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Letter from the publisher

Mother's Day is every day

This magazine decided to forgo the usual focus on Mother's Day that will be so prominently highlighted and marketed this month by everyone else. The commercialization of the recognition of mothers makes a lot of businesses a lot of money, and I'm certain this year will be no exception.



special to signify the day that has been set aside to do just that. It's actually a great idea, but it only works if the sentiment is real and the children one has worked so hard to raise, to nurture, to guide, and to educate, feel grateful and pleased with the effort and the result.

Mothers all over the land will be taken out to brunch or dinner and thanked for their efforts and devotion with a meal, perhaps some flowers, or maybe both. Perhaps they won't go out, with the way the economy is, and served "breakfast in bed," or something like that.

If they are happy and loving, they will love you back and let you know you are being appreciated.

In any case, the sentiment will be to try to give "Mommy" something

If they are caught in the throes of growing, they may not, but that doesn't necessarily mean they are not appreciating you or what you do or have done — it just means they are doing the life thing. Ah, the life thing.



Newborn Gregory

have, for the most part, enjoyed this work more than anything else I have ever done. It has been more rewarding and more fulfilling than anything else, and I have done a lot of things.

Wishing our absent Mommy and partner, Sharon Noble, congratulations on the recent birth of her son Gregory, and all of you mothers who read our magazines a Happy Mother's Day, means I am wishing you that every day, because as every mother knows, every day is Mother's Day.

Thanks for reading!

As a mother, the life thing means to me that every day is Mother's Day, because almost every day since I became a mother I have had some Mommy work to do. I

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

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

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EDITORIAL

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Alternatives to college

Your teen has other options — which can lead to career opportunities

BY CANDI SPARKS

If tax season is not already stressful enough for most families, college acceptance notices are being mailed out at the same time. Just as paying taxes is mandatory, so is going to college. At least that had been the case for most families. But with the economy stinging the pocketbook, many young adults are rethinking whether they can put themselves and their relatives into debt when there's no longer a guarantee that there will be a good job — or employment in their field — when they graduate. For them, college might be seen as optional, at least for the moment.

For these young people, the decision not to go to college may be based on the desire to avoid taking out student loans. To begin one's adult life dreamy-eyed and deeply in debt is not attractive. Everyone knows someone who is either unemployed or underemployed. Taking on a large debt at this time is risky. Creditors are unforgiving, and bankruptcy laws have changed.

While this may make students apprehensive about taking out loans, their parents — who would like to help out with tuition — may not be able to afford more debt, either. It is tough to pay your child's tuition when the cost of living is rising; income to make the mortgage payments is not guaranteed; and boomers may be feeling the need to invest more for their own retirements.

It comes as no surprise that popular opinion about the importance of getting a college degree is gradually shifting every year, but few parents want their children wasting the best years of their young lives on the couch, tweeting or watching tele-

vision until inspiration strikes.

Instead, families can use this period of uncertainty to explore alternatives to going to college that can provide valuable experience for high school grads.

Hone job-seeking skills

These days, people will change jobs at least seven times during their adult working lives, and perhaps even more with the state of the economy. The ability to locate employment opportunities, go through a series of interviews, land a position — and keep it — are critical skills that young people can develop. Job hunting takes time, energy, and practice. The competition in the market is making job hunting a

life skill that is needed, whether or not a person has attended college.

Carla, a Brooklyn-based mother of three, thinks that job-seeking preparedness is as important as emergency preparedness.

"I tell my kids, you just never know who you might meet. You need to be ready to interview anytime, any place, anywhere. By just being prepared, you might get the job on the spot," she says. Carla's graduating high school senior, Theo, has received a few college acceptance notices, but he also wants to consider his other options before heading off to college. At the moment, he has decided to check out the job market before formally responding to any college offers.

Theo is equipped with a USB wristband, which has electronic files of his resume, references, grade point average, and current report card, as well as other important information, stored in data files. He wears it in case he comes across an opportunity to interview, and says that it is a convenient way to have all of the necessary infor-



mation in one handy place. He also hopes that it shows any potential employer his commitment to job readiness.

Carla encourages her kids to use “big-picture thinking,” and spends time discussing with them what they would like to do in life. She is not pressuring Theo to make a decision about college right away, because she is more concerned about his “quality of life” and “finding the right fit, whether it is in a school choice, job setting or career,” she says.

Carla also says that “satisfaction is a big part of success,” and her emphasis is on raising happy children who use the power of making their own informed decisions. She recommends that job seekers use the website of the U.S. Department of Labor as a resource for information and assistance. The website also gives career guidance specifically for working and non-working teens.

Get experience with internships

Many companies need short-term help, and are willing to fulfill staffing needs with interns. The interns go through an application, screening, and hiring process. The benefit of taking an internship (usually without pay) is that the position can be listed on the resume.

Interns are also viewed as future salaried hires in the industry, because they have had some job experience. Internships are limited-time opportunities, such as during the summers or on holidays. They may even be for shorter periods of time, such as over the course of a weekend, depending on the assignment and the company that is hosting the internship.

Internships can be searched on the Internet by geographic location, corporation, time period and industry. One of the most popular summer internship programs is at Major League Baseball.

Volunteer abroad

Travel opportunities abound for those who want to do some good, see the world, and sneak in a vacation along the way. Organizations that provide volunteer opportunities may offer the perfect vehicle for a young adult to experience different cultures and to garner hands-on experience.

Opportunities to assist in the areas of agriculture, conservation, teaching, and medical work are just a few of the volunteer proj-

ects in countries such as Thailand, Vietnam, and China, among many others. The more reputable organizations have an application fee, screening process, and program fees, which help to provide a better quality program and volunteer experience. Depending on the location of the volunteer program, individuals may be required to submit to medical clearances and get the appropriate vaccinations. In addition, volunteers may have to pay for their airfare and travel insurance.

A Queens mother of an adopted daughter (who wishes to remain anonymous) decided that postponing college for a year to “do volunteer work, clear the mind, and think about things,” would be a better plan than dealing with a daughter who was already cutting classes and could be headed down the wrong path.

The daughter had been struggling with her identity and was asking her mother to let her take a trip to her homeland. The mother wanted her daughter to “get in touch with her roots and see what her life could have been like,” but said “making the decision was emotionally draining.”

Regardless, she supports her daughter’s search for herself—even if it involves overseas travel. The volunteer program is only for a few weeks, and the mother will meet her daughter overseas at the half-way point, so that they can share some of that discovery together. She is happy that her daughter can mix in a little personal time within a structured volunteer project. However, as she pointed out, not all volunteer opportunities require overseas travel. Some exist right here in New York in soup kitchens and in community garden projects.

Hopefully, we can help our young adults realize that time is precious, that they can blaze their own trail, and still create a happily-ever-after of their very own.

For more information about job-seeking information and advice, visit www.dol.gov.

To learn more about Major League Baseball’s internship, visit www.mlb.com.

For New York City-based volunteer opportunities, visit www.nyc.gov.

Candi Sparks is the author of the “Can I Have Some Money?” children’s book series sold on Amazon.com and is on Facebook and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author). She is also a Brooklyn-based mother of two.

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

First for allergies

Are firstborn children really at greater risk?

Brooklyn Heights mom Stephanie MacDougal knows about allergies. Her oldest daughter, Kayla, is allergic to trees, pollen, gluten and lactose. She was quite surprised that when her second daughter, Ava, was a child, she was bouncy, bubbly, and could eat anything and go anywhere — without

sniffing, sneezing, or coughing.

Researchers however, may not be so shocked.

A new study recently presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology suggests that firstborn children are more likely to have hay fever, pinkeye due to allergy, and food allergies. The study surveyed parents of more than 13,000 children ages 7 to 15, and found that the prevalence of food allergy was four percent in firstborn children, 3.5 percent in second-born children, and 2.6 percent for children born later.

While the percentages do show a change in the prevalence of allergies due to birth order, the difference is significantly small. It leaves parents wondering if the risk of allergies in their later-born children will be slighter.

One Queens mom says she doesn't believe the study.

"Our pediatrician has always said that since my husband has asthma and hay fever, the chances of our children having them were higher," says Terri Williams, whose four children, ranging in age from 3 to 17, have suffered from allergies since birth. "Like clockwork, each child has come down with asthma, but luckily has outgrown it as they got older," says the Glendale-based mom. "For us, this study doesn't hold water. I wish it did."

Dr. Paul M. Ehrlich, a partner at Allergy and Asthma Associates of Murray Hill, and clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at New York Uni-

versity School of Medicine, agrees.

"This is one of those funny statistics that you can only discern from a great height. The percentage differences involved are tiny," explains the doctor, who co-authored "Asthma Allergies Children: A Parent's Guide."

"There is also a question of whether we are too sanitary for our own good — that by over-cleaning our homes, we may be depriving our kids' immune systems of the challenge they need to toughen up; this is known as the 'Hygiene Hypothesis.'"

He says that parents may be more conscientious for the firstborn and less for the rest, which might explain why eldest children have more allergies, although some allergies occur too early for that to make any difference.

Since there is little a parent can do to prevent the inherent genetic risk of allergies, awareness is key. Regardless of the variation between firstborns and later-born children, one thing is for certain: allergies are on the rise.

"We are seeing a great rise in pollens and grasses — anything that is related to climate change. Spring comes earlier and summer lasts longer," explains Ehrlich.

The key to helping your children is proper diagnosis.

"Allergies are not necessarily being better diagnosed. Runny noses are being treated as allergies when they may be something else. Asthma is misdiagnosed 30 percent of the time," says Ehrlich.

As with every healthcare concern, a patient is his best advocate. If you suspect your child has allergies, or if allergies run in your family, a visit to a pediatric allergist is your best bet.

Danielle Sullivan, a Brooklyn-born mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years, and was recently honored with a Gold award for her health column by the Parenting Publications of America. Danielle also writes for Babble.





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Remembering our TV moms



BY MARYROSE POPPE

Mothers come in all sizes and shapes, with varying strengths and weaknesses, and nothing has shown the variety of approaches to motherhood quite like those portrayed on television shows.

I recently watched reruns of the 1960s western, "Bonanza" and realized that the main character, Ben

Cartwright, was probably one of TV's first "Mr. Moms." Ben was a rugged rancher, a widower, and a gentleman. He ran the outside of his home with a firm hand, and the inside with a gentle touch, much like I think many of the career moms of today do. Thinking of Ben also got me thinking about some of the other TV moms and the messages they send.

Remember pioneer Caroline Ingalls from "Little House on the Prairie?" She and her husband, Charles,

packed up their wagon, left family and friends, and sought a new place to live so that their children could have a better life. She helped plow the fields, tend the farm, and raise seven children, some "chosen from her heart" along life's journey. And, she did

all this while making a home out of a tiny, rustic house.

Then, of course, we had the "Waltons." Liv, who very well might have been the first TV "sandwich generation" mom kept her husband, children, and in-laws happy, healthy, and secure through the trying times of the Great Depression — all under one roof!

Let's not forget "Julia." Diahann Carroll portrayed one of TV's first single moms — a beautiful career woman, who had to raise her young son on her own after being widowed. Unbeknownst to the writers, she was an inspiration for all of the single



parents that would follow.

And "Eight is Enough" taught us that a stepmother can indeed become a "mom." We learned that it takes heart

and soul, patience, endurance, and most of all, love and laughter to make a house a home.

Maybe our idea of a perfect mom would include a blend of a bit of magic from Samantha of "Bewitched"; a little zaniness from Lucy, of "I Love Lucy"; a bit of prim and properness from "Leave it to Beaver" mom June Cleaver; the legal mind of Clair Huxtable of "The Cosby Show"; the tenderness of Mrs. Cunningham from "Happy Days"; Alice's ("The Brady Bunch") housekeeping abilities; first-aid knowledge from "Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman;" and let's not forget the financial independence of an Angela Bauer from "Who's the Boss?"

Of course, the sit-coms and dramas on television are fiction, but over the years, the medium has given us examples of many kinds of approaches to motherhood. The moms are all different from each other, and from most people in real life, but they all love their families, try to make sure things run smoothly, and serve as a positive example for their children, much like today's real life mothers. We all have our strengths.

And we all have days when we feel that we are not living up to the task and are a bit overwhelmed, but on those days, we should pause and be inspired by the perseverance and successes of our favorite TV moms.



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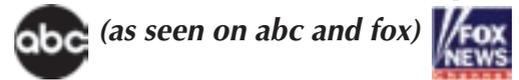
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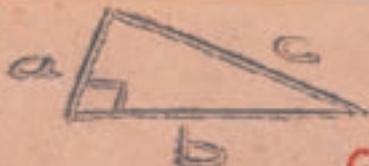
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Spotting chickenpox

My 5-year-old son has developed red spots on his body and won't stop scratching them. How can I tell if he has chickenpox, and what is the best course of action?

Calling your child's pediatrician to discuss his symptoms is a good first step. By discussing your child's symptoms over the phone, you can find out whether it is likely that your child has chickenpox and, if so, keep him from spreading the virus to others by having him stay at home. However, if the pediatrician is unable to confirm your child's condition over the phone, a trip to the office may be necessary.

Chickenpox is caused by the varicella-zoster virus and is quite common among young children. It is characterized by an itchy rash, red spots and blisters all over the body.

Once an individual acquires the virus, it takes approximately two weeks for the initial symptoms to appear (this is referred to as the incubation period). The first symptoms of chickenpox usually last for about two days and include headache, fever, a runny nose and a sore throat, although some individuals do not exhibit any of these symptoms. A rash consisting of red spots and blisters usually appears one or two days after the initial symptoms, and it takes about 10 to 14 days for the blisters to develop scabs.

Chickenpox can spread very easily. It is airborne and spreads via cough or sneeze, but it can also be acquired from sharing food or drink with an infected person, or by touching the fluid of a chickenpox blister.

The majority of children with chickenpox only need home treatment, which involves plenty of rest, drinking lots of fluid, and medication to alleviate fever and itching,



if necessary. A natural way to deal with the itching associated with chickenpox is to soak in a bathtub full of cool water and filled with one to three cups of colloidal oatmeal (available at a drug store) for a period of 15 minutes, twice a day.

If you or other members of your

immediate family have never had chickenpox — which can be quite serious for adults — it would be a good idea to get the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine. Two doses of the vaccine are recommended for both adults and for healthy children who are at least 1-year-old.



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Painting a bright

Here's how to help your artistic child develop her portfolio

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

So, you just found out you birthed a Picasso, and you're not sure what to do next?

When my daughter was in middle school, she was accepted into an accelerated art track, and I realized that I was not the only one who thought she might be artistically gifted. Still, at that point, I had no idea what to do to help her develop her skills.

If your child has shown interest and talent, there are benefits to encouraging her artistic growth, regardless of whether or not she wants to pursue a career in art. Most schools do not provide counseling specific to the arts, so it is helpful for parents to learn how to guide their children and make the most of their gift.

Parents sometimes have difficulty determining if their children are artistically talented. Barry Beach — an “arts counselor” who was the director of the Oregon College of Art and Craft — told me that parents may not be able to determine if their children are indeed gifted. He says parents should take notice if their children enjoy making art and are constantly interested in it.

“Note passion, rather than talent,” he suggests.

If you find that your child enjoys art, do some research and find out about local art classes in your area. Don't assume that time spent in art class in middle and high school will afford a child a full opportunity to develop her skills.

Remember, art class is only one period in a student's day. School art teachers will tell you there is very little “work” time for the students. If you consider the minutes devoted to set-up, clean-up and instruction, there is very little left over for creative work.

Beach encourages younger artists to take advantage of every opportunity, artistically.

“More art classes and art experi-

ences equal better prepared young artists,” he says.

Classes

While researching extracurricular art classes — apart from checking the cost, scheduling and logistical issues — you need to be sure the student has an opportunity to meet with the teacher.

If the school offers a free trial class, take advantage of it! Most art classes are small, but the teacher's attention is usually divided amongst the students, and different instructors offer different amounts of help and guidance, according to their teaching styles.

Personality plays a large role in the proper pairing of an art teacher and his student. Some are demonstrative or unconventional in their teaching style, whereas others can be subdued and expect more independence from their students.

Good art teachers, like any good educators, will know how much guidance is appropriate for each student. Good art teachers will also be honest with their students and with parents about the artistic potential and the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils.

It is not essential for younger children to work with instructors with portfolio preparation experience, but I have always been a firm believer in establishing relationships with well-qualified professionals early on. If your child's art teacher knows how to help her prepare a portfolio later, she will provide her with helpful guidance at an early stage. Also, your child will be acclimated to her teaching style.

By the time your child is in high school, Beach says that “it's critical to see the art experiences and education of the instructors.” Teachers who did not study art in college may not be well prepared to counsel students regarding portfolio-quality artwork, he warns.

When shopping around for an appropriate art program for my daughter, who is a junior in high school, I was astonished by the number of

hours some art schools suggested or even required. One school required an up-front commitment of nine studio hours per week for each semester. This kind of commitment seemed nearly impossible, as SATs, SAT prep, college visits, driving lessons, sports, and assorted extracurricular activities loomed in the near future. I found a school that offered more flexible hours, and my daughter increased those hours, as needed, to complete her portfolio.

Beach hesitated to specify a minimum number of hours per week he would recommend for art classes, stating that students who exhibit the most passion, self-motivation outside classes, and “excitement for creating,” compile the best portfolios.

Supplies

Along with registration for a serious art class comes sticker shock at the art store. Students working on their portfolios graduate from stores like Michael's (general art and hobby stores) to specialty stores, like Utrecht and Dick Blick, where one tiny tube of oil paint can cost \$30.

For a fee, some schools will provide a box of required supplies for the student.

Sometimes, a name-brand item is required (as with certain paints) and other times, the store-brand is acceptable. Ask the teacher if the cheaper brands will suffice, and seek out store staff, as they are usually art students who know the merchandise.

Be sure to have your student sign up for a student discount card and watch for sales.

College

By the time the art student reaches her junior year in high school, she needs to start thinking about whether she would like to work towards a Bachelor of Art or a Bachelor of Fine Arts at a liberal arts college, or attend an art school, such as Cooper Union, Parsons or Pratt.

Portfolio requirements for every school vary. Some schools look for

future



personal style and abstract creations, whereas others place a stronger emphasis on technical skills and traditional training.

A student should review each school's website to check the school's requirements and get a sense of the type of art the school prefers. With this information, she can work towards creating the diversity and types of pieces that would appeal to the school.

"Try as many art mediums and processes as possible ... from freshman year, on," Beach suggests to high school students. This way, he says, the student's varied experiences will help to narrow the college search, will facilitate her selection of a potential major (specialization within the art department), and will increase her ability to compile a diverse portfolio.

If an art student is considering liberal arts colleges and universities, she should inquire as to

whether or not the colleges accept or require art portfolios, and if the portfolios are used by the college for its decision for admission to the school, or only admission to the art department.

The submission of an outstanding portfolio can be helpful for a student with good academic credentials in a very competitive admissions season. Some liberal arts colleges will not accept portfolios at all. It doesn't mean the school's art department isn't good, it just means the student's artistic accomplishments will not be as helpful in her quest for entry into the school.

When the student goes to visit these schools, she needs to make arrangements to see the art department and, ideally, to meet with an art student or professor.

It can't hurt to bring a small portfolio, disc, or USB flash drive containing the student's work on the visit. Friendly admissions officers

are sometimes happy to see a student's work during an interview. At one small, liberal arts college, an art professor my daughter and I met with was willing to take a look at her flash drive and give her his comments on the spot.

By the time work on the student's portfolio is well underway, she should consider participating in a "portfolio day" at an art school. These are generally open to the public, when colleges and art schools (at the college level) set up tables where they engage the students in short discussions and presentations of their works.

The college representatives critique the art in a manner that reminds me of "American Idol," with some comments reminiscent of Simon (blunt and critical) or Paula (encouraging and complimentary). It is valuable experience that can help the student tailor the best possible portfolio while giving her the

opportunity to practice presenting her work.

Finally, Beach recommends that students enter some exhibitions and "juried competitions," normally judged by professional artists. It is a good experience, plus a peek into the real world of art. Of course, he cautions "everything in moderation."

•••

So, in a few short months, my daughter will be leaving to become a studio arts major at a liberal arts college.

Perhaps one day, the crayon drawing that hung on my kitchen refrigerator will be worth something. You never know.

For more information on portfolio preparation, go to www.artschools.com/articles/portfolio, or www.artscounselor.com.

Risa C. Doherty is an attorney and freelance writer from East Hills, NY, who has learned a lot about raising an artist in the last year.

Why music?

Listening to music at an early age can do wonders

BY MARY ALOIA

I was always amazed at how music transformed my children. When my oldest two were babies, music was one of the few things that calmed them BOTH — at the same time! When my youngest was born, my daughter was 6-years-old and my son was 5, and music was, again, the thing that we could all enjoy together. I loved fixing the rearview mirror on the back seat and watching them all bounce, clap and smile as we sang along to our favorite songs. Many, many times when they were little, I found solace in my car with my three children peacefully asleep as the music of Chopin, Brahms or James Taylor soothed their tiny souls. These were just a few of the signs that my children loved music... and why I love music — because it was my super nanny!

Music can alter a child's mood instantly. We all have our personal

stories of using music to calm a colicky baby, singing a family lullaby to put our little one to sleep, or getting through an endless car ride singing "The Wheels On The Bus."

Music is very much a part of our everyday culture. Years ago — before iPods and iTunes — music was something that we MADE. Before the age of technology, when I was a child, music was either playing on the radio, sung by a church choir, or sung by my parents from the front seat of our station wagon. Eventually, I got a record player, then a tape player, and much later, a CD player (all of which are prehistoric now).

Music-making is something that we need to work on, something we need to create. Our experiences with music started in our early childhoods, and it is our job to create these important musical experiences for our own children.

Thankfully, more attention is being paid to the role of early childhood music exposure and how it influences our children. Why? Why music? The short answer is that music is fun, but extensive research has shown that exposing children to music stimulates their overall intelligence and emotional development, nurtures their self-esteem, and at the same time, encourages creativity, self-confidence and curiosity.

Can early childhood music learning really make our children smarter? Well, recent data from the University of Texas indicates that students who had an early childhood music education received higher SAT scores. Studies have also shown that music can benefit cognitive abilities — particularly spatial abilities, higher reasoning and motor skills, and greater understanding and higher achievements in language and math.

Music has also been proven to develop the "whole child." Music exposure has shown to increase overall intelligence in children by

shaping attitudes, interests and self-discipline. Music can be inspiring and motivational, even to the youngest listener, thereby helping with focus and listening skills. Music is blind to age, gender and ability.

Give kids music!

Years ago, families would gather around the piano or the radio in the evenings and sing songs together. Over the years, we have lost this important family pastime, but there are still things that families can do to share the joy of family music. There are many fun and inexpensive ways for parents to explore music with their children.

Here are some interesting music-making ideas that you can try with your child:

- Sing with your child — You may not be the next American Idol, but chances are your child will think you are!

- Make music with things around the house — Get creative and look for everyday things that you can transform into musical instruments. How about making a maraca out of a plastic water bottle? Just fill an empty bottle with some dried beans and re-seal for an instant shaker!

- Introduce your child to different types of music — Add variety to your child's musical life by playing a different type of music each day. Classical, country, rock, rap, big band, jazz, or whatever you love! Just mix it up.

- Try playing a harmonica or a kazoo — An easy and inexpensive way to introduce your child to an instrument and have them experiment with creating different sounds and tunes. Play together and make your own band!

- Talk about music — As you listen to music or make music, talk about it! Talk about how the music makes you feel or what it may remind you of. Tell stories that involve music and singing.

- Try a music class — Exposure to an early childhood music and movement program will help to lay the foundation of childhood music learning.

Mary Aloia is the director of Staten Island Family Music. Staten Island Family Music offers Music Together classes at three Staten Island locations. To learn more, call (888) 731-8719, or visit www.sifamilymusic.com or www.music-together.com.





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www.bricartsmedia.org

BRIC's contemporary art initiatives aim is to increase the visibility and accessibility of contemporary art while bridging the gap between the art world and global culture in Brooklyn through exhibitions, public events, and an innovative arts education program at BRIC Rotunda Gallery and around the borough. BRIC Arts I Media I Bklyn presents contemporary art, performing arts and community media programs that reflect Brooklyn's creativity and diversity. BRIC also provides resources to launch, nurture and showcase artists and media makers. We advance access to and understanding of arts and media by presenting free and low cost programming, and by offering education and other public programs to people of all ages. Learn more about BRIC's programs at bricartsmedia.org.

Brooklyn Center For The Performing Arts at Brooklyn College

2900 Campus Road, 718-951-4500
or www.brooklyncenter.com

Brooklyn Center's Target FamilyFun Series continues to entertain families. For more than 25 years, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College has presented quality, affordable weekend performances specifically for families with children ages four to ten. Next season marks the fifth year that they will partner with Target to present the Target FamilyFun Series, bringing live music, theater and dance to Brooklyn families at affordable prices – tickets for next season's series start at only \$7. Due to its enormous popularity,

next year's series will expand from five to six shows, with titles ranging from the African folk tale Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters to the multi-cultural musical group Hot Peas 'N Butter. And it's not too late to catch the last show of this season's series, Beauty and the Beast, performing on Sunday, May 22 at 2pm. For tickets call 718-951-4500.

Complete information will be announced after Memorial Day. To receive earlybird notification about tickets, sign up for Brooklyn Center's e-news at www.BrooklynCenterOnline.org.

Brooklyn Conservatory of Music

58 7TH Avenue Park Slope
718-622-3300 or www.bqcm.org

The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music offers classes, ensembles and choral opportunities, individual instrumental and vocal lessons to students from 18 months to adults in classical, jazz, world music and music technology. The Conservatory boasts one of the countries leading programs for children through its unique Music Adventures division offering an array of performance driven classes including recorder, movement and painting. The Conservatory provides engaging master classes, educational workshops and affordable professional performances. The distinguished faculty members hold advanced degrees from the world's finest conservatories and universities. Many also maintain active and prestigious performance careers. And all are dedicated to bringing music into the lives of those in their community - from the beginning student just starting out to the advanced student contemplating a career in music. Our school campus is nestled in a completely restored five-story Victorian Gothic mansion in the heart of historic Park Slope, Brooklyn and attracts a student body that is drawn from the New York metropolitan area, the United States, and 27 foreign countries, reflecting the vibrant cultural diversity that is the essence of New York.

The Brooklyn Dance Centers

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Arts

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The Brooklyn Dance Centers have been serving the community for over 26 years by providing a variety of classes for boys, girls and adults.

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Brooklyn Fencing Center

62 Fourth Street, corner Hoyt Street in Carroll Gardens; 917-541-8902 or www.brooklynfencing.com

Is Brooklyn's first competitive fencing club. Their mission is to make the excitement and joy of Olympic-style fencing more accessible to Brooklynites of all ages. They offer beginner classes for ages 6 and up – and the great thing about fencing is, you can keep it at 60 and beyond! Ideal for people who “hate sports” but want to get active, fencing entertains your brain as much as your body. Get in touch with your inner swash-buckler at Brooklyn Fencing this fall.

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Classes in Park Slope at the Berkeley Carroll School or The Old First Reformed Church 718-522-4696 or www.dancewave.org

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The Summer Creative Arts & Music Program of Leif Ericson Day School

1037 72nd Street in Dyker Heights

Continued on page 20



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Continued from page 19
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www.bcprecenter.org

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our 2011-2012 Suzuki program in violin, cello, and flute, as well as for our other music, theater, and dance classes. If you are interested in learning more about the Preparatory Center, you can access information from our website or call our office.

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70 Lincoln Center Plaza
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Admission to SAB is by audition only, and free community auditions for children between the ages of 6 and 10 (with or without previous dancer training) are offered every spring in Harlem, Chinatown, Queens, Bronx, and Brooklyn. Boys attend tuition free, and need-based scholarships are available for girls.

For more information on this month's auditions, visit www.sab.org/auditions.

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Scrapbooking is a great way to preserve memories while making new ones

BY MARY TOMASULO

Take those old records off the shelf. No, not your vinyls from the 1980s, but all of the photos of your favorite family moments, and spend time with your kids by using them to create a priceless book of treasured moments — create a scrapbook.

From Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, to Long Island City, Queens, scrapbookers are snipping photos and meeting for crops (when the hobbyists gather to arrange their pages). They are similar to the old-fashioned quilting bees, when a group of women came together to share conversation, material, and sewing tips. Scrapbooking is the fastest growing sector of the craft and hobby industry, and 30 percent of all U.S. households have at least one member who scrapbooks.

The best part of scrapbooking is that anyone can do it.

“All you need are an album, glue, scissors and photos, and you can get started,” explains Mattie Ettenheim, a Brooklyn resident and scrapbooker since high school. This expressive craft combines the love of photography with the art of collage.

She created a birthday wish book for her best friend, made up of notes and photos of family and friends. In the class she teaches in Manhattan, baby and wedding books are the most popular. She recommends working with ideas from different websites, and working with only one or two photos at a time.

Any event can be recorded by using photos, memorabilia, or anything else you can glue to a page.

“I get inspired by the photographs that I’ve taken, and scrapbooking becomes alive with my life,” said an interior designer who takes classes with Ettenheim. “I love to add funny titles.” She says that she keeps a notebook where she can sketch ideas and designs, and her scrapbook pages become a journal of her life. This stay-at-home-mom says she enjoys scrapbooking, because it is an absorbing distraction that



has her thinking about composition, color and the image.

Be creative and use your imagination when decorating your pages. Using wrapping paper from holiday gifts makes a lovely background for a page with December photos, and Valentine’s Day hearts can adorn the pages with your family sharing hugs and smiles. Birthday cards can be cut and pasted onto a page, while music lyrics can be background for photos of school musicals and summer campfires. Maps and postcards can accompany last summer’s getaway pics, and recipes for holiday dishes can be put together with family photos and handed out as gifts.

Scrapbooking as we know it today began many centuries ago in the form of friendship albums — old books which would contain mounted photos; memorabilia, such as newspaper clippings and letters; and sometimes, a lock of hair. Scrapbooking became popular in the 1980s and has grown

to a million dollar industry with craft supplies available for purchase in stores and online.

And if you’re not handy with scissors and glue, don’t worry, because scrapbooking has caught up with the digital age. Online resources and easy layout options allow you to create cards, calendars and scrapbooks with no mess to clean up.

“I love pictures, and looking back at them is fun,” says Sue Lape, a 35-year-old television researcher who does her scrapbooking digitally. She takes photos with her digital camera, edits them on her computer and then creates gift books, calendars, and scrapbooks — all using various websites. She says she has never made a traditional scrapbook, because there are so many tools available on the Internet.

So, whether you’re snipping and gluing, or moving your mouse, scrapbooking is a great hobby that anyone can enjoy.

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A parent's guide to understanding learning styles

Identifying — and acting on — how your child processes information

BY NANINE IENGO

My sister and I were born 13 months apart. We didn't really suffer from sibling rivalry — what was mine was clearly her's, and vice versa, without question. I do not know a life or a way of being that does not include her.

However, we are as vastly different as two people can be, not only physically (I'm 5'8 and she's 5'4; she's blond and I'm not), but in the way we approached and functioned in school — as were many siblings before and after us. I was an avid reader, greatly preferring books and low-key activities (chess, puzzles), while she ran straight into any physical activity she could (she was actually on a pre-Olympic gymnastics team and one of her fellow gymnasts participated in the 1980 Olympics).

The comparisons were inevitable and typical. I was tall and awkward, but made straight As, while she was small and lithe and was banished to the resource room — as were most kids who were non-typical learners, and therefore, labeled learning disabled in the 1970s and '80s.

I remember the first day we moved into a new school — my sister and I had to take placement reading tests in order to see where we fit among the three classes on our respective grades. I placed in the middle grade because, while I may have been a great student, it was very intimidating sitting in the principal's office, under scrutiny of the third grade teacher, the principal, and my parents, while trying to read passages

and answer questions.

My sister, a shaky test taker from the beginning, tested into the lower class. She ended up developing low educational self-esteem because of the low abilities and bad behaviors of the other students in her class. To her, and obviously to the school, she wasn't able — able to read well, to write well, or to be a good student.

But, here's the thing: she was. Every child is — the key to learning just needs to be uncovered.

And it wasn't until I first read about Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences way back in my undergraduate days that I understood this and put into perspective the great differences in our educational experiences, and my sister's great difficulties in school. My sister wasn't a bad student, she just needed a different approach to learning than what schools at that time were using.

The theory illustrates the many ways in which a person can learn and process information. There are currently eight widely-accepted intelligences, and they are:

- **Visual/spatial intelligence:** People who are visual/spatial learners are great at visualizing and representing their ideas in 3-D, are great with puzzles, and may grow up to become engineers, architects and artists. They tend to need to incorporate concrete examples when they learn, such as drawing a scene from a play if they are reading Shakespeare, or creating a replica of the Eiffel Tower if they are learning about France.

- **Linguistic intelligence:** People who are linguistic learners are great with words, both written and spoken. They love to play with words and find reading a pleasurable activity. In order for them to learn, they need to include note taking or journal writing when they are learning.

- **Logical-mathematical:** People who are logical-mathematical learners tend to be great at reasoning

and logic. Math and science are also strengths for these learners, as they approach learning in an investigative way, asking a lot of questions and applying their reasoning powers.

- **Bodily-kinesthetic:** People who are bodily-kinesthetic learners need to incorporate movement into their learning. They retain information when there is an action incorporated into the lesson. They often need to touch something or physically do something (creating a muscle memory) for it to become meaningful.

- **Musical:** Musical learners tend to be sensitive to noises, music, rhythms and patterns. They need to incorporate music (whether it is by singing, dancing, or moving) in order to learn something and create a memory. You will often find these learners tapping their feet when they are listening to someone talk and creating their own songs from what they are hearing so that they can better understand it.

- **Interpersonal:** Interpersonal learners tend to be the social butterflies of any group. They learn best by transmitting information to others and having others interact with them. Very extroverted, interpersonal learners are empathetic and do well in groups of people.

- **Intrapersonal:** People who are intrapersonal learners are highly intuitive and seen as shy or quiet. They have a keen ability for self-reflection, and tend toward working alone rather than in groups.

- **Naturalistic:** Naturalistic learners love to be in nature and study best when the natural world is involved.

Dr. Gardner did not primarily develop his theory for education, but the educational world has wholeheartedly embraced it. It makes the vocation of teaching and parenting a little easier if a teacher or parent understands the ways in which children see and approach their worlds.

Resources

To find your learning style, visit literacyworks.org/mi/assessment/findyourstrengths.html.

To find your child's style, visit www.scholastic.com/familymat-

ters/parentguides/backtoschool/quiz_learnstyles/index.htm.

For more information on Dr. Howard Gardner, visit www.howardgardner.com.



While there is usually a base type of intelligence, many of us do exhibit a combination of intelligences, and that is why it is so important that when teachers and parents approach any type of activity — whether it be reading, disciplining, teaching, or playing — they include a variety of ways to approach it.

Now, as an educator, I often look back on the pair of us and our educational and personal paths, and use it to inform my educational theories. And it is because of this that I have always aimed at providing my students with lessons that were developed with many different learning styles in mind. I usually didn't plan lessons until I got to know my students and the different styles they offered. I made sure to include activities or projects that would help me uncover the way they learned, and offered them a multitude of ways to access the different centers or projects in our class. This was easy in a preschool environment, but maybe not so much so in a higher elementary grade.

On the first day of class, I designed my classroom to provide opportu-

nities for small and large group, as well as individual activities (listening center, playdough, reading nook). During circle time or whole group work times, I allowed for the different ways a child may need to access the circle or whole group experience. A child was allowed to sit at the table, sit at the circle in a chair, sit holding a stuffed animal, or stand, as long as he wasn't disrupting the class.

When I first started teaching, I had a little girl in my class who was so sensitive to music that she was terrified of the music teacher. After bringing her outside of the classroom to calm down a few times, the music teacher and I decided that it was best for her to sit at the door in a chair. But, by the end of the music time, she was usually

in the circle dancing with the other kids.

To be honest — this does create more work at first, especially doing this for an entire class. But, as a preschool teacher, I found that approaching teaching in this way, creating lessons to include as many of the ways of learning as I could, challenged me and help me become a better teacher.

And now, I see this with my own parenting style. My 3-year-old son is also highly sensitive to sound, but is extremely musically inclined (not to brag too much). He plays simple scales on his piano, and has started writing music with my husband, and on his own.

However, when he enters a room full of screaming kids (say, at an indoor play area), he sometimes has a hard time functioning. I feel that it is up to me — and those who take care of him — to understand his learning needs, and help him understand them as well. This will help him in school, and will make things a little easier for him when he comes across information that he just doesn't understand.

We were taking music classes together at a local Music Together Studio, and after a few weeks, he just wasn't able to handle it. There were too many elements for him to process, and while he loved the music, the surroundings became too much. My husband and I feel that our son does love music, and we want to encourage his natural abilities, so we plan on enrolling him in one-on-one music lessons. Being able to identify his way of learning helps me, especially when the challenging times come up. And trust me, they do come up!

My sister and I sat down and filled out an online questionnaire to find our learning styles. Sure enough, what we had already assumed was true — I'm a linguistic learner, and she's a bodily/kinesthetic learner. I did the same for my son, and confirmed he is a visual/spatial and musical learner. I can't wait for my husband to take the test!

Nanine Iengo is an Early Childhood Educator and Administrator who is working toward her Professional Certification in special education. While taking a leave of absence from the working world to be home with her son, she has developed a parent participation class called Toddler Lit 101, which is aimed at giving all children a love of reading.



Real parent power

Listen to your
kids, and
they'll listen
to you

BY ASADAH KIRKLAND

What is real parent power? The power of a parent does not come from telling a child what to do, or from having “possession” of a child. And it surely does not manifest itself in the form of hitting a child in order to “discipline” him by instilling fear. It is not having “control” over children, but rather, knowing what characteristics and actions will, when combined, be the perfect recipe for helping a child grow into a good, contributing citizen.

All too often, parents desire to have “power over” young people. Have you even been in a job situation in which a person misused his power and always nagged you, made you do things you didn’t want to do, or constantly looked over your shoulder? Annoying, right? What was your feeling? What did you really want to say to him?

What did you want to do to him?

The behavior he displayed did not make you more powerful. His behavior was disempowering, because it showed lack of confidence in your abilities. It demonstrated a lack of trust. Overall, it made you resent him. Hmmm, does that boss’ behavior sound similar to anything a child might experience?

Talk with your kids

At the top of my concern list is the route parents take when they say they’re “pushed to the limit.” I have heard it referred to as “the last resort,” when a parent feels she has to show her power by yelling at or hitting her child to discipline him. Parents say things like, “I have to talk to them five and six times!” or “He thinks just because he’s getting older, he can talk to me any old kind of way?” Yes, parents, I hear you. But there’s a reason behind a

child blocking out your communication, and there’s a way to make sure he doesn’t block you out — and it doesn’t involve hitting.

Think of it like this: there are people you genuinely like speaking to, because they have things to say that you like to hear, while there are others who may be less appealing to speak to, because they either can’t relate to you, or they’re saying things that are adverse to your beliefs. Nonetheless, as an adult, you have the power to tune a person out, or cut communication all together. Unfortunately, children can seldom do that with their parents. Just imagine always being questioned by someone, always having someone tell you what to do, always having someone suggesting her way is the best way, and invalidating your point of view. That’s a demonstration of being spoken TO or AT.

Being spoken WITH feels much different. There’s an actual exchange

of communication in the latter. If more adults had conversations WITH children, both parties would benefit from the understanding that would result.

The communication we have with children does not always have to be about jurisdiction, giving orders, implications, inspection, and other “adult interest” topics. Children don’t always have the same concerns adults have. Cleaning up the house and finishing homework may be really important topics for adults to address, but it’s not about addressing them. It’s about being wise enough to cater to a child’s interest by finding out what is important to him, and talking about that for a change.

The busy schedule and life challenges of a parent cannot supersede the importance of her children’s

interests. If adults don’t lend importance to what children say and think, children will quickly lose interest in what adults say and think. Getting the respect and trust of children cannot be forced. Those values develop out of their experiences with and observations of adults.

Children’s ideas count, and their viewpoints are valid. Adults only have to listen, watch, and use their wisdom to direct the paths of children.

Let the sun shine

During a recent book discussion, a wise gentleman likened babies to little suns. He said that when children are born, they shine brightly, and life experiences tend to dim those lights over time.

“That’s it!” I thought. Can we, as parents and educators, motivate and cultivate children so that those rays KEEP shining brightly, well into their teen years? Can we give them enough tools and happiness to shine brightly as adults?

During that discussion, I think everyone involved realized that we could be doing more to foster more growth in these little lights. Hitting a child to discipline him dims the lights. Yelling at a child dims the lights. Invalidating the efforts of a child dims the lights. We only have to think of the things in our lives that make us feel bright. Once we do that, then we can look at

whether or not we give out the behavior we’d like to take in.

Many adults rationalize the spankings they got as children and say, “Well, those spankings did OK by me — I turned out to be a better person because of them.” The idea here is that being hit by their parents kept them from doing harmful things. But, people, was the decision to not repeat the harmful acts done out of fear, or out of reason? Children will only make good decisions if they have the ability to REASON — to think or argue logically.

A parent who does not take the time to give a child thinking and negotiating skills will raise a child who will become a less powerful adult. Think about it: not being able to reason and negotiate as an adult will cost the adult a job

and a good relationship — all because the parent took more time to discipline the child and make him STOP things, rather than taking the time to allow the child to experience and explore things. Granting a child freedom has nothing to do with letting him run all over the place, it means helping the child feel liberated with the ability to eliminate life’s barriers — with the skills you give him.

Those in power lead easier lives. There is nothing wrong with granting children easier lives. Whether you envision others having all the power, or whether you equip your child with the ability to harness his power, and use it, is only a decision. Power, when displayed, shapes and molds the way one thinks, sees or acts. Power inspires. It lends vision and fortifies faith.

Dig deep and find your power. It’s that stuff that makes you creative, confident, able, and loved by others. Then, look at your child, and REALLY observe the power he was born with, and find ways to strengthen what you discover. Put a new twist on the power exerted in your home. Don’t let it be about your control over anyone. Let it be about how much light all of you can muster up and give out to the rest of the world.

Asadah Kirkland is the author of “Beating Black Kids.” For more information, visit www.beatingblackkids.com.

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NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ

Anything you can do, I can do better

One of the great things about being married to a high school teacher is the dirt-cheap family entertainment. There's always something going on at her school, and it almost always costs nothing, or next to nothing, to attend.

We can take our two boys, who are 6 and 4 years old, to the high school basketball game on a Friday night, toss down a couple of bucks, and the rugrats don't know if the player knocking down three pointers is the acne-faced kid from Home-room 2F or LeBron James. And they don't care, either. They just enjoy being a part of the excitement.

The same goes for theater productions. A couple of bucks gets you four primo seats to an always spirited, well-rehearsed, well-produced ver-

sion of a classic musical. Sure, sometimes the house lights inexplicably turn on for 10 seconds during the middle of a key scene, or a large hunk of the set falls to the stage with a thunderous clap, but the overall entertainment value is not bad, not bad at all.

Recently, we

took the boys to see a production of Irving Berlin's "Annie Get Your Gun," which just so happens to be one of my all-time favorites. My wife and I had the pleasure of seeing Bernadette Peters belt out the role of Annie Oakley on the Great White Way one rainy spring evening a few years back (well, more than a few years now, I guess), and I've been singing those beautiful moonshine lullabies in my head ever since.

While the lyrics and rhythms from "Annie Get Your Gun" have made a lasting impression on me, I had no idea that one song in particular would have a similar effect on my young sons. Let's take it straight to Act II. The boys had already made it to intermission without incident. No one got stuck between the cushions of the folding auditorium seats. No one blurted out, "Daddy, I have to poop!" during a quiet moment between songs. No one cried when the first "gun" was fired on stage. During intermission, we had rewarded their good behavior with a fund-raiser-sized box of Skittles for each kid. Happily, they ate the candies in their seats (don't tell the student-ushers) as the second act began. All was well.

Then, it happened. Call it enlightenment. Call it an epiphany. Call it the simple recognition of an age-old fact. The show's two main characters launched into a rendition of the song "Anything You Can Do," and both boys were mesmerized by what clearly ought to be the official anthem of sibling rivalry. "Anything you can do, I can do better. I can do anything better than you. Anything you can be, I can be greater. Sooner or later, I'm greater than you." I could see it in their delighted little grins. Both of my boys got this song. They knew its meaning. Even at a young age, they live it everyday.

After the show was over and the boys jumped into the back seat of

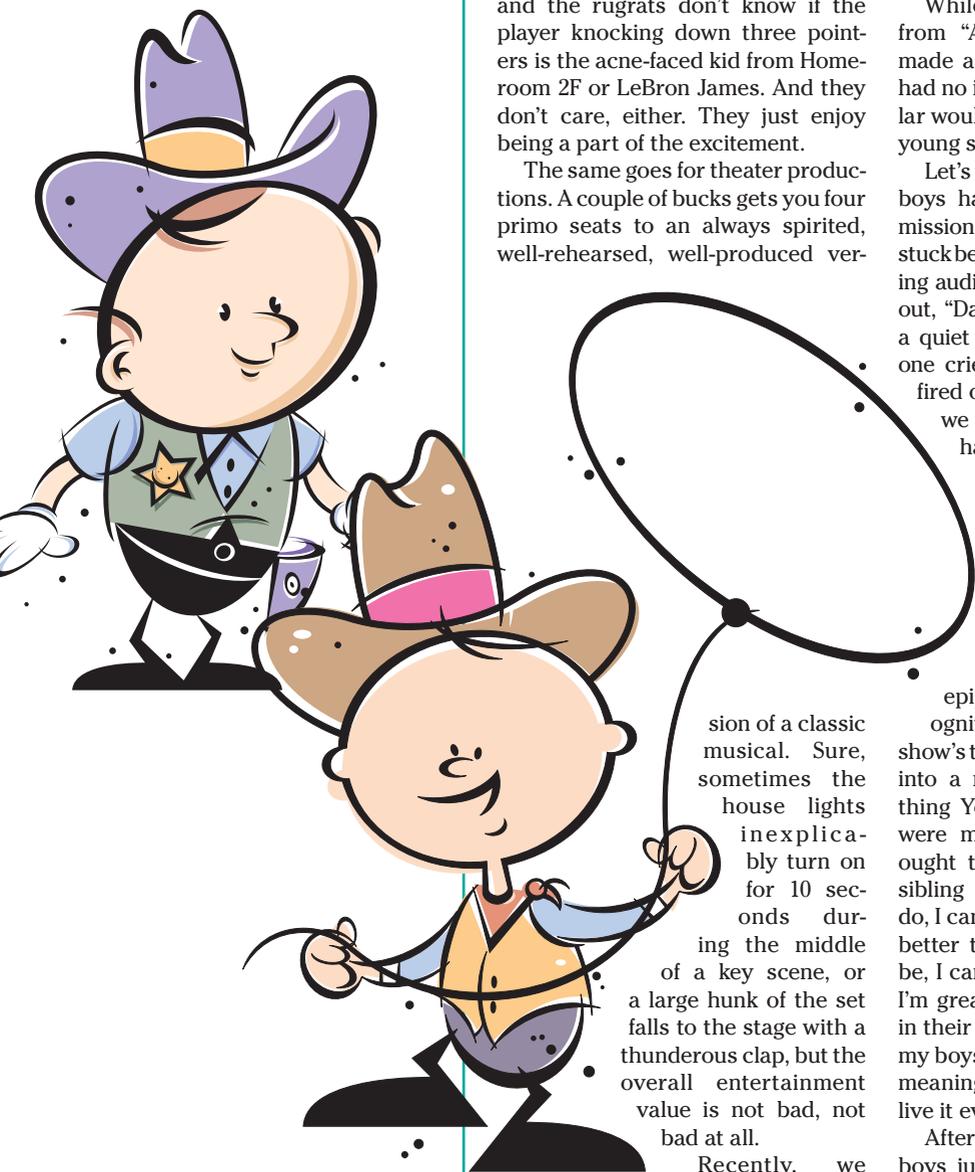
the car for the ride home, it started. First one, then the other, sang little bits of the song — and, of course, began bickering over who had the words right, who sang it better, who was singing the boy's part and who was singing the girl's part and who was and was not keeping his hands to himself. Luckily, the pure joy of singing this wonderful song — by now, my wife and I had jumped in on the second verse — was enough to diffuse the situation.

In a way, though, it was beautiful to listen to them go at it for a moment. There's just no way around sibling rivalry. I have three brothers, and although I wouldn't classify us as ultra-competitive, there's always been enough one-upmanship and friendly competition to go around. I wouldn't expect any less from my own two sons. It's the way of the world and, ultimately — hopefully — some good comes out of it. At its best, sibling rivalry pushes us to excel and achieve and reach our goals with the incentive of that friendly competition. Of course, it's essential that it be kept at that level.

So, when sibling rivalry flares up between your kids at home, know that it's natural. And to calm things down when things get a little too heated between siblings, go ahead and tap "Anything You Can Do" on your playlist and encourage everyone to join in with this delightfully silly tune:

"Anything you can say
I can say softer.
I can say anything
Softer than you.
No, you can't. (Softly)
Yes, I can. (Softer) No, you can't.
(Softer)
Yes, I can. (Softer) No, you can't.
(Softer)
Yes, I can. (Softer)
YES, I CAN!" (Full volume)

Brian Kantz can't carry a tune to save his life. At least he still sounds better than his three brothers. Visit Brian online at www.briankantz.com or drop him a note at thenewbiead@yahoo.com.



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Maria Montessori truly led the way

Her pioneering work on early childhood education

BY MARY CARROLL WININGER

At the beginning of the 20th century, educating young children was a far more grim experience than what we know today. Schools at that time were designed to drill and discipline, rather than grow and nurture young minds. Classrooms were often dirty and crowded Dickensian places where children were deposited to memorize lessons and wear dunce caps. Schools of today are vastly different, with sing-alongs, magic carpets, and class pets.

So how, in the span of a century, did early childhood education make the transition from “Bleak House” to “Sesame Street”? How did ideal classrooms go from being places of tedium and punishment to sweetness and light? The shift was due almost completely to the research and philosophies of one person, who happened to be the first Italian woman to ever receive a medical degree. Her name was Maria Montessori.

The only child of Alessandro Montessori and Renilde Stoppani, Maria Montessori was born in 1870 in the town of Chiaravalle, on the eastern edge of Italy. From the beginning, she wasn't like the other girls. She was described as having been “headstrong” and “self-confident,” often emerging as the leader in schoolyard games. She easily excelled in school and, at the university level, Maria Montessori spent hours in the library studying math and science — her favorite subjects. After several years of pressuring the University of Rome, she was eventually permitted to study medicine there, and in 1896, became the first woman in Italy to become a physician. It was her work with the university's psychiatric clinic that led to her life's calling.

As part of her work with the clinic, Dr. Montessori was to visit asylums for the mentally challenged. She noticed immediately how their youngest residents were starved for attention and experience. When she saw the amount of human potential being wasted, she began conducting experimental research, observing how children in the asylums interacted with specially designed self-teaching materials. After the mentally challenged children scored higher than average children on the same aptitude tests, Montessori determined that learning did not consist of memorizing and reciting, but sensing and experiencing the world through concrete objects.

As a result of this early success, she was asked to establish an experimental day-care center for disadvantaged children in Rome. Sixty children from the low-income San Lorenzo district were chosen to attend the “Casa dei Bambini” (Children's House), where Montessori had designed a “prepared environ-



Maria Montessori changed the face of early childhood education.

ment” in which the children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate, self-directed learning activities.

She noticed how the children, when allowed to move about the room and interact with learning materials, would absorb knowledge almost effortlessly from their surroundings. The children of Casa dei Bambini, whom society had dismissed as unruly “street kids,” also achieved above-average test scores, thanks to Dr. Montessori and her newly-developed method.

She knew then that if children coming to school with special needs or challenging backgrounds could benefit from this non-traditional approach to learning, it would stand to reason that average children could, too.

As word spread of her success with teaching children who were formerly considered “unteachable,” Montessori began to lecture, write books, and conduct training programs to explain her approach, which came to be known as the “Montessori Method.” Her ideas



A Montessori student learns about the decimal system.

swept through enlightened circles, but did not officially take hold in the U.S. until the early 1960s. Today, there are at least 4,000 certified Montessori schools in the United States, and about 7,000 worldwide.

Present-day Montessori schools observe many of the same principles as their predecessors. The sparse environment of a Montessori classroom is filled with carefully chosen materials to facilitate independent research and learning. (A Montessori tenet holds that the teacher is there to control the environment, not the child.)

Blocks and color tablets help children learn about the sensory world; beads and sandpaper numerals teach about decimal representation and identifying numeric symbols. There are materials for buttoning and bow-tying, pouring and scooping, and preparing food — all to encourage hand-eye coordination. Other areas are designated for cleaning, gardening, or caring for animals.

At Montessori schools, children are not forced to sit behind a desk and listen to a teacher talk at them. There are no deadening call-and-response drills, no rigid reward and punishment systems. Children are instead free to move around and explore any subject for as long as they wish, with no time constraints.

When children are allowed to choose what they want to do and concentrate for as long as they need on a given task, they tend to leave that task refreshed and filled with good will towards fellow students. All the while, the teacher must protect the student's concentration from



interruption. Children therefore discover on their own, while being gently guided by their teachers — which fosters a lifetime love of learning.

Students at Montessori schools also do not receive papers back filled with red marks and corrections. Instead, the teacher plans individual projects to enable each child to work on what he needs in order to improve. And Montessori students are not forced to compete — they learn from each other in mixed age groups, where they bounce ideas

off one another and learn what the others know. This ensures the acquisition of problem-solving skills and social interaction, and, in this way, children learn to work together.

There are numerous local examples of schools that uphold Montessori ideas and beliefs, the central one being to bring out the best in each child. Children are allowed to develop at their own speed, according to their capabilities. The students make the choices, and their unique qualities and talents are respected.

It is believed that the most important years of a child's education are not at the university level, but from birth to age 6. If a child is allowed to pursue hands-on tasks during this period and think independently, without obstacles, she can be guided to a promising future.

Montessori's method has proven again and again to advance children's aptitude, thinking and reasoning skills, and overall happiness. It allows children to grow at a relaxed pace into the intelligent men and women they will become.

Mary Carroll Winger is a writer based in New York City. She is a frequent contributor on topics ranging from etiquette to feng shui.

Montessori students learn about math by playing with plastic beads.



Maria Montessori enjoyed observing children learn about the world around them.

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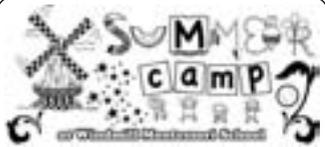
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TWICE THE ADVICE

JACQUELINE AND
KERRY DONELLI

To breast-feed or not to breast-feed?

Dear Twins,

I am pregnant again, and I've decided not to breast-feed, as I found it very physically uncomfortable. But my husband is pressuring me to do it, as he hears it's better for the baby to breast-feed. My mother didn't breast-feed me, and I turned out just fine! Is it better to breast-feed, or can I just use a good formula?

— *Signed, To breast-feed or not breast-feed*

Kerry says: Yes, breast-feeding can make a difference and is superior in several ways. For one, breast milk boosts immunity and therefore, helps your baby resist certain ailments such as stomach problems, allergies, asthma and ear infections.

Breast-feeding also decreases the mother's chance of breast cancer and developing diabetes. Breast-feeding helps to build strong bones, too. It also helps shed unwanted pregnancy weight gain. Lastly, it increases bonding between the mother and infant. Therefore, as long as it's not due to any medical reason, I suggest you breast-feed for at least six months.

Jacqueline says: I agree with Kerry, however, breast-feeding isn't right for everyone, and infant formula is an acceptable alternative.

Dear Twins,

My son is super hyperactive. His teacher complains that he can't sit still and concentrate, and he is distracting the other students. He is rambunctious at home, so my husband and I encourage him to run around and play outside, which seems to help. My sister recently told me she thinks he might have ADHD. What are the symptoms, and is it curable?

— *Signed, Mother of a bouncing ball*

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.



Kerry says: Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) presents itself as hyperactivity, impulsiveness, distraction and inattention in children. Your child should be evaluated by a psychologist. You can breathe easy, however, because treatment — which should combine the use of medication and behavioral therapy — is very effective for children who have ADHD.

Jacqueline says: Don't forget, treatment also includes your loving patience and support!

Dear Twins,

My daughter is now in the 10th grade. Something has gotten into her. I've noticed she never laughs anymore, she sleeps in after school, she stopped running, and is not interested in food like she used to be. Moreover, her grades have gone down. When I try to talk to her about it, she says she's fine. How can I tell if my child is depressed?

— *Signed, Worried mom*

Jacqueline says: Children and teenagers can be depressed; it is not just a grown-up's illness. Signs of depression include frequent sadness or crying; decreased interest in activities, or inability to enjoy previ-

ously favorite activities; low energy; social isolation; poor communication; frequent complaints of not feeling well; often absent from school; poor grades; poor concentration; and change in eating or sleeping patterns, to name a few.

It sounds like your daughter has at least four of the above symptoms. I would talk to her doctor and get a referral to a mental health provider right away.

Kerry says: Has she had a drug test? Nonetheless, I suggest that she take Jacqueline's advice and have her evaluated by a mental health provider to be assessed for depression right away. She can feel back to her old self again with therapy and, if necessary, medication.

• • •

Dear Twins,

Last week, I took my baby in for his immunization shots, and now I'm worried sick that he might be autistic! Now I'm watching him like a hawk, concerned with every move he makes that it's a sign of autism. Did I make the right choice by giving him his shots? Should I be this worried?

— *Signed, Fretting that I made the wrong decision*

Jacqueline says: The ongoing debate between autism and immunizations seems to never end! Scientific evidence does not suggest that the mumps, measles and rubella vaccines cause autism, according to the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Bethesda, Md. That said, some groups claim that a certain type of mercury, called preservative thimerosal, is found in certain vaccines and may be responsible for autism. That said, there is no evidence to date that vaccines cause autism. So stop your fretting.

Kerry says: The signs of autism include the inability to communicate verbally and non-verbally, relate to others and the world around them, and to think and behave flexibly. If you aren't detecting these signs, you shouldn't worry yourself.



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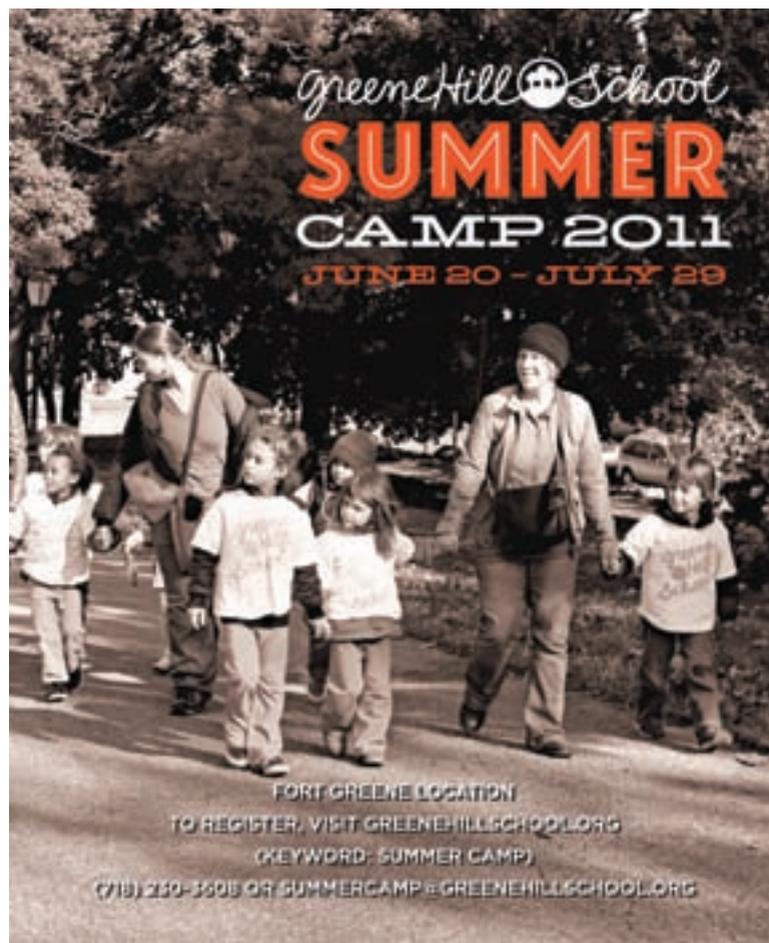
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OUR RELATIONSHIPS

JOAN EMERSON, PhD

Attachment theory

In the field of couple's therapy, an issue that suddenly seems to be central to being a happy, contented duo is actually nothing new — but it's usually thought of in a different context.

"Attachment" used to be thought of as a process only between infant and parents. But these days, the idea of attachment is validated as an adult need. Recently, I heard Sue Johnson, the formulator of Emotionally Focused Therapy, speak of the importance of attachment behaviors in an adult relationship.

The theory of attachment says that no matter how old people are, how successful, powerful, or independent, all people still need to be able to re-experience those early feelings of being cared for, held, looked in the eye, touched and stroked, comforted, and told appreciative things — just like they (hopefully) were treated as babies and young children. Even as independent adults, people still need this experience from significant others; it's the way people calm themselves from

the ongoing stressors of life.

This is a concept I can identify with, and sometimes, annoyingly so, since part of me wishes I wasn't dependent upon my partner for this feeling of peace, and could refuel my own self before going back out into the world.

Attachment theory says that people can't completely satisfy this need on their own, but rather, partners must help each other. Not even a best friend can fulfill this, because the satisfactions come from the physical connection, as well as the emotional. Being able to get and give this peaceful feeling to each other is the emotional bedrock upon which couples build the more rational aspects of relationships. Without this peaceful, loving connection, couples might wind up fighting over a myriad of issues. But where anger really comes from, is the disappointment that a partner's basic needs are not being met.

It's hard to deny that everyone yearns for this attachment experience, and it's probably universal that couples feel an intense attachment connection in the early stages of relationships. So, people want a safe haven, a place where they can feel calmed and supported by their partners. Achieving this feeling is such a basic drive that — in order to be brave enough to reach out and ask for reliable, loving, and protective behaviors — couples have to know it's safe, and that it won't be denied, ignored, or made light of by the other person, because that would be too crushing.

In order to take this risk of depending on the love and acceptance of others, therefore, people need to have a deep confidence that they can be their imperfect, stumbling selves, and that their significant others know who they are and

fully love and value them, because of — and in spite of — their less-than-perfect ways.

The first step in achieving attachment, therefore, seems to be a willingness to share your innermost feelings, concerns, needs, fears, hopes, and dreams, and let your partner get to know that part of you. If you keep things in and don't share, a distance will start to develop between you and your partner, and attachment gets even harder to achieve.

How to reveal yourself, and what to do to help your partner reveal himself to you in return, requires the sacred rules of communication. First, both partners must agree that the conversation is strictly about understanding each other. Invite your partner to share feelings of what he's finding hard these days and what he wishes for. Then, reflect back to him what you heard. Once he says, "Yeah, you got it right," thank him for sharing.

When it's your turn to talk, speak from your own experience, using "I" statements to help your partner hear what it is that you've been dealing with. When he seems to understand, say, "Thanks for listening." If you get to this place of listening and really understanding, you've achieved your goals. Figuring out where to go next is the topic for another conversation.

When you talk, blame is the danger you must guard against. If one of you senses that you're being blamed for problems in the relationship, defensiveness and counterattacking usually follow, and you can't fully listen to your partner.

But it's the physical holding part of attachment that cannot be minimized. It gives each person in the relationship a peace and safety that they can only get from each other. It doesn't take long for these feelings to be generated; almost as soon as you relax against each other with an affectionate touch, you begin to feel a release of tension. Attachment theory has a lot to say about how couples can take care of each other.

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





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No bones about it

Calcium is a mighty mineral battling PMS, cancer and more

BY SANDRA GORDON

No doubt, you know getting plenty of calcium is one of the best ways to ward off bone-thinning osteoporosis later in life. But that's not all. The latest research shows that there are at least five new reasons for the recommended daily intake (or more) of this mighty mineral — 1,000 mg for adults up through age 50, including pregnant or nursing women. Read on to find out all that this super nutrient can do for you besides help build bone.

Combating colon cancer

Among women in the U.S., colon cancer is one of the three most common types of cancer. Research shows, however, that a diet rich in calcium may help prevent this invasive disease.

A study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, for example, which pooled preliminary data from 10 studies in five countries involving 534,536 participants, found that those who consumed the most milk had the lowest risk of colon cancer.

The theory: Without adequate cal-

cium, bile and fatty acids — natural byproducts of digestion — can irritate the colon, causing a constant state of cell repair that's an invitation for cells to become cancerous. The more cells regenerate, the more their DNA has the opportunity of being exposed to toxic agents that can cause them to divide too rapidly, explains calcium researcher Peter R. Holt, MD, professor of Medicine at Columbia University in New York City. Calcium, however, binds with these pesky colon acids, preventing them from doing their damage.

Downsizing PMS

With more calcium in your diet, women are apt to suffer less from the mood swings, headaches, smoldering irritability and anxiety associated with that time of the month. A major study recently showed that a daily dose of 1,200 to 1,500 milligrams of calcium can reduce the classic signs that a period is approaching by 50 percent.

"Premenstrual symptoms indicate that a woman has an underlying calcium deficiency," says study researcher Susan Thys-Jacobs, MD, director of the Metabolic Bone Center at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in New York City. With plenty of calcium in tow, you'll feel better at PMS time. You'll also help prevent osteoporosis, since the same hormones instigate both conditions.

"If you suffer from PMS, you're also probably losing bone," Dr. Thys-Jacobs says.

Preventing high blood pressure

Typically called "the silent killer," because it's often symptomless until it's too late, high blood pressure can lead to heart disease, the leading cause of death for both men and women in the U.S. High blood pressure is also a formidable threat if it develops during pregnancy, a condition called preeclampsia.

Calcium from dairy products,

Making the calcium connection

To help meet the recommended calcium intake of 1,000 mg a day, strive to consume at least three low-fat or nonfat calcium-rich foods daily, such as those that follow.

If you're lactose intolerant, don't write off dairy products. Try consuming foods such as milk, cheese or yogurt with meals.

"Food slows the rate lactose enters your intestine, so your body can handle it better," says Greg Miller, PhD, president of the Dairy Research. Lactose-free milk and cottage cheese are also other options, as is soy milk, but check the label to make sure it's fortified with at least 30 percent of the daily value for calcium.

| Food | Serving size | Calories | Calcium | Added bonus |
|--|--------------|----------|------------|---|
| Low-fat or nonfat yogurt | 1 cup | 210/100 | 350/400 mg | Contains active cultures, which helps make yogurt especially digestible if you're lactose intolerant. |
| Fat-free (skim) milk | 1 cup | 90 | 250 mg | One of the easiest ways to get more calcium. Swap water or soda for skim milk at meals. Make oatmeal, canned soups, prepared pancakes and cake mixes with milk instead of water. Order a skinny latte instead of regular coffee at coffee bars. |
| Fat-free, lactose-free milk | 1 cup | 90 | 300 mg | A decent substitute for regular milk. |
| Fat-free frozen yogurt | ½ cup | 100 | 450 mg | The best brands provide 45% daily value for calcium. (Check the Nutrition Facts panel.) This is more calcium than a glass of milk. |
| Lowfat ice cream | ½ cup | 120 | 150 mg | Contains a fraction of the fat and calories of regular ice cream. |
| Calcium-fortified orange or grapefruit juice | 1 cup | 120/100 | 350 mg | A glass of either has more than a full day's supply of the antioxidant vitamin C; orange juice is also a good source of folate. |
| Low-fat cheese such as mozzarella | 1-inch cube | 50 | 150 mg | Half the fat of regular mozzarella. |
| Calcium-fortified cottage cheese | ½ cup | 80 | 200 mg | Double the calcium of regular cottage cheese. |
| Firm tofu | 1/5 block | 50 | 150 mg | Firm tofu offers nearly 10 percent more calcium than soft varieties. |
| Salmon (with bones) | ¼ cup | 90 | 100 mg | Easy to incorporate; substitute for tuna in your sandwich on occasion. |



however, in combination with a balanced, low-fat diet, may help keep blood pressure in check.

In a major government study called Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, “calcium was one of several nutrients that lowered blood pressure,” says Eva Obarzanek, PhD, a researcher with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

In fact, out of the study came new diets, such as eating plans that are rich in fruits and vegetables, moderate in low-fat or nonfat dairy foods, and low in sodium and sweets. A typical diet of this type, which is widely distributed to high blood pressure patients in the U.S., recommends two to three servings of low-fat or nonfat calcium-rich dairy foods a day, such as skim milk, nonfat yogurt and low-fat cheese.

Conquering kidney stones

If you’ve ever had a kidney stone, you know those minute collections of minerals that form in the kidneys can cause excruciating pain when they pass through the urinary tract and out of the body.

Most kidney stones are made from calcium and oxalate, a salt-like substance found in foods such as

beets, spinach, rhubarb and nuts. Your body also makes its own steady oxalate supply.

Normally, calcium and oxalate remain dissolved and are excreted in the urine. But stones can form when calcium and oxalate become too concentrated in the kidneys, becoming a solid — not unlike sugar settling to the bottom of your coffee cup.

A 12-year Harvard study involving more than 90,000 women, however, found that those with the highest calcium intake had the lowest risk of kidney stones. The theory? Calcium binds with oxalate during digestion, canceling out the possibility that stones will form down the pike. A caveat: The same study also showed that taking calcium supplements without food may actually increase the likelihood that kidney stones will form in some people.

Beating breast cancer

And finally, calcium may also help reduce the risk of breast cancer, especially if you’re a milk drinker. A Finnish study involving more than 4,600 women concluded that those who drank roughly three eight-ounce glasses of milk a day had the lowest risk of breast cancer, compared to those who didn’t. Researchers suspect that calcium, as well as several other components in milk, such as conjugated linoleic acid, may have potent breast-cancer-fighting properties.

Sizing up your supplement

In an ideal world, it’s best to get your calcium from food, because it contains a complete package of nutrients that may help fight disease. Yet, it’s estimated that many women consume less than half of the daily recommended calcium intake. (You could be one of them if you frequently drink water or diet soda instead of milk at meals.)

If this sounds like you, consider taking a calcium supplement with vitamin D for added health insurance; vitamin D helps fine-tune calcium absorption. (However, if you have a personal or family medical history of kidney stones, first talk to your doctor.)

If you plan to go the supplement route, “use it to top off the

calcium you get from your diet,” advises Robert Heaney, MD, a calcium researcher and professor of medicine at Creighton University in Omaha, NE. Heaney recommends taking 500 mg of calcium a day and trying to get the remaining 500 to 1,000 mg of calcium from food.

Calcium supplements come in different forms, such as calcium carbonate, Tums (a.k.a. calcium carbonate) and calcium citrate. Because all are absorbed more or less equally, your main concern when choosing a supplement and estimating how many supplements you need to take each day is how much pure, elemental calcium your supplement contains. Finding out is easy — just look on the nutri-

tion facts on the label. Moreover, to make sure your body absorbs the maximum amount of calcium from your supplement, heed these ground rules:

- Take it with meals. Because food helps slow the rate at which calcium is absorbed in your intestine, take a calcium supplement with food, preferably with larger meals.

This will increase the amount of calcium your body absorbs from a supplement by 10 to 15 percent, says Dr. Heaney.

- Divide and conquer. Spread your supplement out in several doses. For example, if you’re taking 500 mg of calcium a day, take 250

mg at lunch and another 250 mg at dinner to increase the number of times your intestine is exposed to calcium. (You might do this by taking a multivitamin with calcium at lunch, and then taking a straight calcium supplement at dinner.)

- Aim for a name brand. Compared with store brands and small-time manufacturers, brand-name supplement makers generally have more knowledge and experience — and a professional reputation to protect. You may pay a little more for a name-brand supplement, but you’ll gain greater confidence that you’re buying a quality calcium product your body will absorb.

**Top
Tips**



LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Daydream nation

Help your teen stay focused — even in spring

Has your teen's head been in the clouds lately? Maybe it's spring fever. Although, if your son or daughter is graduating from high school this spring, it's probably the more serious condition called "senioritis." Many seniors are literally "out to lunch" once spring break commences. They've had enough — plain and simple. They are ready for the next stage in their lives, and they want to celebrate and enjoy.

No matter what the ailment, parents can help facilitate a successful finish to the demanding school year.

Distractions

Teachers will often say that one can tell it's the end of the year by walking past a classroom. Students

are distracted and restless. They might be staring out the window instead of at the white board.

"It's difficult for teens to focus in the spring for a number of reasons. Many teens have not yet learned how to practice adequate self care, such as good eating, sleep, and stress management habits," says Colleen Cook, PhD, assistant dean of student life and coordinator of counseling and career and health services at Ohio Wesleyan University. "This often leaves them feeling tired and burned-out by the time spring comes around. Add in the distractions of nicer weather and outdoor activities, and it's easy to see why teens become distracted."

Seniors often have a worse case of spring fever than their younger counterparts. This is widely known as "senioritis."

"Graduating seniors should find a healthy balance between enjoying their final days in high school and making healthy and safe choices," suggests Cook.

Preventing burnout

Teens deal with pressures throughout the school year from various sources, however, they also come from within. Overachievers, in particular, can begin to experience burnout as pressures build. A little bit of pressure is not a bad thing, but too much pressure can be a detriment.

In the spring, teens tend to be out later at night due to various social events, such as spring musicals, proms, and awards nights. Sleep deprivation can increase stress levels, and a lack of sleep, coupled with time management issues, can catapult your teen into academic disaster.

"Parents should teach their teens the importance of balance and healthy lifestyle choices — healthy eating, exercise, sleep habits, and relaxation strategies," advises Cook. "Inform them of red flags to look out for that might indicate that they are 'out of balance,' such as anxiety or irritability."

If teens are aware of these issues, they will more likely remain physically and emotionally healthy.

"Parents also need to realize that teens will only take their advice seriously if they model it themselves."

Remember to be on the lookout for more serious concerns that might present in a manner similar to burn out (i.e. depression, anxiety, and substance abuse), advises Cook. If parents suspect a more serious issue, they should contact a mental health professional.

Spring cleaning

Sometimes teens need a fresh start. Suggest a major re-haul of her desk and book bag. The mere purging of old materials, or creating new short-term goals, could be enough to get your teen back on track.

Study times may have to be re-scheduled due to the demands on the calendar. If teens choose a consistent study schedule, they are more likely to stick to it. Allow time for fun after the work is done!

Lastly, if you notice your teen's grades are slipping, communicate with her teachers before it's too late. Classroom teachers can aid in helping your teen get back on track.

Tips and tales

"When my oldest daughter got lackadaisical, I would take her license away, so she would have to study and do her assignments in order to drive."

William Hung, Saugerties, NY

"Give your teen something special to look forward to if he finishes well. Finishing well demonstrates perseverance and dependability — skills that are crucial when looking for a job!" *Brenda Bovee, Hyde Park, NY*

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: School is about to start and your teen is stressed. Thoughts for easing the transition?

Send your full name, address, and brief comments to myrnahaskell@gmail.com, or visit www.myrnahaskell.com.

Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer and columnist specializing in parenting issues and child and adolescent development. She is the mother of two teenagers.





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Car seat care

Make sure your child is car-safe by avoiding these mistakes

BY JERRY PATTERSON

It's estimated that 80 percent of car seats need to be reinstalled, because they are loose and not installed correctly. Make sure your child is as safe as he can be by avoiding these common car seat errors.

The car seat harness is loose

The harness is critical in restraining your child from flying forward or side to side in the event of an

accident. So it's important that you make sure it's tight. The most common way of testing is the pinch test: after you buckle your little one in, try to see if you can put the strap between your fingers. Can you do it? If you can, the harness is too loose and must be tightened.

The seat is too loose

Position yourself in front of the seat and hold it with both hands. Pull it, push it and manhandle it a bit. If the seat moves more than an inch in any direction, it's not tight enough and you need to adjust it. Put as much of your weight as possible on the seat and, while holding it down, grab the belt and tighten it as much as possible.

The car seat is not facing backwards

This is a critical point. The safest infant car seat is positioned facing the rear and not forward, because in the event of a crash, the baby is less likely to have serious injuries while facing the rear.

Babies have stronger backs and spines than necks. While facing forward, they are subject to their heads being thrown forward and back in an accident, and this can result in possible serious neck and spi-

nal injuries. Many top-quality seats can now be used as rear-facing until a child reaches the weight of 40 pounds, before she must be turned to face forward.

The retaining clip is placed incorrectly

The retaining clip gives you insurance that the harness is in the correct position, as well as extra security for your child. If placed correctly, the retaining clip should lie across your little one's chest at the same height as her armpits. After buckling your youngster in, get into the habit of making sure the clip is positioned correctly.

The seat is not at a 45-degree angle

The safest infant seat position is facing back at a 45-degree angle. However, the seat should fit flat on the back seat. Today's newer car seats have built-in levels that will let parents know if the seats are positioned correctly. Since most back seats are angled, you may have to place towels under the seat to ensure that it sits flat.

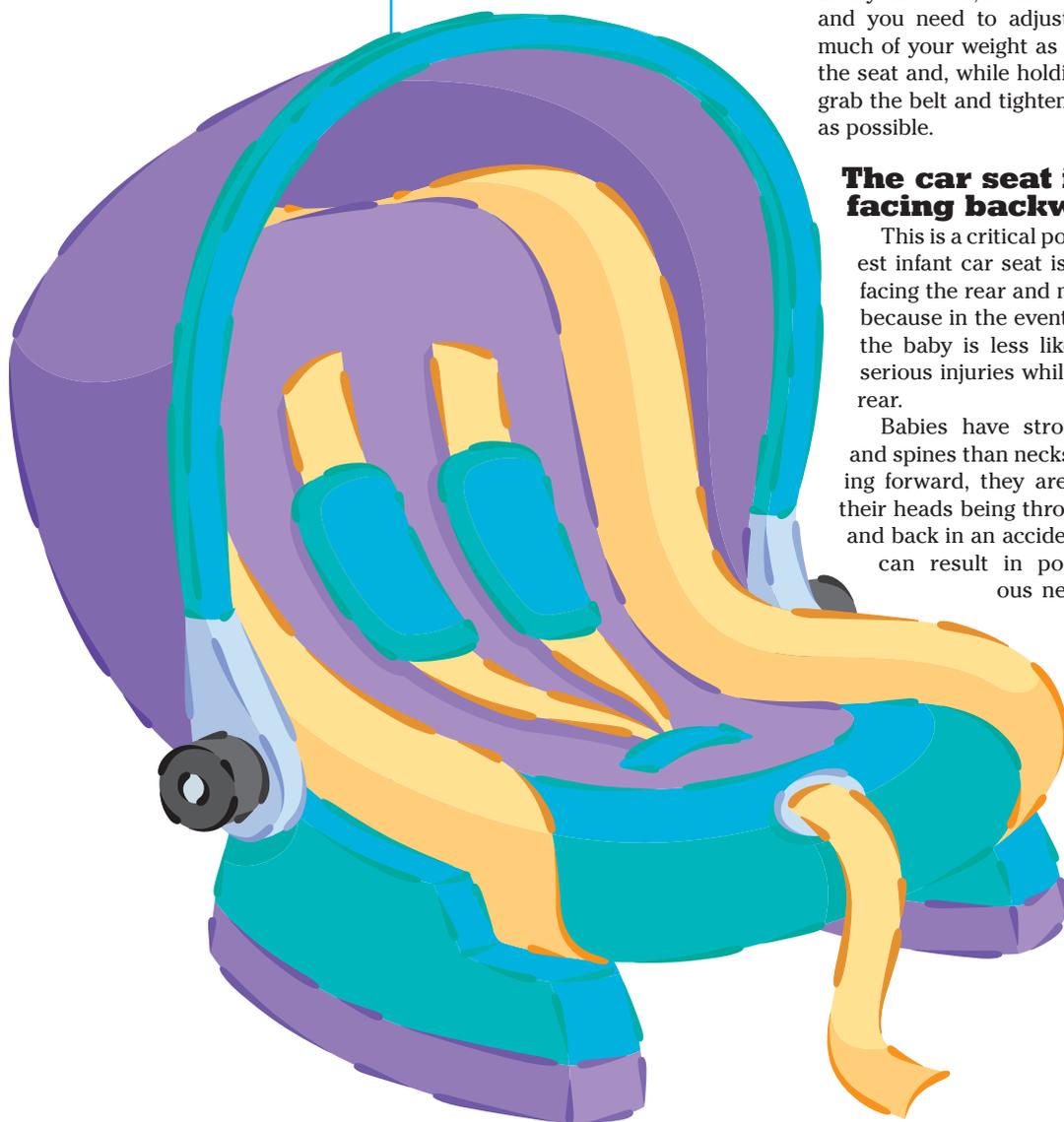
Information for convertible seat owners

Convertible car seats are rear-facing and then convert to forward-facing as your child grows. The best convertible car seats are rear-facing until a child is around 40 pounds, and then turned forward until your child reaches a weight of 70 pounds. It's important to know that your seat harness will use different slots once the seat is turned forward. Check your owner's manual.

...

There's nothing more important than your child's safety, and these simple checks will make sure that your youngster is as safe as possible in her car seat.

Jerry Patterson is the parent of two children and grandfather of five. He's a retired teacher, child safety advocate, and creator of Car Seats Reviews, at <http://www.carseats-reviews.com>.



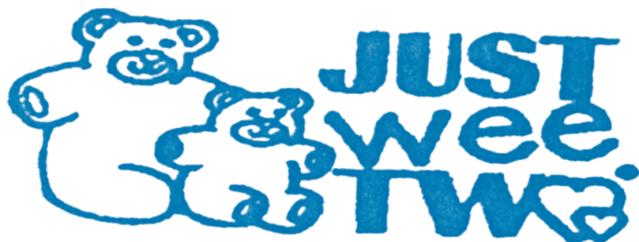
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PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

How to tell your child she's adopted

Dear Sharon,

We have a 5-year-old daughter who is adopted. We haven't told her, and we have mixed feelings about when — and if — we should. Do you have any advice for us?



Dear parents,

I believe that it is important to create a foundation of trust between a parent and child, so it is usually a good idea to let a child know she is adopted relatively early in her childhood.

As children grow older, questions invariably arise about physical appearance, genetic health risks, and life story details that are important for all children to know. Since adoption is more common and public than it was years ago, it can be easier for parents to find the relaxed and confident tone that is helpful to children as the parents share the information about their child's birth and "arrival home" to them.

There are plenty of opportunities to explain details and answer questions as a child grows, but here are a few things to keep in mind as you begin:

There is not an exact way to tell a child her story, in part because

every parent is different and, therefore, frames important discussions in unique ways.

Many 5-year-old children are interested in babies, and how they come into the world. This can be a good starting place to explain that babies grow in a woman's "stomach" and that sometimes a "birth" mother does that part of the process. Depending on the circumstances, parents I know have also explained how the birth mother was happy to make the baby, but couldn't take care of it after it was born and found people who wanted to and were able to be parents when the baby needed a home forever.

Talking to a child about how much she is wanted — and how happy you are to have her — is invariably helpful. Parents I know have described how much time they took to decide to have a baby, how much they wanted to be parents, and how excited they were about meeting their very special little one. Talks such as these are reassuring to all children, but especially to someone who has been adopted.

It is important to remember to find a quiet time and place to have the

conversation, so it is not interrupted. It is also important to be patient and to go over one piece of information at a time, giving plenty of space for children to ask questions and for you to respond. A child's reactions and questions are the best way to limit the confusion that can surface when children try to sort through complicated topics such as adoption.

It is also important to make this talk age appropriate. A 5-year-old child will have different thoughts and need different specifics than a 10 year old. Finding children's books about adoption can help explain things in such a way.

Many parents I know have made their own books to explain their adoption stories. Children have often helped, adding pictures and text that they are interested in including. Such activities can help a child understand, review, and participate in her own story. As a birth, step, and adoptive mom, I can personally say that there are wonderfully unique things about each form of being a parent. The love and commitment in each case is no different, and in each case, the life story of the child has been important to share and discuss.

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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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

A better approach to cyber-bullying

BY CAROLYN JABS

Internet bullying has become an epidemic: according to the National Crime Prevention Council, more than 40 percent of all teenagers with Internet access are bullied online. Governments are passing laws to prevent and punish online harassment. President Obama has even convened a White House conference to address cyber-bullying.

All this attention makes parents feel as though they ought to DO something — until they try to talk to their kids. Then they discover that the cyber-bully label oversimplifies what's actually happening.

"Technology is simply making what's happening far more visible," says Dannah Boyd, a fellow at the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, who has interviewed teens about their online experiences. "If we want to combat bullying, we need to start by understanding the underlying dynamics."

This is good news for parents because it means you can apply everything you know about human nature to what's happening online. At the same time, parents need to

acknowledge that this is uncharted territory. Kids don't have all the answers about online aggression, but neither do adults. What young people need are parents who will talk them through difficult situations as they occur, and help them make nuanced decisions that foster and preserve positive relationships both online and off. Here are some suggestions:

• **Figure out what's actually going on:** Cyber-bullying has be-

come a useless catch-all term. To zero in on problematic behaviors, use the quiz at cyberbullying.org, which lists 19 activities ranging from mean comments on Facebook to hijacking accountants. The quiz can jump-start conversation with your child. Has he heard about people who do these things? Have any of them happened to him? Has he participated in them? Keep this conversation curious and non-judgmental, with a goal of convincing your child that you're an ally when he encounters something he can't handle.

• **Respond instead of reacting:** Adolescents are trying to figure out how to manage relationships independently. When things go wrong there's a temptation to lash out. Instead, teach your child to take a deep breath, step back, and think about what's happened. Who are the people involved? Do they understand what they've done? Has your child had a friendship with the person in the past? Does he want one in the future? The one exception is if your child — or another child — is physically threatened. Then, as the responsible adult, you need to alert authorities.

• **Insist on respect:** You taught your child not to hit when he was a toddler. Now, do the online equivalent. Some of the old rules are as relevant online as they are in real life: if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all!

• **Recognize gender differences:** Researchers have noted that boys and girls often have different styles when it comes to aggression. Often, boys take physical aggression seriously, but shrug off online attacks. Girls — who are typically more adept at verbal bullying — may be more vulnerable to online aggression. Some research confirms girls are more often targets of online harassment in part because a girl's reputation can still be ruined by sexual slurs, while a boy's reputation may be enhanced by it. For boys and girls, parents should send a strong

message that X-rated communication is not acceptable. That means no sexting, no "slut lists," and no explicit sexual content of any kind.

• **Talk about vulnerability:** Bullying is prominent in adolescence because young people are unsure of who they are. Insecurity can make them more sensitive to criticism; sometimes, it makes them deflect attention from themselves by being critical of others. In both cases, parents can help by reminding their children that people aren't perfect. How we handle vulnerability — in ourselves and in others — is a real measure of the kind of people we are.

• **Teach resilience:** Resilience is the ability to transcend adverse circumstances. Parents who swoop in to solve an online problem may actually miss an opportunity to nurture this important quality in their children. When bad things happen, Edith Grotberg, of the International Resilience Project, encourages parents to talk to children about three things: I have (what resources can the child count on), I am (what personal qualities transcend the problem), I can (what actions can be taken to alleviate the problem). Children who learn to think through problems along these dimensions develop a set of skills that will have lifelong benefits.

Experts continue to debate the statistics about bullying, but parents need to stay focused on the actual experiences of the children they know. Turning a blind eye to online aggression is a disservice to young people, but so is hysterical hyperbole. Young people need what they've always needed — adults they can trust to stand by them as they learn to build constructive, rewarding relationships online and off.

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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LAURA GRAY

Deception leads to disappointment

Gulliver's Travels

Rated PG

You overhear your daughter bow out of a previous commitment with a friend. Her excuse — too much homework — sounds a little fishy. Then, as soon as she hangs up, she's calling a new friend and saying "yes" to her invitation to the movies. When you confront your daughter, she admits to "stretching the truth," but sees no harm in it.

At the theater, your daughter runs into her first friend and is caught in her lie. Feelings are hurt and their friendship is strained. Your daughter must work hard to repair the damage she's done. She learns the unpleasant results of getting all tangled up in lies.

In "Gulliver's Travels," a contemporary take on the classic novel, the title character makes a similar discovery and must suffer the consequences. Watch the film, now available on DVD, with your kids, and then use our Talk Together and Play Together activities to explore the topic further.

In the film, Lemuel Gulliver is a lowly mailroom employee who pines for Darcy, a travel editor at the publishing house where they work. To impress her — and get out of his dead-end job — he plagiarizes a travel article and gets an assignment to write about the Bermuda Triangle. That's his first lie.



Watching "Gulliver's Travels" can help teach your kids it's wrong to lie.

As his chartered boat heads into the Triangle, it is caught up in a swirling waterspout. Gulliver lands on the island of Lilliput, but he's a giant among the residents. He helps them rescue their beloved princess, Mary, from the evil Blefuscians and earns the adoration of the Lilliputian people. He tells them elaborate tales of his "homeland" of Manhattan where he is king and his queen is Darcy. The Lilliputians are awed by his stories, none of which are true.

When the Lilliputians discover the truth about Gulliver, they turn their backs on him. Desperate to win back their trust and friendship, Gulliver battles a robot from Blefuscan that is destroying Lilliput. He crushes the robot and convinces the Lilliputians and their neighbors, the Blefuscians, to live at peace with one another. Darcy, who followed Gulliver to the island, falls for him and the two return to New York. Gulliver and Darcy build a new relationship based on honesty.

Talk together

Gulliver seems content in his boring mailroom job until Dan comes to work with him. How does Gulliver's attitude toward the job change? Why is he afraid to talk to Darcy? How do you think he feels about himself? Does Darcy treat Gulliver any differently at work? Why or why not?

In Lilliput, no one knows anything about Gulliver. Why does he decide to make up elaborate lies about his real life? How do the Lilliputians react to his tales?

What happens when Gulliver wins the Lilliputians' respect and admiration? How does this affect him? How does it lead to his downfall?

Think of someone you respect. What do you find admirable about that person? How would you feel if you discovered he or she was a fake? Why is honesty such an important trait?

Missed a Cinematters column? Visit us at [Facebook.com/Cinematters](https://www.facebook.com/Cinematters) and read recent articles for your family's next film adventure!

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Play together: Web of deception

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One yarn set should match

(i.e., two keys). Tangle the yarn sets into a big jumbled mess. To play, each person chooses an item and then works to untangle the yarn until both people can find both ends of their yarn set.

The player who gets the one matching pair wins. Players will discover that the tangled web of deception leads to disappointment every time.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Pizza without guilt

Who doesn't love pizza night? Moms love taking a break while serving a meal that everyone agrees on. Many dads consider pizza a favorite food. Children seemingly never tire of it. Plus, it's budget friendly. But there's often that nagging worry that pizza is a "junk food." Is it?

"With the right choices, a weekly pizza night can certainly fit into a healthy family meal plan," reassures Janice Newell Bissex, a Boston-area dietician and co-author of "No Whine with Dinner: 150 Healthy, Kid-Tested Recipes from The Meal Makeover Moms."

Consider these tips for ordering up a healthful pizza:

- **Go for thin.** A thin crust has fewer carbs and calories than a deep dish or

stuffed crust. A few pizza parlors are even starting to offer a whole wheat crust.

- **Eat less (or eliminate) meat.** Pepperoni is consistently the number one favorite meat topping. Unfortunately, it's loaded with grease and salt. If it isn't "pizza" without pepperoni, ask for half of the usual amount to be placed on the pie. Ditto for sausage. Instead, opt for grilled poultry, shrimp, Canadian bacon, or ham. Or, replace the meat with meaty mushrooms, like portobellos. You'll hardly notice the difference.

- **Order vegetable toppings with abandon.** Here, the sky's the limit. Load up on black or green olives, red or green pepper, onion, artichoke hearts, spinach, sliced or sun-dried tomatoes, fresh basil or broccoli. Aim for at least three veggies on a pie. They add bulk, flavor, and nutrients, making a small portion more satisfying.

- **Get saucy.** Most pizzas contain sauce, while some contain chunks of tomatoes. Either way, enjoy them guilt free. The lycopene in whole tomatoes is more available in tomato chunks and sauce. Herbs and garlic add antioxidants along with their flavor.

- **Lighten up the cheese.** While a good source of protein, calcium, and potassium, pizza's cheese also contains saturated fat.

Since many pizza preparers layer it on thick, it's easy to overdo it.

"If the cheese completely covers the top of the pizza, consider asking your pizza guy to go light on the cheese next time," suggests Bissex. At the table, sprinkle on grated Parmesan or Romano cheese. It's flavorful in small amounts and even provides that fifth taste of "umami," or deliciousness.

- **Fill up on salad.** Bissex's family often starts with a salad or vegetable-based soup to take the edge off everyone's hunger. Studies show that people who eat a high-volume, low-calorie food like salad — or a broth-based soup — as an appetizer, eat fewer calories overall.

Your own pizza parlor

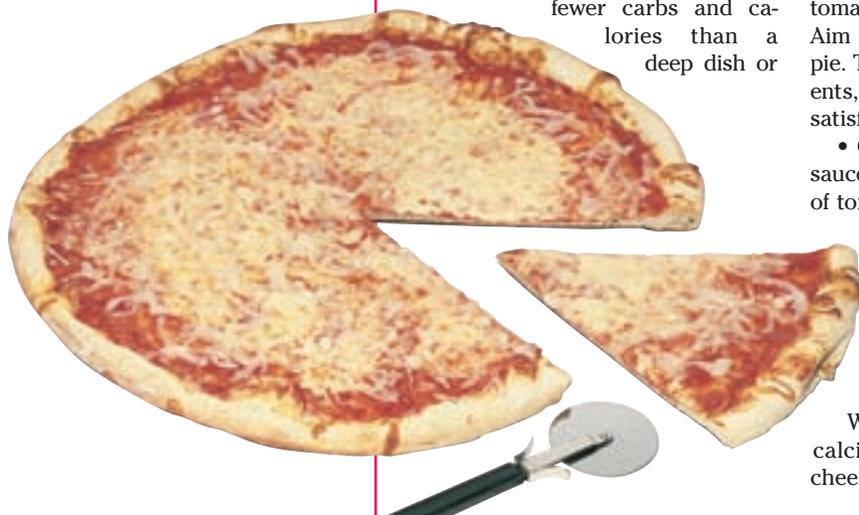
How hard is it to make a pizza at home? Not very. You can pick up a pre-baked crust or fresh or frozen dough, and with a little planning, you can bake your own pizzas. Invest in a pizza stone and peel for best results.

"[My] pizza may be made from dough I make in my breadmaker. But on days when there's time constraints, I'll add toppings — diced tomatoes, sauteed spinach, onions, and mushrooms — to a frozen cheese pizza," explains Camille Prindle, a suburban Chicago-based mother of four, who prefers baking her own pizza.

Bissex concurs. "My girls love pesto pizza topped with sauteed onions, red bell pepper, and spinach. My husband and I like to also add artichoke hearts and mushrooms. To get your kids excited about all those veggies, set up a make-your-own-pizza bar, and then let the kids add whichever toppings whet their appetite."

Pizza can be an indulgent meal with an overload of calories, saturated fat, and sodium — or it can be a healthful meal that's "just right."

Christine M. Palumbo, RD is an award-winning Naperville-based dietitian and mother of three who loves a good quality restaurant pizza. She also enjoys whipping up a totally from-scratch pizza from time to time. Follow her on Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition.



Sausage, Mushroom and Cannellini Pesto Pizza

Makes 10 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 15-ounce can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons prepared basil pesto
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon water
- Kosher salt and freshly-ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 8 ounces mushrooms, coarsely chopped
- 1 12-ounce package chicken sausage (use your favorite flavor), casings removed and the meat crumbled
- 2 12-inch pre-made pizza crusts
- 2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

DIRECTIONS: Place the beans, pesto, lemon juice, and water in the bowl of a food processor and process until smooth and creamy. Season with salt and pepper to taste and set aside. Preheat the oven to 450°F (or the temperature indicated on your prepared pizza crust package). Heat the oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring frequently, until softened, about 7 minutes. Add the crumbled sausage and saute until fully cooked, about five minutes. (The time will vary depending on whether the sausage was precooked or not.) Spread the bean puree evenly over the two pizza crusts. Top each with

the mushroom and sausage mixture. Top evenly with the cheese (1 cup per pizza crust). Bake according to pizza crust package directions and until the cheese melts. Cut each pizza into five slices and serve.

TIP: The bean puree and mushroom-sausage mixture can be refrigerated or frozen for later use, if you only want to make one pizza at a time.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: (1 slice): 320 calories, 12 g fat (4.5 g saturated), 600 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber, 20 g protein, 25 percent calcium, 15 percent iron

Used with permission by "No Whine with Dinner: 150 Healthy, Kid-Tested Recipes from The Meal Makeover Moms" (M3 Press, 2011).



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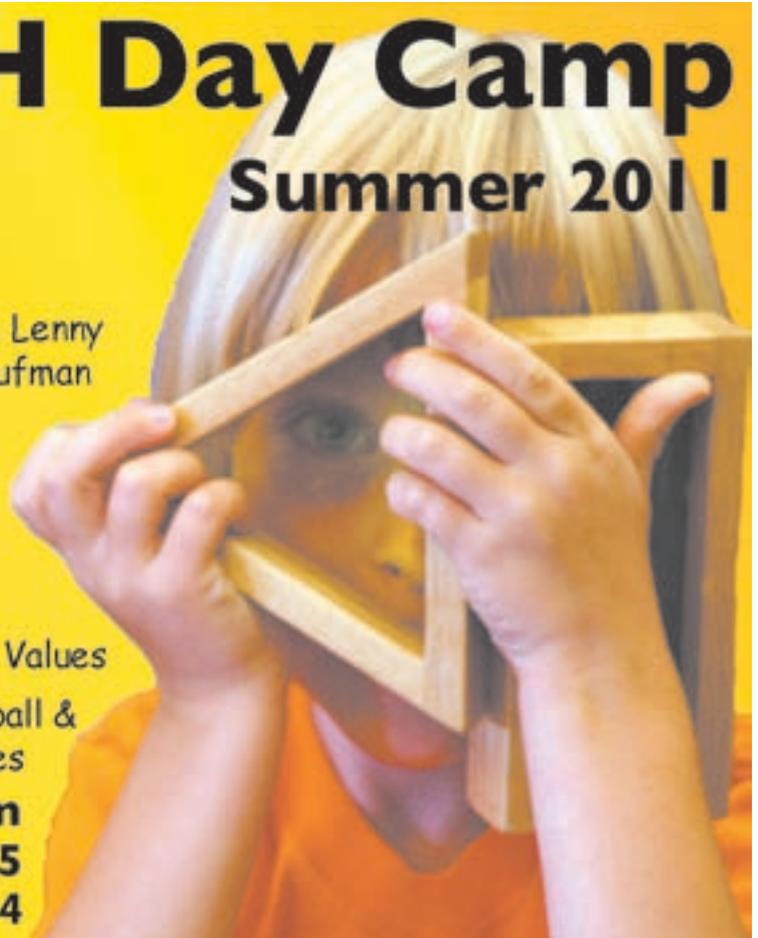
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It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

ABOUT MOMS



10 Percent of mothers who say they'd be happy with flowers for Mother's Day.

55 Percent who say they'd like a romantic weekend away from the kids.



Up to 700 Calories per day mothers burn breastfeeding.

76 Minutes they'd have to spend jogging to burn off the same number of calories.

1 in 540

Odds of a woman having triplets.

3 Number of triplets delivered June 11, 2009, at The Woman's Hospital of Texas in Houston.

Fewer than 10

Number of U.S. mothers who donated breast milk for South African orphans to the Minnesota-based International Breast Milk Project in 2006, the program's first year.

More than 1,250

Number who have donated milk since then.

54 Gallons supplied by the most generous donor.

70,000 Number of hits in one week Manhattan celebrity chef Daniel Angerer got on his website early in 2010 when the new dad posted a recipe for breast milk cheese.

27 Number of states since 2001 that have passed bills allowing birth certificates to be issued for stillborn babies.

25,000 Number of stillborn births every year in the U.S.

More than 160

Number of hospitals in the U.S. that provide obstetricians with smart phones, which enable them to monitor fetal heartbeats of patients in labor even if they're far from the hospital.

Sources: Babytalk, Coolnurse.com, M2 Communications, Census.gov, The Houston Chronicle, Dayton Daily News, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, People Weekly, PRWeb, Breastmilkproject.org

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Dance w Nat
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Sunday Singalong
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Family Disco Party
2nd Saturdays, 6p

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3rd Saturdays, 6p

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TOT SHABBAT

Friday, May 20 at 4:00 p.m.

Singing, dancing, and a little Hebrew for toddlers, preschoolers, and their adult guests. Monthly, every third Friday.

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The Jewish Way to Reduce Stress Sunday, May 22 at 10 a.m. Find renewal with meditative movements, chanting, yoga, and relaxing visualization drawn from Torah.

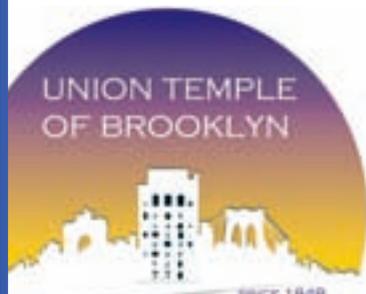
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Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Spring Break: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Daily, 9:30 am–5 pm, Now – Tues, April 26; Free with museum admission.

Extended hours, special programs highlighting how animals and plants around the world thrive in spring; art, fashion, culture and science in New York City's first green museum.

Dinosaur display: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th Street; (212) 769-5000; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:30 pm, \$24 (\$18 students, \$14 children).

Children learn about the largest dinos, the long-tailed sauropods by examining the innovative model.

Story play with First RIF: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 2 pm, Now – Tues, June 28; Free.

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

Arts and crafts: Leonard Library, 81 Devoe St. between Manhattan Avenue and Leonard Street; (718) 486-3365; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Tues, June 21; Free.

Children make homemade projects.

Toddler time with First RIF: Brooklyn Heights Library, 280 Cadman Plaza W. at Tillary Street; (718) 623-7000; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 1:30 pm, Now – Wed, June 29; 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, Now – Wed, June 29; Free.

For children birth to 18 months.

Arts and crafts: Sheepshead Bay Library, 2636 E. 14th St. at Shore Road; (718) 368-1815; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Wed, June 22; Free.

Children make homemade projects.

Game day: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org;



Feeling lucky?

Consider it your lucky day. On May 1, Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band brings its hip-shaking sound to the Knitting Factory.

As the name implies, it's all about the kids, as Lucky Diaz — who mans the vocals, guitar, harmonica, kazoo and more! — leads his Family Jam Band in songs

that will make your little one rock out.

And this being a family show, it all kicks off at 12:30 pm — so you can fit it in between nap times!

Lucky Diaz and the Family Jam Band at the Knitting Factory [361 Metropolitan Ave. at Havemayer Street in Williamsburg, (347) 529-6696], May 1 at 12:30 pm. Tickets \$10.

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!

Wednesdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Wed, June 15; Free.

Arts and crafts: Sunset Park Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 567-2806; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 4 pm, Now – Wed, June 22; Free.

Children make homemade projects.

Story and crafts: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Thurs, June 30; 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, Now – Fri, July 1; Free.

Read, play games and listen to music.

After-School homework help: Cortelyou Library, 1305 Cortelyou Rd. at Argyle Road; (718) 693-7763; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Thurs, June 23; Free.

Provided by trained adult volunteers.

Tween time: Mapleton Library, 1702 60th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 256-2117; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 4 pm, Now – Thurs, June 30; 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, Now – Thurs, June 23; Free.

Listen to a story and then create a project.

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Going Places

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Pre-school story time: Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Fridays, 10:30 am, Now – Fri, July 1; Free.

Classic books and songs.

Chess: Borough Park Library, 1265 43rd St. between 12th and 13th avenues; (718) 437-4085; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; Fridays, 3:30 pm, Now – Fri, May 27; Free.

For all ages.

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, Now – Fri, June 24; Free.

Children make a fun project.

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, Now – Sun, June 26; Free with museum admission.

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

"Wizard of Oz": Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 and 2 pm, \$8 (\$7 child).

Adapted for marionettes by Nicholas Coppola.

Science power hour: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 1–2 pm, Now – Sun, June 26; Free.

Children join with a naturalist for cool activities and experiments.

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, 2–3 pm, Now – Sun, June 5; Free.

Children make projects using natural materials.

Tutoring: Rugby Library, 1000 Rugby Rd. at Avenue H; (718) 566-0054; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Saturdays, 2:30 pm, Now – Fri, June 24; Free.

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

Baby story time: Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between South Elliott Place and South Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; greenlightbookstore.com; Sundays, 11 am, Now – Sun, June 26; Free.

Toddlers listen to stories and songs.



What a 'Beauty'

A classic comes to life this month.

On May 22, the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts does "Beauty and the Beast," presented by the American Family Theater.

Imprisoned by a monstrous Beast, a young girl learns that outward appearances can be deceiving and, with a magic kiss, frees the Beast from his curse.

The show is recommended for ages 4 and up — and, in case you have any fans Disney, just be forewarned that this isn't a version of that film. So no singing clocks and teacups.

"Beauty and the Beast" at Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts [2900 Campus Rd. at Hillel Place in Flatbush, (718) 951-4500], May 22 at 2 pm. Tickets \$6, \$7 at the door. For info, visit www.brooklyncenter.com.

For children 18 to 36 months.

Chess: Bay Ridge Library, 7223 Ridge Blvd. between 72nd and 73rd streets; (718) 748-5709; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; Mondays, 3:30 pm, Now – Thurs, June 23; Free.

For all ages.

Nature crafts: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 2–3 pm, Sat, May

7 – Sun, June 26; Free.

Children make fun projects.

Arty facts: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm, Sun, May 8 – Sun, June 26; \$10 per family (\$5 for gallery/studio families and members).

Children four to seven explore the exhibits and enjoy a family activity in this 90 minute program.

"Play it Safe": PS 3 The Bedford Village School, 50 Jefferson Ave. near Franklin Avenue; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; Wednesday, May 18, 10:30 am; Thursday, May 19, 10:30 am; Friday, May 20, 10:30 am; Monday, May 23, 10:30 am; Tuesday, May 24, 10:30 am; Wednesday, May 25, 10:30 am; Thursday, May 26, 10:30 am; Friday, May 27, 10:30 am; Tuesday, May 31, 10:30 am; Wednesday, June 1, 10:30 am; \$10 (\$15 at the door).

A puppet and people musical addressing safety issues. For children three to seven presented by the Shadow Box Theater.

WED, APRIL 27

The Little Explorers Club: Rubin Museum of Art, 150 West 17 Street, between 6th and 7th avenues; (212) 620-5000 X 344. www.rmanyc.org; 11 am–2 pm; \$10 (child and adult pair; \$5 members).

Children three to five explore a new terrain each meeting, create crafts from around the globe and look at artwork. Pre-registration required.

THURS, APRIL 28

The Yak Packers: Rubin Museum of Art, 150 West 17 Street, between 6th and 7th avenues; (212) 620-5000 X 344. www.rmanyc.org; 10:30 –11:30 am; \$10 child and parent (\$5 members).

Children two to four with accompanied by an adult touch, explore and create projects inspired by Himalayan art.

Arts and crafts: Mapleton Library, 1702 60th St. between 16th and 17th avenues; (718) 256-2117; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children make handmade projects.

FRI, APRIL 29

Story time with first RIF: Windsor Terrace Library, 160 E. Fifth St. at Ft. Hamilton Parkway; (718) 686-9707; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 10:30 am; Free.

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

Teen time: Rugby Library, 1000 Rugby Rd. at Avenue H; (718) 566-0054;

Continued on page 58

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Going Places

Continued from page 56

www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Hang out and enjoy books, games and music.

Writing workshop: Barnes and Noble Park Slope, 267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street; (718) 832-9066; 5 pm; Free.

Helpful hints for teens.

SAT, APRIL 30

Run for the Wild 2011: The Bronx Zoo, Bronx River Parkway at Exit 6; www.wcs.runforthewild.org; 8:30 and 8:45 am; \$30 registration fee.

Third annual 5K race. This year's race is dedicated to helping save the penguins.

Sakura Matsuri: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am–6 pm; \$15, \$10 for seniors and students.

Celebrate Japanese culture at this cherry blossom festival.

Fifth Avenue Family Festival: Fifth Avenue, Fourth St. at Fifth Avenue; www.puppetryarts.org; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

Live bands, vendors, rides, goodie bags and a puppet show. Presented by Puppetry Arts and the Park Slope 5th Avenue Business Improvement District. Rain or shine.

"A Teddy Bear's Picnic": Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between South Elliott Place and South Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; greenlight-bookstore.com; 11 am; Free.

Cartoonist Geoffrey Hayes presents his newest character Patrick Brown, a playful, puddle-jumping bear.

Mother's Day: New Lots Public Library, 665 New Lots Ave. at Schenck Avenue; (646) 593-8423; <https://sites.google.com/site/enyrenaissance>; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

Share a tribute to all mothers through African dance and poetry; and enjoy a fashion show. RSVP required.

Springtime craft marketplace: Brooklyn Lyceum, 227 Fourth Ave. at President Street; (718) 857-4816; www.brooklynlyceum.com; 11 am–7 pm; Free.

Over 60 artisans, music, fine food and drink; fun for the whole family.

Arbor day: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; 1–4 pm; Free.

How many trees are in Prospect Park? Count and learn all about them along with crafts, hands-on activities and exhibits.

"A Doctor in Spite of Himself":



Dino-mite exhibition

If your little one is captivated by the television shows "Dinosaur Train" and "Dino Dan," he'll get a big kick out of a new exhibition at the American Museum of Natural History exploring all there is to know about a super-sized group of dinosaurs. This show goes beyond traditional fossil displays to reveal the amazing anatomy of sauropods.

In "The World's Largest Dinosaurs," on view now through Jan. 2, you can explore a life-sized, fleshed-out model of a 60-foot-long, 11-foot-tall female Mamenchisaurus, known for its remark-

able 30-foot neck.

The exhibition sheds light on how heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and reproduction are linked to size. An interactive dig site at the end will invite visitors to explore how dinosaurs are discovered in the field. Can you dig it?

"The World's Largest Dinosaurs" at the American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan, (212) 769-5000], now through Jan. 2, 2012. Admission \$24 for adults, \$18 for students and seniors, and \$14 for children. For info, visit amnh.org

Prospect Park Band Shell, Enter Park at Prospect Park West and Ninth St. bentquillplayers@gmail.com; www.prospectpark.org; 1 and 4 pm; Free.

The Bent Quill Players perform this adaptation of Moliere's work. Appropriate for all ages.

Recycling workshop: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1792; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children four and older learn about the Red Bird Reef project and paint their own underwater scenes.

Painting workshop: Brooklyn Artists Gym, 168 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues; (718) 858-9069; info@brooklynartistsgym.com; www.brooklynartistsgym.com/classes/upcoming-classes/creative-expression-painting; 3–7 pm; \$60.

Four hour class instructing acrylic techniques.

Nature walk: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; 3–4 pm; Free.

Children hike with a naturalist.

SUN, MAY 1

"Noodleheads & Tricksters: stories to tickle your funny bone": Old Stone House, 336 Third St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (718) 768-3195; BkCommunityStorytellers@gmail.com;

www.theoldstonehouse.org; 3 p.m. \$10, (\$5 kids).

The Brooklyn Community Storytellers present this program for children five years and older.

Infant and child CPR: Gumbo, 493 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins Street and Third Avenue; (718) 855-7808; 10 am–noon; \$75 (\$50 for partner).

Participants learn all aspects of first aid; Debra Scaccia, RN certified instructor leads the class.

Sakura Matsuri: 10 am–6 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 30.

Family picnic: Fort Hamilton Army Base, 101st St. and Fort Hamilton Parkway; tedgeneral@bayridgecommunity-council.com; 11 am–5 pm; Free.

Hosted by the Bay Ridge Community Council featuring prizes, contests, games, face painting, volley ball; tug of war; square dancing and horseshoes. Bagels, cake and coffee. No rain date.

Springtime craft marketplace: 11 am–7 pm. Brooklyn Lyceum. See Saturday, April 30.

Arbor day: 1–4 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, April 30.

"A Doctor in Spite of Himself": 1 and 4 pm. Prospect Park Band Shell. See Saturday, April 30.

Recycling workshop: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, April 30.

Nature walk: 3–4 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, April 30.

"Speaking in Tongues": The Coop School, 81 Irving Pl. at Fulton Street; (917) 287-1361; www.langokidsnyc.com; 3:30 pm; \$10 (\$5 children).

Documentary about the journey of four children learning to become bilingual.

TUES, MAY 3

Employment seminar: New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. between Bay 16th and Bay 17th streets; (718) 236-4086; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn how to spend their summer.

Arts and crafts: Homecrest Library, 2525 Coney Island Ave. between Gravesend Neck Road and Avenue V; (718) 382-5924; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Create Mother's day projects.

WED, MAY 4

Open mic: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at

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Going Places

Continued from page 58

Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 5 pm; Free.

Poets, scholars and activists share their works.

Special needs workshop: Challenge Infant Developmental Center, 649 39th St. (212) 677-4650; www.resourcesnyc.org; 7–9 pm; Free.

Help is a family support service.

FRI, MAY 6

Arts and crafts: Red Hook Library, 7 Wolcott St. between Richards and Dwight streets; (718) 935-0203; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Create Mother's day projects.

"A Doctor in Spite of Himself": 4 pm. Prospect Park Band Shell. See Saturday, April 30.

SAT, MAY 7

Arts and craft fair: Prospect Park, 15th St. at Prospect Park Southwest; parkcraftbklyn@gmail.com; parkcraftbklyn.blogspot.com; 10 am; Free.

Mother's day gifts, activities for children and handmade jewelry; benefiting PS 154.

Health and education fair: Clara Barton High School for Health Professions, 901 Classon Ave. at President Street; (718) 629 8566; cbhs_pta_committee@yahoo.com; schools.nyc.gov/schoolportals/17/K600/default.htm; 10:30 AM; free.

Screenings, mammograms, smoking cessation and eye testing.

Los Munequitos de Matanzas: Peter Jay Sharpe Theater, 2537 Broadway at West 95th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org/series/77; 11 am; \$15 (\$25 adults).

Children three and up enjoy the music of the legendary Cuban group.

Operation Safe Child: New Utrecht Reformed Church, 1827 84th Street at 18th Avenue; (718) 232-7722; 11 am–2 pm; Free.

Finger printing and bike etching.

"Mi bebe es un heroe": Repertorio Espanol, 138 E. 27th St. (212) 225-9920; www.repertorio.org; Noon; \$12.

Bilingual puppet show that teaches the importance of love and family values. For children two and up.

Adoption workshop: Union Temple, 17 Eastern Pkwy. at Underhill Avenue; (212) 652-4743; www.jccany.org; 1 pm; \$10 (\$5 children).

Meet other parents to discuss various options available.

"Aladdin": Brooklyn Public Library's



Photo by Steve Solomonson

Nemo found at Coney Island!

You can find Nemo in Coney Island!

The New York Aquarium revealed on Friday its newest attractions — and both feature the clownfish made famous by the classic 2003 Disney movie.

A gigantic coral reef installation — a 167,000-gallon tank that replicates Glover's Reef, the largest reef on this side of the Atlantic, located

on the coast of Belize in Central America — features a school of the beloved fish, along with green moray eels, majestic stingrays, and bright angelfish.

And right around the corner, a new Conservation Hall highlights three habitats: the southwest Pacific Ocean's Coral Triangle, which also features the clownfish; Africa's Great Lakes, featur-

ing species that are unique to its waters; and Brazil's Flooded Forest, which gives you an up-close and personal view of piranhas in action.

New York Aquarium [Surf Avenue and W. Eighth Street in Coney Island, (718) 265-3474]. Admission, \$14.95 (\$11.95, seniors; \$10.95, children ages 3-12; free for children under 3). For info, visit www.nyaquarium.com.

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.

Enjoy a performance of the classic tale.

Sow and sew flax: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 1–4 pm; Free.

Prepare the soil and then learn how to spin thread and create woven clothe.

"A Doctor in Spite of Himself": 1 and 4 pm. Prospect Park Band Shell. See Saturday, April 30.

Art project: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1792; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with mu-

seum admission.

Children five and up learn about the faceted glass scenes in elevated subway stations and then make their own creation.

Target First Saturdays: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; 5–11 pm; Free.

Festivities include a performance by string band Frankenpine, dance numbers by SoNoGo Butoh Dance and a house dance party with DJ Spina.

SUN, MAY 8

Sow and sew flax: 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, May 7.

Art project: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 7.

MON, MAY 9

"The Emperor of Nihono-Ja": Peter Jay Sharpe Theater, 2537 Broadway at West 95th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org/series/77; 6 pm; \$15.

Author John Flanagan reads from the tenth and final book of the "Ranger's Apprentice" series as Story Pirates perform a scene from the book. For children eight and up.

WED, MAY 11

Computer basics: Mill Basin Library, 2385 Ralph Ave. at Veterans Avenue; (718) 241-3973; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

For children.

Continued on page 62

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Going Places

Continued from page 60

FRI, MAY 13

Teen night: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; teen.programs@brooklynmuseum.org; www.brooklynmuseum.org; 4:30–6:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate African inspired arts; live performances, art-making and refreshments.

SAT, MAY 14

Spring carnival: Families First, 250 Baltic St. between Court and Clinton streets; www.familiesfirstbrooklyn.org; TBA; Free.

Families First kicks off the season with a petting zoo, carousel with swings, musicians, dancing, food and balloons.

Love Your Library: 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; 10 am; Free.

Join in for a buck-a-book sale, music and fun crafts for children.

Fleece fest: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 1–4 pm; \$8 (\$5 children 3-12; \$6 seniors 65 and over).

Witness the yearly sheep shearing and then try a hand at washing, carding, spinning and weaving.

Rolie Polie Guacamole: Gumbo, 493 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins Street and Third Avenue; (718) 855-7808; 4–4:45 pm; \$18 (\$2 siblings, adults free).

Rock, sing and dance with kids band.

SUN, MAY 15

Infant and child CPR: 10 am–noon. Gumbo. See Sunday, May 1.

Fleece fest: 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, May 14.

WED, MAY 18

Arts and crafts: New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. between Bay 16th and Bay 17th streets; (718) 236-4086; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children make homemade projects.

Peace summit for families: PS 29, 425 Henry St. at Kane Street; (917) 797-1351; ellen@peacestartsathome.net; 7 pm; \$10 (suggested donation).

Discussion groups, skits and readings to help parents create a peaceful environment for children.



Photo by Tom Callan

Spring street fair fun

For one day this month, Baltic Street will be a family-friendly carnival!

On May 14, Families First's annual Spring Carnival will take over the block, between Court and Clinton streets, with a few kid favorites.

They'll be a big red real fire truck, petting zoo, carousel, mu-

sicians, including a special kids' DJ, food, arts and crafts, a moon bounce, and a rummage sale. Like they say, there's sure to be something for everyone.

Spring Carnival on Baltic Street [between Court and Clinton streets in Cobble Hill, (718) 237-1862], May 14 from 10 am to 3 pm. For info, visit www.familiesfirstbrooklyn.org.

FRI, MAY 20

Childhood conference: Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 998-3000; www.brooklynparentcenter.eventbrite.com; 8:30 am–3 pm; Free.

Resources, relaxation and information for parents with special needs children. Registration required. Hosted by the Brooklyn Parent Center.

"Balto III-Wings of Change": Pacific Library, 25 Fourth Ave. at Pacific Street; (718) 638-1531; <http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org>; 4–5 pm; Free.

The saga of Balto and his fellow sled dogs continues.

SAT, MAY 21

Health fair: Greater Brooklyn Health Coalition, 19 Winthrop St. between Bedford and Flatbush avenues; (718) 462-8654; www.brooklynhealth.org; TBA; Free.

Health screenings, food, raffles.

Kitchen-community fair: The Academy of Business & Community Development, 141 Macon St. at Marcy Avenue; (718) 624-3288; www.brooklynjuniorleague.org; 10:30 am–3:30 pm; Free.

Celebrate healthy living; take a Zumba class and meet with a nutritionist. Free health screenings available.

Adopt-A-Pet: Pet Web Express, 61 Pearl St. at Front Street; (718) 643-3046; madrette@gmail.com; www.petwebexpress.com; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

Raffles, contests, prizes and a vet on hand.

Spring dance: Old First Reformed Church, 729 Carroll St. at Seventh Avenue; (718) 638-8300; info@oldfirst-brooklyn.org; 5:30 to 10 pm; \$10; (\$7 children).

Live music, buffet dinner, raffles and prizes for kids. Kid-oriented tunes from 5:30–7 pm with adult tunes to follow.

SUN, MAY 22

"Beauty and the Beast": 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).

For children four and up.

MON, MAY 23

Special needs workshop: Sunset Park Recreation Center, Seventh Ave. at 43rd Street; (212) 677-4650; www.resourcesnyc.org; 10 am–noon; Free.

Provides parents and students with guidance for transition to high school.

SAT, MAY 28

Planting party: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 1–4 pm; Free.

Till the soil, plant seed potatoes and then churn some butter.

Rolie Polie Guacamole: 4–4:45 pm. Gumbo. See Saturday, May 14.

SUN, MAY 29

Planting party: 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, May 28.

MON, MAY 30

"Showboat Shazzam": Hudson River Park, Pier 25 at Chambers Street; (877) 238-5596; www.waterfrontmuseum.org; 1 and 4 pm; \$15.

The little big top at sea hosted by the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge, featuring a variety of performers from around the globe.

SAT, JUNE 4

"Daydream": Imagination Playground, Prospect Park, Ocean Ave. at Lincoln Road; (718) 393-7733; www.plgarts.org; 11 am; Free.

Adaptation of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"Mi bebe es un heroe": Noon. Repertorio Espanol. See Saturday, May 7.

SUN, JUNE 5

"Showboat Shazzam": Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge, 290 Conover St. at Reed Street; (877) 238-5596; www.waterfrontmuseum.org; 1 and 4 pm; \$15.

The little big top at sea hosted by the Waterfront Museum and Showboat Barge, featuring a variety of performers from around the globe.

"Daydream": 2 pm. Imagination Playground, Prospect Park. See Saturday, June 4.

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St. George triumphs

Historic Staten Island theatre comes back from the brink

BY MONICA BROWN

It was the late 1940s, and the St. George Theatre was thriving on Staten Island's North Shore.

Families were spending their weekends "going to the show" (the phrase "going to the movies" didn't exist yet), to see films like "Gung Ho" and "The Fighting Sullivans."

Native Islander Camillo DiClerico, now 74 years old, has specific and

fond memories of his days as a New Brighton youngster, enjoying the theatre with his family or friends.

"The St. George had matinees where the kids had to sit in special sections, and the theater had a monitor to keep us in line. We were never allowed to go into the balcony," he recalls.

"At Easter-time, the St. George would give school kids free showings of a silent movie version of 'King of Kings,' which was about the life of Jesus Christ. Try watching that every year in a silent movie with subtitles," DiClerico says with a chuckle.

These days, the big screen is gone, but the stage regularly comes alive with live entertainment by legendary musicians such as Diana Ross, Smokey Robinson, Tony Bennett, and Bret Michaels, just to name a few. There are children's performances, school and community outreach programs, pageants and dance recitals. And this year, Mayor Michael Bloomberg delivered his State of the City address from center stage.

The St. George Theatre is thriving once again, as it did more than 80 years ago.

Looking back

The St. George Theatre originally opened in 1929 as a movie and vaudeville theatre. It was a grand venue, by all accounts — rivaling many Manhattan theaters — with its velvet seats, huge spiraling staircases and specially-constructed balcony area.

It was sold in 1938 to the Fabian Theater chain, which took over and ran it as a movie house — as DiClerico remembers — until 1972. In the 1970s, the theatre fell into disrepair, and various owners tried hard to revive it. There was a roller rink, a nightclub, and an antique showroom. There was even

an attempt in the mid-1990s to turn it into a performing arts center. But that venture, too, was abandoned.

Bringing back 'a white elephant'

In 2004, a Staten Island family stepped in and the transformation began.

Rosemary Cappozzalo, the owner of "Mrs. Rosemary's," a legendary New Dorp dance studio, had been renting out the theatre for recitals during the 1960s and '70s. Because the St. George became more run-down with each passing year, she decided to look elsewhere to stage her shows.

When Cappozzalo was approached by its owner with the possibility of taking it over, she knew she had no choice. She decided it was time to save the theatre once and for all, so, along with her daughters, Doreen Cugno and Luanne Sorrentino, she created a non-profit organization called St. George Theatre Restoration, Inc., which now owns and operates the venue.

A life-long patron of the arts, Cappozzalo donated her life savings of more than \$1 million to help with the restoration.

The re-building was an uphill battle, to say the least, says Sorrentino, the theatre's chief financial officer and director of operations.

The St. George had been padlocked for years, and restoring this diamond in the rough was an arduous task.

"It was a white elephant," says Sorrentino. "Everybody told us not to do it. Lawyer friends, accountants, people in the business. We turned a deaf ear. We knew that if someone was going to do it, it was going to be us."

The women had their work cut out for them. The red velvet seats had been ripped apart; the stage curtain was torn; and the stage itself had chunks of it missing. There was no electricity, no plumbing, no stage lighting or sound system, and no heat or air-conditioning.

"The roof had to be repaired," says Sorrentino. "It was raining in



Courtesy Staten Island Advance / Bill Lyons

the theatre. The only ones finding comfort in the theatre were the raccoons and the birds."

They rolled up their sleeves and got to work installing toilets, sinks, sheetrock and carpeting, while dealing with bigger projects like missing stairs and orchestra seats, as well the installation of a \$30,000 skylight over the stage.

The restoration project itself was fraught with delays and setbacks. There were building codes to adhere to, and safety regulations were top priority. But Sorrentino, her mother, and her sister were determined to make it work. Twelve weeks after they closed on the St. George, the theater was open for business. As daunting as it was, Sorrentino says they never thought about giving up.

"We just kept thinking, 'How can we make this better? What do we need to do next?'" she says.

Continuing to evolve

While business began to boom, the renovations continued. Back in 2008, new lighting and sound systems came, with the help of a \$3 million grant from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, Staten Island Borough President James Molinaro, and then-City Councilman Michael McMahon. With additional grant money and fund-raising efforts, the theatre will soon be purchasing a new rigging system for the stage, handrails for the balconies, and new doors. A new marquee is currently on order.

Cugno and Sorrentino continue to book shows that draw crowds of all ages, but Sorrentino says it's the work they do behind the scenes that brings them the most satisfaction. Since 2004, they have hosted the "Night of Theatre" program, which opens the theatre to senior citizen groups and community service organizations, allowing them to enjoy the performances for free.

In addition, their Summer Outreach Program offers free dance and theatre training — along with a free, healthful lunch — to economically disadvantaged children, ages 9 to 18 years old. It had begun with Cappozalo while the theatre was first being renovated.

"We'd be down there scrubbing floors, painting, and all the kids in the neighborhood used to come and ask us, 'What are you doing?' And my mother would talk to them and have them help her do things like take out the garbage, little er-

rands," says Sorrentino. "They were looking for things to do, and a little pat on the back. They'd spend hours with us! And my mother said right away, 'We have to think of something for these kids to do, to get them off the street.'"

The outreach program was born. And Sorrentino says it has brought hope and change to thousands of kids' lives over the years.

"We teach them all about dance, theatre, theatre etiquette, lighting and sound, public speaking, and poetry," says Sorrentino. "The Staten Island Foundation has even funded a literacy component now. It's my favorite. I love it."

A living legacy

In June of 2009, Cappozalo passed away, after a 10-month battle with cancer.

Sorrentino describes her mother as a woman of vision, passion and grace — someone who gave much more than she ever took. Cappozalo began teaching dance back in 1959 to earn money for her young family, and the business grew steadily over the years. Now, with 1,500 students a week, Mrs. Rosemary's Dance Studio has become one of the largest dance instruction schools on the East Coast.

Her daughters are following in her footsteps. But make no mistake — the workload of running the school (still in its original location on New Dorp Plaza) and the theatre is tremendous. Sorrentino says she's become adept at managing her time properly.

"I'll be on a break at dancing school, but I'll be in the back, on my phone, checking e-mails, looking at applications for the theatre, whatever it takes," she says. "But it doesn't feel like work. It's who we are; it's our lives."

"We're not the type to sit at home, put our feet up and watch Oprah," she says with a laugh, knowing her mother would be proud.

And she admits, there's no giving up now.

"This is not our theatre," says Cappozalo. "It's Staten Island's theatre. It's been saved for generations to come."

St. George Theatre [35 Hyatt St. in St. George, (718) 442-2900]. For more information, visit www.stgeorgetheatre.com.

Monica Brown is a cable television news anchor who lives on Staten Island with her two children. She can be reached at monicaldbrown@gmail.com.

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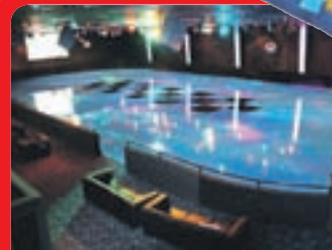
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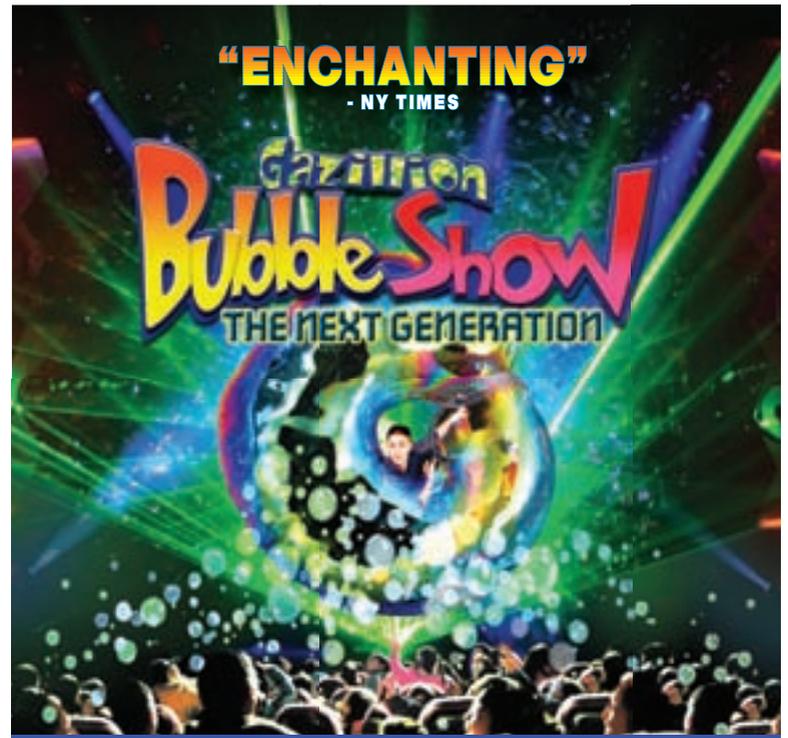
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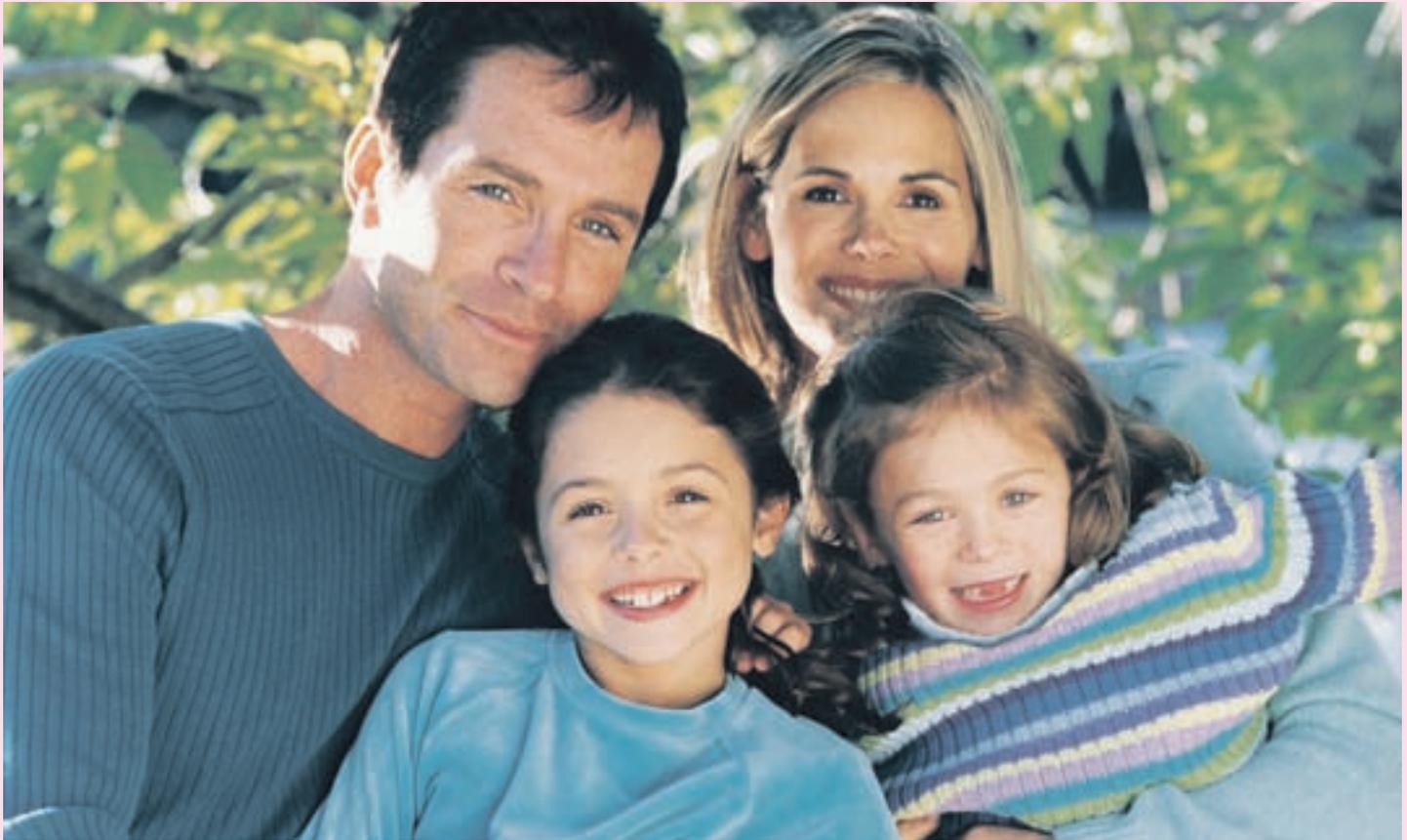
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New & Noteworthy



Graphic goodies

Elizabeth Horton calls her line Nostalgic Graphic Tees. The nostalgia is a funny word — they're shirts for kids, after all — but it works.

Her playful designs include mermaids, cowboys with lassos, baseball players, little scientists with magnifying glasses in hand,

boy and girl surfboarders, cheerleaders and gymnasts.

The white silhouettes are contrasted by a vibrant, solid shirt. And the designs are great for the spring and summer months.

Nostalgic Graphic Tee by Elizabeth Horton, \$20. For info, visit www.etsy.com/people/elizabethhorton.

Some fruity fun

It's Dominos, but with a fruit twist!

From the makers of Bananagrams comes another fun game with a fruit theme. Fruitominoes is a domino game that connects fruit instead of dots, where you can match apples, oranges, bananas, pears and strawberries.

There are 28 crafted dominoes in a compact pouch, for a colorful — and travel-friendly — update to

the classic game.

Fruitominoes, \$12.95. For ages five and up. For info, visit www.bananagrams.com.

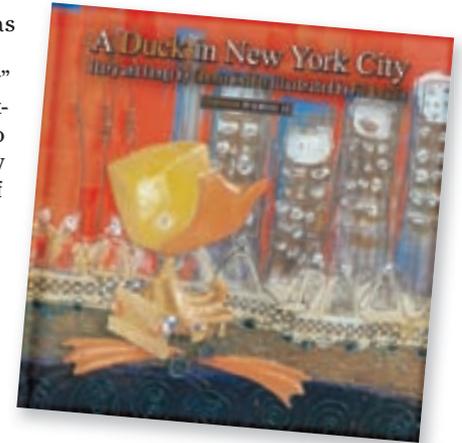


Duck, duck, duck!

A new edition of a book has us revisiting an old favorite.

"A Duck in New York City" follows the adventures of a little duck from the prairies who dreams of making it big in New York City — on Broadway, of course. The book is also an award-winning CD, featuring songs performed by the writer, Connie Kaldor.

With a new Spanish version of the book, called "Un Pato en Nueva York," coming out this month, a whole new audience can now be introduced to this lovable title — and it also features a CD of Kaldor's fantastic songs.



"Un Pato en Nueva York." For info, visit www.thesecondmountain.com.

Life's a beach

You'll never have to worry about losing a sock again.

With LittleMissMatched, the socks purposely come without a pair. And they also come in bright, colorful, fun designs.

Perfect for the approaching summer is this beach anklet, which is outfitted with bathing suits, sandals and sunglasses. It's everything you need for a day at the beach — right on your socks!

At The Beach Anklet Socks by LittleMissMatched, \$9. For info, visit www.littlemissmatched.com.



Batter up!

This book hits a home run.

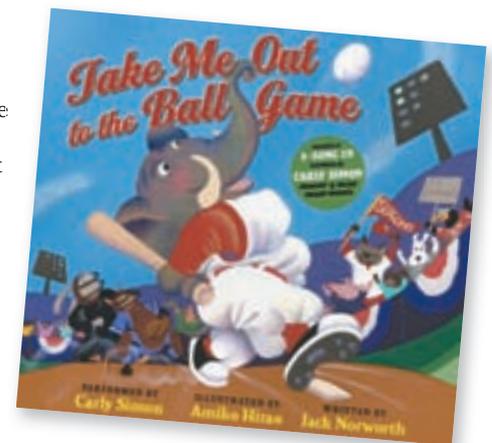
All your little sluggers out there will want to get their hands on the vibrant new picture book, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame."

It explores baseball's unofficial anthem in all of its lyrics, including heroine Katie Casey, who was "baseball mad" and had "the fever...bad."

It even comes with a recording of the song by none-other-than Carly Simon, so you can do a sing-along

after your read-along.

"Take Me Out to the Ballgame," \$17.95.





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- 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 and overnight trips.
- Leadership Experience for teens entering grades 9 & 10

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