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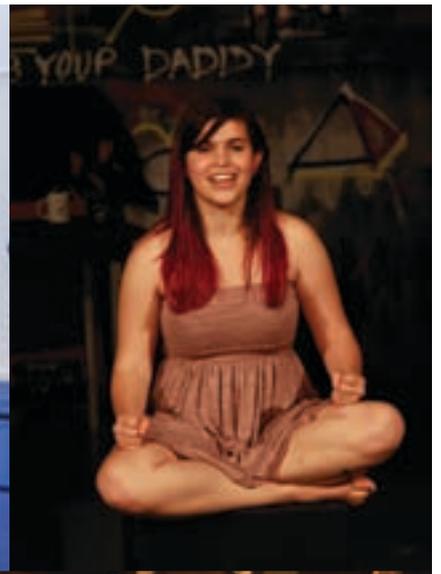
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Letter from the publisher

Babies make the world go around

It's absolutely amazing how much attention and focus a new baby can cause. With so many serious things happening all around us, the recent arrival of Prince George of Cambridge got a whole lot of press time and I saw TV clips of crowds of people standing around all day outside both the palace and the hospital waiting for the birth announcement. Waiting all day? To me that's absolutely incredible.

Then again, I am not a Brit or a Royalist, nor am I inclined to stand around all day for any reason, let alone to wait on the arrival of a baby, unless it was the arrival of my first grandchild which I am really look-



ing forward to, but isn't forthcoming any time soon.

People love babies! Me too. I see them in the street and I take notice. I recently saw a pushcart from a local child-care facility that had 10 babies, each in their individual seat, and the picture of those tiny tots brought me a great deal of joy. I found myself interacting with them and it was a great few minutes in my day.

I loved having a baby, most of the time. I didn't love it in the middle of the night, when I was dealing with colic or such, and losing sleep and patience. Interrupted nights and sleep deprivation for months was difficult and like any other parent I longed for a nanny or such to

turn to on occasion. How lucky in those moments the very rich or the aristocrats are. They always have someone to do that and are seldom responsible for the crabby times. I wonder if Kate and William will be?

Our baby on the cover last month brought a lot of "oohs" and "aahs," and great mail came in commenting on how darling that photo was. Thank you for the feedback. It was fun to put together an issue that had so many articles focused on the natal experience. There's another one in this issue, about the controversy around weight gain during pregnancy. I never really got a good look at her as she moved into the later stages of her pregnancy, but I would bet that Kate didn't put on a lot of weight during her late trimesters. She's pretty underweight to begin with.

Even for them, with all their help and all their rituals, I would bet there would be a "new normal" of a kind. It just happens when you become a new parent, even a very privileged one. I couldn't help thinking of William's mum Diana, and how pleased she would have been to be there too, and how proud she would be to become George's Grannie. She always seemed to most of us to have been largely a good mum herself.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and as always, thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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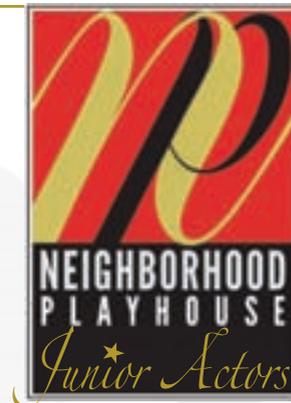
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The great pregnancy **weight debate**

Learning about your body before, during, and after pregnancy

BY JAMIE LOBER

The weight is over, when it comes to debunking popular misconceptions about managing mom's pounds before, during, and after pregnancy.

Dr. Grace Lau, assistant professor in the department of obstetrics and gynecology at New York University Langone Medical Center, says that it is important that every woman knows her baseline weight, so she can determine whether she is going through normal changes or something out of the ordinary.

"For someone of normal body mass index, the aim is to gain between 25 and 35 pounds total over the whole pregnancy, but if you are overweight or underweight or carrying a multiple gestation, your target weight gain is different, and you should check with your practitioner," said Lau.

Do not believe the old saw about a positive

“We always hear that pregnancy is a time when you eat for two, but that does not equate to multiplying your daily caloric consumption by two, because the other person you are eating for is a small fetus.”

pregnancy test giving you license to throw calorie counting out the door for the next nine months.

“We always hear that pregnancy is a time when you eat for two, but that does not equate to multiplying your daily caloric consumption by two, because the other person you are eating for is a small fetus,” said Lau.

If you follow the standard recommendations, you’ll enjoy a healthier pregnancy.

“In the first trimester, you do not need to increase your caloric intake much at all, but by the second trimester, you will increase by 300 calories a day to obtain that 25- to 35-pound weight gain,” said Lau.

The key is to strive for a well-balanced, low-fat, high-fiber diet.

“Consuming adequate protein is important, and fiber in your diet helps to prevent or reduce constipation and hemorrhoids,” said Lau. Exercise is the other half of the equation. “If you are healthy and have a normal pregnancy, you should get in 30 minutes or more of moderate exercise on most days. But before you start, just get the green light from your doctor.”

If you are not used to exercising, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises beginning with as little as five minutes of exercise a day, and adding five minutes each week. The idea is that you stay active for 30 minutes a day — and something as simple as taking a walk can offer you health benefits and does not strain joints. Swimming is another great choice for pregnant women.

Whether you are wondering about diet or exercise, you should feel comfortable bringing any

questions and concerns to your first prenatal visit, and it is highly encouraged that women maintain an open dialogue with their providers.

If you are obese, pregnancy is a poor time to attempt to lose weight. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists states that because overweight and obese women have a higher risk of the complication of gestational diabetes than women who are at a normal weight, their healthcare providers may test them for gestational diabetes during the first three months of pregnancy. Sometimes modifications are made for obese women, because a vaginal delivery might be harder to achieve since it is can be a challenge to monitor the baby during labor.

Being obese increases the risk of some problems for the baby, including birth defects like heart defects or neural tube defects. It may be hard for the doctor to run tests, because if you have too much body fat, it can be more difficult to see certain problems with the baby’s anatomy on an ultrasound exam. Preterm birth and stillbirth rates are also higher if the mother has a high body mass index.

Obesity also puts the mother at risk for health problems, including high blood pressure, preeclampsia, and gestational diabetes. It is advised to do the best you can and work closely with your obstetrician, because despite the risks, it is still possible to have a safe pregnancy and healthy baby if you are obese.

It is normal to worry about how or if you will lose the baby weight after your pregnancy.

“I tell my patients not to stress about weight loss during the first six weeks postpartum,” said Lau.

Do not fall for fad diets — but, rather, try to ease back into an exercise program when your doctor deems you ready.

“Breastfeeding can help, too, as you can burn from 200 to 500 calories per day that way,” said Lau. “Weight loss should be slow and gradual, and if you are breastfeeding, you should not slash calories, because you need that energy for your milk supply.”

Jamie Lober, author of “Pink Power” (www.getpinkpower.com), is dedicated to providing information on women’s and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpinkpower.com.

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5 ways to prevent sports injuries

BY BILL BLUE

Playing sports is a great way for a child to get exercise, learn teamwork and discipline, and make friends. But overdoing it or not knowing the proper way to warmup can result in some bad injuries, including that of the anterior cruciate ligament, a pair of ligaments in the knee that cross each other and connect the femur to the tibia.

Here are ways your child can stay safe while enjoying sports.

Warming up and stretching

Having a routine warmup allows the blood to circulate in your muscles and joints before training at an explosive level. Anterior cruciate ligament tears most often occur from a quick change in direction, so flexibility from stretching is critical to maintaining proper form to avoid injury.

Strength and agility training

Strengthening your knee's primary support system, the thighs and hips, will help stabilize the knee when you're put in injury-prone situations. Some of the best exercises to regularly perform include: squats, lunges, and cone drills that require change in direction. The key is maintaining proper form to train your body to follow the same technique in play.

Knowing your body

Knowing the limits of your body is crucial in avoiding any type of injury. Most anterior cruciate ligament injuries occur at the time when an athlete has been pushed past his limits — that's when he uses incorrect form from exhaustion. Slowly building up your stamina and knowing when to take a break can save you from months of pain.

Using protective gear

Staying up to date on the different products that can help combat anterior cruciate ligament injuries can potentially prevent being sidelined and months of rehab. One of the products professionals developed, the ACL Tube, is specifically designed for the female athlete as an alternative to traditional knee braces, which only serves to immobilize the knee without treating the problem. The lightweight product applies topical pressure to muscles that support the knee, training the muscles to fire. In exchange, this muscle stimulation prevents fatigue, which is when most tears occur.

Cooling down

A majority of athletes know warming up is part of the standard protocol, but they don't realize that cooling down is equally as important. Spending five to 10 minutes slowing down your heart rate will help remove the lactic acid that has built up in your muscles, allowing them to quickly recover and avoid any soreness in the long run.





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Stop the smoke

Three new ways to reduce smoking in young people

BY SHEELAH A. FEINBERG

New York City has enjoyed tremendous success in reducing youth smoking rates. Youth smoking rates in our city declined from 17.6 percent in 2001 to 8.5 percent in 2007. But our progress has stalled since then.

This is not surprising, since tobacco companies spend \$8.37 billion each year in the U.S. on marketing, including \$196 million in New York alone. The more kids see tobacco marketing and product

displays, the more likely they are to smoke. More work needs to be done to bring down youth smoking rates, and prevent kids from lighting up.

New York City has led the nation and the world in fighting tobacco use, especially among children. For the New York City Coalition for a Smoke-Free City, even one new smoker is one too many — especially when it's a young person. We know that nearly 90 percent of new smokers are under the age of 18.

To address this public health crisis, the mayor and City Council have introduced three new pieces of legislation that will reduce youth access and addiction to deadly tobacco products and prevent today's youth from becoming the next generation of addicted smokers. These groundbreaking bills would help more New Yorkers live longer, healthier lives, and solidify New York City's legacy as an innovative public health leader.

The first proposed bill would make our city the first in the nation to restrict the display of tobacco products in stores where youth frequently shop.

Many retailers have "power walls:" massive displays of tobacco products right behind the counter. Whenever youth pay at the register, the power wall is right in full view. These displays prompt impulse buys and are designed to attract youth and normalize both the availability and pur-

chase of tobacco products — the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.

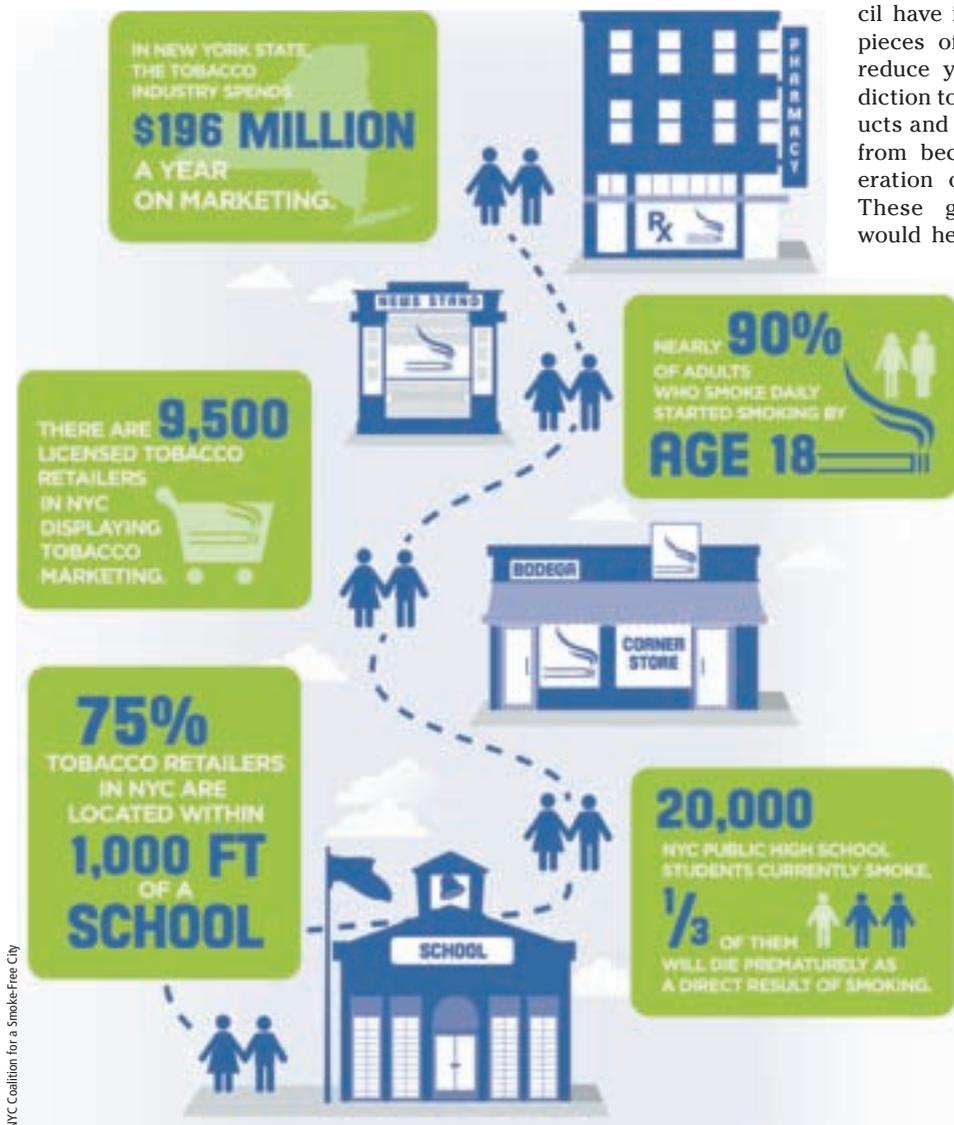
Research shows that higher prices deter youth smoking. New York City has the highest cigarette tax in the nation to protect our youth. The second proposed bill would prevent the use of coupons and other discounts and create a price floor for a pack of cigarettes. It would also level the playing field for retailers, who play by the rules and don't sell loose or unstamped tobacco products, by increasing the penalties for those who do.

The third proposed bill would raise the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to 21. Studies show that 90 percent of people purchasing cigarettes for minors are 18, 19, or 20 years old. Under the new minimum age of 21, New York City high school students could no longer purchase cigarettes, and the number of public high school students under the age of 18 who smoke would decline. We can stop our young people from becoming addicted: young experimental smokers typically become regular smokers around age 20.

New Yorkers are committed to protecting the health of our children. Public opinion polls show that 59 percent of New Yorkers support prohibiting tobacco displays in stores, and 67 percent support raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to 21.

Tobacco use is still the number one cause of preventable death, killing hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. annually, including thousands of lives lost here in New York. Ten years ago, New York City made history with the Smoke-Free Air Act, which ensured all New Yorkers were able to breathe clean, smoke-free air in the workplace, regardless of whether they work in a high-rise office or neighborhood restaurant or bar. We're ready to make history again.

Sheila A. Feinberg is the executive director of the New York City Coalition for a Smoke-Free City.



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Getting into preschool

How to make the process successful and less stressful

BY NOTOYA GREEN

Yes, it's that time of year again, folks: thousands of New York City parents will begin what's called the "preschool process." If you've read the blogs, watched a documentary or two, or listened to other parents talk about preschools, you're probably terrified, or at the very least, anxious.

Admittedly, the preschool process is not easy. It's time consuming and can become emotional for many families. At the end of the day, a school is either going to accept or reject your child, and that can be hard to take. So, is getting into preschool as hard as they say it is? No.

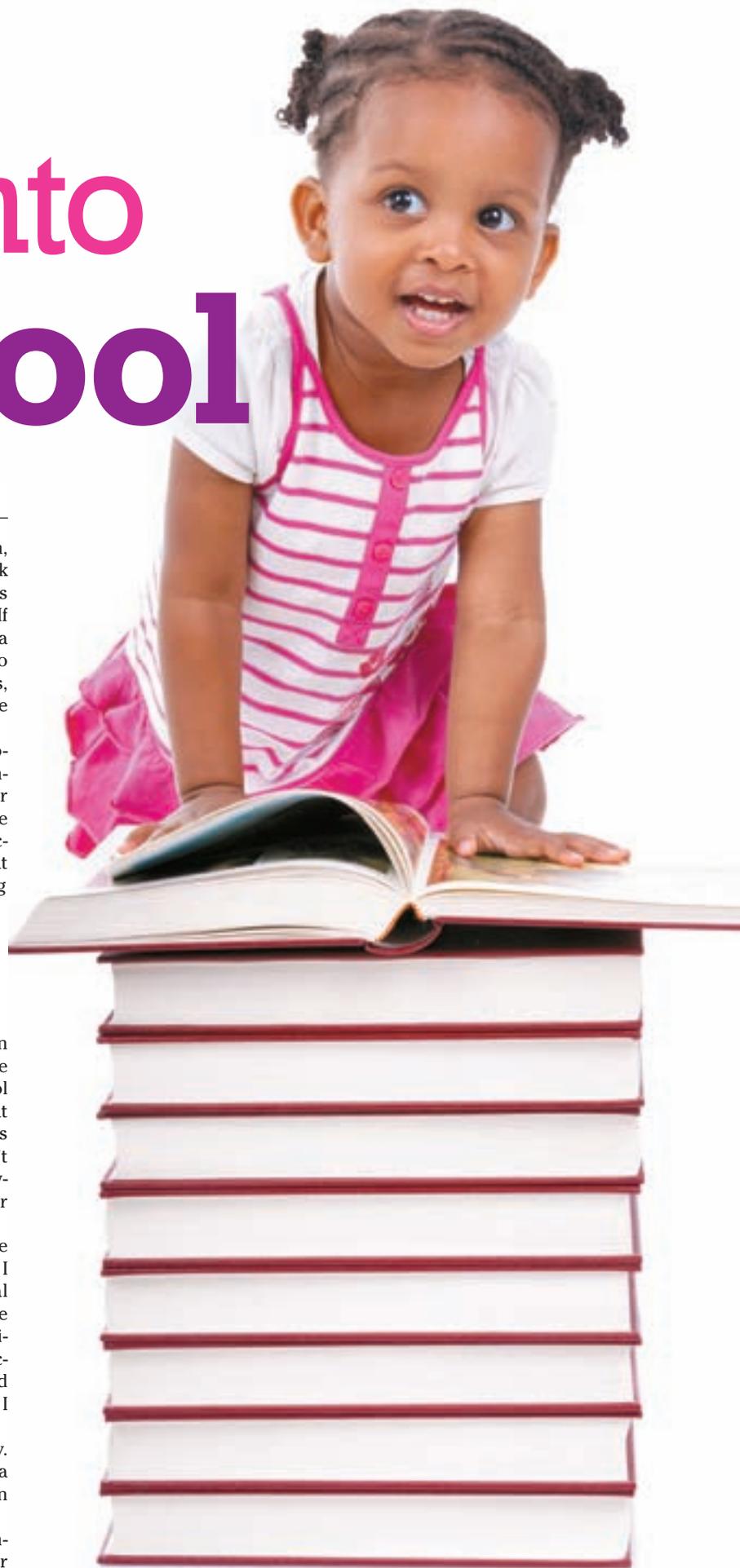
With some planning, patience, and a little luck, your child will get into the preschool of your choice.

How do I know this? I have been where you are now — twice. The first time we applied to preschool we only applied to one school. That was our first mistake, but it was our first-choice school. We didn't get in. We re-applied the following year and got in, along with our other top schools.

It wasn't easy going through the process twice. Needless to say, I was discouraged after the initial rejection and experienced all of the emotions many of you are experiencing now. That said, we were successful the second time around and learned a lot along the way, which I want to share with you now.

First, don't take this personally. Preschool admission is largely a numbers game. Many schools even use a lottery system.

More importantly, schools generally choose 10 to 17 children for



each class based on their age and gender (most schools try to have the same number of boys and girls in a class) after they have guaranteed seats to siblings and legacies.

Second, acceptance to a school (or not) is not a judgment about your child or your child's abilities. Preschools do not test your child and are not looking for "stars." In fact, most of the preschools will not ask to meet your child, so don't worry about turning your child into a prodigy between now and then. Getting into preschool will largely come down to your child's age and gender and how many seats are available.

The basics:

1. Preschool applications are generally due the year before your child enters preschool. Some schools have rolling admissions, but most will require you to apply a year in advance.

2. Parents of older children (3 and over) will have an easier time getting into preschool. There are more schools to choose from for older children (not all schools have a program for kids under 3) and the class sizes are larger. So there are more seats available.

3. When creating your list of preschools think about the school's:

- Location. You generally want a school that is close to home. Remember, your child won't just be going to school there. He will also attend play dates there, birthday parties, etc.

- Teaching philosophy. Think about whether the school's teaching philosophy matches your expectations and values. Most schools are actually a blend of the various philosophies, but it is better to apply to those schools whose philosophies line up with yours. Some of the teaching philosophies most talked about are Progressive, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia.

- Religious affiliation. You should know if a school on your list is connected to a church or a temple. Generally, schools that are connected to churches or temples prefer families that are a part of that community, so getting into one of these schools may be more

difficult if you are not a member. Finally, don't assume that a school is connected to a church or temple simply based on its name. Do your research!

4. Ideally, families should apply to about eight schools to better their chances. Parents of twins should apply to about 10 to 12 schools. Parents of triplets (like us) should apply to 15 schools or more (if you can handle it).

5. Visit the schools' websites and know when and how to get an application.

Now, if you really want to get into a school

- Get to know parents whose children are attending the school. Ask them to write you a letter of recommendation if they have a positive relationship with the school. Schools like families that have ties to their community.

- Send the school a letter expressing your interest in the school after you

have visited. The Independent Schools Admissions Association of Greater New York no longer permits "first choice letters," but parents are still allowed to send letters expressing their interests in a school.

- Consider re-applying if you don't get in the first time around. My kids were 15 months old when I first applied to preschool. They were too young for most schools and barely made the cut-off for our first-choice school. The following year, they were older, so we had more schools to choose from. This increased our chances with all of the schools we applied to, especially our first-choice school. Preschools will often accept you the second time around because re-applying demonstrates your interest and commitment to the school.

Good luck with your applications and e-mail me with any questions at tripletsnycblog@gmail.com. You can also read more preschool tips on my blog.

Notoya Green is a parenting expert and former Family Law attorney. You can read her blog at www.tripletsintribeca.com. You can also follow her on Facebook at www.facebook.com/tripletsintribeca and on Twitter @NotoyaG.

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Keeping cool in the face of a tantrum

My secret:
Three deep
breaths to
calmness

BY HEATHER VAN DEEST

It's 7 am on a weekday morning, and my 3-year-old runs toward the kitchen table to see what's for breakfast. Standing on his tiptoes to peer at his plate, I sigh as I watch his nose crinkle, his cheeks pinch together, and his eyes fill with tears.

"Oh no, another tantrum," I think to myself, as he opens his mouth to scream.

"I don't want toast," my son shrieks, marching away from the table. He stomps his feet and shouts his demands like a drill sergeant. "Give me cereal! And banana, not pear!"

I feel my body tense, preparing to explain all the reasons he must eat his toast — and stop crying now. I tell myself I can reason with him.

I can explain that he had cereal for breakfast yesterday, that the toast is already made. I can explain that we don't always get what we want, that we can't always have our way, and surely he will understand.

But my son is only 3, and because tantrums are a normal part of his world, of his development and changing brain, he continues to cry, stomp, and scream, tempting me to give into his demands and retreat to the kitchen for a bowl of cereal, or worse, resort to yelling back at him.

Then I remember I have another choice, one that's been saving my son and me lately from the frustration and exhaustion of life's tantrums.

"OK, you don't want your toast," I say, standing next to the table, as my son hears my words, prompting him to shriek even louder. I remind myself to remain calm.

"Let's take a deep breath together." I breathe in, exaggerating the movement of my upper body, puffing my chest out like a penguin, and then blow air out through my mouth in a loud whoosh.

My son continues his protest, eyeing the cup of milk next to his plate as if he might knock it to the floor at any moment. I resist the urge to revert back to the "old way" of doing things, of raising my voice or trying to reason with my son as if he is an adult.

Instead, I move the cup from the edge of the table and continue to breathe, in through my nose and out through my mouth.

"Come on," I say. "Three deep breaths."

Sometimes it feels like my son will never calm down, and that I'll be breathing there next to him, in and out, for an eternity. Other times, he quickly joins me. He takes a short breath, fidgets, and cries a little more, then breathes in again, mimicking the sound of my whoosh. If I'm lucky, one breath follows another, until my son is calm and ready to eat his toast.

Breathing deeply together and practicing calmness may not be the easiest or fastest way to help my son through a tantrum, but it is the best way, for both of us. When I am calm, it helps him feel calm, and we can weather the storm together.

And when my son turns to me afterward and says, "I feel better, Mom," I always feel better, too.

Heather Van Deest is a freelance writer looking for more chances to practice calmness each day.



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Sleep training made easy — sort of

A new dad
breaks down
the process

BY TIM PERRINS

Are you a fledgling parent who's interested to learn about sleep training? You're in luck! All you need to do is recite a short speech. It goes like this:

"Fun's over kid! Now you go in your crib — you go in your crib and you cry. Blankets? Pillows? Yeah, that's not gonna happen. And I'll take that little dolly back now, thank you. Here, you can have a stiff plastic mattress. By the way, in two minutes I'm going to the other room to watch TV with the volume turned way up so I can't hear you crying. It's hard, babycakes, but you might as well learn now: the world is a cold and unforgiving place. Goodnight!"

That should do it.

Do you find sleep training to be a daunting prospect? The favored method du jour — letting the baby cry herself to sleep in a crib free from any comforts (a.k.a. suffocation hazards) — feels, well, heartless, doesn't it? Fortunately, you don't have to abide by a one-size-fits-all method. Breaking the process down and considering your

own needs can result in an experience that helps you to better understand your baby and your role as a parent as well. (Does that sound better?)

First, keep in mind is that even with no training, direction, or advanced degrees, your baby will sleep. Hard to believe, but it's true. That said, how do you know how to proceed?

When our baby was about 6 months old, our pediatrician recommended that my wife and I go ahead with the "cry it out" method of sleep training. A more gradual approach is fine too, she told us, but that's more for the benefit of the parents than the baby. This left me thinking: parent-

NEW DAD

ing is hard enough already — is there something wrong with factoring in your own sanity?

Your first year as a parent is all about trying to stop the nerve-wrenching screams of your infant. It's a funny thing that during this time, everyone you know gives advice about sleep training, saying, "It's okay to let the baby cry. It doesn't do any harm." I guess that's true, unless your definition of "harm" includes me tearing my own ears off.

Here's what worked for me. Instead of adhering to the Ministry of Parenting guidelines on sleep training — which dictate that you either remain in the room only for short, predetermined intervals, or leave the baby alone altogether — I decided to play it by ear. My only goal at first was to get her used to falling asleep in the crib instead of on my lap. I didn't feel any need to insist that she simultaneously deal with the shock of being left all alone. I waited until she was clearly tired, and I put her in the crib. She cried, reached for me and tried to stand up, but I didn't give in. I did, however, help her to turn over to a more comfortable position, and I kept a hand on her back, much like when she's falling asleep on my shoulder. The crying eventually subsided to a whimper, and she drifted off to sleep. Elapsed time: 10 minutes!

That was only one part of the overall process, but it was a good start. She was learning the basic concept, and I walked away satisfied rather than stressed out.

Here's why that approach makes sense to me. There will be many, many times when you'll have to deny your baby something she wants: "You're crying because I took away the steak knife you stole off the table? Too bad, you can't have it. But you're reeeeeeally upset about it? Uhhh, sorry, still no."

On the other hand, there really aren't any times when you'll need

to abandon your baby. I think that's why a lot of parents either give up on, or don't even attempt the usual method of sleep training — it doesn't feel right, and they simply can't relate to it. I'm not saying it doesn't work, or that it will have detrimental effects on your baby, but it seems a bit clinical, even opportunistic: if you willingly put your 7-year-old child through an ordeal so horrifying as to make her scream and cry her eyes out for 45 minutes straight, she'll likely spend her adult life in therapy. Your 7-month-old, however, isn't going to remember that kind of trauma, so go right ahead!

I'm not trying to dissuade anyone from following professional advice. The standard method works fine for many people. I'm concerned with those parents who, when faced with sleep training as an all-or-nothing proposition, risk falling on the "nothing" side of the equation. Sleep training can make you feel like a bad parent, or it can help you learn how to be a better one. It's important to know what you're supposed to do, but it's equally important to assess your own situation and recognize when it's okay to break the rules. Theory and discipline are useful tools, but so are compassion and common sense.

After going through my modified routine with the baby a few times, something interesting began to happen. Sometimes after drinking a bottle at night she would lift her head off of my shoulder and squirm her way next to me on the couch. She would whimper, flail around, and finally settle into a satisfactory position and fall asleep — all of the things that babies are purported to do when left to cry themselves to sleep in the crib. I'd like to take credit for "training" her, but I'm starting to think she already knows what she's doing.

Tim Perrins is a part-time stay-at-home dad who lives with his wife and their occasionally tired baby in Park Slope, Brooklyn. More of his thoughts about babies and other things that confuse him can be found at www.RevoltOfTheImbeciles.blogspot.com.



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Twelve steps to get your child ready for kindergarten

BY DR. VALERIE ALLEN

It's the last of the long, hot summer days before your youngster sets out into the world beyond home: kindergarten. For the next 13 years, your child will spend as much, if not more, time in school than at home. School will be the springboard to learning, friendships, and ultimately, a career. Help your child prepare for this journey; get him ready for success; encourage him to enjoy discovery; and assist him to meet the challenges that are ahead.

Each youngster arrives at the door to kindergarten with a different level of preparedness. You want your son or daughter to be ready to learn. Some of the basic "readiness" skills are: number concepts, naming colors, identifying shapes, comparing things that are the same and different, speaking and listening vocabulary, and general information about self and the world in which he lives.

Here are 12 quick and easy at-home activities you can do with your child to enhance these skills:



1 Cut and paste pictures from magazines, name the items in each picture, and make up a funny sentence about each. This will help develop fine-motor skills and build vocabulary.

2 Trace around hands, feet, cookie cutters, jar covers, pop sticks, and other objects. This is another fine-motor activity and enhances creativity.

3 Line up items such as blocks, spoons, cups, and clothespins to create left-to-right progression and visual patterns. This improves visual perception, sequencing, and organization. It helps children find similarities and differences in objects. It also simulates the left-to-right eye movement used when actually reading books.

4 Start with a one-step direction, then a two-part, to help children learn how to listen and follow directions. You can help your child follow directions and complete tasks by using auditory and visual clues. For example, use the words, "first," "next," and "then" when breaking jobs into various steps. You can also hold up a finger as you state each step in the direction. Another helpful tip is to have the child repeat the tasks back to you. You can ask, "What are you going to do first? And then?"

5 Share your "junk" mail: open envelopes, sort by size, discuss the picture on the stamps, find letters or numbers, and circle them. Children can sort envelopes by size, color, and those with and without windows. They can sort the actual mail by size. You can use



a highlighter to find a certain letter, perhaps start with the first letter of your child's first name. He can cut the stamp out and paste them on pretend mail he can give to family members. You can have your child sort the stamps by their design — for example, flags, animals, flowers, people, and so on. You can extend this by allowing your child to put stamps on your outgoing mail, and let him purchase stamps at the post office.

6 After a trip to the store, post office, or church, have your child tell something about what he saw on the ride. To practice sequencing, ask: "What happened first?" and "Next?" Write it down, and let him draw a picture. This increases vocabulary and organization of time sequences. You can prompt your child by asking

which event happened first, for example, "Did we get dressed first or did we drive in the car first?" Also, ask about people he saw or buildings he passed along the way.

7 Write or draw in sand, flour, sugar, etc. Hint: keep it in a Ziploc bag for reuse. Shaving cream is also fun for art expression. This activity begins to stimulate an interest in both art and science. It develops recognition of tactile sensation and differences between solids and liquids. It encourages creativity and free expression. It can also be used to reinforce shapes, letters, and numbers. Additionally, this is another activity for fine-motor control.

8 Cut out pictures from magazines and classify them into groups of food, animals,

clothing, toys, sports, and transportation. Using scissors is an important learning tool, and requires fine-motor skills. This activity extends and enriches vocabulary. Organization, comparisons, and seeing similarities and differences are reinforced with this activity. You can also name colors and shapes and make up stories to go with the pictures. Two or three pictures can be placed next to each other to create the concept of sentence formation by putting words together.

9 Find upper- and lower-case letters in magazines or newspapers and match them with each other, spell out simple words, put them in alphabetical order, or cut and paste onto cards. Have your child group tall letters, such as b, d, l, and t, and letters with

hanging tails, such as g, j, p, q, and y.

10 Draw a picture on a postcard and mail it to a friend, relative, or neighbor. Drawing with pens, pencils, crayons, or markers uses slightly different motor skills. It develops appropriate grip technique, and steadies those small muscles in the hands and fingers. Cutting out a picture and using glue are two more ways to control fine-motor skills.

11 Draw a line or design with a thick marker along the edge of a piece of paper and use a hole punch to go over the design. Use light-weight cardboard from file folders or packing materials. Use a dark marker to make a different shape line along the four sides and have your child punch holes along the line. You can also draw with a pencil and have your child trace over it with a brightly colored marker. This is a fine-motor skill combined with eye-hand coordination. You can also discuss colors and ask where your child has seen this type of line. For example, a shoe string could be a straight line, a cookie is a circle, the kitten's ears look like triangles, and so on.

12 Encourage your child to speak in complete sentences, talk about the family pet, a television show, the clothes he has on, a visit to Grandma's, or plan an outing. Use three to five words to complete a sentence instead of a one-word response. Ask your child for more details to describe what he saw, or what something tasted like or felt like when it was touched.

What is most important? Visit the library every week and read to your child every day. Dedicate these weeks of summer to enjoy time with your child; make him your priority. Invest time in your child now and you will both reap rewards for a lifetime.

Dr. Valerie Allen is a child psychologist in private practice. She presents seminars for parents and professionals in the field of child development and has published two children's books, "Summer School for Smarties" and "Bad Hair, Good Hat, New Friends." Oh, yes, she has also raised six children.

Education

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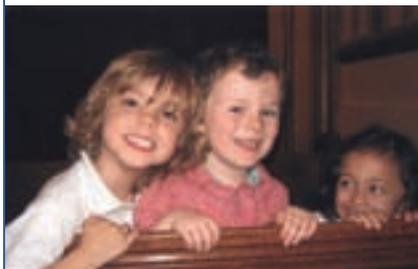
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Continued from page 20

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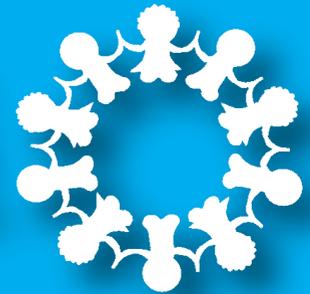
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Saint Albans is an independent Pre-K to Grade 8 school for boys and girls of all faiths. Offering an extensive educational program including study of French, religion, sports, music and art, the school strives to be a true community in every sense of the word. Small class size and emphasis on active learning provides each child with the skills to succeed and the courage to take intellectual risks.

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St. Bart's Playgroup

325 Park Avenue
212-378-0238 or www.stbarts.org/playgroup

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A teacher and teaching assistant are an interactive part of Playgroup, overseeing the curriculum and leading activities. Music is led once a week with the Preschool music teacher. Art Farm makes a monthly visit to Playgroup. Parents/caregivers are required to actively participate in order to assure the success of the program. Please visit our website for more information.

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214 West 142nd Street
212-368-6666 or www.stcharlesschoolcentral.org

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Education

DIRECTORY

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112 Ridge Street
212-472-4665 or www.sunnyskiespreschool.com

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490 Riverside Drive
212-870-6743 or www.wdsnyc.org

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Classes are scheduled on either Tuesday/Thursday mornings or Wednesday afternoons.

Twin Parks Montessori Schools

Central Park Montessori School
1 W. 91st St, NYC 10024
212-595-2000

Park West Montessori
435 Central Park West, NYC 10025
212-678-6072

Riverside Montessori
202 Riverside Dr., NYC 10025
212-665-1600 or www.twinparks.org

Twin Parks Montessori Schools (TPMS) are accredited by the American Montessori Society, the Middle States Commission and are affiliates schools of Columbia University. TPMS provide nurturing, child-centered settings for children ages 3 months-6 years. TPMS are committed to fostering a community of lifelong learners using proven Montessori methodology. Problem solving and creativity are emphasized along with age-appropriate academic subjects.

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Backpack weight

Finding your child the perfect bag for school

BY MONICA DICLERICO BROWN

Every year, that school supply list gets longer — and while those pencils, notebooks, and glue sticks are boring, my kids at least look forward to one thing on the list — picking out a cool, new backpack.

They're fun, and they're functional — but if you have a kid (like mine) who takes home everything at the end of the day (afraid to leave something at school that he might need) — you might need to take a

serious look at the gear your child is choosing, and how he is packing it up every day.

Why? Because heavy backpacks can wreak havoc on a child's joints, muscles, and spine, and the effects could be long-term.

Manhattan physical therapist Karena Wu, of ActiveCare Physical Therapy, warns parents of the injuries that can occur when children carry heavy backpacks to and from school every day.

"When a heavy weight, such as a backpack filled with books, is incorrectly placed on the shoulders, the

weight's force can pull a child backward," says Wu. "To compensate, a child may bend forward at the hips or round the back, which can cause the spine to compress unnaturally. The heavy weight might cause some kids to develop shoulder, neck, and back pain."

Wu says kids should carry no more than 10 to 15 percent of their body weight in their packs. For example, a child who weighs 80 pounds shouldn't be carrying around a bag that weighs any more than eight to 12 pounds — and much less if possible! If you're not sure what that

feels like, weigh the bag on a bathroom scale.

But it's not just the bag's weight that needs to be monitored; look at how your child wears the backpack. Some kids wear their packs too low, which Wu says also increases the stress on the spine. She says the pack should rest evenly in the middle of the back and not sag down to the buttocks.

And some kids like to wear their packs over one shoulder, causing them to compensate for the extra weight by leaning off to one side — which can result in upper and lower back pain and a strain on the shoulders and neck.

Prolonged improper use can also lead to poor posture, especially for girls and younger kids who are smaller and may be carrying loads that are not in proportion with their weight.

Purchasing a safe backpack

The right backpack — when worn properly — is handy and useful. And backpacks are a good choice for school (as opposed to shoulder bags, messenger bags, or purses), because the strongest muscles in the body — the back and the abdominal muscles — support their weight. But before you give in to your tween or teen who just has to have that trendy pack — read these recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics about selecting the right one. Look for:

- A lightweight pack that doesn't add a lot of weight to your child's load. (For example, even though leather packs look cool, they weigh more than traditional canvas backpacks.)

- Two wide, padded shoulder straps; straps that are too narrow can dig into shoulders.

- A padded back provides increased comfort and protects kids from being poked by sharp edges of objects (pencils, rulers, notebooks, etc.) inside the pack.

- A waist belt, which helps to distribute the weight more evenly across the body.

- Multiple compartments, which can help distribute the weight more evenly.

Some schools allow rolling backpacks, which are ideal for heavy loads. Check your school's safety regulations before buying one, because many schools don't permit them as they could be a tripping

hazard in the hallways. (They are also difficult to pull up stairs and roll through snow.)

Be wary of backpacks that have tight, narrow straps because they can dig into the shoulders and affect circulation and nerves. This can lead to numbness and weakness in the arms and hands.

And remember that to be worn correctly, the weight of a backpack should be evenly distributed.

Parents need to make sure the straps are tight enough for the pack to fit closely to the body.

School officials also warn of dangers to other children when some kids wear heavy backpacks:

- Students who carry large packs often aren't aware of how much space the packs take up and can hit others with their packs when turning around or moving through tight spaces, such as the aisles of the school bus.

- Kids are often injured when they trip over large packs or the packs fall on them.

- Carrying a heavy pack changes the way children walk and increases the risk of falling, particularly on stairs or other places where the backpack puts the student off balance.

Encourage your child to take some extra time at the end of the day to decide what comes home and what stays in the locker.

You can also make sure your kids aren't adding to their weight limit by removing laptops, cellphones, and video games.

And lastly, says Wu, there are ways to handle the backpack that can help avoid injuries:

"As with any heavy weight, they should bend at the knees and grab the pack with both hands when lifting a backpack to the shoulders," she says. "Try to make sure all the stuff they carry is distributed; use all of the compartments, and put the heavier items like textbooks, closest to the center of the back."

Most importantly, parents should watch their children handle their packs. If you see your child struggle to get the backpack on or off, or if the child is leaning forward consistently, it's too heavy.

And if your child has back pain or numbness or weakness in the arms or legs, talk to your doctor or physical therapist immediately.

Monica DiClerico Brown is a cable television news anchor and freelance writer. She lives in Pearl River, N.Y., with her husband and two children.

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MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SEREDA

Everything is new for a two-year-old

This month, Olivia turns 2. At this point in a toddler's life, most moms are thinking about how to overcome the "terrible twos." (We, however, got a head start when she was about 18 months.) But I now find myself thinking about new ways to stimu-

late my toddler.

We recently started practicing the alphabet, which she loves singing and got most of it within a week. Then, we moved on to learning colors. For her, everything is pink, so we'll have to come back to that in a while. Unfortunately, we don't have a TV, so learning through shows is not an option. One toddler I know can sit through a whole half-hour cartoon show, mesmerized. Not Olivia.

She's into it for about three minutes and then wants to do something else.

So now, I'm thinking of enrolling her in some type of class. A lot of my friends' kids take some sort of physical activity and the parents rave about how great it is. One toddler goes to Gymboree a few times a week, another does dance, and another does swimming. When I was pregnant with Olivia, I promised I would enroll her in swimming classes as soon as she was old enough, but then the idea of her being in a pool freaked me out, which is hilarious, because, obviously, the idea is that she learns to swim and learns water safety!

What I find more important than her taking classes, though, is being stimulated in her day-to-day routines. (Don't we all wish our routines stimulated us?) Daycare does a great job of that, but sometimes I feel like I'm not doing the best job at home. Is she bored? Does she miss her daycare friends?

Lately, I've been propping her up on the counter when I'm cooking; yesterday, she helped me make her oatmeal and boasted, "I made oatmeal!" She helps me clean up after meals and takes pride in putting her toys away. She feeds the animals and gives them their treats. She even sympathizes with them and tells us that they're hungry or tired — or my favorite, "Doggy wants juice, because it's hot!"

I realize more and more that doing everyday activities is just as stimulating to her as doing an art project in daycare. Whatever she's doing, she's learning and becoming more curious about the world around her. And as her mom, it's fascinating to watch the world through her eyes. Everything is new, exciting, and offers an opportunity to learn.



Knowledge is empowerment

How one
parent found
the right
school for
her child

BY VAL AMBROSE

New York City is a competitive, complicated, and fast-paced place — especially when it comes to early childhood education. As a parent, I want to give my son the best future possible, and I believe this begins with education. You see, I have a passion for education.

I've always valued education. Most of my work experience is even in higher education. However, when the time came to look for a school for my son, I began to see education from a whole new viewpoint — as a Manhattan mother. While applying for independent schools for Cameron, 4 years old at that time, I quickly realized how complex and

involved the decision-making and admissions process was.

I took charge by conducting an initial school search on my own and visiting dozens of schools — some multiple times! I made sure my son took both the Education Records

PERSONAL ESSAY

Bureau and Stanford-Binet standardized tests. Applications went to eight schools, five private and three selective public schools.

Other parents took note of my successful navigation of what they viewed as an intimidating and competitive undertaking. I found myself lending my expertise and knowledge to the other parents. I walked

them through the entire process from selecting the right schools for their children, to applying for admissions and even securing financial aid in some cases. I was not only successful in each case; I found I loved the experience of guiding parents in need.

The United States public school system has acknowledged changes must happen. However, change — especially for government implementation — takes time. Children who are school aged now are not likely to see the needed progress happen quickly enough for them to reap the benefits. Some addresses in Manhattan come with great schools. Many do not. As a result, parents must look elsewhere to ensure their children receive the excellent education they deserve. I urge parents to look into all options for education for their children, including charter and independent schools outside of their neighborhoods. My son Cameron ended up at a school in a different part of Manhattan than my work or our home, but he loves it there.

The school search and admission process is complicated — especially in this city! However, New Yorkers are tough and resourceful. I recommend that parents lean on that resilient and tenacious asset when it comes to their child's education. Check out the resources available to you. Gather some information. After all, knowledge is empowerment. Consider what is best for your child and your family as a whole. Your child deserves a quality education.

Val Ambrose is an education advisor and chief executive officer of iSearch Schools, www.iSearchSchools.com.





JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

My haircutting mishap for the ages

When my oldest daughter was 7 years old, she had the cutest little haircut. Her dirty-blond hair shaped her sweetheart face and her long locks fell down to her shoulders. She had bangs that completed the look and her hair was very easy to care for when properly cut. It was straight and on the thick side, but it grew incredibly fast.

So fast, in fact, that we had to have her bangs cut quite often. During a very busy workweek, I had come home one night to her pleas for a trim. She said her bangs were in her face during school that day and they were really starting to bother her. Our hairdresser was closed, and I was less than thrilled about the overpriced trims that became a frequent occurrence.

I had cut her bangs before, but they never came out quite as straight as when it was professionally done. I don't know what I was thinking. It was more likely I was exhausted and not thinking at all, because I crazily figured that trimming her bangs with a buzzer would be a good idea. Maybe I could get them totally straight that way, I thought out loud.

So I sat my daughter on the kitchen counter and started buzzing away. It was easy. Then I had another brilliant idea — maybe holding down her bangs across her head would flatten them out so I could see just how straight the cut would be. She was a very patient customer and sat quietly until I finished, not even fidgeting.

Ten minutes later, voila! I pulled off the straightest trim. It was clean and even, and looked fabulous — until I removed the hand that was flattening the top portion of her bangs. Then, much to my dismay, I realized the bangs were probably about an inch shorter than they should have been. Not only that, but I had accidentally shaved off her left eyebrow in the process.

She jumped down and ran to the mirror to look. Now, my daughter

thankfully has light-colored eyebrows, but you can certainly notice when one is missing. Yet, at age 7, I suppose, you might not notice, or at least not right away. She looked very carefully at her reflection and I said, “Your bangs look good, right?”

She didn't answer immediately and then said, “I guess so.”

But she kept looking and then mentioned that something looked weird.

The worst thing you can do after you complete a beauty blunder is not own up to it, but that's just what I did, because I thought that if she didn't notice, it wouldn't bother her as much as if she did. At that point, the damage was done. I couldn't grow her eyebrow back.

We began dinner and homework and she forgot about it until she took a shower and looked again at her eyebrowless face in the mirror.

“There's something wrong,” she said as she kept looking.

I had to acknowledge it now, because she was realizing that her face had changed, if only temporarily.

I told her I mistakenly took some of her eyebrow off with the buzzer. I told her I was really sorry, it didn't look that terrible, and it would grow back. At first, she was upset, but not angry. The next day her friends asked her what happened, and she told the whole story about how I had shaved off her eyebrow. Before we knew it, her eyebrow grew back in, and she forgot about the incident for a while.

I thought she forgot about it for good — until last year, when she brought it up, “Hey Mom, remember when you shaved off my eyebrow, and I had to go to school like that

until it grew back in?”

Oh, yeah, I certainly do.

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



Vacation for all

Sarasota's resort at Longboat Club allows families to define fun

BY STACEY ZABLE

As parents, we know that our children can often have different interests. On vacation, this can lead to a hard time finding the right resort to keep everyone happy. A recent trip to the Resort at Longboat Key Club in Sarasota, Fla. proved just the right mix of sports and pampering for my family of four.

My oldest "super-girly" daughter of 14 has discovered the luxury of the spa experience, and she and I enjoyed our time together at the 9,000-square-foot Island House Spa. She was donning that spa robe and sipping fruit-infused mineral water like she had found her nirvana.

We booked the "Couples Massage" room, so that we could enjoy our massages side-by-side. She went with the "Sugar & Spice and Everything Nice Massage" from the "Kids at the Island" treatment menu, where a 50-minute massage using Whoopie white velvet buttercream shea butter made her feel truly indulgent. The "Tropical Island Paradise" 50-minute massage was just what was needed for me to kick-off the stress-free weekend.

More wellness-oriented fun came in the form of a 60-minute stretch class the next morning on the beach. It was the perfect way to start our

Other local attractions

The 410-acre resort is located on the barrier island of Longboat Key, a 15-minute drive from Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, and within a short distance of many of Sarasota's family-friendly attractions, including the Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium.

The Ringling Campus, which includes the magnificent Venetian-inspired home of John and Mable Ringling, the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art,

and the Circus Museum, is a 15-minute drive away. Kids will love the "world's largest miniature circus," which took 50 years to complete and is housed at the Tibbals Learning Center.

A five-minute shuttle ride from the resort lands you at St. Armands Circle, a shopping area filled with boutiques, restaurants, and more than one ice cream shop.

For more on Sarasota's attractions, go to visitsarasota.org.

day. The resort offers an extensive amount of fitness classes including yoga, water aerobics, body sculpting, spinning, and more. The minimum age is 12, so budding teens on up can join mom and dad at the Mind and Motion Studio, or at a class at the beach.

As my teen and I were spending the rest of our time underneath umbrellas poolside or on the resort's beautiful, wide, powder-white sand beach, my husband and 11-year-old were taking full advantage of the tennis and golf facilities. The impressive \$4.5 million award-winning Tennis Gardens opened in 2009 and includes 20 Har-Tru clay courts. They took a lesson with a pro, who was equally good with my beginner tween tennis player as he was with my intermediate-level husband.

Children's clinics are also available and are segmented by ability and age. Tennis is complimentary and unlimited at the resort, so those who love the sport can play all day and night with five lighted courts.

Another day for this sports duo was dedicated to golf. The resort has the 18-hole Islandside Golf Course and the Harbourside Golf Course, which consists of three nine-hole courses. The first time my daughter actually played on a golf course proved to be a true bonding day for her and dad, starting with a lesson, nine holes, and time driving the golf cart.

The resort itself is family-friendly

with newly renovated spacious accommodations featuring washers and dryers and either full-service kitchens or kitchenettes. A supermarket is only a five-minute drive, so families can stock their fridge with snacks, breakfast, and lunch items, and then splurge on dinner out. The two-bedroom suites are perfect for families of four or larger, with two full bathrooms and a living room with a pullout couch. An added bonus is the large balcony, and ours faced the lagoon, where we spied dolphins playing and manatees seemingly kissing the day away.

All of the six resort restaurants offer kids' menus and the ability to tweak from the regular menu to make younger guests happy.

A complimentary shuttle takes you around the expansive resort, making it easy for families to spend time doing activities geared toward each child's interests. Of course, the best part is meeting up at night for dinner and hearing about the day's adventures.

Call the Resort at Longboat Key Club at (800) 237-8821 for package choices and rates or visit longboatkeyclub.com.

Stacey Zable is an award-winning veteran travel writer and family travel expert who has written about destinations, resorts, and cruise lines around the world. Her favorite trips are those that she shares with her husband and two daughters. Send travel questions and comments to Zable at info@familytraveltrails.com.



Calendar

AUGUST



Groove along to the tunes

Rock out with the kids at a concert at Riverside Park South on Aug. 8.

The free show will feature Joanie Leeds and the Nightlights, a kindie-rock band celebrating its new album, *Bandwagon*, and is part of the New York Parks Department's annual outdoor arts and culture festival.

Kids can groove to the tunes, including "Freeze Dance," during

which Leeds will offer prizes to all of the awesome dancers, and "Blast Off," one of the band's most requested tunes. There will also be a raffle for copies of *Bandwagon*.

The free show is on Aug. 8 at 10:30 a.m.

Riverside Park South (Riverside Boulevard between W. 65th and W. 72nd streets in Manhattan, www.nycgovparks.org/parks/riversidepark-south).

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THURS, AUG. 1

Summer in the Square: Union Square, E. 14th Street and Park Avenue South; unionsquarenyc.org/summer-in-the-square; 7 am–6 pm; Free.

Union Square presents Summer in the Square, where you can enjoy story times, character appearances, music, and more.

Young Dancemakers Company Free Performance: Ailey Camp, 21 Jumel Pl. between 168th Street and Amsterdam Avenue; (718) 329-7300, X 3358; aliceteirstein@gmail.com; www.symphonyspace.org; 1 pm; Free.

A company of 18 exuberant, ethnically diverse high school dancers and choreographers, under the watchful eye of director Alice Teirstein, gather for the 18th year of Young Dancemakers Company, and perform their own works.

Cross-stitch circle: New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West between W. 76th and W. 77th streets; www.nyhistory.org; 3:30–5:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Beginning cross stitchers and younger children will learn the basic stitch and create a bookmark with their new skill.

FRI, AUG. 2

Isadora Duncan Children's Dance Class: Fort Tryon Park, Broadway and Dongan Place; (212) 795-1388; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/08/02/childrens-dance-class; 10 am; Free.

This dance class uses skipping, running, and leaping, which makes it a great activity for children ages 4-10.

The Comedy Music Circus: Seward Park, Essex St., between E. Broadway and Grand Street; (646) 395-4186; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/08/02/summer-in-seward-park-puppets-music-clowns; 10 am; Free.

Part of Summer in Seward Park, kids up to age 10 can dance and sing along with Sammie & Todie as they present



Ferry to the French carnival

Governors Island is home to rare, vintage French carnival rides, games, and a pipe organ at the Fête Paradiso festival on weekends through Sept. 29.

The carnival will feature a range of attractions from the late

19th and 20th centuries that the public can ride and enjoy, including a bicycle carousel and flying swings.

Also, a 1930 children's carousel has been repurposed into a music kiosk, where performers entertain visitors with pe-

riod music and side show performances.

Fete Paradiso, Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 29, 10:30 am-6:30 pm, free admission, rides are \$3 each.

Governors Island, Nolan Park; (646) 241-2670; www.nps.gov/gois.

The Comedy Magic Circus.

Kids Junk Orchestra: Sara D. Roosevelt Park, E. Houston Street to Canal Street between Chrystie and Forsyth streets; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/08/02/kids-junk-orchestra; 10:30 am; Free.

Kids Junk Orchestra encourages kids to tap into their imagination and creativity through the use of buckets, pots, and pans. Presented as part of Summer Stage Kids.

Intrepid Free Summer Movie Series: Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 (46th Street and 12th Avenue); (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 7:30 pm; Free.

The Intrepid Summer Movie Series, presented by Dr. Pepper, returns this summer with a selection of entertaining and family-friendly films. Members of the public are invited to bring lawn chairs, picnic baskets and blankets to the Intrepid Museum to view a popular movie outdoors, free of charge, on a

huge inflatable screen on the Flight Deck of the aircraft carrier. Tonight's showing is "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone."

"Madagascar 3": Hudson River Park, Pier 46 at Charles Street; www.riverflicks.com/08.02.13.html; 8:30 pm; Free.

Bring a blanket, pick a spot, and settle in for a movie. Part of Hudson River Park's RiverFlicks, enjoy a screening of "Madagascar 3" with amazing views of the Hudson. Kids get a free popcorn as well.

SAT, AUG. 3

Summer Streets 2013: Park Ave., Lafayette through E. 72nd streets; www.nyc.gov/html/dot/summerstreets/html/home/home.shtml; 7 am–1 pm; Free.

Annual event hosted by the NYC DOT where residents and visitors can enjoy 7 miles of traffic free streets, going from

the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge up to Central Park. Enjoy zip lining, rock climbing, art installations, and so much more.

Arty hours: The Lawn, The Highline at W. 24th Street; (212) 206-9922; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am–noon; Free.

Go on a scavenger hunt or create your own works of art out of planks, nuts and bolts.

"Sesame Street" Screening: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 11 am; Free.

Follow Abby and Elmo down the rabbit hole in this enchanting reimagining of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland." Reservations are strongly recommended.

Bot-building workshop: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100;

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www.sonywondertechlab.com; 11 am; \$10.

Using motors, screws, and recycled materials you'll learn how to assemble and power-up your very own personalized robot to take home. Reservations of up to four children aged 8 and up can be made by calling the number listed and selecting option 3. Reservations can be made Monday through Friday beginning two weeks prior to the event date.

Skate Truck NYC: Skater's Circle, W. 72nd Street entrance, Central Park; www.skatetrucknyc.com/Home_Page.html; noon–8 pm; \$15 (two hours) \$20 (four hours) \$25 (all day).

The city's first mobile Rental Roller Skating attraction, providing safety-certified roller skating equipment, rental skates and inline skates, to skaters of any age, for both local New Yorkers and visitors alike.

"Planet 51" Screening: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 12:15 pm and 3 pm; Free.

When Chuck the astronaut lands on a distant planet filled with little green people, he is surprised to discover that humans are not alone in the galaxy. Rated PG. Reservations are strongly recommended.

Families and Folk Art: American Folk Art Museum, 2 Lincoln Sq. Columbus Avenue and 66th Street; (212) 265-1040; rosen@folkartmuseum.org; www.folkartmuseum.org; 1–2 pm; Free.

This interactive, intergenerational program is offered the first Saturday of every month from 1 to 2 pm. The program introduces children ages 4 to 12 and their accompanying adults to folk art through discussion-based tours in the galleries followed by hands-on art making activities inspired by objects in the museum.

Young Dancemakers Company



Photo by Sarah Pospiech

Museum as muse

Teens can channel their inner artist throughout August at "Framing the Phrase: Creative Writing in the Galleries," a workshop at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

The workshop, for teens in grades 9-12, explores modern and contemporary art and allows teens to respond to works featured in the museum's summer exhibitions, contribute to in-depth group conversations, and produce sketches and creative

writing. The selective workshop is facilitated by a professional writer and educator and concludes with a reading for family and friends. Download the application at guggenheim.org/teenprograms.

Workshop, Aug. 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, and 15, 1-4 pm, \$200 (\$175 for members).

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. between E. 88th and 89th streets; (212) 423-3500, www.guggenheim.org.

Free Performance: Ailey Citigroup Theater, 405 W. 55 St. at Ninth Avenue; (718) 329-7300, X 3358; aliceteirstein@gmail.com; 7:30 pm; Free.

A company of 18 exuberant, ethnically diverse high school dancers and choreographers, under the watchful eye of director Alice Teirstein, gather for the 18th

year of Young Dancemakers Company, and perform their own works.

SUN, AUG. 4

Summer Sunday Family Tours:

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212)

423-3500; guggenheim.org/families; 10:30 am–noon; \$15 (per family), \$10 (members), Free (family level members).

Visitors explore the Guggenheim's summer exhibitions through family-oriented tours that incorporate conversation and creative hands-on gallery activities. Registration is required. Best for kids ages 5-12.

Skate Truck NYC: 12–8 pm. Skater's Circle. See Saturday, Aug. 3.

Just drop in: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 1–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Museum educators lead creative, interactive projects for visitors that explore highlights of the exhibition *New Harmony: Abstraction between the Wars, 1919–1939*. For ages 3–10.

Open studio for families: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; www.guggenheim.org; 1–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Families are able to stop by the Sackler Center's Studio Art Lab and create a work of art inspired by the Guggenheim summer exhibitions. For kids ages 5–14.

MON, AUG. 5

"Little Red's Hood": Morningside Park, W. 110 to W. 123 streets, between Manhattan and Morningside avenues; www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/puppetmobile; 10:30 am; Free.

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre's Puppetmobile puts a fresh take on this classic fairy tale.

Framing the Phrase: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; teenprograms@guggenheim.org; guggenheim.org/teenprograms; 1–4 pm; \$200, \$175 (members).

Teens in grades nine through 12 explore modern and contemporary art and respond to works featured in the



An improved 'Treehouse'

Visitors are invited to play with, dance around, contemplate, or simply experience the imaginative installations at the FIGMENT 2013 Mini-golf Course, an interactive sculpture garden. The artist-designed mini-golf course is open for play Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 29 on Governors Island.

The centerpiece of the installations is the Treehouse, which has

been expanded for its third summer on Governors Island. The theme of the mini-golf course is "State of the Art," where the innovative uses of technology, new and old, push the boundaries of mini-golf while fostering riveting game play.

FIGMENT 2013 Mini-golf Course, Saturdays and Sundays through Sept. 29, 10 am–6:30 pm, free.

Governors Island, Parade Ground; (646) 241-2670; www.nps.gov/gois.

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museum's summer exhibitions through in-depth group conversations, sketching, and creative writing, facilitated by a professional writer and educator. The program concludes with a reading for family and friends. The application process is selective.

Making Books Sing: Bloomingdale Library, 150 W. 100th St., between Amsterdam and Columbus avenues; (212) 222-8030; 3:30 pm; Free.

Making Books Sing's new touring production "My City Park," for children ages 3-10. When Milo finds out that his favorite city park is going to be torn down and replaced with a shopping mall, he seeks out the help of his two best friends, Odessa the Owl and Bucky the Squirrel.

TUES, AUG. 6

Fishing: Charles A Dana Discovery Center, Cental Park North and Fifth Avenue; (212) 860-1370; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am 3 pm; Free.

Children get the basics of catch and release fishing.

Kids Junk Orchestra: Columbus Park, Worth Street and Mulberry Street; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 11:30 am; Free.

Dennis Dove, performs his interactive brand of music for children of all ages.

Framing the Phrase: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Monday, Aug. 5.

WED, AUG. 7

Mr. Chris: Seward Park, Grand and Essex streets; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am-11:30 am; Free.

The artist brings his blend of high energy and interactive music to the stage.

THURS, AUG. 8

Fishing: Charles A Dana Discovery Center, Cental Park North and Fifth Avenue; (212) 860-1370; www.nycgovparks.org; 10 am 3 pm; Free.

Children get the basics of catch and release fishing.

Joanie Leeds and The Nightlights: Riverside Park South, Riverside Drive between 65th and 72nd streets; (212) 408-0219; www.nycgovparks.org/events/summer_on_the_hudson; 10:30 am; Free.

Joanie Leeds and The Nightlights will present a free, outdoor, all-ages show as part of Summer on the Hudson.

Zany Umbrella Circus: Alfred E. Smith Playground, Catherine Slip and Cherry Street; summerstage.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Juggling, acrobatics and much more. Bring a blanket or chair to sit on.



AcroArts Productions

Circuses are coming!

Kids will go crazy for Disney's International Contemporary Circus Festival coming to SummerStage this month.

Finland's famed Race Horse Company, a contemporary circus troupe, will stage the American premiere of its signature work, "Petit Mal" on Aug. 19. The performance will include a fusion of acrobatics, breakdancing, hip-

hop, and martial arts. It is recommended for ages 10 and older.

Bindlestiff Family Cirkus hosts Circus Now!, an evening filled with artistry, courage, and athleticism, on Aug. 21.

Performances on Aug. 19, 7-9 pm, and Aug. 21, 7-9:30 pm, Free.

Marcus Garvey Park amphitheater [Madison Avenue and 124th Street; (212) 860-1394, www.nycparks.org/parks/marcusgarveypark].

Framing the Phrase: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Monday, Aug. 5.

Making Books Sing: Inwood Library, 4790 Broadway near Dyckman Street; (212) 942-2445; 3 pm; Free.

Making Books Sing's new touring production "My City Park," for children ages 3-10. When Milo finds out that his favorite city park is going to be torn

down and replaced with a shopping mall, he seeks out the help of his two best friends, Odessa the Owl and Bucky the Squirrel.

FRI, AUG. 9

"Jumanji": Bellevue South Park, W. 26th Street and Second Avenue; (718) 965-8935; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Grab a blanket or a chair and enjoy this Robin Williams movie.

"Rise of the Guardians": Hudson River Park, Pier 46 at Charles Street; www.riverflicks.com/08.09.13.html; 8:30 pm; Free.

Bring a blanket, pick a spot, and settle in for a movie. Part of Hudson River Park's RiverFlicks, enjoy a screening of "Rise of the Guardians" with amazing views of the Hudson. Kids get a free popcorn as well.

SAT, AUG. 10

Summer Streets 2013: 7 am-1 pm. See Saturday, Aug. 3.

Woolworth's Gargoyles: Skyscraper Museum, 39 Battery Pl. at Nassau Street; (212) 968-1961; education@skyscraper.org; www.skyscraper.org/home; 10:30-11:45 am; \$5 per child, Free (for members).

During a quick tour of the exhibition "Woolworth Building at 100," kids will seek out the Woolworth Building's details of fanciful architectural ornament and then create their own sculptures. Best for ages 3-10. Please RSVP by email.

Hands-on Nano Demo: SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 1 pm; Free.

Just HOW small is small? Uncover the world of nanoscience and nanotechnology while participating in hands-on activities that explore the properties, structures, materials and scale of this important field of science. All activities require general admission to the Lab. Best suited for ages 7 and up. Reservations strongly recommended.

SUN, AUG. 11

Summer Sunday Family Tours: 10:30 am-noon. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

Just drop in: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

Open studio for families: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

MON, AUG. 12

Little Club Heads: Morningside Park, W. 122nd Street and Washington Avenue; www.summerstage.org; 10:30 am; Free.

A dance party for children 12 months to 10 years old.

Framing the Phrase: Creative writing in the galleries: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Monday, Aug. 5.

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TUES, AUG. 13

"Little Red's Hood": Riverside Park, Riverside Drive between W. 72 Street and St. Clair Place; www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/puppetmobile; 11 am; Free.

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre's Puppetmobile puts a fresh take on this classic fairy tale.

Framing the Phrase: Creative writing in the galleries: 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Monday, Aug. 5.

WED, AUG. 14

Making Books Sing: New Amsterdam Library, 9 Murray St. between Broadway and Church Street; (212) 732-8186; 2 pm; Free.

Making Books Sing's new touring production "My City Park," for children ages 3-10. When Milo finds out that his favorite city park is going to be torn down and replaced with a shopping mall, he seeks out the help of his two best friends, Odessa the Owl and Bucky the Squirrel.

THURS, AUG. 15

Framing the Phrase: 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Monday, Aug. 5.

SAT, AUG. 17

Skate Truck NYC: Skater's Circle, W. 72nd Street entrance, Central Park; www.skatetrucknyc.com/Home_Page.html; 12–8 pm; \$15 (two hours) \$20 (four hours) \$25 (all day).

The city's first mobile Rental Roller Skating attraction, providing safety certified roller skating equipment, rental roller skates and inline skates, to skaters



Pizza pie high

The little ones are in for a saucy treat at Kidville on Aug. 20 at its Upper West Side location and on Aug. 18 and 22 at its Upper East Side location.

The Pizza & Play concert series will feature performances by the Kidville's Rockin' Railroad Band (with a new set list each week), open play in the state-of-the-art children's gym, and a pizza party. Tickets are available on eventbrite.com.

Concert and pizza party, Aug. 18, 20, and 22, \$15.

Kidville [163 E. 84th St. between Lexington and Third avenues, (212) 772-8435; and 466 Columbus Ave. between W. 83rd and 82nd streets, (212) 362-7792; www.kidville.com].

of any age, for both local New Yorkers and visitors alike.

SUN, AUG. 18

Skate Truck NYC: 12–8 pm. Skater's Circle. See Saturday, Aug. 17.

Just drop in: 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

Open studio for families: 1–4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

MON, AUG. 19

Race Horse Company performance: Marcus Garvey Park, Madison Avenue between E. 120th and E. 124th streets; 7–9:30 pm; Free.

Bring the family for a fantastic evening under the stars where they can enjoy

Finland's famed Race Horse Company as it premiere its signature work, "Petit Mal," a fusion of acrobatics, break-dancing, Hip-Hop, Chinese pole and martial arts. Recommended for ages 10 and up.

TUES, AUG. 20

Stroller tour: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Ave. at 89th Street; (212) 423-3500; strollertours@guggenheim.org; 3–4 pm; \$15, Free (for family level members).

Led by museum educator and mom Jackie Delamatre, one-hour tours of the Guggenheim's summer exhibitions are given for caregivers and their babies. Single strollers and front baby carriers only. Registration required.

Race Horse Company performance: 7–9:30 pm. Marcus Garvey Park. See Monday, Aug. 19.

WED, AUG. 21

Circus Now: Marcus Garvey Park, Madison Avenue between E. 120th and E. 124th streets; 7–9 pm; Free.

Acrobats, aerialists, and break dancers create an exciting evening of artistry, expression, courage, and athleticism. Recommended for ages 10 and up.

THURS, AUG. 22

Making Books Sing: Fort Washington Library, 535 W. 179th St. between St. Nicholas and Audubon avenues; (212) 927-3533; 3 pm; Free.

Making Books Sing's new touring production "My City Park," for children ages 3-10. When Milo finds out that his favorite city park is going to be torn down and replaced with a shopping mall, he seeks out the help of his two best friends, Odessa the Owl and Bucky the Squirrel.

FRI, AUG. 23

Intrepid Free Summer Movie Series: Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, Pier 86 (at 46th Street and 12th Avenue); (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 7:30 pm; Free.

The Intrepid Summer Movie Series, presented by Dr. Pepper, returns this summer with a selection of entertaining and family-friendly films. Members of the public are invited to bring lawn chairs, picnic baskets and blankets to the Intrepid Museum to view a popular movie outdoors, free of charge, on a huge inflatable screen on the Flight Deck of the aircraft carrier. Tonight's showing is "The Karate Kid" (1984).

SAT, AUG. 24

Sidewalk Art: Skyscraper Museum, 39 Battery Pl., at Nassau Street; (212)

Celebrating with sculpture

Kids will get a taste of architecture at The Skyscraper Museum on Aug. 10.

Attendees will tour the museum's "Woolworth Building @ 100" exhibit before creating their own sculptures inspired by the Woolworth Building's architectural elements, such as gargoyles resembling monkeys and dragons. The event is geared toward ages 3-10. Reserve your child's spot at education@skyscraper.org.

Workshop, Aug. 10, 10:30-11:45 am, \$5 per child.

The Skyscraper Museum [39 Battery Pl. between Little West Street and First Place; (212) 968-1961, www.skyscraper.org].



968-1961; education@skyscraper.org; www.skyscraper.org/home.htm; 10:30-11:45 am; \$5 per child, Free (for members).

Kids will sketch plans of buildings they know, such as their home or school, then use chalk to draw their buildings on the sidewalk in front of the Museum. All ages. RSVP by email.

SUN, AUG. 25

Just drop in: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

Open studio for families: 1-4 pm. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. See Sunday, Aug. 4.

FRI, AUG. 30

Lunchtime Listen: West Harlem Piers Park, Marginal Street and W. 125th Street; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/07/26/summer-on-the-hudson-lunchtime-listen; 12-1 pm; Free.

Pack a picnic and enjoy the music for a summer lunchtime treat.

SAT, AUG. 31

Arty Hours: 10 am-noon. The Lawn on the Highline. See Saturday, Aug. 3.

Basic Canoeing: Harlem Meer, Central Park, 110th Street and Lenox Avenue; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/08/31/basic-canoeing; noon; Free.

Kids ages 8 and up learn the basics of canoeing from urban park rangers.

LONG-RUNNING

Red Grooms Exhibit: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; \$11 admission fee.

Thought-provoking and whimsical for adults and children alike, the exhibition reflects the city's frenetic energy and exuberance. Collateral material provides children and families with a behind-the-scenes look at the artist's planning and conceptualization of his work. The specially selected pieces for this exhibit help children understand the many different ways of seeing their world and environment.

CityParks Golf: Eugene McCabe Park, 120th Street and Park Avenue; www.cityprksfoundation.org; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 am-10:30 am and 10:30 am-noon, Now - Fri, Aug. 23; Free.

Children 6 to 16 learn how to play golf.

Frogs, A Chorus of Colors: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org



Photo by Paul Kohnik

See a kickin' ice sculpture

This year, Christmas comes to Radio City Music Hall on Aug. 13.

Santa Claus and the Rockettes will present a live *Christmas Spectacular*-themed ice sculpture carving by Okamoto Studios under Radio City's marquee. Then, the Rockettes will distribute all-nat-

ural, cranberry-apple flavored ice pops throughout the city on a *Christmas Spectacular*-themed food truck. (The truck can be tracked at facebook.com/radiocitychristmas and radiocitychristmas.com.) It will make stops at Radio City Music Hall, Bryant Park, Madison Square Park, the

Beacon Theatre, Union Square, and Park Slope, among other locations.

"Christmas in August," Aug. 13 at 11 am, free.

Radio City Music Hall [1260 Ave. of the Americas between West 50th and West 51st streets; (800) 745-3000, www.radiocitychristmas.com/ncl].

org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; Suggested admission \$19, \$10.50 children, \$14.50 seniors and students.

Back by popular demand, this exhibition features more than 150 live frogs, including ten species of colorful dart-poison frogs, and explores the diverse world of these complex amphibians by introducing visitors to their biology and evolution, their importance to ecosystems, and the threats they face in the wild.

Art of the Brick: Discovery Times Square, 226 W. 44th St., between Seventh and Eighth avenues; (866) 987-9692; www.discoverytsx.com/exhibitions/art-of-the-brick; Daily, 10 am-9 pm; Now - Sat, Aug. 31; \$22.50, \$19.50 (seniors over 65), \$17.50 (kids 4-12).

This exhibition by artist Nathan Sawaya is a critically acclaimed collection of inspiring works of art made exclusively from LEGO® bricks.

Civil War Scavenger Hunt: New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West between W. 76th and W. 77th streets; www.nyhistory.org; Tuesdays Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am-6 pm, Fridays, 10 am-8 pm, Sundays, 11 am-5 pm, Now - Sat, Aug. 31; \$15, \$12 (Seniors/Educators/Active Military), \$10 (students), \$5 (kids 5-13), Free (kids 4 and under).

This hunt takes families around all four floors of the New York Historical Society to find hidden Civil War objects. Print

out the hunt online, and bring it in for one free children's admission!

Catch and Release Fishing: Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, Central Park North and Fifth Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2013/08/02/catch-release-fishing; Daily, 10 am-3 pm; Now - Sat, Aug. 31; Free.

Try your hand at fishing in the Harlem Meer with the kids. Poles are provided. Anything you catch must be released.

Le Carousel: Bryant Park, 42nd Street and Avenue of the Americas; (212) 768-4242; www.bryantpark.org; Daily, 11 am-8 pm; Now - Mon, Sept. 30; \$2 per ride, 10 rides for \$15.

This lovely French inspired carousel offers kids (and adults!) plenty of fun right in Midtown, featuring brightly colored animals and French cabaret music. Weather permitting.

"Potted Potter": Little Shubert Theatre, 422 W. 42nd St. between Ninth and 10th avenues; www.pottedpotter.com/nyc; Mondays and Tuesdays, 7:30 pm, Thursdays, 2 and 7:30 pm, Fridays, 8 pm, Saturdays, 2, 5, and 8 pm, Now - Sun, Sept. 1; \$39.99 and up.

This show takes on the ultimate challenge of condensing, or "potting" all seven Harry Potter books into 70 mad-cap minutes, aided only by multiple costume changes, brilliant songs, ridiculous props and a generous helping of Hogwarts magic. The show also invites audi-

ences to engage with a real life game of Quidditch.

Bryant Park Piano: Bryant Park, 42nd Street and Avenue of the Americas; (212) 768-4242; www.bryantpark.org; Mondays - Wednesdays and Fridays, 12:30-2:30 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 16; Free.

Clap your hands, stamp your feet, during these performances of ragtime, jazz, boogie-woogie, and stride piano in Bryant Park's upper terrace.

Little New Yorkers: New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West between W. 76th and W. 77th streets; www.nyhistory.org; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30 pm, Now - Fri, Aug. 30; Free with museum admission.

Each class includes story readings, time with historic toys, free exploration, a special Little New-Yorkers hello song, and a related craft project. For ages 3-5.

Fete Paradiso: Battery Maritime Building, Governor's Island Ferry, South and Whitehall streets; www.feteparadiso.com; Saturdays and Sundays, 10:30 am-6:30 pm, Now - Sun, Sept. 29; \$3 (each ride or game).

The museum-quality collection includes attractions from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as carousels, flying swings and a pipe organ, available for the public to ride. Admission to the Festival is free; rides and games cost \$3 each.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Booby-trapped by big-food companies?

Think about your top-three favorite foods. Chances are they're not produce you just pulled out of a Community Supported Agriculture box, or some plain brown rice. If you're being honest, they're likely something sugary, salty, fatty, and processed you grab from your grocery store's middle aisle or freezer.

In his recently released book, "Salt Sugar Fat," New York Times reporter Michael Moss describes how big-food companies exploit our built-in cravings for salt, sugar, and fat by creating foods designed to hook you. He also suggests food scientists and company executives are aware that these foods light up the same pleasure centers in our brains that cocaine does.

This is bad enough for adults, but what about our kids? According to Moss, the food marketing preys in particular on children and their busy, well-meaning parents.

Parents should be highly vigilant when they go to the grocery store, according to Angela Douge, MPH, RDN, assistant director of the Nutrition Science Department at Dominican University in River Forest, Ill., and the mother of a 7-year-old son.

"They're on the battlefield," she said. "The products, the coloring of



the boxes, the placement on shelves are all done to get into their pocket."

Innovation and choice

Keep in mind that food companies are in business to make a profit and in order to do so, it's essential they remain innovative. Their primary mission isn't health; it's making products that sell consistently. You may not buy many processed meats or flavored taco chips, for

instance, but there certainly is consumer demand.

Consumers clearly want choices. Would you like to return to an era when stores stocked a limited variety of foods? Lettuce was iceberg; bread, rice, and pasta were white; and many of the convenience foods we take for granted — such as hummus, salsa, and string cheese — had not yet been introduced.

Something else to consider: have the food companies laced their products with an irresistible combination of flavors that take over our eating behavior? Or could some of us want to blame "something" for our behavior?

It appears the food industry is making a sincere effort to be part of the solution. Many companies have gotten the message that things need to change and have introduced healthier items to their portfolios.

So, do you and your children need to avoid so-called junk food? It's a personal decision you'll have to make. For many, it's about being careful, while knowing what the food giants do that could compel you to overindulge.

Christine M. Palumbo, RDN, is a Naperville, Ill.-based nutritionist on the faculty of Benedictine University. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.



California Strawberry Coconut Pick-Me-Up

This refreshing strawberry drink is perfect for sipping on a warm and sunny day. Makes four (12-ounce) servings.

INGREDIENTS:

4 cups hulled California strawberries, frozen
1½ cups coconut water
1/3 cup orange juice
Sliced California strawberries, for garnish

DIRECTIONS: Place all ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses, garnish with sliced strawberries, and serve immediately.

NUTRITION FACTS: 105 calories; 0.5 g fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 99 mg sodium; 26 g carbohydrate; 5 g fiber; 2 g protein

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Recipes to cool down the family

What a hot summer it has been thus far! With that said, I have a feeling this August is going to be very hot and humid!

The higher temperatures climb, the less appealing it is to turn on the oven or cook something over a hot stove.

What better way to beat the summer heat than with a few of my favorite summer De-Lyssious “cool” recipes? Fruits and vegetables that you think of as “summer” foods are usually those that cool you naturally. Here are some summer recipe suggestions that are virtually fat-free, sugar-free and completely hassle-free for us busy moms. These recipes will be a hit around the pool, out on the patio, or under a beach umbrella. A couple of these great dishes and a cool breeze is all you need to make a hot, lazy day just about perfect. Here are my picks for the coolest foods to enjoy during the dog days of summer.

Make a no-calorie summer cooler. Some of my favorite organic spas feature tall pitchers of fruit- and vegetable-infused water in their reception areas, and I just love these herbal, peppery refreshers. Make your own by combining any of the following in a tall pitcher: lemon wedges, cucumber slices, watermelon pieces, mint leaves, cilantro leaves, or fennel fronds. Chill the mixture for at least a few hours for the flavors to infuse, then enjoy throughout the day for a sugarfree refresher that doesn't even need Splenda. My favorite is water with cucumber slices. It's so tasty that now I have my boys asking for “flavored” water.

Tomato-and-watermelon salad. This surprising salad com-

bination will please your palate. The bright hues and refreshing flavors make tomato-and-watermelon salad the perfect summer side dish. Combine sweet, juicy watermelon chunks with fresh tomato, onion, and a red wine vinaigrette for a salad that is the essence of summer.

Summery parfait. Yogurt is a creamy treat that won't derail your diet. Try layering yogurt with granola and berries for a sophisticated, summery parfait. It also looks very pretty if you're setting the table.

The summer Popsicle. What kid can resist a frozen pop on a hot summer day? Make a homemade version with natural fruit juice.

Fresh fruit-filled Popsicles. Make your own by blending assorted summer

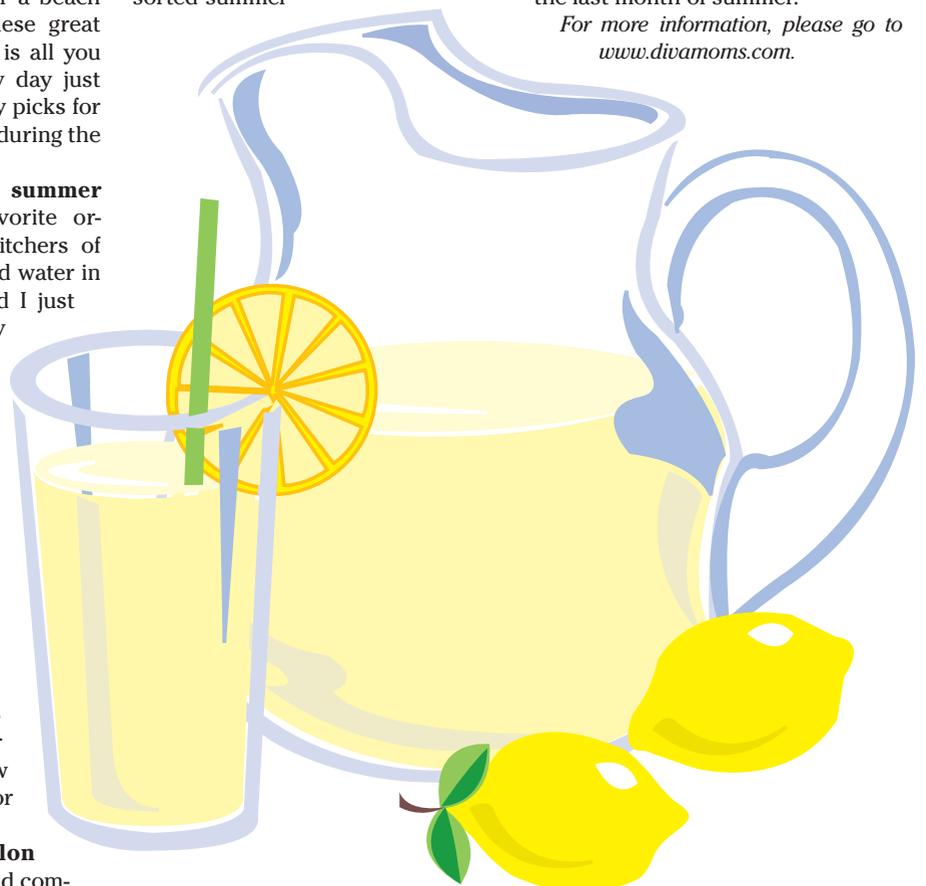
berries and sliced bananas with yogurt, then freezing the tasty mixture in small paper cups with Popsicle sticks. Have your kids help you; they love to watch the Popsicles freeze. Of course, the best part is eating them.

Classic lemonade. When life gives you lemons, juice 'em and combine them with water, sugar, and mint for a classic summer beverage.

Frozen bananas and strawberries. Frozen bananas and strawberries are dipped in melted chocolate, rolled in pretzels, and frozen. These cool treats are great on a hot day!

I hope one or two of these recipes will brighten your summer! Before you know it, the kids will be back to school. Have a wonderful Labor Day weekend with your family and enjoy the last month of summer.

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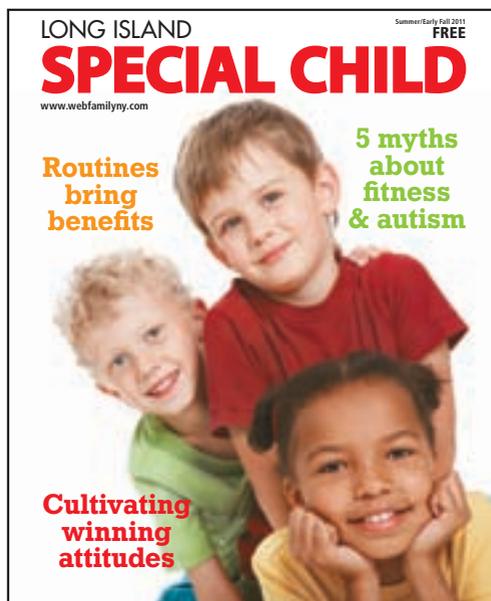
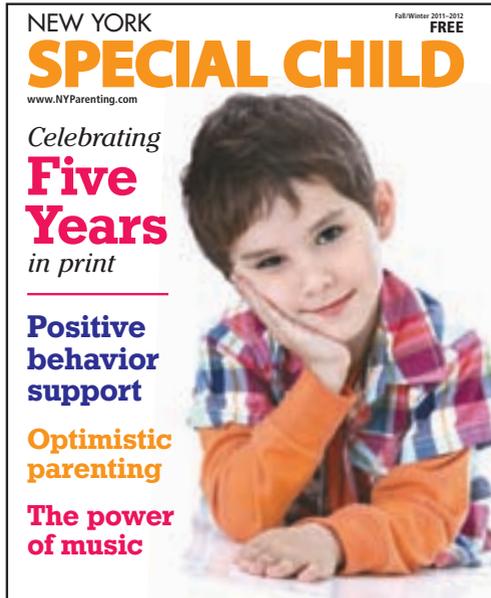
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