

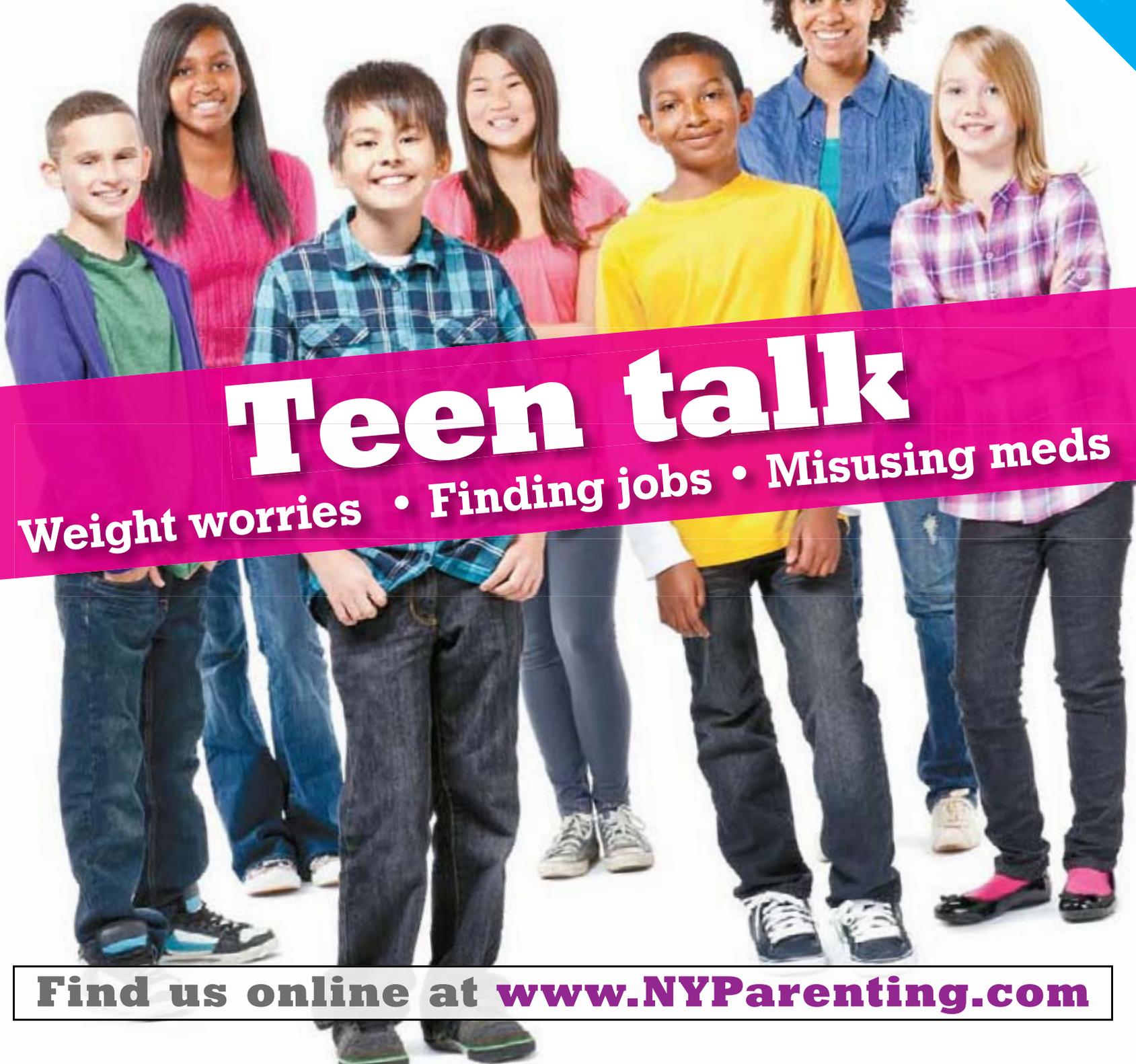
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# Letter from the publisher

## Parenting teens

Being a teenager is often a period of great frustration. You want to be taken seriously, but most of the time you're not. This is a relatively new phenomenon, probably a mid twentieth century evolution, because before that time the term didn't



exist. When there was child labor everywhere, if you were tall enough to work, you did, and girls were often married early in their lives or sent out to service, or they helped out with the younger children and were saddled with parental responsibilities early on through their siblings.

This has largely changed in our western industrialized countries and along with the mandate of secondary education, a new stage of life was

given a new moniker, *Teens*. A highly sought after market of consumers and trend setters, since after the 2nd World War, the influence of this age group has only grown larger and there is a mad dash in the marketing world to find the secrets to get-

ting the attention of their buying habits. Everyone wants to reach this demographic, and along with their importance have come issues that have become more extreme as the years pass.

Eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia and obesity are prevalent and who ever heard of them in previous generations? Pharmaceutical drugs have brought miraculous cures of formerly pervasive illnesses and

diseases, but they have also brought about easy access and the misuse of these same drugs by pre-teens and teens using them for purposes other than cures.

There has never been a time when "image" has been more important or more pressuring than in today's multi-media world where everything is instant and celebrity is both glamorized and abused. Trends abound and it seems a whole generation has not only been pierced but now tattooed and the growing influence of the teen/adolescent market is indeed growing.

This issue is largely devoted to teen stuff and our writers have attempted to address some of these topics that all parents of this age group are struggling with and hope to manage. As in every issue, our regular teen columns are here and also

some additional provocative focus on behavior we need to be aware of. As parents of teens, our responsibility is enormous and growing with each new fad, each new trend, and each new marketing campaign that seeks our youngster's attention and dollars. It is both daunting and manageable, if we do our best to "keep up" and not "turn off" the important lines of communication with our kids.

We hope these articles bring some new information. We all must fully recognize the huge job that parenting kids in this 21st Century world brings, particularly as the ticking seconds produce newer technologies and distance our kids further from the way things used to be yesterday.

A big subject and one we can't hope to cover in just one issue. Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher

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# Having the wrong LOOK

When teens miss out on jobs — just because of appearance

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

**I** made a deal with my daughter that, once she was a senior in high school and was accepted to college, she could get a job to earn some spending money. She decided to apply to the local outlet of one of the most popular chains selling teen clothing.

I agreed to call and set up the interview for her, since she was in school during all normal business hours. The manager said, "Let her come in, and I will take a look at her."

I thought that was an odd comment.

In the drive over to the store, I reminded my daughter to highlight her relevant experience. She nodded, focusing more on the meticulous application of blue metallic eyeshadow, and complaining that she didn't have enough time to work on her hair or get enough sun.

Of course, I told her that she looked just fine.

She insisted that the store "really cared" about how she looked. Although I understood that personal appearance matters, I was not in the least concerned. After all, she is a pretty, petite teenager and a size zero, fitting well into all the latest skimpy styles marketed to teens. She disappeared into the store, three-page application and resume in hand.

## 'Look policy'

When she returned moments later, she was frustrated, understanding

that the referral to an affiliated store meant that she did not fit the bill here. It seems that this chain had an actual "look policy," only hiring teens who fit its ideal image. The application asked the applicant to report how many varsity sports she plays, and includes modeling contract information. One might think that the public is apathetic about the physical beauty of the kid who pulls the requested size sweater from the shelf. Apparently, this company is banking on beauty.

Another well-known teen shopping destination has been known to circulate memos to staff with regard to overall physical appearance for prospective employees, including the policing of eyebrows, hair, and makeup, purportedly rejecting applicants based on their standards for overall physical appearance, including weight.

Professor Daniel S. Hamermesh, from the University of Texas, explores the phenomenon of "lookism" (judging people based on their appearance alone) in his latest book, "Beauty Pays." In it, he recognizes the existence of discrimination based on appearance in the job market and the fact that beauty sells. He grapples with the complex question of whether or not discrimination of this type should be protected by law.

## Impact on teens

I have always been a proponent of talking out issues with my children. Luckily, my daughter has a strong

self-image and did not seem to be as disturbed by the lookist policy she knew to be in place, as she was with the inconvenience of continuing her job search. But, not all teens would feel that way.

When I spoke with her by phone, Dr. Susan Bartell, child psychologist and author of "Dr. Susan's Girls-Only Weight Loss Guide," told me that, if retailers' "lookist policies" are part of a growing trend, then "they can make kids feel that what they look like is more important [than it should be], and push kids to feel inadequate and do things they are not comfortable with, such as [extreme] dieting or wearing clothing that is not comfortable."

Still, according to "So Sexy, So Soon," a 2008 book by Dr. Diane E. Levin and Dr. Jean Kilbourne, exposure to sexualized images and fashion, among other things, "[can make] girls think of and treat their own bodies as sexualized objects." Aspiring to fit within the parameters of some stores' idealized images is no different. Sexuality is linked to the very nature of the clothing marketed to teens and the provocative style of the advertising.

When I spoke by phone with Alissa Quart, author of "Branded — The Buying and Selling of Teenagers," she told me that the store my daughter applied to — and others like it — intentionally "want there to be a confusion." Since teens begin to feel strong allegiances to a particular store or manufacturer, and

the salespeople begin “to resemble the store,” the confusion ensues as the teens begin to feel as if the salespeople are their friends. According to Quart, their goal is “to sell a total atmosphere” where the salespeople all look a certain way.

“Things get all muddled,” she explains, “as there is confusion between the teen-tween consumers’ emotional life and consumption.”

It seems as if the stores can get away with this because of what Quart refers to as the “hierarchy that the stores are held in in adolescent culture.” Teens and tweens tend to identify themselves with the store or brand of choice, referring to themselves as a “Store A person” or a “Store B person,” for example. She also told me that an issue arises “when people become objects and objectify others and themselves.”

### Valuing the ‘whole person’

Now the question becomes: what can we — or should we — do about this phenomenon?

My daughter was unscathed by her experience, recognizing after the store interviews that she did not have the look they wanted. Secure with her own self-esteem, she moved on and obtained gainful employment elsewhere. Unfortunately, not all teens or tweens would react in the same way.

Quart agreed that most parents want to protect their children from this type of discrimination and from the “pervasive commercialism” that has made these stores so significant in our youth culture. She would recommend an open-ended conversation, questioning the norms.

Still, “you do not want your child to be totally alienated from their social group,” she adds.

Bartell said she would recommend an age-appropriate, ongoing conversation, initiated when the opportunity presents itself, starting as young as age 4. She told me that such opportunities will arise often, whether they come from the TV or are passing comments by a child or another adult about how someone is dressed or how she looks.

She would advise parents to focus on talking with their own children about the inner qualities they should value in people, and cautions them to model good behavior by not being critical of other people’s looks. Par-



ents should help the children empathize by asking them how they would feel if others judged them by their looks or criticized their appearance. They should understand the importance of “valuing the whole person” and should know not “to judge a book by its cover.”

On one end of the spectrum, upon recognizing the unfairness of such policies, some would tell young people to “just deal with it, because that is the way the world is.” On the other end of the spectrum, others would counsel their children to take action and boycott stores with discriminatory hiring practices, or even take action to try to alter unfair hiring practices.

I agree with Bartell and believe that parents should take the most essential step of talking with children when they identify or witness such an unjust situation.

It is the parent’s job to share her feelings about right and wrong with her kids, and guide them to act in a way that she feels would be appropriate.

As parents, we will never be able to shield our children from all unfair merchandising situations, marketing ploys, or unjust employment rejections. What we can do is educate them and try to give them the tools to deal with those injustices.

*Risa C. Doherty is an attorney and freelance writer from East Hills, NY.*

It seems as if the stores can get away with this because of the hierarchy that the stores are held in in adolescent culture.



## A TEEN'S TAKE

AGLAIA HO

# Passing with flying colors

**T**he mere mention of a pop quiz, test or exam sends a wave of moans and groans around a classroom. I'll admit that I join the chorus of complainers with cries of outrage. It's natural for teenagers to passionately abhor testing. We're far too busy with more "important" things to do. Sleeping, surfing the Internet, chatting on the phone, listening to music, and watching TV are all in a day's "work" for us. However, now that I'm entering my junior year of

high school, I've noticed what a huge part testing has played in my school life. I've managed to endure close to 11 years of studying and last-minute cramming. Looking back on my experiences, I've come to realize that testing has taught me much more than just the right answer.

My introduction to testing was the Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System, administered to New York public schools from kindergarten through second grade. I was only 5 years old, rudely awakened to the fact that testing was inevitable. I don't remember much about my first test, except that it was a big deal—especially for a little girl who was still struggling to distinguish her left from her right. I don't recall the test having a pass-or-fail system, but I do remember that getting a word wrong would result in a disapproving look from my teacher. For a painfully shy and timorous kindergartner, that was the apocalypse for me!

Today, I can laugh at my innocence, but I learned a lesson all the same. The Early Childhood Literacy Assessment System often required teachers to be absent from the room in order to administer the tests. I believe students—especially young ones—need their teachers present. I've come to appreciate the time my teachers spend actually teaching, rather than testing.

Passing or failing started to make sense when New York statewide exams rolled around in the third grade. The idea of standardized tests still gives me a sickening sensation. All I see now are teachers pressuring students to get top grades, and piling students with loads of prep work. Despite this chaotic mess, I did learn that practice makes perfect.

My parents never believed in rewards for good grades, and taught me that achievements are self-rewarding. At the time, I was slightly disappointed for not receiving something special for my good grade. So when my friends chat-

tered on about their new CD player (gosh, I feel old) or their new Barbie doll, I would flaunt my invisible self-reward. It would take years for maturity to set in, in order for me to understand what "self-reward" really entailed.

In elementary school, subject tests were infrequent and did not influence report card grades. Nonetheless, middle school and high school brought a new type of testing experience. Spanish tests, science quizzes, math exams, oh my! Subject tests introduced me to a dreaded school chore: studying. I learned that in order to receive a good grade on an exam, I'd need to put in 100 percent toward my studies. I yawned my way through future tense Spanish verbs, repeat geometry theorems, memorize the Cold War events, and reread all the quotes in Shakespeare's work.

One of the biggest lessons studying has taught me is that no matter what mark I get on my test, I'll always be the winner. All the work I put into studying helped me absorb the information, and my mistakes only called attention to the material I missed.

Another big part of high school was the highly anticipated Regents exam, the subject-specified New York standardized exams. While these exams are unique to New York, most colleges don't acknowledge high Regents grades, but they do judge poor ones. Therefore, Regents are often heavily stressed in high schools. For me, Regents equaled tediously practicing every old exam online. It's all about getting used to the questions, since many of them repeat themselves over the years. I initially thought of Regents as an unnecessary evil designed to torture students, but preparing for these exams has helped me handle pressure (an inconvenience we all have to overcome in life) and manage my time.

We're always caught up in getting answers right and focusing on the exam material. However, testing has more significant lessons that lie beyond the pages of a test book. I've learned to have confidence in myself and feel pride in what I've achieved. So, maybe testing isn't as bad as it seems.

*Aglaia Ho is a 16-year-old student from Queens who enjoys writing. Her work has been published in Creative Kids, Skipping Stones, Daily News-Children's Pressline, and The State of the Wild.*



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# Pound wise

## How to discuss weighty matters with your teen

BY KATHY SENA

**A**re you concerned about your teen's weight? Are you hitting a brick wall when trying to discuss fitness and health issues with your son or daughter? You're not alone. Many parents report that this is a particularly tough, and often emotional, subject for both parents and teens. So we've asked the experts for tips on broaching this important topic with your child.

### Respect your child's feelings

Teens are certainly not alone in their less-than-desirable reactions to the topic of weight, says Steven Crawford, MD, associate medical director of The Center for Eating Disorders at Sheppard Pratt in Baltimore, Md.

"Consider how you, even as an adult, might react if someone — maybe even your own child — commented on your recent weight gain or pointed out that your exercise and eating habits were really unhealthy," says Crawford. It's a sensitive topic for a lot of reasons, he adds, but more and more because of the intensity with which our culture, and the media, have focused on weight and connected it to individual self-worth and social status.

"These are, developmentally, very sensitive topics for teens," says Crawford, "so some resistance is to be expected."

Weight is often a tricky subject for moms and daughters, especially because moms tend to bring their "body baggage" to the conversation, says Dara Chadwick, a journalist and author of "You'd Be So Pretty If...: Teaching Our Daughters to Love Their Bodies — Even When We Don't Love Our Own."

"For example, if mom was heavy as a child and found that to be a painful experience, she may want to 'spare' her daughter from going through what she went through and may take a heavy-handed or critical approach to talking with her daughter about weight or eating," says Chadwick.

"Or, if mom works very hard to stay slim, she may feel that an overweight daughter is somehow a reflection on her as a mother," Chadwick says. "Daughters tend to shut down when they feel they're being lectured, or when it's a 'do I as I say, not as I do' situation. In other words, mom or dad tells the daughter to go out and play, or get some exercise, from his or her perch on the couch.

"Stay alert for natural opportunities to discuss healthy living," she continues. "While you're in the kitchen together preparing dinner, while you're taking a walk after dinner, while you're watching a television show that makes fun of weight or features an actor who's incredibly thin. Using moments like this helps take the focus off the daughter her-

self. Instead, it's a more global discussion, which tends to feel safer."

### Watch the humor

"I'll admit I've made jokes about my size in the past. But those jokes can hurt just as much as criticism," says Chadwick. "Don't make your butt the 'butt' of every joke. And think twice before joking about your teen's body or appearance in any way." Teens are notoriously sensitive and an off-hand joke about clothes, hair or weight can sting more than adults may realize.

"Never yell, bribe, threaten or punish your child about weight, food or physical activity. If you turn these issues into parent-child battlegrounds, the results can be disastrous," says Dayle Hayes, MS, a registered dietitian in Billings, Mont. "Shame, blame and anger are set-ups for failure. The worse children feel about weight, the more likely they are to overeat or develop an eating disorder."

### Focus on health

"Make sure you set a good example for health, balanced eating and body image," says Crawford. "This means not 'dieting,' fitting in family meals whenever possible, no excessive exercising, and no criticism of your own or other people's bodies."

If you don't want your kids to shut down when the topic of weight comes up, let go of a focus on the weight, or the number on the scale, and focus on general health, he says.

Instead of saying, "I'm concerned because you have lost so much weight over the past month," say, "I'm really worried about you, because it seems like you don't have as much energy lately. Are you feeling OK?"

Likewise, instead of saying "You seem to be gaining weight. You'd better start watching what you're eating," it might be better to say, "I know you've been grabbing a lot of meals on the run lately. Let's try to make some more time to have family meals

## Could my teen have a serious problem?

If you're concerned that your child is underweight or is losing weight, pay attention to any "restrictive" behaviors, suggests Steven Crawford, MD, associate medical director of The Center for Eating Disorders



at Sheppard Pratt in Baltimore, Md. Some potential red flags:

- Large or sudden shifts in weight in either direction
- Continual fluctuations up and down in weight

- Cutting out entire food groups (i.e., fat or carbs) from the diet

- Counting calories or adherence to "diets"

- Frequently weighing oneself

- Evidence of binges (large amounts of food disappear) or purges (odor of vomit, diet pills, excessive exercise, etc.)



together,” and then follow through by planning and preparing meals that incorporate a variety of foods.

“Keep in mind that everything in moderation — as opposed to completely banning fast food or desserts — is the key to balanced eating,” says Crawford.

### **Emphasize breakfast**

“It is vital for teens to have breakfast,” says registered dietitian Joan O’Keefe, a frequent speaker on nutrition at schools and the creator of the “Nutrition 101” video series (available at [www.foreveryoungdiet.com](http://www.foreveryoungdiet.com)). “Their biological clocks say ‘sleep in,’ but the reality is that they have to get up, and they have to have breakfast, and it must include protein.”

Protein in the morning will keep kids satisfied and will help eliminate junk-food cravings, says O’Keefe.

“Protein sources can be fast,” she adds. “Leftover protein from dinner (chicken breast, etc.), yogurt with berries, peanut butter and an apple or whey protein (mix it and go out the door with it) are all quick-and-easy options.”

### **Team effort**

“As with any other important issue, make sure that both parents and important relatives are all on the same page,” suggests Hayes. “Sending mixed messages about weight can also have unhealthy consequences.”

If you’re concerned about other family members having potentially negative discussions with your teen about weight, you may want to share this article with them and talk a bit about the approach you want to use.

### **Puberty-related weight changes**

Teens naturally go through a normal and necessary weight gain at the start of puberty, which allows their bodies to proceed with maturation, says Crawford. As time goes on, with normal eating behavior, their weight will level off at their bodies’ unique set point. Parents who draw negative attention to this period of weight gain could trigger body-image concerns and dieting behavior.

Has your daughter started her period yet? If not, would you have expected her to have started earlier? There may be a possibility that

*Continued on next page*

# Weight worries

*Continued from previous page*

low body weight has delayed the onset of menstruation. If she did start menstruating, is she still getting her period, or has it stopped or been irregular? If you have concerns about this, talk with your daughter's doctor.

## Surf Web together

Make the most of your teen's interest in the internet, and introduce her to some helpful websites that focus on teen health, such as [www.empowermetobe.org](http://www.empowermetobe.org), [www.nflrush.com/play60](http://www.nflrush.com/play60) and [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org) (which also has a teen section), suggests Dallas, Texas registered dietitian Paragi Mehta.

"Together, visit sites such as [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) and [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)," says Mehta. "This is not to scare your teen, but to create an awareness that if we get healthy now, we can reduce our risk of having lifelong disease or health conditions. Explain to your child that diabetes and heart disease are serious, and talk about how making healthy lifestyle choices now can help protect her health in the future."

While these sites offer positive examples for teens, the same can't be said of all media, of course.

"Have open conversations with your kids about the distorted messages their magazines, and media in general, send to us about weight," says Crawford. "Remind them that models in advertisements have been Photoshopped and retouched, and that they don't represent what the majority of people actually look like."

## De-emphasize 'dieting'

"Diets can further complicate an already stressful relationship with food, and could trigger continued problems with eating for your child," says Crawford. "Diets are the number one risk factor for developing eating disorders. Instead of putting your child on a diet, the goal would be to work toward normalizing eating behavior, ensuring that they are getting most or all of the necessary nutrients they need in a day, and get-



ting in touch with the body's natural hunger and fullness cues."

"Always keep the focus on health, rather than weight," says Hayes. "Losing weight is incredibly difficult, and it is not the only measure of success. If your family starts eating better and moving more, your children may 'grow into their weight' as their height increases."

"Try to make healthy food choices whenever possible, such as a baked sweet potato instead of fries, water instead of soda, etc.," suggests Chadwick. "But don't point out your choice or make a big deal out of how you're choosing the healthy version. Kids will tune that out quickly."

Remember to show that all foods can be enjoyed in moderation.

"Have a treat and enjoy it," suggests Chadwick. "Show kids that everything — pizza, cheeseburgers, hot fudge sundaes — has a place in a balanced approach to healthy living. When you choose to have a treat, do it mindfully, and let your child see you enjoy it. Proclaim it 'treat night,' and don't say one word about how it's going to your thighs or how you shouldn't be eating it. Just enjoy!"

## Be the family that plays together

Getting your teen involved in meal planning and physical activities can be a big help, and you can do it without a lot of talking about "the problem." Get your teen involved with meal planning, creating healthy

grocery lists and the grocery shopping, suggests Mehta.

"Get involved in exercise activities with your teen, i.e., kickboxing, martial arts, biking, walking, jogging, tennis, rock climbing or dance aerobics," suggests Mehta. "Join a health club together or do dance/exercise DVDs together. This can help with bonding and is a win-win situation," she says. "You get to spend quality time together, get exercise together, and show how you really care about your health and your family's health."

## Know when to consult an expert

If you want to be as informed as possible before you talk to your child or her doctor about your concerns, it can be helpful to call an eating disorder specialist first, suggests Crawford. Inform him of your child's weight gain/loss, current symptoms, health problems or any other concerns you might have.

It's always best to have an open line of communication with your child if possible.

"If you do express these concerns to your child, indicate that your primary concern is for her health, instead of focusing on the weight or the food she may or may not be eating. Be prepared for her to be defensive," says Crawford.

Your child's primary-care doctor can be a great first step, because your child is already familiar with

Weight is a sensitive topic for a lot of reasons, but more and more because of the intensity with which our culture, and the media, have focused on weight and connected it to individual self-worth and social status.

this person, and an appointment can be scheduled without too much resistance from your child generally, especially if it's incorporated into an annual check-up or well-visit.

Make the doctor aware of your concerns in advance of the appointment, so that she can plan to ask your child the necessary questions, run the appropriate blood and lab tests and make a referral for recommended treatment.

But don't put all your eggs in one basket, Crawford stresses. It's common for parents to take their concerns to a pediatrician who may not be familiar with eating disorders and, thus, may not take the appropriate steps. If your pediatrician dismisses symptoms and you still have concerns, follow up with an evaluation by an eating-disorder specialist, he suggests.

Also, make sure your pediatrician knows that you endorse a non-diet approach, and that you do not want her to focus on the number on the scale or discuss a need for weight gain/loss in front of your child, Crawford advises.

Don't hesitate to ask for help. Don't be offended if someone else is able to get through to your child more easily than you are.

Crawford explains, "Often, a teenager that continually shuts down when confronted by a parent will respond more openly to the concerns when they are expressed by a doctor, school counselor or even a friend."

*Kathy Sena is a freelance journalist who frequently covers health issues and teens. Visit her blog at [www.badballet.com](http://www.badballet.com).*

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# Rx for vigilance

## How to prevent your teen from misusing medications

BY SANDRA GORDON

**I**f you've never asked yourself, "Is my teen misusing medications?" it's high time to consider it.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in five high school students in the U.S. has taken a prescription drug, such as OxyContin, Vicodin, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax without a doctor's prescription. All told, 15.4 million teens reported misusing prescription drugs at least once in 2007 (the most recent stats), according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Abusing over-the-counter drugs — such as cough medicine — recreationally is also a widespread problem, especially among U.S. eighth to 12th graders, the Institute says.

Teens use these drugs to get high, to cram for tests, lose weight or just because their friends are doing it. But, in general, "they use them because the drugs make them

feel happy and change their normal frame of reference," says David J. Mendelson, MD, vice president of medical affairs for EmCare, a company that manages more than 400 hospital emergency departments in 40 states. The teen years are ripe for this behavior because a child's brain isn't fully mature until age 25. Until then, they're prone to risk-taking and living in the moment when it comes to decision-making.

Although these drugs can be purchased online or acquired from the local pharmacy, most teens don't get them that way.

"The great majority of kids who misuse prescription and over-the-counter drugs get them from family members and friends," says Joseph Lee, MD, child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Hazelden Center for Youth and Families, which has seven U.S. treatment centers.

Teens help themselves to over-the-counter and prescription drugs

from the household medicine cabinet, then share them with or sell them to friends, under the misguided notion that these drugs are safer than illicit drugs because they're prescribed by a doctor or sold over the counter. But they can still be just as deadly, or lead to addiction. Both types of drugs — legal and illegal — send about 1 million people to U.S. emergency rooms each year.

### Gen Rx

"One of the best things that parents can do is to educate themselves about which prescription and over-the-counter medications can be potentially abused," Lee says. Here's a round-up of the most commonly misused meds among teens. Keep in mind, however, that it's not any one drug that's the biggest culprit.

According to Lee, "Many teens are mixing it up, using multiple drugs most of the time."

Teens help themselves to over-the-counter and prescription drugs from the household medicine cabinet under the misguided notion that these drugs are safer than illicit drugs.



**Med mishap:** Taking large doses — commonly referred to as Robo-tripping, skittling, dex or candy — can cause distorted emotions and perceptions, making one feel detached. It can also cause numbness, nausea, vomiting, fast heart rate and increased blood pressure. On rare occasions, Robo-tripping can cut off the brain's oxygen supply, causing brain damage.

Besides being up on prescription and over-the-counter teen drug trends, here are more steps you can take to bust the misuse of these meds, or the potential for it, at your house:

- Empty out your medicine cabinet.

“Saving leftover medication for a rainy day is a really bad idea when you have teenagers,” Lee says. To dispose of tempting, unused medication properly, follow these Food and Drug Administration Guidelines.

- Talk to your kids about drug misuse. Use reference points in the media as teachable moments.

“When you see examples of kids using on TV, or there’s an accident in the newspaper, have a brief conversation about it,” Lee says. Try to be approachable, rather than preachy, to build trust and keep the lines of communication open.

- Keep your kids on your radar. Supervise your teen and know where she’s at and who she’s hanging out with at all times. And don’t assume your older teen or 20-something is fine, even if he’s out of the house.

“Most drug abuse and addiction starts between age 17 to the early to mid 20s,” Lee says. “Those are hot spots. That’s when kids can fall through the cracks, because nobody’s paying attention to them anymore, because they’re technically adults,” he says.

- Signs to watch out for that might indicate drug misuse: A change in friends; physical complaints and doctor shopping; a drop in academic performance, change in sleep habits, and/or moodiness.

If you suspect there’s a problem, don’t wait to take action. Many parents wait too long before stepping in. Talk to your child, your child’s doctor, or a therapist versed in substance abuse for an assessment and a professional opinion about what to do next.

For more information about the National Institute on Drug Abuse, visit [drugabuse.gov](http://drugabuse.gov).

## Prescription drugs teens abuse

**Opioids.** The pain-relieving medications Vicodin (acetaminophen and hydrocodone) and OxyContin (oxycodone) are two of the most commonly abused drugs by high school seniors, according to the Institute.

**Med mishap:** Opioids can be taken orally, or the pills can be crushed and the powder snorted or injected. They can produce an addicting feeling of euphoria. They also slow breathing and cause drowsiness. Taking just one dose that’s too large or mixed with other depressants — such as alcohol, antihistamines, barbiturates, or benzodiazepines (like Xanax or Valium) — can be deadly.

**Stimulants.** Central nervous system stimulants, such as the amphetamines Adderall and Dexedrine and methylphenidate (Concerta and Ritalin) are typically prescribed to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, narcolepsy, and — in some cases — depression that’s not responding to other treatment. They increase alertness and attention.

**Med mishap:** Stimulants must be taken orally, but they can be crushed, dissolved in water and injected. They can enhance the ability to focus for studying and tests and produce a feeling of euphoria. But high doses can cause hostility, heart failure, seizures, or paranoia.

## Over-the-counter misused medications

**Cough and cold medicine.** The most common misused medications are those containing the active cough suppressing ingredient dextromethorphan (DXM), such as Robitussin. When taken as directed, these medications are safe and effective.

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*Continued on page 18*

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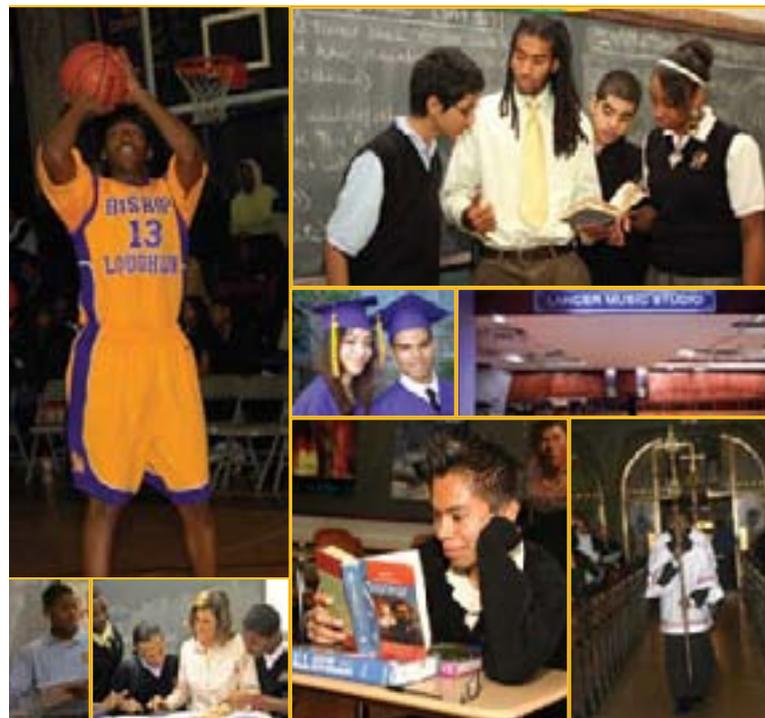
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*Continued from page 16*

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*Continued on page 20*

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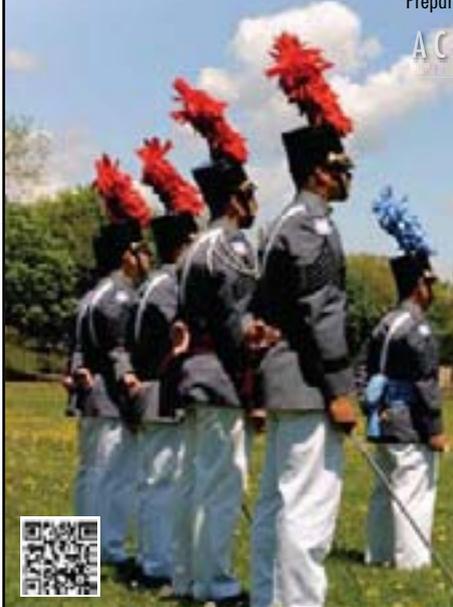


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## LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

# Teens and lying

**D**id you ever lie to your parents when you were a teenager? Be honest with yourself. Not even a teeny, tiny lie? Here is a typical scenario: You started out studying with Mary, but you wound up at John's party afterward. It really wasn't in the game plan, but you conveniently left the latter part out when arrived home and your mom asked why you were late.

Fact: Kids aren't perfect, and lying is common in adolescence. Fiction: "Good" kids don't lie.

### Telling tall tales

Parents may unintentionally serve as role models. Adults often use "white lies" to spare hurt feelings or embarrassment. For instance, you might tell a friend her haircut is adorable after discussing in your child's presence that you would never use that salon.

"Many parents teach children that social or 'white' lies are acceptable. For example, most parents tell their children to express thanks and pleasure for gifts, even if the gift is something the child does not want. Parents also teach children that some thoughts, while honest, do not always need to be relayed to others when they might cause hurt feelings or discomfort," says R. Andrew Harper, MD, medical director at the University of Texas Harris County Psychiatric Center and associate professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Texas Medical School at Houston.

By adolescence, however, teens understand the difference between lying to spare feelings and lying to get one's own way. Teens lie for many reasons, including trying to avoid getting into trouble or seeking more freedom than parents are allowing. If a teen has learned that bending the truth will help him get his way, lying may seem like a good option.

"Pleasing their friends becomes more important than following the rules. When teenagers have to



choose between lying to parents and disappointing a friend, parents often lose that coin toss," says Loren Buckner, a psychotherapist and the author of "ParentWise: The Emotional Challenges of Family Life and How to Deal with Them."

### Be a lie detective

Recognizing a lie can be tricky.

"There are behaviors that may indicate your teen is lying, such as avoiding eye contact, or changes in vocal pitch," explains Harper. "However, many parents have learned through experience when to be suspicious of what their teen is telling them. Explanations that are inconsistent or seem to shift on retelling may be clues." He warns, "Many teens learn to lie to their parents without being detected, particularly if the lie is well planned in advance."

Buckner suggests that parents look for patterns. Teens who stick to curfew, do their school work, and show up when and where they're supposed to can generally be trusted.

### Choosing consequences

Teens don't tend to think ahead. Parents should discuss various scenarios with their teens to illustrate

what can happen when a lie leads to putting oneself and others in danger.

"Some lies have consequences that teach important life lessons," Harper points out. "For instance, a teen who lies about completing homework will get a lower grade. However, lies that place someone at risk should call for more serious consequences from parents."

Harper believes it's wise to involve teens in the process of choosing consequences.

"Parents should consider negotiating with their teens when choosing consequences," he says. "This is an opportunity to teach them about problem solving and collaboration in difficult situations."

Frequent lying can be a sign of a more serious problem. However, belittling or shaming a teen can make matters worse.

"Teens need to know they're loved, even when they get into trouble," says Buckner.

### Tips and tales

"My kids know I will call teachers or friends' parents to check up on them if necessary. If they are caught lying, the consequences are much, much worse!"

— Andrew Bradford, Poughkeepsie, NY

"As a parent, you know what to look for in each of your kids with their different personalities. There are usually telltale signs. Some teens are better at lying than others."

— Kathleen King, Woodstock, NY

### Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Content ratings (movies, TV, music, games) — do you strictly follow them, or find them useless?

Please send your full name, address, and brief comments to [myrnahaskell@gmail.com](mailto:myrnahaskell@gmail.com), or visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://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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# CRAFTING

## a fabulous fall party

Everything you need for a seasonal celebration

BY DENISE MORRISON  
YEARIAN

**W**hether you're planning a bountiful harvest celebration or a creepy-crawly Halloween party, consider these seasonal craft, game and food suggestions.

### Crop of crafts

When doing crafts with kids in a group, plan a main craft with a short, second activity — coloring pages or stringing popcorn — for early finishers. Whatever crafts you choose, pick ones that are easy to clean up, so you can move on to the next activity.

•**Black cat candy jar:** Place black electrical tape over the sharp edges of a tin can. Cover the can with black construction paper and glue in place. Glue two wiggly eyes to the can, then use a thin paintbrush and white paint to draw a mouth, nose and whiskers. Draw and cut out a black tail shape and two triangular-shaped ears. Cut two smaller triangles from pink paper for the insides of the ears; glue to black triangles.

Glue ears to the top inside edge of the can and the tail to the back side of the can. Fill with treats.

•**Jack-o-lantern pots:** Buy vari-

ous-sized terracotta pots and turn them upside down so the drainage hole is facing up. On yellow construction paper, draw and cut out two eyes, a nose and a toothy grin — the wackier the better. Apply Mod Podge (a craft glue) with a paintbrush under and over the facial features, then attach them to the pot. Place a short, wide stick out of the hole to resemble a pumpkin stem.

•**Pumpkin noisemakers:** Paint a 12- by 1/2-inch dowel rod black; let dry. Trace and cut out two leaves using green craft foam, then cut a small slit in the center of each leaf. Draw a face onto the bottom



side of an orange paper plate with a black permanent marker. Line up the face plate with a second orange plate, rims together and bottoms facing out. Use a hole punch to

create holes 1-inch apart around the perimeter of both plates. Place dried beans and small jingle bells between the two plates. Also put the dowel between the plates, moving a short end of the stick above the facial features to represent the pumpkin stem, and a long end below for the handle. Sew plates together by lacing yarn through the holes. Push leaf slits through the short end of the dowel rods and secure with a glue gun.

### Gathering for games

Games are a staple at kids' gatherings: Choose ones every child can participate in, where no one is eliminated. With a little forethought and creativity, any game can be adapted to fit the fall theme.

•**Broom ball:** Purchase half-sized brooms for each party guest and two different colors of seasonal garland. Decorate half of the brooms with one color of garland and the remaining half with the other garland to specify teams. Establish goals at opposite ends of the yard, and divide the children into teams. Place a kickball in the center of the yard, then give each child a broom to sweep the ball to his team's goal. The first team to score five goals wins.

•**Ring around the pumpkin:** Place three large pumpkins with stems in a line several feet apart. Gather four hula hoops. To play, children should take turns standing behind the designated tossing line and try to ring the pumpkins with the hula hoop. The child with the most rings wins.

•**Scarecrow relay:** Separate children into two teams. Choose one child from each team to be the scarecrow. Place scarecrows at one end of the room, along with hay and oversized scarecrow-type clothing items. Teammates line up at the other end of the room. To play, teammates take turns running to the scarecrow and dressing him

with one clothing item, then tag the next player who does the same. When the scarecrow is completely dressed, each teammate returns a second time to stuff straw in his clothing. The first team to finish making its scarecrow wins.

### Seasonal snacks

Food is more fun when kids are involved in the preparation process. Stick with things children like to eat and add a seasonal twist to it.

•**Floating faces:** Core and peel an apple, then cut it in half. Lay one half on the table and use a paring knife to create facial features. Repeat these steps until you have enough apple halves for each party guest. Place apples in a cider punch bowl. When the cider is ladled out, give each child a floating face.

•**Itsy-bitsy caramel apples:** Cut lollipop sticks in half. Use a melon baller to scoop little balls out of medium-sized apples, making sure each ball has a section of the apple peel. Push a lollipop stick into the peel of each apple ball. Blot apples dry with a paper towel. Melt a 14-ounce package of caramel candies with two tablespoons of water. Have children dip and swirl their apple balls in caramel, then roll in crushed Oreo cookies, nuts, sprinkles, nonpareils or mini-chocolate chips. Place on waxed paper to cool for 15 minutes.

•**Pumpkin pancakes:** Mix dry ingredients: 1 cup flour, 1 tablespoon sugar, 2 teaspoons baking soda, ¼ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon cinnamon. Set aside. Separate two eggs. Mix yolks with ½ cup of plain pumpkin puree, 1 cup milk and 2 tablespoons canola oil. Add dry ingredients. Beat egg whites until fluffy, then fold into the batter. Pour ¼ cup of batter onto a greased griddle; flip when bubbles form on top. Kids can make jack-o-lantern faces using raisins, dried fruit, nuts, chocolate chips and whipped cream.

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

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# Boo-tiful bash

Clever tips for hosting a Halloween party for kids and adults

BY PENNY WARNER

**H**ost a happy Halloween party — that's fun for both kids and adults — at your own haunted house. Make it creepy or kooky, cover up in a costume, and keep the treats and tricks coming!

## Eerie invitations

To invite your ghoulish guests, send out “pumpkin pal” invitations. Blow up orange balloons and write party details on them with glow-in-the-dark pens. Then, deflate the balloons and mail them to guests with instructions to inflate the balloons in a dark room to read the message.

Add plastic spiders and other creepy crawlers in the envelope to make the invite extra spooky.

## Boo-tiful decorations

Turn your humble home into a haunted house with the following tips:

- Create a “spooktacular” party setting by stretching cobwebs with rubber spiders over the doors and party tables. Make the atmosphere even more frightening with a fog machine and scary music.

- You can also scare up a few ghosts by inflating white helium balloons and adding ghost faces and white crepe paper streamers. Then let the spooky ghosts float around the room.

## Ghoulish games and activities

Party activities are a great way for kids and adults to have fun together:

- One idea is to create “Pumpkin-



peel back the glove. Float the ice hand in the punch bowl.

- You can also make worm-filled ice cubes by freezing water and gummy worms in ice trays.

- Finally, set out “body parts” as appetizers or snacks, such as Vienna sausages for fingers, deviled eggs for eyeballs, and tiny white mints for teeth.

## Frightening favors

When the party ends, send guests home with ghoulish goodies such as glow sticks, vampire teeth, gummy worms, stage makeup kits and mini pumpkins. Let them select Halloween tricks and treats from a treasure chest and take home their booty as favor.

*Penny Warner, the party planning expert for Balloon Time, has more than 25 years of experience as an author and party planner and has published more than 50 books. For more information, visit BalloonTime.com.*

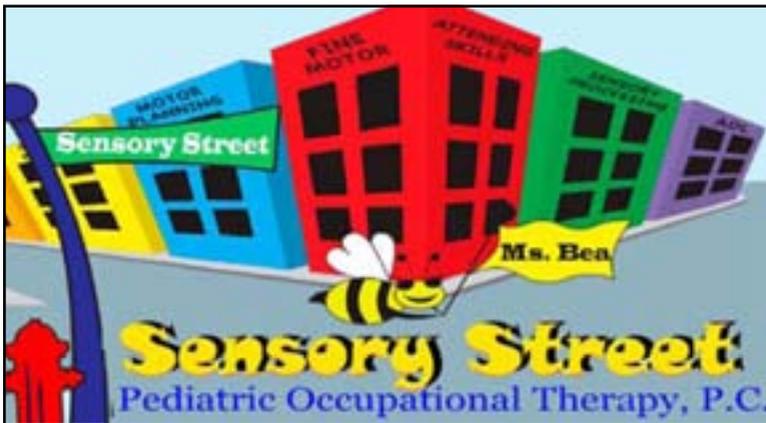
heads.” Give each guest an inflated orange balloon and a permanent marker. Place guest’s names in a hat, then, have everyone secretly select a name. Draw that person’s face on a balloon. Then, let everyone try to match the Pumpkin-head to the guest.

- Hold a trick-or-treat treasure hunt by hiding creepy items like plastic spiders, gummy teeth, and slimy eyeballs throughout the party room. Break into teams and search for the ghoulish goodies.

## Frightening refreshments

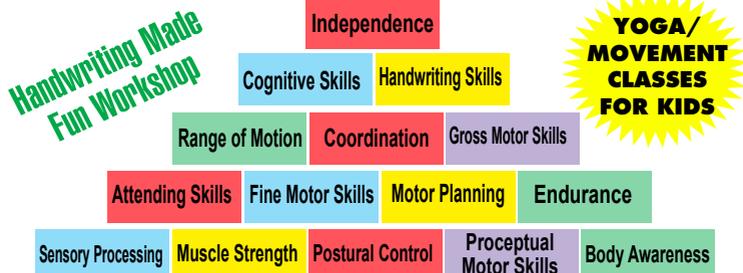
- Get creative — and creepy — by adding a floating green “hand” to your punch. To make the hand, freeze green tinted water in a rubber glove. To set the “handy” ice sculpture free from the glove, run the hand under warm water and





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# Boro treats

Check out these local Halloween events

BY SHAVANA ABRUZZO

**G**alloping gadzooks, BOO-klyn — it's hocus-pocus time! Are you and your merry munchkins brrr-ave enough to venture out on the most diabolical day of the year? Get you ghoul and put a phant-tastic foot forward with our howling, Halloween line-up:

## Ragamuffin Parade

Young urchins are invited to jump-start the monstrous month with a spooktacular rite of passage — the 45th Annual Ragamuffin Parade on Oct. 1.

Junior and lil' sis' will lap up the spotlight — especially if they like to play dress-up. Register your merry munchkin(s) in the school yard of Holy Angels Academy, 74th Street and Third Avenue, 11 am-12:15 pm.

Children — accompanied by an adult — will step off at 76th Street, and travel up the avenue to 92nd Street for more revels in the parking lot of HSBC Bank. Children who submit a registration form and complete the parade will receive a gift.

(718) 307-7855

## Haunt Jaunt

Ready to pound the green in your gruesome glad rags?

Prospect Park beck-

ons trick-or-treaters with its annual Halloween Haunted Walk, a spooktacle beneath the light of the yellow orb set for Oct. 29 — rain or shine. Make sure your lungs are wail-worthy because Lookout Hill will be jam-packed with headless horsemen, warlocks, zombies, wolfmen and other gory ghouls — goosebumps, guaranteed!

The frightfest, suitable for young children accompanied by adults, continues at the Nethermead with a carnival of games and seasonal treats.

Meet at Prospect Park Southwest and 16th Street, noon-3 pm.

It's free and open to all.

<http://www.prospect-park.org/calendar/event/halloween>.

## Spook-tastic stroll

Fall fun in the neighborhood begins at the Park Slope Civic Council's annual Children's Halloween Parade on Oct. 31 at 6:30 pm. The theme of this year's wacky walk is "BOO-klyn."

Primped princesses, gussied-up goblins and spiffy sprites are invited to join the razzle-dazzle, alongside other gleeful critters — accompanied by mom, dad or another adult, of course.

Assemble at the corner of Seventh Avenue and 14th Street, and follow the "yellow brick road" down to Third Street. The merry march culminates at Fifth.

(718) 832-8227

## Phant-astic frolic

Fangs and fake blood have a friend at the Fort Greene Park Conservancy! The group will rule over the calendar's most BOO-tastic day with its 12th annual free Halloween Festival at historic Fort Greene Park on Oct. 29, noon-3 pm.

The revel kicks off with a woof-tastic dog costume contest, so festoon Fido with all the bells and whistles befitting a Halloween hound. Rest assured, there's plenty of teeth-nashing tomfoolery planned for two-legged revelers, too, including horse-drawn hay rides, sack races, face painting, stilt-walkers, entertainers and pumpkin-painting. A cos-

tume contest and a creepy cemetery — featuring spooky stars "Will B. Back" and "R U Next?" — caps the fearsome festivities.

<http://fortgreenepark.org/>

## Get goosebumps

Chill your bones at the Pratt-Clinnton Hill Community Garden on Oct. 31. The fun begins as soon as the sun creeps out of the sky.

A friendly vibe with a down-home feel awaits tricksters at the urban oasis at DeKalb Avenue and Hall Street, where annual Halloween festivities include a haunted walk, performances and other thrills, 5-6:30 pm.

Devotees describe the eerie event as one of their favorites, thanks in part to the lark-loving folks at 313 Clinton Ave.

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## Haunted hotel

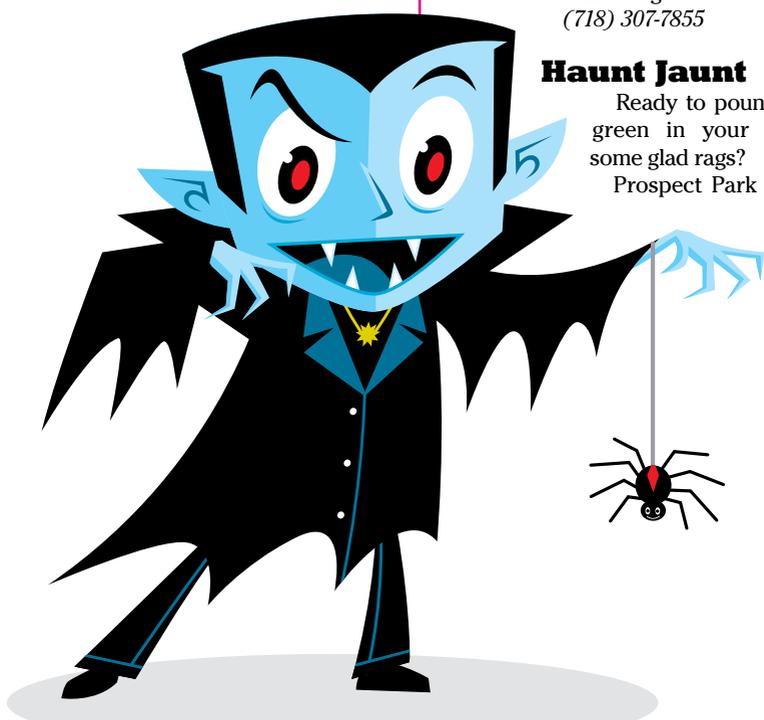
The boo-tiful "Gravesend Inn" is open for business at the New York City College of Technology!

The awesome attraction — part of the college's Haunted Hotel howl-fest — returns this year at the Voorhees Theatre on Jay and Tillary streets, complete with blood-boiling hijinks, though not for pre-school age tykes!

Be greeted by ghastly Tina Terminal, the ghost-bride on the prowl for her groom, Gunter. According to gory lore, Tina and Gunter died on their wedding day in their gown and tux, and their bodies are holed-up in the hotel. Yikes!

Tickets are \$5 and \$4 for groups. The chills and thrills are set for Oct. 20-21, Oct. 27-29, and Oct. 31, 1-5 pm, and 6-9 pm.

(718) 260-5588, (718) 260-5592 or visit [www.gravesendinn.org](http://www.gravesendinn.org)



# MORE SPOOKY FUN

*Attention trick-or-treaters: Monstrous Manhattan abounds with more Halloween spooktacles!*

## Wacky waxworks

Is there life after dark? Find out at the world's most famous wax museum where "After Dark: The Haunting" is poised to jangle bones on Oct. 20-23 and Oct. 27-30, from 9 pm till midnight.

Experience Madame Tussauds New York's notoriously terrifying paranormal activity. Tread the creepy corridors in unnerving darkness, hear the ceaseless moans and feel the chills run up your spine as sinister eyes follow your every move, and restless souls come alive to haunt the living — complete with teeth-melting special effects and "live" wax figures lurk in the shadows, waiting to pounce on tremulous trick-or-treaters.

The spectacle is not recommended for children under the age of 12, and teenagers under 15 must be accompanied by an adult.

Admission is \$25 at the door, \$22 online and \$18 for groups of 15 or more. Pre-purchased tickets are recommended as general admission tickets will not be accepted.

Madame Tussauds [234 West 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues, (800) 246-8872 or [www.afterdarknewyork.com](http://www.afterdarknewyork.com)].

## Woof-tastic parade

Howl with pride when your costumed pup is deemed the most wagnificent at the Halloween Dog Parade in the East Village on Oct. 22.

Bring Fido and pals to Tompkins Square Park, from noon till 3 pm, for one of the nation's largest pooch spooktacles. Now get gussying!

Tompkins Square Dog Run [East Ninth Street between Avenues A and B, (646) 675-2125].

## Halloween central

Expect gourds of fun in Central Park when the Central Park Conservancy holds a Pumpkin Sail on Oct. 23, from 4 till 7 pm.

Bring your own orange beauty to carve and decorate. (Be sure to check out the website below for details about pumpkin size and weight.)

The pumpkins will be illuminated and set sail on the Harlem Meer at 6 pm.

Central Park [Dana Discovery Center, 110th Street between Fifth and Lenox avenues, [www.centralparknyc.org](http://www.centralparknyc.org)].

## Top o' the Rock

The Top of the Rock Observation Deck at Rockefeller Center will welcome children and families to a jubilant Halloween celebration on Oct. 30, from 1 till 4 pm.

Children enjoy face painting, magic shows, sweet treats, and arts and crafts while the whole family takes in a breathtaking view. Activities are free with admission.

Tickets — also available at several on-site terminals — are \$23 for adults, \$21 for seniors and \$15 for children 6 to 12 years old. Children ages 5 and under are free.

Top of the Rock [30 Rockefeller Plaza, between 49th and 50th streets and Fifth and Sixth avenues, (877) 692-7625 or (212) 698-2000, [www.topoftherocknyc.com](http://www.topoftherocknyc.com)].

## High Line high jinks

Aim high this Halloween! Friends of the High Line will present the elevated park's first-ever All Hallow's Eve parade on the High Line, on Oct. 30, from noon till 3 pm.

Families are invited to dress in costume, assemble on the Seating Steps and keep an eye out for puppet master Ralph Lee, who will lead a cavalcade of students — featuring a giant train car puppet created by the kids. Masqueraders will march, beginning promptly at noon, to The Porch, the High Line's new open-air cafe, to paint faces, dance to kooky tunes, and build a spooky house with the Children's Workyard Kit.

It's free, but children 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

The High Line [West 22nd Street to West 15th Street, (212) 206-9922, [www.thehighline.org](http://www.thehighline.org)].

## Mask-a-rade

The American Museum of Natural History will fling open more than 30 of its popular halls on Oct. 31 — from 4 till 7 pm — for trick-or-treating, arts and crafts, strolling entertainers, and more.

Don't be surprised if you bump into your favorite cartoon character — past years have included appearances by Curious George, Winnie-the-Pooh, Strawberry Shortcake, Clifford the Big Red Dog, Madeline, Maya & Miguel, plus performers from the Big Apple Circus, stilt walkers, and master pumpkin carver Hugh McMahon. Wow!

American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West at 79th Street, (212) 496-3409, [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)].

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## FAMILY HEALTH

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# A safer Halloween

*Halloween is coming up. How can I make Halloween an enjoyable and safe holiday for my kids? How can I keep them from eating too many sweets at once?*

**M**ost children look forward to Halloween. They can stay up past bedtime, dress up as their heroes (or villains), watch scary movies, and — especially — eat lots of candy. But Halloween has also become a special concern for parents in recent years, as safety concerns have heightened.

Unlike other holidays in which children celebrate with relatives and friends, the Halloween trick-or-treat ritual exposes children to strangers, the hazards of nighttime traffic, and food from sources that cannot be easily traced.

Despite these hazards, children can have fun and enjoy a safe Halloween with some basic precautions and assistance from neighbors.

Children under 10 should always be accompanied by an adult. To determine whether older children should go out without adult supervision, consider a variety of other factors — such as the safety of the neighborhood and the size of the trick-or-treat group.

If you do allow your children to go unaccompanied, make sure they travel in groups to maximize their safety. It is a good idea to investigate the planned route by walking the area with the children during daylight hours in order to familiarize them with the neighborhood and the traffic rules. Have them avoid busy thoroughfares. If you live in an apartment building, double check building policies on trick-or-treating through the hallways.

Make sure to tell your children —



and remind them again before they go out — to stay away from strangers. They should only approach houses that are brightly lit and should never enter a stranger's house. They should also be sure to carry a flashlight after dusk.

To monitor your children's progress, you may want to prepare a list of neighbors and their telephone numbers. Ask specific neighbors to call you once your children have reached their houses. The length of time your children should spend trick-or-treating will be determined by the size of the neighborhood and the number of neighbors participating.

Once your children are prepared, make sure that their costumes are safe. If your children's costumes involve makeup, use non-toxic, hypoallergenic products for face and body

paint. The night before your children go trick-or-treating, apply some makeup to make sure they are not allergic to it. Dress them in bright-colored, flame-resistant costumes appropriate for mid-autumn temperatures — which can be quite cold in northern cities. Avoid masks, as they can obstruct views of traffic and other hazards, as well as baggy or large costumes, which can easily get caught, be stepped on, or catch fire from jack-o-lanterns.

Although children may want to eat some candy along the way, you should discourage this as much as possible. This year, Halloween falls on a Monday, so remind your children that eating too much candy may keep them awake at night, which can make them tired for school the next day. You can also make rules about eating candy on weekdays.

Once they are home with their candy, carefully inspect all of the treats for any evidence of tampering, including pinholes or rips in the packaging of the candy. Be sure to notify the police of any treats that appear to have been tampered with purposefully. Any unpackaged candy or fruit should be discarded.

Parents of smaller children should watch out for choking hazards, such as small, hard candies or peanuts.

When the goodies pass inspection, ration their consumption to small amounts each day. Eating too much candy leads to tooth decay and can cause nausea, headaches, and hyperactivity. Setting limits and letting your children know the downsides to eating candy may make them think twice before consuming too much of it.

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## NEWBIE DAD

BRIAN KANTZ

# Halloween fears

**T**he nights are getting colder. The harvest moon is full and bright. I'm pretty sure that I just heard a werewolf — or something — howling off in the distance — aww, aww, awwooooo. Yes, it's October. And for kids, that means one thing: Halloween.

Until this year, my boys were convinced Halloween was entirely about the candy. Dressing up in costumes and traipsing through the neighborhood was simply the means to an end. It was their way of procuring a bulging bagful of Tootsie Rolls, Snickers, and Smarties. They didn't question the process at all. No inquisitive "Daddy, why am I dressed like Scooby Doo?" No curious "Why are we knocking on some stranger's door at night?"

No second thoughts. They just wanted the goods.

Now that they're all of 7 and 4 years old, however, things have changed. They've become equally obsessed with the spooky side of Halloween and they love to talk about all of the things that they consider "scary."

As I've listened to their lists of scary stuff, it's occurred to me that I was scared of the exact same things when I was a kid. And that's interesting, because the list is kind of odd. They're not scared of global warming, contaminants in the drinking water, 30-year-mortgages, or Michele Bachmann, like us adults.

Kids have more immediate concerns, like grizzly bears and magic spells.

Could it be that there is a universal list of stuff that kids are scared of? If there is, it probably includes these things:

- **Quicksand.** I'm 38 years old. I've traveled a bit. Yet, I have never seen real quicksand in nature. Does it even exist, or is it just a Hollywood convention for quickly eliminating bad guys from a story line? When I was a kid, I was TERRIFIED of quicksand. One false step — in the backyard, on the way to school, at the beach, anywhere — and you were a goner, swallowed up in the grainy abyss. I was convinced of that. My kids now talk about quicksand with the same fear. Weird.

- **Volcanoes.** Everyone knows that dragons live in volcanoes. That's scary enough, but what my kids are even more afraid of is the lava. Red-hot molten lava rushing down the side of a mountain toward innocent bystanders. When footage of a volcano erupting in Japan hit the TV news, my boys were petrified. They asked: "Lava can't really cover a whole city, can it?" My wife, a social studies teacher, kindly offered them the story of Pompeii and Mount Vesuvius. The boys have been on volcano watch ever since.

- **Haunted houses.** Haunted houses are everywhere in October

— pay five bucks and a teenager in a goalie mask will gladly frighten the bejezus out of you. What I'm talking about, though, are real haunted houses. Like the house on the corner that has been vacant for two years. You know, that house that my son's father's dad's doctor's brother said belonged to a guy who escaped from prison and was later killed there by someone with a light saber. "Yeah, that house is haunted," my son said.

- **Darth Vader.** Speaking of light sabers, Darth Vader is one scary dude. He freaked me out for a good 20 years until I finally found out that it was just James Earl Jones back there. Within the past year, my boys have been mesmerized by all things Star Wars — the movies, the Lego Star Wars Wii games, action figures, etc. They wouldn't admit that they were scared of Darth Vader until we went to Star Wars Night at our local ballpark. On the way to the hot dog stand, both boys nearly soiled themselves when we walked right by Lord Vader in the concourse.

- **Loch Ness Monster.** The other night, completely out of the blue, my older son asked me if the Loch Ness monster is real. Actually, he asked: "Daddy, can we look up on the Internet to see if the Loch Ness monster is real?" After explaining that not everything on the Internet is fact, we Googled it. And there, in black and white, was the famous image of Nessie's serpent head rising out of the water. That was enough proof for him. His next question: "That monster couldn't swim across the ocean, could she?"

There are other scary things, too, of course — Bigfoot, tarantulas, potions and poisons, ninjas and giant roller coasters all make the kids' list. Halloween is pretty cool, though, because it's a time to consider those things that are a little scary to us, and to laugh and joke about them with others over a bagful of candy. And that tends to make everything seem less scary.

*Brian Kantz is always scared that he'll run out of candy on Halloween night. That's why he buys three times as much as he thinks he'll actually need. Mmm ... leftovers. Kantz can be reached at [thenewbiedad@yahoo.com](mailto:thenewbiedad@yahoo.com).*



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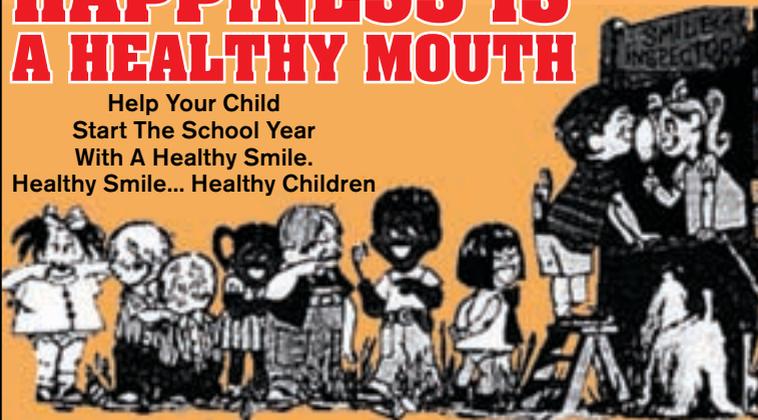
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# Happy braces this season

BY SHAVANA ABRUZZO

**T**oothsome treats aren't sweet when they bite back.

The American Association of Orthodontists wants brace-wearers to keep their fangs spooktacular through the trick-or-treating season, and ward off unnecessary visits to their offices!

The chopper-friendly organization is launching National Orthodontic Health Month by teaming up with Pam Waterman, author of "The Braces Cookbook," to bring thrill seekers and their parents healthy recipes and treats that are fun to make, delicious to eat and won't put a devilish dent in the boo-tiful smiles of the nearly five million Americans who wear braces, clear aligners or

other orthodontic appliances.

Halloween can be one of the busiest times of the year at orthodontists' offices, thanks to your tyke's Halloween haul.

Candies and other treats that are hard, chewy, sticky or crunchy can cause damage to orthodontic appliances, but, that's not the worst of it.

In addition to patient discomfort, a broken bracket or loose wire may prolong treatment and require additional orthodontic appointments. Now, that's scary!

The folks at the Association have your bridgeworks' back! The grrr-eat news is that there are lots of food options that will keep the scheming sugar sprites at bay, including Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Softies and Black Cherry Fruit Bats — just to name



chips and ices are other damaging culprits.

Where's the fun if you can't munch on a candy bar once in a harvest moon, you ask? Orthodontic patients can indulge occasionally, provided they brush and floss properly afterwards, says Dr. Lee W. Graber, the Association's president.

A few more tips: If you chew on a diabolical treat and damage occurs, contact your orthodontist — pronto! Typically, small problems can be solved over the phone, and loose brackets or wires can be accommodated with a dab of orthodontic wax until the patient can come into the office.

Most of all, remember Graber's eerie advice for keeping your haunt-fest a happy and healthy one, "Halloween should be a fun time for all kids, including those in orthodontic treatment!"

*Additional tips and information can be found on the American Association of Orthodontists' website, [www.braces.org](http://www.braces.org), or its Facebook, Twitter (@Braces) and YouTube pages. To locate an orthodontist, click on "Find an Orthodontist" or ask your dentist for a referral.*

two. (For more tooth-healthy treats check out the group's website, [www.braces.org](http://www.braces.org)).

The experts say that orthodontic patients should look for softer confections, such as mushy chocolate or peanut butter cups or melt-in-your-mouth foods. Those with braces or retainers should avoid sweets that are sticky, chewy, hard or crunchy, including caramel, nuts, popcorn, taffy, jelly beans and licorice.

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# Balancing act



Struggling to help kids juggle school, activities and entertainment

BY LAURA VAROSCAK-DEINNOCENTIIS

**J**ordana is a third grader who never has time for play dates with friends because every day after school she participates in various extracurricular activities: gymnastics, music lessons, dance classes, and acting workshops. Sometimes she is pulled out of school early to attend an audition. Usually, her auditions are scheduled on the weekends, so she often misses community and school events, as well as classmates' birthday parties.

By the time she arrives home in the evenings, Jordana is exhausted, but still has to find time to squeeze in homework, rehearsing, violin prac-

tice and dinner before bed. The earliest she goes to sleep is 10 pm.

Her mother acknowledges the hectic schedule, and says she regrets Jordana's frequent, late-night meltdowns, but says her daughter loves everything she does.

Parents want what is best for their children, but their good intentions can easily backfire.

Even though kids may appear to enjoy what they are doing, overscheduling can lead to stress, anxiety, depression and physical illness. They already experience enough pressure in a structured school environment where they are expected to excel. Constantly overloading their schedules prevents children from learning how to function well outside

of a high-stress arena of activity.

Teri is a working mom. She sends her fifth grade son, Scott, to an after school program until 5:30 pm. When he gets home, Scott refuses to review his homework or pick up a book. He complains that he's been working all day at school and "needs a break." While she does household chores, prepares dinner and showers, Teri allows Scott to watch TV and play video games for hours. He usually falls asleep on the sofa with the remote control in his hand.

"It's a long day for him," Teri explains. "He deserves to unwind and do what he wants to do."

While some parents overload their children's lives with enrichment opportunities, others allow their kids

Even though kids may appear to enjoy what they are doing, overscheduling can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, and physical illness.



to immerse themselves in sedentary activities like watching TV, playing video games, texting, or surfing the web on the computer. These addictive forms of media easily capture children's attention for too many wasteful hours and lead to many physical and psychological problems including obesity, sleeping disorders and aggression. The fast-paced action of TV and video games makes it harder to concentrate in the classroom and other environments with less stimulation. Developing brains need training to focus and function at their maximum capacity.

Striking a balance between too much structured after school activity and an overabundance of unproductive "hanging out" time is essential to a child's mental, physical and emotional health. Play is a natural way for children to discover themselves, express their creativity, and develop relationships with others. Scheduling downtime to explore and discover helps children make important connections with the world around them.

Joann picks up her 7-year-old son, Brandon, from school everyday and takes him to the neighborhood park. He enjoys playing alone and with friends. One of his favorite activities is taking a nature walk — gathering leaves, acorns, and rocks as he goes. Sometimes his mother brings their bikes and they ride together. He also likes to bring balls for a spontaneous game of baseball, soccer or basketball with peers in the park. Joann and Brandon have also established a tradition of reading under a tree on a hill that overlooks the water.

"We enjoy sharing the time together after a busy day at school and work," says Joann. "It's very relaxing."

Joann also supports extracurricular activities and takes Brandon to karate on Saturday mornings. He wakes up refreshed, raring to

go. He began studying martial arts two years ago and is slowly and enthusiastically working towards his black belt. Joann thinks it's important for her son to have one specific activity to focus on.

"He enjoys the discipline and takes pride in challenging himself," she says. For Joann and Brandon, it's about quality, not quantity.

Just as Joann limits the number of hours a week her son devotes to karate, she sets boundaries around the time he spends playing games on the computer and watching TV.

"I find no harm in moderation," Joann admits, "and Brandon respects our rules."

Joann monitors the television programs and Web sites her son visits and allows no more than one half-hour show during the week after he completes his homework. Depending on their weekend plans, Brandon chooses how he wants to spend his allotted one hour a day for video games and TV. He often prefers building with blocks or LEGOS instead.

Maintaining a healthy balance of structured and unstructured activities for your children can be challenging, especially in today's culture. It is a lifestyle choice that involves setting priorities, establishing clear boundaries and practicing consistency.

Families can start making changes to their over- or under-active lives by carving out valuable family time each day. Spending at least one hour together without the distraction of television, electronic game devices, phones, or computers is a great start. Simple activities like cooking a meal together, taking a walk and playing a non-competitive game are excellent ways to relax and unwind as a family. Not only are you enjoying each other's company, you are creating precious moments that will most likely last longer than the memory of a violin lesson or a TV program.

Laura Varoscak-DelInnocenti is a teacher and freelance writer. Varoscak-DelInnocenti has won editorial awards from Parenting Media Association and holds master's degrees in fiction writing, education and psychology. She lives in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn and is the proud mom of two sons, Henry and Charlie. Visit her website ([www.examiner.com/parenting-in-new-york/laura-varoscak](http://www.examiner.com/parenting-in-new-york/laura-varoscak)) for more articles on parenting.

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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Mom trusts her gut

## The doctors said her daughter was fine, but she kept looking

**I**t was early fall, but it had already been a long school year for my daughter. Kate was a good student with a lot of friends, but she had begun to dread going to school. At the same time, she was also noticeably tired, angry, and very worried. An initial physical exam showed nothing but good health. Yet, Kate — always an outgoing and fun-loving kid — was changing before my eyes, and I had no clue as to why.

She also had purple circles under her eyes and a distinct lack of appetite. I took her to a new doctor, since the pediatrician she had since birth had just retired. She was tested

for everything from Lyme disease to West Nile, and all the tests came back normal.

Her teacher said she didn't notice any odd behavior and Kate's grades were still good. She assured me that Kate wasn't being bullied or left out, but, increasingly, Kate did not want to go to school or do much of anything, really.

Kate complained of severe headaches and stomachaches, but — more than anything — she was always tired. I wondered if all the symptoms were just a combination of her worrying about going to school, which caused her to lose sleep and not eat right, which in turn, I assumed, accounted for her feeling sick. After all, her pediatrician said everything was fine.

But deep down, I felt it was more than that. I knew my child instinctively, and I knew something was wrong beyond her not wanting to go to school.

I resigned myself to find a physician who could help her, so we went to another doctor who ordered more blood work. While waiting for the tests to come back, Kate started having panic attacks, both at school and at home. She felt like she couldn't breathe and had heart palpitations, which made her believe she was going to die.

It was heartbreaking and probably the most worried and confused I have ever been as a parent. She had already been to a doctor who said she was fine, yet she was getting worse.

The next afternoon, the new doctor called me, and said Kate's thyroid levels were completely off. She had to be hospitalized and have more tests done. The doctor assured me that her diagnosis was not life threatening and

could be handled with medication as soon as she found out the extent to which her thyroid was functioning.

Her official diagnosis was Hashimoto's hypothyroidism with fluctuating high and low thyroid levels, which accounted for the panic attacks. The compromised thyroid was responsible for the headaches, listlessness, joint pain, severe weakness, and a host of other symptoms she was experiencing. After a few days, Kate started on the drug of choice, Synthroid, which is a synthetic thyroid replacement hormone, and over the next few months, she slowly improved.

It has been 5 years since was diagnosed at age 9. Now at 14, although she has improved, she still suffers from debilitating symptoms. Hypothyroidism is an autoimmune disease that causes the thyroid to not function optimally, so the thyroid gland is underactive or sluggish. It produces a host of symptoms, including extreme fatigue, weakness, exhaustion, headaches, and many more. It is managed, not cured. In many cases, it's a lifelong struggle to find a balance and feel good.

If I had not pursued the fight to identify what was wrong, if I had settled for the doctor's word above my daughter's symptoms, she might have gone for years without treatment. Thyroid disease is typically diagnosed in infancy or in postmenopausal women. It is not commonly diagnosed in children, and many pediatricians do not have experience with it.

When you know something is not right in your child, you have to explore it. Nothing is as on target as a mother's gut feelings. Trust yours, every single time.

**Next month:** Do you suffer from hypothyroidism and still feel terrible, despite treatment? We'll explore the mistreatment of patients with hypothyroidism in the November issue.

*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 Media Association. Sullivan also writes for Babble. You can find her on her blog, Just Write Mom.*





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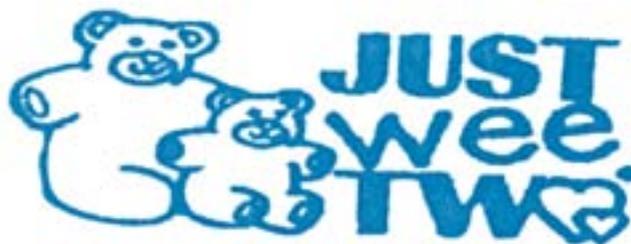
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# Frightful news

## Linking your kid's Halloween candy and hyperactivity

BY THE FEINGOLD ASSOCIATION

**A**re you one of the many parents who have to suffer through their children's temper tantrums and moodiness in the days following Halloween? You may be surprised to learn that these and other behavior problems are often due to synthetic food dyes and certain other additives found in the candy kids consume on this popular holiday.

"If your children act up after eating lots of Halloween candy, you might be tempted to blame the sugar, but the most likely culprits are petroleum-based food dyes," said Jane Hersey, national director of the nonprofit Feingold Association, a charity that helps special needs children. "Unlike sugar, these additives can lead to hyperactive behavior for days after kids have eaten the offending candies."

A Food and Drug Administration panel recently concluded that synthetic food dyes can have a detrimental effect on some children's behavior, and narrowly rejected requiring warning labels on foods containing these additives. The conclusion was based upon numerous scientific studies that support the link between synthetic food dyes and hyperactivity.

A 2007 study led by Dr. Jim Stevenson, published in the British medical journal *Lancet*, found that synthetic food dyes can trigger hyperactive behavior in all children, not just those

diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Stevenson later reported to the British government that the harm done by these dyes to children's IQs is similar to the impact of lead, and that banning these additives might "result in a 30 percent reduction in the prevalence of ADHD in children."

A 2011 study led by Dr. Lidy Pelsser also found that when 41 young children with ADHD completed a restricted additive-free diet, 78 percent of them had improved behavior. When suspected problem foods were reintroduced into the diet, two-thirds of the children experienced a relapse in symptoms.

Studies such as these have prompted the European Union to require labels on most foods containing synthetic food dyes to warn that these additives "may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children." The British government also called on manufacturers to voluntarily remove the dyes and advised parents to limit their children's consumption of dyed foods if they show signs of ADHD.

"Europe is way ahead of the United States in regulating synthetic food dyes, because parents there have been more vocal about the harmful effects these chemicals have on their children's behavior," said Hersey, whose eldest daughter's behavior was helped by the low-additive Feingold Diet.

The harmful dyes are Blue #1, Blue #2, Yellow #5, Yellow #6, Red #3, Red #40, Green #3 and Orange B, and parents should also help children avoid candies containing: artificial flavorings, aspartame, and the artificial preservatives BHA, BHT and TBHQ.

### Devilish dyes

Hersey offers these tips to parents desiring a calmer Halloween:

- Feed them first. Be sure your child goes trick-or-treating with a full stomach to discourage snacking en route.
- Offer a swap. Exchange the synthetic candies that your children bring home for natural candies, homemade treats, or new toys.

- Limit the damage. Go through the stash with your child to toss out the brightly-colored candies.

- Offer a buy-out. Offer to buy the candy your child collects.

- Visit a pumpkin patch. Take the kids to a pumpkin patch to pick their favorite pumpkins for jack-o-lanterns or homemade pumpkin pie.

- Throw a Halloween party. Feature natural treats and include a costume competition, a scary movie, and spooky music like Rimsky-Korsakov's "Night on Bald Mountain." Plus, decorating the house for the party can also be a fun family activity.

- Buy natural candy. To find natural versions of popular candies like dark and milk chocolates, peanut butter kisses, fruit candies, chocolate mint patties, and hard candies, check out the Feingold Association's Foodlist and Shopping Guide, Mail Order Guide, and other publications. Individual dietary needs vary and no one diet will meet everyone's daily requirements. Before starting any new diet, check with your doctor or nutritionist.

- Plan a candy-free outing. Arrange for a special evening at the skating rink, bowling alley, or movies, followed by healthy treats.

"Halloween and the days following it do not have to be stressful," said Hersey. "If you follow these suggestions, you and your family will not be singing the Halloween blues."

For more information on the Feingold Association, visit its website, [www.feingold.org](http://www.feingold.org), or call (800) 321-3287.

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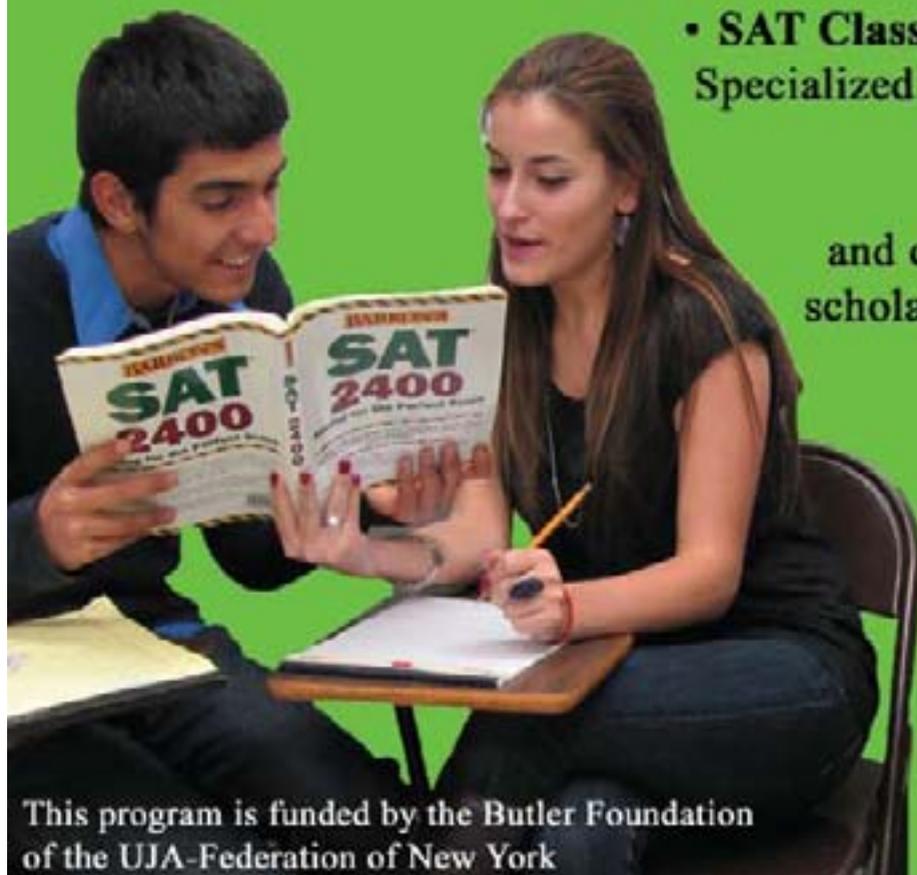


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# It's your move

National  
Chess Day  
puts spotlight  
on a great  
game for kids

BY IGOR POSTELNIK

**M**ake it a point to explore the game of chess with your child on Oct. 8 — National Chess Day.

Chess is a fun board game that the government claims to have academic and emotional benefits, too. The U.S. Senate resolution recognizes chess as a “powerful cognitive learning tool,” and it notes that “many studies have linked chess programs to the improvement of student scores in reading and math,

as well as improved self-esteem.”

And it seems that your child can't be too young to be introduced to the game. In his book, “Your Child's Intellect,” former U.S. Secretary of Education Terrell Bell encourages some knowledge of chess as a way to develop a preschooler's intellect and academic readiness. In at least one private school in Manhattan, chess is taught to all students from kindergarten through second grade.

Although playing chess encourages a great deal of concentration

and interaction, the best part about playing the game — from the child's perspective — is that it is entertaining! Most kids love games, and chess motivates them to become willing to problem solve. Some students who have a hard time sitting still in a classroom love chess, and they enjoy spending time quietly immersed in logical thinking.

And for those interested in nurturing a love of this strategic pastime, New York City is the perfect place to get them started as the boroughs are brimming with chess

The U.S. Senate resolution recognizes chess as a “powerful cognitive learning tool,” and it notes that “many studies have linked chess programs to the improvement of student scores in reading and math, as well as improved self-esteem.”



fans, tournaments, instructors — and even grandmasters! These resources have resulted in a our children's domination in all age categories at the 2011 national school chess championships.

When high schools competed in Nashville, Tenn. in May, Hunter College High School, Brooklyn's IS 318 and the Bronx High School of Science took all three top spots in the chess tournament's highest level of play. But it was New York's best elementary school team — the Panda Pawns from PS 124 in Manhattan — that demonstrated how powerful the city's scholastic chess scene has become by beating accomplished opponents nearly twice its age. The Pawns won top honors in the second-toughest division.

According to the Wall Street Journal's article, “New York Chess: Why NYC Schools Dominate the Game of Kings,” chess has entered our schools as part of the curriculum and as an after-school activity, providing a large pool of talent for local tournaments, at which young players gain competitive experience. Immigrants from countries where playing chess is a national pastime have helped increase the number of chess fans in the city, and those parents foster interest in the game often serve as instructors.

The article goes on to explain that Chess-in-the-Schools, a non-profit, is the city's largest provider of chess instruction, both in after-school settings and as part of the curriculum. The group, which works with 13,000 students in 50 schools with low-income populations, also trains teachers on how to start chess programs with Project Chess. And it's just one of several organizations working in schools and organizing tournaments.

Learning to play chess can help children develop critical thinking skills, as well as other positive academic and non-academic abilities. Kids learn to see patterns and plan ahead before acting. If a player loses his queen, it forces him to immediately pay attention. Chess also teaches the player how to lose, win, be competitive and face an opponent — important skills that have been removed from a lot of other traditional activities.

Many studies demonstrate that students who participate in chess programs show improved scores on standardized tests. The gains are even greater among children with low or average initial scores.

When compared to other games, chess provides a far greater quantity of problems for practice. Just one book, “Chess,” written by Laszlo Polgar — the father of the three chess prodigies, The Polgar Sisters — has more than 5,000 puzzles. Although it is one of the largest chess books ever written, there are thousands of other books to choose from.

Chess-playing students also become accustomed to looking for more — and different — alternatives in games and puzzles.

Whether you dust off your own board and pieces, sign him up for a class, or encourage your child to make the most out of his school's chess program, take advantage of National Chess Day and introduce your child to the thrill of a checkmate.

*For more information about Chess-In-The-Schools, visit chessintheschools.org.*

*Igor Postelnik is a United States national chess master. He and his wife Irina manage Long Island City Kids Enrichment Center, where they offer chess classes. For more information, visit www.lickids.com.*



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## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

# Talking to your child about terminal illness

### Dear Sharon,

My mother lives with us and is terminally ill. Do you have any advice about how we can talk to our children about this? They are 8 and 12. They will be observing her decline and the changes associated with her cancer treatment, and we could definitely use some good feedback from you and others. They adore her, and we haven't told them yet and don't even know if we should, or if we should just let it unfold and deal with the changes as they happen. What do you think?



### Dear Parents,

The details of how to help children, and adults, be with a beloved relative who is terminally ill can be as varied as the individual personalities and circumstances involved, but here are some things to keep in mind that might be helpful as your mother's illness unfolds.

Many 8 and 12 year olds are mature enough to have had some experience with, or thoughts about, serious illness or death. Therefore, it is often useful for children this age to take part in some discussion about a family member who is confronting a health crisis, and for their parents to be available to answer questions and offer support.

When having emotional conversations with children, I often suggest that parents plan to do so in a peaceful and relatively private environment, and at a time when no one is rushed or distracted by the responsibilities and details of everyday life.

Such a conversation might take place in a restful room at home, or while walking in the park on a beautiful afternoon. It is also ideal, if possible, to set aside enough time together to relax and/or enjoy each other's company before and after the talk.

It is often hard to know the best time to bring up such a complicated topic. It can depend on the age and emotional temperament of each child affected and the progression of the disease. Generally, I suggest that parents give ample time for children to process what is happening as signs of a sickness become more visible, but to avoid having the illness become a major focus in a young one's life before it needs to be.

Setting up the conditions for children to share their thoughts and emotions can be one of the most caring things an adult offers in trying times. As young people often have "hunches" about family concerns, there are many ways to help a child "open up," but it can be useful to begin with a question such as "How do you think your grandmother is doing lately?" Listening carefully to a child's initial response can help Mom or Dad frame the pace and

focus of the discussion. If and when the conversation progresses, it is usually wise to introduce specific information slowly and thoughtfully, pausing frequently for questions and giving ample time and space for reactions.

Such talks are rarely easy to have, in part because adults are upset about the challenging circumstances as well. I believe that it is fine for an adult to be emotional as she talks to her child about difficult topics, but whenever possible, it is important to not let her understandable worries and grief distract her from focusing on her child's needs.

It is good to remember that young people often sort through and recover from major transitions differently than adults. That is fine. Asking a child what he would like to do during and after a relative's illness can help parents think through how to set things up to go well for everyone.

Although it is always tragic when a loved one is declining, it can also be a time when family and friends gather together to share their wisdom and care, ultimately strengthening relationships for everyone.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, [www.PHPonline.org](http://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](mailto:SWeiss@cnglocal.com).

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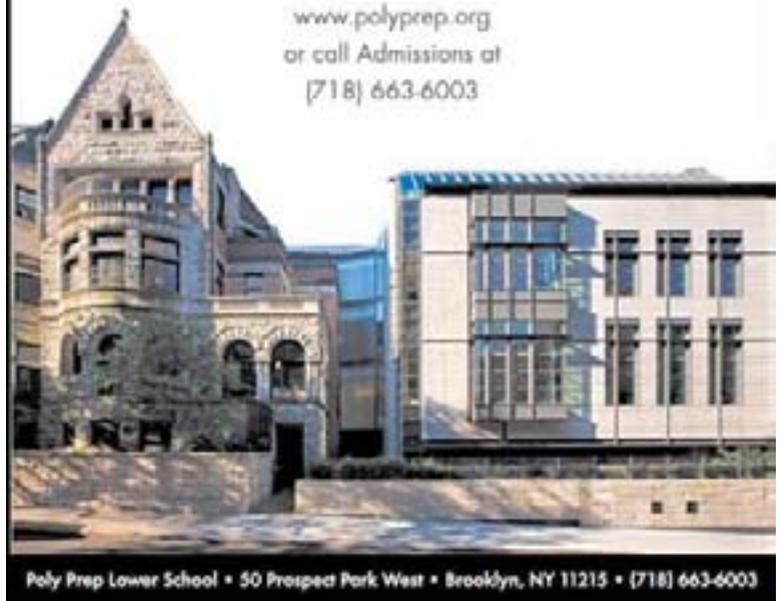
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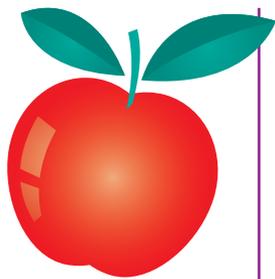
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## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND  
MARGE EBERTS

# Evaluating writing skills

**Question:** My fourth-grader's writing is very sloppy, and she misspells a lot of words. On top of this, her sentences are only three or four words long. If I ask her to write a sentence, she finds it very difficult to put words together. Is she displaying age-level behavior with her writing skills?  
— *Anxious*

**Answer:** Your daughter's writing skills should be judged on the basis of what is expected of students at the end of third grade. Her handwriting at that time would be considered legible if she has correct spacing between letters in a word and words in a sentence.

As far as spelling goes, by the end of third grade, most schools would expect students to at least spell one-syllable words correctly. She also should be able to correctly spell the words that were on last year's spelling tests.

Your daughter also should be able to capitalize the first word in a sentence and use appropriate end punctuation of simple sentences. She should be able to vary the length of her sentences.

Parents often evaluate the skill level of their children by using adult standards. Talk to your child's teacher to find out if your child's writing meets the school's expectations for her grade level. You will also find it helpful to look at the writing of other students in the class. If your daughter's work is not up to grade level, this is the time to discuss how it can be improved.

Parents who are concerned about their young children's writing skills in preschool through third grade can get a good idea of how they are doing by going online to [www.readingrockets.org/looking\\_at\\_writing](http://www.readingrockets.org/looking_at_writing) and seeing samples of real children's writing at these levels. There are also comments about what each child needs to learn to do next.

## Response to Intervention

**Question:** I've heard about Response to Intervention, but I really don't understand exactly what it



is, and how it will affect my child. Please explain.  
— *In the Dark*

**Answer:** Response to Intervention is a new instructional framework designed specifically to provide quick, early help to students who are having difficulty learning — before they are failing. One of the aims of Response to Intervention is to prevent unnecessary assignment of students to special education.

Response to Intervention integrates assessment and intervention with a three-tiered prevention program to ensure that all students achieve, along with reducing behavior problems. How your child is affected by the program depends on how rapidly his or her school is moving to implement it fully.

In a school using the program, a screening is used with every student. Then, based on the results of the screening, it provides support for all students at the intensity level each one needs to achieve academic success. Students are placed in one of three tiers. As the year progresses, tiers of intervention can change.

•Tier one: Most students will be in this tier, which is the grade-level

classroom. Help is given in the form of research-based interventions to the class or individuals based on frequent assessment of the progress the group and individuals are making in meeting grade-level norms.

•Tier two: Students placed in this tier will receive classroom instruction, plus supplementary instruction three to four times a week from 30 to 60 minutes for nine to 12 weeks in small groups (usually two to four students). The supplementary instruction is provided by trained personnel. These students are frequently monitored to see if they no longer need Tier two services or may require Tier three services.

•Tier three: These students need more intense and more frequent interventions. They are having significant learning difficulties and have not been helped by Tier two interventions. Special-education instruction is provided to these students individually or in small groups by special-education teachers.

Students who need more support than provided in the tier system will be further tested to identify their specific learning disability needs. For more information on Response to Intervention, visit [www.rti4success.org](http://www.rti4success.org).

## Handling behavior problems

**Question:** Our second-grader has been in school for almost a month now, and he has behavior problems. He is unable to stay in his seat. If he happens to be in his seat, he is always talking. The teacher says he never stops. I am running out of ideas on how to discipline him when he gets home at night.  
— *Tired*

**Answer:** You can discipline him when he gets home, but it is too late to do much good. Do go to his school and observe his behavior, and see if you have any suggestions for the teacher.

This teacher needs to become proactive. The school's behavior specialist or a mentor should come and observe your son in class. Then a behavior intervention plan can be developed to improve his behavior. If this doesn't work after a few weeks, he may need to be tested to see if there is some underlying reason for his behavior.

Parents should send questions and comments to [dearteacher@dearteacher.com](mailto:dearteacher@dearteacher.com) or ask them on the columnists' Web site at [www.dearteacher.com](http://www.dearteacher.com).

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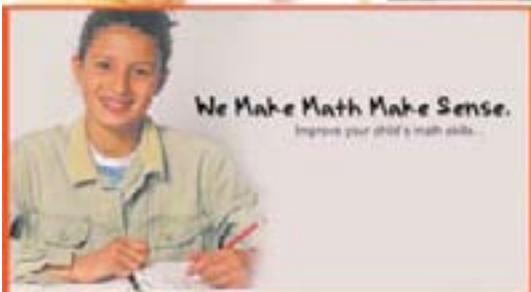
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## OUR RELATIONSHIPS

JOAN EMERSON, PhD

# Waves of emotion at the beach house

**B**eing out at a beach house for two weeks with different family configurations definitely gives one pause to think about what it takes for families to get along throughout a life span. Looking back to all the years that this summer vacation house has seen is a reminder of the angst, as well as pleasure, that went along with each of the stages of my own life: singlehood, young marriage, kids, failing marriage, divorce, single motherhood, new relationships, no relationships, adult kids, a (finally) good remarriage, sons' marriages, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren.

Surprisingly, I'm not done adjusting to life's stages yet, as this grandparent stage carries with it unexpected challenges that, like new parenthood, can't be mastered in advance, but only through trying to figure out how to make it work as I go through it.

I remember, upon becoming a grandmother, finding a book of essays, "Eye of My Heart," by well-known female writers, expounding the joys and tribulations of grandmotherhood. Tribulations?? Thank god I wasn't the only one — what a relief!! I lent that book to every grandmother I knew.

Staying under the same roof at the beach with my children and their own children has made me think continuously — obsess, actually — about why this new grandmother role should be so fraught, and not as simply joyful as I was taught to expect. The closest I've come to understanding the struggle is to see that it's not the relationship with the grandchildren that is the hard part — it's the relationship between their parents and me that needs the attention. So I'm back to dealing with my own children, this time with them as full-fledged adults and me as the aging generation who apparently still can't get it right.

True, my story is only one of a myriad of possibilities, but as I talk to my peers and young parents, I see



that there can be many areas of conflict over the grandchildren. Some of us grandparents think we know ways in which life could be made easier for everyone if our kids would just make some adjustments in their parenting styles. We wish for an independent relationship with the grandkids that's special only between us, yet, when our kids are present, they don't want to be pushed aside. They feel they must help in interpreting between us and the grandkids, as we cannot be counted on to communicate effectively. We feel that they are overly involved and don't let the kids have the time and space to relax and learn on their own, while they feel we are neglectful and not sensitive to the kids' needs. We feel like the third wheel and left out as the parents and kids enjoy each other, and they see us as too self-centered.

Naturally, our own kids feel — as we did when we were starting families — that it is not our business to comment on their parenting styles. Instead, they see ways in which we could make their lives easier if we could avoid what feels, to them, like judgments, and just step up and help them out by going along with the program.

After these recent summer experiences, both my sons went out of

their way to try to make me understand how pushed to the max they were with responsibilities and the accompanying stresses of this stage of life, and how my focus on my own feelings and needs just makes their lives harder. I've come to accept that this is my role for now: go along with the program when with the family. If I want to get to know my grandkids separately, I can do that when babysitting them and as they get older. If I want to relate adult-to-adult with my sons, a short, interrupted telephone conversation is probably the closest I'll come to that for now. This has been a learning process of giving up some of my needs that I haven't been forced to deal with in a long time.

Yet, somehow, it was extremely liberating to hear an honest, open — even if angry — expression of my sons' frustrations with me. At least the harbored resentments on both sides were now spoken, and, afterwards, I noticed myself smiling with relief that both my sons were willing to try to communicate these feelings with me, painful as they were. I've thought, talked, examined, and just sat with what was brought up in me by these talks, and am coming to see that this is the way it must be for now, and going along with their wishes is the right path for me to take. I just hope I can do it.

Once again, talking about feelings — instead of keeping them in — was the turning point for me. This time I was the listener, and hearing my sons talk, angry and upset and overwhelmed as they were, was hard. I spoke to myself during these conversations ("Just shut up, Joan") and it felt good to quietly listen, have them be the ones to share some deep emotion with me, and let them know that they were heard. Next step, the follow-through. I'll let you know how I do.

*Joan Emerson is a New York psychologist who specializes in couple's therapy. Visit her website at [www.JoanEmerson.com](http://www.JoanEmerson.com).*



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## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Step up to the 'Plate

**G**oodbye baffling pyramid. Hel-LO MyPlate!

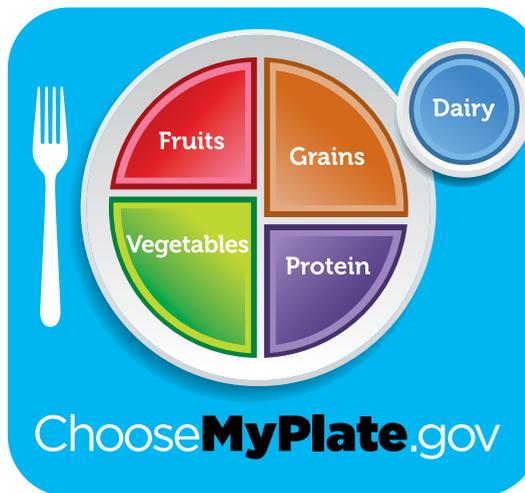
We are finally rid of the striped Food Guide Pyramid and now have a familiar plate in its place. In June, the United States Department of Agriculture unveiled the symbol that should guide our meals: a plate divided into food groups shown in the recommended proportions.

The plate makes it perfectly clear that eating right means plenty of vegetables and fruits, plus whole grains.

"This is a quick, simple reminder for all of us to be more mindful of the foods that we're eating," said First Lady Michelle Obama during the press conference to unveil the new plate. "And as a mom, I can already tell how much this is going to help parents across the country."

The key recommendations are:

- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Avoid oversized portions.
- Make half of your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half of your grains whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (one percent) milk.
- Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread and frozen meals, and choose the foods with lower numbers.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.



make fruits and vegetables half of our plates, the latest United States Department of Agriculture figures show that fruits make up just three percent of our total daily calories, and veggies just five percent. Added fats, oils, sugars and other sweeteners made up 41 percent of calories in 2008.

Plenty or more detailed advice is offered in the full nutrition guidelines at [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov). For example, right on the home page, you can use the MyFoodpedia, Daily Food Plan, Food Planner,

and Food Tracker interactive tools. Would you like to know the calorie count of a particular food? Ask there. Also, if you click on New and Media, scroll down to Print Materials to download coloring sheets in English or Spanish.

Zonka recommends that parents of pre-school aged children use MyPlate as a game. She suggests taking pictures of foods like broccoli, meat and whole grains, and matching the foods to the food groups, like a puzzle. "Ask, what do you think this is?" She suggests.

Children ages 6 and up should become involved in the kitchen, according to Zonka.

"Get them making food and plating it. Talk about colors and texture, put it on the plate and let them play around. Have them come up with a menu," she says. "Ask, how does it all work together?" By making it more tactile, kids can function better in the kitchen.

As for me? I like that the plate is simple enough for anyone to understand. I'm happy that the tips found on the website start off with encouragement to enjoy your meals. And as Obama said, if her daughters' plates are filled with lots of fruits and vegetables, "then we're good. It's as simple as that."

*Christine M. Palumbo, RD, practices nutrition in suburban Chicago. Contact her at [Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com](mailto:Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com) with your column ideas or questions, or follow her on Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition.*

## Fruit kabob

(Makes seven kabobs)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 apple
- 1 banana
- 1/3 cup red seedless grapes
- 1/3 cup green seedless grapes
- 2/3 cup pineapple chunks
- 1 cup nonfat yogurt
- 1/2 cup flaked coconut
- 7 10-inch wooden skewers

**DIRECTIONS:** Prepare the fruit by washing the grapes and apples and cutting them into small squares; peel-



ing the bananas and cutting them into chunks; and cutting the pineapple into chunks, if fresh. Put the fruit onto a large plate. Spread the coconut and yogurt onto two other large plates. Slide the pieces of fruit onto the skewer and design your own kabob by putting as much or as little

of whatever fruit you want! Do this until the stick is almost covered from end to end. Hold your kabob at the ends and roll it in the yogurt, so the fruit gets covered. Then roll it in the coconut. Repeat with the remaining fruit and skewers.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 90 calories, 18 grams carbohydrate, 3 grams protein, 2 grams fat (1.5 gram saturated), 0 cholesterol, 2 grams fiber, 30 milligrams sodium, 77 milligrams calcium, 12 milligrams vitamin C.

Recipe adapted and used by permission from Kendall College School of Culinary Arts.



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## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Safeguarding your digital photographs

**C**hildhood is fleeting, so it's natural that parents want to capture the good times, especially during the holidays. Digital devices make it easier than ever to record memorable moments. Some experts recommend that parents decrease clutter by using digital images to preserve a memory of everything from science projects to beloved toys that have been outgrown.

The nagging question is whether

as they may look, CDs, DVDs and flash drives can break or decay when they are exposed to temperature extremes, humidity and mold. Also, data consists of magnetic signals. If even a few of these are degraded, an entire disk may become unreadable.

Second, digital information can be read only if you have the right machine and the right software. Every time you upgrade equipment, you risk losing access to files that were encoded with an earlier format.

So what's a parent to do? Commit yourself to a few simple strategies that make it more likely that your memories will be available to you — and maybe your grandkids.

- **Be selective.** Digital storage makes it possible to take 300 pictures of your child's birthday party. Delete photos that are blurry or boring. If you can't bear to do that, create two archives — one for truly memorable photos and one for everything else.

- **Get organized.** Setting up a good filing system takes time and thought, but it's effort that will be repaid. The easiest system is chronological. Get

in the habit of downloading photos from phones and cameras, as well as video and audio files, at least once a month. You can also build archives around seasonal events. Kids love seeing themselves grow from Christmases or, for that matter, Halloweens past. Or, build a separate archive for each child.

- **Label and tag.** Nothing is more frustrating than being unable to retrieve a great photo. Images that are especially meaningful deserve a label that includes all the information a good reporter would want. When? Put the year first and then the month to stay in chronological order. Who? Include names or initials to make

searching easier. Where? This is especially important for travel photos. Why? Make up a code word that will help you identify special photos.

- **Back it up.** Having one copy of anything you care about is asking for heartbreak. Although DVDs, CDs, and flash drives make it possible to store copies of important files in a fireproof box or even a safe deposit box, they are easily lost and damaged — and you have to remember to update them. A portable hard drive can be programmed to perform a regular back up for everything that's on your main computer, but will survive neither fire nor flood.

Storing photos online makes it easy to share and get access no matter where you are, but you can't necessarily count on the company managing the cloud to be there in 20 years. Crazy as it sounds, paper may be the best way to guarantee the longevity of photos and other documents. Tapes can also be surprisingly durable if they are stored properly in a cool, dry place.

- **Update.** Some experts recommend creating new copies every five years to avoid data loss. Others point out that every copy of a digital file is a little less perfect than the one before. To some extent, parents who are serious about preservation have to think of themselves as curators, checking the quality of the archive periodically. For advice, as well as materials, visit [familyarchive.com](http://familyarchive.com).

Given the effort that goes into caring for a digital archive, it's worth giving some thought as to why you are creating one in the first place. Especially during the holidays, it's important to remember that, often, the very best way to make a memory that lasts is to be fully present in the moment with your child.

*Carolyn Jabs, MA, has been writing about families and the Internet for more than 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](http://www.growing-up-online.com).*

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memories are actually safe when they are stored in digital formats. Concerns about such storage are showing up among preservationists who have begun to mutter about the "digital dark ages." The Library of Congress has actually created a website designed to help families build and protect a personal digital archive at <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/you/>.

According to the experts, you should be concerned about two things if you hope to see your child's baby pictures when he graduates from high school. First is data rot, the degradation of information that's encoded in bits and bytes. Durable



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# Meet the teacher

## Making the most of your parent-teacher conference

BY DR. VALERIE ALLEN

**S**chool is in full swing, the pencils are sharpened and the books are covered. You've paid for school supplies, and you've worked out a schedule that works for your family for after-school activities and Saturday sports, classes, or chores.

Now it's time to get serious: The parent-teacher conference. One common element among successful students is involved parents. Children whose parents are conscientious

the pace for an ongoing relationship between parents and teachers for the entire school year. Consider the parent-teacher conference as a team meeting. The goal is to plan effective strategies so your child will have a winning season.

A successful parent-teacher conference should include the following:

- **Be positive:** Focus on your child's strengths, talents, and successes. Let the teacher know you love, cherish, and respect your child. You hold your child in high regard and expect others to do the same.

Remember, you are entrusting your most precious possession to this teacher. This person may well spend more hours each day with your child than you do.

- **Keep in perspective:** Children are not being immature, they are acting their age! Child development is a work-in-progress and behavior should be viewed as one point on an ever-changing continuum. When there is a problem, understand that children often do "grow out of it." One of our jobs is to coach and support them, with compassion and consistency, as they encounter life's ups-and-downs. It is critical that parents and teachers mutually support consequences of misdeeds, but not allow negativity to cast a shadow over the entire school year. It is important to separate the "doer" from the "deed" to avoid setting low expectations and a negative reputation for your youngster.

• **Focus on reality:** Neither exaggerate nor diminish your child's academic progress, social skills, or behavioral reactions. Readily identify your youngster's strengths and shortcomings. You know your child better than the teacher does, but the teacher is well educated in child growth and development. She has worked with hundreds of children. Remember, too, that you are emotionally invested in your child, but

the teacher is able to be more objective. Respect the teacher as a professional child expert and consider her suggestions carefully.

- **Ask questions:** Be specific about your youngster's exact grade level performance compared to the grade he is in. You can benefit from the teacher's evaluations and observations of your child during school time. What areas does he need extra help with? What is his reading grade level? Is there a vocabulary list you can study at home? Is there a list of recommended reading books?

Find out whom your child sits next to during free time and whom he enjoys playing with. Does he have a special friend? How does your child respond to criticism from peers or the teacher? Is he helpful, does he take the initiative in learning situations, and use problem solving strategies? Are there special events coming — picture day, field trips, career day?

- **Thank the teacher:** Voice your appreciation for the teacher's time and interest in working with you to help your child succeed in school. Point out something specific the teacher has done that you especially like, such as birthday recognition, display of children's work, or notes home to parents. Mention a school-related anecdote your child has told you which reflects positively on the teacher or the school. Offer to volunteer in the classroom or with projects which can be done at home.

Each successful school year is a milestone for your child. Each grade level not only helps with academic progress, but with socialization skills. Ultimately, each success fortifies your youngster's feeling of self-worth and self-confidence. The parent-teacher conference is one vehicle for monitoring and coaching your child through a positive educational experience.

*Dr. Valerie Allen is a child psychologist in private practice. She presents seminars for parents and professionals in the field of child development and has published a children's book, "Summer School for Smarties." Oh, yes, she has also raised six children!*



about education tend to do better academically and develop positive social skills. They have fewer behavioral problems, are less apt to cut class, and are most likely to graduate from high school.

It is important that your child understands the home-school connection between parents and teachers. This should be viewed by all involved as a time to share information, not a tattletale session. This is an opportunity to help the teacher to get to know your youngster better and lay the groundwork for a mutually-cooperative relationship.

The parent-teacher conference is not just a one-time event, but sets

the pace for an ongoing relationship between parents and teachers for the entire school year. It is important to separate the "doer" from the "deed" to avoid setting low expectations and a negative reputation for your youngster.

• **Focus on reality:** Neither exaggerate nor diminish your child's academic progress, social skills, or behavioral reactions. Readily identify your youngster's strengths and shortcomings. You know your child better than the teacher does, but the teacher is well educated in child growth and development. She has worked with hundreds of children. Remember, too, that you are emotionally invested in your child, but



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## cinematters



LAURA GRAY

# Zookeeper loves life, full of furry friends

## Zookeeper *Rated PG*

**Y**our son is delighted to discover there's a boy his age moving in next door. With great anticipation, he watches the movers unload a shiny new bicycle, a battery-operated truck and a huge swing set, complete with fort and slide. But his smile fades when he turns his attention to his own toy collection: his well-worn bike, a box of miniature cars, a dusty tire swing.

Days later, the new boy shows up on your doorstep asking to play with your son. A little embarrassed, your son leads him into the backyard. His new friend's eyes light up when he spots the tire swing. Soon, both boys are taking turns on it, flying high and squealing with excitement.

Your son gains a new perspective on his "old" toys with the help of his friend. He finds that it's good to take a fresh look at what you love and learn to appreciate it more — a lesson that's driven home for Griffin, the animal-loving caretaker in "Zookeeper," available this month on Blu-ray and DVD from Sony Pictures. Enjoy the film with your family and then discuss it using our Talking Points. Later, you can play "My favorite things" using our Play Together guidelines.

In "Zookeeper," Griffin enjoys a special bond with the animals in his care. He brings them treats, talks to them, and works hard to coax a despondent gorilla to play. The zoo's veterinarian admires his commit-



Zookeeper Griffin is shocked to discover his animal friends can speak to him.

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ment and compassion. But Griffin is lonely and longs to win back his former girlfriend, Stephanie, who thinks his zoo job is beneath him.

In order to help their friend, the animals break their "code of silence" and speak to him directly. Their dating advice — which doesn't always translate well from the animal kingdom to the human world — meets with mixed results. Eventually, Griffin gets his girl, but the cost is high. She insists that he leave his zookeeper job for a more "glamorous" position as a luxury car salesman.

Although he becomes wildly successful at work and in love, Griffin is miserable. He misses the animals and, especially, his gorilla friend, Bernie. And he discovers that he has genuine feelings for Kate, the zoo's veterinarian. Before it's too late, Griffin quits his sales job, returns to the zoo, and intercepts Kate before she can leave for a job in Africa. He realizes that what he had was really what he wanted after all.

### Talk together

Griffin treats the zoo animals as if they are his friends even before he knows they can talk. How do they feel about him? Why do they hide their ability to talk from Griffin?

What do the animals think of Griffin's plans to win back Stephanie? When they decide to break the "code" and offer advice, how does Griffin react? What are some of their suggestions? Which was your favorite? Not all of the advice we may get from friends is helpful. How do you decide whether or not to take someone's advice?

What does Griffin do when he realizes he made a mistake by leaving the zoo? How do the animals react when he returns? In real life, how hard is it to admit that you were wrong? What do you do to make things right?

*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: My favorite things

You will need:

- A box with a lid
- Several small items that hold special meaning for the players
- Paper and pencils

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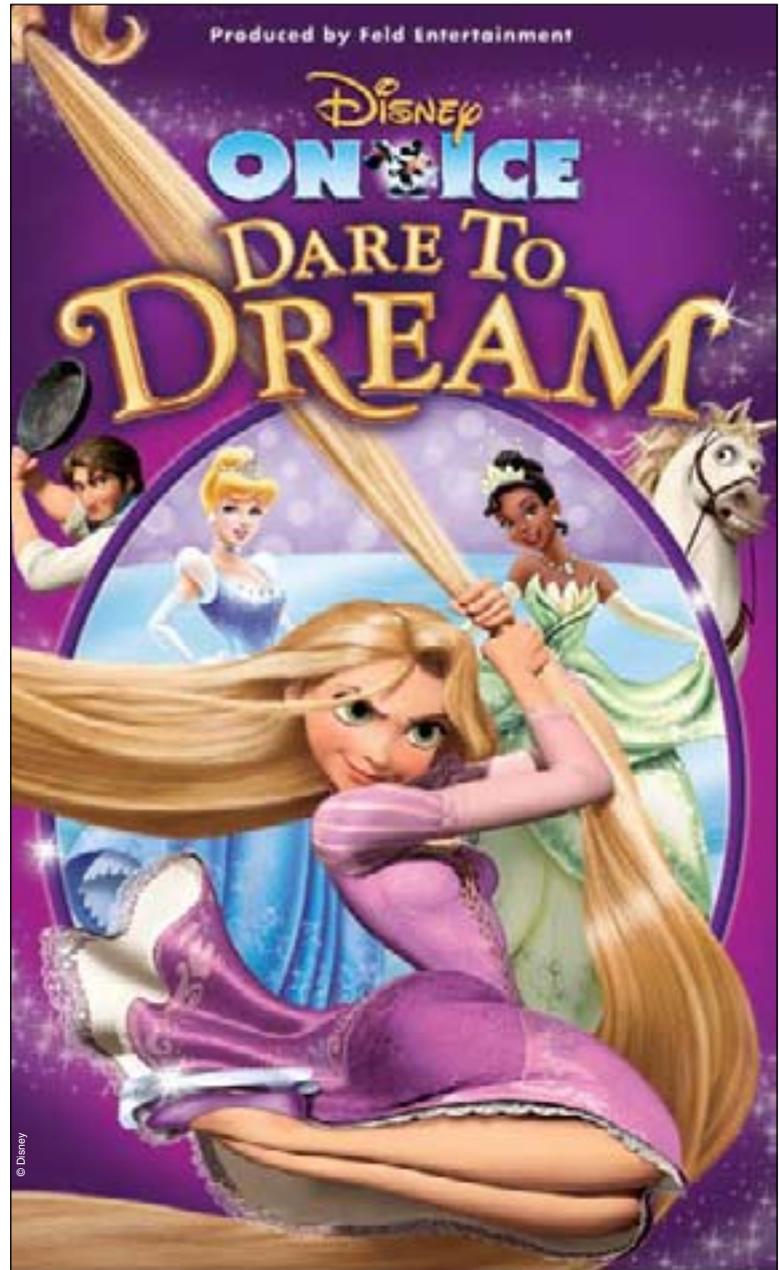
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## FAMILY HEALTH

BY LISA PALADINO  
Coordinator, Staten Island  
University Hospital's breast-  
feeding initiative

# Why breast-feeding is better for baby



**B**reast-feeding provides many benefits for both baby and mother, but right now, less than 75 percent of all babies born in the United States have been breast fed; many not even for six months.

Because the benefits of breast feeding are so bountiful for baby, healthcare organizations and communities across the country are working to encourage women to try it — by offering moms-to-be and new mothers the support of lactation specialists.

Lactation experts can be counted on to provide advice on starting to breast-feed, and, more importantly, how to maintain lactation — even if you should be separated from your baby because the newborn is in a high-risk nursery.

As a mother, when you choose to breast-feed, you initiate an emotional tie that holds the two of you together.

Additionally, health benefits accrue to both of you.

Breast-feeding helps your baby avoid certain childhood diseases by building important antibodies. For this reason, breast milk and baby formula are not interchangeable.

The vitamins and minerals contained in breast milk are not comparable to that of any formula.

For example, your milk contains vitamins, such as A, B6, B12, C, D, E, and K, biotin, folate, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron and copper.

Formula does not protect against the development of these chronic illnesses in childhood and adolescence: diabetes, celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease, and some childhood cancers.

For you as a mom, breast-feeding is an ideal way to reduce stress, post-partum blood loss, and can protect you against the develop-

ment of premenopausal breast and ovarian cancers, and post-menopausal spinal and hip fractures.

## Tips for breast-feeding

- Do not give newborns food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated.

- Select a rooming-in plan in maternity. This will allow you to remain close to your baby 24-hours a day, which encourages breast-feeding on demand.

- Keep your baby dependent on breast milk to satisfy hunger, and do not give your baby pacifiers or artificial teats.

The best advice for moms is to pursue breast-feeding. It offers powerful advantages for both you and your child.

*Paladino is a certified lactation specialist and coordinator of Staten Island University Hospital's breast-feeding initiative.*



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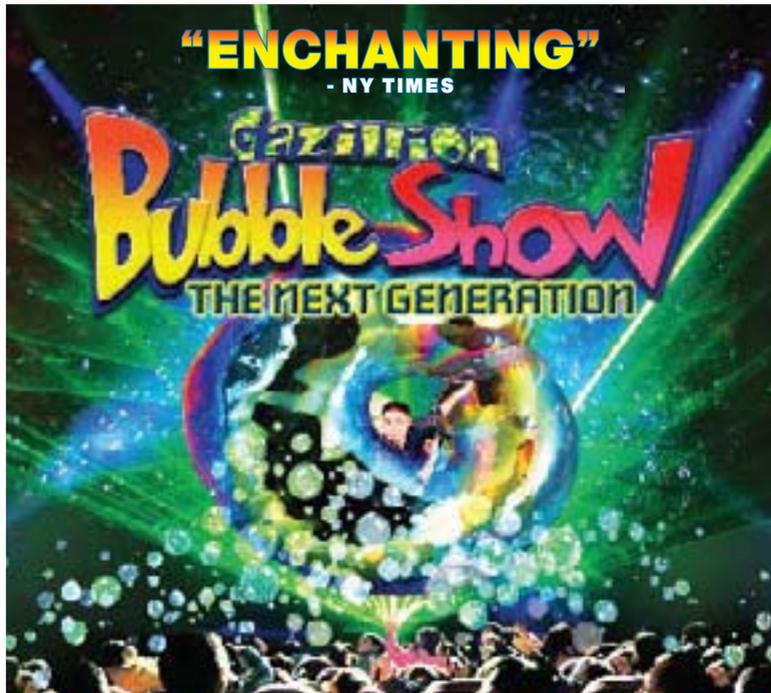


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## TWICE THE ADVICE

JACQUELINE AND  
KERRY DONELLI

# Feeding baby 101

### Dear Twins,

I'm a first-time mom with a 2-month-old baby. I've been getting all kinds of different advice as to when I should start feeding my baby solid foods, and now I'm totally confused! When should my baby start eating solid foods?

**Jacqueline says:** Current research indicates that the best age to start a baby on solid food is between 4 and 6 months; up until then, all of his nutrients should come from breast milk or infant formula. Therefore, once your baby is in this age range and has sufficient head control to turn away when he's done eating, you can try solid foods. Coincidentally, this time frame correlates well with what's also occurring at this age: the beginning of teething and the appearance of the first baby teeth.

**Kerry says:** Jacqueline is correct...but what should you feed your baby, you ask? Begin with rice cereal, as it's easiest on his tummy. Mix it with breast milk or formula, and make it thin to start, so the change in consistency is less surprising. Feed your baby this for about a week before changing to something else.

Next, try feeding your baby a steamed or pureed vegetable for one serving a day; good foods to start with are carrots, squash, green beans, or peas. You can also feed your baby Stage 1 baby food.

Give each new food by itself at first and wait a few days before trying another one to make sure your baby isn't allergic. Then, start adding one serving of pureed fruit a day (except citrus), like pears, peaches, or apples. You will need to wait until your baby is 7 to 9 months old before trying pureed or strained meats, starting with chicken and turkey,



before moving up to red meat. Then, at around 9 months, you can start introducing your baby to table foods, such as mashed potatoes, pasta, and yogurt.

Beware, as there are four foods to avoid during your child's first year: honey (which can cause infant botulism), strawberries, nuts, and eggs, which are all common allergens.

### Dear Twins,

I have a newborn who keeps me up all night. I'm simply exhausted, as I work a 9-to-5 job. When will my baby sleep through the night?

**Jacqueline says:** There are as many answers to that as there are babies! As you probably now realize, newborns can sleep as much as 16 hours a day, but in much shorter stretches. It takes time to settle into a consistent nighttime sleeping pattern, as a baby's nervous system matures, and he's able to go longer between feedings. By the time a baby is 3 months old, he may sleep for five hours or more a night; a 6-month-old may sleep as long as eight to 10 hours at night. Some babies don't sleep through the night until they're at least a year old. You can help your baby develop good sleeping habits by establishing a bedtime routine,

such as nursing or giving a bottle, reading a bedtime story, and singing a lullaby at the same time every night; this signals to your baby that it's time to sleep. Be sure to put your baby to bed sleepy, but still awake, to learn to associate falling asleep with being in bed.

**Kerry says:** Agreed. Also, be sure to put your baby down on his back for safety, and keep toys out of the crib. Some other advice: don't jump at the first noise. You shift positions during the night, and so does your baby. Wait a minute to see if your baby settles back down before picking him up. Lastly, keep nighttime feedings quiet. If you need to feed or change your baby in the middle of the night, don't turn the lights on or play bouncy games. Use a dim night-light and speak softly, so he'll know it isn't time to wake up.

### Dear Twins,

I've always been a pleaser. I do let my kids have their way, because I think that if I don't, they won't love me. I know that's not true, but that's how I feel. That said, they are becoming more and more demanding and difficult every day. Am I wrong about the way I am raising them?

**Kerry says:** So you grew up being a pleaser, and now that you're a parent, you are still unable to put that pleasing nature and inability to confront on a back burner. You still need people to like you, especially your children. However, as a parent, your job is to love and discipline your children, not to be liked by your children. There will be times when your children won't like you. But when they are older and wiser, hopefully they will realize that you were right in disciplining them to become respectful and gracious adults.

**Jacqueline say:** In my opinion, you should see a therapist. To believe our children won't love us if we don't give them whatever they want is ludicrous. The fact that you let your kids "have their way" is a poor way to raise children and even borders on dangerous. Of course your children are becoming difficult and demanding. Did you expect anything different? Get help right away.

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](mailto:TwiceTheAdvice2@gmail.com).

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## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# Living together during divorce

**F**or many couples considering — or in the process of — getting a divorce, a lack of money means one spouse can't afford to move out of the house they share. Both are forced to stay, which leads to frustration, loneliness, and even fear while they wait it out. They hope that things will improve — that, eventually, a job will be found, a home will regain its value — and that somehow, more money will come in. But how do they manage in the meantime?

It can be terribly difficult.

"It takes a lot of effort to maintain respect, for instance, when passing by one another in the kitchen or other common area," says Dr. Doris Aptekar, a Roslyn, Long Island-based psychotherapist and certified hypnotherapist. Still, there are ways to alleviate the stress.

### What to tell the kids

It is tempting not to say anything, but that can be damaging for the children. If the parents don't address the subject, kids will create their own explanations for the negativity in the home and often blame themselves.

It can be enough to say, "Mom and Dad aren't getting along so well right now. But that's grown-up business, and you didn't do anything wrong. We both love you very much." Children shouldn't be told the details of the adult conflict itself.

Aptekar strongly cautions against "bad mouth[ing] the other parent," and calls dating "a very tender area. If parents date, it is important not to bring a new partner to the children's home. Maybe parents should say, 'I'm meeting a friend,' rather than, 'I have a date.' Divorce is hard enough on children. They don't want to see a parent with someone new."

Having a schedule helps, as it clarifies expectations for everyone, including children, and keeps parents from having to repeatedly address the same questions.

Even being apart from your spouse briefly can ease the stress. Can you agree that you will stay out until 10 pm on Tuesdays, and your spouse will do the same on Thursdays? Can you split the weekends? Are there two entrances to the house, allowing you two to avoid meeting when coming and going? Can you have access to the kitchen between the hours of "A" and "B," and your spouse between "B" and "C?"

Staying out can be an opportunity, and many activities are free or inexpensive. Taking a class, attending a support group, visiting family or friends, or pursuing a hobby will ease tension at home, and give you the lift that comes from socializing, being physically active and/or learning something new.

Here are some other things to think about:

• **A therapist or psychologist.** A good one can help you cope with the hurt and the anger that stem from the end of the marriage and the strain of being cooped up together. Recognizing that you

may need help — and getting it — is a sign of strength, not weakness.

• **Divorce coaching.** New to most people, "coaching isn't about giving advice, it's about empowering [clients]

to make changes in their lives," explains Diane Rivers, a certified life coach in New York City. Rivers says that she helps clients "stay focused on what they want," often encouraging "small changes" that can be made "right now, to make things more bearable."

• **Mediation.** A few divorcing couples can speak calmly together. Most can't. And, once adversarial lawyers get involved, constructive communication usually becomes more difficult, if not impossible. People tend to "dig in."

But with a mediator sitting with both spouses, the parties are better able to speak and listen to one another. You might be asked, "Now, while you are both still in the marital home, how can you agree to share it in a way you each feel is fair, and that will reduce the stress between you?" You would be encouraged to brainstorm options, and then to discuss and decide among them.

• **Work on communication skills.** Three books that may assist you are: "Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most," by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton and Sheila Heen; "Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion," by Marshall B. Rosenberg; and, "Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In," by Roger Fisher, William L. Ury, and Bruce Patton.

At a minimum, improved skills may keep the atmosphere in your home from deteriorating further.

If there is domestic violence in your relationship, know that it tends to escalate. Please, don't wait for it to get worse. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at (800) 799-7233, or, (800) 787-3224. You can also visit [www.thehotline.org](http://www.thehotline.org).

*Lee Chabin, a New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer, helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at [lee\\_chabin@lc-mediate.com](mailto:lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com) or (718) 229-6149. You can also visit <http://lc-mediate.com/home>.*



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# Going Places

## LONG-RUNNING

**Blooming Babies:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am, Now – Sun, Oct. 9; Free with museum admission.

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

**Dinosaur display:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan; (212) 769-5000; [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org); Daily, 10 am–5:30 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 2, 2012; \$24 (\$18 students, \$14 children).

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

**Sunday sing-along:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Sundays, 12:15 pm, Free.

Come sing, clap, dance or just watch.

**"The Ohmies:** Morning Wish Garden": Peter Jay Sharp Theater, 416 W. 42nd St. at Ninth Avenue in Manhattan; (212) 864-5400; [theohmies.com](http://theohmies.com); Thursdays, 11 am, Saturdays, 10 am, noon and 3 pm, Sundays, noon and 3 pm, Now – Sun, Sept. 25; \$35.

Dance along to this new musical.

**Family Weekend:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 6, Old Fulton Street at Furman Street; (718) 802-0603; [www.ncgovparks.org](http://www.ncgovparks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, Noon–2 pm and 4–6 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; Free.

Different themes every weekend from recycling to art.

**Creatures of the sea:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, Noon–12:30 pm, Thursdays, 2 – 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 9; \$7.50 (members and children under 1 free).

Explore under the waves for children of all ages.

**Recording studio:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Saturdays and Sundays, Noon–4 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; Free with volunteer time.

Need a place to record your latest hit? Come to Beat Cave and work on-site



## Adventures in Oz

Follow the yellow brick road to Bay Ridge!

Join Dorothy and the gang at the Narrows Community Theater's production of "The Wizard of Oz." The show brings to life the classic story of a girl who discovers that "there's no place like home" after being taken by a tornado over rainbow to the land of Oz. On her way to meet the Wizard to help her get home, she befriends a brainless scarecrow, a heartless tin man, and a cowardly

lion. As the ragtag group heads to the Emerald City to beseech the Wizard of Oz to fulfill their wishes, they face obstacles from the Wicked Witch of the West, who desperately wants Dorothy's red slippers.

*"The Wizard of Oz" at Fort Hamilton Army Base [101st Street and Seventh Avenue in Fort Hamilton, (718) 482-3173] Oct. 1 and 2, 2 pm and 8 pm. Tickets \$20, \$15 for seniors, students and children. For info, visit [www.nctheatery.com](http://www.nctheatery.com).*

with an in-house engineer. For individuals 26 years and younger.

**Boo at the Zoo:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road in the Bronx; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com); Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am–4:30 pm, Sat, Oct. 1 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$16 (\$12 children ages 3-12 and free for children under 3).

Visit the cats and bats and snakes too at the zoo with favorite attractions like the Haunted Safari and Hess Spooky Hayride.

**"The Reluctant Dragon":** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Dec. 18; \$7 (\$8

## 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](mailto: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!

adults).

A new adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's 1893 English tale that tells the story of a brave little girl who befriends a dragon.

**Arts and crafts:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm, Now – Sun, Dec. 18; Free.

Naturalists lead structured fun for children combining outdoor nature games and indoor crafts.

**Handiwork workshop:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 2:30–3:30 pm, Now – Sun, Dec. 18; Free.

Children play games and experience common tasks of 200 years ago.

**Family disco night:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Saturdays, 6 pm, Free.

Eat, drink and shake your groove things!

**Discover tour:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Sundays, 3 pm, Now – Sat, Nov. 5; Free.

Children take a walk with a naturalist and learn little known facts about the park and its animals.

**Read and play:** Greenpoint Public Library, 107 Norman Ave. at Leonard Street; (718) 349-8504; [www.brooklyn-publiclibrary.org](http://www.brooklyn-publiclibrary.org); Mondays, 10:30 am, Now – Mon, Nov. 14; Free.

# Going Places

Infants to 5 years old with and without disabilities meet, make friends and play games.

**Toddler time:** Gravesend Public Library, 303 Ave. X between W. First and W. Second streets; (718) 382-5792; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Mondays, 11 am, Now – Mon, Nov. 21; Free. For children birth to 5 years.

**Storytime:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Noon, \$2.50.

Come hear a few stories with a simple craft to go with it.

**Homework help:** Crown Heights Public Library, 560 New York Ave. between Maple Street and Lincoln Road; (718) 773-1180; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Mondays, 3:30 pm, Now – Mon, Nov. 14; Free.

**Tuesday Sing-along:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Tuesdays, 11:00, \$2.50.

Come clap, dance, sing or just watch!

**Story play with First RIF:** Homecrest Public Library, 2525 Coney Island Ave. between Gravesend Neck Road and Avenue V; (718) 382-5924; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 11 am, Now – Tues, Nov. 29; Free.

Children birth to 5 years play with toys.

**Babies and books:** Bushwick Public Library, 340 Bushwick Ave. at Seigel Street; (718) 602-1348; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 11 am, Now – Tues, Nov. 15.

Infants to 18 months old hear stories and listen to songs.

**Reading RIF:** Ft. Hamilton Public Library, 9424 Fourth Ave. at 94th Street; (718) 748-6919; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 2:30 pm, Now – Tues, Nov. 15; Free.

School-age children earn free books by reading.

**Toddler time:** Sheepshead Bay Public Library, 2636 E. 14th St. at Shore Road; (718) 368-1815; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 2:30 pm, Now – Tues, Nov. 15; Free.

Children birth to 5 years old hear stories, play games and earn books by reading.

**Reading is fun:** New Utrecht Public Library, 1743 86th St. between Bay 16th and Bay 17th streets; (718) 236-4076; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 17; Free.

For teens. Earn books by reading.

**Babies and books:** Clinton Hill Public Library, 380 Washington Ave. between Lafayette and Greene avenues; (718) 398-8713; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org).



## Note-able concert

**S**outhpaw will be folk-rockin' the cradle with Brooklyn's very own Suzi Shelton, Marc Bazerman (aka Baze from Baze and His Silly Friends), and Little Miss Ann on Oct. 9. Children, from 1 to 101, will experience the upbeat, hip musical numbers of Shelton, the groovy folk rock of Little

Miss Ann and the silly rockabilly sing-a-longs of Baze.

*Suzi Shelton, Baze and Little Miss Ann at Southpaw [125 Fifth Ave. at St. John's Place in Park Slope, (718) 230-0236] Oct. 9 at 12:30 pm. Tickets are \$10, \$8 in advance and children under 2 are free. For more info, visit [www.spsounds.com](http://www.spsounds.com).*

org; Tuesdays, 4:15 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 13; Free.

Infants to 18 months hear stories or listen to songs.

**Story time:** Sunset Park Public Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 965-6533; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 4:30 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 17; Free.

Children ages 5 to 12 hear stories and make crafts.

**Farmers market:** The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at the Mosholu Gate in the Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [pubrel@nybg.org](mailto:pubrel@nybg.org); [www.nybg.org/greenmarket](http://www.nybg.org/greenmarket); Wednesdays, 9 am–3 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 23; Free.

Affordable, locally-grown produce and fresh, nutritious baked goods.

**Story and play:** Leonard Public Library, 81 Devoe St. between Manhattan Avenue and Leonard Street; (718) 486-3365; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Wednesdays, 4 pm, Now – Wed,

Nov. 16; Free.

Infants to 5 years old hear stories and listen to songs.

**Writing workshop:** Coney Island Public Library, 1901 Mermaid Ave. at West 19th Street; (718) 265-3220; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Wednesdays, 5 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 16; Free.

Teens learn to write short stories, essays or poems.

**Chess club:** Carroll Gardens Library, 396 Clinton St. at Union Street; (718) 596-6972; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Wednesdays, 6 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 23; Free.

For all ages, learn or improve skills.

**Dance-around:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Thursdays, 11 am, \$2.50.

For children.

**The Yak Packers:** Rubin Museum of

Art, 150 West 17th St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues in Manhattan; (212) 620-5000 ext. 344. [www.rmany.org](http://www.rmany.org); Thursdays, 10:30–11:30 am, Now – Thurs, Dec. 29; \$10 child and parent (\$5 members).

Children, ages 2 to 4, accompanied by an adult, touch, explore and create projects inspired by Himalayan art.

**Reading is fun:** Ulmer Park Public Library, 2602 Bath Ave. at 26th Avenue; (718) 265-3443; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Thursdays, 3 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 17; Free.

All ages earn books by reading.

**Arts and crafts:** McKinley Park Public Library, 6802 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy. at Ovington Avenue; (718) 748-8001; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Thursdays, 3:30 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 17; Free.

Children 5 years old and older draw and create fun projects.

**Teen time:** Bushwick Public Library, 340 Bushwick Ave. at Seigel Street; (718) 602-1348; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Thursdays, 4 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 17; Free.

Books, games and music with friends.

**Game day:** Gerritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Thursdays, 4 pm, Now – Thurs, Nov. 17; Free.

Teens play Playstation and other video games.

**Stargazing:** Brooklyn Bridge Park, Old Fulton Street at Furman Street; (718) 802-0603; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Thursdays, 8:30–10:30 pm, Now – Thurs, Sept. 29; Free.

Join fellow astronomers to gaze at the heavens. Limited telescopes available.

**Movie night:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Fridays, 6:15, Free.

Shorts and a full-length family-appropriate movie.

**Babies and books:** Dyker Public Library, 8202 13th Ave. between 82nd and 83rd streets; (718) 748-6261; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 10:30 am, Now – Fri, Nov. 18; Free.

Infants to 18 months listen to music and stories.

**Story play First RIF:** Bedford Public Library, 496 Franklin Ave. at Fulton Street; (718) 623-0012; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 11 am, Now – Fri, Nov. 18; Free.

Children birth to 5 years old hear stories and play with toys.

**Fun Fridays:** Eastern Parkway Public Library, 1044 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston

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# Going Places

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Avenue; (718) 778-9330; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 4 pm, Nov. 18; Free.

All ages welcome to play video games, draw anime characters and meet with friends.

**Mystery at the Museum:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan; (212) 769-5100; [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–5 pm, Sat, Oct. 1 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$50.

Part walking tour, part game and part theater, children ages 10 and older explore the museum in a new way. Advanced registration required. There are eight performances each day and each runs approximately two hours.

**Story time:** Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between S. Elliott Place and S. Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; [greenlightbookstore.com](http://greenlightbookstore.com); Sundays, 11 am, Sun, Oct. 2 – Sun, Nov. 20; Free.

For babies and toddlers with Miss Nina and John Samson.

**Story time:** Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between S. Elliott Place and S. Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; [greenlightbookstore.com](http://greenlightbookstore.com); Sundays, 11 am, Sat, Oct. 1 – Sat, Nov. 19; Free.

For children, ages 3 to 8, and their families. Picture books and crafts.

**Wii and Nintendo:** The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. at Hicks Street; (718) 923-9710; [themoxiespot.com](http://themoxiespot.com); Saturday, Sept. 17, 6 pm; Saturday, Oct. 15, 6 pm; Saturday, Nov. 19, 6 pm; Saturday, Dec. 17, 6 pm; Free.

Prizes, games and food.

**"The Gravesend Inn":** Voorhees Theatre, 186 Jay St. at Tillary Street; (718) 260-5588; [www.gravesendinn.org](http://www.gravesendinn.org); Thursday, Oct. 20, 1 pm; Friday, Oct. 21, 1 pm; Saturday, Oct. 22, 1 pm; Thursday, Oct. 27, 1 pm; Friday, Oct. 28, 1 pm; Saturday, Oct. 29, 1 pm; Monday, Oct. 31, 1 pm; \$5 (\$4 for groups).

City Tech's haunted hotel is open for business with spectral guests Tina Terminal in search of her bridegroom Gunter. Not suitable for preschoolers.

**"Lumpy Bumpy Pumpkin":** PS 3-The Bedford Village School, 50 Jefferson Ave. at Hancock Street; (212) 724-0677; [www.shadowboxtheatre.org](http://www.shadowboxtheatre.org); Tuesday, Oct. 18, 10:30 am; Wednesday, Oct. 19, 10:30 am; Thursday, Oct. 20, 10 am; Friday, Oct. 21, 10 am; Monday, Oct. 24, 10 am; Tuesday, Oct. 25, 10 am; Wednesday, Oct. 26, 10 am; Thursday, Oct. 27, 10:30 am; Friday, Oct. 28, 10:30 am; Saturday, Oct. 29, 11 am; \$10-\$15.

Presented by the Shadow Box Theater, this original tale tells the story of how someone different finds acceptance.

## Garden gets hotter

**K**ings County is about to get royally spicy at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's annual Chile Pepper Fiesta on Oct. 1. This is one of the borough's hottest fall traditions, featuring bands from around the world — the Lost Bayou Ramblers with Violent Femmes' Gordon Gano, Chico Mann, The Defibulators, Mariachi Tapatio, and many others. Stroll through the lush grounds, tasting goodies from master chocolatiers, vote at the Chile-Chocolate Takedown, or visit local farm stands and try sizzling salsas, pickles, kimchee and other red-hot specialties.

Kids are sure to be riveted by the masters of ceremony, Robbins & Ringold, circus masters who take the stage between acts with juggling (peppers, of course), fire eating, and other antics.

*The Chile Pepper Fiesta at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden [900 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7200] Oct. 1, from 11 am to 6 pm. Tickets are \$15, \$10 seniors and students; free for children under 12. For more info, visit [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org).*

Recommended for children, ages 3-7.

**Haunted pumpkin walk:** New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard in the Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am, Sat, Oct. 1 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$20 (\$18 seniors and students; \$8 for children 2-12).

Stroll through spooky gourds, scarecrows and frightening spiders.

**Creepy Creatures:** New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Boulevard in the Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Sat, Oct. 1 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$20 (\$18 seniors and students; \$8 for children 2-12).

Get up close and personal with Madagascar hissing cockroaches, the emperor scorpion and the pink toe tarantula.

**"Seascape with Sharks and Dancer":** Red Room Theater, 85 East Fourth St. and Bowery Place in Manhattan; (212) 868-4444; [www.smarttix.com](http://www.smarttix.com); Saturdays – Saturdays, 8 pm, Sundays, 2 pm, Thurs, Nov. 3 – Sun, Nov. 20; \$20 (\$15 students).



Photo by Jason Gardner

Don Nigro's off-beat love story about a young man who saves a young woman from the sea.

**Quilting workshops:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1:30–3:30 pm, Sat, Nov. 5 – Sun, Nov. 27; Free.

Children learn how to make their own creations.

### SAT, SEPT. 24

**Toddler time series:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; [www.prospectparkzoo.com](http://www.prospectparkzoo.com); 10–11 am; \$120 (For six hour sessions).

New program for young children at the city's zoos where they can learn about wildlife, nature and the environment. (Saturday series).

**Family fun day:** Overlook-Owl's Head Park, 68th Street and Shore Road; (718) 748-5200; 12:30–3:30 pm; Free.

Councilman Vincent Gentile along

with the Bay Ridge Arts and Cultural Alliance sponsor Blue Grass band "New River Travelers" in concert.

**Harvest days:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 1–4 pm; Free.

Children reap, cook and eat the potatoes that they planted last May, then work the press and drink fresh apple cider, churn butter and run potato sack races.

**Peter Brown:** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 4–5 pm; Free.

Author of "You Will Be My Friend," for children 4 to 8 years old.

### SUN, SEPT. 25

**Harvest days:** Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

**Soccer registration:** FIAO off ce, 7403 18th Ave. at 74th Street; (718) 259-2828; 9 am–5 pm; Free.

Intramural program for boys and girls ages 6 to 14. Competitive games held at Drier Offerman Outdoor Field through November and indoor games till March.

**Soccer registration:** Verrazano Sports Complex, 1990 Shore Pkwy. at Bay 44th Street; (718) 259-2828; 9 am–5 pm; Free.

Intramural program for boys and girls ages 6 to 14. Competitive games held at Drier Offerman Outdoor Field through November and indoor games till March.

**Celebrate climate week:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (646) 452-1975; [education@ra.org](mailto:education@ra.org); [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 2–3:30 pm; Free.

Children, ages 10 to 17, and their parents learn about climate change, trees and our planet.

### MON, SEPT. 26

**"The Circus":** Cobble Hill Cinema, 265 Court St. between Butler and Douglass streets; (718) 596-9113; [www.cobblehilltheatre.com](http://www.cobblehilltheatre.com); 4 pm; \$10 (\$7 children/seniors).

Starring Charlie Chaplin.

### TUES, SEPT. 27

**Toddler time series:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; [www.prospectparkzoo.com](http://www.prospectparkzoo.com); 10:30–11:30 am; \$120 (For six hour sessions).

New program for young children at the city's zoos where they can learn about wildlife, nature and the environment. (Tuesday series).

# Going Places

**Story and play:** Mapleton Public Library, 1702 60th St. between 16th and 17th avenues; (718) 256-2117; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 11 am; Free.

Infants to 5 years old hear stories, play with toys and earn free books.

**Story play:** Borough Park Library, 1265 43rd St. between 12th and 13th avenues; (718) 437-4085; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children from birth to age 5 play with toys and hear stories.

## THURS, SEPT. 29

**Stargazing:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1 (promenade), Old Fulton Street at Furman Street; (718) 802-0603; www.nycgovparks.org; 8:30–10:30 pm.

Join with members of the Amateur Astronomers Association to explore the heavens above. Limited telescopes available.

## FRI, SEPT. 30

**Toddler time:** Clinton Hill Public Library, 380 Washington Ave. between Lafayette and Greene avenues; (718) 398-8713; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 11:15 am; Free.

For children, ages 18 to 36 months.

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

Teens get helpful hints on their styles.

## SAT, OCT. 1

**Open auditions:** Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave. between Eighth Street and Fifth Avenue; (718) 832-0018; www.bax.org; Free.

The Youth Dance Company for young dancers, Levels II and III. Call for appointment.

**Soap box derby:** Westerleigh Park, Maine Avenue at Willard Avenue; (718) 442-0336; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am–3 pm; Free.

The sixth annual event is fun for children. Build your own car, must have brakes and a helmet.

**Toddler time series:** 10–11 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

**"The Story Pirates":** Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 Broadway at 95th Street; www.symphonyspace.org/genre/family; 11 am and 2 pm; \$11-\$25.

Smart and zany troupe creates musical sketch comedy.

**Pumpkin Day:** McCarren Park, Lorimer Street between Bedford and Driggs avenues; (347) 559-1410; www.townsquareinc.com; 11 am–1 pm; Free.

Get your pumpkin, decorate it and take it home, and listen to live music.



## Follow the music

**O**ran Etkin, the Pied Piper of children, will be weaving his magic tunes at the Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater as part of Symphony Space's children's series on Oct. 22 at 11 am.

Etkin — the creator of the Timalooloo method of music instruction featuring Clara the Clarinet, Big Mama Tuba and a host of other friends — will have the children (and adults) dancing in the

aisles. This fun, interactive show engages a child's innate musicality by incorporating melodies and rhythms from all over the world and leading the audience through games, stories, and songs.

*Oran Etkin at the Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater [2537 Broadway at West 96th Street, Manhattan, (212) 316-4962] Oct. 22 at 11 am. Tickets \$20, \$17 for members; \$13 children and \$11 for member children.*

Presented by the Narrows Community Theater.

## SUN, OCT. 2

**Raptor workshop:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Children learn about hawks, falcons, owls and other birds of prey.

**"The Wizard of Oz":** 2 pm. Ft. Hamilton Army Base Theater. See Saturday, Oct. 1.

**Dan Zanes and Friends:** Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, 566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Square; (212) 352-3101; www.skirballcenter.nyu.edu; 3 pm; \$25.

Children's concert featuring material from "Little Nut Tree."

**Two children's authors:** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 4–5 pm; Free.

"What Animals Really Like," by Fiona Robinson and "Love, Mouserella," by

David Ezra Stein. For children ages 3 to 8.

## TUES, OCT. 4

**Toddler time series:** 10:30–11:30 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Tuesday, Sept. 27.

## FRI, OCT. 7

**Writing workshop:** 5 pm. Barnes and Noble Park Slope. See Friday, Sept. 30.

## SAT, OCT. 8

**It's My Park Day:** Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 10 am–1 pm; Free.

Get involved in helping to keep the park clean and make new friends.

**"Women of the Calabash":** Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 Broadway at 95th Street in Manhattan; www.symphonyspace.org/genre/family; 2 pm; \$11-\$25.

Musical performance combining traditional instruments, lush vocals and musical forms.

## SUN, OCT. 9

**Run for the wild:** New York Aquarium, West Eighth Street at Surf Avenue; www.wcsrnforthewild.org; 8 am; \$35 (minimum).

Fund-raiser benefitting turtles and other fragile species.

**Concert:** Southpaw, 125 Fifth Ave. at St. Johns Place; (718) 230-0236; www.spsounds.com; 12:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 in advance; children under 2 free).

Child-friendly concert by Little Miss Ann Band with special guest Suzi Shelton and Baze.

## MON, OCT. 10

**"The Reluctant Dragon":** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; 12:30 and 2:30 pm; \$7 (\$8 adults).

A new adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's 1893 English tale of a brave little girl who befriends a dragon.

## TUES, OCT. 11

**Toddler time series:** 10:30–11:30 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Tuesday, Sept. 27.

## FRI, OCT. 14

**"Treasured Stories by Eric Carle":** Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, 566 LaGuardia Pl. at Washington Square; (212) 352-3101; www.skirballcenter.nyu.edu; 10 am;

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# Going Places

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\$15-\$25.

Beloved children's stories, from "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," "Brown Bear Brown Bear What do You See?" and "Papa Please Get the Moon for Me."

## SAT, OCT. 15

**Toddler time series:** 10–11 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

**"Treasured Stories by Eric Carle":** 11 am and 2 pm. Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. See Friday, Oct. 14.

Gustafer Yellowgold: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1–1:30 pm and 2–2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

The concert is a blend of live music and moving images. Suitable for children of all ages.

## SUN, OCT. 16

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

Led by registered nurse Debra Scaccia.

**"Treasured Stories by Eric Carle":** 11 am and 2 pm. Jack H. Skirball Center for the Performing Arts. See Friday, Oct. 14.

**Sweet day:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 1–4 pm; \$1 per treat.

Taste the sweet and savory treats made from the cookbook of Mrs. Lefferts created in the 1800s.

## MON, OCT. 17

**Harvest Festival:** Narrows Botanical Gardens, Shore Road at 71st Street; linda@narrowsbg.org; www.narrowsbg.org.

Annual event includes a canine costume contest.

## TUES, OCT. 18

**Toddler time series:** 10:30–11:30 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Tuesday, Sept. 27.

**Family party:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan; (212) 313-7161; familyparty@amnh.org; 5–7 pm; \$85 (\$175 adults).

Families partake of educational activities, entertainment, interactive workshop with animals, and the science center.



## A different dragon

**N**ot all dragons are roaring, princess-roasting beasts.

Puppetworks is currently presenting its marionette production of "The Reluctant Dragon," a classic children's story from across the pond about a brave girl who meets and befriends the scary-looking beast. But this dragon is no monster, trading fire-breathing for poetry-rhyming. The soft-spoken dragon befriends the girl, and together they overcome the

townspeople's resentment towards dragons and even manage to win their hearts, showing that you shouldn't judge a reptile by its scales.

"The Reluctant Dragon" at Puppetworks [338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street in Park Slope, (718) 965-3391], now through Dec. 18 on Saturdays and Sundays at 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Tickets \$8 for adults, \$7 for children and \$6 each for groups of 20 or more. For more info, visit www.puppetworks.org.

## SAT, OCT. 22

**Toddler time series:** 10–11 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

**Galumph:** Peter Jay Sharp Theater, 155 West 65th St. at Lincoln Center in Manhattan; www.symphonyspace.org/genre/family; 11 am; \$11-\$25.

Acrobatics, visual effects, physical comedy and choreography.

**Oran Etkin and Timbalooloo:** Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 Broadway at West 96th Street; (212) 316-4962; 11 am; \$20 (\$17 members; \$13 children, \$11 member children).

Zany jazz music just for kids, featuring Clara the clarinet, Big Mama Tuba and all their friends.

## SUN, OCT. 23

**Family workshop:** Shorefront Y, 3300 Coney Island Ave. at Brighton Beach Avenue; (646) 397-2765; www.bphil.org; 10 am; Free.

Children learn how to draw cartoons and compose original music. Presented by the Brooklyn Philharmonic.

## MON, OCT. 24

**"The Muppet Movie":** Cobble Hill Cinema, 265 Court St. between Butler and Douglass streets; (718) 596-9113; www.cobblehilltheatre.com; 4 pm; \$10 (\$7 children/seniors).

Also "Henson and Oz: Never Before, Never Again," introduced by Matt Zoller Seitz.

## TUES, OCT. 25

**Toddler time series:** 10:30–11:30 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Tuesday, Sept. 27.

## WED, OCT. 26

**Harvest festival:** High School for Public Service, 600 Kingston Ave. at Brooklyn Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; 3–6 pm; Free.

The last day for the Youth Farm's market, fun activities and fundraising for next year's garden.

## FRI, OCT. 28

**Monster Mash:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am–2 pm and 3–7:30 pm; \$10 (\$5 members).

Calling all goblins, big and small, to attend the spooktacular featuring a scary word up, costumed DJ, costume parade and a visit with slithery animals, and of course plenty of tricks and treats.

## SAT, OCT. 29

**Boo at the Zoo:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; www.prospectpark-zoo.com; 10 am–5:30 pm.

Face painting, craft making and encounters with the spooky creatures that haunt the barn.

**Monster Mash:** 10 am–2 pm and 3–7:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Oct. 28.

**Haunted Halloween:** First Street Recreation Center - PS 372, 512 Carroll St. between Third and Fourth avenues; (718) 768-3703; www.puppetryarts.org; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

The sixth annual carnival of ghosts, ghouls and fun. Special guest is R2-D2 from Star Wars, presented by Puppetry Arts.

**Ben Rudnick and Friends:** Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 Broadway at West 96th Street in Manhattan; (212) 316-4962; 11 am; \$20 (\$17 members; \$13 children, \$11 member children).

Hip upbeat music with fun-to-sing lyrics.

**Halloween in the Park:** Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; www.fortgreenepark.org; Noon–3 pm; Free.

The 12th annual ghoulfest with hay rides, games, sack races, face painting, stilt walkers and lots of spooky fun.

**Haunted Halloween Walk:** Prospect Park - Lookout Hill, Enter the park at Ocean Avenue at Lincoln Road; (718) 436-2500; www.prospectpark.org;

# Going Places

Noon–3 pm; Free.

Ghouls and goblins lurk in the trees ready to jump out at any time. Parental presence recommended for young children.

**Haunted carousel:** The Children's Corner, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Noon–5 pm; \$2 per ride.

Children take a scary spin on a lion or tiger or bear, oh my!

**National Acrobats of the People's Republic of China:** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; [www.brooklyncenter-online.org](http://www.brooklyncenter-online.org); 1 pm; \$20 (\$10 children 12 and younger).

Gymnasts, contortionists, jugglers and dancers perform traditional and modern day selections.

**Halloween creepy crawlies:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 1–4 pm; Free.

Explore the world of spiders, worms and other creepy crawlies, and make a fun craft.

**Halloween arts and crafts:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flat-

bush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 1–4 pm; Free.

Cut out scary skeletons using the traditional Scharen-Knippen paper cutting art form.

**Halloween Parade:** 176 Java St. between Manhattan Avenue and McGuinness Boulevard; (347) 559-1410; [www.townsquareinc.com](http://www.townsquareinc.com); 2–5 pm; \$5 (party admission).

Dress up in your scariest mask and costume and march down Manhattan Avenue, with a party following for children up to 12 years old. Arts, crafts, food, drinks, games and music. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**Halloween story time:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 2 and 3 pm; Free.

Storyteller Tammy Hall tells tales of old.

## SUN, OCT. 30

**Boo at the Zoo:** 10 am–5:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Oct. 29.

**Haunted carousel:** Noon–5 pm. The Children's Corner. See Saturday, Oct. 29.

**Halloween arts and crafts:** 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, Oct. 29.

**Halloween story time:** 2 and 3 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, Oct. 29.

## MON, OCT. 31

**Halloween celebration:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan; (212) 769-5100; [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org); 4–7 pm; \$19 (\$10.50 children) general admission.

The halls will be open for trick or treating, arts and crafts and cartoon characters. Families partake of educational activities, entertainment, interactive workshop with animals, and the science center.

## TUES, NOV. 1

**Toddler time series:** 10:30–11:30 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Tuesday, Sept. 27.

## SAT, NOV. 5

**Toddler time series:** 10–11 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

## SUN, NOV. 6

**Infant and child CPR:** 11 am–1 pm. Gumbo. See Sunday, Oct. 16.

**Break dancing:** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; [www.brooklyncenter-online.org](http://www.brooklyncenter-online.org); 2 pm; \$7.

Soul Street Dance combines Brazilian capoeira, New York style break dancing and hip hop. For children ages 6 and up. Presented by Target Family Fun.

## MON, NOV. 7

**"Pingu":** Cobble Hill Cinema, 265 Court St. between Butler and Douglass streets; (718) 596-9113; [www.cobble-hilltheatre.com](http://www.cobble-hilltheatre.com); 4 pm; \$10 (\$7 children/seniors).

A new selection of short films.

## TUES, NOV. 8

**Election day crafts:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Lincoln Road at Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 10 am–4 pm; Free.

Children make projects.

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# It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

## BEWITCHING BITS



**36 million** Number of children in the U.S., ages 5 to 13, who go trick-or-treating each year.

**20** Percent of Americans who visit a haunted attraction around Halloween.

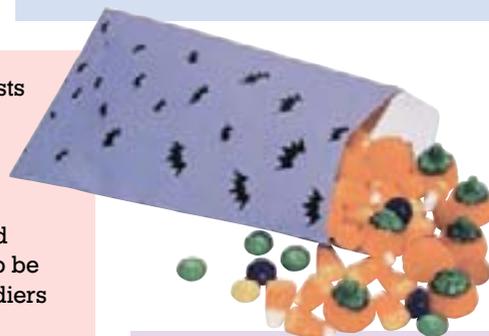
**26** Percent of people who hand out full-sized treats to trick-or-treaters.

**\$17** Amount Philadelphia children collected in 1950 during the first Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF.



**\$148 million** Amount children nationwide have collected during the annual event in the six decades since then.

**\$1** Price dentists participating in Operation Gratitude pay children per pound for unwanted Halloween candy to be shipped to U.S. soldiers overseas.



**25** Pounds of candy a double-bagged, brown paper grocery bag can hold.

**48** Pounds a standard-size pillow case can hold.

**1,352** Estimated number of houses you'd have to visit to collect that much candy, assuming a 50 percent success rate.



**90** Percent of a pumpkin that's water.

**More than 20,000** Number of people who attend the World Championship Punkin Chunkin pumpkin-toss competition to be held Nov. 5 through 7 in Sussex County, Del.

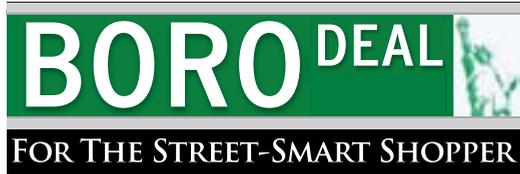
**16th** Century children in Europe started the tradition of bringing apples to their teachers.

**1977** Year Apple unveiled the logo of its then fledgling company, named for the fruit that founder Steve Jobs spent his youthful summers picking in California.



Sources: TheFasterTimes.com, PR Newswire, AssociatedContent.com, Slashfood.com, Halloweencandybuyback.com, Myscienceproject.org, Pumpkin-patch.com, Punkinchunkin.com, Whyguides.com, eHow.com.

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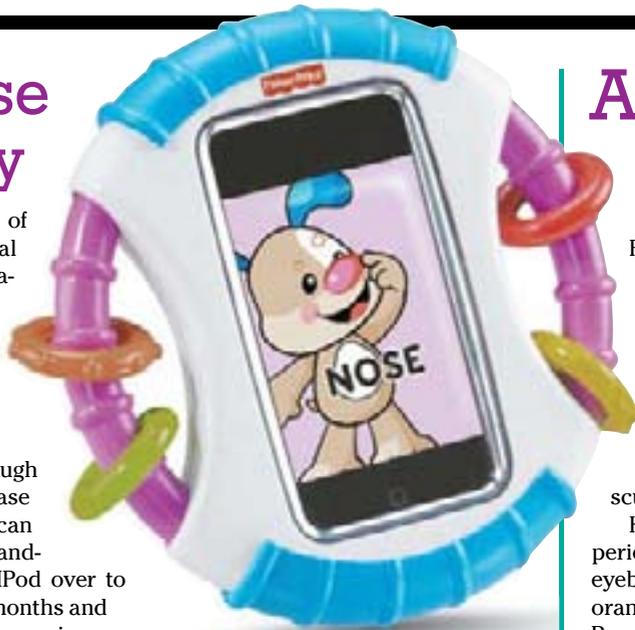
# New & Noteworthy

## The case for baby

There are plenty of fun and educational apps available for babies and young children these days, but the electronic devices they run on certainly aren't dribble-proof.

Thanks to the Laugh & Learn Apptivity Case by Fisher Price, you can now feel confident handing your iPhone or iPod over to your baby (ages six months and up) as she can now enjoy your Apple device without damaging it.

The case is made of durable rubber, and slips right over your device to protect the screen from any drool or rough-housing. Additionally, the Apptivity Case comes with easy grip handles, and a home button lockout feature to prevent your child from making unwanted calls while playing with



your phone. The best part? Colorful rattle beads and a mirror on the back of the case will entertain your child even without a device inside, so you won't feel guilty about making a phone call every once in a while.

*Fisher Price Laugh & Learn Apptivity Case, \$15. For info, visit [www.fisher-price.com](http://www.fisher-price.com).*

## Go a 'Little Nut' for Zanes

Five years — practically a lifetime! — after his last family album was released, Dan Zanes and his musical "friends" are back with "Little Nut Tree," which picks up where this Grammy Award-winning left off.

Zanes fans will appreciate Zanes's genius for fusing top-tapping musical hooks for adults — from genres as diverse as blues, soul, rock, and the Broadway musical — with lyrics that appeal to the younger set.

So the soulful opening track, "In the Basement," sounds like a 1960s dance party, but is actually a tribute to the classic play room.

Another song, the show-tuney

"Summer Trains," starts out like "Sidewalks of New York," but becomes a classic Zanes journey by rail where "everybody's laughing and no two trips are the same."

And it wouldn't be a Zanes album without something flat-out silly — in this case, "John Kakanaka," a song the kids will love (and sing along to).

Zanes's regular band backs him up faithfully, but the former Del Fuegos frontman also takes advantage of a lifetime in the music business, inviting such pop stars as Joan Osborne and Sharon Jones to join the fun.

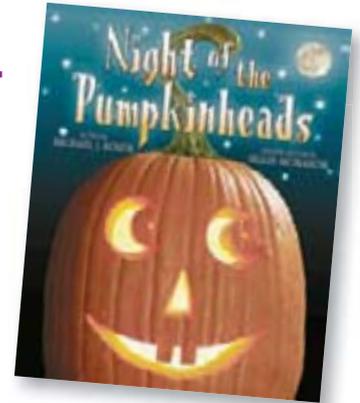
*For info on all of Dan Zanes's releases, [www.danzanes.com](http://www.danzanes.com).*



## A gourd read

Get into the spirit of the season with Michael J. Rosen's "Night of the Pumpkinheads." Follow jack-o-lanterns Jackpot, Jackie-O, and their pumpkin pals as they try to frighten children on Halloween, but can't quite accomplish their scary scheme. The hardcover is illustrated with photographs of actual gourds that have been carved by Brooklyn-based sculptor Hugh McMahon.

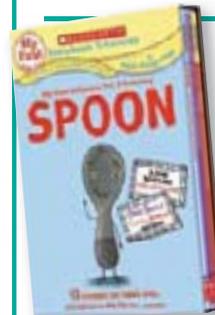
His 35 years of knife-wielding experience are evident in the variety of eyeballs he renders from the rinds of orange baby gourds. Unfortunately Rosen makes a gruesome error by



dubbing Scotland's famous serpent "Lock Ness" instead of "Loch Ness."

Suitable for kids ages 5 to 8.

*"Night of the Pumpkinheads" by Michael J. Rosen, \$16.99. For info, visit [penguin.com/youngreaders](http://penguin.com/youngreaders)*



## 'Spoon' it up

What do a spoon, a fox, a dog, a frog, a skeleton and a pail of blueberries have in common? They're all

found, in animated form, in "My First Collection, Volume 2, Featuring Spoon," a three-DVD set of 13 adorable short stories designed to bolster literacy and problem-solving

skills among pre-and young readers.

Each DVD will entertain and delight your child with sing-alongs, music and a cast of lovable characters.

The set also includes a interviews with "Bugs! Bugs! Bugs!" author-illustrator Bob Barner and "Spoon" author Amy Krouse Rosenthal.

*"My First Collection, Volume 2 Featuring Spoon," \$24.95, \$12.95 for separate DVDs. For info, visit [www.newkideo.com](http://www.newkideo.com).*

## App helps make math fun

How do you make math fun? Launch it into outer space!

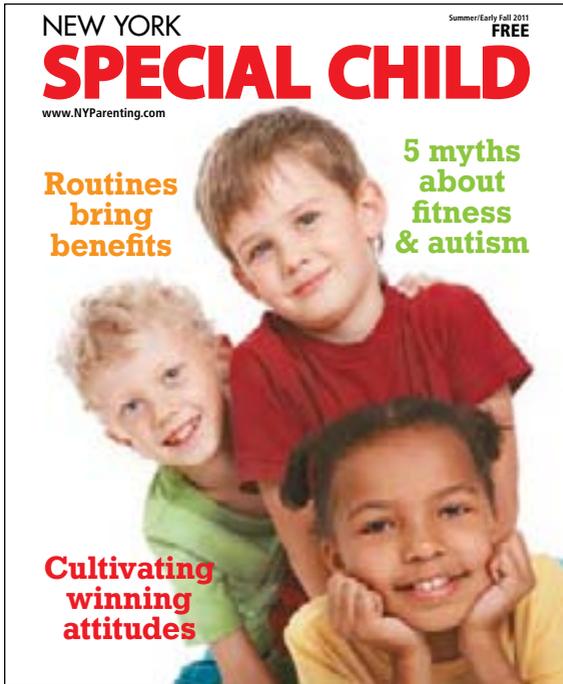
Meteor Math is a numbers game for the iPhone, iPod Touch and the iPad, in which players tap meteors tagged with numerals in order to complete math equations. As the levels get higher, the time limit gets tighter, encouraging your child to solve math problems and puzzles more and more quickly. For kids of all ages, it aids in teaching basic arithmetic, as well as helping more math experienced mathletes brush up on their skills.

With puzzles focused on addition, subtraction, multiplication and divi-



sion, this app will entertain and engage your child in a way that is by the numbers.

*Meteor Math by Mindshapes. \$2.99, available under the "Games" category at the Apple App Store.*



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\*One child (ages 3-12; children under 3 are free) in costume will receive a free child's general admission with the purchase of one full-priced adult general admission ticket. Valid for Boo at the Zoo 2011 dates only. May not be combined with any other offer. ©2011 Wildlife Conservation Society