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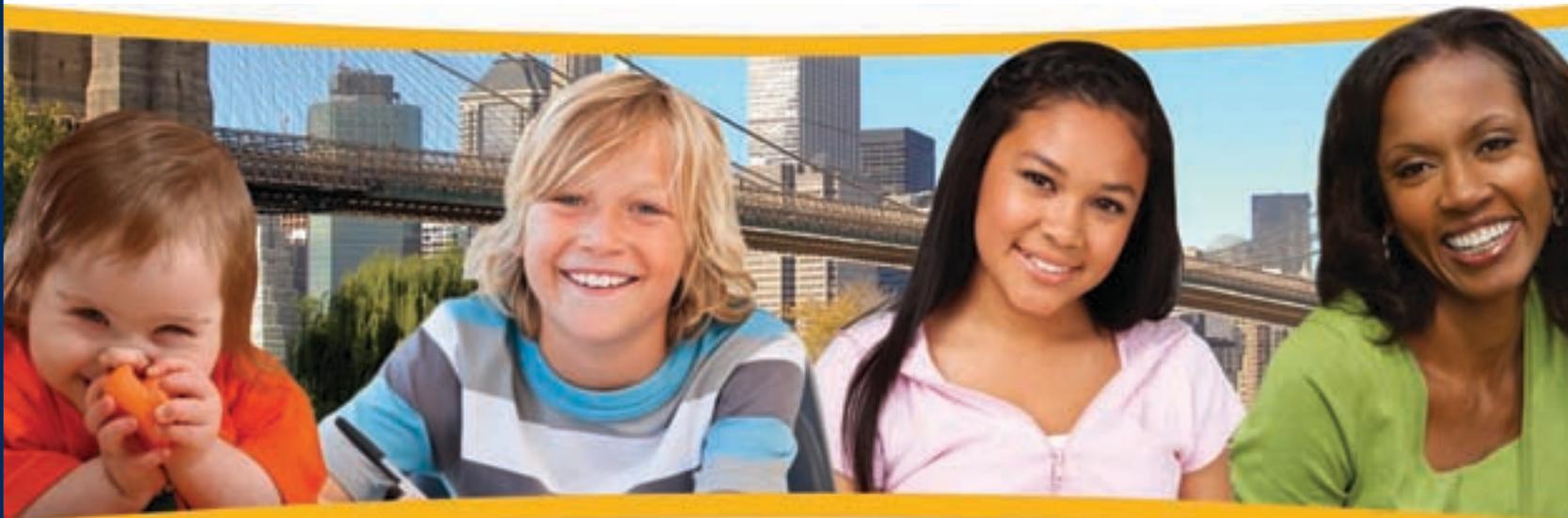
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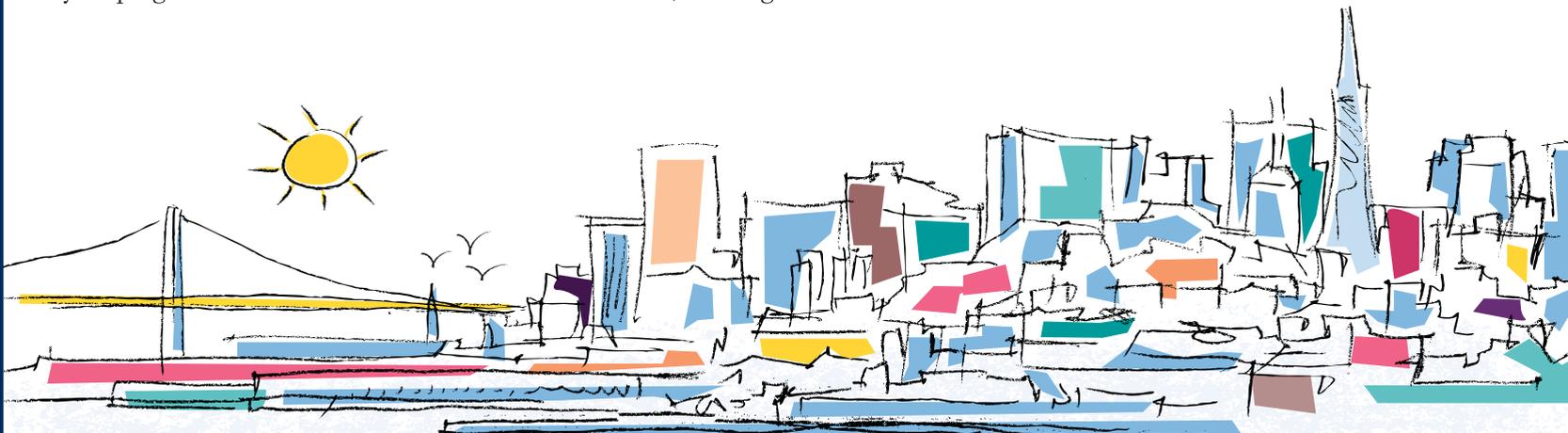
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# Family November 2012

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# Letter from the publisher

## The question of homework

**K**ids are now settled in their classes and the homework reality has begun again in earnest.

When my daughter entered elementary school I soon realized that times had drastically changed from my days in school. I never

had homework in the lower grades of elementary school, and I mean never! Kindergarten wasn't a time for rigorous work; it was a time for socialization and communal fun. We played, we ate, we finger-painted, we read books aloud, we had music and movement, recess and even a nap.

Now this is the typical behavior of a preschooler not a school child. Everything has been moved up and we have accelerated education, study, awareness and production through-



out the life experience. It seems there is little time left to be innocent and without responsibilities.

Nowadays the tone is entirely different and nowhere outside of politics is the divide clearer than witnessing the opposing attitudes of parents on the subject of homework.

Many parents want lots of homework, starting as early as Kindergarten. Those with this priority also seem to be largely in favor of discipline, structure and possibly even uniforms, even in a public school setting.

These academically focused parents are mindful that in this highly competitive global reality children need to have rigorous academic instruction and achievement as early as possible, and are expecting continuous assignments of homework

as a routine. They are advocating for nightly work and aren't satisfied that education is quality or complete without it.

Parents on the other side of this question want their kids to be free after school and on weekends. Free to participate in outside activities of all kinds, whether they are structured such as classes in art, music, gymnastics, or the like, or just free to "hang out" and be kids. Many of these parents state that visiting museums, watching public television, seeing live shows, are high priorities for them in the education process of their children and don't want their children's free time to be consistently mandated to homework assigned from classroom teachers.

These contrasting opinions are not always compatible and many parent association meetings are often spent in debate over the tone of the dialogue

and the outcome of the curriculum as a result. The good news is the strong participation of the parents and their concern and interest over what happens in and out of their children's classrooms. Better to have opposing opinions than none.

I'm wondering where you stand? What do you expect in terms of homework? How much is too much? How little is too little? We will print your letters in upcoming issues. Send your responses or thoughts to [family@cnglocal.com](mailto:family@cnglocal.com).

Have a great Thanksgiving! Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# From our readers

Hello Susan,

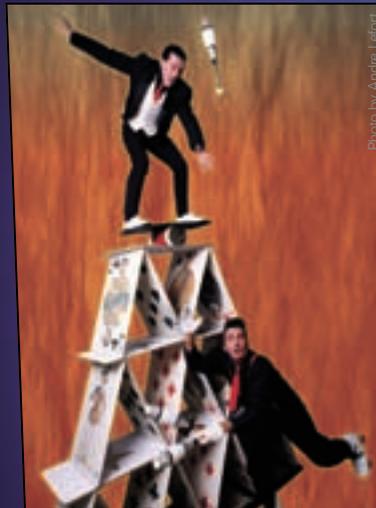
What a terrific issue to see on the newsstand! I only just picked *Manhattan Family* up, but am thrilled to see you're covering teens. There is a dearth of information out there for parents of teens and it's such a challenging time in parenting.

I'll be sure to pass it along to a few parents I know.

Best,  
Faye Rogaski



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# HOMework

## A conversation with parents & experts

What is its value, and how much is too much?

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

Parents throughout the five boroughs are debating the value of homework and whether their children should have more or less of it. Many parents think their children are burdened by excessive take-home assignments, while others believe the homework reinforces important concepts and flags comprehension issues for the teacher.

“The consciousness around homework has definitely changed. Once you start to name a problem, people think about it differently,” Sara Bennett, Brooklyn co-author of “The Case Against Homework,” recently shared with me.

Both Bennett’s work and Alfie Kohn’s book, “The Homework Myth,” cite statistics indicating that there is no correlation between increased homework and academic achievement. Bennett tells me that convincing parents of this can be difficult, since many have believed otherwise for so long.

Kohn also claims that there is a connection between excessive homework and a loss of interest in learning, and that nothing more than “folk wisdom” supports the belief that homework teaches self-discipline, good study habits, or responsibility.

### Reports from the homework front

Chevon Weeks, whose children attend a lottery school in Queens, tells me that she likes her children to be challenged, as “homework will give them a better future.” She is “so pro-homework” because she believes that homework helped her do well academically and is “a necessary evil which will help children compete globally.” Weeks also believes that the teachers need to give homework, so they can get through the new core curriculum and that kids will naturally “veg out” without it.

“Practice makes perfect,” she tells

me, although she won’t condone “busywork.”

Lyss, a Manhattan mom, agrees that it is important that her children do their homework and also believes in its value.

Last year, Diane Butler’s third grader had almost two hours of homework per night at her charter school in the Bronx. Her daughter sometimes gets frustrated and is fearful that she will get detention if it is not completed.

Tracy from Staten Island says, “If the teachers are doing a good job, they shouldn’t be giving [the kids] a ton of work.”

Tamara, a Manhattan mom, notes a disconnect between a parent and teacher, or between a teacher and child, when the homework is overwhelming and the issue is not being addressed. She is one of many parents who understand that the solution can only come from a partnership with the teacher.

### Ban homework?

Author Bennett indicates that good teachers should be able to reinforce important material during the school day, conceding that homework may occasionally provide a bit of reinforcement, despite the statistics disassociating it from direct academic success.

In her book, Bennett stresses, “Teachers receive little training in devising truly educational and meaningful assignments,” focusing attention not just on the excessiveness of assignments, but on their substance.

“I never saw a decent, worthwhile homework assignment, and I don’t know if there is better homework [than what is now being assigned],” she says.

Parents are frustrated, too, when teachers only spot-check homework or fail to provide feedback after a long night’s struggle to complete an assignment.

Still, moms like Tamara, who re-

members her homework as “drudgery,” views her first grader’s homework as “appropriate, inventive, and creative.”

Without hesitation, Bennett indicates that she would support a homework ban. Her colleague Kohn agrees, especially with respect to elementary school. At a minimum, he tells me he would advocate for “a no homework default policy,” where the norm would be homework-free evenings with families deciding how to spend the time, and where a rare assignment is only permitted if it is absolutely necessary and fosters students’ interest in learning.

Vicki Abeles, director of the groundbreaking film “A Race to Nowhere” would favor a ban, as well, telling me, “We haven’t sounded the alarm loud enough when it comes to the long-term health consequences of the ‘busy-trap’ lives of our children” and that “we are depriving them of the growth that comes from having a job, making dinner with their families, reading for pleasure, and pursuing their own interests.”

Both the National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association recommend up to 10 minutes of homework from Kindergarten to second grade, and the National PTA recommends an additional 10 minutes more per grade thereafter. These guidelines seem to be echoed on many of the school’s individual websites, which often include nightly reading. Unfortunately, most of the parents I contacted were unaware of their school’s guidelines.

In the meantime, absent a ban, Kohn, Bennett and Abeles have helped to draft a petition for Healthy Homework Guidelines they hope the National PTA will adopt. For more information, go to [www.change.org/healthyhomework](http://www.change.org/healthyhomework).

### Parents speak up

Unlike years ago, when parents pressured their children to finish



all of their homework, no questions asked, schools today expect more parental supervision and are looking for more open communication with parents. Several schools' homework guidelines even encourage parents to write a note if their children are unable to complete an assignment within a reasonable time and speak with the teacher if it becomes a persistent problem. Some of the parents I spoke with did just that.

One parent went even further and persuaded the teacher that certain regularly assigned homework was not necessary for her child, and as a result, he was no longer required to do it. Still, Kohn would prefer that all families be given the ability to "opt in" to receive homework, as opposed to opting out.

"We're asking them to go back to work at the end of the workday, and I fundamentally disagree with that," Suzanne, a Manhattan mom remarks. She not only resents the need to reserve weeknights for homework, effectively eliminating after school community building and family socialization, but also the need to squeeze enrichment activities into weekends, thereby curtailing traditional family outings.

"Parents need to speak up if the workload is excessive, and they need a vision for what they want as a fam-

ily and need to be brave enough to do it," she advises.

Suzanne noted that the problem is not just in her school, but is systemic and fear-based, telling me, "if we can't meet the [New York State core educational] standards without so much homework, then we need to change the standards."

She says she would support a change to do away with homework before second or third grade, introducing it in a reasonable amount, at an age when the children can work more independently.

Moreover, this mom, so aggravated that the homework required her attention deficit hyperactivity disorder-diagnosed child to take twice the suggested time, successfully advocated for the inclusion of a modification clause for children with Individualized Education Programs as part of her school's guidelines. Hopefully, other schools will follow suit, allowing for down time and family time after a long day.

### **Who's really completing the assignments?**

Lori Hiller, a school social worker from Brooklyn, recognizes that sleep-deprived, anxious kids burn out as the evening wears on. If parents then complete the homework,

the benefit of the assignment is lost. Parents admitted to me that they do more than just assist with the assignment, either because they believe that the younger children do not possess the fine motor skills for elaborate projects or because they "want to get it out of the way."

When my third grader's groupings of taped pennies on plain cardboard was presented alongside another student's ski slope diorama perfectly engineered out of 100 toothpicks, I thought I was the only parent who was not doing my child's project for him. One Queens mother excused parents' over-participation, saying the child still needs to understand the concepts to present the project in class. A Brooklyn mom explains the overreaching as an attempt to avoid an evening of conflict and guarantee an A grade.

Many parents fear that their children will be penalized for incomplete or incorrect homework, so they make sure it is handed in corrected. Unfortunately, the teacher can't then tell if the child has mastered the material or the parent has taught the child that he must come home with top grades, no matter the cost. This mentality can have serious repercussions later, as Bennett references the recent cheating scandals at Harvard University and Stuyve-

sant High School as an outgrowth of this.

### **Defend family time**

Kohn tells parents that their role is "to support their child's emotional, intellectual, social and moral development, not to be the school's enforcer." One Brooklyn mom echoed that sentiment, telling me of her distaste over acting "as the homework police," noting the stress that even appropriate parental supervision can cause in a household, and aware that constant conflict over homework, coupled with some teachers' fear tactics, can result in children hating school.

Hiller notes that families with two working parents often lose their after-work family time to homework and miss the natural interaction they should be having regularly with their children. One working mom from Forest Hills told me she makes the effort to go over all the homework the daughter completed in her after school program, no matter how exhausted she is from her day.

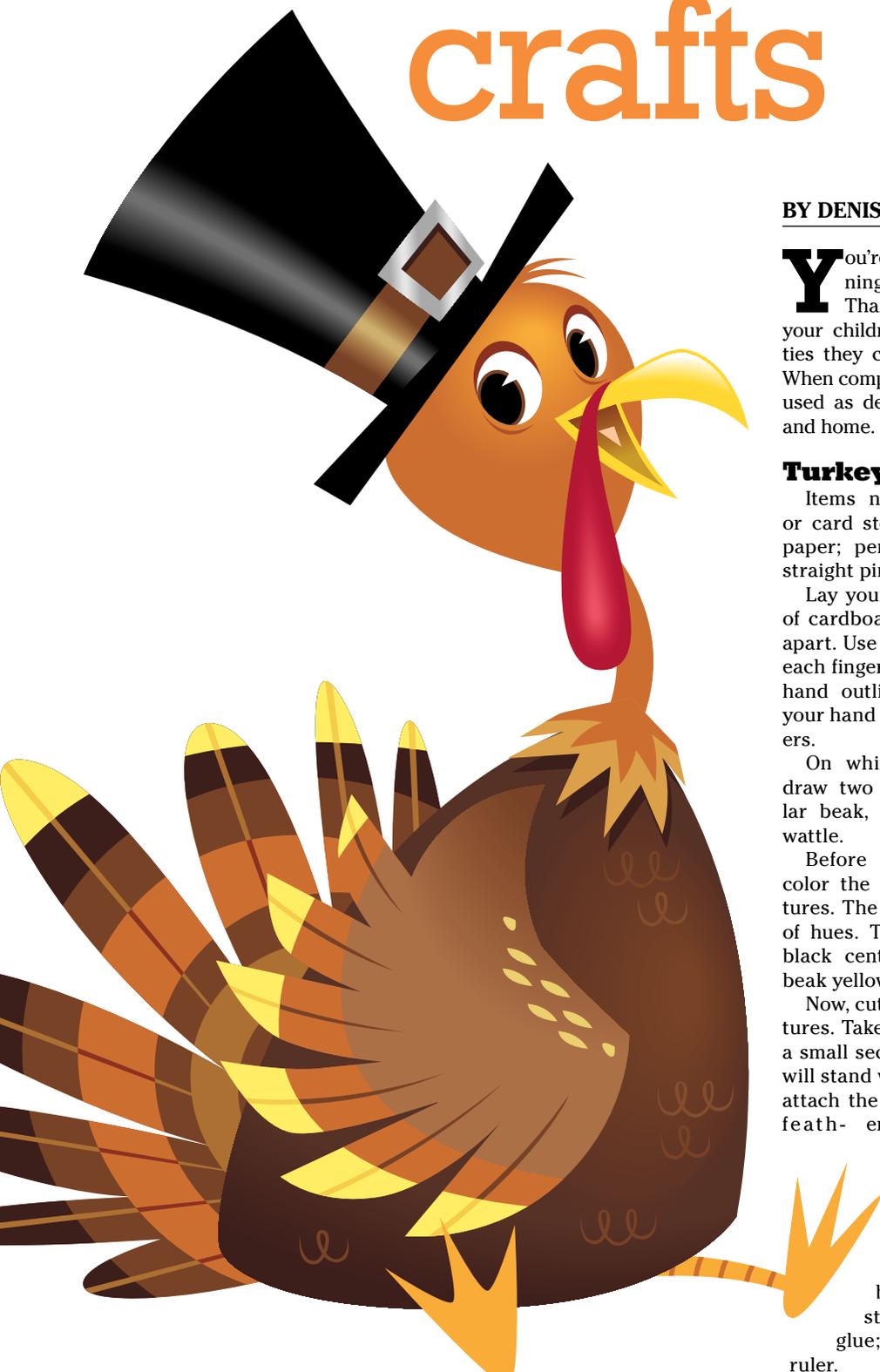
Still, Hiller says, "There is a place in the world for homework and learning how to organize things," but recommends it be coupled with family-imposed structure, in the form of chores and dinner together, as well as informal outings and leisure activities, which can prompt learning, as well. She is aware of the statistics Kohn and Bennett rely upon, but believes that homework has served to provide her own children with good study habits.

"Homework is not like the weather, something to which we just have to reconcile ourselves," says Kohn. He challenges parents to go beyond the logistical questions related to an assignment and inquire as to the value of the assignment itself. He would even encourage parents to band together to convince educators that the value of homework is truly a myth.

Ultimately, we all want the same thing: our children to succeed. In order for that to happen, parents and teachers need to adopt Bennett's approach and recognize that we are "all in this thing together."

*Risa C. Doherty is an award-winning freelance writer, attorney and mother of two, who survived years of homework hassles.*

# Fun Thanksgiving crafts for kids



BY DENISE YEARIAN

**Y**ou're busy this month planning and preparing your Thanksgiving feast, so give your children a few holiday activities they can sink their teeth into. When completed, these items can be used as decorations for your table and home.

## Turkey taters

Items needed: thin cardboard or card stock; white construction paper; pencil; markers; scissors; straight pins; potato.

Lay your hand down on a piece of cardboard. Spread your fingers apart. Use a pencil to draw around each finger and thumb, making the hand outline a little larger than your hand is. This will be the feathers.

On white construction paper, draw two round eyes, a triangular beak, and a teardrop-shaped wattle.

Before cutting anything out, color the feathers and facial features. The feathers can be a blend of hues. The eyes should have a black center for the pupils, the beak yellow, and the wattle red.

Now, cut out all of the turkey features. Take the potato and slice off a small section of the bottom so it will stand without falling. Carefully attach the eyes, beak, wattle, and feathers with straight pins.

## Notable natives

Items needed: two empty toilet paper rolls; orange, pink, black, and yellow construction paper; scissors; glue; pencil; black marker; ruler.

Cut two of each of the following from construction paper: 4- by 6-inch orange paper (Native American body); 2- by 6-inch pink paper (face); 3- by 4-inch black paper (hair); 1- by 6-inch orange paper (headband); small feather shapes from yellow paper.

Wrap an empty toilet paper roll with the orange paper and glue in place.

Draw a face on the pink paper. Wrap the pink paper around the top edge of the toilet paper roll to form the face and head. Glue in place. Cut the black construction paper in long, narrow strips, so it makes fringe for the hair.

Glue hair around the sides and back of the head. For headband, draw zigzag lines or another design across the long orange strip. Glue two or three feathers on the backside of the headband. When dry, wrap the headband around the Native American's head and face making sure not to cover the eyes. Glue in place.

Repeat instructions for the second Native American. Add more feathers for the boy, and draw a beaded necklace on the girl.

## Brim and buckle napkin rings

Items needed: empty toilet paper roll; black and yellow construction paper; scissors; glue; ruler; large jar or cup 3 1/2- to 4-inches in diameter.

Cut each of the following from construction paper: 3- by 6-inch black paper; black circle measuring 3 1/2- to 4-inches in diameter (use the mouth of the jar or cup as a guide); 2-inch square yellow construction paper.

Measure 3 inches on the toilet paper roll, and cut it down to

## Seasonal books

To enjoy a Thanksgiving-themed story time with your child, check out these books at your library:

“Albert’s Thanksgiving” by Leslie Tryon

“The Candy Corn Contest” by Patricia Reilly Giff (sound recording)

“The First Thanksgiving” by Lois Lensky

“Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving” by Eric Metaxas

“Thank You, Sarah: The Woman Who Saved Thanksgiving” by Laurie Halse Anderson

“A Turkey for Thanksgiving” by Eve Bunting (book and sound recording)

“Turkeys, Pilgrims, and Indian Corn: The Story of the Thanksgiving Symbols” by Edna Barth

“Turkey Pox” by Laurie Halse Anderson

cut a smaller yellow square on the inside so it is hollow in the center. This is the buckle of the hat. Glue it onto the hat, close to the brim. The napkin fits into the top of the hat. Repeat directions until you have enough for all of your guests.

### Thankful tree

Items needed: red, green, brown, yellow, and purple construction paper; large brown paper bag or roll of brown paper; scissors; tape; pen.

Cut apart a large brown paper bag and use it to make the trunk and branches of a tree. Hang this on the refrigerator door or another door in your home. As family and friends arrive at your house on Thanksgiving Day, ask if you can trace their hands on a piece of construction paper. Have them write something they are thankful for on each handprint. When they are finished, cut out the hands and attach them to the tree, so they look like leaves.

### Cornucopia of candy

Items needed: large waffle cones; candy corn and pumpkins; other small candies.

Lay cones on their side and fill with candy corn and pumpkin mix, or other small candies.

This can be a small table centerpiece, or a favor at each person’s place setting.

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



that size. Roll black paper around the toilet paper roll and glue in place. This is the body of the hat. On one end, cut six small tabs around the bottom.

Take the black circle and stand the toilet paper roll on one end in the center.

Trace around the roll to form an inner circle. Cut out this inner circle to make a donut shape. Slip the donut shape down over the toilet paper roll to form the brim of the hat. Fold the tabs on the bottom of the roll so they are underneath the brim. Put a dab of glue on each tab and secure to the brim.

Take the yellow square and

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# Weighty issues

How to respond to your child's questions about being overweight

BY KIKI BOCHI

**Y**our child comes home from school, devastated that other kids are teasing her about being fat. You've noticed that she's getting a bit pudgy, but you're not sure how to broach the subject.

Talking to children about weight can be touchy. Many parents struggle with what to say and how to say it. In fact, one survey by WebMD found that many parents feel that talking about weight is more uncomfortable than talking about sex and drugs.

It's no wonder why. Ask adults who have struggled with their weight most their lives, and most have horror stories about insensitive comments they endured as children that were intended to "help" them. Understandably, today's parents are worried about saying the wrong thing, hurting their child's self-esteem, or worse, triggering an eating disorder.

With the ever-growing proportion of children who are overweight or obese, however, parents need to develop smart strategies about how to address the issue of weight. Unfortunately, there isn't that much practical advice out there.

"When parents search online or ask a medical professional for help in talking with their children about tough topics like sex or drinking, they can find a host of useful tools," says Scott Kahan, the director of STOP Obesity Alliance, a collaboration of nearly 70 consumer, government, labor, business, and health organizations. "Yet, if they search for information on how to field questions on weight, they won't find much beyond the simplistic 'eat less, move more' proclamation we've heard for years.

And that's just not sufficient to help the millions of families facing this serious and emotional health issue."

To help, STOP and the Alliance for

a Healthier Generation have developed a free conversation guide that covers "real-world" situations regarding weight, including understanding body mass index, body image, bullying, weight bias, and family obesity. It offers various scripts on how parents can respond to their child's questions and concerns, keeping the focus on healthy choices.

"Weight is a tough issue — perhaps the toughest today's parents face, given all the complexities," says

Ginny Ehrlich, CEO of Alliance for a Healthier Generation. "But that doesn't mean we can avoid it. In fact, it only intensifies the need to weigh in."

The free guide, aimed at the parents of children ages 7 to 11, is available online at [www.WeighInOnObesity.org](http://www.WeighInOnObesity.org).

*KiKi Bochi is an award-winning journalist who brings readers the best advice and latest developments in family health and child development.*



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# Good grief

Five tips to help your child cope with the loss of a pet

BY GAYLA GRACE

**T**ears filled my eyes as I watched the veterinarian end the life of our 18-year-old cat, Callie. Insisting on being present, my youngest son, Nathan, clung to my neck. One of my older daughters had already retreated to the car, unable to watch.

Callie had been part of our lives for as long as I could remember, and my heart was breaking for our children, who would dearly miss her.

## Discuss death honestly

The loss of a family pet may be the first experience a child has in dealing with death. It's an emotional event that almost all families encounter and warrants special attention when it happens.

A child's age determines what level of detail to discuss when a pet dies. A preschool child can't understand that death happens to everyone as a permanent event.

The best approach with young children includes a brief explanation with the opportunity for them to ask questions. Refrain from using the words "put to sleep" or "resting in peace." These words are taken literally by children and will cause further confusion. A young child might begin to worry that he, too, will die when he goes to sleep at night or rests at naptime.

## Prepare for the end

School-aged children understand more about death and may want to be actively involved in the last days of their pet's life. Our son, Nathan, was 8 years old when Callie was euthanized, and wanted to be there for the duration, but it can be trauma-



There will still be difficult emotions to combat, but if the child begins the grieving process while the pet is alive, the death feels less traumatic.



tizing for a child to watch the final procedure.

Our 16-year-old daughter wanted to accompany us to the veterinarian's office and say her ending good-byes there, but didn't want to watch Callie's last moments of life. As a parent, you can help your children decide the appropriate way for them to part for the last time. It often works best to explain what will happen and then allow your children time to cuddle the animal and say goodbye at home before you leave alone with the pet for the veterinarian's office.

When a pet begins to move toward the end of life, we can prepare our children for the inevitable event. There will still be difficult emotions to combat, but if the child begins the grieving process while the pet is alive, the death feels less traumatic.

Callie was sick for several months before she died, and we began preparing our children for what would happen. The finality was still emotional, but our children knew what to expect. Afterward, we talked frequently of our memories and let our kids know it was OK to be sad about her dying.

### Allow time to say goodbye

"Pets are members of our families and when our pet dies, our daily family life is changed," says Kris Palazzo, veterinary hospital manager. "Every circumstance is different, but it's important to allow a child the chance to say goodbye to their pet, if possible." Palazzo also said if pets are cremated, the ashes can be returned to the owner as a keepsake, if the family desires.

Pet owner and mom of two, Bridgette McNabb, agrees.

"We had gotten our dog, Suzie, at 6 weeks of age and she had been in our family for 13 years," says Bridgette. "My husband, Mike, and I knew her days were short, so we started talking to the kids about Suzie not being with us much longer. The day Suzie

was to be euthanized, we brought her in, told the kids what would be happening, loved on her, took pictures with her, and said our goodbyes through lots of tears. Then, Mike took her to the vet. Our last memories at home — with Suzie licking on the kids — were the best."

Allowing the children special time with their dog on her last day of life was a beautiful gift the McNabbs gave to their children.

### Allow emotions to process

The loss of a pet that occurs because of a sudden accident or illness is harder on a child (and you as a parent), emotionally.

You will spend more time consoling your child and working through your own feelings about the loss.

Children can't process their feelings like adults do and may resort to acting out or withdrawing as a result of the loss. Encourage your children to express their feelings and be sensitive when they're feeling sad or angry. Spend extra time nurturing them when possible. And refrain from replacing the pet immediately. It's important to grieve your loss before attempting to move forward with a new pet to love.



Losing a family pet is never easy. As parents, we struggle with our own feelings surrounding the loss, in addition to helping our children cope.

But the loss of a pet offers a great opportunity to begin talking to your child about death, an inevitable part of life. When we explain the process of what's happening and offer our children a sensitive spirit and a willing heart to help them process their feelings, they will adjust to life without their pet and be prepared to love another pet at an appropriate time.

*Gayla Grace is a wife and mom of five children in her blended family. She ministers to stepfamilies through her website, [www.stepparentingwithgrace.com](http://www.stepparentingwithgrace.com).*

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# Get to the Met!

Programs for families abound at venerable New York institution

BY MARIE HUESTON

One of the wonderful things about raising children in a city like New York is the opportunity to expose them to world-class art from a very young age. The Metropolitan Museum of Art is one of the best places to do just that. Within its galleries, young eyes can gaze upon golden earrings worn thousands of years ago, swords and shields carried by knights of old, room settings in which our nation's founders might have stood, and towering panels of bold color and swirling patterns. In every corner of the building, the Met inspires imaginations to soar.

But where to begin? The prospect can be daunting even for the most seasoned museum goer, let alone a family with young children. Fortunately, the Met offers a variety of programs ranging from story time, to walking tours, to art projects that will help you navigate and appreciate the museum's vast collection.

"We want kids and adults to revel in the wonder of art," says Jacqueline Terrassa, managing museum educator for Gallery and Studio Programs. "Our programs are designed to help children hone their abilities to notice, to imagine, and to create. If we spark in them a curiosity and a desire to explore more, then we've achieved our goal."

According to Terrassa, the things children see and make in the Met can often open up new ways of viewing the world outside the museum walls. This has certainly been the experience of Upper West Side mom Sarah Cusick, who has been bringing her two children (daughter Clarissa, 7, and son Luca, 5) to Met family programs since they were toddlers.

"We'll be walking in the city and Clarissa might point out a shape or an architectural style she learned about at the Met," Cusick says. "And a while back, there was an ad campaign with an image of the Mona Lisa that started Luca talking about Leonardo Da Vinci."

Here are some detailed descriptions of the family programs offered at the Met. All are free with museum admission, which is currently a \$25 suggested donation for adults, \$17 for seniors, and free for children 12 and under. Arriving 10 to 15 minutes before programs begin is advisable so you and your children have time to settle in.

**Start with Art at the Met:** Geared towards kids ages 3 to 7, the appropriately named Start with Art at the Met introduces children to beginning concepts of art appreciation like color, movement, and technique. Children walk through the museum and sit to hear stories or draw. Past sessions have visited the galleries of European Paintings, Greek and Roman Art, and Arms and Armor, to name just a few. Pencils, colored pencils, and paper are provided for sketching.

Start with Art Plus incorporates a more detailed art project such as collage, mask-making, or clay.

*Start with Art: Thursday 3:30–4:30 pm; Saturday 11 am–noon, and 2:30–3:30 pm. No program on Nov. 22; no afternoon program on Nov. 10. Start with Art Plus: Sunday, Nov. 25, 2:30–3:30 pm.*

**Art Trek:** Similar in nature to Start with Art but aimed at kids ages 5 to 12, Art Trek makes more stops on a typical tour and delves deeper into the history and background of each work of art. Children might be asked to compare and contrast

two pieces they've seen or to relate the works back to subjects they might be learning about in school. Pencils, colored pencils, and paper are provided for sketching. Art Trek Plus might include a performance or other surprise along the way.

*Art Trek: Saturday 11 am–noon and 2:30–3:30 pm. No afternoon program on Nov. 10. Art Trek Plus: Sunday, Nov. 25, 2:30–3:30 pm.*

**Story time in Nolen Library:** Parents often use Story time in Nolen Library as a jumping-off point to explore galleries in the museum. Afternoon sessions are recommended for kids 3 to 7; morning sessions for those 3 and younger. "Strolling Guides" handed out at the afternoon sessions encourage families to search for subjects and imagery that have been touched upon in the books they've listened to. These guides are available upon request following the Toddler Story time, which focuses on books that young children love to hear, not necessarily ones that relate directly to art.

*Story time in Nolen Library: Tuesday to Friday 3–3:30 pm. Toddler Story time in Nolen Library: Tuesday to Friday 10:30–11 am. No programs on Nov. 6.*

**How Did They Do That?** Inquisitive visitors of all ages can examine the tools and techniques used to create particular works of art in How Did They Do That? Held one weekend each month on both Saturday and Sunday, the 30-minute workshops allow participants a closer look at pieces in the collection, as well as the chance to learn about the materials involved in their construction. Past topics have included Japanese screens and Islamic book arts. November's theme is "Crossbows of the World" and will take place in the Arms and Armor galleries.

*How Did They Do That?: Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 10 and 11, 1–4 pm with information sessions repeating every 30 minutes.*

**Sunday Studio:** Another activity suited to all ages is Sunday Studio, where children are able to create their own works of art alongside originals in the permanent collection. Instructors are on hand throughout



Photo by Don Pollard



Kids will have a great time learning about art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

each two-hour session, so stop in anytime and stay as long or as little as you'd like. Japanese ceramics and American landscape panoramas are among the subjects featured in the past. This month, kids can try their hand making Egyptian hieroglyphs on papyrus in the Egyptian Art galleries. All art supplies are provided.

**Sunday Studio:** *Sunday, Nov. 4 and 18, 1–3 pm.*

**Drop-In Drawing:** An evening program open to both children and adults is Drop-In Drawing, held on one or more Fridays each month. Locations vary: one session might gather in the Roman Sculpture Court, another in the galleries of Modern and Contemporary Art, and yet another in the Astor Court — a recreation of a Ming-Dynasty style Chinese garden courtyard. November's session will meet in the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court. Art instructors provide guidance every 30 minutes throughout the two-hour program. Paper and pencils are provided, but attendees are welcome to bring their own

sketchbooks or pads.

**Drop-In Drawing:** *Friday, Nov. 9, 6:30–8:30 pm.*

**Picture This!** Developed for children 5 and older who are blind or visually impaired, Picture This! programs incorporate tactile opportunities and highly detailed verbal descriptions of pieces in the collection. Themes change throughout the year; in next month's Museum Safari, kids will interact with works of art that depict animals. Like the other family programs at the Met, Picture This! is free with museum admission, but advance registration is required. To make a reservation, call (212) 650–2010 or e-mail [access@metmuseum.org](mailto:access@metmuseum.org).

**Picture This!** *Saturday, Dec. 1, 2–3:30 pm.*

**Discoveries:** Parents with children on the autism spectrum will want to plan ahead for one of the museum's Discoveries programs, which are designed for children 6 to 17 with learning or developmental disabilities. Advance registration allows instructors to keep group sizes

smaller. The programs are multi-sensory, so handling materials, sketching, or movement are often incorporated into the tours. November and December's theme is Power and Protection: A Look at Armor. To make a reservation, call (212) 650–2010 or e-mail [access@metmuseum.org](mailto:access@metmuseum.org).

**Discoveries:** *Sunday, Nov. 18, 2–3:30 pm and Sunday, Dec. 2, 11–12:30 pm.*

**Self-guided tours:** If you visit the Met on a day that no family programs are scheduled — or if you simply prefer to explore on your own — be sure to pick up a Family Map or Family Guide when you enter the museum. The Family Map features a fold-out poster with all areas of the museum replicated in miniature. Around the sides is a look-and-find challenge: spot a unicorn for three points, Medusa's head for two points, and a Founding Father in a rowboat for four points. Each Family Guide focuses on a theme, such as Greek Mythology or the lives of children in Colonial America. For an additional fee, you can also rent Family Audio Guides that point out favorite

kid stops throughout the museum like the Temple of Dendur and the Arms and Armor galleries.

**Family Map and Family Guide:** Available year-round at the information desk inside the museum's main entrance. **Family Audio Guides:** Available at all admission desks and various gift shops; \$7 adults, free for kids 12 and younger, and free for visitors who are blind, partially sighted, or hard of hearing.

**Holiday Mondays:** While the Met is generally closed on Mondays during the year, it opens its doors on special occasions for Charles H. Tally Holiday Mondays to coincide with school calendars. Four one-hour sessions are offered during the course of the day, each with a different theme, so children 5 to 12 may choose to attend one or more as they wish. Gallery tours, stories, and sketching beside original works of art are all part of the fun.

**Holiday Mondays:** *Veterans' Day, Nov. 12, 11 am–noon; noon–1 pm; 1:15–2:15 pm; and 2:30–3:30 pm.*

**The Cloisters:** Whether or not your children are in their princesses and knights phase, everyone in the family will enjoy a visit to The Cloisters Museum and Gardens, the Met's northern-Manhattan branch dedicated to medieval art. During the one-hour family programs offered on weekend afternoons, kids ages 4 to 12 may be asked to spot mythical beasts in tapestries, noble knights in paintings and sculptures, or ornate decoration on clothing worn centuries ago.

**November's schedule:** *Tapestry Tales, Saturday Nov. 3, 1–2 pm; The Medieval Knight, Sunday Nov. 4, 1–2 pm; A Medieval Pilgrimage, Saturday Nov. 17, 1–2 pm; and Medieval Clothing and Fashion—Ropa y Ornamentos Medievales (a bilingual program), Saturday Nov. 24, 1–2 pm.*

• • •

**Metropolitan Museum of Art** [1000 Fifth Ave. at 82nd Street on the Upper East Side, (212) 535–7710, [metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)].

**The Cloisters Museum** [99 Margaret Corbin Dr. near Fort Tryon Place in Inwood, (212) 923–3700, [metmuseum.org](http://metmuseum.org)].

Marie Hueston is the author of "The All-American Jump and Jive Jig" (Sterling, 2010), and the forthcoming "Christmas Eve with Mrs. Claus" (Sterling, 2013). She lives in Brooklyn with her husband, son, and daughter.

# Bathtime surprise

How a mom reacts to a shocking tub discovery

BY MELISSA CADDELL

**W**ith small children in the house, I look forward to certain daily events. Bath time is near the top of my list (only slightly down from nap time). I love the adorable bubble beards, frothy hair and sweet-smelling children.

One evening as the children were making bubble soup, my eldest suddenly yelled, “Mom! Gracie pooped in the tub! There’s poop! Eeeww!” I turned from getting clean towels and saw my oldest daughter, then 5, scrambling out of the tub. Gracie,

2, sat in the tub looking stunned.

I had absolutely no idea how to proceed from here. As the mother of two, you’d think that I would be well prepared for most poop-related events. However, no one had ever told me about poop in the tub, and I had blissfully managed to avoid the experience with my older child.

I stood frozen for a moment while my brain slowly processed this new experience. In a moment of clarity, I realized that I had a choice — I could react in a firm, but playful manner, discussing the importance of not pooping in

the tub and calmly disinfecting everyone and the 3,000 toys that were in the contaminated water.

Or, I could shriek like a maniac, pull the children to safety, and loudly proclaim that we DO NOT poop in the tub.

I went with my gut. Shrieking, I grabbed the children, wrapped them in clean towels (that would now have to be disinfected) and carried them to my non-poop shower. My 5 year old dramatically re-told the event during the whole shower, and Gracie still looked a little shell-shocked (perhaps due to my continual mantra that we DO NOT poop in the tub). After disinfecting the children, I drained the tub, washed my hands with a hospital-style scrub, and set up a bio hazard perimeter.

How does one get poop out of the tub? I had no idea. After multiple discarded plans, one of which was to wait until my husband came home to deal with the toxic waste situation (cowardly, I know), I decided it was best to use a plentiful supply of toilet paper and just grab the floaties that had run aground. I did so, and went through a gag routine worthy of an Oscar. (I wonder where the 5 year old gets her dramatic side from?) I have daily dealings with poop, but excrement not contained in the diaper was a whole ‘nother country.

After the de-contamination process was complete (on both the children, the tub, and the toys in the tub — which I washed with bleach in the washing machine — can you even do that?), I thought about my reaction to the situation (I mean, honestly, it was just poop). As a parent in the trenches, there is not a lot of time for introspection. But I wondered if I had missed an opportunity to just laugh with my children. After this, I had a 2 year old who wore a swim diaper in the tub and stated emphatically, “No, no poop in tub” every time she came near the site of the disaster. Luckily, parenting provides constant opportunities for growth and improvement. I will think back to this adventure with the next unexpected event — like the one that happened today at nap time: poop finger-painting anyone?

*Melissa Caddell is raising three chatty girls (ages 13, 10, and 6) alongside her husband, Casey. She is a coffee snob, loves family movie night, and writes from the relative quiet of her closet.*



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# Don't label my child!

Accepting the diagnosis and services for your child with special needs

BY DANA CONNELLY

**T**o observe your child lag behind his peers is a pressure-filled, insecurity-fueling experience. Every parent needs to be aware of the appropriate developmental milestones of children, for which there is a plethora of information.

Any child-care program worth its accreditation and its tuition should be monitoring your child's progress through these milestones, noting any red flags in development and behavior, and reporting them to you, as the parent or caregiver, in a timely and professional manner.

## Fear of labels

Rather than balk at the suggestion of having your child evaluated, though, understand that these professionals want not only what is best for their program, but also what is best for your child. So why do so many families hold off on having their child evaluated for fear that the child will be "labeled?"

The reality is that everyone is labeled something everywhere they go. Maybe you're the so-called "funny" member of your family or the "tough one" at work. Of course, there is so much more to you than that. It is the same when your child is given a diagnosis.

If your child is displaying symptoms of autism, for example, but we called it "Puzzle-Head Syndrome," does it change what your child's struggles are? It's so important to focus more on the goals that the evaluations outline versus the label. These goals will bring your child closer to age-appropriate levels.

Without accepting the diagno-

sis and services, your child will continue to struggle and will be labeled something regardless. Is it better for your child to be known as "the one who doesn't talk," "the kid who cries a lot," or "the bully," rather than get the help he needs?

## Parents in denial

In speaking with a parent, a registered nurse who struggled with accepting her son's diagnosis of mild-moderate autism, she confessed the following:

"I would have felt less scared and hopeless had they told me my child had leukemia."

This sounded insane and awful to me at first, but then she explained.

Leukemia has a course of treatment that she could understand. And he could potentially be cured. I could see her point.

It's interesting how, if a child has a cold, asthma, or allergies, we as parents are on top of it, making the doctor's appointments, contacting every specialist, and filling the prescriptions.

So why is it that when our children display troubling behaviors, learning disabilities, or developmental delays, we hold off on having them evaluated and



Without accepting the diagnosis, your child will continue to struggle and will be labeled something regardless. Is it better for your child to be known as "the one who doesn't talk," or "the bully," rather than get the help he needs?

reject the services that are offered (for free, through the Board of Education)?

Many parents feel that it is a reflection of their parenting skills. Perhaps they feel a sense of insecurity about the time or opportunities that they can provide for their child. Maybe they blame themselves for an incident the child has endured.

Denial is what grows from such insecurity and is a common reaction to learning that a child will need special educational services, but the inaction of the parent far outshines the difficulties that the child is displaying. While it seems harsh, it is the denial that will have you judged as a parent.

Another concern of parents during the evaluation and diagnosis process is that they do not want their child to be part of the system.

The reality, though, is that if your child has a Social Security number, then he is already part of the system, a system that is designed and regulated to help your child achieve developmental milestones, age-appropriate skills, and future academic success.

The evaluation process is confidential and every report, consent form, and Individual Educational Plan is accessible by only the appointed parties involved in your child's case.

Even if your child requires services throughout his educational career, goals such as college, future employment, and living independently are not unattainable simply because he has been evaluated at some point in his life.

### Neglecting needs

An important consideration is that, prior to first grade, educational services are not mandatory, but if your child requires services after first grade and, as a parent or caregiver, you do not follow through, it could be considered educational neglect.

Section 1012 (f) of the Family Court Act identifies a neglected child as a child less than 18 years of age whose physical, mental, or emotional condition has been impaired or is in imminent danger of becoming impaired as a result of the failure of his parent or other person legally responsible for his care to exercise a minimum degree of care; in supplying the child with adequate food, clothing, shelter, or education in accordance with the provisions of part one of article 65 of the education law, or medical, dental, optometric, or surgical care, though financially able to do so or offered financial or other reasonable means to do so.

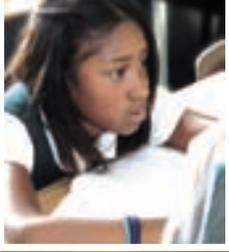
As an evaluation representative for a New York-based agency, I come into frequent contact with families who are in denial of their children's developmental delays. At times, meetings have ended in threats, insults, and even tears. It is OK to feel discouraged, and it is tempting to feel like in some way you have failed as a parent, but it's essential to shelve those impulses and take a more proactive approach to helping your child grow and develop.

The evaluation process is comprised of multiple standardized tests that determine the functioning level of your child. According to the New York City Board Of Education, a child must present with a 33 percent delay in one developmental area, or a 25 percent delay in two developmental areas to qualify for services.

By initiating a proper evaluation for your child, the worst thing that can happen is that your child will get the help that he needs.

For more information, visit [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov).

Dana Connelly holds dual Master's Degrees in Education and Special Education, working as an educational evaluator for a New York-based agency. She specializes in Applied Behavior Analysis and is the proud single mother of a 5-year-old boy.



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For more information please contact Heaven's Hands Community Service at 718-788-5252 or visit [www.hhcsny.org](http://www.hhcsny.org).

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 President Street  
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718-499-5667, ext. 14 or [www.rivendellnyc.org](http://www.rivendellnyc.org)

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# A friendly assist

Kids with disabilities have a friend in Bridge to Youth Recreational Program

BY SHAVANA ABRUZZO

**C**athy and Stephen Wolf faced every parent's nightmare when their precious twins, Stephanie and Dominick, were diagnosed with autism. But the toughest part was yet to come.

"We had difficulty finding a recreational program for our children where they would feel accepted," says the couple, whose fears melted away when they discovered the Regina Pacis Youth Center in Bensonhurst which offered a satisfying play and learning experience, asked no questions, and cost just \$25 a year.

Soon, the Wolfs were spending their Sundays at the Bridge to Youth Recreational Program, enjoying quality family time, and living every parent's dream of seeing their children learn appropriate play skills and have fun, while forming healthy relationships in their community.

"Everyone looks forward to Sundays now," they add.

These days, Stephanie and Dominick, 7, play music, create art, bowl in the on-site bowling alley, and shoot hoops in the gym, while participating in speech therapy and other activities. They enjoy these activities alongside peers ranging in age from 3 to 26, who have Autism Spectrum Disorders, Sensory Integration Deficits, Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and other disabilities.



Music therapist Adrian Fernandez helps a budding pianist tickle the ivories.

On most Sundays, the youth center jiggles with the sounds of rambunctious children jamming along on drums, singing at the top of their lungs to their favorite karaoke tune, or chattering while making edible art projects like acorns out of mini-donuts, topped with frosting and pretzels.

"Last week, they finger-painted apples, and made other art using shaving cream and Elmer's glue," says Susan Esposito, a program co-founder and the parent of two adult autistic children, Charles and Anthony, who have participated in the program since its inception seven years ago by volunteers and therapists, many of whom also have children with special needs.

Holidays are extra thrilling at Bridge, and Halloween was a spectacular affair. Costumed trick-or-treaters made skeletons out of Q-tips, and enjoyed a magic show and a pizza party, in addition to the scheduled events they've come to expect each week.

Those expectations have been simple from the start, says Esposito, a teacher who gave up her job to look after her sons.

"Our population doesn't get invited to parties, and they don't have friends, so our goal was to provide that for them," she says. "It seems that we've fulfilled our goal."

Today, the center is an exciting lei-

sure and educational facility, plus a resource center for parents who network and share information through a thriving grapevine. Group activities are interspersed with joyous celebrations, including regular birthday parties with cakes, candles, and a chorus of cheers.

The kinship formed at Bridge is heartwarming, according to the therapists who help make its magic.

"Families with special needs can come and not only feel welcome and loved, but also be a part of a community that grows together," says music therapist Adrian Fernandez.

The smiles of his young charges are rewards in themselves, adds art therapist James Bonavita.

"I see the look of accomplishment and excitement from them," he says. "This is worth it all."

For Esposito and her fellow board members, the best part is providing an afternoon of fun each week for some of society's most lovable, but under-served, members and their stressed-out families.

"We're here for everyone, I don't even ask what their disability is," she says. "It is what it is."

*Bridge to Youth Recreational Program at Regina Pacis Youth Center [1258 65th St. between 12th and 13th avenues in Bensonhurst, (347) 836-9171, [www.bridgetoyouthinc.org](http://www.bridgetoyouthinc.org)]. Sundays, 1:30-5 pm, \$25 donation.*



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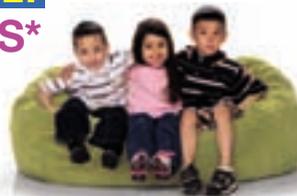
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# Finding a hobby

The value of hobbies for special-needs children

BY REBECCA MCKEE

**I**n the cold months of winter, discovering novel adventures and activities can pose a challenge. It is during these moments when many of us spend time shaking off the chill indoors by working on projects, cozying up with a good book, and seeking out other forms of fun.

People with autism spectrum disorder, or other unique personalities, meet with difficulties managing their leisure in a productive manner. Their free time is not something naturally filled with hobbies. Unstructured minutes and hours lead to practicing undesirable behaviors. How to partake in recreation skills is something that needs to be taught, scheduled, and reinforced. Winter is a perfect season to teach the skill of hobby development and maintenance, as it is the natural time of year for family and friends to spend more time close to home.

Since hobbies take place for most people outside of work and school, families and residential support teams should tackle the task of developing hobbies for a person with autism. All people involved, including the individual with special needs, family and support circles, should articulate and develop hobbies that are preferred and teachable. Keep in mind, as is the case for us all, that hobbies must fit within our daily schedules. As you create on behalf of those who may not enjoy change and combustion, select hobbies that will last throughout the years.

Hobbies that have longevity meet these criteria:

- It is a socially acceptable activity for children, teens and adults.
- It is something that one gravitates towards naturally.



- It is something that is simple to schedule.

- It is something that can be started, enjoyed, and completed alone.

Some socially acceptable activities that will grow throughout childhood to adulthood may include collections, such as sports memorabilia, coins, or stamps. A regularly scheduled physical hobby can consist of an exercise activity, as in Wii, bike riding, yoga, and meditation, or simply taking a daily walk. Pet care and dog walking would be beneficial for those who have a keen interest in animals.

Those who enjoy the arts may be attracted to hobbies that comprise of pottery, musical instrument les-

sons, music appreciation via an iPod, scrapbooking, painting, photography, or keeping a journal. Food lovers may enjoy gardening and planting, and taking that hobby further to cooking and preparing food.

Bringing your family member on board with his hobby development will increase the chances that he will enjoy leisure skills independently. It also heightens the chances that he will grow with this hobby, expand on it, and bring it to new levels throughout his life. Hobbies should not cause internal anxiety to himself or external disruption to others. Hobbies fill free time and are to be enjoyed. They bring structure and a sense of accomplishment. Enjoy!

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## MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

# Narrowing my focus

## Multitasking mom needs quality time with child

**I**'ve really been trying to focus on giving Olivia my undivided attention. Parents, you know how it is; you're "playing" with your kids while trying to answer some e-mails, prepare dinner, or tackle whatever needs to get done at the moment. It's not that I don't enjoy spending time with my daughter, but, like most parents, I have a million things to do and very little time in which to do them.

This morning, when I walked into the office and overheard a co-

worker say that he had watched three movies the day before, I gasped and nearly fell off my chair. How is that possible? I can't remember the last time I had more than 20 minutes of downtime, and the last time I attempted to watch a movie, I didn't get past the opening credits before I fell asleep. (In case you're wondering, this co-worker is single with no kids.)

Watching movies, going to a movie, or even watching one hour of uninterrupted TV is definitely a luxury in our household. Whenever I do have a few minutes to spare, there's always something that needs to get done.

I've realized that in trying to be the best mom, employee, wife, friend, etc., I'm very rarely being present in what I'm doing. And I try to be in-the-now most when I'm spending time with Olivia. Sure, she can entertain herself with all her toys or with the dog and the cat (her favorite play dates), but I'm also aware of how important it is for us to just sit and play together.

My husband is great at this. When he cooks, he gets her involved. He plays with her, and you can tell that he really isn't thinking about anything else. In that moment, it's all about her.

I take for granted that she doesn't realize when I'm immersed in other things while still trying to play with her. But kids are a lot smarter than we think. There's a time and place for multi-tasking, right? While I play with my daughter, dinner is on the stove, I'm folding laundry, checking e-mails, and try-

ing to throw in some squats in there, too. I'm simultaneously planning the rest of the night: eat dinner, clean-up after dinner, clean-up toys, bath time, bedtime, pack Olivia's bag for daycare, prep food for tomorrow, spend quality time with husband, walk the dog (or should we go for a run?). The list goes on.

I think back to an Oprah show I saw recently (while I folded the laundry and cooked dinner). Guests of the show were stressed-out moms who made careless, and even fatal, mistakes. One mother, a respected assistant principal in an Ohio school, accidentally left her 2-year-old child in the backseat of her car while she went to work. When she got to the car it was too late, and her daughter had died. Recounting the 2007 event, she discussed how she was overwhelmed with work, raising two small children, and wasn't thinking clearly. Hearing her, I felt sympathy, not judgment, and thought how this really can happen to anyone. Part of her healing is being present, focusing on the now, and not letting things overwhelm her.

The mother's to-do list really never ends, or like my mom always says, "A woman's work is never done." Maybe I just have to realize that and remind myself more often that Olivia is growing up faster than I'd like to admit. Yes, she'll appreciate a clean and organized home, but she needs some quality mommy time, too.

Yesterday I dedicated my free day just to hanging out with Olivia. We made all of our meals together, went for a walk, and played with dolls. I even laid down with her at naptime and stared at her while she slept, one of my favorite parenting moments. My e-mails were answered at my leisure, and needless to say, the house didn't fall apart. As she gets older, I realize how important it is for her to feel a connection with me, a real, solid connection where she knows I'm there, not just physically, but supporting her in what she does. She really is my biggest priority. Next on my to-do list: get a mother's helper.



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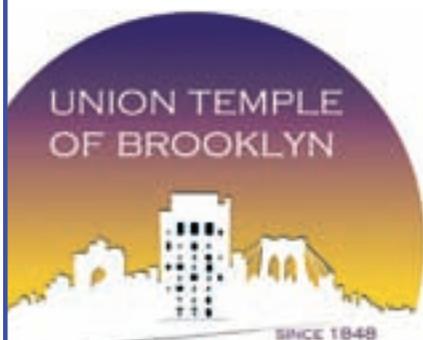
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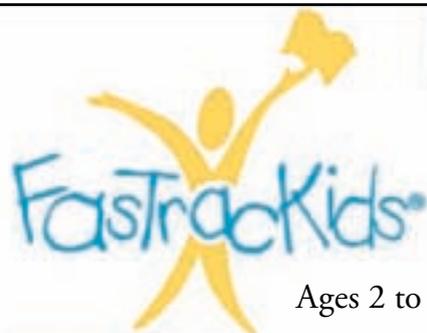
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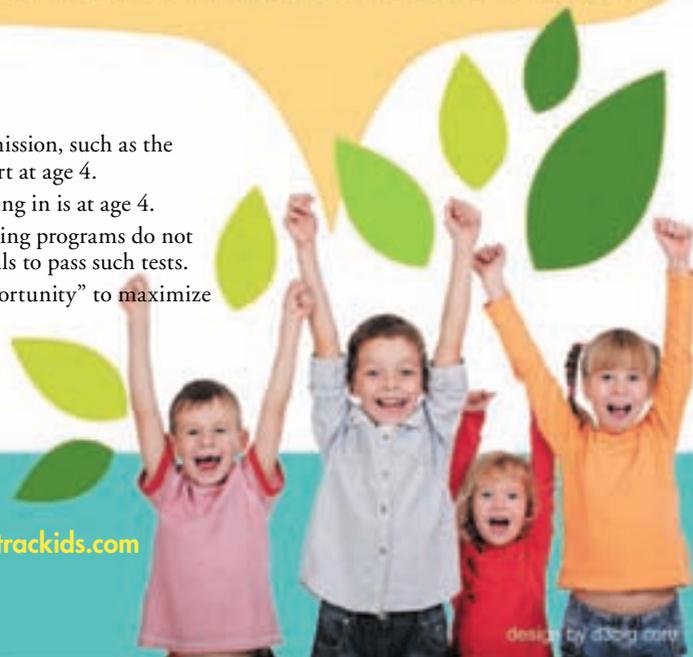
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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN



# Can't sleep?

## Melatonin can help your child

**W**hen my daughter was diagnosed with not one, but two autoimmune disorders, it impacted everything in her life. From daily headaches and stomach pains to extreme fatigue and foggy brain, Kate grew accustomed to dealing with not feeling well. She always had trouble sleeping since being diagnosed, but in the last year in particular, things became worse. During the summer, she couldn't sleep at all. The more she tried, the more anxious she got and the less chance she had to sleep. Her days and nights became confused and her quality of life went downhill fast. When school reopened, it became apparent the first week that something had to be done.

I called her endocrinologist to discuss any possible sleeping aids that might help her. I had never before wanted to put her on any more medications than she was already on — especially sleeping pills — but her lack of sleep had become unbearable, I began to consider it.

Her doctor suggested melatonin. Melatonin? I had heard a lot about it in the past couple of years but didn't know much about it.

I thanked him, hung up, and

embarked on a three-hour Google search. And then I went across the street and bought her a bottle in the pharmacy. Hands-down, it was the best thing I've done to help improve her overall health.

With melatonin, the first mistake that people make is thinking that is a sleeping pill. It is not. It is a natural hormone produced by the body, which helps regulate the sleep and wake cycles. In my daughter's case, she didn't have enough to sustain her and her sleeping cycles were thrown out of whack. Once she started taking it, it immediately began helping her body do what it was naturally supposed to at night — calm down and sleep.

We all know how vital sleep is for all of us. Adequate amounts of sleep are essential for children (and in particular for children with health issues) because sleep affects us in every way, from eating and thinking to repairing cells and fighting off infection.

Dr. Lawrence Rosen, a pediatrician, nationally recognized expert in pediatric integrative medicine, and co-author of "Treatment Alternatives for Children," explains how melatonin helps.

"There are receptors in the brain

for melatonin that regulate brain chemicals related to anxiety and calming," he explains. Dr. Rosen, who is also the founder of the Whole Child Center in Oradell, NJ, recommends melatonin to his pediatric patients. "Melatonin can be a useful sleep or anxiety aid for children (typically 3 years old or older). I encourage an integrative approach to sleep and anxiety issues, including relaxation strategies like yoga or guided imagery. But if those strategies are not successful, a small dose of melatonin may be helpful."

Dr. Rosen recommends starting at 0.5 mg. and says even a very small dose can be effective. My daughter takes 1 mg. each night.

Robin Gorman Newman, founder of MotherhoodLater.com finds melatonin very useful in her son's sleeping schedule.

"My 9-year-old son has always been an active kid, and it's hard for him to wind down. He fights going to sleep, so melatonin was suggested to us. He takes 2 mg. of the GNC brand dissolvable pills a half hour before bedtime. He initially took 1 mg., but as he's grown, the doctor upped the dose."

There is some debate about the possible side effects, such as drowsiness, headaches, abdominal pain, dizziness, and strange dreams. If a child experiences any of these symptoms, melatonin might not be right for him. Bear in mind, however, that those side effects usually occur when people take too much or aren't under a doctor's care.

For my daughter, melatonin has been a lifesaver. Ever since the day she started taking it, she has been able to sleep, which is incredible given her history. If your child has been affected by a sustained lack of sleep or inability to get to sleep, a complete check-up is necessary. Then, once health conditions have been ruled out or identified — and if your child is still struggling to get the sleep he needs to feel healthy — you might want to discuss melatonin with your pediatrician.

*Danielle Sullivan, a 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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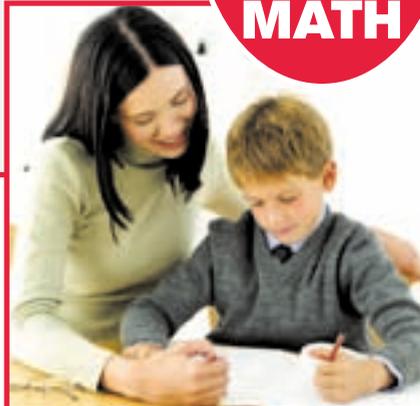
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# Holiday staycation

There's no place like home when New York City celebrates this season

BY STACEY ZABLE

**V**isitors know that December is one of the best times of year to come to New York City, when shops and attractions dress up and show off with special activities, events, and retail wonders. Luckily for us, it's all just a ferry, train or bus ride away. This holiday season, use your days off to take in some of the festive fun listed below — and maybe even top it off with an overnight stay in Manhattan.

## Sights and activities

**Window shopping:** The inside of the stores may be a treasure trove of great gifts, but the first stop for anyone exploring New York City this season is to see the famed holiday windows of Manhattan's iconic shops. Favorites include Bloomingdale's on

59th Street and Lexington Avenue, Bergdorf Goodman on 57th Street and Fifth Avenue, Saks Fifth Avenue on 49th Street, Lord & Taylor on 38th Street and Fifth Avenue, and Macy's on 34th Street at Sixth Avenue.

**Rockefeller Center:** Is there really any other Christmas tree when compared to Rockefeller Center's soaring spruce? The beautifully decorated, massive tree is lit up in all its glory and surrounded by other holiday decor starting Nov. 28. Get in the true spirit and take a spin on the ice at the skating rink, or get tickets for Radio City Music Hall's "Christmas Spectacular," celebrating its 85th anniversary of the Rockettes performing in New York City. The show runs Nov. 9-Dec. 30.

*Rockefeller Center (Rockefeller Plaza between W. 49th and W. 50th streets in Manhattan, rockefellercenter.com);*

*Radio City Music Hall [1260 Sixth Ave. between W. 50th and W. 51st streets in Manhattan, (212) 247-4777, radiocity-christmas.com]*

**Holiday Train Show:** This New York Botanical Garden annual event features model trains that ride through more than 100 replicas of city landmarks, including the Brooklyn Bridge, Yankee Stadium, and the George Washington Bridge. Takes place from Nov. 17 through Jan. 13, 2013.

*New York Botanical Garden [2900 Southern Blvd. in Belmont, Bronx, (718) 817-8700, www.nybg.org]*

**Bryant Park:** Combine skating and shopping at Bryant Park. The City Pond at Bryant Park rink features free ice skating, rental skates, skating shows, and special events and activities. The Holiday Shops at Bryant Park, individual booths boasting unique gift items, surround the skat-



(Above) The first stop for any one exploring New York City this season is to see the famed holiday windows of Manhattan's iconic shops, including Macy's on 34th Street. (At left) There's plenty to do in Rockefeller Center — there's the beautifully decorated, massive tree is lit up in all its glory and surrounded by other holiday decor; ice skating; or Radio City Hall's "Christmas Spectacular."

ing rink through Jan. 6, 2013.

**Bryant Park** [41 W. 40th Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Manhattan, (212) 768-4242, [CitiPondatBryantPark.com](http://CitiPondatBryantPark.com); [TheHolidayShopsatBryantPark.com](http://TheHolidayShopsatBryantPark.com)]

**Gingerbread time:** Going beyond gingerbread men and gingerbread houses, local pastry chefs create large-scale confectionary creations highlighting monuments from around the world at Le Parker Meridien hotel during its annual Gingerbread Extravaganza. They are on display from Dec. 1 to Jan. 3, 2013.

**Le Parker Meridien** [119 W. 56th Street between Sixth and Seventh avenues in Manhattan, (212) 245-5000, [parkermeridien.com](http://parkermeridien.com)]

## Hotel packages

Make your holiday shopping time something special with an overnight stay in Manhattan. Below are just a few of the hotels offering special packages; it's up to you if you want to bring the kids or spend some alone time with your significant other. Access the websites or call the hotels directly for rates.

**Affinia Manhattan:** The Miracle on 31st Street package includes accommodations for one night; VIP Ice Skating package at Bryant Park (two skate rentals, VIP access to bypass the line, hot cocoa, bag check, and 10 percent off your final bill at Celsius at Bryant Park); two complimentary holiday cocktails and 20 percent off holiday dinner at Niles NYC Restaurant & Bar; Macy's 10 percent savings pass; in-room

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**Affinia Manhattan** [371 Seventh Ave. between 30th and 31st streets in Manhattan, (212) 563-1800, [affinia.com](http://affinia.com)]

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**414 Hotel** [414 W. 46th Street between Ninth and 10th avenues in Manhattan, (212) 399-0006, [414hotel.com](http://414hotel.com)]

*Stacey Zable is an award-winning veteran travel writer and family travel expert who has written about destinations, resorts, and cruise lines around the world. Her favorite trips are those that she shares with her husband and two daughters. Send travel questions and comments to Stacey at [info@familytraveltrails.com](mailto:info@familytraveltrails.com).*

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Photo by Heather Weston

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## FAMILY HEALTH

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# Give them the shot

## Don't avoid those childhood immunizations

*I found a pediatrician that I trust for my soon-to-be-born infant. I planned on following all of her advice about immunizations, but a friend is now telling me to avoid immunizing my baby because of risks of autism, sudden infant death syndrome, and other disorders and illnesses that have been linked to vaccines. What should I do?*

**T**he growing trend of parents choosing to forgo routine immunizations for their children, based on unsubstantiated myths, conspiracy theories, and debunked research, poses an unnecessary (and in some cases, life-threatening) risk to their children, as well as a risk to family, friends, and communities.

To be fair, the impulse to second-guess the need for childhood immunizations is understandable. Vaccines can be painful. In rare instances, they can lead to fever, allergic reactions, or other temporary illnesses. And of course, no one enjoys seeing her baby stuck with a needle! However, the benefits of immunizing your child and sticking to the vaccination schedule far outweigh the comparatively microscopic — in some cases, non-existent — risks.

There have always been unfounded theories about long-term negative effects of certain immunizations, but the notion that vaccines were dangerous really caught on in 1998 with a study published by a British medical researcher named Dr. Andrew Wakefield. In it, Dr. Wakefield concluded that the routine measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine was a possible cause of autism. Subsequent studies failed to reproduce or confirm Dr. Wakefield's hypothesis, and it eventually surfaced that lawyers had paid Dr. Wakefield to conduct the study to lend credence to lawsuits against the vaccine manufacturers. In 2010, the paper that originally published the study issued a retraction. Unfortunately, that hasn't stopped the "autism myth" from sticking.

But let's move away from the myths about vaccines, onto the proven benefits. To start, the Cen-



ters for Disease Control recommends a number of immunizations for infants in their first year of life. Those include the hepatitis B, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, and indeed, measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines. It is estimated that, worldwide, immunizations for those illnesses alone save more than three million lives per year. Getting your child vaccinated also protects your community from outbreaks of dangerous diseases. Though immunizations drastically reduce the risk of contracting an illness, they rarely eliminate that

risk entirely. That means that (for example) should your child contract the measles, he still poses a risk to everyone around him, even those who have responsibly kept up with an immunization schedule.

As a parent, you'll find that there's no shortage of things to worry about when it comes to your child, but vaccines should not be among them. By keeping up with your child's immunization schedule, and refusing to fall prey to the latest rumors about the dangers of vaccinations, you will ensure that your child has the best shot at a healthy life.

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SHARON C. PETERS, MA

# 'You don't love me!'



**Dear Sharon,**

How do you respond to a child who says "You don't love me. If you did, you wouldn't send me to school."

**Dear Parent,**

Dramatic statements such as "You don't love me!" or "I hate school!" are not uncommon for little ones to say when they are upset. A child's dramatic statements can easily produce a dramatic reaction from their mom or dad. Such a response can ultimately anger everyone.

I often recommend that parents in your situation give a clear, calm, and brief response to their little one's declaration, and then turn their attention to possible issues of concern, i.e. why their child doesn't want to go to school.

Although school can be wonderful, it is not simple for many children.

It is important for parents to learn about the things that are particularly challenging during their child's day and to offer support and empathy whenever needed.

There are countless reasons why children are reluctant to go to school, and at least as many possible solutions. Here are just a few:

Some children have trouble with transitions. Even when the school year is well under way, children might still be adjusting to a new classroom environment. In this case, parents may need to help their child understand and cope with routines. It might also be wise to talk with teachers to learn details and brainstorm practical ways to help their young one feel less overwhelmed.

Social pressures, even for very young children, can be unsettling as well. It can help for parents to arrange and be productively involved

in individual play dates so that their child has rewarding interactions with children that he sees every day. Play dates often need to happen consistently to strengthen social skills and build self-confidence over time.

Academic pressures can, of course, also produce stress and insecurities. Check with school personnel regularly to identify areas of weakness, and then supplement those difficult subjects with patience and understanding at home, or with tutors, other individuals, or small group assistance. Doing so can build confidence and lift a little one's spirits.

Putting more emotional energy into finding and fixing the underlying issues of a phrase like "you don't love me" can be far more productive than snapping with a quick response said to blow off steam.

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

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

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## LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

# Teens and 'sexting'

**B**ack in the days of passing paper notes and talking on corded telephones, a classmate of mine brought to school a nude photo of a young woman cut out of an adult magazine. Once seen by a few peers, the incident quickly mushroomed into full-blown, graphic stories shared during lunch. The news spread around school as fast as things could spread back then, via whispers in class and taps on shoulders in hallways. However, gossip about the incident vanished quickly once the photo was confiscated.

The new adolescent taboo is "sexting" — a disturbing trend defined as the sending of sexually explicit messages or photos primarily via cellphones. Technology allows texts and photos to be disseminated at

lightning speed. Once a photo is in cyberspace, there is no control over what can happen to it.

### Muddling through statistics

Studies show diverse results. Some studies show that approximately 20 percent of teenagers have sent or received sexually explicit photos. A 2011 study conducted jointly by the Associated Press and MTV found that sexting is far more prevalent among young adults (19 percent) as compared to teens (seven percent).

David Finkelhor, PhD, director of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, explains that many of the studies have higher percentages, because they survey teens who are at or beyond the age of consent.

"Our research, a national sample

of teens under the age of 18, shows that about one percent of teenagers have been involved in sexting."

Studies also show that most teens send these photos to their significant others. Parents have long grappled with the problem of teens risking their reputations to attract the attention of another teen.

"Parents have for generations tried to warn their adolescents about the risks in getting involved in sexual relationships," says Finkelhor.

Low self-esteem and peer pressure are catalysts.

"When we combine a teenager's poor impulse control, curiosity about sex, and their close ties to their high-tech phones, sexting becomes the 'it' trend in boy-girl communication," explains Ida Zarrabizadeh, a licensed marriage and family therapist and professor in the Marriage and Family Therapy master's program at Touro University Worldwide.

### Dangers and consequences

According to the July 2010 FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, "An 18-year-old high school graduate committed suicide after a nude photo she had transmitted via her cellphone to her boyfriend was also sent to hundreds of teenagers in her school." Students who saw the photo allegedly harassed her.

Not only can nude photos be used to harass an adolescent, but some incidents might also be considered illegal.

"It's unusual that kids are being arrested for child pornography. Where there were arrests, something malicious was going on," Finkelhor explains. He says that most incidents handled by police are considered aggravated cases — meaning an adult was involved or a minor engaged in malicious or abusive behavior.

Parents should talk to their teens about real life, tragic examples of sexting gone wrong, so teens are acutely aware of the negative consequences.

### It happened — now what?

"It's easy for parents to become overly emotional. Parents can go

through a number of emotions from anger, to disappointment, to sadness," Zarrabizadeh explains. So parents should seek a support system of their own such as a spouse or trusted friend.

Take action immediately if you've found that your teen has been harassed or exploited.

"If an adult has been involved or there is criminal activity (blackmail or selling and distributing photos), parents should get in touch with police," Finkelhor advises. If content has been posted on a website, Finkelhor says parents should contact the website manager and say that the photos have been posted without permission.

Zarrabizadeh believes that having an open, non-threatening relationship will promote mutual trust.

"Emphasize how important her safety is to you."

### Additional resources

Crimes Against Children Research Center (University of New Hampshire): [www.unh.edu/ccrc](http://www.unh.edu/ccrc)

High Technology Crime Investigation Association: Internet Safety for Children Campaign: [www.htcia.org/isfc](http://www.htcia.org/isfc)

### Tips and tales

"My 13 year old has a TracFone with limited minutes. Until I know she can be responsible, I monitor what she is doing."

— Lisa Phillips, Hyde Park, NY

"Parents should state very clear expectations with a written contract. Discuss long-term consequences with your teen."

— Maureen Primrose, Wappingers Falls, NY

### Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips to encourage leadership qualities in your teen.

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

Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer, 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). For more information, visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com).



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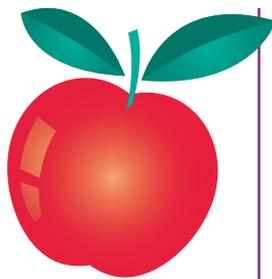
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## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND  
MARGE EBERTS

# A grade for effort?

**Dear teacher,**

My son receives a grade for both achievement and effort in every one of his subjects. I am not sure which grade I should be most concerned with? Is it important to receive both grades for each subject?

**Dear parents,**

The grades measure different things. The achievement grade reflects how well your son has mastered the subject material. The effort grade is less precise. It shows how hard your child is working, including doing classwork, participating in class discussion, and completing homework assignments.

You should be most concerned about the relationship between the two grades. A good grade in effort should ideally be linked to a good grade in achievement. On the other hand, a poor grade in effort can often explain a low achievement grade. And a high achievement grade coupled with a low effort grade may indicate that a child needs more challenging work. Whenever there is a significant difference between the two grades, a discussion with a teacher should be arranged.

Research has shown that students' beliefs about effort are very important. If students believe that the effort they put into learning an academic subject will lead to achieving a better academic grade, the students are more likely to put forth the necessary effort to obtain the results they want to achieve.

## Ways to improve a fourth grader's spelling

**Dear teacher,**

My fourth grader will ace the weekly spelling test; however, he misspells a lot of words when doing other work. How can he improve his spelling?

**Dear parents,**

Part of the answer lies in how he learns the spelling test words. He may not be working with them enough to really learn them. He needs to write the words on a home spelling pre-test as soon as he gets them, self-correct the misspelled words, and write them correctly and then be tested on the missed words



following the same steps until he can write them correctly. If he misses too many words, limit the number of words (five to seven) that he works with in one evening. The night before the test, re-test him on all the words and follow the same correction steps for any missed words.

There is a good possibility that the spelling test words are not the ones that he is misspelling in his everyday work. A good way to deal with this is to look over his work and make a list of the words that he frequently misspells. Then you can follow the steps above and teach him five of these words along with the weekly spelling list. Review these words frequently in separate spelling tests until you see that he really can spell them. It could take a month for him to learn as many as 10 words.

To reinforce the learning of the misspelled words, play Hangman with your son using the words that he frequently misspells. If he can word process, he could type some of his homework. By using spell check, he'll immediately see spelling errors and be able to correct them.

## No phonics a problem for fifth grader

**Dear teacher,**

My daughter was never taught many phonics. Now, when she meets a new word, she can't sound it out.

She's in fifth grade, and this is becoming quite a problem in her social studies and science classes. Where do we get help for her?

**Dear parents,**

When children get to your daughter's age, they really aren't using many phonics beyond the sound of the first syllable. After this, they are decoding words by dividing them into syllables and identifying familiar prefixes and suffixes, as well as using the context.

Admittedly, new words in social studies and science can be difficult to decode. You can help your child by working with her on each chapter's new vocabulary. In most social studies and science

books, these words are usually displayed prominently at the beginning or end of a chapter. If you can't work with your child, consider a tutor.

Don't expect her to learn all the new vocabulary in one session. Start with the ones in the current reading assignment. Introduce these words over several days, and review them frequently. Work on only a few words at a time. First, spend time on the definitions of each word until your daughter can easily define them. Then, take a word and show her how to divide the word into syllables. If she is having trouble with initial consonants, find simple words that she knows using that consonant. For example, if the word is "society," relate it to the word "so." Be sure to identify and teach the common prefixes and suffixes used in the social studies and science words.

It could also be helpful if you and your daughter were to read sections of the textbook aloud together using the new words. If your or a tutor's work with the child is not enough, ask the school to investigate your daughter's reading difficulties and to provide the help that she needs.

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

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# Making the cut

An expert's tips on how to clip your child's bangs

BY JENNIFER BILEK

**N**early every parent, no matter how inexperienced, is one day going to attempt the feat of cutting their children's bangs.

As a professional in the children's haircare industry, my advice is: don't do it!

I know the idea of trimming a fringe of hair straight across the forehead might appear to be an easy task, but only an accomplished stylist can whiz through a trim in two minutes and have your tyke looking like she just stepped off the cover of kiddie "Vogue." Trust me, when you do it, it is not going to take two min-

utes, and "Vogue" will not be calling.

That said, I know you are going to do it anyway. Let's face it, you don't always have time or money in the budget for a trip to the salon for a simple bang trim. But maybe your son's hair is in his eyes, although the rest of his hair could wait another two or three weeks before needing a trim, or your daughter really, really, really wants to grow her hair long, but her bangs are past overgrown.

So, let's run through this together, so that when you do embark on this adventure, you will be armed with a few helpful tips.

First, brush all of your child's hair all the way back, and then, let it fall naturally. This will establish where your child's original part is, and it's the place where you begin to section the bang away from the rest of the hair.

Make an isosceles triangle-shaped section with the point facing the part and the two ends of the same length coming down to greet the forehead. The side of the triangle that is not the same size as the others is the part that lies on the forehead. Remember, the hair growing from the top of the head is the hair that eventually grows down to fill in the sides of the hair, so if you pull all the hair forward without regard to sectioning, you will have too much bang, too much hair in the back, and not enough on sides. This is why you carefully section the hair, and this is half of your battle.

When you have the hair that you want to cut carefully sectioned, you must clip the rest of the hair back, so it is not in your way. Butterfly clips work great for this and can be found in any drugstore.

What kind of scissors are you using? What? Put those garden shears away! And the sewing scissors, nail clippers, and arts-and-crafts scissors, too. Hair scissors are a breed

all their own, which is why they are called "hair scissors." A lengthy discussion on hair scissors is not practical for this article or your quick bang trim, so just trust me, and go to the drugstore and purchase a workable pair for \$20. And while you're at the drugstore, pick up a spray bottle.

Before we go further, let me say that it is better to leave the hair a little longer on your first go around, because you may not achieve perfection immediately. Few parents do. It's better to have some hair left to work with than to have the bangs be too short.

Next, don't cut the bangs on the forehead. Children will instinctually raise their eyebrows, and this will throw off your line. (A little above their eyebrows is your target point, but remember to play it safe by leaving it longer rather than shorter).

Spritz the hair lightly with water. Then, working in three sections (middle and two sides), and taking the middle section first, put it flat between your index and middle fingers and pull it slightly away from the forehead and then down. When you can see the eyebrows below your fingers, move them a smidge more, and cut the hair below your fingers. Don't worry if they are too long, as you can go back for another run once you get the feel of it.

To cut the sides of the bangs, you should move to each side when you are cutting them, in the same way you did the front section, remembering that the head is cylindrical in shape. If you cut the sides from the front they will be as long as the front pieces and hang longer than the front piece. Your bang will not be straight across if you do this.

And that is it! Practice these tips and you're on your way to becoming an expert bang-trimmer.

*Jennifer Bilek is a freelance writer living in New York City. She has been working in the children's hair industry for 20 years and has written extensively about children's haircare for parent magazines. Bilek also writes for The Upcoming Magazine ([www.theupcominguk.co](http://www.theupcominguk.co)) about current affairs.*





## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Eating out healthy

**Y**oung families dine out frequently and children enjoy having a menu just for them. But when you think about a traditional kids' menu — mac-and-cheese, fried mozzarella sticks, hot dogs, and grilled cheese — it won't win any nutrition awards.

Research suggests parents desire healthier options for their children. So can restaurants help stem our childhood obesity epidemic and otherwise help our youngsters eat better?

The National Restaurant Association says "yes." It partnered with nutrition website HealthyDiningFinder.com to create the Kids LiveWell program, which set standards for healthier kids' menu items for both chain and independent restaurants.

"Kids LiveWell is about making the healthful choice the easier choice. It's for providing, not just healthful options, but different options that children will love," explains National Restaurant Association director of nutrition Joy Dubost, PhD, RD. She points to sliders made from bison meat, tasty pasta dishes, and grilled chicken with dipping sauces. "We're really beginning to diversify what's offered for

children."

The standards are based on leading health organizations' scientific recommendations, such as the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for children under age 12. Fresh fruit and vegetables are emphasized. Entrees are limited to 600 calories, no more than 35 percent of which can be from fat.

Practicality was also considered.

"We reached out to registered dietitians who work in the restaurant industry to see if the criteria are doable," said Dubost. Finally, taste was paramount.

"We want to make sure the items have good taste profiles," she said. "If the kids don't eat it, it won't work."

Kids LiveWell launched in July 2011 with 19 restaurants. Now more than 100 brands are participating with almost 30,000 locations, including a large number of independent eateries.

### An app for that

The Association's What's Hot in 2012 survey of 1,800 chefs from the Culinary Federation was eye opening. Chefs named healthful kids' meals third out of 220 trends.

"Consumers are demanding them,

and the restaurants are responding," explained Dubost.

Dubost pointed to the new free Kids LiveWell app (which is geo-coded) for Android and iPhone devices.

"Parents can quickly look on the app, and see what restaurants provide those healthier choices."

Healthy Dining has a mobile website, which will know your location and can give you options based on that. Restaurant operators list healthy options right on the menu, on their websites, or print the information right in the restaurant.

### Healthier breakfasts

Luckily, it's easier than before to find healthful menu choices for children, even if the restaurant at which you're eating is not a Kids LiveWell participant. Try:

- Waffles or pancakes with fruit such as blueberries, strawberries, or applesauce and a just touch of syrup.
- A scrambled egg with whole-wheat toast and two strips of bacon. Ask for fruit instead of hash brown potatoes.
- A veggie omelet for which your child picks the vegetables.

### Healthier lunches and dinners

• Look beyond the children's menu. An adult appetizer often works well as your child's entree. Examples include flatbread pizza, shrimp cocktail, tapas, or soup. Or split a healthful adult entree with your child.

- Ask for sauce or dressing on the side.
- If your child prefers a grilled cheese, hot dog, or even the chicken nuggets, balance it out with an order of steamed broccoli, fruit cup, or other side dish.

If your favorite restaurant has not yet joined Kids LiveWell, you can suggest it joins the program.

"We're really trying to grow the brand," says Dubost. "Ask for a Kids LiveWell meal."

*Christine M. Palumbo is a registered dietitian in Naperville, Ill. and an adjunct faculty member of Benedictine University. Follow her on Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, on Twitter @PalumboRD or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*

### Roasted tomato, three-bean, and mushroom soup

This is a quick, tasty, and hydrating meal. Use low-sodium tomatoes and beans to decrease the sodium content in this dish.

**PREP TIME:** 10 minutes

**COOKING TIME:** 30 minutes

Makes four servings (serving size one cup)

#### INGREDIENTS

- 3 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 cup onions, minced
- 1 cup white or baby bella mushrooms, sliced
- 2 (15-oz.) cans diced tomatoes, fire-roasted
- 2 cups cold water
- 3 to 4 leaves dark green cabbage or kale, shredded roughly
- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary, minced

1 cup cooked cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

1 cup cooked kidney beans, rinsed and drained

1 cup cooked black beans, rinsed and drained

Salt and pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:** Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to a large stock pot over medium heat. Add garlic and stir for one minute. Add onions and heat through until translucent or clear. Add mushrooms and saute together. Add tomatoes and water. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer; add rosemary and stir. Add shredded cabbage or kale leaves to soup. Partially cover the pot and simmer gently for about 15 minutes, or until cabbage or kale is tender. Drain and rinse beans, add to soup, and warm through for a few minutes. Taste to see if you need salt and pepper. Ladle soup into bowls and drizzle



each with a touch of olive oil. Serve with crusty whole-grain bread, if desired.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 309 calories, 11 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 g cholesterol, 600 mg sodium, 42 g carbohydrates, 12 g fiber, 5 g sugars, 14 g protein, 24 percent DV iron.

Recipe courtesy of The Essential Guide to Healthy Healing Foods by Victoria Shanta Retelny, RD, LDN.

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## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Appy holiday season

## Best apps for planning & enjoying the holidays

**T**he holidays are both the happiest time of year — and the busiest. For parents whose schedules are already bulging, it can be challenging to fit in extra shopping, special meals, and traditional events. Although it's naive to think that a few apps will spare you all the stress associated with this time of year, a well-equipped smartphone can help you get at least some of the details under control.

In each of these categories, there are multiple contenders for Best App. The ones listed here are free. Most work on multiple platforms and all seem especially likely to be helpful to parents.

### Making a list

If Santa had a Christmas Gift List Planner, he wouldn't have to check twice. This app, designed by Iwuana, helps Android users keep all their lists in one place and can be found at Google Play. Better Christmas Gift List does something similar for iPhone users and is available through Apple's App Store. Both apps let you make lists of recipients, gift ideas, and price ranges. These apps are great for keeping track of ideas as they occur to you, and they'll also help you stay within your holiday budget.

### Finding the best deal

Naturally, you want to get the most out of your holiday gift budget. Red Laser can help by giving you instant price info for local stores, as well as online vendors just by scanning the barcode on an item. There's also a timesaving "Buy It" feature that lets you prepay for an item, so it's ready for pick-up when you get to the store. Download at [redlaser.com](http://redlaser.com).

### Blitzing Black Friday

If you are someone who likes to plunge into the sales the day after Thanksgiving, you need an app like TGIBlackFriday, which shows you ads for 50 major retailers as soon as they are available. The app, which was created by Dealcatcher, also



lets you create a personal shopping list so you can compare prices on things you plan to buy. Free for both Android and iPhone at [tgi-blackfriday.com](http://tgi-blackfriday.com).

### Zeroing in on the best tech gifts

Gadgets of one kind or another are among the most popular holiday gifts to receive — and among the most stressful to give. How do you know if you are choosing the must-have technology or the best features? The app, available at [Decide.com](http://Decide.com), is certain to boost your confidence. In addition to ratings, the app alerts you to products that are about to become obsolete. The app requires a subscription, but you get one month free, and December is a great time to test drive the product's ratings.

### Zippping through grocery shopping

Ziplist lets you build and manage meal plans. In addition to the 400,000 recipes on the site, you can clip things you want to try from blogs and other sources. During the holidays, the best feature may be the shopping list generator, which tells you exactly what you'll need to buy to make the cookies and other treats you want to serve. Free at [ziplist.com](http://ziplist.com)

### Doing it yourself

In many families, the best gifts are homemade. For inspiration, check out the free apps available from [Michaels.com](http://Michaels.com) and [Joann.com](http://Joann.com). (Go to the website, and put "app" in the search engine.) The apps make suggestions about kid-friendly projects and alert you to make-it-yourself sessions at the stores. Coupons — also available on the companies' websites — defray the cost of supplies.

### Sending great greetings

Sincerely.com has apps that allow you to convert photos into tangible cards and postcards for as little as 99 cents. The app interfaces with your contact list, making it easy to send personalized greetings to family, friends, and colleagues. If you snap pictures of kids opening gifts, you can also send thank you notes that really capture their excitement and gratitude.

### Mellowing out with music

When your to-do list threatens to extinguish your holiday spirit, turn on Christmas radio. This app, available at [Bluemedialab.com](http://Bluemedialab.com), gives you access to 40 stations that play nothing but holiday music in every possible style from religious to rock, jazz, to country. There's even a station that claims to broadcast from the North Pole.

• • •

Of course, downloading and fooling with apps can be a distraction. That's why it's important to remember that the purpose of each of these programs is to streamline holiday chores. Used effectively, they will free up time for what really matters at the holidays — quality face time with children, family, and friends.

*Carolyn Jabs raised three computer-savvy kids, including one with special needs. She has written Growing Up Online for 10 years and is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Other columns are available at [www.growing-up-online.com](http://www.growing-up-online.com).*

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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

## An inspiring read

Even though your child is young, you can bet she's listening to conversations she hears. Surely, she knows that healthcare is a big issue these days. If it's piqued her interest and she wants to learn more, she may enjoy a new book about a little girl who helps her family and village receive better healthcare.

"Mimi's Village" by Katie Smith Milway tells the story of Mimi Malaho, who worries about her pregnant mother after a baby in her village dies. Her family has been lucky — until Mimi's little sister, Nakkissi, drinks some dirty water from the river, and get sick that night.

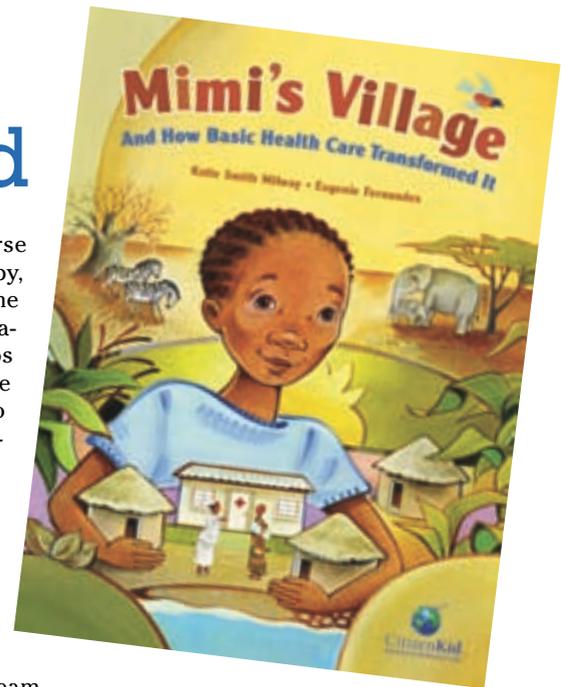
She moaned and couldn't keep anything in her tummy, so Ma and Pa wrapped her in a blanket and put her in their cart. The whole family walked an hour to the next village, where there was a clinic.

The next morning, Nurse Tela took care of Nakkissi and all the other babies lined up for help. As

Mimi watched Nurse Tela weigh each baby, she learned that the next day was vaccination day. The Malahos decided to spend the night at the clinic so they could get vaccinated.

When she got home, Mimi heard her father talking about malaria, which was making lots of the village's children sick. That night, Mimi had a dream that led to an idea, which led to a project that helped her whole village!

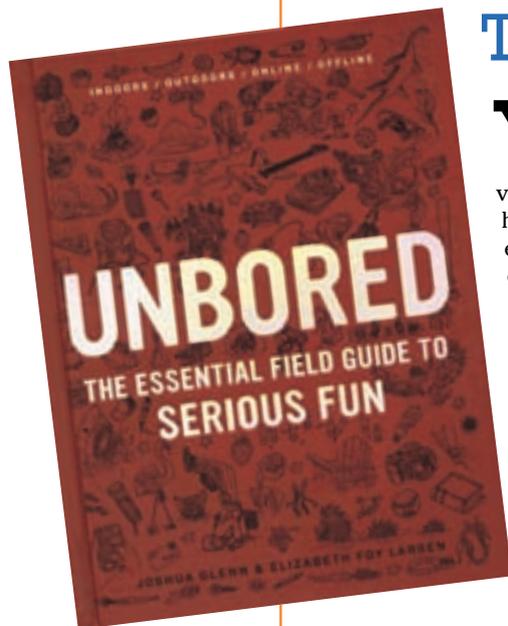
Inspired by real events and real people, the story explains a grown-up issue in a kid-friendly way, and children will definitely identify with a girl like Mimi. Smith gives kids information about Zambia healthcare workers and healthcare in general. Aided by Eugenie



Fernandes's illustrations, young readers learn that they can help make life better for other children around the world.

Recommended for 5- to 8 year olds who love making a difference, this is a book you'll feel good about your child reading.

"Mimi's Village," by Katie Smith Milway [32 pages, 2012, \$18.95].



## Tips for banishing boredom

Your child has mastered every video game in the house, watched every movie, and clicked through every cable channel several dozen times. He's managed to tease his sister and torment his brother, then turns to you and says, "I'm bored." Instead of

channeling your father — by telling him you'll give him something to do! — give him an entertaining book that will make him forget the "B" word.

"Unbored: The Essential Field Guide to Serious Fun," by Joshua Glenn and Elizabeth Foy Larsen, might single-handedly save your

whole family from complete craziness.

If it's a holiday, a weekend, or just some sort of break from school and your child doesn't know what to do with his time, that's where this book comes in — it's filled with pages of excellent ideas.

There are a lot of games in this book, including ones that don't require a board or dice. He can learn, for instance, some farting games, or different kinds of games that use jacks. "Unbored" will help him learn how to get freaky-fit with friends and learn "parkour" (military obstacle course training), which can be done in the backyard — even in the snow!

The book will teach him how to rock out — from what he'll need to build a band, to a quiz to help figure out which instrument is best for him and a few good movies about music he can watch.

It'll teach your child how to turn the bathroom into a spa, redecorate his bedroom, or organize it.

He can find some new crafts, learn how to cook, read a food label, and conserve water.

With all kinds of activities for both indoors and out, "Unbored" keeps children busy with information, ideas, get-outside movement, and downtime that doesn't involve anything electronic. There are pages for quieter readers and an equal amount for kids with a streak of renegade in their blood and restlessness in their feet.

The nicest part about this book is that it's great for sharing — and you'll want your kids to do just that. Add these great activities to downtime, and 9- to 15 year olds will find "Unbored" to be crazy fun.

"Unbored: The Essential Field Guide to Serious Fun" by Joshua Glenn and Elizabeth Foy Larsen [352 pages, 2012, \$25].

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.



DEAR  
DR. KARYN  
DR. KARYN GORDON

# Strategies to inspire your teens at school

Dear Dr. Karyn,

While my daughter tries a little at school, my son seems completely disengaged and uninspired. I have tried everything to motivate my kids, and I'm feeling really anxious. Since you work so much with teens, what have you learned that helps to inspire teens (especially boys)?

Dear Parent,

## Strategy one: be the inspiration

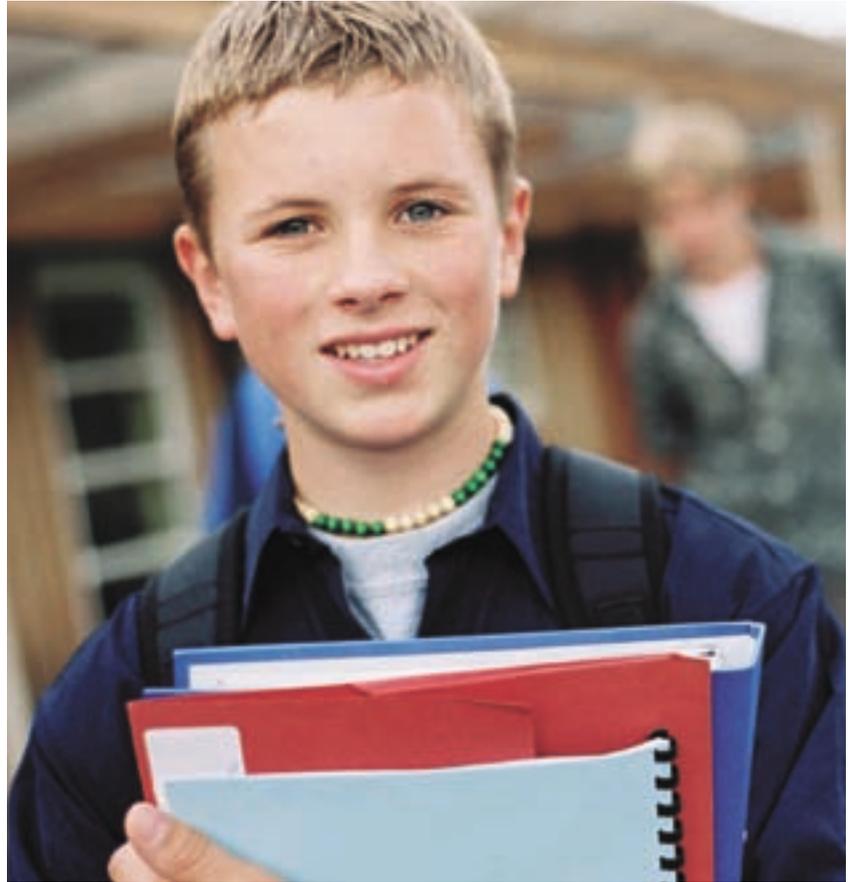
Try to be honest with yourself. Are you an inspiring person? Do you love your life? Do you love who you are? Are you happy with how you are using your gifts? Inspiration is powerful and contagious. Spend time with an “inspiring” person and most of us just feel better, energized, and more alive. The key to inspiring our kids is that we ourselves need to work on inspiring ourselves first. We can preach about being inspirational, but without living it our words are flat, and our teens will tune us out.

So how can we tap into our own inspiration? Be clear about what it is you want to do this year and what character traits you want to work on in yourself. Just last Monday, I decided to dedicate a full day for my dreams and goals for the remaining part of 2012 (I don't do that nearly enough). By the end of the day, I was fully energized, focused, and excited for this fall! It helped clarify what I need to say “yes” to and, more importantly, what I need to say “no” to so I can protect those goals.

Remember that kids and teens love to see their parents love their lives. Your inspiration will be contagious for them!

## Strategy two: talk about dreams (not goals)

Most teens (especially boys) do not like the word “goals” (it reminds



them too much of school). This is one of the key reasons why my popular leadership event for teens is called “Dare to Dream” (and not “Dare to Set Goals”). Many people have dreams — it's the big picture — the snap shot for how they want their lives to turn out. Goals are more specific and too often teens associate goals with a specific subject in school. So try asking your teen about his dreams, such as: “What are some of the dreams you have in your life?”

Ask him about his dreams related to traveling, volunteer work, family, or money. Try to bring up school and career dreams at the end. And while many teens have dreams, some may not (they may be afraid to allow themselves to dream). If so, simply be patient and bring it up again with

them in a few weeks.

## Strategy three: surround him with inspirational people

One of my favorite books is called “The Power of Focus.” In this book, the author talks about the importance of surrounding yourselves with inspirational people, movies, biographies, and books.

So tune into what your teen is interested in. What movies does he like to watch? Who are his role models? Can you get the biographies (TV or video) of one of his role models sharing about their lives' journey? Or do you have aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, or other people in your life that your teen would find inspiring? If so, try to facilitate them spending time together. Something this simple could be all it takes to ignite his inspiration.

# Cherishing time with an 8-month-old

BY TIM PERRINS

Our little baby Hazel is 8 ½ months old, which is an important milestone: she's been out as long as she was in. Her age is starting to show: while she used to curl up in her swing chair like a softball in a catcher's mitt, now her feet hang off of it. According to the pediatrician, she's in the 84th percentile for length! She's not a tiny peanut anymore, but she's still in the little bouncing baby stage; she smiles at people she recognizes, babbles like an Alpine brook in springtime, cries when something's wrong, and shrieks with laughter when you look at her funny.

It seems like things are different every day, but a lot of the big developments — crawling, walking, talking — haven't happened quite yet. We've been holding steady at this fun stage for a while, and now I wonder: can we just enjoy all the changes that are already here, and hold off on the big, impending milestones a little longer?

Here's the kind of development we've seen recently: she started eating solid food. Well, it's only sort of solid food. And she's only sort of eating it. This is how a typical feeding goes:

Hazel is sitting in her little booster chair with the tray table in the "lock-down" position. She bounces and flails her arms and grins. Any attempts to bring food near her mouth are swatted down. Or up. Or, let's just say, "all over the place." Next, she vigorously smashes her ring of plastic keys against the tray table over and over and over and over again until she drops them on the floor. Then, she leans alarmingly far over the side of the chair, reaches a

hand down, and stays like that until I retrieve the toy for her. This cycle is repeated three or four more times.

Finally, she sets her keys down on the tray and an expression of calm curiosity comes over her as she looks at the colorful puppets on the TV screen. This is my moment — she's receptive to maybe two spoonfuls of blueberry baby yogurt. (Baby yogurt is just like adult yogurt, except it comes in smaller containers and costs twice as much.) A few seconds later, she looks down at the keys and remembers what she was doing before the miracle DVD distracted her. And then all bets are off again.

After 40 minutes of this, she has eaten half as much as she used to eat just a week ago.

"How about one more spoonful?" I ask, and she screams and tears off her bib like Hulk Hogan tearing off his shirt. Thus endeth the breakfast.

It's a noteworthy development that our baby is capable of eating, but it's not some watershed moment — the big difference is really that my wife and I are trying to stuff pureed fruit into her mouth.

Most of the other recent changes have been transitional and incremental as well — things aren't boiling yet, but they are simmering with more and more intensity. Hazel rolled all the way over for the first time on July 4 (Independence Day — go figure!), and now she's rolling back and forth all the time like it's nothing. But she isn't truly mobile. Not yet.

She's also becoming more assertive, and this is evident in a number of ways. Her advanced length percentile, I should mention, equates to an equally advanced percentile for "grabbing stuff that Daddy thought was out of reach." A few weeks ago,



if I took away something that she wasn't supposed to have (magazine, TV remote, steak knife) she would move on to something else. Now she cries and screams like she's being tortured. Likewise, if I have the audacity to try to keep her lying on her back during a diaper change.

Which reminds me: somehow she keeps getting even louder. What decibel levels are left after "deafening" and "ear-shattering?"

On one hand, we can't wait for what's next. We're so eager for her first word — to hear her little voice actually talking. On the other hand, her pre-language responses — those giant smiles and thrilled squeals of laughter when I make a silly face at her — are expressive in a way that's pure and magical. (It's amazing that without a firm understanding of normalcy, she can have such a solid grasp on absurdity — it looks like she's taking after dad already!) Once she's past that stage we may never see such unfiltered joy again.

All the parents I talk to — family, friends, complete strangers — tell me to cherish this time.

"It goes fast," they tell me. I've come to recognize the look in their eyes and the tone in their voices — no matter how their kids have turned out, parents everywhere secretly wish they could return to that wonderful time with that happy, smiling baby. Naturally, parents want their babies to reach every milestone, and then to grow up and flourish as adults. But they also want them to stay exactly the way they are.

So to everyone giving us new parent advice: in this instance, at least, we're listening. We're still in the middle of this wonderful time, and we're not missing a minute of it.

*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](http://www.RevoltOfTheImbeciles.blogspot.com).*

# Time to play!

## Playworks helps kids reap the benefits of recess

BY CANDI SPARKS

**W**hen I was a kid, recess was a time to talk with my friends about boys, run, scream, and let off some excess steam before returning the humdrum of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These days, recess is not just a “break” between the morning and afternoon sessions at school, it is also where all the action takes place. Bullying, fights, teasing, exclusion — they all play out during recess.

Unfortunately, these happenings have an effect on what children learn at school because problems at recess often spill into the classroom. Teachers can lose valuable teaching time if they have to stop a lesson to resolve behavioral problems that spawned in the schoolyard every day. During the course of a year, that time can really add up.

“Recess and the transitions to and from lunch are the toughest part of the day,” said a teacher at PS 20

in Brooklyn who asked to remain anonymous. “The students become disorganized, hyper, and difficult to manage. Going from a free-for-all to focused learning is tough on them, and on me.”

This teacher’s comment reminded me of the day when my own child came home with a chipped tooth from playing football in the schoolyard. Another parent reported that their child was being bullied at school, so the staff changed the children’s seats so they’d be further apart. When that didn’t work, the children were put in different reading groups. Ultimately, when the classroom issue couldn’t be resolved, one child transferred out of the school. No parent wants her child coming home from school injured, but, as shown, it is difficult for schools to deal with problems that fall in the gray area between a school problem and a social one.

Emter Playworks, a national nonprofit based in California that en-

gages elementary school students in playgrounds. The organization provides a structure to help the children have fun, learn inclusion through teamwork, and engage in constructive conflict safely.

The games include everyone and focus on teamwork rather than on competition. Playworks levels the play to an appropriate amount of physical activity and combines thinking and self-control with fun games. Many of the Playworks games and instructions can be downloaded from the company’s website. For games like tag (but not called tag), where touching is required, it is to be “as light as the wings of a butterfly.” There is never pushing or shoving. It is a great way to teach children self-control and help them burn off excess energy.

These improvements better the school community, the individual child, and their academic success. The organization is currently engaging students at recess in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, and the list is growing.

“Children do need to play, but many of them do not know how to play,” says Adeola “Ola” Whitney, a Brooklyn mother of two and executive director of Playworks Greater Newark and New York area. “Many kids are not privy to go to a safe park after school. Neighborhoods and schools may not have expansive resources to give kids the healthy recreation that children need.”

Most parents know what she means. Sitting around pushing buttons on an electronic box (AKA a video game console) is not “really” playing.

Roberta Davenport, the principal of PS 307 in Brooklyn, brought the Playworks program to her school to help children develop social skills that have been forgotten in modern academia such as empathy, sharing, respect, and inclusion. The result was improved grades. According to Whitney, the principal wanted a program that would help with the transitions from schoolyard play to schoolwork.





Photos by Roger Tully

“It is a great inclusion program,” says Taina, a parent at PS 3 in Brooklyn, where the Playworks program has organized recess play to include children who were being left out. “It was tough for my child, who has experienced pushing, hitting, and name-calling by a classmate in the yard, and then to come back to class and be forced to sit right next to the person.” The problem not only affects the student who is being bullied and their bully. The tension and frustration of a recess incident can negatively affect an entire class.

Which means that sometimes teachers need an adequate break during the long school day, too. And the Playworks program is flexible. It can either dispatch its own “coaches,” or train staff at schools, to organize the playtime.

But does it matter who runs the Playworks recess?

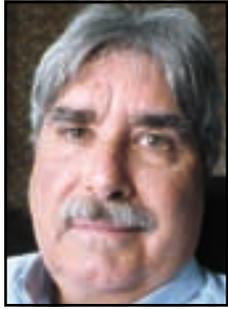
“Absolutely! A great teacher is a great teacher in the classroom. When those skills don’t translate to outdoor play, we help with crowd control, leadership, and managing the playtime in a safe way,” says Whitney.

The program strives to improve the overall tone of the play and of the school. There is no yelling or “punishment” for rule breakers. The coaches model respectful behavior and want to offer opportunities for everyone to participate in the games safely. No yelling at lunchtime? I am already impressed!

Gallup poll research shows that a positive school climate improves social, emotional, and academic outcomes for youth. Rather than cutting out recess, let’s improve it for the sake of children’s health and happiness.

*Playworks is available nationwide and is currently in 23 major cities, including schools in our area: Voice Charter School in Long Island City, The Anderson School on the Upper West Side, and Children’s Storefront School in Harlem. It’s also in several schools in Brooklyn: PS 59, PS 12, PS 11, PS 309, PS 307, PS 11, PS 3, and PS 20. For more, visit [www.playworks.org](http://www.playworks.org).*

*Candi Sparks is the author of “Can I Have Some Money?” a children’s money book series which includes “Max Gets It!,” “Nacho Money,” and other titles. She is the Brooklyn mother of two. Find “CandiSparks’s Blog” on Wordpress, and follow her on Facebook (Candi Sparks, author) and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author), or on [www.candisparks.com](http://www.candisparks.com).*



## FAMILY JOURNAL

ROBERT MORTON

# ADHD children may become ADHD adults

**Dear Mr. Morton,**

My son has been diagnosed with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder and many of his symptoms resemble mine. Ever since I can remember, I've been impulsive, distractible (can't focus long enough to read a magazine article), and restless. Can anything be done for adults with the disorder? — *Frustrated*

**Dear Frustrated,**

Since 30 to 50 percent of children with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder grow into adults with it, I suggest obtaining a thorough diagnosis if these manifestations have, historically, complicated your life. It's tricky to diagnose between true and mistaken attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder in adults; you must rule out other possible causes of your restlessness and impulsivity, such as an anxiety or mood disorder.

The diagnosis should include a meticulous life history, including developmental milestones, obtained by your personal accounts and by recollections from your parents, siblings, and relatives.

If sufficient evidence indicates your above-mentioned behaviors have occurred in various aspects of your life (home, school, neighborhood, and family get-togethers) since childhood, starting at or before age 7 (origin of the disorder in adulthood never happens), your chances for proper diagnosis and treatment will increase greatly.

Many intelligent and capable adults truly fit the profile. Their impulsive, distractible, and restless manners make it fatiguing for them to perform certain tasks that others do with ease: finishing magazine articles; holding chats with people without regrettably saying the wrong thing at the wrong time; finishing detailed tasks; receiving job recognition and promotions; making good grades in school; and, not surprisingly, maintaining adequate self-esteem.

Visit the Family Journal web-



site for a complete description of diagnostic symptoms and access to support groups and area professionals who specialize in adult diagnosis and treatment.

It's interesting that your child has been diagnosed with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, for an abnormally high proportion of the 5 million adults with it have

similarly diagnosed children. Twin studies reveal a strong genetic role.

*Robert Morton 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 the Family Journal website: [www.familyjournal.blogspot.com](http://www.familyjournal.blogspot.com).*



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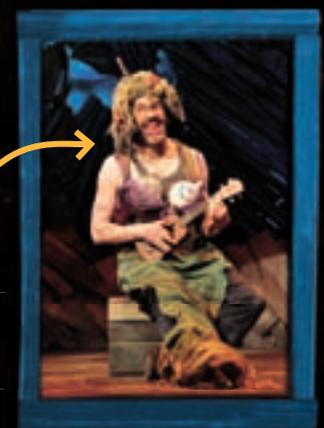
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## A TEEN'S TAKE

AGLAIA HO

# Dear Diary, this is me

**T**here is much truth behind the phrase “time flies,” especially when it applies to childhood. It feels like yesterday I was just a toddler, playing with my stuffed animals and climbing all over the living room furniture like a monkey. Yet memories fade over time. I’m sure we’ve all stopped to wonder how much we’ll remember 20 years from now. One way for your child to preserve special (and terrible) moments of their life is through a diary.

Diary-writing is becoming a lost

sell my diary for tons of money if I ever became famous, I began to write. Back then, my entries were short. They weren’t even half a page long, but I wrote almost every day up until the beginning of middle school. I eventually stopped journaling due to schoolwork and tests.

Recently, I looked back at my diary, and it was an amazing trip down memory lane. I couldn’t help but laugh at my naivete for starting my journal from the back and writing to the front! I realized how much I’ve grown and learned over time.

My diary is a scrapbook of memories. As I read, I found little gems here and there that I had forgotten. I was amazed (and at times baffled) by some of the preposterous stories about how I used to

they feel. They may be embarrassed or afraid of being judged or criticized for what they think. Yet, it is imperative that kids do not suppress how they feel. A diary acts as an ideal place for kids to express themselves without the fear of being labeled or branded. It’s healthy for kids and teenagers to take control of how they feel. Writing about their experiences helps to channel any stress or emotions. It helps them accept how they feel and try to cope.

Also, kids will probably be more prepared and willing to talk about their feelings after collecting their thoughts in their diary. When I was in fifth grade, I wrote a fuming entry about how I couldn’t stand special treatment a girl in my class was getting from my teacher because she had a learning disability. Yet, looking back, I quickly realized how ignorant I was to let my jealousy affect my emotions. I appreciate how my parents have taught me about respect and tolerance. I still feel guilty about the entry, even though my perspective changed a long time ago.

Journaling also promotes practical and creative-writing skills for kids. By writing a short diary entry about each day, kids and teens get a lot of practice writing. Because they can choose what they want to write about, they feel empowered and are more willing to do it. Kids are not limited to just writing about the events of the day, though. Encourage them to expand on specific events, topics, challenges, or emotions that occurred during the day. This nurtures creativity and teaches them to describe and analyze. Over time, this can help prepare kids for school where writing is a key part of assignments and activities.

I’ve started writing a diary again, for I notice how incomplete I was without it. My first entry wound up being six full pages! I didn’t realize I had so much to write about. Wow, I’ve come a long way since I was little.

*Aglaia Ho is a 17-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.*



art. Most kids see a diary as old-fashioned.

However, a diary can actually foster discipline, creativity, written communication skills, and self-reflection. With support and encouragement from parents, kids can learn that keeping a diary is time well spent.

One Christmas, I received a blank Barbie notebook as a present. My dad suggested that I use the book as a diary and write about my life. At the time, I was only 5, and writing about my day, which really wasn’t fascinating at all, was not appealing. Still, enthralled by my dad’s ridiculous suggestions about how I could

purposely trap myself in a tight corner in the playground of my school just to be rescued by a boy I had a crush on!

We can’t recall every moment of our past, but, we usually can call up specific moments when we are reminded of the experience. By writing about himself in his journal, your teen will have something to look back on in the future. The best part is that he’ll never know what will be meaningful to him in the future. He will probably be surprised, like I was. What seems ordinary today might not seem so plain-Jane in 20 years.

Besides storing memories, a diary is a good place to store emotions and thoughts. Kids and teenagers don’t always feel comfortable sharing how



## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# Key to compromise

## Understanding needs and interests in mediation

Consider the story of two men quarreling in a library: one wants the window open and the other wants it closed. They bicker back and forth about how much to leave it open — a crack, halfway, three quarters of the way. No solution satisfies them both.

Enter the librarian. She asks one why he wants the window open. “To get some fresh air,” he replies. She asks the other why he wants it closed. “To avoid the draft,” he answers. After thinking a minute, she opens a window in the next room, bringing in fresh air without a draft.

This illustration of “positional bargaining” as discussed in “Getting To Yes: Negotiating Without Giving In,” by Roger Fisher and William Ury says a lot about how most of us deal with conflict, including in the matrimonial area.

Just as in the library example, we want or demand something — let’s say, it’s the house. We are unable to look past our demands any more than the bickering men could look past the window.

Speaking about mediation recently at the Queens Chapter of the New York State Society for Clinical Social Work, I thought of this story, as well as a much more serious situation involving war and peace, life and death:

In 1978, Egypt and Israel successfully negotiated a peace agreement. Previously, they had fought numerous wars; their history was bitter and bloody. Yet, they made peace. How did this happen? And what can the answer possibly mean to you?

In talks between Israel and Egypt, also discussed in “Getting To Yes,” the parties started with incompatible positions:

[Background: In the 1967 war, Israel had captured the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.]

Egypt’s position: Israel must return all of the Sinai; every inch.

Israel’s position: Israel must keep at least part of the Sinai.

If the discussions had gone no further — if the parties had only been able to look at the window, so to speak — negotiations would have



quickly broken down. So what happened? How did longtime enemies move forward in their talks?

Like the librarian, negotiators and mediators asked questions, in particular, “Why?”

Egypt asked Israel, “Why do you need part of the Sinai?”

Answer: “Security. As long as Israel holds the Sinai, Egyptian tanks will be far from our border. In case of a conflict, having the Sinai will allow us time to mobilize, and if necessary, to fight in Sinai rather than on Israeli territory.”

Israel asked Egypt, “Why do you need to have all of the Sinai back? Why every inch of that desert?”

Answer: “Sovereignty. Sinai is part of Egypt. It belonged to Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs. After domination by other powers, Egypt has once again become a sovereign country. Having land occupied by Israel is a loss of prestige and unacceptable.”

Understanding both parties’ underlying needs and interests created the possibility of developing options to meet their mutual needs.

The results: All of Sinai was given to Egypt; Egypt regained full sovereignty, and its needs were met. Much of Sinai was demilitarized; Egyptian tanks remained far from the Israeli border, and Israel’s need for security was met.

Now, getting back to you.

Do you both want the house? Obviously, you both can’t have it. There is only one, and you can’t cut it down the middle.

So get beyond your positions, and ask yourselves, and each other: “Why do we each want the house? What does it mean to each of us?”

The husband might say, “I have nowhere to go.”

The wife might say, “I grew up in this house. My ties are here.”

If the husband’s underlying concern is having a place to live, maybe he would be willing to part with the house, if his needs for security can be met. If so, the spouses will no longer be fighting over the house. Instead, they can create options allowing the wife to keep it, while allowing the husband to have his own place.

Mediating involves understanding needs and interests. Israel and Egypt did it. Can you?

*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](mailto:lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com), (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/home>.*

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Discussing your particular case and circumstances with a legal professional before making important decisions is strongly encouraged to safeguard your rights.

# A love of arts

The director of the Lincoln Center Institute on how arts education can change children's lives

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

**R**ussell Granet is a Manhattan dad and the newly appointed executive director of the Lincoln Center Institute, which “plays a pro-active, dynamic part in the preparation of young minds for the world of adulthood and the demands of the workforce,” by utilizing imaginative, art-based teaching methods to train teachers, partner with schools within New York City, and host students on its New York campus. Five years ago, Granet created Arts Education Resource, an international consulting practice, following nine years as Director of Professional Development for the Center for Arts Education. I spoke with him recently about his career, his new position, and his vision for arts education.

**Risa Doherty:** What is the goal of the Lincoln Center Institute?

**Russell Granet:** Our goal is to help young people develop their minds to think like artists, not necessarily to become artists themselves. As students are exposed to the arts, they learn to forge their own mission statement and acquire core values, such as integrity, perseverance, and analytical skills, which are instrumental in any profession, and prepare them for success in the world ahead in the 21st century. There is great richness and “capacity” around a work of art. Every artist is faced with a problem: a visual artist has a blank canvas and an actor has a stage in an empty theater. Through arts education, students learn to problem solve and approach larger issues in a different way.

In one study, 60 percent of students referenced an arts experience as the most impactful experience of their education, whereas only eight percent of those students became artists. Arts education enlists them to become full citizens and learn how to work in a group (e.g. through collaborative performance). Lincoln Center Institute provides programs which help keep kids in school, changing their entire perception of learning.

**RD:** What age groups does Lincoln Center Institute work with?

**RG:** Kindergarten through 12, and college students training to be teachers. We also work with private schools, but they are not our primary mission.

**RD:** Are children ever too young for arts education?

**RG:** They are never too young. We want to be a part of the early childhood education movement, since preschoolers at 2, 3, and 4 can mesh play and education like no other time in their lives. It is a perfect opportunity to build imaginative minds.

**RD:** Which disciplines within the arts are included, and which ones are most effective in a pedagogical sense?

**RG:** All four disciplines are included: dance, music, theater, and visual art. No single one is most effective: they all have a place. The most effective will depend upon the goals and objectives for a specific program.

**RD:** Can you describe to me one of your programs?

**RG:** This fall, students from pre-K to fourth grade at PS-1S 499 in Flushing participated in an eight-week dance performance unit entitled “Fiesta Flamenca,” where they learned about how dance gestures can evoke emotion, and created their own rhythmic dance and vocal sequences, facilitated by a teaching artist. The students then attended a live performance, followed by text study in the classroom.

**RD:** How has an exposure to the arts affected you, personally?

**RG:** Exposure to the arts was the factor which kept me engaged in school. I would be a different person if I was not exposed to the arts as a child. At a very young age, theater was my entry point and positively informed all the years of education that followed. My background in theater has had an immeasurable effect on the 22 years I have spent in my current field. I developed a skill set as a result of a lifetime in the arts.

**RD:** Is there an ideal model for your vision which you look to?

**RG:** Our vision at Lincoln Center Institute is based on where we will be tomorrow. We are constantly building on the impressive work accomplished in the first 35 years of our program, as well as influential programs, such as the one at the Kennedy Center, and the other leading arts organizations throughout the world. I say “we” because I believe strongly in working with colleagues: this is a collaborative effort. It is important to be able to sustain the program and not just rely on one person’s or one organization’s ideas.

**RD:** Did you have an “aha” moment when you recognized a need in the field of arts education and knew this was a path for you?

**RG:** When I returned to New York after studying at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, I became a “teaching artist,” which is someone who works for a cultural institution and teaches in the public schools. Teaching artists partner with public school educators and work with teachers to see how the arts can support the subject taught. They help students think about what they are learning in a subject, as well as what they are learning about themselves. When I started working as a teaching artist in a poor neighborhood, I was more often than not given the advice “good luck, nothing works with these kids,” which I found incredibly depressing and more importantly, wildly inaccurate. When I saw how arts education helped those kids gain self-esteem and a sense of their place in their school and in their world, I recognized how profoundly impactful the arts can be.

**RD:** How has your experience at Center for Arts Education working with children with disabilities affected your outlook on arts education in general?

**RG:** Our goal should always include exposing kids with disabilities to all kinds of arts fields. There are as many learning styles as there are kids. Different kids with different disabilities have different entry points for learning. We needed



to find a hook or a doorway to learning for those kids who might struggle with traditional entry points. For some of those kids, the arts are a great entry point and an opportunity for them to excel. I watched kids who normally struggle write and articulately deliver organized pieces on stage, and for me this was a defining moment. Similarly, general-education teachers need to engage children and discover their entry points. For many it is the arts. We are committed to offering all kids a complete education.

**RD:** How far have we come in the field of arts education?

**RG:** We have progressed in fits and starts. The New York City Department of Education is doing its best for 1.2 million children: it is an enormous system with equity issues. There is no “secret sauce” here at Lincoln Center Institute, and we cannot solve it alone, we need to educate parents. We need to broaden the definition of arts education: everyone has a part to play and someone needs to help orchestrate it. Because of my position, I have a unique platform afforded me by Lincoln Center Institute and it’s recognition for quality. Lincoln Center is the largest cultural institution in the world: kids

belong here.

**RD:** What advice do you have for parents who would like more of the arts at their children’s school?

**RG:** I would tell them to advocate for their children, attend school events, invite local politicians to events, and volunteer to help arts educators, no matter how small the task. I would tell them it is okay to notify a school when it does not meet the New York State mandate, requiring 20 percent of the school day be devoted to arts education. In addition, children who choose the arts need to learn that there are more opportunities than just first-

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“Exposure to the arts was the factor which kept me engaged in school. I would be a different person if I was not exposed to the arts as a child.”

---

chair violin or prima ballerina. For every prima ballerina there are 300 people around her, supporting her, from stagecraft to marketing. We hope children will learn the value of working for an organization whose mission matches their own mission in life.

**RD:** How can you open the eyes of certain parents to the value of arts education, if they believe their children are not artistic and that the time is better spent on perfecting “core subjects” as a means for gaining entry to a top college?

**RG:** I would explain to them the full value of arts education, as part of a complete education, as a valuable interest to foster for life and as a vehicle to cultivate their child’s ability to think perceptively, innovate, and analyze situations. Parents need to know that the arts can help our young people become competitive in this generation in the field of their choice.

**RD:** You are the father of a 4 year old. How do you incorporate the arts into her life and how has being a parent influenced your approach to work?

**RG:** My daughter has already received the kind of exposure to the arts, in small as well as profound ways, that some kids won’t get in a lifetime. I do my best to help her not to take any of these opportunities for granted. Knowing the opportunities she has had and the importance of the arts in her development makes me even more passionate about bringing the arts to the kids who might not have the same type of access. I believe to my core that exposure to the arts is a right possessed by all children; it’s the driving force behind all that I hope to accomplish.

*Risa C. Doherty is an attorney and award-winning freelance writer. Read more at [www.risadoherty.com](http://www.risadoherty.com).*



## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Finding my way, as a mom and a writer

**W**hat were you like before you had kids? Can you even remember?

I was very young when I had my daughter, but before then, I was an introspective smart aleck — a slightly offbeat person. It may give you perspective to know I was voted “Weirdest” in the eighth grade, a denotation that I still hold in high regard. As a teen, I horrified my mother by dying my hair jet black and listening to Anthrax, but even after those outward eccentricities eased, I retained a quirky sense of self.

However, once I became a mother, I felt that I had to be “motherly.” Not in a sense that had anything to do with my children but I felt like I became boring. I developed an interest in “proper” things, began to dress differently, and started to worry about things like household fur-

nishing, which I had never cared about before. When I leaped into the workplace, I tried my best to assume a similar role. It was a very reliable, sensible, and a neatly-packaged life of a young, working mother.

The problem was that I have always known that I wanted more for myself. I didn’t want to settle for the ordinary, even when I tried my best to fit into the mainstream.

“We are not cookie cutters of one another,” I often tell my children. It’s easy for kids to get a warped sense of self with the immense pressure they experience to fit in — to have the best sneakers, phone, or whatever. The truth is that all we should be in life is simply ourselves.

As parents, I fear we often forget that little truth. I know I did. For years on end, I did things I did not want to do to please others. Many parents lose themselves in “the shoulds” — what they “should” have, do, or wear. A look at our Facebook newsfeeds reveals how many of our “friends” do this on a daily basis — and how many of them need others to recognize that they are doing these things. We are models for our children, so

It’s vital for us to remember

that if we play the part of people who are consumed with acquiring things, settling, and ignoring our true feelings, then our children will feel obligated to do the same.

And if they do, what chance do they have to become honest, content, and fulfilled adults?

After more than 10 years of editing and writing at local parenting publications, my job slowly morphed into something

that did not represent who I was anymore. Eventually, I summoned the courage to quit and work for myself. Crazy? Perhaps. But all I can think is: why didn’t I do it sooner?

Most of my days now begin with feeding kids, animals, and anything else that shows up in my kitchen and announces “I’m hungry.” They end with my eyes closing, as they glaze over my kids’ horrific math homework or mounds of equally horrific laundry. In between those times, I write — about raising kids, surly teens, obstinate pets, and any parenting news that blows my mind (which, these days, can be plentiful).

Oh yeah, and if you pass my house, you’ll probably notice a Dave Matthews song blaring from my home office.

It is certainly not the life for everyone, but it is “just right” for me. In fact, when I was discussing the decision to write full-time at home with my husband and kids, my daughter told me to “just write,” because it’s what I’ve always wanted to do. So this column name (which is the title of my personal blog) has multiple meanings — it was “just right” for me to stay at home and “just write,” which may not be something a typical mom would do, but, it’s “just right” for me. And when you do what is just right for you, life seems to fall in place.

As a parent of three kids, each five years apart, I still have loads to learn, but the joy of learning is in the journey, and I plan on sharing it all.

So, I really hope you’ll join me because I know I’ll need some back up along the way.

See you next month!

*Danielle Sullivan, a 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 @DanniSull-Writer, or on her blog, Just Write Mom.*



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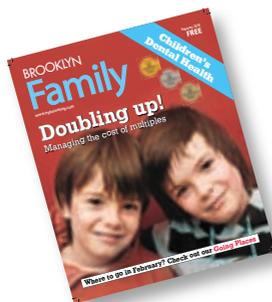
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# Calendar

NOVEMBER



## Don't miss Astrograss live!

**A**strograss comes home to roost at Jalopy Theatre for a special performance on Nov. 3.

The blusey neighborhood band is introducing its newest children's CD, "The Colored Pencil Factory," at a special bash with sing-alongs, instrument demos, a dance contest, and prizes for everyone.

Children and parents will enjoy the band's eclectic mix of progressive bluegrass, traditional bluegrass, and a bit of Eastern European folk rock.

Astrograss will go on at 3 pm on Nov. 3. Admission is \$10.

*Jalopy Theatre [315 Columbia St. between Hamilton Avenue and Woodhull Street in Cobble Hill, (718) 395-3214; [www.jalopy.biz](http://www.jalopy.biz)].*

## 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!

Send your listing request to [brooklyncalendar@cnglocal.com](mailto:brooklyncalendar@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!

## WED, OCT. 31

**Haunted walk:** Owl's Head Park, 67th St. at Colonial Road; (718) 238-6044; 3:30-9 pm; \$1 donation.

Take a scary walk through the haunted walk or, for the feint of heart, stroll through fairytale forest. Play games and have a costume contest. Sponsored by state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge).

**Parade:** Kicks off at 14th Street and Seventh Avenue; [halloween@parkslope-civiccouncil.org](mailto:halloween@parkslope-civiccouncil.org); 6:30 pm.

The Park Slope Civic Council's annual event starts on 14th Street and Seventh Avenue and wends its way through the heart of the Slope with two ambulances leading the way for costumers and puppeteers.

## THURS, NOV. 1

**Roli Poli Guacamole:** Gumbo, 493 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins Street and Third Avenue; (718) 855-7808; 11:30 am-12:15 pm; \$25.

Drop ins for little ones.

**Job search:** Far Rockaway Public Library, 1637 Central Ave. at Mott Avenue; (718) 327-2549; [www.queenslibrary.org](http://www.queenslibrary.org); 1:30 pm; Free.

Those with a criminal record have certain considerations to address when applying for a job — this workshop explains how to get a copy of and understanding a criminal record, navigate the background check, and effectively sell yourself.

**Dance off:** Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; [www.brooklyn.liu.edu/KumbleTheater](http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/KumbleTheater); 5:30 pm; \$125 (\$75 general admission).

It's going to be a rumble when community leaders and stars of New York Dance square off on the dance floor to give borough children and youth a chance to receive a free dance education.



## Velveteen Rabbit hops over

**T**he Velveteen Rabbit is the stuffed toy that yearns to become real in Margery Williams's much-loved literary classic, and this month he's hopping over to the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College for a special performance.

The production of this charming tale of love and devotion features an original musical score, extraordinary puppets, masks, and magic. It's part of the Target Storybook Series and recommended for children 4 to 8 years old.

"The Velveteen Rabbit" on Nov. 11 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$7 and may

be purchased online, or at the box office on Tuesdays through Saturdays from 1 to 6 pm.

*Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College [2900 Campus Rd. between Amersfort and Kenilworth Places in Midwood, (718) 951-4500; [www.brooklyncenteronline.org](http://www.brooklyncenteronline.org)].*

## FRI, NOV. 2

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

Sleepy Time Dream Catchers is suitable for children 18 months to 2 and 1/2 years and teaches the little ones about nighttime rituals.

**The Ideal School of Manhattan Gala:** The Ideal School, 1356 Broad-

way at W. 36th Street; (212) 769-1699; [www.theidealschool.org](http://www.theidealschool.org); 7 pm; Tickets start at \$250.

Annual gala includes cocktails, dinner, dancing, a raffle, and live and silent auctions to support the non-profit independent school and help raise critical funds towards scholarships for students in need.

## SAT, NOV. 3

**Urban birds:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718)

399-7339; [www.prospectparkzoo.com](http://www.prospectparkzoo.com); 10-11:30 am; \$35 (\$40 non-members; \$15 additional child or adult).

Children 7 to 10 years old learn the different types of birds that live at the zoo from urban ecologists, and then go on a bird-watching tour.

**Food drive:** Fairway Market, 480 Van Brunt St. (917) 494-4518; 10 am-2 pm; Donation of non-perishable food items.

Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts of Pack

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and Troop 815 are hosting the event to help out those in need.

**Blooming babies:** 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 2.

**Dia de los Muertos:** 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.

The holiday is celebrated in Mexico and commemorates family and friends who have passed away. For children 4 years old and up.

**Live music:** Jalopy, 315 Columbia St. between Hamilton Avenue and Woodhull Street; (718) 395-3214; www.jalopy.biz; 3 pm; \$10.

Astrograss performs rousing, old-time Appalachian mountain music and original songs, plus sing-alongs, instrument demonstrations, and even one of Astrograss's famous dance contests, with prizes for all.

**Night of stars:** Steeplechase Pier, W. 19th St. and the Reigleman Boardwalk; (718) 421-2021; www.nycgovparks.org; 6 pm; Free.

Come to the Boardwalk and view the night sky in this astronomy program. Equipment provided.

## SUN, NOV. 4

**ING NYC Marathon:** Verrazano Bridge, Staten Island side; www.nyrr.org; 9 am-5 pm; Free.

Come and watch the 43rd running of the world-wide event through the five boroughs of New York City in which more than 47,000 runners will compete. The course begins in Staten Island, goes through Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and ends at Central Park in Manhattan.

**Marine mammals:** New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets; (718) 265-3448; www.nyaquarium.com; 10:30-11:30 am and 12:30-1:30 pm; \$25 (\$20 members).

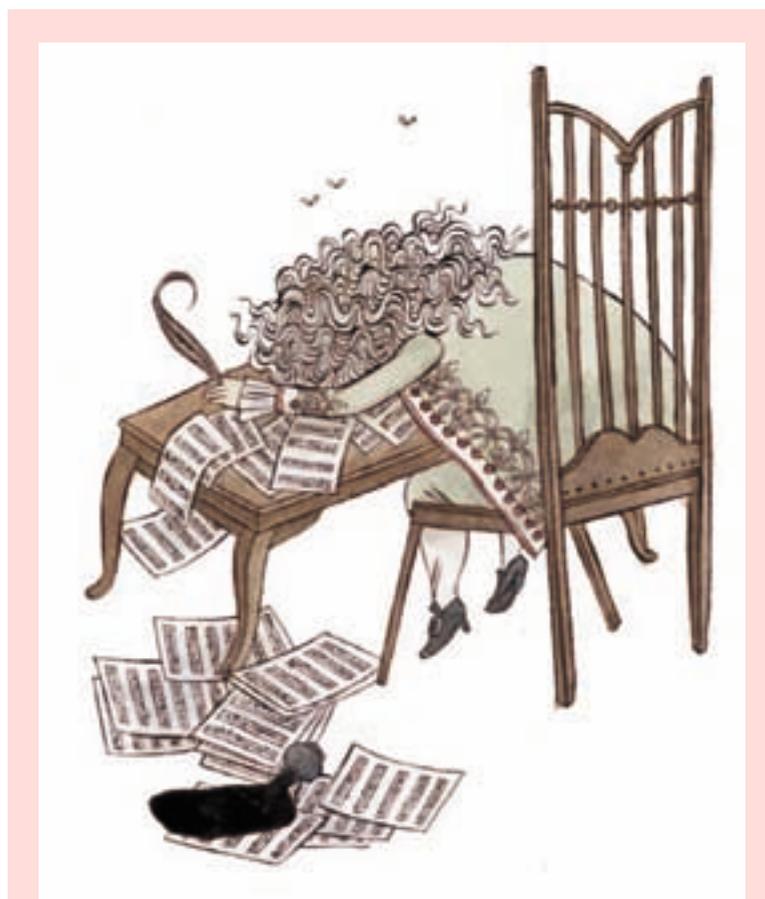
Children 4 to 5 years old learn all about marine animals including seals, sea lions, walruses, and whales.

**Blooming babies:** 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 2.

**Slimy Snails:** 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 explore all things icky and then make some snail art.

**Klezmer concert:** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenter-



## A series of fortunate events

**I**t's a series of fortunate events when the Brooklyn Museum hosts a children's book fair and a performance of Lemony Snicket's "The Composer is Dead" by the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music.

At the book fair children will enjoy meeting their favorite local authors and illustrators, getting a drawing session with Mike Herrod from Comics to Go, and meeting the orchestra. Then, the whole family can solve a mystery and

laugh till they cry at the cutting-edge performance featuring text by Lemony Snicket and music by Nathaniel Stookey. The concert is recommended for children ages 5 and older.

Book fair on Nov. 17, noon to 4 pm with concert immediately following at 4 pm. Admission is \$15, \$10 for children under 12.

*The Brooklyn Museum [200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue in Prospect Heights, (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org].*

online.org; 2 pm; \$30.

Metropolitan Klezmer and Isle of Klezbos transform the theater into a Simchah Palace with traditional Eastern European, Yiddish, folk, and original songs.

## MON, NOV. 5

**"I Can Be President: A Kid's Eye**

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

Join other children for this special President Election preview that is part of the Big Movies for Little Kids series at the theater and is recommended for chil-

dren of all ages. Plus additional shorts about the election process.

## TUES, NOV. 6

**Election day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 9:30 am-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

The museum is open.

**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.

**"Rockin' Ever After":** Nassau Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Turnpike; (800) 745-3000; www.nassaucoliseum.com; 7 pm; \$18 - \$168.

Disney On Ice presents this holiday spectacular featuring Ariel, Rapunzel, Belle, and Merida from Disney-Pixar's "Brave" in her ice debut.

## WED, NOV. 7

**Open House:** Brooklyn Free School, 372 Clinton Ave. at Vanderbilt Avenue; (718) 499-2707; brooklynfreeschool.org; 6-7:30 pm; Free.

Meet the staff, current students, and tour the facility.

**"Rockin' Ever After":** 7 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Tuesday, Nov. 6.

## THURS, NOV. 8

**"Rockin' Ever After":** 10:30 am and 7 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Tuesday, Nov. 6.

**Roli Poli Guacamole:** 11:30 am-12:15 pm. Gumbo. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

## FRI, NOV. 9

**"Rockin' Ever After":** 7 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Tuesday, Nov. 6.

**"Crazy for You":** Ft. Hamilton Army Base Theater, 101st Street at Fort Hamilton Parkway; (718) 482-3173; www.nctheatery.com; 8 pm; \$20 (\$15 seniors, children and students).

The George and Ira Gershwin musical revival is presented by the Narrows Community Theater.

## SAT, NOV. 10

**"Rockin' Ever After":** 11 am, 3 and 7 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Tuesday, Nov. 6.

**Reading:** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; rsvp@powerhousearena.com; www.

# Calendar

powerhousearena.com; 3 pm; Free.

Slate's parenting writers present "Unbored" — a guide for parents and kids who like to have fun. Join the authors for an afternoon of demos and activities from the book's pages. RSVP.

**"Crazy for You":** 8 pm. Ft. Hamilton Army Base Theater. See Friday, Nov. 9.

## SUN, NOV. 11

### Brady Rymer and His Little Band That Could:

92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 11 am; \$15, babies under 2 free.

It's "Bring Your Own Kid" and Brady Rymer brings his all-American rock with a feel-good R&B foundation to the 92Y.

**"Rockin' Ever After":** 11 am, 3 and 7 pm. Nassau Coliseum. See Tuesday, Nov. 6.

**Fall foliage fest:** 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.

Thanks to National Grid, children learn all about chlorophyll and why leaves turn color. For children 4 years old and up.

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

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

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

The much-loved literary classic about a stuffed toy rabbit that comes to visit. Recommended for children 4 and older.

**"Crazy for You":** 2 pm. Ft. Hamilton Army Base Theater. See Friday, Nov. 9.

**Veteran's Day medals:** 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.

Children 5 years old and younger learn the importance of community help and the role of soldiers.

## MON, NOV. 12

**Veteran's Day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 9:30 am-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

The museum is open all day.

**Making discoveries:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; www.prospect-



## Fall fun at the Prospect Park Zoo

**I**t's always fun at the Prospect Park Zoo, thanks to its new fall programs!

From mini-camps to hands-on programs, children and their parents have wonderful opportunities to visit the zoo and experience the animals up-close and personal. There's also activities, games, and interesting hikes you won't want to miss.

On Nov. 3 from 10 to 11:30 am, children 7 to 10 years old accompanied by a parent can explore the zoo with an urban ecologist and learn all about the avian populations that live there, plus the ones that fly

in for a visit, in the Celebrate Urban Birds program.

Making Discoveries on Nov. 12 from 10 to 11 am offers children 3 to 7 years old, with an adult, the chance to learn all about North American animals, hear a story, and then dissect an owl pellet.

Admission to the fall programs (per event), is \$35 for a parent and child who are members, and \$40 for non-members; \$15 for each additional adult or child participating in Making Discoveries.

*Prospect Park Zoo [450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue in Crown Heights, (718) 399-7339; www.prospectparkzoo.com].*

parkzoo.com; 10-11 am; \$35 (\$40 non-members; \$15 additional child or adult).

Children 3 to 7 years old, with an adult, learn about North American animals, hear a story, and have a chance to dissect owl pellets.

## THURS, NOV. 15

**Roli Poli Guacamole:** 11:30 am-12:15 pm. Gumbo. See Thursday, Nov. 1.

**Recycling day:** 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.

Children 5 years old and younger learn the importance of re-using and recycling.

## FRI, NOV. 16

**"Crazy for You":** 8 pm. Ft. Hamilton

Army Base Theater. See Friday, Nov. 9.

## SAT, NOV. 17

**IckyFest:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

The whole weekend is dedicated to all things icky, from cutting the cheese to blood and tears, children discover their scientific and gross-ology side. Suitable for children of all ages.

**Children's Book Fair:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Noon - 4 pm; \$15 (\$10 children under 12).

Meet your favorite borough authors and illustrators featuring storybooks, picture books, and novels. Enjoy games, readings, and activities for all ages. Mike Herrod from Comics to Go will lead a drawing workshop and a performance of "The Composer is Dead," by the Brooklyn Conservatory Community Orchestra. (Concert is recommended for children 5 years of age and older.)

**Survival workshop:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm; Free.

How tough are you? Can you survive in the woods? Urban Park Rangers will lead you in this workshop on how to be prepared for any situation.

**"Crazy for You":** 8 pm. Ft. Hamilton Army Base Theater. See Friday, Nov. 9.

## SUN, NOV. 18

**Adoption conference:** St. Francis College, 180 Remsen St. between Court and Clinton streets; (212) 304-8479; www.adoptiveparents.org; 8 am-5 pm; \$105 (includes one-year membership).

Families who are contemplating adoption will obtain information from professional representatives.

**IckyFest:** 10 am-5 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 17.

**The Suzi Shelton Band:** 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 11 am; \$15, babies under 2 free.

Everyone's favorite children's band combines catchy tunes and hip musical sensibilities to "Bring Your Own Kid."

**"Crazy for You":** 2 pm. Ft. Hamilton Army Base Theater. See Friday, Nov. 9.

**Step into Thanksgiving:** Hannah Senesh Community Day School, 342 Smith St. between First and Second places; (718) 858-8663; 3-5:30 pm; \$5.

Step into invites families to explore holiday celebrations with art, music, hands-on activities, food, and stories.

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# Calendar

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Recommended for children 2 years and older.

## MON, NOV. 19

**Job search:** Arverne Public Library, 312 Bch. 54th St. at Rockaway Beach Boulevard; (718) 634-4784; [www.queenslibrary.org](http://www.queenslibrary.org); 5 pm; Free.

Those with a criminal record have certain considerations to address when applying for a job — this workshop explains how to get a copy of and understand a criminal record, navigate the background check, and effectively sell yourself.

## THURS, NOV. 22

**86th Annual Macy's Thanksgiving Parade:** Kicks off at 77th Street and Central Park West; [www.macys.com/parade](http://www.macys.com/parade); 9 am; Free.

The annual family tradition ushers in the holiday season with floats, balloons, performances, and of course, Santa!

## FRI, NOV. 23

**Black Friday:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 9am-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

While the rest of the city shops and burns off the Thanksgiving feast, children can explore the museum the whole day.

## SUN, NOV. 25

**Winter on the farm:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 1-4 pm; \$3 (Free for children 16 and under).

Children learn how to make candles, start a patchwork quilt, and preserve food for the cold months ahead.

**What a hoot:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 1:30-2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years old and up explore the world of owls and dissect an owl pellet.

**The Shaolin Warriors:** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; [www.brooklyncenter-online.org](http://www.brooklyncenter-online.org); 3 pm; \$30.

Direct from Beijing, the People's Republic of China, the performance mixes martial arts, athleticism, and theater. The spectacle features 22 monks performing feats of strength, agility, and combat.



## The butterflies are back

**L**ike swallows returning to the San Juan Capistrano mission, the "Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter" exhibit has returned to the American Museum of Natural History.

This is the 15th year that the museum's vivarium, kept at a constant 80 degrees Fahrenheit, has hosted more than 500 butterflies (from monarchs to swallowtails) as they flit through blooming, lush vegetation. Budding Lepidoptera enthusiasts interact with the butterflies inside the 1,200-square-foot exhibit, while winding along the pathway that's surrounded

by tropical plants and vibrant blossoms. Powerful lamps shine down from the ceiling, like sunlight through a tropical rain forest canopy.

The magical setting, which provides a warm respite from winter, is both educational and enjoyable for children and adults.

The exhibit is open daily, from 10 am to 5:45 pm, now through May 28, 2013. Museum admission is \$24 for adults; \$14 for children; and \$18 for seniors and students. *American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West at 79th Street in Manhattan, (212) 769-5200, [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)].*

## THURS, NOV. 29

**Roli Poli Guacamole:** Gumbo, 493 Atlantic Ave. between Nevins Street and Third Avenue; (718) 855-7808; 11:30 am-12:15 pm; \$25.

Drop ins for little ones.

## FRI, NOV. 30

**"Yo Gabba Gabba! Live! Get the Sillies Out":** The Theater at Madison Square Garden, 2 Pennsylvania Plaza; (212) 465-6741; [www.thegarden.com](http://www.thegarden.com); 5 pm; Tickets start at \$45.

Digital camera required.

**Survival workshop:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 11 am; Free.

How tough are you? Can you survive in the woods? Urban Park Rangers will lead you in this workshop on how to be prepared for any situation.

**"Yo Gabba Gabba! Live! Get the Sillies Out":** 11 am, 2 and 5 pm. The Theater at Madison Square Garden. See Friday, Nov. 30.

## SUN, DEC. 2

**Music for Aardvarks:** 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; [www.92y.org](http://www.92y.org); 11 am; \$15, babies under 2 free.

David Weinstone entertains with the electro-funk of Big Boom Whacker and the whimsical blues of "Belly Button Song" performed live.

**"Yo Gabba Gabba! Live! Get the Sillies Out":** 11 am, 2 and 5 pm. The Theater at Madison Square Garden. See Friday, Nov. 30.

**Step into Hanukka:** Hannah Senesh Community Day School, 342 Smith St. between First and Second places; (718) 858-8663; 1-4 pm; \$5.

Step into invites families to explore holiday celebrations with art, music, hands-on activities, food, and stories. Recommended for children 2 years and older.

## MON, DEC. 3

**Roadmap to College Admissions:** The Princeton Review, 1305 Kings Hwy. between E. 13th and E. 14th streets; (800) 273-8439; [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com); 7 pm; Free.

An admissions expert will advise students and parents on the college admissions process, including topics such as admissions factors, selectivity, college searching, standardized tests, and timelines. Registration required.

## LONG-RUNNING

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

Children share the joy of books.

**Global shoes:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, \$7.50 (Free for members and children under 1).

The exhibit, which incorporates cultural artifacts from the museum's collection and a variety of hands-on, feet-on activities, encourages children and



Photo by Mike Peters

## Adventure for a 'princess'

**"T**he Little Princess" is a feel-good play about a princess and a mean headmistress, with a happy riches-to-rags-to-riches ending. The best part? It arrives just in time for the holidays at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center on Nov. 11, courtesy

of the ArtsPower National Touring Theatre production.

Children ages 3 to 9 will enjoy the story of spirited Sara Crewe who goes from having it all to losing it all when her doting father disappears and leaves her in the clutches of the evil Miss Minchin.

But all's well that ends well, and Sara's father's friend returns and provides for her once again.

*"The Little Princess" at the Tribeca Performing Arts Center [199 Chambers St. between Greenwich and West streets in Tribeca, (212) 220-1460; www.tribecapac.org]. Nov. 11, 3 pm. \$25.*

their families to explore global cultures within the context of fantasy shoe store and factory. Suitable for children 5 to 12 years old.

**Fair:** Soho, 100 Varick St. (914) 295-4794; varicksflea@gmail.com; www.meetup.com/varicks; Daily, 10 am-4 pm; Now - Sat, Dec. 29; \$55/Space.

Enjoy shopping and schmoozing in the all day market.

**Winged Tapestries Moths at Large:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24(\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

This exhibition features 34 striking and dramatic images of moths, displaying the arresting beauty and surprising diversity of moths from Ottawa-based photographer Jim des Rivières. Runs through September 2013.

**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-5:45 pm; Now - Sun, Jan. 6, 2013; \$24, \$14 children, \$18 seniors and students.

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

**The Butterfly Conservatory:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24, \$14 children, \$18 seniors and students.

The annual exhibition, "Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter," returns and celebrates its 15th year.

**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, Now - Sat,

Dec. 29; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

**Ice Skating:** 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 7-11 pm, Saturdays, Noon-5:30 pm and 6-11 pm, Sundays, Noon-3 pm and 3:30-6:30 pm, Now - Mon, Dec. 31; \$9 (\$7 children) plus \$5 skate rental fee.

Bring your own skates or rent a pair.

**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 7-11 pm, Saturdays, Noon-5:30 pm and 6-11 pm, Sundays, Noon-3 pm and 3:30-6:30 pm, Now - Mon, Dec. 31; \$10 for two climbs.

Challenge and adventure just one rock wall at a time. The wall is the tallest in

door 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 7-11 pm, Saturdays, Noon-5:30 pm and 6-11 pm, Sundays, Noon-3 pm and 3:30-6:30 pm, Now - Mon, Dec. 31; \$6 for a three-minute jump.

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

**"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; \$9 (\$8 children; \$7 groups of 20 or more).

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

**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, Nov. 18; Free.

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

**Sundays at Senesh:** Hannah Senesh Community Day School, 342 Smith St. between First and Second places; (718) 858-8663; Sundays, 9 am-noon, \$15.

For newborns to preschoolers, includes open play in gym, guided play in music and movement, led by a early childhood instructor.

**Registration for daycare:** Honeydew Drop Playhouse, 1113 Church Ave. (718) 369-0633; honeydewdaycare@gmail.com; www.honeydewdrop.com; Weekdays, 8am, Now - Thurs, Nov. 22. Email for more info.

**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.

**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!

**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, Now - Tues, Dec. 25; Free.

Available for children through eighth

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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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3-5 pm, Now - Thurs, Dec. 27; 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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 3-4 pm, Now - 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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 3-4 pm, Now - Tues, Jan. 8, 2013; Free.

Children 13-18 years old play video games.

**Homework Help:** Brighton Beach Public Library, 16 Brighton First Rd. at Brightwater Court; (718) 946-2917; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 4-6 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 25; 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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Tuesdays, 5:30-7 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 25; 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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Wednesdays, 10:15 and 11:15 am, Now - Wed, Nov. 28; Free.

Children birth to 5 years old hear a read-a-loud story, fingerplay and meet other children. Availability first come first served.

**Homework Help:** Bedford Public Library, 496 Franklin Ave. at Fulton Street; (718) 623-0012; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Wednesdays, 4-7 pm, Now - Wed, Dec. 26; 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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Wednesdays, 4-6 pm, Now - Wed, Dec. 26; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

**Myrtle Avenue Farm Stand:** Myr-



Photo by Don Piliard, (2009)

## Hot air America

**T**urkey day would be ho-hum without the annual Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and its adoring flotilla of prancing inflatables.

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ticipate in an 85-year-old tradition by watching the dazzling dirigibles slowly brought to life in the streets around the American Museum of Natural History during a pre-parade balloon inflation revel that's

sure to get the festive juices — and the “oohs” and “aahs” — flowing!

*Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade balloon inflation [79th Street and Columbus Avenue on the upper west side]. Nov. 21, 3-10 pm*

tle Avenue Stand, Myrtle Avenue and N. Portland Avenue; [www.myrtleavenue.org](http://www.myrtleavenue.org); Wednesdays, 4-7 pm, Now - Wed, Nov. 7; Free.

Fresh produce, groceries and bread.

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

For children.

**Homework Help:** Flatlands Public Library, 2065 Flatbush Ave. at Avenue P; (718) 253-4409; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Thursdays, 5-7 pm, Now - Thurs, Dec. 27; Free.

Available for children through eighth grade. Call to confirm.

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

Shorts and a full length family appropriate movie.

**Story time with Jordan:** Power-

House Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); Fridays, 11:30 am-noon, Now - Fri, Dec. 21; Free.

Pre-schoolers listen to stories from favorite books.

**Winter workshops:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Sunday, Nov. 4, 9 am; Sunday, Dec. 2, 2 pm; Sunday, Jan. 6, 10 am; Sunday, Feb. 3, 1 pm; Monday, Feb. 18, 10 am; Tuesday, Feb. 19, 10 am; Wednesday, Feb. 20, 10 am; Thursday, Feb. 21, 10 am; Friday, Feb. 22, 10 am; Free with garden admission.

New series of discovery programs for children. Hands-on discovery for children of all ages. Activities are indoors.

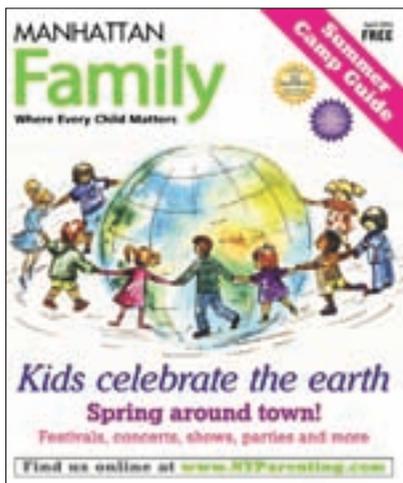
**“Tobias Turkey”:** PS 3 The Bedford School, 50 Jefferson Ave. at Franklin Avenue; (212) 724-0677; [www.shadowboxtheatre.org](http://www.shadowboxtheatre.org); Thursday, Nov. 8, 10 am; Friday, Nov. 9, 10 am; Tuesday, Nov. 13, 10:30 am; Wednesday, Nov. 14, 10:30 am; Thursday, Nov. 15, 10

am; Friday, Nov. 16, 10 am; Saturday, Nov. 17, 11 am; Monday, Nov. 19, 10:30 am; Tuesday, Nov. 20, 10:30 am; Wednesday, Nov. 21, 10 am; \$10.

November wouldn't be complete without a visit from Tobias Turkey. Meet the determined tom on the farm along with Pushy Percival and Farmer Joe for the annual turkey puppet fest. Presented by the Shadowbox Theatre. Suitable for children 3 to 7 years old.

**TheatreSports:** Gallery Players, 199 14th St., between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (212) 352-3101; [galleryplayers.com](http://galleryplayers.com); Sunday, Nov. 18, 12 pm; Sunday, Dec. 16, 12 pm; Sunday, Jan. 27, 12 pm; Sunday, Feb. 17, 12 pm; Sunday, March 24, 12 pm; Sunday, April 28, 12 pm; Sunday, May 19, 12 pm; Sunday, June 16, 12 pm; \$10 (Parents free).

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# It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

## HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS



**1994** Year National Family Literacy Day, Nov. 1, was established.

**30 million** Difference in the number of words heard by children of professional parents before age 4 and those heard by children of parents on welfare.

**25** Difference in IQ scores at age 3 between both groups, with offspring of talkative professionals scoring higher.

**November 2012**

Projected completion date for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, DC, under construction since November 2010.

**38**

Percent of Americans who say their favorite aspect of Thanksgiving is having the day off work.

**260** Tons of turkey Swanson had left in 1953, after the company overestimated the amount Americans would buy for Thanksgiving.

**5,000** Number of trays Swanson salesman Gerry Thomas ordered to fill with surplus turkey, along with stuffing, sweet potatoes, and peas, to create the first TV dinners.

**14**

Percent who say it's spending time with their family.

**69** Percent of holiday shoppers who expect to compare prices and buy gifts online.

**99** Percent of turkeys sold in the U.S. that come from factory farms, where they're bred to be so meaty they can't walk.

**53** Percent of Americans whose favorite Thanksgiving side dish is potatoes.

**Jan. 1, 2012**

Last day U.S. savings bonds, a favorite holiday gift from grandparents to grandchildren, will be sold in paper form and not electronically.

**16** Percent who favor cranberry sauce.

Sources: Readwritethink.org, DAV Magazine, Curve, Time, Newsweek, Pollsb.com, WWD, Daily Record

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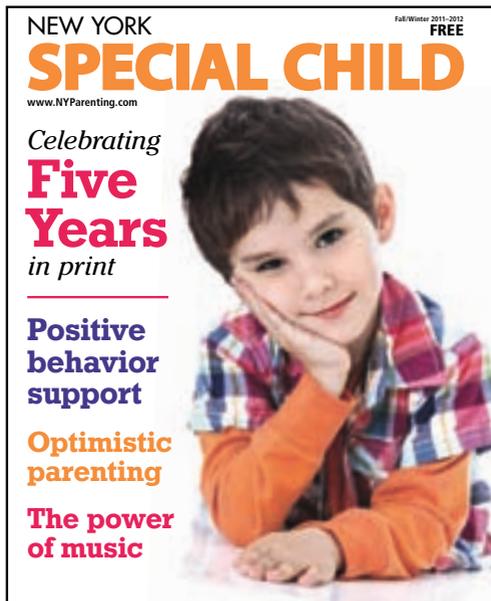
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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Vote Barbie

It's never too early to get little women excited about Election Day!

With Mattel's Barbie I Can Be... President B Party Doll, your child can imagine she's giving a speech about what she might do to make her school better if she was elected to student government, or what she would improve if she was elected president of the United States of America!

The iconic platinum haired doll sports a suit — in Barbie's signature pink, of course — that's trimmed in patriotic red, white and blue ruffles and adorned with a campaign button.

Kids can check out Barbie's progress as she campaigns for the Pink House, by visiting [barbie2012.com](http://barbie2012.com), where they will be prompted to "B inspired," "B confident," "B a dreamer," "B involved," and "B informed."

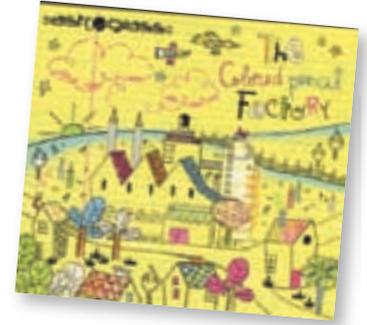
Now, go vote for Barbie.

*Barbie I Can Be... President B Party Doll, \$13.99, [www.barbiecollector.com](http://www.barbiecollector.com).*



## String theory

If you're finding your energy level running low this holiday season, just play Astrograss's latest album "The Colored Pencil Factory" and watch as your whole family vainly attempts to repress happy smiles and tapping toes. This contemporary bluegrass CD, thrumming with the sounds of guitar, fiddles, banjo, and mandolin, is a delightful way to introduce American folk music to a new generation of listeners. The band, which proudly recorded its spirited, acoustic music in Brooklyn, is equally adept at writing clever, often humorous lyrics (They've rhymed "encyclopedia" with "Wikipedia"! ). Mixed in with the original songs

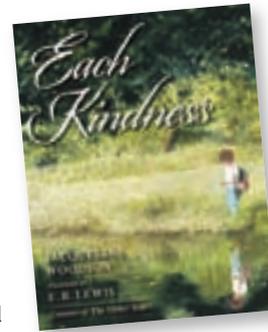


are new arrangements of childhood favorites like "Shortenin' Bread." One of our favorite Astrograss tunes, especially as it grows perilously close to deadline, is the lightning fast finger-picking fiesta that is "Freak Out."

*"The Colored Pencil Factory" CD by Astrograss, \$15, [CDBaby.com](http://CDBaby.com).*

## Bully finds her heart

Jacqueline Woodson's "Each Kindness" (Nancy Paulsen Books), introduces to young readers (ages 5–8) how a good deed "makes the whole world a little bit better." Woodson writes the story from the point of view of Chloe, a bully who regrets her missed opportunities to be a



friend to the new girl in school. This book, with lovely watercolor illustrations by E.B. Lewis, is an opportunity to start a conversation with your child about being inclusive and having compassion toward peers.

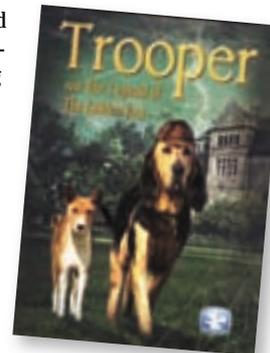
*"Each Kindness" book, by Jacqueline Woodson, \$16.99.*

## Paws for comedy

Warning: If your child has already been pleading for a dog, watching "Trooper and the Legend of the Golden Key" may obliterate your resistance.

The family-friendly film stars Guich Kooch as the voice of Trooper the bloodhound, the film's wise, Texas-accented narrator and main character.

Trooper, along with a chihuahua, Dash, are adopted by the new kid in town, Tommy (Joey Roberts), and the trio go off with magnifying glass



in hand in search of a valuable treasure rumored to have been hidden by an eccentric collector. Along the way, many funny and suspenseful moments are unleashed as they save the town's beloved bookstore from destruction by the evil plotting of the greedy mayor. This dog and child actor have such chemistry,

we wondered if they would team up again for another tail, er, tale?

*"Trooper and the Legend of the Golden Key" DVD, \$14.98, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

## S'more to love

Tane Organics stylishly reminds parents of babies and toddlers to give some thought to quality, purity, and environmental impact when they buy clothing

for the generation that will inherit the earth.

Tane, which translates to "seed" in Japanese, has created a winter collection inspired by the sweet concept of enjoying the great outdoors on a family camping trip.

Part of this "wilderness luxe" line, this soft, felted, alpaca wool kimono jacket is crafted from yarn that is 60 percent alpaca and 40 percent wool and crafted to offer the comforting warmth of a camper blanket.

The attention to detail, like the charming, functional, covered buttons and tiny pocket, adds to the charm. Available in two colors: pebble or charcoal.

*Felted Kimono Jacket by Tane Organics, \$163, [taneorganics.com](http://taneorganics.com).*



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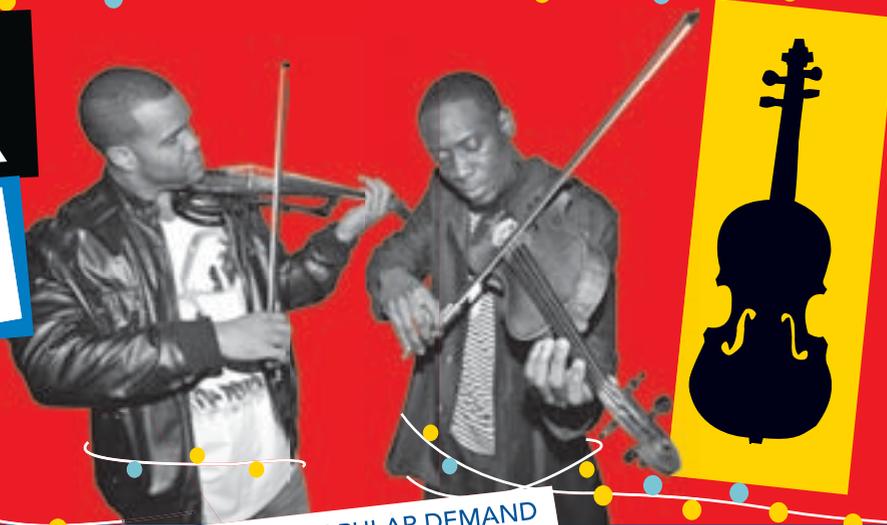
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