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Family March 2016

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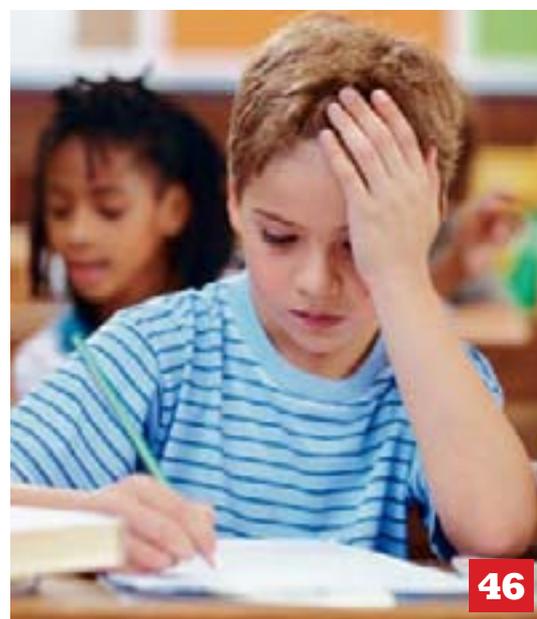
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Camp thoughts

I remember going away to camp when I was a kid and pretty much loving it for the first summer. The second summer I didn't love it so much and in fact, was so homesick that my Dad had to drive up there and get me and bring me home. I can't remember why exactly or what the difference was between the two years. I was very young, but I do remember the feelings I had. I also remember that I learned to swim at camp, make a perfect bed, roast marshmallows over a campfire, and do arts and crafts. We made lanyards, belts and wallets too and had a Sadie Hawkins Day Race. It



was fun!

When it came time to contemplate camp for my then 8 year old daughter, I didn't even consider a sleep-away, although many of her friends starting going to them at around the age of 9. My daughter didn't. She stayed here in NY

and went to day camp every year. Different strokes as they say. Did she miss out? Maybe. But the truth is that I would have missed her too much and I wanted to keep her close to the nest as long as I could in life. She also didn't seem that anxious to go anyway.

Whatever you choose, there are so many interesting options these

days. You can go to a program for the entire summer or you can choose weeks in more specific interests or specialized camps. There is something for everyone in every price range.

The one thing you don't want to do is let your kids be unengaged for the summer, unless you have a country house with a swimming pool nearby. Even kids who will be living at the beach for the summer are better off enrolled in a program that pairs them with other kids in group activities. The camaraderie of "summer friends" only adds to the great mix that makes a child's social life an interesting and enriched experience. The more friends the better.

This print issue presents a lot of programs and there will more next

month as well. In addition to this print magazine, we have a great online Guide at www.NYParenting.com. There are programs there that have not elected to go into print and vice versa. I always think they should do both, but I'm not in control of their budget.

Be sure to check them out in both print and digital and best of luck in finding the right fit for your youngsters. Thanks for reading!

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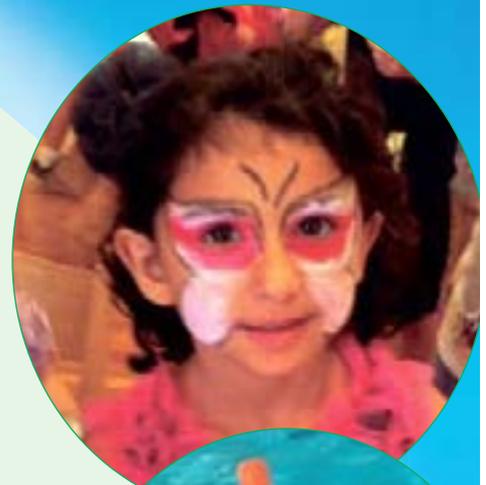
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Are you raising a leader?

Encourage kids to become motivated and confident self-starters

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Many years ago, I used to help out in my daughter's kindergarten class. I remember one female student who always seemed to be in charge. When the class would break up into groups, this little one would embrace her teacher persona, immediately directing those around her. On the playground, she was always surrounded by her peers, who were invariably hanging on her every word.

Some children seem to effortlessly fall into the role of leader, no matter what the environment. However, there are those children who are late bloomers. These are the ones who blend in early on, but blossom with maturity and become presidents of their high school class or captains of a varsity team.

What does this tell us about the development of leadership qualities in our youth? Why do some young people take charge of school projects and playground activities with ease, while others are happy to take the proverbial back seat? Are leaders born or nurtured?

"Talent for leadership is a combination of nurture and nature. Leadership requires the building of a strong central core," says Dr. Gail Gross, a nationally recognized family and child development expert, author, and educator.

Karin Hurt, CEO of Let's Grow Leaders, LLC (letsgrowleaders.com), adjunct professor at the University of Maryland, and prominent keynote speaker, explains, "Important leadership skills can be nurtured in all children. Of course, some personalities will be more drawn to leadership roles, but the truth is that every one of us will face situations in our lives where strong leadership skills are necessary to accomplish something we believe in."

If nurture is a substantial influence, how can parents encourage their children to embrace those qualities that successful leaders possess?

"Parents can be as deliberate in developing leadership as they are in exposing children to reading music and excelling in sports," Hurt reports.

She helped her son in this capacity. "My son was shy as a small child. I don't think anyone would have said

at that point that he was a 'natural-born leader.' We worked on developing leadership skills every single day, but we didn't talk about it as such. Today, he has significant leadership roles in college and in the community. I'm inclined to think he leads well, because he led early and often, and he was exposed to a wide range of experiences."

The following key leadership qualities can be nurtured in children from a very young age:

Confidence

Confidence and self-esteem are inherently linked.

"Bonding is everything, and parents who build security and self-esteem through positive interaction with their child — from birth throughout childhood — have it right," Gross contends. "A well-bonded child has less stress, processes information better, sticks to problem-solving longer, and ultimately, has good self-esteem."

Capable leaders are confident with their vision and decisions, while simultaneously listening to others' opinions without feeling threatened.

"A child who is secure in his own shoes can listen to his own inner voice, as well as the opinions of others, without the need to dominate," says Gross.

Gross also advises parents to allow their children to be take part in decision-making.

"You are building that secure central core which is so important for good self-esteem."

Self-advocacy

Children need to learn to fend for themselves and to fight their own battles. Therefore, parents shouldn't constantly rescue their kids when a mistake has been made, such as delivering a forgotten textbook to school or explaining to a child's teacher why a project wasn't completed on time. You are helping your child to learn to be a self-starter when you teach him to take responsibility for his actions.

Gross asserts, "Teaching your child how to tactfully and clearly explain his position and feelings to others allows him to be self-advocating. Through your own authentic, social interactions, you are teaching your child to respect the opinions of others, to evaluate them, and to follow her own voice."

Gross also points out that by teaching a strong sense of values and integrity, you are strengthening your child's ability to be assertive.

Extracurricular activities for budding leaders

Studies show that early experiences in life impact future leadership potential. Youth who experience the following activities and programs will gain valuable leadership skills and overall confidence:

Activities for children 7 to 12:

In school:

- Student council
- Project leader
- Intramural sports teams
- Student buddy program

In the community:

- Boy or Girl Scouts
- 4-H Club
- Boys and Girls Clubs of America's "Torch Club"

ca's "Torch Club"

- Youth ministry programs at local churches

Conferences and programs:

- Global Young Leaders Conference (www.envisionexperience.com/explore-our-programs/global-young-leaders-conference#what-to-expect)

Activities for teens:

In school:

- Student government
- Captain of a sports team
- Class officer
- National Honor Society
- Student Mentor or Ambassador program

dor program

In the community:

- Camp counselor-in-training
- Boys and Girls Clubs of America's "Keystone Teen Program"
- Church youth organization
- Volunteer organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity

Conferences and programs (some have a selection or nomination process):

- Student Exchange Programs
- National Student Leadership Conference (www.nslcleaders.org/youth-leadership-programs/)
- Youth Action Net (www.youthactionnet.org/)



Motivation

Does your child run for the hills when you ask him to take out the garbage or walk the dog? Does she protest when asked to finish homework before dinner? What motivates young people to complete tasks, even when it's the last thing they want to do?

"Intrinsic motivation is one of the key qualities of leadership," Hurt explains. "Human beings of all ages are more motivated to invest time and energy when they feel they are an important part of something bigger than themselves."

Therefore, it's important for children to understand "why" they are asked to do something. If a child knows that a good grade in social studies will help secure a spot on the

debate team that he hopes to join, he will be inclined to study harder.

Hurt warns parents about rewarding expected behaviors.

"External incentives, such as candy to finish homework, can actually decrease intrinsic motivation, and children will be less likely to develop an interest in pursuing these tasks without being reminded."

Realistic goal-setting

Goal-setting can sometimes be overwhelming and frustrating, especially if the goals are too far-reaching. Parents should help children set goals that are attainable.

"An important part of goal-setting is making them realistic and incremental," Hurt points out. "Setting them too high at first can be de-

motivating, and a child may feel like the goal is impossible to achieve. Helping children break big goals down into smaller milestones can really help."

For instance, if your daughter is determined to break the school record in the back stroke, setting goals to improve her time by one second per meet is a realistic benchmark and will keep her motivated as she strives for her ultimate goal.

Decisiveness

In order to be decisive, a person needs to feel secure with his own decision-making and problem-solving abilities. Parents should allow their kids to make small decisions from an early age, such as what to have for a snack after school.

"Helping your child make age-appropriate decisions will guide him towards the principles of responsibility and commitment," Gross clarifies.

"One of the most important parts of learning to be decisive is understanding that choosing between two good alternatives is not right or wrong. Deciding whether to take ballet classes or play soccer is not a life-or-death decision, and it is reversible," Hurt describes.

Hurt recommends that parents teach children to write down the pros and cons of choices.

"This is a good way to help them develop critical-thinking skills," she adds.

Communication

Some children are comfortable presenting reports to their class, while others break out into a cold sweat. Public speaking is sometimes the most difficult communication skill to teach, because some children are petrified to speak in front of a group.

Gross describes practicing communication in everyday life as a key component in teaching good communication skills.

"Sharing stories, taking turns with the dinner blessing, and making toasts in celebration are all easy ways to help your child gain confidence and competence in speaking in front of others."

Gross also suggests encouraging children to put on little performances for the family, such as read-

ing poetry, singing, or sharing an experience.

"Such performances give your child the opportunity to practice and rehearse public speaking in front of a loving audience," she says.

Courage

Children need to learn to take risks and to fearlessly follow dreams, even when peers don't get it.

"The 'No risk, no reward' mantra is practiced by leaders who have mastered good core values, strong inner vision, and self-control," Gross claims.

It's imperative to teach your children that it is okay to fail because you always learn something from the process. Therefore, parents should share past mistakes and what they learned from them.

Hurt explains that modeling is critical when teaching children about risk-taking.

"If you freak out when you make a mistake, your kids will pick up on that. When adults say, 'I can't do that,' children hear, 'Don't try unless you know you will be successful.' Instead, encouraging experimentation is one of the greatest gifts you can give your children."

Humility

Humble leaders understand their own shortcomings as well as others' strengths. They also accept that they can't do everything themselves and know when to seek help from others.

"Life is about relationships, and this requires being able to get along with all people from all walks of life. Good leaders value their team and listen to the ideas of others," Gross points out.

Hurt suggests exposing children to lots of people in different environments and circumstances. She advises parents to talk to their children about what they learned from the people they met.

"Humility and empathy are two of the most vital leadership skills to learn."

Even if a child is not destined to be a governor or CEO of a Fortune 500 company, leadership qualities help young people reach goals and become successful adults, no matter what their future holds.

Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer. Her work has appeared in national and regional publications across the U.S., as well as internationally. For more information, visit her website, www.myrnahaskell.com.

Swearing OFF

Breaking the bad-language habit in kids of all ages

BY MALIA JACOBSON

From first steps to first cars, childhood milestones are causes for celebration. Except one: a child's first four-letter word.

This unwelcome utterance usually takes place in church, at the grocery store, or the in-law's house — at top volume, of course. Short of shunning all social gatherings, can parents avoid these cringe-worthy scenarios?

If your child has picked up a few choice words, take heart. According to Leslie Petruk, a licensed counselor and director of Stepping Stones

Counseling and Consulting in Charlotte, N.C., parents have loads of influence over children's language. The right response to swearing can clean up bad language — or help prevent cursing in the first place.

Here's an age-by-age guide to cleaning up dirty mouths:

Toddler and preschool years 2-5: Curse cues

When toddlers and preschoolers experiment with swear words, it's the parent's reaction that determines whether those words become favorites. The key is remaining neutral and responding in a calm, matter-of-fact manner, says Petruk.

"If a parent has a strong emotional reaction to a curse word, the child immediately realizes that this is a 'high-power' word and will likely continue using it."

After a bout with bad language, calmly inform the child that the chosen word isn't acceptable, and that choosing to continue using the word will result in a lost privilege. Petruk recommends employing the same technique, whether kids use a mildly naughty phrase (commonly known as "potty talk") or drop a bona fide four-letter gem. Whatever the offending word, calmly reinforcing the boundary helps forbidden words fade away, fast.

Elementary years 6-11: Peer fears

For older kids, cursing is all about fitting in. School-age kids are keenly aware of social cues, and some see "grown-up" language as the ticket to a cooler image.

"Many children do it to fit in with their

peers and appear cooler and edgier than they are," says certified parent educator and coach Meghan Leahy. "It is about belonging, and swearing is a fairly safe way to do that."

But knowing why kids curse doesn't make the problem any less vexing for parents.

School-age children are old enough for an open conversation about personal language choices. Help kids think about the words they use with questions like: Do you think it sounds cool when your friends use bad language? What do you think is cool about it? How do you think others view you if you used that kind of language? Avoid a profanity power struggle by emphasizing that kids have choices about which language to use and enforcing consistent consequences for poor decisions.

Tween and teen years 12-18: Media mayhem

Peers, movies, music, and increasing independence expose adolescents to a plethora of profanity. Many tweens and teens try peppering their own language with these words and phrases — but parents can deflect the influx of nastiness with a strong parent-child bond.

"It's all about staying connected to your child and having conversations with them that are non-judgmental and non-punitive," says Petruk.

Parents can help clean up teen language by encouraging self-reflection: ask a teen whether using swear words shows self-respect, whether she is swearing to gain acceptance or feel included, and how she thinks the language is impacting her reputation.

"Having an intelligent conversation with you around the issue is more likely to have the impact you want," notes Petruk.

And asking empathetic questions is more effective than lecturing or doling out harsh punishments — two tactics that make teens more likely to use bad words as soon as they're out of earshot.

Malia Jacobson is a health and parenting journalist, mom of three, and author of "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."



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Sleep-away camp

Letting kids go helps them grow

BY GAYLA GRACE

Sleep-away camp was just what Ally needed in order to gain independence and confidence, marveled her mom, Sharon.

"She found a whole new group of girls and had a ball; she's had a hard time with girls beginning in grade four," Sharon says, "so it was great for her to bond with girls in a different setting."

Starting at age 9, Ally went away to camp for a week. The following

summer she begged for it to be four. Her parents were delighted.

Time away from parents helps kids learn how to make their own decisions without checking with Mom or Dad first, and residential camp provides the perfect training ground, says Michael Thompson in his book "Homesick and Happy: How Time Away From Parents Can Help a Child Grow" (Random House, 2012).

If you'd like your kids to develop maturity and gain independence (and if you'd like to begin learning

to let go yourself!) it's time to start researching sleep-away camps. Week- or month-long adventures away from home give kids opportunities to experience unique adventures they'd never find at home. Asking other parents what camps their kids attend can be helpful also; having a friend go with your child is a beautiful thing for parents leery of separation.

To find a camp that fits your child's needs, seek out opinions from friends and neighbors, ask

If you'd like your kids to develop maturity and gain independence (and if you'd like to begin learning to let go yourself!) it's time to start researching sleep-away camps.

teachers and church counselors, attend camp fairs, and explore options on your own. Residential camps of all kinds and sizes are located all across the country, so there's sure to be one your child can love and from which he can gain valuable skills.

Camp counselor Jamie Newman expresses enthusiasm for sending kids to camp.

"Camp encourages kids to try new things and teaches them confidence through new experiences. They learn valuable life lessons when encouraged to work through their fears to try something, even if it doesn't feel comfortable to them. Also, when kids are thrown together in a cabin for a week, they're forced to learn how to get along with others and often build lasting relationships that can continue when they return home."

Need more convincing? Here are a few thoughts to consider:

Camp builds maturity and allows children the chance to make their own decisions in a safe, caring environment. Kids benefit from new relationships with camp counselors who care about them and want to help them with everyday struggles.

Camp forces kids to unplug from technology and enjoy the beauty and benefits of nature. Through outside activities, kids find new hobbies without academic pressure or expectations. Kids gain self-confidence through trying new things and discovering talents they didn't know they had.

Camp teaches good sportsmanship by encouraging each child to be fair and kind. Team activities teach kids how to cooperate with each other and the value of getting along with others though working together and sup-

porting one another.

Camp fosters new friendships with kids who come from varying backgrounds — helping kids gain an understanding of how others live outside their community. In a relaxed atmosphere, kids easily make friends while they play, sing, work, eat, and bunk together.

Camp creates life-long memories of new adventures in places they've never experienced before. It offers carefree days where kids can learn how to thrive outside the structure of over-scheduled days.

Parents and 'child sickness'

When it comes to sending a child to sleep-away camp, plenty of parents say, "Well, she's ready for camp, but I'm not ready for her to leave!"

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, homesickness is defined as "distress and functional impairment caused by an actual or anticipated separation from home and attachment objects such as parents." For child sickness, the same can be true, except it pertains to what parents experience when their child is away. Those who suffer from the condition feel some form of anxiety, sadness, and nervousness, and most distinctly, obsessive preoccupation with thoughts of their child.

"Parents today are more anxious than their peers were 20 and 30 years ago," says Peg Smith, CEO of the American Camp Association. "That said, the partnerships between parents and camp directors have increased. Parents should share their concerns with camp directors who are prepared to respond with responsible, informed answers."

Tips for letting go:

- Let your child have trial runs being away from you by permitting sleepovers.
- Don't show anxiety to your child — it will make it hard on him.
- Have a plan for yourself: Get a project done that you've never had time for, go on a trip with your spouse, etc.
- Remember: two of the greatest gifts you can give your child are confidence and independence.

Gayla Grace is a writer who sends her five kids to away camps every summer.

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Photos by Rosalie O'Connor, Raymond Variations & Stars and Stripes, choreography by George Balanchine © The George Balanchine Trust.

Zika and you

What pregnant women need to know about the virus

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

You have probably heard of the Zika virus by now. For pregnant women, it is especially terrifying. The information is changing quickly, and while at this point you are NOT likely to contract the virus in the United States, the type of mosquitoes that transmit the virus (*Aedes* mosquitoes), are found in warmer climates of the U.S.

It's expected that four million people will contract the Zika virus in 2016 in the Americas.

The outbreaks are more likely in tropical zones — southern regions in the U.S. — and the U.S. will not likely see an outbreak until the warmer months when mosquitoes are more active. While your odds of contracting the virus are low (unless you travel to one of the countries listed in the travel advisory), it's still important to know how to protect yourself and your unborn baby.



pain behind the eyes; however, four out of five people infected will not show symptoms. Zika is not contagious, and is mostly spread through mosquito bites.

However, it can be spread through sexual intercourse, according to experts, so if your significant other has recently traveled to one of the places on the travel warning, use protection throughout the duration of the pregnancy.

Is there a treatment or test?

There is no treatment for the Zika virus, however, if you are pregnant, and you or your partner have traveled to an affected country, ask your doctor to administer a blood test to detect the virus.

If it's positive or inconclusive, an amniocentesis may be done to check the baby for infection. Additional ultrasounds will also be administered to check for signs of microcephaly throughout the pregnancy.

For more info on testing, see the Center for Disease Control's flow chart: www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/wr/mm6505e2er.htm

Can Zika be prevented?

There is no vaccine for the Zika virus. The best thing you can do is protect yourself from being bitten by mosquitoes.

This includes wearing long pants and sleeves, staying indoors during peak mosquito times, and using mosquito repellent (which is safe and recommended during pregnancy), and not traveling to countries on the travel advisory.

The Zika virus is a mild disease — in most cases — and rarely results in severe illness or death, but it can be very dangerous for pregnant women's babies.

This is because when a pregnant mother is infected, the fetus can be infected, causing the rare birth defect microcephaly.

This is a neurological condition causing babies to be born with small heads and sometimes small brains.

The condition can also cause other life-threatening developmental anomalies and death. If a mother is infected in the first trimester, the baby has the highest risk of extreme issues.

The Center for Disease Control is still studying the virus and trying to understand all outcomes that may increase risk to the fetus and any outcomes associated with infection during pregnancy.

Here's what you should know:

Symptoms of Zika virus

Most commonly, the symptoms include fever, rash, headaches, red eyes, muscle and joint pain, and

Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother of three children who writes articles about infant, children, and maternal health. She is a freelance writer living in Columbia, S.C.

Travel advisory

The Center for Disease Control has issued a Zika-related travel warning, due to cases of infection, for the following countries:

- American Samoa
- Barbados
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Cape Verde
- Colombia
- Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. territory
- Costa Rica
- Curacao
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- French Guiana
- Guadeloupe

- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Haiti
- Honduras
- Jamaica
- Martinique
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Panama
- Paraguay
- Saint Martin
- Samoa
- Suriname
- Tonga
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- Venezuela

Visit the Center for Disease Control's website for updated travel advisories and Zika virus information.



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BIRTH TO THREE



PRESCHOOL



SCHOOL AGE



ADULTS



Reflecting our communities

This Brooklyn writer is giving children's books a more inclusive face

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Books should be mirrors, windows, and doors, says Brooklyn author and activist Zetta Elliott. With those metaphors in mind, the former Black Studies teacher has embarked on a no-holds-barred literary mission: advocating for more multicultural books about kids of color.

Since 2000, she has been busy creating and self-publishing close to 20 of her own amazing kids and teens books about diversity, because she wants to fill a huge literary gap — more than 90 percent of children's literature published in the US features only white youngsters as main characters, despite the fact that minorities make up 37 percent of the population. Surprisingly, the gap exists even here in New York — the most diverse city in the nation!

As a writer who prioritizes social justice over popularity or profit, Elliott's activist spirit got fired up when she first noticed that striking imbalance. And, as a woman of color, she felt compelled to write about people and places that were near and dear to her heart: her black neighbors and the bustling Brooklyn community she loves.

"So, I write about magical things happening in my own neighborhood, with a cast of diverse kids," she quips, and she delights in conjuring up her fun-loving protagonists: cool girls and boys of color, who take part in fantastic adventures, while learning new things about Brooklyn and New York. Some stories — about current events — help kids deal with scary stuff they see and hear around them.

Elliott teams up with talented artists who illustrate her tales. Even adults enjoy her "organic" historical fantasy narratives.

The author's first Spanish-language books were recently published, and she says she's grateful she can share them with refugee children being held in detention here in the US.



Valerie Caesar

Brooklyn author and activist Zetta Elliott has written close to 20 multicultural books for kids and teens.

Elliott, 43, teaches free writing workshops in her Prospect-Lefferts Garden neighborhood, close to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Prospect Park, where her novel "Dayshaun's Gift" (illustrated by Alex Portal) is set. In the story, Dayshaun wants to spend Saturday morning playing his new video game. But his mother has other plans: she volunteers at a nearby community garden, and that means her son has to volunteer, too.

When he puts on his grandfather's grubby old gardening hat, something unexpected happens — the hands of time turn backward and Dayshaun finds himself in the free black commu-

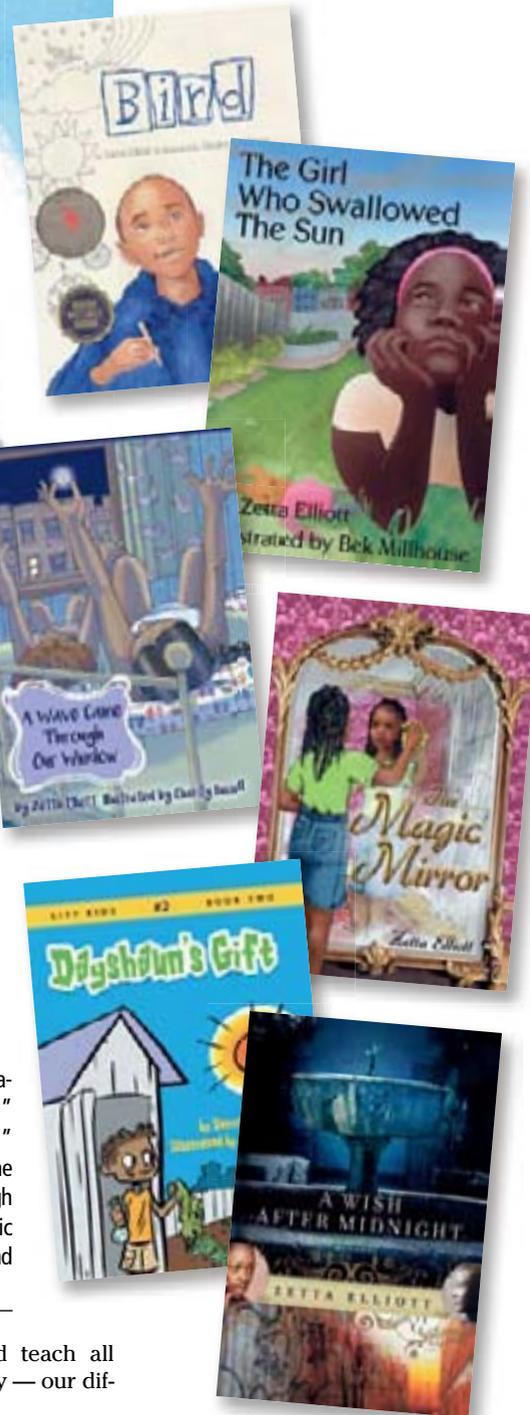
nity of Weeksville during the summer of 1863! While helping the survivors of the New York City Draft Riots, he meets a frail old man who entrusts him with a precious family heirloom. But will this gift help Dayshaun find his way back to the 21st century?

Elliott hopes all of her curious young readers — no matter their color, ethnicity, or religion — will learn to embrace diversity and say, "Hey, that's someone like me!" or "That's someone who doesn't look like me but likes doing the same things I do!"

Last month, during "The Brian Lehrer Show" on NPR, she was invited to talk about the dearth of multicultural titles in the marketplace. She told

You can purchase Zetta Elliott's books on www.zettaelliott.com, Amazon.com, and at some bookstores.

For more books helping kids understand the world around them, check out www.readbrightly.com/books-to-help-kids-make-sense-of-current-events.



listeners why she felt books are like mirrors, windows, and doors.

“When a black girl says, ‘I want more mirror books,’ she’s really saying, ‘I need to see myself!’” she said. “Kids of color are hungry for these stories, but rarely get to see themselves making magic.”

Like Marley Diaz, 11, who hails from New Jersey. The avid reader was featured on the radio show, and she was tired of reading books at school about “white boys and dogs,” so she decided to build a collection that she could donate to a village primary school in Jamaica.

Elliott discussed Marley’s mission: to collect 1,000 books that feature black girls.

“What Marley understands is that all children want a mirror — to open a book and see themselves reflected in the story and illustrations,” she explained. “I incorporate Brooklyn history and New York City landmarks to make the magic seem real — and relevant to urban kids.”

Elliott also said she was taken aback when some neighborhood schools she had visited told her: “We really love your books, but we don’t have that demographic.” It was as

though you have to have minority students in order to have those books in your school, she said.

“Without mirror books, children begin to feel invisible, unimportant, and they can lose their interest in reading,” Elliott says. “It’s equally important for kids to have books that are windows, letting them look into other worlds. When white children see themselves over and over again, they don’t develop the ability to relate to people who are different than them. That’s a real handicap in a global society.”

The problem seems to lie with the gatekeepers of traditional publishing: the sellers, marketers, and reviewers of books. Remarkably, the percentage of books by or about people of color was only 14 percent in 2014, according to Lee & Low Books, Inc., the largest publisher of multicultural books in the US.

Kids need to experience the rainbow that is life, knowing and realizing that others are basically the same as them, with the same wants, needs, and desires. They should read books that encompass the full spectrum of humanity, and stories that convey important and timely

(Above) A Purple Wong illustration from Elliott’s “I Love Snow.” (Right, top to bottom) “Bird,” “The Girl Who Swallowed The Sun,” “A Wave Came Through Our Window,” “The Magic Mirror,” “Dayshaun’s Gift,” and “A Wish After Midnight.”

messages. Books should teach all kids to celebrate diversity — our differences and similarities.

Some of Elliott’s stories empower young girls of color.

“My young adult novels deal with the way girls handle power. They wish they could control the circumstances in their lives, but once they do become empowered, they’re forced to sacrifice certain relationships — and they need guidance,” she explained. “As a black feminist, I’m trying to expose the specific challenges black girls face — like sexual assault — while also providing models of community that can step in when families fail to support young people.

“I would also like young readers to engage differently with history. To see themselves as shapers of history and not passive consumers of historical

narratives that marginalize, distort, or erase people of color. I hope young readers come away from my historical fantasy books feeling closer to the past — feeling that it’s relevant to the way we live our lives today. I write magical stories because I want to feed their imagination — without new dreamers, this nation is lost.”

Although she’s not a parent, Elliott has worked with urban kids for more than 25 years, and says, “I have two beautiful nieces who get lots of books from me!”

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist, parent, and regular contributor to New York Parenting.



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Can student loan debt outlive you?

My husband and I together have a combined \$200,000 in student loans, between undergraduate and graduate school. If one of us dies, what is the obligation of the estate to pay the loans?

Today's students are graduating college and graduate programs with an unprecedented amount of student loan debt — \$1.2 trillion as of 2016. Of law students, 88.6 percent take out loans to pay for law school, with \$80,000 in cumulative graduate debt. Although credit card, mortgage, and other non-revolving debt are contracting, the federal government will lend out \$1.4 trillion dollars by 2023 — mostly student loans — even though gross domestic product growth will not match it.

There are 37 million student-loan borrowers with outstanding loans today. Seven million borrowers are in default, translating into about 17 percent of all borrowers being severely delinquent. Approximately \$85 billion is past due.

Only 37 percent of borrowers made timely payments without deferment or becoming delinquent between 2004 and 2009. Two out of five borrowers (41 percent) are delinquent at some point in the first five years of repayment.

The crushing amount of student loan debt raises several questions, including whether and when these debts are generally forgiven, and what happens to them when a borrower dies.

Federal student loans

If a borrower on a federal student loan dies, the loan is automatically canceled and the debt is discharged by the government. Recipients of private student loans



do not enjoy the same debt forgiveness on death.

For private student loans, forgiveness on debt depends on the terms of the individual loan and the lender's policies. Some private lenders might offer death insurance, whereby the debt is discharged on death. For lenders such as Sallie Mae (Sallie Mae's Smart Option Student Loan, New York Higher Education Services Corporation's NYHELPS loans, and Wells-

Fargo private student loans), these programs offer death and disability forgiveness policies. This is not standard for private lenders.

Even when a student loan is forgiven, the debtor is not completely off the hook. There are tax implications to debt forgiveness, which is treated as income. Even where the debt is forgiven due to disability or death, the tax authorities will impose a tax on the amount of the forgiven debt. In other words,

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the estate could owe as much as 35 percent on the full unpaid amount of the loan.

Can a spouse be liable for the debt?

A spouse does not have repayment liability on a federally backed education loan.

If a spouse is not on the student loan as a co-signer or joint borrower, the surviving spouse is not legally liable for the debt (if the decedent and spouse lived in a community property state like California or Texas, the result might be different. It would depend on the type of loan and the laws of the individual state).

However, the same result might ensue if the debt can be collected from the decedent's estate, thereby reducing the spouse's share.

Now that you know what happens to the loans when you die, what happens to the loans during your life?

There are four main income-based repayment programs for federal (not private) loans. Private loans are at the mercy of the lender.

Deferment or forbearance

The borrower need not make student loan payments while the loan is in deferment. Subsidized loans accrue no interest during deferment; un-subsidized loans accrue interest which is "capitalized" with interest added to the balance and interest charged on the interest.

Those not qualified for deferment might secure forbearance, which allows the borrower to make no payments, or reduced payments, for up to a year. Interest accrues on subsidized and un-subsidized loans (including all PLUS loans) and unpaid interest is capitalized. Both deferment and forbearance can be very expensive propositions in the long run.

Income-based repayment

A borrower who qualifies for income-based repayment pays a maximum monthly payment of 15 percent of discretionary income, calculated under a specific formula. This means that a borrower exiting law school with an average monthly loan payment of \$1,000 earning an annual salary

of \$50,000 can pay as little as a few hundred a month.

The more recent Pay As You Earn program caps the payment at 10 percent of discretionary income.

Depending on the borrower's program, and whether the borrower works in public interest, the balance could be forgiven after 10, 20, or 25 years. The government pays up to three years of accrued interest for subsidized loans. Un-subsidized loans accrue interest. In either case, interest is capitalized if the borrower no longer has a partial financial hardship.

Income-contingent repayment

Borrowers in the contingent program make monthly payments based on their income, family size, and loan balance.

The remaining balance is forgiven after 25 years, 10 years for public service loan forgiveness. Accrued interest is annually capitalized.

Public service loan forgiveness

This program forgives remaining debt to federal borrowers after 10 years of eligible employment and qualifying loan payments. Eligible employment is a range of "public service" jobs in government and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. A public interest job is eligible if it is with:

- The federal, state, local, or tribal government (including the military and public schools or colleges).

- Any nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

- AmeriCorps or Peace Corps.

A borrower may still be eligible if his or her employer provides certain public services such as emergency management, public safety, law enforcement, early childhood education, public health, public library services, or services for the disabled or elderly.

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



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Glued ^{to} _{the} Game

What every parent needs to know about video games

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Back in the good-ol'days (gosh, I sound like my grandmother), parents just wanted kids home by dark. I don't remember my mom being worried about my choice of activities, but I do remember there was always a new adventure. If I wasn't with my next-door neighbor building tree houses with twigs, I was probably catching bullfrogs with my older brother. Usually spring fever was rampant when we'd dash home from the bus stop, grab buckets from the garage, and skip out into the woods — a shortcut to the pond.

Today, many kids are holed up in front of a screen, chasing digital monsters or cracking codes to hidden passageways, all within the comfort of their homes. There are no worries about being caught in a thunderstorm or getting lost in the woods. So, what's wrong with this picture?

Video gaming is, for the most part, an antisocial exercise, such as solitary or curling up with a good book. It should be something to do on a rainy day or while waiting for dinner to be served. Instead, many kids get so addicted to video games that they sit in front of the screen every minute of their free time. Does this sound familiar? Is it any different from sitting in front of the TV all night long?

Parents should be acutely aware of their children's video game habits and preferences, just as parents in the '70s used to monitor TV time. It's not healthy for children or teens to always choose gaming over social activities. Therefore, monitoring the amount of time spent in front of the

screen, as well as the types of games their kids are hooked on, is essential.

Addiction or pastime?

Some children develop a real addiction for gaming, which goes far beyond the definition of typical pastime enjoyment.

Katie Hurley, a child and adolescent psychotherapist, parenting expert, and author of "The Happy Kid Handbook: How to Raise Joyful Children in a Stressful World" (Tarcher/Penguin, 2015), instructs parents, "Like any addictive behavior, there are signs to look for if you have concerns." She says that parents should be concerned if their child is exhibiting the following behaviors:

- Preoccupation with gaming — talks about it incessantly.
- Irritability when not playing.
- Secrecy and dishonesty about gaming time (i.e. pretending to be online to do homework, etc.).
- Defensive attitude about gaming habits when confronted.
- Considerable impact on other areas of life (i.e. drop in grades, disinterest in friends, poor hygiene, loss of interest in other activities).
- Mood swings (excited while playing and depressed when not playing).
- Insufficient sleep.

Dr. Catherine Pearlman, a family therapist and founder of The Family Coach, LLC (www.thefamilycoach.com), agrees.

"For children who are truly addicted, the gaming is interfering with life, such as lower grades, not eating or sleeping enough in order to play, losing friends, missing events, etc,"

she says.

If this is the case, Pearlman suggests that a detox period of a week or more, so that the child unplugs completely, will open the door to other activities.

Special cases

For children with autism spectrum disorder and other social disabilities, obsessive behavior towards gaming is very common. Since children with social challenges often find themselves alone and with nothing to do, gaming provides a connection with the outside world because online relationships are easier to navigate.

"Parents often overlook excessive gaming because the child is busy and happy. This can be even more true for parents of children with autism or other social disabilities," Pearlman asserts. "These children and parents have a difficult existence at times, and gaming can help mediate that. However, children on the spectrum may have a more difficult time walking away from the game and may show more anger when not playing."

Pearlman explains that children with social disabilities are sometimes able to form relationships through gaming that were otherwise too difficult. This might solidify a child's obsession because he is finally receiving the attention he has craved. She suggests that parents replace video games with social skills groups or other activities that encourage socialization. For instance, parents can provide an opportunity for their child to be engaged with peers in an activity he desires, such as swimming.

Hurley states, "For a true addiction, a child or teen needs to see a specialist."

She suggests that parents ask their child's pediatrician for the name of a mental health practitioner who specializes in video game addiction.

"Programs like reSTART (www.netaddictionrecovery.com) offer treatment options by trained specialists and include a digital detox combined with family education, life-skills development, and transition," she adds.

Give gaming a rest

How much is too much?

A Neilson 360 Gaming Report

Positive choices

Gaming companies have caught on to the public's concern about screen time, and it's correlation to childhood obesity, as well as concerns about the antisocial aspect of gaming. Therefore, video games that require teams, promote exercise, and have educational content have been created.

Here are a few suggestions based on multiple reviews from different sites. Parents should also

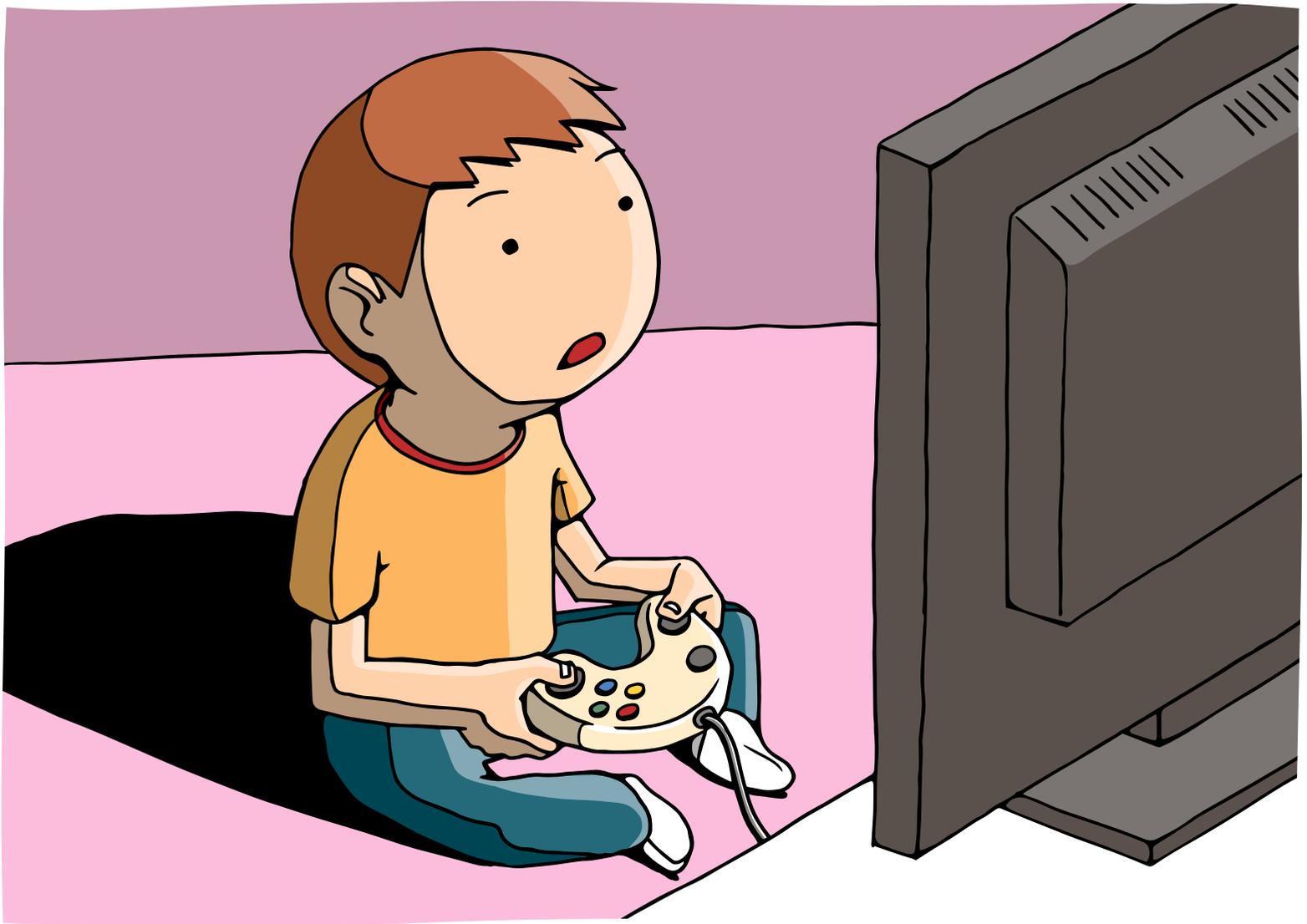
ask trusted friends and teachers for suggestions and preview games themselves:

For kids

- Mario Party 9 (Wii)
- Just Dance Kids (Wii)
- Disney Magical World (Nintendo 3DS)
- Professor Layton Series (Nintendo 3DS)
- Magic School Bus (PC)
- Reader Rabbit (Wii)
- Vita Pets (PlayStation)

For teens

- Third World Farmer (free online)
- Broken Age (PC)
- Just Dance 2014 (Wii)
- Portal 2 (PC, PlayStation 3, Xbox)
- Professor Layton Series — selected games (Nintendo 3DS)
- Valiant Hearts: The Great War (PlayStation, Xbox)
- Zumba Fitness World Body (Xbox)



showed a significant increase (12 percent) in gaming time (not including other entertainment media) for players 13 and up from 2012 to 2013. However, young people are glued to screens for a myriad of reasons. In addition to gaming, kids are involved with social networking on smart phones, computer video games, and movies, or watching TV programming. When the amount of time for all of this entertainment media is added up, the statistics are daunting. Therefore, parents should keep an eye on all of their children's screen activities, not just gaming.

Pearlman suggests a guideline for usage.

"In general, older children (late middle school and high school) shouldn't be playing or staring at a screen for more than two hours per day during the week. Younger children should limit use to no more than 30 minutes."

"Parents need to take an active role in creating rules for game use," Pearlman advises. She suggests that

parents define specific rules for weekdays and weekends and designate clear consequences if the rules are broken.

"Moderation is essential, as is honesty," Hurley claims. "Don't judge your child for his gaming habits. Instead, ask what he likes about the games. Find out what drives him to continue playing, then shift the focus to other pastimes that might offer similar feelings and results."

Pearlman points out, "The more a child steps away from the game and engages in other activities, the less they feel they must play."

So, if parents can initiate getting their kids away from the screen, their children will be more inclined to stay away.

Parents should also be privy to the latest information about parental controls. Parents can control computer use and gaming console use. They can also limit data usage on smart phones. For parents who are new to the game, a user-friendly guide — "A Parent's Guide to Video Games, Parental Controls and On-

line Safety" — can be downloaded to their computer. This guide is published by PTA and Entertainment Software Rating Board.

Concerning video game violence

A recent review done by the American Psychological Association (2015, www.apa.org) confirms a link between video game violence and aggressive behavior.

This report states, "No single risk factor consistently leads a person to act aggressively or violently. Rather, it is the accumulation of risk factors that tends to lead to aggressive or violent behavior. Violent video game use is one such risk factor."

Hurley reports, "A recent study indicates that it's not necessarily the specific game that's to blame, but the time spent playing that can alter behavior. It really comes down to parents knowing their children's personalities and temperaments. All kids are different. If you see aggressive behavior after two hours of play, try cutting the time spent

playing and reevaluate."

Talking openly with your kids and teens about your observations and working together to make a reasonable plan for the amount of game time is paramount.

Both Pearlman and Hurley recommend that parents check out Common Sense Media (www.commonsensemedia.org). There are suggested age ranges, content categories, and reasoning behind the rating.

However, Pearlman reminds parents to go with their gut.

"Parents should use the suggested age range as a guide. They know their children better than game raters. If a game says it's appropriate for a 10 year old, but a particular child has a very suggestible brain and often has nightmares from movies, then the parent should consider if what is seen in that game would be appropriate."

"It also helps if parents play the games with kids or before kids play to get an understanding of the content," Hurley advises.



BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

Which one of you is behaving badly?

On a walk about five days after a big snowstorm, I saw a huge pile of snow that was more gray than white. Yuck! To my amazement, a group of kids approached the mass and started climbing on it and laughing. To these children, it was still snow, no matter what color it was.

On the next block, I found a different scene. A mother and her 2-year-old son were waiting at the bus stop, not far from a heap of gray snow. He looked around and then moved to pick up a handful. The mother started screaming.

“Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me? Why would you do that? It’s so gross!”

She might think it’s disgusting, but her son was coming from a different perspective. Why get so upset about that?

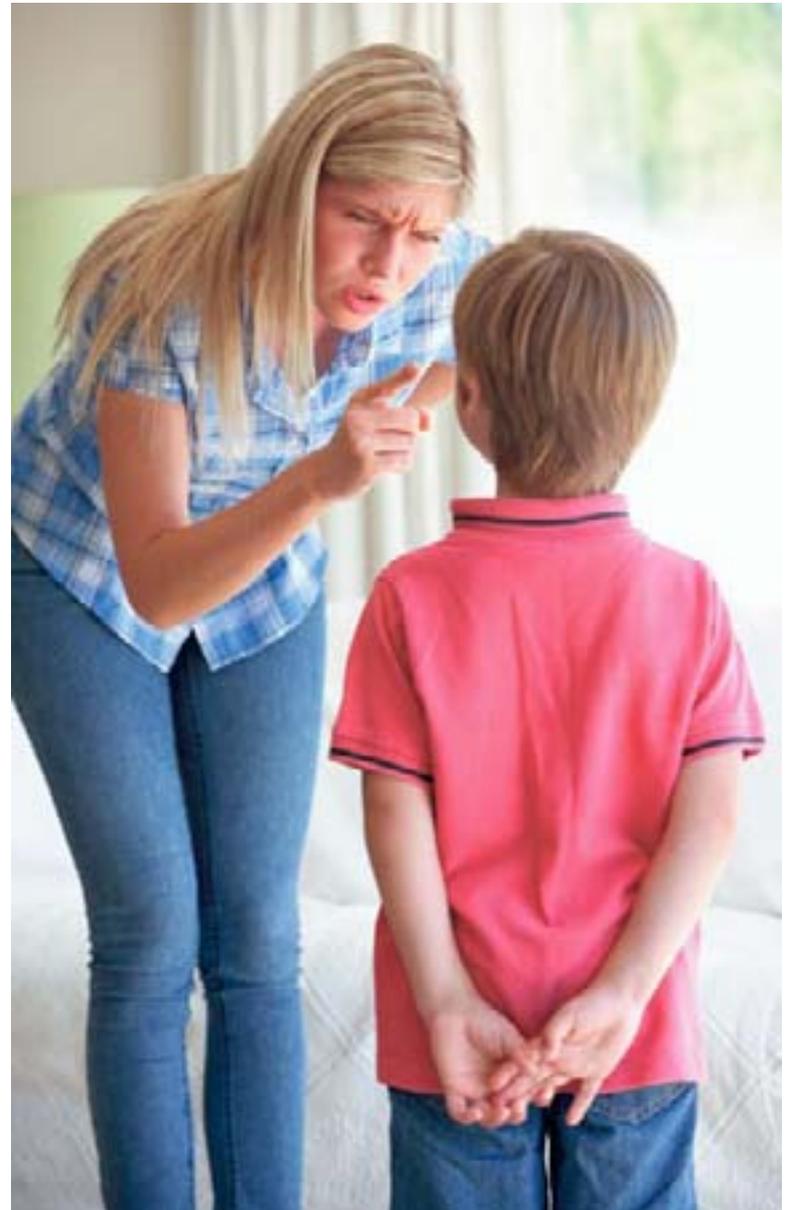
Yes, there are lots of reasons for why she snapped at that moment. We can go into all those ideas and they would be valid. Here’s something that you cannot deny: Your behavior as a parent influences your child’s behavior.

As adults, it is our job to teach our kids. Yes, teaching him that snow is dirty is a good plan. Teaching him it is not good to touch it is also a good plan. Yelling at him for doing so is not a good plan. This approach teaches him to feel bad about himself and to question his choices.

This mother had the right concept but the wrong behavior. If you want your child to have good behavior, then consider how you interact with him and the example you set.

There are a lot of ways to teach your child that dirty snow is dirty and to discipline in a positive manner. A few options his mom could have chosen:

- Hold him away from the snow.
- Calmly tell him to step away and say that dirty snow is yucky.
- Let him touch it so that he might realize it’s gross.



The words you use, combined with your actions, make an impact on your children. Yes, you will have moments that are less than graceful. That is part of being human.

Strive to have less moments of bad behavior yourself, and you will notice that your child will have less moments of bad behavior also. The behavior of your child is more con-

nected to your behavior than you may think.

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

Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist, with 15 years of experience, based in Brooklyn. For more on her, visit www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net.

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"Vista" is Carnival's newest cruise ship.

Cruising from NYC

A great family trip without the misery of the airport

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

For families in the New York metro area looking to escape the hectic city, but don't want to battle the airport crowds, the best option is to take a cruise. New York families have many cruise options, with ships departing from Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Bayonne, N.J. Because cruises offer activities for all ability levels and cater to small and large groups, they provide a great setting for families.

Some parents are hesitant about cruising, with concerns of large crowds and small rooms. However, cruise vacations are a great value for families, allowing for exploration of multiple destinations and selection of a preferred cruise ship experience (ship size, available amenities, and costs vary). The costs for a cruise are also quite cost effective, given that transportation, lodging, food, activities and even childcare are all included in one set price.

When choosing your next vaca-

tion, consider these cruising tips:

Choose convenience. Cruising from New York is the most convenient choice for families. Your next vacation could be a quick taxi ride away! Warm destinations like the Bahamas, Bermuda, and Eastern Caribbean are within reach.

Join the party. As soon as you set foot on the cruise ship, your vacation has begun. Explore the ship and locate the waterslide! Entertainment, beverages, and snacks are immediately available as well, so get comfortable and enjoy the journey.

Tap into your interests. There is something for everyone on a cruise vacation. Locate the gym, yoga studio, or reading room for a little quiet time. Oh, and choose your excursions early. Whale watching in Nova Scotia and golfing in Bermuda will fill up!

Locate the childcare. Even the littlest visitor will be entertained on a cruise! Go to the kids club orientation and learn about childcare options. There will be plenty of children to befriend and fun activities to

participate in.

Plan your days at sea. Check out the cruise schedule and see what piques your interest. Nothing there, join the spa and relax your days at sea! Designated kid-free zones will allow for a little grownup time as well.

Take your kid on the excursions. You will be offered the opportunity to leave your child on the ship while you explore. Say "no"! You're there to bond and experience the port! Besides, the kiddos may have cabin fever after two days at sea.

Go to a tourist magnet. Every port has one landmark, historic site, or attraction that everyone says is a must-see. In Nassau, Bahamas, it's the Atlantis resort. Families can purchase passes to tour and use the resort amenities.

Find a hidden gem. Research the ports for suggestions on a local restaurant or shop. Find something off the beaten path. In Freeport, Bahamas, the Taino Beach Resort offers beach time and a hot lunch excursion.

Take recommendations. The

cruise ships often loop their routes and the staff is familiar with the ports. Ask for their recommendations of where to go and what to see. In San Juan, Puerto Rico, the shops and restaurants of Old San Juan are walking distance from the ship.

Decorate your luggage. There is nothing worse than disembarking and not locating your luggage. Your bag is in a sea of black suitcases. So, either have bright luggage or an obnoxiously large ribbon or tag to differentiate.

Cruises to the Bahamas run year round, first stopping in Port Canaveral, Fla. that has appealing excursions to Kennedy Space Center and Disney World parks. Then the ship stops in Nassau (home to the Atlantis) and Freeport on Grand Bahama Island. Other cruises venture to Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and further to the Eastern Caribbean islands offering Caribbean hospitality without multiple flights and expensive hotels.

Don't think you can stand a full week on a ship? Shorter cruises are available to Bermuda in the warmer months and to Atlantic Coast Canada in the fall.

Still don't know which cruise is right for you? "Navigatr" is an online tool on the website Shermans Cruise (the sister site to Shermans Travel) that helps travelers find which cruise lines match their travel needs, personality, and budget. "Navigatr" generates a list of the most appealing cruises with the best prices, making the travel-planning process easier.

If you're still stuck on where to go on your cruise, consider Travel Channel's Top Five. Travel Channel selected its top-five picks for the most exciting family cruise lines. All depart from the New York metro area:

Disney

Just like the theme parks, Disney

caters to kids and kids at heart. Kids and teen programs offer extensive activities for play and discovery. Even 3-month-old babies are welcome aboard!

disneycruise.com

Royal Caribbean

Royal Caribbean has a fun program for kids to play and make friends. One perk for parents is "expedited dining" for kids. A staff member will whisk your little one away to play while the grownups enjoy their meal.

royalcaribbean.com

Norwegian

Norwegian Cruise Line has a concept for cruising that has families in mind, "freestyle" cruising. Do what you want, when you want; including when you eat dinner. There are no set schedules to follow.

ncl.com

Holland America

Holland America offers classic fun for children and families without the over-the-top stimulation of other cruise lines. A good cruise line for teenagers, the ships offer not only activities but classes in fitness and dance.

hollandamerica.com

Carnival

Carnival is ideal for families on a budget. There is a party-like atmosphere onboard the ships and it starts the moment you step onboard. When not at the kids club, friendly staffers facilitate activities perfect for families.

carnival.com

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

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Referenced links:

Destinations:

- Bahamas: Bahamas.com
- Bermuda: Gotobermuda.com
- Canada: Visitcanada.com
- Puerto Rico: puertorico.com
- Virgin Islands: visitusvi.com

Excursions:

- Kennedy Space Center: www.nasa.gov/centers/kennedy
- Disney World: <https://disney-parks.disney.go.com>

- Atlantis: Atlantisbahamas.com
- Taino Beach Resort: tainobeach.com

Websites:

- Shermans Cruise: www.shermanscruise.com/bestcruise
- Shermans Travel: shermanstravel.com
- Travel Channel: travelchannel.com



FAMILY HEALTH

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New York Methodist Hospital



It's your best shot

Don't avoid the childhood immunizations

I found a pediatrician that I trust for my soon-to-be-born infant. I planned on following all of her advice about immunizations, but a friend is now telling me to avoid immunizing my baby, because of risks of autism, sudden infant death syndrome, and other disorders and illnesses that have been linked to vaccines. What should I do?

The growing trend of avoiding routine immunizations for children is based on unsubstantiated myths, conspiracy theories, and debunked research, and it poses an unnecessary (and in some cases, life-threatening) risk to children, as well as to family, friends, and communities.

The impulse to second-guess the need for childhood immunizations is understandable. Vaccines can be painful. In rare instances, they can lead to fever, allergic reactions, or other temporary illnesses. And of course, no one enjoys seeing his or her baby stuck with a needle! However, the benefits of immunizing your child, and sticking to the vac-

ination schedule, far outweigh the comparatively microscopic — and in some cases non-existent — risks.

Although there have always been unfounded theories that immunizations have long-term negative effects, the notion that vaccines were dangerous really caught on in 1998 with a study published by British medical researcher Andrew Wakefield. In it, Dr. Wakefield concluded that the routine measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine was a possible cause of autism. Subsequent studies failed to reproduce or confirm Dr. Wakefield's hypothesis, and it eventually surfaced that lawyers had paid Dr. Wakefield to conduct the study to lend credence to lawsuits against the vaccine manufacturers.

In 2010, the paper that originally published the study issued a retraction. Unfortunately, that hasn't stopped the autism myth from sticking.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends a number of immunizations for infants in their first year

of life. Those include the hepatitis B vaccine, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough) (Dtap) vaccine, polio vaccine, and measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines. It is estimated that, worldwide, immunizations for those illnesses alone save more than three million lives per year.

Getting your child vaccinated also protects your community from outbreaks of dangerous diseases. Although immunizations drastically reduce the risk of contracting an illness, they rarely eliminate that risk entirely. That means that if a child contracts the measles, he will pose a risk to everyone around him, even those who have responsibly kept up with an immunization schedule.

As a parent, you'll find that there's no shortage of things to worry about when it comes to your child, but vaccines should not be among them. By keeping up with your child's immunization schedule, and refusing to fall prey to the latest rumors about the dangers of vaccinations, you will ensure that your child has the best shot at a healthy life.



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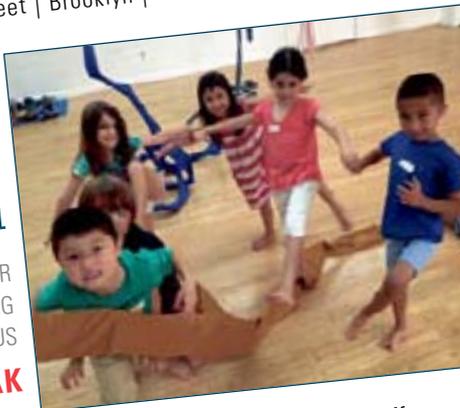
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Camp counselor

The perfect job for your teen

Important life skills among all the fun

BY GAYLA GRACE

Kids love to go to camp and experience new adventures, enjoy a break from everyday life, and make new friends. But as our kids get older, we want them to experience a summer job and the benefits that go along with earning an income. Why not consider the perfect blend of both: a camp counselor job?

Teens can begin working as camp counselors during their high school years and continue during college if they choose. Some camps offer the opportunity for younger teens to begin as counselors-in-training during their junior high years.

A camp counselor job has a lot to offer your teen other than just an income. Here are a few life skills your teen will acquire:

Responsibility. A camp counselor is assigned to a group of kids and

asked to look after their needs and help manage their schedule. Responsibilities include ensuring they're at activities on time, helping with minor first aid, playing with kids at activities, and being a friend on a bad day or during a homesick moment. Teens gain maturity as they help young campers with needs that arise.

Endurance. Camp schedules are packed with activities to allow kids the opportunity to experience as much fun as possible in a short amount of time. Camp counselors must keep up, even on days they feel tired or unmotivated. Counselor Jamie Newman says, "The schedule is exhausting. You have to learn how to endure long days and persevere through exhaustion."

Selflessness. The teen years typically include spells of sour attitudes and selfish behaviors. A camp counselor role forces a teen to suppress his self-indulgent attitude and replace

it with empathy and understanding for others. It shows teens how to put others' needs before their own, a valuable life skill that many teens never acquire.

Relationship skills. Camp counselors are thrown together with other counselors they don't know, some of whom they might not like. They're forced to learn how to get along with others while working toward a common goal. Meaningful relationships are built as counselors work alongside one another day after day.

Overcome fears. Camp is all about new adventures, for campers and counselors both. "We were constantly pushed outside our comfort zone. I had to encourage kids to be adventuresome and try new things, which meant I had to do that, too," Newman says. "Sometimes I felt ridiculous, but I had to let go of my pride." Counselors gain self-respect as they overcome their fears and push themselves outside of their comfort levels.

Humility. Camp counselors learn how to work under someone else's leadership and follow directions. Counselors must do what's asked of them in taking care of kids and following a predetermined schedule.

Self-esteem. What a great feeling to know you're investing in others. That's the feeling a camp counselor experiences every day at camp. Whether it's one week or 10 weeks, camp counselors go home knowing they've made a difference in young children's lives, and that's something to be proud of!

If your teen needs a job that offers life skills with an income, consider a camp counselor position. Camps of all varieties fill their staff with teenagers that offer fun and camaraderie with young campers. Match the interests of your teen — sports, music, education, etc. — with an appropriate camp and watch your teen blossom. As camp counselors, our teens gain valuable experience that offers lifelong lessons and memories in the process.

As a freelance journalist and mom to five kids, Gayla Grace loves sending her teens to camp as counselors.



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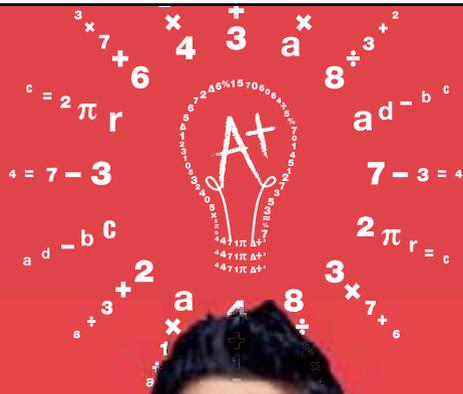
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<http://www.nybreezypoint.com>

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1 Beach 193rd St
Breezy Point, NY 11697
718-634-1500

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Providing an experience for your whole family! Our day camp comes FREE with your season passes! Camps run Monday- Friday from 12:30pm-4:30pm for 8 weeks, and your season passes to the club last Memorial Day weekend - Labor Day. Day camp includes numerous sports, arts and crafts, beach activities, pool swimming, color war, camp show, and more! With age groups ranging from 3 years old through 15 years old, our campers cannot wait to come back to the beach every year. Our special events such as Tie Dye Day, Game Truck Day, Halloween, and Camp Carnival keep every day fresh and exciting. Your children can experience the summer of a lifetime all while mom and dad relax at the beach. We have other activities available through the club's programming schedule.

Brooklyn Doodles Summer Art Camp

at The Stomping Ground
636 Classon Ave
917-803-2679

<http://www.brooklyndoodles.com>
bkdoodles@gmail.com

Our fun and exciting summer camp program is for children ages 2.5 - 4 years. Activities include: creative movement, yoga, music and movement, science exploration, cooking and live animal workshops. Camp Themes include: going on safari, under the sea, super hero day, and favorite T-shirt day! We are an arts based early childhood program. Our mission is to cultivate an enrichment based environment driven by child-led activities and relationship building geared towards young learners. To register for Art Camp or for more information about our programs, please contact us.

Brooklyn Friends School Summer Programs

375 Pearl Street
718-852-1029

<http://www.brooklynfriends.org>

Located just one block from Borough Hall and easily accessible by public transportation. Offering three summer programs for children ages 2 to 14.

Summer Camp enrolls children ages

2 to 8 and features specialty classes in art, dance, science, tennis, group games and swimming.

Summer Arts enrolls children ages 8 to 11 and offers courses in puppetry, music, fiber arts, hip-hop, photography, drawing, painting and woodworking.

Summer Intensives train campers in music video animation, printmaking, drawing and drama. Expert and nurturing faculty runs all programs, including numerous field trips throughout the city. Camp facilities include two gyms, rooftop playground, theater & music rooms, woodshop, darkroom, media centers and air-conditioned classrooms.

Camp Fort Greene/Tech Fort Greene

at The Brooklyn Free School
372 Clinton Ave

<http://www.campfortgreene.com>
info@campfortgreene.com
347-355-7157

Founded to provide a high quality, low-cost summer experience for neighborhood children. Our counselors help young people reach their fullest potential in a warm, nurturing environment where children grow, discover, and, most importantly, play. Campers enjoy soccer, gardening and hands on science inquiry projects all summer long. We recognize children's inherent sense of wonder, creativity, and thirst for knowledge. That's why we're so excited about our new program, Tech Fort Greene - a fun, interactive Technology Day Camp for campers ages 8 - 10 that runs from August 1st - 19th. We believe in empowering children with the tools they need to bring their imaginations to life. Our campers will explore and experiment with circuits, begin to program robots, and start writing their first lines of code. The program includes hands-on time with Little Bits circuits, Bee Bots and Lego Education software, and campers will learn the basics of Scratch.

CBE KIDS Summer Day Camp

In the Garfield Temple
at 8th Avenue and Garfield Place,
Park Slope
718-768-3814 or

www.congregationbethelohim.org

Offering campers a summer of new experiences! The Elementary Division ages 4 ½-9 includes swimming, sports, music, gymnastics, arts and crafts, nature, and circus arts. Movin' On, CBE's travel camp, uses the Temple House as a base for daily

Continued on page 30



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Making Great
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Brooklyn Friends School summer programs take the best of the school year experience and make that light shine even brighter! Every day offers new opportunities for children to grow, to learn, and to develop their talents and interests. Our two programs – Summer Camp for 4 to 7 year olds and Summer Arts for 8 to 13 year olds – are distinguished by their outstanding faculty and favorable teacher-student ratio. The experience for kids is fun and energizing, just as summer should be.



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The Xaverian Community of Emerging Leaders

XCEL

The Xaverian Community of Emerging Leaders (XCEL) is a summer enrichment program that integrates educational, spiritual and leadership development for young men and women entering the 8th grade. In the Xaverian tradition, we seek to create a community of students who possess a zeal for education as evidenced by their character, leadership, and commitment to scholastic success.

The program will run from June 27th – July 28th Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am – 2:00 pm.

The XCEL program accepts scholastically qualified young women and men who have fulfilled all of their academic requirements in seventh grade. Willing to excel as a servant leader and grow as a young person of faith and integrity, XCEL participants will explore their potential and sharpen their talents within a nurturing environment of



passionate Xaverian teachers and friendly Xaverian student leaders.

Please visit www.xaverian.org/xcel to access the online application, as well as the teacher/administrator recommendation form and medical form. The deadline to apply for the 2016 XCEL Program is April 18th, 2016.

Questions: Mr. Vincent Raimondo '97, Director of XCEL, vraimondo@xaverian.org or 718.836.7100, ext. 193

S U M M E R @ X A V E R I A N

2016 Camp Choices

DIRECTORY

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trips in and around NYC; two overnights are included. Native Hebrew-speaking counselors; Hebrew integrated into the daily activities. For more information and registration, please contact Bobbie Finkelstein at 718-768-3814 x 210 or email bfinkelstein@cbebk.org

ConstructionKids Inc.

718-522-2902

<http://www.constructionkids.com>
"ConstructionKids Summer Camps"
--Located throughout Brooklyn and Manhattan

Known for the dynamic projects campers build. Imagine what happens when you combine a kid's love of building, a bunch of friends, and a week of time to explore their imaginations. Campers 4 to 8 years old, work on individual and group projects with real tools and materials that are scaled and selected for small hands. We teach safe, appropriate tool usage, along with drawing and painting. Creativity and problem solving are encouraged. Our goal is to foster each child's confidence and self-assurance so that their skills at designing, making, repairing, and revising are unlimited—like their imaginations. Summer camp is about having fun, making new friends, bonding with staff, and building really cool stuff.

The Cosmic Cove Summer Program

300 Atlantic Avenue,
718-344-4631 or

www.carmelothesciencefellow.com

Inviting you to discover science parties, created at the unique and memorable Cosmic Cove. Here, children are transformed into scientists: they touch, hold, and most importantly take part in all of the experiments. They participate in hands-on activities that are fun, exciting, and, most importantly, educational.

Experiments with Carmelo may include making silly putty, glow in the dark slime, conducting a diaper powder study, making fake snow, etc. They can even work with animals like the weird moving mega mealworms...yuck! You can even take home your experiments...even the live ones.

Deer Mountain Day Camp

63 Call Hollow Road,
Pomona

845-354-2727

www.deermountaindaycamp.com

Info@deermountaindaycamp.com

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FasTrackKids Summer

60 Broadway Williamsburg
7612 13th Avenue
Bay Ridge/Dyker Heights
1605 Voorhies Avenue,
Sheepshead Bay
150 4th Avenue, Park Slope
718-748-3000

<http://www.fastrackkids.com>

Designed for children ages 3-7. Sessions last for one week at a time. A full day program is offered that includes enrichment classes, math, reading, and writing classes, exercise, local field trips, arts and crafts, karaoke, computers, special projects, science experiments and much more. Hours are from 9am-4pm with extended hours available.

The camp offers a fast-paced, fun and fully interactive setting; learning adventures captivate and entertain as they deliver truly meaningful lessons. Each day FasTrackKids will enjoy learning as they explore, discover, imagine and create. This is the summer adventure children will use for life. One or 2 times per week Enopi Math & English Classes are also offered all summer and throughout the year.

Gold Coast Sports Academy

Brooklyn Bridge Park
steve@goldcoastsportsacademy.com

GCSA is a member of the Oasis Children's Day Camps family of camps. GCSA, launching in the summer of 2016, takes all the professional experience and know-how developed over the last sixteen years about summer camp and combines it with world-class professional sports training. We have partnered with premier professional athletes to develop the most sophisticated state-of-the-art training methodology to bring to our camper-athletes. GCSA Summer Sports Academy is for boys, girls, and teens ages 5-16.

Little Thinkers Montessori

148 Clinton Avenue
347-996-2688

718-858-8961

www.littlethinkersmontessori.com

Offering a Summer Program with

Continued on page 32



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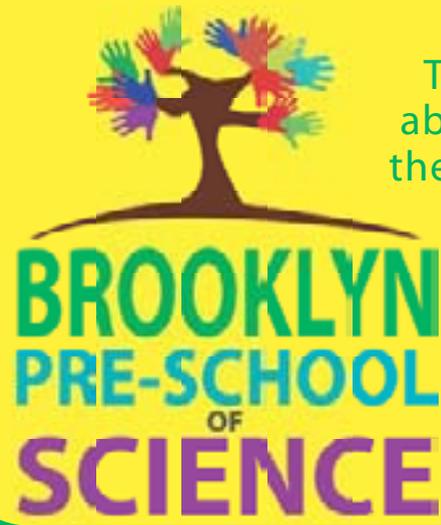
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www.brooklynpreschoolofscience.com

2016 Camp Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 30

full or ½ day sessions running for 6 weeks. Activities include, Gardening, Science, Art, Yoga, Music, Dance and outside play. Children learn through the academic and experiential process, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, and influenced by the culturally diverse atmosphere of Brooklyn. The primary goal of our Montessori program is to use the “whole-child” approach to help each child reach their full potential in all areas of life. Please visit our website or contact us to learn more about our programs.

Midwood Montessori Summer Program

2825 Bedford Avenue,
one block from Brooklyn College
718-253-3242 or
www.midwoodmontessori.com

The rich Montessori setting that attracts children to our school influences our summer camp - a nurturing, creative environment providing a wide variety of activities for children ages 2.9 - 6 years. These include indoor play in our centrally air conditioned building, three outdoor play areas, daily water play, gardening, picnics, barbecues, music, arts & crafts, weekly field trips and theme days, all of which are supervised by our caring and experienced year-round staff. Transportation is available. Located one block from Brooklyn College, our hours are 9 AM - 3 PM (8 AM drop-off available).

Mill Basin Day Camp

5945 Strickland Avenue
718-251-6200 or
<http://www.millbasindaycamp.com>

Mill Basin Day Camp is dedicated to providing an exciting and fulfilling camp experience for children entering Pre-K through 9th grade. As the largest camp only facility in Brooklyn, their modern, fully equipped, air-conditioned and secure space offers a wide range of on-site activities. Campers are supervised by qualified staff in a fun and safe first environment. Door to door bus service is available to most locations. Call or come in for a personal tour of the facility.

Oasis in Brooklyn Bridge Park Summer Program

180 Remsen St.
Brooklyn Heights, 11201
718-596-4900 or
<http://www.oasischildren.com>

Give your child a summer full of fun! We offer three different types of summer camps: a traditional summer day camp program for children ages

5-11, Early Start Imagination Camp for pre-K campers ages 3-5, and a program called Teen Travel, which is designed for young adventurers going into the 7th, 8th, or 9th grades. In all of our programs, daily activities, and trips are centered on creative and performing arts, outdoor education, swimming, athletics, and team-building.

The Park Slope Day Camp

Park Slope, Windsor Terrace,
Bay Ridge, Carroll Gardens
718-788-7732 or
<http://www.parkslopedaycamp.com>
PSDC = CAMP SPIRIT,
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Welcoming, stimulating, lively, diverse, safe, professionally managed outdoor camp for ages 3.5 - 14. Exciting travel camp for grades 6 - 8; fantastic Leadership Experience for grades 9 & 10. Specialized Sports Academy and Circus program. Swim, sports, arts, gymnastics, horseback riding, lots of special events, trips. Very flexible registration; extra long season and accommodating hours. Transportation. An experienced, creative, stable staff, second to none!

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336 3rd Street
718-768-3195 or
<http://www.pipertheatre.org>

Children ages 7-17 spend the month of July creating worlds of imagination and wonder at the Old Stone House and Washington Park. Under the guidance of our extraordinary teachers, students create full-scale productions performed at the end of each workshop. One and two-week programs for Starlings, ages 7-11, vary from puppetry to improvisation to Shakespeare. Four-week programs for students 11-17 include filmmaking; the musicals Blood Brothers, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Alice in Wonderland, Beastmaster and King Lear, and costume design.

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718-928-3779
www.thestageschoolbrooklyn.com

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Continued on page 34

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2016 Camp Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 32

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN



Is your doctor good enough?

Living in New York City affords us the distinct opportunity to get the very best health care and access to the top doctors and hospitals in the world. But not every doctor is the right fit for everyone, or even necessarily good at what he does. In order to have a constructive visit, a patient needs to be informed and knowledgeable about her lifestyle, habits, symptoms, and conditions before seeing a doctor. Yet, many people take a doctor's word over their own; of course, that is part of the reason we go to a doctor: to have his educated opinion on the state of our health, a condition, disease, or symptom we are experiencing. However, a doctor-patient relationship is one of mutual respect with the common goal of the well-being of the patient in the forefront.

A necessary skill we all need to acquire is the ability to stick up for ourselves in the course of our own medical care or the care of a loved one. Unfortunately, this can sometimes be a confusing time because some doctors can hinder rather than help the process.

So how do we know that our doctor's advice is good enough? How can we decide that our doctor is not a good fit? When do we know it is time to move on to a new physician? The truth is that many times, we don't, but there are telltale signs it may be time for a new doctor:

He does not treat you with respect. He doesn't listen. He talks over you.

Your doctor does not take your symptoms into consideration. Perhaps he relies entirely on lab results, or even worse, does not take the proper tests and simply uses his sole five-minute observation to conclude that you are fine when you are telling him you feel ill.

She doesn't show any empathy toward you as a person. There is no offer of hope or a kind word. Maybe she has even suggested it's all in your head, or you need to toughen up.

The doctor is not willing to listen. He doesn't want to hear about the research that you found online or explain why or why not he agrees or disagrees. He believes he has all the answers and you need to blindly follow.

He does not return phone calls, send lab reports, or follow up promptly. Most doctors today offer a portal in which patients can access their results online and email their doctors directly.

Your doctor is inconsiderate of your time. He makes you wait three hours for a five-minute visit.

He acts like they are better than you. The doctor assumes he knows you more than you know yourself.

You just do not feel comfortable with him. If there is no trust, you will always be second guessing the doctor and yourself.

She gets offended that you want a second opinion. Any confident doctor will advise you to seek another opinion and be fully assured in her own assessment as well as your desire to learn more.

The doctor does not explain why he is choosing a certain treatment, surgery, or medication. The doctor may be reluctant to answer your questions and you feel rushed during your time with him.

Doctors are lifesavers and there are too many highly skilled, empathetic, and compassionate physicians in New York to settle for anything than the very best.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blog, Some Puppy To Love.

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Dabney and Dad

BY PAUL MEKLEIN



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My eggs-hausting easter egg hunt

How did I end up being the one searching?

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

“Dad, you can’t stop until you find them all.” Jessie spoke these words during last year’s Easter egg hunt. Why did my wife Mattie and I teach Jessie not to quit when the going gets tough?

Before I discuss the egg collection, let me describe how Jessie ended up hiding 43 eggs for me to find: I carried the large box containing her plastic eggs from the garage to the kitchen.

Jessie said, “I’ll go through them and pull out my favorite ones.”

“No more than 36,” I responded, thinking that would be plenty for the Easter Bunny (me) to hide.

Jessie sifted through the box and pulled out her favorites. The variety of colors, shapes, and sizes in the keeper pile made an impressive collection. She counted them and said, “86.” Before I could repeat, “No more than 36,” my quick thinker said, “I know! I’ll hide half of them, and you can hide the other half.”

As an experienced husband (mar-

ried 30 years) and dad (10 years), I learned long ago to choose my battles wisely. I did a quick math calculation, and to me, 43 eggs versus 36 didn’t seem like a big deal. I agreed to the negotiated egg-count terms. (“Negotiated” sounds better than “I cracked under pressure.”) A daughter’s fluttering eyelashes are hard to resist, especially when she’s wearing an Easter dress.

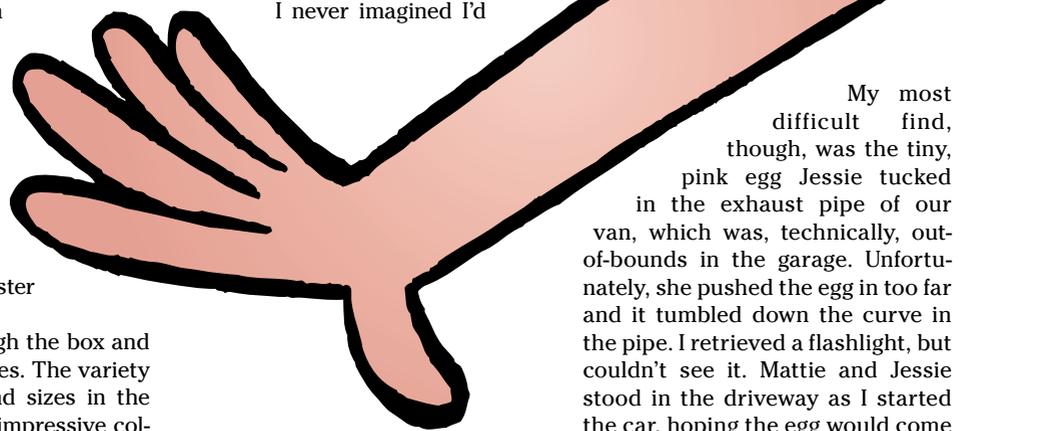
Egg hiding sure has changed over Jessie’s young life. In her early years, I hopped around the yard and hid both plastic and painted eggs. Jessie always enjoyed finding them, except for the one the dog found first and ate. However, before too long, Jessie wanted the egg-hiding role.

I never imagined I’d

ago, so the hunt would finish before Christmas: The hider can’t open things and tuck eggs inside. In other words, the Easter bunny would never lift the garbage-can lid or open the door to the truck parked in the driveway.

Apparently, Jessie forgot about this standing rule. Luckily, she gave me hints: “You’re getting warm, hot, cold, colder.”

It’s good she did, too, because I’d still be looking for a few of them. She hid one egg in a vacant bird’s nest inside the birdhouse. She completely covered one egg with pine straw. Somehow, she planted one egg in the spouting at the edge of the roof. (Maybe she can hop higher than me?) Jessie propped another egg (the last one I found) on a tree branch 10 yards into the pine woods behind our house.



My most difficult find, though, was the tiny, pink egg Jessie tucked in the exhaust pipe of our van, which was, technically, out-of-bounds in the garage. Unfortunately, she pushed the egg in too far and it tumbled down the curve in the pipe. I retrieved a flashlight, but couldn’t see it. Mattie and Jessie stood in the driveway as I started the car, hoping the egg would come out. I turned the key in the ignition. Mattie said the egg shot out about 10 feet. All outside eggs had been found — not easily, but at least a trip to the mechanic wasn’t necessary.

Jessie found the inside eggs with ease. But, hey, I followed the rules.

This year, I’ll be sure to review the Easter bunny hiding rules before Jessie heads outside with her basket of eggs. I need to prevent exhaustion issues ... for me and my car.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments. Happy Easter!

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

have to fight to keep my job as Easter bunny; I have egg-cellent qualifications. At 6-foot-5, I can hop a lot higher than Jessie — Mattie has video footage to prove it. In spite of my superior hopping performance, I’ve shared the egg-hiding job with Jessie for the past few years. I hid the eggs first, then after Jessie found them all, we reversed roles. However, last Easter, Jessie’s 11th, she wanted to go first, so she and Mattie proceeded to the yard with her 43 eggs while I stayed in the house and didn’t look.

Alone in the house, I came up with the brilliant plan to hide my eggs inside, which struck me as a win-win for both Easter bunnies.

I must also share one hide-and-seek rule we implemented long





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GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

The new guidelines for toddlers and tech

For many years, the American Academy of Pediatrics had strict rules about screen time — no exposure for kids under 2 and no more than two hours a day for preschoolers. Last December, the Academy abandoned those guidelines, acknowledging what parents already knew: screens are everywhere.

One recent study, published in the Academy's journal *Pediatrics*, found "nearly universal exposure" for children under 2. Even under age 1, half of all babies interacted with a mobile device every single day, playing simple games, watching videos, and fooling with apps. Academy policy makers concluded, "In a world in which 'screen time' is becoming simply 'time' our policies must evolve or become obsolete."

The revised guidelines from the Academy don't offer specific rules, perhaps because there isn't clear-cut research showing that certain uses of mobile devices help or harm very young children. Instead, they provide general advice, intended to guide parents as they make decisions about when to hand over a tablet or a cellphone to a baby or a toddler. Here are the guidelines:

Media is just another environment. Child development hasn't changed. The Academy points out that kids do what they have always done, but now they do much of it virtually. The most rapid period of brain development takes place before age 3, so infants and toddlers need a wide range of experiences, with and without technology, under the supervision of loving adults.

Parenting has not changed. Parents still have to make decisions about what's good for a particular child in a particular situation. The video that makes one child giggle may be overstimulating to another child or the same child at a different time of day. Good parents respond flexibly to new situations and, most importantly, to each child.

Role-modeling is critical. Little kids imitate adults. Parents who want kids to have healthy relationship with



screens will have to model self-control by setting limits for themselves.

We learn from each other. Young children learn most easily when they are interacting with people. Language, in particular, develops most readily during natural back-and-forth exchanges between babies and adults. According to some studies, lengthy passive exposure to media such as videos may actually inhibit language acquisition. On the other hand, technology that promotes interaction — video chatting with a family member, for example — may stimulate language and other kinds of learning.

Content matters. Rather than setting arbitrary limits on time spent with screens, the Academy recommends that parents think about everything a child does during the day. Is there plenty of time for being outdoors, moving around, reading books, singing songs, snuggling, being silly? Time with technology becomes a problem when it edges out other activities.

Curation helps. Any app can claim that it's educational. Very few have research to back up that claim. Little children, in particular, deserve the highest-quality products parents can find. Before downloading an app or

firing up a video, check reviews from organizations like Parents' Choice (parents-choice.org), Children's Technology Review (childrenstech.com) or Common Sense Media (commonsensemedia.org).

Co-engagement counts. The Academy points out that kids are more likely to benefit from screen time if adults are involved. Just talking about what a child is seeing or doing on a screen provides context and gives a small child a sense of connection.

Playtime is important. Unstructured playtime stimulates creativity and independence. Unplugged play is especially important for very young children, because they learn from touching and manipulating objects in the three-dimensional world.

Set limits. As many adults know, technology can have a mesmerizing effect. Games, in particular, are often designed to encourage mindless swiping, and little kids — like everyone else — may find it difficult to disengage. Setting limits requires the same gentle but firm techniques parents use in other settings. When children want cookies for lunch — or unlimited time on the iPad — it's up to parents to steer them in a different direction.

Create tech-free zones. In particular, the Academy recommends that parents teach kids to power-down during meals and at bedtime. Little children are more likely to adopt healthy eating habits if meals are a happy, social time with lots of playful interaction. At bedtime, research shows that light from screens can interfere with sleep cycles, so the Academy recommends devices be kept out of bedrooms.

Carolyn Jabs raised three computer-savvy kids including one with special needs. She has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years and is about to publish a book called "Cooperative Wisdom: Bringing People Together When Things Fall Apart." Visit www.growing-up-online.com to read other columns.

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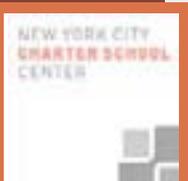
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Charter Schools

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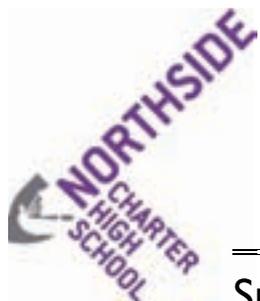
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Continued on page 44



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The New York Post Picture of Northside students at the Charter Advocacy Day 2016

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Charter Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 42

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BOYS

left behind

Help males
to thrive
academically
and socially

BY MALIA JACOBSON

“Boys are hard.” When Charlene Grisim was expecting her son Brady, now 7, she heard this refrain. She didn’t quite believe it, though, until she took a job as dean of students at a middle school a few years ago. There, the so-called gender gap became clear, but not in the way she’d expected.

It wasn’t that most of the students called into her office for discipline problems were boys — the chairs in her office were evenly populated by boys and girls — but that nearly every time, boys were at a complete emotional loss, overwhelmed by tears, while the girls played it cool. Grisim was shocked.

“Girls held tough; they stood there and calmly talked it through,” she says. Boys were another story. Nine out of 10 times, the boy would cry. Not out of anger, she says; rather, the boy would be engulfed in a tide of feelings he’d worked hard to cover up all day long.

Most boys lacked the coping skills to self-regulate or the emotional vocabulary to express their versions of the story or the reasons behind their actions. So in the safety of Grisim’s office, out of sight of mocking peers, boys let their tears loose.

“I think it’s about holding in emotions,” Grisim says. “When someone pin-pokes it, it just spews.”

The problem with school

It’s no secret that girls fare better in school. The past decade has been good for girls in academics: As research and initiatives like the National Girls Collaborative Project help advance girls’ progress in science and technology, and programming geared to cut out “mean girl” bullying, support healthy body image, and

develop social-emotional intelligence abounds, girls are surging ahead.

The global “girl power” trend starts in kindergarten, and by the end of high school, more girls graduate than boys, and they make up 70 percent of high-school valedictorians. And this pattern continues into higher education. Globally, there are 93 men per 100 women in universities. In the U.S., women make up 60 percent of university graduates, earning 60 percent of master’s degrees and 52 percent of doctorate degrees in the country.

Young women are entering wage-earning years with more education than their male peers: 38 percent of women ages 25–32 have at least a four-year degree, compared to 31 percent of men. And today’s young women are living in a society that’s more supportive of their success than ever before. In a 1993 Gallup poll, 63 percent of those polled felt that society favored men over women; by 2013, that number dropped to 45 percent.

A brighter future has emerged for girls. But in the wave of all this success, boys are lagging behind. They score lower in literacy, communication, and empathy, skills essential for classroom and workplace success, and they receive harsher and more frequent school discipline than girls. Although boys make up 54 percent of preschool enrollment, they represent 80 percent of preschoolers suspended. High-school boys are suspended about twice as often girls, despite data showing that girls and boys misbehave at similar rates.

Book-smart boys

Gender differences in education pop up from pre-K through college and beyond, but the problem isn’t about book learning. Research suggests that the gender gap in educa-

tion has little to do with academic deficiencies — academic test scores tend to favor males in some countries and at some grade levels, and females in others, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Case in point: Boys and girls score similarly in fourth-grade math; while girls pull ahead in literacy, boys fare better in science, particularly in high school. Girls show more literary prowess, with higher scores in reading comprehension and verbal fluency, while boys outperform girls in spatial reasoning and spatial visualization. And boys and girls perform similarly on IQ and achievement tests.

In other words, academic differences between the sexes aren’t clear-cut and neither gender has an across-the-board advantage. But it appears that boys aren’t falling behind in school because they can’t do the work.

So why are boys trailing? Because, experts say, the school environment seems uniquely designed to penalize boys for being, well, boys.

School success favors a particular skill set that boys aren’t born with and aren’t being taught, says psychotherapist Michelle P. Maidenberg of Harrison, New York, mom to three boys, 15, 11, and 9, and one girl, 6.

In today’s politically correct climate, it isn’t popular to talk about innate biological differences between boys and girls. But differences exist, and when it comes to behavior and success in school, they matter, Maidenberg says. Research shows that in utero, exposure to higher levels of testosterone is linked to slower maturation of parts of the temporal lobe, along with lower levels of empathy and lower-quality social relationships.

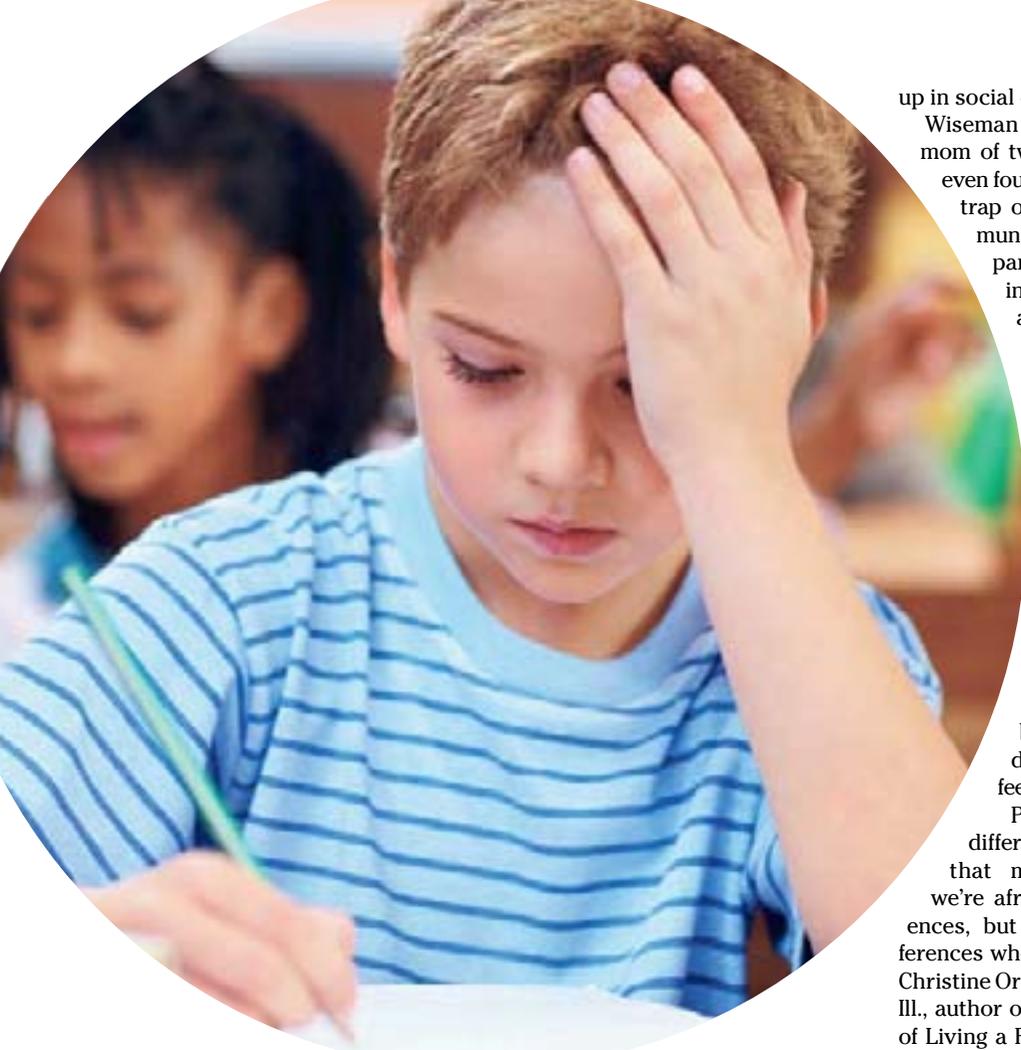
Girls routinely outperform boys when it comes to self-control and delayed gratification, skills that predict academic and career success. And girls’ frontal cortices mature more quickly than boys’, giving females an early edge in problem solving, planning, communication, and relationship building.

“Boys and girls are taught similarly, even though they have different needs. This unfortunately puts boys at a disadvantage,” Maidenberg says.

“Research shows that girls tend to be more goal-oriented and better in planning, following directions and organizing. Given the disparities, boys need appropriate skills to compensate for these challenges.”

Discipline dilemma

These noncognitive skills are underemphasized in schools, according to a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute, despite their critical im-



portance in school and life.

It's precisely these non-cognitive skills that may help girls stay out of trouble in school and bounce back more quickly when they are penalized.

Maidenberg's oldest son points to gender-biased discipline differences at his high school. Girls don't necessarily misbehave less often, but they don't receive the same treatment.

"He says girls are treated with special privileges, especially when it comes to 'misbehaving' in class," says Maidenberg. Girls get warnings; boys get sent to the principal.

Last year, Maidenberg was called to pick up this same son from school. He was accused of destroying a school bulletin board and suspended for the day. Video evidence later proved his innocence, but the experience was jarring for the boy, she says.

"The principal refused to listen to him. When he tried to explain, she asked him if he thought she was a liar," says Maidenberg. "When I spoke to him about it, the first thing he said was, 'If I were a girl, I wouldn't have been treated like a criminal.'"

There's a misconception that boys always require harsh punishment, and that they won't respond to other types of discipline, Maidenberg says. That's

false; a study from Hanover College suggests that both genders would fare better with inductive discipline — "positive discipline" tactics, such as treating kids with empathy, clearly explaining behavior guidelines, and allowing natural consequences to take their course — instead of corrective, or punitive, discipline, such as suspension or losing privileges. Unfortunately, the study notes, schools rarely employ inductive discipline. Simply put: It's faster to slap down a suspension than examine and address root causes of misbehavior.

Emotional evolution

In "Masterminds & Wingmen: Helping Our Boys Cope with Schoolyard Power, Locker-Room Tests, Girlfriends, and the New Rules of Boy World" (2013), New York Times best-selling author Rosalind Wiseman writes about the rich emotional world of boys — a topic that surprises parents of boys, she says.

"Parents get these one-word responses from boys and think there's nothing going on, that they're emotionally stunted," Wiseman says.

That couldn't be further from the truth. Boys feel deeply; they get hurt, are humiliated, and become caught

up in social drama, too.

Wiseman should know: As the mom of two boys, 12 and 14, she even found herself falling into the trap of misjudging boys' communication cues. Too many parents and educators buy into the belief that girls are complex creatures with intricate emotional worlds, and that with boys, what you see is what you get.

"I think we take boys at face value too much, and we don't give them credit for the fact that there might be a motivation for what they do, something we take for granted with girls," Wiseman says. "Just because a boy is loud doesn't mean he doesn't feel things deeply."

Parents downplay the differences between genders that might matter, because we're afraid to talk about differences, but we're also making differences where there are none, says Christine Organ of Arlington Heights, Ill., author of "Open Boxes: the Gifts of Living a Full and Connected Life" and mom to two young boys. In terms of depth of emotion, boys and girls are more alike than they are different, and yet boys are told to toughen up, be a man, rub some dirt in it, she says.

Her second-grader was recently devastated when a friend scoffed at his athletic ability. She resisted the urge to tell him to brush it off.

"I needed to validate his sadness. His friend hurt his feelings. Sadness is normal in that situation."

Organ did the right thing, according to licensed family therapist Linnea Shapiro Fuchs of the Exceptional Children's Foundation in Culver City, Calif.

"We need to help boys develop strategies for dealing with emotional states surrounding disappointments in school, achievement, relationships," she notes. "They need to develop the ability to move forward after small failures."

This ability to handle small relationship snafus becomes more vital during the teen years. Modern boys aren't being taught the social and emotional skills they need to succeed in relationships, says Seattle-based therapist Jo Langford.

Langford wrote "Spare Me 'The Talk!': A Guy's Guide to Sex, Relationships, and Growing Up," which

was published last year. He speaks at schools and runs a private practice, filled mainly with teenage boys struggling with the intersection of sex and technology (think sexting and downloading porn).

Boys don't know how to connect with someone they like, how to show interest, he says.

"They don't know anything about flirting," says Langford. "They know about sex from Google and porn. It's sexual but not really sex. That doesn't teach them how to ask someone out, how to tell someone you're interested."

Communication crunch

The key to ramping up boys' non-cognitive and relationship skills is building strong relationships at home — which means getting him to talk to you. But parents typically go about this all wrong, Wiseman says.

"One of the biggest takeaways [of my work with boys] is that boys want their parents to stop interrogating them at the end of the day."

Trading "How was your day? How was practice? How did the test go?" for a simple "Hi. I'm glad you're here" works wonders, she says. Connect, but give him space, she says. "Boys open up when they're ready. Parents are amazed."

Emotional connection is critical. But to truly champion boys' success, educators and parents also need to rally around boosting boys' literacy in the same way that science and mathematics are now emphasized for girls.

In "Bright Beginnings for Boys: Engaging Young Boys in Active Literacy" (2009), authors Debby Zambo and William G. Brozo make a case for special supports for boys to help close the gender gap in literacy, a deficit that stretches from five percent in elementary school to 14 percent in high school.

Bridging this gap is critical to boys' success, say Zambo and Brozo. They write: "In a world driven by information and knowledge, boys' skill deficiencies will limit access to the full range of opportunities enjoyed by their more literate peers."

Is pairing emotional literacy with actual literacy too lofty a goal? This writer hopes not. Fluent in both language and love, our boys will be poised to succeed.

Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."



A parent for life

Parenthood
is a process
that is forever
evolving

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Several years ago, during my oldest son's college orientation, the provost made a statement that had an immediate impact and continues to resonate with me to this day. He said, "Becoming is superior to being." I hastily jotted down this quote, eagerly anticipating the prospect of exploring its broader implications at a later date.

Upon further scrutiny, the subtle, yet poignant, distinction between being and becoming emerged. While "being" denotes a static, unchanging state, "becoming" implies an active, ongoing process. "Becoming" reflects the gradual, evol-

ing nature of life.

As humans, we are continuously becoming. Unlike other mammals, we have the power to alter the outcome. Every day we have the prerogative to make choices that modify the person we are becoming. We can exercise the option to make the most of the best of ourselves in every aspect of our lives. What an extraordinary privilege and awesome responsibility.

Twenty-six years ago this month, I gave birth to my first child. Instantly, I was a mother. While it took only nine months to achieve that title, I quickly learned that becoming a parent would take much longer. Just when I began to feel comfortable and confident, my son

would reach another milestone. In order to optimize his growth and development, I had to become the parent he needed me to be at each stage.

Ten years and two miscarriages later, I delivered another son. With 10 years of parenting experience, the second time around should be a breeze, I thought. It would merely be a matter of reusing the strategies that had worked with my older son. But my hand-me-down parenting plan didn't work. My younger son was similar to my older son, but he was not the same. He had his own way of interacting with and responding to the world.

Clearly, these two distinctly different individuals, while traveling

Just when I began to feel comfortable and confident, my son would reach another milestone. In order to optimize his growth and development, I had to become the parent he needed me to be at each stage.

the same developmental trajectory, were going to do so in their own unique way. My parenting had to become responsive to their personal styles in order to be effective. It is a process that is ongoing. To this day, I am striving to become the parent my sons need. Here are some of the practices that have been helpful in this endeavor:

Revisit childhood

The parent we become originates in our childhood. The parenting we experienced as children provides the foundation for the parenting we exhibit. Spend time reflecting on the parenting you received. What was effective? What was not? What would have been more helpful?

Recall what it felt like to be the current age of your child. What did your parents do well? What might they have done that would have made a world of difference to you? Reflect on how you can use these memories to become the parent your child needs.

Learn human development

Become a student of human development. Familiarize yourself with the characteristics and milestones associated with your child's age and stage. Remember that these are just general descriptions. Each child develops at his own pace.

Avoid comparisons with siblings, relatives, or friends. Avoid justifying misbehavior with the "it's just a stage" excuse. You can only do what you know. The more you know about human development, the more you can do to optimize your child's experience. Use

your knowledge of human development to guide you in becoming the parent your child needs.

Study each child

Become an expert on your child. Watch closely how he interacts with and responds to you, to others, to the world around him. Listen carefully to his vocalizations, words, explanations for how things work and why things are the way they are. Pay attention to how he expresses his feelings. Use these observations to inform your decisions as you seek to become the parent your child needs.

Create a vision

Imagine yourself as the parent you want to become. Incorporate parenting qualities modeled by parent heroes you can identify from personal experience, literature, and other sources. Be sure to include the parenting strengths you already possess. Apply your knowledge of human development and the observations of your child's temperament. Visualize yourself effectively managing a situation with your child that you have found challenging. Mentally experiment with saying and doing things that seem more productive than the strategies you currently practice. The more comfortable new skills feel, the more likely you are to use them as you work toward becoming the parent your child needs.

Practice for improvement

The old adage, "practice makes perfect," is flawed. There is no such thing as a perfect parent. The most we can do is our best. Fortunately, since becoming a parent is a continuous process, our best can continue to get better. We can practice to achieve continuous improvement in our efforts to become the parents our children need.

Clearly, the ways our children need us change over time. Becoming the parents they need does not stop at some magical age — ours or theirs. Eventually they may no longer need us, but hopefully, they will always want us in their lives. Other jobs are temporary, but the role of parent is a position we hold for life.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman, has been married for 29 years, and has two sons. She is a family therapist, parent educator, and parenting columnist. She is a resident of Lexington, Ky. To contact her, e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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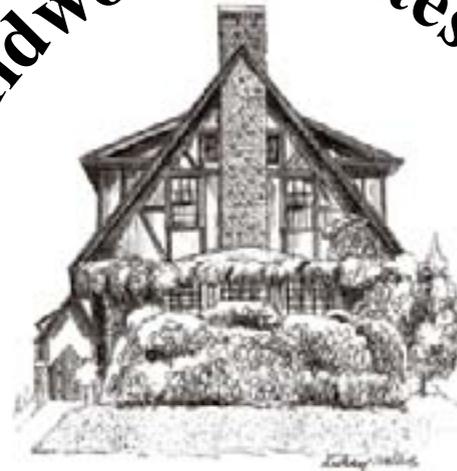
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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

'In the mood' food

Couples hoping to spice up their love life have long turned to candlelight, romantic music, and a bottle of wine. But can the menu serve as an aphrodisiac as well?

Here's the bad news: Sadly, there isn't much science behind foods that get you in the mood.

"Foods such as chocolate, oysters, shrimp, and strawberries have been identified as aphrodisiacs, but little evidence supports that these foods produce any significant effects," according to Jim White, a registered dietitian nutritionist, spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, exercise physiologist, and owner of Jim White Fitness and Nutrition Studios.

Lentils, grapes, truffles, pine nuts, artichokes, vanilla, alcohol, figs, honey, and even the spice turmeric are other foods touted as ways to increase libido.

Here's the food news: Enjoying a



healthy dietary lifestyle regularly will improve how someone feels physically and mentally, which naturally impacts their love life, according to White.

"When the body feels healthy and is working properly, the individual is more likely to desire engaging in acts of love," he says.

So what's a healthy dietary life-

style? It includes fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and plenty of water every day.

"When men and women are eating healthy and exercising, they look better for their partner and they are more self-confident, which can improve their overall love life," he says.

Steer clear of most unhealthy foods, especially in excess. A poor diet can make someone feel tired, cause excessive weight gain, or negatively impact her mood.

Consuming less-than-healthy foods will adversely impact blood flow and digestion in the body, which can lower the desire to have a healthy love life.

So what about those so-called aphrodisiacs? Oysters, shrimp, strawberries, lentils, grapes, truffles, pine nuts, artichokes, vanilla, alcohol, figs, honey, and yes, a little chocolate, are nutrient-rich foods that taste delicious and can improve your health and that of your sweetheart, too.

Christine Palumbo is a nutritionist in Naperville, Ill. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.

Peppered filet mignon with blackberry glaze

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

Steak:

- 1 tsp. crushed black peppercorns
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt
- 4 filet mignon about 5 ounces each and 1 1/2 inch thick

Blackberry Sauce:

- 1/4 cup finely chopped shallots
- 1/2 cup dry red wine (Cabernet preferred)
- 1 cup beef broth
- 3 tbsp. seedless blackberry preserves
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter

DIRECTIONS:

Rub crushed pepper-



corns and sea salt on both sides of steak. Heat oil in large heavy skillet on medium-high heat. Add steaks and cook six to eight minutes or until desired doneness, turning once. Remove from skillet and keep warm. In the same skillet sauté shallots for one minute. Stir wine into skillet, scraping any brown bits from skillet. Let wine boil until reduced by half. Stir in blackberry preserves and broth, let boil until reduced by half. Whisk in butter. Serve steaks with sauce drizzled over.

NUTRITION FACTS: 390 calories, 13 g carbohydrates (10 g sugar), 33 g protein, 20 g fat (8 g saturated), 1 g fiber, 20% DV iron, 2% DV calcium, 4% DV Vitamin A, 2% DV Vitamin C.

Recipe adapted from and used with permission by oregon-berries.com



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

Cook a spring feast

As we near the end of winter and spring comes into focus, a time of renewal is upon us. I like to take this spirit of renewal into the kitchen with classic flavor combinations using global influences to put some new energy and life into the basic dishes I usually cook for the family. The idea is not to complicate things, but to rely on tried-and-true flavors and techniques that deliver great results every time.

Try combining fresh garlic and ginger into a paste. Add scallions and vegetable oil and use this as a rub for bone-in chicken parts or the whole bird. Let the chicken marinate overnight with this rub. Add salt and white pepper just before roasting. Cook at 375-degrees Fahrenheit until internal temperature reaches 165-degrees Fahrenheit, and skin is crispy. Serve with hoisin sauce for dipping!

Combine carrots with spices such as cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and cayenne pepper. Try sprinkling the spices on sliced carrots before roasting. You can also boil the carrots, and then add these spices into a carrot puree: add the hot, cooked carrots, spices, salt, pepper, and a few pats of cold butter to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth (for a vegan meal, substitute olive oil for the butter). Serve with your favorite protein and some brown rice.

Make a balanced dressing for a soba noodle salad. Combine soy sauce, white miso paste, rice wine vinegar, a little brown sugar, chili



flakes, and sesame oil in a small bowl. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. Try this dressing on cooked, rinsed, and chilled soba noodles. This makes a great side dish or main course, depending on what you add to it. Some great additions are blanched broccoli, roasted tofu, sliced red bell peppers, and sesame seeds.

Try lamb this spring. I love cooking lamb at home for my family; it is easy for children to digest and tastes

delicious. Lamb chops are easiest, but I also like getting a boneless leg of lamb and grilling it. Marinate the lamb overnight in garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, mint, and oregano. Let the marinated meat sit out, covered, for about an hour to take the chill off before you start cooking. Then either grill outside or sear in a hot pan, as you would for a steak. A broiler also works well for this. Once you have a nice brown color or grill marks on the exterior, you can roast the meat to your liking. I prefer pink, or medium, but your family's tastes may vary. Let the lamb rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing. Serve with rosemary roasted potatoes, and braised artichokes for a classic spring feast!

Change up your shrimp recipe by using Spanish flavors. I love the combination of smoked paprika, saffron, garlic, and lemon. A hit of sherry vinegar adds just the right amount of acid to make this dish pop!

Joanna DeVita is a mother of two (ages 5 and 2) and is the executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School.

Sauteed shrimp with Spanish flavors

INGREDIENTS:

1 pound cleaned and deveined shrimp (seek out large, head-on shrimp if possible. The heads contain the most delicious juice!)

¼ tsp. chili flake or to taste

Juice of ½ lemon

2 tsp. Spanish smoked paprika, also known as pimenton

1 tsp. saffron threads, rehydrated in 2 Tbsp of hot water

2 tsps. sherry vinegar

2 tbsp. plus 1 Tbsp good Spanish olive oil

2 tsp. chopped fresh parsley

3 cloves garlic, sliced very thinly

Salt and pepper to taste

Lemon wedges for serving

DIRECTIONS: Marinate the shrimp in a non-reactive bowl with smoked paprika, lemon juice, and parsley for up to two hours. Heat a very large sauté pan with 2 Tbsp of olive oil until oil is shimmering, loose, and

just starting to smoke. Add garlic slices and allow to toast. Do not allow them to turn dark brown, they will be bitter.

Carefully add shrimp into the hot garlic oil.

When shrimp are almost cooked through (this will vary in time depending on the size of the shrimp), add the hydrated saffron threads, sherry vinegar, remaining olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste.

Serve piping-hot with good bread and lemon wedges.

Adopting alone

Pursuing a child as a single parent

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

When a family begins to explore the idea of adopting, it is easy to become overwhelmed. There are decisions to be made, questions to be answered, and information to uncover. Imagine the difficulty of figuring it all out on your own.

According to Child Welfare Information Gateway, nearly one-third of adoptions from foster care were completed by unmarried people in 2011.

Thousands of individuals are choosing single parenthood via adoption. The focus for many single people considering adoption is to provide a loving home to a child that is not sought-after. Many single adults are open to choosing an older child, a child of a different race, or a child with special needs.

Once the decision to adopt is made, the next consideration is whether to pursue a domestic or international adoption. Both domestic and international adoption have similar monetary costs, an average of \$40,000, and involve travel. Traveling domestically or abroad to adopt a child can be exciting, rewarding, and stressful. Parents adopting internationally must travel to and stay in the country they are adopting the child from. This could mean anywhere from a few days to several weeks to complete the adoption process. In some instances, multiple visits are necessary. Single individuals that choose to adopt often use family and friends for extended support.

That is what Adrienne Ewing did while traveling to South Africa to meet her son. The 31-year-old nurse



practitioner decided to adopt on her own, having been a widow for five years. She is now the mom to a vibrant kindergartener that she lovingly calls “Georgie.” They have been a family for five months, and she kindly shared her experience with me.

Shnieka Johnson: Did you always have the desire to adopt?

Adrienne Ewing: As a child, my parents were foster parents, which I think opened my eyes and my heart to children who didn’t have families, or at least a loving family or a place that they could call home. When I was married to Marcus, we discussed adoption as something we would like to do someday, but never made any serious steps to start the process. When he died in 2010, I believed that door to be closed.

A friend asked me a few years later — why don’t you adopt as a sin-

gle woman? It was then that I started praying and financially saving for the process, but still quite fearful of doing it alone. In 2013, I had the distinct privilege of walking along my friends as they adopted their daughter. I was floored in amazement of how quickly and seamlessly a family could be created from strangers. I had to start the process, fearfully though, I signed up for the info meeting, then the initial application, etc., until it was all of a sudden officially happening.

SJ: How long was the adoption process for you?

AE: I went to my first adoption info meeting in July 2013, started the home study in September 2013, and started dossier in March 2014. I first saw a picture of my son Georgie on the waiting list in September 2014, and we were officially matched in February 2015 (when the govern-

“There are so many children domestically and internationally that are in desperate need of a loving family.”

ments agreed that I could adopt him). I traveled in July 2015 and returned home with him at the end of August. He legally became my son July 24. All that to say, about two years.

SJ: How do you juggle work and home life?

AE: I've only been back to work two months, so I'm still learning. I work three days a week, but 12-hour shifts, so on days that I work, I only see Georgie for about an hour. I like that on the days that I'm off, I'm off, and can just enjoy being a mom for the day. I think it helps that the days I'm a nurse practitioner and the days I'm a mom are pretty separated. It also helps that I have friends who are caring for Georgie on days that I work, so that I don't worry about him. Oh, I for sure pay someone to clean my house and do my laundry, [which is the] best gift I ever gave myself.

SJ: Do you have a support system nearby?

AE: Absolutely. I could not do this without them — practically, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Most live in Harlem — available in an emergency — and they will wake up at 6:30 in the morning to take him to school when I work. They will bring us dinners, too.

SJ: What has the adjustment been like for you and your son?

AE: It was very hard in the beginning — me getting used to being a mom and his entire life was flipped upside down. Then it was really good for a month or so. Now, I think we're a healthy medium of good and hard. It's only been five months. I think we've bonded very well, but he understandably is pushing boundaries and missing his friends and former caregivers from South Africa.

SJ: What do you want other parents to know about adoption?

AE: It's not as scary as it seems. It's not as hard as it seems. It's not as expensive as it seems.

There are so many children domestically and internationally that are in desperate need of a loving

family. You don't need a degree in psychology or social work to be a loving, safe home to a child that has never had one. It's certainly trying at times, but there is so much goodness and love that you receive.

Cost is an issue, but there are many programs and churches and friends that are willing to come alongside you to make that not a reason anymore. Ninety percent of my adoption fees were covered (not including travel costs).

SJ: Transracial adoption?

AE: Unfortunately, there is a disproportionate number of children of color available for adoption — internationally and domestically. I felt called to adopt (I hope to adopt domestically some day), but as a single woman, internationally was a better option. The few countries that allow single women [to adopt] were children from another race. All that being said, there's no doubt after meeting my son that he is what God always intended for me. It's only been five months, so I'm not sure what will come up for us as he ages. He can obviously see that I am white, and he is brown, and notices who in our community is white and who is brown.

One of the many required readings was about transracial adoption, and the biggest takeaway for me was to make sure I am always the minority, and he's the majority in our community. It was something that I intentionally maintain, even before he came home with me. We live in a predominantly black neighborhood — Harlem. I changed churches, his school is predominantly black — those intentional decisions lead to organically forming relationships with people in those communities.

As a white woman from the Midwest, I was taught not to discuss race, so it's something I have had to adjust to, because it is — and will continue to be — important to him. I ask lots of questions — usually prefaced with “this may sound stupid, but ...” I also gave permission for people to correct me and enter into our family.

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

Additional link:

Child Welfare: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/>

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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

What men want

Twenty tips to reignite your relationship

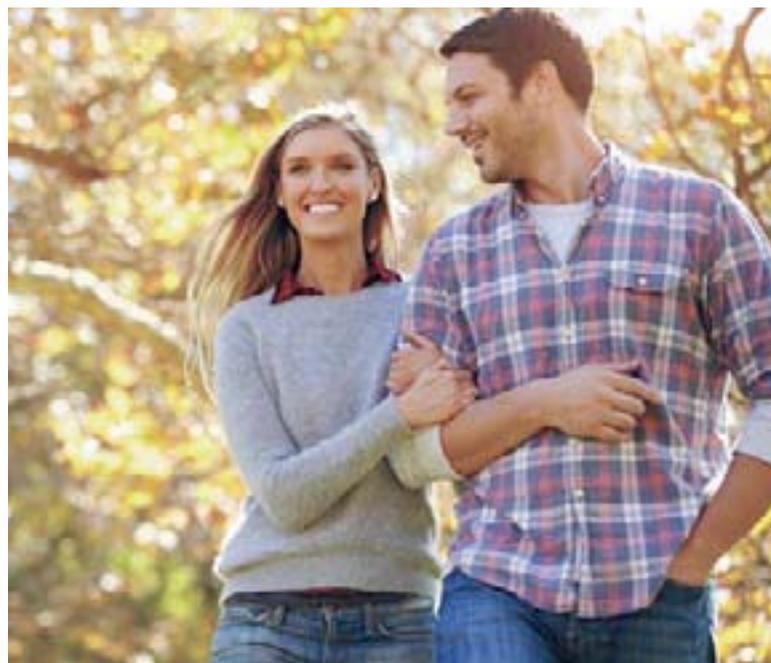
I'm going to break a rule this month. The purpose of our articles (and all that we do at DK Leadership) is to teach relationship principles that you can apply in work and family cultures (including parenting and relationships). So each month we try to tackle one topic that is relevant for both cultures. But since this past month included Valentine's Day — and more importantly, because I gathered some interesting relationship data (that is couple-oriented) — I'm going to break my rule and give you an article that is really just for our relationships! Kids need their parents' relationship to be a solid foundation, so this relationship is worth investing with time and energy!

Too often, we hear about relationships only from the woman's perspective — but what do men want? What do they need from us to keep the spark and ignite our relationships? I went directly to the source and asked men through interviews, questionnaires, and social media. There were powerful and consistent themes!

What's interesting is that many of these answers I've heard my husband say over our 15-year marriage, but what I didn't realize was how prevalent these thoughts were among most men! Their number-one ask (no it wasn't sex) was activity! I've grouped their answers into five themes, order of popularity, and intentionally kept their suggestions in their own words. Enjoy reading the list below and be sure to chat about this with your spouse!

Activity

- Organization and participation in activities that one's partner likes and that one normally wouldn't do (e.g. sporting events, action movies, etc.).
- Museum and sports dates that are of mutual interest.
- Weekends away.
- Watch sports together.
- Date nights.
- Take in a street festival together.
- Get a gift he wants that is outside of your comfort zone (weekend



away to see NFL, book it and buy the tickets; plan the restaurants he would like).

Surprise and mystery!

- Surprise getaways.
- Surprise partner by showing up to office for an unplanned lunch or other date.
- Mix it up! Throw us for a loop — something we don't expect. Variety is exciting!
- Surprise us with something out of routine — to do together. Just to break out of the normal, expected day will bring some spark and excitement.

Connect and affirm

- Connect regularly throughout the day. Pay attention to each other; body language can show a lot when it comes to frustration, worry, happiness, or pride. Hold hands, smile, and praise your partner, it builds and maintains the relationship.
- Stop keeping score: It only builds resentment and makes your closest allies feel like they're in a competition.
- Have a quality, face-to-face conversation without any interruptions.

Don't underestimate how important it is to not only be heard but to actually feel like you are being heard.

- If women want romance, mood, or time together? They will get it if the man gets appreciation — genuine thank you (not a "thank you" that you would give an annoying aunt due to obligation).

Heat it up!

- Sexploration adventures to build on intimate connectedness and relationship.
- Sexting.
- Dressing up.

Time alone

- Time for extreme sports to let off steam to refocus mind and body.
- Surprise with the freedom to do something on our own — maybe she doesn't want to join me, but giving me space to enjoy myself will bring me back closer!

Dr. Karyn Gordon is a regular contributor to "Good Morning America," founder of dk Leadership, and best-selling author of "Dr. Karyn's Guide To The Teen Years" (Harper Collins). Visit her at www.dkleadership.org and on Twitter: @DrKarynGordon.

A show about show biz

KIDS FIRST! FILM CRITIC

"Hail, Caesar!" follows a day in the life of Eddie Mannix, a Hollywood fixer for Capitol Pictures in the 1950s, who cleans up and solves problems for big names and stars in the industry. But when studio star Baird Whitlock disappears, Mannix has to deal with more than just the fix.

What happens when you mix legendary actors, an original story, a smooth and hilarious script, and two of the greatest directors of all time, the Coen brothers? You get "Hail, Caesar!" — an absolutely hilarious masterpiece that I absolutely adore.



This is a comedy that never bores the audience. It is delightfully original. There are a few moments of romance in the film, but not enough to call this film romantic. It has an exciting and origi-

nal plot, with just a hint of dramatic turns throughout the story. What can be better than a movie about making movies, beautiful sets, and intrigues behind the scenes?

The story starts when Whitlock (George Clooney), a famous actor, disappears right before the filming of his final scenes for the movie "Hail, Caesar!," where he plays the main character. Eddie Mannix (Josh Brolin) is assigned to get him back before the studio loses a lot of money.

Although the comedy makes the whole audience laugh out loud time and time again, the cinematography is what made me fall in love with the film. The Coen brothers, who directed the film, execute mastery with every shot, from aerial to 360-degree views. Each one looks so carefully planned, making it perfect for the scene and simply breathtaking. The acting also excels with mega stars including Clooney, Brolin, Scarlett Johansson, and Channing Tatum. They play their parts as if they are — and always have been — that person.



My favorite scene is when we first see Johansson. She is doing a majestic and beautiful swimming routine in which she and other actors perform an extravagant number. What I really love about this shot is the camera angles showing everything from the side to the top, showing the scene in a very unexpected and wonderful way. The scene is peaceful and enjoyable and then ends with an

abrupt, unexpected joke.

The comedy is somewhat mature, so I recommend it for kids ages 13 to 18. I give it five out of five stars for its excellent humor, beautiful camera shots, and an exciting, yet fresh story. This film is in theaters now, so check it out!

— Gerry O., age 13

See his video review at: Video review: <https://youtu.be/pFk7wnpUHps>

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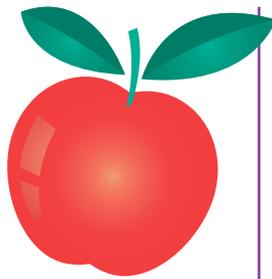
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Ways to acquire keyboarding skills

DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Dear teacher,

Our private school is giving no instruction in keyboarding. Children are expected to pick up this vital skill during the summer by using one of the many keyboarding programs that are available online. My children in third and fourth grade made little progress last summer. How can I help them?

Dear parent,

As we all know, children spend a lot of time on the computer. What we really want is for them to learn to keyboard before they develop their own hunt-and-peck system.

There are a great number of keyboarding programs that are free online. Many include games that can motivate children to learn to keyboard. You can use a search engine to investigate these programs and choose one that offers a sound educational approach. Then, to ensure that your children learn to keyboard, plan to set aside a certain time each day in which they concentrate on learning keyboarding skills.

Do not expect your young children to become expert at keyboarding overnight. Remember how long it took you to learn to type.

How soon children need to become

proficient at keyboarding depends greatly on their individual schools. Why don't you have your children's teachers spell out exactly what skills they will need to have now and next year? You can get a general idea of the computer skills children need at each level in grades kindergarten through eighth by visiting the website www.hw21summit.com and looking for "The New Proposed pre-K-8 Written-Language Production Standard." This list was developed in 2012 by educators and researchers at an Educational Summit in Handwriting in the 21st Century.

Helping a middle-schooler get writing skills

Dear teacher,

My middle-schooler son is a terrible writer. With all of today's technology, is it really important for him to become a good writer when he is able to express himself so well orally?

Dear parent,

Even today it remains necessary to express one's thoughts in writing. For example, think of the importance of e-mail in so many professional fields and the need to write memos, reports, and instructions.

Unfortunately, for most children, writing is the weakest skill of the traditional three Rs. This is not good news, because with each year in school, children's skill in putting words down on paper plays a larger role in the grades they receive.

Since you say that your son expresses himself well orally, have him try using a computer program that turns speech into writing. First, he needs to think of what he wants to say. After he has finished, he can then edit his work.

"Practice makes perfect" holds true in becoming a good writer. The more your son writes, the better writer he will become. This summer, have him write 100 words every day at the same time in a journal for practice. Because reading and writing are

tied closely together, do encourage him to become an avid reader.

Simple ways to improve math grades

Dear teacher,

While my children do all right in math in elementary school, they usually get just Bs. Do you have some tips that might help them get As.

Dear parent,

What you do to sharpen your children's math skills will depend on their age. Since your children are receiving good grades, slight tweaks could result in even better grades.

Our No. 1 suggestion for helping children in elementary school is for them to neaten up their work if it is sloppy. Young children may need to work on the correct formation of numbers, while older students should make sure the numbers in problems are properly aligned. It also helps at this level to make manipulatives to use at home to reinforce basic concepts and to sing the basic math facts to make recalling them easier. In addition, there are a great number of websites that let children drill on the basic facts if that is part of the basic problem.

Students in middle school may find it easier to solve word problems if they use smaller numbers in place of the actual numbers in a problem. It also helps if they underline the key facts in a problem and cross out unnecessary ones. They should also circle the question that they need to answer. Sometimes, drawing a picture can help in solving problems.

There is an old adage that math teachers use: The more problems you do, the better you will become at doing them. Try this approach. If only the odd problems are assigned, ask your children to also do the even ones.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask them on the columnists' website at www.dearteacher.com. © Compass Syndicate Corporation, 2016.

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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.



Is mandatory mediation a good idea?

The Jerusalem Post recently published a piece entitled, “Mediation and the law: The advantages of mediation are manifest.”

Why should we be interested in another country’s mediation matters? Because the major question raised is as valid for New Yorkers as it is for Israelis.

The piece begins:

“A law has been passed in Israel that will ... require couples to try mediation before they can obtain their divorce through the courts.”

In the United States, a requirement to engage in mediation is often referred to as mandatory mediation. Numerous states have such laws when it comes to divorce-related issues such as those involving “custody-visitation.” New York is not one of them.

The author explains the definition of mediation: “Mediation is a form of resolving disputes by using a neutral third party to try to help the parties to come to a resolution, which has to be voluntarily agreed upon. Within this wide definition there are many forms.”

Should mediation be mandatory in

New York? Obviously, opinions vary. Many, though by no means all, New York mediators are in favor. I am not.

What I am in favor of is clients having all the necessary information so that they can make their own informed decisions. Rather than forcing them to try mediation (which is often touted as voluntary) for two or more sessions, they might be asked to participate in a free informational session, in person or online, say for 90 minutes.

Does that sound burdensome? Maybe it is. But consider that if you have divorce papers served on your spouse, or vice versa, you are going to court — maybe many times.

In such a session, you would learn about the different ways to divorce:

Mediation. How the process works; advantages; monetary costs; time to complete; who is likely to benefit and who is not a good candidate; impact on children; experts who might be helpful, and what the role of each would be; the legal steps that follow mediation; what the probable effect will be on future communication between you and your spouse/ex.

Collaborative divorce. I’ll leave

you to read my previous articles on this subject, available on nyparenting.com.

Litigation. What happens in court? How long might the process take? Costs? When might social services get involved, and what are the possible consequences? What does a “lawyer for the child” do? A forensic psychologist? What are depositions? What impact does conflict have on children? How well can you expect to communicate with your ex after the divorce?

Do you think you already know what you should about litigation? From what so many people who have gone to court have shared with me, I have to think that many of you don’t.

So, in my humble opinion, everyone going through divorce should have this information, provided in an unbiased manner, before going through one of the most difficult experiences that most of us will ever face. Then you would be better able to decide how to go forward.

An enormous number of people in New York do not know what mediation, collaborative divorce, or even litigation really entails. That might be different if trial attorneys explained the alternatives to litigation to potential clients; but many don’t.

Which process should you avail yourself of? With information and time to consider, you can figure it out. Litigators shouldn’t make your decision for you by withholding or distorting what mediation is. Similarly, the government shouldn’t require mediation.

Will New York pass a law requiring mediation anytime soon? Probably not. Unlike in Israel, where “even the most hardened litigators are not often averse to [mediation],” many New York litigators are.

This is a big reason why even a much more modest plan to ensure that you are better informed about your options won’t become law 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.



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN



A diploma in patience

My son and I are waiting on his high school acceptance letter

I've been waiting for March. It's something I never usually do, as March is typically a pretty low-key month, but this year, my son will get his high school decision from the Department Of Education any day now. Any parent who has navigated the overcrowded city school system can relate. It starts somewhere around the time your child is 2, as you scramble for pre-K options, and it ends at college graduation (unless your daughter tells you she is going for her master's!).

My kids have all attended Catholic schools in Brooklyn. With a five-year age range between each of them and a few moves in between, they have attended three different grammar schools collectively. When we bought our house seven years ago, we were incredibly lucky to find the school my son is graduating from in June; it has proved to be the best school I have ever known, and I'm really going to miss it.

While my girls both attended Catholic high schools, my son is considering public for his secondary journey, and I'm excited. After a horrendous experience with one of my daughter's schools, we learned the

hard way that just because a school claims to be academically rigorous, close-knit, and caring, the very opposite can be true.

Back in September, my son came home wide-eyed with books filled with high school options, and papers with dates for the Catholic High Schools exam, scholarship tests, application deadlines, teacher recommendations, student essays, and a never-ending list of individual programs and activities at each school. It was a whirlwind to say the least. He and his classmates kept up their regular studies alongside a non-stop slew of weekend classes, tests, and preparations.

The private school acceptances came back in January and on that front, my son is torn from having to choose between two renowned schools: Xaverian in Brooklyn and Xavier in Manhattan. Here is the catch: He really wants to go to public school and the Catholic schools require a large registration sum "to secure your child's spot" weeks before the Board of Education announces high school placements. Of course, most parents pay the fee, because if you don't, your child could very well

end up being assigned to a public school that 1.) He did not choose and 2.) You would never want them to go to ... ever. Those are called second-round schools, which you apparently enter if you don't get into any of your first-round choices.

Contrary to popular opinion, public school admissions are much more competitive than private. For example, if your child is a good student with a decent record and does well on the Catholic schools admission test, she will most likely be admitted into her desired Catholic high schools. On the other hand, the public school programs are overcrowded and the competition is steep.

The program that my son wants to enroll in required an audition on top of the application. We waited for four hours one Sunday afternoon, the last weekend, in fact, after many prior weekends of auditions held at the school which determined who would audition according to his last name. Students from every borough waited along with us. So while hundreds of kids auditioned that month, there are just 53 spots in that program.

I'm glad my son has chosen to explore every available option, and I am trying to convince him (and myself) that no matter what happens, it will be okay. I really do believe that life falls into place exactly as it should. He is my last child embarking on his teen years, and I've learned to not take every single test, achievement, or even lack thereof, so seriously. I wish I had this view years ago when my first daughter was starting pre-K. Back then, I was preoccupied with always choosing the right school, the right amount of studying, the right project, and not stopping to realize that there are various avenues of getting to the same place.

My kids have all gone to different schools, had different experiences, and yet still ended up engaged and thriving young people. It's all I can ask for, and I remind myself of this when I feel uneasiness about not yet knowing which school my son will attend in September. So while we still do wait anxiously for the mail to arrive, I try to remember that come September, he will be exactly where he should be.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find Sullivan on her blog, Some Puppy To Love.

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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

An honestly good read

“Lizzie and the Lost Baby,” the new book by Cheryl Blackford, takes a good look at the old adage, “Honesty is the best policy.”

With the threat of German bombs looming across England, the children in Hull were sent to the countryside to live with strangers, whether they wanted it or not. And Lizzie didn’t want it.

And so it was that 10-year-old Lizzie and 7-year-old Peter were sent to Swaindale to live with a policeman named Fred Arbutnot; his wife, Madge; and Madge’s dotty sister, Elsie.

The English countryside was nice. Peter found someone to play with nearby, and the scenery was lovely. There were cows and sheep, green grass, and things to do. Madge only asked that the children be prompt for lunchtime and not upset Elsie — both of which were very easy to do, until Lizzie found the baby.

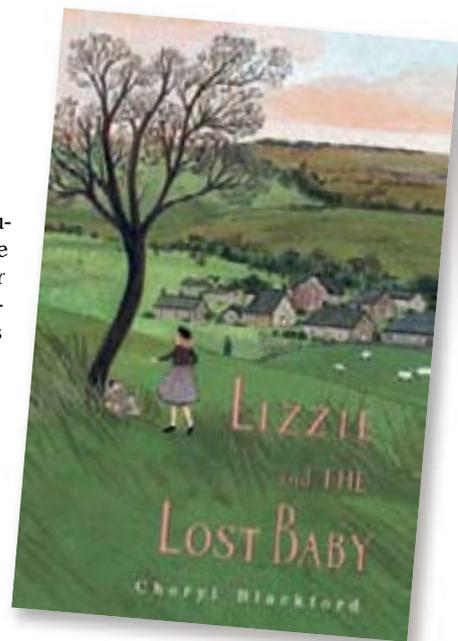
She was laying on a dirty quilt on the grass, a little cherub with black curly hair, crying and all alone. Lizzie couldn’t imagine why anybody would abandon a baby like

that — especially one as beautiful as the one she found. She hoped Madge would help her find the baby’s mother but, instead, Elsie took the baby as her own!

Lizzie knew something wasn’t right, especially when she heard that a nearby Gypsy camp was looking for a missing baby. The baby’s brother, Elijah, thought Lizzie might know something, but the adults in Swaindale told her to keep quiet.

The local magistrate said Elsie could keep the baby. Mummy said the truth was always best. What was Lizzie to do?

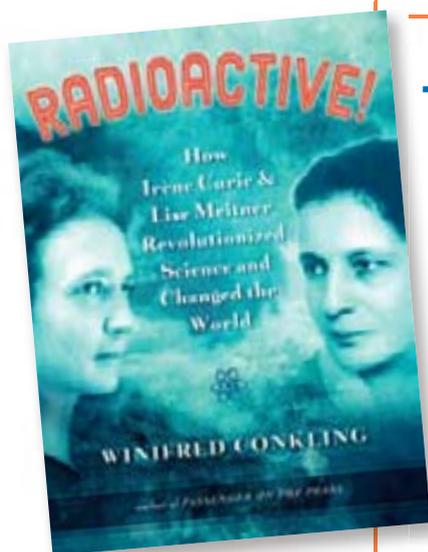
Set during World War II, at a time when drastic measures were taken as needed, this story starts out with something to capture a kids’ imagination: Lizzie and her brother are sent far away from home. Although they’re safe in a lovely, bucolic place, it’s scary nonetheless, but author Blackford doesn’t let her characters linger on it; Lizzie is brave, wise, and responsible from the story’s be-



ginning. Because he is a catalyst for Lizzie’s character, Blackford also gives Elijah a great storyline, too, which is likewise a fine lesson on tolerance for cultures that aren’t familiar to young readers.

Put them together and you’ve got a well-done, delightfully story that can be read independently or aloud. “Lizzie and the Lost Baby” is a book your your tween will honestly enjoy.

“Lizzie and the Lost Baby,” by Cheryl Blackford [181 pages, 2016, \$16.99].



A story of brilliant women

Every day, when adults go to work, they expect to be there for certain hours.

But as in the new book “Radioactive!” by Winifred Conkling, they probably never expect their work to lead to a cataclysm.

Perhaps because she was born to a dedicated pair of scientists, Irène Curie was fascinated by the things that happened in a laboratory. Her father Pierre and her mother Marie were credited with discovering natural radioactivity and boosting the understanding of atomic physics; Irène, an odd and socially backward child, grew up wanting to be a part of their work. Indeed, she later took her place at her mother’s side, first in the lab and then on the battlefield: At just 17 years old, Irène taught doctors how to use mobile X-ray machines during World War I.

Irène met her future husband Frédéric Joliot at the Radium Institute at the University of Paris. Soon, her pas-

sion became his and the two ultimately “earned a reputation as a powerful research team,” and for their discovery of artificial radiation. In 1935, they shared a Nobel Prize in chemistry.

Their rival, Lise Meitner, didn’t have the same opportunities because she came of age at the turn of the century in Vienna, where she had to practically beg for schooling. Once educated, she had a hard time finding work as a physicist. Even after she landed a job, she had to relinquish it to flee the Nazis at the beginning of World War II. Working secretly through letters to an old colleague stuck in Germany, Lise eventually figured out something that had the Joliot-Curies baffled.

When Albert Einstein heard of the work the Joliot-Curies and Meitner were doing, he understood that their discoveries in radioactivity and nuclear fission could be “used to create an atomic bomb.” He knew that President Franklin Roosevelt would want to know it, too, and that the U.S.

didn’t have time to waste.

As an adult who is not a physicist, I struggled mightily with some of what’s inside “Radioactive!” There’s a heap of heavy-duty science here and author Conkling does an admirable job in trying to keep it all teen-friendly, but there’s still quite a bit to chew if you’re in the target audience of 12- to-14-years-old.

And yet, I liked what I read. Conkling offers science, but the stories of heroics and determination that drove Curie and Meitner are what make this book truly enjoyable. These women, both immersed in a male-dominated world, simply would not be deterred from their passions — and what Meitner endured is absolutely astonishing.

While any kid can try tackling this book, I think those who are science-minded will get the most out of it. For them, “Radioactive!” will be inspiring, action-packed, and likeable.

“Radioactive!,” by Winifred Conkling [240 pages, 2016, \$17.95].

Terri Schlichenmeyer never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill with two dogs and 12,000 books.



PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA



In search of zzz's

Dear Sharon,

Do you have any tips to give a parent who is not getting any sleep? My 5-year-old son is waking up every night and coming into bed with us. We've tried many things to put an end to this, but nothing we've done seems to work. My husband is not handling it well either.

Dear parents,

I believe that it is vital for parents to get as much sleep as possible. Parenting is complicated enough without adding exhaustion to the mix. Here are some of the possible solutions moms and dads I have met with have instituted to address this common dilemma.

Some parents with big enough bedrooms put a mat or small mattress in their rooms. This gives their child a chance to be near them without crowding their limited space. They feel that when their child is 7 or 8 years old, the tendencies to look to parents for middle-of-the-night reassurance naturally change (in most cases this is true). They also believe that it can be a bit lonely for a child to sleep alone, and as long as Mom

and Dad's sleep is not drastically interrupted, they are OK with this temporary solution.

Others decide to go into their young one's room when he can't sleep, as it is sometimes manageable to head back to bed when a child has fallen asleep. Some moms and dads in this group get large beds or a separate place to rest in their child's room. This solution can also mean that a child's sleep patterns are less interrupted and can eventually lead to sleeping through the night. Of course, it also can end up with parents sleeping separately for part of the evening.

Naturally, there are parents who do neither and expect that their child stop the habit; letting him "cry it out." As you suggested in your question, this can be easier said than done. The level of a 5-year-old's upset as well as parents' tolerance can vary greatly.

Whatever you choose, here are some important things to keep in mind before instituting any change.

When helping a child alter a disruptive behavior it can help to discuss the transition outside the moment. In this case, that means talking about sleep patterns during the day in a relaxed setting. Calmly explain why everyone needs sleep at night and make sure to take time to listen to your child's point of view. Even if he is upset, listening to what

everyone has to say can help him think things through.

Often, asking a child to help his own ways to help make the change can help. When involved in the process, children can surprise you by cooperating more fully with a challenging change.

Setting up a rewards system can also help. I suggest offering the agreed upon "prize" on a daily basis at first, possibly presenting something even more special after a few days of success (a week can be a long time for a 5-year-old to wait). Stickers on a rewards chart can work for some families, but sometimes, a tangible present can provide more incentive. Ultimately, the real reward is a restful night for everyone.

Moms and dads also need to stay calm when explaining and instituting the change using as few words as possible to express their position. If a child forgets at night, it is especially important to be calm and brief; animated conversations take time and completely wake everyone — only making a bad situation worse.

Your question is common, but the answer is not always easy to find. If none of these ideas fit your family, it might be good to consult a professional who could hear more specifics and tailor solutions to match your particular needs.

My best wishes for a restful night's sleep soon.

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

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

Calendar

MARCH



Photo by Elizabeth Graham

When Irish eyes are smiling

Don your green, paint shamrocks on your cheeks, and get ready for an Irish fest in Brooklyn on March 20.

There are two great ways to celebrate the Emerald Isle in the Borough of Kings! Two parades will take place on March 20 in Bay Ridge and Park Slope.

Revelers in Park Slope can start the day with a mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church at 245 Prospect Park West at 9 am. After the mass, pay tribute during a re-dedication ceremony of the 9-11 victims

memorial. Then, the parade begins as marchers wind their way from 15th Street and Prospect Park West down Seventh Avenue, Garfield Place, and then back up to the reviewing stand at Bartel-Pritchard Circle, at Prospect Park West and 14th Street. This year's Grand Marshall is Mary Hogan, the national president of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Park Slope St. Patrick's Day Parade (kicks off at 15th Street and Prospect Park West) March 20, 1 pm. Free.

Irish eyes in the Ridge can start

off the day at mass held at St. Patrick's Church at 9511 Fourth Ave. and 94th Street at 9:30 am. Parade marchers will step off from Marine and Third avenues at 1 pm. For children, volunteers will be on hand to paint a shamrock or two upon their faces at 1 pm. The parade makes its way up Third Avenue and ends at the reviewing stand on 77th Street and Third Avenue.

Bay Ridge St. Patrick's Day Parade (Marine and Third avenues) March 20, 1 pm. Free.

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!

FRI, MARCH 4

IN BROOKLYN

Autism Night: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (508) 230-3789; www.brooklynkids.org; 5:30 pm – 8 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 hands-on exhibits in a less overwhelming atmosphere. This program is free but pre-registration is required.

SAT, MARCH 5

IN BROOKLYN

"Shaun the Sheep": Industry City Factory Floor, 241 37th St. between Second and Third avenues; (718) 417-7362; info@rooftopfilms.com; rooftopfilms.com; 10 am; Free with RSVP.

Sunset Park Cinema Club presents the stop-motion film. With family activities at 10:30 am, film at 11:45 am.

BAMkids Music Series: Chargaux: BAM Cafe, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street; www.bam.org/programs/bamcafe-live; 10:30 am and 2 pm; \$10.

Charly and Margaux, popularly known as Chargaux, are a Brooklyn-based art collective and string duo that breathe new life into the violin and viola.

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

New York City is home to an amazing abundance of wildlife. Rangers will guide you to the best wildlife-viewing spots in the urban jungle. One reason squirrels are so commonly found in city parks is due to their amazing ability to adapt. Enjoy observing squirrel behavior and learn some interesting facts about



Legendary good time

Come one, come all to the biggest big top in town — Ringling Bros. and Barnum and Bailey's "Legends" is at Barclays Center now through March 6.

Be prepared to be amazed by death-defying acrobats, skilled aerialists, jugglers, high wire thrilling performances, trapeze artists, and entertainment galore to razzle and dazzle every

age.

"Legends" from Feb. 25 to March 6. Tuesdays 10:30 am and 7 pm; Wednesdays to Fridays 7 pm; Saturdays 11 am, 3 pm, and 7 pm; and Sundays, 11 am, 3 pm, and 7 pm. Tickets begin at \$21.

Barclays Center [620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street in Prospect Heights, (917) 618-6100; www.barclayscenter.com].

this "nutty" mammal.

"Romeo and Juliet / Carmen Suite": Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. between Amersfort and Kenilworth places; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 8 pm; \$36.

The power of love and the finality of death collide as two tragic mas-

terpieces are reinvented in this double-bill of one-act ballets. Includes "Romeo and Juliet" set to the music of Tchaikovsky and "Carmen Suite."

FURTHER AFIELD

Operation slumber!: Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 at W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 6 pm to 8 am;

\$120 (\$99 museum members).

Spend the night aboard the Intrepid, it's the ultimate in sleepover fun. There will be educational activities, a visit inside the Space Shuttle Pavilion, a flashlight tour of the flight deck, a scavenger hunt, a ride in a flight simulator, and meals (dinner, snacks and breakfast). Kids also receive a goodie bag with a T-shirt! It's perfect for children 8 to 12 years old. Individual cots provided. Bring your sleeping bag!

SUN, MARCH 6

IN BROOKLYN

Origami academy: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; 10 am to noon; Free with admission to the gardens.

Join the paper-folding pros and learn how to craft tiny animals and flowers (ages 7 and up). Classes begin every half hour. Led by Taro's Origami Studio.

Lego workshop: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; 10 am to noon; Free with admission to the gardens.

Use Lego blocks to build BBG's renowned Cherry Esplanade in miniature form (ages 4 and up). Led by Eleanor Rodgers, Kensington Lego Class.

Special day: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 10 am to noon; Free.

The museum invites families with children with special needs to enjoy the museum before we open to the public! Explore the historic train cars, walk through turnstiles, and drive buses! Put on a hard hat and a vest in our ticket booth for a photo op. Create your own subway themed art and much more! Registration is required.

"Powerful Figures": Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; 11 am and 1 pm; \$10 per family of four.

Children ages 4 to 7 and their caregivers explore the galleries, enjoy a team activity, and make their own art in each 90-minute "Arty Facts" class.

Art of Hamantaschen: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718)

Continued on page 64

Continued from page 63

907-8833; www.jcm.museum;
Noon, 1 pm and 2 pm; \$13 (\$10
children).

Join in the Purim spirit as we
shape, fill, and create delicious
Hamantaschen!

Treasure hunt: Jewish Children's
Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at
Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833;
www.jcm.museum; 1:30 pm; \$13
(\$10 children).

Help King Achashveirosh find his
missing signet ring by answering
clues hidden on the exhibit floors.

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. Must bring own mat.

The Beauty of Ballet: Brooklyn
Center for the Performing Arts at
Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd.
between Amersfort and Kenilworth
places; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenteronline.org; 2 pm; Free.

The lecture demonstration is pre-
sented by the School of American
Ballet, and is a 45-minute, family-
friendly production that illustrates
how students develop into accom-
plished classical ballet dancers, alter-
nating examples of advanced class-
room training exercises with the per-
formance of excerpts from notable
ballets.

**TUES, MARCH 8
IN BROOKLYN**

Bug Out: Brooklyn Children's Mu-
seum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks
Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3:30 pm to 4:30
pm; Free with museum admission.

Meet some friendly critters from



Courtesy: Feld Entertainment

Disney comes to Flatbush Avenue

Open the door to Mickey and
Minnie's live show at the Kings
Theatre for three fabulous perfor-
mances on March 25, 26, and 27.

"Mickey and Minnie's Doorway
to Magic" is presented by Stony-
field Yokids Organic Yogurt and
features all the music and unfor-
gettable moments of your favorite
Disney adventures. Join Mickey
Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald,
Goofy, and 25 of your favorite char-

acters as they surprise and delight
every visitor. See the Fairy God-
mother transform Cinderella's rags
into a beautiful ball gown in a split
second; the "Toy Story" gang defy
the dimensions of Andy's toy box
with the help of the green army
men; and the spectacular stage
debut of Rapunzel and Flynn Rider
as they rise into the sky amidst
the floating lanterns. With special
appearances by Snow White, Tin-

ker Bell, and Aladdin's Genie, you
never know what to expect or who
might join in the fun.

"Mickey and Minnie's Doorway
to Magic," March 25, 1 pm and
7pm; March 26, 11 am, 3 pm and
7 pm; and March 27 at 1 pm and 5
pm. Tickets are \$25.

*Kings Theatre (1027 Flatbush Ave.
between Beverly Road and Tilden
Avenue in Flatbush; www.kingstheatre.com).*

the museum's living collection.

**THURS, MARCH 10
IN BROOKLYN**

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar": PowerHouse Arena, 37 Main
St. at Water Street; (718) 666-3049;
www.powerhousearena.com; 4:30
pm to 5:40 pm; Free.

Children list to a reading of Eric
Carle's book, as well as enjoy a visit
from the puppets from the live show
"Eric Carle." RSVP requested.

**SAT, MARCH 12
IN BROOKLYN**

Outdoor workshop: Canar-
sie Park House, E. 88th Street and

Seaview Avenue; (718) 421-2021;
www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm to 2:30
pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers teach you the
tips and tricks that enhance your
knowledge of the natural world, and
might just save your life. Recom-
mended for ages 8 years and older.

FURTHER AFIELD

**Girls in Science & Engineer-
ing Day:** Intrepid Sea Air and Space
Museum, Pier 86 at W. 46th Street
and 12th Avenue, Manhattan; (212)
245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free with mu-
seum admission.

Celebrate science, technology, en-
gineering and math at the Intrepid
Museum's fourth annual Girls in Sci-
ence and Engineering Day. Enjoy
hands-on experiences, exciting dem-
onstrations and creative discussions
offered by various science-based or-
ganizations, clubs and colleges.

**SUN, MARCH 13
IN BROOKLYN**

"Powerful Figures": 11 am and 1
pm. Brooklyn Museum. See Sunday,
March 6.

Hear 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'

Visit the puppet cast of the
live show "Eric Carle" and lis-
ten to the story of "The Very
Hungry Caterpillar" at Power-
House Arena on March 10.

Eric Carle's classic story be-
gins one sunny Sunday, when
the caterpillar was hatched out
of a tiny egg. He was very hun-
gry. On Monday, he ate through
one apple; on Tuesday, he ate
through three plums — and still
he was hungry.

Strikingly bold, colorful pictures



and a simple text in large,
clear type tell the story of a hun-

gry little caterpillar's progress
through an amazing variety and
quantity of foods. Full at last, he
made a cocoon around himself
and went to sleep, to wake up
a few weeks later wonderfully
transformed into a butterfly!

"The Very Hungry Caterpillar,"
March 10, at 4:30 pm. Free.
RSVP requested.

*PowerHouse Arena [37 Main
St. at Water Street in Dumbo;
(718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com]*

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

Art of Hamantaschen: Noon, 1 pm and 2 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Sunday, March 6.

Treasure hunt: 1:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Sunday, March 6.

"Room on the Broom": On Stage at Kingsborough, 2001 Oriental Blvd. at Oxford Street; (718) 368-5596; www.onstageatkingsborough.org; 2 pm; \$12.

Children 4 years and older will enjoy this musical adaptation of the best-selling book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. Learn how the cat purred and how the witch grinned, as they sat on the broomstick and flew through the wind.

TUES, MARCH 15

IN BROOKLYN

Bug Out: 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, March 8.

THURS, MARCH 17

FURTHER AFIELD

St. Patrick's Day Parade: Kick off, 44th Street and Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; 11 am to 5 pm; Free.

New York's oldest tradition of celebrating everything Irish is celebrated with a grand parade kicking off at 44th Street and working its way up Fifth Avenue, passing St. Patrick's Cathedral and ending on 79th Street.

SAT, MARCH 19

IN BROOKLYN

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

Celebrate the whole Megillah with fun, cultural traditions of Purim including making masks and a screening of "Be Happy it's Purim."

Easter egg hunt: Marine Park, Fillmore Avenue and Madison Place; (718) 238-6044; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Hosted by state Sen. Marty Golden, the annual event features games, music, activities, prizes, an Easter bonnet contest, and an opportunity to snap a shot with the Easter Bunny.

Astronomy workshop: Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; 7 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

The Urban Park Rangers take you on a tour of the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folk-



Photo by Arthur De Gaeta

Celebrate Purim at the Museum

The Brooklyn Children's Museum is dressing up for Purim for a two-day festival on March 19 and 20.

Celebrate the whole Megillah with

fun, cultural traditions of Purim, including making masks and a screening of "Be Happy it's Purim."

Purim Celebration, March 19 and 20 from 10 am to 2:30 pm; free

with museum admission.

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

lore of the universe.

SUN, MARCH 20

IN BROOKLYN

St. Patrick's Day Parade: Holy Name of Jesus Church, 245 Prospect Park West; 9 am; Free.

The 41st annual event kicks off with a pre-parade mass at Holy Name of Jesus Church, and then steps off with a re-dedication ceremony to the heroes and victims of 9-11 memorial, followed by a march up 15th Street and Prospect Park West, down to Seventh Avenue, Garfield Place and then back up Prospect Park West to the viewing stand at Bartel Pritchard Circle. This year's grand marshal is Mary Hogan, national president of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians.

St. Patrick's Day Parade: St. Patrick's Church, 9511 Fourth Ave. and

94th Street; 9:30 am; Free.

Bay Ridge residents celebrate with a mass at 9:30 am at St. Patrick's Church, parade from Marine Avenue and Third Avenue kicking off at 1 pm, and winding its way along Third Avenue to the reviewing stand on 77th Street. VOLLIES will be on hand offering facepainting shamrocks for children at 1 pm.

Purim celebration: 10 am to 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, March 19.

"Powerful Figures": 11 am and 1 pm. Brooklyn Museum. See Sunday, March 6.

Orienteering workshop: Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Noon to 1:30 pm; Free.

Participants will use provided maps

and compasses to locate hidden markers in the park. The program goal is not only to teach navigational skills, but also to inspire a sense of adventure and self-awareness in unfamiliar terrain. Participants chosen by lottery. Register on website.

MON, MARCH 21

IN BROOKLYN

Art of Hamantaschen: Noon, 1 pm and 2 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Sunday, March 6.

Treasure hunt: 1:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Sunday, March 6.

TUES, MARCH 22

IN BROOKLYN

Bug Out: 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm.

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Calendar

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

Continued from page 65

Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, March 8.

FRI, MARCH 25

IN BROOKLYN

"Disney Live! Mickey and Minnie's Doorway to Magic": Kings Theatre, 1027 Flatbush Ave. between Beverly Road and Tilden Avenue; www.kingstheatre.com; 1 pm and 7 pm; \$25.

Join Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald and Goofy as 25 of your favorite characters surprise and delight every visitor. See the Fairy Godmother transform Cinderella's rags into a beautiful ball gown in a split second; the "Toy Story" gang defy the dimensions of Andy's toy box with the help of the green Army men; and the spectacular stage debut of Rapunzel and Flynn Rider as they rise into the sky amidst the floating lanterns.

SAT, MARCH 26

IN BROOKLYN

Easter celebration: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

This two-day long celebration uses Brooklyn Children's Museum's permanent collection to explore Easter symbols and icons. Make egg prints on Saturday and make egg tunes on Sunday, when science and art meet.

"Disney Live! Mickey and Minnie's Doorway to Magic": 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm. Kings Theatre. See Friday, March 25.

Easter egg hunt: Shore Road Park in Bay Ridge, Shore Road and 79th Street; (718) 238-6044; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Hosted by state Sen. Marty Golden, the annual event features games, music, activities, prizes, an Easter bonnet contest and an opportunity to snap a shot with the Easter Bunny.

Dance Festival: BAM Fisher, 321 Ashland Pl. between Hansen Place and Lafayette Avenue; www.bam.org/visit/buildings/bam-fisher; 2 pm and 8 pm; \$48.

The 25th annual event features the talents of more than 300 dancers and 30 companies.

SUN, MARCH 27

IN BROOKLYN

Easter celebration: 10 am to 5



Photo by Steve Solomonson

Meet the Easter Bunny

Don your Easter bonnet with all the frills upon it.

Children celebrate the holiday with a fun egg hunt, a visit with the Easter Bunny, games, activities, and a contest to see just who has the best Easter bonnet ever! The Easter fun is sponsored by state Sen. Marty Golden (R-Bay Ridge).

pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, March 26.

"Powerful Figures": 11 am and 1 pm. Brooklyn Museum. See Sunday, March 6.

"Disney Live! Mickey and Minnie's Doorway to Magic": 1 pm and 5 pm. Kings Theatre. See Friday, March 25.

Marine Park on March 19 and Bay Ridge on March 26. Both events take place from 2 to 4 pm and are free.

Easter egg hunts in Marine Park and Bay Ridge [Fillmore Avenue and Madison Place in Marine Park; Shore Road and 79th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 238-6044].

TUES, MARCH 29

IN BROOKLYN

Bug Out: 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, March 8.

LONG-RUNNING

IN BROOKLYN

Greenpoint Y Early Childhood Center: Greenpoint YMCA Early

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

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.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's "Legends": Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street; (917) 618-6100; www.barclayscenter.com; Tuesdays, 10:30 am and 7 pm, Wednesdays - Fridays, 7 pm, Saturdays, 11 am, 3 pm, and 7 pm, Sundays, 11 am, 3 pm and 7 pm, Now - Sun, March 6; Tickets start at \$21.

The circus is coming to town. Prepare to be amazed as the world's most skilled circus masters entertain and dazzle with acrobatics, animal tricks, and high-wire thrills.

Teen pass: Red Hook Recreation Center, 155 Bay St. between Otsego and Court streets; www.nycgov-parks.org; Weekdays, 3 pm and 6 pm, Now - Fri, June 17; 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 through eighth graders.

Totally Tots art studio: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am, Wed, March 2 - Thurs, March 31; Free with museum admission.

Children lead the way in this sensory paradise of materials. They are invited to build and refine their fine motor skills; learn about colors, and learn how to share with others in this open art studio. There is no such thing as a bad mess in this space, which is tailored to children 5 and younger.

Touch Tank: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Wed, March 2 - Wed, March 30; Free with museum admission.

Kids all ages can meet and touch real, live sea creatures like starfish and sea urchins.

Block lab & studio: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Thursdays

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

– Sundays, 10 am to 1 pm, Thurs, March 3 – Thurs, March 31; Free with museum admission.

Visitors explore the many facets of what it means to live with others and contribute to the communities they call home. In the new second floor studio, which focuses on art and architecture, artist James Paulius's Sky Village installation invites visitors to use their building skills by creating communities in the sky with wood blocks and pegs. Early engineering skills are also honed in this space through open block play with large Imagination Playground blocks and table top sized Kapla Planks and Magnatiles.

"A Sock's Fables": Triskelion Arts, 106 Calyer St. between Banker Street and Clifford Place; (718) 389-3473; info@triskelionarts.org; www.triskelionarts.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 10:30am, Now – Sun, March 13; \$15.

A fun-filled, 45-minute sock puppet show for kids, based on Aesop's fables. With a puppet-making workshop after the show.

Family Day: Brooklyn Historical 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 3 to 7 years old.

"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).

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 2 pm and 3 to 4 pm; Free.

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

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;

Photo by Jaqi Medlock

Discover a world of dance at BAM

It's a singular dance sensation at BAM Fisher on March 26 when the 25th annual Dance Festival steps on stage.

The festival features the talented toe tappings of more than 300 dancers, 30 companies, and

the most sensational dance routines you will ever see.

Lace up those tap shoes and get ready to enjoy two performance of foot tapping, ballet leaping, and jazzy dance.

Dance Festival on March 26, two

shows at 2 pm and 8 pm. General admission tickets for each show are \$48.

BAM Fisher (321 Ashland Pl. between Hansen Place and Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene, www.bam.org/visit/buildings/bam-fisher)

lynmuseum.org; Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm, Now – Tues, May 31; Materials fee plus museum admission.

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

Craft Room: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm.museum; Sundays – Thursdays, Noon to 5 pm, Sun, March 6 – Thurs, March 31; Free with museum admission.

Get creative with a variety of materials and make a Jewish-themed project.

Free Family Day at Wyckoff Farmhouse: Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. at E. 59th Street; (718) 629-5400; 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

Gracie Mansion tours: Gracie Mansion in Carl Schurz Park, E. 88th Street and East End Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 676-3060; gracieinfo@cityhall.nyc.gov; www.on.nyc.gov/gracietour; Tuesdays, 10 am to 10:50 am, Now – Tues, April 12; Free.

Mayor DeBlasio and First Lady Chirlane McCray have introduced a new art installation, titled "Windows on the City: Looking Out at Gracie's New York." The installation consists of previously and newly acquired works, all from the original Gracie Mansion period, which have been curated to create a more historically accurate picture of life in New York City during the time of Gracie Mansion's construction. RSVP required. Photo ID required for entrance. No photography permitted in the interior. At the present time, tours are available in English only.

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.

"Shen Yun Dancers": The David Koch Theatre, 20 Lincoln Center Plaza, Manhattan; (800) 818-2393; Wednesday, March 2, 7:30 pm; Thursday, March 3, 7:30 pm; Friday, March 4, 7:30 pm; Saturday, March 5, 2:30 pm; Sunday, March 6, 1:30 pm; Wednesday, March 9, 7:30 pm; Thursday, March 10, 7:30 pm; Friday, March 11, 7:30 pm; Saturday, March 12, 2:30 pm; Sunday, March 13, 2:30 pm; \$80- \$300.

Dancers invite you to experience this divine culture of the Middle Kingdom. Shen Yun brings the profound spirit of this lost civilization to life on stage with unrivaled artistic mastery. Every dance movement, every musical note, makes this a stunning visual and emotional experience you won't find anywhere else. The performance is suitable for children 5 years of age and older. Run time is two hours, 15 minutes with intermission.

New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Fashion plate

This purple-and-white porcelain print dress from Cute Well-Dressed Kids will ensure she shines at the Easter Egg Hunt!

The woven cotton dress features a pattern inspired by Asian vases and ceramics, with lovely attention to details — such as the princess seams and solid cording at the waist. The gathered, full skirt has a whimsical purple chrysanthemum at the waist that echoes the blooms in the skirt's print.

This machine-washable dress is fully lined and has an invisible zipper on the back. (It's available in sizes 4 through 16, but it runs small in sizes 7–16, so you may want to order a size larger.)

The only missing accessory for this quintessential springtime frock is a deep basket to collect all of those candy-filled eggs!

Porcelain Print Dress, \$49.50, www.cwdkids.com.



Listen to your childhood

Canadian jazz vocalist Diana Panton has lent her considerable talent to interpreting classic children's songs — and other surprises — on her first children's album, "I Believe in Little Things." Dropping on March 18, this CD is a must-have gift for cranky babies and their jangled-nerve moms, teens studying French (who will be dazzled by "In A World of My Own" from the film "Alice in Wonderland," sung in that Romantic tongue and English), and everyone else! Panton's soft, sweet, soothing voice makes "Pure Imagination" — from the classic film

"Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" — a pure joy!

I always tear up when I hear Kermit the Frog sing "The Rainbow Connection," but I have a new appreciation for the heart-tugging tune now that I've enjoyed Panton's version. (For a sample of her soft, sweet sound, check out the precious animated video for the title song, composed by Joe Raposo, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUJOTVL5zJU>.)

In many ways, Panton's CD is like an audible walk down Memory Lane, reminding us of our favorite songs — and moments — from childhood, and it reminds my 9-year-old son "of the kind of soft music they play in cafes."

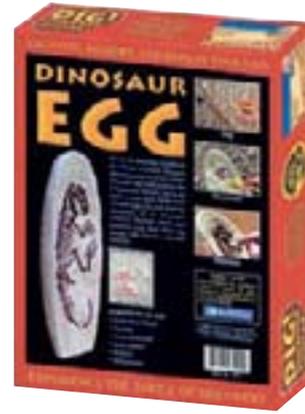
"I Believe in Little Things CD" by Diana Panton, \$15.99, www.amazon.com,



Egg-citing discovery

Not every Easter egg needs to be filled with candy. The Dig and Discover: Dinosaur Egg — which is actually a 10-inch-long dino egg replica — reveals a little t-rex skeleton as the child excavates, restores, and paints this fascinating faux fossil.

The kit, recommended for aspiring paleontologists ages 7 and



older, ignites the child's imagination with the idea that this tiny terror from the Cretaceous Period was discovered in China's Green Dragon Mountain.

The kit includes an excavation block, booklet, brushes, tool, and paints, so they can get to work revealing the little dinosaur.

Dig and Discover: Dinosaur Egg, \$29.95, www.museumtour.com.

Play with it again, kid

When a child opens a gift there is — all too often — a terrible moment when he comes to the realization, "It needs batteries." This kicks off the parent's dreaded hunt for the screwdrivers.

Of course, whatever tool is quickly found is usually wrong for the job. But we were delighted to find a solution to this dilemma at last month's North American International Toy Fair at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center in Manhattan.

The solution to your tool time woes: The Toydriver, a battery-

powered, handheld screwdriver that easily removes screws from most toys. The design made it easy to hold, control, and get to those screws that are recessed. With the Toydriver, we felt capable and empowered!

The mini power screwdriver has forward and reverse functions to tighten and loosen screws. (Genius!) And we are delighted that the included Philips and slotted magnetic screw bits are easily stored inside the screwdriver's base! The Toydriver does require 2 AAA batteries, but they're included, so that will save you (at least one) dreaded hunt for batteries!

Best of all, *its* battery compartment is screwless!

Toydriver, \$9.99, www.amazon.com.



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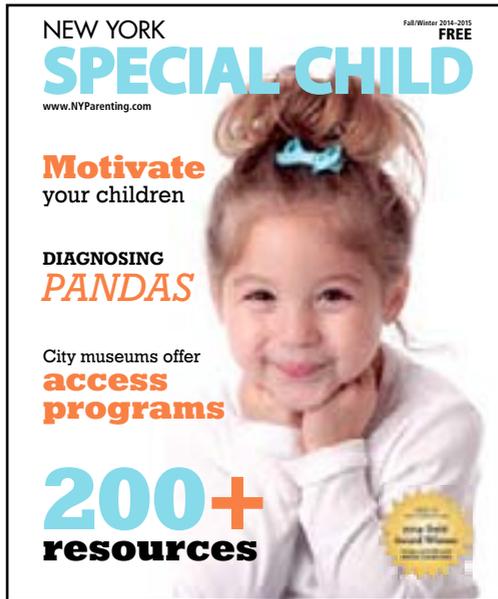
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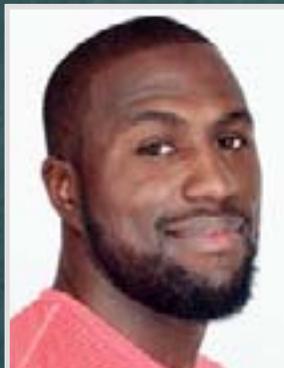
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