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# NEW YORK Parenting

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January 2017

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# Short days and long nights

I'm writing this on the shortest day of the year, Dec. 21, and I can only say how happy I am to know that every day from here on will grow longer. It's draining to get up when it's dark and to leave work when it's dark also. I miss the light and don't know anyone who doesn't. Kids especially have a really



difficult time in the winter, particularly now that most of them are engaged in after-school programs. By the time they too are finished, it's dark and also cold, not the best recipe for outdoor fun.

Light is very important to our psyche and we have to take advantage of the weekends in the winter in particular to make sure we get enough outdoor light time. Getting yourself and the kids up early enough on weekend days to get outside and frolic is of the utmost importance. One

of the glorious things about life in New York are all the wonderful parks that make our city so enjoyable in every season.

It won't be long before we have a snowfall that leaves accumulation on the ground, and what kid doesn't love finding a good hill in a park and sledding or snow tubing

down? And what about those ice rinks? There are many wonderful rinks in all the boroughs and I urge you to make sure that your family begins this fun practice really early on in your child's life.

The holidays were fun as they always are but now we're on to a New Year and new experiences. New York is exciting all year long and winter is no exception. This issue offers a variety of ideas of how to stay healthy, eat well, and prioritize and make the cold months internally warmer.

Rolling out soon will be the "new look" of our website, NYParenting.com, and we hope you will visit it often. It works well with any device and offers a great calendar, helpful guides and of course all of our editorial, both recent and archived. Our Online Camp Guide 2017 will be launching soon. Be sure to look for it.

Wishing all of you and our staff and contributors a very Happy New Year! We hope you have started out the year right and that good health and prosperity will be a part of your every day life in 2017. Take nothing for granted. Enjoy! Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# Don't have a will? Know the risks

“**J**ust” is not justice.

People often think that if they die without a will, everything will just get taken care of.

“Oh, I don't need a will. Everything will just go to my spouse.” Or, “I don't need a power of attorney. Worst comes to worst, they'll just get a guardianship.”

Often, these statements are driven by the speaker's desire to avoid paying legal fees, making it easier to resort to his vision of focusing on what he thinks is the ultimate result — rather than the process required in order to get there.

When someone dies without a Last Will and Testament, the rules of descent and distribution of property under the laws of intestacy — that is, dying without a will — apply. These rules also apply when someone leaves a will that is invalid and does not comply with the formalities of the statute, for example,

when someone pulls something off the internet and just has it notarized, or has it witnessed by one of the beneficiaries named in the will.

There are rules about the order of priority about who stands to inherit from an intestate estate and who has “standing” — the right to petition to be the fiduciary of the person's estate. The fiduciary is called an “Administrator” and not an “Executor,” a term which applies to probate estates where a decedent died with a will. (By the way, in New York State, female fiduciaries are no longer called “Executrix” or “Administratrix” since the diminutive suffix was abolished by court rule in 1997, yet many people continue to incorrectly use these terms.)

The application of the laws of intestacy may have unintended consequences. For example, the spouse does not take all. Instead, the spouse takes the first \$50,000, and then half of the remainder, with the



## ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.

other half going to any surviving children. And, there are many people who hold themselves out to be husband and wife (or spouses) but in fact are not legally married. New York State does not have common-law marriage.

Often people lose sight of what is involved to administrate an estate, and the fact that it can be less organized and require additional paperwork than in a probate estate. For example, for unmarried persons, you can try to go to court to have a judicial declaration of a marriage, but it is a high burden of proof and an uphill battle, one that encounters legal costs. Those costs are always considered in determining the cost-benefit analysis of whether to proceed in a certain direction. Estate taxes can also be higher in those cases, where a decedent was not actually married to his partner, who now will not receive the assets of the decedent because he or she has no legal standing as a non-spouse.

Also, if there are minor children, those minor children are not legally competent to own property. Therefore, the parent must seek appointment as a Guardian of the property in order to receive the assets, at which point those funds must be held jointly with the Clerk of the Court, and the Court's permission is required for a withdrawal of those assets.

This puts the Court in control of the assets, and not the child's parent. The parent is then required to seek the Surrogate's Court approval every time she

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or he wants to access some of the child's money for childcare expenses. In New York County, the Guardianship department has an unspecified rule (not codified anywhere) that there should be enough money left for the child to go to college. There are no guidelines for what this means. College tuition at a state school or a private university?

Although the child is legally entitled to whatever is left in the account once he or she reaches the age of 18, many would agree that no child should have access to large sums of money at 18, particularly when that child has experienced a tragedy like losing a parent.

In addition, there are certain factors that render a person ineligible to serve as a fiduciary, such as a felony conviction. Although a will does not necessarily overcome that statutory barrier, at least you would be able to state why you want that person to serve notwithstanding the defect or barrier to serving.

In other situations, the decedent might not have gotten along with his or her siblings, or parents, from whom he or she was estranged, or distant cousins whom he or she never met. Often, people in same-sex relationships, particularly those who hail from the South or "fly over" states, had a falling out with their

conservative family members and don't speak with them once arriving in the Big Apple. Nonetheless, in this case, blood really is thicker than water, and they will stand to inherit if there is no will to stand in the way of that situation.

Without a will, you lose the option of choosing the person who will administer an estate, or serve as trustee. Often in an intestacy situation, in cases where there is no one suitable to serve, or even where there is no family, the Public Administrator will serve as fiduciary. This is a person appointed by the Court to administer those estates that are without someone to serve.

In certain circumstances, even those people who are otherwise entitled to take under the statute can be barred from that entitlement. For example, a parent or spouse who abandoned the decedent cannot inherit, nor can a person who murdered the decedent or was culpable in their death (known as the "Son of Sam" rule).

A Surrogate Court recently took that logic one step further: A husband who murdered his wife's mother (his mother-in-law). The wife — the heir of the murdered woman's estate — post-deceased her mother, also intestate, leaving her husband as the sole heir of her estate.

Even though he was not culpable in his wife's death, the Court barred him from taking in intestacy.

Children who are "adopted out" may also not inherit from the biological parent. Stepchildren are not included in the intestacy list, no matter how emotionally close the relationship.

You need to look no further than estates of celebrities to visualize what happens. Prince died unexpectedly this year without a will. Now his estimated \$300-million estate will be distributed among six siblings. This is complicated because of the nature of his assets. Unsurprisingly, other potential heirs have surfaced claiming to be Prince's out-of-wedlock child, including a federal prison inmate.

There are serious consequences to not leaving a valid will, yet nearly two-thirds of American adults fail to do so. Don't be one of them. And remember that this is not a "do-it-yourself" project.

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

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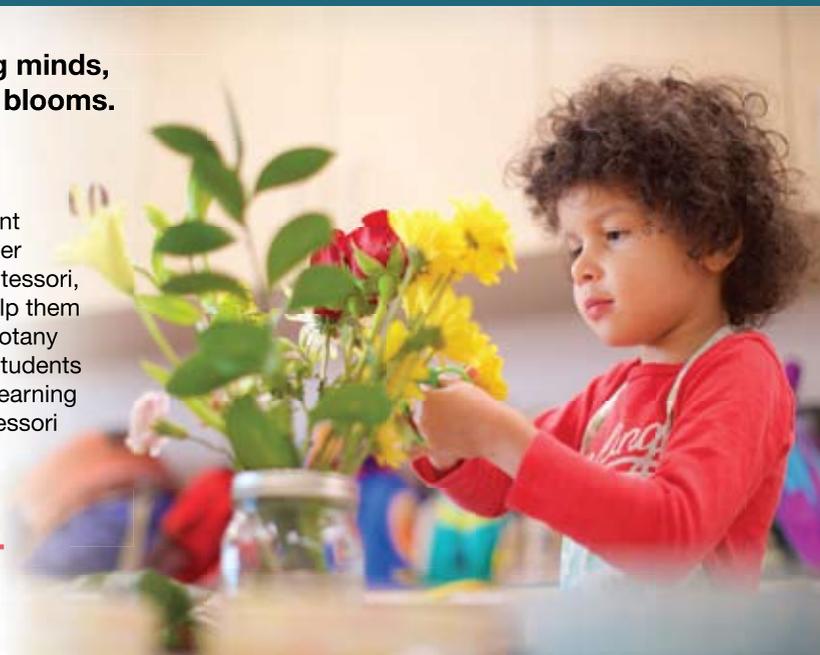
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# Writing out your resolutions

## How making a list can help you reach your goals

BY LARA KRUPICKA

**N**ow that the calendar has turned and you have a whole year before you, what will you do? Whether you favor New Year's resolutions or not, there's nothing like the positive image of possibility that lies in the fresh beginnings of Jan. 1. And tapping into that inspiration can take your family on adventures all year long, if you adopt the right mindset.

### This year I will...

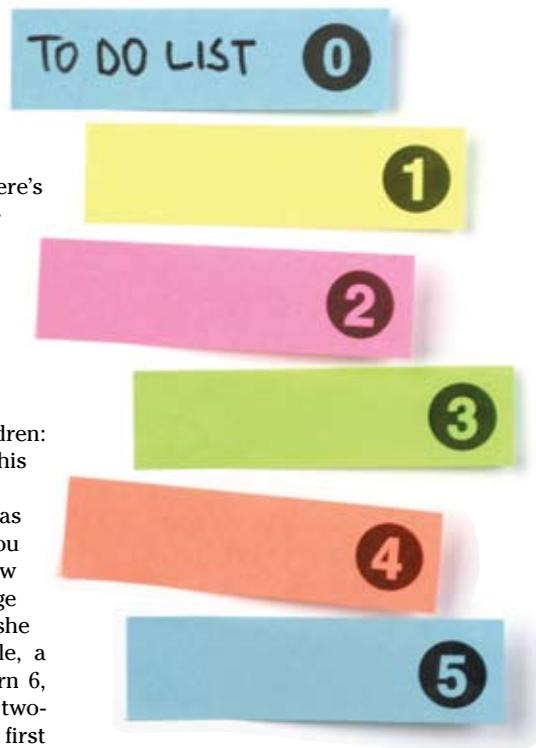
Try this exercise with your children: write (or print out) the phrase: "This year I will..."

Then, have your children list out as many things as they can think of. If you need to, prompt your child with a few expected events, but also encourage her to consider new ideas of hopes she wants to make happen. For example, a child may write: "This year I will turn 6, start first grade, learn how to ride a two-wheeler, and go to Grandma's for my first long overnight without Mom and Dad."

Ask younger children to draw pictures of what they hope will come in the next year. Then you can write underneath the pictures a description of what each one depicts.

While your children are working on their lists, write your own. Again, if it helps, start off with the occurrences you can be fairly certain will happen. Note any special events you are looking forward to. Then delve into your desires of what you would like to see take place during this calendar year.

Consider also creating a list that you can share together: "This year we will..." There may be overlap between your individual lists and the shared list. It doesn't matter. The important thing is that you take the opportunity to look ahead at how you will spend time as a family.



### Power in writing

Just having written those thoughts down will make a difference. As Henriette Anne Klausner says in her book, "Write It Down, Make It Happen," "Writing down your dreams and aspirations is like hanging up a sign that says, 'Open for Business.'"

She goes on to explain how the act of putting a goal in writing stimulates a part of your brain (the reticular activating system) that filters out the unnecessary and non-urgent and latches on to what is relevant to the stated goal.

"Once you write down a goal, your brain will be working overtime to see you get it, and alert you to the signs and signals that were there all along," Klausner explains.

In practical terms, it means that you will pause and pay attention when information related to one of your "This year I will"

desires comes up. If your intention is that this will be the year you take up water-color painting, you will be more likely to notice the article in the local paper about a woman opening a studio to offer water-color classes. Not only will you notice it, but you will be mentally prepared to take action — to check your calendar to see which class fits your schedule and then phone to register for the class. You will make it happen.

### A call to celebrate

You and your children have listed what you look forward to this year. But consider this: those lists can also provide a reminder of what you want to celebrate — be it a milestone you anticipate or an accomplishment someone is aiming for. So while the year is young, think about how you would like to acknowledge special events. Will you have a party? Or will a certain reward correspond with crossing off a goal? Talk as a family about when and how this year you will all commemorate those occasions.

If you can, post your lists out in the open where you can see them and be reminded regularly of where your family wants this year to take you. Commit to reviewing your lists once a month or so — perhaps as a family night activity. As you review, cheer each other on for any progress made toward attaining your goals, or milestones you have passed.

Unlike New Year's resolutions, where often we hope to break a bad habit or initiate a difficult one, "This year I will ..." lets you look forward to all that the new year will bring with anticipation. And it keeps generating enthusiasm long after others' resolutions have died.

So what will you do this year?

Lara Krupicka is the author of "Family Bucket Lists: Bring More Fun, Adventure & Camaraderie Into Every Day" and mom to three girls who have plenty they plan to make happen in 2017.



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# A soothing voice

Psychologist writes that a mother's voice heals better than any text

**M**y mother worked a lot when I was growing up. As a single parent of two small children, she often took on extra shifts as a nurse just to keep food on the table. Every day when I got home from school, one of the first things I would do was call my mother at work. Never once was she unhappy to hear from me, and the only time she did not come to the phone right away was when she was with a critical patient.

When I had especially exciting news, I couldn't wait to call, because it felt like it didn't really happen unless I shared the news with her. That relationship has lasted into my adulthood, and she's still the first person I call when something great (or terrible) happens in my life.

So it made total sense to me — both as a mother and a daughter — when I read that psychologist Leslie Seltzer found that young girls who talked to their mothers experienced a drop in the

stress hormone cortisol. According to Seltzer, the girls' brains released a burst of oxytocin upon hearing their mother's voice.

But why exactly does this happen? Is it simply that we are used to our mother's tone? Does she always say just the thing we needed to hear, or is it more about the pitch of her voice?

Seltzer had 64 girls, ages 7–12, take a difficult math test. The girls were divided into four groups: “One group spoke to their mothers on the phone, some talked in person, others chatted via instant message, and the final group didn't communicate with their moms at all.”

The girls who were able to speak to their mothers in person or on the phone experienced a decrease in cortisol levels and a spike in oxytocin levels. The text messages were less effective.

Seltzer thinks we are not only “fine-tuned to respond to our moms' vocal in-



## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

tonations,” but mothers have the unique ability to detect anxiety in their child's voice, so therefore can reassure them without the child having to verbally say they're scared or worried.

We've all heard the studies of how premature babies are soothed by their mother's voice, but it's rarely stressed how effective a simple call to our mothers can be in lessening our own anxiety, or even how much we need to continue talking to our own kids as they grow older to help them in the same way.

I am seeing this with my own girls. Now that they're teens, I realize how far an encouraging word — whether it's directed to a chemistry test, a heartbreak, or an illness — can go. Often I find myself telling one of my girls that everything will be fine, that they shouldn't worry, and walk them through their current situation. I am often shocked at how quickly it works. It's not that I am alleviating their problem or giving the perfect advice.

On the contrary, the single biggest thing I do is simply listen and then try to help them realize what they already think or how they want to proceed.

It's not always easy. Often it's quite difficult and frustrating to stay cool in the midst of a teen breakdown, but I know how important it is for them to understand that they can work out their dilemmas through some self reflection, so while I listen, I don't dictate. More than frequently, that simple gesture is more than enough.

Seltzer says that not only does a mother's voice provide an instant oxytocin boost, but it lasts throughout the day, long after the phone call ends.

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



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2017 resolutions:

# Care more, love fiercely

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

**D**aily reports of hate-motivated violence, divisive rhetoric, threats to long-held racial, religious, and gender liberties, along with irreparable attacks on the Earth, have led me to limit my screen exposure. It's not that I want to hide from reality. But determining what is real has become so much more complicated and difficult to establish.

Lately, it feels as though I've been transported to an altered state of existence reminiscent of the sequence in "It's A Wonderful Life" when George Bailey wished that he'd never been born and finds himself in Pottersville. He discovers the people he knew and loved have degenerated into the worst versions of themselves. They had become bitter, greedy, and cruel. The

streets of the once-charming town were lined with businesses catering to all manner of human vice.

In a world without George Bailey, Mr. Potter managed to destroy every shred of decency and humanity that had characterized Bedford Falls. In the absence of George Bailey, Potter capitalized on people's fears, distrust, ignorance, anger, and desperation, creating a dependence on him for their livelihood. Without the conscience, optimism, courage, empathy, and loving kindness of a George, Potter's quest for power and control went unchecked.

Whereas George looked for the best in people, appealing to their strengths, and inspiring them to discover these in themselves, Potter relied on people's insecurities, preying upon their weaknesses, which more readily served his selfish pur-

poses. George discovered that in the presence of genuine caring and relationship, people strive to live up to your highest expectations of them. Potter preferred to operate in the absence of genuine caring and relationship, counting on people to be satisfied to live down to his lowest expectations.

These two opposing approaches to wielding personal influence have been readily observed over the past year. What is abundantly clear is that if we allow ourselves to become disillusioned when faced with disappointment, it is easy to slip into self pity and despair. By doing so, we make ourselves vulnerable to those who would guide us down a destructive path.

This is not the time to retreat into darkness. Now's the time to rise up, determined to stay alert, be smart, take action, and

work harder to create the conditions necessary for the preservation of a healthy future for ourselves, our children, and our planet. We have reached a critical time in our history when we must choose between what is best and what is easy. In choosing to do what is best, we must think globally while living locally. We must live in the present while being mindful of the future. Here are two recommended New Year's resolutions:

### Care more

When my younger son became overwhelmed by challenging situations, he attempted to alleviate anxiety by declaring, "I don't care!" Instead of trying to convince him that he did indeed care or excusing him from trying, I would say, "Then I guess I'll have to care enough for both of us until you feel strong enough to care again." This response, combined with guided practice and encouragement, generally invited a spirit of cooperation rather than antagonism. Before long, he felt confident enough to resume caring.

It's easier not to care. It relieves any sense of personal responsibility for improving the situation. But not caring creates a false sense of security that can be dangerous. Not caring leads people to do and fail to do things that may have dev-

This is not the time to retreat into darkness. Now's the time to rise up, determined to stay alert, be smart, take action, and work harder.

astating consequences for all of us, such as pollution, climate change, and food waste. Therefore, I have to care more and do more to make up for those who choose not to care. Hopefully, in time, they will find the courage to care.

### Love fiercely

What we have witnessed, recently, is what happens when anger prevails. Anger is an emotion that appears powerful and strong because it is loud, even violent. But anger is based in fear, ignorance, insecurity, and emptiness leading to hate, cruelty, and division. Anger may be a strong emotion, but it is not an emotion of strength. Love is an emotion of strength. Love comes from a place of

courage, knowledge, confidence, and fulfillment leading to growth, compassion, and unity.

It's easy to hate. You don't have to give up anything to hate. Loving is much harder, because you have to give something up. You have to give up putting yourself first. Love is powerful, even fierce. It is patient and kind. It sacrifices and protects. It challenges wrongdoing and defies injustice. Love endures hardship and dares to hope. People yearn for love in their lives. They want to be loved fiercely. I choose to love, in hopes that it will serve as a beacon guiding others to discover the power of love within themselves.

George Bailey discovered he had a wonderful life, not because of what he had, but because of what he gave. The care and love he unselfishly shared inspired hope, giving others the courage to care and love as well. George's wealth was measured in devoted family and friends. May we all seek such riches in the New Year.

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

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**January 10, 2017**      **9:00 am**

**P.S. 123**  
**Theme:** Magnet School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)  
**Address:** 100 Irving Avenue  
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**January 10, 2017**      **9:00 am**  
    **11:00 am**

**P.S./I.S. 157**  
**Theme:** Magnet School of Civic Leadership in Health and Science  
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**Telephone:** 718.622.9285

**January 6, 2017**      **9:00 am**

**P.S. 196**  
**Theme:** Magnet School of Communication and Media Arts  
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**January 11, 2017**      **9:00 am**

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# First-date jitters

## Daughter's first dance brings out mom's teen nostalgia

BY KARA MARTINEZ BACHMAN

**T**his weekend, I had the first-date jitters. My heart raced a little. My hands shook. My nerves were on fire.

As the big day neared, I had made sure everything was perfect. Shoe heels: high enough to be attractive, but not high enough to attract the wrong glances. Dress: Just the right amount of sparkle — but not too much! (Remember: there's a fine, but very important, line between "Frozen" snow queen and over-the-top drag queen.) Makeup: just a touch, on the eyes only.

When the day of the winter dance came, the big event was the first thought I had when waking up and the last I had before going to sleep.

My daughter had a blast.

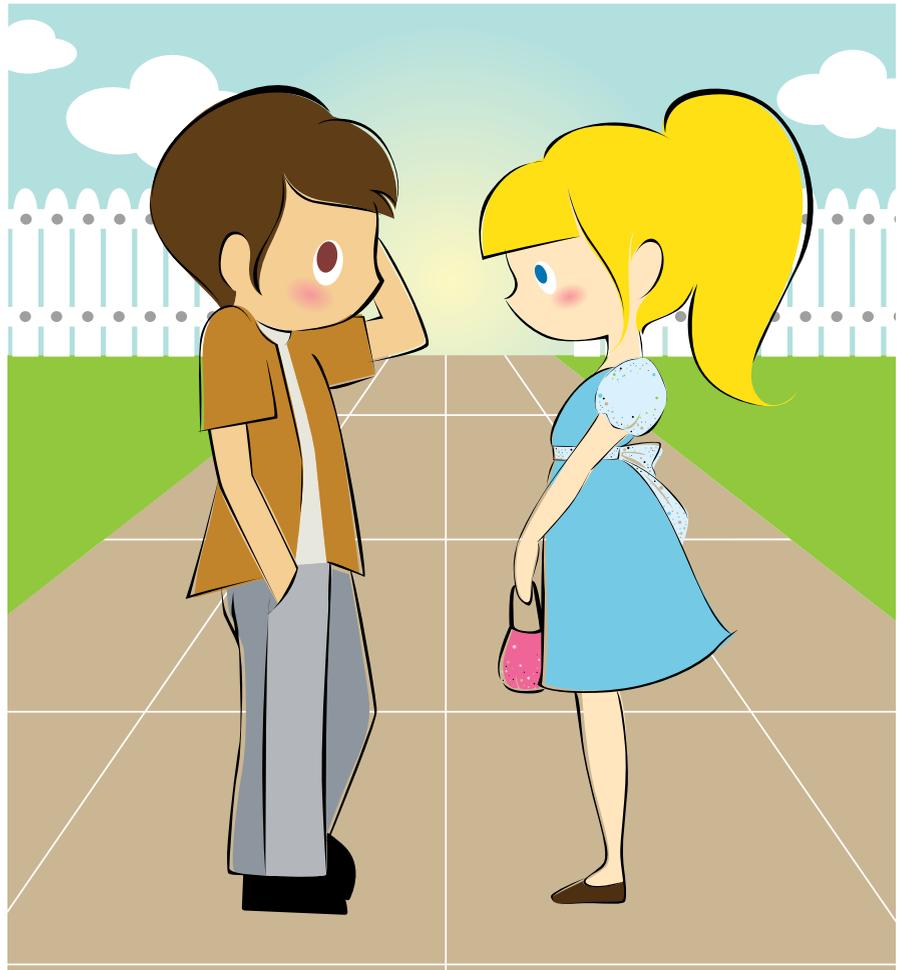
Yeah, the big date was, of course, hers. At age 46 and married for more than 20 years, I'm a little old for first dates. And believe me, if for some reason I had one, I'd spend less time worrying about how I looked and more concerned with whether I'd brought a Tylenol, two antacid tablets, and if I'd make it home before the news started.

When I was her age, there was no eighth-grade dance. Not the kind where anyone brought dates, at least. These days, though, things are different. Everything seems to happen at younger and younger ages.

I wonder why that is, why there's a mad rush on for childhood to start — and thus, end — sooner. Why? Does everyone want to just "get it over with," so our children can move on to more important things, such as making money and continuing the competitive climb?

It's sad to rush something so precious and brief. Rushing the years of first dates and terrible, but exciting, kisses is a mistake. I look back on those times, and I wish I could grab and hold them. I wish I could bottle up those sweet teen days and set the bottle (it would be pink) on my fireplace mantle. I wish, maybe every decade or so, I could open the bottle and release a tiny whiff of carnation corsages and punch bowl punch and let a bit of that genie out of the bottle. Just for a minute.

And that's kind of what happened this weekend. When my daughter stood ner-



ously with her date and posed for a few awkward photos; when I adjusted her wrist corsage — because it was too loose — and felt a misty hint of tears well up; when she left the house beaming, but returned saying, "Well, that was okay, I guess. Nobody danced much ... "; the genie of nostalgia was on the loose.

In the end, her first date at winter dance was more about the preparations than the thing itself, just as it was for me back in the 1980s.

It was more about what was to come, a reminder to me that I'd some day lose her, and a herald of all the dreams of most every girl: marriage, children, friends, job. And as every mom knows, our jitters may momentarily subside as dance night winds down, but still crop up when we open the

report card, or wait on medical test results, or when it's almost midnight and our oldest child is still not home

When the genie's popped out of the bottle, all we can do is watch, wait, and go ahead and take those two antacid tablets, hoping she uses her three wishes wisely.

*Kara Martinez Bachman is author of the humorous essay collection, "Kissing the Crisis: Field Notes on Foul-mouthed Babies, Disenchanted Women, and Careening into Middle Age." She's read her work on NPR, and it has appeared in dozens of magazines and newspapers, including The Writer, Funny Times, the New Orleans Times-Picayune, and many more. She is managing editor of Parents & Kids—Gulf Coast, Parents & Kids—Pine Belt, and Parents & Kids—MS Delta magazines in Mississippi. Find out more at KaraMartinezBachman.com.*

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# Hurtful words

## What *not* to say to your daughters

**I**s there anything that matters more to a little girl than what her mother thinks of her?

Quite possibly, what her mother says to her.

To some, a mother is a little girl's whole world, so when she says something negative, her daughter takes it to heart (and often keeps it in her psyche for years to come). In teens, whose feelings are magnified times a thousand, one demoralizing comment can make her see herself in a terrible light, which can lead to low self-esteem.

Even as adults, we don't want to hear our mothers questioning our judgments in a condescending way. Yes, we do want their advice, but not their harsh criticism.

Luckily, it seems like many of us have surpassed the old-fashioned way of raising girls, even though that is exactly how many of us were raised. Yet, there are many moms who still let some things slip without even realizing the damage they are doing.

With that in mind, here are some things a mother should never say to her daughter:

**Be girlier:** A mom might be a feminine

flower, but if her little girl is a tomboy, let her embrace who she is. If a mother is obsessed with frilly dresses and shoes, she should wear them, and not force them on her unwilling daughter.

**Don't be rude:** Sometimes life calls for being rude. So many times, it calls for standing up for oneself. The old-fashioned (and disgusting) notion that girls need to be nice all the time creates people-pleasers — who please everyone else except themselves.

**You can't do that:** Whether it's become a scientist, win a contest, take that calculus course, or become the next president, any time you tell a girl she can't do something, it creates a negative thought pattern in her brain. Pretty soon she may internalize that she really can't do many things, and then of course, once she believes that, she will stop trying.

**You are running out of time to have kids:** Words hurt even when you're an adult. Remember the part in the movie "The Help," when Emma Stone's character's mother, Charlotte Phelan, told her daughter, "Your eggs are dying. Would it kill you to go on a date?" If you do, then you probably also remember how terrible she made her very smart daughter feel just



## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

because she didn't have a man in her life. The pressure to have kids when you want them and can't have them is nothing short of huge. Any kind of negative comment from a mother is damaging. And let's not even go there about how plain horrifying it is to make a woman's life all about landing a man.

**Don't get dirty:** Girls should experience everything that boys can. One of my absolute favorite memories as a child was playing with the mud in my yard. Give me a spoon, and I could dig for hours. You deny a girl a lot when you expect her to stay clean all the time. Kids — boys and girls — were meant to explore, have adventures, and sometimes, get dirty!

**What will the family, neighbors, or other girls think?** So a girl doesn't want to go to a sleepover, join Girl Scouts, or dress the way her friends do. Mothers should never have a girl question any decision by asking what her family or friends would think. Not unless they want the girl to make every decision based on what others think rather than what she thinks.

**Put on some lipstick before you go:** Which snidely means that how you look sans makeup is not good enough. More moms need to encourage girls that they don't need to hide their faces under a mountain of cosmetics.

**Just smile:** Or "Don't look so angry, sad, or bored." Every time you tell a girl to mask her own feelings for the sake of looking good for the neighbors, friends, or family, you are telling a girl to hide how she really feels, which will only make her feel much, much worse. If a girl is angry, for God's sake, let her be angry!

Have something to add to this list? Let us know on Facebook!

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

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# Go natural

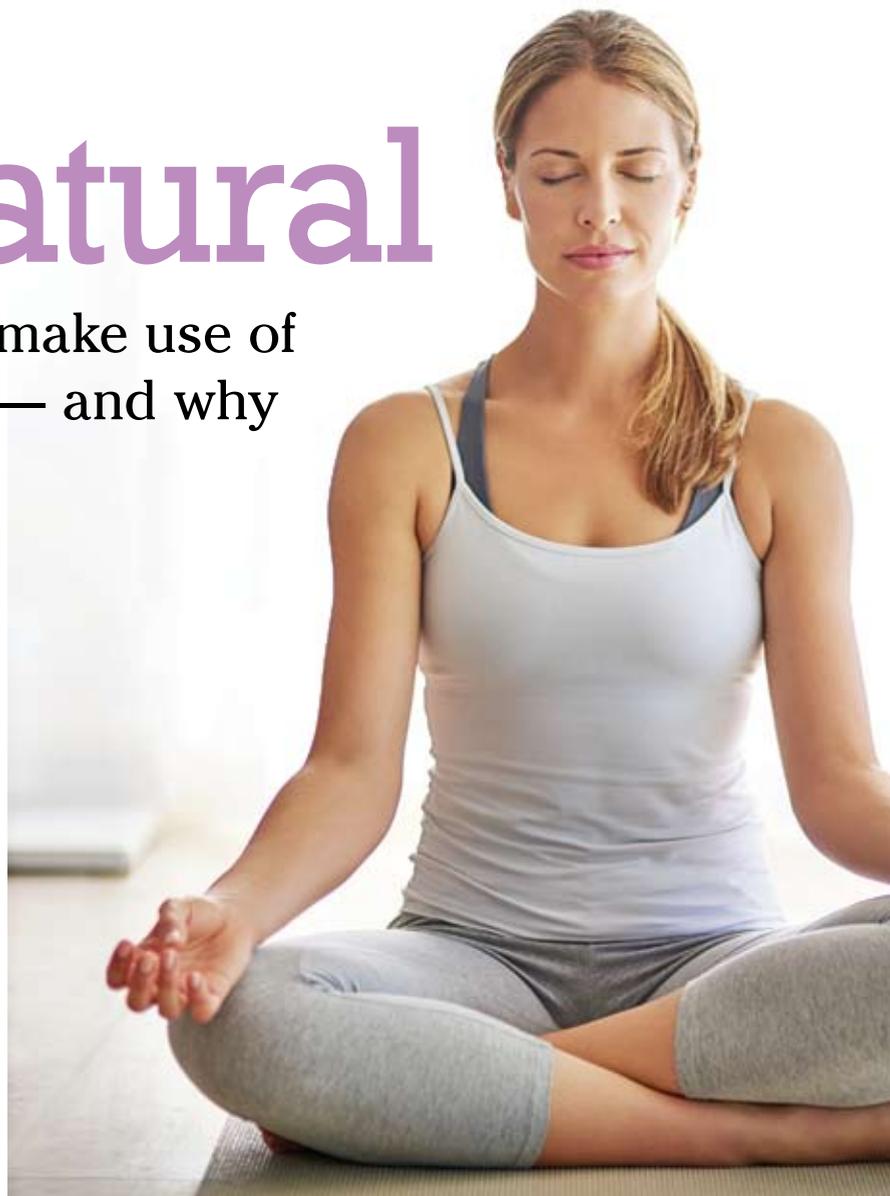
## How parents can make use of natural medicine — and why we usually don't

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

**W**hen I was growing up, no one emphasized natural medicine as a viable health care choice. Instead, I was brought up, as I imagine you were, to rely entirely on traditional medicine without realizing I had other options. In the Western medicine model, the doctor is usually the center of the family health-care system and family members orbit around the doctor like planets in a solar system. But what about other options like naturopathy, acupuncture, and Chinese medicine?

A family can go through decades of insured health care without ever once receiving a recommendation from a Western doctor to explore natural medicine. In my opinion, we are way past due for a revolution in our healthcare system, which will provide insurance coverage for natural practitioner visits and treatments in addition to traditional medicine. But this idea could take generations to achieve, so don't wait for the revolution to come to you. Part of taking charge of your family's health care means understanding your natural healthcare coverage as well as you understand your traditional healthcare coverage.

In recent years, my family has found that natural medicine approaches to non-emergency health issues work well for us alongside the usual traditional medicine approaches. For example, I have struggled since the onset of puberty with anemia, and it is only recently, at midlife, that I am finding consistent relief by taking bi-identical hormones and natural herbal supplements recommended to me by a licensed naturopath. I had no idea that alternatives to standard hormones even existed until recently, but I have only myself to hold responsible for letting my primary care physician and ob-gyn guide



my choices. Fortunately, I have discovered that my insurance allows up to a certain dollar amount of spending per year on natural medicine practitioners, which is more than ample to fit my needs and the needs of my family.

You may not be so lucky with your insurance, but don't make any assumptions if you have not yet checked. If obtaining natural health care is important to you and your current insurance company does not offer it, you might consider changing providers or plans. Whatever you do, don't wait for your physicians to suggest a chiropractor, a masseuse, or a nutritionist because you are not likely to hear these recommendations from them. Instead, start asking questions before someone in your family has a health issue. Or, if someone already has a diagnosis, contact your insurance company and find out what natu-

ral approaches are covered or partially covered by your current policy. There is no reason to choose one path over the other since both options may be helpful in unison. And if you are ever unsure about the compatibility of recommended treatments, consult your pharmacist or get a second, or even a third, opinion.

Start asking the question today: are natural healthcare options available for my family's medical challenges? Generally speaking, natural health care will not come swiftly to your rescue as when you need emergency surgery or you are diagnosed with a serious infection like strep or bronchitis. However, natural health care can help you and your family with less serious and even nagging healthcare concerns. Also remember that no two people are alike. While some folks may not respond positively or even at all to a natural

## Thirty natural healing approaches

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27. Therapeutic horseback riding
28. Traditional Chinese medicine
29. Visualization / guided imagery
30. Yoga

or Eastern approach, others may have dramatically positive results. Personally, I am finding natural health care to be less expensive, more comforting, and producing less side effects for me, thus far in my treatment.

Western medicine is expensive and is influenced heavily by insurance and pharmaceutical corporations. No one likes to go to the doctor and receive a huge, unexpected bill afterwards. Insurance is intended to prevent this from happening, which is why we rely on it so much. Taking into account employment benefits, out-of-pocket insurance costs, and co-pays, many families cannot afford all the quality medical care their families need. However, an issue that is not discussed enough is the need for a more balanced healthcare system. Think of Western medicine as the yang and Eastern medicine as the yin in a complete circle of care that represents a balanced approach to health and wellness.

Overall in the U.S., our healthcare system is far too yang, and a more yin approach will require years of advocacy and, hopefully, change. In the meantime, your voice can make a difference in creating a more balanced and equitable healthcare system. Every question counts. Every request for something you don't already

receive moves the needle. Remember, natural healthcare benefits may already be available to your family and might even be going to waste, as they were in my insurance policy. Natural health care should not be considered a replacement for traditional health care, but rather a more gentle, moderate approach to overall wellness.

The most important thing we can do as parents is take charge of our family's health care by not turning our decision-making processes over to physicians. Our job as parents is to partner with physicians, not turn our power over to them. By taking charge of our family's health care, we pave the way for a more balanced approach. We also set a valuable example for our children, so they can be more empowered in their future healthcare decisions. When it comes to your family's health, combining traditional and natural approaches just might be the best of both worlds: a life-long approach to wellness that is swift when necessary but also slow and incremental as is wise.

*Author, journalist, and writing coach Christina Katz is proud to say she believes in vaccinations, flu shots, and natural medicine. She does not see traditional medicine and natural medicine as mutually exclusive.*

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# Talking politics

## How to handle election discussion with your children

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**A**s our country prepares to inaugurate its 45th president, Donald J. Trump, it would be an understatement to say that there are still mixed feelings amongst many Americans. The election is over, and we must accept the results, regardless of political designation. As parents, we focus on our kids — their questions, concerns, and opinions. Now more than ever, children (as young as elementary aged) are politically informed.

Due to social media and mass media coverage, children engaged with their parents more than they might have during previous presidential election cycles. In fact, children are quite aware of the significance of this most recent election according to KidsHealth.org poll, where 75 percent of kids and 79 percent of teens answered “yes” when asked whether they

thought that the outcome of the election would change their lives. Most teens who took the poll also ranked issues — like gas and food prices, education, health care, war, and the environment — as “very important” to them.

Regardless of personal politics, parents are still tasked with promoting certain ideals in their children in the face of divisiveness surrounding our political leaders. Although we are no longer inundated with election coverage and advertisements, we have not seen the end of negative talk on our screens, which will continue to raise questions and reactions for children. Adding to the challenge in discussing the current news coverage with children is that parents may still be struggling with their own feelings about this election.

For example, a task for parents who hoped Hillary Clinton would become the first female president, is how to cope with

disappointment in themselves, but also their children’s dismay. Clinton said during her concession speech, “To all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and to achieve your own dreams.”

Parents can use this moment as an opportunity to show our kids how to voice their opinions, respect others’ opinions, and value differences. Start by sharing your own opinions on these subjects, and then ask your children their opinions. Encourage expression, questions, and feelings, to ensure children become comfortable voicing these difficult emotions.

Talking about the election result will add to their learning and critical-thinking skills. It will also allow for you to hear their thoughts and correct any misconceptions. Maybe your child has fears about the fu-

ture. Possibly something a candidate said or did while campaigning is still concerning to them. Actively listen to your child, her concerns, and reassure her, but also encourage her to think about the future. Let your children know that they can also make a difference in their greater community, and help them think of things that they can do for others, or identify a cause that they can more actively support.

Although it can be difficult at times to decipher the complications of this election, parents must model a positive example and provide support for their kids as the 45th president takes office.

### Strategies for helping children

Denise Daniels is a Peabody Award-winning broadcast journalist, author, and parenting and child development expert, who specializes in the social and emotional development of children. She offers the following strategies and discussion tips for helping children understand the election:

### Actions and values

We're guided by our values, but we're judged by our actions. And actions, especially in children, are almost always inspired by feelings. That's why one of our key jobs is to help our kids understand

Although we are no longer inundated with election coverage and advertisements, we have not seen the end of negative talk on our screens, which will continue to raise questions and reactions for children.

their emotions and learn to manage them appropriately.

### Managing emotions

Research has shown that children — and adults — who can't manage their emotions have more difficulties academically, professionally, socially, and psychologically.

It's never too early, or too late, to begin the process of helping children develop "emotional intelligence" — so that they learn to act with civility and respect, despite any bad examples they may have seen during the election season.

### Talking to kids

Help older children feel comfortable talking about their emotions by listening without judgement and emphasizing that all feelings are okay. Then teach your children strategies for managing their emotions, whether it's taking deep breaths

and counting to 10 to diffuse anger, or using positive self-talk to overcome fear or sadness.

### Talking to teens

When children understand their own feelings and those of others, they can act with self-control, compassion, and empathy. When teens have developed emotional intelligence, they are better able to resist peer pressure and stay true to themselves.

When young adults act responsibly, they will vote with care and conviction. Our world — and our endless election cycles — will be better for it.

Find this and other tips online at [www.denisedanielsparenting.com](http://www.denisedanielsparenting.com).

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

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# Teaching kids to clean up



## BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

**T**he holidays have come and gone. Your home is now filled with new toys that will be played with and then tossed aside, giving a new covering to your carpet. You think to yourself, “What would it take to get my children to actually clean up when they finish playing?”

You have heard that they clean up in school. One catchy song from the teachers, and they are all about it. Yet, when you say “clean up” and then sing a song, nothing happens.

Day after day, you spend precious time picking up Legos and puzzle pieces, figurines, and Zingo tiles. You realize, this is why half the games can’t be played — the pieces are lost in the piles of toys left unsorted.

Enough!

Today is the day that you start teaching your small ones to clean up. Here is the secret: cleaning up is a skill that needs to be taught. Just like the alphabet or tying shoes. If you teach them, they will clean up. If you don’t, you will con-

tinue to feel like a maid and frustrated that games purchased two months ago are useless.

Here is how you teach cleaning up:

Play a game with your small being — together.

At the end, say, “Let’s clean up.” Then, give him a specific part of the game to clean up, and you pick another part to clean up. This is a clear direction.

“You put all the red pieces away, and I will get all the green pieces.”

Make sure you only put away your pieces and wait for him to clean up his. If there are then more pieces left, assign them to your small being or yourself.

When your small being pushes back, saying, “No, I don’t want to,” simply stick to your guns and repeat the direction. Wait until he cleans up his pieces before another game can be started. Make sure to stock up on patience, as the first few times you do this, it might take some time for him to realize you mean it.

Once all the parts of the game are

packed away, give the job of closing the box to someone. Either you or him, doesn’t matter, as long as you say it aloud.

“I am going to close the box now that all the pieces are away.”

Putting the game back in the closet is another specified job. Assign it to someone and then make sure that person does it.

“You get to put the box back in the closet.”

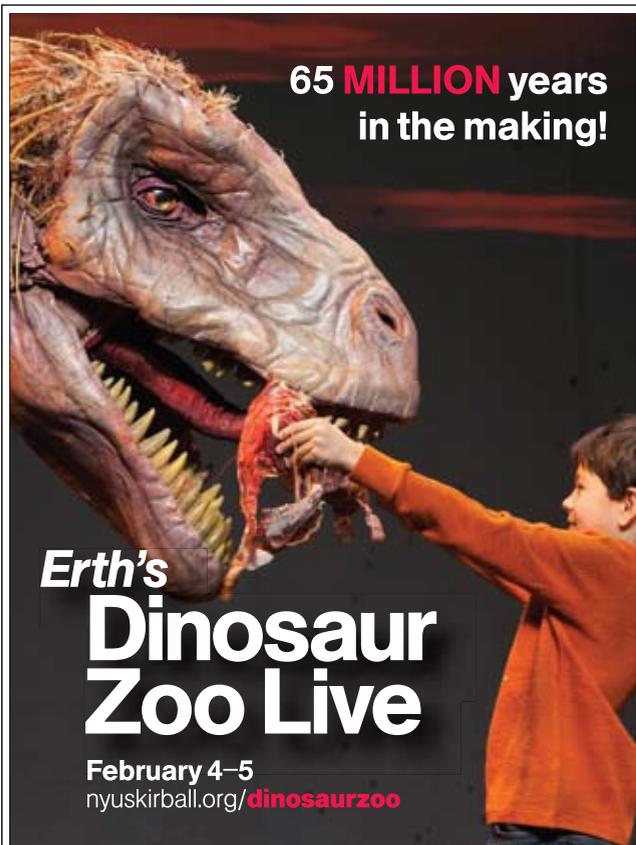
This is how you teach your kiddo to clean up!

Now, there are variables that can be added. Wait to raise the bar until this joint clean up is mastered. Then you can start having him clean up toys when he plays independently. Providing the specific elements to clean up will be a great way to support your kids accomplishing the goal of getting all the pieces away. Over time, you can reduce the details, and your small being will be a fantastic cleaner upper!

One day you will get super fancy and add in choices: “What piece do you want to clean up first?”

It’s a great goal to work towards, but know that it is not a great place to start. Start with clear directions and then move into choices.

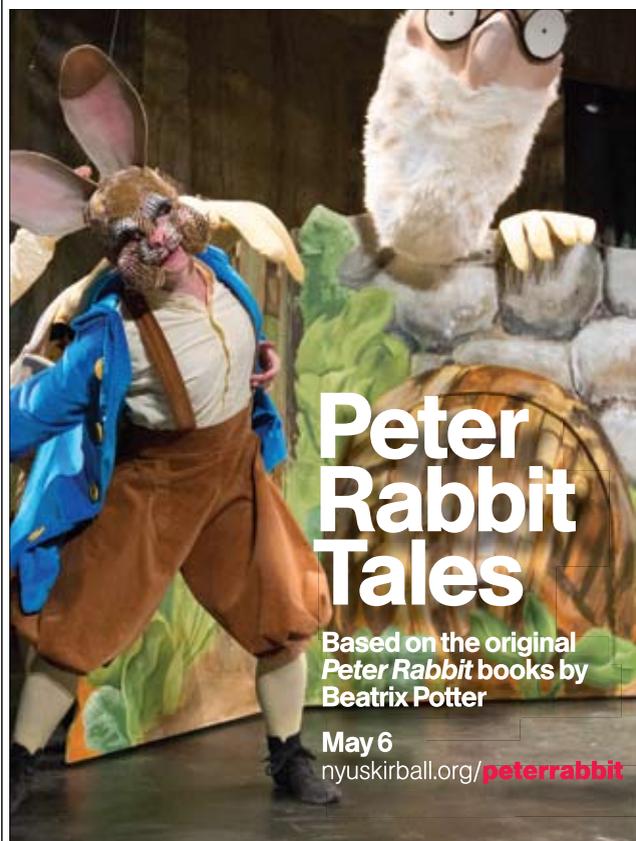
*Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 15 years and has condensed her observations into her practice and programs. For more on her, visit [www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net](http://www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net).*



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*Continued on page 28*

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*Continued from page 26*

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# This kid's got chops

## NYC cooking prodigy tells us about his prize-winning dish

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**B**en's Beginners is an interactive program and contest that aims to make cooking an activity that bring families together. Offering a cash prize to kitchen-savvy kids, the contest is simple: submit a photo of you and your family making a rice-based dish together to the Uncle Ben's rice company. Manhattan seventh grader and cooking prodigy Jesse Gunn did just that.

His "Lop Chung Fried Rice" earned him \$15,000 and an additional \$30,000 for his school. Thanks to Gunn's creativity in the kitchen, the East Side Community School will now have a lunchroom makeover. Gunn shared his experience with us.

**Shnieka Johnson:** Who taught you to cook?

**Jesse Gunn:** My dad taught me how to cook. His favorite thing to tell me is nothing is hard, you just have to try and learn from your mistakes. He is not a chef, just a foodie. We spend a lot of time together in the kitchen with me cooking and him cutting onions and cleaning up after me, ha! We work as a team. We get to talk about the day, video games, our next projects, and things like that.

**SJ:** At what age did you start cooking?

**JG:** I started helping my dad in the kitchen when I was really young by stirring and mixing ingredients. Later on, my dad got me interested in tasting new things. When I was 8, I used to watch "Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern" and began to start eating things like chicken feet, tripe, snails, and frogs. But I really got into cooking when I was 10. I had seen "MasterChef Junior," and I saw how good those kids were and was a little sad — I thought I could never be that good. But my dad asked me if I would be interested in trying out. I said "no," so he said, "ok, well, I can teach you if you really want to do it." So for the next six to seven months, I was cooking with him three times a week. Each week, it was always something different and harder, reinforcing the basics and learning new techniques. At the last minute, my dad entered me into "MasterChef." I lasted eight episodes and went out on team challenge. Since the show, I have learned and improved so much, and with cooking you never stop learning!

**SJ:** Have you always enjoyed it?

**JG:** Yes, I love trying new things and ex-



Matt Hurst, Corporate Affairs Manager at Mars Food North America, and Ben's Beginner's recipe winner Jesse Gunn celebrate Jesse's prize — \$30,000 for his school's lunchroom makeover.

perimenting, but the most fun is when I do molecular gastronomy. It's like doing science, which is one of my favorite subjects.

**SJ:** Who do you cook with now?

**JG:** I cook with my dad and sometimes my friends come over and they want to learn how to make something. I have cooking play dates, and I show them how to make French macaroons, profiteroles, Chinese food, and other things. Other times I cook with other chefs doing demos or teaching classes.

**SJ:** What inspired your dish?

**JG:** We came up with a lot of amazing dishes, like rice pudding, crème brûlée, mango sphere on top of coconut rice on a bed of Crème Anglaise, but the rice dish we posted, I think 15 minutes before the contest ended, was Lop Chung fried rice with transformation egg. What makes our fried rice different is that almost every fried rice dish uses a plain scrambled egg. We put umami in ours.

It is based on a Japanese dashimaki tamago-styled scramble egg, which is full of umami, which totally changes the egg to a different flavor — sweet, salty, savory, sour — and plays with your taste buds. The second reason is anyone can make fried rice super easy and every ingredient is interchangeable, so if you don't have Lop Chung — Chinese sausage — you can use chicken or sausage beef. We really wanted to win

to help our school with the cafeteria makeover and help promote healthier eating.

**SJ:** Do you want to go into culinary arts?

**JG:** At the moment, I have been asked to do a series of cooking videos called "Recipes from the Studio."

The guys Manny and Peter are great, I get to cook whatever I want. I am involved in a lot of cool things in addition to cooking. I love music and playing guitar. I am in two bands right now, and we play out in nightclubs like the Bitter End, where Bob Dylan and Janis Joplin used to play. I am also into building and designing drones. I have been building them since I was 8 years old and right now, I am the youngest professional drone training pilot in the world. I have trained more than 700 people how to fly a drone. I do this with the aerial sports league at the Maker Faires across the country.

If you're passionate about something and put the time and work into it, no matter what it is — sports, science, music, art, writing, school, or cooking — you will see results. Anyone can cook, you just have to get in the kitchen and start!

*Shnieka L. 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).*

# Mediation tackles income, expenses

**B**ill and Angela, who we have been following, are set to begin their second mediation session. They attended a consultation in November. In their first mediation session in December, they addressed parenting issues. Now, they will begin to discuss financial matters.

## Jan. 19 — Session 2

The mediator asks Angela and Bill how they and the children are, and whether anything of note has happened since the last session.

The mediator gives the spouses a brief overview of Marital and Separate Property (and Debts).

He then begins setting out Bill's and Angela's respective income and expenses. [The mediator had e-mailed each of them a blank form asking for this information after the first session, and both spouses have filled it out.] This is done using a flipchart, so that all three of them can see the figures that the spouses supply.

Bill questions why Angela is paying \$400 a month for clothes for herself and the children. Bill isn't angry, but thinks the number is high. In discussing the matter, it turns out that Angela based her calculation on her September credit card statement, which showed higher costs than average due to purchasing back-to-school clothing. Their daughter needed a lot of

new things, because of how much she had grown over the summer.

Angela says that she will look at her statements for the past year and take the average of that 12-month period. Bill agrees to her suggestion. The mediator makes a note to come back to this question.

Angela asks if — since money will be tight — Bill can cut down on his recreational spending. Bill bristles at first; but looking at where his money goes, decides this is reasonable. Bill says he can spend a lot less on sporting events. He does a quick calculation, agreeing to reduce recreational spending by 10 percent, starting this month. He believes that he can bring it down further, but feels comfortable starting at 10 percent.

The mediator, noticing Angela's facial expression, asks if she wants to say something.

She answers, "Well, I think Bill could do more here." (Bill immediately becomes upset.)

"But," she adds, "Bill is willing to commit to this, and says he'll do more; I believe that." Turning to Bill, she says, "Maybe it's a good idea that you start with 10 percent; that way, you won't feel deprived. If you spent less now, you might hate it, and be angry with me, and we'd be worse off. So, good. Do the 10 percent for now. Then, we can talk about it again in a month or two.



## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

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Can we do that?"

Bill is still annoyed, but he also feels that he is being heard by his wife. He agrees. They discuss what to do with the money that will be saved. Bill wants to use it to pay down a credit card. Angela agrees to this.

Regarding the expense and income figures now displayed on the flipchart, the spouses agree that the numbers are pretty accurate.

Bill raises a concern he has about the parenting agreement. He says that he has what is a minor change in mind that would allow him to spend more time with the children during the summer, if Angela would be ok with it. Bill shares his thought.

Angela says that the change would be alright with her, if another small change can be made when it comes to the Thanksgiving holiday break, starting the following year.

Bill tells Angela that he is willing; while he likes the Thanksgiving break and doesn't really want to change the schedule they had agreed to, the change over the summer is a much bigger deal to him.

The session ends, with the spouses agreeing to complete the Asset/Debt forms for the next session.

**Next time: Assets (especially the house) and debts.**

*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.





## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Ten easy nutrition resolutions for '17

**N**ew Year's resolutions tend to focus on a few themes: Lose weight, stop smoking, and so forth. How about declaring some nutrition resolutions that will benefit your family now and in the future? Here are a few resolutions to try in 2017:

**Plan meals more often.** While it may appear you simply don't have time to do this, once you get into the habit, you'll realize how much time and money this ultimately saves. Meal planning can impact your family's eating habits as much as anything else you do.

**Get out of your recipe rut.** Admit it: While you have an endless supply of recipes at your disposal, you cook less than 10 of them regularly. Set aside 30 minutes on the weekend to comb your trove of recipes. Prepare a shopping list with ingredients for one or two recipes you haven't made in the last year. Try a new, healthful entrée once a week.

**Keep an eye on your food-purchasing habits.** Believe it or not, you're likely buying more at this time of year than any other time. According to a study of more

than 200 households in New York over the course of seven months, we buy roughly twice as many calories per serving in food in the first three months of the New Year than during the holidays. Despite New Year's resolutions to eat better, consumers buy the healthy foods they promised themselves they would, along with the unhealthy foods they promised themselves they wouldn't. Whoops.

**Try a new vegetable each shopping trip.** People who eat a wider variety of vegetables tend to be thinner, probably because they're displacing higher-calorie foods. About half of all Americans' vegetables are iceberg lettuce, potatoes, onions, and canned tomatoes. Have the kids help you with choosing something new and look up creative ways to prepare it.

**Enjoy a familiar food in a new, unexpected way.** Pizza is the second most common entrée Americans consume. The number one type? Pepperoni and cheese pizza. There are ways you can shift to a healthier pizza. Substitute vegetable toppings for the pepperoni and use smaller amounts of cheese. Some places even offer

a whole-wheat crust.

**Try some new seasonings.** Explore the herb and spice aisle and bring home a few that sound interesting. While you're at it, clean out your spice cabinet by tossing any that have lost their fragrance.

**Clean out the refrigerator more often.** At least once a month, pull everything out of the fridge and toss foods that are "questionable." Wipe down the entire interior, then put things back with an eye on keeping more healthful foods front-and-center. Consider holding an end of week "buffet" in order to use up leftover foods before they go bad.

**Try some new whole grains.** Cook up a pot of barley, quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice, or wheat berries. Keep it in the fridge and warm up a bowl at a time for a rib-sticking breakfast once you add chopped fruit (frozen or fresh), nuts, and a teaspoon of sugar.

**Put legumes on the menu every week.** Enjoy legumes such as beans, peas, and lentils as a replacement for meat at least one day a week. They're near-perfect foods with loads of fiber, protein, folate, potassium, iron, and other vitamins and minerals. Replace that side of rice, potatoes, or noodles with beans or lentils. Cook up a pot of chili or bean soup in your slow cooker, and there's dinner for a few days. Or make a bean salad.

**Switch from tuna to salmon.** Canned salmon has more healthy omega-3 fats than canned tuna and the salmon is almost always wild.

*Christine M. Palumbo is a registered dietitian nutritionist in Naperville, Ill. Her nutrition resolutions are to use her slow cooker more often and to finally "nail" her homemade pizza recipe.*

BY FELICIA LEBEWOHL ROSEN

**A**s an attorney and school psychologist, I am frequently reminded that bullying is a serious problem in schools. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, close to half of all children will experience school bullying — as a bully, victim, or bystander — at some point when they are in primary or secondary school. At least 10 percent of students are bullied regularly, and those with disabilities are at an increased risk. Every child's legal right to an education includes the right to a safe learning environment that is free from bullying. Here's what parents need to know about holding schools accountable for bullying and when parents can take legal action.

Bullying can be physical (spitting, hitting, making mean or rude hand gestures, taking or breaking someone's belongings); verbal (name calling, spreading rumors, teasing, offensive graffiti, threats to cause harm); emotional, social, relational (social exclusion, embarrassing someone in public, spreading rumors); or cyberbullying (sending insults or threats electronically).

To constitute bullying, the behavior must cause serious physical or emotional harm — such as depression, excessive absenteeism, deterioration of general physical health, and lower grades or withdrawal from school. In addition, generally, the behavior must have been repeated or have the potential to be repeated over time.

Bullying is basically a form of intimidation or domination towards someone who is perceived as being weaker. Students have described bullying as when "someone makes you feel less about who you are as a person." The occasional hurtful taunt, teenage drama, or bickering among peers with equal power — although upsetting — is not legally considered bullying.

A school district could be liable for bullying that occurs on school property or at a school-sponsored event such as a field trip or athletic event. School property includes school buses. The question as to whether a school must address bullying that takes place off school grounds and not at a school-sponsored event is not always clear and depends on the facts of the case.

There are a number of federal and New York State laws and school district policies that address bullying. School districts' policies are usually on the schools' websites and in student and parent handbooks. Schools must provide parents with a copy of the policy if requested.

The Dignity for all Students Act is a



# Holding schools accountable for bullying

New York State statute designed to provide all school-age children with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property and at school functions by a student or employee. It also applies to cyberbullying on or off school property that creates a risk of bullying on school property.

This statute is triggered when a school district employee witnesses or receives

a report of bullying. A designated school administrator must then conduct or supervise a thorough and prompt investigation to determine if material incidents of bullying occurred that creates a hostile environment. If the school's investigation finds that an incident occurred, the school must take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the bullying, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture, prevent recurrence

The Dignity for all Students Act is designed to provide all school-age children with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property and at school functions by a student or employee.

of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the victim.

In addition, if the bullying constitutes a crime, the act requires that the incident be reported to the police. The victim or parent may want to request a meeting to address any remaining concerns and that the situation be monitored carefully. They should send a letter or e-mail to the administrator after the meeting to confirm the concerns that were discussed and any actions that the administrator agreed to take.

New York State law does not require that parents be provided with a report of the findings of the investigation, although some schools' policies provide for such. Parents can always request in writing that they be provided with a copy. In addition, parents and students over the age of 17

can access the report under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Under this act, the school must provide access to the requested document within 45 days of receipt of a written request.

There are also federal statutes that protect students who belong to certain protected classes from bullying — Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act protect students with disabilities; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.

A school district can only be liable for bullying if it had actual notice or, in some cases, should have known about the bullying. It is important for parents to put the

school on notice of any bullying occurring on premise or at school-sponsored activities by sending written, detailed notice of the bullying to the principal and superintendent as soon as possible. Parents should extensively document in writing incidents of bullying, the complaints about the incidents made to the school, and the school's responses.

There are a number of legal options that parents can take after they have notified the school that their child is being bullied and the school does not take sufficient action to stop the bullying. Parents can file a complaint against the school district and, in extreme cases, such as that involve assault with a weapon, pursue a criminal investigation. Before filing a lawsuit, it is important to consider that litigation could be highly stressful. For some children, a lawsuit may be too emotionally difficult, whereas for others it is emotionally positive and empowering. It is recommended to consult an attorney as to legal options.

For additional information about bullying in schools, see [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) and consult an education lawyer.

*Felicia Lebewohl Rosen is a special education lawyer with the law office of Ronald E. Stiskin & Associates, P.C. and is a certified school psychologist. She can be contacted at [felicia@stiskinlaw.com](mailto:felicia@stiskinlaw.com).*

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# Kids & TV

## Ratings, recommendations, and guidelines for parents

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

I knew a mom several years ago who had a “no TV” policy. She was adamant about a television-free environment, so she didn’t own one. What she may not have known was that her son would visit his friends’ houses and make a beeline for the tube, instead of choosing to play soccer down at the park or go for a bike ride.

Television programming has changed immensely in the last 20 years. There are so many choices that it can make one dizzy at times. Part of the positive aspect of this change, however, is that there are plenty of quality choices available.

Perhaps the quandary for parents today is not if their children should watch TV but what they should watch and how often they should tune in. Parental controls as well as resource websites (i.e. [www.common sense media.org](http://www.common sense media.org)) provide parents with control and information that they didn’t have decades ago.

### How much is too much?

Have you ever tried to have a conversation with a child engrossed in his favorite TV show? It’s like trying to get your dog’s attention when he’s just gotten a hold of his new, stuffed bone. He knows you’re there, but he’s too busy chomping to acknowledge you.

Balance is the operative word. Sometimes we all — parents included — need a bit of a break from the “real” world. It’s not unhealthy if quality television programs are viewed in moderation and are not interfering with social activities,

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“In terms of negative programming, I always say that turning on any media is like opening the door to your living room. Would you let kids in who were being violent, mean to each other, or making fun of other kids?”

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school work, and family time.

“Television can be a source of learning and entertainment,” explains Dr. Sanam Hafeez, a licensed neuropsychologist and founder and director of Comprehensive Consultation Psychological Services, P.C. ([www.comprehendthemind.com](http://www.comprehendthemind.com)). “However, too much TV can take away from other activities, such as exercising, playing with friends, reading, and doing homework.”

Hafeez warns parents of additional concerns.

“Studies have shown that kids who watch too much TV are more likely to be overweight, and depending on the content of what they see, more aggressive. Excess TV viewing has also been linked to poor grades, sleep problems, and behavioral problems.”

Dr. Lisa Strohmman, a clinical psycholo-

gist, co-author of “Unplug: Raising Kids in a Technology Addicted World” and founder of Technology Wellness Center ([www.technologywellnesscenter.com](http://www.technologywellnesscenter.com)), reports, “The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends no television for children under the age of 2. For children older than 2, the recommendation is no more than one to two hours of quality programming a day. TV watching and technology use can impede valuable developmental activities like exploring, playing, and interacting with others. These functions are vital to learning and healthy physical and social development.”

Experts also remind parents that TV time includes watching programs on the computer and iPad.

Dr. Jephtha Tausig-Edwards, a New York City-based clinical psychologist and supervising psychologist for Family & Children’s Services of Nantucket, says, “Don’t have it playing in the background. Keep screens and other media out of children’s bedrooms and do not use right before bedtime. There really isn’t a substitute for reading to a child in terms of the boost this gives to early literacy and the opportunities for interaction between parents and children.”

If televisions are not in children’s bedrooms, the battle is half won, because it will be easier to monitor screen time if the television is in a central location used by all family members.

### Quality programming

What should parents look for in quality programming?



“Look for educational content, respectful language, take-home messages or lessons which are congruent with your values, and what you feel are important perspectives you would like your children to have towards their fellow human beings,” says Tausig-Edwards.

“I’ve always recommended a rich diet of good, quality educational media that kids are interested in, want to talk about, and want to learn more from,” explains Angela Santomero, a child development expert, TV executive producer, and co-

creator of the current hit, “Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood” (PBS Kids) as well as “Blue’s Clues” (Nick Jr.) and “Super WHY!” (PBS Kids). She advocates television viewing in moderation: a good balanced diet of healthy media!

When it comes to preschoolers, Santomero counsels, “Interacting and physical touch is the most important stimulation for babies and toddlers. When television is introduced, it should be at a slower pace so that it is not overstimulating.

‘Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood’ fits this bill because of its socio-emotional storylines, preschool musical strategies about sharing, going to the potty, dealing with disappointments, and trying new foods. These are life lessons that this young age group is able to grasp with musical strategies that help and guide both parents and kids together.”

“Go with calm, quiet programs. Slower-paced viewing gives small children time to think and absorb. Lots of random activ-

*Continued on following page*

ity, like the kind in action-adventure cartoons, confuses them.” Hafeez describes. “Instead, choose simple programs that emphasize interactivity. Ideal shows inspire your child to make sounds, say words, sing, and dance.”

Santomero suggests the following shows for various age groups:

**For preschoolers:**

“Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood” (PBS Kids: Socio-emotional)

“Creative Galaxy” (Amazon.com Inc.: Art)

“Super WHY!” (PBS Kids: Literacy)

“Blue’s Clues” (Nick Jr.: Kindergarten readiness show)

**For young kids:**

“Wild Kratts” (PBS & PBS Kids: Adventure learning)

“Wishenpoof!” (Amazon.com: Adventure learning)

“Word Girl” (PBS & PBS Kids: Literacy)

**For tweens:**

“Master Chef Jr.” (FOX: Cooking)

“Project Runway Jr.” (Lifetime: Fashion creation)

“The Amazing Race” (CBS and Travel Channel: Reality adventure)

“The Gilmore Girls” (Warner Bros. and Netflix: Family drama)

“Fuller House” (Sequel to “Full House.” Netflix Original Series: Family drama)

**For teens:**

“Downton Abbey” (PBS: Period drama series)

“Friends” (Reruns on TBS and NIK: Comedy drama)

Also recommended for teens:

“Scorpion” (CBS: Tech-driven drama series)

“Bunheads” (Freeform: Dance drama)

“The Fosters” (Freeform: Family about foster teens)

**What to avoid**

Santomero advises, “In terms of negative programming, I always say that turning on any media is like opening the door to your living room. Would you let kids in who were being violent, mean to each other, or making fun of other kids? Depending on the age of your child, the immersive experience of media creates an image that can hardly ever be erased, so be careful of what stories you decide to have your kids be part of and what characters you want your kids to be friends with. Also, be ready to talk about any and all issues that they see.”

Experts have studied the effects of violent and sexual content affecting young viewers’ behavior for decades.

## How to interpret TV ratings

Here are Dr. Strohman’s explanations of Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ratings.

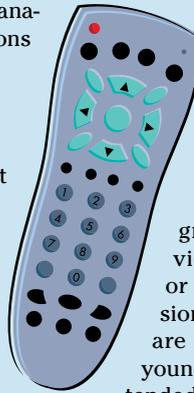
**Ratings directed towards children:**

**TV-Y:** These programs are not expected to frighten or upset young children as they are specifically designed for viewers between the ages of 2 and 6.

**TV-Y7:** These programs feature fantasy that young children may not have the developmental skills to understand and are typically not appropriate for children under 7. The make-believe plot lines are more likely to frighten young children.

**Ratings directed toward general audience:**

**TV-G:** These are not “specifically



geared toward children, but they are appropriate for all ages by most parents. They do not contain excessive violence, expletives, or sexual references.

**TV-PG:** These programs may contain some violence, some suggestive or sexual material, and occasional strong language. They are likely not appropriate for young children to watch unattended, but are acceptable for older children.

**TV-14:** Parents are cautioned to not allow children under 14 to view these programs without supervision. These programs might include overtly sexual situations, inappropriate dialogue, indecent language, or graphic violence.

Tausig-Edwards points to Albert Bandura’s seminal work in this area.

“The work showed that children are affected by instrumental violence. For example, if they see it, they are likely to try it subsequently. Content is crucial as children are not able to differentiate between real and cartoon violence until they are much older.”

Hafeez agrees.

“Younger children tend to model behavior they see and don’t always understand the difference between reality and entertainment. Therefore, exposure to sex and violence through the media’s influence can cause aggressive or anti-social behavior. Media can influence children to believe violence is a good solution to solve problems or desensitize and cause a lack of empathy for human suffering.”

In terms of the consequences of being exposed to sex and violence on television, Dr. Hafeez states, “Kids exposed to sex on TV are almost twice as likely to initiate sexual intercourse. Some research suggests that kids who watch violence on TV are more likely to display aggressive behavior.” For young children, she suggests that scary shows be avoided as well.

Santomero adds, “Watching violence on television is not only a modeling concern for kids, but might also motivate kids to be more violent in nature. Watching sexual content, before [one is] ready, could cause confusion or lack of understanding about what a positive relation-

ship can and should be.”

**Some general guidelines**

“Overall, I believe in watching age-appropriate content that is enriching and inspiring,” says Santomero. “I also believe that, as a parent, you are doing your best when you are interested, active, and involved in what your kids are doing. Get into the content that they are watching as deeply as possible. Read the books, play the app, do related activities, or just sit over a snack and have a good old-fashioned discussion about your child’s favorite show.”

Hafeez advocates critical viewing.

“Even young children can learn to watch without ‘tuning out.’ Encourage your child to ask questions and relate what’s happening in the show to her own life. For example, if you and your toddler have just finished watching a ‘Sesame Street’ segment that introduces a number, talk about it later and find other examples to show him. While setting the table you might say, ‘Hey, today’s number was 3, and there are 3 places to set!’”

All experts advise encouraging social activities that draw kids away from obsessing about what’s on the screen.

*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.myrnahaskell.com](http://www.myrnahaskell.com)). She is also cofounder and senior editor of “Sanctuary” ([www.sanctuary-magazine.com](http://www.sanctuary-magazine.com)).*



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# Calendar

JANUARY



Mel Visions

## BAM Kids Film Festival

BAM is hosting the 19th annual Kids Film Festival on Jan. 28 and 29.

This year's lineup features an impressive roster of films tailored for children ages 3–11. The festival will showcase 58 films from 27 countries and in 10 languages. Many of these films are in their US or New York premiere screening.

Highlights of the 2017 festival include a diverse selection of live-action including, from Sweden, "Martha & Niki," about the first-ever female champions of the Juste Debut hip-hop competition in Paris

(pictured); as well as animated shorts; a wide array of no-dialogue films that use other modes of storytelling to convey the themes; and several different selections from the shorts programs and feature films to satisfy each age group.

BAM Kids Film Festival, Jan. 28 and Jan. 29 from 9:30 am to 4 pm. Tickets are \$10 for children 13 years and under, \$14 adults, and \$9 for seniors and members.

*BAM Rose Cinemas [30 Lafayette Ave. between Lafayette Avenue and Hanson Place in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org)].*

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# Calendar

### Submit a listing

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

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

## SUN, JAN. 1

### IN BROOKLYN

**Hanukkah Art Festival:** Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; [www.jcm.museum](http://www.jcm.museum); 10 am to 5:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children celebrate the holiday with an olive oil workshop, art canvas, game show, doughnut decorating, Artists in Action and lighting of the Menorah.

**Christmas and New Year:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Sunday, Jan. 1, noon; Free.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance for family programming to ring in the new year.

**Olive Press Workshop:** Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; [info@jcm.museum](mailto:info@jcm.museum); [www.jcm.museum](http://www.jcm.museum); 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm; \$13 museum admission.

In this hands-on workshop, visitors will learn how olive oil is made, and have a chance to extract the oil and light a Hanukkah menorah using a hand-made wick and freshly produced oil.

## MON, JAN. 2

**Christmas and New Year:** Noon. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Sunday, Jan. 1.

## TUES, JAN. 3

### IN BROOKLYN

**Explorers Day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 10 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

There is tons to explore at the museum and Tuesdays are dedicated to its permanent exhibits. Together with your child, can you find an authentic West Indian Day Parade costume? Have you met the Madagascar hissing cockroaches in the greenhouse? Can you try your dance moves in



Molly Robinson

## Rockin' by the Gowanus

It's a Winter Bash and it's a smash.

This live show at the ShapeShifter Lab in Gowanus on Jan. 29 promises to be a hootin', tootin' good time.

Mil's Trills will be celebrating its seventh birthday at the annual party. In true "Bash" fashion, the live show will include a raucous infusion of brand-new playful, whimsical, and highly interactive tunes as well as a debut of

the new music video for "Say Hey," off the latest release of "Now That We're Friends ..."

Winter Bash on Jan. 29, doors open at 10 am. Tickets are \$15, \$45 for a family package, infants in arms are free.

*The ShapeShifter Lab* [18 Whitwell Pl. at Third Avenue in Gowanus, (646) 820-9452, [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2724102](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2724102)].

Global Beats?

**Drum Workshop & Brooklyn United Marching Band:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 4 pm to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Come and visit after school for a drumming workshop with the Brooklyn United Marching Band and let the music flow.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**American Dance Platform:** Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., Manhattan; (212) 242-0800; [www.joyce.org/performances/american-dance-platform](http://www.joyce.org/performances/american-dance-platform); 7:30 pm; Tickets start at \$10.

Now in its second year, the American Dance Platform initiative continues to showcase some of the most captivating American companies performing today. This year's festival features an eclectic roster of artists, with each of the eight

companies performing twice throughout a week of double bills. Dedicated to the memory of Theodore S. Bartwink of the Harkness Foundation for Dance.

## WED, JAN. 4

### FURTHER AFIELD

**American Dance Platform:** 7:30 pm. Joyce Theater. See Tuesday, Jan. 3.

## THURS, JAN. 5

### FURTHER AFIELD

**American Dance Platform:** 8 pm. Joyce Theater. See Tuesday, Jan. 3.

## FRI, JAN. 6

### FURTHER AFIELD

**American Dance Platform:** 8 pm. Joyce Theater. See Tuesday, Jan. 3.

# Calendar

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

## SAT, JAN. 7

### IN BROOKLYN

**Story Time Depot:** New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; [www.mta.info/mta/museum](http://www.mta.info/mta/museum); 11:30 am to noon; Free with museum admission.

Children 2 to 5 years old enjoy reading of some of our favorite transportation tales!

**Bargemusic:** BargeMusic, Fulton Ferry Landing and Brooklyn Bridge; [www.bargemusic.org](http://www.bargemusic.org); 4 pm; Free.

This one-hour performance includes a question-and-answer session with the musicians. Doors open 15 minutes before the performance — no reserved seating is available.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**American Dance Platform:** 2 pm and 8 pm. Joyce Theater. See Tuesday, Jan. 3.

## SUN, JAN. 8

### IN BROOKLYN

**First Sundays:** Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; [www.bbg.org](http://www.bbg.org); 10 am to 2 pm; Free with Garden admission.

A series of pop-up programs inspired by water, in honor of the opening of the Shelby White and Leon Levy Water Garden. Children have fun with arts and crafts, listening to a story, and taking a nature walk.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**American Dance Platform:** 2 pm and 7:30 pm. Joyce Theater. See Tuesday, Jan. 3.

## TUES, JAN. 10

### IN BROOKLYN

**Drum Workshop & Brooklyn United Marching Band:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks



Mike Reaiff

## Winter garden's delights

Pop on over for pop-up programs at First Sunday at Brooklyn Botanic Garden on Jan. 8.

First Sunday is series of pop-up programs inspired by water, in honor of the opening of the Shelby White and Leon Levy Water Garden. Children can make their own snowglobe and origami

frogs, listen to a story, and take a winter nature walk.

First Sunday, Jan. 8 from 10 am to 2 pm. Free with admission to the gardens.

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

Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); 4 pm to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Come and visit after school for a drumming workshop with the Brooklyn United Marching Band and let the music flow.

## SAT, JAN. 14

### IN BROOKLYN

**Story Time Depot:** 11:30 am to noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Jan. 7.

## SUN, JAN. 15

### IN BROOKLYN

**"I Have a Dream":** 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.

Celebrate the iconic civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., over two days of culture and fun, families will learn about his legacy by taking a deep dive into our country's history. Learn about the importance of diversity, equality, and rights.

## MON, JAN. 16

### IN BROOKLYN

**"I have a dream":** 10 am to 5 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday,

## Meet Rolie Polie Guacamole

Holy moly, it's Rolie Polie Guacamole at Jalopy Theatre on Jan. 29!

The dynamic singing titans of kindie music are back, and they are bringing a taste of summer to the cold winter days with the release of their latest album, *Live on the Fourth of July*.

Come on down, get out of the cold,



and enjoy the hot sizzling sounds that will have your toes tapping like they were in summer sandals.

*Rolie Polie Guacamole, Jan. 29 at 11 am. Call for tickets.*

*Jalopy Theatre [315 Columbia St. between Hamilton Avenue and Woodhull Street in Red Hook, (718) 395-3214; [www.jalopy.biz](http://www.jalopy.biz)].*

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Jan. 15.

**Martin Luther King, Jr., celebration:** BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); 10:30 am; Free.

Includes civic leaders, a keynote address by Opal Tometi, music performances by The Campbell Brothers and The Institutional Radio Choir, Borough President Adams to serve as Master of Ceremony, and a screening of Ava DuVernay's "13th." Tickets distributed on first-come, first-seated basis beginning at 8 am.

**Martin Luther King Jr., Day:** 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 3 pm; Free.

Join the Prospect Park Alliance and celebrate with activities including Nature Exploration, in which you'll bundle up and find out what the animals in the park are doing this winter; Discovery Pack, that will get you inspired with nature and get you ready-to-go kits filled with activities; Blooming Naturalist will teach you to identify birds, use binoculars and field guides, then make their own soy wax lip balm; and Animal Encounter, where you'll learn about the animals in the center's collection and help feed them.

**Freedom Songs & Stories:** Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); 2 pm to 3 pm; \$3.

Storyteller Tammy Hall reads tales from around the world about Martin Luther King, Jr.

## SAT, JAN. 21

### IN BROOKLYN

**Story Time Depot:** 11:30 am to noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Jan. 7.

## SUN, JAN. 22

### IN BROOKLYN

**Lunar New Year – The Year of the Rooster:** Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. between Hillel Place and Avenue H; (718) 951-4500; [www.brooklyn-center.org](http://www.brooklyn-center.org); 3 pm; \$25.

The prestigious Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company performs an all-new celebration of Chinese arts commemorating the Year of the Rooster.

## FRI, JAN. 27

### IN BROOKLYN

**"Flight":** Kumble Theater at Long Island



Yi-Chun Woo

## 'Flight' in the New Year

Spread your wings and fly over to Kumble Theater at Long Island University on Jan. 27 and 28 to enjoy "Flight."

This year, Lunar New Year begins on Jan. 28. The holiday is celebrated by Asian communities the world over. Enjoy an exciting new kind of performance to mark this celebratory time. "Flight" is an Afro-Asian fusion dance performance by Peggy Choy Dance, a New York-based company.

The production is inspired by the

12th-century Persian poet Attar's poem "Conference of the Birds," an allegorical tale of the world's birds embarking on a dangerous journey in search of the Wondrous Rose of Love.

"Flight" Jan. 27 and 28, 7:30 pm. Tickets range \$10 to \$12.

*Kumble Theater for the Performing Arts at Long Island University Brooklyn [1 University Plaza, off Flatbush Avenue between Dekalb Avenue and Willoughby Street in Fort Greene, (718) 488-1624; [www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater](http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater)].*

University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; [www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater](http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/kumbletheater); 7:30 pm; \$10 – \$12.

Enjoy an exciting diversion from the dreary winter with "Flight," a new kind of performance to mark this the Lunar New Year.

## SAT, JAN. 28

### IN BROOKLYN

**BAMKids Film Festival:** BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Lafayette Avenue and Hanson Place; (718) 636-4100; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); 9:30 am to 4 pm; \$10 for 13 years and under and seniors (65+), \$14 adults, \$9 BAM members.

Tailored for children ages 3–11, showcas-

ing 58 films from 27 countries and in 10 languages.

**Story Time Depot:** 11:30 am to noon. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, Jan. 7.

**"Flight":** 7:30 pm. Kumble Theater at Long Island University. See Friday, Jan. 27.

## SUN, JAN. 29

### IN BROOKLYN

**BAMKids Film Festival:** 9:30 am to 4 pm. BAM Rose Cinemas. See Saturday, Jan. 28.

**Winter Bash:** The ShapeShifter Lab, 18 Whitwell Pl. at Third Avenue; (646)

820-9452; [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2724102](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2724102); 10 am; \$15 (\$45 family rate; infants in arms free).

Mil's Trills will be celebrating its seventh birthday at the annual Winter Bash. In true bash fashion, the live show will include a raucous infusion of brand-new playful, whimsical, and highly interactive tunes as well as a debut of the new music video for "Say Hey."

**Rolie Polie Guacamole:** Jalopy Theatre, 315 Columbia St. between Hamilton Avenue and Woodhull Street; (718) 395-3214; [www.jalopy.biz](http://www.jalopy.biz); 11 am; Call for tickets.

Brooklyn's award-winning titans of indie music bring a taste of July to the cold new year with the release of this newest album, "Live on the Fourth of July."

**Jack Quartet:** Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch, 10 Grand Army Plaza, between Eastern Parkway and Flatbush Avenue; (718) 230-2100; [www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch\\_library\\_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265](http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/branch_library_detail.jsp?branchpageid=265); 4 pm; Free.

The Carnegie hall Neighborhood Concert Series presents this string quartet.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN BROOKLYN

**Ice Skating:** LeFrak Center at Lakeside, 171 East Dr. at Ocean Avenue; (718) 462-0010; [www.lakesidebrooklyn.com](http://www.lakesidebrooklyn.com); Mondays – Thursdays, 10 am to 6:30 pm, Fridays, 10 am to 9 pm, Saturdays, 11 am to 9 pm, Sundays, 11 am to 9 pm, Now – Tues, Feb. 28; \$6 (\$9 weekends) skate rentals extra.

Lace up those skates and get sliding across the ice.

**Sensory Room:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Sundays and Mondays, 2 pm, Sun, Jan. 1 – Mon, Feb. 27; Free with museum admission.

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

**Block studio and lab:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Mondays, 10 am, Mon, Jan. 2 – Mon, Feb. 27; Free with museum admission.

In the museum's second-floor studio, which focuses on art and architecture, visitors of all ages develop their engineering skills as they engage in open block play with large Imagination Playground blocks and tabletop-sized Kapla Planks and Magnatiles, as well as artist James Paulius's house-shaped wooden blocks and pegs from his installation Sky Village.

**Totally Tots studio:** Brooklyn Chil-



Associated Press

## Celebrating MLK Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day means no school — so there's no excuse not to make it out to Lefferts Historic House and celebrate the legacy of this iconic civil rights leader on Jan. 16.

Join master storyteller Tammy Hall as she shares Freedom Songs and Stories to children of all ages. She will incorporate stories and songs from

around the world based on the theme of freedom to create a rich experience for all.

Freedom Songs and Stories, Jan. 16 from 2 to 3 pm. \$3.

*Lefferts Historic House [452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org)].*

dren's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Mondays, 10 am, Mon, Jan. 2 – Mon, Feb. 27; Free with museum admission.

Children make inspired artwork. Learn about Kehinde Wiley, Titus Kaphar, Alma Thomas, and Ebony Patterson.

**Museum Highlights:** 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, Noon to 1 pm, Sat, Jan. 7 – Sun, Jan. 29; Free with admission to the museum.

Join 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.

**Touch Tank:** Brooklyn Children's Mu-

seum, 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, Jan. 7 – Sat, March 4; Free with museum admission.

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

**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, Sat, Jan. 7 – Sun, Jan. 29; 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.

**Live Animal Adventure:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at

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

St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 4 pm to 5 pm, Sat, Jan. 7 – Sun, Feb. 26; free with museum admission.

Learn about and touch live animals, including snakes, turtles, lizards, and other reptiles from the museum's living collection.

**Family Day:** Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd.; (718) 629-5400; [programs@wyckoffmuseum.org](mailto:programs@wyckoffmuseum.org); [wyckoffmuseum.org](http://wyckoffmuseum.org); Thursday, Dec. 22, 1 pm; Saturday, Jan. 21, 1 pm; Free.

Kid-friendly tours, hands-on activities, scavenger hunts, and more on select Saturdays. If the weather's nice, bring a picnic and enjoy our grounds before or after your visit to the house. If you plan to visit with children under 10, we recommend visiting before 2 pm to take advantage of specially planned activities for younger children.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**"All Aboard with Thomas and Friends":** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road, The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Daily, various times, Now – Fri, Jan. 20; \$30 (\$28 seniors & students; \$18 children under 12).

Join Thomas and Driver Sam for "All Aboard with Thomas & Friends" at the New York Botanical Garden. Help Thomas find his way from Knapford Station to Brendam Docks using teamwork, friendship, and discovery in this fun-filled sing-along, mini-performance adventure. Bring your camera to have your photo taken with Thomas after the performance.

**Holiday Train Show:** New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road, The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Tuesdays – Sundays, 10 am to 5:30 pm, Now – Mon, Jan. 16; \$20 (\$10 children). Weekends \$30 (\$18 children).

## Year of the Rooster

Celebrate the Year of the Rooster with a performance by Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company at Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College on Jan. 22.

The prestigious company will perform an all-new celebration of Chinese arts commemorating the Year of the Rooster, cousin to the mythical Phoenix, whose song awakens the world each morning and whose confidence and loyalty is well regarded. Delightful red lions, golden dragons, and white peacocks frolic and play to the exotic sounds of traditional instruments, while graceful dancers and astounding acrobats showcase the rich culture of one of Brooklyn's most vibrant communities.

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Jan. 22 at 3 pm. Tickets \$25.



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

More than 150 New York City landmarks are recreated in miniature out of bark, nuts, leaves and other plant parts. Large-scale model trains zip around such familiar sites as the Statue of Liberty and Rockefeller Center. A recent addition of 3,000-square-feet of exhibition has made room for new trains, bridges and tracks. See website for extended hours. Reservations strongly recommended.

**Train show at Grand Central:** Grand

Central Station, 42nd St. and Park Avenue, Manhattan; [www.nytransitmuseum.org/exhibits](http://www.nytransitmuseum.org/exhibits); Weekdays, 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 26; Free with museum admission.

The Fifth Annual Holiday Train Show is an iconic holiday image of a model train, whirring by as it circles the base of a brightly-lit tree, evoking feelings of warmth and wonder in children and adults alike.



## Blast off to outer space

Ground control is calling all space travelers to come and visit before the mission takes off on Jan. 22 at the Children's Museum of Art.

The exhibit Mission to Space covers the mysteries of outer space and how it continues to challenge our imaginations. As life on Earth faces a volatile future, outer space emerges as a destination of refuge, peace, and infinite possibility.

While there, come to the Pepperman Family Fine Arts Studio and enjoy two new interactive installations by designer

Ellen Van Dusen, and the Bridge Project Crazy Space Odyssey, by Tom Burnett, Edy Escamilla, and Yung Oh Le Page.

The Bridge is full of sights, sounds, and even a moving comet. As you continue to the space station you will board a spacecraft and blast off into outer space.

Mission to Space, daily until Jan. 22, from noon to 4 pm. Free with museum admission.

*Children's Museum of the Arts [103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street in Hudson Square, (212) 274-0986; [www.cmany.org](http://www.cmany.org)].*



# Frostbite: When to be concerned

*My 6-year-old daughter just loves playing in the snow. I don't want to keep her from childhood joys like sledding and building a snowman, but I am worried about the risk of frostbite. How can I allow her to have fun in the snow, but also make sure that she is safe?*

**Y**our daughter is certainly not the only child (or child-at-heart) who loves playing in the snow, and as long as you take the proper precautions, she can have all the wintertime fun she wants. However, you have raised a key concern that deserves attention. Although people think of frostbite as something for Arctic explorers, it can occur right here in Brooklyn.

Frostbite — freezing of the skin and underlying tissues, usually of the hands, feet, nose, ears and cheeks — is an extremely dangerous condition. If deep enough, frostbite can permanently damage nerves in the skin, tissues, muscles, and even bones of the affected area.

Children are particularly susceptible, because they lose heat from their skin

more quickly than adults.

Frostbite is caused by prolonged exposure to temperatures below 32-degrees Fahrenheit, and occurs in a series of stages. It is important to pay attention to color changes in the skin, as feelings of discomfort may lessen as the frostbite becomes more severe. The first stage is frostnip, a mild form of frostbite in which skin turns red and first feels very cold, and then prickly or numb. Frostnip alone does not require medical attention, but should you notice the symptoms, change your daughter into dry clothes as soon as possible and be sure to warm the affected area.

The second stage is superficial frostbite, during which redness turns pale yellow or white and may appear hard or waxy. The skin may start to feel slightly warmer, but that is the body compensating for the freezing process. If you notice these symptoms, after changing your child into dry, warm clothes, take her to an emergency room. If her feet and toes exhibit symptoms of frostbite, do not let her walk on the affected area, because this could cause more damage. Do not warm the af-



## FAMILY HEALTH

**DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD**  
**Chairman of Pediatrics**  
**New York-Presbyterian Brooklyn**  
**Methodist Hospital**

ected area unless you can keep it warm, as warming and re-exposure to the cold can worsen the damage.

Severe frostbite reaches further into the skin's layers of tissue, making the skin appear very hard and cold. It can cause complete numbness in the affected area. If it is very severe, the skin will turn black. If you suspect that severe frostbite has occurred, take your child to a warm area and call 911 immediately.

Once at the hospital, physicians will warm the affected area, and may administer pain medication as well as a tetanus vaccine. Frostbite may also require several days of hospital observation, as it usually takes some time for the extent of the damage to become apparent. Blistering may occur after the skin is warmed. Long-term complications of frostbite may include greater susceptibility to cold in the affected area, numbness, and, for children, stunted growth in the affected area if the growth plate of a child's bone is affected.

The best thing you can do for your daughter is make sure she is prepared for winter play. If she is going to play in snow, it is not enough to dress warmly — she also needs to be wearing waterproof gear. Being wet in the cold increases the likelihood of frostbite. After dressing her in warm layers, make sure she wears an insulated, waterproof coat, gloves, boots, and hat. If her clothing becomes wet, bring her inside and change her into dry clothing. Make sure she is taking breaks from the cold often, with a warm snack or beverage. Playing in temperatures around 32-degrees Fahrenheit is fine while taking these precautions, but if it is unusually cold or there is a bad wind chill, that is not the day to build a snowman.

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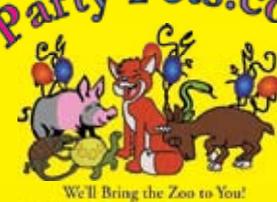
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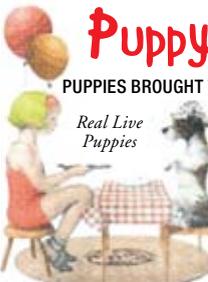


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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Give boring shoes the boot

What's more fun than a pair of rainboots for splashing in slushy puddles? How about transparent wellies that your little girl can transform as easily as changing her socks? She can wear her American Girl plastic Peek-A-Boo Wellies with their set of five pairs of WellieWishers socks for instantly adorable footwear transformations.

The polyester-cotton sock set includes a pink ballet slipper inspired pair, another pink pair with a gold Mary Jane shoe design, a red polka dot pair with ladybug faces on the toes, a multicolored floral pair, and a blue-and-green fish pair.

The rain boots are available in sizes 8/9, 10/11, 12/13, and 1/2.



Peek-A-Boo Wellies rainboots, \$26, WellieWishers set of five socks, \$20, AmericanGirl.com.

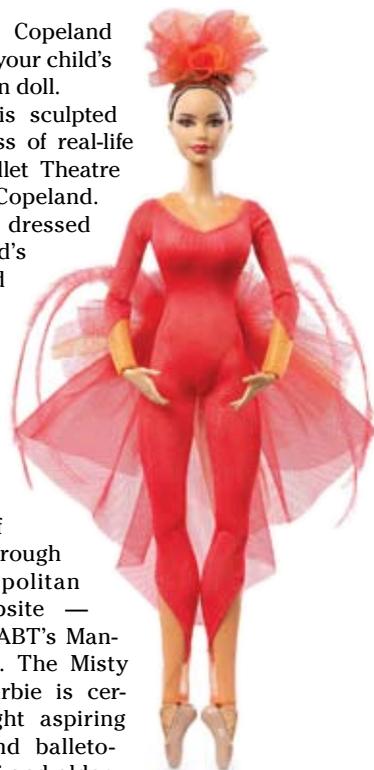
## Hot gift idea

The Misty Copeland Barbie is not your child's typical fashion doll.

This one is sculpted in the likeness of real-life American Ballet Theatre star Misty Copeland. The doll is dressed in Copeland's thrilling red costume from Igor Stravinsky's ballet "The Firebird," and she stands tall en pointe.

Sales of this toy — through the Metropolitan Opera's website — support the ABT's Manhattan home. The Misty Copeland Barbie is certain to delight aspiring ballerinas and balletomanes ages 6 and older. This fiery dancing doll will ignite the imaginations and career aspirations of little girls everywhere — especially when paired with Copeland's picture book, "Firebird," illustrated by Christopher Myers.

Misty Copeland Barbie, \$35.96, MetOpera.org.



## Junie B. Jones sings!

For all of those little musical theater buffs, a Junie B. Jones The Musical cast album dropping on Jan. 13 is a treat for the ears — and heart.

New York City songwriting team Zina Goldrich and Marcy Heisler deserve to go the front of the lunch line for having successfully set the adventures of this first-grade heroine to music for the off-Broadway show originally produced by Theatreworks USA.

The CD opens with a rousing tune sung by Junie B. (Lori Casteel) about her new

journal, "Top Secret Personal B e e s w a x ." More highlights include the comically ominous "You Need Glasses" and the gleeful, exuberant perk of donning her purple specs, "Now I See." It's a great listen for the whole family, especially those between 3 and 9.

"Junie B. Jones The Musical" Album, \$9.99, iTunes.com.



## Dropping science from the 'Blue'

Kids can discover scientific concepts while on an out-of-this-world adventure in Galxyz's new app "Blue Apprentice."

Galxyz founder Osman Rashid's digital game for students ages 6-12 is rich in science content — and surprisingly, has many moments of laugh-out-loud dialogue. While it is entertaining, Blue Apprentice takes its educational component seriously. Created in partnership with the New York Academy of Sciences to follow Next Generation Science Standards, it covers more than 45 topics.

Players customize their avatar, Thalo, and — along with their flying friend Grit, a wisecracking Chipku — they're off to save

the galaxy from the evil King Dullard. Like a choose-your-own-adventure-style book, players move at their own pace and select their next actions with text prompts — that can be played aloud for emerging readers — all the while revealing real information, like the elements in the periodic table, or the definition of matter, and much more.

The Blue Apprentice app can be played on iPads (which we preferred) or online at blueapprentice.com via a monthly subscription; the first seven days are free, so they can try it, before you buy it.

Blue Apprentice app, \$10.99 per month or \$74.00 per year, blueapprentice.com.

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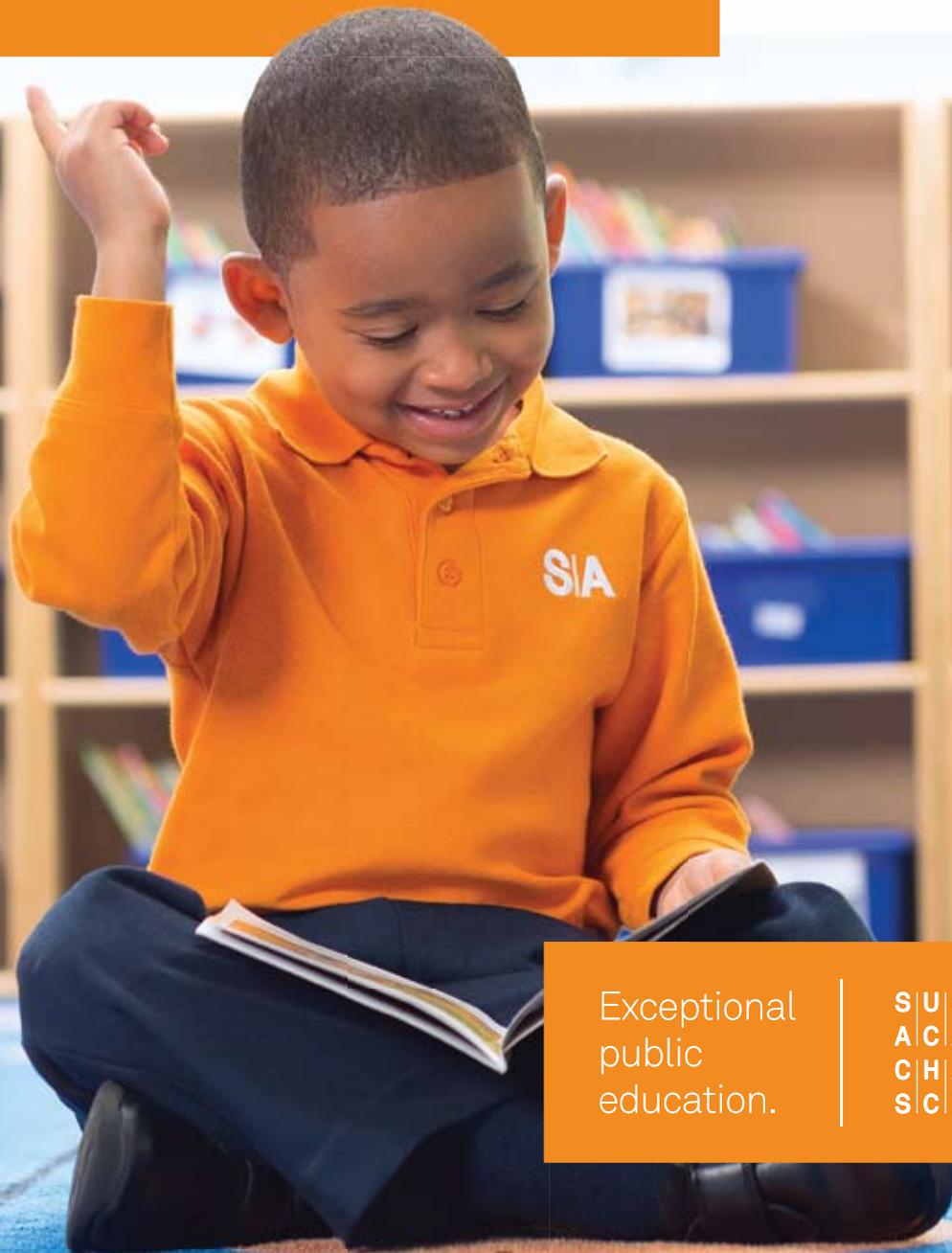


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