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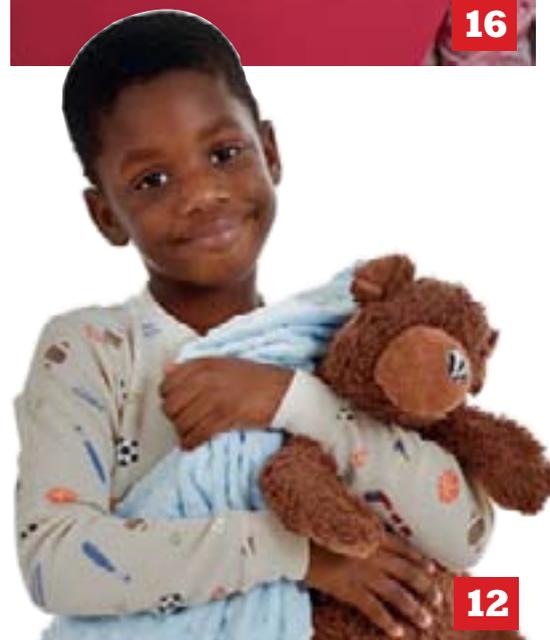
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February thoughts

When I was a kid there were no pediatric dentists. Dentistry was not the science it is now, although many advancements had been made and just having fluoride in our water helped my generation have better teeth and



gums than the ones before. Now we know that good dentistry actually begins with babies, with diet, and with consistent dental care. Great specialization has taken place and we now have highly trained professionals in wonderful child-friendly offices and atmospheres, with state-of-the-art equipment. It has made a world of difference and parents should make sure their children visit their dentist early on in their lives,

one has to wonder why it's so often left out of the "health care" portfolio. I strongly believe we need to band together on this topic and get our insurance companies/plans and our legislators to include dentistry in our health coverage. One of the problems, it seems to me, is that all of these decision makers already have their own coverage for their families in their very rich and broad health care packages, and that, like many

just like they do with their pediatrician.

This is Children's Dental Health Month and a good time to consider whether your family has found the practice you need to ensure your children's good health. Dentistry is an essential part of it and

other things in life, it's an "I've got mine" mentality that leaves so many of the rest of us without. There isn't a Congressional office holder with this problem and I've discovered that most people are unaware that just one term in office guarantees a person benefits for life. These benefits are real "Cadillac" plans and not many of us have them.

This is also the month when we really know winter is here and it usually gives us a bit of a beating. Fortunately we had a mild December and January in most ways, so hopefully we won't mind too much the winds of February. This year we will have one more day in February, so enjoy the Leap Year extra day!

And finally, there's Valentine's Day. A good day of business for restaurants and florists. It used to be a good day for the greeting card in-

dustry but I think perhaps email has put a dent in that option. The thing I always loved about Valentine's Day was making a card for the people I loved, especially my parents. Cutting and pasting is still something I enjoy and working with construction paper. I think I'm going to get started right now to make some cards. I hope both you and I get some nice cards, home made from our children. It's a wonderful feeling, and if we do, we can thank our lucky stars.

Have a great month! Thanks for reading.

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Simple ways to show your kids

LOVE

BY GAYLA GRACE

Your kids know you love them, right? Still, children can always use a few extra strokes or simple reminders of how important they are to us.

Try some new ways this month to say “I love you” with these tips:

Tell them the story of their births. Show pictures of how they looked as a newborn and talk about who came to visit in the beginning. Make sure they know how excited you were when they entered your life.

Love them despite their faults. Offer them grace freely and often.

Play together. Surprise them with a new game on Saturday morning. Enjoy donuts and hot chocolate while learning to play the game. Be sure to include the whole family.

Find a unique quality about your child and praise him for it. Whether it’s a sensitive spirit toward a sibling or a quick-to-forgive gesture toward friends, tell him how it makes him special.

Indulge in a child-specific treat. Enjoy some one-on-one time together while you indulge. Ask for

input and make plans ahead so your child knows it’s a special occasion.

Compliment your child in front of another adult. Be specific with an example of good behavior as you beam with pride.

Praise their efforts, not just results. Don’t expect perfection on every chore or straight A’s on every report card. Let your children know you notice when they do their best.

Read together. Let them pick their favorite book and read to them, even when you don’t want to.

Surprise your child with a simple gift through the mail such as a comic book, a glow-in-the-dark pencil, or his favorite player's card. Include a note of "I love you."

Play outside together on a cold day. Make snow angels. Go sledding one more time.

Accompany them to walk the dog. Ask about their day at school or a budding friendship. Listen more than you talk.

Allow them to be messy. Play with finger paints and play-doh. Go outside and spray silly string on each other.

Display their artwork on your refrigerator or window. Talk about what a great job they did and how you love to look at it every day.

Put a surprise in their lunch. Include a note that says, "I love you."

Be in the moment. Hop off social media and completely tune in when they're talking, focusing on their needs.

Patiently help with homework. Don't raise your voice when you have to explain it one more time.

Ask for their ideas when you plan your next vacation. Look at fun places to visit on the computer and dream together for future trips.

Get spiritual. Sit under the stars and talk about the beauty of God's creation.

Put on a happy face. Take off your serious hat and make them laugh. Tell jokes or watch a funny

movie together. Tickle them until they cry.

Offer a no-rules day. Let your kids stay in their pj's all day, and eat and play whatever they want.

Ask your child to sing to you. Join in and finish the song as a duet. Let your children know you love hearing their beautiful voices.

Make his day. Surprise your child with a simple gift through the mail such as a comic book, a glow-in-the-dark pencil, or his favorite player's card. Include a note of "I love you."

Get toasty. Make s'mores around the fire pit or roast marshmallows in the fireplace. Include a cup of hot cocoa or favorite beverage with it.

Begin a tradition. Start fun traditions for holidays and birthdays that your child can look forward to as a family.

Make friends. Get to know their friends and encourage healthy friendships. Take everyone out for a movie night or bowling night once in awhile.

Be her biggest fan. Let your child experiment with sporting activities, music lessons, and other extracurricular activities. Cheer her on as she seeks to find what fits for her.

Appreciate who they are. Allow them to be different from you.

Treat them with respect. Don't interrupt when they're talking. Ask for their opinion as often as possible and include them in family decisions as they get older.

Dream a little. Daydream with them about their future spouse, career, or long-term ambitions.

Use physical affection. Hug, kiss, and shower them with physical affection every day. Tell them at least once a day, "I love you."

Gayla Grace is a freelance journalist who enjoys finding unique ways to show love to her five children.



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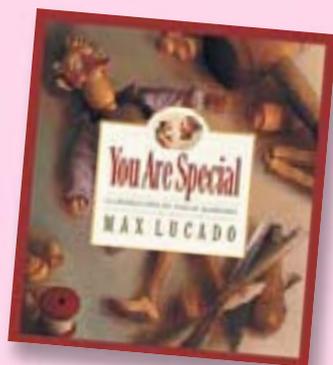
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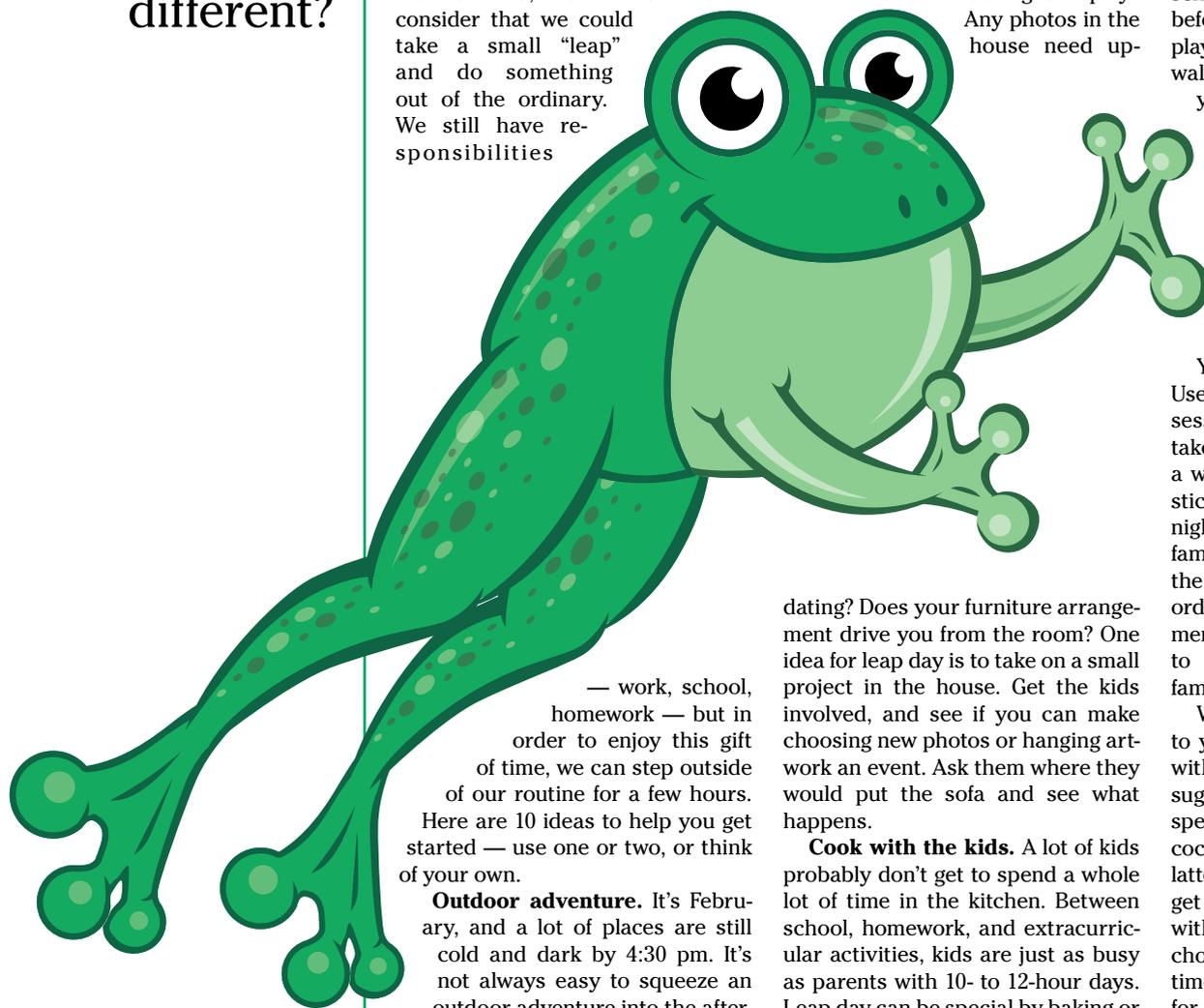
Time to take a LEAP

We get an extra day this year; why not try something different?

BY SARA MARCHESSAULT

Every four years we get an extra day added to the calendar — Feb. 29. This year, it's a Monday. This day is not always on our calendar, and it could be considered extra time, or a gift of time.

Before this day is filled with normal routines, it's fun to consider that we could take a small "leap" and do something out of the ordinary. We still have responsibilities



— work, school, homework — but in order to enjoy this gift of time, we can step outside of our routine for a few hours. Here are 10 ideas to help you get started — use one or two, or think of your own.

Outdoor adventure. It's February, and a lot of places are still cold and dark by 4:30 pm. It's not always easy to squeeze an outdoor adventure into the afternoon. Between getting home from school, snacks, and unpacking bags, we run out of time quickly. Leap day could be the day that the adventure is made a priority. It's a special day. Head outside for an hour or two in the afternoon. Explore your neigh-

borhood. Look at what bugs you can find. Climb trees. Sled down your favorite local hill. Then go inside and have hot chocolate afterward.

Craft day. My kids love it when they wake up in the morning, or come home from school, to find what we call "the art sheet" on the floor. We put our kid-size table on top of the sheet and break out the craft supplies. Colored paper, scissors, glue, glitter, pipe cleaners, hole punchers ...anything that we have comes out on craft day. The table is left out for most of the day, and they can come and go as they please. We listen to music and talk, take breaks for food, and at the end of the day, they are proud of what they've created. And the time we've spent together is well worth the mess.

Nesting. Do you have a pile of children's artwork that you've been meaning to display? Any photos in the house need up-

a fun day to try a new ethnic meal. See what you can find in your community for a meal experience you or the kids have never had before. Try Ethiopian, Indian, French, or Hawaiian. Ask lots of questions, and enjoy your time together.

Museum stop. Does your community have a museum that caters to kids? Or do you have an older child interested in art? This could be the day to incorporate a special outing to a museum or an art gallery. See what's in your community that you can go and explore and share with your kids that offers an experience of culture and learning that is outside of their daily norm.

Return to an old stomping ground. This can be especially fun if you've lived in the same city for a long time, but moved to a new neighborhood or your kids have switched school. Visit a place that you've been before but rarely go back to — a playground with a great swing set, a walk down a favorite street, a church you used to go to, or even the kids' section of the library. Choose a place that you feel good about visiting and are eager to return to.

Start a new routine. Is there anything that you, or your family as a whole, committed to establishing or starting at the start of the New Year, and now has fizzled out? Use Feb. 29 as your chance to reassess and recommit. If you decided to take a walk after dinner five nights a week and are having a hard time sticking to that, recommit to three nights a week. Wanted to start a family journal but never made it to the store? Hop online Feb. 29 and order a pretty blank book that each member of your family can write in to capture memories and special family stories.

Which of these ideas sound good to you? Or what have you come up with on your own? Any of these suggestions can be combined with special treats or snacks (think hot cocoa and popcorn for the kiddos, lattes or tea for mom and dad), gadget free time, or getting together with another family. Whatever you choose to do, enjoy your gift of extra time — it won't "leap" back around for another four years.

Sara Marchessault is a writer and coach. Her work helps clients to more fully experience joy in their daily life. Marchessault is an avid diarist and keeper of her family's stories. Learn more about her work at saramarchessault.com.

dating? Does your furniture arrangement drive you from the room? One idea for leap day is to take on a small project in the house. Get the kids involved, and see if you can make choosing new photos or hanging artwork an event. Ask them where they would put the sofa and see what happens.

Cook with the kids. A lot of kids probably don't get to spend a whole lot of time in the kitchen. Between school, homework, and extracurricular activities, kids are just as busy as parents with 10- to 12-hour days. Leap day can be special by baking or cooking together. Invite your young chef to learn how to make his or her favorite meal and enjoy some quality time together.

Eat new foods. If your kids are a little bit older, or have an adventurous palette at any age, this could be



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Sleep-away on it

Overnight camps cook up memorable fun

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

From whitewater rafting to performing arts and cooking, today's sleep-away camps appeal to a wide range of interests while still providing the long-term benefits summer camp is known for. And yet, you may wonder how to find an overnight camp that offers the right blend of environment and activities for your child and gives you peace of mind at the same time. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Benefits of overnight camp

In addition to learning new skills, children learn how to collaborate

and live in community while at camp, gaining self-confidence and independence through problem-solving and teamwork.

"All those things are life skills and life assets that every parent wants for their child," says Jill Tipograph, a camp consultant and author of *Your Everything Summer Guide & Planner*.

Popular camp activities

According to the American Camp Association, 75 percent of camp directors reported adding new activities and programs to accommodate trends in popular culture. The top three activities camps are integrating into their more traditional fare, like campfires, swimming, and

horseback riding, include performing arts, adventure, and more recently, culinary.

"Culinary is the hottest and newest in terms of camps investing in building kitchens and bringing in specialists to teach the kids. The other part that goes along with culinary is the whole farmed table — taking things from the gardens and cooking them," Tipograph says.

Traditional vs. specialty

Specialty camps are designed for kids interested in pursuing a specific interest. Traditional camps, on the other hand, offer a combination of programming. Children can try different activities, including those they may not have tried otherwise,

“Children can learn and grow and become themselves away from home and school and all the usual surroundings. That’s why people value time at camp.”

whether stained-glass design, rock climbing, or singing in a recording studio.

“I feel that if children start their camping career on a purely specialty track, (parents) are really missing what camp can do for their child. The advantage traditional camps offer is they are all about the child holistically,” Tipograph says.

A menu of choices

One example of a traditional camp that offers a variety of specialty tracks for campers is Hidden Valley Camp, located in mid-coastal Maine and a member of the Maine Camp Experience. The camp attracts campers between the ages of 8 and 14 from all over the world.

Camp director Peter Kassen finds that culinary classes are especially attractive to campers, thanks in large part to pop culture and a greater interest in eating well.

“This idea of being a foodie has really permeated the culture. Being involved in producing your own food and eating good food has become more central not just with adults but with children as well,” Kassen says.

Through the culinary classes, campers acquire a valuable life skill, learning to prepare quality, healthy meals from specialists in the food industry, and tasting foods from all over the globe.

“Last year, we had a group of 10 Korean campers accompanied by a woman who brought them over. She cooked a Korean meal for the entire camp. It was spectacular,” Kassen says.

But cooking is only one aspect of the camp. Whether they try windsurfing, horseback riding, tennis, or anything else, Kassen hopes campers leave camp with

a sense of confidence.

“At any good camp, campers ... get excited about an idea, and they pursue it from beginning to end without an adult telling them they had to do it in the first place,” he says. “That’s why people value time at camp. Children can learn and grow and become themselves away from home and school and all the usual surroundings.”

Considerations for a successful sleep-away experience:

Maturity. Most kids are ready by ages 9 or 10, but consider your child’s physical and emotional maturity first.

Plan ahead. If possible, start researching camps a year ahead of time. Check out websites, talk to friends and family for recommendations, and visit prospective camps. Many overnight camps offer family weekends in the fall.

Length of camp. How long do you want your child away at camp? Camps offer both short and long-term sessions.

Size of camp. Decide whether your child would do better in a large setting or a smaller gathering.

Gender. Choose from a single-sex or a co-ed camp. Not sure which? Consider whether a younger sibling may eventually join your older child at camp.

Location. Determine the types of activities you want your child to experience. Because of their geographical location, some camps offer better outdoor or adventure activities than others and may be more likely to have access to experienced adventure specialists.

Meet the director. A meeting with the director is imperative in order to get a sense of his or her personality, trustworthiness and compatibility.

“You need to see how they’re interacting with your child,” Tipograph says. “They set the tone and the philosophy for the camp and it trickles down. How they relate to you and your child is the same way they train their staff to do the same.”

Additional resources include ACA-Camps.org, MaineCampExperience.com, and www.everythingsummer.com.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines and her husband are the parents of two boys. Her latest book is “Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World.”

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Are they getting enough sleep?

Kids really need their shut-eye

BY JOE CIAVARRO

In New York City, sleep is a commodity that can be hard to come by. With busy schedules extending into late hours, loud street noises, and high academic demands, making sure your kids get enough sleep can be a challenge. There is much debate over the exact number of hours a child should sleep every night, yet of equal importance is determining whether or not your child is getting good quality sleep. The consequences of untreated poor sleep in children affect many different parts of the body, and can include heart failure, developmental or behavioral issues, poor school performance, poor growth, obesity, reflux, and significantly increased risks of complications from surgery.

Risk factors for poor sleep include a history of prematurity (early birth), obesity, sinus disease, having a family member with poor sleep, large tonsils or adenoids, and persistent wheezing. Your pediatrician should be screening your child for symptoms of sleep disorders, so understanding what to look for can help your pediatrician make a diagnosis and refer your child to treatment.

Snoring is one of the most common complaints parents have concerning their child's sleep quality. Snoring is caused by an obstruction or narrowed airway (breathing tube) and can sometimes lead to apnea, or pauses in breathing. Most children with sleep apnea will have some degree of snoring, but not all children who snore have sleep apnea. It is normal for children to have noisy breathing during a cold or sinus in-

fection, but if you notice snoring during times of wellness, pay close attention. Other nighttime symptoms of poor sleep include night terrors, sleep walking, restless sleep, or return of bed-wetting issues.

Daytime symptoms of poor sleep in children can be easy to miss but do exist. Many children will be difficult to wake in the morning or complain of a headache. Older children can have daytime sleepiness with excessive napping or falling asleep at inappropriate times. Younger children can also have increased sleepiness but may also show hyperactivity.

Talk with your child's teacher about his academic performance and behavior during school hours. Inability to concentrate, focus, or pay attention during school can be a sign of poor sleep. Your child's teacher is a valuable resource, as she is likely to be spending more daytime hours observing your child and noticing changes in his performance. These symptoms are easily reversible once sleep patterns return to normal.

Adults with severe sleep apnea or sleep disorders tend to put on pounds, but young children are more likely to lose weight or have difficulty achieving normal expected weight and height gains. It is important to note, however, that obesity is a common cause of sleep apnea in children.

It may be helpful to observe your child sleeping, and look for pauses in breathing, though due to some variations in breathing patterns being normal at certain ages, sleep apnea in children can usually only be diagnosed by a pediatric sleep specialist with an overnight sleep study. Talk to your pediatrician about a referral if you suspect your child has a sleep disorder. The longer treatment is delayed, the more difficult it is to reverse the negative effects of poor sleep.

Joe Ciavarrò is a pediatric physician assistant in New York City.





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'Different' worldview

Overcoming my longtime fear of people with special needs

BY DAVE PAONE

Ever since my younger days I was petrified of those with special needs. This harks back to the time when the term “special needs” wasn’t coined yet; we used the word “retarded.”

On the rare occasion I was in the presence of someone with special needs I was scared of what I might do. I was scared I was going to blurt out the word “retarded!” I was scared I was going to say something equally as offensive. But mostly I was scared of these individuals themselves. I just didn’t want to be around such people.

I attended Catholic grammar school in the 1970s. I was surrounded by “normal” people. We had no such thing as an inclusion class, a self-contained class, a resource room, or even a special-education teacher. If other schools had these, I wasn’t aware of it.

My fear continued into college. I was a photojournalism major at an art school in Manhattan. In my third year I decided to take on art education as a minor. My very first student teaching assignment was at a public school in a class of fifth- and sixth-grade boys with learning disabilities.

I was in a bit of a panic for my first few lessons. One reason was that I really hadn’t been around children much. I’m the youngest in my family and that includes all my cousins. So I wasn’t quite sure how to speak to a 10 year old. Another reason was I wasn’t all that confident in my ability as a teacher. And then these kids had special needs, and you know how I felt about that!

I had a great cooperating teacher and she boosted my confidence. I soon learned talking to a 10 year old isn’t much different from talking to a 20 year old (10 year olds are people, too.) But the big relief was these boys weren’t nearly as disabled as I thought they were. This made my first step in overcoming my fear a giant leap.



Photo by Dave Paone

A student with cerebral palsy I befriended in college my second time around.

For many of the following years I had little or no contact with those with special needs. However, I still wasn’t all that comfortable with the prospect of being near them.

After college I didn’t pursue photojournalism and I didn’t pursue teaching. I wound up in the movie business as an assistant cameraman.

In 1998 I worked on the remake of “Rear Window” with Christopher Reeve. A short time before this he was injured in a horseback riding accident, leaving him paralyzed from the neck down and breathing with the help of a ventilator.

I was petrified of him. What do you say to someone in his position? Plus, he’d be wheeled onto the set right before we’d roll, we’d shoot the shot, and then he’d be wheeled off again. Not a lot of opportunity for greetings.

After about two weeks I mustered

up the courage to approach him. I had nothing to be scared about. I have to tell you, his spirits were high and he was extremely personable. I can’t believe how happy he was, regardless of not being able to do much of anything for himself.

Another giant step in overcoming my fear.

In 2002 I became a high school photography teacher in the southern California desert. It was a large campus with a lot of buildings. Since it was southern California, you could walk from one building to the other — outside — all through the winter.

To get from the building with the darkroom to the building with the ceramics room where the art department chairperson was, I had to pass another building. It had large glass windows and I could see inside.

It was full of students in wheelchairs. They looked pretty bad off.

The room was also filled with aides of some sort. And of course at least one teacher.

No one ever spoke about these people. I'm not entirely sure they were even part of the school. No one ever mentioned the students, no one ever mentioned the teachers or the aides. They were tucked away in this building, but they were there every day. Whenever I'd pass the building and look through the windows, I'd think, I really should go in there and say hello to everyone. Did I really think that? It's hard to believe I had such a thought, but I did every time I passed the place. I guess my fear of those with special needs was pretty close to gone.

In addition to the giant steps in overcoming this fear, I can attribute a large part of this change to age. I suppose it's fairly normal for a 10 year old to be scared of those who are different, but by 35, the fright subsides a lot on its own.

I only spent two years at the school and I just never got to say hello to anyone in that room. I regret that.

Several years later I returned to college for a short time in order to renew my New York State art teacher certification, which had expired many years prior. I had to take three classes to satisfy some new requirements.

While at Nassau Community College, I met another student in the math lab, where I went for extra help. She was about 20 years old and had cerebral palsy. She told me she was in special-ed classes all through primary and secondary school, but was now in college as media major.

We became friends. We socialized in the math lab, in the cafeteria, at events on campus and even off campus. I was friends with someone with special needs? To both my surprise and delight, I was.

In recent years I've been substitute teaching in various school districts on Long Island. Although my certification is in art, I can be put in any class from kindergarten through 12th grade. I often get placed in special-ed classes. Some are on the elementary level, some in middle school, and some in high school. They range from the resource room to full-blown, self-contained classrooms.

I was never thrilled to get these assignments. This time around I'd be in a classroom — in a command position with responsibility — with several children with spe-

cial needs. My fear returned. Once I was assigned to a self-contained classroom in an elementary school with five autistic boys. Each had an aide and they had routines, so I really didn't have to do much teaching, but I was with them the entire day.

It wasn't easy. My fear was replaced with pity. I felt so sorry for these children and their parents. Even though I was going to walk away from them at the end of the day, I was still emotionally drained. By 3 pm I wanted to either cry or get drunk.

However, I was told one boy was a great artist. I had the opportunity to sit with him and draw. They were right! This child, although he couldn't say anything, could draw.

I wound up back in that class as a substitute again and had a second opportunity to sit with him. This time he had Playdoh and made little sculptures. Boy, could he sculpt! I recall him making a bird with webbed feet.

I thought, if I were the art teacher in this school, I'd give up my free period to work with him one-on-one to make art projects. And then have an exhibit of his work. Did I think that? I would voluntarily give up my time to be with an autistic child? I guess now both the fear and the pity were replaced with something else.

For the rest of the year whenever I was back at that school I dropped into that classroom to say hello to everyone.

Sometimes I sub for the librarian or music teacher. The special-ed classes come in once a week for these rooms, just as all the other classes do. I often find the special-ed classes to be the least stressful ones of the day.

So what have I learned from all of this? I guess it's that I never had a reason to be as scared. That some kids with special needs can create artwork as good or better than their "normal" classmates. That those in wheelchairs aren't as miserable as we think they are.

While I've gotten to this point, I do not see myself pursuing special education as a career. I have nothing but the highest regard for teachers, aides and parents who work with special-needs children all day. It's not my calling, but I'm glad I've gotten to the point where I can be among those with special needs and not be afraid, but instead able to work with them in some small way.

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DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

An unconventional approach to love

Nothing brings a parent more joy than noticing her child smiling, and seeing the happy twinkle in his eyes and the sparkle in his smile.

To make your child that happy is what you live for, right? You work very hard to create a world around your child that makes him as happy as possible. It's natural to want to protect him from disappointment, ward off frustration, and avoid things that may be too challenging. In any individual moment, this keeps your child happy. However, in the long run, overdoing your happiness fortress can create some significant challenges.

For example, always saying "yes" means your child will not understand when he is told "no," which, as we all know, often happens in the larger world. Also, consistently protecting your child from disappointment means he will not be able to navigate when things don't go his way. At the heart of the matter, if you're always protecting your child from challenges, his problem-solving skills will not be honed.

The best way to love your child is to teach him to overcome struggles, to problem-solve challenges, and to accept that he cannot always have exactly what he wants, every moment that he wants it. It might be difficult to watch your children struggle, but it's essential to let him do so. Keep your eye on the big picture.

You have a choice: do you want your child to be happy right now and struggle in the long-term, OR, do you want your child to struggle right now with your support and in the long-term be happy? The choice is up to you!

My recommendation is to aim for long-term happiness in your child. You can make the switch in approach by trying a behavioral adjustment:

Start by saying "No" some of the time to your child and do not provide a significant justification. The practice of teaching your child



to accept "no" is much more important than the ice cream he wants. Often, we get caught up in the moment of happiness (having the ice cream) and forget about the big goal (teaching your child to accept "no").

Place your child in situations that are too hard for him. One of two things will happen: either he will ask for help, which is a great skill to practice, or he will surprise you by figuring out something you thought he could not. Often times our kiddos are more creative than we expect, and given the opportunity, they will find a solution.

If he comes to you with a problem or is upset, don't automatically fix it. Ask your child what he will do about it, which will build his problem-solving skills. The important thing is to move on after his brainstorming. This teaches your child to refocus his attention. Letting your child stew in frustration only to

have you fix it does not lead to sustainable happiness or life skills.

Create a difficult task for your child to complete (this is my personal favorite). I like giving kids boxes they can't open with a fabulous surprise inside. All of a sudden they are incredible problem solvers!

When you work on one of these techniques, accept that there might be some pushback, but stick to it. Creating resilient and resourceful children is the greatest gift you can give the world.

For a special gift especially for New York Parenting readers, please visit: drmarcie.leadpages.co/quick-video-for-ny-parenting/

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.

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Seeing the future

An optometrist asks: Is myopia really a life-long sentence?



BY JOEL H. WARSHOWSKY

Are you doing all that you can to reduce or eliminate your degree of nearsightedness?

Some call it nearsightedness, some myopia, and still others use the British term shortsighted. In any case, it all means the same thing. Vision at far distance is blurred, while vision at near distance is clear.

All this is common knowledge, however, what is not commonly known is that some children who have been diagnosed as nearsighted are not nearsighted, and still, others have to go through increases in prescription every few months, making their lenses even thicker.

Functional nearsightedness

Children who have frequent increases in their eyeglass prescription are most often diagnosed as functionally nearsighted by behavioral or developmental optometrists.

Typically, functional nearsightedness may begin as early as 5 to 7 years of age and usually starts with a low amount of prescription. It is common to initially associate it with eyestrain and frontal headaches related to sustained reading, computer, or writing tasks. Copying from the blackboard may especially cause inaccuracy and fatigue.

The first symptom that usually occurs is reduced distance vision, only after sustained near vision tasks. Typically, vision gradually improves when sustained near visual activities are suspended. Over time, however, the blurred distance vision remains and eventually worsens

Treatment for functional nearsightedness is through remediation of the eye muscle inefficiency and imbalance.

with length and demand of the near visual task.

Functional nearsightedness is different than genetic, in that genetic myopia is passed on from one generation to the next, regardless of how one uses his eyes. The genetic form of nearsightedness usually starts earlier in life, with children 2 to 5 years of age, has an initial moderate to high prescription, and is typically unrelated to eyestrain associated with near vision tasks.

For you, the parent, to understand the process of functional nearsightedness, the association or linkage of your child's inside (ciliary) muscle for focusing and outside (extra-ocular) muscles for coordination must be understood.

There are six outside muscles surrounding each eye and one muscle that is inside the eye, controlling focus. This process occurs because the internal and external eye muscle systems are linked, allowing one system to support and compensate for the other.

Typically, extra effort to focus is needed when there is a lack of ability to coordinate and turn the two eyes inward. If extra effort is put into focus, that effort will translate into an increased ability to turn the two eyes inward. However, over time, the increased focusing leads to an internal muscle spasm and ultimately becomes what some call structured-in myopia.

At this time we don't understand how that occurs, but we do know when it does occur. The functional focusing spasm becomes myopia.

To summarize, if I can't coordinate my two eyes together, enabling them to look at the same point in space at the same time, I can elect to over-focus, increasing my ability to coordi-

nate these 12 external muscles (six for each eye), assisting the two eyes to turn inward together, preventing double vision and associated symptoms, and creating eye strain.

Eyestrain, often associated with functional myopia, ultimately becomes translated into true structural myopia through this process.

Treatment

Treatment of functional nearsightedness is different than the genetic type. Whereas treatment for genetic myopia is typically compensated through a nearsighted spectacle lens, treatment for functional nearsightedness is through remediation of the eye muscle inefficiency and imbalance.

Treatment for functional myopia may include: a therapeutic eyeglass prescription (which may be in the form of a bifocal), vision therapy (training), and proper visual hygiene and diet designed to reduce stress and strain of the visual system.

Therapeutic lenses are designed to reduce the need to over focus, while vision therapy potentially eliminates the need to compensate one system for another, it can resolve the eye coordination difficulty.

Proper visual hygiene may include diffuse uniform lighting and proper posture. In addition, some recent research suggests a properly balanced diet rich in chromium may reduce myopic effects. Personality may as well play a role in a child's ultimate development.

There is a lot that is not known about myopia and its development, however, there are proven programs and procedures that have been proven to reduce or eliminate myopia.

Join me in reducing myopia in children today.

Joel H. Warshowsky is a behavioral and developmental optometrist who is Associate Clinical Professor Emeritus and founding chief of Pediatrics at SUNY State College of Optometry, where he had taught for 37 years. He has served as an optometric consultant to numerous schools for child development throughout New York and New Jersey. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and College of Optometrists in Vision Development, and has three pediatric practices in Roslyn, New York, Ringwood, New Jersey, and Riverdale.



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A dental home

The importance
of finding a
pediatric dentist
for your child

BY DR. ELAN KAUFMAN

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommend that every child be seen by a pediatric dentist by age 1. It also encourages parents and other care providers to help every child establish a dental home by this age as well. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry modeled the concept of the dental home based on the current medical home concept in pediatric medicine.

Originally created as the center of a child's medical records, and specifically for persons with special health care needs, the medical home is a team-based health care delivery model led by a health care provider that is intended to provide comprehensive and continuous medical care to patients. With evolving health care perspectives, a modern dental home is the

same — a cultivated partnership between the patient, family, and pediatric dentist in cooperation with other dental and oral health care specialists. It was created as a cost-effective and higher quality health care alternative to emergency care situations. It encourages parents to help establish their child's dental home before problems arise.

Headed by a pediatric dentist, the dental home should provide comprehensive oral health care including emergency, preventive, and restorative treatment of oral disease. Anticipatory guidance about growth and development, as well as caries risk and periodontal disease risk assessment are also to be provided. Furthermore, a plan for dental emergency due to trauma should be established, dietary counseling provided, and education about the importance of proper oral health care for children should be taught and reviewed with

the new parents.

What this all really means is that it's best to meet your pediatric dentist as early as possible. The same ways pediatricians are trained to meet child's medical needs; pediatric dental specialists are uniquely qualified to deliver oral health care to infants, children, and adolescents. Pediatric dentists are the pediatricians of dentistry. They have additional training and education beyond dental school and are the true experts in oral health care for your child. They also know when it is appropriate to get another type of specialist involved in your child's care.

All studies show that the earlier the first visit, the better chance your child has of a cavity-free smile. It also gets a child to become familiar with the dental environment, doctors, and staff. Good oral health is an important part of your child's teeth. At the pediatric dental office you will learn how to clean and protect your child's teeth. Every child should have the opportunity for the best dental care possible, and it's never too early to find a dental home for your child. Treat your child to a pediatric dentist.

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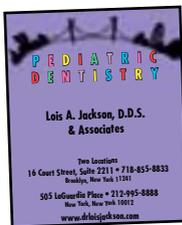


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believe in personal attention and individualized treatment. We strive to give your child the care and dental health care information that will prevent tooth decay and keep your child's smile beautiful for life!

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Dr. Elan Kaufman is a board certified diplomate in pediatric dentistry. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and associate member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Kaufman earned his Doctorate of Dental Medicine (DMD) in Boston, at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, with high honors.

Dr. Kaufman, a faculty member at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, also served as Chief of Pediatric Dental Medicine & Surgery at St. Luke's, Roosevelt, and Coney Island Hospitals for over fifteen years. He also held many leadership positions, including serving as Chairman of the Oral Health Committee NY Chapter II of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Reneida Reyes D.D.S., M.P.H.

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

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

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

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



TEETH TIPS

**DR. LAVANYA
VENKATESWARAN**
Pediatric Dentist

Starting good dental habits with baby

It's never too early to start teaching your children good dental habits. A common question parents ask is when the right time is to start brushing their child's teeth.

I often suggest introducing a toothbrush to your baby even before she has teeth, but when the teething process begins. On average, that is in the range of four to six months of age. A good infant toothbrush, available at local drugstores, will have a small head with very soft bristles.

The infant toothbrush can be used for soothing when your baby is teething. A good trick is to put a clean toothbrush in the freezer, and then your baby can teethe on the icy brush head for comfort. This way, she gets accustomed to the toothbrush and comfortable with having a brush in her mouth. You can also use the infant toothbrush to gently massage and brush your baby's gums.

Once the first tooth or teeth erupt, I recommend starting a routine brushing habit. Begin with a regular nighttime brushing after your baby's last feeding or bottle of milk for the night. You can use baby toothpaste without fluoride at first.

Once your baby has two or more teeth though, I recommend switching to a fluoridated toothpaste under parent supervision. In accordance with American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry guidelines, use a very minimal amount, just a tiny smear of paste, equivalent to a tiny grain of rice or a small dot. Brush your baby's teeth and then wipe away the paste with a damp washcloth or gauze. This way, your baby won't swallow the paste.

Once teeth begin erupting in your baby's mouth, the oral environment changes, and different bacteria can be present that cause dental decay. The fluoride toothpaste will give your baby's teeth topical protection. The fluoride in toothpaste can prevent demineralization of enamel on the teeth, as demineralization can make teeth vulnerable to decay. Some babies particularly enjoy the feeling of a brush in their mouth and



want to brush their teeth on their own, too! In this case, remember to only give your baby a clean toothbrush without paste or with a fluoride-free paste if she wants to brush by herself, so that there is no risk of swallowing fluoride toothpaste.

Your baby should have her first dental checkup around age 1 or after the first teeth erupt, so your pediatric dentist can also help you learn how to brush your baby's teeth and wipe away the paste if you need help with technique. After you have a routine in place, start adding brushing time in the morning as well. As mentioned above, some babies like to try

to brush their teeth on their own, and it's fine to let them have a turn safely. However, the actual brushing should be done by a parent until they are older.

Making brushing a habit from a young age is important, it will lay the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health!

Dr. Lavanya Venkateswaran is a board-certified pediatric dentist, who practices at Tribeca Smiles and at Park Ave Smile. She is an assistant professor of clinical dentistry at Columbia University Medical Center and is an attending dentist in the department of Pediatric Dentistry.

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The right way to have an argument

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Yesterday morning, during my workout, I watched “The Andy Griffith Show” episode where Opie enters the 50-yard dash contest. Barney devises a training regimen and convinces Opie that winning is a sure thing. When Opie loses, he becomes despondent and rude. Exasperated, Andy expresses his disappointment in Opie’s decision to be a sore loser. In that moment Opie realizes he is risking losing something far more valuable than a medal — his father’s respect. Anxious to regain his father’s approval, Opie follows Andy to the sheriff’s office to declare he doesn’t want him to be disappointed. Andy tells Opie he doesn’t expect him to

be happy about losing. He explains that while it’s easy to be a winner, it’s much harder, but just as important, to be a good loser.

Reflecting on this account of gaining personal maturity, it occurred to me that a similar lesson is relevant to marriage. It’s easy to be married when everything is going well. It’s much harder when problems arise. But it is just as important to be committed to the relationship when the going is rough as when it’s smooth.

Conflict is the last thing most couples want to think about around Valentine’s Day, but being prepared to effectively manage conflict can mean the difference between celebrating one romantic day a year and spending a lifetime in a deeply, mutually satisfying relationship.

Remember conflict is natural in any intimate relationship. Arguing can even be a growth-promoting activity when conducted properly. Here are some suggested guidelines for keeping arguments safe and productive:

Keep the goal in mind. The goal of effective arguing is resolution of an issue in a manner that allows both parties to emerge whole with the relationship intact and undamaged. Not necessarily unchanged, but undamaged.

Clarify the issue. Define the issue as precisely as possible. Be sure both parties are clear about what is being addressed. It is much easier to find a solution to a well-defined problem.

Argue after thinking. Avoid addressing important issues on the

Being prepared to effectively manage conflict can mean the difference between celebrating one romantic day a year and spending a lifetime in a deeply, mutually satisfying relationship.

spur of the moment. Spend time giving the issue some thoughtful consideration so you can calmly articulate your position. Set aside time to adequately explore the issue.

Agree to argue responsibly and respectfully. Accurately identify own your feelings so that you can effectively express them. Think before you speak. Once spoken, words cannot be unspoken. Speak in the way you would like to be spoken to. Say what needs to be said in a way that is most likely to be heard by your partner. Refuse to undermine the argument with destructive tactics like ultimatums, accusations, personal attacks, name calling, bringing up the past, or the silent treatment. Never resort to exploiting your partner's insecurities or shortcomings, unless of course yours are fair game. It's OK to be mad. It's not OK to be mean.

Use effective communication skills. Check out your perceptions, impressions, and assumptions by repeating your understanding of the message you received. Identify areas of agreement. Use them to keep your differences in perspective. Keep the focus on the issue at hand.

Stay in the present. Avoid turning conflict into a competition. In marriage, if one loses, you both lose.

Be honest. Openly express your thoughts, opinions, and preferences. Speak about yourself, not about your partner. Being honest is not a license to be cruel. Saying what is on your mind does not mean you are right, accurate, or have a corner

on the truth. It simply means that you are sharing your perspective openly. No two people see things exactly the same way, no matter how sincerely they love each other. Work toward creating a shared perspective.

Use humor when possible and appropriate. Humor can relieve tension as long as it is not used to avoid the situation or belittle your partner. Laughter can be healing unless it is intended to hurt. A good rule of thumb is it's OK if both people are laughing.

Take a break. If the argument becomes unproductive or counterproductive, agree to step away. Set a definite time to resume, sooner rather than later. Use the break to regain your focus and perspective. Take a walk. Better yet, take a walk together. Walking stimulates the mind and inspires creativity. It may be easier to reach resolution side by side rather than face to face.

Seek closure. When both partners agree the conflict is resolved, put the solution into effect, congratulate one another, and move on. Remember you're not going to agree on everything. Know when to agree to disagree.

Get help. Frequent arguing or arguing for no legitimate reason may be symptoms of a more serious problem. Seek professional counseling before what is merely an irritation becomes a crisis.

• • •

These guidelines may seem unnatural and uncomfortable at first, but with practice you can become as proficient at effective arguing as you have been at ineffective arguing.

Conflict is inevitable in marriage. Romance is one of the first casualties of unresolved conflict. Carefully consider what you are willing to risk for the sake of the argument.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Kentucky. She has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons, ages 24 and 14. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. After six years as Arts Facilitator for the School for the Creative and Performing Arts, she chose to return to her favorite place of employment – home. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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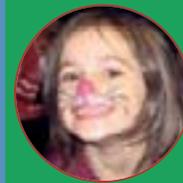
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Baby-making 2.0

How to increase your odds of getting pregnant the second time around

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Is your biological clock ticking again, as severe baby fever clouds your thoughts? Are you and your partner yearning for another bundle of joy?

Many couples gearing up for bebé número dos find that getting pregnant the second time around is a breeze, while others are wondering why this baby dance isn't working out the way it ought to be. If you can relate to the latter, you're not alone.

According to www.whattoexpect.com, it turns out that second baby infertility or "secondary infertility" is more common than you think, accounting for 60 percent or so of all infertility cases.

There are many factors that may potentially cause primary or secondary infertility (including age), but thanks to medical reproductive advances, more happy couples have been welcoming their bambinos into the world.

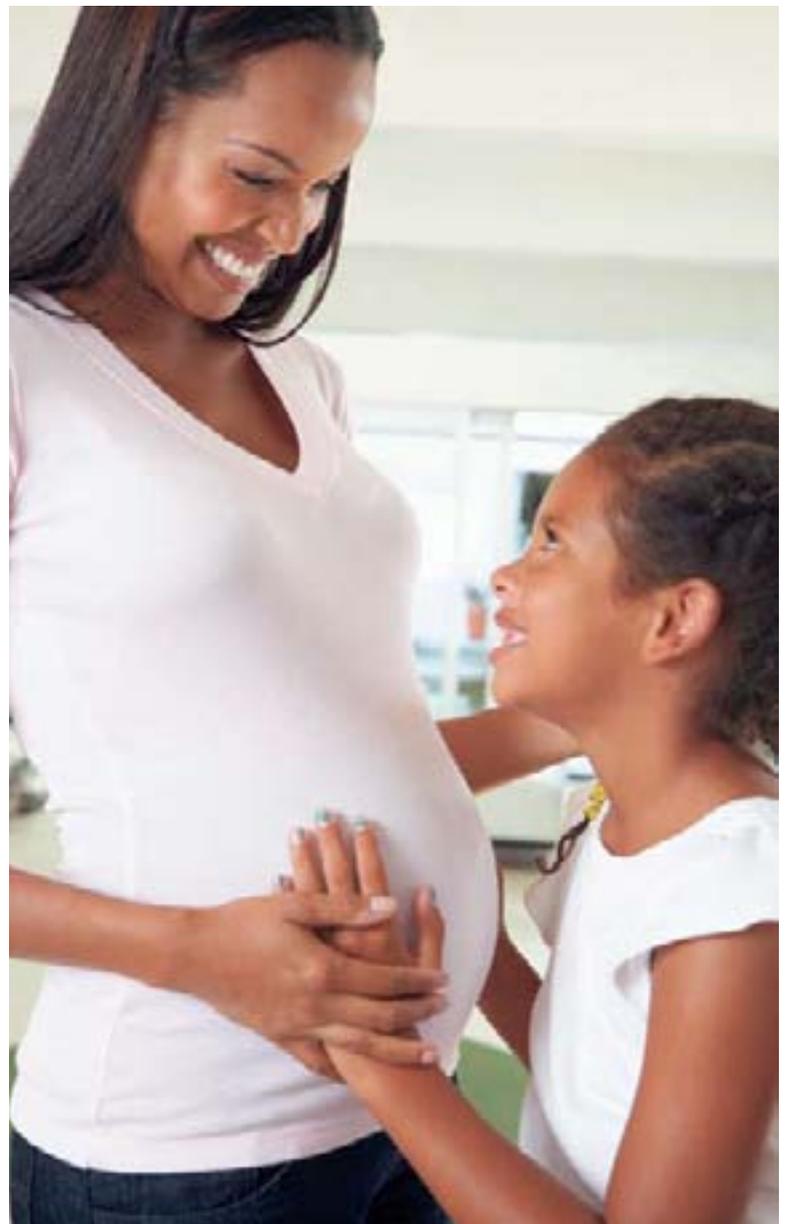
Reasons for infertility

Women have the best chance of conceiving at age 27 or so, but men usually don't have to worry about low sperm count until after age 40 (and if things aren't going "swimmingly" for him, it may just be a matter of wearing loose briefs or throwing back a few less beers).

And keep in mind, there's only a 20 to 25 percent chance of getting pregnant each cycle! Even for young, healthy couples, it may take up to six months to a year to get pregnant.

According to Dr. Lynn Westphal, professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology (Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility) at Stanford University Medical Center in California, there are some issues that can cause secondary infertility woes: endometriosis can progress, an infection could have occurred during delivery or afterwards, and fibroids or benign tumors could develop on the uterus.

A woman should mention any changes in her body or cycle to her ObGyn or midwife, and ask if that could be affecting her chances of a second pregnancy. Were there



any complications during her pregnancy or delivery? Is she taking different medications that may affect her cycle? Luckily, some issues don't require fertility treatments. Sometimes it's as simple as changing your meds or adding more nutrients to your diet and getting more sleep.

In vitro fertilization and egg freezing

During in vitro fertilization, a process by which an egg is fertilized by sperm outside the body, the zygote (fertilized egg) is implanted in

the woman's uterus in hopes that a pregnancy will result. [Watch one couple's moving journey live on "The Today Show" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utkUkvYq-zM>].

During the in vitro process, women usually experience some fullness or bloating as ovaries get larger, and may have some bruising at the injection site due to daily injections of follicle-stimulating hormones (normally produced in the body), according to Westphal. By giving more, hopefully you get more eggs to grow. Other side effects include breast tenderness

Second baby infertility or “secondary infertility” is more common than you think, accounting for 60 percent or so of all infertility cases.

and a tired feeling.

Westphal said she has close friends who went through fertility treatments, and knows the process can also be difficult both psychologically and emotionally.

“Couples often pay a lot of money and are stressed out and worried that they’re going through all this and still might not get pregnant,” she noted. In vitro is pricey; treatments cost about \$15,000 to \$17,000 per cycle and insurance doesn’t usually cover it.

And thanks to pioneering research by experts like Westphal, what was once impossible is now possible. As one of the country’s foremost experts in fertility research, she operated one of the first egg freezing clinics in the US.

Westphal’s recommendation for women who aren’t planning to get pregnant for several years but would like to freeze their (better quality) eggs, should do so at age 32 or 33, when their chances at conceiving are better.

Holistic alternatives

Westphal recalled a study she was involved in. She found that a special supplement seemed to help women who had irregular cycles, and after taking “Fertility Blend,” they seemed to have regular cycles and higher pregnancy rates. The secret? It has a number of vitamins, which include potent chaste berry extract and arginine, an amino acid.

If you’re trying to get pregnant, she suggests taking this as your prenatal vitamin or together with your prenatal vitamins, so it may optimize your cycle. But, if you’re under 35 and have been trying for a year, she suggests having an evaluation to figure out if there’s something else that is preventing your second pregnancy; if you’re over 35, she says, get evaluated

after six months.

Over 40? You may want to see a fertility expert. Remember: The key element here is time. When eggs get older, it’s harder to conceive. Also, since 35 to 40 percent of fertility problems can be traced back to the guy (and his age affects sperm quality), a specialist can help if he’s over 40.

Does stress affect baby-making?

Westphal said it doesn’t, but admits that everyone is stressed out by the time they get to her office.

“I tell them it’s good to find ways to reduce and manage stress; long-term health habits may help prevent potential second baby fertility problems, and everything in moderation.”

Couples should cut down on alcohol, smoking, caffeine, colas, and calories, and get in more exercise, yoga, and meditation.

She emphasized partner support or support groups during the process, as well.

“Part of the problem with infertility treatment is, some people feel very isolated — they don’t feel like they can talk to others about it or, they don’t get a lot of emotional support.”

If you’re still not sure why all your efforts aren’t resulting in a positive pregnancy test, here’s a tip: take a break, relax, and enjoy a little vino over a romantic candlelit dinner. Or, how about a weekend getaway? Life can be overwhelming at times, so reconnecting emotionally is vital to a well-balanced, loving relationship.

As you jump-start your second baby-making journey and wait for the stork to come knocking at your door again, remember that no matter what happens, you still have your first child to cherish.

Babies are gifts. They’re truly little miracles. And despite amazing advances in reproductive research and procedures, how they come to be still remains a mystery.

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 her. Scileppi’s work has appeared in a variety of media outlets. She has also written book cover copy for Simon and Schuster.



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Kitchen confidential

When my daughter and I decided to make a cake, it wasn't pretty

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

For Valentine's Day 2013, my 8-year-old daughter, Jessie, and I baked a pound cake for my wife, Mattie. I remember it well, because I'm not sure if the kitchen has recovered. I'm pretty sure I haven't.

Egg slime ran down the cabinet. I fished eggshells from the batter. Flour dust covered the dish detergent bottle, faucet, and coffee pot. Jessie melted butter until it boiled over in the microwave. Luckily, I heard the splatter and stopped the microwave; three minutes remained on the timer.

Even a little bit of vanilla extract left on a teaspoon proved problematic. Jessie asked, "May I have it?" She made a face after she licked

the teaspoon. Apparently, vanilla smells better than it tastes. Ten minutes later, Jessie complained of a bellyache. Little did I realize, my head would soon ache.

Jessie had used the hand-held electric mixer to stir the ingredients. I asked her to hand me the mixer, so I could make sure the batter was well mixed, but we had a poor exchange. Fumble! The mixer, turning at full speed, plopped into the bowl. Batter sprayed everywhere — my shirt, my pants, the wall, the sink, the coffee maker. Jessie avoided the erupting batter by running into the living room.

Had I remained calm, I would have unplugged the cord from the outlet, but one doesn't think clearly while his kitchen, and self, are being painted in batter. I pulled the mixer from the remaining ingredients in the bowl, careful to not get my fingers caught in the spinning beaters and abruptly end my writing career.

Jessie came back into the kitchen as clean-up began. She retrieved a spatula to scrape the batter that blanketed the mixer back into the bowl. Surprisingly, enough batter remained, and before too long, the sweet aroma of pound cake filled the kitchen.

Next, Jessie wanted to help with the Valentine's Day supper. She suggested that I cut the onions and chicken while she peeled the potatoes. After thinking, "I don't have energy to clean up blood," I gave her permission. As Jessie peeled the potatoes, she sang "Over the Rainbow." As my fatigued head rested against the kitchen cabinets, my beautiful girl wished upon a star.

Jessie, now 11, still loves to bake, cook, and microwave. On a recent Saturday when Mattie was out of town, Jessie and

I were watching my favorite college football team hold onto a one-point lead.

Jessie turned to me and said, "I'm hungry."

I said, "I am, too."

Jessie quickly responded, "I'll make supper."

Since my team needed me to cheer it on, I said, "Okay, but don't burn down the house."

Jessie cut a hard-boiled egg in half and delivered it in a glass bowl. Then she heated a can of chicken soup on the stove and served it. All was going well, but then I picked up an all-too-familiar scent — the smell of something burning. I opted to run to the kitchen and forget about my team nursing its one-point lead.

"What's burning!?"

"Everything's okay, Dad. Please don't look." Jessie likes to surprise me. Trust me; if I smell something burning, I'm going to look.

Jessie had over-microwaved two cookies. She served me the blackened one with a scoop of mint chocolate chip ice cream on the side and covered the burnt cookie with chocolate syrup and white chocolate morsels.

As I enjoyed my dessert, I asked Jessie, "Did you turn off the stove?" Jessie ran into the kitchen.

I heard the stove knob click, followed by, "It's off now."

My team held on for a one-point victory. When I read the sports page the next morning, the kitchen still smelled like burnt cookie.

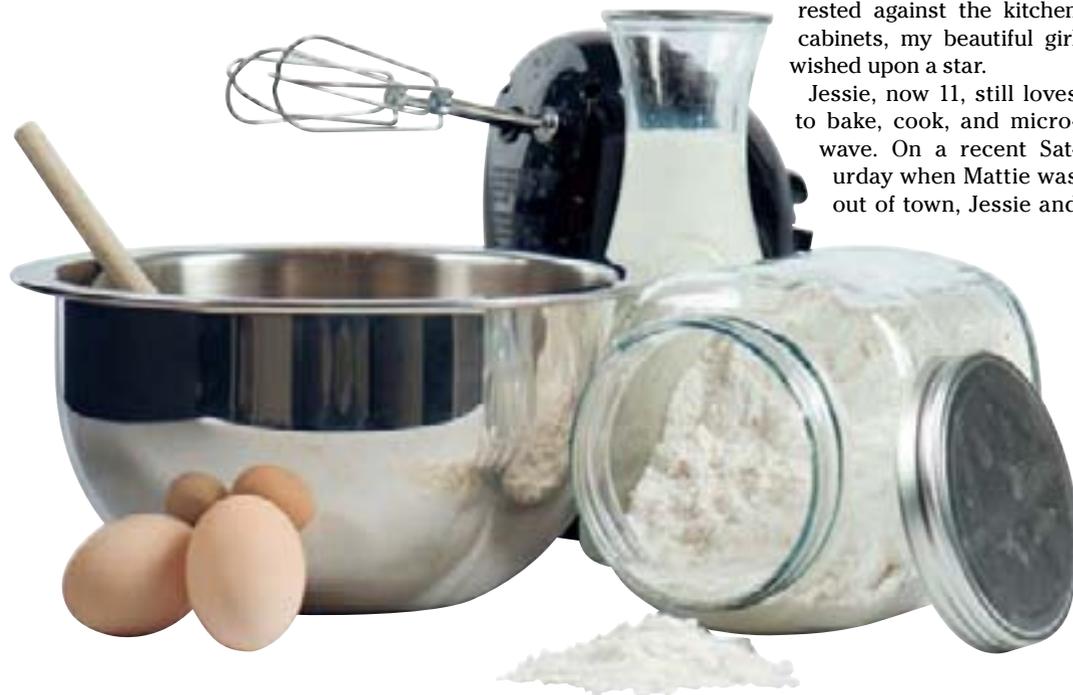
What did I learn from these experiences? Wear an apron ... always. Chocolate syrup is a good condiment for burnt desserts. Although I enjoy college football, I cherish living in my house more.

Most importantly, I must continue to let Jessie try things, so she can grow — but with supervision.

I don't know what Valentine's Day 2016 will bring, but I plan to keep a scented candle on hand. If I don't use it to mask the smell of burnt food, it can always provide a romantic ambience for my valentine.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments. Happy Valentine's Day!

Patrick Hempfing had a 20-year-long 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/patricklhemping and on Twitter @PatrickHemping.





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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Early menopause

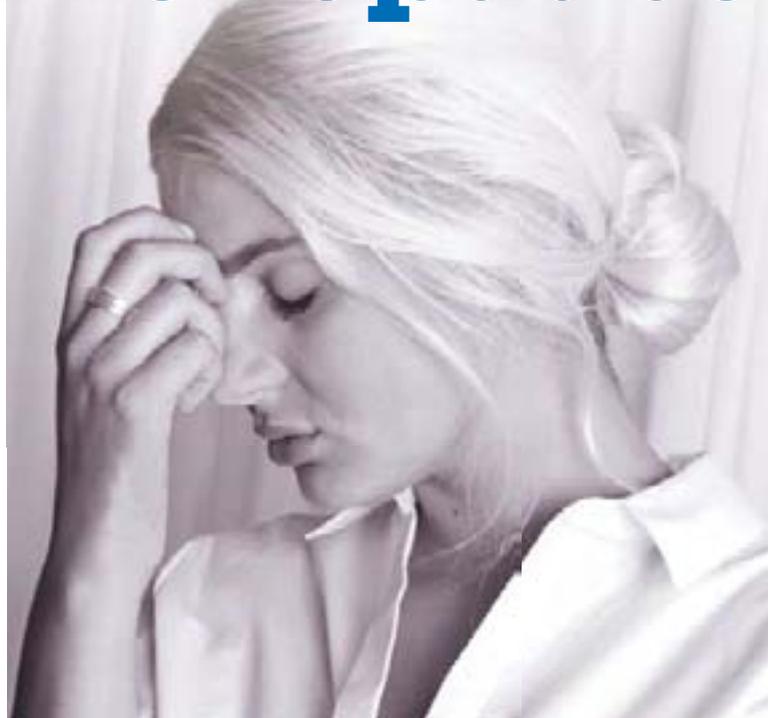
Susan Deakin dropped her middle schooler off at school one morning and headed for the pharmacy. Staring at the pregnancy tests, she felt nervous. At age 42, she hadn't been pregnant in more than a decade and thought her days of raising babies were over for good, but not having had a period in eight weeks could only mean one thing. The test was negative, so she bought another a few days later, which was also negative, and a trip to her doctor brought her news she simply was not ready to hear.

"'You may be menopausal.' That's what my doctor told me, and I thought he was surely joking," she says. "I'm young. My period has always been like clockwork and I feel fine."

"The average [age] in the United States is 51, but it can occur between 40-60," explains Dr. Shirazian, assistant professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the NYU Langone Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health. "Before age 40 it is diagnosed as primary ovarian insufficiency."

Primary ovarian insufficiency is considered premature menopause, and it may have a specific cause, which can be autoimmune or infection specific. Other possible reasons for premature menopause include having had chemotherapy treatment, having a hysterectomy (which springs a women into instant menopause), smoking, and a history of premature menopause in the family. So at age 42, Susan was technically not experiencing menopause prematurely, even though it was younger than the average age of 51.

There is no one definitive test to diagnose menopause; the official diagnostic criteria states that a woman must have not had a menstrual period in 12 consecutive months. However, it may be a good idea to have certain hormones tested. The Mayo Clinic recommends that women have these tests: follicle-stimulating hormone, estrogen, and thyroid-stimulating hormone. Follicle-stimulating hormone levels increase and estradiol levels decrease as menopause occurs, and an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms similar to those of menopause.



Sonia Rodriguez of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, was 44 when she thought she might be going through menopause because she had not had a period in five months and was not pregnant. "I was convinced my periods were over, and I felt awful, from everything I heard about menopause being so terrible. I had migraines and was extremely fatigued, so I thought that menopause could be starting, but my doctor took a blood test and called a few days later saying I had hypothyroidism, which was probably causing my menstrual irregularities. She gave me medication and my periods came back."

Signs and symptoms of menopause include irregular periods (very heavy, longer or shorter than usual), vaginal dryness, hot flashes, night sweats, sleep problems, mood changes, and weight gain.

Dr. Shirazian points out that although there is nothing inherently unusual with menopause occurring in early 40s, women should be make sure they are not suffering from "bone loss or bone decline, which tends to occur with a decline in estrogen." If a woman would like to boost herself through the use of supplements once menopause hits, Dr. Shirazian says "virtually all supple-

ments are good that include calcium and vitamin B. For symptom relief, evening primrose oil works well."

The vast majority of women report symptoms and up to 70 percent of women experience hot flashes for years, but there are those few who do not. Some women experience no symptoms other than the absence of a monthly period.

"I felt fine throughout," says Susan, who has not had a period in three years and is considered to have fully reached menopause. "Once I knew I wasn't pregnant and got over the shock that menopause was probably happening, I was actually relieved. I didn't have any debilitating symptoms and I honestly don't miss my period at all!"

If you are having missed periods or symptoms of menopause, don't make assumptions. The only way to find out exactly what is happening is to see your doctor. Search for doctors that specialize in hormonal testing and menopause.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.

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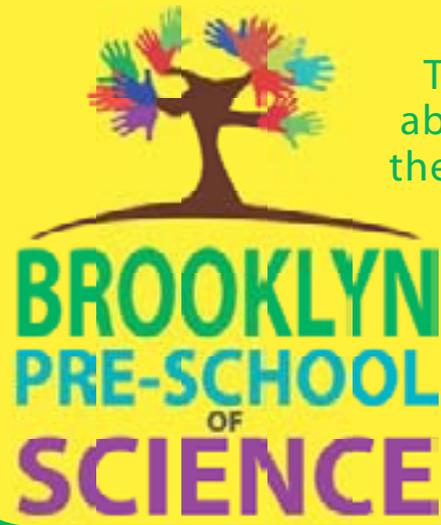
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CAROLYN JABS

Protect your family's medical information

Health information is valuable. Obviously, your doctors need swift and easy access if they are going to provide effective treatment, especially in an emergency. But health data also has value to researchers and advertisers. And medical financial information is attractive to criminals who can use it to steal medications, equipment, and services.

Now that medical records are being kept electronically, they can more easily be misappropriated. Healthcare providers and insurers have been hacked, creating worries about privacy as well financial vulnerability.

Medical companies that get access to health information may bombard you or your child with advertising for treatments that you don't want or need. A thief who gets access to insurance information can ruin your credit and max out your benefits.

Just as worrisome, a person who accesses health services under the name of a family member may have her information entered into the medical record, creating confusion that can have serious consequences.

Protecting your family from these problems requires vigilance. Get into the habit of following these rules:

Study statements. Check provider names, dates of service, and the type of service provided. Does anything look unfamiliar? Were you billed for the same thing twice? If you see a mistake, report the problem as soon as possible.

Check Explanation of Benefits. An Explanation of Benefits from your insurance company usually says "This is not a bill" at the top. That's not a reason to ignore it. Match these to statements from medical providers. If there are any discrepancies, contact your insurance company immediately. An inaccurate Explanation of Benefits may be your first indicator that someone else is using your insurance information.

Sign up for online accounts. Many doctors and pharmacies provide pa-



tients with password protected access to personal medical files. Not only is this an easy way to check the accuracy of records, but it also keeps anyone else from setting up an account under your name.

Correct misinformation. Fraudulent medical claims can introduce inaccurate information into medical records. If you become aware of errors in your medical files, ask that they be corrected. Keep in mind that the medical provider that created the record has responsibility for changing it but won't necessarily notify any other providers who may have received the information. Follow up with each of them to be sure records are accurate.

Set up personal health records. Having your own records makes it easier if you need to change health care providers. MyPHR.com has an extensive list of record-keeping apps and programs as well as paper forms that can be downloaded. Regardless of format, you'll want to record the following information for each family member:

- Dates of immunizations
- Lab results, including blood type
- Allergies and sensitivities to medications, foods, and materials
- Prescribed medications, includ-

ing dosages

- Treatment for chronic conditions such as asthma
- Treatment for unusual conditions including hospitalization or emergency room visits

Because genetic history is likely to become more important in your child's lifetime, you may want to use the same file to record medical conditions of ancestors and other family members as you learn about them.

Be skeptical about free. Medical identity thieves try to trick people into revealing sensitive medical information by offering free products and services. Drug companies and other suppliers set up free forums to harvest information that may be useful in marketing. Free medical apps may collect information that is sold to advertisers.

Before accepting a deal that seems to be too good to be true, read the fine print — and especially the privacy policy.

If, despite all these precautions, you suspect someone has stolen the medical identity of a family member, act swiftly, following the steps outlined at identitytheft.gov/#what-to-do-right-away.

You can also request an Accounting of Disclosures, a record that details when, what, who, and why your medical information was shared by your provider.

Even if you don't suspect medical fraud, you may want to request a disclosure report as well as reports from the three major credit agencies (annualcreditreport.com). By law, you are entitled to a free copy of each of these reports each year, and you may sleep better at night if you know they've given your family a clean bill of health.

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 to read other columns.

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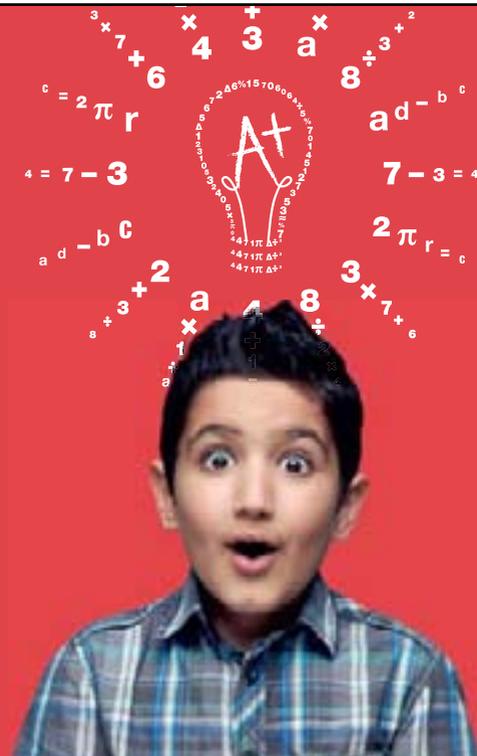
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Liquid gold

How much
do you
know about
amazing
olive oil?

BY ASHLEY TALMADGE

Olives were among the first cultivated crops, and olive oil production dates back thousands of years to the eastern Mediterranean region. Ancient people valued it not only as a culinary accoutrement, but also as medicine and lamp fuel. The Greek poet Homer famously referred to olive oil as “liquid gold.”

North America’s relationship with olives began in the late 1700s, with cuttings brought by Spanish missionaries. However, it wasn’t until well after the gold rush that farmers developed an interest in the olive as a cash crop.

Traditional farming yields new gold

Darro Grieco and his wife, Olivia, own the 100-year-old Berkeley Olive Grove in California.

At 400 acres, it’s the largest grove of mission olives (the only olive considered indigenous to the Americas) in the world.

Yet, the Griecos have eschewed artificial irrigation and other industrial farm practices in favor of traditional organic, sustainable methods. This allows the olive trees to flourish through their natural 600-

plus year lifespan, and ensures the preservation of the historic property.

Grieco says that although his yield is smaller than that of a large hedgerow operation, “the use of dry farming and hand-intensive practices has produced exceptional olive oils.” Year after year, his award-winning extra virgin olive oils prove his point.

Why extra virgin?

Extra virgin olive oil is made sim-

ply by crushing olives and extracting the juice.

Neither heat nor chemicals, which degrade the oil, are used during the process. Experts agree that only an extra virgin olive oil confers the health benefits associated with olive oil.

Extra virgin olive oil contains the “good” (monounsaturated) fatty acids, as well as naturally occurring polyphenols. Naturopath Dr. Christina Caselli says consumption of olive oil “lowers insulin levels, lowers blood pressure, and reduces overall cholesterol levels.”

Amazing mayonnaise

INGREDIENTS:

2 farm-fresh egg yolks
¼ tsp. salt
2 tsp. lemon juice
Pinch of garlic or a bit of garlic oil
1½ cups extra virgin olive oil

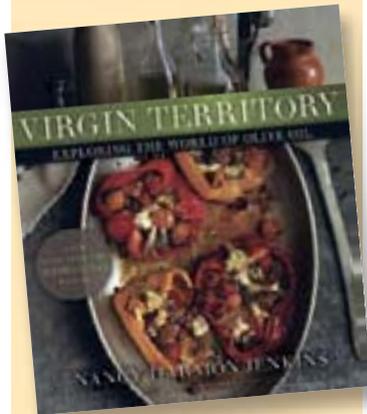
DIRECTIONS: In a blender, mix together the farm-fresh egg yolks, salt, lemon juice, and garlic or garlic oil.

With the blender on low, add the olive oil, drop-by-drop. In just five minutes you’ll have a delicious dip for artichokes, dressing for slaw, or spread for a sandwich.

(Raw eggs are made safe by acidifying them with lemon juice or vinegar. Make a fresh batch each time and do not store leftovers.)

— from Chef Brett LaMott





Increase your olive oil IQ

•“Olive Oil Times Magazine” (www.oliveoiltimes.com) — articles on all things olive oil: history, new research, industry awards.

•“Truth in Olive Oil” (www.truthinoliveoil.com) — lists of excellent extra virgin olive oils, both “gourmet quality” and store bought.

•“Virgin Territory: Exploring the World of Olive Oil,” book by Nancy Harmon Jenkins (2015), includes 100-plus recipes.

•North American Olive Oil Association, www.aboutoliveoil.org

In addition to the well-documented cardiovascular benefits, new studies suggest specific phenols may prevent Alzheimer’s disease and destroy cancer cells.

Applying olive oil to the skin can be beneficial as well. Caselli says it “can be used as a carrier for essential oils to be used topically,” and that it’s an effective treatment “for cradle cap in infants due to its gentle antimicrobial properties.”

Finding your gold

Though good extra virgin olive oil has proven health benefits, the consumer must be careful. Lab tests have revealed that more than two-thirds of store-bought oils imported by the U.S. and labeled as extra virgin fail to meet International Olive Council standards.

Unlike wine, olive oil does not improve with age. It’s more like a juice, best just after it’s squeezed.

Former olive grower Susie Lawing says, “When buying an oil

there are all kinds of variations, but the main thing is freshness.” Look for:

Dark glass bottle or tin container. Exposure to heat and light degrades the oil.

Harvest date. Olive oil becomes rancid over time, so buy the most recently bottled oil.

Quality seal certification. Extra virgin olive oils bearing a sticker from one of several programs — e.g. North American Olive Oil Association, Extra Virgin Alliance, or California Olive Oil Council — meet specific taste and chemical standards.

Price point. “If it sounds too good to be true...” You know the rest of the story. Most experts agree that you cannot buy good extra virgin olive oil for less than \$10 per liter.

A cook’s companion, hot or cold

Contrary to a widespread myth, good extra virgin olive oil is quite stable under high heat conditions. It can be used for frying, sautéing, and baking at 410 degrees Fahrenheit or more with tasty, nutritious results.

“We cook with extra virgin olive oil at our restaurant, because the flavors come out ... It’s good to cook with and very healthy for you,” says Chef Brett LaMott.

Grieco agrees, adding that an oil with a high phenol content “preserves the nutritional content of the foods you’re cooking with it.”

When choosing an oil, keep in mind:

Go bitter for better health. Grieco and other experts say that, due to the high phenol content, the healthiest extra virgin olive oils often have a bitter or peppery quality.

One olive is not like another. LaMott says each oil has a “terroir” — it “tastes like the soil where it grows.” Olives of the same variety may have very distinct flavors, depending on where they’re grown.

Different dishes, different oils. Pair a robust oil with a strong spicy dish, a delicate oil with a light dish.

Another healthy and delicious tip? LaMott suggests replacing other fats with olive oil.

“It’s far better than putting butter on your bread. Just dip your bread in olive oil.”



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A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

Picking the perfect college takes time

You have gotten your admission letter for college. Maybe, you have gotten more than one. It is common for high school seniors to apply to several schools. If you applied to a wide range of schools from “safeties” to “reaches,” you are probably sitting in front of three to five different offers. Getting into college was exciting for me, but I remember being stressed out about choosing the right school. During the month I was given to make that decision, my inbox was bombarded with e-mails from every college that extended a welcome. Of course, each school claimed that it provided the best academic experience and most engaging student life.

In some ways, colleges are not lying in their seemingly exaggerated assertions. Everyone prioritizes different aspects of a school. Get to know your options and understand all the stipulations of your acceptances from financial aid to specific programs you might have been offered.

Visit the campus

The best way to learn more about a college is to visit the campus. Regardless of whether that college had been a stop on your pre-application tour in the past, you should revisit the school and scrutinize it with the intentions of potentially attending. Consider the practicality of living at the school or commuting. Even simple questions like “Are there plants or trees on campus that you are allergic to?” or “How accessible is the health center?” are important. Immerse yourself in the student experience. Read at the school library, have a meal at the dining hall, attend a class, or if possible, stay overnight in the dorms. Be sure to talk to some actual students and not just those hired by the admissions office.

Attend any welcome or preview events the school might organize for newly admitted students. A school that truly values its students will roll out the red carpet for you and arrange special performances, din-



ners, and tours just for this event. Furthermore, these welcome events are a great time to meet prospective members of your freshman class. It also gives you a chance to speak with other students who might also be deciding between similar college acceptances.

Consider potential areas of study

Because your primary job at college will be as a student, it is very important to consider what a college can offer in terms of academics. Besides whether the curriculum is challenging, diverse, and interesting, you may also want to learn what a school has to offer in terms of different majors. If you have an idea of what you want to study, look to see if a school offers particular programs, internships, or guidance in those fields. Some schools may not offer your major at all, while others might even have accelerated programs for those hoping to pursue a specific career.

Even if you are not sure what you want to study, browse the variety of opportunities a college has to offer. A larger selection will give you greater flexibility to explore different fields and better resources for whatever major you do declare.

Money matters

Before making a decision, you should always consider the financial implications of enrolling in each college. Unless you are fully paying for your education, it is worth speaking with your parents about tuition costs. Financial aid packages and scholarships are important, given the huge expense of college in today's day and age. If you are planning on higher education after undergrad, you may want to consider a less expensive school or one that offers you a scholarship.

Additionally, review the details of your financial aid package or scholarship. You may be offered a loan, rather than a grant and many scholarships are renewed on an annual basis, providing you maintain a specific G.P.A.

Talk to teachers, friends, and family

Lastly, it is helpful to get the opinions of others. Have a discussion with teachers, guidance counselors, friends, and family. Talking with others may give you the validation you need to make that final decision or reason to reconsider. You may come across someone who has more information about a specific school or can put you in touch with a current student. Furthermore, family and friends can provide a different perspective and point out particular concerns you may not have previously considered.

When I finally made my decision, I remember feeling uneasy and worried that I may have made the wrong choice. It may seem easy to delve into the world of hypotheticals, but look forward. Be confident in your decision and focus on the new adventure you are about to begin. Enjoy the rest of your senior year and start getting excited about college. Browse the course catalog and connect with other new students. The worst is over and only the best is yet to come.

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.



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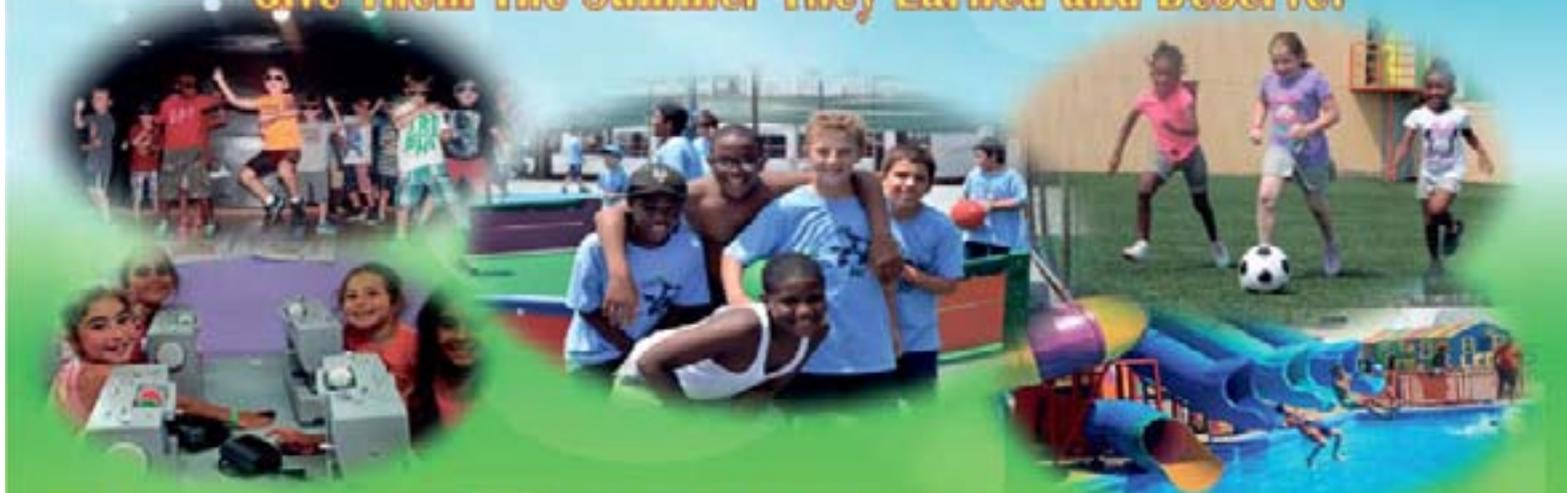


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Leaving a retirement account to a minor

I have large retirement accounts and would like to name my grandchildren as the beneficiaries. It is my understanding that a minor (someone under the age of 18) cannot legally “own” money or bank accounts. Is that accurate? How should I handle contingent beneficiaries on my IRA and other assets? Should I write the names of my minor children or should I name their parents?

Leaving a retirement account to your grandchildren is a commendable way to leave a legacy for your family. If the beneficiary is designated, he may elect to “stretch” the inherited IRA (individual retirement account) over his own lifetime, allowing the asset to grow tax free within the account for presumably a long time. However the beneficiary will be required to withdraw what is called, required minimum distributions, the minimum amount he must withdraw from the account each year calculated based on his own (presumably younger) age immediately. The beneficiary will have to make an election for the stretch out within a relatively short period of time after the death of the account owner, otherwise the default is that the beneficiary must withdraw the entirety of the account over a five-year period.

Additional planning is advisable if the beneficiary is under the age of 18. Because a minor may not own property in his individual name, there is a high probability that the financial institution will require that a guardian of the property be appointed for the child in order to distribute the distributions. This would require a petition to the court, and an account held jointly with the Clerk of the Court such that approval would be required each time a withdrawal is desired. In other words the parent would not have unfettered discre-



tion over the account. Also the child would be permitted to withdraw the entirety of the assets in the account when he becomes 18, which could be a significant sum.

There are two alternatives. First you may designate a custodian who can oversee the account until the grandchild reaches 18. At that point the grandchild could withdraw the entirety of the account, subject to significant income taxes on the withdrawal and losing the benefit of tax-free growth within the account.

If the individual retirement account is of substantial value, or if you are concerned about spendthrift behavior or wish to protect your grandchild’s inheritance, you can create what is known as a conduit trust in your will or in a living trust. You can then designate that conduit trust as the beneficiary of your account instead of the individual grandchild. When drafted properly, it allows the IRA to “look through” the trust and treat the minor as the designated beneficiary while still allowing a stretch-out of the account over the grandchild’s life. The distributions are paid to the trust, not to a guardian under court supervision, and they can then be used for the

grandchild’s benefit by paying the grandchild’s parent or guardian, or a provider of services (such as a private school or college). The stretch-out can be as long as the trust allows, even for future generations.

There is also a technique known as an accumulation trust, however, the conduit trust has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service in various rulings and commentary, whereas the accumulation trust has not.

Keep in mind that the individual retirement account must be distributed only to the trustee of the conduit trust in order to preserve the integrity of the account.

These are complicated techniques that require specific drafting to ensure your objectives are met. You should always consult with a qualified estate planning attorney to determine a course of action that is right for you and your specific situation.

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 her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and www.besunderlaw.com.

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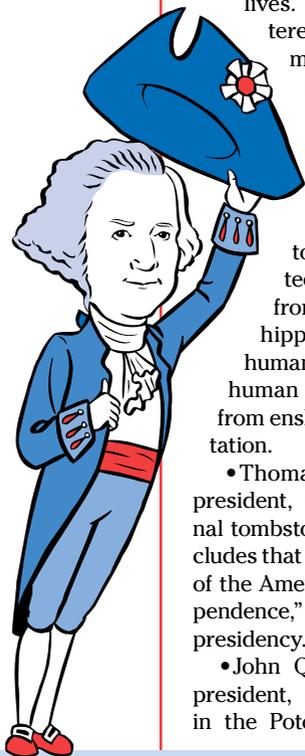
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Executive exposé

Fascinating
and fun facts
about our
presidents

BY JANEEN LEWIS

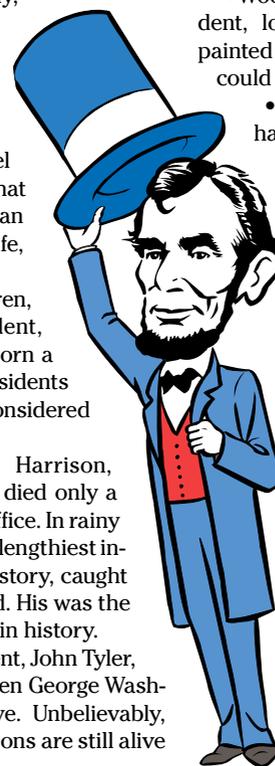


We know them as our commanders-in-chief, leaders who hold executive power, and men who always look academic, dignified, and perfectly presidential in the paintings and photographs that document their lives. But there are some interesting tidbits about these men you probably didn't hear in history class. To help celebrate President's Day, here is a list of 25 intriguing facts about our presidents:

- George Washington, the first president, had teeth that were made not from wood, but from bone, hippopotamus ivory, and human teeth. It is possible the human teeth were purchased from enslaved workers on his plantation.
- Thomas Jefferson, the third president, designed his own original tombstone. While the epitaph includes that Jefferson was "The author of the American Declaration of Independence," it makes no mention of his presidency.
- John Quincy Adams, the sixth president, frequently skinny-dipped in the Potomac River in the early

morning hours. He was also one of the first presidents to be photographed. Thankfully, he was fully clothed for that.

- Andrew Jackson, the seventh president, once killed a man in a duel over an argument that started when the man insulted Jackson's wife, Rachel.
- Martin Van Buren, the eighth president, was the first to be born a U.S. citizen. The presidents before him were considered British subjects.
- William Henry Harrison, the ninth president, died only a month after taking office. In rainy weather, he gave the lengthiest inaugural speech in history, caught pneumonia, and died. His was the shortest presidency in history.
- The 10th president, John Tyler, was born in 1790 when George Washington was still alive. Unbelievably, two of Tyler's grandsons are still alive today.



- Have you ever had a crush on a teacher? You're not alone. Millard Fillmore, the 13th president, married his teacher, Abigail Powers.
- James Buchanan, the 15th president, bought slaves in Washington DC and set them free in Pennsylvania.
- In 1860 Abraham Lincoln grew a beard when an 11-year-old girl, Grace Bedell, wrote to him and told him he would stand a better chance of being elected president if he grew "whiskers." He followed Bedell's advice and soon after became the 16th president.
- Andrew Johnson, the 17th president, was the first president to be impeached and then acquitted. It would be another 130 years before another president, William Jefferson "Bill" Clinton would be impeached. He was also acquitted.
- Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th president, was the first to install a phone at the White House. Who was the first person he called? The man who invented the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell.

• Multilingual and ambidextrous James Garfield, the 20th president, could write Latin with one hand while writing in Greek with the other.

• Chester Arthur, the 21st president, was a clothes horse. He reportedly owned 80 pairs of pants.

• Teddy Bears are named for Theodore Roosevelt, the 26th president, because he once refused to shoot a bear his hunting companions tied to a tree.

• Woodrow Wilson, the 28th president, loved golf so much that he painted his golf balls black so he could play in the snow.

• Visitors to the White House had to be careful during Herbert Hoover's administration. The 31st president was known to let his son Allan's two pet alligators roam around the grounds.

• Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32nd president, was related to 11 other presidents by either blood or marriage.

• John F. Kennedy, the 35th president, donated his presidential salary to charity.

• Gerald Ford, the 38th president, posed for Look Magazine while he was a college student at Yale. It is widely believed that he posed for the cover of Cosmopolitan Magazine in 1942.

• James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, the 39th president, was the first president to be born in a hospital.

• Ronald Reagan, the 40th president, is credited with saving 77 lives during the seven summers he worked as a lifeguard.

• George Herbert Walker Bush, the 41st president, learned the hard way not to attend an event when he had the flu. Despite his doctor's orders, he went to an important dinner with the Japanese Prime Minister and proceeded to vomit and pass out at the dining table.

• George W. Bush, the 43rd president, acted as head cheerleader for the football team when he was in high school.

• Barack Obama, the 44th and current president, won Grammys in 2005 and 2007 in the Spoken Word Album category for his books, "Dreams From My Father" and "The Audacity of Hope: Thoughts on Reclaiming the American Dream."

Janeen Lewis is a freelance journalist and presidential history buff. She has been published in "Chicken Soup for the Soul: The Multitasking Mom's Survival Guide" and "GreenPrints: The Weeder's Digest."

Quiz your knowledge

Here are some of the presidents' most memorable quotes. Who said each of the following?

1. "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."
2. "Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far."
3. "I have left orders to be awakened at any time in case of national emergency — even if I'm in a cabinet meeting."
4. "Read my lips: no new taxes."
5. "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country."
6. "... That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."
7. "I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."
8. "I would rather belong to a poor nation that was free than to a rich nation that had ceased to be in love with liberty."
9. "Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth."
10. "As a man is said to have a right to his property, he may be equally said to have a property in his rights."

Answers:

1. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
2. Theodore Roosevelt
3. Ronald Reagan
4. George H.W. Bush
5. John F. Kennedy
6. Abraham Lincoln
7. Thomas Jefferson
8. Woodrow Wilson
9. George Washington
10. James Madison

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Principal – Maura Lorenzen

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Maximo Catala - Principal

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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Discover the power of sprouted grains

Sprouted grains, a popular food of the '70s, are back. In fact they're becoming trendy and can be found in bread, cereal, pasta, and snack chips.

Sprouted grains refer to seeds of grain that are soaked in water and allowed to germinate, or begin to sprout. Once a root appears, the grains can be frozen, dried, or mashed and cooked into baked goods. They're considered a whole grain and that grain can be wheat, rye, barley, spelt, or oat. Even naturally gluten-free corn, rice, amaranth, and millet flours are being made from sprouted grains.

Proponents say the health benefits are significant. Sprouted grains are said to be higher in nutrients such as protein and vitamins. But are the benefits being overstated?

"Whether there's a significantly greater amount of nutrients or not, that's not really clear," says Dr. Julie Miller Jones, professor emerita at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, Minnesota. "Is it 10 percent more, enough to make a nutritional impact?"

Sprouted grains are a touch sweeter and more flavorful than traditional whole grains.

"You're breaking down some



starch, which makes it taste sweeter," says Jones, who attended a presentation on the topic at the American Association of Cereal Chemists International meeting in October. She says it's a way for food companies to "get a sweet taste without added sugar."

She adds that some of the enzymes produced during the sprouting process can make certain proteins easier to digest.

"It breaks down grain protein and legume protein, both of which are harder proteins for us to digest."

In addition, sprouting activates

certain plant enzymes that start breaking the cell wall down, which also improves digestibility.

As to the protein increasing, she says since the starch is being used up, it's the percentage of protein that is going up, not the actual amount.

"When you measure it analytically, you have more protein, but you haven't been making protein, you've been using up the starch so the percentage is higher."

Sprouting causes the reduction of phytate, which improves the absorption of both iron and zinc, two key nutrients for both kids and their mommas.

Is there a downside to sprouting? Jones says that depending on how long you do it, "you can take all the beta glucan (fiber) out of things like oats or barley."

Sprouted flour can be purchased online and at natural foods stores, but mainstream supermarkets are beginning to offer it as well.

For more information on how to sprout your own or baking with them, see the book "Bread Revolution" by Peter Reinhart.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is eager to try her hand at some sprouted grain recipes. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter or ChristinePalumbo.com.

Sprouted coconut waffles

Serves four

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 large eggs
- 1/4 cup yogurt
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 3 tbsp. coconut oil
- 1/4 cup maple syrup (plus more for on top)
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 1/4 cups sprouted whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup coconut flour
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 4 tbsp. dried, shredded coconut

DIRECTIONS: In a large mixing bowl, lightly beat the eggs. Add the yogurt, water, oil, syrup, and vanilla. Mix until blended. Add the remaining dry ingredients to the egg mixture and mix until blended.

Follow the waffle iron instructions for cooking. Adjust the consistency of the batter by adding more water or flour as needed.

Serve with butter and maple syrup.

NUTRITION FACTS: 410 calories, 51 g carbohydrate, 11 g protein, 19 g fat (15 g saturated fat), 490 mg sodium, 13 g fiber

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FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN



Delicious romance

It's all about the LOVE this Valentine's Day! Wishing everyone a Valentine's Day filled with romance, roses, and, of course, lots of deLysscious chocolates. Valentine's Day in New York City can be very magical and romantic. There are so many fabuLyss things to do on with and without the children.

Spend a beautiful evening with someone special this Valentine's Day in The Carlyle Hotel. Book a

room and take a "staycation." Since this Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday, you can choose from a matinee or evening Broadway show. "An American in Paris," "Beautiful," and "The Color Purple" are just a few that I love.

But if you really want to splurge on that special someone, get tickets to see "Hamilton." This would make it one Valentine's Day you would never forget. We can't stop

listening to the music and singing all of the songs in my apartment.

Take a horse and carriage tour in Central Park with or without the kids. Make sure to stop into the Plaza Food Hall before or after for some deLysscious treats. Some of my favorites are La Maison du Chocolat, Billy's Bakery, and of course, Lady M. You can always make a reservation at the Palm Court in the Plaza Hotel for high tea.

I always love having the kids make something handmade for my husband, grandparents, and teachers. This is a time for them to unplug and get creative. This year I have some fun ideas for them, including taking them to PhotoOp on the Upper East Side for a photo session (www.photoopnyc.com). Once we have the photos I am going to have the kids decorate the picture frames with glitter glue, paint, and markers. I want them to personalize each frame for their loved ones.

We will also make some handmade chocolate lollipops in the shapes of hearts, lips, and flowers.

Wishing everyone a sweet Valentine's Day with their loved ones!

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

DeLysscious Valentine's Day sugar cookies

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 4-2/3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup pale-pink or white sanding sugar (optional)
- Petal dust in pink, orange, and violet tones (optional)
- 2/3 cup apricot or strawberry jam, slightly warmed (optional)

DIRECTIONS: In bowl of electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar until fluffy, about four minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Sift flour, baking soda, and salt into large bowl.

On low speed, gradually add flour mixture to mixer bowl, alternating with buttermilk, until combined. Wrap dough in plastic; chill until firm, one hour or overnight.

To color white sanding sugar, if using, place a few tablespoons in a small bowl. Mix in petal dust with a toothpick, a bit at a time, until desired shade is reached. Colored sanding sugar will last indefinitely.

Heat oven to 350-degrees with two racks centered. Line two baking

sheets with parchment paper. On lightly floured surface, roll chilled dough 1/8 inch thick. Cut out hearts using any 1- to 3 1/2-inch heart cookie cutters. If desired, cut centers out of some hearts.

Transfer with spatula to baking sheets. Chill for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with sanding sugar, if using. Bake until just golden but not too brown, about 10 minutes.

Transfer cookies to rack. Continue with dough; reroll scraps.

To make sandwich hearts: Brush bottom heart lightly with jam; cover with a second heart with center cut out; jam will adhere hearts. Fill cut-out area with more jam.

From <http://www.marthastewart.com/354106/valentine-cookies>



FAMILY HEALTH

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

Signs & prevention of lead poisoning

There have been frightening stories in the news about how thousands of children in Michigan have been exposed to toxic lead levels due to tainted public water supplies. Do New Yorkers face similar risks? What are the symptoms of lead poisoning, and how can I reduce my own child's risk of exposure to lead?

According to New York City's Department of Environmental Protection, the water that comes from our upstate reservoir system is virtually lead-free, so a systemic problem like the one unfolding in Michigan is unlikely. However that doesn't mean that New Yorkers should automatically consider the water that comes out of their home plumbing lead-free, or that lead poisoning from other sources isn't a possibility. In 2014, the City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene identified more than 8,000 children who had blood lead levels high enough to indicate unsafe exposure to lead.

Lead poisoning is a particular concern for children, because their bodies absorb almost five times more ingested lead than those of adults. Depending on the extent of the exposure, the symptoms of lead poisoning may range from irritability, fatigue, inability to concentrate, and nausea to seizures, developmental delays, and even death in the most severe cases. Even small levels of lead that result in no immediate symptoms can have adverse effects on a child's brain later in life.

There is some good news: lead poisoning is easy to prevent. Elevated levels of lead in the blood do not occur as the result of a disease that worsens over time — lead in the blood is accumulated through exposure. With the proper precautions you can minimize this.

To start, although New York City banned the use of lead-based paint in residential buildings more than half a century ago, many buildings constructed prior to the ban may



still contain hazardous paint that has never been removed. This is why the health department recommends reporting any peeling paint to your landlord to ensure that it is repaired immediately. Keeping your child away from peeling paint and home repairs that disturb paint — both in your own home and in those of others — is important as well.

Do not take vitamin and herbal supplements that come from other countries, which may also contain lead. Imported clay pots and dishes may contain lead, too, and should not be used to cook, serve, or store food.

And though the water supply we get from our reservoirs is safe, lead can still creep into it in the final twists and turns if your home has old piping, fixtures, or solders. Signs of tainted water in your home include tap water that is unclear or

has a strange odor, but water with unsafe lead levels often looks and tastes exactly like water that is lead-free. Running tap water on cold for two minutes before using it to drink, cook, or make formula can usually minimize the risk of lead poisoning from your plumbing. You can also contact 311 and the Department of Environmental Protection will send you a kit that allows you to get your water tested for free.

Be sure to frequently wash your hands, as well as pacifiers, bottles, toys, and any other items that your child may put in her mouth to minimize your risk of lead poisoning and to stave off a host of other health conditions. There are many things to worry about when raising a child, but with the proper precautions, lead poisoning need not be one of them.



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

Sustainable seafood for you & your family

There are many wonderful reasons for cooking seafood regularly for you and your family, including numerous proven health benefits, simplicity in preparation, impressive presentation, and delicious results. However, it is important to take into account the sustainability of our seafood choices. Whether you are a seasoned fish cook or just starting to experiment with seafood recipes, a delicious dinner can put a smile on everyone's face!

Try arctic char. Arctic char, also known as sea trout, has a similar color, flavor, and cooking method as salmon. Reasonably priced, this fish is often responsibly farmed. At Léman, we season and roast the tender fillets, then brush them with a tangy honey butter when they are piping hot. Served with steamed grains, roasted veggies, and sliced chives on top, and you have a beautiful, healthful weeknight meal.

Go for clams and mussels. Great-quality, farmed mussels and clams are widely available. You can steam



the shellfish up in an infinite number of ways. The cooking process produces a beautiful broth that is perfect for pouring over linguine or mopping up with good bread.

Solve your seafood dilemma. Many families are split on liking seafood. A great way to solve this is to make a recipe that can use either

fish or chicken. Barramundi, tilapia, mahi mahi, or chicken breast all work well with a lemon-caper brown butter sauce. You never know, you may even convert a non-fish eater! (Recipe follows.)

Skip the fish, keep the sea. Seaweed is gaining popularity in the U.S. by the minute, and with great reason. Packed with vitamins and minerals, edible plants from the sea are delicious! Miso soup relies on kombu, or edible seaweed, for depth of flavor. Seaweed salads, made from wakame or hijiki, are a perfect addition to dinner or lunch. And don't forget the easy-to-find crunchy seaweed snacks that are popular with kids and adults alike.

Canned tuna transformation. There are many excellent quality oil-packed canned tuna options available. Canned tuna can be used as a garnish in a vegetable-packed classic tuna Niçoise salad. Boiled baby potatoes, steamed French green beans, black Niçoise olives with white wine vinaigrette are the perfect bed for some flaked-up, oil-packed tuna. If you are like me and love anchovies, you can lay a few of those on top, too.

Joanna DeVita, executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, is an accomplished chef from New York. After graduating from the University of Maryland in 2002, she pursued her dream of becoming a chef by enrolling in the French Culinary Institute in lower Manhattan. In addition to making her way from line cook to executive chef through various restaurants and catering companies in New York City, she has worked at an organic farm in Australia and at restaurants in Spain and Ireland. DeVita 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.

Seared fish fillets or chicken breast with lemon-caper brown butter

INGREDIENTS:

- 4, 5–7 ounce white fish fillets such as Barramundi, tilapia or mahi mahi, skin off
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, tenders removed
- 2 tbs vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- fresh ground black pepper to taste
- salt to taste
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter

- 2 tbs capers (rinsed if salt-packed, drained otherwise)
- juice of 1/2 a lemon
- 1 tbs chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS: Season fillets (fish or chicken) well with salt and fresh ground pepper. Prepare ingredients for sauce by cutting up butter, chopping parsley, squeezing lemon juice, and draining capers. Mix the flour with cayenne pepper, black pepper, garlic powder, and salt. Dredge fillets in flour, then shake off excess flour. Heat a large sauté pan on high heat with vegetable oil until oil shimmers, becomes "loose" and smokes only slightly.

Gently lay fillets, presentation side down, into the hot pan. Do not move fillets. Lower the flame to medium

and allow a crust to form. Flip fillets over after three to four minutes. They should be golden-dark brown. Cook fish fillets until a knife-point easily pierces through. Cook chicken until internal temperature reaches 165-degrees Fahrenheit (you may need to finish in the oven).

In a fresh sauté pan, melt butter cubes. When butter foams up, lower the heat and watch closely. The butter solids will begin to brown and smell toasted. Swish the butter around in the pan so it cooks evenly. When butter solids are nicely brown add capers, parsley, and lemon juice and turn off the heat. Taste the sauce and adjust for seasoning. Pour sauce over cooked fillets. Serve with potatoes or rice pilaf and broccoli.

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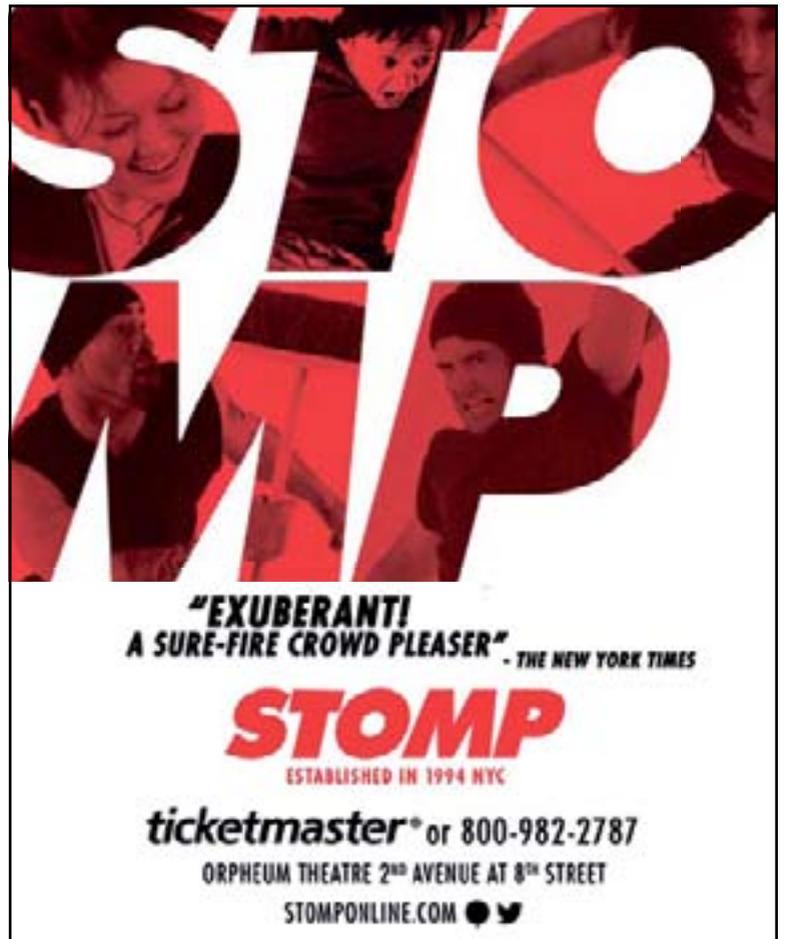
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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

I'm hooked again!

My lifelong love of crochet is now a business

I first picked up a crochet hook when I was 8 years old. My mother was crocheting a blanket in our Windsor Terrace home on a quiet Sunday, her only day off. Rather than being tired and irritable, which I'm sure she was to a certain extent, she somehow found the patience to teach me how to maneuver my very impatient fingers to make a single chain stitch. Mom went back to her granny square blanket, and I proceeded to try my hand at a series of chain stitches. Some were too tight, others overwhelmingly loose, but I persevered.

Each weekend and some weeknights, my mom continued work on her blanket and I was soon making chain stitches with ease. For many weeks, we sat side-by-side, Mom and her stunning blanket and me and my never-ending chain stitch. One time, she said, "Hey, I bet I can make a beautiful dress for your Barbie," and in just a few minutes, she did. It was a shoulderless hot pink ball gown that was fitted at the waist and then bloomed into a gorgeous gown with subtle curled circles at the bottom. It was not that like anything that could be found in a store. Many years later, as a first-time nanny, my mom made gorgeous blankets for my nephew and daughter.

I dabbled here and there over the years, learning how to make blankets, scarves, and hats. My own daughters learned how to crochet, too. Just a few months ago, my oldest said it had been a while since we crocheted and suggested we get some yarn and make something. So we did. It became my nightly ritual. After a long day, instead of watching television, I crocheted.

We bought new yarns that I had never had before, like chunky wool-ease, saateen, ultra pima imported Peruvian yarn, and my new favorite, alpaca. We experimented with new creations, and were soon making infinity scarves, chunky cowls with buttons, slouchy hats, braided ear warmers, and our new favorite, dog scarves! They were all contemporary and fashionable accessories,



and I grew to love my long lost hobby all over again. Then I started to notice something: I was calmer than I had been in months. I also realized that when I had a stressful day, I couldn't wait to get home and crochet that night.

We sold quite a few of our items at a local vendor day and that gave us the push to move forward. We recently opened an Etsy shop and named it "BKLYN Handmade" because we are truly a Brooklyn business; after all, it all began right here. We say there is Brooklyn spirit in every stitch, and there truly is.

Crocheting is such a cathartic form of expression. Our personal style is where elegance and style

meet comfort and warmth ... because you should have the best of both worlds. If you are looking for a soothing hobby, you can pick up an inexpensive needle and yarn at your local dollar store just to get a sense of crocheting. Then go to YouTube and look for beginner projects — there are many! And if you get "hooked" like we did, shoot me an e-mail, or better yet, send me a picture of your finished project!

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.

Being a great pet owner!

Take proper care of furry friends

BY HEIDI GANAHL

Whether you're already a pet owner or are considering becoming a pet owner, keep these tips in mind to ensure responsible ownership:

Sign your dog up for a training class. It is important to create a bond with you and your dog, as well as learn how to communicate with your pup. By teaching him commands, it will help you learn how to tell your pooch what you want and don't want them to do in your household.

Exercise your pup. Dogs that don't receive enough exercise can resort to bad behaviors like chewing, digging, and barking. Make

sure your canine gets at least a brisk 30-minute walk — depending on his size — a day to get his energy out.

Purchase a microchip and identification tag. Make sure to get your pet microchipped and also have an identification tag with your contact information on them at all times. On average, 80- to 85 percent of dogs and 98 percent of cats that go missing will not return home, but proper ID tags and microchips help to increase the likelihood of a reunion with a lost pet.

Research local veterinarians



and schedule an appointment. Find a veterinarian and get your pup a check-up every six months. Preventative care will keep your dog healthier and will help keep medical costs down.

Educate children on how to interact with your dog properly. If you have children, teach them the proper way to interact with your dog. Most bites occur with kids under 12 years old, so educating yourself, as well as your kids, on the proper way to be around their four-legged family member is a must.

Give your pet lots of love and attention. Dogs love their humans, and it is important for them to spend time with you. Leaving a dog alone in the backyard or for extended periods of time is not healthy for them. If you work long hours, hire a dog walker to get your dog out during the day for some exercise and companionship.

Heidi Ganahl is the Founder of Camp Bow Wow.

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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Help your kids be more responsible

One of the most common questions I get asked from parents is about responsibility. How can we inspire, help, and empower our kids to be more responsible? The exciting part about this topic is that it does not matter how old your child is — it is never too late to start.

So what if parents have been doing too much for their kids — how does a parent start to change this habit? The following three tips will help get you thinking. If you need more tips or help with this, I go into much more detail on this topic in my resource “Analyze Your Teen: 4 Part-3 Hour Audio-File Series.” In fact, one part (nearly one hour) is dedicated to this challenging topic. But here are three tips to get you started:

Make a list

Set apart some time, sit down with your partner, and make a list of things that you are doing that should be your kids’ responsibilities (i.e. making lunches, doing laundry, calling teachers, applying for part-time jobs for them).

Compare notes to see what you have on your list and what your partner has on his. You may be surprised just how many items you have written down.

Prioritize

Talk it out with your partner and choose the top one to two jobs or responsibilities that you want to start giving to your kids. Be sure to start with simpler (and easier) jobs and work up to the more difficult ones.

When we are trying to pass responsibilities to our kids, we don’t want to overwhelm them (this demotivates behavior), so start with simpler jobs first.



Talk with your child in a loving way

Once you and your partner have decided on the key items you want to start passing over to your children (i.e. they are now responsible for making their own bed or lunch), you want to make sure you raise this with your kids in a positive and loving way. Ninety-three percent of communication is the “how” not the “what.” Yes, it’s important to use the right words, but really pay attention to how you communicate it.

If a parent says, “Okay, son, I’ve had enough of doing everything, so I’m passing these jobs to you,” immediately a teen will get defensive.

However, if a parent says, “Honey, I need to apologize. I realize that I have been doing too much because of my own issues (i.e. my need for control) and I realize that it’s really not helping you or me. So I’ve thought of a great plan that will mean I nag you less, I’ll be more happy, relaxed, and easygoing, and you’ll feel even better about yourself,” you’ll get their attention.

Start with easier responsibilities first. For many things, allow the natu-

ral consequences to happen (i.e. if your son doesn’t do his laundry, he has no clean clothes). Remember not to rescue your kids!

Here’s the golden rule: If a child can do something, you let her do it (i.e. my 8-year-old twins can pick up their toys, so that’s now their job, not mine). Teens can physically do laundry or make their lunches, so that should be their responsibility, not the parents’.

Once you pull back and you see your kids moving forward, praise, praise, praise! Once your child or teen hears your praise, sees you more relaxed, and is now experiencing how great it feels to be fully responsible over something, this is the positive reinforcement they need to continue!

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



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.



A question of marital fault

In a recent court case, Alice M. v. Terrance T., wife Alice M. was divorcing her husband Terrance T., who had already been convicted of raping her during their marriage. Terrance was claiming in the divorce action that his wife had “falsely accused” [him] of domestic violence and rape.” He asked the court to decide if he was entitled to money and some property.

In his Dec. 23 decision, State Supreme Court Justice Jeffrey S. Sunshine set out the question before the court as follows:

“The issue ... is whether defendant (husband), who is serving a 40-year prison sentence following conviction of rape in the first degree against plaintiff (wife), is entitled to maintenance, equitable distribution, and counsel fees.”

The judge found it to be clear “that [Husband] seeks ... to collaterally attack his criminal conviction for first-degree rape of plaintiff during the marriage.”

Judge Sunshine doesn’t allow Terrance to cast doubt on his rape conviction. Here is one reason:

Standard of proof

The rape case had been a criminal case. It was already decided that the husband had been found guilty of rape “beyond a reasonable doubt,” which is a very high standard of proof.

In civil cases like divorce, the standard of proof is lower — that is, easier to meet — than ones in criminal court. The standard in civil court is “a preponderance of the evidence.”

Since the husband had been found guilty of rape in the criminal court, where so much proof was required to convict him, the judge wouldn’t accept his argument in the divorce (civil court) case, where less proof is needed, that his wife had falsely accused him

Fault

Much of the case revolves around the question of fault, more specifically: when does one spouse’s fault (bad behavior against the other spouse) affect the amount of money and property she or he will receive from the divorce through equitable distribution (dividing marital prop-

erty) and spousal maintenance (alimony)?

In partial answer to this question, Judge Sunshine referred to the case of *Blickstein v. Blickstein*, decided in 1984, “which is often cited in this jurisdiction for the proposition that marital fault is not, as a general rule, ‘a just and proper consideration in determining equitable distribution of marital property.’”

In *Blickstein*, the court stated that:

“It would be, in our view, inconsistent with this purpose to hold that marital fault should be considered in property distribution. Indeed, it would introduce considerations which are irrelevant to the basic assumptions underlying the Equitable Distribution Law.

‘And that: ‘fault is very difficult to evaluate in the context of a marriage and may, in the last analysis, be traceable to the conduct of both parties.’”

“However,” Judge Sunshine wrote, “the Court [in *Blickstein*] then unequivocally noted that in rare cases where the Court found that one spouse had engaged in ‘egregious’ conduct against the other spouse that it may be a factor the Court could consider in making an equitable distribution award.”

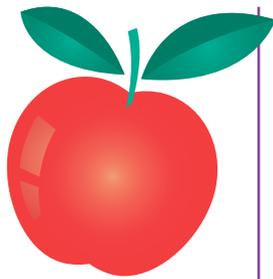
Judge Sunshine cited more recent cases, and cautioned that few actions will involve such egregious conduct — conduct that will “shock the conscience of the court.” But some have, such as ones involving extreme violence and kidnapping.

(“Conversely, conduct that courts have found not to be egregious includes adultery, alcoholism, abandonment, and verbal harassment coupled with several acts of minor domestic violence.”)

Due largely to Terrance’s horrible mistreatment of Alice, everything he asked for was denied. The court’s conclusion that he never contributed financially (having been incarcerated part of the marriage) didn’t help his case either.

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, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

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



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Learn these helpful education acronyms

Dear teacher,

Please help me understand some educational acronyms so that I know what the teachers are talking about.

Dear parent,

It always helps to understand what your children's teachers are saying. Whenever a teacher uses an acronym that you don't understand, simply ask for an explanation. Here are a few acronyms that might be helpful for you to know that are commonly used in elementary and middle school:

ADA — (Average Daily Attendance) is determined by dividing the total days of instruction by the total days of student attendance. It is used as the basis for distributing state school revenue.

AYP — (Adequate Yearly Progress) a measure under No Child Left Behind to see if states are meeting proficiency goals in reading and math.

ESL — (English as a Second Language) a program giving special instructions to children who are learning English.

G&T — (Gifted and Talented) a variety of programs that support the needs of exceptional children through accelerated, rigorous, and specialized instruction.

IQ — (Intelligence Quotient) a number representing a student's intelligence based on the score of a special test.

LEA — (Local Education Agency) your local school system or county.

NAEP — (National Assessment of Educational Progress) nicknamed the "Nation's Report Card," it compares the achievement of students in different states in various subject areas.

NCLB — (No Child Left Behind) a federal law that holds primary and secondary schools accountable to higher standards.

PTA and PTO — (Parent Teacher Association and Parent Teacher Organization) parent-teacher groups with the goal of helping and improving an individual school, especially through parental involvement.

RTI — (Response to Instruction)



a three-tiered system of identifying students' needs and supplying the appropriate help.

STEM — (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) a focus on skills needed to succeed in today's world with the goal of interesting young students in these subjects at an early age.

Title I — A program that provides federal funding to schools that have low poverty levels. The funding is meant to help students who are at risk of falling behind academically.

USED — (United States Education Department) provides federal assistance to state and local agencies, establishes policies related to federal education funds, administers distribution of these funds, collects data and oversees research on America's schools and identifies major issues in education.

Finding a time to talk to teachers

Dear teacher,

Both my husband and I work long, long hours at jobs where we can never get away for conferences with our children's teachers. Do you have any suggestions about ways that we

can talk to their teachers?

Dear parent,

Talking with your children's teachers is very important. When it is simply impossible to visit with them in person, the best alternative is to talk on the phone. Use e-mail or the school website to contact the teachers to arrange a convenient time to talk to them. It might even be possible to use Skype, so the conversation will seem more personal, as you are looking at each other.

Also, if you attend school events in the evenings, you may find it possible to communicate ahead of time with teachers and arrange a time to meet before or after an event. Another possibility is trying to arrange time before school starts to come in early and talk to teachers.

When you have immediate questions that need answering, email is often the best way to get the answers you need.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask them on the columnists' website at www.dearteacher.com. Compass Syndicate Corporation 2015.

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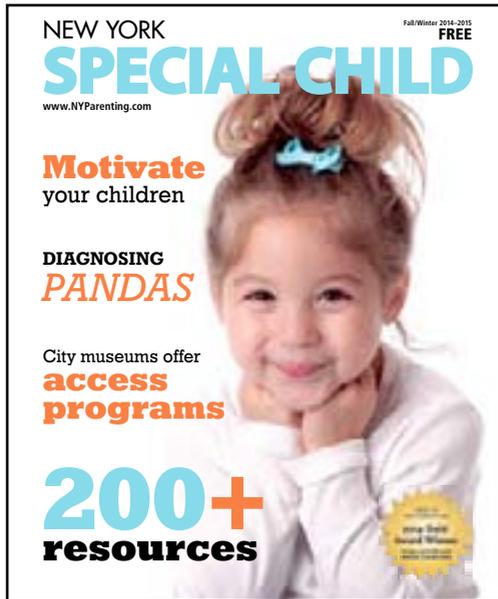
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Calendar

FEBRUARY



Now entering winter break fun

Hop aboard for all types of fun at New York Transit Museum's mid-winter break programming from Feb. 16 through 19.

Children of all ages can learn about one of the greatest transit systems in the world in a variety of workshops and programs.

Workshops include Get Kinetic,

Redbird Reef Painting, and Tunes Under New York.

Mid-winter break events, Feb. 16 through Feb. 19, 10:30 am to 2 pm. Free with museum admission.

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

Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. NYParenting.com

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

MON, FEB. 1

IN BROOKLYN

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

Be a fare collector for the day. For children 5 and older.

TUES, FEB. 2

IN BROOKLYN

Groundhog Day: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10:30 am – 3 pm; Free with admission.

Make your own Punxsutawney Phil puppet and see if it sees its shadow.

WED, FEB. 3

IN BROOKLYN

"Pop-Pop Popcorn!": Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (212) 353-2332; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater; 10 am and noon; \$10 (\$15 adults).

"Pop-Pop-Popcorn!" is the latest fun-filled hour from The Paper Bag Players. The show is bursting with new work and sprinkled with classic Paper Bag Player sketches sure to entertain and delight kids ages 3–8.

THURS, FEB. 4

IN BROOKLYN

"Pop-Pop Popcorn!": 10 am and noon. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Wednesday, Feb. 3.

FRI, FEB. 5

IN BROOKLYN

Autism Night: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (508) 230-3789; www.brooklynkids.org; 5:30 pm to 8



Photo by M. David Leeds

Pop in to 'Pop-Pop Popcorn!'

Pop in to see "Pop-Pop Popcorn!" at the Kumble Theatre on Feb. 3 and 4.

"Pop-Pop-Popcorn!" is the latest fun-filled hour from The Paper Bag Players. The show, featuring

pm; Free with admission.

The museum will be open exclusively to families with children 10 and under on the autism spectrum. Have a chance to explore our hands-on exhibits in a less overwhelming atmosphere. This program is free but pre-registration is required. Call the museum.

SAT, FEB. 6

IN BROOKLYN

The Science of Stem: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (508) 230-3789; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm to 3 pm; Free with admission.

Science activities featuring the young girls from Easton's Steam Education Team! These Easton Middle School and Oliver Ames High School students attended the Envision the Future Summer Camp at Bridgewater State University this past summer and serve as ambassadors for Stem and Steam studies.

the song "A Day on the Lake," is bursting with new work and sprinkled with classic Paper Bag Player sketches sure to entertain and delight kids ages 3 to 8.

"Pop-Pop Popcorn!" Feb. 3 and

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

What do engineers discover when they dig underground? Find out in this fun workshop. For children 5 and older.

SUN, FEB. 7

IN BROOKLYN

Lego class: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10:30 to noon; Free with garden admission.

Use Lego blocks to build a miniature Japanese garden (ages 4 and up). Led by Eleanor Rodgers, Kensington Lego Class.

Card-crafting workshop: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718)

4 at 10 am and noon. Tickets are \$10 for children, \$15 for adults.

Kumble Theater at Long Island University [DeKalb and Flatbush avenues in Clinton Hill, (212) 353-2332; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater].

623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am to noon; Free with garden admission.

Use Japanese maple leaves to make your own greeting card (ages 4 and up).

DIY Origami: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am – noon; Free with garden admission.

Drop by our self-guided digital origami workshop (ages 5 and up). Led by Taro's Origami Studio.

"Adventurers of Ru-Lan – The Prince is Born": BookCourt, 163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets; (718) 875-3677; www.bookcourt.org; 11 am; Free.

Just in time for Chinese New Year for ages 4-8 years old. Author Larry Bennett with illustrator Basia Tov will present the words and pictures from their collaboration — a charming story that introduces young readers to vibrant Chinese culture and shares

Continued on page 60

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Continued from page 59

values of compassion, empathy, loyalty, and friendship.

Fire workshop: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Urban rangers teach you how to create a fire safely and responsibly. For children 10 and older.

Fantastic Tunnels: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 6.

Shambahala Yoga: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 2 pm to 3 pm; Free with garden admission.

Young adults learn the various methods. You must bring your own mat.

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

Popular and Broadway selections sung by Hannah Stone and Sabrina Palladino and others. Presented by the Regina Opera Company.

New York Riveters vs. Boston Pride: Aviator Sports and Events Center, 3159 Flatbush Ave. in Floyd Bennett Field; (718) 758-7500; <http://nwhl.co/contact-us>; 7 pm; \$18.

The women's hockey team plays at home.

TUES, FEB. 9

IN BROOKLYN

Chinese New Year: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10:30 am - 3 pm; Free with admission.

Celebrate by adding your art to a giant good luck dragon, then make a smaller one to take home.

Free Application for Student



Very romantic ballet

"Romeo and Juliet" comes to On Stage at Kingsborough on Feb. 13. Just in time for Valentine's Day, the most beloved romantic tragedy is performed by the State Ballet Theatre of Russia to the music of Sergei Prokofiev.

The ballet is based on Wil-

liam Shakespeare's timeless tale of tragic love.

"Romeo and Juliet," Feb. 13 at 8 pm. Tickets are \$32-\$35.

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

Aid Workshop: Berkeley College, 255 Duffield St.; 800-446-5400; <http://www.berkeleycollege.edu>; 6 pm to 8 pm; Free.

This hands-on workshop is for parents and guardians of high school seniors interested in applying for financial aid, and students are encouraged to attend. How to apply for a PIN and a full explanation of the financial aid process will be discussed. A presentation will take place on

Berkeley College institutional aid in the form of scholarships and grants. Parents and guardians can request a financial aid planning session by presenting their most recent income tax returns to a financial aid administrator.

WED, FEB. 10

IN BROOKLYN

Rhythm Stories: Kumble Theater

at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater; 10 am and noon; \$25.

A beautifully crafted production on black history. The show is centered on a young girl named Khadijah, who is sent to attend the local performing arts school but doesn't see how dance or music is significant in life. Khadijah feels this way until she meets Yowza, a mysterious and magical being who takes her and friend Naomi on a journey through history to discover the ancestral rhythm of a people, which eventually leads right back to her own creativity and gifts.

THURS, FEB. 11

IN BROOKLYN

Rhythm Stories: 10 am and noon. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Wednesday, Feb. 10.

Meet George Washington: New Utrecht Reformed Parish Hosue, 18th Avenue and 84th Street; (718) 256-7173; 7:30 pm; Free.

Mr. Grillo, the education director at the Van Cortlandt House Museum in the Bronx, has been appearing as Washington for more than 16 years at historic sites and events. He will discuss Washington's time in New York, including the Battle of Brooklyn in August 1776, his victorious return to New York in November 1783, his inauguration there in 1789 and more.

FRI, FEB. 12

IN BROOKLYN

Rhythm Stories: 10 am, noon and 7:30 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Wednesday, Feb. 10.

SAT, FEB. 13

IN BROOKLYN

Valentine's Day: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10:30 am - 2 pm; Free with admission.

Two days devoted to the colors red, pink, and white. We'll have a variety of crafting supplies in MakerSpace that encourage creative expressions of love!

Weather workshop: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Urban rangers lead workshops and experiments on the weather and outdoor exploration.

Miles of tiles: New York Transit

A princely Chinese tale

Drop in to BookCourt on Feb. 7 for a reading of "Adventurers of Ru-Lan: A Prince is Born."

Just in time to celebrate Lunar New Year, the year of the monkey, author Larry Bennett with illustrator Basia Tov will share the words and pictures from their collaboration.

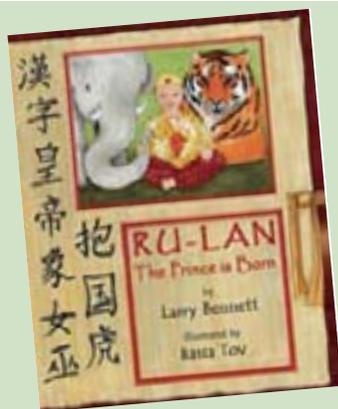
The charming story introduces young readers to vibrant Chinese

culture and teaches the values of compassion, empathy, loyalty, and friendship.

The book reading is suitable for children ages 4 to 8 years old.

"Adventurers of Ru-Lan: A Prince is Born" reading on Feb. 7 at 11 am. Free.

BookCourt [163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Park Slope, (718) 875-3677; www.bookcourt.org].



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

There are miles of mosaic tiles in the stations; learn how to make them and create your own designs.

Rhythm Stories: 7:30 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Wednesday, Feb. 10.

"Romeo and Juliet": On Stage at Kingsborough, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; www.onstageatkingsborough.org; 8 pm; \$32-\$35.

The State Ballet Theatre of Russia performs this full-length dance in three acts. Music is by Sergei Prokofiev. This full-scale production is choreographed by Bolshoi Ballet choreographer Michael Lavrovsky and based on William Shakespeare's timeless tale of tragic love.

SUN, FEB. 14

IN BROOKLYN

Valentine's Day: 10:30 am – 2 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 13.

Miles of tiles: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 13.

New York Riveters vs. Buffalo Beasts: Aviator Sports and Events Center, 3159 Flatbush Ave. in Floyd Bennett Field; (718) 758-7500; 2 pm; \$18.

It is the final home game — and fan appreciation night — for New York's women's hockey team.

MON, FEB. 15

IN BROOKLYN

President's Week: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (508) 230-3789; www.brooklynkids.org; 10:30 am – 2 pm; Free with admission.

Learn all about our founding fathers.

February Break Discovery

Days: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 11 am – 1 pm; Free with garden admission.

Explore the habitats from around the world. Different activities on all the days. Pop in and discover what's happening.

"Alice in Wonderland": Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm; \$9 (\$10 adults).



File photo by Arthur De Gaeta

Meet Mr. President

The father of our country, George Washington, is coming to visit the New Utrecht Reformed Parish House on Feb. 11.

Meet Gen. Washington, as portrayed by Michael Grillo, the education director at the Van Cortlandt House Museum in the Bronx.

To celebrate the birth of our first president, Grillo, who has been appearing as Washington for more than 16 years, will again give a talk at the parish house and include discussions about the Battle of Brooklyn in August of 1776, his victorious return to New York in November of 1783, his inauguration there in 1789, and his visit to New

Utrecht in April 1790, when he had lunch at Barre's Tavern at 84th Street and 16th Avenue, where he greeted students from the village school.

President Washington will have an escort of two Revolutionary War re-enactors in the uniform of a New York State militia unit, one of whom will give a brief talk about the life and equipment of a Revolutionary War soldier. A question-and-answer session with the audience will follow the presentation.

Meet George Washington on Feb. 11 at 7:30 pm; free.

New Utrecht Reformed Parish House [18th Avenue and 84th Street in Bensonhurst, (718) 256-7173]

The Lewis Carroll's adventure is adapted for marionettes by Adam Kilgour and Nicolas Coppola. For children 3 and older.

TUES, FEB. 16

IN BROOKLYN

Mid-winter Break: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 10:30 am – 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Have fun with workshops includ-

ing Get Kinetic, Redbird Reef Painting, and Tunes Under New York. For children of all ages.

President's Week: 10:30 am – 2 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

February Break Discovery

Days: 11 am – 1 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Monday, Feb. 15.

"Alice in Wonderland": 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Puppetworks. See Monday, Feb. 15.

WED, FEB. 17

IN BROOKLYN

Mid-winter Break: 10:30 am – 2 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Feb. 16.

President's Week: 10:30 am – 2 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

February Break Discovery

Days: 11 am – 1 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Monday, Feb. 15.

"Alice in Wonderland": 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Puppetworks. See Monday, Feb. 15.

THURS, FEB. 18

IN BROOKLYN

Mid-winter Break: 10:30 am – 2 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Feb. 16.

President's Week: 10:30 am – 2 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

February Break Discovery

Days: 11 am – 1 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Monday, Feb. 15.

"Alice in Wonderland": 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Puppetworks. See Monday, Feb. 15.

FRI, FEB. 19

IN BROOKLYN

Mid-winter Break: 10:30 am – 2 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Tuesday, Feb. 16.

President's Week: 10:30 am – 2 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

February Break Discovery

Days: 11 am – 1 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Monday, Feb. 15.

"Alice in Wonderland": 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Puppetworks. See Monday, Feb. 15.

Slavic Soul Party: BRIC Arts Media House, 647 Fulton St. at Rockwell Place; (718) 683-5621; www.bricartsmedia.org; 7:30 pm; Free.

The nine-member Balkan funk band performs new works written by young people in the Brooklyn community.

SAT, FEB. 20

IN BROOKLYN

Free Application for Student Aid Workshop: 9 am to 1 pm. Berkeley College. See Tuesday, Feb. 9.

Continued on page 62

Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Visit Wonderland with Alice

Come and journey with Alice in Lewis Carroll's fantasy adventure "Alice in Wonderland," at Puppetworks from Feb. 15 through 19.

The classic fairy tale is adapted for marionettes by Adam Kilgour and Nicolas Coppola and tells the tale of Alice, who travels through the looking glass to have great adventures. From her meeting with the White Rabbit to the nasty Queen of Hearts, there is lots of laughter and adventure for children 3 years and older.

"Alice in Wonderland," Monday through Friday, Feb. 15 to 19. Show times are at 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. Tickets are \$9 for children and \$10 for adults.

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



Photo by TA Smith

Continued from page 61

SUN, FEB. 21

IN BROOKLYN

Animal tracking: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Learn how to find and know animals through their tracks. Led by the Urban Park Rangers and for children 10 and older.

SAT, FEB. 27

IN BROOKLYN

BAMkids Film Festival: BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Ashland Place; (718) 636-4100; www.bam.org; 9:30 am-4:30 pm; \$10 for kids, \$14 for adults.

The BAMkids Film Festival, now in its 18th year, returns with an impressive lineup. Tailored for children ages 3-11, it includes 70 films from 25 countries and in nine languages.

Lunar New Year: Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; www.prospectparkzoo.com; 11 am to 4 pm; Free with admission.

The Wildlife Conservation Society

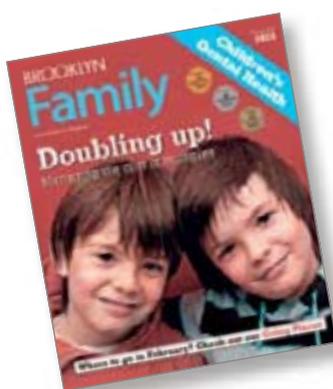
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Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at www.NYParenting.com/calendar

Prospect Park Zoo are celebrating the Year of the Monkey with special activities to ring in the Lunar New Year — including the Hao Bang Ah Monkey Puppet Show, making items that keepers will present to the monkeys, a scavenger hunt, calligraphy lessons and crafts, and the Discovery Center and feeding the sea lions.

Natural fibers: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

The rangers help you to create fibers by using natural dyes and learning techniques.

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

Create a book of fantasy vehicles.

SUN, FEB. 28

IN BROOKLYN

BAMkids Film Festival: 9:30 am–4 pm. BAM Rose Cinemas. See Saturday, Feb. 27.

Lunar New Year: 11 am to 4 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Feb. 27.

Mixed-up vehicles: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 27.

LONG-RUNNING

IN BROOKLYN

Greenpoint Y Early Childhood Center: Greenpoint YMCA Early Childhood Center, 99 Meserole Ave. at Lorimer Street; (212) 912-2260; www.ymcanyc.org; Weekdays, 5 am–midnight, Saturdays and Sundays, 8 am–9 pm, Now – Tues, March 1.

The center is accepting applications for children who are 3 years of age as of Dec. 31, 2015. The program, which blends academic, physical, and emotional development, is tailored to individual needs and conducted through hands-on activities, taking advantage of the ways in which children learn best.

Teen pass: Red Hook Recreation Center, 155 Bay St. between Otsego and Court streets; www.nycgovparks.org; Weekdays, 3 pm and 6 pm.; Free.

Clubs that focus on the areas of city Parks, arts, environmental science and sports that are tailored to the interests and talents of sixth and eighth graders.

Family Day: Brooklyn Historical



It's Groundhog Day!

Find out if there will be six more weeks of winter when the groundhog sees his shadow at the Brooklyn Children's Museum on Feb. 2. Children will make their own Punxsutawney Phil puppet and then see if it sees its shadow in celebration of Groundhog Day.

Suitable for all ages.

Groundhog Day on Tuesday, Feb. 2, from 10:30 am to 3 pm. Free with general admission.

Brooklyn Children's Museum [145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Crown Heights, (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org].

Society, 128 Pierrepont St. at Clinton Street; (718) 222-4111; www.brooklynhistory.org; Saturdays, 11 am, Now – Sat, April 16; \$5.

Lloyd Miller, Together in Dance, and the staff provide a fun Saturday with crafts, singing, and moving and grooving. Suitable for families with children that are 3 to 7 years old.

Express Art: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; Saturdays and Sundays, 11:30 am – noon, Now – Sun, Feb. 28; Free with museum

admission.

Start off the weekend with a reading of transportation stories.

"Alice in Wonderland": Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; www.puppetworks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, April 24; \$9 (\$10 adults).

The Lewis Carroll's adventure is adapted for marionettes by Adam Kilgour and Nicolas Coppola. For children 3 and older.

Fishing Fun: North end of Esplanade,

East Drive and Ocean Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 2pm and 3 to 4 pm.; Free.

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

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

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

Arty Facts: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm, beginning Sun, Feb. 7; Materials fee plus museum admission.

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

Free Family Day at Wyckoff Farmhouse: Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. at E. 59th Street; (718) 629-5400; Saturday, Feb. 20, 1 pm; Saturday, March 19, 1 pm; Saturday, April 16, 1 pm; Saturday, May 21, 1 pm; Saturday, June 18, 1 pm; Saturday, July 16, 1 pm; Saturday, Aug. 20, 1 pm; Free.

Wyckoff Farmhouse hosts a day of kid-friendly tours, hands-on activities, scavenger hunts, and more. Special activities for kids younger than 10 before 2 pm.

FURTHER AFIELD

Annual train show: Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Park Avenue, Manhattan; web.mta.info/mta/museum/#general; Weekdays, 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 21; Free with standard admission.

Zip through tunnels, see familiar skyscrapers; and visit subway stops by viewing model trains. The layout Lionel Metro-North, New York Central and subway trains along with a miniature replica of Grand Central Terminal is a great way to spend the holidays.

The Titanosaur: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 11 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

The cast of the largest dinosaur that ever walked the earth is now on exhibit. The 122-foot long dino is residing on the fourth floor. This giant herbivore belongs to a group known as titanosaurs, and weighed about 70 tons.



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Follow 'The Night Parade'

In the new book "The Night Parade" by Kathryn Tanquary, setting things straight might be the hardest thing you'll ever do, anyway.

What good was a vacation if you couldn't spend it doing what you wanted? Saki Yamamoto grumped about that the whole way up the mountain to her grandmother's house. All her friends got to stay back in Tokyo, but Saki's parents insisted that she and her brother go to the Oban Festival and spend time with Grandma.

Though she promised her mother that she'd leave her phone off, Saki couldn't resist catching up on texts.

And that — the whole missing-her-friends thing — was perhaps why Saki allowed a group of "cool" village teens to talk her into doing something very disrespectful. That was when she accidentally called a curse upon her family.

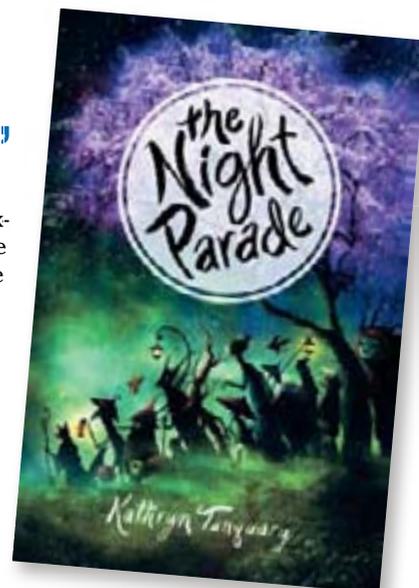
Her first indication of trouble was the cold hand that tried to strangle her in her sleep, waking her and sending her out into the

forest with a four-tailed fox that explained to Saki that she had three nights to follow The Night Parade and lift the curse. The fox tricked her, but the tengu, a feathered spirit, took her as far as the gates to the Midlight Prince's castle on the second night. That was where she met the Lady of Bells, who sent the tanuki, a raccoon-dog that was Saki's third night guide.

Lifting a curse was not easy, nor for the faint of heart.

I don't think I've ever quite read anything like "The Night Parade." And that's a good thing.

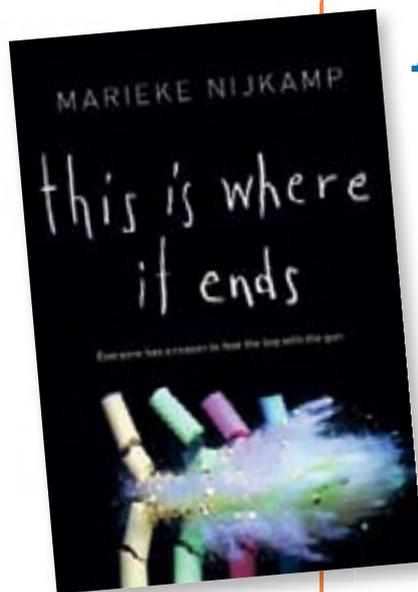
Tanquary's story is unique enough to hold a reader's interest, even on the pages that grow slow. The book has overall the feeling of a Japanese fairy tale, which keeps the story sweet, and there are allegories and life-lessons here, just like other fairy tales — but yet, the monsters and settings are quite a bit darker and more foreboding than anything you might've read in



childhood, and they made me squirm. Readers will also find a bit of humor to move things along and though that can be sophomoric at times, it still fits.

Great for readers ages 12-to-15, I think a savvy preteen might like it and a fantasy-loving adult will appreciate it, too, so get in line. Start "The Night Parade," and you'll find it just right.

"The Night Parade," by Kathryn Tanquary [336 pages, 2016, \$16.99].



A story for today's world

In every class there are always a few kids you try to avoid.

Why shouldn't you avoid the school bully or, as in the new book "This is Where It Ends" by Marieke Nijkamp, the kid who simmers just beneath his skin.

When it's still cold outside nobody wants to run laps, but Claire forced herself into extra practice: this was the last track season her team would have together and she wanted to make it memorable. They'd all scatter after graduation, and she'd miss her best friend Chris.

Inside Opportunity High School, Principal Trenton had just finished her comments at daily assembly. They were familiar words and Tomás and Fareed would've mocked her, had they been there. Instead, because rumor had it that a boy named Tyler was returning to school and because Ty had been bullying Tomás's

sister, Sylvia, Tomás decided that a little break-in to the school office was warranted.

In the auditorium, the chair between Sylvia and Autumn was empty; Autumn had saved it for her brother, Tyler, and his absence made her nervous. Sylvia understood why: After the accident that took Autumn's mother's life, Autumn's father started drinking; over time, he'd used his fists on both Tyler and Autumn.

Sylvia knew Autumn couldn't wait to leave Opportunity. That broke her heart; she loved Autumn. She couldn't make her stay — but she couldn't bear to let her go, either.

The bell rang, which meant that students had three minutes to dash from auditorium to classroom. Tomás knew they'd mill around for a bit and that class wouldn't start until the teachers arrived; their noise would give him and Fareed a chance to escape from the office. But there was no noise.

In the auditorium, students were confused. They tried to leave, but the doors seemed to be locked. Or

stuck. And then someone began shooting.

Usually when I read, I'm a book-snacker: dip, taste, walk away, return, nibble, nibble, like a literary bag of chips. But this book — this one had me immobile for hours.

And yet, it absolutely wouldn't be fair to say that "This is Where It Ends" is ripped from the headlines. It's timely, but it isn't sensational. Nijkamp also gives readers a story, told over the course of a mere 54 minutes. In that time, we get to know the kids at Opportunity High, their crushes, dreams, their fears, and their morality. That familiarity — as if these kids are your neighbors — will make you shudder.

Meant for readers ages 14 to 17, this is absolutely an adult book, too. If you can handle a novel that feels like yesterday afternoon's news, then "This is Where It Ends" is one you truly shouldn't avoid.

"This is Where It Ends," by Marieke Nijkamp [288 pages, 2016, \$17.99].

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

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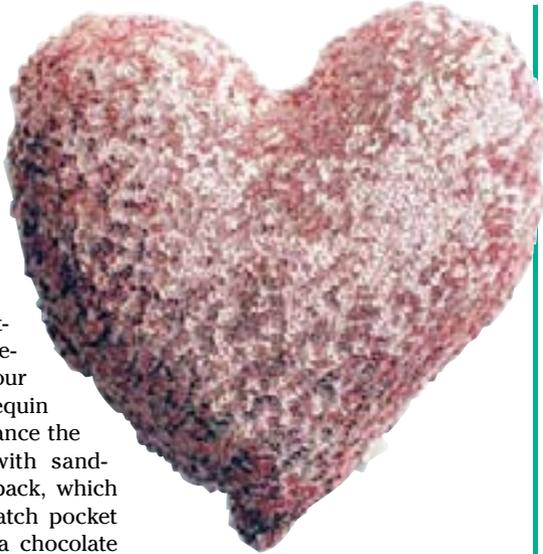


New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Big love

Valentine's Day is on the horizon, and it's a day to celebrate all of those beloved ladies — daughters, mothers, friends, wives, and grandmothers. Brooklyn-based design duo Atsuyo et Akiko have created a way to display your love — a shimmering Sequin Heart Pillow. They balance the pillow's glitzy front with sand-colored linen on the back, which has a 2-inch-square patch pocket where you can stash a chocolate kiss or — even better! — a folded note you've written, detailing all of the ways she shines. A perfect gift for the gals you adore, ages 3 and older, the 12-inch by 12-inch pillow is available through Smitten for the Wee Generation.



Every time she looks at this shining heart, she'll remember how much she means to you.

Sequin Heart Pillow by Atsuyo et Akiko, \$60, www.perfectlysmitten.com.

Ru' the day!

Celebrate the Chinese New Year, on Monday, Feb. 8, with your children and Larry Bennett's new series of adventure-rich folktales about a young prince, Ru-Lan. The lavishly illustrated children's books expose kids to Chinese words and culture, while relating exciting stories for readers in preschool through third grade. The first installment, "Ru-Lan: The Prince is Born," is the tale of a royal couple who — with the help of a phoenix — finally get a baby of their own.

The prince is kidnapped and forgets his family, until he gets help from his wise animal friends. After he's safely returned home, the emperor and empress set out in disguises with a New Year's scheme to get close to the evil enchantress and ensure she won't steal away their joy again.

The detailed watercolors by Manhattan artist Basia Tov are inspired by Chinese brush painting landscapes, and the text is writ-



ten in English, sprinkled with Chinese words. (The book also has a list of the ways it supports Common Core standards.) Package this beautiful book with a "hong bao," a red envelope containing money, and a special child will have luck — and a love of reading — in the new year.

"Ru-Lan: The Prince is Born" book by Larry Bennett, \$10.95, www.barnesandnoble.com.

Flex their mini-muscles

Lakeshore's Get Ready to Write Gumball Grab is a board game that — finally — makes it fun for preschoolers to practice holding a pencil correctly. Each player (up to four) receives a game mat and takes turns picking cards to find out how many and which color rubber "gumballs" they can select from — or return to — the gumball machine game board. They pick up the faux candy with their tweezer tongs that reinforce the official three-finger grip. The first player to fill their mat wins the game, but the real victory belongs to the parents, who watch as their child hones sorting, matching, and fine motor skills as well as improving their eye-hand coordination. The game board and

accessories are sturdy and colorful. Especially for players ranging in age from 3 to 6 years old, Gumball Grab contains four game mats, four tweezer tongs, 40 action cards, a game board, and 40 balls.

With Gumball Grab, family game night just got a little sweeter.

Getting Ready to Write Gumball Grab game, \$29.99, www.LakeshoreLearning.com.



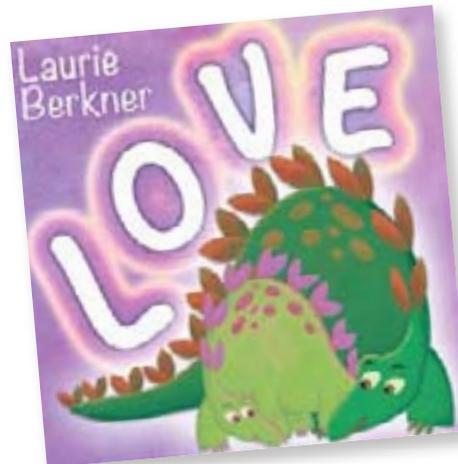
'Love' for sale

Whether you're looking for a Valentine's Day gift for your little one or a soundtrack for your Feb. 14 celebration, Laurie Berkner — of Sprout channel's "Sing it, Laurie!" series — has a new album available for download: "Love."

Ideal for listeners up to age 8, the collection of 16 songs (plus two bonus tracks) are culled from her previous albums, and the selection offers a variety of musical genres from lullabies to irresistible dance numbers like her hit, "My Family." While I adore the exquisite, quiet beauty of her version of the old folk song "I Gave My Love a Cherry (The Riddle Song)," softly sung as a duet with her daughter Lucy Mueller, my son couldn't stop singing the upbeat, rhyme-a-licious ode to chocolate, "Choco-lot in my Pock-o-lot."

No matter which song is your favorite, your family will find there's a lot to like about "Love."

"Love" digital album by Laurie Berkner, \$5.99, www.itunes.com.



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