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# Family November 2013

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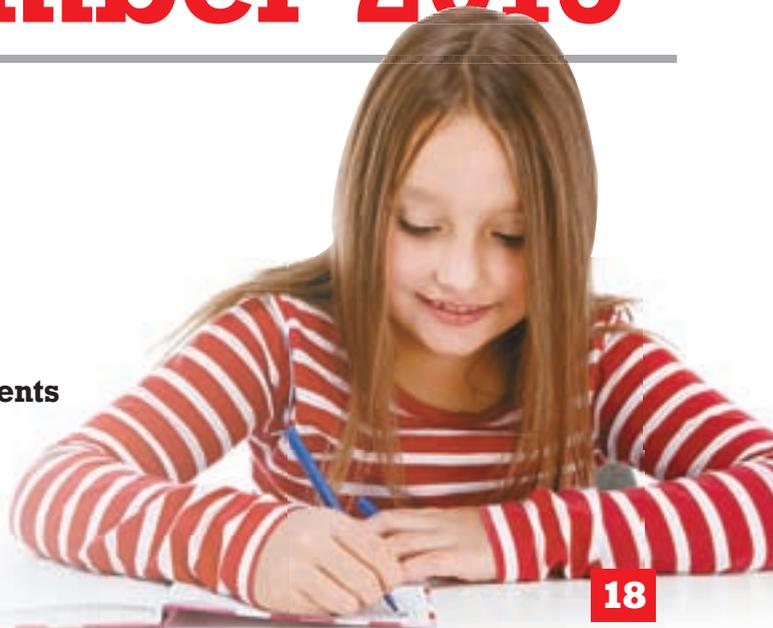
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# Letter from the publisher

## Giving thanks and remembering

**T**hanksgiving is my favorite holiday. I love everything about it; the food, the spirit of appreciation for our bounty and the coming together of family. The celebration of the harvest is universal and every culture seems to have a ceremonial experience built around it.

I also love that it is the one holiday in our culture that is inclusive of everyone and is about being human, not about religious affiliation or patriotic awareness and memory or about commercialism.

The first Thanksgiving for the early settlers must have been extraordinary if not exhausting both physically and emotionally. They had been welcomed by the indigenous tribes and had been taught



by them what to grow, how to grow it and how to harvest it. They were shown good cheer by the generous tribes of the northeast and we should all be remembering them as we celebrate in our contemporary manner.

Native Americans have played an enormous role in our lives, and they made it possible for those settlers to last through very difficult times. They shared their knowledge and their land. They were wise and innocent to the future that lay in store for them.

It's what I generally think about as winter begins. Maybe it's because I was an avid student of history, or maybe it's because all around us are Native American memories and names. I'm always aware of their

role in this nation.

As a second generation American, whose ancestors came from various parts of Europe, we were "greenhorns" to the American experience, although we caught on quickly; quickly enough to experience a few world wars, the Great Depression, and to lose a loved one in Vietnam.

My grandmother was in charge of food in our house as I was growing up and having survived starvation in Europe and the Depression here, a full larder and food on the table was a sign of security to her and to our family. I have largely stayed the same and have enough food backed up in my house as "possibility" to put together a good small banquet at the drop of a hat.

There have been times I had an invite to a Thanksgiving dinner and times I didn't. Someone long ago

suggested I volunteer to feed others less fortunate or ill on Thanksgiving, and I did and it was great. It felt wonderful to be a giver and to help make someone else's holiday possible.

Whatever your family does on this holiday, let's remember how lucky we all are to have children as we celebrate these special days. All holidays are enhanced by the presence of our children and they take on new meaning with each passing year.

We extend our best wishes to you and yours for a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# Gay families

## Becoming a more familiar sight

Part one of a series profiles three New York couples

BY ALLISON PLITT

**T**he gay and lesbian rights movement has made great strides in New York in recent years. Under the Marriage Equality Act, passed by the state legislature and signed by Gov. Cuomo, same-sex marriage became legal in New York on July 24, 2011.

Two years later, the movement won a national victory on June 26, 2013, when the United States Supreme Court ruled that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act — a 1996 law that denies legally married same-sex couples more than 1,100 protections and responsibilities of marriage — was unconstitutional. By striking it down, the Supreme Court affirmed that all committed couples who marry deserve equal, legal respect and treatment.

As more and more states legalize gay marriage, U.S. citizens are growing accustomed to seeing same-sex couples and their families. I interviewed three gay, married men with children, who live in different areas of New York City, to find out how these changes have impacted their lives. I asked all of them the same set of questions and got some very thought-provoking answers.

### Howard and Darren

Howard May lives with his husband, Darren Rosenblum, and 4-year-old daughter in Manhattan's Chelsea, where many gay and lesbian couples live. Howard was born in Forest Hills and grew up in Long Island. He is a psychologist who helps both gay and straight patients deal with a variety of mental health issues.

Howard and Darren had their daughter through gestational surrogacy, in which one woman is the egg provider and another woman carries the fetus. Although they all live in different parts of the country, Howard and his husband are still in contact with their egg donor and surrogate.

Howard and his family have traveled overseas and lived in Seattle before settling in Chelsea.

"We have not suffered overt harassment, although we have received uncomfortable stares at times," observed Howard.

Other than an occasional question, he says his daughter has never been teased by her classmates for having two fathers. But, the father does say he has a "heightened awareness for possible danger" after there were six recorded incidences of "gay-bashing" last summer in New York City, in which the victims were badly beaten and one man was shot to death by a homophobic gunman.

Of course, words can hurt, too, and Howard says there's one insensitive query that he and his husband are asked "a lot": "Who is the biological father of our child?"

"It doesn't annoy us, because we discussed it in advance and came up with an answer, which is that we're both her parents," said Howard. "We don't really want to identify [the sperm donor], because we don't want people to think one of us is more of a parent than the other. It's really not important. When it's important for our daughter to know, she'll know."

The subject that Howard speaks most positively about are the new opportunities for him and his family, thanks to the change in Defense of Marriage Act legislation.

"Now that DOMA has been found unconstitutional, we can file a joint federal income tax return. We also now have the comfort of knowing that when we do die, our assets can pass to the other without tax burden," Howard explained. "It is so significant that our federal government is saying that anti-gay dehumanization won't be tolerated. The emotional implications of this are immeasurable."

### Boaz and Gal

The next person I spoke with was Boaz Adler, who was born and

raised in Israel. He moved to Chicago, where his father was living, when he was 18. Boaz is married and he and his husband, Gal Adler, adopted a boy from Guatemala, who is now 8 years old. They also adopted an infant boy from Florida last December, and he is now almost a year old. Boaz is studying for his master's degree while his husband works for the federal government. Since the historic Supreme Court ruling, Boaz now receives many benefits from the federal government that were once only granted to married couples, such as medical insurance and survivor benefits.

Boaz and his family live in Forest Hills, Queens, which is a predominantly straight community.

"We feel very comfortable living here," said Boaz. "We feel that we're part of the community. We don't see ourselves as any different."

When asked how he would feel if his family moved to another area of the country, he answered, "We used to live in Texas, and we would travel all over the South, and I never felt persecuted in any way. I don't know if it's just my kind of narrow tunnel vision of the world, 'Hey, it's just who I am,' but people don't care or care enough to bother me."

Boaz finds that most kids are just inquisitive, and since his older son doesn't talk a lot about having two dads, Boaz answers a lot of his friends' questions about their family. He does believe, however, that his son has been teased by other children.

"When my son was 4 or 5, a girlfriend came to our home and said sort of tauntingly, 'Well, you don't have a mom,' and my son paused for a moment, and I stopped breathing. Then he said, 'But I have two dads. You barely see your dad, because he's at work, but I have two dads.' That was his response. It wasn't something I manipulated in any way, but it made my heart swell."



### **William and Estevan**

Lastly, I interviewed William Sherr, who was born in Georgia and grew up in Texas. While living in Texas, he was a school teacher for the Dallas Independent School District. After William married 13 years ago, he and his husband, Estevan Garcia, decided to have children. His husband adopted their

first son, but the state of Texas would not allow a joint adoption, so William researched areas where joint adoptions were possible. Eventually, they moved to Washington State, where William was able to adopt their son as well.

William and his husband later moved to Windsor Terrace, Brooklyn, close to Park Slope, where many

gay and lesbian families live. William now has three children — a 13 year old, an 11 year old, and a 6 year old. Two of his children were adopted, while one joined his family through foster care. Estevan is employed as a pediatric emergency physician at a hospital while William stays home and takes care of the kids, but he also runs a business from his home

that caters to the needs of gay and lesbian families.

William has health insurance from Estevan's employer, but in the past, he had to pay tax on its imputed value. Because of the change in laws, the hospital recently announced that all domestic partner benefits would be converted to spousal benefits.

Since William has been a stay-at-home parent for the last 13 years, he hasn't been able to contribute to his Individual Retirement Account during his unemployment years. Now that William is federally recognized as a spouse, he can contribute to his IRA, regardless of his income.

When William travels with his family, they sometimes encounter people asking inappropriate questions of his children, such as where their mother is or if they are really brothers and sisters. Since William and his husband's children have different birth families, they do not resemble each other.

"It doesn't happen so much here in New York, but more when we travel, we get questions like that."

William says he enjoys living in Brooklyn, because his children's school in nearby Park Slope is so friendly to his family. He thinks it would be difficult for his family to live anywhere else.

"I do think our children have been bullied and harassed a few times, and I think our school has stepped up and eradicated the problem. If I have an issue with the school, I can go to the administration, and I know the administration is going to be on my side. They're not going to side with the bully. They're not going to side with someone's belief that my family is wrong. If we lived in another community, I don't know if we would have that luxury."

As advocates of adopting and fostering children, William and his husband have fostered more than 20 children in their home over the years.

His advice to gay and lesbian couples who are considering becoming parents?

"It's not nearly as difficult as you think," said William. "I would advise them to think about adoption and foster adoption and think about trying to help all the kids out there that don't have a home that need a home."

*Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to New York Parenting.*

# Be your child's best influence

Keeping your children on the right path can be a challenge, but these tips can help

BY KIKI BOCHI

**W**ith all the recent hullabaloo about Miley Cyrus's twerking and her music video in which she swings naked from a giant pendulum, what she is actually singing about may have gone unnoticed. The once-popular Disney star who was idolized by kids everywhere is now singing about taking the street drug Molly, doing "lines" of cocaine in the bathroom, and partying all night.

Hannah Montana has grown up, and it's a scary thing.

With those kinds of messages in popular media, keeping your children on the right path may seem like a challenge, but it is possible. And the biggest step is to set yourself up as the most important influence in their lives. The sooner you start, the better.

"Parents are the number one reason why kids don't do drugs," says Peggy B. Sapp, president of Informed Families, an organization that works to reduce drug use among kids.

Sapp wants parents to know that



## Scary numbers

A recent report by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shed light on how many adolescents, ages 12 to 17, used illegal substances on an average day in America:

- 7,639 drank alcohol for the first time.
- 4,594 used an illicit drug for the first time.
- 4,000 adolescents used marijuana for the first time.
- 3,701 smoked cigarettes for the first time.
- 2,151 misused prescription pain relievers.

no one is more powerful in influencing their children than they are.

"Drug education is about teaching children self-control and responsibility. It's not so much about talking about drugs as it is about positioning yourself as the parent and authority figure," Sapp says.

Here, from Informed Families and the National Crime Prevention Council, are some ideas on how to build stronger relationships that will keep your children on the right track.

## Establish good communication

The better you know your children, the easier it will be to guide them towards positive activities and friendships. Develop a genuine interest in your child as a person. Make time for his questions and comments, even if they seem silly to you. Talk to your children every day. Share what happened to you and ask what happened to them during the day. Ask your children their opinions and include them in making decisions. Show your children that you value their thoughts and input.

## Get involved in your children's lives

Young people are less likely to

get involved with drugs when caring adults are a part of their life. Spend time doing something your children want to do every day. Support your children's activities by attending special events like recitals and games. Praise their efforts, not just their successes. Most important, when you are with your child, be present in the moment. Put away your cellphone. Don't worry about something else while you are talking with your child. If you are preoccupied, you will send the message that you don't think your child is important.

## Be a source of support

Help your children manage problems by asking what is wrong when they seem upset and letting them know you are there to help. Listen to your child's or teen's concerns without judgment. Repeat them to show that you heard and understand. Even if you disagree, don't preach. You want your child to feel comfortable and confident in coming to you.

## Make clear rules and enforce them consistently

Share your views about life, what is right and wrong, and what you aspire to for your family. Discuss rules, expectations, and consequences in advance. If a rule is broken, be sure to enforce the consequences such as taking away television or video games. This teaches children that they are responsible for their actions. Give praise when your children follow rules and meet expectations.

## Be a positive role model

Demonstrate ways to solve problems, have fun, and manage stress without using alcohol or drugs. Children really do notice what their parents say and do. Avoid contradictions between your words and your actions. This includes how you deal with strong feelings, emotions, stress, and even minor aches and pains. Actions speak louder than words.

## Help your children choose friends wisely

When children have friends who don't engage in risky behaviors, they are likely to resist them, too. Get to know your children's friends and their families. Involve your children in positive group activities, such as sports teams, scouting troops, and after-school programs.

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# Becoming fluent

Seven tips to help English-as-a-second-language kids thrive

BY JENNY CHEN

**E**nglish-as-a-second-language students are the fastest growing population within the student community, according to the National Council of Teachers of English. From the 1997-'98 school year to the 2008-'09 school year, the number of English-language learners enrolled in public schools increased from 3.5 million to 5.3 million, or, by 51 percent. With growing diversity in the United States, those statistics continue to grow.

However, learning English can

be a tough endeavor, so we asked experts across the country what their top tips are.

**1** Be patient and adjust expectations. Learning a new language takes a lot of time. Not only are students learning grammar and vocabulary, but they're also learning a new culture and way of doing work, says Dr. Anne Pomerantz of the Penn Graduate School of Education. Frustration hinders progress, and the best thing to do is simply adjust your expectations and trust that your child will soon become proficient.

**2** Shop around for schools. Not all schools are well equipped for these students. Many public schools do not have the resources to work individually with your child. However, says Dr. Pomerantz, "Public schools tend to be more diverse than private schools. Some private schools don't even have ESL staff." Some questions to ask when looking for a school are:

- Is there a full-time English-language specialist at the school?
- What is the school doing to engage parents of English-lan-

The best way to learn is still the way we all learned our first language as a child — through practice. Encourage children to speak English as much as possible, without worrying about making mistakes.

guage students (e.g., resource fairs; translation services; adult courses)?

•What is the school doing to promote interaction between these students and their English-speaking peers?

**3** Be your child's advocate. Unless you're lucky enough to have your child go to a school well equipped with English-language resources, you're going to have to fight for your child's own English-learning education.

"Some parents come from places where they may not be used to the parent-teacher involvement, and they don't understand that they have the right to join a PTA, or they might not realize that they need to speak up on behalf of their child," said Dr. Pomerantz.

However, says Robyn Schulman, professional development academic and career advisor at the Illinois State Board of Education, and a seasoned English-as-a-second-language instructor, parents new to this country may not know where to start.

Shulman recommends presenting every previous school record you can to your new school because English-language students are often mislabeled as learning disabled. She also recommends asking for a translator if one is available.

**4** Expose your child to as much English as possible.

The best way to learn is still the way we all learned our first language as a child — through practice. Thomas Dalton, owner of the company English in Denver and a professor at the University of Denver, says that he focuses on primarily encouraging kids to stop feeling self-conscious and practice as much as possible. He recommends that parents encourage their children to speak English as much as possible, without worrying about making mistakes.

"In order to learn something, you have to be free to make mistakes. Just blast through and make mistakes," he said.

**5** Make it fun. Vanessa Wade, a private tutor in Texas, encourages students to speak as much English as possible. She has a game in which she picks a word and tries to get a student to say anything and everything about the word for three minutes. This helps students get over their self-consciousness and forces them to talk as much as they can.

"When it's fun, they forget that they're learning," Wade said.

She also recommends letting kids watch cartoons and movies in English to expose them to the language.

**6** Help them be good observers of their environment. Being an English-as-a-second-language student isn't only about learning a new language — it is also about learning a new culture.

Dr. Pomerantz emphasizes the importance of teaching kids to observe their new environment. She encourages parents to ask kids about the specific details about their day, and ask questions about why certain things happened, rather than making assumptions about their new culture or about their own limitations.

"Take an inquiring stance rather than an evaluative stance," she said.

**7** Take risks yourself! Parents set an important example for their kids, said Dr. Pomerantz. It's important for parents to take risks and be willing to make mistakes. Dr. Pomerantz also encourages parents to make an effort to speak English to their children, no matter how limited it is.

*Jenny Chen is a freelance writer specializing in education and parenting. She has written for Washington Parent and Mothering Magazine.*

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## DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

# Makin' me squirm

I should have known something was up. There I sat across from three of Sarah's teachers. Like any parent, I was worried. They hadn't told me why I was coming in for a meeting. They said they'd discuss it when I got there. It could mean only one thing: Sarah had done something flagrantly illegal, something mordant and hideous. They were calling me in to dismiss me from parenting forever then putting her into a "home." Probably with

high walls and guards.

I swear there was a single, 40-watt naked bulb over the empty table and I could barely see their haggard, veteran educator faces. One of them was smoking. They slid my daughter's creative writing essay across the table to me. The room chilled.

I braced myself for the pain and looked across the table, expecting a grim visage set in grave concern. I was wrong.

They were smirking.

Teacher: "Mr. Garlington, thank you for joining us."

Me: (I pulled a crumpled candy cigarette from my pocket; I puffed a cloud of powdered sugar like nothing's happening.) "You make it sound like I had a choice."

Teacher: "Take a look at your daughter's essay and tell me what you see."

I looked down at the paper before me. I glanced. I squinted. I didn't want to show weakness before her teachers — they can smell fear. But as soon as my weary eyes landed on the page, I saw a pattern emerge, a carefully laid smattering of code revealed itself, as if my daughter, trapped in her desk in a public school, was trying to send me a message: for there, wedged between actual seventh grade vocabulary words, was a string of F words. A lot of F words.

She was sending me a message alright. She was saying, I am

a drunken sailor.

I didn't break. I'm no snitch. I shrugged, worked my candy cigarette to the other side of my mouth and said, "So?" like I was channeling the ghost of Clint Eastwood. (Oh come on, he's dead; he's been dead since "Gran Torino.")

Or, OK, actually, I said, "Well, it's creative."

Apparently, this was not the answer they were looking for. They laid into me like grizzled detectives, hammering me with explanations about form and context, about accepted commonalities. They even used the word colloquial. Colloquial.

I didn't blink. Because they got nothing on me. I'm a frikkin' parent. I'm front line. I know teachers are tough, but when did they ever peel their kid's underwear off the floor or clear a house for lice only to find out it was dandruff? When have they ever had to fold their daughter's thong? I've been in the weeds, man. I've been in country for 13 years.

I held my ground like a rock and ...

... they started laughing.

"Mr. Garlington, we think the essay is a hoot. Seriously, it's the funniest thing we've read in years. Sarah is wildly talented."

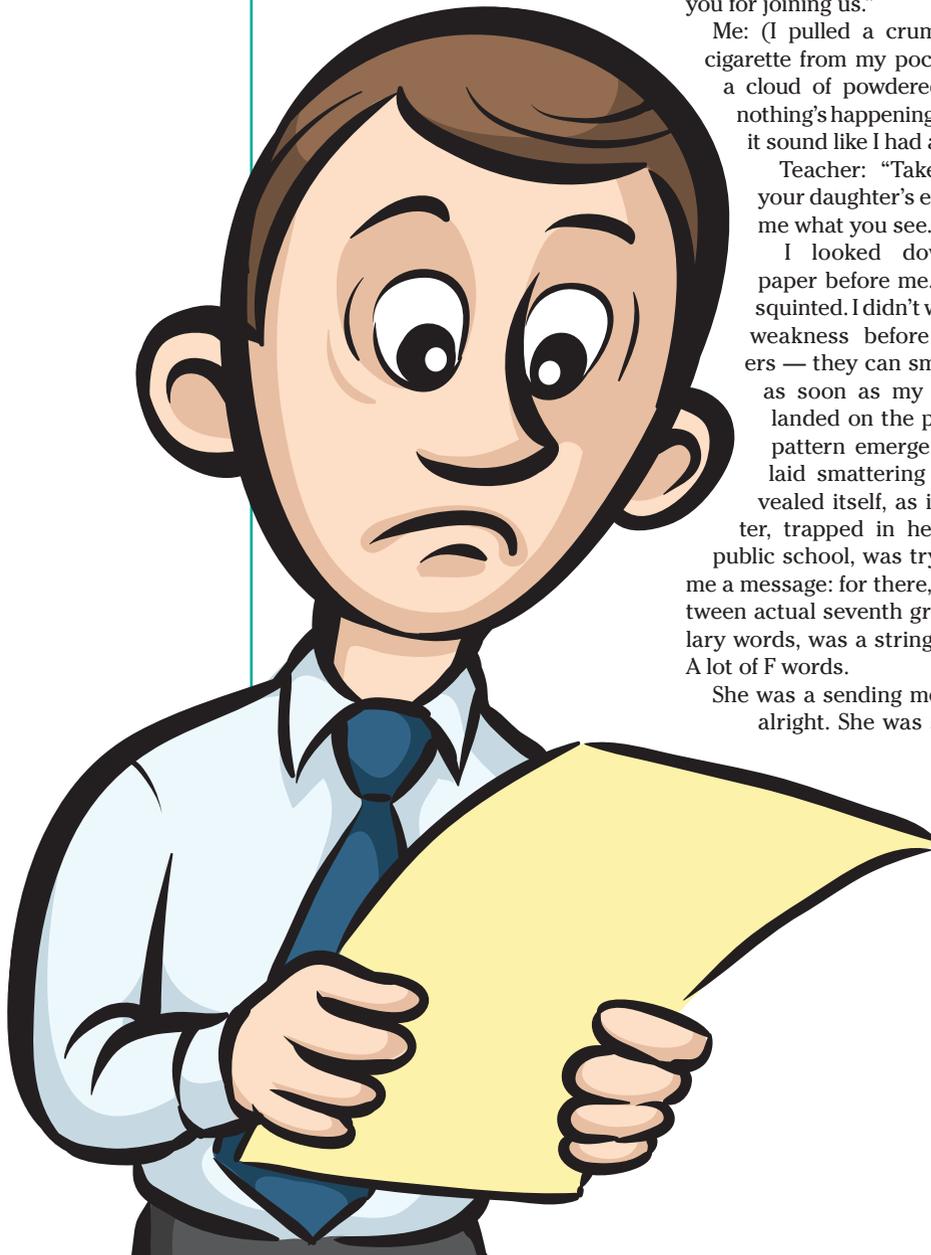
"Oh, well thank..."

"But she's gonna fail unless you have her change the F word so U and C are replaced by asterisks."

"You're just gonna let me walk out of here?"

"\*&^%\$# right we are."

*Chris Garlington lives in a standard two kids, wife, dog, corner-lot, two-car dream package. He drives a 2003 Camry, sports a considerable notebook fetish, and smokes Arturo Fuente Partaga Maduros at the Cigar King as often as possible. His stories have appeared in Florida, Orlando, Orlando Weekly, Catholic Digest, Retort, Another Realm, The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature, South Lit, and other magazines. His short story collection, "King of the Road," is available on Amazon. His column "My Funny Life," was nominated for a national humor award. He is the author of the infamous anti-parenting blog, Death By Children; the anti-writing blog, Creative Writer Pro; and co-author of "The Beat Cop's Guide to Chicago Eats."*





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# Keeping safe from household POISONS

BY JAMIE LOBER

**W**hen it comes to poisonings, our youngest members of society often fall victim, as kids get into all sorts of mischief.

“Children under the age of 6 make greater than 50 percent of our calls, and the most popular age group is 2 and 3 year olds,” said Dr. Gaylord Lopez, director of the New York City Poison Control Center. “We had the death of a child who bit in and ate one of those laundry packets.”

Anything with an interesting texture or color might seem appealing to a child.

“Sometimes the laundry packets are multi-colored, like blue, white, or orange, so they appear edible, which is one of the leading risk factors of why kids get into them.”

Kids misinterpret household items for candy, which can turn dangerous.

“A lot of medicines look like candy, and a prime example would be an Ex-lax square because it looks like a chocolate square,” said Lopez.

Only take drugs as prescribed and never take larger or

more frequent doses. Dispose of unused, unneeded, or expired drugs immediately.

It is important to identify and be clear about items around your home so kids are certain of the difference.

“Windex, furniture polish, and lamp oil look and smell like something else, and are poison instead of something consumable like Gatorade or Kool-Aid,” said Lopez.

Turn on a fan when using household cleaners.

If you have questions or concerns, you can speak to a medical professional around



the clock at a local poison control center.

"People call us about drugs, chemicals and household items, and we get a lot of calls about cough and cold medicines, vitamins, plants and personal hygiene items," said Lopez. No question is too unusual.

### Child-proof your home

When parents come home with a new child, it is critical that they poison-proof their home.

"Get cabinet locks, and if you are taking medicines, make sure you affix the child-resistant cap" said Lopez.

The most common items that are responsible for poisonings are ones that a family member recently used around the home. "If you use bug spray to kill ants at your porch, put it where you found it or in an area that is difficult for a kid to get to," said Lopez.

A big piece of prevention revolves around storing products appropriately and out of reach.

"Keep products in their original container," said Lopez. Try not to expose your child to fumes as well. "Some people get poisoned by toxic fumes that result from mixing chemical X with chemical Y and Z."

### Trick-or-treat tips

When Halloween rolls around, be aware of candy safety tips.

"Advise your kid not to eat and walk at the same time, and examine the candy to make sure things are not out of the wrapper or have an unusual smell to them," said Lopez. Be cognizant of costume and make-up safety as well, and just use common sense.

Realize that most people do not always have symptoms of poisoning right away.

"A lot of times some of the early signs and symptoms are related to stomach problems like nausea, vomiting, and excessive stools; and sometimes there are other nervous system problems that are not as evident like drowsiness, sleepiness, tremors, or seizures," said Lopez. Never wait for symptoms to see whether or not you have been poisoned.

### Prevent pet poisoning

Our furry friends must be protected, too. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of New York reinforces that you should not feed any form of

The most common items that are responsible for poisonings are ones that a family member recently used around the home.

chocolate or coffee to your pet.

Similar to responding to a child with poisoning, do not panic, but know that rapid response is important. The New York American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asks that you take 30 to 60 seconds to safely collect and have at hand any material involved, and if you witness your pet consuming material that you suspect might be toxic, do not hesitate to seek emergency assistance. You should keep the phone number for Animal Poison Control Center on your refrigerator, as well as the number for your local veterinarian.

Last but not least, you should consider investing in an emergency first aid kit for your pet that includes a fresh bottle of hydrogen peroxide, three percent USP; a turkey baster, bulb syringe, or large medicine syringe; saline eye solution; and artificial tear gel. Staying calm and responding are the most important actions you can take.

"Eighty-five percent of all calls we get can be managed at home; we have probably reported somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 to 40 deaths secondary to poisons each year but that is when you have a volume of over 100,000 calls, there may be 30 instances where someone overdoses and are successful in hurting themselves," said Lopez.

For any treasured member of the family, it is better to be safe than sorry, and if you are ever in doubt, just make a simple phone call that could save a life.

You can speak to a medical professional around the clock at New York City Poison Control Center, (800) 222-1222. For Animal Poison Control Center, call (888) 426-4435.

Jamie Lober, author of "Pink Power" ([www.getpinkpower.com](http://www.getpinkpower.com)), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at [jamie@getpinkpower.com](mailto:jamie@getpinkpower.com). © 2013 Jamie Lober

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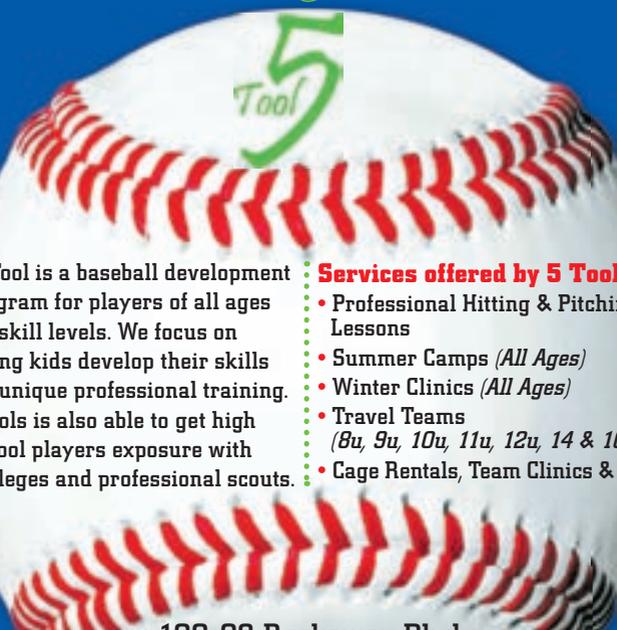
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## FABULYSS FINDS

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# Thanksgivukkah!

## This year, dreidels and drumsticks collide

**L**ooks like we need to prepare our stomachs — Thanksgiving and Hanukkah are a day apart this year! I am so excited to kick off the holiday season with two of my absolute favorite and most personally meaningful holidays. Hanukkah and Thanksgiving are both such warm, family-oriented holidays that happen to also involve the BEST possible food! The traditions that I have with my family are special to me, and are what make the holidays unique and FabUlyss for me and those closest

to me. I would love to share with you what my family and I love to do on these two very special holidays.

This holiday will not happen for another 70,000 years, so they say. So celebrate, with Manischewitz-brined turkey; a cornucopia of gelt; pecan pie rugalach; potato pancakes with cranberry sauce; and lots more DeLysscious holiday treats.

Some of my family's favorite Thanksgiving traditions are:

A big breakfast, and then head over to watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade here in Manhattan. My boys love seeing the new floats every year.

After the Thanksgiving meal, everyone writes down on a piece of paper something he is thankful for. The slips of paper are folded up and placed in a pretty basket. We then draw each piece of paper out, read it aloud, and try to guess who wrote it. (The kids used to draw pictures before they could write.)

My sister is the best cook in the world. Every year she prepares the Thanksgiving feast for two days prior in my apartment.

My boys love being her sous chefs. When things are settled in the kitchen, we watch "Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory."

Some of my family's Hanukkah traditions are:

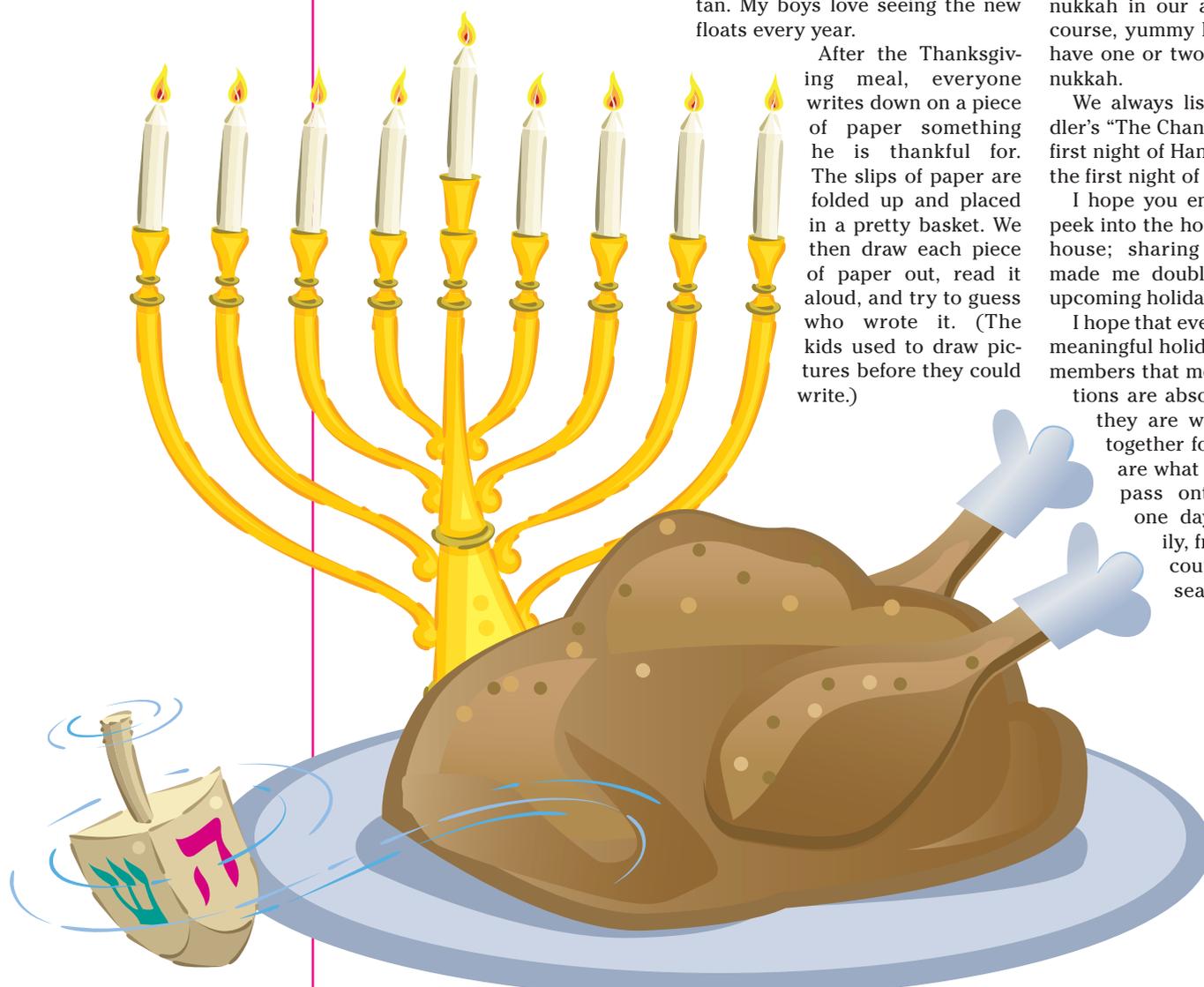
We always play dreidel the first night of Hanukkah, and whoever wins gets to light the first candle of the menorah.

We always have the most DeLysscious jelly doughnuts for Hanukkah in our apartment, and of course, yummy latkes. We try and have one or two each night of Hanukkah.

We always listen to Adam Sandler's "The Chanukah Song" on the first night of Hanukkah as we open the first night of gifts.

I hope you enjoyed your sneak peek into the holidays at the Stern house; sharing these traditions made me doubly excited for the upcoming holiday season.

I hope that every DivaMom has a meaningful holiday season, and remembers that memories and traditions are absolutely everything; they are what bind a family together for generations and are what your DivaTots will pass onto their children one day. Enjoy the family, friends, fun, and, of course, the food this season!







# The *write* stuff

How to help  
a child with  
dysgraphia  
succeed at  
school

BY SUE LEBRETON

**D**oes your child avoid homework or become distressed when that homework involves printing or writing? Does he have an awkward pencil grasp? Is his printing or handwriting difficult to decipher? Can he communicate his ideas verbally, but struggles to organize thoughts on paper? If any of this sounds familiar, your child may have a learning disability called dysgraphia.

Students with learning disabilities have normal intelligence but have difficulty with their brain's ability to receive, process, store, or analyze infor-

mation. These disabilities are usually diagnosed after children enter school — when parents and teachers see the gap between affected children and their peers. If not addressed, this gap increases over the years as learning becomes more complex. The sooner children are identified and receive help, the better they do in school and in their social life.

There are three distinct types of dysgraphia: motor, spatial, and processing. Children can have one or more of these types of dysgraphia. Helen Painter, occupational therapist and author of “Dysgraphia: Your Essential Guide,” says that it is crucial to determine which form of dys-

graphia your child has so you can choose the appropriate treatment and accommodations.

Motor dysgraphia is the easiest to recognize, as it is when a child struggles due to poor motor skills, such as a poor pencil grasp. Often, a child will be screened and will begin working on those fine motor skills with an occupational therapist. Painter suggests that the motor issue (if it occurs as the only form of the disability) can be almost fixed in a month or two. If issues continue, she says parents should have their child seen by a medical doctor or a psychologist, the professionals who are qualified to assess spatial dysgraphia and

## Signs of dysgraphia

### Top-10 signs of dysgraphia (ages 4-6)

- Difficulty learning the alphabet and identifying letter sounds to the letter.
- Difficulty learning the letters in the child's own name.
- Avoiding drawing and writing.
- Avoiding fine motor centers or stations.
- Poor ability to cut with scissors.
- Awkward pencil grasp.
- Poor pencil control for curved letters.
- Good at copying, but cannot compose own words.
- Frustration and shutting down behaviors.
- Self-esteem slipping, feelings of being stupid.

### Top-10 signs of dysgraphia (ages 7-12)

Children in this age range display poor overall legibility, which is:

- Mixing upper- and lower-case letters.
- Poor spelling.
- Poor spacing between words.
- Poor placement of letters and words on the line.

- Tiring when writing due to awkward pencil grasp.
- Saying letters and words out loud while writing.
- Difficulty thinking of words to write.
- Poor comprehension of what is written.
- Self-esteem slipping further.

### Top-10 signs of dysgraphia in teens and adults

- Mixing print and cursive styles of writing.
- Difficulty brainstorming main idea, supporting sentences.
- Poor organization of writing ideas in general.
- Difficulty organizing what has already been written down.
- Widening gap between speech and written work.
- Work avoidance.
- Taking huge amount of time for work completion.
- Decreased comprehension when writing requirement increases.
- Difficulty with grammar and spelling.
- Lowered self-esteem.

Source: "Dysgraphia: Your Essential Guide," by Helen Painter

processing dysgraphia.

In processing dysgraphia, there is a missing link between working memory and the muscle movements required to do the printing or writing. People with this form say they cannot see the letters or words in their "mind's eye." Spatial dysgraphia occurs when the person has difficulty understanding what the eyes are seeing. People with spatial dysgraphia struggle to see how objects are positioned relative to each other and how things are similar or different.

Unfortunately, both spatial and processing dysgraphia remain with children throughout their lives, so parents must work with educators to provide modifications and accommodations.

"It will help your child develop sound study habits and realize this is a condition that can be worked with, and it is not something that needs to be disabling. Today's children are fortunate to be able to benefit from technology, compared

to kids in the past who could only have dreamed of such help," says Painter.

Despite the availability of a wide array of technology, Painter has noticed that both parents and educators are hesitant to use the technology, because they fear that children will not learn the skills if they use this crutch. Her practical experience disproves this.

"Anybody can succeed if they are given the right tools, lifelong tools. There is no excuse for not helping these kids today," says Painter.

If you suspect your child may have issues with dysgraphia, have a physician or psychologist perform testing so that your child can get the appropriate support.

*Sue LeBreton's son was finally diagnosed with dysgraphia after many years spent focusing on motor skills. He has both motor and processing dysgraphia and has become a happier, more engaged student with the help of technology.*



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# Scheduling the season

Letting go in  
the holiday  
tug-of-war

BY BETH FORNAUF

**I**t's the most chaotic time of the year. With the start of November, parents start feeling the pull of the holidays. The stress of budgeting for presents, travel, and holiday events is enough to rattle anyone's holiday spirit, and trying to manage invitations, obligations, and special events has many parents changing their tune from "Let it Snow!" to "Let it be over!"

For many, it all starts with a simple question: what should we do for the holidays? This quickly snowballs into a never-ending list of follow-up questions. Should we travel? Should we stay home? Should we host friends? Should we visit family? What can we afford? Competition for your and your family's time — from in-laws, siblings, friends, and work — has many parents wishing they could skip the holiday hoopla altogether.

Yet, there are ways to navigate the murky seas of familial and social obligations that accompany the holidays. All you need are a few strategies for getting organized, staying honest, and knowing when to say "no thanks, but..." Read on to find out how to let go in your holiday tug-of-war.

## **Define non-negotiables**

Every family has certain commitments that are non-negotiable. You simply need to make time for them in your schedule. Do yourself and your family a favor by determining what these are as early as possible.

Does your oldest child have final

exams to study for? Or maybe your little one has a speaking role in the holiday pageant? Consider both scheduled events like parties, and ongoing ones like music lessons or sports.

Compile a list of not-to-be-missed events for all of your family members, and note dates, venues, and times so you aren't frantically

searching for them at the last minute.

## **Put it (all) in writing**

Once you've established your family's non-negotiables, put every



Should we travel?  
Should we stay  
home? Should we  
host friends? Should  
we visit family? What  
can we afford?

single one of them in writing. But don't stop at a list. Write the dates on the family calendar. (And if you don't have one of these, please create one immediately!)

This does not mean simply logging things in your smartphone or personal planner. Important family events need to be visible to parents and kids. This helps avoid conflict because everyone can see when something is happening, and also gives everyone a sense of ownership in making holiday plans. So if you expect your partner to attend your holiday office party, don't just assume it's a go — put it in **VISIBLE** writing.

### Check in

As tempting as it might be to reply "yes" to the first ugly-sweater party invitation that lands in your inbox, resist the urge. It's unfair of you to commit to something without talking it over with the rest of the family. You may be thrilled at the prospect of having Thanksgiving dinner with your parents at a nice restaurant, but your kids may want to relax and stay home.

Check-in with your home team before you make any decisions. You'll avoid making assumptions, and are less likely to encounter whining and grumbling down the road. By seeking out other's opinions and ideas in the planning phase, you may find yourself on the receiving end of the same respectful consideration in the future.

### Consider your kiddos

When making holiday plans, it's often easy to assume that your kids, especially if they are young, will roll with whatever you decide to do. But stop and think for a minute: do you really want to fly (and risk delays and overbookings) across the country when your kids want to cozy up with you at home?

For many, the magic of the holidays dwindles as we get older. If

you have little ones, consider taking it easy and establishing traditions at home over the holidays. If your kids are older, you need to talk with them about their school work, activities, and sports schedules — many of which do not take a hiatus over winter breaks.

### Put forth a Plan 'B'

Refusing an invitation, especially from a family member, can be tricky. You don't want to hurt anyone's feelings or make things awkward.

Instead of simply saying "no thank you," or "sorry, we can't make it," offer an alternative. So maybe you can't attend Christmas dinner at your in-laws'. Offer to host them for a New Year's Day brunch instead. Better yet, save yourself some stress and plan a get-together for later in the month. Why not take advantage of one of the long weekends in January or February for a low-key visit?

### Take time for the team

Amidst the chaos of holiday shopping, decorating, and socializing, keep in mind that one of the goals of this time of year is to celebrate with loved ones, especially your immediate family. That's difficult to do if you're always worrying about catching a flight to somewhere, or spending days trapped in the kitchen preparing a meal.

Make it a point to carve out some family time with your kids, whether they're toddlers or teenagers. You won't have them home with you forever, and now is the time to make some memories that they can cherish. Schedule a game night, have a cookie-baking party, or get outdoors and build a snow family. Whatever you decide, make that time sacred and family-only. You'll all be thankful you took some time to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Remember, the holidays aren't about accepting every invitation that comes your way. Take some time, before the frenzy begins, to think about what you and your family should hold on to, and ways you can let go.

Enjoy the season.

*Beth Fornauf is a freelance writer. She plans to celebrate the holidays by hosting family, relaxing with her husband and two children, and enjoying some fun in the snow.*

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## MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SEREDA

# The one-upper mom

I met with an old friend whom I hadn't seen in a while and as soon as we sat down to "enjoy" our lunch, I remembered why I had stayed away. I realized she's a classic one-upper — no matter what I've done or what I'm doing, she insists that she is doing better.

Most people know someone like this in their lives, and it's usually entertaining to see her try to validate herself constantly by trying to outshine you. The difference is,

now she constantly has to tell me how much more advanced her child is compared to mine (so not true!).

I asked her how her daughter was doing at her new school (she's 5), and said she must be having fun at a new place. I said this very enthusiastically. She responded by saying that it's not fun at all. The school curriculum is "very tough." I shot back saying that learning is

still fun, especially when they're learning easy things.

"No," she insisted. "She has to learn her colors, alphabet, manners, and basic math. She even has homework."

Basically, all the things that Olivia has learned at age 2 in daycare, her 5-year-old child is being taught the exact thing at a fancy, expensive school. I kept my comments to myself. Then she asked if Olivia was in diapers.

"Well, she wears Pull-ups. She still has her accidents and goes potty when she feels like it."

I don't push her with her potty training. I was hoping this woman would give me some potty-training wisdom, but instead she gasped and reminded me that her daughter had been out of diapers at 2 years old. However, she didn't feel like mentioning that she still uses a pacifier, bottle, and sleeps in the bed with mommy and daddy. That information didn't get highlighted.

Then we turned the conversation to some happy news and common ground: we're both expecting. But even that topic was an opportunity for her to dominate the conversation. She asked me what hospital I'd be delivering in, and I mentioned that I'd be going to the same hospital I used to deliver Olivia, since I had such a great experience and the staff was amazing. She told me that her hospital was rated in the top five for childbirth and delivery and that each room has a luxurious spa-like bathroom. Yes, because the loo is definitely the most important criteria for selecting a hospital (eye roll).

I realize there are a lot of people like her, unfortunately. People always want to feel better about themselves, especially when it comes to their kids, which really just translates to their identity as a parent. I get it: it's the most important job we have, and we want the world to know we're great. Personally, though, I prefer to relate to people, not undermine them. And as far as Olivia's achievements, she doesn't need to impress anyone, because no matter what she does or doesn't do, her father and I will always cheer her on.



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# Babies *vs.* dogs

When you have one of each, comparisons are inevitable



Hazel and Pippin have some traits in common.

## NEW DAD

BY TIM PERRINS

**W**hen my wife and I brought home our first puppy a few years ago — a French bulldog named Scout — several friends asked if we were making a trial run before deciding to have a baby. (For the record, no. We got a dog because we wanted a dog.) Now that we have a baby, though, if I mention that little Hazel does some of the same things that our dogs do, people give me dirty looks as if to say, “How dare you?” Why are people so horrified about comparisons between babies and dogs?

Maybe I can clear things up a little. I’ve been a dad for more than 20 months now (which is, like, 2 in baby years), so I feel confident in declaring that **HAVING A BABY IS LIKE HAVING A DOG**. Can you believe I just said that? Blasphemy, right?

First of all, if the “getting a dog as a precursor to having a baby” thing is only about a general increase in responsibility, then why is it that, before you have children, when you and your significant other buy a plant for your apartment, people don’t ask, “So when’s the baby coming, huh? Well?” (With the exception of your overbearing relatives who keep giving you and your spouse weirdly inappropriate gifts of “sexy” underwear — they’re going to assume there’s a bun in the oven if you so much as buy a jar of pickles.)

If mentioning dogs and babies in the same sentence makes you squeamish, then we just need to look at some basic facts. Once you bring your new little one home, your life will be consumed with waking up every night to deal with crying and poop, going to the doctor for check-ups and shots, and trying to get your restless little monster to go to sleep.

Wait, I got distracted for a second thinking about pickles — was I talking about a baby or a puppy just now? Huh? Well? Exactly.

A year after Scout came along, another Frenchie — Pippin — was delivered by the proverbial seabird. (I always pictured a stork, but I'm pretty sure this was an alb-tross.) Those boys are relentlessly willful. On every walk, Scout tries to make a break for the nearby dog-run. Pippin takes any chance he can to eat acorns off the sidewalk. Both would tear across the street to chase a squirrel. That's why we have leashes for them.

Once Hazel learned to walk, she also needed to be restrained — and for pretty much the same reasons. There are leashes made for toddlers, too, but most parents are mortified by them. I mean, it would be a disgrace to treat a baby like a dog! Well, I hate to break it to you: we already treat babies like dogs. If you still need convincing, just consider these questions:

•What's the difference between a baby-gate and a dog gate? Answer: whoever is on the other side.

•What's the difference between a dog toy and a baby toy? Answer: where you bought it. Hazel loves dog toys, while Scout is never happier than when he's prancing around with one of Hazel's stuffed animals in his mouth. To be honest, I can't tell which toys are whose anymore. They all rattle or squeak, and they're all designed to be chewed on.

All of that aside, I think I know what's at the heart of this matter. People don't want their precious children compared to dogs, because dogs are animals. Filthy animals! They eat things off the floor, they lick everything, and pee anywhere. Babies, on the other hand, are pure and clean like little angels.

Okay, so babies do those things, too, but never mind that — the idea is that dogs are inherently dirtier than humans. They get fleas. They sniff each other's backsides, and worse. Still, since Hazel arrived, she's been regularly licked on the face by these guys. She runs around with food in her hand — she has a nibble, and then Pippin takes a bite. Everything that's unsanitary about dogs, she's been exposed to it — and yet she has never caught

mange, or the plague, or whatever you get from dog germs.

Funny dog, though: every time we come home from Toddler Time at the local gym, her nose turns into a geyser erupting slime all over her face for days. For all of their unsavory habits, dogs seem pretty clean. Toddlers, though, are disgusting, germ-ridden petri dishes.

If you believe babies are cleaner than dogs, stop by our apartment at dinnertime. Scout and Pippin lick their bowls clean, then switch and inspect each other's dishes just to be sure. The baby? Well, by the time dinner is done, she

looks like she got into a food-fight with Jackson Pollock. Mostly she doesn't eat — she must absorb nutrients from food through her hair.

Are animals really that dirty? Sure, Scout and Pippin will eat cigarette butts off the sidewalk,

but at least they didn't leave them there to begin with. After living in New York City for a good 10 years, and also spending a lot of my childhood hiking in the Adirondacks, it's clear to me that the wilderness, where animals live, is much more beautiful than the garbage dumps where people reside. We like to pretend we're superior, but no amount of deodorant or exfoliating face-wash can change the fact that humans are the dirtiest animals on the planet.

The other morning, after Scout and Pippin wolfed down their breakfast, I gave Hazel a handful of Cheerios, which she promptly dumped into a just-used dog-food bowl.

"Why won't this child eat?" I grumbled. But then she carried the dog dish up onto the couch so she could eat her Cheerios out of it in complete comfort. I winced at the sight, but instead of taking the bowl, I texted Hazel's mom at work to give her the morning's update. The replay came back: "Hey, at least she's eating."

*Tim Perrins is a part-time stay-at-home dad who lives with his wife, their toddler, and two ravenous dogs in Park Slope, Brooklyn. More of his thoughts about babies and other things that confuse him can be found at www.RevoltOfTheImbeciles.blogspot.com.*

If mentioning dogs and babies in the same sentence makes you squeamish, then we just need to look at some basic facts.

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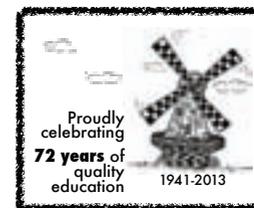
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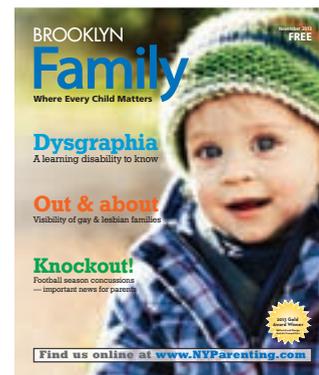
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## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

# Parents' separation and teenage angst

**Dear Sharon,**

My husband and I have recently separated. Our children are of varied ages and the young ones are dealing with it well. It's our teenager who seems to be having the hardest time. Any advice for us?



**Dear Parents,**

I am not surprised to hear that your teenager is having a hard time with this transition. Most teens go through periods when they require extra attention from their parents and they can be particularly sensitive to signs of family upheaval.

Adolescents are often sorting through complications in their own peer relationships and can be keenly aware of and affected by adult interactions around them. Teens are also juggling hormonal changes and academic pressures while in the midst of figuring out plans for their future. With so much going on for children at this age, any significant change can easily feel like too much to bear.

It doesn't make it easier for parents that most adolescents rarely keep their emotions to themselves, even ones who become sulky and re-

moved, and when upset, often wear their hearts on their sleeves.

Distressed teens usually need extra tender love and care from mom and dad. As recently separated parents usually have a lot on their plate, finding extra patience and time can be challenging. Nevertheless, any effort that moms and dads can direct toward their adolescents is often worth the effort. Adult care and perspective can sometimes transform a cranky teen into an invaluable family member.

Unfortunately, talks from an understandably worried or urgent parent usually do not help an already agitated young person. Instead, whenever possible, I suggest that parents begin offering TLC by setting aside some quiet time to "hang" with their child, remembering to listen more than talking. Sometimes listening to a teen's music, quietly watching a show or movie together, or even taking a turn at a much-loved video game can eventually lead to a good discussion.

Many parents, including myself,

have also found that productive conversations are more likely to occur when "in transit" or doing an activity away from home that a teen enjoys. The movement and change in surroundings that comes with simple activities like driving, riding the subway, shopping, going out to eat, or walking the dog can often shake up a bad mood or unhealthy routine and open up more relaxed lines of communication.

When parents have recently separated and are sorting through their own emotions, it can be hard to hear the strong opinions, anger, or frustration of an agitated teen, but if a parent can spend down time with her child and help him release tension by listening, it usually helps moms and dads stay calm and caring when sharing helpful perspectives or answering difficult questions. Helping a teen weather a family transition like yours takes patience, love, and a fair amount of parental fortitude, but sour moods can brighten, and over time, the change can go well for everyone.

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

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

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# Heads UP

What parents of athletes should know about head injuries and concussions

BY KIKI BOCHI

**B**rooke de Lench was watching one of her sons play in a high school football game, and what she saw worried her. He looked slow. Confused. Uncoordinated.

No one else seemed to notice, but she saw enough to set off alarm bells. It wasn't just that he was having an off day. She later took him to the doctor, and results confirmed her fears — her son was suffering from the residual effects of at least one concussion, and possibly more.

"I was told to never let his head be in a collision again," says De Lench, the founder of MomsTeam.com, a website whose mission it is to empower parents of young athletes through information and resources. During her son's recovery, the experience was frightening enough to launch De Lench on a mission of spreading the word

about the dangers of concussions and other sports injuries.

With the announcement of a \$765-million settlement agreement last month between the NFL and more than 4,000 retired players who claimed the league hid the dangers of concussions, many parents may be wondering about the long-term effects of head injuries sustained by youth athletes. Many of the professional players have shown evidence of a degenerative brain disease similar to Alzheimer's disease that is believed to be caused by repeated head trauma.

"I think parents really need to understand the ramifications," says De Lench, author of "Home Team Advantage: The Critical Role of Mothers in Youth Sports."

Concussions can happen in any sport, not just football. They occur in soccer, baseball, lacrosse, basketball, wrestling, hockey, cheerleading, and volleyball, among other sports.

No activity is immune. With kids playing harder than ever in today's ultra-competitive world of youth sports, it only makes sense.

Concussions are brain injuries that occur when a blow to the head or body causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Concussions can also be caused by a fall, a collision between players, or with an object such as a goalpost. Even a mild blow to the head — a "ding" or "getting your bell rung" — can have serious consequences.

Recent research has shown that because of the way their brains are growing, adolescents are more sensitive to the effects of a sport-related concussion than adults or children. In addition to long-term damage, youth athletes who have suffered a concussion are at risk of Second Impact Syndrome, a rare but usually fatal condition. If a child who has not completely recovered from a concussion receives a second blow to the head, it can cause massive swelling in the brain that can lead to sudden death.

Various studies reveal some frightening facts: brain changes in children who have sustained a mild traumatic brain injury, or concussion, persist for months following injury — even after the symptoms of the injury are gone, according to a study published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*. The research suggests that, among other things, concussions alter the brain's white matter — the long fibers that carry information from one area of the brain to another.

Yet 41 percent of student athletes returned to play too soon after a concussion, according to another report. The study found that a shocking 16 percent of high school football players who lost conscious-

## Learn the signs of concussion

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, athletes who experience any of the signs and symptoms listed here after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body should be kept out of play until a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion says they are symptom-free and ready to return to play.

### Signs observed by coaching staff or parents

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness, even briefly

- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events either prior to hit or fall, or after

### Symptoms reported by athletes

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down"





ness during a concussion returned to the field the same day. More than 20 percent of concussions in boys' and girls' soccer and basketball were repeat concussions. In fact, 16.8 percent of high school athletes suffering a concussion had previously suffered a sport-related concussion, either that season or in a previous season.

De Lench, a former athlete herself and strong supporter of youth sports programs, understands the desire for kids to return to play. For many kids, being an athlete is how they define themselves. It is not only part of their identity, but is also a huge part of their social life.

"Kids should not be pulled out of sports. Sports are critical — critical! — for some kids. Pulling them out is not the remedy here," she says. "We need to empower parents to make sure coaches are trained properly, to make sure kids get the

right kind of physical training such as neck-strengthening, and to make sure kids are taught to self-report symptoms."

Some school districts around the country are requiring young athletes to undergo cognitive testing prior to participating, so they can have a "baseline" to determine when a player can safely return to play, but such information is only useful if students understand the importance of reporting symptoms and if parents and coaches are vigilant about taking note of possible injuries.

So what are the most important things a parent — and coach — should know about concussions? First, seek professional medical attention if your young athlete shows any sign of injury, such as appearing dazed, stunned, confused, or clumsy, or if she exhibits a loss of memory, mood and behavior changes, or even a brief loss of consciousness.

Some symptoms may not show up for hours or days, so parents need to be tuned in.

A young athlete with diagnosed concussion should not be allowed to return to play on the day of injury, regardless of the medical resources available or her level of athletic performance. All concussion management guidelines, old and new, agree that no athlete should be allowed to return to play while exhibiting post-concussion signs or symptoms. Some call for at least one symptom-free week before returning to practice or play. Because activities that require concentration and attention might exacerbate the symptoms and delay recovery, children should limit exertion and school-related activities until symptom-free (e.g. no homework, no text messaging or videogames, and staying home from school).

For young people ages 15 to 24,

sports are second only to motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of brain injury, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But even far younger children have suffered concussions on the field and on playgrounds.

"The more parents know, the more they can make a difference," De Lench says. "I always tell parents to think about the life-cycle of their child. Think about how that child will feel when they are 30 or 40 and they have cognitive issues or pain from injuries.

"You as a parent need to understand that you are the guardian of your child and their future."

*Additional information on concussions and youth sports, including an online training course for coaches, can be found on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html). For more, visit [www.MomsTeam.com](http://www.MomsTeam.com).*



**DOWNTOWN  
MOMMY**  
NOTOYA GREEN

# The difficult truth about parenting

**F**rom celebrity moms to parenting magazines to moms on the playground, whenever most women talk about parenting, they say the same thing: “Parenting is the hardest, but most rewarding, job in the world, and I wouldn’t give it up for anything!”

There are few of us who would

dispute the overall premise of that, but I wonder if every one of us who says it really means it?

Meaning, do we always think that parenting is rewarding all the time, even though it’s something we say all the time? Or, is it something we have to say? Why is it that we feel so compelled to say how rewarding parenting is whenever we talk about the difficulty? Are we not allowed to complain? Or is it that we always have to be “happy moms?”

I am the mom of 3-year-old triplets, and my life with them has been exhilarating, but it has also been incredibly exhausting.

During my days with them, my kids consume all of my energy and at night, they still want more! I struggle daily to keep up with the demands of parenting, on some days more successfully than others.

I also struggle to maintain other aspects of my life outside of parenting. I struggle to keep lunch dates with friends (assuming I can remember I had a lunch date), and I struggle to keep up with the demands of my professional life.

So parenting is hard, and it’s in those moments when it doesn’t feel very rewarding. Instead it feels like I’ve been duped. That said, if I had a conversation with a fellow mom I would say, “it’s the most rewarding job in the world,” even if I didn’t think so at the time — and I know that I’m not alone in that.

At some point, every one of us feels drained, confused, and exhausted by our roles as mothers. There are moments in all of our lives when we are not “happy moms,” and in fact, we may be downright miserable (at least momentarily), and yet, it feels like we are not allowed to say it. It feels like whenever we talk about our lives as mothers everything has to seem perfect.

I wonder if fewer moms would feel less guilty or isolated if they knew that they weren’t alone, and that having feelings of dissatisfaction is completely normal. It is also possible that by reflecting on the difficulty of parenting without talking about the joys of it in the same sentence, it would cause more of us to feel inspired by the importance of our job. Would we all feel a greater sense of purpose, satisfaction, and accomplishment by simply talking about parenting in a different way, by just saying that “parenting is the hardest job in the world”?

*Notoya Green is a parenting expert and former family law attorney. You can read her blog at [www.tripletsintribeca.com](http://www.tripletsintribeca.com). You can also follow her on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/tripletsintribeca](http://www.facebook.com/tripletsintribeca) and on Twitter @NotoyaG.*





## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Teaching kindness

**L**ike many parents, my husband and I will soon be receiving our children's report cards and will be eager to see how they are doing. Throughout the years, I have stressed how important education is and that trying your best is always the goal. I clearly remember my own school years and struggling through some tough classes, like algebra, and studying as much as I could to keep my grade-point average up. My grades were extremely important to me. I felt that school was the one thing I really excelled at, and my education provided me so many wonderful opportunities. So when I had kids, I naturally wanted them to do well in school (in fact, very well). I'm no tiger mom, but I do expect good grades.

Growing up, my mother was my biggest cheerleader and always told me

how proud she was of me, but she also told me she was proud of me even when I blew a test or received a grade lower than I wanted. No matter what, she related that it meant a lot to her when the teachers would say I was a nice girl and a kind person. She said that mattered even more than grades. Back then, I thought she was crazy — who cares about goodness when I didn't get that grade I was hoping for?

You know how they say daughters become their mothers? Well, then you must see me raising my hand right now proclaiming, indeed, I have turned into my mother in many ways. And yes, as a mom myself, I now believe that goodness counts for more than grades.

When I read my kids' report cards, I always pay attention to the teacher's comments. On a regular report card, the majority of the spaces are reserved for grades with a very small portion for personal progress. That is where they list things like conduct, compliance with school policies, and respecting the rights of others, but the teachers can

write anything they want in the comments section. So when I see the teachers have written that my children are kind, good-natured, and sweet, it makes me happier than their grades do. I praise them for their grades, of course, but I also make it a point to tell them that I am proud of who they are and how they conduct themselves in school, not just the grades.

Education is vitally important, but being a good person is essential in my book. It reminds me of when author Amy Chua was in the news a couple of years ago writing about extremely strict parenting ideals. Back then, many parents came out

to say it was more important that their kids be happy than get into Harvard.

I agree but would take it one step further. Of course, we all want our children to be happy, but how about placing an importance on being a kind, engaged, and helpful person? I have known quite a few Harvard grads who may have smarts, but lack compassion and decency; I would never want my children to emulate them. Of course, one does not wash out the other. I also know quite a few Harvard grads who are using their talent to positively contribute to the world. They are people that I would be thrilled to have mentor my kids. You can absolutely be an intelligent and compassionately caring person. That should be the goal.

As parents, shouldn't we strive to at least equate goodness and grades, so that our kids are just as valued for learning how to be genuinely kind and decent human beings as well as smart and successful?

I admit that I am pleased when my kids bring home good grades, but I am even more delighted when I hear that they are thoughtful and considerate people who will make a difference in this world, who will help rather than harm, and who will think about others. I do believe that compassion is taught in many, small ways from infancy on, and we should reward it right along with all those As on the report cards.

Like grades, compassion and consideration sometimes take effort and hard work, especially for young children as they grow up and start to think of others, rather than just themselves. Think of how many adults you know who still only focus on themselves, and what a better place this world would be if everyone learned compassion and empathy as a child. Acquiring a good education is vital, but developing integrity and consideration is fundamental.

*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 Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.*





DEAR  
DR. KARYN  
DR. KARYN GORDON

# Raise confident kids

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I was really moved by the segment you did on TV about how to build confidence in our kids. I am a single mother of three young girls ages 1, 6, and 8, and at times this can be extremely challenging. I don't want to affect my girls' lives with any sort of negativity, because I am not feeling well with myself. Thanks so much for enlightening me about changing my thinking and giving me hope as well.

**T**he great news is that self-esteem and confidence is 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? Here are three tips:

**Model it:** We learn confidence from a variety of places (culture, media, peers), but I say 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 if we are modeling it for our kids, there is a high probability that they will learn it from us. Some people get excited with this information, but others 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?

If you are already feeling confident and you model this consistently, great. Your children will likely learn this automatically from you. It's like picking up a language as a child. But if you or your spouse struggle with confidence, my suggestion is that you get coaching to fix this 100 percent a fixable problem!

**Understand it:** If you were to read hundreds of articles and journals about this topic, you'd learn that self-esteem comes down to one word: attitude. How we think impacts how we feel, which impacts what we do.

If your 10-year-old daughter tells herself, "I am too fat" (thought), she will feel "insecure, self conscious, guilty" (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).

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."

The example above is illogical 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 confident person does not tell herself the conditional statement "I am okay if 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 like, "I love you only if you take out the trash" — 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. 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.

**Affirm their character:** Kids desperately need to know from their par-

ents that you are proud of them. So look for opportunities to affirm them, but focus specifically on your children's 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, give regular constructive feedback, so that it's not all praise and no substance.

Listen to the difference: "Johnny, I'm so proud of you that you got an 'A' on that test" versus "Johnny, I'm so proud of you that you were so hard-working, disciplined, and focused."

The first one is affirming Johnny's marks (external) and the second one is affirming his character (internal). Here is why this slight difference is highly important: children can 100 percent control their time management and personal discipline, whether they ask for help if they don't understand, getting to bed on time, etc. (character and internal), but they cannot control their actual mark, because their teachers control this (achievement and externals). Obviously, their character will highly influence their outcomes — but ultimately the results may be out of their control.

The danger I've seen is that if parents affirm too heavily on externals, kids either become an over-achiever or an under-achiever. By focusing on what I call "Inside-Out Parenting" — in which parents focus first on developing the character of our kids — not only does it help them feel more confident and empowered, but it also increases the chances of them developing intrinsic motivation (the most powerful form of motivation wherein kids are motivated for themselves). So when you see your kids being disciplined, motivated, courageous, adventurous, and loyal — tell them!

*Dr. Karyn Gordon is one of North America's leading relationship and parenting experts. She is a regular contributor to "Good Morning America," founder of dk Leadership, best-selling author of "Dr. Karyn's Guide To The Teen Years" (Harper Collins), and motivational speaker to a quarter of a million people. Visit her at [www.dkleadership.org](http://www.dkleadership.org) and on Twitter: @DrKarynGordon.*

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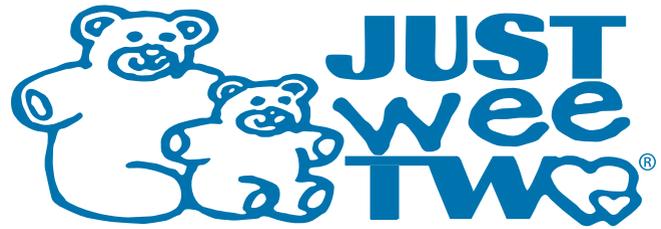


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## FAMILY HEALTH

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

# Ear infections: What parents should know

*From my youth, I remember ear infections as a time when I got to drink some pink medicine and stay home from school. However, with our first child due in a few weeks, I'm combing through new-parent literature and am discovering that ear infections can actually have serious, long-term complications. Is this true? What causes ear infections, and is there anything I can do to prevent them?*

**T**here seem to be three certainties in life — death, taxes, and childhood ear infections. In fact, ear infections are so common that 75 percent of children will experience one before they are 3 years old. Fortunately, though they can make your child very uncomfortable, ear infections usually aren't an emergency. But, as you are discovering in your research, it is important to keep a watchful eye for the symptoms of an ear infection, and make sure that the condition is monitored and treated appropriately.

Ear infections usually start with another illness, such as a cold or sinus infection, that causes swelling in one of the thin passages that connect the middle ear to the throat. These passages, called the eustachian tubes, are responsible for keeping pressure from building up by letting air move in and out of the middle ear. When bacteria or viruses from an illness become trapped in a swollen eustachian tube, an ear infection can be the result. For children ages 3 and younger, the eustachian tubes are very small, and less able to keep germs out, which is the reason ear infections are so common in infants and toddlers.

If babies could speak, they would let their parents know when they're experiencing symptoms that typify an ear infection: ear pain, trouble hearing, and popping or ringing in the ears. Sadly, it will be some time before your baby can elaborate on his ear woes, so it's important to keep your eyes peeled for the tell-tale signs of an ear infection. These may include fever, fluid draining from the ear, unresponsiveness to quiet



sounds, a sudden change in mood or increase in fussiness during a cold or other respiratory infection, an unwillingness to lie flat, or night-waking more frequently.

If these signs and symptoms last longer than a day, call a doctor, who can examine your child's ears and make the proper recommendations. Treatment for ear infections may consist of antibiotics (such as “the pink stuff” — amoxicillin) and, if your baby is more than 6 months old, an over-the-counter pain reliever such as Tylenol or ibuprofen.

If antibiotics are prescribed, make sure the child takes the entire prescription, or the infection may recur. Chronic ear infections are rare, but left unaddressed, they may lead to fluid, swelling, or an infection behind

the eardrum that does not go away or keeps coming back, which may cause long-term or permanent damage to the ear.

While it's impossible to eliminate your child's risk of developing an ear infection, there are some good ways to tip the odds in your favor. Keep your baby up-to-date on vaccines, breast-feed your baby for a minimum of six months if you are able, and make sure your baby is never near tobacco smoke. Aside from reducing the chances of an ear infection, each of these are beneficial practices in their own right!

If you notice the symptoms of an ear infection, don't panic. By following these steps, and working with your child's pediatrician, you won't be hearing about ear infections for long.

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## THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

# From Haiti, a story to encourage kids to dream

**Y**our child has a dream to do something great.

Some want to be football players, or stars on a stage. Maybe he dreams of visiting Europe, driving a hot rod, being an astronaut, riding a horse, writing a book, or helping others. Keep him dreaming of doing great things by sharing the new book “Serafina’s Promise” by Ann E. Burg.

Eleven-year-old Serafina had a secret that she thought about while carrying water four times a day, emptying chamber pots, sweeping the floor, gathering wood, and piling charcoal. Her secret kept her mind busy while her hands were working.

She wanted to be a doctor ever since the physician Antoinette Solaine took care of her baby brother, Pierre. And though Pierre died, Serafina saw that being a healer was something special. Her papa even said she had a gift for it.

But she knew that she needed an education, and that was very expensive. Her mom said that there was no money for a uniform or shoes and, besides, she needed Serafina

at home, because she was about to have another baby, and there were things she couldn’t do.

So Serafina spent her days doing chores and turning her secret over in her head. Serafina knew that she needed to speak to papa, who would talk to her mom about school. A trip to the city for Flag Day seemed like a good chance to ask.

And ask she did, on their way to Port-au-Prince. Papa listened — Serafina loved that about him — and though she wasn’t sure what would happen, he smiled when she promised to find ways to earn her own money for school. It would take the rest of the summer, but once the new baby arrived, Serafina was sure she’d have time to do it.

And then the ground began to shake.

Page through “Serafina’s Promise,” and you might think there’s not much here. Indeed, the pages are largely empty and the words are spare, but don’t let that fool you: young readers won’t be able to help but be affected



by this powerful little tale.

In a matter-of-fact manner befitting her optimistic young character, author Burg portrays Haiti’s poverty and problems without making the story one of weepy drama. In the end, those bare pages packed a huge punch, and I think kids will like that a lot.

Meant for children ages 10 to 14, I think a slightly younger good reader will find this a nice challenge. For her, or for any child who wants a quick, enjoyable novel, “Serafina’s Promise” will be a dream.

“Serafina’s Promise,” by Ann E. Burg [304 pages, 2013, \$16.99].



# Grab ‘Snatchabook’ off the shelf

**T**he other night at bedtime, there was big trouble.

Your child went to grab his favorite storybook — and it was gone! You both looked under the bed. Where could it be? You’re not sure, but if you read “The Snatchabook” by Helen Docherty and Thomas Docherty, I think you’ll know.

It’s late at night and little Eliza Brown has chosen a book to read before bedtime. That happened every night in every house all over Burrow Down because, well, who doesn’t love a good story before they go to sleep?

So Eliza and her neighbors were all in their quiet houses, all in their quiet beds, getting ready for a quiet night. But what they didn’t know was that something strange was just outside their windows.

Eliza noticed it first. A breeze moved the curtains in her bedroom just a bit, and when she grabbed for her storybook, it was gone!

The book that Mommy Owl was reading — POOF!

The story that Papa Squirrel was reading — ZIP!

Just like that. Everyone was convinced that “book thieves” were hiding in their houses. They were sure it was bad.

They were missing their books.

But Eliza wasn’t going to take this lying down — besides, she loved a good mystery — so she set a trap. She wanted that stealing to end and she wanted it to happen “RIGHT NOW!”

Eliza then heard a tiny voice that seemed sad. It seemed to be apologizing, like it needed to make things better, but there was just one problem. Could Eliza and the residents of Burrow Down fix what was very wrong?

With a lighthearted and oh-so-

clever rhyme, and illustrations that are absolutely beyond charming, “The Snatchabook” is very likely going to be your child’s new bedtime BFF. In this story of someone who loves books so much that he can’t help but take them, the authors build excitement by adding a very gentle scare — but don’t worry. When your kids see the reason for the fright, they’ll be too delighted to do anything but laugh, thanks to Tom Docherty’s artwork.

I think early grade-schoolers will love it, and so will you. If a brand-new bedtime book is just what your family needs, then “The Snatchabook” is a steal.

“The Snatchabook” by Helen Docherty and Thomas Docherty [32 pages, 2013, \$16.99].

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.



## ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,  
ESQ.

# Talking about wills

*Q. I've finished my estate planning documents, but my parents are still procrastinating on getting their estate plan in order! How can I appropriately broach the conversation with my parents without ruffling their feathers?*

**C**ongratulations on getting your own estate documents in order! Initiating any conversation about estate planning is a sensitive conversation. People don't like to be confronted with their own mortality. Parents don't like to be told what to do by their children!

One way to start the conversation is by mentioning that you've just finished your estate planning documents and how relieved you are to know that you've put a plan in place for a crisis or emergency. From there, you can explain how your parents putting a plan in place will make the process easier on their children, minimize the potential for disputes, and ensure a lasting legacy of harmony among you and your siblings. I find that the "making it easier on your children" angle is the best motivator for most aging parents to initiate the process. It makes the idea of estate planning less about their mortality and money and more about taking care of their children.

There are important reasons to have this conversation. Parents of young children can rapidly become

the "sandwich generation," caring for both their own children and their parents.

Parents might be reluctant to talk money with their children. The resolution will not come in a single conversation, so be prepared for a series of smaller conversations. Even if your parents are resistant at first and get defensive, don't be surprised if they come back to you later. Try to enlist the support of your siblings if possible.

If and when your parents are ready to talk, some suggested questions are below (I suggest not bombarding them with all of these questions simultaneously, lest they feel like they are under cross-examination).

### Health:

- Where would you want to be in the event that you find it difficult to care for yourself? Many people want to "age in place" at home as long as possible. That said, there are benefits to moving to an assisted living or senior living facility, which offers activities and a social community.

- Who do you want to make medical decisions if you couldn't make them or communicate them yourself? Do you have a health care proxy who documents those choices? Where are those documents? Can I have a copy?

- Have you considered giving your doctors Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act releases to allow us to speak with them if we have questions about your health or medical treatment?

- Have you considered what treatments or life-sustaining measures you would or would not want in certain circumstances, assuming your physicians conclude that you are not likely to return to a meaningful quality of life? What thoughts do you have about being kept alive by ventilators, feeding tubes, respirators, or other medical intervention? Under what circumstances would you want those measures to be used to keep you alive? Under what circumstances do you not want those measures to be used to keep you alive? What do you

understand those terms to mean?

### Finances:

- How can I help you with managing your finances and paying your bills?

- Have you considered how much money you will need when you retire? In your 70s; 80s; 90s? Have you considered how you will pay for your long-term care if you need a home care aide or if you need to go into a nursing home?

- Do you have a will and where is it kept?

- Who do you want to handle your financial affairs if you are unable to manage them for yourself? Do you have a power of attorney? If you do not want to execute a power of attorney, do you know who you would want to act as your guardian if one needed to be appointed?

If your parents are receptive to implementing a plan, you should encourage them to consult a trusts and estate attorney with experience in elder law issues.

The various software and pre-filled forms available on the internet will not be tailored to the unique needs specific to your parents' individual situation.

Bruce Feit recounted a tale in his New York Times blog that is worth noting here — Nora Ephron wrote of her friend Judy's death at the age of 69: "I meant to have a conversation with Judy about death, before either of us was sick or dying. I meant to have one of those straightforward conversations where you discuss What You Want in the eventuality." But, Ephron noted, "once they found the lump, there was no having the conversation."

*Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of 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.besunder-law.com](http://www.besunder-law.com).*



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## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# Relocating with kids after divorce

One of the toughest situations a family can face during or after a divorce involves one parent wanting or needing to move far away from the other. Often, the reason for considering relocation is financial — living in two homes is more costly than living in and maintaining one. For most couples, divorce usually means a financial hit.

Making a new start elsewhere in the hopes of providing the basics that a family needs can make sense.

For sure, non-monetary reasons are frequently factors as well. One spouse may return to live where she grew up in order to have the emotional support of her parents, other relatives, and friends.

Whatever the underlying reasons, relocation involves hard questions. Given the school schedule, how will the child maintain a strong and healthy relationship with both mom and dad? How will the travel expenses (flights, hotel accommodations, etc.) be handled?

When relocation is an issue, the “remaining” parent may feel abandoned, and perhaps betrayed. The parent planning a move may feel that he has no choice, and that he can’t continue living in the same geographic area.

Rarely are there easy answers, and perhaps that is a reason why different judges have issued inconsistent rulings from one court to the next. It is most challenging to predict whether a judge will give more weight to the ongoing relationship between the parent who is staying and the child, or to the new opportunities of the spouse wanting to move.

Still, parents can influence the odds one way or the other. Let’s take the recent case, *Matter of Davis v. Ogden*, August 2013, Appellate Division, Second Department.



In my view, this was an “easy case” in that the remaining parent, in this instance the father, apparently did very little to help himself prove to the judge that the children should stay with him. Still, there are clear lessons to be learned.

The mother argued that 1) by moving from New York to Florida, she would be living in a place where the cost of living is lower, and where the quality of life would be greatly enhanced; 2) she was struggling financially, and so providing the high quality of life that children deserve was difficult if not impossible in New York; and, 3) her mother and other relatives in Florida could give her and the two children the support they need.

The mother made a strong case for relocation, and the father’s own behavior only bolstered her case. He had spent little time with the children — only 30 hours during

the preceding year. He didn’t have much phone contact with them, and wasn’t there for appointments with doctors or for extracurricular activities. He also wasn’t in contact with the kids’ teachers.

The judge might have ruled differently if the father had been very involved with the children, giving his time and attention to them in every possible way. Judges make their decisions based on “the best interests of the child” (a vague concept that leaves judges with a great deal of discretion in weighing various factors).

Under these circumstances, does a higher standard of living and help from family outweigh the relationship of the children with their father? What if *his* parents are a big part of the children’s lives? What if the father is willing and able to financially assist so that the kids’ standard of living can be raised right where they are?

Again, a very difficult matter to decide.

A parent wishing to relocate with a child has the burden of establishing that the contemplated move would be in the child’s best interest. In New York, the burden (a preponderance of the evidence) may not be very stringent. When the remaining parent is largely uninvolved with the children, it is even easier to reach.

*New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin 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/>. Follow him on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/lchabin](http://www.facebook.com/lchabin).*

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

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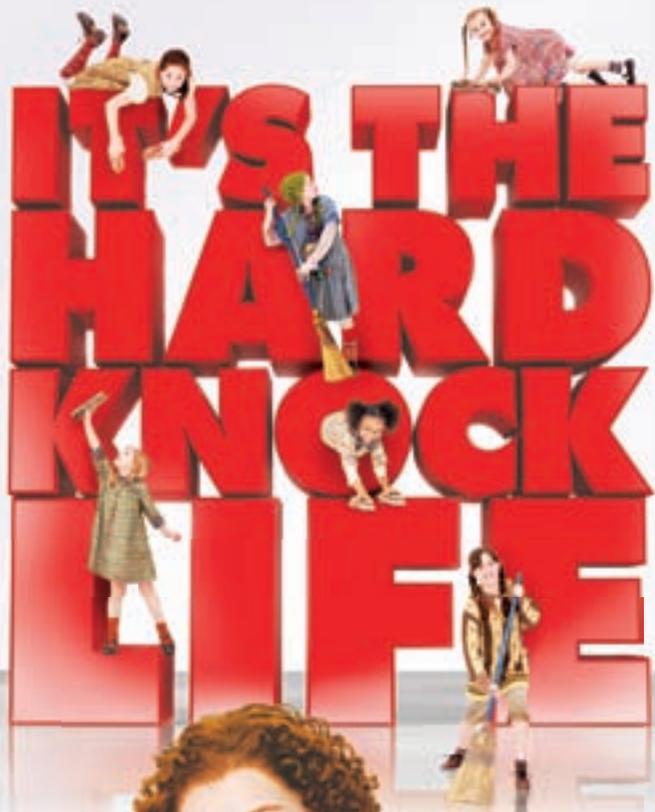
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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# A clean home for an asthmatic child

**A**s parents, we want to keep our home as clean as possible for our kids, as well as for ourselves. When babies enter the picture, many moms and dads clean more than before in order to give their babies the healthiest environment possible. When you have children who have allergies or suffer from asthma, your cleaning load increases exponentially.

Every single day brings more dust and a new opportunity for an allergic reaction. Some parents go overboard and spend more time than necessary attempting to keep allergens at bay. This not only leaves already overscheduled, busy parents with a much longer to-do list, but it also brings about more daily anxiety by trying to adhere to maniacal standards.

Mary Stockton of Brooklyn Heights can relate.

"After I had my son a year ago, I became obsessive about making sure every particle of dust was immediately removed. I vacuumed daily, even my curtains, and I drove myself crazy."

Already exhausted from late night feedings, Stockton explains that when her son was diagnosed with asthma at 8 months of age, she went into overdrive and saw every speck of dust as a deathtrap.

"My husband saw me in the throws of frantic cleaning and pointed out that I couldn't live like this. I was spending all my time dusting and wiping down furniture rather than enjoying my baby. That's when I stopped being so preoccupied with dirt and dust."

So what is absolutely necessary when it comes to cleaning routines when you have an allergic or asthmatic child? We asked Dr. Paul M. Ehrlich, a partner at Allergy and Asthma Associates of Murray Hill,



and clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine. Ehrlich, also the co-author of "Asthma Allergies Children: A Parent's Guide" and co-founder and blogger at AsthmaAllergiesChildren.com, explains that with a little prevention, a parent can certainly protect her child without driving herself insane in the process.

What are the basics when it comes to cleaning your home with an asthmatic or allergic child? What absolutely needs to be done in terms of cleaning daily and weekly?

The most important thing is to know what your child's allergies are. For example, we all know that getting rid of visible dust is a matter of good housekeeping, but if your child is allergic to dust mites, you should use special dust mite-resistant mattress covers and bedding.

Also, avoid cleaning supplies that have added scents. "Lemon fresh" may sound attractive, but as far as your child's allergies are concerned, it can irritate the sinuses and the skin when used in detergent.

What is not necessary? What are

some of the extremes that parents go to that they don't need to do?

The emphasis on antibacterial cleaning supplies is oversold. Soap and water remove both allergens and bacteria from hands, dishes, bathrooms, and kitchens very effectively. Antibacterial agents do not neutralize allergens.

What other precautions need to be taken when you have pets?

This is a huge dilemma. There is no such thing as a truly hypoallergenic dog or cat. There's an urban myth that "hypoallergenic animals" have hair, not fur. This ignores the fact that the allergenic proteins in and on these animals emanate from other tissue besides hair or fur, particularly skin and in saliva.

If regular bathing is possible — very hard, particularly with cats — do it, and brush shedding dogs regularly to keep shedding to a minimum. There are also preparations marketed under the Allerpet name that can reduce dander.

Above all, keep the pet out of the patient's room to keep allergen bombardment to a minimum during a healthy eight or nine hours of sleep. Beware, however, that cat dander is particularly sticky and travels from room to room on clothing. Better for your child to change out of day-time clothing into fresh PJs outside the bedroom.

If you have any doubts whether your child might be allergic, do not get a dog or cat. It is in no one's interest (especially the poor pooch or kitty) to have to give up a pet.

*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 Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.*

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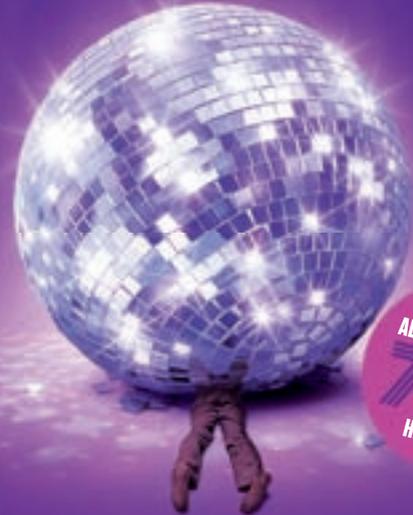
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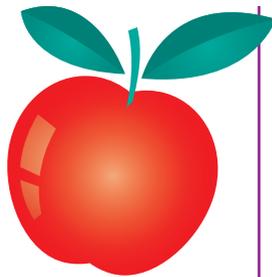
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## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND  
MARGE EBERTS

# Value of preschool

## Dear teachers,

What are some of the reasons for sending your child to preschool?

## Dear parents,

Preschool programs do have value. They can help parents provide their children with the rich background of experiences necessary for success in school. Preschools can offer your child these benefits:

- Training in social skills. Through playing with other children, a child picks up the skills of sharing, negotiating, and cooperating, and gains experience in forming friendships.

- An awareness of others' feelings. A child learns that others share his worries, fears, and delights — a first step in realizing such feelings are not unique to him alone.

- A greater trust in adults. By finding out that other adults will care for him, a child learns that he can trust adults other than his parents. This makes the world feel like a safer place.

- A greater sense of independence. At home, a child receives a great deal of one-on-one attention. Learning that attention must be shared with others makes the child more self-reliant.

- Improved listening and speaking skills. A child has to develop these skills to communicate successfully with the teacher and other children.

- New experiences. From trips to a bakery to new songs and dances, a child is introduced to activities that help him learn more about the world.

- Stimulation and activity. A child gets to play with a variety of equipment and materials in a place primarily designed for play.

- Increased self-esteem. By succeeding at school tasks, a child becomes more confident of his abilities.

- The satisfaction of belonging to a group. A child gains an appreciation of what school is like and develops a positive attitude toward school. He also becomes more comfortable with being away from home for part of or the whole day.

- Solid preparation for kindergarten. With today's kindergartens turning into yesterday's first grades, preschool now offers the background for success in school that children used to get in kindergarten.



## Developing awareness of geography

**Parents:** The third week in November (Nov. 17 to Nov. 23) is Geography Awareness Week. It was established 26 years ago to encourage citizens, young and old, to think and learn about the interconnectedness of the world. Unfortunately, many of today's schools do not focus on teaching geography. So this week is a good time for parents to start taking up the slack and help their children learn more about this subject.

By visiting the Geography Awareness website, parents can find a wide array of activities, events and volunteer opportunities to participate in with their children. The most appealing aspects of this site are the missions that will help you and your children explore your own communities, looking at them through geographic activities. Some intriguing missions from last year include: making a "smell" map of your neighborhood, living on a budget of just \$1.25 a day, watching sunrise at sunset, and keeping a ship's log for five days. Completing different missions will enable your children to earn skill badges.

The videos on this website are another very educational aspect that will increase your children's knowledge of geography on such topics as earthquakes, tsunamis, and the wildest weather in the solar system. Your children should also enjoy the cartoons on the website.

Use this week and subsequent

weeks for all of your family to learn more about geography and have fun together completing the missions. Good luck!

Visit [www.geographyawareness-week.org](http://www.geographyawareness-week.org).

## Helping children organize their writing

### Dear teachers,

My fourth-grade son has a very difficult time trying to organize his writing. He is a great little reader, but getting his thoughts down on paper seems to be an impossible task for him. What suggestions do you have, so I can help him to improve his writing skills?

### Dear parents,

Since your son is a good reader, this is definitely the place to start. Get some good short children's books out of the library, like a Curious George or Clifford book. Read a book with your son.

Encourage him to tell you what happened first in the book, next, and then at the end of the story. By doing this, your son has just completed a verbal outline. Explain that this is one way that authors organize their thoughts, and it is a way that he could organize his own writing.

Read another book together and show him how to make a timeline of the events that happened in the story. Have him write the beginning and ending events on the line and then fill in the middle of the line with a few other events that happened. Point out that this is another way to organize his writing.

Another technique that almost writes a story or report is simply talking to your son about what he wants to say or what he knows about a topic. What he says should then be written down on 3-by-5 cards and placed, by him, in the order of their importance. He can then complete his writing assignment.

Remember this: The more your son writes, the better his writing skills will be.

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

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## A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

# Perfect interviews

**T**he interview process plays a big part in an adult's life. Being able to shine during an interview may determine whether or not you land a job. Performing well can open up doors to opportunities. Needless to say, being interviewed by a stranger who can determine one's fate is daunting and extremely nerve-wracking. What if you say something wrong? What if your interviewer is unimpressed and shows it?

These days, it is not unusual for teenagers to also face the same unnerving and grueling process. Interviews pop up frequently in a teen's life. Many colleges and universities require an interview. Employers of summer jobs and internships often like to drill their applicants with a few questions to get to know them a bit better. Some scholarships and special programs include interviews. Even applying for a leadership role in high school may require answering a few questions in person.

In my own life, I have been interviewed many times, for a variety of reasons, and in several different settings. I have also interviewed other students for leadership roles in school organizations. Acing an interview is not as difficult as it may seem. With the right preparation, a bit of confidence, and some practice, anyone can have a good interview.

### Before the interview

An interview is just like any special event. In order to get ready for it, you will need to set aside some time to prepare. The day before your interview, be sure you are aware of the purpose of the interview. A college interview will not be entirely the same as an interview for a leadership position at school.

I like to find out as much as I can about the setup of the interview. Knowing what to expect definitely eases my anxiety. Yet, it is also

important to be open to the unexpected. Once, for a scholarship interview, I was under the impression that I would be speaking with a "small" panel of the scholarship sponsors. So, "small" means two or three people, right? Nope! I walked into a room with 15 pairs of eyes staring at me. I had a quick moment of panic before I calmed down and adapted to the changed situation.

It is also a good idea to review your application. I reread my application not only to remind myself of what I have written, but also to see if I have any questions for my interviewer. (Big tip, almost every interviewer will ask you whether you have any questions for him or her.)

Plan ahead. I look up directions to my interview location. I even find pictures of the building on the internet or a map of the neighborhood. Sometimes, I even look up my interviewers, so I can effectively connect with them during the meeting.

### During the interview

On the day of your interview, you will probably feel excited and a little apprehensive. Arrive on time. First impressions are always important. I can never be too careful about leaving myself enough time to get to my interview location. I've learned the hard way — on the way to my very first interview, I was met with a sick passenger on my train, which resulted in me sprinting down the sidewalk. Thank goodness I didn't wear high heels!

During the actual interview, relax and enjoy the experience. A good interviewer will try to make his interviewee feel comfortable. When interviewing students for school leadership positions, I noticed that candidates are more open and outgoing when I first lighten the mood with some small talk.

After settling down, focus on answering the questions. Have confidence and really sell yourself. Now is not the time to feel modest! As a humble person at heart, I often found this the most difficult. I'm not one to flaunt my resume. Yet, during an interview, I've learned to open up about my achievements and share with interviewer my pas-

sions and interests.

Know that your interviewer is interested in you, so don't be afraid to give too much. At the same time, be genuine. He wants to meet the real you.

Before you leave, be sure to ask your interviewer a few questions. This not only shows your interest, but also helps you learn more about the position you are seeking.

### After the interview

When I get home, I immediately write a thank you note (well, e-mail) to my interviewer. My parents have always stressed the importance of thanking others for their time and consideration. It is not only courteous, but it also keeps you fresh in your interviewer's mind. In my notes, I usually throw in a sentence or two about a specific conversation topic or moment during the interview. Something like "I enjoyed talking about life on campus," or, "It was helpful to hear about your experiences, since you went to the same high school as me," will help your interviewer remember you more vividly.

Also, I discuss my interview with friends and family. Sometimes I reflect on what I did right and what I could've done better. The interview process requires a lot of practice and sometimes, mistakes do happen. I have said some dumb things during a couple of interviews. Nevertheless, I have learned from my errors (and embarrassment).

It is also important to understand that the interview process is not the be-all and end-all of your application process. If you do not land the job, the college of your dreams, the leadership position, the scholarship, etc., that does not mean you performed poorly on your interview. You may just not be a good fit for what you were seeking. As long as you show who you truly are in an interview, you will succeed either way.

*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.*





## LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

# All my what?

## Good girls, but bad language

**M**y 17-year-old daughter wanted to show me a cute picture posted on Instagram of some of her classmates at the beach. The picture could have been on the cover of a Hallmark card. The beautiful waves, sandy beach, and smiling, tanned teens made me yearn to be near the coast. My mood took a sharp turn, however, when I glanced at the caption below which read, "All My Bitches."

"Are you kidding me?" I asked my daughter.

"What's wrong?" was the innocent reply.

"What does that caption mean?" I asked as if I couldn't read plain English.

"Oh, that's just something friends call each other sometimes. It's not a bad thing," she insisted.

Seriously? Not a bad thing? Newsflash adolescents: a bitch is a female dog, ergo a derogatory term.

Here's the problem: If girls use "bitches" and "hoes" (an abbreviated form of "whore") as terms of endearment, adolescent boys will think it's just fine to refer to them with the same. Teenage girls need to realize that their disrespectful banter can have negative consequences.

### What's the thinking?

Teens have picked up on this nonsense from the obvious — pop culture. Rap lyrics, for instance, are laden with demeaning terms for females, and they appear casually in movies as well. Unfortunately, "bitch" and "hoe" have become more mainstream than the terms of yesteryear — chicks, dames, and broads. Although also considered pejorative for their time, it was not typical for women to refer to their friends this way. Does this commonplace usage degrade how females are perceived in general?

"I think the girls are doing this to feel inclusive with their friends," explains Mary Jo Rapini, psychotherapist and co-author of "Start Talking: A Girl's Guide for You and Your Mom



About Health, Sex or Whatever" (Bayou Publishing, 2008). "However, their casual manner of disgusting names for one another is lowering their sense of self."

### Losing respect

Neil McNeerney, family counselor, parent consultant, and author of "Homework: A Parent's Guide to Helping Out Without Freaking Out!" (Integrated Press, 2011), agrees that these disparaging names are harmful.

"If we use degrading language, even in jest, it will be interpreted as degrading by others."

Some adolescents believe this name calling is harmless amongst female friends, but adolescent boys have started referring to female friends this way.

"Boys are trying to be accepted by the girls, so they are using the lingo to achieve that.

Unfortunately, they will begin thinking those words accurately describe not just friends, but all women. If we want men to be respectful, allowing this type of name calling is not going to help us get that respect," Rapini warns.

### Perceptions matter

McNeerney explains, "I think we should remind our daughters how other people will perceive them when they use degrading language." He also points out that teenagers will go on the defensive. "If she replies with something like, 'It doesn't mean that anymore,' don't get into an argument."

Instead, he suggests that parents

reiterate their point of view, explaining why their word choice will likely be misunderstood by others.

Rapini reminds parents, "Parents should demand 'word replacement' and not back down. You cannot be your teen's buddy and parent."

### Tips and tales

"If you don't respect yourself and your friends, don't expect anyone else to."

*Myrna Adams King, Woodstock, NY*

"Although they may think it is harmless, it sounds so disrespectful to others. I think it is up to parents to let their girls know how bad it makes them look."

*Lisa Phillips, Hyde Park, NY*

"It can turn very negative words from our generation into something that no longer is used in a hurtful way. Girls use the words in a way that empowers them. They have changed language to work for them, instead of against them."

*Stacey Price-Rathjen, Chicago, IL*

"This is an example of kids seeking to emulate behaviors and lifestyles they don't really understand, but which they are bombarded by in popular teenage TV, music, and movies. The kids are just parroting back what they have heard in popular media. I don't think they understand the exact implications of the slang they are throwing about. It's simple for me. If one of my sons ever said a female friend of his was one of his 'hoes,' I would be just as horrified as if he had said, 'She is one of my whores.'"

*Michael Smith, Amentia, NY*

"I think it is horrible. Young girls need to value themselves more. If they are using the terms in regard to themselves, it's like giving others permission to use the same sayings in a derogatory way."

*Wendy Smith-Emmett, Kingston, NY*

### Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: How should parents handle their daughter's attachment to an abusive boyfriend?

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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). For details, visit [www.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com).

# It figures

BY CYNTHIA WASHAM



## EARTH-SAVING STATS

**Nov. 15** Date of America Recycles Day, proclaimed in 2004 by President George W. Bush.

**75,000** Number of signatures collected in two weeks in May 2012 by students at Sun Valley Elementary School in San Rafael, Calif., asking Crayola to establish a take-back program to recycle plastic markers.

**500,000** Number of school children, from 47 states, who recycled 1.8 million tons of waste during Keep America Beautiful's inaugural Recycle-Bowl, held in the fall of 2011.

**5.3** Average pounds of materials each student recycled.

**41** Pounds per student at Marshall Christian Academy in Alabama, the country's top recycler.

### More than 30

Number of years St. Jude's Ranch for Children — serving abused, abandoned, and neglected youngsters in Nevada — has raised money by reselling used Christmas cards.



## TURKEY TIDBITS

**30** Number of miles an adult would have to walk to burn off the 3,000 calories in a typical Thanksgiving dinner.

**86** Percent of adults who are less active than usual on Thanksgiving day.

### 322 B.C.

Year it's believed the ancient Etruscans started the tradition of making a wish while pulling a turkey wishbone.

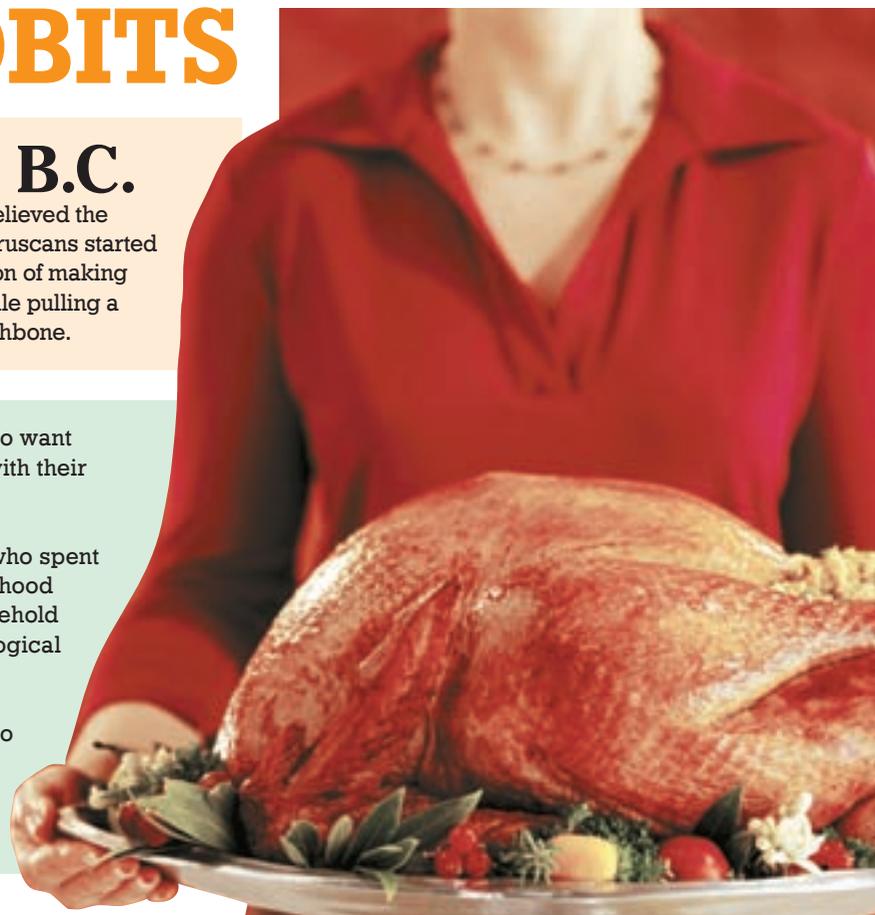
### 99

Percent of turkeys sold in the U.S. that are raised on factory farms, where they're so fat they can't walk.

**90** Percent of Americans who want to spend Thanksgiving with their families.

**55** Percent of young adults who spent at least part of their childhood living outside the traditional household of married parents with their biological children.

**60** Percent of Americans who agree that if people consider themselves family, they are.



Sources: Holidayinsights.com, Stjude ranch.org, Waste & Recycling News, American School & University, About.com, Newsweek, ABC World News, NPR.org, TheCatholicthing.org, Livestrong.com



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## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Celebrities' effect on your child's diet

**I**t's no secret that kids trust celebrities. But can an endorsement from a celebrity spur your child into making unhealthy food decisions?

The answer is yes.

Children viewing a commercial featuring a famous soccer player ate considerably more potato chips than kids who had seen ads for toys and nuts, according to research published in *The Journal of Pediatrics*. Past research has shown kids are more likely to pick foods endorsed by celebrities, even when it's fruit.

Researchers also found that children will eat more of an endorsed snack food when they saw the celebrity on TV in a context other than a commercial.

This is worrisome, since most foods advertised on TV are unhealthy and could affect a child's future weight and health.

"Parents need to be aware that exposure to any food marketing for high fat, sugar and, or salt foods



may have a detrimental impact upon their child's food choice, intake, overall diet quality and therefore health," explains Dr. Emma Boyland, lecturer in Appetite and Obesity at the University of Liverpool, who led the study.

### All ages vulnerable

While the study was done on children ages 8 to 11, children at

any age are vulnerable to food-marketing effects.

Research suggests that TV commercials have an influence over the food choices of even very young children. Major food-brand logos are thought to be recognized by children before they can even speak.

"It is not until children are around the age of 12 that they are likely to start understanding the persuasive intent of food-promotion activities (i.e. that somebody is trying to sell them something)," says Boyland. "For some, this understanding will not be fully developed until much later."

### What can a parent do?

It is clear that more study needs to be done to explore this phenomenon with other celebrity endorsers, products, and marketing elements such as brand characters, but there are some steps parents can take.

- Be aware of the extent and nature of your child's exposure to marketing messages.
- Reduce the amount of television your child watches.
- Critically discuss the promotion of foods with children in an age-appropriate way.
- Help them understand both the persuasive intent of commercials and the importance of making better choices.

"In the context of an obesity epidemic, the food promotion environment is one factor we should seek to effectively control to safeguard the next generation's health," Boyland adds.

*Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*



## Waffle-iron grilled cheese

If you don't own a panini press, an old-fashioned waffle iron makes a tasty grilled sandwich that holds up in a lunch box. If you don't have either, cook this on the stove top as you would an ordinary grilled cheese.

Makes one sandwich

### INGREDIENTS:

1/3 cup coarsely grated Gruyère cheese

2 slices whole-wheat or rye bread

3 thin slices tart apple such as Granny Smith

Oil for the waffle iron

**DIRECTIONS:** Preheat the waffle iron. While it heats, assemble the sandwich. Sprinkle half of the cheese over one bread slice.

Lay the apple slices over the cheese. Top with the remaining cheese and remaining bread slice. Brush the waffle iron with oil. Put the sandwich in the waffle iron and close tightly. Cook until the bread is browned and the cheese is melted, two to three minutes. Remove from the waffle iron and let cool for five minutes. Cut in half and wrap well or store in a container.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 410 calories, 43 g carbohydrate, 7 g fiber, 10 g sugar, 21 g protein, 18 g fat, 7 g saturated fat, 350 milligrams sodium, 45% DV calcium, 15% DV iron.

Source: Katie Sullivan Morford, "Best Lunch Box Ever: Ideas and Recipes for School Lunches Kids Will Love," Chronicle Books (2013)



## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Beyond Facebook

What parents need to know about *other* social media

**I**t was probably inevitable. Now that 70 percent of teens are friends with their parents on Facebook, some are looking for less supervised places to socialize. A report from the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that even though most teens feel obligated to maintain a presence on Facebook, many expressed “waning enthusiasm.” Their reasons? The site has been “colonized” by adults.

“Teens are looking for a place they can call their own,” observes Danah Boyd, a fellow at the Berkman Center for the Internet and Society at Harvard. “Rather than all flocking en masse to a different site, they’re fragmenting across apps.”

Having teens on a variety of social media apps makes supervision more difficult. The classic advice — “keep the computer in a public space” — is hopelessly quaint, especially for teens who socialize on cellphones. One response is to use monitoring software that will alert parents anytime a child sends or receives a message that’s inappropriate.

Although surveillance may be a good short-term fix for some kids, it can obscure the long-term goal — raising kids who use good judgment about social media. These kids resist the temptation to behave poorly just because they are online, and they know



how to protect themselves when they encounter bullies, trolls, and other online predators. How do you equip your child with those essential life skills? Here are a few suggestions:

- Limit social networking of any kind for middle-school students. Pre-adolescents are learning how to manage relationships and the process isn’t always pretty. Middle-school kids are very aware of themselves and not very aware of others. Even the nicest kids say mean things — and are devastated if someone says something mean to them. Being part of social media compounds the damage by making clumsy comments, ill-advised fashion choices, and failed attempts at humor widely available — and permanent.

- Check the apps on your child’s phone. Review the apps on your child’s phone every time you pay the bill. Ask questions that will help your child think critically about social apps: How did you find out about the app? What information does it collect about you? Does it broadcast your location? How much time do you spend using it? What kind of community does it create?

- Be aware of the connection between social media and self-esteem. For many young people, social media intensifies the pressure to be popular. They may obsess about how many followers they have, how many likes a particular post attracts, or parties they didn’t attend. Parents can’t micromanage this part of a child’s life — teens learn by making social mistakes. At the same time, parents can buffer the impact of social media

by giving kids plenty of positive attention, supporting healthy offline friendships, and pointing out the limited shelf life of popularity.

- Teach self-protection strategies. Talk to your child about how she can respond to mean or crude comments with tactics similar to those she would use offline: If possible, ignore bad behavior. The other person may just be having a really terrible day. Don’t respond in kind, because that is likely to escalate the problem. Whenever possible, use humor to defuse conflict. Take advantage of privacy settings to block people who are always mean or negative. If a post is threatening, save a copy and share it with a trusted adult.

- Be sure your child knows you have his back. Many teens don’t talk to their parents about social media problems for fear that parents will overreact. Let your children know that you have confidence in them to handle most situations, but you want to know about any online interactions that feel scary or overwhelming. If a child comes to you with an online problem, resist the urge to take charge. Instead, help your child think through how he wants to handle the situation. What is motivating the person who is causing the problem? Is this a relationship that matters to your child? Does he have offline contact with the person? Most importantly, listen!

The social skills young people need to succeed with social media aren’t all that different from the ones that they will need in the offline world. As a parent, you can help your children stay focused on the big picture — what kind of people do they want to be and what kind of friends will support them in becoming those people? For kids who keep those goals clear, the particular app they are using at the moment won’t much matter.

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

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### Apps that should be on your radar

All of these social media apps can be downloaded on cellphones. They allow users to upload photos, videos, or messages, which can, in turn, attract approval or comments from other people. Most apps have some sort of privacy system that allows users to make their posts public or available only to approved followers. Teens should be encouraged to use these controls with the understanding that as soon as something is online, it’s no longer private.

Gifboom: Very short videos

Instagram: Photos and videos.

Keek: Limits audience for videos to 36 friends

Kik: Messaging with photos and videos.

Path: Limits audience to 150 friends.

Pheed: A social network for the “wild at heart.”

Reddit: Links and texts. Especially popular with teenage boys.

Snapchat: Photos are supposed to self-destruct after a few seconds.

Tumblr: Blogging with photos, audio, and videos.

Twitter: Updates in 140 characters or less.

Viddy: Videos in 15 seconds or less.

Vine: Six-second videos.

# Calendar

NOVEMBER



Photo by Ayano Hisa

## WeBop palooza at BAM Kids

**W**eBop is bee-bopping into BAM Kids on Nov. 23 for a jazzy-licious family party.

Produced by Jazz at Lincoln Center, the WeBop Family Jazz party is a fun day of swing and strut. The band is led by Mr. Tim, (aka Tim Sullivan) and allows children to explore the role of drums in jazz music. He uses works by the greats

to demonstrate rhythm, improvisation, and more. Children sing, dance, and drum along with a variety of special guest including Ms. Bea, who will teach WeBop family workshops this winter.

*WeBop Family Jazz Party, Nov. 23 at 2 pm at BAM Kids [30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place in Fort Greene; (718) 636-4129; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org)]. All tickets are \$10.*

## 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!

## FRI, NOV. 1

**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–12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Wonderful Wampum teaches little ones about the indigenous cultures of the Eastern Woodlands, then create a wampum inspired necklace to wear.

## SAT, NOV. 2

**Blooming Babies:** 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 1.

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

Children 5 years and older listen to stories that celebrate nature and learn about the world's largest pole at 173 feet tall in British Columbia.

**For the birds:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 11:30 am–noon; Free with museum admission.

This month's Subway Safari teaches children about the birds that nest in elevated subway trains.

**Dia de los Muertos:** 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 listen to stories about Mexico's famous holiday, Day of the Dead.

**See the stars:** Brooklyn Bridge Park, Old Fulton St. and Furman Street; (718) 421-2021; 7 pm; Free.

Join with Urban Park Rangers and view the solar system, learn about pollution and discover the best places in the city for amazing sky views.

**"STePz":** Brooklyn Center for the



Photo by Linda Blase

## 'Stuart Little' at Kingsborough

**T**he most unusual mouse arrives On Stage at Kingsborough as part of its Family Series on Nov. 16 for a staging of "Stuart Little."

The production, presented by the Dallas Children's Theater, is based on EB White's award-winning book "Stuart Little," and is recommended for children 4 years and older.

Stuart Little is a mouse born into a very ordinary New York City family, but in no time at all, his life becomes anything but ordinary. Through a series of adventures and misadventures, with a

variety of characters including a bird named Margalo, the not-so-friendly family cat Snowbell, and his humans, Stuart learns a valuable life lesson about loyalty, family, and friendship.

Children have an opportunity to meet with the cast in the lobby after the show.

"Stuart Little," On Stage at Kingsborough, Nov. 16 at 10:30 am. Tickets are \$12.

*On Stage at Kingsborough Community College [2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street in Manhattan Beach, (718) 368-5596; [www.onstageatkingsborough.org](http://www.onstageatkingsborough.org)].*

Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; [www.brooklyncenteronline.org](http://www.brooklyncenteronline.org); 8 pm; \$36-\$45.

Award-winning dancer Savion Glover performs.

## SUN, NOV. 3

**Stephen Savage:** PowerHouse Arena, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; 11:30 am; Free.

Author and illustrator of "Ten Orange Pumpkins." RSVP requested.

**Blooming Babies:** 11:30 am–12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Nov. 1.

**Totem poles:** 11:30 am–noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**Dia de los Muertos:** 2:30–3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**"Transformers":** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 3–4 pm.

Book party and craft demo led by Matthew Reinhart regarding his newest book, Transformers: The Ultimate Pop-Up Universe.

## TUES, NOV. 5

**Holiday offerings:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 11 am and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

The Great Subway Search and Map NYC:ABC 123 to while away school holidays.

**Election day fun:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am–12:30 pm and 2:30–3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children learn about voting and then participate in their own election.

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

Children meet grasshoppers, worms, stick bugs and Madagascar hissing cockroaches. For all ages.

## WED, NOV. 6

**City Stomp:** Dizzy's Diner, 230 Fifth Ave. at President Street; (718) 230-5551; 5 pm and 6:30 pm; Free with a dinner reservation.

*Continued on page 56*

# Calendar

Continued from page 55

## THURS, NOV. 7

**Diwali:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate the Indian Festival of Lights.

## SAT, NOV. 9

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

Children of all ages have fun playing with big blocks and building imaginary castles.

**Totem poles:** 11:30 am-noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**For the birds:** 11:30 am-noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**Thunderbird American Indian Dancers:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Featuring a variety of dance forms.

**Junior Engineers:** 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 discover bridge building.

**Dreamcatchers:** 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 listen to Ojibwa tales of how Asibikaashi or Spider Woman weaved her web to catch bad dreams.

## SUN, NOV. 10

**"Whale Shines":** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 11:30 am; Free.

Author Fiona Robinson reads from her new book.

**Block party:** 11:30 am-12:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 9.

**Totem poles:** 11:30 am-noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**"Anne Frank, A History for Today":** Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 Fourth Ave. at 74th



## Celebrate Native American Heritage

November is Native American Heritage Month and the Brooklyn Children's Museum is celebrating with fun activities in its "Totem Poles" event throughout the month.

Totem poles can be used to tell stories, celebrate nature, or remember important people. They can be big or small, with the largest totem pole in the world standing at 173 feet and residing in British Columbia,

that's taller than the Children's Museum.

Children are invited to join in and make a group totem pole and view the totem poles in the museum's exhibit.

Classes are for children 5 years and older and are at 11:30 am to noon on Nov. 2, 3, 9, 10, 23, and 24. It's free with museum admission.

*Brooklyn Children's Museum [145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Mark's Avenue in Crown Heights, (718) 735-4400].*

Street; (718) 745-8520; 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm; Free.

The exhibit offers to shed light on the lessons of hope and compassion revealed in Anne Frank's story.

**Junior Engineers:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 9.

**Dreamcatchers:** 2:30-3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 9.

**"Hope":** Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 Fourth Ave. at 74th Street; (718) 745-8520; 3 pm - 9: pm; Free.

Brooklyn Women's Chorus, Bella Voce Singers kicks off the opening of the month long exhibit of "Anne Frank, A History for Today," on loan from the Anne Frank Center USA, by performing Linda Tutas Haugen's "Anne Frank: A Living Voice."

**Amy Herrick:** powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 4-5 pm; Free.

Author of "The Time Fetch." RSVP requested.

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

Author of "FraidyZoo." RSVP requested.

## MON, NOV. 11

**Veteran's Day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children explore the importance of soldiers and then make a medal to take home to their special hero.

**"Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp":** 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).

Children 4 years old and up enjoy flying carpets, vanishing castles and a live djinni of the lamp in this puppet adaptation of the most famous of the 1001 tales of the Arabian Nights.

## WED, NOV. 13

**Daniel Stark:** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 7-9 pm; Free.

Author of "Paper Pups." Includes a craft demo. RSVP requested.

# Calendar

## SAT, NOV. 16

**"Stuart Little":** Kingsborough Community College, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; www.onstageatkingsborough.org; 10:30 am; \$12.

Adapted from the book by EB White.

**"The Secret Garden":** BAM Kids, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place; (718) 636-4129; www.bam.org; 11 am; \$7 (\$9 adults).

With Agnieszka Holland.

**"The Secret Garden":** BAM Kids, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place; (718) 636-4129; www.bam.org; 11 am; \$9 (\$8 club members; \$7 children 12 and under).

Directed by Agnieszka Holland is based on the novel of the same name by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

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

Children 4 years and older make cornhusk dolls, learn about native Indians and hear stories about cornhusk dolls that inspire children.

**Native New Yorkers:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Who were the first people to live in this state? Children learn all about the Lenape, Seneca and Onodaga nations.

**For the birds:** 11:30 am-noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

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

Children create a fantasy version of Grand Central Station.

## SUN, NOV. 17

**KidMade in Brooklyn:** 11:30 am-noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 16.

**Native New Yorkers:** 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 16.

**"Anne Frank, A History for Today":** 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. See Sunday, Nov. 10.

**Fantasy sketches:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 16.



## City Stomp is back

**A**fter a relaxing summer, City Stomp is back on track and performing its famous, fantastic dinner show at Dizzy's Diner.

Dizzy's is the best place to rock out to the stomping, finger-popping, snapping, sounds of City Stomp. The indie rock band is just the ticket to keep the children happy and the adults enjoy-

ing a night out.

The shows are free with a dinner reservation. Shows are Nov. 6 and 20, and Dec. 4 and 18 with seatings at 5 and 6:30 pm.

Reservations are required as shows are booked weeks in advance.

*Dizzy's Diner Fifth Ave. [511 Ninth St. at Eighth Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 230-5551].*

## FRI, NOV. 22

**Christmas Fair:** Our Lady of Grace-School Auditorium, Avenue W and E. Second Street; (718) 627-2020; 6-9 pm; Free.

Start your shopping early, plus pose with Santa.

## SAT, NOV. 23

**Book fair:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklyn-museum.org; 10 am-4 pm; \$15 (\$10 children under 12) includes museum admission.

More than 30 children's book authors will be on hand including illustrators of storybooks, and picturebooks, plus books for young adults.

**Christmas Fair:** 10 am-7 pm. Our Lady of Grace-School Auditorium. See Friday, Nov. 22.

**WeBop Family Jazz Party:** BAM Kids, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place; (718) 636-4129; www.bam.org; 11 am; \$7 (\$9 adults).

Fun with drums.

**"The Little Engine That Could Earns Her Whistle":** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenter-online.org; 2 pm; \$7.

The classic children's story has a new twist. Recommended for children 4 years and older. Presented by the Target Storybook series.

## WED, NOV. 20

**City Stomp:** 5 pm and 6:30 pm. Dizzy's Diner. See Wednesday, Nov. 6.

## THURS, NOV. 21

**Thomas and Friends craft night:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3-7 pm; Free.

Enjoy hands-on activities like making conductor hats, crafting an engine and mapping train tracks.

**Totem poles:** 11:30 am-noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**Yummy tummy:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children learn all about shapes, even the ones that are food.

**For the birds:** 11:30 am-noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**Music with Laraaji Nadabrahmananda:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Noon and 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Musician who specializes in electric zither and African Mbire music.

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

Children use their imagination and make a blueprint and build a pint-sized vehicle.

## SUN, NOV. 24

**Christmas Fair:** 9 am-5 pm. Our Lady of Grace-School Auditorium. See Friday, Nov. 22.

**Totem poles:** 11:30 am-noon. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**Yummy tummy:** 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 23.

**"Anne Frank, A History for Today":** 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. See Sunday, Nov. 10.

**Transportation inventions:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 23.

**"My Mother's Italian, My Father's Jewish & I'm Home for the Holidays":** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd., between Amersfort Place and Kenilworth Place; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenter-online.org; 3 pm; \$30.

The hilarious off-Broadway hit regals us with stories of Chgristmases and Hanukkahs past, complete with bickering parents, motherly guilt trips and teenage daughter drama, Oy vey!

## FRI, NOV. 29

**Artpalooza:** Brooklyn Children's Mu-

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# Calendar

Continued from page 57

seum, 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 5 years old and younger explore their artistic side with glue, paint, and color.

**Fantastic tunnels:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 11:30 am, 1:30 and 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Learn all about the train tunnels beneath the city.

**"Miracle on 34th Street":** Shore Hill Community Center, 9000 Shore Rd. at 91st Street; [NCT@nctheatery.com](mailto:NCT@nctheatery.com); 8 pm; \$10-\$20.

The Narrows Community Theater performs the holiday classic in a musical.

## SAT, NOV. 30

**"The Red Balloon" "White Man":** BAM Kids, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place; (718) 636-4129; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); 11 am; \$7 (\$9 adults).

Both flicks were directed by Albert Lamorisse.

**Shapes and things:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children learn how triangles come together to form a pyramid or circles and lines make a face.

**For the birds:** 11:30 am-noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 2.

**Fantastic tunnels:** 11:30 am, 1:30 and 3 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Nov. 29.

**"Miracle on 34th Street":** 8 pm. Shore Hill Community Center. See Friday, Nov. 29.

## SUN, DEC. 1

**Shapes and things:** 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Nov. 30.

**Fantastic tunnels:** 11:30 am, 1:30 and 3 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Nov. 29.

**"Anne Frank, A History for Today":** 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. See Sunday, Nov. 10.

**"Miracle on 34th Street":** 2 pm. Shore Hill Community Center. See Friday, Nov. 29.



## Get spaced out with two Tims

**T**im and the Space Cadets are landing at the Jewish Museum on Nov. 17 for an out-of-this-world concert.

Indie rock songwriters Tim Kubart and Tim Matt Puckeet weave childhood memories through textured pop tunes, rockers, and lullabies, including their

chart-topping single "Superhero." The show is great for children 2 to 6 years old.

*Tim and the Space Cadets, Nov. 17 at 2 pm. Jewish Museum [1109 Fifth Ave. in Manhattan; (212) 423-3200 [www.thejewishmuseum.org](http://www.thejewishmuseum.org)]. Tickets are \$18 for adults, and \$15 for children. Member discount available.*

## LONG-RUNNING

**"Album Tracks:** Subway Record Covers": New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); Tuesdays - Fridays, 10 am-4 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am-5 pm, Now - Sun, Jan. 12, 2014; \$7 (\$5 children and seniors).

Exhibition celebrates album artwork that features the New York City subway and elevated system.

**Art kids:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Fridays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Fri, Nov. 1; Free with museum admission.

Children explore a new style of art each week.

**Ride the Carousel:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Thursdays - Sundays, Noon-5 pm, Now - Sun, Nov. 10; \$2.

Yeah it's open; the beautiful 101

year old ride is up and running for little children to enjoy.

**"Fati's Last Dance":** Billie Holiday Theatre, 1368 Fulton St. between Marcy and Brooklyn avenues; (718) 636-0918; [www.thebillieholiday.org](http://www.thebillieholiday.org); Thursdays and Fridays, 8 pm, Saturdays, 3 pm, 8 pm, Sundays, 4 pm, Now - Sun, Dec. 15; \$15-\$25 (children and seniors \$12-\$15).

Off-beat comedy for teens and up written by France-Luce Benson.

**National Grid's Earthworks:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Sat, Nov. 30; Free with museum admission.

Children learn about harvesting and gardening.

**Touch tank:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and

2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Sat, Nov. 30; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages touch a starfish, a horseshoe crab, or a sea snail.

**Sensory room:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Sat, Nov. 30; Free with museum admission.

For children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. Space limited, first come first served.

**"Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp":** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, Now - Sun, Dec. 22; \$9 (\$8 children).

Puppet adaptation of the most famous of the 1001 tales of the Arabian Nights.

**Open ice skating:** Abe Stark Ice Skating Rink, West 19th Street and the Boardwalk; (718) 946-6536; Saturdays and Sundays, 1-3:30 pm, Now - Sun, Dec. 22; \$9 (\$5 skate rental).

Break out the blades and start practicing your jumps.

**Greenmarket:** Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street; (917) 618-6100; [www.barclayscenter.com](http://www.barclayscenter.com); Wednesdays, 8 am-4 pm, Now - Wed, Nov. 27; Free.

Featuring locally grown produce, cooking demonstrations, and family-friendly activities.

**Ballroom dance classes:** FIAO Beacon Community Center at IS 96, 99 Avenue P. between W. 11th and W.12th streets; (718) 232-2266; Wednesdays, 6-9 pm; Free.

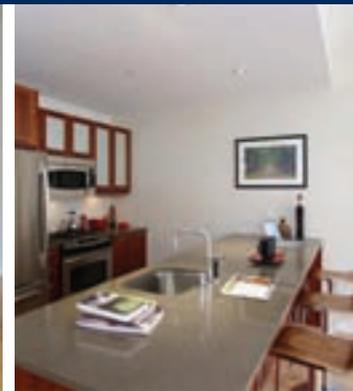
For beginners of all ages.

**Meet the museum:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org); Thursdays, 11 am and 4 pm, Now - Thurs, Dec. 12; call for fees.

Little ones and their caregivers explore art and culture through gallery activities and art making.

**TheatreSports:** The Gallery Players, 199 14th St. between Second and Third avenues; (718) 595-0547; Sunday, Nov. 10, 12 pm; Sunday, Dec. 15, 12 pm; Sunday, Jan. 26, 12 pm; Sunday, Feb. 16, 12 pm; Sunday, March 23, 12 pm; Sunday, April 27, 12 pm; Sunday, May 18, 12 pm; Sunday, June 15, 12 pm; \$10.

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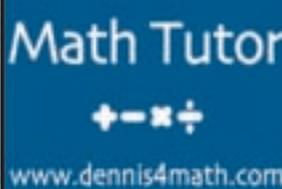
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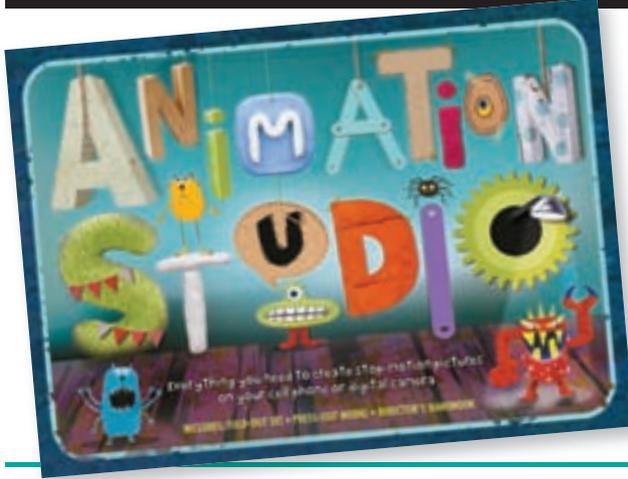
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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS



## Ready, set, animation!

Put your kids on the fast track to film school with a toy that will exercise their story-telling talent while honing their directing and producing skills. Budding auteurs, ages 8 to 12, can create a stop-motion movie using a cellphone or digital camera with Animation Studio by Candlewick Press.

The boxed set includes a reversible, fold-out stage set (a spooky laboratory!), press-out props and puppets, storyboard

sheets to plan the action, and a director's handbook penned by Helen Piercy, who runs animation workshops in London schools. There are even pieces here to help a child make their own 19th century optical toys, a zoetrope and a thaumatrope! This box contains hours of entertainment for your little B-movie director, and a super fun way to spend reel quality time together!

*Animation Studio by Candlewick Press, \$19.99, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

## Classic rock 101

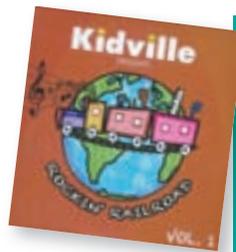
Surprisingly, the soundtrack to Kidville's early childhood music education class, a collection of 20 tracks called "Rockin' Railroad Vol. 1," will pry loose dim, pre-lullaby-era memories of rockin' out to Journey and Kiss.

All of the songs on this CD are written and produced by Brooklyn native Paulie Z (from the IFC television series, "Z Rock," a band that made the Jekyll and Hyde shift between being kids entertainers by day and transforming into the rock band ZO2 by night).

On "Rockin' Railroad," Paulie Z

puts his hair band chops to great use, creating a wide-ranging collection of tunes from the catchy "Snooze Blues" to "Growing Up," rife with electric guitar and Steve Perry-esque vocals. We're making new memories with our progeny — as we teach them how to perfect air guitar and gentle head banging.

*"Kidville presents Rockin' Railroad Vol. 1," \$12.99, [www.bestbuy.com](http://www.bestbuy.com).*



## Celebrating challah-days

Just in time for Hanukkah, the vivacious Mama Doni (aka Doni Zasloff) releases her new DVD, "Mama Doni's Jewish Holiday Party" on Nov. 12. Doni's "Party" is comprised of three segments featuring music and recipes guaranteed to infuse families with Doni's irrepressible joy as they celebrate Hanukkah, Passover, and Shabbat (the sabbath).

The episodes tell the stories behind the holidays and include plucky bluegrass versions of classic and original songs sung by Doni

and Eric Lindberg, whose fingers fly over his stringed instruments. In addition to sharing recipes for challah

(pronounced HAW-lah) bread, matzo pizza, and latkes,

Doni reminds her young audience to savor the holidays' themes: cherishing freedom, caring for those who are suffering, and taking the time to count our blessings — especially our loved ones.

*"Mama Doni's Jewish Holiday Party" DVD and "Mama Doni: The Acoustic Jewish Holiday Collection" CD, \$19.98, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*



## Illuminating manuscript

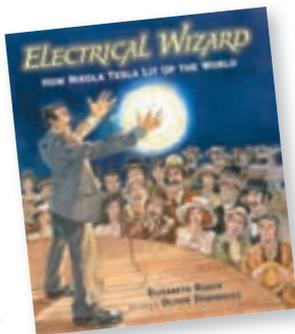
Recommended for children ages 7 to 13, "Electrical Wizard: How Nikola Tesla Lit Up the World" by Elizabeth Rusch, tells the story of the eponymous inventor as he grew from a Serbian boy playing in a stream to an electrical engineer literally giving power to the famous lights of Broadway.

Rusch's non-fiction picture book can be enjoyed on multiple levels. It is a compelling tale with fascinating illustrations by Oliver Dominguez about the creative, imaginative child who dreamed big, and who continued pursuing his groundbreaking electrical engineer-

ing concept of alternating current despite naysayers. It's also a great science book, combining explanations and diagrams of how alternating and direct currents work with examples of awe-inspiring applications: Tesla's invention was used to harness the power of Niagara Falls to literally illuminate New Yorkers. The story of Tesla and his experiments is so exciting, that parents should warn

their littlest listeners of the dangers of playing with electricity.

*"Electrical Wizard: How Nikola Tesla Lit Up the World" by Elizabeth Rusch, \$16.99, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*



## A pirates life for thee

It's time for scallywags to gather round and listen to a tale of adventures on the high seas with

Nosy Crow's pop-up book and play mat, "Playbook Pirates"! Recommended for buccaneers ages 3–7, the sweet book has fantastic 3D structures — such as a pirate ship, octopus, and lighthouse — created by paper engineer Corina Fletcher and artist Britta Teckentrup. The book can be unfolded to lay flat on the floor,

transforming it into a mat where your jolly marauder can imagine

adventures with the enclosed free-standing pirates, rowboat, and sea creatures. When it's time to pull up the anchor and tidy up, the play pieces and book can be stowed away in its sturdy storage box where it will stay shipshape

till the next voyage. *"Playbook Pirates" by Corina Fletcher and Britta Teckentrup, \$24, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*



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