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# Teens, screens, and prepping for the future

This is our annual Teen Issue, and although they say that parent magazines are geared more to the issues of the very young children in our families, having been through it myself, I would have to say that the real challenges begin when kids enter puberty. That's when they stop listening to what we say, rely mostly on their friends and peers for advice and guidance, and start pulling away from our lead.



are throughout October and even beyond.

Our writer Allison Plitt has reviewed a new book on internet safety that should help parents long before the teen years kick in. How important is that for all of us! Certainly every parent should be doing as much as possible to get "hip" to the realities of social

media and what their kids are up to online, which changes from day to day.

Myrna Beth Haskell has contributed Part 1 of a series on "Hooked on Screens," a subject I addressed in my column in last month's issue. It relieved me to know I'm not the only one who is concerned about the dependence factor in our connection to electronic media.

There's so much to discuss when it comes to our preteens and teens. Concerns about body image, approval and influence of friends, and the pressures of school and grades are only some of them. It's not easy

as a parent to feel them pulling away from us, and they do, but not only do they need preparation for that, but so do we.

Separating from our kids should not be a startling reality when we become "empty nesters" but be a process the whole family is in training for years before it actually occurs. In getting our kids ready for adulthood, we will also be getting ourselves ready for their eventual independence. I know from personal experience how shocking it can be even though you know it's coming, and sometimes, even though you've been waiting for it with your breath held.

Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# Internet safety

## A new primer for parents

BY ALLISON PLITT

**A**ccess to the internet is a given for most of today's children. New information is available at the touch of a button. Kids can follow — and be followed by — friends and strangers alike on social media sites. And the rise of cyberbullying, and its sometimes tragic endings are certainly alarming.

As Amber Mac writes in her new book with Michael Bazzell, "Outsmarting Your Kids Online," kids are "adapting more quickly than we ever imagined ... we are living in a unique time when we aren't properly equipped to handle the questions kids are asking; in fact, we are frequently turning to them to learn how all these shiny new things actually work."

So how are parents to ensure their children's safety when using new-fangled technology that comes so easily to young children and teens?

In this new book, the writers state that the crimes perpetrated by cyber predators and bullies reported in the news are not aberrations. Mac, who is a bestselling author and technology entrepreneur, and Bazzell, an internet security expert, use their combined experience to provide parents with helpful how-tos for working with their kids in navigating the most popular social media platforms, keeping their home computers safe from cyberattacks, learning how to identify cyberstalkers, and knowing when it is necessary to contact the police.

### Safety first

In the first half of the book, the authors review the most commonly used online social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. They also mention newer apps that have become popular with teens, such as Snapchat and Vine, where pictures and videos are created and e-mailed to friends. Their philosophy is simple: parents can start using these apps to familiarize themselves with how the product works, how to set safety measures, and to keep an eye on their children's activity on the sites.

Mac points to the CNN series "#Being13," which found that the "heaviest users in the



Amber Mac's handbook offers suggestions for parents on dealing with their children's avid use of technology.

group checked all their social media accounts more than 100 times per day. This group explained that they closely monitored social media to keep on top of their popularity status." The authors encourage parents to have children and pre-teens use computers in the living room or gathering places in the house, so they can monitor what their children are doing online.

### The internet is permanent

To avoid being patrolled by their parents, sometimes teenagers activate an account with their real name, but are secretly active on another account under a fictitious name. Assisting parents in finding where their child is actually posting online, Bazzell created a database search tool. After the parent collects as much information as possible about her child on a social media site, she can input the information into the database and then receive a list of links online that provide the location where she can find her child

is actively posting.

Mac notes that some parents might find this and a few other topics discussed as a breach of privacy, and writes, "We believe that you cannot have privacy without security and vice versa." It's up to each family to decide what is the right approach for them.

The reason for parents checking up on their kids, says Mac, is because they must help kids realize that if they post something to the internet, it is permanent, and may come back to haunt them. The authors say that both college admission placement personnel and job placement recruiters do check names online for any suspicious activity. Parents must teach their children that everything posted online is public information. (Fortunately, search engines such as Google and Bing can be contacted and will remove any sexually explicit material about a child online.)

### Tracking tools

Unfortunately, apps like Instagram use a navigation system, which, if not turned off in the child's app, can let a viewer know where the post or photo was taken and at what time. It is necessary to disable the tracking system on kids' smartphones and on these apps. If your child has any followers or friends who look suspicious or have sexually implicit or explicit usernames, it is necessary to delete them as soon as possible. If parents don't warn children about these protective measures, a sexual predator can easily track down the location of your child.

Children can also make their Instagram account private, which only allows your child to choose which friends to follow, and Twitter even has accounts for families so each member is aware of what is being shared online. The book has many such tips to help entire families protect themselves online.

### Girls and the internet

Instagram is popular with kids 13 to 17 because it allows them to take pictures of themselves and share them with friends. Research has shown that while boys prefer computers for playing games, girls use

their smartphones for sharing visual imagery. There is an downside, however, to all of this female photo sharing.

The book says, "The Girl Scout Research Institute has also studied the connection between girls and social media, indicating that 68 percent of girls have had a negative experience online (including bullying and harassment)."

The sharing of nude photos is a slippery slope. The authors point to news stories about sexual predators obtaining the photos and blackmailing young girls with the threat of posting the photo online or telling their parents. Likewise, these photos can fall into the e-mail inboxes of classmates who will harass the girl.

Whether it's in reaction to a nude photo or not, online bullying has become a huge issue. Since some sites have anonymous posting, the comments from peers can be very cruel. If a child ever receives a physical threat in online statements such as, "I'm going to kill you. I'm going to beat you up tomorrow. I'm going to hurt you. I'm going to have someone else hurt you," this is considered a crime. Parents and teens should report these incidents to local and state police.

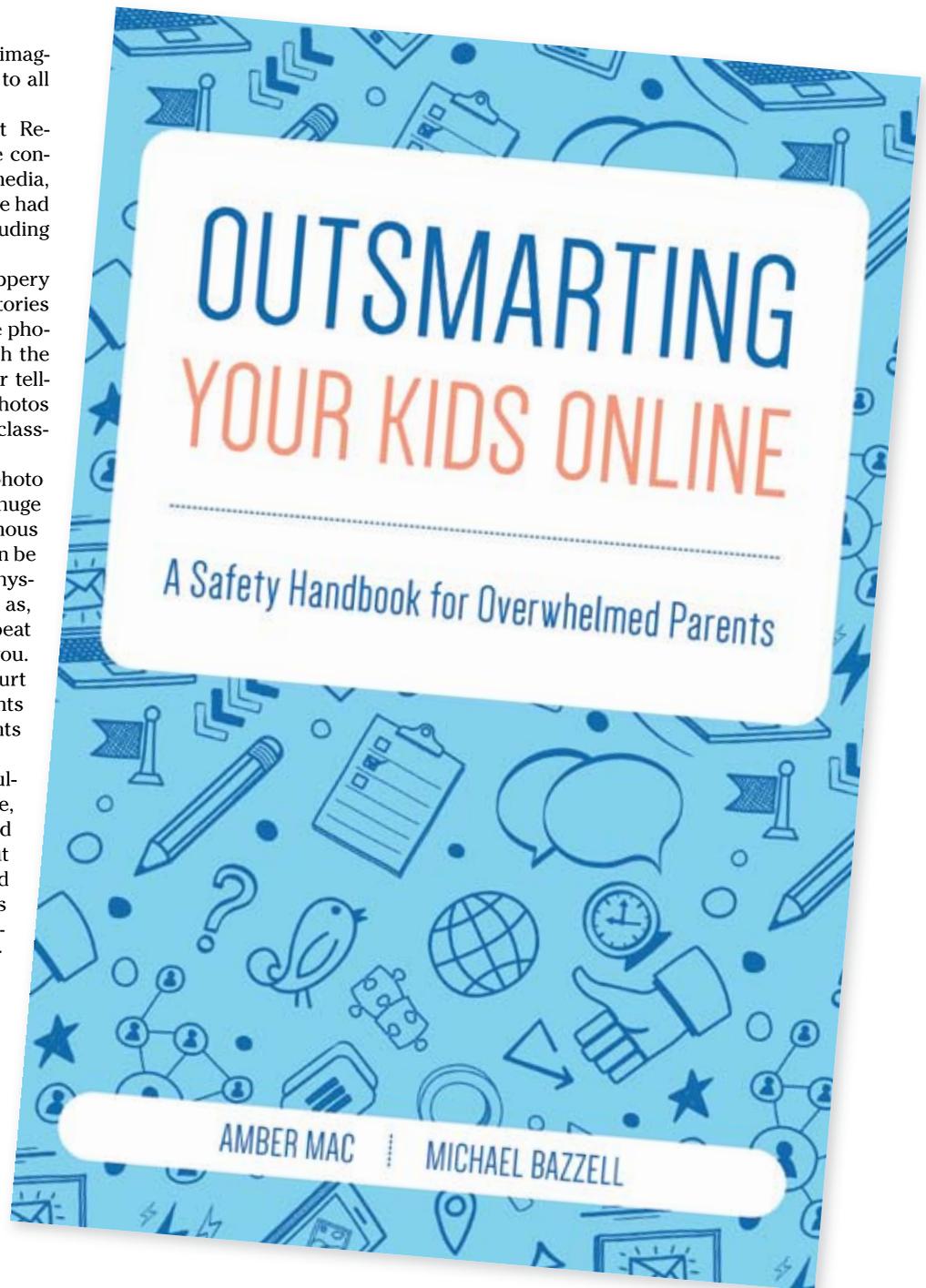
Half of all children who are cyberbullied never report it. Parents, of course, will want to protect their children and tell them to block the bully online, but kids, especially older teens, are afraid of retaliation. One of the main reasons teenagers don't report bullying is because they often feel embarrassed or humiliated.

The book provides resources for parents, so they can learn how to help children deal with online bullying.

"One of the best resources online for both parents and teachers when it comes to bullying is TheBullyProject.com," the authors write. "This site includes a parent action toolkit to explain how to talk to your children, how to approach the school, and other next steps."

Besides TheBullyProject.com, the authors constantly cite the website Common Sense Media ([www.commonsensemedia.org](http://www.commonsensemedia.org)), which provides information about educational and age-appropriate websites, as well tips to help parents establish limits and boundaries with children when they use computers.

When it comes to online protection and etiquette, the authors advise both parents and their children to avoid "oversharing, overreacting, and bullying." Parents can model positive online interactions by sharing interesting information with their kids. In doing so, children will respect their par-



ents' willingness to learn about how they communicate with the world.

### **Protecting your home**

Within the home, parents need to protect their computer from hackers and intruders. If you own a Windows-based computer, install antivirus software. With any type of Mac, such antivirus software is unnecessary.

Work with family members to create complex passcodes to lock and unlock any type of gadget, and use multiple hard-to-guess passwords for online accounts. Store

the list of passwords in a safe place.

The authors want to give parents the necessary knowledge and tools to start safe internet habits early in a child's life.

"Too many parents give up when it comes to managing screen time, but it's a battle worth fighting as early on in your child's online life as possible," they write. "A young child without boundaries is going to run into potential problems later in life on the internet."

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

# Raising a baby without Dr. Google

I have done something unheard of in today's age of modern parenting. And if you have kids who are in their late teens or are young adults, you probably have, too. We survived parenting without consulting the internet for Every. Single. Thing.

I was talking with my oldest the other day and speculating on the fact that when she was little, I didn't have a Facebook page filled with moms, or a community message board to throw out questions to at 3 am when she wouldn't sleep or was cutting a tooth. In many ways, I'm glad I didn't. The sheer amount of answers, suggestions, and warnings you will find on every aspect of raising a child is purely overwhelming, and can be quite alarming. Sure, your baby could have colic or pyloric stenosis, but he could also just be overtired and having a rough night. For new moms, the combination of sleep deprivation and a glowing computer screen with pages and pages of doomsday could-bes is a terrifying combination.

Back when my daughter was a baby, I had to wait until the morning to either call the pediatrician or my mother for any worries I had.

Sure, there are a myriad of ways that consulting the internet is helpful as a parent. You can read about generalized information, milestones, uplifting stories, and also heartfelt essays to let you know that you're not alone.

You can meet other moms from across the country and develop a kinship and bond due to your children's age or condition. The support groups can be a lifesaver to parents who have a child with a health issue.

However, the amount of misinformation from well-intended (and also not so well-intended) people can also drive a new mom mad.

There are many amateur doctors out there who will swear by an odd technique or try to convince you that your doctor's advice is wrong.

Even among the reputable websites, which offer oversimplified health advice, it can be easy to get sucked into fearing



the worst over a seemingly normal situation like your baby having gas or a rash. Dr. Google (especially in the wee hours of the night) can be a place to develop unwarranted fears and worries. Sometimes, it's best to not panic, and let your natural instincts kick in. A new mom's brain is actually wired to not only be hyper vigilant about perceived threats to her baby, but also to amplify them. As in the case of most things in life, it helps to start with a clear — rather than anxious — mind.

So instead of scouring 18 random pieces of advice at night when baby is sleeping, get some sleep yourself, and if you have a worry, call your doctor — and then your mom — in the morning. Everyone knows that is really the best medicine!

*Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City.*



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# Curvy girl club

## Finding positive words to foster your daughter's self-esteem

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

**G**irls need to hear words that accurately describe them in a positive light on a regular basis. A 2014 study from University of California, Los Angeles, found that girls who had been called “too fat” by family members and peers were more likely to be obese a decade later. The study also showed that labeling children as “fat” to motivate them to lose weight seemed to stigmatize them rather than help achieve that goal.

When my daughter was in fourth grade, we were sitting in my bedroom on the end of my bed when she made the teary announcement that she was “fat” compared to her gaggle of friends, who were all quite lean at the time.

Naturally, I said she was not fat. I said she just happened to have lean friends, but not everyone in the world was thin. I suggested she try the word “curvy” to describe herself, because saying fat in that manner seemed demeaning to herself.

I emphasized that there was nothing wrong with being curvy, that many girls and women are curvy, and that being curvy is something to be proud of, not anything to be embarrassed about.

She sniffled, wiped away a couple of tears, and seemed intrigued by the idea. “Who else is curvy?” she wanted to know.

I rattled off a few famous curvy women off the top of my head. Beyoncé. J.Lo. Jennifer Hudson. Katy Perry. Each time she recognized a name, she seemed to brighten up a bit.

“What about at my school? Who is curvy at my school?” She seemed dubious. But I was able to come up with several girls who were curvy like her, and some who were even curvier.

“So I am curvy?” she said the word as though tasting a new food she wasn't sure she was going to swallow. “Will I always be curvy? Will I ever get to be skinny?”

It seemed best to just level with her. “Honey, you will always be curvy. Curvy is who you are. You were born this way, and you will probably always be curvy.”

I held my breath a bit, unsure a definitive statement like this was really appropriate. All I knew was I did not want to encourage her to attempt to diet in an effort to be skinny like her friends, as I had



constantly done in middle school. Middle school was still a year and a half away for her at the time.

Curvy has since become a part of my daughter's identity. Several years later, curvy is a word Samantha uses to describe herself with pride and self-acceptance rather than disappointment and self-pity. Lucky I chose this word, because although Samantha is more physically fit today than she has ever been, puberty has gifted her with more curves in more places than she ever could have imagined in fourth grade, I'm sure. But it's all right, because I know

she feels like she is part of a secret club, the curvy girl club, with millions of unofficial members around the globe.

After reading about the study, I recognize the negative impact a parent's words can have on a child. Perhaps our daughters would benefit from a greater variety of positive words to describe them, rather than sticking with the usual suspects like “fat” or “thin.”

Maybe if we encourage our daughters to embrace words they proudly identify with, those words can become like a badge that connects them to millions of other girls

around the globe, instead of an indication that something might be wrong with them or set them apart from normal, whatever that is.

We all want to fit in; this is human nature. But viva the curvy girls, the nerdy girls, and the outrageous girls! Here's to encouraging girls to be more self-accepting, so they don't have to waste their energy on a daily basis trying in vain to change things about themselves they cannot change.

I have put as many positive words on this list as I could come up with, and feel free to add your own. Discuss these words with your daughter. Pay her an honest compliment. She will own the words she wants to keep. And if she does not seem to recognize herself in a positive word that describes her accurately, keep the discussion going until she does.

Two sayings seem to be at work here. The first is "the truth will set you free." The second is "acceptance is the answer to all of my problems today."

Assertive, Able, Adventurous, Approachable, Ambitious, Amazing, Affectionate, Ardent, Awesome, Artistic, Articulate

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Creative, Confident, Curious, Collaborative, Clear, Committed, Courageous, Consci-

Here's to encouraging girls to be more self-accepting, so they don't waste their energy trying in vain to change things about themselves.

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*Author and journalist Christina Katz enjoys writing about empowering girls and women. Words that describe her are articulate, brave, creative, confident, curious, and many others you will find here that likely also describe you and your daughter.*

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# Fall's freshest flavors

**F**all is officially here. It is time to embrace the chill in the air with earthy fall veggies; long, home-cooked stews; and juicy, crisp fall fruits. Running around to different fall activities can overwhelm us. A few days of cooking can yield a full week's worth of soul-satisfying meals to share as a family.

## Go for pears while they are sweet!

Pears tend to be hard and flavorless for much of the year. Fresh, ripe pears in October are a whole other story. When I have more pears than my family and I could possibly eat out of hand, I poach them.

Make a poaching liquid using white or red wine, water, sugar, honey, agave or maple syrup, and warm spices such as cinnamon stick, star anise, cloves, vanilla bean, and nutmeg. (If you don't want to use wine, just leave it out.)

Boil the poaching liquid until the sugar dissolves and the alcohol in the wine (if using) cooks off, about 15 minutes on a low simmer.

Peel the pears and cut in half. With a teaspoon, scoop out the seeds on the inside. Place the pears into the poaching liquid and allow to cook very gently until pears are tender but not mushy or falling apart. Take the pears off the heat and let them cool in the poaching liquid.

You can use the poached pears to top a fancy tart or just eat as is. Either way, they make an elegant dessert. Strain the poaching liquid and save for other uses, such as mixing with prosecco for a fall-themed brunch cocktail.

## Squash and pumpkins everywhere!

Try some creative uses for squash. Cut squash in the shape of french fries and cook on high in the oven with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Serve these "butternut squash fries" on your next burger night. Or steam, peel, and puree any orange squash and use this as a substitute for canned pumpkin. Your recipe will taste super fresh!

## Slow cook it

Take some time to do a slow-cooked braise when you have the chance.

Cold days mean more time inside. Make your home smell great with a batch of pork carnitas, soy and mirin-braised beef, or

vegetarian bean chili. Put the braise on in the morning and enjoy as a late lunch or dinner. Enjoy leftovers all week, worked into different dinners and lunches.

## Pizza time

Utilize leftover cooked squash, braised meats, local cheeses and charcuterie, and fresh herbs for a pita bread pizza-bar.

Make little bowls of all of your family's favorite pizza toppings, and let everyone build their own pizza by topping whole-wheat pita bread with whatever they like. Bake on a sheet tray and dinner is ready in minutes! Serve with a crisp green salad and some cut-up, freshly picked apples to round it out.

## Pick up some pomegranates

These delicious fruits are finally coming back into season. Extract the seeds and eat them just like that! Or use the seeds in a green salad with toasted pumpkin seeds and feta cheese. Sprinkle pomegranate on guacamole for a sweet, juicy punch at your next get together. (See the guacamole with pomegranate recipe.)

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



## TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA



## Guacamole with pomegranate

### INGREDIENTS:

4 ripe avocados  
 ½ serrano chile pepper, seeds removed  
 1 small plum tomato, diced  
 ¼ red onion, diced small  
 Juice of one lime  
 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro  
 3 tablespoons pomegranate seeds  
 Salt and pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:** Split avocados in half and remove the pit. Scoop out the avocados and place into a bowl.

Using a potato masher, mash the avocado with salt and pepper, lime juice, and cilan-

tro in a mixing bowl.

Fold in the diced tomatoes, chiles, onions, and pomegranate seeds, reserving a sprinkle of pomegranate for garnish.

Continue to fold together the ingredients, tasting for seasoning. Add more salt and lime juice as desired.

Transfer to a bowl for serving, and garnish with remaining pomegranate seeds. Enjoy with chips, fresh tortillas, or cut-up carrots and bell peppers.





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# Hooked on the screen

## Is there life without electronics? Part one of a series

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

I recently had a discussion with my husband about “the good ole days.” So many kids today have their heads buried in something with a screen. We used to immerse ourselves in creative play. I remember creating haunted houses and charging neighborhood kids 10 cents to enter. Sometimes we’d build tree forts with twigs and rope — not the sturdiest things in the world, but a lesson in the fine art of construction just as well. We’d decorate the road with chalk art and hold major league jump rope contests.

For kids today, free time often presents a different scenario. Instead of taking advantage of the warm weather or creating an indoor carnival, many kids obsessively engage their cellphone, iPad, laptop, game

console, or watch marathon re-runs of “SpongeBob SquarePants.”

Parents should encourage their kids to ditch the electronics on a regular basis and enjoy life the old-fashioned way. This may be easier said than done, due to the fact that life in general this millennium is a technological one; but it is doable — not to mention healthier — for your children no matter what their age. Here’s how:

### Encouraging non-tech activities

Dr. Lisa Strohman, a clinical psychologist, co-author of “Unplug: Raising Kids in a Technology Addicted World” and founder of Technology Wellness Center ([www.technologywellnesscenter.com](http://www.technologywellnesscenter.com)) reminds us that parents have to practice what they preach by monitoring their own

tech use. Strohman shares that her family practices “tech-free Tuesdays,” and she uses positive reinforcement for alternative activities.

“I reward them when I witness them doing other things, such as going out on their bikes.”

Strohman points out that it’s critical that kids get used to stepping away from technology early on and that they also learn the importance of finding alternative pastimes.

Sue Scheff, a nationally recognized parenting advocate, author, and founder and president of Parents’ Universal Resource Experts Inc., agrees that parents need to be cognizant of their own behavior in order to be positive role models for their kids.

“Mom and Dad, it’s about leading by example. If your kids watch you check your devices at mealtime or rudely in front of guests, that’s a green light for them to mimic this behavior,” she states.

Scheff also advises parents to encourage activities that provide for intellectual and social growth, such as summer internships and community service.

“Offer suggestions such as volunteering at a nursing home or animal shelter. Exercising is another great activity to get disconnected.” She advocates going on regular power walks with your children. “It’s about unplugging.”

Technology isn’t all bad. When it is used in conjunction with other creative activities, it can definitely be positive, but parents need to make an effort to join in on the fun.

“We’ll read a book, then watch the movie up until the section we’ve reached

### Positive tech time that includes physical and social activity

We are surrounded by technology, and it’s not going away. Families need to strike a balance. Here are some positive ways to incorporate technology into family life:

- Find a new recipe online and watch videos together for how to prepare it. (For example, [foodnetwork.com](http://foodnetwork.com) has kid-friendly videos.)
- Plan your vacation using the internet: study various destinations with your kids.
- Exercise with your kids using video games such as Wii Dance, etc.
- Keep track of friends in other coun-

tries — their cultures, language and lifestyles — via social media.

- Play electronic games and watch movies that have an educational focus. (See Common Sense Media for ratings and reviews of products.)

- Use technology to create gifts for special people in your lives (photo calendars, digital art, etc.).

- Build a family tree and find out more about your family history (i.e. [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com)).

- Use texting for convenience and safety as opposed to a substitution for in-person connection.



in the book. Then we discuss how the book is different from the movie,” Strohmman offers. She also encourages parents to suggest do-it-yourself activities that inspire team work, such as writing short plays and then filming it together.

### **Obsession and red flags**

Common Sense Media reports, “More research needs to be done to help us understand when, how, and why people use the internet and other devices in harmful ways. The American Psychiatric Association has identified only one internet-related condition, internet gaming disorder. Sometimes, what looks like addiction is simply problematic behavior. A balanced approach to using media can correct problematic behavior.”

Common Sense Media suggests that parents pay attention to how children act during and after watching TV, playing video games, or hanging out online.

“If they’re using high-quality, age-appropriate media, their behavior is positive, and their screen-time activities are bal-

anced with plenty of healthy, screen-free ones, there’s no need to worry.”

### **Unique issues with special-needs children**

According to Autism Speaks (a worldwide autism and advocacy organization), “Parents and autism therapists have long noticed that many children and teens with autism become deeply engaged with video games and other forms of screen-based media.”

Special-needs kids might also react more outrageously (i.e. tantrums) if technology is taken away. However, the organization reports that video games can be useful for teaching social skills and other behaviors. Therefore, finding a balance is pertinent.

Parents should work together with their child’s therapist and other professionals to assess whether or not their child’s electronics use is stymieing his social skills development.

Strohman suggests that parents have consistent communication with their

child’s classroom teachers.

“Teachers can easily assess your child’s social skills in relation to their peers,” she says.

### **General signs of addiction for all children**

- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Lying about or hiding use
- Loss of interest in social interactions
- Inability to self-monitor time spent on cellphone, video game, etc.
- Keeping devices accessible at all times

•••

In next month’s issue, part two of “Is There Life Without Electronics?” will focus on setting guidelines, monitoring usage, and parental controls.

*Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer. Her work has appeared in national and regional publications across the U.S. as well as internationally ([www.mymahaskell.com](http://www.mymahaskell.com)). She is also cofounder and managing editor of Sanctuary ([www.sanctuary-magazine.com](http://www.sanctuary-magazine.com)).*

# Voices carry

## Your child has a powerful instrument, but how is it used?

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

**A**s a child, I thought a piano was like a sofa and that everyone had one in their living room. My grandparents played the piano and organ, my father played the piano, and my sisters and I started lessons at the age of 6. The tradition has continued with each of my boys starting on piano when they were 6 and adding instruments — such as violin, guitar, mandolin, and ukulele — along the way. Learning to play a musical instrument adds an incredibly rich dimension to the ability to express oneself. But the fact is, each of us has an instrument that we have been using, practicing, and fine-tuning since birth. It is the most powerful instrument we possess.

This instrument has the potential to express and evoke every human emotion. Its capacity to conjure images, instill fear, destroy confidence, create hope, provide comfort, and proclaim love is unparalleled. The instrument I have described is, of course, the voice.

The voice allows us to vocally express the activity that takes place in our brain. These focalizations may or may not be verbal, but they allow us to share our thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The voice takes what is internal and makes it external, making it possible for that which is individual and personal to become public and social.

As with all instruments, the ability to use our voice is governed by the brain. The mind has to think before the voice can speak. So, if you said it, you thought it, even if only for a split second. Therefore, our voice and how we use it are completely under our control.

Sometimes we don't mean to say what we think, and this brings me to the subject of filters. Each of us has developed a set of personal filters through which information from the brain passes before being emitted from the mouth. We were not born with these filters. They are created as a result of what we have learned through the formal and informal training we receive from our family, community, school, religion, and culture. While our personal filters are unique to us, commonalities can certainly be ob-

served within groups.

These filters mature and become sophisticated with age and experience. Some typical childhood filters include, "Always say please and thank you;" "Don't talk back to your parents;" and "Don't utter four-letter words."

Older kids may add: "Speak respectfully to your elders;" "Certain topics are not to be discussed outside the family;" and "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

Our adult filters become more complex and differ depending on who we are speaking to and the circumstances. Hopefully we have learned, among other things, that while "Honesty is the best policy, it doesn't mean being cruel;" and "Criticism is more readily received when combined with compliments and encouragement."

With school back in session, whether we are parents of elementary, middle, high school, or college-age students, now is a good time

to check, modify, and even change those vocal filters. Take the time to really listen to your own voice, your children's voices, and the voices that your children are exposed to (friends, relatives, media, etc.), and determine whether some alterations are in order.

Ask yourself, how am I using my voice? What messages am I sending? Are they the messages I intend? What do I want my voice to stand for? What filters do I need to add or eliminate to achieve the results I desire?

Help your children through this same process of evaluating their voices. Share with them your observations from listening to them speak to you, their siblings, other family members, and friends. Encourage them to carefully consider how they currently use their voice. How do they want to use their voice? What kind of voice do they want to be known for? What kinds of alterations might they need to make in order to create the voice they desire?

Spend time together reflecting on the impact of the voices from outside your family such as television, internet, movies, social media, peers, school, and print media. What messages are these voices conveying? Are they messages that reinforce your family's values? Do these voices act as incentives or deterrents in creating the voices you and your family desire? What filters need to be in place to assure that you have control over the impact of these voices?

Our voice is our most powerful instrument. It wields incredible influence, intentionally or unintentionally. That is why it is essential that we think before we speak — that we speak to invite understanding, to build and strengthen relationships, to inspire excellence.

As Benjamin Disraeli said, "There is no index of character so sure as the voice."

*Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman spent 15 years as a family therapist and parent educator. To contact her, please e-mail [parent4life@yahoo.com](mailto:parent4life@yahoo.com).*



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# Five effects of 'pregnancy brain'

**M**oms know how much pregnancy affects a woman's body, both physically and emotionally. A pregnant woman may be naturally preoccupied with the baby growing inside of her, but she is also adjusting to the changes in her own body, which include so much more than back aches, swollen feet, and exhaustion.

During this time, there are specific hormonal changes taking place that cause an expectant mother's brain chemistry to alter.

This is commonly known as pregnancy brain, and there is scientific evidence showing these significant changes that occur during a pregnancy. While these changes cannot be prevented (and you wouldn't want them to, because they are necessary), knowing exactly why you sometimes feel irritable or absent-minded definitely helps! Here's what you need to know:

## Hormones reign

"There are 15–40 times more progesterone and estrogen marinating the brain during pregnancy," says Dr. Louann Brizendine, author of "The Female Brain." Progesterone actually induces calmness and has a sedative-like effect. This can make some women not only fatigued but also absent-minded.

Getting good sleep and proper nutrition helps. Now is also an ideal time to review your stress management — before the baby arrives.

## Shrinkage

It might sound like a sci-fi movie, but the hormonal surge is swift and strong. Some estimates report that brains shrink by six to eight percent! Rest assured, your brain will regenerate fully by the 24th week postpartum.

## Wonder Woman

Thought you could handle many things before becoming pregnant? Well, thanks to a boost in the prefrontal cortex, expectant moms can multitask like a superhero. This part of the brain helps people perform sev-

eral tasks at once.

It's a case of perfect timing, as you are planning your delivery, nursery, work demands, and a host of other arrangements all within a relatively short period of time.

## Hormones revisited

Remember those hormones that caused you to feel calm? Well, they also work in reverse. This can cause any perceived threats to you or your baby to become amplified. (We'd like to say this passes once the baby is born, but a mother's instinct to protect her child is not to be messed with, no matter how old he or she is!)

## Head of the class:

Along with those tiger mom protection skills come a new set of neural pathways, which enable new moms to hold more information in their brains, and also increase their intelligence.

Thankfully, this helps us absorb the abundance of new information we'll need to parent our precious baby.

*Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City.*



## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN





# Apply pressure

## Helping stressed-out teens find a cure for ‘college application blues’

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**I**t's senior year and emotions are running high. Extreme stress and excitement intermingle with raging hormones, 24-seven texting, and endless social media posts.

Before you know it, you and your high schooler will find yourselves smack in the middle of the mind-boggling process of college applications: considering schools, going on tours, filling out endless applications, and drafting well-written essays.

Most high schoolers who grapple with the challenging, multi-faceted, and time-sensitive college application ordeal find it extremely stressful and overwhelming. Staying up late can backfire during the school day, and re-writing essays is really hard when they're trying to make an impression and stand out from the crowd — on top of making time for all of their high school homework and after-school commitments.

And, as a caring parent, you may feel compelled to push, prod, nag, encourage, and make suggestions. But then you get stressed out as well.

In the end, the hard work will pay off. But in the meantime, how can teens and parents keep their health and sanity in check?

There are ways to alleviate all of that stress, according to Dr. Yamalis Diaz, clinical associate professor of the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at NYU Langone's Child Study Center. She offers valuable tips on how you and your family can help your teen beat the college application blues.

**Tammy Scileppi:** So, how can parents help?

**Dr. Yamalis Diaz:** First, let me say that one way parents and teachers often attempt to provide “support” may actually be counterproductive to the teen's ability to develop effective coping mechanisms — they provide excessive reassurance. (“It'll be fine ... you'll do great ... don't worry about it... you'll figure it out,” etc.) This is a natural thing to do when a teen tells you they are stressed or worried about something.

The problem is that this does not allow

the teen to explore, process, and problem-solve the source of their stress, and instead, [it] works to brush it aside or minimize it before effectively coping or problem-solving. If you do this enough times throughout their lives, the learned coping mechanism is to avoid thinking too much about it and just set it aside. That's not coping — it's avoiding. There needs to be a healthy balance.

Thinking too much and actually worrying or ruminating is unhealthy ... not giving it any thought and failing to problem-solve or learn to cope with stressors is also unhealthy. Parents and teachers can best help by finding ways to allow the teen to effectively think about and process their sources of stress and avoid providing excessive reassurance.

**TS:** What are other ways parents and teachers can help alleviate college application-related fear and anxiety?

**YD:** Being careful about the “messaging” related to college and avoiding a message that feels too intense. For example, saying things like, “You HAVE to get into a good college. If you don't get into the best college, X will happen, etc.” can really set the stage for the pressure to build. Instead, discuss college expectations in realistic and hopeful terms:

- Validate their feelings of stress and be open to discussing their stressors.

- Help them identify effective coping strategies that work for them — exercise, time with friends, engaging in hobbies, etc.

- Help them develop a system for getting organized and manage multiple demands effectively.

- Provide assistance to help get things done, without doing it for them.

**TS:** Discuss your own experience working with high schoolers in your practice.

**YD:** One of the biggest issues we see is teens experiencing significant stress and anxiety that leads to avoidance. Unfortunately, it is a natural tendency to avoid things that make us feel anxious. Setting it aside or distracting yourself for a bit is not a bad thing, but avoidance means you're simply not doing anything to address the stressor, which creates a circular process of

increasing stress without resolution (worrying vs. avoiding, doing nothing vs. more to do, time running out, stress increasing and intensified worrying, and so on).

Unfortunately, when they finally get to it, they either don't do nearly as good a job as they could have done, or they decide not to do it at all (e.g., taking some of the colleges they wanted to apply to off their list, because they're short on time).

**TS:** What are some steps students can take to get through this difficult process?

**YD:** Get organized! This is the perhaps the single best way to both manage the process and prepare for the transition to college. One of the reasons many students have such a hard time transitioning is that once they start college, they are suddenly left to their own devices to manage their time and tasks independently. Thus, they are suddenly managing almost every aspect of their daily lives for the first time, with significant consequences hanging in the balance if they fail to manage it effectively. Instead, they should:

- Start developing a realistic timeline to help you manage the multiple aspects of the applications with plenty of time to get them done.

- Don't procrastinate. Learn to tackle things that make you anxious first vs. last. Everything after the hardest thing feels easy, and once you have momentum, it'll be easier to get things done.

- Talk to parents, teachers, and other college students to get advice on how to manage the process.

- Learn to recognize signs of chronic stress, anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns and get help. Many people don't realize how susceptible college students are to mental health problems. In fact, this is the period of development with the highest level of mental health problems, most notably anxiety, depression, and substance use disorders. It's important for parents and teens to know and understand important signs in order to get help before the concerns spiral.

**TS:** Why can academic achievement lead to under-achievement?

**YD:** Unfortunately, teens who have been “over achievers” (or simply highly focused on achievement) can sometimes develop perfectionist tendencies or really unreasonable expectations for achievement. When I talk with parents about this issue, I highlight the difference between having a conscientious work ethic vs. being a



perfectionist. There is a big difference between the two, with very significant implications.

Perfectionist standards are hard to meet. (After all, there's no such thing as perfect all the time.) And they require levels of effort that just can't be sustained as work and demands get harder. As a result, it may lead them to burn out and buckle under the pressure and begin avoiding or disengaging from things, because they feel too stressful. Thus, teens may begin to underachieve instead. This is one of the ways that otherwise smart and talented young students may end up failing courses or even dropping out in their early college years.

**TS:** What about teens with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder?

**YD:** For teens with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, the process is slightly different. What first gets overwhelmed for them are their executive functions (organization, time management, planning, decision-making, problem-solving, etc.) as these are deficits related to the disorder in the first place. Once they lose their footing, or fail to establish it at all, the cycle of anxiety may begin and proceed similarly to what I just described.

What is particularly difficult for teens with ADHD is the unfortunate combination of anxiety/perfectionism plus the disorder. This is a tough combination in the brain because anxiety can make you too focused on

relatively small details (e.g., each sentence of a big paper being exactly right) while ADHD makes it hard to focus and complete tasks. Using this example, can you imagine how long it would take to write a good paper when you're striving to make it "perfect" but having a hard time concentrating? Either way, very little to nothing gets done. And this is just one paper for one class among the many other things they need to manage. And, again, that cycle of avoidance may ensue, leading to underachievement and mounting pressure.

In addition, they should be sure to visit their college's disability support services center as soon as possible to get appropriate academic accommodations (e.g., extra time to complete assignments) and other support services such as study skills workshops. Parents can help with this by helping to identify the appropriate center and help the teen schedule an appointment in advance.

**TS:** After the application process is completed, what are some tips for high schoolers and parents, as they head off to college?

**YD:** The number one tip is to develop a system for getting organized early on. Habits are hard to develop if you don't already have them, so find small organization strategies that work for you and practice them.

Another, often less discussed issue, is the changing relationship between parents and their college-aged kids. While teaching the class I co-developed at NYU, aptly named "twentysomething," I have discussed this topic with many college students and have heard that students sometimes feel that their parents can be a significant source of stress for them.

There are many reasons for this, ranging from the parent's own anxiety about what their kids are doing at college to understandable conflicts about real issues (e.g., misuse of money, failing grades). It can also be because there is a bit of a gray area as teens progress into what is now called emerging adulthood (not quite adults, but no longer adolescents). This means they may pull for independence in some ways, but rely heavily on their parents in other ways and, as a result, both sides may have trouble knowing how best to navigate the changing relationship, which can lead to conflicts and stress.

I recommend having calm and open discussions about expectations and realistic ways for teens to meet those expectations, including how often to "call your mom!" (a source of disappointment for many a college student parent).

**TS:** In your opinion, does pre-college stress and its impact on teens carry more weight today than it did say, 20 or 30 years ago?

**YD:** Absolutely! We have the highest rate of college attendance in history, which means we have a highly educated millennial generation. In the context of current economic conditions, this means we have a highly educated generation but not enough jobs.

This sets the stage for a very competitive environment, both in college and in the workplace, and that sense of extreme competition is trickling down to teens (and kids). As a result of this dynamic, there are both subtle and very overt messages at school, at home, in the media, etc. that you have to get into a good college and then compete for a good job.

This is a simple summary of how the pressure to go to college has ratcheted up significantly, and the pressure is beginning to mount among younger and younger children. Just ask some of the kids who have gone through the middle school application process, and you'll quickly get a sense of the intensity of that stress and pressure.

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

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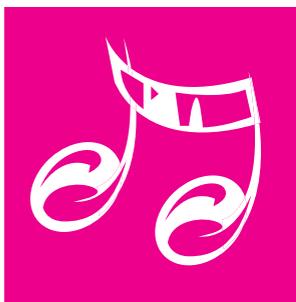
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*Continued on page 24*



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# Private/Independent School Guide



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### DIRECTORY

*Continued from page 22*

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# Separation anxiety

## Getting your teen ready for adulthood starts in high school

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

**D**on't hold onto your teens too tightly, parents. The high-school years are meant to be a preparation to launch them from home out into the world. Bear in mind that entire books have been written to help adults recover from the behavior of their misguided parents, who unconsciously clipped their wings because they couldn't cope with the uncomfortable feelings that come with letting go. Your goal is to stay alert as you bravely prepare for a separation that is inevitable.

If you feel weepy and clingy about the physical distance that will arise between you and your future young adult, you will set her up for feelings of guilt and obligation that won't serve her as she forges her own path in the world.

Teens need incremental independence and appreciate your assistance getting used to the consequences of their choices. If you coddle your teen, do all her thinking for her, intercede in the face of every life challenge, swiftly grant every whim, and then abruptly withdraw your assistance after college, your child is bound to struggle.

Don't set your child up for a big fall, especially if you have a well-behaved or reticent teen, skilled at avoiding parent disappointment. A rebellious or strong-minded teen will be less concerned about hurting her parents' feelings and can make choices that please herself more easily. But teens of any disposition need support and encouragement to make a smooth

transition from the safe haven of home into self-reliance. Besides, there are ways to keep teens close to your heart while gently encouraging the independence that will help them grow the wings they will need to soar out into a world full of happy life choices.

### **Illuminate paths to earning**

Most teens like money. Money means, among other things, freedom to a teenager. Modern money skills include exploring the possible ways to earn as well as the savvy ways to save, spend, and invest. If you find you spend a lot of time discussing managing money, maybe it's time to educate yourself on current paths to earning. Try to keep your fearful assumptions about possible career paths in check.

If your teen is an artist, explore the plethora of online earning opportunities that exist today. If your teen enjoys physical movement, research the jobs that allow her to be on her feet rather than sitting behind a desk. And try not to obsess about future job security. Get a career counselor involved to help your teen explore jobs that maximize her natural talents and curiosities.

### **Create a "Say Anything" space**

Don't shy away from serious topics with your teen. Drugs, alcohol, date rape, sexual assault, gender identity, sexual preference, and birth control are just a few topics that need to be faced squarely and

### **Ten movies to discuss with your teen**

- "Parenthood"
- "Say Anything"
- "Anywhere But Here"
- "Father Of The Bride"
- "Terms Of Endearment"
- "Juno"
- "The Family Stone"
- "Dead Poets Society"
- "Pitch Perfect"
- "28 Days"

discussed openly with your teen before she leaves home. One way to broach these topics might be to watch and discuss topical films together that you wouldn't necessarily share with younger children. (See the "Ten movies to discuss with your teen" sidebar.)

The key here is to establish an open door of communication through which no topics are off-limits. If this makes you squeamish, it's time to deal with uncomfortable topics whether you like them or not. Enlist your spouse's ear to get your concerns off your chest first, and share the responsibility of holding challenging discussions. Everyone in the family will likely become more accepting, mature, and open-minded thanks to your willingness to open up.

### **Discuss relationship wisdom**

Intimacy with another person requires a strong sense of individuality. Encourage your teen to see all relationships as learning opportunities. Use high-school social situations as opportunities to discuss what she needs and wants in various types of relationships, to consider what at-



tracts and repels her, and to explore which groups feel the most comfortable. Peer pressure is strong in high school, so if you don't ask these questions, your teen's self-awareness may not increase.

Conversations about the role of relationships encourage self-knowledge, which can lead to happier connections in the long run. When it comes to creating lasting relationships with others, self-awareness is paramount. Therefore, don't place too much emphasis on finding "the one" or being part of the popular crowd. Your acceptance of the needs and wants of your teen will go a long way towards her future happiness.

### **Interrupt anxiety with spontaneity**

Making the leap from home into the big, wide world is a major life transition that can trigger worry. A helpful technique for any parent to learn to help break the cycle of negative thinking is anxiety interruption.

When you notice the tight shoulders or the snappy disposition, why not suggest a little walk or drive — or maybe even a spontaneous shopping trip.

This may seem like a strange parenting habit, but what you are helping your teen do is break the cycle of stress before it

starts affecting the decision-making process. Focusing constantly on the problems at hand blocks spontaneous solutions from bubbling up. So when your teen is struggling with what feels like a big decision, teach her how to move away from stress, let go of anxious thinking, and shift focus until clear thinking returns. Sometimes the easiest way to have a breakthrough is by getting into a calmer, more receptive state of mind.

### **Reconsider ultimatums**

Let your teen decide where she stands on family traditions and rituals. "As long as you are living in this house, you will go to church every Sunday along with the entire family," is one possible approach. But another way is to establish a cut-off date for family obligations.

Perhaps after the age of 16 your children could decide whether or not they will attend a family commitment like religious services or not. If your teen does not wish to join in, let her experience what it's like to abstain. Then, if she decides to come back around, you will know it's because she wants to rather than because she must. And if she does not wish to participate right now, it's your job to get used to the idea. Your teen will grow up and make her own choices in the future, anyway. If this is a hard truth for you to swallow, perhaps you need to start practicing relinquishing pressure now.

### **Emphasize ways to decompress**

Anticipate alone-time shortages, especially during the emotionally intense graduation year. Then strive to instill self-reflection, self-care, and self-expression, so these habits will be there to comfort your teen in the future. Writing, drawing, biking, and knitting all induce a state of creative flow.

As the departure date to leave home approaches, you may notice teens are more absorbed with friends and social activities than interested in spending time alone. But moments of quality down time are when people connect with inner guidance and are crucial to leading a healthy, well-rounded life. And remember, if you want your teen to discover and follow her bliss, you are going to have to set a good example.

Your hobbies will come in handy, as you both cope with the natural feelings of grief that are sure to arise as you and your teen prepare to part on happy terms.

*Author, journalist, and writing coach Christina Katz is readying herself for the inevitable day she has to say "goodbye" to her teen. But, like many parents, she can't say she's looking forward to it.*

# Bias in the courtroom

**I**magine a judge presiding in a courtroom. What comes to mind? Do you have the sense that this person in a black robe interprets the law fairly, and rules on cases in an unbiased manner?

If so, two recent American Bar Association Journal articles may give you pause, and perhaps shake your faith in judges' abilities to remain unbiased when handing down justice.

The article, "Implicit bias is a challenge even for judges" gives examples of bias found "from various studies over the years" such as "darker skin leads to longer prison sentences."

Fortunately, there are judges and others who are working to recognize and overcome their biases.

"We view our job functions through the lens of our experiences, and all of us are impacted by biases and stereotypes and other cognitive functions that enable us to take shortcuts in what we do," Court of Appeals Judge Bernice B. Donald told a gathering of judges, state and federal, from around the country. Donald was on a panel for a program by the association's Judicial Division titled, "Implicit Bias and De-Biasing Strategies: A Workshop for Judges and Lawyers," at its annual meeting in San Francisco.

Such programs are a positive step in making the courts fairer. But the problem of bias may be greater than we know.

An article entitled, "Louisiana juveniles got longer sentences after unexpected LSU football losses, study finds," in which "ju-

venile judges in Louisiana imposed longer sentences in the week after an unexpected football loss by Louisiana State University," reported that:

- The average length of dispositions — which included probation and custody — handed down by the judges was 513 days for the young people studied. But that average increased by about 35 days after an unexpected loss, according to the researchers.

- When Louisiana State University was ranked in the top 10 before the game, an unexpected loss had a bigger impact — the disposition was 63 days longer on average, according to the study.

- The increased disposition was even higher — 74 days longer — if the judge attended the school as an undergraduate, leading the researchers to conclude that the results are driven by those judges who received undergraduate degrees from the university.

- Black juvenile defendants bore the brunt of the lengthier dispositions.

That a defendant might receive one sentence if a football team wins, and another if it loses, is an injustice. Justice itself becomes petty and arbitrary.

So, what do these articles have to do with divorce?

The answer is, everyone has biases — including your judge, if you are litigating your divorce.

I often write about mediation. But how do the court process and mediation process compare when it comes to bias?



## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Well, mediators have biases, too, like everyone else. However, the mediation process has protections for parties that the court lacks:

- In mediation, parties speak directly with the mediator. Many mediators will specifically and repeatedly invite corrections from the parties, by saying things like, "Tell me if I understand you. What I think I heard you say is that ..." I would say that at least once each session, a spouse clarifies or corrects my understanding of his or her statements.

- In mediation, if the mediator isn't listening to and understanding you, you'll probably know and feel it. And, if you feel that the mediator is biased, you can end the process at any time.

- In court, if you have a lawyer, you probably will not speak a single word directly to the judge. It is hard and often impossible to know whether and how the judge is understanding what your lawyer is saying on your behalf. In court, you can't end the process on your own. If you feel that your judge is biased, you're stuck with that judge, with rare exceptions.

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

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



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# Motivate by example



## BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

**W**hen you are a parent, you accumulate memories of the most magical moments of your life with your kids. You also rack up some of the most challenging. The trick is to keep the magical moments stacking up faster than the challenging ones.

I swear doing this doesn't require lessons at Hogwarts. With a few solid behavior strategies in your back pocket, you can change some of the demanding moments into whimsical remembrances. Keep the following three guiding behavioral principles in mind next time you feel your frustration build:

### Speak with purpose

Only give your child a direction when you are ready to follow through on it.

For example, every morning you tell your small being to get dressed 17 times, but this only happens when you go into her bedroom, help her pick out her clothes, and put them on her.

Make a vow to only tell her to get dressed when you are ready to walk into her room and help her. Stop telling her to get dressed while you are still getting yourself dressed or making breakfast. This will reduce everyone's frustration fast!

### Do more, your actions count

Our behavior paired with our words teaches our small beings to listen.

This will help you with the juggling act that is required as a parent.

When you now speak with purpose, you tell your daughter it is time to get dressed and then walk into her bedroom and start opening drawers. You are showing her what actions need to be taken to get dressed, rather than waiting for her to start before you make a move. Be the model she needs.

This approach also has the added benefit of eliminating arguments as you put your words into action before she can debate. Any little lawyers in your life will be stopped in their tracks.

### Choose honey

You know the phrase "you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar"? This adage could not be more important for promoting better behavior in your small beings. When you are positive, they are much more likely to have stellar behavior.

When you begin searching for the right outfit with your small being, say something like, "It would be fun to wear a

dress with tights today, since the air is so wonderfully cool." Open her closet door and find a dress that you think is great and tell her how much you love the polka dots on it. When you are excited about her clothing, it will be more fun for her to get dressed.

The trick to these fundamentals is that you need to use them proactively. Respond to your small one's needs by creating a solid dynamic where you always speak with purpose, do more, and choose honey. It will make a world of difference!

If you want more details on how to use these strategies, check out my new book, "Love Your Classroom Again." While the examples are based on a classroom setting, the strategies are applicable to any environment.

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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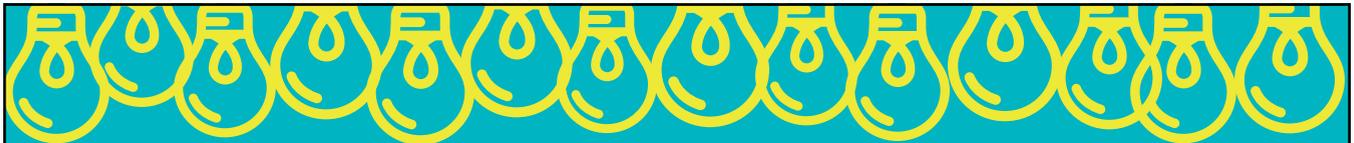
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# Give your cellphone a time-out!



## A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

**N**owadays, for your 6th birthday, instead of monster trucks, Barbie dream houses, and trips to Disney World, you ask your parents for a cellphone. Shockingly, some children do get their first phone at the age of 6! When I was a kid, the only phones in the school playground were toy “Kim Possible” “Kimmunicators.”

I did not get my first cellphone until high school, and it was a flip phone with prepaid minutes and no texting feature. The only calls I ever made were to my parents to let them know when I got out of school and was coming home. I was not gifted a smartphone until college.

These days, young people are tethered to their phones. Whether one is texting friends, updating social network accounts, or playing games, a phone seems to be an essential for this generation. With the rapid developments in technology, cellphones offer plenty of resources for today’s youth and can promote greater independence. However, when phones start becoming an extra appendage, it can adversely affect family life and jeopardize safety.

Cellphones may be a godsend to parents. When I was a toddler, I would throw a tantrum whenever my family traveled. If I had been born in this century, my parents could have pulled up cartoons on their smartphones for those “long” 20-minute rides to Grandma’s. Phones may have done their job of occupying youngsters too well. Kids often prefer their virtual networks to their real-life ones. With cellphones in hand, they can easily escape socializing with family and friends at any time.

It is understandable that there are times when young people do need the privacy their phone provides. Nonetheless, clinging to a cellphone may cause one to miss out on opportunities to meet new people and create fond memories.

In order to strike an ideal balance between the virtual life and real life, set some guidelines.

First, my parents and I agree upon a list of situations where we cannot be on our phones: dinners with extended family, holiday parties, and family vacations. We also have prepaid data usage to limit the amount of web browsing we can do on our cells. What do you do during those predetermined times when you cannot use your phone? At a family gathering, I catch up with my cousins who live far away, strike up a conversation with my grandmother, or offer to help my aunts and uncles prepare dinner.

Develop good habits for cellphone usage by learning to take precautions for your own safety. It goes without saying that you should never text and drive or ride your

bike. Also, restrain from using your phone while walking. Be aware of your surroundings. I have seen people crash into others, run into street lamps, and walk straight into the middle of traffic, because they were busy texting.

Be mindful of who you communicate with and what you send over text message. Never connect with anyone you do not know in person without permission from your parents. Be aware that even if your app claims to delete messages automatically, every text is still recorded.

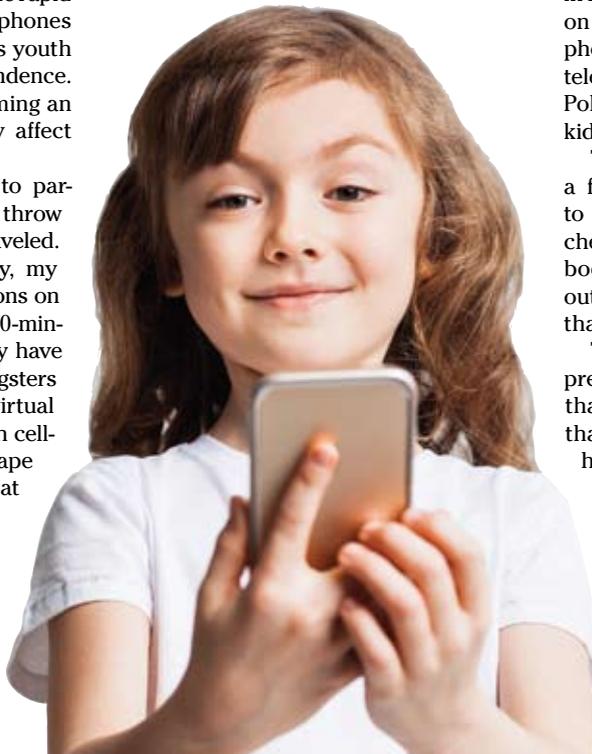
Also, avoid apps that allow others to see your present location.

Lastly, a word to parents: If possible, look for opportunities that can instill the importance of real-life experiences. This is an attitude your kids will carry with them in life and will help them be less dependent on their phones in the future. Since smartphones function more as toys than actual telephones nowadays, find alternatives for *Pokemon Go* and *Candy Crush* that will get kids interacting with the physical world.

Try exploring a nearby park. Go for a family bike ride. Encourage your kids to pick up a sport, make some crafts, or check out some books and join a library book club. Encourage your kids to hang out with their friends in person rather than over social media.

The key to unplugging is really about presenting alternatives and emphasizing that the physical world offers far more than the virtual one. Because technology has come to infiltrate all areas of life, learning to put down the phone is a lesson for the whole family. This is not easy, but can be achieved in small steps with the mindset of prioritizing what matters the most in life: actual, real-life experiences.

*Aglaia Ho is a 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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# Spooked by Halloween candy?

**M**aria Rago wishes parents could just relax and avoid restricting their children from their Halloween candy haul.

“If people could just allow themselves to have a little candy and not make a big deal out of it and have it in addition to the nutritious things they eat throughout the day or week, it can be no big deal,” she said. She should know. In addition to being a mother, Rago holds a doctorate in psychology and is the president of the National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders.

“People get this idea they have to micromanage everything they eat and everything their kids eat, and frankly, it takes the joy out of life,” she added.

Welcome to the Eating Season. It begins as soon as we turn our calendars to October and lasts three months. It’s a time when we receive mixed messages and then the guilt piles on. Eat! Drink! Celebrate! But don’t overdo it! How many steps to walk off a fun-size candy bar?

It’s enough to drive a person batty.

When it comes to Halloween candy, today’s parents tend to be stricter than previous generations. It’s not uncommon for (usually) moms to allow a few pieces of candy on Halloween night and a few days afterward, then take it away for good. But Rago thinks back to a simpler time when candy wasn’t fraught with emotion.

“When we grew up, most kids were not heavy, and we put the candy in our rooms, and we just ate it whenever. It didn’t mean anything to us. Now, we act as if it’s poison.”

She recommends more intuitive eating — becoming aware of the body’s inner cues such as hunger and fullness — and eating foods that appeal to you when you feel hungry, so that candy is not such a big deal when it IS around.

Yet, some children do need to have limits put on their candy consumption.

“If you have a home with a lot of food rules and a lot of anxiety about the candy, that child might be vulnerable to eating a lot of it, because they’re not usually able to,” says Rago. In this case, putting a reasonable limit on candy consumption — say two or three small pieces a day — can help spread it out until the time when it turns stale or the child has lost interest.

By then, you’ll have another holiday’s excesses to worry about!

*Christine Palumbo is a Naperville, Ill.-registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD



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# Painting a brighter future

In a city of cultural riches, opportunities for teens

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**I**s your teen an aspiring artist? If so, then area museums want to tap into his potential and offer a learning space for his talent to flourish. Students can drop in and sketch in the galleries of many of the city's highly regarded art institutions. Many offer art courses with the guidance of a highly trained instructor, who is usually a practicing artist. This is a great way to expand a young artist's practice, approach, and technique. Several large institutions have robust offerings for teens, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum. Each institution offers scheduled and drop-in classes as well as special perks for teens only.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art offers young people a chance to find inspiration and make friends in its teen programs. From gallery talks to art-making workshops, students are exposed to centuries of art history. Teens can also receive unlimited free admission by obtaining a "Teen Pass" (valid with a middle or high-school identification card).

The Museum of Modern Art offers free studio art classes to high-school students, and during the course, they create contemporary art and create their own exhibit. They will learn technique and put it into practice when creating their own pieces. Teens also have the opportunity to view and discuss artwork with peers while being guided by a museum professional. The course meets multiple times a week.

## For young artists

Here's a list of area museums that offer programming for teens:

**Brooklyn Museum** (200 Eastern Pkwy. in Crown Heights, [www.brooklynmuseum.org/education/teens](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/education/teens))

**Bronx Museum** (1040 Grand Concourse in Grand Concourse, [www.bronx-museum.org/education/teen-programs](http://www.bronx-museum.org/education/teen-programs))

**Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum** (2 E. 91st St. on the Upper East Side, [www.cooperhewitt.org/education/teen-programs](http://www.cooperhewitt.org/education/teen-programs))

**Jewish Museum** (1109 Fifth Ave. on the Upper East Side, <http://thejewish-museum.org/programs/teens>)

**Metropolitan Museum** (1000 Fifth Ave. on the Upper East Side, <http://met-museum.com/events/programs/teens>)

**Museum of Modern Art** (11 W. 53rd St. in Midtown, [www.moma.org/learn/teens](http://www.moma.org/learn/teens))

**New York Historical Society** (170 Central Park West on the Upper West Side, [www.nyhistory.org/education/teen-programs](http://www.nyhistory.org/education/teen-programs))

**Queens Museum** (New York City Building, Meridan Road in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, [www.queens-museum.org/queens-teens](http://www.queens-museum.org/queens-teens))

**Staten Island Museum** (1000 Richmond Terrace – Snug Harbor Campus, Building H in Randall Manor, [www.statenislandmuseum.org/about/volunteer](http://www.statenislandmuseum.org/about/volunteer))

**Whitney Museum** (99 Gansevoort St. in the Meatpacking District, <http://whitney.org/Education/Teens>)

The Whitney Museum's teen programming, "Youth Insights" (open to high schoolers), aims to have students, museum staff, and artists work collaboratively. There are a range of offerings and an opportunity for teens to expand their circle of friends and their perspective on art. Students that participate in the program are later eligible to apply for internships to work aside museum professionals, teaching others about the works exhibited. The internship requires a commitment of at least three hours per week. Other opportunities include serving on planning committees to host more teen events and also writing for the teen blog, known as the "Whit Blog." If

your teen is not ready to commit to a full semester, there are also free drop-in art-making sessions on Friday afternoons, from 4 to 6 pm. Teens can create works or bring in their works-in-progress. Each offering provides materials for the students to use.

It is also the perfect way to build a portfolio for middle schoolers that are considering a specialized arts high school or high schoolers looking to enter an arts program in college. Looking ahead to the college application process and exploring careers, teens that participate in courses can also utilize this time to explore careers in the arts by interacting with museum staff and teach-



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The programming is the perfect way to build a portfolio for high schoolers looking to enter an arts program in college.

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ing artists. Select programs offer teens the opportunity to develop professional skills through docent programs and internships. So, aside from providing a fun and safe space, participation in these programs could lead to resume-building experience. This is huge for college applications.

A number of museums throughout the five boroughs offer classes, workshops, and events specifically for teens. These offerings are typically grant-funded and free for the students with perks like snacks, activities, and even a MetroCard. Many classes are drop-ins (typically on Saturdays), but there are other classes with a set schedule in the after-school



(Above and right) The Jewish Museum offers art programs for teens.

hours that require an application and can be a competitive admission process. By participating in a series of classes or workshops, the teens develop their art-making skills. These programs are not just offered by the large institutions, so aspiring artists (and their parents)

should take a look at the offerings of each museum.

*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).*



# What is fifth disease?

*I recently hosted a birthday party for my 12-year-old son. One of his friends had a rash on his face and arms, which his mom said was fifth disease. She said her child was no longer contagious, but I was still nervous. What is fifth disease, and what are the chances that other kids at the party now have it?*



## FAMILY HEALTH

**DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD**

Chairman of Pediatrics,  
New York Methodist  
Hospital

**F**ifth disease sounds a lot scarier than it actually is. The name comes from being the last of the five classic rash-producing infections of childhood. (The first four being measles, scarlet fever, rubella, and a now-forgotten disease called fourth disease.) Fifth disease

is a viral infection caused by parvovirus B19. The condition manifests itself first

through a low-grade fever and cold-like symptoms. These symptoms resolve fairly quickly, and then a red rash develops on the face (thus the disease's moniker as the "slapped face syndrome"). The rash can then spread to the arms, hands, and torso.

In terms of the disease spreading to the other kids at your party, I wouldn't worry. A child is contagious during the "cold-like" symptom phase of the disease, and the virus is spread through the tiny respiratory water droplets in a cough or a sneeze. By the time the rash appears on the skin, the infection is no longer contagious.

The virus usually strikes children between the ages of 5 and 15, and is relatively harmless for a healthy child.

However, children with weakened immune systems or pregnant women should be in contact with their doctors if exposure to fifth disease is suspected or if symptoms develop. The condition slows down the body's production of red blood cells, which can lead to anemia and deprivation of oxygen to tissues. In non-compromised children, this slow-down is barely noticeable. However, for those with compromised immune systems or for those who are pregnant, there can be complications that require medical attention.

Because fifth disease is a virus, there is no treatment beyond waiting it out. While fifth disease's contagious phase only lasts a few days, the ensuing rash can remain for up to three weeks. While the child may feel just fine, the rash may itch and fade and reappear as the disease runs its course, making it more annoying than painful. In any case, a rash should always be checked out by a pediatrician for correct diagnosis and, if warranted, treatment.

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# What **POLITICS** can teach our kids

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

**F**rom yelling newsroom pundits and vigorous dinner party debates to divisive Facebook exchanges, 'tis the season when there's virtually no escape from politics. Your kids may come home with questions about opinions overheard at school or elsewhere. From a parenting perspective, the democratic process — and political shenanigans — provides plenty of fodder for teaching kids lessons in independent thinking, respectful discourse, values, and civics.

## **Nurture independent thinkers**

Take advantage of the political process to help your children learn to think for themselves. Ask your children open-ended questions to hear their point of views.

"Find out what they're thinking. What you want to do is stimulate their analytic, natural human curiosity," says Dr. Fran Walfish, a child and family psychotherapist and author of "The Self Aware Parent: Resolving Conflict and Building a Better Bond with Your Child."

Watch the speeches and debates together. Ask your child who he thinks is telling the truth based on body language or who seems more respectful during a debate.

Whether you agree or not, ask her: "Why do you feel that way? How would you solve the problem?" Share your opinions with your children by prefacing your comments with "I feel" or "I think" and ask questions like: "I wonder how he'll make that happen? What do you think? How would you make it fair if you were president?"

## **Avoid anger**

As hard as it may be, try to refrain from making judgmental comments or calling candidates with whom you disagree colorful names.

"Shouting at the TV, or at one another, presents a very negative example of responding to conflicting opinions," says Mary Jane McKittrick, author of the "Boomer and Halley" children's series (written for ages 4 to 8), including



the Mom's Choice award-winning book "Boomer and Halley: Election Day."

Through humor and embedded life lessons, McKittrick's books tell stories of families and communities resolving difficult challenges by working together.

## **Model respectful dialogue**

Not all parents agree on politics, but what matters is how they discuss the issues in front of their children without raising a child's anxiety. Make ground rules with your spouse before engaging in the discussion: No interrupting; take turns listening; and no put-downs, insults, or blaming. And, if you come to an impasse, agree to disagree.

"I would love for parents to respect

each other's point of views. I would also hope that they will respect their children's point of view," Walfish says. "Be able to tolerate differences. We still love each other, and I can tolerate you having powerfully different feelings than mine."

If you find yourself getting drawn into a heated argument around the table with loved ones, keep your cool and suggest you pick up the conversation at another time.

## **Play nice — in politics?!**

Political rhetoric may be difficult for your child to comprehend, but behavior in politics can often parallel real-life situations your child can relate to about how we should treat each other and who we can trust.

“Here we are: two political figures. They’re going to say their beliefs right out front, but wouldn’t it be nice if that was all they were doing,” Walfish says. “Instead, what they’re doing is using put-downs, criticisms, (and) willing to go forward at all costs to win.”

Perhaps the vindictive nature of politics will never change, but parents can use examples of how politicians conduct themselves to teach values about what it means to win honorably, treat others with respect, and be a trustworthy friend. For example, on the playground, a child might promise your child that he can have the ball next, but then passes the ball to an ally or continues to hog the ball. Even a young child understands that the other child’s actions are unfair.

“A good friend is someone who treats you right all of the time. And that’s what we’re looking for in politics,” Walfish says. “And a lot of times people will say anything to get what they want, which is to win. Our job is to try to figure out who’s telling the truth, who’s going to deliver on the goods.”

### Civics 101

Talk to your kids about the democratic process. Take your child to the voting booth and follow the results on election night together to help her see the election

### Looking for more?

Check out these books, movies, and websites for kids interested in learning about politics and government:

#### Children’s books

- “Duck for President” by Doreen Cronin
- “This Little President: A Presidential Primer” by Joan Holub (board book)
- “That’s Not Fair!: Getting to Know Your Rights and Freedoms” (Citizen-Kid) by Danielle McLaughlin (release date April 1, 2016)
- “Doodles U.S. Government Coloring Fun” by Setria James (release date April 1, 2016)
- “One Vote, Two Votes, I Vote, You Vote” by Bonnie Worth (release date Aug. 2, 2016)

#### Political movies

- “1776” (ages 8 and up)
- “Young Mr. Lincoln” (ages 10 and up)
- “Gandhi” (ages 12 and up)
- “Dave” (ages 12 and up)
- “All the President’s Men” (ages 13 and up)

Source: [CommonSenseMedia.org](http://CommonSenseMedia.org)

#### Websites

- KidPresident.com featuring 12-year-old Robby Novak, a YouTube sensation, television star, and co-author of “Kid President’s Guide to Being Awesome.”
- Kids.gov: <https://kids.usa.gov>
- Ben’s Guide to the U.S. Government: <http://bensguide.gpo.gov>
- CongressforKids.net: [www.congressforkids.net](http://www.congressforkids.net)

process in action and the connection between your vote and why it matters.

Explain that politicians are public servants, and they usually enter the political process in an attempt to make a difference in the lives of citizens.

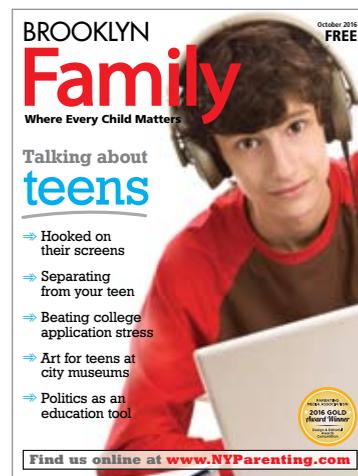
“Parents can offer examples from their lives to illustrate giving to others as a positive way to explain politics,” McKittrick

says. “After all, politics exist in our families, communities, schools and workplaces — not just at the ballot box.”

*Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines resides with her opinionated family — which includes her husband, two rambunctious boys, and a pair of playful dogs. She is the author of “Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World.”*

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# SpookyLysscious Halloween fun



## FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

Can it be the month of candy corn and Halloween fun already? October brings some fabULyss family outings from apple picking to pumpkin patches.

With fall upon us, that means new, fabULyss clothing! I want to introduce you to Designer Revival on the Upper East Side. It's the place to go to consign and shop. You will want to purchase everything in this hidden gem. You can set up a time to meet with a personal shopper as well as someone to help you decide what to toss and what to keep when it's time to clean out your closet: [www.designerrevival.com](http://www.designerrevival.com).

I'm looking forward to a Halloween filled with lots of fun and sweet treats. A few of my favorite, new costumes for the little ones are, for the girls, the Strawberry Kiss character (pictured) from the toy line "Shoppkins." All the little "Shoppies" love this costume. My younger daughter is going to go as her favorite cartoon character — Peppa



Fig. For the boys, I love costumes from the Lego line Ninjago in assorted colors, as well as all the fun emoji costumes.

A new fabULyss jewelry collection that I love is Ariana Rabbani. She combines gold with diamonds and colored stones for pieces that are feminine with a touch of romance. Jewelry manufacturing runs in her blood — her family has more than 40 years experience in the business, and she designed her first namesake collection after learning from the best in the fashion industry at Ralph Lauren and Giorgio Armani. Her collection is sold worldwide in more than 100 specialty stores, and has been photographed on actresses at events. Check out [arianarabbani.com](http://arianarabbani.com). This jewelry line is a beautiful diva-must!

I am looking forward to taking my daughter and a few of her best friends to see "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood LIVE!" The fabULyss show for kids is coming to the Kings Theatre in Brooklyn in November. Make sure to purchase your tickets — which are on sale now — soon, because the show will sell out. Daniel and his iconic red sweater are sure to be a big hit with the children in this interactive musical adventure.

"Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood Live" at Kings Theater (1027 Flatbush Ave. <http://danteltiger-live.com>, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com)) Nov. 26 at 2:30 and 6 pm.

Make sure to visit the [www.divamoms.com](http://www.divamoms.com) website to learn all about our annual Halloween Spooktacular for babies 6 months to 3 years of age. The children are going to have goblins of fabULyss fun.

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

### Hot dog mummies

Having a Halloween party? I love this fun recipe for crispy, phyllo-wrapped hot dog mummies from the Food Network:

#### INGREDIENTS:

- One package of 8 bun-size hot dogs, each halved crosswise
- 2 ounces cheddar cheese, cut into 16 thin slices
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 8 sheets phyllo dough
- 4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted
- Ketchup, yellow mustard, barbecue sauce or your favorite dipping sauce, for serving and decorating

#### DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit and line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Cut a slit in each hot dog piece and stuff with a slice of cheese. Set aside. Combine the salt, garlic powder, and pepper in a small bowl.

Working with one sheet of phyllo at a time and keeping the rest covered under a

damp towel or paper towels, lay a phyllo sheet on a large cutting board or counter and lightly brush with melted butter. Lightly sprinkle with some of the spice mix and fold in half lengthwise. Brush the top with more melted butter and cut into 1/2-inch-thick strips. Using two pieces of stuffed hot dogs per phyllo sheet, wrap half of the strips around each piece of hot dog to create a mummy look. Leave a small section of hot dog exposed towards the top, so it looks like a face peeking out from the phyllo wrappings. Don't worry about frayed edges or tears — it will add to the mummy look.

Place on the prepared baking sheet and repeat with the remaining phyllo, melted butter, spice mix, and hot dogs. Remelt the butter if it cools down too much while forming the mummies.

Bake until the phyllo is crisp and golden brown, about 25 minutes. If desired, dot ketchup or mustard eyes on each mummy using a toothpick and serve with extra sauces for dipping.

From Food Network Kitchens: [www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/crispy-phyllo-wrapped-hot-dog-mummies-recipe.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/crispy-phyllo-wrapped-hot-dog-mummies-recipe.html)



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# Reading rates for kids

## Dear teacher,

One of my children seems to read very slowly. The other just dashes through books and textbooks. What are the typical reading rates for children in third and seventh grades?

## Dear parent,

You would think that this is a very simple question to answer. Instead, it is a rather complicated question. Children read at different rates when they read silently or orally. Their rates also vary depending on the types of reading that they are doing and whether they are reading material that is on their independent reading level.

What you want is for your children to read at an appropriate rate with adequate comprehension. Reading fast is great provided children also understand what they have read. Remember, children are not good readers unless they understand what they have read.

Many studies have been made of what constitutes an appropriate oral reading rate for different grade levels. Most are within a similar range. You can find very detailed oral reading data for grades one through eight by going to [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org) and searching for "oral reading fluency" to see what the expected rates are for children in the fall, winter, and spring of each year.

There is just not as much data about optimum silent reading rates. However, students should consistently read faster silently — especially after the early grades. Dr. Neil J. Anderson, a professor at Brigham Young University, says 138 words per minute is an appropriate silent rate for a third-grader and 195 words for a seventh-grader. With each grade in school, children's silent reading rates should increase between 10 to 20 words.

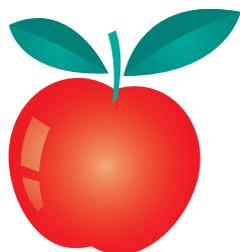
## Handling a bad report card

### Dear teacher,

My sixth-grader, who just started middle school, brought home a report card loaded with C grades last week. In elementary school, she always got As and Bs. I'm quite disappointed, and she is very upset. How can this be turned around?

### Dear parent,

Expressing your anger or frustration over these less-than-desired grades to your



## DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND MARGE EBERTS

child is not going to solve anything. Since your child has been a good student, it's important to look at what has changed to get her back on the path to good grades.

One thing that you need to consider is that middle school is usually quite different from elementary school. Your child is now faced with a number of different teachers with different personalities to cope with as well as demands. She may not yet have solved the riddle of how to handle this new experience. Plus, the curriculum

is probably more demanding.

The first step is to talk calmly with your child to see if she has a handle on why her grades have slipped and how she might be able to turn things around. With this information in hand, you and your daughter should talk with her teachers. Your daughter may even be surprised to find out why she has received the grades that she did.

And you both must be sure to ask the teachers how the child can do better in each class. She may need to work on different

things for each class. However, more than likely, there will be a common thread of what she needs to do. Make a list of these things. Also, be sure to ask the teachers if your daughter needs any special help and where it can be found.

Once you and your daughter know what she needs to do to get better grades, help her begin to make the necessary changes. They may fall into the following areas:

**Study plan:** Study time for quizzes and tests needs to be scheduled. Beyond this, your daughter may need help from you or her teachers on ways to study for quizzes and tests.

**Homework:** Simply doing homework faithfully every night may be sufficient to improve your child's grades.

**Challenging work:** When the child does not understand assigned work, she needs to get help at once from the teacher, a parent, online, or a tutor or learning center.

## Online tutors — helpful or not

### Dear teacher,

I simply have no time to help my daughter with math. Many of her friends use online tutors. What are the pros and cons of using one?

### Dear parent,

Online tutoring sites are exploding all over the internet. The tutors are usually college students, retired teachers, college professors, or professional tutors. Their quality, however, can be uneven.

Negatives include technical glitches and language barriers when the tutors are from other countries. Many, however, provide quick, excellent help — guiding students to figure out the answer.

If you decide to try an online tutor, be sure to sit by your child for the first few sessions to investigate the quality of the tutor. Also, tutoring sessions work best when students come to sessions with a list of questions.

*Parents should send questions and comments to [dearteacher@dearteacher.com](mailto:dearteacher@dearteacher.com)*

*or ask them on the columnists' website at [www.dearteacher.com](http://www.dearteacher.com).*

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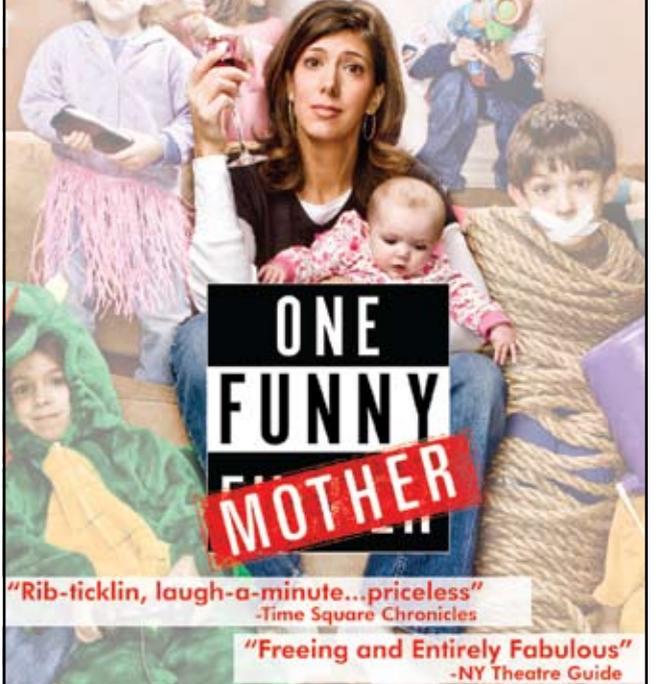


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# Calendar

OCTOBER



## Dia De Los Muertos

Celebrate the Day of the Dead at Brooklyn Children's Museum on Oct. 22 and 23.

*Dia De Los Muertos* — Day of the Dead — is a Mexican day to remember and prepare special foods in honor of those who have departed. Children can celebrate with Sonia De Los Santos of Dan Zane and Friends with live music, arts and crafts, and fun activities throughout the day. Children also learn the origins of this holiday and its traditions through art and animal programs.

Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead), Oct. 22 and 23, from 10 am to 5 pm. Free with admission to the museum.

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

## 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](http://NYParenting.com)

# Calendar

### Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to [brooklyncalendar@cnglocal.com](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!

## SAT, OCT. 1

### IN BROOKLYN

**Chile Pepper Festival:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 10 am to 6 pm; \$20 (\$15 students and seniors).

New York's hottest fall tradition features blazing bands, high-Scoville scale sauces from Brooklyn and beyond, spices for sale, and artisanal goodies from chile-chocolatiers.

**Kids Pavillion at I Am Art NYC:** Industry City, 220 36th St. and Second Avenue; [iamartnyc.com](http://iamartnyc.com); Noon to 4 pm; \$20 per day (\$30 two day pass; \$11 for children 13 to 18 years old; free for children under 12).

Two-day programming with instructor-led arts and crafts activities, creative storytelling, canvas free-paint, face and finger painting, art-tech demonstrations by Microsoft, and much more. Families will also enjoy live music performances curated by the critically-acclaimed Freedom Dance Party (featuring DJ Cosi and Herbert Holler) and Brooklyn's youngest rock band, Unlocking the Truth. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**50th Annual Ragamuffin Parade:** Third Avenue from 76th Street to 92nd Street; [www.ragamuffinparadeny.com](http://www.ragamuffinparadeny.com); 1 pm; Free.

Kids dress up in costumes and march down Third Avenue. Registration starts at 11 am.

**Get Kinetic!:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm; Free with museum admission.

Inspired by Rube Goldberg devices, we'll assemble teams to plan and construct wacky, winding machines of miraculous motion! For all ages.



## Come to the big BAMboo!

Don those costumes and get your boo on at the annual BAMboo at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Peter Jay Sharp Building on Oct. 31.

All ages are welcome to this Halloween celebration featuring music, carnival games, arts and crafts, stilt walkers, roaming artists, a costume contest, and

a candy giveaway. This year's theme is Boo Bash, the greatest costume party you've ever been to!

BAMboo, Oct. 31 from 4 to 7 pm. Free.

*BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building (30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street in Fort Greene, [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org)).*

## SUN, OCT. 2

### IN BROOKLYN

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

Inclusive space for children of all abilities can explore their senses. Welcoming environment for children with autism spectrum disorder.

**Kids Pavillion at I Am Art NYC:** Noon to 4 pm. Industry City. See Saturday, Oct. 1.

**Get Kinetic!:** 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 1.

## MON, OCT. 3

### IN BROOKLYN

**Rosh Hashanah in the Park:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Noon to 4 pm; Free.

Celebrate the holiday with fun activities

including Nature Exploration, Bird Nerds Game, Nature on the Go, and Animal Encounter. Plus, get a Discovery Pack.

**Carousel rides:** Prospect Park Band Shell, Prospect Park West and Ninth Street; (718) 965-8900; [www.bricartsmedia.org/cb](http://www.bricartsmedia.org/cb); Noon to 5 pm; \$2 per ride (\$9 for a book of 5).

Celebrate the holiday with a ride on the park's beloved 1912 carousel.

**Race Around the Farm:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 2 pm to 4 pm; \$3.

Get out and get moving this Rosh Hashanah on this special day when the whole family can participate in potato sack races, spoon races, stilts and other old-fashioned games.

## THURS, OCT. 6

### IN BROOKLYN

**Transit Tots:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street;

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# Calendar

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(718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 10:15 am; Free with museum admission.

Stories, games, and surprises for the youngest transportation fan. For ages 2-5 and adult companions.

## SAT, OCT. 8

### IN BROOKLYN

**Get Kinetic!:** 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 1.

## SUN, OCT. 9

### IN BROOKLYN

**Sensory Room:** 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 2.

### Oct 9

**Fall Harvest:** Narrows Botanical Gardens, Shore Road and 72nd Street; (718) 748-4810; [www.narrowsbg.org](http://www.narrowsbg.org); Noon to 5 pm; Free.

Don't miss local artists and crafters selling their wares, plus raffles, native plant sale, pumpkin patch, music, and the Canine Costume contest. Rain date is Oct. 16. To enter your pooch in the costume contest, make sure to register by Oct. 6.

**Get Kinetic!:** 1:30 pm to 2:15 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 1.

**Book Launch:** powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 4 pm; Free.

Meet author Adam Gidwitz at this special event for his new book "The Inquisitor's Tale." RSVP requested.

### FURTHER AFIELD

#### "The Quest for the Seven Teeth":

Central Park (Call for exact location), Central Park, Manhattan; (347) 559-6223; [www.Accomplicetheshow.com/kids](http://www.Accomplicetheshow.com/kids); Noon and 1 pm; \$60 mother and child.

Presented by Accomplice the Show, this fun, interactive scavenger hunt will ignite children's imaginations as they embark on a quest to assist the Tooth Fairy's cousin, Franklin, in finding some teeth to replace those that he lost. The event lasts approximately two hours, rain or shine, and is suitable for children 6 to 11 years old. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations in advance required.

## WED, OCT. 12

### IN BROOKLYN

**Discovery Room:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 10:30 am to noon; Free with museum admission.



## A harvest on the beach

Come and have a "bootiful" weekend at Luna Park now through Oct. 30.

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

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

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

Halloween Harvest, now through Oct. 30, Saturdays from noon to 11 pm and Sundays from noon to 8 pm. Entrance is free to the park, rides and activities extra.

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

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

Young fans can explore their favorite books, toys, and building materials. For children 2 to 5 years old.

**Redbird Reef Painting:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 10:30 am to noon; Free with museum admission.

Learn about recycling, subway-style! Retired Red Bird subway cars took a dive into the Atlantic Ocean to form a new home for fish. Dive into this fun program and paint your own vibrant scene of an underwater world of recycled cars. For ages 4 and older.

## THURS, OCT. 13

### IN BROOKLYN

**Transit Tots:** 10:15 am. New York Transit Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 6.

## SAT, OCT. 15

### IN BROOKLYN

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

In 1870, inventor Alfred Beach caused a sensation when he opened his experimental subway powered by air. We'll learn more about his unique design and use air power to conduct experiments of our

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own! For ages 5 and up.

## SUN, OCT. 16

### IN BROOKLYN

**Sunday Story Time:** powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 11:30 am; Free.

Illustrator Lori Richmond reads her new picture book about a young boy, his energetic puppy, and the friends they encounter on their afternoon walk around town. Reservations requested.

**Sensory Room:** 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 2.

**The Pneumatic Subway:** 1 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 15.

## WED, OCT. 19

### IN BROOKLYN

**Redbird Reef Painting:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate Sukkot and learn about recycling, subway-style! Retired Red Bird subway cars took a dive into the Atlantic Ocean to form a new home for fish. Dive into this fun program and paint your own vibrant scene of an underwater world of recycled cars. For ages 4 and older.

## THURS, OCT. 20

### IN BROOKLYN

**Transit Tots:** 10:15 am. New York Transit Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 6.

**Redbird Reef Painting:** 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Wednesday, Oct. 19.

## SAT, OCT. 22

### IN BROOKLYN

**Día De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 10 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Join Sonia De Los Santos of Dan Zane and Friends to celebrate the traditional holiday with live music, arts and crafts, and fun activities.

**"Zahhak-Legend of the Serpent King":** BAM Fisher, 321 Ashland Pl. between Hansen Place and Lafayette Avenue; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); 10:30 am and 3 pm; \$15.

Creator Hamid Rahmian returns with this production that is taken from the "Shahnameh," or "Book of Kings" — a



## An extra wild Halloween

Have a ghoulishly good time with ghosts, goblins, and scary treats at the annual Boo at the Zoo event in Prospect Park Zoo on Oct. 29 and 30.

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

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

Boo at the Zoo, Oct. 29 and Oct. 30 from 11 am to 4 pm. Free with zoo admission.

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

Persian epic poem penned in the 10th century by Persian poet Ferdowsi. This shadow play tells the story of a misguided prince who becomes the villainous Serpent King. Following the show there is a hands-on workshop for kids to create their own shadow puppets. For children 8 to 13 years old.

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

Using the museum's vintage subway cars as the stage, you'll design a crowd of puppets that animate a tale of travel! For ages 5 and older.

## SUN, OCT. 23

### IN BROOKLYN

**Día De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration:** 10 am to 5 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 22.

**Sunday Story Time:** powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and

12th streets; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 11:30 am; Free.

Joshua David Stein and Julia Rotham (author and illustrator of "Can I Eat That?") lead this week's event. A whimsical — yet factual — series of questions and answers about the things we eat — and don't eat! Reservations requested.

**Sensory Room:** 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 2.

**Shadow Puppet Storytelling:** 1 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 22.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**"The Quest for the Seven Teeth":**

Noon and 1 pm. Central Park (Call for exact location). See Sunday, Oct. 9.

## THURS, OCT. 27

### IN BROOKLYN

**Transit Tots:** 10:15 am. New York Transit Museum. See Thursday, Oct. 6.

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# Calendar

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

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## SAT, OCT. 29

### IN BROOKLYN

**Party Like Brooklyn Halloween:** Fulton Mall, 1 DeKalb Ave.; [partylikebrooklyn@gmail.com](mailto:partylikebrooklyn@gmail.com); [www.partylikebrooklyn.com](http://www.partylikebrooklyn.com); 10 am to 11:30 am; Free.

Mr. Marc the MC & DJ Mikey Palms bring you an early morning Halloween event you do not want to miss. Wear your best costume and be ready to let loose!

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

It's time to take out those costumes, come to the zoo, give Halloween treats to the animals, and have a ghoulishly good time.

**Shadow Puppet Storytelling:** 1 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 22.

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

Laia takes great care to erase any stains that appear on her big white wall, but she could never imagine what would happen when Dot arrives! With a little bit of magic and a lot of imagination, Dot and Laia begin a journey across music and colors, turning a simple wall into the perfect setting to make their dreams come true. The event is a unique performance in which dance, theatre, music, new technologies, and the inspiration of American artist Sol LeWitt combine to create a magical puzzle where everything is possible.

## SUN, OCT. 30

### IN BROOKLYN

**Monster Mash 2016:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 10 am to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Calling all ghosts and goblins! Come dressed to impress as the museum celebrates Halloween. Join us for a spooky good time complete with Halloween-inspired activities.

**Boo at the Zoo:** 11 am to 4 pm. Prospect Park Zoo. See Saturday, Oct. 29.

**Sunday Story Time:** powerHouse on 8th, 1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets; (718) 666-3049; [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com); 11:30 am; Free.

Get ready for Halloween with Bob Shea's new picture book, "Quit Calling Me a Monster," which puts a new spin on the so-called scary ghouls that haunt us on Oct. 31. Reservations requested.



## This fall fest is red-hot

Kings County is about to get royally spicy with the Brooklyn Botanic Garden's annual Chile Pepper Fiesta on Oct. 1.

This is one of the borough's hottest traditions, featuring bands from around the world — Lost Bayou Ramblers, Aurelio, Hazmat Modine, and many others.

Stroll through the lush grounds, taste goodies from master chocolatiers, visit local farm stands, and try sizzling salsas, pickles, kimchee, and other red-

hot specialties.

Kids are sure to be riveted by the masters of ceremony, Robbins & Ringgold, circus masters who take the stage between acts with juggling (peppers, of course), fire eating, and other antics.

Chile Pepper Festival, Oct. 1 from 10 am to 6 pm; \$20 (\$15 seniors and students; free for children under 12 and members).

*Brooklyn Botanic Garden [900 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway in Crown Heights, (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org)].*

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

**Sensory Room:** 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, Oct. 2.

**Shadow Puppet Storytelling:** 1 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 22.

## MON, OCT. 31

### IN BROOKLYN

**BAMboo!** BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); 4 pm to 7 pm; Free.

All ages are welcome to this community Halloween celebration, featuring music, carnival games, and more. Don't forget your costume!

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN BROOKLYN

**Community Farmer's Market:** Hatie Carthan Garden, Lafayette and Nostrand Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Saturdays, 9 am to 3 pm, Now – Sat, Nov. 19; Free.

The place to be for fresh fruits, health foods, activities, and educational programs.

**Family Discovery Weekends:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Saturdays, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, Sundays, 1 pm to 3 pm, Now – Sat, Oct. 29; Free with general admission.

Experiment, learn, and play together in the Discovery Garden. Hands-on stations throughout the meadow, woodland, and marsh habitats, and in the vegetable garden, encourage families to explore nature together. This is a drop-in program for families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather. Check this webpage for updates.

**Religious services:** No Limit Beulah Sabbath Pentecostal Church, 5417 Avenue N between E. 54th and E. 55th streets; (718)241-8100; [www.nolimitbeulah.org](http://www.nolimitbeulah.org); Saturdays, 11 am; donation.

Sabbath school for children.

**Swale:** Pier 6 at Brooklyn Bridge Park, Joralemo Street and Furman Street; (718) 724-6432; [www.bcape@bbpnyc.org](http://www.bcape@bbpnyc.org); Thursdays and Fridays, 10 am to 7 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am to 7 pm, Now – Fri, Oct. 14; Call for tickets.

Brooklyn Bridge Park is hosting Swale, a collaborative floating food forest. People can visit, take part, and learn about food sustainability. Swale is an evolving sculpture and a functioning farm producing healthy food. Along with learning about food, participants can attend yoga classes, performances, lectures, and workshops.

**Museum Highlights:** New York Transit



## Dangerous gingerbread

Follow the crumbs to Puppetworks on Sundays now through Dec. 18 to see “Hansel and Gretel.”

This version is based on the Brothers Grimm fairytale and adapted into a gentler version for children 3 years and older by artistic director Nicolas Coppola.

“Hansel and Gretel” tells the story of two children lost in the wood after a bird eats their breadcrumb trail, and their adventure with Rosina Sweettooth, a silly witch who wants to turn

them into gingerbread — only to end up as a cookie herself. Folk songs from Humperdinck's opera accompany the production.

“Hansel and Gretel,” Sundays, now through Dec. 18 at 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm (all dates) with a special showing on Monday, Oct. 10 (Columbus Day). Reservations suggested. Tickets are \$9 for children and \$10 for adults.

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

Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); Saturdays and Sundays, Noon and 3 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 27; Free with admission to the museum.

Join our expert Museum Educators on a dramatic journey through the building of New York's subway system, the evolution of the city's surface transportation, and our priceless collection of vintage subway and elevated cars dating back to 1904.

**Halloween Harvest:** Luna Park, 1000 Surf Ave. at W. 12th Street; (718) 373-5862; [www.lunaparknyc.com](http://www.lunaparknyc.com); Saturdays, Noon to 11 pm, Sundays, Noon to 8 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; Park entry is free, rides are extra.

Every weekend will be abuzz with festive and seasonal activities including a petting zoo, pony rides, pumpkin patch, magicians, and so much more. The park will be abuzz with festive and seasonal activities along with special events in the spirit of

Halloween.

**“Hansel & Gretel”:** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, Now – Sun, Dec. 18; \$9 (\$10 adults).

This version based on the Brothers Grimm fairytale is adapted into a gentler version and tells the story of two beloved children lost in the wood after a bird eats their breadcrumb trail, and their adventure with Rosina Sweettooth, a silly witch who wants to turn them into Gingerbread, only to end up as a cookie herself. Folk songs from Humperdinck's opera accompany the production. Suitable for children 3 years and older. Reservations suggested.

**Educational Center:** Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6, Atlantic Avenue at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; [www.brooklyn-bridgepark.org](http://www.brooklyn-bridgepark.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 1

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# Calendar

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pm to 5 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 20; Free.

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

### Educational Center drop-in hours:

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6, Atlantic Avenue at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; [www.brooklynbridgepark.org](http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org); Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 3 pm to 5 pm, Now – Tues, Nov. 22; Free.

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

**Touch Tank:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Sat, Oct. 1 – Sun, Oct. 30; Free with museum admission.

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



## Get Kinetic!

Get Kinetic! at the New York Transit Museum Oct. 1, 2, 8, and 9.

Inspired by Rube Goldberg devices, children will form teams to plan and construct wacky, winding machines of miraculous motion!

Get Kinetic!; Oct. 1, 2, 8 and 9 from 1:30 to 2:15 pm. For all ages; free with museum admission.

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

**Train Operator Workshop:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 23; Free with museum admission.

Drop by our Computer Lab to take control of a subway car and operate it over virtual miles of track, using some incredibly realistic software! Space is limited, recommended for children 10 years and older.

**Garden Story Time:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); Sundays, 11 am to 1 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; Free with general admission.

Read garden-inspired stories with volunteers. All programs are outdoors and canceled in case of inclement weather.

**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, Oct. 25; Free with garden admission.

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

**BAMKids Movie Matinees:** BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave. at Hanson Place; (718) 636-4100; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); Sundays, 2 pm, Sun, Oct. 9 – Sun, Nov. 27; \$10 (\$7 for children under 12).

The series offers families the perfect introduction to classic films on the big screen.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Boo at the Bronx Zoo:** Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; [www.bronxzoo.com](http://www.bronxzoo.com); Saturday, Oct. 1–Tuesday, Oct. 4, 10 am; Saturday, Oct. 8–Monday, Oct. 10, 10 am; Saturday, Oct. 15–Sunday, Oct. 16, 10 am; Saturday, Oct. 22–Sunday, Oct. 23, 10 am; Saturday, Oct. 29–Sunday, Oct. 30, 10 am; All events are included with the purchase of a Total Experience Ticket (\$33.95 for adults, \$23.95 for children 3 to 12 years old, and \$28.95 for seniors 65 and older, and free for children under 2 years old).

The zoo is hosting five weekends in October celebrating nature with loads of kid-friendly activities including pumpkin carving, a costume parade, live music, a Hay Maze, and more.

**Mario Batali's Kitchen Gardens:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road, The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 1:30 pm to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 20; Included in All Garden Pass Admission.

Garden beds are filled with plants featured in the favorite recipes of the chefs



## Historical adventure

Children's literature author Adam Gidwitz launches his new book, "The Inquisitor's Tale," at Powerhouse on 8th on Oct. 9.

The Inquisitor's Tale takes on medieval times in an exciting and hilarious new adventure about history, religion — and farting dragons.

Meet the author at this special book event!

"The Inquisitor's Tale" book launch, Oct. 9 at 4 pm, free. RSVP requested.

*Powerhouse on 8th [1111 Eighth Ave. between 11th and 12th streets in Park Slope, (718) 666-3049, [www.powerhousearena.com](http://www.powerhousearena.com)].*

from Mario Batali's restaurants. Kids can explore the gardens to solve Mario's Menu Mystery.

**"Hansel & Gretel's Halloween Adventure":** Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon, and 2:30 pm, Saturdays, 1 pm, Sundays, 1 pm to 5 pm, Thurs, Oct. 13 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$7 (children under 12) \$10 for all others.

Presented by the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, this holiday show is based on the adventures of the classic fairytale duo.

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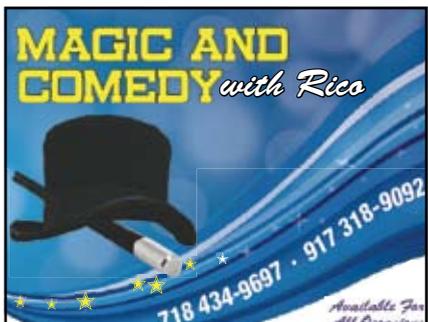
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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

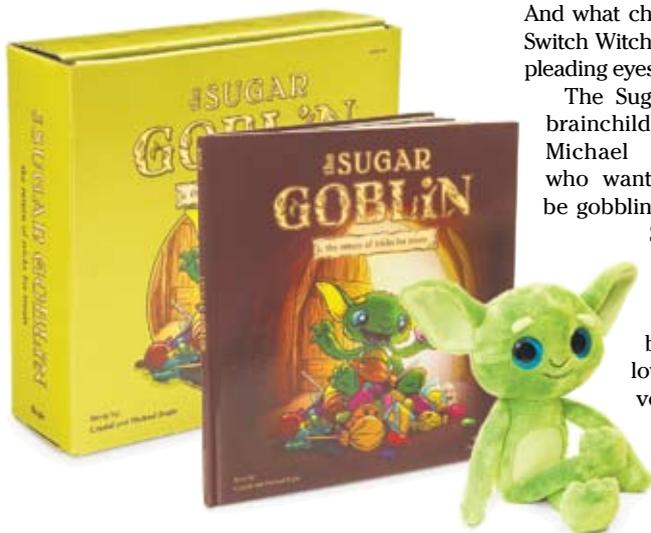
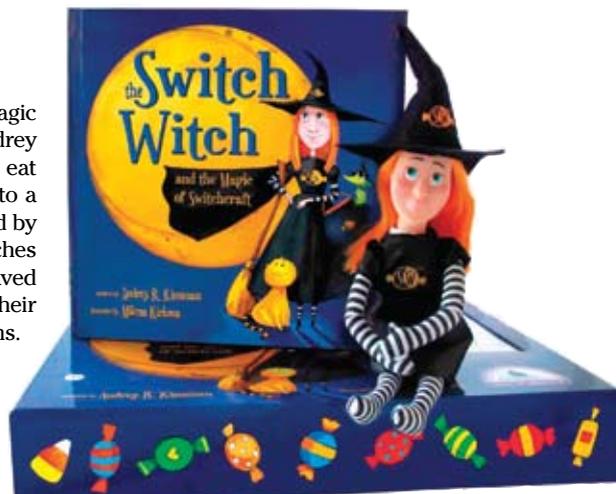
## Pulling the ole switcharoo

Parents are steeling themselves for the great avalanche of Halloween candy that is about to rain down on their normally nutrient-rich tables, but this year they can choose a partner in crime to help make their kids' treats disappear: the Switch Witch or The Sugar Goblin. They, and their hardcover books, have been invented by creative parents to help switch candy for a

toy (that the adults provide).

"The Switch Witch and the Magic of Switchcraft" is written by Audrey Kinsman, whose son couldn't eat most of his Halloween haul due to a food allergy. In her tale, illustrated by Milena Kirkova, the Switch Witches collect the candy of well-behaved children and use it to heat their homes and power their brooms. And what child could refuse the Switch Witch doll with her big, pleading eyes?

The Sugar Goblin is the brainchild of Crystal and Michael Boyle, parents who wanted their kids to be goblin' less candy. Their tale, "The Sugar Goblin: The Return of Tricks for Treats," and adorable green, plush character, come in a sturdy, keepsake box. In the days before Halloween, this creature will be cavorting through homes like the Elf on the Shelf, turning up in comic poses and performing tricks in anticipation of receiving the kids' candy.



According to the Boyles' book, illustrated by Darren Cranford, the goblins need to replenish their empty candy storage cave — or they'll starve!

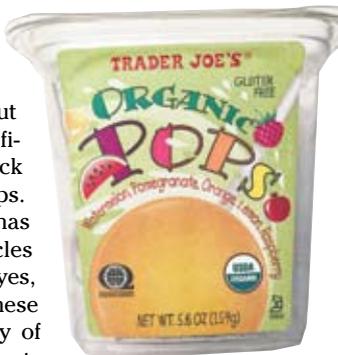
The Switch Witch and the Sugar Goblin sets — recommended for kids ages 3 and older — make for fun, new Halloween traditions for families that want a sweet — yet healthy — holiday.

*The Switch Witch and the Magic of Switchcraft set, \$29.99, [www.target.com](http://www.target.com); and The Sugar Goblin set, \$29.99, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).*

## Fright free

For Halloween candy without scary ingredients such as artificial dyes and flavorings, check out Trader Joe's Organic Pops. Over the years, this magazine has printed several chilling articles about the dangers of food dyes, and most terrifying of all, these ingredients are found in many of the Halloween treats we give to children. A delicious alternative to the carcinogenic and potentially mood-altering ingredients of typical colorful candies, Trader Joe's lollipops have natural flavors such as watermelon, pomegranate, orange, lemon, and raspberry. These pops are imbued with hues from vegetables: red cabbage, purple carrots, turmeric, and annatto! And these pops are gluten-free and certified organic by the United States Department of Agriculture and Quality Assurance International. They taste as good as they look, so they will be happily welcomed into trick-or-treat bags by kids and parents alike. That's news that will make any jack-o-lantern light up.

*Organic Pops by Trader Joe's, 5.6 oz. for \$4.99, [www.traderonline-store.com](http://www.traderonline-store.com).*



## Rock-a-bye burrito

Whether it's a Halloween costume or a baby shower gift, every infant needs a Tortilla Baby blanket and hat set, created by Katharine Harlan Owens. The similarities in coloring to an actual tortilla make for a baby blanket that will transform the infant (up to three months) instantly into a baby burrito. (As if babies weren't delicious enough!) This swaddle is circular — measuring 40 inches in diameter — and it's made of a cotton-polyester blend. The matching knot hat completes the disguise, turning baby into a supersized Chipotle cutie pie.

And when the infant outgrows her tortilla swaddle, it can be repurposed as a burp cloth, stroller blanket, or changing table cover. Now this is a gift that keeps on serving up smiles!

*Tortilla Baby blanket set, \$48, [www.uncommongoods.com](http://www.uncommongoods.com).*



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