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The changing role of dad

I've been observing fathers a lot lately, and whether it's out on the streets, in a shopping situation, or looking out my windows early in the morning, I've discovered the continued evolution of the responsibilities and behavior of dads.



More and more fathers are giving primary care to their children and sharing in the day-to-day duties of parenting. They are shopping for the meals and cooking them. They are doing the laundry and dropping the kids off at school or picking them up. They are present at after school activities and in the pediatrician's office. All of them? No, but more than before.

This is an enormous change from years ago when many children hardly ever saw their working dads. I've spoken to numerous people over the years who were already asleep when Dad got home at the end of the day, and often many of those dads worked six days a week. Dad was

often the disciplinarian, not the loving caregiver. Lots of older adults heard the phrase "wait until your father gets home" as a threat to punishment for something done wrong.

An enormous change has taken place with the opening up of education and job opportunities for women. More fathers are sharing and/or even taking centerstage in being stay-at-home dads and caring for their children full time, for at least a period of time. That doesn't always translate into also caring for the home as well, as studies have shown that they're still leaving many of the household chores to Mom.

All of that will change as children are equally trained in and expected to do household work like laundry, ironing, cleaning, shopping and cooking. Traditional roles are breaking down and even my Dad, who got home from work many days before my Mom, would be running

the vacuum cleaner as we came home after school and popping a roast into the oven that my Mom had left for him to do. Yes, and he even wore an apron!

In many of our urban households there are double dads and that's really a new model! I'm very curious as to how the responsibilities are divided in many of those families. I wonder if it's based on who has the better or more responsible job? Changing times for many of us especially here in NYC where we have a lot of progressive realities. Exciting stuff!

June is my very favorite month of the year. I know many people feel the same. Enjoy it!

Thanks for reading.

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Dad's influence

Fathers are role models for both sons and daughters

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

When I was a child, my dad seemed omnipotent. When he walked into a room, he was larger than life. He was someone who always knew how to fix a problem or find the right person to help if he couldn't do it himself — which was rare. Over the years, I developed a lot of the same skills that I had always admired in my dad: an ease with public speaking, a practical approach to finances, self-confidence, and a keen sense of time management. Would I be the same woman today if I had not had my dad as a role model? Probably not.

A father's influence lasts a lifetime. Children look to their fathers for strength, encouragement, and support. Both sons and daughters mimic their dads from a very young age. Picture a small boy pretending to dress up for work like his dad (crooked, oversized tie and all) or a little girl struggling to reach a booming baritone while pretending to give a speech to a captivated audience. It's true that someone might find it's more natural to tell a young boy, "You remind me of your dad when he was little," than a young girl. However, dads have just as much influence on their daughters — despite the gender difference — and daughters

often grow up to be reflective images of their dads. Fathers are role models for both genders in many profound ways. Children learn about honesty, relationships, compassion, and self-love from their dads.

A father's perspective

"Men, in general, tend to construct, maintain, and build intimacy through activity, whereas women tend to develop bonds through talking," says Dr. Mark Morman, professor of communication studies and director of graduate studies at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Morman has conducted years of research in social learning and communication.

"A father is the single most important model for how a child will father in the future. Those children who grow up with [dysfunctional or neglectful fathers] have a hard time breaking the cycle and need to make a strong effort to father differently."

Morman explains that fathers use a masculine approach to developing relationships. This means "doing" things with their kids to form bonds. A father might coach his daughter's softball team, take his son fishing, or sing in the church choir with his kids. This is a dad's comfort zone — being immersed in activities with his children.

"One of the most important things I

have learned as a dad is to be emotionally available to my kids. They have seen me emotionally vulnerable, and I believe this has been important to both my son and my daughters," Dr. LeRoy E. Reese, a psychologist at Akoma Counseling and Consulting, Inc. in Decatur, Ga., stresses. Reese adds that he is not afraid to express physical affection to all of his kids, including his son. "Sons should understand the normalcy of males expressing affection for each other."

Reese also likes to spend quality time "doing" things with his children.

"I recommend to parents, and especially fathers, to date their kids on a regular basis and to spend individual time with each child doing something that reflects his or her interests. I hike and do 5Ks with my oldest daughter, go to the symphony with my son, and draw with my youngest. It is around these events that I learn the most about my kids."

Fathers often consider part of their role to be "family protector." This does not entail using aggressive behavior to solve problems. Instead, fathers should remember that their duty is to demonstrate strength of character and convictions to solve problems.

Stevan Lynn (a.k.a. Coach Lynn), producer and host of the award-winning television program "Dare 2 Dream: A Father's Guide to Success," guest talk show host (WHCR 90.3 FM in New York), and founder of the Fatherhood Training Center in Bronx, has helped countless fathers succeed as caregivers.

"In teaching our children the formula to having 'real strength,' fathers must embrace the concept of leading by example. The strength he exhibits while overcoming challenges provides a visual guide for his children to draw upon when their own strength is tested."

When a father solves a problem while holding it together both emotionally and physically, he teaches his children such values as civility, compromise, and ingenuity.

Reese asserts, "On the issue of defending oneself, I think being positively assertive is key, as is knowing when and how to ask for help and that asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness."

Dads as role models for sons and daughters

Fathers need to be cognizant of their

Father's day reflections

Thoughts, memories, and inspiration about fatherhood and how fathers have touched our lives:

"My dad stressed to both me and my brother to always respect and treat women well. Life is much easier if you follow this advice."

— Dave Blackwell

"I was considering working my senior year in high school instead of rowing on a crew team. My father told me, 'You'll be working the rest of your life. Shut up and row.'"

— Tom Gannon

"My papa has Alzheimer's, and he has become so Zen. He is sweet, emotional, patient, sentimental, and calm — traits I knew were in him but rarely saw. This disease has been a curse and yet a

blessing for our profound love."

— Maria Hoskins

"To know my dad was to love him. I never heard him say an unkind thing about anyone, which always amazed me. A favorite memory I have is that he chose to write on the blue page of my eighth-grade yearbook, 'Never be like this page.'"

— Myrna K. King

"My husband deals with my daughter better than I do sometimes. He knows how to really listen to her. If she's having a problem, he doesn't fly off the handle like I tend to do. Instead, he listens and waits until she's ready for his advice."

— Anita Mittelstaedt

"Wherever you are, *be there* for your kids! The older my kids got, the smarter I got."

— Jim Turnbull



words and their actions because their children will ultimately emulate them.

“Social learning is vital when it comes to parenting. We learn by watching others,” Morman stresses.

It depends on the father and individual situations, but Morman feels fathers should nurture and advise their sons and daughters the same.

“Fathers who instill confidence and competence in both sons and daughters end up with confident and self-motivated children.”

Lynn has a similar view.

“While there are no gender specific rules in a father becoming his kids’ role model, fathers must take into account that, as the kids grow, his understanding of their psyche must evolve. Fathers can serve as strong role models by exhibiting sacrifice on a consistent basis in regards to providing for their needs (not their wants) and encouraging their dreams. These simple acts resonate with kids.”

“It is ineffective and hypocritical to assume a ‘do as I say, not as I do’ attitude. Kids are sponges and they absorb every-

thing they see and hear, so fathers have to be very intentional about their words and actions,” Reese instructs. “Dads serve as role models by working to be their best selves and allowing their children to see their imperfections. Dads should also demonstrate loving predictability, consistency, discipline, and unconditional acceptance.”

On a personal level, Coach Lynn feels his guidance has helped to develop a strong character in his children.

“Being a role model to my children has been paramount in raising them to be confident and compassionate adults.” He believes his guiding principle was to lead by example. “Seasoned parents understand that while our children may listen to 10 percent of what we preach, they most certainly watch 100 percent of what we do. Therefore, it is imperative to give them a positive, consistent, and inspirational visual, coupled with lots of hugs and ‘I love yous,’ to shore up their belief in your words of wisdom.”

A dad’s influence on future relationships

Both sons and daughters look to their

father’s relationship with their mother as a guideline for what to expect in future relationships. It’s imperative that fathers model respect and understanding in all family relationships, such as with in-laws and grandparents.

Lynn states, “Developing healthy relationships is a lifelong process. Dads can help build a sense of what it takes by exhibiting a positive attitude and promoting the concepts of faith, sacrifice, patience, commitment, and unconditional love.” Lynn says that these characteristics are the cornerstones of healthy relationships.

Reese believes dads can help kids develop a healthy outlook on relationships by demonstrating one.

“All healthy relationships start with respect. One of the best ways dads can demonstrate this is by having a healthy relationship with their wife, partner, or mother of their child.”

Morman reports, “Some research suggests that, in general, women fall in love with a man similar to their dad, because he is the first man she has loved and has had as a role model.” This poses a problem if a daughter has grown up with someone who has not taught her that she is worthy of respect — the result can be a string of bad relationships. “Daughters who don’t get approval from their dads growing up might seek approval from another man,” Morman warns.

When dads make the best of difficult circumstances

Sometimes dads cannot always be physically available, because they are not living with their children full-time due to divorce, military service, or other types of job relocations and family situations. Dads can still have a strong relationship with their children, even if circumstances sometimes keep them physically separated.

“Fathers must make a strong effort to maintain an ongoing presence with their kids, even when they can’t be physically present,” Morman explains. “I travel a lot, but I always text my son. I send him lots of pictures, too.” If there is ongoing contact, your “presence” never goes away.

“Fathering from afar adds another dimension to the list of responsibilities and challenges. However, Dad can still have a profound influence through consistent and constant communication and by immersing himself in his kids’ lives,” Lynn points out.

“In summary, fatherhood is a gift, a privilege, and a responsibility. I am not perfect as a father, but without question, I am a better man because I take being a dad seriously,” Reese shares.

Myrna Beth Haskell is an award-winning author, columnist, and feature writer (www.myrnahaskell.com).

Father is not the opposite of mother

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

The word “opposite” is a term of comparison that may be used in a variety of ways. It can refer to two things that are the reverse of each other, such as up-down, on-off, in-out. It can distinguish between the presence or absence of a particular condition or state of being, such as light-dark, wet-dry, hard-soft. It describes things that oppose each other, such as two walls, the banks of a river, two teams, or armies. And finally, opposite may be used to differentiate between two qualities or characteristics, such as active-passive, tall-short, easy-difficult. So basically, opposite means that the two things being compared are not alike. They have nothing in common. They are the opposite of each other.

While contemplating what to write for Father’s Day, an image popped into my head transporting me back to elementary school in the mid-1960s. There were these workbooks to supplement the concepts being taught with illustrations reminiscent of those found in Dick and Jane readers. When we were learning to distinguish between things that are opposite, exactly the same, or similar, there were two columns of images on the page. We were to use different colors of crayon to connect the images that were opposite, the same, or similar.

A blue line connecting the picture of fire with the caption underneath reading “hot” and an ice cube with the caption “cold:” opposites — correct. A red line connecting the two identical pictures of a ball: same — correct. A yellow line connecting the picture of a man in a suit and hat carrying a briefcase labeled “father” and a woman in high heels and an apron feeding a baby labeled “mother”: similar — wrong! The line was supposed to be blue for opposite. WHAT?

The teacher’s attempt to explain why father and mother are opposite created nothing but confusion. Fathers work, mothers do not. Fathers are tough, mothers are gentle. Fathers are strong, mothers are weak. Her struggle to justify marking “similar” as wrong led to increasingly absurd reasoning. There were exceptions for every example she provided, just from my own limited experience (not the least of



which was the fact that she was a mother working as a teacher).

First of all, my father didn’t wear a suit and hat to work, and neither did most of my friends’ fathers. And our mothers worked — some at home, some in offices, some in their own businesses, some on farms. They didn’t walk around the house in high heels, but they definitely worked.

If “tough” meant not putting up with misbehavior, then my parents were pretty well tied in that category. On the other hand, each of them could also be gentle and were capable of great tenderness.

As for “strength,” my mother may not have been as strong as my father, but she was certainly not weak. Nevertheless, disagreeing with a teacher would surely lead to trouble. If it wasn’t clear then, it surely is now, the reason the teacher could not provide a satisfactory explanation was because there wasn’t one.

Father is not the opposite of mother.

Upon closer inspection of those two images supposedly depicting the iconic father and mother, another troubling observation became apparent — the conspicuous absence of children in the picture of the father. Based on those pictures, one could mistakenly conclude that the presence of a child makes a woman a mother, but the presence of a briefcase makes a man a father. The not-so-subtle message being that the role of mother requires the presence of children, but the role of father can be satisfactorily dispatched devoid of any involvement with children. However convenient such a fallacy might appear to be for fathers, the consequences for children can be devastating. If there is such a thing as the opposite of father, perhaps the closest thing to it, as far as children are concerned, is the absence of father.

Protect your children from experiencing this absence by becoming fully present in their lives:

- Share your recollections of becoming a father with them.
- Find models or mentors who will support you in becoming the father you want to be.
- Learn about child development. But remember to parent by the child, not by the book, because no matter how much we know or how much experience we have, every child is unique. Our parenting must be adjusted accordingly.
- Stay informed and involved in all aspects of their lives.
- Be both physically and emotionally available to them. When you cannot be with them, find ways to stay connected.
- Tell them you love them. And show them by what you are willing to do with them, not what you can give them. There are no pause buttons, instant replays, rewinds, or do-overs for childhood. Childhood cannot be delayed until a more opportune time.

There are as many ways to be an excellent father as there are fathers. Your children are learning just as much about how to become a person from you as they are from their mother. What they learn may be different, but not opposite, especially if the common source is love. Happy Father’s Day!

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Be a volunteer

How kids benefit from serving their community

BY LARA KRUPICKA

Mitchell teaches at-risk youths how to sail a tall ship. Carly interprets the life of a 19th-century child. And Haley walks dogs at an animal shelter. What do these three kids have in common? They're among the estimated 15.5 million young people who participate in volunteer activities. And like many others, these three kids are finding they get back more than they give through volunteering. Here are some of the benefits they've found (and your child could gain, too):

Discovery of new interests

Mitchell Smith hadn't done any sailing before he joined the Topsail Program at the Los Angeles Maritime Institute at age 12. But now his mom says he loves being aloft aboard the 100-foot brigantines.

"He found a passion for sailing," says Mitchell's mom, Sandy. "It opened him up to a whole new world."

In fact, Mitchell often volunteers as an excuse to get in more sailing. In a word, he's hooked.

Volunteering gives kids a chance to

Organizations accepting youth volunteers

If your child isn't sure where she would like to volunteer, here are a few good places to start:

- Hospitals (think candy strippers)
- Animal shelters
- Museums
- Food pantries
- Libraries

For other opportunities, check out www.volunteermatch.org, an online searchable database of organizations looking for volunteers. (It allows you to search for kid- and teen-friendly openings.)

try new things. In the process they can uncover talents and interests they hadn't been aware of. Some may even go on to pursue college studies and careers inspired by their volunteer experiences.

Increased confidence

Youth volunteers gain valuable exposure to interacting with the public they couldn't get anywhere else. It requires

them to exercise their communication and public-speaking skills. In turn, this fosters confidence as students see the positive impact of their interactions.

Carly Mulder, a junior interpreter at the Naper Settlement living history museum in Naperville, Ill., learned early on that part of her role involved greeting museum visitors and fielding questions about the games and other activities she demonstrates. Karin, Carly's mom, notes she has seen Carly's confidence improve from her involvement at the museum.

"She's learning how to interact with the public and how to have confidence in dealing with other people."

Wearing a costume and imagining herself as a person from a different era helped. So did special training provided by the museum.

Even behind-the-scenes roles can instill confidence as kids find success in completing the tasks they're given. And connecting with fellow volunteers and coordinators can be enough to help reticent youngsters come out of their shells and develop valuable social skills. For some kids, simply the act of sharing their time and being valued for their service can build self-assurance.

Broadened perspective on life

Volunteer experiences also give kids a chance to get outside of their neighborhood and have contact with people who are different from them. Whether at a museum or a food pantry, volunteering opens up children's horizons. It exposes them to more of the world — in a controlled environment where they can feel safe.

Haley McDonald's mom, Bobbie, has involved her in a variety of volunteering experiences since a young age, including one while on vacation in the Dominican Republic.

"We went to a farm and helped with a project," explains Bobbie. "It was a huge, broadening experience — seeing that everyone doesn't live the way you live."

Responsibility

While many volunteer opportunities are one-time events, kids can also sign up for regular shifts. Being committed to an ongoing position requires taking responsibility. Mitchell's mom points out that it makes him prioritize his activities. He has to decide whether he'll sign up for a sailing shift or do something else. And Carly's mom sees how it has helped her daughter learn the importance of following through on obligations.

Kids also often get the opportunity to

Tips on getting started

1. Look for a one-time opportunity to try out the concept of volunteering, such as at a food pantry.

2. Volunteer side by side with your child. It can be a good bonding experience and models the spirit of volunteerism.

3. Watch for chances to pair your child's interests with a service activity.

4. Try, try again. If the first experi-

ence doesn't work, look for another place for your child to serve.

5. Take a long-term view. If you value service to others, continue helping your child get involved in volunteering. As Dr. Bobbie McDonald (a doctor of psychology and mother of a youth volunteer) points out, "Anything you involve kids in on a regular basis, they're likely to continue into adulthood."

have increased responsibility in the role they play and the tasks they perform in their position as a volunteer. Mitchell has learned how to sail a tall ship, and also teaches others. And Carly hopes one day to move up to giving tours in one of the museum's buildings.

Enjoyment

When kids find a volunteer position that fits them well, the common response is, "It doesn't feel like work." When the position and the child's interests match, to them it's more like a chance to get out and play. This in turn can be a good step in helping them discover their vocation.

Taking along a friend, as Haley frequently does, adds to the experience as

well. In fact, group settings can be a good introduction to a volunteer experience, such as through a Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop or church youth group. When kids have fun during an initial stint, they're more likely to sign up again in the future. And after a while, they're signing up because it's something they enjoy.

Don't underestimate what your child might have to offer an organization as a volunteer. And don't underestimate the positive impact that experience can have on him. As these three young people have found, there's a lot to be gained by giving your time to a local organization.

Lara Krupicka is a freelance writer and mom to three girls. She enjoys watching her daughters grow through volunteer experiences.



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Healthy sun habits start early

My 9-year-old son loves being active, especially during the summer. He swims, plays baseball, soccer, anything, really, that gets him moving. He spends a lot of time in the sun, so I try to get him to wear sunscreen. However, he hates it and will do anything to avoid wearing it. I wonder if it is really necessary. He tans easily, and rarely burns, so maybe he does not have to wear sunscreen if he will only be playing outside for a few hours?

The idea that skin needs to burn in order to be damaged by the sun is a major misconception. Any change in skin color, including a tan, from the sun is a response to harmful ultraviolet radiation. This radiation can not only prematurely age the skin, it can also lead to skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the country. People often think that it takes decades of excessive sun exposure to develop skin cancer, but in fact, much of the damage that can lead to skin cancer occurs before age 20. The steps you take — or don't — right now can have a long-term impact on your son's health. Even if your son squirms at the idea of putting on sunscreen, it is crucial that he take precautions while playing outside, especially during these sunniest months of the year.

It may be helpful to try a different kind of sunscreen than you have used before. Maybe he finds the smell or texture uncomfortable. Luckily, there are plenty of options for kids. He may prefer one with a sweet smell, or one that can be applied as a spray. Try different varieties to see which one he is most able to tolerate. Also, always choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 30 or higher, as this will provide the most protection for the longest period of time.

Thirty minutes before your son goes outside, apply the sunscreen to exposed skin. This half hour allows the sunscreen to soak in and set. If he is going to be playing sports or swimming, which can wear off even a waterproof sunscreen, be sure to reapply every two hours.

Sunscreen is not the only step that should be taken to prevent damage from the sun. If he is going to play outside during the summer, it is important that he try to avoid the direct sun between the hours of 10 am and 3 pm. This is when the sun is strongest and can cause the most damage.

Of course, this does not mean he should be cooped up inside all day. Rather, if he is outside when it is sunniest, encourage him to play in a shady area. Protective cloth-



FAMILY HEALTH

DR. PRAMOD NARULA, MD
Chairman of Pediatrics
NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn
Methodist Hospital

ing is another key component of proper sun protection: he should wear a hat with a wide brim, long-sleeve shirts, and long pants.

That said, there is no reason why your son should not enjoy this summer to the fullest. It is wonderful that he is so active, and this should not be discouraged. If he learns good sun protection practices now, he can continue to enjoy the outdoors for decades to come.

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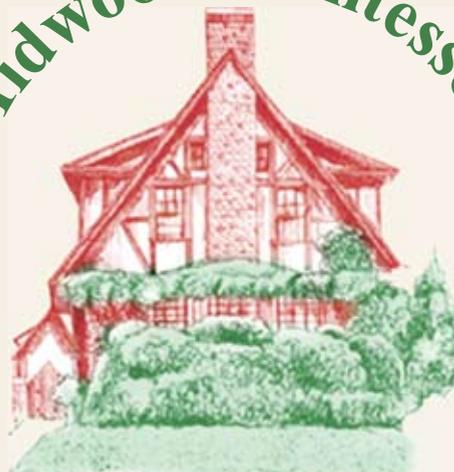
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Doc, can we talk?

Ten tips for effective communication with your pediatrician

BY DR. KAREN TROLLOPE-KUMAR

As a family doctor, sometimes, the days don't always go as expected. On a busy day, I feel like I'll never catch up, and it's frustrating that I can't give adequate time to each individual patient. One afternoon not long ago, I was feeling unusually tired. I looked down at my schedule and saw that my last patient was Beth, a young mother with a 7-year-old son. I thought to myself, let's hope this one is just a simple sore throat!

"So what brings you in today?" I asked, after a brief greeting.

"Well, I'm worried about Jimmy," said Beth, anxiously. "He's getting into trouble at school a lot, and his teachers say he's not paying attention. Sometimes he

has stomachaches. I'm not sure what to do ... Also, I'm wondering if you could just check his foot, I think he's developed a plantar wart."

I couldn't help letting out a sigh. "Well, let's just focus on the main problem," I say. "What more information can you give me? Have you got his latest report card? Any specific comments from the teacher?"

Beth shook her head. She tried to explain more about her concerns about Jimmy, but she sensed that I was not listening closely, and she tripped over her words. Finally, I said in a voice edged with irritation, "There's not much I can do in this short appointment. This is a complicated issue. Can you re-book for another time?"

After Beth and Jimmy left the office, I felt very guilty for brushing her off that way. I knew that she was not happy with the appointment, and neither was I. We had a communication problem, aggravated by time constraints. Unfortunately, such problems are all too common between family doctors and their patients, and a little teamwork can get the critical doctor-patient relationship back on track.

Like any healthy relationship, good communication is fundamental, and that applies to the doctor-patient relationship as well. When that vital link of understanding between doctor and patient is broken, a cascade of negative consequences can result. If the patient hasn't been able to fully explain his or her symptoms, an in-

correct diagnosis might be made. If the doctor hasn't clearly communicated his or her assessment of the problem, the treatment plan might fail. Poor communication inevitably leads to dissatisfaction for both doctor and patient.

Here are 10 quick tips to communicate better with your family doctor, and to make your office visit more effective:

- If you are seeing the doctor for a complicated issue (like Jimmy's problem) ask the receptionist to book you a longer appointment.
- Prepare what you're going to say ahead of time, and keep it concise and focused.
- If you've done some research on the internet about your problem and want to share it with your doctor, make sure you use reputable sites to get that information. Doctors get frustrated when patients bring in reams of information of dubious value.
- Avoid coming into the doctor's office with a list of unrelated problems — focus on your main concern for that visit.
- If you are coming in to get results of an important test, bring a friend or relative with you. Sometimes it can be hard to remember what the doctor has said, especially when the topic is emotionally laden.

Like any healthy relationship, good communication is fundamental, and that applies to the doctor-patient relationship as well. When that vital link of understanding between doctor and patient is broken, a cascade of negative consequences can result.

- If you have a particular worry about a symptom (for example, could this be cancer?), express that concern to the doctor.
 - If the doctor advises a treatment you don't feel comfortable with, explain your reasons, and see if an alternative approach would be possible.
 - Keep your follow-up appointment, and at that time, let the doctor know how well (or not) the treatment has worked.
 - If you're not happy with the service you're getting, communicate this clearly but politely, using "I" statements. (For example, "I feel concerned about how long it took to receive these test results.")
 - If you're happy with the service you're getting from your doctor, a word of thanks or a card is always appreciated. Doctors are human, too!
- Improving communication requires

work on the part of both the doctor and the patient. Thinking back on this appointment with Beth and Jimmy, I realized my faults: I was tired and also frustrated because the issue was complex and difficult to address during a short appointment. Yet still, I could have done a better job at communicating with compassion. On Beth's part, she could have prepared for this appointment by thinking ahead about what information might be useful for the doctor. Working together, patients and family doctors can form great partnerships if they keep communication at the forefront of their relationship.

Dr. Karen Trollope-Kumar is a family physician and author of "Cloud Messenger: Love and Loss in the Indian Himalayas." For more information, please visit www.karentrollope-kumar.com.

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Protection starts early

Giving newborns a crucial vaccine

BY DR. NONYELUM EBIGBO

It's hard to imagine putting your newborn through the pain of a shot. But a little stick early in life is an important first step to protecting your baby against a deadly disease.

Hepatitis B is a contagious liver disease caused by the hepatitis B virus. This infection can range from a very mild illness with few or no symptoms to a serious condition requiring hospitalization. Some people are able to fight the infection and clear the virus. But for others, the infection lingers throughout their life.

The virus spreads through blood or other body fluids that contain small amounts of blood from an infected person. People can spread it even when they have no symptoms. Babies and children can contact the hepatitis B virus in the following ways:

- At birth from their infected mother.
- Being bitten by an infected person.
- By touching open cuts or sores of an infected person.
- Through sharing toothbrushes, wash cloths, or other personal items used by an infected person.
- From food that was chewed (for the baby) by an infected person.

The virus can live on objects for seven days or more. Even when blood is not visible, there could be virus on an object.

Why do we immunize children against hepatitis B? It is important to know that children are at much greater risk of serious complications of this disease than adults are. While 10 percent of adults become chronic carriers of hepatitis B virus after acute infection, 90 percent of infants run this risk, half of whom will develop liver failure. In the perinatal period, 70 to 90 percent of babies whose mothers are positive for hepatitis B surface antigen will acquire the infection from their mothers



without intervention.

The hepatitis B vaccine is not a blood product. It is produced by recombinant DNA technology and has 90 to 95 percent efficacy in preventing acquisition of this disease for at least 15 years from immunization. It is the only vaccine that is reliably immunogenic (protective) in the newborn period. A major determinant of its effectiveness is early initial dose.

For those parents who are convinced that their child will not engage in high-risk behaviors, it is worth noting that in 2008, activities such as attending school and playing sports might be considered "high-risk behaviors." The assumption today is that universal precautions are taken and that all children are vaccinated when they attend school; therefore, another child with hepatitis B who accidentally sustains an injury on the basketball court that results in a cut or bleeding should not be a threat to another child.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all delivery hospitals establish orders for routine administration of hepatitis B vaccine to newborns. This vaccine strategy mandates universal, immediate initiation of the vaccination to all medically stable newborns, as strategies based on identify-

ing high-risk mothers have not been effective due to late transmission in pregnancy and frequent suboptimal prenatal care. This recommendation is supported by the New York State Department of Health.

Why should your baby get the hepatitis B shot at birth? The birth dose:

- Protects your baby against a potentially serious disease.
- Prevents unrecognized perinatal transmission and prevents transmission from family members due to unrecognized chronic hepatitis B virus infection in the household.
- Prevents your child from developing liver disease and cancer from hepatitis B.

All babies should get the first shot of hepatitis B vaccine before they leave the hospital. This shot acts as a safety net, reducing the risk of getting the disease from moms or family members who may not know they are infected. At Richmond University Medical Center, we practice the universal birth dose vaccine strategy to protect and provide a safety net for all our newborns.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov and www.immunize.org.

Dr. Nonyelum Ebigbo is a Pediatric Resident at Richmond University Medical Center on Staten Island. For more, contact her at nebigbo@rumcsi.org.



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Making a plan for special education

New book seeks to help families understand Individualized Education Plans and how they can help

BY ALLISON PLITT

Growing up in New Jersey in the 1980s, I really liked going to school and was a very conscientious student. Yet, no matter how much extra effort I put into doing my math homework, I couldn't correctly apply the concepts by myself in class.

My problems with math started in fifth grade, and as the years progressed, the subject became more difficult for me to understand. My younger brother, on the other hand, was a mathematical genius. He wasn't a diligent student like myself, but he always aced math tests.

My brother's often-discussed "brilliance" in this subject made me all the more ashamed of my own incompetence. By the eighth grade, I broke down in tears to my mother and confided to her that I couldn't handle another math class. She spoke to some of her friends in our community and found a math tutor for me. I went to that tutor every Saturday for about four years until I felt comfortable enough to do my math homework and tests in school without outside assistance.

With hindsight, I wish I could have read "The Survival Guide for Kids in Special Education (And Their Parents): Understanding What Special Ed Is & How It Can Help You." Published just this year, the book has two authors, Wendy Moss and Denise Campbell, who both have extensive experience in the field of special education. Dr. Moss earned her doctorate in clinical psychology, and as a psychologist she has worked

with families for more than 30 years in schools, hospitals, and private practice. Campbell is a speech pathologist who has worked with children affected by diverse disabilities.

This book isn't just for students enrolled in special education programs at their schools. It is for any student who needs help and receives it in the form of a study group with peers, a tutor outside of the school, or a specialist seen once a week to work on a specific area of struggle.

The authors emphasize that no one is perfect and that those students who receive high grades usually study very hard to get them. They advise students not to compare themselves to others, because each individual has his own strengths and weaknesses.

In my case, despite my problems with math, I excelled in other subjects such as English and foreign languages. Looking back, I could have benefitted from the book's advice to counterbalance my weakness in math by gaining confidence from my strengths in subjects oriented toward communication.

The book is easy to read for students starting at the third-grade level. It also includes many illustrations and real-life stories about students who were able to overcome their learning challenges. At the end of every chapter, there are questions for children to answer about their feelings towards receiving special education and how they can be proactive in receiving the help they need.

A recurring theme throughout the "Survival Guide" is that children should

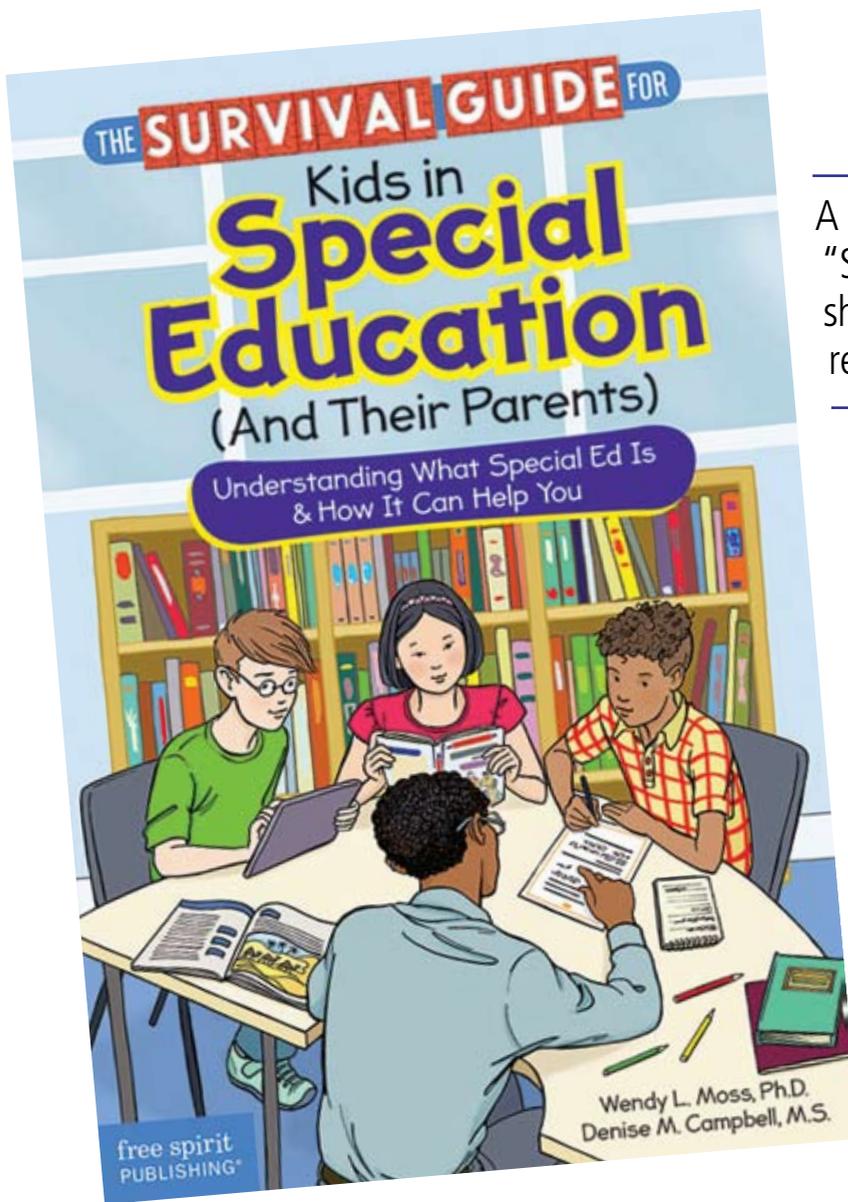
not be embarrassed to receive extra help for their studies. If they are being teased at school or afraid they will be teased, the authors suggest that the children do not act like receiving extra help is a big deal. If they need to leave the classroom to see a specialist, they should do so in a confident manner. If their friends ask them about their special education, they should respond by making direct eye contact with the person and answer the question calmly to the best of their ability.

Another concept the authors impress upon readers is that it is especially important for kids to communicate with their special education teachers to discuss their goals, what they need to do to achieve those goals, and if something is not working, to try another approach. Parents should also be aware of what is going on at school with their child's special education and the progress they are making.

The book offers many definitions to young readers about special education terms. According to the authors, "a consultant teacher is someone who goes to various classrooms and gives extra help to different learner kids all day long," while "a resource room is a room at school where students go to get help in small groups."

The authors also explain that students retain information in different "learning styles." They write, "A visual learner likes to see what he is learning. An auditory learner likes to hear what he is learning." Kinesthetic learning is a more experiential learning style in which students get involved in hands-on projects and create videos showing what they have studied.

When students are evaluated to determine what kind of extra help would be beneficial, they are often asked questions about the best ways in which they learn. This allows the special education teacher to determine their learning



A recurring theme throughout the “Survival Guide” is that children should not be embarrassed to receive extra help for their studies.

family are usually invited to attend these meetings. The authors suggest that before students attend such meetings, they write down what is helping and what is hindering them. They can ask the committee about their improvement and if they are reaching their goals in a timely manner.

The book appears to be oriented towards students in third through eighth grade. The authors explain that students can receive special education all throughout high school, but they should not scare themselves over what they will need to learn in the higher grades. Students should concentrate on their current Individualized Education Program and achieving the goals they have discussed with their teachers until the end of the school year.

The authors talk about students having a positive attitude towards their special education plan and avoiding negative self-talk when they make mistakes. If things become challenging for students, they should create a list of all the things they can do well. The authors also advise against procrastination and advocate that students organize their schedules and studies so that they can meet deadlines on time.

Most importantly, the book says that an Individualized Education Program teaches students about making a plan and following through on it to achieve a goal. They offer their readers possibilities for their future by using the same technique in all the challenges they will soon face in life — be it college, vocational school, or an apprenticeship in a specific field of work. Wherever students venture on their journey, the authors emphasize, they should never be afraid to ask for help. As for my own academic journey, when I finally asked for the help I needed, I was able to achieve the goals that I had originally worked so hard for but could not obtain.

Allison Plitt lives in Queens with her daughter and is a frequent contributor to this publication.

style. Different schools administer various tests. The authors advise students that they have the right to ask what their test is about and how long it takes to complete it.

Students will meet specialists with various expertise depending upon what skills need to be tested. As the authors clarify, “school psychologists are trained to understand students’ learning style, their feelings, and how they handle challenges ... Learning specialists might also be called educational evaluators. These people can recognize the skills students need to do well in various subjects such as reading, writing, and math.”

Other people who test students are speech or language therapists, also called pathologists.

“They test students’ skills related to listening and speaking. Other specialists are experts in vision, coordination,

and handwriting,” the authors write. Students should not be afraid of being tested. Test results, the authors say, “enable specialists to know students’ areas of talent, their areas of difficulty, and their learning styles.”

If the test results determine that a student will need a team of teachers with a plan created for his own special learning challenges, that is called an Individualized Education Program in some public schools. The team is made up of specialists and the student’s regular classroom teacher. They comprise what is called a Committee on Special Education. In other public schools, the teaching group is a 504 team which develops a 504 plan to assist students with special education.

The Committee on Special Education meets several times a year to discuss a student’s progress. The student and his



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Estate planning for non-U.S. citizens

My wife and I are not U.S. citizens, but I have been living in the U.S. for 15 years. One of our three children was born in Italy, but the other two were born here and have citizenship from both countries. Our third child also has a U.S. passport. Do we have any unique issues that we should be considering?

Yes! Many parents are so busy taking care of their children that they delay their own estate planning. Some spouses avoid the discussion because they cannot agree on a guardian. Some believe that they do not need a will since they do not have substantial assets.

Raising children is chaotic, but one thing is for sure: every parent should have essential documents in place to legally protect their family. In a situation where one or both parents are non-U.S. citizens or the chosen guardian or trustee of money for U.S.-based children is a non-U.S. citizen living abroad, there are unanticipated events that can disrupt an otherwise documented estate plan. Here are five things all non-U.S. citizen parents living in the U.S. should consider:

Choosing a guardian

The most common reason parents start thinking about estate planning is their concern about who will care for their children if both spouses die. You can nominate a guardian and alternate guardians for your minor children in your Last Will and Testament. The court can approve the appointment and will usually do so unless it finds that the guardian is not fit to serve. In the absence of a will or a designation of a guardian in a will, the court will appoint a guardian for your children.

Many spouses disagree on who should serve as a guardian. In deciding on a one, parents should consider many factors, including:

- The relationship with your children.
- The willingness to accept responsibility.
- Whether he or she has children and their ages.

- Whether he or she lives in the same or a different state.

- Whether you anticipate maintaining relationships with both sides of the family.

- Whether he or she can meet the physical and emotional demands of being a guardian.

Keep in mind that you may always change your will at any time, and the person you nominate as guardian of your toddlers may not be the same person you want as their guardian when they are teenagers.

You should look at your will every two to three years or more frequently when you or your appointed fiduciary experience major life changes such as a birth, death, disability, or divorce. You should also choose at least one alternate guardian if the person you selected is unable or unavailable to act as guardian when needed.

Foreign nationals frequently desire to appoint non-U.S. domiciled guardians of their minor children in case of a common accident. For non-U.S. citizens, or even U.S. citizens whose chosen guardian is a non-U.S. citizen living outside the United States, you need to consider the practicalities of having your children relocated outside of their home in the country.

All nominations of a guardian in a will remain subject to confirmation by the Surrogate's Court, irrespective of citizenship. The court determines whether the nomination is in the best interests of the child, and whether the person is eligible to serve as a fiduciary. Usually it will defer to the parents' nomination in the will, but could be persuaded otherwise if someone challenges the nomination.

In cases involving foreign nationals, a non-U.S. resident may not be eligible to serve as a guardian, and therefore may not meet the statutory requirements to serve as a fiduciary. Under New York law, people ineligible to serve as fiduciaries include minors, felons, and non-resident aliens, among others. Thus, a non-domiciliary with children in the U.S. who dies without



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.

a surviving spouse runs the risk that her designation of an alien sibling or parent may not necessarily be confirmed as a guardian, whether or not the nomination is challenged.

One of the factors the court could consider is the location of the nominated guardian, and if it is in the children's best interests to return abroad, or to remain in the United States. Another factor might be evidence of the parents' prior intent to return to their home country or to remain in the United States, and whether the children are citizens of the United States or temporary residents.

You should also consider that your children may not want to leave their home in the U.S. to go to another country. Children who are 14 years old or older can have a say in the appointment of a guardian, and that child may not want to leave his life behind, be it for Idaho or Italy.

For foreign nationals residing in the U.S., the best course of action may be to designate your first choice as guardian, even if that person is a non-U.S. resident. There should also be one or two alternate nominations as guardian in the event that the court declines to appoint the primary choice. As always, individual consultation with an attorney is critical.

Wills & testamentary trusts

A will is a legal document that dictates how you want your assets distributed after your death, and, as noted above, who you want to serve as the guardian of your chil-

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dren and trustee of any money for their benefit. Minor children cannot directly own assets. Your will should specify that any property passing to a minor be held in a trust, the terms of which are set forth in the will.

Parents of special-needs children should incorporate trusts that permit the child to maintain any government benefits while still reaping some benefits from the trust income. The trust becomes effective at your death. It is a separate legal entity that holds the assets for the benefit of the beneficiaries. The terms can set forth how income is distributed and when principal is accessed (usually for the health, education, maintenance, and support of the beneficiaries at the discretion of the trustee), and at what ages the children are entitled to distributions of the remaining principal. A designated trustee administers the trust and makes those distributions.

You can specify in your will what the trust can and cannot be used to finance, how much can be used for college, and under what conditions. You can nominate one or more co-trustees and alternates, and can nominate a friend, family member, lawyer, or bank or corporate trustee.

Other key documents

These additional documents are essen-

tial to protecting yourself and your family:

Health care proxy. Appoints the individual you would want to make health decisions on your behalf if you can't, as well as any successor agent to fulfill that role if the primary agent isn't available.

Living will. Provides direction to your agent under your health care proxy regarding end-of-life choices such as feeding, hydration, resuscitation, and life support if you are unable to communicate.

Durable Power of Attorney. Differs from the health care proxy in that it is for financial matters (not health related), and it is effective upon execution (not upon incapacitation). This is a very powerful document and misuse by an agent could cause great financial harm, but it is a very important document to have in place. Failure to do so could lead to a potential guardianship proceeding in a crisis situation, which can be time consuming and costly.

Appointment of Agent for Disposition of Remains. Appoints an agent to make burial and funeral arrangements. Some expats prefer to be buried in a family plot or returned to the home country.

Appointment of Standby Guardian, Authorization to Leave Country, and Medical Authorization. Streamline the ability of a guardian to return to the home country with minor children.

Beneficiary designations

Assets such as retirement accounts and life insurance are non-probate assets and are transferred outside of the will. Those assets require a designation of the beneficiary — the person or persons whom you want to inherit those assets at your death. Parents often have retirement accounts left with previous employers, often before they married and had children. It is critical to review all of your accounts and ensure all beneficiary designations are up to date.

You should consult an attorney to make sure that your documents meet your objectives. Although many forms of these documents are online, only an attorney can help you understand what they mean and how they work. Being an ex-pat requires an additional level of attention to your legal needs. Without the benefit of legal insight, you may make mistakes that undermine your intentions.

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



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Multilingual kids

The multiple benefits of teaching children multiple languages

BY AMELA DZURLIC

There were many instances when a parent or an adult who works with children would ask me: “How does your child speak four languages? Does he get confused? Is it difficult to teach another language? How do you do it?”

It takes dedication and some research to help your child learn another language, especially if you come from a mono-linguistic background. When you develop a sense of comfort with the second language or if you’re hiring someone to teach your child the language, it is also important for you to at very least know the basic vocabulary of the language you’d like your child to learn.

Teaching your child a second language may seem difficult at first, but remember this: the sooner you begin teaching him, the easier it is for him to obtain a stronger vocabulary, as well as proper grammar.

Teaching a child during the infant and toddler years makes it easier for him to obtain all of those new words and information. As you must have heard from caregivers, your mom-friends, pediatricians, and educators: Their brain is like a sponge. It just absorbs everything.

There are many benefits to teaching a child a second language — or even a third, fourth, or fifth language. The benefits of teaching your child to become bilingual can help him with his still-developing frontal cortex, which is responsible for decision making and, most importantly, executive functioning. Learning languages is also in the same area of the brain as learning math. There is no evidence that learning two or more languages can help your child become better in math, but it helps to know that the neurons of both areas are connected.

According to Medical Daily, children who learn more than one language de-

velop a vocabulary that can enhance their perspective of the world. When looking at the vocabulary of languages, you can find words in each that do not exist in other languages. For example, the Portuguese word “saudade,” which would be poorly translated into English as “nostalgia.” However, the word does not simply mean nostalgia, it means the feeling of longing. It means having this intense feeling of happiness for a memory, yet you are sad and begin to tear up just a little bit, because that moment has come and passed — that moment has now become a memory. It makes you feel happy to have lived in that moment, but it also makes you feel a bit sad that it is over. It’s in the past now. This is just one example of how expanding your child’s vocabulary with additional languages can help him navigate his emotions and hopefully help him express himself and describe his feelings better.

There are many ways in which you can

teach your child another language, and here are some great tips:

Read books together. You can visit your local library or bookstore for books that are in two languages.

Watch educational videos on the internet that are musicals. Sometimes, when we sing songs with our children, it helps all of us remember words better. They can visually see the object, say the word, and sing it out.

Attend cultural events. Oftentimes in New York City there are free cultural events by county and region.

Language programs for families. There are some public programs as well as private programs to enroll your child for further learning.

Attend museums or tours that are both in English and another language. Doing so helps you listen to another person speak the language, especially if that language is their native language. When visiting a museum, you can read a map in the language you are learning as well as your native language.

Enlist outside help. Ask your child's teacher or day care if any of the staff or teachers speak the language you're trying to teach your child, and if they'd be willing to communicate with your child in that language.

Children who learn more than one language develop a vocabulary that can enhance their perspective of the world.

Consistency in teaching your child another language is essential, but that does not mean you must strictly speak one language at a time. You can also mix words from one language and use the words from each language to develop a single sentence. This helps your child differentiate the two languages, and it's a great way to exercise his brain. Another exercise you can try is by asking your child a question in one language and then having him answer in the other language.

Simultaneous learning is when you're teaching a child two languages, which many parents who are bilingual tend to do as they teach their children both English and their native language. Other parents are teaching their child one language by two different people.

Your child is a sequential learner if you're teaching him how to communicate well in

one language before you move on to the other language. This can sometimes cause pressure on your child, causing him to feel frustrated, especially if the second language is the one usually spoken in his community. At only the age of 3, my son enjoys mixing Spanish, English, and Portuguese with his predominantly Latina peers.

The benefits of learning more than one language according to neuro-linguists are:

- Better memory.
- Better problem solvers, in general.
- Better sense of self-expression.
- Better readers and writers.
- Creative artists and problem solvers.
- Ability to multitask successfully.
- Better executive functioning skills, which are controlled by the frontal-cortex, later in life.

Teaching your child another language shouldn't feel like a burden; it should be exciting. Have fun with it, and engage in some of the suggested activities. Be creative and make the most out of this exciting, new learning experience.

Amela Dzurlic is a single mother of a multilingual toddler who has an obsession with trains and learning how things work. She is currently a freelance writer, women's mental health advocate, and studies developmental psychology with a focus on child development and education.

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Double duty

Bilingual children's books entertain and teach kids some valuable skills

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

More than 41 percent of the students enrolled in New York City public schools speak a language other than English at home, reported the city's Department of Education in its 2013 report on English language learners. Children's brains are primed for language-skill development, so it is encouraged to start introducing bilingualism at an early age. Your child's school, like many in major urban centers, is home to large numbers of children for whom English is a second language. These children represent a variety of languages and often are the majority in a single classroom.

There are many theories and arguments about bilingualism. However, it is known that knowledge of multiple languages aids cognitive development in a positive way. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, there are many advantages that benefit children who are raised bilingual from an early age into adulthood. For bilingual children, language skills are stronger in both their primary and secondary languages, and early reading skills tend to come more easily. Also, bilingual children have a greater ability to focus on mental tasks, like abstract reasoning — which comes in handy for test taking.

One way that parents can support bilingualism is by adding bilingual books to their home library, bookshelf, or book corner. The ability for your child to read in both English and another language will strengthen his or her literacy in an organic way. Reading bilingual books also helps children increase their cultural appreciation for others — not only for those that share a language, but for those different from them.

There are a variety of bilingual books available for children — from board books with simple vocabulary to story books with text for English and another language. Starting with these books at an early age will aid children on their path to fluency. Colorful picture books will make



"Little Maria" author Luz M. Mack.

duce bilingual books?

LM: It is important for me to produce bilingual books to enhance my children's understanding of my own childhood experiences, and to be able to share these experiences with children from other cultures. María is a child of the world that all children will be able to see in themselves.

SJ: How many languages?

Will there be more?

LM: The book is available in an English and Spanish edition, English and Italian, and English and French edition. I am working on offering the book as an online application. Children and their families will be able to, through this application, see and hear María and her family's experiences in all the languages offered.

SJ: Any other books in the works?

LM: Definitely! The next installment of the Little María books is "María the Super Helper." This book will show how exciting, fun, and rewarding it can be to be helpful around the home. I am also working on another book that will be called "Incredible You." This book will be aimed at building children's confidence and self-love.

Born and raised in the Dominican Republic, Mack now lives in New York with her husband, Tony, and their three children: Andrea, Chloe, and Tony. Her books (illustrated by Arjeanette Vivero) promote an understanding of cultures, and they detail how childhood looks outside of the United States. The series is available in multiple languages and can be purchased via Amazon.com.

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.

learning a new language (or maintaining a home language) fun and enjoyable for the whole family.

Many children's book authors have a passion for providing language skills through fun stories in an educational way, and using a bilingual approach will immerse kids in other cultures. I spoke to author Luz M. Mack about her first bilingual children's book, "Little María." It's part of a series that is full of beautiful images, with a story centered on a character that will help all curious kids better understand cultures around the world. Here's what she had to say about her approach:

Shnieka Johnson: What was your inspiration?

Luz M. Mack: My inspiration was trying to show my children about my childhood experience. I also wanted to share with them things that other children experienced while growing up in another country, such as the Dominican Republic, as it is very different from what children experience growing up in the United States. That is how the character María originated. Her experiences are very similar to mine as a child growing up, and she enjoys time with her family, friends, and community, which is something I believe that U.S. children will be able to relate to.

SJ: Why was it important for you to pro-

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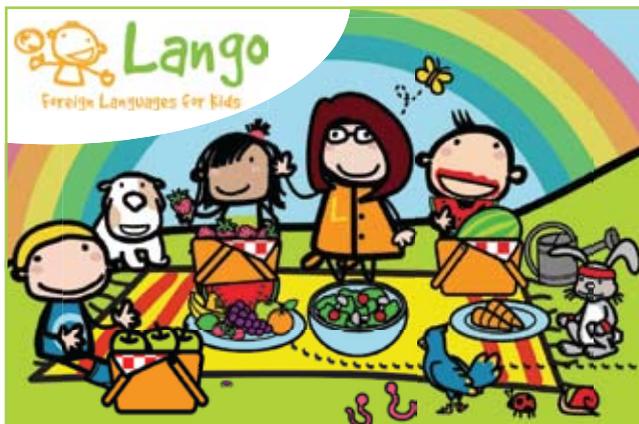
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What kids learn from chores

Many families have a list of tasks that need to be done each day — or week — by children. I can't remember specific chores I had to do as a child. What I do remember is my parents asked me to do things, and I did them.

Many of the things I did could have been considered chores, but my parents never called them that. We had a family mentality that we all took care of the house that we lived in together.

Regardless of what you want to call it — either chores or responsibilities — it is important that your children have an active role in taking care of your home. This can be as easy as setting the table, cleaning up after a meal, taking out garbage, or putting dirty laundry in the hamper. It is critical to teach your small ones that as simple as these things are, they count big time towards keeping your home running smoothly.

Do your children help with any of these actions right now? If not, start with one. Pick one thing you would like them to do. For the next 14 days, make sure this one action happens each and every day.

Can you find a way to get them to do it

without you constantly reminding them? You could place a sign on the wall with the kids' chores, implement a timer to remind them, or integrate them into their routine. You can also consider doing one of the steps of the process together.

Once this one action is part of their daily routine with minimal support from you, begin teaching them to regularly complete a second task around the home. The continuous growth will be satisfying and will make your life easier.

This is so important for you and your small one. It will leave you feeling less like your child's maid and more like his parent. It will teach him to take care of the home, which is an invaluable life skill. It is also a way to spend quality time together. Rather than you doing chores and the kids acting out to get your attention, they will have your attention by helping you.

One final, critical point: children do not know that chores are hard, boring, and challenging. They only learn that when we teach them that.

If you can instead impart on them that home activities are a fun part of life, then they will learn to enjoy them. That is an

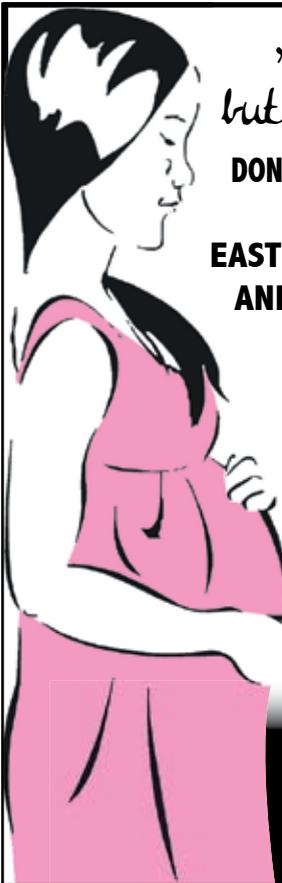


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De-stress yourself

I've recently rekindled my passion for crocheting, a creative endeavor that soothes me. I set aside time for it on most days. As a result, I have purchased a large assortment of yarn in shades of every color. Whenever I go to make something, I sift through various bags searching for what I'm looking for.

Likewise, when I was a young mom I was always frantically searching for a stray glue stick or my keys. Then I bought a rack over my desk to keep my keys securely fastened, and more recently, storage containers to hold various yarns, neatly marked by color and material. I also set up a school zone in my home where my kids could both do their homework and keep their school items.

These small changes made a huge difference in my life, because they brought more peace, simply by eliminating what wasn't working and fostering what brings me joy. If you would like to do the same, read on!

Eliminate obligations

It is not necessary or healthy to take on extra work if you don't want to. We're obviously not talking about your job, because you won't always have a choice there, but so many people, and women in particular, will take on added commitments in their personal lives just so they do not upset anyone (other than yourself!).

So when you get pressure from the PTA or in-laws or neighbors to join yet another committee or work on a bake sale, flea market, or group project, you really can say "no" to anything you have no interest in. It is a sign of good health to set boundaries, so you have time for you and family.

Add solutions

What are the things that drive you absolutely crazy on a regular basis? As a manager, I apply this principle at work, and I'm sure you can relate. When something isn't working, you will likely have a meeting about ways to fix or improve upon it. Yet at home, I would encounter recurring obstacles but not change them!

Whether it is a simple fix like an overcrowded coat rack, a dish tray that goes awry, or a junk drawer that takes up space and serves no purpose, if we take five minutes in the day to ask ourselves what is not working organizationally at home, we can immediately make a decision and plan to change it.



Eliminate communication

This might sound harsh, but consider how many people call, text, and e-mail you daily. Have you ever just sat down to dinner or to help your child with homework and get an urgent text or call from a frantic friend or co-worker who needs their problem heard right now?

Just because we have the technological capability to always be in touch does not mean that we must be at everyone's beck and call. Of course, you will want to leave your phone on for your spouse and kids to be able to reach you, but you can also decide that at a certain time of day, you will not answer it for anyone else. It's not rude, it's self-sustaining.

Add imposed relaxation

This means something different for everyone. Some people reach optimal relaxation when doing yoga. Others get it from running, painting, or doing crafts. Often, it can be something simple like taking a bath or catching up on the your favorite show. No matter what does it for you, it is key to introduce recreation and joy into your daily life on a regular basis. Otherwise, you will end up frazzled, and possibly resentful.

Eliminate reading updates

Sure, Facebook is good for waiting



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

rooms and long bus rides to work, but there are two big reasons to stay away from making it a daily habit.

First off, so many of the perfect family holidays, vacations, and celebrations are falsely re-created snapshots that do not exist in real life. You might see your perfect friend with her perfect kids and perfect home, but not see that one minute after the photo was taken, the kids were arguing, the couple was fighting, and the Cinderella dream was dead. Comparing oneself to anyone (and especially on social media sites where nothing is reality) only sets you up to feel less than.

Secondly, we might absently scroll through our feed and then find ourselves 20 minutes later checking out what our long-lost friend's sister's favorite recipe is. It's a huge time waster, time that could have gone to mindful reading, taking a bath, or savoring that last sip of wine.

Add music

There is something about music that is instantly soothing. When you turn on your favorite songs, your heart rate lowers, your mood changes, and you feel lighter, brighter, and happier. Just think of how much your home's tone changes when you listen to the hostile news channels on television compared to turning off the television and playing your favorite song.

One of my kids' happiest memories, they tell me, is when I would listen to Dave Matthews or System of A Down. Now when they hear those songs, they say they remember us cooking together or doing art projects, and it gives them a good feeling. Music is an instant stress buster, so the next time your home could use a pick-me-up (like during homework hour), turn up the volume, and sing your hearts out.

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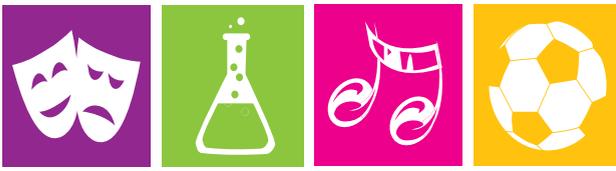
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Enhance eligibility for financial aid

Last month's column focused on college savings plans — the 529, Uniform Transfer to Minor's Act and Uniform Gift to Minor's Act accounts (also called custodial accounts), and Coverdell Education Savings Accounts — that parents, grandparents, and others can use to save for a child's college education. The message was start saving when the child is young. That said, you still may be in a position where you and your child need additional financial aid when the time comes. Just know that even with savings, retirement accounts, and owning a home, you may still be eligible for financial aid.

Below are highlights of some of the factors that could enhance your financial aid eligibility.

Making sure your assets and those of your child are owned by the right person, at the right time, and withdrawn in the correct manner and the proper sequence can increase your financial aid grant. Strategies that can be implemented are too numerous to mention in this column. Planning ahead, consulting your tax advisor, and working with a financial advisor can decrease your chances of making a mistake and increase your financial aid potential.

When applying for aid, nearly all colleges require applicants to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and provide federal tax returns. This information is used to calculate the Expected Family Contribution, an index number that colleges follow to determine how much financial aid you are eligible to receive. Depending on the asset values, and in whose name the assets are owned, can affect how much aid you receive. Although alternative application forms and requirements exist, this column will concentrate only on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

All non-retirement accounts, including bank accounts, CDs, stocks and bonds, 529 accounts, and even investment properties and certain small businesses, are included in Expected Family Contribution calculations. When making a calculation, assets owned by parents have a much lower impact on financial aid grants than assets owned by their children. In general, only 5.64 percent of the value of parent's accounts is expected to be used towards college expenses, as opposed to 20 percent of

a child's assets. Here are some of the most common types of accounts and how they affect the calculation:

Custodial accounts

Custodial accounts are considered an asset of the child. Each year 20 percent of the values of these assets are counted towards the calculation. That is nearly four times more than if the money had been in other types of college savings accounts.

529 Plans and Education Savings Accounts

These accounts are considered assets of the parent, not the child. Each year only 5.64 percent of the value of these accounts is expected to be used for college expenses. Withdrawals made from 529 accounts to pay for college are not included in the calculation and affect following year's financial aid. That is why these plans have become so popular.

The 529 accounts owned by grandparents are not considered when determining the calculation. However, if a grandparent withdraws money from the account to pay for college, it is considered a gift to the child. In these cases the full amount can decrease the next year's financial aid grant by 50 percent of the amount withdrawn. For example, if grandma withdrew \$10,000 from her granddaughter's 529 account and used it to pay for college, the next year's financial aid grant could be reduced by \$5,000 (half of the amount withdrawn). Talking with an advisor about withdrawal strategies before making withdrawals from a grandparent's 529 accounts can lead to increased financial aid grants.

Retirement assets

The value of 401k, 403b, IRA accounts (traditional and Roth), and most other retirement accounts are not included in the calculation. Sometimes people take loans from their retirement accounts to pay for college. Those loan withdrawals are not included in the calculation.

An important thing to remember is when withdrawals are taken from Roth IRA accounts when applying for financial aid: If certain conditions are met, you may be able to withdraw funds from a Roth IRA before retirement age without any tax or



FAMILY FINANCIAL PLANNING

ANTHONY N. CORRAO

penalty. If you do withdraw funds from a Roth IRA, it will be considered untaxed income when calculating, and can affect the next year's financial aid grant by 50 percent of the withdrawal amount.

Small businesses and investment properties

In most cases, the value of a family-owned business is not counted towards the calculation. However, if you own more than 50 percent of the business and have more than 100 full-time employees, the value of the business will be included in the calculation. Investment and rental properties you own do not receive the same exclusion as small businesses. The full value of these properties will be included in the calculation.

Life insurance and annuities

The cash value of your life insurance policy and annuities are not considered in this calculation. However, in certain circumstances not covered in this column, certain types of annuities may be considered when determining your financial aid eligibility.

This column is a brief overview of the complex financial aid system. Planning in advance and working with a knowledgeable financial advisor should help you achieve your goals.

Anthony N. Corrao is an independent advisor with Corrao Wealth Management. For more than 25 years, he has helped families with their financial goals by developing financial, educational, and retirement planning strategies. He can be found at www.corraowm.com.

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Changing your family's bad habits

When I was a child, my mother would clean up after dinner, and then announce, “The kitchen is closed.” That was her way of saying we had better not go out there and make any kind of mess. No cooking, heating up, or anything else that required dishes to be used or messes to be made. I thought she was crazy. And now I find myself saying, “I’m done cleaning. Do not make a mess. If you use any dishes, you clean them up.” It’s my 2017 version of “kitchen’s closed.”

And yet, on a regular basis, I will find cups from late-night drinks in the living room, tea drips or sugar bits on the counter, or (gasp) a half a sink of dishes in the kitchen when I wake up, and it drives me mad.

On the other hand, what drives my husband mad is when I do the dishes when there aren’t really that many to be done. “You don’t have to run and do every dish the minute it’s dirty,” he says. Of course, that’s an exaggeration, and it’s also an expression of how he would prefer I relax a bit instead of getting annoyed over a trivial thing like dishes, and I would rather get the dishes done, so I can relax.

Of course, there are other bad habits that my family, and many others, are guilty of: constant arguing between siblings, not sitting together during dinner, and everyone being on their phone entirely too much. Today’s busy lifestyle may be in direct opposition to quality family time, but it doesn’t mean we can’t all work harder to not fall into bad family habits, and overcome them when we do.

Make rules together

Create family rules with your partner early on. Decide together what is important for you as a family and why. Different families have different ideas of what constitutes acceptable bedtimes, dinner etiquette, and homework schedules as well as proper cleaning and organizational tasks.

Talk it out

As the kids get older, integrate what makes good and bad habits into family discussions so you are all on the same page. This helps kids know exactly what is expected of them and every member of the family, and what consequences will ensue from bad habits.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Nip it in the bud

Don’t let infractions slide. Maybe you’re tired and not in the mood to reprimand your child for the messy room or the texting at the table. Frankly, it’s often easier to disregard it, but ignoring it will create an unfair element between siblings, and teach your children that rules only apply sometimes.

But don’t display anger

Raising your voice or losing your temper is no way to create peace in your home, and it just showcases your bad habit — losing your cool. Remember that children need gentle prodding and clear-cut guidelines to thrive. Even so, they will still fall into bad habits from time to time as we all do. We need to call attention to it and calmly redirect their actions.

Include yourself

Parents need to keep up good family habits just as much (some might argue even more so) than the children. We also need to keep up our own standards. Sure, work might require us to answer co-workers during family time, but we cannot fall into bad habits and then expect our kids not to do the same. Remember, they are watching everything we do, and we are constantly modeling good (and bad) behavior for them.

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

Front Line Hero

Queens immigration specialist honored for tireless work

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

The ongoing efforts of quiet, dedicated heroes — who work closely with people in need to help them do better — seem to go unnoticed.

But that's not always the case. Every year, New York Nonprofit Media (a news source for local non-profits), recognizes Front Line Heroes from that industry who work in the field helping clients, while making their organizations' goals a reality.

This year, Queens Community House's Immigration Specialist Carmen Gutierrez was named a 2017 Front Line Hero and recognized at a recent ceremony. The longtime Jackson Heights resident said she could not be more appreciative of the honor.

"It was an honor to be nominated and awarded, and it was wonderful to be surrounded by hardworking people from many different organizations," she said. "Thank you to my family, friends, and co-workers at Queens Community House for giving me the inspiration and strength to keep doing what I do every day. I hope I can continue to help the lives of immigrant families for the better."

There were 29 people from other non-profits who were given awards that day, and approximately 150 attendees at the event.

Providing 'tools' and compassion

Serving more than 20,000 children, youth, adults, and older adults every year, Queens Community House's mission is to provide individuals and families with the tools to enrich their lives and build healthy, inclusive communities. Through a broad network of programs operating out of 25 sites in 11 neighborhoods, it offers local residents a much-needed support system at every stage of life, helping them to develop the knowledge, confidence, and skills to change their lives for the better and become active participants in their larger community.

Gutierrez mostly receives Queens-based clients who range in age from 20 to 90, but the organization's clients may also come from all five boroughs, as well as Long Island and New Jersey.

"I just try to give them all that I can and let them know that they can be confident in what they are doing," said the awardee, who was born in Ecuador and raised in

Venezuela.

Once she arrived here, young Carmen promised herself that she would always aim high. During her first week in the U.S., she attended a free English class in her Queens community. Later, she got into college and graduated at 33, because she was a part-time student and full-time employee, working to provide for her mothers and sisters. And in time, she started her own little family and became a dedicated wife and mother.

Later, Gutierrez worked as a paralegal for about 20 years. Then, after getting her Board of Immigration Appeals certification, she worked at Queens Community House for 14 of those 20 years. Now, she says she would love to be a lawyer and would like to take her LSATs in the near future.

Most of her work as an immigration specialist involves providing consultations and applications, such as family petitions for parents, spouses, or children seeking to come into the U.S. and be reunited with their families.

"We assist people with their applications to become U.S. citizens. After a parent has obtained their citizenship, their children have an opportunity to derive their own U.S. citizenship from their parents, and we file their child citizenship certificate application. We also do DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) applications for young adults," she explained.

Advocating for immigrants' rights

With Gutierrez's guidance and support, thousands have achieved their own version of the American Dream, just as she has.

Struggling to adjust to difficult circumstances and a new way of life, more than 700 families and individuals, locally and beyond, were fortunate enough to have her working tirelessly by their side and advocating on their behalf, in their quest to gain citizenship or legal residency within the U.S. (and that was just in the last six months). And, because of her unbridled compassion and empathy for those who are trying to make it here, Gutierrez feels compelled to take that extra step whenever she can; going above and beyond, she accompanies frail candidates to their hearings, provides community workshops, and volunteers at citizenship clinics.

"I remember [when] Carmen helped a Colombian woman obtain her permanent residency after her son was murdered," said Queens Community House Associate Executive Director Mary Abbate. "She showed true courage by going straight to the immigration office and asking them to approve the woman's application, so that she could go to the funeral in Colombia and still come back to her family here in the U.S. Carmen has made it her mission to stop deportations, and she is a true advocate for the immigrant community."

According to the organization, her work also involves assisting those who were targets of immigration scams get back on track, and helping refugees obtain their permanent refugee status. In addition, she has aided students who have been in the U.S. since they were toddlers to continue their education and to stay in the country they've known as their home.

"It's very important to me and all of us at QCH, to help facilitate the families immigrating to the U.S. through the process, with minimal confusion and frustration," said the Front Line Hero. "As an immigrant myself, I feel immensely passionate about the work I do helping families stay together and reunite in the U.S., knowing that many of them are coming here for a better life and future for themselves and their children, just as I did years ago."

There are certain cases that need to be referred to an attorney, so Gutierrez said she refers some clients to lawyers at trusted organizations.

"We have a monthly immigration clinic and outreach with Legal Aid Immigration Unit attorneys and a weekly immigration clinic with the CUNY Citizenship Now attorneys; I decide which cases could benefit from an appointment with them.

"Sometimes, I provide a brief consultation and a referral to another agency specialized in the matter they need assistance in, if I feel that they are better suited to address a specific issue or concern of the client," she explained. "It could be a family issue, such as domestic violence, or another related family issue; in this case, we could refer them to Family Justice Center, Sanctuary for Family, Family Court, etc. There are different issues that could be addressed in a phone call or an in-person consultation and we could direct them forward depending on their particular need."



Jackson Heights resident and immigration specialist Carmen Gutierrez was recognized as a Front Line Hero for going above and beyond in her work with local immigrant families.

Endless resources

Queens offers a wide variety of resources for immigrants and Queens Community House is proud to serve that community in a multitude of ways, including library services, adult English classes in public schools for those learning English as a second language, and through local organizations dedicated to serving the borough's communities.

According to Gutierrez, it also has a department for eviction prevention, as well as housing specialists. Even college advisers in middle and high schools in Corona, Forest Hills, Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights, to name a few. In Forest Hills, it has a special department for seniors, with two social workers, that provides activities, Meals on Wheels, and other programs.

With regard to funding for resources, it subcontracts with the Legal Aid Society and the Immigrant Opportunities Initiative. And this year, it was very lucky to receive a grant of \$7,500 from an anonymous donor, said Gutierrez, who refers many clients to the Queens District Attorney's Office for Immigration Affairs. Queens Community House also works with Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, whose office has been committed to enhancing services for immigrants and multicultural understanding across the borough, thanks in part to her Immigration Task Force

initiative, which has served as a bridge between diverse immigrant communities and local government.

'The World's Borough'

Recent immigrants, regardless of where they come from, can benefit from a cornucopia of resources made available to them, especially in sanctuary cities like New York. And, because so many have settled in Queens, nowhere else on the planet is that diversity reflected and celebrated more, than in "The World's Borough," which prides itself on the cultural richness of its immigrant communities.

"I'm very proud and happy to live in Queens, which is known to be the most diverse place in the world, and I love knowing that the work I do and the work done by everyone at QCH, is helping to make that possible and to keep that diversity thriving," said Gutierrez.

With nearly half, or 2.3 million, of its residents born abroad and speaking more than 135 languages, families that hail from 120-plus nations have called Queens neighborhoods home. And, while each community enjoys its own traditions and is known for its unique ethnic foods, the bounty of local offerings is meant to be shared with others.

Most New Yorkers and savvy visitors alike know that a ride on the No. 7 train

will take you on an international gastro and shopping tour of the borough. So, for example, if you happen to exit the subway at the Jackson Heights-Roosevelt Avenue stop, you'll probably feel like you're in India. Taking up two blocks along 74th Street between Broadway and 35th Avenue, Little India's main shopping thoroughfare boasts colorful shops selling sari fabric and Bollywood movies, as well as restaurants serving South Asian fare, while the Jackson Heights library branch offers texts in Russian, Bengali, Korean, Hindi, and Portuguese, among others.

By the way, did you know that students at Jackson Heights elementary school PS 69 — which has the most diverse student body in the country — speak approximately 84 different languages?

Advocating for immigrants' rights

Helping those who come here integrate into local communities and adjust to the American way of living while advocating for their rights is no easy task. It requires a wealth of knowledge and expertise in the field of immigration, including its legal aspects. But beyond that, it requires a mix of essential qualities: a giving spirit and an innate desire to make people's lives better, combined with an ability to problem-solve, troubleshoot, and make things happen de-

spite daunting challenges. As a Front Line Hero, Gutierrez seems to have all of those valuable attributes.

“Carmen has been a beacon of hope for many immigrant families; not only is she compassionate and kind, but she guides her clients through their application processes seamlessly. She understands the needs of Queens families and their hope to stay together in the country they now call home, and she does everything she can to make that dream a reality,” said Queens Community House’s Executive Director Ben Thomases.

What does the future hold for these families?

“Our immigrant population is concerned for its immigration status. I understand that in this current moment in time, many immigrant families have fears for their future, but I hope to help them achieve their dreams of citizenship in the best way that I can,” said Gutierrez.

“I hope to see them reunite with their families and loved ones, and to become proud and hardworking citizens of the United States. I will do my best to help each individual case, but I know that many times, the process can be quite difficult and some cases can be harder than others. We are providing the information to families that may need to plan in case of

“As an immigrant, I feel immensely passionate about the work I do helping families stay together and reunite in the U.S., knowing that many of them are coming here for a better life and future for themselves and their children, just as I did years ago.”

an immigration detention.

Just like everyone else, hardworking immigrant parents raising their children here in the U.S. wish for success and better lives for their kids, as they grow up in an open society that strives for equality.

After all, no matter who you are in America, the world can still be your oyster.

That was what Gutierrez taught her daughter, who has been in the gifted and talented program in school since kindergarten. She reminds her: “Today is a new day. Do your best!”

Like most parents, she feels that her family gives most meaning to her life, but says her work does as well.

Talking about her favorite pastimes and hobbies, Gutierrez said she loves family gatherings, parks, and picnics, as well as spending quality time with her daughter, working on arts-and-crafts projects like

origami and painting.

“We used to attend library activities for kids and spend hours there reading great books. We love to visit museums and parks, and we did volunteer work with other kids at Flushing Meadow Park recently for Earth Day.”

But she says what she likes most about her job is “listening to people’s concerns and providing the best solutions and services that they deserve.

“I like to see the happiness people feel when they finally become citizens or reunite with their families. Even when a client doesn’t pass the test or their application request gets denied or complicated, I am happy to console them and encourage them not to give up.”

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

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Between the lines

The lost joy of phone heart-to-hearts

BY KARA MARTINEZ BACHMAN

When I was young, we spent the greater part of our afternoons and evenings in idle gossip. My friends and I would lie on our respective living room couches, or on the carpeted bedroom floors of our suburban ranch homes, and press telephone receivers up against our ears. We'd giggle into what was, back then, a rotary phone, or a fancy new push button model. Those telephones are not like what we have now. They were connected to the wall by a long cord that seemed, to us, like some kind of social lifeline.

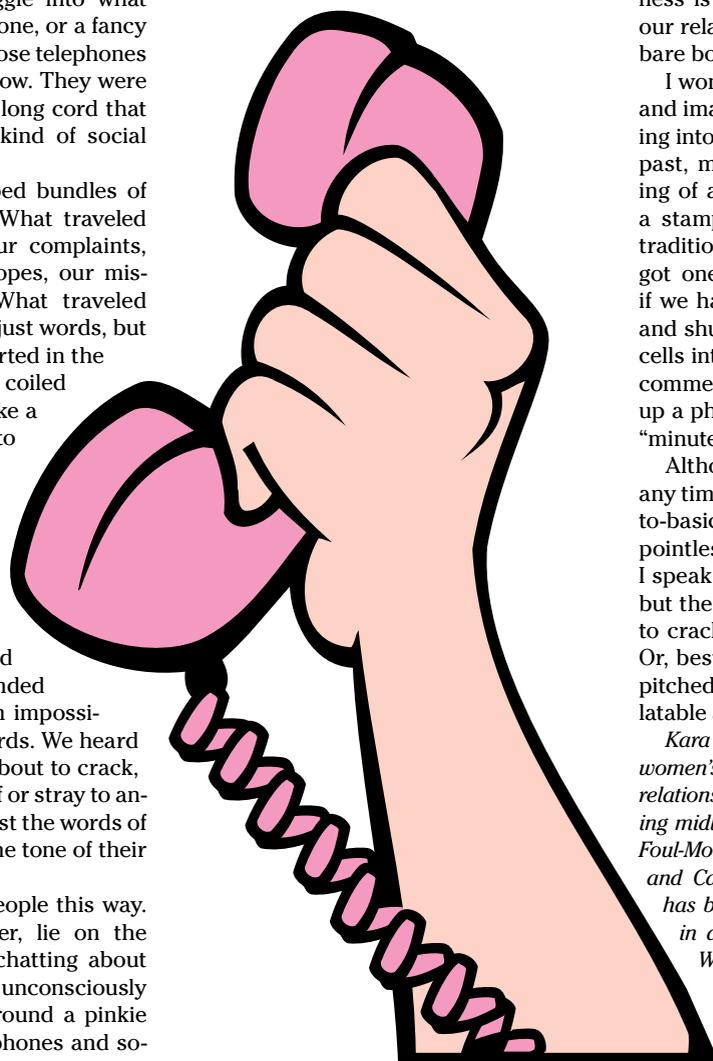
And those plastic-wrapped bundles of wire were social lifelines. What traveled along those wires were our complaints, our gossipy stories, our hopes, our mistakes, and our dreams. What traveled along those wires were not just words, but heartfelt vibrations that started in the receiver, traveled down the coiled handset cord that looked like a slinky, and went straight into the hearts of our girlfriends and, if we were lucky, into those of our boyfriends as well.

In this way, we really heard those we were communicating with. Literally. We heard the guffaws and the wisecracks, the long-winded sighs that would have been impossible to translate into any words. We heard when a friend's voice was about to crack, so we knew when to back off or stray to another topic. We heard not just the words of our friends, but we heard the tone of their souls. We were in no rush.

Now, we rarely talk to people this way. Most of us seldom, if ever, lie on the bedroom floor for hours, chatting about nothing in particular while unconsciously twisting the phone cord around a pinkie finger. In this age of smartphones and so-

cial networking, it seems that social sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have completely replaced our time spent listening. More than anything, social networking is not so much about listening as it is about talking.

What fun is there in reading quirky comments on an electronic page, where the guffaws and voice inflections and all-



telling sighs are lost somewhere between the pixels? What fun can be found in the swiftness and concision of a text message? What things are we missing that are hidden between the lines?

The sad answer is that we will never know. Will kids raised on social media ever really know the subtleties of meaningful, yet idle, conversation? There are no texts or Facebook posts, however clever, that can compete with the creative conversational meandering that leads a friendship into new, and unexpected, territory. Not to mention the most important part: it is totally impossible to paint our toes while we tweet.

We use bits and bytes and blips and screens and fonts to isolate and compartmentalize our relationships into something that resembles business. Nowadays, we just want to cut to the chase. We don't want to waste our time. Or our words. As with the 140 character limit of Twitter, we are inadvertently encouraged by the technology to say as little as possible as quickly as possible. This is not how real relationships are built; this is how business is streamlined. We are mechanizing our relationships; we are bringing them to bare bones.

I wonder if some day we may look back and imagine laughing, sighing, and squealing into a receiver as a quaint mode of the past, much like we today view the sending of a telegram, or even the sending of a stamped personal correspondence via traditional mail. When is the last time you got one of those? In either case, maybe if we had the willpower, we would log off and shut down. Maybe we would toss our cells into the sea, like in that familiar beer commercial. Maybe we would instead pick up a phone that is not counting down our "minutes."

Although I won't eschew the "socials" any time soon, I personally vote for a back-to-basics embrace of time spent in idle, pointless chatter. And the kind of chatter I speak of is not the kind found in tweets, but the kind found in a voice that is about to crack. Or in a barely audible "hmmm." Or, best of all, in my very favorite: a high-pitched, girlish, totally pointless, un-translatable and highly inefficient "Squeel!"

Kara Martinez Bachman is author of the women's humor essay collection on parenting, relationships, and the pros and cons of reaching midlife, "Kissing the Crisis: Field Notes on Foul-Mouthed Babies, Disenchanted Women, and Careening into Middle Age." Her work has been heard on NPR and has appeared in dozens of publications, including The Writer, Funny Times, the New Orleans Times-Picayune, the Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop, and many parenting magazines.

Calendar

JUNE



Etienne Frossard

Take a kayaking adventure!

Life preservers on, helmets secured, sunscreen applied — get ready to enjoy a day of kayaking on the East River with members from the Brooklyn Bridge Park Boathouse.

Boaters can put their paddles in the water from June 7 through Aug. 26 and have a fun day on the river.

Kayaking, June 7 through Aug. 26 on

Thursdays from 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm, and Saturdays, 10 am to 3 pm. Free. Open to all ages. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. No reservations required.

Brooklyn Bridge Park Boathouse (End of Pineapple Street and Furman Street in Brooklyn Heights; www.bbpboathouse.org).

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

THURS, JUNE 1

IN BROOKLYN

Transit Tots: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; 10:15 am to 11 am; Free with admission to the museum.

Stories, games, and surprises for our youngest transportation fans! Free with admission. For ages 2-5 and adult companions.

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

Get your hands dirty at kids' discovery stations throughout the garden. Investigate and classify plants, touch a carnivorous plant and learn how it eats, or go on a monarch and milkweed exploration in the meadow! This is a drop-in program for schools and families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather.

FRI, JUNE 2

IN BROOKLYN

Fab Friday Kids Concerts: Putnam Triangle, Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; www.fabfulton.org; 10 am to 11 am and Noon to 1 pm; Free.

Little ones get pumped to listen to Anza's Spanish Sing-Along (in partnership with Busy Bodies), a musical morning in sunny Putnam Triangle! They will enjoy a lively sing-alongs, mini music lessons, storytelling circles, and interactive role-play in a social setting, while parents and caregivers look on — and join in! Suitable for children 12 months to 5 years.

Kids Discovery Stations: 10:15 am to 12:15 am. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Thursday, June 1.

"Show Boat:" St. Patrick's School Auditorium, 97th Street and Fourth Avenue; (718) 482-3173. www.narrowcommunitytheater.com; 8 pm; \$25 (\$20 seniors, students and children).



'Moo'ving to the beat

"Moo-ve" on over to the Putnam Triangle to listen to Moozika on June 30.

The local group performs as part of the Fab Friday Kids Concert series and offers children 12 months to 5 years old an opportunity to move with the beat, enjoy lively sing-alongs, have a mini-music lesson, listen to a story, and enjoy interactive role-play in a social

setting.

Parents and caregivers should not feel left out — they can look on or join in.

Moozika at Fab Friday Kids series, June 30, from 10 am to 11 am. Free.

Putnam Triangle (Fulton Street and Grand Avenue in Clinton Hill, www.fabfulton.org).

Presented by the Narrows Community Theater, this classic Kern and Hammerstein musical is a memorial tribute to original cast member Mickey Sullivan. Great for all ages, with classic songs.

SAT, JUNE 3

IN BROOKLYN

It's My Estuary Day: Kaiser Park, Bayview Avenue; www.nycgvparks.org; 8 am to 3 pm; Free.

We'll do big beach cleanup to start the day and will have a dozen marine science learning stations set up for everyone to investigate and learn about Coney Island Creek. This volunteer event is family-friendly. Organized by Cultural Research Divers, Brooklyn Marine STEM Education Alliance, and Making Waves.

Flea Market: Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit, 8117 Bay Pkwy. at 82nd Street; (718) 837-0412; www.episcopalchurch-of-holyspirit.org; 9 am to 4 pm; Free to enter.

Clothing, family commodities, arts, books, refreshments, and more — great for

community service.

Family Discovery: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; 1 pm to 3 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Experiment, learn, and play together in the Discovery Garden. Hands-on stations throughout the garden's meadow, woodland, and marsh habitats and in the vegetable garden encourage families to explore nature together. Create a nature-based craft, artwork, or invention with Discovery Garden docents. This is a drop-in program for families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather.

"Show Boat:" 2 pm. St. Patrick's School Auditorium. See Friday, June 2.

Camping: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 6 pm to 7 am; Free.

We camp to create lasting memories, connect with the natural world, and bond with our families. Camping affords us the opportunity to unplug from the diversions

Calendar

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

of everyday life and to laugh and play with our families. The Urban Park Rangers celebrate the tradition of camping and we look forward to welcoming your family. Families chosen by lottery.

Discovery Walk: Plumb Beach Parking Lot, Belt Parkway and East Exit 9B; www.eventbrite.com/e/horseshoe-crab-discovery-walks-tickets; 6:30 pm to 8 pm; Free.

Roam the sandy shores and interact with some prehistoric beach dwellers — horseshoe crabs. Program is sponsored by NYC H2O. Their mission is to educate and inspire New Yorkers about the city's incredible water system. We want to create a generation of concerned, educated New Yorkers who conserve and advocate for natural resources. Pre-registration required.

SUN, JUNE 4

IN BROOKLYN

Holding History: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11 am; Free with museum admission.

What makes an object "historical?" Why do museums keep objects behind glass? Children will ponder these questions while being able to physically hold, touch, and feel historical artifacts from our collection. They will learn about the history of those objects through this tactical investigation and by relating these historical artifacts to their own lives.

Garden storytime: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., at Eastern Parkway; (718) 623-7220; www.bbg.org; Noon to 1 pm; Free with admission to the gardens.

Read garden-inspired stories alongside volunteers. Drop in anytime during program hours to join in. This is a drop-in program for families with children of all ages. All programs are outdoors and canceled in inclement weather.

Rock and Roll Playhouse: Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets; (718) 963-3369; therockandrollplayhouse.com/brooklynbowl; Noon; \$10 (children under 1 year old free).

Weekly programming offers families an opportunity to enjoy music together using educational cornerstones like literature or songwriting with kids.

Family Discovery: 1 pm to 3 pm. Brooklyn Botanic Garden. See Saturday, June 3.

Pirate School: Waterfront Museum Barge, 290 Conover St. near Reed Street; (718) 624-4719; www.waterfrontmuseum.org; 2 pm; \$13-\$18.

It's a one-man family vaudeville show featuring Billy Bones and the Good Pirate. Children will laugh out loud.

"Show Boat:" 2 pm. St. Patrick's School



Paula Berg

Storytime in the park

Have fun this summer listening to stories on Pier 3 Greenway Terrace from June 6 to Aug. 2.

Join a children's librarian from the Brooklyn Public Library to hear stories, sing songs, and enjoy the breeze from the water. The only thing more fun than a good storytime is one with

a view of the Brooklyn Bridge!

Summer Storytime, June 6 to Aug. 2, 11 am. Free.

Pier 3 Greenway Terrace [Furman and Pierrepont streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 514-7359; www.brooklynbridgepark.org/park/pier-3-greenway-terrace].

Auditorium. See Friday, June 2.

MON, JUNE 5

IN BROOKLYN

Block studio and lab: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am; 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 table-top sized Kapla Planks and Mag-natiles, as well as artist James Paulius's house-shaped wooden blocks and pegs from his installation Sky Village.

TUES, JUNE 6

IN BROOKLYN

Explorers' Day: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 10 am - 4 pm.

Tuesdays are dedicated to our

permanent exhibits. Together with your child, can you find an authentic West Indian Day Parade costume? Have you met the Madagascar hissing cockroaches in our greenhouse? Can you try your dance moves in Global Beats?

THURS, JUNE 8

IN BROOKLYN

"Cinderella Samba": Highland Park, Jackie Robinson Parkway; www.cityparks-foundation.org/event/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-cinderella-samba-2; 10 am to 11 am and Noon to 1 pm; Free.

This contemporary twist on the classic "Cinderella" fairy tale is presented by The CityParks PuppetMobile and sets the timeless story in the lush landscape of Brazil, where, thanks to the help of her fairy godmother, Cinderella attends Rio de Janeiro's biggest Carnival gala and dances the samba with Prince Paulo himself.

FRI, JUNE 9

IN BROOKLYN

Red Hook Fest: PS 15, 71 Sullivan St. between Van Brunt and Richards streets;

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

(718) 643-6790; www.redhookfest.com; 5:30-7:30 pm; Free.

Kick off summer with the 24th annual Red Hook Fest! The weekend starts out with a community cook out and DJ dance party on the beautiful Brooklyn waterfront.

Sea Shanties and Folk Music: Waterfront Museum Barge, 290 Conover St. near Reed Street; (718) 624-4719; www.waterfrontmuseum.org; 7:30 pm; \$5-\$20.

Slackjaw and Holler perform favorite sea shanties.

SAT, JUNE 10

IN BROOKLYN

Red Hook Fest: Louis Valentino Pier, Coffey Street at Ferris Street; (718) 643-6790; www.redhookfest.com; 2 pm-7 pm; Free.

Kick off summer with the 24th annual Red Hook Fest! Featuring a lineup of professional bands and dance companies, plus free activities for all ages like kayak rides in New York Harbor, face-painting, and an interactive scavenger hunt.

Pet costume day: Deno's Wonder Wheel on the Boardwalk at W. 12th Street; 2 pm; 2 Cans of dog food as registration fee.

The annual event where our four-legged, two-legged, and even some feathered and finned friends are given a chance to strut their stuff is back! You can take Fido on The Wonder Wheel because pets ride free when accompanied by their owner, or participate in the costume contest. Prizes include passes for Deno's Wonder Wheel and gift certificates to Petco. All registrations must bring two cans of cat or dog food as an entrance fee.

Discovery Walk: 6:30 pm to 8 pm. Plumb Beach Parking Lot. See Saturday, June 3.

SUN, JUNE 11

IN BROOKLYN

Party on Wheels: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; 9 am to 11 am; \$60 (\$40 children 2-17; \$165 family of four pack).

Bring the whole family to our fourth annual family benefit for exclusive early access including breakfast and birthday cake, crafts and dancing, conductor cab photo booth, face painting, model trains, and rides on our 100-year-old Lo-V subway cars right from the museum platform! Registration required.

Antique Automobile Show: Floyd Bennet Field, Ryan Visitor Center, Flatbush Road between Belt Parkway and Aviation Road; (718) 788-3400; clubs.hemmings.com/brooklynclub; 10 am-4 pm; Free.

Join the Spring Car Show, displaying vintage, antique, classic, and military cars.



Canines at Coney Island

It's back! Pet Costume Day returns to Coney Island on June 10.

The annual event where our four-legged, two-legged, and even some feathered and finned friends are given a chance to strut their stuff is a tail-wagging good time.

First prize is a season pass for Deno's Wonder Wheel and a \$150 certificate to Petco, second prize is day passes to the Wheel and a \$75 gift certificate to Petco, and third prize also garners day passes to the Wheel along with a \$25 certificate to Petco. Contestants will be judged for Funniest Costume, Most Creative Costume, and Best Pet/Owner Costume Combo!

The contest is limited to 25 entries, and registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. All participants must bring two cans of cat or dog food as an entrance fee. All cans will be donated to The Sean Casey Animal Rescue, which will have an adoption vehicle on W. 12th Street for the day. Rain date for the festivities is June 11.

You can also take Fido on The Wonder Wheel — because pets ride free when accompanied by their owner.

You can pre-register at www.wonderwheel.com.

Pet Costume Day, June 10 at 2 pm.

Deno's Wonder Wheel (Boardwalk at W. 12th Street in Coney Island).

Calendar

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

Basic Canoeing: Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; www.prospectpark.org/audubon; 11 am to 2 pm; Free.

Few experiences compare with being on the open water in New York City. The rhythm of the waves, the sun on your face, and the exhilaration of slicing through the water all add up to an experience you'll never forget. Our trained Urban Park Rangers will lead you on canoe adventures that range from the gentle waters of protected lakes to the challenging open waters of rivers and bays. All canoe programs are for ages 8 years and older. Participation in a mandatory safety review led by a trained park ranger is required. This basic canoeing program is great for all skill levels.

Holding History: 11 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, June 4.

Rock and Roll Playhouse: Noon. Brooklyn Bowl. See Sunday, June 4.

TUES, JUNE 13

IN BROOKLYN

Explorers' Day: 10 am – 4 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, June 6.

WED, JUNE 14

IN BROOKLYN

Saltwater fishing: American Veterans Memorial Pier, Bay Ridge Avenue and Belt Parkway; (718) 421-2021; www.nycgov-parks.org; 11 am to 12:30 pm; Free.

Catch-and-release fishing is a great way to get outdoors and discover nature just a few blocks from home. Our experienced Rangers teach the ethics of fishing and the ecology of our waterways on every fishing program. You can try to hook a pumpkinseed sunfish, carp, or chain pickerel. All equipment is provided. This program is recommended for ages 8 years and older. Participation is first-come, first-served.

THURS, JUNE 15

IN BROOKLYN

Transit Tots: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; 10:15 am to 11 am; Free with admission to the museum.

Stories, games, and surprises for our youngest transportation fans! Free with admission. For ages 2-5 and adult companions.

FRI, JUNE 16

IN BROOKLYN

Fab Friday Kids Concerts: Putnam



Jeannine Casati

Same story, new twist

“Cinderella” gets a twist with “Cinderella Samba” at Highland Park on June 8.

This contemporary twist on the classic fairy tale is presented by The CityParks Puppet Mobile and sets the story in the lush landscape of Brazil where, thanks to the help of her fairy godmother, Cinderella attends Rio de Janeiro's biggest Carnival gala and dances the samba with Prince Paulo himself.

When Cinderella is forced to flee the gala just before midnight, the prince sets out to find the mystery woman who stole his heart in hopes of marrying her. The production fea-

tures an original commissioned musical soundtrack that brings samba center-stage, handcrafted festival floats on parade, and one-of-a-kind marionettes donning their most vibrant Carnival costumes, created by the expert puppeteers from the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre in Central Park.

“Cinderella Samba” June 8, 10 am to 11 am and noon to 1 pm. Free performance is open to all ages.

Highland Park (Between Jackie Robinson Parkway and Jamaica Avenue in Cypress Hills, www.cityparksfoundation.org/event/cityparks-puppetmobile-presents-cinderella-samba-2).

Triangle, Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; www.fabfulton.org; 10 am to 11 am and Noon to 1 pm; Free.

Little ones get pumped to listen to Shake, Rattle and Roll — Cuba with Roman Oguardio Diaz, a musical morning in sunny Putnam Triangle!

SAT, JUNE 17

IN BROOKLYN

Flea Market: 9 am to 4 pm. Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit. See Saturday, June 3.

Free Family Day: The Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. (718) 629-5400; programs@wyckoffmuseum.org; wyckoffmuseum.org/events/family-days; 11 am – 3 pm; Free.

History comes alive as you explore a new theme in the garden or historic farmhouse each month. Educators assist you and your family to explore what life was like in rural Brooklyn and investigate clues to the past. Touch old artifacts, examine the historic architecture, and get to know one of Brooklyn's first families, the Wyckoffs. The activities are best suited for kids ages 4 through 10. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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

Use all of your senses and explore the park, searching high and low for clues with the Urban Park Rangers as your guide. Nature scavenger hunts are a great way to connect to the natural world and get mov-

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

ing outside.

"Earthquake & Friends Father's Day Comedy Show:" Kings Theatre, 1027 Flatbush Ave. between Beverly Road and Tilden Avenue; www.kingstheatre.com; 8 pm; Tickets start at \$54.

Comedian Earthquake, known for his role as Uncle Mike in "Everybody Hates Chris," will headline the event with a stellar lineup of comedians accompanying him on the stage. The show will surely be a highly entertaining and laugh-out-loud evening for dads and their families!

SUN, JUNE 18

IN BROOKLYN

Holding History: 11 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, June 4.

Rock and Roll Playhouse: Noon. Brooklyn Bowl. See Sunday, June 4.

TUES, JUNE 20

IN BROOKLYN

Explorers' Day: 10 am – 4 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, June 6.

THURS, JUNE 22

IN BROOKLYN

Transit Tots: 10:15 am to 11 am. New York Transit Museum. See Thursday, June 15.

SAT, JUNE 24

IN BROOKLYN

Game Day and Chess: Putnam Triangle, Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; www.fabfulton.org; 10 am to 3 pm; Free.

Take your fun offline for this awesome day dedicated to all things games! From urban croquet to double-Dutch jumping to traditional board games, there will be something for everyone to play the day away. Check out the life-sized chess board, or even better, play against a chess expert — 21-year-old Stanford University co-ed and Brooklyn native Rochelle Ballantyne will face multiple challengers — simultaneously. (Free registration starts at 10 am!)

Camping Gear and How to Use it: Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

NYC Parks' bright and talented Urban Park Ranges are what make our Weekend Adventure programs so amazing. This hands-on workshop will give you a list of essentials to bring on your next camping trip. You will learn proper use of cutting tools and wood processing, and how to take your camping skills to the next level. Please note: Registration is required; to register, please visit nyc.gov/parks/rangers.



Alexa Hoyer

Learning double Dutch

Whether jumping in or out, double-Dutch jumping is back at Brooklyn Bridge Park in Open Ropes, from June 7 through Aug. 30.

Open Ropes is a double-Dutch jump rope session open to everyone of any age, skill, and jump style. Skilled instructors are on-hand to provide basic instruction in a fun block party environment.

Grab your partners, grab two ropes, and get into the jump of things.

Open Ropes, June 7 through Aug. 30 on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm. Free. All skills welcome.

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 2 [Joralemon Street at Furman Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgепark.org].

SUN, JUNE 25

IN BROOKLYN

Holding History: 11 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Sunday, June 4.

Rock and Roll Playhouse: Noon. Brooklyn Bowl. See Sunday, June 4.

TUES, JUNE 27

IN BROOKLYN

Explorers' Day: 10 am – 4 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Tuesday, June 6.

THURS, JUNE 29

IN BROOKLYN

Transit Tots: 10:15 am to 11 am. New York Transit Museum. See Thursday, June 15.

FRI, JUNE 30

IN BROOKLYN

Fab Friday Kids Concerts: Putnam

Triangle, Fulton Street and Grand Avenue; www.fabfulton.org; 10 am to 11 am; Free.

Little ones get pumped to listen to Moozika, a musical morning in sunny Putnam Triangle!

LONG-RUNNING

IN BROOKLYN

The Ed Center: Brooklyn Bridge Park – Pier 6, Atlantic Avenue at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3 pm to 5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm to 5 pm, until Wed, Aug. 30; Free.

Get to know Brooklyn Bridge Park and visit the giant aquarium filled with East River critters, a 10-foot scale model of Brooklyn Bridge Park, the reading corner, and so much more.

Basketball clinics: Basketball Courts at Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 2 Promenade; www.brooklynbridgepark.org/pages; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4 pm, until Thurs, Aug. 31; Free.

Improve basic basketball skills with the

Big and Little Skills Academy on Pier 2. Each clinic will include either yoga to enhance flexibility or flag football for agility training. For children 8 to 17 years old.

Train Operator Workshop: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street; (718) 694-1600; www.nytransitmuseum.org; Fridays and Saturdays, 1:30 pm, 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! Recommended for children 10 years and older. Be aware that space is limited.

Touch Tank: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, until Sun, July 9; Free with museum admission.

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

Music in Motion: Fulton Ferry Landing, 1 Water St. at Furman Street; www.bargemusic.org; Saturday, June 3, 4 pm; Saturday, June 10, 4 pm; Saturday, June 17, 4 pm; Saturday, June 24, 4 pm; 4 pm; Free.

Bargemusic presents a family concert of chamber music on its floating barge. Doors open 15 minutes before the performance — no reserved seating is available. The hour-long concert is followed by a discussion with the artists.

Summer storytime: Pier 3 Greenway Terrace, Furman and Pierrepont streets; (718) 514-7359; www.brooklynbridgepark.org/park/pier-3-greenway-terrace; Wednesdays, 11 am, Wed, June 7 – Wed, Aug. 2; Free.

Enjoy storytime with librarians from the Brooklyn Public Library who read fun stories from their summer reading list and more. Hosted by the Brooklyn Bridge Conservancy.

Kayaking: Brooklyn Bridge Park Boat-house, end of Pineapple St. and Furman Street; www.bbpboathouse.org; Thursdays, 5:30 pm to 6:45 pm, Saturdays, 10 am to 3 pm, Wed, June 7 – Sat, Aug. 26; Free with admission to the museum.

Paddle in the East River. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult guardian.

Kayak Polo: Brooklyn Bridge Park Boat-house, end of Pineapple St. and Furman Street; www.bbpboathouse.org; Sundays, 12:30 pm to 1:30 pm, Wed, June 7 – Sat, Aug. 26; Free with admission to the museum.

These games are open to the public and totally free! Your level of experience doesn't matter, and nothing will improve your kayaking skills as quickly as playing this game.



A trip to the Mississippi

Take a seat and be transported to a time long ago when "Show Boat" docks at St. Patrick's School Auditorium on June 2, 3, and 4.

The Narrows Community Theater presents this production of the Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein musical, in memorial to cast member Mickey Sullivan.

"Show Boat" follows the lives of stagehands, performers, and dock workers on the Cotton Blossom, a Mississippi River showboat, and cov-

ers a 40-year period from the 1890s to the 1920s.

The Broadway smash musical featured classics as "Old Man River," "Make Believe," and "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man."

"Show Boat," June 2 at 8 pm and June 3 and 4 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$25, \$20 for seniors and students.

St. Patrick's School Auditorium [97th Street and Fourth Avenue in Bay Ridge, (718) 482-3173; www.narrowscommunitytheater.com].

Double-Dutch: Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 2, Joralemon Street at Furman Street; (718) 222-9939; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; Wednesdays, 7 pm, Wed, June 7 – Wed, Aug. 30; Free.

Open Ropes hosts a double-Dutch jump rope session open to everyone of any age, skill, and jump style. Skilled instructors are on-hand to provide basic double dutch instruction in this fun block party environment.

FURTHER AFIELD

Drones – Is the Sky the Limit?: Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, Pier 86 (46th Street and 12th Avenue), Manhattan; www.intrepidmuseum.org; Weekdays, 10 am to 5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, until Thurs, Aug. 31; \$33 (\$31 seniors; \$24, children 5-12; Free children under 5; retired and active military members free).

The exhibit explores pilotless aircraft and the history of drone technology, from its modern-day origins in World War I and its military development to its current ap-

plications in solving complex humanitarian and commercial challenges. Visitors will be able to fly actual drones and watch the first-person viewpoint of a drone racing; get up close and personal with Volantis, the world's first "flying dress," designed by global superstar Lady Gaga, in collaboration with TechHaus. Also on display is a prototype of an Amazon cargo vehicle designed for home delivery of online shopping orders.

"The Princess, The Emperor, and the Duck:" Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays – Sundays, 10:30 am and 2 pm, \$12 (\$8 for children under 12).

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater presents three classic tales from Hans Christian Andersen "The Princess and the Pea," "The Emperor's New Clothes" and "The Ugly Duckling." For children ages 3 to 9.

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Food allergies at summer camp

Children with food allergies heading to summer camp may be at greater risk for adverse reactions compared to when they're at school.

According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, the reasons are numerous: People who don't know them well are supervising them, food sharing may be more common, epinephrine autoinjectors (EpiPens) may not be available, and emergency medical services may be a long distance away.

Can you send your child to summer camp and still relax while she's there? Whether your child attends a sleep-away camp or a day camp, food allergies can make you more nervous than usual.

Here are some tips as you plan your child's time away:

Ensure there is a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan in place. This is a written plan of instructions for the camp director based on recommendations from your child's health provider — an allergist or physician treating your child for food allergies — that clearly states what to do if an allergic reaction happens. Be sure to include a recent photo of your child with it.

Talk with the food service director about your child's allergies and ask to review the menu and its ingredients. In addition, "Bring outside foods to camp that are safe for your child to eat as close to the foods which will be served," says

Resources for families with food allergies

- www.foodallergy.org/resources/camps
- www.foodallergyawareness.org/programs/
- www.aaaai.org/global/latest-research-summaries/New-Research-from-JACI-In-Practice/food-allergy-summer-camp

registered dietician Lisa Musician, president of Food Allergy Dietitian, Inc. and the author of "Parenting a Positive Reaction: A parent's guide to help promote safe care at school for your food allergy child."

"Offer additional suggestions on how to make the meals 'allergy-friendly,' or offer to go shopping with the person who is responsible for the food," she adds. If the camp is having the meals catered off-site, contact the owner and create a meal plan for your child.

Ask about food allergy training and emergency protocol. "Find out how far it is from camp to a source of medical attention with additional epinephrine if necessary," advises Musician, whose grown children have multiple food allergies with a history of anaphylaxis. "Also, it's important to know in advance what type of ambulance will respond to the 911 calling in the event your child needs medical assistance if epineph-



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

rine is used."

Because not all levels of ambulances are equipped with epinephrine, the camp should request a higher-level ambulance that carries epinephrine on board.

Review your child's medications well before he departs for camp. Ensure that the required medication forms are completed by your child's health provider and in place. And pack those meds! A recent study published in *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* found that only two out of five campers with food allergies were found to have brought an EpiPen to camp.

And verify that staff will carry your child's meds when on outings.

Ask how your child will be identified with easy visibility as a reminder to the staff about food allergies. Even seemingly innocuous activities such as hitting a piñata could spell danger if it's filled with candy.

Calmly discuss with your child what to do about his food allergies. Children old enough to be away at camp are old enough to advocate for themselves regarding their food allergies.

While it is nerve-racking to send your food-allergic child to camp, she CAN have a safe and enjoyable experience while she's there. "Remind your child to enjoy the experience of camp and to focus on the fun while being mindful of safe food choices," adds Musician.

Christine M. Palumbo is a registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in Naperville, Ill., who sorely wants a breakthrough in the prevention of food allergies. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter or ChristinePalumbo.com.



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