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FEATURES

- 6 Everyday Earth Day**
Getting your children involved in the earth's future is getting them involved in their own
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI
- 8 Time-outs vs. time-ins**
Tips for fostering effective and connective discipline
BY JUDY M. MILLER
- 10 Practice, practice, practice!**
Middle school musicians to perform at Carnegie Hall
BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON
- 12 Becoming yourself**
Assisting our children in finding their own way
BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN
- 16 Good old days**
As education changes, what we gain — and lose!
BY ALLISON PLITT
- 20 How does it feel?**
Teaching children the important skills of emotional intelligence
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI
- 24 Tech-free at camp!**
When kids unplug, they make lifelong connections
BY ASHLEY TALMADGE
- 42 From tears to cheers**
Father and daughter set a goal, and hang on until the very end
BY PATRICK HEMPFING

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- 26 Camp Choices Directory**
- 57 The Marketplace**

COLUMNS

- 14 Behavior & Beyond**
BY DR. MARCIE BEIGEL
- 18 Ask an Attorney**
BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.
- 36 Dear Dr. Karyn**
BY DR. KARYN GORDON
- 38 Family Health**
BY DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD
- 40 Healthy Living**
BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN
- 44 Dear Teacher**
BY PEGGY GISLER AND MARGE EBERTS
- 46 Teeth Tips**
BY DR. LAVANYA VENKATESWARAN
- 47 Good Sense Eating**
BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD
- 48 Divorce & Separation**
BY LEE CHABIN, ESQ.
- 49 Growing Up Online**
BY CAROLYN JABS
- 56 The Book Worm**
BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER
- 58 New & Noteworthy**
BY LISA J. CURTIS

CALENDAR

- 50 April Events**

CARTOON

- 41 Dabney and Son**



24



16



12



20

Spring is here

It seems that spring is finally here, although I'm never willing to bet that we won't have some final burst of winter in the form of either a series of cold days or a late snow fall. Too many times we've seen the blossoms burst forth on the trees and then a heavy wet snow come down and break all the branches and cut down the tulips. Hopefully, we'll dodge that bullet this year.

With the longer days and the warmer weather, the streets, parks, farmers' markets, stoop sales, and neighborhood celebrations are in high gear. With April being the month we celebrate Earth Day, make sure that your family gets into con-



now when there are so many bike lanes and rental bikes easily accessible in many areas of town.

And then there's the beaches. Personally, I love to visit the beach all year round. Each season has its own beatific offerings. Obviously, we still have to bundle up somewhat, but on a sunny day especially, the kids will love the beach at this time of year. It's a giant sand box and a great ball playing field. Also, the surfers are

tact with the natural wonders of this planet of ours. Visit your local botanic garden, take a walk along the waterways, visit a museum, shop at a flea market and get outdoors. Bicycle riding has always been popular, but never more in our city than

out there practically all year round and it's a great show to watch them "doing their thing."

Wonderful early spring vegetables are in season now, like artichokes (one of my favorites) and here's my favorite recipe for cooking them. (2-4 artichokes) This is Roman style and is a staple around Easter.

Clean your artichoke and then cut off the stem. Cut the top off and then trim the remaining leaves with a scissors to make them more manageable.

In a dutch oven or saucepot, saute three sliced garlic cloves in two tablespoons of olive oil.

Add a small can of organic chicken broth.

Add salt, pepper and pepper flakes to taste.

Put in the artichokes and add the

juice of half a lemon.

Cover and cook for 40 minutes or until the leaves pull off easily. If necessary, add a bit of water to your broth.

When ready, plate and eat. Make sure to add some of the broth to the bottom of your bowl for dipping. Crusty toasted bread and some good cheese like brie or herbed goat cheese make a good accompaniment.

Have a wonderful month. Happy Spring!

Thanks for reading.

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Everyday Earth Day

Getting your kids involved in the earth's future is getting them involved in their own

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

In many city schools, students and teachers are making a difference in their communities with programs that reduce waste, encourage recycling, save energy, and conserve resources. Environmental education helps kids understand the environmental challenges of the 21st century, as they learn to appreciate and respect the natural resources that Mother Earth provides for all of us.

Since its first official celebration on April 22, 1970 — when 20 million Americans, energized by their love of our planet, marched in the streets to protest against air and water pollution — the original spirit of Earth Day still echoes across city neighborhoods in 2016, as kids and families try to do their part to help the environment.

Earth Day and an eco-friendly attitude

It may have started with hippies, flower children, and anti-Vietnam War protestors as a grass roots movement that flowered into a ginormous nation-wide event. But over the decades, Earth Day — celebrated every year on April 22 — has evolved into an environmental celebration that focuses on teaching modern-

day tree-huggers, young and old, about going green, and the importance of sustainability and personal eco-responsibility. Some would call it an ecological trend that encourages each and every one of us to be mindful of the earth's limitations and to conserve — at home and at the workplace — through recycling, composting, backyard or micro gardening, and saving energy by turning off lights and unplugging unused appliances.

This no-waste sensibility goes hand in hand with a conservationist attitude on the part of local schools, organizations, and companies.

In schools that use Project Learning Tree's award-winning curriculum materials, like those covering all things energy, kids find out how we use it, and what we can do to conserve it. According to www.plt.org, the way America's youth learn about the environment will largely determine the future quality life for generations to come. Quality environmental education teaches students the skills they need to be informed decision makers, and provides critical tools for a 21st-century workforce faced with devising solutions to increasingly complex environmental issues, like climate change and energy.

By incorporating energy educa-

tion into elementary and middle school curricula, students will be engaged in real-world S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning, while they discover how individual and collective choices about energy use affect their lives and the whole planet.

How you can celebrate Earth Day

Younger kids can enjoy a hands-on nature and gardening adventure as they learn about sustainability with a fruit and vegetable garden, and four seasons garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. They can also check out plants and animals in a meadow, marsh, and woodland.

Though it don't have specific Earth Day programming, the garden offers a wide array of family-friendly public programs to explore the environment.

"For more than 100 years, Brooklyn Botanic Garden has encouraged children and their families to learn about and appreciate the world of plants and the environment," says Elizabeth Reina-Longoria, director of communications. "BBG's newest space — the Discovery Garden for children — allows kids to closely explore habitats and have fun in nature, inspiring future generations of environmental stewards."



...

An Environmental Protection Agency educational website features a Planet Protectors Club for kids and teens, whose mission is to improve the world around them by making less trash. Planet Protectors also help other people learn to reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Kids can check out fun activities and games, while learning about reducing wastes and saving resources at: www3.epa.gov/epawaste/education/kids/planetprotectors/index.htm

Teens can get tips on daily choices they make that affect the environment, i.e. products, natural resources they use, etc.

The site lists eco-friendly tips:

- Use products made with recycled materials

- Use energy-efficient light bulbs and rechargeable batteries
- Shop with cloth bags
- Reuse plastic bags, cups, containers, etc.
- Repair items instead of throwing them away
- Compost your food and yard waste

How Earth Day changed the world

Forty-five years ago, industrial pollution was rampant. People were concerned about it and its negative effects on their health, but politicians, not so much. Surprisingly it took three proactive republicans to jump-start the new movement against environmental ignorance.

After witnessing the Santa Barbara oil spill that killed thousands

of birds and fish in 1970, Earth Day founder and then-Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin had a brainstorm: Why not organize a huge grass roots protest over what was happening to the environment. So he announced that there would be a nationwide demonstration on behalf of the environment and invited everyone to participate (no social media then!). Nelson later wrote, "We had neither the time nor resources to organize 20 million demonstrators and the thousands of schools and local communities that participated. That was the remarkable thing about Earth Day. It organized itself."

Eventually, he teamed up with Republican Congressman Pete McCloskey, as well as a young activist, to teach folks about their environment.

In a 1993 piece Nelson wrote, "I

was satisfied that if we could tap into the environmental concerns of the general public and infuse the student anti-war energy into the environmental cause, we could generate a demonstration that would force this issue onto the political agenda. It was a big gamble, but worth a try. The response was electric. It took off like gangbusters. The American people finally had a forum to express concern about what was happening to the land, rivers, lakes, and air — and they did so with spectacular exuberance."

President Richard Nixon proposed the Environmental Protection Agency (launched on Dec. 2, 1970) after he signed an executive order. Landmark environmental laws went into effect, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Estuary Protection Act.

Climate change is scary!

In an April 2015 huffingtonpost.com article, Californian Congresswoman Jackie Speier wrote, "Strange weather has made headlines around the world. We've seen polar vortexes and tornadoes in the Midwest, massive snowstorms on the East Coast, rapidly shrinking sea ice at the North and South poles, record hurricanes and cyclones over the Pacific and Indian Oceans, flooding in Asia, and extreme droughts in Africa and right here in the western states of the U.S. Scientists call this the 'new normal' — in a warming world we have to expect the unexpected."

But even in California, they didn't expect five consecutive years of unprecedented drought.

Speier cites "sea level rise, ocean acidification, species extinctions, erratic weather events, decreased agricultural yields, harm to human health and lower worker productivity" as real and costly consequences of climate change. While many folks believe global warming is man-made, others say these events are natural and cyclical.

For more on the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, visit www.bbg.org/learn/kids_and_families.

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



Time-outs vs. time-ins

Tips for fostering effective and connective discipline

BY JUDY M. MILLER

Time-ins versus time-outs. What's the difference? As it turns out, quite a bit.

Many adults are familiar with the concept of time-outs — the process of separating the child, often in another part of the house, if home, from his parents for the purpose of calming down, thinking about his behavior, and regrouping. Time-outs withhold attention, the highest motivator for any child. Overused, time-outs can quickly become ineffective, and both the parent and child can feel bad about the experience.

Time-ins are similar to time-outs in that they focus on teaching children to self-regulate their behavior. However, time-ins differ from time-outs, because they emphasize regaining peace and balance of the situation while the child is within close proximity to his parent. And this physical closeness while calming helps to foster connection and security between the child and parent.

There are several things a parent

needs to be on board with to effectively use time-ins. The first is that they should understand what discipline is: the training or teaching that reinforces the desired specific behavior (self-regulation) and ordered way of life compatible with family and societal expectations.

The second is that the parent should embrace a new attitude, that of being child-centered. The parent should focus on how to best address what her child needs.

The use of time-ins is well suited to any child, and can be used for a child of any age. Parents who are bonded with their child are the most effective in using time-ins because their child is attuned (emotionally connected) to them.

The parent can explain why the behavior was inappropriate after the child has calmed down, but only if she is also calm. Parents who are emotional cannot help their child or address a situation. To use time-ins effectively:

- Keep your child within proximity of where you are, be it in the

kitchen, gardening, or on your lap, if very young.

- Give your child some “distance” by avoiding direct eye contact.

- Eliminate conversation until your child has indicated he is ready to talk about the situation.

- Gently resume eye contact and positive non-verbal cues (nodding, smiling) as you discuss the situation (misbehavior).

- Be aware of your tone.

- Think about your word choices.

- Correct without shaming.

- Be specific about your expectations.

- Lower yourself to your child's level, if necessary — kneeling, for example.

- Touch your child. For example, a gentle hand on the shoulder.

- Offer a hug. Research shows that a 30-second hug releases oxytocin, the “bonding” hormone, and has another emotional and physical benefit — stress reduction.

Other dos and don'ts

- Avoid showing anger. Your child cannot calm down if you are angry. Model the behavior you want to see in your child.

- Avoid grabbing or jerking your child. Your goal is not punishment, but helping your child to calm and understand what behavior was inappropriate.

- Do not berate your child. Doing so can cause your child to “mute” you.

- Do not talk about your child's behavior within the hearing of others, especially peers; this causes shame and public humiliation.

- Do not give your child something to do or watch while in time-in. This time is for reflection.

- Speak calmly and firmly.

- If using a place for your child to sit, use the same place and same seat.

- If you have an older child (5 to 10 years of age), consider giving him something constructive to do, like a puzzle or craft. Talk to your child while he creates. This can help the older child process his feelings.

- Use a timer; this indicates you are committed to the time-in. If your child is not or does not feel calm or quiet when the timer goes off (ask), set it again.

- Remain calm and gentle after the time-in is over. This encourages self-regulation, which is your goal.

Judy M. Miller savors time with her kids. She is a certified Gottman Institute educator and the author of “What To Expect From Your Adopted Tween” and “Writing to Heal Adoption Grief: Making Connections & Moving Forward.”



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Practice, practice, practice!

Middle school
musicians to
perform at
Carnegie Hall

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

These young musicians are learning from the best.

Seventy-five middle school student musicians auditioned on Jan. 30 and 31 for a coveted spot in the New York Pops' Kids on Stage program. Only 20 chosen finalists will be trained by New York Pops teaching artists and will perform on stage for the orchestra's annual birthday gala at Carnegie Hall on May 2.

"Kids on Stage is an amazing opportunity for young musicians. In addition to the excitement of the culminating performance on stage at Carnegie Hall, students engage in a truly immersive learning experience throughout the audition and rehearsal process as they work closely with skilled educators, professional musicians, and Maestro Reineke," said Lisa Beth Vettoso, The New York Pops' director of education.

The program is part of the orchestra's PopsEd program, which is led by Music Director and Conductor Steven Reineke and provides an exciting learning environment for its students, showcasing tools like composition, lyric writing, performance, and mentorship to foster learning.

Before the gala, the young musicians will have five rehearsal sessions, including three with PopsEd teaching



Twenty middle school student musicians will play on stage at Carnegie Hall with the New York Pops orchestra.

The 2016 Kids on Stage students include:

- Ande-Marie Balla, flute, grade 8
- Eve Budd, clarinet, grade 7
- Quentin Chen, violin, grade 7
- Lukas Chin, horn, grade 7
- Philip Fletcher, euphonium, grade 8
- Pasquale Giusto, trumpet, grade 8
- Jeshua Kim, flute, grade 8
- William Lach, trumpet, grade 8
- Yong Ho Lee, clarinet, grade 8
- John Liu, euphonium, grade 7
- Victoria Lu, violin, grade 8
- Jessica Mandel, horn, grade 8
- Olivia Mangum-Lehmann, cello, grade 8
- Simone Martel, saxophone, grade 7
- Jordyn Pierre-Raphael, saxophone, grade 8
- Abigail Rodriguez, percussion, grade 8
- Meghan Stackhouse, clarinet, grade 6
- Adam Vidal, trumpet, grade 8
- Anna Wielgat, oboe, grade 8
- Shuran Xie, saxophone, grade 6

artists, one led by Reineke, and a dress rehearsal at Carnegie Hall before the gala. Of the 20 participants, five students will be selected to receive a three-week scholarship to the French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts Summer Camp in Hancock, N.Y., to participate in the program for advanced musical studies.

The 20 finalists certainly proved their mettle at the auditions.

"The students are asked to prepare a piece of music, play basic scales, and sight read in a format similar to an orchestral audition," said Karen DiYanni, a current Kids on Stage judge as well as a New York Pops violinist and PopsEd Teaching Artist. "At the auditions, we met young musicians from all over the city, with varying levels of experience on their instrument. In addition to newcomers, we saw many that auditioned and/or were selected last year. This speaks volumes about what an incredible experience and opportunity Kids on Stage is for middle-school students."

Education is an essential part of The New York Pops' mission. Through its PopsEd programs, the

organization collaborates with public schools, community organizations, children's hospitals, and senior centers throughout the five boroughs, which affords thousands of New Yorkers the opportunity to participate in music programming.

"Kids on Stage helps fill the gap in today's music education system by giving students a truly unique, professional opportunity," said DiYanni.

To be considered for participation, the students filled out an application form and submitted two personal essays and a recommendation letter from a teacher. Student essays and recommendation letters were then reviewed by the director of education and New York Pops staff, who selected students and invited them to audition, said Vettoso.

The New York Pops 33rd Birthday Gala "Do You Hear the People Sing" at Carnegie Hall (881 Seventh Ave. between W. 56th and W. 57th streets in Midtown, www.newyorkpops.org) May 2, 7 pm. Tickets from \$31 to \$160.

Shnieka Johnson is a Manhattan-based education consultant and freelance writer. Contact her via her website: www.shniekajohnson.com.

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Becoming yourself

Assisting our
children in
finding their
own way

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-
TIEMAN

Andre Pater, a renowned equine artist, conducted a tour of his work that my younger son and I attended. During the tour Pater was asked what advice he gives young artists on how to achieve success. He clarified that there are many ways to define success. He identified his greatest success as an artist being the feeling he gets when he creates something that deeply touches another person. He concluded by saying, "Above all, be yourself. After all, you cannot be anyone else anyway."

What simple, straightforward advice. Be yourself. I mean, it's two words. Yet, it presents a formidable challenge. For to be yourself, you have to know yourself. And the self you have to know changes over time. Recently I shared a related quote, "Becoming is superior to being." This statement suggests that while "being" denotes a static, unchanging state, "becoming" recognizes the active, evolving nature of the self. Therefore I altered Pater's advice to say, "Become yourself!"

"Become yourself" implies that we possess the power to choose who we are becoming. Last month

I explored the relevance of this notion to the lifelong process of becoming a parent. But what about the implications of this directive to "become yourself" for our children? How do we assist them in discovering the power to become themselves and guide them to exercise it conscientiously? How do we facilitate the process of our children becoming themselves?

Visualize them. We are our children's original mirrors. They come to know the earliest versions of themselves through their interactions with us. Create a vision of your child. Not a fixed vision, a flexible vision. A working vision of

“Become yourself” implies that we possess the power to choose who we are becoming. But what about the implications of this directive to “become yourself” for our children?

the kind of person you want her to become. Not the career you want her to pursue. We are raising people, not professions. A vision of the personal qualities and character you want your child to possess. Use this vision to direct your parental actions. What we reflect back to our children is what they come to believe about themselves.

Give them their story. Each of our children has a unique story. Tell your child her birth or adoption story. Tell her about all her “firsts” and early experiences. Share treasured memories. Keep a journal for her. Populate her story with people who love her. Tell her family history. If you don’t know her family history, research her culture and share its heritage. Our children need both roots and wings. The deeper the roots, the stronger the wings.

Prompt their vision. Encourage your child to create a personal vision of the individual she wants to become. Focus on personal qualities, problem-solving, and relationship skills that will serve her well throughout life. Emphasize the importance of self reflection and self correction.

Teach them to think before they speak. Teach your child to choose words that are more likely to be constructive than destructive. Use empathy-building questions, “How would you feel if that happened to you?” “What would you think if someone said that to you?” “What would you do in that situation?” Challenge her to consider, “If everyone said or did what you propose, would it be OK?” “What would that look like?” “If not, then should you?” “What might you do instead?” Discuss how she will know when

she’s being true to the vision. Identify what she is already doing that fits her vision. Assess those aspects that do not fit and explore how she might bring about desired change. Help her establish realistic short and long-term goals. Guide her in discovering the abundance of possibilities within herself.

Model the personal qualities you value. It is not enough to tell our children how to behave. We have to show them. Remember — they may not be listening to everything we say, but they are watching everything we do. Demonstrate the personal qualities and character you want them to exhibit. Notice when they are doing what is expected. Recognize and express appreciation for their efforts and accomplishments. Be more anxious to catch them being good than being bad. When discipline is necessary, make it relevant, reasonable, and respectful. Model qualities you would be proud for them to emulate.

Becoming yourself is not the same as expressing yourself. Our culture is obsessed with self-expression and individuality, albeit a superficial understanding of individuality. Individuality is not defined by appearance, possessions, and friends. Individuality is apparent in spite of, not because of, mere outward trappings. The expression of our thoughts and feelings through our words and actions is inherently and utterly unique.

Individuality is a birthright. You cannot become anyone but yourself. The challenge is to fully realize the potential of the person each of us is capable of becoming.

This is the essence of our individuality and becoming ourselves. And, it is a reciprocal process. While we are becoming the parents our children need, they are becoming themselves. May we acquire the wisdom to assist them in ways that allow each of us to make the most of the best of ourselves.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Ky. She has been married for 29 years and has two sons. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator, and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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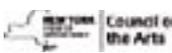
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Executive functions

The 'how and why' of these important life skills

Executive functioning is a hot topic! Parents and teachers alike are talking about it. But what exactly is executive functioning, and how can you teach it to your child? Let's dive in!

Executive functions are a set of skills that help a person navigate through the day-to-day necessities of life. It's a mental framework. I tend to think of it like formatting a document or presentation, such as in PowerPoint. You use particular elements to create a visual arrangement and are able to drop in any content so you can configure it as needed.

Skills such as memory, attention span, problem solving, and planning are executive functions. We use these capabilities for how we learn, play, explore, and enjoy the world.

As children, we each subconsciously learned these skills. It was simple: we watched our parents and other small beings, and then developed our own strategies from our observations. Many of us are not aware of the skills that we use to focus or problem solve, as it has become automatic.

When small beings (or possibly medium and big beings) don't adequately develop executive functioning skills, they will have difficulty completing seemingly basic tasks. Sometimes this struggle will result in challenging behavior.

I can empathize when small beings get frustrated when they don't have the skills necessary to make basic life tasks easy. They lose their patience with them quickly, but they honestly don't know what to do.

For example, a big being might tell a small being, "Go play." Easy enough for a typically developing small being, but for a small being who does not have adequate executive functioning skills, the simple act of playing is a challenge.

You see, playing requires planning and an attention span. Since small beings are just learning to use language, they may not know how to ask for help or that help is needed, as frustration is their norm. In the moments when executive functions are



the root of a problem, many small beings simply feel unsuccessful. Then these children act out, adults get mad, and they feel worse.

Rather than punishing or reprimanding your child for not doing what he is told, teach him how to succeed. Here are my top five tools for teaching executive functioning skills:

Provide step-by-step instructions. Just because you know how to do a task, it does not mean that your small being does. Breaking it down into small steps leads to big success.

Teach rote routines. There are certain activities we do everyday, like getting dressed, getting ready to leave the house, washing hands, etc. Provide a specific order to do each of these things and repeat the same order each day. Your child will soon learn the pattern and have more independence!

Create schedules. As adults, we have calendars that we reference all the time. Knowing what comes next

gives us comfort. Teach your small being to create the same kind of list. If your schedule changes every day, then create a new schedule every day. All you need is pen and paper.

Use timers! Kids are often given time frames like "Read for 20 minutes" or "In five minutes you need to clean up." How do they know when time is up? Set a timer. It will create awareness of time and independence.

Check in times. Don't wait for your child to act out to check in on her. When she is playing nicely, provide ideas and suggestions of how it can keep going. This will keep her moving in the right direction.

For a special gift especially for New York Parenting readers please visit: bit.ly/vid-nyp

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

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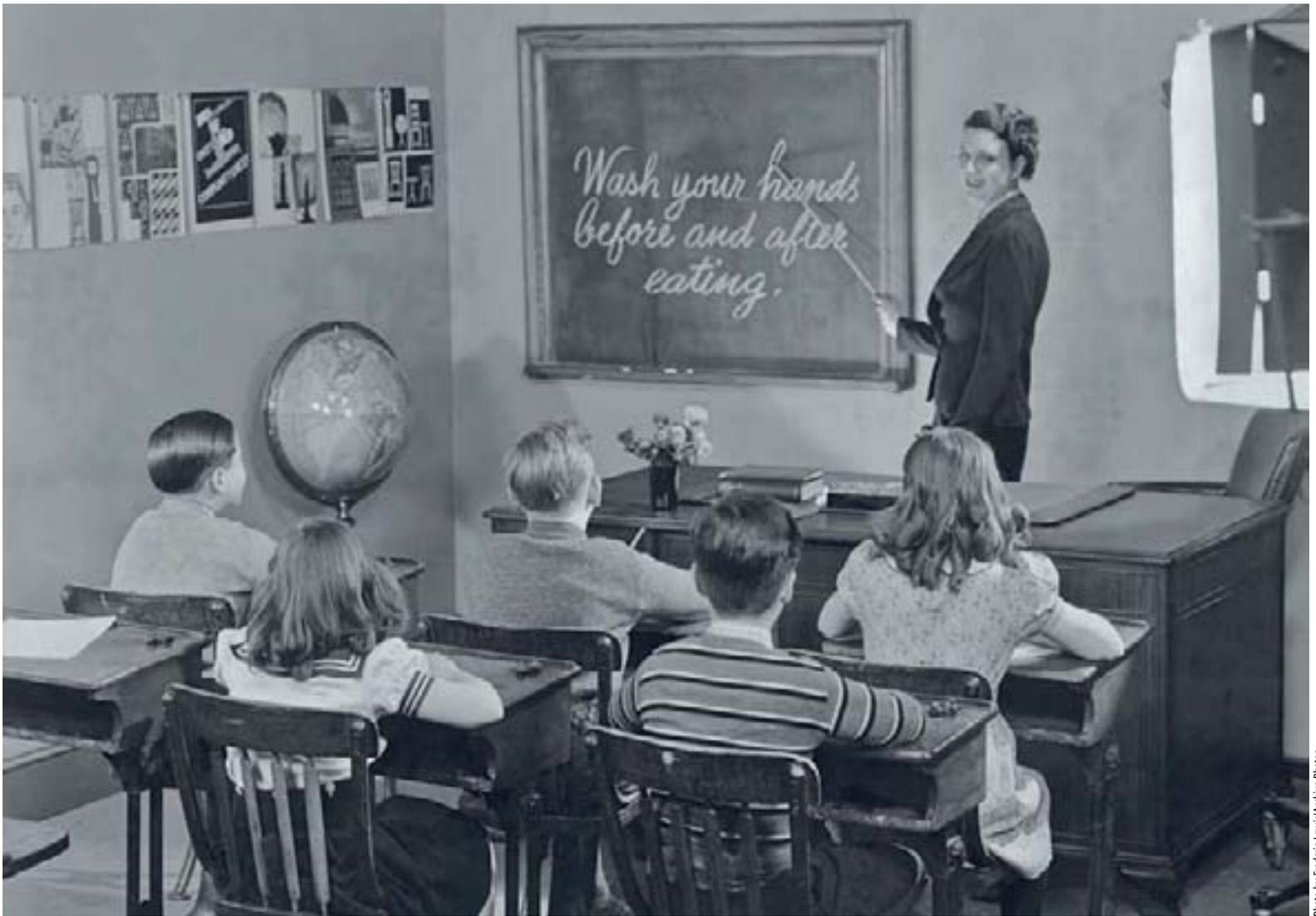


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Good old days

As education changes, what we gain — and lose!

BY ALLISON PLITT

There I was in town the other day, running errands while listening to music on my iPhone with earphones plugged into my ears. The music, though, suddenly stopped, and I started hearing my 10-year-old daughter singing, “I love you. I love you. I love you.” Completely perplexed, I looked down at my playlist of songs and saw the words “Voice Memo.” Somehow, my daughter decided to create her own song and inserted it into my playlist.

I was astonished she could do this at 10 years of age, because I’m well into my 40s and cannot figure out how she managed to accomplish it. At her top-rated public elementary

school in Queens she learns about various websites in her technology class, which teaches students more about computers. A couple of the websites (www.code.org and www.scratch.mit.edu) have taught her to use blocks of code (a language that programs a computer to do something), which creates animation for a screen full of imaginative characters.

Now my daughter is in fourth grade and is in a STEM class — an acronym for “Science, technology, engineering, and math.” It is the first STEM class the school has ever had, and I had no idea she had been chosen for it until her first day of school. Because there are so few Americans, especially women, in these fields, STEM classes are now being created

in schools throughout the country.

Every few weeks, the kids are put into teams of four and asked to do a task: mail a potato chip in a package that will prevent it from breaking; balance a marshmallow on 20 vertical spaghetti sticks; drop an egg with a parachute to ensure it doesn’t break; create a survivor team to escape from any region of New York state with just a handful of tools; build a tower using index cards and tape; or construct an Iroquois Native American longhouse from a design plan and materials the children had to prepare and gather beforehand.

After every project, all the students are asked to write about their experiences working on these assigned tasks with their teammates. I read over my daughter’s summaries,

which usually start out with “We all had different ideas.” Then the essay gets juicy, because “two people disagreed and got into a fight.” Every paper, however, calmly ends with “In the end, we found out which of our designs worked best.”

There was quite a bit of drama with the interpersonal dynamics of the groups when these projects started in September. Now, many months into the school year, my daughter doesn’t come home complaining that no one listened to her ideas.

I am grateful towards this school for giving my daughter such a comprehensive education. I am also happy that with each passing year, my daughter becomes more and more eager to go to school in the mornings. I have just a few qualms with the curriculum — a result of my old-school background, when computers weren’t in classrooms, and we spent more time using pencils.

My first complaint, over which I hear many parents also grieve, is the loss of cursive writing. It’s still taught in some private schools in the third grade, but teaching cursive handwriting has been completely eliminated from the curriculum of public schools across the country. The sub-

My first complaint, over which I hear many parents also grieve, is the loss of cursive writing.

ject was brought up at a Parents Association meeting at our school and labeled a lost cause, as one parent, a Human Resources Director, recalled asking a teenage intern to sign her name on a document and all she wrote was the letter “X.”

My second criticism is that many New York City public schools stop spelling tests after second grade ends. I remember being in a spelling bee in sixth grade, when we still had to memorize 10 new spelling words a week. As other parents have spoken to me about their children’s problems with spelling, I asked at a Parents Association meeting that the idea of continuing the spelling tests past second grade be brought up at the School Leadership Team meeting, when a group of teachers, parents, and the principal of the school meet on a monthly basis.

When I asked my friend who sits on that team about my spelling test suggestion, he said the teachers didn’t think spelling tests were necessary, as spelling was already em-

bedded into the children’s curriculum. I still fume about this response, but I can still manage a hearty laugh at the end of the school year when some of the kids sign cards to each other saying, “Have a happy summer.”

My last worry is that teachers are not given the respect that they deserve in the classroom. My daughter is not the top student in class, but she always gets high marks for her behavior. I have heard my daughter and her own teachers complain that students continue to talk after they have been told to be quiet. Even when the principal visited my daughter’s class to intervene, the students continued to talk.

Last year, my daughter came home from her third-grade classroom complaining that so many kids were talking, she could no longer hear the teacher speak. As the class parent, I sent an email to all the parents and instructed them to tell their kids to stop talking in the classroom. I also wrote in the email that I had a list of kids who were talking, and if they

wanted to know if their child was on the list, they could contact me.

Of course, I was punished by the teacher for making her look incompetent, and several of the parents complained about my interference in a job that was not mine to do. It had just gotten to the point for me where I had seen and had heard enough.

Surprisingly, there were quite a few parents supporting the fact that I had addressed the issue so openly. For the past two years, there have been 32 students in my daughter’s class, and even with a teacher and an assistant, it is still not enough supervision to get the kids to behave.

In retrospect, I still cling to the love letters my grandparents wrote to each other in cursive writing and sigh in exasperation as my daughter continues to incorrectly spell “February” — until she sees it auto-corrected on the computer. With all of this new technology and teaching techniques to encourage experiential learning in the classroom, we, as a country and a community, have forgotten to teach our children the thing that matters most — showing respect towards others.

Allison Plitt is a writer who lives in Queens with her daughter.

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What's an executor?

My cousin told me that she named me as her executor in her will. What does an executor do, and what are the duties and responsibilities? If I really do not want the responsibility or to take on the role, if and when the time comes, can I decline or resign from being executor?

As executor (thankfully, female fiduciaries are no longer referred to as an “executorix”) once appointed by the Surrogate’s Court, you would be obligated to carry out the provisions of the will and administer the estate. That means marshaling the assets of the decedent, paying her expenses, and distributing the remaining assets as she intended. It can also mean resolving any claims against the estate. Some (but certainly not all) of the duties of an executor may include the following:

- Locate and notify witnesses to the will.
- Notify post office to forward mail.
- Secure the decedent’s residence or home, as well as any firearms.
- Make sure house and other buildings have fuel during the winter months.
- Open a checking account or saving account for the estate.
- Discontinue unneeded utilities.
- Examine the contents of safe deposit box accompanied by the estate’s attorney.
- Search for valuable papers and assets.
- Inspect all real estate and locate mortgages, and leases affecting the property.
- Examine all life insurance, real estate, and personal property insurance policies.
- Select qualified appraisers for all property to be sold.
- Investigate possibility of profit-sharing or pension death benefits.
- Review income tax returns for the past three years.
- Make sure all tax returns are filed on time.



will be seriously offended, you can simply advise her that you do not wish to act as executor and suggest that she execute a revised will. Alternatively, upon the person’s death, you can renounce your rights as executor and decline to act. If the will nominates a successor executor, that individual would then have the right to seek to probate the will. You could also probate the will but ask that someone else be appointed. It is advisable to pursue one of these options rather than the option of seeking to resign as executor once you have been appointed by the court.

ing to resign as executor once you have been appointed by the court.

If an executor who has already been appointed as such by the Surrogate’s Court wishes to resign, she must file a written application with the court seeking judicial permission to resign. In an application for permission to resign as executor, the applicant must demonstrate “good cause,” and the decision of whether the individual will be permitted to resign rests in the discretion of the court. Generally, the court will evaluate whether the executor’s request to resign is in the best interests of the estate. If the executor is unable to establish that the resignation is in the best interests of the estate, the court may deny the request. In addition, in order to resign, an executor must settle the estate account.

It is best to have an honest discussion with the person appointing you before she does so. That said, it is frequently the case that someone has the desire to serve when asked, but at the time she is needed, her circumstances have changed.

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.

- File the required inventory of decedent’s assets with the court within six months of the date of appointment.

- Prepare formal or informal accounting as the case may require, and distribute the assets of the estate to the person or persons entitled to them.

- Obtain receipts and releases or waiver of citation from beneficiaries, and submit decree settling account where format account and decree are necessary.

An executor is entitled to compensation in the form of commissions for her service. Commissions are usually paid out of the estate after the distributions have taken place and subject to approval of either the court or the beneficiaries of your estate. Commissions are based upon a statutory commission rate as follows: five percent on the first \$100,000 in the estate, four percent on the next \$200,000, three percent on the next \$700,000, two-and-a-half percent on the next \$4,000,000, and two percent on any amount above \$5,000,000.

Executors usually retain the services of trusts’ and estates’ counsel to help guide them through the process.

As for the second part of your question, just because you are nominated as executor in someone’s will does not mean that you must accept this responsibility. Unless you believe that the person appointing you

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"The Moodsters" help teach children the fundamentals of emotional intelligence.

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How does it feel?

Teaching children the important skills of emotional intelligence

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Pixar's Oscar-winning animated movie "Inside Out" has jumpstarted an important conversation, and is shining a spotlight on a topic that is near and dear to parenting and child development expert Denise Daniels's heart: emotional intelligence.

After years of research, and helping children and parents deal with disaster and grief here in the U.S. and abroad, she has developed a new groundbreaking brand for preschoolers. The Moodsters is based on curriculum from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence.

Just like 11-year-old, hockey-playing, Minnesota student Riley Andersen, the adorable character in the animated movie, your young daughter or son may be experiencing various changes in his or her life and feeling emotions he or she

can't quite process. They may be feeling confused or overwhelmed — like Riley, when she is uprooted from her familiar, happy life and finds herself in a new, less-joyful situation, after moving to San Francisco. Suddenly, she's feeling sad and kind of angry.

The film's main setting takes place in Riley's mind, and the story is almost entirely told from the point of view of her five emotions: Fear, Sadness, Joy, Disgust, and Anger. It just so happens that The Moodsters (Coz, Lolly, Snorf, Razy and Quigly) are five lovable characters that also represent different emotions. According to Daniels, Moodsters use detective skills to solve emotional mysteries, and children learn through the adventures of the characters how to handle challenges and opportunities they may face in their everyday lives. There's even a feelings meter that kids can

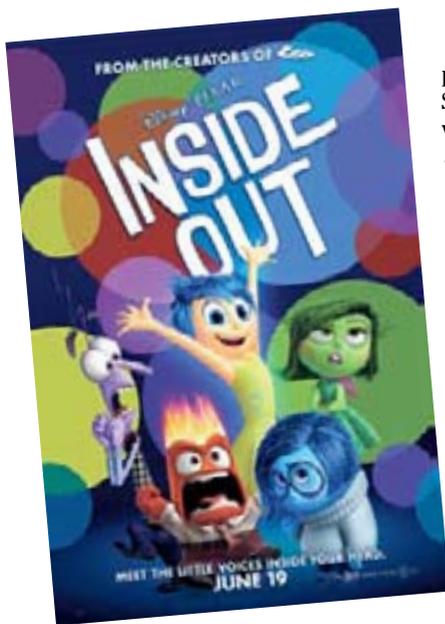
point to. For parents, Moodsters are learning tools that help teach children the fundamentals of emotional intelligence.

So, what is emotional intelligence?

It's the ability to recognize your own and others' emotions, to understand nonverbal cues, and to manage one's own feelings and emotions and express them appropriately.

Decades of scientific research reveal that sound emotional intelligence skills benefit children's physical and psychological health, and well-being.

"We know that kids that learn these skills are more successful in school, and test scores on standardized tests are higher; they do better socially and psychologically and have stronger, healthier relationships," Daniels notes. They're even better problem-solvers and



The recent Pixar film, "Inside Out" also explores the emotions of children.

have less depression.

Daniels says parents should start talking to their children about feelings during the day and especially at bedtime, when kids often experience fears and anxiety. She emphasizes that little ones should be encouraged to verbalize how they feel early in life — from 1 year old through pre-school and beyond.

"Inside Out" has been shining a spotlight on a very relevant topic that has been the focus of Daniels's amazing work — how emotional intelligence affects every child's development, no matter his ethnicity, socioeconomic situation, or circumstances. Moodsters are multicultural. And Daniels says the idea first came about when she realized that all kids' feelings are universal.

Then when she and her children came down to Ground Zero after 9-11, Daniels knew she had a mission, as she sat down and talked to kids and parents who were dealing with devastating loss and grief. And a workbook she created helped so many kids deal with their emotions. Fifteen million copies were drop shipped across the U.S.

The Peabody Award-winning broadcast journalist said she also worked with children in refugee camps in Sri Lanka, and helped families cope after Hurricane Katrina. And when the economy tanked in 2008, Daniels was there to help kids who were losing their homes and whose parents were losing jobs.

"I was hearing from so many parents, so I called my friends at Scholastic and they asked me to write something for their website and create a workbook for these kids," she recalled.

Daniels, who lives in Minnesota, said she and her New York-based team send lots of toys to hospitals, and have been getting loads of letters and questions from parents and educators everywhere, even Africa, Germany, and South America. She is also hearing from social workers in New York and meeting with an educational company here. Last fall Daniels went to an amazing school in Harlem, where she talked to young, high-risk students. She said teachers did meditation with the kids and talked about their feelings. New York 1's camera crew was there.

After the Paris and San Bernardino tragedies, Daniels has been teaching parents how to talk to their kids about terrorism. For tips you can read her Guidelines for Grownups on her website.

The grandmother of three says she is thrilled the movie came out at this time. Daniels is helping lead the charge in that conversation about emotional intelligence and is exposing a common part of growing up that often children, as well as their parents, may have trouble grasping. Many teachers are reaching out to her and there is a growing movement to get The Moodsters into schools. "All this underscores that EQ is beginning to go mainstream," she says.

"We are our children's first teachers, and our home is their first school. There's been a revolution in child psychology, and that revolution is teaching kids EQ skills."

Find out more info. and where you can get The Moodsters toy and book packs, visit www.denisedanielsparenting.com.

For more on The Moodsters visit www.themoodsters.com. A Learn About Feelings app for iOS and Android is in the works.

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



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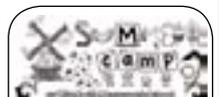
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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

On un-boy-ing boys

I recently read an article titled “Why Are We Un-Boy-ing Our Boys?” It discussed a typical scenario found in schools all over: A fidgety boy is disinterested in the classroom instruction, and couldn’t care less about the current phonics lesson. He is soon referred to a specialist who says he may be slightly delayed ... or he might simply not be interested.

The author goes on to say:

“I do not have a Ph.D. nor one of those satiny Technicolor sashes around my neck, but I know this much: he is not interested. I understand the teacher has a job to do, but the boy turned five in July. He cares about marshmallows and the Fresh Beat Band. He cares about chocolate and Halloween. He doesn’t care about vowel sounds.”

She then pointed out how many girls of the same age will sit down at a desk and follow directions, but asking young boys to do the same is trying to “un-boy them.”

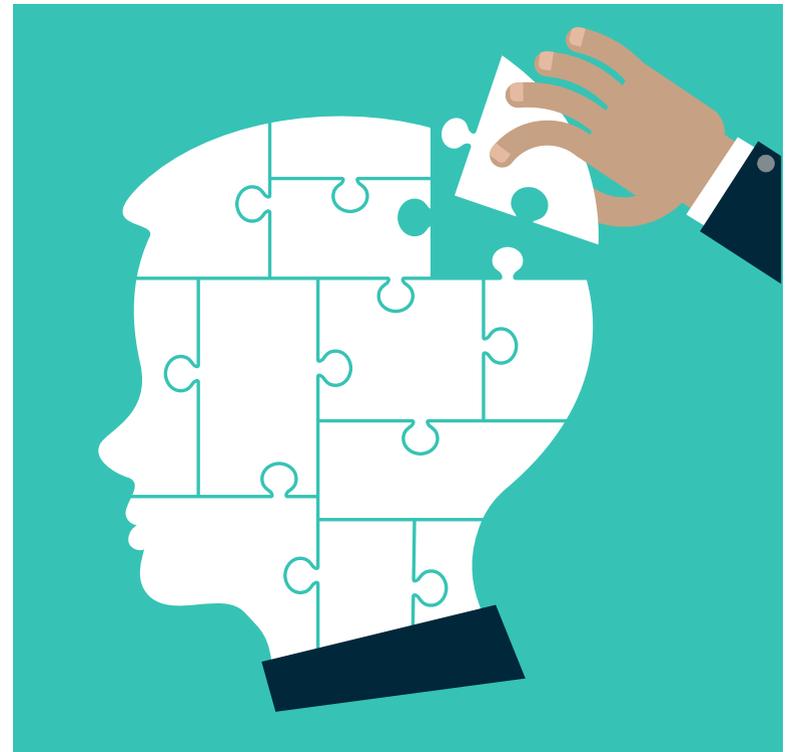
I agree ... but I disagree, too.

Boys are different, plain and simple, and most of them are more aggressive, more hands-on, and wilder than most girls. It’s true, by nature, that most boys act and react differently, find particular things interesting or boring, and think about the world in a way that is wholly incomparable to how most girls think.

I see this with my own son. Although he is a good student, there are so many things about school he finds utterly monotonous, and he does his best to sit through them while stifling his pure boy energy. Expecting every preschool boy in any given class to actually want to sit down at a desk and learn about grammar might be a tad unrealistic.

Yet, to take the debate a step beyond mere gender differences, I say we need to look at children in general. After all, the same behavior might also be said for a girl. In general, girls might tend to be quieter and better behaved than boys, but it’s certainly not a steadfast rule. I have known many girls who were just as fidgety, just as disinterested, and just as hyperactive.

I understand where the desire to start our children off on the right foot



and ahead of the competition comes from. I get it. I live in New York City, where if you’re pregnant, you better be holding headphones up to your belly with Mozart turned all the way up, because the second that baby is born, he needs to be ready for that entrance exam at a good preschool, lest his chances at an Ivy League education prove nonexistent.

Okay, an exaggeration, yes, but not by a whole lot. By age 5, most kids have already been in school for two or three years. The pressure grows with each passing day: standardized tests; near-perfect grades, so they can make it into a decent middle school; and thinking about college, starting on day-one of freshman year of high school. And every year, more of our kids are diagnosed with some learning disability, put on anxiety medication, and committing suicide.

Just when can kids actually be kids? I often wonder what exactly we are doing in trying to create the ideal academically gifted, athletically inclined child. We can’t create a perfect child out of sheer will or practice. And kids should be seen as so much more than their academic or athletic performance.

Here’s the honest truth: Not every child likes school or excels at it. Some children who are fabulously intelligent are also wholeheartedly bored by routine, drone-like rhetoric, and repetition. Some of these children have a curious mind that will take them to wonderful, innovative careers that will change the world in ways many Ivy League students could only imagine. Some kids will work with their hands, become artists, construction workers, chefs, actors, sanitation workers, etc, and have very full lives in which they are loved and make a difference in the world.

So I get it that we are under fierce competition in our global economy where the Chinese are kicking our butts, but in many cases, both boys and girls need to just be kids — get dirty, play, think, imagine, be silly, get in trouble, and yes, along the way learn grammar, math, and more.

Do they need to do it all by age 5? I highly doubt it.

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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Tech-free at camp!

When kids
unplug, they
make lifelong
connections

BY ASHLEY TALMADGE

In our world of constant connectivity, some might argue that kids shouldn't be expected to "unplug" for weeks on end. And yet, most overnight summer camps are still tech-free zones. Why? Recent studies reveal there are good reasons for taking a tech break. And seasoned camp directors are privy to a little known fact: Kids actually enjoy it.

"Many of our campers actually thank us for the opportunity to put away their phones for a while," says Erec Hillis, boys' camp director at Camp Champions in Texas. "Some of them say that it is exhausting to try to keep up with all the demands of being available 24-7, and that camp is a welcome break."

Nonetheless, it can be daunting to think about letting the smartphone, iPad, and laptop go untouched for the camp session. And parents may feel just as anxious as their kids. After all, we're used to communicating with our children whenever and wherever the notion strikes. What to do?

First of all, it helps to know why most camps remain unplugged.

"Because the whole point of our camp is to enjoy nature, facilitate communication, and empower children by developing those skills. We don't allow cellphones or iPods, which diminish interpersonal interaction," says Kevin Gordon, director of Camp Kupugani outside of Chicago.

Gordon says there's solid evidence to support this view, and points to a recent study from University of California, Los Angeles in which a group of sixth graders unplugged for five days at an outdoor camp. This group showed marked improvement in their ability to accurately read non-verbal emotional cues when compared to a control group of same-age



students who hadn't yet been to camp.

While the researchers did not dismiss the value of technology as a communication and learning tool, they concluded that "digital screen time, even when used for social interaction, could reduce time spent developing skills in reading nonverbal cues of human emotion."

It is through face-to-face encounters that kids gain the ability to see another's perspective, and develop empathy. They learn to cooperate and contribute. All this is important in the cultivation of lasting friendships. In his book, "Home-sick and Happy: How Time Away from Parents Can Help a Child Grow," psychologist Michael Thompson contends it is because campers spend so much time together, that "camp friendships grow so quickly and deeply." The camp environment itself inspires face-to-face interaction. Campers eat, sleep, and play in proximity to one another.

"Kids want to interact with one another. Camp allows kids to be near enough to each other that they don't need their phones," Hillis says. "They can just walk over and start a conversation."



It is through face-to-face encounters that kids gain the ability to see another's perspective, and develop empathy.



Still, it's a good idea to prepare your child for the tech-free experience. You may simply inform him of the no electronics rule, and express your confidence in his ability to abide by it. Hillis reminds parents not to commiserate with a child who seems reluctant to give up his device. Just remind him that all campers will follow the same rules, and that the camp has good reasons for being tech-free.

"We simply want kids to be comfortable in knowing that they can turn the phone off for a period of time and perhaps enjoy life even more richly, rather than feeling that they are missing out on something," he says.

Gordon recommends experimenting with a tech break of a day or two, sometime before the start of camp.

"Do it as a family and recognize how it's actually fun, and you feel

more connected as people!"

He also suggests discussing how your camper can deal with homesickness, and how you'll keep in touch without devices. Many camps now offer one-way e-mail — parents send e-mail, which is then printed and delivered to campers by the staff. However, Gordon favors old-fashioned snail mail, and says e-mail, "though easier for the parent to send, is generally not as appreciated by the camper."

In fact, experts like Thompson recommend letter-writing as the primary form of communication between parent and camper. He writes that "the time spent between sending and receiving a letter is a valuable opportunity for both parent and child to think about one another without having to do anything with or for each other." He believes a child cannot become independent without spending time away from parents, and warns that "minute-by-minute contact with parents undermines the sense of separation." So don't be the parent who slips an extra phone into your child's duffel!

Gordon acknowledges that being disconnected from screens is more difficult for parents than for campers.

"It's also a different experience (and harder), since the parent is in their same world, while the camper is busy in a new environment," he says. Yet parents would do well to practice some tech "downtime" for the duration of the camp session.

Thompson writes, "My advice: Stop the e-mails. Just send one or two packages per summer, and give yourself a break from checking the camp's online photos. Go buy some stamps and write a long letter, or two, or 19."

During the weeks at summer camp, your child will make new friends. Everyday she'll eat, bunk, play, share adventures, and have heart-to-hearts with them. True, she may use social media to stay in touch with her camp friends throughout the year. But memories of the things they did together — tipping the canoe, singing by the fire, playing pranks on the counselors — will create the strongest of bonds. She'll yearn for next summer when she can ditch the smartphone and wrap her arms around her forever friends. Face-to-face.



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www.congregationbethelohim.org

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Experiments with Carmelo may

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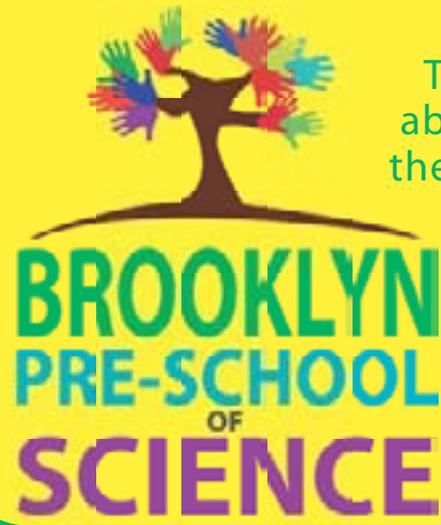
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Continued from page 26

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.

Digital Media Academy

718 University Ave.,
Los Gatos, CA 95032
Locations: Concordia College, NYU,
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866-656-3342
www.digitalmediaacademy.org
info@digitalmediaacademy.org

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150 4th Avenue, Park Slope
718-748-3000
www.fastrackkids.com

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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.

Greene Hill School Summer Program

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

Greene Hill School Day Camp is located in Fort Greene/Clinton Hill and offers Day Camp for kids ages 3-5 (Campers must be toilet trained), Mini-Adventure Camp for kids age 6-7, and Excursion Camp for kids ages 8-10.

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Brooklyn, NY 11236
718-454-3036

www.joesmusiccenter.org

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Continued on page 30



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917-300-8789

www.langokidsnyc.com

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1360 Fulton Street (Currently located at Restoration Plaza)

718-789-7330

info@littlesunpeople.com

www.littlesunpeople.com

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www.mmdg.org/school

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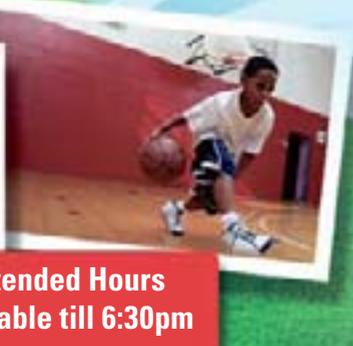
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Continued on page 34



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2016 Camp Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 32

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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Laughing enough?

Why it's truly essential at home and at work

Here is a simple question: How often do you laugh? Is it frequent, or does it happen so rarely that you can barely remember the last time? According to Psychology Today, kids laugh 300 to 400 times a day, while adults only chuckle fewer than 20 times!

The truth is that laughing is incredibly important in all types of relationships. One study showed that if a potential employee could make the interviewer chortle during the interview, he had a substantially higher chance of getting the job. Why? Because people want to work with others who are fun. The same applies to families. Below are three great reasons why laughing is essential at home, at work, and in the classroom!

Memory maker

Think of one of your favorite family memories growing up and chances are it was something that was extremely fun and funny. Guys in particular are attracted to amusing stories and even humorous commercials. When we laugh together, it creates a powerful bonding experience in relationships!

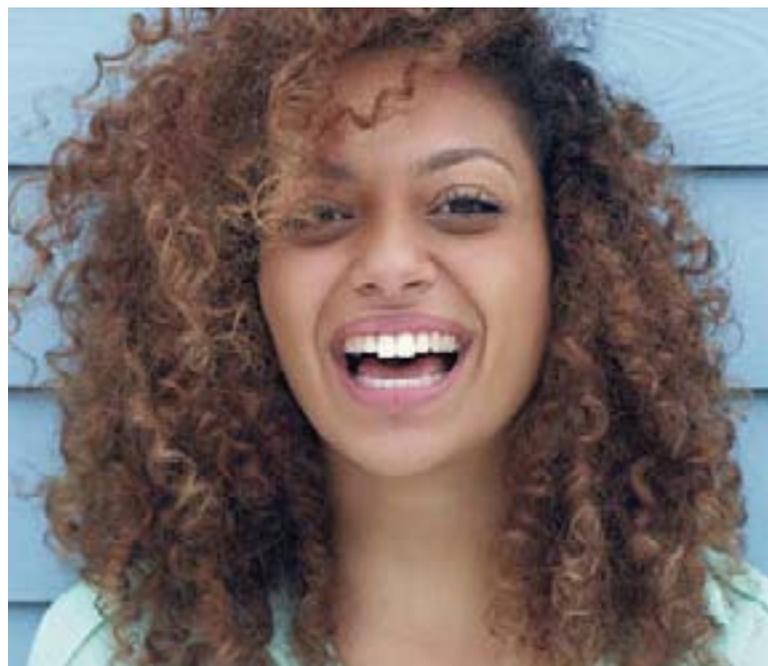
Years ago I went for lunch with one of the world's renowned Generation Y experts. We were exchanging insights on Gen Y — I was sharing trends from North America, and he was sharing about his experiences in Europe and Asia, where he was from. During our conversation, he noted that as a speaker he has learned that the No. 1-best practice of a great motivational speaker is laughter.

The lesson: People may like your talk, but if you don't make them giggle in the first 10 minutes, they won't remember it. I couldn't agree more!

Mood enhancer

When people laugh, it changes their mood. They tend to be more relaxed, easy-going, and pleasant. People no longer sweat the small stuff, tend to be less irritable, and more tolerant. This new mood is highly appealing for partners and kids!

Take this cue to the office or class-



room. Just think of your favorite boss or teacher. One of my favorite teachers from my childhood was my typewriting teacher Ms. Fitzpatrick. She was strict with punctuality, so for every minute a student was late to her class, she would have that student do pushups as a consequence. One minute late equaled one minute of pushups. I think some of my fellow classmates (who happened to almost always be male) would intentionally be late to show off to all of the ninth-grade girls how many pushups they could do.

Ms. Fitzpatrick's strict boundary not only taught her students how she wanted to run her class, but it got everyone laughing and changed the mood of this class! It's no wonder she was popular as a teacher!

People magnet and culture shift

When you chuckle more, get ready for your family to want to spend more time with you. In fact, kids often tell me that one of the most valued attributes of their parents is when they are silly and easy-going.

In our office, I try to intentionally get our staff to laugh. I'll tell silly stories, or mention funny things my

twin 8-year-olds did or said. (There is no shortage of material in this area.) I love watching how sharing these stories changes the entire mood of our work culture.

Years ago, I saw a commercial on this (perhaps you remember it). It showcased three to four employees laughing around the water cooler. When their boss approaches, they stop and all look nervous, waiting for his response. When he joins in the jokes, they relax and continue talking. The point? People are drawn to laughter, and it can change the entire culture!

If you don't think you are naturally funny, don't worry! This does not mean you have to provide the humor for others or be the life of the party. Just be intentional to re-tell funny things that have happened to you, and be present when others are telling their stories.

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

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FAMILY HEALTH

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Is it sore or strep?

For parents, telling the difference isn't easy

My 10-year-old daughter has a runny nose and a sore throat! The last time this happened, I did my best to help her with over-the-counter cold remedies and tea, but the problem didn't go away until I took her to the doctor, who said she had developed strep throat several days earlier. How can I better identify the differences between a simple sore throat and strep? Should I take my daughter to the doctor right away?

Strep throat — an infection of the throat and, or tonsils caused by the streptococcal bacteria — is often the result of a condition that has similar onset symptoms, such as the common cold, laryngitis, or the flu.

The strep bacteria is responsible for nearly 40 percent of sore throats in children — meaning that 60 percent of the time, that sore throat has not been caused by strep. That “line” isn't always easy to discern.

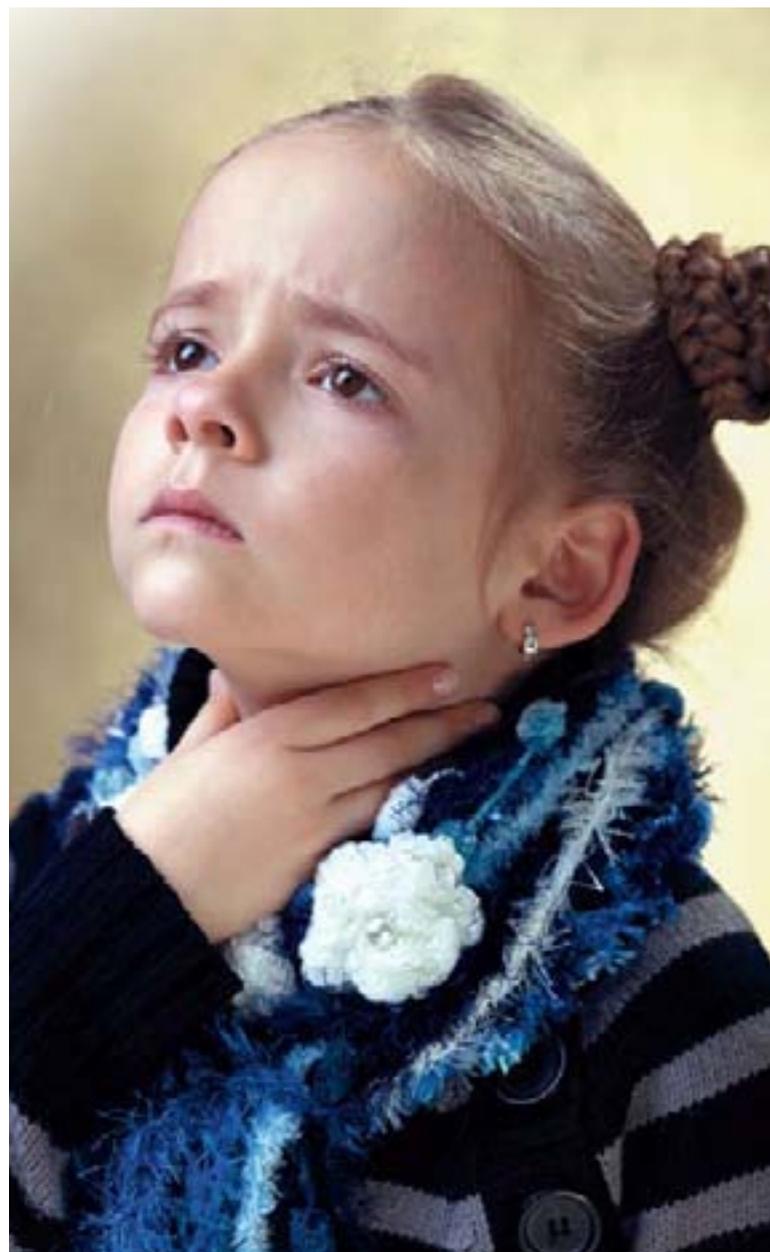
As you have noticed, the initial symptom of strep is often a sore throat that does not go away, despite lozenges, over-the-counter medications, tea, or any other home remedies.

A strep infection may be indicated when the child spikes a fever, loses her appetite for an extended period of time, has no energy, or develops pain in her lower abdomen. That's when it's time to visit your child's pediatrician.

To determine whether a child has strep, the doctor will first perform a medical examination and look for key symptoms, which can include enlarged lymph nodes, fever, redness, swelling, and white spots on the tonsils. The doctor may then administer a rapid strep test, which provides highly accurate results in minutes.

A throat culture (a laboratory diagnostic test to find bacterial or fungal infections in the throat) is another method to test for strep throat, and may also be necessary.

Throat cultures are still consid-



ered to be the “gold standard” of strep diagnosis, but the results of a throat culture can take 24 to 48 hours, making a rapid strep test a more ideal option in many cases, especially if your child's symptoms are strongly indicative of strep throat.

Strep is very contagious, and can potentially cause complications. However, once it has been

diagnosed — the earlier the better — it is nearly always treatable with a full course of penicillin, amoxicillin, or other common antibiotics.

So, as long as you keep your eyes peeled for the symptoms of strep, and, if necessary, contact or visit your child's pediatrician, there's no reason to be sore when your child complains that her throat hurts.

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Skincare for moms

Remember the days of being devoted to a beauty routine? Perhaps you spent hours straightening or curling your hair when getting ready for a night out, or luxuriating in long baths, massages, or pedicures on a regular basis? Now, as a new (or not so new) mom, you are lucky to enter the bathroom alone or grab a three-minute shower.

“I would have never — and I mean never — appreciated what a fantastic thing it is to actually use the bathroom without anyone screaming, crying, or banging at the door,” says Andrea Tate, a mom of two toddlers from Bergen Beach. “These little things make you feel nuts.”

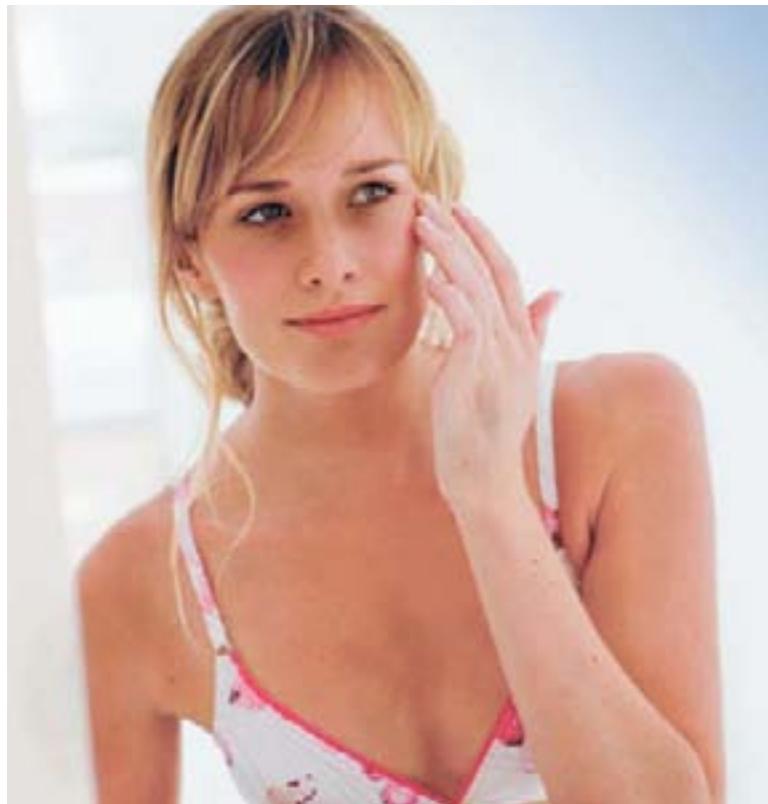
Let’s face it. Part of the high stress level of new motherhood comes from a loss of liberty, from a lack of freedom to go out alone, and the inability to get a decent night’s sleep. One of the most immediate ways these omissions reveal themselves is on your skin. Skin tells the tales of sleepless nights, inadequate nutrition, and sheer exhaustion most commonly in the form of breakouts and dryness.

“When my son, who had colic, was born, I couldn’t figure out what made me look so tired,” says Andrea. “Then I realized my face was blotchy and breaking out. I had basically forgotten to even wash my face some days, let alone do the half-hour bedtime skin ritual I used to do before I became a mom.”

So how do you obtain time for yourself and institute a skin regime? According to Dr. Christine Choi Kim, a board-certified medical and cosmetic dermatologist, all you need is just 15 minutes a day to keep your skin fresh and protected.

Take your makeup off every night

If you manage to apply makeup to your face in the daytime, no matter what else you do in the day, take it all off at night. Dr. Kim, who received her dermatologic training at Weill Cornell Medical Center-New York Presbyterian Hospital explains, “Before you go to bed, remember to remove your makeup thoroughly. Sleeping with a layer of sebum,



sweat, and makeup can cause pores to become congested, leading to acne breakouts.”

Dr. Kim suggests using convenient makeup remover wipes that are easy to toss in your purse and are also perfect for travel. They can be found in any beauty aisle and are inexpensive. Of course, good-old soap and water work just fine. (Just remember the following tip!)

Moisturize, moisturize, moisturize

There is, perhaps, nothing that screams tired more than scaly, dry skin. It not only feels terrible, rough, and itchy, but it looks awful, and yet it is so simple to avoid. The key is prevention.

“Invest in a good hand cream and make a point to use it after every hand washing,” says Dr. Kim. That adds up to multiple times a day for moms, but consider that every time you change a diaper or make a meal and wash your hands, you are losing moisture, so it is necessary to replenish each time. “Constantly washing hands, cooking, and laundering can

dry your skin to the point that a rash called ‘hand eczema’ develops. For severe cases, you may need to use a cortisone cream for several days.”

Apply sunscreen

Unless you are allergic, it is vital to use sunscreen every day to protect against skin cancer, advises Dr. Kim.

“Make sure you put on a product with SPF 30 or higher before you leave the house! This can be a simple sunscreen, or you can also try a BB cream that includes antioxidants and a tinted moisturizer — perfect for a natural, everyday makeup look!”

The key is to develop a routine, so that your skin-care regimen become a part of your typical day, because being a more relaxed and satisfied mom who cares for herself will only yield the very best for your baby.

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.

Dabney and Dad

BY PAUL MEKLEIN



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From tears to cheers

Father and daughter set a goal, and hang on until the very end

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

“We did it, Dad!” Jessie ran across the yard and leaped into my arms. After the hug, we slapped a high five. Her smile told the neighborhood: Jessie and I had reached our goal!

Last summer, 10-year-old Jessie and I set out to catch 100 softballs in a row. We stood in our front yard, about 12 yards away from each other, and tossed the ball between my tan leather glove and Jessie’s pink one. We often had to pick the ball up off the grass, sometimes from our neighbor’s yard.

By the end of the summer, our record stood at 33 consecutive catches. Though we fell 67 catches shy, we kept 100 as our goal. Winners keep trying — that’s what my wife, Mattie, and I have taught Jessie since she was a toddler.

Last October, Jessie and I recorded a brief video to promote a Halloween contest. Jessie did great. I did, too, if you don’t count the first 99 takes. As my eyes focused on the bright light and camera, my mouth forgot the words. It didn’t help that I only had about four hours of sleep the night before — at least that’s what I told myself.

Although it was not my finest moment, I am proud I did it. I stepped out of my comfort zone and gave it my best effort. I did feel a little extra pressure, though, as I wanted to make Jessie proud of her dad. She tickled me when it was finally over, after what felt like “take 100.” She came over to my chair and gave me a little hug.

“You did great, Dad.”

Getting back to our 100-softball-catch goal, Jessie and I kept tossing, catching, and dropping softballs throughout the fall and winter. A few

weeks ago, we tried again. We had only tossed a few balls when one of my throws glanced off Jessie’s glove and hit her leg, a little above her right ankle. She fell to the ground, held her ankle, and cried.

I remained calm. Jessie has many strengths and drama is one of them.

“Shake it off, you’ll be okay,” I said. Mattie, hearing the commotion, ran out of the house. I told her there was a “minor incident,” and “possibly there will be a black-and-blue mark.”

Jessie’s story differed slightly.

“Mom, my leg is broken.” After a little mom sympathy, Jessie said, “I think I passed out for a minute.” Mattie broke out in laughter.

Mattie went back into the house, and Jessie and I began tossing again.

Before too long, we had broken our record of 33 catches. Could we make it to 100?

I threw the ball to Jessie. She caught it, 97. She threw it back and I caught it, 98. As I pitched number 99 to Jessie, the ball felt like a 50-pound weight, but my throw was on target, and Jessie caught it. All Jessie needed to do was to make one more good toss and Dad had to catch it. She did, which is where this story began.

After our celebration, I said, “Let’s see how high we can go.” I tossed the ball; it hit the end of Jessie’s glove and fell to the ground.

Although our success was short-lived, I’m proud Jessie recovered from her “broken leg” and continued on, like her dad did with the video. Sometimes we need to get past the tears of pain or embarrassment before we can appreciate the victory cheers.

In the years ahead, Jessie and I will continue to set new goals and strive to achieve them. Chances are we’ll end up with a few bumps and bruises along the way, and probably some tears. But we’ll also share hugs, high fives, and cheers. I just hope I don’t pass out, even for a minute, and miss any of the “We did it!” moments.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments.

Patrick Hempfing had a 20-year-long professional career in finance 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 @PatrickHempfung. Hempfing’s first book, “MoMEnts: A Dad Holds On,” is scheduled for release on Amazon.com on May 1.



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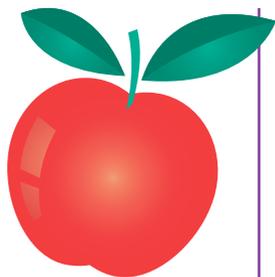
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DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

All the skills needed for kindergarten

Dear teacher,

What do kindergarten teachers feel are the most important skills that young children need in order to be ready for kindergarten?

Dear parent,

Look at the list below to see how kindergarten teachers ranked — from most important to least important — what they are looking for in their kindergarten students:

- Comprehension of the spoken word
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- Social development
- Self-help skills
- Emotional development
- Speaking skills
- Pre-reading activities
- Understanding numbers
- Gross motor skills (large muscles)

You can use the Kindergarten Readiness checklist (<http://dearteacher.com/content/my-child-ready-kindergarten-0>) on our website to get an idea of how ready your children are for kindergarten.

Handling kids' complaints about teachers

Dear teacher,

Every day, my fifth grader comes home and complains about what she calls her very mean and demanding math teacher. What should my role be in this conflict?

Dear parent,

Don't jump the gun and call the teacher right away or ask for your child to switch teachers. Instead, be a fact-gatherer first, to make sure you completely understand the situation before searching for solutions. At preschool and elementary levels, it is usually wise to visit the classroom in order to see exactly what is happening.

After that, it is time for a conference with the teacher.

Be sure to point out to your child that it is natural for conflict to occur.



For example, there will be bosses and neighbors in the future with whom your daughter will have conflicts. This can be a first lesson in learning how to get along with difficult people. Do act as a mentor, however, in guiding her to find possible solutions to this problem. And be sure to express to your child that you have confidence in her ability to handle this situation.

The Common Core science standards

Dear teacher,

I know we have Common Core Standards for English language arts and literacy and math. Are we going to have them for science, too? Will all schools then be teaching the same things?

Dear parent,

In April 2013, the science standards known as the Next Generation Science Standards were issued. There has not been a great rush to adopt these standards as there was for the earlier Common Core Standards. There are several reasons for this. First of all, most of the states are making sure that they have the Common Core curriculum under their belt, and teachers are comfortable using that new curriculum.

There is also the fact that there are no federal incentives for adopting them.

Plus, states are trying to coordinate their existing science standards with the new ones. It will also take time to write new curricula, provide professional development, and prepare assessments.

The science standards do not spell out what should be taught in as much detail as Common Core did for English language arts and literacy and math. In fact, many states may be ending up with their own version of the science standards. The states and local districts will be filling in the details so students can learn the key ideas in the standards. Therefore, not all schools will be teaching the same things in science.

Right now, science educators estimate that it will be another three to four years before schools transition to the new standards, and even then, it is expected to be an ongoing process.

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

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TEETH TIPS

**DR. LAVANYA
VENKATESWARAN**
Pediatric Dentist

A healthy diet for healthy kid's teeth

As a pediatric dentist, wife, mother of a toddler (and a new baby on the way), I am keen to instill healthy oral habits in my family. Preventing dental decay is important, and a key factor that can cause decay is poor diet. A diet high in sugar and carbohydrates will contribute to developing cavities. There are simple tricks and substitutions you can make in your child's diet to make it more teeth friendly. Here are some suggestions that I discuss with my patients' families, too:

Breakfast

Instead of traditional pancakes with maple syrup, try oatmeal-banana pancakes. Swap your pancake flour for instant oats, and naturally sweeten them with crushed ripe banana in the batter, or any other fruit of choice. This way, you avoid the sugary syrup and you get the added benefit of fiber from the oatmeal. In addition:

- Pick cereals that don't have more than 10 grams of sugar per serving.
- Opt for fresh-squeezed juices or plain milk as morning beverages versus juices from concentrate or flavored milk.
- With bread, try to pick whole-grain varieties versus plain white or refined flours.

Lunch

A lot of parents confess that they don't know what their child eats when she buys lunch at school, so keep track of what your child buys and look at school menus together at the beginning of the week, so you can make healthy decisions together!

If you are packing your child's lunch:

- Avoid packing a sugary juice box, opt for water or plain milk.
- Instead of a sweet treat for dessert, make fruit the dessert inside the lunchbox.
- If your child has braces — and if she has time — brushing her teeth after lunch is a great idea to keep food from sticking in the teeth, wires,



and brackets for the rest of the day.

Snacks

Almonds and walnuts are a great idea for a snack, giving you the crunch of a potato chip without the fried content or carbohydrate excess. If allergies are an issue, try sunflower seeds or soy nuts. Almonds and walnuts are basic in their pH, which can neutralize acidity in the mouth. Acidity is a factor that allows bacteria to cause dental decay.

Avoid too much dried fruit, like raisins, dried cranberries, mangoes, etc. The dehydrating process releases more intrinsic sugar from the fruit. Combine that with the sticky quality, and it's a recipe that can lead to cavities.

Instead, opt for fresh vegetables and fruits. Carrots, celery, and apples are great choices, and the nature of them can help cleanse the oral cavity. You can also add natural peanut butter (or SunButter if allergies are present) to them to make it a more appealing snack.

Cheese is also a great option be-

cause it has calcium, casein, and phosphorus, all of which have protective effects on your enamel. Another good dairy choice is plain yogurt or yogurt sweetened with only fresh fruit.

Avoid cookies, cakes, chocolate, and candy at snack time and keep them as once-in-a-while treats. That way, they stay just that — a treat, and not a regular part of your child's diet.

These are just some suggestions, but I know it can be hard to shape a diet when you have a picky eater or a child with many food allergies, so I encourage you to discuss diet with your pediatric dentist. Together, you can come up with strategies that suit your child. Diet definitely has a role in your child's oral health, and making simple switches early on can lead to happy smiles in the future!

Dr. Lavanya Venkateswaran is a board-certified pediatric dentist. She practices downtown at Tribeca Smiles as well as uptown at Park Ave Smile. She is an assistant professor of Clinical Dentistry at Columbia University Medical Center and is an attending dentist in the department of Pediatric Dentistry.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Save the vitamins!

You do your best to select nutrient-rich foods for your family. What happens to those nutrients once you arrive home and prepare that food?

The method used to store, prepare, and cook can all affect a food's nutrient profile. Since you can waste those nutrients, here are some ways to maximize the nutritional quality of the foods you and your family are eating.

Use as little water as possible when cooking vegetables.

"Water-soluble vitamins are easily dissolved when they hit water," says Alissa Rumsey, a New York-based registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "The less you use, the more you preserve the nutrients. Instead of boiling in an uncovered pot of water, try microwaving or steaming them instead."

Refrigerate leftover food in airtight, moisture-proof containers. When cooked food is exposed to air, more nutrients are lost.

Purchase frozen fruits or vegetables at this time of year.



"The fruit or vegetable is picked at the height of ripeness, then quickly frozen, which preserves the vitamins and minerals," says Rumsey. "Often, frozen vegetables and fruits can have higher nutrient content than their fresh counterparts, especially if that fresh produce was picked a few weeks ago."

When preparing beets, carrots, broccoli, or other whole vegetables, use the entire plant from root to

stem. This reduces food waste, as well.

Store veggies and fruit in airtight containers in the fridge. In addition to the cold temperature, high humidity and less air contact lessens nutrient loss.

What NOT to do:

Avoid boiling vegetables in large amounts of water and then tossing that water.

"You're throwing away many of the water-soluble vitamins," says Rumsey.

Don't cut vegetables into tiny pieces. This exposes more of the surface to air, light, heat, and water, bringing with it a higher chance of losing nutrients.

An interesting exception to this rule of thumb: garlic and other members of the allium family (onions, leeks and shallots). By chopping these foods into tiny pieces and allowing them to sit for 10 minutes before cooking, you actually increase their active components.

Don't cook veggies for a long time. To cut down on cooking times, cover the pot, place veggies in already boiling water, and learn to enjoy them with a bit of a crunchy texture.

The most important way to optimize your family's nutrient intake, however, is to simply eat more produce.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who has long made saving nutrients her mission. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Mediterranean potato soup

Serves four

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Ready Time: 35 minutes

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ tsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth (or vegetable broth)
- 3 medium red potatoes, unpeeled, cubed
- 3 carrots, sliced
- ¼ tsp ground pepper
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 15-oz can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup (2 ounces) whole wheat noodles, uncooked
- 2 cups fresh spinach or 1 cup frozen spinach
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese, shredded



DIRECTIONS: Heat oil in a 2-quart pot, sauté garlic and onions about three to four minutes. Add chicken broth, water, potatoes, carrots and seasonings; cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Add kidney beans and noodles. Bring to boil again, cook until noodles are soft. Remove from heat.

Just before serving, add spinach to

pot and stir gently. Ladle into bowls and serve with Parmesan cheese.

NUTRITION FACTS: 350 calories, 62 g carbohydrates, 19 g protein, 5 g fat, 62 mg cholesterol, 1510 mg potassium, 420 mg sodium, 38% DV vitamin C, 14 g fiber.

Recipe used with permission by: Colorado Potato Administrative Committee



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

When money matters

Consulting a certified divorce financial analyst

Getting through a divorce may “take a village.” That is, different professionals may be needed while going through the process. As a mediator I help divorcing spouses (and others in conflict) reach their own agreements and stay out of court. I may suggest that clients meet with another professional, depending on their needs. One such professional is a certified divorce financial analyst.

Haven’t heard of certified divorce financial analysts? Less well known than accountants and tax attorneys, they offer services that can benefit almost anyone. Jamie Wolff, a vice president with UBS Financial Services’ Bell and Levitt Wealth Management Group, is a certified divorce financial analyst who offered the following tips when asked about the most important things divorcing couples should know:

The earlier the better

A certified divorce financial analyst can assist someone who is already divorced, but Wolff recom-

mends meeting with one before the divorce begins. Then, or even during the divorce, money-saving plans can be developed that may be unavailable once the divorce is final.

“I have seen blunders” that could have been avoided if planning had started earlier, she says. These analysts can review proposed settlements to see if financial needs will be met, and develop alternative proposals.

Financial decisions now will affect your future

This point may be obvious, but I mention it because many of us find money confusing, stressful, and even overwhelming. Mediation clients tell me, “I want the divorce over with. I don’t care about the money. It doesn’t matter.”

But money does matter, and having the right professional work with you will make the process more manageable.

Understand what you have — and what you will need

Certified divorce financial analysts (like mediators) help clients with budgeting so that they can understand where they are financially.

“Understand your spending. Really,” Wolff emphasizes. “Understand future earning potential and consider what will you need to be happy and comfortable in the future.”

Learning about clients as individuals, certified divorce financial analysts can help create a plan for both the near and long-term future. Divorce is largely about “turning one lifestyle into two, and you need numbers for that.”

A dollar doesn’t equal a dollar when dividing assets

“A common mistake that occurs while filing for divorce is made when people think a dollar equals a dollar in distributing assets,” says Wolff. “Financial specialists in the field of divorce may be needed in order to assess the future value of particular assets (such as a pension or a business), which helps make the process

of dividing assets equitably more likely. Splitting up assets by the dollar amount fails to consider the potential growth and tax ramifications of that asset. The more complex the sum of assets, the more difficult the process of dividing becomes.”

‘Equitable’ and ‘equal’ are not the same thing

Equitable means fair, whereas equal means the same amount. For example: Spouses have \$10,000 in the bank. Each takes \$5,000 (an equal amount).

Example (from a famous mediator, John Haynes): Husband and wife own a boat. Husband wants something in exchange for the boat. Wife says essentially that “You had an affair. You have your girlfriend. I want the boat.” Husband agrees. Both feel that wife getting the boat is fair, though it’s not a financially equal arrangement.

Decide what is most important to you in a settlement

In happier days a couple purchased a painting for \$50. They have been arguing for weeks over who will keep it.

While property may have sentimental value — and how you feel about property can be a legitimate measure of its value — is that what such arguments are really about? Occasionally. But often we argue to argue, and the objects we fight over have little meaning in themselves.

Whether you mediate or litigate, a certified divorce financial analyst can be helpful in thinking through the financial issues.

Jamie Wolff can be reached at (212) 309-3086 or Jamie.wolff@ubs.com.

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.





GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

Straight talk about online harassment

Cyberbullying may seem like something that happens to other people, but the statistics say otherwise. A study from the Pew Research Center found that, among adults, 40 percent have experienced online harassment and 73 percent have witnessed it.

For teens, the numbers are a little lower, although researchers note that many adolescents don't report incidents of cyberbullying for the same reason they don't talk about offline harassment: they feel intimidated and humiliated. They assume nothing can be done. And they worry talking to adults will make the problem worse.

That's why parents need to be proactive.

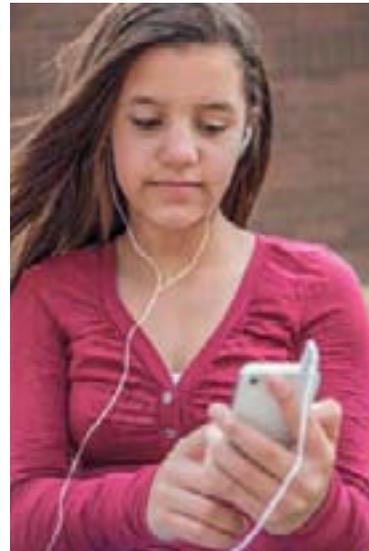
The hard fact is that most children will eventually encounter people who use the internet to intimidate, harass, and threaten others.

The best way to fortify kids is to talk — in advance — about what cyberbullying is, how to prevent it, and what can be done when it happens. Here's some of what your child needs to know:

Recognize

Cyberbullying comes in many forms. The mildest is mean comments, name-calling, and shaming. Painful as this may be for the target, it isn't dangerous. Learning to shake off mean comments is a life skill. To give kids perspective, talk about the American tradition of free speech. Nasty, misinformed people have a right to their opinion, but that doesn't mean your child should pay attention.

Other forms of harassment are more serious, especially if they continue day after day. These include threats of personal harm including rape, spreading lies that damage a person's reputation, posting personal information including cell-phone numbers or sexual photos, and techno attacks such as taking control of a social media account. Help your child distinguish between unpleasantness and risk.



Be proactive

The best way to deal with any problem is to avoid it. Raise your child with the assumption that people will be kind to each other. Model that way of living in your home, and help your child find friends who respect and appreciate each other.

Online, help your child build a community where people treat each other well. Point your child toward the helpful Social Media Safety Guides produced by Heartmob (iheartmob.org). There are separate guides with straightforward explanations of privacy tools for Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Tumblr, and YouTube.

Get creative

Because bullies can't always be avoided and authorities can't always be effective, a growing number of people are taking creative steps to make the internet safer for everyone. Kids who know about these efforts are less likely to feel hopeless about bullying if it happens to them or they witness it. They may still feel shock, shame, and even fear, but they will also know that they have allies and role models who have figured out effective ways to respond.

•A Thin Line provides detailed information about online harassment

and encourages kids to share steps they've taken to assert their digital rights. The site, developed by MTV, also has a "for grown-ups" section that lists helpful resources (athinline.org/pages/parents-and-educators).

•BeStrong Emoji are little symbols, distributed by Vodafone, that allow kids to encourage people who are being harassed (vodafone.com/content/parents.html).

•We Heart It is a social media app that limits harassment by allowing users to "heart" but not comment on content uploaded by others (weheartit.com).

•StompOutBullying runs a free, confidential chat line for teens over 13. Trained volunteers provide support to young people who are distressed about online harassment (stompoutbullying.org).

•The Speech Project details all the ways young women can be harassed online. The tools and resources section provides up-to-date information about what girls and young women can do to protect and defend themselves (wmcspeechproject.com).

•StopIt is software that allows people within a community to anonymously send screenshots of material that is offensive or abusive. Schools that use the app have seen a reduction in the number of cyberbullying incidents (stopitcyberbully.com).

It's natural for parents to want their children to live in a kinder, safer world. At the same time, parents need to equip children with the skills they need to cope with problems, should they arise. When parents talk — in advance — about communities that have mobilized to combat cyberbullying, children become stronger, more confident, and more likely to respond constructively to whatever comes their way online.

Carolyn Jabs raised three computer-savvy kids including one with special needs. Her new book, "Cooperative Wisdom: Bringing People Together When Things Fall Apart," will be published in 2016. Visit carolynjabs.com for more information.

Calendar

APRIL



Embark on a great live-action adventure

The great, big, lovable Clifford will be coming to the Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College on April 17.

Children coming to the live-action production of "Clifford the Big Red Dog" embark on a new adventure with the dog with the heart of gold. Based on the classic children's books by Norman Bridwell,

this brand-new musical celebrates the timeless values of sharing, respect, and cooperation.

"Clifford the Big Red Dog," April 17 at 2 pm; tickets are \$18.

Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College [2900 Campus Rd. between Hillel Place and Avenue H in Midwood, (718) 951-4500, www.brooklyncenter.org]

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Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

FRI, APRIL 1

IN BROOKLYN

Gala and Auction: Villain, 50 N. Third St.; <https://ps132pta.ejoinme.org>; tickets; 6 pm to 11:30 pm; \$50 in advance (\$60 at the door: \$100 for two).

PS 132 is hosting its seventh annual event to benefit the school. Tickets include food, drink, desserts, and dancing. Raffle to bid on items in both live and silent auctions or at the door.

SAT, APRIL 2

IN BROOKLYN

West Point Day: Fort Hamilton Army Base, Seventh Avenue and Poly Place; www.hamilton.army.mil; 9:30 am to 1 pm; Free.

Fort Hamilton Army Base is hosting this event to highlight the military academy to the local community. This is a great event for parents to attend to discover the programs and value of a military education. Special performances from the Hellcat Pipes and Drums, Rabble Rousers, cheerleaders and Cadet Drill Team, plus special exhibits include fencing, law enforcement, boxing, and more. Registration recommended.

Quilt show: Grand Ballroom at Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge, 333 Adams St.; (718) 833-1490; www.quiltbrooklyn.org; 10 am to 6 pm; \$10 (children under 12 free).

The Brooklyn Quilters Guild presents this year's show that will feature more than 100 quilts made by members. Some will even be available for purchase — including one 90-inch-by-90-inch quilt will be raffled off. Vendors, a silent auction, sewing and quilting demonstrations, and local Girl Scout troops will be working on their textile badges.

Artie Bennett: The Bookmark Shoppe, 8415 Third Ave. at 84th Street; (718) 833-5115; Noon; Free.

The author of "The Butt Book" will share and read from all four of his popular illustrated books for a special Saturday Storytime.

Opening season: Prospect Park Band



Jam with Miss Nina

Get ready to jump, jam, and jive with Miss Nina on April 13 at the Bushwick Public Library

Children's musician Miss Nina presents her high-energy Jump & Jam with Miss Nina and Nate. Children can sing along with Nina and Nathan Terry to all their fa-

vorite tunes that are included in her weekly video show.

Jump & Jam on April 13 at 10 am. Free.

Bushwick Public Library [340 Bushwick Ave. at Seigel Street in Bushwick, (718) 602-1348; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org]

Shell, Prospect Park West and Ninth Street; (718) 965-8900; www.bricarts-media.org/cb; noon-5 pm; Free (\$2 per ride on the carousel).

Celebrate the opening of the park including the world-famous Carousel with a ride and fun activities.

Spring Planting: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 2 to 4 pm; \$3.

Join members of the Alliance to plant a crop of flax and make a pot out of newspaper.

Next Stage & Youth Performance: Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater; 7 pm; \$25.

Next Stage highlights dance companies from the area. Chosen from annual submissions, these dance makers represent what to watch in concert dance.

FURTHER AFIELD

Operation slumber!: Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 at W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 245-0072; www.intrepid-museum.org; 6 pm to 8 am; \$120 (\$99 museum members).

Spend the night aboard the Intrepid. 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, APRIL 3

IN BROOKLYN

Quilt show: 10 am to 4 pm. Grand Ballroom at Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge. See Saturday, April 2.

Story time: powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 11:30 am; free.

Katy Woolard author of "French Toast Shoes" will read and then lead a fun activity. RSVP requested.

Opening season: Noon-5 pm. Prospect Park Band Shell. See Saturday, April 2.

Interactive Concert: Shorefront YM-YWHA, 3300 Coney Island Ave.; (347) 689-1842; www.musicforautism.org; 1 pm; Free.

Special musical production for families with individuals with autism featuring Stefanie Grivvin, Bill Cole, and Ras Moshe Burnett. RSVP required.

Volunteer Corps: Prospect Park Ninth Street Entrance, Ninth Street and Prospect Park West; 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

Tweens and teens who want to help take care of the park will meet with other families. Pre-register on line.

Next Stage & Youth Performance: 2 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Saturday, April 2.

Spring Planting: 2 to 4 pm. Lefferts Historic Homestead. See Saturday, April 2.

FURTHER AFIELD

A celebration of Beverly Cleary: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street, Manhattan; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 4 pm; \$15.

The stars align for the 100th birthday of the beloved children's author with live readings, drawings, and music. The event caps the Thalia Kids' Book Club series and features the talents of Paul Giamatti, Amy Ryan, Liev Schreiber, David Hyde Pierce, and many others. Children will also take part in many child-friendly activities.

TUES, APRIL 5

IN BROOKLYN

First Discoveries: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 9:30 am to 10:30 am; Free with Garden Admission.

Calling all explorers from 2 to 4 years old to plant a seed, touch a wriggly worm and hear a story by the meadow nook.

Kids' Discovery Stations: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10:15 am to 12:15 pm; Free with Garden Admission.

Dig in and get your hands dirty, investigate, and classify plants, learn how a carnivorous plant eats, and explore the meadow.

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

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

WED, APRIL 6

IN BROOKLYN

Kids' Discovery Stations: 10:15 am to 12:15 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Tuesday, April 5.

Continued on page 52

Calendar

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

Continued from page 51

Middle-grade book club: powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 5:30 pm; free.

Staffer Jordan Nielsen leads a discussion on "The Dreamer" by Pam Munoz Ryan. For tweens. RSVP required.

THURS, APRIL 7

IN BROOKLYN

Kids' Discovery Stations: 10:15 am to 12:15 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Tuesday, April 5.

SAT, APRIL 9

IN BROOKLYN

Book Drive: Owl's Head Park, 68th Street and Colonial Road; www.facebook.com/owlsheadvolunteers; 10:30 am to 4:30 pm; Free (books sold separately).

The Girls Scouts of America are hosting this event where you can donate unwanted books as well as purchase used books.

Family Discovery Weekends:

Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; Free with Garden Admission.

Families experiment, learn, and play together in this fun drop-in event and then do a nature-based craft.

Baby and Family Expo: Industry City, 233 37th St. between Second and Third avenues; achildgrows.com/expo; 11 am-3:30 pm; \$15.

A Child Grows in Brooklyn returns with its fifth annual event featuring interactive demonstrations, the latest in baby gear, top advice from parenting experts, kid-friendly entertainment, and access to community resources. Mil's Trills will be on hand to entertain, plus face painting, and super soccer stars. Registration required.

"Fiddlefest": Prospect Heights High School, 883 Classon Ave. between Union and President streets; (718) 230-4825; 2 pm; \$10 (\$5 children under 12).

Under the sea is presented by the students at the Prospect Heights High School.

FURTHER AFIELD

Scout Day - Astronomy: 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 2:30 pm; call for tickets.

Scouts will learn the ins and outs of amateur astronomy from museum educators, as well as the important role the stars play for pilots and astronauts navigating through the sky. During Astronomy Scout Days, Cub Scouts will work on their Astronomy Belt Loops and Aca-



An old-fashioned bee

The Brooklyn Quilters Guild will be hosting its annual Quilt Show on April 2 and 3 in the Grand Ballroom at New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge.

This year's show will feature more than 100 quilts made by members. Some will be available for purchase, and one 90-inch-by-90-inch quilt will be raffled off. It was created by Sylvia Hernandez and inspired by Edyta Sitar's "Dreaming." First prize is the quilt, second prize is a Pfaff sewing machine, and the third is a basket

full of quilting supplies.

Visitors can also get sewing and quilting demonstrations and local Girl Scout troops will be working on their textile badges. Children can play an "I Spy" game with prizes.

Quilt Show, April 2 from 10 am to 6 pm and April 3 from 10 am to 4 pm. Tickets \$10, children under 12 free. Raffles are \$1 each.

Grand Ballroom at New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge [333 Adams St. in Downtown, (718) 833-1490; www.quiltbrooklyn.org]

demic Pins while Boy Scouts will work toward their Astronomy Merit Badges.

SUN, APRIL 10

IN BROOKLYN

Domestic violence rally: Cadman Plaza Park; www.cadvny.org; 10 am to 2 pm; Free.

The Center Against Domestic Violence — with support of National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators — is hosting a community awareness fair honoring crime victims of domestic violence. Hot 97 will make a two-hour appearance with station DJ and street team, station promo vehicle, sound system, games and prizes. Boxing gym WTF demos shadow boxing and defense class. There will be presenta-

tions given by local officials, survivors of domestic violence and advocates. Promotional giveaways and informational material will be distributed!

Family Discovery Weekends:

10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 9.

Bones of Old Dutch House tour:

Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; 11 am to noon; \$10.

Tour guides lead you through history and you can examine the white oak timbers, climb the staircase for a view of the attic's smokehouse, and go into the cellar to look at the foundation. You can see how much the house has changed

in 230 years. For older children. Reservations required.

Story time: powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 11:30 am; free.

Authors Ame Dyckman and Zacchariah Ohora read from their new book "Horrible Bear." RSVP requested.

Matzah factory: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm-museum.org; 1 pm, 1:45 pm and 2:30 pm; \$13 (\$10 seniors).

Bake your own matzah, race against the clock as you mix, punch, roll, and bake before the dough rises. Then take it home.

FURTHER AFIELD

Science workshop: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 11 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission and members.

As part of the Milstein Science Series the museum offers Wild Antarctica, a fun science festival where children learn about Antarctica, the coldest and windiest place on Earth, children learn about new discoveries of amazing creatures and the unique geology beneath the ice. Meet live penguins, try hands-on activities, and experience dynamic performances.

Special Needs Expo: Long Island Hilton, 598 Broadhollow Rd., Long Island; (516) 279-3727; info@specialneedsexpos.com; www.specialneedsexpos.com; 11 am to 4 pm; Free.

Discover the special needs resources for children, adults, and professionals. Meet many service providers and obtain product information, attend seminars, and view demonstrations. Fun for kids too!

TUES, APRIL 12

IN BROOKLYN

First Discoveries: 9:30 am to 10:30 am. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Tuesday, April 5.

Bug Out: 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, April 5.

FURTHER AFIELD

Operation slumber! Girls Only:

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. 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). Girls receive a goodie bag with a T-shirt! It's perfect for girls 8 to 12 years

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

old. Individual cots provided. Bring your sleeping bag.

WED, APRIL 13

IN BROOKLYN

Miss Nina: Bushwick Public Library, 340 Bushwick Ave. at Seigel Street; (718) 602-1348; www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org; 10 am; Free.

Children's musician Miss Nina presents Jump & Jam with Miss Nina and Nate. She performs all her songs including hits from her weekly video show.

THURS, APRIL 14

IN BROOKLYN

Pop-Pop-Popcorn: Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (212) 353-2332; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater; 10 am and noon; \$8.

It's the latest fun-filled hour from the Paperbag Players. Bursting with new work and classic sketches. Just right for children 3 to 8 years old.

SAT, APRIL 16

IN BROOKLYN

Family Discovery Weekends:

10:30 am to 12:30 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 9.

Show Up!: Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater; 3 pm and 6 pm; \$32.50.

Presented by Cynthia King Dance Studio. The production is an energetic anthology of original choreography performed by dancers of all ages. The work unites ballerinas, B-Boys, modern dancers, and more under an eclectic soundtrack that includes classical, jazz, bluegrass, hip-hop, and contemporary music, as well as live African drumming.

FURTHER AFIELD

Bird walks: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 9 am, 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$12 (\$10 members).

Observe the birds of Central Park with museum naturalist Noah Burg. Young explorers will begin their adventure by learning the tools and skills of observation using museum specimens. Then head out to Central Park to identify the many bird species and habitats in the park. Binoculars and guides are included. This program is recommended for families with children ages 4-10.

Green Festival Expo: Jacob Javits Convention Center, 655 W. 34th St. and 11th Avenue, Manhattan; greenfestivals.org; 10 am to 5 pm; \$10 per day (\$19 weekend pass).

Join Mother Nature to celebrate Earth Day at the biggest greenest festival.



Cherry blossom time

Sakura Matsuri comes to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden for a weekend of celebration and culture on April 30 and May 1.

Sakura Matsuri is the annual cherry blossom festival that celebrates traditional and contemporary Japanese culture.

Featured events include Taiko Drumming, a cosplay fashion show, tea ceremonies, kabuki dancers, a demonstration of samurai sword fighting, manga

drawing, a bonsai children's workshop, a display of beautiful parasols, and of course, the beautiful cherry blossom trees in the gardens.

Sakura Matsuri on April 30 and May 1, from 10 am to 6 pm. Tickets are \$20 and \$25; Free for children under 12.

Brooklyn Botanic Garden [1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, (718) 623-7220, www.bbg.org].

There will be dozens of experts and presenters providing materials on how you can live a better greener life. Loads of children's activities including an interactive sustainability learning game and Growums Captain Eggplant teaching gardening tips to kids. Dr. Oz's Health Corps provides lessons on sugary drinks and the Swim Strong Foundation hosts water activities.

SUN, APRIL 17

IN BROOKLYN

Story time: powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 11:30 am; free.

Author Paulette Bogan shares a new adventure of the lovable duo Virgil and Owen. RSVP requested.

Earth Day: Prospect Park Audubon

Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Celebrate Mother Earth with fun activities from fishing lessons to how to keep the park healthy, and a parade where marchers will make instruments out of recycled materials and then jam out with Bash the Trash.

Matzah factory: 1 pm, 1:45 pm and 2:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Sunday, April 10.

"Clifford the Big Red Dog": Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. between Hillel Place and Avenue H; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenter.org; 2 pm; \$18.

Embark on a new adventure with Clifford, the big red dog with the

heart of gold. Based on the classic children's books by Norman Bridwell, this brand-new musical celebrates the timeless values of sharing, respect, and cooperation.

National Grid Earth Day Celebration: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. between Hillel Place and Avenue H; (718) 951-4500; www.brooklyncenter.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children and adults alike will enjoy live music, arts and crafts, and street performers at this free community festival, where interactive family activities highlight the need to create a more sustainable future and care for the earth.

Show Up!: 3 pm and 6 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Saturday, April 16.

FURTHER AFIELD

Walk MS NYC: Pier 26, West and North Moore streets, Manhattan; (855) 372-1331; www.walkmsnyc.org; 9 am - 1:30 pm; Registration fees.

Fund-raising to support MS research with musician David Osmond performing. Walkers meet at Pier 26 and walk along the park, enjoying views of the Hudson and New Jersey. Walk begins at 10:15 am.

Green Festival Expo: 10 am to 5 pm. Jacob Javits Convention Center. See Saturday, April 16.

"Cinderella": Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. between Park and Madison avenues, Manhattan; (800) 982-2787; www.nytb.org; 11 am, 1 pm and 3:30 pm; \$24 (\$34 adults).

The New York Theatre Ballet will perform Donald Mahler's version of the classic tale of finding your perfect prince.

MON, APRIL 18

FURTHER AFIELD

Frontiers lecture: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 7:30 pm; \$15 (\$13.50 seniors/students) \$12 members.

Older teens enjoy lecture series Gravitational Waves - Messengers from the Warped Universe, which discusses some of the most violent events in the universe warp space-time and create gravitational waves. Physicist Nergis Mavalvala discusses how we search for these ripples in space-time and decode the information they carry about events as far back in time as the first moments after the Big Bang. Held in the Hayden Planetarium Space Theatre.

Continued on page 54

Calendar

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

Continued from page 53

TUES, APRIL 19

IN BROOKLYN

First Discoveries: 9:30 am to 10:30 am. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Tuesday, April 5.

Bug Out: 3:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, April 5.

FRI, APRIL 22

IN BROOKLYN

Recital and performance: Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater; 7:30 pm; \$15 (\$10 students and seniors).

LIU Brooklyn dance majors perform an exciting program of modern and contemporary dance. Work by the Ronald K. Brown /Evidence Dance Company will be featured, alongside a piece choreographed by LIU dance faculty member Alenka Cizmesija.

SAT, APRIL 23

IN BROOKLYN

Recital and performance: 2 pm and 8 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Friday, April 22.

SUN, APRIL 24

IN BROOKLYN

Story time: powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; www.powerhousearena.com; 11:30 am; free.

"The Best Days are the Dog Days," by author Aaron Meshon shares the joys of nap time, of pup and his sis.

Recital and performance: 3 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Friday, April 22.



Family Festival fun

What better way is there to celebrate spring? The annual Family Festival presented by Puppetry Arts is set for April 30 in Park Slope.

The borough-based theater Puppetry Arts hosts this fun day of activities that includes characters from Star Wars, a bouncy house, arts and crafts, and a puppet-making workshop.

The event, held each year, is a great way to meet your neighbors and help out by supporting free

cultural programs in area schools and shelters.

Family Festival on April 30 from 11 am to 3 pm; rain or shine.

The first 200 children receive a Puppetry Arts Trick or Treat Goody Bag.

Admission to the festival is free on April 30, but there is a \$2-4 activities fee; \$5 for tote decorating and \$4 for bounce house.

Old Stone House by JJ Byrne Park (Fifth Avenue and Fourth Street in Park Slope, info@puppetryarts.org).

MON, APRIL 25

IN BROOKLYN

Ultimate science show: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm.museum; 1 pm, 2:30 pm and 4 pm; \$15 (\$12 seniors) Plus museum admission.

Discover and explore a world of science that is interactive and exciting! Children will enjoy a one-of-a-kind performance that is filled with laughter and edge-of-your-seat entertainment.

Game Show: Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; www.jcm.museum; 1:30 pm, 2:30 pm 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Everybody loves a quiz show. At the Jewish Children's Museum, visitors can compete against each other. Approx. 30 min.

TUES, APRIL 26

IN BROOKLYN

Ultimate science show: 1 pm, 2:30 pm and 4 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Game Show: 1:30 pm, 2:30 pm 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

FURTHER AFIELD

Astronomy Live: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 7 pm; \$15 (\$13.50 seniors/students) \$12 members.

The Force Fields Around Spaceship Earth presents the invisible force fields all around us that make life on Earth possible. Held in the Hayden Planetarium Space Theatre.

WED, APRIL 27

IN BROOKLYN

Ultimate science show: 1 pm, 2:30

pm and 4 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Game Show: 1:30 pm, 2:30 pm 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

THURS, APRIL 28

IN BROOKLYN

Ultimate science show: 12:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

Game Show: 12:30 pm. Jewish Children's Museum. See Monday, April 25.

SAT, APRIL 30

IN BROOKLYN

Sakura Matsuri: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 10 am; \$20 - \$25 (Free for children 12 and younger).

The 35th annual Cherry Blossom festival, features traditional and contemporary Japanese dances, performances and customs.

Park Slope Family Festival: By JJ Byrne Park, Fourth Street and Fifth Avenue; info@puppetryarts.org; 11 am to 3 pm; Free admission (\$2-4 activities fee; \$5 tote decorating and \$4 bounce house).

Presented by Puppetry Arts, families have fun and meet with Star Wars' characters, puppet-making classes, games, prizes, and loads of fun. First 200 kids get a free Puppetry Arts Trick-or Treat Goody Bag.

FURTHER AFIELD

Run for the Wild: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.wcsrun-forthewild.org; 8 am; Registration fee.

Runners/walkers of the 5K run/walk can run on behalf of any species that inspires them, new fund-raising prizes

Learn all about the gas we pass



Children's author Artie Bennett visits the Bookmark Shoppe for a special Saturday Storytime on April 2 and shares his latest book, "Belches, Burps, and Farts - Oh My!"

He has tackled butts, poop, and a panda meltdown, and now he shares his illustrated journey through the gas we pass. Once again he takes little readers on a wild trek through taboo territories. His awesome illustrations laced with scientific facts makes it a fun read for children of all ages.

"Belches, Burps, and Farts - Oh My," at a Saturday Storytime, April 2 at noon, free.

The Bookmark Shoppe [8415 Third Ave. at 84th Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 833-5115]

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

include a chance to win a South Pacific cruise and Yankees tickets. Activities include a beer garden for the adults, rock climbing wall, silent disco, face painting, and so much more.

SUN, MAY 1

IN BROOKLYN

Sakura Matsuri: 10 am. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, April 30.

LONG-RUNNING

IN BROOKLYN

Block lab & studio: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Thursdays - Sundays, 10 am to 1 pm, Fri, April 1 - Sat, April 30; 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. The installation invites visitors to use their building skills by creating communities in the sky with wood blocks and pegs.

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, Sat, April 2 - Sat, April 30; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and younger 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.

"Light — A Dark Comedy": 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, May 1; \$18.

A show about an 11-year-old's adventures in a world without light.

Pop-up-Audubon: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am to 4 pm, Sat, April 2 - Sat, April 30; Free.

Leaf Litter Critters is for children 5 years and older who want to learn about life in the forest. Fun games and experiments allow the children to explore the wooded park.

Pop-up-Audubon: Prospect Park Audubon Center, Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am to 4 pm, Sat, April 2 - Sat, April 30; Free.

Plant Clues is chock full of materials you need to use to learn about plants. The Discovery Pack invites you to get inspired by nature. Take a guided tour on a Lakeside Nature stroll. Junior natural-



Photo by Tom Callan

'Round and 'round

The painted ponies go up and down and 'round and 'round on the beautifully restored Prospect Park Carousel on April 2 and 3.

It's opening day for the world-famous carousel — and plenty of Prospect Park fun and activities. Take the kids for a ride on a horse, a lion, or a bear if you dare at the beautifully restored

carousel, located in the Children's Corner, just inside the Willink entrance to the park.

Prospect Park Carousel opening weekend April 2 and 3, from noon to 5 pm.

Tickets are \$2 per ride, \$9 for a book of five tickets.

Children's Corner [Ocean and Flatbush avenues and Empire Boulevard in Prospect Park, (718) 965-8900].

ists help rangers track the growth of different species of plants.

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 that are 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.

Educational Center: Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6, Atlantic Avenue at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm to 5 pm; Free.

Get to know Brooklyn Bridge Park and visit the giant aquarium filled with East River critters, the reading corner and so much more. Open hours.

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.

Spring Planting: Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 2 pm to 4 pm, Sat, April 2 - Sat, April 30; \$3.

Join members of the Alliance to plant a herb seed and take it home.

Educational Center drop-in hours: Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6, Atlantic Avenue at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 3 pm to 5 pm; Free.

Get to know Brooklyn Bridge Park and visit the giant aquarium filled with

East River critters, read in the reading corner, and so much more. Open hours.

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, Sat, April 2 - Sat, April 30; Free with museum admission.

Meet and touch real, live sea creatures like starfish and sea urchins.

Arty Facts: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.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, April 3 - Thurs, April 28; Free with museum admission.

Get creative with a variety of materials and make a Jewish themed project. Closed for Passover April 21 through 24.

Earth Day celebration: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Friday, April 22, 10 am; Saturday, April 23, 10 am; Sunday, April 24, 10 am; Monday, April 25, 10 am; Tuesday, April 26, 10 am; Wednesday, April 27, 10 am; Thursday, April 28, 10 am; Friday, April 29, 10 am; Free with museum admission.

Join museum staff for fun activities to celebrate Mother Earth all week long. There is Greener Glob Mural in the art studio. Meet the author, and listen to a story about our environment.

FURTHER AFIELD

Dinosaurs Among Us: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at We. 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

The exhibit feature ancient, rarely seen fossils, and life-like models, including a 23-foot-long feathered tyrannosaur (Yutyrannus huali) and a small four-winged dromeosaur (Anchiornis huxleyi) with a 22-inch wingspan and vivid, patterned plumage.

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

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



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Learning what being the best really means

In “The Quickest Kid in Clarksville” by Pat Zietlow Miller, illustrated by Frank Morrison, Alta was the fastest runner in Clarksville, Tenn. — and everybody knew it.

But she wasn’t as fast as Olympic gold medalist Wilma Rudolph, and that made her dream. What would it be like to have three Olympic medals hanging around her neck?

And then some girl Alta had never met before came “sashaying” over with the whitest shoes Alta had ever seen. She said her name was Charmaine and her shoes sparkled — they were just made for running. Alta’s shoes had holes in them, but shoes can’t tell who’ll win a race.

Alta challenged Charmaine to a race — and won.

Charmaine challenged Alta to another race — and Charmaine won.

Alta was sure that was because Charmaine tripped her. Or because Alta’s toe was poking out of the front of her shoe, which really made her sad because Mama said those shoes had to last.

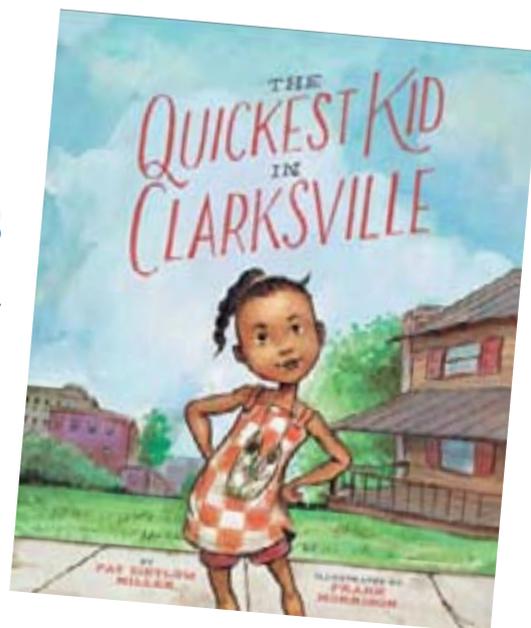
Another day, Charmaine came by, strutting “like she’s queen of the block.” Alta wasn’t having any of that; she far preferred to remember that Wilma Rudolph, the fastest woman alive, was coming to town to be in a parade. Maybe Wilma might even see the banner she made, and she wave.

As Alta started to run to the parade route with the banner, she suddenly realized that the banner was heavy and awkward and there’d be no way she’d get to the parade in time.

How would she ever make it?

Nobody likes to lose, but there are times when losing isn’t a bad thing. Sometimes, it means winning and “The Quickest Kid in Clarksville” shows your child how that works.

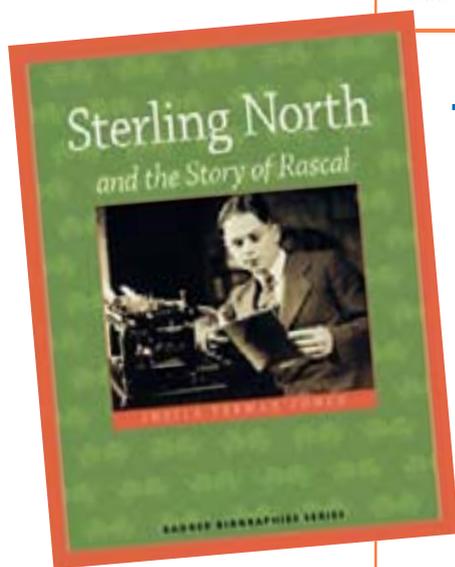
Miller’s main character has scads of charm, but it’s a confident boldness that kids just can’t miss. Thanks



to artwork by Morrison, the fierceness never leaves Alta’s face, even when her new adversary steps into the ‘hood — a frenemy who’s surprisingly equal to Alta — leading to a show-down, an ultimate olive branch, and an ending that’ll make you smile.

If your kids are curious, Miller also includes a page on the real Wilma Rudolph, putting this book into further perspective.

“*The Quickest Kid in Clarksville*” by Pat Zietlow Miller [40 pages, 2016, \$16.99].



A boy and his raccoon

When author Sterling North suffered loss, his family was scattered and so, as you’ll see in “Sterling North and the Story of Rascal” by Sheila Terman Cohen, he reached for something very unusual.

Growing up in a small Wisconsin town in 1918, 11-year-old Sterling North had pets: a dog and a bird, a muskrat and a woodchuck. And that year — not too long after his mother died — Sterling had a baby raccoon.

With his mother gone, his much-older sisters away, his brother fighting in World War I, and his father at work, Sterling spent much of his time outdoors near the town of Edgerton. He was with a friend one spring day, in fact, when Sterling’s dog startled a mother raccoon, who hurriedly gathered her babies and moved away to safety.

But she forgot one kit and Sterling,

knowing that the baby would die without care, fished it out of its den and took it home.

Rascal lived in the family barn, but he eventually ended up sleeping in the house, sometimes on Sterling’s bed. Like most raccoons, he was curious and mischievous, but Sterling loved his pet and patiently taught Rascal many things. For an entire summer, Rascal went nearly everywhere with Sterling and, that fall, he went to school, too.

Years after letting Rascal go, Sterling became an adult, married, and moved to Chicago, then Michigan, and then took his family to New Jersey, where he became a well-known writer of books, magazine, and newspaper columns. Still, he never forgot his love of nature, his boyhood, or the pet that gave him comfort.

Like many kids over the last 50-some years, I loved reading “Rascal.” Like them, I wanted my own raccoon. However, like me, your child will

have to settle for “Sterling North and the Story of Rascal” — but before he gets to the good part the tale, he’ll have to work past a lot of filler.

Cohen adds bits about automobiles, Spanish flu, Thomas Edison, telephone operators, and more. There are many photos here, too, but most of them are representative or “similar to” what Sterling “might” have used, which made me feel cheated.

But will your child care? You know that answer; I can only tell you that this is an interesting supplement to the classic tale and may enhance its reading.

Just be aware of that, if “Sterling North and the Story of Rascal” is a book your 8- to 12-year-old reaches for.

“*Sterling North and the Story of Rascal*” by Sheila Terman Cohen [119 pages, 2016, \$12.95].

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

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

Bring on the mud!

April showers bring May flowers — and a lot of puddles. Step back and let your kids splish, splash, and enjoy when they're safely ensconced in Muddy Buddy waterproof coveralls from Tuffo, available in yellow, pink, blue, red, and camouflage print.

These polyester coveralls keep rain out more effectively than an umbrella and rain boots, and they come with a waterproof storage bag, so they can enjoy puddles even when you're on the go.

Available in sizes 12 months, 18 months, and 2T-5T, Muddy Buddy is machine washable (and should be hung up to dry), and has lots of wonderful details such as a reinforced seat and knees; two zippers in the front; and



elasticized wrist and ankle cuffs. Even the hood is elasticized and has a brim to shed water better than feathers on a duck.

Muddy Buddy Coveralls by Tuffo, \$34.99, www.kohls.com.

Wrap stars

Have your family make a decision to take just one action to make our planet greener in honor of Earth Day, on April 22. A great idea from the Triumph Plant Company is to swap out your usual wrapping paper for Flowering Gift Wrap. Triumph's recycled paper can go from the party and into the flower pot, because it's embedded with fresh wildflower seeds that attract butterflies!

You'll be scaling back your carbon footprint while you and your family make your neighborhood more hospitable for lovely pollinators. The kit includes four large sheets (24-inches by 36-inches) of wrapping paper in pale aqua, lavender, and beige which can be used to wrap shirt boxes or to line gift bags. It also includes six gift cards with planting directions printed on their backs.

The papers contain a mix of seeds for candytuft annual, Siberian wallflower, California poppy, and lupine perennial flowers.

The wildflower paper can be planted anywhere — making it truly a gift that keeps on giving.

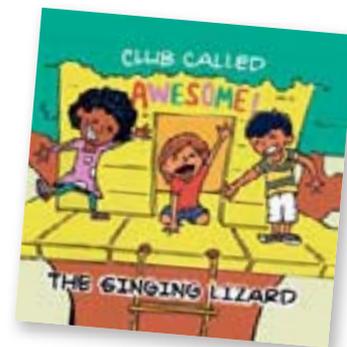
Flowering Gift Wrap by Triumph Plant Company, \$14.95, www.amazon.com.



Join the 'Club'

"Club Called Awesome" transforms any room into a discotheque where the whole family starts grooving to its "electro-kindie" dance beats of The Singing Lizard, led by maestro Liz DeRoche.

Her club is packed with irresistibly tunes: "Celebrate" is the perfect anthem for revelry during April vacation; the soaring "Beat Bot the Robot" excites over the mysteries of space; and "Peace Sign" is especially poignant for parents and educators in the weeks following the terrorist attacks in Brussels.



Recommended for kids ages 2-8, the "Club Called Awesome" CD comes with a comic book inspired by the songs.

"Club Called Awesome" CD by The Singing Lizard, \$15, www.iTunes.com.

Siblings' day in the city

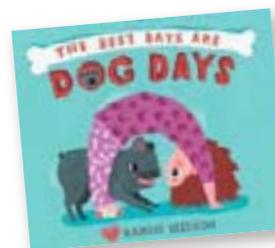
"The Best Days Are Dog Days," by author-illustrator Aaron Meshon, is a wonderful gift for a city kid. His charming, colorful pictures depict streets, a park, and a farmers market that are clearly inspired by Brooklyn.

The tale is told with very little text from the perspective of the pet bulldog, who shares his adventures with Sis, his human "sibling." Meshon's illustrations depict how much the pooch and Sis have in com-

mon. Recommended for readers ages 3 to 5, it inspired us to get outside and enjoy spring in the city!

The Best Days Are Dog Days book by Aaron Meshon, \$16.99, www.amazon.com. Meshon will give readings on April 17 at 1 pm at Books of Wonder [18 West 18th St. in Manhattan, (212) 989-3270], on April 23

at 2 pm BookCourt [163 Court St. in Brooklyn, (718) 875-3677], and on April 24 at PowerHouse on 8th [1111 Eighth Ave. in Brooklyn, (718) 666-3049].



Science sounds like fun

Science is fascinating and surprising, but it doesn't always feel that way when you're sitting in a classroom. The Science Wiz Sound kit includes 20 activities that will pique the interest of budding scientists ages 8 and older. The piece de resistance is building your own Thomas Edison-style phonograph.

The kit contains more than 34 components including a motor, weights, a recording cylinder, a phonograph base, a sound tube, a

megaphone, a 48-page, book by Penny Norman, Ph.D., and links to free mobile device Apps.

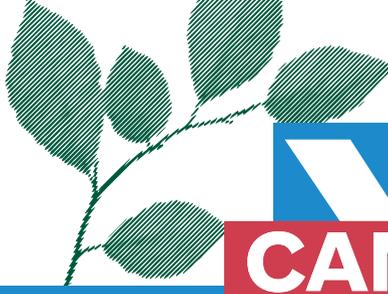
The step-by-step, clear directions for the suggested activities are packed with facts and illustrations that ignite enthusiastic learning and independent exploration.

Parents supply the three AA batteries to power the phonograph — and congratulations on a job well done.

Science Wiz Sound kit by Norman & Globus, \$29.95, www.sciencewiz.com.



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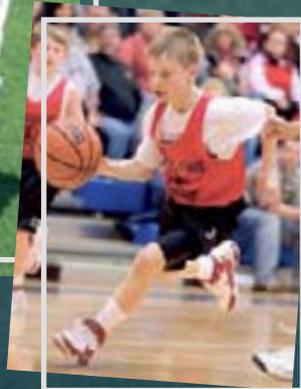
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