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### Preteen dating

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# NEW YORK Parenting

Brooklyn Family  
February 2018

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# Love is the answer — always

The world has changed so much and being a parent to a pre-teen/teen these days offers far less control over their behavior and interactions than ever before. The world of electronics, social media, and instant connection has altered everything, plus the fact that kids are so much more astute than in past generations.



they're very young and needing boundaries.

Love is truly the answer. And real loving as parents is to lay the groundwork for healthy emotional, psychological, and physical well being. A complicated but worthwhile task. So many experts in a variety of fields help us to contribute to this

effort through our editorial. It is intrinsic, and our devoted mission to make life and loving a healthier experience for both children and adults.

For this Valentine's Day and every day in the name of love, I wish all of our young ones a more trusting experience with the men and women around them than many of the recent news items have revealed. Sexual misconduct and molestation of our

kids has been a hidden reality for too long. Adults have covered up their crimes against our children and now the doors to their misdeeds are being opened. Very brave young men and women are at last telling their stories. Respectfully, we must help them in every way we can.

It takes a great deal of courage to grow up. It takes even more courage to help someone else grow up. It also takes devotion, patience, and belief.

Love is the answer. Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# Preteen dating

## Advice for parents in navigating little romances

BY DENISE YEARIAN

**T**he age kids begin to become attracted to one another varies tremendously from one person to another. For some, those feelings start in late elementary school. For others, it's not until high school.

So when a child 9- or 10-years-old begins to show romantic interest in another, parents need to be proactive in communicating and establishing guidelines. Here are some tips to help:

**1. Set the stage.** Take your preteen's

relationships seriously. Attractions are normal and will only increase as children grow. Remember the way he or she views and conducts relationships now paves the way for future dating relationships.

**2. Get their view.** Ask your teen how he or she defines "dating," "going out," or "having a boyfriend or girlfriend." Then share your views. Reinforce the need to always respect others and oneself.

**3. Keep the line of communication open.** If the relationship has gelled, continue dialoguing, so you know how it is progressing. Ask open-ended questions

in a casual way: "What do you like about this boy?" "What do you have in common?" "How does he treat you?" "Who are her friends?" "How do you feel about her?" "Do you feel respected by this person?" This gets your child thinking about what is important in a relationship.

**4. Establish and discuss relationship boundaries.** These could include not being alone with the boy or girlfriend, having parental supervision at home, not being allowed in each other's bedrooms, no touching, staying in group settings, and having a curfew, to name

a few. Equally important is to help your preteens understand why these boundaries are there, so they begin to develop an internal compass.

**5. Set expectations in other realms of life.** Remind your preteen the importance of remaining focused on academics and extra-curricular activities, as well as maintaining current friendships. Set guidelines about phone and internet use, too.

**6. Monitor media exposure.** The messages young people receive from music, television, movies, books, and magazines are laden with love, sex, and relationships. Make sure these messages line up with your family's values. If you see or hear something questionable with your child's media, use it as an opportunity to discuss your values in a non-confrontational way. Realize your preteen may question your values, particularly if they don't line up with media messages or her friends' values. This is normal and means she is questioning, but not necessarily rejecting, what you embrace.

**7. Know their friends.** They have a tremendous influence on the way your child thinks, talks, and acts. Open your home and encourage your preteen to invite his or her friends over, so you know them and see how they interact.

## Resources

For more on helping your preteen navigate relationships, check out these books:

- "For Young Women Only" (Multnomah) by Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa Rice
- "How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk" (Scribner) by Adele Faber
- "How to Talk so Teens will Listen and Listen so Teens will Talk" (William Morrow Paperbacks) by Adele Faber
- "You and Your Adolescent, Revised Edition" (Simon and Schuster) by Lawrence Steinberg, Ph.D.
- "Raising a Thinking Preteen: The 'I Can Problem Solve' Program for 8- to 12-Year-Olds" (Holt Paperbacks) by Myrna Shure and Roberta Israeloff
- "Roller-coaster Years" (Harmony) by Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese

**8. Discuss dress.** Share with your preteen that the way we dress sends a message to others. Clothing should be modest and should not have provocative

messages written on it. Set the standard by being a good role model in the way you dress.

**9. Honor privacy to a point.** Reserve the right to inspect your preteen's backpack or room if he or she becomes secretive or begins to show other signs that concern you.

**10. Allow expression of emotions.** Don't minimize your preteen's feelings, no matter how trivial they may seem. This is particularly true for boys who may think they need to suppress it. At the same time, teach him or her to make decisions based on careful thought, not heartfelt emotions.

**11. Lend emotional support.** Most preteen relationships are short lived. When the relationship ends, your child may or may not be hurt, but your sensitivity and empathy toward the situation will build a healthy trust and bond between you.

**12. Know when it is time to intervene.** If the relationship moves beyond innocent, the preteen becomes obsessive, or you begin to see unhealthy behaviors, contact your school counselor or other professional for advice.

*Denise Yearian is the former editor of two parenting magazines, the mother of three children, and a grandmother.*

**Districts 14 - 32**  
**Magnet Schools Assistance Program**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS 2018 OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE**

<p><b>P.S. 120</b>  <b>Theme:</b> Magnet School of Architecture, Engineering and Design  <b>Address:</b> 18 Beaver Street          Brooklyn, NY 11206 (District 14)  <b>Tel:</b> 718.455.1000 <b>Web:</b> PS120K.org</p> <p>February 8 9:00 am          March 14 9:00 am          April 19 9:00 am          May 10 9:00 am          June 7 9:00 am</p> <p><b>P.S./I.S. 157</b>  <b>Theme:</b> Magnet School of Civic Leadership in Health and Science  <b>Address:</b> 850 Kent Avenue          Brooklyn, NY 11205 (District 14)  <b>Tel:</b> 718.622.9285 <b>Web:</b> franklinmagnet.org</p> <p>February 14 9:00 am</p>	<p><b>P.S. 123</b>  <b>Theme:</b> Magnet School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM)  <b>Address:</b> 100 Irving Avenue          Brooklyn, NY 11237 (District 32)  <b>Tel:</b> 718.821.4810 <b>Web:</b> PS123K.com</p> <p>February 7 9:00 am</p> <p><b>P.S. 196</b>  <b>Theme:</b> Magnet School of Communication and Mixed Media Arts  <b>Address:</b> 207 Bushwick Avenue          Brooklyn, NY 11206 (District 14)  <b>Tel:</b> 718.497.0139 <b>Web:</b> 196wbms.org</p> <p>February 7 8:30 am/5:30 pm          March 21 8:30 am/5:30 pm          April 18 8:30 am          May 16 8:30 am/5:30 pm          June 6 8:30 am</p>
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# How will you love?

## What does the word 'love' mean to you?

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Seeing as how it is February, when everything from donuts to dog treats are heart shaped, and everywhere you look there are roses and chocolate or chocolate roses, I feel compelled to write about love. Simple enough, right, what with Valentine's Day and all? But therein lies the root of the flaw in my reasoning — assuming that simple means easy. There is perhaps no better example of something so seemingly simple being anything but easy than love.

This single, four-letter word, throughout history, has provided inspiration for countless artists, philosophers, and scholars. Few themes, if any, have kindled more artistic and intellectual productivity than love. Yet, when asked what love is, no two people give exactly the same definition.

What I don't know about love could probably fill several volumes. Nevertheless, I have spent most of my life, certainly my adult life, observing, studying, reading about, and yes, practicing love in human relationships, and I have drawn some basic conclusions. Whether or not there is empirical evidence to support them, I don't know. I have not conducted research or collected data from a questionnaire. These are merely statements based on my 50-some odd years of experience noticing and thinking about love.

Love is both universal and personal. We are all hardwired with the capacity to receive and give love, but our ability to actually recognize, accept, and demonstrate it is largely determined by our interpersonal experience. Thus, the ability to love is learned. As parents, we are the primary teachers and models for what our children will come to believe about love.

Ours is an impoverished language when it comes to love. Unlike the advertising or marketing industry, the Greeks understood that what you feel for a stick of gum, household appliance, or car is not the same as what you feel for another person. They had seven different words to describe the types of love people experience. Since we have only one word, it is vital that we reserve its use for the most important people and relationships in our lives. The overuse of a word diminishes its significance.



Love is an action word. In the declarative sentence, "I love you," love is the verb, the action word. The verbal expression of love can be powerful, but the failure to pair it with congruous action renders it meaningless.

Love changes. Change is not the same as growth. Growth suggests something that can be measured, like height, or counted, like money. Love exists as a quality, not a quantity. We are not endowed with a finite amount of love that can be used up, leaving us empty-handed. The capacity for love is immeasurable. It evolves to meet the changing needs of those involved in the relationship. Love takes many forms and is transformative. It changes everything.

Love is an act of courage. There are no guarantees when it comes to love. It takes tremendous courage to open oneself to the possibility that one's love may not be reciprocated — to accept that, either way, one's life will be changed.

Knowing what love isn't is just as essential as knowing what love is. Mistakenly confusing love with sex, neediness, and material things can have devastating consequences, especially for the young and inexperienced. Providing our children with clear messages about appropriate expressions of love helps protect them against being exploited. Love is not an excuse for justifying unacceptable, abusive, or criminal behavior.

Love is an endless act of forgiveness. Love is strong enough to withstand disappointment, with ourselves and with others. Loving another means choosing not to punish them when they make a mistake. Love offers the transgressor an opportunity to redeem himself after exhibiting genuine remorse. However, love also recognizes when repeated offenses create a pattern and forgiveness becomes enabling, which is not in the best interest of either party.

Love requires empathy. Without the ability to imagine ourselves in another person's place, it is impossible to know how to love him effectively. Taking the time to get to know, making the effort to understand, and communicating about expectations regarding love are necessary for a mutually satisfying relationship.

Love is a choice. Every day we participate in countless interactions that present us with the opportunity to demonstrate a loving response. Choosing love means choosing kindness, patience, and unselfishness. It means choosing not to be threatened by or resentful of another's abilities and talents. Love delights in doing good and seeing others do good also. It offers honesty without cruelty and seeks the same. Love is safe, dependable, and hopeful. It inspires us to become the best version of ourselves.

Since love is a choice, each of us is faced with the question: how will we love?

As for me, I intend to love in a way that, like the small grain of sand in an oyster, over time, produces a pearl. Of all the things I might one day be remembered for, I hope it will be that I knew love and loved well. May we have the wisdom to recognize love when we witness it and surround ourselves with people to love, who will love us in return.

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



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# Forecast: Snow babies

## Extreme weather to blame for an increase in baby showers

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**W**e've all seen television shows and movies that include a dramatic scene of a pregnant woman going into labor at the most inopportune time — during a storm or natural disaster. It turns out this is not so far off from reality. Labor pain is not only hormonal, but can also be affected by environmental changes that cause great stress. Given the right situation, external stress could cause early labor.

Women going into labor prematurely only has a mild correlation with winter storms or natural disasters. However, physicians and hospital staff vividly remember these most eventful days (and nights) in labor and delivery.

“Natural disasters such as Hurricane Sandy in 2012, snowstorms, [and] earthquakes all increase the amount of stress levels on patients, and therefore increase the amount of catecholamines released by pregnant patients leading to possible premature birth,” notes Dr. Reyna Payero, a physician in obstetrics and gynecology at Advantage-Care Physicians. “Moreover, the physiological response to stress in a pregnant woman is to release hormones that increase her heart rate and also her blood pressure, therefore potentially increasing her risks for infection and possible early birth,” she adds. Because a woman's body stress level can impact when she goes into labor, significant natural disasters are known to cause women to go into early labor.

“During Hurricane Irene in 2011,” she says, “the storm caused multiple mothers to undergo early delivery or premature contractions in Staten Island,” where Dr. Payero worked at the time.

But it's not only during or immediately after a natural disaster that spikes in birth rates can be observed — as the urban legend goes, they can also rise around nine months after a storm. Winter storms and natural disasters are said to cause a baby boom, of sorts, nine months later. The validity of this urban legend depends on the severity of the storm or disaster. For example, if a winter storm leaves you and your partner snowed in or a natural disaster limits your activity outside of the home — intimacy is inevitable. Many assume that when couples have a lot of time indoors, it leads to an increase in babies born about nine months later. So, is it



true that being home in a snowstorm puts couples in the mood to make babies? According to Treetopia, it is true. In its study, Top 10 Steamiest Snowstorms (<http://blog.treetopia.com/2017/12/top-10-steamiest-snowstorms>), it used a combination of government data and reported birth rates to come to that conclusion — though it looked at more than just snowstorms.

Some think that the noticeable increase in births is due to the fact that couples simply have too much time on their hands when snowed in, or have limited forms of entertainment when hunkered down at home. According to Medical Daily, hospitals began bracing for an increase in birth rates in the last weeks of July and early August of 2013, nine months after Superstorm Sandy hit in the fall of 2012. And just as expected, local hospitals reported spikes in birth rates up to 30 percent. In fact, Treetopia ranks Superstorm Sandy the “sexiest storm” of all time due to that spike. The second sexiest storm on Treetopia's list was “Snowvember” of 2014, which also caused birth rates to rise up to 30 percent about nine months later.

Put simply, sex is a way of coping with stress (or boredom, in some cases). Whether it is a blizzard, hurricane, or power outage, disasters give couples a lot of time together indoors, and that can lead

to a spike in the number of babies born in the area nine months later. This is not a new concept — this phenomenon is known as the “Fertility Effect of Catastrophe.” Studies show anecdotal evidence that suggests increased fertility rates result from catastrophic events. A 2008 study from Johns Hopkins University states that this can be traced back decades, with New York's own blackout of 1965 as a prime example. Nine months after the blackout, there was an increase in the birth rate.

There are certainly storms and events where there are no birth spikes, such as low-severity storms, winter storm warnings, and the like, which leads to a debate of whether spikes in births are just perceived or are actually measurable. The debate arises every time there is a sizeable snowstorm that dumps inches — and sometimes feet — of snow. For the 2017–18 winter season (which we have already witnessed a portion of), there is a lot more snow expected in our forecast. If the urban legend is true, there will be a spike in births up and down the East Coast in the fall of 2018!

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



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# Transitioning to the ‘big-boy’ bed

## When and how to move out of the crib

*My son is 2 years old, and he keeps shaking the side rails of his crib and trying to climb out. Is he ready to transition to a “big boy” bed? If so, what is the best way to make this transition easy and peaceful for him, as well as our family?*

**I**t sounds like your son is ready to transition out of the crib. Some experts suggest 18 months of age and a height of 3 feet as a guideline for when a child should switch to a bed, but the timeline really varies from child to child. Climbing out of the crib on a daily basis, rattling the crib side rails, and verbalizing the desire for a bed are all signs that a toddler is ready to make the transition.

The next step is finding a suitable bed for your son. Toddler beds are available,

but they will probably not work for long — most have a weight limit of 50 pounds. For a longer-term solution, shop for a low-profile twin bed with a railing and no areas where little hands and feet can get stuck. Buying bed rails is generally the best option, and temporary; separate railings can easily be attached to a twin bed.

It will also ease the crib-to-bed adjustment for your son if you let him help pick out the bed and sheets, because he will feel a sense of ownership in the process. Additionally, talking about the impending change to a new bed — how much fun it will be and how proud you are of him — will build excitement.

Don't forget that toddlers can leave their sleep space freely once they start sleeping in a bed, so make sure that

the room he's sleeping in is fully child-proofed. Be sure to look around at toddler level and ensure that your son can't pull anything off of the dresser or pull the drawers out and climb on them. Safety plugs for outlets are also essential.

Even if your son initially seemed happy about the transition, he may get out of the new bed repeatedly. This behavior can be frustrating, but it is normal. Toddlers are accustomed to boundaries, like a crib, and suddenly having the freedom to move from room to room without asking can be exciting for them. But this independence can also transform some children from good sleepers into restless ones. To discourage after-hours exploration and foster more restful nights, keep everything else as consistent as possible by placing the new bed exactly where the crib was and keeping the same nightly routine for bathing, bedtime stories, and tucking in.

Despite your best efforts, your son will likely get out of bed a few times once he's out of the crib. When that happens, experts recommend returning him to his room swiftly and without fanfare to avoid encouraging a repeat of the behavior for attention. You may have to do this a few times. Set ground rules, like “no getting out of bed except to go to the bathroom.” Praise your child when he sleeps through the night. It may even be necessary to stay in the room for a while until the toddler falls asleep.

*To schedule an appointment with a pediatrician affiliated with New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital, please call (718) 499-2273 or visit [www.nyp.org/brooklyn](http://www.nyp.org/brooklyn).*

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*Continued on page 16*

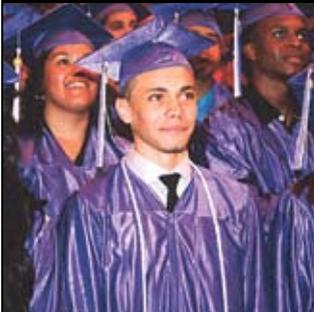
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# Charter Schools

## DIRECTORY

*Continued from page 14*

Led Conferences, a reflective presentation by students to their parents on their academic and character progress and Presentations of Learning, an end-of-year presentation of their learning to a panel of parents, peers, teachers, and community members. Students can choose from a wide range of electives and after-school activities to augment their core academic studies, and participate in a daily advisory that focuses on developing character and life skills through the lens of our Habits of Heart and Mind.

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### PAVE Red Hook Charter School (K-8)

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# STEM for all

## Making science accessible for English language learners

BY HANNAH THELEN

**L**earning a new language is hard. Trying to learn complicated math and science concepts in a new language is even harder.

With almost five million English language learners in U.S. public schools facing this near-impossible challenge, it is difficult to believe that bilingual science, technology, engineering, and math resources are still not readily available. The rate of high school graduation for English language learners is only 63 percent, almost 20 percent lower than the national average. These students often fall behind in basic subjects due to insufficient language accommodations.

Wendi Pillars, an experienced English language learners teacher from Chatham County Schools in North Carolina, says, “Teachers continue to report that they feel unprepared to work with students who are language learners ... even though English language learners enrollment continues to increase annually in most states.”

This issue also causes educators to overlook English language learners who may be candidates for advancement, evidenced by the paltry two percent enrolled in gifted programs.

Even as English as a second language, bilingual, and dual-language immersion schools become more popular, these programs almost universally face a lack of resources.

This is particularly frustrating for Spanish-speaking English language learners, who make up a significant portion of this population. Spanish speakers comprise over half of all English language learners in the U.S., with more than 3.8 million students. In the U.S. today, one of every four public school students is Hispanic — and this number increases daily. In fact, the U.S. is now home to more Spanish speakers than Spain.

Science, technology, engineering, and math subjects are vital to helping students succeed in school and in daily tasks like understanding mortgages and using electronics. The National Science

### The need for bilingual education

- Nearly one in 10 students in U.S. public schools are English language learners.
- The U.S. is home to 52.6 million native or bilingual Spanish-speakers.
- Seventy percent of Hispanic students speak a language other than English at home.
- Students in two-way dual language programs show higher reading and math scores.
- Bilingual adults experience less cognitive decline as they age.

Foundation stresses that “to succeed in this new information-based and highly technological society, students need to develop their capabilities in STEM to levels much beyond what was considered acceptable in the past.” Careers in science, technology, engineering, and math are growing quickly, and typically provide high salaries. It is more important than ever to ensure that all students are receiving quality education, yet English language learners have notably few resources that deal with these subjects.

Fortunately, educators and educational publishers are beginning to address this problem.

There is now a resource designed specifically to help Spanish-speaking science, technology, engineering, and math students learn these subjects.

A set of middle-grade books offers literature-based science and math brain-teasers in both English and Spanish, with easy side-by-side comparison that allows students to develop their language and science and math skills at the same time. Having a resource like this, which clearly explains science and math concepts in a fun, accessible way, can be game-changing for these students.

These books are part of the five-book “One Minute Mysteries” series, written by father-daughter team Eric and Natalie Yoder. They challenge kids to solve real-life brain-teasers using their knowledge



### Bilingual resources: Where to begin

These great websites curate quality Spanish language and bilingual resources for parents and educators:

- De Colores: The Raza Experience in Books for Children, <http://decoloresreviews.blogspot.com>
- ¡Colorín colorado!, <http://www.colorincolorado.org> (For educators and families of English language learners)
- Bilingual Books for Kids: Multicultural Connections y Cosas Hispánicas, <http://www.bilingualbooks.com>
- Common Sense Media, [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org) (List of bilingual & Latino books)
- Goodreads, [www.goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com) (List of popular bilingual Spanish books)

of science, technology, engineering, and math subjects.

Previously only available in English, the bilingual edition of the science mysteries book was released last year, titled “More Short Mysteries You Solve With Science! – ¡Más Misterios Cortos que Resuelves con Ciencias!” The second bilingual book was just released in August, this time offering math mysteries, “Short Mysteries You Solve With Math! – ¡Misterios Cortos que Resuelves con Matemáticas!”

Dr. Carmen M. Martinez-Roldan, from



Tech. Sgt. Carlos J. Trevino (U.S. Air Force), hepimging (flickr)

English language learners face a unique challenge in science, technology, engineering, and math classes.

the Bilingual Education Program at Columbia University, writes of the book set, “Bilingual materials addressing STEM topics are long overdue. These books give kids the vocabulary and confidence they need to succeed in the classroom.”

For more great bilingual resources, take a look at the websites listed in the sidebar.

It’s important for these books and other bilingual resources to be easy enough to use at home as well as in the classroom. Bilingual resources are especially helpful for kids who speak English at school, but use only Spanish at home with their parents. The development of language skills should be encouraged beyond the school day, for both Spanish

speakers learning English, and English speakers hoping to become bilingual.

Bilingual education is not just for English language learners. Many English speakers are discovering the powerful positive impact that knowledge of a second language can have on academic and personal success. Reading and math scores of students in two-way dual-language education are higher than those of monolingual students, regardless of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, proficiency in English, or special education skills. Bilingual children also demonstrate an increased sense of self-worth and identity, and tend to relate to others better than monolingual students.

The handful of websites and books

mentioned here fill only a small portion of the bilingual science, technology, engineering, and math resources that this country needs. That being said, it’s an important start.

As educators and educational publishers become aware of the shortage, more bilingual resources will become available and, more importantly, make their way into the hands of students who need them.

*Hannah Thelen graduated from Bowling Green State University with a bachelor of Fine Arts in creative writing. She lives in Washington, D.C., where she generally enjoys reading, writing articles or short stories, and drinking too much bubble tea. Contact her at Hannah@PlatypusMedia.com.*

# Not taking 'No' for an answer

## Bump on son's neck leads to hyperthyroidism diagnosis

**F**ive-year-old Jason was crankier than usual. Everything seemed to bug him — even things he previously loved, as well as sleeping and eating. Suddenly, he had trouble falling asleep and when he finally did, he couldn't stay asleep. Foods he previously loved made him feel sick or he was starving so much, he couldn't get enough food. He seemed more hyperactive, swinging his leg back and forth constantly, talking very fast, and was feeling hotter than usual, often sweating when it was cold out.

The pediatrician said he was simply having a growth spurt, or “just being a regular active boy.” Jason's mom, Lindsey Moynihan, knew there was something else going on, but trusted her doctor. However, when Jason grew more restless and irritable, she sought out a second opinion from another pediatrician a few weeks later, and was given a clean bill of health once more.

“I was infuriated, because I knew Jason was just not himself,” she says.

A few days later, Lindsey noticed an ever-so-slight bump on Jason's neck, and when she felt it, she instantly felt cold to her bones, not knowing what it was, but knowing that it shouldn't be there.

At an Urgent Care facility, the doctor in charge ordered an immediate ultrasound of Jason's neck, which showed a very large nodule directly on his thyroid gland, and bloodwork. Lindsey was directed to an endocrinologist who did more bloodwork, which showed that Jason was hyperthyroid, meaning that he was producing too much thyroid hormone, which was causing his anxiety, rapid heart rate, mood swings, and more.

The endocrinologist discussed the possibility that a nodule of this size could also be malignant. The American Society of Clinical Oncology reports that “thyroid cancer is the most common cancer in women 20 to 34. About two percent of cases occur in children and teens. The incidence rates of thyroid cancer in both women and men have been increasing in recent years, at a rate of about five percent more a year.”

“To learn that Jason had a thyroid problem was bad enough, but to consider that it might be stemming from cancer was devastating,” says Lindsey.

Lindsey was then referred to a thyroid



surgeon and a biopsy was performed in the surgeon's office in the form of fine needle aspiration. The American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists recommends that fine needle aspirations should be considered for nodules larger than 10 millimeters in diameter. Jason's nodule was more than three centimeters. After three agonizing days, Lindsey got the phone call that the nodule was benign. She was “extremely relieved and thankful,” however, Jason still suffered with the hyperthyroidism.

The thyroid is a vital organ and responsible for every system in the body, so hyperthyroidism causes every body system to work in overdrive. Jason's heart rate was 130 at rest and his metabolism was so sped up that he was losing weight despite eating more. Graves' Disease, an autoimmune disease, can cause hyperthyroidism, but Jason's blood test showed he did not have this, so the next step was a radioactive thyroid uptake scan. This requires the patient to ingest a radioactive pill and then have a scan done to see how the thyroid is working.

Lindsey was not thrilled with the idea of her son having to ingest a radioactive pill, but she was assured that the amount in the pill was a safe level, and it was crucial to finding out where the hyperthyroidism was coming from.

This thyroid uptake scan showed that



## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Jason had a toxic nodule, a solitary nodule that was producing extra thyroid hormone. There are two options when faced with a toxic nodule: radioactive iodine treatment or surgery. Children are not candidates for radioactive iodine treatment (and many adults opt out of this as well as it contains a massive amount of radioactive iodine and necessitates isolation for three to seven days). Anti-thyroid medication may also be given to help alleviate hyperthyroid symptoms initially, but it will not be a permanent solution. Surgery was the recommended choice.

“The surgeon explained that toxic nodules do not go away on their own, and surgery is often inevitable, and it's a long-term solution. I was so on the fence about it, but when I heard this, I knew it had to be done.”

A month later, Jason underwent a partial thyroidectomy. His hyperthyroidism resolved almost immediately and the surgery discovered that the nodule had been pressing on his trachea, another reason why removal was the best option. Lindsey feels relieved now that the six-month ordeal is over, and happy that she did not take “no” for an answer when her son first became sick.

“Jason did wonderful with the surgery, and says he can even breathe better now,” says Lindsey. “I am so glad it is all over, and also glad that I discovered the lump before his condition worsened.”

*Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.*



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# Meet the dentist

## How to prepare your child for the first dental visit

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Jane and Drew Tamassia love going to the dentist. They think it is fun. Perhaps it's words like "tickle toothbrush" and "sugar bug remover" that make these preschoolers giggle. Maybe it's the mini-movie theater or Downtown Disney decorations that draw them in.

"I think they like going because I started them early and chose someone who knows how to work with children," says Suzanne Tamassia, whose own childhood dental fears drove her to find a dentist who works specifically with children.

"Getting children in at an early age is key," says pediatric dentist Lawrence Louie. "I like to see them when the first tooth erupts. It gives me a chance to get a good look at the child's mouth and lets me share oral health care and nutrition information with the parents."

Jennifer Luzader, pediatric dental hygienist, agrees.

"We recommend children have their first dental exam by their first birthday, and their first dental cleaning by age 2."

Even before that first appointment, there are things parents can do to prepare their child for their visit.

"Use books, videos, and role play at home," says Luzader. "Talk with your child using good, positive terms, and remind him how important it is to take care of his teeth and eat the right kinds of foods."

That is what Susan Magasiny did.

"Before Jake's first appointment, we talked about how the dentist was a doctor for his teeth and that to keep them healthy, he needed to have check ups," says the mother of two. "I told him the dentist was going to look at his teeth, count them, and maybe take a picture. It was no big deal."

"I remember sitting at home [and] role-playing with Jane," recalls Tamassia. "I would say, 'Open your mouth, and let me see your teeth,' then I would pretend to be the dentist. She liked that."

Role-playing did prepare Jane for that first visit, because when she went, she knew just what to expect.

"When a child comes in, we try to make it a fun experience," say Luzader. "They get to pick out things like fluoride flavor, sunglasses for eye protection, and a new toothbrush and floss. Then we go through



each step of what we are going to do, first on their fingers, then in their mouths. We count their teeth, scale those that are covered with plaque and tartar, and then polish. We finish with a fluoride treatment and have the dentist come in for an exam."

Louie talks children through the procedures, too.

"We call it, 'Tell. Show. Do.' First we tell them what we are going to do, show them on our hands, then do it — that way there are no surprises."

Even without so-called "surprises," sometimes anxiety sets in.

"Crying through the first two years is very expected, even at 3," says Luzader. "One way to ward off tears is with distraction. We have puppets we use and will talk with children on their level to gain their confidence. We also try to make it fun — 'What kind of animal is down your throat today?' Even when children come in crying, 95 percent of them leave with a smile."

"What is really important is that parents not relay any fears they have about going to the dentist," says Louie. "Every once in a while, I see where parents have elaborated on what happened to them, and it comes through to the children."

On occasion, dental emergencies arise which cannot be avoided.

"One week after Jake's first appointment, he fell into a picnic table and had a

severe dental injury. His gum was pushed up to the top of his mouth and his whole front tooth was exposed," recalls Magasiny. "I called the dentist and they took us in right away."

But it was a wait-and-see injury. In the months to follow, Jake had to return several times so the dentist could evaluate the situation.

"I started to prep him about losing his tooth early, which he did about six months later," she continues. "But through it all, Jake built trust and confidence in the dentist."

So much so, if you asked him today, he would tell you he looks forward to his dental visits. His mother does, too.

"What I appreciate most about our dental practice is that they have given me tools to teach my children preventative dentistry," says Magasiny.

Tamassia agrees.

"I like how our dentist takes a sincere interest in children," she says. "Everything is catered to them — there's an indoor climbing playhouse, video room, and lots of books. They even get to take home a goodie bag and report card!"

"The goal is to have the child enjoy his first, second, third — whatever visit it is," says Luzader. "Because if he does, he'll want to return again and again."

*Denise Yearian is the former editor of two parenting magazines and the mother of three children and four grandchildren.*

## Questions to ask when choosing a dentist

Here's what the Academy has to say:

### Before the visit:

- Do you have special training or interest in treating children?
- Are you a member of the American Dental Association or the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry?
- Is the dental office set up for children? Does it offer toys, books, games, and/or child-sized furniture?
- How does your office deal with dental emergencies?
- Is the office conveniently located to your home or your child's school?
- Does the practice accept dental benefit plans?

### After the visit:

- Was my child seen promptly?
- Was I asked for a complete medical and dental history of my child?
- Was the dentist gentle but thorough when examining my child's mouth?
- Did the dentist or staff talk with my child, encouraging his involvement in dental health?
- Was I informed about my child's tooth development, the causes and prevention of dental disease, and appropriate dental care at home?
- Were my questions treated with concern and respect?
- Was the visit a positive experience for my child?

## Frequently asked questions about visiting the dentist

**When should my child first see a dentist?** At the eruption of the first tooth and no later than his first birthday.

**How often does my child need to go?** Every six months.

**When should I first clean my child's teeth and what should I use?** Clean your child's gums right from the start. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush with a small head and water, at least once a day before bedtime.

**When can I begin using toothpaste?** Fluoridated toothpaste should be introduced when your child is between the ages of 2 to 3.

**How do I know if my child is getting**

## 10 tips to prepare for the first dental visit

Here are some suggestions from the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry:

1. Start early to get your child acclimated to visiting the dentist and prevent future dental problems.
2. Consider a "get acquainted" visit to introduce your child to the dental office before the first appointment.
3. Choose a pediatric dental practice. Pediatric dentists have two to three years of specialized training beyond dental school in treating children. Plus, the offices are child friendly.
4. Select an appointment time when your child is alert and rested.
5. Explain before the visit that the dentist is a friend and will help your child

keep his teeth healthy. Add that the visits will be fun.

6. Answer all your child's questions positively. (Keep an ear out for scary stories from peers and siblings.)

7. Avoid using scary words. Check-ups and 90 percent of first visits do not have anything to do with "hurt," so do not even use the word.

8. Read your child a story about a character that had a good dental visit.

9. Write out questions in advance about your child's dental health on such topics as home care, injury prevention, diet and snacking, fluoride, and tooth development.

10. Make sure your child has regularly scheduled dental visits twice a year to maintain good dental health.

## Resources to prepare children for visits with the dentist

- "Barney Goes to the Dentist" by Linda Cress Dowdy; Publishing Lyrick
- "The Berenstain Bears Visit the Dentist" by Stan & Jan Berenstain; Random House
- "Brush Your Teeth Please Pop-Up" by Leslie McGuire; Reader's Digest
- "Curious George Goes to the Dentist" Margaret Rey; Houghton Mifflin
- "Doctor DeSoto" by William Steig; Farrar, Straus & Giroux
- "Going to the Dentist" by Fred Rogers; Putnam
- "Have You Ever Seen a Moose Brushing His Teeth?" by Jamie McClaine; Partners Publishing Group
- "How Many Teeth?" By Paul Show-

ers; HarperCollins Publishing

- "Just Going to the Dentist" by Mercer Mayer; Golden Books

- "Show Me Your Smile!: A Visit to the Dentist (Dora the Explorer)" by Christine Ricci; Simon Spotlight/Nick Jr.

- "Smile! Says the Crocodile" by Jane Belk Moncure; Child's World

- "The Tooth Book" (Bright & Early Board Books) by Dr. Seuss; Random House

- "A Trip to the Dentist Can Be Lots of Fun!" (Videorecording) by Robert Wortzel and Rob Garner; Night Media Group, Inc.

- "A Trip to the Dentist Through Pinata's View" (Videorecording); Boggle-Goggle Enterprises

- "What to Expect When You Go to the Dentist" (What to Expect Kids) by Heidi Murkoff; Harper Festival

**enough fluoride?** Ask your dentist to evaluate your primary source of drinking water. If the fluoride level is deficient, he may prescribe fluoride supplements.

**What can be done to alleviate pain during teething?** Give your child a clean teething ring; cold spoon; or cold, wet washcloth. Or rub his gums with a clean finger.

**When should a child stop bottle feeding?** Between 12 to 14 months of age.

What is baby bottle tooth decay, and how can I prevent it? Baby bottle tooth decay is caused by nursing a child to sleep or putting him to bed with anything other than water. To prevent it, have your child drink from a cup by his first birthday. Do not let him fall asleep with a bottle. Night-time breastfeeding

should be avoided after the first primary teeth erupt. Drink juice from a cup instead of a bottle.

**When should my child stop sucking his thumb or fingers?** Most children stop by age 2. If your child is still sucking his thumb after age 4, discourage it and talk with your dentist or pediatrician. Prolonged thumb sucking can create crowded and crooked teeth, or bite problems.

**What should I do if my child has a toothache?** Rinse the irritated area with warm salt water and place a cold compress on his face if it is swollen. Give your child pain reliever for pain. See a dentist as soon as possible.

— *the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry*

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Dr. Reneida E. Reyes has been actively engaged in the practice of Pediatric Dentistry for over 30 years. Dr. Reyes received her pediatric dental training at The Children's Hospital of Boston and Harvard University School of Dental Medicine. She also holds a master's in Public Health Degree from Harvard School of Public Health in the area of Maternal and Child Health Studies.

This practice promotes oral healthcare with gentle and pain-free dental procedures. With fillings and check-ups, you can get all of your dental needs completed in one place. The staff at this dentistry will provide you with excellent care for your children.

Dr. Reyes has been actively engaged in organized dentistry with a strong focus on children's oral health, having served as chair of the Oral Health Committee of Second District Dental Society (Brooklyn and Staten Island) and State Chair of National Children's Dental Health Month for the New York State Dental Association (ADA).

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- a fun loving staff that can be comforting to them
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Our pediatric dental office is colorful, fun, and child-friendly. Dental phobias are often rooted in childhood, so it is essential that the child feel comfortable, safe, and trusting of the dentist from the outset. We have a unique vocabulary designed to ward off fear of seeing the dentist. We are not just any kids' dental office. We are changing the way people view dentistry for kids! Our entire team is dedicated to providing your children the personalized, gentle and comprehensive care they deserve.

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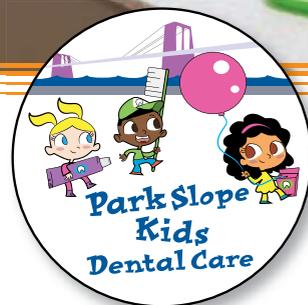
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# Short Stuff

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## Tips to protect eczema-prone skin this winter

When the weather cools down, dry, itchy skin flares up, and a child's skin is particularly vulnerable. Nearly 10 million children in the United States have eczema. The cause is not known, but low temps, dry central heating, and low humidity indoors can dry and irritate your child's skin and make it more susceptible to an eczema flare-up.

To help navigate this itch-prone season, Dr. Mamina Turegano, a New Orleans dermatologist, shares tips to protect kids' skin this winter:

**Regulate room temps.** Make sure the space where your child sleeps is not too hot. If your child is prone to eczema, dry heat will aggravate the skin and make eczema worse.

**Keep baths short.** It's fine to bathe your child every day, but keep bath time to no more than five to seven minutes. Ensure that bath water is warm, not hot. Bathing habits are the most common reasons that we lose the natural moisture in our skin. The more water that you expose skin to, the drier skin gets. Hot water further dries out the skin. I recommend a brief (five minute), luke-warm shower or bath,

only once a day.

**Use a mild soap.** Look for one that's made for sensitive skin and contains

moisturizing cream. I recommend avoiding soaps with fragrances or dyes. Proper skin care is extremely important in those with eczema-prone skin and involves avoiding products (soaps, detergents, moisturizers, etc.) that have fragrances, dyes, and other potential allergens.

**Soak and smear.** Pat yourself dry with a soft towel but don't rub vigorously. Within one minute after patting skin dry, while it is still damp, apply moisturizers to lock in water that your skin absorbed during the shower. Moisturizers containing ceramides, such as EpiCeram, are better able to lock in the moisture. EpiCeram is one of my favorite moisturizers because it contains ceramides in the same ratio that naturally exists in our skin.

**Avoid using wipes, if possible.** If your baby's skin is prone to dryness, the wipe can dry the skin out — particularly if it's made of synthetic fabric, which can aggravate the skin. Lightly wash, or, if you have to, use an alcohol-, propylene glycol-, and paraben-free wipe.

"The more a kid scratches his skin, the worse the eczema can get, so it's best to stop the itch-scratch cycle as early as possible," says Dr. Turegano.





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## Catholic Schools

### DIRECTORY

### Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Academy

**Bensonhurst, 1514 72nd St.  
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### St. Edmund Elementary School

**Sheepshead Bay, 1902 Ave. T  
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**[www.stedmundelem.org](http://www.stedmundelem.org)  
[saintedmundelem@gmail.com](mailto:saintedmundelem@gmail.com)**

Our school is a coeducational elementary school serving students from Nursery through 8th Grade. Our school endeavors to educate the whole child: Spiritually, academically, socially and physically, in order to become responsible moral citizens in today's society. At St. Edmund, we envision our school as an academic center founded upon solid Christian and academic principles which will serve our children and reflect their multicultural backgrounds. St. Edmund Preparatory High School is located next door, and we enjoy a close, ongoing relationship. Many of our graduates go on to high school at St. Edmund Prep.

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Our school has educated children for over 100 years in the Catholic tradition of excellence. The school follows the NYS curriculum for the core subjects. Specials include Physical Education, Technology, Music, Art, and Performing Arts. Students are instructed to act as peer mediators, classes include focus on conflict resolution and non-violent behavior

and the school's Peace Garden is a continual reminder of our commitment to creating a peaceful society. Students graduate equipped with strong study skills, time-management and note-taking techniques that prepare them for High School and College. Tuition Assistance is available through programs sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn and the SFACA Alumni Scholarship Program.

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**[www.xaverian.org](http://www.xaverian.org)**

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# What are lectins?

## Looking at the latest dietary ‘villain’

**T**wo food groups — beans and whole grains — that mostly enjoy a healthful reputation are being slammed both online and in a book because they contain lectins. What are lectins, and why should they be shunned?

Lectins are a group of proteins found in most plants. They're plentiful in beans and whole grains. Lectins are also found in smaller amounts in both white and sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini, carrots, berries, watermelon, nuts, coffee, chocolate, and select herbs and spices (such as peppermint, marjoram, and nutmeg).

In growing plants, along with other compounds, they serve as a defense system against invaders,

Lectins are sometimes referred to as anti-nutrients. The claim is that lectins incite a “biological warfare” within our bodies, ultimately causing weight gain, digestive maladies, elevated cholesterol, acne, arthritis, and even brain fog.

What does the research show?

Over the years, lectins have been the subject of a great deal of research; they are not newly discovered. Certain lectins can be toxic, while others have no ill health effects. Online health sensationalists and book authors paint lectins with the same brush claiming they're all dangerous. The truth is their so-called evi-

dence is weak and lacks peer-reviewed science to back it up.

Here's the thing: The majority of lectin studies were done on isolated lectins and not actual foods. While it's a fact that lectins damage the digestive tract in studies in which animals were fed raw beans or pure lectin, the reality is that we don't consume beans that are raw. And we certainly don't consume isolated lectin. We cook our beans and whole grains — or ferment or sprout them — before eating, which deactivates most lectins. So that's a moot point.

In addition, few studies have been conducted on humans; rather they've been done on animals or in test tubes. How can book and online health gurus link lectin-containing foods to certain health maladies when no clinical trials on humans have been completed?

### Safely consume lectins

When cooking dry beans take these steps: Soak them in water for at least five hours, pour it off, then bring the beans to a roiling boil in fresh water for at least 10 minutes. At that point, reduce the heat and simmer on the stove or in a slow cooker. Using canned beans instead? No worries since they are already fully cooked.

But when you cook dry beans — espe-



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

cially red kidney beans — only in a slow cooker, they may not reach a high enough temperature to break down all the lectins present. The result may be several hours of gastrointestinal upset such as nausea, vomiting, gas, and diarrhea, especially if eaten in large quantities.

Fermentation and sprouting also decreases lectin content. “Friendly bacteria” present during fermentation digests the anti-nutrients, reducing lectins by up to 95 percent.

Beans are superior sources of iron, B vitamins such as folate, magnesium, zinc, and potassium and other minerals and are an inexpensive and sustainable way to obtain protein. Whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa, wheat, and barley, provide ample amounts of B vitamins, iron, magnesium, and selenium. Both food groups are excellent sources of dietary fiber.

While there are people who feel better when avoiding beans and whole grains, most of us can safely eat them and enjoy the myriad of ways they are prepared.

What about pricey supplements that promise to neutralize the negative effects of lectins? Don't waste your money on these scare tactics; they're simply not necessary.

In short: Don't let pseudoscientists scare you away from eating legumes and whole grains. Some of the healthiest populations around the world center their diets around these two food groups.

*Christine Palumbo is a Naperville, Ill.-registered dietitian nutritionist who enjoys whole grains on a daily basis and tries to fit in beans whenever possible. Find her at Christine Palumbo Nutrition on Facebook, @PalumboRD on Twitter, or ChristinePalumbo.com.*



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# She does it all

A multitasking mom, Dr. Mitzner offers her advice

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**D**r. Alison Mitzner somehow does it all! Like most parents, there are times when she probably wonders how she's able to juggle so much while keeping her sanity.

The multitasking New York City pediatrician and journalist also has many years of experience as a mother and fitness fanatic under her belt, and has built a strong platform to share her knowledge.

She feels, like many parents do, that her children — daughter Serina, now 6 (“going on 16!”), and son, Penn, who is 4 — are numero uno, and says, “They are the most amazing, happy, kind, and loving kids and just so much fun! I am excited to see what the future and 2018 has in store for me and my kids.”

Offering her knowledge and views about a variety of parenting topics, Dr. Mitzner was also eager to share some interesting tidbits about her personal life and medical career with readers.

**Tammy Scileppi:** How do you find balance between mommyhood and your career?

**Dr. Mitzner:** It takes a lot of prioritizing and really budgeting my time well. I'm big on my lists! My to-do list is never-ending, but really works to help me remember many things I would probably otherwise forget. It also helps me tackle what I need to get done in a more stress-free, calming way. I try to make use of all the hours I have in the day and ensure I know what will fit in, where. It is so easy otherwise to waste time — which I don't have time to do!

I also try to do the best I can to be present wherever I am, and whatever I am doing. When I'm at work, I give 100 percent, and when I am home, I am all about quality, focused time with the kids. However frustrating for those trying to text me in the evening, my phone is usually put away. Busy parents often worry about how they will get everything done while still spending time with their kids. I focus on the time I do have with them, on quality time (even if not long). This really shows your children how much you love and care for them. It has such a positive effect — all while making wonderful memories.



Dr. Alison Mitzner and her kids.

I realized after my son was born (and a bad mastitis infection from not taking the time to pump!) I needed to also take some time for myself, even if just 20 minutes. For me, working out, staying healthy, and getting sleep are the most important and make me even more energized and allow me to give the most I can for my children and my career.

In the past year [I've become] a single mom, [so] I also make sure I have people around me that can support and help me when I need it. I realized I need to have this support at times. I am fortunate to have found my tribe and a great group of friends and a wonderful babysitter. It isn't easy to find a sitter you can trust and love your children like family, rather than just a job, but they are out there!

**TS:** How about some tips for a peaceful home, happier kids, healthy meals and snacks?

**Dr. M:** Stay calm! If you remain calm, you will have a calming effect on your child and a stressful situation. It is truly powerful. I'm all for peaceful parenting.

If you are calm, others around you will be calm. If you are anxious, others around you are anxious. Moods are truly contagious. Whether positive or negative — you set the tone. So as hard as it may be at times with your kids, take breathers, laugh, step away. Engaging with your children patiently and calmly, without adding more stress to the situation, is so beneficial.

Additionally, they will listen and actually hear more of what you are saying when you are teaching them what to do and not do, and they will learn from you.

Children also, as we know, learn from watching and observing their parents. We are their biggest role models. If they see you calm and reacting to stressful situations calmly. They will learn to stay calm when anxious or faced with a stressful situation.

Humor is a great way to connect with your child, too, and that connection and bond is so important when disciplining and teaching your children. When they test your patience, take a breath. Take a few minutes. But also, you can add laughter and humor. (I know, easier said than done — but it really does help!) Just always remember your child is learning. They learn from you. Use these times as a good opportunity to teach your child — with humor, if possible — patiently and calmly. They will then feel supported to learn and hear you and cooperate with you, rather than get more upset or frustrated. It also makes it a lot less stressful and more fun!

As far as meals, I am all for eating healthy, and eating at home is the best way to do that. We for sure go out to eat, but it is more the exception than the norm. I am all about choices, too, rather than forcing them to eat something they don't like. Offering two choices (healthy options) gives the kids the control they want, yet they will still eat well. I always add things to the plate for them to try and re-introduce foods that, even if they tried before and didn't like it, they may like this time. Often, they end up liking it.

**TS:** Tell us about your practice and why you find your work fulfilling.

**Dr. M:** After completing residency, I practiced general pediatrics for five years in a private practice here in Manhattan.

During those years, I was also an attending pediatrician at multiple New York City teaching hospitals, where I admitted and examined newborns and pediatric patients. I love children, and it was always so rewarding helping patients, along with parents. I also always loved supervising and teaching residents and medical students in various aspects of clinical and academic medicine.

I have since moved into the pharmaceutical industry. I have had experience in the industry with leading safety teams and physicians and mentoring many physicians globally. I am currently senior director in Safety and Regulatory department at a large pharmaceutical company.

I find what I do now even more rewarding, as I am helping patients not only on a small level based on who I saw in the office, but millions!

**TS:** As a fitness expert, what are some tips for parent-friendly workouts?

**Dr. M:** A good reminder for busy parents as well as soon-to-be moms, is that even just a short amount of exercise — 15–20 minutes — can help boost your energy, lift your mood, and keep you mentally alert, besides keeping you healthy and fit. With your infant or toddler, you can go for a quick walk while they are in the stroller. If

“If you are calm, others around you will be calm. If you are anxious, others around you are anxious. Moods are truly contagious.”

they nap and you are home, simple push-ups, sit ups, and squats are good. It is also good to stay fit since you want your children to know the value of fitness, and they will if they see you exercising. As they get older, you can exercise with them, too.

I like cardio, elliptical, or jogging, along with some weight training and core strengthening. Also, starting this month, I will be training the next 12 weeks for the FitDoc competition in March.

Dr. Mitzner believes in using alternative integrated medicine practices — like meditation and acupuncture — for a calmer, well-balanced life, and as a great way to alleviate pain and other symptoms associated with certain conditions.

She started researching and finding al-

ternative treatments after she experienced complications and unexplained headaches from a procedure she had. She says it really helped her during that difficult time, and “I use these practices now in daily life for me, my children, and many other family, friends, colleagues, and more, and it completely changed my life for the better. It also truly helps me raise my children with many of these practices in mind, and I am raising them in a peaceful, calm way.

“This experience and learning of alternative medicine is also the reason I named my daughter Serina (meaning serene and peaceful) to remind me of all the amazing alternative practices that I did throughout my pregnancy with her.”

And sharing her daily mantra, this super-busy parent says, “I think about what I’m grateful for. Happiness is a choice we make. I’m all for being thankful, laughing, and getting rid of things that don’t make me happy and focusing my attention on things that do. Just one positive thought each morning can really change your whole day.”

To learn more about Dr. Mitzner, visit [www.alisonmitznermd.com](http://www.alisonmitznermd.com) or follow her Instagram @alisonmitznermd.

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

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# Understanding the 2017 tax reform

**W**ait, what just happened? Many of you surely said this as 2017 came to a close. There was much talk about tax reform toward the year's end. The nuts and bolts of the bill changed as frequently as some people change their clothes, making it hard to keep track of what was in and what was out. But now that the bill has passed and the dust has settled, we can digest it in the bill. Here is an overview of the changes, with some things to consider and potential steps to take if they make sense for your situation:

**When will it take effect?:** The provisions of the bill are effective from Jan. 1, 2018 through Dec. 31, 2025, with some exceptions and phase outs. After Dec. 31, 2025, the law sunsets to that which existed as of Dec. 31, 2017. This is not unprecedented; Bush the First used a similar mechanism to gradually increase the federal estate tax exemption before it sunset in 2010.

**How Does the tax rate change?:** The maximum tax rate will drop from 39.6 percent to 37 percent. There are still seven tax rates — 10 percent (for \$0 to \$9,525, and \$19,000 for married couples), 12, 22, 24, 32, 35, and 37 percent (more than \$500,000, and \$600,000 if married). The Internal Revenue Service will publish the official table at the end of January 2018.

**What happened to the Alternative Minimum Tax?:** The Alternative Minimum Tax is still around, but the threshold of when it kicks in was increased to \$1 million (married) and \$500,000 (single). In other words, under the Alternative Minimum Tax, a taxpayer begins to lose the potency of certain deductions like real property taxes and mortgage interest at a certain income level. The thresholds under the old law were \$164,000 (married) and \$123,000 (single). Under the new law, higher income earners can continue to benefit from deductions.

**Can I take an itemized deduction?:** For taxpayers who did not want to itemize deductions or did not have them available

to deduct (such as real property tax and mortgage interest, or charitable deductions), the government allows a “standard” deduction amount. The bill nearly doubles the standard deduction from \$13,000 to \$24,000 (married) and from \$6,500 to \$12,000 (single).

**Can I take medical expense deductions?:** If you think that you will have increased medical expenses, 2017 and 2018 would be the years in which to aggregate them, if you have that option available. Under the prior law, medical expenses needed to exceed 10 percent of adjusted gross income. The bill reduces that threshold to 7.5 percent for the 2017 and 2018 tax years.

**Is there an estate tax?:** The bill changed the federal estate tax from about \$5.6 million per person to \$11.2 million per person until 2025, at which point the provisions sunset and the federal estate tax exemption reverts to where it was as of Dec. 31, 2017, with adjustments for inflation. However, the bill impacted only federal estate tax. Most states also impose an estate tax, which remains unchanged absent state-law changes.

**What about state and local tax deductions?:** State and local tax deductions such as real property taxes, state income taxes, and municipal income taxes are capped at \$10,000. However, if you were subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax previously, it is likely that you were phased out of the impact of these deductions anyway.

And what about the kids? What provisions impact them? This being a parenting magazine, here are some of the ways he bill changes your taxes as it relates to your children:

**The “kiddie tax”:** The “kiddie tax” is the rate at which unearned income of children under the age of 19 (and college students under 24) is taxed. So, in other words, if you gifted stock to your kids when they were born, and it throws off \$10,000 in income per year in dividends, the income is “unearned,” unlike wages and salary.

**Child tax credit:** The tax law allows for



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ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.

a tax credit (an amount to offset the tax you would otherwise owe, as opposed to a deduction, which offsets the overall gross taxable income) for the number of children you have. As with the Alternative Minimum Tax, under the prior law, the potency of the child tax credit was phased out above a certain income threshold. The bill increased the child tax credit to \$2,000 per qualifying child and is refundable up to \$1,400 subject to phase outs (meaning that even if you do not owe any taxes, the government will refund you the money from the credit).

**Deduction for Student Loan Interest:** The maximum amount that can be deducted for interest on student loans is \$2,500, with phaseouts for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income exceeding \$65,000 (\$135,000 for married filers).

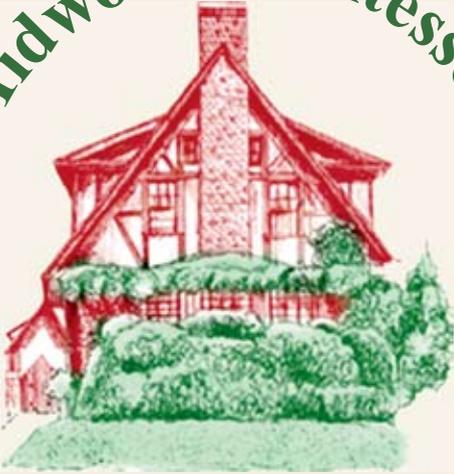
**529 Accounts:** You may now access 529 funds to pay for educational expenses for kindergarten through grade 12 schools, not just college.

These are just some of the aspects of the elements of the new law. How the bill will impact you and your family depends on your situation. You should consult your accountant to determine how the bill affects your tax situation and determine what, if any, changes to make in your tax planning in 2018.

*Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C. Find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at [www.besunderlaw.com](http://www.besunderlaw.com).*

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# Love is a behavior

## Building loving habits in your family

**L**ove is not just a feeling or a warm fuzzy sensation inside your heart. Love is a behavior, an action, an experience. It is how you demonstrate that warm fuzzy sensation as an interaction between you and another.

Parents will say, “Of course I love my kids.” You know it is the right answer, and it’s true most of the time.

But rather than asking if you love your kids, my question is how do you love your kids? What actions do you take? If love is, as I say, an experience, how do you experience love with your children?

If this question has you stumped, then perhaps my top three ways to love your children will help:

### 1. Keep your temper in check!

Your words have a big impact. The day-to-day demands of parenting, with your small one always pushing your buttons, can be frustrating. And I know it is hard to always keep your cool, but your children are listening. The words you use when you are upset cannot be unsaid.

So, even when upset, don’t berate, be-

little, or insult your kids. Find ways to correct and direct them, or simply wait to speak until you have relaxed. You may not be able to use loving words in the moment, but you can avoid using hurtful words. This is an act of love!

### 2. Set up date night

Date night is not just for your partner. No matter how much time you spend with your children, set up a specific date night with them — ideally, individually and weekly. Knowing that they get to have dinner with you every Tuesday or brunch each Sunday is special for them, and you’ll both look forward to it. This special time will be something you both cherish as they grow up.

### 3. Small steps have the most impact

The big moments are easier to remember. Birthdays, holidays, and graduations all have love built-in. It is the small moments that can have a huge impact. Start your days off with a snuggle. Put a note in your little one’s lunch box. Leave a paper heart on her pillow. Draw a card for him that says “I love you.” Hang up a picture



## BEHAVIOR & BEYOND

DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

she drew. It does not need to cost a thing to show your small ones love. Day-to-day moments can be packed with love.

Building more love in your family will increase amazing behavior. Start building loving habits in your family, one day at a time!

*Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavior specialist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 20 years. Her book “Love Your Classroom Again” is a best-seller, and her new book, “Love Your Family Again,” is available on Amazon. Find out more at [DrMarcie.com](http://DrMarcie.com).*

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# Calendar

FEBRUARY



## Celebrate the Year of the Dog

Come celebrate the Year of the Dog and Lunar New Year with a performance by the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company at the Kumble Theater on Feb. 11.

The Brooklyn College of Performing Arts center presents the acclaimed Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. The troupe returns for its fifth annual celebration and the arrival of spring, with a performance that includes traditional dances and new contemporary works created by Artis-

tic Director Nai-Ni Chen, as well as live music performed by the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York and a special performance by acrobat Lina Liu.

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company, Feb. 11 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$25, half price for children under 12. Suitable for all ages.

*Kumble Theater at Long Island University [DeKalb and Flatbush avenues in Fort Greene, (718) 951-4500, [www.at.Brooklyn-Center.org](http://www.at.Brooklyn-Center.org)].*

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# Calendar

### Submit a listing

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

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

### THURS, FEB. 1

#### IN BROOKLYN

**"Under the Tangle:"** GK Arts Center, 29 Jay St. at John Street; (212) 715-1914; [contactus@treehouseshakers.com](mailto:contactus@treehouseshakers.com); 11 am; \$20 to \$35.

**Presented by The Treehouse Shakers, this performance follows an adolescent girl who becomes ensnared in a labyrinth. Throughout her journey, she twists along the brambling pathways being confronted with obstacles, finding numerous clues, and meeting many unusual characters.**

#### FURTHER AFIELD

**16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:** New York Transit Museum at Grand Central Station, 89 E. 42nd St. at Park Avenue, Manhattan; (212) 878-0106; 8 am to 8 pm; Free.

The display features Lionel trains traveling along a 34-foot long, two-level, "O" gauge model train layout. Departing from a miniature replica of Grand Central Terminal on their way to the North Pole, this year's exhibition showcases the Transit Museum's Lionel Metro-North, Polar Express, and vintage subway train sets. A selection from the museum's collection of trolley and elevated train models created by Dr. George T.F. Rahilly will also be on display to the delight of viewers.

### FRI, FEB. 2

#### IN BROOKLYN

**"Under the Tangle:"** 11 am. GK Arts Center. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

**Family Shabbat Service and Dinner:** Bay Ridge Jewish Center, 8025 Fourth Ave. between 80th and 81st streets; (718) 836-3103; [office@brjc.org](mailto:office@brjc.org); [www.brjc.org](http://www.brjc.org); 6:30pm; Members: \$20 per person, \$35 per family. Non-member: \$25 per person, \$40 per family.

Bay Ridge Jewish center welcomes in Shabbat with singing, storytelling, and dancing followed by a delicious themed dinner. People of all ages — toddlers to seniors — socialize and form friendships.

**The Share Series (theater, dance, music and spoken word):** Ingersoll Cornerstone Community Center, 177 Myrtle Ave.; 7-9 pm; Free.



## Outsmarting the wild

Urban Rangers share wilderness hacks in this Wilderness Survival Workshop at the Salt Marsh Nature Center on Feb. 10.

Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world — and might just save your life. Through this series of hands-on workshops, New York City Parks Urban all-Park Rangers will teach vital wilderness survival skills.

Whether you are preparing for an extended journey through the woods or just want to impress your friends on your next camping trip, these skills are bound to come in handy.

Recommended for children 8 years and older.

Survival Workshop, Feb. 10 from 11 am to 12:30 pm; free.

*Salt Marsh Nature Center [3302 Avenue U in Marine Park, (718) 421-2021].*

University Settlement's SHARE! Series is an ongoing, mobile performance event that brings artists of all ages and stages of development together on one equal platform. It's a time to testify, witness and connect with the artists in your community. All performances will be curated by Brooklyn's first Intergenerational Community Arts Council.

**"Beauty and the Beast":** St. George Community Center, 6209 11th Ave. and 62nd Street; (718) 989-9566. [www.ridgechorale.com](http://www.ridgechorale.com); 8 pm; \$@5 (\$20 seniors and children 10 years and younger).

Jeff Samaha Theater Productions/Ridge Chorale presents this timeless tale of love and redemption.

#### FURTHER AFIELD

**16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:** 8 am to 8 pm. NY Transit Museum at Grand Central Station. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

### SAT, FEB. 3

#### IN BROOKLYN

**BAMKids Film Festival:** BAM Peter Jay

Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street; [www.bam.org](http://www.bam.org); 9:30 am to 4 pm; Tickets per screening \$10 children 13 and under (\$14 adults; \$10 seniors and \$9 for members and patrons).

The lineup this year showcases 76 films from 31 countries, in nine languages. This is the first year that a shorts program with Dream Chasers is presented. In addition there will be the Jim Henson Foundation's Puppets on Film, showcasing innovative puppetry work. Children's activities include face painters, balloon artists, master puppeteer Tarish "Jeghetto" Pipkins and his hybrid puppets, as well as Rogue the Magician and juggling stilt walker Billy Schultz. There will also be interactive activities for families in the BAMcafé including crafts, button-making, and digital games by Shawn Pierre.

**Ramones for Kids:** Industry City, 220 36th St. at Second Avenue; [therockandrollplayhouse.com](http://therockandrollplayhouse.com); 12:30 pm; Free.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse's presents the 2018 winter season of children's music workshop-series. The music of the Ramones and the '80s is on tap.

**Black History Month – Bedford-**

# Calendar

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

**Stuyvesant:** Herbert Von King Park, Clifton Place and Marcy Avenue; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

African-American history is the part of American history. Most African Americans are the descendants of Africans forcibly brought to and held captive in the United States from 1555 to 1865. Discover the history of Bedford-Stuyvesant and the prominent African-American community leaders that had a positive impact on the neighborhood.

**"Under the Tangle:"** 1 pm. GK Arts Center. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

**Hao Bang-Ah, Dog:** New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236-4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 2 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Chinese Theater Works presents a special performance celebrating the Lunar New Year, The Year of the Dog. "Hao Bang Ah" is the common expression meaning "great" or "well done." This year the puppet show features a selection of traditional Chinese Budaixi, a glove puppet vignettes. There will be a sing-along, games, foods and customs along with a post-show hands-on demonstration.

**"Beauty and the Beast":** 2 pm and 8 pm. St. George Community Center. See Friday, Feb. 2.

**Dance with Mark Morris Dance Group:** Mark Morris Dance Group, 3 Lafayette Ave. between Nostrand Avenue and Bedford Avenue; (718) 624-8400; [julie.mmdg@gmail.com](mailto:julie.mmdg@gmail.com); [www.markmorrisdancegroup.org](http://www.markmorrisdancegroup.org); 3 pm; Free.

A free class taught by Dance Group company members and accompanied by live music. All ages and levels are welcome.

**Celebrate Black History Month:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; [info@brooklynmuseum.org](mailto:info@brooklynmuseum.org); [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org); 5PM; Free.

Brooklyn Museum's popular Target First Saturday celebrates Black History Month with activists and artists from across the African diaspora. Highlights include a curator talk in "One Basquiat," a screening of "Whose Streets?" poetry readings, feminist book club, Hands-on Art fun, performances by soul singer and pianist Aaron Abernathy, The Skins, and Latasha Alcindor, and a closing dance party hosted by Everyday People.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:** 10 am to 6 pm. NY Transit Museum at Grand Central Station. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

## SUN, FEB. 4

### IN BROOKLYN

**BAMKids Film Festival:** 9:30 am to 4 pm. BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building. See Saturday, Feb. 3.

**Early Bird Morning Walk:** Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400; [www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); 10 am to 11 am; Free.

## So many twists and turns

"Under the Tangle" returns to the GK Arts Center on Feb. 1, 2, and 3.

Presented by The Treehouse Shakers, this performance follows an adolescent girl who becomes ensnared in a labyrinth.

Throughout her journey, she twists along the brambling pathways being confronted with obstacles, finding numerous clues, and meeting many unusual characters: a flock of birds, the daunting labyrinth guards, and the Queen of the Lost perched upon a grim tower.

"Under the Tangle" Feb. 1 and 2 at 11 am, and Feb. 3 at 1 pm. Tickets range from \$20 to \$35. Recommended for children 8 years and older.



8 years and older.

GK Arts Center [29 Jay St. at John Street in Vinegar Hill, (212) 715-1914; [contactus@treehouseshakkers.com](http://contactus@treehouseshakkers.com)].

prospectpark.org/audubon; 10 am to 11 am; Free.

Join Prospect Park Alliance to learn about the Great Backyard Bird Count and search for your favorite "backyard bird." Find woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches eating from feeders along Prospect Park's nature trails. Please note this tour leaves promptly at 10 am. Led by the Brooklyn Bird Club.

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

Experience the serenity and wonder of the garden with programs for the entire family! Featuring Family Discovery Stations and Storytime, Winter Nature Walk with Bradley Klein, Chase Away the Winter Bloues tour, and Conservatory Seasonal Highlights tour.

**Dance, Drum, and Imagination Summer Camp Info Session:** RestorationArt, 1368 Fulton St. between Brooklyn and New York avenues; (718) 935-9700; [info@cumbdance.org](mailto:info@cumbdance.org); [cumbdance.org/youth-classes/summer-camp](http://cumbdance.org/youth-classes/summer-camp); 12:30-1:30 pm; Free.

This summer, young artists ages 3-7 will unleash their imaginations and learn about music and dance from the African Diaspora. Join us for this free summer camp info session to learn more about the program, meet the teaching artists, and get a taste of the camp experience. Let's frolic through the Caribbean Sea! With song, dance, food, steel drum-making, and more, campers learn about Haiti, Puerto Rico, Trinidad, and other Caribbean locales.

**Shelter Building:** Prospect Park, East Drive and Lincoln Road; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Our Urban Park Rangers are well-versed in outdoor lore. Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world, and might just save your life. All programs are family-friendly, but are recommended for ages

8 years and older.

"Beauty and the Beast": 2 pm. St. George Community Center. See Friday, Feb. 2.

**"Salute to Broadway":** Our Lady of Perpetual Help auditorium, 5902 Sixth Ave. at 59th Street; (718) 259-2772; [nfo@reginaopera.org](mailto:nfo@reginaopera.org); [www.reginaopera.org](http://www.reginaopera.org); 3 pm; \$15 (\$5 teens; children free).

Regina Opera Company rings in the New Year season with a two-hour concert of classic and contemporary Broadway selections and Italian songs.

**Creativity Lab:** Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue; (718) 638-5000; [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org); 4 pm to 5:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Welcome to the Lab! Drop by our studios and explore your creative side. In this drop-in workshop for all ages, take inspiration from our galleries and get messy, experiment with materials, and learn artistic techniques with a new project each month. Bring the whole family and stay as long as you'd like!

**Kenny Barron:** Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; [www.kumbletheater.org](http://www.kumbletheater.org); 8 pm; \$35.

Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College presents the jazz maestro and Grammy nominee in a special solo event.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**16th Annual Holiday Transit Show:** 10 am to 6 pm. NY Transit Museum at Grand Central Station. See Thursday, Feb. 1.

## MON, FEB. 5

### FURTHER AFIELD

**SO Magic Workshop:** Harmony by Karate, 251 W. 81st St., Manhattan; (215) 760-3752; [Sarah@BehavioralMilestones.org](mailto:Sarah@BehavioralMilestones.org); [www.harmonybykarate.com](http://www.harmonybykarate.com).

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

SOMagicTricks.com; 4–4:45 pm; \$375 for six 45-minute sessions.

All magic exercises are done in pairs under close supervision to ensure success and boost self-esteem. SO Magic is intended for children ages 3 to 5 years old. It is an inclusive program for children with all different abilities and we are able to modify to accommodate any special needs. Children will start by designing their own custom magic kits and will learn new exciting tricks each week to amaze their friends and family all while developing social skills.

## FRI, FEB. 9

### IN BROOKLYN

**“Beauty and the Beast”:** 8 pm. St. George Community Center. See Friday, Feb. 2.

## SAT, FEB. 10

### IN BROOKLYN

**TOTS Sing-Along to welcome in Shabbat!** Bay Ridge Jewish Center, 8025 Fourth Ave. between 80th and 81st streets; (718) 836–3103; office@brjc.org; www.brjc.org; 10:45 am.

Experience Shabbat morning with singing, guitar, puppetry, and musical prayer. Families with children birth to 5 years old and caregivers participate in a playful setting and form friendships. Followed by challah and grape juice.

**Wilderness Survival Workshop:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421–2021; 11 am to 12:30 pm; Free.

Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world, and might just save your life. Through this series of hands-on workshops, NYC Parks Urban Park Rangers will teach vital wilderness survival skills. Whether you are preparing for an extended journey through the woods or just want to impress your friends on your next camping trip, these skills are bound to come in handy.

**David Bowie for Kids:** Industry City, 220 36th St. at Second Avenue; therockandrollplayhouse.com; 12:30 pm; Free.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse presents the 2018 winter season of children’s music workshop-series, and Maj. Tom is connecting again with the music of David Bowie.

**Chinese Cultural Festival:** New Utrecht Library, 1734 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236–4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

Celebrate the Year of the Dog at the library.

**Story Time:** New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236–4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 2 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Librarians read stories celebrating the Lunar New Year.

**Nature’s Workshop – Illustrations:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421–2021; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free.

This winter, join us for the Nature’s Workshop series. Each program in this series explores



## History of the waterfront

Welcome to the waterfront.

The Brooklyn Historical Society is hosting a new exhibit, *Waterfront*, at its Dumbo location now through March 31.

The immersive, multimedia exhibition brings to life the history of Brooklyn’s coastline through interwoven stories and 12 concept areas that engage visitors of all ages.

Attendees are greeted by a floor-to-ceiling sculptural installation of more than 80 archaeological artifacts and fragments, as well as a 14-foot reproduction of an 1879 lithograph of Brooklyn’s waterfront.

There is also a viewing of “Edge,” an eight-minute film showing the wa-

terfront’s history through 10 epic historical moments stretching over 20,000 years.

In “A Laboring Family,” visitors can listen to oral histories and then don work clothing and try their hand at ship fitting.

*Waterfront*, now through March 31, on Tuesdays through Thursdays, 11 am to 6 pm; Sundays, 11 am to 6 pm; Fridays and Saturdays, 11 am to 8 pm. Admission is \$10, \$6 for seniors and teachers, and free for students and members. Suitable for all ages.

*Brooklyn Historical Society Dumbo location [55 Water St. at Main Street in Dumbo, (718) 222–4111; www.brooklynhistory.org].*

its topic in depth and allows you to develop a skill, participate in a hands-on project, and indulge your curiosity. This workshop will inspire you to illustrate the landscape, waterway, and wildlife of the salt marsh. This workshop will take place indoors. Basic materials provided.

**Lunar New Year Celebration:** Dyker Library, 8202 13th Ave.; (718) 748–6261; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/dyker>; 2 pm; Free.

Chinese music, dancing, and a fashion show at Dyker Library, with special Chinese songs from the Dyker Singers.

**“Beauty and the Beast”:** 2 pm and 8 pm. St. George Community Center. See Friday, Feb. 2.

**“Songs Full of Heart”:** Brooklyn Music School Playhouse, 126 St. Felix St. between Lafayette Avenue and Hanson Place; (718)

638–5660; [lilli@michelletabnickpr.com](mailto:lilli@michelletabnickpr.com); brooklynmusicschool.org; 5 pm; \$5.

Come and enjoy the fifth annual Valentine’s Day concert, “Songs Full of Heart.” Designed to showcase the budding vocalists and stars of tomorrow, this program features a wide variety of repertoire including works by Billy Joel, Sting, and Adele Adkins. The young performers explore the significance of love and human connections through tunes that go beyond words and unite hearts.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Fifth Annual Meet the Breeds and Masters Agility Championship:** Piers 92–94, 711 12th Ave. at 55th Street and West Side Highway, Manhattan; [www.westminsterkennelclub.org](http://www.westminsterkennelclub.org); 10 am to 5 pm and 7 pm to 9 pm; Tickets range from \$32–\$100 for adults, depending on the event; \$10–\$20 for children under 12, depending on the event.

# Calendar

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

Package tickets also available.

The show offers some of the country's greatest canine athletes and their handlers as they face a challenging obstacle course of jumps, tunnels, weave poles and more in a timed competition, open to all breeds and mixed breeds. Meet the Breeds, along with The International Cat Association, gives dog and cat lovers a unique opportunity to meet and visit with hundreds of adorable dogs and cats while learning about responsible pet ownership and various breeds.

## SUN, FEB. 11

### IN BROOKLYN

**Valentine's Day celebration:** Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets; (718) 963-3369; [https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1614941?utm\\_medium=bks](https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1614941?utm_medium=bks); 11 am; \$12 (Free for children under 1).

The Rock and Roll Playhouse presents this family concert to celebrate the holiday of love.

**"Beauty and the Beast":** 2 pm. St. George Community Center. See Friday, Feb. 2.

**Lunar New Year Celebration:** Kumble Theater at Long Island University, DeKalb and Flatbush avenues; (718) 488-1624; [Info@BrooklynCenter.org](mailto:Info@BrooklynCenter.org); [www.kumbletheater.org](http://www.kumbletheater.org); 3 pm; \$25.

Celebrate the oncoming arrival of spring with an all-new festival of Chinese music and dance commemorating the Year of the Dog, faithful guardian, and loyal friend to mankind. This family-friendly event includes graceful dancers, a colorful Chinese marketplace, red lions and golden dragons frolicking to the lilting sounds of traditional instruments, and more. Enjoy the elegant splendor and rich culture of one of Brooklyn's most vibrant communities with this award-winning performance by the prestigious Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company.

## MON, FEB. 12

### IN BROOKLYN

**Bilingual Birdies:** New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236-4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 11 am to 11:45 am; Free.

Storytime for children to 5 years old in Mandarin.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**The 142nd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show:** Piers 92-94, 711 12th Ave. at 55th Street and West Side Highway; Madison Square Garden, W. 33rd Street and Seventh Avenue, Manhattan; [www.westminsterkennelclub.org](http://www.westminsterkennelclub.org); 8 am to 4 pm and 7:30 pm; Tickets range from \$32-\$100 for adults, depending on the event; \$10-\$20 for children under 12, depending on the event. Package tickets also available.

The 142nd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show activities include breed judging in the hound, toy, non-sporting events, as well as junior showmanship finals and best in show.

## Hear songs of Broadway

Give your regards to Broadway in this 2018 season opening of Regina Opera Company on Feb. 5, featuring selections of contemporary Broadway hits.

The famed company rings in a new season of old and new favorites performed by sopranos Abigail Mitchell and Sabrina Palladino, tenors José Heredia and Juan del Bosco, baritone Danny Oakden, and bass Kofi Hayford (pictured), with flutist Richard Paratley and piano accompanist Victoria Ulanovskaya.

The performance is suitable for all ages.

"Salute to Broadway," Feb. 5 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$15, \$5 teens, children under 12 free.

*Our Lady of Perpetual Help auditorium [5902 Sixth Ave. at 59th Street in Sunset Park, (718) 259-2772; [info@reginaopera.org](mailto:info@reginaopera.org)].*



Check Kennel website for exact times and locations.

**SO Magic Workshop:** 4-4:45 pm. Harmony by Karate. See Monday, Feb. 5.

## TUES, FEB. 13

### IN BROOKLYN

**George Washington Returns:** New Utrecht Church, 18th Avenue and 84th Street; (718) 256-7173; 7:30 pm; Free.

Washington Portrayer Michael Grillo's presentation about Washington's career will include a discussion of the Battle of Brooklyn in August 1776, his victorious return to New York in November 1783, his inauguration there in 1789, and his visit to New Utrecht in April 1790. President Washington will have an escort of two Revolutionary War re-enactors in the uniform of a New York militia unit, one of whom will give a brief talk about the life and equipment of a Revolutionary War soldier.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**The 142nd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show:** 8 am to 4 pm and 7:30 pm. Piers 92-94. See Monday, Feb. 12.

## FRI, FEB. 16

### IN BROOKLYN

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

Bundle up and find out what your favorite park animals are doing this winter. Join Pros-

pect Park Alliance naturalists to discover the winter survival strategies of animals that live in Prospect Park. Enjoy nature games, science activities, bird watching, and more!

**Campfire Conversation:** Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [prospectpark.org/campfire](http://prospectpark.org/campfire). [www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht](http://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht); Noon to 4 pm; \$3.

Join Prospect Park Alliance and the Brooklyn Public Library around the campfire for the first Campfire Conversation of 2018! Please register in advance.

**Kids Create:** New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236-4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 celebrate the Lunar New Year and make crafts.

**TOT Shabbat:** Bay Ridge Jewish Center, 8025 Fourth Ave. between 80th and 81st streets; (718) 836-3103; [office@brjc.org](mailto:office@brjc.org); [www.brjc.org](http://www.brjc.org); 5:30 pm; see ad.

Families with kids birth to 5 year olds and caregivers experience Shabbat with songs, stories, instruments and dancing. Journey through a Shabbat experience that will excite your children and develop Jewish community. Tot Shabbat concludes with challah and grape juice and lots of smiles!

**Musical Shabbat:** Bay Ridge Jewish Center, 8025 Fourth Ave. between 80th and 81st streets; (718) 836-3103; [office@brjc.org](mailto:office@brjc.org); [www.brjc.org](http://www.brjc.org); 6:30pm; see ad.

The BRJC band will welcome Shabbat with new songs and melodies. Get ready to sing and clap to the beat of the music and prayers of our

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heart. All ages welcome.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**U.S. Lego Live!**: Pier 36, 299 South St., Manhattan; (888) 512-7469; [info@parallellive-group.com](mailto:info@parallellive-group.com); [https://legolive.frontgatetickets.com/#label\\_fragment](https://legolive.frontgatetickets.com/#label_fragment); 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm; \$30 to \$75, plus fees.

The inaugural Live experience is the first time the international sensation will bring Lego Master Builders, Minecraft, Star Wars, and millions of bricks to the same place at the same time for fans of all ages to enjoy. The interactive, highly visual event is a must for any Lego fan.

## SAT, FEB. 17

### IN BROOKLYN

**Farmhouse Family Day**: Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum, 5816 Clarendon Rd. (718) 629-5400; <https://www.nycgovparks.org/events/2017/12/16/farmhouse-family-day>; 11 am to 3 pm; Free.

Drop in and explore New York City's oldest house together. Arrive by 1 pm for a unique hands-on making activity. Seasonal activities inside the historic house and around the gardens include scavenger hunts, artifact investigation, gardening, self-guided exploration, and hands-on activities. Family Day is open to everyone. Activities are designed for families with kids ages 4 to 10. Children must be accompanied by an adult. No reservation required.

**The Sounds of Brazil**: Industry City, 220 36th St. at Second Avenue; [therockandrollplayhouse.com](http://therockandrollplayhouse.com); 12:30 pm; Free.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse presents the 2018 winter season of children's music workshop-series. Kids Dance to the Samba beat.

**Family Fun – Salsa**: Mark Morris Dance Group, 3 Lafayette Ave. between Nostrand Avenue and Bedford Avenue; (718) 624-8400; [julie.mmdg@gmail.com](mailto:julie.mmdg@gmail.com); [www.markmorris-dancegroup.org](http://www.markmorris-dancegroup.org); 4:30 pm; \$25 per family of one to three, \$30 per family of four-plus, maximum of six per family.

Designed for the whole family, you will learn the fundamentals of a variety of dance, fitness, and music genres. From Bhangra and Salsa to music and singing and more! All workshops are 60 minutes long. For all ages and abilities. No experience necessary. Learn the steps and rhythms of this favorite Latin social dance. This energetic class will include stretching, body isolations, and basic partnering.

**"Daniel Beaty – Emergency"**: Kumble Theater at LIU Brooklyn, 1 University Plaza, (646) 765-4773; [lilli@michelletabnickpr.com](mailto:lilli@michelletabnickpr.com); [www.brooklyncenter.org](http://www.brooklyncenter.org); 8 pm; \$35.

When a slave ship emerges out of the Hudson River in present-day New York Harbor, the city and the nation are sent into near-hysteria as they try to understand this bizarre and unexplainable phenomenon. Award-winning actor, writer, poet, and community activist Daniel Beaty portrays more than 40 characters in this solo theatrical tour-de-force as he explores our shared humanity and what it means to be free.



## Rockin' Valentine's Day

Hearts and flowers are on the table at the Brooklyn Bowl, during this family-friendly Valentine's Day workshop-concert on Feb. 11.

Children of all ages will enjoy this interactive fun concert of music, dancing, games, activities, storytelling, and the opportunity to rock out, presented by

the Rock and Roll Playhouse.

Valentine's Day celebration, Feb. 11 at 11 am. Tickets are \$12, free for children under 1.

*Brooklyn Bowl [61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets in Williamsburg. (718) 963-3369; [www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/](http://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/)].*

## FURTHER AFIELD

**U.S. Lego Live!**: 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm. Pier 36. See Friday, Feb. 16.

## SUN, FEB. 18

### IN BROOKLYN

**The Music of Dave Matthews Band**: Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets; (718) 963-3369; [https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1614941?utm\\_medium=bks](https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1614941?utm_medium=bks); 11:30 am; \$12 (Free for children under 1).

The Rock and Roll Playhouse continues its Family Cocnert series with this fun event of Rhyme and Reason.

**"Daniel Beaty – Emergency"**: 8 pm. Kumble Theater at LIU Brooklyn. See Saturday, Feb. 17.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**U.S. Lego Live!**: 8 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 7 pm. Pier 36. See Friday, Feb. 16.

## MON, FEB. 19

### IN BROOKLYN

**President's Week in the Park**: Prospect Park Audubon Center, enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue; (718) 287-3400;

[www.prospectpark.org/audubon](http://www.prospectpark.org/audubon); Noon to 4 pm; Free.

Join Prospect Park Alliance during Presidents Week for family-friendly programs.

**President's Week**: Lefferts Historic House, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway; (718) 789-2822; [prospectpark.org/campfire](http://prospectpark.org/campfire). [www.prospectpark.org](http://www.prospectpark.org); Noon to 4 pm; \$3.

Join Prospect Park Alliance during Presidents Week for family-friendly programs.

**Kids week – Finding Your Way**: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Navigate your way through Marine Park. Learn how to use a map and compass for safe hiking, then try out your skills on an orienteering trail!

## TUES, FEB. 20

### IN BROOKLYN

**President's Week in the Park**: Noon to 4 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 19.

**President's Week**: Noon to 4 pm. Lefferts Historic House. See Monday, Feb. 19.

**Kids week – Shelter building**: Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

# Calendar

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

Do you have what it takes to survive in the wilderness? Develop skills that will help you create a shelter from natural and man-made objects.

**Kids Week – Fort Greene History and Colonial Games:** Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 1 pm to 2:30pm; Free.

Step back in time and play some colonial games. The history of Fort Greene Park provides the perfect backdrop as we experience what Colonial-era kids played during their free time.

## WED, FEB. 21

### IN BROOKLYN

**President's Week in the Park:** Noon to 4 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 19.

**President's Week:** Noon to 4 pm. Lefferts Historic House. See Monday, Feb. 19.

**Kids week – Nature Games:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Bring the kids and enjoy the day with the Urban Park Rangers in Marine Park as we enjoy games inspired by nature.

## THURS, FEB. 22

### IN BROOKLYN

**President's Week in the Park:** Noon to 4 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 19.

**Kids Week – Birds of Prey:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Join the Urban Park Rangers for an afternoon and learn about eagles, hawks, and owls, and the important role they play in nature.

**Kids Week – Build a Birdfeeder:** Fort Greene Park Visitor Center, enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park; (718) 722-3218; 1 pm to 2:30pm; Free.

Learn how to build a birdfeeder for your own back yard.

**Tech time!:** New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236-4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 3 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Children participate in the library Olympics!

**"Marvel Universe Live! Age of Heroes":** Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave. at Pacific Street; (917) 618-6100; [ijbanks@brooklynnetts.com](mailto:ijbanks@brooklynnetts.com); [www.barclayscenter.com](http://www.barclayscenter.com); 3 pm; \$15 - \$97.

Marvel fans, assemble for this live, action-packed battle to defend the universe from evil. This new show unites Spider-Man, the Avengers, the Guardians of the Galaxy, and Doctor Strange in a race against time to recover the Wand of Watoomb before Loki gains control.

**Open House – Success Academy Bed-Stuy 1:** Success Academy Bed-Stuy 1, 70 Tompkins Ave.; <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/>

open-house-success-academy-bed-stuy-1-registration-41385688709; 5:30 pm; Free.

Families with children born in 2013 or earlier, applying to kindergarten–fourth grade for August 2018 are invited to join us as we introduce you to the joy and community at Success Academy. Meet with our principal, teachers, and current parents as we explore classrooms and answer questions about our curriculum, approach, and design. Refreshments and snacks will be served. All guests should register and bring a valid photo ID for check-in.

## FRI, FEB. 23

### IN BROOKLYN

**President's Week in the Park:** Noon to 4 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center. See Monday, Feb. 19.

**Kids Week – Knot Tying:** Salt Marsh Nature Center, 3302 Avenue U; (718) 421-2021; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; Free.

Do you know how to tie a square knot? How about a bowline knot? If you would like to learn, come join the Urban Park Rangers and find out how to tie these knots and more.

**Kids Create:** New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th St. at 17th Avenue; (718) 236-4086; <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/locations/new-utrecht>; 3:45 pm to 4:45 pm; Free.

It's the Winter Olympics and children 5 to 12 make crafts to celebrate.

## SAT, FEB. 24

### IN BROOKLYN

**Music of Billy Joel:** Industry City, 220 36th St. at Second Avenue; [therockandrollplayhouse.com](http://therockandrollplayhouse.com); 12:30 pm; Free.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse presents the 2018 winter season of children's music workshop-series. The music of the uptown guy comes downtown for kids to dance.

**PJ Library Storytime & Havdalah Party:** Bay Ridge Jewish Center, 8025 Fourth Ave. between 80th and 81st streets; (718) 836-3103; [office@brjc.org](mailto:office@brjc.org); [www.brjc.org](http://www.brjc.org); 4:30 pm; see ad.

Say good-bye to Shabbat and welcome in the week! Stories, Playtime, Arts & Crafts, Music, Refreshments.

**"Excuse Me While I Kiss The Sky – a Jimi Hendrix Tribute Show featuring Wilco's Nels Cline":** Brooklyn Music School Playhouse, 126 St. Felix St. between Lafayette Avenue and Hanson Place; (718) 638-5660; [lilli@michelletabnickpr.com](mailto:lilli@michelletabnickpr.com); [brooklynmusic-school.org](http://brooklynmusic-school.org); 5 pm; \$15.

This cross-generational show celebrates the musical genius of Jimi Hendrix that goes beyond boundaries of time and space. Student bands from Brooklyn Music School will also be joining in for some of the classic Hendrix songs.

## SUN, FEB. 25

### IN BROOKLYN

**"Hamilton" for Kids:** Brooklyn Bowl,

61 Wythe Ave. between N. 11th and N. 12th streets; (718) 963-3369; [https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1614941?utm\\_medium=bks](https://www.ticketfly.com/purchase/event/1614941?utm_medium=bks); 11:30 am; \$12 (Free for children under 1).

The Rock and Roll Playhouse continues its Family Concert Series.

## MON, FEB. 26

### FURTHER AFIELD

**SO Magic Workshop:** 4:00–4:45pm. Harmony by Karate. See Monday, Feb. 5.

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN BROOKLYN

**Waterfront:** Brooklyn Historical Society – Dumbo, 55 Water St. at Main Street; (718) 222-4111; [www.brooklynhistory.org](http://www.brooklynhistory.org); Tuesdays – Thursdays and Sundays, 11 am to 6 pm, Fridays and Saturdays, 11 am to 8 pm, until Sat, March 31; \$10 (\$6 seniors and teachers; free for students and members).

This is an immersive, multimedia exhibition exploring the history of Brooklyn's coastline through interwoven stories of workers, industries, activists, innovators, families, neighborhoods, and ecosystems. There are 12 concept areas that will engage visitors of a variety of ages and interests, including a dress-up experience that lets kids don work clothing and try their hand at ship fitting, and allow children and adults to design their own waterfront neighborhood using whimsical magnets of buildings, bridges, animals, landmarks, and more on a ten-foot illustrated landscape.

**Color Cove:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays – Saturdays, Noon, until Sat, March 31; free with museum admission.

Color Cove is a place where children can release their inner artist by using a variety of art materials including paint and stickers. The entire room is your canvas — let your imagination run wild!

**Craft room:** Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; [www.jcm.museum](http://www.jcm.museum); Sundays – Thursdays, 1 pm to 3 pm, Thurs, Feb. 1 – Wed, Feb. 28; Free with museum admission.

Get creative with a variety of Jewish-themed crafts to choose from!

**Game of Jewish Life:** Jewish Children's Museum, 792 Eastern Pkwy. at Kingston Avenue; (718) 907-8833; [www.jcm.museum](http://www.jcm.museum); Mondays – Thursdays, 1 pm to 4 pm, Sundays, Noon to 5 pm, until Thurs, Feb. 22; \$13 (\$10 seniors with ID).

Step onto a life-sized board game and play a unique and exciting "Game of Jewish Life." Celebrate and explore the milestones of a Jewish life through interactive activities and imaginative play.

**Drop in Play at Spark:** Spark by Brooklyn Children's Museum, 1 John St.; (718) 852-2470; [vcialabro@brooklynkids.org](mailto:vcialabro@brooklynkids.org); [44 BROOKLYN FAMILY • February 2018](http://www.</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

# Calendar

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

[brooklynkids.org/spark](http://brooklynkids.org/spark); Wednesdays and Fridays – Sundays, 1–5 pm, Thursdays, 1–6 pm, \$15.

**BUILD IT!** Design your own structures in our popular exhibit Brooklyn Block Lab MAKE IT! Creativity abounds in our art activities that change each week. **TOUCH IT!** Get cozy in our Discovery Den featuring soft play and reading space, and a series of discovery drawers that hold treasures from our collection as well as tactile materials for little hands to explore.

**Sensory Room:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 2 pm to 5:30 pm, until Sat, March 31; Free with museum admission.

An inclusive space where children of all abilities can engage with their peers and explore their senses. Sessions in the space are balanced between self-guided exploration of the space and a facilitated program by one of the museum's educators. All are welcome in this space, please let the educator present know if your child has particular needs or sensitivities.

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

org; Fridays, 3 pm to 3:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, until Sat, March 31; free with museum admission.

Join a museum educator for this interactive story time!

**"The Prince and the Magic Flute:"** Puppetworks, 338 Sixth Ave. at Fourth Street; (718) 965-3391; [www.puppetworks.org](http://www.puppetworks.org); Saturdays and Sundays, 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm, until Sat, March 31; \$11, \$10 children (\$9 for groups of 20 or more).

This marionette production is adapted for children by Nicolas Coppola from Mozart's opera and is set in mystical Egypt. The story tells the story of a prince and a birdcatcher as they try to rescue a princess.

**Explorers Day:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays, 10 am to 5 pm, until Tues, March 27; free with museum admission.

There's tons to explore at the museum, and Tuesdays are dedicated to our permanent exhibits. Have you met the Madagascar hissing cockroaches in our greenhouse?

**Storytime & Sensory Lounge:** Spark by Brooklyn Children's Museum, 1 John St.; (718)

852-2470; [vcalabro@brooklynkids.org](mailto:vcalabro@brooklynkids.org); [www.brooklynkids.org/spark](http://www.brooklynkids.org/spark); Wednesdays, 10 am, until Wed, March 28; \$363 per semester.

**Storytime & Sensory Lounge** (12 to 36 months). Children and caregivers explore their senses in this interactive class that includes song, storytelling, dramatic role-play and an art project with different materials to explore every week. Pre-registration required.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**"Neverland: Peter Returns:"** Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; [www.cityparksfondation.org](http://www.cityparksfondation.org); Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:30 am and 11:30 am, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, beginning Tues, Feb. 6; \$12 (\$8 children).

The City Parks Foundation presents the original marionette play based on J.M. Barrie's iconic Peter Pan tales. This version is a spin on the beloved children's classic. Leaving their parents behind, the Darling children follow Peter Pan back home to Neverland for the adventure of a lifetime. When the cunning Captain Hook turns Peter's pals Tiger Lily and Tinker Bell against him, the children team up with the Never Boys to save the day, learning the value of forgiveness and friendship.

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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Lovable, hairy Shnook

A Shnook is a sweet Valentine's Day gift idea for kids ages 3 and older. These collectable, ball-shaped creatures with two fluffy paws and wild, Troll-esque hair have touching slogans just right for this sweet holiday. For example, Shnug-gles "gives cuddles so true," and Shmiley, pictured, "brings happiness you can't hide." Even pulling the plush toy from its bubble and shaking it until it grows "eight times its size" is part of the fun. Then, kids can style their Shnook's wild mane with the included comb, elastic bands, and barrettes. The Shnooks' fairly flat packaging makes it conveniently portable alternative to screen time while traveling over this month's school vacation.

Whether they're with your child on the go or shnuggling up at bedtime, Shnooks are disarmingly charming.

*Shnook by Zuru, \$9.99, www.walmart.com.*



## Friends 'Walk' this way

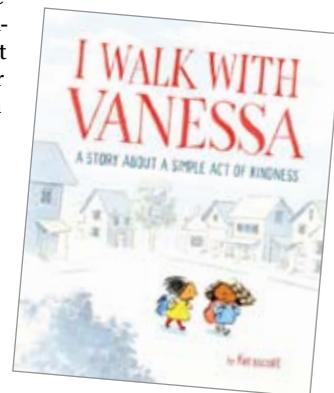
A new picture book, "I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About A Simple Act of Kindness," by husband-and-wife illustration team Kerascoet, moved me to tears — and they hadn't written one word.

This series of illustrations depicts a new girl at school, Vanessa, who has a difficult time fitting in. On her way home from school, she is isolated and targeted by a bully.

The incident was witnessed, and the observer decides to go to Vanessa's house the next morning and walk with her to school.

This empowering book, published by Schwartz & Wade, shows how an act of concern, no matter how small, can ignite a wave of thoughtfulness, generosity, and sympathy.

*I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About A Simple Act of Kindness book by Kerascoet, \$17.99, www.barnesandnoble.com.*



## Blaster is a barrel of fun

Cupid might win hearts with an arrow, but you can win their love over and over again with 96 foam darts that come with the ridiculously fun X-Shot Turbo Advance blaster from Zuru. The barrel of this behemoth holds 40 darts, which allows for a satisfyingly long battle between dads and their blaster-wielding progeny. If friends and family are busy, Turbo

Advance can also be enjoyed solo by setting up plastic cups or other targets easily scrounged from around the house. The Turbo Advance's barrel is a cinch to detach and reload. Safety

glasses (sold separately) are a must for these toys which clear a distance of 80 feet — and bounce off walls and trees with gusto! Recommended for kids ages 8 and older, the X-Shot Turbo Advance successfully entices kids to put their devices down and run around outside. What's not to love?

*X-Shot Turbo Advance set by Zuru, \$29.99, www.X-Shot.com.*



## A positive playmate

Little kids can feel stress, too, but how can parents help them to practice anxiety-reducing, mindful practices like breathing exercises?

That's where Luna Petunia, a new talking toy from Funrise, really shines. When Luna runs into problems in her animated show on Netflix, she reminds herself not to panic by repeating her mantra, "Stop, breathe, believe!" Children can hear the 14-inch-tall doll repeat this catchphrase (among others) by pressing her key-shaped necklace.

In the show, Luna passes from real life to the animated world of Amazia through a petunia portal, where she has adventures with her friends. The show's floral motif is incorporated in her tutu-style skirt which is topped with satin flower petals.

Luna has shimmering blue hair, and sports glittery purple, translucent rain boots and lots of bracelets. A colorful toy for children ages 3 and older, Luna's movable arms and legs make her akin to an action figure with an adorably oversize head. Luna Petunia is a comforting gift idea for a special tot that could use an encouraging word and a smile.

*Luna Petunia doll by Funrise, \$15.99, www.target.com.*





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