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Every month's a month of love

It doesn't have to be February to give gifts of love and thoughtful expressions of caring and appreciation. But having a special day in a cold and often dreary winter month can perk up the whole family. In my house growing up we always baked cookies or cakes and decorated them with colorful hearts and made our presents for our parents. After my parents passed, I found all the cards we had largely ever given them in a special folder and I sat there crying my eyes out recalling the years of my youth and being so happy that I had expressed my love to them in those ways.

Back in the day, before the curriculum changes, art class in school was a great place



to use various crafts techniques to bring home cards, or clay figures, or a drawing to Mom and Dad. With art classes no longer a part of a regular curriculum, it's a fun thing for families to do together as a home project — although there are still schools that help kids make Valentines for Mom and Dad. Construction paper, glue,

glitter, colored pencils, and good markers should be a part of every family's "art box."

The important thing, of course, is to be together and to express each and every day how much we love each other. Nonetheless, the small gestures often create long memories and bonds that last a lifetime. Do I have a special folder for the cards I have

been given over the years? Of course I do. And every now and then I look at the special message my then 5-year-old gave me for one or another of the holidays when we do such things. And do I shed some tears? Of course I do. Tears of joy and gratitude and wonder at where all the time went and why the film is moving so fast.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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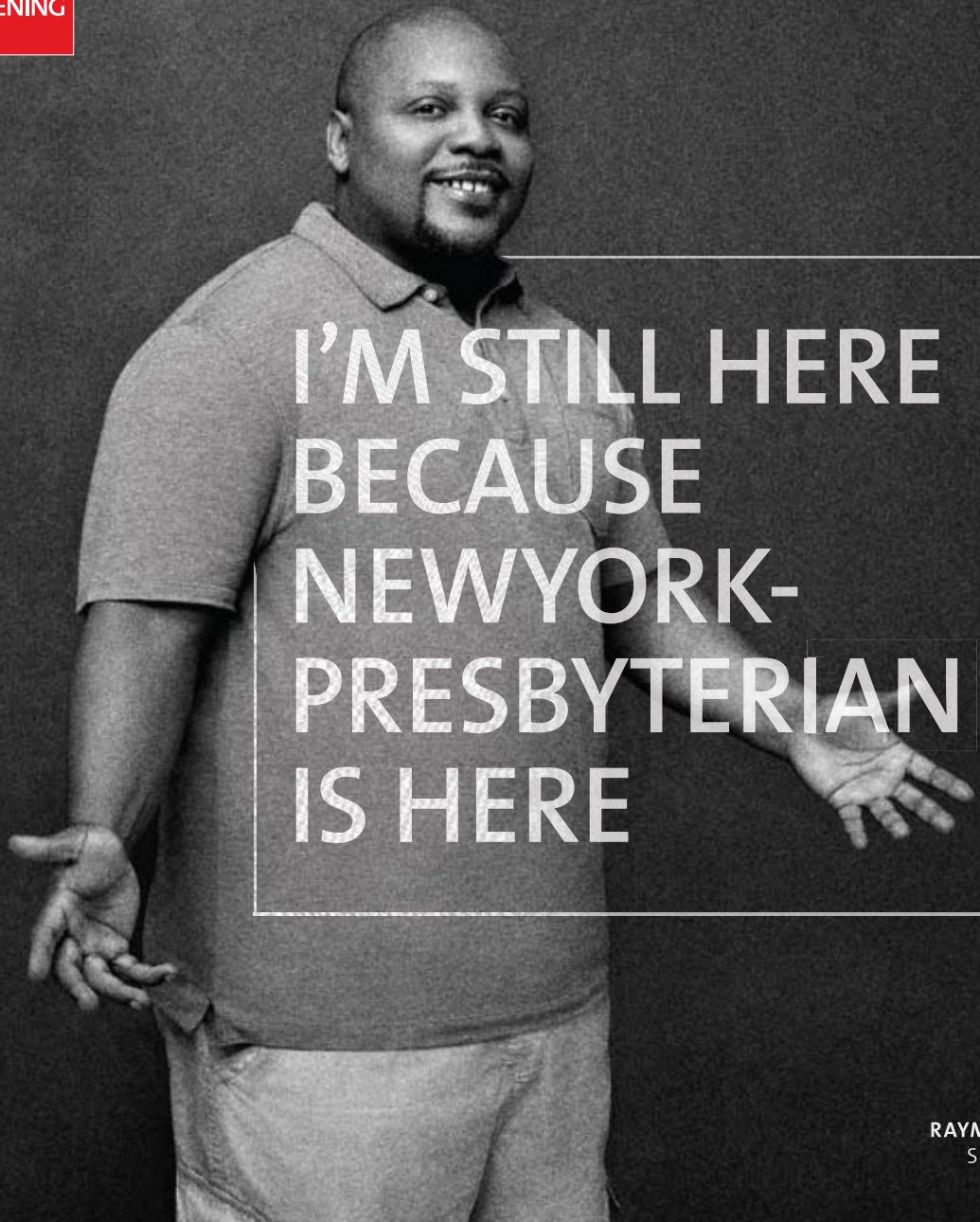
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Planning the Perfect Day Out

Program helps families take in city attractions—within budget

By Shnieka L. Johnson

Cabin fever got you or the kids down? Bundle up and go out on the town! The city's tourism arm, NYC & Company, has curated the perfect day out just for you and the family with its new NYC Winter Outing program. For the first time, its signature programs will overlap—Restaurant Week through February 8, Broadway Week through February 10, and Must-See Week (i.e., museum and local attractions) through February 10.

These options are not just for out-of-towners, it's a cost-effective opportunity for locals to get out and experience the city's offerings, too.

"NYC & Company for the first time has aligned these signature programs in order to counter what we're referring to as 'FOGO' or the fear of going out, especially in the winter, and to encourage visitation to our countless world-class restaurants, Broadway shows, attractions, tours, and performing arts at a value," says Chris Heywood, Senior Vice President of Global Communications at NYC & Company.

This is a great opportunity for families seeking kid-friendly activities, while staying within a budget. There are a number of great museums, attractions, tours, and Broadway shows to see with the family, as well as prix fixe lunch and dinner meals to enjoy at hundreds of restaurants throughout the city.

"Families should make the most of 2-for-1 tickets to countless activities at a value! There is no time like the present, and these programs are the destination marketing organization's way of giving back to locals and attracting even more staycations and overnight visitation. It's truly a great opportunity to get out and explore the five boroughs—there are participants in each—from tried-and-true favorites to lesser-known destinations. Extra perk—there are shorter lines in the winter, which is great for guardians with restless kids," Heywood adds.

Families seeking a winter outing can browse participating shows, attractions, and restaurants through NYC and Company's website, nycgo.com, and use the "favoriting" tool to save a list of and access links to book



Matthew Murphy

The Broadway musical "King Kong."

tickets and reserve tables. You can choose your own outing or take a look at the sample outings that were specially curated with particular interests in mind.

"NYC & Company's editorial team considered participating attractions, tours, performing arts, restaurants, and Broadway shows and with their expert, insider knowledge of New York City's varied offerings, identified options well suited to families with children spanning various ages. Our organization is familiar with speaking to the needs of families of all age ranges, including parent(s) and grandparent(s) with

teens, tweens, and young kids—thanks to an ongoing partnership with Nickelodeon—and consistently taps a robust network of member organizations citywide for their family-friendly offerings. Combined with our own in-house market research, we're able to pinpoint varied interests across demographics," Heywood says.

The sample itineraries, or "mini-itinies," are helpful for families that are not sure where to begin when looking at such a vast list. You can make your decision based on the age of your kids. There are several Broadway shows that are considered "kid friendly," like

"Aladdin" (a lively adaptation of the Disney movie), "Anastasia" (based on a film about a real life duchess), "Frozen" (an adaptation of the popular Disney movie about royal sisters), "King Kong" (based on the iconic movie), "Lion King" (a moving adaptation of the Disney movie) and "Phantom of the Opera" (with music and suspense, it's currently the longest running show on Broadway). The convenience of the "mini-itinies" makes for a low-stress outing—lunch and dinner at a restaurant, a show and attraction grouped together with varied interests in mind.

There are fun themes like Old School, Glam, Like a VIP, and Go Big or Go Home. Either theme could appeal to families depending on the age of the kids. "Walk on the Wild Side" is a fun, winter outing itinerary intentionally curated for families to enjoy. By combining the Bronx Zoo, Sarabeth's (a restaurant with a kid-friendly menu splashed in animal print décor), and modern classic "The Lion King" on Broadway, the tiniest New Yorkers and visitors can enjoy a taste of wildlife in



Sight-seeing tour The Ride.

the concrete jungle. Beyond this curated itinerary, families are encouraged to mix and match any of nearly 400 participating restaurants, 24 Broadway shows, and nearly 60 attractions, tours, and performing arts to create their own, ideal New York City winter outing.

With so many options, there is no need to stay inside your apartment all winter.

Take advantage of the deals, and go out on the town. Bring the kids and have the type of New York experience that out-of-towners dream about.

Shnieka L. Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan, where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her at shniekajohnson.com.



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The Endangered Species Coalition is again holding its annual youth art contest. Artwork must be submitted electronically by March 1. The Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest is an integral part of the annual Endangered Species Day, celebrated the third Friday of May each year.

Entries should depict a land or ocean-dwelling species that either lives in or migrates through the United States and its waters and has been placed on the threatened-endangered species list.

A prestigious panel of artists, photographers, and conservationists will judge the artwork. Winners will be chosen in four categories: K-Grade 2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12, and will receive plaques and art supply gift packs. One grand prize winner will be honored at a reception in Washington, D.C., in May and also receive a special art lesson.

Visit endangeredspeciesday.org for more information. If you have any questions, contact David Robinson (Endangered Species Day Director) at drobinson@endangered.org.



MOM TO MOM

Join our New York Family Mom to Mom Facebook sisterhood and find moms in your neighborhood for advice, community, and support. facebook.com/groups/nypmoms

GONE TO THE DOGS

The American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog is now open at its new Manhattan location on Park Avenue. The museum houses one of the world's largest collections of canine fine art.

The newly designed space will house art from famous dog artists such as Sir Edwin Landseer, Maud Earl, and more. It also has a two-story glass vitrine that encases rare porcelains and bronzes, in addition to a library. The museum's first exhibition will be entitled "For the Love of All Things Dog" and combines select works from the American Kennel Club's own collection and that of the museum.

Throughout the space, visitors will experience exhibits that bridge the digital and physical elements of the museum and bring new life to the collection. The gallery includes interactive exhibits such as a "Find Your Match" kiosk that takes your photo, aligning its likeness with an registered dog breed. Additionally, there is a "Meet the Breeds" touchscreen table



that allows visitors to explore breeds' features, traits, and history.

The museum will also have an app where users can interact with the exhibits. American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog (101 Park Avenue between East 40th & 41st Streets, museumofthedog.org).

A SIMPLE AID TO BREASTFEEDING

Breastfeeding may be best for baby—one reason why more than 80 percent of women are doing it. But let's face it, it can be hard on mom. In fact, half of all moms say they quit breastfeeding earlier than they wanted to because of lactation challenges. Milkease is an all-natural breastfeeding relief pack that helps alleviate lactation issues, so moms breastfeed longer and babies get the best nutrition nature ever made!

Milkease is a circular shaped pillow with a center opening that's filled with flaxseed and dried lavender petals. Just heat it up in the microwave for about a minute and then place on the breast. The flaxseeds emit a moist heat, which dilates milk ducts to relieve pressure and increase milk flow. The dried lavender, well, that just smells nice and helps mom relax.



Creator Nicole Beck (a mom-of-three) spent more than a decade working for Frito-Lay in purchasing, finance, operations and marketing. When this corporate gal started a family, she realized breastfeeding challenges were real! When she learned most women experience the same issues and many of them stop breastfeeding because of it, she decided to start Milkease.

Learn more at theMilkease.com.



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When Moms Work from Home

Would you be happier working from home? It's a no-brainer question for most people. Some immediately say they would jump at the chance, while others say they would never want that arrangement. Some moms understandably enjoy the outside, adult interaction that the workplace provides. Having a reason to put on nice clothes and leave the house is yet another common reason cited, as many people tend to think of those who work from home as sitting inside in their jammies all day long. (I would say the opposite is true.)

However, according to a recent survey, telecommuters are in general happier and healthier people, which in turn, cultivates better parents. As employees, they are more satisfied, which results in better workers.

Here are the specific ways that telecommuting helps parents and companies:

Not only happier but healthier: When asked to draw comparisons, telecommuters say their stress levels have dropped 25 percent on average since working from home. Seventy-three percent even say they eat healthier when working from home because they have more time to exercise, prepare healthy meals, and engage in activities that de-stress, such as yoga and walking.

More loyal employees: Without the trek to the office—on average, a 75-mile round-trip for respondents—76 percent of telecommuters are more willing to put in extra time on work and say they are more loyal to their company since telecommuting. Telecommuters also report they work much more efficiently and longer when they can work from their home office.

Better balanced: More than 80 percent say they now maintain a better work-life balance. Employees say the stress reduction that comes with losing their long commutes enable them to enjoy their daily lives more simply by gaining a few extra hours each day. Gaining two to three extra hours each day enables shopping, cleaning, and parental chores to get done much more easily.

Once you have kids, career goals tend to shift. Even moms that prefer working out of an office often tend to seek out more flexible work schedules when they become mothers so they have a quality home life. If you would like to telecommute, I'd encourage you to seek out ways that you can in your given field



by joining online groups, networking with work-from-home moms, and asking any telecommuting mom they know how they do it.

Years ago, I left a fulltime job that was one-and-a-half to two hours away with no definite plan (not the smartest thing), but managed to find enough writing and editing gigs to be able to work from home fulltime. Last year, with my kids now older, I went back to a flex job where I work three days a week in the office and two days from home, but the years I worked exclusively from my home office were invaluable. It enabled me to have a much more active social life than when I was

holed up in my Manhattan office, enduring 80-hour workweeks. It also allowed me attend to every school event or household emergency without having to take a sick day. But best of all, it gave me the chance to excel in a field that I truly love and work with talented professionals that I'm proud to call colleagues.

So am I healthier and happier for it? You can bet on it!



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



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Private & Independent School Guide for NYC

[www.nyparenting.com/
private-independent-school-guide](http://www.nyparenting.com/private-independent-school-guide)

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The deadline for Kindergarten lottery applications is 5pm, April 2, 2018.

Five Steps to Catch Up on College Savings

One conversation I often encounter with clients is their feeling that they are behind on college savings. If you have these same thoughts, you're not alone. These conversations usually go in one of two directions—clients either think they haven't saved enough money, or they haven't started saving for college yet. Do not fret if you have the same feelings. There are several things you can do to get on track. Here are five simple steps you can take now to stop those uncomfortable feelings:

Prioritize

For your long-term financial health, as well as your child's, saving, rather than borrowing, is preferable. Money that's been set aside in a 529 plan or other savings account has the potential to earn interest or gains. Taking loans, on the other hand, requires you to pay interest, sometimes well into future years. Even increasing your savings by a small amount might substantially increase your child's college nest egg due to the power of compounding interest.

Take advantage of tax-advantaged savings accounts

Tax-advantaged accounts — where taxes can be deferred or even eliminated — can greatly help you protect any gains. There are multiple different vehicles to choose from, depending on your circumstances. After considering the option with your financial advisor, choose what's most practical for you depending on your situation.

One strategy I use most often with my clients is a 529 college savings plan. When you save for your child's college a 529 plan, your investments grow tax-free and, depending on where you live, you might be entitled to a state tax break. Whether a state tax deduction and/or application fee savings are available depends on your state of residence. Additionally, withdrawals from the account made for qualified higher education purposes may be tax free. Rules around 529 plans allow for large annual contributions (more on that below), so parents who believe they are behind in college savings might be able to increase their savings quickly. Before investing in a 529 plan, you should research the particular plan and its fees and expenses.



You should also consider that certain states offer tax benefits and fee savings to in-state residents. For tax advice, it's always best to speak with your accountant or tax professional. And remember, nonqualifying distribution earnings (withdrawals not spent on higher education) are taxable and subject to a 10 percent tax penalty.

Another option is a Coverdell Education Savings Account. Coverdell accounts have many similarities to 529 plans but also some key differences. Amounts deposited in a Coverdell account grow tax-deferred and distributions can be tax-free if they're used to pay for educational expenses. Unlike 529 plans, Coverdell accounts can be used not only for college, but for Kindergarten through grade 12 expenses—and beyond—as well. However, these types of accounts are not appropriate for high earners because there are income eligibility limits. A parent's ability to contribute is phased out as your adjusted gross income increases to \$110,000 for individuals, and \$220,000 for married couples filing jointly. Contributions limits are also very low, just \$2,000 a year per beneficiary.

One strategy I discuss with clients is establishing automatic transfers from your bank accounts or payroll deductions. Creating this planned behavior has shown to increase the probability of success in reaching

your college savings goal.

Let friends and family lend a hand

When grandparents, aunt and uncles, and friends ask what your child would want as birthday gift, suggest the gift of college through contributions to a 529 plan. Over the years it's become common for the special people in a children's life to make contributions to a 529 plan.

I've seen more and more family and friends embracing this thoughtful option. I've found grandparents are especially interested in leaving a legacy to their grandchildren through 529 accounts. An interesting feature of 529 plans is that family members can accelerate five years' worth of contributions into one gift of up to \$75,000 per person and \$150,000 for married couples without incurring any gift-tax consequences. This could be a huge kickstart towards college savings.

Be alert and aware

In the last months of 2018, we witnessed some volatile markets. Imagine if your child's 529 plans were invested incorrectly right at the time you needed to start making withdrawals to pay for college. That is why it is important to monitor your investments with a financial advisor. As your child's college years draw nearer, it's often wise to focus on more conservative investments to protect your college savings potential market downturn. Resist the urge to try to earn big returns in a short period of time. Don't be overly aggressive in your asset allocation. Speak with your financial advisor about the ways to protect or limit your accounts at the worst times.

Catching up on college savings might feel like an unattainable goal, but starting to save or increase savings now could lead to more secure college funding when the time comes.



Anthony N. Corrao is president, wealth management and director of corporate education at Manhattan Ridge Advisors. For more than 25 years he has helped families towards their financial goals by developing financial, educational, and retirement planning strategies.

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Still a Place for Juice at Breakfast?

Parents are serving less fruit juice—but is that a mistake?

Once a staple on family breakfast tables, fruit juice seems to have lost its mojo. Derided as being “full of sugar” and vilified by pediatricians and family medicine doctors, parents are serving less fruit juice.

But is that a mistake?

Take orange juice, for example.

According to Food and Drug Administration definitions, it’s an excellent source of vitamin C, and a good source of potassium, folate, and thiamin. A little-known nutrient—unique to oranges and their juice—is a flavonoid called hesperidin, which provides anti-inflammatory activity and affects gene regulation.

Calories? Only 110 in an eight-oz. glass.

Other fruit juices are no slouch in the nutrient department. Grape, grapefruit, mango, pineapple, pomegranate, prune, and tangerine juice all provide significant amounts of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients.

“Too often, 100-percent juice is lumped in with other sweet beverages, particularly soft drinks and fruit punch,” says Dr. Robert Murray, professor of Pediatrics, Gastroenterology and Nutrition at Ohio State University. “They are not the same. Fruit juice contains natural sugars, not added sugars, and preserves the nutrients and bioactive components of whole fruit with the exception of fiber.”

Interestingly, kids who drink fruit juice eat more fruit, according to Dr. Murray.

“Currently in the U.S. among toddlers and young children, juice comprises 50 percent of daily fruit servings. Among older children, teens, and adults, it’s 33 percent. Efforts to increase whole fruit consumption have not been very successful, even as consumption trends of 100-percent juice have fallen over the past 20 years. This suggests that 100-percent juice does not displace whole fruit, but augments it. For that reason reducing or eliminating 100-percent fruit juice from a diet usually is not compensated with whole fruit, cutting total fruit intake per day and lowering the individual’s diet quality.”

How much, how often?

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans state that people should choose 100-percent fruit (or vegetable) juice without added sugars.



Eight ounces of 100-percent juice provides at least one serving of fruits or vegetables and can help meet the recommended amount of four-and-a-half total cups of fruits and veggies each day. The Guidelines also recommend a daily limit of one cup.

The report states that juice drinkers eat more whole fruit and have higher quality diets (with more fiber) compared with non-juice drinkers.

In moderation, juice can even play a role in weight management.

“Substantial excess consumption of juice can add calories, which can lead to weight gain. But consumed at recommended levels of one serving per day of fruit, there does not appear to be a higher risk of obesity,” Dr. Murray says.

The research backs this up. A comprehensive review performed by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for its Evidence Analysis Library examined the association between 100-percent fruit juice and weight in children ages 2-18. It concluded the evidence does not support an association between 100-percent fruit juice consumption and weight status in children.

One-hundred percent of what?

When selecting a juice, look for 100-percent juice on the label. One misleading practice by some companies is to add 100-percent vitamin C to a fruit punch or beverage. So be careful when you see the term “100 percent”; make sure it refers to the percent of juice, not simply added vitamin C.

As a registered dietitian nutritionist, I believe there is a place for both whole fruit and fruit juice in the diet. With many people not consuming enough fruit, a combination of whole fruit and fruit juice is a highly effective way to meet the fruit shortfall.



Christine Palumbo is a registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is a 2018 recipient of the Medallion Award from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

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Cutting Family Costs

Ways to save money without sacrifice

By Kimberly Blaker

The cost to raise kids today is between \$12,350 to \$14,000 a year per child, according to a January 9, 2017, CNN Money report by Kathryn Vasel. Multiply this by two or more children, and that's a substantial chunk of change. But there are lots of ways to keep costs down without sacrificing the quality of family life. Follow these cost-cutting tips, and watch your savings grow:

Feeding the crew

Feeding your family is perhaps one of the biggest expenses you'll incur. It's also one of the best places to cut costs.

Coupon clipping can bring substantial savings—provided you use coupons only for items you'd purchase anyway. Admittedly, coupons can also be a hassle. If you have time for coupon clipping, look for grocery stores that offer double coupons to make the most of this savings strategy. Also, set up some guidelines so you don't use coupons to the extent you're losing money by making unnecessary purchases or where you could have had a better deal by purchasing another brand.

Cut your grocery bill by at least a third by buying only on-sale. Each week, flip through your store flier, then stock up with a four- to six-week supply of the items on sale. After the first month, you should have plenty of stock to eliminate most non-sale purchases. Although you'll invest more up front, within a few weeks you'll have recouped your investment and see your grocery bill start to drop.

Also, avoid wholesale food clubs. When comparing prices, the savings are usually minimal. They rarely compare to grocery

store sale prices. You might use food clubs for just a few staple items you've researched and know are always a better deal.

When shopping, always compare the price per ounce on different size packages. Contrary to popular belief, smaller packages are often the better deal. Manufacturers learned people go for the bigger bulk size items because of the better price per ounce. As a result, they switched the pricing around knowing consumers will just gravitate to the larger package with the assumption it's a better deal.

Don't let unanticipated fast food runs eat up your spare cash. Have paper plates and plenty of frozen meals to toss in the oven for emergency eat-and-run suppers.

Energy efficiency

There are plenty of ways to cut overall energy use without sacrifice, so make the following tips part of your strategy:

- Run your dishwasher only when full, and use the no-heat or air-dry setting.
- Keep your refrigerator out of the sun.
- Turn off the oven a few minutes before your meal is done cooking. The heat already built up in the oven will finish the job.
- Wash all laundry in cold water, except for sheets and towels that need hot water to kill bacteria and odors.
- Clean the lint filter on your dryer before each use. And don't over-dry clothes.
- Evaluate your lighting needs. Use the lowest watt bulb possible that still provides ample lighting. Better yet, use the compact fluorescent light bulbs for maximum energy savings.
- Keep your hot water heater between 115-120 degrees. Hotter temperatures are wasteful, unnecessary, and can lead to scalding.

- When purchasing new appliances, compare energy efficiency. Paying a little more for the more energy efficient appliances can save money in the end.

- Turn your computer off overnight and during long interruptions.

Family fun

Having fun doesn't have to cost an arm and a leg—or anything at all.

Make visiting your library a regular family activity. Libraries today offer a wide variety of free entertainment including books and magazines, DVDs, music CDs, video games, audiobooks, even computer games, and software. If your library doesn't carry a book you're looking for, ask about its interlibrary loan program.

Contact local, county, and state parks for scheduled activities and programs. Also, don't forget about paved biking and roller blade trails, hiking and nature walks, fishing, swimming, wildlife viewing, and more.

Instead of taking your family to dinner or for fast food, pick up Chinese and head to the park. You'll not only save, but you'll eat healthier, too.

Contact the science, natural history, and children's museums in your area and ask if they're one of the more than 350 members of the Association of Science-Technology Centers in the U.S. If so, purchase an annual family membership, generally ranging between \$120-160. These passes offer unlimited visits to all member museums. Then plan several day trips throughout the year for family science fun. Visit astc.org/passport for details. The passports must be purchased directly through one of the participating science-technology museums.

Don't buy new computers. Recent models



can often be found in the newspaper or online classifieds for a fraction of the cost.

Finance savvy

The following suggestions can bring big savings and make banking and loans work for you rather than against you.

If possible, double up on mortgage and loan payments. If you can't, you can still save by breaking each monthly payment into two. Pay half of your monthly loan and mortgage payments a couple weeks early. Contact your loan institution and make sure early and partial payments will apply to your regular monthly installments and that interest will be adjusted accordingly.

Open your checking account at a credit union or bank that offers free accounts with no maintenance or check fees.

Store your credit card. Carrying it on you

can lead to impulse buying. Unless you're disciplined enough to pay it off monthly, credit cards eat up spare cash on interest expenses.

Auto economizing

There are many ways to keep driving expenses down. Try these for starters:

Increase the deductible on your collision to \$1,000, unless you're accident prone, or have teen drivers. The cost difference can be significant.

Avoid purchasing a brand-new vehicle. Opt for a low-mileage model only one to four years old. You'll save a fortune on depreciation.

Dress for less

Save on household and clothing expense by trying these money-saving ideas. You'll be helping to protect the environment, too:

Hit the end-of-season sales and save 60 -80 percent on kids clothing for the following school year. A one-size difference is usually a safe bet.

Visit resale shops for super savings on like-new children's clothing. You can find these stores locally as well as online resale shops.

Catch the savings as families in all income brackets are doing today. Hit garage and estate sales for family and household needs. You'll find top-quality, top-condition items including toys, baby equipment, children's clothing, household furnishings, and more, for next to nothing.

Kimberly Blaker is a freelance writer and the author of a kid's Stem book, Horoscopes: Reality or Trickery? You can find her at kimberlyblaker.com

spotlight: dental health



Three Commonly Asked Questions About Your Children's Oral Health

By Sara Shahi, DDS

Parents usually have a number of questions and concerns when it comes to their child's health, and oral health is no exception. Here are the three most common question parents have asked about caring for their young children's teeth:

"I have to see a dentist every six months, but who should see my child?"

Ideally, a board-certified pediatric dentist should be evaluating, examining, and treating your child. Children are not just small adults, and caring for their dental health has its own unique challenges, which is why pediatric dentists go through extra years of vigorous training specializing in the complexities of treating children and the problems that can present in childhood.

Board-certified pediatric dentists have been extensively evaluated by a nationally recognized group of senior and experienced peers and have received a stamp of approval on their skills, knowledge, and quality of

care. This goes beyond just looking for "holes" in teeth and treatment of cavities. Pediatric dentists evaluate things such as growth, the relationships of the jaws, health of the tissues inside of the mouth, and airway development. Early diagnosis of any conditions will lead to early intervention while the child is still growing and may reduce complications in adulthood.

"My child has a few teeth, when should I take them to a pediatric dentist?"

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommends that all children visit a dentist no later than six months after the eruption of the first tooth or prior to turning 1 year of age.

The first visits will allow for the child to get acclimated and show the child that dental visits can be very fun and do not involve any sort of discomfort. These visits also provide an excellent chance for the pediatric dentist to talk to parents and guardians about the best at-home practices to help the child grow up cavity-free. Parents will also be provided with information on what changes are

expected to occur in the child's oral cavity until their next dental check up.

"I know my child has cavities but don't baby teeth just fall out?"

Although baby teeth, also known as primary teeth, are usually replaced by adult or permanent teeth, they still must function pain free in the meantime. Cavities that grow beyond a certain point can result in pain and discomfort affecting a child's ability to eat, concentrate in school, and leave him unable to get a peaceful night's rest. In addition, it is important to understand that primary teeth are "place holders" for the permanent teeth, and any premature loss or breakdown of the primary teeth may result in a more severe overlap or crowding of the permanent dentition. Lack of teeth can also result in less esteem when smiling and interacting with other children, and unfortunately may lead to loss of confidence.

Keep in mind, prevention or early intervention will be the least invasive path in achieving optimal oral health for both you, and your child!

Sara Shahi, DDS is one of the pediatric dental specialists at Upper East Pediatric Dentistry. A dental graduate from both NYU and Columbia University, she is passionate about the field of dentistry and spends much time in its study, having received board certifications from the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry, Integrative Biological Dental Medicine, and Naturopathic Medicine.

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How to Help Kids Lose Weight

When your child's body mass index becomes a problem

We've all done it as parents. We have rewarded our child with a promised snack or a treat. Maybe it was an ice cream for a good report card or a dessert for winning a game. Food, after all, is a comfort, but when these small rewards turn into habits, you may have a real problem.

"I can't really remember how it started," says Laura Pellegrino of Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. "It certainly wasn't a conscious decision, but I always wanted to have my daughter feel satisfied and happy. When she was a baby, I began comforting her with a bottle and it later turned to a snack here and there." Pellegrino's daughter, Theresa, is a bright-eyed, 8-year-old who last year weighed 125 lbs., a typical weight of an adult woman.

Unfortunately, this story is anything but unusual. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in American children ages 2-19, 16.9 percent of them are considered obese, and the American College of Cardiology reports that 33 percent are overweight. Furthermore, researchers from Columbia University report obesity as the biggest overall health threat facing the country. Child obesity has reached epidemic rates and become one of the leading health concerns in the country. It can cause heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, early onset of puberty, liver disease, diabetes, and shortened life span. There are several reasons for the growth of child obesity, ranging from practical to emotional, and treatment is likewise, multifaceted, which can overwhelm parents. The first line of defense is knowing where and how to begin.

Know the numbers

First, you must find out how your child's numbers stack up. Ask your pediatrician about your child's weight in correlation to healthy ranges.

"Pediatricians generally calculate a body mass index (BMI) at each yearly physical," explains Dr. Jennifer Gruen of Village Pediatrics in Westport, CT. "The BMI is an estimation of body fat based on height and weight. We also plot the BMI on a graph to compare a child's number to other children their age. For children, a BMI percentile of 85-95 percent is considered overweight and over 95 obese."

In Pellegrino's case, her pediatrician first advised her that her daughter was considered obese. She found the news troublesome but didn't know how to change anything, so she sought out a nutritionist who clued her into the daily requirements for a then 7-year-old.

"By having a list of foods and acceptable portions, it helped me to monitor exactly how much Theresa should be eating," she says. Theresa has since lost 19 lbs.

Talk it out

Emotions are vital in the weight loss process. Even initially speaking with your child about a weight problem can be a very sensitive subject. Dr. Joanna Dolgoff, a Manhattan pediatrician and child obesity expert in Child and Adolescent Weight Management, says in her new book, *Red Light, Green Light, Eat Right*, that parents should be truthful but tactful as well. "Most overweight children know they are overweight. Even if you haven't pointed it out, their peers probably have." She says that if parents avoid bringing up the subject, it will only result in kids thinking it shameful to talk about. Instead, she advises parents to speak in terms of "we" instead of "you." Say "we" are going to eat healthier, and 'we' are going to get more active. Dr. Dolgoff also encourages parents to be open about their own weight struggles and explain why certain foods are healthier than others. Always be available for support and praise your child for making healthy conscious choices.

Other important advice from Dr. Dolgoff is to be positive. It's imperative not to express negativity or fatalism, by saying it's in your child genes and they have no power over getting fit. Don't make fun of your child's weight—ever! Don't become the food police and forbid or force any foods, which can result in rebellion. Most of all, Dr. Dolgoff stresses that you should never put your child on a popular fad diet because children need a healthy balance of all foods, even carbs and fats, to help them develop properly.

Walk it off

For Martha Bentley of the Lower East Side, her son's weight problem occurred from a matter of convenience.

"I work up to 10 hours a day and when I

get home, I'm tired. So I began doing things for convenience, like ordering pizza and filling up Mark's lunchbox with bags of chips and cookies to throw in with a sandwich. They were easy to grab in the morning. Mark was very slim throughout the second grade, even though he ate all the junk food. But I noticed last year that he began growing out of all his pants faster than usual."

Mark is in the third grade and now wears a size 12 in pants and has grown an inch. Just a year ago he wore a size 14. Bentley says she had to make big lifestyle changes to get him healthy, which included cutting down her work hours, preparing healthy meals, and getting him involved in activities.

"Mark would come home from school and sit on the couch all afternoon playing video games, but my mother watched him and she was elderly, so my hands were tied. Now I come home earlier and make taking a walk part of our daily routine."

Dr. Gruen agrees that technology and lack of time spent exercising play a big role in child obesity rates.

"Modern life has contributed greatly to the general increase in our children's weight. Children rarely walk anywhere as part of their daily routine (walking to school, to the ballfield...). Sports tend to be structured (as in Little League) instead of running to the corner playground with friends after school. This limits real exercise to children who can afford to play, and want to play in an organized fashion. And even for these children, these sessions are also often shorter than when kids went out to play for hours after school as well. Dual-income families also often mean children are in after-school care programs, or home alone after school, which also limits access to exercise," Dr. Gruen says. She adds: "Modern technology such as cellphones, game stations, and computers also encourage stationary entertainments. Recent estimates have suggested that children are spending up to seven hours a day on technology and TV!"

This inactivity combined with poor quality food choices is a recipe for weight gain. In addition, common ingredients found in many kid's snacks contain high-fructose corn syrup, a cheap food and drink additive that contributes to the obesity epidemic.

"Our digestive system operates largely on



secretion or suppression of two hormones: ghrelin and leptin. Ghrelin increases your appetite while leptin tells your brain 'I'm full,'” Dr. Gruen explains. “High-fructose corn syrup suppresses leptin, making it harder for your brain to register satiety. It never shuts off ghrelin, however.” This causes a child to never be satisfied and look for more and more food.

Change habits

According to Dr. Jason Kronberg of the Pediatric and Adolescent Sports Medicine and the Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine of Long Island: “The hardest part of breaking the obesity cycle is changing dietary habits. Studies have shown that after age 13, the chance of changing one’s eating habits is slim. Most people have developed eating habits at that age that stay with them for their entire

lives. The important issue is getting parents to change their habits that will filter down to their children.”

Patty Straffalino, of Yonkers, agrees, “I have to admit that I didn’t realize how much my poor eating habits contributed to my daughter, Maria, being overweight.”

Straffalino says that she had been overweight her whole life and didn’t want her daughter to experience the same pain she went through growing up as an overweight child. When Maria came home from school and was crying because her classmates had ridiculed her weight, it was a wake-up call. She immediately put her entire family on a healthy eating plan. “Seeing Maria devastated hurt me because I knew I was in charge of the food that came into the house.”

Straffalino says she never told her

daughter she had to lose weight, but focused instead on being healthy. Maria has gotten slimmer and lost 14 lbs., Straffalino has lost 36 lbs., and her husband has lost 21 pounds in the past 10 months.

While no parent wants to watch her child suffer the repercussions and health problems that come with obesity, every child can get healthier with a little help. As Pellegrino says: “I learned throughout this whole process that everyone can do small things that add up to better health, and it will be tough, yet certainly doable. But it all starts with the parent.”



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

Continuing the Journey Towards Healthy Change

Parenting mistakes made when caring for children with co-occurring disorders

By Allison Plitt

This is the second part of a two-part series about the book, I Didn't Cause It, I Can't Change It.

In the 2016 publication, *I Didn't Cause It, I Can't Change It*, authors Mary Ryan Woods and Adrienne Murray dedicate their book to mothers of children suffering from co-occurring disorders in which a patient suffers from a mental illness and substance abuse simultaneously.

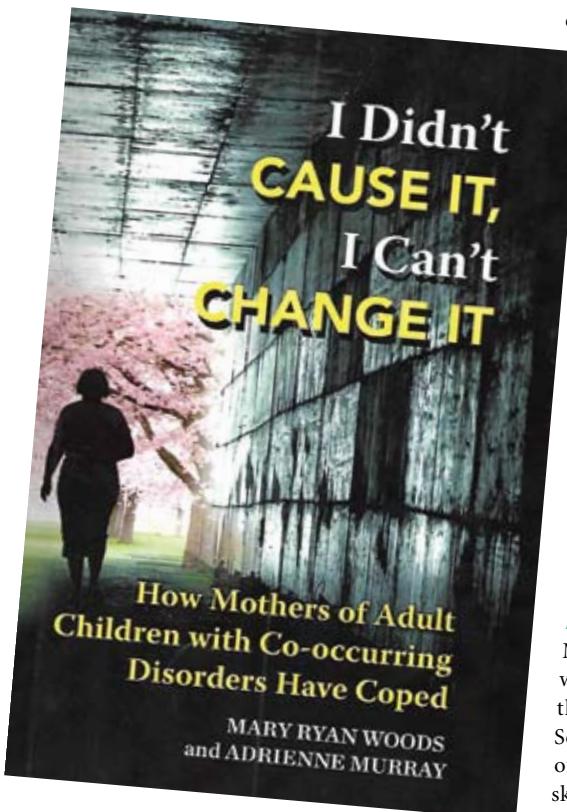
After interviewing more than a dozen mothers, the authors address problems these caregivers have in common. The issues range from dealing with the stigma within their community for having a child with a co-occurring disorder to attending support groups and sharing with other mothers their own experiences.

According to Woods and Murray, many mothers have trouble accepting their child's co-occurring diagnosis. As they write, "In the late 1960s, a man named Bill Milliken wrote a book called 'Tough Love' that promoted authoritarian parenting. During this period, some parents were called 'helicopter parents' because they wouldn't give their children the freedom to 'figure things out for themselves.'"

Unfortunately, since co-occurring disorders are chronic brain diseases, authoritarian parenting "has hurt more than it has helped those with COD." Contrary to the concept of tough love, the support of a united family unit is "the best indicator of success for an individual with COD." A parent should never give up on her child, no matter how bleak the diagnosis.

Treatment programs

Mothers should be aware that sometimes it takes a major incident for them to realize their child should be admitted to a treatment program. Usually, if their child is arrested



or hospitalized, the family will have to find a treatment program best suited for their child.

Families should also know that if their child is not receiving treatment for both his mental illness and substance abuse simultaneously, their child will not recover. Only once their child is sober and stable can recovery begin.

Woods and Murray list 10 different types of treatment for co-occurring disorders, such as family therapy and 12-step programs. Both authors assert that by the time the family finds effective treatment, "it may have been through many different providers who used a variety of different treatment methods."

When their child enters a treatment facility, mothers often feel left on the outside.

It can be hard for them to trust the process. As a co-occurring disorder is a chronic disease, a patient does not recover after a 28-day stay in a treatment facility. The family must understand that recovery is "a marathon, not a race."

As parents reach out and learn how to cope with their child, they should also see any perceived failure "as a step closer to recovery and wellness." Even if their child experiences a setback, it is an opportunity for growth. Most patients relapse because of "increased stress, the surfacing of underlying trauma, or simply becoming successful."

The authors view a relapse in a more positive light, adding, "Relapses are treatable and often are the gateway to deeper insight, commitment, and recovery. Understanding what precipitated the relapse and learning new coping skills are the focus of treatment."

Just like their children, families must work on learning to grow and evolve.

"If there are adequate family supports in place, there will be a 50 percent decrease in hospitalization of their child," the authors write.

Anchoring versus enabling

Many mothers parenting an adult child with a co-occurring disorder often feel they are playing a role of "uncertainty." Sometimes, mothers make decisions "out of fear without the best information or skills to do anything else."

Over the years, one type of ineffectual parenting that has surfaced is called "enabling," which is demonstrated when a parent gives her child money that is then used to buy drugs, bail an individual out of jail, or pay a speeding or DUI ticket.

Although the parent has a made a well-meaning gesture, these behaviors have "lasting negative consequences for the individual as well as the family, because they continue to support the disease process rather than treatment and recovery."

While a mother may be thinking she is trying to keep her child alive, she is "all too often told that they enable their children's addictions of symptomatic behavior."

Anchoring, on the other hand, means that a mother is there for her adult child no matter how serious the situation is. As the authors explain, "Sometimes she's the care manager, sometimes the crisis intervener. When an

individual is incapacitated due to these brain diseases, the need to step in is great.”

Their children can still drift, but when a parent is an anchor, they don’t drift so far that “they get lost in the sea of homelessness, victimization, and addiction.”

As the authors explain: “A mother acting as an anchor keeps her son or daughter connected to the community. She provides a safe place for the person living with co-occurring disorders so that he or she can learn new and effective ways to cope. In this role, she is able to provide consequences that are effective but not punitive.”

Remission and recovery

If mothers expect long-term remission for their children, they must smoothly transition their child from a treatment facility into more independent living by following four important steps:

- Procure stable housing
- Establish a sober support network which includes family members
- Maintain regular meaningful activity
- Develop trusting, healthy relationships

When their child finishes treatment, “a comprehensive discharge plan is imperative for the whole family.” After playing the role of “the first responder” for their child for so long, most mothers say it is hard to let their child go so he can experience life and make his own choices. As their child transitions to a more independent lifestyle, mothers admit they still fear for the safety and stability of their child.

Good communication skills and supports help families avoid falling into patterns of “codependence,” in which people rely on each other and there are harmful consequences. Families should focus on instead interdependence, which “is defined as the mutual dependence between individuals...who need extra supports to be successful.”

Sometimes families have difficulty accepting who their child has become, versus the expectations of what the parent or family had hoped for. It is important for siblings to seek out support and treatment for themselves “to gain forgiveness and resolve issues.”

The mother may often fall into a depression when her child leaves, as she has put her own life on hold in order to seek treatment for her child. The mother may need to seek treatment for herself if she is no longer taking proper care of herself or her relationships with friends and family has “wilted.”

After speaking with the mothers they interviewed, the authors observed: “It’s important to find people to bond with who understand the experience.” Woods and Murray also suggest mothers write down their feelings in a journal to gain perspective.

Comparing a family’s journey in recovery to a destructive wildfire, the authors write, “When an individual takes a step back to look at the bigger picture, they can see that the other attribute of fire is one of cleansing. What is old can be removed to make way for something new and more beautiful than the family may ever have imagined.”

Allison Plitt lives in Queens with her 12-year-old daughter and is a frequent contributor to this publication.

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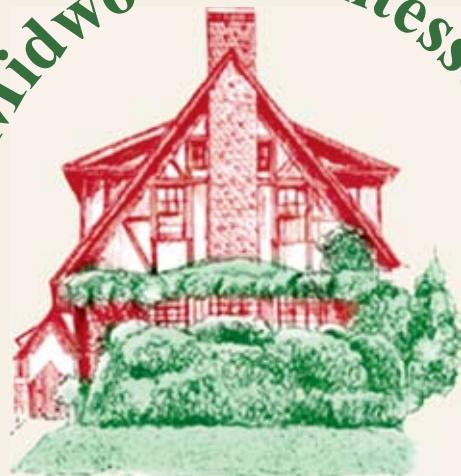
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Helping Children Grieve

The second part of our interview with counselor Dr. Anne Klaeysen

By Tammy Scileppi

Last month we spoke with Dr. Anne Klaeysen, a parent and Brooklyn resident, who has decades of experience in counseling as a Humanist Life Advisor at Columbia University. Here, she continues to offer her valuable insights, and helps parents and caretakers broach the sensitive—and sometimes taboo—subject of death.

As leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, in Manhattan, Dr. Anne Klaeysen helps oversee the organization's Ethics for Children class, where youngsters learn about things like morals, the Golden Rule, and how to become good citizens. A recent class opened up a conversation about death, by introducing a wonderful children's book titled *What Happens When We Die?* by J.R. Becker. In it, the author depicts life and death as natural processes. Here's an excerpt: "See, one thing that makes things special, is knowing that they end. That's what makes our lives so precious. And each moment with our friends."

All of his books address existential and essential issues in a scientific and honest fashion.

According to Dr. Klaeysen, who holds a Doctorate in Pastoral Counseling, when discussing the loss of a loved one, parents should: listen, empathize, and know when to stop.

"That last point is most important. Talking too much has the potential to

overwhelm a child," she explains. "At the end, the most important thing to stress to children is that even if a person is physically gone, they can still be remembered through stories and memories."

Tammy Scileppi: Why do so many people fear that great unknown, death?

Dr. Anne Klaeysen: In my experience, it's not death people fear; it's dying. We all understand that we are mortal. What we don't know is how we will die and when. My grandmother prayed that she would die in her sleep, painlessly and without suffering. People are concerned about the quality of their lives and fear prolonged and painful dying. Many of us also experience family and friends suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's, a kind of death before actually dying. The majority of members in my congregation support death with dignity and lobby for assisted dying.

TS: Everyone grieves differently. How are children affected by loss and grief?

AK: Differences in grieving are more about the relationships we have with the deceased than the age at which we experience death, although younger children can be influenced by the adults around them and teens by their peers. The circumstances of a death — old age, illness, accident, suicide, etc. — also determine our responses. We are shocked at sudden and unexpected death, especially when someone is young. We may feel guilt or shame after a suicide and relief when someone's suffering has ended.

In my experience, honesty and empathy

are essential to the grieving process. Again, it is most important to listen to children's thoughts and concerns and to be aware of what is age appropriate.

It's also important to consider the age-appropriateness of certain traditional rituals around death. For example, in my opinion, no child should be forced to view a corpse in a casket.

TS: What were some of your children's experiences with loss?

AK: My husband and I discussed death with them when they were quite young; it was before any of their grandparents had died. Like many families, they had pets that died. Logan, the turtle, is buried in our Brooklyn garden under a stone sculpture of — what else? — a turtle. They also had friends whose grandparents died, and we discussed what they had been told. In one case, a child was rescued halfway up a utility ladder in his family's garden, holding on for dear life, because he had been told him that his grandfather had climbed it to go to heaven and he wanted to see him. Again, honesty is essential.

My memory is that [my daughter] Emily (now 32), more than [my son] Andrew (now 34), entertained deep existential thoughts at a young age, around 5. She would muse about death. Mostly I listened, as parents must always do. She didn't seem fearful; it was a wondering that wandered along different tangents. Together we imagined how life began and ended. We also read stories from other faith and cultural traditions.

It may be comforting for a young child



to imagine a beloved relative or friend in a “good place,” but care must be taken to also be honest. A good place can be a loving memory or a cherished keepsake. I don’t recommend dashing a young child’s hope of being reunited with a loved one. We can wonder with them what happens and acknowledge how much love we share.

TS: How does the Ethics for Children class (for ages 2-11) help kids in their everyday lives? I understand that violence in the news has also been discussed.

AK: We discuss everything. Our emphasis is on building, nurturing, and keeping loving relationships. That involves developing a vocabulary for feelings, learning how to articulate what we are experiencing, and cultivating empathy for other people’s thoughts and feelings. Our children learn to identify and stand up for their values as individuals and in group settings.

At the recent Ethics class, death wasn’t the only subject discussed; it was also about nature itself and how humans are part of nature.

• • •

So, when you touch upon loss and death with your children, why not talk to them about these and other profound and fascinating topics, as well? Is there an afterlife? Did we exist before we were born? If so, where? And the book will help guide you with fun verses and whimsical illustrations, when your kids ask those sensitive questions.

While there’s a lot of bad stuff going on out there that kids are being exposed to — violence, crimes, and mass shootings — our world still has plenty of good things to offer, so that’s where their focus should be.

“There are so many other interesting things happening in our lives that engage us ... especially love,” says Dr. Klaeysen, adding: “And, what gives our finite lives meaning, is

an important topic.”

Ethics for Children class at New York Society for Ethical Culture (2 West 64th Street between Broadway and Central Park West, ethical.nyc/youth) every Sunday from 11am-12:30pm (unless otherwise noted on website). Classes are free to families who are members of the Society, or donation-based entry from non-members. Parents may stay with their kids. What Happens When We Die? is available on Amazon.

Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist, parent, and regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City's movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for her. Scileppi's work has appeared in a variety of media outlets. She has also written book cover copy for Simon and Schuster.



Understanding and Treating Pink Eye

My daughter has just returned to school from winter break and already two of her classmates have pink eye! Can you tell me more about the disease, how it is spread, and ways to make sure my children aren't infected?

Pink eye, also known as conjunctivitis, is an inflammation or infection of the transparent membrane that lines the eyelid and part of the eyeball. This membrane, known as the conjunctiva, is usually clear. However, if irritation or infection occurs, it can become red and swollen.

The cause of pink eye is commonly a viral or bacterial infection. Most cases of conjunctivitis are caused by viral infections. However, both viral and bacterial conjunctivitis are very contagious, which is why early diagnosis and treatment is the best way to limit its spread.

Pink eye may develop and show

symptoms in one or both eyes. The most common symptoms include redness, itchiness, a gritty feeling, discharge that forms a crust during the night, and/or tearing.

In the case of conjunctivitis caused by a virus, there is no simple "cure"—the infection simply must run its course while the body fights it off. The good news is, a case of viral conjunctivitis typically goes away in seven to 10 days, and children can usually return to school in three to five days. While those days can be very uncomfortable, over-the-counter remedies, such as warm or cold compresses, can help to alleviate some of those symptoms. Unlike pink eye due to a viral infection, pink eye that is caused by bacteria can be treated by antibiotics, and the child can return to school 24 hours after an antibiotic has been started, provided that symptoms have improved.

The best way to avoid the discomfort of pink eye is to prevent the infection from occurring at all.

Practicing good hygiene is the best way to control its spread. Make sure that hand washing is frequent, and tell your daughter to avoid sharing objects with an infected classmate, as her fingers will no doubt be near her eyes several times a day.

There's no need to panic; pink eye is a minor eye infection, but left untreated it can develop into a more serious condition. Visit your child's pediatrician if you are concerned.



Pramod Narula, MD is the Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.



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Exploring an Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust

By Alison Arden Besunder, Esq.

In last month's column, we addressed the role that life insurance can play in an estate plan. This month, I will address a common vehicle to own the policy during your lifetime to both exclude the proceeds of the insurance from your taxable estate and also ensure that the proceeds are used for its intended purpose.

A common misconception about life insurance is that it is "tax free," which it is not. Life insurance proceeds (specifically, income generated by whole-life policies) are income-tax free, but they are not estate-tax free. The proceeds of a policy—whether term or whole—will be calculated as part of your gross taxable estate for the purpose of calculating the applicable estate tax. If you own an insurance policy, or have the abilities of ownership (i.e., the right to change the beneficiaries on the policy), then the entire insurance proceeds would be taxable in your estate when you die.

As I mentioned last month, life insurance can provide several important benefits to your estate plan. Although the state and federal estate tax exemptions are much higher today in 2018 than they were in years past, if you have a taxable estate, life insurance can provide your beneficiaries with available funds to pay future tax liabilities. Presently, New York State imposes a tax on estates valued at more than (approximately) \$5.5 million, and the Federal government imposes a tax on estates valued at more than \$11.2 million. However, there was a not-so-long-ago time that the New York State exemption was \$1 million and the Federal Exemption was only \$2 million. Thus, if your estate is comprised of illiquid assets—such as real estate, stock, or an interest in a business—life insurance can provide necessary available funds to your family so that they will not have to sell assets in order to pay taxes and other liabilities.

If estate taxes are a problem, you can create an insurance trust, which owns the life insurance policy. This will avoid estate taxes for insurance proceeds when you die. If you already own an insurance policy and you transfer that policy to an irrevocable trust, then

estate tax liabilities will not be avoided for three years. The rule is that any assets transferred to the trust within the three years of your death will be recaptured and brought back into your estate for estate tax purposes.

This type of trust, called an Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust, is a form of irrevocable trust that can help exclude life insurance from your gross taxable estate, and thereby from estate taxes. An Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust owns (and controls) and is the beneficiary of your life insurance policies. It cannot be changed or amended once created (although the grantor can always stop making gifts to the trust to pay the premiums). Existing policies are transferred to the trust, or the trust buys new policies on the grantor's life.

For owners of small businesses, life insurance can be a crucial part of a solid estate plan. For many business owners, their net worth is inextricably intertwined with the business itself, and the business is an illiquid asset that cannot be readily sold. The Internal Revenue Service is not sympathetic. It demands that estate taxes be paid in cash within nine months of death, even if you file for an extension to file the taxes. Although there is a provision in the tax code for applying for an "installment plan," it is not a request that is readily granted, and the IRS charges interest on the installments. Often the survivors of business owners who failed to plan are required to use the little cash or liquid investments that were left to them—and on which they expected to depend to satisfy daily needs—to pay the estate taxes and expenses of administrating the estate.

An Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust can be used as a vehicle to hold insurance policies so that the death proceeds are payable to the trust and pass to the trust beneficiaries free of estate tax. The trust beneficiaries can then use those proceeds for their living needs or to pay whatever share of estate tax is generated by the business. But, by using the trust, the gross amount of the life insurance proceeds will not be eroded by taxes themselves. For business-owners and non-business owners, the Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust has other

benefits, such as protecting the liquid assets from a spouse's remarriage, divorce of children or beneficiaries, and protection from creditors of the spouse or children and grandchildren.

Here's how an Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust works:

1. You gift money to the trust. Usually, you transfer enough money to cover the annual premium. In order to avoid paying gift taxes on the gift (or decreasing your available tax exemption at death), the trust usually gives the beneficiaries an immediate right to withdraw the gift contribution (usually a short window like 30 days). This is known as a Crummey power for the court decision that sanctioned it as a permissible methodology for rendering the transfer qualified for the annual gift tax exclusion (\$14,000 in 2014).

2. The trustee of the trust then purchases life insurance on your life. Depending upon how the trust is set up, the trust may purchase insurance on the joint lives of you and your spouse. When you die, the trust receives the insurance proceeds from the life insurance company.

The Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust has many other benefits depending on the client's objectives, such as ensuring preservation of principal against creditors, remarriage of your spouse or of children-beneficiaries, or from the beneficiaries themselves in the case of a spendthrift or where substance abuse is an issue. It can help ensure that capital will remain in the trust for future generations if desired. A forced sale of other assets under duress or in bad market conditions can also be avoided or the impact softened. In short, the Irrevocable Life Insurance Trust is an excellent vehicle for ensuring your financial legacy, regardless of your net worth or anticipation of estate taxes.



Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists parents with their estate planning needs. Her firm assists clients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties. You can find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and at besunderlaw.com. If you have a question that you would like to see answered in this column, please email alison@besunderlaw.com.

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FEBRUARY

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PIG POWER

It's official: 2019's Chinese Zodiac animal is the cutest one ever! On February 2, join the Prospect Park Zoo for a Lunar New Year celebration aptly titled *Lunar Zoo Year: Year of the Pig!* According to tradition, pigs symbolize wealth and good fortune. In honor of the Year of the Pig, visitors can meet the zoo's three piglets

(yes, there are three of them, and yes, they are just as cute as they sound), go on a Zodiac-themed scavenger hunt, and learn how the Wildlife Conservation Society is aiding animals in Southeast Asia and China. This event runs 10am-4:30pm and is free for all ages with zoo admission. *Prospect Park Zoo [450 Flatbush Avenue, prospectpark.org]*

1 FRIDAY

Kids Create: Lanyard. Show off your lanyard weaving skills at Gerritsen Beach Library! Kids of all ages can make bracelets and key chains out of lanyard during this free one-hour program. bklynlibrary.org. 2-3pm. Free. *Gerritsen Beach Library, 2808 Gerritsen Avenue. bklynlibrary.org.*

FURTHER AFIELD

For The Love Of Chocolate. Join the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum for an evening of chocolate-tasting! Chocolatier Diane A. Holland of Blue Tulip Chocolates will teach participants about different varieties of international chocolate during this two-hour program. Taste eight kinds of chocolate and bring home a sample. Pre-registration is required. 7-9pm. \$45. *Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Road, Bronx. (718) 885-1461. bartowpellmansionmuseum.org.*

Thunderbird American Indian Dancers in Concert. Theater for the New City will present its 44th annual Thunderbird American Dancers Dance Concert and Pow Wow through February 3. There will be dances, stories and traditional music from Native Peoples of the Northeast, Southwest and Great Plains regions. The event has become a treasured New York tradition for celebrating diversity by honoring the culture of the first Americans. This event is suitable for children ages 5-12, as well as older teens and adults. Times vary. *Theater for the New City, 155 1st Avenue, Manhattan. theaterforthenewcity.net.*

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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 calendar@newyorkfamily.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!

**Kids on Film**

The BAMkids Film Festival is back for its 21st year during the weekend of February 2-3! This year the always-engaging film festival will screen shorts and feature films from 27 countries, including "Looking for the Wild," "Mogul & Pero," "Belly Flop," "Penguin," "Dreams Come True," and more—a series of short films featuring classic tales, folklore, and fables. After the screenings children

can stop by the café for free interactive games, 360-degree film experiences, a circus performance by TheMuseBrooklyn, a workshop with Dancewave, food, and much more. The BAMkids Film Festival is recommended for kid ages 3-11. The fest starts at 9:30am. Tickets for adults are \$14; children ages 13 and under are \$10. *Brooklyn Academy of Music [321 Ashland Place. bam.org.]*

2 SATURDAY**BAMkids Film Festival 2019.**

The BAMkids Film Festival is back for its 21st year this weekend! This year the fest will screen shorts and feature films from 27 countries, including "Looking for the Wild" and "Dreams Come True," a series of short films featuring classic tales, folklore, and fables. After the screenings, children can stop by the café for free interactive games, 360-degree film experiences,

a circus performance by TheMuseBrooklyn, a workshop with Dancewave, food, and much more. Recommended for ages 3-11. Daily, through February 3, 9:30am. Adults: \$14; children ages 13 and under: \$10. *BAM Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Avenue. bam.org.*

"The Naughty Penguin".

Head to The Old Stone House on Saturday, February 2, to see Spellbound Theatre's "The Naughty Penguin." Ages 2 through 5 will help Penguin navigate her world without getting into trouble during this interactive performance. Show times are 10am and 11:15am. Tickets are \$15 per person. *Old Stone House, 336 3rd Street. spellboundtheatre.com.*

Lunar Zoo Year: Year Of The

Pig. Join the Prospect Park Zoo for a Lunar New Year celebration! In honor of the Year of the Pig, visitors can meet the zoo's three piglets, go on a zodiac-themed scavenger hunt, and learn how the Wildlife Conservation Society is aiding animals in Southeast Asia and China. 10am-4:30pm. Free with zoo admission. *Prospect Park Zoo, 450 Flatbush Avenue. (718) 399-339. prospectpark.org.*

Roll-A-Rama Family Skate Extravaganza.

Every Saturday, Industry City's Dreamland Roller Rink invites families with children ages 7 and up for a Family Skate Extravaganza! Skate to your favorite retro and contemporary tunes, take a photo on the red carpet, and more. Skate rentals are included in the price of admission. You

calendar FEBRUARY

are welcome to bring your own skates, roller blades, and protective gear. Protective gear will not be provided. Saturdays and Sundays, 1pm. Tickets start at \$15. *Industry City, 220 36th Street. (888) 898-1118. eventbrite.com.*

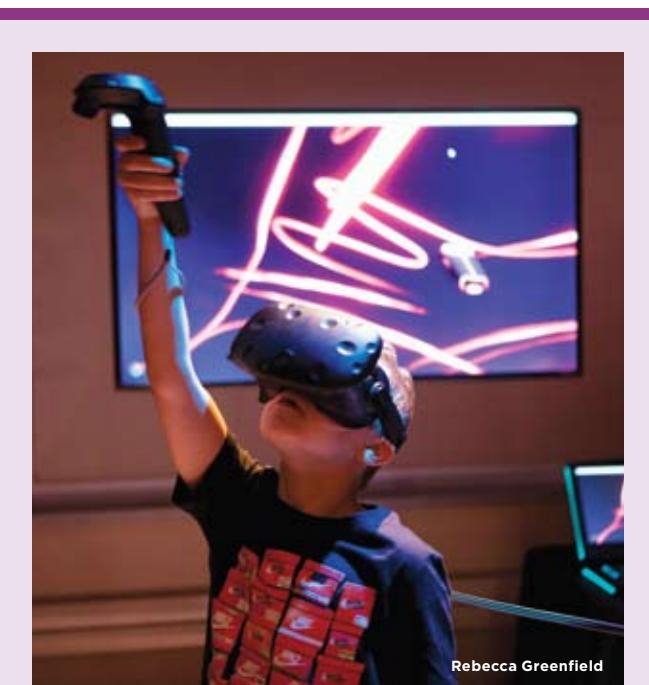
The Great New York Subway Map.

Join the New York Transit Museum for a program dedicated to the NYC subway! Families with kids ages 5 and up will listen to a reading of The Great New York Subway Map by Emiliano Ponzi. Afterwards, museum visitors can create their own imaginative subway maps inspired by the actual subway map created in 1972 by Italian designer Massimo Vignelli. nytransitmuseum.org. 1:30-2:30pm. Free with museum admission. *New York Transit Museum, Schermerhorn Street and Boerum Place, Brooklyn. nytransitmuseum.org.*

Black History Month With Tammy Hall.

Celebrate the start of Black History Month at Gerritsen Beach Library! Master storyteller Tammy Hall will tell tales from the African Diaspora during this special one-hour program. All ages are welcome. 2-3pm. Free. *Gerritsen Beach Library, 2808 Gerritsen Avenue. bklynlibrary.org.*

Brooklyn Music School presents “Alida and the Hummingbird”. Based on a Puerto Rican myth “The Legend of the Hummingbird,” this original production produced by the Musical Theater and Performance Program at BMS celebrates the rich indigenous and Latin cultural heritage of America. “Alida and the Hummingbird” tells a touching story of true love that inspires caring and compassion for all beings and builds bridges in times of conflict. Vivid images of flowers, colorful birds, and goddesses like Atabay will help the young performers tell the inspirational story. Don’t miss



See February 1

3 SUNDAY

BAMkids Film Festival 2019.

See Feb. 2

The Rock And Roll Playhouse: The Music Of The Beatles For Kids.

All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for a Beatles concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11am; show begins at 11:30am. 11am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Avenue. ticketfly.com.*

F.A.M. (Family Art Magic).

This Sunday the Brooklyn Museum will host families with children ages 4-6 for its Family Art Magic class! Art and community will be explored through the lens of “celebration.” Participants will be able to view the Museum’s newest exhibits and march in their own parade. Pre-registration is required. 11am-2:45pm. Free with museum admission. *Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. brooklynmuseum.org.*

Celebrate “Here’s Hank”

With Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver.

Join the Brooklyn Public Library and Stories Bookshop + Storytelling Lab for a “Here’s Hank” celebration! Actor, director, and writer Henry Winkler and co-author Lin Oliver will discuss their newest children’s book *Everybody is Somebody*, the 12th and final installment of their “Here’s Hank” series. All ages are welcome. Free tickets must be reserved prior to the day of the event. Copies of the entire series will be available for purchase. 4-6pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza. bklynlibrary.org.*

The Little Orchestra Society At Brooklyn Children’s Museum.

Check out this musical workshop

Fun With Tech

Do your kids love MineCraft, robots, and anything VR? This is the event for you! Technology will take over the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) during the third annual Teknopolis exhibition! Tech-savvy kiddos ages 6 and up can explore floors of interactive exhibits that will bridge the arts and digital media. This year, the exhibit will offer two different experiences, allowing visitors to pick and customize what they see—proving that we truly are living in the future! Visit the BAM website for ticket time slots and more information. *Brooklyn Academy of Music [321 Ashland Place. bam.org.]*

this beautiful production with original music and script by Pamela Martinez and Patricia Cardona. 4-5pm. \$10-20.

Brooklyn Music School, 126 Saint Felix Street. brooklynmusicschool.org.

Sharks After Dark Family

Overnight. Families with children ages 5 and up are invited to a sleepover at the New York Aquarium! Check out the Aquarium’s new sharks exhibit, get a tour of the sea life of the Hudson Canyon, participate in a dive chat, and meet live animals during this overnight experience. Don’t forget to bring a sleeping bag! Daily, through February 3,

6pm-9:30am. \$100. *New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Avenue. (718) 265-3474. tickets.wcs.org.*

FURTHER AFIELD

“Emily Brown and the Thing”.

The Thing is being so loud that Emily can’t sleep, but all he wants is to find his Cuddly. She sets out to help him be reunited with his friend so they can all go to sleep. 11am, with a talk-back performance at 3pm. For ages 4-7. Tickets start at \$25. *New Victory Theatre, 209 West 42nd Street, Manhattan. (646) 223-3010. newvictory.org.*

Thunderbird American Indian Dancers in Concert.

led by The Little Orchestra Society at the Brooklyn Children's Museum. You'll get to explore the sounds of nature, and learn about different musical instruments through stories and songs during this 45-minute program. 5:15pm. Free with museum admission. *Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Avenue. brooklynkids.org/los.*

Sharks After Dark Family Overnight. See February 2

FURTHER AFIELD

"Emily Brown and the Thing".

The Thing is being so loud that Emily can't sleep, but all he wants is to find his Cuddly. She sets out to help him be reunited with his friend so they can all go to sleep. 11am. For ages 4-7. Tickets start at \$25. *New Victory Theatre, 209 West 42nd Street, Manhattan. (646) 223-3010. newvictory.org.*

Thunderbird American Indian Dancers in Concert.

See February 1.

4 MONDAY

Kids Create: Bay Ridge Rocks.

Get ready to rock Bay Ridge! Head to the Bay Ridge Library to paint rocks that you can then hide all over the neighborhood. Please note: As this project is messy, younger children must be accompanied by an adult. 4-5pm. Free. *Bay Ridge Library, 7223 Ridge Boulevard. bklynlibrary.org.*

5 TUESDAY

"Fly Feather". Beginning February 5, Spain's Periferia Teatro will perform its production of "Fly Feather" at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. This puppet performance tells the tale of Robin, a bird who journeys into the forest and meets new animal friends who need her help. Kids ages 5-7 will learn the value of friendship, problem-solving, and risk-taking during this 50-minute show. *bam.org.* Daily, through February 10, 10:30am-3:30pm.



Mike Ratliff

Gimme a Break

Looking for a super-fun and educational happening for February break? Bring your kiddo on down to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden during midwinter school break (February 18-20) for illuminating activities galore at February Break Discovery Days! Children of all ages will learn how plants survive in a multitude of environments, listen to botanical-themed stories, and go on a scavenger hunt. Plus budding gardeners can pot their own plant to take home. Though the featured activities will be the same for each day, but repeat visitors are welcome. Each day is free for kids of all ages, and runs from 11am-1pm. *Brooklyn Botanic Garden [990 Washington Avenue, bbg.org]*

\$18. *BAM Fisher, 321 Ashland Place. bam.org.*

Lunar New Year In Prospect Park.

Celebrate the Lunar New Year in Prospect Park! Ring in the Year of the Pig with paper lantern-making, good luck paper crafts, a Bird Nerds Game Hour, a live animal encounter, and traditional New Year treats. Pre-registration is recommended. All ages are welcome. 12-4pm. Free. *Prospect Park, 450 Flatbush Avenue. (718) 220-5100. prospectpark.org.*

Our Garden Club. Create your own mini-garden at Flatlands

Library! During this one-hour program, children with and without disabilities can plant seeds, sing, read stories, and take home plants. 4:30-5:30pm. Free. *Flatlands Library, 2065 Flatbush Avenue. bklynlibrary.org.*

6 WEDNESDAY

"Corduroy" Storytime.

Families with kids ages 3 through 5 can join the New Utrecht Library for a special story time in celebration of *Corduroy!* Listen to a reading of Don Freeman's classic children's book, and then stick around for *Corduroy*-themed activities. *bklynlibrary.org.*

org. 3-4pm. Free. *New Utrecht Library, 1743 86th Street. bklynlibrary.org.*

Japanese 101. Love Japanese manga and anime? Want to learn Japanese? Stop by Stone Avenue Library for a Japanese 101 class! Teens will learn the Japanese alphabet, vocabulary, and common words heard and found in manga and popular anime shows such as "Sailor Moon," "Fairy Tale," and "Naruto." This class will be led by Stone Avenue Young Adult librarian and former Japan resident Yosenex Orenge. 4-5:30pm. Free. *Stone Avenue Library, 581 Mother Gaston Boulevard. bklynlibrary.org.*

Brooklyn Traditional Slow Jam.

Bring your acoustic instrument to the Old Stone House in Brooklyn for a Traditional Slow Jam! Musicians of acoustic instruments such as cellos, guitars, mandolins, fiddles, and banjos can play traditional tunes together by ear during this two-hour jam session. Sheet music will not be used, and songs will be played at a slow to moderate speed, which will enable musicians of all ages and abilities to participate. *theoldstonehouse.org.* 7-9pm. \$5. *Old Stone House, 336 3rd Street. theoldstonehouse.org.*

9 SATURDAY

Aquarium Mornings.

This Saturday families with children ages 3-8 can spend their morning at the New York Aquarium! There will be a live shark encounter, aquatic-themed activities, early access to the Aquarium's exhibits, and much more. Pre-registration is required. 9-10:30am. \$30. *New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Avenue. (718) 265-3474. tickets.wcs.org.*

"Fly Feather." See February 5

Roll-A-Rama Family Skate Extravaganza. See February 2

calendar FEBRUARY

Chinese New Year Celebration.

Welcome in the Chinese New Year at Brooklyn's Central Library! Families with children of all ages can celebrate the Year of the Pig with a live performance from dancers with the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. This one-hour, dance spectacular will feature traditional Chinese music and costumes. Families will be given priority seating. Seating will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. 1-2pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza.* bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD

"CHALK" (a silent comedy).

A playful and poignant homage to classic silent-film era comedians, "CHALK" invites audiences into a hand-drawn world where imagination is made real and anything can happen. Charlie Chaplin meets "Harold and the Purple Crayon" in this feel-good romantic romp sure to "Draw You In." For ages 3 and up. 2:30-3:30pm. \$15 general, \$12 parent, \$5 kids. *Frigid New York, East 4th Street, Manhattan.* tinyurl.com/ChalkPlay.

Lunar New Year 2019 at Brookfield Place

Ring in the Lunar New Year with a family-friendly performance presented by Arts Brookfield in partnership with the New York Chinese Cultural Center. The afternoon begins with a festive Lion Dance (1:40pm) that will move from the Oculus Westfield World Trade Center through Brookfield Place and into the Winter Garden. At 2pm, the mainstage performance begins with traditional Chinese dance and music, a martial arts demonstration, and theatrical players in full traditional make-up and regalia. Free. 2-3:15pm. *Brookfield Place, 3 World Financial Center, 230 Vesey Street, Manhattan.* brookfieldplacenyc.com.

10 SUNDAY

"Fly Feather."

See February 5

The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of The Rolling Stones for Kids.

All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for a Rolling Stones concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11am; show begins at 11:30am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Avenue.* ticketfly.com.

12 TUESDAY

Stomp, Clap & Sing With Conroy Warren.

Ages 5 and under can stomp, clap, and sing with Conroy Warren this Tuesday at the Central Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library! The musician combines multiple musical genres such as jazz, calypso, and reggae to create a sound that's all his own. Families will be given priority seating. Seating will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. 11am-12pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza.* bklynlibrary.org.

13 WEDNESDAY

DIY: Light Up Valentine's Day Cards.

Teens can create their own Valentine's Day cards for their favorite someone at Mill Basin Library. Participants will learn circuitry basics and apply what they've learned to make a card that lights up! All materials will be provided. 4-5pm. Free. *Mill Basin Library, 2385 Ralph Avenue.* bklynlibrary.org.

14 THURSDAY

TropicalFete Comes To The Flatbush Library.

Celebrate Black History Month this Thursday at the Flatbush Library! TropicalFete, Inc., an organization which provides a platform for emerging artists

of the arts, will join the Library for a spoken word performance, steel pan music, stilt walkers, and much more. All ages welcome. 6-8pm. Free. *Flatbush Library, 22 Linden Blvd., Brooklyn.* bklynlibrary.org.

15 FRIDAY

Slimentine's Day.

Gerritsen Beach Library invites teens ages 13 and up to its Slimentine's Day! Library visitors can make their own slime during this two-hour drop-in event. All materials will be provided. *bklynlibrary.org*. 3-5pm. Free. *Gerritsen Beach Library, 2808 Gerritsen Avenue.* bklynlibrary.org.

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic."

The word of the day is magic! Join Elmo, Abby, Cookie Monster, and more as your "Sesame Street" favorites discover the magical moments in everyday life. Feb. 15 at 11 am; February 16-17 and 23-24, 10:30am, 2pm, 5:30pm; February 18, 11am and 2:30pm; and February 21-22, 11am. For all ages. \$39 and up. Children under 1 may attend without a ticket. *Madison Square Garden, West 32nd Street and 7th Avenue, Manhattan.* (212) 465-6741. msg.com.

16 SATURDAY

Farmhouse Family Day.

Drop into the Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum to explore New York City's oldest house! Seasonal activities inside the historic house and around the gardens include scavenger hunts, artifact investigation, gardening, self-guided exploration, and hands-on activities. Recommended for families with children ages 4-10. No registration required. 11am-3pm. Free. *Wyckoff House Museum, 5816 Clarendon Road.* (718) 629-5400. nycgovparks.org.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse:

The Music of Madonna For Kids.

All ages are invited to Industry City this Saturday

for a Madonna concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at noon; show begins at 12:30pm. Free. *Industry City, 220 36th Street.* (888) 898-1118. therockandrollplayhouse.com.

Roll-A-Rama Family Skate Extravaganza.

See February 2

Senegalese Dancer And Griot

Lamine Thiam. This Saturday the Central branch of the Brooklyn Public Library will host Senegalese dancer Lamine Thiam! As a griot, a West-African storyteller, musician or poet, Thiam performs dances which are native to his home country of Senegal. The dancer will be joined by the Bousso Ensemble during this one-hour performance. Families will be given priority seating. Seating will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. 1-2pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza.* bklynlibrary.org.

Survival Series: Fire Making.

Would you be able to survive in the wilderness? NYC's Urban Park Rangers invite kids ages 8 and up to join them for a survival course in Brooklyn's Fort Greene Park. During this hour-and-a-half workshop, participants will learn how to create (and extinguish) a controlled fire using primitive and modern methods. nycgovparks.org. 1-2:30pm. Free. *Fort Greene Park, 100 Washington Park.* (718) 722-3218. nycgovparks.org.

Meet the Artist: Ebony Bolt.

Visit the New York Transit Museum to meet artist Ebony Bolt! Families with children ages 5 and up can hear about Bolt's creative process and her latest installation in Grand Central Terminal. Following the talk, young museum visitors can add to a large-scale drawing craft. 1:30-3:30pm. Free with

museum admission. *New York Transit Museum, Schermerhorn Street and Boerum Place. nytransitmuseum.org.*

Hot Cocoa & Coding. Join Blue Studios for a special coding event! Kids can engage in age-appropriate coding activities and enjoy hot chocolate during this two-hour workshop. This program is recommended for children in Kindergarten through high school. Pre-registration is required. [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com). 2-4pm. \$15. *Blue Studios, 396 Atlantic Avenue. eventbrite.com.*

FURTHER AFIELD

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic." See February 15

17 SUNDAY

Shipwreck Adventures.

Families with children ages 3 through 8 can learn all about shipwrecks during Shipwreck Adventures at the New York Aquarium! During this hour and a half program, Aquarium visitors will engage in shipwreck-themed activities, hear stories of real shipwrecks, and discover how these disasters impact ocean life. 9-10:30am. \$30. *New York Aquarium, 602 Surf Avenue. (718) 265-3474. tickets.wcs.org.*

The Rock and Roll Playhouse:

Salsa Sounds for Kids. All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for a salsa concert! Boneita will perform salsa music in a family-friendly environment. The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11am; show begins at 11:30am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Avenue. ticketfly.com.*

FURTHER AFIELD

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic." See February 15

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space



Erika Kapin

STEAM Engine

Get ready to move full STEAM ahead! Science, technology, engineering, arts, math and fun take center stage all week at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full STEAM Ahead. With science demos, animal shows, maker spaces and more, there's something for

everyone. Check website for schedule. Daily, 10am-5pm; February 17-23. For all ages. Free with admission. \$33 adults, \$24 children 5-12, children 4 and under free. *Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum [Pier 86, West 46th Street & 12th Avenue, Manhattan. intrepidmuseum.org.]*

Museum Kids' Week: Full

STEAM Ahead. The Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum will host its annual Kids Week festival from Sunday, February 17-. 23. During Kids Week, visitors will have the opportunity to participate in dozens of fun-filled activities, live animal shows, hands-on workshops, musical performances, special guests and interactive demonstrations that the whole family will enjoy. This year, the Kids Week theme is Full STEAM Ahead, where science, technology, engineering, arts, math and fun take center stage. *Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, West 46th Street and 12th Avenue, Manhattan. intrepidmuseum.org/KidsWeek.*

18 MONDAY

February Break Discovery Days.

Head to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden during

midwinter school break for activities galore! Children of all ages will learn how plants survive in a multitude of environments, listen to botanical-themed stories, and go on a scavenger hunt. Plus, budding gardeners can pot their own plant to take home. Please note: Activities will be the same for each day, but repeat visitors are welcome. Daily, through February 21, 10:30am-12:30pm. Free with garden admission. *Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 990 Washington Avenue. bbg.org.*

Presidents Week In Prospect Park. Visit Prospect Park during Presidents Weekend for an array of family-friendly activities! Park visitors can participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, make suet bird feed, play traditional games, build a winter home for animals, and more. All ages are welcome.

12-4pm. Free. *Prospect Park, 450 Flatbush Avenue. (718) 220-5100. prospectpark.org.*

FURTHER AFIELD

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full

STEAM Ahead. See February 17

19 TUESDAY

February Break Discovery Days.

See February 18

Book Discussion: "Dragons In A Bag" By Zetta Elliott. Head to the Coney Island Library for a book discussion! During this one-hour program, kids ages 8-12 will discuss Zetta Elliott's *Dragons in a Bag*. Having won such distinctions as NPR Best Book of the Year, Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year, and Chicago Library Best Book of the Year, the novel follows Jaxon, a boy who spends the

calendar FEBRUARY

day with a witch. Together they must transport dragon babies to a magical world where they'll be safe. But, of course, things don't go as planned! 2-3pm. Free. *Coney Island Library, 1901 Mermaid Avenue.* bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full STEAM Ahead. See February 17

20 WEDNESDAY
February Break Discovery Days. See February 18

Kids Tech With Laptop Gaming.

Interested in technology? Brighton Beach Library invites ages 6 through 18 to a kids' tech workshop! Participants will learn the basics of circuitry and electronics to create robotics during this one-hour program. No prior electronics knowledge is required. All materials will be provided by Little Bits. 3:30-4:30pm. Free. *Brighton Beach Library, 16 Brighton First Road.* bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD
Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full STEAM Ahead. See February 17

21 THURSDAY
February Break Discovery Days. See February 18

Ezra Jack Keats Story And Craft. Enjoy the stories of iconic children's author Ezra Jack Keats at the Central branch of the Brooklyn Public Library! A librarian will read a Keats book and visitors can then create a craft based on the book's themes. Plus at the end of the program, don't forget to take home your free copy of a Keats book provided by the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation. 4-5pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza.* bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic." See February 15

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full STEAM Ahead. See February 17

22 FRIDAY

Lunar New Year 2019 With Asian Performing Arts. Usher in the Year of the Pig at Sunset Park Library! Families with children of all ages will be treated to an afternoon of traditional Chinese dance, songs, martial arts demos, and an interactive ribbon dance led by the Asian Performing Arts company. This free program is part of the "Everyone is Welcome Here" series. 4:30-5:15pm. Free. *Sunset Park Library, 4201 4th Avenue.* bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic." See February 15

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full STEAM Ahead. See February 17

23 SATURDAY

Teknopolis 2019. Technology will take over the Brooklyn Academy of Music during the third Teknopolis exhibition! Kids ages 6 and up can explore floors of interactive exhibits that will bridge the arts and digital media. This year the exhibit will offer two different experiences, allowing visitors to pick and customize what they see. Visit bam.org for ticket time slots and more info. Thursdays-Sundays, 9:30am-9:30pm, through March 10. Adults: \$21; Children (ages 6-14): \$16. *BAM Fisher, 321 Ashland Place.* bam.org.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of Queen for Kids.

All ages are invited to Industry City this Saturday for a Queen concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock

through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at noon; show begins at 12:30pm. Free. *Industry City, 220 36th Street.* (888) 898-1118. therockandrollplayhouse.com.

Roll-A-Rama Family Skate Extravaganza. See February 2

Shine And The Moonbeams.

Children ages 3 through 6 will dig the music of Shine and the Moonbeams. During this free one-hour concert, young music lovers will enjoy R&B and Soul songs that address bullying and self-esteem in a kid-friendly way. Families will be given priority seating. Seating will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. 1-2pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza.* bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: Singapore.

The Orchid Show celebrates its 17th year at the New York Botanical Garden with an homage to the wealth of orchids and rich cultural history of Singapore. Singapore is home to more than 220 native orchid species. Native and hybrid orchids alike have become synonymous with the nation. During daylight hours, visitors can enjoy an authentic Singapore vibe with tributes to the Singapore Botanic Gardens' vertical hanging habitats, tours of the garden and orchid care demonstrations. The Orchid Evening activities will also make sure that the fun will continue after the sun has set. Daily, 10am-6pm. Free with an All-Garden Pass. *New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Boulevard, Bronx.* nybg.org.

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic." See February 15

Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum Kids' Week: Full STEAM Ahead. See February 17

24 SUNDAY

Teknopolis 2019.

See February 23

The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of Stevie Nicks and Fleetwood Mac for Kids.

All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for a Fleetwood Mac concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11 am; show begins at 11:30 am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave., Brooklyn.* ticketfly.com/event/1798413-rock-roll-playhouse-music-brooklyn.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: Singapore.

See February 23

"Sesame Street Live!: Make Your Magic." See February 15

25 MONDAY
FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: Singapore.

See February 23

Very Young People's Concerts: "Allegro and Adagio". It's never too early to give your children an appreciation of music. In one fun-filled hour, the New York Philharmonic combines games, storytelling and great music, unlocking young children's imaginations. 10:30am. For ages 3-6. \$26-31. *Merkin Concert Hall, 129 West 67th Street, Manhattan.* nyphil.org.

26 TUESDAY

Stomp, Clap and Sing With Lucy Kalantari and The Jazz Cats.

Playing jazz age-inspired music for kids, Lucy Kalantari and the Jazz Cats will perform songs from their new Grammy-nominated album All The Sounds and lead the audience in an interactive scat session. Recommended for ages 5 and under. Families will be given

priority seating. Seating will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. 11am-12pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, Central Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza.*
bklynlibrary.org.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: Singapore.

See February 23

27 WEDNESDAY
FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: Singapore.

See February 23

28 THURSDAY
Teknopolis 2019. See Feb. 23

FURTHER AFIELD

The Orchid Show: Singapore.

See February 23

LONG-RUNNING
FURTHER AFIELD

X: Times Square Valentine

Heart Design Winner. X

(2019), Reddymade's winning design for the 11th annual Times Square Valentine Heart Design Competition, explores how love emerges within communities. An "X" evokes many expressions of interpersonal and civic love, including the written symbol for a kiss, and even the mark of a vote. Round openings at the centers of the planes combine into heart shapes when viewed from different angles. X will be up in Times Square throughout the month of February. *Times Square, Manhattan.*

arts.timesquarenyc.org.

"Yeti, Set, Snow!" An original story and production from the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, "Yeti, Set, Snow!" is the story of a young girl named Widget, and her friend, Twig, who encounter a yeti named Pascetti on the first snow day of the winter season. Pascetti, who lives on a mountain top nearby, dislikes the snow. Through songs and snow day activities, Pascetti discovers not only that snow



Dog Days

Calling all dog-lovers! The 143rd Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show will take place on February 11-12. Established in 1877, the Westminster Kennel Club is America's oldest organization dedicated to the sport of purebred dogs. Today 204 breeds and varieties of dogs compete in Best of Breed judging at Piers 92/94 with the winners advancing to Group and Best in Show competitions at Madison Square Garden. Breed judging will take place during the day (from 8am-4:30pm) at the Piers, and Groups, Junior Showmanship, and Best In Show will be judged evenings at Madison Square Garden. Tickets range from \$40-65. *Madison Square Garden & Piers 92/94 [4 Pennsylvania Plaza; 711 12th Avenue, Manhattan westminsterkennelclub.org.]*

can be fun, but also the value of friendship. Daily, through February 24, 11:30 am-6pm. \$8-12. *Central Park, Sheep Meadow, 1802 65th Street Transverse, Manhattan.*

cityparksfoundation.org.

How Many Zombies Are

Too Many Zombies? In this interactive game at the New York Hall of Science, players take on the role of scientists helping the "Center for Calamity Control" simulate a zombie outbreak. Facilitators introduce participants to mathematical modeling and the ways they can be used to simulate, analyze and make predictions about the complex real-world phenomenon. At the end, players see graphs detailing

the population swings and can further tweak parameters and see different results through play. Daily, through February 28, 9:30am-5:30pm. Free with NYSCI Admission. *New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th Street, Queens.*

nysci.org.

A Way with Words: the Power and Art of the Book. Children's Museum of the Arts (CMA) is pleased to announce A Way With Words: The Power and Art of the Book, an exhibition that presents artworks that draw attention to the long and remarkable history of the book, on view through April 29. Including works by Cara Barer, Doug Beube, Long-Bin Chen, and more, A Way With Words will show the transformation of

everyday books into expressions of identity, community, memory, and more. Families will see unconventional treatments such as cutting, weaving, burning, and shredding. Children will also create their own artworks inspired by the exhibition. Daily. Free with museum admission. *Children's Museum of the Arts, 216 West 83rd Street, Manhattan. (212) 721-1223. cmny.org.*

"Odd Day Rain". Bring the kids to this futuristic rock musical set in the world 2211. There are no adults, technology, or running water in this world for Aurora and her friends. Meanwhile, a girl named Claire wonders if there's anyone else out there on the planet. Runs February 1-24: Fridays at 7pm, Saturdays and Sundays at 2pm and 4pm. \$15 kids, \$30 adults. *TADA! Youth Theater, 15 West 28th Street, Manhattan. (212) 252-1619. tadaattheater.com.*

MOCA Fest 2019. The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA) is excited to announce MOCA FEST 2019, an eight-week Lunar New Year celebration at MOCA to welcome the Year of the Pig and the start of year 4717 on the Chinese calendar. Festivities will include the launch of MOCA's new shop in partnership with Pearl River Mart; Lunar New Year-themed programs and children's activities; MOCA's Night Market showcasing cuisine from famed Asian-American chefs; a Family Festival; and a glamorous Lunar Soiree. The Museum invites people of all ages to take part in its uniquely designed celebration aimed at providing a genuine and deep understanding of this famed holiday and what it means in American society. All proceeds go to the Museum of Chinese in America. 11am-6pm. General admission \$12; children under 12 in groups of less than 10, free; students and seniors \$8. *Museum of Chinese in America, 215 Centre Street, Manhattan.*

mocanyc.org.

treats

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By Mia Weber



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2. Jennifer Fisher Medium Gold Border Enamel Heart Pendant with Letter, Love Red, \$850, [jenniferfisherjewelry.com](https://www.jenniferfisherjewelry.com)
3. Dick Taylor Candied Almond Craft Chocolate Bar, \$9, dicktaylorchocolate.com
4. Paravel Crossbody Capsule Standout Shoulder Bag, \$265, tourparavel.com
5. Palermo Body Rose Geranium + Mandarin with Rosehip, \$12, palermobody.com
6. United by Blue Sumter Bartrams Sock, Red, \$12, unitedbyblue.com
7. Harlem Candle Company, "Josephine" luxury candle (large 12 oz.), \$45, harlemcandlecompany.com
8. Izola Red 6 oz. Flask with Canvas Carrier, \$42, izola.com
9. Charlotte Olympia Pink Scent Handbag, \$498, charlotteolympia.com
10. Sugarfina Pink Chocolate sparkling rosé bears, \$23, sugarfina.com.

For more seasonal gift guides, visit [newyorkfamily.com!](https://newyorkfamily.com)

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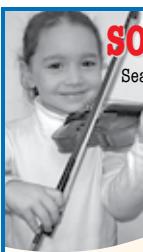
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Lose the Winter Blues

How one local mom is learning to love winter through her daughter's eyes

By Jana Beauchamp

After the holiday season everyone talks about the post-holiday blues, New Year's resolutions, and then winter blues. I can blow off the blues without giving up my favorite foods, vowing to exercise more, or de-cluttering KonMari style. How is this possible you may ask? Nothing beats the winter blues like experiencing the winter season through my baby's eyes.

My "baby" is now 4 years old and even though Kyli insists she is a big girl, she will always be my baby. In winter she loves to cuddle close and hug to stay warm. This melts my heart. Although I get a little icy when she says her legs are frozen and she can't walk down the street and I have to carry her like a sack of ice. But those warm hugs make it worth it. Once we are holding each other tight, we both forget about the cold and feel our warm hearts. This helps me tolerate winter.

They also say cold hands warm heart. My little lady detests bundling up in her hat, mittens, and layers upon layers and prefers to throw them off. The struggle is real. Kyli has no body fat so when we (finally) get outside, she's suddenly a frozen Popsicle. I ask what flavor Popsicle but she says I'm not funny and that she's not a Popsicle. She says she is frozen solid and can't move quickly and proceeds to walk in slow-mo. It is quite a sight. There is nothing cuter than my tiny daughter all bundled up and moving like a marshmallow man. Trust me. It makes me smile inside and out. Plus, she always puts her winter weather accessories back on after all so I don't look a totally bad mom. This helps me endure winter.

Whether we get a flurry of snow or a nor'easter, it is equally magical to Kyli. That is part of her charm. If there is even a trace of snow, she loves to stick out her tongue and try to catch the snowflakes. She'll take any tiny bit of snow to make a snow ball and throw it at me with the biggest, happiest naughty grin.



It's fire on ice. Speaking of fire on ice, Kyli also loves to ice skate. She especially loves when her big sister and friends hold her hands and skate around with her. Whenever the big girls tire of this and Kyli eventually takes my hand, she holds on so tight. I love this tightness and closeness and it squeezes on my heart strings. We giggle and smile and ice skate. This makes me grow fond of winter.

Nothing turns winter frowns upside-down like hot chocolate. Kyli loves to warm up with hot cocoa and marshmallows. She knows to order cocoa with marshmallows on the side. That means one cup of cocoa and one cup of marshmallows. It's sheer child genius. She always eats the marshmallows first because the cocoa is too hot. She eats those marshmallows one by one and savors each and every bite until they are gone. Then she'll take exactly one small sip of hot chocolate before saying she is done. And I usually don't mind finishing the leftover cocoa. She often helps feed it to me to make sure I don't spill (like mother, like daughter).

It's all very sweet. This helps me appreciate winter.

Of course there's lots of indoor play this time of year. We used to get stir crazy and tire of staying inside to play but then we discovered that there's nothing more fun than playing summer in wintertime. She parades around in her swimsuit, sunglasses or goggles and takes out our beach chairs and beach blankets. Sometimes she even dresses up like a mermaid and swims (in the bath) then retreats to the beach to build pretend sand castles. It's beachy keen so much that I don't even mind all the extra summer laundry in winter. This makes me love winter.

Every wintry wonderful thing I do with my littlest lady makes for a winter a wonderland and then the cold doesn't seem so bad anyway. I'm seeing everything with rose colored shades instead of moping in the winter blues thanks to my delightful daughter! I never thought I'd say this but I may love winter after all!

Jana Beauchamp is a Manhattan writer and mother-of-two.



Happy New Year!



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