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February thoughts

When I was a kid there were no pediatric dentists. Dentistry was not the science it is now, although many advancements had been made and just having fluoride in our water helped my generation have better teeth and



gums than the ones before. Now we know that good dentistry actually begins with babies, with diet, and with consistent dental care. Great specialization has taken place and we now have highly trained professionals in wonderful child-friendly offices and atmospheres, with state-of-the-art equipment. It has made a world of difference and parents should make sure their children visit their dentist early on in their lives,

one has to wonder why it's so often left out of the "health care" portfolio. I strongly believe we need to band together on this topic and get our insurance companies/plans and our legislators to include dentistry in our health coverage. One of the problems, it seems to me, is that all of these decision makers already have their own coverage for their families in their very rich and broad health care packages, and that, like many

just like they do with their pediatrician.

This is Children's Dental Health Month and a good time to consider whether your family has found the practice you need to ensure your children's good health. Dentistry is an essential part of it and

other things in life, it's an "I've got mine" mentality that leaves so many of the rest of us without. There isn't a Congressional office holder with this problem and I've discovered that most people are unaware that just one term in office guarantees a person benefits for life. These benefits are real "Cadillac" plans and not many of us have them.

This is also the month when we really know winter is here and it usually gives us a bit of a beating. Fortunately we had a mild December and January in most ways, so hopefully we won't mind too much the winds of February. This year we will have one more day in February, so enjoy the Leap Year extra day!

And finally, there's Valentine's Day. A good day of business for restaurants and florists. It used to be a good day for the greeting card in-

dustry but I think perhaps email has put a dent in that option. The thing I always loved about Valentine's Day was making a card for the people I loved, especially my parents. Cutting and pasting is still something I enjoy and working with construction paper. I think I'm going to get started right now to make some cards. I hope both you and I get some nice cards, home made from our children. It's a wonderful feeling, and if we do, we can thank our lucky stars.

Have a great month! Thanks for reading.

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Time to take a LEAP

We get an extra day this year; why not try something different?

BY SARA MARCHESSAULT

Every four years we get an extra day added to the calendar — Feb. 29. This year, it's a Monday. This day is not always on our calendar, and it could be considered extra time, or a gift of time.

Before this day is filled with normal routines, it's fun to consider that we could take a small "leap" and do something out of the ordinary. We still have responsibilities

— work, school, homework — but in order to enjoy this gift of time, we can step outside of our routine for a few hours. Here are 10 ideas to help you get started — use one or two, or think of your own.

Outdoor adventure. It's February, and a lot of places are still cold and dark by 4:30 pm. It's not always easy to squeeze an outdoor adventure into the afternoon. Between getting home from school, snacks, and unpacking bags, we run out of time quickly. Leap day could be the day that the adventure is made a priority. It's a special day. Head outside for an hour or two in the afternoon. Explore your neigh-

borhood. Look at what bugs you can find. Climb trees. Sled down your favorite local hill. Then go inside and have hot chocolate afterward.

Craft day. My kids love it when they wake up in the morning, or come home from school, to find what we call "the art sheet" on the floor. We put our kid-size table on top of the sheet and break out the craft supplies. Colored paper, scissors, glue, glitter, pipe cleaners, hole punchers...anything that we have comes out on craft day. The table is left out for most of the day, and they can come and go as they please. We listen to music and talk, take breaks for food, and at the end of the day, they are proud of what they've created. And the time we've spent together is well worth the mess.

Nesting. Do you have a pile of children's artwork that you've been meaning to display?

Any photos in the house need up-

a fun day to try a new ethnic meal. See what you can find in your community for a meal experience you or the kids have never had before. Try Ethiopian, Indian, French, or Hawaiian. Ask lots of questions, and enjoy your time together.

Museum stop. Does your community have a museum that caters to kids? Or do you have an older child interested in art? This could be the day to incorporate a special outing to a museum or an art gallery. See what's in your community that you can go and explore and share with your kids that offers an experience of culture and learning that is outside of their daily norm.

Return to an old stomping ground. This can be especially fun if you've lived in the same city for a long time, but moved to a new neighborhood or your kids have switched school. Visit a place that you've been before but rarely go back to — a playground with a great swing set, a walk down a favorite street, a church you used to go to, or even the kids' section of the library. Choose a place that you feel good about visiting and are eager to return to.

Start a new routine. Is there anything that you, or your family as a whole, committed to establishing or starting at the start of the New Year, and now has fizzled out? Use Feb. 29 as your chance to reassess and recommit. If you decided to take a walk after dinner five nights a week and are having a hard time sticking to that, recommit to three nights a week. Wanted to start a family journal but never made it to the store? Hop online Feb. 29 and order a pretty blank book that each member of your family can write in to capture memories and special family stories.

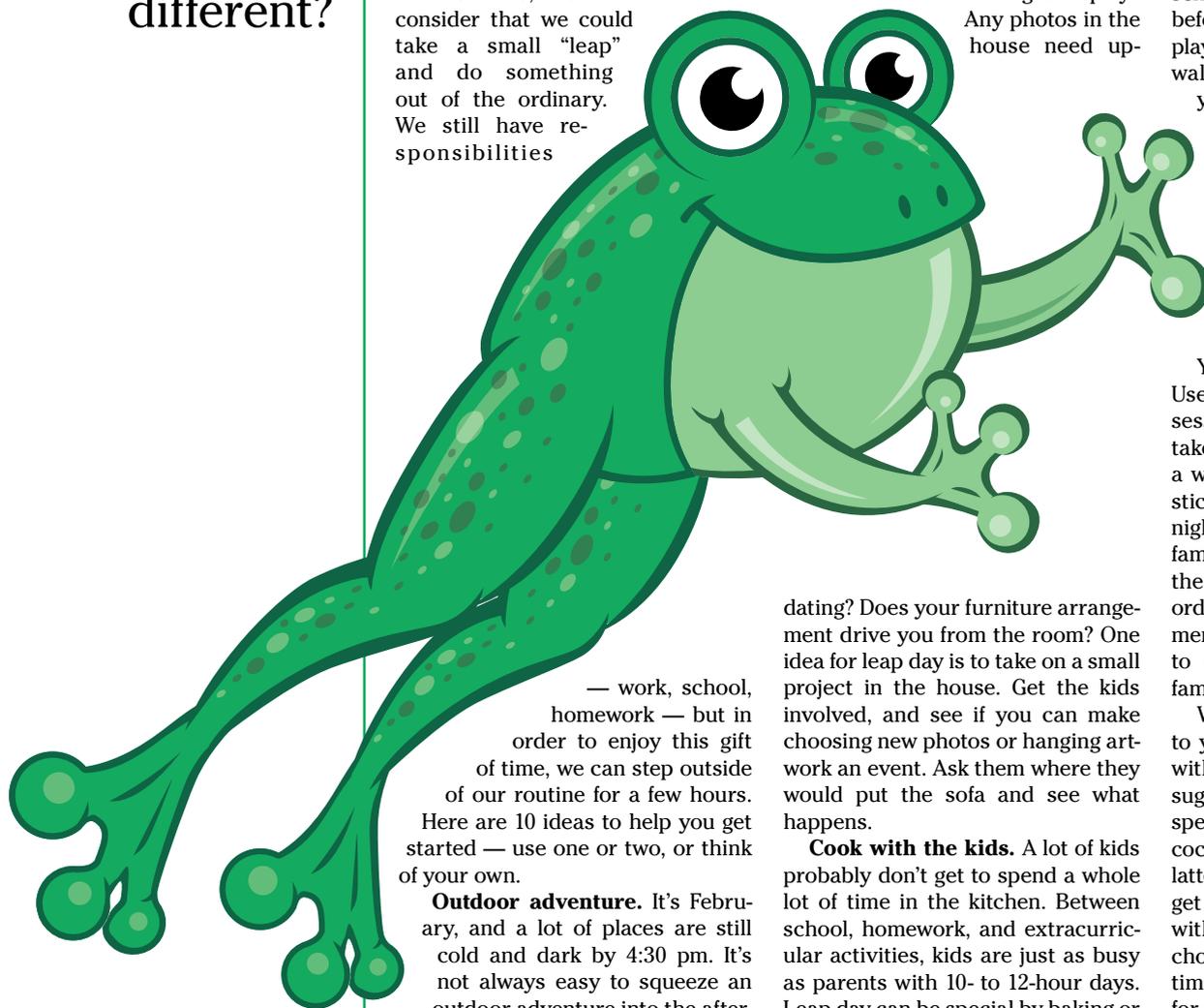
Which of these ideas sound good to you? Or what have you come up with on your own? Any of these suggestions can be combined with special treats or snacks (think hot cocoa and popcorn for the kiddos, lattes or tea for mom and dad), gadget free time, or getting together with another family. Whatever you choose to do, enjoy your gift of extra time — it won't "leap" back around for another four years.

Sara Marchessault is a writer and coach. Her work helps clients to more fully experience joy in their daily life. Marchessault is an avid diarist and keeper of her family's stories. Learn more about her work at saramarchessault.com.

dating? Does your furniture arrangement drive you from the room? One idea for leap day is to take on a small project in the house. Get the kids involved, and see if you can make choosing new photos or hanging artwork an event. Ask them where they would put the sofa and see what happens.

Cook with the kids. A lot of kids probably don't get to spend a whole lot of time in the kitchen. Between school, homework, and extracurricular activities, kids are just as busy as parents with 10- to 12-hour days. Leap day can be special by baking or cooking together. Invite your young chef to learn how to make his or her favorite meal and enjoy some quality time together.

Eat new foods. If your kids are a little bit older, or have an adventurous palette at any age, this could be





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Simple ways to show your kids **LOVE**

BY GAYLA GRACE

Your kids know you love them, right? Still, children can always use a few extra strokes or simple reminders of how important they are to us.

Try some new ways this month to say “I love you” with these tips:

Tell them the story of their births. Show pictures of how they looked as a newborn and talk about who came to visit in the beginning. Make sure they know how excited you were when they entered your life.

Love them despite their faults. Offer them grace freely and often.

Play together. Surprise them with a new game on Saturday morning. Enjoy donuts and hot chocolate while learning to play the game. Be sure to include the whole family.

Find a unique quality about your child and praise him for it. Whether it’s a sensitive spirit toward a sibling or a quick-to-forgive gesture toward friends, tell him how it makes him special.

Indulge in a child-specific treat. Enjoy some one-on-one time together while you indulge. Ask for

input and make plans ahead so your child knows it’s a special occasion.

Compliment your child in front of another adult. Be specific with an example of good behavior as you beam with pride.

Praise their efforts, not just results. Don’t expect perfection on every chore or straight A’s on every report card. Let your children know you notice when they do their best.

Read together. Let them pick their favorite book and read to them, even when you don’t want to.

Surprise your child with a simple gift through the mail such as a comic book, a glow-in-the-dark pencil, or his favorite player's card. Include a note of "I love you."

Play outside together on a cold day. Make snow angels. Go sledding one more time.

Accompany them to walk the dog. Ask about their day at school or a budding friendship. Listen more than you talk.

Allow them to be messy. Play with finger paints and play-doh. Go outside and spray silly string on each other.

Display their artwork on your refrigerator or window. Talk about what a great job they did and how you love to look at it every day.

Put a surprise in their lunch. Include a note that says, "I love you."

Be in the moment. Hop off social media and completely tune in when they're talking, focusing on their needs.

Patiently help with homework. Don't raise your voice when you have to explain it one more time.

Ask for their ideas when you plan your next vacation. Look at fun places to visit on the computer and dream together for future trips.

Get spiritual. Sit under the stars and talk about the beauty of God's creation.

Put on a happy face. Take off your serious hat and make them laugh. Tell jokes or watch a funny

movie together. Tickle them until they cry.

Offer a no-rules day. Let your kids stay in their pj's all day, and eat and play whatever they want.

Ask your child to sing to you. Join in and finish the song as a duet. Let your children know you love hearing their beautiful voices.

Make his day. Surprise your child with a simple gift through the mail such as a comic book, a glow-in-the-dark pencil, or his favorite player's card. Include a note of "I love you."

Get toasty. Make s'mores around the fire pit or roast marshmallows in the fireplace. Include a cup of hot cocoa or favorite beverage with it.

Begin a tradition. Start fun traditions for holidays and birthdays that your child can look forward to as a family.

Make friends. Get to know their friends and encourage healthy friendships. Take everyone out for a movie night or bowling night once in awhile.

Be her biggest fan. Let your child experiment with sporting activities, music lessons, and other extracurricular activities. Cheer her on as she seeks to find what fits for her.

Appreciate who they are. Allow them to be different from you.

Treat them with respect. Don't interrupt when they're talking. Ask for their opinion as often as possible and include them in family decisions as they get older.

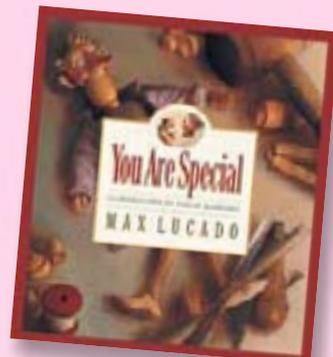
Dream a little. Daydream with them about their future spouse, career, or long-term ambitions.

Use physical affection. Hug, kiss, and shower them with physical affection every day. Tell them at least once a day, "I love you."

Gayla Grace is a freelance journalist who enjoys finding unique ways to show love to her five children.

Books to help your kids feel loved

- "You Are Special" by Max Lucado
- "Little Things Long Remembered: Making Your Children Feel Special Every Day" by Susan Newman
- "101 Ways to Make Your Child Feel Special" by Vicki Lansky
- "Oh, The Places You'll Go" by Dr. Seuss



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Sleep-away on it

Overnight camps cook up memorable fun

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

From whitewater rafting to performing arts and cooking, today's sleep-away camps appeal to a wide range of interests while still providing the long-term benefits summer camp is known for. And yet, you may wonder how to find an overnight camp that offers the right blend of environment and activities for your child and gives you peace of mind at the same time. Here are some things to keep in mind:

Benefits of overnight camp

In addition to learning new skills, children learn how to collaborate

and live in community while at camp, gaining self-confidence and independence through problem-solving and teamwork.

"All those things are life skills and life assets that every parent wants for their child," says Jill Tipograph, a camp consultant and author of *Your Everything Summer Guide & Planner*.

Popular camp activities

According to the American Camp Association, 75 percent of camp directors reported adding new activities and programs to accommodate trends in popular culture. The top three activities camps are integrating into their more traditional fare, like campfires, swimming, and

horseback riding, include performing arts, adventure, and more recently, culinary.

"Culinary is the hottest and newest in terms of camps investing in building kitchens and bringing in specialists to teach the kids. The other part that goes along with culinary is the whole farmed table — taking things from the gardens and cooking them," Tipograph says.

Traditional vs. specialty

Specialty camps are designed for kids interested in pursuing a specific interest. Traditional camps, on the other hand, offer a combination of programming. Children can try different activities, including those they may not have tried otherwise,

“Children can learn and grow and become themselves away from home and school and all the usual surroundings. That’s why people value time at camp.”

whether stained-glass design, rock climbing, or singing in a recording studio.

“I feel that if children start their camping career on a purely specialty track, (parents) are really missing what camp can do for their child. The advantage traditional camps offer is they are all about the child holistically,” Tipograph says.

A menu of choices

One example of a traditional camp that offers a variety of specialty tracks for campers is Hidden Valley Camp, located in mid-coastal Maine and a member of the Maine Camp Experience. The camp attracts campers between the ages of 8 and 14 from all over the world.

Camp director Peter Kassen finds that culinary classes are especially attractive to campers, thanks in large part to pop culture and a greater interest in eating well.

“This idea of being a foodie has really permeated the culture. Being involved in producing your own food and eating good food has become more central not just with adults but with children as well,” Kassen says.

Through the culinary classes, campers acquire a valuable life skill, learning to prepare quality, healthy meals from specialists in the food industry, and tasting foods from all over the globe.

“Last year, we had a group of 10 Korean campers accompanied by a woman who brought them over. She cooked a Korean meal for the entire camp. It was spectacular,” Kassen says.

But cooking is only one aspect of the camp. Whether they try windsurfing, horseback riding, tennis, or anything else, Kassen hopes campers leave camp with

a sense of confidence.

“At any good camp, campers ... get excited about an idea, and they pursue it from beginning to end without an adult telling them they had to do it in the first place,” he says. “That’s why people value time at camp. Children can learn and grow and become themselves away from home and school and all the usual surroundings.”

Considerations for a successful sleep-away experience:

Maturity. Most kids are ready by ages 9 or 10, but consider your child’s physical and emotional maturity first.

Plan ahead. If possible, start researching camps a year ahead of time. Check out websites, talk to friends and family for recommendations, and visit prospective camps. Many overnight camps offer family weekends in the fall.

Length of camp. How long do you want your child away at camp? Camps offer both short and long-term sessions.

Size of camp. Decide whether your child would do better in a large setting or a smaller gathering.

Gender. Choose from a single-sex or a co-ed camp. Not sure which? Consider whether a younger sibling may eventually join your older child at camp.

Location. Determine the types of activities you want your child to experience. Because of their geographical location, some camps offer better outdoor or adventure activities than others and may be more likely to have access to experienced adventure specialists.

Meet the director. A meeting with the director is imperative in order to get a sense of his or her personality, trustworthiness and compatibility.

“You need to see how they’re interacting with your child,” Tipograph says. “They set the tone and the philosophy for the camp and it trickles down. How they relate to you and your child is the same way they train their staff to do the same.”

Additional resources include ACA-Camps.org, MaineCampExperience.com, and www.everythingsummer.com.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines and her husband are the parents of two boys. Her latest book is “Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World.”

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Are they getting enough sleep?

Kids really need their shut-eye

BY JOE CIAVARRO

In New York City, sleep is a commodity that can be hard to come by. With busy schedules extending into late hours, loud street noises, and high academic demands, making sure your kids get enough sleep can be a challenge. There is much debate over the exact number of hours a child should sleep every night, yet of equal importance is determining whether or not your child is getting good quality sleep. The consequences of untreated poor sleep in children affect many different parts of the body, and can include heart failure, developmental or behavioral issues, poor school performance, poor growth, obesity, reflux, and significantly increased risks of complications from surgery.

Risk factors for poor sleep include a history of prematurity (early birth), obesity, sinus disease, having a family member with poor sleep, large tonsils or adenoids, and persistent wheezing. Your pediatrician should be screening your child for symptoms of sleep disorders, so understanding what to look for can help your pediatrician make a diagnosis and refer your child to treatment.

Snoring is one of the most common complaints parents have concerning their child's sleep quality. Snoring is caused by an obstruction or narrowed airway (breathing tube) and can sometimes lead to apnea, or pauses in breathing. Most children with sleep apnea will have some degree of snoring, but not all children who snore have sleep apnea. It is normal for children to have noisy breathing during a cold or sinus in-

fection, but if you notice snoring during times of wellness, pay close attention. Other nighttime symptoms of poor sleep include night terrors, sleep walking, restless sleep, or return of bed-wetting issues.

Daytime symptoms of poor sleep in children can be easy to miss but do exist. Many children will be difficult to wake in the morning or complain of a headache. Older children can have daytime sleepiness with excessive napping or falling asleep at inappropriate times. Younger children can also have increased sleepiness but may also show hyperactivity.

Talk with your child's teacher about his academic performance and behavior during school hours. Inability to concentrate, focus, or pay attention during school can be a sign of poor sleep. Your child's teacher is a valuable resource, as she is likely to be spending more daytime hours observing your child and noticing changes in his performance. These symptoms are easily reversible once sleep patterns return to normal.

Adults with severe sleep apnea or sleep disorders tend to put on pounds, but young children are more likely to lose weight or have difficulty achieving normal expected weight and height gains. It is important to note, however, that obesity is a common cause of sleep apnea in children.

It may be helpful to observe your child sleeping, and look for pauses in breathing, though due to some variations in breathing patterns being normal at certain ages, sleep apnea in children can usually only be diagnosed by a pediatric sleep specialist with an overnight sleep study. Talk to your pediatrician about a referral if you suspect your child has a sleep disorder. The longer treatment is delayed, the more difficult it is to reverse the negative effects of poor sleep.

Joe Ciavaro is a pediatric physician assistant in New York City.



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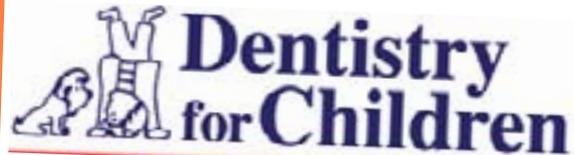
Dr. Elan Kaufman is a board certified diplomate in pediatric dentistry. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and associate member of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Dr. Kaufman earned his Doctorate of Dental Medicine (DMD) in Boston, at Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, with high honors.

Dr. Kaufman, a faculty member at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine, also served as Chief of Pediatric Dental Medicine & Surgery at St. Luke's, Roosevelt, and Coney Island Hospitals for over fifteen years. He also held many leadership positions, including serving as Chairman of the Oral Health Committee NY Chapter II of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Drs. Ken Markel, Jack Mitchell, Ted Wohl, Durgish Kudchadkar, Ariel Bales-Kogan

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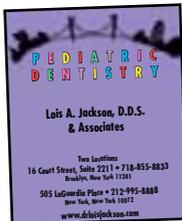
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Dr. Atousa Farahani earned her Doctorate of Dental Surgery from the University of Southern California School of Dentistry in Los Angeles, where she graduated with distinction.



Dr. Atousa completed an advanced education in general dentistry at Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, and a two year based pediatric dentistry residency at Jacobi Medical Center at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine in Bronx, NY, where she served as the chief resident.

During this time she received extensive clinical, emergency, and hospital training, where she mastered office-based and operating room procedures on infants, children and adolescents. Her training included education on the growth and development of children, and the treatment of medically and physically compromised patients.

Dr. Atousa is a dedicated, passionate, and enthusiastic pediatric dentist who continuously strives to provide the highest standard of care to her patients. She has volunteered numerous hours providing care to the underserved children at Give Kids a Smile Day.

Dr. Atousa is an active member of American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and is certified in CPR and Pediatric Advanced Life Support.



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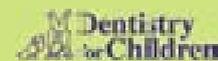


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A dental home

The importance
of finding a
pediatric dentist
for your child

BY DR. ELAN KAUFMAN

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommend that every child be seen by a pediatric dentist by age 1. It also encourages parents and other care providers to help every child establish a dental home by this age as well. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry modeled the concept of the dental home based on the current medical home concept in pediatric medicine.

Originally created as the center of a child's medical records, and specifically for persons with special health care needs, the medical home is a team-based health care delivery model led by a health care provider that is intended to provide comprehensive and continuous medical care to patients. With evolving health care perspectives, a modern dental home is the

same — a cultivated partnership between the patient, family, and pediatric dentist in cooperation with other dental and oral health care specialists. It was created as a cost-effective and higher quality health care alternative to emergency care situations. It encourages parents to help establish their child's dental home before problems arise.

Headed by a pediatric dentist, the dental home should provide comprehensive oral health care including emergency, preventive, and restorative treatment of oral disease. Anticipatory guidance about growth and development, as well as caries risk and periodontal disease risk assessment are also to be provided. Furthermore, a plan for dental emergency due to trauma should be established, dietary counseling provided, and education about the importance of proper oral health care for children should be taught and reviewed with

the new parents.

What this all really means is that it's best to meet your pediatric dentist as early as possible. The same ways pediatricians are trained to meet child's medical needs; pediatric dental specialists are uniquely qualified to deliver oral health care to infants, children, and adolescents. Pediatric dentists are the pediatricians of dentistry. They have additional training and education beyond dental school and are the true experts in oral health care for your child. They also know when it is appropriate to get another type of specialist involved in your child's care.

All studies show that the earlier the first visit, the better chance your child has of a cavity-free smile. It also gets a child to become familiar with the dental environment, doctors, and staff. Good oral health is an important part of your child's teeth. At the pediatric dental office you will learn how to clean and protect your child's teeth. Every child should have the opportunity for the best dental care possible, and it's never too early to find a dental home for your child. Treat your child to a pediatric dentist.

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TEETH TIPS

**DR. LAVANYA
VENKATESWARAN**
Pediatric Dentist

Starting good dental habits with baby

It's never too early to start teaching your children good dental habits. A common question parents ask is when the right time is to start brushing their child's teeth.

I often suggest introducing a toothbrush to your baby even before she has teeth, but when the teething process begins. On average, that is in the range of four to six months of age. A good infant toothbrush, available at local drugstores, will have a small head with very soft bristles.

The infant toothbrush can be used for soothing when your baby is teething. A good trick is to put a clean toothbrush in the freezer, and then your baby can teethe on the icy brush head for comfort. This way, she gets accustomed to the toothbrush and comfortable with having a brush in her mouth. You can also use the infant toothbrush to gently massage and brush your baby's gums.

Once the first tooth or teeth erupt, I recommend starting a routine brushing habit. Begin with a regular nighttime brushing after your baby's last feeding or bottle of milk for the night. You can use baby toothpaste without fluoride at first.

Once your baby has two or more teeth though, I recommend switching to a fluoridated toothpaste under parent supervision. In accordance with American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry guidelines, use a very minimal amount, just a tiny smear of paste, equivalent to a tiny grain of rice or a small dot. Brush your baby's teeth and then wipe away the paste with a damp washcloth or gauze. This way, your baby won't swallow the paste.

Once teeth begin erupting in your baby's mouth, the oral environment changes, and different bacteria can be present that cause dental decay. The fluoride toothpaste will give your baby's teeth topical protection. The fluoride in toothpaste can prevent demineralization of enamel on the teeth, as demineralization can make teeth vulnerable to decay. Some babies particularly enjoy the feeling of a brush in their mouth and



want to brush their teeth on their own, too! In this case, remember to only give your baby a clean toothbrush without paste or with a fluoride-free paste if she wants to brush by herself, so that there is no risk of swallowing fluoride toothpaste.

Your baby should have her first dental checkup around age 1 or after the first teeth erupt, so your pediatric dentist can also help you learn how to brush your baby's teeth and wipe away the paste if you need help with technique. After you have a routine in place, start adding brushing time in the morning as well. As mentioned above, some babies like to try

to brush their teeth on their own, and it's fine to let them have a turn safely. However, the actual brushing should be done by a parent until they are older.

Making brushing a habit from a young age is important, it will lay the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health!

Dr. Lavanya Venkateswaran is a board-certified pediatric dentist, who practices at Tribeca Smiles and at Park Ave Smile. She is an assistant professor of clinical dentistry at Columbia University Medical Center and is an attending dentist in the department of Pediatric Dentistry.



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The right way to have an argument

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

Yesterday morning, during my workout, I watched “The Andy Griffith Show” episode where Opie enters the 50-yard dash contest. Barney devises a training regimen and convinces Opie that winning is a sure thing. When Opie loses, he becomes despondent and rude. Exasperated, Andy expresses his disappointment in Opie’s decision to be a sore loser. In that moment Opie realizes he is risking losing something far more valuable than a medal — his father’s respect. Anxious to regain his father’s approval, Opie follows Andy to the sheriff’s office to declare he doesn’t want him to be disappointed. Andy tells Opie he doesn’t expect him to

be happy about losing. He explains that while it’s easy to be a winner, it’s much harder, but just as important, to be a good loser.

Reflecting on this account of gaining personal maturity, it occurred to me that a similar lesson is relevant to marriage. It’s easy to be married when everything is going well. It’s much harder when problems arise. But it is just as important to be committed to the relationship when the going is rough as when it’s smooth.

Conflict is the last thing most couples want to think about around Valentine’s Day, but being prepared to effectively manage conflict can mean the difference between celebrating one romantic day a year and spending a lifetime in a deeply, mutually satisfying relationship.

Remember conflict is natural in any intimate relationship. Arguing can even be a growth-promoting activity when conducted properly. Here are some suggested guidelines for keeping arguments safe and productive:

Keep the goal in mind. The goal of effective arguing is resolution of an issue in a manner that allows both parties to emerge whole with the relationship intact and undamaged. Not necessarily unchanged, but undamaged.

Clarify the issue. Define the issue as precisely as possible. Be sure both parties are clear about what is being addressed. It is much easier to find a solution to a well-defined problem.

Argue after thinking. Avoid addressing important issues on the

Being prepared to effectively manage conflict can mean the difference between celebrating one romantic day a year and spending a lifetime in a deeply, mutually satisfying relationship.

spur of the moment. Spend time giving the issue some thoughtful consideration so you can calmly articulate your position. Set aside time to adequately explore the issue.

Agree to argue responsibly and respectfully. Accurately identify own your feelings so that you can effectively express them. Think before you speak. Once spoken, words cannot be unspoken. Speak in the way you would like to be spoken to. Say what needs to be said in a way that is most likely to be heard by your partner. Refuse to undermine the argument with destructive tactics like ultimatums, accusations, personal attacks, name calling, bringing up the past, or the silent treatment. Never resort to exploiting your partner's insecurities or shortcomings, unless of course yours are fair game. It's OK to be mad. It's not OK to be mean.

Use effective communication skills. Check out your perceptions, impressions, and assumptions by repeating your understanding of the message you received. Identify areas of agreement. Use them to keep your differences in perspective. Keep the focus on the issue at hand.

Stay in the present. Avoid turning conflict into a competition. In marriage, if one loses, you both lose.

Be honest. Openly express your thoughts, opinions, and preferences. Speak about yourself, not about your partner. Being honest is not a license to be cruel. Saying what is on your mind does not mean you are right, accurate, or have a corner

on the truth. It simply means that you are sharing your perspective openly. No two people see things exactly the same way, no matter how sincerely they love each other. Work toward creating a shared perspective.

Use humor when possible and appropriate. Humor can relieve tension as long as it is not used to avoid the situation or belittle your partner. Laughter can be healing unless it is intended to hurt. A good rule of thumb is it's OK if both people are laughing.

Take a break. If the argument becomes unproductive or counterproductive, agree to step away. Set a definite time to resume, sooner rather than later. Use the break to regain your focus and perspective. Take a walk. Better yet, take a walk together. Walking stimulates the mind and inspires creativity. It may be easier to reach resolution side by side rather than face to face.

Seek closure. When both partners agree the conflict is resolved, put the solution into effect, congratulate one another, and move on. Remember you're not going to agree on everything. Know when to agree to disagree.

Get help. Frequent arguing or arguing for no legitimate reason may be symptoms of a more serious problem. Seek professional counseling before what is merely an irritation becomes a crisis.

• • •

These guidelines may seem unnatural and uncomfortable at first, but with practice you can become as proficient at effective arguing as you have been at ineffective arguing.

Conflict is inevitable in marriage. Romance is one of the first casualties of unresolved conflict. Carefully consider what you are willing to risk for the sake of the argument.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Kentucky. She has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons, ages 24 and 14. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator and has written extensively on the topic of parenting. After six years as Arts Facilitator for the School for the Creative and Performing Arts, she chose to return to her favorite place of employment – home. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.



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Continued on page 24



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Private/Independent School Guide

Catholic Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 22

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212-926-5820, www.ollnyc.org

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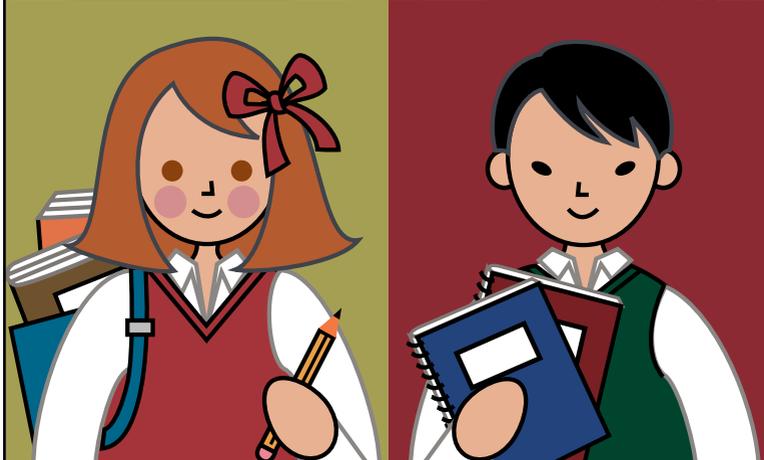
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Seeing the future

An optometrist asks: Is myopia really a life-long sentence?



BY JOEL H. WARSHOWSKY

Are you doing all that you can to reduce or eliminate your degree of nearsightedness?

Some call it nearsightedness, some myopia, and still others use the British term shortsighted. In any case, it all means the same thing. Vision at far distance is blurred, while vision at near distance is clear.

All this is common knowledge, however, what is not commonly known is that some children who have been diagnosed as nearsighted are not nearsighted, and still, others have to go through increases in prescription every few months, making their lenses even thicker.

Functional nearsightedness

Children who have frequent increases in their eyeglass prescription are most often diagnosed as functionally nearsighted by behavioral or developmental optometrists.

Typically, functional nearsightedness may begin as early as 5 to 7 years of age and usually starts with a low amount of prescription. It is common to initially associate it with eyestrain and frontal headaches related to sustained reading, computer, or writing tasks. Copying from the blackboard may especially cause inaccuracy and fatigue.

The first symptom that usually occurs is reduced distance vision, only after sustained near vision tasks. Typically, vision gradually improves when sustained near visual activities are suspended. Over time, however, the blurred distance vision remains and eventually worsens

Treatment for functional nearsightedness is through remediation of the eye muscle inefficiency and imbalance.

with length and demand of the near visual task.

Functional nearsightedness is different than genetic, in that genetic myopia is passed on from one generation to the next, regardless of how one uses his eyes. The genetic form of nearsightedness usually starts earlier in life, with children 2 to 5 years of age, has an initial moderate to high prescription, and is typically unrelated to eyestrain associated with near vision tasks.

For you, the parent, to understand the process of functional nearsightedness, the association or linkage of your child's inside (ciliary) muscle for focusing and outside (extra-ocular) muscles for coordination must be understood.

There are six outside muscles surrounding each eye and one muscle that is inside the eye, controlling focus. This process occurs because the internal and external eye muscle systems are linked, allowing one system to support and compensate for the other.

Typically, extra effort to focus is needed when there is a lack of ability to coordinate and turn the two eyes inward. If extra effort is put into focus, that effort will translate into an increased ability to turn the two eyes inward. However, over time, the increased focusing leads to an internal muscle spasm and ultimately becomes what some call structured-in myopia.

At this time we don't understand how that occurs, but we do know when it does occur. The functional focusing spasm becomes myopia.

To summarize, if I can't coordinate my two eyes together, enabling them to look at the same point in space at the same time, I can elect to over-focus, increasing my ability to coordi-

nate these 12 external muscles (six for each eye), assisting the two eyes to turn inward together, preventing double vision and associated symptoms, and creating eye strain.

Eyestrain, often associated with functional myopia, ultimately becomes translated into true structural myopia through this process.

Treatment

Treatment of functional nearsightedness is different than the genetic type. Whereas treatment for genetic myopia is typically compensated through a nearsighted spectacle lens, treatment for functional nearsightedness is through remediation of the eye muscle inefficiency and imbalance.

Treatment for functional myopia may include: a therapeutic eyeglass prescription (which may be in the form of a bifocal), vision therapy (training), and proper visual hygiene and diet designed to reduce stress and strain of the visual system.

Therapeutic lenses are designed to reduce the need to over focus, while vision therapy potentially eliminates the need to compensate one system for another, it can resolve the eye coordination difficulty.

Proper visual hygiene may include diffuse uniform lighting and proper posture. In addition, some recent research suggests a properly balanced diet rich in chromium may reduce myopic effects. Personality may as well play a role in a child's ultimate development.

There is a lot that is not known about myopia and its development, however, there are proven programs and procedures that have been proven to reduce or eliminate myopia.

Join me in reducing myopia in children today.

Joel H. Warshowsky is a behavioral and developmental optometrist who is Associate Clinical Professor Emeritus and founding chief of Pediatrics at SUNY State College of Optometry, where he had taught for 37 years. He has served as an optometric consultant to numerous schools for child development throughout New York and New Jersey. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and College of Optometrists in Vision Development, and has three pediatric practices in Roslyn, New York, Ringwood, New Jersey, and Riverdale.



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A question of marital fault

In a recent court case, Alice M. v. Terrance T., wife Alice M. was divorcing her husband Terrance T., who had already been convicted of raping her during their marriage. Terrance was claiming in the divorce action that his wife had “‘falsely accused’ [him] of domestic violence and rape.” He asked the court to decide if he was entitled to money and some property.

In his Dec. 23 decision, State Supreme Court Justice Jeffrey S. Sunshine set out the question before the court as follows:

“The issue ... is whether defendant (husband), who is serving a 40-year prison sentence following conviction of rape in the first degree against plaintiff (wife), is entitled to maintenance, equitable distribution, and counsel fees.”

The judge found it to be clear “that [Husband] seeks ... to collaterally attack his criminal conviction for first-degree rape of plaintiff during the marriage.”

Judge Sunshine doesn’t allow Terrance to cast doubt on his rape conviction. Here is one reason:

Standard of proof

The rape case had been a criminal case. It was already decided that the husband had been found guilty of rape “beyond a reasonable doubt,” which is a very high standard of proof.

In civil cases like divorce, the standard of proof is lower — that is, easier to meet — than ones in criminal court. The standard in civil court is “a preponderance of the evidence.”

Since the husband had been found guilty of rape in the criminal court, where so much proof was required to convict him, the judge wouldn’t accept his argument in the divorce (civil court) case, where less proof is needed, that his wife had falsely accused him

Fault

Much of the case revolves around the question of fault, more specifically: when does one spouse’s fault (bad behavior against the other spouse) affect the amount of money and property she or he will receive from the divorce through equitable distribution (dividing marital prop-

erty) and spousal maintenance (alimony)?

In partial answer to this question, Judge Sunshine referred to the case of *Blickstein v. Blickstein*, decided in 1984, “which is often cited in this jurisdiction for the proposition that marital fault is not, as a general rule, ‘a just and proper consideration in determining equitable distribution of marital property.’”

In *Blickstein*, the court stated that:

“It would be, in our view, inconsistent with this purpose to hold that marital fault should be considered in property distribution. Indeed, it would introduce considerations which are irrelevant to the basic assumptions underlying the Equitable Distribution Law.

‘And that: ‘fault is very difficult to evaluate in the context of a marriage and may, in the last analysis, be traceable to the conduct of both parties.’”

“However,” Judge Sunshine wrote, “the Court [in *Blickstein*] then unequivocally noted that in rare cases where the Court found that one spouse had engaged in ‘egregious’ conduct against the other spouse that it may be a factor the Court could consider in making an equitable distribution award.”

Judge Sunshine cited more recent cases, and cautioned that few actions will involve such egregious conduct — conduct that will “shock the conscience of the court.” But some have, such as ones involving extreme violence and kidnapping.

(“Conversely, conduct that courts have found not to be egregious includes adultery, alcoholism, abandonment, and verbal harassment coupled with several acts of minor domestic violence.”)

Due largely to Terrance’s horrible mistreatment of Alice, everything he asked for was denied. The court’s conclusion that he never contributed financially (having been incarcerated part of the marriage) didn’t help his case either.

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, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

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Leaving a retirement account to a minor

I have large retirement accounts and would like to name my grandchildren as the beneficiaries. It is my understanding that a minor (someone under the age of 18) cannot legally “own” money or bank accounts. Is that accurate? How should I handle contingent beneficiaries on my IRA and other assets? Should I write the names of my minor children or should I name their parents?

Leaving a retirement account to your grandchildren is a commendable way to leave a legacy for your family. If the beneficiary is designated, he may elect to “stretch” the inherited IRA (individual retirement account) over his own lifetime, allowing the asset to grow tax free within the account for presumably a long time. However the beneficiary will be required to withdraw what is called, required minimum distributions, the minimum amount he must withdraw from the account each year calculated based on his own (presumably younger) age immediately. The beneficiary will have to make an election for the stretch out within a relatively short period of time after the death of the account owner, otherwise the default is that the beneficiary must withdraw the entirety of the account over a five-year period.

Additional planning is advisable if the beneficiary is under the age of 18. Because a minor may not own property in his individual name, there is a high probability that the financial institution will require that a guardian of the property be appointed for the child in order to distribute the distributions. This would require a petition to the court, and an account held jointly with the Clerk of the Court such that approval would be required each time a withdrawal is desired. In other words the parent would not have unfettered discre-



tion over the account. Also the child would be permitted to withdraw the entirety of the assets in the account when he becomes 18, which could be a significant sum.

There are two alternatives. First you may designate a custodian who can oversee the account until the grandchild reaches 18. At that point the grandchild could withdraw the entirety of the account, subject to significant income taxes on the withdrawal and losing the benefit of tax-free growth within the account.

If the individual retirement account is of substantial value, or if you are concerned about spendthrift behavior or wish to protect your grandchild’s inheritance, you can create what is known as a conduit trust in your will or in a living trust. You can then designate that conduit trust as the beneficiary of your account instead of the individual grandchild. When drafted properly, it allows the IRA to “look through” the trust and treat the minor as the designated beneficiary while still allowing a stretch-out of the account over the grandchild’s life. The distributions are paid to the trust, not to a guardian under court supervision, and they can then be used for the

grandchild’s benefit by paying the grandchild’s parent or guardian, or a provider of services (such as a private school or college). The stretch-out can be as long as the trust allows, even for future generations.

There is also a technique known as an accumulation trust, however, the conduit trust has been approved by the Internal Revenue Service in various rulings and commentary, whereas the accumulation trust has not.

Keep in mind that the individual retirement account must be distributed only to the trustee of the conduit trust in order to preserve the integrity of the account.

These are complicated techniques that require specific drafting to ensure your objectives are met. You should always consult with a qualified estate planning attorney to determine a course of action that is right for you and your specific situation.

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

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Baby-making 2.0

How to increase your odds of getting pregnant the second time around

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Is your biological clock ticking again, as severe baby fever clouds your thoughts? Are you and your partner yearning for another bundle of joy?

Many couples gearing up for bebé número dos find that getting pregnant the second time around is a breeze, while others are wondering why this baby dance isn't working out the way it ought to be. If you can relate to the latter, you're not alone.

According to www.whattoexpect.com, it turns out that second baby infertility or "secondary infertility" is more common than you think, accounting for 60 percent or so of all infertility cases.

There are many factors that may potentially cause primary or secondary infertility (including age), but thanks to medical reproductive advances, more happy couples have been welcoming their bambinos into the world.

Reasons for infertility

Women have the best chance of conceiving at age 27 or so, but men usually don't have to worry about low sperm count until after age 40 (and if things aren't going "swimmingly" for him, it may just be a matter of wearing loose briefs or throwing back a few less beers).

And keep in mind, there's only a 20 to 25 percent chance of getting pregnant each cycle! Even for young, healthy couples, it may take up to six months to a year to get pregnant.

According to Dr. Lynn Westphal, professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology (Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility) at Stanford University Medical Center in California, there are some issues that can cause secondary infertility woes: endometriosis can progress, an infection could have occurred during delivery or afterwards, and fibroids or benign tumors could develop on the uterus.

A woman should mention any changes in her body or cycle to her ObGyn or midwife, and ask if that could be affecting her chances of a second pregnancy. Were there



any complications during her pregnancy or delivery? Is she taking different medications that may affect her cycle? Luckily, some issues don't require fertility treatments. Sometimes it's as simple as changing your meds or adding more nutrients to your diet and getting more sleep.

In vitro fertilization and egg freezing

During in vitro fertilization, a process by which an egg is fertilized by sperm outside the body, the zygote (fertilized egg) is implanted in

the woman's uterus in hopes that a pregnancy will result. [Watch one couple's moving journey live on "The Today Show" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utkUkvYq-zM>].

During the in vitro process, women usually experience some fullness or bloating as ovaries get larger, and may have some bruising at the injection site due to daily injections of follicle-stimulating hormones (normally produced in the body), according to Westphal. By giving more, hopefully you get more eggs to grow. Other side effects include breast tenderness

Second baby infertility or “secondary infertility” is more common than you think, accounting for 60 percent or so of all infertility cases.

and a tired feeling.

Westphal said she has close friends who went through fertility treatments, and knows the process can also be difficult both psychologically and emotionally.

“Couples often pay a lot of money and are stressed out and worried that they’re going through all this and still might not get pregnant,” she noted. In vitro is pricey; treatments cost about \$15,000 to \$17,000 per cycle and insurance doesn’t usually cover it.

And thanks to pioneering research by experts like Westphal, what was once impossible is now possible. As one of the country’s foremost experts in fertility research, she operated one of the first egg freezing clinics in the US.

Westphal’s recommendation for women who aren’t planning to get pregnant for several years but would like to freeze their (better quality) eggs, should do so at age 32 or 33, when their chances at conceiving are better.

Holistic alternatives

Westphal recalled a study she was involved in. She found that a special supplement seemed to help women who had irregular cycles, and after taking “Fertility Blend,” they seemed to have regular cycles and higher pregnancy rates. The secret? It has a number of vitamins, which include potent chaste berry extract and arginine, an amino acid.

If you’re trying to get pregnant, she suggests taking this as your prenatal vitamin or together with your prenatal vitamins, so it may optimize your cycle. But, if you’re under 35 and have been trying for a year, she suggests having an evaluation to figure out if there’s something else that is preventing your second pregnancy; if you’re over 35, she says, get evaluated

after six months.

Over 40? You may want to see a fertility expert. Remember: The key element here is time. When eggs get older, it’s harder to conceive. Also, since 35 to 40 percent of fertility problems can be traced back to the guy (and his age affects sperm quality), a specialist can help if he’s over 40.

Does stress affect baby-making?

Westphal said it doesn’t, but admits that everyone is stressed out by the time they get to her office.

“I tell them it’s good to find ways to reduce and manage stress; long-term health habits may help prevent potential second baby fertility problems, and everything in moderation.”

Couples should cut down on alcohol, smoking, caffeine, colas, and calories, and get in more exercise, yoga, and meditation.

She emphasized partner support or support groups during the process, as well.

“Part of the problem with infertility treatment is, some people feel very isolated — they don’t feel like they can talk to others about it or, they don’t get a lot of emotional support.”

If you’re still not sure why all your efforts aren’t resulting in a positive pregnancy test, here’s a tip: take a break, relax, and enjoy a little vino over a romantic candlelit dinner. Or, how about a weekend getaway? Life can be overwhelming at times, so reconnecting emotionally is vital to a well-balanced, loving relationship.

As you jump-start your second baby-making journey and wait for the stork to come knocking at your door again, remember that no matter what happens, you still have your first child to cherish.

Babies are gifts. They’re truly little miracles. And despite amazing advances in reproductive research and procedures, how they come to be still remains a mystery.

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

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Try arctic char. Arctic char, also known as sea trout, has a similar color, flavor, and cooking method as salmon. Reasonably priced, this fish is often responsibly farmed. At Léman, we season and roast the tender fillets, then brush them with a tangy honey butter when they are piping hot. Served with steamed grains, roasted veggies, and sliced chives on top, and you have a beautiful, healthful weeknight meal.

Go for clams and mussels. Great-quality, farmed mussels and clams are widely available. You can steam



the shellfish up in an infinite number of ways. The cooking process produces a beautiful broth that is perfect for pouring over linguine or mopping up with good bread.

Solve your seafood dilemma. Many families are split on liking seafood. A great way to solve this is to make a recipe that can use either

fish or chicken. Barramundi, tilapia, mahi mahi, or chicken breast all work well with a lemon-caper brown butter sauce. You never know, you may even convert a non-fish eater! (Recipe follows.)

Skip the fish, keep the sea. Seaweed is gaining popularity in the U.S. by the minute, and with great reason. Packed with vitamins and minerals, edible plants from the sea are delicious! Miso soup relies on kombu, or edible seaweed, for depth of flavor. Seaweed salads, made from wakame or hijiki, are a perfect addition to dinner or lunch. And don't forget the easy-to-find crunchy seaweed snacks that are popular with kids and adults alike.

Canned tuna transformation. There are many excellent quality oil-packed canned tuna options available. Canned tuna can be used as a garnish in a vegetable-packed classic tuna Niçoise salad. Boiled baby potatoes, steamed French green beans, black Niçoise olives with white wine vinaigrette are the perfect bed for some flaked-up, oil-packed tuna. If you are like me and love anchovies, you can lay a few of those on top, too.

Joanna DeVita, executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School, is an accomplished chef from New York. After graduating from the University of Maryland in 2002, she pursued her dream of becoming a chef by enrolling in the French Culinary Institute in lower Manhattan. In addition to making her way from line cook to executive chef through various restaurants and catering companies in New York City, she has worked at an organic farm in Australia and at restaurants in Spain and Ireland. DeVita is the mother of two (ages 5 and 2) and loves nothing more than spending time with them in the outdoors and sharing her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking with her family.

Seared fish fillets or chicken breast with lemon-caper brown butter

INGREDIENTS:

- 4, 5–7 ounce white fish fillets such as Barramundi, tilapia or mahi mahi, skin off
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, tenders removed
- 2 tbs vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- fresh ground black pepper to taste
- salt to taste
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter

- 2 tbs capers (rinsed if salt-packed, drained otherwise)
- juice of 1/2 a lemon
- 1 tbs chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS: Season fillets (fish or chicken) well with salt and fresh ground pepper. Prepare ingredients for sauce by cutting up butter, chopping parsley, squeezing lemon juice, and draining capers. Mix the flour with cayenne pepper, black pepper, garlic powder, and salt. Dredge fillets in flour, then shake off excess flour. Heat a large sauté pan on high heat with vegetable oil until oil shimmers, becomes "loose" and smokes only slightly.

Gently lay fillets, presentation side down, into the hot pan. Do not move fillets. Lower the flame to medium

and allow a crust to form. Flip fillets over after three to four minutes. They should be golden-dark brown. Cook fish fillets until a knife-point easily pierces through. Cook chicken until internal temperature reaches 165-degrees Fahrenheit (you may need to finish in the oven).

In a fresh sauté pan, melt butter cubes. When butter foams up, lower the heat and watch closely. The butter solids will begin to brown and smell toasted. Swish the butter around in the pan so it cooks evenly. When butter solids are nicely brown add capers, parsley, and lemon juice and turn off the heat. Taste the sauce and adjust for seasoning. Pour sauce over cooked fillets. Serve with potatoes or rice pilaf and broccoli.




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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Early menopause

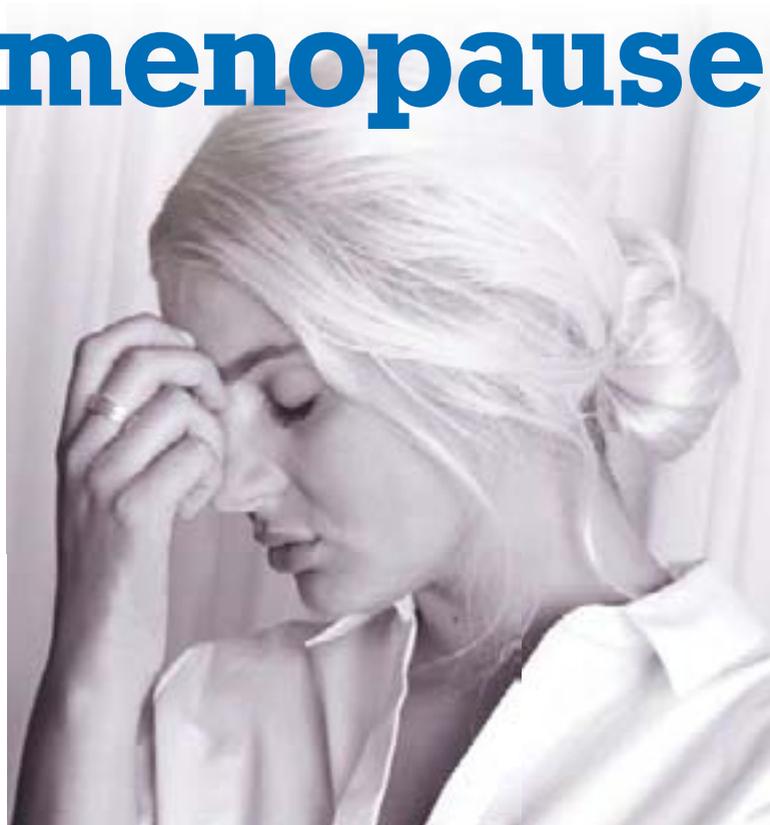
Susan Deakin dropped her middle schooler off at school one morning and headed for the pharmacy. Staring at the pregnancy tests, she felt nervous. At age 42, she hadn't been pregnant in more than a decade and thought her days of raising babies were over for good, but not having had a period in eight weeks could only mean one thing. The test was negative, so she bought another a few days later, which was also negative, and a trip to her doctor brought her news she simply was not ready to hear.

"You may be menopausal! That's what my doctor told me, and I thought he was surely joking," she says. "I'm young. My period has always been like clockwork and I feel fine."

"The average [age] in the United States is 51, but it can occur between 40-60," explains Dr. Shirazian, assistant professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the NYU Langone Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health. "Before age 40 it is diagnosed as primary ovarian insufficiency."

Primary ovarian insufficiency is considered premature menopause, and it may have a specific cause, which can be autoimmune or infection specific. Other possible reasons for premature menopause include having had chemotherapy treatment, having a hysterectomy (which springs a woman into instant menopause), smoking, and a history of premature menopause in the family. So at age 42, Susan was technically not experiencing menopause prematurely, even though it was younger than the average age of 51.

There is no one definitive test to diagnose menopause; the official diagnostic criteria states that a woman must have not had a menstrual period in 12 consecutive months. However, it may be a good idea to have certain hormones tested. The Mayo Clinic recommends that women have these tests: follicle-stimulating hormone, estrogen, and thyroid-stimulating hormone. Follicle-stimulating hormone levels increase and estradiol levels decrease as menopause occurs, and an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) can cause symptoms similar to those of menopause.



Sonia Rodriguez of Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, was 44 when she thought she might be going through menopause because she had not had a period in five months and was not pregnant. "I was convinced my periods were over, and I felt awful, from everything I heard about menopause being so terrible. I had migraines and was extremely fatigued, so I thought that menopause could be starting, but my doctor took a blood test and called a few days later saying I had hypothyroidism, which was probably causing my menstrual irregularities. She gave me medication and my periods came back."

Signs and symptoms of menopause include irregular periods (very heavy, longer or shorter than usual), vaginal dryness, hot flashes, night sweats, sleep problems, mood changes, and weight gain.

Dr. Shirazian points out that although there is nothing inherently unusual with menopause occurring in early 40s, women should be make sure they are not suffering from "bone loss or bone decline, which tends to occur with a decline in estrogen." If a woman would like to boost herself through the use of supplements once menopause hits, Dr. Shirazian says "virtually all supple-

ments are good that include calcium and vitamin B. For symptom relief, evening primrose oil works well."

The vast majority of women report symptoms and up to 70 percent of women experience hot flashes for years, but there are those few who do not. Some women experience no symptoms other than the absence of a monthly period.

"I felt fine throughout," says Susan, who has not had a period in three years and is considered to have fully reached menopause. "Once I knew I wasn't pregnant and got over the shock that menopause was probably happening, I was actually relieved. I didn't have any debilitating symptoms and I honestly don't miss my period at all!"

If you are having missed periods or symptoms of menopause, don't make assumptions. The only way to find out exactly what is happening is to see your doctor. Search for doctors that specialize in hormonal testing and menopause.

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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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Help your kids be more responsible

One of the most common questions I get asked from parents is about responsibility. How can we inspire, help, and empower our kids to be more responsible? The exciting part about this topic is that it does not matter how old your child is — it is never too late to start.

So what if parents have been doing too much for their kids — how does a parent start to change this habit? The following three tips will help get you thinking. If you need more tips or help with this, I go into much more detail on this topic in my resource “Analyze Your Teen: 4 Part-3 Hour Audio-File Series.” In fact, one part (nearly one hour) is dedicated to this challenging topic. But here are three tips to get you started:

Make a list

Set apart some time, sit down with your partner, and make a list of things that you are doing that should be your kids’ responsibilities (i.e. making lunches, doing laundry, calling teachers, applying for part-time jobs for them).

Compare notes to see what you have on your list and what your partner has on his. You may be surprised just how many items you have written down.

Prioritize

Talk it out with your partner and choose the top one to two jobs or responsibilities that you want to start giving to your kids. Be sure to start with simpler (and easier) jobs and work up to the more difficult ones.

When we are trying to pass responsibilities to our kids, we don’t want to overwhelm them (this demotivates behavior), so start with simpler jobs first.



Talk with your child in a loving way

Once you and your partner have decided on the key items you want to start passing over to your children (i.e. they are now responsible for making their own bed or lunch), you want to make sure you raise this with your kids in a positive and loving way. Ninety-three percent of communication is the “how” not the “what.” Yes, it’s important to use the right words, but really pay attention to how you communicate it.

If a parent says, “Okay, son, I’ve had enough of doing everything, so I’m passing these jobs to you,” immediately a teen will get defensive.

However, if a parent says, “Honey, I need to apologize. I realize that I have been doing too much because of my own issues (i.e. my need for control) and I realize that it’s really not helping you or me. So I’ve thought of a great plan that will mean I nag you less, I’ll be more happy, relaxed, and easygoing, and you’ll feel even better about yourself,” you’ll get their attention.

Start with easier responsibilities first. For many things, allow the natu-

ral consequences to happen (i.e. if your son doesn’t do his laundry, he has no clean clothes). Remember not to rescue your kids!

Here’s the golden rule: If a child can do something, you let her do it (i.e. my 8-year-old twins can pick up their toys, so that’s now their job, not mine). Teens can physically do laundry or make their lunches, so that should be their responsibility, not the parents’.

Once you pull back and you see your kids moving forward, praise, praise, praise! Once your child or teen hears your praise, sees you more relaxed, and is now experiencing how great it feels to be fully responsible over something, this is the positive reinforcement they need to continue!

Dr. Karyn Gordon is one of North America’s leading relationship and parenting experts. She is a regular contributor to “Good Morning America,” founder of dk Leadership, best-selling author of “Dr. Karyn’s Guide To The Teen Years” (Harper Collins), and motivational speaker to a quarter of a million people. Visit her at www.dkleadership.org and on Twitter: @DrKarynGordon.

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Calendar

FEBRUARY



The Martians have landed!

The Martians have landed at the Children's Museum of Manhattan on Feb. 22 in *Spaceships and Martians*.

On Feb. 20, 1962, NASA launched one of the most important flight missions in American history. Astronaut John Glenn successfully circled the Earth three times in four hours and 56 minutes, reaching speeds of more than 1,700 miles an hour!

If you were to take a trip into space, what would you hope to see? Come build your own spaceship at Children's Museum of Manhattan.

Spaceships and Martians, Feb. 22 from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Free with museum admission.

Children's Museum of Manhattan [212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway, (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org].

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Calendar

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Send your listing request to 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!

MON, FEB. 1

IN MANHATTAN

Gallery workshop: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Young artists 5 and older will work on a collaborative weaving inspired by the works of Jackson Pollock's splatter designs.

THURS, FEB. 4

IN MANHATTAN

Gallery workshop: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Inspired by Alicia Scardetta's use of over-sized cords, young artists will create simple weaves, which will then be run through the press to create a textured print of their creation! For children 5 years and older.

Autism Awareness Speaker Series: Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, 30 W. 68th Street; (212) 877-4050; www.swfs.org; 7 pm; \$18.

Mike Hickey, national president of American Special Hockey Association, and Erica Dubno, Special Olympics, discuss the role of sports in communities for individuals on the autism spectrum.

FRI, FEB. 5

IN MANHATTAN

Winter Carnival: Bank of America Winter Village in Bryant Park, West 40th Street and Fifth Avenue; wintervillage.org/visit/wintercarnival; Noon-10 pm; Free.

Bundle up and come on out for the second annual Winter Carnival at Bank of America Winter Village! Have fun in the frosty weather and join in for a celebration of the winter season. This jam-packed weekend features dancing,



'Red' in the big city

She's hip, she's cool, and she's at the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre in Central Park. "Little Red's Hood" is running from Feb. 2 to April 29.

Little Red is a smart, young, city slicker who is too focused on her smartphone to notice her surroundings. Wulfric is a misunderstood wolf with a sweet tooth. When Little Red travels from New York City to the country to deliver some cupcakes to her grandma, she encounters a colorful cast of characters as Wulfric the Wolf tries to head her off at the pass.

This fresh re-telling of the clas-

sic tale is just right for city-slicker kids ages 3 to 9 years old.

"Little Red's Hood," Feb. 2 through April 29; Tuesdays through Fridays at 10:30 am and noon; Saturdays and Sundays at 1 pm; after March 2 an additional show is added to Wednesdays at 2:30 pm. There will be special hours the weeks of Feb. 15-19 and again April 25-29 with added performances at 11 am and 1 pm on Fridays. Tickets are \$10 and \$7 for children under 12 years old.

Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater [W. 79th Street and West Drive in Central Park, (212) 988-9093; www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts].

curling lessons, ice golf, live skating, musical performances, and more.

Gallery workshop: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 and older inspired by Susan Beallor-Snyder's loops and knots, will try their hand at the art of macrame. Tie knots to create twists and turns and elaborate pieces of art. As Snyder lets the work determine where she goes, so will young artists by letting their fingers guide them to their finished creation.

SAT, FEB. 6

IN MANHATTAN

Valentine Workshop: Battery Park

City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; bpcparks.org; 11 am to 1:30 pm; Free.

Make your own valentine with dried lavender, rose petals, and other fragrances from the garden. Materials provided pre-registration is required. For children 5 and older.

Family Activity Day: Morris-Jumel Mansion, 65 Jumel Terrace at W. 162nd St.; (212) 923-8008; education@morrisjumel.org; 11 am to 2 pm; Free with admission to the museum.

In celebration of Black History Month, costumed historian Cheyney McKnight (of Not Your Momma's History) will bring Morris-Jumel Mansion's Colonial Kitchen to life as she speaks about African influences on colonial cooking. There will be things to taste and lots to learn! Advanced registration is recommended.

Tiger Tales: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$15 (\$13 members).

Wily Grandma Bunny teaches the young animals of the jungle how to survive under the reign of a tyrannical carnivore. There will be shadow puppetry, Chinese music, and a big screen to create four humorous and allegorical tales for all ages.

Winter Carnival: Noon-10 pm. Bank of America Winter Village in Bryant Park. See Friday, Feb. 5.

At the Kids' Table: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; 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/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, FEB. 7

IN MANHATTAN

All Aboard! Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Pl. at First Place; (646) 437-4202; www.mjhnyc.org; 10:30 am; \$8 (Free for children and grandchildren of members).

Pick up your passport and get your tickets at this hands-on workshop. Board the boat and watch a new original play based on the PJ Library story, "When Jessie Came Across the Sea."

Astronomy: North Side of the Great Lawn - Central Park, 85th Street Mid Central Park; (212) 628-2345; 7 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe. Astronomy programs feature the use of telescopes and binoculars to observe specific astronomical events. Many programs feature astronomy experts and all equipment is provided. For older children.

MON, FEB. 8

IN MANHATTAN

Holiday hours: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 11 am - 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Continued on page 42

Continued from page 41

The museum will be open to the public to enjoy an extra hour to explore the museum and workshops! The Wee Arts Studio will open at noon. Want to enjoy the Wee Arts Studio earlier in the day? Join the Wee Arts Drop In Class from 10:45 am to noon.

Somewhere a Place for Us: University Settlement, 184 Eldridge St.; (212) 453-4555; 7 pm; Free.

Dynamic and diverse artists creatively respond to the lyrics of "Somewhere" and offer visions of the New York they would like to build. This performance is part of the Share Series, a bimonthly salon honoring artists at all stages of development on one equal platform. Presented by University Settlement and the Carnegie Hall Share Series.

THURS, FEB. 11

IN MANHATTAN

Greeting Card workshop: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 4-6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Join Rachel Rutstein of Creative Kids Care for a special card-making workshop inspired by the theme "What does love mean to you?" in the Valentine's Day spirit!

SAT, FEB. 13

IN MANHATTAN

Elizabeth Mitchell: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$18 (\$15 members).

The artist and her family band perform songs by Woody Guthrie, Bob Marley, The Velvet Underground, Vashti Bunyan, Gillian Welch, and more.

Chocolate Day: Morris-Jumel Mansion, 65 Jumel Terrace at W. 162nd

Honor Black History

It's a Family Activity Day at Morris-Jumel Mansion on Feb. 6.

In celebration of Black History Month, costumed historian Cheyney McKnight (of Not Your Momma's History) will bring Morris-Jumel Mansion's colonial kitchen to life as she speaks about African influences on colonial cooking.

There will be things to taste and

lots to learn!

Advanced registration is recommended.

Family Activity Day, Feb. 6 from 11 am to 2 pm. Free with museum admission.

Morris-Jumel Mansion [65 Jumel Terrace at W. 162nd Street in Harlem, (212) 923-8008, education@morrisjumel.org].



St.; (212) 923-8008; education@morrisjumel.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; \$35 (\$25 members).

Discover the joys of chocolate. Executive Director Carol Ward and Assistant Curator Kelsey Brow will discuss all things chocolate, from the history of its consumption to the ways and means of the chocolate pot. Tastings, of course, will be included. Advanced registration is required.

Ice Festival: Naumburg Bandshell in Central Park, 72nd Street and Fifth Avenue; (212) 310-6600; 3 pm to 7 pm; Free.

The Conservancy's fifth-annual event features ice-carving artists from Okamoto Studio. Revel among colorful lights as the Mall becomes a vibrant silent disco with live DJs. Dress warmly.

SUN, FEB. 14

IN MANHATTAN

"Sammy Spider's First Mitzvah - The Musical": 92Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. at E. 91st Street; (212) 415-5500; www.92y.org; 4 pm; \$5.

Join us as Sammy Spider learns what it means to care for others — and how we all have something to contribute — in this original, one-time-only perfor-

mance. Sing along and clap your hands as Sammy makes the audience part of the story! Meet Sammy and the rest of the cast after the show. For families with children ages 8 and under.

MON, FEB. 15

IN MANHATTAN

Holiday hours: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 10 am - 4 pm; Free with Museum Admission.

The museum will be open to the public to enjoy an extra hour to explore the museum and workshops! The Wee Arts Studio will open at noon. Want to enjoy the Wee Arts Studio earlier in the day? Join the Wee Arts Drop In Class from 10:45 am to noon.

Kids' week: Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum, Pier 86, W. 46th St. and 12th Avenue; (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org; 10 am - 5 pm; general admission.

Kids' week will focus on the extreme environments of our universe, from the chilly polar ice caps to the surfaces of distant exoplanets! Including science demos, live animals, and interactive dis-

plays that the whole family will enjoy. Check out the schedule of events, now available on our website.

TUES, FEB. 16

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' week: 10 am - 5 pm. Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

WED, FEB. 17

IN MANHATTAN

Kids' week: 10 am - 5 pm. Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

THURS, FEB. 18

IN MANHATTAN

Holiday hours: 10 am - 4 pm. Children's Museum of Manhattan. See Monday, Feb. 15.

Kids' week: 10 am - 5 pm. Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

FRI, FEB. 19

IN MANHATTAN

Holiday hours: 10 am - 4 pm. Children's Museum of Manhattan. See Monday, Feb. 15.

Kids' week: 10 am - 5 pm. Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

Ladysmith Black Mambazo: The Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. and Sixth Avenue; (212) 840-2824; 8 pm; \$45 and up.

Uplifting vocal harmonies inviting the younger generation to join in their mission, passing along the tradition of storytelling and spreading their message of peace, love, and harmony to millions of people.



Oh so funny Valentines

The yucks just keep on coming at the Gotham Comedy Club when the up-and-coming comics of Kids 'N Comedy perform on Feb. 28.

Love and heartbreak is on tap for the month of love. Kids 'N Comedy present the facts on what it is to be a teenager in love! The passed notes, the stolen glances, the anxiety-ridden first dates and oh-my-gosh his hand is sweaty, how long am I supposed to hold it, and do I text him tomorrow or does that seem desperate!? Some-

times your first love is the kid who sits behind you in History, sometimes it's Black Widow from the Avengers (don't judge). Either way, it's always funnier to hear someone else talk about it, and, oh, these comedians will!

Kids 'N Comedy on Feb. 28 at 1 pm. Admission is \$15 plus one item minimum.

Gotham Comedy Club [208 W. 23rd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in Chelsea, (212) 877-6115; www.kidsncomedy.com].

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

SAT, FEB. 20

IN MANHATTAN

Eagles soar: Payson Center at Inwood Hill Park, Payson Avenue and Dyckman Street; (212) 628-2345; 9 am-10:30 am; Free.

Urban Rangers will guide you to the best wildlife viewing spots in the urban jungle. We offer birding programs throughout the year. Birding programs are appropriate for all skill levels and beginners are welcome. This program will focus on eagles. Dress appropriately for the weather. This program will include making observations along the shorelines of the Hudson River.

Kids' week: 10 am - 5 pm. Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum. See Monday, Feb. 15.

George Washington's Birthday Bash: Morris-Jumel Mansion, 65 Jumel Terrace at W. 162nd St.; (212) 923-8008; education@morrisjumel.org; 11 am to 2 pm; Free with admission to the museum.

Come celebrate George Washington's birthday at his only Manhattan headquarters during the Revolutionary War! We will be making a special George-inspired craft. At 1 pm we will have a special tour about Washington's time in the mansion. Advanced registration is recommended.

Family Dancing: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am and 2 pm; \$15 (\$13 members).

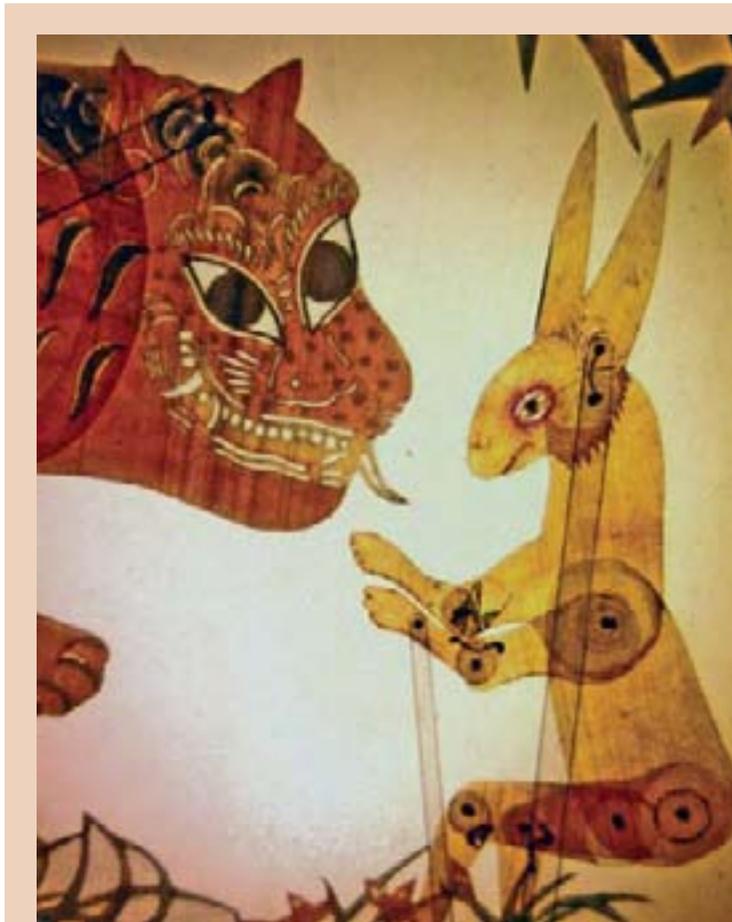
From head spins to windmills, and from six-step to the trusty pop and lock, prepare the kids for a unique program of jaw-dropping break dance action from Manzana City Crew, a collective of artists based in New York City. Kids will join company members on-stage to try out their own moves in an engaging and fast-moving atmosphere of fun. A sold-out event every year, this company of four young high-energy, super athletic performers returns to rock the Upper West Side with two performance times.

MON, FEB. 22

IN MANHATTAN

Space ships and Martians: Children's Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

On Feb. 20, 1962, NASA launched one of the most important flight missions in American History. Astronaut John Glenn successfully circled the Earth three times in four hours and 56 minutes, reaching speeds more than 1,700 miles an hour! If you were to take a trip into space, what would you



Chinese puppet show

Celebrate the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Monkey, with a production of "Tiger Tales" at Symphony Space on Feb. 6.

Presented by the Chinese Theatre Works, this puppet show tells the tale of Wily Grandma Bunny and how she teaches the young animals of the jungle how to survive under the reign of the carniv-

ore. The show weaves shadow puppetry, Chinese music, and a big screen to create the humorous and allegorical tales.

"Tiger Tales," Feb. 6 at 11 am and 2 pm; tickets are \$15.

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

hope to see? Come build your own spaceship!

SAT, FEB. 27

IN MANHATTAN

Gustafer Yellowgold Show: Symphony Space, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 864-5400; www.symphonyspace.org; 11 am; \$18 (\$15 members).

The show features live music, colored-pencil animations, and storytelling. With its unique crossover appeal, the show has been the wild-card opening act for Wilco and The Polyphonic

Spree. Gustafer the character is a friendly creature who came to Earth from the sun and is living an explorer's life in a slightly psychedelic version of the Minnesota woods. This year's show will include new songs and visuals from the latest Gustafer Yellowgold album and video release *Dark Pie Concerns*.

SUN, FEB. 28

IN MANHATTAN

Gotham Comedy: Gotham Comedy Club, 208 W. 23rd Street; (212) 877-6115; www.kidsncomedy.com; 1 pm; \$15 plus one item minimum.

Love and heartbreak is on tap for the month of love. Kids 'N Comedy present the facts on what it is to be a teenager in love! The passed notes, the stolen glances, the anxiety-ridden first dates, and oh-my-gosh his hand is sweaty, how long am I supposed to hold it, and do I text him tomorrow or does that seem desperate!?

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

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

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

Annual train show: Grand Central Terminal, 42nd Street and Park Avenue; web.mta.info/mta/museum/#general; Weekdays, 8 am to 8 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now - 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.

New York City 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 - 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.

The Titanosaur: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 11 am to 5 pm; 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 residing on the fourth floor. This giant herbivore belongs to a group known as titanosaurs, and weighed about 70 tons.

Accessible Arts Initiative: Child
Continued on page 44

Continued from page 43

Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Mondays and Wednesdays, Noon-5 pm, Thursdays and Fridays, Noon-6 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am - 5 pm; Free.

The museum is beginning a pilot year of the program, which will enable any child with a disability and his caregiver admission to programs in exchange for feedback to help strengthen museum-wide programs. Registration is required.

Winter Games: Ballfields, West Street between Murray and Warren streets; (212) 267-9700; bpcparks.org/whats-here/parks/ball-fields; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 3:30 pm to 5 pm, Now - Mon, Feb. 29; Free.

Keep active outdoors and play soccer, flag-football, hockey and more. For children 7 years and older. Equipment provided.

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

Through comic books, original drawings, posters, video clips, costumes, early merchandise, and props, Superheroes in Gotham will tell the story of comic book superheroes in New York City.

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

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.



Photo by Erika Kapin

Extreme universe

Come explore the extremes at the Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum during Kids' Week, Feb. 15 through 19.

This year, children can learn about extreme environments from the polar regions to the deserts, from Earth to the Moon, Mars, and beyond. Staff will highlight the most exciting atmospheres in the universe through hands-on

activities, presentations, and special guest appearances.

Kids' Week, Feb. 15 through 19, 10 am to 5 pm. Events are free with general museum admission.

For exact times and schedules visit the museum's website.

Intrepid Sea Air and Space Museum [Pier 86 at W. 46th Street and 12th Avenue in Hell's Kitchen, (212) 245-0072; www.intrepidmuseum.org]

Silicon City - Computer History

Made in New York: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays - Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 am - 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am - 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am - 5 pm, Now - 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.

"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 - 6 pm, Fridays, 10 am - 8 pm, Sundays, 11 am - 5 pm, Now - Sun, March 20; Free with museum admission.

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 that have been linked to it. In addition, this exhibition will showcase other 14th- and early 15th-century Italian panels.

"Little Red's Hood": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, W. 79th and West Drive; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and Noon, Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Noon 2:30 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Tues, Feb. 2 - Fri, April 29; \$10 (\$7 for children under 12).

Little Red is a smart, young, city slicker who is too focused on her smartphone to notice her surroundings. When Little Red travels from New York City to the country to deliver some

cupcakes to her grandma, she encounters a colorful cast of characters as Wulfric the Wolf tries to head her off at the pass. Suitable for children 3 to 9 years old.

Little New-Yorkers: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30 pm; 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.

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

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.

Teen night: Battery Park City, 6 River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; bpcparks.org; Fridays, 4 pm to 7 pm, Now - Fri, April 8; Free.

Teens enjoy chilling and games with friends.

Macy's story time: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Sundays, 11:30 am; 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 illustrator 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; Sundays, Noon-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.

Vacation week: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; Saturday-Sunday, Feb. 13-21, 10 am; Free with museum admission.

Enjoy special events including a presidential superheroes storytime; "The Amazing Spider-Man"; the Trial of Typhoid Mary President's Day trivia; and Civil War Minecraft.

Winter wonderland

Have fun and enjoy a Winter Carnival at Bryant Park on Feb. 5 and 6.

Bundle up and come on out for the second annual party at Bank of America Winter Village!

Have fun in the frosty weather and join in for a celebration of the winter season. This jam-packed weekend features dancing, curl-

ing lessons, ice golf, live skating, and musical performances, and more.

Winter Carnival, Feb. 5 and 6 from noon to 10 pm. Free (some activities require a fee).

Bank of America Winter Village in Bryant Park [W. 40th Street and Fifth Avenue; <http://wintervillage.org/visit/wintercarnival>].

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Delicious romance

It's all about the LOVE this Valentine's Day! Wishing everyone a Valentine's Day filled with romance, roses, and, of course, lots of deLysscious chocolates. Valentine's Day in New York City can be very magical and romantic. There are so many fabuLyss things to do on with and without the children.

Spend a beautiful evening with someone special this Valentine's Day in The Carlyle Hotel. Book a

room and take a "staycation." Since this Valentine's Day falls on a Sunday, you can choose from a matinee or evening Broadway show. "An American in Paris," "Beautiful," and "The Color Purple" are just a few that I love.

But if you really want to splurge on that special someone, get tickets to see "Hamilton." This would make it one Valentine's Day you would never forget. We can't stop

listening to the music and singing all of the songs in my apartment.

Take a horse and carriage tour in Central Park with or without the kids. Make sure to stop into the Plaza Food Hall before or after for some deLysscious treats. Some of my favorites are La Maison du Chocolat, Billy's Bakery, and of course, Lady M. You can always make a reservation at the Palm Court in the Plaza Hotel for high tea.

I always love having the kids make something handmade for my husband, grandparents, and teachers. This is a time for them to unplug and get creative. This year I have some fun ideas for them, including taking them to PhotoOp on the Upper East Side for a photo session (www.photoopnyc.com). Once we have the photos I am going to have the kids decorate the picture frames with glitter glue, paint, and markers. I want them to personalize each frame for their loved ones.

We will also make some handmade chocolate lollipops in the shapes of hearts, lips, and flowers.

Wishing everyone a sweet Valentine's Day with their loved ones!

Lyss Stern is the founder of DivaLysscious Moms (www.divamoms.com).

DeLysscious Valentine's Day sugar cookies

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 4-2/3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup pale-pink or white sanding sugar (optional)
- Petal dust in pink, orange, and violet tones (optional)
- 2/3 cup apricot or strawberry jam, slightly warmed (optional)

DIRECTIONS: In bowl of electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar until fluffy, about four minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Sift flour, baking soda, and salt into large bowl.

On low speed, gradually add flour mixture to mixer bowl, alternating with buttermilk, until combined. Wrap dough in plastic; chill until firm, one hour or overnight.

To color white sanding sugar, if using, place a few tablespoons in a small bowl. Mix in petal dust with a toothpick, a bit at a time, until desired shade is reached. Colored sanding sugar will last indefinitely.

Heat oven to 350-degrees with two racks centered. Line two baking

sheets with parchment paper. On lightly floured surface, roll chilled dough 1/8 inch thick. Cut out hearts using any 1- to 3 1/2-inch heart cookie cutters. If desired, cut centers out of some hearts.

Transfer with spatula to baking sheets. Chill for 30 minutes. Sprinkle with sanding sugar, if using. Bake until just golden but not too brown, about 10 minutes.

Transfer cookies to rack. Continue with dough; reroll scraps.

To make sandwich hearts: Brush bottom heart lightly with jam; cover with a second heart with center cut out; jam will adhere hearts. Fill cut-out area with more jam.

From <http://www.marthastewart.com/354106/valentine-cookies>



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