue talking with her so you know how her relationships are progressing.

- Do ask your preteen how she defines "dating," "going out" or "having a boyfriend."

- Do let your preteen know that it is OK to express her emotions. This is particularly true for boys who may think they need to suppress their feelings.

- Do monitor your preteen's media exposure. The messages young people receive from music, TV, movies, books and magazines are laden with love, sex and relationships. Make sure these messages line up with the values your family upholds.

- Do know your preteen's friends. They have a tremendous influence on the way your child thinks, talks and acts.

- Do teach your preteen that the way she dresses sends a message to others. Clothing should be modest and should not have provocative messages written on it.

- Do give your preteen guidance with regard to decision-making and what is appropriate. Teach her to make decisions based on careful thought, not heartfelt emotions.

- Do be a good role model in the way you conduct your own relationships.

- Do set boundaries with regard to relationships and communicate these to your preteen. These could include: not being alone with the boy/girlfriend, having parental supervision at home, not being allowed in each other's bedrooms, no touching,

staying in group settings, and having a curfew. Equally important to setting boundaries is to help your preteen understand why these boundaries are there so she begins to develop an internal compass.

- Do set expectations and communicate these to your preteen. These could include staying focused on academics and extra-curricular activities, maintaining current friendships, time on the phone and Internet, etc.

- Do ask your preteen open-ended questions and keep the conversation positive: What do you like about this boy? What do you have in common? How does he treat you? Who are his friends? Do you like them? Do you feel respected by this person? This gets the child thinking about what is important in a relationship.

- Do talk with your preteen about respecting others and oneself.

- Do honor your preteen's privacy, but reserve the right to inspect her backpack or room if she begins to show signs that concern you.

- Do be an emotional support when the relationship ends. Most preteen relationships are short-lived. 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.

- Do realize that preteens may question your values, particularly if they don't line up with media messages or their friends' values. This is normal and means they are questioning but not necessarily rejecting what you uphold.

- Do 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.

- Do realize this is the beginning of a long journey for your preteen. Continue to communicate and build a healthy relationship so she learns to successfully navigate this facet of life.

Resources

"For Young Women Only," by Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa Rice

"How to Talk so Kids will Listen, and Listen so Kids will Talk," by Adele Faber

"How to Talk so Teens will Listen, and Listen so Teens will Talk," by Adele Faber

"You and Your Adolescent: Revised Edition," by Lawrence Steinberg, Ph.D.

"Raising a Thinking Preteen: The 'I Can Problem Solve' Program for 8- to 12-Year-Olds," by Myrna Shure and Roberta Israeloff

"Roller-coaster Years," by Charlene C. Giannetti and Margareta Sagarese



NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ

School bus stories

Making memories on the iconic yellow ride

Everyone has a memorable school bus story. Here's mine: I must have been in first or second grade at the time. One fall morning, as I walked up to the bus stop at the corner, I watched in curiosity as a bunch of older kids frantically gathered crabapples and layered them in the street. They snatched rotten apples off the ground and picked fresh ones from the tree. Young and naïve, I

bus holds an iconic place in the history of American education. On the one hand, buses have provided essential transportation for generations of children, allowing them to get to school safely from around the block or across the county.

On the other hand, buses have been parked in the middle of some hugely significant legal battles regarding who goes to school where.

They've also been known over the years as the rolling headquarters for bullies and braggarts.

Of course, school buses and school bus

maybe most important, a first bit of independence is established. A new world opens up to a child when he climbs up those bus steps and drives away from home.

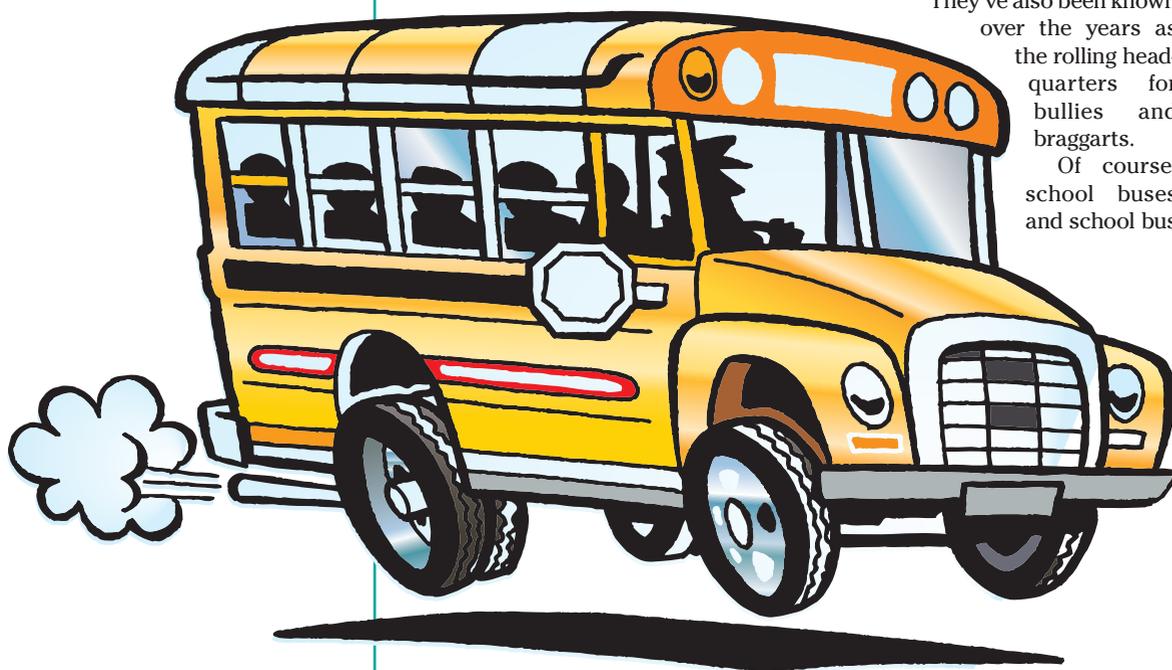
Luckily, our son enjoyed riding the bus right from the start. Within a few weeks, he was telling my wife and I about his new "bus friends" — the kids who he sat with and near. Whenever we went out somewhere around town, from the grocery store to the park, the boy would run into one of his friends from the bus. This happened so often that I began to think that he knew more people than I did.

Our son also told us what he was learning on the bus. That was an eye-opener. At dinner, he matter-of-factly stated that he had learned the "f-word" on the bus. The f-word? Already? Really? Upon further inquiry, it turned out that the f-word he learned on the bus was "fart." Crisis averted and no need to drive him to school yet.

Later in the year, he regaled us with some song lyrics that he had picked up on the bus. He launched into a rendition of that old holiday classic, "Jingle bells, Batman smells, Robin laid an egg, the Batmobile lost a wheel, and the Joker got away! Hey!" It was beautiful. Would that song ever have enjoyed such longevity without the bus? We sang that tune on the bus when I was a kid, and now my son has learned those time-honored lyrics.

Old-timers love to talk about walking to school. Uphill both ways. In the snow. The argument is that hoofing it built character. I'd have to argue that taking the bus builds character, too. A year and a half since my son started riding the bus, it still amazes me that my little boy just jumps right on every morning. As we wave goodbye to each other, I'm proud that he's willing and able to be that independent. I'm proud of this daily act of courage. And I'm proud that he hasn't yet thought of lining the bus's path with apples.

Brian Kantz stopped taking the bus when his family moved one block away from the school. He then had to make the uphill walk, both ways. Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at theneubiedad@yahoo.com.



wondered what they were up to.

With their prep work complete, the jokesters stepped back a few feet from the curb and waited in silence. Moments later, our big yellow school bus, driven by a guy named Norm, came barreling down the road — right on schedule.

I distinctly recall the SHHPPPLL-LATTT sound of the bus running over about 200 apples — and spraying applesauce all over the place. I also remember the collective cheer of triumph from the kids who made it happen. And even now, more than 30 years later, I can still see the look on that poor bus driver's face as he shook his head in disapproval. He knew that he'd been had by a bunch of kids. Ah, the school bus.

For better or worse, the school

drivers have made their mark on pop culture, too. Which parent doesn't cringe at the thought of a real-life version of Otto — the headphone-wearing, head-banging driver who gets the Simpson kids to school — driving their own kids? And who couldn't help but laugh when Napoleon Dynamite boarded the bus in that movie's opening scene and tossed an action figure tied to a string out the window so that he could drag it down the dusty road? What a great idea.

Last year, when my oldest son started kindergarten and hopped on the bus for the first time, I was struck by the significance of it all. The school bus really is its own little kids club where friendships are made, legend and lore is handed down from big kids to little kids, and

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Eliminating driveway back-overs

How rear-mounted video cameras prevent accidents

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

Changes are being made to help ensure that the number of children accidentally hit by cars backing up goes way down.

According to Kids and Cars, an organization raising awareness about back-overs, 50 children are accidentally hit weekly. Often, they are hit by family members backing out of the driveway and unaware that the child has run behind the car.

On Dec. 3, the U.S. Department of Transportation proposed new safety regulations in accordance with the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Safety Transportation Act, which directs the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to come up with a way to improve drivers' ability to see pedestrians behind them.

And the administration determined that the most effective option is the rear-mounted video camera, along with the in-vehicle display screen, so the driver can see what happens behind the car. The proposal requires that these improvements be in cars by the 2014 model.

During its research, the administration heard proposals from those in the car industry, equipment manufacturers and safety advocates. It also tested numerous mechanisms that could be used to save lives. It tested not only the effectiveness of each, but also the driver's tendency to fully use it.

The administration found that additional mirrors tended to distort images, and sensors, which are used in some cars already, failed to reflect



well off of non-smooth surfaces — like clothing. Also, young children were often too short to be detected by sensors. In addition, sensors can sound false alarms, therefore losing their effectiveness. And it was found that people respond more to visual alerts, rather than auditory ones.

In its calculations, the administration considered how the size of the vehicles and the height of the drivers affected rear visibility. It found that the area of highest risk was an area 10 feet wide and 20 feet, in length, behind a vehicle.

Safety advocate Bill Nelson — who has been raising awareness with a yearly four-mile run since he lost his son, Alec, in a back-over incident in 2004 in Dix Hills, Long Island — is grateful that this issue is being addressed. He believes that the proposed regulations are a great start, but he still cautions that millions of vehicles without rearview cameras will remain on the road for a long, long time.

And Manhasset resident Susan Auriemma worries that many drivers may not understand how long, or how often, they need to view the display screen when backing up.

“We need to use a combination of

education and technology to keep our children safe,” says Janette Fennell, president and founder of Kids and Cars. She finds that people need to be provided with information so that they can make effective use of the new technology — like knowing to wipe the camera lens from time to time, as snow and dirt can obscure the image. Fennell's organization hopes to help people measure the blind zone behind their vehicles, as not all people are aware of just how big that zone can be. She also wants people to know that the cameras are not fool-proof protection for backing up.

Although these new steps should reduce driveway back-over accidents considerably, there is no technology that can replace full attention and vigilance when backing up, cautions David Strickland, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration administrator. Drivers still need to check on the whereabouts of children and check that no one is behind their vehicles.

The proposed regulations for car manufacturers rest on the belief that for now, they would use current rearview video systems to satisfy the new standards, and therefore would not incur a higher cost for manufacturing cars with the new technology. In its proposal, the administration noted that the regulations would prevent property damage as well.

Driveway back-overs are not the only danger to our children, but they are a preventable one. New regulations mandating the installation of rearview cameras in new cars will not ensure avoidance of every back-over incident, but such regulations will no doubt save lives.

For more about the proposed regulations, visit <http://www.nhtsa.gov/>.

To find out more about Kids and Cars, car safety, and back-overs, visit kidsandcars.org.

Alec's Run [Half Hollow Hills West High School in Dix Hills, Long Island] is on April 30 at 9:30 am. A separate fun run for kids begins at 9 am. To find out more, visit alecstrun.com.

Risa C. Doherty is a freelance writer and attorney from East Hills, NY, and drives an SUV equipped with a rearview camera.

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CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Chocolate: A gift to your heart

Is it any coincidence that two images — hearts and chocolate — are inescapable during the month of February? The gift of chocolate is linked to affairs of the heart, but can it also be healthy for the heart?

Unwrap the science

Much of the research about cocoa's health benefits has been conducted over the last 10 years. Over 740 beneficial bioactive components have been identified in cocoa beans, according to David A. Stuart, PhD, with the Hershey Center for Health and Nutrition. For example, health-promoting sterols, resveratrol, flavan-3-ols and especially flavanols are abundant in cocoa. And the fatty acids in cocoa are either neutral for blood cholesterol, or actually help lower it.

Is dark chocolate truly the best? According to a 2006 study in the "Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry," flavanols are most concentrated in cocoa powder, followed by baking chocolate, dark chocolate, milk chocolate and finally syrup.

And it's no surprise that nearly all the clinical trial studies have been conducted with cocoa powder or dark chocolate. The research suggests beneficial effects on cardiovascular risk factors such as serum cholesterol, blood pressure, vascular reactivity, platelet stickiness and systemic inflammation. However, the research has only been done with adults, and

Q: How much chocolate provides health benefits?

A: According to published research, between one and 10 tablespoons (10 to 100 calories) per day of cocoa. Or two to 20 gram tasting squares (90 calories total) of dark chocolate.

there is no proof of health benefits for children at this time.

Children and chocolate

Children love hot chocolate, right? But is it healthy for them?

"A cup of hot chocolate prepared with real cocoa powder is an excellent way to consume relatively high amounts of chocolate flavanols," states Jeffrey Blumberg, PhD, director of the Antioxidants Research Laboratory at Tufts University.

What about milk chocolate? Many children prefer it, because it's smoother and sweeter to the taste. Blumberg, who along with Stuart, spoke at the American Dietetic Association Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo in November 2010, reassures that milk chocolate does contain the same flavonoids as dark chocolate, but at a 20 to 50 percent lower concentration. (There are no flavonoids in white chocolate, as it is not made from the cocoa bean.)

Stimulant effect?

Parents often worry about the caffeine in chocolate and its stimulant effect on young children. Actually, there are two naturally-occurring stimulants, caffeine and theobromine. Caffeine is present in the same order in chocolate products as flavanols, with cocoa powder being the highest. But the amount is small. For example, a 1.55 ounce milk chocolate bar contains about 12 milligrams of caffeine, the same amount in about three cups of decaf coffee.

Closely linked to caffeine, theo-

bromine has only a mild stimulatory effect. Dark chocolates, unsweetened baking chocolate and cocoa powder contain more theobromine than do milk chocolate and syrups.

When it comes to the amount of chocolate to shoot for, Blumberg notes that consistency is key and that eating it every day is what provides the most benefits. He also reminds us to practice moderation.

"Children need to learn the important lesson that candy — even candy with healthy phytochemicals like the flavonoids — should be consumed in small amounts as a fun, but indulgent, treat. Of course, encouraging kids to expand the horizons of their palate beyond simple sweets to more adventuresome foods (including dark chocolate) is always a good idea."

Christine M. Palumbo is an award-winning dietitian in Naperville, IL. She is a mother of three and the wife of a chocoholic. Herself? Not so much. Contact her at Chris@ChristinePaumbo.com or (630) 369-8495.



Old-fashioned hot cocoa

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
Dash salt
1 cup reduced fat milk
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon sugar

INSTRUCTIONS: Mix cocoa and salt in a mug. Heat milk in the micro-

wave on high for 90 seconds or until hot. Gradually add the hot milk to the cocoa mixture in the mug, stirring until well blended. Stir in vanilla and sugar. Makes 1 serving.

NUTRITION FACTS: 190 calories, 27 grams carbohydrate, 9 grams protein, 5 grams fat, 2.5 grams saturated fat, 24 grams sugar (13 grams from added sugar), 270 milligrams sodium, 30 percent daily value calcium, 10 percent daily value vitamin A, 4 percent daily value iron, 12 milligrams caffeine.

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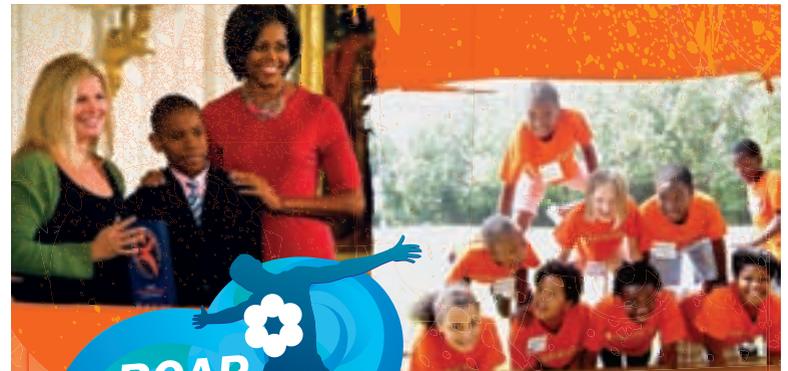
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Keep smiles safe

Mouthguards should be part of your child's sports equipment

BY MANI ALIKHANI,
DDS, MS, PHD

Each year, thousands of facial injuries are experienced by both children and adults while on the playing field, on the basketball court, biking or skating, and doing other activities. So what can you do to protect your little sports star's smile while he's playing? Make sure he wears a mouthguard.

According to the American Dental Association, a properly fitted mouthguard, or mouth protector, is an important piece of athletic gear that can protect your child's teeth and smile. It is a resilient appliance that is placed inside the mouth, usually to fit over the surfaces of the teeth and gum. This way, it provides a protective surface to distribute and dissipate transmitted forces on impact, minimizing the risk of trauma to the lips and intraoral tissues, such as lacerations, crown or root fractures, luxations and avulsions.

Costs of a mouthguard

Athletic mouthguards vary from inexpensive, preformed plastic trays designed for use without any modification, to custom-made, individually-designed devices that fit a child's teeth perfectly. Of course, the custom-made mouthguard has better retention and comfort, less inter-



ference with speech and breathing, and more adaptability to orthodontic appliances.

Choosing a mouthguard

Choosing a mouthguard can be a challenging task. However, when making your decision, be sure you select a mouthguard that not only is resilient, tear-resistant and comfortable, but is also durable, easy to clean, and fits properly in your child's mouth.

Taking care of a mouthguard

- Before and after each use, rinse it with cold water or an antiseptic mouth rinse. You can also clean it with toothpaste and a toothbrush.

- Use a firm, perforated container to store or transport your mouthguard.

- Avoid high temperatures, such as hot water, hot surfaces or direct sunlight, as this will minimize distortion of the mouthguard.

- Have regular dental check-ups in order to make sure that your mouthguard is always in good condition to provide effective protection without

irritating your mouth.

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Sports for which you may need a mouthguard

If you participate in these sports, consult your dentist about getting a mouthguard:

- Acrobatics
- Basketball
- Bicycling
- Boxing
- Equestrian events
- Extreme sports
- Field events
- Field hockey
- Football
- Gymnastics
- Handball
- Ice hockey
- Inline skating
- Lacrosse
- Martial arts
- Racquetball
- Rugby
- Shotputting
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Top 10 dental facts

Dentists explain how to keep baby teeth cavity-free



1 Most children have 20 baby teeth by their third birthday.

2 Cavities in baby teeth become much more serious faster than cavities in adult teeth.

3 Don't be a floss flunkie! It is recommended that parents floss their child's teeth until she is old enough to do so herself, usually at about 6 years old.

4 Flossing should be done prior to brushing in order to get food out from between teeth, so that any excess food will be easier to

remove with the toothbrush.

5 To figure out if a child is old enough to brush her own teeth, go by this dental rule of thumb: If a child is unable to tie her shoelaces, she is not likely to brush her teeth well and will need the help of an adult.

6 Permanent teeth appear more yellow in color than baby teeth.

7 To prevent tooth decay in young children when food and bacteria get trapped in grooves of teeth, usually the back molars, it might be necessary to place sealants — thin plastic coatings similar to adult fillings — on top of the grooves as an aid in keeping new perma-

nent teeth healthy.

8 The average person brushes her teeth 30-40 seconds each day, but dentists encourage teeth to be brushed two times daily for two minutes each time.

9 Don't forget about your child's tongue! It is important to clean the tongue as well.

10 Beautiful smiles need a great start! Good dental hygiene and regular visits to the dentist are crucial in maintaining a healthy smile your children will be proud to display on picture day!

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A cavity is a result of a disease process, just as diabetes is a disease process. If your children get cavities, they have Strep cavity-causing bacteria and they probably acquired it from you. Brushing teeth and limiting sugar will help stop the bacteria from

proliferating, thereby stopping cavities in their tracks.

Xylitol, pronounced zeye-li-tall, is a natural sugar found in fruits and vegetables like berries and corn, and is usually extracted from birch bark. It helps prevent cavities by changing the environment of the mouth to hinder the growth of the bacteria.

Xylitol is organic and was approved by the FDA in 1963. It can be found in chewing gum, breath mints, tooth wipes, lollipops and many other types of candies. We can bake with it and even sweeten our coffee with it. It is on the shelves of health food stores and is widely available on the Internet.

Xylitol must be used consistently

for it to be effective. If we use too much, it may cause a laxative effect, like mannitol or sorbitol, and studies show that if we use too little, it has no effect. It has fewer calories than cane sugar (2.4 calories versus 4 calories per gram, respectively) and it is recommended for diabetics.

Children crave candy and sugary snacks throughout the year. Xylitol is a guilt-free choice for parents to allow their children to eat treats.

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Dr. Reneida E. Reyes has been actively engaged in the practice of Pediatric Dentistry at One Hanson Place (the former Williamsburg Savings Bank building) for about 30 years. Although the building has been converted to luxury residential condominiums, Dr. Reyes may still be found in the building in suite 706.

Dr. Reyes received her pediatric dental training at The Children's Hospital of Boston and Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. She also holds a master's in Public Health Degree from Harvard School of Public Health in the area of Maternal and Child Health Studies.

Professionally Dr. Reyes has been actively engaged in organized dentistry with a strong focus on children's oral health, having served as chair of the Oral Health Committee of Second District Dental Society (Brooklyn and Staten Island) and State Chair of National Children's Dental Health Month for the New York State Dental Association establishing the Sugarless Wednesday Program, which received National recognition from the American Dental Association (ADA) as a Recipient of the Golden Apple Award in 2007.

Dr. Reyes had been Section Chief of Pediatric Dentistry at New York Methodist Hospital, Division of Dental Medicine since 1997. Dr. Reyes received the New York State Dental Foundation award of excellence in community service on Oct. 12, 2009.

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Dr. Alan, an immigrant of Syria migrated to Israel, where he studied and practiced general dentistry for 6 years. He was then given the opportunity to migrate and settle in the USA where he found a new love and calling to study and practice pediatric dentistry at NYU. Dr. Alan graduated in 1998. Under the care, guidance and skillful training of Dr. Judy for a number of years, he further developed his

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Our clinical director, Dr. Mani Alikhani earned his Dental Degree at Tufts University and his Orthodontics Certificate at New York University. He is an Assistant Professor & Director of Orthodontic Research at New York University College of Dentistry.

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Dr. Lisa Bienstock is a Pediatric Dentist, who joined Dr. Lois Jackson and Associates Pediatric Dental Practice in the summer of 2009. Like Dr. Lois Jackson, Dr. Lisa Bienstock completed her training in Pediatric Dentistry at Columbia University, where she now volunteers her time teaching one half day a week. She is an active member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentists, American Dental Association, American Association of Women Dentists, The New York County Dental Society, The Dental Study Club of New York, and The New York Academy of Collaborative Dentists. Dr.

Bienstock also enjoys participating in national and international dental mission trips to treat underprivileged children; her most recent trip was to the Dominican Republic last spring. Dr. Bienstock's most recent honor was the acceptance for candidacy to become a Diplomate of the American Board Pediatric Dentistry.

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Photo by Stefano Giovannini



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(At left) Talented tweenies Leah Herzberg (left) and Alle Tangney 12, get a helping hand from 5-year-old Benjamin Herzberg. (Above) Artsmart Justin Maxwell Adams of Crown Heights celebrates the installation of his drawing.

Art-smart kids at Brooklyn Museum

BY SHAVANA ABRUZZO

Aspiring artist Amaya Hutchinson can stand back and admire her own masterpiece the next time she visits the Brooklyn Museum.

The 9-year-old budding Rembrandt from Crown Heights was among dozens of art-smart visitors of all ages who left their mark on the borough's most famous archive by putting their magic down on paper at the 25th anniversary celebration of Arty Facts and the Gallery/Studio Program held on Jan. 16.

The family-friendly day called upon kids and adults to create a memory book and contribute to a community sculpture, using the museum's renowned permanent collection of art from around the world as

inspiration. The milestone anniversary also featured alumni artwork and an opening reception for the Gallery/Studio Program Student Exhibition — with free cupcakes tossed in to sweeten the deal.

Talented tweenie Justin Maxwell Adams celebrated his installation — a colorful, crayon collage — by pumping both arms in the air, a wide smile spreading across his face as he hailed his two-in-one accomplishment: being an artist and an exhibitor at one of the planet's most famous museums. Nearby, 12-year-olds Leah Herzberg and Alle Tangney, and Benjamin Herzberg, 5, toiled on a vibrant pencil drawing — their joint offering for the wall of fame.

The elders weren't to be outshone, though. Thomas Robinson, a senior from Jamaica, N.Y. proudly exhibited

his 3-D labyrinth crafted from beads and shells, while Jhmar Galloway displayed his multi-media sculptures to rave reviews.

The Brooklyn Museum's Gallery/Studio Program offers fun and challenging studio art courses for wannabe artists, including classes in painting, printmaking, drawing, sculpture, mixed media and digital photography — capped by an exhibition of the students' work in the museum's Con Edison Education Gallery.

View the Gallery/Studio Program Student Exhibition through March 22 at the Brooklyn Museum [200 Eastern Pkwy, at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights, (718) 638-5000]; www.brooklynmuseum.org.

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Never say never

Even young kids are at risk for eating disorders

BY MONICA BROWN

"I began as an anorexic when I was 11 years old. Then I discovered bulimia when I was 15 and struggled with the disease until I was 36 years old. This disease robbed me of my health, life, and relationships," a middle-aged woman with a history of eating disorders posted on an online forum. "I am now 44 years old. I now have cardiomyopathy (weakening of the heart muscle) ... unstable blood pressure ... I have constant heart palpitations, and I'm on a ton of meds that I have to live on the rest of my life just to live a close-to-normal existence. All for anorexia/bulimia. All to be in control and all to be thin."

Thirty-three years ago, when her struggle began as a young girl, this woman's case may have been an anomaly. But today, it's a far different story. While experts believe the predominant onset of illness is between 12 and 18 years of age, recent studies suggest younger children are more at risk these days than ever before.

In a new clinical report from the American Academy of Pediatrics,

published in the December 2010 issue of "Pediatrics," it is estimated that 0.5 percent of adolescent girls in the U.S. have anorexia, and one to two percent meet criteria for bulimia. There is now an increasing recognition of eating disorders in males, which now represent up to 10 percent of all cases of eating disorders, as well as in children of younger ages. An analysis by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality revealed that from 1999 to 2006, hospitalizations for eating disorders in children under 12 years of age increased by 119 percent.

Experts say it's difficult to measure the reasons for such an increase in younger children. But doctors continue to study the causes of the illness, in hopes that they can change those rising statistics. While there are different factors that contribute to each individual case, some constants remain across the board.

"With young kids, it's a fear element. It's an irrational fear element, and it could be that there's an enormous amount of emphasis (in the home) on dieting and weight, which could produce fear in a suscepti-

ble child," says Dr. Katherine Halmi, a board-certified pediatrician and clinical researcher at Weill Cornell Medical Center. "Remember, the child(ren) who get this, tend to be highly anxious, highly perfectionistic, insecure kids. They are psychologically and, probably, biologically vulnerable to develop anorexia when the environment is provocative."

A provocative environment that includes, she says, mothers who obsess over dieting and exercise. While there's widespread disagreement over theories like that one, nutritional experts say that, because of those rising statistics, and because obesity rates in children — another type of eating disorder — are on the rise, it's more important than ever for parents to reinforce healthy eating habits at home.

"Be a good role model. This is especially critical for mothers with their daughters. Eat well, choosing a variety of foods. Enjoy an occasional dessert, pizza or bag of chips and enjoy them without guilt," says Christine M. Palumbo, a registered dietician and adjunct faculty member at Benedictine University in Naperville, IL. "Don't criticize the size of your thighs or belly. And by all means, never suggest to your child that she is overweight. Don't count calories or exercise just to burn calories you've just eaten. Be physically active, because it's fun and makes you feel good afterward."

Early intervention and treatment can be lifesaving

There's one thing experts can agree on: early intervention and treatment is the key to getting a child or teenager with anorexia and/or bulimia the help needed to eventually save her life. Kidney and other organ damage, heart problems, bone loss, and a host of other health issues can plague a child with an eating disorder well into adulthood, if intervention doesn't take place early on.

Parents who suspect their child might have an eating disorder should

What is anorexia?

According to medical experts, anorexia is an eating disorder in which people intentionally starve themselves. It causes extreme weight loss, which the National Institute of Mental Health defines as at least 15 percent below the individual's normal body weight.

Food and weight become obsessions. Compulsiveness may cause strange eating rituals or the refusal to eat in front of others. It is not uncommon for people with anorexia to collect recipes and prepare gourmet feasts for family and friends, but not partake in the meals themselves. They may also adhere to strict exercise routines to keep off weight.

The cause of anorexia is not known. It can begin as innocent di-

eting behavior, but gradually progresses to extreme and unhealthy weight loss. Social attitudes toward body appearance, family influences, genetics, and neurochemical and developmental factors are considered possible contributors to the cause of anorexia.

Doctors say people who develop anorexia are more likely to come from families with a history of weight problems, physical illness, and other mental health problems, like depression or substance abuse. They may come from families that are challenged by appropriate problem solving, being too rigid, overly-critical, intrusive, and overprotective. Those with anorexia may also be dependent and immature in their emotional development, and are likely

to isolate themselves from others. Other mental health problems, like anxiety disorders, are often present in anorexia patients.

What is bulimia?

Bulimia is defined as uncontrolled episodes of bingeing (excessive overeating) that are usually followed by purging (self-induced vomiting), misuse of laxatives, enemas, fasting, or excessive exercise to control weight. When an individual with bulimia binges, she usually will eat much larger amounts of food than would normally be consumed within a short period of time (usually less than two hours). Eating binges occur at least twice a week for three months and may occur as often as several times a day.

first schedule a thorough exam with the family pediatrician, who can chart the child's proper weight and height, and rule out any other medical issues. The next step is to find a trained psychotherapist who can begin to work with the child, and in many cases, the family.

Maudsley therapy

Traditional therapies have focused on treating the patient individually, but a newer approach has emerged in recent years, and some experts believe this can be much more effective for young children and adolescents.

The Maudsley Technique is an intensive outpatient treatment that focuses on the family unit — parents play an active and positive role in order to focus on three key elements of treatment:

- Helping to restore their child's weight to normal levels expected given her age and height.
- Giving the control over eating back to the patient.
- Encouraging normal child/adolescent development through an in-depth discussion of these crucial developmental issues as they pertain to their child.

"Families should be involved," says Dr. Evelyn Attia, Director of the Center for Eating Disorders at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, a program that is known for being the only specialized, psychiatric inpatient unit dedicated to eating disorder patients in New York state. "We know that (family therapy) will improve the likelihood of success."

For young children in treatment, the concerns go beyond just specific medical and psychological care. Children in this program also meet with a certified teacher each weekday for classroom time and spend the afternoons completing homework assignments. The hospital works closely with local school districts to ensure the continuity of their coursework. During a patient's stay at the facility, families can undergo treatment, using some of the Maudsley techniques.

"Eating disorders affect the entire family, especially when the patient is young," says Attia.

And while doctors say they have learned to incorporate some of the methods used in Maudsley therapy during inpatient care, they also stress that Maudsley is critical to outpatient care, where families have



to do the hard work every day to see the results.

While treatment options can vary from program to program, doctors say there's one thing every family must do: get help quickly — mainly because they want their child to be healthy as soon as possible, but also, because forcing children into treatment before they are old enough to decide for themselves could save their lives.

"The real emphasis needs to be on diagnosing and treating children and teenagers before they reach the age of 18," Halmi emphasizes. "Once they reach the age of 18, they're a

legal citizen, and they can refuse care. And it's impossible to commit somebody for treatment, unless they're near death."

For more information on the Eating Disorder Center at New York-Presbyterian, visit nyp.org.

For more information on the Maudsley Technique, visit maudsleyparents.org.

Monica Brown is a cable television news anchor and freelance writer. She also conducts public speaking workshops for both children and adults. Monica lives on Staten Island with her husband and two children and can be reached at monicaldbrown@gmail.com.

Early intervention and treatment is the key to getting a child or teenager with anorexia or bulimia the help needed to eventually save her life.



ASK THE PROFESSIONAL

DEBORAH BERGER

Stunned at school

When his teacher suspects developmental issues

Dear Debbie,

Our 4-year-old son is in preschool. Recently, we were told by his teacher that she believes he may have some developmental issues and should be evaluated. We were completely unprepared for this and are stunned and somewhat frozen in place. We haven't the vaguest idea where to begin. Does it begin with talking to our pediatrician? Can you help us take the next steps? What does this mean and what should we do next?

You certainly may wish to speak with your son's doctor, but before you do, I suggest that you speak to your son's teacher. You said she told you that she believes he may have some developmental issues and should be evaluated, but you did not say in what areas. You need to ask the teacher specific questions about what delays she is seeing. Does she believe that your son has delays in speech and language, in his gross or fine motor skills, or in all areas?

After you speak with your son's teacher, you can certainly speak to your pediatrician and get his or her opinion, but you do not have to do this.

If you agree with your son's teacher and suspect that he may have developmental issues, you have the right to refer your son to your school district's Committee for Preschool Education for a free evaluation, by sending a letter simply stating that you believe your son has developmental delays and that you are asking for an evaluation to determine if, in fact, he is a child with a disability.

I suggest that all correspondence with the school district be sent by certified mail or hand delivered, in order to have proof of delivery, and you should keep copies of all letters you send to the school district.

The committee must do a complete evaluation of your son in all areas in which you suspect he has developmental delays.

After all of the evaluations are completed, you will have a meeting with



the committee, in which the results of the evaluations will be discussed, and it will be determined if your son requires services to address his developmental delays. If your son needs services, the services must be provided at no cost to you and must be provided in the least restrictive environment. This means that the services can be provided at your home, the therapist's office, at his private preschool, or any other type of school your child may attend.

You are an equal member of the committee, so you will be a part of the decision-making process regarding your son.

It is always a good idea to identify and address delays as early as possible, and you would be wise to pay attention to the concerns of the

teacher. However, the final decision is yours. The committee needs your permission to evaluate, classify and provide services. If at any time you change your mind, you are free to withdraw your consent.

For more information and help with the committee process, you can contact the parent center in your area by phone or e-mail. A list of all the parent centers in New York State is available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialized/techassist/parentcenters.htm>. These services are free of charge.

Deborah Berger is an attorney who concentrates in Education Law. She represents parents and students in Long Island, NY. Deborah Berger [218 Main St. in Long Island (631) 630-6982.] PMB Box # 107, Setauket, NY 11733. For more information, visit www.deborahberger.com.

DISCLAIMER: "Ask Debbie" is a public forum and questions and responses are not private or confidential or protected by the attorney-client privilege. This is not a solicitation for business but is general information. Ms. Berger is not your attorney, and the response above is not legal advice. You should not read this response to propose specific action or address specific circumstances, but only to give you a sense of general principles of law that might affect the situation you describe. Application of these general principles to particular circumstances must be done by a lawyer who has spoken with you in confidence, learned all relevant information, and explored various options. Before acting on these general principles, you should hire a lawyer licensed to practice law in the jurisdiction to which your question pertains or an education advocate.

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Continued on page 28

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Catholic Schools

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Continued from page 26

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Improving school for disabled kids

Overturing Rowley, the Kryptonite of special education

BY MARILYN SCATTOREGGIO

With the release of “Waiting for Superman,” a documentary film that attempts to give answers to a very complex problem, everyone is talking about education and what we, as a nation, need to do to raise the standards so that our children can compete in the 21st century. But these discussions leave out a very important demographic of children and the education problem they face.

For all the talk about raising national standards for education, we keep forgetting that there are more than 6.5 million kids with disabilities who receive services based on a federal law, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This law entitles all students with disabilities to receive a free appropriate public education — which means an individualized education program designed to meet the student’s needs.

The problem lies in the case of *Board of Education v. Rowley* — which the United States Supreme Court passed in 1982. In *Rowley*, it was determined that the Act only guarantees a “basic floor of opportunity,” meaning that public schools only need to provide disabled students with an education that allows them to make “some progress.”

The individualized program need not be the best one, nor one that will maximize the child’s educational potential corresponding with the opportunity offered to non-disabled students — rather, it need only be a program that the child will somehow benefit from.

What this means, in practice, is that all this talk about excellence in education does not apply to disabled students.

Every parent knows that a fourth-grade reading level will not translate into academic success at the college level. But when parents of disabled students question the education their children receive in public schools, the schools usually cite *Rowley*.

“We don’t have to give you the best education — your child only has to make ‘some progress,’” is a familiar refrain to any parent of a disabled child who seeks to address a lack of significant progress — whether in reading, writing, math, critical thinking, or life skills.

And advocates and attorneys who work in the trenches have seen the impact of this low standard. We have seen schools — even in high wealth areas — graduating students who cannot adequately read, write or do basic math calculations. We have seen schools place many students on a non-

diploma “individualized education program track” that, too often, does not give children the useful instruction they need to lead productive and independent lives.

We have also seen the passage-way between schools and the criminal justice system grow so large that it is almost as if there is a pipeline to juvenile detention, as schools increasingly use the courts to circumvent their responsibility to identify and provide an education to students with disabilities.

It is time we did better for all children. We need to discover strengths in every child and nurture them, even if it means redesigning the curriculum to accommodate the unique abilities and talents of each and every child. We need to teach all children how to think, question, and be creative to the best of their abilities.

We, as a country, need to ensure that all children are entitled to excellence in their education. It is time for Congress to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and say “goodbye” to *Rowley*. Equal opportunity is a bedrock principle in the United States. Upon this principle rests the hopes and dreams of all of our children.

While the average child in this country is “Waiting for Superman” to save her education, we must remember that more than 6.5 million students with disabilities are also waiting for us to do something. Unless we change the standard — now — our children will still be left in the basement while we talk about educational excellence for everyone else.

Marilyn Scattoreggio has been an education advocate for more than 20 years. She works as the supervisor of education advocacy at the Long Island Advocacy Center, Inc., in Suffolk County. This essay is her personal opinion and not that of her employer.



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Stopping bullies

City schools advise on how to help victims and tormentors

BY ALLISON PLITT

There has been a national trend in bullying within the last decade, with several events with tragic results in the last few months alone. Now, the city's Department of Education is taking steps to give teachers and parents ways to recognize and stop bullying.

The Department has launched seminars in schools citywide, which teach parents and teachers about the symptoms a child may display if she is being bullied by classmates, and ways to stop it.

"This is a school-wide initiative we are working on together. It's everybody's job to become involved," Rivky Broyde, a coordinator of Early Intervening Services told teachers and parents in a recent workshop.

In Broyde's opinion, violence on television shows and video games is a contributing factor to the increasing number of cases of bullying in the U.S. She also believes that as more children spend time on the Internet and social networking websites, there has been an inclination for students to cyberbully. Without necessary parental supervision, children have been able to post inappropriate comments online.

As a result of this trend, more schools have been teaching social and emotional education, although no mandated laws require it.

"Studies have really shown that social and emotional education actually has a positive affect on academics," Broyde stated. "It doesn't take away from the academics in any way. It only enhances it."

The department's workshops draw upon information gathered by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the National Association of School Psychologists. In accordance with their research, bullying is defined as "an imbalance of power in which the victims have difficulty defending themselves." Most bullying takes place when children are middle-school age or teenagers.

Profile of a bully

Despite the common conception that bullies are loners, most children who bully make friends easily and have a group of peers who support or encourage their bullying. Children who bully other students tend to be impulsive, lack empathy, have difficulty following rules, view violence in a positive way, and have average or above-average self-esteem.

"Boys are more straight-forward and physical about bullying, while girls are more sly and underhanded about it," Broyde observed. Gossiping, cliques and social exclusion are forms of non-verbal, emotional bullying that girls tend to use.

Effects of bullying

Children who have been bullied show signs of depression, loneliness, and anxiety. They lack self-esteem and an interest in school and often feel sick, are absent from school, and, in the worst-case scenarios, are suicidal.

Enrolling your child in activities in which she can enjoy and excel can help boost her self-confidence, which can help her be more assertive when she is being bullied.

"Parents can help build their child's self-confidence by encouraging their talents and making them feel good about themselves," Broyde explained. "Bullies usually have too much self-esteem or think too highly of themselves, so they put others down. We need to build the self-esteem of the victims than that of the perpetrators to bring the bullies down a notch."

If you're uncomfortable with the types of friends your children are spending time with, you can initiate play dates with other students. Forming new friendships also increases a child's self-assurance in social situations.

Intervention

If you suspect your child is being bullied, help her calm down, because it will be easier to gain her trust. Even if you disagree with how

she handled a situation, don't criticize her or assume that she did something to provoke the bullying.

"Getting a child to calm down and trust that you're on their side will really help the conversation later on," suggested Broyde. "This helps parents obtain as much information as possible about the bullying. The next step in the conversation would be 'How might you have handled this differently' or 'Let's problem solve this together.'"

Many times, children don't tell their parents about being bullied, because they don't want to be tattletales.

"Often bullies will say, 'What are you going to do, tell on me?'" Parents need to explain to their children the difference between tattling and the appropriateness of telling an adult for a purpose."

Don't advise that your child ignore the bully, because it makes the situation more serious.

"If a child doesn't learn how to speak up for himself, the bullying will not end," Broyde warns.

But a child should never hit back, because once he does, he's at fault because physical retaliation is not tolerated in schools, even if a child is provoked.

"The statements victims make cannot be antagonistic, because if the victim starts to make fun of the bully, the situation will escalate," says Broyde. "One idea about how to diffuse the tension in a confrontation is to use humor or make an irrelevant remark to throw the bully off guard."

Victims should not show fear or anger, but rather, calmly tell the bully to stop. Because children bully for attention, Broyde believes that sometimes the best solution is to tell the bully to stop and then walk away. The best advice for children being bullied is to avoid bullies as much as possible.

School intervention

When a child is too afraid to confront a bully, the parents should immediately contact the school, not the parents of the bully. The school



should act as a mediator by bringing both parents together to assist them in resolving the problem.

Once a parent is notified that their child has been bullying, the parent should enforce consequences for their behavior, such as less free time watching television or playing on the computer.

"If the punishment is too severe, it can lead to a more antagonistic relationship between the child and the parent," says Broyde.

Preventing a bully

The best way to prevent a child from becoming a bully is to make an effort to speak and act considerately and resolve problems in a non-violent manner.

"When children are around, parents need to think about what type of models they should be setting for them," Broyde remarked. "By demonstrating respectful behaviors, such as not making fun of somebody's outfit at a party, parents are being that model so their children can see those positive behaviors at home."

Since bullies have a tendency towards delinquency, it is suggested

that parents enroll them in athletic activities as an outlet for their extra energy.

One of the ways parents can teach their children values such as compassion, caring and respect, is by reading books to them with these messages.

"Reading books to your children is one of the easiest and also one of the most powerful ways for children to learn about values," Broyde said. "The message isn't coming at them directly, and they're not getting a speech from mom and dad. Sometimes indirectly going through stories, kids can identify with characters that they really love, so the message gets imbued in those ways."

While there are ways schools can counsel parents whose children bully, parents of victims can also work with the school to help their own children in social situations.

"If a parent notices their child is impulsive, hyperactive or inappropriate with social skills, the bully might be annoyed with this type of behavior," Broyde stated. "If you mention this to the school and the

teacher also notices the child having difficulty socially among friends, there can be a joint effort between the school and the parents in working on some of those social skills."

Peer intervention

If your child notices a bully picking on another student, the best thing to do is not laugh with the bully, as this only fuels the taunting. If your child feels safe confronting the bully, he should tell the bully to stop, as this shows the bully that no one thinks he's funny.

However, if your child does feel he would be in danger of being bullied himself, Broyde suggests two ways he can assist in the situation.

"First, by not participating in the taunting, the other students are sending a message that they aren't supporting the bully's behavior. If they do not laugh at the bullying, they take the power away from the bully who is acting out for attention. Second, the bystander should tell an adult about the bullying, or offer to accompany the victim to an adult to advise them of the situation."

The Department of Education has

also created its own peer mediation program, which is being taught to students. Children role play from a script and learn how to resolve conflicts between students.

"The strategy has proven effective, as peer pressure encourages students to respect each other instead of blaming an intervening teacher for taking sides," Broyde explained.

In implementing seminar and workshops, the department is making concerted efforts to tackle a problem that is now being addressed by schools across the nation.

"We can have these straight-A college students, and if they lack a socially emotional side, it doesn't bode well for our future. We really have to not only educate the mind but the heart at the same time," says Broyde.

For more information about bullying, visit www.stopbullyingnow.com.

Allison Plitt is a staff writer for Family Publications New York and a mother living in Queens with a preschool-age daughter. If you have any ideas you'd like to share with her about resources for families in Queens, please feel free to contact her at allisonplitt@hotmail.com.



SCIENCE MATTERS

MARGARET HONEY

Science can be fun

New methods help kids be better learners

It's a persistent challenge in science education to keep students engaged. So much is competing for their attention — streams of media are constantly coming through computers, handheld devices, iPods, television and radio. With all that chatter, educators must devise strategies that make the learning of science less dependent on textbooks — and more dependent on a hands-on approach to what is sometimes referred to as design-based learning.

People are drawn together by a common delight in the magic of tinkering, building, hacking, creating, upcycling, and inventing tools, gadgets and toys. They learn from peers and mentors while designing, prototyping and fabricating. They are the people who “just might spark the next generation of scientists and engineers,” according to Dale Dougherty, founder of Make magazine.

Six years ago, Dale founded Maker Faire in northern California. It's a two-day festival that brings together makers and inventors from a wide spectrum of disciplines and interests. And last year, it was inaugurated at the New York Hall of Science. At Maker Faire, individuals organize into communities, personally motivating and socially engaging.

Making involves approaching a problem with an unknown answer, whereas traditional schooling has typically trained students by rewarding them for solving a problem with a known answer, often following a memorized formula or sequence. But unless we teach our young people to be creative in their problem solving, we will continue to become less competitive in the global economy.

The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recently found that the problem is not just “a lack of proficiency among American students; there is also a lack of interest in STEM fields among many students.”

In 2009, President Obama said he wanted Americans “to be makers of things, not just consumers of things.” The success of Maker Faire — 25,000 participants in New York and 80,000 participants in the Bay Area in 2010 — shows a way forward that can get our students motivated about science, technology, engineering, and math.

From John Dewey to Ted Sizer, progressive educators have pointed out the limitations of an educational approach that encourages breadth over depth, efficiency over exploration, and acceleration over patience and persistence. By creating spaces where individuals can dig deeply into their passions and take time to explore, invent and tinker with like-minded others, the Maker movement affirms the kind of deep learning that matters.

Of course, if we want to engage students in making, we need to support and empower their teachers. The culture of K-12 education hasn't historically encouraged the maker mentality. One great resource for teachers is Resource Area for Teaching, a non-profit with centers in California and Colorado. The organization helps teachers transform the learning experience guided by three principles: collaborative hands-on activities, access to a vast array of low-cost materials and the training to use them in hands-on projects, and an emphasis on 21st-century learning skills.

Equally important are opportunities for teachers to become part of the maker communities that can lend support, materials and expertise. The New York Hall of Science, and its science museum colleagues nationwide, have emerged as resources for teachers and makers because they share the essential commitment to hands-on learning. The Queens-based science and technology center sponsors large-scale annual events like Maker Faire, as well as smaller programs like make-it-take-it activities and upcycling workshops where everyday trash items get transformed into new, purposeful products.

Our goal is to show that learning science is not only important, but it's also fun and fulfilling. When we make, we learn.

Margaret Honey is the President and CEO of the New York Hall of Science. Visit nysci.org/makerfaire to see highlights from the inaugural World Maker Faire.



The Diet Coke and Mentos experiment as performance art at World Maker Faire.

Textbooks have never been the most effective medium for exciting students about science, technology, engineering, and math. They are thick, dense, and literally unable to be navigated alone.

The advantage of design-based learning is that it utilizes our innate tendencies toward curiosity and resourcefulness. In a word, we are all “makers.” We make things that help us do what we need to do and understand things we need to understand. This sensibility is inspiring a nationwide movement that has tremendous potential to improve education in those fields in the U.S.

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Stay-at-home dads

The benefits of this working model for modern family life

BY CANDI SPARKS

The recent influx of stay-at-home dads is creating a new model for the modern family. The stay-at-home dad is a more involved partner for his wife and a more involved parent for his children. His presence provides a level of comfort and protection for the family, and many men seem to enjoy staying at home and find

pleasure in parenting their children and caring for the home. It can be a respite from the pressures of the working world and the bleak job market. Their contributions to the home and family in this new capacity are priceless.

At a time when fathers are known to be absent from the home because of long hours on the job, separation, divorce, work or military duty, it is a plus to have a man around the

house. A father who is physically and emotionally available builds better relationships with his children — and with his wife.

Brett, a stay-at-home dad from Queens, says he enjoys taking care of his daughter Ava full-time, because it is a relief from the pressures of his previous job in finance. He decided to stay at home, because his experience trying to find a job was disheartening, and the



A father who is physically and emotionally available builds better relationships with his children — and with his wife.

ribbons and multiple ponytails all at once, which meant her dad had let her do the styling herself. Regardless of how her hair was fashioned, Jenn was confident in her appearance, and Danielle thinks it was because father and daughter worked on creating a masterpiece together.

Some fathers choose to stay at home, because they don't want to miss a minute of their children growing up.

"It is important to put first things first, and the children come first," says David, who stays at his home in the Bronx. "Their personalities change and grow so quickly that you have to be there while they're young, or you'll miss it. Once they get to high school and college, they naturally pull away. Get as many moments as you can while they're young."

He says that he is not the best cook, but he is the best interactive listener and homework helper. As far as he is concerned, the quality time with his kids is more important than feeding them gourmet meals.

A stay-at-home dad is not only good for the kids, but can be good for his wife as well. Men can become much more involved in the communication aspect of the relationship when their focus is shifted from the workplace, leading to a renewed intimacy that is good for both partners.

A dad staying at home is not a feminization of the male, but rather a chance for the man to bring his special touch to what was formerly considered a woman's world. A man who understands what it takes to run a home and take care of kids can make both partners feel better appreciated, and leave more time for both of them to build on their relationship.

Candi Sparks is the author of the "Can I Have Some Money?" book series. You can follow her on Twitter and Facebook as Candi Sparks (writer).

family needed to save the monthly \$2,000 they paid for childcare.

But he is happy to be a stay-at-home dad, because he and Ava are bonding more than they would have under other circumstances. Ava is confident that he is there for her when she needs him, and even feels special that she is the only child at her nursery school who is not picked up by a mother or nanny.

"Brett can handle any situation that comes up with Ava and doesn't have to consult with me before making decisions, the way a babysitter normally would," says his wife, Marie.

Marie appreciates having Brett at home because she can focus at work with few interruptions. With Brett keeping things running smoothly, she knows that their "love bank" is full.

Although men may need time to develop the skill set it takes to keep a home and care for the family, they can learn how to do it in their own way, and often enjoy doing so. There is a learning curve to preparing children for school in the morning and getting a meal on the table in the evening, but fathers can be innovative in performing each task and their results may help their children in the long run.

Danielle, a first-grade teacher in Brooklyn, can always tell when fathers dress kids for school, especially when it comes to girls' hairstyles. One of her students, Jenn, would have her hair in neat parts with bows, beads or ribbons, thanks to her mom. Other days, she would arrive with bows,



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OUR RELATIONSHIPS

JOAN EMERSON, PhD

Appointment to love

Pining for your old sex life? Time for date night!

When you first started dating your partner, you had chemistry, attraction and, yes, sex. But now that you're in a committed relationship, raising a family, and building good lives, you may notice that, at times, your sexual connection starts to falter and all but cease. This is an issue that all couples struggle with: keeping their sexual intimacy alive for the long haul. Sometimes, there are bumps in the road, but you may find that it takes a date on the calendar to ignite the passion that you first felt in your dating days.

It can be hard to admit that you and your partner are not clicking. It's easy to blame it on being too tired, too busy, too involved with the kids, or telling yourself that you're fine without the sex. But in reality, you feel that absence on your mind and it's causing discomfort.

Knowing that your partner loves you, desires you, and is as committed as you are to keeping sex alive is something that you need — and he needs from you — for a deep feeling of wellbeing. Since maintaining this bond is a fairly universal challenge, and remains a challenge through everyone's lifespan, there's much thought and knowledge about how one can realistically keep the sexual connection alive.

So what's to be done? The answer is hard to hear, at first. Spontaneity and waiting for passion to overtake you is apparently not something you can rely on these days. Instead, you must make a commitment to plan a time for sex and make sure that you follow through. Yes, a sex date seems cold and calculated compared to how you wish it could be, but this seems to be the only way to get the sex going again and keep it going.

In order for this to work, there are a few steps to follow:

Begin with a gentle talk about how you're missing the lovemaking, and explain that you need to hear



that your partner is, too. Talk about whether you're both willing to do what's necessary to resume your sex life.

If so, the next step is to have a somewhat theoretical conversation — no pressure — about what would be a frequency that both of you would feel comfortable with (at this point, weekly may seem to be a great start) and a mutually agreeable time for your sex date.

In this conversation, you also want to confirm if both of you are willing, until things are back on track, to do your part in keeping the topic and the outreach alive, and not leave all the responsibility to your partner.

As you continue on the path, and are committed to making sex happen, you will see that getting it going is a departure from your old dreams, as well. You've made the date, the time has come, you're both lying there, and you don't even feel emotionally or physically in the mood.

This is the time for a hero to emerge: one of you has to have the bravery to reach out for the other. And, it's a commandment that if ei-

ther has the courage to suggest a time, and at that time actually physically reaches out, the other will consider it a sacred obligation to be loving and receiving, because, as we know, one can feel very vulnerable — and can shut down — if one thinks her sexual outreach is being rejected.

Most amazingly (since you're following the commandment), as you relax into your partner's arms, and start nuzzling and kissing, you notice your resistance melting away and the emergence of pleasure and desire in your body.

The rest is history: the history of how this really does work. The passion does come back, resulting in satisfaction, and best of all, in the days after, you feel affectionate toward your partner and notice that your mind is at peace. It's comforting to know that, since you've seen it work, it's a drop easier to make the next sex date and follow through. There's no other way. Enjoy.

Dr. Joan Emerson is a New York psychologist who specializes in couples therapy. Visit her website at www.JoanEmerson.com.

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TWICE THE ADVICE

JACQUELINE AND KERRY DONELLI

Too old for a crush

Dear Twins,

My neighbor across the hall in our apartment building has a crush on my daughter (she is 12, he is 18), and every Valentine's Day he gives her a huge gift — like a giant box of chocolates. Last year he gave her an enormous cake that read “To My Valentine.” I want this to stop, but don't want to hurt his feelings. How can I discourage this? — *Overwhelmed*

Kerry says: I'd have a talk with him. Tell him that your daughter is far too young to be receiving attention from an 18-year-old. Tell him if he refuses to stop, you will get an order of protection requiring him to stay away from her and he could be arrested if he violates that order.

Jacqueline says: I think Kerry's being a little much. I suggest you be frank and honest with your neighbor. Tell him that although you appreciate his generosity, your daughter is far too young to be receiving intimate gifts from adults.

Dear Twins,

I hate Valentine's Day, because of my 25-year-old daughter. She is fat — really fat. She's never had a Valentine's date. I feel guilty because I have Valentine's Day plans with a gorgeous date (I'm divorced), and she'll be staying home watching my youngest daughter. — *Sexy Mom*

Jacqueline says: Having your daughter stay in to babysit for you is not looking out for her best interest. Suggest she go out with friends or to a singles' event and fork over the money for a babysitter. Your daughter will have a higher sense of self-worth being pro-active, rather than sitting in envy of her mother's love life.

Kerry says: The way you talk about your daughter by calling her “really fat” and referring to yourself as “sexy mom” and your “gorgeous date” makes me shudder. I worry that you might be validating any self-hate she might have. Don't pity her. If you want to help, ask if she



would like to work out with you, and cook healthy, low-fat foods. Be a role model, but don't shove it in her face.

Dear Twins,

For Valentine's Day, my 12-year-old, sixth-grade son wants to take a sixth-grade girl, whom he's “madly” in love with, to the movies, followed by soda and ice cream afterwards at a shop two doors away. Of course we would drive them there and pick them up. Do you think they're too young to be left alone, or to go out on a date? — *Growing Pains*

Kerry says: I think that it's fine, as long as they promise not to stray away from the area, and you pick them up shortly after the movie.

Jacqueline says: I disagree with Kerry. They are far too young to be going to the movies and out to dessert by themselves. A lot can happen in between the time you drop them off and pick them up. Furthermore, if you allow him the privilege of dating alone at age 12, what will it be like when he dates at age 13? 14? Get my drift? A 12-year-old is far too emotionally immature to understand the consequences of his actions.

Dear Twins,

I've been called to my son's school twice now, as he's been accused of stealing. However, the child accusing him is the neighborhood bully and

full-fledged liar. Unfortunately, the principal doesn't know this. My son, a fifth-grade student, emphatically denies stealing anything, and says that he has been set up. But the principal believes the other child. I believe my son, and I know he would never steal, and certainly not from this bully! How can I prove it? This will go on my son's record! — *Worried*

Jacqueline says: Have a meeting with both your son and the principal, together, and iron this out once and for all. Ask the principal his reasoning as to why he believes the other child over yours. Look your son in the eye and tell him there will be consequences at home if he is being dishonest with you. Together, the three of you should come up with a solution.

Kerry says: This is not a major crisis. He's only in the fifth grade. Make an appointment to see the principal with your son and explain this to him. I'm sure he's reasonable and will take your point into consideration.

Dear Twins,

Our daughter has always been a model student, but now that she's in junior high school, she's hanging out with a “rougher” crowd, and she's becoming like them. She talks rougher, dresses tough, skips school, and her grades are going way down. Even worse is her attitude toward her father and me. We don't know how to handle her or how to turn this all around before it's too late.

— *Desperate*
Jacqueline says: Your daughter is at the age where the opinions of her peers have more influence over her actions than those of her parents — that's the bad part. This is most likely just a stage. I would lay down some ground rules: First and foremost, she better respect her parents. Secondly, she must maintain a certain grade average. If she skips school or doesn't abide by these rules, she will be yanked out of that school altogether.

Kerry says: I agree. It's your house, your rules. You and your husband need to sit her down and explain the rules that she must follow without exception. If she breaks these rules, ground her good. Period.

Jacqueline and Kerry Donelli, twin sisters, are multiple award winning filmmakers. They are currently getting their Masters in Mental Health and have a radio show on WBCR-AM also called, “Twice the Advice” — where one twin gives advice and, often, the other completely disagrees! Please e-mail them at TwiceTheAdvice2@gmail.com.

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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

What's beneficial about video games

What used to be called cabin fever has morphed into video game virus. Symptoms include staring at a screen with occasional whoops of triumph or outbursts of dismay.

Parents often think of video games as little more than virtual babysitters, something to be tolerated and occasionally encouraged when parents have to meet a deadline or need some downtime. But new research suggests that some games can pro-

ers can switch from task to task much faster than non-gamers, making them better multitaskers.

- **Vision:** Researchers found that a gamer's vision is more acute. After non-gamers were tested, then trained to play video games, then tested again, not only did their visual acuity improve, but the improvement was durable over as much as two years.

- **Spatial cognition:** The ability to mentally manipulate 3D figures helps students succeed in math and engineering. Researchers have found that scores improve after students have experience with video games, especially action games in three dimensional environments. Perhaps this is because gamers use the frontal cortex of the brain in the same the way musicians do. MRI studies done at York University in Toronto found that gamers use much less brain power than non-gamers when they do small motor tasks.

- **Social skills:** Most teens play games with other people, and games that require strategy and problem-solving often promote conversation. Researchers have found that games which require cooperation to achieve a pro-social goal actually encourage people to help each other in real life.

- **Emotional release:** Dr. Christopher Ferguson of Texas A&M University gave 100 young people a frustrating task and then randomly assigned them to do one of four things: play a non-violent game, play a violent game as the "good guy," play a violent game as the "bad guy," or not play video games at all. The young people who played the violent game from either point of view reported being less "hostile and depressed."

- **Self confidence:** In the book "Grand Theft Childhood?," Cheryl K. Olson, a researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Mental Health and Media, found that games can be a source of self-esteem and pride, especially for children who are challenged in other areas.

For children to get these benefits, parents have to pay attention to the games they play. The most important step is researching any game before it comes into the house. Although there are many websites for gamers, reviews tend to overlook issues that matter to parents. Instead, compare comments on family-centered sites like www.commonssensemedia.com, whattheyplay.com or grandtheftchildhood.com, a site run by Olson.

Basic information about video game ratings is available at ESRB.org, a website which explains the reasoning beyond the ratings for each game.

Once a game is in the house, be aware of what's happening when your child plays. Keeping the game system in a public part of the house gives you a chance to see the game as it unfolds and observe your child's responses. Encourage your child to share favorite parts of the game and, if you can, learn a little bit about how to play. Being more involved allows you to establish gaming rules that make sense. Parents often make the mistake of giving a child a two-minute warning before gametime ends. For the child immersed in a complicated role-playing game, that really isn't enough time. You may also want to be more flexible about time when children are playing games with friends.

One rule should remain firm: video games should never be allowed to crowd out other activities that are important for healthy child development. Kids need adults help in creating balanced lives that include exercise, homework, chores, reading, family time and other activities. If parents are committed to that kind of balance over the long-term, it won't matter one bit if there's an extra hour of gaming on a dreary winter day.

Carolyn Jabs, MA, has been writing about families and the Internet for over 15 years. She is the mother of three computer-savvy kids. Other Growing Up Online columns appear on her website www.growing-up-online.com.

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motivate the development of valuable skills, much as sports does.

They've also discovered that action games create distinct benefits.

Daphne Bavelier, professor of brain and cognitive sciences at the University of Rochester, runs a lab that has conducted more than 20 studies on video games and concluded that action games are may give kids an advantage in several areas including:

- **Attention:** Playing video games may teach youngsters focus on the task at hand. Tests showed gamers were able to detect new information quickly and integrate it into their thinking efficiently. Bavelier's research also suggests that gam-

Truly super 'Bowl'

New book and DVD guides parents along step by step

BY JOANNA DELBUONO

"My child is 3 and still in diapers." "My child is 5 and wetting the bed at night, what do I do?" These concerns and others are addressed in Dr. Baruch Kushnir's new book "The Magic Bowl," a parent's guide to potty training.

This sensitive subject is handled with sound practical advice and good humor for parents and includes a great DVD for children.

"The toilet training process varies between different cul-

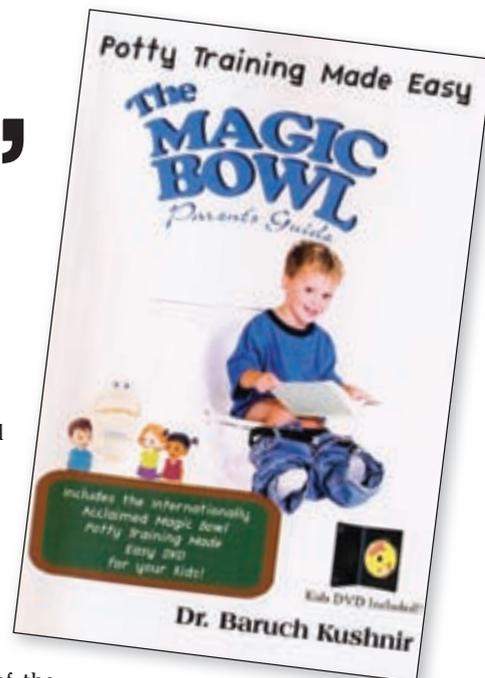
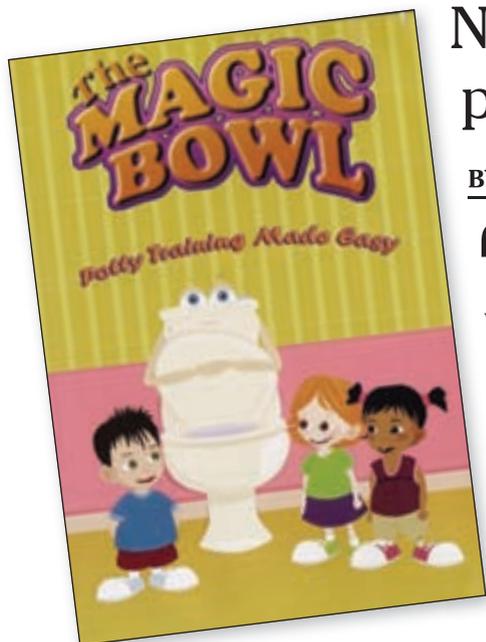
tures, families, siblings and even twins," says Kushnir, adding, "The process should be carried out in a positive atmosphere that emphasizes success and avoids punishments, penalties and expressions of anger and disappointment."

Kushnir leads parents step by step through each phase of the process from when training should be begin, "Am I ready for the toilet-training process," in chapter one, to the more advanced stages of "How and when to teach how to wipe?" in chapter four.

The DVD, "Magic Bowl," is fun to watch with catchy tunes, just right

for 2, 3 and 4 year olds to understand. The talking toilet is a hoot, too! A must-read.

"The Magic Bowl: Potty Training Made Easy" by Dr. Baruch Kushnir; Price World Publishing, 160 pages, plus DVD; \$19.95.



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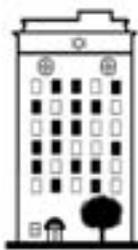
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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

In the mood

Teens and emotional swings

No, I'm not talking about the Glenn Miller song our parents used to swing to. I'm talking about those pesky mood swings for which our teenagers are infamous — one minute she's in a fabulous mood, the next, she's Cruella D'Evil with a hangover!

Save your breath. These are the times you need to find your sense of humor — and make a beeline to your cabinet where you store the herbal tea.

Why the drama?

Many experts say it's normal for teens to have mood swings. We're told we can blame them on those nasty little hormones.

"Hormones do play a part in moodiness. In the teen years, there is a perfect storm of physiologic, social, academic, family, and developmental challenges," says Robin Goodman, PhD, director of A Caring Hand bereavement center, and a consultant to Allegheny General Hospital. "It's a tough time for navigating the many choices and social pressures out there, which can create a great deal of stress."

In addition, teens are also moving away from family and parents as their main source of support as they try to solidify their identity. On top of the many social and physical changes teens are coping with, many are also dealing with academic expectations and pressures due to the college search process. All of this can wreak havoc on your teen's mood.

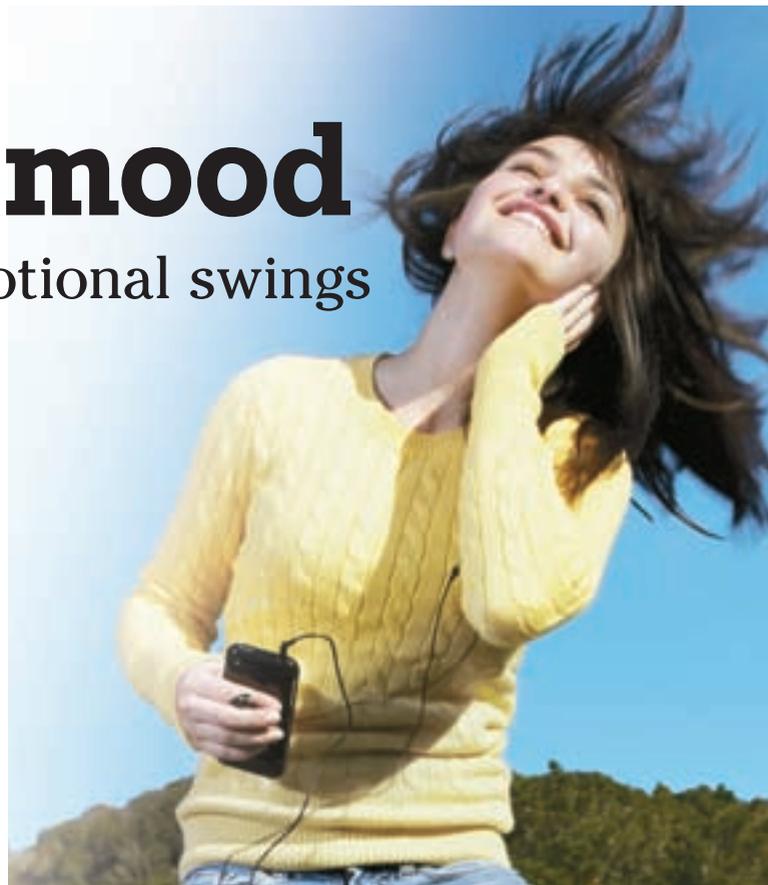
Goodman suggests talking "with," not "at" your teen.

"Keep in mind that teens want to feel heard and understood," she advises.

Don't minimize your teen's feelings by saying things like, "It will get better." Remember that limits are good and help keep your teen grounded.

Time to worry ... or walk away?

My daughter is full of extremes. She is either an excited chatter box, or she's down in the dumps and re-



fuses to tell me about her day. If she comes home from school in a dumpy mood, I've learned to give her space. I wait before trying to speak with her about what's going on, and, oftentimes, if I don't barrage her with questions, she'll eventually want to discuss what's bothering her, because she won't be able to hold it in any longer.

There are times, however, when parents should not assume that the latest drama is a typical teen mood swing. Always rely on your instincts.

"Parents have a history with their teens. If they are worried, there is a good chance that there's something of concern," says Goodman.

She instructs parents to pay attention to signs of real difficulty, including the following behaviors, which may indicate that your teen is in trouble and might need professional help: withdrawal, isolation, low energy, worrisome changes in eating and sleeping habits, acting out physically or sexually, a sudden drop in grades, and signs of suicide, such as giving away possessions, extreme euphoria or agitation.

"When a teen's mood is interfering with functioning at school, with friends, and with family, parents need to get to the bottom of what is going on," she says.

On the other hand, if you sense

that your teen is just going through her typical ups and downs, no need to fret. After all, you made it through those "terrible two" tantrums fairly unscathed. This, too, shall pass.

Tips and tales

"Don't try to reason or argue with him. It will only aggravate the situation. If your teen swung into a bad mood, chances are he'll swing out soon. Just walk away."

Polina Banelos, Watertown, NY

"I remind myself that teenage peer pressure is difficult. Then, I attempt to determine what has triggered my daughter's mood swing. When all else fails, I head to Starbucks and purchase her a soothing tea latte."

Clarissa Goins, Poughkeepsie, NY

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic:

Your teen has a bad case of spring fever. How do you help him stay focused?

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Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer and columnist specializing in parenting issues and children's development. Her work appears in publications across the United States and Canada. She is the mother of two teenagers.

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Help children cope with celiac disease

My son was recently diagnosed with celiac disease. What exactly does this mean, and how can I safely modify his diet?

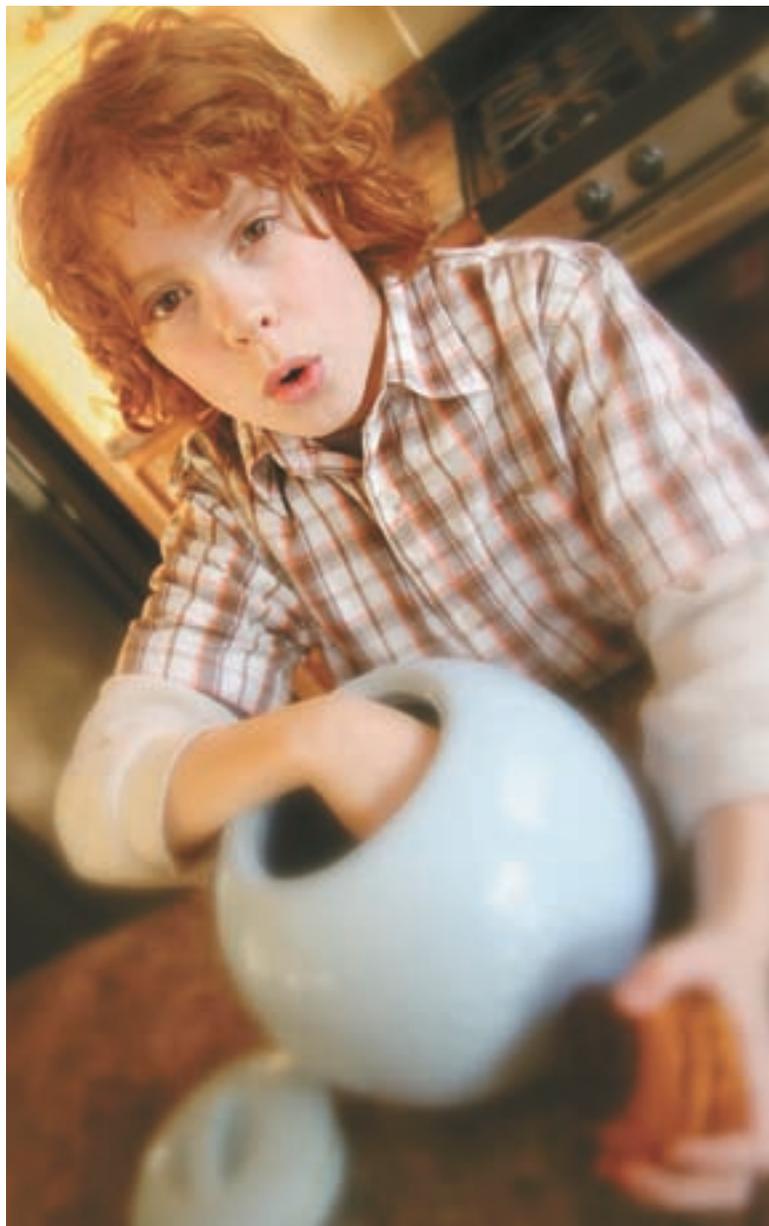
Having a child who is diagnosed with celiac disease can seem overwhelming at first. But it is manageable by reading labels, and making sure his new diet is well balanced.

Celiac disease is characterized by a food allergy to gluten, a protein found in some grains. Now that your son has been diagnosed with celiac disease, it's very important that he avoid all food products that contain gluten. People with celiac disease who eat foods containing gluten experience an immune reaction in their small intestines, causing damage to the inner surface of the small intestine and an inability to absorb certain nutrients. Repeated ingestion of gluten can even cause nutrient deficiency-related diseases, such as iron deficiency anemia and decreased bone density.

Common foods that may contain gluten are breads, cereals, pasta, pizza, cakes, pies and cookies. When you go food shopping, be sure to carefully check the labels on packages for gluten. Certain kinds of soups, sauces, syrups and even luncheon meats may also have gluten.

While this may sound like a lot of food to avoid, don't worry, your son still has a variety of dietary options that are available to him. Since grains are a vital component of a healthy diet, many food manufacturers make gluten-free breads, cereals and pastas. These products should have a label that says "gluten-free." Corn tortillas, homemade breads, biscuits, or muffins made from gluten-free flour, rice cereals, rice cakes, cornflakes, and brown, wild, or white rice are also good gluten-free grain products.

To ensure that your son will get the nutrients he needs, he may have to take a daily vitamin or mineral



supplement. Consult with a doctor or a registered dietician about the supplement that's best for your child.

In addition to a supplement, it's also important that he maintains a balanced diet. Be sure he gets several daily servings of fresh fruits and vegetables; calcium-rich products, such as low-fat yogurt or milk; foods

that contain iron, like poultry or nuts; and foods with B12, such as eggs and seafood.

With the right type of simple modifications to his diet, your son will still be able to enjoy all of his meals and maintain healthy eating habits. And over time, managing the disease will become second nature for the both of you.



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PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Broaching the 'talk' with a young one

Dear Sharon,

We are finding a lot of pornographic-type stuff in our 12-year-old son's room, hidden away in closets, drawers, etc. Should we ignore this, or should we mention it to him? Is it time for us to have the "talk" with him? Do people still do that anymore, and if so, what kind of talk do we have in a time of such open awareness? What's your advice for parents these days who are facing conversations about sex with their kids?



Dear parents,

Since most teens and tweens are juggling increased pressure from peers, the media, school and hormones, I think it is important for parents to spend time helping them sort through many issues — including ones pertaining to sex and pornography — though particulars can vary greatly for each child, even in our era of open awareness.

It is true that many children this age have been exposed to plenty of information and misinformation about intimacy. It is also true that 12 year olds frequently become embarrassed and/or defensive when parents begin discussions related to bodies or sex. Even talks about obvious physical changes can be difficult to have. Nevertheless, if offered respectfully and thoughtfully, the support and guidance of an older, and hopefully, wiser person can help decrease the isolation and confusion that often surround such topics.

Rather than jumping into the "talk," I generally suggest that parents begin by making sure that they

are spending plenty of enjoyable time with their child and having frequent, relaxed discussions about their young person's life — inside and outside of school. Such time can help family relationships stay close, connected and fun, and ultimately help the more difficult talks go well.

When it is time to broach the sex/pornography discussion, some parents begin by listening to their young person talk about general topics related to intimacy. He could talk about his thoughts, experiences and emotions about friendships that have changed, crushes he has felt, romances he has enjoyed or hoped for, rejections he has encountered, or physical changes he has experienced or seen in his friends and schoolmates. Adults, of course, usually ask questions to help a child open up, but often make the mistake of talking more than is needed. If you or your spouse can remember that listening to your child can be at least as important as the information you share, it can help your child feel "understood" and less alone as he sorts things through.

Parents I know have said that after they listen for a while, they explain that sex and intimacy are important and wonderful parts of life, but ones that need to be thought about in order to go well. Talking about

the repercussions of impulsive reactions to possible romantic interests has also been helpful. Some parents have found that sharing parts of their personal experiences with their children helped. I often suggest that parents ask their child one simple question: "What do you think about what I just said?" after each point they make. This gives the child a chance to process and share his own ideas, opens up an easier dialogue, and ultimately helps him understand what is being said.

It may help to sensitively explain that although pornographic "stuff" can be stimulating, it is not about loving human contact. If pornography becomes a preoccupation or substitute for real contact, it can easily interfere with — and have a negative impact on — healthy relationships.

Exploring sexuality is a common and healthy reaction to physical and emotional changes that occur during adolescence. When parents have engaged, ongoing discussions on the topic without worry or pressure, they can consistently improve their tween or teen's relationships inside and outside of their home. As much of the success and happiness we all achieve in life centers on our relationships, I think such talks are worth the effort.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, www.PHPonline.org.

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at SWeiss@cnglocal.com.

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Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Story play with First RIF: Gerritsen Beach Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Mondays, 11 am; Free.

Children up to 5 years old play with toys, hear stories and earn free books by reading.

Marine mammal watch: Coney Island Beach, West 10th Street and the Boardwalk; (718) 421-2021; www.nycgovparks.org; Daily, 11 am; Now – Sun, March 6; Free.

Watch the otters, seals and whales from the beach.

“The African Drum”: PS 3 The Bedford School, 50 Jefferson Ave. between Bedford and Franklin avenues; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; Tuesday, Jan. 25, 10 am; Wednesday, Jan. 26, 10 am; Thursday, Jan. 27, 10 am; Friday, Jan. 28, 10 am; Monday, Jan. 31, 10 am; Tuesday, Feb. 1, 10 am; Wednesday, Feb. 2, 10 am; Thursday, Feb. 3, 10 am; Friday, Feb. 4, 10 am; Monday, Feb. 7, 10 am; Friday, Feb. 11, 10 am; Monday, Feb. 14, 10 am; Friday, Feb. 18, 10 am; Tuesday, Feb. 22, 10:30 am; Thursday, Feb. 24, 10:30 am; \$15 (\$20 at the door).

African American folk tales.

Wacky Tuesday: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Now – Tues, April 12; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and younger explore art, science and culture.

Story play with First RIF: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 2 pm; Free.

Children up to 5 years old play with toys, hear stories and earn free books by reading.

Little Scientists: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Wednesdays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Now – Wed, April 13; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and younger investigate the world of natural science with hands-on activities.

Toddler time with First RIF: Brooklyn Heights Library, 280 Cadman Plaza West at Tillary Street; (718) 623-



Film fest for kids

Calling all young cinephiles.

For two days, 66 movies from more than 23 countries will take over the Brooklyn Academy of Music during its BAMkids Film Festival, on Feb. 5 and 6.

Some highlights include “Awesome Animation,” an all-animation program for ages 7 to 9, and two short film programs geared towards the youngest audience members, ages 2 to 5.

The fun doesn’t stop with the movies; BAM has designed kid-

7000; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 1:30 pm; Free.

Children 18 to 36 months engage in interactive play and hear stories.

Babies and books: Flatlands Library, 2065 Flatbush Ave. at Avenue P; (718) 253-4409; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 3:30 pm; Free.

For children birth to 18 months.

“The Ohmies, Morning Wish Garden”: The Daryl Roth Theater, 101 E. 15th St. at Park Avenue South; (212) 239-6200; ohmies.cmail1.com; Thursdays – Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm,

friendly activities like karaoke and face-painting. There will also be live performances featuring Jon Samson and his band as well as the Story Pirates, who will present their musical sketch comedy.

BAMkids Film Festival at BAM Rose Cinemas [30 Lafayette Ave. between St. Felix Street and Ashland Place in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100], Feb. 5 and 6. \$9 for children 13 and under, \$12 for adults per screening, \$7 for members and \$9 for seniors per screening. For info, visit www.bam.org.

Now – Sun, Jan. 30; \$36.

Children 3 to 8 enjoy an interactive musical experience.

Rolie Polie Guacamole: Gumbo, 493 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins Street and Third Avenue; (718) 855-7808; Thursdays, 11–11:45 am, Now – Thurs, March 10; \$160 (\$22 for drop ins, space permitting).

Children and their caregivers rock and roll, sing and dance with local band.

Tales for tots: Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Thursdays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Now – Thurs, April 14; Free with museum admission.

Submit a listing

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

All you have to do is send your listing request to calendar@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!

brooklynkids.org; Thursdays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Now – Thurs, April 14; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and younger hear stories from far away places.

Story and crafts: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 3:30 pm; Free.

Children create art projects based on stories.

Tween time: Sunset Park Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. between 50th and 51st streets; (718) 567-2806; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 3:30 pm; Free.

Read, play games and listen to music.

Tween time: Mapleton Library, 1702 60th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 256-2117; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 4 pm; Free.

Read, play games and listen to music.

Story craft: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; Thursdays, 4 pm; Free.

Listen to a story and then create a project.

Pre-school story time: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Fridays, 10:30 am; Free.

Classic books and songs.

Arts and crafts: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; Fridays, 4 pm; Free.

Children make a fun project.

Going Places

Textile recycling: Ft. Greene Greenmarket, Washington Park at DeKalb Avenue; (212) 788-7964; recycle@grownyc.org; Saturdays, 8 am–3 pm; Free.

Bring clean and dry textiles including clothing, paired shoes, towels, sheets, scarves, hats, bags and belts for reuse or recycling.

Textile recycling: McCarren Park Greenmarket, Union Avenue at N. 12th Street; (212) 788-7964; recycle@grownyc.org; Saturdays, 8 am–2 pm; Free.

Bring clean and dry textiles including clothing, paired shoes, towels, sheets, scarves, hats, bags and belts for reuse or recycling.

Story time: Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between South Elliott Place and South Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; abookstoreinbrooklyn.blogspot.com; Saturdays, 11 am; Free.

Children 3 to 8 listen to stories and enjoy age appropriate activities.

Blooming Babies: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Children 18 months to 2 and one-half years participate in interactive activities with their caregivers.

Green quilts: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, Noon–4 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 31; Free.

Featuring works that drew inspiration from recycled materials.

Arts and crafts: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 20; Free.

Children create projects using natural materials.

Tutoring: Rugby Library, 1000 Rugby Rd. at Avenue H; (718) 566-0054; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Saturdays, 2:30 pm, Free.

Black United and Proud of Our Heritage offers homework help for students in grades one through six.

Early American crafts: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 2:30–3:30 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 13; Free.

Play games and make an art project.

Baby story time: Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between South Elliott Place and South Portland Avenue;



'Madeline' goes to DC

It's Madeline, it's Madeline! Everyone's favorite red-head is back for another adventure.

In "Madeline at the White House," Madeline takes a midnight sightseeing tour on a magic carpet of cherry blossoms.

"The idea for sending Madeline to the White House was my grandfather's," said illustrator John Bemelmans Marciano about Ludwig Bemelmans, the creator of "Madeline." "It grew out of his friendship with Jacqueline Kennedy."

In Marciano's new tale, Madeline is invited to the White House by Candle, the president's lonely only daughter, for the annual Easter Egg hunt and roll. Bouncy read-aloud text and gorgeous watercolor pictures tell the story of Madeline and the other little girls having a rollicking good time and introducing Candle to the joys of occasionally breaking the rules.



And there's even more fun to be had when Marciano reads from his new book at BookCourt in Cobble Hill on Feb. 6.

John Bemelmans Marciano at BookCourt [163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill, (718) 875-3677], Feb. 6 at 11 am. Free. For info, visit www.bookcourt.org.

(718) 246-0200; abookstoreinbrooklyn.blogspot.com; Sundays, 11 am; Free.

Toddlers listen to stories and songs.

After-School homework help: Cortelyou Library, 1305 Cortelyou Rd. at Argyle Road; (718) 693-7763; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 3:30 pm, beginning Thurs, Feb. 3; Free. Provided by trained adult volunteers.

Games galore: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Daily, 1–3 pm, Sat, Feb. 19 – Sun, Feb. 27; Free.

Play Nine-Man Morris or make your own fun.

MON, JAN. 24

"Duck Soup": Cobble Hill Cinemas, 65 Court St. (718) 596-9113; 4 pm.

The Marx Brothers are at their zany best in this sidesplitting-funny political satire.

TUES, JAN. 25

Creative writing: Gumbo, 493 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins Street and Third Avenue; (718) 855-7808; 11–11:45 am; \$120.

Children 7 to 10 get helpful writing hints from Debbie Officer.

"Knickerbocker Holiday": Alice Tully Hall, 1941 Broadway; (646) 202-9623; www.collegiatechorale.org; 8 pm; \$25.

Starring Ben Davis, Christopher Fitzgerald, Victor Garber, David Garrison, Kelli O'Hara and Bryce Pinkham and presented by the Collegiate Chorale.

WED, JAN. 26

Wii: Clarendon Library, 2035 Nostrand Ave. at Farragut Road; (718) 421-1159; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens enjoy video games with friends.

"Knickerbocker Holiday": 8 pm. Alice Tully Hall. See Tuesday, Jan. 25.

FRI, JAN. 28

Origami: Brighton Beach Library, 16 Brighton Beach First Rd. between Brightwater Court and Brighton Beach Avenue; (718) 946-2917; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children learn the ancient art of paper folding.

Jammy Jam: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 5:30–8:30 pm; Free.

Pajama party, storytelling, lullabies and more. Separate ticket required.

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Going Places

Continued from page 51

SAT, JAN. 29

Camp Fair: Church of St. Paul the Apostle, Columbus Ave. at West 60th Street; (212) 677-4650 X 20; www.resourcesnyc.org; 11 am–3 pm; Free.

Parents and caregivers of children and teens with disabilities obtain information from 70 New York City day camps and sleepaway camps and receive a Camps 2011 Directory.

Our Favorite Bears: Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between South Elliott Place and South Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; abookstorein-brooklyn.blogspot.com; 11 am; Free.

Staff reads from the books of Eric Carle, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What do you See," "Old Bear and his Cub." Children are encouraged to bring their own stuffed bear to cuddle.

Flute Sleuth: Old First Reformed Church, 729 Carroll St. at Seventh Avenue; (718) 638-8300; 11 am; \$10.

A musical mystery featuring classic flute quartet.

Kids Cafe Festival Goes to College: Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension; (718) 522-4696; www.dancewave.org; Noon–5 pm; Free.

Five 50-minute classes for junior and senior high school students.

Story time: The BookMark Shoppe, 8415 Third Ave.; (718) 833-5115; www.bookmarkshoppe.com; Noon; Free.

Best-selling author Tad Hills reads his children's stories, "How Rocket Learned to Read," "Duck, Duck, Goose" and "Duck and Goose."

Magic show: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 1 pm; Free.

Myron the Magnificent astounds his audience.

"Miracles of Magic with Myron the Magnificent": Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; 1 pm; Free.

John Bemelmans Marciano: PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 4 pm; Free.

Children's author of "Madeline at the White House" joins Brett Helquist, author of "Bedtime for Bear."

YouthWorks performance: Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave. at Eighth Street; (718) 832-0018; bax.org/youth/festivalsevents/youthworks; 7 pm; \$5.

Young people 7-18 years old create



'Alice' with the 'Works

Consider this your invitation to the borough's best tea party.

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and perform their own works.

SUN, JAN. 30

Flute Sleuth: 3 and 4:30 pm. Old First Reformed Church. See Saturday, Jan. 29.

Tennis school: Regina Pacis School, 1201 66th St. between 12th and 13th avenues; (718) 745-7776; Noon–1 pm; Free.

Learn about Steve Carberry's tennis program for juniors and adults.

"Seussical": Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. at Hillel Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; \$6 (\$7 at the door).

Musical based on the works of Dr. Seuss. For children 4 and older.

YouthWorks performance: 5 pm. Brooklyn Arts Exchange. See Saturday, Jan. 29.

all your favorite characters — including Alice, the Mad Hatter, Caterpillar and the Queen of Hearts — will come alive like never before.

"Alice In Wonderland" at Puppetworks [338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street in Park Slope, (718) 965-3391], now through April 17. Reservations required. Tickets \$8 for adults, \$7 for children. For info, visit www.puppetworks.org.

MON, JAN. 31

School tour: Our Lady of Guadalupe School, 1518 73rd St. at 15th Avenue; (718) 331-2070; www.olgschool.com; 9:30 to 11 am; Free.

Visit the school and meet with the staff and teachers. Programs are offered for pre-K through eighth grade. Registration begins today after CSW Mass.

TUES, FEB. 1

Creative writing: 11–11:45 am. Gumbo. See Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Boating lessons: Old Mill Yacht Club, 163-15 Crossbay Blvd.; (718) 623-3114; helen-cohen@hok.com; 7:30 pm; \$80.

Flotilla 11-3 of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary presents a 7-week course with an exam to follow. Pre-registration required.

WED, FEB. 2

Arts and crafts: Homecrest Library,

2525 Coney Island Ave. between Gravesend Neck Road and Avenue V; (718) 382-5924; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 4 pm; Free.

Children celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year of the Rabbit.

THURS, FEB. 3

School tour: 9:30 to 11 am. Our Lady of Guadalupe School. See Monday, Jan. 31.

Lunar New Year celebration: Sunset Park Recreation Center, Seventh Avenue at 43rd Street; (718) 492-0409; Noon–4pm; Free.

Welcome in the Year of the Rabbit with a traditional Lion Dance, Money God greetings, martial arts and Chinese folk dance performances, Chinese magic, children's drawing contest, ethnic dishes and more.

Karaoke: Clarendon Library, 2035 Nostrand Ave. at Farragut Road; (718) 421-1159; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens meet with friends, sing-along and dance.

Kaissa: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 7 pm; Free.

The artist is known for her blend of African, reggae, jazz and R&B sounds.

SAT, FEB. 5

Winter Jam: Prospect Park, Nethermead, Enter the park at 16th Street and follow the signs; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2011/02/05; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

Annual winter sports festival encouraging New Yorkers to enjoy the outdoors.

Chinese New Year: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 1 pm; Free.

Celebrate the Year of the Rabbit.

Chinese New Year celebration: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 6 and older discover the ancient art of "nianhua," Chinese block printing.

Kids Cafe Festival Goes to College: Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension; (718) 522-4696; www.dancewave.org; 3 pm; \$20 (\$15

Continued on page 54

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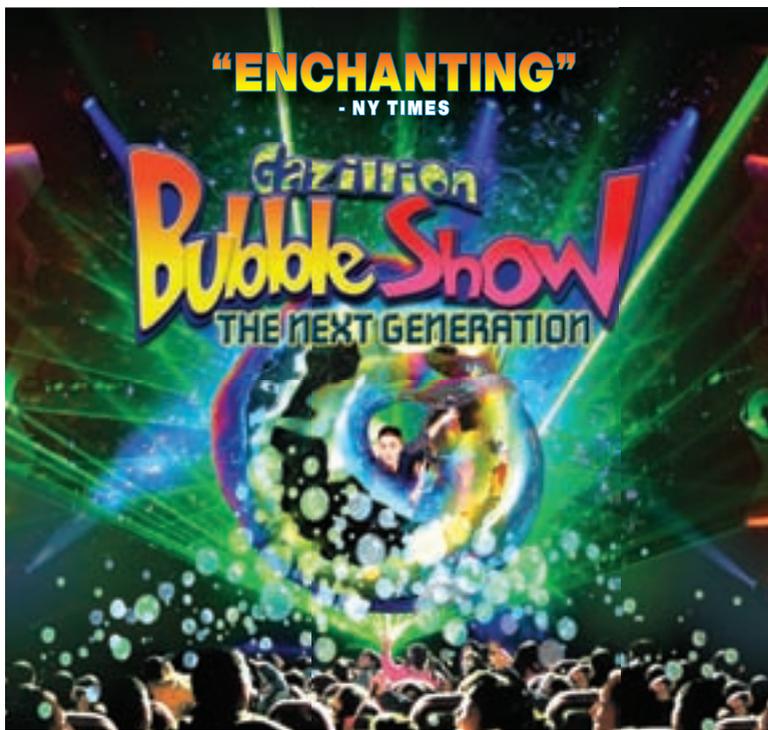
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Going Places

Continued from page 52

students with valid ID; \$12 kids under 12).

Performances.

SUN, FEB. 6

Chinese New Year celebration: 12:30 PM. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 5.

Kids Cafe Festival Goes to College: 3 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Saturday, Feb. 5.

MON, FEB. 7

"The Hidden Reality: Parallel Universes and the Deep Laws of the Cosmos": Hayden Planetarium Space Theatre, Central Park West at 79th St. (212) -769-5100; www.amnh.org; 7:30 pm; \$15 (\$13.50 students, members and seniors).

Author and professor Brian Greene leads lecture on quantum mechanics and the cosmos, we are not alone. Book signing to follow.

TUES, FEB. 8

Creative writing: 11–11:45 am. Gumbo. See Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Boating lessons: 7:30 pm. Old Mill Yacht Club. See Tuesday, Feb. 1.

FRI, FEB. 11

School tour: Visitation Academy, 8901 Ridge Blvd. at 89th Street; (718) 680-9452; www.visitationacademy.net; 9 am and 11:30 am; Free.

Meet with teachers and staff. Pre-k to middle school.

Craft fair: Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St. at Clinton Street; (718) 222-4111; www.brooklynhistory.org; 11:30 am–6 pm; Free.

Handmade jewelry, clothing, pottery, soaps, sweets and other treats at the Valentine's Day-themed event.

Arts and crafts: Brighton Beach Library, 16 Brighton Beach First Rd. between Brightwater Court and Brighton Beach Avenue; (718) 946-2917; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 4 pm; Free.

Children make a fun project.

Arts and crafts: Gerritsen Beach Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 4 pm; Free.

Children make a fun project.

SAT, FEB. 12

Craft fair: 10 am–5 pm. Brooklyn Historical Society. See Friday, Feb. 11.



Easy being 'Green'

Elmo and his friends are back for a whole new "Live" adventure.

From Feb. 17 to 21, "Sesame Street Live: Elmo's Green Thumb" turns Madison Square Garden into a true-blue Sesame Street, with all of the familiar faces and some fresh blooms, too.

In the show, Elmo helps a new sunflower friend, Sunny, find a new home after she's outgrown her flowerpot.

Along the way, they encounter some trouble as Abby Cadabby, a fairy-in-training, casts a spell that makes Elmo and all of his friends

shrink. As they explore Big Bird's garden from a smaller perspective, they learn some big lessons about how important little critters are to our ecosystem.

Like all "Sesame Street Live" performances, "Elmo's Green Thumb" is filled with laughs, dancing and, most important, lessons for the young and old.

"Sesame Street Live: Elmo's Green Thumb" at Madison Square Garden [4 Pennsylvania Plaza in Manhattan, (212) 465-6741], Feb. 17-21. Tickets are \$23-\$143. For info, visit www.sesamestreetlive.com/shows/elmos-green-thumb.

A Dog's mind: American Museum of Natural History, Linder Theater, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5100; www.amnh.org; 11 am–noon and 1–2 pm; \$10 children and \$12 adults, (\$8 members children and \$10 adults).

Author Alexandra Horowitz discusses her new book "Dog: What Dogs See, Smell and Know" and live interactive demonstration.

"Cinderella": Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. between Madison and Park avenues; (800) 982-2787; www.nytb.org; 11 am and 1 pm; \$40, (\$35 children).

Children's classic performed by the

New York Theatre Ballet.

The Itty Biddies: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 1 pm; Free.

Take a journey around and outside America through storytelling, presented by CarnegieKids.

Spotlight: Coretta Scott King: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 6 and older learn about the iconic figure and create a craft based on

the King family.

SUN, FEB. 13

"Caps for Sale" and "The Three Billy Goats Gruff": Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, CW Post Campus, Route 25A; (516) 299-3100; www.tilles-center.org; 11 am and 1 pm; \$20 (\$12).

Performed by the Hudson Vagabond Puppets.

"Cinderella": 11 am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm. Florence Gould Hall. See Saturday, Feb. 12.

Valentine's craft: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Ave. U; (718) 421-2021; 1–3 pm; Free.

Children create crafts for their parents and friends.

Hibernation station: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 and older learn about why animals hibernate.

Q Jazz Express: Queen of All Saints Lower Church, 300 Vanderbilt Ave. at Lafayette Avenue; (718) 638-7625; www.qasrcc.org; 3 pm; \$10 (\$5 children under 14).

Children discover jazz through a fun-filled trip led by Raven Williams into the world of musical instruments and the origins of jazz.

TUES, FEB. 15

Creative writing: 11–11:45 am. Gumbo. See Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Boating lessons: 7:30 pm. Old Mill Yacht Club. See Tuesday, Feb. 1.

THURS, FEB. 17

Karaoke: 3:30 pm. Clarendon Library. See Thursday, Feb. 3.

Tuskegee Airmen: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 5 pm; Free.

Children of all ages learn about this historic group of service men.

FRI, FEB. 18

"Atlantis II: Milo's Return": Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org>; 4–5 pm; Free.

Take an out in space adventure.

SAT, FEB. 19

Love Bug: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with mu-

Continued on page 56

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Going Places

Continued from page 54

seum admission.

Children 5 and younger learn the ways that insects help us in everyday life.

Saluting jazz elders: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5315; www.amnh.org/globalweekends; 1–5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate African-American History month by learning about trailblazing artists and musicians and enjoy a concert performed by the New Amsterdam Music Association.

African folktales: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 1 pm; Free.

Master storyteller Caren Calder tells traditional stories to the beat of a live percussionist.

Clyde Wilder: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages shim, sham and shimmy to the beat in this interactive concert.

Invention convention: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and older learn about African American inventors.

"Cats": Tilles Center for the Performing Arts, CW Post Campus, Route 25A; (516) 299-3100; www.tillescenter.org; 8 pm; \$75, \$60, \$45.

Broadway musical.

SUN, FEB. 20

Love Bug: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 19.

American Big Band: Brooklyn Cen-

ter for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. at Hillel Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; \$27.

Take the A train back to the glory days of big band music.

Invention convention: 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 19.

MON, FEB. 21

Kids' week: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Ave. U; (718) 421-2021; 10 am; Free.

Children make crafts and learn about history and nature.

Kids' week: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 723-3218; 10 am; Free.

Children make crafts and learn about history and nature.

Nature films: Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400 X 303; www.prospectparkzoo.com; Noon–3:30 pm; Free.

View LIFE, the newest natural history series from Discovery Channel and the BBC. Reservations required.

Have a heart: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and older learn about the heart.

TUES, FEB. 22

Kids week: 10 am. Salt Marsh Nature Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Kids week: 10 am. Fort Greene Park Visitor Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Creative writing: 11–11:45 am. Gumbo. See Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Nature films: Noon–3:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Astronomy workshop: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and older learn to navigate by the stars.

Boating lessons: 7:30 pm. Old Mill Yacht Club. See Tuesday, Feb. 1.

WED, FEB. 23

Kids week: 10 am. Salt Marsh Nature Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Kids week: 10 am. Fort Greene Park Visitor Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Nature films: Noon–3:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Monday, Feb. 21.

THURS, FEB. 24

Kids week: 10 am. Salt Marsh Nature Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Kids week: 10 am. Fort Greene Park Visitor Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Nature films: Noon–3:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Monday, Feb. 21.

FRI, FEB. 25

Kids week: 10 am. Salt Marsh Nature Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Kids week: 10 am. Fort Greene Park Visitor Center. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Nature films: Noon–3:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Monday, Feb. 21.

Spotlight: Elijah McCoy: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 6 and up take a train ride through Black History Month.

Origami: 4 pm. Brighton Beach Library. See Friday, Jan. 28.

SAT, FEB. 26

Stop 'n' Swap: MS 113 Lobby, 300 Adelphi St. between DeKalb and Lafayette avenues; www.grownyc.org/swap; 11 am–2 pm.

Bring toys, books, clothing, house wares and working electronics to trade. Please bring only portable items so others can easily carry them away. Sponsored by GrowNYC.

Spotlight: Elijah McCoy: 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Feb. 25.

"Sleeping Beauty": Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 1 pm; Free.

Children's classic.

"The African Drum": The National Black Theater, 2031-33 Fifth Ave. between 125th and 126th streets; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; 2 pm; \$15 (\$20 at the door).

African American folk tales.

SUN, FEB. 27

Dr. Seuss's Birthday: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 723-3218; 11 am; Free.

Children 12 and younger create their own "Seussical" to take home.

Astronomy workshop: 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, Feb. 22.

US Military Academy Band: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. at Hillel Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; Free.

TUES, MARCH 1

"The African Drum": 10 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theater. See Saturday, Feb. 26.

Creative writing: 11–11:45 am. Gumbo. See Tuesday, Jan. 25.

Boating lessons: 7:30 pm. Old Mill Yacht Club. See Tuesday, Feb. 1.

WED, MARCH 2

"The African Drum": 10 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theater. See Saturday, Feb. 26.

THURS, MARCH 3

"The African Drum": 10 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theater. See Saturday, Feb. 26.

FRI, MARCH 4

"The African Drum": 10 and 11:30 am. The National Black Theater. See Saturday, Feb. 26.

SAT, MARCH 5

"The African Drum": 2 pm. The National Black Theater. See Saturday, Feb. 26.

SUN, MARCH 6

The Beauty of the Ballet: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. at Hillel Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; Free.

School of American Ballet students perform excerpts from "The Sleeping Beauty" and "The Nutcracker."

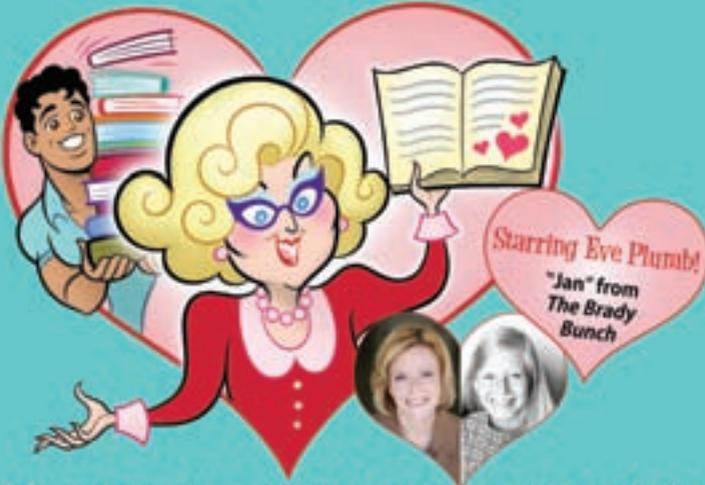
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LAURA GRAY

Unlikely hero has a change of heart

Megamind *Rated PG*

Your shy, unassuming daughter has turned into a crusader with a cause. And it's all because of a duck. Actually, a whole family of ducks that has wandered from the neighborhood pond into nearby yards, leaving their messy marks behind. Now the homeowners' association wants to call in an expert to force out the foul fowl forever!

That's when your super girl springs into action! She comes up with a plan to stop the feathered pests from straying. The association approves her suggestion and the ducks are saved. You and your daughter discover that the heart of a hero can be found in some unlikely places. Often, all it takes is the right cause.

The citizens of Metro City make that same discovery when their longtime nemesis comes to their rescue in "Megamind." Check out DreamWorks Animation SKG Inc.'s mega-hit, available Feb. 25 on DVD and Blu-ray, with your kids. Then use our Talk Together discussion starters to uncover the movie's themes. Afterward, create Hero Heart Surprises in our Play Together family activity. Who knows? You might find a few "hero hearts" in your own home!

In "Megamind," a super-brainy alien named Megamind spends his life battling the superhero Metro Man for control of Metro City. But despite his intelligence and creativ-



The nefarious Megamind uses TV reporter Roxanne to lure superhero Metro Man to his hideout.

ity, Megamind is always defeated by the macho Metro Man. But after Megamind appears to have destroyed Metro Man with his death ray, he finds life as a supervillain without a foe to be pretty dull.

So Megamind decides to create his own superhero using DNA that he extracted from Metro Man. He accidentally injects the serum into a nerdy cameraman named Hal, turning him into Tighthen. Posing as Tighthen's "space dad," Megamind begins training him to be a superhero. Tighthen, who has pined for the lovely Roxanne for years, embraces his new super status. Now, he figures, he can use his powers to get the girl of his dreams.

But when Tighthen learns his "space dad's" true identity — and is rejected by Roxanne — he goes after Megamind, destroying Metro City along the way. Megamind, disguised as Metro Man, arrives and runs Tighthen out of town. But Tighthen figures out it's Megamind and turns on him. At the last minute, Megamind uses his Defuser Gun to remove Tighthen's powers and save Metro City. Soon,

Megamind is quite comfortable in his new role as superhero of Metro City. It seems the heart of a hero beats in his eerie blue chest after all!

Talk together

Megamind and Metro Man come to earth as babies but land in very different settings. How does that affect them? Why is Megamind jealous of Metro Man?

Roxanne gets to know the "real" Megamind when he poses as Bernard. How is he different from his supervillain self? What does Roxanne like about him? Why is she upset when she discovers the truth?

Megamind and Roxanne are shocked to find out that Metro Man is really alive and hiding out. What does Metro Man dislike about being a superhero?

What kind of superhero would you be? What kind of super powers would you possess? How would you use them to help people?

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Play together: Hero heart surprise

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- Cake mix, prepared
- Cake frosting

- Conversation heart candies

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are cooling, cut a small slit in the top of each and insert a conversation heart candy. Frost when cupcakes are completely cooled. Enjoy finding your own "hero heart" inside when you bite into a cupcake.

Remind your children that a hero's heart often can be found in some unlikely places — maybe even inside a treat!

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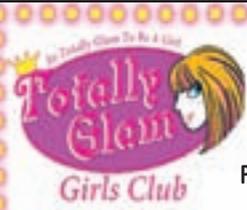
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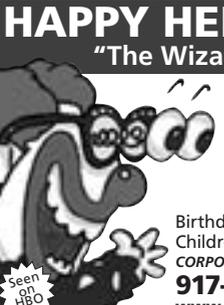
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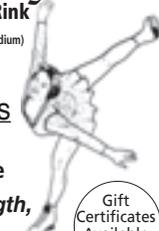
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New & Noteworthy



Beary fun

Get ready to shake, rattle and roll. BambooZoo's soft shakers may be the perfect companion for your baby. These huggable toys come in a chunky style that's easy to grasp, with ears and knobs that are also tough enough for tugging and teething. And, of course, it's a rattle, so she'll have fun making a ruckus.

Materials-wise, they are filled with natural corn fibers, and they're machine washable.

The pastel, adorable designs include all of the zoo favorites: giraffes, monkeys and bears!

BambooZoo rattles by Dandelion for Baby. \$12.95. For info, visit www.dandelionforbaby.com.

What baby eats

While there's no shortage of literature out there for new parents, one notable new book helps you to better navigate the confusing waters of good nutrition for your infant and toddler.

"Great Expectations: Best Food for Your Baby and Toddler, From First Foods to Meals Your Child Will Love," by Jeannette L. Bessinger, features advice to help ensure your baby gets the best, most wholesome, and natural food possible at home.

The newest entry in the "Great Expectations" series focuses on easy preparation of nutritious baby and toddler meals — from the first fingerfoods to more than 130 kid-tested recipes. Bessinger also offers tips on

how to select the right food, set up a pantry, establish smart eating routines, and introduce a wide variety of tastes and textures. They're lessons you, and your child, will benefit from throughout your lives.

"Great Expectations: Best Food for Your Baby & Toddler, From First Foods to Meals Your Child Will Love," by Jeannette L. Bessinger. \$14.95. Available on Amazon.com.



Get 'One Step Ahead'

Just because it's play time, it doesn't mean they can't bone up on their ABCs!

With these interlocking foam puzzle mats from One Step Ahead, your child — and a friend — can get interactive with letters as they build cubes and play with these cushy pieces.

If letters don't suit your fancy, the cushy mats also come in solid color or number sets. You can stick with one, or buy

one of each and mix and match.

They're durable, too, so you'll have them long after they've learned their 123s.

Interlocking Foam Puzzle Play Mats from One Step Ahead. \$29.95 per set. For info, visit www.onestepahead.com.



This hat's a hoot!

Your little one will look even more adorable than she already does in this crocheted owl hat.

The colorful piece is made using four-ply baby yarn, so it's nice and soft. The avian-themed head covering is available for bird brains sized newborn to adult. Colors include pink, brown and green, or blue,

brown and green combinations. Prefer different hues? Got Tutus invites you to choose your own color variations.

It'll make for great photos, while keeping her head warm in a hat she'll want to wear.

Owl hat by Got Tutus? \$25. For info, visit www.etsy.com/shop/gottutus.

Diapers dressed up

These are sure to be a hit at the next baby shower.

Diaper Cupcakes by Twosies Baby Boutique make for cute, cleverly designed gifts for the expectant mother.

In your own specially crafted cupcake box, you'll find soft baby washcloths, Pampers disposable diapers and cotton socks.

The pretty bakery box package is easy to give and fun to receive. Available colors include pink, blue, yellow and green, and the boxes can be fur-



ther customized to suit your needs. *Diaper Cupcakes, set of four for \$17.95. For info, visit www.etsy.com/shop/twosieskidboutique.*



Park Slope Day Camp June 29 - September 2

- Free morning transportation from most Brownstone Brooklyn neighborhoods.
- Door to door transportation available from most other Brooklyn locations.
- Very flexible registration; extra long season and accomodating hours.
- Outdoor, fun, stimulating programs for campers ages 3.5 to 14.



Program & Activities

- Pee Wee, Junior, Middle and Senior Camp for campers entering Pre-K through 6th grade.
- Cirque d'Ete for grades Pre-K - 5 featuring acrobatics, circus skills, clowning and more.
- On Wheels: travel camp for campers entering grades 6 - 8 features daily & overnight trips.
- Leadership Experience for teens entering grades 9 & 10

New Soccer Camp

Want your child to bend it like Beckham while still having fun? For children entering grades 1 - 5. Co-ed.

Mid-Winter Mini Camp

February 21 - February 25
5 days of trips & activities based in Park Slope.



Open House Dates

Saturday, February 19
339 8th Street, just below 6 Avenue
Presentations begin at
1pm & 2:30pm

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- Volleyball
- Kickball
- Arts and Crafts
- Basketball
- Softball/Baseball
- Football
- Kayaking
- Environmental Education
- Health and Nutrition
- Field Trips



Open House Dates:

December 10th to June 17th

Every Saturday 12pm - 4pm
(Presentations start every 30 minutes)

Sun. February 7th

12pm - 4pm (Presentations start every 30 minutes)

Sun. March 13th

12pm - 4pm (Presentations start every 30 minutes)

Sun. April 10th

12pm - 4pm (Presentations start every 30 minutes)

Sun. May 15th

12pm - 4pm (Presentations start every 30 minutes)

Sun. June 12th

12pm - 4pm (Presentations start every 30 minutes)

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