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Letter from the publisher

Another school year

September is the month of new beginnings. New temperatures, new clothes and shoes, new books for our kids, new teachers, new schools sometimes, new friends and new lessons to be learned.

Here in New York City all our kids are back in

school, whether private or public, and the summer is now officially at an end, in spite of days that often seem like beach days with clear blue skies, teasing us into thinking fall is not on its way. But it is.

This issue presents our ANNUAL FALL ACTIVITY GUIDE displaying great programs around our communities. There's a broad range of afterschool activities or weekend adventure/learning enrichment classes/



programs to enhance our children's academic and developmental progress. There are really talented and nurturing professionals who are running programs designed to expand our children's horizons and give us peace of mind and the opportunity to

be elsewhere when we need to be.

New York being what it is, there is no lack of possibilities, and many of them are comfortably affordable and/or are accepting vouchers. With so many Moms working outside of the home and many viable careers developed, there is enormous need for these activities. Signing up early will be the ideal, but many of them are accepting registration well into the weeks ahead.

Here in New York September will painfully continue to remind us of that fateful day 11 years ago when our city was in chaos. Personally, I don't think those of us who lived here through that day are likely to ever forget the memories that will long be with us. September 11th will always mark the day when we lost a kind of innocence and freedom from fear that we no longer have. Everything changed and nothing changed, we are the same, but we are also different.

September also marks many important holidays and historic rituals to many New Yorkers. Labor Day, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur are all important dates that close our schools. In my house, my daughter is beginning her senior year in college, which continues to amaze me. Just yesterday, it seems, I was taking her to preschool and in the speeded

up film that is much of life, as one grows older; she is now 21 and taller than me.

There are articles and columns in this issue we hope will make your life a bit easier. They cover babies, toddlers, school age kids and teens heading off to college, and are largely designed to help with the transition of this Back to School season.

Being a parent is a long pleasure with little training. It is up to each of us individually and as a community to rise to the occasion.

Thanks for reading!

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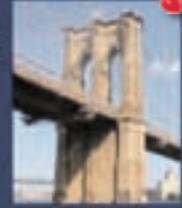


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Wellness in the Schools

How these two parents turned ‘yucky’ into ‘yummy’ for 20,000 city school kids

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Gotham summer is fading into autumn, which means thoughts of going back to school loom for New York City’s one million-plus public school kids. But this fall, some of these lucky students have a reason to be excited because they will be participating in the Wellness in the Schools program, which is designed to teach school cooks how to plan and create tasty meals prepared from scratch.

The program — which has received a big thumbs up from parents who have written in to praise its efforts — has managed to transform outdated menus full of boring, energy-sucking grub into delightfully nutritious cafe-style cuisine in more than 40 school cafeterias in Manhattan, the Bronx, South Bronx, and Brooklyn since 2005.

How it started

In 2005, Nancy Easton — a former city school teacher, principal, and Upper West Side mom — became increasingly concerned about what her 5-, 8-, and 11-year-old children were eating during lunch hour as she sat in on school meetings. In response to the issue, she created the Wellness in the Schools movement.

The uber-proactive alumni of PS 333 (now a “wellness” school), has said that when she was an educa-

Nutrition in other schools

What does the lunch menu look like at the Obama girls’ private school, Sidwell Friends?

Kids there enjoy organic spinach, roasted local vegetable melts, and organic black bean nachos.

tor in the city’s school system, she couldn’t help but notice many students’ poor eating habits. She knew all too well how it adversely affected their ability to learn and perform in the classroom.

Easton’s friend, world-class chef, and four-star restaurant owner Bill Telepan joined Wellness in the Schools as its volunteer executive chef in 2008. As a dad and food expert who believes that “wellness is the way we live,” Telepan felt he needed to make a positive change after he noticed how wilted the salad bar was in his 11-year-old daughter Leah’s school cafeteria at PS 87. Employing his white-tablecloth skills, he carved time out of his busy schedule to train cafeteria staff. Before long, they learned how to make wraps filled with chicken or beans and added options like fresh romaine lettuce, cucumber, celery, corn, onions, cheddar — and even whole-wheat pasta salad — to the salad bar. The kids didn’t come back for just seconds — they came back for sevenths!

“I set up three days with the Department of Education in which I could cook in my daughter’s school. We were serving sandwiches and pasta sauces with pesto and chickpeas. On Pizza Fridays, we made whole-wheat flatbread pizzas.”

Working with other parents, public school officials, and the Department of Education’s food service, the two parents bravely moved forward with their health plan.

What it does

Wellness in the Schools has partnered with top culinary schools in the city, which sends its graduates to school kitchens to demonstrate how U.S. Department of Agriculture-allotted and budgeted food can easily be transformed into appealing, wholesome fare. This includes vegetarian chili, which, when cooked in volume, can feed an army of hungry kindergarten through 12th graders.

The program also offers a quarterly plan called Cook for Kids that offers students hands-on classes, where they learn how to whip up yummy, nutritious dishes using preservative-free ingredients and produce from local green markets. This results in kids bringing home new recipes that they can prepare with their parents, advocating bonding and good eating habits for people of all ages.

Yet, despite all of Wellness in the School’s great intentions, a handful of public school cafeterias still have cooks who may still be mixing ketchup and grape jelly to make barbecue sauce. According to a recent study, more than 70 percent of public schools serve food that is high in fat and loaded with sugar and salt because, even though it’s unhealthy, the nutrient guidelines for vitamins, minerals, and protein are met. One can only hope that down the road, the “Top 10 bad foods” — which include peanut butter, jelly, breaded chicken products, cereals, French fries, burgers, meat sauces, Jamaican beef pat-

Chef Telepan’s vision for the future

- A fresh salad bar with fruit compotes in every cafeteria.
- Roasted chicken instead of chicken patties.
- Replacing taco meat with veg-

- etarian chili (in burritos or as a rice topping).
- Fitness and sports programs in every school.



Photo by John Kernick

Upper West Side parents Nancy Easton and Chef Bill Telepan serve as the executive leadership for Wellness in the Schools.

ties, canned ravioli, and cold cuts with nitrates — will gradually be replaced with healthier and fresher options.

Easton, whose family eats what she preaches, said she likes to food shop with her kids.

“We visit green markets as often as we can on weekends. [My kids] cook with me and I don’t make too many ‘forbidden fruits.’ We have

dessert, but I try to keep it wholesome. We avoid processed food and eat well-balanced meals.”

Healthy bodies, healthy minds

Eating nutritious food that fuels the body isn’t the only ingredient necessary for a healthy lifestyle.

“We’re also a very active family,” says Easton. “We enjoy bike riding

along the river, museums, and exploring different foods and neighborhoods in the city.”

Due to this smart and activity-loving mentality, Wellness in the Schools also works closely with Asphalt Green — a recess enhancement program in the South Bronx — to create the Coach for Kids program. It provides fitness and sports instruction by sending coaches to

needy schools. And another organization, Partnering with SportmeNY, also partners with Wellness in the Schools in order to bring tennis to five schools on the Upper East Side.

Outlook for fall and beyond

In a recent speech, Mayor Bloomberg noted that after decades of increases there was a surprising 5.5 percent drop in the amount of obese children in public school. This translates into roughly 6,500 fewer overweight kids. Easton and Telepan have been acknowledged as an inspirational force by the White House and First Lady Michelle Obama’s Chefs Move to Schools initiative, and recently spread their wellness-gospel on the Cooking Channel’s Game Changers segment.

And although Easton says that “there’s a lot of excitement and growth” in store for Wellness in the Schools, not every public school will be affected by this positive change. Despite the fact that Bloomberg mentioned in his speech that an overwhelming majority of parents think their children are fit and at a healthy weight, he also said that “the facts tell a different story.”

Parents and educators who are still frustrated by unhealthy food options in their children’s cafeterias can bring change to their own schools by reaching out to Wellness in the Schools or by working with their schools’ administrations — and fellow parents — to encourage their kitchens to cook from scratch. Parents should also do their part by cooking simple, fresh, nutritious, kid-friendly meals at home with their children — it teaches them healthy eating habits that will last them a lifetime.

Wellness in the Schools is on Facebook and Twitter.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based writer and journalist who has interviewed and profiled many interesting people, including several celebrities. She has been covering arts and entertainment in New York City, but also enjoys sharing her insightful articles with NY Parenting readers. As a mom, she has lots of parenting experience under her belt, having raised a bright and independent teenage son (in college), and his older brother, who is a super-talented actor and comedian.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Do children need a cholesterol check?

What is your child's cholesterol? How about his LDL? Or HDL? Do you know?

If you don't, relax, because most parents are in the same boat. But, new government guidelines endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics are encouraging pediatricians to test children's cholesterol level starting at age 9, and their reasons behind it make a lot of sense.

With the obesity rates steadily increasing, there is just cause to test when you consider that high cholesterol levels can cause heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that two-thirds of American adults and 15 percent of children are overweight or obese. Furthermore, in certain states, the numbers for children rise to more than 30 percent.

However, some doctors are claiming that we don't need to test every single child for high cholesterol. Instead, they feel that perhaps a more laid back approach should be utilized, and only children who are at high risk for high cholesterol should be tested.

There are others who also feel that doctors who have ties to drug companies will push medication on children, when they should really just encourage a better diet and more activity.

When a child is determined to be overweight or has an unhealthy diet, it might be easier to make the determination that a blood test is in order. But what about thin children who eat well?

My daughter, at age 9, endured a battery of blood tests to investigate why she had not been feeling well for a long time. One of the first things that came back was that she had high cholesterol. That was



strange to hear, because she was a very healthy eater, loved veggies and salads, barely ate meat or junk food, and was very thin. A couple of months later, we learned that she had Hashimoto's disease, which affects a person's thyroid — and her's was compromised.

We didn't understand why her cholesterol levels were high until we found a pediatric endocrinologist who explained to us that high cholesterol is a marker for a thyroid problem. In fact, if doctors see a thyroid problem, they should test for thyroid dysfunction. This would have saved my daughter many months of not being properly diagnosed. He also told us that she didn't need to be treated for the cholesterol itself because once her thyroid became under control, those levels would naturally dip to normal amounts. Like promised, as her thyroid levels regulate, her cholesterol levels continue to fall.

Still, I'm not sure every child needs a cholesterol test, unless a problem has been identified or they are high risk. Of course, this begs the question: what other blood tests should children regularly undergo in light of our obesity epidemic? Is diabetes the next blood test that kids might need in the future?

Has your child been tested for cholesterol? Would you want to test him? Are these guidelines too strict?

Go to our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/NYParenting, and share your thoughts on this subject.

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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Head of the class

Helping your child excel — at every age and developmental stage from kindergarten through high school

BY SANDRA GORDON

From the crawling, walking, and babbling of infants to the angst and rebellion of tweens and teens, children constantly go through a predictable set of developmental stages physically, intellectually, emotionally, and socially.

Of course, the age at which your child reaches these stages can differ from other children.

“Along the way, any of these [phases can be experienced] ahead or behind the others in their timing, then switch, which can be confusing for parents,” says Vivian Seltzer, PhD, professor of human development and behavior at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

You can start out with a precocious learner who is seemingly ahead of everyone else, only to find out two years later that her classmates have caught up and they’re speeding ahead. Not to worry. It’s all just part of growing up. But, as a parent, it helps to know these things.

“Knowing where your child is at developmentally can help you understand and support her,” Dr. Seltzer says. Most kids don’t need a lot of help navigating the landscape, especially as they grow older. But it helps to be aware of where they are so you can guide them along the way and step in if you feel its necessary.

Use our guide to help your child make the most of every age and stage — from kindergarten through high school.

Elementary school: Milestone-mania

From kindergarten through fifth grade, kids make major strides. In kindergarten and first grade they learn how to transition to school by becoming comfortable with a classroom routine while learning how to read. By third grade and beyond they learn that they need to read in order to learn. Emotionally, they begin to develop their academic self-esteem based on feedback from you and their teachers. By the fourth and fifth grades they’re moving from concrete to abstract thinking.

“When concrete thinkers see the Statue of Liberty, they see it as a lady with a torch. An abstract thinker also sees it as a symbol of freedom and democracy,” says Rebecca Branstetter, an educational and clinical psychologist in Oakland, Calif. By the fifth grade, kids are also beginning to set goals, work independently, function better in groups, make more complex decisions, and become organized with their school and homework.

It’s wise to extend learning beyond school when your child is in elementary school. Reinforce what your child is learning in school with activities at home. For example, let your second grader count change at the checkout and help her learn fractions by allowing her to measure ingredients while you’re baking cookies together. Have her tell time. Talk about numbers while you’re driving, such as how fast you’re going, the distance you’ll travel, and how long it will take to get there. Play board games that involve money, time, logic, or vocabulary — such as the family editions of Monopoly, Scrabble, or Apples to Apples. On the weekends, take family outings to museums and zoos to visit exhibits that coincide with school subjects.

“If your child is learning about Egypt, take a trip to a local museum with an Egyptian exhibit,” says Branstetter. “It reinforces curiosity, sends the subtle message that school is important, and shows your child that school and home are connected.”

Develop a homework habit. Make doing homework automatic by coming up with a routine that fits your

child’s personality. Some kids like doing homework right after school. Others need to burn off steam by playing for half an hour (set a timer) before getting down to business. Whatever you choose, stick to the schedule you establish for your kids as much as possible. To minimize distractions, keep the TV off during homework time.

For younger kids, begin each homework session by asking your child to explain what she’s supposed to do, then gauge if she can do it alone or if she needs your help. If you’re not around when your child does her homework, let her know you’ll look at it when you get home, and be sure to follow through.

“Praise her when she completes her homework by emphasizing the process, such as ‘You worked really hard to learn your math facts,’ rather than the product ‘Good job on learning your math facts.’ Praising the process teaches persistence, which is a skill kids need for school success,” Branstetter advises.

Middle school: Hormone havoc

In middle school — the sixth through eighth grades — kids are starting to go through puberty, and the physical changes can make them feel like they’re not in control of their bodies.

“It’s a complicated time physically, socially, and emotionally,” says Vicki Panaccione, PhD, a licensed psychologist and founder of the Better Parenting Institute in Melbourne, Fla. During this difficult age and stage, their sense of self is also developing. “There’s a lot of exclusion in middle school,” she says. Cliques can provide a safe haven as kids try to figure themselves out.

Parents should expect turmoil during this stage. Mood swings and over-reactions, such as total hysteria over whether or not a boy or girl looked at your child in the hallway, are a normal part of this phase of development.

“Don’t take it personally. Just understand that your child is going through a lot,” says Panaccione. Be supportive but don’t minimize the problem or try to fix it either. “Middle schoolers don’t want you to solve anything.”

Instead, use phrases like: “I’m sorry you feel that way,” or “Gosh, that must have been embarrassing for you,” rather than “Just ignore it,” or “Just get over it. It’s not a big deal.” It is a big



deal to your child. Placating doesn't help and can be harmful.

"They can push your child away because she'll feel like you just don't get it," Panaccione says.

Don't be too concerned if your child starts to hang with the wrong crowd.

"As kids develop and decide who they want to be, they need to decide who they don't want to be," says Seltzer. They may try on various groups, including one that's not your favorite, to see what feels right. All kids have friends their parents don't like. But kids are good self-barometers. "Don't butt in unless you think their friends are dangerous," Seltzer cautions.

Empathizing academically is also important. In middle school, the workload gets more difficult because kids have to meet the demands of up to seven different teachers instead of just one.

"It's a big challenge. The best thing you can do is allow your child to vent," Panaccione says. If your child complains that one of her teachers gives too much homework, for example, you might say, "Well, what

do you think you might need to do, given that he gives lots of homework?" rather than "He's only trying to teach you." The idea is to help your child solve the problem, find her own way, and keep the lines of communication open so your child will continue to feel comfortable talking to you about even bigger problems that might come along later.

High school: The "who-am-I?" years

In high school, children forge their identities academically, socially, morally, sexually, and spiritually while trying to figure out who they are apart from you.

"High schoolers question everything and may even rebel against your opinions and beliefs," says Panaccione. If you're a Democrat, for example, your child might say she's a Republican. If you're a meat-and-potatoes family, she'll become a vegan. You get the idea.

Talking to you teen is the key to their success. Allow your child to question your opinions and values

and express herself. Ask questions such as, "Oh, why do you think so?" rather than lecturing or yelling.

"It's a great time to find out who your kids really are," Panaccione says.

Note dramatic changes. It's normal for high schoolers to be just as moody as middle schoolers. But if your teen shows a drastic change in personality or behavior; a significant drop in grades, study habits, or attitude; a dramatic shift in appearance, dress, or grooming; or interests, goals, or activities, know that something's up.

"Talk to your teen about your concerns," says Panaccione. Start by saying something like: "I'm concerned that you're spending time in bed when you used to be out with your friends."

Then listen to what your child has to say. If the behaviors are a sign of rebelling against a lack of freedom or privilege, be open to discussing and compromising. If you're concerned your child may be suffering from depression or another mental health

disorder, seek professional help.

"Your child's primary care provider or the school guidance counselor is a good resource for a referral to a qualified child or teen psychologists in your area," Panaccione says.

College pressure is another issue you have to consider when your child is in high school. By the 11th grade, it comes on strong. The earlier you discuss college with your child, the better. But only start talking about higher education when your child seems ready.

"Some kids are focused, but most have no idea what they want to do or major in," Panaccione says. To reduce anxiety, Panaccione tells her high school patients that they don't have to know what they want to do going into college. That's where they'll figure it out, which is something you could say at home, too. Also, listen to your child's wishes for college rather than pushing your agenda.

"To be successful, kids should end up going to a college that's right for them," she says.



Back to school!

Some tips
to keeping
your kids
interested in
learning

BY DR. VALERIE ALLEN

The sound of the pencil sharpener, the smell of book print, and the sight of new clothes send a clear message — school is in full swing. A new school year brings with it the fun and excitement that comes with learning. School provides discovery, new friends, and personal growth for your child. You can set the stage for a successful school experience for your youngster by using a few common-sense strategies.

• **Have a positive attitude toward learning.** Encourage your child to do well and expect the best. Participate in educational opportunities together through the community or at the library. Make a commitment to purchase “educational” gifts and books for special occasions. Set a good example for your child by reading a book or taking a class.

• **Support the school.** Make a commitment to have one parent-teacher conference in person every month. Write, text, or e-mail your child’s teacher, and comment on specific classroom activities. Volunteer your time or resources to help at school. If you have items at home or at work that the school could use for projects,

donate them, because “one man’s trash is another man’s treasure.” Enforce the school’s rules and policies at home, and speak highly of the school, the teacher, education, and the joy of learning in front of your child.

• **Be prepared.** Make it easy for your child to handle all of the “nuts and bolts” of getting ready for school each day. Have adequate school supplies on hand, and buy items ahead of time for future use. Prepay for school lunches whenever possible. Select an outfit for each day at the beginning of the week and keep “school clothes” apart from casual clothes. Establish a drop-off spot for books, backpacks, lunch boxes, and so on. Use a large envelope with the child’s name on it to keep correspondence and school notices handy. Promptly respond to requests from the school or teacher for permission slips, field trip money, or similar items.

• **Have routines.** Set up a daily schedule for routines of bathing, eating, dressing, homework, and play time. Keep distractions to a minimum, and regulate and limit telephone, television, radio, and computer time.

• **Schedule learning time.** Set aside a minimum of 30 minutes each day for educational activities, including assigned homework or practice

skills that the teacher has sent home. Use workbooks or learning activities, such as crossword puzzles, cards, or board games to encourage logic, decision making, and problem solving. During learning time, do not allow phone calls, television, computers, or visits from friends.

• **Create a star!** Find something that your child likes and does well, and let him show off a bit. Encourage fun and the pleasure of having a good time in a positive way. Give your child the message that it is OK to read a book, draw funny pictures, play an instrument, plant a garden, groom a pet, collect stamps, or learn about motorcycles. Find a way to showcase his talents, perhaps at a nursing home or with an elderly relative or neighbor. Children need to sparkle and shine!

These are just a few things parents can do to help their youngsters enjoy and maintain an interest in school-related activities and learning in general.

Dr. Valerie Allen is a child psychologist in private practice. She presents seminars for parents and professionals in the field of child development and has published two children’s books, “Summer School for Smarties” and “Bad Hair, Good Hat, New Friends.” Oh, yes, she has also raised six children!



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Raising your kids to be politically savvy

How to engage your children with the world around them

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Election year presents an opportunity for children to learn about and develop an interest in politics. But it shouldn't be confined to the classroom. Experts suggest that when political issues are addressed in both the academic and domestic arenas, it has a lasting impact on future voters. To begin cultivating an interest in political affairs, parents should encourage family dialogue and take advantage of resources.

"Start with simple concepts children can understand," says Fran O'Malley, curriculum specialist for the Democracy Project at the University of Delaware. "Ask, 'who are the

leaders or authority figures in our home? Our community? What kinds of jobs do they do?' As children enter school, initiate conversations based on what they are learning in history or government class and go from there."

This, he says, is all part of a scaffolding process that instills concepts and can be built upon over time. Richard Coe, representative for Kids Voting U.S.A., agrees.

"Talk with children about how government affects them right now through everyday things like safety regulations on water, mattresses, and toys. Or, money needed to make libraries and parks better," says Coe, whose nonpartisan organization works to educate and engage future

voters. "If you find that point of relevance and are consistent with these type conversations, most kids will take an interest."

That's how Jeffery Sullivan became engaged in politics. When he was still in elementary school, he developed a mentoring relationship with a family friend and local politician. Through their conversations, he learned about issues being addressed on the state and local level and how some of them directly affected his life.

"This roused his curiosity in political affairs, and by fourth grade he wanted to know more about local government, then county, then state, and eventually national administration," says Linda Sullivan of her now 16-year-old son.

Everyday politics

•Ignite their interest. Most children have an interest in politics but it must be consistently nurtured through family dialogue and various resources.

•Start simple. Talk about leaders and authority figures in your home and community. Discuss the concept of responsibility. Show your child pictures of those in the political spotlight and discuss what form of leadership he holds. Discuss what they are learning in government or history class. This is all part of a scaffolding process that introduces concepts and can be built upon over time.

•Reason with relevance. Talk about how government affects your child's life right now through everyday things — regulations on items he uses or money needed for places

he frequents, such as parks and libraries.

•Lean on literature. Use juvenile literature such as biographies, historical, and fiction works as springboards for discussions and to hone his understanding of governmental affairs.

•Utilize worthwhile websites. Political and civic-oriented websites designed for children have information and activities to teach kids about government and current affairs.

•Network with the news. Watch the news and political debates and read the newspaper aloud, then discuss it together. Explain political cartoons and encourage your child to create his own cartoons based on issues important to him.

•Motion for movies. Teens can develop some political concepts

through movies, such as "All the President's Men" or "1776."

•Challenge to change. Teach your child that when things happen he has the ability to affect change. Identify neighborhood problems, such as a littered park, and talk about what he can do to change it.

•Rally with letter writing. Encourage your child to write letters to local, state, and national politicians about issues of concern. Children usually receive a letter in return — particularly from local and state officials — and this will encourage them to continue their efforts.

•Make a mock event. Encourage school and extracurricular groups to organize mock elections and hold mini debates, as this introduces political concepts.

•Design day trips. Take trips to state and national historical and governmental sites. If possible, make prior arrangements to meet with representatives. Have your child make a list of questions to ask officials before leaving home.

•Practice at the polls. Take your child with you to vote. This will familiarize him with voting processes.

•Value volunteering. Participate in community family volunteer opportunities throughout the year and during campaign time. Parents and children can help with neighborhood mailings, drop off literature, distribute buttons, or put up campaign signs.

•Early election encounters. Encourage your child to run for school or class office. This will give him a jump start on leadership roles and is a tangible way to teach him about the campaigning process.

•Be consistent. Studies show that parents who regularly discuss political issues with their kids have a better chance of raising politically minded children.

•Mentor and model. Let your child see you reading the newspaper, watching the news, being active in civic volunteering, and voting. Unspoken modeling has a lasting effect.

Top Tips



Jeffery was also an avid reader and with his collection of politically based children's books, he honed his understanding of history and governmental affairs.

"There are so many good books out there that can be used as springboards for introducing kids of all ages to politics and elections," says O'Malley. "One of my favorite is 'Duck for President.'"

Dominique Downs likes that book, too.

"About a month ago my teacher read 'Duck for President' and afterward asked who would like to run for [class] president, so I raised my hand. So did others," says the third-grade student. "We each picked a vice president, then drew pictures, came up with a slogan, and gave speeches to get people to vote for us."

Political- and civic-oriented websites designed for children are good resources, too, as are newspapers and television shows that keep kids abreast of current events.

"I regularly read portions of the newspaper to my kids and we watch CNN together and then discuss what is happening," says Dominique's mother, Glenda Amponsah Tandoh. "Since my daughter is running for class president, she's particularly interested in how the candidates are doing."

Parents should also encourage letter writing.

"It's a level of engagement every school-age child can get involved in," says O'Malley. "And when they get responses back — which they usually do — it encourages them even more."

Tandoh found this to be true. When her son was studying current events in sixth grade, he became concerned about an issue being addressed before congress. He and several other students shared their views with the teacher, who then suggested they write a letter to the governor.

"Before long we received a letter inviting us to come and share our views before state congress, which we did," says the now 16-year-old Isaac Watkins. "After we returned, we received another letter thanking us for getting involved and saying that our views were being considered. This showed me that even though I can't vote, I can still make a difference."

Family visits to state and national historic and governmental sites can foster an interest in political affairs, as can a trip to the polls, so young-

sters can learn about voting processes.

"That's the whole point of my organization — we educate and prepare kids to be engaged voters," says Coe. "Children go to the polls with their parents and vote, and the results are published in the newspapers."

"When Jeffery has gone to the polls with me I've taken him into the booth and he's seen how I may vote republican in one area and democrat in another," says Sullivan.

"Later, I explain why I've chosen one candidate over another so he understands."

Finally, consider family volunteering.

"Candidates are always looking for people to assist during campaign time and families are no exception," says O'Malley. "Parents and children can help with neighborhood mailings, drop-off literature, distribute buttons, or put up campaign signs."

Most important, remember that nurturing an interest in political affairs fosters responsible citizenship.

"Involving my kids in politics helps them to understand the world is bigger than just our home and community," says Tandoh. "It also encourages them to think about issues they wouldn't otherwise consider. I'm planting seeds now in hopes that one day they will step out and make positive changes their world."

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

Resources for your children

Here's a list of subject-related juvenile resources:

Books

- "America Votes: How Our President is Elected" by Linda Granfield.
- "Arnold for President" by Craig Bartlett.
- "As If Being 12 3/4 Isn't Bad Enough, My Mother Is Running for President!" by Donna Gephart.
- "Barack Obama: An American Story" by Roberta Edwards.
- "Class President" by Johanna Hurwitz.
- "Dork on the Run" by Carol Gorman.

- "Duck For President" by Do-reen Cronin.
- "First Boy" by Gary Schmidt.
- "First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover" by Mitali Perkins.
- "Girl Reporter Rocks Polls!" by Linda Ellerbee.
- "Grace for President" by Kelly S. DiPucchio.
- "Hail to the Chief: The American Presidency" by Don Robb.
- "Hillary Clinton: An American Journey" by Laura Driscoll.
- "If I Ran for President" by Catherine Stier.
- "Phineas L. MacGuire ... gets slimed!" by Frances O'Roark Dowell.

- "So You Want to Be President" by Judith St. George.
- "Vote!" by Eileen Christelow.
- "Vote for Me: All About the Civics" by Kirsten Hall.

Internet sites

- www.cnn.com/studentnews
- www.kidsvotingsoutheastpa.org
- www.pbskids.org
- www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids
- www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/kidspost/orbit/kidspost.html
- www.whitehouse.gov/about/white-house-101

Don't miss your child's back-to-school physical

A primer so you and your child know exactly what to expect

BY JAMIE LOBER

Your child's back-to-school physical is the most important task to check off of your list this fall, especially if your child is entering a new school. Here's a primer so you and your child know exactly what to expect in his back-to-school examination.

A physical normally involves seeing the doctor, who will ask how the child has been doing. If the doctor has not seen the child before, he will require a more extensive history.

"If it is someone they are seeing for the first time, most doctors will do an entire intake history where they find out whether or not this kid has always been healthy, where they received their previous healthcare, if they had any medical problems, what their birth history is, family history, and any sort of medical problems in the family, all of which are baseline areas that the doctor will cover because he wants background information," says Dr. Leslie Hayes, chief of adolescent medicine in the department of pediatrics at New York Methodist

Hospital in Brooklyn.

What the physical entails depends largely on the patient's age. A younger child will have his height, weight, blood pressure, temperature, and pulse taken, as well as a head-to-toe physical, in which the doctor looks at the child's general appearance to see if he looks well for his age. It's like an A through Z health inventory.

"We examine their eyes by looking with our ophthalmoscopes, look in their ears, their mouth, and assess their dentition to see if they have good dentition or a lot of cavities," says Hayes. "We listen to their heart, lungs, examine their abdomen, and check their extremities to make sure they are neurologically intact and growing properly."

Doctors will plot the child's height and weight on a growth chart to make sure the child is "reasonably adequate height and weight for their age and sex," she says.

"What we are seeing more commonly is overweight kids who are off the growth charts as far as weight is concerned," says Hayes. If this is the case, the doctor will mention the importance of exercise, eating a well-balanced diet, and choosing water over soda to prevent obesity. "If a child watches a lot of television, we talk to them about decreasing their screen time."

The pediatrician also touches on school performance, asking the child what classes he is taking and if he is not doing well. The doctor wants to find out if the cause of poor performance could be something medical or psychosocial.

And, much to most kids' disdain, the pediatrician will give the child scheduled boosters or vaccines to help prevent him from contracting any diseases he may be at risk of getting.

The physical is the perfect time and place for parents to ask pediatricians any questions they may have about their children's health, such as "my young kids don't like to eat vegetables or fruits, and won't drink water."

"As a child goes through certain developmental stages the parents may be concerned, but that is why it is important to come in for an annual physical exam, just to make sure that the doctor can confirm that everything is OK," advises Hayes.

It's also the perfect opportunity for kids to ask doctors any questions they may have. Younger kids do not tend to ask a lot of questions, but as children become teenagers, they tend to be more involved in their healthcare and sometimes come in with questions for their doctor.

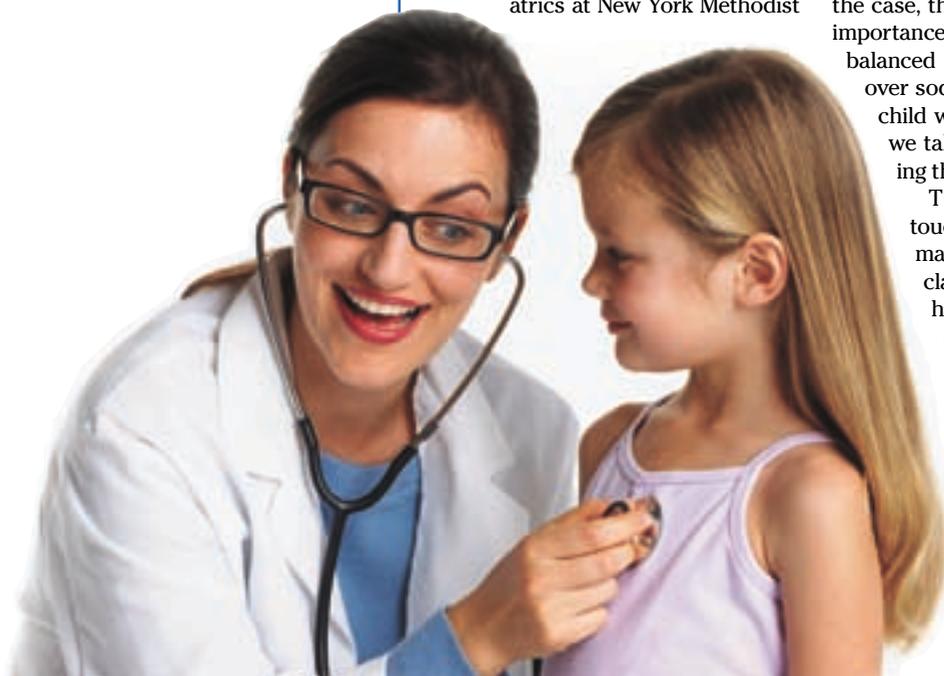
As kids get older, their doctors may talk to them about personal safety, such as car safety for a teen who is starting to drive, or safe dating. The point is to tailor the advice to each child.

"The guidance is governed by the age, as well as cognitive developmental level of the patient, but most center around healthy lifestyles, safety prevention, smoking, safe-sex practices, and relationships," Hayes explains.

A back-to-school physical is without a doubt important for every child, no matter the age or school grade, and should become a yearly practice for parents and children.

"It is a good idea to have your child come on a yearly basis to be seen," says Hayes. "As they get older, normally the interval of time between visits is larger, but it is helpful to have them come in at least every two years to be reevaluated and to make sure their growth and development is normal and that they are not experiencing any sort of medical issues or problems."

Jamie Lober, author of "Pink Power" (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.





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Singing the world

The Young People's Chorus visits China — and discovers much more

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

When the Young People's Chorus of New York City received an invitation to represent North America at the 2012 World Choral Summit in China, Francisco Nunez — the founder and artistic director of the chorus — was thrilled, but not entirely surprised. Since its start in 1988, the Young People's Chorus has received numerous honors and awards for its stellar performances around the globe. Nunez, a 2011 MacArthur Fellow, describes the chorus as an “artistically viable and an incredibly multicultural choir,” completely deserving of such an honor. Still, one of his biggest challenges was to narrow down a selection of music to represent the United States and its widely diverse background.

He called fellow choir director Philip Burnell for advice. Burnell simply responded, “Do what you do.” Appreciating his friend's confidence and trust in his ability to prepare an impressive repertoire, Nunez got to work. His vision was to create something more than a traditional choral performance, instead, an event with staging that would capture the heart of the U.S. Under his direction and the choreography of Jacquie Bird, 43 members of the Young Men's Chorus and Concert Choir began a demanding two-week rehearsal schedule, practicing everyday from 10 am to 5 pm, before departing for China.

The invitation came from the International Federation of Choral Music,



an organization committed to facilitating communication and exchange between choral musicians throughout the world. The 11th annual China International Chorus Festival and World Choral Summit took place in Beijing in mid July. Internationally renowned choral leaders and world-class choirs came together to share their musical talent, individual perspectives, and passion through a series of concerts, workshops, and discussion groups. The theme of the summit was “Voices in Harmony.” The Young People's Chorus of New York City joined other choruses from Europe, Africa, South America, Australia, and Asia to share their different cultures.

The Opening Ceremony was a great success. Ten thousand people packed the MasterCard Center, and international TV channels were there to document the event. During its visit, the

Young People's Chorus held two-hour concerts at the Guangzhou Opera House and the Chinese Conservatory of Music. The singers delivered flawless vocal and dance performances that had the audience on its feet by the end of the performance.

The choristers performed the first half of the program in their formal uniforms, and then switched to a classic Americana look inspired by Broadway musicals like “Showboat,” “Ragtime,” and “Newsies.” The boys dressed in caps and vests to capture the feeling of old New York. The girls wore long white dresses and carried white parasols, reminiscent of Alvin Ailey's “Revelations.” Nunez's selections ranged from the Renaissance to the contemporary periods and included music from the Amazon, Latin America, and China. They sang classical and traditional music, Shaker hymns, folk songs, gospels, spirituals, and contemporary pieces.

Chorister Ada Huang blogged about the audience's enthusiasm when they performed “Oye” as an encore.

“The whole song was an amazing experience because in the heart of the moment, we decided to bring children up on the stage, and mothers were practically throwing children in our arms to dance with us,” she wrote. “We sang with all the people who came to see us and the ending was so full of power and love.” This was especially significant because it was Huang's first visit to Guangzhou, her





family's hometown.

Lu Wei and the late Anne Ofstedal, the parents of choristers Christina and Dustin Lu, had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to travel to China to watch their children perform at the Conservatory. They borrowed the words of a teenage girl in the audience to describe their experience: fabulous and awesome!

"Song by song, dance by dance, the YPC choristers, singing and moving as perfectly as we've ever seen them, left their audience with a rich impression of the talents and vibrant joy of American young people."

Nunez believes the educational impact of the tour for the choristers was boundless.

"Traveling changes a child's perspective of his or her place in the world, giving these young people first-hand knowledge of issues affecting the international community," he said. "Music is powerful. In Estonia, it helped bring down the Iron Curtain!"

Sixteen-year-old Louise Sullivan was excited to travel to China with the chorus.

"It was amazing to sing in a giant, beautiful opera house, visit different temples, and see the Great Wall! I also understood what it was like to go someplace with a mission: YPC is

about connecting with others through music by having fun and sharing our experiences with others from different cultures and backgrounds," she said. "As a singer, I was always thinking about the music — memorizing, searching for meaning, saving my voice — because I know our performances would influence others."

Tohar Scheininger has been with the chorus for four years. The 17-year-old alto looked forward to sharing the music she and her fellow choristers had worked so hard perfecting with a Chinese audience.

"The Boatman Song" was the most musically challenging for her. Sung in Chinese, the piece moved the audience. Tohar noticed a middle-aged woman sitting in the front row and focused on her smile while singing and felt a deeper connection with the Chinese culture. She appreciated the strong emotional response to the music, which reminded her that music is truly a universal language.

Nunez says the chorus does more than just singing beautiful songs.

"People watch them perform and think, 'Everything is going to be OK.' These young men and women are change makers. They are making a difference in the lives of others. They make a good impression and



people meet them and think, 'This is what Americans are like.' They are helping our country," Nunez states emphatically.

Louise and Tohar thank Nunez for helping them by being such a brilliant teacher and a good friend.

"He has such a way with kids," Tohar explains. "He knows how to talk to us so we'll listen — not just about music — he grabs our attention, motivates us, guides us. He's incredible!"

Indeed, Nunez is a passionate, dedicated, and gifted man who cares about

humanity and believes that change is possible in the world. His positive influence on the lives of young people builds bridges between cultures around the globe, joining people in peace and harmony.

For more information about the Young People's Chorus of New York City, visit www.ypc.org.

Laura Varoscak-DeInnocentiis is a writer, educator, and mom living in Brooklyn. A regular contributor to NY Parenting Media, Varoscak-DeInnocentiis has won several editorial awards for her articles.

A cooler lunch

How to pack
a school
lunch that
stays a safe
temperature

BY KIKI BOCCI

Packing school lunches can be a pain for parents, but at least you gain some peace of mind about what your kids are eating. It's a great way to help children maintain healthy, balanced diets — and save money, too.

But if parents don't take certain precautions, even the most well-meaning moms and dads could make their children sick.

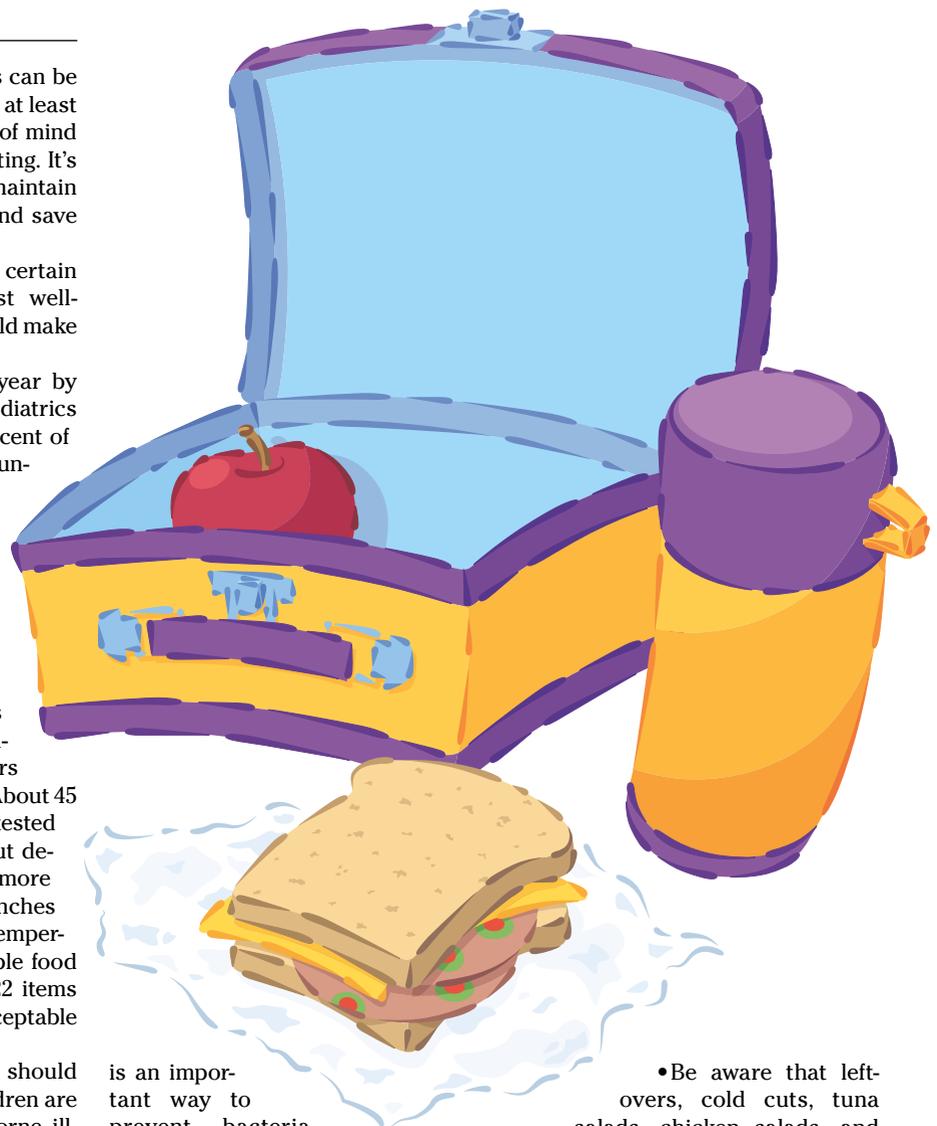
A survey published last year by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that more than 90 percent of sack lunches were kept at unsafe temperatures, exposing children to foodborne illnesses. Even lunches that included ice packs reached unsafe temperatures if too few were included or if too much time passed before lunchtime.

In the study, sack lunches of more than 700 preschoolers were measured 1.5 hours before the food was served. About 45 percent of the 700 lunches tested had at least one ice pack. But despite parents' best efforts, more than 90 percent of the lunches were at dangerously warm temperatures. Of the 1,631 perishable food items in the lunches, only 22 items were found to be in an acceptable temperature range.

For parents, this study should serve as a wake-up call. Children are at particular risk for foodborne illnesses. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says compared with adults, children younger than 4 years have quadruple the number of bacterial infection incidents transmitted through food.

Symptoms of foodborne illness are unpleasant and debilitating. Severe cases, especially in young children whose immune systems are not fully developed, can lead to serious medical issues such as kidney problems, malnutrition, and even death, the Center noted.

Control of the temperature of food



is an important way to prevent bacteria from growing and making kids sick. Some tips for parents:

- Start with an insulated lunch bag or box. Soft, insulated lunch bags or boxes are the best choice. Avoid paper lunch bags.
- Include small, frozen gel packs. Have extras in the freezer in case you forgot to put yesterday's in the icebox to refreeze.
- Consider freezing a juice box or water bottle and including it in the lunch. By lunchtime it will melt, providing a cool refreshing drink.

• Be aware that leftovers, cold cuts, tuna salads, chicken salads, and egg salads all must be kept cold to avoid the growth of bacteria that can make kids sick. Even store-bought, packaged lunch combos containing lunchmeats, crackers, and cheese need to be kept cold.

• Don't re-use foil, plastic wrap, or Baggies, even if it seems environmentally friendly to recycle. After a day in a lunch bag, they have become incubators for bacteria. The safest thing to do is to discard them.

• If you have reusable containers, be sure to wash them out thoroughly with soap and hot water.

2012–2013 School Year Calendar

September 2012

- 6 Thursday SCHOOL SESSIONS BEGIN FOR ALL STUDENTS. Early dismissal for non-District 75 Kindergarten students only.
- 7 Friday First Full day for non-District 75 Kindergarten students.
- 10 Monday First Full day for Pre-kindergarten public school students.
- 17 Monday Rosh Hashanah (schools closed)
- 18 Tuesday
- 26 Wednesday Yom Kippur (schools closed)

October 2012

- 8 Monday Columbus Day Observed (schools closed)
- 17 Wednesday Pre-kindergarten Non-Attendance Day

November 2012

- 6 Tuesday Election Day. Students will not be in attendance.
- 12 Monday Veterans Day observed (schools closed)
- 22 Thursday Thanksgiving Recess (schools closed)
- 23 Friday

December 2012

- 24 Monday Winter Recess begins (including Christmas and New Year's Day)

January 2013

- 2 Wednesday Students return
- 21 Monday Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (schools closed)

February 2013

- 18 Monday through 22 Friday Midwinter Recess (including Washington's Birthday and Lincoln's Birthday (DOE observed)) (schools closed)

March 2013

- 25 Monday through 2 Tuesday Spring Recess (including Good Friday, Easter and Passover) (schools closed)

April 2013

- 3 Wednesday Students return to school

May 2013

- 27 Monday Memorial Day Observed (schools closed)

June 2013

- 6 Thursday Chancellor's Conference Day. Students in all five boroughs will not be in attendance.
- 21 Friday In non-District 75 high schools having to administer Regents Exams from June 12 through June 20, students will not be in attendance.
- 26 Wednesday LAST DAY FOR ALL STUDENTS (all students report)



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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Teaching your kids gratitude & empathy

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I'm becoming increasingly frustrated with how my kids seem entitled. They keep wanting more and more and my husband and I don't know what to do to kick this attitude of entitlement. Not only do they seem ungrateful, but they also seem to lack empathy toward each other. Can you give some ideas on how parents can teach kids these two important qualities?

on all that is positive in his life. Research tells us that people who have gratitude benefit from personal happiness, optimism, lack of stress, and tend to be more satisfied with their lives. They take better care of themselves by doing things such as eating well and exercising and are professionally better strategic thinkers (Emmons and McCullough).

Empathy (which is other-centered) is when a person tries to see life through the lens of another and puts himself in another person's shoes. Empathy is a cornerstone of EQ and people who are empathetic benefit from having the essential skill necessary for healthy relationships and an increased desire to help and share. They also lack of aggressive and violent behavior (Universities of Missouri, Toronto, Harvard and Illinois).

These two separate skills complement each other, since, when people are grateful they tend to want to help others. And when people are empathetic toward others it reminds them of all that they can be grateful for in their own lives.

Model It

The best way for kids to learn these skills is for parents to model it for them. Just like kids can pick up languages more easily at a young age, the sooner they can experience and observe gratefulness and empathy from their parents, the sooner they start learning it.

Teach It

There are many ways to teach these skills, but let me highlight eight small steps to get you started.

To teach gratitude:

- Get yourself and your kids to keep a gratitude journal (recording every day the small and big things you are grateful for). I've had clients as young as 8 do this, in addition to my adult clients. It's a very easy step to help train your brain to focus on the simple and positive things in your life.

- After you have modeled saying

"thank you" to your kids, teach them that you also expect a thank you after meals or drives to schools.

- Have your kids make and give thank you cards after they have received gifts. (For example, in my home, after our twins' 5th birthday party, we had them make individual thank you cards for all their friends. Although this took more than five hours, it was well worth it!)

To teach empathy:

- When your kids seem upset, ask them the question, "How are you feeling?"

- If they say nothing or "I don't know," try my technique called "Give A Menu," in which you provide options. For example, you can say, "Are you feeling angry, upset, or frustrated?" By providing some options (like a drop down menu), you can help your kids to be more effective at articulating how they feel.

- After they have stated the emotion, empathize with that emotion by saying something like, "I can understand why you are angry — I would be, too."

- Allow them to vent about the situation and be careful NOT to dive into solution mode too quickly. Kids need to experience empathy from us before they are able to see it from the other person's lens. And if we start providing the fix-it plan, kids will zone out and have a difficult time seeing it from another person's perspective.

- After they have finished venting, and you have empathized with how they feel, only then should you ask them how they think the other person felt in the situation. If they have a difficult time thinking about this, you could ask them, "Imagine that the roles were reversed. How do you think you would feel in his shoes?"

Remember that learning these skills is a life-long process (not a quick fix), so be patient with yourself and your kids as they learn them!

Do you have a question for Dr. Karyn? She would love to hear from you! E-mail her at karyn@drkaryn.com.



Dear Parent,

Great question! In fact, when I speak across the country at various parenting conferences, one of the most common questions parents ask me is exactly what you are asking — how can parents teach gratitude and empathy to their kids? These two characteristics are not just a good parenting idea, but research also tells us that these skills (which are components of EQ, aka "Emotional Intelligence") are some of the greatest predictors for how successful a child will be in the 21st century. So how can parents teach these essential skills (which are 100 percent learned)? Here are three tips:

Understand It

Gratitude (which is self-focused) is when a person chooses to focus

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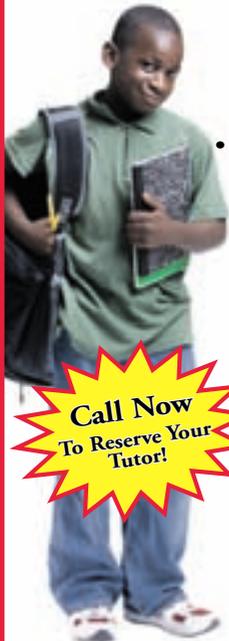
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Fall Activity

GUIDE

ACTIVITY / AFTER-SCHOOL / PLUS

Beansprouts After-School Program

453 Sixth Avenue
718-965-8573 or www.beansproutsnurseryschool.com

Is a Park Slope tradition since 1980, providing a warm, supportive, child-centered pre-school, where children play and grow together. They offer part-time nursery school for children 2-5 years. Their specially selected staff provides a caring environment that does wonders in helping children grow.

They also offer an Early Childhood After-School program for grades Pre-K - 3rd. Pickup is offered for after school at various local locations.

Activities include swimming, arts & crafts, sports, cooking, music, movement and a large outdoor play space.

CBE KIDS After-School Center

8th Avenue and Garfield Place,
718-768-3814 extension 210 or www.congregationbethelohim.org

Offers a variety of instructional classes and recreational activities, allowing each child to develop at his or her own pace. Supervised by a highly qualified staff, the program operates on a trimester basis and caters to children in grades K-6. Pick-up from area schools is available; call for details. Swimming is on-site in a spacious heated pool. Children in kindergarten - sixth grade can sign up for a different course each day of attendance: examples are instructional swim, gymnastics, art, cooking, theater, video, dance, music, sewing and computers.

DJ Kids After-School Program

In 3 locations, Canarsie, Flatbush & East New York
718-257-0547 or www.djsafterschool.com
Monday-Friday 2:00pm - 7:00pm - Vouchers accepted

The mission of DJ School Age Program Inc., is to provide our school children with a safe and supervised environment in which to further enrich and educate them. It is of the utmost importance to the ever caring and professional staff of the program to cater to your child's every need, as we work on furthering your child's development and improving their weaknesses and confidence in the school program. In our program each child is given individual attention, so as to discover

where the child needs improvement and practice, while boosting their self esteem and confidence in each area of practice. Children are taught to work and play together while respecting the golden rule that there is a time to work and a time to play.

Campus After-School Program

2901 Campus Road
718-421-7575

We pick up from most local public and private schools and can assist you with transportation if your child's school is outside of our area. All children arrive at our facility promptly after their school dismisses. Our program begins with a light snack and afterwards every child immediately begins his/her homework. Children work in groups divided by grade that are assisted by one or two counselors. Our staff takes the time to go over the material and will ensure that all children come home with their homework completed accurately and are able to demonstrate an understanding of the subject. If necessary children are tutored in subjects that they demonstrate a weakness in.

All children in testing grades receive weekly instruction to help them prepare for the State ELA and Mathematics Exams.

After homework is completed all children participate in a wide array of extracurricular activities. On a rotating basis all children will be exposed to physical education, karate, arts and crafts, dance, music, language studies and much more.

We know that parents have to work late and we offer pick up either at 6:00 pm or 7:00 pm.

PAC KIDS- After School and Enrichment Programs

1500 Paerdegat Avenue North,
718-531-1111 or www.pacplex.com

We offer an after school program in which a staff member will pick-up your child after school and safely bring your child to the center. They will enjoy healthy snacks and help with their homework and then...the fun begins. Licensed teachers supervise this program. A.C.D., Begin, and Union vouchers are welcome. The PAC KIDS Program offers lessons that are educational, recreational and help your child excel in their development while enhancing confidence. Activities available include gymnastics, swimming, soccer, basketball plus teen & pre-teen fitness.

Continued on page 26

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Community arts education for all ages.

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"Acting Out! led to a huge turning point in my daughters life. She never performed or sang and was labeled 'shy' and 'an observer'. Thanks to the amazing encouragement from the staff at Acting Out! My daughter shed those labels and added a new one - "STAR!" - Happy Mother - Stephanie Karp

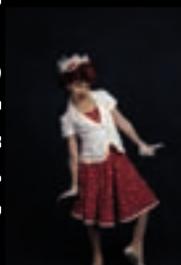
"Acting Out! is such a jewel. When you come in here you just know you're in a safe & creative place. It is like Gold. What a pleasure for us to teach The Wicked workshop here! We will come back anytime!" Broadway Stars - Geoff and Chelsea Packard - Wicked, Phantom, Rock Of Ages.

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"My son Derek is heading to Broadway (Simba in The Lion King) thanks to Ms. Roberta and her talented staff. My son could not have accomplished his goal if it wasn't for Acting Out! If your child's desire is to sing or act, Acting Out! will make it happen."
Frederica Johnson



REGISTER NOW

THE Brooklyn DANCE Center I

We are now serving the community for over 28 years

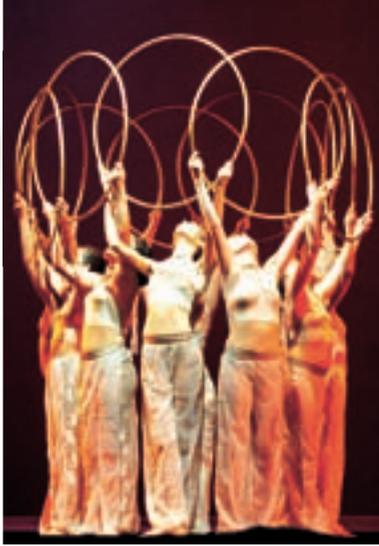
- Ballet • Pointe • Tap • Jazz • Hip Hop • Lyrical
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- Bellydance • Flamenco • Floor Barre • Pilates



Registration Dates
August 23rd through 25th and
September 5th through 8th
from 2 to 7 p.m.

Learn from only the highest quality dance teachers, specializing in all ages from beginner thru professional level.

The Brooklyn Dance Center I
2106 West 6th Street



Contact Us At
718-996-0319 • www.TheBrooklynDanceCenter.com

Fall Activity GUIDE

Continued from page 24

DANCE

April's Dance-N-Feet

4626 Flatlands Avenue; (Bet. Schenectady Ave. & E. 46th St.) 718-692-4809

9411 Avenue L (Bet E. 94th & 95th Sts.) 718-272-1813

1866 Flatbush Avenue (Bet. Ave. K & E 38th St.) 718-258-2340

April's Dance-N-Feet is celebrating its 19th year, offering classes in tap, ballet, jazz, hip-hop, pointe, lyrical, gymnastics, Praise Dance, African, Caribbean dance, karate, Adult and boys classes, for beginners to advanced students. Adult classes are available as well. Private lessons or leveled classes are given for ages 2 - adult for reasonable prices. Their senior tap company and boys' troupe have performed with tap legends. We have 4 platinum award winning hip-hop competition teams ages 3-18: The Gems, Diamonds, Divas and Crystals. They have also danced in other Manhattan professional theater venues. The school's students have been accepted to LaGuardia High School (School of Performing Arts), Alvin Ailey School, and have performed in commercials.

The Brooklyn Dance Centers

6720 20th Ave. 718 256 5320

9110 5th Ave. 718 333 5767

www.thebrooklyndancecenters.com

or e-mail- brooklyndance@aol.com

The Brooklyn Dance Centers has been bringing professional dance training to the community for over 28 years. They were recently voted "The Best Dance Studio In The Boro" for 2012. Classes are offered for all ages, children through adult and all levels, beginner through advanced. Their curriculum includes Ballet, Pointe, Modern, Contemporary, Tap, Hip Hop, Acrobatic, Break Dancing, Zumba, Belly Dance and Social Dance. A competitive, pre-professional program for the serious minded dancer is also available. Their friendly staff can help you find the classes you are looking for. Please call or email for further information.

Brooklyn Dance Center I

2106 West 6th Street www.thebrooklyndancecenter.com

718-996-0319 or email bd1@thebrooklyndancecenter.com

We are now serving the community for over 28 years. These schools for professional dance offer training for all ages and levels, beginner through advanced. Classes are available in

Ballet, Pointe, Jazz, Modern, Hip-Hop, Tap, Lyrical, Modern, Contemporary, Acrobatics, Breakdance, Bellydance, Flamenco, Floor Barre, Pilates, Salsa, Ballroom, Hustle and yoga. Boys' only classes are also offered. Competition classes are by audition only. Please call for their registration dates and for more information.

The Center for Arts and Culture - Youth Arts Academy at Restoration Plaza

247 Herkimer Street
718-636-6969 or www.restorationplaza.org

Restoration's Center for Arts and Culture - Youth Arts Academy (YAA) offers quality instruction to youth ages 3 to 18 in dance, theater, and African drumming. Over the course of two semesters, classes are offered at the Academy after school and all day on Saturdays. Through its Arts-In-Action program, YAA also provides arts instruction and professional development workshops in theater, dance, and music to an average of 500 to 1000 students attending Brooklyn-based public schools. For students interested in pursuing dance professionally, YAA offers an intense, multi-genre curriculum in dance. We also offer multi-disciplinary packages consisting of three classes for comprehensive arts instruction. For those already proficient in dance performance, Restoration has a youth dance company who serves as the dance ambassadors for the Center for Arts and Culture's Youth Arts Academy. Many of YAA's students are accepted into the most coveted performing arts schools in New York City. Be a part of the legacy.

Creative Arts Studio

310 Atlantic Avenue; 718-797-5600

119 Union Street in Carroll Gardens;

718-243-0658

www.creativeartsstudio.com

Elite Family Fitness

111 Union St.

718-596-0006 or www.elitetrainingandfitness.com

Be creative, be fit, & be healthy! Creative Arts Studio (performing arts studio in Boerum Hill) (CAS) Director, Sherri Hellman & David Cascia, Director of Elite Family Fitness are coordinating a unique environment rich with classes and activities your whole family can enjoy. CAS families will have access to Elite Family Fitness, the exercise & fitness facility next door with its wide and diverse range of classes and work-

Continued on page 28



BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE
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bax.org/youth/classes
Financial Aid Available • Classes start September 10, 2012



dance, theater & tumbling classes for young artists — tots to teens

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Saturday, September 8

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Classes for Everyone from Pre-Schoolers to Teens and Adults

Ballet - Pointe - Tap - Jazz - Lyrical - Contemporary - Hip Hop - Theatre Dance
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Special Workshop for our upcoming production of The Nutcracker
Scholarship Program for Talented Students Training for a Career in Dance
Award Winning Competition Teams (by audition only)

Registration Dates

Third Avenue Studio

7110 Third Avenue - 718.680.0944

Saturday, September 1st
12:00 Noon - 4:00 P.M.

Tuesday, September 4th through
Friday, September 7th
3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Saturday, September 8th
12:00 Noon - 4:00 P.M.

Classes begin
Monday, September 10th

Fifth Avenue Studio

5312 Fifth Avenue - 718.492.2279

Tuesday, September 4th through
Friday, September 7th
3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Saturday, September 8th
12:00 Noon - 4:00 P.M.

Monday, September 10th and
Tuesday, September 11th
3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.

Classes begin Wed., September 12th

www.vspac.com

These dancers are students at the
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Now accepting Pre-K for individual classes & the after school center

For more information, please call:
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or visit us online at
www.congregationbethelohim.org



274 GARFIELD PLACE, PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN

Fall Activity

GUIDE

Continued from page 26

shops. Each member of your family will be able to find, pursue, and participate in the arts, as well as a wide range of instructive activities in health & fitness, exercise, weight management and more! For more information, check out our websites.

Cumbe: Center for African and Diaspora Dance

558 Fulton Street, 2nd Floor, info@cumbdance.com

Like us at: [facebook.com/cumbbrooklyn](https://www.facebook.com/cumbbrooklyn) Follow us at: @[cumbdance](https://www.instagram.com/cumbdance)

718-935-9700 www.cumbdance.com

MOVE. SING. DRUM. DANCE!

Register now for Fall Children's Classes Ages 5-18.

Cumbe is a new dance studio in the BAM Cultural District, and we are proud to offer fun and engaging classes with teachers who are also master performers on the world stage. Fall Classes include: Salsa Dance Mix, Brazilian Percussion, West African Dance & Drum, Hip Hop, Stepping, Capoeira, African to Hip Hop, and more. You can try all of our classes during "Pay What You Wish" Week from September 10-16! Come dance and drum to exhilarating rhythms from West Africa, Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, the U.S., and more. We have classes for adults also, and host amazing birthday parties. Contact us to plan a party your child won't forget.

Cynthia King Dance Studio

1256 Prospect Avenue
718-437-0101 or www.cynthiakindance.com

Provides a fertile training ground for students of all ages and abilities, embracing traditional to emerging styles. Ballet, Hip Hop, Jazz, B-Boy/Break Dance, Tap, Modern Dance, and Salsa are taught by experienced professional dancers.

The dance seasons culminate with original, unique student concerts with additional performance opportunities throughout the year. The spacious and lively studio has grown to include a working Junior Dance Company and special residencies with master teachers and choreographers.

Visit the website for a schedule of classes, faculty bios, registration information, listings of special events and auditions.

Dancewave

45 Fourth Avenue at Dean Street

Downtown Brooklyn B, D, Q, N, M, R, W, 2, 3, 4, 5 to Atlantic/Pacific Street
718 522-4696 or fax 718-522-4696 or www.dancewave.org

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. Since 1995, Dancewave has offered education programs for young people with a rare combination of artistic integrity, educational rigor, nurturing support and access for all students. Dancewave programs include: Dance Training (The School at Dancewave, Summer Dance Intensive); Pre-Professional Companies (Dancewave Company, Dancewave Company II, Young Movers Ensemble); Arts In Education (D-Wave in Motion, Public Schools Master Class Tour); and Community Performance (Kids Cafe Festival, Spring Celebration). The School at Dancewave offers dance classes for ALL AGES at the Dancewave Center and locations throughout Park Slope. Classes include Creative Movement, Ballet, Modern, Jazz, African, Hip Hop, Musical Theater and more!

Joffrey Ballet School

434 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd fl, NYC

212-254-8520 or www.joffreyballetschool.com

The Joffrey Ballet School is the home of Baby Ballerinas, Hip-Hoppin' Street Jazz, Demi Soloists, and so much more. The world-renowned program is a world-renowned good time for you and your child. We have 60 years of excellence to share with your family. The dance classes begin at the age of two, with live music and performances that will create memories to last a life-time. Our themed-based birthday parties are fantastic with cakes by the "Cake Boss," and sprinkles of joy from the school faculty. Come grow with us.

Vicky Simegiatos Performing Arts Center

7110-12 Third Avenue
718-680-0944 (weekdays after 5:00 p.m. - all day Saturdays) or www.vspac.com

The Vicky Simegiatos Performing Arts Center, in business for 40 years, offers the finest education in all styles of dance, music and musical theatre for boys and girls of all ages, from pre-school to adult. With two Brooklyn locations, the VSPAC boasts a faculty of top flight professionals. Their students have been accepted to elite

Continued on page 30

Creative Arts STUDIO

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aerobic/functional exercise

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(fit play and tae kwon do)



www.elitetrainingandfitness.com
111 Union Street (off Columbia)
Carroll Gardens/Brooklyn

Call for info:
718-596-0006



Fall Activity

GUIDE

Continued from page 28

schools and have gone on to enjoy successful careers. VSPAC's national award winning competition teams have performed at the Joyce Theatre, Alvin Ailey Theatre and Madison Square Garden. VSPAC will be offering scholarship workshops for young students who want to dance in our company's presentation of The Nutcracker, a full length ballet."

LEARNING / TUTORING CENTERS

Club Z! In-Home Tutoring
718-483-8506 or www.clubztutoring.com.

Club Z! of Brooklyn provides highly individualized, one-on-one instruction in all subjects, for students of all ages. Our tutors are experienced, degreed professionals and/or state certified instructors, with impeccable credentials and a heartfelt enthusiasm for teaching. We use our students' school curricula and guarantee increased confidence in the classroom, higher grades, stronger study skills, and enhanced motivation. We offer tutoring at home or other convenient locations, flexible scheduling, affordable rates and excellent support for students of all abilities. We serve all Brooklyn neighborhoods. Contact us at 718-483-8506 or by visiting www.clubz.com/Brooklyn.

Dynamic Learning Center for Tomorrow's Leaders After-School Enrichment Program K-5

121 Gravesend Neck Rd
718-998-6481 or www.DynamicLearningCenter.org or www.DLCTL.org

Our focus and philosophy is to build The Leaders of Tomorrow. Our emphasis is building: critical thinking, problem solving, research, communication, socialization skills • we encourage the child's vision and empower them with knowledge • build moral character based on biblical principles (Ex 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother ...") • we assist with the homework • we provide strong academic program through the renowned fun computer based Renzulli Learning System • our healthy learning environment includes academic integrated sports, ETIQUETTE, FRENCH, MUSIC, and CHESS lesson • we reward them when they take the initiative and motivate them • our children recite 'Leaders are made, not born' • we are making

leaders right now!

Fastrackkids

Bay Ridge/Dyker Heights 718-748-3000

Brooklyn/Sheepshead Bay 718-891-5437

Williamsburg 347-987-4450 or www.fastrackkids.com

Come See How FasTrackKids is "Learning, Cleverly Disguised as Fun!"

Welcome to FasTrackKids! We offer early childhood education programs for age groups that range from 6 months to 8 years old. These programs are designed to help improve creativity, critical thinking and communication skills while preparing your children for school and life.

Independent research by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) has shown that a significant number of three to six year old children enrolled in FasTrackKids improved their vocabulary and social skills at a rate 100% to 150% times faster than their peers not enrolled in the program. We at FasTrackKids know that the most important learning years are during early childhood, where the ability to learn and grow knows no boundaries.

The best way to find out if FasTrackKids is the right program for your child is to sign up for a Free Discovery Class.

Remember...there is a small "window of opportunity" for your child to make critical brain connections for future learning. Don't wait for this window to close on them!

Thank you for visiting us! If you have any questions, please call or see our website.

Mathnasium of Brooklyn

Two convenient locations
392 Atlantic Ave., in Brooklyn Heights; 718-858-MATH.

6806 20th Ave., in Bensonhurst; 347-7-MATH-11.

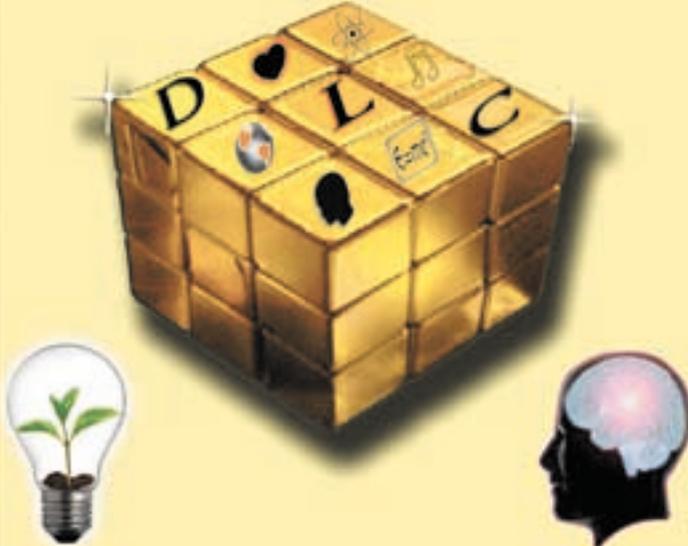
www.mathnasium.com/bensonhurst or www.mathnasium.com/brooklynheights

After-school learning centers, where we make MATH make SENSE to kids. We support children in first through 12th grade, including algebra, geometry, trigonometry and college calculus. Our program helps with S.A.T.'s, G.E.D.'s and Regents preparation. We specialize in Math and provide assistance ONLY in mathematics. We are the Math EXPERTS.

We provide excellent content, at a great value with proven results. We offer individual instruction in a group setting. We provide an in-depth assessment to gauge students' gaps

Continued on page 32

DYNAMIC LEARNING CENTER
FOR TOMORROW'S LEADERS



ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



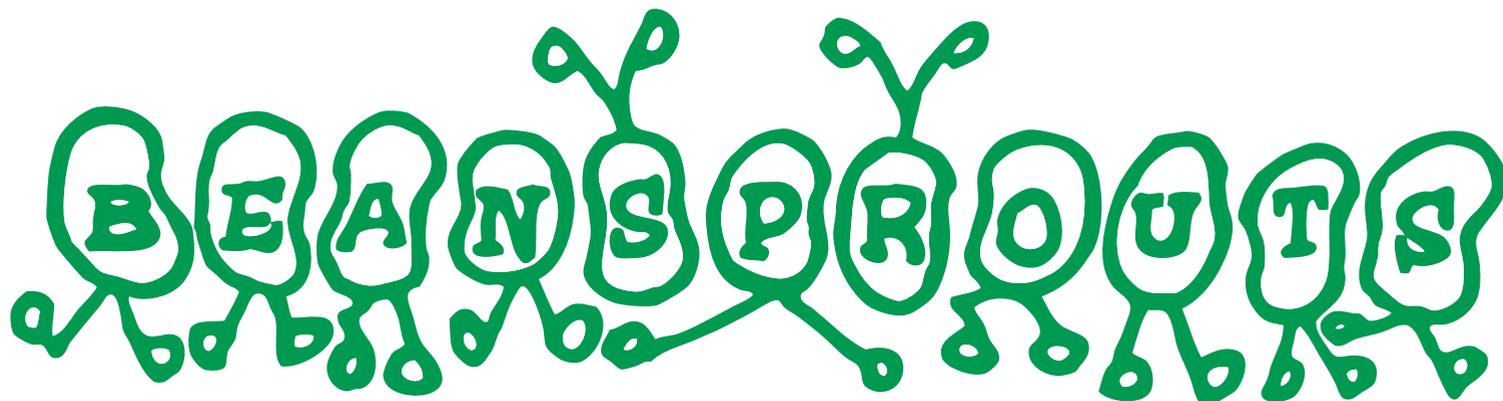
MATH - SCIENCE
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FUN COMPUTERS



INTEGRATED SPORTS

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www.beansproutsnurseryschool.com

DANCEWAVE

Dance with us this Fall!



Photo by Elizabeth Rosetty

45 Fourth Ave at Dean St, Brooklyn, NY • info@dancewave.org • (718) 522-4696
www.dancewave.org • [f](#) [t](#)

Classes for Babies, Toddlers, Kids,
Teens and Adults

Ballet, Modern, Hip Hop, Pre-Pointe,
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Fall Semester Classes Start September 10

OPEN HOUSES

Tadpole Dancers Open House (18mos-36 mos) – Fri, Sept 7, 10am-12pm
Free Trial Classes

Kids & Teens Open Houses – Sat. Sept 8 & Sun. Sept 9
\$5 Trial Classes

Schedule of Open Houses Available Online at www.dancewave.org
Reservations Required. Email: RSVP@dancewave.org

DANCEWAVE COMPANY AUDITIONS

Work with renowned choreographers and perform at
professional venues across New York City!
Reservations required. Email: RSVP@dancewave.org

Dancewave Company I, II & III
Sat Aug 25, 1pm • Wed Aug 29, 5pm • Wed Sept 5, 5pm
13 yrs & up, 2+ yrs dance experience required

Young Movers Ensemble Tues, Sept 11, 5pm
10-13 yrs, 1+ yrs dance experience required

Young Performers Ballet Ensemble Thur, Sept 13, 5pm
10-13 yrs, no experience required

Amazing Creatures Company Sat Sept 8, 1pm
7-9 yrs, some experience required

AUDITION FOR A SCHOLARSHIP! Sat, Sept 8, 11am
rsvp@dancewave.org to secure your audition spot

SAVE \$10 WITH THIS AD!

In person, by phone, or online with promo code: BKFall

Fall Activity

GUIDE

Continued from page 30

of knowledge, and we concentrate on those areas. We also help students with school work and homework, which they are encouraged to bring with them.

Similar to a gymnasium designed to strengthen the body, Mathnasium is designed to build up the Math mind. We provide a no-pressure, low-stress environment, and we strive to take the fear out of Math. No red pens or X's here! We look to reinforce students' confidence and self-esteem, and make Math fun.

We have a rewards program, where students earn points as they complete sections of work which they can later redeem for prizes. We also have a game area, where students can play Math-related games with other students and staff, if they have time left over from their session.

MUSIC

Brooklyn Conservatory of Music

58 7TH Avenue Park Slope
718-622-3300 or www.brooklynconservatoryofmusic.com

Through its Classical, Jazz and Suzuki divisions the Brooklyn Conservatory offers classes, ensembles and choral opportunities, individual instrumental and vocal lessons to students from 18 months to adults. The Conservatory provides one of the country's leading programs for children through its unique Music Adventures division and offers affordable and enjoyable concerts for kids through its highly acclaimed Music For Families concert series. The conservatory also presents music classes to those with special needs through its Music Therapy Division and operates a strong outreach program through our ever expanding Music Partners division which has become essential to the educational fabric of New York City. Each year the Conservatory presents six incredible, affordable concert series. These diverse series are: Music for Families Jazz at the Conservatory, New Music, Music NOW!, Brooklyn Conservatory Community Orchestra and the Brooklyn Conservatory Chorale. Our school campus is nestled in a completely restored five-story Victorian Gothic mansion in the heart of historic Park Slope, Brooklyn and attracts a student body that is drawn from the New York metropolitan area, the United States, and 27 foreign countries, reflecting the vibrant cultural diversity that is the essence of New York.

The Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy

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

The Noel Pointer Foundation Program

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

We offer extracurricular activities for after school programs in violin, viola, cello, piano and theory. Our daily program runs Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. In addition, we offer an extended program for working parents. The Noel Pointer School of Music is a string music program to teach violin, cello, viola and bass to elementary, middle and upper school students. The school is offering this valuable training to the youth of the city to encourage and nurture creativity and musical literacy in children who might otherwise not have the opportunity or exposure. The Noel Pointer School of Music is a feast of quality musical training. Learning to play a string instrument is a wonderful activity that opens up a whole new world for children. Join us this fall for a world of musical fun.

The Patricia F Robinson Music Studio

590 Madison Street in Bedford-Stuyvesant
917-214-7297

Patricia Robinson is the 3rd of 4 generations of music teachers to run this historic program that was founded in 1930.

Offering the same personal attention for which it has become famous over the generations. The studio is set on 3 floors in a historic brownstone in a homelike environment.

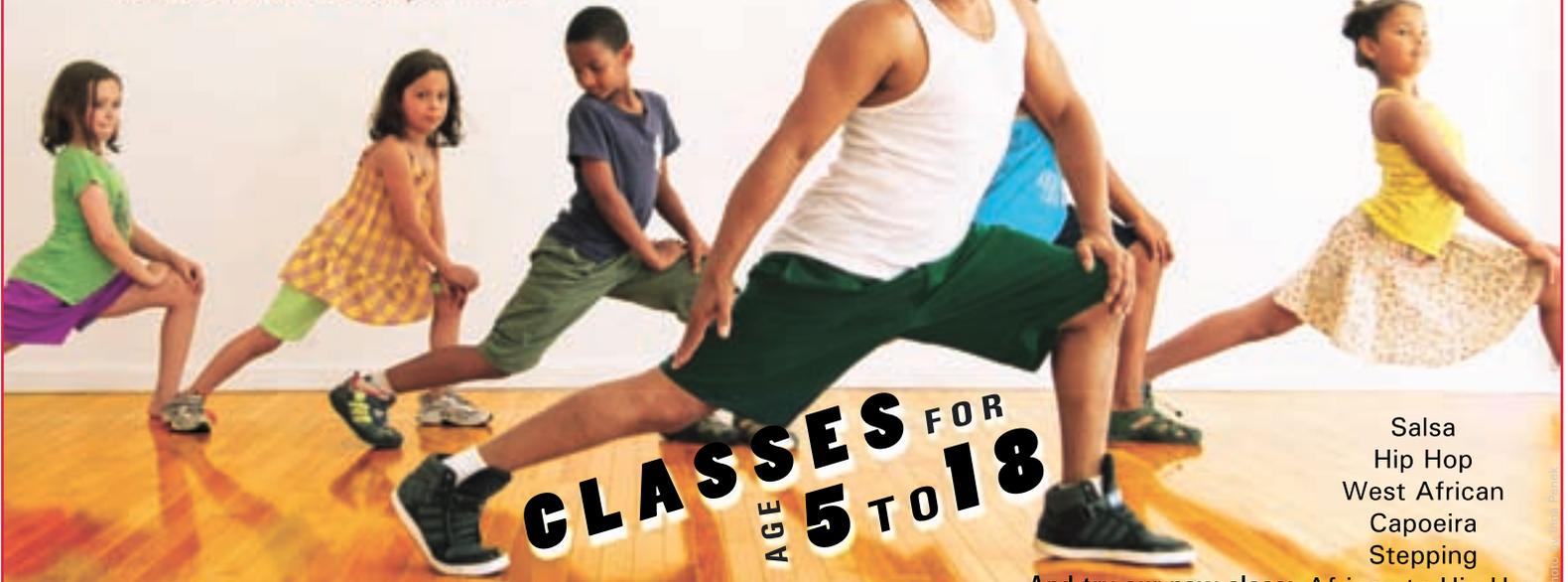
The studio has expanded to include

Continued on page 34



Center for African and Diaspora Dance

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September 10-16!



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AGE 5 TO 18

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And try our new class: African to Hip Hop

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Special 10% Discount Applied to All Tuition Paid in Full by September 29th, 2012

247 Herkimer Street (Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration)
www.npsom.org
email at: npf.nyc@gmail.com
718-230-4825

Fall Activity

GUIDE

Continued from page 32

violin (private and group), modeling/ social graces, photography and an exciting toddler program where parents and children enjoy gaining musical skills through song and dance for children 3 ½ and up

PERFORMING ARTS

Acting Out

718-236-6494 or www.actingoutonline.com

Why choose ACTING OUT? - Besides their fun and friendly atmosphere, honest evaluations, successful alumni, industry reputation and dynamic style, they just simply get results!!!

Acting Out offers an extensive performing arts curriculum, from kindergarten to college. Courses include all levels of acting, musical theatre, improvisation, film & television, along with private lessons for singing, piano and audition preparation.

Acting Out prides itself on its fantastic teachers who are all working actors/ musicians that offer your child the opportunity to learn from professionals. Their instructors can be seen on Broadway, regional theatre, television, radio and film. They are members of the Actors Equity Association, the Screen Actors Guild and AFTRA, and hold Bachelor and/or Master Degrees in the performing arts.

Most importantly, they have instructors who dedicate themselves to provide your child with an environment in which they feel safe in expressing the full range of emotions required in developing their performing arts skills. With two Brooklyn based studios Acting Out says "Come on down and take a class, visit our website or feel free to call, we love to answer questions!"

BAX, /Brooklyn Arts Exchange

421 5th Avenue
718-832-0018 or www.bax.org

Which is located in the heart of Park Slope, has been recognized for excellence in arts education since 1991 BAX offers well-graded classes for tots to teens in DANCE including Creative Movement and a full range of levels in Modern/Contemporary Dance. The THEATER program includes Creative Dramatics, Acting Technique, and Improvisation... PLUS new class offerings, including Ballet, Tumbling, Teen Funk Fusion, Physical Comedy and more.

Dimensions on Stage

7603 3rd Avenue
718-238-0668 or www.dimensionsonstage.com

Dimensions On Stage, Brooklyn Center for Theatre and Performance, is a performance studio dedicated to acting, singing, voice, movement, on-camera work and all elements of the theatrical experience. If your dream is to be a star, or simply to come out of your shell, everyone shines at Dimensions On Stage! For 31 years, Dimensions in Dance has been Brooklyn's premiere dancing school offering the finest in dance training. We are now taking that same attention to quality and skill into a new dimension with Dimensions On Stage! Dimensions On Stage was created to offer young performers a space to explore, learn, play and cultivate their talents and imagination. We believe that experience in the performing arts builds confidence and self awareness, aids in public speaking and sharpens intuition. Our acting, singing and theatre classes are fun, fully involved experiences taught by successful actors, singers and trained professionals.

Joe's Music & Dance Center

114-04 Farmers Blvd 718-454-3036
545 Brooklyn Avenue - 718-774-0700
or www.joesmusiccenter.com

A large diversity of instruments is taught from piano, violin, viola, cello, guitar, bass guitar, drums, saxophone, clarinet, flute, trumpet, trombone, voice, etc. to the less common instruments such as bassoon and tuba. Students can begin with classical, but the Academy also has many students that study pop, jazz, contemporary music or gospel. Students have the opportunity to pursue NYSSMA evaluations and prepare for specialized high school auditions. There are also competitive music opportunities.

Preparatory Center For The Performing Arts at Brooklyn College

234 Roosevelt Hall 2900 Bedford Ave.
718-951-4111 or www.bcprepcenter.org

Is an exciting, nurturing environment where children can develop a life-long love for music, theater and dance and gain skills that will give them confidence. Faculty are skilled in teaching beginning to advanced students. Music classes include private instruction, musicianship, and ensembles as well as Suzuki programs in Violin, Cello and Flute. Traditional Theater, Musical Theater, Ballet, Tap and other Dance classes are offered for children 5 and up. Beginning music, theater, and dance classes for very young children are available during the school year.

Continued on page 36

Discounts For Siblings & 2nd Program

REGISTER ON
Sept. 5, Sept. 6, Sept. 7, 6-9 pm.
Ongoing Registration After Sept. 10th

Weekend & Sunday Classes Available

GIVE YOUR CHILD THE BEST

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<p>NOVA GYMNASTICS CENTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational Classes For Boys & Girls • Team Programs • Artistic & Rhythmic Gymnastics • Tumbling & Cheerleading Classes 	<p>NOVA MARTIAL ARTS ACADEMY</p> <p>Karate, Kung-Fu, Grappling & Ju-Jitsu For Children & Adults</p> <p>Teaches Self-Defense And Discipline</p>
<p>NOVA DANCE ACADEMY</p> <p>Basic Through Advanced Techniques</p> <p>Ballet, Jazz & Ballroom</p>	<p>OUTSTANDING CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAY PARTIES</p> <p>AT A GREAT PRICE!</p>

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On Going Registration After Sept. 10th

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“with the proper instruction and reinforcement, most young children can perform at the level we now call gifted.”

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-Founder of FastrackKids Curriculum, FastrackKids International, Ltd.

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Step 1.

Supplement your child’s regular preschool education with FastrackKids Gifted & Talented development program, in just 2 hours per week.

Step 2.

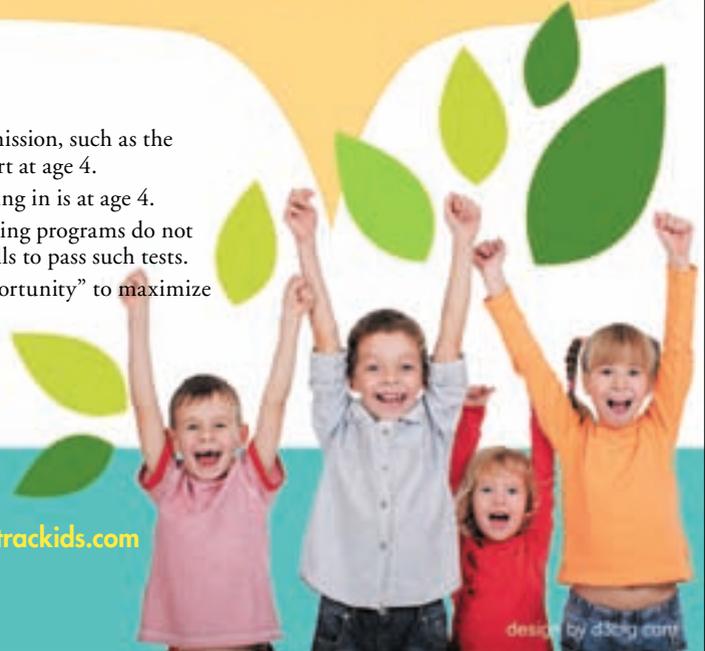
Further emphasize critical thinking skills with our Enopi Math & Critical Thinking program.

Step 3.

Enroll in our NYC ERB & OLSAT/NNAT@2 prep class or private one-on-one sessions

Facts:

- Gifted & Talented tests for admission, such as the ERB & OLSAT/NNAT@2, start at age 4.
- Your child’s best chance of getting in is at age 4.
- Most preschools and early learning programs do not teach children the necessary skills to pass such tests.
- There is a vital “window of opportunity” to maximize your child’s potential.



BROOKLYN
 Sheepshead Bay
 (1605 Voorhies)
 718.891.5437
 Park Slope
 (150 4th Ave.)
 718.260.8100

Williamsburg
 (60 Broadway)
 347.987.4450
 Bay Ridge/Dyker Heights
 (7612 13th Ave.)
 718.748.3000

STATEN ISLAND
 Grasmere
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Open auditions are being held now for BYCA's Fall 2012 season!

Auditioning girls ages 9 to 16, and boys 9 to 21
 Voice Training / Musicianship / World-Class Performances
 Visit BrooklynYouthChorus.org for more information.



Brooklyn Youth Chorus Academy 718-243-9447 ext. 221
 info@brooklynyouthchorus.org 179 Pacific St., Brooklyn, NY 11201
 Artistic Director DIANNE BERKUN

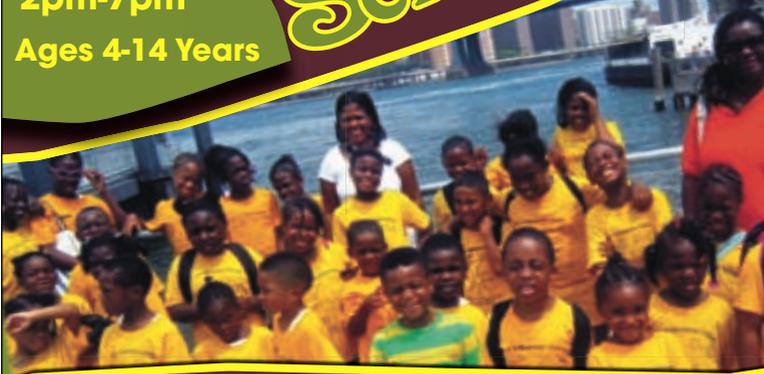
This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

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Ages 4-14 Years

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 Brooklyn, NY 11236 • 718.257.0547
www.djsafterschool.com

Fall Activity

GUIDE

Continued from page 34

StageCoach Theatre Arts Schools

718-852-3208 or www.stagecoachschools.com

StageCoach is the world's largest part-time performing arts school. 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 offers performances each term and workshops with Broadway performers. Reasonable rates and sibling discounts. StageCoach training is training for life, for more information please call Beth on 718-852-3208

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Bay Ridge Jewish Center Hebrew School Program

718-836-3103 or email office@bayridgejewishcenter.org

Children meet once a week for an after school program that fosters curiosity, friendships and a love for Judaism. Multi-sensory hands-on activities engage younger children in learning the building blocks of Hebrew language, Torah stories and Jewish holidays. Older children focus on Jewish values, culture, and traditions. As one student said, "This can't be called Hebrew School, it's too much fun to be school". Parents are welcome to meet with Rabbi Dina Rosenberg to plan for their children's Jewish education, including Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation.

SCIENCE

The Cosmic Cove

300 Atlantic Avenue,
 718-344-4631 or www.carmelothesciencefellow.com

Invites you to discover his science parties, created at his unique and memorable Cosmic Cove. Here, children are transformed into scientists: they touch, hold, and most importantly take part in all of the experiments. They participate in hands-on activities that are fun, exciting, and, most importantly, educational.

Experiments with Carmelo may include making silly putty, glow in the dark slime, conducting a diaper powder study, making fake snow, etc. They can even work with animals like the weird moving mega mealworms... yuck! You can even take home your experiments...even the live ones.

SPORTS

Brooklyn Fencing Center

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

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

Get in touch with your inner swash-buckler at Brooklyn Fencing this winter.

Continued on page 38



WHERE KIDS LOVE LEARNING...
 ABOUT BEING JEWISH!

Bay Ridge Jewish Center Hebrew School Program

- One day-a-week (all age school children)
- Tot Shabbat (toddlers & pre-schoolers)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Prep



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office@bayridgejewishcenter.org

Meet Rabbi Dina Rosenberg to plan your child's Jewish education!



Mathnasium's K-12 Math Enrichment Program



A gymnasium develops the body...
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Catch Up. Keep Up. Get Ahead.

Call for a free assessment!

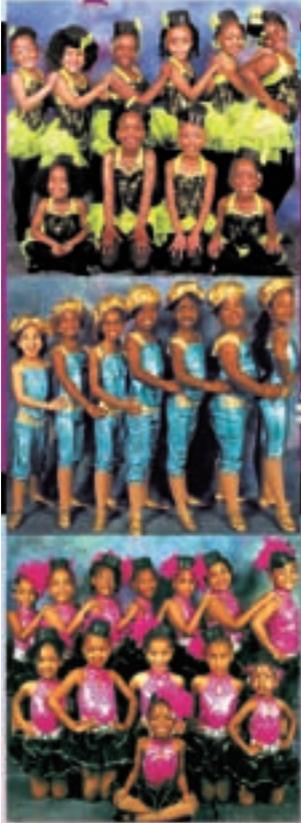
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718-692-4809

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(BET. E. 94TH & 95TH STS.)
718-272-1813

1866 FLATBUSH AVENUE
(BET. AVE. K & E. 38TH ST.)
718-258-2340

Fall Activity

GUIDE

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Elite Fitness Studio

111 Union Street
718-596-0006 or www.elitetrainingandfitness.com

We are devoted to providing an environment that will support you in creating physical and mental wellbeing. Elite Fitness is recognized for our passion and expertise in providing our clients with the knowledge and direction necessary to achieve their individual goals and to improve quality of life for our community.

Our studio was designed to make you the client feel as comfortable as possible. With your needs first we have cultivated an environment that will allow you to experience the benefits of exercise while keeping you motivated and positive. We understand that it is a big step deciding to get started and with that in mind, we have put an amazing staff together to serve you and accommodated all of your needs in a small caring neighborhood studio.

From the many cardiovascular options to a weight loss and well being nutritional program, we will supply the platform for your success.

evening and weekends. Call to schedule your free trial class. Celebrate your child's birthday at The Little Gym. Reserve your birthday bash today!

Nova Athletics

3701 Surf Ave. and at Adelphi Academy in Bay Ridge
86th Street and Ridge Boulevard;
718-996-2229 or www.novaathletics.com

Is a non-profit sports club serving Brooklyn for over 30 years. The school's students have consistently captured countless State and Regional gymnastic championship title. Nova students have competed at venues from Madison Square Garden to those in Europe, Asia and South America. In 2005, their Artistic Gymnastic gymnasts won honors; the Rhythmic Gymnastics program produced championship athletes. At present, Nova boasts the #1 gymnast in the USA. Nova offers classes in Artistic Gymnastics, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Martial Arts and Dance for beginner through advanced, from ages 3 to adult.

VARIED CHILDREN'S CLASSES

Arts East New York

851 Hegeman Avenue
718-676-6006 or www.artseastny.org

ARTS East New York Inc. provides access and affordability to high quality artistic programming for the community we serve. We use the arts as a tool to affect the socio-economic challenges facing our neighborhood. Arts and culture are an essential component of community life and showcasing these works are essential to the strengthening of our environment. The arts are a community asset that offers hope and encouragement to its

Continued on page 40

The Little Gym of Bay Ridge

8681-18th Ave Bensonhurst
718-259-6878 or www.tlgbayridgebensonhurstny.com

A feeling of success is one of the many benefits your child receives at the Little Gym. The Little Gym provides gymnastics-based motor skill development programs for children 4 months to 12 years old. Through sequential skill-building, movement, gymnastics, exercise, music and games, our curriculum builds student's physical, social, emotional and intellectual skills. All classes taught in a fun, safe and nurturing environment. Classes are offered in the morning,

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Kindermusik • Guitar • Vocal Ensembles • Adult Classes • Piano • Voice • Guitar • Violin • Viola
Cello • Bass • Flute • Clarinet • Saxophone • Oboe • French Horn • Trumpet • Trombone • Baritone
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Only \$5 a Class

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Classes to begin October 6, 2012
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Brooklyn College

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234 Roosevelt Hall, 2900 Bedford Avenue
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Over 30 years of offering music, theater, and dance classes for children age 3 and up.



OPEN HOUSE - SEPTEMBER 8

Individual consultations for fall, 2012

Suzuki interviews for violin, cello, and flute study for ages 3-6
Please call to schedule a time

- **MUSIC** - Beginner to advanced instrument and voice lessons, group classes, Suzuki study for very young children
- **DANCE** - classes for age 3 and up, creative movement, ballet, tap, modern dance styles
- **THEATER** - theater games and improvisation, audition prep

Registration is now open for the 2012-2013 school year • Classes begin September 10th

Please call **718-951-4111** for a registration consultation or visit our website at www.bcprepcenter.org for complete course listings

The School for Professional Dance Training



Ballet, Pointe, Tap, Jazz, Contemporary, Modern, Hip Hop, Acrobatics, Breakdancing, Yoga, Zumba, Bellydancing

All Ages - All Levels
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Bay Ridge
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718-333-5767



Fall Activity

GUIDE

Continued from page 38

residents. ARTs East New York offers a variety of cultural events to target and make a powerful impact on the socioeconomic ills that are statistical problems in this community. We showcase the following artistic expressions as vehicles for change: Dance, Music, Film/Video, Fashion, Visual/Fine Arts, Theatre and Poetry.

The Gym Park

**81 Oak Street, Greenpoint
718-349-6627 or www.thegympark.com**

The Gym Park Gymnastics & Play Center hosts awesome gymnastics/activity Birthday Parties at a low price for your infant, toddler or teen. We provide a 2,800 sq ft gymnastics center that is fully equipped and ready to handle a large group of excited partiers. Our play space is new, safe, fun and designed to teach and promote age appropriate physical activity through gymnastics play. Our instructors will guide your children through a 1.5+ hour party that you & your child will never forget. Don't worry about parking, we have ample parking and

are only 3 blocks from the G train. Check out our website for more information about our parties. We look forward to hosting a great birthday party for your child. See you at The Gym Park Gymnastics & Play Center!

The Moxie Spot

**81 Atlantic Avenue
718-923-9710 or www.themoxiespot.com**

The Moxie Spot is a full-service, two-story restaurant with kid's activities at Atlantic Avenue and Hicks Street. Its creative environment makes classes especially fun for kids. Before or after class you can hang out and enjoy the great food, toys, games and art activities that are available throughout the day. Fall classes will be John Carlin's Kid's Music Underground, Jane Z's Kids Cook, & Baby Fingers w Ana. For more information on the schedule and how to sign up, please visit www.themoxiespot.com or call 718-923-9710. Check out our schedule for free activities such as story times, sing along with Lloyd Miller, Dance Around w Nat, Nintendo Wii Night, Saturday family disco, and movie nights.

Register NOW!

AFTER SCHOOL CLASSES

FALL SEMESTER 2012

Brooklyn Heights - Call Beth: 718-852-3208

Ages 4 - 6: Early Stages Performing Arts Classes
Mini musicals each term.
Students learn Drama, Dance and Singing in this fun 90 minute class.
Fridays 3:30pm-5pm & Saturdays 9:30 am-11 am & 11:30 am-1 pm

Ages 6 - 16: Main Stage Performing Arts Classes
Students learn Drama, Dance and Singing in a 3 hour class.
Workshops with Broadway performers & be part of our variety show!
Fridays 3:45 pm-6:45 pm & Saturdays 10 am-1 pm

All Classes at PS58 The Carroll School, Brooklyn
Reasonable Rates and Sibling discounts.
All levels welcomed, previous experience is not necessary.

Applications for our Fall Term are now available!
World's Largest Part Time Theatre Arts Schools

SING! DANCE! ACT NOW!

Stagecoach
Theatre Arts Schools

www.StageCoachSchools.com

YOUTH ARTS ACADEMY



OPEN HOUSE | REGISTRATION DAY
Saturday, September 15, 2012 | 10:00am - 3:00pm
Fall Classes Begin: Saturday, October 6, 2012

All Students (ages 3 - 18 years)

DANCE DRAMA DRUMMING

FEES

Registration: \$50.00 per student
Tuition: \$500.00: 32 weeks based on 1 hour class per week
\$750.00: 32 weeks based on 1-1/2 hour class per week



For more information: 718-636-6995
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation
1368 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11216
Subway: A or C Train to Nostrand Avenue
LIRR to Nostrand Avenue | Bus: B44, B25, B43
www.restorationplaza.org

The SCIENCE CARMELO FELLOW

at the Cosmic Cove!

- After School Classes
- Birthday Parties
- Science Summer Camps
- Trips
- Toddler Classes
- Science Play group

Photo by Heather Weston

Children are born scientists; they investigate every facet of life. The Cosmic Cove takes a child's curiosity and investigative nature and inspires their minds to explore all aspects of the world around them.

By using a hands-on inquiry based approach to teaching science, I have motivated thousands of children in the many disciplines of science. Children learn in an atmosphere where they are allowed to laugh and learn. They work in collaborative groups, and are encouraged to communicate and share their findings.

The Cosmic Cove is a place where children can call Carmelo the Science Fellow the big marshmallow because learning should be fun.

www.carmelothesciencefellow.com

Parent's Picks
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for more info:
718.722.0000
718.344.4631

Brush wars

What to do if your daughter won't let you brush her hair



BY JENNIFER BILEK

Is your daughter stubborn when it comes to brushing her hair? Hair brushing is an important part of personal daily hygiene and whether she is a 2 or a 10-year-old, the habit should be instilled in her as early as possible. After all, you teach her to brush her teeth every night, right?

That said, your daughter's reluctance may very well have to do with knots that are painful to remove. Teaching her how to brush her hair properly — and treating hair brushing spent between you and her as an opportunity for quality time spent together — can lessen the tantrums, leave her hair looking beautiful, and give her the tools to keep it healthy for the rest of her life.

If your daughter is seriously vocal about her objections to hair brushing, take her to a room that is quiet and explain that hair brushing is not up for negotiation. Listen to and acknowledge her fears or concerns — when children feel like their problems are being heard they tend to act out less.

You can also ask your daughter what might make the experience more pleasant for her. Listening to her favorite music, sharing a story with her that no one else knows, allowing her to watch TV, or letting her put together a jigsaw puzzle as you brush can occupy her mind and make her less anxious. It's also important that you learn how to brush her hair in a way that doesn't hurt, so you can teach her how to do it as well. Keep in mind that some people do have more sensitive scalps and your daughter may be one of them.

- Removing tangles is the first order of business when brushing hair. You should choose a brush with soft plastic or rubber teeth for removing tangles and always start about an inch from the bottom of the hair. Starting at the top, near the

scalp, will only reinforce tangles as you bring the brush down on them.

Grab a section of hair about an inch in diameter and separate it from the rest of the hair. Work your way up the hair gradually, while holding it tightly in your fist slightly above the part you are brushing, which cuts down on pulling at the scalp. Bring another inch into the brush on the down stroke, and then another until you are at the top. When you are done with one section, take another section and proceed the same way until you have made your way around the entire head. Tug softly at knots. No yanking!

- For tough knots, try gently kneading them first in your fingertips, very softly pulling them apart like you might pull cotton from a large roll. If you pull hard on a knot it gets tighter, so knead and pull very gently and the knots will loosen enough for the brush to go through. Have patience! De-tangler can help, but if you use too much it builds up on the hair and causes more problems than it cures. De-tangler is best used right out of the bath on wet hair.

- Now that her hair is tangle-free and dry, a natural bristle brush will distribute the oils from the scalp to the rest of the hair, giving it shine and keeping it healthy.

- Lemon-juice rinse (pure lemon juice and water left on hair for 20 minutes and then washed out) bi-weekly in summer will keep the chlorine — which tends to make all hair very stiff and unmanageable — out of your child's hair.

It is never too late to create a positive hair-brushing routine, so begin now and happy brushing!

Jennifer Bilek is the owner of Get Coiffed, a haircut house-call service for Manhattan families that specializes in children's hair care. Bilek has published numerous articles on hair care and general health issues.

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Finding the right shoes

Putting your
best foot
forward when
shopping for
your child

BY KIKI BOCCI

You know the return to school means you need to put something more substantial on your child's feet than flip-flops and sandals, but what? Is there really that much of a difference among children's shoes?

If you think about the wide variety of shoes in your own closet, you'll know the answer is yes.

There are shoes that pinch your toes and are agony by the end of the day, and then there are the shoes that make you feel like you're walking on air. Which kind would you prefer your child to be wearing all day?

Finding proper shoes is not just a back-to-school task — it's a challenge all year long, say the experts at the American Podiatric Medical Association. Here are some things they suggest you keep in mind:

- When it comes to shoes, banish the hand-me-downs. Even if the shoes seem like they still have a lot of wear left, never hand down footwear. Just because a shoe fit one child comfortably doesn't mean it will fit another the same way. Also, sharing shoes can spread fungi like athlete's foot and nail fungus.

- Take your child shoe shopping. You may think you know what your child will like. And you may think you know the correct size. But every shoe fits differently. Letting a child

have a say in the shoe-buying process promotes healthy foot habits down the road.

- Proper fit is key. Always measure a child's feet before buying shoes. Don't assume you know the correct size based on your last purchase, even if it was just last month (or even last week). When your child tries on a pair — yes, both shoes! — Watch him walk in them. Do they slip down on the heel? Do they look too tight? Watch for signs of potential irritation.

- Bigger is better. Always buy for the larger foot. Feet are seldom precisely the same size. Make sure you check both feet and select the larger size. It's easier to deal with a shoe that is slightly too big than one that is too small. Also, make sure your child tries on shoes with socks of the thickness he will be wearing with the shoes.

- Patience isn't a virtue when it comes to shoes. Do not buy shoes

that need a "break-in" period or that your child needs to grow into. Shoes should be comfortable immediately and fit properly from the start. How long would you be willing to wear shoes that give you blisters, make you walk awkwardly, or are uncomfortable?

- Buy something solid. Look for a stiff heel — it shouldn't collapse when you press on the back of the shoe. Also, the shoe should have a reasonably rigid middle. Your child's shoe should never twist in the middle. Finally, check for toe flexibility. The shoe should bend with your child's toes.

- Be prepared to go shopping again soon. Children's feet change with age. Shoe and sock sizes may change every few months as a child's feet grow. Don't expect your purchase to last for months on end.



S

pirit is not measured by awards that line our mahogany bookshelves, but by the number of smiles we elicit. Let us always remember that there is always someone who looks up to us so let us lead by example, for our success as a society is measured by the outcome of tomorrow, not by the events that happen at present. Let spirit bridge the ignorance that divides us. Let spirit knock down the walls of ignorance that imprison us and

let spirit unite us as a community.

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Calendar

SEPTEMBER



File photo by Tom Callan

It's the fantastic Atlantic Antic

Atlantic Antic is back and better than ever!

The mile-long corridor between Hicks Street and Fourth Avenue will be transformed into a boulevard of food delights enough to satisfy any foodie on Sept. 30 from noon to 6 pm. And let's not forget the entertainment provided by DJs and live acts.

Children won't be bored with all the activities planned — they can

hop on rides, listen to storytelling, play games, or have their faces painted.

Come on down and celebrate the end of summer, Brooklyn style at the Atlantic Antic, the bestest street fair ever.

Atlantic Antic [Atlantic Avenue between Hicks Street and Fourth Avenues in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 875-8993, www.atlanticave.org]. Sept. 30 from noon to 6 pm.

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

All you have to do is send your listing request to brooklyn-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!

FRI, AUG. 24

In Ghostly Japan: Hudson Guild Theater, 441 W. 26th St. between Ninth and 10th avenues; (212) 932-9601; www.theatreartsjapan.org; 2 and 7 pm; Free.

Suitable for children 7 years and older. Stories of "Strange Things," written by Eriko Ogawa, is based on the written works of Rampo Edogawa, Japan's leading bizarre mystery writer, and Yukumo Koizumi.

Fitness class: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 6-6:30 pm; Free.

Onya West, certified personal trainer, leads children on a Soca-cise fitness class. Part of the 2012 Free Friday Family Jam Series.

Sesame Flyers: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 6:30-7:15 pm; Free.

The Youth Ensemble celebrates the Caribbean heritage in dance and song. Part of the 2012 Free Friday Family Jam Series.

"Puss In Boots": Maria Herndandez Park, Knickerbocker Ave. and Suydam St. www.nycgovparks.org; 8-10 pm; Free.

Pack a basket, grab a blanket, and be prepared to be in love with this animated Don Juan cat, voiced by Antonio Banderas.

"The Smurfs": Hudson River Park Pier 46, Christopher St. and the Hudson River; (212) 627-2121; www.hudsonriverpark.org; 8:30 pm; Free.

Papa Smurf to the rescue, yet again.

SAT, AUG. 25

Family art day: Caribou Baby, 272 Driggs Ave. between Eckford and Leonard streets; (347) 460-2229; info@cariboubaby.com; www.cariboubaby.com; 10 am; \$15.

A day of arts, where you can drop by and create something as a family.



Follow the bread crumbs

Follow the candy to the witches house at Puppetworks when "Hansel & Gretel" comes to town this fall, from Sept. 1 through Dec. 16.

The merry marionettes created by Nicolas Coppola tells the Brothers Grimm fairy tale of two beloved children, Hansel and Gretel, who get lost in the woods after a bird eats their bread crumb trail, causing them to run into Rosina Sweettooth, a silly witch who tries to turn them into gingerbread, only to (spoiler alert) wind up as a cookie herself.

Your family will enjoy the journey, along with the delightful folk songs from Humperdinks' famous opera.

"Hansel & Gretel" at Puppetworks [338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street in Park Slope, (718) 965-3391, www.puppetworks.org]. Saturdays and Sundays, Sept. 1 through Dec. 16, with two special performances on Oct. 8 and Nov. 12. Performance times are 12:30 and 2:30 pm. Tickets \$8 for adults, \$7 for children under 12, and \$6 for groups of 20 or more.

Maker weekend: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 11 am-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Build a buzzer, make your own creation with ZOOB pieces and recycled materials.

Taste of Brooklyn: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11 am-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages enjoy this tribute to the best food from the best place on earth, Brooklyn. Participants include Sun in Bloom, Brooklyn Swirl, Super Foxy Sweets, Tasty Kids, and Annie Mae's Cheesecake. With lots of hands-on workshops, it's sure to be a fun time.

Family day cookout: Freebrook Academy, 375 Stuyvesant Ave.; forfathersproject@gmail.com; www.forfathersproject.org/2012/07/16/cookout; noon-6pm; Free.

Bring your own burgers, games, and supplies.

In Ghostly Japan: 2 and 7 pm. Hudson Guild Theater. See Friday, Aug. 24.

Key Wilde and Mr. Clarke: Carroll Park, Smith and Carroll streets; carroll-parkbrooklyn.org/concerts; 4 pm; Free (donations welcomed).

In collaboration with Cobble Hill Playschool.

Camping: Prospect Park, West Drive and Field 6; (718) 421-2021; www.nycgovparks.org; 6 pm; Free.

The Urban Park Rangers celebrate the tradition of camping. Families are chosen by lottery.

SUN, AUG. 26

Brighton Jubilee: Brighton Beach Avenue, Brighton Beach Avenue between Corbin Place and Coney Island Avenue; (718) 891-0800; www.brightonbeach.com; 10 am-5 pm; Free.

The 36th annual street fair with live entertainment, an arm wrestling competition, Neptune Jam, 7/11 handing out slurpees and chicken wings, and more.

Maker weekend: 11 am-4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, Aug. 25.

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Calendar

Continued from page 47

Taste of Brooklyn: 11 am–4 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 25.

Family day: Mt. Zion Church of God, 37th Street between Church Avenue and Linden Blvd. (718) 284-4375; flat-bushevents@gmail.com; noon–5 pm; Free.

Children and parents enjoy food, games, health screenings, and loads of activities.

History stories: Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. between Ralph Avenue and Kings Highway; (718) 629-5400; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon–2 pm; \$8 materials fee (Parents and guardians free).

Children 4 to 10 years old learn about life on Wyckoff Farm through ARTiculate, a program featuring hands-on projects. Advanced registration recommended.

In Ghostly Japan: 2 pm. Hudson Guild Theater. See Friday, Aug. 24.

TUES, AUG. 28

Discovery workshops: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 1:30–3:30 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Children learn all about gardening and animal life at the gardens through hands-on exploration, story time, and garden hunts. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Baby workshop: Caribou Baby, 272 Driggs Ave. between Eckford and Leonard streets; (347) 460-2229; info@cariboubaby.com; www.cariboubaby.com; 6:30 pm; Free.

Learn about the amazing properties of the wool fiber and why it is considered essential in newborn and child rearing in many countries across the globe.

WED, AUG. 29

Gardening at the farm: Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. between Ralph Avenue and Kings Highway; (718) 629-5400; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free.

Children 7 to 11 years old learn how to plant seeds, construct garden designs, make crafts, harvest vegetables, and learn all about life on a farm.

Kidsmobile: Monsignor McGolrick Park, Nassau Avenue and Russell Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10–11:30 am; Free.

The library comes to you in this colorful library on wheels.

Chop chop workshop: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 2:30–3:30 pm.



Hop aboard for transit fun

Hop on board with the New York Transit Museum for fun workshops throughout the month and the 19th annual Bus Festival on Sept. 30.

First is artist Tricia Keightley, the creator of the Hunts Point Mosaic Mural, who will discuss her work and teach budding artists how to create their own masterpieces on Sept. 8 at 1:30 pm. It's suitable for children 6 years old and up.

The Great Subway Search is perfect for children 4 years old and up. They'll work to find clues and discover key signs, symbols, and subway parts during this platform scavenger hunt on Sept. 9 at 1:30 pm.

Budding engineers can learn all about air-powered subway cars, invented by Alfred Beach in 1870, by conducting their own air experiments on Sept. 15 and 16 at 1:30 pm.

World-travelers will visit Santiago, Chile, on Sept. 22 and 23 at 1:30 pm without ever leaving

the station, and learn all about subway systems from around the globe.

Digging tunnels is hard work — not to mention dangerous — and children 5 years old and up can learn all about it on Sept. 29 at 1:30 pm. They'll learn all about the different tools these workers use and the rocks that are excavated when they play a game matching rocks with the boroughs in which they are found.

It all builds up to the 19th annual Bus Festival on Sept. 30 from 11 am to 5 pm. Children, parents, and bus fans can learn about old, new, and special buses that will be on display.

Children's workshops are free with standard museum admission of \$7 for adults; \$5 for children 2 to 17 years old and seniors, and free for members.

New York Transit Museum [Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 694-1873, www.mta.info/museum].

Each week children 4 years old and up learn how to prepare their favorite foods from around the world. Free with museum admission.

FRI, AUG. 31

Back-to-school supplies drive: Tomato House, 301 Saratoga Ave. (347) 770-7813; madafipierre@gmail.com; tomatohouse.org; 11 am–7 pm; Free.

Drop off school supplies from Aug. 28 to 31, 11am–6pm. All kinds of materials are needed: composition books, notebooks, #2 pencils, erasers, sharpeners, rulers, calculators, dictionaries, and book bags.

Back to school: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Before school starts, youngsters are invited to partake in a hands-on party filled with crafts, music, and a fashion show.

Rolie Polie Guacamole: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2–3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Brooklyn's own will perform and treat children to a high-energy concert filled with songs from the "Houses of the Moly" album.

Camping: Marine Park, Gerritsen Avenue at Gotham Avenue; (718) 421-2021; 6 pm; Free.

Break out the s'mores and have a fun filled sleep out under the stars.

Fireworks night: Boardwalk, W. 10th and W. 15th streets; www.nycgovparks.org; 9:30 pm; Free.

Last chance to see the booms, oohs, and aahs at Coney Island.

SUN, SEPT. 2

Nature crafts: Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1, Old Fulton Street at Furman Street; (718) 722-34208; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am; Free.

Children join with the rangers to create fun and unique projects using natural materials.

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

Meet the amazing horseshoe crab. Suitable for children 4 years old and up.

Studio Sunday: Museum of Arts and Design, 2 Columbus Circle at Eighth Avenue; (212) 299-7777; www.madmuseum.org; 2 pm; \$10.

Children 6 years old and up get the 411 from a professional artist on how to explore the galleries, and then a

Calendar

hands-on workshop to create works inspired by the selections. RSVP required.

WED, SEPT. 5

Kidsmobile: 10–11:30 am. Monsignor McGolrick Park. See Wednesday, Aug. 29.

NYC Connected: DeKalb Public Library, 790 Bushwick Ave. at DeKalb Avenue; (718) 455–3898; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 3:30–5 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old play video games to learn about websites, and get tech and homework support.

FRI, SEPT. 7

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

"Dreams of Peace" is suitable for children 18 months to 2 and 1/2 years old and teaches the little ones about diversity, tolerance, and unity.

SAT, SEPT. 8

Shababa Saturday With Karina and Coco: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415–5500; www.92y.org; 10:30 am–12:30 pm; Free.

This free Shabbat celebratory experience is for the whole family every Saturday, with instruments, arts and crafts, puppets and movement. Join Karina Zilberman and her puppet pal Coco for a multigenerational, interactive and dynamic Shabbat experience.

Discovery workshops: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623–7220; www.bbg.org; 11 am–1 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Children learn all about gardening and animal life at the gardens through hands-on exploration, story time, and garden hunts. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Blooming babies: 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Sept. 7.

Meet the artist: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schemerhorn Street; (718) 894–1792; www.mta.info/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Tricia Keightley discusses her mosaic work that lines the walls at Hunters Point Avenue station. Then children 6 years old and up work on their own mosaic masterpiece.

Archery: Salt Marsh Nature Center, Avenue U and E. 33rd Street; (718) 421–2021; 2 pm; Free.

Recommended for children 8 years



Suzi strums at the Children's Museum

Swinging, swaying, songstress Suzi Shelton comes to the Brooklyn Children's Museum for a hopping concert on Sept. 22.

The Brooklyn beauty, and all-around children's rock goddess, charms children and parents alike as she strums her pink guitar and weaves a web of finger-snapping fun. Suzi shares songs from her award winning CDs, "No Ordinary Day," "The Very Brave

Elephant and His Friends," and "Let's Get Moving Trains, Cars and Planes."

Tickets are free with paid museum admission of \$7.50, and free for members and children under 1 years old. Suitable for children 3 years and older.

Suzi Shelton at Brooklyn Children's Museum [145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Crown Heights, (718) 735–4400, www.brooklynkids.org]. Sept. 22 at 1 and 2 pm.

and older. Rangers demonstrate the safe and proper way to draw a bow and shoot an arrow.

SUN, SEPT. 9

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

Debra Scaccia, RN, leads parents in this certification course.

Blooming babies: 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Sept. 7.

Discovery workshops: Brooklyn

Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623–7220; www.bbg.org; 1–3 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Children learn all about gardening and animal life at the gardens through hands-on exploration, story time, and garden hunts. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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

Walk through the gardens and explore. For children 4 years old and up.

Subway scavenger hunt: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schemerhorn Street; (718) 894–1792; www.mta.info/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years old and up hunt through vintage subway cars to find clues in this great subway search.

Audra Rox: Littlefield, 622 Degraw St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (718) 809–8850; www.hiptotmusicfest@gmail.com; 2 pm; \$12 (8 for children; Free for non-walkers).

Hip Tot Music fest presents a concert for children birth to 7 years old.

"Cecil the Pet Glacier": PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666–3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 4–5 pm; Free.

Poet Matthea Harvey shares this story about a girl and her pet. Suitable for children 4 to 8 years old.

MON, SEPT. 10

GED prep course: Macon Library, 361 Lewis Ave. between Macon and Halsey streets; (718) 573–5605; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 10 am–1 pm; Free.

Registration for classes. Children 17 years old are required to produce discharge papers and proof of age. Bring a pen and be prepared to stay at least three hours for testing and enrollment.

TUES, SEPT. 11

Trial workshop: True North Wellness, 61 Tompkins Pl. at DeGraw Street (718) 643–6064; www.truenorthwellness.com; 1 and 2:30 pm; Free.

For babies 6 weeks old to rolling, creeping, and crawling, and parent or caregiver.

WED, SEPT. 12

Trial workshop: BAX – Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 643–6064; gogobabies.net; 1 pm; Free.

For babies 6 weeks old to rolling, creeping, and crawling, and parent or caregiver.

NYC Connected: 3:30–5 pm. DeKalb Public Library. See Wednesday, Sept. 5.

Open house sundae: Bay Ridge Jewish Center, 405 81st St. at Fourth Avenue; (718) 836–3103; 6 pm; Free.

Learn all about the progressive program for Jewish studies for children that meets after school.

THURS, SEPT. 13

Baby time: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230–2100; www.brooklynpublicli

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Continued from page 49

brary.org/locations; 10–10:30 am; Free.

Children birth to 18 months enjoy songs and rhymes. Space limited pick up ticket on the morning of program.

FRI, SEPT. 14

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

A musical performance for kids with Palms Down Percussion Ensemble.

SAT, SEPT. 15

Birds of prey: Owl's Head Park, 68th Street and Colonial Road; (718) 421–2021; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am to noon; Free.

Learn about eagles, hawks, owls, and falcons from the rangers.

Shababa Saturday With Karina and Coco: 10:30 am–12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Saturday, Sept. 8.

Discovery workshops: 11 am–1 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, Sept. 8.

Junior engineer: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 894–1792; www.mta.info/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years old and up experiment with air power and learn all about the air powered subway engine invented by Alfred Beach in 1870.

Rebecca Stead and RJ Palacio: PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666–3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 4–5 pm; Free.

Two favorite authors read from their new books, "When you Reach Me," and "Wonder," respectively. Recommended for children 8 to 12 years old.

SUN, SEPT. 16

Marsh workshop: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421–2021; 10 am to noon; Free.

Children get the 411 on the types of creatures that live in the marsh.

Student film festival: Governors Island, Building 11 in Nolan Park; www.govisland.com; 11 am–3 pm; Free.

The second annual screening of the Big Movies for Little Kids festival. Watch a short or participate in a video-making and art activities with CMA's staff.

Discovery workshops: 1–3 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Sunday, Sept. 9.

Junior engineer: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Sept. 15.



Zoo is the place to be

The Queens Zoo is a spectacular way to spend the day — with daily activities and even overnight adventures.

Children 4 and 5 years old, accompanied by a parent or caregiver, can enjoy hands-on activities, visits with animal guests, and scavenger hunts in the Kinder Kritters workshop on Sept. 22 and 29; Oct. 13 and 20; and Nov. 3 and 10, from 2 to 3 pm.

Tiny toddlers 2 to 3 years old with an adult can meet the furry, scaly, and feathery denizens of the zoo at two separate workshop series: on Sept. 22 and 29; Oct. 13 and 20; and Nov. 3 and 10, from noon to 1 pm; and on Sept. 14, 21, and 28; and Oct. 5, 12, and 19,

from 10:30 to 11:30 am. Each series is \$125 for members and \$150 for non-members.

Adventurous kids ages 5 and older with an adult can explore the zoo after hours and stay for the night on Sept. 15 and 16 from 5 pm to 10 am. Bring your own tent, sleeping bags, and a picnic dinner. The zoo provides the rest: beverages, dessert, a late night snack, breakfast, and of course, all the adventure you can handle. Admission for members is \$85 per person, and \$100 for non-members.

The Queens Zoo [53-51 111th St. in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, (718) 271-1500, www.queenszoo.com].

TUES, SEPT. 18

The Great Subway Search: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place and Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694–1873; http://mta.info/museum; 11 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children enjoy a platform-level scavenger hunt and then create their own version of a subway map.

WED, SEPT. 19

NYC Connected: 3:30–5 pm. DeKalb Public Library. See Wednesday, Sept. 5.

THURS, SEPT. 20

Drawing workshop: Brooklyn Pub-

lic Library's Central branch, Flatbush Ave. at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230–2100; www.brooklyn-publiclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; 3:30–5:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn the basics of fashion illustration and sketching live models from featured illustrators and graphic designers.

FRI, SEPT. 21

"Can't Stop Singing": Nassau Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Turnpike; (800) 745–3000; www.nassaucoliseum.com; 7 pm; \$21.50–\$108.50.

Join in with Big Bird, Elmo, and the whole "Sesame Street" gang.

SAT, SEPT. 22

"Can't Stop Singing": 10:30 am, 2 and 5:30 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Friday, Sept. 21.

Shababa Saturday With Karina and Coco: 10:30 am–12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Saturday, Sept. 8.

Discovery workshops: 11 am–1 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, Sept. 8.

Marvelous Mexico: 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.

Children 2 and 1/2 years old to 5 years old learn all about Mexican heritage, then create a craft to take home.

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

The children's singer-songwriter brings her own brand of funk to get up and dance to.

Saltwater fishing: Steeplechase Pier, Reigleman Boardwalk and W. 19th Street; (718) 421–2021; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

The rangers teach participants the safe, ecological way to fish. Suitable for children 8 years old and up.

Hold the Chile: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 894–1792; www.mta.info/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children travel to Santiago, Chile without leaving the station and learn about subway systems around the world. Suitable for children 5 years old and up.

Shoes and shoes: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735–4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30–3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate the opening of the latest exhibit, Global Shoes, by making a special craft to take home. Suitable for children up to 5 years old.

SUN, SEPT. 23

Book festival: Brooklyn Borough Hall Plaza, 209 Joralemon St. at Court Street; 10 am–6 pm; Free.

The event features vendors, agents and book sellers.

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

Debra Scaccia, RN, leads parents in this certification course.

Calendar

Marvelous Mexico: 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.

Children 2 and 1/2 years old to 5 years old learn all about Mexican heritage, then create a craft to take home.

"Can't Stop Singing": 1 and 4:30 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Friday, Sept. 21.

Discovery workshops: 1-3 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Sunday, Sept. 9.

Hold the Chile: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Sept. 22.

Shoes and shoes: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate the opening of the latest exhibit, Global Shoes, by making a special craft to take home. Suitable for children up to 5 years old.

WED, SEPT. 26

The Great Subway Search: 11 am and 2:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Sept. 18.

NYC Connected: 3:30-5 pm. DeKalb Public Library. See Wednesday, Sept. 5.

SAT, SEPT. 29

Shababa Saturday With Karina and Coco: 10:30 am-12:30 pm. 92nd Street Y. See Saturday, Sept. 8.

Transit rocks: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schemerhorn Street; (718) 894-1792; www.mta.info/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Digging a subway tunnel is a hard job, and the workers need to know what shovels to use and what type of rocks they are working with. Children 5 years old and up learn all about rocks with a fun matching game.

The Deedle Deedle Dees: Carroll Park, Smith and Carroll streets; carroll-parkbrooklyn.org/concerts; 4 pm; Free (donations welcomed).

In collaboration with PS 29.

SUN, SEPT. 30

Bus Festival: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schemerhorn Street; (718) 894-1792; www.mta.info/museum; 11 am-5 pm; Free.

Have a bus-ling good time at the 19th annual Bus Festival. The streets will be lined with the largest collection of old, new and special buses outside of the depot. Then children can make a fun arts-and-crafts project about buses.



Explore technology

September is back-to-school month, and Sony's Wonder Technology Lab has fun, entertaining, hands-on — and let's not forget — educational activities to get kids back into the swing of things.

Children ages 7 and up can explore the little world of nanotechnology on Sept. 1 from 1 to 3 pm with hands-on activities just suited for wee fingers.

Ever wanted a robot of your own? On Sept. 8 Sony provides the motors, screws, and recycled materials, and budding builders provide the imagination to create a robot to take home. The workshop is 11 am to 1 pm, for children 8 and up, and admission is \$10 per child.

Tech fun continues on Sept. 22, when children learn the basics of stop-motion filming by making their own animated monster mash — editing, tweaking, and

burning a copy to take home. Admission is \$6 per child. Event runs from 11 am to 1 pm, is for children 8 years and older, and requires reservations.

Don't miss a Dora the Explorer movie on Sept. 15 from 11 am to noon. After the flick, moms, dads, and the whole gang can learn to salsa from trained professionals from noon to 1 pm. On Sept. 29 there's another Dora movie, followed by craft time when kids can make their own star pillows. Admission for both events is \$5 per person. Reservations are not required, but are strongly recommended, especially for younger ones.

Sony Wonder Technology Lab [550 Madison Ave. between 55th and 56th streets in Midtown, (212) 833-8100, www.sonywondertechlab.com]. Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9:30 am to 5:30 pm; closed Mondays and Sundays. Admission free, unless otherwise noted.

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

Learn about the premier predators, falcons and hawks that live in the park from the Rangers.

Atlantic Antic: Atlantic Avenue, Hicks Street to Fourth Avenue; (718)

875-8993; www.atlanticave.org; Noon-6 pm; Free.

The 38th annual street fair that features one mile of food, music and fun throughout Brownstone Brooklyn, children's activities, and live entertainment. Rain or shine.

Migration sensation: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400;

www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30-2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years old and up learn all about our fine feathered friends and their trip south for the winter.

Frank Viva: PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 4-5 pm; Free.

The author reads from his latest book, "A Trip to the Bottom of the World with Mouse." Recommended for children 4 to 6 years old.

WED, OCT. 3

The Great Subway Search: 11 am and 2:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Sept. 18.

THURS, OCT. 4

The Great Subway Search: 11 am and 2:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Sept. 18.

FRI, OCT. 5

The Great Subway Search: 11 am and 2:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Sept. 18.

LONG-RUNNING

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

Shorts and a full length family appropriate movie.

Shababa Fridays: 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; Fridays, 9:30-10:15 am, Now - Fri, Aug. 24; \$10.

Karina and Coco lead shabbat in playful interactive activities. For newborns to 3 years old.

Cartoon exhibit: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Sun, Sept. 2; \$11 (\$8 children 2-17, college students and seniors).

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.

Amazing Water: New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets; (718) 265-3448; www.nyaquarium.com; Daily, 10 am-5 pm; Now - Sun, Sept. 9; Free with general admission.

It's the newest feature at the aquarium, a 1,500 square foot maze and

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learning environment, where participants learn all about the environmental factors that threaten our waterways.

Intrepid Air and Space Museum:

Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum at Pier 86, 12th Ave. at 46th Street; www.intrepidmuseum.org; Weekdays, 10 am–5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Wed, Oct. 31; \$30 general admission (\$26 seniors and college students; \$23 children 7-17 and veterans; \$16 children 3-6; Free for active and retired military and children under 3).

Come aboard and explore the 12,240 square foot interactive Exploreum, featuring a variety of hands on exhibits as well as the Space Shuttle Enterprise.

“The Adoration of the Magi”:

Museum of Biblical Art, 1865 Broadway between W. 61st and W. 62nd streets; (212) 408–1500; www.mobia.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am–6 pm, Now – Sun, Sept. 9; Free.

The beautiful early Italian Renaissance alterpiece by Bartolo di Fredi, (1330–1410), will be displayed in its entirety.

Fair: Soho, 100 Varick St. (914) 295–4794; varicksflea@gmail.com; www.meetup.com/varicks; Daily, 10 am–4 pm; \$55/Space.

Enjoy shopping and schmoozing in the all day market.

Creatures of Light: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769–5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–8 pm; \$24(\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

This interactive exhibit explores organisms that produce light, from the flickering fireflies to alien deep-sea fishes.

“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, Now – Sun, Aug. 26; \$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 to 9 years old.

Ice Skating: Aviator Sports and Events Center, 3159 Flatbush Ave. (718) 758–7500; Mondays through Thursdays, 11 am–4 pm, Fridays, 11 am–4:20 pm and 7–11 pm, Saturdays, Noon–5:30 pm and 6–11 pm, Sundays, Noon–3 pm and 3:30–6:30 pm \$9 (\$7 children) plus \$5 skate rental fee.

Bring your own skates or rent a pair.



Get ready to rhumba!

Karumba! It's time to party down with Limon Dance Company's dance lessons at Bryant Park on Sept. 1 and 8 at 10 am.

All skill levels are invited to come and practice rhumba, cha cha, and salsa with instructors from the Limon Dance Institute and Dance Company.

Don't be shy, it's not the tech-

nique that's important — it's the moving and grooving to the beat.

So bring your enthusiasm, and don't forget your dancing shoes and comfy togs.

Limon Dance Company's dance lessons at Bryant Park [42nd Street and Avenue of the Americas in Midtown, (212) 777–3353, <http://bryantpark.org/plan-your-visit/bpmoves.html>]. Sept. 1 and 8, 10–11 am. Free.

Rock Climbing: Aviator Sports and Events Center, 3159 Flatbush Ave. (718) 758–7500; Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 am–4 pm, Wednesdays, 11 am–4 pm, Fridays, 11 am–4:20 pm and 7 to 11 pm, Saturdays, Noon–5:30 pm and 6–11 pm, Sundays, Noon–3 pm and 3:30–6:30 pm, \$10 for two climbs.

Challenge and adventure just one rock wall at a time. The wall is the tallest indoor wall in the borough, standing at 35 feet. Test your endurance if you dare. Suitable for children 5 years and older.

Sky-jump: Aviator Sports and Events Center, 3159 Flatbush Ave. (718) 758–7500; Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11 am–4 pm, Wednesdays, 11 am–4 pm, Fridays, 11 am–4:20 pm and 7 to 11 pm, Saturdays, Noon–5:30 pm and 6–11 pm, Sundays, Noon–3 pm and 3:30–6:30 pm, \$6 for a 3 minute jump.

A 12-foot bungee trampoline located on the main street level. Must weight between 40 and 150 pounds.

Le Carrousel: Bryant Park, W. 40th St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues; www.nycgovparks.org; Daily, 11 am–8 pm; Now – Wed, Oct. 31; \$2 per ride.

Fashioned to complement the park's French style, this classic ride features brightly colored animals and French cabaret music.

Ping Pong: Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. and W. 42nd Street; www.nycgovparks.org; Daily, 11 am–7 pm; Now – Sun, Sept. 30; Free.

Paddles and balls provided and all skill levels welcome.

Story time with Jordan: PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666–3049; www.powerhousearena.com; Fridays, 11:30 am–noon, Free.

Pre-schoolers listen to stories from favorite books.

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.

Storytime: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. at E. 82nd Street; (212) 570–3894; metmuseum.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 3–3:30 pm, Now – Thurs, Aug. 30; Free with museum admission.

Children 3 to 7 years old listen to a story then go and find the art on a treasure hunt in the galleries.

Orbis Pictus: The Gallery of the Czech Center New York, 321 E. 73rd St. (646) 422–3399; info@czechcenter.com; www.czechcenter.com; Daily, 6:30–8:30 pm; Now – Wed, Oct. 17; Free.

Play Well is a series of site-specific installations in which artists and children collaborate to create experiences in visuals, sound and motion.

Art on the High Line: The High Line, W. 23rd St. at 10th Avenue; (212) 206–9922; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 10 am–noon, Sat, Aug. 25; Free.

Families are invited to drop in and experiment with unique materials and create their works of art to take home.

Beginners trainer program: Long Island Aquarium & Exhibition Center, 431 E. Main St. (631) 208–9200, X H2O; reservations@amwny.com; www.longislandaquarium.com; Saturdays, 10:15 am & 2:00 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 29; \$150 (Members: \$125).

Children 10 years old and above have an opportunity to learn how to be a trainer and work with seals and sea lions.

The Kid's Corner: Habana Outpost, 757 Fulton St. at S. Portland Avenue; (718) 858–9500; www.habanaoutpost.com; Saturdays and Sundays, Noon to 4 pm, Now – Sun, Sept. 30; Free.

Creative crafts, wellness workshops and environmental projects. Staff helps children create recycled art designs. Outdoors - weather permitting.

Basketball clinics: North Meadow Recreation Center, 97th St. Transverse Rd. (212) 348–4867; [\[parks.org\]\(http://parks.org\); Saturdays, Noon–2 pm, Now – Sat, Oct. 27; Free.](http://www.nycgov-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Children 9 to 17 years old get help with the B-ball game.

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 – Fri, Aug. 31; Free.

Craft activities and fun nature games.

Ezra Jack Keats Story Hour: Imagination Playground, Ocean Avenue at E. Lake Drive; (718) 287–3400; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 2–3 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 31; Free.

Gather at the Peter and Willy statue in the park and listen to fun stories.

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, Now – Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

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

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, Now – Sun, Oct. 21; Free.

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

Fishing Clinics: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287–3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays, 3 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 31; Free.

Presented by Macy's the program offers children instruction on how to catch the big one. For children 15 years old and younger.

Start with Art: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Ave. at E. 82nd Street; (212) 570–3894; metmuseum.org; Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30–4:30 pm, Now

– Thurs, Aug. 30; Free with museum admission.

Children 3 to 7 years old sketch, explore and listen to stories.

Summer stories: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Sundays, 2 and 3 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 31; Free.

Master storyteller Tammy Hall enchants the little ones with childhood favorites under the big tree.

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

Come clap, dance, sing or just watch!

Toddler wonderland: Habana Outpost, 757 Fulton St. at S. Portland Avenue; (718) 858-9500; www.habanaoutpost.com; Tuesdays, 10 am – noon, Now – Tues, Sept. 18; Free.

Little ones play with toys, a water table, supervised art projects for children 4 and younger while moms visit with each other.

River tots: Pier 46, Charles Street and West Street; (212) 627-2121; www.nycgovparks.org; Tuesdays, 10 am, Tues, Aug. 28; Free.

Children 2 to 5 years old learn about nature in an urban setting.

Wild Wednesdays: The High Line, W. 14th Street and 10th Avenue; (212) 206-9922; www.nycgovparks.org; Free.

Children watch a butterfly grow, touch a wriggle worm, or watch seeds fly.

Yak Packers: Rubin Museum of Art, 150 W. 17 Street, between Sixth and Seventh avenues; (212) 620-5000 X 344. www.rmanyc.org; Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10:30–11:30 am, Now – Thurs, Oct. 25; \$10 (\$5 seniors and students; Free for children under 12 and members).

Children 2 to 4 years old explore the exhibits and collections, play, listen to stories, and crafts.

Popup art: Pier 25, West Street at N. Moore Street; Wednesdays, 3 pm, Now – Thurs, Aug. 30; Free.

Together with the Children's Museum of the Arts, Pier 25 offers art-appreciation activities for children 1 to 15 years old, including fine art and media and early childhood art workshops.

Myrtle Avenue Farm Stand: Myrtle Avenue Stand, Myrtle Avenue and North Portland Avenue; www.myrtleavenue.org; Wednesdays, 4–7 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 7; Free.

Features fresh produce, groceries and bread.

Dance-around: The Moxie Spot, 81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry



Thirteen going on 50

Channel Thirteen's going on 50, and is celebrating with a poster workshop at the Museum of the City of New York on Sept. 30, Oct. 28, and Nov. 3.

In celebration of Channel Thirteen's 50th anniversary, Kids Club Thirteen is hosting a poster workshop and contest for children in kindergarten through eighth grade. Children are invited to drop in on an art workshop and create

a poster depicting their favorite Channel Thirteen children's show.

Drop-in workshops are on Sept. 30 and Oct. 28 from 10:30 am to noon, and on Nov. 3 from 1:30 to 3 pm. Free with museum admission. Recommended for children 6 to 14 years old.

Museum of the City of New York [1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets at Central Park East, (212) 492-3490, www.kids.thirteen.org; www.mcny.org].

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

For children.

Reading is fun: Sheepshead Bay Public Library, 2636 E. 14th St. at Shore Road; (718) 368-1815; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Saturdays, 10–11 am, Sat, Sept. 1 – Sat, Nov. 17; Free.

Children share the joy of books.

"Hansel & Gretel": Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Dec. 16; \$8 (\$7 children) group rates available.

The Brothers Grimm classic comes to life with music and songs by Hump-erdinck and adapted for marionettes by Nicolas Coppola, suggested for children 4 years old and up.

Homework Help: Gerritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 3–6 pm, beginning Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Homework Help: Kings Highway Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, 2115 Ocean Ave. between Kings Highway and Quentin Road; (718) 339-2783; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3–5 pm, beginning Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Teen time: Dyker Public Library, 8202 13th Ave. between 82nd and 83rd streets; (718) 748-6261; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 3–4 pm, Tues, Sept. 4 – Tues, Nov. 27; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old enjoy books, games and music along with RIF book club.

Teen game time: Paerdegat Branch Library, 850 E. 59th St. at Flatlands Avenue; (718) 241-3994; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 3–4 pm, beginning Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old play video games.

Homework Help: Brighton Beach Public Library, 16 Brighton First Rd. at Brightwater Court; (718) 946-2917; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 4–6 pm, beginning Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Homework Help: Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway in Grand Army Plaza; (718) 230-2100; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265; Mondays, 4:30–6:30 pm, Tuesdays, 4:30–7:30 pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 4–6 pm, Saturdays, 11 am–1 pm, beginning Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Homework Help: Red Hook Public Library, 7 Wolcott St. between Richards and Dwight streets; (718) 935-0203; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Tuesdays, 5:30–7 pm, beginning Tues, Sept. 4; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Homework Help: Bedford Public Library, 496 Franklin Ave. at Fulton Street; (718) 623-0012; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 4–7 pm, beginning Wed, Sept. 5; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Homework Help: Carroll Gardens Public Library, 396 Clinton St. at Union Street; (718) 596-6972; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 4–6 pm, beginning Wed, Sept. 5; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Homework Help: Flatlands Public Library, 2065 Flatbush Ave. at Avenue P; (718) 253-4409; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Thursdays, 5–7 pm, beginning Thurs, Sept. 6; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

Toddler time: Dyker Public Library, 8202 13th Ave. between 82nd and 83rd streets; (718) 748-6261; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Wed, Sept. 26 – Wed, Nov. 28; Free.

Children birth to 5 years old hear a read-a-loud story, fingerplay and meet other children. Pre-registration required. (Registration begins Sept. 1 to Sept. 26 daily Monday through Friday, 1-2 pm).

Mom on cloud nine

Local mom creates a vlog to document the challenge of raising five kids in the city

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

Melissa Lawrence is a New York City mom who had five kids in six and a half years. It was like mommy boot camp in her house. She felt challenged as a new mom, despite having graduated from Harvard Law School and practiced law for 10 years. But she found ways to deal with the myriad of issues that would arise. In fact, she had so much advice she wanted to share with new parents, on issues ranging from baby blues to product recalls, that she started her own vlog — a blog that provides periodic short informational videos — called CloudMom. I spoke with Lawrence recently about CloudMom and her thoughts on some recent parenting issues.

Risa Doherty: When did you start CloudMom?

Melissa Lawrence: I started shooting in the spring of 2011, when my fifth baby was 3 months old, but we just launched this past June. It took one year to start it up.

RD: Why “CloudMom?”

ML: I thought about the word cloud, as it has been used for computer networking and Internet information delivery, and thought it would best describe an Internet video service that would offer practical information for mothers.

RD: How did you start CloudMom?

ML: [Since] I love video and Internet, I thought about making YouTube videos to share and communicate with other moms about all the little things I did to care for my baby. There were silly little things that made my “mom life” easier, from tips on diaper changing and breast-feeding, to time management. I realized that so much happens during the first 12 months, as there is so much change. I was really exhausted, and I had such a hard time with my first and second babies, that I wanted to package my ideas together for other mothers.

RD: So, you couldn’t have done this while your first two children were babies?

ML: Oh no, I never could have



done it with the first. It was a very intense time and I felt as if I never could get out of the house or get to the shower. I was also stressed because I had a “cluster feeding” baby, which is a baby who is very fussy late in the day, as a result of breast-feeding patterns.

RD: What does your spouse think of CloudMom?

ML: He is very supportive.

RD: Is this the first parenting vlog from New York City?

ML: To my knowledge, this is the first comprehensive “how to” video site hosted by a mom that walks you, step by step, through everything you need to know about caring for a newborn. There are quite a few vlogs out there — most have to do with older kids. My vlog appears daily and I talk about all sort of things that are

happening in my life with my kids, as well as about what’s buzzing out there. I am a New York City mom, but we have had responses from viewers as far away as India and Saudi Arabia.

RD: What tips would you have for “mompreneurs” (mom entrepreneurs) with respect to setting goals, financial foresight, and support?

ML: First, know your costs, and keep them as low as possible. Give yourself enough time to get out there and earn revenue, clearing trademark and other set-up costs, so you can support the business and enable it to grow.

Second, you must really believe in the business you are creating. It needs to be something that is truly meaningful to you, a passion and not just a good business idea, since you



“This is the first comprehensive ‘how to’ video site hosted by a mom that walks you through everything you need to know about caring for a newborn.”

will undoubtedly need to put in a lot of after-hours time.

Third, you should think about your timing. I waited until my first three children were in school and my fourth was in for half a day. I am flexible about my work hours and I am usually able to work late at night, so I can spend time during the day with my kids.

RD: When did you have the time to shoot the videos, and how did you integrate your work on Cloud-Mom with your home life?

ML: Unless I needed the baby for the shoots, I would make the videos when the younger ones would nap and the older three kids would be at school, between 10 am and 3 pm. I wanted to arrange my schedule so I could always bring the older ones to school.

RD: How do you arrange your schedule to make time for all your children?

ML: Although I cannot give as much individualized attention to each kid every day as I would like, it balances out. If I do not have enough time to give the kind of attention I want to one of the kids one day, I make it up to him or her the next day. I will talk with the children about how their day was and we will all do stuff together, like putting the baby down. Half of what kills energy is guilt. I put the phone away and try to find time for everyone.

RD: Do you have tips for moms who have difficulty juggling it all?

ML: I know I can't be everything to everybody each and every minute. There are certainly times when everyone in my house seems to be talking at once. When that happens, I try to explain to my kids that I am a person, too, and tell them, “look, I am having a hard time.” I try to ease up on the guilt and enlist the help of the older ones to teach them to take some responsibility and take a bit off my plate.

RD: What was your favorite activity with the kids this summer?

ML: I took them on the bus. I am not happy hearing how spoiled

American kids are, so I try to do things to teach them empathy. I take them on excursions, for example, using the public bus, to try to teach them about how to behave in public spaces within a larger society and show respect for others.

RD: How do you feel about Anne-Marie Slaughter's article in *The Atlantic* entitled “Why Women Still Can't Have it All?”

ML: The reality is that it is hard to combine home, work life, and children's activities, when both spouses work. In one week, I was required to be at the children's school five times. I enjoyed Slaughter's article because she talked about the practical realities that are part of everyday life, and provided relatable examples, like who will pick up the dry cleaning. For Slaughter, it became too difficult to meld her two lives, and she spoke freely about the less-than-glamorous realities of the daily juggling act, explaining why she could not “have it all,” when this juggling act became impossible for her. Similarly, in the vlog, I like to take things that people are talking about and bring the advice down to a practical level, sharing the things that have worked for me.

RD: What do you see for the future of CloudMom?

ML: We currently include many topics in the how-to videos for “Baby's First Year,” and the daily vlogs for parents of children of all ages, including tips I come up with in my life as a mom, and parenting issues that are now trending. We hope to soon grow to include videos about raising toddlers and older children, as well as other topics related to mom health and wellness. It is a labor of love and I just hope to be able to continue doing it for a long time.

Check out Lawrence's Cloud-Mom videos at www.cloudmom.com or go to www.facebook.com/cloudmom.

Risa C. Doherty is an attorney, award-winning freelance writer, and mother of two. Read more at www.risadoherty.com.

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How to apply for college

(without the stress)

Three wise ways to help your child and keep perspective

BY MICHELE RANARD, MED

When it comes to college applications, getting in to a school can feel like a cruel test of mental and emotional stamina. How much editing help should a parent give on the essay? Which extracurriculars appeal to admissions officers? Which university provides the best fit?

The most challenging element of the college planning process for this parent has been feeling alone in the anxiety. Fellow parents of teens don't freely share information — things are competitive out there.

That's why it was a relief to discover "Getting In Without Freaking Out" by Arlene Matthews. A professional college consultant, Matthews says college-bound students and their parents need to take a major chill pill. Her guide is full of practical tips for tackling college app angst, and if you have vocal chords, you "will" laugh at her commentary.

The following, culled from the book as well as personal experience, just may lower your blood pressure and increase your optimism. Think of it as free therapy!

College admissions are trendy

It used to be that kids who were



bright and well-rounded were placed by admissions officers at the top of the application heap. Then, parents everywhere made the mistake of pushing their kids into activities and community service and these kids fell from favor. It turns out that colleges now prize angular candidates who sport a sharply focused interest or talent.

Whether your child is well-rounded or angular, rest easy

knowing that the planet needs all shapes and sizes. Well-rounded types do well in a variety of fields — from medicine to movie making — and angular types create great art and discover new technologies.

Instead of trying to package your teen based on current admission fads, you should cherish and celebrate her unique shape. Jay Matthews, an education reporter

We are all charmed by designer schools, but generic is underrated, and it is simply pointless to freak about getting your kids into the “perfect” designer school, since that school does not exist. Not even in the Ivy League!

for The Washington Post, suggests stressed-out parents repeat this mantra: “People succeed because of the quality of their character, not the notoriety of their college.”

It's who they are, not where they go

Very successful people once attended some un-cool sounding colleges (an ordinary guy named Ron Reagan went to Eureka College in Illinois and sort of did OK).

Our society has become so competitive within the realm of parenting that many people believe that where their kids attend college is reflective of the job they did raising them.

Ever heard a version of this at a cocktail party: “William wishes he could say yes to BOTH Stanford and Yale! Fabulousness just runs in the family!”

We are all charmed by designer schools, but generic is underrated, and it is simply pointless to freak about getting your kids into the “perfect” designer school, since that school does not exist. Not even in the Ivy League!

In her book, Matthews, with great comic verve, likens the Ivies, or “trophy schools,” to trophy wives. While the name of a trophy school may leap out on a graduate’s resume, like a trophy wife, those schools can also be expensive and notorious for investing more in new prospects than in current students.

“A commercialized point of view is what turns the admissions process into a game ... There is very little evidence that correlates the status of a college with effective educational practice,” contends Lloyd Thacker of The Education Conservancy. “Parents need to listen to the facts, not their friends at cocktail parties.”

Matthews reminds that, in the scheme of things, there is a point where college credentials cease

to matter.

When college days are history, employers in the workplace want to know what you have accomplished and whether you will continue to deliver.

You may not be aware of what college your friends, co-workers, or employer attended, but you “are” cognizant of whether your friend has strong moral character or if your co-worker has a notable work ethic.

Late bloomers can finish strong

If you have a late bloomer, you may feel concerned. Your child may be bright with multi-potentiality, but has yet to discover her niche. Perhaps she has no published articles, patents, or a single hospital named in her honor. It can be frustrating to sense that colleges want to see greatness demonstrated now.

The reality is that plenty of teenagers are just getting warmed up. Deferred blooming may even have a silver lining. After all, peaking at age 18 may spell disappointment down the line. Matthews points out the deferred greatness of Cervantes, who completed “Don Quixote” at age 68, and Grandma Moses, who began painting in her late 70s. History reminds us that finishing strong is honorable.

Muddling through the application process requires stamina, chocolate, and a sense of humor. Let’s face it — worrying won’t appease the admissions gods or increase anyone’s chances of acceptance. So arm yourself with reality-based facts instead.

Michele Ranard has a husband, two children, and a Masters in counseling.

Resources:

- Matthews, Arlene. *Getting In Without Freaking Out*. Three Rivers Press. 2006.
- Thacker, Lloyd. www.educationconservancy.org
- Matthews, Jay. “Ten Ways to Reduce College Application Stress.” *The Washington Post*. July 3, 2007.

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Local artist True painted the stairway mural at 247 Herkimer St., where the Brooklyn stars include (clockwise from above) Stephanie Mills, Max Roach and Ben Vereen.

Brooklyn's stairs of fame

A new project at Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation encourages kids to climb

BY ASHAUNTE SOLOMON

Kids at a Bedford-Stuyvesant youth organization are realizing that taking the stairs instead of the elevator can be a whole lot more fun — thanks to the group's initiative to encourage physical activity.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, a Brooklyn community development corporation funded through the city's Department of Health, commissioned local artist True to turn the drab walls of the building's stairwell into a Brooklyn Hall of Fame, featuring famous singers, artists, and actors who came from the borough. And the effect was positive — more kids began to take the stairs rather than the elevator, so I went over to check it out.

As I walked up the stairs looking at all the paintings of famous Brooklynites, I realized that most of

the people I hadn't heard of before. Each star featured had text next to them, explaining what they did with their fame and fortune. The paintings were very colorful and had a lot of life to them.

One of the paintings was of Lena Horne, who I really like — she was a very good singer and actress and I think she was really cool. The text next to her said, "I used my talents as a singer, dancer, and actress to open doors for our people."

Another person I thought was pretty outstanding was Eubie Blake. He lived on Stuyvesant Avenue, which is close to where I live. His sign said: "I used my talents as a lyricist, composer, and musician to show that blacks could create musicals that were not demeaning to our people." I thought this was a good thing because he showed that change was possible.

As I reached the third floor — the

top of the staircase — I was kind of disappointed that there weren't more paintings. If there were more stairs — and paintings — I would have taken them!

By taking the stairs I got to learn new things while doing something most people don't like to do, but should do. Now I would rather take the stairs than the elevator because it's healthier — and more interesting than staring at an elevator door!

The building at 247 Herkimer St. houses Restoration's Youth Arts Academy and art organizations such as the Noel Pointer School of Music and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus, collectively serving some 540 children between the ages of 3 and 18.

Ashaunte Solomon is 14 years old and attends Academy for Young Writers in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. She was also an intern at Restoration as part of the Summer Youth Employment Program.

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Around town with baby: Mixed reviews

Our writer and his new daughter have gotten mixed reactions from strangers when out in their neighborhood

BY TIM PERRINS

It's been six months since our family unit went "nuclear." (Isn't it odd how that term is used once you add a child to the equation?) This is our first child, and I have nothing I can compare this experience to, but people constantly assure me that this is a special time that should be cherished. Parents everywhere remember these early days of wonder with great fondness. Which is funny, considering that most of this so-called magical time is spent hoping the baby will go to sleep:

- "I need to put this laundry away. Aren't you tired yet?"
- "It's 3 am. You are killing me!"
- "Why won't you take a nap? Daddy wants to watch 'American Ninja Warrior.'"

There's a balancing act between providing loving attention to your squirming, little gremlin and trying to get anything done. Don't get me wrong — the time you spend with your baby is unlike anything else. It's filled with some of the happiest and funniest moments you can imagine, but also with some of the most taxing and draining times you'll ever experience. Not surprisingly, when your life at home is filled with these ups and downs, all it takes is going out for a walk in the neighborhood to make you sensitive to the fact that the rest of the world also has mixed reactions towards babies.

My wife and I (along with our nuclear baby), live in Park Slope, Brooklyn, which is reputed to be the progressive-minded "stroller capital" of the United States. In this neighborhood babies are raised on a diet of kombucha, organic kale, and "The Daily Show." Here, everything is tailored to children, from restaurants to parks to barber shops. In Park Slope, no one is too young for yoga: we have



The writer's daughter, Bea.

Some people can't hide their indignation that your baby hasn't yet mastered the nuances of socially acceptable behavior.

mom and baby yoga, pre-natal yoga — I bet you can even find fertility-boosting, pre-conception yoga.

We've also got a baby backlash. In certain circles it's fashionable to sneer at the child-centric culture of Park Slope. Shortly before our baby was born, I overheard a couple of 20-somethings on Fifth Avenue saying there are no good bars around here.

"Like I want to sit next to someone's stroller when I'm having a drink," I heard one say.

It's strange that New York City is supposed to be so inclusive and diverse, and yet people just want to stereotype anyone who's not exactly like them. Anyway, I can only hope those two are able to find a suitable drinking establishment in a more youth-centric Brooklyn neighborhood, like Bushwick, before the clientele there outgrows their ironic moustaches and jumps on the baby-bandwagon, too.

Now, opinions are one thing, but outward hostility is something else. A few weeks ago I was walking with my little baby Bea snuggled against my chest in her carrier. I was the last of a thinly-stretched group of pedestrians crossing the street, causing a man in a big sports utility vehicle to have to wait before making the turn. I could have ceded my right of way and let him go first, but I would've missed the light myself. As I crossed he yelled out, "That's OK, you go ahead! You've got a BAAA-BYYYY!"

I'm not disparaging all sports utility vehicle drivers, but this fellow in his pointlessly large vehicle was, as the kids say, a total jerk-face. I'm guessing he already had a chip on his shoulder about the neighborhood, and in classic jerk-face fashion, he bent the facts to affirm his bias — I was the narcissistic Park Slope parent who doesn't care about anyone else.

Jokes about stereotypes can be harmless fun, but when you treat real people poorly based on preconceived notions, things start to

get ugly. That was the first time I had been pre-judged on account of being a parent, and it made me angry. After a minute, though, that gave way to a sense of pride. In fact, it made me want to go and buy a case of kombucha.

And that brings us, happily, to an episode on the other end of the spectrum.

I was on line at the grocery store a few weeks ago, and little Bea was getting fussy. I turned her around in her carrier so she could look outwards, which she usually likes. I tried taking her out of her carrier and holding her up in the air — Space Baby! — but to no avail. I gave her a bottle, but she was not having it. By the time I arrived at the checkout, little Bea was in big hysterics, and the potent mix of parental exasperation at her torment, plus the dreadful fear that dozens of people hated me at that instant — for not knowing how to handle her, for not taking her outside, or for simply having the gall to be there in the first place — verged on overwhelming.

"Do you want me to hold her?" asked the woman behind the register.

In spite of my surprise I didn't hesitate. "Yes, please."

I handed Bea over, and instantly she looked puzzled and stopped screaming. Then she looked at me and her little cheeks lit up and she gave me her big toothless cartoon smile.

Some people can't hide their indignation that your baby hasn't yet mastered the nuances of socially acceptable behavior, but the overwhelming responses from people I meet are ones of support and joy. There's a small part of me that has never gotten over the adolescent notion that I don't quite fit in, that I'll always remain something of an outsider, but when I have little Bea dangling in front of me, breaking the ice with her glowing, exuberant grin, complete strangers become like family. Lately, I've felt a kind of acceptance from the world that I didn't know existed. If the ups and downs of parenting result in a payoff like that after only six months, then I'll gladly suffer all the jerk-faces in the world to see what's coming next.

Tim Perrins is a part-time stay-at-home dad who lives with his wife and their brand-new tiny human in Park Slope, Brooklyn. More of his thoughts about babies and other things that confuse him can be found at www.RevoltOfTheImbeciles.blogspot.com.



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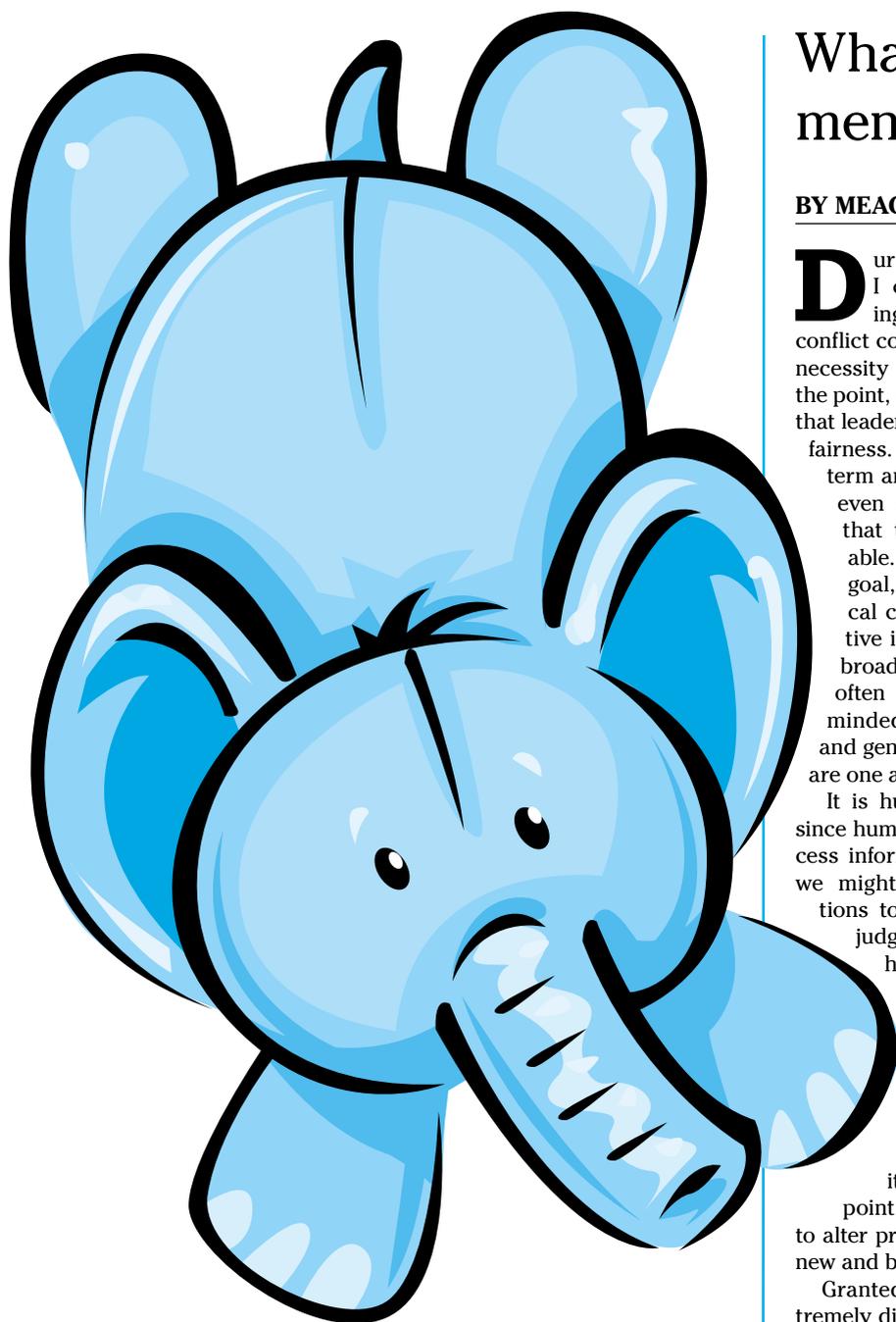
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Lessons from an ELEPHANT



What a classic tale of six blind men teaches about perception

BY MEAGAN J. MEEHAN

During my graduate studies, I came across an interesting concept in the realm of conflict communication: the integral necessity of perspective. More to the point, objectivity is the key asset that leaders seek in order to achieve fairness. Objectivity is an abstract term and is evasive by nature — even serious academics doubt that true objectivity is attainable. Yet, if objectivity is the goal, then perspective is a critical component, since perspective is the means by which we broaden our horizons. Conflicts often occur because of closed mindedness or stubbornness, and generally, those two attitudes are one and the same.

It is human nature to disagree, since human beings cognitively process information differently. Hence, we might all have varying reactions to the same stimulus. The judge of our character is not how we interpret information, but how we react to opinions that differ from our own. More importantly, the greatest judge of character, intelligence, and leadership skills is one's ability to listen to another's point of view and, if applicable, to alter previously held beliefs to fit new and better ideas.

Granted, these sound like extremely difficult concepts with deep

underlying moral, philosophical, psychological, and communicative implications. True, they are all of that and more. Yet, even the most difficult concepts can be broken down and made easier to understand. It is the simplification of difficult concepts that makes them interesting and engaging.

In the case of perception lessons, there is no better parable than that of "The Blind Men Describing the Elephant." The story originates from India many centuries ago and was popularized in the Western world via a poem written by American, John Godfrey Saxe in the 19th Century. There are many different versions of the story. An abridged version is about six blind men who had often heard about elephants but, being blind, had never actually seen one. Curious about the creature, the six blind men decided to visit the palace grounds where the rajah (king) kept many elephants. A friend of the six blind men met them at the palace and led them to an elephant that was standing in the courtyard. The six blind men touched the elephant with their hands, hoping to mentally envision what the animal looked like based on what it felt like.

The first blind man touched the side of the elephant. "How big and smooth," the first blind man declared. "An elephant is like a wall."

The second blind man touched the trunk of the elephant. "How round! An elephant is like a snake."

The third blind man touched the tusk of the elephant. "How sharp! An

Examining facts in a calm and objective manner is the primary way to broaden perspective and make educated choices.

elephant is like a spear!"

The fourth blind man touched the leg of the elephant. "How tall! An elephant is like a tree!" The fifth blind man touched the ear of the elephant. "How wide! An elephant is like a fan."

The sixth blind man touched the tail of the elephant. "How thin! An elephant is like a rope."

After each blind man had formed an opinion about the elephant, their friend led them into a nearby garden. The six blind men were tired due to their journey and the hot day. The men sat down in the shade of a tree and their friend brought them lunch. As they relaxed, the men started to discuss the elephant. Yet none of the blind men could agree on what the elephant was like, and each accused the others of being wrong.

The shouting in the courtyard soon awakened the rajah, who looked out of his palace window and saw the six quarreling men.

"Stop!" he called down to them, commanding their attention. "The elephant is a big animal, each man touched only one part. Therefore, each of you is partly right and all of you are wrong. In order to understand what an elephant is like you must put all the parts together."

The six blind men listened to the wise rajah. Calmly, they went back to their lunch and discussed each other's experience of the elephant. By the end of the day all of the men had an accurate idea of what an elephant looked like.

This story is a favorite in philosophy classes because it forces students to think deeply about its varied meanings. There is a religious undertone to the story, with many arguing that it was meant to serve as a parable about human relationships with God, or a commentary on the relationship between those who are in positions of power and those who are not. Although these viewpoints are both warranted, I think that this story has a much wider range than only the political

and theological arenas. More than anything else, I see this story as a commentary on the importance of being open-minded. It is, at its core, a very basic lesson with positive long-term benefits for those who take it to heart.

"The Blind Men Describing the Elephant" is a delightful story that people of all ages, creeds, and races can enjoy. The story is very entertaining and its deep meaning — that life is multi-faceted and should be acknowledged as such — makes it one of the greatest examples of educational literature that I have ever read. In short, it's a wonderful learning opportunity that is especially effective for children.

It is critical for people to recognize the importance of being open-minded, objective, and willing to consider other points of view. Examining the strengths and weaknesses of an issue is crucial to finding the best solutions and explanations for that particular situation. When disagreements occur, shouting and screaming usually lead to nothing but additional problems. Sometimes it takes an objective person — like the rajah in the story — to remind us to consider other views before finally reaching our own conclusions.

Sometimes it seems as if the world is presented as two sided — black and white, right and wrong — with little room for objective thinking. In reality, few things are so clean-cut and, unfortunately, too many people lack the initiative to recognize this and embrace all the possibilities that are available. Examining facts and options in a calm and objective manner is the primary way to broaden perspective and make educated choices. This is useful for forming strong friendships, business partnerships, and sound decisions overall.

Giving children the treasured gift of insight and perception is key to developing open-minded and well-rounded individuals for whom knowledge is a permanent priority. Best of all, it is easy to instill these messages at a young age through amusing and appealing stories, such as "The Blind Men and the Elephant."

Meagan Meehan is a published author of poems, short stories, novels, and articles in numerous publications. She is also a cartoonist and an award-winning modern artist. Meehan holds Bachelors in English literature from New York Institute of Technology and a Masters of communication from Marist College.

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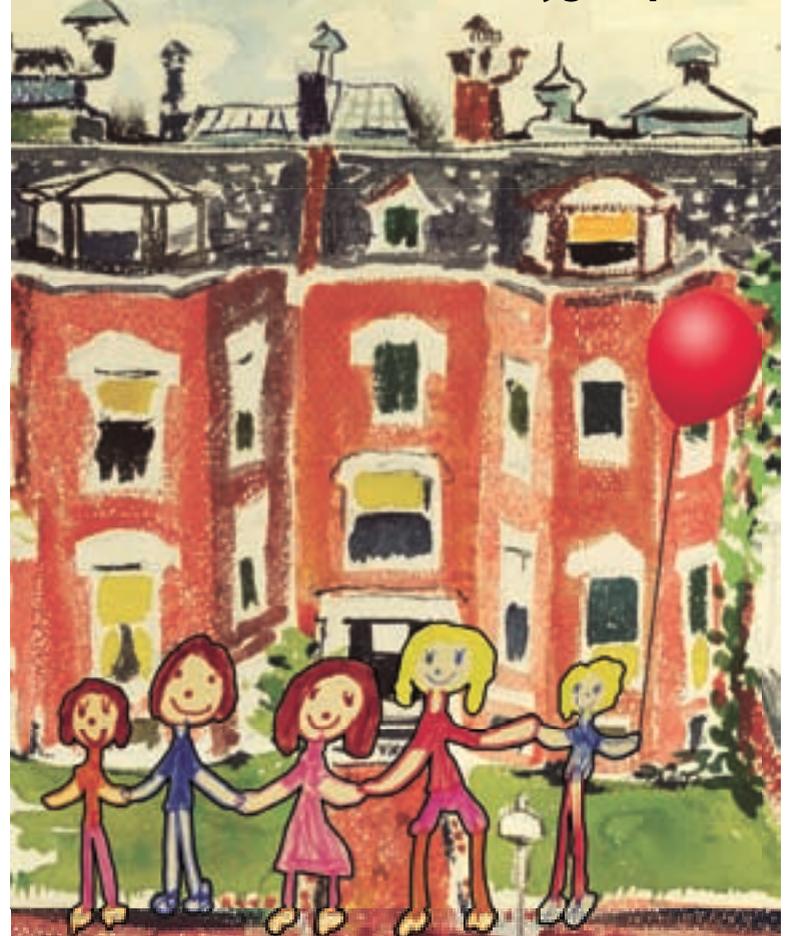
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Off to college

Ways to help your student and family cope with emotions

BY CAROL BRZOZOWSKI

I remember the day like it was yesterday, the day my first-born started his first day of school. It was a bittersweet moment — I had done everything I could to prepare him for this day, so I was confident he had the best shot at success that he could have.

Yet it also was a milestone day — I had to let go of his hand and pass him off to his teacher, who took his hand and guided him into her classroom. I bid him a tearful goodbye, and then stood in the courtyard, hiding behind a post, watching him settle in until the bell rang. I then drove home, tears rolling down my cheeks.

That was then. This is now, as I prepare to send him off to his first year of college.

The bittersweet feelings have returned. In a few weeks, I will be embracing my son, who is now much

taller than me. I am confident that I have done everything I could to prepare him for this day. I know he will have the best shot at success that he could have, at one of the best public universities in the country.

I will help him unload all of his personal items from our vehicle and bid him what is sure to be another emotional good-bye. It will be a much longer drive back home. This time, I will not see him again for a month until family weekend.

During orientation, which the University of Florida calls “Preview,” I attended a seminar called “Family Transitions,” moderated by the university’s counseling and wellness center.

I affectionately referred to it as group therapy for parents sending their first-borns off to college. Even looking at the seminar’s title on the program triggered tears.

Recently, a young man at the gym where I work out indicated to me

that as a new college student, he was both excited and nervous. As parents we may focus on our own emotions at this time, but it also is an emotionally turbulent time for our sons or daughters, as well as their siblings, and even the family pet.

In the college student’s first days, he may experience a roller coaster of emotions.

There are issues associated with leaving home, such as displacement of traditional support systems, knowledge of a familiar environment, change in friendships, and changes in familiar expectations.

There’s uncertainty about the future. A student’s goals may be idealized and untested in the new environment.

Although students are aware that study demands in college are different, many are unprepared for the amount of, and rate at which, the material will be presented. While

many have been successful in high school, receiving an average grade may come as a shock. It takes time to see the bigger picture and the learning process over a semester.

What the student thinks others expect of him is very important. Living up to or failing those goals can be a source of motivation and reward, but also stress and shame.

There's the "hidden curriculum" of college: how does one navigate the campus, pay bills, balance a checkbook, shop for groceries, find classrooms, ensure he's in the right course, is on track for his major, approach a professor, ask for help with academics, figure out where to eat, do laundry, manage differences with roommates, and the myriad of tasks that were once taken for granted or provided by others? Can anyone help? Is it even OK to ask for help?

Fitting in socially also is a significant concern — developing friendships, intimacy, and social support is desired but takes time. Where does one go to initiate these important aspects of community life? How does one cope with difficulties in creating a social network?

For some students, making independent decisions can be daunting. How does a student decide how to act and what options to choose? Who will approve or disapprove of those options?

So what can parents do to help make the transition to college go as smoothly as possible for their offspring? The center's counseling staff acknowledges that there are no easy answers for parents and family members, but there are some general guidelines:

- Listen to your student's concerns; avoid lecturing or too quickly offering solutions.
- Ask questions to help your student clarify the concerns; avoid giving answers too readily.
- Acknowledge and communicate emotions — affirming that you recognize your student's feelings — and avoid denying the presence of strong feelings (in yourself or your student).
- Express your thoughts and provide perspective; avoid making demands.
- Help clarify the consequences of behaviors; avoid threatening in ways that stifle communications.
- Be supportive and remind him you love him; avoid taking responsibility away from your student.
- Strive for mutual respect; avoid demanding submission without un-

derstanding.

- Let go a little and compromise where possible; avoid giving up completely and exasperation.
- Deal with the problems openly and as calmly as possible; avoid ignoring or exaggerating problems.
- Allow mistakes for both of you; avoid expecting perfection... growth takes time.

Starting college is a highly emotional time for students and their families. The tension can be high. Counselors have seen a range of scenarios, from those parents who've had a strained relationship with their students and drop them off at college and spin off in their cars to those who book a hotel for a week and keep checking on the student on a frequent basis.

Siblings may either feel sad or none too happy to try to take over their brother or sister's room (this is not the time to turn the room into Dad's man cave, an exercise room, or a tranquility space).

The University of Florida's dean of students' office offers several other suggestions for families to help support their student:

- A helicopter parents hovers; a rocket ship parent takes issues straight to the top. Avoid those behaviors, but do be involved and stay informed. Be aware of deadlines, resources, and opportunities.
 - Encourage your student to get involved in at least one extracurricular activity; these helps ensure a successful transition. That activity can be connected with the student's academic or social interest, or can enhance an activity in which he is interested.
 - Encourage your student to do research with a professor or study abroad.
 - Discuss expectations about substance abuse, money management, wellness, and integrity.
 - Communicate frequently, but ask your student what he prefers: phone calls, texts, Skype, or Facebook. Don't make surprise visits to the campus — ask the student if the time is convenient, as he may need study time.
 - Trust your instincts; if you are concerned for your student's well-being, contact the dean of students.
 - The best advice to give your student — everything at the university is a learning experience — including what happens outside the classroom.
- That's also a concept worth embracing for the rest of your family.

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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Teens young & old

Different problems as your teenagers mature

Your children's teen years are particularly demanding on parents because expectations and rules must continually adapt to the kids' ever-changing behaviors.

Typical teen temperament — rebellion, moodiness, and insecurity — usually begins in the “tween” years (ages 10 to 12) and becomes full-blown around age 13. In all fairness, though, teens should not be lumped into one category. I prefer to categorize the teen years into two distinct phases — the “roller coaster” phase (ages 13 to 15) and the “know-it-all” phase (ages 16 to 19).

For the record, my daughter experienced mood changes that swung

chotherapist from Long Island who specializes in treating at-risk teens, describes the young adolescent as conflicted between wanting to rely on his peers and still needing parental support. This estrangement phase is troublesome for parents because their child becomes dismissive and no longer idealizes them.

“In my experience, it proves to be less about willfully rejecting loved ones than carelessly struggling with one's own identity,” he says.

Shelly Furuness, PhD, an assistant professor of secondary education at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., agrees.

“Younger teens are trying to figure out who they are in relation to everyone else,” says Furuness. They are constantly mirror-checking because their bodies are incessantly changing, and they fear that they'll look weird or different. “They know what they're supposed to do, but it's physically and emotionally harder for a younger teen to control their behaviors.”

What's a parent to do?

Don't get caught up in the drama and sink to your teen's level. Try to empathize with your teen's inner turmoil and the likelihood that she literally feels uncomfortable in her own skin.

DeCamello urges parents to maintain their role as adult models and to avoid “falling prey to reactive battles with their teens.”

Know-it-all phase

During the “know-it-all” phase, teens experience significant firsts as they prepare for adulthood, such as driving or living on one's own.

Teens start to find their way during this phase. Perhaps they are earning their own income, driving to school, or becoming increasingly secretive about their love lives. Fortunately, their temperaments are a bit more even-keeled than their younger counterparts.

“As the teen years progress, a trend toward less emotion-driven impulsiveness and more thoughtful, pondered responses begins to emerge,” DeCamello reports.

It's difficult to allow your older teen to make mistakes because the consequences can be frightening, such as a car accident or an unwanted pregnancy.

“Older teenagers are looking for independence and ways to leave the nest,” Furuness explains. “They take on responsibilities to show they are capable of being on their own.”

What's a parent to do?

Let go. Allow your teen to grow away from you and become a unique person.

Levester Johnson, EdD, the vice president for student affairs at Butler University in Indianapolis, Ind., instructs parents to provide their teens with more independence so they can acquire the skills they will need as adults.

“Give them more freedom as they demonstrate that they're using their freedoms properly. Don't sweat the little things like hair and clothing that they may be experimenting with.” Johnson says that successes and failures are all part of the maturation process.

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) now available on Amazon.com and at: www.unlimited-publishing.com/haskell/.

Tips and tales

“Older teens drive in cars with other teenagers. Therefore, parents should know their teen's circle of friends and ask a lot of questions.”

Peggy Farrington, Wappingers Falls, NY

“Younger teens seem more eager to explore things that feel ‘rebellious,’ while older teens seem to have more of an idea about consequences.”

Jennifer Malcarne, Clinton, NY

Share your ideas

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back and forth like Tarzan on steroids during her “roller coaster” phase, and my “know-it-all” son — now 18 — has the habit of telling my husband and I, “Let me explain this to you,” as if we just fell off the turnip truck. So here's a breakdown of the two phases from someone who knows them well.

Roller coaster phase

During the “roller coaster” phase, teens experience extreme hormonal and physical changes, such as acne, weight gain, and facial hair growth, which leave them feeling awkward at a time when they are desperately trying to fit in.

Anthony DeCamello, PhD, a psy-



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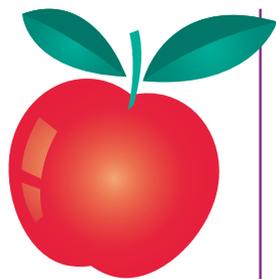
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DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

How to prepare for the new school year

A great start

Dear teacher,

We're back to school this month, and I want to make the year go smoothly. What are some of the really important things to do to make this happen?

Dear parents,

To make the school year go smoothly, a family discussion really helps. Talk about the things that really worked last year and those that didn't. Focus on everyday activities such as the time to get up, go to bed, eat, and do homework.

It is also important to discuss how the children will organize getting everything ready for the new school day, such as getting forms signed and handling lunch.

Early agreement on all these things is vital. Nothing, however, should be written in stone. Routines can be changed if they are not working.

Once the nitty-gritty of each day is organized, parents need to focus on the things that they can do to make the school year look a whole lot better. For many families, the answer is to slow things down to be able to avoid feeling exhausted and tense from too many activities. A steady routine of rushing to ballet, sports, and clubs for the children, and then parents trying to squeeze in meetings and exercise classes for themselves can eliminate any chance family members have to relax and enjoy time together. It is also very important to have dinner together so the family can talk to each other.

Value of pretend play

Dr. teacher,

I am a bit worried. My two young girls, ages 3 and 5, spend a great deal of their time doing pretend play. Is this a good thing for them to do? A lot of it centers on being princesses.

They have their princess dolls riding horseback and living in castles. They also dress up as princesses.

Dear parents,

Pretend play is a wonderful thing for children to do, and educators are very enthused about its benefits. It is a great way to get kids ready for school. By playing together, your children are learning to take turns, be part of a team, negotiate, and play leader. At the same time, they are enhancing their verbal skills and learning how to solve problems.

It certainly seems to be popular right now for young girls to playact being princesses and to play with princess dolls. If you are upset about their concentration on princesses in particular, you might try providing additional paraphernalia to broaden their horizons. They may, however, just move their princesses into these new venues.

Pretend play also fosters creativity. Since young children learn by imagining and doing, be glad that they are building so many skills.

Is cursive writing disappearing?

Dear teacher,

My daughter did not learn cursive handwriting in third grade. And apparently cursive is not going to be taught in fourth grade. How will she ever learn to sign her name?

Dear parents,

Many of today's elementary teachers believe that teaching cursive is old-fashioned in this technological age. Instead, they favor keyboarding instruction.

Furthermore, states now have the choice under the Common Core State Standards to decide whether or not to include cursive in the curriculum. And more and more of them are eliminating cursive partly because of the crowded curriculum necessary to prepare for standardized testing.

Because your daughter did not receive any instruction in cursive in third grade when handwriting is typically introduced, she may never

be taught to write or read cursive.

As far as her signature goes, she will probably create her own signature, as most children without cursive instruction do. It is likely to be very simple and may not be too legible. The best way for her to learn to write her name is for you to have her practice tracing and then copying her signature until she can easily write it.

Handling bullying

Dear teacher,

My seventh grader has just told me that he doesn't want to go back to school. It comes out now that a group of kids teased him unmercifully last year about his very curly hair. How can I help him handle this?

Dear parents,

First, you have to find out how serious this situation really is. Could it just be anxiety about returning to school? Or is it in any way a threatening situation?

As you know, bullying is a big problem, and close to three quarters of all children have been bullied. Your son needs to learn how to respond to verbal bullying. Should the bullying become physical or escalate to threats of violence, school personnel must be brought into the situation at once.

There are books that will give you and your son ideas about how to deflect bullying. A good choice is "Bullies Are a Pain in the Brain." Look for a video by the same title on YouTube, where you'll also find other videos that have solid approaches to handling bullying.

Advise your son that this is a new school year, and he may no longer be a target of the bullies. Also, help him develop strategies to use if he should be bullied again. These could include avoiding the bullies, making everyone laugh, and staying with friends.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask the columnists at www.dearteacher.com.



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Ensuring the safety of a latchkey kid

I am a single parent who is often at work when my 11-year-old daughter gets home from school. What steps can I take to best ensure her safety during the hours that I'm unable to be there?

There's no doubt about it — a supervised home is preferable. However, a full workday does not always allow us that opportunity. Fortunately, there are several steps you can take to help ensure the safety of your children when they are home alone. (The following advice typically applies to children ages 11 and up; children younger than 11 require supervision at all times.)

Children should keep their house keys hidden while walking home. Do not permit your child to experiment with different routes between home and school.

Walking home with friends or a trusted adult is a good idea, and once your child is home, she should check in with a responsible adult to confirm that she has arrived home safely.

Establishing a daily schedule so that your child has something to do during her time at home is very important as well. Boredom often leads to trouble, so you should provide some kind of educational or entertaining activity for your child, such as a puzzle, art materials, or even simple chores. You may also want to keep some healthy snacks around.

Post your contact emergency numbers by the phone and make sure that your child knows what to do and who to reach in case of an emergency.

Do a few mock run-throughs with her for practice. Also, post house safety rules regarding the use of appliances and answering the door and telephone. (Children should not answer the door for strangers and should never indicate that they are home alone over the telephone.)



The tips above should help, but consider looking for ways to provide your child with supervised care, such as a local recreational organization or an after-school program. Some children may have fears about staying home alone and need an adult to answer their ques-

tions and concerns. Talk with your child about staying home alone and make sure that she is comfortable with the situation.

Busy workday or not, it is important to spend time with your child each day; your love and attention cannot be replaced.



Simple rules of backpack safety

BY JAY HUNT

It's that time of year again! With school starting up, it's a good time to remind parents to exercise caution about their children's backpacks, which are often used improperly or are overloaded. It is estimated that annually, some 10,000 school-aged kids across the country visit doctors or the ER with complaints of back-related injuries. When backpacks are worn improperly or are too heavy, students are at a risk for spinal injury. Some simple warning signs:

- Struggling to put on or take off backpack.
- Change in posture or pain when wearing backpack.

- Tingling or numbness in arms, shoulders, or hands.

- Red marks on shoulders from shoulder straps.

Simple tips to help:

- Backpack should not exceed 10 to 15 percent of a child's total body weight.
- Wear both shoulder straps for better distribution of weight.
- Choose a backpack with multiple compartments.
- Pack heavier items at the bottom or closer to the back.

Get the school year off to a safe start. And don't forget to include the backpacks!

Jay Hunt is the Clinical Director of Madison Physical and Occupational Therapy, and someone who has youngsters of his own.

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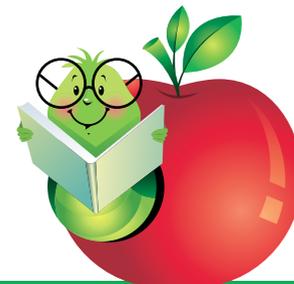


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SHARON C. PETERS, MA

How to foster your twins' individuality



Dear Sharon,

We have identical twin daughters who rely on each other for just about everything. They dress alike, act alike, and are each other's best friends. They are 12 and we are concerned that they are too dependent and lack any individuality. Are we justified in our concern, and do you have any advice for us moving forward?

Dear Parents,

It is a true gift when twins such as your daughters get to have strong, close relationships.

However, it can be important to foster twins' individuality, as doing so can help them grow into adults who have had the opportunity to understand and pursue their own goals and aspirations. Here are a few relatively simple ideas that can help.

Even when twins are identical there are usually noticeable differ-

ences. I usually suggest that parents of twins appreciate and foster these unique qualities, encouraging any distinct friendships, academic interests, or recreational activities as frequently as possible. This can mean that parents need to find ways to get each child to separate places at the same time, which can cause reluctance and anger in the children, but can truly benefit them in the long run.

Another basic but effective tool is for parents to spend regular time alone with each child. In circumstances when twins are particularly intertwined I suggest arranging an hour or two every week to do something of each one's choosing. This can help parents practically support

personal interests and explorations, and helps communicate that mom and dad enjoy being with them individually, not just as a unit.

I've talked to many parents of twins who have said that it was at times difficult to help their children become more independent. This can be particularly true as children get closer to adolescence. Teens and pre-teens are often increasingly reluctant to alter their routines, but adult guidance is an important part of parenting.

It can help to remember that when twins have some separate relationships and interests they have even more to share with each other. Best wishes as you continue to help your twins grow.

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

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DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

A teenage appetite

With this boy, feeding time is all the time

And so, here I stand, hip-deep in spent pizza boxes, McDonald's wrappers, and popsicle sticks. My kitchen is piled to the eaves with sauce-splattered pots, greasy pans, dirty dishes, and those plastic wrappers from Kraft "cheese" slices. I'm exhausted. I'm worn out. There's not a scrap of food in the house. I wipe the sweat off my brow, wipe my hand on my apron, and my phone vibrates. It's the boy, texting me from his lair.

"Food."

It's been like this for six weeks. He wakes up, eats everything, then

asks me what's for lunch. I'm trying to keep ahead of him but it's hard. I hurry back into the kitchen. I make him a couple of sandwiches, some mac and "cheese," a pickle, and a glass of milk. I come into his room and place the bowl gently on the table in front of him so as not to disturb his run of headshots in *DIE ZOMBIE DIE*.

I break down the mountain of pots in the kitchen, chip dried gravy off the stove, and get everything back in order. He brings me the plate.

"That was good. What's for lunch?"

"I'm frying a horse."

"Dad, you're so funny. But seriously."

He eats like a hobbit: breakfast, second breakfast, pre-lunch, lunch, post lunch, second lunch — I think he eats in the shower.

And he's not getting fat. Not much. He's getting bigger. Like I'm zooming in. If his head and feet are any indication of how tall he's going to be (like 6-foot-1 isn't good enough) I should start saving for a new ceiling.

And though most of the food is clearly being used as

scaffolding to grow his new giant body, some it goes through him the old-fashioned way and it's as much a problem coming out as it is going in.

"Dad, call a plumber."

"He was here five minutes ago!"

"Cool. What's for lunch?"

Yesterday he was eating a snack while looking in the fridge for a snack.

"You should go to the store. I need a snack."

"You're eating beef jerky right now."

He looks at the beef jerky in his hand.

"Well, it's almost gone."

I open the fridge — a starving village in Czechoslovakia stares back at me.

"I'm going to Wendy's."

"Get a me a triple baconator."

"Kid, you're too young for a heart attack."

"And a shake."

"Any last requests?"

"Hurry."

I hit the road. I reject my own principals. I drive through Wendy's. I bring home a heart attack in a box. I have one, too. I feel dirty. I feel like I've crossed some kind of line. And I feel like I'll never eat again. My stomach is distended like I've swallowed a bowling ball. I walk in and three of his friends are there.

They've brought snacks.

They're eating on the couch like a pack of upright hyenas; the crunch of chips is deafening. They all see me and pounce off the couch, snatching the food from my carb stupor weakened grasp.

I've been gone 15 minutes. There are six large, empty bags of chips, beef jerky wrappers, and an eviscerated Combos bag — one of them has his head inside a sack of Funyons. I could live a week on the crap they've eaten while I was out GETTING FOOD.

They tear open the fast-food wrappers and growl.

"Thanks, Mr. G, we were starving."



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Our children surprise us nearly every day. But one of the biggest surprises can be when your child announces he's on a high-protein, low-fat, low-carb diet, and asks you to buy spinach or another green leafy food he's rejected his entire life. When asked why, he explains he wants to develop his abs.

Welcome to the world of tween and teen sports nutrition, where kids desire to build muscle and strength — and coaches suddenly are the most important adults in a young person's world.

"This is really a great opportunity to get them engaged in talking about good nutrition and how they should be eating," explains Ellen Shanley, RD, dietetics director at the University of Connecticut, co-author of "Fueling the Teen Machine" second edition, and the mother of two.

Yet, "as a parent you need to be involved and ask questions if you do not agree or have questions about something the coach is stating," she says.

Team participation and dietary habits

Unfortunately, not every student athlete is lean and fit. In a recent review of the research published in *Current Sports Medicine Report*, a journal of the American College of Sports Medicine, there's no evidence showing that sports participation



prevents obesity in kids.

Those who play sports are more likely to consume fast food and sugar-sweetened beverages and take in more total calories than non-athletes. Yet, these same students often consume more vegetables, fruits, and drink more milk than those not in sports.

It's likely no surprise to parents that many sport participants consume empty-calorie foods. Think of the candy, sugar-sweetened drinks, chips, and ice cream sold at games and meets.

And parents are often on the hook for bringing "treats" for practices and games, regardless of the amount of actual calories burned.

Nutrition strategies

- For building muscle, you must exercise those muscles, says Shanley. "The best way to build muscles is

when aerobic exercise is combined with strength training. The energy to do this is provided mostly from carbohydrates, not protein."

- Eat enough calories. An average teen female needs 2,000 calories each day, and a male needs 2,300. But calorie needs can vary depending on the athlete's age, gender, height, weight, type of sport, playing time, intensity level, and skill level.

- Eat a good mix of protein, fat, and carbohydrates. Fifty-five to 60 percent of the calories should come from carbohydrate, 20 to 35 percent or less from fat, and 15 to 20 percent from protein.

- Most athletes need 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight each day. For example, a 110-pound youth needs about 40 grams of protein.

- Need help in translating the above recommendations? Consult a credentialed sports dietitian by visiting www.scandpg.org/search-rd/

In addition to parental involvement, there's much that can be done by league officials and coaches of youth sport organizations to promote healthy dietary habits among participants. They can reach out to registered dietitians for educational seminars and to help develop simple, accurate nutrition education materials for parents, coaches, and youths.

Volunteer parent coordinators can also develop food and beverage guidelines for team snacks and items sold at concession stands.

As for your son frustrated with the lack of progress with his "six-pack" and biceps? Advise patience. His male hormones will increase during the maturation process, and so will his ability to grow muscles.

Christine M. Palumbo, RD, is a registered dietitian in Naperville, Ill. and an adjunct faculty member of Benedictine University. Her son was incredibly frustrated with his inability to sprout muscles during his teen years. Follow her on Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, on Twitter @PalumboRD or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Yummy frozen banana bites

This is a fun way to use up slightly overripe bananas, as well as small amounts of leftover holiday sprinkles and bits of chocolate.

INGREDIENTS

1 banana, peeled
About 1/3 cup chocolate chips (or leftover chocolate bar, chopped)
Flaked sweetened coconut
Cookie or cake "sprinkles"

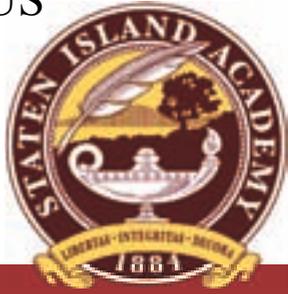
DIRECTIONS: After cutting off the



ends of the banana, cut into 1-inch slices. Place the slices onto a plate or baking sheet lined with wax paper. Freeze for about one hour. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt the chocolate chips in 30-second increments. Stir well after each, until the chocolate is completely smooth. Place the coconut and sprinkles each on separate plates. Remove the banana from the freezer and dip each piece halfway into the melted chocolate. Roll the chocolate-covered halves in the coconut and sprinkles. Place the banana pieces back on the plate and into the freezer for an additional 15 minutes or until set.

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To gift or not to gift

I have been hearing a lot about the expiration of the “Bush tax cuts” and changes in the estate and gift tax laws, and how people should be making substantial gifts this year. What does this mean? Is this true

Many clients have heard in the media that the window to make tax-free gifts is closing, and that they should be gifting all their assets. Unfortunately, those articles and reports do not effectively explain what the changes will be and how they will impact you.

Currently, an individual may transfer \$5.12 million during his lifetime or at death without incurring any federal transfer tax. The tax rate on transfers above the exemption amount is at an historic low of 35 percent. A married couple can transfer a combined \$10.24 million because of a newly introduced concept of “portability,” allowing a surviving spouse to “carry over” the unused exemption of a dead spouse. This high exemption amount expires on Dec. 31, 2012, when the federal exemption drops to \$1 million at a 55 percent tax rate.

This presents a unique opportunity to transfer a large amount of assets free of transfer taxes, the current low interest rates, and the current depressed asset values, but gifting is not right for everyone. Many clients do not have an objective of shielding their children’s inheritance from estate taxes, feeling that they should be content with the net result of their hard-earned wealth. For family business owners, it could be a unique opportunity to implement business succession planning at valuation discounts.

Considering whether to gift depends on many factors, including: the nature and extent of the client’s assets, the cost basis at which he required those assets, whether he is ready to give up control, the family dynamic, and the personalities of the children or other individuals whom he would entrust with his assets. The



assessment should address whether a gift makes sense, which assets should be gifted, whether conditions should be placed on transfer of assets, whether a trust should be used to hold the gifted assets, and the terms and structure of that trust.

Some of these issues are contemplated in greater detail:

- Will the estate tax exemption be lowered? This depends, in part, on politics. President Obama has proposed a \$3.5 million estate tax exemption at a rate of 45 percent, with a lifetime gift tax exemption of \$1 million. If he wins in November, he will still need to convince Congress to enact his proposal. If the Republicans take control of Congress, they will either insist on keeping the exemption at \$5 million at a 35 percent rate, or compromise with President Obama.

- Are you ready to give up control? In general, enjoying estate tax savings techniques requires that the donor give up some control over assets. Giving a substantial portion of your wealth to another individual leaves you without any legal guarantee that he will use the money to pay for your care, or return the money at your request. Not everyone is ready to put himself at someone else’s mercy.

If, having contemplated the benefits and drawbacks, you or a client decide to make substantial gifts, some strategies include:

- Outright gifts. This is appropriate only in certain situations, as it is not always appropriate to give significant gifts to minor children or grandchildren without putting asset protection

in place against potential creditors or future ex-spouses. There may also be generation-skipping tax consequences to making outright gifts to a younger generation. Keep in mind that anyone can gift \$13,000 per year to any individual (\$26,000 from a married couple) and can pay unlimited medical and educational expenses. Annual exclusion gifts remain an effective way to decrease your estate without using up any of your lifetime exemption, wherever it winds up. As noted above, New York State does not impose a transfer tax, but has a very low estate tax exemption of \$1 million. Thus, making annual exclusion gifts can help to reduce the size of your taxable estate.

- A living trust can be drafted for the benefit of intended beneficiaries or a class of beneficiaries (i.e., descendants, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, etc.). The trust terms can be tailored to dictate when and how specific distributions can be made, and can be structured as “Grantor Trusts” for income tax purposes so that any trust income is picked up on the grantor’s individual return. Devising a trust and the appropriate trust terms requires time, attention, and careful planning.

Deciding whether to take advantage of estate planning techniques requires an individual assessment of your own situation. Before undertaking a drastic restructuring of your assets, you should fully understand the mechanisms and consequences of doing so, and feel comfortable with the transfers and structures you are implementing.

It is essential that you consult with your accountant, tax planner, financial advisor, and attorney before undertaking any change in your estate plan.

Alison Arden Besunder assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate-planning needs. Her firm assists clients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. You can find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on the web at www.besunderlaw.com.

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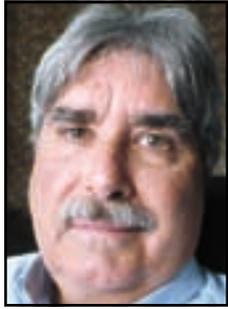
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FAMILY JOURNAL

ROBERT MORTON

Danger of parents as perfectionists

Dear Mr. Morton,

I am a perfectionist and put a lot of pressure on my 10-year-old son to achieve. This past school year he brought home “Bs” and “Cs,” which I can’t accept. How can I help him to get better grades without putting too much stress on him? —S.L.

Dear S.L.,

When parental expectations are too high or perfectionistic, children easily grow anxious and hypersensitive to criticism. I’ve witnessed students try to get even with overly demanding parents by committing “academic suicide” or by purposefully underachieving. Others develop poor self-esteems and relinquish their natural zest for trying in school ... and life.

If your son feels he cannot consistently be good enough to please you, he may eventually throw in the towel or learn to give only minimal effort in school and in life. And why not? If effort doesn’t earn your appreciation, he’ll rationally conclude the less effort, the less to lose, emotionally.

Here’s some thoughts that may help: Realign your own ideas about perfectionism and humor yourself, even laugh at yourself and your mistakes. Remember, people only approach perfection when they fill out their income tax forms or go on job interviews.

Like the baseball greats Hank Aaron and Babe Ruth, focus intensely on process, and minimally on product. How? Appreciate and encourage your son’s daily efforts and improvements (process) and less on making all “As” in school (product).

In this manner, your son will feel your appreciation for his daily efforts and improvements, regardless of the outcomes. Everything else will follow, for he’ll learn the true meaning of “winning” — no one is a loser until he gives up. People who don’t make mistakes are the ones who usually don’t



make anything at all. Is that why Aaron and Ruth struck out at the plate many more times than they hit home runs?

A New York-based psychoanalyst, H. David Stein, MD, feels that perfectionist parents do their children more harm than good. “Kids feel that their parents are dissat-

isfied with them, even if it’s not stated,” he says. “They pick up on subtle cues.”

Robert Morton, MEd, EdS, has retired from his positions of school psychologist and adjunct professor in the School of Leadership and Policy Studies at Bowling Green State University. Contact him at robertmorton.359@gmail.com.



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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Modern-day mystery that teens will love

Your teen loves mysteries, but your weathered Agatha Christies are too old-school for her.

Then try Kimberly Reid's "Creeping with the Enemy," a mystery set in a school with a street-smart sleuth lead by 15-year-old Chanti Evans, who's an ace at wedding through lies.

When Chanti and her new friend Bethanie witness a robbery at a tamale place, Chanti knows something is off. It took place on freebie Friday, and the restaurant's buy-one-get-one-free offer usually means a line out the door. But for some reason, on this particular Friday, no one was there. And Chanti noticed.

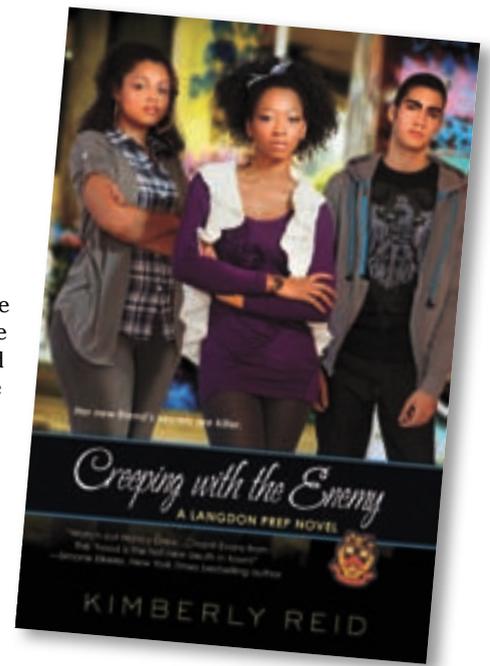
She also noticed a creepy guy flirting with Bethanie. There was something really off about him. He acted weird — like he was some kind of hero — when the gunman entered the restaurant, when, in reality, he almost got everybody killed.

After the gunman fled the scene, Chanti searched the area for clues, but found nothing. Worse of all, she can't even ask her mom, Lana — who's a cop — for help figuring things out because she wasn't supposed to be in the tamale place's dangerous neighborhood.

Chanti also starts to realize that her friend Bethanie's life seems to be one gigantic fib — especially when she discovers that Bethanie is actually dating the creep from the restaurant.

The more Chanti finds out, the more everybody hates her snooping. But what else can she do?

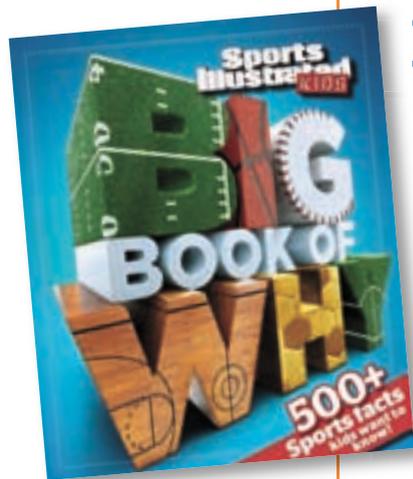
Reid gives Chanti brains, maturity, and a sense of humor without making her too much of a good-girl type. That, and the novel's real-life, conversational dialogue lend authenticity to the book, which will



keep savvy 12- to 17-year-old readers from tossing this book aside.

This teen novel is the third in a series, and while it could be read first, your teen will appreciate the characters better if she starts from the beginning. Start there, and "Creeping with the Enemy" will be a mystery she'll have no trouble enjoying.

"Creeping with the Enemy" by Kimberly Reid [256 pages, 2012, \$9.95].



Kids won't even know they're learning

Parents have to be sneaky with their kids. They have to slip spinach into brownies so they will eat their vegetables and tell them that if they don't behave they'll end up on Santa's "naughty list." And, sometimes parents have to be sly about schooling children as well.

"Time for Kids Big Book of What?" and "Sports Illustrated Kids Big Book of Why" are two fun books pumped

full of informative facts that will educate while entertaining kids. By reading these books, children will learn where the largest meteorite landed, the difference between a fruit and a vegetable (and how long they can survive without either one), where the hottest temperature was recorded, and how long they could survive in space without protection.

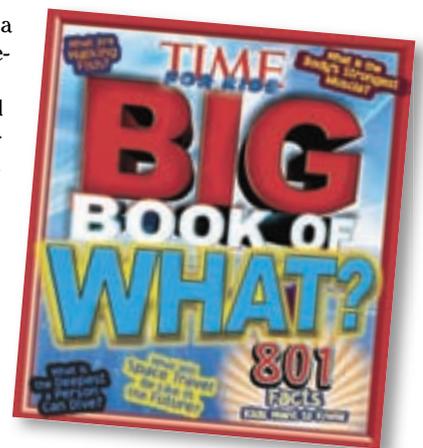
They'll better understand their bodies by reading about which muscle in the body is the strongest (and a few runners-up), what it means to be dou-

ble-jointed, and why it's not always a good idea to do a lot of stretching before exercising or playing sports.

Future doctors, surgeons, and nurses can also learn what an artery is while learning about nutrition, cooking, eating bugs, and not consuming things that are poisonous. They'll impress their teachers and classmates by knowing what Olympics sports are men-only, how to play Mancala, why tennis balls are furry, and why pitchers' warm-up area is called the bullpen.

By delving into subjects that kids actually want to learn about, both of these books whet kids' appetites with small bits of information that won't cause them to lose interest. These kid-friendly, parent-pleasing books offer a wide variety of topics and plenty of pictures to keep even the most non-bookish children reading.

So before the summer ends, give your 7- to-12-year-old a scholarly jump-start on the new school year with "Time for Kids Big Book of What?" and "Sports Illustrated Big



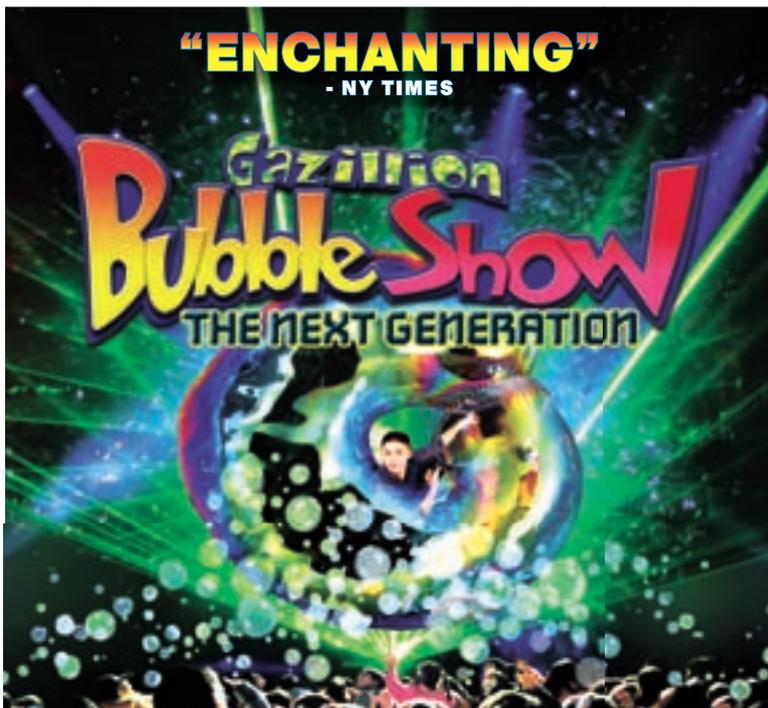
Book of Why."

Just don't tell them that they're learning. That's your little secret.

"Time for Kids Big Book of What?" [192 pages, 2012, \$19.95].

"Sports Illustrated Kids Big Book of Why" [128 pages, 2012, \$17.95].

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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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Making a digital grounding work

Teaching kids to do the right thing isn't easy. Basically, parents have three options: encourage good behavior, ignore poor behavior (especially when it's caused by temporary factors such as fatigue, hunger, or simple immaturity), or discourage bad behavior by associating it with disagreeable consequences.

For wired kids, the most disagreeable consequence is often loss of digital privileges. Parents have been doing it for years, but "digital grounding" got its name in 2010 when research from the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported that 62 percent of parents had disciplined their kids by taking away a cellphone.

Grounding of any kind is simply a big-kid version of "time out." The theory is that if a

child is disconnected from other people for a while, he will have extra time to think about what he did wrong, and miss his social connections so much that he won't want to repeat the problem behavior. Now that kids do most of their socializing online, the only effective way to disconnect them is to confiscate their digital devices or limit access to texting, social media, and interactive games.

To make digital grounding effective, parents should be aware of the distinction between discipline and punishment. Both words are rooted in Latin, but discipline comes from a root that means "to teach," while punishment comes from a word that means "to inflict pain." The impulse to punish is understandable, especially when a child's behavior has caused distress for a parent. The theory, of course, is that making a child suffer for a mistake will dis-

courage that mistake in the future. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Punishment often triggers resentment, which in turn, makes kids devious or even defiant.

In contrast, the goal of discipline is to help children learn from mistakes and develop the self-control that guides better choices in the future. Instead of doing the right thing because he is afraid of external consequences, a child who has the benefit of good discipline develops an inner sense of what is right based on trust, respect, and an ability to think about long-term goals.

Come to think of it, those three qualities — trust, respect, and clarity about long-term goals — are also what parents will need if they are going to make digital grounding a form of discipline in the best sense of the word. Here are some suggestions about how to do just that:

- Be clear about expectations. Children are more likely to experience grounding as punishment if it seems like a random response to behavior parents don't like. Whenever possible, be clear in advance about what you expect and why it matters. As children get older, listen to their point of view and modify rules to reflect their growing capabilities. House rules that are clear and make sense to kids are less likely to be broken. And when transgressions do occur, kids are less likely to resent calm, even-handed enforcement of penalties that have been discussed in advance.

- Connect consequences to behavior. Many experts believe the most effective consequences grow logically out of misbehavior. A child who sends inappropriate text messages loses cellphone access precisely because he's demonstrated an inability to use the device responsibly. A child whose grades suffer because she's gossiping on Facebook when she says she's researching a paper can't use social media until she makes schoolwork a priority. In such cases, parents may actually

want to say that the device is causing a problem so it's being grounded (instead of the child).

- Enlist tech support. One of the best things about technology is that there are off buttons. If you've decided it's in your child's best interest to use the computer only for homework, use a timer to back up a digital curfew. Curtail access to specific websites by changing passwords or using blocking software. Contact your cellphone carrier to find out whether you can temporarily disable services such as texting or web access. Some companies will also let you restrict calls so your child can use a cellphone only for emergency calls or to get in touch with you.

- Think ahead. Before blurting out, "You're grounded!" parents should anticipate consequences — for themselves. The Pew Report found that many parents didn't follow through on cellphone bans because they needed to reach their kids on the phone. The same thing may be true of social media. If your child depends on an afternoon gaming session to relieve stress or social media to maintain friendships, you'll want to think carefully about whether taking away those privileges is the best way to achieve your goals.

Used judiciously, digital grounding may actually improve family relationships. Some parents find that unplugging a child for a while opens up opportunities for conversation and other shared activities. They aren't likely to see it that way at the time, but many children will, in retrospect, be grateful for parents who insisted that they step away from digital distractions so they could reconnect with a better, more responsible version of themselves.

Carolyn Jabs raised three computer-savvy kids, including one with special needs. She has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years and is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Visit www.growing-up-online.com to read other columns.



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A TEEN'S TAKE

AGLAIA HO

Fun in the kitchen

Food is a universal language that brings the family together. Nothing is better than sharing a meal with the people you love. The dining room table is the perfect forum — a place for communication and bonding. Preparing a meal as a family can also be a valuable learning experience for all ages. Cooking with kids not only helps to develop problem-solving skills and creativity, but also fosters awareness for nutrition and exposure to different cultures.

My parents have always been magicians in the kitchen. They are amazing chefs and share a passion for food — both cooking and eating it. As a young child I hung around the kitchen, fascinated by what went on at the counter (or at least as much as I could see at three feet tall). I was always zealous — wanting to help out and sample the meal. Even filling a pot with water or washing a few vegetables was a treat. I was fascinated by the chemistry of cooking. I was amazed how a few eggs, a lump of butter, flour, and a handful of chocolate chips could somehow transform into a mouthwatering cookie. It wasn't long before I begged my parents to teach me how to cook.

Early cooking lessons proved to be useful. I quickly learned how to follow directions. My earliest cook-

ing experience was making banana muffins with my mom when I was 3 years old. Even though I was too little to know how to read recipes, my mom gave me verbal instructions and insisted that I try my best. She told me what to add, how much to add, and when to stir. She even demonstrated how to crack eggs and encouraged me to mimic her. Needless to say, this quickly became chaotic as eggshells found their way into the recipe. Let's just say that a clumsy 3-year-old and a delicate egg apparently don't go hand-in-hand!

Learning to cook also helped me learn about nutrition and a balanced diet. With obesity on the rise, it is imperative that kids understand healthy eating, especially at a young age. I was an extremely picky eater when I was younger. I don't recall taking a liking to anything except tomatoes, cucumbers, and ice cream. My parents drilled into my head the importance of a varied diet. They taught me how to make different foods, from salads (vegetables) to sandwiches (meat and grains), eggs (protein), and smoothies (fruit). They opened my eyes (and mouth) to all the food groups andajoled me into eating things I normally wouldn't try. It worked. I was so proud of my cooking that I would happily consume the entire meal!

Cooking also broadened my horizon in a cultural aspect. America is a mixing pot of many different flavors. It is crucial that children explore other cultures and learn to respect them.

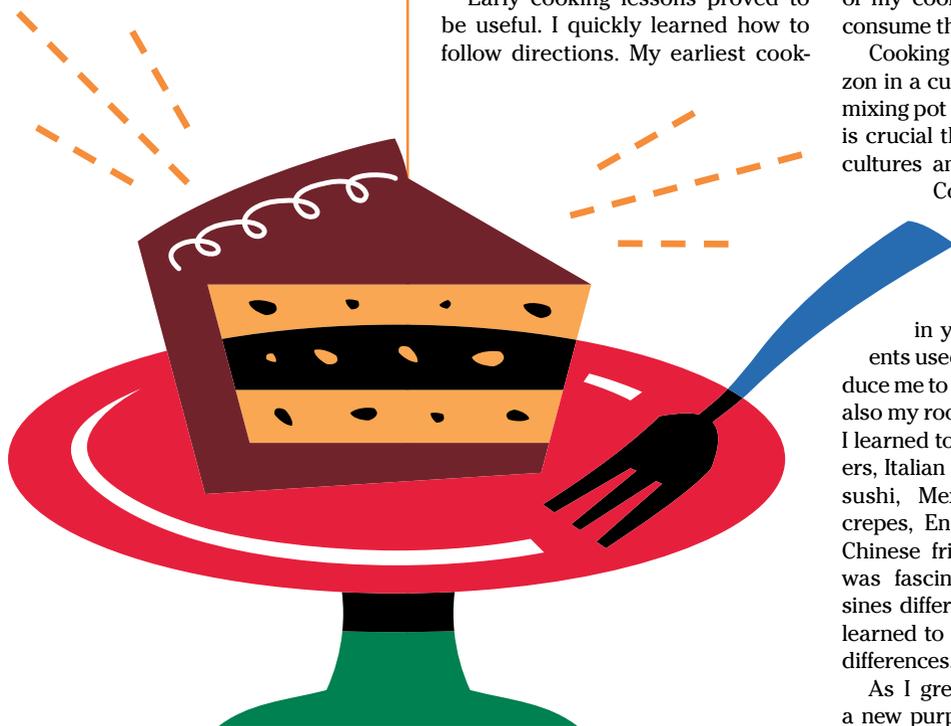
Connecting with your own heritage is also important. What better way to travel around the world than via a food tour right in your own kitchen? My parents used cooking as a way to introduce me to different ethnic dishes and also my roots as a Chinese-American. I learned to cook American hamburgers, Italian pasta and pizza, Japanese sushi, Mexican gazpacho, French crepes, English shepherd's pie, and Chinese fried rice and dumplings. I was fascinated by the unique cuisines different cultures offered, and I learned to accept and appreciate the differences.

As I grew older, cooking took on a new purpose. It became more of a

practical skill, preparing me to survive on my own in college and afterwards. My parents gave me full control of the kitchen (while poking their heads in now and then to make sure the house was not on fire). They granted me the freedom to find my own recipes, buy all the ingredients, and cook my own meal. It was challenging, yet liberating. It soon became a test of problem-solving. I quickly learned the disappointments of cooking. Not everything turns out as planned. I recently attempted to make chocolate lava cakes from scratch. It was one of the most difficult dishes I've ever cooked, requiring meticulous and precise timing. A lava cake needs an outer layer of soft cake with a gooey center of warm chocolate. It is fairly easy to overcook or undercook this cake. Despite having a recipe, I was forced to tweak and estimate in order to execute a perfect cake. The first cake was overcooked (aka a brownie), which forced me to bake the second cake for less time. Unluckily for me, the next cake was undercook (aka chocolate fondue). Baking the third cake for a time somewhere in between the first two tries finally triumphed as the perfect lava cake.

Also, being older, I realized that cooking could lead to creativity. I learned to alter or use recipes as a foundation to which I could add and subtract. I began to create my own recipes, mostly through trial and error. I also learned the importance of plating and presentation. Visually appealing meals tend to enhance the experience! Little bits of garnish can go a long way. Experimenting with my favorite foods often yielded surprising results. Cooking is an adventure for kids and parents. It is a test of following directions for children and a test of patience for parents. It is also a useful skill you can use the rest of your life. Still, the best part of cooking as a family is finally sharing the meal. So gather the family and try out a new culinary creation together. Bon appetite!

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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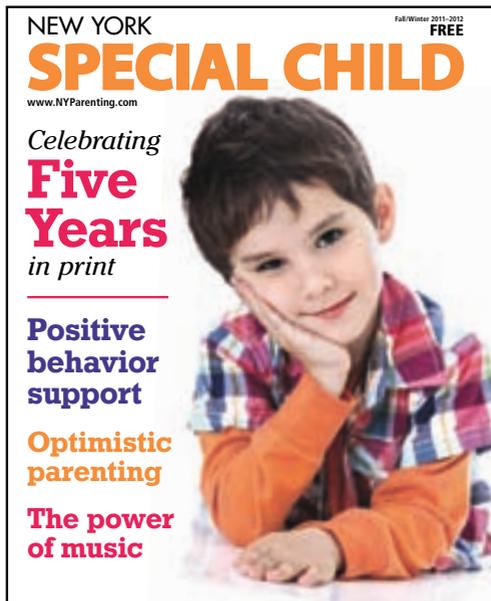
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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Please don't leave!

Helping worried children to understand divorce

It can be hard to believe, but if you are getting divorced, your children may be afraid that you will leave them.

“How can that be?” you wonder. You love your children dearly. You spend lots of time, take care, and play with them. Your children are the most important thing in your life. Abandoning them is impossible — your children “have” to know that.

But do they?

Imagine you're 7-year-old Jamie who was at a sleepover at a friend's house, playing and watching cartoons while a few blocks away, her father was moving out of their family home. Or step into 4-year-old Justin's shoes. He watched his mother pack. Before leaving, she hugged him, said that she loved him, and promised she would call.

What's missing here? How about sitting these parents down with their children to provide an explanation, reassurance, comfort, and a glimpse of what life will be like post-divorce?

Why do parents fail to provide preparation and comfort? Usually, it has to do with a lack of knowledge or because handling these conversations is just plain hard, or both.

Imagine — as you may have already — telling your children that the marriage is over, and that you or your spouse will be moving out permanently. Won't they be sad? Might they cry? Get angry? Yes — and that's OK.

Stop telling yourself that your kids are better off by avoiding the subject — you're not doing them any favors. Children will fill in the blanks and their invented versions will probably be far more frightening than the truth. Imagined truths can range from “Dad left because I fought a lot with my brother” to “Mom doesn't love me enough, and that's why she moved. I'm so bad and worthless that she's even living in another city.”

Children can — and do — think this way. Kids of divorced parents also often experience insecurity with the parent who has physical custody.

“What do you mean? I work long hours to care for my daughter. I do ev-



erything for her. I'm there for her 100 percent. She's not insecure about me,” you may think.

Maybe, but consider this — from her point of view, one parent she loved has already left. Why shouldn't you leave someday, too?

“And if Mom also leaves me, how will I take care of myself?” she may be thinking. “How will I live?”

If you have primary physical custody, you may have double the parenting workload now — doing both your former parenting role plus much of what the absent parent used to do. Errands, mowing the lawn, or discipline are suddenly all on your shoulders. Day after day, the demands from the kids seem to grow. Your daughter clings to you when you drop her off at school, whereas she used to walk in without a care. Your son begs to be told another joke, for more water, or another hug at bedtime.

Maybe you have less time for your children, lose your patience, or are less affectionate. Kids may think they're at fault if you are less available to them just when they need you most. Fear of losing you can grow.

So parents (together, if possible) need to tell kids what is about to happen.

Here's a sample sit-down conver-

sation parents can have with their children:

Dad: “Your Mom and I aren't happy being married anymore. I'm going to be moving to a new apartment at the end of the month. I love you, just like I always have. We both love you and will take care of you. And you didn't do anything wrong.”

Mom: “Would you like to see Dad's new apartment this weekend? You'll be there with him every Friday after school and Saturday. And on Tuesday nights, too. When you're at Dad's we can talk on the phone, and when you're with me, you and Dad can talk a lot.”

Explain upcoming changes, especially how your kids will be affected, tailoring the words to your situation. Don't blame. Invite questions from the children and make sure to listen.

If this talk is too difficult for you, get help from a therapist or a support group. Whatever it takes, you owe it to your children.

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin, Esq., helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com or (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/home>.

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only.

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It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

FOOD AND FAMILY

4,500

Number of McDonald's Happy Meal toys Pennsylvania father of three David Bracken has collected since 1993.

12 Number of fast-food kids' combo meals out of more than 3,000 studies that meet the nutritional standards for preschoolers.

500 Calorie limit New York City Councilman Leroy Comrie is proposing for children's meals to include a toy.

1,090 Calories in a typical McDonald's Happy Meal.

15 Percent of children who ask daily to go to McDonald's.

30 Percent of children who say their favorite breakfast food is bacon.

2 Percent who say oatmeal.



23 Age of Romanian gypsy Ridca Stanescu in March 2011, when she became the world's youngest grandmother.

61 Age of Chicago grandmother Sara Connell in February 2011, when she gave birth to a test-tube baby fertilized from her daughter and son-in-law's egg and sperm.

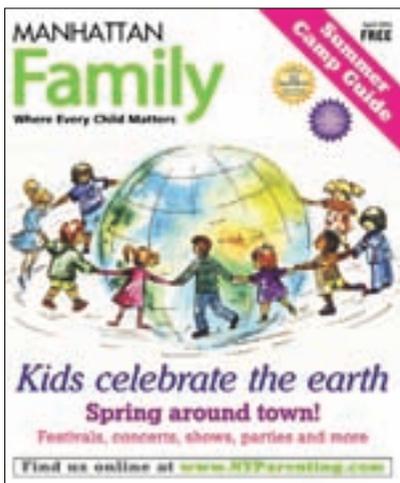
33 Percent of Americans honored on Stepfamily Day, Sept. 16, for being stepparents, stepchildren, or stepsiblings.

65 Percent of remarriages that involve children from a previous marriage.

62 Percent of obese women who were put on their first diet before age 14.

40 Percent who were put on a diet by their parents.

Sources: Steppingstones, tripod.com, FoxNews.com, HollyBaby.com, Medicinenet.com, Time.com, USA Today, Slashfood.com, CNN.com



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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Modern life

Bennett House by *brinca dada* is not your typical dollhouse. It's constructed from eco-friendly woods in a muted palette of colors rather than garish plastic. Designed by Tim Boyle, it can be played with when it's open or closed and features a two-story living room, elevator, roof top pool and glass rail balconies. The house measures 36- by 21- x 21-inches, and can be filled with *brinca dada's* sleek furnishings (sold separately). Made of non-toxic, lead-free paints and stains, you'll happily bring this modern home into your child's room — and hope that they'll let you join in the fun!

Bennett House by brinca dada, \$499, www.brincadada.com.



Young folk

When I heard my son's school sing Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" this year, I was stirred by its timeless message. So I was delighted when I discovered Elizabeth Mitchell's new CD of 13 child-friendly Guthrie classics!

Sure, we couldn't be more excited to see the Fresh Beat Band in concert later this month, but Mitchell's "Little Seed: Songs for Children by Woody Guthrie" reminds us that the folk hero's soothing songs are worth revisiting.

"Little Seed: Songs for Children by Woody Guthrie" CD, \$11.98; \$9.99 for download; www.folkways.si.edu.



Book of shadows

"Gustav Gloom and the People Taker" (Grosset & Dunlap) is the first book in a new fantasy series for 8- to 12-year-olds published just in time to celebrate the spooktacular Halloween season. Penned by Adam-Troy Castro, this suspenseful novel tells the tale of Fernie What, a courageous girl who moves with her family to a home across the street from Gustav's creepy mansion, wonderfully rendered in "Corpse Bride"-esque illustrations by Kristen Margiotta.



Fernie barges into Gustav's house in pursuit of her cat, Harrington, and soon finds that it is filled with dotting aunts, criminals, hilarity, and horror. She does her best to make sense of the shadows with minds of their own as she attempts to find her feline and get out before the deadly People Taker can wrap his hands around her throat.

"Gustav Gloom" is part cautionary tale encouraging kids to tell their parents where they are going and part rousing endorsement of the power of friendship that has us looking forward to the sequel, "Gustav Gloom and the Nightmare Vault!"

"Gustav Gloom and the People Taker" by Adam-Troy Castro, \$12.99, www.barnesandnoble.com.



Delicious design

Need a little help fueling your child's return to school? Try reinventing her lunch with the super adorable Kotobuki Geisha Doll Bento Box by Hakoya. This five-piece, lacquered plastic set assembles to look like a kokeshi doll (a charming yet limless figure), and pulls apart to reveal two bowls and a lidded container (the face). The pieces can be filled with soup, vegetables, dips, yogurt, granola, fruit, and more. The three bowls are held together with a large, black elastic band that is included. (The bento box is also available from Amazon.com in a samurai warrior design.) The set measures 3.8 x 3.8 x 5.5-inches, for toting a small meal that will be sure to earn you an A for effort.

Kotobuki Geisha Doll Bento Box by Hakoya, \$20.43, www.amazon.com.

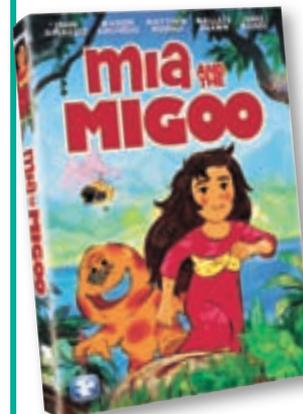
Rescue mission

In the feature-length, animated film "Mia and the Migoo," families are introduced to a courageous girl who overcomes numerous obstacles to reunite with her father and save life itself.

Directed by Jacques-Remy Girerd, this English language version of a French movie follows the motherless, impoverished Mia (Amanda Misquez) as she tracks her father Pedro (Jessi Corti) to a remote mountain where he is helping build a resort.

Along the way, our heroine runs into a sorceress (Whoopi Goldberg), who wields a knife to cut the girl's hair while she sleeps. Soon after, Mia befriends the goofy Migoo (Wallace Shawn), a doughy creature that guards the tree of life — an eyesore to the resort's investors.

The artistry of the film's 500,000 hand-painted frames had my 5-year-old gasping with delight, and we both appreciated the original score by Serge Besset, performed by the Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra.



Sub-titled bonus features detailing how Girerd pulled it all together will awe viewers of all ages, and possibly inspire a new generation of illustrators and musicians.

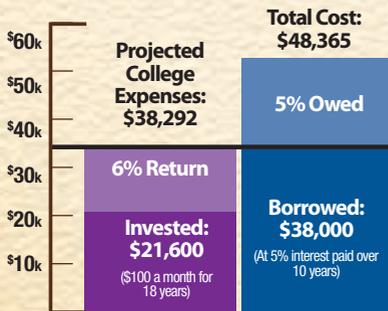
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** Up to \$10,000 is deductible from New York State taxable income for married couples filing jointly; single taxpayers can deduct up to \$5,000 annually. May be subject to recapture in certain circumstances — rollovers to another state's plan or nonqualified withdrawals.

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New York's 529 College Savings Program currently includes two separate 529 plans. The *Direct Plan* is sold directly by the Program. You may also participate in the *Advisor Plan*, which is sold exclusively through financial advisors and has different investment options and higher fees and expenses as well as financial advisor compensation.

For more information about New York's 529 College Savings Program *Direct Plan*, obtain a Program Brochure and Tuition Savings Agreement at www.ny529directplan.com or by calling 1-800-376-9166. This includes investment objectives, risks, charges, expenses, and other information. You should read and consider them carefully before investing.

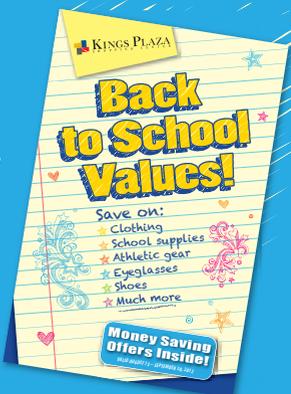
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