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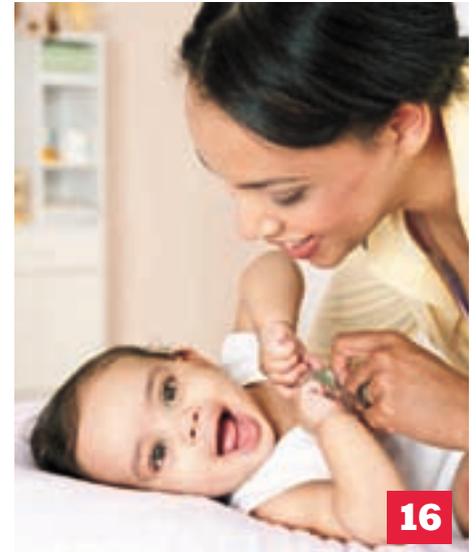
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# Letter from the publisher

## Call for love

**A** number of our columnists in this month's issue have turned their attention to this "thing" called love. Of course, it's February and the time of year when so much focus is on romance and expressions of tender feelings.



So what is love? How do we know it when we have it or find it? How do we avoid the pitfalls of love, the false alarms and wrong choices that break our hearts and waste our time?

These are the questions that parents wish so much to be able to answer when their tweens and teens face the inevitable break-ups or heartbreaks or unrequited love experiences. We recall as parents looking back on the hurts of our

own youth the disappointments and sorrows. If only we could have the formula to give our youngsters that would help them through the pathways of love and longing. But we can be bracing and understanding and comforting even when we hear things like, "If you loved me I wouldn't have to go to school", recently said to a member of our staff by her young son.

We need more love in this world, that's for sure. We need to love the ones who have no love, we need to spot the need for love in the unloved around us and help them feel secure, safe and untroubled. As parents we need to reach out for help for our children when and if we

recognize they are facing issues we are incapable of handling for them on our own. This is also a part of love. It is our responsibility to instill love and trust and security in those babies who come into our arms as brand new people and if they are in trouble, it is loveable to reach out for help.

In spite of horrible headlines from time to time, I believe we all are becoming more loveable. I see incredible changes sociologically with far less polarization, anger, revenge and separation. I see a growth in tolerance, understanding and acceptance and huge changes that make me know that many of us humans have come a long way. We are moving forward and there is progress on every front and that is because of love.

So we love our children, our pets,

our family, our friends, and if we're very fortunate, we get a partner to experience it all with that makes us less on our own. Some do and some don't. That's just the way it is. Not an easy thing to explain to one's children who are all hoping and dreaming of love everlasting and the bells and the banjos ringing.

Love is the answer. I say that every year and I mean it. We can't have enough. We must treasure every piece of it that comes our way.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# FLU

## Learn how to stay safe

The flu has hit the city hard this year. Keep yourself and your family healthy

BY JAMIE LOBER

**T**he flu has hit New York hard this year and has the city's parents talking.

Word out is that this season's vaccine is not as effective as it should be, making some patients hesitant about getting the flu shot for them and for their children. But doctors are stressing that getting the shot is better than nothing.

"Initially, patients refused flu vaccines because they were concerned about side effects and getting the flu from the vaccine, so it is important for people to know that it is not a live virus," said Dr. Nieca Goldberg, clinical associate professor of the Department of Medicine at Leon H. Charney Division of Cardiology, and director of the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health at New York University Lagone Medical Center. "Although it is not 100-percent effective, it is 62-percent effective and that is better than nothing," said Goldberg.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can infect the throat, nose, and lungs, causing





Regardless of your decision to get vaccinated, you should take proper precautions.

mild to severe illness.

For some people, the flu is more dangerous than for others.

“People who are particularly at risk for getting the flu are people with heart disease, lung disease, and illnesses that lower their immunity, like cancer,” said Goldberg.

Scientists try to stay ahead of things by changing the vaccine each year depending on what the epidemiologists see as the trend.

“Last year’s vaccine does not help you,” said Goldberg.

Sometimes, people do not realize they have the flu at first.

“You start to feel achy all over, your muscles ache, you are very tired, and you may have a cough, diarrhea, or vomiting,” said Goldberg. “Sometimes, the flu requires hospitalization. If you are dehydrated, not eating, dizzy, or feel like you are going to faint, you may be given intravenous fluids.”

Symptoms are different in terms of intensity compared to your routine cold. It is important to remember that not everyone with the flu has a fever. Being prepared is the key to fighting the virus.

“A thermometer is a good piece of medical equipment to have in your house, and you should have acetaminophen on hand to take for muscle aches,” advised Goldberg.

WebMD states that Americans are turning to cold and flu supplements in greater numbers this year. Instead of over-the-counter medications, people are considering natural remedies such as taking vitamin C, echinacea, and zinc, because the Food and Drug Administration has released reports about some over-the-counter cold and flu treatments being ineffective.

Studies show that while vitamin C can improve the immune system, it does not prevent colds when given in doses of one gram per day. But, it has proven to be beneficial as a treatment, reducing the duration of colds by as much as 24 to 36 hours.

Regardless of your decision to get vaccinated, you should take proper precautions. If you are exposed to someone who has the flu, you should talk to your doctor about antiviral drugs, which are typically between 70 and 90 percent effective at preventing you from getting sick. It is helpful to stay out of crowds and close quarters as best you can during flu season.

If you suspect you have the flu, take action.

“The fastest way to get rid of the flu, if you are having the most severe case, is to talk to your doctor so he can prescribe an antiviral medication known as Tamiflu, which shortens the course. The other thing you can do is stay home and rest,” said Goldberg. If it seems to get worse instead of better, seek medical attention.

If you are feeling very sick, you should not go to work. If your child is sick, do not send her to school. Try to avoid sharing utensils, glasses, and personal items. Common surfaces like telephones, computer keyboards, and doorknobs should be wiped down regularly to decrease the spread of germs.

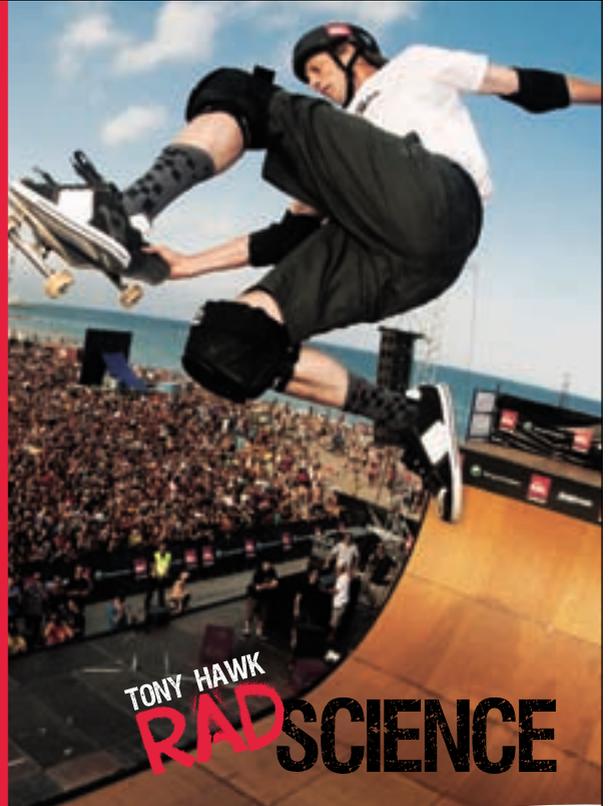
Washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water is also a good means of prevention. Even better, you can get your child in the habit of washing for the duration it takes to sing “Happy Birthday.”

Lifestyle choices like managing stress, getting adequate sleep at night, eating a balanced diet, and staying hydrated can make a difference in your flu-fighting potential.

Do not think you are immune to this epidemic. Be safe rather than sorry by consulting your pediatrician or family doctor about what you can do today.

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

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# Everyday Love

Show love to  
your children  
with these  
simple tips

BY KIKI BOCHI

**V**alentine's Day gets many people thinking about love. But in truth, love is something you show your children every day, through actions big and small.

Our actions speak more of love than all the candy, cards, and grand gestures in the world.

"While we mark holidays, children count every day as a reminder of how much they are valued, loved and respected," says Peter A. Gorski, MD, an advisor to the American Academy of Pediatrics' website, HealthyChildren.org. "Seemingly small efforts to give a child our full attention, to appreciate a child's interests, to acknowledge a child's genuine feelings — these have huge effects and rich rewards well beyond the moment."

Here, from the American Academy of Pediatrics, are some ideas on how to be a more loving parent. Better than a bouquet of roses, these dozen tips will bring smiles to your child's face all year long.

- Use plenty of positive words with your child. Try to avoid using sarcasm, as children often don't understand it, and if they do, it creates a negative interaction. Banish put-downs from your parenting vocabulary.

- Respond promptly and lovingly to your child's physical and emotional needs. Remember, there is amazing power in a simple hug.

- Make an extra effort to set a good example at home and in public. Use words like "I'm sorry," "please," and "thank you."

- Make plans to spend time alone with your child or teen doing something he enjoys. There is nothing more



valuable you can give your child than your time and undivided attention.

- When your child is angry, argumentative, or in a bad mood, give him a hug, or other gesture of affection. Don't escalate things by getting mad as well. A simple statement like, "I see you are feeling angry today" can help validate him and defuse the situation. When he calms down, talk with him about his feelings.

- Use non-violent forms of discipline. Structure, rules, and limits are important to all children. Punishments can include time-outs or suspending privileges, such as television time or other activities. Allowing children of any age to constantly break important rules without discipline only encourages more rule violations.

- Your child's health depends on the care and guidance you offer during the early years. By taking your child to the doctor regularly, keeping him safe from accidents, providing a nutritious diet, making sure he gets enough sleep, and encouraging exercise, you help protect and strengthen his body.

- Help your child foster positive relationships with friends, siblings, and members of the community. Encourage cooperation in your home rather than competition between siblings. Organize get-togethers with extended family, and make your child's friends feel welcome in your home.

Help your child connect with a larger community through sports and activity programs, community groups, or your church or synagogue.

- Mark family nights on your calendar so the entire family can be together. Put a different family member's name under each date, and have that person choose the game or activity for the evening. Choices can include board games, playing basketball, taking a walk together, or even doing a creative craft.

- Let your child cook with you to familiarize him with good food choices. Involve your child in the entire process, from planning the menus, to shopping for ingredients, to the actual food preparation and serving. Not only will your child eat better, but you will also turn a daily chore into a fun, shared experience.

- Help your child develop self-esteem. Your child needs your steady support and encouragement to discover his strengths. He needs you to believe in him as he learns to believe in himself. Loving him, spending time with him, listening to him, and praising his accomplishments are all part of this process.

- Don't forget to say, "I love you," every day to children of all ages.

*KiKiBochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.*

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# Hover charge

'Helicopter parents' can keep their kids from taking off

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

**N**ancy was thrilled to receive an acceptance letter from her top-choice Ivy League school. For years, she researched the best college programs and studied how to produce a winning application package.

She hired one tutor to help with SAT preparation and another to help write a successful personal essay. She visited many campuses, touring and networking with deans, admissions directors, and professors. It was now time to share the good news with her son, Will — the one going off to college.

Will is among the thousands of young people, born between 1982 and 1995, who fall victim to a “helicopter parent.” The term first appeared in the 1990s to describe a specific group of baby boomers who hover over their children throughout every stage of their development. Despite good intentions, these parents do more harm than good.

This ineffective parenting style usually begins in preschool (with over-programmed kids attending karate, piano, ballet, yoga, gymnastics, swimming, art, and cooking classes after their regular school day) and escalates to college and beyond.

Lisa, a recent business school graduate, has always appreciated her father’s involvement in her life. A few months before graduation, he wrote her resume, embellishing it with impressive (albeit exaggerated) information, and spent big money on designer business cards. Now, he accompanies his 21-year-old daughter to career fairs and job interviews, often intervening when the delicate subject of salary comes up.

“She’s a bright girl, but I don’t want anyone taking advantage of her. I want her to start out comfortably.”

Lisa graciously accepts his help. “It’s nice to have someone who

cares so much about me and my future. I’m very lucky.”

It’s typical for parents to micromanage their young children. Babies rely on their caregivers to nourish and protect them. But for many parents, letting go becomes an emotional challenge — even when the child is ready for independence. As children grow older, they deserve opportunities to become more self-reliant and responsible. These are basic, but crucial, life skills. But helicopter parents interfere with every aspect of their child’s life, giving a very clear message: “You cannot succeed without me.”

They do not allow their kids to fail, or succeed, without their help. Children cannot learn to trust themselves if their parents do not trust them to handle their own affairs. Crossing the line from parental guidance to predominance can lead to negative consequences for the children by:

- Weakening their decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Undermining their confidence
- Instilling a fear of failure.
- Encouraging dependence on parental approval.
- Increasing anxiety
- Decreasing self-motivation.
- Blurring the boundary between childhood and adulthood.
- Slowing social and emotional development.
- Fostering a negative self-image.
- Robbing them of valuable opportunities to learn from their own experiences.

## Rise of the helicopter parents

Overprotective parents have existed since the beginning of time. However, with the rapid rise of technology, hovering has become much easier. Computers, e-mail, web cams, cellphones, and text messaging can collectively be called “the longest umbilical cord in the world.” They make it possible for parents and children to access each other around the

clock. The business of information technology is booming, and new products are being developed to target the helicopter parent population.

“These new products will significantly expand the monitoring and tracking capabilities of parents, enabling them to keep track of whom their children meet online, monitor kids’ movements and location, and keep tabs on their behavior and lifestyle,” according to senior analyst Kevin Osborn.

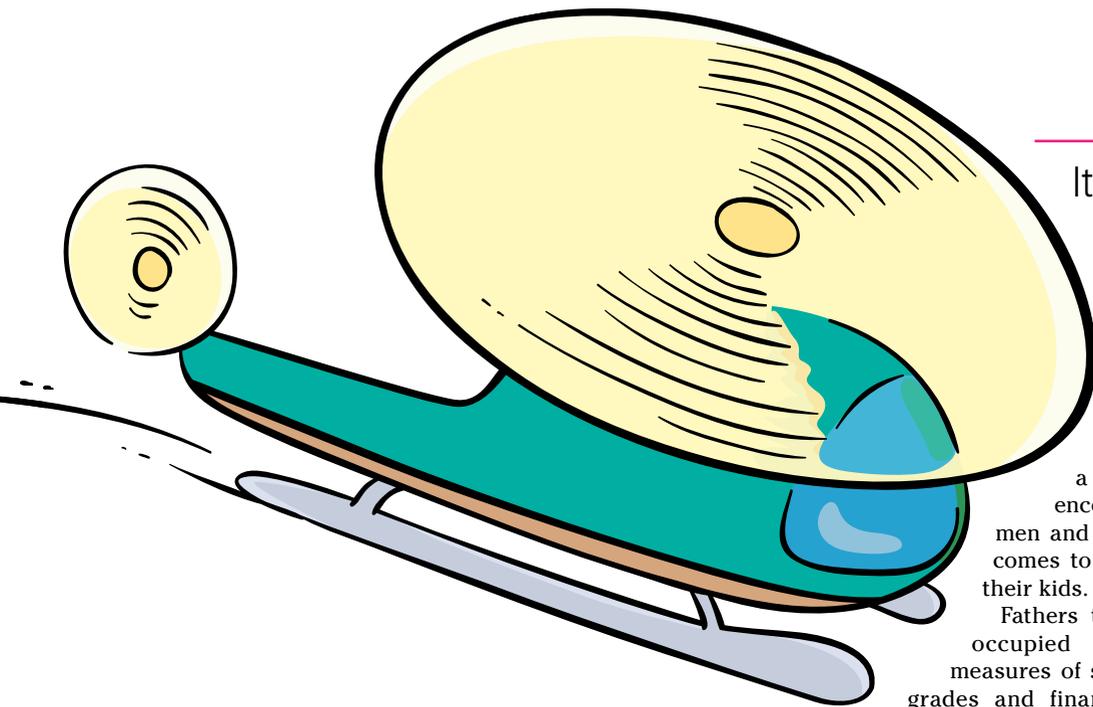
This growing trend may also be a result of today’s critical economic situation.

The uncertainty of the job market creates anxiety for both parents and their children. Desperately wanting their sons and daughters to land secure, well-paying jobs, helicopter parents may push too hard, especially during college years. Academic excellence is important, but it does not compare to the knowledge gained from living independently, which includes making mistakes and learning from them. That freedom is invaluable, because it enables young men and women to explore the entirety of what it means to be an adult.

Some helicopter parents encourage their children to attend prestigious universities, believing that the degree will result in a successful career, but then they strain to pay their child’s tuition. Parents can come to see their children as investments and believe they deserve to be involved.

## Moms vs. dads

Helicopter parenting is prevalent among all racial and ethnic lines, as well as socioeconomic status. Recent studies indicate that nearly 70 percent of college students’ parents cross the line between supporting and controlling their children. Yet,



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It's typical for parents to micromanage their young children. But for many parents, letting go becomes an emotional challenge — even when the child is ready for independence.

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a marked difference exists between men and women when it comes to micromanaging their kids.

Fathers tend to be preoccupied with concrete measures of success such as grades and finances. They are more aggressive in their approach and go straight to the top to resolve problems.

Ben arranged for his daughter to attend a nearby university so she could live at home while taking classes.

Each night, he helps her with her homework, often re-writing papers for her. He carefully monitors her grades, expecting no less than a 3.08 average.

After she scored an 87 on a statistics exam, Ben visited the professor, demanding that the grade be changed. When the professor refused, he spoke with the head of the department and wrote a letter to the Dean until the grade was raised three points.

Mothers, on the other hand, tend to become more overly involved with their son's lives. Theirs is more of an emotional attachment, a desperate need to be needed.

Beverly drives more than two hours to her 20-year-old son's dormitory three times a week to cook him meals and do his laundry and housecleaning. She schedules his doctor's appointments and gets up early to give him a daily wake up call.

Whatever happened to autonomy — not to mention alarm clocks?

### **Common types of helicopter parents**

**The academic watchdogs:** carefully monitor homework and grades, often completing assignments for their children; speak to teachers, professors, and administrators on behalf of their chil-

dren, often arguing over grades or deadlines.

**The safety monitors:** worry excessively about every aspect of their children's lives, including health, eating, and sleeping habits, living arrangements, relationships, exposure to sex, drugs, and alcohol; constantly keep tabs on children's whereabouts.

**The enablers:** provide unlimited money and domestic services, although their children are old enough, and capable enough, to take care of themselves.

**The best friends:** strive to maintain constant contact with their children, preventing independence and freedom; establishes no healthy boundaries.

**The agents:** organize, schedule, and sort out difficulties, while going to great lengths to give their children an advantage over their competition.

### **Stay grounded**

As children develop, they need practice making their own decisions. Facing challenges builds self-esteem and confidence.

Too much parental participation can interfere with the development of autonomy, detrimental to self-reliance and independence.

A parent's duty is to respect her children's needs, while serving as a positive role model.

As tempting as it may be to jump in to prevent disappointment or failure, allow your children to learn from their mistakes. In the end, the lessons they learn will be invaluable.

By the time they reach their college years, young adults will be strong, ready to face the world with gusto.

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



## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Why romance is dead

## What are we teaching our girls about love?

**I**t was a fitful night at best. Colds and runny noses were running rampant among my brood and my youngest couldn't sleep.

So together, we retreated to the living room couches at 4 am hoping to rest while watching TV. As he settled onto the sofa and pulled his Super Mario blanket up to his face, I knew he had dozed off, so I grabbed the remote as fast as I could because those Cartoon Network voices were grating on my clogged ears.

Switching to the OWN Network, I'd hoped to catch a good Dr. Phil repeat or something else that would distract me before my day would officially begin an hour later. I tuned into "The Nate Berkus Show" with his guest "Millionaire Matchmaker" Patti Stanger.

Stanger dished out dating advice at a moment's notice, but grew visibly sullen when she was asked why she wasn't married and where her millionaire was. Interesting. If I were single, that would probably be a clue that I shouldn't follow her advice.

I noticed her tone and instructions were harsh. For example, one woman in the audience had been out on a first date and it apparently went well until the guy

said he was interested in bird-watching. The woman was evidently so horrified that she didn't know how to respond so she let him ramble about his sightings.

Stanger's advice: "Get up and say, 'I can tell this won't work, but if I find a friend who may be interested, I'll give them your number,' and then run away." Stanger said the young lady was "too hot and single" to listen about bird-watching.

Yikes.

Was I in bizarro land? What happened to meeting someone you found interesting and sharing a quick bite to eat or a coffee? Now, it's turned into abandon a person mid-meal if you don't like his hobby. If you met a friend, a colleague, hell, even an acquaintance for a meal, you'd give him more courtesy than what she was advising.

Speaking of "hot," in a mock-date improvement segment, one young man began his would-be date by telling her she was "hot" (after creepily staring her up and down). Mind you, this was the first thing he did and said.

I let out a quiet "eew" in my darkened living room, but Stanger said, "Hot means sex, so he is looking at you sexually." Then the woman replied, "Thank you."

I couldn't watch much after that, as I scratched my head wondering if this is really the advice that young people are getting now. I will accept neither my daughter saying "thank you" for being called hot, nor my son using the word "hot" in the first sentence he utters to a girl (unless it's something like, "watch out, that pan is hot!").

People wonder why romance is dead, and maybe it's because so many of us have allowed common courtesy and decency to go by the wayside. Also, the fact remains that we teach people how to treat us, so if we settle for less, that is what we will get.

It reminds me of recent memo making the Internet rounds that says, "I often wonder if more girls were willing to be ladies, more guys would be challenged to be gentlemen."

The challenge lies for both genders, and I hope it's a challenge that we teach our next generation to take.

*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, [www.justwritemom.com](http://www.justwritemom.com).*



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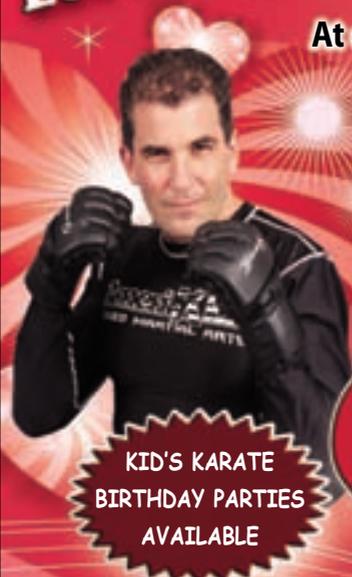
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## MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

# The terrible twos

**I** think the terrible twos have arrived early. My sweet little girl has developed a whole other side to her that's not so sweet.

A few months ago, a friend asked several other moms for tips on how to deal with her toddler who had taken a liking to repeatedly biting her. Most moms advised on biting him back! Understandably, she didn't want to do that, nor spank him. Eventually, she decided just to ignore him, although ignoring the bite marks was a lot more difficult.

Luckily, Olivia is not a mini-Dracula. She prefers whining, hitting, and throwing herself (I'm not sure which situation is worst).

There's a ton of parenting advice and tips on how to discipline toddlers — everything from spanking to time-out, to talking and encouraging positive behavior rather than punishing bad. I'm not against spanking. I think it can work and if you pick your battles, it may be very effective.

However, when I've attempted to spank Olivia, she does it in return or does it to the dog. It's sad to see my pit bull being bullied by my 1-year old. And isn't it counter-productive to punish my child for hitting by hitting her? At this stage, I don't think a time-out is very effective, she's too young to understand. She doesn't understand that she is being punished. To her, mommy is leaving her all by herself. No lesson learned.

I do talk and encourage positive behavior as much as I can, but what I've also found to be effective for temper tantrums, whining, frustration, and other annoying toddler behaviors is distracting her. I read somewhere that when your child is acting up, the best thing to do is to distract her. That sounded genius and when I tried it, it was! The next time I felt a tantrum coming on, I brought her attention to something else, my cellphone. I focused on the phone like it was the most intriguing thing ever, and she followed my lead. Sometimes when she's being fussy

I'll just tickle her, and as much as she wants to be upset, she can't help but laugh and forgets her frustration, or even better, tries to tickle me back.

Another tantrum-fighting tactic: singing and dancing.

When Olivia is being uncontrollably fussy and moody, I'll engage her in a song and dance. Sometimes it's a nursery rhyme and sometimes it's something I've just made up. The more upbeat and silly, the better.

I try to look at things from her point of view — although there are some things she can

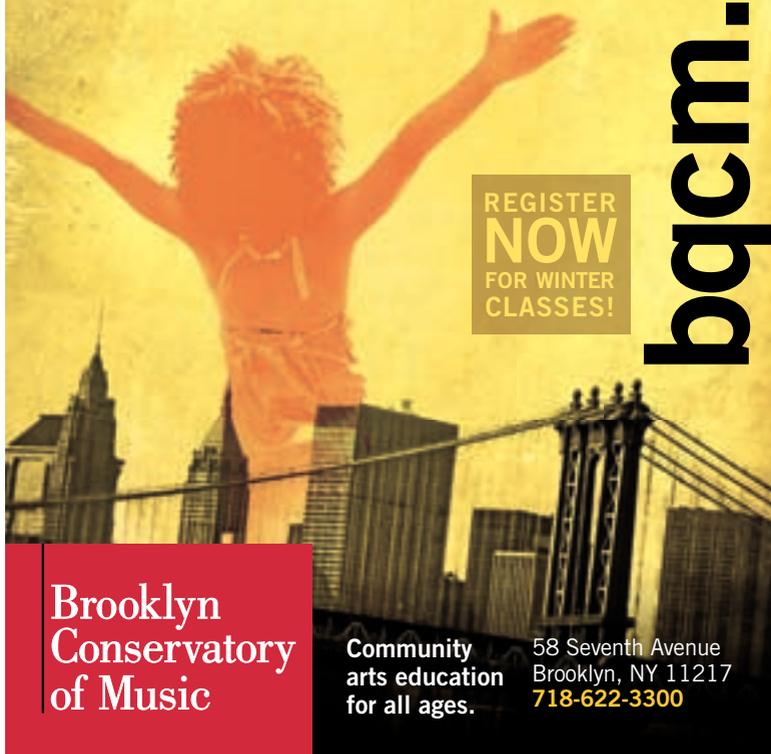
communicate to me: bottle, book, eat, bath time (she's very smart), but there are other things she hasn't mastered yet and that must be frustrating. Trying to understand the toddler brain is not always so easy.

Fortunately, we haven't had any public tantrums yet, but I'm sure we will. If and when that happens, I'll be prepared to tickle my daughter and break out into a ridiculous dance in front of strangers.

I'm sure the other parents will be able to relate, and if I'm lucky, they might just join in.



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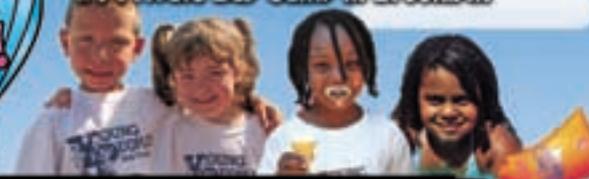
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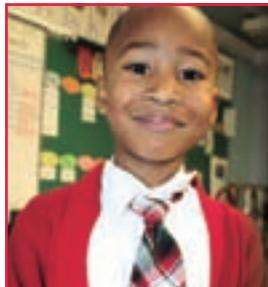
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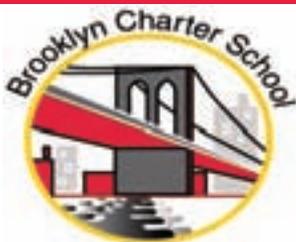
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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# The science of love

**L**ove protects us from loneliness, poor health, and even helps us live longer. This month, while love is in the air and people are doing their best to find and keep love, could their efforts be in vain?

After all, you can date as much as you like and meet a whole lot of people, but if the chemistry just is not there, you cannot force the attraction.

Maternal love, of course, is a whole other story. It's primitive and fierce. That unique bond between mother and child does not end with delivery. In fact, the change is life-lasting. Some moms feel that instinctively from the get-go. However, the change is not only emotional, it's biological. There is a real science behind the concept of love.

Here are three distinct ways love can be explained through science:

### **Pregnancy**

Research performed by psychologist Laura M. Glynn of Chapman University and Curt A. Sandman at the University of California proposes that pregnancy hormones help prepare a woman's brain for the stresses of motherhood. This includes everything from giving her more patience and becoming more resilient to stress, to becoming fine-tuned to her baby's needs.

### **Brain change**

During pregnancy, just as the mom passes oxygen and nutrients to her baby via the placenta, it seems that a baby can pass DNA to his mother. Recent research out of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle has discovered that male DNA has been found in the brains of mothers who have given birth to boys. This strange phenomenon is also believed to ward off certain types of cancer, such as bowel and skin cancer. One of the oldest women studied was a 93-year-old woman who was found to have male DNA in her brain after death.

### **Romantic love**

When talking about romantic love, it is simply like a drug — some



say it's addictive. A study from the State University of New York at Stony Brook suggests you can crave the person you fall in love with much in the same way you would a drug. Author of the study, psychologist Arthur Aron, says the change occurs in the brain, not the heart.

"Intense passionate love uses the same system in the brain that gets activated when a person is addicted to drugs," he explains.

Whether we see love as purely emotional, wholly scientific, or a happy blend of both, love is a wonderful thing to have in our lives and a reason for celebration.

*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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Isobella Jade's son Phoenix is learning the importance of reading from a young age.

# Babies & books

New York mom  
Isobella Jade  
supports early  
reading

BY JAMIE LOBER

**I**sobella Jade is a self-described author, model, and new mom who claims to have both beauty and brains to make her a total package.

She instigated a new baby book blog called Phoenix Baby Book Club, where she features her son Phoenix's reading adventures and encourages new parents to start

reading early — even in the womb. Jade, known in New York City's fashion world as a petite model at 5-feet-2 inches, says her career took off when she wrote her first book at the Apple store when she did not have a computer.

"After I shared my underdog story I started getting a following and it grew from there," says Jade, who went on to write three more books, and claims she is not quit-

ting anytime soon.

She quickly learned that talking about how to get ahead as a shorter model was just one way she could reach out to young adults. She found that keeping things interesting and inspiring helped maintain her following. Instead of just being discovered as a model, she was starting to discover herself and wanted to teach young girls the lessons she had learned.

"It is not about if they are looking at every page, but they are listening and engaged."

"I gave them an awareness of being careful and talking to their parents about what they are doing," says Jade.

Her lessons grew more serious after she had a baby boy, who is now 2 ½ months-old and already working with a modeling agency in the city. Not only is he attractive, he is a wise little man.

"We share the books we are reading together with others, and since my mom was a reading teacher, reading is a common nature to me," says Jade.

When parents like to read, their children pick up on it.

"It is the best part of my day when I read to Phoenix, which is in the morning and before dinner time," says Jade.

She considers it a special moment when she can introduce her son to the beauty of the world.

"He gets to hear words he might not have heard in everyday life, see pictures, ignite his senses, and see colors," she says. If you fear your toddler may not be able to sit still long enough to read a book, don't try to fight it, but rather, try to set aside 10 minutes a day, she advises.

"Parents can make it fun. I make noises myself and am animated but humanistic," says Jade, adding she talks to her son like he is 4 years old instead of treating him like a baby.

Jade suggests that parents find teachable moments when reading to their children.

"We have paintings on our walls so I go through the colors and tell him to look at red, white, green, and go through the rainbow," she says. You may find you get a positive response from your child. "I make him giggle and it is fun, but you have to have the right attitude so it is a good experience."

The key is to acknowledge the world around you and not be afraid to be yourself, she says.

"It is weird reading to him because I am not sure if he under-

stands me and he probably does not understand every word, but he does understand my expressions and the way I move my mouth," says Jade.

Parents can also get their children involved by making reading interactive.

"Notice what is going on on the page that you can talk about, like the clouds, cool motorcycle, or owl, so it is more fun than just reading the sentence," says Jade. Use household items as you narrate. "If you have a stuffed animal or cool truck to incorporate — or other things in your room that are a color from the book, like a lampshade or couch — talk about it."

The more you practice reading aloud, the better you will feel about it.

"You have to bring your positivity, excitement, and positive voice to it," says the mom. Try to gauge how your child is feeling. "I talk to him and ask how he is doing, and he will smile and hear my tone of voice and pitch go up when I am happy or excited."

And make sure to give your baby credit where it is due.

"They pay attention and are so smart, and that can be taken for granted," says Jade.

Each child's interest level varies, but all seem to care in their own way.

"It is not about if they are looking at every page, but they are listening and engaged," she says.

While the key is to start young, literacy matters for all ages.

"I love advocating for everyone to read so they can keep their wonder and imagination going, take a moment to escape, appreciate the story of someone else, learn so much, and appreciate the world and their own life and others better," states Jade.

She says she is most proud of how she is raising and portraying her family.

"It is one thing to be admired and liked for how you look, but it is another to have a perspective, opinion, be observant and appreciated," she says. "I am glad people think Phoenix is cute, but I love it when people say Phoenix is smart."

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

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Principal Elena Heimbach, is a regional school in the Diocese of Brooklyn with classes from Nursery - 8th grade.

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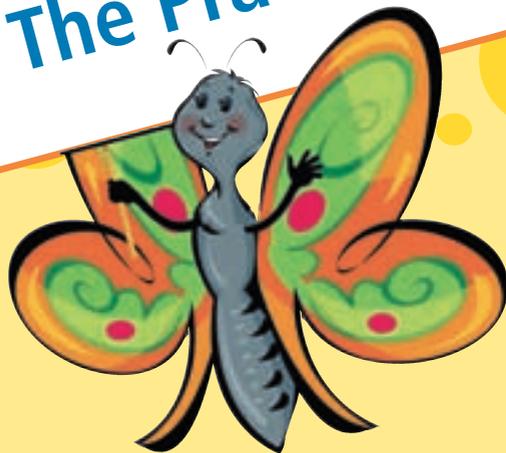
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Dr. Reneida E. Reyes has been actively engaged in the practice of Pediatric Dentistry at One Hanson Place (the former Williamsburg Savings Bank building) for about 30 years. Although the building has been converted to luxury residential condominiums, Dr. Reyes may still be found in the building in suite 706.

Dr. Reyes received her pediatric dental training at The Children's Hospital of Boston and Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. She also holds a master's in Public Health Degree from Harvard School of Public Health in the area of Maternal and Child Health Studies.

Professionally Dr. Reyes has been actively engaged in organized dentistry with a strong focus on children's oral health, having served as chair of the Oral Health Committee of Second District Dental Society (Brooklyn and Staten Island) and State Chair of National Children's Dental Health Month for the New York State Dental Association establishing the Sugarless Wednesday Program, which received National recognition from the American Dental Association (ADA) as a Recipient of the Golden Apple Award in 2007.

Dr. Reyes had been Section Chief of Pediatric Dentistry at New York Methodist Hospital, Division of Dental Medicine since 1997. Dr. Reyes received the New York State Dental Foundation award of excellence in community service on Oct. 12, 2009.

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# Sparkling smiles

How to  
protect and  
promote your  
child's dental  
health

BY KIKI BOCHI

**C**ould there be anything more precious than your child's smile?

Preserving and protecting that smile should be on the top of your list of priorities, yet oral health is often overlooked by many parents. It's understandable — you have so many things to deal with, and worrying about preventing cavities just seems to get away from you. Besides, they're just baby teeth, right?

Wrong.

Even baby teeth are important. Baby teeth serve as spacers to maintain the proper alignment for permanent teeth. And that's not all: children with healthy mouths chew more easily and gain more nutrients from the foods they eat. They learn to speak more quickly and clearly. Plus, a healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance.

If you're not taking the best care of your child's teeth, you are certainly not alone. For the first time in 40 years, dentists are seeing an increased number of children with multiple cavities, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Along with this alarming trend is an increased number of children who require hospital admittance and general anesthesia to treat their extensive cavities and tooth decay.

Teaching your child proper oral care at a young age is an investment in his health. To mark Children's Dental Health Month in February, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry offers this advice:

- Set a good example. Taking good care of your own teeth sends a message that oral health is important. In addition, cavity-causing germs can be transmitted through contact — like when your baby puts his hands in your mouth and then in his own mouth, or if you share cups or utensils. That's why it's so important to keep your own teeth and gums healthy.

- Be smart at bedtime. Do not nurse a young child to sleep or put him to bed with a bottle of milk, formula, juice, or any sweetened liquid. As a child sleeps, any unswallowed liquid in the mouth feeds bacteria that produce acids and attack the teeth. Protect your child from severe tooth decay by putting him to bed with nothing more than a bottle of water or a pacifier. And never dip a pacifier in sugar or honey — day or night.

- Attack plaque. Plaque is a sticky film of germs that forms on teeth and gums after eating or drinking,

which is why brushing twice a day is so important. To ensure children's teeth are properly brushed, parents of toddlers should do it for them with a soft brush by using a circular or wiggling motion on all tooth surfaces, especially where the tooth meets the gum line. Even once kids are old enough to do their own brushing, parents should watch over the process until children are at least 8 years old.

- Use the right tools. Clean a baby's gums regularly with a clean gauze pad even before any teeth have erupted. This will accustom your baby to an oral care routine, plus reduce the bacteria in your child's mouth. For toddlers, use a small, soft-bristled brush with only a smear of toothpaste so that they don't swallow it. Once children can spit, use a pea-sized portion of toothpaste so they don't absorb too much fluoride. Remember to replace toothbrushes every three to four months — and even sooner if the bristles are worn out, or if your children have been sick.

- Floss daily. It is important to remove plaque from between the teeth and under the gum line before it can harden into tartar. Flossing removes food and plaque between teeth that brushing misses. You should floss for your children beginning at age 4. By the time they reach age 8, most kids can begin flossing for themselves.

- Eat well. Children must have a balanced diet for their teeth and gums to develop properly. Equally important is a diet high in certain kinds of carbohydrates. Other foods, such as sugar and starches, may place your child at dental risk. Limit starchy or sugary foods, which produce plaque acids that cause tooth decay.

Choose wisely. Use dental products that contain fluoride, including toothpaste, and visit a dentist regularly.

*KiKiBochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.*





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# A mom sent to the principal's office

Her intentions were good, but she still landed in hot water

BY ALLISON PLITT

**G**rowing up, I was one of those strange kids who loved going to school to study and learn. Now, I love taking my 6-year-old daughter to the public school she's enrolled in, helping her with homework, and coming into her first-grade classroom to participate in special occasions.

My excitement about school, however, became a problem this year, when I got sent to the principal's office for putting pictures of the students on a public website.

When my daughter entered pre-K two years ago, a parent created a photo-share website. Whenever a special event happened at the school, he would take pictures and then send an e-mail to all the other parents informing them he had uploaded photos to the site.

I thought this was a great idea, so the following year, when my daughter started kindergarten at a differ-

ent school, I created a site for her class. So whenever a special occasion took place, like a Halloween party or a trip to the bowling alley, I took pictures of the kids. I then uploaded the photos, and e-mailed the parents telling them where they could find the pictures. The teacher, however, didn't have an e-mail address, so I never thought to tell her about the site.

Many parents complimented me on the photos and the site, so I created another one this year for the first-grade classroom. My first opportunity to take photos was at a class party in mid-October. I volunteered to help out at the event and showed up with my camera in hand.

A few days later, when I went to upload the photos, the site was advertising a new software program for its members, which would allow them to create a more elaborately detailed site.

With great excitement, I created a website for my daughter's class and uploaded all the photos from the party. In contrast to the previous year's website where I just uploaded pictures, this year I was able to add names to, or "tag," all the people in the photos.

I was also capable of creating a school calendar on the site. Since I even had the ability to add documents to the site, I uploaded the class list, which provided the names of all the students with their parents' names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Then I sent an e-mail to all the parents and the teacher, telling them about site, and made them members of the site, which meant they could add and edit information.

Besides receiving a handful of compliments from the parents about the photos, I started to get



bad news.

First, the class parent who had organized the party told me the teacher had seen the website and told her to change the name of the website to "The Parents of the First Grade Class," so it would look like the parents, and not the school, were responsible for creating it.

Next, I received an e-mail from the assistant principal, requesting that the class parent and I meet with her and the principal.

Throughout my entire academic career I had never been in trouble with the principal. So before the meeting I e-mailed the principal and assistant principal links to both the kindergarten and first-grade classroom share sites I created. I was sure that if they saw all the hard work I did, they would realize how great it was for the parents to see photos of their kids and have access to so much information about the school.

At the meeting, the assistant principal asked me if I had asked the other parents or the teacher about creating the site. I told her I had made the site by myself because the parents from the previous year enjoyed seeing the kindergarten photos.

She told me that my first mistake was in not asking permission to create the site, since it involved the school. She also told me that when she went to the website, she could see the class list with the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all the parents.

When she told me that, I wanted to put a bag on my head for being so stupid, because I totally forgot to edit the visitor access to the site. In other words, anyone who went to the website could see a name tagged to each person's face in the pictures, as well as everyone's contact information.

The assistant principal told me to remove all of the personal data on the website immediately. She told me nowadays there are people with child custody issues, where one of the parents doesn't want the other to know their contact information or even their whereabouts.

Realizing this new set of circumstances, I apologized and told her I would speak to the teacher as soon as possible. I couldn't believe that what had seemed fun to me could now actually be construed as litigious.

After the meeting I went straight

home and untagged the names and edited the visitor access, so the only thing the visitors to the website could see were the photos.

I spoke to my daughter's teacher in person, and apologized about creating the site without consulting with her. She said she was concerned about people tagging photos, and cutting and pasting their faces to Facebook. I told her I had no idea something like that could even happen.

Ultimately, the teacher and I both agreed to delete the website. I also deleted both the kindergarten and first grade class sites.

I told my husband, who works with computers, what had happened, and asked him how the parent in my daughter's pre-K class had created a class website and never received complaints from the other parents concerning their online privacy.

My husband explained that the pre-K website was a secure site not open to the public, where the only visitors who could only access it had to receive an e-mail invitation. He said I, on the other hand, had created an unsecure website in which any person could visit and look at it.

Better understanding my error, I sent an e-mail to the parents, teacher, principal, and assistant principal telling everyone how sorry I was about creating the site without getting their opinions beforehand. I also let them know about the privacy issues in regards to tagging individuals in the photos and the unsecure visitor access, as well as the final decision to delete the site.

Reflecting on the entire incident, there are still times I want to put a bag on my head when I think about all the things I had done wrong. Nonetheless, I was also unaware of the more advanced technological concerns, such as being able to take a person's photo from a website and pasting it to a social media site.

I became aware that we're facing a new frontier where people act very cautiously about protecting their online privacy. Above all, I finally came to realize that it's vitally important to communicate verbally in this age of global communication.

*Allison Plitt is a contributing writer for New York Parenting Media, and lives in Queens with her husband and 6-year-old daughter.*



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DEAR  
DR. KARYN  
DR. KARYN GORDON

# How to build up your child's confidence

**Dear Dr. Karyn,**

Is self-esteem learned or genetic? And if we do learn it, how can I build my daughter's self-esteem? I've read several articles about why it's important and I'm terribly concerned that my daughter will suffer from low self-esteem, the way that I did growing up. Can you please offer some practical tips?



**Dear Parent,**

The great news is that self-esteem and confidence are 100 percent learned! Some people think it is genetic, but that is a myth! So how can we help to develop it in our kids? For this month I'm going to give extra information so parents have a clear idea what they can do! Here are three tips:

## Model it

The truth is that we learn confidence from a variety of places (culture, media, peers), but after practicing for 16 years, I would say that the best predictor for what kind of confidence our kids will have is what has been modeled by the same-gendered parent. So, fathers to sons, mothers to daughters: pay attention!

We are the most influential teachers on this topic for our kids. Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule, but the great news is that if we are modeling it for our kids, there is

a high probability that they will learn it from us! While some people get excited with this information, others honestly feel a little daunted, thinking "Oh, no, so it's all up to me!" But think about it logically — wouldn't you rather be the most influential person in your child's life on this issue versus one of her friends or the media? This really is great news! If you are already feeling confident and you model this consistently, great! She will likely learn this automatically from you (it's like picking up a language as a child) without you ever having to talk about it! But if you or your spouse struggle with confidence, my number one suggestion is that you get coaching to fix this. This is 100 percent a fixable problem!

## Understand it

If you were to read hundreds of articles and journals about this popular topic, you'd learn that self-esteem comes down to one word — "Attitude." How we think (attitude) impacts how we feel (emotions), which impacts what we do (behavior). If your 10-year-old daughter tells herself "I am too fat" (thought) she will feel "insecure, self-conscious, guilty, etc." (emotions) and this will highly impact her decision making in that she may count calories, weigh herself daily, or be overly obsessive about how she looks (behavior).

If your spouse tells himself "I am worthy only if I make this amount of money this year" (thought) he may feel anxious, overwhelmed, stressed (emotions), which will impact his decision-making. He may become a workaholic (since his self-worth is connected to his net-worth), he may be edgy with your kids and you, or he may find it difficult to relax (behavior). The truth is that emotions are always logical (emotions will feel whatever we tell them), but our thoughts that impact how we feel are NOT always logical (it depends on what we tell ourselves). Experts call these thoughts "internal dialogue" and it's incredibly powerful!

The two examples above are il-

logical thoughts (when we examine them objectively). However, as long as people tell themselves these kinds of thoughts, they will always feel insecure and anxious. To fix and build confidence we need to change how we think. A healthy, confident person does not tell herself conditional statements ("I am ok if \_\_\_\_\_" (ex. I get this position, make this amount of money, date this person, reach this weight)). Instead, she tells herself, "I am worthy as I am. If I get this goal, that's great, but my self-worth does not depend on it").

Just think about your kids. Can you imagine telling them a conditional statement such as "I love you if \_\_\_\_\_" — it's absurd! Loving parents do not put conditions on their love towards their kids. Similarly, someone who has healthy confidence does not put conditions on her self-worth. This internal dialogue is so powerful, and research demonstrates that when people have a genuine healthy confidence they are more likely to set goals and get them because they are fearless, take more risks, and have the guts and courage to charge after their ambition! When we unlock the dialogue in our head and challenge "toxic thinking," we unleash a powerful force! Just ask yourself — if you were fully confident, did not fear failure, rejection or what others thought — what would you do for 2013?

## Affirm character

Your children desperately need to know that you are proud of them. So look for opportunities to affirm them — but focus specifically on their character.

We all hear a lot of talk about praising kids from different experts, and while some people think it gives kids a big head or false self-esteem, I couldn't disagree more.

The key is that you need to make sure you are affirming the right way, or it may backfire, in addition to giving regular constructive feedback so that it's not all praise and no substance.



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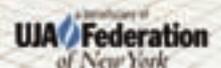
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# The right to know

Is there a way to tell if your home is *really* smoke-free?

BY SHEELAH A. FEINBERG

All parents want to protect their children from potential health risks, especially at home.

We childproof our homes to prevent household injuries, install window guards, and use carbon-monoxide detectors. If any remodeling is done, we're sure not to use lead-based paint, and many parents insist that their homes are smoke-free.

But are they?

## Multi-unit housing

New York City has the highest concentration of multi-unit housing in the country at almost 70 percent of homes.

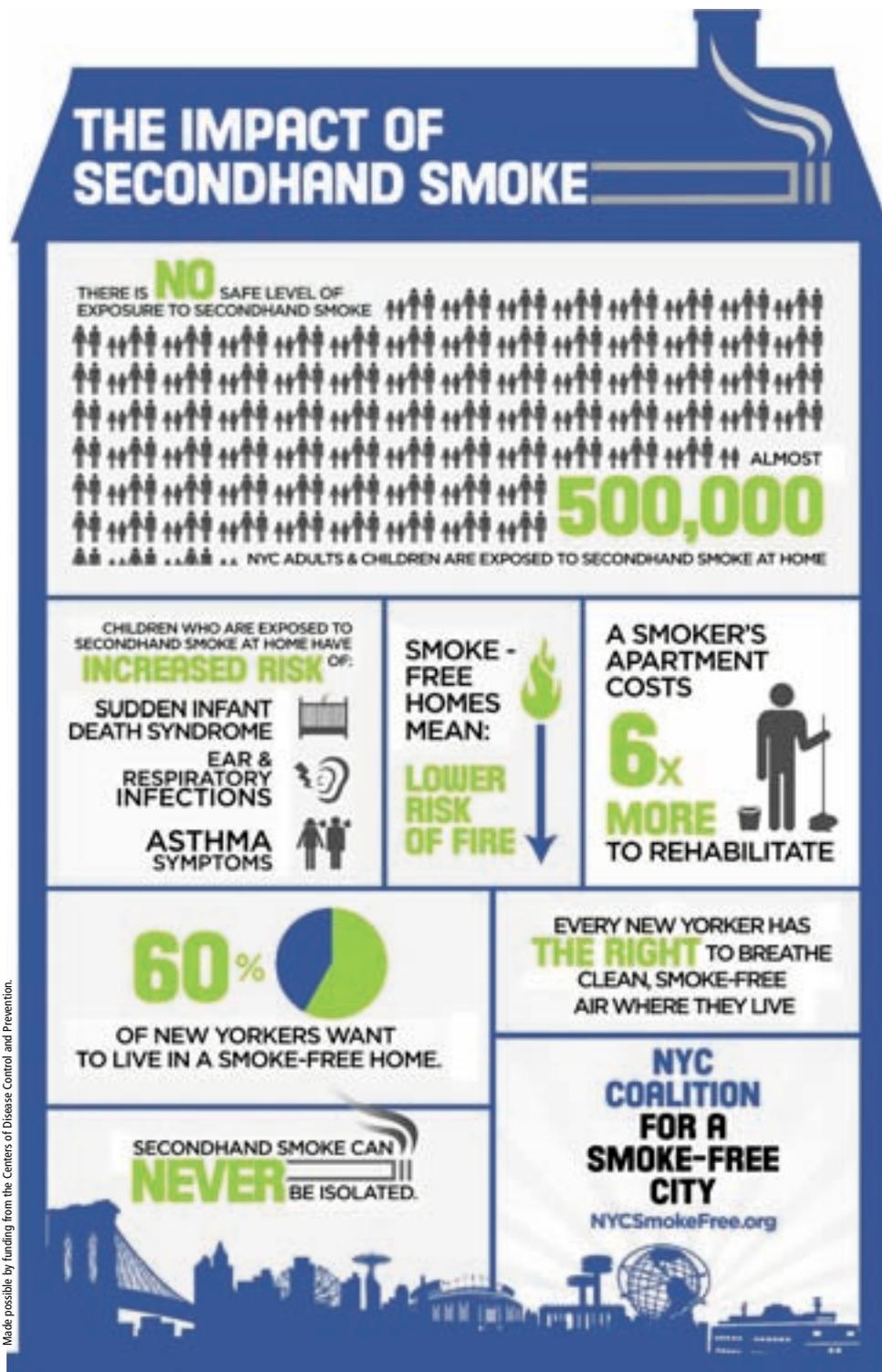
That means most of us share walls, stairwells, lobbies, and most importantly, the air we breathe. Studies show that secondhand smoke travels between units and floors, and through cracks in piping, ventilation, and flooring. Secondhand smoke can never be entirely contained.

On average, up to 60 percent of the air in multi-unit buildings is shared. So, when one person smokes, the whole building smokes.

## Children at risk

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is absolutely no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Even brief exposure can cause health problems, especially for children and the elderly. Secondhand smoke kills 42,000 Americans each year, including nearly 900 infants.

Approximately 200,000 New York City children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home. Children spend more time at home, so when they are exposed they have increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome, ear and respiratory infections, and worsening asthma





On average, up to 60 percent of the air in multi-unit buildings is shared. So, when one person smokes, the whole building smokes.

symptoms.

For those children who suffer from asthma, exposure to secondhand smoke leads to more frequent asthma attacks and more trips to the Emergency Room.

Clearly, children face a greater risk than adults of the negative health effects of secondhand smoke.

When secondhand smoke is in the air, young, developing lungs receive a higher concentration of inhaled toxins because a child's breathing rate is faster than that of an adult.

Parents can protect their children by voluntarily adopting a smoke-free policy in their homes, but for those who live in an apartment building, secondhand smoke can be a constant threat to your children's health, especially if you live near a smoker.

### **Smoking disclosure policies**

Most people don't know if their building allows smoking, or if they will be exposed to secondhand smoke in their home, until they are already residents.

We all have the right to be free of hazardous conditions in our home, especially when it comes to our children's health. Why should our children be involuntarily exposed to secondhand smoke?

We have a right to know if the home we're choosing will be affected by secondhand smoke that could put our children's health at risk. Why shouldn't parents know if their building allows smoking before moving in?

Smoking disclosure policies would give prospective tenants and buyers the facts they need in order to make an informed choice when deciding where to live. Landlords and building own-

ers would need to disclose their building's smoking policy to anyone who is considering moving in.

We already have disclosure policies in place for many similar residential health hazards, such as lead-based paint, radon, and bed bugs.

Why not simply add tobacco smoke to this list? These disclosure policies appear to have contributed to reducing the health consequences resulting from exposure to these health hazards. When you consider all the facts, smoking disclosure policies just make sense.

New York City parents would then be able to choose to live in a building that has voluntarily gone smoke-free and know their children would be protected from secondhand smoke.

New York City stopped smoking in bars and restaurants almost 10 years ago, and last year, our parks and beaches became smoke-free.

If we can protect our health in these public places, why can't we protect our health in our homes? As concerned parents, we have a right to know if smoking is allowed in a building before we move in.

The NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City strongly supports smoking disclosure policies.

New Yorkers have a right to know if they will be involuntarily exposed to secondhand smoke and choose to live in a building that is 100 percent smoke-free to protect their children's health.

For more information, visit [www.NYCSmokeFree.org/housing](http://www.NYCSmokeFree.org/housing) and [www.SmokeFreeHousingNY.org](http://www.SmokeFreeHousingNY.org)

*Sheelah A. Feinberg is the executive director of the NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City.*

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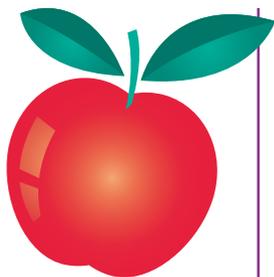
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## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND  
MARGE EBERTS

# At what level are my children reading?

## Dear Teachers,

How do I know if my young children in kindergarten and third grade are reading on grade level? Also, can you give me a list of books for these grades?

## Dear Parent,

Report cards and teacher conferences should already have told you about your children's reading level in both grades. If not, ask their teachers for this information. Be aware that reading on grade level can mean different accomplishments at different schools. Plus, you should expect bright children to be reading one or more years above their grade level.

teacher or the school librarian. It also can be helpful to ask friends about books their children are enjoying.

## Peer pressure

### Dear Teachers,

How can I tell if my middle schooler is being accepted socially by his peers? He spends a lot of time in solitary pursuits.

### Dear Parent,

Simple observation should largely answer your question. Are friends calling him on the phone? Is he calling others on the phone? Is he asked on outings with other children? Does he interact with neighborhood children his age? Does he participate in sports formally or informally? Does he belong to Boy Scouts or any clubs? Does he ever do school projects or homework with others in his class? What does he say about having friends? What does his teacher say about his socialization at school?

Caution: Are excessive online activities limiting personal contact with his peers?

## Child labeled a trouble maker

### Dear Teachers,

Since third grade, my child has been labeled as a trouble maker. He is currently in fifth grade and everything he does, no matter what, he gets a detention. We have a meeting scheduled with his teacher, because I have heard that this information is being sent over to his middle school — labeling him even before he arrives?

### Dear Parent,

You have been hearing about your son's behavior for several years now. Why did he start acting this way in third grade? What happened in third grade to make the year different from first and second grade, before he had a label? And the big question: why hasn't something been done to change his behavior by you or the school?

As far as his records go, you will not be able to take out any information that teachers have put into them. However, you can look at the records

and put in information expressing your take on his behavior for the middle school teachers to see.

Realistically, it is past time for your son to change his image.

When you meet with his teacher, ask what can be done right now to help your son eliminate the trouble maker label.

Suggest that a behavior modification plan be developed immediately so some improvement in his behavior can begin to take place at once.

## Helping a child who is a 'disorganized mess'

### Dear Teachers,

My daughter is in the second grade, and the teacher says that she is a "disorganized mess" in class. The child often can't find missing books and is not willing to look for them.

### Dear Parent,

Organization is a skill that young children usually learn at home. Getting your child to be more organized needs to be a two-pronged attack by you and the teacher.

First focus on the classroom and the missing book situation. If the child does not have a desk to keep her things in, books not being used always must be placed in a basket or cubby.

At the start of the day, take and store all books from her backpack and store them. Have a chart that she can check when this is done. She must also check the chart that a book has been put away when another is opened. The teacher should check the chart frequently and insist on this organization before other activities can be started. The chart can be taped to the top of the child's desk or table where she sits. At home, choose just one aspect of your daughter's life that ties in with school — possibly getting her backpack organized before 8 pm each day.

Submit questions and comments to [dearteacher@dearteacher.com](mailto:dearteacher@dearteacher.com) or visit [www.dearteacher.com](http://www.dearteacher.com).

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On our website ([www.dearteacher.com](http://www.dearteacher.com)), you will find the San Diego Quick Assessment that will let you quickly gauge your children's reading ability. It is the first item under "Checklists." All you have to do is to have your children read lists of words. This is a first-step screening procedure; however, research has confirmed that it is a fairly accurate estimate of children's ability to read. Not only will it tell you the grade level in which your child is actually reading, but it will also tell you the grade levels where he can read independently and those in which he will struggle.

The best way to get a list of suggested books for your children to read is to request one from your child's

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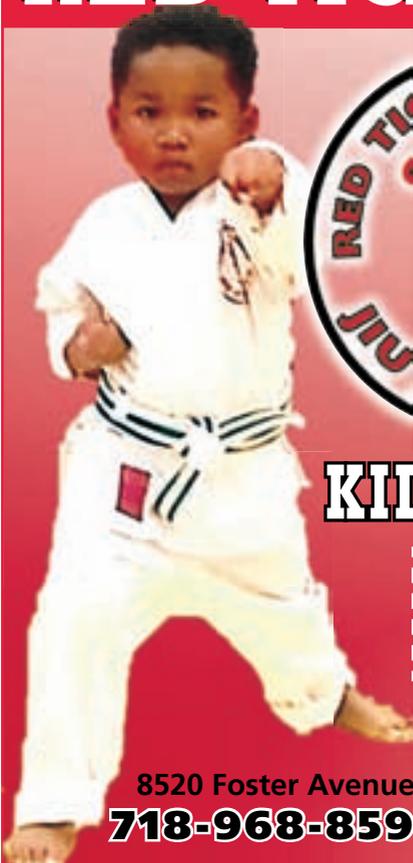
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# What's shakin'?

Attention: Tots  
to tweens,  
Milkshake is  
performing  
live!

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**H**ere's a kids' recipe for super-fun entertainment: take three cups of playfulness, one pint of cool, mix in some groovin' rock 'n' roll, and swirl in a dollop of happy. Then, whip it all up and pour, smile, and enjoy!

If your kids love yummy milkshakes, they're going to go crazy for Milkshake — the band. Millions of American households are familiar with the Baltimore-based indie band, through its light-hearted, high-energy music videos featured on PBS KIDS, Nick Jr., and Discovery Kids.

Now, Milkshake is returning to the Big Apple! Younger and older fans of all ages are looking forward to singing and clapping along, as the band celebrates the March 26 release of its fifth studio CD, "Got a Minute?" with a concert on March 3 at The Jewish Museum in Manhattan.

"Got a Minute?" showcases a fun-packed collection of 13 minute-long tunes, originally created in 2006 for a series of PBS KIDS videos, plus 20 additional "Milkshake miniatures" (33 little gems for young listeners).

"We thought it would be cool to do 20 more short songs, no longer than two minutes each," says lead singer, co-founder, and "hands-on"

mom Lisa Mathews. "This CD runs the gamut, age-wise, with the newer songs reflecting more tween subjects, like bullies, looking outside oneself, and caring for others."

So what do kids — and parents — love about Milkshake?

For an entire decade, the pop-rockers have created and performed memorable, melodic, sing-a-long songs that transcend age and bring to mind Lennon and McCartney, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Julie Andrews, The White Stripes, and Bo Diddley.

Mathews feels that kids "love the interaction that our music encourages, and the full-out fun factor; they realize we do songs about what kids really care about — things they can relate to."

In fact, young fans even bring special symbolic stuff to concerts.

"We see kids bringing their own 'Bottle of Sunshine,' and even little bags to catch all that yellow confetti, during that song. Some wear caps for our 'Superhero' song, and many little girls sport a tutu," she adds.

## A musical evolution

The band has never stopped growing and evolving since forming in 2002. When Mathews first worked with friend and band mate, guitarist Mikel Gehl, in Baltimore, Md., the experience could be described as musically karmic.

And it all started with an ad in the Village Voice.

"I was playing in a cover band, but kind of wanting a change. I would always read the music ads in the Voice, and I saw Mikel's," says Mathews.

Gehl remembers when they first met.

"When Lisa came down from the city to sing with us the first time, I tried not to appear too exuberant because I was afraid she would realize she was too good for us, and hop on the bus back to New York!" says Gehl. "She had a way of transcending the mechanics of performance and going directly to having an intimate musical conversation with the listener."

Their indie rock band, Love Riot,

became popular in Baltimore's music scene.

"At the time, I had purple hair, and I remember going down to meet the band, and I'm sure I was a sight in bright sunlight," says Mathews. "But as things meant to be, always happen — I loved this band, the guys, and the scene, and one day, got a one-way ticket to Baltimore."

"She understood that each song had its own story and mood, and it was important for those stories to be unique, even as the performance was cohesive. With that ability, I knew we would be versatile enough to embrace the stylistic musical changes that always come," says Gehl. "Since we wrote very honestly about our lives, the transition to Milkshake, as a band for families, was a very natural one."

When Mathews became pregnant with her daughter, the last thing she wanted to do was "sing in smoky venues until 3 am. So I told Mikel, 'that was it — no more bands.' When his wife became pregnant a year later, well, making music for our little ones seemed the thing to do. And Milkshake was born."

Soon a new CD was also born, called "Happy Songs," and inspired by those little ones.

"As a mom, this was a beautiful thing," Mathews recalls. I would make up those early lullabies on 'Happy Songs' while I was nursing Jesse in the wee hours of the morning."

That was the turning point for the band — when indie rock met preschool, and beyond. As songs were added to radio playlists across the country, it was clear that traditional kiddie music was changing in a big way.

The change from Love Riot to Milkshake also meant Mathews and Gehl could grow, as musicians.

"The subject matter we sang about no longer dealt with love in all its glory and demise. Now, we had a whole new, gigantic palette to pull from: counting, dress up, imagination, breakfast time, bottles of sunshine, being scared ... it was seemingly endless," explains Mathews.



Confetti rains down on kids as the band performs "Bottle of Sunshine."



Photo by Steve Parke

(From left) Brian Simms, Mikel Gehl, Tom Moon, Lisa Mathews, Michael "Shepp" Sheppard, and Cord Neal make up the band Milkshake.

"And, we were no longer obligated to use only the players in the band and do only rock-pop; we felt incredibly liberated. All of a sudden it was just me and Mikel, and whoever we wanted to play whatever we wanted. Tuba? Okay! Cello? Why not? And we explored different musical genres, as necessary."

Both musicians agree that transitioning from rock music to kids' tunes was an "absolutely natural evolution."

### Queens girl

The lead singer currently calls Baltimore home, but she's still a Queens girl at heart, born and raised partly in Astoria, then Bayside.

"My early years were spent in Astoria, in this wonderful three-story brownstone," she says. "On the first floor was Grandma, on the second was my aunt, uncle, and two cousins, and we were on the third."

She fondly recalls the big, old house with the wraparound porch in Bayside:

"Oh, it was crazy! All of a sudden, I had a huge side yard and a real backyard... and, oh, the garden my mother had! We would have Sunday breakfast on the porch on warm days, and then my dad would read us the Sunday comics. It was idyllic."

Mathews says that back in the day she wrote poetry and always dreamed of being a singer.

"All my Barbies were singers."

As she got older, she became immersed in music, and the first song she ever wrote was a love song.

"By 16, I was playing my Fender Rhodes [piano] with the headphones on most evenings, and by 19, I was out of the house, living in Greenwich Village with a producer guy I met. Mom was heartbroken, and when I think back now, that was a pretty amazing thing to let me do."

She lived in a "tiny railroad-style apartment, with very little light. But it was cozy, and I loved the Village and my little restaurants — especially Figaro Cafe and John's Pizzeria."

At 21, she was part-owner in a rehearsal and recording space nicknamed The Music Building because it had so many bands rehearsing on one floor or another — with a studio in the basement, where the Ramones loved to rehearse — really loudly!

"We had bands from England, bands passing through on tours; even a week with Weird Al Yankovic, who was just the nicest guy," she says.

### Milkshake 'hearts' the city

Milkshake's band members love to visit New York.

"We've performed here many times and it remains one of our favorite places," says Gehl. "Every-

thing is more vital and interesting, and it's easy to get around. It's a walking town."

Both Mathews and Gehl are now in their early 50s, and they say their music changes with their kids' ages.

"As our kids move on to listening to ever more 'grown up' music, it seems fitting for us to come full circle, arriving at the kind of music we were doing before we started Milkshake," says Gehl.

*Milkshake at the Jewish Museum [1109 Fifth Ave. at 92nd Street in Manhattan, (212) 423-3222, www.thejewishmuseum.org, www.milkshakemusic.com]. On Sunday, March 3 at 2 pm. Museum members: \$15 adults, \$11 children 12 and under. Non-members: \$18 adults, \$13 children 12 and under. Under age 2, free.*

*Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based writer and journalist who loves New York City. She has two bright and talented sons.*



## DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

# How to fold ... your daughter's thong?

**B**eing a home dad has its advantages. I watch TV while I work, I listen to the stereo real loud, and there are sandwiches and beer. The downside is the long-suffered horror all moms have shared through the ages: there are no secrets.

You go through everyone's drawers. You wash their clothes. You sweep under their bed. You fold their underwear.

You fold your daughter's thong. You fold your daughter's — AAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!!!

Look, I'm a ninja-level pop. I will go into Walgreens and loudly inquire as to the location of the heavy flow pads. Long ago, I suffered through the horror of my daughter's emergent boobies. These days I'll look right at them, up to my elbows in sink water, and tell her she's not leaving the house until she's dressed less like a transvestite and more like a nun. But a thong in the laundry is a new horror.

My first impression was "ooh, la la — go mom!" Mere seconds later I

realized my voluptuous wife couldn't get this minuscule strap around her foot, much less up to her OH MY GOD! My second impression was OH MY GOD!

Unlike a bra, which, no matter how much black lace or pink ribbons it has, is still structurally important, a thong has no practical use except as a way to say to the world, "I am legally not naked," which only happens in situations where someone else is OH MY GOD!

We dads can work our minds around most daughter stuff. We plan ahead for puberty (beer), driving lessons (beer), and boyfriends (show the kid your study wall: deer head, deer head, space, deer head. Point to the empty space. I'm saving that one for the first guy who breaks her heart).

But we forget our little princesses are exploding out of puberty into an unparalleled womanhood. Never in the history of man have women been so unfettered and free. They are the fortunate great grandchildren of women's rights. They don't know why Mr. Mom is ironic. They grew up in a world of equality, highly paid women CEOs, Oprah, and porn for girls. When I was her age, a thong was porn. For my daughter, a thong is just a thing.

Thank God for my golf skills. Using a seven iron (yes, a seven iron; clearly a nine iron would slice them off into the heating vent), I carried my daughter's thong upstairs toward her room, like a dead rat on a skewer.

I was halfway across the living room when she walked in.

At this juncture, the highly educated father would employ a sports maneuver that snatched the panties out of sight before either of us needed to acknowledge them.

Most.

"You dropped your floss."

"Father, why are you hoisting my unmentionables into the air like a flag?"

"I'm surrendering."





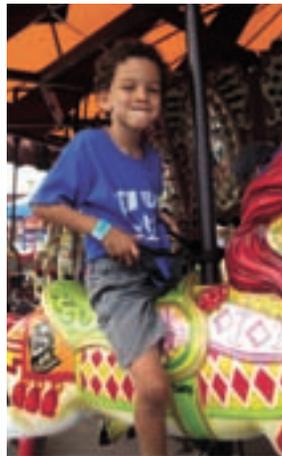
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# Calling young

There's lots to explore at the Children's Museum of Art

BY MARIE HUESTON

**C**harlton Street between Hudson and Greenwich streets is an unassuming Manhattan block, populated by parked cars and passersby. But step inside the Children's Museum of the Arts, and you are transported to a world of bright color and boundless energy. There, you'll find kids of all ages looking at art, learning about art, making their own art, and bouncing gleefully on giant rubber balls.

Clearly, this is no ordinary museum.

It has been just more than a year since the archive moved to its new location at 103 Charlton St. from its previous home on Lafayette Street. Having nearly triple the amount of space has allowed the curatorial and educational staffs — as well as their young visitors — to really spread their wings.

"It was a great opportunity for us to be able to design a new space to meet all our imperatives," says Lucy Ofiesh, the museum's director of Development. "We were able to expand and update our exhibition space, and add classrooms to offer more after school and weekend workshops."

Enter the museum to find a 2,000-square-foot exhibition space, where artwork is just as likely to be suspended from the ceiling as it is hung on the walls. This month, for example, 26 sculptural "Letter Racers" by legendary graffiti artist RAMMELLZEE float overhead, while his found-object figurines fill a display case and his large-scale paintings line the walls.

The imaginative RAMMELLZEE

## February events at the Children's Museum of the Arts

Lunar New Year Festival, Feb. 2 and 3 from 10 am to 5 pm. Ring in the Year of the Snake with special art demonstrations, music, and performances, including the classic Chinese Lion Dance.

ARTY Gras, Feb. 16 from 10 am to 5 pm. Enjoy the festive sounds of a New Orleans jazz band and construct fanciful masks, costumes, and noisemakers — then show off the creations in a parade!



Photo by Junenore Mitchell

Galaxseum is on view through Feb. 3, and will be followed on Feb. 7 by Face to Face, an exploration of children's self-portraits from around the world. The main gallery will be closed from Feb. 4 to 6 for installation of the new show, with an opening reception on Thursday, Feb. 7, from 4 to 6 pm, during the museum's pay-as-you-wish hours.

As with all of the museum's exhibitions, interactive stations invite children to try their hand at the media they see around them. After viewing Face to Face, children will be able to take pictures of themselves in the Media Lab to be projected onto the wall, or they can stop by the self-portrait table, where different kinds of mirrors offer different perspectives of facial features: realistic, cubist, and abstract.

"What's special for kids visiting our museum is that it's about more than just looking at art," observes Valerie Kharchenko, manager of Ed-

ucation Programs. "It's about looking and then making their own creations based on what they have seen, and learning that their art is just as important as what's in the exhibits."

Open workshops held during museum hours in the light-filled Fine Art Studio let kids experiment further with a variety of materials. Professional artists are on hand to teach techniques and offer guidance. A Clay Bar offers yet another opportunity for hands-on learning with tactile materials. Children 5 and under will want to stop by the WEE Arts Studio, where tables and chairs are scaled specifically for them, and projects and materials are better suited for tiny hands.

Parents of children with special needs will find a number of inclusive programs at the museum, including Stripes, for children on the autism spectrum. Held three Saturdays a month from 9:30 to 11 am (before the museum's regular — and more

# artists!



hectic! — hours), Stripes helps improve motor skills while offering an outlet for self-expression. Inclusive weekend classes, held most Sundays from 1 to 3 pm, invite physically challenged kids and their siblings or friends to make art in a social setting. This month's themes are Stop-Motion Animation: Quiet Winter World on Feb. 10 and Sculpt It: Clay Works on Feb. 17. ARTogether invites families receiving preventive care, or in the foster care system working toward reunification, to bond and play in a safe, fun environment. Appointments for ARTogether are made on an individual basis, so anyone interesting in participating can contact the museum directly.

"Our aim is to provide an immersive experience to young artists of all backgrounds and abilities," Lucy Ofiesh points out.

The museum also has a wide range of classes taught by working artists. WEE Arts attracts the 5 and under set with morning and afternoon classes that frequently incorporate music and storytelling. There is a drop-in option for WEE Arts as well, allowing parents and caregivers greater flexibility. After-school classes for kids 5 to 12 are held from 4 to 5:30 pm on Monday through



Thursday. Illustration, Exploring Media Lab, and Drawing and Sculpture are a sampling of the spring 2013 schedule. The At 5 Program for 13- to 15-year-olds meets on Monday evenings from 5 to 7 pm.

During school breaks and summer vacation, the museum offers "Art Colony" Day Camp, with themes that change from week to week. For the upcoming private school spring break (March 18 to 22) kids 6 to 12 can choose between Claymation and Bookmaking. Animated Shorts



Photo by Hannah Swihney

focusing intently on colorful exhibitions and creative projects. Each hour, the Ball Pond is divided into three 20-minute intervals, grouping children by age for safety. Children 4 and under bounce at the top of the hour, followed by 5 to 7, and finally ages 8 and up enjoy the final 20 minutes.

If all of this isn't enough to convince you to visit the Children's Museum of the Arts, consider the reviews given by my own children during their first trip to the museum last month.

My 9-year-old son, Ian, summed it up in a word: "Awesome!" His 5-year-old sister, Sage, while happily smudging pastels in the style of Mark Rothko, proclaimed, "Ian, isn't this so fun?"

*The Children's Museum of the Arts [103 Charlton St. between Greenwich and Hudson streets in Manhattan, (212) 274-0986; [cmny.org](http://cmny.org)]. Admission \$11; free members, infants, and ages 65 and older. Pay-as-you-wish Thursday, from 4 to 6 pm.*

*Marie Hueston is a freelance writer who lives in Brooklyn.*

and Printmaking will be taught during public and private school spring break (March 25 to 29). Week-long summer sessions are held from June 10 to Aug. 30, both at the museum, for children 6 to 13, and on Governor's Island, for kids 8 to 15. Ceramics, Fashion Design, Fairy-Tale Films, Landscape Painting, and Origami are just a few of the subjects to be covered.

And what about those giant rubber balls? You'll find them in the museum's popular "Ball Pond," a great place for kids to burn off energy after

# Nap time

## *It's not just for sleeping!*

BY TIM PERRINS

**I**'m a big fan of nap time. Now that I'm a father I'm not the one napping anymore, but I'm okay with that.

In the 11 months since my daughter Hazel was born I've learned to look forward to her nap time, and in the process I've gained a much deeper appreciation for time in general.

You might wonder why I'm so

keen on sending my baby off to sleep. Don't I want to spend time with her? Of course I do, but I also have responsibilities to attend to. Have you ever tried getting anything done around the house while looking after a baby who is not napping? Good luck! When she's awake, my little Hazel is busy enough for both of us — I just follow her around the apartment doing damage control while she dismantles anything she can get her hands on. She helps herself to Cheerios, yanks baskets full of her clothes off the shelf, and flings the contents all around the room, rolls dog-food cans across the floor, and even pries open boxes of pasta to give herself a shower of rigatoni.

As if that's not enough, Hazel's obsession with the dogs' water dish has intensified. Since learning to crawl she has turned into a smiling wind-up toy — only this wind-up toy comes equipped with mystical water-divining

technology: if there's a liquid-bearing vessel anywhere on the apartment floor, she will locate it faster than you can say, "Um, where's the baby?"

My wife and I are finally remembering to move the water dish to the kitchen counter whenever Hazel is on the loose. (Sorry dogs, the bar's closed — come back tonight around 9 pm.)

So, just what is it that I do when she is asleep? I eat, of course. A lot. Who knows when I'll have another chance? In the first few months with Hazel, there were always cold, hard, waffles sitting in the toaster oven, or a bowl of soggy cereal, never touched by a spoon, left hastily atop the coffee maker. Newborns, it turns out, come standard with another sensor — one that causes them to scream for a bottle the instant anyone else in the room tries to eat something. Now at 11 months, she doesn't need to be fed every 90 seconds, but she's found other ways of making me go hungry. When I try to make a sandwich she immediately crawls over to me and tugs at my legs until I pick her up. And should I have the gall to continue my food preparation with just my one free hand? Well, then she just kicks that dog-dish full of water off the counter, and it's back to the life of a scullery maid for me.

In my previous life — the one before the baby — if I had an hour to spare I would put my feet up and turn on the television. Now, when the baby allows me a little time by taking an afternoon nap, I find myself moving in six directions at once. I'll start chopping vegetables for dinner, but then I'll realize the dishwasher needs to be emptied, and halfway through that I'll start putting away laundry, all the while tiptoeing around so as not to disturb the sleeping baby. If she wakes up in the midst of that whirlwind, then I'm really in trouble. Why? Because if I can't finish everything I started, my wife is going to come home to the biggest mess ever seen — laundry in a pile

on the couch, the dishwasher open and half-emptied, food all over the counter. "What have you been doing all day?!" she'll ask. "This place is a disaster!"

The end result of all of this is that I'm becoming a more efficient person.

Parenting, however, isn't just about time management, or about chasing a rowdy infant for an hour and frantically folding laundry the next. Throughout this chaotic and demanding time, you are getting to know your baby, even as she's just getting to know the world around her. Every day, right in front of your eyes, she is developing into a real person who, for some crazy reason, wants to share her newfound joy with you. In those moments, you learn just how valuable your time really is. Everything that requires your attention, from cleaning to career, serves a greater purpose than ever before. With that in mind, attending to household chores isn't quite so tedious. You might even find yourself happy to tackle them, knowing that after you're done you can get back to the more important stuff, like helping the baby redecorate the apartment with rigatoni.

On a recent afternoon, Hazel woke up from a nap and started whimpering. I scooped her up in my arms and carried her out to the living to see if she wanted a bottle. Instead, she leaned her head on my shoulder and went right back to sleep. By that point I'd done as much folding and cleaning as I could handle for one afternoon, so I sat down on the couch (slowly, so as not to disturb the little koala bear clinging to my shoulder), put my feet up on the coffee table, and switched on the TV. Sometimes, there's no better use of your time than just letting the baby sleep.

*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.Revolt-OfTheImbeciles.blogspot.com](http://www.Revolt-OfTheImbeciles.blogspot.com).*



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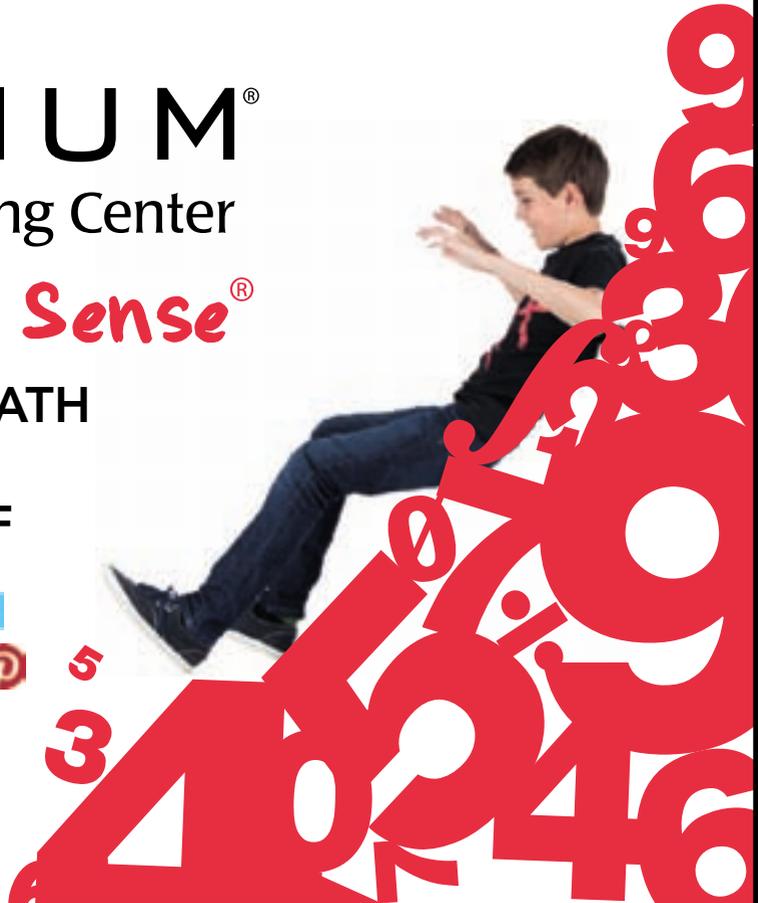
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Photo by Jim Avondio

(Above) Spend some quality time with your sweetie at Oasis Day Spa. (At left) Light up your love with a trip to the Top of the Rock at night.

# Local romance

New York City is the perfect backdrop for Valentine's Day

BY STACEY ZABLE

**C**all the grandparents or babysitter to take care of your children this Valentine's Day and plan a getaway for just you and your significant other. And since we live in one of the most romantic cities in the world, the alone time can take place close to home.

A key part of this amorous adventure is an overnight stay in the right property. Fresh from a \$10-million renovation, Manhattan's **Hotel Chandler** oozes boutique elegance, with the warmth and coziness that you might find at a larger New England bed and breakfast — but it's located on East 31st Street. With only 125 guest rooms and suites, the Hotel Chandler is able to offer something many New York City properties don't: intimacy. Guests are greeted with genuine smiles and “hellos” from staff, while the hotel's lovely library room and bar make for excellent areas to simply relax. A new high-end organic restaurant, Juni, by Executive Chef Shaun Hergatt, is set to open shortly and is sure to add to the romantic feel of the property.

Guest rooms boast classic bay windows and pampering touches such as Frette Italian linens and Molton Brown bathroom amenities.

The neighborhood location is quiet, despite being only a few blocks from one of the city's most romantic icons, the **Empire State Building**. Purchase

the “Chandler Refresh Package,” and you can get all of Hotel Chandler's romantic elements wrapped up together including late check-out, complimentary cocktails, breakfast, and tickets to the Empire State Building. Rates vary by time of year, so call or go online to check your dates.

*Hotel Chandler [12 E. 31st St. between Madison and Fifth avenues, (866) 627-7847; hotelchandler.com].*

Using Hotel Chandler as your base, the city has many Valentine's Day week-specific events and anytime-fun for two. For another incredible view, the **Top of the Rock Observation Deck** at Rockefeller Center will host its Winter Starlight Music Series from Feb. 2 to 23, with a special Valentine's Day performance. Also on Valentine's Day, you can explore the Metropolitan Museum of Art and end your day with a three-course, prix-fixe meal, including a glass of sparkling wine, for \$60 per person at the museum's Petrie Court Cafe and Wine Bar.

*Top of the Rock Observation Deck [30 Rockefeller Plaza between West 50th and West 49th streets, topoftherocknyc.com].*

*Metropolitan Museum of Art [1000 Fifth Ave. at East 82nd Street, (212) 570-3964].*

Many restaurants will be offering special Valentine's Day menus, but why not skip the meal altogether and go straight to the decadent desserts? The **Valentine's Sweetheart's Sugar-tooth Tour** is a two-hour escapade

featuring a minimum of six stops to enjoy delicious sweets. The tour is available on multiple dates in February, including Feb. 14. Cost is \$52.74 per person, plus tour guide gratuity.

*Valentine's Sweetheart's Sugar-tooth Tour (Meet at 1471 Broadway at West 42nd Street, sugartoothtours.com).*

Pair your chocolate with wine, beer, tastings, and music at **Cheers for Chocolate: A Party for Chocolate Lovers** on Feb. 9 from noon to 2:30 pm and 4 to 6:30 pm at Hudson Terrace on West 46th Street between 11th and 12th avenues. The Chocolate Lovers Ticket includes admission with five chocolate tastes and one glass of wine or craft beer for \$45. The event is being sponsored by iAdventure.com, where you can buy tickets online.

Before or after the chocolate, enjoy a **“Side-by-Side Massage”** at Oasis Day Spa on Park Avenue, a short walk from Hotel Chandler. It costs \$240 for 60 minutes of pampering and is the perfect way to start or finish a day focused on the two of you.

*Oasis Day Spa (1 Park Ave. between East 32nd and East 33rd Streets; oasis-dayspanyc.com).*

*Stacey Zable is an award-winning veteran travel writer and family travel expert. Her favorite trips are those that she shares with her husband and two daughters. Send travel questions and comments to Stacey at info@familytravel-trails.com.*





## FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

# Get your Cupid on this Valentine's Day

**A**h, Valentine's Day: the day of love, sweetness, and chocolate. While not a major holiday, per se, this special day in February can be a little gem of a celebration that brings much happiness ... if you treat it as such!

It's often thought of as a day to be set apart strictly for couple bonding, but kids can celebrate Valentine's Day, too. I remember being thrilled when my grade-school peers would bring in little valentines, boxes of chocolate or Sweethearts candies! So, send the kids into school on the big day with little goodies for their teachers and classmates (and make sure there is enough for every kid).

You can also have the "sweetest" time at one of these two incredible chocolate stores, notorious for their unique varieties and DeLysscious treats: Jacques Torres Chocolate on Water Street near Dock Street in Brooklyn's DUMBO neighborhood and MarieBelle on Broome Street between West Broadway and Wooster Street in SoHo. Take the kids to help pick out some chocolate for dad, a little something for themselves, and you.

For that classic, romantic V-Day meal with your love, go big and go to Daniel on East 65th Street between Madison and Park avenues in Lenox Hill. It has a quiet, romantic atmosphere that is perfect for the loving couple — and not for the kids. Being one of the only restaurants in Manhattan holding the New York Times' coveted, four-star rating, Daniel accepts reservations up to a month in advance. So, get dialing, men!

Another beyond-perfect Valentine's Day restaurant that's not to be forgotten is Felice, an Italian ristorante with an eco-friendly wine list on First Avenue and East 83rd Street on the Upper East Side. Felice's featured wineries are all sustainable, organic, and biodynamic. The restaurant's seating is unique and comfortable and, overall, the ambiance is a perfect mix of upscale and relaxing.

Another Valentine's Day thrill is a shopping expedition at the famous Agent Provocateur on Madison Avenue between East 62nd and East 61st streets in Lenox Hill; the lingerie collections are absolutely beautiful and a must-have for any woman to feel her sexiest on the most romantic day of the year. Agent Provocateur brings together the finest French laces and silk satins with its signature classic colors: black, cream, and — of course — scarlet and pink, perfect for V-Day!

For those couples who haven't gotten their portrait

taken since their wedding, schedule a romantic photography session. Heidi Green takes absolutely beautiful photos of couples, and her gallery is impressive. She's also known for her portraits of children, so if you want the kids in on the shoot, that'll work too!

Manhattan isn't exactly like living on a beach, but we do have some gorgeous sunsets. Take the time to watch the sun set with your loved one — even if it's on your terrace or out your window while your kids are eating dinner. It's sure to evoke some romantic emotions appropriate for Valentine's Day — and may just lead to a perfect Valentine's night, even if you're stuck at home!

If you're fortunate enough to have the time, take a dance class! In my grandparents' era, couples could dance fluidly and effortlessly at any occasion. Let's bring that sweet skill back! Dancing with your husband is a sensual, bonding activity — and, even if you're both horrible and klutzy, you'll have fun laughing together. Dance Manhattan Dance Studios on West 19th Street, between Sixth and Fifth avenues, offers some great deals on classes and special events involving couples dance.

But if you're both in dire need of putting your feet up, schedule a couple's massage at the Caudalie Spa at the Plaza Hotel on West 58th Street and Fifth Avenue in Midtown. The spa offers phenomenal massages. Remember, you and your spouse deserve to relax and unwind side-by-side after the hard work you put in as parents.

I hope your Valentine's Day is amazing, and remember ladies: Charles M. Schulz once said, "All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."

Contact Heidi Green Photography at [info@heidigreen.com](mailto:info@heidigreen.com) or (212) 545-5304; [www.heidigreen.com](http://www.heidigreen.com).

Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLysscious Moms ([www.divamoms.com](http://www.divamoms.com)) and co-author of "If You Give A Mom A Martini ... 100 Ways To Find 10 Blissful Minutes For Yourself."



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## FAMILY HEALTH

DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD  
Chairman of Pediatrics  
New York Methodist Hospital

# Big whoop or not?

## What are the risks and treatment of pertussis?

*This winter has seen the worst outbreak of whooping cough since 1955, according to reports.*

*My child has had a severe cough for the past few days — could it possibly be whooping cough? Can children still contract the disease?*

**T**o start, you need to confirm whether your child has been immunized against pertussis (whooping cough). Childhood immunizations have been largely responsible for severely curtailing outbreaks of many diseases, including pertussis, since the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine is often part of a regular pediatric immunization schedule.

It is unclear why this winter has seen such a spike in whooping cough cases, and indeed, concerns are starting to arise as to the duration of the pertussis vaccine's efficacy. Those questions aside, should your child come down with the symptoms of pertussis, you should still seek treatment right away.

Caused by bacteria called *bordeatella pertussis*, pertussis is an inflammation of the respiratory tract. The disease is highly contagious, and commonly affects young children between 1 and 10 years old. At first, the symptoms of whooping cough are fairly mild, and can include a runny nose, congestion, low fever, and mild cough. Those symptoms may eventually become severe enough to cause spasms of coughing — often four or five hard, repeated coughs — followed by a “whooping” sound that results from the infected child gasping for air. Left untreated, the nasal and respiratory tract congestion can lead to pneumonia. Pertussis commonly affects older children or teens who may not have been immunized. Pertussis can also affect adults whose childhood immunizations have worn off.

During its early stages, pertussis can be treated with the antibiotic erythromycin, which can sometimes prevent the disease from worsening. However, once pertussis pro-



gresses to include severe coughing spasms, antibiotics may no longer be effective. Physicians sometimes recommend hospitalization for children with pertussis, especially for infants under six months of age. With proper care, regular hydration, and suction to clear blocked nasal passages, the coughing spasms should eventually subside.

Whooping cough can usually be prevented with a series of regular immunizations, so whether or not your child has already had whooping cough, it is important to make sure he still gets immunized. When

someone gets pertussis, his body develops a natural immunity to the disease. However, the duration of that immunity varies from person to person, so routine vaccinations against whooping cough are recommended.

Make sure you discuss any questions you have about pertussis treatment or the vaccine with your child's pediatrician. Proper caution will go a long way in ensuring that pertussis remains no big whoop.

*Dr. Pramod Narula is chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at New York Methodist Hospital.*

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## ASK AN ATTORNEY

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# Tax changes for '13

*Do you need to change or update your estate planning documents in light of the “fiscal cliff” tax changes?*

**M**uch talk and press was devoted at the end of last year to the “fiscal cliff.” On Jan. 2, President Obama signed into law the “American Taxpayer Relief Act.” It will be left to each individual American taxpayer to determine if he is, in fact, relieved by the outcome.

The act makes several (supposedly) permanent changes to the tax code, impacting both federal income and estate taxes. Some of the estate tax changes implemented are:

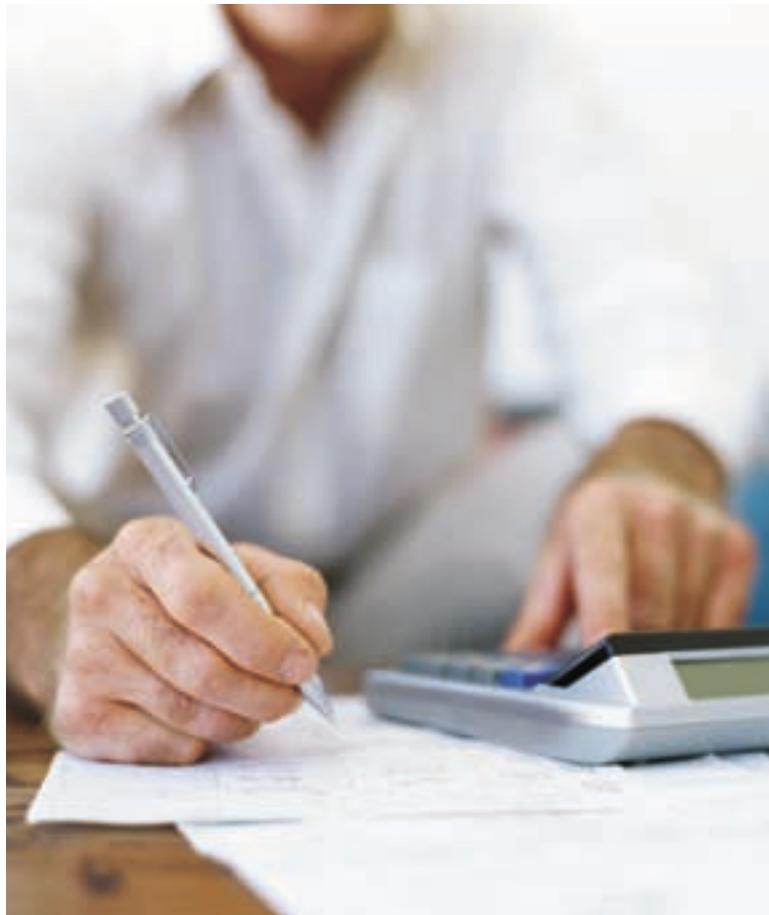
- A \$5 million estate, gift, and generation-skipping tax exemption to each individual, indexed for inflation. The exemption for 2013 is \$5.25 million (up from \$5.12 million per individual in 2012).

- A 40 percent maximum estate tax rate for all assets transferred at death or during lifetime in excess of the federal exemption.

- “Portability” between U.S. spouses was made permanent. That is, a spouse who dies with less than the \$5 million plus federal exemption may “carry over” the excess to the surviving spouse, subject to some conditions on the surviving spouse’s remarriage. In other words, U.S. spouses have a combined exemption of \$10.50 million in 2013.

It is critical to keep in mind that New York State has “decoupled” from the federal estate tax regime and maintains only a \$1 million estate tax exemption. There is an unlimited marital deduction (i.e., you can leave an unlimited amount of assets to a spouse), but there is no “portability” in the New York State estate tax system.

The new tax laws make aggressive lifetime planning less of a priority for individuals with less than \$5 million and couples with less than \$10 million in assets, but tax planning is still important in light



of the comparatively low New York State exemption. This type of planning, however, is usually accomplished with lifetime transfers of assets at the death of the surviving spouse.

Second, the new tax laws may diminish the need for a credit shelter trust because of the portability exemption. A credit shelter trust allows a spouse to provide for a surviving spouse by placing assets in a trust that, literally, shelters the tax exemption credit and allows those assets to bypass the estate of the surviving spouse, thereby avoiding some estate taxes at the death of the surviving spouse.

Portability diminishes the need for that aspect of the trust, but a credit shelter trust still offers many

benefits like creditor protection, subsequent appreciation, protection from state estate taxes, and assurances that the assets will pass to the children of the first marriage if the surviving spouse remarries.

As with all legal matters, it is critical to consult an attorney to assess how changes in the law impact the facts and circumstances of your individual situation.

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

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## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Organic food: Worth all that extra cost?

**S**hopping for organic foods is an individual choice for your growing family.

“For me, personally, my top priority is making sure that my family is eating the recommended five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day, whether it be from organic produce or not,” says Elizabeth Zawila, a mother of two young children.

### Organic defined

On food labels, the term “organic” is legally defined as:

- 100 percent organic: The product must contain only organically produced ingredients.
- Organic: The product must contain at least 95 percent of organically produced ingredients.
- Made with organic ingredients: Processed foods may bear this label if they contain at least 70 percent of organic ingredients.

### Why choose organic?

There’s increasing concern about the safety of exposure to synthetic pesticide residues, especially for

pregnant women and young children. What has captured parents’ attention is the emerging research linking pesticide exposure to children’s attention, cognition, and behavior, as well as sensory issues.

A clinical report published by the American Academy of Pediatrics in November 2012 came out in favor of buying organic produce and meat, but suggested you can skip the organic milk. The report, which analyzed existing scientific evidence, found there’s little difference in the vitamin and mineral content between organic and conventional foods.

The report does cite lower pesticides in organically grown produce and a likely lower risk of exposure to drug-resistant bacteria.

In one study cited, switching to organic produce for five days reduced the levels of pesticide residue in the urine of children accustomed to eating conventional produce.

“It remains unclear whether such a reduction in exposure is clinically

relevant,” the report states.

Organic milk is popular with parents due to concerns about growth hormone and estrogen often given to conventionally raised cows. The report concluded, “Ingestion of milk from estrogen-treated cows appears to be safe for children,” as there is little difference in the sex-hormone concentrations in organic and conventional milk.

### Be strategic

Organics cost 10-to-40 percent more than conventionally grown produce. Save money by choosing store brands or shopping at warehouse clubs. Or you can purchase many organic grains, pastas, flours, dried fruit, and nuts in the bulk sections of stores for less.

“Labeling a food as ‘organic’ can give you a false sense of security. Even organic snack foods can be just as high in sugar, sodium, fat, as their non-organic counterparts,” reminds Zawila, a registered dietitian who is a clinical nutrition specialist at the University of Illinois Medical Center.

The debate continues about which is healthier, but consider this: eating more fresh fruits and vegetables in general is the point.

If buying all organic isn’t a priority or a financial reality for you, consider taking a strategic approach. Insist on organic versions of what retains the most pesticide residue, like apples, grapes, or celery. Skip it for produce with skins or peels you would not consume such as bananas, pineapples, and onions.

Zawila adds, “Having young children brings many expenses, and I know pigeonholing myself into only buying organic produce would limit the amount and variety that I would be able to buy and prepare for my family.”

*Dietician Christine Palumbo is based in Naperville, Ill. and is a frequent speaker on health and wellness. Contact her at [Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com](mailto:Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com). Her Facebook page is Christine Palumbo Nutrition and her Twitter handle is @PalumboRD.*

### Citrus-Yogurt Sundae

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#### INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. lowfat vanilla yogurt
- 1 tsp. freshly grated Sunkist® orange peel
- 1 tsp. freshly grated Sunkist® grapefruit peel
- 2 Sunkist® grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
- 2 Sunkist® oranges, peeled and cut into half-cartwheel slices
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1 cup blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, or seedless grapes
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Combine the yogurt, orange and grapefruit peels; cover and chill. In a large bowl, combine all the remaining ingredients; cover and chill. To serve, spoon fruit mixture into individual dessert dishes and top with the yogurt.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 150 calories, 0.9 g total fat, 0.4 g saturated fat, 4 g protein, 35 g carbohydrates, 2 mg cholesterol, 5 g dietary fiber, 26 mg sodium

Recipe courtesy of Sunkist®





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## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Being smart about risks of SnapChat

**B**y now, most parents have heard of SnapChat, the phenomenally popular new messaging app that allows users to annotate and send photos and very short videos. Unlike other messages posted to social media sites, SnapChat photos are supposed to disappear in 10 seconds. Kids who are deeply tired of having their lives searched and analyzed on Facebook love this element. As one college blogger put it, SnapChat is fun “without the terrifying permanence of the rest of our technology.”

In one way, this is good news for parents who have been trying to convince their kids to be discreet about what they post on Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites. Many young people are keenly aware that Facebook can be reviewed by everyone from romantic partners to college admissions officers, employers, and even law enforcement. Timeline made it even more obvious that Facebook is a biographical record, and many people, including teens, started using it for what Jenna Wortham of the New York Times calls “success theater,” a cautious, curated version of their lives.

As everyone knows, life is messier than that, especially in adolescence. SnapChat is appealing in part because it allows kids to share their ever-changing moods without having to worry that a fleeting moment will be held against them. Of course, any alert parent can see where this is going. First, part of what prompts all those moods is the awakening of sexual feelings. Second, you can never assume anything digital is truly gone.

Most of the five million messages being sent everyday on SnapChat are not sexual. Instead, they are spontaneous, momentary impressions of things the sender finds goofy, funny, or touching. Sharing these tidbits with friends does deepen relationships. The youthful founders of SnapChat seem wise beyond their years when they write, “there is value in



the ephemeral. Great conversations are magical ... because they are shared, enjoyed, but not saved.”

The same thing could be said about romance, and even sex. And that’s why SnapChat creates concerns for adults who can easily imagine impulsive teens using the service to send provocative or even obscene pictures of themselves. This is where parents need to take a deep breath. Despite the media attention to the subject, sexting is not rampant among teenagers. The most authoritative research study from the University of New Hampshire found that among children 10 to 17, only one percent had shared explicit images of themselves or others, and only seven percent had received such an image.

Some people worry that SnapChat will make such behavior more tempting because it promises to erase all evidence. Parents may long to shove this genie back into its bottle, but that’s not going to happen. Facebook has already introduced its own self-destruct program called Poke, and there are other imitators in the work. A better strategy is to help children think through the rewards and risks of SnapChat and its competitors. Here are some suggestions.

• **Encourage.** There are many creative and constructive ways to

use SnapChat. In fact, the vision described on the SnapChat website is actually quite wholesome: “We believe in sharing authentic moments with friends. It’s not all about fancy vacations, sushi dinners, or beautiful sunsets. Sometimes it’s an inside joke, a silly face, or greetings from a pet fish. Sharing those moments should be fun. Communication is more entertaining when it’s with the people who know us best. And we know that no one is better at making us laugh than our friends.” This could be a prompt for dinner table conversation or a quote that hangs on the refrigerator.

• **Inform.** Be sure your child understands that anything digital can be replicated. SnapChat reduces the likelihood that a photo will be distributed without permission, but it doesn’t eliminate it completely. The recipient of a message can always grab the screen shot. Yes, the sender is notified if this happens but, if the image is compromising, the damage will be done. Recipients can also, in theory, use another camera to capture a titillating image. The bottom line is that sending another person a photo of your private parts is always ill-advised. There simply is no such thing as “safe sext.”

• **Enforce.** If you didn’t make rules when you gave your child a cell phone, now is a good time to make it very clear about acceptable and unacceptable use. A sample contract is available at <http://tinyurl.com/2au7122>. Modify it as needed to reflect your family’s values and your child’s level of maturity.

These conversations will go better if parents tune into the underlying appeal of SnapChat. Today’s kids intuitively understand that every photo doesn’t need to be saved, every whim doesn’t need to be scrutinized, and every thought doesn’t deserve a permanent record.

*Carolyn Jabs raised is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Visit [www.growing-up-online.com](http://www.growing-up-online.com) to read other columns.*



# Puppy love

Pets and the health of your baby

BY KIKI BOCHI

**N**ew parents often wonder whether the arrival of a baby should prompt the exit of pets from the house, partly because of fears that living in close proximity with cats and dogs will increase the risk their child will become allergic.

There's no need to kick out Fido or Fluffy. A study published in the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy* revealed that keeping a dog or cat in the house, especially in a baby's first year, may actually reduce the risk of developing allergies.

As part of the study, researchers from the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit followed a group of children from birth until adulthood. Periodic contact was made with the families to collect information about exposure

to cats and dogs. At age 18, 565 study participants supplied blood samples to the researchers, who measured antibodies to dog and cat allergens.

The results? Being exposed to a specific animal in the first year of life appeared protective, rather than risky.

According to the study, young men whose families kept an indoor dog during the subject's first year of life had about half the risk of becoming sensitized to dogs, compared to those whose families did not keep a dog. And both men and women were about half as likely to be sensitized to cats if they had lived with a cat in the first year of life.

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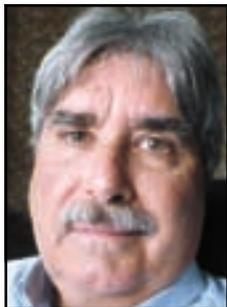


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## FAMILY JOURNAL

ROBERT MORTON

# Managing stress in a tough economy

**Dear Mr. Morton,**

I'm working two jobs, my husband's laid off, the bills are piling up, and our three young children are feeling the stress. How can we ease their worries?

**Dear Parent,**

You're not alone. Even though our economy is showing signs of improving, there are many people who are now seeking help from food banks who were actual donors a few years back! Others who worked a steady 40-hour week with overtime now are laid off or must survive on 32 hours — with no benefits. There are more children on free or reduced school lunches and increasing numbers of kids without health coverage.

As the American family stares at the fiscal cliff, our uncertain economy and the financial strain it places on them is underestimated, and children are not immune to it. They sense the increased stress in their parents and hear and read about it

in the news.

The best time for you and your husband to discuss his job loss, your working double time, and the bill pile-up isn't during dinner. Discuss your financial difficulties quietly after the kids are asleep. Children need "predictableness" in times of family stress, so try and keep your discipline and expectations of them positive and consistent, and the household routine as unwavering as possible.

Keep an eye out for changes in your children's behavior or emotions. When families undergo any number of extended struggles, children may develop sleep difficulties, headaches or stomachaches, even have unexplained fears or anxiety that may take the form of clinging behaviors.

If they have questions about the extra job you had to take on, or why dad was laid off, answer their questions honestly and calmly in an age-appropriate manner. Don't hide the

truth from them. Tell them the reasons why the family adjustments are necessary, for children's fear of the unknown will frighten them more than the truth. If the tight family budget means they can't get a puppy for Christmas, so be it. But always reassure them that the family will be OK, which it most likely will be, for everything in life is cyclical and that goes for the financial markets, too.

Low-income families fare worse. Experts have studied government policies and legislation that have affected below-medium income families. The lack of a national housing policy, affordable housing for families with children, health and medical care, the lack of mental health services, and the difficult-to-access healthcare for the rural poor are problems that grow in a recession. Economic downturns, unemployment, and under-employment indirectly affect childcare, the increased work expectations of parents, pre-kindergarten and Head Start programs, as well as the education of immigrant children. The economic insecurities hit middle class families during the recession, but are magnified among low-income families who increasingly live on credit.

Interestingly, sociologists have compared U.S. policies for children and families to those of selected major industrialized countries. In a 2004 study by the Annie E. Casey, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations, it was reported that a large number of American families are currently faring poorly in their struggle to provide for themselves. Low-income and poor families were found to contain one-third of all of the children in American working families. Low-wage jobs without benefits mean that families at or below the poverty line live a precarious existence.

*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 [robertmorton359@gmail.com](mailto:robertmorton359@gmail.com).*



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Photo by Heather Weston

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## LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

# Teens eating healthy

**I**t was the fall of 1978 when my 14-year-old friend and I decided to join America's newfound fitness craze. We devised a plan during sixth period lunch: we would bike clear across town without stopping. Here was the problem: fast-food restaurants galore along the way. My memory tells me we stopped at McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, and a hot dog joint before landing at the Caldor parking lot. After 12 miles, a large order of fries, two Bavarian cream donuts, and an over-stuffed chili dog, we gave each other a high five to celebrate our accomplishment. I get indigestion just thinking about it!

For decades, teens have been devouring fast food and salty snacks as part of their daily diets. Let's be honest: how many 14-year-olds do you know who opt for carrot sticks over a handful of salty fries? Is it hopeless, or can parents suggest healthy options that their teens will actually enjoy?

### General guidelines

Dr. Howard M. Shapiro, a Manhattan-based weight loss specialist and best-selling author of the "Picture Perfect Weight Loss" series, urges teens to avoid certain foods.

"Limit foods high in cholesterol, saturated fat, and trans-fat, such as fatty meats, egg yolks, and foods prepared with hydrogenated oils and shortenings."

Shapiro suggests that teens include some "good fat" in their diets: olives, avocado, nuts, seeds, and olive or canola oil. Soy foods help to reduce the risk of heart disease.

"Include a couple of servings a day of any of the following: soy milk, or soy yogurt," he says. Also, soy protein powder can be added to shakes or smoothies — an added health benefit for these popular teen drinks. Teens might also try veggie or turkey burgers and veggie sausages.

Healthy eating habits include healthy eating schedules. Lauren Graf, a nutritionist for the Department of Pediatric Nephrology and the Pediatric Heart Healthy Program at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, advises, "Teenagers should eat multiple, small meals throughout the day and a good breakfast, because it will help them do better on exams."

Graf also warns about eating heavy meals too close to bedtime, a problem for many teens who are involved in after-school activities. Eating heavy meals late at night can lead to disrupted sleep and an inability to "work off" the calories.

### Encourage the good stuff

Graf instructs parents to limit the amount of processed foods on hand.

"Stock up on frozen fruits. These won't go bad, and teens can use them as toppings on frozen yogurt. Parents should model healthy eating. Believe it or not, this will eventually click with your teenagers."

Quick tips:

- Prepare healthy casseroles on weekends and freeze for later in the week.
- Pack a snack to avoid fast-food stops.

- Opt for fresh over packaged and canned.

### Quick snacks for active teens

The food has to look and taste good, or your teen won't eat it. Since many teens are constantly on the run, healthy snacks play an important role, and easy preparation is a must.

Healthy snack alternatives suggested by Dr. Shapiro:

- Soy chips with guacamole or hummus — instead of potato chips and sour cream dip.
- Whole-grain crackers and peanut butter — instead of a bagel with cream cheese.
- Roasted pumpkin seeds — instead of a bag of milk chocolate pretzels.

Graf says teens will be pleased to hear, "Dark chocolate is actually good for the heart. It provides antioxidants and doesn't have the levels of sugar and fat found in milk or white chocolate."

Graf also suggests slathering hummus or mustard on sandwiches in lieu of mayonnaise.

### Tips and tales

"I only keep healthy snacks at home. My daughter learned to like celery and peanut butter. She'll also sprinkle cinnamon on apple slices."

*Susan Cerulli, school nurse at Haviland Middle School, Hyde Park, NY*

"Heart-healthy breakfast sandwiches: egg whites, mushrooms, and low-fat cheese on wheat bread. Use olive oil cooking spray for frying."

*Maria Hoskins, Hyde Park, NY*

### Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips for making the most of that first job at a fast-food restaurant or grocery store.

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, "Lions and Tigers and Teens: Expert advice and support for the conscientious parent just like you" (Unlimited Publishing LLC, 2012), available at Amazon.com. For details, visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com).*



# Wrapping up loose ends

In "The Wrap-Up List," a new novel by Steven Arntson, there's a way of cheating death for 16-year-old Gabriela Rivera.

In Gabriela's modern-day suburban town, Deaths — eight-foot-tall, silver-gray creatures — send a letter to whomever is chosen for a departure, telling them to wrap up their lives and do the things they always wanted to do before they have to depart.

Gabriela never thought about her own mortality, even though there were Death sightings everywhere, and a portrait of her late grandfather hung in her bedroom. Between school and hanging out with Iris, Sarena, and Raahi, life was full. She'd never com-



## THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

pletely get used to having Deaths wandering around close-by, but she never really gave them much thought, either.

Then she found the red envelope in the mail.

"You've been chosen for departure," it said, and Gabriela's blood ran cold.

When someone was contacted by a Death, he was told how many days he had left, with scant room for negotiation. The days allowed for tying up loose ends,

saying goodbye, planning the leaving, and making a wrap-up list of things to do before he departed. Nobody knew why Deaths selected certain people, and the only way to escape departure was to find that

Death's Noble Weakness — learn from the clues, and the Death could be cheated.

Once Gabriela understood that she would be departing with her Death, Hercule, she made her wrap-up list: helping her friends and herself get their first kisses.

There are a lot of things to like about "The Wrap-Up List," starting with the sharp main character.

Arntson's Gabriela is loyal and kind-hearted, good to her parents, and smart, but with enough self-doubt to make her believable. I liked the way she faced her own Death; how she befriended him and.....well, I can't tell you any more without ruining everything.

The other great part about this book is that it forces you to think about what you'd do if you'd been picked for departure. The answer, and the world in which the question is asked, is the other part of



Arntson's most excellent, creepy, sweetly created story, and I really liked it.

I'd say this book is appropriate for anyone ages 12 and up.

"The Wrap-Up List," by Steven Arntson [240 pages, 2013, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$15.99].

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

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PARENTS  
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SHARON C. PETERS, MA

# Some solutions for a little couch potato



**Dear Sharon,**

What do you recommend parents do to get their kids more physically active? My son is only 10 years old, but he's getting a gut and is glued to screens of one kind or another all the time, not to mention his interest in junk food.

I haven't encouraged this eating habit, but he seems to be picking it up from outside our home. Between the two factors he's not in the best of shape and health anymore, and I'm concerned.

**Dear Parent,**

I think parents can make a big difference to their "glued-to-screens, junk-food-snacking pre-teens," but it often requires patience and persistence from mom and dad.

Many parents begin by setting limits on screen time. Even when children, especially older ones, use technology for many aspects of their academic and social lives, it is possible to expect that screens be turned off during several parts of the day. Morning, dinner time, and after a certain hour at night are common periods that screens are restricted in many homes.

It can also help to place computers in family areas of the house rather than in private rooms where young people can lock themselves away without interruption or supervision.

Turning off screens is usually not enough. It is important to find and arrange for healthy and engaging alter-

natives at school or in the neighborhood as well. Parents need to make sure that the activities they choose are a good match for each child.

Engaging in ongoing family physical activities is also particularly important. Visiting parks regularly, bike riding together, or enrolling in family swim are a few of the more common things to do in New York.

Sometimes screens are a substitute for diminishing "fun time" with parents that happens for a variety of reasons as children get older. A pre-adolescent is not likely to openly express enthusiasm for attention from his parents, but even tweens and teens benefit greatly from time spent with mom or dad.

I am sorry to say that resistance to most of these ideas is almost inevitable when a 10 year old is wedded to screens.

It can make a big difference if parents can figure out ways to talk about their expectations and ideas at a time of day when everyone is relatively calm and relaxed. When moms or dads only express their understandable exasperation in the moments when their child refuses to move, tensions rise and 10 year olds can easily

become more set in their ways.

Unfortunately, the clearest, most patient description of a well-thought out plan can easily be met with a classic grunt. I often tell parents to be ready, not surprised, by any opposition and listen to complaints, but stay firm and confident remembering that after a relatively brief period of physical activity moody, sedentary, children often end up having a good time.

Avoiding prolonged discussion and figuring out how to get out of the house as quickly as possible can also help.

Stocking up on healthy food options and limiting unhealthy choices at home is of course important.

Providing plenty of fruits, nuts, nut butters, and cut-up raw veggies with dips can make a difference. Even when children are eating junk food away from home, which is unfortunately common, if parents can model healthy eating, young ones are much more likely to sort through a good diet as they get older.

Have fun eating well and being active with your 10 year old. I believe your patience and persistence will prevail in the end.

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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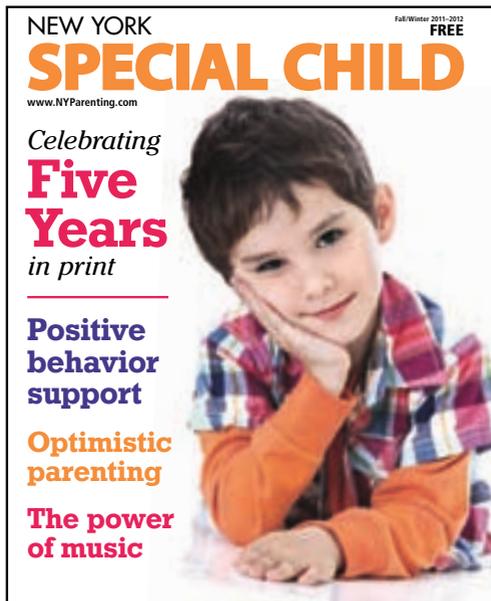
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## A TEEN'S TAKE

AGLAIA HO

# How to battle bullying

**B**ullying has been a growing concern nationwide, especially with the latest stories about the dire and sometimes fatal effects of bullying. It is an issue that should not be overlooked. Most children and teenagers have been the victim of bullying at least once in their lives or have experienced it as a bystander. The constant teasing and demoralization can cause kids to feel miserable, worthless, and unable to change their situation. Bullying can even lead to suicide.

However, bullying does not have to reduce your feeling of self-worth. It is important for children and teenagers to rise above the cruel words and taunts. By learning to embrace our identities, seeking support from family and friends, and building the confidence to stand up to bullies, we can combat bullying once and for all.

Bullying comes in many forms and usually varies based on a child's age. Regardless of what form bullying comes in, bullies usually tend to pick on those who are different. They are motivated by their own insecurities, fears, and jealousy. Their goal is to isolate their victim, diminish that person's self-esteem, and elevate themselves. Many times, bullying results from a power struggle between kids. Sometimes, good-natured teasing can intensify into bullying and harassment.

When I was in elementary school, typical bullying usually consisted of name-calling paired with hurtful insults. Occasionally, physical violence would occur, but verbal bullying was most prevalent.

Personally, I was bullied and teased as a "goody-two-shoes." I rarely got into trouble and was always following directions and helping the teacher out. Looking back, I guess I was probably "that annoying kid." Nevertheless, I did not deserve the harassment I received for being a "teacher's pet." Kids in my class would pick on me, egging me on to break the rules. I was reduced to tears on several occasions.

Aggravated by the bullying, I told my parents. I quickly realized how valuable it was to tell someone. Fortunately, my experience did not escalate, but telling an adult is still the



best way to tackle bullying, especially for younger children. Adults need to play a part in helping children cope with their situation and understand that they are loved and special. In elementary school, adult intervention might even stop the bullying. After I told my parents about my situation, they not only comforted me, but also spoke to the teacher, who diffused the situation.

In middle school and high school, bullying often takes on a crueler form. As kids get older, their insults become more creative. In high school, I have been bullied a few times because of my petite size. Some of the short jokes include "Hey, hobbit" and "Don't you qualify as a midget?" The persistent short jokes really hit me.

Again, I told my parents. This time, they helped me in a different way. My mother, who is also very short, shared with me her experiences with bullying. It was very relatable and definitely comforted me. Finding friends and family who have gone through the same hardships can make you feel so much better, and it also helps you realize that you are not alone. My mother promised that things do get better.

Yet, from my own experiences, older bullies have cunningly mastered how to use our social vulnerabilities against us. In middle school and especially in high school, one of the greatest fears for a teenager is not fitting in. The idea of being isolated — without any friends — is ter-

rifying. Bullies often use this to their advantage, ignoring a victim, leaving him out of social activities, or treating him differently.

Worst of all, with the advent of new technologies and social networking, cyberbullying is often the most common vehicle for social isolation. There is less accountability online and cyberbullying can easily go undetected. It also spreads very quickly. One of my friends was cyberbullied by some of my other friends. They would not allow him to join Facebook groups and often left him out of events. Behind his back, they would gossip online and insult him. He was very upset and hurt. Eventually, I stood up for him and explained to my friends that their comments and behavior were insensitive. Shortly afterwards, the bullying stopped.

From what I have learned over the years, one of the best ways to combat bullying is by embracing who you are. If you love yourself, it is harder for others to tear you down. You become impervious to their mean words. When it comes to my height or being a "teacher's pet," I have come to accept that this is part of my identity and my personality. This is who I am, and I am proud of it. My improved self-esteem has certainly derailed most bullies. Even when the teasing does occur, it does not bother me anymore.

Bullying is not just a phase of life or a rite of passage we all must experience. It is a grave issue. In a perfect world, we could all wave our magic wands and eradicate bullying from the face of the planet. Unfortunately, it is much more complicated than that, and ending bullying is still a dream and a wish. We need support from all adults to help kids deal with this common hardship, whether it is providing comfort to a victim, actively stopping bullying in schools, or monitoring online activity. However, arming ourselves with the tools to combat and cope with bullying is a must, one that we can all strive for today.

*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.*



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**DIVORCE & SEPARATION**

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# How collaborative divorce eases pain

**W**hen suffering from a physical ailment, such as back pain, what do we do to get relief? Who do we turn to solve the problem?

If resting, using a heating pad, and taking anti-inflammatories don't help, we will most likely make an appointment with a doctor who can take X-rays and prescribe physical therapy. We'll do whatever we can to avoid an operation, because surgery, the most invasive and potentially risky way to go, is the option of last resort.

Yet, when it comes to ending our marriages, the majority of us do the opposite; that is, perhaps fearful of what our spouse may do — or in reaction to what the spouse has already done — we schedule a meeting with the legal professional who tries to win everything possible for a client by going to (or threatening to go to) court, which generally in-

volves the greatest risk for us and our children.

Often, our first impulse is to consult a litigator — maybe a “shark,” the toughest advocate we think we can afford, who will protect us by tearing the other spouse to shreds.

At a recent training session at the Cardozo School of Law in Manhattan, Professor Adam Berner, a mediator and collaborative lawyer, used this analogy in pointing out the prevalence of litigation in our society, and how differently clients make decisions in choosing medical care on the one hand, and legal assistance on the other.

When divorcing, Berner said, we pay hefty retainer fees to enter and begin the court process. Even though more than 97 percent of divorcing couples will ultimately settle their cases out of court, as opposed to a judge making the ultimate decisions, we pay our litigators handsomely to prepare for a trial that is quite unlikely to ever take place.

For many couples, there is a better way to proceed. It is called collaborative divorce.

What is collaborative divorce? I can only begin to answer this question in one column, so here are the basics:

- You stay out of court: Both you and your spouse, and each of your lawyers, sign an agreement committing everyone to work together to reach respectful and lasting settlements, without litigation. It is this agreement that often reduces the fears we have, and allows for cooperation, rather than the battles so often seen in the courts.

Note: Either spouse can later decide to go to court. Such a decision results in the termination of the collaborative law process. This rarely happens and when it does, the collaborative lawyers can no longer represent the clients;

new attorneys must be hired.

Collaborative divorce does not always lead to agreements, but statistics compiled by the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, the preeminent organization dealing with collaborative practice, show that 86 percent of cases settle. Only 11 percent are terminated, with another two percent of couples reconciling.

- Two-way and four-way meeting: In collaborative divorce, each spouse is represented by a lawyer. You and your lawyer will discuss your needs, for example: housing, financial security, and parenting matters. Your attorney will discuss with you how the law applies to the facts of your case. This work will happen in two-way meetings between you and your lawyer.

In four-way meetings with both spouses and their respective lawyers in the same room, the attorneys will assist in helping everyone to understand one another.

Understanding your spouse doesn't mean agreeing with your spouse. But it does allow for much better communication and for a rational discussion of the issues. And with this mutual understanding achieved, the lawyers will help you to develop options to satisfy both of your needs, and to consider the implications of the possible choices before you. Your lawyers will also assist in the negotiations.

There is much more to say about collaborative divorce. I intend to discuss such matters in the coming months. As always, I welcome your questions and comments.

*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.



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# Calendar

FEBRUARY



Photo by TA Smith

## Puppets with a dose of 'Magic'

**T**he classic children's tale, the "Prince and the Magic Flute," comes to the stage at Puppetworks now through March 24, with special performances on Feb. 18 and 19.

The marionette production, adapted by director Nicolas Coppola, features simple songs taken from the Mozart score. The story involves the brave prince and the bird catcher, and their attempt to rescue the fair maiden princess from the Palace of the Sun with the help of a magic flute

and magic bells.

Highlights include "The Creatures of the Night," "The Prince's Tests of Water," "Fire and Silence," and the "Destruction of the Evil Queen of the Night."

Tickets are \$8 for children, and \$9 for adults. Group rates are available. Performances are held each Saturday and Sunday, through March 24, at 12:30 and 2:30 pm.

*Puppetworks-Park Slope [338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street in Park Slope, (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org)].*

## 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!

## THURS, JAN. 31

**Toddler time:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; [www.prospectparkzoo.com](http://www.prospectparkzoo.com); 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm; \$150 (\$125 members) for whole series.

Barnyard buddies is suitable for children 2 and 3 year olds. Children enjoy nature play, counting and sing-a-longs. Registration required.

## FRI, FEB. 1

**Toddler time:** 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

**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.

Tales of Winter is suitable for children 18 months to 2 and 1/2 years old. Listen to cherished winter stories and then make a snowy craft to take home.

## SAT, FEB. 2

**BAMKids Film Festival:** BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave. and Ashland Place; (718) 777-FILM (3456); [www.bam.org/kidsfilmfest](http://www.bam.org/kidsfilmfest); 10 am - 2 pm; \$12 (\$9 children under 13; \$9 for seniors; \$7 members) per screening.

The 15th annual festival showcases films tailored to children ages 2 to 10 years old. There will be 76 films from 24 countries. Highlights include "Animation Extravaganza," an all animation program for children 7 to 9 years old, six international features, and two short film programs for tots 2 to 5 years old. See website for schedule of individual title screenings, date and time.

**Children's story time:** Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between S. Elliott Place and S. Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; [greenlightbookstore.com](http://greenlightbookstore.com); 11 am.

Ezra Jack Keats' beloved classic, "The Snowy Day," will be read to children, ages 3 to 8, at the weekly story



Courtesy of Hip Tot Music Fest

## Father Goose is cooking

**G**rammy-winner Father Goose strums onto the stage at Littlefield on Feb. 10 for the Hip Tot Music Fest.

The lead singer of Father Goose, Wayne Rhoden, brings his very special sort of indie rock, complete with a taste of the West In-

dies and a contagious Caribbean beat full of the sounds of reggae mixed with energetic vocals and instruments.

The very special concert will have everyone up and dancing. Come for the music or get there early and enjoy a day of glitter tattoos, face painting, and playing

king and queen in the cardboard castle. Moms and dads will love the giveaways.

At Littlefield on Feb. 10, doors open at noon, concert begins at 12:30 pm; \$12; \$10, for children.

*Littlefield [622 Degraw St. near Fourth Avenue in Gowanus, (718) 855-3388; [www.hiptot.com](http://www.hiptot.com)].*

time event at the Greenlight Bookstore. Along with the reading there will be special coloring and game activities related to the picture book.

**Blooming babies:** 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Feb. 1.

**Transit time travel:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years and older learn how life was back in 1913 as they explore the toys, food, dress and transportation of that day.

**After-school expo:** PS 321, 180

Seventh Ave. between First and Second streets; [www.ps321pta.squarespace.com](http://www.ps321pta.squarespace.com); 2-5 pm; Free.

Parents with school-aged children have an opportunity to meet with summer camp and after-school program representatives.

**Groundhog day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years old and younger learn if there will be six more weeks of winter and what makes groundhogs so special.

**Youthworks performance:** BAX — Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave.

(718) 832-0018; [www.bax.org](http://www.bax.org); 7 pm; \$5 at the door.

Plays, dances, poetry and original songs by young artists 7 to 18 years old.

## SUN, FEB. 3

**BAMKids Film Festival:** 10 am-2 pm. BAM Rose Cinemas. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

**Toddler time:** 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

**Blooming babies:** 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Feb. 1.

*Continued on page 66*

# Calendar

Continued from page 65

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

Rangers guide children to the best spot in the center to view the center's animal inhabitants.

**Transit time travel:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

**"Salute to Broadway and Zarzuela":** Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 5902 Sixth Ave. at 59th Stret; (718) 259-2772; www.reginaopera.org; 3 pm; \$12 (\$5 teens; free for children).

Regina Opera's two-hour performance features show-stopping Broadway tunes as well as selections from the "Zarzuela" (Spanish operetta).

**Youthworks performance:** 5 pm. BAX — Brooklyn Arts Exchange. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

## WED, FEB. 6

**Mil's Trills:** Rock Shop, 249 Fourth Ave. between Carroll and President streets; (718) 230-5740; www.therockshopny.com; 3 pm; \$15 parent and child (\$5 each additional sibling).

Amelia Robinson, founder of Mil's Trills, leads families in gentle songs, games and stories for children birth to 4 years old.

## THURS, FEB. 7

**Toddler time:** 10-11 am and 11 am-12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

## FRI, FEB. 8

**Toddler time:** 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

## SAT, FEB. 9

**Get your Dance On:** New York Methodist Hospital, 506 Sixth St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (855) NYM-WELL; www.nym.org/dance; 10 am-2 pm; \$10 (Children under 12 free).

Join together for the national Day of Dance, a program that offers dancing as a regular form of exercise. Registration required.

**Wilderness workshop:** Prospect Park Picnic House, West Drive at Third Street; www.prospectpark.org; 1 pm; Free.

Urban park rangers teach you how to be prepared. Recommended for children 8 years and older.

**Daddy-daughter ball:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue (718) 735-4400;



Photo by Art Lawson

## Regina Opera goes Broadway

**B**roadway comes to Brooklyn as the Regina Opera Company presents "Salute to Broadway and Zarzuela" on Feb. 3.

Soloists from the company present a two-hour concert featuring the best of Broadway and Spanish music. From Rodgers and Hammerstein to Andrew Lloyd Weber, soprano Lisa Flanagan, mezzo-sopranos Elizabeth Mondragon and Heather Roberts, tenors Ray Calderon and Hamid Rodriguez, and baritone Ricardo Rosa, accompanied by Richard

Paratley on flute and Victoria Ulanovskaya on piano, will have you dancing in the aisles.

The Spanish selections will have English translations provided.

Young or old, the concert is a sure treat for every age.

"Salute to Broadway and Zarzuela," on Feb. 3 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$12 general admission; \$5 for teens. Children free.

*Our Lady of Perpetual Help Auditorium [5902 Sixth Ave. at 59th Street in Sunset Park, (718) 259-2772; www.reginaopera.org].*

www.brooklynkids.org; 5:30-7:30 pm; \$27 per couple (\$20 members) plus admission.

Be a debutante on your date with dad. Dancing, refreshments, Valentine's activities and guest DJ Kev White.

## SUN, FEB. 10

**Toddler time:** 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan 31.

### Baby story time special music event:

Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton St. between S. Elliott Place and S. Portland Avenue; (718) 246-0200; greenlightbookstore.com; 11 am.

Brooklyn local singer-songwriter Vered Benhorin will sing playful songs from her kid-friendly album, "Good Morning My Love," to children from 6 weeks old to 3 years old at Greenlight Bookstore's weekly baby story time event.

**Inspirational concert:** Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St. at Lafayette Avenue; 11 am-12:30 pm; Good Will donation.

One World Brooklyn Kids Chorus will again perform with members of the Lafayette Inspirational Ensemble, under the direction of Janis Russell.

**Hip Tot music fest:** Littlefield, 622 Degraw St. between Third and Fourth avenues, (718) 855-3388; hiptotmusicfest@gmail.com; www.hiptot.com; 12:30 pm; \$10 for children, \$12 for adults.

Father Goose strums onto the stage with his very special brand of Kindie music. Come on down and enjoy a day of glitter tattoos, face painting, a cardboard castle, and giveaways.

## TUES, FEB. 12

**Mardi Gras:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years old and younger learn all about the holiday and its cultural significance then create a fun mask to take home.

## THURS, FEB. 14

**Toddler time:** 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

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

Check out what's on the menu for the museum's scaly friends.

# Calendar

## FRI, FEB. 15

**Toddler time:** 10–11 am and 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

## SUN, FEB. 17

**Toddler time:** 10–11 am and 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Thursday, Jan. 31.

## MON, FEB. 18

**“The Prince and the Magic Flute”:** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965–3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); 12:30 and 2:30 pm; \$8 (\$9 adults).

Puppetworks presents the comic adventure, based on the classic Mozart opera. The tale is of the brave prince and a bird catcher, who attempt to try and rescue the princess. Recommended for children 3 years old and older. Special weekday President’s Week performance.

**Winter in the Wild:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287–3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 1–3 pm; Free.

Wondering what your favorite park animal is doing this winter? Join with staff and discover the strategies these animals use to survive.

## TUES, FEB. 19

**Play ball!:** Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735–4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years old and younger learn all about super slugger Jackie Robinson.

**“The Prince and the Magic Flute”:** 12:30 and 2:30 pm. Puppetworks. See Monday, Feb. 18.

**Winter in the Wild:** 1–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 18.

## WED, FEB. 20

**Anansi the African Spiderman:** Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue (718) 735–4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children listen to African folk tales about the super spider.

**Winter in the Wild:** 1–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 18.

## THURS, FEB. 21

**Winter in the Wild:** 1–3 pm. Pros-



Photo by Amy Bolger

## Storytime with song

**I**t’s a green light in honor of Valentine’s Day for Brooklyn singer-songwriter Vered Benhorin at the Greenlight Bookstore on Feb. 10. Vered will sing kindie-friendly songs from her album “Good Morning My Love” during the store’s weekly baby story time. Children 6 weeks to 3 years old can sing along, listen to a

pect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 18.

## FRI, FEB. 22

**Jammin’ Out:** Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735–4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children celebrate African-American Heritage month and learn about African

story, and enjoy interactive playtime. Stop by for a musical and storytime extravaganza.

Vered Benhorin, Feb. 10 at 11 am. Free admission.

*Greenlight Bookstore [686 Fulton St. between S. Elliott Place and S. Portland Avenue in Fort Greene, (718) 246–0200; [www.greenlightbookstore.com](http://www.greenlightbookstore.com)].*

instruments and then create their own musical instrument to take home.

**Winter in the Wild:** 1–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 18.

## SAT, FEB. 23

**Quilting workshop:** Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735–4400;

[www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children discover the art of quilting and story telling.

## SUN, FEB. 24

**Jumpin’ Juniper:** BAX — Brooklyn Arts Exchange, 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 832–0018; [www.bax.org](http://www.bax.org); 11 am; \$8 (children under 2 free).

Amelia Robinson, founder of Mil’s Trills, leads families in gentle songs, games and stories for children birth to 4 years old.

**Brush your fangs!:** Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735–4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

National Grid’s earthworks presents this fun workshop that teaches children all about the wildest teeth in the animal kingdom. Then, kids can make a toothbrush for their own fangs.

## SAT, MARCH 2

**“Saddles and Sunshine”:** Kingsborough Community College, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368–5596 [www.onstageatkingsborough.org](http://www.onstageatkingsborough.org); 10:30 am; \$12.

Presented by the Paper Bag Players, this all new show of vignettes is filled with unforgettable songs, jokes, dances, and innovative new paper bag sets.

**Mil’s Trills:** 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](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265); 1 pm; Free.

Amelia Robinson, founder of Mil’s Trills, leads families in gentle songs, games and stories for children birth to 4 years old.

**Kids Cafe:** Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488–1624; [www.brooklyn.liu.edu/KumbleTheater](http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/KumbleTheater); 3 pm; \$20 (\$15 students; \$12 children under 12).

Major college dance departments perform selections.

## LONG-RUNNING

**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; Now – Sun, March 10; \$7.50 (Free for members and children under age 1).

The exhibit, which incorporates cultural artifacts from the museum’s collection and a variety of hands-on, feet-on activities, encourages children and their families to explore global cultures within the context of fantasy shoe store and

*Continued on page 68*

# Calendar

Continued from page 67

factory. Suitable for children 5 to 12 years old.

## Winged Tapestries Moths at Large:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; [www.amnh.org](http://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.

## The Butterfly Conservatory:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; [awang@amnh.org](mailto:awang@amnh.org); [www.amnh.org](http://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.

**"The African Drum":** The Bedford Village School, PS 3, 50 Jefferson Ave. at Franklin Avenue; (212) 724-0677; [www.shadowboxtheatre.org](http://www.shadowboxtheatre.org); Monday, Jan. 28, 10:30 am; Tuesday, Jan. 29, 10:30 am; Wednesday, Jan. 30, 10:30 am; Thursday, Jan. 31, 10 am; Friday, Feb. 1, 10 am; Saturday, Feb. 2, 11 am; Monday, Feb. 4, 10:30 am; \$15.

Presented by the Shadowbox Theater. Puppets bring the wit, wisdom, and humor of African folk tales to life. Learn how the turtle got its shell and the adventures of Kijana and her animal friends.

**Letters to Santa:** City Reliquary, 370 Metropolitan Ave. between Marcy Avenue and Havemeyer Street; (718) 782-4842; [www.cityreliquary.org](http://www.cityreliquary.org); Thursdays – Sundays, noon–6 pm; Now – Sun, Feb. 10; \$5.

A museum exhibit at Williamsburg's City Reliquary tells the story of a young Bedford-Stuyvesant-born man, who in 1913, played Santa and answered the hopeful letters of needy children — succeeding miraculously in founding the Santa Claus Association, only to fail in the end.

**Art Works:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Fridays, 2:30 pm; Feb. 1 – March 15; Free with museum admission.

Little Picassos explore their artistic side.

## "The Prince and the Magic Flute":

Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 and 2:30 pm; Now – Sun, March 24; \$8 (\$9 adults).

Puppetworks presents the comic adventure based on the classic Mozart opera. The tale is of the brave prince and



Photo by Fred Porter

## Join Scooby and the gang

**S**cooby-Dooby-Do, where are you? We got some work to do now!

Zoinks — Scooby and friends will solve a mystery at the Beacon Theatre, Feb. 22 through Feb. 24.

Scooby, Shaggy, Fred, Velma, and Daphne pile into the Mystery Machine van to track the criminals

and crack the case. Crazy ghosts, perplexing puzzles and a whole lot of Scooby snacks will be on hand. Come and sing along to the original groovy tune, plus meet new wacky characters as the gang romps through this live performance full of Scooby shenanigans and riotous antics. You'll laugh until you cry!

"Scooby-Doo Live" performances: Feb. 22, 11 am and 5 pm; Feb. 23, 11 am, 2 and 5 pm; and Feb. 24, 11 am, 2 and 5 pm. Tickets are \$40 to \$75.

*Beacon Theater [2124 Broadway at W. 74th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 465-6500; [www.beacontheatre.com](http://www.beacontheatre.com)].*

a bird catcher, who attempt to try and rescue the princess. Recommended for children 3 years old and older.

**Sundays at Senesh:** Hannah Senesh Community Day School, 342 Smith St. between First and Second places; (718) 858-8663; Sundays, 9 am–noon; Now – Sun, March 17; \$15.

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

**Winter workshops:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 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.

**Wacky Tuesdays:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays, 11:30 am; Now – Tues, Feb. 26; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years old and younger explore art, science, and culture in a fun and exciting way.

**Flee from the cold:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Daily, 1–3 pm; Sat, Feb. 16 – Sun, Feb. 24; Free.

org; Daily, 1–3 pm; Sat, Feb. 16 – Sun, Feb. 24; Free.

Come in and get roasty toasty, learn how to play Nine-Man Morris, and make a playing board to take home.

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

Freestyle Repertory Theatre is bringing improv to a new level and adding children to the mix. Groups of teens challenge each other to create scenes on the spot. Come with your children and have as much fun as they do.

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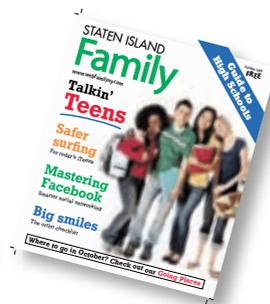
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# It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM

## PARTIES AND PIGSKINS

**2** Number of times the "AFL-NFL World Championship Game" was played before the name was officially changed to the "Super Bowl," after the toy Super Ball.



**\$2 million**

Value of Super Bowl "champions" clothing, preprinted with the losing team's name, which the NFL donates to children in developing countries.

**\$100,000**

Amount Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes allegedly spent in July 2011 on daughter Suri's second birthday party.

**8 or 9** Age most children want to scale back on birthday parties

**29** Percent of parents who would spend no more than \$100 on a child's birthday party.

**29** Percent who would spend more than \$250.



## FEATS AND FETES

**Feb. 1**

Date of National Freedom Day, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the 13th amendment, outlawing slavery, in 1865.

**1948**

Year President Harry Truman made it an official holiday.

**11** Percent of membership drop in the last decade in the Boy Scouts of America, which celebrates its 101st anniversary on Feb. 8.

**2 million** Estimated number of hours Boy Scouts volunteer every year in the U.S.

**76** Percent chance of success for a marriage between one-time teenage lovers who rekindle their romance at least five years later.

**45** Percent chance of success for the average marriage.



**2** Hours Australian mother Kate Ogg in 2010 embraced the son doctors told her was stillborn before he opened his eyes and proved them wrong.



Sources: Yahoo.com, Worldvision.org, Babble.com, Moneycentral.msn.com, About.com, Holidaysmart.com, Wired.com, Independent.co.uk, msnbc.com.



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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS



## Wheel of frosting

Give your cupcakes the stage they deserve with Godinger's spectacular Ferris Wheel Cupcake Holder. Imagine the crowd of delighted children and envious murmurs of "Where did you get that?" from fellow moms when this alights on your dessert table. It may be considerably smaller than Coney Island's Wonder Wheel, but

this 19-inch-tall display can still pack a sugar high for eight cupcake-loving tots. Whether you're looking for a new idea for a birthday party or a Valentine's Day celebration, this ferris wheel will leave your guests with a delicious memory.

*Godinger Ferris Wheel Cupcake Holder, \$59.99, www.godinger.com.*

## All fur love

Keep baby warm this Valentine's Day with luxe accessories from Edoche. These pink microsuede hats, mittens, and booties are trimmed in soft, black, synthetic fur which will keep her snuggly till spring has sprung. The Velcro-closure hat and booties come in two sizes: 0 to 6 months and 6 to



12 months, while the mittens come in one size, 0-12 months. The company prides itself on unique design and quality construction, and it shows in parent-pleasing details like the cord that connects the mittens, so the only thing lost this winter is your heart.

*Edoche mittens, \$29; booties, \$28; and hat, \$37, www.edoche.com.*

## A Grand birthday

Every child understands the thrilling importance of a birthday party, but they may need a little help when it comes to understanding why a certain train station is special. And that's why you should make tracks to the book shop to pick up Maira Kalman's hardcover, "Next Stop Grand Central," which has been reissued by Nancy

Paulsen Books to coincide with the centennial celebration of that magnificent Manhattan landmark. Kalman's colorful, delightfully quirky illustrations and kooky prose crowd the page — giving readers a fleeting glimpse of the passengers, who "walk, run, dash, rush," and a behind-the-scenes introduction to the employees who keep



the station running. Recommended for kids ages 4 and older.

*"Next Stop Grand Central" by Maira Kalman, \$16.99, www.barnesandnoble.com.*

## Strings attached

From the funky, horn-rich opening song, "Hootenanny," to the sweet lullaby, "Begin the Day Again," that ends Jambo's latest CD, Steve Pierson has penned 14 original, positive songs that will leave smiles plastered on the faces of the whole family. The talented musician boasts that he used 10 different guitars

on this CD, but listeners will also revel in the equally expert sounds of the Texicali Horns, Herb Pedersen on banjo, and 8-year-old vocalist (and Pierson's daughter!) Lucy. Recommended for kids ages 4-9,



"Hootenanny" is brimming with "the kind of organic, rootsy music that I love, and that I feel is missing in much of kids' music these days,"

says Pierson. We couldn't agree more.

*"Hootenanny" CD by Jambo, \$14.95, www.cdbaby.com.*



## Heartfelt gift

Nothing goes better with bedtime than soft, organic cotton jammies and a bedtime story. So Swedish children's apparel maker Hanna Andersson has created two Valentine's Day-themed prints on its long johns, Funky Hearts and Cross My Heart, with 15 percent of the profits to be donated to the non-profit, Reach Out and Read, which promotes early literacy and school-readiness in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and across the nation. Hanna is well-known for its comfortable, flat-lock seams and quality, and now it's also getting attention for sharing the love of reading through Reach Out and Read, which distributes books to kids through pediatrician's offices. Available in sizes 18-24 months to 14. For more information, visit [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org).

*Hanna Andersson Funky Hearts or Cross My Heart Long John Sets, \$42 each, www.hannaandersson.com.*



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