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# Family August 2016

## FEATURES

### 6 Preparing for kindergarten

A teacher's advice for the big day  
BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

### 8 Taking it offline

New game encourages social media detox  
BY LAURA VAROSCAK-DEINNOCENTIIS

### 10 Teaching children about mindful eating

A therapist's new book offers help for families struggling with weight issues  
BY ALLISON PLITT

### 12 Nurturing nature's gifts

Encouraging your children to embrace science and the arts  
BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

### 28 Fitbit to be tied

A device that tracks all my fitness activity?  
No thanks!  
BY LISA A. BEACH

### 30 Coming up Rosie

O'Donnell's program gives theater-loving kids a brighter future  
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

### 32 Senses of wonder

When you're young, there's a lot to get excited about  
BY PATRICK HEMPFING

### 34 Philanthropy in 3D

A Manhattan teen's passion for changing kids' lives with 3D printing  
BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

### 53 An online minefield

How to help your kids, tweens, and teens safely navigate social media  
BY LISA BEACH

## COLUMNS

### 14 Just Write Mom

BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN

### 16 Behavior & Beyond

BY DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

### 18 Family Health

BY DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD

### 26 Healthy Living

BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN

### 36 A Letter from College

BY AGLAIA HO

### 38 Dear Dr. Karyn

BY DR. KARYN GORDON

### 40 The Book Worm

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

### 42 Tips for Feeding Kids

BY JOANNA DEVITA

### 43 Good Sense Eating

BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

### 50 FabuLYSS Finds

BY LYSS STERN

### 52 Dear Teacher

BY PEGGY GISLER AND MARGE EBERTS

### 53 New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

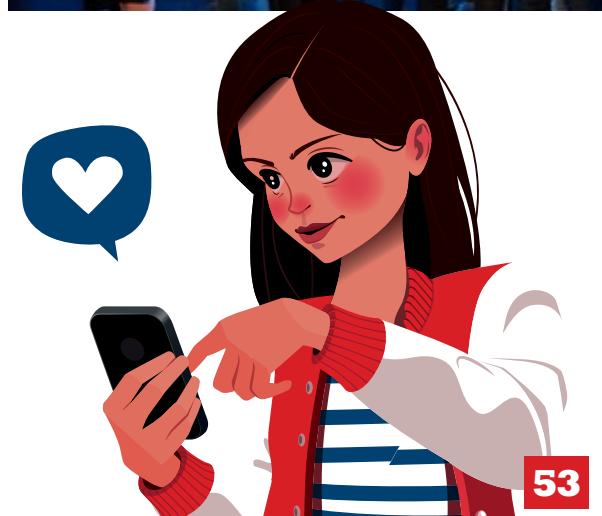
## CALENDAR

### 44 August Events

## SPECIAL SECTIONS

### 20 Education Directory

### 51 The Marketplace



# Summer in the city

**S**ummer fun is happening all around New York. The beaches have been really friendly this year with great weather overall. Not too hot and steamy, but just hot enough to make being at the beach simply delicious. The beach is great for everyone in the family, but especially for kids. It's, after all, a really big sandbox, and what kid doesn't love the sandbox?

I was out at the beach last weekend as usual and was marveling at the amount of work and talent some of the kids had put into



building one of the most beautiful and intricate sand castles I had ever seen. Then there are the boogie boarders and even really young surfers. By the way, what's really changed is the number of adults who have gotten into the joys of boogie boarding. It's not just kids anymore, which makes trying to swim or take a dip sometimes fairly hazardous.

It's been a great summer for picnicking in the park and if one walks or drives by our parks on any weekend, you can see for yourself how

many families are taking advantage of our beautiful facilities and wonderful lawns. One doesn't even have to see it, usually you can smell the aroma of grilling going on.

New York City is wonderful in the summer. With lots of families going in and out of town on vacations and many of the kids away at sleep away camps, most of the neighborhoods are less crowded, and if you have a car, it's a lot easier to park and get around. Public transit is lighter, too, and that makes everyone happier who takes it on a daily basis. But watch out for the cyclists. They are everywhere.

Our calendar is full of wonderful ideas for you and your family, and

if you want to have an even greater expanded look around town for happenings beyond your own borough, log onto to our website, NY-Parenting.com, click on the calendar, and also sign up for our newsletters on the homepage.

Have a great August and happy Labor Day, too!

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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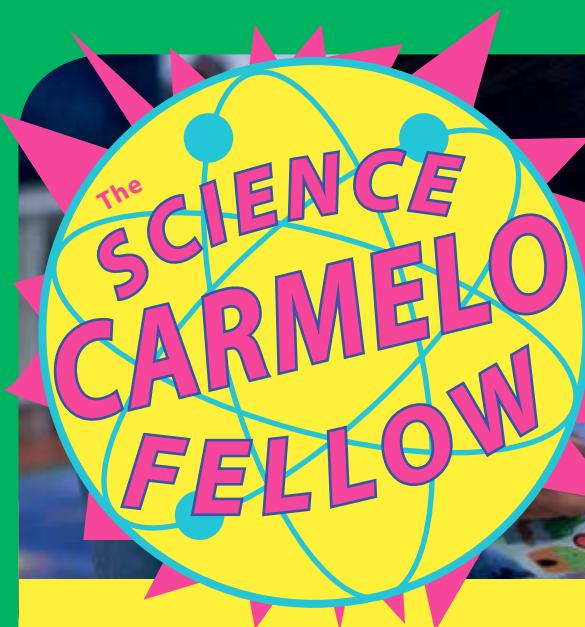
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# Preparing for kindergarten

A teacher's advice for the big day

BY ALEXA BIGWARFE

The summer has passed by more quickly than you thought, and now you may be panicking because you are sending a child to kindergarten. Is he ready? Are you ready? Kindergarten is one of the largest milestones in a young child's life, and you want to ensure you and your child transition smoothly.

Kindergarten teacher Summers McBride graciously answered some questions about preparing for the big start to school. She offers important insight and suggestions for making the jump to kindergarten:

What are the *most* important things a parent can do to prepare her child for kindergarten?

Before school begins, you could visit the school and take a tour — visit the important places: kindergarten hall, cafeteria, etc. Practice getting in and out of car seats, so that the car line will be less stressful when starting your day, or visit the bus stop and talk about the procedures for riding a bus.

Have your child practice writing his name with a pencil. Practice counting objects and counting aloud. And most importantly, read books daily and ask questions as you read the books. There are simple things you can do to help develop pre-reading skills while reading together — point to each word on the page as you read, have your child point to the words as you read, ask him how many words are on a page.

Where do you see parents putting a lot of unnecessary effort?

I think we are all guilty of this, but worrying too much about things that don't truly matter — things like having to have the perfect outfits, shoes, hairstyles, lunch boxes, and sparkly school supplies.

Additionally, do not panic if your children do not know their letters, numbers, or are not reading. Children will be assessed prior to school and placed appropriately. There is a large variation in skill level for children entering school for the first year, but by the end of the year, your child will be caught up to where he needs to be to enter first grade.

Do you have any advice or tips for a first-time kindergarten parent?

Trust and talk with your child's teacher often. We love your children just like they are our own, and we truly want the best for each and every child in our classroom.

Keep the morning goodbye short, sweet, and positive. Some students are very anxious the first few days,

and it is very encouraging for the students if you remain calm and upbeat. The children are able to sense when a parent is stressed or sad.

Can you recommend any good books that can help prepare mom and dad for the first week?

The best children's book I know is "The Night Before Kindergarten." Otherwise, I think books for parents would vary depending on the kind of child.

What are some great ideas if parents want to bring in a gift for the teacher the first week?

The biggest gift is having support and knowing that you have parents to help you. But for the parents who aren't able to help out in class, I know they like to show their support and love other ways. So for me, the worst part of preparing for my day is making lunch. When a parent offers to bring me lunch that is a wonderful gift. Coffee is great, too!

As far as a present, I can't speak for all teachers, but things we can use in the classroom are very helpful: pens, stationery, tissues, Clorox wipes, hand soap, etc.

Any other tips or pointers for moms and dads?

Just try not to worry, and if you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns, feel free to talk to your child's teacher. I am huge on communication and being on the same page with parents, so that things are kept consistent for children. Having great communication helps everyone involved.

Other tips for once the school year starts:

Bring a snack when you pick your child up from school. Many of the kindergartners eat lunch very early, so by the end of the day, they are very hungry.

Be prepared for homework. Yes, in kindergarten. Many schools give daily homework, even to the kindergartners.

Plan for rest time. School is going to wear them out. Especially those children who have never been in an all-day program or are still used to taking a nap.

Good luck as you begin this very exciting and sometimes scary adventure into education. Remember these tips and try to enjoy it!

*Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother of three young children and a freelance writer. She writes about her experiences as a mother and is particularly familiar with this topic as she prepares her middle child for kindergarten in the fall.*



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"Free Me: The Game" creators Jose Pablo Cantillo and Jeff Levine.

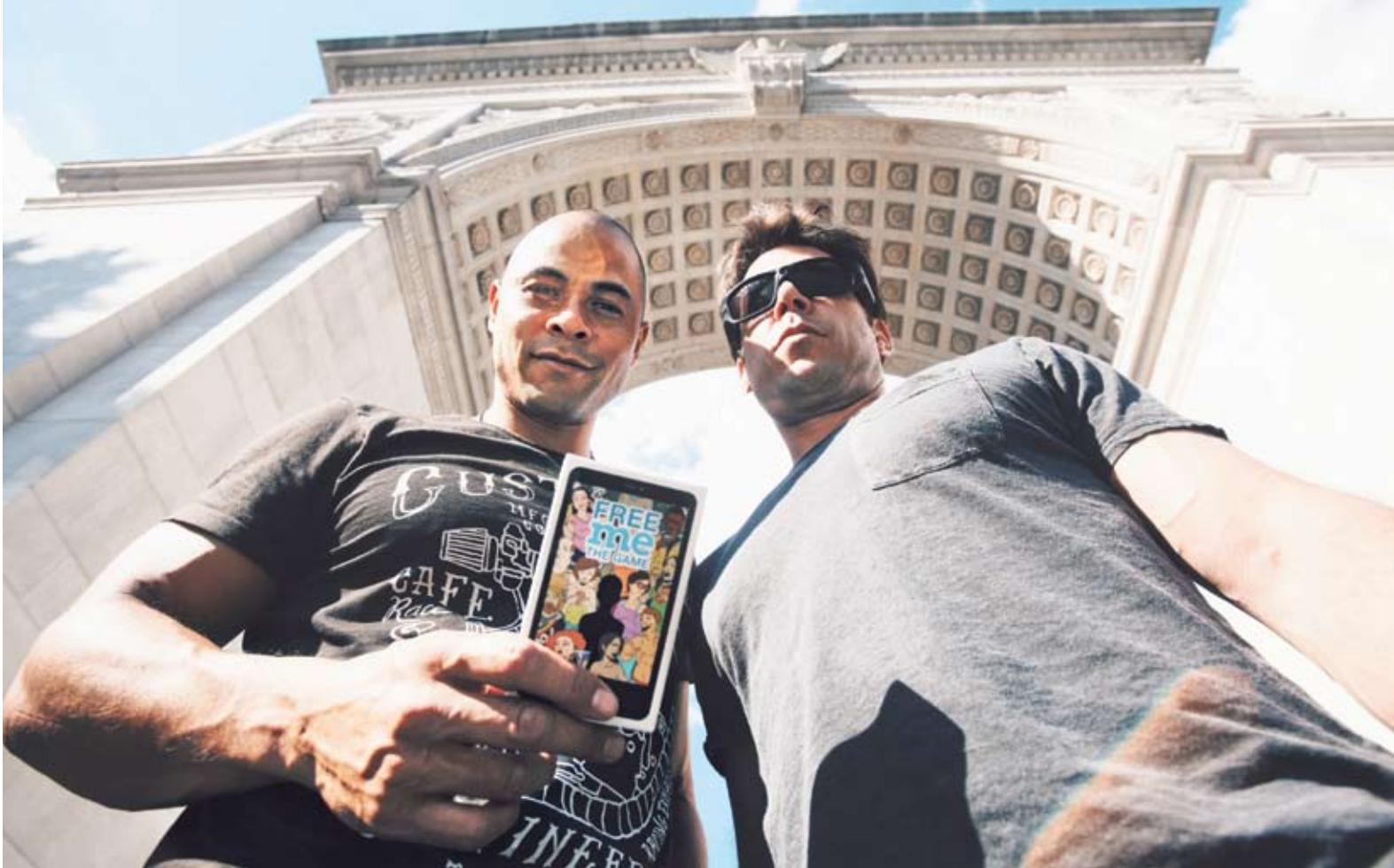


Photo by Robert Cheng

# Taking it offline

New game  
encourages  
social media  
detox

BY LAURA VAROSCAK-  
DEINNOCENTIIS

**I**t all started with a father taking a peek at his 9-year-old daughter's open diary: "My Dad is always on his phone every min. of every second, it is so annoying, he can't even look at anything besides his phone. I wish he could just play with me."

Jeff Levine, (a.k.a. "annoying dad") rushes off to catch an early flight to New York, but he cannot escape the sting of his child's words. On the plane, he joins his close friend and business partner Jose Pablo Cantillo (best known for his acting roles on "The Walking Dead" and "Sons of Anarchy") who immediately senses something is wrong. Jeff confesses his

indiscretion, and both men acknowledge their excessive use of popular technology platforms, despite their efforts to keep it at a minimum, especially around their families.

They also understand the damage social networking sites cause by creating a false sense of connection that fools people into believing they are more connected than ever before. They realize that being on their phones for "every minute of every second" encourages those around them to do the same.

Comedians at heart, Jeff and Jose also poke fun at the extremes of social media mania. By the time the plane lands, they challenge each other to live without their digital devices for as long as possible.

They can only bear to abstain for a couple of days, but this newly found freedom opened their eyes to the constant addictive pull of social networking sites around them. They stop to watch a mother in a playground. She holds coffee in one hand and her cellphone in the other. While simultaneously texting and conversing on speakerphone, she kicks her baby back and forth on the swing! This image perfectly illustrates the ridiculous lengths people will go to feed their insatiable social media appetite.

The trip becomes the impetus for a brilliant idea: a new, groundbreaking card game that aims to change the way people view their online identities. Jeff and Jose brainstorm

Each card depicts a funny scenario that illustrates how ridiculous and out of hand social media postings can get.



on their flight back from New York to Los Angeles. Inspired by their heightened awareness, they apply their sharp wit and dedication to family to create "Free Me: The Game," which emerged after 11 months of development.

Designed with teenagers and young adults in mind, players from all walks of life are enjoying this entertaining card game. Its goal is to bring people together to form authentic connections through laughter. Finding humor in social media creates a feeling of camaraderie, which cannot be duplicated through a screen.

In this fast-paced card game, the first person to lose all friends and followers is the winner. The first and most important rule is to put away all cellphones and electronic devices. There are different categories of cards that you can give, take, or swap with other players. Dare cards challenge players to perform silly tasks in front of the group. If a phone card is selected, players engage in "hashtag battles."

Each card depicts a funny scenario that illustrates how ridiculous and out of hand social media postings can get. One card shows a man standing in front of a machine in his underwear. A bright orange liquid squirts out, splattering his face. The caption reads: "Spray tan malfunction ruins your selfie photo session."

Another card displays a couple sitting at a romantic dinner table. Both of them stare at their phones with smiles on their faces. The card reads, "You post how great your date is going. Your date does the same. You haven't actually spoken." This absence of intimacy in today's culture is exactly what the game aims to highlight.

The card in the last example reminds me of a recent news story about a couple who just got married. As they entered the reception for the first time as man and wife,

the bride had her phone in hand and frantically began posting. Annoyed, the groom asked her to put the phone away, but she refused. An argument ensued, and the groom walked out on his bride. A few days later, he filed for divorce.

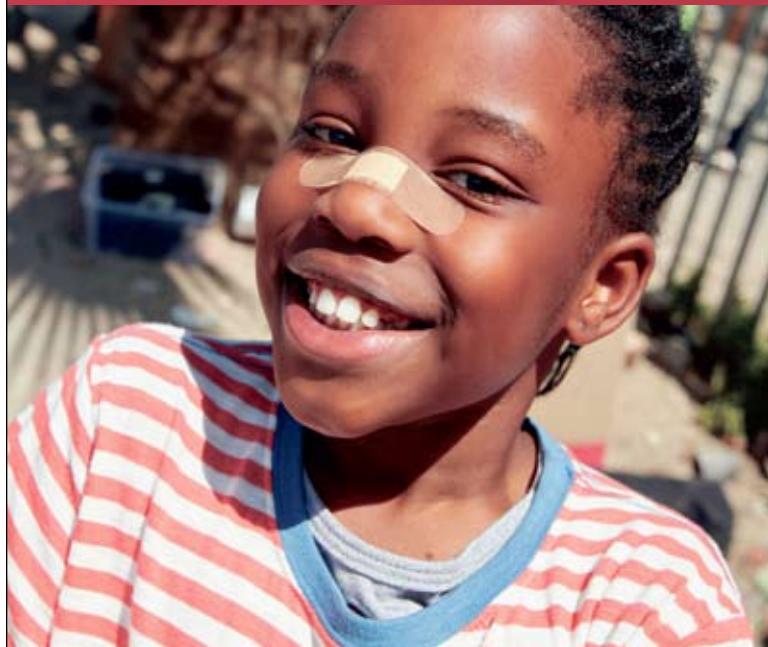
After playing "Free Me," I strongly support the game's mission. Everyone who participates enjoys spending meaningful offline time with family and friends. The game does have an ingenious hook: It ends with the loser posting penalty tasks to their real social media pages. Even if younger generations miss the satire behind the game, at least they will spend less time online and become more mindful of what they post on social media sites.

As a writer, educator, psychology student, and mother, I appreciate this game on many different levels. The intelligence behind its design will raise awareness about the social media epidemic in our country and serve as an enticing alternative to digital devices as the primary means of relating to others. The game also supports the serious problem of cyber-bullying by donating \$1 of every online purchase to anti-bullying organizations.

"Free Me: The Game" has much to offer the millions of people who remain isolated from the outside world and disconnected from face-to-face human interaction. Although the development and growth of social media are amazing technological achievements with many benefits, their overuse is tearing apart the precious gift that created them in the first place: a joining of hearts and minds.

*Laura Varoscak-Delnocentiis is a teacher, freelance writer, and mom living in Brooklyn. She is an award-winning contributor to New York Parenting and a member of the Parenting Media Association, and she has a master's degree in clinical psychology.*

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# Teaching children about mindful eating

A therapist's new book offers help for families struggling with weight issues

BY ALLISON PLITT

**D**o you have a child with a weight problem and wish you could do something to help him? Are you upset watching your child deal with this difficult problem alone and feel you have failed him as a parent? Psychotherapist Dr. Michelle Maidenberg has written just the book to assist you with this dilemma — “Free Your Child from Overeating: 53 Mind-Body Strategies for Lifelong Health.”

As of 2010, more than one-third of the children and adolescents in this country were overweight or obese. It is a serious national health issue, since overweight or obese children are 10 times more likely to become overweight or obese adults. And food manufacturers know how to lure kids to eat unhealthy food; kids are now eating five to six times more sugar than the three teaspoons a day recommended by the American Heart Association.

## Mindful eating

The book, written for children 10 to 18 years old, is broken down into three parts. In the first part of the book, Maidenberg introduces the concept of “mindful eating” to kids. She explains, “One popular definition of mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”

She suggests parents talk to their child about mindful eating, as



Dr. Michelle Maidenberg.

because, “Diets don’t work,” says Maidenberg, “Ninety-five percent of dieters regain their lost weight in one to five years ... Encouraging dieting can undermine parents’ intent and actually contribute to an increased risk of obesity.”

Instead, she advocates “a consistent practice of healthy eating and exercise [that] will make long-term, incremental changes. The goal for any child is to promote diet-free living and mindful eating with all foods eaten in moderation.”

## Working together

The second part of the book details how the family can collaboratively work together to help the overweight child and even themselves. Most often, an overweight child usually has an overweight parent, so the author has the parents write about their behavior and attitude towards food. Even if the family has another child without a weight problem, Maidenberg advises treating both children the same in regards to mealtimes and eating.

The more frequently parents made comments to their children about their weight, the more negatively the children felt about their bodies. Family members should never tease their child about being overweight, nor should they weigh their child or bribe him to lose weight.

In addition to buying healthier foods, parents may decide not to buy “trigger foods” that cause their

child to overeat. If parents do choose to bring trigger foods into the home, they should not have them easily accessible in the kitchen.

Research shows that when the family attempts weight loss and healthier lifestyles together, children are more successful at losing weight. When families eat meals together, kids tend to eat healthier and are less likely to be overweight.

Parents shouldn't label food as "junk" or "bad" food. Sometimes the overweight child will steal or hide food to avoid being seen eating it. If there is shame associated with eating a specific food, it is more likely the child will try not to be seen eating it, and may overdo it.

Besides following a healthier eating plan, children should adopt an exercise routine. Many studies have found a direct correlation between screen time and kids being overweight and obese.

Family meals should be screen-free and family members should commit to no more than two hours of screen time per day. Studies have also shown that exercise has numerous benefits. For example, it enhances academic performance, improves mood, promotes better sleep, and increases energy.

If you never discuss your child's weight problem, you could be seen as ignoring it, even though you may be thinking about it. And one study showed that how you talk about it matters. According to the study, if parents engage in weight-related conversations, those children were more likely to diet, use unhealthy weight-control measures, and binge eat. But, when the parents discussed healthful eating behaviors, the adolescents were less likely to diet and use unhealthy weight-control behaviors.

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MICHELLE P. MAIDENBERG, PhD, MPH, LCSW-R

## Sticking to it

Teenagers are at the age where they want to be independent, but they actually need parental support more than ever because of their "raging hormones and impulsive behavior," the author says. The last part of the book discusses how parents can help their child if they slip by binging. Kids can have self-defeating thoughts, and parents can talk them through these ideas, so they can resume their improved lifestyles.

Teenagers should learn that no one is perfect. And if they binge, they should try to get back on track as soon as possible.

"Every slip is a learning opportunity

and enhances your child's self-awareness and ability to problem solve. [He] is practicing working through challenging situations to get back to her values of healthful living," Maidenberg writes. The author leaves space in the book for when a child makes a mistake, he can write down his thoughts and feelings, and how he intends to resolve the dilemma.

The family must support the child and his needs — whether it means calling a restaurant ahead of time to find out the menu or accompanying their child on a walk around the neighborhood. These teenag-

ers should also learn to assert themselves in restaurants or other situations when they need to ask for healthier food alternatives.

Parents are encouraged to use empowering words when discussing their child's health, such as "fit," "strong," and "active." Parents should encourage their children to love their bodies regardless of their weight, as humans are all different shapes and sizes. Parents should also stand up for their child if they are being bullied at school because of their weight.

"The prevalence of weight discrimination has significantly increased in recent decades and is comparable to the rates of racial discrimination. Weight is the main reason for teasing and bullying at school," Maidenberg writes. Children should have access to healthful foods at school and should also receive some type of nutritional education.

The most important lesson of all is for children to learn that hard work provides positive feedback.

"The person who sticks it out — who decides to stay with it despite any setbacks, frustrations, and disappointments — is left feeling confident and proud, recognizing that the result is worth all the effort!" Maidenberg concludes.

Allison Plitt is a frequent contributor to *NY Parenting* and lives in Queens with her 10-year-old daughter.



# Nurturing nature's gifts

Encouraging your children to embrace science and the arts

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

**L**ooking into a newborn's eyes, there is something ancient, yet completely innocent in his gaze. A hint of the divine lurks within the depths of those limpid pools. While utterly dependent upon us for their survival, they appear to have forgotten more than we will ever know. Like the energy stored in an object at rest, they

are a body full of potential. Within that miniature body, cradled in our arms, exists the potential for everything he will ever become.

Whether or not that potential is fully realized is primarily in our hands.

Like all of nature, our children are exquisite works of art and science. As members of the human race, their legacy is to become both scientists and artists. They are born to wonder, to want to understand and explain —

science. They are born to create, to want to express and communicate their experience — art.

From the beginning, infants use all of their senses to figure out what things are and how they work. When they do begin to talk, they start naming things. Their earliest attempts at conversation are filled with questions — what, how, and why. They replicate sounds and hum. Their bodies move rhythmically. Give a child a pencil, and he will draw. Provide music, and he will sing and dance. Listen, and he will tell you a story. That every human culture has art and science is not surprising. What is surprising is how rapidly the artist and scientist is socialized out of our children.

We take our young budding artist and scientist and say, "I can't look at that right now. I'm too busy." "I'm doing something. Be quiet." "Sit still." "Don't touch that." "Don't make a mess." "Stop asking so many questions." We put

As parents, we are responsible for making sure our children develop a healthy conscience, and setting a good example is the best teacher.

a screen in front of them to keep them occupied, so we can get back to our important work.

By the time children start school, science has become a dreaded subject that seems unrelated to their existence. Art has become something they cannot do, are not good at, or are not supposed to like because of their gender. They have learned to doubt or mistrust the artist and scientist within. Then we entice them with contests and trophies to get them enthusiastic about things for which they had a natural affinity.

How ironic that our children, as living experiments moving around in a veritable natural laboratory with science constantly going on inside and around them, are convinced science is something that is only relevant to people called scientists. How unfortunate that they become inhibited by the social definitions of art and the evaluative process, considering themselves unqualified to create a masterpiece on their life's canvas, assuming someone called an artist can do it better.

In our efforts to arbitrarily assign monetary value, we have treated art and science as mutually exclusive rather than inextricably connected. There is the anatomy, chemistry, and physics of visual art. The physics of musical sound. The anatomy of singing. The psychology of literature and theatre.

There is no inherent value of one over the other. Each is enhanced by an understanding of and appreciation for the other. Together they make us the unique creatures we are. Together they allow us, unlike any other creature on Earth, to understand, create, and assign meaning to our existence.

There is a science that is es-

sential and prerequisite to the practice of any other science or art — conscience. Just as biology is the knowledge of living things, conscience is the knowledge of the difference between right and wrong. The dictionary defines conscience as knowledge of one's guilt. I prefer to think of conscience as recognizing the implications of one's choices. Conscience should not just kick in after a poor choice has been made. A healthy conscience is proactive and serves as a guide when faced with challenging decisions.

Like all sciences, conscience is learned. It is learned by our children at our knees and elbows, in the back seats of our vehicles, and in our homes. It is learned by observing as well as listening because "while they may not listen to everything we say, they are watching everything we do." They are taking note of whether the actions match the words. Conscience reminds us that just because we can do something, doesn't mean we should.

As parents, we are responsible for making sure our children develop a healthy conscience, and setting a good example is the best teacher. When our children witness us using our perceptive skills and demonstrating empathy toward others in our decision-making and actions, they learn how to exercise conscience. When we express appreciation for their conscientious choices and institute related, reasonable consequences for their failures to do so, we help strengthen their conscience.

Jiminy Cricket told Pinocchio, "Conscience is that still small voice that people won't listen to." We must make sure our children not only hear and recognize that still small voice, but that they listen to it. Practicing conscience in art and science, in life, significantly increases the likelihood that our children will make worthwhile contributions to the world as they seek to fulfill their potential.

*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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## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# The Pokémon wave

**S**ummer 2016 just got even more eventful with the new Pokémon GO App. And if you have a child, teen, or even young adult, you know what I'm talking about. My oldest and my youngest have been happily spending hours walking the city in search of Pokémons. The new app lets each user become a trainer and through his phone's navigation system and camera, shows him exactly where the creatures are hiding, so he can go catch them all. It also locates the PokéStops in your vicinity, which are center locations where users can gain helpful accessories, and Pokémons Gyms, where users can battle other Pokémons.

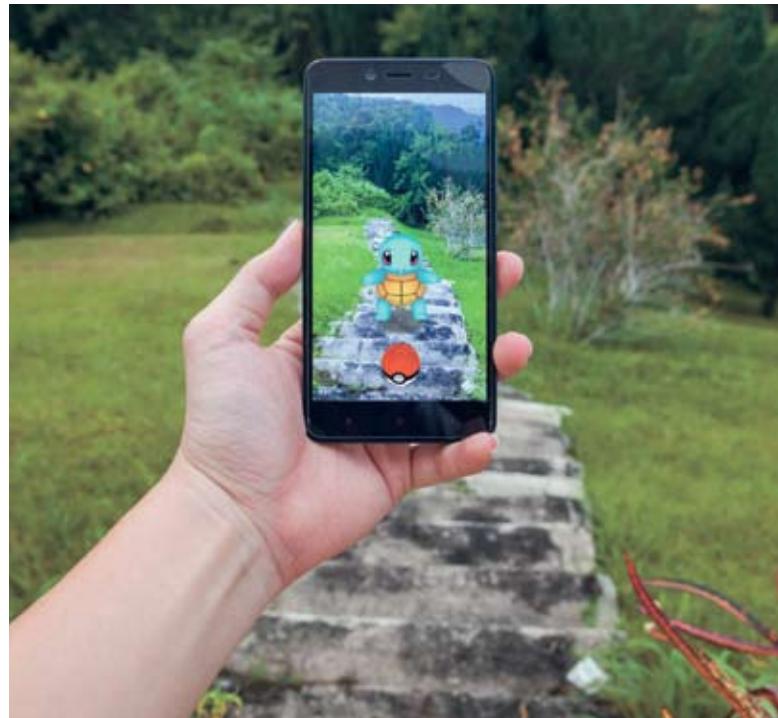
The game shows you real-life photos of key places, such as landmarks and businesses in your neighborhood, and tells you to go to them to collect more.

Yesterday, my son and daughter went to the local playground after seeing that the sprinkler area was a gym. When they got there, they saw people of all ages gathered with their Pokémons music blaring from their phones, trying desperately to acquire accessories while also grabbing that longed-for Eevee (a rare Pokémon species).

The day before, as my son and I were on the train crossing the Manhattan Bridge, the app located a live Pokémons in the train car that he could potentially catch.

The first time I tuned into the Pokémons craze was in the late '90s when my nephew, Mike, would collect the cards. He introduced my daughter Amanda to it, although at five years his senior, she didn't quite have the training abilities that he possessed. Mike was the most dedicated 10-year-old trainer you could ever find.

He'd keep every card in a plastic wrap, and buy scrapbooks in which he carefully organized each card according to its Pokémons group (water, air, or land). The fun back then was that you never knew which cards would be in a pack, so every time you purchased a pack for just a couple of bucks, it was like buying a lottery ticket. I remember those walks home from the store with him screaming, "I got a Charizard!"



It was nothing but fun. Later on, Mike got into the Gameboy games and had to have the Pokémons Yellow and then Pokémons Gold and Silver to catch the creatures on his Gameboy. Pokémons had become the dominant subject of many days back then, and birthday and Christmas gifts were easy — they were always a game, console, pack of cards, T-shirt, or accessory of some sort.

I even remember rewriting the popular 1999 Macy Gray song, "I Try" to be a Pokémons song, "I try to say goodbye to Machoke, try to walk away from my Squirtle, though I try to hide it, it's clear, my world crumbles when Pokémons not here." Hey, it made the kids laugh.

I thought the allure had finally died down until my kids downloaded the app a couple of days ago, and it seems like everyone — adults included — are hunting Pokémons. Now they are hunting in groups and taking pics of the creatures, then Instagramming the photos, which show the Pokémons on the bus or in the car, or in my case, on my head in a Lower East Side Starbucks.

As a mom (and a worrier), I can see the potential pitfalls, such as not watching where you are going

when pursuing a Pokémons, and veering into the street, or walking into a high-crime neighborhood because a PokéStop exists there, but with a little common sense and awareness, the game can be loads of fun.

It will surely bring customers to many businesses, as users seem to gather wherever the Pokémons are. I'm seeing big marketing bucks for the creators here. Already, stores are putting up signs letting customers know that they are a stop. On another positive note, it also gets kids walking all over. If the kids are young enough, it gets parents walking with them, so the fitness component is a double win.

I would have never thought that nearly 20 years later, I'd still be thinking about Pokémons, but the saying "whatever is old becomes new again" sticks around for a reason. So if you see a group of kids or adults gathered around making gestures and posing for photos with things that aren't really there, rest assured ... and then watch out, because there just might be a Pikachu behind you!

*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.*

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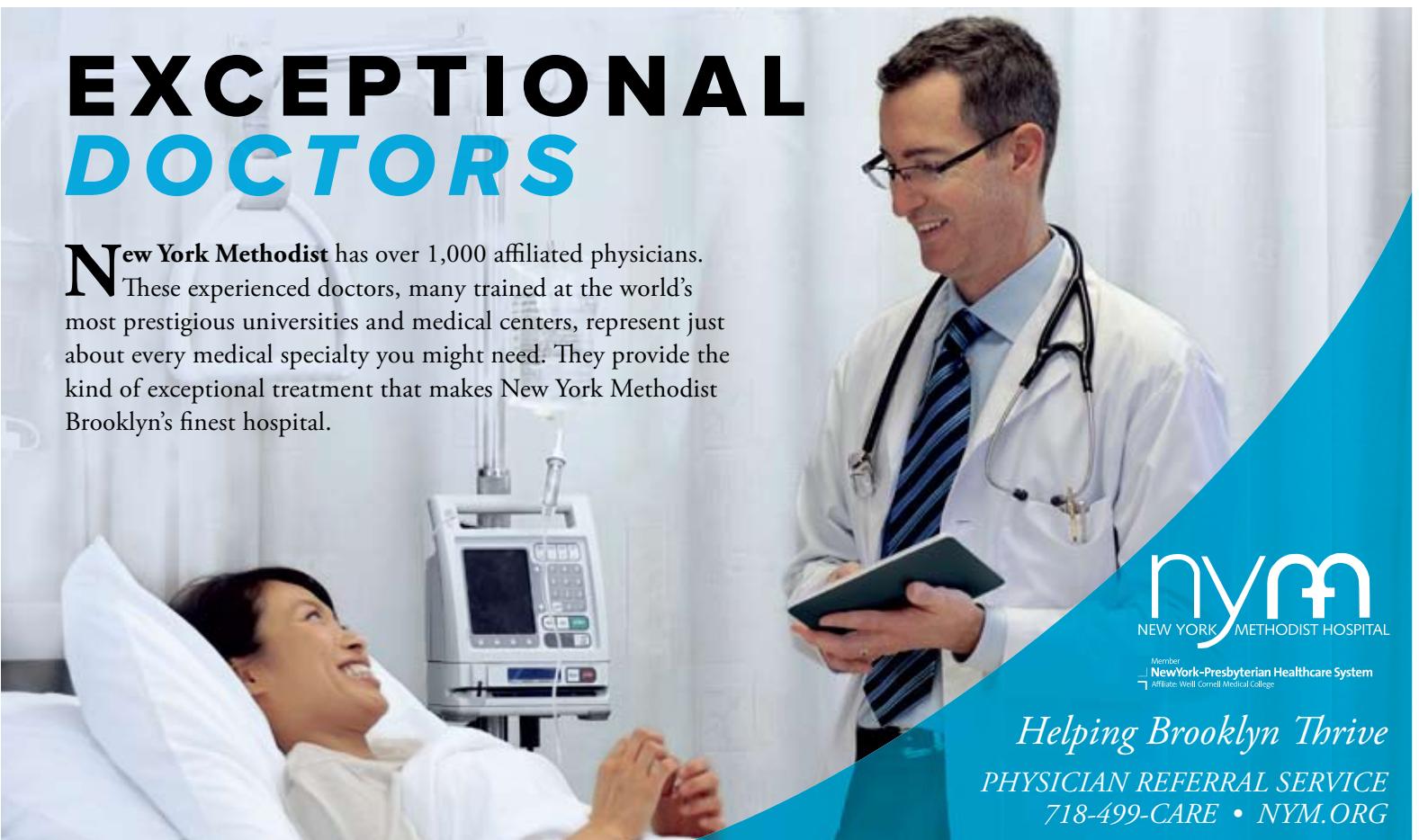
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## BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

# Don't take a summer break from parenting

**S**ummer is a time when everyone wants a break. We work hard all year and we deserve it! When it gets warm and the days are long, we all expect time at the beach, lighter schedules, and more time with friends.

After working hard to keep your small beings in line all year, you may also want a parenting vacation. This means less structure at home and more flexibility with the rules, for example, you'll say "yes" more often to ice cream and "no" to daily clean up.

While it may seem like the right choice at the moment, the reality is that you'll have to work harder in the longer run. Consider that carefully when you decide to have a summer vacation from parenting.

Here are your options, warts and all:

### Take the summer off and pay for it as you go

You don't want to scream at your kids at the family barbecue, but I assure you that's what will happen if you let go of all structure. When you look the other way as your kiddo eats a second dessert, it means that bedtime will end up being at 11:30 pm, instead of the regular 8:30 pm.

You will see that bad behavior starts to happen more often. Also, while you can pretend that your child understands the shift in rules during the summer, it's not the case. It will take an intense amount of work and be a grueling process to transition your kiddo to school-time rules if you let everything go during the summer.

### Make a set of summer rules

You acknowledge that the summer has more space for flexibility, but you will create structure that inhibits problem behavior. You'll talk with your kids about the shift in expectations when they are on holiday and that there are adjustments you are making. Maybe you decide to



have dessert every other day rather than just on the weekends, or baths every day instead of every other.

Whatever the change, you talk about it and do it with intention. The road back in September will be bumpy, but not grueling.

### Rules change only during vacation

You keep all your regular rules and expectations in place, especially when it comes to routines around treats and bedtime. This signals to your child that the rules are in his best interest. Also, you maintain some daily reading and homework time, so that your small ones keep learning all summer. Doing so helps them see learning as part of life, not something that only exists during school.

When you are on vacation together, you relax the rules a bit and let your children know exactly what you are doing. This plan ensures that the transition back to school

is seamless. Your kiddos learned all summer that structure does not inhibit fun.

My suggestion is to put option three into action. Select family rules that help your small ones thrive and keep them in place all year round. Make small adjustments as seasons change, because dramatic changes are confusing. Keep your children's mind stimulated throughout the summer as their bodies are in motion.

Do what is in your kids' best interests and help them flourish year round!

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

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



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# A healthy start to the new school year

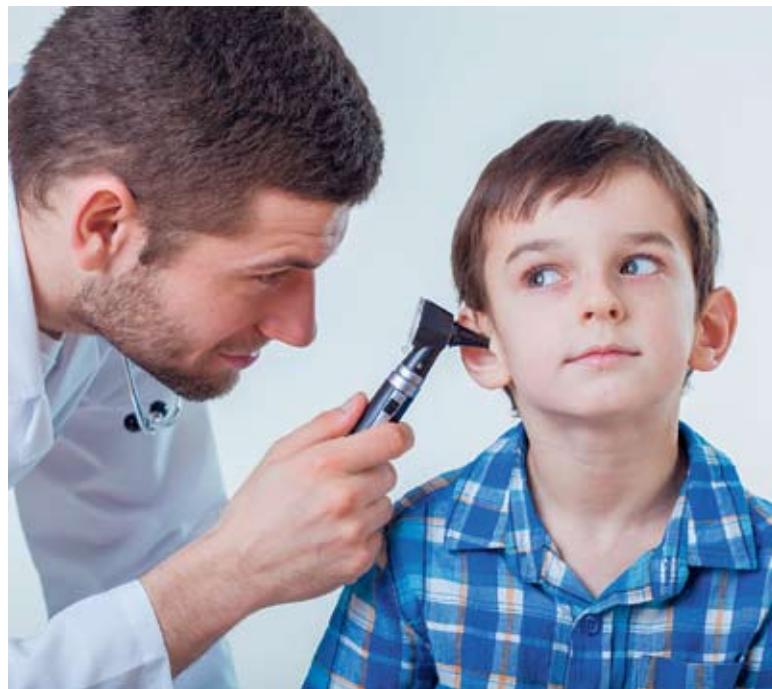
*Summer is flying by and school starts just after Labor Day. We want to make sure that our children's transition from the pool to the classroom is as smooth and healthy as possible. Do you have any recommended to-dos for August?*

The beginning of school is an important time for children, and there are plenty of steps you can (and should) take to help them get off to a healthy start. Whether it's the first day of kindergarten or the last year of high school, a few simple back-to-school preparations can help make the beginning of a new academic year smoother for your children.

First, it is important to be caught up on immunization shots. New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene requires children to be current on their recommended immunizations before they can attend school. These requirements apply to public, private, and parochial school students alike, so even if you are certain your child is up-to-date on his shots, it is advisable to make sure that the school has the updated immunization record on file.

Some of the necessary immunization shots include the hepatitis B vaccine; the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (which prevents pneumonia and meningitis), the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine; the polio vaccine; and the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine. Children entering middle school should receive a second diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine; and the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine. More information about vaccinations required for students by grade is available on the website of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

The end of the summer is a great time to schedule your children's physical examinations, dental exams, and, if necessary, allergy checkups. It is also important



that you communicate any special medication needs to the school. If your children need to take prescription or non-prescription medications during the school day, your healthcare provider may need to complete a form that notifies the school and provides any requisite instructions.

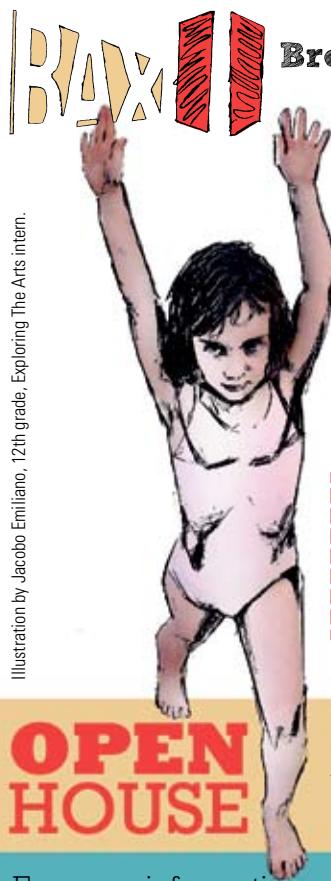
Ensuring a healthy lifestyle for your child is important outside the doctor's office as well, especially when it comes to nutrition. It's good to start reinforcing the habit of healthy eating before the school year begins. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast are more attentive in class, earn higher grades, and have fewer behavioral problems.

If your children are running short on time in the mornings, you can prepare simple, nutritious breakfasts that they can eat while on their way to school. Some easy ideas include sliced fruit with whole-wheat bagels and cream cheese, multigrain toast with peanut butter or shredded cheese, and

plain yogurt with granola as a topping.

A child's emotional needs are also important. Starting a new grade or a new school can be anxiety-inducing at any age. Children may be nervous about finding their classroom, making new friends, or completing college applications in the months ahead. The most important thing you can do as a parent is to listen to their concerns and help them find solutions. For instance, extracurricular activities such as drama, dance, or sports teams encourage children to make new friends, helping them to avoid the end-of-summer blues and realize that the school year can be as much fun and exciting as summer vacation.

For more information about making the transition back to the classroom easier for your children, as well as any health requirements at your children's individual schools, contact the schools' nurses or guidance counselors, or your children's healthcare providers.



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*Continued on page 22*

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*Continued from page 20*

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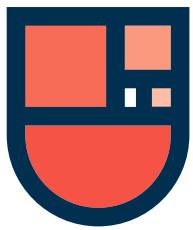
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*Continued on page 24*

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*Continued from page 22*

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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# The power of water

**W**ater is essential for life. Whether inside or outside of the body, water heals. We all know it and most of us strive to drink more, but did you know about all of the therapeutic and restorative things that water can do for a body?

A year ago, my dog was diagnosed with acute pancreatitis. She could not move, would not eat, and when we took her to the emergency vet, they were straight with us: many dogs with her levels of pancreatitis do not survive. They told us they would start an intravenous drip immediately, and we should pray.

After two days, we visited her. Still attached to her tube, she was spunky, renewed, and thriving, even while still quite ill. She was given pain meds but no additional specific medication other than fluids. This was the first time I was awed by the power of water.

Around the same time, my daughter was diagnosed with postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, which affects every system of the body. One of the most important treatments is to drink large amounts of water to keep the blood volume up. When the body is not super hydrated, patients suffer blood pressure issues, heart racing, and are likely to pass out and suffer a host of other symptoms. It's an extreme example, but, on a lower level, we all exhibit symptoms if not properly hydrated.

Drinking water, especially in the dog days of summer, is essential for children, teens, and adults. There is a reason why people grab some cold water for any person who isn't feeling well. Water can prevent and cure many ailments:

**Cellular level:** Keeping hydrated is vital, because nearly every cell in the body needs water to function properly. Being dehydrated causes the heart to pump harder and places a stress on every organ in your body.

**Hunger:** Experts say that if you have already eaten something, but find yourself feeling hungry, nine out of 10 times you are mildly dehydrated.

**Mental clarity:** According to a study published in the Journal of Nu-

trition, being even mildly dehydrated (defined as one to two percent below optimal levels) can affect mood, cognitive function, and ability to think.

**Prevention:** By simply upping your water intake, you may be able to stave off migraines, headaches, bloating, and constipation. So instead of reaching for over-the-counter relief when these ailments pop up, drink plenty of water to prevent them before they occur.

**Detoxify:** Water is the best way to flush toxins out of your body. Even if you simply consume too much sugar or salt, by drinking water, you will help bring your body to a healthy equilibrium. Water also helps relieve the bloating from premenstrual syndrome.

The Institute of Medicine advises that an adequate water intake for men is roughly 13 cups a day, while for women is about nine cups daily. Keep in mind that is for a typical day. Factors such as exercise, health conditions, weather, pregnancy, and breastfeeding will require you to increase your daily amount. (It is possible to drink too much water, which can di-

lute electrolytes to a damaging level, but this is rare. You would need to consume gallons at a time.)

A good sign that you are drinking enough is if your urine is clear-colored. The darker the urine, the more the need for hydration. In children, you can ward off a urinary infection if you notice dark urine. Prolonged dark urine may be a sign that your kidneys are not getting enough water to properly filter out toxins.

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



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# Fitbit to be tied

## A device that tracks all my fitness activity? No thanks!

BY LISA A. BEACH

**T**apping into the latest trend, my well-intentioned husband recently bought me a Fitbit, one of those omnipotent fitness-tracker wristbands that works with your smartphone. The Fitbit monitors your every move (literally) with a built-in navigation system and loads of features, mak-

ing it a top-seller that (supposedly) fits every lifestyle.

That is, every lifestyle but mine.

I practically hung my head in ungrateful shame as I returned his gift, because isn't it all about the thought that counts? What does this say about me if I returned a gift, not because it didn't fit or it is the wrong color, but because I just didn't like it?

What kind of monster am I?

And yet, I was ready to be branded with a scarlet letter as I returned my Fitbit to Sports Authority (that my husband scored at a 20 percent discount, no less!). I'm probably the only person in the world who's jumping off the Fitbit bandwagon.

Why?

For starters, I'm just not into

To get the most out of my Fitbit, I need to wear it all the time, even when I'm sleeping, shackling me like an I'm-on-house-arrest ankle bracelet. Who needs that judgment all day long?

exercise. I mean, I occasionally walk and do yoga, but only because I know I should. And I've given up trying to master the "Dance Off the Inches Hip Hop Party" DVD I bought a few years ago, foolishly thinking I could do complex choreography "so simple anyone can do it." Well, thanks for making me feel like an idiot, girl-on-the-cover-with-rock-hard-abs. When Fit Blonde Girl instructs her hip-hop wannabees to "pop it," the only thing that pops (and cracks) is my arthritic hip.

And I do try to incorporate movement into my daily life. I kick butt in word games, throw a fit when my teen mouths off to me, run daily errands, jump to conclusions, and dance around uncomfortable conversations. These activities don't really burn many calories, but, at least I'm not totally sedentary.

But the fitness tracker is a little too Big Brother for me, with my every movement being monitored 24-seven. To get the most out of my Fitbit, I need to wear it all the time, even when I'm sleeping, shackling me like an I'm-on-house-arrest ankle bracelet. It just dangles on my wrist all day, recording every arm swing as I walk or reach for another glass of wine. Who needs that judgment all day long?

I feel like I should be wowed by this "wonder product" chock-full of features that track not only your exercise, but also your sleep patterns, your water consumption, your calories, and your heart rate.

High-tech features for a low-tech girl:

- I don't need a Fitbit to monitor my water intake. When I can feel the cotton in my mouth, I know it's time to take a drink.

- I don't need a Fitbit to tell me I was restless 35 times last night. I looked at the clock 14 times during the night, feel exhausted in the morning, and can see the dark circles under my eyes, so I'm well aware I had a crappy night's sleep.

- I don't need a device that's waterproof up to 10 meters, given my penchant for never going scuba diving.

- I don't need a Fitbit to vibrate every hour to tell me I've been inactive for too long. When I feel my derriere going numb from sitting at the computer too long, I know it's time to get moving.

And then there's the whole guilt factor. On days when I think I've been fairly active, I check my Fitbit only to discover that I racked up an unimpressive 415 steps today, and it's already 3 pm. This sets off a mini-rage, as I yell at my wrist monitor, "Why are you silently judging me? Who are you to tell me I'm below my goal today?"

On top of all this, I'm always just a few steps behind what's trending.

Case in point — "Breaking Bad" was three seasons old before I even heard about it. And I just read a fashion article that pantyhose are coming back in, which made me wonder, when were they out? So it feels a bit premature for me to jump on the Fitbit bandwagon just yet.

I'm also not what marketing experts would call an "early adopter." I don't upgrade my cell-phone every year. I have zero desire for an Apple Watch. I don't want a drone.

And, after great resistance, I finally forced myself to get on Twitter now that it's almost 10 years old. I'm always late to the trend party by choice.

Now, if my husband can find me a Witbit to monitor my sarcasm, I'd be all over that. But a Fitbit? Thanks, but I'm good.

*Lisa Beach is a freelance writer, blogger, humorist, and recovering homeschool mom who lived to write about it. Check out her writer's website at [www.LisaBeachWrites.com](http://www.LisaBeachWrites.com) and visit [www.TweeniorMoments.com](http://www.TweeniorMoments.com), Beach's humor blog about mid-life, family, friends, and all the baggage that goes with it.*

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# Coming up Rosie

## O'Donnell's program gives theater-loving kids a brighter future

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**S**parking lifelong appreciation for the arts with classes in dance, singing, and acting, Rosie's Theater Kids — created by actor-comedian Rosie O'Donnell — provides city youngsters with creative opportunities. Its fun, triple-threat approach to learning has shaped the lives of 60,000 boys and girls since the organization's start back in 2003. And now, two childhood friends from Hell's Kitchen are celebrating the scholarships recently awarded to them by Rosie's Theater Kids, which has given them thousands more reasons to sing and dance for joy.

### The color yellow

At one time, funny, big-hearted O'Donnell was considered brash and controversial. But since she left her talk show, she has been leading a quieter life and doing "ordinary" things, like raising her children and posting family stuff on her Facebook page. And her two loves — kids and theater — seem to be keeping the busy mom out of trouble.

Every kid has a dream, and parents like O'Donnell understand that if that dream isn't channeled properly, and if it isn't nurtured and celebrated, chances are, it will eventually fade to gray.

So, when she launched Rosie's Theater Kids, offering performing-arts classes as well as free Broadway shows to fourth graders attending PS 51 — located near the city's theater district and filled with many students whose families can't afford tickets to the shows, the kids' lives were changed forever. O'Donnell realized the irony in the situation and said it was, "Like living in Hawaii, and never having access to the beach."

The comedian's favorite color is sunshine yellow, which she prefers to the limelight. In her book, "Celebrity Detox," she writes, "Fame stole my yellow. Yellow is the color you get when you're real and brutally honest. Yellow is with my kids ... The bundle of bright yellow warm-



Photo by Rosalie O'Connor

Rosie O'Donnell (with Broadway star Kristin Chenoweth) loves the theater.

ing my core, formerly frozen and uninhabitable ... They got yellow from me, and I felt yellow giving it to them, and it was all good ... So, why am I leaving my show? It took my yellow. I wanted it back. Without it, I can't live. The gray kills me."

So, when she dreamt up the coolest kids' theater program in town while sitting at her kitchen table, you can bet she had probably imagined a warm yellow. Sharing Broadway and the performing arts with local kids became her calling. Like many of her program's students, O'Donnell came from humble beginnings and knew what it was like to have that burning-in-your-belly desire to become something more. Her mother, who died when O'Donnell was 10, introduced her to the theater. And her beloved former teacher, Pat Maravel, helped her heal and find her voice, so O'Donnell named the program's home on Manhattan's West 45th Street the Maravel Arts Center in her memory.

### Well-rounded kids rule

In the old days, to get into show biz you had to know how to carry a tune, dance (and tap dance) your heart out, take elocution lessons, and learn how to project your voice to the audience. But most of all, you had to have personality and a winning smile.

All of the above still holds true today. Tomorrow's rising stars are expected to train hard and aim high for their personal best and to strive for excellence, especially if they're chosen as Rosie's Theater Kids, where the code word is achievement — not only in the performing arts, but in school as well.

The staff and industry professionals are there to help students develop and hone their creative talents, but the programs take learning a step further, with life-prepping guidance along the way.

After all, the road to stardom can get rocky, and finding your inner Hamilton or Nicki Minaj doesn't come easy for anyone.

In a challenging, sometimes cut-throat world, a hefty dose of self-esteem and confidence-boosting makes all the difference, and all kids and teens benefit from knowing that the people around them believe in them and support their chosen path.

That's especially true for Rosie's Theater Kids, who deal with difficult challenges. Some have grown up in the housing developments or have families impacted by crime.

### A triple threat

Rosie's one-of-a-kind programs focus on academics, nutrition, and art, and the staff works hard to provide an exciting, well-rounded theater education.

Last year, Rosie's Theater Kids' ACTE II Program received the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the nation's highest honor for out-of-school arts and humanities youth programs. Performing to loud applause for First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House, 12 students accepted this honor.

In 2014, the program was awarded a \$500,000 grant to establish the SAM Scholarship for Scholastic and Artistic Merit, an ongoing scholarship program that provides graduates with full scholarships of gap funding (the amount of money that is owed once scholarships, grants, and parent contributions are accounted for) to the college of their choice. Whatever is left (generally loan



Karen Herrera and Kathy Gaweda celebrate their scholarship wins thanks to Rosie's Theater Kids.

amounts) need not be taken, and the scholarship will pay for that. The funds will be used to cover tuition, room and board, books, and other necessary items that come with the cost of higher education.

### **Kathy and Karen win big**

For the first time in Rosie's Theater Kids' history, two city students were selected to receive this scholarship. When Katarzyna (Kathy) Gaweda, 16, garnered a much-deserved \$100,000 scholarship from Rosie's Theater Kids, she said she couldn't imagine a greater feeling — until her best friend, Karen Herrera, also 16, was called up moments later to accept a \$50,000 scholarship at the annual spring benefit.

Both girls are former PS 51 students. Kathy and Karen were introduced to the program during a school visit in the fourth grade.

"I was so incredibly excited. I started crying out of happiness, and when Karen's name was announced, the tears just kept coming," said Kathy, the daughter of Polish immigrants. "We've shared experiences since first grade and to be able to share such a life-changing experi-

ence is something I will never forget. When I got home and told my mom, she was super excited as well. We cried happy tears together."

Kathy, who attends the Professional Performing Arts School in Manhattan, as a musical theater major, said she is looking at small liberal arts colleges not too far from New York so she can stay close to her parents. Her top choices are probably Brown and Vassar.

"We're going to start applying in the fall, so we can get teacher recommendations and write our essays. Rosie's helps the seniors so much with the college application process, which is a huge comfort to us and to our parents," she said.

Thanks to Rosie's Theater Kids and their scholarships, both girls have applied to colleges they would never have even dreamed of applying to before.

"Rosie's is one of the most accepting and loving communities I've ever been a part of. Every member of the staff genuinely cares so much for each student and the students are always there for each other. As the students get older, they became caring for and helping the youngest students," Kathy said. "During my first

gala with Rosie's, I realized that I had so much fun when I was performing that from then on it held a special place in my heart."

Although her interests include photography, writing, humanities, and women's studies, Kathy plans on entering freshman year with an open mind, taking whatever classes interest her, then choosing an academic path later on.

Like many New Yorkers, she needs her culture fix every now and then.

"I recently saw 'Dear Evan Hansen' at Second Stage Theatre and it was absolutely incredible! I loved the music and the story so much, and since it's moving to Broadway, I'm hoping to see it again. I'm also desperate to see 'Hamilton' (but who isn't?), as well as 'Waitress' and 'The Color Purple,'" she said.

As the daughter of two Mexican immigrants, Karen also grew up in modest circumstances. She attributes her strong work ethic to her mother, a home keeper, and her father, a bike messenger. And she credits her sister Kiara, who is deaf, as one of the reasons she has such appreciation for musical theater.

"I honestly had no idea I was going to win. It's not that I doubted my

abilities to win it, but it's because everyone in my class is so deserving," said Karen. "It's truly an honor to win such an amazing scholarship."

Karen said her mom was waiting by the door when she told her she had won \$50,000. They hugged and started tearing up. She then told her dad, and they both hugged her.

"My younger sister started yelling in excitement," she recalled. "I had never seen my family so happy, but something that I will never forget from that night is when my dad told me, 'Karen, this is the best gift I have ever received in my 46 years of life.'"

Karen has been looking at New York colleges, like State University of New York Purchase and others. She hasn't started applying yet, because she just finished her junior year at Talent Unlimited High School, but may major in communications or look into bachelor of fine arts programs in acting.

Karen enjoys the theater scene and said she recently saw the plays "The Humans" and "The Father" on Broadway, and performances by the Jessica Lang Dance Company and SteeleDance Company.

"I've really been wanting to see 'Dear Evan Hansen,' 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time,' 'Fiddler on the Roof,' 'The Color Purple,' and of course, 'Hamilton,' which is on everyone's must-see list."

Earlier this year, she saw Deaf West's production of "Spring Awakening," and recalled being brought to tears as the songs came to life through American Sign Language.

Her fave theater actors, singers, and dancers include Jonathan Groff, Frank Langella, Misty Copeland, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Beth Malone, Audra McDonald, and so many others.

Rosie's Theater Kids has lifted the curtain on an exciting world of possibilities for Karen.

"[It] has changed my life completely," she said. "Without this program, I would have no idea what I would be doing now. I am truly grateful for the investments made in me and will forever be thankful to be a part of such an amazing program that gives children the opportunities to succeed and excel in life."

For more, visit [www.rosiestheaterkids.org](http://www.rosiestheaterkids.org).

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

# Senses of wonder

When you're young, there's a lot to get excited about

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

**E**yes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet. It seems like I was just teaching my toddler names of her the body parts and all about her five senses. Oh, to experience the world through the senses of a child — the excitement, the passion — about even small things. Jessie is now a tween, but her enthusiastic reactions to everyday experiences still tickle me. She cherishes the moments with all of her body parts.

Jessie and I recently spent the afternoon together. Our first stop was a restaurant, where I ordered chili. I tried something different and ordered it in a bread bowl. When the waitress brought it, Jessie's eyes got so wide you'd have thought I won the lottery.

"Dad, you'll always have to order this!"

Jessie sat across from me behind a huge bowl of salad, chatting happily as she tasted the

## CHERISH THE MOMENTS

various nuts, cheeses, and other toppings that decorated the lettuce. Jessie makes full use of her mouth for talking as well as eating, which sometimes gives my ears the sense that they might start bleeding.

After lunch, we shopped. Jessie found a bottle of blue nail polish we thought was 99 cents, but it rang up for 37 cents. I'm not sure when her eyes sparkled more: as she celebrated the fabulous deal, or that evening when she showed off her blue fingernails.

After buying the nail polish, Jessie noticed her favorite store was having a sale: the 75 percent-off sign in the window was a sight to behold.

"Dad, we need to go there right away!"

"Jessie, we need to buy sneakers, not lotions and soaps."

But she twinkled her pretty eyes, and shoe shopping waited. We left an hour later with a full bag of fragrant treats for her nose.

A few days later, our friend gave Jessie three bottles of perfume.

Jessie sprayed the first on her wrists and rubbed them together. She spritzed the second on her mom's wrist.

"Dad, I have one more to sample."

"I don't want to wear ladies' perfume."

I said the words — and meant them — but my muscles must not have heard, because I held out my hand, and Jessie sprayed it, then pulled it to her nose. She then dragged my hand, towing me behind, for her mom to sniff.

The next morning, Jessie was still excited about her new perfume. Her mom Mattie sent her back to the bathroom to "tone down the scent." I told Jessie it might be too much perfume if the teacher at the front of the room can smell her from the back row.

On our shopping trip, we finally found some sneakers for Jessie's

ever-growing feet. (A few days later, I would question whether we needed that purchase when shoeless Jessie stepped onto our pollen-covered driveway in her socks and danced around in the yellow dust as if a light snow had fallen.)

After paying for the sneakers, we browsed the department store.

"Dad, I love this coat. It's the softest coat in the entire world."

Jessie repeated this several times, both before and after I purchased the green jacket for her. The next morning, rubbing her hands up and down her plush-covered arms, she was still thrilled.

"I love my fuzzy coat. I'm always going to have a fuzzy coat. I'll wear it in summer and winter and when I outgrow it, I'll give it to Momma and get another one."

On the ride home, Jessie gave the radio buttons on my truck a workout, switching stations to catch songs she liked. Her ears and mine don't always appreciate the same sounds, but some of her music has grown on me.

At the beginning of our afternoon, before I ate my chili, I texted a photo of it to Mattie. Jessie's enthusiasm was so contagious, I had to share it.

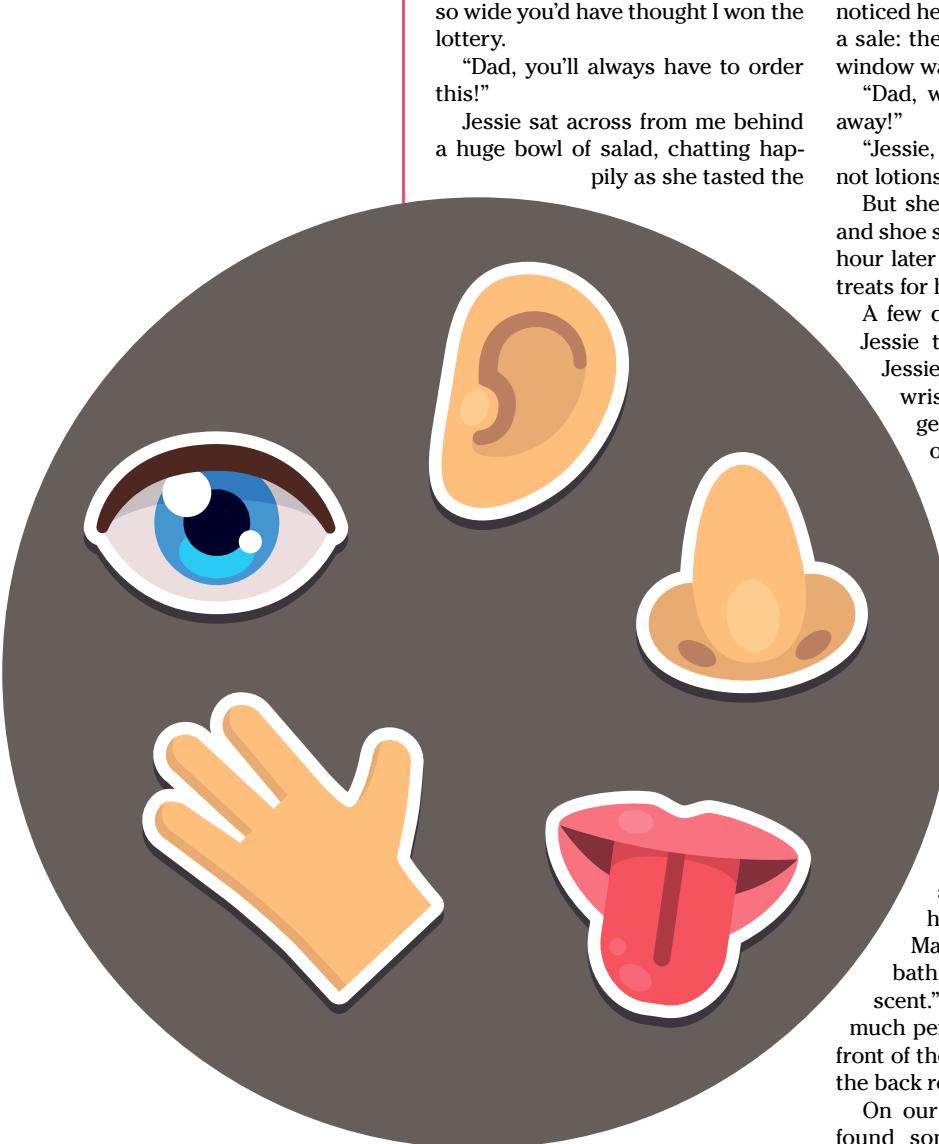
When I finished the chili, there was a big hole in the bottom of the bread bowl. For some reason, I felt compelled to take an "after photo." I picked up the bread and held it so that Jessie's face was visible through the hole, then snapped the picture with my other hand. When I said "Smile," she smiled, but added, "Dad, don't play with your food." I've taught my girl well.

She's taught me, too — to use all my senses, especially a sense of wonder, to get the most out of every day.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments.

*If you enjoyed this column, you'll like Patrick's first book, "Moments: A Dad Holds On." The book compiles favorite stories and new material and is available for sale on Amazon.com.*

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





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# Philanthropy in 3D

## A Manhattan teen's passion for changing kids' lives with 3D printing

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**A** Manhattan teen is learning the 3-D skills she'll need to help bring her passion for doing good to the next level.

Chloe Sutter, a rising senior at Convent of the Sacred Heart, spent four days in leadership training and mentorship thanks to the ANNpower Vital Voices Leadership Forum, a program that teaches young women from across the U.S. the leadership skills they need to affect global progress, invest in their communities, and begin their journeys as the next generation of leaders.

It was her dedication and passion for making a difference, specifically by connecting kids with disabilities to 3D printers, that brought her to ANNpower — a partnership between ANN Inc. (parent company of Ann Taylor, LOFT, and Lou & Grey) and Vital Voices.

"My freshman year of high school, my school introduced a 3D-printing program (in partnership with Enabling the Future, an organization that matches kids in need with prosthetic hands), with a specific focus on printing fully functional prosthetic limbs. That year, I assisted in making three hands.

"To see a young boy throw a ball for the first time, shake his father's hand, and give us high-fives was so rewarding," says Sutter. "However, after that year, the program ended at my school for logistical reasons, and I was so passionate about it, that I knew I had to find a way to not only continue it, but also expand it."

The teen has big plans for the future of 3D printing.

"I want every school with access to a 3D printer to be able to print fully functional prosthetic hands, which are so much simpler to make than anybody realizes. Typical prosthetics can cost tens of thousands of dollars, yet 3D-printed prosthetics have just as much functionality and — aside from the cost of the printer — materials to make prosthetic hands cost just \$20.

"For kids who are still growing, it's so important to be able to get new prosthetic limbs as they grow," she says. "I'm training younger students in my school (fifth through eighth graders) to create 3D-prosthetic



Chloe Sutter was part of a national leadership forum for young women.

hands, and am hoping to expand the program to other schools as well. So many schools have 3D printers, but not all know how to use them for the betterment of the community — yet."

And thanks to the forum, Sutter received invaluable support that will help her reach her goals.

"The experience was energizing and inspiring. I built strong relationships with the other Fellows, all of whom I learned from. In addition to gaining lifelong friends, I've also gained their insight and support. The other fellows and the mentors in the ANNpower Vital Voices network challenged me to strengthen my project idea, and many of them are already looking for ways to help me bring it to life."

"I also heard from and was mentored by incredibly accomplished female leaders, including Reshma Saujani (founder and CEO, Girls Who Code) and Meredith Koop (stylist to the First Lady). I feel so supported by the collaborative community I'm

now part of thanks to ANNpower," she said.

She and the other participants are now eligible to receive an ANNpower Project Grant (up to \$2,500) to put their ideas into action.

ANNpower grants are currently supporting projects ranging from politics to the arts, to the fields of science, technology, and math.

"I'll never forget some of the lessons I learned from leaders from ANN Inc. and Vital Voices, as well as women leaders from across industries," Sutter added. "But the best part is that it doesn't end there. I know that the ANNpower network, the other Fellows included, will continue to help me develop my project and reach my final goal."

Visit [annpower.org](http://annpower.org) for more information.

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

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## A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

# Staying close with your kids at college

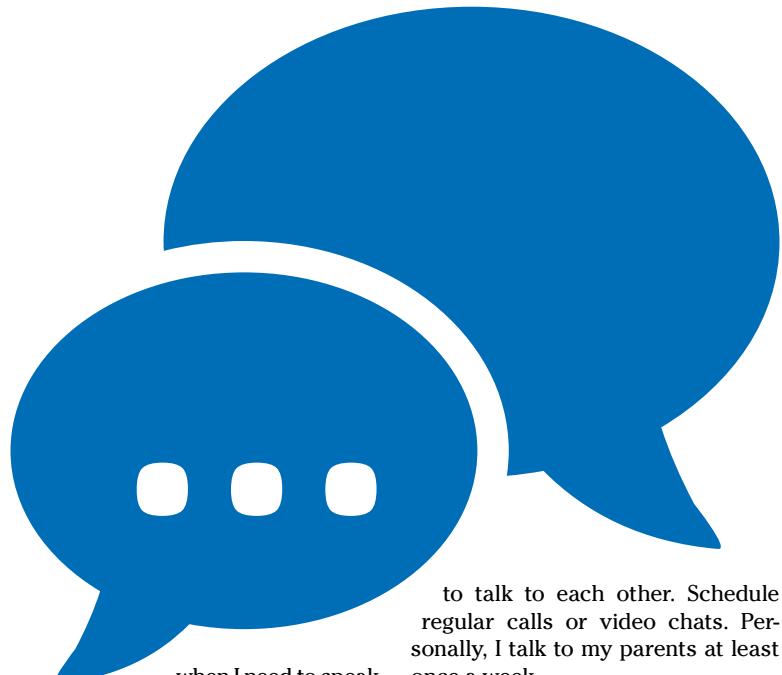
**I** grew up having a close relationship with my parents. I was very open with them and always included them in conversations about my life. Needless to say, moving away for college meant that my relationship with my family changed. With miles between us, my parents and I still manage to keep in touch, but I have been forced to be a lot more independent.

Maintaining a healthy relationship with your immediate family is important. No matter how old you are, you need someone to rely on and trust. Your parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins are a crucial support network. Building that steadfast connection can be difficult for students and family alike. For students, too much parental involvement may feel suffocating, while for family members, too much free rein may be worrisome. The key is to maintain open communication.

For students, being away from home means newly found freedom, which is both scary and exciting. On one hand, there is no one telling you when to clean your room, when to go to sleep, or that you cannot go out on a Wednesday night. On the other hand, the absence of parents may lead to piles of dirty laundry on your dorm room floor and wading through a sea of stinky clothes.

When you're away at college, your parents can no longer micro manage your life. When I was in high school, my dad used to make sure I was up in time for class. However, in college, I need to set my own alarm and resist hitting the snooze button a hundred times. If I wind up being late for class, there is only one person to blame: me.

Despite this novel independence, it is okay to ask your parents for help and advice. Sometimes I call my mom to ask questions about cooking a meal or whether I can put my sweaters in the dryer. I also talk to my parents whenever I need emotional support. As awesome as my school's counseling services can be, there are times



when I need to speak  
with someone who  
really knows me, like my parents.

For parents, worrying about the not-so-little-ones is natural. Although my parents will never admit it, letting go of their only child was not easy. Ideally, parents should avoid being overbearing, especially when your child first arrives at school. Allow him or her time to adjust to the change and figure out how to make friends and choose classes on his or her own.

My college even suggests that parents abstain from calling the school, which may place additional stress on both parents and their kids.

Instead, find new ways to subtly check in on your budding scholar. Pay attention to any photos she might send you in text messages or e-mail. If you are connected with your child on social media, keep an eye out for interesting posts, likes, or photos. Although what your child posts on Facebook does not tell the whole story, it can often provide hints about her overall wellbeing.

Nonetheless, for both parents and students, there is nothing like actual verbal communication to truly nurture a relationship. Take some time

to talk to each other. Schedule regular calls or video chats. Personally, I talk to my parents at least once a week.

What you choose to discuss is up to you. When I chat with my family, I tend to tell them a little bit about everything that has been happening on campus. Occasionally, I have personal matters to discuss, like how I should prioritize my time or how to handle a conflict with my friends. Although my parents may rattle off advice, it is still up to me to decide on a plan of action.

I try to check in on my parents, since they are aging, too. As much as I am envious that they are exploring the city and eating out more frequently than when I am at home, it is great to see that they are not suffering from an empty nest.

Relationships must be constantly nurtured, if they are meant to last. When communication is not as frequent as in the past, make the moments you physically spend with your loved ones matter. We can still care about each other from distance, and with a little effort, we can continue to show we care.

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

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**DEAR  
DR. KARYN  
DR. KARYN GORDON**

# Helping your kids get through divorce

*Dear Dr. Karyn,*

*I am currently going through a painful divorce, and my kids are really struggling. We were in a toxic relationship, but now my kids are really suffering. I realize this is a loaded question, but are there any suggestions you could give to parents in this type of situation?*

**I**n recently did a segment for a national television show on helping kids through divorce with the simple dos and don'ts for parents. Divorce is rarely easy or straightforward — every family's situation is unique. And yet, I've seen firsthand — while working with hundreds of families — that how parents deal with the divorce greatly impacts how "healthy" or "damaged" the kids end up. Many kids (including teens and young adults) don't know how to voice their needs to their parents, so I often become the spokesperson to the parents, providing practical tips for how to

navigate this tough time. Here are three tips to consider:

## **Filter what you say**

Be sure to filter what you are saying not only to your kids, but also when your kids are around. (They often overhear the late-night phone calls if you're discussing your ex.) The golden rule is to say something positive, neutral, or nothing at all! When children hear negative comments (directly or indirectly), they often feel that they need to choose sides, and this often creates an enormous burden that is unfair and unhealthy.

Also be sure to filter what you say when talking directly to your kids. When a parent makes comments such as "You are so much like your father," but at another time says, "I can't stand your father," your child may interpret that you can't stand him. It confuses him!

Just remember to honor your partner (even if you disagree on many things) in his or her absence.

## **Focus on your kids**

It's important to put extra focus and energy on connecting and engaging your kids during this time! This can often be tough for parents going through divorce, because many tell me they feel like they are falling apart and have nothing left inside to give.

My encouragement is to try your best (and get your own support, as I list below). Your kids are losing the family "that they know," and it is a very big deal for them. Even though divorce is extremely common, it's a new experience for your children, and it's important to not minimize their experience, and to recognize the pain it may cause them. When talking with your kids be sure to emphasize:

- That they still have two parents that love them.
- That the divorce is not their fault. (It is never the fault of any child.)

Be sure to spend time with them

one on one; they need to know that you are close by during this difficult time. They may be angry, frustrated, distant, or aggressive, and blaming one parent more than another. Expect a wide range of emotions and validate their feelings. (Don't rationalize your behavior or the decision to divorce.) Listen, listen, and listen some more (yes, I intentionally wrote "listen" three times), and allow them to experience the huge range of emotions they face. Divorce is like a type of death — in fact, many people experience the same cycle of emotions as if a person has died (shock, anger, sadness, acceptance, forgiveness). Give them time to experience and grieve this.

## **Surround yourself with supportive friends**

Many children mirror the emotions of their parents, so the sooner you can work on getting yourself healthy and happy again, the better! To do so, make a list of the people in your life that can be on your supportive team (friends, family, counselor), but definitely do not put your kids on that team.

Kids (including teens but also young adults) should never be the counselor or go-to person for their parent. Yes, they can help in supporting you when you are struggling, but they should never have to feel the burden of being the person you are relying on — it's too big and heavy for them. One of the most damaging things a divorced parent can do is to unload to their kids. Be intentional to get help from your adult supportive team, so you can return to emotional health and be a better parent to your kids.

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



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## THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

### No need to ‘Worry’

In “Mama Loved to Worry,” by Maryann Weidt, mama is really tall — at least five feet! — and the story, illustrated by Rachael Balsaitis, is even taller!

Mama was a first-class, top-rate worrier. She was so good at it, she won awards. But she had reason to worry. She had the whole farm to take care of, including the cows, the pigs, the chickens, and Baby Eli, who seemed to be into everything, every minute of the day.

One afternoon, while she was in the garden, Mama worried about a tornado. A twister like that, well, it could carry the farm off! She worried and worried — and when Mama worries, she knits. That day, she knitted enough woolies for the pigs, chickens, and cows to wear, and when a tornado actually did “tumble tail over teakettle” toward the farm, she grabbed Baby Eli and ran. That Eli, he was always into everything.

Another day soon afterward, Mama started to worry about how truly hot it was. What if Crooked Neck Creek dried up? What would happen then? She worried and worried — and

when Mama worries, she sews “faster than a hound dog after a squirrel.” On that day, she sewed clothes for all the aunts, uncles, and cousins, and she worked up a sweat. There was no more need to worry about the creek, but where was Baby Eli?

It was even hotter the next day, and Mama started to worry about all of that heat. It could have popped the corn in the fields! She worried and worried — and when Mama worries, she makes sauerkraut, strudel, and snickerdoodle twists. When the corn started popping in the field, and the sugar cane melted, it smelled so good. But where was Baby Eli now?

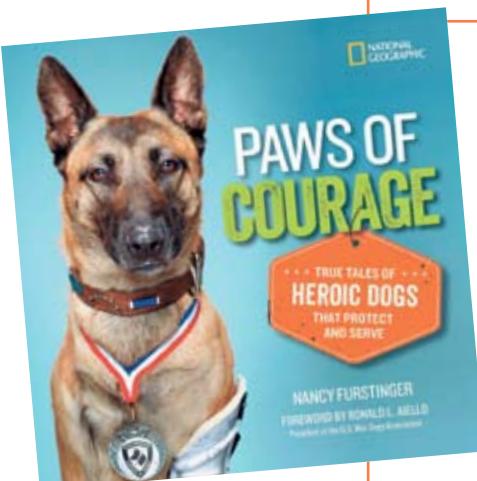
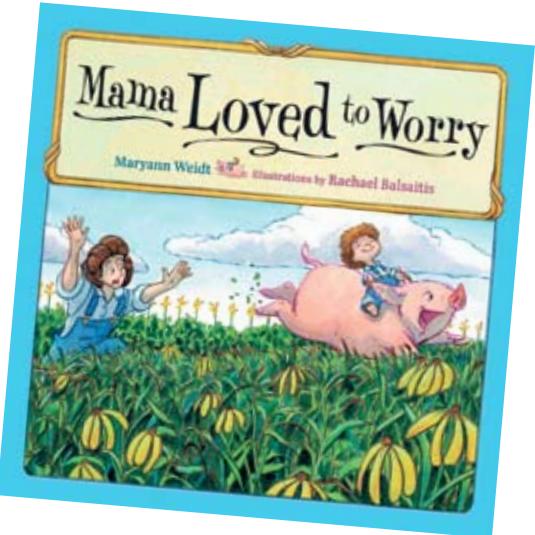
Just as suddenly, where was Mama? Was it time to worry about her, too?

There isn’t a kid in the world who doesn’t love exaggeration in a story, and Weidt gives it with this rib-tickler that gets taller and taller as the

tale goes on. The language in this book will really make you grin, but what’s even better are the illustrations by Balsaitis. She gives this book a home-spun feel of a gentler time when laundry hung outside to dry, the waterin’ hole was a right-fine place to swim, and summer never ended.

This book is a knee-slappin’, leg-pullin’ passel of fun for 5-to-8-year-olds, or anybody who knows how to spin a tale a mile high. And if that’s either of you, then “Mama Loved to Worry” could be huge.

*“Mama Loved to Worry,” by Maryann Weidt [32 pages, 2016, \$16.95].*



### Tales about doggie derring-do

Everybody knows that dog is man’s best friend, but that goes doubly for a military or police dog and a handler: there are times when that relationship is a life-or-death matter. And in “Paws of Courage” by Nancy Furstinger, you’ll find mini-stories of those bonds, past and present.

Dogs, of course, have served on the battlefield for millennia, but history only remembers a handful of brave canine soldiers. In World War I, Sergeant Stubby, a pit bull mix, saved countless lives by warning soldiers of incoming bombs and by alerting them to enemy presence.

Tiny Smoky, a Yorkshire terrier, helped soldiers by doing the same thing in World War II, and due to her size, was also able to help “thread vital wires” through a narrow underground pipe. An English Pointer named Judy followed her handler to

a prisoner-of-war camp in World War II, and was eventually listed as a prisoner-of-war for her own protection.

Also during World War II, around 10,000 family dogs became K-9 soldiers, sentries, and sniffers, including a German Shepherd mix named Chips, who was honored for bravery on the battlefield and for capturing enemy soldiers all by himself.

Belgian Malinois dogs, says Furstinger, are “canine superheroes” with speed and courage and are a “top breed for police and military work.” Newfoundlands are excellent swimmers and can dive; for those heroic maneuvers, they’re employed in water rescue. Labrador retrievers make great arson dogs.

You would have had to have been born two months ago to not know that dogs are important members of military troops, crime-fighting organizations, and anti-drug efforts. For most of us, it’s always been that way; K-9 corps are a common sight.

So why read “Paws of Courage?”

I wondered that myself. Furstinger tells some rather common tales of military and working dogs, then and now; you might not recognize them individually, but the stories are familiar, if not similar to others you’ve browsed or seen online. Been there, read it, kept the collar — except for two easy-to-love things: the abundance of pictures in this book and the sidebars of information.

You might find this book in the children’s section of your favorite bookish place, but I think it’s more for readers ages 14 to adult.

Give “Paws of Courage” to your dog-lover, and you’ll be a hero, too.

*“Paws of Courage: True Tales of Heroic Dogs That Protect and Serve,” by Nancy Furstinger, foreword by Ronald L. Aiello [160 pages, 2016, \$12.99].*

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



Online Activity Guide  
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## TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

# Farm stand specials

**F**or many of us, August is a time to get out of the city and enjoy the tranquility of summer. For others, August is a time to enjoy the tranquility inside the city, with less crowds and a slower pace. Wherever you find yourself this month, make sure you find your way to a farm stand. The sun-warmed, ripe tomatoes, plump eggplants, juicy melons, and gem-like stone fruits of August make the produce stand look like a candy shop. Treat these ingredients simply, and let their natural flavors shine!

### Try something new with corn

My family loves corn on the cob, simply grilled and served with salt and butter. After shucking the corn, I rub it with olive oil and a few cracks of black pepper. When ready to grill, I wrap the seasoned corn in aluminum foil and place onto a hot grill. If you are lucky and have a campfire, you can place the corn directly on the hot coals of the fire. Just make sure to turn the wrapped ears frequently.

When corn is cooked to your liking (about five to 12 minutes depending on the fire heat and your preferred level of char), let the corn cool in its foil packet. This allows it to continue to steam as it cools.

You can then add butter and serve — or try it Mexican-street style with mayonnaise, chili powder, a squeeze of lime, chopped cilantro, and some crumbled cotija cheese. If you can't find cotija, queso fresco or a mild feta will work.

Make a few extra ears and save

them for a corn salad with all of those same ingredients plus a can of drained, rinsed black beans or chickpeas.

### Tomato time

I love summer tomatoes so much that I refrain from eating them most of the year, because nothing compares to the juicy sweet, acidic flavor blast of August tomatoes. My favorite breakfast during the tomato season is the traditional *pan con tomate* of Spain. This snack is so delicious and requires no cooking except toasting some good bread slices. (See the recipe below.)

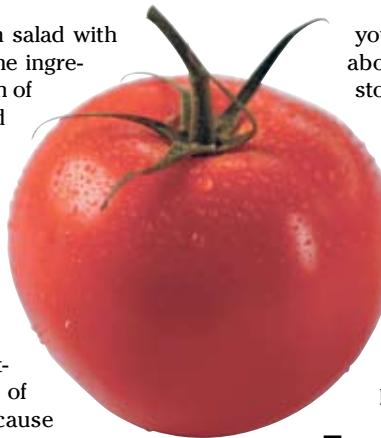
The garlicky tomato topping can be used for a number of things in addition to toast, such as a sauce for grilled chicken, a pizza topping, a pasta salad sauce, and a condiment for steamed greens.

### Make jam

My family's favorite jam is blueberry, hands down. Making jam doesn't have to be a huge project, and is a great way to make sure no fruit goes to waste. Blueberries can be very runny, but if you add a fruit that is high in pectin such as plums or apples, it will thicken it right up naturally.

Make a small batch in a heavy-bottomed sauce pan. Keep the few jars that it yields right in the fridge so

you don't have to worry about sealing and dry storing the jam. Use the delicious jam over the next week or two for all kinds of things including puff-pastry tart filling, pancake topping, or a fancy sandwich spread with some good brie or camembert. The ideal picnic food!



### Try a watermelon salad or soup

We all love juicy sliced watermelon and classic fruit salad. But when there are more melons around than we know what to do with, try mixing it up with a savory application. Watermelon salad with mint or an ice-cold watermelon gazpacho are both elegant additions to a friend's pot luck cookout or a sunset beach dinner.

### Now is the time for Eggplant Parmesan

Every year in August, I put aside some time to make a classic Eggplant Parmesan. It takes time to do it right.

You need to salt and drain the raw eggplant slices, bread and fry each slice, assemble the layers in a casserole dish with fresh mozzarella, basil, Parmesan, and a simple tomato sauce. The results can be sublime.

Although this is not an easy or quick dish, it is well worth making when eggplants are at their beautiful peak. Either make a small batch and eat it over a few days or make a giant batch as I do, and freeze the leftovers in family-sized portions in gallon Ziploc bags. If you get all the air out of the bag and make sure it is sealed tightly, these precious leftovers will be perfect long after eggplants are out of season.

*Joanna DeVita is executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School. DeVita is the mother of two children and loves nothing more than sharing her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking with them.*

### Pan con tomate

Yields enough to top four slices of toast

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 large, ripe beefsteak tomato or 3 medium ripe plum tomatoes
- 3 tbsp. excellent-quality olive oil
- 1 raw garlic clove
- 1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- Flake sea salt (preferred), kosher salt, or fine sea salt, to taste
- 4 slices toast — sourdough, ciabatta,

multigrain — whatever you prefer

**DIRECTIONS:** Cut the tomato(s) in half. Using a cheese grater, grate the tomato's cut-side until only the peel remains.

Discard or eat the peel. Reserve the grated tomato insides in a small mixing bowl.

Grate half of the clove of garlic on a microplane. Reserve the ungrated clove for another use, and add the grated garlic to the mixing bowl with

the tomato pulp.

Season the tomato pulp with 2 of the tablespoons of olive oil, black pepper, and a pinch of salt.

Let mixture sit to develop flavor while you toast the bread.

Spoon or brush the tomato mixture over the hot, toasted bread.

Drizzle the remaining olive oil over the bread, letting it drip down the sides. Sprinkle with some more sea salt, to taste. Enjoy!



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Choose conventional or grass-fed beef?

**I**n spite of today's high beef prices, some families are opting to pay even more for grass-fed beef. They believe it's tastier and more nutritious than conventional grain-fed beef. Are they onto something?

First, some beefy definitions:

**Conventional beef.** Cattle that spend the majority of their lives grazing on grassy pastures. They are then "finished" for the last three to nearly 12 months on a primarily grain-based diet that may include corn, soybeans, roughage, and nutritional supplements. The animals are often given antibiotics and hormones.

**Grass-fed beef.** These cattle eat grass and forage from the pasture until they are harvested. Until January of this year, the Department of Agriculture formally defined this method of feeding. "Grass-fed" beef can still be found in the meat case, but there is no legal definition of this term. Instead, look for private bodies that certify beef as having been raised on grass. These include American Grassfed, Food Alliance, and Animal Welfare Approved, which also look at the confinement of animals, environmental stewardship, and use of hormones and antibiotics.

### Better nutrition?

Proponents of grass-fed beef point to its superior nutritional profile. For example, a serving of grass-fed beef provides roughly two fewer grams



of total fat and one more gram of protein.

One widely heralded claim is that it provides a greater amount of omega-3 fatty acids.

It is true the grass-fed contains double the omega-3s, but the overall amount is very small. Conventional beef contains 0.02 gram omega-3s per 3½ ounces, compared to 0.05 gram per 3½ ounces. If you want omega-3s, go for fatty fish and omega-3 eggs.

The undisputed benefits of grass-fed, pasture-raised beef include the long-term sustainability of animal

farming and the ways the animals are cared for.

Two more labels you may encounter at the meat counter:

**Naturally raised beef.** This is a Department of Agriculture certification that the meat is harvested from cattle raised completely free from growth hormones, antibiotics, or animal by-products. This could be either grain- or grass-fed. By contrast, "natural" beef can come from cattle raised on a feedlot, fed genetically modified grain or grain grown with pesticides, or given antibiotics or hormones.

**Grass-fed organic beef.** This meat comes from cattle fed on only 100 percent organic grass and forage. These cattle are never given antibiotics or hormones. Consumers Union recommends this whenever possible.

If grass-fed or other premium beef is not in your budget, watch the portion size and select extra lean cuts of conventional beef.

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

### Southwest chicken dip

Prep: 10 mins. Cook: 25 mins

Yield: 10 half-cup servings

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/2 cup Stonyfield Whole Milk Plain Greek Yogurt
- 1 8 oz. package Neufchatel or cream cheese (softened)
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 2 cups chicken breast (cooked and

shredded)

1/2 cup black beans (drained and rinsed)

1/2 cup corn

1 cup shredded Mexican blend cheese

Garnish: sliced scallions, shredded cheese, beans, and corn

**DIRECTIONS:** Preheat oven to 375-degrees Fahrenheit. Mix all of the ingredients together in a large bowl until incorporated. Transfer the mixture to a baking dish or cast-

iron skillet and bake in the oven for 20–25 minutes until bubbly. Remove from oven and garnish with scallions, shredded cheese, beans, and corn.

Serve with celery sticks, carrot sticks, pita chips, and/or crackers.

#### NUTRITION FACTS (without garnish):

190 calories, 8 g carbohydrate (4 g sugars), 16 g protein, 11 g fat (6 g saturated), 1 g fiber, 330 mg sodium, 8% DV vitamin A, 2% DV vitamin C, 15% DV calcium, 4% iron.

Used with permission from Stonyfield.com.

# Calendar

AUGUST



## More than just storytime

The Brooklyn ARTery is again hosting its annual Storytelling Festival on Governors Island on Aug. 7, 14, 21, and 28.

Featured storytellers include Regina Ress on Aug. 7, Arif Choudhury on Aug. 14, Julie Pasqual and puppets on Aug. 21, and origami swami Megan Hicks, as well as the Marshall Katzman Marionettes, on Aug. 28.

The festival is sponsored by Mu-

nicipal Credit Union and Corner Media Group.

Storytelling Festival on Aug. 7, 14, 21, and 28 from 1 to 3 pm. Free.

Families can get the ferries to the island at 10 South St. in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 in Brooklyn.

*Brooklyn ARTery Soundstage [Outside Building 10 in Nolan Park on Governors Island, (347) 425- 7770, [www.brooklynartery.com](http://www.brooklynartery.com)].*

## Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. [NYPARENTING.COM](#)

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

### MON, AUG. 1

#### IN BROOKLYN

**Mindful Crafts:** Tykes in the Heights, 663 Vanderbilt Ave.; (646) 309-5540; [Lucie@mischievousgoddess.com](mailto:Lucie@mischievousgoddess.com); [www.mischievousgoddess.com/#brooklyn/c397z](http://www.mischievousgoddess.com/#brooklyn/c397z); 4 – 4:45 pm; \$18.

Unicorns, mermaids, and faeries ... oh my! They're all real in Mischievous Goddess World! And they come to life during this inspiring art-and-craft series that is woven with ancient wisdom and mindfulness practices. Using materials found in nature (and a few bits of sparkle!) we will paint, build, weave, mould and create a variety of awesome crafts for your little love to treasure!

### TUES, AUG. 2

#### IN BROOKLYN

**Story time:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 3 Greenway Terrace, Pierpoint Street and the water; [www.brooklynbridgepark.org](http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org); 10:30 am to 11 am; Free.

Listen to Brooklyn Heights librarians read stories from the Brooklyn Public Library's reading list and have a rollicking good time listening to stories, singing songs, and enjoying the breeze from the water.

**Story Hour:** Imagination Playground, Ocean Avenue and Lincoln Road; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 3 pm; Free.

Gather around Peter and Willie, the statue of two beloved Keats characters, for storytelling adventures brought to life by Tammy Hall. Sponsored by the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation.

### WED, AUG. 3

#### IN BROOKLYN

**Nature walk:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1 entrance, Old Fulton and Furman streets; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm; \$5 (\$10 non-members).

Join environmentalist educator Christina Tobitsch on a tree walk.

**Double Dutch:** Brooklyn Bridge Park



## Go double Dutch

Hallo! Ankie van der Meer and Nanne Kalmas will be performing Dutch folk songs at the Waterfront Museum Barge on Aug. 13.

The pair have collaborated on projects like the Henry Hudson and the Half Moon project and primarily sing in Frisian and Dutch, Esperanto, and English. They will share their repertoire of historical poems and songs

including Adriaen Block and the "Onrust," Peter Stuyvesant, and other themes from New Netherlands and New Amsterdam.

Nanne & Ankie, Dutch folk singers, on Aug. 13 at 2 and 4 pm. Free.

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

Pier 2, Clarke Street at the Roller Rink; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 7 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Learn to jump with experienced Double Dutch Empire instructors. For all abilities but recommended for children older than 15.

### THURS, AUG. 4

#### IN BROOKLYN

**Summer Sports:** McDonald Playground, McDonald Avenue and E. First Street; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 10 am to 11:30 am; Free.

Children 7 to 17 play street hockey. For all levels.

#### "Mermaid and Neptune

**Crowns":** Greenpoint Library, 431 Sixth Ave.; (718) 832-1853; [www.bklynlibrary.org](http://www.bklynlibrary.org); 11:45 am; Free.

Join author Melanie Hope Greenberg for a story reading and craft activity workshop.

**"American Graffiti":** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1 entrance, Old Fulton Street and Furman Streets; [www.ny](http://www.ny)

[govprks.org](http://www.govprks.org); 6 pm to 10 pm; Free.

The quintessential teen movie. Bring a chair or blanket.

**Fishing nite:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 6pm to 8 pm; \$5 per person.

Prospect Park Alliance welcomes families to an introductory catch-and-release fishing class. Our experienced naturalists will teach participants how to tie a fishing knot, attach bait, and cast a line to a try and hook a fish! Families and children ages 8 years and older are welcome to participate. All equipment and light snacks will be provided. Advance registration is required.

**"The Sandlot":** Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 7:30 to 10:30 pm; Free.

Partnering with the Brooklyn Hospital Center's Young Leadership Council, come and enjoy this family friendly movie on the lawn.

**"Space Jam":** Brooklyn Museum,

# Calendar

200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; [www.brooklyn-museum.org](http://www.brooklyn-museum.org); 8 pm; Free.

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the animated cult classic, which follows Michael Jordan and the Looney Tunes characters in an outer space basketball game.

**Explore the heavens:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 1 entrance, Old Fulton St. and Furman Streets; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm; Free.

Come see the stars, planets and the moon from the park.

### FRI, AUG. 5

#### IN BROOKLYN

**"Star Wars: The Force Awakens":** WNYC Transmitter Park, West Street and Greenpoint Avenue; (347) 987-2765; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 8 pm to 10 pm; Free.

Older teens will enjoy this movie from the Star Wars franchise.

### SAT, AUG. 6

#### IN BROOKLYN

**Cooking workshop:** Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd.; (718) 629-5400; 1 pm to 3 pm; \$8 materials fee.

Join Cheryl Paswater, a certified fermentationist and educator who will teach older teens how to make a few seasonal ferments, including sauerkraut and styles of sour cream.

**Hindu Lamp Ceremony:** Pebble Beach at Brooklyn Bridge Park, Old Fulton Street and Furman Street; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 4 pm to 8 pm; Free.

Help bring peace and harmony to the shoreline. Watch Aeilushi Misstry perform the traditional Aarti ceremony at the park, then enjoy a dance performance.

**Garden Grooves:** Greene Acres Community Garden, 334 Franklin Ave.; (212) 333-2552; 6 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

Enjoy the sounds of live music from local musicians.

**Astronomy:** Owl's Head Park, 68th Street and Shore Road; (718) 421-2021; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 8 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Our Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe. Astronomy programs feature the use of telescopes and binoculars to observe specific astronomical events.

### SUN, AUG. 7

#### IN BROOKLYN

**"Mermaid and Neptune Crowns":** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 6, Furman Street; [www.brooklyn](http://www.brooklyn)

*Continued on page 46*

# Calendar

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

## Continued from page 45

bridgepark.org; 11 am; Free.

Meet author Melanie Hope Greenberg for a special story time.

**Shira and Friends:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 6, Joralemon Street; [www.nycgovpark.org](http://www.nycgovpark.org); 11 am to 1 pm; Free.

Led by singer-songwriter Shira Kobren, Shira & Friends loves bringing its high-energy, catchy tunes to its favorite kinds of audiences — the ones that love to dance along and become part of the show. Shira & Friends sing about topics that range from how to have the best day, to under-the-bed-monsters, to the power of dancing.

**Checkmate 101:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 6, Joralemon Street; 11 am to 1 pm; Free.

Come learn how to take your chess game to the next level with Zeebedee Collins! Best for beginners; limited boards available.

**Intermediate Canoeing:** Marine Park, Burnett Street and Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

For children 8 and older with some experience. Must be accompanied by guardian or parent.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Storytelling festival:** Governors Island at Nolan Park, Building 10, Manhattan; (347) 425-7770; [www.brooklynartrary.com](http://www.brooklynartrary.com); 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Hosted by Brooklyn ARTery Soundstage, the event features Regina Ress. Families can get the ferries to the island at 10 South St. in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 in Brooklyn.

## MON, AUG. 8

### IN BROOKLYN

**Mindful Crafts:** 4 – 4:45 pm. Tykes in the Heights. See Monday, Aug. 1.

## TUES, AUG. 9

### IN BROOKLYN

**Story time:** 10:30 am to 11 am. Pier 3 Greenway Terrace. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

**"The Winter's Tale":** Bridge View Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park, Old Fulton Street and Furman Street; nfo@brooklynbridgepark.org; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 7 pm to 9 pm; Free.

Shakespeare's rom-com presented by the New York Classical Theatre.

## WED, AUG. 10

### IN BROOKLYN

**Double Dutch:** 7 pm to 9 pm. Pier 2. See Wednesday, Aug. 3.

**"The Winter's Tale":** 7 pm to 9 pm. Bridge View Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park. See Tuesday, Aug. 9.



## It's hole-in-one fun!

Tee off at CityParks Golf now through Aug. 25 at Kaiser Park and St. John's Park.

Children ages 6 to 17 can learn the basics of the sport, from teeing off to how to sink that hole-in-one.

City Golf is now through Aug. 25 at Kaiser Park on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 10:30 am for children 6 to 8, and from 10:30 am to noon for children 9 to 17 years old.

*Kaiser Park (Neptune Avenue and*

*Bayview Avenue in Coney Island)*

It's also at St. John's Park on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 am for children 6 to 8 and from 10:30 am to noon for children 9 to 17 years old.

*St. John's Park (Bergen St. and Troy Avenue in Crown Heights)*

City Golf is free and is presented by René Lacoste Foundation and CityParks Foundation.

*Registration online is required. [www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/register](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/register)*

## THURS, AUG. 11

### IN BROOKLYN

**Summer Sports:** 10 am to 11:30 am. McDonald Playground. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

**Creatures of the Night:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 7 pm to 9 pm; \$10 per person (family of four discount tickets available).

This family-friendly version allows you to explore after dark with expert naturalist Paul Keim. Share snacks and beverages with Paul as he speaks about the ecological role that bats and nocturnal insects play in our environment, followed by a walking tour to spot and identify the Park's various species of resident bats in flight. Advance registration is required.

**"Julius Caesar":** Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 7:30 pm; Free.

Hip to Hip Theatre Company celebrates its 10th season of Free Shakespeare in the Parks with a performance of the tragedy.

**Explore the heavens:** 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Pier 1 entrance. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

## FRI, AUG. 12

### IN BROOKLYN

**Goodnight Goddess Parties:** Tykes in the Heights, 663 Vanderbilt Ave. at Park Place; [www.mischievousgoddess.com](http://www.mischievousgoddess.com); 5:30–7:30 pm; \$40 per child, including dinner.

Drop off the girls and go on a date! Incorporating mindfulness with imaginative play and creativity, each party will be inspired by a unique and inspiring theme. For girls aged 5-8, and includes story-telling, meditation, craft activity, and supper.

**"The Winter's Tale":** 7 pm to 9 pm. Bridge View Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park. See Tuesday, Aug. 9.

**"Inside Out":** WNYC Transmitter

Park, West Street and Greenpoint Avenue; (347) 987-2765; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 8 pm to 10pm; Free.

What really goes on inside a kid's head? Find out in this kid-friendly flick.

## SAT, AUG. 13

### IN BROOKLYN

**Dutch Folksingers:** Waterfront Museum Barge, 290 Conover St. near Reed Street; (718) 624-4719; [www.waterfrontmuseum.org](http://www.waterfrontmuseum.org); 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Ankie van der Meer and Nanne Kalmas sing a repertoire of historical songs about Henry Hudson and the "Half Moon," Adriaen Block and the "Onrust," Peter Stuyvesant, and other themes from New Netherland and New Amsterdam.

**LuLu's Cuts & Toys 15th Anniversary Carnival:** LuLu's Cuts & Toys, 48 Fifth Ave. between Bergen and Dean streets; [www.luluskidscuts.nyc](http://www.luluskidscuts.nyc); 5–8 pm; Free.

The neighborhood hairstylist and toy store celebrates more than a decade in Park Slope. Come out for a block party featuring face painting, carnival games, rides, and more.

**North Summer Strolls:** Fifth Avenue between Dean Street and Sterling Place; [info@parkslopefifthavenuebid.com](mailto:info@parkslopefifthavenuebid.com); [www.parkslopefifthavenuebid.com](http://www.parkslopefifthavenuebid.com); 5–9 pm; Free.

Rock-climbing wall, hula hoops, bubbles, giveaways by local businesses, and more.

**"The Winter's Tale":** 7 pm to 9 pm. Bridge View Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park. See Tuesday, Aug. 9.

**"Murder at the Food Coop":** Flamboyan Theater (Venue 2), 107 Suffolk St. between Rivington and Delancy streets; [www.fringeonthefly.com](http://www.fringeonthefly.com); 9:45 pm; \$18 (no late seating).

My, oh, my! The best whodunnit! The Park Slope Food Coop is the setting for this fruit and veggie farce, where beneath the green leafy leftist exterior slinks all manner of evil. Suitable for tweens and teens.

## SUN, AUG. 14

### IN BROOKLYN

**Foraging in the Park:** Grand Army Plaza, Union Street between Flatbush Avenue and Prospect Park West; (914) 835-2153; [www.wildmanstevebrill.com](http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com); 11:30 am; \$20 (\$10 children under 12).

Join Wildman Steve Brill and hunt for King Bolete Mushrooms and other edibles.

**Sunset TankerTime:** Portside New-York, Pioneer Street at Bowne Street; (917) 414-0565; [www.portsidenew-york.org](http://www.portsidenew-york.org); 5–10 pm; Free.

Bring a picnic, take-out dinner, bottle

# Calendar

of wine, your sketchbook, your kids, your main squeeze for a quiet and relaxing sunset at the end of your weekend on Red Hook's main dock. Selections from the maritime library will be available for reading on site.

**"Murder at the Food Coop":** 5 pm. Flamboyan Theater (Venue 2). See Saturday, Aug. 13.

**"The Winter's Tale":** 7 pm to 9 pm. Bridge View Lawn at Brooklyn Bridge Park. See Tuesday, Aug. 9.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Storytelling festival:** Governors Island in Nolan Park, Building 10, Manhattan; (347) 425-7770; [www.brooklynartery.com](http://www.brooklynartery.com); 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Hosted by Brooklyn ARTery Soundstage, the event Arif Choudhury. Families can get the ferries to the island at 10 South St. in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 in Brooklyn.

## WED, AUG. 17

### IN BROOKLYN

**Double Dutch:** 7 pm to 9 pm. Pier 2. See Wednesday, Aug. 3.

**"Murder at the Food Coop":** 7:15 pm. Flamboyan Theater (Venue 2). See Saturday, Aug. 13.

## THURS, AUG. 18

### IN BROOKLYN

**Summer Sports:** 10 am to 11:30 am. McDonald Playground. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

**Rolie Polie Guacamole:** The Old Stone House, 336 Third St. between Fourth and Fifth avenues; (718) 768-3195; [theoldstonehouse.org](http://theoldstonehouse.org); 5:30 pm; Free.

The kid's band kicks off the summer playground season with its family-friendly hits.

**Explore the heavens:** 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Pier 1 entrance. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

## SAT, AUG. 20

### IN BROOKLYN

**Field Day:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 2, Clarke Street; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 10 am to 2 pm; Free.

This event is accessible to all ages and abilities. Enjoy obstacle courses on the play turf, bocce games, four square, shuffleboard, and basketball clinics presented by Big & Little Skills Academy and Dodge YMCA!

**Sand Sculpting contest:** Coney Island Boardwalk, Beach between W. 10th and W. 12th streets; [wearebcs.org/sand/](http://wearebcs.org/sand/); Noon to 4 pm; Free.

Open to all sculpting artists of all ages and abilities. This 26th annual



File photo by Steve Solomons

## Masterpieces in sand

Grab your pails, shovels, and imagination — it's the 26th annual Sand Sculpting Contest in Coney Island on Aug. 20.

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

Everyone has the chance to

turn sand into a towering masterpiece for a chance to win cash prizes and bragging rights.

Preregistration required for all entrants.

Sand Sculpting Contest, Aug. 20 from noon to 4 pm. Free.

Coney Island Beach (Off Boardwalk between W. 10th and W. 12th streets, [www.wearebcs.org/bcs/news\\_events/sand-sculpting2016/](http://www.wearebcs.org/bcs/news_events/sand-sculpting2016/)).

event is hosted by Brooklyn Community Services and Astella Development Corp. Registration required. Must arrive before 11 am.

**North Summer Strolls:** Fifth Avenue between Dean Street and Sterling Place; [info@parkslopefifthavenuebid.com](mailto:info@parkslopefifthavenuebid.com); [www.parkslopefifthavenuebid.com](http://www.parkslopefifthavenuebid.com); 5–9 pm; Free.

Watch or join in on the Artichoke Pizza Eating Contest! With special guests from the World Wrestling Entertainment, so stay tuned. Also featuring a rock-climbing wall, hula hoops, bubbles, giveaways by local businesses, and more.

**Garden Grooves:** Greene Acres Community Garden, 322 Greene Ave. between Franklin and Classon avenues; [www.nyrp.org/calendar](http://www.nyrp.org/calendar); 6–8:30 pm; Free.

Featuring free-form jazz fused with Negro spirituals and freedom songs of 13th Amendment and the Afrotronic funk of Digital Diaspora.

## SUN, AUG. 21

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Ecology Sail:** Schooner Pioneer leaves from Pier 16, South Street Seaport in Manhattan; <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/961826>; Noon to 3

pm; \$45 (\$40 children).

Come aboard the schooner Pioneer and set sail past Governors Island for the fishing grounds of Bay Ridge. We'll set a trawl net and participants will haul it in, bringing up a variety of creatures from blue crabs to flounder. The sail is recommended for children aged 5 and up. Reservations required.

**Storytelling festival:** Governors Island in Nolan Park, Building 10, Manhattan; (347) 425-7770; [www.brooklynartery.com](http://www.brooklynartery.com); 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Hosted by Brooklyn ARTery Soundstage, the event features Julie Pasqual and puppets. Families can get the ferries to the island at 10 South St. in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 in Brooklyn.

## WED, AUG. 24

### IN BROOKLYN

**"Murder at the Food Coop":** 2 pm. Flamboyan Theater (Venue 2). See Saturday, Aug. 13.

**MCU Youth Baseball and Softball Clinic:** MCU Park, 1904 Surf Ave. at W. 17th Street; (718) 449-8497; [mmattone@nymcu.org](mailto:mmattone@nymcu.org); [www.brooklyncyclones.com](http://www.brooklyncyclones.com); 5:30 pm; Free.

Open to children 7–14 years old. Brooklyn Cyclones players lead the par-

ticipants in on-field, hands-on exercises. Each participant will also receive four tickets to that night's game. Pre-registration required at [www.nymcu.org/baseballclinics](http://www.nymcu.org/baseballclinics).

**Double Dutch:** 7 pm to 9 pm. Pier 2. See Wednesday, Aug. 3.

## THURS, AUG. 25

### IN BROOKLYN

**Summer Sports:** 10 am to 11:30 am. McDonald Playground. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

**"Murder at the Food Coop":** 6:15 pm. Flamboyan Theater (Venue 2). See Saturday, Aug. 13.

**Explore the heavens:** 8:30 pm to 10:30 pm. Pier 1 entrance. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

## FRI, AUG. 26

### IN BROOKLYN

**Goodnight Goddess Parties:** 5:30–7:30 pm. Tykes in the Heights. See Friday, Aug. 12.

## SAT, AUG. 27

### IN BROOKLYN

**Afropunk Festival:** Commodore Barry Park, Navy Street at Flushing Avenue; [www.afropunkfest.com/brooklyn/](http://www.afropunkfest.com/brooklyn/); 11 am–10 pm; Tickets starts at \$45.

Ice Cube headlines the yearly music festival. He's joined by rapper Tyler, the Creator, funk legend George Clinton, and hip-hop producer Flying Lotus, among many others.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Arthur Ashe Kid's Day:** USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Corona Park, Queens; (866) OPEN-TIX (673-6849); [www.usopen.org](http://www.usopen.org); 9:30 am to 4 pm; \$10 general admission (\$25 loge tickets).

The 21st annual event is presented by Hess. Singing sensations Flo Rida, Zara Larsson, Troye Sivan, Jordan Fisher, Laura Marano, and Forever In Your Mind will team up with reigning 2015 US Open Champion Novak Djokovic and two-time US Open Champion Rafael Nadal to kick-off the 2016 US Open.

## SUN, AUG. 28

### IN BROOKLYN

**Wash Day Special Needs:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 9 am to noon; Free.

Visitors can enjoy interactive, sensory-based learning experiences at Lefferts Historic House, or ride the Carousel with the lights and sounds turned off to

*Continued on page 48*

# Calendar

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

## Continued from page 47

accommodate those with noise sensitivities. Attendance limited, please RSVP in advance.

**Afropunk Festival:** 11 am–10 pm. Commodore Barry Park. See Saturday, Aug. 27.

**Book Bag Giveaway:** Jesus Outreach Tabernacle, 1368 Fulton St.; (718) 569–9067; <http://jesusoutreachtabernacle.org/>; 12:30 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Children will be served refreshments and receive a book bag. First come first served. All are welcomed. Hosted by Pastors Terrance and Sandy Roberts.

**Wash Day workshop:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789–2822; [www.prospectpark.org/](http://www.prospectpark.org/); 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Cool off from the summer sun at Lefferts by helping Alliance educators get the dirt out of our 19th-century reproduction clothing the non-electric way — using tubs, washboards, and bar soap.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Storytelling festival:** Governors Island in Nolan Park, Building 10, Manhattan; (347) 425–7770; [www.brooklynnartry.com/](http://www.brooklynnartry.com/); 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Hosted by Brooklyn ARTery Soundstage, the event features Megan Hicks. Families can get the ferries to the island at 10 South St. in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 in Brooklyn.

## TUES, AUG. 30

### IN BROOKLYN

**Rolie Polie Guacamole:** Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, 10 Grand Army Plaza, between Eastern Parkway and Flatbush Avenue; (718) 230–2100; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch\\_library\\_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265); 11 am; Free.

Come on down to a Chips and Salsa Summertime concert with the kings of kindie rock.

## WED, AUG. 31

### IN BROOKLYN

**Double Dutch:** 7 pm to 9 pm. Pier 2. See Wednesday, Aug. 3.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN BROOKLYN

**Summer camp:** PS 163, 109 Bay 14th St.; [Tiffany.alix@yahoo.com](mailto:Tiffany.alix@yahoo.com); Weekdays, 8 am to 1:15 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 5; Free.

Hosted by the Italian American Organization. Open for all children.

**Summer camp:** PS 209, 2609 E. Seventh St.; [c.scollo@fiabrooklyn.org](mailto:c.scollo@fiabrooklyn.org); Weekdays, 8 am to 1:15 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.



## A quest for wildlife

Take the challenge to learn all about wildlife in a new program called the Quests at Prospect Park Zoo now through Sept. 5.

The Quests are geared to children, but adults may participate as well. Visitors will learn about animals in scavenger hunt format and embark on a nature adventure to identify local birds, discover ways to reduce pollution, learn about ocean and other aquatic habitats, and more.

The five Quest stations are:

**Nature Playscape** — Participants will get creative along the Discovery Trail, with activities and explorations using natural objects inspired by the animals that live here, including prairie dogs, dingoes, red pandas, river otters, and tufted deer.

**Wetland Wonders** — Inside the Animal Lifestyles building, visitors will learn about the wetland habitats of New York City and what you can do to keep these ecosystems healthy.

**Conservation Station** — At the Hall of Animals exhibit, visi-

tors will conduct experiments inspired by the activities of scientists saving wildlife and wild places around the world.

**Citizen Science** — New York City is home to a variety of birds, including rock doves and grackles. Visitors will be shown photos of these and other birds and report back which species they were able to identify.

**Ocean Connections** — At the Sea Lion Court, visitors will learn about protecting marine life by taking part in quizzes that test their knowledge of oceans and the animals that live there.

Participants receive a Quest map brochure at the start of each adventure, then visit several stations around the park to complete science and conservation challenges.

Quest Stations is offered now through Sept. 5, Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 am to 3 pm, and is free with zoo admission.

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

Hosted by the Italian American Organization. Open for all children.

**Play Streets:** 61st Street and Fourth Avenue; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

The Police Athletic League is again hosting Play Streets, offering a safe environment for children to play sidewalk games, be creative, and just have fun.

**Play Streets:** Boulevard Houses, Stanley Avenue and Wortman Avenue; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Brownsville Houses, Rockaway Avenue and Osborn Street; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Coffey Park, Richards

Street and Dwight Street; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Fox Playground, E. 55th Street and E. 54th Street; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Glenwood Shelter, 4612 Glenwood Rd.; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Junius Street Family Residence, 25 Junius St.; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Kelly Playground, E. 14th Street and E. 15th Street; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Liberty Avenue Family Residence, 51 Junius St.; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Linden Houses, between Stanley Avenue and Wortman Avenue; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Marlboro Houses, between W. Eighth Street and W. 11th Street; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Renaldo Salgado Park, between Monroe Street and Madison Street; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Play Streets:** Tompkins Houses, between Tompkins Avenue and Throop Avenue; [www.palnyc.org](http://www.palnyc.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 5 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Summer Sports:** Sunset Park Recreation Center, 43rd Street and Seventh Avenue; (718) 972–2135; [www.nycgov-parks.org](http://www.nycgov-parks.org); Weekdays, 9 am to 4:30 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 17; Free.

Tots program for children 8 months old to 3 years old.

**Get up and go!**: Seth Low Playground, W. 12th Street between Avenue P and Bay Parkway; [www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/kids-fitness](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports/kids-fitness); Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am to noon, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

This educational, multi-sport fitness program is designed to get children, ages 6 to 10, to be active in their local parks. The "Get Up & Go!" program gives kids the chance to learn about health, nutrition, and fitness while having a blast with their friends.

**CityParks Golf:** Kaiser Park, Neptune and Bayview avenues; [www.CityParksFoundation.org](http://www.CityParksFoundation.org); Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 am to noon, Mon, Aug. 1 – Thurs, Aug. 25; Free.

Children 6 to 17 years old learn the proper use of equipment and the basics of the sport. Online registration required.

# Calendar

**CityParks Golf:** St. John's Park, Bergen Street and Troy Avenue; [www.CityParksFoundation.org/](http://www.CityParksFoundation.org/); Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am to noon, Mon, Aug. 1 – Thurs, Aug. 25; Free.

**First Discoveries:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Tuesdays, 9:30 am, Now – Tues, Aug. 23; 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](http://www.bbg.org); Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:15 am to 12:15 pm, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:15 am, Now – Fri, Aug. 26; 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.

**Get up and go!**: Kaiser Park, Neptune Avenue and Bayview Avenue; [www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports-kids-fitness](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org/sports-kids-fitness); Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 pm to 4 pm, Now – Fri, Aug. 19; Free.

**Quests program:** Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 399-7339; [www.prospectparkzoo.com/quests](http://www.prospectparkzoo.com/quests); Wednesdays – Sundays, 11 am to 3 pm, Now – Mon, Sept. 5; Free with zoo admission.

Visitors learn about wildlife in scavenger hunt format and embark on a nature adventure to identify local birds, discover ways to reduce pollution, learn about ocean and other aquatic habitats, and more.

**Touch Tank:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Now – Wed, Aug. 31; Free with museum admission.

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

**Tinybop Kid's Playgroup:** Tinybop Inc, 540 Atlantic Ave. between Third and Fourth avenues; (516) 500-1967; [playtesting@tinybop.com](mailto:playtesting@tinybop.com); [tinybop.com](http://tinybop.com); Wednesdays, 4–5 pm, Now – Wed, Aug. 17; Free.

Kids will get the chance to play with new educational apps and enjoy hands-on science activities, led by staff from the app-making creative studio. Light snacks will be provided.

**African Dance:** Target Brooklyn Community Garden, 933 Bedford Ave. at Dekalb Avenue; (212) 333-2552; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Wednesdays, 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm, Now – Wed, Aug. 24; Free.

Each session will feature an African



## Stroll and a haircut

Come on down for a fun carnival and help LuLu's Cuts and Toys celebrate 15 years of snipping on Aug. 13.

The neighborhood combination hairstylist and toy store is hitting a milestone anniversary of serving the Park Slope community with a block party featuring face painting, carnival games, rides, cotton candy, and

more.

Plus, you can also enjoy Fifth Avenue's Summer Stroll, happening the same day, where there will be a bounce house, carousel, and more.

Fifteenth anniversary carnival on Aug. 13 from 5 to 8 pm; free.

*LuLu's Cuts & Toys (48 Fifth Ave. between Bergen and Dean streets, [www.luluskidscuts.nyc](http://www.luluskidscuts.nyc)).*

dance-based workout. No partner or prior experience required. For older teens.

**Basketball Clinic:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 2, Pier 2 walkway; [www.brooklynbridgepark.org/events/big-and-little-skills-academy-basketball-clinics](http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org/events/big-and-little-skills-academy-basketball-clinics); Thursdays, Noon to 2 pm, Now – Thurs, Aug. 25; Free.

Improve basic basketball skills with the Big and Little Skills Academy. Each clinic will include either yoga to enhance flexibility or flag football for agility training. Join Big and Little Skills Academy for dynamic basketball clinics for ages 8 to 17.

**Friday Night Fireworks!**: Luna Park, W. 10th Street and the Boardwalk; [lunaparknyc.com](http://lunaparknyc.com); Fridays, 9:30 pm, Now – Sat, Aug. 27; Free rides, entertainment extra.

When the sun goes down, the lights come up with fireworks — painting the skyline with vivid color seen from miles away in the darkest of nights.

**Religious services:** No Limit Beulah Sabbath Pentecostal Church, 5417 Avenue N between E. 54th and E. 55th streets; (718) 241-8100; [www.no-limit-beulah.com](http://www.no-limit-beulah.com).

[nolimitbeulah.org](http://nolimitbeulah.org); Saturdays, 11 am; donation.

Sabbath school for children.

**Pop-Up fishing:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Saturdays and Sundays, Noon to 6 pm, Mon, Aug. 1 – Wed, Aug. 31; Free.

Join Alliance educators to learn about ecology under the water and in the air!

**"The Wizard of Oz":** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Aug. 21; \$9 (\$10 adults: \$8 for group rates).

Artistic director Nicolas Coppola has adapted the story to the marionette stage, featuring an original Country-Western score for the famous Oz characters to sing and dance to. Great for children 4 years and older.

**Bird Watching:** North end of Esplanade, East Drive and Ocean Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 2 pm and 3 to 4 pm, Now – Tues, Aug. 30; Free.

Families with children 15 and younger

join a ranger and identify the more than 250 species of birds in the park.

**Macy's fishing clinic:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 3 pm, Mon, Aug. 1 – Wed, Aug. 31; Free.

This popular summer program offers kids and adults of all ages the opportunity to fish. Participants learn about aquatic ecology, fishing safety, and will even get to use live bait. Pre-register to reserve your spot. Limited drop-in spots are also available.

**Bargemusic Concert:** Bargemusic, Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street and Furman Street; (718) 624-2083; [www.bargemusic.org](http://www.bargemusic.org); Saturdays, 4 pm to 5 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 24; Free.

Walk across the gangplank of a renovated coffee barge for a one-hour, family-friendly concert. This one-hour performance includes a Q & A session with the musicians. Doors open 15 minutes before the performance; no reserved seating is available. Visit [bargemusic.org](http://bargemusic.org) for more!

**Magic at Coney:** Sideshows by the Seashore, 1208 Surf Ave. between W. 12th Street and Stillwell Avenue; (718) 372-5159; [www.coneyisland.com](http://www.coneyisland.com); Sundays, noon, Now – Sun, Sept. 4; \$10 (\$5 kids).

A magical variety show featuring illusionists, escape artists, mentalists, and close-up magicians.

**Basketball Clinic:** Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 2, Pier 2 walkway; [www.brooklynbridgepark.org/events/big-and-little-skills-academy-basketball-clinics](http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org/events/big-and-little-skills-academy-basketball-clinics); Sundays, Noon to 2 pm, Now – Sun, Aug. 28; Free.

Improve basic basketball skills with the Big and Little Skills Academy. Each clinic will include either yoga to enhance flexibility or flag football for agility training. Join Big and Little Skills Academy for dynamic basketball clinics for ages 8 to 17.

**Free Family Day at Wyckoff**

**Farmhouse:** Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. at E. 59th Street; (718) 629-5400; Saturday, Aug. 20, 1 pm; Free.

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

## FURTHER AFIELD

**SeaGlass Carousel:** SeaGlass Carousel, The Battery, Battery Park Underpass, Manhattan; [www.thebattery.org](http://www.thebattery.org); Daily, 10 am to 10 pm; Now – Sat, Aug. 20; \$5 per ride.

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



## FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

# Make summer truly fabuLyss

**T**he lazy days of summer are here. Whether your kids are away at camp, you're relaxing at the beach, or you're at home with the little ones, I have many fabuLyss finds for you and your family. From toys for the parents, to an in-house veterinarian, to clothes for your kid, to gift ideas, we've got it all covered! Unfortunately, the summer is slowly ending, but these things should brighten your August before back-to-school madness begins!

### On-call pet doctor

If you're a Diva Mom out in the Hamptons for the summer and have a pet, you will want to read about this fabuLyss find! Dr. Cindy Bressler is the city's best house-call veterinarian. She is available for routine and emergency vet care 24 hours a day, seven days a week! You can't beat those hours! Dr. Bressler has been a veterinarian for 22 years. She

truly is the best, and after the summer, she will be back in the city to continue care of your animal.

*Call or text her at (631) 255-8556.*

### Toys for parents

I want to share with all of you a new fabuLyss find. N+B toys for parents. That's right, toys for you, not your child! There are three different kits I want to discuss: The Posi-Tokens, Doin' Time, and Meal Wheel. I'm obsessed with all of them. The Posi-Tokens is a great reward system for your children. This toy is to motivate good behavior. Every time your child does a chore around the house, homework, or gets a good grade, give him a token. When your child gets a certain amount of tokens, reward him. Say, a special

treat or extra TV time! Also, if he misbehaves, you can take away tokens just as fast as you gave them out!

To keep you and your kids on the punctuality track, check out the Doin' Time clock. It comes with magnetic tags for visual reminders of what needs to happen — and when. Never be late to soccer practice again!

The third toy is the Meal Wheel. This toy provides ways to interact at the dinner table, and it also encourages those stubborn kids to eat their meal!

*Check out [www.nplusbtoys.com](http://www.nplusbtoys.com).*

### Cute picks

The clothing company kidpik (pictured) is fabuLyss and helpful. With this company, you do not have to leave the house to go shopping with your little girl, sized 4-14! (My BlakeyBleu is going to love shopping with me for nursery school!)

How does it work? First, you head over to its website, [www.kidpik.com](http://www.kidpik.com), and create an account. From there, you will create your girls' style profile. It only takes a few minutes to complete and helps the stylist personalize your daughter's unique style! After you complete your profile, you select your frequency. You can choose from a one-time trial box, one box per season (four per year), or two boxes per season (eight per year). There is no commitment of any kind, so you can pause or cancel your membership at any time!

Next, you will receive a personalized box of five to seven items. This will include choices of tops, bottoms, dresses, layering pieces, shoes, and accessories designed to complete multiple outfits! Each box is around \$100 total, but if you keep the entire box, you will receive a 30 percent discount. Not bad, right? You will only be charged for the items you decide to keep after you receive your box. You have seven days to decide which items you would like to keep, and then you ship back the items you do not want. Bonus? Shipping is free both ways!

So if your daughter hates to go shopping, check out kidpik to have your items sent directly to you! I know I will be using it all year long.

### Gift-giving solved

Ever struggle over what gift to give? I think I found our answer. Caroline Eva Gifts is a personalized gift business founded by Caroline Altman, a busy mother of three girls. Altman often faced the challenges of finding the perfect gift to give to her own friends or friends' children for birthdays and other celebrations that would be appreciated (and not returned).

Responding to that need, she developed a highly customized line of fabuLyss luxury products that are ideal for busy mothers or corporate clients seeking something special in a selected price range and knowing that the gift would be fashionable and "just right." She works one-on-one with clients selecting the perfect gift for friends, family, bar or bat mitzvah favors, or corporate clients.

*Check it out at [www.carolineeva.com](http://www.carolineeva.com)!*

### Capture the moments

If you're searching for a photographer, look no further than Heidi Green. Known by many as New York City's "mom-a-razzi," she is called upon by fabuLyss, in-the-know moms, as well as top event planners and party venues to capture their fun. Her repertoire includes mitzvahs, weddings, showers, baby namings, engagements, and corporate events. Definitely book Green for a beach family photo shoot while the weather is still nice!

Whether it's a portrait session or special celebration, Green approaches each shoot with a unique blend of perfectionism and passion, and it shines through in each and every photo. Her style has been described as vibrant and colorful, candid, and unique. She and her team of talented photographers keep it friendly and stress-free while capturing every detail of your event from start to finish. At the end of the day, you feel as if you've made a new friend, and have gained the most special photos to treasure. Check her out at [www.heidigreen.com](http://www.heidigreen.com) and contact her at [Heidi@heidigreen.com](mailto:Heidi@heidigreen.com).

*Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLyssious Moms ([www.divamoms.com](http://www.divamoms.com)).*



# the Marketplace

## CHILD CARE

The NYC Nanny Agency That Cares



**tinytreasures** NYC

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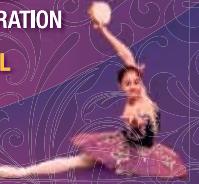
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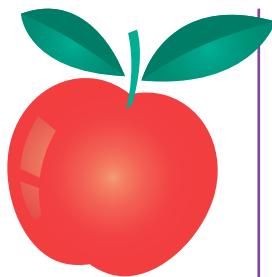
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## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND  
MARGE EBERTS

# How to support your child in school

### **Dear teacher,**

The new school year has started. In the past, I have always been involved in my children's education by communicating with their teachers, attending parent-teacher meetings, being a room mother, going to school events, visiting their classrooms, and so on. Is there anything else parents should do to be involved in their children's education?

### **Dear parent,**

You are being an involved parent. You know what is happening at your children's schools and have the information to have meaningful conversations with them about what is going on at their schools.

There is one more thing about being involved in children's education. Parents need to be involved at home as well as at school.

They can do so much at home to ensure their children's success in school. On the non-academic side, they can teach them patience, responsibility, and respect for others — all traits that will enhance their education.

Another area in which parents should be involved with their children's education, especially in the early grades, is their homework. This will give them an opportunity to expand the curriculum through related learning activities at home even if it is just a dinner table conversation.

Finally, it definitely helps if parents read daily to their children. They should also go beyond reading with younger children to ask questions about what is happening in the story. With older children in grades five and beyond, discussions can include who the author is and the author's point of view.

Finally, let your children see that you are excited about what they are learning. This will make them even more eager to learn and to share what they are learning with you. This is true at any grade level.



### **Teaching to the Common Core standards**

### **Dear teacher,**

So many people I know are upset about Common Core. They think every teacher will now be forced to teach in the same way. Is this true?

### **Dear parent,**

That is definitely a misconception. Teachers will continue to devise their own lesson plans and adjust the curriculum to the individual need of students in their classes. The standards do establish what students need to learn as Common Core is a clear set of shared goals and expectations for what knowledge and skills will help students succeed, but they do not dictate how teachers should teach. Instead, schools and teachers will decide how best to help students reach the standards.

### **Finding reading apps for preschoolers**

### **Dear teacher,**

There are times when we are waiting on the sidelines of a soccer game or at a doctor's office that I would like to have my preschooler be able to pick up some reading skills on my cellphone rather than just play games. What should I look for in se-

lecting appropriate apps for her?

### **Dear parent,**

It can be a daunting task to find appropriate educational apps for preschoolers. If your child is just being introduced to reading, search for apps that have a limited amount of text, quality narration, as well as word games to reinforce the learning of new words. One very helpful website with well-vetted apps is commonsensemedia.org.

Your preschooler might enjoy our Skinny Books – Word Family Readers available in the App Store. They have amusing rhyming word stories, like "Mox the Ox," "The Cub in the Tub," and "The Crab Who Ran Away." Then there are fun games to play with the words they have learned to read. Plus, there is accompanying narration so they can read these books without adult help. And this app will truly put young children on the road to reading as they will learn more than 200 rhyming words and 36 of the most basic sight words.

*Parents should send questions and comments to [deateacher@deateacher.com](mailto:deateacher@deateacher.com) or ask them on the columnists' website at [www.deateacher.com](http://www.deateacher.com).*

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# An online minefield

## How to help your kids, tweens, and teens safely navigate social media

BY LISA BEACH

**T**hink before you post. It seems like common sense, but a lot of kids, tweens, and teens just aren't heeding this advice when they use social media — and are getting themselves into trouble in the process.

Just ask attorney James Mueller, a managing partner with Verner Brumley McCurley Mueller Parker, a Dallas-based family law firm.

"Some of the things kids put online [are] going to affect them, because it doesn't go away," says Mueller. "It will follow them in life."

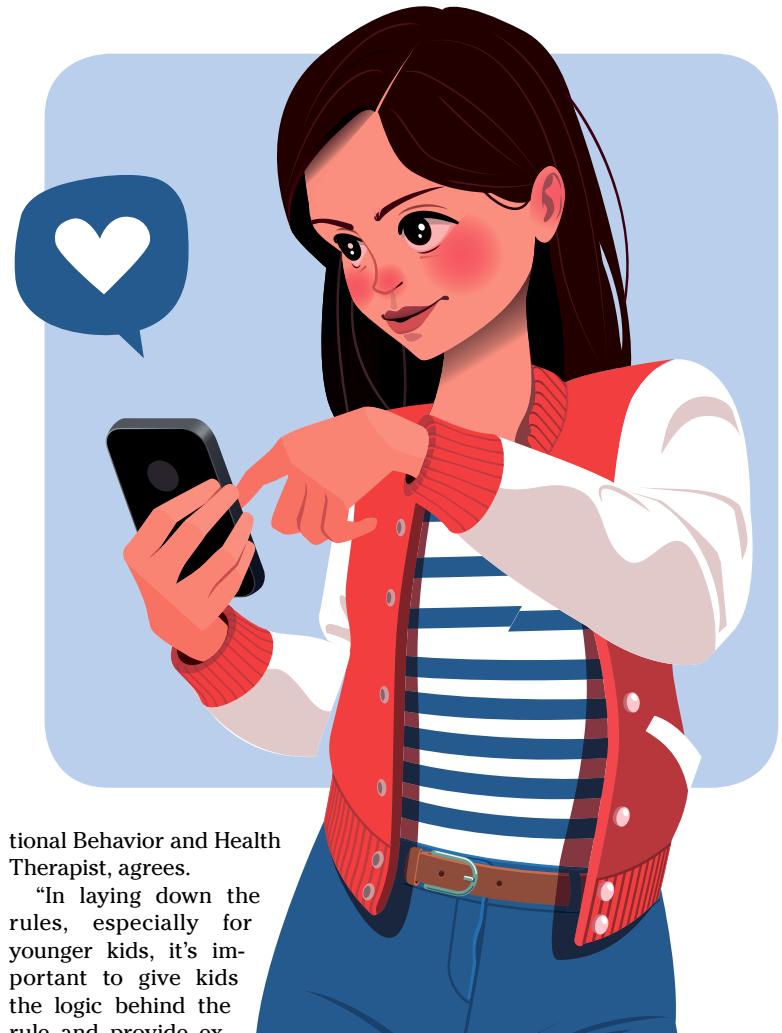
As a family lawyer, Mueller sees this at first hand.

"In one custody hearing, a daughter gave the judge all these reasons why she didn't want to live with mom. We found out that, when we checked the girl's Instagram account, she didn't want to live with mom, because dad allowed her to smoke marijuana and drink while at dad's house," recalls Mueller. "The next thing you know, she's kicked off her sports team, the judge has now seen all of this, and dad is in trouble. The sad part is it all came from an Instagram post."

Kids need to realize that these days, everyone looks at their social media activity, including teachers, coaches, lawyers, colleges, scholarship committees, and potential employers. Stories abound in the media about athletes getting kicked off teams, students losing their scholarships, and kids getting arrested for some of their questionable antics that got posted on social media.

"When any potential employee sends me a resume, the first thing I do is pull any social media accounts that I can," points out Mueller. "You can find out an unbelievable amount of information."

Mueller advises that parents, as the first line of defense, need to play an active role in their kids' online lives by providing age-appropriate limits. Dr. Sandy Gluckman, a Func-



tional Behavior and Health Therapist, agrees.

"In laying down the rules, especially for younger kids, it's important to give kids the logic behind the rule and provide examples that demonstrate the bad things that could happen," says Dr. Gluckman, who advises a collaborative approach, asking kids what kind of rules they could live with and then negotiate. "When you're a nurturing — rather than authoritative — parent, you're educating and empowering kids, which will help them learn to think things through themselves."

So how can kids, tweens, and teens engage online in a more responsible way? Here are some tips:

**Think before you post.** If you'd be embarrassed to show what you're going to post to your grandmother, then don't post it. If you'd be compromising your safety (such as posting where you'll be at a certain time or that you're home alone), then don't post it. If you'd be hurting or embarrassing someone else, then don't post it.

**Assume what you post isn't private — even if you send a private message.** Mueller points out that just because you intended something to be private when you sent it, doesn't necessarily mean the other person understands (or wants to adhere to) your intentions of keeping it private.

As he says, "You can only control

your action, you can't control other people's actions."

**Realize what you post is permanent — even if you later delete it.** Once you hit send, you create a permanent cyber-record of your words and images delivered via status updates or news feeds. Someone might have already saved or shared your post by the time you delete it from your account.

**Be aware that your online activity affects your reputation.** When you realize that other people besides your friends are checking out your social media accounts, you're more likely to do the right thing online.

With kids of all ages texting, exploring social media, and posting photos, parents can use these tips to help them navigate the use of social media in a safe, responsible way.

*Lisa Beach is a freelance writer whose work has been published in dozens of print and online publications, including Brain, Child, Parents, Scary Mommy, Good Life Family, Calgary's Child, and Orlando Family. Check out her writer's website at [www.LisaBeachWrites.com](http://www.LisaBeachWrites.com) and visit her humor blog at [www.TweenerMoments.com](http://www.TweenerMoments.com).*

# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Designing with nature

The Student Gel Printing Plate Kit from Gelli Arts is a versatile set of tools that can be used outside and can easily incorporate items such as leaves and feathers into monprint designs. Artists of all ages can use the 5-inch-square "gelli" printing pad, brayer, and two 5-inch-square geometric stencils over and over again to make frame-worthy prints, gift wrap, or decorative papers. (And these tools can be used to print on fabric, too.)

Parents supply the acrylic paint, paper, and encouragement to wee artists to find items from the yard or park that could be used to make interesting patterns in the paint.

If it is a rainy day, and you're look-

ing for design inspiration indoors, you can use bubble wrap, cotton swabs, or even a cardboard tube to apply or take away paint. (The Gelli Arts blog has inspirational videos that we enjoyed watching over and over again.)

Changing colors on the flexible printing square — and clean up — is a breeze: use water or hand sanitizer and wipe with a paper towel, or just use baby wipes. With this printing plate kit, kids can begin making monprints in minutes, but there is a seemingly infinite number of possible tool and color combinations to make for hours of enjoyment.

*Student Gel Printing Plate Kit by Gelli Arts, \$24.99, [www.gelliarts.com](http://www.gelliarts.com).*



## Bring da Noize

For a lighthearted and (discreetly) educational soundtrack on your next family road trip, look no further than "Phineas McBoof Crashes the Symphony" — the latest musical from Doctor Noize.

Composer-performer Cory Cullinan, aka Doctor Noize, has recruited an impressive roster of artists to record this spirited two-act, two



Gunn and Isabel Leonard. The Metropolitan Opera's John McVeigh, in the role of Mama's Boy, pleads for courage in the adorable "I Could Be Someone."

Cullinan, a former high-school music teacher, has sprinkled tantalizing tidbits about orchestration, instrumentation, and music history throughout his lively story. "Phineas McBoof" is recommended for all ages, but those listeners ranging from age 8 to 13 especially appreciate the witty banter. Bravo, Doctor Noize!

*"Phineas McBoof Crashes the Symphony" two CD set by Doctor Noize, \$19.99, [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com).*



## Savor memories

You can mine culinary gold at summer potluck dinners with Valerie McKeehan's wire-bound Keepsake Kitchen Diary, where family cooks can log in nearly 200 of their favorite recipes, as well as their memories of each dish.

Write in when you first tried the dish, the occasions when it has been enjoyed, and the name of the person who likes it the best.

The recipes are conveniently sorted under tabs designating type (starters, soups and salads, main courses, side dishes, desserts, and miscellaneous).

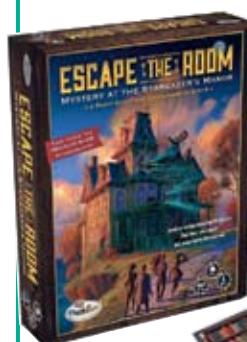
And finally, the pretty 9-by-10-inch cookbook includes 12 tear-out recipe cards, so you can share your beloved recipes with the next generation, too. Grandma would approve.

*The Keepsake Kitchen Diary by Lily & Val, \$45.99, [www.lilyandval.com](http://www.lilyandval.com).*

## All 'Manor' of fun

For a family game night that is sure to be remembered, check out ThinkFun's Escape the Room: Mystery at the Stargazer's Manor, Nicholas Cravotta and Rebecca Bleau's tabletop version of the popular, real-life escape-the-room events.

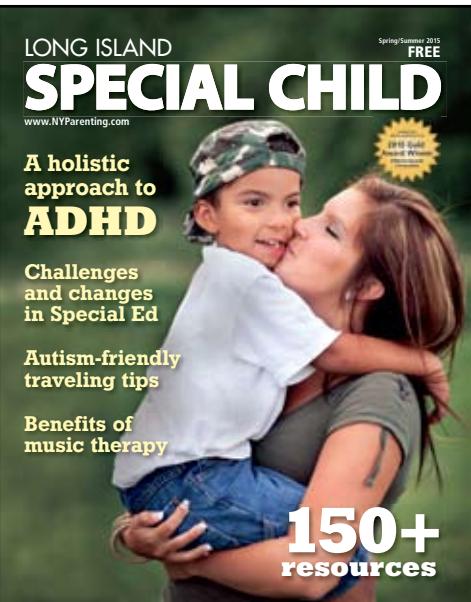
Recommended for ages 10 and up, it challenges players to travel back to 1869 and visit the mansion of a reclusive astronomer to get to the bottom of the strange sights, sounds, and smells emanating from within. When your band of sleuths enters the manor, you will be "locked" in a room, and that's when the clock starts on the fun of opening envelopes to reveal clues to solve puzzles that beget more clues until your family — hopefully — escapes.



The game night can be as elaborate as you'd like; the website offers tips on how to evoke a mood with costume accessories and period music.

*Escape the Room: Mystery at the Stargazer's Manor by ThinkFun, \$21.99, [www.target.com](http://www.target.com).*





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