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# Family June 2015

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# Graduations, birthdays & Father's Day

**T**he best graduation I ever went to was my daughter's from Kindergarten. It was so particularly moving on some wonderful level. Our family was supposed to sing a song together and I became such an emotional mess that I couldn't sing. I was weeping and as hard as I tried to control it, I couldn't. I've never been able to explain it to anyone very well, but I was peculiarly aware of the passage of time and I sensed that my little baby was moving on to being a child and that the film was about to speed up. I was right and it did and has.



In our house, June is a month of birthdays, my daughter's, mine and those of many good friends. We have

dinner celebrations and all feel great that the beautiful month of June is the month we entered into life. The good thing about having birthdays in the summer months is that you are able to have festivities outdoors if you want to. We have had many parties in the park, brought our food, set up a picnic under the shade of the trees and watched the children frolic in the beauty of late spring/early summer. Great memories.

Father's Day as I was growing up was every four years a special day I would share with my own Dad, because every four years it fell on my birthday. I loved this shared day with my father although he never liked making a big deal of it. In this

issue we talk a good deal about fathers and how important their role is as a hands-on parent. It can make or break the equilibrium of most children and the absence of a father can be devastating. We are happily finding that more Dads are opting for a strong presence and shared responsibility in the raising of their children starting from infancy. This is a very different posture and a welcome sociological change from past generations.

Although stay-at-home Dads are a welcome phenomenon and the number of men opting to be the primary caregiver to their children under 18 has risen considerably, unfortunately, so has the number of households without a father and children who have no male figure/role model in their lives has gone up as well. This is utterly detrimental to the well

being of millions of children and it must be our societal goal to change this statistical reality.

If there's a graduation or a birthday in your family this month, enjoy! Cherish the moments and bookmark the memories. To all the Fathers, we wish you a lifetime of responsible interaction with your children and the joy of hands-on caregiving. You will be happy you did and so will your children.

Have a great month. Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# A SUMMER ADVENTURE

for students ages 2-10

2-3.5  
Year Olds

## FasTrackKids Explorers \*

Educational, gradual separation class for the young ones. Sign up for any number of weeks 1-10!

### Activities include:

Group mingle & play, circle time, science lab, cooking together, fun academics, reading together, fun arts, & goodbye friends!

### Themes

July - Lets Play, August - Out & About

### Schedule:

Tues & Thurs from 9:30am-11:30am

6-10  
Year Olds

## FasTrackKids Enrichment Camp

Sign up for 1 week or all 10!

### Trip Around the World Part 1 (6/29-7/3)

FasTrackKids will travel to various regions of the world and learn how children in those countries live. Visit the FasTrackKids International Expo at the end of the week. This summer we will explore China, India, Mexico, and Australia.

### Biology (7/6-7/10)

Children discover the wonders of plant, animal and human life through activities and scientific experimentation. Children take a "virtual" trip to the Amazon, the Sahara and Antarctica to learn about their unique ecosystems.

### Artists Studio (7/13-7/17)

Join Ana Paula in the FasTrack art studio and be inspired by the works of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Matisse and Picasso while creating unique pieces of art! Students will enjoy creating their own cartoon story, interacting with digital art on the Learning Station, making several sculptures and illustrating books.

### Astronomy (7/20-7/24)

Explore our galaxy and the concepts that hold it together.

### Natural Science (7/27-7/31)

Children participate in a variety of scientific experiments including magnetism, flotation, molecular change and buoyancy. The children gain an understanding of the scientific method through these experiments and games.

### Trip Around the World Part 2 (8/3-8/7)

All aboard the FasTrack Supersonic Exploring Airplane! Azora and FasTrackKids will fly to different countries across the world while learning games, famous landmarks and delicious foods found in those countries. The countries explored are Italy, Brazil, Egypt and the USA.

### Earth Science - Geology (8/10-8/14)

The Earth reveals its wonder and variety as children explore climate, geology, and forces of nature. Activities and games on the Learning Station allow the children to take imaginary world journeys to examine and understand the composition of the earth from its surface to its core.

### Anatomy (8/17-8/21)

Through the exploration of different, major body systems such as the skeletal, respiratory, digestive, and circulatory & nervous systems, your child will explore the human anatomy and learn to develop healthy habits along the way.

### Archeology (8/24-8/28)

A trip to the Pre-Historic Ages and back, to discover the dinosaurs and the fossils they left behind.

### Creativity (8/31-9/4)

Children learn to see and appreciate creativity in themselves and others. Through stories and activities, they learn about different cultural styles, creativity and imagination in music, art and dance. Individual and team problem-solving skills are developed through various interactive activities.

### Schedule:

½ Day Options (1pm-4pm) / Full Day Option - Ages 6 & Up Only!  
9am - 4pm) if combined with Academic Enrichment Program  
Early and Extended Day Options Available (7:30am - 6:30pm)

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150 4th Ave.  
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Williamsburg  
60 Broadway  
347.987.4450

Bay Ridge/  
Dyker Heights  
7612 13th Ave.  
718.748.3000

Sheepshead Bay  
1405 Voorhies Ave.  
718.891.5437

3.5-5  
Year Olds

## FasTrackKids Discoverers \*

Fun and challenging enrichment for the young mind.

Sign up for any number of weeks 1-10!

**Activities include:** Smart Board, hands-on projects, arts & crafts, experiments, role-playing, videotaping & more!

### Themes

See FasTrackKids Enrichment Themes to the right.

**Schedule:** Mon, Wed, Fri, from 9:30am-12:00pm

4-14  
Year Olds

## Eye-Level Classes - Stop the Brain Drain, all year round!

Children come 1 or 2 times per week plus do homework. Children focus on developing their Math (Critical Thinking and Calculation skills) as well as their English (Reading, Writing, and Reading Comprehension skills)

3.5-7.5  
Year Olds

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5-10  
Year Olds

## Academic Tutoring & Enrichment Camp

Sign up for any number of weeks 1-10!

Children come Monday through Friday where they have a 1 hour Eye-Level session each day, then they have fun with computers (l-pads), arts and crafts, board-games, puzzles, play and socialize with their classmates each day.

Eye Level is a skill based math & literacy enrichment program. Children are given individualized instruction based on their academic level to improve their mental math, critical thinking skills, reading comprehension and writing ability.

### Schedule:

½ Day Options (9am-12pm or 1pm-4pm)  
Full Day Option - Ages 6 & Up only! (9am - 4pm)  
if combined with FasTrackKids Enrichment Program  
Early and Extended Day Options Available  
(7:30am-6:30pm)



\* parents must stay on premises at all times

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# Dear Dad: Your kids need you!

Every dad has the chance to show love and acceptance

BY GAYLA GRACE

**D**ick Hoyt is an inspiring father. His son, Rick, was born a quadriplegic with cerebral palsy. His parents were told he would be mute for life and should be institutionalized. But his dad refused to believe it.

Hoyt noticed Rick's eyes followed him everywhere he went, and so he became determined to find a way to communicate with him. He solicited help from Tufts University, where a skilled group of engineers built Rick an interactive computer. Rick controlled the cursor by touching a switch with the side of his head, which enabled him to finally communicate with those around him.

Rick immediately relayed his love for sports, and at 15 years old, asked his dad to participate in a five-mile benefit run for a classmate paralyzed in an accident. Although not a distance runner, Dick agreed to join in the run and push Rick in his wheelchair. That day changed their lives. After the run, Rick said, "Dad, when I'm running, it feels like I'm not hand-

icapped" ([www.teamhoyt.com](http://www.teamhoyt.com)).

Inspired to offer Rick more opportunities to experience that feeling, Hoyt began training every day with a bag of cement in the wheelchair while Rick was at school. The two began participating in marathons, triathlons, and other grueling athletic events and have now completed more than 1,000 races together. Rick knows he has an incredible dad whom he refers to as "The Father of the Century."

Most dads don't have the same opportunity Hoyt had with his son. But every dad has the chance to show love and acceptance to his children, giving of his time to provide nurturing and guidance.

Children gain security from a dad willing to make time for them. I love to watch dads with their sons at the baseball fields as they play catch, practice batting, or offer encouraging words. Athletics offer a great way for dads to be part of something their children enjoy while the kids learn about good sportsmanship and reap the benefits of hard work and practice.

Children benefit from a dad who provides consistent love and dis-

cipline. Discipline teaches children self-control and right from wrong, while helping them feel secure and cared for. Dr. James Dobson, author of "Bringing up Boys," says, "Boys are more likely to get off course when they are not guided and supervised carefully ... When left to their own devices, they tend to drift toward the center divider or into the ditch, toward misbehavior or danger."

Children gain healthy standards from a dad with spiritual principles. Studies show that children who actively engage in a community of faith increase their odds toward a happier, healthier, and longer life, while significantly reducing the likelihood of risky behavior.

Children need a dad who exemplifies a stable male role model. We've all heard the saying, "I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day." Children mirror their parent's behavior and learn relationship skills and healthy social skills, including how to treat others, by watching them. Children benefit from a father who regularly shows them physical affection and treats his marriage partner with love and respect.

Our generation sees too many children reared without fathers. A high divorce rate, unbalanced career priorities, and prevailing addiction rates contribute to an absent father for many, emotionally and physically. However, study after study reflects the impact of a child's well-being from the influence of his father.

It's not always possible to be an active dad on a daily basis, but it is possible to stay involved in your child's life in other ways. A dad's role is a high calling that not everyone gets to experience. But for those who do, it's a role to be honored and cherished, carried out with intentional purpose.

*Gayla Grace is a freelance writer, wife, and mom to five children. She is thankful for the role her husband plays as their children's father.*

## Inspirational books by Team Hoyt

"One Letter at a Time": Inspirational stories of his life told by Rick Hoyt, using his one letter at a time method of speaking to communicate.

"Devoted: The Story of a Father's Love for His Son": The story told by Dick Hoyt of the incredible bond with his son and how Team Hoyt's mission statement, "Yes You Can," was created.

"Rick Hoyt: The Story of Rick Hoyt": A beautiful story of how Rick Hoyt, born with cerebral palsy, lives an inspiring life with the help of friends and family.

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# Children and GENDER ROLES

Be careful of  
typecasting  
your kids

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

**D**uring the past 50 years, our society's gender rules have undergone a major shift. More women than ever are in leadership positions and in careers once reserved for men. Modern fathers are more involved in child-rearing and care-taking roles. But, do we still inherently treat our sons and daughters differently based on their gender?

"An unequivocal yes," says Dr. Deborah Smith, a University of Missouri-Kansas City sociologist who studies gender issues. "Within 24 hours, parents are handling male and female babies differently. If boys are crying, they're angry. If

girls are crying, they're fussy."

## Gender and age

For children under the age of 6, gender should play little role, if any, in how we parent our kids. Rules like discouraging our little girls from playing in mud and our little boys from crying can be developmentally damaging, Smith says.

During these formative years when children are curious about exploring a variety of interests, toys, and activities, avoid pushing your child in more stereotypical directions.

"You might be stopping the best chemist, because she's a girl and 'girls aren't into chemistry,' or stifling the best nurse because 'boys aren't nurses,'" Smith says.

## Gender differences

Many parents feel gender differences become more important as children enter adolescence. Chrissy Stewart, a mom of three, including two sons and a daughter, says she parents her children with the same general set of rules of behavior, but feels differences in the sexes demand awareness of different issues.

"General rules are the same and most expectations for behavior, like kindness and no bad language, but there are just things that parents are more worried about with a boy or a girl that are more gender-specific," she says. For example, a parent is more likely to talk to her daughter about self-defense, and her son about dating etiquette.

Laura Murphy, a parent coach, is the mother of three grown children, including two sons, 18 and 22, and a daughter, 20. She says parents should work toward the common goal of raising good people, but also celebrate the differences between the sexes.

"We do want men to model for their sons how to be a strong, good-hearted man in this world. Women need to model for their daughters how to be a loving, caring good woman in this world," Murphy says.

And regardless of whether you have boys or girls, chances are you enforce different rules according to differences in behavior and personality.

### Division of labor

Parents may unwittingly set gender rules when it comes to chores, requiring their girls to complete indoor chores and their boys to take care of outdoor chores.

"I encourage parents to teach children to do both," Murphy says. "I want my daughter to be able to take care of her own household inside and out someday, and I want my son to take care of his own household inside and out."

Teaching children to care for themselves and their homes should be a universal goal as they grow into adulthood.

### Model respect

Consider the messages you send your children when you and your spouse divide household responsibilities, make child-rearing decisions, and how you treat one another.

"How the parents view their roles has a lot to do with how the children will view their roles," Murphy says.

A mother who handles everything in the household, refusing to share any responsibilities with her husband, sends the message that he can't do anything right, and he is left searching for a role, Murphy says. Children may also assume that women manage everything in the home.

"I don't think men need to be the dominating force in the family, but they certainly need to be a leader in the family," Murphy says. "Work as a team. Sometimes a woman has to defer to the man and the man has to defer to the woman."

Honor, appreciate, and respect each other's roles in the household. Your children will learn that gender has little to do with the healthy functioning of a home.

"The bottom line is everybody needs to be respected regardless of gender," Smith says. "If we think about ourselves as humans first and what's a good idea to create a healthy human — particularly not making a big distinction for 6 and under — would go a long way in helping children develop the full range of emotions and interests and competencies that you just need as a successful human being."

Raised with less focus on rigid male and female rules and proactive guidance from you rather than from provocative media or cultural influences, your children can freely pursue their interests without feeling restricted by their gender.

*Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines and her husband are the parents of two boys. Hines is the author of "Happy, Healthy, & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World."*



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## Historical fun facts

### True or false?

In colonial America, parents dressed young boys and girls alike in white gowns.

True! At age 6, old enough to begin helping his father with chores, a boy officially left babyhood behind upon receiving his first set of breeches. Parents didn't begin dressing their babies in gender-specific clothing until the 1940s.

### Did you know?

Around World War I, Earnshaw's Infant Department, a trade publication, designated blue for girls and pink for boys. The editors felt pink was a more masculine, stronger color, and delicate blue was more appropriate for girls. Parents, however, preferred blue for boys and pink for girls. Gender-specific pinks and blues didn't take off, however, until the advent of sonograms in the mid-1980s.

Source: Smithsonian.com

# What makes a **family**?

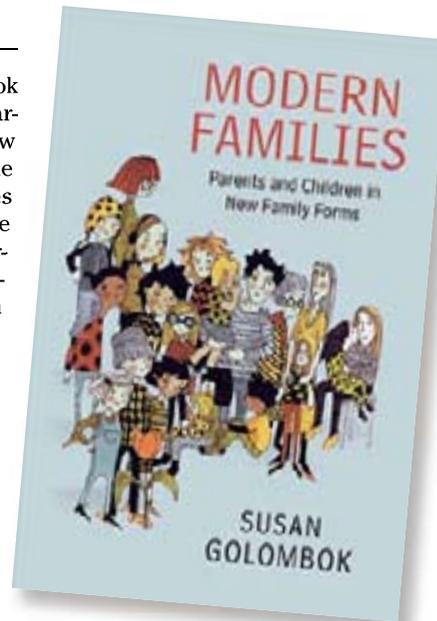
Taking a  
closer look  
at modern  
households

BY ALLISON PLITT

**D**on't be fooled by the book title "Modern Families: Parents and Children in New Family Forms." It is not about the Emmy-winning television series "Modern Family," which relates the humorous experiences of three current-day families. The book "Modern Families" is written by Susan Golombok, professor of Family Research and director for the Centre for Family Research at the University of Cambridge. In her book she assembles together about 40 years-worth of "cutting-edge" research about modern family models.

Although "Modern Families," March, 2015, consists of research studies and its results, it is similar to that of the popular television show in depicting the struggles and triumphs of different, evolving contemporary families. The conclusions Golombok makes from the research studies are fascinating and definitely worth reading. She not only stresses the positive aspects of these new modern family models, but highlights the drawbacks as well.

Most of the research Golombok cites in her book are studies done in economically developed countries since the early 1980s. The results of the studies attest to her conclusions. One interesting inference was that children raised by lesbian and homosexual couples do not suffer gender identity crisis. The worst situation these children experience are environments where they feel ashamed to talk about their families. Unfortunately, homophobia exists in the world and children from single-sex couples should be prepared to en-



counter this type of discrimination.

The book also discusses children conceived through in vitro fertilization, in which a sperm and an egg are fertilized in a laboratory to create an embryo, which is then implanted into a woman's uterus. Another form of in vitro fertilization is intracytoplasmic sperm injection, when a single sperm is injected directly into an egg. Many times when these procedures are conducted, multiple embryos are used for each ovulation cycle. Consequently, some mothers give birth to multiple children at the same time.

According to Golombok, there are "physical risks associated with multiple births, including perinatal mortality, preterm deliveries, low birth weight and neonatal problems and disability." Due to these problems in multiple births, she writes, "some countries have introduced regulations to limit the number of embryos

used in an IVF or ICSI cycle. In the United States, however, the incidence of multiple births following IVF and ICSI remains above 30 percent."

Children conceived with siblings of the same age also experience developmental delays in infancy, which is common for twins, however, by age 5, they had caught up to their peers in terms of motor skills. While families experience emotional and financial stress in raising numerous babies at the same time, once these children had reached adulthood, they lacked any physiological or psychological problems that may have been caused by their conception.

Another modern family structure causing a lot of controversy is surrogacy. A couple with fertility problems can ask a surrogate to be impregnated with their embryo and give birth to their child. An alternative option is having the surrogate contribute her own egg to a man's sperm to create an embryo and carry the child.

Homosexual men sometimes use surrogates when they want a child with a genetic link. Studies show that some children continue to see their surrogate mothers after childbirth and have relationships with the surrogate and her family throughout their lifetimes.

Due to the high cost of hiring a surrogate (some agencies will charge up to \$100,000), many US couples are going to economically developing countries, like India, to find women who will carry their child for much less expense. Many people are concerned that surrogate mothers will refuse to hand over the baby after the birth, but statistics show this rarely happens. There are only a few



recent studies done on surrogacy, but those that exist prove that children conceived in this manner grow up and adjust just as normally as any child their age would.

Another category under the “modern family” heading is single men and women who decide to conceive or adopt children and raise them by themselves. If a woman wants a genetic link to her child, she can get pregnant by donor sperm insemination. Women nowadays have the option to freeze their eggs or embryos (with donor sperm) in their 20s and 30s and then postpone having a child until their 40s. A new trend is an increasing number of single men electing to have a child with the use of a surrogate. These types of single

mothers and fathers are usually financially independent and have a strong network of family and friends to help them raise their children.

Children brought up by single mothers and fathers “by choice” generally do not suffer from any psychological problems associated with their conception. They build a very close bond with the parent who raises them, yet often miss having another parent. These children are almost always informed about how they were conceived because of the absent second parent and usually search for their other birth parent.

When these children find their birth parent, they are generally glad to have met them. They frequently, nevertheless, choose to have long-

term relationships with their donor siblings. “In 2000, the Donor Sibling Registry — an internet site designed to facilitate the search for donors as well as families who share the same donor — was established in the USA by a donor-conceived boy and his mother,” Golombok writes. “Since that time, 44,000 people have registered with this website and more than 11,000 matches between donor offspring, donors and donor siblings have been made.”

Looking back at the feedback of all the participants, Golombok believes it is best to let children know how they were conceived around age 10, when they will be able to have some comprehension of the in vitro and surrogacy processes. When families

are open with their children about their conception, they tend to get along better and there is less conflict within the household. When parents withhold information from children about their origins, there becomes a greater likelihood for stress and tension in familial relationships.

Many single-sex parents, especially men, consider adoption as a choice for having children. While some adoption agencies were initially skeptical about same-sex parents raising children, the success of so many single-sex families has allayed their fears. When children are adopted before the age of 1, there are fewer psychological problems between the parent and child. When a child is adopted after the age of 1, he or she is more likely to encounter neglect and abuse before being adopted, and, as a result, experience psychological problems later on.

One of the most predominant modern family forms is the divorced or separated single parent raising her children alone. Golombok writes, “Approximately 40 to 50 percent of married couples in the U.S. divorce ... studies have consistently shown that children whose parents divorce are more likely to show emotional and behavioral problems and are less likely to perform well at school than are children in intact families.”

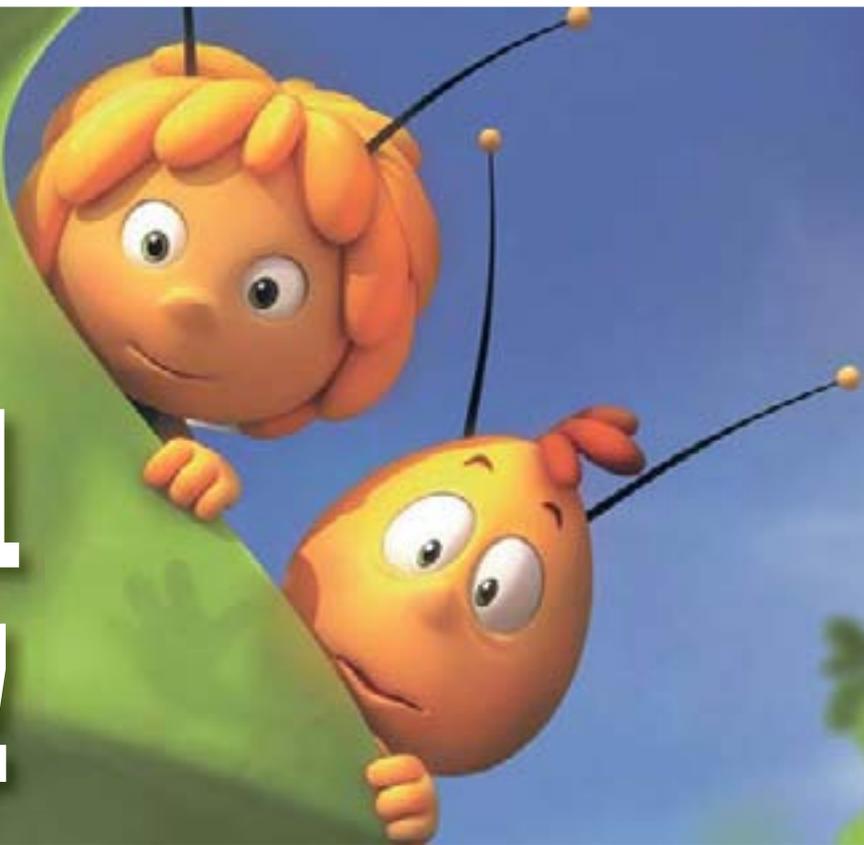
Although these negative behavioral patterns in children of divorce decline as the years pass on, especially for girls, “boys still showed higher level of conduct problems.” Much of the research on the psychological problems in children of divorce indicates that these children suffered not as a repercussion of an absent parent, but due to conflict and hostility in the home before the parents separated.

In another study it was found that depressed parents with marital problems can cause depression in their children. Despite the economic hardships divorce can make for families, the effects of unhappy, married parents can produce a worse scenario for children. Golombok implies that, in the end, all it takes is a loving parent with some discipline, structure and open communication to create a better home for a child.

To obtain more information about Susan Golombok and her book, “Modern Families,” visit these two websites [www.cfr.cam.ac.uk](http://www.cfr.cam.ac.uk) or [www.childandfamilyblog.com](http://www.childandfamilyblog.com).

*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.*

# Good buzz!



## Kid critics enjoy the adventures of 'Maya'

*"Maya the Bee Movie" features a spunky young bee, Maya, who won't follow the rules of the hive. This lovely, animated film is devoid of violence or other scary stuff, that you can safely share with your younger family members. It's an engaging tale of adventure and friendship that teaches some poignant lessons about trust and honesty. The first version of this tale was made in 1925 in Germany using micro-photography of real insects to tell the story. This updated version, released on DVD and Blu-ray on May 19, is beautifully animated and offers delightful comedy to help grab and hold your attention.*

**"M**aya the Bee Movie" is an incredible animated film, written by Fin Edquist and Marcus Saueremann, directed by Alex Stadermann. This is a very funny movie. I laughed during many scenes, and I also cried during a few scenes. I love the movie, because the characters are funny, and it teaches great lessons throughout the film.

The movie takes place in a beehive located in a colorful meadow full of beautiful flowers. In the meadow, there are many different types of bugs. Inside of the bee hive, there are lots of worker bees. All of the bees have different jobs, which are assigned by the royal advisor, Buzzlina (Jacki Weaver). For instance, one of the jobs is picking up pollen.

Another job is watching the adorable little baby bees.

This is also where Maya (Coco Jack Gillies) stays until spring. Maya wants to be independent and explore the hive. She does not like staying with the babies, so she sneaks out when she has the first opportunity. When Maya sneaks out, she causes a lot of chaos within the hive, because she is very young and does not know what she is doing. She takes you on a fun and exciting adventure.

The movie is well written. Stadermann draws out remarkable performances from the voice actors and brings out the best in each character. I love how Gillies expresses Maya's feelings. Weaver makes the royal advisor, Buzzlina, seem so real.

My favorite scene is when Willy (Kodi Smit-McPhee) and Maya meet. They seem to like each other from the very beginning. Another favorite part is when there is a battle between the bees and another group of bugs. My least favorite part of the film is when something horrible happens to Maya, and she finds out a secret about the queen.

The message of the story is: everyone has a role to play in life. It takes everyone working as a team

to get the job done. The movie is fun, fabulous, and family-friendly. I recommend it for ages 4 to 18 as well as adults. I give this movie 5 out of 5 gold stars.

— Brooke S., age 9

See her video review at: <https://youtu.be/BzDjUqX6hls>

**"M**aya the Bee Movie" is a cute and funny movie! It's about a young, little bee named Maya who is very curious and eager to learn about the beehive. As Maya explores the beehive without permission, she asks a bunch of questions. Maya quickly learns that she is completely different from the other bees. She repeatedly finds herself in trouble by Buzzlina, the queen's assistant. As a result, Maya gets banned from the hive. Her friend Willy does not want Maya to be alone, so he leaves the hive and follows her.

As Maya and Willy are out in the meadow, they learn that hornets and the other bugs and insects are not as bad as they have been told. While Maya has been banned from the beehive because of her curiosity, Buzzlina devises a plan to harm the Queen, so that she can take control of the bees and the hive.

There are several different messages in this movie. The one that stands out the most to me is, "Dare to be different." In this movie, the



bees have to follow specific rules, specific directions, and they must do as they are told. Maya is different, and she is told that she does not belong in the beehive. She works hard to find her place among the bees. She learns that she is an important bee in the kingdom and that her voice is important.

My favorite part is when Willy is mad at Maya and decides to fly back to the beehive. Willy is scared of everything.



But, when a frog sticks out his tongue to try to capture Willy for dinner, Willy hits the frog's tongue and flies away without looking back. That's pretty impressive for a fearful bee.

My favorite character is Willy. He is a very loyal and true friend. He supports Maya and helps her when she's down, and he's not afraid to tell her when she's not right. He is also very funny.

"Maya the Bee Movie" is a wonderful film! It has great messages for kids! I recommend this movie for boys and girls ages 5 to 10. I give this movie 3 out of 5 shining stars!

—Kayla P., age 13

See her video review at: [https://youtu.be/F5D58b\\_NPEk](https://youtu.be/F5D58b_NPEk)

If you enjoy comedy mixed with great animation, then you will love "Maya the Bee Movie." Maya is unlike other young bees her age. Instead of following orders, Maya has a mind of her own. For example, instead of staying within the safety of the beehive, Maya decides to go off on her own to visit the surrounding meadow, where she became friends with Flip the grasshopper.

At some point, Maya's curiosity led to her finding out that the Royal Advisor to the Queen Bee had stolen the royal jelly, saved especially for the Queen Bee, which leads to the Royal Advisor's kicking Maya out of the beehive.

At this point, Maya has to survive on her own in the meadow and is soon joined by her close friend Willy, who fears for her safety and cannot let Maya be by herself in the mysterious meadow. Together, the two bees become friendly with a variety of other insects and other creatures.

Eventually, Maya and Willy learn that the Royal Advisor has stolen

the Queen's royal jelly because she was seeking to make war with the hornets. By the end of the movie, Maya, Willy, and their other young hornet friend Buzzy stop the Royal Advisor's evil plans and, after recapturing the royal jelly, bring it back to the Queen, who then makes a complete recovery. For her efforts, Maya is appointed Hive Ambassador by the Queen Bee and she and Willy are made responsible for observing the meadow and reporting new friends that arrive.

My favorite character in the movie is Maya. She is easy to relate to for me, because she is very much a free spirit, unable to sit still, who always wants to be in on the action. I also enjoyed hearing from Flip the grasshopper. Flip is always able to provide Maya with excellent advice such as telling her to always "bee positive." The scenery is also colorful and beautiful and will be enjoyed by everyone.

My favorite part of the movie is when Maya and Willy are together out in the meadow attending the Jitterbug Hollow Musical Festival. There, they hear different insects playing a large number of musical instruments while Flip the grasshopper sings, "It don't matter what they say, be yourself every day."



This film has many positive messages that apply to younger audiences. For me, the most powerful message of the movie is that a person should be himself and does not need to follow in the footsteps of others. The movie also shows the strong bonds of loyalty between Maya and Willy, who have to work together in order to stop the Royal Advisor's plans.

I also appreciated the lesson that young people can make a huge difference in this world. In the movie, many grown-up bees and grown-up hornets are prepared to fight to see who would gain control of the meadow. In the end, it is two young bees and one young hornet who save everybody from being destroyed.

I give "Maya the Bee Movie" 5 out of 5 stars. It is a great family movie. I recommend it for ages 4 to 10. I appreciated its excellent messages and wonderful music.

—Adam C., age 9

See his video review at: [https://youtu.be/\\_0blgrn1Mo](https://youtu.be/_0blgrn1Mo)

# Being a father

Going  
from mere  
paternity  
to true  
parenting

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-  
TIEMAN

**M**y husband and I were both working on doctoral degrees when our first son was born. We also had part-time jobs and were hundreds of miles away from our families. After waiting five years to have a baby, we were anxious to take care of him ourselves. A system of “tag-team parenting” evolved that allowed us to take care of our extrafamilial responsibilities as well as have individual and joint time with Douglas. The different reactions we received when we were out separately with our infant son were most interesting. People would come up to me and comment on Douglas, but they would stop Jerry and say things like, “Your wife sure is lucky you’re willing to babysit,” or “How nice that you’re helping your wife out,” or “Giving the wife a break, I see.” The message was clear: When I had Douglas with me, I was doing my job, but when Jerry had him, he was doing me a favor.

The first few times we found these remarks amusing, but 25 years later we still hear the same thing. We both find this deeply disappointing. Why is it that when a father is does what mothers have been doing for centuries, he’s Superman, but a mother doing it is still “just a mom?” These comments not only perpetuate the stereotypic practice of equating “par-

ent” with “mother,” but they also minimize the profound significance of the father’s role.

A growing number of fathers expect their parenting role to exceed the limits of paternity, financial support, and “roughhousing.” The majority of men in recent studies report that they are more involved in child-rearing than their fathers were and that they desire an equal partnership with their spouse in the rearing of their children. While including fathers in pregnancy and childbirth has been a tremendous improvement, it is not enough. It’s ironic that hospitals go out of their way to involve fathers in labor and delivery, even inviting them to cut the umbilical cord, and then fail to require the father’s presence when informing the mother about feeding, bathing, diapering, changing the umbilical cord dressings, etc. I’m pretty sure it’s not because they assume the father already knows how.

Children need fathers to progress out of the delivery room into the nursery and beyond. How do we (and by we, I mean all of us, males and females) go about replacing the peripheral father with an all-inclusive version? Here are a few suggestions:

## Changes in language

Words are powerful. Through language we communicate our attitudes, beliefs, and expectations. As long as we continue to equate

the word parent with mother, we are cheating fathers and children. When parenting books, magazines, or articles are clearly geared to a female audience, authors and publishers are suggesting that fathers need not read them. When letters asking for volunteers for school-related activities are addressed to mothers, the message is clear about who is expected to reply.

So gentlemen, the subtle, yet persistent exclusion of fathers in the conversation about parenting suggests you are free to move out of the picture, emotionally and even physically. But if you accept the circumstances as inevitable and, therefore, permission to renege on your responsibilities as a parent, not only are you depriving your children, but you are also denying yourself the rich rewards of this role. When we can openly say to our sons, as they cuddle their teddy bears, comfort a sibling or friend, or care for a pet, “You’re going to make a terrific father someday,” we’ll know the language of parenting has changed.

## Changes in attitudes and expectations

The false impression that child care is something fathers occasionally do for mothers continues to prevail. In actuality, parenting is what fathers do with mothers for their children. Referring to fathers as babysitters is absurd. Babysitters are people who get paid to fill in for parents who are unavailable. Fathers, you are not temporary filler. You are the real thing. Seeing you fulfill your parental responsibilities in public, as well as private, should be treated as the norm, not a novelty. Parenting should be a mutual sharing of both the responsibilities and rewards of child rearing. Men are not solely responsible for making the optional involvement of fathers acceptable. Many women lack a role model for a hands-on father. They have been socialized to believe that mothers should know all there is to know and do all there is to do with regard to child care. Otherwise they are not fulfilling their duty.

Many of us fall into the trap of assuming there are only two ways of doing things — our way and the



wrong way. When it comes to children, it is presumed mothers know “the right way.” When fathers demonstrate competence in this arena, it can be threatening to a mother’s self image. Fathers, if you face these situations, be patient, but persistent. Make it clear that your active participation is a statement about your desire to parent, not about your partner’s ability to parent.

### **Changes in actions**

Wilhelm Busch reminds us, “To become a father is not hard. To be a father is, however.” Any job worth doing is worth doing to the best of your ability. Parenting is no exception, whether you are male or female. In your efforts to become the father your children need you to

be, take the time to: Examine your sense of identity. If your identity is all tied up in whether or not you are employed, what you are employed to do, where you are employed, and how much you earn, then your identity is extremely vulnerable to the unpredictability of the marketplace. If you look to your colleagues or employer to provide you with a sense of worth, you are forgetting that these people are primarily interested in what you can do and specifically, what you can do for them.

In the eyes of your children, your value is not determined by the size of your paycheck. Children attribute the greatest power to those who are available to fulfill their needs — prepare their meals, participate in their play, provide comfort when they’re

hurt or ill, etc. The only place you are irreplaceable is at home. I have never heard of anyone expressing regret on their deathbed for not having spent more time at the office. Conserve your energy. Save some of the smiles, words of encouragement, patience and enthusiasm you demonstrate at the office for the people waiting for you at home. Utilize the time it takes you to travel home to mentally prepare yourself for the transition from your office work to your family work. Your children deserve the best of you, not the leftovers.

### **Get the training the job requires**

None of us is adequately prepared for the job of parenting. Few of us

have had any formal training. The rest of us are limited to the parenting we received as kids — the models our parents provided. Many men do not feel good about the job their fathers did, but they don’t know how to do any differently. Sometimes when people don’t feel competent in a role, they simply avoid it. Don’t allow your discomfort to rob you and your children of one of the most critical relationships in your lives.

Take the initiative to learn more about becoming the father you want to be. Read, attend classes and workshops, or join a parenting group. Identify a father you really admire and ask him to be your mentor. Spend time discussing your joint parenting goals with your spouse. Just because you didn’t give birth doesn’t make you any less of a parent.

The fact is, you can’t not parent. You can choose whether or not to become a parent or whether or not to be an involved parent. But if you have children, you cannot choose whether or not to parent. Your presence or absence will be experienced as parenting by your children. The way your children experience your involvement in their lives, or lack thereof, has an extraordinary impact on what they come to believe about themselves and how they relate to the rest of the world. The relationships that children establish with their parents provide the foundation for every other relationship they will ever have.

As you celebrate Father’s Day, take the time to reflect on what this role means to you, your children, your family, the future. The next time someone says, “How nice you’re willing to babysit for your wife,” boldly reply, “It’s my job. I’m doing this for them. I’m a dad!”

*Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons, ages 24 and 14. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.*

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# Funny moms

Comedy duo  
— and moms  
— poke fun  
at parenting

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**H**aving a sense of humor is mandatory when you're a parent. Without it, you could easily lose your sanity, especially in these turbulent times. And if you're a single parent, you probably need a triple dose.

Humor is a great motivating tool and works wonders when you want your children to do something they don't want to. When you inject humor into life's challenging mix of ups and downs, annoying stuff is easier to deal with. Most parents would probably agree that being firm but kind of funny is an effective way to create a loving bond with your family. And it's a good way to keep your kids in line, as they all-too-suddenly transition into smart-alecky adolescents and know-it-all teens.

El and Mel agree.

Between regular feedings, diaper changes, and pediatrician visits, these hilarious mom comics are just finding out that humor is the best medicine when it comes to fussy tots and dirty laundry.

Melanie Kinard and Ellie Dunn, a two-woman-comedy-music duo, have been real-life best friends since they were 12, and have been performing all over the city (and the world) for many years. But after a bit of a hiatus, these funny gals decided to reinvent themselves in the form of "The Mommy Show (for Adults Only)." They plan to present their new act in venues city-wide, but were proud to make the official debut at QED Astoria in Queens on June 3. So stay tuned. You can expect more shows in Park Slope, the Upper West, and the Upper East



Mel and El performing at 92Y Tribeca.

Side in late summer and early fall.

"When we first developed our act, we were both living in Queens, and we worked on material in the living rooms of our respective apartments. Back then, we were all about being single ladies, gallivanting about town with our fabulous gay friends. But now that our songs are more about nursing babies and less about nursing drinks, we're catering to a whole new crowd."

As newbie moms and doting wives, the duo can't wait to get on stage and share songs, stories, and sassy one-liners about parental angst and their families' trials, joys, and tribulations

with anyone who will listen.

El is a Queens girl and is 16-month-old Charlie's mama. Instead of doing big Midtown shows, she says Mel and El's goal is to make life more convenient for parents who need a night out.

"We're going to bring the show out to different neighborhoods and connect with the parent-centered businesses and organizations in those areas."

Mel recently "defected" to Harlem from Queens with her hubby and kiddies — Colin, 3, and Claudia, 3 months. She said they want the show to be a place where you



(Left) Ellie Dunn with her son Charlie, and Melanie Kinard with her son Colin.

“Now that our songs are more about nursing babies and less about nursing drinks, we’re catering to a whole new crowd.”

can relax and laugh and also meet some cool parents from your own neighborhood.

As the friends’ lives changed, so too did their act.

“I got married when I was 35, so I had plenty of years to be a little bit ridiculous and make a lot of mistakes,” said Mel. “I continue to be a mistake-making ridiculous person, but now I do it with a husband and two kids.”

“We made ‘The Mel and El Show’ and performed versions of it all over the place — from a downtown crowd at Joe’s Pub to 3,000 gay men on an Atlantis Cruise in the Mediterranean — and then we had kids,” says El. “All of our material started to

be about pregnancy and babies and parenthood, so we finally decided to fully embrace it and ‘The Mommy Show’ was born.”

But Mel and El’s fresh, new laugh-out-loud show isn’t just for mommies. They describe it as a totally inclusive experience that has been entertaining moms, single folks, grandparents, gay parents, and other people with senses of humor for years.

Do the comedienne have any tips for working moms?

“I read some article recently that basically said, ‘There is no such thing as work-life balance,’ and that sounded right to me,” says Mel. “It’s been a relief to let go of the idea that I should always feel super ‘namaste’ all the time. When I’m working, I’m worrying that I’ve abandoned and ruined my kids. When I’m with my kids, I’m obsessing about checking things off of my work to-do list. It doesn’t end. Most days I would benefit from a vacation.”

“That was profound. I was going to say something fairly basic, like ‘Don’t go to the office with poo on your shirt,’” says El.

“That’s wise, too,” says Mel.

For more on Mel and El, visit [www.welcometothemommyshow.com](http://www.welcometothemommyshow.com).

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# From feuds to fun

## Five tips for turning spoiled dreams into a blissful summer

BY JUDY M. MILLER

**L**ooking forward to having your kids home for the summer? I always am. I anticipate enjoying the outdoors and a much more leisurely pace while we enjoy long bike rides and hikes, an annual trek to the beach, lots of ice cream, and more time and connection.

The saying goes that a mom's two favorite days are the day summer vacation begins and the day it ends. Is this true for you? Do you find yourself counting down the days to the start of school, because your kids have spoiled your dreams of a wonderful summer by arguing, fighting, or refusing to participate in family time and activities?

There are two primary culprits behind derailed summer dreams. Think back to the 10 months or so preceding summer and you'll likely recognize them: lack of routine and time together.

What we often love about summer — the easy-going, unstructured days — can backfire. Kids without routines can easily become restless and edgy, which can lead to tormenting each other. Likewise, kids often spend the other 10 months separated — by bedrooms, school, peers, sports, and other

extracurricular activities. Months of separation portend a lack of interaction, which in turn fosters unfamiliarity, and that makes spending time together challenging. So, do you want to nip a spoiled summer in the bud? Here are five ideas to address the key reasons summer dreams sour:

### Be intentional

The first step to a successful summertime with your kids is understanding why summers sour. That said, be thoughtful about how you're going to smooth the way. Realize that you will have challenges, and remember that your focus is on your kids, not what you need to do. Hold on to your enthusiasm, patience, and humor.

### Have a plan

Consider your kids' interests and plan activities around them or combine their interests into one activity. Remember to get your kids' input on what they'd like to do. I have a daughter who loves nature, one who loves to bake, and two sons who are very active. I combine their interests into a bike ride through the woods that includes a picnic (with a special dessert made by my daughter) on the bank of our local river. We skip rocks after we eat. This has become a favorite summer outing.

### Think 'active'

Sitting around day-in and day-out frustrates kids; they need activity for healthy bodies and minds. I ban the use of computers and watching of videos and TV during the day (although the rules are different for inclement weather). We still go down to the local park to swing

and spin and hit some balls around on the tennis courts. We often play games of H-O-R-S-E or croquet while waiting on dinner.

### Think transitions

Provide an hour of downtime every day, to quietly read or create artwork. I set the kitchen timer, one of my "best" friends. Kids need time to regroup independently, just as you do. Similar to when you had your newborn, rest when they rest. I encourage you to not take this time to do household chores or other activities.

### Keep it loose

Kids need routines; they help regulate their mind and body clocks, and kids know what to expect. Because there are fewer commitments during the summer, you can have a little looser routine, for example letting your kids stay up later to catch the fireflies or watch the stars and sleep later in the mornings. Kids should still have chores, like walking the dog and helping to water the garden. Just remember that while you have a looser schedule, the need still exists to keep a focus on the day and any plans.

The summer you desire is within your reach. Use the vacation time to reconnect and build deeper relationships among your kids, and between your kids and you. That last day of summer? You'll come to wish it wasn't.

*Judy M. Miller is a freelance writer living with her husband and four children. She is a parent educator and the author of "What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween" and "Writing to Heal Adoption Grief: Making Connections & Moving Forward."*

## Backup options

Have some back-up plans you can rely on in case of weather, other unforeseen circumstances, or your intended plan falls flat. The ideas are endless. Here are a few we enjoy:

**Board games:** Make sure the games can incorporate all of your kids' ability levels, as well as yours.

**Kitchen fun:** Create a menu together. Shop for the ingredients and

prepare the meal together. Kids of all ages can participate, from getting items together to measuring, stirring, mixing, cutting (with your supervision), and cleanup. We do a theme night once a week — Thai, Chinese, Italian, etc.

**Get out of the house:** Think pottery painting, first-run movies, local museums, and day-trips (destinations within a few hours of where you live).



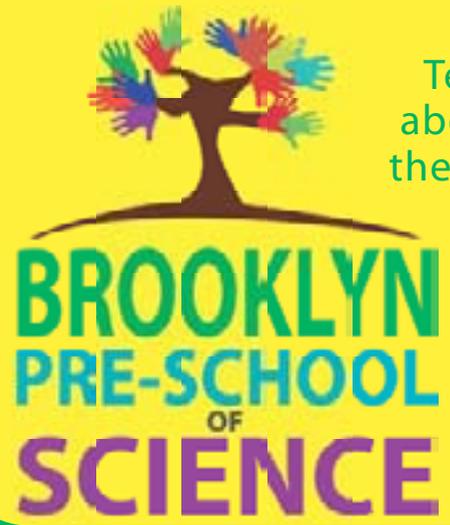


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# 6

# more reasons why dads are super!

Fathers add  
so much  
to their  
children's  
lives

BY DR. HEIDI SMITH LUEDTKE

**P**op culture doesn't appreciate dads. Sitcoms make fun of their diapering (in)abilities or portray dads as irresponsible babysitters who feed the kids pizza, ice cream, and sugary soda while mom is out for the evening. Personal experience tells me there may be some truth in this. My own husband shows our kids zombie movies, then acts surprised when they refuse to sleep with the lights out. Really.

Stereotypes aside, it can be hard to move past the mom-knows-best mentality and make room for dad's different style of parenting. Mom of four, Tsara Shelton of Teague, Texas, says parenting together with her boys' dad has been the biggest challenge in their happy, 13-year marriage.

"I always want to be the one with the answers and insights! But in truth, it's been co-parenting that's blessed my boys with the best of what both mom and dad have to offer," she says.

All moms can learn valuable lessons from watching what dads do best. Here's how:

## 1. Dads are good with good enough

Most moms I know struggle to drown out the nagging inner critic who says we aren't good enough. We feel intense pressure to keep the house (and kids!) clean and to respond cheerfully to every social obligation. Our to-do lists never get done.

And it's stressful.

Researchers at Auburn University found women are more likely to feel inadequate at home and at work than men, because we're more apt to be perfectionists.

Dads recognize the 80 percent solution is often good enough. They can walk away from a sink full of unwashed dishes — without feeling

guilty — to spend time playing with the kids before bedtime. Moms can't deny there is wisdom in this approach. Dishes don't grow up and go off to college. Kids do.

Being good with "good enough" doesn't mean dads deny their shortcomings. Tina Bushman, co-author of the family discussion-starting book "Table Talk," says she has learned from watching her husband, John, address his missteps.

"When it has been a rough parenting day, he will sit on the edge of our child's bed and explain that even though parents try hard, we aren't perfect," she says. "He apologizes if he got upset or said the wrong thing and asks forgiveness. It takes a humble dad to do that, and I love him for it."

## 2. Dads encourage active play

Mud pies, snow forts, and do-it-yourself science experiments are dads' domain, says Wendy Valderrama of Denver, Colo., "They do messy fun really well."

Valderrama watches her 3-year-old daughter's princess wedding ball with prince Daddy every night. "He lets her take the lead and follows right along with her in the imaginative play," she says. A dad's passion for play is a joy to behold.

When they aren't entertaining kids on their own level, dads expose kids to grown-up tasks and topics. A dad might teach a child how to mow the lawn or talk about financial matters during informal apprenticeship sessions. Since dads aren't focused on ages and stages of development, they may share information that is over kids' heads. There is an upside to this, Valderrama says.

"The conversations I overhear between my daughter and her dad are amazing! I see her processing concepts I wouldn't have thought possible, because I am stuck in a

preschool mentality all day."

## 3. Dads encourage risk-taking

While moms' protective instincts lead us to discourage kids from taking physical risks, studies show dads give kids more personal space to explore the environment, even if there is risk involved.

"At the park, I'm nervous about my 2-year-old going down the big slide, and, at home, I protect my baby from face-planting every time he attempts to crawl," says San Diego, Calif. mom Anna Crowe. Dads often push kids to go outside their comfort zones.

Physical challenges help kids develop strength, coordination and confidence. And, by testing their physical prowess, "kids learn valuable skills that could prevent them from getting into serious trouble in the future," Crowe admits. Dads allow kids to learn by doing when moms might be more likely to teach by talking.

During the anxious moments in parenting, dads maintain a calm composure moms admire. Stacy Lewis of Long Beach, Calif., says her husband changed her perspective on parenting forever during one intense encounter with their three kids.

He said, "I don't get it! You are the mom. Why are you hollering?" And something clicked for Lewis. "He keeps things insanelly balanced, and I love him for that."

## 4. Dads set boundaries

Because women are focused on preserving social connections, we may avoid family conflict. The mental and emotional effort of peace-keeping can lead to emotional exhaustion for women, according to research by psychologists at Carnegie Mellon University. Over time, minor frustrations can grow into deep, simmering resentments.

Shelton admits she struggles to



establish clear, firm rules for her kids. She sees most issues as gray areas and enjoys discussing the connections between kids' behaviors, social expectations, and cultural pressures.

While moms might see kids' behavior in shades of gray, dads can take a more black-and-white view. Men are less likely to shy away from conflict, because they don't take it personally. That means they step in and confront interpersonal issues

head-on. Shelton's two youngest sons — who had symptoms of autism at early ages — learned to be comfortable in their own bodies and brains because of their dad's black-and-white boundaries.

"If my husband didn't bring everything down to its simplicity, I would get lost loving my boys in the gray," she says. The key to parenting well is to figure out which situations require a firm, rule-based response

and which ones call for deeper conversation. Dads seem to know this intuitively.

### 5. Dads don't fret

Women often wish men would listen to our problems without trying to solve them, but that's not how men are wired. When things go wrong, dads jump into problem-solving mode and determine what steps they can take to change the situa-

tion. If the first attempt isn't successful, dads try another approach.

Women are more likely to focus on feelings, which can actually amplify distress. We may commiserate with girlfriends or replay worst-case scenarios in our minds. C. Lee Reed of Beachside, Fla., recalls her father often told his kids to "suck it up" in the face of disappointment.

"It sounds crazy, but we learned to put on our big girl panties when things didn't go our way," Reed says. Now she uses the same phrase with her own daughter. It lightens the mood when emotions run high.

Dads' emotional balance allows them to keep parenting problems in perspective. Crowe says she often panicked at her son's inability to sleep through the night or the fact that he didn't crawl when other babies did. But her husband took a longer view.

"He taught me not to worry so much about the little things, unless they become a bigger concern," says Crowe. A calm response is both comforting and practical.

### 6. Dads are present

Moms take pride in our superhuman ability to do five things at once, but there is an undeniable downside. Multitasking prevents us from seizing the joys of the present moment. Lauren Nichols of Farmingdale, NY, praises her husband's ability to be in the moment with their 4-year-old son.

"I admire his ability to slow down and listen to everything our son has to say. It is as if he really remembers what it was like to be a little kid. They are two peas in a pod."

Reed is inspired by her husband's presence as well. While Reed, who calls herself "Helicopter Mom" is busy multitasking, her husband, "Just Plane Dad," knows how to be fully present in the moment, she says.

"When he spends time with our daughter, he's not worried about the laundry or paying the bills. He is all there."

Tuning in completely allows dads to see children as growing, loving little people. And it reminds us all that we're blessed by our children — and their dads — in big and small ways every day.

*Heidi Smith Luedtke is a personality psychologist who has gleaned many practical parenting strategies from her husband's more laid-back approach. She is the author of "Detachment Parenting."*

# The right number

Just how much can a little girl fit in a tent?

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

**I**t's hard to believe I'll be celebrating my 11th Father's Day — as a dad — this year. My baby girl Jessie, now 10, stands 5 feet tall. It doesn't seem possible, but the numbers don't lie.

We live in a world filled with numbers — dates, times, measurements, bank accounts, thermostat settings, weights, ages, house numbers, bills, paychecks, ball scores, and many more.

Of course, some numbers are more important than others. I prefer Jessie's grades to be in the 90s or 100. Being a college football fan, I hope my teams score more points than their opponents each Saturday. I don't count the number of hairs on my head, but I'd rather have a bigger number. It doesn't take an auditor to know that some of them have gone missing in recent years.

Sunday afternoon, Jessie provided my wife Mattie, and me with an interesting numbers challenge. About two weeks earlier, Mattie had a business trip. Rather than leave

## CHERISH THE MOMENTS

her home office unused while she was gone, I set up Jessie's tent and tunnels.

Long ago, my tall girl outgrew the tent, a gift for her second birthday, but she still loves to play in it. The square tent measures just four feet long by four feet wide. It is 42 inches tall at the highest point, and connects to one of the four tunnels that came with the set.

Jessie had a blast playing with her dog Sadie in the tent and tunnels. She even slept in the tent during Mattie's absence. Well, part of her slept in the tent. About half of the sleeping bag containing Jessie's legs stretched outside the opening. The small tent held quite a bit — a girl, a dog, 14 stuffed animals, one pet pillow, three small pillows, three regular pillows, and several blankets for padding. Each night, I'd place a battery-operated lantern in one of the tunnels, which made a great night light.

When Mattie came home from her trip, Jessie asked to have one final party in the tent before we took it down. She planned

the entire event from food to attire, so all her mom and I had to do was show up. Jessie handed me one of her headbands to wear, while Mattie lucked out with a tiara. Sadie looked cute in the feather boa Jessie wrapped around her neck. The people menu consisted of peanut butter cookies and Kool-Aid. Sadie's plate held a spoonful of peanut butter, Rice Krispies, and a few pieces of leftover chicken.

Now, here is where the numbers problem

began. Jessie not only invited Mattie, Sadie, and me to the party, but also 14 stuffed animals. When Jessie throws a party, she throws a party!

I've heard about cramming people into things, such as a Volkswagen, phone booth, photo booth, even an outhouse. Mattie, Sadie, Jessie, 14 stuffed animals, and I were about to take the "tent stuffing" challenge. At 6-foot-5, I knew I would take up my fair share of the space. With the 14 animals already arranged, Queen Mattie and Show-girl Sadie went in next. Jessie and I squeezed in last, with our cookie plates and Sadie's snacks. We opted to leave the drinks outside the tent (smart thinking by Dad).

"Dad, don't sit on Eeyore!" Luckily, I didn't sit on Sadie's spoonful of peanut butter.

We all made it in, but after getting kicked, twice, within the first minute; I opted to enjoy my cookies and Kool-Aid from the outside looking in. I like it when blood flows to all my extremities, while not being chided for smashing a stuffed donkey. Prior to the conclusion of the party, we all crammed into the tent a second time for a "famie" photo (a selfie of our family).

Each day, we're surrounded by numbers, some within our control, others not. Sometimes we're happy when the number is big, like a sunny winter day in the 70s. Other times, such as when looking down at the bathroom scale, small numbers are better. Some numbers speed by too quickly, like Jessie's age, a number that will end in "teen" before I know it.

Is there such a thing as "the perfect number?" For a few minutes on a Sunday afternoon, we sure found a good one. I have a "famie" to prove it.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments. I wish all dads a happy Father's Day.

*Patrick Hempfing had a 20-year professional career in banking, accounting, and auditing before he became a father at age 44. He is now a full-time husband, stay-at-home dad, and writer. Follow him at [www.facebook.com/patricklhempfung](http://www.facebook.com/patricklhempfung) and on Twitter @PatrickHempfung.*



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# Mental health

Don't neglect this part of your child's well-being

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

**M**ental health is an important aspect of overall health. Children suffer from mental health issues just as severely as adults, yet the priority on access to good care for children with mental health issues has been a lower priority. Many agencies are working to change that.

The purpose of the specific focus of Children's Mental Health Week, May 3–9, 2015, was to raise awareness about the need for good access to care for children with mental health issues, but also to highlight the support resources that are already available for children and teens who may be suffering from mental health issues and trauma. It was an opportunity to discuss the importance of access to mental health services, and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues. During this week, positive mental health practices were featured.

The theme this year was "Mental Health is Fundamental." And it truly is. Mental health issues stem from illness in the central nervous system, and should be prioritized as high as any other health condition facing our children. While as many as 20 percent of children in America have some sort of mental health issue, according to research by ScienceDirect.com, parents remain overwhelmingly under educated about children's health issues and resources.

Our children need access to good mental health programs across the United States. A recent study from the U.S.



National Center for Health Statistics found that one in 13 school-age children is taking one or more prescription medicine for behavioral or emotional issues. The data was derived from the National Health Interview Survey, which continually collects information about U.S. health and health care. Although the researchers could not identify specifically what the children were being treated for, in their expert opinions, the most likely disorders are attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, and depression.

When left untreated in children and adolescents, mental health problems can result in negative and sometimes tragic consequences. These may include dropping out of high school, substance abuse, juvenile detention, physical health problems, and even suicide. Associated costs, both financial and human, are wide and can impact not only the child, but his family, community, and beyond (as much as \$247 billion per year, according to the Annual Report on Health Care for Children and Youth in the United States).

The National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health

(National FFCMH) ([www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek/toolkit](http://www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek/toolkit)) wants Children's Mental Health Awareness Week to send the following messages to our communities:

- Mental health is essential to overall health and well-being.
- Serious emotional and mental health disorders in children and youth are real and treatable.
- Children and youth with mental health challenges and their families deserve access to services and supports that are family driven, youth guided, and culturally appropriate.
- Values of acceptance, dignity, and social inclusion should be promoted throughout all communities for children and families.
- Family and youth voice is a valued asset in determining appropriate services and interventions.
- End stigma!

It's important for our children, families, and communities.

*Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother of three small children. Her son was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at the age of 7, and she is passionate about removing the stigma around children's mental-health issues.*

## Resources:

Learn more about awareness week, childhood emotional and behavioral problems, and medications from the following sites:

Supporting Children's Mental Health: Tips for Parents and Educators [www.nasponline.org/resources/mentalhealth/mhtips.aspx](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/mentalhealth/mhtips.aspx)

**American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

[www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876285914002538](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1876285914002538)

[www.kidsmentalhealth.org/](http://www.kidsmentalhealth.org/)

[www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek/toolkit](http://www.ffcmh.org/awarenessweek/toolkit)

[www.samhsa.gov/children/national-childrens-awareness-day-events/awareness-day-2015](http://www.samhsa.gov/children/national-childrens-awareness-day-events/awareness-day-2015)

**Young children resources**

<http://archive.samhsa.gov/children/earlychildhoodmat.asp>

**Specific resources for young adults:**

<http://archive.samhsa.gov/children/youngadult-home.asp>



## Learning the ABCs of speech and language development

BY DR. ROSALIE MARDER  
UNTERMAN

**W**hat can you do if you have a child you feel may be late in developing speech? What if your voice is always hoarse or strained? What if you or your child stutters? What can you do if your child has difficulty communicating or does not relate with others due to difficulties with social skills? What can you do if someone has difficulty hearing, or needs a hearing aid? Even “small” issues, like a child with a lisp or a need to speak more clearly or accent reduction, can seem overwhelming.

Communication is key to learning and independence. Speech and language help us communicate thoughts, ideas, and emotions. When a child has special needs, development of communication may become more difficult, but no less important. Parents must be aware of speech and language development, for sometimes they are the first indicator of the need for assistance. Speech is the verbal expression of language; the way sounds and words

are formed. Language is the understanding and use of communication.

As parents, we wonder if our child is developing as expected. We may ask, when should speech and language skills develop? How will I know if he is on time or delayed? During the first few years of life, babies respond to their environment and to the people around them. During the first five months, babies react to sound, watch people speaking, vocalize pleasure and displeasure, and make noise when spoken to. At 12 months, a baby understands “no-no” and tries to communicate. Modeled sounds are repeated and the baby is babbling repeated sounds. At 24 months, the baby follows simple directions, points to objects named, says approximately 50 words and begins to put words together. By 3 years of age, a child’s vocabulary may be too large to count, using sentences comprised of two to three (or more) words. At age 4, the child can be understood by most people.

What if your child has not developed speech and language as described above? Does this mean he has a serious problem? When in

doubt, it is always recommended that one speak to a professional. Speech-language pathologists and audiologists assess individuals across the lifespan, from newborn hearing screenings and feeding assessments to geriatric communication, hearing, and cognitive issues. Speech-language therapy is offered for many issues, such as language development, articulation, voice, stuttering, apraxia, hearing impairment, aphasia, traumatic brain injury, autism, social skills, accent modification, reading, and functional communication. In many cases, advice can be given that will be helpful and questions can be answered. Sometimes a more in-depth look is needed, with a full evaluation, followed by a discussion of the results and recommendations.

If you are concerned about speech, language, or hearing problems for yourself or any member of your family, please seek help and be evaluated.

*Dr. Rosalie Marder Unterman, is a clinical director and associate professor at Touro College’s graduate program in speech-language pathology.*

# Private/Independent School Guide

## Special Needs

### DIRECTORY

#### Applied Behavioral Interventions

2625 East 14 St, Suite 200  
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329 East 149th Street (Fourth floor) Bronx, NY 10451  
641 Lexington Avenue #622 New York, NY 10022  
646-666-3088 or [www.abisvc.com](http://www.abisvc.com)

We empower our staff, families, and other team members through extensive training and support as they collaborate creatively to change the lives of the individuals we serve. ABI utilizes a family-centered approach to encourage generalization and independence. ABI provides office based diagnostic evaluations and developmental assessments, as well as on-going behavioral health services for individuals on the autism spectrum in their homes and communities, mainly through private insurance for ages three to adulthood.

ABI clinicians use techniques including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to achieve measurable outcomes, while also incorporating naturalistic and social modeling based methods tailored to the needs of each individual. ABI's team includes multi-lingual professionals who serve families from various cultural backgrounds. ABI sees teaching as a science rather than an art, with children needing effective and efficient therapists to optimize learning time. Programs have been developed by a team with over 15 years of direct clinical experience.

#### Challenge Early Intervention Center

Exec. Office: 649 39th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232  
Queens Office: 72-38 Main Street, Flushing, NY 11367  
Staten Island Office: 1911 Richmond Ave, Staten Island, NY 10314  
718-851-3300 or [www.challenge-ei.com](http://www.challenge-ei.com)

Challenge provides home/community and center based developmental evaluations and Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers under the age of 3 who have or are suspected of having a developmental delay and/or disability. Challenge has been a provider of the highest quality EI and ABA services since 1987. All services are provided at

NO OUT OF POCKET COST to parents. Services are provided throughout Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island and parts of Manhattan.

#### The Downtown Brooklyn Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic

Located at Long Island University, corner of Flatbush and DeKalb avenues, Metcalf Building, Second Floor  
718-488-3480 or [www.brooklyn.liu.edu](http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu)

Provides state-of-the-art evaluation and treatment services seeing patients of all ages who present a wide range of communication disorders. Specifically, children are referred to the clinic who have problems such as delayed development of speech and language, stuttering problems and language-learning disabilities.

Adult clients include individuals who suffer from communication problems related to stroke, head trauma and voice disorders as well as those that stutter. Audiological services include both hearing screenings in the community and complete hearing and auditory processing assessments in our audiological suite.

#### EBS Therapy of New York

718-238-0377 or [www.ebstherapy.com](http://www.ebstherapy.com)

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EBS therapy of New York is a multi-disciplinary team of highly-trained specialists with a passion for working to help children and adults move, communicate, and learn to their greatest potential.

Our clinic is located in Brooklyn, New York, but our services reach far beyond – into schools, homes and the communities throughout the five boroughs. We work with families to determine the best and most effective places and times

*Continued on page 28*



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This Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a public program for children under the age of three who are either suspected of having or at risk for developmental delays or disabilities. EIP is funded by NYS and NYC. All EIP services are provided at no cost to parents. Health insurance may be used for approved services. A child's eligibility for the program can be determined only by state approved evaluators under contract, and all services must be authorized by the NYC Early Intervention Program.

For more information about CHALLENGE: **718-851-3300 • challenge-nl.com**

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- ▲ Free hearing screening for anyone over the age of 7.

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## Special Needs

### DIRECTORY

*Continued from page 26*

to meet the unique needs of each child. Our mission is to make a difference within the community by helping our clients achieve success in communication, learning and movement.

#### Rivendell School

277 3RD Avenue; Bet Carroll & President Street  
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(two through six years). Rivendell School offers beautiful Montessori classrooms, an excellent student/teacher ratio, and a warm, cooperative atmosphere where children learn to work and play. Shelly Wolf Scott is the Admissions coordinator.

#### Touro College Speech and Hearing Center Speech-Language Therapy

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# Peace offering

Public and charter schools *can* work together

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**T**he city's "district vs. charter" battle continues, until someone comes up with workable solutions that make both sides happy, and both sides realize it's all about making the students happy and encouraging them to succeed as they enter a super-competitive world.

According to a 2014 Wall St. Journal article, "High-Performing N.Y.C. Charter Schools Share Their Success Strategies," efforts have been made (behind the scenes) to help district teachers and principals learn from high-performing charters.

Places like NYC Collaborates ([nyccollaborates.org](http://nyccollaborates.org)) create opportunities for educators from district and charter schools to come together to share information and team up to improve student achievement.

It makes a lot of sense.

Youth organization Harlem RBI responded to the need for better access to education within the community and opened DREAM Charter School — East Harlem's community-based public charter — in 2008.

According to its website, [www.dreamschoolnyc.org](http://www.dreamschoolnyc.org), the school's mission is to prepare students for high-performing high schools, colleges, and beyond through a rigorous academic program that aims to nurture critical thinkers who possess a strong character and a love of learning, along with a commitment to wellness and active citizenship.

"DREAM Charter School is pleased to see the recent legislative changes that further secure

## NY'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PART 3 OF A SERIES

Efforts have been made (behind the scenes) to help district teachers and principals learn from high-performing charters.

the growth of New York City's charter school sector. But more work remains to be done until all charter schools in private space receive equitable facilities funding," said Eve Colavito, head of the school.

"Each dollar spent on rent takes away from valuable resources that could be spent on our classrooms," she added. "We look forward to working with our policy makers to bring about these changes to benefit our children."

In a 2014 NY Daily News article ("The truth about charter schools"), quality charters are compared to well-run organizations: Since charters have more wiggle room, unlike district schools (nine out of 10 aren't unionized), they can innovate and make changes to suit their needs, thanks to management flexibility.

It's all about having the freedom to make savvy decisions, like making the workday longer; adjusting salaries and offering rigorous training; even hiring and firing teachers and school leaders when it's deemed necessary.

However, did you know that local charters are held strictly accountable to the state for student performance, and every five years, are subject to reviews that determine if a school continues to operate?

According to that article, many kids who have attended several of Success Academy's 22 schools have brought home some of the best test scores state-wide, due to the way their unique charters are run: Students are encouraged to spend more time on task, and a respectful, academics-centered environment prevails, while the staff makes sure parents are truly involved with what goes on in the classroom. See more at: [successacademies.org](http://successacademies.org).

In her blog <http://tntp.org/blog/post/success-academy-works-for-my-kid>, super-involved Success Academy parent Ariela Rozman points out that "Success schools across the city have shown tremendous gains for students, often helping them meet state learning standards at double and triple the rates of other schools."

According to [insideschools.org](http://insideschools.org) — a website based at the New School in Manhattan that provides independent insight into local public schools and information about the New York City Department of Education — most of the new charters that have opened in the Big Apple are part of established charter networks, including Success Academy, Achievement First, and Ascend Schools.

And a few of the new schools are independent "mom and pop" charters that aren't part of a larger network.

Certainly, the "Don't compete, collaborate" cause would be furthered if both charter school enthusiasts and foes were more candid about their stance in this hot-button debate.

So, while it doesn't seem likely that folks on both sides of the aisle will be singing "Kumbaya" any time soon, on a more positive note, it does appear that charters are truly committed to sharing best practices with their district school counterparts and improving public education for all students here.

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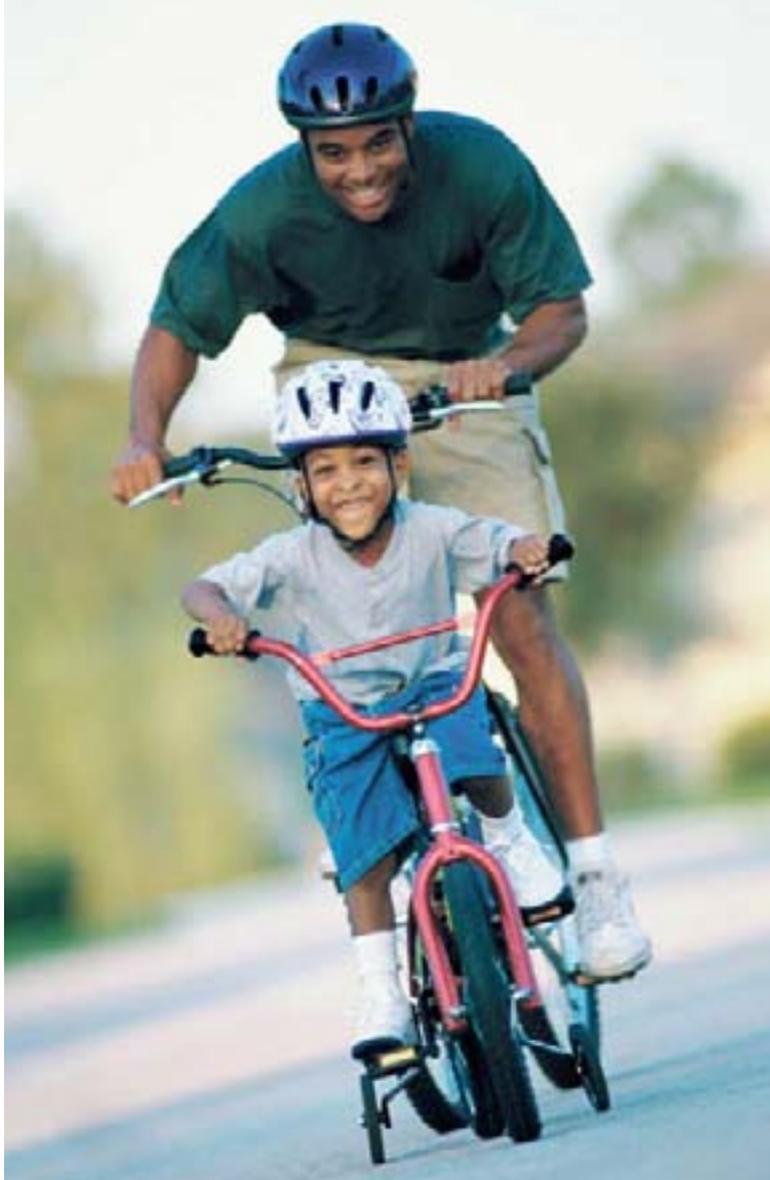
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# Healthy summer

Simple tips  
for a happy  
season

BY DR. MATTHEW WEISSMAN

**A**s school lets out and the summer takes full course, families must not forget about important health and safety tips in the midst of all the excitement. Stay healthy and happy this summer with these quick tips and reminders:

## Food and drink

**Stay hydrated throughout the day.** Unlike soda and juice, water

provides you with optimal hydration free of empty calories and sugar. Start your morning with a tall glass of water and keep drinking it throughout the day. You can tell if you are properly hydrated by the color of your urine — the lighter, the better. To add nutrients and taste to your water, try infusing it with fruits such as lemons, cucumbers, and strawberries.

**Prepare healthy snacks at home.** Make your own healthy snacks for you and your kids to take along for the day. This will prevent the urge to spend extra money and make unhealthy choices at street carts and concession stands. Some go-to ideas include fresh fruit, nuts, hard-boiled eggs, and whole-grain crackers. You can make your own popsicles in the freezer out of fruit juice. Watermelon makes a great snack — look online for tips on how to cut it into sticks for easier snacking.

**Make time for breakfast.** A balanced breakfast consisting of fruit, protein, and whole grains will fuel your morning, boost your metabolism, and prevent overeating later in the day. Granola bars and yogurts are great on-the-go breakfast options, but be conscious of certain flavors or brands that may be high in sugar and fat.

**Don't forget food safety.** Make sure to keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Most foods start to spoil after just a couple of hours in the warmer temperatures, so make use of coolers, thermoses, and ice packs. Always wash your hands before eating.

## Protection

**Wear bug repellent.** Lightly cover any exposed skin with a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you'll be outdoors. Using repellent prevents irritating bug bites and reduces your risk of Lyme disease and West Nile Virus. Going camping? Consider a stronger repellent that lasts all day and is meant for the woods, with at least 20–30 percent DEET. Don't forget to check for ticks at the end of each day.

**Use sunscreen.** Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Make sure to use at least two ounces; people often don't use enough. Reapply it every two hours and after swimming or sweating. Most clothing doesn't provide adequate sun protection, so make sure to apply sunscreen underneath. Talk to your kids about the importance of sunscreen, too — a few bad sunburns

during childhood can more than double the risk of melanoma.

**Wear protective clothing.** Wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses with ultraviolet protection are great ways to stay in style while protecting yourself from sun exposure. When walking or hiking in tall, grassy areas, remember to wear long pants and socks to protect yourself from ticks.

**Remember your helmet.** Every kid should have a well-fitting helmet to wear whenever on wheels. Accidents are common on bikes, skateboards, scooters and skates — even for older and more experienced riders. For activities prone to falling, consider knee, elbow, and wrist pads as well.

## Fitness

**Get moving.** Ditch the electronics, go outside and get active. Begin your day with a morning run, walk, or hike, and organize family outings that are centered around physical activity. Limit total screen time to one hour per day. Try to walk instead of taking the bus, or get off the bus or subway a stop early.

**Track your steps.** Get a pedometer app on your cellphone or a walk and run tracking app so you can see how far you've made it. If you have not made it 10,000 steps by the early evening, find a way to get some extra activity.

**Be cautious at the beach and pool.** Make sure to always swim with a buddy, preferably where a lifeguard can see you. Take frequent breaks and make sure to stay hydrated. Get swimming lessons for your children. Pay constant attention to your children — many kids drown while their parents are looking down at their cellphone or running a quick errand. Contrary to popular belief, drownings are generally silent.

**Take these tips on the road.** Remember, the rules don't change just because you are on vacation. Make sure to pack enough snacks and water for the car trip. Leave yourself enough visibility when driving, even with lots of suitcases in the back. Make sure to wear your seat belt and have the kids in appropriate car seats. Pack a first-aid kit with alcohol swabs, bandages, and tweezers in your car.

*Dr. Matthew Weissman, an internist and a pediatrician, is the chief medical officer for Community Healthcare Network, a network of 11 federally-qualified health centers in four boroughs of New York City.*

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## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# 5 ways to say 'thanks' to your child's teacher

**W**ith the school year wrapping up, many moms are looking for a way to show gratitude to their child's teacher. My son's school takes up a collection, and the class mom buys a gift from all the collected money. I like to participate in that, and I think it's great, because it takes the pressure off busy moms who don't have time to find a personalized gift. But I also like to do something extra.

My son has been extremely fortunate in the teachers he has had at Good Shepherd School in Brooklyn. Every time I hear about another teacher doing something horrific in the news, I just cringe, and then I thank my lucky stars that my son has such wonderful educators helping to mold his mind and conscience.

Let's face it. When you drop your child off at his classroom, you don't really know what happens when you're not around. You might get filled in after the fact by your child, but more often than not, leaving your child in the care of another adult is a leap of faith.

Teachers are not just there to teach ABCs and 123s. They do a million countless things every day that never get recognized. My son's teachers have been a constant source of guidance, encouragement, and stability.

Teachers help children in countless ways each day, and it's important that we recognize that. Here are some small ways to thank your child's teacher this year:

**Bookstore giftcard.** What teacher doesn't like books or need more? Odds are that a bookstore gift card would be like giving your child's teacher the keys to a candy store. (It would be for me, too!) I don't think I could ever get sick of browsing the bookstore aisles.

**Not a mug.** By the time a teacher has completed teacher training and field visits, she probably already has more than enough mugs that say #1 Teacher on them.

**Giftcard for school supply store.** All the teachers I have ever known



could use more school supplies, and way too many pay for them out of their own pocket throughout the year. This gift is a no fail.

**Something they personally love.** A few years ago, my daughter had a teacher that was fascinated by frogs. She had frog pictures, statues, earrings ... you get the picture. So at the end of the year, my daughter picked out an especially beautiful porcelain frog for her collection. One year, another teacher was obsessed with the New York Jets, and we bought him a Jets souvenir. If you know for a fact that your child's teacher loves a particular thing, go with it.

**A handwritten letter.** You don't have to buy anything to let a teacher know how much she is appreciated. A simple letter telling her why this year was a successful experience for your child means way more than a store-bought gift. And a copy of that letter sent directly to the principal is a nice touch, too. Teachers make a school, and principals should know when a teacher does an outstanding job. Hearing it straight from the parents always helps!

On a personal note, I would like to extend my extreme gratitude to my son's (and my daughter who grad-

uated a few years ago) principal, Mr. Anthony Paparelli. Having had my three children at three different grammar schools, I have never encountered a principal who cared so much and strived every day to make school a positive, challenging, and fun environment for all his students.

Paparelli was available to the parents every morning and afternoon in the schoolyard, attended countless functions with enthusiasm, revisited curriculums and raised the standards each year, while somehow still managing to find the time to participate in the yearly jumpathon, hand out paper towels in the bathrooms during lunch, chat with parents, and find a million and one ways to make his students love their school and learning. He changed the lives of countless kids, and as he moves on to the next chapter in his career, his absence will surely leave a hole, but it will also leave a legacy of dedication, love, and strength.

*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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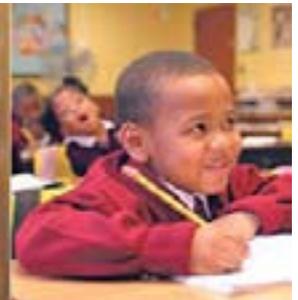
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FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

# Word of wisdom from mom moguls

The mom moguls breakfast was a huge success, with more than 250 guests attending to listen to a celebrity panel talk about the balance between home life and work life, and what it takes to be a successful “mompreneur.” The celebrity panel included Kelly Rutherford, actress and founder of the Children’s Justice Campaign; Aliza Licht, senior vice president of Global Communications and Twitter phenomenon; DKNY PR GIRL Veronica Webb, entrepreneur and supermodel; Keri Glassman, Founder of Nutritious Life and The Nutrition School, TV personality and author; Genevieve Gorder, interior designer and HGTV TV personality; and Rachel Blumenthal, CEO and founder of the Crickets Circle. I moderated the #FabULyss breakfast with Veronica Webb.

These highly successful women shared tips for up-and-coming mom moguls. Some of these tips were getting thunderclaps, such as launching a product and perfecting your pitch to be able to say what your brand is in just a few words. The mom moguls also shared some wisdom on how to balance both home life and work life. Keri Glassman offered up some advice on that by saying, “You’re



The author (far left) and Veronica Webb (far right) with the amazing moms.

allowed to love what you do. You can love spending time with them more, but it’s amazing to love what you do.”

The panel also described the influence social media has on a product, person, or companies success. Veronica Webb explained the importance of proof reading before posting anything on a social media outlet. Social media has turned into a professional platform and it’s pertinent that it’s treated that way. This panel of inspiring women helped other women learn the tips and skills it takes to be a successful working mother in today’s technology controlled world.

The event was held at Urbo, a beautiful restaurant on 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue. Two gift bags filled with goodies were hung on each chair. Bouquets that were set as centerpieces were also available to take home. Before the panel spoke, guests were invited to go into the bar area to get a drink and get pampered by the Glam Squad. A wonderful brunch was served filled with French toast, eggs, bacon, yogurt parfait, and some delectable pastries. For dessert, a variety of cupcakes were available, along with two amazing cakes — one in the shape of a handbag and the other promoting Aliza Licht’s new book, “Leave Your Mark.” It’s safe to say everyone left with some knowledge, a full tummy, and two bags filled with #FabULyss gifts.

All in all, the event was a huge success. Future and present mom moguls received helpful tips and tools in order to help them reach their career goals. To be a working woman is hard enough, but to be a working mom is even harder. This event shows all women that their careers don’t have to stop when they have a baby. A mom mogul is the most powerful woman on earth; also the busiest, and this #DivaMom’s breakfast showcased what it takes to be one.

*Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLyssious Moms (www.divamoms.com).*

**Notable quotes from the mom moguls:**

**Aliza Licht:** “Repetition is Reputation.”

“Perfect your elevator pitch. Be able to explain what your brand is in a few sentences.”

**Veronica Webb:** “When you’re doing social media, proof-read everything!”

“In starting a business, as long as you don’t have the same problems everyday, you’re doing good.”

**Sasha Charnin:** “Your instincts

are the best instincts. You know you.”

**“Google is my best friend.”**

**Genevieve Gorder:** “Sometimes it feels like it’s never enough. Know that we are all there with you.”

“The most authentic voice is always going to be your own.”

**Kelly Rutherford:** “I always get people on my social media telling me how to better my own social media!”

“Kids are little Buddhas. They teach us everyday.”

**Rachel Blumenthal:** “Follow

your gut, my gut said to start another business! We are wired to always be going.”

“They should be so lucky to have us!”

**Lyss Stern:** “One of the greatest things we are doing right now, is women really respect the talents we have. One thing is not better than the other.”

**Keri Glassman:** “That’s just it. There’s nothing else like it.”

“I always wanted to push forward. I never wanted to be complacent.

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## A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

# Tutorials offer true one-on-one attention

**M**any college students seek comfort in large lecture classes where they can be just one of many faces in a crowd. For these types of students, the very idea of a class with only two students and one professor may seem unimaginable. However, this is part of an Oxford-style tutorial, a unique experience my college offers for students who dare to seek out a more intimate and in-depth learning experience.

Based on a similar program at Oxford University, tutorials allow students to fully stimulate themselves academically through intense discussion and writing. This semester, I was fortunate enough to take my first tutorial class at Williams. This opportunity has been not only enjoyable, but also extremely eye-opening for me about my needs when it comes to education.

If you had asked me in high school whether I could envision myself in a class where I am one of only two students, I probably would have said “no.” Even in elementary school, I was not the most talkative of students. Class discussions were terrifying for me, because I never had much confidence in my own opinions. I was also very shy and would rarely take the initiative to share my thoughts, unless asked.

Slowly, I did outgrow my timid demeanor and became a bit chattier. Still, I found class participation an internal struggle for me in high school. I did not like answering questions, because I was worried about being wrong or embarrassing myself. Even when I had opinions to share, I was always concerned I would not be able to articulate them clearly or someone would viciously challenge my ideas.

Given my previously poor track record with class participation, going to a small liberal arts college was daunting. Yet, the small classes and approachable professors proved to be a very different experience from my prior public high school days. With fewer students, I did not feel as



intimidated to participate. I did not have to compete with as many hands flying into the air. I felt more comfortable speaking my mind, especially in subjects I enjoyed, like history.

This realization prompted me to partake in the most rigorous learning experience my school offers: the tutorial. Each tutorial course offered at Williams focuses on a very narrow topic. My current course is a history tutorial that takes a close look at America during the 1970s and how the political, social, and economic structures of the time have implications on our modern-day country.

Each tutorial section only has two to three students and meets only once a week in the professor’s office. The atmosphere is very relaxed and informal. Discussions and conversations have never been awkward. That may seem like it’s not a strenuous course, but I quickly realized you cannot rely on others to instigate discussion. You really need to complete all the reading thoroughly and think about the main ideas and arguments of each piece.

Every week, my partner and I have been assigned a collection of fascinating readings and are expected to present a six-page essay every other week, which can be challenging when I have to balance heavy workloads for my other classes.

For me, I have found that the one-on-one attention from the professor has been very beneficial. My partner and I direct all the discussion, choosing what aspects of the reading we feel is most important or most interesting. Our professor is open to

whatever we choose to talk about and follows our lead. Occasionally, she will guide us when appropriate with some big-picture questions, which are challenging and really motivate us to think analytically.

My partner and I come from different backgrounds, but do share some similar experiences, which has led to more out-of-the-box, but relatable conversations. Best of all, I feel comfortable test-driving new ideas and appreciate the immediate feedback I can get from both my partner and my professor. I do not need to suffer the embarrassment of being wrong in front of a large class. The informal setting makes errors and misunderstandings a lot more forgiving.

Apart from the academic advantages of a tutorial, I have come to better understand what my needs are as a student. I seem to need to form more personal connections with the instructor, rather than merely listening to a professor lecture from afar. I perform better in smaller environments where creativity and free-thinking is encouraged. This knowledge has been very valuable and has helped me figure out the tools I need for success.

I encourage other students to explore what unique learning experiences their school offers — even if it seems out of their comfort zone. We all learn in different ways, and you might be surprised to find a method that works just for you.

*Aglaia Ho is a sophomore at Williams College and a native New Yorker. She also writes for her own blog at [www.aglaiaho.weebly.com](http://www.aglaiaho.weebly.com).*

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DEAR  
DR. KARYN  
DR. KARYN GORDON

# Five benefits of camp

*Dear Dr. Karyn,  
My daughter is 11 and her friends are all going to camp, but I'm nervous about this. She keeps asking me to let her go, but because I never went to camp I'm anxious around this — it just wasn't part of our family growing up. What are your thoughts on kids going to camp? Am I overreacting?*

**C**amp provides powerful emotional, physical, and leadership development opportunities. Here are my five benefits for sending kids to camp!

## **Builds lifetime friendships**

My belief is that camp is a powerful “friendship accelerator.” Where else can you build deep friendships in one week? Generally, friendships take months or years to cultivate — and yet those of us who have gone to camp understand how quickly friendships can form when you are living in the same cabin, doing campfires, taking risks together, and having an insane amount of fun!

I went to camp for the first time when I was 8 years old and I have maintained some of my longest friendships with those friends now more than 30 years later. Camp is truly a unique place that really allows people to build lifetime friendships!

## **Builds independence**

Helping kids move from dependence to independence is a critical developmental stage (ideally we want to help them move to interdependence in their teen and young adult years). Yet, becoming independent does not always happen naturally (that's why you can see a 25 year old still dependent on his parents, living at home playing video-games). Parents beware! When parents do too much (overindulge, micro-manage, helicopter their kids' and teens' decisions), it stunts independence from developing.

That's why camp can be so powerful! Camp provides a healthy, safe environment for kids to have some space away from their parents and to start exercising their independence muscle (yes, think of it like an emotional



muscle that needs a lot of practice)!

## **Goal-settings**

When was the last time your kids took an intentional healthy risk or set a goal? This topic came up in our house recently because last month we had the Raptors head coach Dwane Casey speak to our parent community (he was exceptional) about inspiring your kids to take risks (I'll share next month some of his key insights). So leading up to his keynote I was openly talking about risk-taking with my boys. And they really got it!

Risk-taking is a skill or emotional muscle that is critical for kids to learn — but how? One of the best ways is to be in an environment that allows them to naturally try new things with someone encouraging and coaching them as they start to spread their wings. Camp provides that powerful, yet safe environment for kids to start exercising this ability.

## **Increases confidence**

The first book I wrote was on self-esteem for kids, and a significant finding I discovered in my research was that one of the best ways to build self-esteem is for kids to set goals and take risks. When we set realistic goals, and try our very best to reach them, we build self-efficacy, or this sense that “Wow, I am in control of my life. Life doesn't happen to me (passive) but I can make it happen (active).”

Camp provides an amazing environment for kids to try new things,

push themselves out of their comfort zone, and expand their interests, which is why it helps to build their confidence.

## **Improves activity**

Many parents ask me how can they get their kids away from technology. Yes, you can set limits and negotiate for time boundaries — but it can be exhausting! When I was doing my doctorate there was a type of therapy I was drawn to called structural and solution-oriented therapy, which focused on finding solutions or changing a structure to create change. So, yes, you can exercise your communication and conflict-resolution skills to limit technology, OR, structurally, you can put your kids in an environment where technology is not an option — like camp!

Just to be clear, I'm not against technology or media time (after all, I work nearly one-third of my time now in media), but I do think there needs to be a balance. I strongly believe that kids need to have ample time outside, being active, and enjoying nature! In many ways camp allows us to enjoy the simple things of life again — playing, being, exploring, building, expanding ourselves, and relating to those around us!

*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, and best-selling author of “Dr. Karyn's Guide To The Teen Years” (Harper Collins. Visit her at [www.dkleadership.org](http://www.dkleadership.org).*



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## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Body positivity in an online crucible

**R**aising a daughter who's happy in her own skin isn't easy. For years, parents have worried about the unrealistic way women are depicted in media, advertising, pop culture, and even video games. Many try to counter this influence by pointing out to their daughters that commercial images of women are often manipulated by people hoping to make a profit.

Excellent information about the connection between traditional media and body image is widely available online. Check out the research at [geenadavisinstitute.org](http://geenadavisinstitute.org), the infographics at [representation-project.org](http://representation-project.org), and the interactive game at [mypopstudio.com](http://mypopstudio.com).

Social media poses different challenges, largely because girls themselves are creating and commenting on their own images. This gives them tremendous power — and makes them hugely vulnerable. On platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and Twitter, appearance can become a competitive sport as girls vie for emoji, likes, and followers.

Selfies in particular push girls to compare themselves with peers at their prettiest, and it doesn't take long to figure out that the fastest way to get more likes is to be thin, skilled with makeup, dressed in revealing clothing, or positioned in a provocative pose.

A recent survey by Common Sense Media found that, among teens who post online, 35 percent are worried about being tagged in unattractive photos, 27 percent feel anxious about their appearance in posted photos, and a quarter take it personally when their photos are ignored.

Parents may not be able to dominate the conversations about appearance that are going on in social media, but they can and should comment. Girls need to hear from mothers who have come to terms with their own body issues and fathers who appreciate women for more than their faces and figures. Here are six things to keep in mind:



**Don't dismiss.** For better or worse, people do make judgments about each other based on how they present themselves physically, so your daughter's concerns about how she looks are valid. And for girls who constantly see images that have been filtered and Photoshopped to match an ideal, the curves and pimples of puberty can feel like a crisis.

Parents cannot change the prevailing culture, but you can help your daughter think clearly about two things. First, how much will she allow herself to be influenced by what others think about her looks?

**Encourage her not to give power to those who don't deserve it.** Second, how will she evaluate others? Help her understand that other, less visible qualities — integrity, intelligence, sense of humor, compassion — are more important than appearance.

**Be aware of the awful.** Yes, there really are pro anorexia (pro-ana) and thinspiration (thinspo) websites that encourage girls to starve themselves and praise them when they post emaciated photos. Yes, girls post "Am I pretty?" videos on YouTube and, perhaps unsurprisingly, attract the attention of trolls. Yes, there are apps like Hot or Not that exist simply

to rate the physical attractiveness of users. Although many girls are turned off by these sites, others are susceptible to their appeal.

**Critique photos.** A photo can capture a "real" moment or it can be a performance. Talk to your daughter about how she chooses the photos she decides to post online. What is she trying to express about herself? What kinds of editing techniques does she use and why? What kind of feedback does she hope to get? How will she feel if people misunderstand what she is trying to communicate? You can ask similar questions about the photos her friends post online. Do specific photos capture what she likes about her friend or their relationship? Do other photos make her uncomfortable?

**Filter feedback.** Teens long for feedback from peers — as long as it is positive. Negative comments can be crushing, so parents need to help children develop defenses. Rather than accepting hostile or cruel comments as objectively "true," teach kids to understand them as a reflection of the other person's state of mind. People who are happy with themselves don't feel the need to attack others. Encourage your child to be constructive in her own comments — supporting and encouraging other girls instead of tearing them down.

It may not seem that way in adolescence, but appearance is only a fraction of a girl's identity. You can mitigate the impact of social media by talking often about all the other things you value about your daughter. Create a family environment in which every member is respected for who they are and what they can do rather than how they happen to look on any given day.

*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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## PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

# Effectively prevent sibling rivalries



### Dear Sharon,

My daughters are 5 and 2. The older one is old enough to know that it's not alright to hit. How do we deal with the 2 year old, who doesn't understand this yet? She's continually provoking her big sister.

### Dear Parents,

Almost all siblings provoke each other and it's rarely, if ever, easy for parents to resolve ensuing conflicts. When siblings hit it can be particularly challenging.

Provocative behavior, such as hitting, is usually much more common when children are bored or frustrated. As 2- and 5-years-olds usually can only play together for short amounts of time (their abilities and interests differ), boredom or frustration can quickly and easily surface.

Two-year-olds in particular often crave attention (even when it's neg-

ative), have boundless energy, and are notoriously impulsive. Therefore, it is common for a 2-year-old to lash out at an older sister who does not want to play 2-year-old games or does things more easily.

Saying, "Don't hit!" to a two year old, unfortunately, usually has a limited effect. However, taking time to listen to the inevitable frustrations of each child (you don't necessarily have to fix things) can help reduce pent-up emotions and calm frayed nerves.

I believe that stopping your child from hitting before it begins is probably a parent's most effective and preventative tool. It can help when the parents of young siblings think of themselves as running a small "program" which requires interesting age-appropriate activities for each sibling as well as a tremendous

amount of patience and attention.

Developing clear schedules that keep both children happily occupied and arranging for another child or mother's helper to come by at particularly trying times of the day (i.e. when dinner needs to be prepared) can also make a huge difference.

Siblings have a deep and important relationship. They often share even the slightest emotions with each other in less than ideal ways. When your daughters are older, the current developmental differences will be less noticeable and they will be able to engage with each other for longer periods of time in more productive ways (at least some of the time).

Best wishes as you weather your current storm — calmer times will inevitably come.

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).



## MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SEREDA

# Friends for you and your family

**O**n Friday nights my husband and I are usually exhausted from the busy work week, so our nights usually go something like this: ordering in, hanging out with the girls, putting them to bed, and then peeling our eyelids open while we try to watch a movie. Not a terrible way to start the weekend, but sometimes we want to hang out with other people that are in the same boat as us, or other parents.

A funny thing happens when you become parents — you're not exactly a part of the party and club scene (not that we really were, at least not all the time) and you have not exactly found a lot of other people in your stage of life either. At least for us, we haven't found our groove in that area at this point in time.

There is this weird in-between phase of “we're-young-parents-we-still-want-to-hang-out-just-not-necessarily-go-out-all-of-the-time-maybe-we-can-all-get-together-with-out-kids-and-hang-out? Or no?”

I have a girlfriend who lives about five minutes away from me. From time to time she and her husband and their three year old daughter come over or we will go over to their house.

It is perfect — the girls all play together, and the grown-ups drink (responsibly, of course) while sharing some laughs. We've spent nights in stitches, laughing only the way someone you've shared a lot of history with can make you laugh. I miss that.

But recently, we haven't seen each other much. Life has gotten in the way, I guess not for us, but for them. It seems that there's always an excuse; someone is sick or tired or both. My husband and I are realizing that maybe they're just not that into us anymore.

So, we're in the market for new same-stage-in-life friends. It's funny and awkward. You're never too old to make new friends, but it's not easy, especially when you're checking out the entire family's compatibility with your family.

We're now those weird people that check out other people in hopes of finding new Friday night companionship, play dates, barbecues, and happy hours. All the fun stuff you do with your friends, plus the little ones.





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## TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

JENNY GENSTERBLUM

# Streamling healthy meals for your kids

## Breakfast and lunch tips from Chef Gensterblum

**P**reparing breakfast and lunch for kids can be tricky, not to mention time consuming. As the executive chef of the Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, I am responsible for making sure 600 charges eat healthy and well-balanced meals every day.

Below are five simple tips to make preparing nutritious and tasty meals easy, so you can streamline the process and incorporate healthy eating seamlessly into your child's day.

**Feed their brains for breakfast!** Glucose provides fuel to the brain. Without it, our brains simply don't operate as well. Foods like beans, steel-cut oats, and hearty whole grains provide the most steady and prolonged sources of glucose.

**Don't be as boring as toast!** Whole grain toast is quite possibly the quickest and easiest breakfast to prepare. Don't be limited by butter and jam! Try topping whole-wheat bread or an English muffin with:

- 1/4 of an avocado (another food that promotes brain health!)
- Cream cheese and fresh berries
- Nut or seed butter, bananas, and chia seeds
- Celery, raisins, and nut or seed butter
- Ricotta cheese, pears, and a drizzle of honey sea salt

**Pick up a bento box.** They come in all shapes, sizes, and designs. The lunch boxes are separated into compartments — making controlling portion sizes and getting in daily recommended values a cinch. Not only that, it makes meals visually pleasing, which always encourages young ones to eat!

**Let your children help you pack lunch the night before.** Studies show time and time again that children are more willing to eat or try something that they took part in preparing. It's a great way to spend time together, teach new skills, and



encourage healthy and adventurous eaters.

**Plan ahead.** Turn dinners into lunches easily with a little planning. Examples: bacon on Sunday morning = BLAT (bacon, lettuce, avocado, tomato) on whole wheat for lunch. Chicken for dinner? Grill an extra breast and make chicken salad. Had corn and zucchini for your vegeta-

ble for dinner? Turn your side dish into corn and zucchini whole-wheat fritters, using whole-wheat pancake batter and stirring in the leftover veggies.

*Jenny Gensterblum is the author of the cookbook "Secret Sauce: Kid Tested and Approved Recipes from the Léman Manhattan Chef's Vault" now available at Blurb.com.*



## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# Child support for low-income families

**T**he New York Times, in its “Room for Debate” column, recently asked, “How can child support be reformed so that children are provided for without the lives of poor families being damaged?” The Times referenced the shooting of Walter Scott by a South Carolina police officer, noting that his family, “said he may have fled for fear of being jailed for nonpayment of child support,” and stated that for poor fathers, these obligations often result in jail time “for noncompliance, making it harder for them to pay their debts and often costing them their jobs.”

Four opinions were given. Here are highlights:

### Help fathers

The child support system exists “to collect and disburse money,” Jacquelyn Boggess, co-director, Center for Family Policy and Practice writes. It facilitates wage withholding and seizure of bank accounts, suspension of licenses, and more. Federal law requires states to retain money collected on behalf of the poorest families — current and former welfare recipients — as reimbursement for welfare cash benefits.

“Chronic unemployment or dire poverty” is not considered; debt is assessed knowing “that some parents have no assets, income, job or prospects ... We should “recognize that some parents will need services outside and instead of the child support system.”

The system should include “services to help ... parents gain economic stability” such as “a better Earned-Income Tax Credit policy, job training, employment services, and earning and income supplements while they train. Both parents need health, legal and other services.”

### Not tough enough

By contrast, Kezia Willingham, a health coordinator for the Seattle public schools’ Head Start program, feels that “enforcement measures



are not strong enough.”

A single parent who has raised a child with “virtually no assistance from the biological father,” Willingham has thrived. But, there were times when “even \$50 a month would have been very helpful.”

The system, Willingham writes, has measures “in place to accommodate financial hardship ... A non-custodial parent’s financial hardship should not absolve them of responsibilities ... The custodial parent often has an even harder time.”

### The government taketh

Kenneth Braswell, executive director of Fathers Incorporated, notes that child support “operates as a government cost-recovery strategy by reimbursing states and the federal government for benefits paid to mothers on behalf of children ... Families on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families only receive about a quarter of the child support collected on their behalf. The majority of states keep all child support collected on behalf of these families.”

Braswell believes “payments should be passed through to the custodial parent in their entirety.”

“Some fathers pay up to 65 percent of their wages in child support and arrearages,” he writes, driving “many low-income men into severe poverty.” Fathers can request a review, but many don’t know of their rights and cannot navigate the judicial process.

Fathers need “training and employment supports” to be able “to compete in this global economy ... Punitive methods ... like incarceration should only be used where fathers demonstrate that” they can pay, “but are unwilling to.”

### Threat as incentive

National Child Support Enforcement Association executive director Colleen Eubanks writes that child support agencies “recognize that incarcerating parents for nonpayment can be counterproductive to its mission of supporting families.”

For obligors needing assistance, most states offer programs to assist them, ranging from G.E.D. attainment to job training to substance abuse counseling. Most agencies have forgiveness programs when the obligor is unable to pay a support debt owed to the state (because the children received public assistance). Child support programs now focus more on compliance than collections.

The threat of revoking the driver’s license of a noncompliant obligor actually becomes an incentive to negotiate a payment plan. When payments start coming in, more drastic enforcement approaches stop, including those leading to arrest.

The issues are complicated, and every action has consequences. What answers would you propose to reform the child support system?

*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/>.*

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



## BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

# What is normal?

The difference between ordinary and problematic behavior



One of the most frequently asked questions of behavior therapists is, “Is this normal?” Which is quickly followed by, “Is there a way for this to stop?”

At the forefront of every parent’s mind is discerning the line between normal and problem behavior. Where does, “all kids tantrum” change into, “this is a problem?”

The good news: there’s not a clear line between normal and problem behavior. The bad news: there’s not a clear line on which to base your decision.

Here’s my best advice: If you’re constantly asking yourself if your child’s behavior is normal, then I suggest that you simply stop asking and start addressing the behavior.

You’re wasting time when you could have started taking steps to change it. If you’re not sure what to do, then find someone — a friend, teacher, pediatrician or behavior expert — to help you figure it out. The behavior can be improved even if it is normal.

Here are three normal behavior challenges and how to change them:

- “I have to call my child’s name 15 times before he answers.”

This is either a sign that you’re overusing your child’s name by putting it in every sentence or that you have not taught him to respond when you call his name. The solution: Become aware when you’re using your child’s name and use it specifically to get his attention. Make sure to only use your child’s name when you’re close enough to prompt him if he ignores you. Stop shouting his name across the room.

- “My kid does not sit down to eat and I end up chasing her around the house with her plate to ensure she eats enough.”

Notice if there are certain foods that she will sit to eat. Use those foods to teach her about sitting for meals. Also, adjust your expectation of how long she will sit. Maybe you start with her sitting for just two minutes at the table. Set a timer and the clear expectation that she needs to sit until the time is up. The constant reminders become a celebration that she sat still when the timer goes off!

- “At school my child does great

cleaning up, but at home he never puts his toys away.”

At school there’s a specific time to clean up. There’s usually a fun song while it happens and there’s nothing else to do until clean up is done. The solution: Create that same type of environment at home. When you realize there are many different games pulled out, call out that there’s clean-up time. Find out what your child is still playing with, allow him to leave that out, but clean up everything else. Do it together and have fun during it; when you make cleaning up a chore, no one wants to do it. Once the clean up is complete, then everyone goes back to playing. Make sure playtime ends with a clean up time, just like in school.

For more tools to improve behavior in your home, visit: <http://bit.ly/behavior toolkit>

*Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 15 years and has condensed her observations into her practice and programs. For more on her, visit [www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net](http://www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net).*

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## FAMILY HEALTH

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

# Helmet safety: myths vs. reality

*I know that concussions can be serious, so I make sure that my children always wear helmets whenever they are riding their bikes or playing any other sports that may require protective headgear. However, a friend now tells me that helmets don't necessarily protect against concussions. Is that true? Can you tell me more about concussions, and the best ways to reduce the risk of concussions in my children?*

**I**n recent years, there has been a huge increase in public awareness about the long-term health risks posed by concussions — particularly, multiple concussions sustained over time. When it comes to protecting your children from sustaining concussions, it's good that you're off to an early start.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that is caused by

a blow to the head or body, a fall, or another injury that jars or shakes the brain inside the skull. Symptoms of a concussion are often temporary, but they can last for hours, days, weeks, or even months. They may be mild, moderate, or severe and can include deficits in memory and cognition, issues with concentration, headaches, mood instability, and sleep disruption.

Over time, repeated concussions may increase a person's risk for depression, dementia, Parkinson's disease, and other conditions later in life.

When it comes to the value of a helmet in preventing concussions, your friend is partially correct. During impact, a helmet will lessen, but not fully eliminate, the risk of a concussion.

However, a helmet dramatically reduces the risk of serious head injuries or skull fractures. A well-fitting helmet does this by distributing impact force across a wide area of the head during a crash, instead of allowing that force to be concentrated in a small area on the skull. This is why football players can collide dozens of times per game and not fracture their skulls, while still unknowingly experiencing dozens of small concussions.

To reduce the risk of concussion, wearing a helmet is the first step — but not the last one. Children still need to learn to exercise caution and good judgment if and when they are interested in participating in any sport in which head trauma is a possible occurrence. The same is true when riding a bicycle or engaging in any other recreational activity that requires a helmet for safety. Your brain is fragile and, obviously, irreplaceable; to prevent concussions, caution is key.





## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Your health issues also become theirs

**M**egan was so fearful of food that when her 5-year-old son wanted to continue playing rather than stop to eat, she was relieved she didn't have to deal with it. At other times, she tried eating meals with him but would only pick at a salad. Needless to say, Megan was a poor role model for her son, who was underweight for his age.

A mom's past experience with weight and eating certainly influences how she feeds her children. But how much do women carry their eating issues into motherhood?

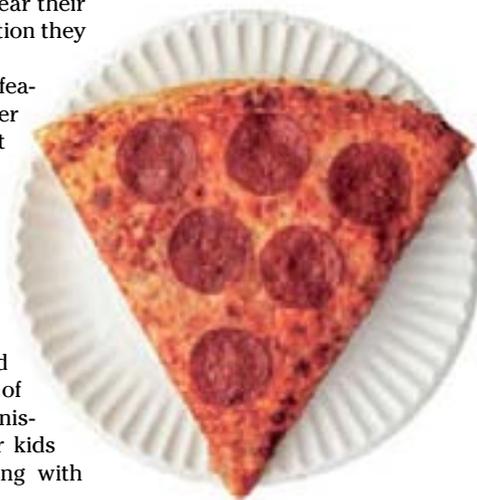
"I actually see this all the time," says registered dietician nutritionist Jessica Fishman Levinson, founder of Nutritioulicious, a nutrition consulting and communications business. "Moms may have eating issues after growing up overweight or with

eating disorders and often fear their children will have the condition they had."

One common situation features a mom who fears her daughter is putting on weight after being overweight most of her own life.

As a result, Levinson sees two different reactions. One group of mothers is often hypervigilant over what their children are eating and overly concerned about it. The other group of moms try to make it a non-issue to the extent that their kids eat everything and anything with no limits.

Neither of those extremes is providing your child with a balanced diet or teaching him how to eat once he's on his own.



### If you're struggling

If you had an eating issue in the past, or you're still struggling with one, and you feel like it could be impacting how you're feeding your child, seek out an eating therapist or registered dietitian nutritionist who specializes in eating disorders.

A professional can help you determine where your eating issues stem from, or why you react to food the way you do. This can ultimately allow you to change your behavior, especially in situations that make you anxious.

If your child is going to a birthday party where pizza and cake will be served, think through how you can make the rest of the day and week more balanced.

"The hardest thing you need to do is go with the flow," Levinson says. "If you don't let your child have the treats at the birthday party or at the friend's house when all the other kids are having them, your child is going to feel left out, and they're going to seek (the food) elsewhere."

*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*

### Bacon-stuffed shell salad

Serves 8

Prep time: 25 minutes.

Cook time: 15 minutes

#### INGREDIENTS:

12 ounces Canadian-style bacon, sliced

1 cup zucchini, shredded

1/2 cup red bell pepper, finely chopped

2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese, grated

3 Tbsp. vegetable oil

3 Tbsp. red wine vinegar

1 clove garlic, minced

1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning

1/2 tsp. sugar

1/4 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. pepper

16 conchiglioni (jumbo shells)

Romaine lettuce

**DIRECTIONS:** Cut Canadian bacon into thin strips. In a large bowl combine bacon, zucchini, red pepper, and



Parmesan cheese; set aside.

For dressing, combine oil, vinegar, garlic, Italian seasoning, sugar, salt, and pepper. Pour dressing over bacon mixture; toss gently to mix. Cover and chill 30 minutes.

Cook conchiglioni according to package directions. Drain and rinse with cold water. Spoon about 1/4 cup of the bacon mixture into each conchiglioni. Place the shells, filled side

up, in a baking dish. Cover and chill 2–4 hours.

To serve, arrange romaine lettuce leaves among salad plates. Place 2 shells atop each plate.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 160 calories, 8 grams carbohydrates, 11 grams protein, 9 grams fat (2 grams saturated), 0 fiber, 700 mg sodium.

From [PorkBelInspired.com](http://PorkBelInspired.com).



## THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

## Fast-paced, fantastical fairy tale

When you were small, thanks to fairy tales, you were quite afraid of giants. You simply knew they were just waiting to crush your house or grind your bones to make their bread. With hands the size of small cars, they'd pick you up and fling you aside. And if a giant didn't do it, an ogre could, unless, of course, you're a princess and, as in the new book by Betsy Schow, you're "Spelled."

Crown Princess Dorthea was really "pixed." It was bad enough that she was confined inside the Emerald Palace, courtesy of some ancient fire-making curse that nobody was sure even worked anymore, but her parents kept trying to marry her off to some dumb prince from another stupid kingdom — the latest of which, Prince Kato of Somewhere-Somewhere, was a big jerk. For Grimm's sake, Dorthea was only a teenager!

Okay, well, maybe it was infantile to throw a hissy-fit during the Muse Day ball. It was childish to pix off her parents. And it was definitely wrong to wish upon a star that a Fairy Godmother-wanna-be gave her; a star that Verde, the Kingdom's head sorceress, would've warned Dorthea not to take.

That star — that pocket-sized

white-rock star ruined everything.

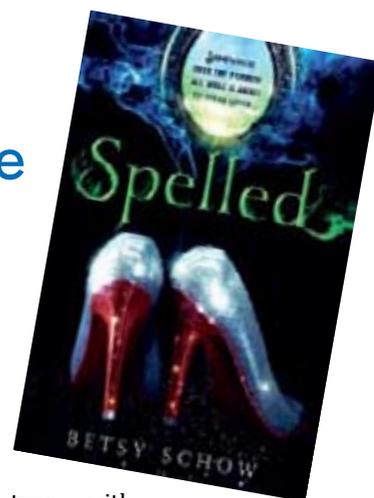
As soon as Dorthea wished aloud that she didn't have to attend the ball or dance with Kato or follow any rules — boom! — everything went white. Chandeliers shattered. People Dorthea'd known her whole life were changed; even Kato was suddenly a tiny, furry creature the size of a puppy. And there, standing in the middle of the chaos, was a silvery-pale woman who said her name was Queen Griz — and though she hated to do it, she was going to kill Dorthea.

As the Emerald Palace collapsed in a heap, Dorthea fled on a vacuum cleaner with furry Kato and a snarky kitchen girl. She wasn't sure where to go; before Verde disappeared, she'd shouted something about Dorthea's sparkly red shoes and a rainbow.

Whatever that meant, with Griz's cackle resounding in her head, Dorthea knew she had to get there, fast.

There are, overall, two words to describe "Spelled": Clev. Er.

With a starting point of a basic princess story, author Betsy Schow moves with lightning speed through just about every fairy tale and fantasy story you can remember, taking her main character on an original adven-



ture with an Oz flair and a flirt with classic Grimm. There are cameo appearances in this story from Cinderella, Rapunzel, and a magical dragon; plus big roles for chimeras, a sometime-fairy godmother and a head-swapping hag, giants and a caterpillar army, an Ice Queen, leprechauns, flying puppies, and a "Mimic-man" who can copycat anyone. That all adds up to a fast-paced, magical story with quick-witted dialogue and a spoiled royal who learns that there's gnome place like home.

Not too hard and not too soft, this book is just right for 12-to-17-year-old readers, but be sure to borrow it back for yourself. Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum, "Spelled" smells like gigantic Fun.

*"Spelled," by Betsy Schow [352 pages, 2015, \$9.99].*

## Not a typical coming-of-age summer story

Carl Dunn didn't seem to be a diary-keeping kind of kid.

There was once a time when he wasn't the bullying type, either, and in the new book "The Trap" by Steven Arntson, almost-seventh-grader Henry Nilsson remembered those days. Now, Carl was the worst bully in their corner of Iowa.

Henry would've totally avoided Carl if possible, but Carl was big brother to Henry's best friend Alan, and in that late summer of 1967, Alan was worried. Carl had been skipping baseball practice and there were nights when he didn't come home. That wasn't at all like Carl; stranger still, he was writing, and what he wrote sounded dangerous.

And that was why Henry, his twin sister Helen, Alan, and Helen's best friend Nikki were on their bikes in the woods at a campsite where Carl had been. They were looking for clues to his odd behavior

when Henry found a book buried in a box beneath a pile of moldy old science-fiction novels. "Subtle Travel and the Subtle Self" had a plain cover. Henry put it in his rucksack because he liked to read.

That night, cracking the book open, he discovered something amazing.

At first, it didn't make sense: the book instructed readers to recite some numbers, then "using your eyes, rock yourself" to step out of the physical body. When it worked, and Henry met Carl while walking around in a parallel world, he couldn't wait to tell Helen and their friends so they could do it, too. Meeting with the author's widow made the trick even cooler — until she invited the kids to a graveyard and Henry's other body got ensnared in a ghostly trap.

That's when Henry knew that getting out wouldn't be easy.

"The Trap" has a "Stand by Me"

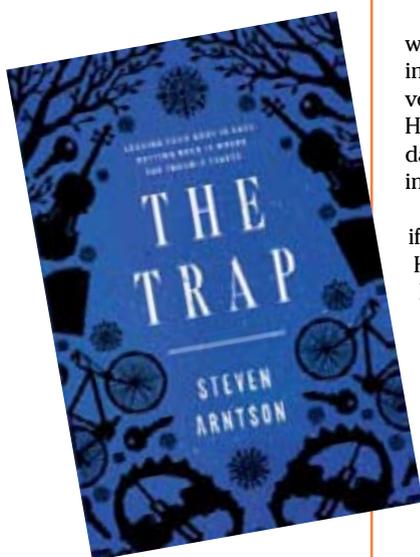
vibe. It is also reminiscent of '50s sci-fi novels — only a little bit sharper.

There is a big creep factor that will appeal to kids with good imaginations, and a thread of sweetly awkward romance to soften the story. Arntson further sets his book apart with parents that are more than just caricatures and a kid-centric ending that also feels very grown-up.

I think that if your child enjoys science fiction, but wants something a little more solid, or if you're looking for a quick, decent read yourself, you can feel good choosing this one. For fourth-through-seventh-grade readers and adults, alike, "The Trap" is a book to get caught in.

*"The Trap," by Steven Arntson [247 pages, 2015, \$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.



HEALTHY  
LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# How your stress can affect your pet



**I** was stressed last week. It was one of those days when I had a million things to do in about an hour, and everything was going wrong. I was running late, forgot to make my son's lunch, was further held up by a daunting drip coming from the kitchen, and the phone was ringing off the hook.

"Calm down, Mom," my daughter said. "You're making Django nervous."

She was right. Our black lab Django didn't want to be near me and walked around with her head down. It was something I had noticed before. You know how when someone comes into the room frazzled, and you can feel their nervous energy? Well, Django does the same with me. She knows my tones, and when I'm stressed or feeling sick, she responds.

Dog owners have long known this to be true. How many times have we told our friends and family that our dogs sense when we are feeling sick or down in the dumps? Fellow pet owners understand right away, but non-pet people sometimes look at us as if we're crazy. But now, we have scientific proof that dogs read our emotions based on our vocal cues.

A study in Hungary in which 11 dogs were placed in MRI scanners to measure brain activity while more than 200 sounds were played such as crying, whining, and happy barks, showed that dogs' brains react to specific vocal tones. The areas in the brain that lit up proved to be the same regions that responded in human brains to the same sounds. (Dogs were not forced into the MRI machines. The dogs that chose not to go into it were not studied.)

Attila Andics of MTA-ELTE Comparative Ethology Research Group in Hungary, who performed the study, says the research explains how dogs react and respond to our tones.

"This method offers a totally new way of investigating neural processing in dogs," said Andics. "At last, we begin to understand how our best friend is looking at us and navigating in our social environment."

It's surely not news to those of us that love our pets; we have already known that they understand us. But it sure is affirming to have science back us up!

*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.*

# Calendar

JUNE



Bruce Handy (Pablo Jancey)

## Luna Park offering an exciting treat for studious students

Good grades never felt so good! Luna Park is rewarding studious students with ride credits all through June.

School is almost out but hard-working students can still reap the benefits of those As and Bs in class.

Students from kindergarten to college get bonus credits for rides just by showing off those report cards. As get four credits, Bs get three credits and Cs receive two

credits. If you make the grade, bring your report card to guest services to receive your credits. Luna Park rides only (excludes Cyclone, Thunderbolt, and B&B Carousell).

Good Grades Reward Program, June 1 through June 30, daily, 11 am to midnight. General admission applies.

*Luna Park Guest services [West 10th Street and the Boardwalk in Coney Island; (718) 373-5862; [www.LunaParkNYC.com](http://www.LunaParkNYC.com)].*

## Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to [brooklyncalendar@cnglocal.com](mailto:brooklyncalendar@cnglocal.com) — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

## THURS, JUNE 4

### IN BROOKLYN

**Fledglings:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 9:30 am – 10:30 am; Free.

Children develop self-reliance, creativity and problem-solving skills. For toddlers 18 to 36 months and their caregivers.

**Summer reading program:**

Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, Flatbush Avenue at Eastern Parkway; (718) 230-2100; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch\\_library\\_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265); 11:15 am – 3:30 pm; Free.

It's that time of year again — the library is hosting its kick off to the annual event that keeps kids reading even when school is out.

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

Travel to faraway places in your imagination by listening to stories.

**Free hours:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 3 – 5 pm; Free.

Children enjoy the museum free of charge on select days.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Career talk:** 92 Y Warburg Lounge, 1395 Lexington Ave. at 92nd Street, Manhattan; Security at 8867; 7 pm; Free.

Millennial expert Joan Kuhl shares with millennials the best way to prepare for their future. Check in is 30 minutes prior to event.

## FRI, JUNE 5

### IN BROOKLYN

**Art kids:** Brooklyn Children's Mu-



## Laurie Berkner solo

Grab your blanket and a picnic basket and enjoy a concert by Laurie Berkner on June 21 at Herbert Von King Park.

The queen of children's music performs solo for this special Father's Day celebration with songs from the "You and Me Tour" as

well as favorites including "Bottle Caps," "One Seed," "Telephone," and "Drive My Car."

Laurie Berkner, June 21 at 5 pm. Free.

*Herbert Von King Park (670 Lafayette Ave. at Fort Greene Place in Clinton Hill; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org))*

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.

Learn about art and hone up on skills and techniques.

## SAT, JUNE 6

### IN BROOKLYN

**"Mermaids on Parade":** Book Court, 163 Court St. at Atlantic Avenue; (718) 875-3677; [www.book-court.com](http://www.book-court.com); 11 am – 4pm; Free.

Come and meet author Melanie Hope Greenberg and listen to her read her newest book.

**Storytime:** Barnes and Noble, 267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street; (718) 832-9066; [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com); 11 am; Free.

"Peanut Butter & Cupcakes" are on the menu.

**Go Greenpoint:** McCarren Park, Lorimer Street and Bedford Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); noon-4 pm; Free.

The event includes education with schools, community groups, and companies displaying research art projects, recycling for bicycles, electronic equipment, clothing, books, and

toys, green contests for children and adults, wellness with judo, yoga, and other classes, vendors with environmentally friendly merchandise, and live music and dance performances.

**Frolic:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 1-5 pm; Free.

Bring your wild wings and your dancing shoes for a fabulous family festival celebrating springtime whimsy and the opening of the new Discovery Garden. Dragonflies, butterflies, and other winged friends are welcome!

**Jennifer Muller & The Works Dance Company:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

A fun performance for all ages.

**Camping:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 6 pm; Free.

Join with rangers to camp out under the stars. Tents are provided, space limited, families chosen by lottery.

## SUN, JUNE 7

### IN BROOKLYN

**Family Discovery:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 10:30 am-2:30 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Experiment, learn, and play together in the Discovery Garden. Hands-on stations throughout the garden's meadow, woodland, and marsh habitats, and in the vegetable garden encourage families to explore nature together.

**Family Day:** Red Hook Park, Clinton Street between Bay and Halleck streets; [www.SummerStage.org](http://www.SummerStage.org); 4 pm; Free.

Featuring Unlocking the Truth, Black Girls Rock and Willie Mae Rock Camp. All ages enjoy a day of fun, music and dance. Co-sponsored by Disney.

## TUES, JUNE 9

### IN BROOKLYN

**Summer reading:** Pier 3 Greenway Terrace, Furman and Pierrepont streets; (718) 514-7359; 10:30 am – noon; Free.

Enjoy a fun storytime with librarians from the Brooklyn Heights branch.

## WED, JUNE 10

### IN BROOKLYN

**Storyfaces:** Highland Park Children's Garden, Jamaica Ave. and Ashford St.; (718) 235-4100; 5:30-6:30 pm; Free.

Christopher Agostino shares original stories and folktales in an inspiring fusion of visual and performing arts.

## THURS, JUNE 11

### IN BROOKLYN

**Fledglings:** 9:30 am – 10:30 am. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Thursday, June 4.

**Tales of Wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, June 4.

**Free hours:** 3 pm to 5 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, June 4.

**Children's piano concert:** Shore Road Parks, 90th Street and Shore Road; [www.shoreroadparks.org](http://www.shoreroadparks.org); 6 pm; Free.

Shore Park Conservancy's "Sing for Hope Pianos" 2015 series presents a children's concert with local young pianists.

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# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

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## FRI, JUNE 12

### IN BROOKLYN

**Play Date:** Brooklyn Bridge Park, 334 Furman St. at Middagh Street; 11 am; Free.

The award-winning kiddie-indie music duo Play Date will make its New York City debut with a concert of interactive tunes for the whole family.

**Art kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, June 5.

**Father's Day Crafts:** Gerritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); 3-5 pm; Free.

Kids make a special craft to surprise dad.

**FAB Fridays for Kids:** Putnam Triangle Plaza, Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; [www.faballiance.org](http://www.faballiance.org); 4-6 pm; Free.

Fulton Area Business (FAB) hosts free afternoon kids' activities such as jump rope, sidewalk chalk drawing, checkers, FDNY safety training demonstrations, Brooklyn Public Library library card sign-up, hula hooping, and more.

**Mary Carmosino:** Shore Road Parks, 90th Street and Shore Road; [www.shoreroadparks.org](http://www.shoreroadparks.org); 7 pm; Free.

Shore Park Conservancy's "Sing for Hope Pianos" 2015 series presents Mary Carmosino with selections from the American songbook.

## SAT, JUNE 13

### IN BROOKLYN

**"Mermaids on Parade":** Edamama, 568 Union Ave. between Frost and Richardson, Unit B; (728) 388-3663; 10 am; Free.

Come and meet author Melanie Hope Greenberg and listen to her read her newest book.

**Family Discovery:** 10:30 am-2:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Sunday, June 7.

**Storytime:** 11 am. Barnes and Noble. See Saturday, June 6.

**Arts & Crafts for Trees:** LDC of Broadway Community Garden, 900 Broadway at Stockton Street; (212) 333-2552; 2-4 pm; Free.

Spend the day making fantastic projects that draw attention to nature's bounty.

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



## Hip-hopping for all

Come on down for a hip-hopping, bopping Family Day presented by Hip Tot on June 14 at the LeFrak Center Lakeside Rink in Prospect Park.

Father Goose, the big daddy of kid's hip-hop, brings his dance hall boogie and reggae riffs to the pint-sized tots at a special family day. Adding to the fun, families will be treated to a short-

ened version of the "Lion King Jr.," performed by the students at Community Roots Middle School, as well as story time, crafts, giveaways, and sing-alongs.

Hip Tot Family Day, June 14 from 11 am to 2 pm. Free.

*The LeFrak Center Lakeside Rink at Prospect Park [17 E. Drive in Prospect Park; (718) 462-0040; [www.lakesidebrooklyn.com](http://www.lakesidebrooklyn.com)]*

museum admission.

A fun performance for all ages.

**Vincent Merola:** Shore Road Parks, 90th Street and Shore Road; [www.shoreroadparks.org](http://www.shoreroadparks.org); 5 pm; Free.

Shore Park Conservancy's "Sing for Hope Pianos" 2015 series presents popular songwriter Vincent Merola.

**Spelling Bee:** The Temple of Restoration Time, 515 Dean St.; (718) 425-9900; [www.restorationtime.com](http://www.restorationtime.com); 6 pm; Free.

Open to all students in ninth, 10th, 11th and 12th grades that attend charter schools in the borough. Hosted as part of the Helping Hands Ministry. Pre-registration for spellers required.

## SUN, JUNE 14

### IN BROOKLYN

**Family Bird Watching:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park

at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 10-11 am; Free.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance for its monthly family bird watching tours. After learning how to use binoculars, join our naturalists to identify some of the 250 species of birds that call Prospect Park home.

**Family Discovery:** 10:30 am-2:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Sunday, June 7.

**Hip Tot Family Day:** Lakeside Rink in Prospect Park, 17 East Dr.; (718) 462-0040.; [www.lakesidebrooklyn.com](http://www.lakesidebrooklyn.com); 11 am - 2 pm; Free.

Tots have a grand-old time at the concert series featuring the Reggae sounds of Father Goose, along with story time, crafts, and giveaways. Hosted by Hip Tot.

**No Place Like Home:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718)

735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 11 am-noon; Free with museum admission.

Ever wonder what a snake's home is like? How about a lizard's? Do you think it's different if they live in a desert or in a jungle? Come learn, explore, and create the perfect habitat for our wild animal friends! Please RSVP to [specialneedsinfo@brooklynkids.org](mailto:specialneedsinfo@brooklynkids.org) by June 11.

**"Mermaids on Parade":** powerhouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 11:30 am; Free.

Come and meet author Melanie Hope Greenberg and listen to her read her newest book.

**TheatreSports:** Gallery Players, 199 14th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (212) 352-3101; [www.galleryplayers.com](http://www.galleryplayers.com); Noon; \$10.

TheatreSports offers a unique opportunity for kids to watch and participate in live theater, with a fun-filled competition between two teams of actors who challenge each other to create scenes on the spot.

**Family Day:** Betsy Head Park, DuMont Ave. and Thomas S. Boyland St.; (718) 257-1635; 4 pm; Free.

The Martha Redbone Roots Project and Ebony Hillbillies provide the entertainment at this fun day full of activities. Co-sponsored by Disney.

**Gregory Post:** Shore Road Parks, 90th Street and Shore Road; [www.shoreroadparks.org](http://www.shoreroadparks.org); 5 pm; Free.

Shore Park Conservancy's "Sing for Hope Pianos" 2015 series presents classical musician and composer Gregory Post.

## THURS, JUNE 18

### IN BROOKLYN

**Fledglings:** 9:30 am - 10:30 am. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Thursday, June 4.

**Tales of Wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, June 4.

**Free hours:** 3 pm - 7 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, June 4.

## FRI, JUNE 19

### IN BROOKLYN

**Moosika:** Putnam Triangle Plaza, Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; [www.faballiance.org](http://www.faballiance.org); 10-11 am; Free.

Fulton Area Business (FAB) hosts a lively performances for kids to sing, dance, and play musical instruments along to.

**Art kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm.

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, June 5.

## SAT, JUNE 20

### IN BROOKLYN

**MTA Birthday celebration:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 9 am-11 am; \$65; \$40 children (under 2 years old free; \$175 for family pack of four).

Come and celebrate the 100th anniversary of Brooklyn Manhattan Transit with a day of live music, historic trains, a chance to meet conductors, and a birthday cake.

**Storytime:** 11 am. Barnes and Noble. See Saturday, June 6.

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

A fun performance for all ages.

**Fumiyo Narita:** Shore Road Parks, 90th Street and Shore Road; [www.shoreroadparks.org](http://www.shoreroadparks.org); 6:30 pm; Free.

Shore Park Conservancy's "Sing for Hope Pianos" 2015 series presents classical musician Fumiyo Narita.

## SUN, JUNE 21

### IN BROOKLYN

**Pier Kids:** Pier 6, Joralemon and Furman street; (718) 802-0603; 11 am-noon; Free.

Celebrate the arts with music from Robbi K featuring Bakithi Kumalo.

**Family Day and You and Me Tour:** Herbert Von King Park, Lafayette Avenue between Marcy and Tompkins avenues; [www.SummerStage.org](http://www.SummerStage.org); 4 pm; Free.

Featuring Laurie Berkner, Something Positive, and Brooklyn Marching Band. Co-sponsored by SummerStage Disney.

## THURS, JUNE 25

### IN BROOKLYN

**Fledglings:** 9:30 am - 10:30 am. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Thursday, June 4.

**Tales of Wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, June 4.

## FRI, JUNE 26

### IN BROOKLYN

**Art kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, June 5.



Brooklyn Botanic Garden / Caroline Voegen Nelson

## Family fest at Botanic Garden

Frolic at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden on June 6 with a fabulous family festival. Bring your wild wings and your dancing shoes to celebrate springtime whimsy and the opening of Brooklyn Botanic Garden new Discovery Garden.

Dragonflies, butterflies, and other winged friends are welcome!

Children can enjoy the new garden and drop in at The Art of Discovery weekly program that teaches budding gardeners and nature lovers all about nature in

the new Discovery Garden.

Frolic, June 6 from 1 to 5 pm. Free with garden admission

*Brooklyn Botanic Garden [1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, (718) 623-7220; [www.bbq.org](http://www.bbq.org)]*

## SAT, JUNE 27

### IN BROOKLYN

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

Put on your capes and explore your super powers in this all-day, all-weekend event.

**"Puppetry Arts Festival of Brooklyn":** JJ Byrne Park, 334 Fifth Ave. between Fifth and Sixth streets; [www.puppetryarts.org](http://www.puppetryarts.org); 11 am-3 pm; Free; \$2 activities (\$4 T-shirt).

Puppet shows including special guest Tuffy Tiger performing songs from his new CD, Star Wars characters, and puppet-making crafts. First 200 children receive a free Puppetry Arts Goodie Bag.

**School's Out:** Luna Park Guest Ser-

vices, W. 10th Street and the Boardwalk; (718) 373-5862; 11 am-12 am; General admission.

Out for the summer — celebrate with demos on variety of sports and activities and great rides. All day.

**Storytime:** 11 am. Barnes and Noble. See Saturday, June 6.

**Flax harvest:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 2 to 4 pm; \$3.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance for the mid-summer harvest. You helped plant, weed, and water, and now please help harvest the flax crop and prepare it for processing. Learn how flax is processed into linen and try on some reproduction clothes for a fun photo-op in our farm wagon. While you're here, make a flax doll to bring home.

**Magmanus:** Brooklyn Bridge Park, 334 Furman St. at Middagh Street; [www.cityparksfoundation.org](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org); 4 pm and 7 pm; Free.

Swedish circus company Magmanus Company combines circus skills, humor, and audience interaction to present a show with Bollywood juggling, unique teeterboard acrobatics, and a high-flying acrobatic grand finale. Presented by SummerStage Kids by Disney.

## SUN, JUNE 28

### IN BROOKLYN

**Shore and birding:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 10 am-11 am; Free.

Rangers guide you to the best place to view the wildlife. For older children.

**Superhero weekend:** 10 am-5 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See

*Continued on page 58*

Continued from page 57

Saturday, June 27.

**Pier Kids:** Pier 6, Joralemon and Furman streets; (718) 802-0603; 11 am; Free.

The Wildlife Theater presents "Polar Opposites."

**"Happiness the Jewish Way":** Kings Bay YM-YWHA, 3495 Nosstrand Ave. (917) 370-5760; [www.tickettailor.com/checkout/view-event/id/26750/chk/122d](http://www.tickettailor.com/checkout/view-event/id/26750/chk/122d); Noon; \$12.

Author Olga Gilburd shares her book and leads a workshop for teens and parents. Ticket price includes a copy of the book.

**Flax harvest:** 2 pm to 4 pm. Leferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, June 27.

**FAB Fridays for Kids:** Fowler Square, Fulton Street and Lafayette Avenue; [www.faballiance.org](http://www.faballiance.org); 4-6 pm; Free.

Fulton Area Business (FAB) hosts free afternoon kids' activities such as jump rope, sidewalk chalk drawing, checkers, FDNY safety training demonstrations, Brooklyn Public Library library card sign-up, hula hooping, and more.

**Magmanus:** 4 pm and 7 pm. Brooklyn Bridge Park. See Saturday, June 27.

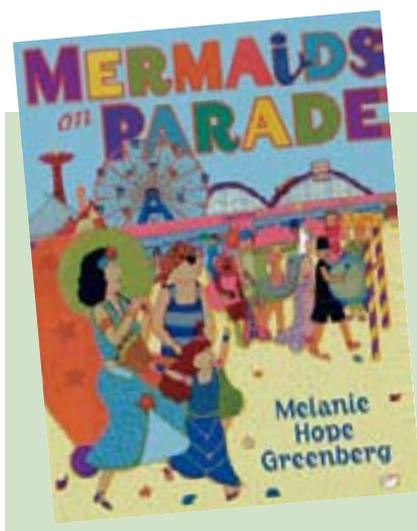
**"The Wiz":** Prospect Heights HS, 883 Classon Ave.; (347) 788-1069; [www.abundancearts.org](http://www.abundancearts.org); 6 pm; \$30 (day of event).

End-of-year dance concert, presented by AbunDance Academy.

## TUES, JUNE 30

### IN BROOKLYN

**Try it Tuesdays:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, June 2.



## The circus is coming to town

Experience the thrills and chills of the Magmanus Circus at Brooklyn Bridge Park on June 27 and 28.

The City Parks Foundation presents the Swedish company of performers who combine circus skills, humor, and audience interaction to present a show with Bollywood juggling, unique teeterboard acrobatics, and a high-flying ac-

robatic grand finale.

Come on down to the park and celebrate Family Day and circus high-jinks with this stupendous performance.

Magmanus Circus, June 27 and 28 at 4 pm and 7 pm. Free.

Brooklyn Bridge Park (334 Furman St. at Middagh Street in Dumbo, [www.cityparksfoundation.org](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org)).

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN BROOKLYN

#### Good grades reward program:

Luna Park Guest services, W. 10th Street and the Boardwalk; (718) 373-5862; Daily, 11 am-midnight; Mon, June 1 - Tues, June 30; General admission.

School is almost out, but hardworking students can still reap the benefits of those As and Bs in class. So students get bonus credits for rides just by showing off those report cards. As get four credits, Bs get three, and Cs receive two. For students in kindergarten through college. If you make the grade bring your report card to Guest Services to receive your credits. Luna Park rides only (excludes Cyclone, Thunderbolt and B & B Carousel).

**Craft room:** Jewish Children Museum, 792 Eastern Parkway; (718) 907-8833; [www.jcm.museum](http://www.jcm.museum); Sundays - Thursdays, Noon-5 pm, Now - Mon, June 29; Free with museum admission.

Get creative with a variety of Jewish themed crafts to choose from!

**The Art of Discovery:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Tuesdays - Fridays, 8 am-6 pm, Saturdays, 10 am-6 pm, Sundays, 10 am-6 pm Tues, June 2 - Sun, Aug. 30; Free with admission to the gardens.

What do baby ladybugs look like? Why don't ferns have flowers? Why are there pigeons everywhere? Do you ever wonder things like that? Then you would make a terrific naturalist! A naturalist observes plants, animals, and other living things closely, asks questions, and tries to learn the answers.

**"From Here to There":** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, Now - Wed, June 10; \$9.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum explores transportation with "From

Here to There," consisting of 12 interactive exhibits, helping kids explore transportation by land, sea, and air, and the mechanics that go into it.

**"Pattern Wizardry":** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, through Aug. 30; Free with museum admission.

Through the magic of patterns found in nature and hands-on activities featuring objects from the natural science collection, the exhibit promotes concepts of math and science through hands-on learning experiences and the relevance of patterns.

**Sensory Room:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 pm to 4:45 pm, Tues, June 2 - Thurs, July 2; Free with museum admission.

An inclusive place where children of all abilities can engage with peers and explore their senses.

**Bug Out!:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30 pm, Tues, June 2 - Thurs, July 2; Free with museum admission.

Bugs are not gross, they are great. Children of all ages discover that some are friendly and all are unique.

**Touch Tank:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Wednesdays, 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, Fridays, 3:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 12 pm, Wed, June 3 - Sun, July 5; Free with

## 'Mermaids on Parade'

"Mermaids on Parade" marches into powerHouse on Eighth on June 14 for a special book signing event.

Children's author Melanie Hope Greenberg reads and signs her latest book "Mermaids on Parade."

The sights, sounds, and smells of the real-life Mermaid Parade that takes place

in Coney Island every year is the base for this fun-filled romp about a little girl who is going to the parade in a special coming-out-of-her-shell costume.

"Mermaids on Parade," June 14 at 11:30 am. Free

powerHouse on 8th [1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets in Park Slope; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com)].

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

museum admission.

Drop by and meet gentle sea creatures.

**Nature Exploration:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Thursdays and Fridays, Noon-4 pm; Free.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance for nature education programs at the Prospect Park Audubon Center, the first urban Audubon Center in the nation. Children enjoy bird nerd games, nature on the go, and animal encounter.

**Ken Siegleman's poetry outreach:** Barnes and Noble, 267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street; (718) 832-9066; [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com); Thursdays, 6:30 pm, Now - Thurs, June 25; Free.

Anthony Vigorito hosts a night of poetry featuring guest poets each week. For teens and adults.

**Toys, Games, and Puzzles:** Gerritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 10:30 am-11:30 am; Free.

Playtime for kids aged 0-5.

**Reading is Fundamental:** Gerritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 2 pm; Free.

Kids receive a free book when they sign up, on their birthday, and every third week if they checkout two books per week.

**Game On! Board Games:** Sunset Park Public Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 965-6533; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 3:30-5 pm; Free.

Kids play games such as Connect 4, Uno, Clue, and Monopoly.

**Tween Teen Tech Time:** Sunset Park Public Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 965-6533; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 3:30-5 pm; Free.

Twins and teens enjoy books, Nintendo and Playstation videogames, and music, while participating in Reading is Fundamental.

**Incredible Invertebrates:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am-4 pm, Sat, June 6 - Sun, June 28; Free.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance to explore the freshwater ecosystems of Prospect Park.



## Fun with the puppets

Tuffy Tiger and friends will be at JJ Byrne Park on June 27 for a fabulous festival. The Puppetry Arts Festival of Brooklyn features special guest Tuffy Tiger performing songs from his new CD, *Star Wars* characters, and loads of puppet-making crafts.

Children of all ages enjoy a day of song, dance, and crafting.

The Puppetry Arts Festival, on June 27 from 11 am to 3 pm. Free. *JJ Byrne Park (334 Fifth Ave. between Fifth and Sixth streets in Park Slope; [www.puppetryarts.org](http://www.puppetryarts.org)).*

**Roller Skating:** Pier 2 at Brooklyn Bridge Park, 150 Furman St.; (718) 300-2401; [www.brooklynbridgeskating.com](http://www.brooklynbridgeskating.com); Saturdays and Sundays, Noon-7 pm, Now - Sun, June 28; \$8 to skate plus skate rentals.

Strap on those quads and come roller skate.

**"Jack and the Beanstalk":** 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, Aug. 23; \$9 (\$10 adults).

The classic fairytale comes to life with puppets in this musical performance based on old English folk melodies.

**Animal Yoga:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm, Sat, June 6 - Sun, July 5; Free with museum admission.

Explore movement and stretch like a cat and do a downward dog.

**Needlework and games:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1-3 pm; \$3.

Join in with staff and make a small sampler and play board games.

**Flax to linen:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 2-4 pm, Sat, June 6 - Sun, June 28; \$3.

Check on the flax crop planted in the spring and try out the tools used to process flax fibers into linen cloth. Touch different pieces of linen cloth to compare the weaves and try on some linen reproduction clothes for a fun photo-op in our farm wagon.

**Movie Matinees:** BAM Rose Cin-

emas, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Lafayette Avenue and Hanson Place; (718) 636-4100; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); Sundays, 2 pm, Now - Sun, June 7; \$7 children (\$10 adults and \$9 for members).

Curated by BAMcinematek, the series offers families an introduction to the classic films and new indie selections. From Charlie Chaplin to Walter Lang.

**First Discoveries for Toddlers:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Tuesdays, 1:30-3 pm, Tues, June 16 - Tues, Aug. 25; Free with admission to the gardens.

Toddlers 2 to 4 years old with caregivers plant a carrot seed, touch a wiggly worm, and listen to a story.

**Free hours:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Thursdays, 2 pm to 6 pm, Thurs, June 25 - Thurs, Aug. 27; Free.

Children enjoy the museum free of charge on Thursdays in the summer!

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Science Playground:** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; [www.nyscience.org](http://www.nyscience.org); Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm; \$5 plus museum admission.

Children are encouraged to explore science through slides, seesaws, climbing webs, a water play area, sand boxes, and more, weather permitting.

**"Galapagos - Nature's Wonderland in 3D":** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; [www.nyscience.org](http://www.nyscience.org); Weekdays, 11 am & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 & 3 pm, Now - Tues, June 30; \$6 adults; \$5 children.

In this 3D movie, travel to the Galapagos archipelago to meet giant half-ton tortoises and marine iguanas that spit sea-salt from their noses, hunt fishes with the colorful blue-footed boobies, and swim with tiny penguins.

**Rocket Park Mini Golf:** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; [www.nyscience.org](http://www.nyscience.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm; \$6 (adults), \$5 (children and seniors), plus museum admission.

Golfers of all ages can learn about key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more!

# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## For him and his Mini Me

The adorable, ego-feeding father-and-son “Copy” and “Paste” shirt set — by Bronx dad Danny Gold, proprietor of Etsy.com’s LittleBookKidsShirts shop — will be the envy of your June 21 family barbecue.

It’s a simple but hilarious sentiment on cotton shirts available in three colors (white, banana, and gray), in men’s sizes (small to triple-extra-

large) for the “Copy” T-shirt and in children’s sizes, newborn bodysuit to youth large T-shirt, for “Paste.”

Our next Etsy.com gift idea is bkykid’s Father and Son Space Play Mat T-Shirt set.

The back of Dad’s shirt depicts a road through the cosmos, upon which junior can zoom his Hot Wheels around, simultaneously amusing the wee one while providing his parent with a free massage.

Dad’s black tee, which features a small alien on the front and the playmat on the back, is available in sizes small to double-extra-large, and the toddler’s matching black shirt, which features the road on the belly, is available in sizes 2T–5/6.

*Copy and Paste Dad and Baby Shirt Set by LittleBookKidsShirts, \$33.99–\$39.99 for the set, [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com); Father and Son*

*Play Mat T-shirt Set by Bkykid, \$39–\$41 for the set, [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).*



## 800th birthday

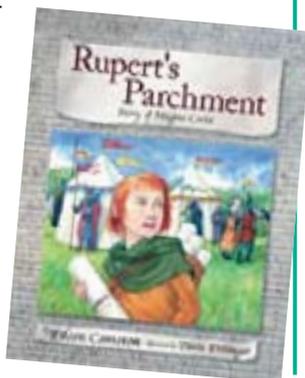
Everyone loves a party, and what’s worthy of a bigger celebration than the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta on June 15? Eileen Cameron’s surprisingly suspenseful historical fiction tale, “Rupert’s Parchment: Story of Magna Carta,” makes it easy to talk with kids (ages 6–11) about why the charter is “great.”

Written from the perspective of the 12-year-old title character, the book relates why King John of England was persuaded to proclaim the rights of free men in 1215.

This hardcover picture book is beautifully illustrated by Doris Ettlinger, with some pages’ lavish embellishments inspired by illuminated manuscripts.

“Rupert’s Parchment” also compares passages of England’s Magna Carta to our Bill of Rights — just in time for another important celebration on July 4th.

*“Rupert’s Parchment: Story of Magna Carta” book by Eileen Cameron, \$15.35, [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com).*



## One for the road

With their debut album “Goo on My Shoe,” Here Comes Trouble offers kids of all ages a CD overflowing with a variety of musical styles, lots of humor, and delightful wordplay.

The album — which will be released on June 9 — is a mix of genres and inspirations, and it pays homage to punk, hip hop, pop — and even the Weather Girls! The songs are raining hilarity, with mealtimes painted as a battle of wills in the counting song, “I Want Dessert,” and the premise that the “Bubbles in My Bath” are not there because of soap is a riddle that little Sherlocks will figure out with a giggle. “Goo on My Shoe” will be the fun soundtrack for our next road trip!

*“Goo on My Shoe” CD by Here Comes Trouble, \$14.99, [cdbaby.com](http://cdbaby.com).*

## Notable pastime

ThinkFun’s new game enables little composers — ages 6 and older — the ability to begin writing “original music in minutes.” Although I was skeptical, Compose Yourself makes good on its promise — even for kids who can’t read music, like my 8-year-old co-reviewer.

The game, created by cellist-composer Philip Sheppard, contains 60 transparent music cards that can be flipped and rotated for different results. After choosing their cards, the child arranges them in the order he wants to hear them, visits the Compose Yourself website, enters the cards’ 4-digit codes, and selects how their composition will be performed — on a marimba, or by an orchestra, or by both.

If he likes the result, the mini Mozart can name and save their tune as an MP3 and print the sheet music.

The cards and instructions are stored in the included drawstring bag until the next time he’s struck by the urge to write a tune.

*Compose Yourself by ThinkFun, \$14.99, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).*



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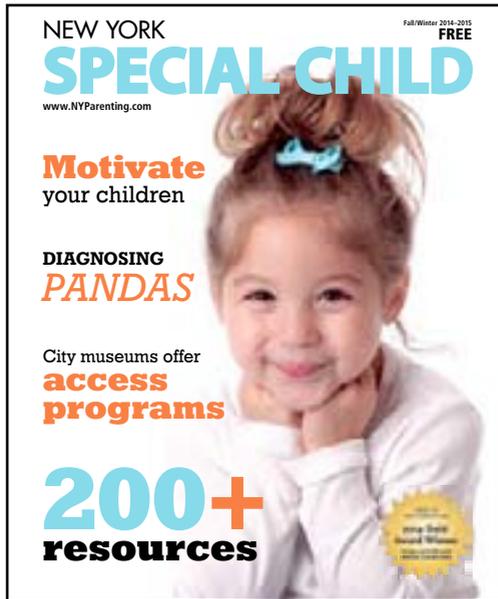
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