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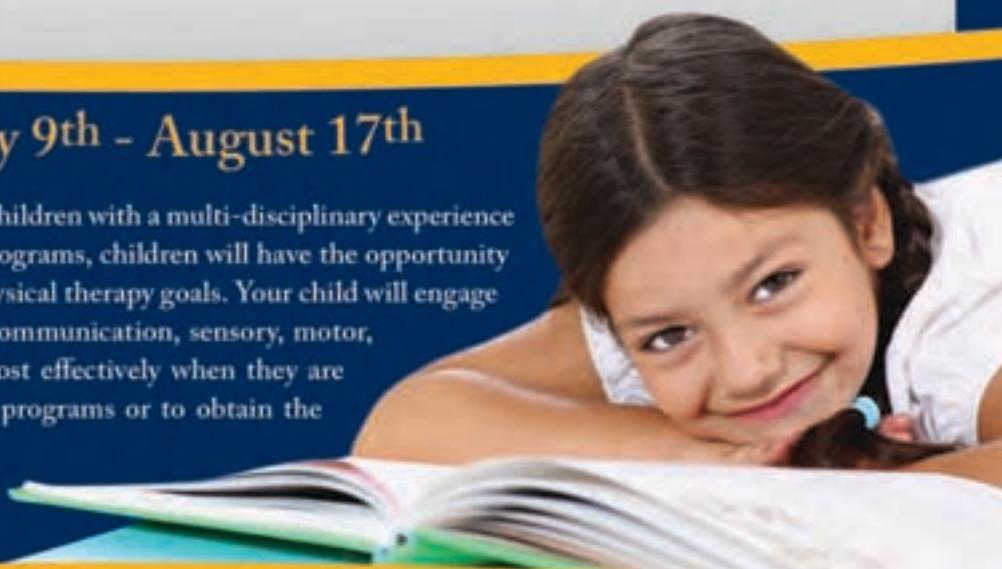


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Family May 2012

FEATURES

- 6 Miracle moms**
How these women survived life-threatening labors
BY SANDA GORDON
- 12 Chasing their dreams**
Two determined Ailey dancers share their stories
BY JENNY GRACE TORGENSON
- 14 Creative theater games**
Spark your child's imagination with these ideas
BY JOCELYN GREENE
- 22 City kids play together in perfect 'Harmony'**
Under-served elementary students are developing their musical talents
BY LAURA VAROSCAK-DEINNOCENTIIS
- 24 Rocking with Laurie Berkner**
Talking to the 'queen of children's music'
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI
- 26 Celebrate mothers of special-needs children**
Remarkable moms need extra thanks on Mother's Day
BY REBECCA MCKEE
- 30 Is technology a sleep snatcher?**
Research indicates electronics may cause problems
BY JENNY CHEN
- 32 Why the world embraces the Montessori method**
How this 100-year-old education philosophy continues to benefit students today
BY DANE L. PETERS
- 40 What we all need to know about bullying**
End abuse with these helpful tips
- 42 Dyslexia's potential**
New book uncovers a disorder's inherent set of abilities
BY MARY CARROLL WININGER
- 44 Sleeping peacefully?**
What parents should know about their child's snoring
BY KIKI BOCHI
- 52 A special camp**
Finding the right program for your special child
BY REBECCA MCKEE
- 54 Wheelchairs and cookies**
Understanding a kid's food agenda
BY RICHARD KAHN, PHD, RD
- 68 Honor a favorite teacher**
Nominate her as an 'Unsung Hero'

COLUMNS

- 8 Mommy 101**
BY ANGELICA SERADOVA
- 10 Healthy Living**
BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN
- 28 Death by Children**
BY CHRIS GARLINGTON
- 36 Ask an Attorney**
BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.
- 38 Divorce & Separation**
BY LEE CHABIN, ESQ.
- 46 Good Sense Eating**
BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD
- 48 Dear Dr. Karyn**
BY DR. KARYN GORDON
- 50 Growing Up Online**
BY CAROLYN JABS
- 56 Our Relationships**
BY JOAN EMERSON, PHD
- 58 The Book Worm**
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER
- 60 Family Journal**
BY ROBERT MORTON
- 62 Family Health**
BY DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD
- 64 Parents Helping Parents**
BY SHARON C. PETERS
- 66 Lions and Tigers and Teens**
BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL
- 77 It Figures**
BY CYNTHIA WASHAM
- 80 A Teen's Take**
BY AGLAIA HO
- 82 New & Noteworthy**
The hottest new products

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 70 Going Places**
Find out what's going on in your town

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- 16 Arts Directory**
34 Montessori Directory



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Letter from the publisher

Art is for everyone

We received responses from readers this month commenting about trash and littering around the city. I was pleased to see that so many people support my contention that we need to create urgency about the condition of



our streets. Apparently many of you have clean-up teams going strong in your own neighborhoods and I loved hearing from you about this and hope more of you will contact me with your thoughts.

This May Issue has an annual focus about Arts for Kids and the importance of introducing children early in life to any or all branches of the arts. There is no doubt that exposure and participation in music,

theater, dance, or fine art helps imaginations soar, enhances the child's academic performance and contributes strongly to the future growth of a well rounded person.

Having been myself, both a performer and teacher of performance, married to a musician, the daughter of a singer and a designer, my personal exposure came from the beginning. Other children may have been sung to sleep with a lullaby but for me it was a Verdi aria.

Music was and is a constant in our home. My daughter has grown up with classical music, jazz, opera, world music, R & B, and classic rock from the beginning. Being exposed to it always, she has come to appreciate

all of it and I fully believe that someday as a mature adult, she will choose of her own volition to turn on Bach or Puccini, or listen to Ravi Shankar or Flamenco. We have always gone to museums and the walls of our home are adorned with art and photographs and we regularly go to plays and concerts.

I signed her up for dance when she was little and she went on to do it happily for years. The love of the arts is there, deep and solid and there is great respect for those who make art and are thus enhancing our experience here on our planet earth through their work.

Art is universal and there is no culture that doesn't do art of some kind, although there are cultures where it is so natural a part of everyone's reality that they have no word for it. It is just what everyone does.

When visiting the island of Bali, for example, one finds this surprising but charming truth.

We are brought together through these truths and whether making music together, or creating a mural, or watching a film in a foreign language from a cultural reality far away, we discover the links of a chain that binds our humanity and takes away the strange part of being strangers.

Make sure you and your kids are involved. Dance together and sing and make sure they are given a chance to express their unique inner selves.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher

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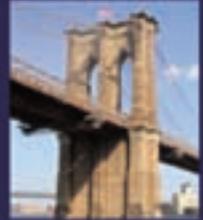


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Miracle moms

How these women survived life-threatening labors

BY SANDRA GORDON

When you're expecting a baby, you do what you can to take control of the experience. You go to your ob-gyn appointments and childbirth classes, take prenatal vitamins, and try to eat a healthy diet. Still, there's always that feeling that Mother Nature's really the one in charge, and you're just along for the wild ride. Ever wonder what you'd do if your pregnancy or labor suddenly took a surprising turn? That's what happened to these three women, who were forced to call upon reservoirs of strength and resourcefulness they never knew they had in order to bring their babies into the world.

Babies in danger

"We nearly lost our twins."

— Jennifer Miller, 35

Two weeks before giving birth, Miller woke up in a puddle.

"I assumed my water had broken, so I called my doctor and went to the hospital," says the web designer.

There, though, Miller was told her water hadn't broken and she returned home, where she continued to leak fluid.

"I also felt like there was blood rushing through me. I could hear it pounding in my ears," she says.

Then, 10 days before her due date, Miller went into labor. At the hospital, she developed a 102-degree fever due to an uterine infection.

As it turned out, "I had been leaking amniotic fluid all along," she says. Consequently, even though the babies were in the right position to be born vaginally, Miller had an emergency C-section.

Baby Josie was born first; she weighed just 2 pounds, 12 ounces, and was followed by Anna,

who weighed 3 pounds, 15 ounces. Because of their size difference, the identical twins were easy to tell apart. Although Anna was the larger baby, "she was basically stillborn; she had an initial APGAR of 0 and she was bright red, but they were able to bring her back," Miller says.

After giving birth, Miller learned that she had an undiagnosed case of twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, which is a complication specific to identical twins who each have their own amniotic sac but share a single placenta. With this syndrome, blood flow through the vessels in the placenta connecting the twins becomes unbalanced; one twin, the "donor," doesn't get enough blood while the larger twin, the "recipient," becomes overloaded with it.

In turn, the recipient twin increases the urine it makes to reduce its blood volume. That twin eventually has too much amniotic fluid. The donor twin produces too little urine and the amniotic fluid becomes very low or absent.

"They mentioned TTTS at the hospital to me once, but nobody talked to me about it," Miller says. Fortunately, after some initial developmental delays, Josie and Anna are now perfectly healthy 7-year-olds.

Life lesson: "Looking back, I dismissed a lot of things I shouldn't have, chalking them up to just having twins," says Miller. "Like the fact that I began feeling really uncomfortable and felt the constant rush of excess blood, which is a symptom of TTTS."

For more about twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, visit www.tttsfoundation.org.

A deadly complication

"I survived a rare syndrome."

— Miranda Klassen, 33

When Klassen, a sales representative, was in labor with her first child, she had a seizure and went into cardiac arrest, which caused a temporary lack of blood flow to the baby because of her lack of oxygen. To



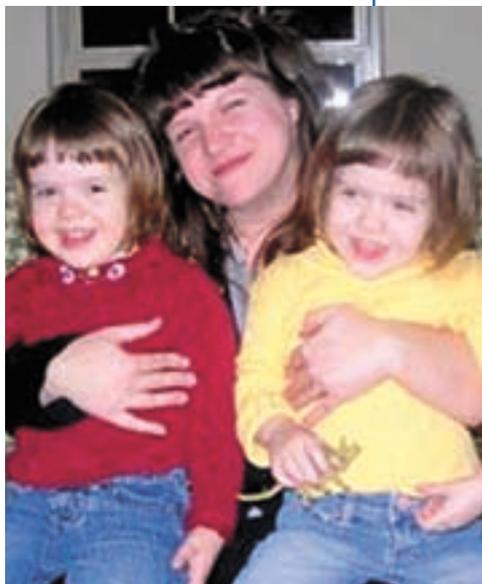
Mikala and Celia Vidal.

restore her heartbeat, her husband, Bryce, later told her that respiratory technicians administered chest compressions while her obstetrician performed an emergency C-section. Her baby, a boy, was delivered in just eight minutes. Yet, it took 10 minutes to resuscitate him. Would he be OK? It was too soon to tell.

While the baby was whisked to the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit, doctors put Klassen into a medically-induced coma to assess the situation. An electrocardiogram showed amniotic fluid in the chambers of her heart, indicating that she had suffered from an amniotic fluid embolism, an extremely rare complication that manifests in response to amniotic fluid entering the bloodstream during delivery, which is not unusual.

"But a very select few women have an anaphylactic-like reaction to the fluid, which causes life-threatening blood clots. I was one of them," Klassen says.

An amniotic fluid embolism can cause heart and lung collapse and excessive bleeding and clotting. Amniotic fluid embolism is an elusive syndrome with no known cause. The condition is estimated to affect one in 80,000 women during labor and when it happens, 80 percent of the women don't survive. Newborn mortality is 30 to 40 percent. Surviving mothers and babies can suffer serious compli-



Jennifer Miller and her girls.



The Klassen family

cations, such as brain and heart damage.

After Klassen's diagnosis, doctors performed intravenous surgery to place a filter just below her heart to catch any potential blood clots that could form and travel to her heart as a result of the embolism.

The filter, in fact, caught a large clot that would have otherwise killed her.

"It was so large that they weren't able to remove it, and it will be in me forever," Klassen says. "Over time, it's very likely that I will lose a lot of circulation in my legs as a result of it."

Nonetheless, she's glad to be

alive and to be there for Bryce and her baby, whom they named Van. He's now a completely healthy 4-year-old, meeting all of his developmental milestones.

Life lesson: After her near-death experience, Klassen started the AFE Foundation (<http://www.afe-support.org>), the first of its kind to educate women about amniotic fluid embolism and support families who have been affected.

"I'm going to take the blessing of having survived AFE and create a voice for people who can't," she says.

"Only five percent of people come out completely intact after AFE like my son and I have."

Wrong diagnosis

"I was a walking fish tank."

— Mikala Vidal, 28

When Vidal, a former public relations representative, was pregnant with her first child, she immediately began retaining so much water that almost every part of her body was bloated.

"At work, I joked that I was a walking fish tank. I had only one pair of shoes I could wear, and I could barely squeeze my arms and legs into my maternity clothes," Vidal says.

Her ob-gyn brushed it off.

"I was told, 'Some women just carry more water,'" recalled Vidal, so she shrugged it off, too. But six

weeks before her due date, Vidal noticed some spotting, so she went to the doctor. From there, she was hospitalized and diagnosed with preeclampsia (pregnancy-induced hypertension). After a few days in the hospital, she was induced, because she had also been leaking amniotic fluid.

"At one point during the labor, I felt a huge pain just under my rib cage. When I told the nurse, she said it was just a contraction, and it was time for my epidural. I didn't think it was a contraction, but then again, I had never had a baby before. So I got the epidural, and it did take away the pain," Vidal says. Ten hours later, she delivered a healthy baby girl, Celia, who weighed 5 pounds, 1 ounce.

"Preeclampsia goes away after the baby is born, so I should have been cured," Vidal says. But after her epidural wore off, she still had that excruciating rib-cage pain. "It turns out that my liver was failing, which was causing the pain, along with a few other organs. I had to be med-flighted to the intensive care unit at another hospital," Vidal says.

There, she was stabilized and diagnosed with a severe case of hemolysis syndrome—a breakdown of red blood cells—elevated liver enzymes, and a low blood platelet count.

"It presents like preeclampsia, but only gets worse after you deliver," Vidal says. Hemolysis syndrome occurs in less than one percent of all pregnancies, and mortality rates

are reported to be as high as 25 percent.

Life lesson: "At the ob-gyn's office, I just trusted the certified nurse midwife and never asked questions, which was a huge mistake. I knew retaining that much water wasn't normal. I realize the importance of being your own advocate and asking as many questions as possible about your health and the health of the baby," Vidal says.

For more information about hemolysis, visit www.aafp.org/afp/990901ap/829.html.

Sandra Gordon is a mom of two who writes about parenting, health, nutrition, and baby products for books, national magazines and websites. Visit her at www.sandrajgordon.com.



MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

Patience required for motherhood



On my morning commute, I saw a woman trying to soothe her toddler as he cried and kicked while being strapped to his stroller. The mom kept her cool as her son continued to struggle with her. I should also mention that she had two other children with her, and one was an infant.

Most of the train riders gave her a cold stare, and, up until about eight months ago, I probably would have done the same. How dare she ride the subway during rush hour? Doesn't she know people are trying to get to work? This was my selfish, pre-baby way of thinking. It's funny how, for some people (ahem, me), it takes having a child to realize that the world, in fact, does not revolve around them. But this impatience with children was not limited to mass transit.

Truthfully, I've never really been too tolerant of them. I wasn't the girl who baby sat for the neighborhood kids, and I didn't "ooh and ahh" when my friends started to have babies. Even now, a lot of my single friends worry obsessively about finding the right person to settle down with before "it's too late" to have kids. I never felt that way. Having

children, to me, was always something in the very distant future, and, although I was aware of my poor attitude, I vowed (and still do) that my children would always behave, especially in public! To say I had no patience with children is a huge understatement.

Babies teach us a lot of things even before they're born; compassion, joy, unconditional love, but your patience is challenged right around day three as a new parent. It's patience you need when breastfeeding isn't happening as naturally as you thought it would. Patience will get you through a rough patch of colic and sleepless nights, and you will definitely call on your patience when your baby spits up all over you when you're running late for work. Big smile.

Unfortunately, some people's patience runs a little thinner than others, and there will always be people who have a problem with your kid on the train, or at a restaurant, movie theatre, etc. I am patient with impatient people, because I am one. I have to remind myself of my new, calmer identity, at least for my daughter's sake. My mother has been telling me to work on it for years. She even bought me a cute little "Patience" rock, which I keep at my desk as a gentle reminder. And, yes, I rub it in moments of high stress. (Hey, whatever gets you through your day!) Funny, her patience isn't particularly great either...

That day on the train, I was able to do my small part in making a mom's day just a little easier. As she continued to struggle with her whiny kid and prepare the others to leave the train, I held the emergency exit door for her and gave her an empathetic smile. Sure, I was late for work, but it was the right thing to do for a fellow mom. So, as I held the door open and three more moms passed through with their strollers and small parade of kids, I bit my bottom lip, called on my patience, and just kept holding on.

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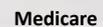
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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Tips for pain-free breastfeeding

It is possible!

Among the endless concerns that come with new parenting and first-time pregnancy is the decision of whether or not to breastfeed. Many new moms want to breastfeed but are honestly afraid to do so after hearing stories about the pain and anguish associated with it.

Susan Bennington of Bay Ridge was one of them. When her son, Jamie, was born two years ago, Bennington admits that she almost didn't even try to breastfeed, because she thought it would hurt too much.

"My sister had given birth to my niece a year before I got pregnant, and she had such a hard time with it, she eventually gave up. Ever since then, she talks about how she should have just bottle-fed from the beginning and saved herself the torment," she says.

Bennington cites sore nipples and difficulty in latching on as the top two causes of why her sister stopped.

"While I was naturally concerned seeing what my sister went through, I still felt in my heart that breastfeeding was best, and wanted to give my child every chance at the best health possible," says Bennington. "So, I started reading up on it in my sixth month almost daily. When my son was born, amazingly enough, he latched on right away. It gave me the confidence to continue, and I'm so glad I did."

Sara Chana, a breast-feeding expert and certified lactation consultant, says that when breastfeeding is working properly, it shouldn't hurt.

Here are her best tips for pain-free breastfeeding:

- Don't believe that breastfeeding is supposed to hurt and that sore nipples are to be expected. If the baby is latched on to the breast properly, breastfeeding should not hurt!

- Do teach your baby to latch onto the breast, not the nipple! Most



women that come into my office are letting the baby latch onto the nipple and not the breast itself. (Remember, it is called "breastfeeding," not "nipple feeding.")

- Don't worry about getting your whole areola into the baby's mouth. Most women are taught to get the whole areola into the baby's mouth, but all women have different size areolas, so this is really not the judge of a good latch. With a good latch, there usually is some areola showing, and often times, lots of areola is showing.

- Do hold your breast steady and compress it into a pointy shape with your hand, because a pointy breast can fit deeper into a baby's mouth. Be sure to bring the baby to you deeply (not trying to stuff your nipple into the baby's mouth). Your goal is to get your breast deeply into the baby's mouth with the nipple touching the S spot (between the baby's hard and soft palate). Your nipple

actually needs to point back into the baby's throat.

- Don't get discouraged. If your latch hurts, try again. If you allow the baby to nurse in a way that hurts you, your baby will not get the message that he needs to nurse deeper. When a mom and her baby share the experience of being on the breast deeply, with practice, mom will be able to nurse pain free.

- Do get help from a professional lactation consultant if you are in pain, not getting enough soiled diapers, or feel unsure or discouraged. Birth hurts — breastfeeding is not supposed to!

Danielle Sullivan, a Brooklyn-born mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find her on Facebook and Twitter @DanniSullWriter, or on her blog, Just Write Mom.

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CHASING

Two determined

BY JENNY GRACE TORGERSON

For two kids with a passion for dance, nothing could stop them from realizing their dreams. Because of their spirit and dedication, these two, now in their early 20s, are dancing with one of the most prestigious — and competitive — dance companies in the city.

Paige Fraser

Many little girls grow up dreaming of becoming dancers. For Paige Fraser, that dream is a reality. Fraser is a member of the Ailey II dance company, affiliated with the prestigious Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. After beginning her dance training at the age of 4, Fraser spent 12 years in serious study, which led to a spot in the Alvin Ailey high school program.

“It was a great experience and a huge privilege,” says Fraser, now 21. That led to a chance for Fraser to study further with the Alvin Ailey company while pursuing her degree at Fordham University, where she is currently a senior. In 2010, Fraser was one of 12 dancers selected out of the Ailey School’s 1,500 to join the Ailey II company.

However, Fraser’s dream of becoming a professional dancer almost turned into a nightmare. At the age of 12, the Eastchester Bronx native was diagnosed with scoliosis, which severely affects the alignment of her spine and pelvis. After being urged by several doctors to undergo corrective sur-

gery that would effectively end her dream of becoming a professional dancer, Fraser and her parents made the pivotal decision to forgo. Instead, through yoga and gyrotomics (which is a form of pilates-like exercise involving machinery), Fraser built up strength in her core muscles and managed to all but correct her scoliosis.

“People see me today, and they don’t believe I have scoliosis,” says Fraser. “It’s a blessing that I am still pursuing a career in dance.”

And today, Fraser is focused on dance and her studies. Although she enjoys modeling and musical theatre, she says “dance is my main passion and has to have all of my attention.” That focus has certainly paid off.

In 2010, Fraser had the honor of performing in Alvin Ailey’s “Memoria” in celebration of the compa-



THEIR DREAMS

Ailey dancers share their stories

ny's 50th anniversary. Over the past year, Fraser has performed across Europe, in 35 U.S. cities, and on the island of Bermuda. This year, she will be dancing leading roles in Thang Dao's "Echoes," Troy Powell's "Reference Point," and Donald Byrd's "Shards," all with Ailey II. Someday, Fraser would love to be a part of the main Ailey company.

Fraser's advice for others aspiring to follow in her dancing footsteps is to remember to "never settle for someone else's opinion, and to believe in yourself and never give up."

Thomas Varvaro

Growing up in Marine Park, Brooklyn, dance was not on Thomas Varvaro's mind. As an avid sports enthusiast, Varvaro's dreams revolved around baseball and karate. So, when his mother initially suggested he take up dance, Varvaro balked.

"I thought it was too girly," says the now 22-year-old. But his mother saw through his hesitation to his desire to perform and insisted he try. At age 8, Varvaro took his first dance class, and his career as a dancer was born.

After his initial training, Varvaro took a trip with his mother to see the American Ballet Academy perform a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," and he knew he was on the right path.

"It really made it obvious to me that this is what I should be doing," remembers Varvaro. After that pivotal moment, Varvaro went on to earn a place at Bay Academy, a former performing arts magnet school, where his teachers realized his exceptional potential. At the faculty's urging, Varvaro auditioned for, and landed, a space in the Ailey Athletic Boys Dance Program, where his technique grew.

Varvaro felt from the beginning that the Ailey school was welcoming to him and his family, and he felt at home there.

"The faculty took the time to get to know me and help me," he says.

With their support, Varvaro went on to study at LaGuardia Performing Arts High School, where he honed his classical ballet technique through a joint program with the School of American Ballet. At the end of his senior year, his hours of training really paid off. He chose to return to Ailey and its Bachelor of Fine Arts program. From there, the prestigious — and immensely competitive — Ailey II company asked Varvaro to become an apprentice.

For Varvaro, it was "a dream come true to join the company." As a young dancer, he had collected Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre posters and fliers and dreamed of someday dancing with them. While apprenticing with Ailey II, Varvaro would sit in on rehearsals, watch the dancers, and happily soak up every moment of the experience.

Now a full-fledged member of Ailey II, dance has taken Varvaro to places he only ever dreamed of visiting. As an apprentice, he spent a summer dancing in Paris, and last season, he toured with the company throughout Europe and across the United States. After this season in New York, Varvaro will be traveling with the company to Germany, Poland, and Luxembourg.

"Dance has taught me that you really can live your dream; with dedication it's possible," says Varvaro. And he hasn't stopped dreaming. After his time in Ailey II is over, Varvaro hopes to join the main Ailey company, or possibly dance with Cirque du Soleil, then get a Master's degree and teach dance to other dreamers.



Creative theater games to spark your child's imagination

BY JOCELYN GREENE

Looking for a fun activity to spark your kids' imaginations? Kids love to be entertained, and they especially love to take part in their own amusements. Luckily, there are two great theater games that will entertain them and let their imaginations soar.

One great game that even works for just two people is "story clap." It's inspired by Viola Spolin, an important innovator of the American theater in the 20th century.

Here's how to play:

One person starts with an opener that puts us in the fairy tale or fable mind-set, as in "Once upon a time, there lived a firefly who didn't know she was a firefly..." or, "In a deep forest there was a witch who loved to make soup out of..."

That storyteller then claps, which passes it to the next person. It is that person's job to continue where the first person left off, then pass it on to the next person, and so on. The game continues in this fashion until the story reaches a natural end.

You'll be surprised at how creative the story becomes as the tellers feel inspired by the collective voice of the group.

As you play the game more and more, experiment with the length of the story chunk you tell. Archetypes — such as princesses, witches, animals, dragons — are great to play off of, and you can combine elements of your children's favorite books and characters. This game is also a great way to air an issue that may have come up at home, so kids can give voice to their feelings.

As the adult in the group, it is important that you help direct the story. Set up a conflict and then help it toward resolution. With kids ages 4–6, it's a good idea to designate the adult as the clapper to keep the action going. You'll be amazed by how much they already understand story structure, and how excited they are to create their own tales with you.

In my experience, we end up physically re-telling the story, but it is a great activity all on its own for winding down at bedtime, on car trips, or at a family gathering. On rainy days, you can help the kids write the story on paper and they can illustrate it!

Another great game is "ACTive reading" — a reading aloud game in which kids get to play the parts in the stories.

Let your child create the environment of the book. Let him explore the way the ocean sounds while you read "Mariana and the Merchild: A Folktale from Chile." Playfully whistle and whoosh the sounds of the sea and the wind with him, or create whale calls and dolphin whistles. Then, have your child quietly continue the ocean soundtrack while you read aloud — the effect can be quite hauntingly beautiful.



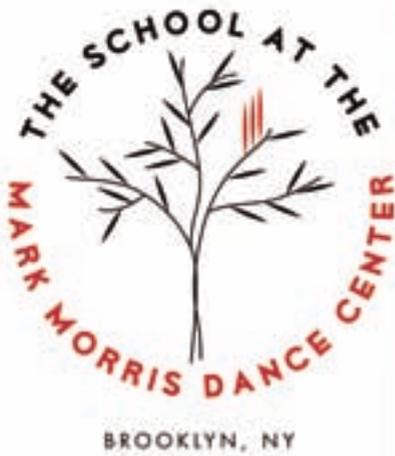
When reading "Make Way for Ducklings," watch what happens when your child acts out the traffic and noisy streets of Boston, or creates the quacks of the duck family? How about the sounds of the monkeys in "The Hatseller and the Monkeys," or the monsters in "Where the Wild Things Are?" You may come up with sounds that are funny, or some that are eerie. You'll be surprised by the way your child astutely hears his world and gives voice to his imagination.

Most children are eager to play the parts in the stories they read. If they read themselves, they enjoy following along while you read, and getting the chance to say the words of a certain character. Whether you are reading "Horton Hears a Who," or the Harry Potter books, there will likely be a character with whom they identify. Let them cast themselves and say their characters' dialogue while you read the rest. They will be living inside the story in a very exciting way. For a moment in time, the characters' journeys become theirs. If they aren't reading yet, gently prompt them with the character's lines and let them interpret the rest.

In this way, you enter into a kind of dialogue with your child, even while you are reading. He'll feel connected to the world of the book because he is a part of creating it, and he'll feel connected as you both tell the story. He'll also be having a lot of fun, which is always the bottom line!

Jocelyn Greene is the founder and executive director of the theater program Child's Play NY. She also runs the after-school acting programs at Packer Collegiate Institute, the Berkeley Carroll School, and Greene Hill School.





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9-12 Year Olds
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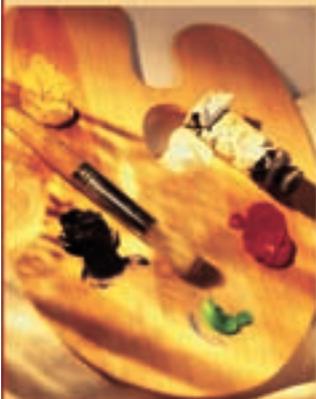
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Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College

2900 Avenue H
718-951-4500 or www.BrooklynCenterOnline.org

For more than 25 years, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College has presented quality, affordable weekend performances specifically for families with children ages four to ten. For its 2012-2013 season, Brooklyn Center will continue its relationship with Target to present the Target Storybook Series, four family musicals based on classic and contemporary literature, including the titles The Velveteen Rabbit, How I Became a Pirate, The Little Prince, and Sleeping Beauty. Tickets start at only \$7 and go on sale after Memorial Day. Other family-friendly performances coming to Brooklyn Center in the 2012-2013 season include the exciting Shaolin Warriors, the Russian language holiday musical The Snow Maiden, and the interactive event Sing-a-long-a Sound of Music. For complete information on upcoming performances at Brooklyn Center, sign up for Brooklyn Center's e-news at www.BrooklynCenterOnline.org.

Brooklyn Conservatory of Music

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

Nestled in a Victorian Gothic mansion in the heart of historic Park Slope, the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music is a thriving community center where music is open to everyone. From the beginner to the advanced student contemplating a career in music, the Conservatory's commitment is to provide the highest quality in arts education.

This summer get immersed in the music you and your child love! Our new Summer Workshop Series in July and August offers week-long and weekend intensives for all ages that focus on vocal and instrumental instruction in jazz, rock, and classical. Music Adventures offers the youngest a creative outlet to explore their musical abilities. Find a program you love. Register now for a challenging, fun, and fulfilling summer of music!

The Brooklyn Dance Center I

(2106 West 6th Street; 718-996-0319)

Brooklyn Dance Center II

(6720 20th Ave; 718-256-5320)

Continued on page 18

SUMMER INTENSIVE NYC YOUNG DANCER PROGRAM

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Tutu
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Ballotté
Brisé volé

Balletomane
Cavalier



Arts

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 16

Brooklyn Dance Center III (9110 5th Ave 718-333-5767)

The Brooklyn Dance Centers are offering two camps this summer! The Fairy Princess

Dance Camp for ages 4 to 9. Program includes dance, creative movement, tumbling, arts and crafts and fun fairytale themes. The summer dance intensive is for pre-teens and teens. Both programs are two three-week sessions starting the week of July 9th. Summer classes include Pre-Ballet for toddlers. Teen adult summer classes offered in Ballet, Pointe, Jazz, Hip Hop, Tap, Bellydance, Breakdance, Flamenco, Body Workout, Pilates, Yoga and Zumba. Call for more information and details

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

Brooklyn's first competitive fencing club. Their mission is to make the excitement and joy of Olympic-style fencing more accessible to Brooklynites.

They offer a fun and exciting summer camp for children 7 and up. Your child will have fun while learning fencing footwork, conditioning, bladework, and of course bouts. Beginners are welcome; separate sections run simultaneously for beginners and intermediate/advanced fencers. Equipment provided. Fencers should bring a bag lunch or lunch money for delivery and a water bottle.

Call or visit their website for more information and summer camp dates.

The Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy

179 Pacific Street, Brooklyn
718-243-9447 ext.221 or www.brooklynouthchorus.org or info@brooklynouthchorus.org

Is a performance-based vocal music education program serving 250 students annually. Choristers receive voice training and music theory instruction and also gain performance experience in BYCA's own concerts and in appearances with prominent orchestras and artists such as the NY Philharmonic and Elton John. BYCA students reflect the city's economic, racial and ethnic diversity. A scholarship program ensures access for all who wish to study. BYCA's four treble voice choruses range from ages 7 to 18, and the young men's ensemble, for males with changed voices, includes singers ages 14 to 21.

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718-797-5600 or www.creativeartsstudio.com

Creative Arts Studio offers children between the ages 5-13, the chance to have a wonderful experience of dance, drama, music and art.

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Dancewave is a nonprofit arts organization that transforms the lives of New York City youth through unique exposure to world-class, pre-professional performing arts training through our Dancewave Companies and the School at Dancewave. The Dancewave Companies provide performance opportunities to youth by pairing students with renowned artists such as Twyla Tharp, Mark Morris, Andrea Miller/Gallim Dance, Bill T. Jones and many more. Classes at the School of Dancewave are offered after school, on the weekends and during the summer in Creative Movement, Ballet, Modern, Jazz, African, Hip Hop and more! Contact us today for more information!

Joe's Music & Dance Academy

114-04 Farmers Blvd 718-454-3036
5712 Church Avenue - 718-774-0700 or www.joesmusiccenter.org

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Joffrey Ballet School

Founded By Robert Joffrey in 1953

Continued on page 20



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Week 1: August 20-24

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Artistic Director DIANNE BERKUN

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Arts

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Continued from page 18

**434 Avenue of the America's, 3rd,
4th and 5th Floors
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9612 or www.joffreyballetschool.com**

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

**1037 72nd Street in Dyker Heights
718-748-9023 or www.ledsny.org**

Leif Ericson Day School's Summer Creative Arts and Music Program (SCAMP) begins its 16th year of fun on June 25, and runs through August 3. Children from pre-K to grade 7 enjoy computers, art, music, movement, and drama. Professional caring staff and junior counselors are enthusiastic and attentive. Limited group size allows for a more fulfilling experience. All activities are on-premises. Two snacks provided daily. SCAMP hours are 9a.m.-3p.m. with "Early bird" care (8am) and "Late Bird" care (5pm) for additional fees.

The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center

**3 Lafayette Avenue
718-624-8400 or www.mmdg.org**

Under the direction of School Director Sarah Marcus and School Administrator Elise Marafioti, The School at the Mark Morris Dance Center is a year-round, high-quality dance training program offered at affordable rates. The School reflects the spirit of the Mark Morris Dance Group in its celebration of dance and music, which are essential to a child's education and development. The School offers a diverse range of classes for all ages and abilities and is a growing center of creative activity for children, community residents, and professional dancers. Additional information is available at www.mmdg.org.

Music Programs at The Noel Pointer Foundation

**1368 Fulton Street 3rd Floor
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718-230-4825 or www.npsom.org**

Noel Pointer Foundation's (NPF) Summer Strings program offers intensive but fun music education training in violin, viola, cello, classical guitar, piano and theory. The daily program runs Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with extended day available for working parents. Summer Strings encourage and nurture children's creativity and promote music literacy in children who might, otherwise, not have the opportunity or exposure to quality music education. Learning to play a string instrument is a wonderful activity that opens up a whole new world for children. Join us this summer for a world of musical fun.

Preparatory Center For The Performing Arts at Brooklyn College

**234 Roosevelt Hall 2900 Bedford
Ave.**

718-951-4111 or www.bcprecenter.org

The Preparatory Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College offers music, theater and dance classes and private lessons for children of all ages and levels. We also welcome adult students for private instruction in musical instruments, voice, and composition. Registration is currently underway for our summer semester, which begins on July 2. Offerings for the summer include a Creative Play program for ages 3-5, dance and theater classes, and private and group music study. Informational and placement interviews are currently being held for our 2012-2013 Suzuki program in violin, cello, and flute, as well as for our other music, theater, and dance classes. If you are interested in learning more about the Preparatory Center, you can access information from our website or call our office.

StageCoach Theatre Arts Schools

718-852-3208 or www.stagecoachschools.com

StageCoach is the world's largest part-time performing arts school, operating in 11 countries and has over 600 thriving schools with 40,000 enthusiastic students attending each week. StageCoach has a reputation for stretching children's imagination and building their confidence through classes in drama, dance and singing. The schools run for three hours every Saturday, students are boys and girls ages 4 to 18 and are grouped in classes by similar age.

StageCoach training is training for life, for more information please call Beth on 718-852-3208 or view the video on their website

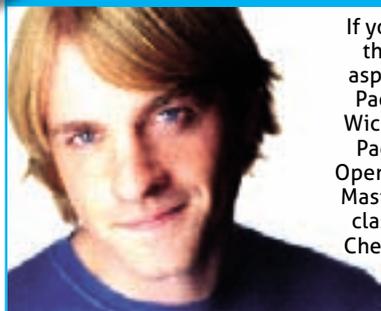
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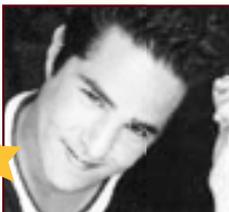


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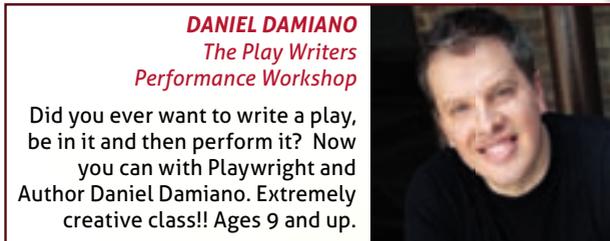


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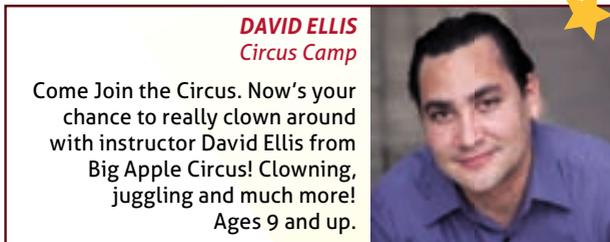
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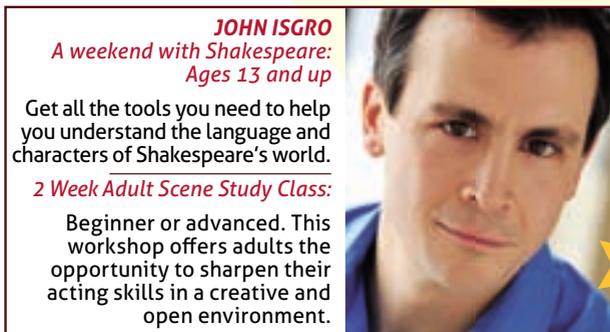
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City kids play together in perfect 'Harmony'

Under-served elementary students are developing their musical talents

BY LAURA VAROSCAK-DEINNOCENTIIS

An organization is developing the musical talents of young New York City students who would not ordinarily be exposed to music education.

The Harmony Program provides free music education to elementary students in select public schools. Children who are interested in the program apply by submitting an essay on why they want to study a musical instrument. Once accepted, they choose an instrument from the brass, woodwind, string, and percussion families. Participants receive daily music lessons, instruments, books, supplies, and opportunities to attend cultural events.

Anne Fitzgibbon, founder and executive director of the Harmony Program, traveled to Venezuela in 2007 on a Fulbright Fellowship to study the famous National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras, known as El Sistema. Impressed by its commitment to social change through music, she returned to New York.

Her primary goal was to design a program that uses music as a means to help children grow into healthy, well-rounded, and productive individuals. In addition to fostering social development, the Harmony Program encourages learning through ensemble playing, creates a supportive community for program participants and families, and demands a serious commitment to daily music study.

The Harmony Program prioritizes serving schools in high need areas, as well as those that do not offer formal band or orchestra. Equally



important to the selection process is the partnership of a dynamic and cooperative principal who believes in the value of music education. PS 152's principal, Dr. Rhonda Farkas, recognizes how the Harmony Program enriches the educational experience of the students in her school in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

"It has benefited them in exponential ways," said Farkas, "by lifting their confidence levels, boosting self-esteem, enhancing cooperation and collaboration, self-direction, flexibility, adaptability, productivity, and responsibility."

I recently visited PS 152's after-

school program, listened to the students play, and heard what they have to say.

The kids — taught by college- and graduate-level music students trained by the Harmony Program — were enthusiastic and ready to learn, even after a long day of school.

Instructor Patrick O'Reilly taught his young drumming students how to identify notes and rests, rhythms and patterns, repeats and loops. There was a strong sense of group learning and peer teaching in the intimate class of four. Sebastian, a fifth grader, took a break from the snare drum to help a classmate identify the



down beat from a series of notes on the board. He was patient and kind, and continued to support her until she played the music correctly.

The kids expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the program.

"When I have a bad day, the music and my friends make me happy," said Mia. "The two go together."

Fifth-grader Theresa added that playing music is not only fun and exciting, but it helps her to focus and concentrate, too.

"I think it's going to help me on the [English Language Arts] exam," she said.

Sebastian agreed and said learning to read music has helped him improve in math.

Cassandra recalled that the Harmony Program brought made it possible for her to perform with one of the most famous musicians in the world. "Playing with Placido Domingo was awesome!" she recalled. In January, Cassandra was one of 35 young musicians chosen from the Harmony Program to perform at the gala celebration honoring the tenor and conductor. The maestro conducted the orchestra of fourth to sixth graders.

"Making music as a part of an orchestra is an important part of the program, because it requires children to respect their places as members of a community and to understand the rules, structure, and organization that govern that community," explained Harmony founder Fitzgibbon.

Lexy, a violinist, joined the Harmony Program in second grade. Now a fifth grader, she also had the opportunity to play with Domingo. Lexy recalled the experience with excitement, but quickly shifted her focus to the Harmony Program itself.

"Music allows me to express my feelings," explained Lexy, whose favorite pieces of music are Pachelbel's "Canon in D" and "The Magic Flute." "I'm so grateful that it is a free program. Otherwise, I would not have the opportunity to play an instrument."

When I entered the woodwind group's practice room, the students were in the middle of learning a new, challenging Bach piece. They struggled persistently until the end, then immediately asked their teacher if they could play "The Magic Flute," which they had been practicing for the past few months. They performed it with joy, confidence, and pride. The young musicians' talent amazed me, but I was even more impressed by their dedication and respect for the music-making process.

The Harmony Program teaches more than music. It develops important skills necessary for children to succeed in many areas of their lives.

Principal Farkas explains, "It offers our children the tools, resources, and experiences that have helped facilitate and drive the knowledge, complex thinking skills, collaboration, and creativity required for the college and career outcomes needed to succeed in the 21st century."

For more, visit harmonyprogram.cuny.edu.

Laura Varoscak-DeInnocentis is a mom, teacher, and freelance writer. She is a regular contributor to New York Parenting Media and has won several editorial awards from Parenting Media Assoc. Varoscak holds master's degrees in fiction writing, education, and psychology. Visit her webpage at www.examiner.com/parenting-in-new-york/laura-varoscak for more articles on Brooklyn parenting.



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Rocking around with Laurie Berkner

Talking to the 'queen of children's music'

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

When beloved children's songstress and guitarist Laurie Berkner performs, excited audiences love to sing along and clap to familiar songs. In fact, her shows are so much fun, that fans leave with smiles on their faces, still humming her tunes.

It's that rewarding response that keeps Berkner returning to the stage.

Fans can see her live when Berkner plays three shows at the Concert Hall in Manhattan on May 18 and 19.

The super-talented, popular, guitar-strumming performer actually created an entire genre — a progressive “kindie rock” movement. Her lively shows are all about kid-friendly, rockin' music that isn't dumbed-down or too saccharine.

Berkner's songs tell stories, teach life lessons, and are full of energy. Many of her songs involve movement, while others—quieter songs—inspire feelings of security and warmth. And all of them invite children's participation, allowing tots to be silly, powerful or whatever they like, encouraging them to use their imagination.

“When I'm writing a song, I'm thinking about whether the kids will like it and whether I'm going to connect to them through it,” said Berkner. “I'm also thinking about whether I want to sing it over and over again, so I guess that's the part that connects with adults. ‘Old MacDonald had a Farm’ is a great song for kids, but I couldn't sing it 100 times!”

Berkner lives with husband, Brian Mueller and daughter, Lucy 7, on the Upper West Side, and in a recent interview, said she is continually inspired by her young audience and her own life experiences, while occasionally, “connecting to what I did when I

was a child. There's a song called ‘Pillow Land’ on my new ‘Party Day!’ CD, which I wrote one day, just remembering how I loved making things out of couch pillows and imagining a place that's magical.”

Berkner's fame came as a surprise — even to her. She said writing music for children seemed to get her creative juices flowing and it was a surprisingly fluid transformation from playing rock bands like Lois Lane (an all-female cover band, as well as her own rock band, Red Onion).

The early years

Berkner's home in Princeton, New Jersey was never a boring place, and music appreciation was always encouraged. The budding performer became a real music buff and her taste was rather eclectic — ranging from rock to classical to Gilbert and Sullivan operettas and Broadway musicals.

Berkner recalled that as a child, Marlo Thomas's “Free to be You and Me” album seemed to strike a chord, inspiring her musical aspirations later in life.

As a teen she sang in choirs, got parts in musical theatre and played in cool bands. And even though she enjoyed playing piano, clarinet and violin, it's no surprise that the guitar is Berkner's favorite instrument.

After graduating Rutgers with a psychology degree, which came in handy when she worked with kids at summer camps and eventually as a children's music specialist at New York preschools and day care centers, Berkner was on her way to discovering her niche. She said her experience with kids “turned out to be incredibly rewarding. I learned a lot just by working with them every day.”

At Rockefeller University in Manhattan, Berkner worked as a music specialist at the child and family

center. She took over for the music teacher who was leaving after 10 years.

“It was my first time being a preschool music teacher, so I observed the class teacher and asked her, ‘How do you get these kids to do all those things that you want them to do? I don't understand; I can't seem to get these kids to pay any attention to me.’ So, she told me to stop talking and put it into music,” Berkner recalled.

“The kids wanted to be dinosaurs, which I thought was fun, but I didn't want them to get out of control and hurt each other. They were roaring and showing their claws and stomping around, so I sang a song, ‘It's time to eat.’ So, they would stop and eat, then got up and pretended to be dinosaurs again, and when that got to be a little bit intense, I'd sing, ‘Stop and take a rest.’ And then I'd save the roaring for the very end of the song.”

That's when “We are the Dinosaurs” (from her first album, “Whaddaya Think of That?” released on cassette in 1997) was composed, based on this funny situation whereby the kids were allowed to do their thing and express anger in a creative way.

Recordings

Berkner formed her own record company, Two Tomatoes Records, LLC in 1988, when her second CD “Buzz Buzz” was released. Everything seemed to fall into place as she pursued her passion. Her work began to sell rapidly in the New York area, as word of mouth began to spread.

As the universe continued to smile down upon the performer, Berkner's release of “Victor Vito” (1999) got US Magazine to say, “The title cut has already become a birthday party anthem.”



Photo by Todd Ouyoung

Berkner suddenly found herself in her own Upper West Side office, after working out of her one-bedroom apartment for many years. She said it felt really good.

And then The Laurie Berkner band came to be. Their live shows brought down the house as kids who idolized them started throwing stuffed animals on stage – a sign of loyalty.

Another hit with the tot crowd, the “Under a Shady Tree” CD (2002), won a N.A.P.P.A. Gold Award and a Parents’ Choice Silver Honor Award. Critics singled out the recording as one of the best of the year.

Nick Jr. phenom

In 2004 Berkner debuted on Nick Jr., with a series of six music videos, as part of the network’s “Move to The Music” series. In an instant she became a household word and enjoyed an amazing increase in CD sales.

In September, 2010 Nickelodeon released “Let’s Hear It for The Laurie Berkner Band!” — a DVD of her most popular videos that have

aired on the network. And in June of that year, “The Best of The Laurie Berkner Band” received a N.A.P.P.A. Silver Honors Award.

The exciting release of the band’s first new DVD of original videos since 2006, “Party Day!” (Two Tomatoes Records/Razor & Tie) in July, 2011 entered the Billboard Top Music Videos chart at number one.

The December, 2011 release of Barnes & Noble’s first original “Read and Play” NOOK Kids Book, based on the title track from “Party Day!” took preschool fun and education to a whole new level. “The Party Day” e-book is a musical adventure featuring unique animation and great interactive games in which a merry bunch of insects get together for an all-day beach celebration.

Berkner’s simple lyrics and catchy melody, coupled with colorful illustrations by Julia Wolf, capture the childhood feeling of never wanting a perfect day to end.

We adults know that feeling all too well as we struggle with the imperfections of daily life.

Busy bee Berkner is also the author of two picture book-with-CDs based on her songs, “Victor Vito and Freddie Vasco” (Scholastic) and “The Story of My Feelings” (Orchard Books). She has also released a sheet music compilation, “The Laurie Berkner Songbook” (Music Sales Group), and is featured on a software cartridge that accompanies Fisher-Price’s award-winning toy, Learn Through Music Plus.

Family time

Berkner said she loves spending quality time with her family when she’s not touring, and Lucy can’t wait to have her mom all to herself, and enjoys occasionally seeing her sing and play guitar at shows, even though she has to share her mom with fans. Mother-daughter downtime usually consists of shopping at local markets, reading, talking and biking. Family outings to the beach in the summer and horseback riding include dad.

Lucy attends private school, and says she’s proud of her mom. She may be headed in a musical direction,

showing lots of promise as a drummer, and enjoys pop singer Taylor Swift, according to Berkner.

“But some days, she says she wants to be an archeologist, while other days, a paleontologist,” says mom.

As a busy mom, Berkner said she tries to go with the flow and not be too over protective. Sometimes, she likes to play her songs for Lucy, and make things up as a way of instructing her to do things.

“I was singing once and saw a 4-year-old girl shut her eyes and start swaying to the music,” said Berkner. “I thought, ‘That’s the reason I got into music.’ It keeps me wanting to do more.”

Laurie Berkner at the Concert Hall [2 West 64th St. at Central Park West, (212) 277-7179] May 18, 5 pm; May 19, 11 am and 3 pm. For more, visit www.laurie-berkner.com.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist. She loves New York City and has her finger on the pulse of the city’s vibe. And, as the parent of two great sons, she has a lot to write about.

Celebrate mothers of special-needs children

Remarkable moms need extra thanks on Mother's Day

BY REBECCA MCKEE

May is the month to appreciate our mothers and grandmothers. We make a special effort to show our love and gratitude this time of year through our words and actions (and, for good measure, a beautiful bouquet doesn't hurt!).

But a more and more homes include family members who have autism spectrum disorder. Many of these individuals may rarely convey to their mothers just how much adoration and love exists within their special bond, and those moms can use

some special recognition.

Mothers of children with special needs work tirelessly day in and day out for their children.

Their work includes motherly duties of love, providing food, shelter, clothing, tenderness, and teaching.

But standing atop of that mountain is a pressure-cooker filled with speech and language goals, fine- and gross-motor coordination activities, functional life skills, opportunities for generalization, natural environment teaching moments, sensitivity and awareness for siblings and peers, team meetings, workshops, parent-training

visits, data collection and analysis for behavioral outbursts, and so much more.

It is a world that involves these mothers' front doors opening and closing continuously to allow for professionals to enter and exit. Between those times it is the mothers who hold everything together.

It is a motherhood that requires patience; patience that includes waiting an entire summer while an 8-year-old child learns to imitate waving.

It is a motherhood that requires grace; grace that includes calmly handling a very loud 10-year-old autistic child in the supermarket while every other adult in the surrounding area glares. It is a motherhood that requires fortitude — courage and advocacy mixed together in a cake bowl — that has to be at an all-time high level from the time of diagnosis throughout adulthood.

It is a motherhood that requires connectedness; connectedness means constant networking, attendance at workshops, fund-raisers, classes, and more.

It is a motherhood that requires a realistic view of accomplishment; accomplishment can easily mean her child learning how to tie his shoes at the age of 19 after working on this skill for more than 300 hours. It is a motherhood that requires balance; balance between caring for all members of her family, herself, and a person with special needs who naturally requires just that much more.

We should all remember to honor our mothers each day, and especially on Mother's Day.

This May, if you know a mother or grandmother who has the personal privilege of having a family member with autism spectrum disorder, or individualized personality, acknowledge her. Take the time to wish her a happy Mother's Day.

These are words she may have yet to hear from that special person in her life.



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DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

Dad comes in last

Let us establish, now, that I am not very good at this fatherhood thing. Never have been, never will be. I am a struggling father, an amateur, a dilettante. My children know this; I've been proving it to them since they were born. For my son, the proof was never so obvious as during the pinewood derby.

I tend to plan the way some people fall off a cliff. I backplan, coming to my senses moments after something expensive lies smoldering at my feet

ewood derby car.

First of all, the manufacturer's verbiage claiming the paint will dry in one hour is a big fat lie. The only thing happening in an hour is the Scoutmaster will come into the broom closet where you're building your car (your son's car) AS THE DERBY IS STARTING to tell you [unprintable] or he will [unprintable]. And the wheels will get stuck to the fuselage, which really doesn't matter in the great story arc of life.

that's even heavier. And that's when the chucks release and all the cars speed down the slope toward the finish line. All the cars.

Except his.

Yeah, the manufacturer coulda said something about that.

Look, I know something about being shamefaced: I attempted dating in the '80s. I worked at a theme park. I drove a Gremlin. I drove a purple Gremlin.

So I knew how to react. I knew precisely the harrowing precipice of dignity that my father-and-son dynamic skidded uncontrollably toward in the gravity of that glance. As my son's public humiliation went nuclear, as an entire auditorium of parents shushed, their heads swiveling in unison toward me, as the raw force of an accumulated scowl swept toward me like a bright red tsunami, I thought to myself: "I should have used a hair dryer."

The next year was no better. Heck, the next two years were no better. My car — my son's car — never placed. I spent at least 50 bucks on kits, sandpaper packs, chrome pipes, high-gloss lacquer; but no matter how many hours I put into my car — into my son's car — I didn't place. He didn't place.

Finally, the kid said, "Dad, can I try?" — and then I got it. I mean, it was soooo obvious. I should have seen it coming a mile away: this was one of those blunt lessons of fatherhood, a Zen smack, a lightbulb as bright as the sun, and it was shining across that dim auditorium directly onto me and I knew, I knew right then, that I needed powdered graphite lube.

The kid was having none of it. He grabbed a chunk of pine and built what appeared to be a wedge of cheese with a number seven scrawled on its side. It wasn't sanded. The wheels were crooked. It was yellow. This car had nothing going for it.

He didn't win. I mean, he was racing a block of cheddar against a Sponge Bob, a third-generation door-stop, and a perfectly rendered 1967 Camaro Super Sport. He came in fourth.

And he didn't care.

Winning had nothing to do with it.

Winning has nothing to do with it.



long enough to say, "Maybe I should have read the instructions." I also tend to reject proper tool usage to the point where the home improvement chain Menards has issued a restraining order.

So nobody should be surprised I screwed up my pinewood derby car.

I mean, so nobody should be surprised I screwed up my son's pin-

But there is a moment when it does matter. There is, in fact, a moment where those wheels, shellacked to the body of the car by a generous application of Krylon Red #5, bear the weight of a '57 Chevy in a single glance as your son tries to place his race car on the track...and it sticks to his fingers.

However, there is another moment

have a

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Is technology a sleep snatcher for your kid?

Research indicates electronics may cause serious problems

BY JENNY CHEN

We all know that sleep is important for growing children, and that they often aren't getting enough shut-eye. But a recent report shows just how serious the problem might be. Yet, even if you get your kids to bed on time, they may have trouble falling asleep. The culprit? Increased use of technology.

The results of a survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control show that 68.9 percent of children in the United States don't get enough sleep. Students who get less than eight hours of sleep per night are 86 percent more likely to seriously consider suicide, and 60 percent more likely to smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol. Sleep deprivation also leads to memory loss, poor focus, and weight gain. In recent years, studies have suggested that habitual Internet use and computer gaming can lead to lost sleep.

"Sleep is really important, but it seems to take a backseat these days. Media and electronics are available 24-seven, and it makes it harder to go to sleep," says Kyla Boyse, a registered nurse with the University of Michigan and a mother of three.

At her clinic, Boyse has seen first-hand the effects of electronics on quality of sleep for growing children and teens. She recommends that parents remove all electronics from the bedroom. That means TVs, computers, and even cellphones and their chargers have to go. Even when kids are not using the electronics, the devices emit high levels of electromagnetic radiation, which disrupts melatonin produc-

tion — a key player in sleep pattern regulation. Bright, unnatural light from electronic screens can also stimulate the brain and disrupt circadian rhythms.

In fact, electronics are so powerful in affecting a child's quality of sleep that Dr. Victoria Dunckley, a child

and adolescent psychiatrist in California and blogger for Psychology Today, recommends a three-week electronic fast for all her patients who have sleep problems. Among her patients who have prior behavioral or mental problems, Dunckley sees a 50 percent decrease in symp-



toms relating to poor sleep after the fast. Among regularly developing children, she sees nearly a 100 percent decrease in symptoms relating to trouble sleeping. Young children are particularly sensitive to the negative effects of electronics, because their brains are still forming.

"It really makes a difference. If it didn't make such a big difference, I wouldn't be so radical about it," says Dunckley. "Disrupting the circadian rhythm even 30 minutes a week can ... upset everything."

Of course, this is even if your child goes to sleep at bedtime. But many of today's children and teens eschew sleep for engrossing video games, texting conversations, and Facebooking. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 75 percent of teens use cellphones at night when they should be sleeping, and after 9 pm, 34 percent of adolescents reported text messaging, 44 percent reported talking on the telephone, 55 percent reported being online, and 24 percent played computer games. Media use also often stimulates the brain, which makes it harder to sleep hours after you've turned your electronic devices off.

Furthermore, electronics use often displaces physical activity, which helps in promoting high-quality sleep. The National Wildlife Federation reported in 2011 that playing outdoors increases a child's exposure to natural daylight and exercise, which can lead to a marked increase in quality of sleep.

Lack of sleep is nothing to snore at. The 10 hours that children are supposed to get at night help them strengthen their immune systems, process emotion-laden memories into their long-term memory, and grow. Sleep deprivation actually interferes with the production of the human growth hormone. Studies have also suggested that children's sleep habits set the foundation for sleep habits into the adolescent and adult years.

But what if your child has schoolwork to finish? Surely a couple hours of sleep sacrificed in the name of studying, often on the computer, is no big loss. Dunckley disagrees. She says that electronics actually suppress the frontal lobe and cortex. The frontal lobe is linked to long-term memory

and other higher mental functions, such as recognizing long-term consequences for actions. The cerebral cortex also plays an important role in memory, attention, language, thought, and consciousness. In other words, children who use electronics too much and don't get enough sleep will actually not do as well in school, and will have trouble developmentally.

Never mind the schoolwork, Dunckley says, your child's health is the number one priority.

Of course, in a world of smartphones, over scheduling, and busy parents, how does one begin to limit a child's use of electronics? Here are some tips:

• **Set a good example.** Try to do all your work during the day, and turn off your electronics after dinner. Not only will it set a good example for your children, it will help you relax as well.

• **Limit screen time to two hours a day.** Dunckley says that limiting all screen time (this includes computers at school, TV, video games, etc.) to two hours significantly reduces sleep problems.

• **Discourage electronics use after 7 pm.** When it starts getting dark, your body naturally begins preparing itself for bedtime, and artificial light can confuse it.

• **Get outside.** For every hour of screen time Dunckley recommends an hour of outdoor activity. "The benefits of outdoor activity can help offset the negative impacts of electronics," she says.

• **Take electronics out of the bedroom.** Kids who learn to fall asleep in front of the TV never actually achieve deep sleep because their brain is still being stimulated. But Boyse says that there's no need to go cold turkey all at once. First, take the TV out of the bedroom, then the computer, and then the cellphone. Before long, your child won't even miss the devices!

• **Be firm.** Boyse acknowledges that there might be some whining and balking on the part of the kids when you first try to limit electronic use.

"But one thing that parents need to remember," says Boyse, "is you're the parent, and it's up to the parent to do what's right for the kid."

Jenny Chen is a freelance writer. She has written for Washington Parent and Parent Connection.

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Why the world embraces the Montessori method

How this 100-year-old education philosophy continues to benefit students today

BY DANE L. PETERS

Having discovered Dr. Maria Montessori's internationally proven educational philosophy — a theory she began developing at the end of the 19th century in Italy — late in my career, I find that I cannot learn enough, for my sake, for the students in my school, and for my granddaughter. So much of what takes place in a Montessori environment today is predicated on the guiding principles that Montessori developed after many years of observing children.

Montessori is an educational philosophy that supports a student's innate curiosity and freedom to question, encouraging adaptability and independence. The need for our children to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills has become even more important as they face the challenges to come in our rapidly changing world.

Whether you read Dr. Jane Healy's book, "Your Child's Growing Mind"; the New York Times Feb. 17, 2012 article, "Building Self-Control the American Way"; or Daniel Pink's book, "Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us," you will come across present-day principles and phrases that relate directly to Montessori's work and methods. The resurgence of Montessori education here in the U.S. — that began in the early 1960s — has grown to more than 4,000 private and public schools today.

In understanding Montessori education, which is now the most utilized pedagogy on the globe, with more than 22,000 schools in 110 countries, it might be helpful to review a few of the most prominent words that describe the basic tenets of her work and their relevancy to the needs of education today.

• **Teacher as facilitator** — Montessori believed that teachers should be a guide-on-the-side rather than a



sage-on-the-stage. A top-down learning environment is non-productive for the student. Education is most successful when the student is an independent learner. Also, Montessori teachers must complete exten-

sive training to become credentialed Montessori teachers.

"The child is truly a miraculous being, and this should be felt deeply by the educator," said Montessori.

• **Respect for the student** — Along

the same lines as teacher as facilitator, in a Montessori environment, there is a deep respect for the student. Students flourish in a setting that is supportive and respectful of their individuality, abilities, and potential.

• **Intrinsically motivated** – Probably one of Montessori's most meaningful tenets is helping students to work for their own goals, satisfaction, and interest, and not for external rewards. It is widely recognized that individuals are more highly motivated when they have a vested interest in their pursuits and goals.

• **Prepared environment** – A Montessori classroom is designed with thoughtful structure that facilitates students making choices and learning at their own pace. It is an environment that develops independent problem-solving skills by allowing students time to explore, discover, concentrate, research, and learn. The teacher closely monitors the progress of each student, helping her make good choices that support learning and exploration of all subjects within an academic curriculum.

• **Mixed-age classes** – Montessori classrooms have 3-, 4-, and 5-year old students in one classroom, just as first-, second-, and third-grade students or fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students are in one classroom. This promotes peer learning; students learn from and teach each other, developing collaboration and leadership skills, compassion, and mastery of the material.

• **Three-year cycle** – Students remain with the same teacher for three years, allowing teachers to gain an intimate knowledge of each student's individual learning style and potential. And it provides consistency in a student's academic life. A spiraling curriculum throughout the three-year cycle develops a deeper understanding of academic subjects.

• **Method and materials that are timeless** – Many of the materials Montessori developed 100 years ago are used in classrooms today. For example, the sequencing materials students use are highly applicable to the strict syntax necessary for computer programming or building software applications. Also, many of the self-correcting Montessori materials enable students to be successful without adult intervention, encouraging a student's independence and self-

confidence.

• **Practical life skills** – Students engage in tasks that relate directly to everyday practical skills. Caring for yourself and your environment, organizing, and using household materials, are employed in the classroom to help students build critical-thinking, decision-making skills, and fine-motor coordination skills.

• **Grace and courtesy** – Being thoughtful of the needs of others and engaging with others in a respectful manner are important characteristics of a Montessori education. These are the building blocks for the peace curriculum that is ever-present in a Montessori school. Compassion is a characteristic held in high regard within the Montessori curriculum.

• **Life-long learner** – Curiosity and a life-long intellectual pursuit of knowledge is a means for life. Learning is not simply to complete an assignment or achieve a satisfactory test score.

• **Critical thinker** – Always using exploration and experience, students are encouraged to make informed decisions. Students learn to gather information, make comparisons, and apply what works to each problem or situation, with a focus on understanding the process of discovery and developing independent, problem-solving skills.

• **Confident learner with a strong sense of self** – Montessori students learn to take risks in their academic work and think creatively without a fear of failure. When they do fail, they see it as a learning experience and know how to independently recover and get back on track.

All of the above Montessori concepts are not only important in the early years, but they also provide the foundation for adolescence and adulthood. During the critical adolescent years, these methods become essential to give students the independence to manage freedom with responsibility. Repeatedly, Montessori education touches the lives of so many people in a way that helps them to be confident, thoughtful citizens, always working to build a better environment for themselves and others.

Dane L. Peters is head of Brooklyn Heights Montessori School in Brooklyn. You can reach him at dpeters@bhmsny.org. Visit his blog at www.daneseblog.blogspot.com.

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ESQ.

Saving money for your child's future

I want to start putting money away for my children. Is a 529 plan the best vehicle for savings?

Saving for your children's future is an admirable goal but it's important to do so in the most tax efficient way. Remember that you can transfer up to \$13,000 per year tax-free to any individual. In addition to this annual exemption, you can make unlimited payments toward another individual's medical or educational expenses as long as those funds are paid directly to the provider.

A 529 plan is a program designed to encourage savings for higher education. It enables you, the Contributor, to take advantage of Federal and (if applicable) New York State tax savings. It is not limited by the annual exclusion although it carries other limitations like a lifetime cap on contributions and a five-year limit of \$60,000. It also allows the contributions to grow and be withdrawn tax-free if used for qualifying educational expenses. And knowing that you will be in a better financial position when your children enter college creates a sense of security. Plus, you are able to control the withdrawals, change beneficiaries, and transfer to another 529 plan at any time as long as you remain the owner on the account.

Grandparents can also contribute to a 529 plan and placing money into it affords other estate planning benefits. By contributing, they are moving money out of their own taxable estate while maintaining control over the funds as the owner. Keep in mind that as a New York State taxpayer, there is a deduction for your contribution to a 529 plan on your New York State income tax but for older generations, it is important to know that gifting of assets could im-



pose penalties that may affect future eligibility for long-term care benefits through the Medicaid Program.

A 529 plan allows your child to apply the funds to her tuition, room and board, books, supplies, and other qualified higher-education overheads. Withdrawals from a 529 plan account for these expenses are federally tax-free, use of the resources is not limited to New York State, and the money can be used at any eligible post-secondary school in the United States or abroad.

With a 529 plan you are unable, or could be penalized, if you use the funds for purposes like summer camps, clothing, or vacations. If this is something you desire, other, more flexible banking structures provided in the Uniform Gift Act for Minors or the Uniform Trust Act for Minors would allow this kind of spending.

Yet if you chose one of these options, your child will be entitled to control the account when she reaches 18. At which point, you could create a minor's trust or fund a ROTH IRA or a regular IRA for her to ensure continuity of savings.

When undertaking any savings program for your kids, it's never too early to start a conversation about finances. It's one of the best ways to raise a responsible, happy, and successful adult.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the Law Offices of Alison Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate-planning needs. Her firm assists clients in New York City, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. You can find Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Helping someone through a divorce

When someone is getting divorced, the concerns are often pretty obvious: the welfare of the children and future relationships with them; a place to live; money; a job; and so forth. But, for many of us, how to respond and be there for someone in this situation is complicated — and not only because of her emotions, but because of our own as well.

Recently, I spoke with a colleague about how friends and family can be supportive when a divorce is taking place, and about the challenges we can face in providing that support. Marie Wetmore, a life and career coach who assists clients dealing with transitions and stress, has heard first-hand what people most want when splitting up.

We discussed how reaching out — even to people we know very well — can be an awkward step. What should we say? What shouldn't we say? Divorce is a very sensitive topic to bring up. It can seem “too sensitive” — even taboo. And people often don't know how to handle it. Maybe we're even worried about getting close, afraid of what another's divorce may suggest about our own marriages. We wonder, “Could that happen to me?”

We may respond by pulling away, and allowing the relationship to disintegrate.

On the other hand, we may overdo it. When your friend talks about her divorce, do you top her stories with tales of your own, or some War of the Roses story you have heard about? Do you give advice when it hasn't been asked for, or act like an expert when you've read exactly three articles on the subject? If you are not honoring where she is, it may be your friend who pulls away. Without realizing it, you may lose the trust of someone you really care about and want to help.

So, what to do?

There is a middle ground. Don't back away or drop the relationship.



Instead, be sure to be around and available, and answer the phone or call back. Open the door to conversation, but without putting pressure on her. Listen, without judging, because when you're getting a divorce, just being able to talk is so important. Propose meeting for lunch or doing something else she'll enjoy. The requirements of day-to-day living can be overwhelming to someone going through a divorce. Offering to help with the practical necessities can alleviate the burden more than one might imagine.

Can you offer to babysit? Of course. For some, the biggest challenge is childcare, so if you can handle that for a few hours, and your friend can attend a therapy session, run errands, or get to an aerobics class, it will be a big help to her.

If you've got the contacts or the research skills, offer to check into lawyers, financial planners, or support groups. Maybe a move is planned, and you can help with the packing.

Let her know that mediation is an option, and that she doesn't have to have a contentious divorce.

Wetmore related how, when a friend was going through a divorce, the woman didn't know anyone else who had been in her position. When

she did eventually find someone to connect with, it helped a lot to have a person who could say, “It was hard, but this is what it's like, and it's better now.” So, if you know someone who is divorced and in a good place, and someone else going through it now, ask whether they would like to be hooked up in order to talk.

Many divorcing spouses struggle with a sense of failure. And even those who don't will still have their fears, frustrations, and disappointments. You should listen and let them vent. But, you can also gently remind them that ultimately, divorce can open up possibilities for creating a happier life. While their emotions will rise and fall like waves, the storm will pass. Make it known that throughout, your love and friendship are constant, and you are there for them.

Lee Chabin, Esq., a 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, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/home>.

Reach Marie Wetmore at marie@lionssharecoaching.com.

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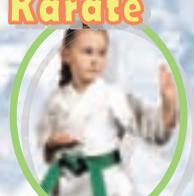
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What we all need to know about **BULLYING**

End abuse
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helpful
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Everyone should know:

- Bullying is a power issue. It's about preying on the weak and on those who may be "different."

- Bullying has moved out of the schoolyard and onto the Internet and mobile phones. Cyber bullying is the fastest growing method students use to bully others.

- It takes a village. Children who are bullying others need to understand that everyone is watching — parents, teachers, neighbors, church members, coaches, troop leaders, etc. — and will speak up when their behavior is inappropriate.

- Kids fall into three roles: the bully, the victim, and the witness. The witnesses who do not speak up against bullying provide an audience that encourages the bully.

- Speaking up against a specific bullying incident or pattern takes courage and can result in repercussions for the victim or witness. To keep them safe, protect the students' anonymity.

Parents should know:

- Just as you teach a child personal hygiene, ethics, and good behavior, you need to teach him that bullying is wrong and that witnessing a bully calls for action. What action? At a minimum, tell an adult.

- There are warning signs that may indicate your child is being bullied, or may be bullying others. Become familiar with them. You can find warning signs at stopbullying.gov.

- Have regular conversations

about all of those topics that are uncomfortable for both you and your child — such as bullying, drugs, sex. Acknowledge that these are difficult conversations for both of you, but that you are going to have them anyway.

- You are your child's advocate. If you suspect or know your child is being bullied, your job includes engaging school staff and others to help support your child through this bad time. Visit the school frequently. Get to know teachers and other staff before problems occur.

- Monitor and supervise your child's online and cellphone activities, set boundaries, and let him know you are monitoring him. It's the best way to know that he is

neither bullying nor being bullied, sexting, sharing passwords, or compromising his privacy, safety, and security.

Here are some links about how to monitor:

- How much should you monitor? At childhelp.org.

- Spying or monitoring? At about.com.

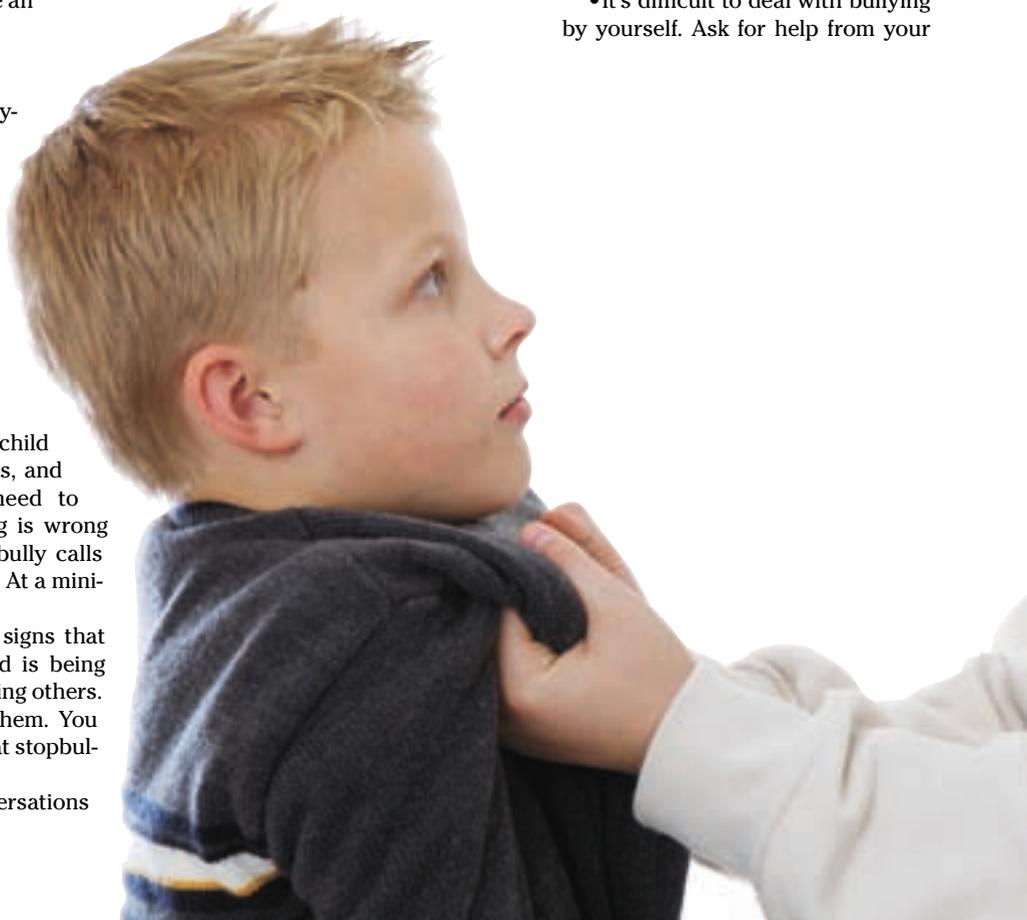
- Four things to help protect kids online at Microsoft Safety and Security Center at microsoft.com.

- Overview of monitoring cellphone use at education.com.

Kids should know:

- No one deserves to be bullied. It is harmful and can have long-lasting repercussions.

- It's difficult to deal with bullying by yourself. Ask for help from your



friends, parent, or an adult you trust or know has been assigned to deal with bullying.

- Doing nothing says you think it's OK to bully another person. Take a stand against bullying.

- If someone gets upset with your behavior toward others, even if you think you're just being funny, you may be bullying. Stop, reflect, and talk about it with someone you trust.

Additional links for kids:

- That'sNotCool.com.
- StopBullying.gov.

Teachers should know:

- Early and immediate intervention to resolve conflicts will mini-

mize bullying and support victims. Find tips at stopbullying.gov.

- Dealing with bullying is a team effort. Learn all you can about bullying through research and recommended interventions.

- There needs to be a designated leader who serves as a resource for staff and students and keeps track of incidents. Kids should know who that person is and that anonymity will be protected.

- Your attention needs to extend beyond the schoolhouse or program doors to include the school neighborhood, Internet, and texting.

For a cyberbullying toolkit for educators, visit commonsensemedia.org.



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Dyslexia's potential

New book
uncovers a
disorder's
inherent set
of abilities

BY MARY CARROLL
WININGER

Dyslexia may be one of the most well-known and yet least understood of all the learning disorders. But many authorities in the field have begun to view dyslexia simply as a different way of absorbing and processing information, with its own inherent set of abilities and gifts.

The common misconception is that dyslexia is characterized primarily by mirror writing (writing certain letters backwards) and rearranging letters when reading (reading “was” for “saw”), when, in fact, these behaviors

band-and-wife duo Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide, have written a book that details the valuable features that can manifest in a dyslexic person. The book, “The Dyslexic Advantage: Unlocking the Hidden Potential of the Dyslexic Brain,” discusses how the dyslexic brain is different, the unique capabilities it can possess, and the different ways a dyslexic person can maximize his full aptitude.

“[W]e’ve come to believe that thinking of dyslexia as simply a disorder of reading and spelling is both deeply incomplete and misleading,” says Dr. Brock Eide. “Usually, dyslexic individuals are thought of as having brains that are trying hard to learn and work just like everyone else’s, but are failing because they’re defective

not completely known.”

These strengths can serve dyslexics well, in the fields of architecture, design, and surgical medicine (material); visual art (interconnected); law (narrative); and the sciences (dynamic).

“Not every dyslexic individual has these strengths...in our experience all have at least some, and each of these tends to be much more common in dyslexic than non-dyslexic individuals,” reports Dr. Brock Eide. “It’s important to recognize and understand these strengths, because we’ve found that dyslexic individuals who succeed in adulthood usually do so, because they’ve learned how to take full advantage of one or more of these strengths, and not just because they’ve fully overcome dyslexic challenges with reading or spelling.

“Typically, they’ve learned to only use these strengths to work around their weaknesses, rather than letting their weaknesses define who they are or what they are capable of achieving.”

How, then, can dyslexic individuals be assisted to embrace their full potential, seeing as how they’re capable of so much? In an ideal world, say the doctors, the current educational system would be different, and geared more toward students of all learning abilities.

“We need to focus much more heavily on understanding and taking advantage of how the brains of dyslexic students actually work, rather than teaching them as if the goal were to get their brains to work just like everyone else’s,” says Dr. Brock Eide. Dyslexic students follow a “different developmental pattern than other children” and they “need a different kind of education that reflects these differences,” he says.

“Schools cannot just operate on this ‘mode of normal’ and expect all kids to learn well,” confirms Dr. Fernette Eide. “An ideal education needs to be tailored more towards [everyone’s] strengths.”

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

“We need to focus on taking advantage of how the brains of dyslexic students actually work, rather than teaching them as if the goal were to get their brains to work just like everyone else’s.”

only occur in a very small percentage of dyslexics.

The disorder is actually more frequently observed through other signs, such as difficulty with rhyming words in very young children, word or

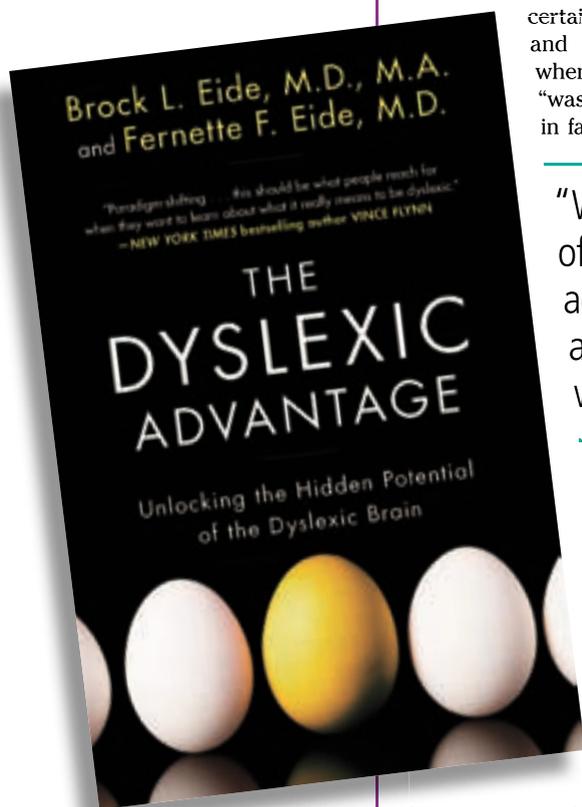
letter omission when writing and reading, and substitution of similar-looking words to replace the ones intended (“help” for “held,” “who” for “how”). For these reasons, dyslexia has often been seen as a burden or a weakness—or even a condition to be overcome. But, now, experts and evaluators are starting to realize that the so-called disability can be accompanied by an array of skills and talents not understood or even noticed before now.

Two Seattle-based physicians, hus-

in some way.”

After working with and speaking to hundreds of dyslexic individuals, the doctors have witnessed, again and again, that dyslexics “share many desirable and useful features in how they learn and process information.”

In the book, the doctors detail four common areas of dyslexia-associated talents, which they call the MIND strengths: material, or spatial, reasoning; interconnected reasoning, or the ability to see connections and relationships, particularly big-picture relationships; narrative reasoning, or the ability to see facts as stories, cases, or examples, rather than abstract, non-contextual information; and dynamic reasoning, the ability to use bits of remembered experience to make predictions about how things will change over time, which, the doctors write, “helps dyslexics function well in situations where the conditions are changing or all the facts are



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Sleeping peacefully?



What parents should know about their child's snoring

BY KIKI BOCHI

You can't help but smile at that soft snoring sound your baby makes while snoozing — it's almost like purring. And who can resist that? If your child is older and makes a bit more of a racket, you may smile indulgently. Sounds a lot like Dad, right?

Snoring on the part of your child should not just be a source of enchantment and amusement, however. It turns out, it may be a sign of trouble.

Children who snore or who have other sleep-related breathing problems are more likely to have behavioral issues years later, according to a large population-based study in the April issue of the medical journal "Pediatrics."

More than most parents realize, that sweet snoring may be impeding children's ability to sleep, which can have serious behavioral consequences. An estimated one in

10 children snore regularly; while between 2 and 4 percent have sleep apnea, defined as abnormally long pauses in breathing during sleep.

For the study, researchers at the University of Maryland and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York asked parents about their children's snoring, mouth breathing, observed apnea, and their behavior. They started tracking 11,000 6-month-old children, and continued periodically until they reached age 7. Upon analysis, the link between sleep and behavior problems was startling.

By age 4, children with sleep-disordered breathing were 20 percent to 60 percent more likely to have behavioral difficulties such as hyperactivity, aggressiveness, emotional symptoms, and difficulty with peer relationships. By age 7, they were 40 percent to 100 percent more likely. The more pronounced the symptoms reported by parents, the worse the behav-

ioral challenges, the study found. What's more, behavior issues were not always immediately obvious; sometimes it took years for them to emerge.

The study authors concluded that sleep-disordered breathing early in life has strong effects on behavior later in childhood, possibly because this is a critical period of brain development and there is the greatest need for sleep.

Disordered breathing causes abnormal gas exchange, interferes with sleep's restorative processes, and disrupts the cellular and chemical balance in the body.

The study findings suggest that snoring and snorting during sleep may require attention as early as the first year of life. If you notice your little one is sleeping less than peacefully, be sure to mention it to your pediatrician.

KiKi Bochi is the mother of two and an award-winning writer and editor who specializes in family topics.

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Eating healthy for two

Good nutrition tips for those mothers-to-be

The minute I learned I was pregnant during each of my pregnancies, I cut out coffee (and wine) and otherwise spruced up my diet. My objective? Do everything I could in my power to get baby off to a good start.

Every mother-to-be wants the best for her baby, so let's take a look at the latest nutritional recommendations.

Go-to nutrients

- **Choline.** This B-vitamin plays a key role in developing the hippocampus, the memory center of the brain. It's also involved with building the neural tube and central nervous system. Egg yolks are a particularly rich source. Find smaller amounts in beef, poultry, pork, and fish, as well as pistachio nuts.

- **DHA omega-3.** DHA is the building block of our brains, according to Tara Guidas, MS, RD, author of "Pregnancy Cooking & Nutrition for Dummies"® and the mother of two preschool-aged sons.

"Aim for low mercury, high omega-3 fishes like salmon or sardines or take a supplement," she advises.

- **Folate.** This B-vitamin is needed to prevent birth defects even before you're pregnant. Take a prenatal, mul-

tivitamin, or folic acid supplement when you're trying to get pregnant. Eat folate-rich foods like asparagus, spinach, orange juice, and legumes.

- **Iron.** Blood volume increases and so do iron needs. Meat is the best source, due to its highly absorbable form of this mineral.

- **Protein.** You need a significant amount of additional protein to support the growth of the baby. Aim for things like Greek yogurt, lean meats, and beans to meet these needs.

- **Vitamin D.** "Most women enter into pregnancy deficient in this vital nutrient, and you need more when you're pregnant," states Guidas. "Supplements are the best way to get it."

Steer clear of these

Guidas points to three categories of foods that pose a safety risk: Anything unpasteurized, such as milk, cheese, or freshly squeezed juices; undercooked or raw meats, fish, seafood, or poultry; and raw or runny eggs.

Cravings

Food cravings are normal, and for the most part, hormonal, according to Guidas.

"They don't necessarily mean you

are 'deficient' in a nutrient if you are craving it. For example, you may not be deficient in iron if you're craving a steak." She suggests you enjoy that food. "Go with the cravings and have small amounts of the foods you are craving, as long as it's not a dangerous food or a non-food substance." As every mom of two knows, every pregnancy is different, so don't be surprised if one pregnancy finds you with extreme cravings and the next with not much at all.

If food allergies run in the family

Guidas says if food allergies run in the family, it's best to limit them during pregnancy. However, with no history of allergies, "there is no need to limit milk, eggs, peanuts, soy, or any of the other common allergens."

In two studies presented at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology's annual meeting in March, researchers found that nursing mothers who attempt to ward off allergies by eliminating high-risk foods did not reduce the development of food allergies in their children.

Post delivery

After baby arrives and the new moms get into a rhythm, many are anxious to get their bodies going back to normal. Guidas suggests patience.

"Don't expect too much too soon. Make sure you rest and recover," she says. Guidas recommends drinking plenty of fluids, as well as eating to keep your strength up.

"Focus on nutrient-rich foods like lean meats, low-fat dairy, whole grains, and of course, lots of fruits and veggies. Eat small meals and frequent snacks so you give your body energy consistently throughout the day."

Christine M. Palumbo is a registered dietitian in Naperville, Ill. who experienced stronger food aversions than she did cravings during each of her three pregnancies. Find her on Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition or contact her at Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Spinach, Egg, and Cheese Sandwich



Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: About 10 minutes
Makes one serving

INGREDIENTS:

Nonstick cooking spray
½ cup fresh spinach, stems removed

½ cup chopped fresh mushrooms
1 egg
1 slice Swiss cheese
1 whole wheat bagel thin

DIRECTIONS:

Spray a small skillet with nonstick cooking spray and heat it over medium heat. Add the spinach and mushrooms to the skillet and cook until soft, about two to three minutes.

While the vegetables are cooking, mix the egg in a small bowl with a fork. Remove the vegetables from the skillet and set them aside.

Add the egg to the hot skillet, and cook it until it's no longer runny, about four minutes, flipping or stirring halfway through. Place the

cheese on top of the egg and heat until melted, about one minute.

Toast the bagel thin in a toaster. Add the egg and cheese to the bottom half of the bagel thin. Top that with the sauteed vegetables and the other half of the bagel thin.

Vary it! Use asparagus in place of spinach if you want a different flavor, or if you want to take advantage of it while it's in season.

NUTRITION FACTS: Calories 305; fat 14 g (saturated 7 g); cholesterol 239 mg; sodium 340 mg; carbohydrate 28 g (dietary fiber 6 g); protein 22 g; iron 2 mg; calcium 354 mg; folate 75 mcg.

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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Finding a new way to have the talk

I have three kids ranging from 4 to 11 years old and while visiting with friends at a party recently, the topic of giving “the talk” to our kids came up. I haven’t spoken about sex at all in our home. (I’m terrified to do this since I never received it from my parents.) Can you give me some tips about what to do?

I’ve got great news: I don’t recommend that parents give their kids “the talk.” Feel relieved yet? Honestly, if you think having the talk is scary for you, just ask your kids! Nobody likes it — and for good reason! I have found this one-time, pressure-focused, anxiety-ridden conversation is overrated and really ineffective because parents are too nervous, teens zone out, and, often, it’s given far too late. So instead, here are four tips to help you through.

Have small talks

I strongly urge parents to have smaller, more manageable talks

about sex and sexuality as your kids grow up so that they (and you) can get comfortable answering bigger questions. The key is that you want your kids to guide you when and how deep you go in this topic.

I have 4-year-old twins and my one son already asked me if “Mommy has a penis.” When I explained that I don’t (because I’m a girl and he is a boy) — he looked amazed and then off he went to play with his trains.

I thought to myself — sex education has started in our home today! Later that day, he said to me, “Oh, Mommy, I have so many questions!” and I responded, “Great — I want to be the person you come to with all your questions!”

Use media around you

While I understand why you don’t feel comfortable talking about sex (since this was not modeled for you by your parents), it’s still extremely important that you face your fears and address this topic gradually with your kids. I’ve learned that if parents are uncomfortable talking about sex, kids won’t come to them with their questions and will instead go to their friends and social media for answers (which may give inaccurate or inappropriate information).

For your older kids, try using media around you to start up the conversation. For example, the next time you watch a TV show or movie showing teens being sexually active, ask your teens what they think about it (see tip three for more guidance). Using media is a great way to start up the conversation.

One client’s son (age 14) asked his dad “Is sex really good?” because he

saw it on a billboard while driving in the car. The dad said it was one of their most honest conversations, and it all started thanks to a media advertisement!

Talk about values

In school, your kids will often learn about sex education, the importance of protection, sexually-transmitted diseases, and the other mechanical aspects of sex. It’s important that they know this information. However, in addition, it’s important to talk about the value of sex. What are their values? Do they want to wait till they are: 16, in love, in college, married, dating a person for a minimum of three months?

Many teens will have some ideas, but talking it out helps to articulate it. It’s important to have your kids think about their values in advance so that they know how they want to respond. Remember: don’t tell your kids what to think, teach them how to think, especially with this topic.

Develop a great relationship with a health care provider

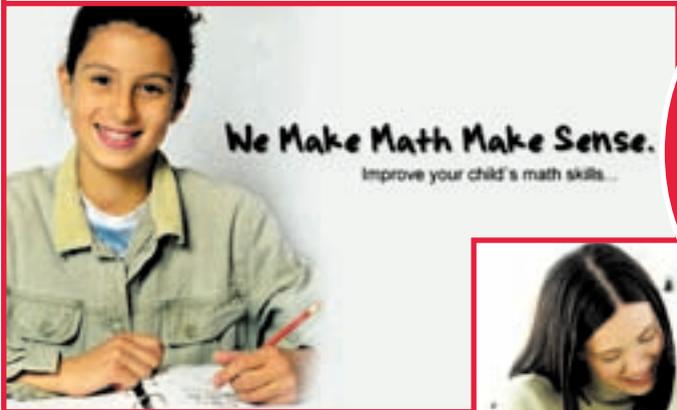
Once you’ve covered more of the emotional aspects of sex, make sure your kids have the right information on the physical side of sex. Many pre-teens and teens believe myths about sex (for example, that you can’t get pregnant the first time). It’s important that your kids develop a relationship with a great health care provider with whom they can build a rapport and who can answer some of those specific questions. Then, if they do decide to be sexually active, they have a relationship with someone whom they can go to, in addition to you.

Dr. Karyn is one of North America’s leading relationship and parenting experts. A national media consultant, motivational speaker to more than a quarter million people and author of “Dr. Karyn’s Guide to the Teen Years” (Harper Collins) — Dr. Karyn’s style is passionate and pragmatic. Visit www.drkaryn.com for more information.

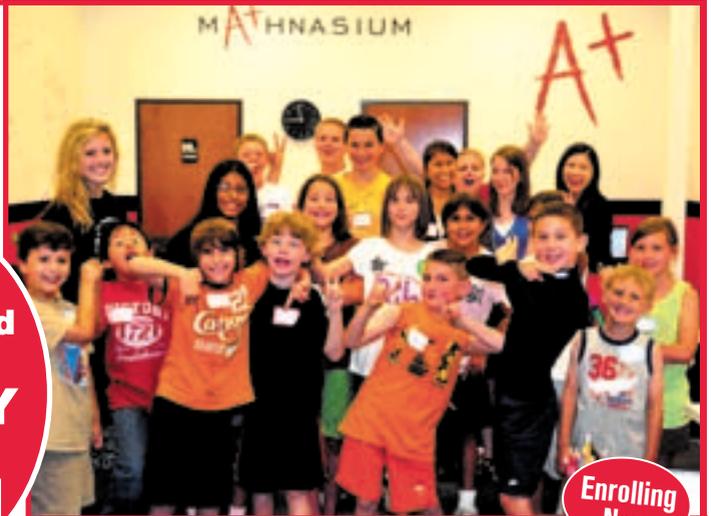


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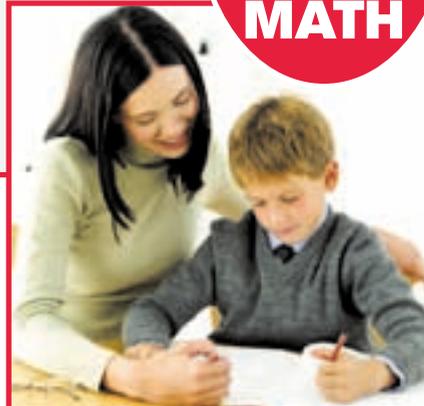
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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Ways to organize the virtual clutter

Anyone who spends any time online knows the frustration of finding something wonderful — a recipe you want to try, a book you want to read, a promising present for your child's birthday, even an inspirational quote — and then never being able to find it again.

Pinterest is the latest attempt to bring personal order to the chaotic world of the Internet. Even though the site requires an invitation, it has rocketed into the top 10 social media websites in only a few months. Just visiting the Pinterest homepage is a voyeuristic glimpse into the places, ideas, and things that excite other people.

Like most good ideas, this one is deceptively simple. Once you have a Pinterest account, you create themed bulletin boards. The topics can be basic — recipes, craft projects, clothes, dream vacations — or idiosyncratic — fabric swatches, smoothies, clever. When you come across a photo of something that fits into your categories, you use a button to pin it to the bulletin board, creating a link that will lead you — and others — back to the original sources.

The result is a lush, visual collection of things that caught your attention for some reason. Some people use Pinterest like a refrigerator door — a mishmash of reminders, as well as images that bring a smile. Other people carefully curate their Pinterest collections, treating the boards as life rafts that keep them from drowning in information. Still others use the juxtaposition of images for inspiration the way people in creative fields use vision or mood boards. Need a dessert for the potluck, a rainy-day craft for the kids, a gift for a friend? There's a Pinterest board for that.

The organizing possibilities alone are satisfying, but Pinterest also has a social dimension, because the site's founders believe people can learn a lot about each other by seeing what they collect. A profile on Pinterest consists of a list of bulletin boards with nine images from each collection. You can decide to follow other people, including some designated Tastemakers and, of course, others can follow you. As people comment on and repin items they like, they form mini communities based on shared enthusiasms, tastes, and passions. Some people find this kind of interest-based sharing preferable to other forms of social networking.

Although Pinterest is the flashiest of the social bookmarking sites, it's not for everyone. For one thing, you can't simply join. The site requires an invitation, though a link on the homepage lets you request one directly from the company. Also, because of its emphasis on images and not text, Pinterest is very much about things. The site doesn't have ads, but there are already a lot of commercial links from people who hope you will buy their products.

For all of these reasons, some people may prefer other social bookmarking sites. All of the sites below satisfy what psychologists call a deep human urge to collect, organize, and share. They also help you organize virtual clutter. To make good use of any of

these sites, get in the habit of tagging what you save. The more tags you create, the more likely you are to find what you need when you need it.

- **Delicious:** The first of the social bookmarking sites, Delicious has had a complete redesign that allows users to collect Internet content including articles and videos into stacks that can be private or public. The homepage includes hot lists that make it easy to stay on top of trends.

- **Digg:** A good choice for busy parents who are trying to keep up with news on a variety of channels. In addition to posting your own links, users can vote thumbs up or down on stories posted by others.

- **StumbleUpon:** A serendipitous way to explore the Internet, StumbleUpon allows you to submit, tag, and vote for sites that interest you. As you do, the site develops a sense of what interests you and helps you "stumble upon" other sites that have caught the attention of other people who share your enthusiasms.

- **Tumblr:** Tumblr is ideal for people who would prefer to keep a running online log of things that interest them. This microblog site is easy to use and has a huge audience.

- **Wists:** Wist appeals to people who like to window shop. The name is short for wish lists, and users create amazing collections of shoes, gadgets, light fixtures, jewelry, and other objects they covet.

Whichever site you choose, you'll need to exercise some self-discipline. Collecting can be an addictive pursuit — especially if the next treasure is only a click away. Give yourself a time limit for this pastime, and then step away from the screen, back into the three-dimensional world, where there are real cupcakes to be baked, real rooms to be straightened, and real family members to be hugged.

Carolyn Jabs, MA, raised three computer-savvy kids, including one with special needs. She has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years. Visit growing-up-online.com to read other columns.



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A special camp

Finding the right program for your special child

BY REBECCA MCKEE

The skies are still gray, the trees are bare, and our fingers and toes are bundled up in mittens and socks. Summer, not to mention scheduling summer activities, is a faraway thought for most. But for families with young children and teenagers with special needs, NOW begins the process of picking the right summer program.

Summer programs are becom-

ing more diverse...for both typical young people and those who differ from the norm. The idea that all boys live for sports, and all girls love dolls has gone by the wayside. It is now time for parents of those with special needs to ride this wave and accept that it is OK for their child to live outside of the box, too! Past practice was that a

boy or girl with autism spectrum disorder, or other special needs, would spend the summer working extremely hard to fit in at a typical camp. As with any special education situation, there were pros and cons.

It's a great idea for summer programs to expose young children or teenagers with special needs to natural settings alongside typical peers, but will the special-needs kids enjoy the experience? When picking a summer program, par-

abundance of information. With a little bit of research, you can find a variety of summer programs — including agriculture camps at local farms; theatre programs that include drama, stage building, filming with both Legos and Robotics; and other settings — that would fill those hot summer days with a program that accommodates your family member's specific preferences.

You can also contact local colleges and universities in your area. Certain academic programs offer half-day and full-day summer camps geared toward children with special needs. The counselors are actual college and graduate school students in the fields of special education, speech-language pathology, psychology, and other related fields — you can't get better than that!

You'll benefit greatly from shopping for camps early in the year. Once you've narrowed down the choices on an adult level, take into account your child's experience at the camp each day. Summer experiences are supposed to be happy and fun!

People with special needs need to alleviate anxiety and prepare for change by being exposed to information via multiple senses. Have the child preview the location visually by looking at pictures from the pamphlets and websites. Touring the site will capture the auditory and kinesthetic modalities, and counting down to the end of the school year and beginning of summer on a calendar will prepare the child for a change in routine.

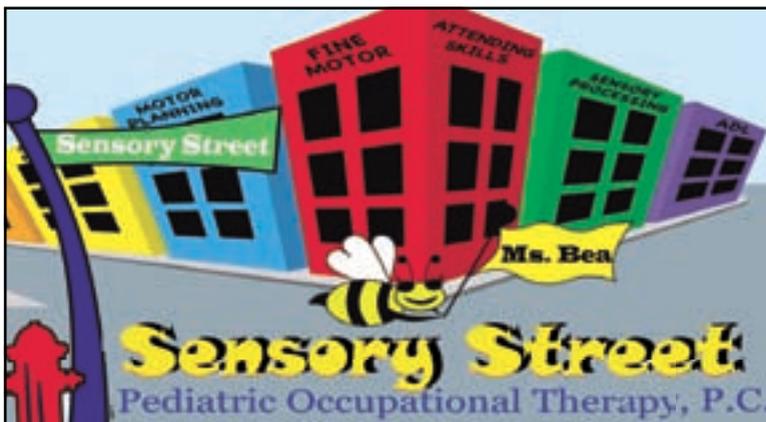
What matters most to the special-needs child or teenager should be the foremost thought when choosing a summer program. Try to be flexible and think outside the box, and get a head start, too, so that you can have full access to all of the options out there.

Rebecca McKee, The 13th Child Autism and Behavioral Coaching. For more, visit www.mybehaviorcoach.com or the13abc@aol.com.



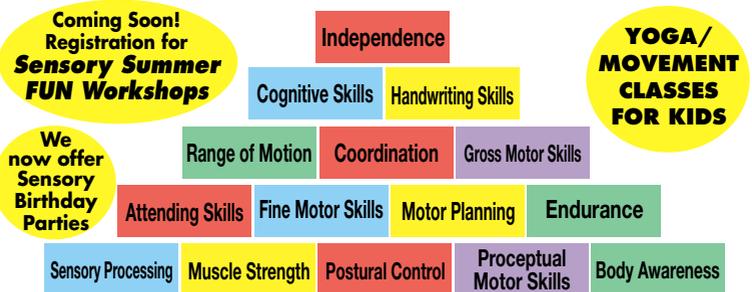
ents have to remember what matters most to and what is best for the special-needs child who will be attending the camp. We have to measure his level of enjoyment during his summer vacation.

To gain a broader view of activities, families can attend local parent support meetings at their children's schools. You'll find an



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Wheelchairs and cookies

Understanding a kid's food agenda

BY RICHARD KAHN, PHD, RD

Kids, delayed or not, have their own agenda when it comes to food. Parents are, rightfully, concerned about the nutrients and calories that make up long-term health, but such things do not concern children. Parents speak the language of words and think about the future. Little children speak the language of gestures and think in terms of now. No wonder communication channels break down at the table.

The trick to better meals is to see

thing worked fine. After getting settled and arranged, he and his mother sat down by my desk.

The mother told me Ruedo did not eat, was picky, and refused most foods. It was no surprise he was underweight. As we started to talk, the mother began to cry. After a few minutes, she wiped her eyes. I waited, listening, until she composed herself. We went back to the task at hand.

"I see he has many challenges," I said, "but, tell me, can he get a cookie out of you?" She smiled, then she laughed. "Yes!" she said grinning. I knew now we could make some headway. Mom had moved from the world of worry to the world of possibility. She recognized Ruedo's strengths.

I had already seen that children with varying degrees of delay know how to manipulate their parents as well as typically developing children when it comes to treats. To me, it is a sign of mental health. The response to the ploy is up to the parents. Some parents may think, "Why not give them what they want? The child is already suffering. He hardly eats anything."

Well, the child may not be suffering. Certainly, the child will suffer as he grows to understand himself in relation

to others. In the moment of worming cookies out of parents, though, the child is not suffering. The child is doing what all little children do once they have figured out the weak points of their parents. The fundamental issue that worried the mom was the usual concern of parents when they lose control of the daily meals and snacks. Instead of thinking about healthy foods, they focus on some aspect of the delay.

Once mom and I tacitly agreed that we were talking about a parenting problem, we talked about the

feeding relationship, a parenting approach to nutrition. The rule governing feeding relationships is pretty simple: the parent provides; the child decides. In Ruedo's case, no one addressed Ruedo's hard-wired drive to self-feed. Mom understood the rule, but it would take time to work out a way to solve his particular needs.

The better therapists address the parenting process along with remediation. The parenting job includes the basics, such as modeling at the table, eliminating the baby bottle, helping the child use a cup to the extent possible, and the judicious use of "no" and "yes" for treats.

When children learn that parents provide, and that they decide, mealtimes go smoother. Picky and refusals can abate. Sometimes, sensory delays will weaken. It can be complicated to apply the feeding rule in the presence of delays, but not impossible. The reasons to try it are practical and emotional.

Sameroff, a psychologist, finds that parents of delayed children need the three R's: Remediation, Redefinition and Reeducation. Remediation refers to optimal remediation of the delay. Redefinition describes the change in thinking that allows parenting strengths to come into play by minimizing any overwhelming aspects of the disability. He finds that parents' attitudes can affect the child's ability to overcome. In the case of nutrition, it means minimizing struggles. Otherwise, the emotional fallout of routinely distressing meals grows unchecked. Love gets buried.

Lastly, parents have to learn about what's behind the struggles. Learning about hunger, readiness, and satiety cues is essential. Parents who see standard emotional behaviors catch their deeper meaning. It becomes easier to apply basic parenting skills. We love our children, and calm mealtimes support that love.

Richard Kahn, PhD, RD, is a New York City pediatric nutritionist in private practice specializing in the needs of young children. Reach him at childnutrition@verizon.net or RichardKahnNutrition.com.



what is behind the behavior on both sides. Children instinctively anticipate that parents understand their developmental drives and behaviors, but delays can cloud the child's signals, as was the case with a wheelchair-bound child we'll call Ruedo.

Ruedo had a muscular condition that left him with very poor muscle control below the neck. He could guide his wheelchair by moving a joystick between his right thumb and forefinger, but it was clear that he had very limited use of his hands. Above his shoulders, though, every-



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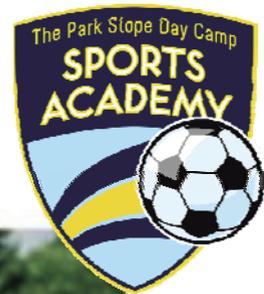
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OUR RELATIONSHIPS

JOAN EMERSON, PhD

To each his own

Well, it's spring, and my husband and I have just gone through a hard few days. He's a baseball fanatic — player, fan, and fantasy participant — and it's time for me to accept, again, that for the next several months, I will be sharing him with his other passion.

As the season begins, I've heard public figures I highly regard — all men, it seems — talking about how delighted they are to be watching their favorite sport again and how much baseball means to them on a deeply emotional level.

The rational part of me, therefore, knows my husband's not totally out of line to want to watch all of the games of the opening week, and that's exactly what he did for three straight days.

But, it's vacation; neither of us is working this week. When the first

day of the vacation arrived, my fantasy of how it should be spent was obviously totally different than his. I wanted to jump into time together; he wanted to transition slowly into that togetherness by relaxing into himself, and watching baseball. I made every effort to han-

dle my disappointment and annoyance in a mature, contained way, but I definitely wasn't perfect. He acknowledged that he wasn't happy with how overly hooked in he was getting, and was also sorry that he wasn't handling it better.

It's now a few days later and we are, yet again, reflecting on how these differences are pretty much normal and unavoidable with us, but still regularly catch us by surprise. Each of us has our own vision of how to get to this place of togetherness we both want: his is to slowly transition after some time of winding down and doing his own thing; mine is to jump on the bandwagon as soon as possible.

I guess we'll always be talking about how to overcome these differences in a way that feels comfortable and fair to both of us.

Yet, even though it's nothing new, the fact that the conversation about this balance has resumed again feels good.

We all know that even with love, commitment, and the best of intentions, the path of couplehood is not smooth. But it is a surprise that even when it's the same old patterns repeating, and history has shown that we'll be alright again, the rational part of us cannot always prevent the emotional pain we feel when things go off track.

The hardest part is staying with those feelings without overreacting until some time passes, and things are back to normal.

Nobody wants to feel the pain that goes along with a really good and deep connection falling apart for a while, but it seems to go with the turf.

It's a reminder of the vulnerabil-

ity we all have when we are in a truly committed relationship, and that pain can go so deep, we can even understand why some people just choose to never even risk getting into the game.

What am I learning from this mini-breakdown after many years and many repeats? I don't really know the whole answer.

I do know that one basic ingredient that helped ease the angst was the fact that we were sharing the loss of each other, and we were committed to working to reconnect.

But, ultimately, I seem to be learning again how important it is to communicate our expectations.

If we had, we could have lovingly agreed on how to care for each other's needs and also for our own.

During one of those baseball evenings, I took the opportunity to go hear some local music in a place that I rarely get to.

It felt great to be there, but it would have felt so much better if we had talked in advance and planned that, on this evening, we would lovingly give each other the chance to do our own thing.

Without this loving feeling, there was probably a little guilt and self-righteousness on both sides.

So, I realize that the most helpful component is that talk in advance about what each of us is wanting and needing that will help get us through these difficult transitions and differences.

Nobody is doing anything wrong here, so even if we start off in totally different places, at the very least, we'll know what to expect and will plan accordingly.

Chances are, we'll even be able to negotiate some small accommodations that will make the different goals more acceptable.

It can feel risky to state our needs, but it's so much better to know what each feels, than to wind up hurt and disconnected.

Dr. Joan Emerson is a psychologist specializing in couples therapy. For more information and writings, visit her website at www.JoanEmerson.com.



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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

A rootin' tootin' read

It's the rare for kids to want to grow up to be a cowboys in this age of video games and sports heroes, but a new book about a former slave-turned-cowpoke might change all that.

"Best Shot in the West, the Adventures of Nat Love" by Patricia C. McKissack and Fredrick L. McKissack, Jr., (Chronicle Books) tells the story of Nat Love, the youngest child of slaves who was born in a log cabin on a plantation in Tennessee and when on to become a free cowboy known by his peers as one of the best shooters, ropers, and wranglers in the West.

Nat was 7 when the Civil War broke out and his owner, Robert Love, took Nat's father away to help build forts. When they returned, Love didn't tell his slaves that they were free and it was quite awhile before they found out the truth.

But the joy of being free didn't last long. Soon after, times got tough when Nat's father and sister died. In

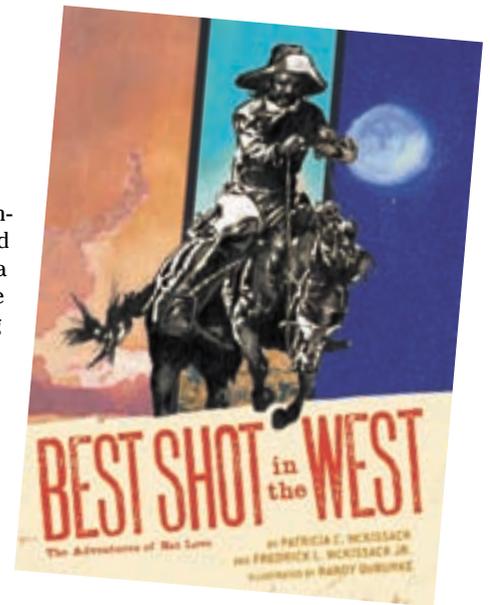
order to help care for the family, Nat found jobs here and there, mostly working as a cowboy. He learned that he was really good at breaking colts, and was paid 10 cents for each dangerous ride.

When he was 14, Nat gave his mother half his savings and left home. He walked some and rode some until he found work as a cow-puncher.

The other cowboys soon came to respect Nat, who became a trailboss known as "Deadeye Dick" because he was one of the best shooters, ropers, and wranglers in the West.

But then cowboying changed, and so did Nat, who had lived a charmed life for 20 years. But he was getting older, and it was time for different dusty trail.

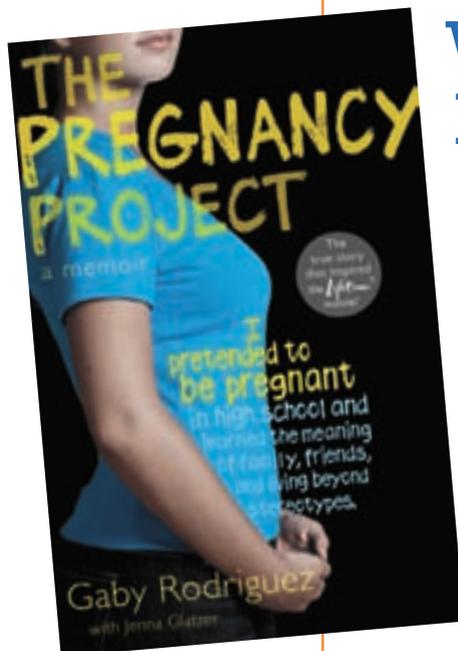
Based on a the autobiography of Nat Love, the McKissacks bring to kids the kind of story that will ignite



their imaginations with tales of the Wild West. Written in comic-book form, it is kid-friendly, and the artwork by Randy DuBurke ropes in even the most reluctant reader.

"Best Shot in the West" is one rootin' tootin' read for kids ages 8 to 13.

"Best Shot in the West: The Adventures of Nat Love," by Patricia C. McKissack and Fredrick L. McKissack, Jr. [133 pages, 2012, \$19.99].



What's it's really like being a teen mom

You said you had a headache, your stomach hurts, or your foot was so swollen you couldn't walk. But really you were unprepared for a physics test, didn't want to deal with dramatic friends, or were recovering from the prior day's embarrassment.

Now your daughter does the same thing. But how far would she go? Author Gaby Rodriguez lies in order to make a difference and explains it all in a book she co-wrote with Jenna Glatzer called "The Pregnancy Project" (Simon and Schuster).

While most kids have some idea of what they want to be someday, Rodriguez knew what she didn't want to be -- a teen mom.

It was a family legacy she wanted to avoid. Her mother was pregnant at 15,

all of her older sisters were pregnant in high school, and some of her brothers were fathers before they were out of their teens. Everybody in her Oregon community figured that Rodriguez would embrace the family tradition.

She knew from experience that when a girl becomes a mother too young her education suffers and that was not an option for budding, young author. She had her sights set on college. Yet she was curious. What would people say if she did get pregnant? Would their attitudes toward her change? What would it be like to live the stereotype?

Since her senior project was looming and mandatory for graduation, Rodriguez decided to try a bold experiment. With the help of her mother, boyfriend, best friend, and a few trusted teachers, she pretended to be pregnant. All of her classmates and her siblings believed she was expecting a baby that April.

The situation wasn't easy and after enduring stares, whispers, and nasty

comments Rodriguez thought about quitting a few times. Yet she persevered, even creating a fake bump out of clay and padding.

The reader accompanies Rodriguez on an emotional journey of discovery during and after her senior project. "The Pregnancy Project," is a brave story with a dash of brilliance and a twist of wide-eyed amazement.

Yet, what Rodriguez learns during her experience isn't nearly as important as the guidance Glatzer offers to girls in this book. The co-authors are blunt about the pain of smug, unwarranted comments by friends and candid about the surprising anger Rodriguez felt in response. They offer firm and practical advice for sexually active teens. So if you're a girl who is contemplating pregnancy, do yourself a favor, and read "The Pregnancy Project." It just might change your mind.

"The Pregnancy Project," by Gaby Rodriguez with Jenna Glatzer [218 pages, Simon and Schuster, 2012, \$17.99] is recommended for teenaged girls.

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



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FAMILY JOURNAL

ROBERT MORTON



Why does our son reverse his letters?

Our son, age 7, reverses letters when writing. We fitted him with glasses, but the reversals continue. Could he have dyslexia? What should we do?

It's not uncommon for children at ages 7, 8, or 9 to reverse letters while writing.

Dr. Martha Weber, an education professor at Bowling Green State University, coined a term for this in 1972: the "Moma" concept. It illustrates the relationship between how young children perceive their world, and why they reverse letters while learning how to write.

The concept is explained through how children see their mothers. A child who sees his mother dressed

up and wearing makeup for a Friday night out, or wearing a bathrobe, hair curlers, and facial mask on Saturday recognizes that, no matter how different she may look, she is still his mother. Most young children who reverse letters do so, because although the letters may look different, to these kids, they're still the same. (This is known as form constancy.)

No wonder kids question our adult level-headedness when we tell them that merely moving, what looks to them like a "stick," from one side of a circle to the other, creates a totally different concept (a letter "b" becoming a "d"). And, how about the confusing visual similarities between p-q, m-w, M-W,

m-n, or h-n?

Even if eyeglasses enable the information to enter your son's brain at 20-20, he will draw upon his belief system to logically misinterpret the incoming visual information. For now, I'd advise not searching for other causes, such as dyslexia, to explain the letter reversals. Primary teachers have witnessed this problem work itself out most of the time. For now, just blame it on "Moma."

Robert Morton, MEd, EdS has retired from his positions as school psychologist and adjunct professor in the School of Leadership and Policy Studies at Bowling Green State University, in Ohio. Contact him at robertmorton359@gmail.com.

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Protect your family from sun's dangers

My husband and I enjoy being outdoors with our children in the warm weather, but we often worry about sunburn. What are the risks, precautions do we need to take?

In moderation, sunlight is actually good for our health. The sun provides vitamin D, which encourages bone health, and has been shown to lift people's moods.

Too much sun, however, can lead to the reddened, itchy, or even blistered skin, known as sunburn. In more severe cases, sunburn can lead to nausea, headache, dehydration, and fever.

The sun emits electromagnetic radiation that is invisible to the human eye. These ultraviolet rays are strongest between 10 am and 4 pm, so try to plan your outdoor activities with this in mind.

An early morning or early evening family bike ride is a great way to enjoy the weather and get your dose of vitamin D with a reduced risk of sunburn. Of course, you are never entirely safe from the damaging effects of the sun, so sunscreen is still necessary during these times of day.

If you plan to be outdoors in the afternoon, liberally apply sunscreen with an sun protection factor of at least 30 half an hour before going outside. Sunburn can occur within 15 minutes of exposure, so it is best to make sure that you and your children are protected before leaving your home. Sunscreen should be reapplied every two hours, and it is best to use a brand that is waterproof. Be sure to use sunscreen even on cloudy days as ultraviolet rays penetrate clouds.

Remember to also wear appropriate clothing and accessories, such as wide-brimmed hats, ultraviolet-protection sunglasses, long-sleeved shirts, or specially designed ultraviolet-proofed clothing that already has sun protection factor built in. Ultraviolet-protection laundry detergent that adds a SPF 30 to clothing



when washed is also available.

Even if you are taking precautions, do not stay in the direct sunlight for hours at a time. If you are playing outside with your children, take breaks during which you sit in the shade and cool down. You will be less likely to burn or become dehydrated.

In the unfortunate event that sunburn does occur, apply a cold compress and aloe vera gel to the area,

as both can relieve some of the sting. Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, and stay out of the sun until your sunburn heals. If your children have a high fever, blisters, nausea, headache, or signs of dehydration, like reduced urination and dizziness, call your pediatrician. With some careful planning, and a lot of sunscreen, it is possible to enjoy the warm weather and make the most of family outings.

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Photo by Heather Weston

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PARENTS
HELPING
PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

When the boy next door is a big bully



Dear Sharon,

Our next-door neighbor's son is a bully. He is 12-years-old, sizeable, and formidable. I know he's a bully because my 10-year-old son is one of his many victims. I don't know what to do or how to deal with this situation. My son is afraid of retribution if I take action, but I think doing nothing is more terrifying for everyone. What do you say?

Dear Parent,

I am sorry to hear about this all too common problem.

It is often challenging, although necessary, to conduct a thoughtful and effective adult intervention when bullying occurs. It can be particularly difficult when tensions come from a menacing neighbor who is an ongoing presence in a young person's life.

There is rarely a simple solution to repeated intimidations, but here are some possible things to think about as you tackle the problem.

It is important for parents to play a role in the resolution of bullying. It is often useful for moms and dads to enlist advice and specific assistance from a variety of sources who can keep discussions confidential. Taking time to brainstorm and strat-

egize with trusted family members, friends, and school or religious community advisors before acting can help generate ideas that can effectively stop the problem. It is not uncommon for children like your son to fear vengeance. Unfortunately, those fears are not unfounded, all the more reason to have any parental actions be carefully thought out beforehand. Impulsive responses, an understandable reaction to bullying, are sometimes effective but can also lead to complications in the long run.

Of course, one possible solution would be for an adult to talk directly to the child or his family. However, it can be useful to remember that bullies are frequently experiencing family hardships and this emotional discord might be contributing to the problem. Those underlying issues might have to be addressed or at least understood to have interventions go smoothly.

While sorting through ways to stop the harassment, I suggest that parents in your position set aside ample time

to listen to the details of the child's experiences and then provide good counsel about any steps that might be taken to interrupt the behavior like avoiding the bully, not responding, and asking for help from others. Finding additional support through school or community resources such as counseling or support groups, in or outside of school, can be invaluable -- even when stopping the problem is not a quick or easy task.

Parents are understandably upset and worried when their children are being bullied. They also need plenty of support and good counsel. If parents can sort through their own feelings it is easier for them to provide the calm, reassuring emotional support and practical strategizing that an adolescent needs during this time.

I am sorry to hear about your son's dilemma. I know many moms and dads who have sorted through viable solutions to handle bullies over time. I wish you well as you do the same.

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

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



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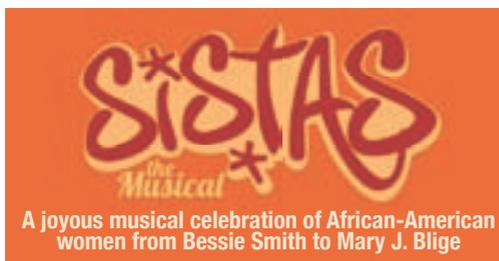


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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

The role reversal: Teens as caregivers

When teens take care of younger siblings

I loved to hang out with my baby sister when I was a teenager. I used to take her everywhere, even to some social activities at my high school. I really enjoyed the “mommy role,” even when she did something out of the blue, like kicking one of my guy friends in the shin at a winter carnival.

I realize that I probably enjoyed her tagging along with me, because it was my choice. It may have been an entirely different story if I was obligated to care for her on a regular basis, especially if the care got in the way of my own activities.

Sometimes, teens are responsible for younger siblings for long hours after school due to their parents’ job schedules or their family’s financial situation.

This can be a catalyst to a teen becoming responsible at an early age; however, in some situations, a teen might feel resentment for having to assume a parental role. Is there a limit

to how much responsibility a teen should take on?

The benefits

Beth H. Garland, PhD, a licensed psychologist at Texas Children’s Hospital, reports, “Benefits may include increased responsibility and an opportunity for increased trust between the adolescent and his parent.”

Pamela Garber, LMHC, a Manhattan-based therapist who works with adolescents regarding family issues

and other life stressors, believes that teens can gain important life skills while caring for a younger sibling.

“The benefits can be the development of a strong sense of responsibility, an understanding of choices and consequences, and a value system based on family,” she explains.

Amy B. Acosta, PhD, a licensed psychologist at Texas Children’s Hospital, agrees.

“Some teens may respond to caretaking roles in ways that promote skills for nurturing others, and these responsibilities may increase feelings of closeness within the family,” she says. She feels that there is a potential for family connectedness when there is a sharing of responsibilities.

Too much to handle?

Most experts agree that teens need time for social activities. This can be a challenge when teens are spending a great deal of time outside of school hours watching over younger siblings.

“Often, the negative consequences, such as resentment and an over-developed sense of responsibility, are linked to other issues and problems,” warns Garber. For instance, teens might begin to exhibit negative behaviors because they feel their own needs are not being met.

Garland finds that social experiences help teens learn skills that enable them to navigate situations as adults.

“The balance between childcare responsibilities and activities associated with adolescent development (e.g. social events, dating, free time) may be one potential challenge,” she says. Parents should also talk to their teens to be sure their teens are not overwhelmed.

Finding a balance

“It is helpful for parents to make sure their teen has structured time that is strictly for him,” instructs Garber. Ideally, teens should be able

to allocate time in their schedule for both school and social obligations. This will help them feel cared for and valued. Additionally, teens will have the opportunity to mature socially, so the peer disconnect will be limited.”

Parents should consider community resources, such as support groups and churches. Another idea is to work out childcare swaps where families take turns with childcare.

“Some cities offer free or low-cost after-school and weekend programs at city parks and recreational centers,” says Garland.

Acosta suggests extracurricular activities.

“School sports and clubs may provide a logistical solution to childcare while simultaneously honoring a need to explore new interests and create bonds with other children.”

Tips and tales

“I used to babysit my younger siblings all the time. Every family is different, but I grew up way too fast and never really had time to be a child.”

Renee Falanga Brenner, New Paltz, NY

“I think that taking care of a younger sibling could be favorable. However, the teenager could build resentment against his younger sibling and rebel.”

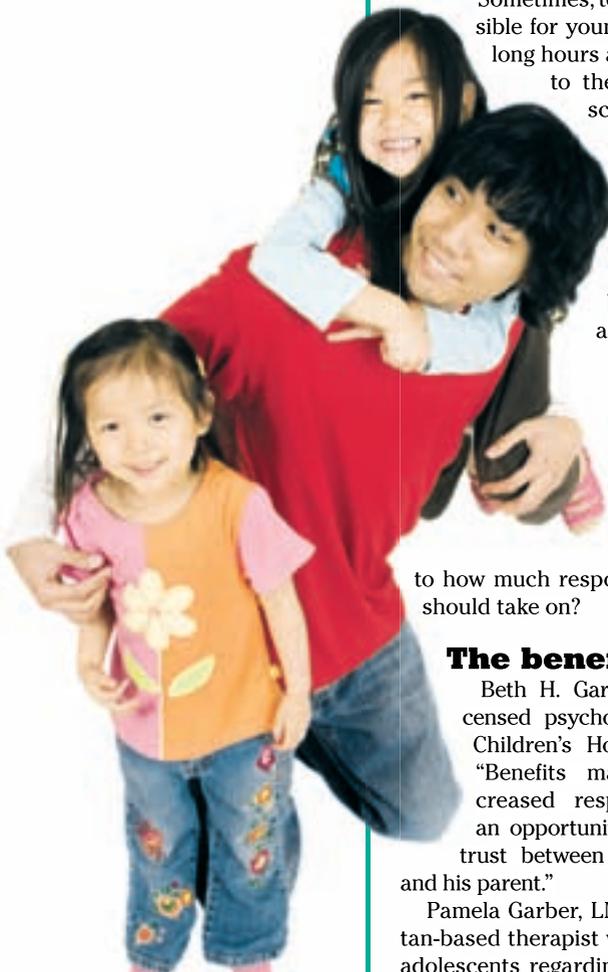
Charles Knapp, Brooklyn, NY

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips for dealing with the day your teen leaves for college.

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

Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer, columnist and author of the newly released book, “Lions and Tigers and Teens: Expert advice and support for the conscientious parent just like you” (Unlimited Publishing LLC). Visit www.myrnahaskell.com.



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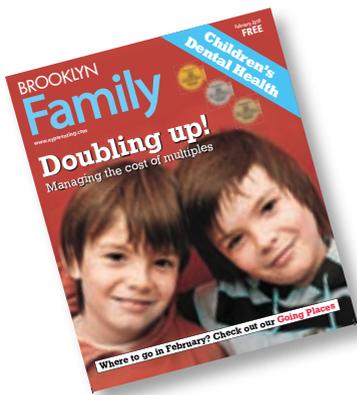
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The International Dyslexia Association is celebrating National Teacher's Day on May 8 by inviting families to nominate a special educator as an "Unsung Hero."

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The Association will recognize each nominee by sending them a letter informing them of the nomination and naming them on their website. All those honored will be



placed in a drawing for a \$250 travel stipend, three nights' accommodation, and one free registration to attend the association's 63rd Annual Conference: Reading, Literacy, and Learning on Oct. 24 to 27 in Baltimore, Md.

To nominate a special educator, visit the Association's website, www.interdys.org/AnnualHonorATeacher.htm. Entries are due by May 18. For more, call Lisa Harlow of Clapp Communications at (410) 561-8886, or e-mail lisa@barbclapp.com.

The International Dyslexia Association is a non-profit, scientific, and educational organization dedicated to the study and treatment of dyslexia, as well as related language-based learning differences. It operates 45 branches throughout the United States and Canada and has global partners in 18 countries, including Australia, Brazil, England, Germany, Ireland, and Japan.

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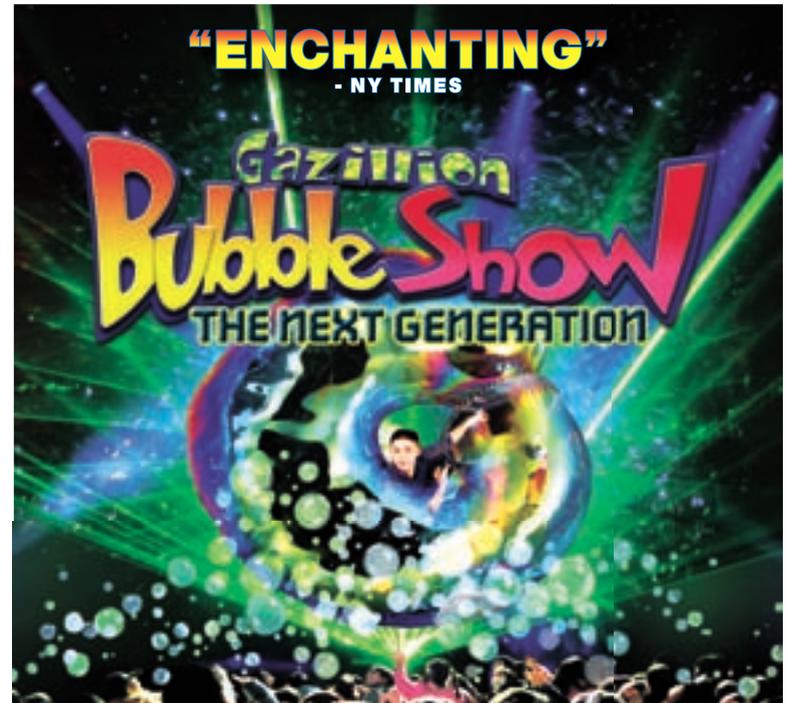
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Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Teen docent program: New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets; (718) 265-3448; www.nyaquarium.com; Weekdays, 9 am – 4:30 pm, Now – Fri, May 11.

The Aquarium is looking for teens, 15 and older to become docents to lead tours to visitors; assist with special events, staff information and craft tables on and off-site; assist the instructors in the education department and conduct short marine conservation programs on the boardwalk. Applications must be received by May 18. Call to register.

Cartoon exhibit: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am–5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, \$11 (\$8 children 2-17, college students and seniors).

Animation. A 6,000 square exhibit features characters from the Cartoon Network, including larger than life graphics, animation from concept to finished product, storyboarding, character design and drawing.

“Little Miss Muffet’s Monster Sitting Service”: The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, West Dr. at 79th Street Transverse; (212) 988-9093; cityparksfoundation.org/swedishcottage.html; Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon and 2:30 pm, \$8 (\$5 children under 12).

Based on the nursery rhyme, “Little Miss Muffet”, this version tells the story of Molly Muffet, the descendent of the original Miss Muffet. Run time is approximately 50 minutes and is suitable for children 3-9.

“Once Upon a Story”: The Bedford Village School, 50 Jefferson Ave. at Franklin Avenue; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; Wednesday, April 25, 10:30 am; Thursday, April 26, 10:30 am; Friday, April 27, 10:30 am; Tuesday, May 1, 10:30 am; Wednesday, May 2, 10:30 am; Thursday, May 3, 10:30 am; Friday, May 4, 10:30 am; Saturday, May 5, 11 am; Tuesday, May 8, 10:30 am; Wednesday, May 9, 10:30 am; \$10 (\$15 at the door).

Tall tales and legends to music and shadow puppetry. Show includes Johnny Appleseed, Big Annie and Native American tale, The Growing Rock.



Invitation to the ball

How will a sweet servant girl with an evil stepmother find happiness? You’re invited to find out on May 20 at 2 pm when “Cinderella” sweeps the stage.

Sing along with the soot-covered protagonist as she shares her desire to go to the royal ball, smile when Cinderella’s kind-hearted fairy godmother helps her achieve her dream, and blush as a dashing prince discovers whose foot fits perfectly into an

elusive, glass slipper. This one-hour version of the classic fairy tale is presented by the American Family Theater, does not have an intermission, and is great for children 4 and older.

“Cinderella” on May 20 at 2 pm. All tickets are \$7.

Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, [2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort and Kenilworth places, (718) 951-4500]. For more info visit www.brooklyn-centeronline.org.

Suitable for children in pre-k to third grade.

Toddler time: Gravesend Public Library, 303 Ave. X between West First and West Second streets; (718) 382-5792; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 11 am, Now – Wed, June 27; Free.

For children birth to five years.

Storytime: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com;

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, Noon, \$2.50.

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

Story time: Ulmer Park Public Library, 2602 Bath Ave. at 26th Avenue; (718) 265-3443; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, Noon, Now – Wed, June 27; Free.

Children 3-5 years old enjoy classic songs and books.

Writing workshop: Coney Island

Submit a listing

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

Public Library, 1901 Mermaid Ave. at West 19th Street; (718) 265-3220; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 5 pm, Now – Wed, April 25; Free.

Teens get helpful hints on their short stories, essays and poetry.

Alvin Ailey Dance Show: The Ailey Citigroup Theater, 405 W. 55th St. between Ninth and 10th avenues; (212) 405-9000; www.alvinailey.org; Wednesday, April 25, 8 pm; Thursday, April 26, 8 pm; Friday, April 27, 8 pm; Saturday, April 28, 3 pm; Saturday, April 28, 8 pm; Sunday, April 29, 3 pm; Sunday, April 29, 7 pm; \$49.

The young dancers of the Ailey II company performs.

Dance-around: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Thursdays, 11, \$2.50.

For children.

Little Learners club: St. Anselm’s Church, 365 83rd St. between Third and Fourth avenues; (718) 745-7643; Tuesdays, 9:30 – 10:45 am, Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:45 am, Now – Thurs, June 28; \$125 per month.

Story-time, playtime and arts and crafts for children 2 years old and their moms/caregivers.

Carousel: Prospect Park Children’s Corner, Enter at Flatbush Ave. and Ocean Avenue; www.prospectpark.org/calendar; Thursdays – Sundays, Noon–5 pm, Now – Sun, June 24; \$2 per ride.

The iconic ride is open for rides for the whole family.

Bereavement support group: St. Joseph’s High School for Girls, 80

Continued on page 72

Going Places

Continued from page 71

Willoughby St. at Bridge Street; (646) 739-1005; kfinneran@calvaryhospital.org; <https://www.calvaryhospital.org>; Thursdays, 4:30–6 pm, Now – Thurs, June 28; Free.

For children 13-18 years old who are grieving the death of a loved one. Pre-registration required.

Movie night: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Fridays, 6:15, Free!

Shorts and a full length family appropriate movie.

Reading is fun: Homecrest Public Library, 2525 Coney Island Ave. between Gravesend Neck Road and Avenue V; (718) 382-5924; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 3:30 pm, Fridays, 2:30 pm, Now – Thurs, June 28; Free.

Teens read for free books.

Reading is Fun: Sunset Park Public Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 965-6533; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Fridays, 3:30 pm, Now – Fri, June 29; Free.

Teens and tweens enjoy books, games and music.

Teen time: Greenpoint Public Library, 107 Norman Ave. at Leonard Street; (718) 349-8504; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Fridays, 4 pm, Now – Fri, June 29; Free.

Get together with friends and read books, play games and listen to music.

Conservatory garden tour: Central Park's Conservatory Garden, Fifth Ave. at East 105th Street; (212) 860-1370; www.centralparknyc.org; Saturdays, 11 am–12:30 pm, Now – Sat, May 26; Free.

See tulips, daffodils, twin crabapple allees, and more.

Yoga: Greenpoint Public Library, 107 Norman Ave. at Leonard Street; (718) 349-8504; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Saturdays, 3:45 pm, Now – Sat, June 30; Free.

For individuals 18 years and older.

"The Amazing Max and the Box of Interesting Things": The MMAC Theater, 248 W. 60th St. between Amsterdam and West End avenues; (212) 239-6200; www.telecharge.com; Saturdays, 4:30 pm, Now – Sat, June 30; \$29.50 (\$49.50 VIP seating).

The magic show with a mind of its own. Magician Max Darwin makes objects appear out of thin air.

Family disco night: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Saturdays, 6 pm, Now – Sat, July 14; Free!

Eat, drink and shake your groove things!



Mouse in toe shoes

Angelina Ballerina and all of her friends are going to have a magical day at Kingsborough Community College.

The beloved character from the CG animated series comes to life in "Angelina Ballerina: The Musical," a play about a special visitor coming to watch the pirouetting mouse and her pals Alice, Graci, AZ, and Viki perform at their school, Camem-

bert Academy. Will the excitement surrounding this famous guest cause Angelina to mess up the hip-hop, modern, and ballet dances her teacher Ms. Mimi has taught her? Or will she shine?

Find out and join the fun on May 20 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$12. Kingsborough Community College, [2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street, (718) 368-5596]. For more info visit www.onstageatkingsborough.org

Bingo night: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Sundays, 6, Now – Tues, May 15; Free.

Prizes and fun for the whole family.

Sunday singalong: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Sundays, 12:15 pm, Now – Sun, July 22; Free.

Come sing, clap, dance or just watch.

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

Craft activities and fun nature games.

Chess club: Call for location; (917) 957-1714; deborahfeiner@gmail.com; Sundays, 4 pm, Now – Sun, June 24; \$100 (for whole six months).

Club forming for children 6 to 10 to meet and play; A coach will be on hand to help students hone their game skills. Admission fee provides for the coach, supplies and hopefully tournament costs. Sponsored by Town Square.

Teen time: Ulmer Park Public Library, 2602 Bath Ave. at 26th Avenue; (718) 265-3443; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Mondays, 4 pm, Now – Mon, June 25; Free.

Children 13 and up read books, play games and listen to music.

Singalong: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry

streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Tuesdays, 11:00, \$2.50.

Come clap, dance, sing or just watch!

Reading RIF: Ft. Hamilton Public Library, 9424 Fourth Ave. at 94th Street; (718) 748-6919; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 2:30 pm, Now – Wed, June 27; Free.

School age children earn free books by reading.

Story and play: Leonard Public Library, 81 Devoe St. between Manhattan Avenue and Leonard Street; (718) 486-3365; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 4 pm, Now – Tues, June 26; Free.

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

Bereavement support group: St. Joseph's High School for Girls, 80 Willoughby St. at Bridge Street; (646) 739-1005; kfinneran@calvaryhospital.org; <https://www.calvaryhospital.org>; Tuesdays, 4:30–6 pm, Now – Tues, June 26; Free.

For children 6-12 years old who are grieving the death of a loved one. Pre-registration required.

"A Comedy of Errors": The Cranberry Street Theater Space, 55 Cranberry St. between Henry and Hicks streets; (718) 624-3614; theater2020.com; Friday, May 4, 8 pm; Saturday, May 5, 8 pm; Sunday, May 6, 3 pm; Thursday, May 10, 12 am; Friday, May 11, 8 pm; Saturday, May 12, 8 pm; Sunday, May 13, 3 pm; Thursday, May 24, 7 pm; Friday, May 25, 8 pm; Saturday, May 26, 8 pm; Sunday, May 27, 3 pm; Thursday, May 31, 7 pm; Friday, June 1, 8 pm; Saturday, June 2, 8 pm; \$18.

Family friendly production of Shakespeare's play about mistaken identity, love and marriage. Theater 2020 uses actors and puppets in this fast paced 90 minute version of the classic.

Nature's helpers: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 2–3 pm, Sat, May 5 – Sun, June 24; Free.

help keep the park and the waterways clean and enjoy the day.

Race around the yard: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 2–3 pm, Sat, May 5 – Sun, June 24; Free.

Participate in potato sack races spoon races, stilts and other old-fashioned games.

Discover tour: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Sun-

Going Places

days, 3 pm, Sun, May 6 – Sun, June 24; Free.

Take a walk with a naturalist and watch for animals while investigating little known facts about the park.

Wii and Ntendo: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets; (718) 923-9710; themoxiespot.com; Saturday, May 19, 6 pm; Saturday, June 16, 6 pm; Saturday, July 21, 6 pm; Free.

Prizes, games and food.

THURS, APRIL 26

Toddler Time: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10:30–11:30 am; \$25 (\$30 non-members).

Winged Wonders- for 2 and 3 year old children. Live animals, movement and musical activities plus a craft.

Art and literacy workshop: City Treehouse, 129A W. 20th Street; (917) 463-8609; www.privatepicassos.com; 6–7:30 pm; \$30 (adults only).

Discuss the importance of visual arts in child's development as well as the literacy connection and fine motor skills.

Bedtime stories: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Ave. at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (800) 273-8439; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 7:30 pm; Free.

Children 3 to 7 enjoy stories by Ezra Jake Keats.

SAT, APRIL 28

Nature workshop: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10–11:30 am; \$35 (\$40 non-members).

Children 9-12 years old learn about frogs toads and everything amphibian.

Healthy Kids Day: Park Slope Armory, Eighth Avenue at 15th Street; (212) 673-7030; www.ymcanyc.org/armory-sports-complex/armory-sports-home/facility; 10 am–4 pm; Free.

Inflatable houses, face painting, rock climbing wall, family zumba, entertainment and more.

Sakura Matsuri 2012: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am; \$15 (Free for members).

Celebrate traditional and contemporary Japanese culture with more than 60 events and performers including Taiko Drumming, Manga artist, J-Pop Bands, Tea ceremonies, Samurai Sword Fighting, Cosplay Fashion Show, Bonsai demos, Minbu Folk Dancing, children's workshops, and Puzzle Plaza.

Toddler Time: Central Park Zoo,



Hang with the fishes

Want to kick-it with some penguins? Have a soft spot for fish and a blank spot on your resume? The New York Aquarium is looking for teenage volunteers ages 15 and older to assist with a bevy of services, including leading visitors on tours, assisting with special events, manning information

desks, assisting marine instructors in the education department, and conducting marine conservation programs along the boardwalk. Applications must be received by May 18. Call to register.

New York Aquarium [602 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets in Coney Island, (718) 265-3450] visit www.nyaquarium.com

830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10:30–11:30 am; \$25 (\$30 non-members).

Animal Sing-A-Long - for 2 and 3 year old children. Live animals, movement and musical activities plus a craft.

Josh Selig: Barnes & Noble, 97 Warren St. at Murray Street; (212) 587-5389; www.barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Author of "Olive Branch: Red & Yellow's Noisy Night" and creator of the Wonder Pets will be on hand to read a story and sign copies of his books.

Family festival 2012: Old Stone House, Fourth St. at Fifth Avenue; (718) 768-3703; 11 am–4 m; Free.

Puppetry Arts and Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District will host their 3rd annual community event, rain or shine. Puppet making, mask making, face painting, bouncy moon rides, cotton candy, hot dogs and live performances. The first 200 children will receive a goodie bag. Admission for rides

and crafts extra.

Alumnae Reunion: Bishop Kearney High School, 2202 60th St. at Bay Parkway; (718) 236-6363 X247; vlake@bish-opkearneyhs.org; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Welcome back the classes of 1987, 1967, 1972, 1977, 1982, 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007.

Golf fest: Chelsea Piers, 23rd St. and the Hudson River; (212) 336-6800; www.chelseapiers.com; Noon–6 pm; \$15 (\$10 children).

Stop by and demo out the latest golf equipment and enjoy complimentary hitting and swing tips from pros, a kids corner and hot dogs and beverages.

Mil's Trills: Park Slope festival, Fourth St. at Fifth Avenue; www.milstrills.com; Noon–12:45 pm; Free.

Leaping Lizards it's a concert just for kids. Suitable for babies/toddlers ages birth to 4.

Brian Barrentine and his Funi-kiJam Friends: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Ave. at

Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 1 pm; Free.

Musical adventure packed with songs, storytelling and dance.

Ballet Hispanico: The Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave. at 19th Street; (212) 242-0800; www.joyce.org; 2 pm; \$10-\$59.

The world premier of Espiritu Vivo.

SUN, APRIL 29

Sakura Matsuri 2012: 10 am. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 28.

Kinder Kritters: Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; www.prospectparkzoo.com; 10:30–11:30 am; \$25 (\$30 non-members) per session.

Incredible insects - for 4 and 5 year old children. Instructors lead the children through songs, dances and games, as well as creative animal themed crafts.

Recess Monkey: 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 601-1000; www.92ytribeca.org/byok; 11 am; \$15 (Free for children under 2).

The acclaimed Seattle children's band performs selections from the latest album.

Golf academy: Chelsea Piers, 23rd St. and the Hudson River; (212) 336-6800; www.chelseapiers.com; Noon–5 pm; Free.

Enjoy a 15 minute lesson with a golf pro, demos and more.

KindieFest: Littlefield, 622 Degraw St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (718) 855-3388; www.littlefieldnyc.com; Noon–4 pm; \$15.

Music and more is the menu for this year's fourth annual conference of the music industry for children and families. Get the latest, greatest tunes on today's family music scene. Featured entertainers are SteveSongs, Bari Koral Family Rock Band, Moon LUNA, Big Ban Boom and Apple Brains.

"A Day of Music for Casey": Congregation Beth Elohim, 274 Garfield Pl. at Eighth Avenue; https://www.remembereingcasey.com; 1–5 pm; \$110 (four pack-2 adults 2 children).

Family friendly fundraiser benefiting the Casey Young Foundation.

Jazz Knights: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; Free.

The West Point band performs big band favorites, popular music and original compositions.

Continued on page 74

Going Places

Continued from page 73

Mil's Trills: Smokehouse, 44 Berry St. at N. 11th Street; www.milstrills.com; 2 pm; \$15.

Leaping Lizards it's a concert just for kids. Suitable for babies/toddlers ages birth to 4.

Ballet Hispanico: 2 pm. The Joyce Theater. See Saturday, April 28.

Mac Barnett, Taeun Yoo: PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; kids@powerhouse-arena.com; www.powerhouse-arena.com; 4–5 pm; Free.

The authors of "Chloe and the Lion" and "You Are a Lion and Other Fun Yoga Poses" share their books with children 4-8. RSVP requested.

WED, MAY 2

Mil's Trills: Vineapple Cafe, 71 Pineapple St. between Henry and Hicks streets; 10 am; \$15.

Leaping Lizards it's a concert just for kids. Suitable for babies/toddlers ages birth to 4.

Mil's Trills: Rock Shop, 249 Fourth Ave. between Carroll and President streets; (718) 230-5740; www.therockshopny.com; 3:30 pm; \$15.

Leaping Lizards it's a concert just for kids. Suitable for babies/toddlers ages birth to 4.

Family movie night: George Bruce Library, 518 W. 125th St. at Amsterdam Avenue; (212) 662-9727; www.nypl.org/locations/george-bruce; 5–6:45 pm; Free.

Families enjoy various films in the children's room.

THURS, MAY 3

"Zora Returns to Harlem": New York City College of Technology Klitgord Center Auditorium, 285 Jay St. at Tillary Street; (718) 260-8855; theatreworkscitytech.org; 2 pm; Free.

NAACP award-winner Antonia Badón will star in a one-woman show about the the life of Harlem Renaissance writer, Zora Neale Hurston.

Gilbert and Sullivan: Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. <https://www.dancespatrelle.org>; 7:30 pm; \$35.

The ballet is presented by Dances Patrelle featuring favorite Gilbert and Sullivan selections, from the Pirates of the Penzance to the Mikado. Appropriate for all ages.

FRI, MAY 4

Blooming Babies: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am–12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.



All aboard the Bluebird

Choo-Choo. Climb aboard the Bluebird and travel back in time to the 1939 and 1964 World's fairs at the Transit Museum when Transit Time Capsule is presented on the weekend of May 12 and 13.

Children 5 and up will enjoy learning all about these workhorse trains and about the Westinghouse Time Capsule, which was meant to stay sealed for 5,000 years. Afterwards, kids will have the option to create their own time capsules with supplies

brought from home.

The Museum will also host a reading of "How Little Lori Visited Times Square," the beloved book by Amos Vogel on May 5 and 6 at 1:30 pm.

Transit Time Capsule on May 12 and 13 at 1:30 pm, and book reading on May 5 and 6 at 1:30 pm. Both events are free with regular museum admission.

New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, (718) 694-1600. For more info visit www.mta.info/mta/museum.

For children 18 months to 2 and one-half years.

Cinco de Mayo stories and craft time: 125th Street Library, 224 E. 125th St. at Third Avenue; (212) 534-5050; www.nypl.org/locations/125th-street; 2–3 pm; Free.

Children ages 5-12 will make maracas and hear tales about Mexico. Pre-registration in person or by phone is required.

"Zora Returns to Harlem": 2 pm. New York City College of Technology Klitgord Center Auditorium. See Thursday, May 3.

Gilbert and Sullivan: 7:30 pm. Dicapo Opera Theatre. See Thursday, May 3.

The Fireworks Ensemble: Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Ave. between Lincoln Place and Seventh Avenue; (718) 622-3300 or email: rfrank@bqcm.org; www.bqcm.org; 8 pm; \$5-\$10.

Celebrate National Chamber Music month with this amplified and contemporary band.

SAT, MAY 5

Zoo help: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 9–10:30 am; \$50 (\$60 non-members) each session \$170 (\$215 non-members) four sessions.

Children 8-10 years old help the animal keepers and study the behaviors of animals.

Speech screenings: Boro Audiology Cline, 207 Prospect Park Southwest, between Park Circle and Greenwood Avenue; (718) 622-3500; 11 am–4 pm; Free.

Assessing articulation skills for children 3 and older and hearing aid check and service for adults.

Animal Tales Extravaganza: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.

com; 11 am–4 pm; \$29.95 (\$19.95 children 3-12 \$24.96 seniors).

Celebrate Cinco De Mayo with Dora and Diego, arts and crafts, listen to a story, march in the Rainforest Creature Parade or experience Avenue Zoo - it's all family fun all weekend long.

Blooming Babies: 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, May 4.

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

Sow the soil and sew some clothes and try on reproduction clothes made of linen.

Transportation Inventions: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Amos Vogel's beloved book How Little Lori Visited Times Square is the featured story. Suitable for children 6 and older.

Gilbert and Sullivan: 2 and 7:30 pm. Dicapo Opera Theatre. See Thursday, May 3.

"Zora Returns to Harlem": 2 pm. New York City College of Technology Klitgord Center Auditorium. See Thursday, May 3.

Read with Wilbur: Grand Central Library, 135 E. 46th St. between Lexington and Third avenues; (212) 621-0670; www.nypl.org/locations/grand-central; 2 pm.

Children ages 5-12 read with Wilbur, a specially trained therapy dog. This event is first come, first serve, so sign up in advance.

SUN, MAY 6

Kinder Kritters: 10:30–11:30 am. Prospect Park Zoo. See Sunday, April 29.

Astrograss for Kids: 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 601-1000; www.92ytribeca.org/byok; 11 am; \$15 (Free for children under 2).

A unique blend of bluegrass and down home humor. The concert features sing-a-longs, dance contests, hoedowns and songs about Brooklyn neighborhoods.

Blooming Babies: 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, May 4.

Green for Queens Earth Day event: Central Queens Y; (718) 268-5011; 1–4 pm; Free.

The Central Queens YM&YWHA hosts a fair that will feature green living exhibits, workshops, and vegan

Going Places

cooking demonstrations.

Flax weekend: 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, May 5.

Transportation Inventions: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 5.

Spring fair: The Morgan Museum, 225 Madison Ave. (212) 590-0393; <https://www.themorgan.org/public>; 2–5 pm; \$8 (\$6 members; \$2 children).

Children 6-12 along with parents enjoy a day filled with music, dance, art and animals. To kick off the event, in the company of animals, conductor and composer Adam Glaser presents *The Composer's Paintbrush*: Painting the Animal Kingdom following the performance strolling actors in animal costume encourage children how to explore music, a photo shoot, dancing, singing and mask making workshops.

Gilbert and Sullivan: 2 pm. Dicapo Opera Theatre. See Thursday, May 3.

MON, MAY 7

"Barbapapa": Cobble Hill Cinema, 265 Court St. between Butler & Douglass streets; (718) 596-9113; www.cobblehilltheatre.com; 4 pm; \$7.

Children's classic cartoon movie.

TUES, MAY 8

Adoption seminar: Union Temple, 17 Eastern Parkway; (212) 558-9949; www.jccany.org/ametzcalendar; 6–7:30 pm; Free.

Talking to children about adoption.

WED, MAY 9

Family movie night: 5–6:45 pm. George Bruce Library. See Wednesday, May 2.

FRI, MAY 11

Bobaloo: Putnam Triangle Plaza, 22 Putnam Ave. between Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; aballiance.org/news/fab-fri-arpil-20-2012; 10–11 am; Free.

Bob Basey performs songs and tells stories.

SAT, MAY 12

Kinder Kritters: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10–11 am; \$25 (\$30 non-members).

Springtime on the Farm - for 4 and 5 year old children. Instructors lead the children through songs, dances and games, as well as creative animal themed crafts.

Opening day: Artisan-Market, Dekalb Ave. at Washington Park; (718) 855-8175; artisan-market.org; 10 am–5



Bugging out at zoo

Kids will be smarter about arthropods after visiting the Central Park Zoo on May 19.

Seven- to 10-year-olds, who enjoy creepy, crawly insects, will love this class at the zoo, where they'll learn all about the bugs who make their homes there.

Taught by an urban ecologist, children will collect insects from various habitats around the zoo

and sort the collections to try to identify the species.

Each participant will take home his or her own insect trap to collect and observe the ones they find in their own neighborhoods.

"Bugs, Bugs, Bugs" at the Central Park Zoo [830 Fifth Ave. at East 65th Street in Manhattan, (212) 439-6583] May 19, 10 to 11:30 am. \$35 members, \$40 non-members. For more, visit www.centralparkzoo.com.

pm; Free.

Celebrate the re-opening of the market with a performance by children's group The Rockdoves.

Jr. Keepers: Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; www.prospectparkzoo.com; 10:15–11:45 am; \$35 (\$40 non-members) per session.

For children 8-10 years old. Learn how to take care of the animals and study animal behavior.

Toddler Time: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10:30–11:30 am; \$25 (\$30 non-members).

Hop Skip and Jump - for 2 and 3

year old children. Live animals, movement and musical activities plus a craft.

Animal Tales Extravaganza: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; 11 am–4 pm; \$29.95 (\$19.95 children 3-12 \$24.96 seniors).

Arts and crafts presented by Bright Horizons, Animal tales by Plum Organics, Sportacus and Stephanie from Lazy Town on Sprout, Avenue Zoo and Kate Monster from the Animal Zoo. it's all family fun all weekend long.

Movie time: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am–12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Tots, camera action, all pint sized film enthusiasts enjoy an animated film.

Transit Time Capsule: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Two bluebird cars traveled to the World's Fair, in 1939 and again in 1964. Learn all about the fairs. For children 5 and older.

SUN, MAY 13

Mother's day: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 11 am–12:30 pm; \$45 (\$50 non-members).

Children 3 to 10 years old with an adult meet a variety of animals, make a tasty treat for one of the zoo animals and embark on an animal moms scavenger hunt, followed by a craft and cake.

Mother's day celebration: Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; www.prospectparkzoo.com; 11 am–12:30 pm; \$40 (\$45 non-members; \$15 each additional child).

Children 4-10 years old with an adult meet a variety of moms and babies at the zoo. Craft and cake are included.

Mil's Trills: 92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 601-1000; <http://>; 11 am – 2 pm; \$15 (Children under 2 free).

Leaping Lizards it's a concert just for kids and moms just in time for Mother's day. Amelia Robinson plays her original songs on her ukulele. Suitable for babies/toddlers ages birth to 4.

Movie time: 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, May 12.

Transit Time Capsule: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, May 12.

WED, MAY 16

Family movie night: 5–6:45 pm. George Bruce Library. See Wednesday, May 2.

THURS, MAY 17

Resource Fair: Brooklyn College Student Union, Campus Rd and Hillel Place; (718) 642-8512; bfssac@yahoo.com; 9 am–2:30 pm; Free.

Sponsored by the Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Council, the event features representatives from over 100 agencies and vendors, workshops and seminars for families, advocates, agencies and friends of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Continued on page 76

Going Places

Continued from page 75

FRI, MAY 18

Art Slam: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; rachel@rrapoport@cmayn.org; www.cmany.org; 6:30–9 pm; Free.

Children in seventh to ninth grade party with pizza, music and art. RSVP required.

SAT, MAY 19

Insect workshop: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10–11:30 am; \$35 (\$40 non-members).

Children 7-10 years old learn about bugs and how to identify the different species at the zoo.

Animal Tales Extravaganza: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; 11 am–4 pm; \$29.95 (\$19.95 children 3-12 \$24.96 seniors).

Arts and crafts presented by Bright Horizons, Animal tales by Plum Organics, Disney's Choo-Choo Soul, Mo Willems' Elephant and Piggie and the Rainforest Parade. it's all family fun all weekend long.

Memorial Day Parade: Emmons and Ocean avenues; sbpbccivicaassociation@hotmail.com; 11:30 am; Free.

Honoring our veterans; invocation and ceremonial tribute. Kick off at Emmons and Ocean Avenue and ends at the Haring Street Memorial. Beverages and snacks available to participants. Hosted by the Sheepshead Bay Plumb Beach Civic Association.

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

It's that time again. Watch the sheep being shorn at the zoo and then go over to Lefferts Historic House and try your hand at washing, carding and spinning the wool.

Brooklyn Jazz Wide Open: Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Ave. between Lincoln Place and Seventh Avenue; (718) 622-3300 or email: rfrank@bqcm.org; www.bqcm.org; 8 pm; \$10.

Celebrate National Chamber Music month with world-class musicians who will play new music and share their creative processes with the audience.

SUN, MAY 20

The Deedle Deedle Dees:

92Y Tribeca, 200 Hudson St. at Vestry Street; (212) 601-1000; www.92ytribeca.org/byok; 11 am; \$15 (Free for children under 2).

Brooklyn based educational band performs favorite children's numbers.

Fleece fest: 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, May 19.

"Cinderella": Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; \$7.

Classic, presented by the American Family Theater. For children four and up.

"Angelina Ballerina": Kingsborough Community College, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Decatur Avenue; (718) 368-5596; www.konstageatkingsborough.org; 3 pm; \$12.

The beloved character comes to life and has the entire audience up on its feet.

MON, MAY 21

"Shaun the Sheep": Cobble Hill Cinema, 265 Court St. between Butler & Douglass streets; (718) 596-9113; www.cobblehilltheatre.com; 4 pm; \$7.

Animated film from the creators of Wallace and Grommit.

SAT, MAY 26

Memorial day weekend: Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park West and Ninth Street; (718) 965-8900; www.prspectpark.org/calendar; 9 am–9 pm; Free.

The carousel is open, and all the plants are in bloom - enjoy a fun filled day in the park. View the website for a complete listing of all events.

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

Help till the soil and plant potatoes for this year's harvest, then church fresh butter and enjoy a piece of homemade cornbread.

SUN, MAY 27

Memorial day weekend: 9 am–9 pm. Prospect Park Band Shell. See Saturday, May 26.

Potato days: 1–4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, May 26.

MON, MAY 28

Memorial day weekend: 9 am–9

pm. Prospect Park Band Shell. See Saturday, May 26.

WED, MAY 30

Trio Tritticali: Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, 58 Seventh Ave. between Lincoln Place and Seventh Avenue; (718) 622-3300 or email: rfrank@bqcm.org; www.bqcm.org; 7:30 pm; \$5-\$10.

Celebrate the official release of this eclectic string trio's debut CD, Issue #1.

FRI, JUNE 1

Summer festival: PS 15, 71 Sullivan St. (718) 643-6790 X113; www.redhookfest.com; 6–9 pm; Free.

This year's theme, "Women's Work: healing our communities." The 19th annual day features female led bands and dance companies, kayak rides, poetry and story telling.

Choreography showcase: BAX – Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-0018; www.bax.org; 7:30 pm; \$5.

Student and director perform original dance routines, as well as the works of young choreographers ages 9-14.

SAT, JUNE 2

Kinder Kritters: Central Park Zoo, 830 Fifth Ave at E. 65th Street; (212) 439-6583; www.centralparkzoo.com/programs; 10–11 am; \$25 (\$30 non-members).

Incredible insects - for 4 and 5 year old children. Instructors lead the children through songs, dances and games, as well as creative animal themed crafts.

Animal Tales Extravaganza: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road; (718) 220-5103; www.bronxzoo.com; 11 am–4 pm; \$29.95 (\$19.95 children 3-12 \$24.96 seniors).

Arts and crafts presented by Bright Horizons, Animal tales by Plum Organics, Ferdinand the Bull, Nat And Alex Wolf with the Music Unites Youth Choir (Sat. only), Maisy Mouse, Kristi Yamaguchi reading It's a Big World, Little Pig, and the Rainforest Parade. it's all family fun all weekend long.

Summer festival: Louis J Valentino Jr. Park & Pier, Coffey and Ferris streets; (718) 643-6790 X113; www.redhookfest.com; Noon–7 pm; Free.

This year's theme, "Women's Work: healing our communities." The 19th annual day features female led bands and dance companies, kayak rides, poetry and story telling.

Read with Wilbur: 2 pm. Grand Central Library. See Saturday, May 5.

Choreography showcase: 7:30 pm. BAX – Brooklyn Arts Exchange. See Friday, June 1.

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It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM



MOTHERHOOD MATTERS

1522 Year Dr. Wertt of Germany, a male physician interested in obstetrics, was caught trying to sneak into a labor room dressed as a woman and burned at the stake for his crime.

59 Percent of obstetricians in the U.S. who are men.

19 Percent of parents who regret choosing the names they did for their children, often because so many other youngsters have the same name.

3.9 million

Number of moms with children under 18 who write blogs, usually about parenting



9 Percent of mothers 35 or older who gave birth in 1990.

14 Percent in 2008.

\$15.99 Cost of a Pregnancy Piercings flexible belly-button ring for woman who wants to comfortably keep her naval piercing through pregnancy.

\$2,200 Cost of each of the two Chelsea sleigh beds singer Mariah Carey and husband Nick Cannon bought for their twins.

44

Percent of out-of-hospital births in the U.S. in 1940.

1 Percent today.

48 Percent of social-media users who are Facebook friends with their mothers:

1,000 Approximate number of surrogate mothers who give birth every year in the U.S.

8

Percent of Mother's Day flowers bought by women for themselves.



Sources: Sojourners, Glamour, Pregnancy-Place.com, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, PregnancyPiercings.com, ADWEEK Online, Instablogs.com, PewResearch.org, AboutFlowers.com, Y98.radio.com, NewsLite.tv.

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A TEEN'S TAKE

AGLAIA HO

What Memorial Day means to me now

For kids, it may be hard to grasp the gravity of Memorial Day. We tend to associate this holiday with a day off of school, barbecues, and picnics in the park. We pull out our bathing suits and get ready for the start of the summer. As we prepare for fun in the sun, we might easily overlook the war overseas. With this ugly reality so far from home, many of us have felt little impact. Yet, as American troops pull out of Iraq and many others head to Afghanistan, we need to stop and think about what we really should be honoring on May 28.

Memorial Day is about remembering our fallen heroes. It began as Decoration Day, a day to remember those who died during the Civil War. The holiday now commemorates all of America's brave men and women who have made sacrifices to protect our country and our values. I appreciate everything these men and women have done, but I've always felt disconnected on this holiday.

When I was younger, my parents explained the idea behind Memorial Day, but I never really paid attention. They took me to the little parade in our neighborhood. I don't remember much except sitting on the sidewalk and munching on popcorn as the red, white, and blue floats passed by. I'm sure I was as interested in my snack as I was in the actual parade. We would also visit Washington D.C. and pay our respects at the memorials, but I was more enthralled by the museums. For me, Memorial Day was not on the same scale as Fourth of July, so I thought of it as a minor holiday.

This year my feelings have changed. Memorial Day finally means more to me thanks to my American history class and my amazing teacher. He is a strong believer in encouraging students to form their own opinions about our past. Not only does he teach us about history but he always shows us how our past relates to the present.



This year, as I studied our history, I began to see a connection between America's earlier wars and our current situation in Afghanistan. For instance, when we learned about the first national draft instituted during the Civil War, Americans at the time were outraged by the compulsory conscription. We've recently discussed a similar resistance during the Vietnam War draft. It really made me think about how fortunate Americans are today. Due to courageous volunteers, most will never have to experience the hardships of the combat zone.

The real turning point for me, however, was back in March when we studied World War II. We discussed, many times, how the war caused so many casualties. I read about D-Day and the bloodshed in the midst of America trying to infiltrate France. The next day in class, my teacher showed us a dramatization of the invasion of Normandy from the movie "Saving Private Ryan." He also told us about his experience watching it with World War II veterans. The vets were shocked and shaking uncontrollably as they observed their worst nightmares relived on the screen. I suddenly felt a pang of guilt and a newfound sense of respect for our military and I

promised myself that I would truly commemorate these fallen heroes this Memorial Day.

American history is the story of our freedom and our determination to preserve our liberty. We are proud of our values. Our service members are always ready and willing to protect us and secure our freedom. Our country is not perfect but what has reverberated throughout history is that America's finest are always ready to fix our mistakes. These men and women bear the burden of bombshells and fire. Despite all of our different origins, our military unifies us by safeguarding the rights that are guaranteed to all.

So this Memorial Day, take some time to reflect on how this country has been shaped by our soldiers. Remember those who died so that we can live in a safe country. Don't forget to thank those who serve our cause and let them know of our appreciation. And for those who have passed, make sure to hang our colors -- proud and strong -- in their honor.

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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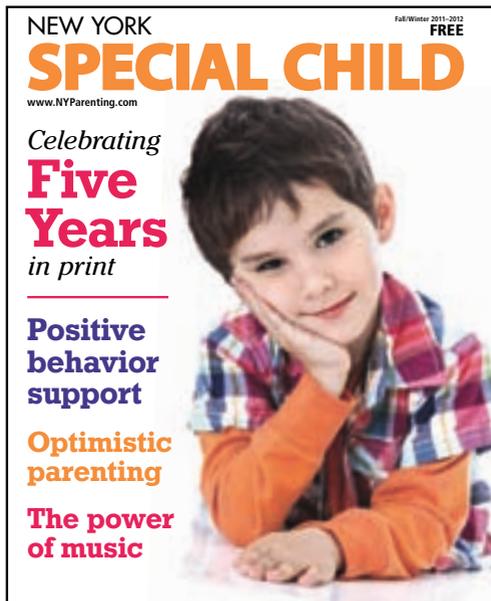
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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS



A neat seat

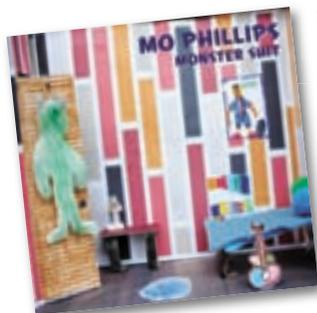
We all know at least one girl that would swoon for the "Princess" Fainting Couch by Levels of Discovery. She's the daughter, granddaughter, or niece that loves to host a tea party, prefers tutus to pants, and clamors for Fancy Nancy books at bedtime. And such a girl would feel glamorous indeed as she lounged on these purple cushions, perched above hardwood that is embellished with the words "Her

Royal Highness."

HRH's parents will adore the practical function of this lounge: the seat — equipped with a slow-closing metal safety hinge — lifts to reveal storage for your little princess's tiaras, bejeweled shoes and feather boas.

The couch, which features removable back, arm, and seat cushions, measures 31-inches wide, by 13.5 inches-deep, and 27-inches high. Perfect for all ages, up to 100 pounds.

Levels of Discovery "Princess" Fainting Couch with Storage, \$151.96–209.95. Visit barnesandnoble.com.



'Monster' talent

Warning: Listening to Mo Phillips' latest CD, "Monster Suit," will make your head bob uncontrollably and add a cheesy grin to your face. That's because this Portland, Oregon-based singer-songwriter's collection of 14 rockin' songs are both silly and smart. Phillips entertains parents and children alike with lyrics that demonstrate sympathy to both camps, whether this dad of two boys

is exhorting listeners to not "fall off the couch 'cause the carpet is lava" in the country-influenced "Hot Lava;" or commiserating over an unruly 'do in "Bed Head;" or he's encouraging his young listeners to be true to themselves in "The Princess and The Cowboy." Now, giddyup to the record store.

"Monster Suit" CD by Mo Phillips (Hey! Bacon!! Records), \$12.99. Visit mophillips.com.

The best babysitter ever

A wonderful Mother's Day gift for a special grandmother, "Silly Frilly Grandma Tillie" is a beautifully illustrated tribute to those special women that can't help but delight their grandkids.

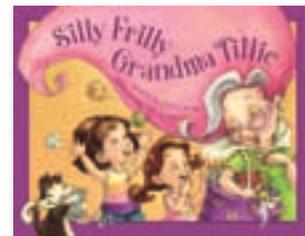
In Laurie Jacobs' humorous hardcover, Grandma Tillie is babysitting Chloe and So-

phie. Rather than parking the girls in front of the TV, Grandma Tillie becomes the entertainment, transforming herself into a series of fun-loving characters.

The sweet, comic tale is recommended for children ages 4–8.

"Silly Frilly Grandma Tillie" by Laurie Jacobs (Flashlight Press),

\$16.95. Visit ipgbook.com.



Picnic fit for Yogi

GoPicnic has developed an allergen-free mealtime solution to enjoy on your child's time-crunched days. Its SunButter + Crackers ready-to-eat, meal-in-a-box is a balanced, light lunch with creamy sunflower seed spread that is easily squirted onto the crunchy, multi-grain crackers. The box also contains seed and fruit trail mix, tropical fruit "bites," and a

chocolate cookie.

The components are delicious and don't need to be refrigerated. Bring a napkin and a drink and you're on your way!

GoPicnic SunButter + Crackers ready-to-eat meal, \$4.99. Available at Target stores and at GoPicnic.com.



For her little twinkle toes

Whether your daughter is 3 or 23, a mommy-and-me pedicure date can be a fun, bonding experience for both. Just in time for toe-baring sandal weather, Piggy Paint has released four new shades: Glitter Bug, translucent with multi-color sparkles; Glamour Girl,

fuschia with silver glitter; Pocketful of Posies, a matte, dark pink; and Hypnotize, a deep, shimmery teal in Piggy Paint's "Refined" line of chic colors that is geared toward moms.

What makes these polishes so special? Piggy Paints are water-based, non-toxic, and devoid of the dizzying odor of standard polishes. The chip-resistant paints — made in the U.S. — are a great favor idea for your little princess's spa-themed birthday party. Now you can both put your best feet forward — safely.

Piggy Paint nail polish, \$3.98–\$8.99. Visit walmart.com.

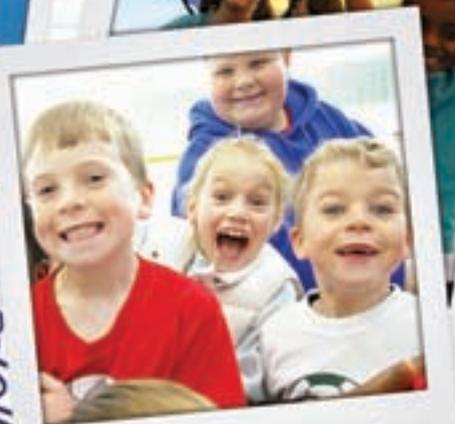


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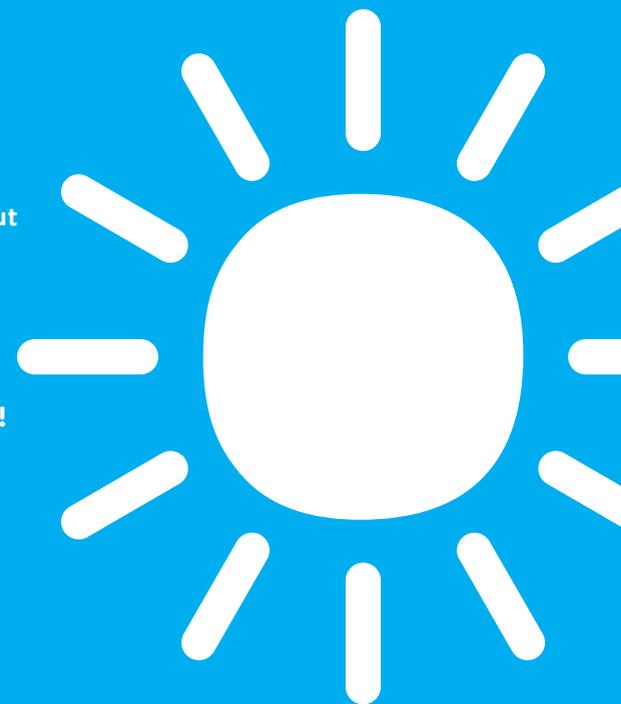
Have you made plans for your child's summer yet?

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