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# Family January 2016



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# 2016, oh my!

**M**y New Year's resolution this year is to spend more time helping others. Whenever I have volunteered to do anything in my life, it has left me with the very best feeling and I've been researching why.



We all know people who exercise and talk about feeling "high" during or after a workout — a happy feeling of warmth, a sense of calmness and a release of stress. Those who help others can also feel these same feelings.

This "helper's high" is believed to be caused by the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain-reducing chemicals. In addition to

relieving pain, endorphins apparently also produce good feelings.

Any kind of volunteer activity can help improve your health, but studies have shown that some types are better than others. Activities that involve personal contact, such as mentoring a child or visiting the elderly, seem to be more beneficial. Volunteers who have an ongoing, one-on-one relationship with the person they are helping are more likely to experience the "helper's high."

There was a study done a few years ago of a group of people from varied locals who had passed the 100 year mark in their lives. They

had a few things in common and one of them was that they were all very vital and engaged as helpers to others. They all also smiled and laughed a lot. It makes sense.

Involving our children early on in life in being a helper is a great piece of their education and setting the example for them personally is the ideal. It's so terrific to be a joiner, to have your hand held up, to be the volunteer in the room. It's also great for your kids to see that you're someone who others can depend on. It will make them all the more stable in their own relationship with you and ultimately with others.

It's been a wonderful year for New York Parenting. We've developed all kinds of new initiatives. If you're not signed on to

get our newsletters and e-blasts, please go to our homepage on [www.NYParenting.com](http://www.NYParenting.com) and sign up. Quality information for you as a parent is coming in these e-blasts. Not only that, but you can enter to win tickets and prizes of all kinds. We give things away all the time! Like us on social media and send us your comments. We always welcome them.

Wishing you all a very happy New Year. Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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# Girls, sports and the city



NYC kids have lots of options for athletic pursuits

BY ALLISON PLITT

**W**hen I attended college in Vermont in 1988, I remember all the kids at the school who grew up in New York City. They had the starring roles in the plays, performed in dance recitals, played some type of instrument, or majored in art history. I never saw any student who was raised in New York City participate in sports.

What I've been observing in the city today contradicts my pre-conceived notion. For example, my 9-year-old daughter, who is growing up in Queens, takes weekly swimming and skating classes, plays tennis once a month, and in the winter, goes skiing for at least a week.

I am not the only parent with a child active in sports. Her friends at school participate in soccer, basketball, baseball, swimming, karate, ice skating, and tennis. It's like this new generation of athletes coming out of one of the most unlikely of places.

Another interesting trend I'm seeing in the city is the participation of more girls in sports. One of my daughter's classmates, who is also a 9-year-old girl, has a brown-belt in karate. Her mother told me that the next step for her daughter would be to get her black belt, but she must be 18 years old to obtain it, so she most likely will be getting a junior black belt next year. Then, at my daughter's school last year, I met a 10-year-old girl who told me she plays ice hockey. I was astonished to hear these girls playing sports long-considered to be male-only activities.

Who would have imagined such things could have happened since 1972, when the federal government enacted Title IX? In defining Title

IX, the Women's Sports Foundation states, "Title IX gives women athletes the right to equal opportunity in sports in educational institutions that receive federal funds, from elementary schools to colleges and universities."

The major sports events of last year are inspiration enough for me — the United States' women's soccer team won the 2015 World Cup, Ser-



ena Williams won three major grand slam events in tennis, and American swimmer Katie Ledecky broke her own world record in the 1,500-meter freestyle at the 2015 World Championships.

Soccer, swimming, and tennis were the sports I played as a child, so these are the statistics that stand out in my mind. My love of playing and watching sports comes from my father, who got into a bit of mischief when he was in school growing up in Connecticut. Because of it, the school told his parents that my father should divert his extra energy into sports, which his parents encouraged him to do. By my father's senior year of high school, he was

playing varsity football, hockey, and baseball.

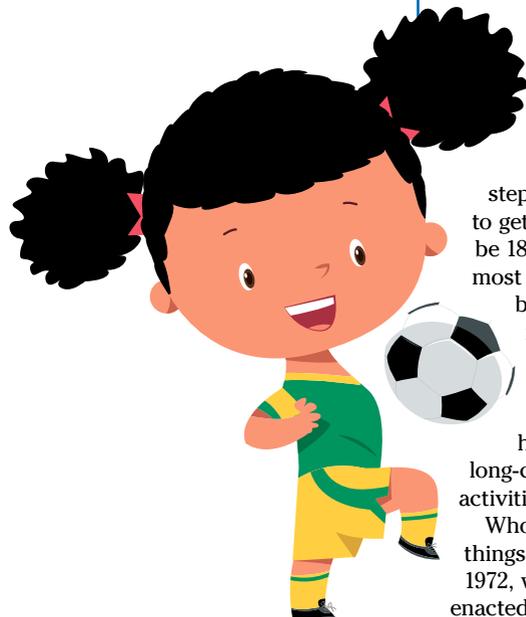
Growing up in suburban New Jersey in the 1980s, I had a lot of opportunities to play sports. My classmates and I were the first generation of kids whose parents both had to work full-time, so after-school activities became a necessity for many of us. Instead of walking back from school to an empty home until our parents returned from work, we could now walk over to an after-school practice of any seasonal sport or to an indoor gym in town that had gymnastics equipment, a swimming pool, and a volleyball court.

Between my brother and myself, we each played at least one season of field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, hockey, basketball, swimming, tennis, and softball by the time we were ready to go to college. Not that I played all of those sports very well, but I at least had the opportunity to participate in some of them. My father even coached my town's first all-girls soccer team in 1982, on which I played.

Sports, to my father, wasn't just about the importance of learning a physical skill. For my father, the game was about learning to work with others as a team, practicing hard until you achieved your own goals, and never giving up.

Nowadays, my father plays golf five days a week and constantly reminds me that as science has discovered, physical exercise releases "endorphins," according to [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com), that "trigger a positive feeling in the body ... which can be accompanied by a positive and energizing outlook on life." In other words, when we exercise, we are taking care of both our bodies and our minds.

*Allison Plitt lives in Queens and is the mother to a 9-year-old daughter.*



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Author, activist and father Eric Roswood (right) wrote a book to guide same-sex couples through the adoption journey. He lives in California with his husband Mat and their adopted son, now 2.

# Brave new world

## Part two of our look at same-sex adoption

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**A**ttitudes toward same-sex parenting are changing, but the road to parenthood remains rocky. Just ask any lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender parent, and he'll tell you that adopting a child is an uphill battle, but well worth it when a happy family unit is finally created.

The challenges facing these couples are often daunting, and more problems lay ahead as they grapple with the same issues that adoptive heterosexual or single parents

have to deal with when raising children who will eventually question where they came from.

"It is recommended that adoptive parents disclose the fact that a child has been adopted as soon as he or she is able to understand this concept (typically around age 5 or 6)," says Manhattan-based, licensed clinical psychologist, Dr. Melissa Robinson-Brown, who suggests that parents remain supportive, open, and honest when children pose questions.

"Same-sex couples may also face questions from their children, once

they are exposed to kids who come from families with heterosexual parents, so age-appropriate language is key," she continues. And, as children grow older, parents can begin using the word "adoption."

She adds: "Based on my work with children and adolescents who have been adopted, the fact that a child has been adopted will often play a role in identity development, especially during adolescence."

Same-sex couples are faced with many different options when choosing to have children today. In his new book, "The Journey to Same-Sex Parenthood" (New Horizon Press), slated for release in March 2016, author, activist and father Eric Roswood helps same-sex couples navigate the various paths to parenthood: adoption, fostering, surrogacy, assisted reproduction, and co-parenting. He shares the experiences and wisdom of others who have already completed the journey.

In 2013, Roswood and his husband Mat adopted their son through open adoption. (They live in California and were married at Disneyland back in 2011.)

"When we decided to have children together, we were lucky enough to match with a birth mother in Illinois, who was only 13 weeks pregnant at the time, so we got to experience much of the pregnancy journey," Roswood says. "We were there for the first sonogram and heard his heartbeat before he was even born."

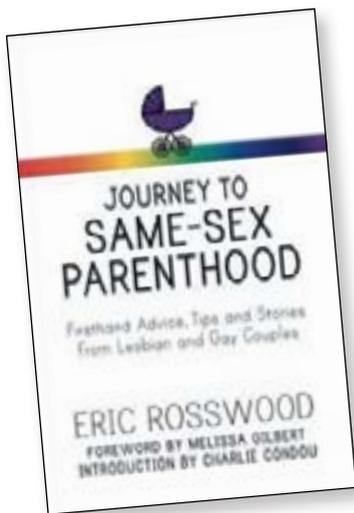
Their son's birth mother wanted to have a home birth, which was a bit of a challenge because midwives aren't technically allowed to practice in Illinois.

"We eventually crossed state lines into Iowa, where she lived with us for a few weeks and eventually gave birth in our hotel room. Because three states were involved (our home state of California, her home state of Illinois, and Iowa, where our son was born), the paperwork was kind of a nightmare."

It took almost two years to get a copy of his birth certificate.

When their son, now 2, was born, Roswood became a stay-at-home dad.

"I'd say the biggest challenge we've had as parents is finding



changing stations. It's hard to believe that many places still have changing tables in the women's restroom only. It sends a message that it's a woman's job to take care of babies, and that men don't need to be as involved in the day-to-day parenting. How outdated is that?"

Philadelphia-based attorney Angela D. Giampolo founded PhillyGayLawyer.com and Giampolo Law Group for the sole purpose of meeting all of the legal needs of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.

In a recent interview, she talked about her work with these couples and in an article titled "The Challenges Facing Same-Sex Couples Who Wish to Adopt Children," she writes:

"All across the United States, alternative families are modernizing the American dream. In a new take on traditional household arrangements, 'Daddy' and 'Papa' trade off walking the dog, driving the kids to soccer practice, and juggling household chores. However, there is complexity hidden in the mundane — it is unlikely that this idyllic snippet of family life came so easily into being.

"While many heterosexual couples take for granted the ability to conceive their own children, same-sex couples know just how difficult it can be to expand their families. A single episode of ABC's hit show 'Modern Family' portrays the heartache of a failed adoption attempt, when same-sex partners Mitchell and Cam drive for hours to pick up a new baby boy, only to find that his birth mother has changed her mind.

"While it is true that the process of bringing new children into the family can be daunting and

disheartening, it is entirely doable and completely worth the work."

Since the laws around adoption differ from state to state and county to county, Giampolo says it's imperative that anyone looking to start a family, be it through adoption, artificial insemination, or surrogacy, contact a lawyer licensed in their state.

"You need to be aware of the process in your state; what clearances are needed; do you need a home study; what are the termination rights of a biological parent, etc."

She says the majority of her lesbian couples use IVF, and it's fairly simple for them.

"My gay male clients have a harder time creating families, unfortunately, and it is much more costly and comes at greater legal risks. Men have the option of using a surrogate, or adopting through a private agency or foster care."

The greater legal and emotional risks have to do with the termination of parental rights involved.

"It is heartbreaking when a client of mine has been fostering a child for two years and then goes to adopt him or her and have the judge give the biological parent a 'second chance.'"

Giampolo points out that while having a family for a same-sex couple is clearly more work than what the majority of heterosexual families are used to, the power inherent in marriage and a second or step-parent is irreplaceable.

"Once both individuals have legal parentage, both are treated equally. Additionally, both people can make important medical, educational, and custodial decisions and they are automatically entitled to collect benefits in the event of death.

"These rights are of immeasurable value when planning for the security and happiness of your family. And while the steps to secure them can be alien to the 'traditional American family,' the security that comes with those rights makes having a family a reality for same-sex couples everywhere. As we gain more equality, the future holds great things for LGBT families."

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



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# The ultimate family adventure

How these  
parents had  
the vacation  
of a lifetime

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**W**ould you be willing to trek 13,000 miles across multiple countries? Now, imagine that your kids are with you. That's exactly the journey that the Kirkby family went on recently. Adventure-seeking parents Bruce Kirkby and his wife Christine Pitkanen brought their two sons, Bodi (age 7) and Taj (age 3), along for an atypical family vacation. They traveled "surface only" — by boat, car, train, horse and on foot — en route to the Himalayas.

"Travel is so often destination oriented, but to us, the journey mattered just as much, or even more, than the destination. We could have flown to the Himalayas, but we wanted our children to experience everything in between; that great tapestry of cultures and languages and countries that would be missed from an airplane seat," said photojournalist Kirkby.

"We also wanted to show our boys that everything on the planet is connected," added Kirkby. "The world, especially for a young child, can seem infinitely large. Tracing a journey from our house to the other side of the world helps them see how the things we do at home affect others far away, and visa versa.

"Finally, Christine and I both love adventure and travel, and wanted to share that passion with our boys," he added.

As a travel writer and photographer, Kirkby was used to traveling alone, but the addition of his wife and young children posed some obstacles for the seasoned globe-trotter.

Travel Channel, [www.travel-channel.com](http://www.travel-channel.com), cameras followed the Kirkby family documentary-style on their incredible journey to a remote Himalayan region. The typical travel challenges arose, like sick-



Gurmeet Sapal

ness from altitude changes, missed trains, and unfamiliar food.

## Traveling light

"We prepared very carefully, as we had to be light. We took only the bare essentials — a few sets of clothes, one book each, first aid kit, etc. As parents, the primary thing we focus on each day is making sure the boys get enough food and sleep. If those are taken care of, the children can handle almost anything. But if they lag behind in either, travel quickly becomes difficult.

"There were times on the journey — when trains arrived four hours late, or every dish we were served was hot with spice — that meeting these needs was difficult, and required ingenuity.

## Honing math skills

"The boys have been traveling all their life, so they were almost 'at home' on the road. There were meltdowns of course, but probably less than at home, because spending so much time with their parents tends to calm them, especially Bodi," said

Kirkby. "We rewarded them for good behavior and helping with family tasks by giving them each a small amount of change in local currency. They loved trying their hand at bargaining — and the math they learned in the process was amazing. They both returned home with a sack full of trinkets and mementos from around the world that they still play with today. Allowing them to buy their own things, with their own money, gave both of them a sense of control in the crazy journey — and brought both an immense amount of joy."

Any extended travel with children takes great preparation, and the ability to travel with only the "bare essentials" is a skill that even the average family going on a week-long vacation could appreciate.

## Accommodating special needs

However, the Kirkbys are not the average family. One of the bigger challenges the Kirkby family faced during the journey was autism. The oldest child of the Kirkby family,



Bruce Kirby

Bodi, is on the autism spectrum, and that had a significant impact on the family's travel decisions and preparation.

"A child on the autism spectrum craves predictability and routine, so we showed Bodi a visual schedule of the coming day each morning," says Kirby. "There were unexpected shifts in plans at times, which were hard for him. He also needs quiet time and space, which can be difficult on crowded trains and streets. We brought ear-phones and music to help calm him in these situations. Overall, we find travel calms Bodi, which may seem counterintuitive, but the basic routine of getting up, moving, eating, then sleeping stays the same, day after day, and was something he could lean on."

Choices have to be deliberate when traveling with a child on the autism spectrum, and the unexpected nature of travel — with

delays, cancellations and constant changes — somehow have to be preempted to ensure the child remains comfortable.

The Kirkbys' experience illustrates that the key to adventure travel as a family is balance.

### **Mixing travel, fun, and rest**

"Balancing travel with local exploration and relaxation. We need to make distance, but also wanted to ensure the boys didn't get exhausted, so we needed to make sure every few days we had the chance to play in a pool or by a lakeside, and not always be driving or in a train," says Kirby. "We were traveling for three months — aboard ships, trains, ferries, cars, jeeps, and even yaks. On a journey of that length, it becomes important to mix fun with travel. So we tried to follow every long day of moving with a day of exploring — stopping in un-

expected and unplanned places, like Gorakpur, India, where we found a hotel pool and pizza after a punishing 10-hour drive."

Adventure-seeking parents have to meet in the middle with their kids, for both safety and enjoyment. The key is to remember that it is the family's journey and not just your own.

### **The world as classroom**

Many parents are hesitant to unplug, but to leave everything behind takes much determination. There are responsibilities with home and work, and if children are school-aged that poses another concern.

"Bodi missed three months of school, and people frequently ask if we were worried about this, but at his young age, what he experienced in that time seemed incomparable to the tiny bit of school he'd miss. We did buy a basic workbook, but

his teachers told us not to worry, that he'd be just fine."

### **Do it yourself**

Although the Kirby family documented the trip for the purpose of the series, "Big Crazy Family Adventure", it is just as simple for the average family to plan a "mini adventure" themselves. Travel expos like the New Times Travel Show, [nytravelshow.com](http://nytravelshow.com), offer many resources for families to gather.

For more individualized assistance, travel agents that focus on adventure travel or family travel are the route to go. Start small with an adventure weekend, and then on to an adventure week. Dream together and dream big as you plan your journey together.

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



FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN



# A new year — a new you

**H**appy New Year! I hope 2016 brings each and every one of you a FabuLyss set of 12 months filled with lots of love, happiness, and success.

I know that every year I try and make New Year's resolutions that I can accomplish. I will admit, sometimes it's harder than others. One resolution that I have committed to my boys is that I will try and spend less time on my iPhone. I need to take this time to unplug and be more present with my children. One of the best days that I spent on our holiday vacation was when my middle son

locked up my phone for the day. I was unplugged for 24-seven, and it felt amazing. As my boys remind me, work, e-mails, texts, and social media can wait. This is one resolution that I am going to try my best to stick to.

What's your biggest New Year's resolution?

Speaking of unwinding and powering down, I have also committed to taking more time for myself this new year. I found the most amazing robes for me and the kids from Kelsey Maclean, [www.kelseymaclean.com](http://www.kelseymaclean.com). I will be wrapping myself in these soft, DeLysscious robes after taking

a bubble bath each and every day. The website "provides fine clothing and accessories for babies, children, and adults in a timeless country club style. The collection is expertly crafted in Peru of decadently soft Pima cotton and other fine textiles for superior comfort and long life." I find that items from the Kelsey Maclean line make a special gift because each piece can be personalized with a monogram, name, or logo.

I will also be exercising at least five days a week. Whether it's a Flywheel class or Core Fusion class from Exhale, I will be making that time for me for both my physical and mental well being.

Want to go bananas for New Year's Day breakfast? Try this amazing recipe from [www.howsweeteats.com](http://www.howsweeteats.com). I promise your kids will thank you for starting out the New Year with the most deLysscious breakfast.

*Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLysscious Moms ([www.divamoms.com](http://www.divamoms.com)).*

## Banana bread French toast

Makes one (9- by 5-inch) loaf

### INGREDIENTS:

For bread:

- 2 1/2 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 2/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 large bananas, mashed (about 1 1/2 cups)

1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled

1/4 cup milk

**DIRECTIONS:** Preheat oven to 350-degrees Fahrenheit. Spray a loaf pan (mine was 9 by 5 inches) liberally with non-stick spray or grease with butter. In a bowl, mix together flour, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, and baking powder, then set aside.

In a large bowl, whisk egg and sugar together until smooth. Whisk in vanilla extract, then add bananas and milk and mix until combined. Add in dry ingredients slowly, mixing with a spoon until batter comes together. Add in melted butter and

stir until incorporated. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 50–55 minutes, or until center is set and a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let cool completely. It's best if cooled overnight.

For French toast, using 1/2 loaf (about six slices):

- 3 large eggs
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- butter for the pan

**DIRECTIONS:** Slice banana bread to desired thickness. In a bowl, combine

eggs, vanilla, cream, and cinnamon, whisking until combined. Heat a griddle or large skillet over medium heat and brush with butter. Dip each slice into the egg mixture for about 30 seconds to coat completely, then place on the buttered surface. Cook until golden and somewhat crispy, about two minutes per side. Serve with sliced bananas, fresh whipped cream, syrup, and a sprinkle of graham cracker crumbs.

For a drizzly chocolate, combine 2 tbsp chocolate chips and 1/4 tsp coconut oil in the microwave for about 45 seconds, mixing once during cooking time, until pourable.

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# Decode your child's cough

That hack is making them miserable, but just how serious is it?

BY SANDRA GORDON

**I**t's always distressing to hear your little one cough, especially in the middle of the night. Still, as common as this wintertime symptom is, it's helpful to know that it often sounds worse than it really is.

"Coughing is the body's way of clearing and protecting the airways from irritating mucous and other secretions," says Dr. Charles Shubin. Coughs also provide valuable clues about your child's illness.

Follow our guide to figure out what's worrisome and what's not — and how to help your child feel better — fast.

## Croup

A contagious wintertime viral infection that causes the throat and windpipe to swell and narrow. It typically affects kids between 6 months and 3 years. (Adults and older children have wider windpipes, so swelling is less likely to affect breathing.)

**Cough clues:** A distinctive, shrill, dry, seal-like bark, which frequently starts in the middle of the night.

"The sound is unlike any cough you've ever heard before," says Dr. Mark Widome, a pediatrician and author of "Ask Dr. Mark."

**Other symptoms:** Your child's illness follows a circadian rhythm: better during the day, worse at night. She may have a slight fever. In severe cases, your child may develop stridor, a harsh, high-pitched sound every time she inhales, similar to the noise kids make after a long crying jag.

**What to do:** Sit with your child in a steamy bathroom for five minutes; the humidity will help move mucus from her lungs and calm her cough.

"After that, bundle her up in warm pajamas and take her out into the cool night air for a few minutes or open the freezer in the kitchen and have your child breathe in the frigid

air," says Dr. Bonnie Kvistad, a pediatrician.

The combination of steam then cool air can help reduce airway inflammation. At bedtime, run a cool-mist humidifier in the room; the cold, moist air may reduce airway swelling as well.

Call your doctor right away if your child is less than 2 to 3 months old, her cough worsens, or she's having trouble breathing. She may need medicine to reduce inflammation. Otherwise, croup often runs its course in three to four days.

## Common cold

A viral infection of the nose, sinuses, throat, and large airways of the lungs. Coughing usually lasts the entire length of the cold (about seven to 10 days), but can linger twice as long, with mild improvement each day.

**Cough clues:** A wet or dry, hacking cough without wheezing or fast breathing, day or night.

**Other symptoms:** Sneezing, a runny nose, watery eyes, and a mild fever (usually less than 101.5 degrees F).

**What to do:** Keep nasal passages as clear as possible; congestion and postnasal drip worsen this cough. Using a cool-mist humidifier in your child's bedroom will help moisten airways to reduce the coughing caused by post-nasal drip.

For babies and toddlers who can't blow their nose yet, use nasal saline drops and a nasal aspirator to suction a runny nose.

Children's Tylenol or Ibuprofen can keep him comfortable if he has a fever, but check with your doctor for the right dose if your child is under age 2.

If your child's cough and stuffy nose persist for more than 10 days without improving, see your doctor. Your little one could have asthma,

allergies, or even enlarged adenoids, which inhibit breathing. Older kids could have sinusitis, a bacterial infection often brought on by a cold.

## Whooping cough

Also known as pertussis, it's a highly contagious bacterial infection of the throat, windpipe, and lungs. Babies routinely get their shots at 2, 4, and 6 months of age, and additional booster at 15 months and again between 4 and 6 years. Children who haven't received their full immunizations are most vulnerable. All adults, especially those in close contact with infants younger than 12 months, get the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis) vaccine and a booster every 10 years. Immunity wanes as we get older. Therefore, adults may carry pertussis but get only a mild cough.

**Cough clues:** Dry, hacking coughing fits — as many as 25 coughs in a single breath. When your child inhales sharply to catch her breath, she makes a high-pitched whooping sound.

**Other symptoms:** Before the cough starts, your child has a week of cold-like symptoms but no fever. In infants, the illness can be severe and cause mucus to bubble from the nostrils. It can also lead to convulsions and make a baby stop breathing if she gets tired.

**What to do:** Call your doctor if your child's cough worsens — instead of improving — after a week. Babies usually need to be hospitalized to control the cough and have mucus suctioned from their throat. The illness is treated with antibiotics, although the cough can last for many weeks or even months.

Whooping cough is very contagious, so children who are not fully immunized who have been in contact with somebody with whooping cough should see their pediatrician. "They may be given prophylactic antibiotics," Dr. Kvistad says.

## Gastroesophageal reflux disease

Caused by a weak or immature band of muscle between the esophagus and stomach that allows acid to flow back up. Sometimes the irritating juices can enter the lungs, causing a chronic cough.

**Cough clues:** A wheezy, crackly, persistent cough after your child eats. Coughing episodes typically worsen when she's lying down.

**Other symptoms:** She may feel a burning sensation or may vomit or belch when swallowing. A baby



might be fussy or have been labeled as colicky. Toddlers may develop wheezing and picky eating habits.

**What to do:** See your pediatrician if your child's wheezy cough lasts longer than two weeks. He may recommend keeping your baby upright for at least 30 minutes after feedings and elevating the head of her mattress while she sleeps. Prescription medicine can also control symptoms.

### **Asthma**

A chronic condition in which small airways in the lungs swell, narrow, become clogged with mucous, and spasm, making breathing difficult. Common asthma triggers include environmental irritants, viral infections, and exercise.

"Children with asthma, in essence, have sensitive lungs," says Dr. Widome.

**Cough clues:** A persistent cough that's often whistling or wheezy, lasts longer than 10 days, and worsens at night or after your child exercises or is exposed to pollen, cold air, animal dander, dust mites, or smoke.

**Other symptoms:** Your child is wheezing or has labored, rapid breathing.

**What to do:** In mild asthma cases, a chronic cough may be the only symptom, Dr. Widome says. See your doctor for an accurate diagnosis. Mention any family history of allergy, asthma, or eczema, which can increase your child's likelihood of the disease.

### **Flu**

A viral respiratory illness that's most common from November through April.

**Cough clues:** A mildly hoarse, throaty cough that comes in frequent spells and can be either wet or dry.

**Other symptoms:** Your child feels listless and complains that his throat is scratchy and sore, his head hurts, and the muscles in his back and legs ache. He may also have a runny nose, fever, and nausea.

**What to do:** Call your doctor if your child has a fever above 101.5 degrees F, is throwing up, has diarrhea, or is uninterested in eating or drinking. (Your doctor will recommend steps to prevent dehydration.)

Give your child plenty of fluids,

and use a humidifier to clear congestion in his airways. Also, to ward off future bouts of the flu, ask your pediatrician about getting your child an annual flu shot; it's recommended for children 6 months of age and older. It's not expected to protect against the swine flu (H1N1), which has similar symptoms to seasonal flu. But a separate swine flu vaccine is currently being developed. Ask your pediatrician for more information.

### **Bronchiolitis**

An infection of the tiny lower airways in the lungs called bronchioles. It's usually caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and most often occurs from late fall to early spring.

Not to be confused with bronchitis (a frequent upper-respiratory infection in older kids and adults), bronchiolitis is common among babies and toddlers.

"Respiratory syncytial virus is different than the common cold, but it's not pneumonia. Almost all kids will get a bout of it by age 2," says Dr. Paul Checchia, a respiratory syncytial virus specialist. It typically runs its course in five to seven days.

**Cough clues:** A phlegmy or wheezy cough that's often accompanied by fast, shallow, or difficult breathing.

**Other symptoms:** Your child starts out with cold symptoms, such as sneezing or a stuffy or runny nose, that last about a week, and may develop a fever up to 103 degrees F. He's lethargic and makes a wheezing sound when he exhales.

**What to do:** Call your pediatrician right away if your little one seems to be struggling to breathe or is too irritable to eat or drink. Infants with bronchiolitis sometimes need to be hospitalized to receive oxygen treatment.

If your child's symptoms are mild (a wheezy cough without breathing trouble), blow his nose for him with a nasal aspirator or help him blow his nose, put a cool-mist humidifier in his room to help loosen mucus in his lungs, and make sure he drinks plenty of fluids. Kids can get respiratory syncytial virus year after year, because the body doesn't build immunity to the virus. The virus can stay alive on surfaces for hours.

"You can't put your child in a bubble, so the best you can do to avoid infection is wash your hands often," Dr. Checchia says.

*Sandra Gordon is an award-winning freelance writer who delivers expert advice and the latest developments in health, nutrition, parenting and consumer issues.*



## TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

# Try something new for the new year

**A**s we celebrate the New Year, many of us decide to evaluate the type of food we eat and the lifestyle we live. Whether it is eating lighter, gluten-free, vegetarian, or getting fit, many New Year's resolutions involve changes in diet. It can be a little tricky accommodating these diverse preferences at mealtime. I often turn to nutrient-dense, meat-free proteins, such as beans, nuts, and lentils to round out a meal suited for everyone at the table.

**Try a chickpea curry.** Chickpeas are delicious on their own, but they really shine when you spice them up and simmer them in a flavorful sauce. This curry goes great with steamed rice and roasted vegetables (recipe below).

**Add a fresh pop of green.** Edamame, both in the shell and out, are a great addition to meals. Not only do they look beautiful, but they are also packed with protein and nutrients. They store very well in the freezer and steam up in no time. Stock up on frozen snap peas and sweet peas as well. They are easily stirred into rice and noodle dishes that will please the whole family!

**Try Tuscan-style white beans with greens.** Winter is a great time to delight in the flavors, textures, and nutritional benefits of hearty braising greens. Try cooking cannellini or great northern beans with onions, garlic, fresh herbs, vegetable broth, and chopped, clean hearty greens such as kale, collards, or mustard greens. Squeeze



fresh lemon, drizzle good olive oil, and sprinkle extra herbs and seasoning just before serving. This dish makes a great addition to an Italian-inspired feast. Grill some sausages for the meat eaters and slice up some good bread.

**Come prepared.** When visiting family and friends, they may not be aware of the changing dietary preferences you and your family may have. Try preparing a black bean and corn salad ahead of time and bring enough to share. Blanch frozen corn, drain canned black beans, and combine with a tangy lime vinaigrette. Add sliced scallions, fresh cilantro, garlic powder, and salt and pepper to taste. This salad is great

served cold, room temperature, or hot. Put it into a burrito, on top of a salad, or alongside whatever your hosts are serving. This salad will last up to four days in the fridge and travels very well. It covers all the bases, as it is dairy-free, gluten-free, meat-free and, of course, delicious.

**Experiment with homemade veggie burgers.** At the school, we make ours with lentils, chopped mushrooms, and sun-dried tomatoes. Test a few recipes and see which one suits you the best. Once you find it, make a big batch. Form patties and freeze in layers separated by parchment paper. Next time burger night rolls around, pull out just what you need and leave the rest frozen. Put out exciting condiments and toppings such as caramelized shallots, spicy mayo, and sliced avocado. Everyone can add what they like and enjoy together!

*Joanna DeVita, executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, is an accomplished chef from New York. DeVita is the mother of two children (ages 5 and 2) and loves nothing more than spending time with them in the outdoors, sharing her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking with her family.*

### Curried chickpeas

#### INGREDIENTS:

2 tbsp vegetable oil  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 tablespoon minced ginger root  
1 small onion, diced  
2 tsp curry powder (try making your own by toasting the spices and grinding them in a coffee grinder)

2 small can chickpeas, drained and rinsed, or cooked from dry chickpeas  
¾ cup vegetable broth  
¼ cup cream or coconut milk (optional)  
5 sprigs fresh cilantro, chopped  
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

**DIRECTIONS:** Heat oil in a medium saucepan. Sauté onions with a pinch of salt and pepper until softened and translucent. Add ginger, garlic and

curry powder and cook until fragrant, taking care not to burn the garlic and spices. Add the chickpeas and coat with the mixture in the pot. Add the liquids and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, let simmer on low for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in chopped cilantro and add seasoning to taste. Serve immediately or at room temperature. This dish is very good reheated as well.



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# Discover the value of Catholic schools

Why parents choose this effective alternative

BY CANDI SPARKS

**A**t a time when the New York City public school system is under much criticism and revision, working families have found an alternative in the Catholic school system, which have historically been the ones to reach out to and support communities in need.

The public schools in immigrant-filled working-class neighborhoods during the early-to-mid-20th century were largely overcrowded and not necessarily providing top-notch education. To assured that their children would be taught their values, many of the immigrants of the day opted for a parochial school system.

In the early days of the immigration wave, it was primarily Irish and Italian immigrants that sent their children to Catholic schools. As the years went by and new immigrants came from more countries and continents, the demographic shifted and one didn't necessarily have to be Catholic to choose this option. As a result, many Catholic schools have continued as an integral part of our citywide school landscape.

Currently, Catholic schools serve more than 160 nationalities. With each wave of immigration Catholic schools offer diversity. Non-Catholics comprise about one quarter of the student body.

"Catholic schools are not just meant for the faithful. We are here to grow faith by building community and reaching out to those in need," says Tom O'Brien, of the Brooklyn Diocese, which is involved in raising scholarship funds to help families offset tuition. "But not every Catholic school family is in great economic need. Our demographic is changing. We have seen an influx of middle income families who choose Catholic school because of the class size, excellence in education, and for a safer environment than what most parents think the neighborhood public school would offer."

Patty, a public school teacher from



the Bronx, sends her son Ronald to a Catholic elementary school.

"The environment stresses academics and doing the right thing," she says. "The teachers set high standards for the children. They are expected to do well and they rise to the occasion."

Many Catholic school students are the first in their families to graduate from college. In low-income neighborhoods, this means that the school is providing the lion's share of educational support for children who do not have access to private tutoring or help at home.

There is a 99 percent graduation rate for Catholic high schools, compared to the 41 percent public high school graduation rate. And 97 percent of Catholic high-school students go on to graduate college.

Overall, Catholic school seems to outperform public school and is a viable, less-expensive system of education in the private sector.

In fact, the only two private schools in New York State that were designated by the U.S. Department of Education as "Blue Ribbon," a program that honors public and private elementary, middle, and high schools whose students achieve at high levels, or schools that make significant progress in closing the achievement gap, in 2011 were both Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York — St. Ignatius Loyola School on E. 84th Street in Manhattan and St. Ignatius on Mott Street in Manhattan.

The incentives for getting a Catholic school education are different than what they used to be, and this

is changing the demographics of Catholic school students.

"Families that don't have money don't usually have many choices. We needed to find a school with the right mix for Benny," says Elizabeth, a Brooklyn mother of two, who chose to send her son to a Catholic school with solid academics and a baseball program. "He really wanted to play baseball. The only school that we could find to bridge the gap was a Catholic school."

Likewise, Patty, of East Harlem, sends her daughter Amber to a bilingual Catholic school.

"My daughter goes to a school that gives her [education] in both languages," says Patty. "Sure, they speak the same languages in the public school around the corner, but it is unofficial. The public school does not have the same structure."

Amber's Catholic school is also closely related to other parish activities and offers bilingual masses, events, and service projects for the community. This makes the Catholic school a great way for Patty and Amber to meet people of similar backgrounds and build a community. Parochial schools celebrate the tradition of faith, family, and community.

Unfortunately, keeping these schools open has become a challenge. The Catholic school sector is no different than any other, and closings have been publicized. In response, Catholic schools are researching and developing new educational business models. Some Catholic schools have closed their doors, only to reopen as academies. For example, in South Ozone Park, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary School and St. Stanislaus Bishop and Martyr School closed, only to be succeeded by the Divine Mercy Catholic Academy. Because the school involves more than one

parish, it is called an academy to differentiate it from a single-parish school. Since 2005, the Brooklyn Diocese has opened many Catholic academies in Brooklyn and Queens.

The Brooklyn Diocese has also implemented the program "Preserving the Vision." The name means exactly what it says: preserving what has always been an integral part of Catholic life — the education of children. This vision includes developing schools that will be better able to meet the diverse and changing needs of students and parents.

The Archdiocese has also initiated the "Pathways to Excellence" program, aimed at professional development for principals, teachers and staff at schools that already do outstanding work. Because of the diverse population, there is still more than can be done to close the achievement gap. The program is aimed at raising standardized test scores and providing teachers with new classroom tools, such as the digital teaching program for fourth and fifth grade math, "Time to Know," which provides online learning, data collection and feedback for the school.

Personally, I am proud to share that my fondest childhood memories revolve around a humble beginning, in a humble neighborhood. My siblings and I attended a Catholic elementary school, Our Lady of Victory, for eight years. I am pleased that Catholic schools are committed to remaining vibrant institutions for generations to come.

*Candi Sparks is the author of children's books about money including "Can I Have Some Money? Educating Children About Money," "Max Gets It!" and "Nacho Money." She is a Brooklyn mother of two and is on Facebook (Candi Sparks, author) and Twitter (Candi Sparks, author). Her website is www.candisparks.com.*

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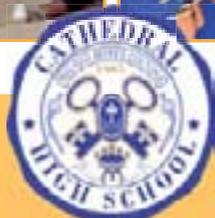
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## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Keep that resolution

## A 'Today' anchor's secrets to being 'thinner in 30'

**W**ith the New Year comes those dreaded resolutions, and for many busy parents, they revolve around fitness and health. Experts agree that instead of resorting to unattainable goals that fizzle out by early February, the key to long-term success is to implement specific changes into

your daily eating habits and exercise routine.

We asked journalist and "Today" anchor Jenna Wolfe to share her five best tips from her new book "Thinner in 30." Wolfe is not only a fitness buff, she's also a certified personal trainer, and a very busy New York City mom to boot. Her advice is not only practical but doable:

**Stop eating simple carbs after 6 pm.** This means no sugar, bread, white rice, white potatoes, and nothing that comes out of a box. This is where and when we do our most damage. We're tired, hungry, lazy, and distracted, so we let our guards down. If we're out at a restaurant, we attack the bread basket and the apps before we even see our main course. If we're home, we snack, graze, eat dinner followed by more dinner fol-

lowed by a snack and maybe dessert. Follow this tip, and you'll save hundreds of calories a night.

**Eat one less bite at every meal, and chew longer.** Finishing every last morsel on your plate feels right, and seems ok, but studies show you can save 75 calories a day by leaving one last bite. And if you chew your food longer, you're extending the time between bites. It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain it's full, and in those 20 minutes, you could do so much damage! Chewing your food 20 times before swallowing could add up to 112 fewer calories per meal.

**Drink 20 sips of water first thing in the morning.** Don't count ounces or glasses or cups, just swallow 20 times. That's it. When you wake up in the morning, your body is already dehydrated. Drinking 20 sips (almost nine ounces) will wake you up, kick start your metabolism, and even curb some of your hunger pangs.

**Download a new workout mix and arrange your music the right way!** Don't just put your music on shuffle. Instead, arrange your songs from least favorite to most, so your best songs won't play until about halfway through your workout. That way, you'll get a boost just when you need it most.

**Keep a strict food diary three weeks a month.** Write down every last bit of food you eat over the course of the day. It doesn't matter what you eat, just write it all down. Want to take it up a notch? E-mail that list to a friend every night. You will begin to make changes to your diet on your own. When we're held accountable for our own actions, we suddenly become responsible for them. Do this for three straight weeks, and then take a week off and compare how much you eat during both stretches.

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



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# How to talk to your teen about

# eating disorders

BY HELEN STEELE

**T**alking with your children about eating disorders — defined as “serious disturbances to your everyday diet, such as eating extremely small amounts of food or severely overeating,” according to the National Institute of Mental Health — is very important, but it

can be a tricky business. Here’s a quick guide to help you approach the topic:

### **Be calm**

An emotive topic such as eating disorders can quickly spiral out of control — particularly when you as a parent are aware of the potential health consequences that

anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, or binge-eating disorder can bring with them. Early intervention can be crucial where eating disorders are concerned, but many parents avoid voicing their suspicions until it is too late, as they fear a row.

One way to bolster your sense of calm is to prepare what you’re going to say beforehand. It’s hard to

keep your cool if your child reacts badly to your words — but planning the thread of your conversation before bringing it up can help a lot in allowing you to calmly weather any such storms. You can never entirely predict how a teenager is going to react to your words, but you will by now have at least some idea of the kind of vocal and reasoning techniques which work on them, and those which are likely to provoke an argument.

Try speaking to your teen on a reasonable and adult level. Treating teens like grown-ups where serious subjects are concerned often inspires young people to act in a way which will prove themselves worthy of this respect. Anything you can do to keep the conversation on an even keel is well worth it — as the longer the lines of communication are open and working smoothly, the more information you can exchange on this crucial topic.

### Don't be judgemental

Voice your concerns — but try not to do so in a manner which is judgemental or makes it seem as though you're blaming your child. If you make her feel as though you're getting at her, she may well become defensive and shut down the conversation. Some eating disorders come with patterns of behavior or ideas about food that may seem peculiar to those without an eating disorder — and it's very easy to blame the suffering individual for what seem like weird diet quirks.

In fact, these are part and parcel of the eating disorder, which is — and this is important to remember — an illness. You wouldn't blame or judge your child for having a runny nose when she has a cold, so try to extend the same sympathy and unconditional support to your child during conversations about eating disorders. Of course, this can be difficult when the very nature of eating disorders means that your child is unfortunately likely to avoid and prevaricate when the issue is addressed, which can be frustrating, so, as above, try always to stay calm. Staying calm will prevent you from acting as though you blame her.

### Listen

This conversation should not be a lecture. It should be an op-

portunity for your child to open up to you about any issues she has with food, or body image, or any questions she has about eating disorders.

We are lucky in New York to have a range of resources available to us which aim to promote healthy body image and reduce eating disorders — but it does not matter how much you tell a child, if she does not feel like you're hearing her point of view on the subject, none of it will go in. So, have an open conversation. Listen to what she's not telling you as much as what she is, and encourage her to come to you for unconditional love, support, and an open ear if she is struggling.

### Prepare for negativity

Unfortunately, eating disorders and the body-image issues with which they are often associated frequently come with a considerable degree of secretiveness and defensiveness as part of the package. And this is before you take into account the fact that you may be dealing with teenagers — a demographic which can be volatile at the best of times.

Even the calmest, most open and well-reasoned conversational approach to this topic may be met with opprobrium or sulking.

That's okay. Don't worry. You've breached the topic, and let your child know that you love and care for her and want to help her in the event that she does develop an eating disorder.

Hopefully, these thoughts will percolate within her mind, and when she's feeling a bit less defensive, she might bring the subject up on her own. If not, keep on trying at regular intervals, always highlighting the message that you're not cross, you just think that this is an important conversation which you wish to have because you love your child.

*For information about eating disorders, visit the National Institute of Mental Health at [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov).*

*Helen Steele is a writer and volunteer for charities that help people who suffer from mental health problems, addictions, and eating disorders. Steele has battled anorexia, and although she is well now, and has been able to have her own family, she's keen to ensure her own daughters have a healthy attitude towards their bodies and food.*



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# Preteen dating

## Trivial terrain or time to talk?

BY DENISE YEARIAN

**T**he age attraction begins varies tremendously from one person to another. For some, those feelings of attraction start in late elementary school. For others, it's not until high school. Although the age gap varies, experts agree that when a child that's 9 or 10 years old begins showing interest in the opposite gender, parents need to sit up and take notice.

"Kids this age may have a boy- or girlfriend, but still not know what dating means," says Shaunti Feldhahn, relationship researcher and analyst, and author of "For Young Women Only." "They are mimicking what they see played out on TV or

by teenagers, but they don't have a full grasp of how a relationship works."

Parents, she says, may have a tendency to dismiss these early relationships as trivial, but they should be taken seriously.

"It's an advanced signal of what is to come and needs to be addressed by Mom and Dad while they still have a major influence in their child's life," Feldhahn suggests.

Jane Bowen, director of a statewide parent education organization, agrees.

"Parents should take the lead in facilitating age-appropriate discussions with their preteen regarding friendships, dating, decision-mak-

ing, and sex. If your son says he has a girlfriend or is 'going out' with someone, ask what that means," she says.

But according to Bowen, talking about it shouldn't be a one-time deal.

"These conversations need to happen frequently, so parents know where their preteens are in relationships and preteens know what their parents' expectations are," she continues.

This is what Patty and David Ford did with their 9-year-old daughter Amber.



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“If your preteen son says he has a girlfriend or is ‘going out’ with someone, ask what that means.”

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“When she was in the fourth grade, Amber would tell me that so-and-so liked her and that other girls in the class had boyfriends,” recalls Patty. “I felt like if she came and shared it with me, it was important that we talk about it.”

Ford told her daughter she was too young to have a boyfriend, but she was careful to keep the line of communication open. Two years later, a bigger relational issue cropped up. With the parent-child dialogue already established, Ford was able to help her daughter navigate the sticky situation.

“This past fall, a boy at school gave Amber a necklace,” says Ford. “Since it was right before her 11th birthday, we told her if she wanted to keep it, it would have to be a birthday gift.”

But on her birthday, the same boy gave Amber a card with \$50 tucked inside of it. Amber didn’t know what to do, so she brought the money home and talked it over with her mother.

“I told her there was no way she could keep it, and she understood,” Ford explains. “We talked about how accepting a gift like that could make the boy think their relationship could possibly go to the next level — holding hands, giving him a kiss, that kind of thing. We agreed that I would call the boy’s parents, explain the situation, and tell them the money would be returned the next day.”

When parents talk with their children, they should communicate their values and expectations and then lay out boundaries. Equally important is to explain why the boundaries are there.

“Rather than imposing rules preteens may resent, help them understand reasons why the rules are there, so they begin to develop that internal compass,” says Feldhahn.

Parents should also try to find out what is influencing their child

— be it friends, an older sibling, or some form of media — so they can address the issue as a whole.

“When Amber and I talk about relationships, I find out what is going on not just with her, but with the entire sixth-grade class,” says Ford. “It helps me understand what’s influencing her. Is it persuasion from a new friend? Is she trying to fit in? Does she feel pressured?”

Although 10-year-old Jordan Adams isn’t yet attracted to the opposite gender, he fell prey to a peer-induced pair off that made him uncomfortable.

“This past fall, Jordan’s school organized a dance for the kids,” explains his mother Amy. “It was supposed to be a reward for good grades, but things spiraled out of control. Jordan came home one day and told me he didn’t want to go to school, because everyone had a date for the dance and he didn’t.”

Adams called the school and talked with the principal. He informed her that the administration knew nothing about the pair-offs; it had been instigated by the students.

“Up to this point, I hadn’t discussed boy-girl relationships with Jordan,” Adams says. “I didn’t think I needed to. But I’m realizing now that even if he isn’t thinking about girls, the kid sitting next to him in class may be, so I’ve got to maintain a constant dialogue with him.”

“Attractions are normal and will only increase as children grow,” Bowen concludes. “If we want to prepare our kids for healthy dating relationships later on, we need to start communicating and building a trusting relationship with them now.”

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

### Resources

“For Young Women Only” by Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa Rice.

“How to Talk so Kids will Listen and Listen so Kids will Talk” by Adele Faber.

“How to Talk so Teens will Listen and Listen so Teens will Talk” by Adele Faber.

“You and Your Adolescent Revised Edition” by Lawrence Steinberg, Ph.D.

“Raising a Thinking Preteen: The ‘I Can Problem Solve’ Program for 8- to 12-Year-Olds” by Myrna Shure and Roberta Israeloff.

“Roller-coaster Years” by Charlene C. Giannetti and Margaret Sagarese.

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## DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

# Do you two need a parenting schedule?

**I** was recently asked the question: Do we need a parenting schedule? Here are a few thoughts that parents may find helpful.

For most families, a schedule of what dates the child will spend with either parent is of great value, for every member of the family.

Children will not feel torn: The recently celebrated Christmas holiday serves as a good example of how children can feel conflicted, if deciding which parent they will spend time with is left up to them. Do you think your kids might have felt this way? “If I’m with Mom, will I make Dad feel bad? And, if I’m with Dad, won’t Mom be lonely, and feel that I love Dad more than her?”

For a lot of children, being put in the position of having to choose is a no-win situation; whatever the decision, the child feels disloyal to someone.

Note that many holidays can be “split” in some manner. Hanukkah, also celebrated last month, is eight days long. Often, it is possible for a child to spend at least a day or two with one parent, and the remainder with the other. Depending on the circumstances, a child may be able to be with Dad on Christmas Eve and Mom on Christmas Day, or vice-versa.

Also note that older children may need a different arrangement; or even no arrangement. My daughter, recently turned 18 and living at college, had long been looking forward to tossing out the parenting schedule she had been living under. Although she had said that she believed the schedule we had was the best one possible, and though her mother and I were very flexible about our daughter being with the other parent when something came up — which our teenager recognized and appreciated — a schedule was nevertheless confining for her.

Since she turned age 16 or so, I had been hearing, “One thing I look forward to about college is not having a schedule of when to be with you and Mom.” I had my doubts; wouldn’t those conflicted feelings that often



come from having to choose which parent to spend time with still be there? But, she loves the new freedom, and no schedule is a big success for this child of divorce. (It helps a lot that both of her parents are very easy going about this, and that our daughter wants to — and makes a point of — visiting with each of us, though we don’t know weeks in advance when to expect her.

Will no schedule work in your situation when your child heads off to college? I couldn’t say, and am only grateful that it is successful here. As one who shares information with others about parenting during separation or divorce, I still can’t say that I would necessarily recommend not having a parenting schedule. It depends so much on your child, and on you the parent, too. If your child wants to try it, can you be supportive? Or, will you make every one of your kid’s trips home a guilt trip as well?

Parenting schedules benefit parents, too! Want to go out with friends? Take a class? Run errands? Go shopping? Sleep in? With a schedule in place, you’ll know when you can, and find planning ahead much

easier to do.

For many parents, a schedule also has the great benefit of reducing the conversations and interactions with the other spouse. If you’ve agreed about which parent your child will be with, and when, there should be fewer occasions to discuss and argue over these questions. If one parent has just been “showing up” to see or take the children whenever he feels like it, a schedule should help to end that behavior.

Need help in creating or revising a parenting schedule? Consider trying on your own; there are books and websites to help you. Otherwise, give some thought to mediation; parenting schedules are a big part of what divorce mediators do.

*New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at [lee\\_chabin@lc-mediate.com](mailto:lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com), (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/lchabin](http://www.facebook.com/lchabin).*

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

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# A family's transition

Documentary explores the journey of transgender parent and her loved ones

PART TWO OF A SERIES

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

**I**magine if one day, out of the blue, your dad, or your uncle, or partner came out as transgender. How would you and your family react? What would you tell your children?

Brooklyn filmmaker Sharon Shattuck is the daughter of a transgender parent. She shares her family's heartfelt story in her new film "From This Day Forward." This is the first feature-length documentary she has directed, and it's a moving portrayal of an American family coping with the most intimate of transformations.

The film premiered at the prestigious Doc NYC Film Festival on Nov. 14th at the Bowtie Cinemas in Chelsea to a packed house.

With her wedding just around

the corner, Shattuck returns home to examine the mystery at the heart of her upbringing: How her parents stayed together against all odds. In this revealing portrait of an unorthodox family, the filmmaker seeks to understand the inner workings of their special relationship.

When she was in middle school, Shattuck's father, an artist, came out as transgender (taking the name Trisha), yet, remained married to the filmmaker's straight-identified mother Marcia. With sensitivity and affection, "From This Day Forward" explores Trisha's transformation, its repercussions on her family, and the complexity and resilience of love and marriage.

Shattuck sat down to talk with New York Parenting about her revealing documentary.

**Tammy Scileppi:** What was it like growing up?

**Sharon Shattuck:** It was really tough. My dad started to transition to a woman (her name now is Trisha) when I was really young — like, 8 years old. My sister Laura was 5. We kind of forced the issue, because we found some photos of dad dressed as a woman, and we brought them to my mom and asked her about them. My parents felt that they should tell us, rather than keeping some dark family secret, so Dad said, "I have something to tell you kids." Then Dad left the room and came back dressed as a woman, and said, "This is who I am."

I should note here that my mom already knew about dad — not necessarily that Dad would want to someday BE a woman, but that



Filmmaker Sharon Shattuck explores her family's experience in her documentary "From This Day Forward." (Left) Her mother Marcia and father Trisha.

Dad had a preference for women's clothing. And she was okay with it.

**TS:** How did you both react to this news?

**SS:** At first, when we saw dad dressed up in the living room, my sister and I were pretty okay with dad's preference — before we realized that our friends and friend's parents thought it was weird. That's when we started to feel ashamed of Trisha. To make matters worse, before I started fifth grade, we moved from the suburbs of Chicago up to a very small town in Northern Michigan, where everyone knew everyone, and Trisha (and our family) stuck out like a sore thumb.

**TS:** What was the community's reaction like?

**SS:** When I was younger, there was NO media out there in the world about transgender families. I felt very isolated, and I think because people in our community didn't understand what was going on with our dad, it made it easier for them to discriminate against our family. My sister and I were lucky in that we made a lot of friends despite our "weird dad," so we didn't experience much social discrimination from our peers, but we did witness lots of discrimination from the local community, from older people.

I say in the film that at one point, my sister's high school math teacher pulled her aside after class

and said, "I don't approve of what your dad is doing." She was just trying to get extra help with her math homework, and felt completely blindsided by that. Mom and Dad went to the principal of the school, and because he was friends with the teacher, no action was ever taken. Today, my dad still experiences a lot of subtle discrimination and barely veiled contempt from neighbors and townspeople.

**TS:** Your film's message?

**SS:** So, my biggest goal with this film is to show people that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people and their families aren't different from anyone else. We deserve respect and acceptance. Other families shouldn't have to experience what my family did in the '80s and '90s, and what Trisha still experiences in her small town to this day. I'm hoping that little by little, hearts and minds will change, and hopefully my film will play a small role in that shift.

**TS:** How is your family doing now?

**SS:** My parents still live together (married and very much in love) in the same town in Northern Michigan.

Just one more note on that, since my film is all about my parents and their incredible, enduring relationship: My mom and dad have had such a profound effect on the way I think about my relationship with my husband. I still can't imagine the amount of change their relationship has endured, but I know that over time, all relationships change and morph, and I'm sure mine will experience its own challenges.

Whenever I get snippy with my husband, I try to remember Trisha's words, "if you know how to smile your way through arguments and come back, then you'll go far."

The film will be on Netflix and iTunes this year. For more, visit [www.fromthisdayforward-film.com](http://www.fromthisdayforward-film.com). And find the trailer at <https://vimeo.com/114131444>.

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

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## GROWING UP ONLINE

CAROLYN JABS

# Apps to fight stress

**H**ere's a news flash: life can be stressful. For parents. And for kids.

Technology, of course, is part of the problem. But it can also be part of the solution. The apps described below were designed to promote well-being. Some are intended specifically for family members at different ages and stages; others are more generic. All offer respite from the demands and pressures of family life.

Apps like these have been developed in response to a growing body of research indicating that stress is at the root of many social, mental, and physical problems. The antidote is often mindfulness, which can be cultivated in a variety of ways. Research suggests that becoming more aware of bodily sensations, thoughts, and feelings can help people cope with anxiety, sleep more deeply, focus on tasks, and enjoy family time more.

Don't add any of these apps to your must-do list. That would, of course, defeat the purpose. Instead, play with them to find out whether one of them helps the people in your family relax and connect with what's important.

**Mindfulness for Pregnancy** helps expectant parents become deeply aware of the physical and emotional changes of pregnancy. The program includes guides to gentle yoga stretches, walking meditation, loving kindness meditation, and being with baby meditation. \$2.99. For Apple.

**Sleepy Sounds** is one of many apps that promise to help children (and adults) fall asleep. This app offers choices — you can tune in to white noise, nature sounds, a lullaby, or music of your own choosing. The app also provides a soothing animation that can function as a nightlight for children, and you can set a timer so the sound doesn't play all night. Free. For Apple and Android.

**Settle Your Glitter** is a deceptively simple app that can be used by children as young as 5. The app asks children to become aware of they are feeling. Then they see a virtual snow globe filled with swirling glitter. Coached by a friendly puffer fish, kids can settle the glitter by breathing deeply. The app is produced by



The Settle Your Glitter app

the Momentous Institute, which also created **Breathing Bubbles**, another app which encourages children (or, for that matter, adults) to breathe deeply as they “release a worry” or “receive a joy.” Free. For Apple.

**Smiling Mind** was created by a non-profit in Australia and has content customized for different age levels. Children answer a few questions and then are encouraged to practice easy-to-follow meditations designed to calm the mind and relieve stress. The app keeps track of progress and includes connections to Facebook and Twitter. Free. For Apple and Android.

**Take a Chill** is specifically for tweens and teens. Developed in response to research suggesting that mindfulness increases self-esteem and decreases anxiety, the app introduces teens to simple tools for self-assessment as well as quick meditations. Users can set up the program to send them reminders and motivational quotes. \$1.99. For Apple.

**Take a Break** is perfect when parents feel they are the ones who need a time out. Created by Meditation Oasis, the free app includes two guided meditations — one seven minutes and one 13 minutes. If you feel like you don't have that much time to spare, consider the **Simply Being** app, which costs \$1.99 but includes a five-minute option. These apps also provide an opportunity to reset between work and family time. Free. For Android, Apple, and Windows.

**Calm** will appeal to family members of all ages. Inspired by the

idea that contact with nature helps people regain a sense of balance, the app includes video of beautiful settings, matched with natural sounds or soothing music. When a walk in the woods or a visit to the beach is out of the question, this app can provide an oasis. Free. For Apple, Android, and Windows.

**Stop, Breathe, and Think** asks you to close your eyes for 10 seconds. Then you take a quick inventory of your mental, physical, and emotional health. Based on the results, the app recommends a five- to 10-minute meditation. Developed by Tools for Peace, the app also includes meditations that improve sleep and reduce stress. Free. For iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad.

**Omvana** is an easy way to explore different approaches to mindfulness and meditation. The app includes free as well as paid recordings featuring vocals and calming sounds. A mixer allows you to combine the two, so you get a customized track. The app is also supported by a website, [omvana.com](http://omvana.com). Type “parenting” into the search engine, and you'll find lots of intriguing ways to build family harmony, including a two-minute laughter meditation. Basic app is free. For Apple and Android.

**Gratitude Journal** is an updated way to “count your blessings.” Parents can use the journal as a personal reminder of what's been good about every day. Or you may want to involve kids in creating a daily record of what they are thankful for. \$2.99. For Apple. (**Attitudes of Gratitude** is a similar app, available for free on Android.)

Apps like these are one of many ways to help children become resilient, so they can put life's problems in perspective. As a parent, you may not be able to protect your kids from stress, but you can equip them with skills that will help them cope, and mindfulness is a good place to start.

*Carolyn Jabs raised three computer-savvy kids, including one with special needs. She has been writing Growing Up Online for 10 years and is working on a book about constructive responses to conflict. Visit [www.growing-up-online.com](http://www.growing-up-online.com) to read other columns.*

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## JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Winter weather tips for your family pets

**O**ur pets are part of our family, and just as we make provisions to keep our children warm and cozy in the winter, the same must be done for our dogs and cats. The frigid winter temperatures are not just inconvenient; they can be incredibly dangerous for our pets. Experts say frostbite can take hold in less than 15 minutes, and animals are not exempt from this despite their furry coats.

Frostbite is bad enough, but hypothermia is the most dangerous hazard when the weather gets this cold. Signs of hypothermia include violent shivering followed by listlessness, a rectal temperature below 95-degrees Fahrenheit, weak pulse, lethargy, and coma. It can become fatal very fast.

It goes without saying that every dog and cat needs to be indoors during cold temperatures like these. I would argue, however, that dogs and cats need to be indoors during any cold temperatures. If you are cold, they are cold, simple as that. Outdoors is no place for pets.

Here are some other tips to keep your precious pups and kitties content and protected this winter:

**Pay extra attention to puppies.** Puppies are more susceptible to the cold than dogs due to their tender age. They will suffer from the harsh realities of the cold quicker and should not spend much time outdoors in harsh weather conditions. In addition, they may have some issues potty training during cold spells. Understandably, puppies may have more accidents in this weather.

**Frostbite most often occurs on the thin, exposed areas of a dog.** The skin of their ears, tail, scrotum, and paws may look blue or white but will appear red and inflamed when circulation comes back. The surface of the skin may peel and eventually turn black. Use warm (not hot) compresses on the affected areas and then seek medical care.



**Cats are particularly vulnerable to the cold and can actually freeze to death.** Crafty cats will do what they have to do to stay warm and alive. When left outside, many cats seek out warmth under car hoods and engines, and can easily be killed when cars are turned on, so take a peek under your hood and tires before turning on your car.

**Make sure collars are secure and never let dogs off the leash.** Getting lost in sub-zero temps is deadly. Their scent trails are compromised in the snow, and frostbite and hypothermia can set in quickly, leaving them unable to find their way back home.

**Cars can be lethal.** It's worth remembering that a cold car can be just as deadly as a hot car for a dog. They can freeze to death in an unheated vehicle. Not only are they already at freezing temps, but cars can act as a refrigerator, keeping all the coldness inside.

**Stay away from salt.** Be on the lookout for salt on sidewalks and driveways, which can irritate and even burn your pup's paws. Wipe their paws off with a paper towel or

warm cloth when you return from a walk.

**Check on neighboring pets.** It's imperative to remember that if we see an animal left outside in this weather, we must report it to the proper authorities as soon as possible. Dogs left outside in cold temperatures suffer needlessly and can easily die. It is a form of abuse. We are the protectors of animals and need to be vigilant about their well being at all times.

**Anti-freeze can be fatal.** It is poisonous, and even a lick or two on a quick walk can add up to distress for your dog. Keep an eye out for any liquid on sidewalks and steer clear of it. Also, do not let your dogs roam freely where you cannot monitor their activity. If there is any doubt that your dog may have ingested antifreeze, take her to the vet immediately.

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

# Calendar

JANUARY



## Biggest dinosaur ever comes to the big city

Look out New York, Titanosaurus is stomping into the American Museum of Natural History as of Jan. 15.

The latest exhibit features the cast of the largest dinosaur that ever walked the earth. Titanosaurus is 122 feet long and will reside on the fourth floor. This giant herbivore belongs to the group known as titanosaurs and weighed a hefty but lithe 70 tons, which is

about what 10 African elephants would weigh. To get a sense of the creature's size, check out the fossil pictured above.

Titanosaurus exhibit begins Jan. 15. Open daily 11 am to 5 pm. Free with museum admission.

*American Museum of Natural History [Central Park West at W. 79th Street in the Upper West Side, (212) 769-5200, [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org)].*

## Never miss a great event!

Sign up for our FREE newsletter and get twice-a-week ideas for you and your family right in your mailbox. [NYParenting.com](http://NYParenting.com)

# Calendar

### Submit a listing

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

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

### SAT, JAN. 2

#### IN MANHATTAN

**Spaghetti Marshmallow Challenge:** SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; [www.sony-wondertechlab.com](http://www.sony-wondertechlab.com); 11 am to 1 pm; \$6 per person.

Pile your plate with spaghetti, although instead of meatballs, we have marshmallows! Bring a friend or work on your own to create a spaghetti marshmallow tower! Tallest and strongest structures win prizes! Best suited for ages 6 and up. RSVP required.

**Bilingual concert:** Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; [www.symphonyspace.org](http://www.symphonyspace.org); 11 am; \$15 (\$13 members).

Sonia de los Santos celebrates the release of *Mi Viaje: De Nuevo León*; featuring a special guest appearance by Dan Zanes! Kid friendly.

### WED, JAN. 6

#### IN MANHATTAN

**The Three Kings:** Teatro SEA, 107 Suffolk St. at Delancey; (212) 529-1545; [www.teatrosea.org](http://www.teatrosea.org); 3 pm to 5 pm; Free.

Come celebrate one of the most important Latin American holidays, El Día de los Tres Reyes Magos, or Three Kings Day. The first 1,000 children to arrive will meet the Three Kings and receive a free gift! Live music by Los Pleneros de la 21 and Mariachi Academy of New York as well as free samples of food and beverages provided by Goya Foods.

### SAT, JAN. 9

#### IN MANHATTAN

**Puzzle mania:** SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100;



## Celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.

Learn about and celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr., at a kid-friendly panel on Jan. 17 at the New York Historical Society.

Major moments in the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. are discussed by a panel of experts.

[www.sonywondertechlab.com](http://www.sonywondertechlab.com); Noon-1 pm; \$5 per person.

Have fun and figure out puzzles. Do you have the puzzle skills to fit jigsaw pieces together? Learn how jigsaw puzzles are made and then color your very own to take home! RSVP required.

**At the Kids' Table:** New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); 2 pm to 4 pm; \$16 (10 for members).

Sarah Lohman leads a workshop on how to create carrot caviar and gelified noodles. For children 8 and older.

**Pause/Play:** 14 Street Y, 344 E. 14th St. and First Avenue; (646) 395-4310; [www.14streety.org/](http://www.14streety.org/)

Children explore the civil rights movement, King's involvement, and discover his teachings and writings.

Panelists share their memories and celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

pauseplay; 2 pm to 5:30 pm; \$5 children under 18 ( \$10 adults, and \$30 Family).

This innovative programming offers recreational activities for adults and children at an event designed for the diverse Downtown community and a fun way to spend a Shabbat afternoon.

### SUN, JAN. 10

#### IN MANHATTAN

**Family Brunch:** New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); 9:30 am to 11 am; \$35 (\$30 member) \$120 family of four.

Celebrate the annual exhibit of Holiday Express with a special morn-

Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 17 from 2 to 4 pm; free with museum admission.

*New York Historical Society [170 Central Park West at 77th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 873-3400, [www.nyhistory.org](http://www.nyhistory.org)].*

ing brunch. Participate in a scavenger hunt and meet Conductor Abe.

**Superhero tour:** New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); 2 pm to 4 pm; \$8 per person plus museum admission.

Take the tour and learn all there is about to learn about Gotham's superheroes. Then delve into the secret identities of heroes and create an alter ego portrait.

### SAT, JAN. 16

#### IN MANHATTAN

**Tie Dye:** SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833-8100; [www.sony-wondertechlab.com](http://www.sony-wondertechlab.com)

*Continued on page 36*

# Calendar

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

## Continued from page 35

wondertechlab.com; Noon–1 pm;  
Free with general admission.

It's groovy baby! Experience a science-filled crazy art experiment that you can take home! Bring a white shirt or we will supply you with a handkerchief that you can tie-dye! Reservations for children at a pre-K to kindergarten learning level can be made. RSVP required.

**Holiday tour:** New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873–3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; \$8 per person plus museum admission.

Take the tour and explore the Holiday Express exhibit. Play train games and then bring home a special train souvenir.

## SUN, JAN. 17

### IN MANHATTAN

**Civil Rights:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873–3400; nyhistory.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Kid-friendly panel discussion on the major moments in the Civil Rights movement, and celebrate Martin Luther King Day.

**Stam-Pede:** Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864–5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 3 pm; \$15 (\$13 members).

The Just Kidding season continues with percussive dance and comedy. A blockbuster annual event presents an afternoon of the very best in percussive dance by six celebrated companies. From lively Irish dance to innovative body percussion and exhilarating tap dance, this show offers something for everyone who loves the power and precision of percussive dance. This year's showcase includes: Darrah Carr Dance, Forces of Nature Dance Theatre, Germaine Salsberg's Les Femmes, Ryan Casey, Soul Steps, and The Bang Group.

## SAT, JAN. 23

### IN MANHATTAN

**Family benefit party:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873–3400; nyhistory.org; 11 am to 2 pm; Call for tickets.

Save the date and support the museum.

**Sleeping Under The Stars:** SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833–8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; Noon to 1 pm; \$5



## Great day at the Piers

Come on down and have a Sunday full of fun at Sunday Funday on Jan. 31 at Chelsea Piers.

Sunday Funday is back by popular demand! For the second year running, hundreds of families will celebrate with the Children's Museum of Manhattan.

The best in family entertainment including Laurie Berkner (pictured), indoor sports and games, creative workshops, and fabulous food for the whole family.

Children up to age to 12 will enjoy age-appropriate activities from live performances to obstacle courses, sports, celebrity appearances, and bouncy castles.

Infants and toddlers will enjoy soft play areas and sing-alongs, and themed workshops will be run for all ages by museum educators.

Your favorite costume characters, magicians and face painters will add to the family fun!

Plus all food and drink is included in the price of your ticket!

Sunday Funday on Jan. 31 from 10:30 am to 2 pm. Tickets are \$75 for non-members; \$60 for adult and child members, and children under 12 free. Tickets include lunch and snacks.

*Pier 60 at Chelsea Piers [11th Avenue between W. 19th and W. 20th streets in Chelsea, (212) 721–1223, cmom.org].*

per person.

Do you dream in color? What do you dream about? Learn about why we dream and then decorate a special pillow to take to bed each night! Once it is decorated, we will print a photo of you to place in a secret pocket. RSVP required.

## SUN, JAN. 24

### IN MANHATTAN

**Breaking Bread:** Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place at First Place; (646) 437–4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 10:30 am; \$8 (Free for children and grandchildren of members).

A hands-on challah baking workshop and the premier of "Rise & Shine: A Challah Day Tale" and "Bagels from Benny."

## THURS, JAN. 28

### IN MANHATTAN

**Little Oceans:** SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833–8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; Noon to 1 pm; Free with General Admission.

Surf's up! It may be still be winter, but we are dreaming of the ocean. Waves are the first thing you see when you are at the beach, but where do they come from and how do they work? Learn all about waves and then create your own tiny ocean using recycled plastic bottles. Reservations for children at a pre-k to kindergarten learning level can be made.

## SAT, JAN. 30

### IN MANHATTAN

**Hands-on nano demonstration:** SONY Wonder Technology Lab, 550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street; (212) 833–8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free with General Admission.

Just HOW small is small? Join us to uncover the fascinating world of nanoscience and nanotechnology and participate in hands-on activities that explore the properties, structures, materials and scale of this exciting field of science. No reservation required. All activities require general admission tickets to the lab, which can be obtained same day on a walk-up basis. Best suited for ages 6 and up.

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

## SUN, JAN. 31

### IN MANHATTAN

**Sunday Funday:** Pier 60 Chelsea Piers, 11th Avenue between W. 19th and W. 20th streets; (212) 721-1223; [cmom.org](http://cmom.org); 10:30 am to 2 pm; \$75 non-members (\$60 adult and child member; Children under 12 free).

It's back by popular demand! For the second year running, hundreds of families will celebrate with the Children's Museum of Manhattan. The best in family entertainment including Laurie Berkner, indoor sports and games, creative workshops and fabulous food for the whole family. Plus, all food and drink is included in the price of your ticket!

## LONG-RUNNING

### IN MANHATTAN

**Annual train show:** Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Park Avenue; [web.mta.info/mta/museum/](http://web.mta.info/mta/museum/); Weekdays, 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now to Sun, Feb. 21; Free with standard admission.

Zip through tunnels, see familiar skyscrapers, and visit subway stops by viewing model trains. The layout Lionel Metro-North, New York Central, and subway trains along with a miniature replica of Grand Central Terminal is a great way to spend the holidays.

**Superheroes in Gotham:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); Tuesdays to Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am to 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am to 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am to 5 pm, Now to Sun, Feb. 21; Free with museum admission.

Superheroes are a part of our daily lives engaging our imaginations on



## Fun times for Shabbat

Pause/Play has come to the 14th Street Y on Shabbat afternoons.

This innovative program offers a way for you to hit the pause button and play.

Children can have their own fun by joining in on interactive music, science, or art class while the adults can stretch in yoga class, or the whole family can take a dip in the indoor pool.

This innovative programming

provides a fun, unique way to spend your Shabbat afternoon and is designed for the diverse Downtown community.

Pause/Play on Jan. 9 is Family Fit Day, from 2 to 5:30 pm. Admission is \$5 for children under 18 and \$10 for adults; \$30 for a family package.

14 Street Y [344 E. 14th St. and First Avenue in the East Village, (646) 395-4310, [www.14streety.org/pauseplay](http://www.14streety.org/pauseplay)].

the pages of comic books, television, and movie screens, as well as across the Broadway stage and the virtual world of gaming. Since their introduction in the late 1930s, superheroes have been societal role models, inspirational and enviable. Based on

mythological archetypes, they navigate the twists and turns of modern life. Through comic books, original drawings, posters, video clips, costumes, early merchandise, and props, Superheroes in Gotham will tell the story of comic book super-

heroes in New York City; the leap of comic book superheroes from print to radio, to television, and ultimately to film; and the role of fandom.

**Toys and trains:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); Tuesdays to Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am – 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am – 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am to 5 pm, Now – Sun, Feb. 28; Free with museum admission.

Enjoy the holiday season with Holiday Express. Children will enjoy the magical wonderland with a dynamic installation from its renowned Jerni Collection of model trains, scenic elements, and toys from a bygone era. Featuring several treasures exhibited for the first time since New-York Historical acquired the collection, Holiday Express will unfold over a broad swath of the first floor and continue throughout the lower-level DiMenna Children's History Museum. With the aid of theatrical lighting, an ambient audio "soundscape," and other visual effects, visitors will be engaged in all-new and captivating holiday experience.

**Silicon City Computer History Made in New York:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); Tuesdays to Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am to 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am to 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am to 5 pm, Now to Sun, April 17; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate New York's central role in the digital revolution, highlighting the pioneering work and technological innovations that have transformed daily life. The exhibit examines New York as a technological hub where the intersection of commerce and innovation gave birth to the first computers and tech com-

*Continued on page 38*

## Dance with a real beat

Stam-Pede jumps onto the stage at Symphony space on Jan. 17.

The blockbuster annual event presents an afternoon of the very best in percussive dance by six celebrated companies.

From lively Irish dance to innovative body percussion and exhilarating tap dance, this show offers something for everyone who loves the power and precision of percussive dance.

This year's showcase includes: Darrah Carr Dance, Forces of Nature

Dance Theatre, Germaine Salsberg's Les Femmes, Ryan Casey, Soul Steps, and The Bang Group.

The high-energy musical production presents the audience with a rollicking good time and a sensory feast.

Stam-Pede on Jan. 17, 3 pm. Expected run time is 120 minutes. Tickets are \$15, and \$13 for members.

*Symphony Space [2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 864-5400, [www.symphonyspace.org](http://www.symphonyspace.org)].*



**Continued from page 37**

panies. Featuring more than 180 artifacts from the late-1800s through the 1980s, Silicon City will include early computers and telecommunications hardware, archival materials, photographs, digital artworks, and interactive experiences that immerse visitors in the decades-long evolution of technology.

**"Maesta" — Gaddi's Triptych reunited:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays – Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am to 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am to 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am to 5 pm, Now to Sun, March 20, 2016; Free with museum admission.

After conservation and exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum and at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the New-York Historical Society's Madonna and Child Enthroned with Ten Saints: Maestà is back on Central Park West. Painted circa 1330–34 by Taddeo Gaddi, the major disciple of Giotto, this panel was originally the central section of a triptych with two shutters (sportelli). Following new research, the Maestà will be exhibited with the two double-sided wings from a private collection that have been linked to it. One features the artist's amazing solar eclipse (Gaddi was temporarily blinded by one). Its frame will also be reconstructed and its conservation highlighted. In addition, this exhibition will showcase other 14th- and early 15th-century Italian panels donated to the Historical Society in 1867 by Thomas Jefferson Bryan, a pioneering New York collector of Italian "primitives," (i.e. painters before Raphael).

**NYC Marathon exhibit:** Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave. between 103rd and 104th streets; (212) 534-1672; www.mcnyc.org; Daily, 10 am to 6 pm, Now to Tues, March 8; Included with Museum admission.

This is the first exhibition to explore the history and experience of running New York's greatest race. Covering the period of 1970, when 127 participants ran laps around Central Park to the present, the New York City Marathon has developed into a spectacular five-borough event. The exhibition brings the fascinating history to life, capturing the energy, enthusiasm and spirit of community that makes New York's "Marathon Sunday" special. The exhibit features works by both amateur and professional photographers.

**Accessible Arts Initiative:** Children's Museum of the Arts, 103



## Hop aboard and sing with Thomas

Take a ride with Thomas the Tank Engine when "All Aboard with Thomas and Friends" returns to the New York Botanical Garden, from Jan. 2 through Jan. 24.

Join Thomas and driver Sam on a fun-filled, sing-along, mini-performance adventure by helping them decorate the station in time for the big Sodor surprise birthday party before the guest of honor, Thomas the Tank Engine, arrives! The show is 20 minutes long with plenty of songs to keep

a smile on your face, with a fun sing-along.

When children arrive at the theater they receive coloring sheets and crayons. After the show they are called up in order of arrival to have their photo taken on stage with Thomas and Sam. This photo can be printed and purchased onsite. When the children depart they receive a certificate with their name and date.

"All Aboard with Thomas and Friends." Daily Jan. 2 through Jan.

24. Shows are 11:30 am to 5:30 pm. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$18 for students and seniors, and \$8 for children ages 2 to 12. Prices on weekends and holiday Mondays are \$25, \$22 for seniors and students, \$10 for children 2 to 12, and free for members on any date. Tickets include the All-Garden Pass which grants access to the Holiday Train Show.

New York Botanical Garden [200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., (718) 817-8700, [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org)].

Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; [www.cmany.org](http://www.cmany.org); Mondays and Wednesdays, Noon to 5 pm, Thursdays and Fridays, Noon to 6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm; Free.

The museum is beginning a pilot year of the program, which will enable any child with a disability and her caregiver, parent, therapist or teacher, admission to programs during general public hours in exchange for feedback to help strengthen museum wide programs. The initiative is aimed at making the museum more accessible for all children, including special-needs children. Registration is

required. Families will receive a Welcome Kit upon entering the museum that includes the tools that will make the visit enjoyable and successful.

**"If You Lived Here You'd Be Home":** Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; [www.cmany.org](http://www.cmany.org); Mondays, Noon to 5 pm, Tuesdays and Wednesdays, closed, Thursdays and Fridays, Noon to 6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Now to Sun, Jan. 17, 2016; \$12 (Free for members and children under 1).

This exhibition takes cartography and mapping as its starting point

and includes contemporary artists whose work references maps and mapping.

**Macy's story time:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Sundays, 11:30 am, beginning Sun, Jan. 3; Free with museum admission.

All ages are welcome to join this special Story Time with Richard Simon, Tanya Simon, and Mark Siegel, authors and illustrator of "Oskar and the Eight Blessings." After the reading the authors will hold a short discussion about the inspiration behind the book, and the illustrator

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

will give a brief presentation about how he began sketching New York in 1938.

**Youth wheelchair basketball:** Gertrude Ederle Recreation Center, 232 W. 60th St. at West End Avenue; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); Sundays, Noon to 2 pm; Free for children under 18 (\$25 annually for young adults between 18 and 24).

The NY Rolling Fury is hosting this sporting event for tweens, teens, and young adults with physical disabilities to learn how to play the game.

**Cross-Stitch Circle:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); Thursdays, 3:30 pm, beginning Thurs, Jan. 7; Free with museum admission of \$19 adults, \$6 children ages 5 to 12.

Beginning cross stitchers and younger children will learn the basic stitch and create a bookmark with their new skill. More seasoned stitchers and older children and adults make a handcrafted gift for someone. Ages 7 and up.

**Little New-Yorkers:** New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; [nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org); Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30 pm, beginning Fri, Jan. 8; Free with museum admission.

Held in the cozy Barbara K. Lipman Children's History Library, this program introduces New York and American history to the littlest New Yorkers with age-appropriate readings and engaging hands-on activities. Ages 3 to 5 years old.

**The Titanosaur:** American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; [www.amnh.org](http://www.amnh.org); Daily, 11 am to 5 pm; beginning Fri, Jan. 15; Free with museum admission.

The cast of the largest dinosaur that ever walked the earth is now on exhibit. The 122-foot long dino is re-

## Making challah

Come and break bread at the Museum of Jewish Heritage on Jan. 24.

Children enjoy a hands-on challah baking workshop. After making a loaf or two, children then see the premier of "Rise & Shine: A Challah Day Tale" and "Bagels from Benny."

Breaking bread on Jan. 24 at 10:30 am. Admission is \$8 and free for children and grandchildren of members.

*Museum of Jewish Heritage [36 Battery Pl. at First Place in Battery Park, (646) 437-4202, [www.mjhync.org](http://www.mjhync.org)].*



Photo by Lauren Adler

siding on the fourth floor. This giant herbivore belongs to a group known as titanosaurs, and weighed about 70 tons.

**"The Gumball Game":** TADA! Youth Theater, 15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue; (212) 252-1619 X 4; [www.tadatheater.com](http://www.tadatheater.com); Fridays to Mondays and Wednesdays, call for time, Fri Jan. 22 to Mon, Feb. 15; \$25 (\$15 children).

Join the gang as they try to solve the Case of the Missing Masterpiece.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**Heart and Seoul:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; [www.brooklynkids.org](http://www.brooklynkids.org); Tuesdays to Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm, Now - Sun, Jan. 3; Free with museum admission.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum

will ride Hallyu (the Korean Wave) with a new exhibit that brings modern-day South Korea to New York City.

**Holiday Train Show:** New York Botanical Garden, 200th Street and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Daily, 11 am to 5 pm, Now to Mon, Jan. 18; Included with an All Garden Pass.

The annual event returns with more trains and more tracks with an additional 3,000 square feet of exhibition space. Displays include: Grand Central Terminal, Radio City Music Hall, the historic Hudson River Valley houses, Brooklyn Bridge, and Rockefeller Center.

**"All Aboard with Thomas and Friends":** New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org); Daily, 11:30 am to 5:30 pm;

Sat, Jan. 2 to Sun, Jan. 24; \$20 (\$18 students/seniors: Children 2-12 \$8; members and children under 2 free).

Join Thomas and Driver Sam on a fun-filled, sing-along, mini-performance adventure by helping them decorate the station in time for the big Sodor surprise birthday party before the guest of honor, Thomas the Tank Engine, arrives! The show is 20 minutes long with plenty of songs to delight the audience as everyone sings along. When children arrive at the theater, they receive coloring sheets and crayons. After the show, they are called up in order of arrival to have their photo taken on stage with Thomas and Driver Sam. This photo can be printed and purchased onsite. When the children depart, they receive a certificate with their name and date.

## The Missing Masterpiece

Who done it? You can find out at TADA when the Gumball Gang comes to town from Jan. 22 through Feb. 15.

The crime-stopping kids of the Gumball Gang are hot on the trail of a mystery. They need to solve the Case of the Missing Masterpiece.

There's mystery and intrigue aplenty along with lots of fun for every age.

"The Gumball Gang and the Case of the Missing Masterpiece" from Jan. 22 through Feb. 15, Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Call for showtimes. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children

*TADA! Youth Theater [15 W. 28th St. between Broadway and Fifth Avenue in Chelsea, (212) 252-1619 X 4, [www.tadatheater.com](http://www.tadatheater.com)].*



Photo by Henry Chan



## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# The ABCs of GMOs

Last fall, the television talk-show “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” interviewed people shopping at a farmers’ market about genetically modified organisms, commonly known as GMOs. Asked if and why they avoid them and what the letters “GMO” refer to, the shoppers were hard pressed to answer correctly. Regardless, they were perceived to be “bad.”

It’s clear that there’s poor public understanding of the science behind genetically modified organisms.

A genetically modified organism is a plant whose DNA has been manipulated with genetic material to achieve an advantage such as resistance to insects, disease, and weed killer, or tolerance to frost or drought.

Eight U.S. crops are genetically modified: Alfalfa, sugar beet, corn, soy, canola, cotton, papaya, and zucchini and yellow summer squash.

The vast amount of soy is used for animal feed and soybean oil, but the soybeans used for edamame, tofu, and soy milk are a different plant and are not modified. Wheat is never genetically modified.

Like the recent gluten-free craze, food manufacturers of packaged goods are sensing a marketing opportunity to set their products apart from the competition. More and



more, you’re seeing “Non-GMO” plastered on the front of food packages — without a verification process — in order to sell products.

### The facts

Let’s dispel the myth that most processed foods are genetically modified because they include oil or sugar made from modified crops. In reality, the process of creating oil and sugar breaks down all the proteins from the plant — including the modified protein — so that the end products do not include any

of the original genetically modified proteins.

For all the angst over these foods, peer-reviewed scientific studies overwhelmingly suggest there are no observed health problems from eating food with genetically modified ingredients. The National Academy of Science, World Health Organization, European Food Safety Authority, Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control, and several national medical and health organizations have all deemed genetically modified ingredients to be identical to their non-modified counterparts and safe for human consumption.

Still, if you wish to avoid modified foods, simply choose USDA Organic products — which is a guarantee that a product contains no modified ingredients — or look for the “Non-GMO Project Verified” label. There is also a new voluntary Department of Agriculture government certification and labeling program.

By eating more whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and lean animal protein, you’ll eat healthier and avoid genetically modified ingredients.

*Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*

### Turkey, brie, and apple sandwich

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Makes: 1 serving

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 slices whole wheat sourdough bread, toasted
- 3 slices Hillshire Farm Naturals Hardwood Smoked Turkey
- 1 slice Brie cheese
- 4 thin slices green apple

#### DIRECTIONS:

 Preheat broiler.

Arrange bread on a baking sheet. Spread mustard on one slice of bread. Layer with turkey, apple, and brie cheese. Broil 2 minutes or until cheese melts and turkey is warm. Top with second slice of bread.



**NUTRITION FACTS:** 360 calories, 50 g carbohydrate (12 g sugar), 20 g protein, 8 g fat (3 g saturated), 7

g fiber, 1290 mg sodium, 15% DV calcium, 15% DV iron.

Adapted from HillshireFarm.com

# theMarketplace

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# New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

## Medal in fun

With their new mini luge, the Zipfy, your kids will make the most out of snowy winter days and be sure to medal in fun. And parents can also take a turn on the plastic sled as it has a 250-pound weight capacity, and it's recommended for kids ages 5 to 106. The feet-first safety design makes it easy for the rider to stop and control his speed, while the handle makes it a cinch to maneuver. Choose from the classic red Zipfy, or the new purple on pink, or two-tone green or blue versions.

The Zipfy measures 13-inches



wide by 21-inches long and 16-inches high, and weighs just three pounds, so it won't slow them down when they're trudging back up the hill.

Hot chocolate for the little racers is not included.

Zipfy Mini-Luge sled, \$39.99, [www.hearthsong.com](http://www.hearthsong.com).

## Lights, camera, action!

Long, gray, winter days and the plaintive wail of "I'm bo-o-ored" call for parents to have a preemptive stash of entertaining activities for kids to while away the hours. SpaceFlix allows kids to use their Apple or Android device to create a space-themed, stop-motion film.

In the process, it will have the tweens mining their creativity. How? They can't yell "action!" until they've sculpted their lead aliens, er, actors from modeling clay. A younger child may even want to draw storyboards to plan out each scene, while an older child may

even be tempted to write a screenplay before recording.

After they've set the stage (which is a two-sided set, featuring a pockmarked, green moonscape on one side and an interior of a spaceship on the reverse), they can download the stop-motion animation app and get the players moving. The kit includes stickers, invisible fishing line, and punch-out props to jazz up the actors and set.

Recommended for wee Steven Spielbergs ages 8 and older, this is riveting way for a child to play alone, with friends, or with a whole family of earthlings.

SpaceFlix kit and app, \$16.99, [www.marblethebrainstore.com](http://www.marblethebrainstore.com).



## In tunes with nature

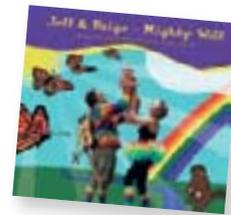
"Mighty Wolf," the new album from Jeff & Paige, is a joyous nature hike told through narration and song. Paige Doughty and Jeff Kagan give voices to the insects and animals they meet along the way (imagine an English-speaking beaver, with a lisp). Their human baby, Wolf, can be heard cooing, too.

Jeff & Paige's original songs are entertaining while slyly delivering challenging educational material. I was

introduced to the concept of a keystone species (such as the important, aforementioned lisping beaver), and I laughed — and groaned — at the hilariously dark, euphemism-rich "Dead and Delicious," a rocking song about road kill scavengers ("Carry on, raven/ Carrion").

Jeff & Paige are extraordinarily talented educators, and I can't wait to see what Wolf will inspire them to teach us next!

"Mighty Wolf" CD by Jeff & Paige, \$15, [www.jeffandpaige.org](http://www.jeffandpaige.org).



## It's pasta time with Nona

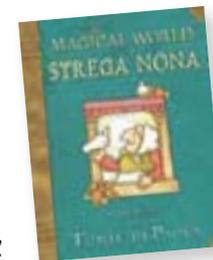
"The Magical World of Strega Nona," six children's stories featuring author-illustrator Tomie dePaola's wise, nurturing title character, will be treasured by kids ages 5–8.

In addition to the Caldecott Medal-winning "Strega Nona," the collection also includes "Strega Nona's Gift" — a story about how Nona celebrates Epiphany, the Italian holidays on Jan. 5 and 6, and how bungling Big Anthony has his own epiphany.

The hefty tome includes a map of Nona's Calabrian village, kid-friendly Italian recipes, and pasta cooking tips. It includes a CD featuring dePaola reading "Strega Nona: Her Story."

"The Magical World of Strega Nona" is a spellbinding collection, but it's up to you to provide the "ingrediente segreto," the secret ingredient: love!

"The Magical World of Strega Nona," \$40, [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com).



## Game builds suspense

The new board game Lift It! Deluxe has parents and kids building structures using the crane that they hold in their hands — or strap on their heads — for maximum

guffaws.

Lift It is recommended for players ages 8 and older, who will be maximizing their coordination skills while they race the clock to stack pieces with the crane. Players can also join forces in teams and cooperatively crane.

But the fun in this game is really watching the parents or grandparents trying to maintain their dignity with a crane strapped to their head. With Lift It! Deluxe, the hilarity will ensue.

Lift It! Deluxe board game, \$34.99, [www.marblethebrainstore.com](http://www.marblethebrainstore.com).





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