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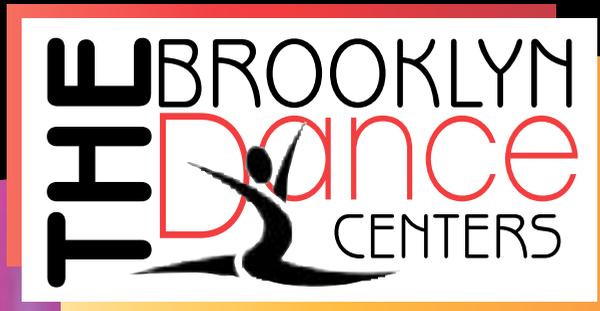
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# Family October 2015



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# Autumn in New York

September was such a beautiful month here in the city. We can only hope that October will also provide us with sunny days and good spirit. I always hope for decent weather on Halloween so the kids can have a fun time trick-or-treating. It's a real drag when it's raining or too cold. A bit brisk, OK, but if the kids have to cover their costumes with coats and carry umbrellas, it really ruins the whole thing. It should be autumnal, not wintry. Anyway, I have my fingers crossed.



This issue presents a special teen focus in addition to all the regular items. October is when many of the high schools offer Open Houses for the coming school year and when middle schoolers and their parents are checking out their options.

Be sure to see what schools are highlighted here inside. In addition we have a few articles on teen issues that will be certain to stir some emotional response. Anyone who has had a child with an eating issue will tell you how important it is to be on the lookout for signs of bulimia. Not always easy to spot, be sure to read this to become more informed. If detected early, kids can get the therapeutic help they need to break the control factor that is at the root of this syndrome and many others.

Another one is centered around abuse behavior. In this issue we highlight a New York City program called Day One and our resident writer Tammy Scileppi has interviewed their director, Michelle Paoletta. This organization provides a local voice

on the issue of dating violence and domestic violence among our youth. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month and we want to contribute to the awareness by entering the conversation and shedding light on this issue. Part II will be found in the November issue.

These are important topics for us to be addressing. They impact all of our lives in numerous ways. No one's family is immune. Regardless of income, strata or education level, the human conditions remain prevalent. Adolescence is a tough time and it takes very determined parents to talk tough topics with their kids. Our writer Christina Katz addresses this in her tips for talking to your tweens and teens. We can all use as much advice and help as possible. Pressures are out there for our kids that we don't even know about. Every generation presents its own new elements of stress. As parents we

must be trying to do our best and researching and listening for what the new signs are that signal trouble.

There's so much to be aware of. It's hard to imagine when you hold that new baby in your arms what a myriad of issues your will be dealing with in the years ahead. With no classes or degrees to prepare us or back us up, we take on this role and hopefully find support, information and intelligence in our quest to raise healthy and happy adults.

We hope very much that our Award winning editorial helps. That's our goal.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# Arts education for every child

How ProjectArt opens doors to those in need

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**C**olumbia University's Teachers College is teaming with arts organization ProjectArt to bring free arts education to students in underserved communities.

The partnership allows for graduate students in the college's Art and Art Education program (a total of 24 teachers in training) to teach visual arts classes to school-age children (ages 4 to 17) in a number of the New York City's public libraries.

Not only will Teachers College's students aid ProjectArt, but the college itself will offer training for all teaching artists working with the organization. The college will also spearhead developing a form of assessment to measure the impact of ProjectArt's services. This partnership will boost the efforts of Pro-

jectArt to offer cost-effective programming in its six partner libraries in Harlem, the south Bronx, central Brooklyn, and Queens.

I spoke to ProjectArt founder Adarsh Alphons to learn more about his organization, who it serves, and how to get kids involved in a program such as this.

**Shnieka Johnson:** What prompted the founding of ProjectArt?

**Adarsh Alphons:** In 2011, with little more than a bag full of art supplies and borrowed office space in Harlem, I began ProjectArt. There was one goal and one goal only: to put paintbrushes in the hands of as many children [as possible] that don't have adequate access to arts education.

Soon, friends became teachers, parents became volunteers, and kids became students. Over the last three

years, with the help of hundreds of people who have donated their time, money, and resources, ProjectArt has created a model of change that can confront the national arts education crisis, and impact youth on a large scale while keeping our costs low. The resulting model is infinitely scalable, while spurring excitement at one of our nation's oldest institutions — its libraries.

One of the incredible things about this journey has been the inspiring and generous people that ProjectArt has had the good fortune of working with. Having started with very little, ProjectArt has been lucky to have met [these volunteers] and is continually surprised by the generosity of others.

**SJ:** What is the demographic of the children involved?

**AA:** ProjectArt's participants are at-risk inner city youth ages 4 to 17 years old. We hold our programs in low socioeconomic-status neighborhoods with a high, discernible need for free after-school programs, during youth's most vulnerable hours, 3 to 6 pm. We target this specific population because of the extensive research that has been done demonstrating the positive impact arts education has on the development of socioeconomically disadvantaged youth.

**SJ:** How did the partnership with



ProjectArt brings arts education to students' classrooms.

the public libraries come to fruition?

**AA:** Since 2008, public libraries in New York City have faced a cumulative budget cut of \$68 million, which has directly affected the programming available to its communities, which has contributed to the library's inability to appeal to a wider audience. ProjectArt realized that these "failing institutions" would be the perfect place to offer our free, high-quality art classes — thus keeping our costs low and revitalizing these historic institutions with the classes that they desperately need in order to stay relevant within today's changing society.

Our pilot programming in conjunction with a library institution was first realized in 2013 as ProjectArt [when we] partnered with the Hamilton Grange Library in West Harlem.

**SJ:** What boroughs do you currently offer programming in?

**AA:** ProjectArt currently operates in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. By the end of the 2015 calendar year, ProjectArt will be operating out of 20 libraries throughout all five boroughs.

**SJ:** Is there a set curriculum or do the teaching artists design their own?

**AA:** ProjectArt does not have a set curriculum but rather includes art history surveys that are context-led to reflect the cultural sensitivities of the communities we serve. We strive to recognize and respond to the unique makeup of the communities in which we teach and therefore our teachers design their own curriculums, so that they can tailor lessons to their classes'

needs. This could mean anything from incorporating lessons on local folk culture to projects that give students the opportunity to share traditions with their classmates.

**SJ:** How often is the children's work exhibited?

**AA:** We believe that sharing children's art with society is an integral part of the child's growth as creative achievers. Furthermore, we believe that these artists deserve recognition for their work and the opportunity to develop insight about the artistic community. With the help of galleries, businesses, interior designers, and developers, our students' work is showcased three times a year, at the conclusion of each semester — spring, summer, and fall in highly visible and well-known art galleries in Chelsea. Additionally, at the conclusion of the gallery show, our students exhibit their artwork in library exhibitions where their work is shared and celebrated within the student's own community.

**SJ:** How can parents get their children involved?

**AA:** Parents can register their children by filling out our registration form at either the library branches or by contacting Tadia Lynch, ProjectArt's Head of Programs. Tadia can be reached at [tadia@projectart.org](mailto:tadia@projectart.org) or (212) 256-1947.

Visit [www.projectart.org](http://www.projectart.org) or [www.tc.columbia.edu](http://www.tc.columbia.edu).

*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](http://www.shniekajohnson.com).*

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# Telling their stories

How Day One helps teens trapped in dangerous relationships

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**E**very October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month is observed to shed light on a devastating issue that has become widespread in our communities, here in New York and beyond, in a staggering way. So it's comforting to know that organizations such as Manhattan-based Day One, [www.dayoney.org](http://www.dayoney.org), are there to help young people who are experiencing the negative effects of unhealthy, abusive dating relationships.

More than 30,000 city youth have been educated about domestic violence since Day One's launch in 2003 and are feeling more empowered, thanks to the organization's multifaceted resources and leadership programs and 6,000-plus trained professionals, who provide supportive, non-judgmental guidance.

Abusive behavior is all about control; it can be physical, verbal and emotional, or sexual. Silence, isolation, and shame are the hallmarks of this abuse.

Day One Program Director and social worker Michele Paoella appeared on WNYC's Brian Lehrer Show on Sept. 17 with three young

women who survived abuse at the hands of their partners and chose to share their stories.

"Crushed: Teens and Dating Abuse," a series of audio stories, explores the much-asked question, "Why do they stay?" It provides rare and intimate insight into a largely unknown phenomenon, revealing how silence, power, and control are dynamics that can permeate relationships, even when the partners don't live together; how such relationships can affect everything from self-esteem to friendships to school performance; and how parents and guardians rarely know how to talk about the distinction between healthy and abusive relationships.

To produce the series, WNYC's Radio Rookies program — a New York Public Radio initiative that provides teenagers with the tools and training to create radio stories about themselves, their communities, and their world — partnered with Day One to help illuminate the pressing issue of teen dating abuse and take listeners behind the scenes. Both Paoella and survivor Destiny Mabry — who has become an advocate on the issue — discussed how parents can spot the signs of teen dating

abuse and help prepare their kids for healthy relationships.

Mabry, 25, grew up in the Bronx and now lives in Harlem. She was one of the one in three city teens who report being verbally and emotionally abused by a romantic partner. The abuse left her depressed, and by the time she was in her early 20s, she was in counseling to heal from the relationship. Then in January 2014, Destiny's older sister, Kia, and her 1- and 3-year-old niece and nephew were murdered by her brother-in-law. In her story she interviews her mother and her grandmother, as she seeks to understand the cycles of abuse that go, "as far back as we can call it." She considers speaking out about abuse an important part of her healing.

Paoella, who had just returned from taping the show on Sept. 17, felt it was important to talk about Day One's services and the too-prevalent teen violence issue affecting the city's youth.

**Tammy Scileppi:** I understand that today's story centered around domestic violence and what one of your Youth Voices Network members, Destiny, went through.

**Michele Paoella:** Destiny, the young person who was interviewed with me, produced a Radio Rookies piece for this series. [You can see the entire interview from the Brian Lehrer show at: <http://www.wnyc.org/story/abusive-relationship-meets-fatal-end>.]

Youth Voices Network is an advocacy group of survivors that we work with. They do public speaking events, etc. Right now, they're hosting an art contest for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

**TS:** Discuss how Day One helps young people.

**MP:** We provide prevention education workshops to middle and high school students, as well as direct services to survivors of dating and intimate partner abuse, ages 24 and under. Most of our clients are young



Destiny Mabry (left) was one New York City teen to report being verbally and emotionally abused by a romantic partner. (Above) Mabry and Day One Program Director and social worker Michele Paoletta are interviewed on WNYC.

women, but we also work with young men and people in the LGBT community that have experienced or are experiencing abuse. The services we provide to survivors include free and confidential legal and counseling services.

One client was 15 and came in after her girlfriend viciously assaulted her; her school told her about our services. It had been going on for about one-and-a-half years. In the first two sessions, we created a detailed safety plan. She didn't want to call the police, so I went with her to family court and helped her petition for an order of protection.

I also helped her apply for a school safety transfer, since her girlfriend went to her school and was stalking

and threatening her, impacting her ability to participate meaningfully in school. After her physical safety had been established, she decided she wanted to join a support group and also started seeing me for counseling individually, because she was experiencing some symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and also felt very isolated from friends and family, and like no one understood her experience.

We worked together for about six months in counseling, overall. At the end of that time, she had transferred schools, felt safe, said she felt connected to the other survivors in the group, and her post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms had decreased.

Young people in our services are

welcomed and encouraged to include parents and guardians if they choose to.

**TS:** I read that Day One has become the primary voice of expertise in New York City on the issue of dating abuse and domestic violence among youth. Please explain.

**MP:** We work with all five boroughs and provide services that range from crisis intervention to long-term counseling. We're doing a lot of training with the NYPD right now to make sure their school safety agents and domestic violence officers are aware of the issue.

Many young people that we work with are referred to us by district attorneys, the police, school personnel, family members or friends,

and child protective service workers after they have experienced violence. Some of them want to get an order of protection, or want legal support for any number of abuse related issues, such as custody and visitation, sexual assault on campus, or immigration-related cases when abuse has been present. Others just want individual or support group counseling or assistance trying to find safe housing.

The cases are always driven by the survivor themselves. We work with young people up to age 24 and have no minimum age range; the youngest who's ever come through our doors is 13.

*Look for Part 2 of this important topic, which will include the other survivors' stories and more information about teens and dating abuse, in the November issue of New York Parenting.*

*Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer-journalist and parent, and a regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City's movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for this mother of two bright and talented sons. Scileppi's work has appeared in a variety of media outlets. She has also written book cover copy for Simon and Schuster.*



# Mistakes happen

How to help  
your child  
overcome the  
fear of failure

BY HELEN NIEVES

**H**as your child ever been afraid of failing at something that he never tried it at all? Does your child make excuses in order to not engage in practices? Fear of failure, or atychiphobia, is an irrational fear that will hold a person back in life.

He will refuse to do anything, because he is not sure he will succeed. Your child may want to engage in an

activity, but the fear is so great that he would rather avoid it in order to prevent symptoms of anxiety or depression. The fear of failure is connected to self-worth, and your child will try to protect his worth by avoiding failure, and consequently, he will miss out on opportunities. This fear will cause him to not put forth enough effort or give up before he even had the chance to try. Children fall into four categories when dealing with failure:

**Students who love learning and see failure as a way to learn from it.** They do not believe failure diminishes their self-worth.

**Students who over-strive and avoid failure by knowing they will succeed.** They may engage in activities where they know positive outcomes will be the result. Their success is motivated by fear that they will not be perfect or succeed. Over-strivers usually doubt their abilities.

This fear will cause your child to not put forth enough effort or give up before he even had the chance to try. Consequently, he will miss out on opportunities.

**Students who accept failure and believe that their failure is due to having little to no ability.** They give up on succeeding, and their self-worth is low. If they do succeed at something, they do not believe they had the ability to succeed at it, but rather believe that their success was outside their control.

**Students who do not expect to succeed and avoid activities.** They believe they have low ability and low worth when they try at something but fail. They may procrastinate or make excuses in order to avoid failure that is due to lack of ability. These children have internalized failure. Avoiding failure, to them, is impossible.

### What parents can do

Parents of a child with fear of failure should try to convince their child to believe in himself. They need to teach their child that mistakes are part of life and that it is okay to fail. Teaching their child to learn from failure rather than allowing the fear to prevent him from engaging in activities is important. Here are some tips you can try to encourage your child to take risks:

**Help your child to look at failure as a learning experience.** Teach your child to embrace failure and understand that mistakes help him to do better next time. If your child does not make mistakes, he will not learn or improve. Remember that failure or making mistakes gives him an opportunity to do things better and to feel more inspired. Help him seek to fail doing things that he normally won't do. Your child will learn a valuable lesson and realize that failing is not a bad thing. Give him an example of someone who has failed before they succeeded at something.

### Emphasize effort over ability.

Provide your child with praise and positive feedback that focuses on effort. If you see that your child studied for days and he failed a test, do not get angry at him. Instead, praise him for the effort and for trying. This kind of feedback can motivate him, and he can believe that he can succeed. If a parent reprimands him for failing or tells him to try harder, this can cause him to doubt his abilities and not try.

**Build a positive relationship with your child.** Your child needs to look at you as a positive role model. Help your child by looking at the mistake and evaluating what went wrong and what he can do differently next time. Have your child watch how you respond to failure. Share your disappointments with your child and what you learned from the situation. You can also read stories to your child about people he admires and how they learned to cope with failure.

**Use humor.** Laugh at the mistakes you make in front of your child. You do not want to curse or yell, because by doing so, you are setting an example that mistakes are bad and should not be made. Just laugh and have fun. Mistakes happen, right? It is not the end of the world! So teach that to your child!

It is helpful for your child to experience failure and learn from it at a young age rather than when he is in high school, when the stakes are much higher. Have your child gradually face his fear of failure. Slowly "expose" your child to making mistakes. Play games and randomly let him win and lose. Model positive attitude and play often enough, so your child can realize that it is okay to lose.

It is important to let your child do his personal best. In life, he will fail and he will succeed. Failing is a part of life, but we need to teach our children how to cope with failure and view it as an opportunity for growth.

*Helen Nieves is a licensed mental health counselor, attention-deficit consultant specialist, and certified anger management specialist. She has a private practice in Brooklyn and works with adults and children with various emotional and behavioral issues. She is an instructor at the American Institute of Health Care Professionals. For more, visit [www.counselingadhd.com](http://www.counselingadhd.com).*

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# The spirit of Halloween

Holiday fun  
with my  
daughter —  
and dog!

## CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

Jessie, my 10-year-old daughter, loves to be in charge of decorating for holidays.

“I want to decorate all by myself” is something I’ve heard many times. She enjoys decorating for Christmas best, because we have lots of boxes filled with Christmas ornaments, lights, etc. However, whether she has many boxes or only one, Jessie has fun and makes the most of her decorating supplies.

On a beautiful Saturday morning three weeks before Halloween, I decided to wash my wife’s van. My wife Mattie was returning from a business trip that night, so I thought it would be a nice welcome-home surprise. Jessie likes to help wash cars and anything — or anyone — else the hose will reach.

When Jessie helps wash the family vehicles, she prefers rinsing over scrubbing. As I vacuumed the van’s interior, Jessie watered the watermelon plants, air, and grass. Since she likes to be in charge of the water hose, the new nozzle added to the excitement. Of course, Jessie had to try all the settings, clicking from one to the next by twisting the plastic nozzle head to achieve a spray, jet, or various other configurations of water flow.

Jessie is a lot like her mom. Mattie’s younger brother bestowed upon her the title “Dictator of the Bathroom” when they were growing up together in a one-bathroom house. Jessie is apparently striving to be “Dictator of the Water Hose.”

During a snack break, I asked if Jessie would like to decorate for Halloween before her mom got home. She enthusiastically responded, “Yay! May I do it all myself?” I retrieved the box marked “Halloween” from the garage, then left my experienced decorator in charge while I finished the car. Back outside, I enjoyed my freedom to squirt the hose whenever I wanted.

About 30 minutes later, I walked in to Halloween. Jessie had taped a foam ghost to my computer. She hung spider webs from the light above my desk. Two stuffed animals, a white ghost and a black cat, peeked out from under the comforter in the master bedroom. If they didn’t scare Mattie, the spider attached to the toilet tank would.

When I walked into the living room, I found Jessie at the cof-

fee table, crayon in-hand. She had printed Halloween-themed coloring pages from the computer as she felt the walls needed a little more color.

Jessie and I picked up Mattie a few hours later. I thought we’d surprise her with the clean car and Halloween decorations. Jessie had a different plan. She greeted her mom with a hug and promptly gave her a detailed report.

We had a nice evening, which included Jessie dressing Sadie, our dog, in her Halloween costume. Jessie decided to be a cat and dress Sadie as a mouse. Sadie didn’t mind the gray T-shirt, but I can’t say she enjoyed the gray sock pulled over her tail.

Mattie, tired from her trip, went to bed early. I allowed Jessie to stay up past her bedtime to watch a little college football. My two favorite teams lost, one on a last-second field goal. As I crawled into bed, disappointed over the loss, I landed on something. I reached behind me and pulled a ghost and black cat out from under my back. My frown changed to a smile.

I smiled again a few weeks later when a cat, a mouse, and a 6-foot-5 block of moldy cheese greeted trick-or-treaters on our front porch. The cat, who had painted my face and selected my cheese-colored shirt, wore a big grin, too. As for the mouse, she was the cat’s best friend.

Jessie already has this year’s costumes planned. Recently, Mattie purchased a swimsuit and removed the foam pads from the top. Jessie held each pad to my chest and said, “This year, we’re going to be cheerleaders.”

Here’s my response, Jessie, in the form of a cheer: “Give me an N. Give me an O. Give me a W-A-Y. What’s that spell? NO WAY! Louder now, NO WAY!”

No matter what costume I wear, or how much my face gets painted, I’m confident we’ll have another wonderful Halloween ... with special decorations. And if our house gets egged, I only need to call Jessie and her trusty water hose.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments. Rah-rah! Happy Halloween!

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



Family dog Sadie in her mouse costume.

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# Could this be bulimia?

## Seven signs you don't want to miss

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

Jennifer had noticed a recent change in her daughter Kylie since she had turned 13. Kylie was once a rambunctious child, who loved rough-and-tumble games with her two big brothers and was seldom afraid to speak her mind. But lately, Kylie had become more withdrawn and touchy. Jennifer noticed that she was less and less interested in interacting with her brothers, and she did not bounce back from their little-sister taunts and teases as easily as she once had.

Kylie was reading a lot of articles online about dieting and fasting, and once, Jennifer had even found a package insert for over-the-counter diet pills in Kylie's bedroom trash can. Kylie was also spending less time with her childhood friends and more time staying home watching sitcom reruns on TV.

Jennifer was concerned, but she felt that Kylie was pushing her away. Should Jennifer follow conventional wisdom that advises parents to give teens space and respect their desire for more independence? Or should Jennifer pay closer attention

to Kylie's day-to-day behaviors, especially related to eating and dieting?

If you know the facts about an eating disorder called bulimia nervosa, then you know that Jennifer should calmly and quietly pay closer attention to Kylie's behavior around eating and dieting. Studies indicate that by their first year of college, 4.5 to 18 percent of women and 0.4 percent of men have a history of bulimia.

In the United States, five to 10 million adolescent girls and women struggle with eating disorders and borderline eating conditions. According to The Center For Mental Health Services, 90 percent of those who have eating disorders are women between the ages of 12 and 25.

Boys and young men are also at risk for eating disorders. And eating disorders in boys and men, even if less frequent, may be on the rise. Especially at risk, studies say, are boys on competitive sports teams, where members are under pressure to meet specific weights or stay physically fit, and also boys who are hypersensitive about physical appearance.

Bulimic behavior means binge eating and then attempting to rid the body of the food by purging (forcing yourself to throw up), by taking laxatives or diuretics, by fasting, or by compulsively exercising. Children who are overly concerned about their weight may take diet pills, smoke cigarettes, drink excessive amounts of diet soda, take stimulants, or try anything else that promises appetite suppression or rapid weight loss.

If you are wondering if your child is overly focused on body image and

weight, and might be at risk for bulimia nervosa, watch for these seven signals:

**Large amounts of foods consumed in short amounts of time.** Food disappears suddenly from your kitchen or pantry. Packaging and wrappers appear in indoor or outdoor trash and recycling containers without your awareness that food was eaten. You find food packaging or wrappers in funny places, such as in bedroom closets or hidden under or behind furniture after you've noticed food missing.

**Purging behaviors.** Your child retreats to a remote bathroom right after meals. You discover diet pills in your daughter's purse or diuretics in your son's sports bag. You find evidence of vomiting in the bathroom although no one in the house is sick. You notice bloodshot eyes or broken blood vessels in your child's face shortly after mealtime.

**A fascination with fasting.** You notice your child not eating for a day or even days at a time, possibly engaging in extreme behaviors like drinking large amounts of water or diet soda to suppress appetite. Your child exhibits dizziness or lightheadedness from not eating.

**Compulsive exercising.** Your child often exercises right after eating, perhaps even early in the morning or late at night. You notice that periods of intense exercise come in fits and spurts rather than maintained sensibly over time. You notice a connection between the reward of food and the punishment of exercise afterwards.

**Secretiveness around eating**

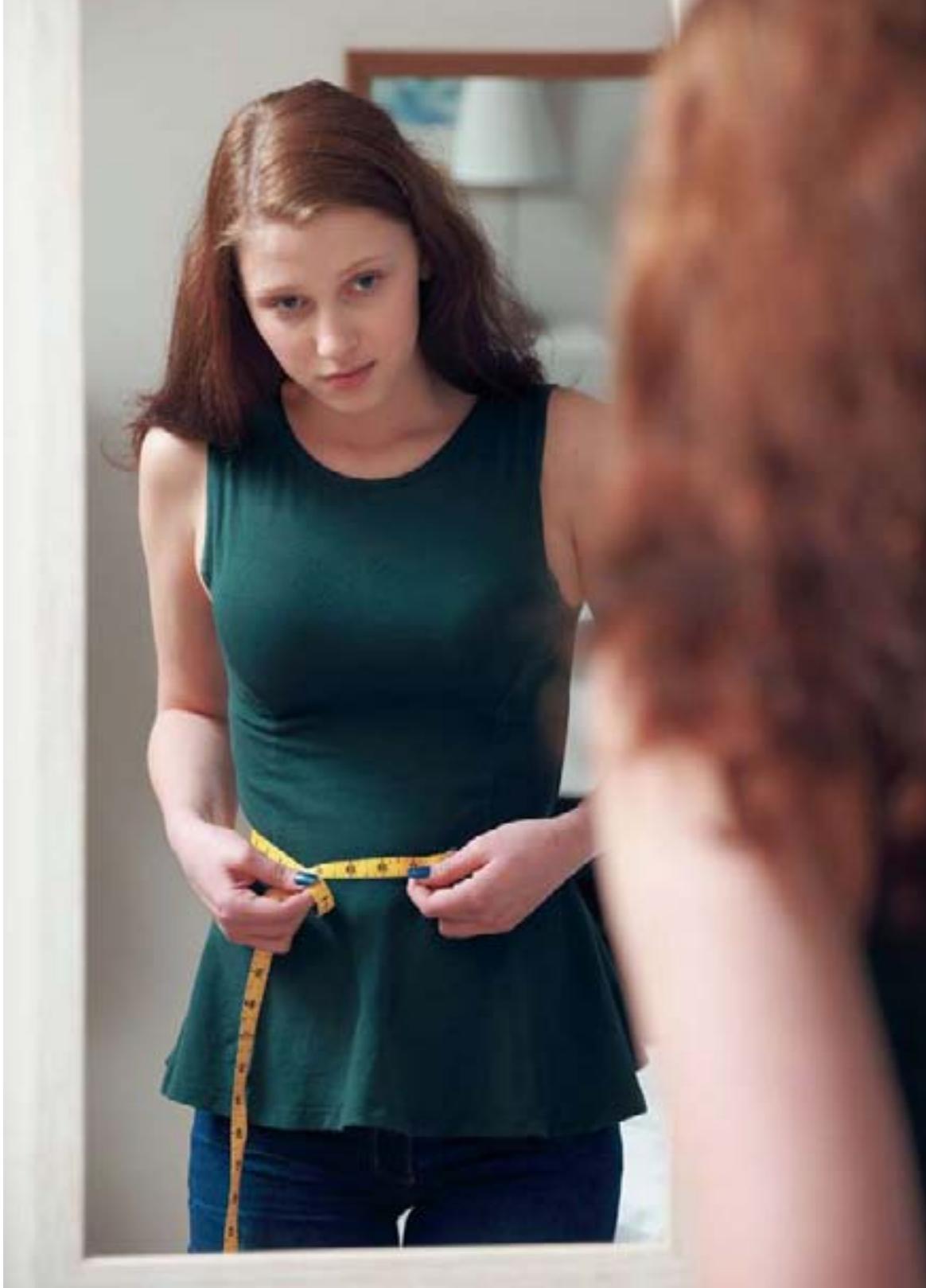
### Online resources that can help

Helpguide: [http://www.helpguide.org/mental/bulimia\\_signs\\_symptoms\\_causes\\_treatment.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/bulimia_signs_symptoms_causes_treatment.htm)

National Eating Disorders Association: <http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/bulimia-nervosa>

Office On Women's Health: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/bulimia-nervosa.html>

National Institutes Of Health: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000341.htm>



**and food.** You may find multiple candy bar wrappers in an outdoor trash container. You might hear your daughter awake at night rooting around in the kitchen cabinets. You notice that an ice cream container that was almost full yesterday is now almost empty.

**Overeating.** You suspect your child is eating emotionally or anxiously. He has a group of buddies who like to all “pig out” together after intense sports competitions.

You wonder how your child seems to be eating so much without gaining weight. You notice a pattern of bursts of overeating that did not exist before.

**Mood changes and addictive behaviors.** Does your child seem anxious, depressed, or excessively moody lately? Sometimes eating disorders and mood disorders go hand-and-hand, and those who suffer from eating disorders may also be at higher risk for addictions. If a typi-

cally cheery child suddenly turns sour and becomes distant and depressed along with several of these other signs, get ready to offer help.

There is often nothing visible on the surface that will tip you off to an eating disorder, so you may need to become a detective to determine whether or not your child is suffering from one. A bulimic child may work hard to keep up appearances. She may fall into a normal category of weight for her age, take care with

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There is often nothing visible on the surface that will tip you off to an eating disorder, so you may need to become a detective to determine whether or not your child is suffering from one.

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her appearance, and put a smile on her face to cover up behaviors she does not want you to notice. But pay attention, because by the time you notice concrete physical signs, like discolored teeth or calluses on fingers, the disorder will already be in advanced stages.

The best thing that can happen for a child with an eating disorder is early intervention and treatment, which is why it's important to try and catch patterns of bulimic behavior as soon as possible. Remember that eating disorders are painful and cause the sufferer to feel acute shame. If your child needs help, you want to be ready to provide it calmly and supportively without making a big fuss or taking the situation personally.

Do not try to treat eating disorders at home. Seek professional help. Do some homework and set up professional resources before you approach your child, so you can be ready to offer a course of helpful action. Contact your family doctor ahead of time, and get the name of specialists in your area. Keep in mind that the best choice for a child feeling vulnerable and ashamed may be to seek out a treatment professional of the same gender with a gentle manner.

Think of an eating disorder as a cry for help rather than a permanent condition. With early intervention and treatment, and love and support from family and friends, Kylie has a good chance of making a full recovery. Then she and Jennifer and the whole family can feel close once again.

*Author and freelance journalist Christina Katz would like to live in a world without eating disorders, so she wrote this article to help parents notice signals they might otherwise miss. Her latest book is “The Art of Making Time for Yourself, A Collection of Advice for Moms.”*

# Ghoulish gatherings

How to create  
a Halloween  
celebration to  
remember

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

I was a witch every Oct. 31 throughout elementary school. My costumes got increasingly elaborate, and by the fifth grade, I was sculpting my own witch noses. I was fascinated with anything macabre, so Halloween night was something I started looking forward to months ahead of time. In high school, I would dress up to take my little sister from door to door. Sometimes I would talk a friend into creating a haunted house for the neighborhood kids.

Halloween never “got out of my blood.” It takes several days to decorate our typical abode into a haunted

mansion that would rival the spook-o-meter of Dracula’s castle. Trick-or-treaters are never surprised when a vampire or other specter opens the door to greet them.

My family wanted to share our passion for all things Halloween with more friends and family. Our annual celebration began as a simple gathering of like-minded Halloween fanatics who would always stop at Haskell’s Haunted Mansion after a night of trick-or-treating to take photos together, grab a cookie, and regale each other about the excitement of the evening.

However, the party began to morph into something much more elaborate, with themes, costume contests, and engaging party games. Soon, we were hosting parties for 50 to 60 friends and neighbors. Once the kids were too old to trick-or-treat, the haunted bash still provided some much-needed fun for our teenagers — not to mention their parents!

Halloween parties are a great way for the generations to bond and enjoy some spooky fun together. There is something about becoming someone — or something — else or that allows folks to let loose and find their inner child. So, get into the spirit of the season and ask your kids to assist with the preparations.

## Themes

In the beginning, our party was a general celebration, but we quickly started to introduce themes, which increased the enthusiasm tenfold.

Incorporate your theme into all aspects of the party planning, including

the food, decorations, and invitations. For instance, framed portraits of our kids were turned into evil clowns or dancing werewolves, and activities were also modified to match the theme. We never required guests to dress in theme, but folks usually embraced the idea. So, plan to have a costume prize for “Best in Theme.”

Think outside of the box. Here are some themes we used over the years:

- Scary circus (dressing up as a circus character with a creepy twist).
- Couple and family costumes (Adams Family, Santa and Mrs. Claus, Thing 1 & 2, etc.).
- Dead rock stars.
- “Walking Dead” decades (creatures of the night from ’20s, ’80s, etc.).

## Food and table settings

It’s all about the food, and a Halloween party encourages exceptional creativity. Label typical foods with creepy descriptions, such as werewolf eyeballs (meatballs) or barbecued bat wings (chicken wings). Print custom labels for soda and juice bottles (i.e. witches brew or skeleton juice). You can find these online or ask your kids to create some.

Of course, for the creative baker or cook, transforming your treats and snacks into ghoulish concoctions is always fun. We’ve had eyeball cupcakes, a graveyard cake, chilling punch with a floating frozen hand, pretzel candy bones, and worm-infested Jell-O, to name a few.

Convert table settings and sideboards into spine-tingling displays that capture the spirit and theme of the party. Rather than a store-bought Halloween tablecloth, stretch and tear fabric gauze over a plain, black linen or plastic tablecloth for a natural effect. If more



gore is desired, splatter red food coloring (or fake blood) on the gauze. Place plastic spider rings on your candlesticks and cobwebs on the backs of chairs. Carve out miniature pumpkins to use as dip bowls and create freaky faces by pinning cut veggies for the facial features. There is no limit to what you can do with the goodies and table settings to enhance your Halloween vibe.

For more Halloween table setting ideas visit: <http://www.hgtv.com/design/make-and-celebrate/entertaining/spooky-halloween-table-settings-and-decorations-pictures>

### Games and contests

Halloween Majority Rules became one of our most popular games, enjoyed by all age groups. Divide guests into teams of three to four. To make things more interesting, create teams of teens vs. adults or boys vs. girls. The hostess reads a question, such as, "What is the most common facial or head accessory worn on Halloween?" Each team has one minute to come up with an answer together. Answers and team names are written on slips of paper and collected by the hostess to be read to the entire group. All teams who guessed the "most common" answer receive one point. We've also played Halloween charades, Halloween trivia, Halloween bingo, and guess the famous scary movie line or movie score.

We've found that holding costume contests inspires folks to find their creative gene. Surprisingly, many of the parents gave the younger crowd a run for their money in the "most creative costume" category. Our contests inspired mini parades. Contestants in the various categories would parade through the house and gather at a location so guests could vote for their favorites. Ties are broken by the host family.

Prize ideas:

- Craft store frame labeled "Best in Theme."
- Halloween dish towels for "Best Adult Female."
- Movie coupons and a tin of popcorn for "Best Teen Costume."

- Ghoulish back scratcher for "Best Adult Male."

### Music

There are numerous Halloween mixes available with favorite soundtracks from scary movies or typical Halloween song titles, such as Michael Jackson's "Thriller." Another option: Eerie classical tunes, such as Johann Sebastian Bach's "Toccatina and Fugue in D minor."

However, it's more fun to make your own soundtrack. Your kids will love this! Record ghostly sounds and simulate deadly storms, or ask your children to narrate spooky stories.

### Favors

Guests love to have something to take home. If you choose to hand out favors, think of something interesting and affordable (preferably handmade by you and your kids). Here are some options:

- Individually wrapped iced sugar cookies with the year or theme.
- Bookmarks with party date or theme and adorned with dangling broom or ghost.
- Chocolate lollipops (grave-stone, pumpkin, skull, etc.).
- Glow bracelets and rings.
- Popcorn or trail mix hands (stuffed in transparent, plastic gloves with a candy corn for nails).
- Travel-size hand sanitizers with handmade Halloween labels.

### For more chilling inspiration

There are a multitude of ideas on Pinterest, but the following URLs can help to jump-start the brainstorming process:

- Interesting snack and dessert options: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/holidays-and-parties/packages/halloween.html>
- Game suggestions for all ages: <http://www.partygameideas.com/halloween-games/games-list.php>
- General tips, decorations, costume ideas, etc.: <http://www.celebrations.com/c/halloween-party-ideas/all>
- Family theme costumes: <http://www.today.com/news/19-cutest-family-theme-costumes-halloween-2D80189605>



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## BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

# Four ways to curb naughty behavior

**Y**our child is amazing and unique. When you see him clean up or put his dish in the sink — without a reminder — you believe that every cell in his body is pure love.

Then there are the other moments. Last week, he pulled all the boxes off the shelf at CVS after biting his friend at the playground, and if that wasn't enough, today he declares, in front of his teacher, that he doesn't have to listen to you. Or he looks right at you as he pours his milk on his sister.

It's not the most flattering behavior, is it?

What to do?

You know that keeping your child within reach at all times is exhausting.

Not leaving the house is another option, but then, who will do the errands?

You can make excuses for the bad behavior: He's tired. Hungry. Coming down with something.

I've got some unfortunate news: When you make excuses or completely avoid a challenging situation, you do your child a disservice.

That means that the ultimate solution is to address the behavior.

I've seen children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder sit and focus on his homework, kids with oppositional defiant disorder listen to every direction given, and kiddos with autism navigate overwhelming social situations. If these kids can be successful, then so can your child.

The solution on how to make this happen comes in four parts:

**Stop making excuses for your small beings.** They are capable of learning anything, if you teach them in the right way. If you allow the problem behavior to be okay, then they learn that it is okay, and more likely, the behavior will happen again in the future. Your language alone can change this.

**Look realistically at the challenging behavior.** Decide if it really needs



to change. If it does, great! Then take one step towards the desired behavior and start celebrating the small progress your child makes. If it does not need to change, then stop commenting on it, and let it happen.

**Teach your children rather than punish them.** When problem behavior props up, we often react with our own frustration. Problem behavior is often repeated, so you may be able to predict when it is coming. Be proactive and get yourself ready to teach your child, rather than yell once he misbehaves.

**Create teaching opportunities.** We generally avoid things that we do not enjoy, so we often do not put children in situations that will be chal-

lenging. The best way to get them to practice is to put your child in situations that are mildly difficult and use small steps to build up successes!

I'll be your cheerleader here: Stop making excuses and start putting in the hard work to make behavior change happen!

For more help with behavior, please visit my page made exclusively for NY Parenting readers at: [bit.ly/vid-nyp](http://bit.ly/vid-nyp).

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



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# Kids & vitamins

Part two of  
our look at  
the great  
supplement  
debate

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**J**ustin Noble, a certified nutrition coach, co-creator of the fun wellness book series for kids, “My Body Village,” and subject of last month’s “The great vitamin debate,” sat down with New York Parenting to discuss the importance of vitamins and balanced meals and the inspiration for his book series.

**Tammy Scileppi:** What are some helpful tips about multivitamins that parents should know?

**Justin Noble:** First and foremost, you should always do your best to meet all of your child’s nutrition requirements from food. Taking a multivitamin will never make up for having a poor diet. A diet rich in a variety of whole, unprocessed, natural foods is the ideal place to get the wide array of nutrients your child’s growing body requires.

The problem is that it can be a

challenge getting your child to consume a nice variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats. A lot of kids are very picky eaters. For some children, getting them to try new foods can be like pulling teeth — and they need those teeth to eat those Brussels sprouts!

**TS:** What do you recommend for kids who have limited food choices or weight issues?

**JN:** It’s tricky when there is a food desert situation, and there are limited food choices. In these situations, the best approach is to do your best to eat as much whole, natural foods as possible and make up the difference with supplements. In a city like New York, there are food deserts, but if you make the effort to hop on a train and travel just a few stops away, you will find access to healthy food options. In all of the boroughs, there are so many good grocery stores, bodegas, and farmers’ markets, that there is no excuse

for not eating well on any budget.

For issues with weight, I would recommend finding a nutrition coach in your area. Each situation is unique and requires a tailor-made approach. There is a normal trajectory for a child’s growth, but there are always exceptions. Some children simply develop faster or slower than others, so sometimes what is perceived as a nutrition issue is simply a child who is developing outside the norm. This would need to be closely monitored, in case there is a bigger health issue at play.

For weight issues that are a result of lifestyle choices, you first need to get a nutrition evaluation, set goals, develop a plan for reaching those goals, and then monitor progress and make adjustments.

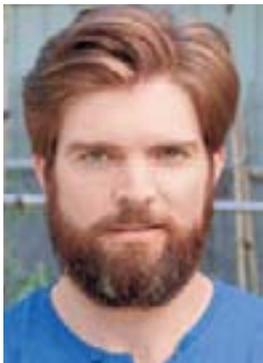
**TS:** What about picky eaters?

**JN:** When you have a picky eater, I certainly believe vitamins are an excellent insurance policy. There

are several nutrients a growing child needs to be healthy and develop properly. If your child isn't eating a variety of natural whole foods, then they aren't getting the nutrients their body needs. They need to get them somewhere. That's where a vitamin comes in.

I strongly believe you shouldn't give up on trying to get a picky eater to eat new foods. The best way to get them to try new things is to get them involved in the process.

When you are at the grocery store, have them help you select your fruits and vegetables. Have them smell, feel, listen to, and really look at the produce you are wanting to purchase.



Author Justin Noble

Once you get their other senses involved, they'll be interested in discovering that fifth sense of taste. Have them help you prepare meals. They'll be much more interested in trying something they helped to create. Make eating exciting to them instead of just something they have to do before they can get back to playing.

**TS:** What fueled the idea for your "My Body Village" book series for kids? How does it benefit families?

**JN:** As a child, I had severe asthma and allergies. Whenever I would have a bad asthma attack, I would get very upset, and ask my mom, "Why do I have to go through this, and why does this only happen to me?" When I was about 7 years old, my parents gave me a book about asthma. The book explained what caused asthma and told me exactly what was happening inside my body. The things I learned from that book, I discovered, made coping with my asthma much easier.

Ever since childhood, the idea of books related to helping children understand their bodies and their own health has been an idea in the back of my head. Years later, as an adult, when I found myself in the vitamin section of my local drug store, I was hit with another idea. Looking at the word "vitamin," I thought to myself, "If you replace the second "i" with an "e," you get "vitamen." Thus, the idea for "Artie's Party Featuring

the Vita-Men!" — the first book in the series — was born.

There are relatively few books available to parents and their children that deal with health, and none that approach health topics the way "My Body Village" does. Through the personification of the body's organs, we establish a relationship between a child and their body. The stomach or bladder is no longer some strange, mysterious thing inside of them, but a friend that plays a major role in their life. Once this relationship is established, it becomes easier to explain what is going on when the child doesn't feel well, or to explain why it's so important for them to eat vegetables.

It takes complicated answers to questions, like "Why should I take vitamins?" "Why does my stomach feel sick?" and "Why did I wet the bed?" and simplifies them. The series gives parents a way to explain the science behind it to their children in a fun and entertaining way.

**TS:** Describe those cool characters you and your wife, Le-Anne, conjured up.

**JN:** Each book features a different character. The characters are all personified organs who live in a village called Body. Occasionally, guest characters visit from outside the body. [For example,] [my] book "Nurse Vaccine" helps children prepare for shots and explains why we sometimes have to get shots, even though we are not sick.

**Le-Anne Noble:** [Developmental editor for the series] What [could be a] better way to spark creativity and curiosity than to take a scientific subject, like health and wellness, which is often thought of as boring, and then bring it to life — literally? Thinking outside the box and encouraging imagination is what "My Body Village" is all about. Healthy brain, healthy body, happy people.

*Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based parent and a regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City's movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for this mother of two bright and talented sons.*

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# Positively powerful role models

Survivors  
share their  
stories of  
strength and  
words of hope

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**A**cross New York City and beyond, breast cancer survivors are standing strong and very often winning the fight against a disease that has become far too prevalent, even among women in their 30s.

Thanks to ads and commercials sponsored by organizations like Susan G. Komen, women have become more enlightened about breast cancer and have come to understand the importance of yearly mammograms and regular self-exams.

## Alantheia Pena

Survivor Alantheia Pena is using her experience to help other moms battling breast cancer.

The Bronx grandmother's battle with breast cancer started in 2009, when she was a stay-at-home mom raising three girls. Her shocking diagnosis came after she found out that her two older daughters were pregnant. Suddenly, her life and her family's became super-challenging.

"But my partner was very supportive, and my entire family helped me with my kids and household chores; my mother cooked meals for me to

## Be proactive

Trust your gut instinct, if you suspect that something doesn't feel or look right (like a strange discharge or even some dimpling of the skin), talk to your doctor. Become your own health advocate and get that suspicious lump checked out as soon as possible. Early detection is key to surviving breast cancer!

You can learn about the four steps to breast cancer awareness here: [www.komennyc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=breasthealth\\_awareness](http://www.komennyc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=breasthealth_awareness).

make sure I was eating healthy," recalled Pena, who is now in her 50s.

It all started back in 2008 when she told her doctor that her breasts felt sore. Since her mammograms kept coming back negative, she said an entire year went by before she was sent for a sonogram and was told that since many African-American women have dense breasts, mammos don't always pick up lumps.

That was the case with Pena.

"As soon as the ultrasound techni-

cian saw my breast on the screen, I could tell by her expression that something was wrong," she recalled.

A mass was discovered deep in her left breast, and after five or six surgeries to clean it out, a mastectomy was performed. Then the battle continued when a spot was found in her right breast six months later. After that was cleaned out, she eventually lost part of that breast as well. Then both breasts were reconstructed. She was in the intensive care unit for a grueling month of pain.

Luckily, she never had chemotherapy or radiation, but said she took Tamoxifen, a prescription medication for treating advanced breast cancer in men and women, and early breast cancer in women.

"When I would come home after tests or surgeries, my kids were very clingy. I wouldn't let them see me in the hospital, hooked up with all that stuff, so we talked on the phone. But my partner was there all the time," she recalled.

It was a long and painful fight, both physically and emotionally.

"At home, I made sure not to show my girls how I was feeling, so they wouldn't get upset. I told them I would be fine. I made sure that I got all the support I needed outside, so my home life was peaceful, not stressful. I prayed a lot and meditated."

Despite another potentially devastating setback this September — Pena said she had just learned that a spot came up on a mammo in what was left of her right breast — the brave survivor still manages to hold on to hope. During our interview, her voice sounded calm and optimistic when she talked about her next six-month exam in February, and possibly needing another biopsy.

She knows that her daughters must get tested soon.

Despite her battle with breast can-

## Other ways to heal

Medical advice and treatment from your doctor should always be followed, but there are plenty of other ways in which you can help yourself heal.

Keep your family and friends close and your pets even closer. Dogs and cats have extrasensory perception — they can sense when you're not feeling well and may help speed up your healing journey.

Rest. Meditate, do yoga, and keep breathing when you're stressed

out, sad, or feeling fearful.

Change your diet. Eliminate sugar, which feeds cancer cells, and "the whites" — white bread, white rice, etc. Get a Nutribullet.

Try a holistic route. Ask your doctor about keeping your pH levels at alkaline, check out other holistic options, but stick with your doctor's treatment plan.

Start a journal or blog. Putting your thoughts and feelings on paper or a screen can help you sort through your emotions.

Try self-visualization. Close your eyes and imagine each cancer cell blowing up ... *kabloom!*

Repeat a mantra — and believe it. Think and say, "I'm healthy!" every day.

Remember to live in the moment. Enjoy the little things. Nobody knows what the future will bring.

Get plenty of hugs. Did you know that hugging raises dopamine levels in your brain?

Repeat every day.

# October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



(Above) Bronx breast cancer survivor and grandmother Alanthea Pena with Jayden and Nimyah. (Right) Pena was featured in a Susan G. Komen ad in *Ebony* Magazine.



cer, Pena is a striking and healthy-looking African-American woman. You can see strength and compassion for others in her beautiful gray eyes.

And she has become an advocate for breast cancer awareness, helping other women who are battling the illness, while raising families and dealing with extreme hardship.

In 2012, the survivor made a TV commercial for Susan G. Komen and she was interviewed about her experience in a special that aired on CBS: <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/komen-greater-nyc-race-for-the-cure>.

Her image has appeared numerous times on Susan G. Komen's campaign ads, gracing the pages of several magazines, including *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Country Cooking*, *Simplicity*, and *Cosmopolitan* — and in 2014 she appeared on a huge Susan G. Komen poster at LaGuardia Airport.

"Other women show their cleavage, I show my scar," says Pena, who loves to shop at Victoria's Secret. "It shows that I fought for my life; it's my battle scar."

The scar reminds her and others that you can be strong, fight the good fight, and win!

## Caryn Fernandez

A shocking Stage III breast cancer diagnosis turned a 40-something mother-of-two's life upside down. On that bitter cold afternoon in February 2011, an elderly woman who sat beside Caryn Fernandez at the treatment center seemed to feel her pain. Looking back, the three-year cancer survivor says she still recalls the stranger's soothing words and calm demeanor.

"If you believe in angels among us, that lady may have been one," she said.

Fernandez's battle started with a funny-feeling, pea-sized lump in her left breast that lit up like a Christmas light during a sonogram that followed a suspicious mammogram.

"I remember thinking: It was hard to believe how a little thing like that could change everything," said Fernandez. But it did, and a biopsy confirmed the worst. The aspiring artist knew she was facing the biggest challenge of her life and still recalls how the fear turned into rage, as she heard a voice in her head screaming, "Why me?"

She remembers how the dreary forecast that winter matched her mood. And seemingly endless days marked by gray skies made her feel hopeless and sad. She said she had a feeling of general malaise that worsened as she endured numerous chemotherapy treatments that made her feel weak and nauseous.

No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't shake that gloom-and-doom feeling.

"I was walking around like a zombie with a wrenching emotional ache in the pit of my stomach. But one day, I decided I'd had enough; the negativity had to stop! Hiding under the covers wasn't doing me any good."

Looking back, Fernandez remembers that just 24 hours after her diagnosis, her perspective about life made an 180-degree turn. Things that she had perceived as terrible before she got sick no longer carried much weight in light of her new situation. And her marriage grew stronger. She and her husband Manny forgot about all the stuff they had bickered about just days before.

"We refer to that time as our former lives," she said. "Suddenly, all the pettiness didn't matter anymore. I had to focus on healing and getting better. I was a mess, but Manny was my rock."

And they both learned how to pick their battles with the kids.

Their son Luke (then 12) and daughter Jasmine (then 7) soon realized that their usually upbeat and energetic mom wasn't the mommy they used to know.

"I was a shell of my former self. For a while, both kids started to act out in negative ways, because they couldn't deal with their feelings of insecurity and fear, but the more we reassured them and conveyed optimism, the more they felt comforted," Fernandez said.

Fast forward to 2015. As Fernandez's family and friends celebrate her wellness, the artist, activist, and lover of all things vintage says she wants to remind everyone that "the Big C" shouldn't define who you are.

Her story, like the stories of so many other survivors, is one of hope, and she sees her desire to share it as a personal tribute to her brave sisters everywhere. Now that she has embraced her experience with strength and positivity, Fernandez says she sees life in a whole new way. Her daily mantra?

"Don't sweat the small stuff. And even though it sounds corny, I say 'thank you' to the universe when I wake up each morning."

She believes that being grateful for the good in your life, despite the harsh realities, profoundly changes your outlook and energy. That, and a relaxing yoga routine followed by 20 minutes of meditation works wonders, she insists.

"Even when you're in pain and feeling nauseous and yucky, you've gotta stay focused and push past all that crap!"

Pena's and Fernandez's stories are echoed by so many other breast cancer survivors here in the city, many of whom take part in the Susan G. Komen Greater New York City Race for the Cure each year. Their collective wish? That they can look back and say: "The 25th Race for the Cure (held in Central Park on Sept. 13) was the last one ever, because a much-needed cure has finally been discovered."

*Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance journalist and mother of two sons.*

# Let's talk

## How to tackle tough topics with your tweens and teenagers

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

**W**hen it comes to discussing difficult topics with your kids, your natural inclination may be to try to avoid the job altogether. But remember, your children will pay for your hesitancy or embarrassment with a lack of awareness they will need to make good decisions. You don't want your child making emotion-fueled, spur-of-the-moment choices about alcohol, sex, or peer pressure to try and prove something to his friends. You want him to know in advance where he stands on crucial decisions before he gets caught in a slippery situation.

Sweet, innocent naiveté might be a preferable fantasy to parents in the short run, but protecting kids too much can cost them as they progress through rites of passage. How soon do your kids need to be ready to make good choices? Earlier than you may think — according to the National Institute On Alcohol Abuse And Alcoholism, 40 percent of adolescents report drinking by eighth grade, and 55 percent report being drunk at least once by 12th grade. Kids who head off to middle school with a solid understanding of how to make good choices about alcohol, sex, and peer pressure can worry

less and thrive more.

According to The Mayo Clinic, sex education is a parent's responsibility. And by reinforcing and supplementing what kids learn in school, parents can set the stage for a lifetime of healthy sexuality.

Kids rely on parents to help them make good choices. Eighty percent of teens feel that parents should have a say in whether they drink or not. Be optimistic about the positive impact you can have. Information is power.

It is uncommon for tweens to start having consensual sex before the age of 12, therefore conversations about sex need to start early — likely long before you think your child is considering the option. Ideally, you want to start presenting your child with basic information on alcohol, sex, and peer-pressure from a young age.

The Mayo Clinic also reports that peer pressure, curiosity, and loneliness can steer teenagers into early sexual activity. Therefore, do not delay. Start talking to your kids about the big three today. Here's how:

**Start early.** Don't wait until your child is facing challenges to start talking about tough topics. As soon as your child begins to read, arm her with books that tackle important topics. Girls start puberty between the ages of 8 and 13 and boys start puberty between the ages of 9 and

15. This means if you are going to get a jump on teaching kids about puberty, you will begin around the time they enter kindergarten. A little bit of information delivered gradually each year will seem much less intimidating, rather than waiting for middle school and dumping a lot of information on kids all at once.

**Cover the basics.** How well do you understand biology, chemistry, and sociology? When your child hits puberty, he is going to be affected physically, emotionally, and within his peer group. This is especially true if your child is the first or the last in a group of friends to hit puberty. You might need a refresher course before you feel confident holding your own in conversations with your child about challenging topics. When your child starts watching health and wellness videos in school, be sure you watch them too. You can even watch them together, if you think this will spark questions and discussion. Check in with your child's teacher for more information on her plans.

**Be authoritative.** Parents who have the best results getting through to teens are authoritative rather than authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful. So have thoughtful limits for your kids and express them to your kids frequently. Don't imagine they will know what you expect un-

### Back to school for parents

Get the information you need first, so you won't be thrown by questions your child dreams up about alcohol, sex, and peer pressure. These sites can help:

- Kidshealth: <http://kidshealth.org>
- MedlinePlus: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childrenand-teenagers.html>
- NIAAA: <http://www.niaaa.nih.gov>

### Books about puberty

*For girls:*

- "The Care And Keeping Of You, The Body Book For Younger Girls, Revised Edition" by Valorie

Schaefer

- "The Care And Keeping Of You, The Body Book For Older Girls" by Carla Natterson

- "The Girl's Body Book, Everything You Need to Know for Growing Up *You*" by Kelli Dunham

- "What's Happening To My Body? A Girl's Guide" by Lynda Madaras and Area Madaras

- "Period. A Girl's Guide" by JoAnn Loulan and Bonnie Worthen

- "The Period Book, Updated Edition: Everything You Don't Want to Ask (But Need to Know)" by Karen Gravelle

*For boys:*

- "The Boy's Body Book: Everything You Need to Know for Growing Up *You*" by Kelli Dunham

- "What's Happening To My Body? A Boy's Guide" by Lynda Madaras and Area Madaras

- "What's Going On Down There? Answers To Questions Boys Find Hard To Ask" by Karen Gravelle

### Watch media together

**Television shows that tackle tween and teen issues:**

- "The Wonder Years"
- "Freaks and Geeks"
- "My So-Called Life"

**Movies about peer pressure:**

*For tweens:*

- "The Mighty"
- "Stand By Me"
- "Now And Then"
- "August Rush"

- "The Sandlot"

*For teens:*

- "Pretty In Pink"
- "Freedom Writers"
- "Mean Girls"
- "The Man In The Moon"
- "Mystic Pizza"
- "Say Anything"
- "Perks Of Being A Wallflower"

**Movies about pregnancy:**

- "Riding In Cars With Boys"
- "Where The Heart Is"
- "Juno"
- "Quinceañera"
- For parents:*
- "American Teen" (documentary)
- "Secret Life of the American Teenager"



less you tell them.

Studies show that parents with a permissive attitude towards drinking, combined with poor communication and unhealthy modeling, lead teens into unhealthy relationships with alcohol.

Parents who provide a healthy and consistent balance of discipline and support are more likely to have teens respect their boundaries on drinking and other behaviors.

**Cover new angles.** Kids grow up and as they do, you will become aware of important details that you failed to cover. You talked about biological sex, but did you discuss when to have sex? Kids who know their parents discourage sex are more likely to wait. You broached the topic of alcohol, but did you get into the dangers of drugs? You don't want your child thinking drugs are any less dangerous than alcohol. You talked about peer pressure on the playground, but what about when there is a car involved? Make sure your child will call you rather than get in the car with a drunk driver.

The older kids get, the more contexts and social situations they will encounter. Keep reviewing possible scenarios with your kids so they will not be taken off guard. Teach them that it's not only okay to say "no," but that life requires us to say no sometimes in order to make the best choices for ourselves.

**Keep circling back.** You are never done discussing delicate topics. For example, 80 percent of kids will try alcohol in high school, but even if your child starts drinking in college or later, keep talking. She needs to know that you are consistently focused on her wellbeing no matter what her age.

Late elementary school and middle school are important times to talk about the negative effects of over-indulging in alcohol. By the time kids become teens, they should have an in-depth understanding of the negative effects of alcohol and should know you are willing to talk more any time.

**Restrict media images of partying.** A 2010 Dartmouth Medical

School study concluded that parents who steer kids clear of R-rated movies helped kids stay strong against peer-pressure to drink alcohol.

According to Dr. James A. Sargent, "The research to date suggests that keeping kids from R-rated movies can help keep them from drinking, smoking, and doing a lot of other things that parents don't want them to do."

In another study conducted the same year, Sargent concluded that children who watch R-rated movies become more prone to sensation-seeking and risk taking. Make sure your kids are mature enough for what they watch. If you are unsure, watch with them and set clear guidelines.

**Create opportunities for discussion.** Whatever you do, don't become so fanatical about your child making good choices that she will want to avoid these topics with you altogether. A relaxed, age-appropriate, multi-media approach can help keep the conversation going without you having to constantly bring up topics yourself.

For family movie night, choose a film that sparks discussion or take your child to see a movie in the theater and then discuss it over dinner afterwards. Studies have shown that parents who are concerned, engaged, and speak openly about expectations help their kids make more responsible choices. You want kids to know you care, but you don't want to drive them nuts. So don't ban films and media altogether, just try to take an active role.

**Encourage questions.** If your kids come to you with questions about alcohol, sex, and peer-pressure, then you know you are doing a good job keeping the doors to good communication open. Thank your child for asking questions. Resist the urge to make jokes or brush off your child's feelings. Respond to inquiries as thoughtfully as you can. You want to make sure the questions keep coming to you. Cast your vote in every potentially confusing situation. Better yet, turn the table and ask your teen what he thinks is the best choice in a situation. This is a good way to find out if he is listening or tuning you out.

**Look in the mirror.** Your child is going to pick up on the way you relate to your own body. Are you constantly on a diet? Typically complaining about weight you want to lose but not exercising? Do you drink soda, eat junk food, and hit the fast food drive-through when you are upset? Do you drink often or excessively on occasion? Kids are imitators. They will do what you do. They will act the way you act. If you say yes to every request for your time and don't take time to take care of yourself, then your children will not learn to say no, either. How's your sex life? How's your drinking? How's your ability to say no? If the answer is not good, get to work on making better choices yourself, since this is what you expect of your kids.

When is your job as a choice coach done? Never. The goal for both you and your child is thoughtful responsiveness.

Make sure your child has all the information she needs to get to the place where she can make conscious choices and you will sleep better tonight and every night.

*Author and freelance journalist Christina Katz was a tween-teen once, and thank goodness. She draws on her memories — both happy and humiliating — to stay as far ahead of her tween daughter as she can. Her latest book is "The Art of Making Time for Yourself, A Collection of Advice for Moms."*



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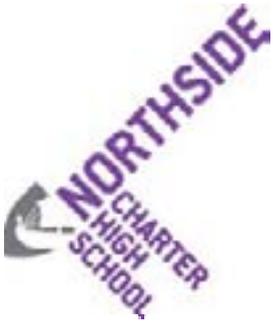
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*Continued on page 30*



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**DIRECTORY**

*Continued from page 28*

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## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# The rise and fall of Fort Couch Cushion

**I**f you have a kid under the age of 8, chances are you probably have had a fort built in your living room at some point.

You know the kind: hastily created by excited tykes by yanking off the couch cushions and assembling them into an upright square. Sometimes a sheet will be strewn across the top, but not always. In the fort, the child is a soldier or a space pioneer or even a superhero gathering energy (and snacks!) for the next mission. But often, he is just a kid quietly thinking out of plain sight within the confines of the almighty fort.

As a mom or a dad, sometimes you get messages from the fort scribbled by tiny hands and tossed over the top. Many times, the messages are requests for an Oreo or two, or a juice box. If you're lucky, there might be a drawing of a heart, or the words "I love you" jotted down on a Post-it note. On certain days, you might get the chance to actually speak to the holed-up fort inhabitant.

Back when my kids were young, the sofa cushions spent more time atop the wooden floorboards than on the couch. If nothing else, it was an opportunity to suck up the crumbs with the hand vac or locate that missing Lego or earring. Many times, rather than interrupt the work taking place inside the fort, I'd settle for the lack of cushion just so I could get some work done on my laptop. The fort provided a snug play space which meant that I could string a few sentences together without having to constantly keep one eye on a wandering toddler. I could enjoy a whole

phone conversation, or grab some precious minutes of a favorite television show.

But soon the long legs of a preschooler required back-up pillows to complete the fort. And when hours inside the fort were replaced with days inside bustling classrooms, the makeshift castle became a weekend treat until birthday party invitations from classmates and homework took precedence. Suddenly, the couch stayed intact more often than not.

My youngest is now 12 and he's 5-foot-9. He gets his own snacks

and doesn't pretend to be a space pioneer anymore. When he wants some privacy, he goes to his room. When he wants something to do, he texts a friend. Now, the couch cushions never come off unless I'm cleaning ... and I miss those darn forts more than I could have imagined.

*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.*





# How to celebrate Halloween safely

For kids, this holiday should only be the good kind of scary

BY JAMIE LOBER

**H**alloween is just a few weeks away, and as the finishing touches are added to kids' costumes, they're looking forward to carving pumpkins, dressing up, and collecting candy as they walk their neighborhood with friends. It will be a fun evening, but it is important not to leave safety by the wayside.

"We have learned that many kids are injured when out trick-or-treating, so we have to talk about being safe trick-or-treaters," said Marjorie Marciano, coalition coordinator for Safe Kids NYC.

Something as basic as accompanying your child and discussing how to properly cross the street can be lifesaving.

"Look both ways, because there might be cars turning, and be aware that cars have the right to turn," said Marciano. You want to be alert and make sure the street is clear, because every driver or bicyclist on the road will not take the time to signal or stop when they should. Take advantage of crosswalks.

Even though you may believe that your child is mature for his age, it is still not a good idea for even the most independent and responsible child to be out by himself, particularly after dark.

"Kids under age 9 should not be

trick-or-treating on their own — even in daylight — and kids up to age 12 should always have an adult with them and stick to areas they know," said Marciano.

Of course, if your teenager is going out on his own or with friends, be sure that he has a cellphone with him and is able to call you and also knows how and when to use 911.

It's certainly fun to take pictures of the kids in their costumes, but don't be tempted while they're trick-or-treating in the dark.

"Kids and parents should put their phones down and not text when crossing the street, so they can pay attention to traffic. If they have headphones on with music, they should take them off," said Marciano.

It can be tempting for kids to run or gallop along, so hold your child's hand — especially as you cross the street.

"Remember that dusk [is a time when it's] hard for drivers to see, so costumes or trick-or-treat bags should have some reflective tape, or kids should carry glow sticks or flashlights and wear a light color that drivers can see," said Marciano.

Masks are popular and can make for great costumes, but they can hinder a child's ability to see where he is going — and that's the last thing you want on Halloween night.

"Masks can obscure kids' vision, so you want to have face paint or

makeup instead," said Marciano.

Also investigate the length of their costumes, and alter the hem so it does not drag on the ground, because kids can trip or fall. If purchasing a costume, make sure the label says flame resistant. And if an item like a sword or stick is part of the outfit, make sure it is not too long or sharp to avoid injuries.

By staying in groups in an area that is well-lit, kids can do a better job of looking out for one another. Stranger danger is an issue on Halloween more so than the rest of the year, because kids are interacting with strangers.

"They should not be getting into conversations with grown-ups that they do not know," said Marciano.

It's also time to prepare your home for trick-or-treaters who will come knocking at your door. To ensure that everyone stays safe, remove any lawn decorations, tools, or garden hoses from the porch that could be tripped over. Make sure all of your outdoor lightbulbs are working. Sweep away wet leaves from your sidewalk, so nobody slips and falls. If you have a pet, keep him away from the front door to prevent a child from getting bitten. And, as always, if you see any suspicious activity, report it to the local police, so they can make sure the rest of the night goes smoothly.

When your child comes home, be sure to inspect the candy and throw away anything that is unwrapped or looks suspicious. By taking precautions, your whole family is even more likely to have a Halloween that's memorable for all of the right reasons.

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

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# Asthma

## What you need to know

Answers to  
six common  
questions

BY JOE CIAVARRO

**T**hroughout the U.S., about 10 percent of children have asthma. For us New Yorkers, the rate is a shocking 30 percent! Being told your child has asthma can be a scary thing to hear, but it doesn't have to be. As a Certified Physician Assistant, I often hear questions about asthma. Here are some common questions about childhood asthma that parents ask in our practice:

**My child was just diagnosed with asthma, does this mean she can't play sports?**

Absolutely not. Asthma is a treatable disease, and its symptoms can be managed and prevented well

enough to play sports. Sit down with your child and together do an internet search for famous athletes with asthma. You may be surprised by what you find!

What are some factors that put my child at risk of asthma?

Babies who are born premature often develop asthma in early childhood, although many can outgrow it. There is some evidence that early infections with respiratory syncytial virus can lead to asthma later in childhood. Additionally, exposure to second-hand smoke, both during pregnancy and in early childhood, can alter lung structure and predispose a child to asthma.

**How do you get asthma?**

Asthma is not a contagious disease. Some cases are genetic, while

others may be acquired, such as in premature babies or with chronic exposure to second-hand smoke. It's best to be up front with your child's pediatrician about who in the family has asthma and what makes it better or worse.

**How do I prevent an asthma attack?**

The best way to prevent an asthma attack is to learn what triggers an exacerbation in your child. This is usually discovered while the doctor reviews symptoms with you, but can also be discovered with allergy testing. Be sure to adhere to your child's asthma medication regimen and follow instructions carefully. Call your pediatrician before stopping any of these medications.

**Can allergies trigger my asthma?**

Allergies can definitely trigger asthma symptoms. Inhalation of pollens is the most common, but it can also be triggered by dust mites, house dust, animal dander, and, of course, cigarette smoke inhalation.

**What medications are used to treat asthma?**

Asthma medications are divided into two categories: Rescue medication and controller medication. Rescue medications work in a way similar to adrenaline by relaxing thin muscles in the airways to help them open up. Controller medications work to prevent reactions, either by reducing inflammation in the lungs (such as with inhaled corticosteroids) or preventing an allergic response, like an antihistamine medication.

**How do I prepare my child's school to treat an attack?**

The best way to prepare your child's school for managing her asthma is to have an open discussion with your child's teacher or school nurse. Ask your child's school or day care nurse if she has been trained in asthma recognition and treatment. Most importantly, you should obtain an Asthma Action Plan from your pediatrician or asthma specialist. This will detail what triggers your child's asthma, what medications are being used, and how to manage an emergency situation.

If you think your child may have asthma, talk to her pediatrician about an asthma evaluation.



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# Healthy harvest

How Farm-to-Preschool program makes a difference

BY AFIA BEDIAKO

**P**arenting can give us many opportunities to be proud of our little ones. When they can count to 10, say the alphabet, say “thank you,” or when they share, we applaud those moments. But lately, I find myself most excited when my nearly 2 year old eats her veggies.

Having easy access to nutritious food and direct experiences with fresh-grown and unprocessed food is crucial for our young children. Fresh school meals, garden activities, farm field trips, and hands-on food lessons all promote early good nutrition and education.

Farm to Preschool programs include serving locally sourced food at school meals; providing hands-on activities such as gardening, farm visits, and cooking lessons; and engaging youngsters, their family, and the school community in fresh-food eating, growing, and learning activities.

These sorts of events are becoming more popular and more common citywide as well as here in Brooklyn. Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation’s Health Initiative has been working with area preschools and Head Start programs for more than two years through the Farm to Preschool activities, in which we have improved access to healthy, fresh food for more than a thousand youngsters and their families.

Our efforts to improve school



food began with replacing canned fruits and veggies with fresh items at a single Head Start site. Farm-fresh items were later introduced.

Next, parents and area youth came together to repurpose donated materials and create school gardens and indoor planters, and fruit trees were donated to five area Head Start Centers. Volunteers offered gardening expertise to help train educators and others in the school. A winter pop-up market was offered to extend a regional farmer’s selling season and make freshly picked fruits and veggies available to preschool families. Classroom lessons on planting and harvesting were offered as a way to teach science and math.

Now, families and staff have become further involved with school-based, healthy-food trainings and options to purchase weekly farm shares at school. Building upon these accomplishments, the programming has spread to three more communities and now includes 20 sites, 1,100 children, and many community and national partners.

Early nutrition has a huge impact on our children’s ability to learn, grow, and thrive. One in four children in the city are food insecure, but many children consume the majority of their daily nutrients in child care centers (making school meals an important vehicle). A diet of high-quality ingredients known origins is crucial.



Fresh items are available at the Marcy Plaza farmer's market.

Early introductions to fresh foods can benefit children throughout their lifespan. Demand for foods that are minimally processed is increased when we have direct experience with fresh food and know where it comes from. Indeed, it's possible to get back to the farm, even here in Brooklyn.

Research shows Farm to Preschool activities support an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption among participants. Particular preferences for or against certain types of foods are common among preschoolers, and unfortunately, vegetable consumption is typically low.

In assessments at program sites, however, we've seen vegetables wasted during school meals decrease from 60 percent to 30 percent. I've seen first-hand, students referring to fresh spinach samples as "yummy" and eagerly requesting miniature apples as a snack.

Families benefit from programming as well. I've seen countless examples of parents and grandparents recounting fresh food experiences from their youth and discussing how they have reintegrated fresh food practices into their current habits through home gardens or cooking from scratch.

As a mother of a toddler, it's my great pleasure to be a part of efforts to improve access to and knowledge about fresh, nutritious foods for our littlest consumers.

If any of the above gets you excited, there are multiple opportunities to get involved. Administrators can start small and include garden lessons, obtain food from local markets or farm shares, or conduct visits to local food-producing gardens. Restoration's Health Initiative can provide program support.

Families of preschoolers might offer to volunteer for in-class activities or field trips. There are options to buy fresh produce through farm shares in Bedford-Stuyvesant and Brownsville (sign up at [CorbinHillFoodProject.org](http://CorbinHillFoodProject.org)). Local farmer's markets are open through November.

Ask your child's day care or preschool where it gets its produce, and if it is not getting it from local or regional farmers, encourage it to do so. For more information, visit [Restorationplaza.org](http://Restorationplaza.org).

*Afia Bediako is a community health advocate and manager of the Farm to Preschool program at Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. She can be reached at [abediako@restorationplaza.org](mailto:abediako@restorationplaza.org).*

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ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,  
ESQ.

# An inheritance for a college tuition

*My mother-in-law recently passed away, naming my wife as a beneficiary of her annuity. Our oldest child is a junior in high school and preparing to apply for college — and financial aid to pay for it — next year. How will the inheritance impact his availability for financial aid? Should we wait to file the claim form for the annuity until after the financial aid package is awarded, which the annuity company says is possible? Or should my wife disclaim the inheritance entirely and let it pass to the other siblings?*

**T**his is an excellent question highlighting the intersection between estate planning and financial planning for college.

There are two basic types of financial aid: need-based and merit-based. This brief article focuses on need-based aid. Eligibility for this aid is based on a static formula: cost of attendance minus expected family contribution = need. This is the amount that the college expects the student's family to pay for school. The expected family contribution is calculated based on a snapshot of assets and income available for college.

Just like with real estate appraisals, there are three methods used to calculate expected family contribution. All three of them are based on the data of the income and assets of the student and parents, all of which must be reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

In Medicaid planning, the terminology is “exempt” and “non-exempt” resources. The concept applies in financial aid, too. Retirement accounts are exempt assets, as is a home. Non-retirement assets are included in the expected family contribution calculation. Home equity, small businesses, and non-qualified annuities are not counted in one



calculation, but they are in the other two. Annuities and life insurance contracts are not reported on the application, but annuities are counted on the CSS Profile, which is the other aid form used by many private colleges. Not only will the asset value of investments be reported, but the unearned income such as interest, dividends, and capital gains will also impact the income calculation.

Under one of the three Free Application for Federal Student Aid calculations, home equity is capped at 1.2 times the parent's adjusted gross income. Life insurance cash values and personal assets (household goods, cars, furniture, etc.) do not count under any of the three formulas.

The three aid formulas weigh in-

come more than assets to determine what families must contribute toward the cost — it effectively expects parents to use 47 percent of their net income after taxes and other items. In other words, income counts nine times more than assets do.

Parents are assigned a “savings allowance” to arrive at an available asset value. In other words, after yet another calculation, parents are expected to use up to 5.64 percent of the available assets as calculated on college costs annually. Students, however, are not given a “savings allowance,” and 100 percent of the value of any asset in the student's name is counted and expected to be used toward the college cost. In other words, the money in the student's name is expected by the

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college to be used to pay tuition at a much higher rate than parents' own assets. This is counterproductive to a common estate planning technique of utilizing the annual exclusion gift amount to make annual gifts to children, either in an Uniform Transfers to Minors Act, an Uniform Gifts to Minors Act, or a trust. This fact undercuts the wisdom of placing money in one of these accounts for the child. The student's assets are calculated at about 20 percent for expected family contribution, while parents' assets are calculated at five percent. From that standpoint, the 529 Account or a Roth (or a Coverdell if the parents' income permits) is a better vehicle for stockpiling savings.

The 529 plans owned by the parent or student do not count toward the eligibility. The distributions might count toward income if someone owns the plan other than the parent or student, say, a grandparent, and distributions from a grandparent's account do count as income for the previous year for financial aid purposes. When the 529 plan is owned by the parent or student, however, the distributions are not reported as income when applying for financial aid. The distribution is tax-free (because it is paying for education), is not reported on the Form 1040, and does not get reported as "untaxed income" on the financial aid application.

One advisor recommends waiting to use a grandparents' 529 plan money until after the student's final eligibility for financial aid has been determined, or in the student's senior year, because the income will be reported for the prior year — the year the student graduates.

Trust distributions, on the other hand, are always counted as taxable or untaxed income and do count against eligibility for financial aid.

As for the second question on timing of estate distributions, one commentator suggests that the money is not reported as an asset on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid unless and until the estate is settled and the money is distributed.

Likewise, the commentator suggests, if ownership of the assets is contested (say, in a contested accounting in Surrogate's Court), and the ownership has not been resolved, then there is also no requirement to report the asset on

the application. Similarly, proceeds from life insurance would not be reported as an asset until received. Presumably this puts some level of control in the hands of the applicant or his parents as to when they submit the life insurance claim form, or perhaps coordinate with a friendly fiduciary (or contest an accounting) to control the timing for application purposes.

There is no "look back," however, and an account owner can simply change the name of the beneficiary if the 529 plan will interfere with the ability to obtain financial aid, and if the financial aid package is more attractive than the funds held in the 529 plan.

But before you start moving money around in the years leading up to your child's entry into college, consider the tax consequences of moving money around between owners. You will consume a portion of your federal lifetime credit, not to mention potential capital gains consequences. Selling appreciated investments will cause your income to spike, thus further disrupting the income calculations that will determine financial aid eligibility.

And, restructuring assets may be irrelevant if your and your spouse's income will disqualify your child from financial aid regardless of where and how your assets are titled. If your income is \$250,000, your expected family contribution will be approximately \$65,683 which means your child is not likely to qualify for any need-based aid.

On the other hand, if you have two children in college at the same time, your expected family contribution is split equally among the two (or more) students. Although the prospect of having not one but two children in college at the same time invokes terror in the hearts of most parents, perhaps it has a silver lining in the financial aid arena. With more than one child attending college simultaneously, they may be eligible for need-based aid even despite a high income level.

*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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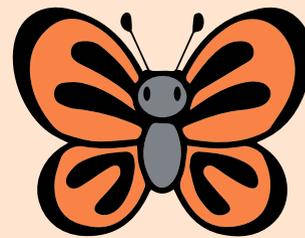
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# Home alone — ready or not?

How to know  
if your kid  
can handle it

BY DENISE YEARIAN

**W**hen adolescents stay home without adult supervision, it can be a positive growth experience. To navigate the sometimes unsettling decision surrounding this responsibility, consider these 10 tips:

**Maturity level.** Child development experts agree, most kids are ready to stay home alone somewhere between the ages of 12 and 13, but there is no magical age. Since kids mature at different rates, evaluate your child on an individual basis. How independent and self-directed is he with regard to responsibili-

ties such as getting homework and chores done, arriving at school on time, and asking for help when problems arise?

**Desire to stay alone.** Equally important is whether your child is willing to be home alone. If he expresses reservations or objections, hold off. Or, if there are other transitions going on in his life — a recent death, divorce, or relocation to a new home — wait until those adjustments have been made.

**Safety suggestions.** Consider your community's safety, neighborhood relationships, and peer influences. Do you live in a safe setting with trusted neighbors your child can go to for help in the event of an emergency? Are there peer influences in the community that cause some concern? Also address basic safety rules, such as what to do in the event of an emergency; how to handle basic first-aid; and precautions with electrical outlets, appliances, heating equipment, etc.

**Rest assured with rules.** Think of your child as his own sitter and pass along the same instructions and information you would give to a caretaker. Discuss house rules, write them out, and post them in a visible location, along with important phone numbers. Don't assume he automatically knows your expectations. And remember, some rules when you are home, such as cooking and playing outside, will be significantly different when you are away.

**Media guidelines.** If you do not establish media guidelines, the television and computer may run con-

tinuously. Agree upon a time limit for TV and technology devices. Then, remind your child what is and isn't permissible to view. If needed, put on filters to protect your kids.

**Alternative activities.** If you will be gone for an extended period of time, collaborate with your child about activities he can do to alleviate boredom and occupy his time: "What do you plan to do while I'm away?" If your child says she doesn't know, suggest activities — art, music, creative writing, board games, etc. This may need to be an ongoing conversation to keep ideas fresh.

**Ready him with role play.** Play the "What if..." game to prepare your child for unexpected situations: "What if a delivery man comes to the door?" "There is a power outage?" "You come home from school and find a broken window?" Encourage him to come up with his own answers, but guide him to the right response if there's a better choice. This builds confidence, tests his responses, and may cause him to think about the gravity of this responsibility — that it isn't just fun and games.

**Ease into it.** If you have some reservations, start with 30-minute increments during the day while you run short errands or take a walk. As your child demonstrates readiness, stretch out the time. When you get home, talk about how things went.

**Support from a distance.** If your child is staying home alone every day due to your work schedule, lend emotional support. On occasion, leave notes and special surprises to reassure him of your love and concern, and remind him you trust things will go well and he can handle the responsibility. Also, call regularly to check in and say "hello."

**Ongoing communication.** If you have already established an open line of communication, your child will be more likely to talk about problems that come up, and you will get a sense if things aren't going well. If he is acting differently — not making eye contact, using a different tone of voice, or something seems to be bothering him — follow up until the issue is resolved.

At first, it may be hard to leave your child without adult supervision, but with time, it should get easier. And you may find that, just as with other steps toward independence, when you let them go, you see them grow.

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



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DEAR  
DR. KARYN  
DR. KARYN GORDON

# Preventing burnout

*Dear Dr. Karyn,  
My husband never stops working and feels guilty for taking time off. I'm really concerned that he's going to experience burnout. It seems like our culture is just moving too fast. What suggestions do you have to help those get control of their life again and not burn out?*

**G**reat question! The truth is we are seeing adults at every stage of life maxing out — whether working at the office 70 hours per week or playing the taxi driver to all of the kids' activities. Here are three tips for parents to prevent burnout. Enjoy!

## Remember who is in control

This tip seems like an obvious one until we stop and listen to ourselves and those around us. Earlier this month I was at a conference, and found myself chatting with some parents afterwards who were concerned about how they were going to manage the four-times-a-week hockey practices, three-times-a-week week ballet lessons, once-a-week week piano lesson, and two-times-a-week gymnastics classes, multiplied by their three children. It sounded like a two-person full-time job just getting the kids to and from their activities, and I felt exhausted just listening to the complexity and details of their schedules!

The challenge is that this particular mom was speaking as if this schedule had been given to her. The truth is that she had chosen this schedule. Even if our kids beg us, or we feel the pressure to keep up with other families, ultimately, we as the parents have control over what we do or don't do. We can decide what we sign up for and what we decline. We are the adults.

Even in the workforce, we may think that our employer has control, but the truth is that we are always in control of ourselves. We can either choose to say yes to the demands, or have the courage to tell our employer that his expectations are unrealistic. We can choose to take on the more demanding, high-stress job with more traveling (higher pay), or the lower-stress job (with less pay).



We must remember that life is about choices (some with far more attractive outcomes than others). We all make choices that have rewards and consequences attached to them. So it's important to own our choices and not play the victim. Owning the choice won't necessarily make us less stressed, but it can make us feel more empowered, and may force us to think closely about whether we want to make some changes.

## Choose big rocks first, then the sand

I shared on the Canadian television show "Cityline" a concept I learned years ago about rocks and sand: if you have a jar and you try putting sand in first and then rocks, your big rocks will have a hard time fitting. But if you reverse it — put your big rocks in first, then the sand around it — it will likely fit! I'm a visual learner, so I loved this concept right away.

If we understand that we all have a finite amount of energy and time, that's the jar. Our first step is to think about our big rocks. What are two or three big rocks that are really important to us that we want to tackle this fall? Is it personal? Or is it professional?

The fall is a great time to think about your big rocks. What is most important to you? When you start to shape your schedule, begin with your rocks. Then you can add the sand — things you like to do but are not as important to you.

## Recharging will save you time

One of my favorite top-10 classic books is Stephen Covey's "Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People." A

key principle that he teaches is that effective people "sharpen their saw." They schedule time away from work to recharge, unwind, and energize their emotional and physical batteries. It may seem counter-intuitive, but we are most effective when we stop and take time off, and this process will make us better, more effective managers, parents, and leaders. It's true, and I have repeatedly experienced this for myself!

This summer, my schedule and stress were higher than usual. Deadlines were fast approaching for a new television show I'm producing, and for the first time in years, I considered sending my husband Brent and our boys to the cottage for our family holiday without me, so I could stay and work in the city and get ahead of my workload. But I knew this concept — that recharging will save you time — and it was time for me to put it into practice.

So I stuck to the plan and took off 10 days to recharge, play, decompress, and simply be. Words cannot express how different I felt coming back to the office. I was restored, fully energized, fully engaged, and I managed to get more done in the first two days back in the office than I would have by dragging myself along if I had stayed in the city. The best part (other than getting a lot done) was that I was me again. I was playful, present, creative, and the kind of wife and mother I strive towards being. This social experiment on myself was a great reminder of how we can know things intellectually, but it means nothing if we don't live it experientially.

As you start mapping out your schedule at home and at work this fall, remember who's in charge. Remember your top two-to-three big rocks. (Let go of the sand.) And remember to schedule in recharging time. These three tips not only will prevent burnout, but most importantly, they'll also keep you grounded on what is most important to you, and who you want to be!

*Dr. Karyn Gordon is founder of dk Leadership, the author of "Dr. Karyn's Guide To The Teen Years" (Harper Collins), and motivational speaker. Visit her at [www.dkleadership.org](http://www.dkleadership.org) and on Twitter: @DrKarynGordon.*

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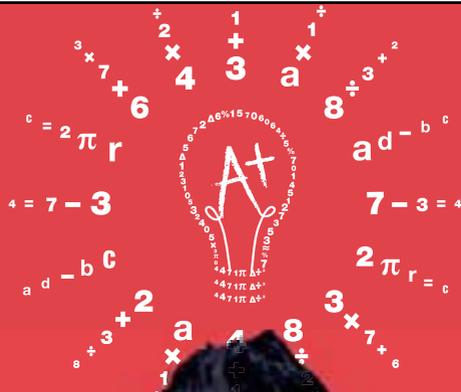
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# Masters of chess in Cold War battle

Kid film critics delve into 'Pawn Sacrifice'

*In this gripping, true story set during the height of the Cold War, American chess prodigy Bobby Fischer (Tobey Maguire) finds himself caught between two superpowers when he challenges the Soviet Empire. "Pawn Sacrifice" chronicles Fischer's terrifying struggles with genius and madness, and the rise and fall of a kid from Brooklyn who captured the imagination of the world. It opened nationwide on Sept. 25.*

**I** had no expectations going into the film. Biopics are really a 50-50 sort of deal, especially today, and they have been recycling the same plots for years now, so the

only thing that can separate them are the performances and style of the director. "Pawn Sacrifice" [directed by Edward Zwick] is different from other biopics for those very reasons.

Tobey Maguire gives the performance of his career. His nuanced, detailed, and invested performance as Bobby Fischer provides most of this movie's appeal. He never loses his intensity in the movie and is motivated with every decision he makes as an actor, so his character's decisions seem just as assured and focused. Audiences are naturally drawn to that.

Maguire is supported by Liev Schreiber, Peter Sarsgaard, and Michael Stuhlbarg. They all give fantastic performances that are all layered. That's my favorite thing about them — they aren't one-dimensional, and they don't fall by the wayside as many supporting characters in biopics do. They've got their own passions and motivations.

Secondly, and most importantly, the number one thing that keeps us invested is the story. Since I've seen the movie, I still can't quite put my finger on why it is as addicting as it is. I have gone over it

in my head continually, and as I piece the themes together, I finally get a common theme: obsession. The characters in this movie are relentless in their journey. But that's not enough. There are plenty of bad movies with motivated characters. So I asked myself about the style of the movie. It features some nice editing [by Steven Rosenblum], but it isn't anything special.

Finally, I went to the main focus of the movie: chess. That's what keeps us involved. It's the fact that, probably for the first time in our lives, most of us are witnessing chess taken so seriously. In this movie, we see chess as more than a board game. Set during the Cold War, chess represents America vs. the Soviets. It represents escape and fulfillment. Those kinds of stakes for a game we often pass over takes us by surprise, and we can't help but get drawn in.

Actually, as I walked out of the theater, I heard someone comment, "This movie made me want to play chess." It didn't have the same effect on me, but I can see how it might have.

With that said, the movie does get off to a rocky start, including a sequence when they show Bobby at age 12, which is pretty bad. I understand that Seamus Davey-Fitzpatrick is a young actor, but he wasn't very good. It was very one note and not believable. It actually seems out of place among the rest of the movie. I mean, it doesn't help that the dialogue is really bad for that portion and doesn't get the film off to a great start. But when it picks up steam, it keeps you on the ride.

I give this movie 4 1/2 out of 5 stars, and I recommend it for ages 10 to 18.

— Willie J., age 16

See his videoreview at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwDvs2G02lw>

The story in "Pawn Sacrifice" is exciting, interweaving Bobby Fischer's personal struggles with paranoia and the incredible tension of the Cold War. Directed by Zwick, it follows the story of Fischer, who is trying to become the best chess player in the world during the tense Cold War period of the '60s and '70s.



He goes up against thousands of opponents and beats them all in order to play the best player of his time, the Soviet Boris Spassky, at the 1972 World Chess Championships in Reykjavik, Iceland.

The cast portrays the characters exceptionally well, especially Schreiber as Spassky. Although I didn't want to root for the Russian, I felt much more sympathetic to his character than Fischer's. Maguire is convincing as Fischer, but the character's personality is so paranoid, irritating, and selfish, and he treats others, including those who love him, so badly, that he is unlikable and hard to root for.

Although I root for the U.S. to win, Fischer's personality leaves me torn. As the movie progresses, I start to like Spassky more and more. Schreiber makes Spassky a sympathetic character — he's calm and even understanding of the mental-emotional struggles Fischer is going through.

Fischer's friends are also enjoyable characters and are always there to help him through the tough games.

Since the Cold War never escalates into full-blown military battles, cultural competitions between the Americans and Soviets, such as the race to the moon, this chess match, and the "Miracle on Ice," are high-profile confrontations. With that background, the plot keeps you intrigued all the way through and puts you

back in that tense, scary time period by interspersing old news footage throughout the film. On a personal level, the portrayal of Fischer's deteriorating mental state is realistic but sad. Even though he completes the historic match, his personal demons get the best of him in the end.

If you watched, listened to, or read about this chess match live in 1972, I think you will love this movie. If you didn't see the match, you will still be gripped by the history and the passion of all the characters involved. I would give "Pawn Sacrifice" a 4 out of 5 stars and recommend it to ages 14 to 18.

— Will S., age 14

See his videoreview at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qt5az5LXX0o>

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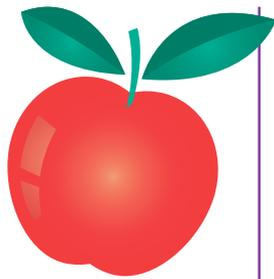
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## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND  
MARGE EBERTS

# Why Common Core doesn't limit learning

**Dear teacher,**

How is it possible to bring out every child's learning potential when there is the trend to standardize schooling across this country?

**Dear parent,**

You are probably thinking about Common Core — the new curriculum standards in English language arts and literacy and math that most states have adopted. It is certainly clear that these standards do list what children should learn in these areas. However, schools and teachers are able to go beyond this and add additional content.

Do not worry about these standards limiting children's learning potential. They place a big emphasis on critical thinking rather than repetition and rote learning. And with current technology, there is a wealth of opportunity for children to explore personal interests.

**Parental involvement in homework****Dear teacher,**

How can I best help my children learn to handle their homework? How much should parents be involved?

**Dear parent,**

Whether you like it or not, you will have to play a role in helping your children handle homework. The sooner you put them on the path to handling homework by themselves, the happier you both will be. Check to see if you are doing what is necessary to make your children responsible for their homework. This is a parents' checklist:

- Teach your young children how to use an assignment pad to write down what each day's homework is.
- Emphasize reading and rereading directions before starting each assignment, so your children will know what to do.
- Show your children how to han-



dle difficult assignments by studying similar work in textbooks and class worksheets.

- Provide help only when it is requested, and they have really tried to do the work.
- Set an agreed-upon time to start homework.

Have you ever thought of using a homework contract with your children? Visit our [dearteacher.com](http://dearteacher.com) website, and you will find one to download in Skill Builders under "Study Skills."

**The difference between a 504 Plan and an Individual Education Plan****Dear teacher,**

My third-grade son has attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and is currently being tested to see if he qualifies for some school accommodations. We will be having a meeting with the school in a few weeks. However, I would like to know what the difference is between a 504 Plan and an Individual Education Plan? Which would be best for my son?

**Dear parent,**

You have asked a very common question. You are now on the road to obtaining answers from your school district. The plan that is best for your son depends on how much the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

affects his school work. Do keep in mind that the results could always come back that your son does not need either a 504 Plan or an Individualized Education Plan.

Parents need to know that children who are identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are eligible for Individualized Education Plans; however, children who are identified under the 504 Plan are not eligible for an Individualized Education Plan.

Both the 504 Plan and the Individualized Education Plan are created by an educational team. Both plans can work well to serve students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Both protect the rights of students with the disability and ensure that they will be learning in the least restrictive environment.

However, the 504 Plan and the Individualized Education Plan have unique differences:

- The 504 comes under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Children are eligible if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity. It does not need to have an educational impact.

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act serves children with disabilities through an Individualized Education Plan. To qualify, a student needs more than just accommodations, they need services related to their disability.

- The 504 Plan is a shorter process and easier to get than an Individualized Education Plan. The plan will follow the student after he leaves high school.

- An Individualized Education Plan is a longer process that takes more time for students to become eligible, and it has some stigma attached and ends with high-school graduation.

- Children under a 504 Plan are only eligible to receive accommodations. Those under an Individualized Education Plan receive accommodations plus a wide range of services.



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# 10 spots for family fun in Newport

This historic playground for the rich is also great for children

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**L**ooking for a picturesque getaway that's kid-friendly, too? Newport, Rhode Island is just three hours north of New York City and makes for a convenient weekend away. Whether you have a future architect, a sports fanatic, or beach baby, Newport is great to visit any season, but especially during the summer months. Spend time outdoors at the marina, local parks, and beaches — like Gooseberry Beach, which is set back in a cove and is family friendly. Or, go out for fresh seafood, shop downtown, and tour historic homes like the Vanderbilt's 70-room Italian Renaissance-style palazzo, The Breakers.

Families visiting the area can learn about its history, and enjoy the beauty of scenic water views while basking in the sun and breeze of the "city by the sea." Newport is best known for

its well-preserved architecture dating back more than three centuries, but also boasts many sporting events and music festivals that bring a youthful vibe to this historic beach town. For the foodies, there are even restaurant weeks in the fall and spring!

Newport is a great location for a family trip, but if the grown-ups are seeking time alone or a night out — give a call to Newport Babysitting Service or Newport Nannies. These companies cater to travelers visiting the area with children. (Yes, you can bring the kids and still go wine tasting.)

Here are my top 10 Newport activities:

**1. Audrain Automobile Museum** [222 Bellevue Ave. in Newport, (401) 856-4420, [www.audrainautomuseum.org](http://www.audrainautomuseum.org)]

Established in the fall of 2014, the Audrain Automobile Museum's collection showcases more than 160 automobiles. They range from early 20th century to modern day. The entire collection is never displayed all at once. The vehicles are exhibited by theme and exhibitions change periodically. This is the perfect place to bring your little (or big) car enthusiast.

**2. Cardines Field** [20 America's

Cup Ave. in Newport, (401) 845-5806, [www.newportgulls.pointstreaksites.com](http://www.newportgulls.pointstreaksites.com)]

Now home to the Newport Gulls of the New England Collegiate Baseball League, this family-friendly venue served as a baseball field as early as the late 1800s. It is an affordable option for family entertainment and great for the sports-loving traveler. Alongside both residential and commercial buildings, this small, urban gem of a ballpark is definitely worth the outing.

**3. Cliff Walk** [Memorial Boulevard and Eustis Avenue in Newport, (401) 845-5300, [www.cliffwalk.com](http://www.cliffwalk.com)]

The 3.5-mile picturesque walk offers crashing waves on one side and beautiful mansions on the other. Stroll along the Atlantic coastline on this designated National Recreation Trail. Parking is available along Narragansett Avenue and a section of the walk is handicap accessible; however, there are no services or restrooms along the trails.

**4. Fort Adams State Park** [84 Fort Adams Dr. in Newport, (401) 847-2400, [www.riparks.com](http://www.riparks.com)]

Fort Adams State Park offers panoramic views of both Newport Harbor and Narragansett Bay. There is

a wide range of activities offered at the park. Visitors are welcome to go fishing and boating as well as participate in sports such as soccer or rugby. Fort Adams is best known for its annual summer concerts. Newport Folk and Jazz festivals draw thousands of visitors to the outdoor space.

**5. Historic Mansions** [424 Bellevue Ave. in Newport, (401) 847-1000, [www.newportmansions.org](http://www.newportmansions.org)]

Take a tour (docent led or audio) of the mansions or “summer cottages” and learn about the people that lived and worked in them. The Preservation Society of Newport County maintains the homes and gardens of its properties, preserving the landscape. During summers, your little ones can participate in three-day camps that include hands-on experiences. Children will go on behind-the-scenes tours of the mansions and learn about conservation, landscape design, and architecture.

**6. Newport & Narragansett Bay Railroad and Ice Cream Train** [America’s Cup Avenue (Route 138A) in downtown Newport, (401) 295-1203, <http://trainsri.com>]

The Newport & Narragansett Bay Railroad offers its visitors a classic railroad travel and dining experience. Departing from downtown Newport, parents looking for a family-friendly activity will love the Aquidneck Island Rail Tour and The Ice Cream Train. These are shorter rail excursions, but lunch menus for both kids and adults are offered. Save room for ice cream sundaes with all the toppings!

During winter, the Polar Express Train Ride on the Newport & Narragansett Bay Railroad operates on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from Nov. 21 through the week after Christmas. Trains depart at 4:30 and 6:15 pm. Seats sell quickly, so be sure to book early!

**7. International Tennis Hall of Fame** [194 Bellevue Ave. in Newport, (401) 849-3990, <https://www.tennis-fame.com/>]

The newly renovated International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum is the only museum in the world dedicated to preserving the history of the sport of tennis. The exhibitions guide you from the sport’s medieval roots to its present day rise in popularity. With more than 25,000 objects in its collection, the museum is housed in the historic Newport Casino building and sits on a seven-acre site (which includes grass courts). The museum has interactive components dispersed

throughout, making it more accessible to young visitors. Admission for children is free.

**8. Newport Art Museum** [76 Bellevue Ave. in Newport, (401) 848-8200, [www.newportartmuseum.org](http://www.newportartmuseum.org)]

For more than 100 years, the museum has served as a cultural gathering place dedicated to individual growth and learning. The collections reflect Rhode Island’s rich cultural heritage and maintain an emphasis on the art and artists of Rhode Island. The Minnie and Jimmy Coleman Center for Creative Studies, housed in the museum, encourages people of all ages and abilities to explore their creativity through art. The museum offers classes, camps, workshops, and other educational programming, including family events throughout the year.

**9. Polo** [250 Linden Ln. in Portsmouth, (401) 846-0200, [www.npt-polo.com](http://www.npt-polo.com)]

Newport Polo is host of the Newport International Polo Series and a founding member of the United States Polo Association. The site offers public exhibition matches as well as polo instruction year-round.

**10. Sailing** [60 Fort Adams Dr. in Newport, (401) 846-1983, <http://www.sailnewport.org>]

Sail Newport is New England’s largest public sailing center and home to the Dr. Robin Wallace Youth Sailing Center. The center serves hundreds of children each season. Sail Newport is located at Fort Adams State Park and offers easy and affordable access to sailing.

**Other links:**

Discover Newport: [discovernewport.org](http://discovernewport.org)

Gooseberry Beach: [Newport-discovery-guide.com/Newport-ri-beaches](http://Newport-discovery-guide.com/Newport-ri-beaches)

The Breakers: [newportmansions.org](http://newportmansions.org)

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*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](http://www.shniekajohnson.com).*



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New York Methodist Hospital

# Halloween candy: Tricks for the treats

*My children — 5 and 8 years old — love Halloween: the dressing up, the trick-or-treating, and most of all, the candy. They come home with their pillowcases full to the brim! I know that candy isn't good for their growing bodies and teeth, but I don't want to be an ogre and take it away from them. Do you have any suggestions for ways to let my kids enjoy their Halloween candy but still keep them healthy?*

**W**hen you think about our national tradition of one night a year, dressing up in a wild outfit, going to almost any door, and being feted with handfuls of candy — it's pretty sweet! Americans buy nearly 600 million pounds of candy a year for Halloween, and although all of that candy isn't coming directly into your house, Halloween can provide the opportunity to establish some annual candy management traditions of your own.

Your children's Halloween candy haul will provide them with the opportunity to establish good habits — with your help. Some of your tricks can start before you leave the house. The old saw about not going grocery shopping hungry? Same goes for trick or treating. Make sure your kids eat a healthy, satisfying meal before hitting the streets; this should help keep their eyes smaller than their stomachs when they are offered the chance to take candy from a bowl or basket. Also, instead of sending them out with a pillowcase, as you mentioned in your question, use a smaller container, which will fill more quickly. Once there is no more room for treats, it's time to come home.

Many families choose to give out pencils or stickers or another fun, non-food item. Should you choose to give out a snack, buy something that your kids don't like! There will be less temptation to sneak it from the coffers.

When your family returns from trick-or-treating and the (small) containers are dumped and the spoils reviewed, there are a number of strategies that you can choose to employ,



depending on what works for your household. Parents should be sure to review the treats and remove any choking hazards or unwrapped items such as open cookies, fruit, or suspicious pieces. Here are some tricks you can try:

**Good things, small packages.** Using small, snack-size food storage bags, have your child divide the candy into smaller parcels, with each containing a daily allotment — be it two, three, five pieces, or more. The child gets one bag a day. You can either work conditions out with your child (after dinner, with school lunch, once chores are done) or let her eat it as she chooses.

**Switch Witch.** Some families get visits from the Switch Witch, where either the entire candy collection is switched mysteriously at night with a wished-for gift, or smaller portions are exchanged for smaller gifts (make sure that your child agrees that it is

okay if the Switch Witch visits).

**Out of sight, out of mind.** Perhaps you want to let your kids enjoy the fruits of their labors — let them eat as much of their candy they want on Halloween night, and then store the rest out of eyesight. Over the next few days, if they ask for some, let them choose a piece (or two), and then return the bag to the hiding place. Chances are, they will forget about the candy long before it is gone.

**Trick or teeth!** This seasonal onslaught of candy makes regular brushing and flossing even more imperative, especially if sticky, chewy candies that adhere to teeth are a favorite. Whichever strategies you chose, thorough dental hygiene is not negotiable.

With a little forethought and a strategy in place and agreed upon, this year's trick-or-treating can start a Halloween tradition all your own.



## A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

# Scotching the idea of studying abroad

**A** staple of the college experience is studying abroad. It is a unique way to see the world while also immersing yourself in another culture and language. Most students will spend at least a semester, usually during their junior year, in another country. However, while my friends discuss their plans to gallivant in the English countryside or drink wine in Italy, I can look forward to another whole year on campus. Despite its appeal, studying abroad is just not the appropriate decision for me.

Deciding to forgo a study abroad experience was one of the toughest decisions I have made during my college career. When I first began thinking about college, I actually did not expect to study abroad. Who would have guessed that after a few information sessions and conversations with older friends, I would be set to spend the spring semester of my junior year in Edinburgh, Scotland? I was drawn to the new experience, since I adore Celtic culture, and was interested in traveling around Europe during my spring break.

However, some of my underlying reasons for studying abroad were a bit dubious and caused me to reconsider. Peer pressure definitely played a role in my choice. Having never been out of North America, traveling to Europe by myself would be a terrifying experience and not a decision I would normally make. Still, I was equally as frightened of not having that opportunity altogether and regretting it eventually. I worried that with all my friends abroad and posting pictures of their adventures, I would be miserable and alone on campus.

The biggest deciding factor was my academic status as a double major at Williams. I was ambitious enough to declare a double major in chemistry and history with intentions of completing a thesis. Because the two subjects are about as different as you can get, there are absolutely



no classes that can simultaneously count for both majors. To graduate on time with honors, I will need to obtain at least one class for each major every semester.

Trying to transfer chemistry credits from abroad is a nightmare due to differences in the European collegiate system. American science classes, especially chemistry courses, emphasize lab work and hands-on learning. Thus, in order for me to gain credits toward my chemistry major, I need to enroll in classes that come with some sort of laboratory component. In Europe, science classes, especially at the equivalent of the American undergraduate level, highlight classroom learning and do not require lab work.

Another main factor that prevented me from studying abroad was my plans for higher education in law school. I have known since middle school that I wanted to pur-

sue a career as an attorney and am still keen to realize that dream. Unfortunately, I have still not taken the Law School Admission Test. Given my current state of readiness, it seems most effective for me to take the exam in February, which is offered right on my school's campus. Though the LSAT is offered in Europe, the February exam is definitely less accessible.

Furthermore, given the amount of concentration and focus needed to excel on this exam, it would be foolish for me to take the exam at the start of my study abroad experience when I am still adjusting to a new place and may be emotionally more volatile.

Overall, what really convinced me to change my mind was the purpose of my undergraduate education.

I focused my attention on my academics and my future and discovered that I was actually putting myself at a disadvantage by going abroad. It was not easy saying no to a fantastic experience, but I do believe it was what had to be done.

Even though studying abroad is not the right opportunity for me, I do see the benefits of the experience. If you can afford the time away from your college to see the world, you should definitely take it. However, be aware and consider the implications of this experience. Never choose studying abroad over graduating on time, given the high price of college these days. Also, bear in mind how your credits will transfer over, especially if you are a science major.

If you do decide to study abroad, regardless of detrimental consequences, make sure you are ready to face them when you return home. Remember that in life, there will always be opportunities to travel even if they are not now.

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



## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Should toys talk?

**H**aving a toy that can talk is a persistent childhood fantasy. Adults have been trying to bring that fantasy to life ever since Thomas Edison installed miniature, hand-cranked phonographs in porcelain dolls. Over the years, toy manufacturers have experimented with toys that say prerecorded phrases or tell entire stories when a child pulls a string or presses a button.

More recently, toys have become truly interactive, equipped with software that makes them seem responsive to children. This fall, Mattel announced development of Hello Barbie, a new version of the iconic doll which, with the help of a wifi connection, analyzes what a child says so Barbie can respond with something appropriate. Cognitoys has introduced a talking dinosaur named Dino, which answers questions and responds to commands. Both toys are supposed to “learn” as a child uses them, so their responses become tailored to the child.

These toys join a crowd of other talking toys ranging from a baby doll that can “read” 70 words to a “talk back” doll that repeats what a child says in a squeaky voice, from programmable “pets” to radio-controlled robots. Some people think all of this responsiveness has educational potential. One intriguing study found that children who played with toys programmed to say their names and other personalized information were more attentive when the toy presented unfamiliar material.

At the same time, many experts continue to feel that young children in particular are better served by toys that allow the child to control the script. Playing is a way for children to work out their own ideas about the world, and it may be better for them to be the ones putting words in the mouths of their

favorite stuffed animals, dolls, and action figures. Some toys that seem amusing to adults may actually limit a child’s imagination.

In short, parents will want to think carefully before purchasing the season’s most seductive talking toys. Here are some questions worth asking:

### Will the toy work?

Nothing is more frustrating than a new gadget that doesn’t do what it’s supposed to do. Before choosing a talking toy, be sure your child is developmentally ready to manage the controls. Think about whether the toy will challenge or frustrate your child. Will it be too difficult to use without adult assistance? Consider durability, too. Some talking toys are fragile. A toy that breaks down or has technical glitches will interrupt the flow of play.

### Does the toy gather info about child?

Whenever a toy connects to the cloud, parents have to assume that anything a child says in its presence is being recorded. What use will companies make of those recordings? The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood worries that Hello Barbie will “eavesdrop” on children.

“It’s creepy,” says Executive Director Dr. Susan Linn, “and it creates a host of dangers for children and families.”

Others are concerned that toys which depend on wifi will become targets for hackers who have already demonstrated that they can manipulate talking dolls, baby monitors, and other household equipment.

To minimize security risks, parents should turn off toys when they aren’t in use and take advantage of any safeguards provided by the manufacturer. The makers of Dino, for example, allow parents to set up an account so they can monitor, and if necessary, delete what a child says to the toy.

### Is the toy a good role model?

If a toy is going to have regular conversations with your child, you’ll want to be sure that what it says is consistent with what you want your

child to hear. Some toys are surprisingly sassy. How will you feel if your child mimics the toy?

Other toys embody exaggerated ideas about gender — hyper-muscular action figures or heavily made up dolls. If a toy is going to function as a child’s friend, it should be a positive influence.

### Does the toy stimulate imaginative play?

Talking toys are often one-trick ponies. The toy does the work, so your child becomes a passive consumer of entertainment. Once the novelty wears off, your child is likely to be bored, a sure-fire indication that the toy isn’t giving your child room to think and grow.

Many child development experts believe that children benefit most from simple toys that give them open-ended opportunities to experiment and explore. If you decide to invest in interactive toys, be sure young children also have access to basics like blocks, puppets, puzzles, and art supplies.

School-age children are often inspired by interactive toys, but not necessarily in the way that manufacturer intended. Some kids try to manipulate the toy to see if they can make it do outrageous things. If your child has that kind of inventive spirit, he might benefit more from a toy like Ozobot that puts programming power in the child’s hands.

Finally, it’s important to understand the limitations of talking toys. Children need to become skilled with language because it’s the best way to share information, express feelings, and build a sense of closeness with other people. Toys that talk may be clever and amusing but they cannot help a child develop understanding and empathy. That’s something he can learn only in the company of living, breathing, caring people.

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

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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Is ADHD really so overdiagnosed?

**A** new study from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finds that one third of children being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are under the age of 6. Susanna Visser, a researcher at the U.S. National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, studied the diagnosis of more than 3,000 children. She found that about half of the children were diagnosed before the age of 7, and 31 percent were diagnosed before the age of 6. Researchers found that the first person to become concerned about the

child's behavior was the parent or a family member in three out of every four cases.

But is the disorder being overdiagnosed as suggested by numerous, recent headlines pointing at this study?

"Often, the most important questions are the hardest to answer. If we knew the physiological processes that result in the symptoms which we use to diagnose ADHD, then we could determine whether it is being over-diagnosed," says psychiatrist Dr. Francis Castellanos, of The Child Study Center at NYU Langone Medical Center. "On the other hand, it's always the case that both over- and under-diagnosis exist, and I strongly suspect that is also occurring in ADHD.

"We know the rate of diagnosis varies substantially by community — probably more than could be accounted for by 'real' variation. We also know that minority families and families with low levels of economic resources have much lower rates of diagnosed ADHD — it's likely that many children in those communities are being under-diagnosed."

Another prominent finding was that a little more than half of the children diagnosed received their diagnosis from the pediatrician or family doctor, instead of a psychiatrist.

"Many types of doctors are trained and qualified to diagnose ADHD in children. This includes medical doctors, such as pediatricians, child and adolescent psychiatrists, pediatric neurologists, and family physicians," says Castellanos. "Non-medical doctors include clinical child psychologists and neuropsychologists, who are also exceedingly well trained. However, just because someone

has one of those credentials does not mean they are necessarily the best person to evaluate complex cases.

"The Visser study showed that when children present with ADHD before age 6, child psychiatrists are more frequently involved, which is appropriate, since they are the specialty, which is the most focused on ADHD and similar conditions."

In addition, since there is no specific test to formally diagnose the disorder, a doctor must rely heavily on the parents' observations and opinions. This can be a positive or negative thing since the symptoms are also the very same typical behaviors that most preschoolers demonstrate: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsive behavior.

Children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are in constant motion, squirm and fidget, make careless mistakes, often lose things, are easily distracted and don't listen well, and do not complete tasks. Symptoms need to occur in multiple settings (at home, in school, at social functions, etc.) and last for at least six months.

Some parents who aren't quite used to the unrelenting demands and energy of very young children might object to their bursts of energy. Not all, or even most high-energy children actually have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. However, it does have a very strong genetic component, so if the parents have had problems with hyperactivity, it is even more likely that their child could have it. Researchers suggest that the number may be as high as 75 percent for a child born of both parents with the disorder.

*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.*





## TEETH TIPS

DR. LAVANYA  
VENKATESWARAN  
Pediatric Dentist



# Sweets are not a treat for kids' teeth

One of the most exciting things to look forward to in the fall is Halloween, with all of its pumpkins, costumes, trick-or-treating, and yummy candy. It's a fun time for kids and parents, but as a pediatric dentist, I counsel my patients' parents to be mindful of their children's oral health given all the candy and sweets that are available. I don't advocate not eating any candy or chocolate, or enjoying sweets at all. I myself have a sweet tooth, and it's understandably nice to enjoy a treat now and again. What I do suggest is moderation and to keep quantity as well as quality in mind when deciding what your child will eat.

Eating too many sweets can quickly lead to dental decay, even if it's consumed for just a short period of time. Also, certain types of candy or chocolates can be more harmful to your child's dental health versus other types. Ideally, it's better to avoid the gummy, sticky candies, lollipops, or chocolates that have goey, sticky additives. A few treats from Halloween loot is fine, but try to weed out the majority of the above mentioned types of candy and chocolate from your child's trick-or-treat bag. Plain chocolates are a better

choice, and dark chocolate is even better, since it has antioxidants.

Having so much candy around after Halloween can be a temptation and lead to over indulgence. One idea I suggest to my patients' parents is to donate some of the candy that their children receive. There are many local causes that collect extra Halloween candy, and many dental practices offer a fun incentive program that motivates kids to part with some of their treats.

Holidays in general increase the risk of dental decay, because special treats get added into the normal diet. Here are some other things you can do to help reduce the risk of your child developing a cavity:

Make sure your kids are drinking enough water. In Manhattan, our tap water is fluoridated, so anytime you drink it, you get some protection from cavities.

Add a third tooth-brushing. If there are days you feel like your child is indulging more than usual in treats, add an extra tooth-brushing into his routine during the middle of the day in addition to the normal morning and bedtime brushing.

Get dental sealants. Sealants are usually applied to permanent molars. In school-aged kids, that means

the 6 year old and 12 year old molars. It's a relatively uncomplicated, painless, and non-invasive procedure. Sealants are applied to the biting surface of the teeth, the surface that has deep pits and fissures, and the surface most likely to develop decay in school-aged children. The sealant shallows out the depth of the pits and fissures, making it less likely for sticky food particles and bacteria to get stuck in them. In some cases, younger kids who only have primary molars, or baby molars, may also be candidates for sealants. This is something you can talk to your pediatric dentist about, as other factors specific to your child should be considered.

Halloween is just one example of a seasonal holiday approaching, and there are many more coming up that will include fun times and delicious goodies. Keep these dental tips in mind so that your child can enjoy his treats in moderation and still keep that healthy, beautiful smile!

*Dr. Lavanya Venkateswaran is a board-certified pediatric dentist. She is currently in private practice at Tribeca Smiles. Additionally, she is an attending at Columbia University Medical Center as an assistant professor of clinical pediatric dentistry.*



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Saving food means saving more money

**H**ow much food did you throw away today?

The average U.S. family of four spends \$640 each year on food that ends up in the garbage, according to a new survey by the American Chemistry Council. Vegetables — think about the slimy lettuce in your fridge drawer — are the most commonly wasted food.

We're sensitive to price while grocery shopping — where saving a quarter may sway our decision to buy a particular brand — but we throw out much of our hard-earned money when food goes to waste.

The top causes of food waste include buying or preparing too much, unwillingness to consume leftovers, and improper food stor-

age, according to research from the Cornell Food and Brand Lab. And strategies that are intended to save money — such as buying in bulk and shopping only monthly — actually contributed to food waste and didn't save money after all.

Ready to reduce your waste? Here are some tips:

**Stock up only on food you're sure your family can eat at its peak.** Will you really consume the package of six hearts of romaine lettuce, double package of fresh mozzarella, or crate of oranges found at a club store?

**Shop as if you have a small refrigerator.** Our fridges tend to be too large, and it's easy to load them up with more than we can eat.



Buy smaller amounts of the highest quality foods you can. This way, you're more likely to eat them.

**Elevate scraps and leaves.** Turn stems, peels, and leaves into ingredients rather than waste. Carrot tops, parsley, and asparagus can be pulsed into pesto. Broccoli stems can go into a stir fry. Fruit and veggies that are bruised or will soon be overripe can be blended into a smoothie.

**Save and eat the tiny amounts.** Wrap up the uneaten half-sandwich from lunch or the small amount of leftover casserole. Either can become a kid-sized portion for dinner.

**Eat down your fridge.** Rediscover the art of making soup, frittatas, salads, or stews using what you already have. Dedicate one day a week to using up any leftovers.

**Try composting.** It's the perfect way to turn food scraps into free fertilizer. Instead of putting potato peels, moldy berries, or coffee grounds down the garbage disposal, throw them in a ventilated, covered bin in your yard. Occasionally toss some black dirt into it.

*Christine Palumbo, registered dietician, is a happy composter in Naperville, Ill. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.*

### Southwestern smoky ranchero burger with grilled avocado

Makes four servings  
Prep Time: 20 minutes  
Cook Time: 12 minutes

#### INGREDIENTS:

##### LIME MAYONNAISE:

1/4 cup mayonnaise  
1 tbsp lime juice  
1 package McCormick® Grill Mates® Smoky Ranchero Marinade, divided

##### STUFFED AVOCADO:

2 ripe avocados  
1/4 cup crumbled Cotija cheese (may substitute shredded Mexican cheese blend or Monterey Jack cheese)

1/4 cup diced tomato

##### BURGERS:

1 pound 80 percent lean ground beef  
4 Kaiser rolls  
1 small red onion, thinly sliced

**DIRECTIONS:** For the lime mayonnaise, mix mayonnaise, lime juice, and 1 teaspoon of the marinade mix in small bowl until well blended. Cover. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

For the stuffed avocado, halve and



seed avocados. Carefully remove peel, leaving each half intact. Lightly season with salt and pepper. Mix cheese and tomato. Set aside.

For the burgers, mix ground beef and remaining marinade mix until well blended. Shape into four patties. Grill over medium heat four to six minutes per side or until burgers are cooked through (internal temperature of 160-degrees Fahrenheit). Grill avocado halves, cut-sides down, for 30 seconds. Turn over avocados. Place 2 tablespoons of cheese mixture into each

avocado half. Drizzle with hot sauce, if desired. Grill four to five minutes. Toast rolls on the grill, open-side down, about 30 seconds.

Serve burgers on rolls topped with stuffed avocados and onion slices. Press roll gently to smash the stuffed avocado. Serve with lime mayonnaise.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 650 calories, 45 g carbohydrates, 30 g protein, 39 g fat (10 g saturated), 82 mg cholesterol, 1323 mg sodium, 8 g fiber.

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## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# 'Best interests' left up to judges in NY

**W**hen a court decides what is in the best interest of the child, they could take into account 18 factors.

If you go to New York state's courts website, [nycourts.gov](http://nycourts.gov), you can find the following:

"When there is a court case that affects a child, like custody, parental rights, or adoption, the court will consider the 'best interest' of the child when making its decision."

But what does "best interest" of the child mean? The website continues:

"There is no standard definition of 'best interest' of the child. In general, it refers to the factors that the judge considers when deciding what

will best serve the child and who is best suited to take care of the child. In New York, the 'child's health and safety shall be the paramount concerns' when making a decision."

To say that "There is no standard definition of 'best interest' of the child" is an understatement. In New York, there are about 18 factors that a judge may take into account, including:

Age of the child; health and special needs of the child; capability of each parent to provide for care; history of the care provided by each parent; health and physical condition of each parent (which includes damage done by drug or alcohol abuse); preference of the child, depending on the child's age; maintaining stability in the child's life; and so on.

In addition to these, there are about a dozen other factors; plus, a judge may consider any other factor that may have a bearing on the best interest of the child.

This, of course, is all according to New York state law. Other states have their own laws regarding what is in a child's best interest, and many of those laws are different from ours.

Across much of the country there are disagreements regarding whether and how to reform child-custody laws. Some issues that are being raised:

- How to balance what parents want and parental rights against the rights of children.

- Should there be a presumption of joint custody? (Meaning, essentially, that the court will rule that both parents will spend roughly the same amount of time with their child, unless one parent presents convincing evidence that only she or he should have custody in this case.)

- If a parent has been away from a child due to military service, is this circumstance to be considered?

- If a child has witnessed domestic violence against a parent, should there be a presumption that the other parent cannot be awarded custody?

- Is evidence of Parental Alien-

ation Syndrome, where one parent has manipulated a child to hate or fear the other, something a judge can look at?

- What role should mediation play? Do findings that mediation is a much quicker and less expensive process than litigation warrant "mandatory mediation," meaning that parents would be required to engage in what is generally thought of as a voluntary process when it comes to custody cases?

- Should judges and lawyers involved in custody cases be mandated to learn more about how "high conflict" affects children?

A few points on what New York law says about custody cases:

- New York does not presume that parents will share joint custody.

- Joint custody should not be granted to "warring" parents; and if parents are in court over custody, this fact indicates that they are unable to jointly make decisions for their child.

- Domestic violence is a mandatory factor — meaning the court must consider it — in determining custody.

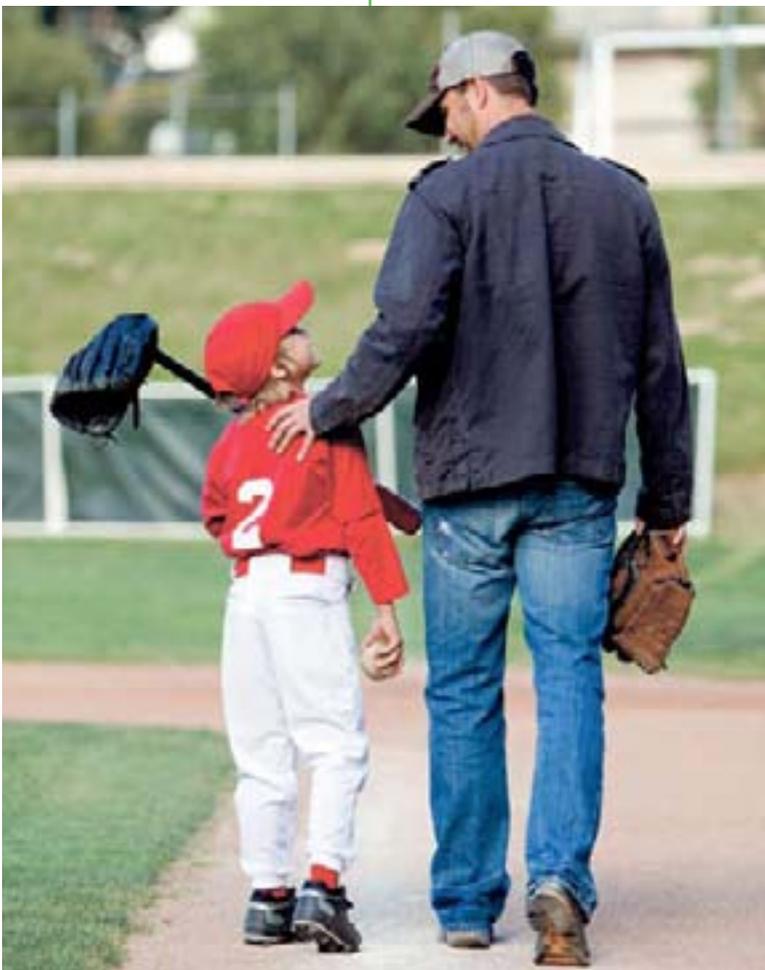
- If one parent is deceased, there is a presumption that the surviving parent will be awarded custody.

You can expect that questions about what is really in the best interest of our children will continue to be asked; and as opinions change, New York's laws may change with them.

**REFERENCE:** "Best Interest of the Child: A Legislative Journey Still in Motion" by Erin Bajackson in the *Journal of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers*, Vol. 25, 2013 p. 311. ([www.aaml.org/sites/default/files/MAT205\\_2.pdf](http://www.aaml.org/sites/default/files/MAT205_2.pdf))

*New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at [lee\\_chabin@lc-mediate.com](mailto:lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com), (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/lchabin](http://www.facebook.com/lchabin).*

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



# Calendar

OCTOBER



Photo by Elizabeth Graham

## Halloween at the Zoo

Have a ghoulishly good time with ghosts, goblins, and scary treats at the annual Boo at the Zoo event in Prospect Park Zoo on Oct. 24 and 25.

The annual spooktacular features fun activities such as a costumed character scavenger hunt, face painting, and other Halloween-

themed games and crafts. And of course, lots of animals to visit!

Boo at the Zoo, Oct. 24 and Oct. 25 from 11 am to 4 pm; free with zoo admission.

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

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# Calendar

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### THURS, OCT. 1

#### IN BROOKLYN

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

Travel to faraway places in your imagination by listening to tales from around the world.

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

Meet some friendly critters from the museum's living collection.

**Plant mystery tour:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Free with garden admission.

What are plants up to in the Discovery Garden? Investigate interesting plants and search for critters in the garden's habitats using microscopes, dip nets, and other science tools. Start your own science experiment to take home! Drop-off program for kids only — caregivers should remain on grounds during the program and be reachable by cellphone. Pre-registration required.

**Middle School fair:** Shell Bank (JHS 14), 2424 Batchelder St.; [www.nyc.gov/schools/middleschool](http://www.nyc.gov/schools/middleschool); 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm; Free.

Information sessions for parents of students entering middle school.

### FRI, OCT. 2

#### IN BROOKLYN

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

Learn about art as we explore artistic processes, techniques, and skills.

**Tap City:** On Stage at Kingsborough,



## Along the rivers

Come and listen to the songs that moved America along the rivers in "River Songs" at the Waterfront Museum Barge on Oct. 3.

Jeff Newell and the New Trad Quartet featuring Karl Lyden, Ben Stapp, and Brian Woodruff present the new musical revue featuring the music of the heartland. The group shares the stories and music from historic American wa-

terways — the Hudson, the Ohio, the Shenandoah, the Erie Canal, and the Mighty Mississippi — and the people who worked on them to build our nation.

"River Songs" on Oct. 3 at 2 pm. Free.

*Waterfront Museum Barge [290 Conover St. near Reed Street in Red Hook, (718) 624-4719; [www.waterfrontmuseum.org](http://www.waterfrontmuseum.org)].*

2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; [www.onstageatkingsborough.org](http://www.onstageatkingsborough.org); 8 pm; \$32-35.

Enjoy the best of tap dancing featuring Tony Waag, Kazu Kumagai, Felipe Galganni, Max Pollak, Karen Calaway Williams, and many others.

### SAT, OCT. 3

#### IN BROOKLYN

**Pumpkin fest:** Mazzone Hardware, Fourth Place between Court and Clinton streets; 10 am - 4 pm; Free.

The 11th annual event hosted by Mazzone Hardware will be bursting with clowns, musical entertainment, free refreshments and ghoulishly good fun!

**Pop-Up Audubon:** Fantastic Foliage: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 10 am-3 pm; Free.

Brooklyn's last-remaining forest becomes a real-world laboratory for

hands-on discovery. Take an in-depth look at the largest organism within this habitat with bird-watching, mulch-spreading, and outdoor play.

#### Family Discovery Weekends:

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

Experiment, learn and play together.

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

Start off the day with reading a favorite transportation story. For children 2 to 5 years old.

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

Children older than 3 years create their very own map of the city.

**River Songs:** Waterfront Museum Barge, 290 Conover St. near Reed Street; (718) 624-4719; [www.waterfrontmuseum.org](http://www.waterfrontmuseum.org); 2 pm to pm; Free.

Jeff Newell's New Trad Quartet presents this new musical revue featuring stories and songs from historic American waterways.

**Kids Corner:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org); 8 pm; Free.

In English and Spanish- singing, creative movement, and music-making to popular Latin American songs. Target free Saturdays.

### SUN, OCT. 4

#### IN BROOKLYN

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

The new exhibit is filled with Korean arts and culture, featuring Vong Pak's Korean Drum and Dance Trupe.

**Pop-Up Audubon:** Fantastic Foliage: 10 am-3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

#### Family Discovery Weekends:

10:30 am to 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Arty Facts:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org); 11 am and 1:30 pm; Materials fee plus museum admission.

Families enjoy a day at the museum with hands on activities, and explore the works of artists.

**Blessing of the animals:** St. Paul's Church, 157 St. Paul's Place, at Ocean Avenue; (718) 282-2100; 12:30 pm; Free.

Bring your leashed, crated or otherwise secured animals the annual Blessing of the Animals service. The event will include the blessing by Father Sheldon Hamblin and live organ music.

**Map NYC:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Mammoth Follies:** On Stage at Kingsborough, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; [www.onstageatkingsborough.org](http://www.onstageatkingsborough.org); 2 pm; \$12.

The Hudson Vagabond Puppets explores the great age of the dinosaur in an old-fashioned revue of original songs, witty jokes, and earth-smashing dances in this musical trip through prehistory.

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

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3–5 pm; Free.

Thyra Heder reads from her new illustrated tale “The Bear Report,” where Sophie forms an unlikely friendship with a polar bear named Olafur, who teaches her all about his icy, arctic home.

**“The Bear Report”:** PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main St. at Water Street; (718) 666–3049; [www.powerhouse-arena.com](http://www.powerhouse-arena.com); 3 pm to 5 pm; Free.

Children’s author Thyra Heder introduces her newest book. RSVP requested.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Medieval festival:** Ft. Tyron Park - Margaret Corbin Drive and lawns, Henry Hudson Parkway and W. 190th Street, Manhattan; (212) 795–1388; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 11:30 am – 6 pm; Free.

Get ready to joust, see jugglers and jesters and enjoy a good time in the Middle Ages. Costumed vendors are on hand to sell a wide variety of period items as well as food and drink. Food, clothing, and crafts are available for purchase.

## TUES, OCT. 6

### IN BROOKLYN

**Sensory Room:** Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735–4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 2 pm to 4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

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

## THURS, OCT. 8

### IN BROOKLYN

**Tales of wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Bug Out:** 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Plant mystery tour:** 4 pm to 5:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

## FRI, OCT. 9

### IN BROOKLYN

**Art Kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Friday, Oct. 2.

## SAT, OCT. 10

### IN BROOKLYN

**Pop-Up Audubon:** Fantastic Foliage: 10 am–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Storytime depot:** 11:30 am to



## Harvest fun in Coney

Come and have a “bootiful” weekend at Luna Park now through Nov. 1.

Halloween Harvest is a fall festival with lots of fun activities, including story-telling, pumpkin-picking, painting and caricature artists, costume parade for dogs, costume karaoke, and much more.

See the Boardwalk decorated with Halloween and autumn finery, plus take the plunge on all the thrilling rides and enjoy fabulous food vendors, a booth for airbrush tattoos, magicians strolling along the Boardwalk, balloon artists, hair braiders, jugglers, and

face painters. Families can also enjoy the Monster Mash stage for dancing, Creepy Crawly Crafts, and Camp Luna for stories and s’mores.

Halloween Harvest, now through Nov. 1, Saturdays from noon to 8 pm and Sundays from noon to 6 pm. Entrance is free to the park, rides and activities extra.

For a complete schedule of Halloween Harvest events and activities, go to [www.lunaparknyc.com](http://www.lunaparknyc.com).

*Luna Park (Boardwalk and W. 12th Street in Coney Island; [www.lunaparknyc.com](http://www.lunaparknyc.com))*

noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Map NYC:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**The Draconids Meteor Showers:** Inwood Hill Park, Seaman Ave. and Isham Street, Manhattan; (212) 628–2345; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 7 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

Urban Rangers are your guide to the universe and this meteor shower, which often appears at the mouth of the Draco the Dragon constellation. Best observed on a clear moon-less night.

## SUN, OCT. 11

### IN BROOKLYN

**Pop-Up Audubon:** Fantastic Foliage:

10 am–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Arty Facts:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638–5000; [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org); 11 am and 1:30 pm; Materials fee plus museum admission.

Families enjoy a day at the museum with hands-on activities, and explore the works of artists.

**Map NYC:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Fireside Pies:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789–2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 5:30–7:30 pm; \$10 (\$30 for a family of four, cash only).

Join the Prospect Park Alliance in baking apple pies in the fire of the Lefferts Historic House’s hearth. With les-

sons on the history of Lefferts and fire-making.

## MON, OCT. 12

### IN BROOKLYN

**“Beauty and the Beast”:** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965–3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm; \$9 (\$10 adults).

Presented by Puppetworks, this production is suitable for children 4 years and older. The hand-carved, wooden marionettes in costumes and settings are typical of 15th-century French design. Reservations suggested. Special performance.

## TUES, OCT. 13

### IN BROOKLYN

**Sensory Room:** 2 pm to 4:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Tuesday, Oct. 6.

## THURS, OCT. 15

### IN BROOKLYN

**Tales of wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Bug Out:** 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Plant mystery tour:** 4 pm to 5:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

## FRI, OCT. 16

### IN BROOKLYN

**Art Kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children’s Museum. See Friday, Oct. 2.

## SAT, OCT. 17

### IN BROOKLYN

**Pop-Up Audubon:** Fantastic Foliage: 10 am–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Borough wide school fair:** Sunset Park High School, 153 35th St. and Fourth Avenue; [schools.nyc.gov/choice](http://schools.nyc.gov/choice); 11 am – 3 pm; Free.

Learn all about programs, the new school year, and what each school has to offer.

**Storytime depot:** 11:30 am to noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

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

Create your own fantasy vehicle design. For children 4 years and older.

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

## SUN, OCT. 18

### IN BROOKLYN

**Pop-Up Audubon:** Fantastic Foliage: 10 am–3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Arty Facts:** 11 am and 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 11.

**Borough wide school fair:** 11 am–3 pm. Sunset Park High School. See Saturday, Oct. 17.

**Mixed up Vehicles:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 17.

## TUES, OCT. 20

### IN BROOKLYN

**Sensory Room:** 2 pm to 4:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, Oct. 6.

## THURS, OCT. 22

### IN BROOKLYN

**Tales of wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Bug Out:** 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Plant mystery tour:** 4 pm to 5:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

## FRI, OCT. 23

### IN BROOKLYN

**Art Kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Oct. 2.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Candlelight Ghost Tours:** Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. Fourth St. at Lafayette Street, Manhattan; (212) 777-1089; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm; \$25-\$35 (\$15 museum members).

Older teens will enjoy this venture into the ghostly halls of history by hearing chilling tales of phantoms, ghosts, and ghouls while touring the Merchant House mansion. Reservations required.

## SAT, OCT. 24

### IN BROOKLYN

**Boo at the Zoo:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; [www.prospectpark-zoo.com](http://www.prospectpark-zoo.com); 11 am–4 pm; Free with zoo admission.

Prospect Park Zoo's annual Boo at the Zoo features fun activities such as a costumed character scavenger hunt, face painting, and other Halloween-themed games and crafts. And of



Photo by Paul Martinka

## American as apple pie

Fireside Pies is a hearth-cooking event as American as apple pie — so come and bake one on Oct. 11 at Lefferts Historic Homestead.

The Fireside Pies event is hosted by the Prospect Park Alliance and offers an opportunity for families to bake apple pies in the outdoor hearth of the Lefferts Historic House. Along with

baking a really good pie, families learn lessons on the history of Lefferts and fire-making.

Fireside Pies on Oct. 11 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. \$10 per person or \$30 for a family of four, cash only.

*Lefferts Historic Homestead [452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, (718) 789-2822, [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org)]*

course, lots of animals to visit!

**Storytime depot:** 11:30 am to noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

**Creepy Crawly Halloween:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 1–4:30 pm; Free.

From dissecting owl pellets to a watching a snake eat a mouse, take a closer look at Halloween's creepiest animals with an afternoon of activities that will get your hands dirty.

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

Use your imagination and create a wacky vehicle model for the future. For children 6 years and older.

**Igor Butman's Moscow Jazz Orchestra:** On Stage at Kingsborough, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; [www.onstageatkingsborough.org](http://www.onstageatkingsborough.org); 8 pm; \$25-\$30.

Presenting the hottest jazz orchestra in Russia and one of the best big bands

in the world!

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Candlelight Ghost Tours:** 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Merchant's House Museum. See Friday, Oct. 23.

## SUN, OCT. 25

### IN BROOKLYN

**Flea Market:** Bay Ridge Jewish Center, Fourth Avenue and 81st Street; (718) 836-3103; [www.brjc.org](http://www.brjc.org); 9 am to 4 pm; Free.

New and used items and more than 50 vendors.

**Boo at the Zoo:** 11 am–4 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Oct. 24.

**Arty Facts:** 11 am and 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 11.

**Halloween Haunted Walk:** Lookout Hill at Prospect Park, Prospect Park Southwest. Enter at 16th St. and Prospect Park Southwest; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Noon–3 pm; Free.

Deep in the Park lies Lookout Hill, the highest point in Prospect Park and

home of the Prospect Park Alliance's Annual Halloween Haunted Walk. Ghouls and goblins lurk behind the trees, ready to provide a silly scare!

### Creepy Crawly Halloween:

1–4:30 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Saturday, Oct. 24.

**Transportation inventions:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 24.

**Scary Stories With Tammy Hall:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 2–4 pm; \$3 suggested donation.

Master storyteller Tammy Hall keeps the tradition of scary stories alive with tales told in the village of Flatbush 200 years ago.

## TUES, OCT. 27

### IN BROOKLYN

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

Greg Attonito of the Bouncing Souls and Singer Shanti Wintergate rock family friendly shows plus Nina Pajama Parties.

**Sensory Room:** 2 pm to 4 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, Oct. 6.

## WED, OCT. 28

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Candlelight Ghost Tours:** Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. Fourth St. at Lafayette Street, Manhattan; (212) 777-1089; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm; \$30-\$40 (\$15 museum members).

Older teens will enjoy this venture into the ghostly halls of history by hearing chilling tales of phantoms, ghosts, and ghouls while touring the Merchant House mansion. Reservations required.

## THURS, OCT. 29

### IN BROOKLYN

**Tales of wonder:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Bug Out:** 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 1.

**Subway shindig:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 6 pm to 8 pm; \$7 (\$5 children and seniors).

Get dressed up in your favorite cos-

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# Calendar

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

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tume for a night of fun, frolic and ghosts. Enjoy a puppet play too. Suitable for children 2 to 7 years old.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Candlelight Ghost Tours:** 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Merchant's House Museum. See Wednesday, Oct. 28.

## FRI, OCT. 30

### IN BROOKLYN

**Art Kids:** 11:30 am and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Friday, Oct. 2.

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

Vintage subway cars become the stage for this fun puppet show. For children 5 and older.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Candlelight Ghost Tours:** 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Merchant's House Museum. See Wednesday, Oct. 28.

## SAT, OCT. 31

### IN BROOKLYN

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

Calling all ghosts and goblins, come dressed to impress and celebrate Halloween! Join for a spooky time complete with a performance by Mariachi Tapatio de Alvaro Paulino and a ghoulish glowing dance party.

**Haunted Halloween Carnival:** First Street Recreation Center, First



## Fun with dinosaurs

Hudson Vagabond Puppets presents "Mammoth Follies" at On Stage at Kingsborough Community College on Oct. 4.

"Mammoth Follies" explores the great age of the dinosaur in an old-fashioned revue of original songs, witty jokes, and earth-smashing dances.

Enormous dinosaur puppets populate the stage, including host-with-the-most Willie Mammoth, Smiley the Saber-Toothed

Tiger, Bessie the lovable 27-foot long Apatosaurus, Tony and Trixie Triceratops, Terry the Pterodactyl, and the 11-foot tall T. Rex in a musical trip through pre-history.

"Mammoth Follies" on Oct. 4 at 2 pm; tickets are \$12.

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

Street at Fourth Avenue; [www.puppetryarts.org](http://www.puppetryarts.org); 11 am-3 pm; Free.

Brooklyn-Puppetry Arts New York will host its 11th Annual Haunted Halloween Carnival, with puppet-making, games, prizes and a haunted house.

**Storytime depot:** 11:30 am to noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 3.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Tales from the Crypt:** Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. Fourth St. at Lafayette Street, Manhattan; (212) 777-1089; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 7 pm to 8 pm; \$25 (\$15 museum members).

Horror on Halloween. Join in for a dramatic reading from the 19th-century Gothic literature stories. Reservations required. For older teens.



## 'Beauty and the Beast'

The tale that is old as time, "Beauty and the Beast" is at Puppetworks on weekends from Sept. 19 through Dec. 20 with a special performance on Oct. 12.

Artistic director Nicolas Coppola has adapted this version that features a cast of hand-carved, wooden marionettes in costumes and settings typical of 15th-century French design. This production features a live actor made up as Beast. It also includes special effects, including animated vines that capture the prince in the Enchanted Wood. Music from

French composer Jules Massenet accompanies the play.

Suitable for children 4 years and older.

"Beauty and the Beast," Saturdays and Sundays, Sept. 19 through Dec. 20 at 12:30 and 2:30 pm, with a special performance on Columbus Day, Oct. 12. Tickets are \$9 for children, \$10 for adults, and \$8 per person in groups of 20 or more. Reservations are suggested.

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

## SUN, NOV. 1

### IN BROOKLYN

**Arty Facts:** 11 am and 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 11.

**Shadow Puppet stage:** 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Friday, Oct. 30.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN BROOKLYN

**"Pattern Wizardry":** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, Now - Fri, Oct. 30; \$9 (Free on Thursdays from 3 to 5 pm).

Through the magic of patterns found in nature and hands-on activities featuring objects from the museum's 29,000 cultural and natural science collection, the exhibit promotes concepts of math and science through hands-on learning experiences.

**Transit Tots:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://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.

**"Here. There. Everywhere.":** gallery505, 505 Court St. between Huntington and W. Ninth streets; [www.lizholly.com](http://www.lizholly.com); Daily, Noon-9 pm; Thurs, Oct. 1 - Thurs, Dec. 31; Free.

Abstract painter Liz Holly's watercolor works are exhibited in "Here. There. Everywhere." With a blend of calligraphy and watercolor paints, Holly's work reaches to represent the landscapes of everywhere from Pennsylvania to Brooklyn.

**Nature Exploration:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Thursdays and Fridays, Noon-4 pm, 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. Children enjoy bird nerd games, nature on the go, and animal encounters.

**Toys, Games, and Puzzles:** Gerriksen Beach Public Library, 2808 Gerriksen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 10:30 am-11:30 am, Now - Thurs, Dec. 31; Free.

Playtime for kids infant to age 5.

**Reading is Fundamental:** Ger-

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ritsen Beach Public Library, 2808 Geritsen Ave. between Bartlett Place and Gotham Avenue; (718) 368-1435; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 2 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 31; Free.

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

**Game On! Board Games:** Sunset Park Public Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 965-6533; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 3:30–5 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 31; Free.

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

**Tween Teen Tech Time:** Sunset Park Public Library, 5108 Fourth Ave. at 51st Street; (718) 965-6533; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org); Fridays, 3:30–5 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 31; Free.

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

**Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket:** Grand Army Plaza, Union Street between Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park West; [www.grownyc.org](http://www.grownyc.org); Saturdays, 8 am–4 pm, Now – Thurs, Dec. 31; Free.

Families can pick up fresh produce and artisanal items.

**Heart and Seoul:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Sat, Oct. 3 – Sun, Jan. 3, 2016; Free with museum admission.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum will ride Hallyu (the Korean Wave) with a new exhibit that brings modern-day South Korea to New York City.

**Halloween harvest fest:** Luna Park, Boardwalk and W. 12th Street; [www.lunaparknyc.com](http://www.lunaparknyc.com); Saturdays, Noon–8 pm, Sundays, Noon–6 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; The park is free (rides extra).

Families enjoy the Boardwalk and rides, plus story-telling, pumpkin-picking, painting and caricature artists, and even a costume parade for the pooches. The Boardwalk will be decorated with Halloween and autumn finery. Visit an airbrush tattoo booth, see magicians strolling along the Boardwalk, balloon artists, hair braiders, jugglers, and Monster Mash stage for dancing, Creepy Crawly Crafts, and Camp Luna for stories and s'mores.

**"Beauty and the Beast":** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Dec. 20; \$9 (\$10 adults).

Presented by Puppetworks, this pro-



## Circus is coming!

The Big Apple Circus is returning to Lincoln Center with brand-new show "The Grand Tour," running from Oct. 21 to Jan. 10, 2016.

"The Grand Tour" opens the 38th season of the Big Apple Circus, and transports the audience to the Roaring '20s, the dawn of the modern travel age.

With every seat less than 50 feet from the stage, audiences will be awed by the world-class entertainers as they perform breathtaking acts. Clowns, jugglers, acrobats, and aerialists from Africa, Asia, Australia,

Europe, and North and South America appear with ponies, puppies and more. The troupe sets off on its own whirlwind adventure, accompanied by the live, seven-piece Big Apple Circus Band at each performance.

Big Apple Circus "The Grand Tour," Tuesday through Sunday, Oct. 21 to Jan. 10, 2016. Show times are scheduled from 11 am through 6:30 pm and tickets prices start at \$25.

*Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts [10 Lincoln Center Plaza on the Upper West Side, (212) 875-5374; [www.bigapplecircus.org](http://www.bigapplecircus.org)].*

duction is suitable for children 4 years and older. The hand-carved, wooden marionettes in costumes and settings are typical of 15th-century French design. Reservations suggested.

**Fishing Fun:** North end of Esplanade, East Drive and Ocean Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://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

bird.

**Bird Watching:** North end of Esplanade, East Drive and Ocean Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 2 pm and 3 to 4 pm; 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:** Lef-ferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush

Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1–3 pm, Now – Mon, Dec. 28; \$3.

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

**Kids discovery stations:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:15 am to 12:30 pm, Tues, Oct. 6 – Fri, Nov. 6; Free with garden admission.

Get your hands dirty at kids' Discovery stations throughout the garden. Investigate a mystery plant, hold a water plant, and learn how it floats, or go on a pollinator hunt in the meadow!

**Changing seasons:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am – 3 pm, Sat, Oct. 10 – Sat, Oct. 31; Free.

Prospect Park Alliance offers twice the Pop-Up fun with a second tent that explores the Park's aquatic habitats. Explore how seasonal shifts affect the behavior of animals and influence plants in Prospect Park.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Activity Trail:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronx-zoo.com](http://www.bronx-zoo.com); Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 am – 3pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; Free with zoo admission.

Starting at the Dancing Crane Cafe, you will balance like a flamingo, run like an ostrich, and crawl like a crocodile.

**Flight quest:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronx-zoo.com](http://www.bronx-zoo.com); Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am – 3pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 1; Free with zoo admission.

Take part in the World of Birds quest and check them off your list, then examine an African bee eater.

**Big Apple Circus:** Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts, 10 Lincoln Center Plaza, Manhattan; (212) 875-5374; [www.bigapplecircus.org](http://www.bigapplecircus.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, Various times between 11 am and 6:30 pm, Wed, Oct. 21 – Sun, Jan. 10, 2016; \$25 and up.

Pitch the tents, the Big Apple Circus is returning for the 38th season. "The Grand Tour" transports audiences to the Roaring 1920s, the advent of the modern travel era. With every seat less than 50 feet from the stage, audiences will be awed by the world-class entertainers as they perform breathtaking acts. Clowns, jugglers, acrobats, and aerialists from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America appear with ponies, puppies and more.



## TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA



# Fall for fall picnics

**A**s the weather starts to cool down, I love spending sunny, fall days outside. Going for a hike in the woods, tailgating at a football game, or going apple picking at a farm are just a few of the ways I like to spend time in the fresh air before the weather turns. When planning these outings, I always make sure to pack a cooler bag with lots of delicious foods. Packing your own lunch can make an outing last longer. With the right planning, you can avoid fast food or other unhealthy choices and create a memorable picnic! Here are a few tips to get you started:

### Make your own hummus

Packaged hummus is delicious and a great way to add protein and fiber to your diet. If you own a food processor, blending your own takes only minutes and you can customize it to your liking.

Simply blend one can of drained chickpeas, the juice of half a lemon, two tablespoons of tahini paste, a quarter teaspoon ground cumin, and a pinch of salt. With the motor running on the food processor, drizzle

in three tablespoons of good quality olive oil or grapeseed oil. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. I like to bring along cut-up carrots, snap peas, and whole-wheat pita chips to make it into a meal.

### Yogurt on the go

Sweeten plain Greek yogurt with some good quality maple syrup. Pack it into pint containers with cut-up strawberries and blueberries. Don't forget to pack the spoons!

### Cut up some apples

Bring some apples along in your cooler bag. The wide variety of sweet and crunchy apples available in the fall make a great snack, and hold up really well. I like to pack a small cutting board and a steak knife wrapped in a kitchen towel. I find we are much more likely to eat apples when they are sliced! Don't cut the apples too far in advance, as they will turn brown quickly!

### Sample local cheeses

There are so many great, small cheese producers all over the coun-

try. Bring along a different type on each outing and sample what these cheese whizzes are creating! You can use the same cutting board and knife as the apples. Don't forget a Ziploc bag for the leftovers.

### Put your salad in a wrap

Wraps are a great way to eat lots of greens on the go. Put clean, cut-up lettuces into a wrap with your favorite salad add-ins. I like Kalamata olives, feta cheese, and some of the homemade or store-bought hummus. Keep the tomatoes and dressing on the side, so your wrap doesn't become too soggy.

When packing your picnic, don't forget to bring a few paper towels and a plastic bag for trash.

*Joanna DeVita, executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, is an accomplished New York chef. She is the mother of two (ages 5 and 2) and loves nothing more than spending time with them in the outdoors and sharing her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking with her family.*

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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Blast from the past

Make no bones about it, your budding paleontologist will be a fierce competitor for the best costume prize at the Halloween party with this dinosaur costume from Chasing Fireflies. Turning the idea of a typical T-Rex costume inside out, this frightening fossil is comprised of an 11-piece set (including a black shirt and pants, and soft polyester-polyurethane head-piece, belt, tail, legs, hands, and feet), and it's available in sizes 4-16. Give this T-Rex some room, because he is the king of the party!

*Dinosaur Skeleton Costume, \$85, [www.chasing-fireflies.com](http://www.chasing-fireflies.com).*



## All Hallows Zzzzs

Babies can tire quickly of their Halloween costumes, so you'll be glad that you have this glow-in-the-dark skeleton sleeper in your back pocket, er, diaper bag. It has stripes of orange on a white field, with glow-in-the-dark black bones. (Washing the garment inside-out will preserve the glow.) The sleeper's ready-to-grow cuffs means baby gets even more use out of this sturdy, well-made garment, so don't be afraid to buy a bigger size (newborn-3).

This sleeper suit from Hanna Andersson is everything your child's costume is not; it's soft, and made of organic cotton with smooth, flat-lock seams. A neck-to-knee zipper

— which facilitates fast diaper changes — has a protective tab at the neck. This sleeper suit can't help but make your baby's first Halloween extra sweet, by extending



the masquerade into the wee hours of the night.

*Glow in Dark Skeleton Sleeper, \$40, [www.hannaandersson.com](http://www.hannaandersson.com).*

## Celebrate your bump-kin

This Halloween, celebrate your little bump-kin with a cotton-blend shirt from DJammar Maternity's Etsy.com shop. The long, orange top puts a grinning face of a jack-o'-lantern squarely on your belly — and a smile on the



faces of all who see you. Available in sizes small to extra-large, this shirt will help you enjoy your pregnancy while you wait for your little pumpkin to ripen.

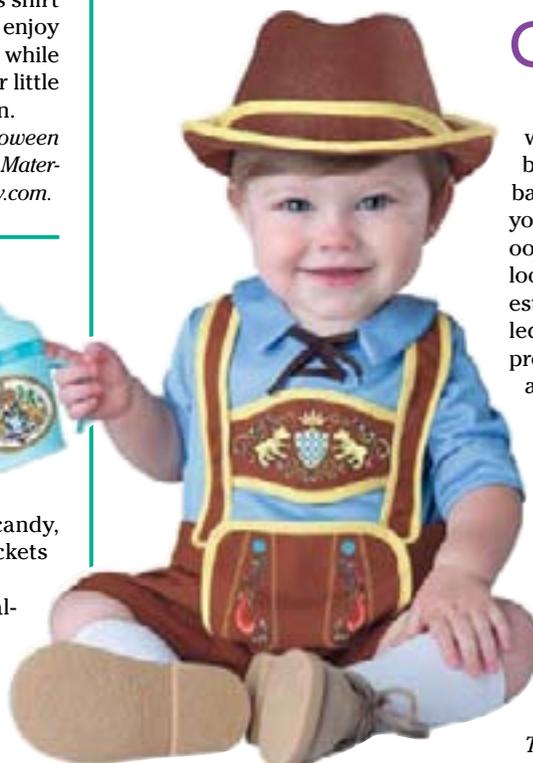
*Maternity Halloween Shirt by DJammar Maternity, \$27.99, [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).*

## Waiting game

As soon as they see the displays of candy in the market, your kids start asking, "How much longer until Halloween?" Help ease the interminable waiting until the trick-or-treating can commence with this felt calendar from Pottery Barn Kids. You can hide tiny toys, candy, stickers, spooky poems, and more in the 31 pockets that are held up by a grinning jack-o'-lantern.

The 55-inch high decoration can be personalized with a monogram or name for an additional \$9. It's a gourd-eous way for children to count down the days till they can finally don their costumes!

*Pumpkin Countdown Calendar, \$45, [www.potterybarnkids.com](http://www.potterybarnkids.com).*



## Go Deutsch!

There is no shortage of events where you can celebrate Oktoberfest in the boroughs, and now, baby can dress the part! Prepare yourself for a chorus of adoring oohs and aahs, when they get a look at your tot sporting this polyester version of traditional Alpine lederhosen from Costume Express. This toddler outfit — available in sizes 12-18 months and 18 months-2T — is as delicious as a slice of Black Forest Cake, and it includes the blue and brown jumpsuit with H-shaped suspenders, brown and yellow hat, and a "Sippy Stein" sticker (to be applied to a cup you provide). Get ready to pass the pretzels and bump steins with a hearty "Prost," because this costume is a real Wiener!

*Little Lederhosen Costume for Toddlers, \$29.99, [www.costumeexpress.com](http://www.costumeexpress.com).*

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Ages  
3-7

### FasTrackKids CORE

FasTrackKids Core is based on the belief that most children are potentially gifted if fed the proper intellectual and creative stimulation early-on. The FasTrackKids Core enrichment program is designed to stimulate the mental development of potentially gifted 3-7 year old children. It is a unique experience for children and complements preschool, home school, kindergarten and first grade programs. For 2 hours a week, this fast-paced, fun and fully interactive program captivates and entertains as it delivers truly meaningful lessons.

Our goals are to prepare children for school and life, develop creative thinking and problem solving skills, teach speaking and communication skills through videotaped exercises, teach the application and transfer of knowledge, promote leadership and personal growth and encourage a lifelong love of learning.

Research shows that participation in FasTrackKids can raise a child's IQ by up to 30 points. The enhancement of your child's growth in education and communication skills compliments other school programs perfectly and virtually guarantees the transition into a highly successful public or private school setting.

Ages  
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### Handwriting Without Tears

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Ages  
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### FasTrackKids Preschool Alternative

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Ages  
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Ages  
4-7

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Our expertly crafted, comprehensive curriculum utilizes SmartBoard technology, manipulatives, and proprietary, colored, workbooks in order to hold student interest and guarantee their success. Last year, we had a success rate of over 90%!

NEW  
Ages  
6-9

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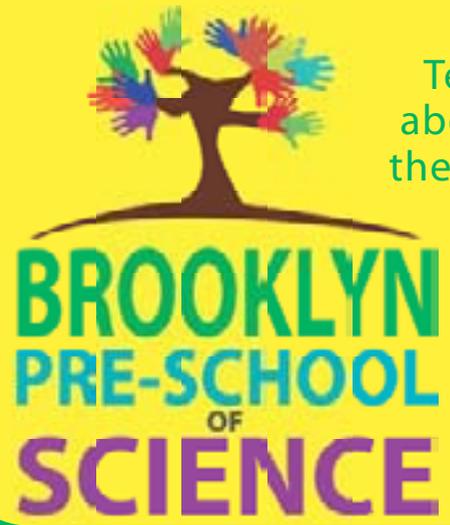
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