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August already?

Halfway through the summer? It can't be but it is. The weeks fly by in a way they don't when there's snow and ice on the ground. Right? Whether it's vacations away or days in the park or at the beaches, summers in the city are never long enough.



Tammy Scileppi has given us another wonderful insightful piece on the important world of social media and its affect on our adolescents. Through a fascinating interview with Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown, they discuss the growing cultural phenomenon. Make sure to read "Too Connected."

Our issue this month presents our annual Fall School Guide. We hope you will take a good look at the many options around your borough for education opportunities. So many fine professionals throughout our communities are offering wonderful choices from daycare to high school. There's something for everyone.

In addition, this issue has an article I think is very important and is a must-read. Our resident writer

I am a part of this world too. I text, I email, I have two Facebook accounts and am no stranger to social media. However, when I end my day and am in our office building elevator, I often am the only rider not holding a smartphone and either reading or typing. When I dine out with my 20-something daughter, her phone is always present and beeping with texts coming in and mine is stored

in my purse where it largely stays. Even when I'm at my desk, that's where my phone is stored. It doesn't follow me everywhere and when I get home, I seldom am aware of its presence, which is why I still have a land line, otherwise no one can reach me by phone. But I am not an adolescent and in fact, am strongly categorized as a digital immigrant. These youngsters are natives.

And don't miss reading the piece on "Older Moms" by another of our resident writers, Allison Plitt. As one of those gals myself, I am a true testament to the trend that has been developing, although I do take issue with her contention that 20 years ago it was unheard of for a woman in her 40s to be giving birth. Actually, it was just starting to be a trend and a woman over 35 having a first time pregnancy was no longer referred to as having a "change of life baby." As

women explored life, love and new careers, there was naturally often a delay in not only having children but in entering into committed relationships. Anyway, there are indeed unique issues and this is a good read.

Make sure the summer is not going by with your kids no longer reading, writing and engaging in learning activities of some kind. The loss of continuity is detrimental. Visit the libraries and read as a family. It's such a bonding pleasure.

Enjoy the final month of summer. I know I will. Thanks for reading!

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10 tips to help you set fitness goals for your family

BY SARA DIMMICK

It is a warm summer day in one of our many city parks, and a few families are gathered on the lawn doing a combination of stretching exercises, an obstacle course, and sprints. They are led by an instructor who encouragingly motivates each member of the group to do his best. This scene is becoming commonplace throughout the city, as more parents are making fitness a priority for their families and incor-

porating it into their family time.

This trend could very well be a response to the increase in childhood obesity. According to the Center for Disease Control, childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years.

Children who are obese are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure — not to mention psycho-social issues related to obesity includ-

ing low self-esteem and feeling discriminated against. And, children and adolescents who are obese are likely to be obese as adults and are therefore at higher risk for adult health problems such as heart disease, type-2 diabetes, stroke, and several types of cancer.

Parents and caregivers play a critical role in shaping how their kids think about living healthy. Whether it's setting fitness goals, going regularly to the gym, or making smart food choices, it is impor-

Parents and caregivers play a critical role in shaping how their kids think about living healthy. Whether it is setting fitness goals, going regularly to the gym, or making smart food choices, it is important for children to see adults modeling healthy behaviors and routines.

tant for children to see adults modeling healthy behaviors and routines. With demanding work schedules and extracurricular activities, it can be a challenge to find the time for exercise and healthy meal planning.

Renee Eanes-Belgrave, a mom of six, says that although she and her husband Clyde struggle with finding time to exercise, they are trying to make it a part of their family routine, because it's something healthy that their kids enjoy.

"Family time is so important to us," says Eanes-Belgrave. "With such a range of ages in our family, exercise is a great activity that brings us all together. And, a little healthy competition amongst the kids motivates them to do what they can."

One of the most important ways to teach kids about living healthy is to show them that it is fun! Norman Turkowitz, a dad of two who has run the New York marathon more than 20 times, says he can still recall the special times he spent with his dad playing sports and exercising. Today, he tries to create similar experiences and memories for his kids.

"It's all about setting realistic goals and having fun while trying to reach them."

Dr. Cindy Baskin, internist at Weill Cornell Medical Center, agrees that kids are impressionable and need to be exposed to positive habits in order to adopt them.

"Children are far more likely to develop healthy habits if they see their parents making smart diet choices and living an active lifestyle," says Baskin. "That message is so much stronger than a doctor who tells a child to 'eat your fruits and vegetables and do daily exercise.'"

Want to kick-start a healthy routine for your family? Here are

10 tips to get you started:

1 Make workouts part of your family ritual and schedule the time on your family calendar, so everyone knows what to expect and when.

2 Allow kids to decide what your workout will be (jogging, bike riding, calisthenics, etc.).

3 Reward family members for their participation (movie, a trip to the toy or clothing store, screen time).

4 Use sprints and obstacle courses to create friendly competition. This makes workouts more exciting.

5 Rotate who in the family will lead a group workout.

6 Encourage kids to food shop with you. If they are part of the process of choosing what to stock the fridge with, they will more likely want to eat their selections.

7 For that picky eater in your household, keep introducing healthy food over and over. Remember it takes 10-plus times for a child to take to a food.

8 Leave your fruit bowl in a place where kids can easily grab an apple or a banana.

9 Stock your fridge with veggies and cover all the colors of the rainbow: red peppers, zucchini, broccoli, purple cabbage. Have kids help you prepare meals.

10 Plan active vacations that involve walking, hiking, or other sports-related activities. If a relaxing vacation is planned, try to do one active thing each day.

Sara Dimmick is a new mother and co-founder of Physical Equilibrium, which provides fitness and wellness experiences for New York City families. Her motto is "create balance and have fun!" Ask her your fitness-related questions at sara@physeq.com.

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Issues facing the older mom

As science allows births later in life, mothers face new challenges

BY ALLISON PLITT

The number of women in the United States giving birth to children after the age of 35 is rising, according to a report published in 2014 by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Twenty years ago it would have been unheard of for a woman to give birth in her 40s. Thanks to advances in assisted reproductive technolo-

gies, women have more opportunities available to them to have children after 35.

Just recently the media has focused on several women, such as singer Sophie B. Hawkins, who have decided to have a baby at the age of 50. They have been able to get pregnant through technological developments with in vitro fertilizations, such as using donor eggs or unfreezing eggs or embryos women

created in their 30s, when they were more fertile.

There are many reasons for women postponing childhood. One motive could possibly be that people, in general, are living longer lives. Another factor is that women are finding fulfilling careers during their childbearing years. Some women have not yet found a partner with whom to have a child.

Lois Nachamie, a board-certified psychotherapist, counsels women having children later in life, as well as their families. Fifteen years ago, Nachamie, who was 42 when she had a baby, published a book called "So Glad We Waited: A Hand-Holding Guide for Over-35 Parents," with a forward by actress Debra Winger. Fifteen years later, 35 doesn't seem so old to wait and have a baby now that mothers are becoming pregnant at 50.

"I think by the time a woman is 50, she's made an active decision. You can't rely on your regular cycle. You have to make use of a lot of assisted

“The birth of a child to an older mother is a very treasured and cherished event. Setting limits is sometimes harder than when you have a child at a younger age.”

reproduction by the time you're 50, so these women have made a considered choice,” Nachamie says.

Nachamie also takes into consideration the rising life expectancy in the United States and other economically developed countries.

“Our life expectancy has certainly increased dramatically and the ability to combat disease and maintain a preventive kind of lifestyle means that a woman in her 50s in this day and age, if she's taking care of herself, is pretty healthy. She's not like a woman in her 50s fifty years ago,” she says.

She also says older mothers in good physical health should not be too anxious about the physical challenges of raising a toddler.

“I think people are often worried about the physical challenges, but even if you might have creaky knees when you're 60, if you're in good shape, the physical challenges aren't as horrendous as people fear.”

She advises older mothers to take precautions when parenting, telling them not to indulge to their child's every whim.

“The birth of a child to an older mother is a very treasured and cherished event. It's not a mistake by any stretch of the imagination. Because the child is so wanted in terms of parenting, it becomes a little trickier,” she cautions. “Setting limits is sometimes harder than when you have a child at a younger age because you're so happy to have this kid that you kind of don't want to say ‘no.’”

Nachamie has also seen older mothers struggle in raising toddlers.

“I think the other thing for women over 50 is that the toddler years can be trying and exhausting. Some people find it just fabulous and they think everything their kid does is spectacular. Other women are really bored and they

don't like sitting on the floor and playing games. That depends on the personality of the mother.”

Older mothers, furthermore, can find their teenage children emotionally challenging when they reach adolescence, Nachamie believes, saying “these kids may be embarrassed by their mothers when they reach their teen years. Children start to worry that their parents are going to die, which they often don't talk about, but they certainly are aware of.”

From her work counseling families, she's seen the problem technology poses to older mothers.

“If a woman is over 50, her relationship with technology, no matter how technically savvy she is right now, is still a real, hard disconnect between how much kids use technology and how much time they spend with their family. Common sense tells you that the more a kid is involved with any kind of technology, the less they're involved with another human being,” she says.

Another obstacle Nachamie considers is the possibility of older mothers becoming grandparents.

“An older mother might be a grandparent, but if your own child wants to wait until they're 40 years old to have a baby, then the mother is 90. I don't think that should stop anybody. I just don't think it's something that hits people until they are older and their child is older.”

Despite the challenges mothers 50 and older experience, Nachamie still holds their tenacity and determination in high regard.

“The 50 year old who has decided to have a child, in my opinion, is a very brave woman. I believe from a psychological point of view, when the biological urge was upon her, she had other things going on and so now, psychologically, she is allowing love into her life,” she says.

“Clearly what a child does is bring love into the home,” she adds. “It gives us someone to love unconditionally. So I think the 50 year old who has decided to do that is a very brave human being. I admire them tremendously and they have brought something to this relationship that a younger woman may have not.”

To learn more about Lois Nachamie's books and insights into parenting, visit www.loisnachamie.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.

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Too connected

How sexting, texting, and the social media frenzy are affecting and shaping our adolescents

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

As millennials pass the torch to a new generation of amazing kids, and the social media frenzy reaches fever pitch, parents are getting even more frustrated with the amount of time their youngsters spend texting, and worry about the sexting epidemic they keep hearing about.

Even though they're all signs of the times, these issues may be creating an emotional fireball that could affect your child's psyche, and trigger negative repercussions down the road.

Kids these days!

Recent TV commercials are great examples of how our culture is evolving. One favorite shows a dad and his two teen daughters relaxing on their living room couch; he's sitting in the middle. The girls are texting away on their cellphones. Curious, dad asks them if they're texting each other. The girls respond yes matter-of-factly. He seems a bit baffled and is probably wondering: why can't they just talk to each other?!

Another popular commercial sends a similar message, but in this one, the parent seems to be taking her kids' texting craze in stride and has probably decided: If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. A family gathers at the breakfast table; they're anxiously waiting for their favorite waffles to pop out of the toaster. The adolescent daughter and her mom are texting back and forth in a funny, heated battle over who will be the waffle winner, as the youngest child snatches one and runs off with it. In real life, most parents probably wouldn't go for a one-on-one texting scenario at meal time. Would you?

Before the words internet, e-mail, instant messaging, chatting, texting, sexting, tweeting, likes, friending, and hashtag were coined, people (younger and older) connected with one another the old-school way: by simply talking face-to-face, or over the phone, and by writing notes and letters. Sure, it was boring and basic, and far less creative than today's plethora of communication options — and it also took a bit more time to

reach out to someone — but it seems back then, folks had more of it.

Everyone enjoyed chatting, gossiping, sharing and commiserating — offline. Friends and relatives would enjoy passing actual photos around and carried several in their wallet or purse. And it worked just fine. Many folks, who remember that era, talk about those days with a sense of longing. Some youngins refer to them as “dinosaurs.” Flirting and courting was done the old-fashioned way, as well, not by texting and sexting, of course. And it was so romantic! How can texts with smiley faces and flowery e-mails replace pillow talk (you and your true love chatting over the phone at bedtime) and hand- or type-written love letters sprayed with perfume?

In fact, until recent times, most of us were quite “innocent,” and didn't even know what sexting meant, until a certain local politician made headlines (several years back) when his salacious cellular escapades were suddenly uncovered.

Our information age

How lucky we are to live in an exciting era marked by constant change and possibilities; overflowing with newfangled technology and state-of-the-art gadgets, created by great minds! It's hard to believe we practically have the entire universe at our fingertips; that we can reach out to others in a variety of exciting ways in just milliseconds, and across cyberspace — without ever uttering a word or speaking to another human being if we so choose. Happily or sadly (depending on your perspective), there's no going back; the genie is forever out of the bottle, granting our collective, ever-increasing wish for speed, progress, and the next coolest thing in a culture that some say is marred by superficiality, ignorance, and self-destructive divisiveness.

We're witnessing so many wonderfully innovative developments, but at what cost to our kids?

One day, when we look back, we'll see that the Zeitgeist — the spirit of our times — was in large part defined by the high-tech revolution, speedy information gathering and

sharing, a growing desire for instant gratification (which we may be passing on to our kids), and an obsessive need to connect and reach out 24 hours a day, seven days a week, yet in limited and perhaps, less meaningful ways. These changes have gradually transformed how we and our kids relate to each other and others in our personal and professional lives.

Some signs are already there: Consider how difficult it is for many tweens and teens to converse with each other or with family members and peers one-on-one. And, why read articles and books when you can get quick info and news from the internet, they ask. We, as parents know that some of what's out there in cyberspace is misleading or inaccurate, but they don't quite get it. Putting pen to paper is becoming a thing of the past, as is cursive writing and learning penmanship. It's quicker and easier to send important messages or express certain emotions (OMG! LOL!), and even say “I love you” via text or email. #what a shame!

Undoubtedly, social media is a powerful, dynamic force in our lives. It's fun, entertaining, and extremely useful, but as we all know, it can also serve as a force for evil. Like the internet, and tweeting, it's a double-edged sword — and can be dangerous.

Friends and likes?

It's a known fact that less Facebook “likes” and cyber-bullying can cause kids to feel unpopular, depressed, and even suicidal. Parents and caregivers: keep reminding those kids that hundreds of social media “friends” aren't as important as having just a few real ones. And that sometimes, BFFs aren't your best friends forever; they can turn around and say mean things about you with a few cunning keystrokes and clicks. But it's our job to remind them that it's definitely not the end of the world! And that they aren't defined by that meaningless nonsense.

Every era and time period, like every person, has its own personality and spirit. We are all a product of our times in some ways — the culture we grew up in. That said,



many parents are now witnessing how their tweens and teens are being affected by the culture they live in, and would agree that the sexting craze and social media frenzy a bit scary. They're just not sure how to deal with it, since "everybody's doing it" and there's so much peer pressure. Sound familiar?

But there does seem to be a way to better grasp how this cultural phenomena can be dealt with and reined in.

Protecting them

We know that kids' personalities, values, and ideas are partly molded by their parents, but also by outside forces: cultural and societal influences that dictate how they think and act. Since adolescents and teens are so impressionable and vulnerable, it's up to parents and caregiv-

ers to keep them as safe as possible no matter how old they are, and keep the lines of communication open — despite their protests to leave them alone. And kids should be reminded often that inappropriate texts, sexting, and questionable social media posts can end up in the wrong hands and cause havoc in their young lives. Future employers, friends, and love interests can easily look back and view all that awkward, embarrassing, unfiltered stuff posted on kids' Facebook pages when they were younger, very naïve, and caught up in the moment. And it's going to be there forever.

Since adolescent and teen brains aren't fully developed, youngsters tend to focus only on the present; they don't think much about conse-

quences, or about cause and effect — and that's a big problem!

Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown is an assistant professor in Pediatrics and Psychiatry, co-director of Psychology Training Program, and licensed clinical psychologist at the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center in Manhattan. She provides individual, group, and family therapy, as well as psychological testing. The center provides medical, mental health, dental, and optical services to adolescents and young adults ages 10-24.

She lives in Edgewater, New Jersey with her family — daughters Kyah (5), Kahlia (2), and husband Antoine (a senior director and partner at an advertising agency) — but has always practiced in New York.

In this enlightening, informative interview, the mother of two helps parents and caregivers understand a growing cultural phenomena, i.e. social media, texting, and sexting. She talks about how all this stuff affects our children as they transition into real-world relationships.

Tammy Scileppi: Why has sexting become so popular?

Melissa Robinson-Brown: Puberty and adolescence have historically been a time of change and identity development. Moreover, teens experience significant distress over these two key elements. Teens are curious and hormonal. They are trying to fit in, trying to develop relationships, exploring their sexuality, and testing limits — their own and their parents'. Today's generation does a large majority of this exploration via technology and social media.

A significant majority (if not all) of adolescents have a phone or some access to the internet, and they are constantly staying in contact with peers.

Long ago, we used the phone or in-person conversations to have suggestive or flirtatious conversations with our potential or current partners. We might have talked about sex and even suggested that the person might get to "see!" Remember that old line, "You show me yours, I'll show you mine?" Well, that hasn't changed. It's just become more technologically advanced. Teens don't have to wait until they are physically with someone to "show theirs." It can be done with a quick "snap photo" and "send." It has become a part of courting and flirting. It's all done via technology.

Given that brain development is still happening during adolescence and impulsivity is high, often, teens aren't thinking about the possible repercussions of sending pictures of their bodies via text message. It's not something that previous generations had to think about, which means parents may not always be thinking about how these discussions have to happen when they hand their teen a smartphone!

TS: How can sexting trigger emotional or mental instability in adolescents and teens?

MRB: Well, again, brain develop-

Continued on following page

Continued from previous page

ment and emotional maturity are still developing during adolescence. So, already, the foundation is a little rocky. Adolescents deal with so many different emotions already. They are constantly trying to figure out who likes them, who are their friends, what group they want to be a part of, will they be a unique individual or someone that follows the crowd? All of these factors affect socialization. When that sext gets sent, it sometimes goes to the intended person and that's where it stays. But other times, it has now become a tool for someone else to use, often to bully and degrade individuals. It's used to start rumors and label individuals a "hoe" or a "thot" (that hoe over there). Once that picture has been spread, there is little that the individual can do to deny that he or she might be portraying a certain image.

At least in previous generations, if a guy claimed to have slept with a girl or guy, it would be a case of he-said-she-said and perhaps, the rumor would eventually die. Now, there is hard evidence that something happened or at least that the said individual was willing to send the sext. Being bullied or portrayed in this way when it was not the intention of the sext instantly creates feelings of anger, sadness, helplessness, and shame. When these feelings interact with an already rocky adolescent period, this is definitely a recipe for emotional instability.

TS: In some ways, has social media become the culprit for these issues?

MRB: Social media is a significant part of today's adolescent population. These public forums set the stage for socialization, popularity contests, and bullying. It's about how many "friends" you can attain and how many "likes" you get on a post. Many times, social media makes it easier to start conversations, meet people, and become bold! Teens (and adults) say things on social media that they wouldn't normally say in person. It gives you permission to take off the filters, and I believe it also interferes with the ability to learn about appropriate social cues and in-person socialization.

Text messages, messaging on Facebook, direct messaging on Instagram, creating stories on Tumblr, sending quick messages on Snapchat, etc., it all gives teens permission to take off the filters and express themselves in a way that they might not otherwise do in person! As such, individuals are more likely to send



Psychologist Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown (pictured with daughters Kyah and Kahlia) speaks about the dangers of sexting for teens.

the message and, unfortunately, social media can help a picture or sext spread pretty rapidly!

TS: Is mental illness awareness regarding kids improving?

MRB: Mental health awareness definitely needs to improve! This is especially true in teens that often hide symptoms or lack the awareness to know that they are having significant symptoms. A teen doesn't have to express a depressed mood for you to know that he or she is depressed. Instead, parents, caregivers, teachers, counselors, coaches, and other individuals who work with teens need constant psychoeducation on what signs to look for. Adults need to become more aware of their children's habits!

Every time I first meet with a parent of a teen that I am seeing, I praise that parent for recognizing a need to seek out professional help for a problem, no matter how big or small! That means the parents were paying attention and that's where we as parents need to gain mastery! We need to know our kids and watch their movements. Are they eating? Are they sleeping? Have they become more withdrawn? How are they doing in school? Who are they chatting with on the phone or on text message? Are they on their phone until late hours?

Just pay attention! Even when

they don't want you around, parents, caregivers, counselors, teachers, should be paying attention.

A brave, complicated, and scary new world

Growing up in our fascinating, progressive, and brave new world is great; these are exciting times for everyone, but things are changing around us at lightning speed and sometimes, for the worse. And many parents worry that their children are being shaped by what some describe as an anything-goes, no-holds-barred society, which is hyper-focused on sex, hot celebs, looks, reality TV, social media, and legalizing pot. Some are concerned with a disturbing mind-set and trend among some teens, who have a get-rich-quick-without-working-for-it attitude. How all these variables manifest in our kids' lives, remains to be seen. Only time will tell.

And there's evidence that all these distractions—the electronic devices, the endless texting and preoccupation with social media are very addictive. Let's face it, we adults can't live without our cellphones, iPads, and computers either, and feel lost and disconnected without them.

Here's a no-brainer: Now that summer's here, why not spend more quality time outdoors with your family, just having good, old-fashioned fun close to home, or exploring

Gotham and doing stuff that will stimulate your kids' minds? The idea is to get them away from all those devices! And for older teens, plan regular activities that will hone their socialization skills.

As the planet turns, it seems likely that no matter how brilliant, forward-thinking, and tech-savvy our kids become, and how fast our modern culture evolves, socializing, connecting, and sharing will always remain at the core of who we are as human beings, while we search for more ways to reach out and communicate in a complex, global world that's getting smaller.

Ironically, social media was created to bring people together, but over-dosing on social media and texting tends to pull us further apart. It would be nice if our kids truly understood this concept and learned how to better interact with others in person, or over the phone, or by writing a letter and mailing it.

Unplugging and tuning out

Everybody has the ability to tune in to what's happening out there in a flash. Or, choose to unplug and tune out for a while.

Some families are experimenting with a great "new" way of interacting, based on an old-school concept—it's called family time. During dinner, or at designated times (during the week, or on weekends), all devices are turned off and put away. Instead of focusing on their phones, kids spend quality time with their family members, talking about their day or week; issues are addressed openly and hopefully resolved. Discussing current events is optional, and joke-telling is especially encouraged, as are board games. You never know, this "radical" idea could eventually become a nation-wide trend!

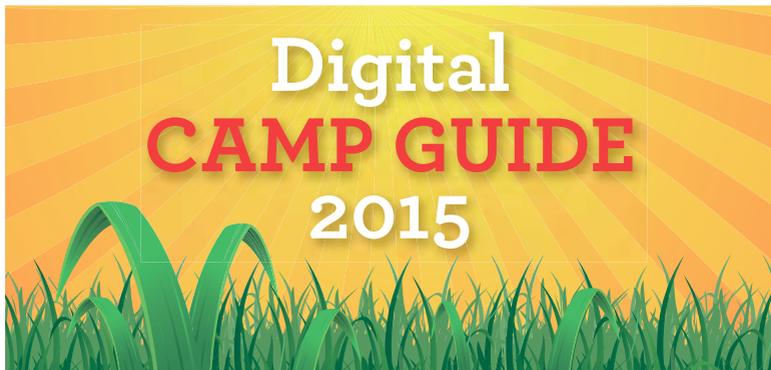
Another recent commercial seems to sum up the Zeitgeist that defines our crazy culture: A family of four waits in line at the airport; they're looking forward to their island getaway vacation. While their teen daughter and adolescent son are busy on their cellphones, mom and dad happen to mention that there's no wifi where they're going, so they suggest that when they get there, the kids might want to actually talk, for a change. Shocked by this news flash and visibly shaken, the siblings briefly pause, glance at each other and consider the implications. Deciding that talking isn't such a great idea, they shake their heads no, as mom turns to dad and says, "I like it!"

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Keep an eye out

Tips for parents on protecting their child's eyesight

BY BEHLOR SANTI

Not only is August the month of hot days and school shopping, but for the past decade it's also been Child Eye Health And Safety Month, a time to observe the health of your children's eyes. Here are seven tips to ease the stress and yet make certain your child's eyes are in good shape:

Stay up-to-date with screen time research

Traditionally, the American Academy of Pediatrics has suggested that children over age 2 watch less than one or two hours of television daily. In October 2014, the academy debated its recommendations. In an article published in Slate, Lisa Guernsey of the New America Foundation's Early Education Initiative, says, "Let's face it: Raising children turns our hair gray no matter what. But at least it moves us from a 'no screen time'

recommendation, that few parents abide, toward 'mindful screen time' in today's media-maniac world."

Get your child's eyes examined regularly

According to Prevent Blindness, an organization dedicated to educating the public about eye health, parents should first network with friends, relatives, and co-workers to find eye doctors good with children. "The best thing to have is good information," says Dr. Steven E. Brooks, chief of pediatric ophthalmology at Columbia University Medical Center in Manhattan. Just before your child's appointment, prepare questions for the eye doctor and bring a teddy bear or other toy along.

Protect your child's eyes from the sun

Make sure that your child uses sunscreen. Encourage the use of sunglasses that block excess ultraviolet, or UV, rays.

Sports and eye safety go together

Whether your child plays basketball or prefers skateboarding, emphasize the wearing of safety eyewear.

Get your kids active

If your child's a little couch potato or video-game fan, encourage him to be physically active. TV time is not connected to blindness, but researchers have found a connection between TV or computer time, called "close work," and nearsightedness. Less close work, and more time playing, can reduce the risk of causing or worsening nearsightedness, as well as maintain a normal body mass index.

Emphasize nutrition

In addition to making your child play, feed him nutritious food. Excess sugar, salt, and fat can lead to obesity, hardening of the heart's arteries, and elevated blood pressure, factors in poor eye health. Structuring a diet to prevent diabetes also will have an influence on your children's health as he grows older. Diabetes can damage vision.

Special attention for a special-needs child

If your child has such conditions as Down syndrome, developmental delay and juvenile arthritis, Brooks suggests setting up appointments with pediatric ophthalmology specialists. Children with special needs disproportionately suffer from eye problems.

• • •

"I'm an advocate of children receiving high-quality vision care," says Brooks. "Appropriate attention to safety is always important to make sure preventable injuries are prevented ... annual evaluations of vision are important to detect vision problems early, but also to raise awareness."

Regular eye checkups benefit children whether eye problems are detected or not. For conditions such as strabismus, or crossed eyes, pediatric ophthalmologists have effective treatments, such as applying demecarium bromide, or injecting Botox into affected eye muscles. Even if your child's eye health is normal, regular checkups encourage good eye care. Children see their eye health as important as dental health or fitness. Check out Eye Spy (<http://eyespy.preventblindness.org/index.php>), a free, educational website with age-appropriate information on eye anatomy and how the eye works, as well as eye safety.

Also check out the National Center for Family Professional Partnership website (www.fv-ncfpp.org/index.php?cID=567). It has valuable resources concerning eye health for children on the autistic spectrum, as well as resources for parents of children with vision impairment.

This August, do more than stay cool and prepare your child for the school year. Protect your child's sight and allow him to see every day well.



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Wheel power

How to
prepare your
child for
riding a bike
to school

BY JENNIFER WARNER

There's a group of kids that have an unfair advantage over your children. They do better in school, are more social, and have fewer health problems in childhood and adulthood than all their peers. Who are these over-achieving stars? They are the kids who bike to school.

For many adults, the idea of biking to school seems like a quaint memory of a bygone era, but the families whose children are pedaling to the classroom each morning know different. They know that daily dose of biking improves their kids' academics and attitude, and makes up for the lack of physical activity they may experience at other times.

The benefits of biking are so powerful, in fact, that a regular bike ride has actually been proven to help ease the signs of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder! A study by Specialized Bikes Foundation and RTSG Neuroscience (a team of physical education consultants) explored whether or not children diagnosed with ADHD could benefit from a bike ride. What they found was incredible.

For children with attention issues, the study found that a bike ride actually changed the neuro-electric activity of their brain to a more "normal" pattern. Study participants had

a better mood and were better able to process feelings after they biked.

A separate study published in the *Journal of Pediatric Psychology* discovered that regular exercise improves self-esteem in children, and research shows that kids who bike regularly are less likely to be overweight in childhood and nearly 50 percent less likely to be overweight as adults.

With schools devoting less and less time to physical education and sports, one in three children in the U.S. is dangerously overweight or obese, and 6.5 million kids living with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, it is more important than ever for parents to take control.

One of the most affordable and practical ways to make sure your children are thriving and getting the daily physical activity they need is to bike them to school. It's easier than you think. If you live within five miles of your child's school, getting there by bike may actually take you less time than getting there by car.

Once you have your prep down, it's a breeze, and you'll enjoy the added benefit of getting some exercise yourself! To start biking your kids to school, just remember these tips.

Air in the tires

A little prep goes a long way towards making your bike ride to

school a smooth and pleasurable experience.

Invest in a good floor pump and make sure you have everyone's tires properly inflated. Also, have a secure bike lock for each of your kids' bicycles and practice locking them up properly together. U-locks and cables are an effective combination and lightweight enough that your kid can probably tote them in a backpack without a problem.

Not sure how to lock up a bicycle? Visit mycitybikes.org/bike-to-school for step-by-step instructions.

Drive it first

The scariest parts of biking to school are intersections. What better way to know how to deal with traffic than to drive in it? Think about your family's route from a car's perspective. Where are the blind spots? Where are the crosswalks? Use this knowledge to map out the safest route, and keep in mind that you may be one of the very lucky people who can incorporate a bike path into the commute. Bike paths are separated from traffic and have fewer intersections with roads and the cars that drive on them than riding on the sidewalk or bike lane.

Check your local app on mycitybikes.org/new-york or traillink.com



to see where the bike paths are in your area.

Helmets for everyone

Make sure everyone has their safety gear on. Including you. Properly fitting helmets, front and rear blinking bike lights, and bright-colored and reflective jackets, vests or accessories will keep you safe and visible on your ride.

You are your child's example, so save yourself the hassle of an "I'm not wearing that" tantrum by showing your kids how you strap on your helmet, turn on your bike lights, and wear your safety gear. What's normal for you will become normal for them.

Divide and conquer

When you share the responsibility of driving your kids to school with neighbors or family members, it's called "carpooling." Do the same by bike and you're "bike-pooling."

Plan your route and safety protocols together with another trusted parent.

Do all the steps above together at least once, so you make sure you're on the same page.

Not only will this make everyone's

life easier, but you'll be more comfortable knowing that your surrogate bike leader has the same expectations and plans as you do. Sharing the responsibility will free up some of your mornings while ensuring that your kids are getting the best possible start to every single day.

To build up your own confidence on the bike, consider taking a maintenance class or joining a group ride hosted by your local bike shop. For example, 718 Cyclery in Brooklyn hosts regular city riding clinics to teach less-experienced riders how to maneuver their bike and handle biking in traffic scenarios.

Many shops like 718 Cyclery have free, scheduled maintenance classes where you can learn basics like changing a flat tire, adjusting the seat height, or keeping a bike's moving parts clean and lubricated. You'll feel more confident and in control when you learn how to save the day in the event of a technical mishap.

Visit mycitybikes.org to connect with a local bike shop in your area and find local bike ed opportunities for grown-ups.

Jennifer Warner is a beginner biking advocate and outreach director at My City Bikes, the first and only public health campaign dedicated to support-

SOURCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/data.html>
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm>

Can cycling help manage ADHD in kids?
http://www.specialized.com/OA_MEDIA/pdf/Specialized_infographic_2.23.15_novideo.pdf

Children who ride a bike two or more times a week are less likely to be overweight.

Dudas, R., and M. Crocetti, 2008 – Association of bicycling and childhood overweight status, *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, 8, 392–395

Adolescents who participate in bicycling, in-line skating, or skateboarding more than four times a week are 48 percent less likely to be overweight as adults.

Menschik, D., et al., 2008 – Adolescent physical activities as predictors of young adult weight, *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 162, 23–28

Nearly two-thirds of children 9–13 do not participate in any organized physical activity outside of school, and 23 percent don't engage in any free-time physical activity at all.

Duke, J., et al., 2003 – Physical activity levels among children aged 9–13 years: United States, 2002, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 52, 785–788

Participation in physical activity is positively related to academic performance in children.

Singh, A., et al., 2012 – Physical activity and performance at school: A systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment, *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 166, 1

Regular exercise reduces depression and improves self-esteem in overweight children.

Petty, K., et al., 2008 – Exercise effects on depressive symptoms and self-worth in overweight children: A randomized controlled trial, *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*



DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Five tips to reduce performance anxiety

Dear Dr. Karyn,

My daughter is 26 years old and although she is an adult, she still lives at home with us and suffers a lot of performance anxiety at her new job. Growing up she was an overachiever — always struggling to be at the top of her class and sport teams, and now I see this in her professional life. The irony is that all my friends think I have this dream child, but really I am deeply concerned for how much pressure she puts on herself and her overall happiness. She seems miserable and very unhappy. Any suggestions would be helpful!

You may be surprised how many people actually experience anxiety or performance anxiety. In fact, years ago when I was speaking at a human resources conference in Ottawa, I shared that we are seeing epidemic rates of anxiety among those from Generation Y (those born generally between early 1980s and early 2000s), and I was approached by a millennial immediately after my presentation. She thanked me for helping her better understand herself and admitted that the week prior she had been out for dinner with several of her Gen Y colleagues, and learned that she was the only one not on anti-anxiety medication. She was concerned that employers needed to hear more about this, because it is such a prevalent part of the millennial experience, and that more sick days should be made available to employees who struggle with anxiety.

Regardless of what you think of her suggestion I will tell you that it's easy to criticize and point fingers at this generation until you start to understand why they are this way! I strongly believe that the root of this anxiety epidemic is that we have not done a great job at helping and teaching these next two generations, Y and Z, to learn how to cope with adversity, failure, and rejection. Anxiety is one of the most common topics we work with at our counsel-



ing center and we consistently see outstanding results; we have found the first and most important step is to simply understand it. I trust you will find these five tips helpful!

Understand anxiety

Many people think anxiety is bad or wrong, which is simply not true! Part of managing emotions is understanding them. The truth is we have hundreds of emotions (some experts say up to 3,000) and anxiety is simply one of them. Feelings are not good or bad — just pleasant or unpleasant. I often say anxiety is our “friend” not our enemy — it's simply trying to tell us something and we need to stop and pay attention!

Thoughts drive emotions — so when someone is feeling anxious it's usually because of a toxic thought

that is underlying it (ex. what if I don't pass this test?; what if I don't get this promotion?; what if I don't get into this university?) The feeling is not the problem — it's the thought! Anxiety tends to be driven by thoughts related to the future and “what if's.”

Understand the performance anxiety ‘lie’

Performance anxiety is a more specific type of anxiety in that it is connected directly to performance (school, sports or work). I see this a lot when I work with high-performing students, athletes, professionals and entrepreneurs. The irony is that on the outside, these people (usually over-achievers) appear great! They are often the top of their class,

receiving the highest professional awards or getting the latest promotions.

And I want to emphasize that there is nothing wrong or unhealthy about achieving, but the challenge arises when these high-performers start to attach their self-worth to what they do — that's the real problem! Their thinking is "I'm okay if I achieve," so they often struggle with issues of confidence and perfection. In fact, I often say that anxiety, low self-esteem, and perfection are three best friends who often hang out — they are all separate issues that are very interconnected.

Focus on what you can control

The secret to changing how we feel (we can't do it directly) is to change how we think. Our minds are extremely powerful, and the great thing is that we can control the thoughts we are telling ourselves! If we feed ourselves toxic thoughts, we will feel terrible! If we feed ourselves healthy thoughts, we will feel confident, happy, and peaceful.

When I speak at schools and organizations or work with individuals, I emphasize that we need to change the thinking from "I'm okay if _____" to "I'm okay as I am! Yes, I may like to work on _____, but my self-worth is not based on my achievements."

When we have the courage to change the things within our control (and have a plan to do so), we will start to feel our anxiety decrease.

Re-define failure

Part of healthy thinking is re-defining failure or negative feedback. I once heard someone say that when he fails he simply studies the failure as data. He doesn't personalize it, it's simply information for him to study and learn from so he can improve. This type of thinking is extremely healthy!

When I started speaking professionally many years ago, I decided it was imperative to always (and I mean always) get feedback sheets from my audience. This can be a little risky, because feedback includes both the positive and the negatives! At first when I started asking for this feedback, I will admit that I often took the negative feedback personally, but I quickly realized I needed to stop doing this. People were simply comment-

ing on my speaking ability, not my character or who I am.

I had to make sure my self-worth was not connected to whether or not I was a good speaker. Speaking was simply a job I was doing and I needed to be able to study the data so I could improve, not obsess over whether people liked me!

Accept what you cannot control

When I think about the high-performing individuals I've worked with regarding their anxiety, the common thread is that they are living their life opposite to what I suggest for tips four and five. They are focusing on what they can't control, which will drive their anxiety through the roof. We cannot control whether people like us, whether we get the job promotion, or anything else that is in the future.

But we can control today — how we think and what we do! We can control whether we are telling ourselves healthy thoughts, detaching our self-worth from our performance, trying our absolute best, or surrounding ourselves with those we can learn from and simply learning from our "failures." These are the strategies that will not only minimize anxiety, but also lead to greater success!

Many of my anxious high-performing clients have admitted to me that they were afraid to let go of their unrealistic, unhealthy, unloving thinking that their self-worth is based on their achievement. They were afraid that if they didn't think this way their performance and drive would decrease (even though they would likely be happier). Can a person change her thinking? Absolutely!! We've helped thousands of clients radically reduce their anxiety and increase their confidence! What surprises most of them is that not only are they much happier, but they also often achieve more because they are more fearless and courageous with taking risks. What a great side-effect of eliminating anxiety!

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



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The post-baby BLUES

Understanding
postpartum
mood
disturbances

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Most women experience some form of postpartum mood disturbance following the birth of their child. For many, the symptoms are mild and disappear within two weeks. But a small percentage of mothers go on to develop one or more postpartum mood disorders including depression, anxiety, and psychosis.

The good news is that with intervention, women can recover.

This was the case with Julie

O'Neill. Shortly after her daughter was born, this mother began experiencing troubling symptoms.

"It started in the hospital when I had problems with breastfeeding, and by the time I got home, I was feeling all the pressures of new motherhood," she says. "That first week, I was very teary, but I chalked it up to baby blues and thought I'd be OK soon. By week two, I found myself waking up shaking due to panic attacks. I wasn't able to eat or sleep either. Having been a social worker, I was familiar with the symptoms

of depression and knew I needed help."

"Up to 80 percent of new mothers experience baby blues and have mild feelings of depression, but problems that persist beyond two weeks could be pointing to postpartum depression," says Janet Brown, a perinatal behavioral health specialist. "And its appearance may be delayed for up to a year after giving birth."

Dr. Katharine Weymouth, a private practicing psychiatrist specializing in women's mental health, agrees.

"The symptoms go beyond fatigue,

More on postpartum mood disorders

Women with a personal or family history of mood disorders should talk with their physician prior to conceiving, as they are at a higher risk of developing conditions while pregnant or postpartum. If any of these symptoms of postpartum mood disturbances persist two weeks after delivery, women should get an evaluation by their physician or mental health professional.

Baby Blues occur in up to 80 percent of new mothers due in part to hormonal changes postpartum. Symptoms, which include extreme tearfulness, irritability, anxiety, mood swings, feelings of inadequacy, insomnia and fatigue, can appear right after delivery, peak at five days, and usually disappear by 12 days postpartum. A small percentage of women with baby blues go on to develop postpartum depression. Baby blues are the only one of these conditions considered a disturbance, not a disorder.

Postpartum depression occurs in up to 13 to 15 percent of women and is said to be the most common complication of childbearing. Symptoms parallel clinical depres-

sion and can include sadness, lack of interest in things (particularly bonding with the baby), feelings of guilt or inadequacy, worthlessness, irritability, impatience, sense of hopelessness, insomnia, change in appetite or concentration, difficulty enjoying things, and recurring harmful or suicidal thoughts. Symptoms can occur soon after delivery or up to a year postpartum.

Postpartum anxiety disorders, which include anxiety, panic, obsessive-compulsive, and post-traumatic stress disorders, occur in up to 10 percent of women suffering with postpartum depression. Symptoms vary according to disorder and may come and go, but one common characteristic they share is excessive worry that interferes with one's ability to function. Following is a breakdown:

- Postpartum anxiety disorder symptoms could include feeling keyed up, tiring easily, irritability, fidgety, insomnia, and difficulty focusing.

- Postpartum panic disorder is characterized by sweating, trembling, nausea, dizziness, difficulty

breathing, tight chest, and numbness in hands and feet.

- Postpartum obsessive-compulsive disorder symptoms include repetitive behaviors or thoughts which cause anxiety, worry or panic. It may also be accompanied by protective behaviors and constant, obtrusive thoughts related to the baby's safety. Note this is not postpartum psychosis. Women with obsessive-compulsive have no intent of harming their child. These thoughts are very disturbing to them, and because they don't understand it, the condition is accompanied by fear, shame, and emotional turmoil. This is, in fact, the one disorder people know the least about and most women are afraid to talk about for fear others will think they are crazy.

- Postpartum traumatic stress disorder occurs in women who experienced trauma during pregnancy, labor, or delivery. Symptoms, which can occur up to two months after delivery, can include flashbacks about what happened, nightmares, and hyper vigilance.

Postpartum psychosis is a rare

disorder that occurs in only one to two percent of women who deliver. Symptoms usually develop within 48 to 72 hours postpartum and can include delusions, hallucinations, disorganized speech, and inappropriate behavior. Symptoms may also be preceded by a period of restlessness or agitation. Women with a history of bipolar disorder are at a higher risk for developing postpartum psychosis, and in-patient psychiatric treatment and medication may be required immediately.

Resources

- Postpartum Support International is an organization dedicated to providing information, resources, and support on postpartum issues. For more information, visit www.postpartum.net, or call (800) 944-4773.

- www.MedEdPPD.org was developed by the National Institute for Mental Health to provide information about postpartum depression.

- www.womensmentalhealth.org is an online resource created by Massachusetts General Hospital as a way to provide up-to-date information and resources on women's mental health issues.



irritability, and difficulty concentrating. That's considered normal when caring for an infant," she says. "Postpartum depression can include sadness, irritability, insomnia, fatigue, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, change in appetite or concentration, difficulty enjoying things, and recurring thoughts of harming one's self."

In addition to postpartum depression, mothers may experience one or more of the four postpartum anxiety disorders or postpartum psychosis, a rare condition characterized by disorganized thinking, hallucinations, and delusions. With any of these conditions, early detection

and intervention is key.

"What many people don't realize is women are at risk for these conditions while pregnant as well. So I suggest they talk with their doctor before they conceive to avoid potential problems, particularly if they have a history of depression or anxiety," says Weymouth.

By week's end, O'Neill had contacted her physician. But the doctor on call phoned in a prescription her insurance wouldn't cover.

"That Monday, I took myself to the hospital, and they referred me to their Perinatal Behavioral Health Department," she says. "There I was

diagnosed with postpartum depression and anxiety. They put me on medication with continued monitoring and recommended I join the support group offered through the hospital. Six weeks later, I was feeling better."

For Crystal Lohr, intervention wasn't immediate, and she suffered severely as a result. A week after giving birth to her daughter, this single mother started having nightmares that left her trembling in sweaty sobs.

"A-year-and-a-half later, I began having painful anxiety attacks that felt like someone was squeezing my

rib cage and stabbing me in the heart. I didn't want to interact with my daughter, either. I would sit and watch her play, but instead of joining in, I'd curl up in a ball and cry," she says of her now 3-year-old. "I knew I needed help, but I thought I could take care of it myself. On top of that, I was embarrassed and didn't want anyone to know."

Then two-and-a-half years later, while taking her daughter for a checkup, Lohr broached the subject.

"I told the doctor I knew I suffered from postpartum depression, and now it had gotten worse. So she asked me, 'On a scale from one to 10, how happy are you right now — 10 being the happiest?' I told her 'three,' then burst into tears," she says.

Lohr was diagnosed with anxiety and severe depression that stemmed from postpartum.

"The doctor explained that it's like a disease and needs to be treated. I started on Citalopram [an antidepressant], and a week later, I was feeling better," she says.

Treatment options vary depending on the disorder and severity of symptoms.

"Some women do fine with support groups. But others may need one-on-one therapy with a mental health professional to help develop new coping strategies," says Brown. "Medication may also be administered where symptoms are significant."

One thing O'Neill found particularly helpful were the support group meetings.

"It was good to be with other moms who were feeling the same way. We connected through our struggles and drew strength from one another," she says.

O'Neill, in fact, continued to attend meetings even after she had recovered, to encourage other moms, and has since started a second support group that meets at a different location. More recently, she joined the team of Postpartum Support International to work as an advocate for new mothers and their families.

Today, she's on a mission: "I want to tell mothers that postpartum depression is treatable, and you're not alone. With the help of support groups, counseling, and medication, it will get better," she says. "Now that I'm expecting again, I have the tools to get through this, should it happen again."

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



Fight summer learning loss!

Five things
that NYC
kids should
pick up this
season

BY DR. DEBORAH ANTOINE
AND RHEA WONG

This season, most kids will experience the all-too-common phenomenon known as “summer learning loss.”

The National Summer Learning Association reports that the majority of students lose two months of grade-level equivalency in math over the summer months, with low-income students also falling behind two months in reading. Furthermore, most children gain weight more rapidly during summer break.

To help prevent this seasonal backsliding, we compiled a list of five things that New York City kids should pick up this summer:

A racquet. Everyone knows tennis is great exercise, but it is also proven to uniquely build kids’ cognitive abilities, academic performance, and character. According to a United States Tennis Association study, children who play tennis get better grades, have fewer behavioral problems, and are more likely to aspire to attend college than those who play

other sports. To learn about tennis opportunities for kids throughout New York City, visit www.nyjtl.org.

A book. Summer reading is a tried and true way to combat learning loss. One of the many benefits kids reap from reading is a more robust vocabulary, which is crucial for standardized tests. Visit www.btny.org/resources for recommended books and vocab apps. Additionally, parents should read the same books and engage their kids in conversation about the plot, characters, and themes.

A pen. Writing well is vital for success in school, and it helps kids become more analytical and expressive. The trick is to make it enjoyable. Some kids like keeping a journal, but many do not. Writing and performing spoken word poetry and music lyrics are effective ways to get kids excited about expressing themselves through words.

A MetroCard. On weekends, visit different parts of New York City. Expand your child’s worldview by embarking on outings to new neighborhoods to experience diverse cultures, hear different languages, taste ethnic

foods, and see distinctive architecture. Visit the city’s world-class museums, many of which offer cheap — or even free — admission.

A meditation practice. The positive impact that mindfulness meditation has on adults’ health and well-being is extensively documented. But studies also show that meditation helps kids calm down, focus, and can even boost their test scores. Concentration is a particularly important skill these days, as kids are increasingly bombarded with visual stimulation from TV, videogames, and mobile devices. For meditation resources for children, visit www.teachchildrenmeditation.com.

This summer, our two organizations — New York Junior Tennis & Learning and Breakthrough New York — are embarking on a new partnership. New York Junior Tennis & Learning’s brand-new Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning in the Bronx’s Crotona Park will serve as the third site of Breakthrough New York’s year-round academic enrichment program.

Kids participating in summer programming at the Cary Leeds Center will boost their brains and bodies, so that they’re ready for success in school come September. For those kids who aren’t participating in this kind of enrichment programming, picking up these five things is a great way to turn learning loss into summer gain.

Dr. Deborah Antoine is president and chief executive officer of New York Junior Tennis and Learning. Rhea Wong is executive director of Breakthrough New York.

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How citizenship can affect an estate plan

I am a United States citizen, but my spouse is not. Are there special requirements we need to incorporate in our estate plan or last will and testaments?

Most definitely yes. Part of a married couple's estate plan may include utilizing what is called marital deduction in the estate of the first spouse to die — in order to avoid paying any estate taxes until after both spouses are deceased. This is particularly true if each or either spouse has a gross estate more than the estate tax threshold, currently at \$5.43 million for federal taxes and \$3,125,000 in New York (for 2015). This exemption is only permitted when the surviving spouse is a U.S. citizen.

When a surviving spouse is not a U.S. citizen, the estate tax for assets exceeding the estate tax exemption would ordinarily be due. Perhaps recognizing the inherent problem in depriving the surviving spouse from the use of assets to support herself during her lifetime, the IRS allows non-citizen spouses to choose to put assets in excess of the exemption into a special type of trust, called a Qualified Domestic Trust. This allows the surviving spouse to enjoy the benefit of the marital deduction, while giving comfort to the IRS that the government will receive the taxes due on the death of the second spouse (rather than have the surviving spouse “abscond” to the home country and deprive the U.S. government of the tax on the remaining assets).

In light of the increase in the allowable exemption, fewer non-U.S. citizen couples find themselves in a situation that would require a Qualified Domestic Trust to preserve assets after the death of the first spouse.

In addition if your estate does not quite reach the federal limit,



but does exceed the New York State limit, there is no need to set up a Qualified Domestic Trust in order to take advantage of the marital deduction provisions.

Another key point to be mindful of is that U.S. domiciliaries (even if they are non-U.S. citizens), remain subject to U.S. gift and estate tax on their worldwide assets. Non-domiciliaries are only subject to the U.S. transfer tax system only to the extent of their U.S. property. Many international clients think they are “safe” if they don't declare the assets. This is a mistake, as the IRS could charge interest and penalties and also lien the assets located in the U.S.

Although “domicile” is a very fact-intensive inquiry and analysis, that very much depends on the circumstances, a foreign national is considered “domiciled” in the U.S. if he

is currently residing in the U.S. with no intention of leaving. Or, stated another way, if the evidence indicates that the U.S. is the place to which the person intends to return when they are away.

The prudent ex-pat will enlist the services of an accountant and attorney to ensure that they are positioned in the most efficient manner both for income and estate taxes. A U.S. will, with or without a Qualified Domestic Trust, can be a crucial part of ensuring efficient disposition of assets in the most tax-efficient manner possible.

Guardianship

In addition, there are important considerations for ex-pats who have children during their residence in the U.S. There are two circumstances to consider: what would happen to

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the care and raising of minor children if both parents were to die, but also if both parents become disabled while the child(ren) are minors? Frequently, the choice of guardian by a non-U.S. citizen in his Will is a family member who lives in the home country and is not a U.S. citizen. In that case, a designation of stand-by guardian is crucial to help bridge the gap between the time that the parent(s) are incapacitated or have died, up until a court has made a determination of a permanent guardian. The U.S. will also help determine the guardianship of your children upon death of both spouses, rather than leaving it up to the full discretion of the U.S. court.

The procedure to name a guardian for minor children is to nominate an individual or individuals in your will to take legal custody of your child. This can but does not need to be the same individual(s) as the "minor's trustee," who will oversee the management of any finances left to the minor child.

A guardian nomination is just that: a suggestion to the court that, in most cases, will be upheld if the individual qualifies as a fiduciary, meaning a person in a position of trust. In New York a person is not eligible to be a fiduciary if he is a "non-domiciliary alien [...] except [...] one who shall serve with one or more co-fiduciaries, at least one of whom is resident in this state." That said, the court may still appoint a non-domiciliary alien or a New York resident as a fiduciary in his or her discretion. An individual who is mentally incompetent, a felon, or who otherwise "does not possess the qualifications required of a fiduciary by reason of substance abuse, dishonesty, improvidence, want of understanding, or who is otherwise unfit for the execution of the office" is also unfit to serve as a fiduciary, as is anyone else who is ineligible in the court's discretion. The court may also declare as ineligible to act as a fiduciary "a person unable to read and write the English language."

What does this mean? For international clients, it means that while they should nominate the guardian of their choice based on substance (i.e., their true qualifications in substance to provide the best care for their children), the choice is a mere nomination and is subject to the judge's approval and order of who will raise a child

and have legal custody. Second, for the many ex-patriates living in New York City, it means that extra care must be taken to communicate to the court why the appointment of a non-domiciliary individual as guardian is in the best interest of your minor children. These specifics can be spelled out in the will itself or in a separate writing that should be properly executed.

The other thing to consider is that many non-U.S. citizen parents reside in the U.S. with no real intention to leave, but are insistent that their children be raised in their home country. The thing they fail to consider is that a child who is raised in the U.S. his entire life may not want to leave the U.S. when he is 10, 14, 15, and his entire life is based here. It is a very different situation when the child is an infant or toddler and could easily adjust. If a parent wants the child to be repatriated to the home country, the child's citizenship may be a factor bearing on the judge's decision. If the parent applied for or obtained dual-citizenship from her home country for the child, this may be deemed evidence by the judge of the parents' intent for their child to keep a connection to the parents' country of origin. It has the added impact of providing a basis for which the guardian in the home country can request assistance from her own state department or diplomatic agency to repatriate the child. In the absence of dual citizenship, the home country's state department lacks standing to assist. This, together with basic border-control issues, poses an obstruction to relocating a child to another country either temporarily pending the proceeding or permanently.

Because estate tax laws constantly change, it is important to revisit your estate plan as set up in your last will and testament over time. If either or both of you are not U.S. citizens, it is important to discuss with your estate planning attorney the possibility of including a Qualified Domestic Trust in your wills.

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



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critical thinking skills. Our curriculum is fully aligned with the Head Start Child Development, Early Learning Framework and state early learning standards. Contact us today to find your local center or to inquire about tuition and openings at one of our centers.

Greene Hill School

39 Adelphi Street
718-230-3608 or www.greenehillsschool.org

Greene Hill School is an independent lower and middle school with a sliding scale tuition. At Greene Hill, children are actively engaged in their world through critical thinking and open-ended investigations; teachers provide expertise and consistent, thoughtful guidance; parents are important contributors to the school environment, and the local community is a natural extension of the GHS classroom. Tours for families of children from Pre-K through 8th grade will commence in October 2015. For more information please visit our website www.greenehillsschool.org. Email admissions@greenehillsschool.org with any questions.

offers its students a safe and caring atmosphere. Please call 718-748-9023 or visit <http://ledsny.org> to find out more about this unique school that combines tradition values with a modern world.

LePort Montessori Cobble Hill

292 Court Street, Brooklyn
718-340-3550 www.leportschools.com/bk

LePort Montessori Preschool is opening their doors in Fall 2015 with part-time and full-time Montessori programs for infants, toddlers, and preschool. We also offer a Spanish Immersion option for toddler and preschool. At LePort, children are guided at every stage of development to gain the essential knowledge, thinking skills, and strength of character necessary to flourish as joyous children today, and as successful adults tomorrow. Visit our website to learn more and to sign-up on our interest list so you can be notified of upcoming admissions events, tours, and parent education seminars.

Little Sun People, Inc.

1360 Fulton Street
718-789-7330 or www.littlesunpeople.com

Little Sun People, Inc. is a unique community childcare service founded in 1980 by Fela Barclift, an African American mother of four and lifetime resident of the colorful community of Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Little Sun People, centrally located in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community, has been especially designed to foster the development of the younger child. Something that sets them apart, however, is that at Little Sun People, they made the decision from inception that attention and responsiveness to the heritages and cultures of all people would be a very important part of how they would frame the preschool curriculum.

They have made it their special mission to highlight the long, wondrous history, as well as illustrious and diverse ways of life of all people of color on the planet, with a particular emphasis on people of African ancestry.

Magic Moments Academy

1078 Fulton Street
347-464-5544 or info@magicmomentsacademy.com
www.magicmomentsacademy.com

Continued on page 32

Just Wee Two

With locations in Brooklyn Heights and Park Slope, 800-404-2204 or www.justweetwo.com

Just Wee Two offers a very special time for children to enjoy pre-nursery school activities with the security of knowing Mommy (or another caregiver) is there. A great preparation for pre-school, the Mother & Child program is available for children as young as 14 months. Partial separation and separation classes are also available. The school has a pre-nursery program, arts & crafts, music, play, stories, snack and creative movement.

Leif Ericson Day School

1037 72nd Street
718-748-9023 or www.ledsny.org

Leif Ericson Day School, a private Christian elementary and middle school located in Dyker Heights, celebrating over 48th year of academic excellence for students in pre-school through grade 8. The pre-school class, a combined 3- & 4-year old program, where communication skills, motor skills, cognitive skills, and person/social skills are a part of the curriculum, also includes, English language arts, science, math, social studies, Christian studies, music, and computers. With a small class size, a teacher and an assistant, this unique learning environment

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Fall 2015 School Guide

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 30

Magic Moments Academy is a brand new Child Care and Early Learning center in the Heart of Bed-Stuy expecting to open its doors in September, 2015. Magic Moments Academy is proud to offer a convenient, yet distinctive child care and early childhood education solution to the families of Bedford-Stuyvesant and neighboring areas. Our dedicated directors and staff have years of child care experience in the community and are excited to welcome this latest location! Magic Moments Academy provides a safe and nurturing environment, with a creative emphasis on the fundamentals of early childhood development and integrated educational components.

Our newly renovated space is conveniently located on Fulton Street and steps away from the Franklin Ave. subway station. We look forward to serving our Bed-Stuy community in our new space.

Now enrolling for Infant /Toddler Care, 2's & 3's Preschool and 4's Pre-K.

Midwood Montessori

2825 Bedford Avenue at Glenwood Road

718-253-3242 or www.midwoodmontessori.com

We are situated in a charming Tudor “Children’s House.” The school provides a rich curriculum tailored to each child’s pace. Children served are ages 2.9 to 6 in pre-school and kindergarten. Special attention is given to encouraging socialization, while the academics are taught on a one-on-one basis by a dedicated and nurturing staff using the Montessori hands-on methods. The school offers full time art and music teachers, three outdoor play areas, an indoor gym, manipulatives, cultural studies, practical life and sensorial materials, language arts, math, science, and geography. AM, PM and full day sessions, summer camp, early drop off, and transportation service are available.

Police Athletic League, Inc. Headstart/ Collaboration Programs

Locations include:

PAL W.O.C.E. 280 Livonia Avenue;

PAL Carey Gardens, 2964 W 23rd St.

PAL La Puerta Abierta, 3001 West 37th St.

PAL Schwartz, 452 Pennsylvania Avenue,

PAL Western Queens, 10-26 41st Avenue;

PAL Woodside Early Learning

Center, 50-37 Broadway

718-342-4725 or www.palnyc.org

Offers full day sessions. Some sites have Universal Pre-K programs as well as inclusion classes. Hot meals are provided. PAL Headstart is a leader in early literacy; children learn all subject areas in a nurturing environment. PAL not only educates children, but provides a wide array of parent workshops. Special programs in the arts and sciences include field trips. All programs are free. Contact Asneth Council, Director.

Parkway School

5566 Kings Highway
718-346-0369 or www.parkwayschool.org

Parkway School is a private not for profit institution that is dedicated to academic excellence. Educating students from pre-kindergarten through eight grade. Learning is the epicenter of activities at Parkway. Our students engage in stimulating curriculum, which encourages intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. By giving our students the ability to critically and objectivity analyze, we can be confident that they will seek to change what they conclude needs changing and to defend and strengthen that which is worth preserving. Academics and critical thinking skills are not the only lessons learn at Parkway.

Parkway school has an excellent after school program in our Custodial Care which runs from 3-6 p.m., the children are supervised until they are picked up. Generally, they do their homework or play educational games with other children. In our tutorial program which runs from 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. children are tutored in specific subject areas depending on their individual needs. Children do not have to be enrolled at Parkway School to participate in programs. Children may be enrolled in a combined Custodial and Tutorial Program.

Rivendell School

277 3RD Avenue; Bet Carroll & President Street
718-499-5667, ext. 14 or www.rivendellnyc.org

A Montessori pre-primary inclusion school was founded in 1977 as The Children’s House of Park Slope and incorporated into Rivendell School in 1998. Rivendell provides a respectful, inclusive community that helps children feel powerful and confident as learners and as social and emotional beings.

Toddler, half day and extended day

Continued on page 34

Leif Ericson Day School

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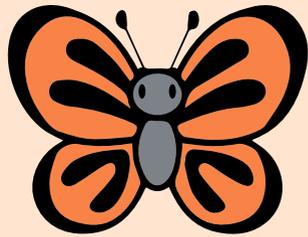


Information about curriculum, admissions and sliding scale tuition are available on our website

www.greenehillschool.org

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Private/Independent School Guide



Check it out on NYParenting.com

Fall 2015 School Guide

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 32

programs are available (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.

Stepping Stones Nursery School

245 86th Street
718-630-1000 or www.
steppingstones86.com

We believe in engaging every child in small and large muscle activities, sensory and discovery exploration, social interaction and creative expression with an educational curriculum. Classes for two, three and four year olds are offered with a choice of full- or half-day programs. They are open 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. An After-school Program is available for Pre-K-5th grade with free pick-up service from PS 185 and DGK Holy Cross.

Sunny Skies Preschool

Multiple Locations

Sunset Park
4228-10th Ave, 718-372-4665 x 420
**Coney Island / Sheepshead Bay /
Gravesend / Midwood**
2585 Coney Island Ave, 718-372-
4665 x 320

Borough Park
4301-10th Ave. 718-372-4665 x 419
Prospect Heights
720 Washington Ave. 718-372-4665
x 200

At sunny Skies Preschool, our mission is to provide the families we serve with a program that fulfills the educational, emotional and social needs of their children in a fun, loving and safe environment. The children thrive in the curriculum especially designed by Sunny Skies Preschool.

Our four locations are all large and vibrant facilities and are staffed by highly qualified teachers and assistant teachers encourage learning at every moment throughout the day. Each moment is a teachable moment.

Our STEAM room provides an opportunity for children to explore and learn through Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. We have incorporated computers, Samsung tablets, SmartBoard, a variety of children's books, and cookware. With proper assistance from teachers, children are encouraged to share and execute simple healthy recipes, such as milkshakes, fruit salads, etc.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Programs are offered at our Sunset Park, Borough Park and Coney Island Locations. We designed the classrooms to accommodate our UPK program. This enriched program offers quality education for children who are at the age of four/born in the year 2011. Please contact us for details at any of our locations.

Urban Strategies Early Learn

1091 Sutter Avenue/1152 Elton
Street
718-348-9349/718-348-9349

For nearly three decades, Urban Strategies preschool programs have been working with children and their families to prepare them for the transition into kindergarten. By the time our students enter elementary school, they are well developed academically, socially and physically to meet the challenges in their new learning environment. Our caring staff is also diligent in their work to encourage parents to become active in making decisions concerning their children's education. Additionally, we partner with the Committee of Pre-School Education to provide a quality learning experience for our students with special needs.

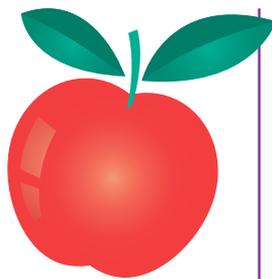
Our students are also given free nutritious meals: breakfast, lunch and snack. USEL is licensed by the DOH and Mental Hygiene and funded by the federal government through the City of New York.

Windmill Montessori School

1317 Avenue T
718-375-7973 or 718-375-4277 or
www.windmillmontessorischool.
org

For over 70 years, has been a peaceful place to learn, with an environment that encourages your child to progress at his/her own pace. The family-oriented Montessori method nurtures students in grades Pre-k to 8th, emotionally and academically, promoting a sense of purpose, a love of learning and civility.

Small classes meet the students' individual needs. Curriculum-based trips, from puppet shows to museums, culminate in JHS overnights "Learning About History By Living It," with trips to Boston, Gettysburg and Williamsburg, VA; and "Meeting Our Lawmakers" in Albany and Washington, D.C. French, yoga, phys. ed., music, art, and computer skills enliven the school day.



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Structuring your schooltime routine

Dear teacher,

We start each new school year with the best intentions of getting our kids out the door without too much hassle and handling after-school activities, including homework. But the sad truth is that we slip up and throw in the towel after a few weeks. What is the secret of making our family's life go smoother this year?

Dear parent,

Perhaps the secret for your family is not to do too much at first. Start by choosing to structure either the morning or the after-school routine. And select the routines that fit your family's personality and are age-appropriate for your children. Remember that changing behaviors takes time. Don't give up too quickly.

Morning routines

- Successful morning routines start the night before. Clothes should be selected, baths taken, alarms set and backpacks laid by the door.
- Create a realistic morning sched-

ule for your children that includes breakfast and departure times.

- Include in your routine time for brushing teeth and putting on outerwear.
- Use timers for dressing and eating.
- Have a strategy for making school lunches or paying for them.
- Use music as a transition to eating or leaving home — different tunes for each activity. This can be programmed into an electronic device.
- Eliminate all use of electronic media.
- Post the routine in a prominent spot.
- Be willing to change parts of the routine that simply do not work.

After-school routines

- Successful afternoon routines will need to have some latitude, as activities do vary. You may need different routines for different days.
- Include a time for snack. Kids love them, and snack time is a great time to talk about what happened at school.
- Choose a specific time for homework, dinner, and going to bed.
- Include a definite play time for fun each day, if possible.

Talk, talk, talk to children**Dear teacher,**

All I see everywhere is parents either talking, texting, or searching for messages on their cellphones in the presence of their children. No one seems to talk to children anymore. How is this affecting children?

Dear parent,

There has been very little research on the effects of adults (parents and caregivers) being tied to their phones in the presence of kids. One study noted that children in fast-food restaurants reacted either by en-

tertaining themselves — often with tablets or mobile devices — or simply misbehaving. Since the development of language in young children is strongly dependent on adult-child conversation, it only makes sense for cellphones to be put away when adults are around children.

Choosing the perfect planners**Dear teacher,**

The school wants our young children in elementary school to use planners. However, the teachers have not made very specific recommendations. What should I be looking for?

Dear parent,

The type of planners children use depends upon their grade level. The younger the child, the smaller the planner should be. They do not need heavy, bulky planners. In early elementary school, a planner should have:

- Plenty of space to write down assignments, as younger children usually have large handwriting.
- A front and back pocket to bring work home from school and assignments and forms to school.
- A spiral binding so papers will not fall out and be lost.

Depending on a teacher's requirements, it can also be handy to have pages for logging the books a student has read and spelling words.

As children advance to later grades, schools may provide planners or require a specific planner. These planners are usually larger and will offer more options. A calendar is definitely necessary so the children can write down the dates when assignments and reports are due, as well as the schedule of family events, extracurricular activities and appointments.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask them on the columnists' website at www.dearteacher.com. ©Compass Syndicate Corporation, 2014.

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN



Teenage disease nobody's heard of

Julia Swanson was a vivacious, smart, and fun-loving teen until, quite abruptly, she wasn't. One day, she felt dizzy, nauseous, and her heart was racing before leaving for school. Thinking she was coming down with the flu, she brushed it off. After a few days, the flu never set in but Julia kept having these symptoms. Then she almost passed out in school after walking up the stairs.

Doctor after doctor could not identify why a healthy teen was experiencing such debilitating symptoms. One said it was simple tachycardia — an abnormally rapid heart rate — brought on by the stress of school. Another said it could be anxiety or panic disorder. Another said it was irritable bowel syndrome. Yet another said it was a hormonal imbalance. The last one said it was allergies. Julia became unable to walk very far, be

active, concentrate, socialize, or do anything she would normally enjoy doing.

Every doctor she visited missed the diagnosis. It wasn't until her mother, Elaine, took her to a psychiatrist to rule out any psychiatric conditions, but the doctor said he didn't think she had any mental issues at all. In fact, she was reacting very normally for someone going through such terrifying physical experiences day in and day out. "She may have POTS," he said. It was the first time that Elaine had heard the term before.

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome is a form of dysautonomia (when the autonomic nervous system malfunctions) that affects a large portion of teens. Symptoms may include heart palpitations, extreme fatigue, brain fog, nausea, headache, light-head-

edness, heat intolerance, exercise intolerance, insomnia, headaches, gastric problems, chronic pain, and near-fainting or full fainting spells, especially upon standing upright or walking. The symptoms are "severe enough to limit daily functioning" says Dr. Blair Grubb, a leading Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome specialist in the country. Many compare the quality of life to that of having congestive heart failure.

There is no cure for it, but a variety of medications and lifestyle modifications help alleviate symptoms. The first primary therapy is extra fluids and extra salt to increase the blood volume, as most people with suffer from hypovolemia, or low blood volume, which increases their orthostatic intolerance.

Postural Orthostatic Tachycar-

Resources for patients and their families:

•Dysautonomia International: A wonderful website and Facebook page, provides vital information, lists top doctors nationally and helps identify doctors in your area; www.dysautonomiainternational.org.

•DINET: A comprehensive website and organization aiming to spread awareness, doctor finder; www.dinet.org.

•DYNA: Brochures can be printed to explain Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome to family, friends, schools, etc.

•www.dynainc.org

•Standing Up To POTS: website with loads of information on living with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, treatments, research, and advocacy, including a letter to bring to each doctor, titled "What Every Doctor Should Know About POTS."

•POTSibilities Parents: Facebook group for parents of children with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome; invaluable information offered and vibrant community that helps each other.

•Facebook and Twitter: each has multiple groups and pages with vital information.

dia Syndrome may be diagnosed by doing a "poor man's tilt test," in which the heart rate increases of 30 or more beats per minute (or a rate that exceeds 120 beats per minute) that occurs within the first 10 minutes of standing. A formal tilt table test or advanced autonomic testing are typically performed for official diagnosis, although some doctors do not put their patients through it and are able diagnosis clinically. Many patients become very dizzy, nauseous, and many pass out while undergoing the test.

"To imagine POTS for yourself: number one, fast for 24 hours; number two, donate a pint of your blood; number three, go home and turn your thermostat up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit; number four, stand motionless. Enjoy the symptoms," says Dr. Jeffrey Boris, a pediatric cardiologist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

The level of disability in patients varies, from those functioning with symptoms to those rendered bedridden. Many teens, in the prime of the life, cannot endure the simplest of things, like attend school, hang out with friends, or even go shopping, without experiencing immediate symptoms and possibly passing out. The recovery period is often a long and arduous one. When Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome develops in adolescence, 20 percent of teens make a full recovery within 10 years. Recovery is typically dependent on the underlying cause, although in many cases, no identifiable cause is ever found. Some known causes are viral infections, Lyme

disease, Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome, Chiari malformation, mast-cell activation disorders, mitochondrial disease, and tumors. Still many other causes exist.

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome is not a rare disease, but it is not widely known either, even by many physicians. The top hospitals in the country in the research and treatment are Mayo Clinic, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and Cleveland Clinic. Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome is treated usually by a cardiologist and a neurologist combined, but a full treatment team may also include a gastroenterologist, infectious disease doctor, allergist, rheumatologist, geneticist, and of course, a psychologist to help the patient learn to live with such a debilitating chronic condition.

Julia and her parents are still visiting specialists and determining which treatments might work best, but are hopeful now she has been finally diagnosed.

"At least we know what we are dealing with now," says Elaine. "We are hopeful that new research will bring better treatments options and hopefully one day, a cure."

To learn more about Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, watch "The Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome" by Dr. Jeffrey Boris on YouTube.

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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You might be thinking, "What does Dr. Marcie know about me?" Well, several things that you're doing right now let me know that you're a great parent.

You are reading a parenting magazine: This shows you're interested in learning how to improve yourself, and that is an indication that you at least know enough to be curious.

You are reading a column written by a behavior therapist (me!). You're aware that all children and parents have behavior problems. It's amazing that you're proactive about this reality.

You actually took the time to celebrate yourself (and if you haven't yet, then do it now!). You recognize that reinforcement is a good step to keep humans happy. So you're considering giving yourself some of the praise that you so heavily provide to your children.

There are so many ways to find information, and in the parenting world, there are an overwhelming number of different techniques, tools, strategies, opinions, and perspectives about what you're doing wrong and how you can do it better. It can be a real challenge for a contemporary parent, because the cacophony of voices constantly tells you that you're messing up.

In this moment, let's focus on what you're doing right! You're taking the time to read lots of views and opinions. You're considering what experts say and then living your life! At just the right moment, you'll recall something you read somewhere, give it a try, and realize it was a great strategy. At other moments, you'll follow your own parenting instinct that has guided you well time and time again. You will realize that you do know what you are doing!

Are there moments when you're less than perfect as a parent? Of course, you're human! Are there times when you wish you made a different choice? Of course, you're human! Let's remember, however,

that being a parent is not about beating yourself up every time you hit a bump.

The key is to recognize what you did well and repeat the same action again in the future. Being aware of the choices you make and reflection on what you did well or not is the key to being a great parent. After all, isn't this what we teach our kids? To become really great at something you need lots of practice. You'll make mistakes and that is okay. It's about recognizing the mistakes and learning from them, then trying your best the next time. You're doing this! Keep it up!

Keep learning, growing and exploring new parenting ideas, theories and tools. Keep celebrating all the good moments you have as a parent, as that is the best way to become an even greater parent!

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.

The art of conversation

Preschool kids are the perfect age to learn the social aspect of language

BY THOMAS C. DAUS

Have you ever wondered how children develop the ability to introduce, maintain, and also close a topic of conversation? Well, there is a great deal of learning that goes into our young children's minds within the arena of social communication. Pragmatics is the term used to describe the social aspect of language, and how we "use" our chosen words with others. Although it is essential for parents to continuously work on enhancing a young child's understanding and verbal expression, pragmatic development can be considered the icing on the cake with regard to language development.

We can all remember having interactions with people whereby either a lack of eye contact, difficulties with staying on topic, and perhaps an abrupt ending to a conversation may have left us feeling a bit awkward.



Pragmatic skills are learned at a very early age, and it is carried with us throughout our adult lives. Parents should take the time to have short conversations, throughout the course of one's day, to allow for opportunities to teach, through modeling of target, pragmatic goals.

For our preschool students, there are numerous pragmatic functions

to be taught which allow for greater social language expansion. The areas of requesting (yes or no questions, "who," "what," "where," "when," and "why" questions), action requests (i.e. give me), description identifications (i.e. that's my ball), responses (that's not a dog), conversational devices such as politeness markers (i.e. please, thanks), and also communication functions (i.e. the protesting of objects — "don't touch the car") are all appropriate teachings.

It is exciting to learn the pragmatic aspects of our language. The more we teach our children pragmatics, the more we increase the likelihood of molding them into well-rounded, polite, and socially integrated children.

Thomas C. Daus is a speech-language pathologist. For further information on pragmatic development strategies, and also an overall understanding of speech and language development, visit speakfromtheheart.org.

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FAMILY HEALTH

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

Stay screen smart

How to balance computer time and health

Lately, I have read a lot about the harms of “screen addiction” for children, and the problems that can arise from too much time spent on smartphones, tablets, video games, and other screen-based media. However, my teenagers, who are both good students, tell me they still need to use computers every day for their schoolwork, to write papers, and do research. How can I balance their need for that kind of “screen time” against its negative impacts?

For certain, parents and children alike are living in an increasingly screen-driven world, and you are very right to note it is having negative effects on childhood development. We know for sure that the brain is highly sensitive to stimuli from computer or smartphone screens, and screen addiction is already associated with increased risk of type-2 diabetes, particularly when an electronic device becomes a substitute for physical activity. Constant electronic device usage may also stunt a child’s social development and increase her chances of conduct problems and emotional issues.

But you’ve also touched upon a note that often goes unaddressed — namely, that not all screens are created equal. It may not be necessary for a child to send 50 text messages a day or to watch movies on an iPad, but desktop computers themselves are mandatory for many day-to-day academic tasks, particularly for high school-age students. College essays and applications are now completed digitally — and, for better or worse, the internet is often the first place a student will look to do academic research.

The developing brain was not designed to stare into a computer screen, and yet, for many tasks, there is no practical way around it. And yet, teenagers also rightly need at least nine hours of sleep per night, which comes at mathematical odds with time that must be devoted after school activities and 3.5 hours of homework that



high schools students are assigned, on average, every day. It seems that there are no easy solutions — yet.

The good news is that there are straightforward steps you can take to minimize the effects of any schoolwork “screen time.” As a very first step: if your child is using an online source for academic research, encourage her to just print it out and read it, and simply recycle the paper after it is no longer needed. Avoid researching “on-screen.” In addition to the harmful effects that constant light exposure can lead to, studies have suggested that the way articles are navigated on screen as opposed to in text on pages also impairs comprehension. And touching on academics — one of the reasons that children use their computers to do research is, simply, because it is fastest to do everything on screen, even if it unintentionally reduces the accuracy and verifiability of schoolwork. It might sound “old school,” but published books

have clear citations and have been verified for accuracy. And paper does not emit light! Hitting the old-fashioned books can thus improve the quality of a student’s sleep and, as a side-benefit, the quality of her work, too.

It’s important to note that, screen or no screen, a healthy wind-down time after homework and before bed (at the minimum 30–60 minutes) is still a necessity, and ignoring this necessity is like ignoring the necessity to exercise — might work for a while, but is bound to catch up with you sooner or later. To make that happen, maintaining a realistic schedule is key.

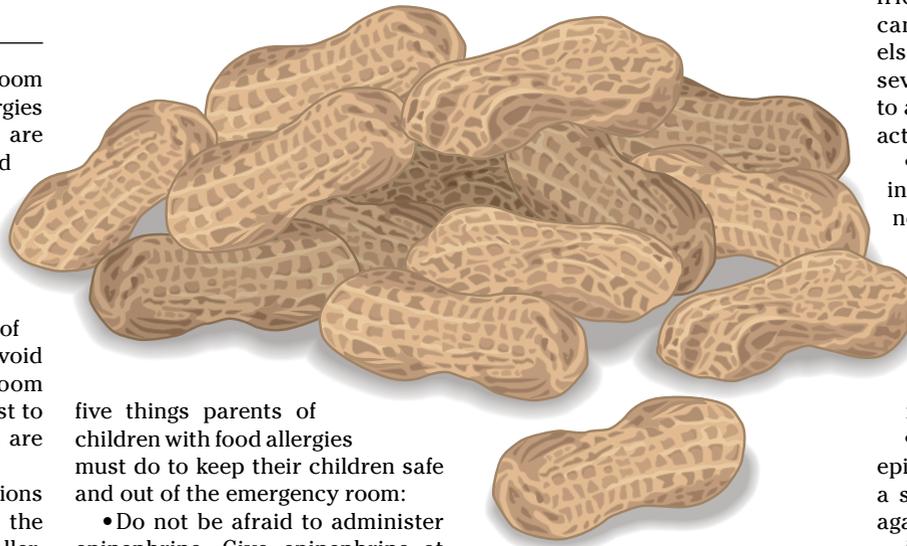
It’s good that you have recognized that this is a complex issue, and that some screens are easier to turn off than others. But these steps are a good start to making sure that the combination of “computer time” and “study time” has the least impact on your child’s development through her school years.

Keeping kids with food allergies safe

BY DR. BUCK PARKER

Trips to the emergency room for kids with food allergies are on the rise. Many are being brought in for a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction — called anaphylaxis — and are having a second severe reaction hours later, when they are still in the hospital. So, what can parents of kids with food allergies do to avoid the terror of an emergency room visit, other than doing their best to avoid the foods their children are allergic to?

Many of these severe reactions could have been prevented in the first place. Avoidance of the allergen is key and most parents will do everything in their power to protect their child from that particular substance, but in addition, there are



five things parents of children with food allergies must do to keep their children safe and out of the emergency room:

- Do not be afraid to administer epinephrine. Give epinephrine at the first sign of a severe allergic reaction.
- No one is immune to food allergies, and new food allergies can

develop at any time, so always be aware of severe allergic reaction symptoms to look out, for includ-

ing: hives, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, wheezing, repetitive coughing, throat swelling, tongue swelling, dizziness.

• Anaphylaxis can happen anywhere at any time, and it can be deadly if not treated quickly and properly. Parents must educate themselves, their children, their friends, their family, schools, camps, babysitters, and anyone else caring for their child about the severity of food allergies and how to avoid life-threatening allergic reactions.

• Be vigilant about cross contamination. Battling food allergies is not only about avoiding consumption of the allergen, but also about avoiding contact with the allergen. Wash hands with soap and water and keep kitchen surfaces and tables clean. Do not share food, drinks, or utensils.

• Always have a second dose of epinephrine with you and use it if a second reaction starts to occur again.

Dr. Buck Parker is a trauma surgeon and one of the stars of NBC's show "The Island." He provides expert medical opinions on the web, radio, and television programs nationwide.

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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

When I just knew I was having a boy

When I was pregnant for the first time, I just knew that my baby was a girl. We never found out beforehand, but when the doctor said, "It's a girl!" I wasn't shocked at all. With our second daughter, we skipped knowing the gender again, wanting to be surprised at birth. In the beginning, I had no idea, but towards the end, I was 99 percent sure she was a girl. Right again.

With our third child, I had no idea initially. This pregnancy was a little different. I was nauseous 24 hours a day, seven days a week after never having any morning sickness with my first two. Thoughts of boys were on my mind (even though the idea of actually raising a boy terrified me a bit). But I still wasn't having any strong feeling either way, until one very ordinary day.

A few months into the pregnancy, I had just gotten off the subway and was on my way home. I was listening to a Dave Matthews Band song on my iPod, which I did nearly everyday on my commute home. I was enjoying a song that I had listened to about a million times before that day, "Ants Marching." I thought nothing of it, and began mentally checking my to-do list as I took each step.

And then Dave sang the line:

"Goes to visit his mommy. She feeds him well, his concerns, he forgets them. And remembers being small. Playing under the table and dreaming."

It stopped me in my tracks, literally. I slowed my pace and just smiled, wondering if what I was feeling was actually true. This baby was a boy. In that moment, I just knew it. I felt a certain warmth and happiness that I hadn't experienced before. A few weeks after that day, a sonogram confirmed he was indeed, a boy.

It was one of the few magical times I've had as an adult. Of course, whenever I hear that song it takes me

back to that very moment, crossing a quiet Brooklyn street knowing I was carrying my son. My boy is now 12 and a skilled and passionate guitar player. While he usually plays alternative and metal songs, he surprised me recently and began playing "Ants Marching," knowing the full story behind that song. You know how you always think the best moments in life are the big ones? They're really not. Sometimes they are a week-day afternoon when you are simply listening to the quiet strumming of a sweet boy who fills your heart.

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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FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

The recipe for a healthier lifestyle

The scale: every mama's worst enemy. I know how stressful it is to look in the mirror and see an extra 10 to 20 pounds staring right back at you. Let's face it, mamas, we aren't 18 anymore! We can't eat whatever we want without gaining a pound. That doesn't mean that you can't look absolutely FabuLyss no matter what stage of life you are at. Since my fathers passing seven months ago I put on some extra weight (to say the very least) and just haven't been feeling myself. So, I am about to embark on a skinny Lysscious summer journey to get fit, the right way — the healthy way! No more late-night birthday cake ice-cream or Magnolia cupcakes. It's going to be kitchen closed at 8 pm rule for moi this summer! The boys are away and it's my time to get back to where I want to be — skinny jeans in the fall!

The first step for me was going to see Carolyn at Food Trainers. Food Trainers was created by Lauren Slayton (my FabuLyss friend) to cater to clients who were busy and motivated, but needed help to eat healthier. Located on 65 Central Park West, these private nutrition sessions help thousands of New Yorkers who are trying to be healthier and lose weight. It's hard to eat healthy! Believe me, there is nothing I love more than carbs and ice cream, but the nutritionists at Food Trainers are there to support you through your whole journey. A support system can get you through anything, even when all you want to do is eat a bag of chips. Follow me on Instagram @diva_moms for this journey of mine — should be interesting to say the very least.

Food Trainers, <http://foodtrainers.com/main>.

My next step is to take the Flywheel challenge at Flywheel Sports and start incorporating more Flywheel into my weekly routine. Spin is a great way to burn a lot of calories while still having lots of Fabu-



Lyss fun. Unlike the treadmill, time flies by during a Flywheel class. The Flywheel challenge is a two-week tune up that includes five Flywheel classes per week, early booking for classes (so you can get a good bike), an exclusive 14-day nutrition plan, recipes, two nutrition conference calls with Self Magazine nutritionists, instructor coach to keep you on track, Flywheel workshop to help you become more efficient on the bike, and a closing gift. I know that going to the gym sounds less than appealing on most days, but Flywheel is a guaranteed full body workout that pushes you to your limits while also having a FabuLyssly fly time.

Flywheel Sports, www.flywheelsports.com.

I invite all the moms to take these challenges on with me. It's time to doing something for you! It will make you feel like a whole new person when you start to eat clean and exercise. You'll have energy you haven't had since before you had kids! I also want to tell my mamas that it's important to be healthy, but it's also important to love yourself no matter what size you are. You are a superhero, and superheros are strong, independent, FabuLyssly fierce, and confident. I want all of you to remember that the next time you are buying clothes. Beauty has no size, so strut down the street like the FabuLyss mamas that you all are!

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



Lots of fun with these 'Pixels'

Kid film critics weigh in on Adam Sandler's latest effort

The highly touted film, "Pixels," opens this weekend to much applause. When aliens misinterpret video feeds of classic arcade games as a declaration of war, they attack the Earth in the form of the video games. Directed by Chris Columbus and starring Adam Sandler, Kevin James, and Michelle Monaghan, this is sure to be a hit with families looking for summer entertainment.

From Donkey Kong to Pac-Man, from Adam Sandler to Josh Gad, this film really has anything you could imagine. "Pixels" is the funniest film of the year so far!

This is, of course, a comedy. However, along with that, there is a lot of drama and a hint of romance all packed into one huge adventure made for the entire family to enjoy.

The story features Brenner (Adam Sandler) who installs electronic equipment for a living. However, when an alien species attacks in the form of 1980s classic video games, Brenner and his friends are the only ones capable of stopping them. And, to do so, they must beat the aliens, as if they were in the game.

This film is fantastic! The special effects are absolutely mind blowing. There are no boring scenes, and some special effects are simply mind-

blowingly fantastic. I still can't figure out how they did some of them. The acting is spot on. One scene I really liked is where two kids are competing on classic arcade machines with Donkey Kong loaded on them. The director makes it so you see them playing, their points, and the screen, as well as the reflection of the games in their eyes. It looks amazing!

My favorite scene is when they are facing Pac-Man in Mini Coopers that are designed to be the ghosts who chase and destroy Pac-Man. When Brenner's car is the only one left and Pac-Man just gets a "power up" — which, like in the game, allows him to eat the ghosts — Brenner pulls off an awesome and insane stunts to run away. It is action-packed and just stupendous to watch!

This film is good for kids, adults, and gamers, of course. I do believe people in their 30s and 40s would like this the most because they can understand a lot of the older game references. I don't think younger kids should watch this, due to the adult language and mature references. I



recommend it for ages 9 through 18 and older, and give it 5 out of 5 pixelated stars.

— Gerry O., age 13

See his video review at <https://youtu.be/pHRaEiwci0>

This movie directed by Chris Columbus full of action! "Pixels" starts off in 1982, when three teens compete in the Video Arcade World Championships. After the championship, Brenner's (Adam Sandler) life goes downhill. Years later his best friend, now the President of the United States, calls on Brenner to help with an alien invasion that could destroy the world. Brenner and his team have to defeat the 1980 video games in real life.



The plot is interesting, unique, and original, and could lead to a sequel. The computer animation is realistic, detailed, and so incredible. I know some people don't dig Sandler, but I really think he is very good in this role.

The audience clapped at achievements and laughed at all the funny parts. It was so cool to hear their connection with the movie.

One of my favorite characters is Eddie (Peter Dinklage). He is very funny and he is very committed to his character.

My favorite part of the movie is when Brenner, Violet (Michelle Monaghan), and Cooper (Kevin James) go up against Donkey Kong. All of the computer animation is incredible. It is so realistic, and I found myself wishing I had been part of the action on set when the characters all jumped over the barrels and up the ladders.

This movie is an interesting blend of comedy, science fiction, and action. Even though there is some inappropriate language and questionable jokes, and in one scene kind of inappropriate dance moves, I still enjoyed this film. Since this movie is new, funny, has amazing computer animation, is well casted and transformed me, I give it 4 out of 5 stars. I recommend this movie for 11 to 18 year olds and think adults will enjoy it, too. I do believe some younger kids still could enjoy this film. It just depends on how much they understand the jokes and if they recognize the video games from the 1980s.

— Mia A., age 11

See her video review at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcdLQ6FZWsU&feature=youtu.be>



GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Apps that connect families and nature

Do your children enjoy being outdoors? According to a recent study from the Nature Conservancy, 82 percent of American parents feel that spending time in nature is “very important” to a child’s development, second only to reading. Despite that sense of priority, 65 percent of parents in Brazil, China, France, and Hong Kong as well as the U.S. regard lack of time outdoors as a serious problem. The Children and Nature Network has compiled research connecting what it calls “nature deficit disorder” to attention problems and diminished awareness of the senses as well as physical inactivity and obesity.

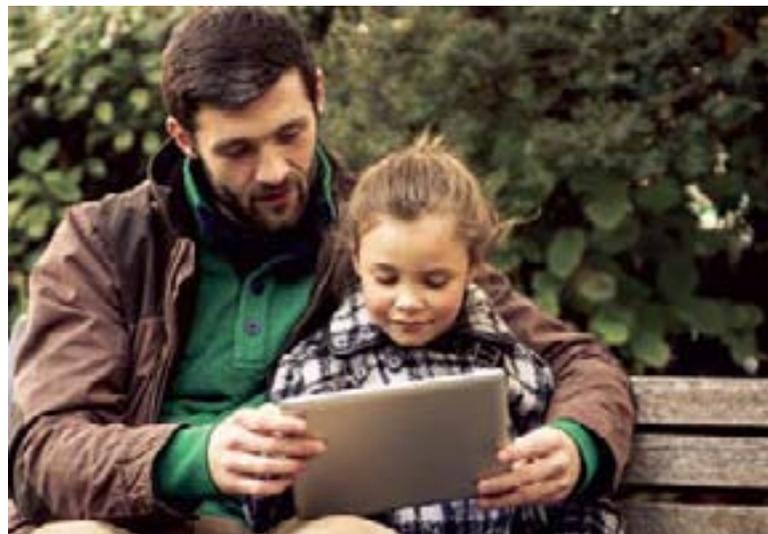
Ironically, both of these organizations responded to this problem by developing websites. Naturerocks.org, a partnership between the Nature Conservancy and Disney, offers a rich collection of activities that will get kids outdoors to engage with the natural world, as well as an interactive map that points families toward beaches, campgrounds, aquariums and zoos. The Children and Nature Network has a list of nature clubs for families (childrenandnature.org/movement-directory).

Going online in order to strengthen your family’s connection with the great outdoors may seem counter-intuitive, but in our wired age, it does not make sense to ignore the many websites and apps that promise to inspire and support a deeper involvement with the world beyond the screen.

Where to go

Yes, you can explore the natural world in your own backyard or in the park down the street. But when you have the urge for a bigger adventure, these apps can guide you:

NatureFind pinpoints all sorts of places where families can satisfy an appetite for exploration. In addition to nature centers and natural history museums, the website provides descriptions and directions for zoos, botanical gardens, and wildlife refuges. A mobile version makes it easy to find



activities on the go (naturefind.com).

Parkfinder provides concise information about city, state, and national parks. A menu of activities allows you to search for parks where your family can pursue your favorite pastimes (ohranger.com).

All Trails is a source for information about 50,000 trails in the U.S. and Canada. In addition to information about level of difficulty and scenery along the way, you’ll have access to comments from other hikers. The basic app is free. For \$50 a year, you can get very detailed maps produced in a partnership with National Geographic (alltrails.com).

Get involved

A number of apps motivate users to take the next step and become citizen scientists, reporting their observations and taking action to preserve threatened species and habitats:

Project NOAH (Networked Organizations and Habitats) encourages wildlife lovers, young and old, to take photos of what they see and upload them to a website. The photos help scientists track wildlife populations. And a global community is ready to help your child identify unknown plants and animals (projectnoah.org).

Nature’s Notebook takes a different approach to observation. Your

family can sign up to record changes in a specific site such as a favorite park or your own backyard. Then use the app to make regular field notes. Specific questions encourage children to notice seasonal changes for plants, birds, and other creatures. Those observations become part of a database that helps scientists track migration patterns (usanpn.org/natures_notebook).

iNaturalist, an app and a website, is the brainchild of college students whose ambitious goal is a “living record of life on Earth that scientists and land managers could use to monitor changes in biodiversity, and that anyone could use to learn more about nature.” Younger kids may need help in uploading photos, but they will have the satisfaction of knowing that they are contributing to a massive database that records life on the planet (inaturalist.org).

Think of these apps as bridges that will connect the virtual world in which most kids spend most of their time and the natural world where there are miracles waiting to be discovered.

Carolyn Jabs has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years and is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Visit www.growing-up-online.com to read other columns.

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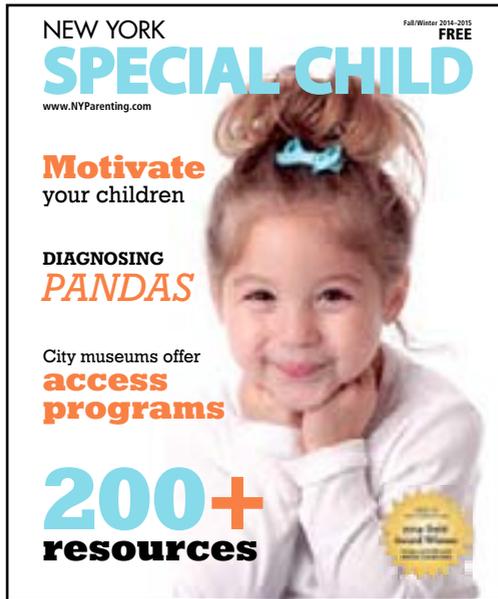
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Rash

judgments

Your basic guide — from itchy and perplexing to kind of creepy

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

Alarmed by that angry red rash splashed across your child's body? Rashes run the spectrum, signaling anything from a mild viral infection to a chronic or even life-threatening illness. Since the list of rashes and their causes is extensive, you may wonder what's what and when to call the doctor.

First, avoid self-diagnosis.

"Viral and allergic rashes both can present as a diffuse, splotchy, blanching, pinkish rash. Because the rashes look similar, it can be impossible sometimes to tell the difference just by appearance," says dermatologist Dr. Reginald B. Henry.

Below are the more common types of childhood rashes and typical treatment methods. Check with your family physician or dermatologist to correctly diagnose and treat a mysterious rash.

Diaper rash

Even the most conscientious diaper-changing parent may see an uncomfortable, red, puffy rash blossom on her baby's bottom. Babies can suffer from diaper rash after a bout of diarrhea, as a side effect from antibiotics, or if they recently started eating solid foods. Change your baby's diaper frequently, and use wipes without alcohol or fragrances to gently pat the area dry. Treat the area with a protective barrier ointment after each diaper change. If the skin appears infected with blis-



ters, oozing discharge, or painful open sores, call your pediatrician.

Eczema

About 10 percent of infants and children suffer from atopic dermatitis, or eczema. The chronic disease is especially common in families with a history of allergies and asthma. According to the National Eczema Association, 65 percent of children are diagnosed in their first year of life and 90 percent by the time they are 5 years old. Eczema is extremely itchy, but is not contagious. It appears as red, scaly dry skin and can vary in severity.

Physicians generally treat eczema first with an over-the-counter cortisone cream to calm the red, inflamed skin. Throughout the year, treat skin with moisturizers.

“Lotions are better in the humid months, ointments in the winter months,” Henry says. “Don’t over-treat your child if the dermatitis isn’t really bothering her.”

Bacterial

Staphylococcal and streptococcal bacteria often cause infections with rashes, including impetigo, scarlet fever (strep throat with a rash), folliculitis and cellulitis. Lyme disease, caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and transmitted by ticks, can cause a bull’s-eye rash. If you suspect Lyme Disease, seek medical attention immediately.

Bacterial infections are typically treated with antibiotics.

Viral

Viral-related rashes are splotchy, blanching (disappears when pressed), pinkish-colored and usually accompany other symptoms like fever, diarrhea, sore throat, and lethargy. Typical childhood viruses that present with a rash include Fifth Disease; molluscum contagiosum; chicken pox (varicella); roseola; and hand, foot, and mouth disease. Depending on the diagnosis, your physician may prescribe antiviral medications.

Warts are another viral skin condition commonly seen among kids. Although warts generally resolve

on their own, “due to the fact they are contagious, we tend to treat them with a spray or liquid nitrogen every one to two weeks until they are gone,” says dermatologist Dr. Donna Corvette. “We can also treat with various topical acids and sometimes we use blister beetle juice, which is quite effective.”

Parasitic

A pimple-like skin rash that’s extremely itchy and contagious could be caused by scabies, which is a mite that burrows into the skin. Because scabies can spread quickly through skin-to-skin contact, your physician may recommend treating the entire family with a topical medication.

Fungal

The name might make you shudder, but ringworm (tinea corporis), a red circular skin rash, is caused by a fungal infection, not a worm. The rash doesn’t always itch, but can spread from skin-to-skin contact. Treat with an anti-fungal product.

Allergies

Rashes like hives are allergic reactions that are typically splotchy, blanching, pinkish, and intensely itchy. A new food or a new medication could be the culprit. Consult with your doctor for diagnosis and treatment. Seek immediate medical attention if your child has trouble breathing or experiences swelling of the tongue, lips, or face.

Contact dermatitis like poison ivy or exposure to other irritants can also cause itchy allergic reactions. Treat the area with an over-the-counter cortisone cream. For insect bites, try ammonia-containing products like AfterBite Kids. Henry also recommends oatmeal baths, baking soda compresses, and Sarna lotion, or Noxzema cooled in the refrigerator to help relieve itching.

When should you seek emergency care?

“Special care and concern should be given to the child who appears acutely ill with fever and rash,” Corvette says. “Seek prompt care in an emergency room setting for urgent treatment. Do not procrastinate on these types of rashes.”

Writer Christa Melnyk Hines is a mom of two sons, ages 8 and 9, who have sported a variety of questionable rashes over the years. She is the author of “Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World.” Visit her at www.christamelnykhines.com.

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AGLAIA HO

Share your voice and talents online

I have always loved writing. When I was little, I dreamed of being a published author. Thanks to NY Parenting, my wish came true much earlier, for which I am so grateful. Creativity, however, is neither formulaic nor scheduled. Sometimes, thoughts and opinions do not emerge on a regular basis and other times — more common than an exception — I have more words to put on paper than can be printed. I have turned to an online blog as an alternate platform to share my voice with others. It can be like projecting into a void not knowing whether anyone will see my site. Yet, it can also be like broadcasting your life because someone might actually be looking at your work.

The internet is undoubtedly one of the best inventions, especially for teenage artists, activists, and visionaries who need a public platform for their projects. The web has spawned and uncovered plenty of young sensations. It has propelled singer Justin Bieber to fame (and notoriety) and

made fashion guru Bethany Mota a household name. For creative and ambitious teenagers, gaining attention for their work is challenging. They bring a new perspective and shed light on the realities of the next generation that adults fail to understand, but companies and agents do not always find young talent that desirable. Age and lack of experience is a hamartia. So is the fact that school hinders teenagers' work availability. Not to mention, actively submitting work to potential agents or employers can be daunting for youngsters, due to the fear of rejection and their delicate self-esteem.

The web provides a diverse platform that can unlock many new opportunities for teens. In the past decade, websites have emerged that have allowed for sharing of all types of media. YouTube provides filmmakers a public screen and musicians a stage. Instagram allows young photographers to share their portfolios. Writers can log onto plenty of different sites — Tumblr, Blogger, Weebly

(which I use) — to create an online journal for their stories, editorials, and essays. Even young activists can publicize their campaigns on social networking sites and even ask for donations through crowd funding. College applicants can even create their own site to showcase all their talent and achievements. The bottom line is whatever dream you have, the internet has a place for it. The web will not discriminate based on your age, gender, or race. Those less sure about their own abilities can even post anonymously and do not have to face direct criticism. Harsh words and constructive advice are buffered behind usernames and can allow a teenager as much privacy and personal space as he or she needs.

It goes without saying that

posting work on the web can also be extremely dangerous. Be aware that anything you post will forever have a footprint on the internet. Thus, it is best to be cautious about the material you choose to share. Cherry-pick any personal information you disclose. Technology makes it quite simple for a stalker to find out more about you, so do not make his job easier by posting too much private and personal information like your address, telephone number, or images of your neighborhood. Also, take a second to review how you present yourself to an online community. This includes choosing wisely the language you use and the images or videos you share. Do not convey yourself as anything your grandmother would not be proud of — or a creeper could relish in. Don't forget that your work, if on a public platform, is available for teachers, future employers, or college recruiters to see. Be careful about posting anything that specifically criticizes your school or work.

One question that might still linger is whether posting online will actually be effective. The truth is you can never be sure. When I first started my blog, I never thought it would be the talk of teenagers all across America. It still is not, but I have had some opportunities that have resulted from my newfound online presence. Yet, even if nothing becomes of my blog in the future, I still intend to commit to writing for it. It gives me a sense of worth and significance by being able to post my work.

My writing is more useful being online for anyone to read than it is taking up memory on my laptop. Give yourself the opportunity to share your work with one or with thousands. Remember that if what you do is really your passion, you win either way.

Aglaia Ho is a rising junior at Williams College and a native New Yorker. She also writes for her own blog at www.aglaiaho.weebly.com.





GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Picking safe foods at farmers markets

Shopping at a farmers' market not only offers some of the freshest fruits, veggies, and other foods, but it also offers the opportunity to buy locally, support small business, and connect with your community.

But as you explore farmers' markets in your area, pay attention to the vendors' food safety. Vendors often sell products outdoors where they are exposed to dirt, bugs, and pollutants. In addition, they usually have little access to water for product washing.

Most markets have their own food safety rules as well as related government regulations. But there are basic guidelines you should follow, too:

- Check the stands' overall cleanliness, including gloves and clean utensils, covered garbage cans, coolers for perishables, and clean bags.

- Be sure to use separate reusable grocery totes for raw meat and poultry and ready-to-eat foods. It's important to wash your reusable totes often. Unwashed grocery bags are breeding grounds for bacteria.

- Harmful food-borne pathogens like *E. coli*, salmonella, listeria, and norovirus may contaminate fruits



and vegetables. To reduce your risk: Go early for the best selections, wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly, and dry them with a clean cloth or paper towel. Avoid produce with mold, bruises, or cuts.

- Wash produce even if you plan to peel it. Bacteria on the outside of melons and bananas can be transferred

inside when you cut or peel them.

- Refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within two hours.

- Only buy pasteurized milk products. Pregnant women, young children, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for illness caused by listeria. Soft cheeses made from unpasteurized milk are one common source.

- Eggs should be properly chilled at 45-degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked.

- Meat should be kept in closed coolers with ice. Perishables must be refrigerated within two hours (one hour if it's more than 90-degrees Fahrenheit), so bring an insulated bag for the way home. Separate meat from other ready-to-eat foods, so the juices from raw meat do not come in contact with other foods.

- Only buy juice or cider that has been pasteurized.

- To locate a farmers' market near you, go to www.localharvest.org.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Raspberry-blackberry Greek yogurt ice pops

Makes 6 to 8 (depending on the size of the mold)

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups fresh (or frozen and thawed) blackberries or raspberries

1/4 cup powdered sugar

16 ounces honey-flavored Greek-style yogurt

DIRECTIONS: Combine berries with powdered sugar in a blender or food processor, pulse until smooth to make purée. Spoon half the yogurt into a bowl and stir in 2 tbsp. of purée so it is stained pink. Spoon into ice pop molds, add the rest of the purée, then the rest of the yogurt. Push in ice pop sticks and freeze until solid.

NUTRITION FACTS: 90 calories, 16 g carbohydrate (14 g sugar), 6 g protein, 0 g fat, 25 mg sodium, 136 mg potassium, 2 g fiber

Adapted from the Oregon Raspberry and Blackberry Commission.





MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SEREDA



How I teach responsibility

I've been trying to teach Olivia about responsibility. At almost 4 years old, there's a lot she can do to help out around the house — she's able to clean up her toys (which I've made easy by purchasing a bunch of bins), she tidies up when she sees that something is not in its place, and she even feeds the pets, when she's up to it.

When we started this whole introduction to the word "responsibility" a few months ago, she asked me what it meant. I explained to her that it meant she is expected to take care of her toys and clean up after herself, something she needs to do every day. I could tell she felt empowered and like a real "big girl." For a while, she went on about her new responsibilities with pride. Then, I asked her to do something that she normally

does not do: put away her laundry, and she said, "Mommy, that's your responsibility!" I realized then that she had a full understanding of the word.

I like talking to other parents about this topic on whether or not their toddlers help around the house. Some say that they're still too young, and others say that while they do ask them to do some things, it never gets done the right way. Granted, Olivia doesn't always organize her toys the way I would like, and when she's doing other things, especially in the kitchen, there are some messes, but that's to be expected. She's learning while making those mistakes and gaining confidence in her abilities to help out.

I've been hesitant to let her help around the kitchen because, as I

mentioned, it can get messy when a toddler is trying to help out in that area. I'm worried she'll spill things, or worse, accidentally cut herself when trying to do it "like Mommy." But seeing her light up any time she can help with a meal makes me so happy. It also makes me happy to see her little sister wanting to do the same things. If a 4 year old is making a mess in the kitchen, imagine what an 18 month old can do!

Now that I have children of my own, I admit that I didn't help out enough around the house enough when I was younger. Even as a teenager, I felt like housework was such a chore. Yes, housework is a chore (even if you have help with it), but part of being responsible is taking ownership of it and getting it done.

I like to think I'm preparing my kids for the real world. They'll need to take care of themselves and we're starting with what they can do at home. Once they've mastered cleaning up toys and being mommy's little helpers, I think the possibilities are endless. I'm thinking dish washing is next. That makes me very happy.



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

JENNY GENSTERBLUM

Grilling fruit, veggies

Everyone has their favorite grill recipes, which usually involve meats and marinades. Don't skimp on the veggies this summer with these tips and recipes.

Grilled citrus

Charring the cut side of a lemon or lime adds a smoky flavor when squeezed over grilled meats, fish, or vegetables. You can also use the grilled citrus as the acid in a vinaigrette that will have more depth than a typical citrus vinaigrette.

Grilled lemon vinaigrette

Serves four

INGREDIENTS:

2–3 lemons, cut in half
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp dijon mustard
Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS: Place lemons, cut side down, on a hot grill. Remove when nicely charred. When cool, squeeze out the juice into a small bowl. Add the mustard and whisk together. While whisking, slowly drizzle in olive oil, until combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Grilled tomatoes

Summer is the season to enjoy ripe, farm-fresh tomatoes. So as to not lose all the juices and great flavor, try grilling tomatoes in a foil packet with a drizzle of olive oil, salt, and pepper. Use as a bruschetta topping, to make a smoky salsa, toss

with pasta, or use anywhere you would use regular tomatoes.

Grilled tomato bruschetta

Serves four

INGREDIENTS:

1 pint grape tomatoes
4 tbsp olive oil, plus 1 tbsp for grilling
1 pinch red pepper flake
1 clove garlic, minced
Salt and pepper, to taste
1/2 tsp sherry vinegar
1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, washed and dried
1/2 whole baguette, sliced

DIRECTIONS: Cut grape tomatoes in half lengthwise. Prepare two foil packets using aluminum foil. Place tomatoes inside each, drizzle with 1 tbsp olive oil, red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper. Close the foil pouch and grill on a medium hot grill for about 18 minutes, or until the tomatoes burst and release their juices. When slightly cooled, put tomatoes into a bowl. Add the remaining olive oil, minced garlic, sherry vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Tear the basil leaves with your hands and add to the bowl. Mix gently until combined. Top each slice of baguette with a heaping mound of tomato mixture.

Cut to grill

When grilling vegetables, make sure to slice them properly. For quicker, more even cooking, make sure to cut veggies in large pieces that will expose more of the surface to the grill. Instead of chunks, cut eggplants, zucchini, or summer squash into rounds or thick slices lengthwise.

How long to grill veggies?

Similar to roasting or blanching, some vegetables simply take longer than others (potatoes vs. asparagus, for example) on the grill.

To get perfect vegetables on the grill, toss them in oil, salt and pepper, then sear on the grill over high heat. Once they are nicely charred, move them to a cooler part of the grill to finish cooking the insides.

Grilled eggplant and portobello mushroom burgers

Serves four

INGREDIENTS:

1 medium eggplant
4 portobello mushrooms, cleaned and de-stemmed
1 tbsp vegetable oil
4 whole-wheat buns or English Muffins
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp olive oil
Your favorite burger toppings: cheese, lettuce, tomato, onions
Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS: Cut eggplant crosswise into 1/2-inch thick rounds. Season eggplants and mushrooms with salt and pepper. Drizzle oil on both sides of the eggplants and mushrooms. On a hot grill, place a single layer of the eggplant and mushrooms. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes on each side until dark grill marks appear. If the vegetables are getting to dark and aren't cooked through, transfer to a cooler part of the grill to finish cooking. When cooked through, transfer to a platter and drizzle with vinegar and oil. Assemble burgers.

Grilled desserts

Make room on the grill for dessert. Try pineapple, peaches, grapefruit, bananas, or watermelon straight on the grill and your favorite berries in a foil pouch.

Grilled peaches with ricotta yogurt and honey

Serves four

INGREDIENTS:

4 peaches, halved & pitted
1 cup ricotta cheese
1 cup greek yogurt
Honey, for drizzling
1 tsp olive oil

DIRECTIONS: In a bowl, mix together ricotta and yogurt. Brush the cut side of each peach with olive oil. Over a medium-hot grill, place the peaches, cut side down. Grill for about 5 to 8 minutes, or until softened and lightly charred. Remove peaches to a platter. Fill each peach half with ricotta yogurt. Drizzle with honey and serve.

Chef Jenny Gensterblum is executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School.

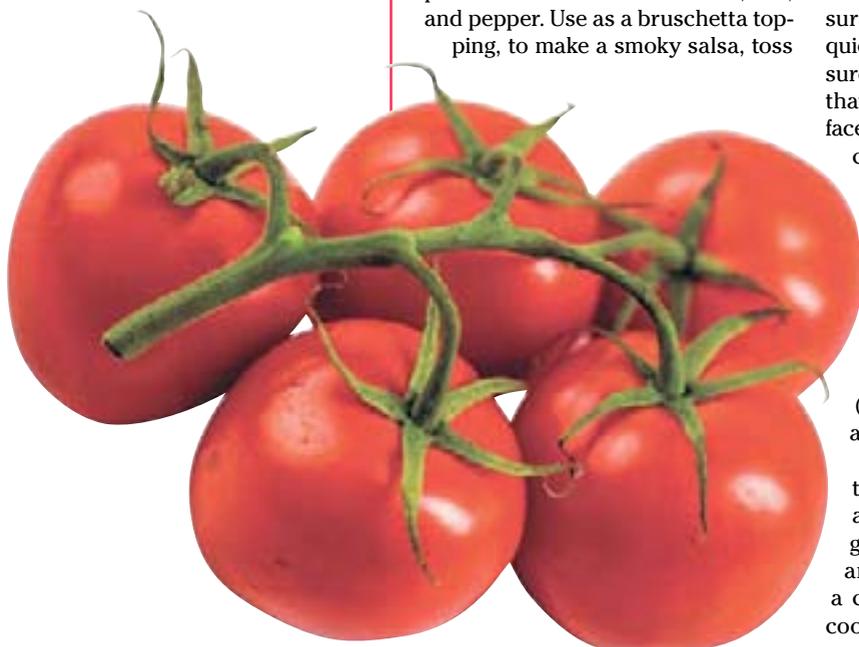




Photo by Robert Wagoner



(Clockwise from left) The main draw of Watkins Glen State Park are the waterfalls. Learn all about glass at Corning Museum of Glass. The Taughannock Falls State Park offers a picturesque view.

Discover the Finger Lakes

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

The Finger Lakes region lies within the triangle between Syracuse, Rochester, and Corning in central New York and includes the 11 lakes in that area. The Finger Lakes is a family-friendly and culture-filled region that has something for every age and interest.

The region caters primarily to those interested in outdoor activities, especially those looking to escape the city for something different and a chance to sleep under the stars. There are numerous campgrounds with accommodations ranging from traditional tent camping to cabins and cottages.

Don't forget your hiking boots to explore the Finger Lakes State Parks.

There are also a number of cultural institutions accessible to the area, like the Rockwell Museum in Corning, the National Museum of Play in Rochester, or the Rosamond Gifford Zoo in Syracuse.

Looking for an amusement park? Seabreeze amusement park (and waterpark) overlooks Lake Ontario, and offers roller coasters, thrill rides, and live shows for all ages. The road trip to central New York will provide lifelong memories, and now is the perfect time to go. Here's 10 of my favorite attractions from the Finger Lakes region:

Museums

The Corning Museum of Glass [1 Museum Way in Corning, (800) 732-6845, www.cmog.org]

Founded in 1951 by Corning Incorporated, this museum is dedicated to telling the story of glass. Glass is a versatile, ancient material and has been explored by artists, scientists, and historians for thousands of years. The rich history of glass is displayed in the Glass Collection Galleries. Your family can learn about the science and technology behind glass and recent innovation via hands-on exhibits in the Innovation Center. There, concepts behind optics, vessels, and windows can be explored. You will even have an opportunity to delve deeper into glassmaking with Make Your Own Glass sessions (for beginners) offered daily. The studio also offers year-round courses in all levels of glassmaking that range in length and level of difficulty.

Museum of the Earth [1259 Trumansburg Rd., Ithaca, (607) 273-6623, www.priweb.org]

The Paleontological Research Institution was founded in 1932 to care for collections of specimens and publish findings in paleontological research. The institute, for many years, boasted research, col-

Links

www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org
www.museumofplay.org
www.rockwellmuseum.org
www.seabreeze.com
www.flcheesetrail.com
www.fingerlakes.org/things-to-do/museum-trail
www.nyparks.com/regions/finger-lakes

lections, publications, and public education. It was not until 2003 that the Museum of the Earth was established to provide the general public with a unique venue to see its artifacts. The museum encourages critical thinking about life on Earth (past and present). Your family can explore a mix of natural history displays, interactive science features, and art exhibitions. There are hands-on, visual exhibitions and community outreach. The museum's permanent collection will take your family on a journey through history — billions of years.

Sciencenter [601 First St., Ithaca, (607) 272-0200, www.sciencenter.org]

Founded in 1983, Sciencenter is a nationally recognized museum, hosting guests not only in Ithaca but also worldwide through traveling exhibitions and outreach. This bright hand-on space is perfect for families. The museum itself was a community effort, operating from storefronts for nearly a decade and then taking volunteers an additional 10 years to expand a small permanent space to the now expanded Sciencenter in 2003. This is truly a beloved museum.

Parks, falls and gorges

There is an abundance of state parks in the Finger Lakes region, making for beautiful scenery. Each park has its own unique charm, with some offering a lake-front view while others boast gorges and waterfalls. Some waterfalls in the area can be seen from the street and for others you'll have to make your way along a park path or hiking trail.

Buttermilk Falls State Park (105 Enfield Falls Rd., Ithaca)

Buttermilk Creek flows down the steep valley side toward Cayuga Lake and the falls are visible just off Route 13 south of Ithaca. Your family can swim at the base of the falls during the summer months or

hike the trails — ranging from easy to moderate difficulty.

Robert H. Treman State Park (105 Enfield Falls Rd., Ithaca)

Robert H. Treman State Park is just south of Ithaca and hosts a gorge called Enfield Glen. Your family can take advantage of the hiking trails that lead to the 115 Ft Lucifer Falls.

Fillmore Glen State Park (1686 St. Rte. 38, Moravia)

Fillmore Glen State Park has dense woods that lead to a narrow gorge.

Taughannock Falls State Park (2221 Taughannock Rd., Trumansburg)

Taughannock Falls State Park's namesake waterfall is one of the highest in the region with surrounding trails for exploration. Note that there is a balcony accessible from the upper parking lot near Route 89.

Watkins Glen State Park (Route 14, Watkins Glen)

Watkins Glen State Park has not only gorges, but also 19 different waterfalls and cascades. The base entrance is available off Route 14.

Trails

Fingerlakes Cheese Trail, location varies

Renowned for its wineries and natural beauty, the Finger Lakes region is also has abundance of farms and orchards. The Finger Lakes Cheese Trail started in 2010 is a collaborative of small farms whose goal is to drive business and visitation to the farms and help bolster tourism in the Finger Lakes Region as an agri-tourism attraction. Your family can take a tour with the use of the trail's map.

Museum Trail, location varies

The Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance has partnered with nine museums, attractions, and historic homes to create the new Finger Lakes Museum Trail. The aim is for visitors (and residents alike) to explore the history and culture within the Finger Lakes region. The museums include institutions like the Womens Rights Museum and sites such as the home of Harriett Tubman. The museums of the Finger Lakes are entertaining and educational.

Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: www.shniekajohnson.com.

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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

A hair-raising true story

In the middle of World War II, when resources and money were both scarce, a trip to the circus was a huge treat. Families sometimes saved for months for the chance to see big cats, elephants, trapeze acts, and clowns.

According to the true story in “Big Top Burning” by Laura A. Woollett, that was the case for many residents of Hartford, Conn., when the Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey Circus came to town that day in early July 1944.

“More than 6,000 people attended the circus on that hot July 6 afternoon,” says Woollett.

The Big Tent (which was “massive” and weighed more than 75,000 pounds) filled quickly with circus-goers, clowns and horses, bears and lions, tigers, chimps, and elephants. Large chutes at the entrances whisked the animals in and out, the air smelled like popcorn, and the afternoon promised to be a fun one.

It’s likely, then, that few people noticed the tiny flame on the side of the tent in the corner by the men’s room. Those who did probably thought the circus workers would take care of it; fires were pretty common at circuses at that time. The tent was wa-

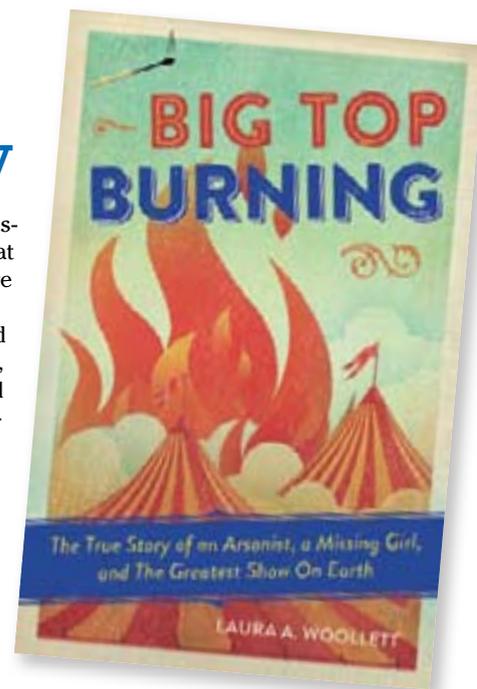
terproofed with wax and gasoline, but nobody gave that much thought — until the fire spread, and so did panic.

Screams filled the air and circus-goers raced for exits, some of which were blocked by animal chutes. A few people escaped beneath the circus tent. Others fell to the ground and were crushed. Within 10 minutes, the Big Tent had burned to the ground, injuring more than 480 people and killing 167 people, 59 of which were children under age 10.

But how did the fire start, and who were the people whose bodies were never claimed? The answers to those questions are still unknown.

It’s summertime. Who wants to read history books in the summer, anyhow? Give your child “Big Top Burning,” and rest assured that he will.

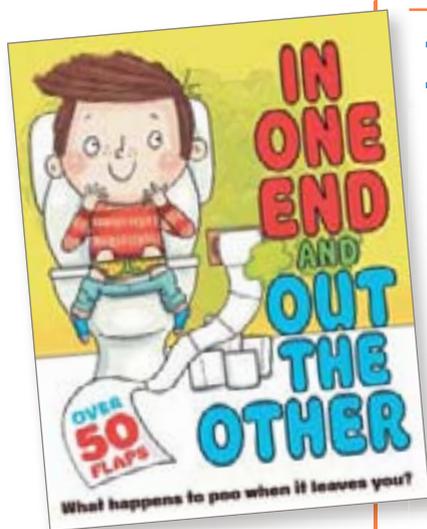
With a sense of urgency and just the right setting in time, author Laura A. Woollett presents this true story in a way that will resonate well with the age group for which this



book is intended (10 and up). I was riveted by the personal accounts of this tragedy, and I think the lingering mystery at the end will capture kids’ interest.

While the photographs inside this book aren’t terribly graphic, some of the narrative might be a bit much for sensitive young readers. Just be aware because, even for an adult, “Big Top Burning” can be a hair-raising book.

“Big Top Burning,” by Laura A. Woollett [167 pages, 2015, \$18.95].



Looking for answers to icky questions?

No, you’re not a baby anymore. You can tie your shoes, comb your own hair, and nobody needs to feed you. You can even use the potty by yourself — but what happens after you do?

You’ll find out in the book “In One End and Out the Other” by Dr. Mike Goldsmith, illustrated by Richard Watson.

Just like gasoline in a car, food is fuel for your body and the first step in making that fuel is the saliva in your mouth that helps “mush up the food.”

Once you’ve finished a bite and swallowed, the “gooey” mixture goes down your esophagus and, 10 seconds later, it enters your stomach, where it becomes something called “chyme.” Your stomach works the chyme, then sends it to your small intestines, where nutrients are absorbed and, about seven hours later, it enters your large intestines, where

water is removed. After another day or so, digestion is complete and you’ll be ready to flush what’s left down the toilet.

Then what? Everything goes down a long pipe, under the ground, and into a sewer. There, it mixes with things that other people have flushed and heads to a sewage treatment plant where it gets dumped through screens into chambers and becomes sludge.

There, germs break down the sludge in the same way your body breaks down food.

At some plants, sludge gets dried and becomes food for plants, while “dirty water” is cleaned with “good bacteria” that makes it safe to put back into rivers.

With a mix of words kids feel comfortable using, and real technical and medical terms, Dr. Mike Goldsmith explains what happens from mouth to months later, not only for

humans but for plants and animals as well.

This information — and the trivial bits that accompany it — is helped along by illustrations by Richard Watson, both in the main part of the book and in the fun-to-find flaps that give kids even more knowledge about the everyday function of their bodies and their cities.

Even though I’m well beyond the target age of this book (5–7), I learned a lot from it, and I think your kids undoubtedly will, too. If you’re looking for answers to sticky questions, “In One End and Out the Other” is flush with facts.

“In One End and Out the Other,” by Dr. Mike Goldsmith [14 pages, 2015, \$12.99].

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

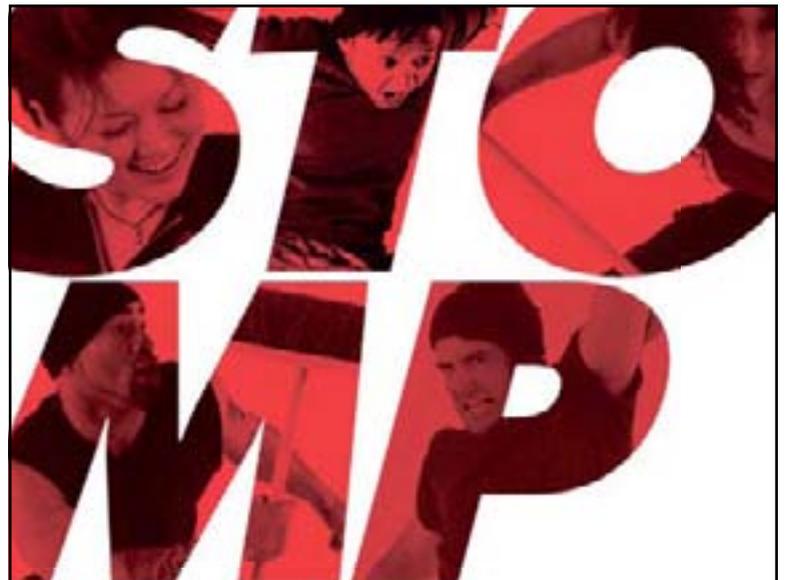
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Calendar

AUGUST



Mil's Trills thrills

Come and listen to the fantabulous Mil's Trills at the Gerritsen Beach Library on Aug. 21.

Children are treated to a special concert by Amelia Robinson, of Mil's Trills, sharing her unique brand of rock and roll on her electric ukulele. Her rocking band will take everyone on an expedition of music from around the world, including urban funk, blues, honkey tonk, calypso and more. And as a special

treat she will offer a sneak peak of new numbers from her upcoming album "Now That We're Friends," with titles including "Say Hey," and "Everybody's Got a Buddy."

Mil's Trills, Aug. 21 at 2 pm. Free.

Gerritsen Beach Public Library [2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue in Gerritsen Beach; (718) 368-1435; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org]

Never miss a great event!

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Calendar

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 — 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!

SAT, AUG. 1

IN BROOKLYN

Coffee Bark: Prospect Park Picnic House, Prospect Park West and Fifth Street; www.prospectpark.org; 7 to 9 am; Free.

Bring the whole family — especially the pups. There will be goody bags for our four-pawed friends, and information tables.

Animal Yoga: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10:30 am; Free with admission.

Young yogis, what is your favorite animal? Explore movement as we stretch like a cat and go upside-down for downward facing dog.

Soap making: Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Road and Ralph Avenue; (718) 629-5400; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Older teens learn how to make soap using a combination of ingredients including essential oils and a variety of herbs and flowers. Advance registration required.

Time capsules: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm; Free with general admission.

MTA employees unearthed a time capsule buried in 1950. Now you can record your 2015 journey and make a capsule of your own. For all ages.

Ezra Jack Keats Story Hour: Imagination Playground, Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Road; www.prospectpark.org; 2 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Gather around the statue of Peter and Willie, two characters from Keats, and listen to a story read by Tammy Hall.

Train operator school: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free with general admission.



What's in the tunnel?

Fantastic Tunnels is now boarding at the New York Transit Museum on Aug. 15, 16, 22, and 23.

What do engineers do? Find out in this super interesting workshop especially geared to children 5 years and older. Examine the miles and miles of underground tunnels that make up the

New York City Transit system and discover their secrets.

Fantastic Tunnels, Aug. 15, 16, 22 and 23 from 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. Free with museum admission

New York Transit Museum [Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn Heights; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum]

Drop by the computer lab and take control of a subway car. Great for children 10 and older.

"The Hunger Games – Mockingjay, Part 1": Irving Square Park, Halsey St. and Wilson Avenue; (212) 639-9675; www.nycgovparks.org; 8:30 pm – 10:30 pm; Free.

Movies under the stars in Prospect Park. Entertainment starts at 7 pm, movie starts at sundown. For tweens and teens.

SUN, AUG. 2

IN BROOKLYN

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

Volunteers of Wildlife introduce kids to birds of prey.

Time capsules: 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Washing day: Lefferts Historic

Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 2 to 5 pm; \$3.

Scrub that dirt right out of these reproductions of 19th-century clothing using tubs, washboards and a bar of soap.

MON, AUG. 3

IN BROOKLYN

Get Up & Go!: McCarren Park, 776 Lorimer St. between Bayard Street and Driggs Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/kids-fitness; 10-11 am; Free.

The City Park Foundation hosts "Get Up & Go," where instructors will help youngsters increase their core skills such as running and throwing, as well as motivate them through contests, races, and obstacle courses.

TUES, AUG. 4

IN BROOKLYN

Summer Reading Storytime: Brooklyn Bridge Park's Granite Prospect, Old Fulton Street at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Listen to Brooklyn Heights librarians read stories from the Brooklyn Public Library's reading list.

WED, AUG. 5

IN BROOKLYN

Children's concerts: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 10 am; Free.

Get on board and hop to it with Hopalong Andrew.

Summer garden: Highland Park, Highland Blvd. and Vermont Place; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Children 7 to 12 years old explore the gardens and connect with nature.

"The Hunger Games – Mockingjay, Part 1": Prospect Park, north end of Long Meadow, Enter at Grand Army Plaza and Prospect Park West; 7 pm; Free.

Movies under the stars in Prospect Park. Entertainment starts at 7 pm, movie starts at sundown. For tweens and teens.

THURS, AUG. 6

IN BROOKLYN

Get Up & Go!: Calvert Vaux Park, Calvert Vaux Park Greenway and Shore Parkway; www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/kids-fitness; 10-11 am; Free.

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The City Park Foundation hosts "Get Up & Go," where instructors will help youngsters increase their core skills such as running and throwing, as well as motivate them through contests, races and obstacle courses.

Get Up & Go!: Sternberg Park, Boerum Street between Lorimer and Leonard streets; www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/kids-fitness; 12:30–1:30 pm; Free.

The City Park Foundation hosts "Get Up & Go," where instructors will help youngsters increase their core skills such as running and throwing, as well as motivate them through contests, races and obstacle courses.

Get Up & Go!: Seth Low Playground, Bay Parkway at W. 12th Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/kids-fitness; 12:30–1:30 pm; Free.

The City Park Foundation hosts "Get Up & Go," where instructors will help youngsters increase their core skills such as running and throwing, as well as motivate them through contests, races and obstacle courses.

SAT, AUG. 8

IN BROOKLYN

Animal Yoga: 10:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

New York Horses: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm; Free with general admission.

Before trains there was the horse-drawn street car. Learn all about this with a visit from the Kensington Stables. For all ages.

Ezra Jack Keats Story Hour: 2 pm to 3 pm. Imagination Playground. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Train operator school: 2 pm to 4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

"Tales of Brier Rabbit": S. Oxford Park, S. Oxford St. and Cumberland Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 5 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Presented by the City Park's Foundation and the Puppet Mobile. Follow the tales of the feisty Brier Rabbit, who is always getting into trouble. Part of SummerStage Kids.

Perseid Meteor Shower: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 9 pm to 11 pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers guide you to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe. This is one of the brighter meteor showers of the year, occurs every



Adventure on the pier

Pier Kids is a fun way to spend a Sunday on Aug. 2 and Aug. 9, at Brooklyn Bridge Park.

On Aug. 2, Volunteers of Wildlife brings birds of prey to the park, and children can learn all about these fascinating hunters of the sky. Aug. 9 brings the Dirty

Socks Fun Time Band in for a concert and activities.

Pier Kids, Aug. 2 and 9, at 11 am. Free.

Pier 6 [Joralemon Street and Furman Street in Brooklyn Heights; (718) 802-0603; www.brooklyn-bridgepark.org].

August, peaking around Aug. 9–13.

SUN, AUG. 9

IN BROOKLYN

Hip Tot Family Day: LeFrak Center at Lakeside, 171 E. Dr. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 462-0010; www.lakeside-brooklyn.com; 11 am; Free.

Family music group Rolie Polie Guacamole and Dog on Fleas featuring Grammy-winning songwriter Dean Jones perform a free lakeside concert at Prospect Park.

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

Sing, dance and draw with Dirty Socks Fun Time Band and hands-on activities for children of all ages.

Time capsules: 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Family dinners: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. in the Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org/m/family-dinners.php; 5 pm to 7:30 pm; \$85 for adults (\$35 for children 2 to 12 and free for children under 2).

Cooking demonstrations and dinners celebrating the Edible Academy, and all prepared by Mario Batali's

chefs, including Frank Langello of Babbo, Dan Drohan at Otto; Mario La Posta from Babbo Boston, John Katz at Tarry Market; Andy Nusser of Tarry Lodge and Anthony Sasso of Casa Mono. Reservations and pre-purchase tickets suggested.

MON, AUG. 10

IN BROOKLYN

Get Up & Go!: 10–11 am. McCarren Park. See Monday, Aug. 3.

"Mrs. Doubtfire": Coney Island Beach, 1001 Boardwalk West at W. 10th Street; (718) 594-7895; www.coneyislandfunguide.com; 7:30 pm; Free.

Grab a blanket and some popcorn and enjoy this family-friendly comedy starring Robin Williams and Sally Fields.

TUES, AUG. 11

IN BROOKLYN

Tree care: Green space, 90 Kent Ave. a N. Eighth Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am – noon; Free.

Join with Human Impacts to help care for local trees and green spaces. Registration recommended.

Summer Reading Storytime: 10:30 am. Brooklyn Bridge Park's Granite Prospect. See Tuesday, Aug. 4.

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

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

WED, AUG. 12

IN BROOKLYN

Hybrid Movement Company: Sunset Park Playground, Sixth Ave. and 44th Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Dance, acrobatic, and a visual arts troupe.

Summer garden: 2 pm to 4 pm. Highland Park. See Wednesday, Aug. 5.

"Happy Feet": Long Meadow North at Prospect Park, West Drive and Prospect Park Southwest; (718) 802-3777; 7 pm to 11 pm; Free.

Grab a picnic basket and blanket and get ready for a movie under the stars.

THURS, AUG. 13

IN BROOKLYN

Get Up & Go!: 10–11 am. Calvert Vaux Park. See Thursday, Aug. 6.

Get Up & Go!: 12:30–1:30 pm. Sternberg Park. See Thursday, Aug. 6.

Get Up & Go!: 12:30–1:30 pm. Seth Low Playground. See Thursday, Aug. 6.

SAT, AUG. 15

IN BROOKLYN

India day: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am – 4:15 am; Free with museum admission.

Aug. 15 is India's Independence Day. It's a whole day of learning, dancing, and celebrating. Have your hand painted with henna; try your luck at playing pachisi; make a Rakhi bracelet to celebrate siblings and friends; hear Indian instruments like the sitar and tabla; sing songs in English, Bengali, and Hindi with Raga Kids; then learn Bhangra dancing from Ajna Dance Company at a rooftop dance party featuring DJ Rekha.

Sand Sculpting Concert: Coney Island Boardwalk, Surf Ave. and W. 20th Street; www.eventbrite.com/e/25th-anniversary-coney-island-sand-sculpting-contest; 11 am to 4 pm; Free.

Experience one of Coney's most popular event in this 25th annual sand concert. Amateurs and semi-professional sculpting artists of all ages compete for prizes and bragging rights. And if you can't sculpt you can cheer

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your favorite artist on. Registration required for artists. Hosted by Astella and Brooklyn Community Services.

Fantastic tunnels: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm; Free with general admission.

What do engineers do? Find out in this great workshop for children 5 years and older.

Ezra Jack Keats Story Hour: 2 to 3 pm. Imagination Playground. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Train operator school: 2 to 4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Camping: Prospect Park Picnic House, Prospect Park West and Fifth Street; www.prospectpark.org; 6 pm to 7 am; Free.

Families enjoy the great outdoors under the stars for a sleepover. Tents are provided, space is limited; chosen by lottery.

"Remember the Titans": Jackie Robinson Playground, Marion St. and Patchen Ave.; (212) 234-9607; www.nycgovparks.org; 8:30 - 10:30 pm; Free.

Twins view a screening of this film about a high school football coach and a difficult road.

Night Sky: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 9 pm to 11 pm; Free.

Urban rangers take you on a journey through the stars discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe. Night Sky programs highlight the history and folklore of the solar system, using the naked eye to locate stars and planets.

SUN, AUG. 16

IN BROOKLYN

Fantastic tunnels: 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 15.

MON, AUG. 17

IN BROOKLYN

Get Up & Go!: 10-11 am. McCarren Park. See Monday, Aug. 3.

"Guardians of the Galaxy": Coney Island Beach, 1001 Boardwalk West at W. 10th Street; (718) 594-7895; www.coneyislandfunguide.com; 7:30 pm; Free.

Grab a blanket and a bucket of popcorn and enjoy Coney Island Flicks on the Beach.



Old-school family fun

It's a fun family day at the Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum on Aug. 29.

Get a tour of the house and learn about games and activities of by-gone times.

There will be scavenger hunts a plenty and hands-on activities

to keep everyone busy throughout the day.

Family Day, Aug. 29 from 11 am to 3 pm. Free.

Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum [5816 Clarendon Rd. and Ralph Avenue in Flatbush; (718) 629-5400; www.nycgovparks.org]

TUES, AUG. 18

IN BROOKLYN

Summer Reading Storytime: 10:30 am. Brooklyn Bridge Park's Granite Prospect. See Tuesday, Aug. 4.

WED, AUG. 19

IN BROOKLYN

Summer garden: 2 pm to 4 pm. Highland Park. See Wednesday, Aug. 5.

Double Dutch: Pier 2 Brooklyn Bridge Park, Furman St. and Pierrepont St.; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Learn to skip rope the double Dutch way. Open to all ages and abilities. For children 15 years old and up.

THURS, AUG. 20

IN BROOKLYN

Get Up & Go!: 10-11 am. Calvert Vaux Park. See Thursday, Aug. 6.

Get Up & Go!: 12:30-1:30 pm. Sternberg Park. See Thursday, Aug. 6.

Get Up & Go!: 12:30-1:30 pm. Seth Low Playground. See Thursday, Aug. 6.

FRI, AUG. 21

IN BROOKLYN

Mils Trills: Gerritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Live in concert with her funky brand of kids rock and roll is Amelia Robinson. Suitable for children 3 to 11 years old.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Al E Gator and Friends": Goat on a Boat Puppet Theatre, 4 Hampton St., Sag Harbor, Staten Island; (631) 725-4193; www.goatonaboat.org; 11 am; \$8 \$10, \$12.

Children 2 to 8 years old will enjoy this marionette variety show.

SAT, AUG. 22

IN BROOKLYN

Animal Yoga: 10:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Fantastic tunnels: 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 15.

Ezra Jack Keats Story Hour: 2 pm to 3 pm. Imagination Playground. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Train operator school: 2 pm to 4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Al E Gator and Friends": 11 am. Goat on a Boat Puppet Theatre. See Friday, Aug. 21.

SUN, AUG. 23

IN BROOKLYN

Field Day: Pier 5, Joralemon St. and Furman St.; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am - 2 pm; Free.

Bring the whole family for fun games of basketball, soccer, bocce, handball, volleyball and more.

Fantastic tunnels: 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 15.

WED, AUG. 26

IN BROOKLYN

Summer garden: 2 pm to 4 pm. Highland Park. See Wednesday, Aug. 5.

Movie Night: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 6 to 8:30 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Bring a picnic basket and enjoy a special screening of "The Goonies."

FRI, AUG. 28

IN BROOKLYN

Family camping: Marine Park, E. 36th St. and Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 7 am; Free.

Families enjoy the great outdoors under the stars for a sleepover. Tents are provided, space is limited; chosen by lottery.

SAT, AUG. 29

IN BROOKLYN

Animal Yoga: 10:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Family Day: Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Road and Ralph Avenue; (718) 629-5400; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Kid-friendly tours, hands-on activities and scavenger hunts.

The City of Tomorrow: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm; Free with general admission.

Children take a journey into the future and look at transportation and

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technology. For all ages.

Ezra Jack Keats Story Hour: 2 pm to 3 pm. Imagination Playground. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

Train operator school: 2 pm to 4 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Arthur Ashe Kids Day: USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens; (866) 673-6749 (OPEN-TIX); www.usopen.org; 9:30 am to 4 pm; \$10 general admission (\$25 loge tickets).

Presented by Hess, the 29th annual event includes live performances from Rolling Stone "Artist You Need to Know" Bea Miller, "hip-pop" duo Kalin and Myles, Flo Rida protégé Natalie La Rose, MTV's "Artist to Watch" Jacob Whitesides and chart-topping pop-rock act American Authors. Children will enjoy a host of activities and meet with tennis champs Novak Djokovic, Marin Cilic, and others for a day of tennis, music. The annual event kicks-off the 2015 US Open, which runs from Aug. 31 to Sept. 13.

SUN, AUG. 30

IN BROOKLYN

The City of Tomorrow: 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Aug. 29.

LONG-RUNNING

IN BROOKLYN

Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket: Grand Army Plaza, Union Street between Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park West; www.grownyc.org; Saturdays, 8 am-4 pm; Free.

Families can pick up fresh produce and artisanal items.

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

The new exhibit teaches the relevance of patterns. Features hands-on activities.

The Art of Discovery: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; Tuesdays - Fridays, 8 am-6 pm, Saturdays, 10 am-6 pm, Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - 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



Game, set, match!

The 29th annual Arthur Ashe Kids Day swings into the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on Aug. 29.

Presented by Hess, the event includes live performances from Rolling Stone "Artist You Need to Know" Bea Miller, "hip-pop" duo Kalin and Myles, Flo Rida protégé Natalie La Rose, MTV's "Artist to Watch" Jacob Whitesides, and chart-topping pop-rock act American Authors.

Families can enjoy an exciting

schedule of tennis games geared toward kids, see an exhibition match and skills competitions with Novak Djokovic and Marin Cilic, and meet with the tennis greats after.

Arthur Ashe Kids Day on Aug. 29 from 9:30 am to 4 pm. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$25 for loge seating.

Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Arthur Ashe Stadium (Flushing Meadows Corona Park, www.arthurashekidsday.com).

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.

Kayaking: Brooklyn Bridge Park's Granite Prospect, Old Fulton Street at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; Saturdays, 10 am-3 pm, Now - Sat, Aug. 29; Free.

Glide along the Brooklyn waterfront during free public kayaking. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult guardian. All levels welcome, no experience is necessary.

Family discovery weekends: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 10:30 am - 2:30 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 23; Free with garden admission.

Experiment, learn and play together in the Discovery Garden. Hands-on sta-

tions encourage families to explore nature. For all ages.

Totally tots: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 11:30 am, Sat, Aug. 1 - Sun, Aug. 30; Free with museum admission.

Toddlers enjoy a new hands-on experience for our littlest learners!

"Jack and the Beanstalk": Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 23; \$9 (\$10 adults).

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

Fishing Fun: North end of Esplanade, East Drive and Ocean Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays and

Sundays, 1 to 2 pm and 3 to 4 pm; Free.

Families with children 15 and younger learn about aquatic ecology, fishing safety and collect their own bait.

Macy's fishing clinics: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 2 pm and 3 to 4 pm, Sat, Aug. 1 - Sun, Aug. 30; Free.

Children under 15 years old learn about aquatic ecology, fishing safety and collect bait.

Bird Watching: North end of Esplanade, East Drive and Ocean Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 2 pm and 3 to 4 pm, beginning Sat, Aug. 1; Free.

Families with children 15 and younger join with a ranger and identify the more than 250 species of birds in the park.

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

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

Sensory Room: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 pm to 4:45 pm, Wednesdays and Fridays - Sundays, 2 pm to 4 pm, Sat, Aug. 1 - Sun, Aug. 30; Free with museum admission.

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

Historic games: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 pm to 5 pm, Sat, Aug. 1 - Mon, Aug. 31; \$3.

Come relax in the shade and learn how to play Nine Man Morris, then make your own board to take home.

Bargemusic: Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street and Furman Street; (718) 624-2083; www.bargemusic.org; Saturdays, 4 pm, Now - Sat, Sept. 26; Free.

Walk across the planks for a family-friendly concert.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream": Gallery Players, 199 14th St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (212) 352-3101; www.galleryplayers.com; Thursdays - Saturdays, 7:30 pm, Sundays, 3 pm, Now - Sun, Aug. 2; 18.

Gallery Players presents Shake-

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spere's play about fairy king Theseus's feud with his queen Titania.

Summer Safety: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm.museum; Sundays – Thursdays, 10 am, Now – Mon, Aug. 31; \$13 (\$10 for seniors).

Children learn about the rules of the road at the Safety Road exhibit. Interactive exhibits, with a crosswalk, traffic lights and a shopping strip.

Play Streets: Park, 61st St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 21; Free.

The Police Athletic League's Summer Playstreets Program offers a safe environment for youngsters to play traditional sidewalk games, including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey, and basketball.

Play Streets: Coney Island Houses playground, 3030 Surf Ave. between W. 30th and W. 31st streets; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 21; Free.

The Police Athletic League's Summer Playstreets Program offers a safe environment for youngsters to play traditional sidewalk games, including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey, and basketball.

Play Streets: Kelly Playground, Avenue S and East 15th Street; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 21; Free.

The Police Athletic League's Summer Playstreets Program offers a safe environment for youngsters to play traditional sidewalk games, including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey, and basketball.

Play Streets: Fox Playground, East 52nd St. and Avenue H; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 21; Free.

The Police Athletic League's Summer Playstreets Program offers a safe environment for youngsters to play traditional sidewalk games, including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey, and basketball.

Play Streets: Alice Branch Family Shelter, 1040 East New York Avenue; www.palnyc.org; Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 21; Free.

The Police Athletic League's Summer Playstreets Program offers a safe environment for youngsters to play traditional sidewalk games, including double Dutch jump rope, hopscotch, Nok Hockey, and basketball.

Tennis in the Parks: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, DeKalb Ave. and S. Portland Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.



Sculptures of sand

Grab your pails, shovels, and imagination — it's the 25th annual Sand Sculpting Contest in Coney Island on Aug. 15.

Sponsored by Astella Development Corporation and Brooklyn Community Services, the family-friendly event is open to amateurs and semi-professional sand sculpting artists of all ages competing for cash prizes and bragging rights.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Tennis in the Parks: Kaiser Park, Neptune Ave. and Bayview Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Tennis in the Parks: Kelly Playground, Avenue S and E. 14th Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Tennis in the Parks: Marine Park,

Everyone has the chance to turn sand into a towering masterpiece.

Preregistration required for all entrants.

Sand Sculpting Contest, Aug. 15 from 11 am to 4 pm. Free.

Coney Island Boardwalk (Surf Avenue and W. 20th Street in Coney Island; www.eventbrite.com/e/25th-anniversary-coney-island-sand-sculpting-contest).

Filmore Ave. and Stuart Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Tennis in the Parks: McCarren Park, N. 13th Street between Bedford Ave. and Berry Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Tennis in the Parks: McKinley Park, Seventh Ave. and 75th Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays – Thursdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Registration is required online.

Track and Field: Betsy Head Playground, Strauss St. and Livonia Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting a track and field program for the summer for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 5 to 7 years old.

Track and Field: Betsy Head Playground, Strauss St. and Livonia Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting a track and field program for the summer for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 8 to 16 years old.

Golf: Herbert Von King Park, Marcy Ave. and Greene Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting golf lessons as part of its Summer Sports program for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 9 to 16 years old.

Summer Sports: Sunset Park Playground, 44th St. between Fifth and Seventh avenues; (718) 972-2135; Manny.Accimeus@parks.nyc.gov; www.nycgovparks.org; Weekdays, 10 am – 6 pm, Now – Fri, Sept. 4; Free.

Pitch, shoot and score with the city's new program. Each day you can take your pick of what activity meets your fancy. Registration is required by e-mail.

Tennis in the Parks: Jackie Robinson Playground, Malcolm X Blvd. and Chauncey St.; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Tennis in the Parks: Leif Ericson Park, Eighth Ave. and 66th Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

Track and Field: Kaiser Park, Neptune Ave. and Bayview Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12;

Continued on page 64

Continued from page 63

Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting a track and field program for the summer for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 5 to 7 years old.

Track and Field: Kaiser Park, Neptune Ave. and Bayview Avenue; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer-; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting a track and field program for the summer for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 8 to 16 years old.

Track and Field: Linden Park, Linden Blvd. and Vermont Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer-; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting a track and field program for the summer for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 8 to 16 years old.

Golf: Marine Park, Ave. S and E. 32nd Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer-; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting golf lessons as part of its Summer Sports program for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 6 to 8 years old.

Golf: Marine Park, Ave. S and E. 32nd Street; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer-; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am – 10:30 am, Now – Wed, Aug. 12; Free.

The City Parks Foundation is again hosting golf lessons as part of its Summer Sports program for the city's school children. Registration online required. For children 9 to 16 years old.

Tennis in the Parks: Bensonhurst Park, Cropsey Ave. and Bay Parkway; www.cityparksfoundation.org/2015-summer-; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 pm to 4 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 14; Free.

City Parks Foundation is again hosting tennis lessons for children as part of its Summer Sports program. Registration is required online.

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

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

First discoveries: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at



A ride under the sea

Take a ride beneath the sea in the SeaGlass Carousel opening on Aug. 20 at The Battery.

The new one-of-a-kind ride features a huge nautilus shell with 30 luminescent fish to give you the ride of your life. Unlike traditional carousels, this one has you sitting inside the fish instead of on top — letting you glide through the sights and sounds of a 360-degree aquatic adventure.

Visitors walk through the

Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; Tuesdays, 1:30 pm to 3 pm, Now – Tues, Aug. 25; Free with garden admission.

Children 2 to 4 years old with a caregiver plant a carrot seed, touch a wriggly worm and hear a story about nature. The drop-in program is outdoors and is cancelled in inclement weather.

Transit Tots: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; Thursdays, 10:15 am, Now – Thurs, Oct. 1; Free with general admission.

Educator Polly Desjarlais entertains children with games, stories and fun. For children 2 to 5 with an adult.

Nature Exploration: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Thursdays and Fridays, Noon–4 pm, Now – Fri, Oct. 30; Free.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance for nature education programs at the Prospect Park Audubon Center, the first urban Audubon Center in the nation.

beautiful Tiffany and Company Foundation Woodland Gardens before reaching the brand-new attraction.

SeaGlass Carousel is open daily beginning Aug. 20, from 10 am to 10 pm and costs \$5 per ride. Access to the Battery and gardens is free.

SeaGlass Carousel (The Battery at the Battery Park Underpass in Lower Manhattan; www.thebattery.org)

Children enjoy Bird nerd games; nature on the go and animal encounter.

Free hours: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Thursdays, 2 pm to 6 pm, Now – Thurs, Aug. 27; Free.

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

Playdate: South Brooklyn Children's Garden, 204 Columbia St. and Sackett Street; www.nycgovparks.org; Fridays, 9:30 am to 11:30 am, Now – Fri, Sept. 4; Free.

The garden is open to all children 18 months to 5 years old to play in the sprinklers, water the plants, dig in the dirt and have a messy good time.

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

Playtime for kids aged 0–5.

Reading is Fundamental: Geritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Geritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and

Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; 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; 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; Fridays, 3:30–5 pm; Free.

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

Friday Night Fireworks: Coney Island Boardwalk; Fridays, 9:30 pm, Now – Fri, Sept. 4; Free.

FURTHER AFIELD

Science Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; 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.

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; 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!

Children's Zoo: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.bronx-zoo.com; Daily, 10 am – 5 pm; Now – Fri, Oct. 30; \$5 with Zoo Admission.

The newly renovated area is open and features new species, new exhibits, and a domestic petting zoo. Children of all ages enjoy learning about the giant anteaters, sloths and mini goats.

SeaGlass Carousel: SeaGlass Carousel, The Battery, Battery Park Underpass, Manhattan; www.thebattery.org; Daily, 10 am to 10 pm; beginning Thurs, Aug. 20; \$5 per ride.

A beautiful, huge crystal nautilus shell with 30 grand luminescent fish, takes riders on an aquatic journey.

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

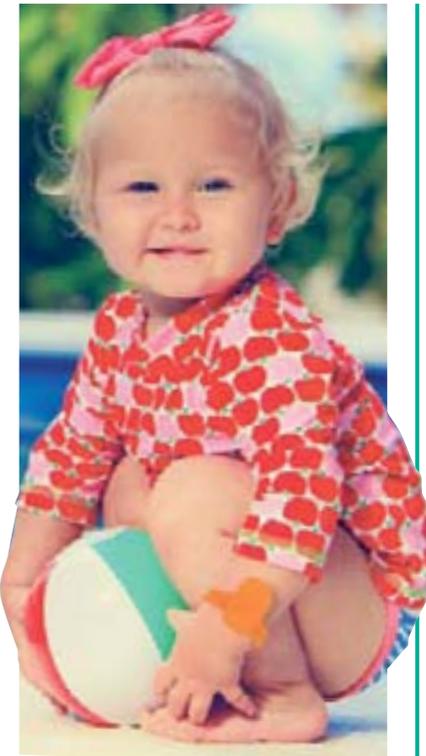
Splash safely

As the long, hot days of summer beat down, the time is ripe for pool parties and trips to the beach! For times when parents are chatting and attempting to supervise their kids, iSwimband can be an important assistant in helping maintain your vigilance. This wearable, drowning detection sensor is 1.5-inches wide and can be snapped into a rubber wristband for toddlers (or other non-swimmers) or snapped into a headband for swimmers.

The iSwimband alerts a parent's compatible Bluetooth device with a sound akin to a submarine dive alarm when a swimmer has been submerged too long or if a non-swimmer enters the water. We were able to download the free app onto our iPhone 4 and were impressed by its streamlined, helpful instructions. The parent customizes the settings for their child's swimming abilities, or lack of ability, and how soon they want the alarm to sound if the sensor is submerged.

The sensor can monitor from up to 100 feet away — as long as the parent has an unobstructed view or path for the signal. We tested the sensor in the wristband and also in the headband on kids playing in a pool and found both ways of wearing the sensor to be effective.

(For self-conscious tweens, the



headband can also attach to goggles, making the it even less noticeable.)

The manufacturer, Aquatic Safety Concepts, says the sensor is not intended as a replacement for adult supervision. And they report that the iSwimband battery should last for hundreds of hours of splash-splashing fun.

iSwimband drowning detection device, \$59.99, iSwimband.com.

Summer style 'Bee' blooming

Sunflowers evoke happy memories of summer and sunshine, so it's understandable that the new watercolor-style print on the organic cotton dress from Burt's Bees Baby would be utterly irresistible. The dress comes with a matching diaper cover and features contrasting, orchid-colored sleeves and trim around the snap-closure collar. Just as the *Helianthus* attracts bees, butterflies, and birds, the



graphic on the front of the dress is joined by an embroidered bee, and the sleeves are capped with fluttering wings of raw-edge fabric.

The sunflower dress set, which comes in sizes newborn, 0–3 months, 3–6 months, 6–9 months, and 12 months, is a sweet, eco-conscious gift for a baby girl.

Sunflower Dress Set by Burt's Bees Baby, \$22.95, BurtsBeesBaby.com.

Cracking the 'Code'

On Aug. 2, a new board game will be released that will assuage parents' fears that they aren't doing enough to help their kids prepare for a career in a digital world — Code Master. While Code Master is a single player game, it can be enjoyed with a friend or by a parent-and-child team as they cheer each other on to solve the puzzles and get their avatar to the portal together.

In packaging that evokes Mojang's beloved Minecraft video game, Code Master inventor Mark Engelberg has assembled a board game that effortlessly introduces "while" loops, "if-then-else" conditional branching, and more while the child (ideally age 8 or older) merrily puzzles out how to help their adorably pixelated avatar pick up power crystals and ascend to the next level.

The player unwittingly "writes" a program with his action tokens by putting them in a sequence on the guide scroll that directs the avatar's actions. He even learns from his mistakes; if it doesn't work, the



instructions are encouraging, saying it's a simple matter of "debugging your program," so try again.

Rewards are built into Code Master: Every time the player reaches a portal, he is elevated to the next level, graduating from beginner, to intermediate, to advanced, and finally, to expert. There are 60 logic puzzles in the game to provide hours of brain-teasing challenges.

Code Master Programming Logic Game by Think Fun, \$19.99, www.target.com.

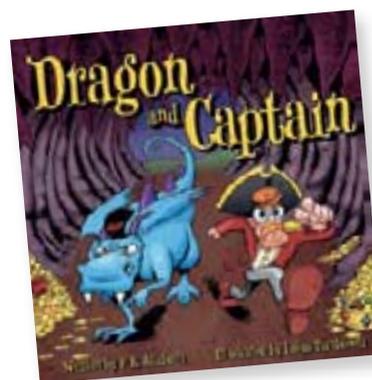
Ode to Calvin and Hobbes

Set your kids' sails for an adventure with "Dragon and Captain," the debut picture book from P.R. Allabach. It's a rollicking celebration of summer days and unleashed imaginations that will especially delight readers ages 4–8. Like Bill Watterson's Calvin and Hobbes comic

strips, "Dragon and Captain" (Flashlight Press) is a graphic novel that moves between illustrations of real life and the active imaginations of the two boys who transform into the dragon and captain. Captain's boat is missing and the lighthearted, kinetic illustrations by Lucas Turnbloom depict the two friends' thrilling journey to find the ship and infiltrate a band of pirates in order to recapture it.

In the imaginations of Dragon and Captain, a pocket watch becomes a compass and a paper towel tube becomes a telescope. It's a reminder that children don't need lots of stuff to be entertained during their vacation days; they need unstructured time, imagination, and a friend.

"Dragon and Captain" book by P.R. Allabach, \$17.95, www.barnesandnoble.com.





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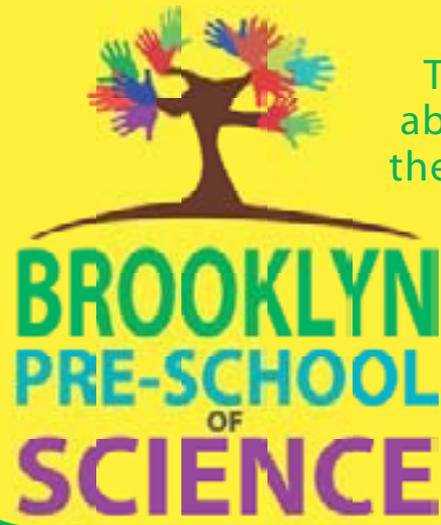
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