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20



32



38



30

FEATURES

- 6 Time to read**
This whole family is going to hit the books
BY LISA A. BEACH
- 8 A quiet problem**
Ten tips for parents with shy children
BY DENISE YEARIAN
- 10 Stitching together character**
Lessons from a childhood sewing contest —
and my mother's words of wisdom
BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN
- 20 Homework star**
Ten tips for parents to make homework a
home run
BY DENISE YEARIAN
- 30 From A to ZZZs**
Important info linking shut-eye to great
grades
BY MALIA JACOBSON
- 32 Finding her shtick**
A Brooklyn comedian's journey to
mommyhood
BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

CALENDAR

- 38 September Events**

COLUMNS

- 18 FabuLYSS Finds**
BY LYSS STERN
- 22 Dear Teacher**
BY PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS
- 34 Ask an Attorney**
BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.
- 35 Divorce & Separation**
BY LEE CHABIN, ESQ.
- 36 Just Write Mom**
BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN
- 44 Tips for Feeding Kids**
BY JOANNA DEVITA
- 46 New & Noteworthy**
BY LISA J. CURTIS

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- 12 Classes and Enrichment
Directory**
- 24 School Choices Directory**
- 45 The Marketplace**

Screen time, families, and children

I get in the elevator in my office building and I'm the only one not looking down at my smart phone. I drive the streets of our city and narrowly avoid pedestrians looking down at their screens instead of looking where they're going. I've seen moms crossing streets with strollers and simultaneously looking down at their device. No matter how often the dangers of driving and texting are pointed out, we still have people ignoring the warnings and inviting accidents and possible death. We are screen people without a doubt.



I've been asking the question about how all of this is affecting our children. It seems that most American children actually spend more

time consuming electronic media than they do in school, according to Common Sense Media. Anya Kamenetz did a wonderful piece on this topic for NPR that caught my ear the other day and prompted me to download it.

Some of the facts she pointed out are that tweens log 4 1/2 hours of screen time a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. For teens, it's even higher; nearly seven hours a day. And that doesn't include time spent using devices for school or in school.

Digital devices are more integral every year, with research available to support both the benefits as well as the dangers. Anya writes that the American Academy of Pediatrics

plans to update its guidelines on media use later this year. Current recommendations are to avoid all screens for children under 2, and to allow a maximum of two hours per day of high-quality material for older children. I would like to repeat that line about avoiding all screens for children under 2. How often I've seen tablet devices propped up in front of babies in restaurants, apparently to pacify them into silence so the parents can enjoy their dinner.

Parents have to set the example and, personally, one sees far too many parents concentrating on their own screens rather than on their children. It used to be they were merely talking on the phone, now they are also scrolling and texting. This kind of distraction takes away precious time for focus on the children and supervision/guidance.

It's something for us all to consider. Are we reading books anymore? Are we engaging in enough physical activity or are we sitting in front of some kind of screen? Are our kids getting enough exercise or are they also sitting on their backsides too much? If those hours logged are correct, then they certainly are not. We need to address that quickly, especially as school begins and new patterns emerge after the summer vacation.

Thanks for reading.

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Time to read

This whole family is going to hit the books

BY LISA A. BEACH

Back when my two boys were younger, we read books every single day. Reading was as much a part of our daily rhythm as eating. We'd snuggle on the couch to read picture books. We'd read during breakfast if we were eating by ourselves. We'd read on the back porch and in the car and even in the pool.

We filled bookshelves in almost every room with mysteries, classic literature, poetry, trivia books, biog-

raphies, historical fiction, and lots of non-fiction catered to the boys' ever-changing interests. And we practically lived at our public library during our homeschool years, borrowing dozens of books a week to feed our voracious book habit.

But then, technology slowly crept in and almost killed our passion.

One by one, screens sneaked into our lives, transfixing our attention with videos, GIFs, games, apps, memes, social media, and e-mail. Screen swipes replaced page turns. Bite-size online content replaced in-

depth magazine articles and real books.

And then I read a blog post by an author lamenting her lost love affair with books and how she's going to right that wrong this year. She decided to designate an entire day once a week to reading. This inspired me.

I love her idea and decided to steal it for our family, with a bit of a twist. As a busy family with work, school, homework, soccer, band, and more, we could never devote a whole day to reading as she does. But we could devote 30 minutes one night a week. If we could make time for an episode of "Modern Family" each week, we can surely squeeze in the same amount of time for reading.

With school back in session, it seems like the perfect time to institute Reading Night with our two boys. I can already envision the grumbling and eye-rolls when I tell them we're all (my husband and myself included) going to shut off our screens a little early one night a week to (gasp!) read a real, turn-the-page book. But as a parent, I know I've got to power through the typical resistance to get us back on the bookworm track.

I plan to start with a trip to the bookstore, so the boys could pick out a new book. (We've all got Kindles, but I want to go totally old-school.) My husband and I will probably choose from the many nonfiction books we own but haven't yet gotten around to reading. If all goes well, maybe we can even read and discuss the same book, like we did years ago with "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." (A mom can dream, can't she?)

For our first official Reading Night, I also plan to weave in a little post-reading treat, like popcorn or ice cream. I can get my boys to tolerate just about anything if there's a promise of junk food at the end.

But I'm up for the challenge because reading for pleasure is a habit worth fighting for in this technology-saturated world.

Lisa Beach is a freelance writer and recovering homeschool mom who lived to write about it. Read more of Lisa's articles at www.LisaBeachWrites.com and check out her humor blog at www.TweeniorMoments.com.



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A quiet problem



Ten tips for parents with shy children

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Childhood shyness is a common concern among parents, who fear their youngsters may lack self-confidence and lag behind in social development. But with preparation, practice, and patience, most reserved children can learn how to successfully navigate social situations and build meaningful relationships with peers. Here are 10 tips to help:

1. Start small: Expose your child to a variety of non-threatening, positive peer interactions from an early age. When he starts day care or school, begin with a small class or group size until he is ready to transition to a larger one. As group size grows, consider adult-child ratios to encourage positive peer interactions and reduce the chance of negative behaviors such as bullying, exclusion, and name calling.

2. Scope out settings: If possible, take your child to a new academic or extracurricular program before classes begin, so he can meet the teacher and get acquainted with the setting and routine.

3. Rally support: Let the teacher or caretaker know about your child's shyness, and stay in touch throughout the year to address problems that arise.

4. Home field advantage: Encourage at-home play dates to empower your child to take social risks and open up to his peers. Invite one friend over several times until your child feels comfortable interacting with him. Gradually increase the number to two or three children. Also, encourage your child to go to friends' houses to play.

5. Set the scene: Prepare your child for social gatherings to alleviate anxiety and fear of the unknown. This is particularly helpful with random events such as birthday parties and family reunions. Talk about what he will see and do, so he's well

informed. Present it in story form: "Tomorrow [child's name] is going to..." and tell your child the whole story, inserting his name. Then ask, "What other things might he see?" "What else might he do?"

6. Dress rehearsal: Role play different scenarios, such as meeting a new peer at school. Switch roles so your child can act out both situations. Or use dolls, action figures, or puppets, if you choose. Talk about how they are feeling. Repetition will build confidence.

7. Reach for resources: Read books to your child about others who overcame shyness and fear. These include, "Shy Charles" by Rosemary Wells, "Let's Talk About Being Shy" by Marianne Johnston, and "Little Miss Shy" by Roger Hargreaves, to name a few. Talk about the lesson in the story and how it applies to your child.

8. Listen up: Take time to listen to your child and understand his feelings and fears. Don't assume you know how he feels. He may be upset

because the setting is too loud, there are too many people, or it's too chaotic. You'll never know unless you listen. Validate his concerns and ask open-ended questions to encourage dialogue.

9. Get professional help: If your child's behavior persists past six months or increases, talk with your pediatrician to differentiate between temporary shyness and social anxiety disorder, which prevents children from normal social development.

10. Stay positive: When your child does engage in social scenes, offer positive reinforcement. Affirm his character and personality, and avoid chastising, teasing, or embarrassing him about his shy behavior. Remember, he may always be somewhat timid, but with preparation, practice, and loving patience, most children can learn to successfully navigate social situations.

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

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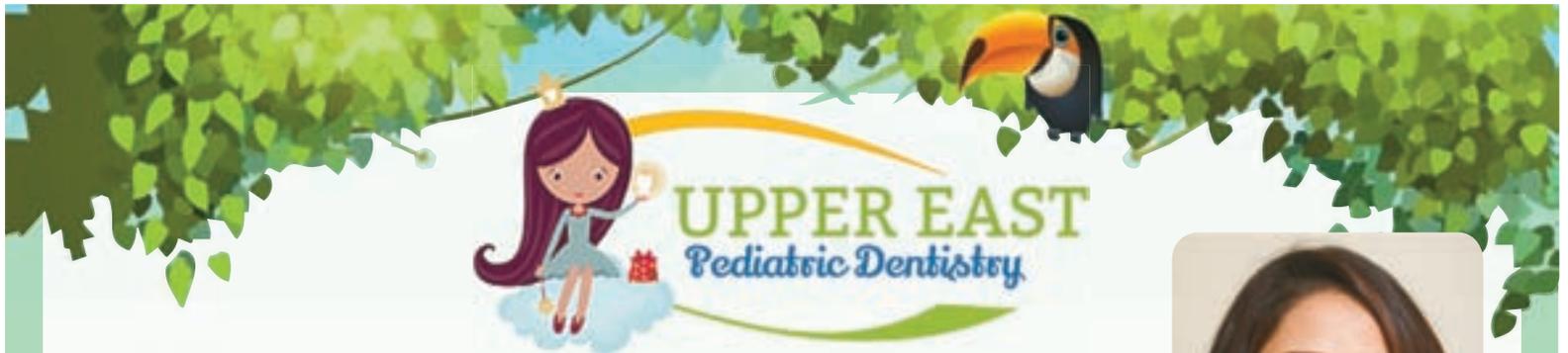
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Stitching together character

Lessons from a childhood sewing contest — and my mother's words of wisdom

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

One day in 1969, the county extension agent came to my fourth-grade class to tell the girls about a 4-H sewing contest. She gave us a list of rules and a registration form. I had watched my mother expertly transform piles of shapeless material into exquisitely crafted garments with her magic machine. Now I was going to make some magic of my own. I could not wait to get home and get started!

Ignoring my mother's warnings, I selected a material far more suitable for a party dress than an apron: pale, lavender organdy covered with delicate daisy appliqués. It was the most beautiful cloth I had ever seen.

Anxious to begin, I was disheartened to discover all the preliminary steps necessary to sew. Ironing the material, trimming the pattern, ironing the pattern, fitting the pattern to the material, pinning the pattern to the material, cutting the material according to the pattern, matching up the pieces and pinning them together — it was like assembling a limp puzzle. With pinpricked fingers, tired and sore from

heavy, pinking shears twice the size of my hand, I was finally ready to sew.

Having supervised my clumsy efforts through the preparatory measures, my mother cautiously introduced me to her prized Singer sewing machine.

Her fear that I might pierce

with the needle or sew a few inexperienced digits together was not lost on me. Nevertheless, she proceeded to instruct me on the process of inserting the bobbin, threading the needle, and gently pressing the lever that controlled the speed of the needle with the right knee while smoothly guiding the material under the tension foot to create an even seam. Describing this is so much easier than doing it!



Fortunately, my mother did not succumb to the temptation to protect me from possible disappointment by doing the work for me.

Hunched over the Singer cabinet, feet planted on the rung of the chair (so my knee would reach the lever), tongue placed firmly between my lips, eyes fixed on the pieces of material about to be joined, I made my first tentative stitches. A few days and some tears later, I completed my first sewing project. While recognizable as an apron, it was nothing like the exceptional creations my mother produced.

My initial enthusiasm for the contest was replaced by dread at the prospect of judges seeing those imperfect, wavy seams and that uneven hem. Sensing my weakening resolve, my mother carefully tied the freshly ironed apron around my waist. As I stood scrutinizing the reflection in the mirror, she tenderly shared her thoughts. Her exact words are lost to me now, but the gist of the message was this: Having the courage to try something new is more valuable than the outcome of a contest. If you are going to do something, do your best. Learning to do something well takes time and practice. Strive to make your best better as you go.

"You can be proud that you gave this your best effort, and that it's your work," she reassured me.

Fortunately, my mother did not succumb to the temptation to protect me from possible disappointment by doing the work for me. Nearly every generation of parents wants a better life for their children. They want to provide opportunities and advantages they did not have. Unfortunately, the word "better" often becomes confused with "easier." Making things easier can actually stifle development of desirable qualities. The challenge — to learn, to improve, to meet the

next challenge — propels us toward realizing our potential.

We can prepare our children to meet the challenges they will face with courage, enthusiasm, and determination:

Find tasks they can do. Children want to be useful. They feel valued when given opportunities to be helpful. Encourage their initiative by finding age-appropriate ways to include them in everyday tasks.

Take time to teach. Show them how to do what they are expected to do. Merely telling them is not sufficient. Give them a standard to work toward, but have realistic expectations for their early attempts.

Appreciate effort and recognize improvement. Express appreciation for their efforts to perform the task at hand. Provide assistance when necessary. Expect mistakes and offer guidance in correcting them. Keep examples or take pictures of their early attempts, so they can see their improvement over time.

Find the fun. Make the work environment pleasant. Listen to music, chat, tell jokes, share stories, sing while you are working. Remember this wise advice from Mary Poppins, "you find the fun, and snap, the job's a game!"

Strive for excellence. Discuss what excellence means and how to recognize it. Demonstrate or supply examples of excellence. Practice makes excellence. Help them recognize when they are doing their best and have achieved excellence so they can become their own best critic.

Learn something new. Let your children see you struggle. Let them see your progress. Don't be afraid to let them see you sweat!

My apron received the blue ribbon, primarily because the judges could tell a 9 year old made it. The ribbon has long since been misplaced, but I saved the apron along with the lessons my mother taught me. They have served me well in every facet of life.

Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman is a resident of Lexington, Ky. She has been married for 29 years and has two sons. 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. To contact her, please e-mail parent4life@yahoo.com.

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FIDI

25 Pine St, NYC

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www.physiqueswimming.com

The After School Aquatics program at the Pine Street School located, in the heart of the Financial District, is offered on Mondays and Wednesdays with instructional swim at Seahorse Aquatics. Students are bused from Pine Street School to the pool.

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Continued on page 16

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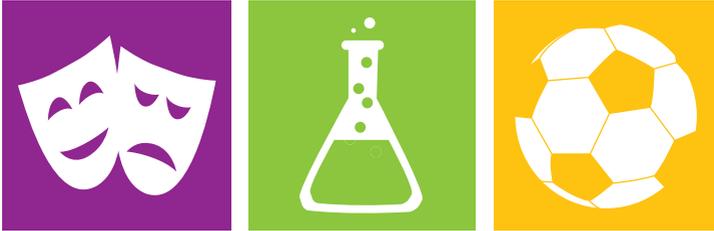
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www.NYParenting.com

Classes and Enrichment

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 14

ences for students and their families. Almost every tutoring package begins with a diagnostic or assessment to determine a student's strengths and areas of improvement. The team then uses these results to build a customized curriculum for each student. Try a session for only \$40! Contact one of the offices today by visiting our website and find out how.

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FABULYSS FINDS

LYSS STERN

Finding the fun in back-to-school time

I hope everyone had a fabuLyss summer making lots of memories to last a lifetime. My boys had the best summer at sleep-away camp, and the last few weeks before school we were beach bound.

Make the first day back to school special for your little one. I love shopping for back-to-school clothes and backpacks with my children. Get new notebooks, sticker books, agendas, pens, and much more.

Check out the brand ban.do for the cutest products ever. The sticky note set, “You’re Straight Up Magic,” is adorable and useful with a to-do list section, and seven others for their daily notes.

Want to make their notes even prettier? Consider the “Gel Yeah” pen set with five neon gel pens, one metallic gold gel pen, and one black with silver glitter gel pen. Their notes will look so good!

Also, if your students need to or-



ganize their day the old-fashioned way — on paper — look at the “I am Very Busy” agenda. All of ban.do’s products are so cute and affordable!

Visit www.bando.com.

Looking for a fabuLyssly fun new Broadway show?

Take the kids to see “Cats” now that it has returned to Broadway, and let the memory live again with your children.

“Cats” at Neil Simon Theatre (250 W. 52nd St. between Broadway and Eighth Avenue in Hell’s Kitchen, www.catsthemusical.com).

Diva Mom’s Book Club is back in September with another fabuLyss book. Jill Kargman, creator and star of Bravo’s “Odd Mom Out,” will be launching her new book, “Sprinkle Glitter on my Grave,” with us! On Monday, Sept. 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, Kargman will be signing books at the beautiful Armitron Showroom.

Jill Kargman at Armitron Showroom (411 Fifth Ave. between 37th and 38th streets in Korea Town) Monday, Sept. 12 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. RSVP @ Divamoms.com. Space is extremely limited.

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

Back-to-school deLysscious cookie recipe

My kids LOVE going back to school with personalized notes in their lunchbox and these sugar cookies from a Giada De Laurentiis recipe. (I confess that I only make the cookies for the first day of school. And then again for special occasions. Most of the other times they are store bought.)

INGREDIENTS:

Cookies:

- 1 (16.5-ounce) tube refrigerated sugar cookie dough (recommended: Pillsbury)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting

Frosting:

- 1 stick (4 ounces) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 1 pound powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup water, plus extra, as needed
- Assorted food coloring (see Cook’s Note)
- Special Equipment: assorted animal-shaped cookie cutters, about 4- to 5-inches long.
- Decorating suggestion: multi-colored sprinkles, colored decorating sugar, mini chocolate chips, small candies, mini marshmallows

DIRECTIONS:

For the cookies: Put an oven rack in the center of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350-degrees Fahrenheit. Line two baking sheets with parchment

paper and set aside.

In a medium bowl, combine the cookie dough and flour until smooth. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to 1/4-inch thick. Using animal-shaped cookie cutters, cut out shapes from the dough and arrange, about two-inches apart, on the prepared baking sheets. Form the scraps of dough into a ball, roll out to 1/4-inch thick, and continue to cut out animal shapes. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until the edges are lightly golden brown. Cool for two minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely, about 15 minutes.

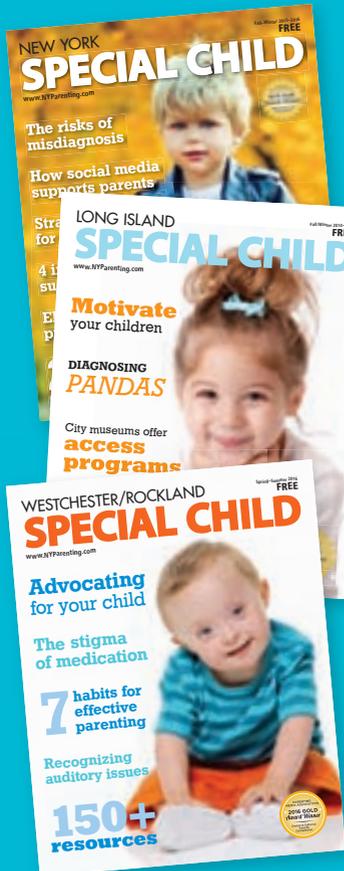
For the frosting: In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter until smooth, about 20 seconds. Add the powdered sugar, vanilla extract, and 1/4 cup water.

Beat on low speed until combined. Increase the speed to high and beat until the mixture is smooth, adding more water, as needed, one teaspoon at a time, until the frosting is spreadable.

Divide the frosting between three small bowls. Color the frosting by mixing in one drop of food coloring at a time, until the desired color is reached. Spread the frosting over the cooled cookies and decorate.

COOK’S NOTE: I suggest watching how to make this recipe online. Also, if using natural food coloring (such as Seelect brand), be sure to shake the bottle before adding the coloring to the frosting.

Recipe courtesy of Giada De Laurentiis: www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/animal-sugar-cookies-recipe.html



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Homework star

Ten tips
for parents
to make
homework a
home run

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Homework is an important component to a child's educational experience. To help families make the most of homework time, consider these tips:

1. Time it right

To find the best time to do homework, consider your schedule and your child's temperament and personality. Some kids need a break when they get home. Others lose steam if they don't do their assignments right away.

Try doing homework at different times to see where you have the greatest success. Then create a consistent routine based on what works best for your child.

2. My space

Children need a distraction-proof area for doing homework. And for some, that may not be a bedroom where familiar toys could divert their attention or a kitchen table situated around household hubbub.

Find a consistent place away from distractions but still central to a parent so the child can be monitored if

he has questions or needs help staying on task.

3. Tuned in or turned off?

Some children enjoy listening to music while studying, but parents need to consider their child's learning style and the type of media he's tuning in to. A small percentage of children do better with a little background noise, but the majority need it quiet.

If your child insists on having something on, refrain from TV or familiar tunes that might distract his thinking. Choose instead unfam-

Find a consistent place away from distractions but still central to a parent so the child can be monitored if he needs help staying on task or has questions.

miliar songs without words such as soothing, classical music.

4. Aid and ally

Parents should be there to lend support and provide guidance when needed. Read together, help with directions and spec out the first few problems to make sure your child understands the concepts. Then let her work independently while remaining available for questions. Follow up by checking for quality. If you see several mistakes, encourage your child to make corrections. But don't fix it for her. Teachers would prefer the work come back wrong rather than having a parent make needed corrections.

If the work is replete with errors, let it go, and send a note to the teacher saying your child didn't understand the work. Another thing that may help is a homework buddy. Encourage your child to partner with a classmate, so they can be in contact with one another if either has trouble while completing an assignment.

5. Rapid review

Reviewing previous lessons is beneficial in refreshing a student's memory, particularly with subjects like math where one concept builds upon another.

Look at a couple of past lessons and have your child briefly explain the concepts to you. But keep it short, so he's still alert for the current day's assignment.

6. Tarry and toil

If your child is working for an extended period of time, consider the cause. Is she tired? Unfocused? Dawdling? Not understanding the material? If she's procrastinating, set a timer or offer an incentive for completing the assignment on time.

If, however, your child is diligent and still not finishing in a reasonable amount of time, have her stop. Then let the teacher know how

long she worked.

7. Pay attention to patterns

If you find your child frequently saying he doesn't understand the work, it may be a clue he needs extra school support or a tutor. Likewise, if he effortlessly whips through his assignments day after day, it may be an indication he's not being challenged.

Homework isn't supposed to be overly difficult, but students should have to put some time and thought into it. Look for patterns that something is happening, either good or bad. Then communicate with the teacher and ask for her suggestions.

8. Relegate responsibility

Encourage your child to take on the responsibility of starting and finishing homework by creating a system such as a check-off list. When she starts to receive long-term projects, help her map out the work by using a calendar, so she learns good time-management and organizational skills.

Break down large projects into the smallest components of what needs to be done each day — reading "X" number of pages, for example. Then check with your child periodically to make sure she's staying on task.

9. Scope out sick days

If your child is going to be out for more than a few days, contact the teacher and let her know. If he has to stay home due to a minor illness, the teacher may want to send a few things your way.

But if your child is truly sick and needs to rest, she'll probably suggest letting him recover and catching him up on the work when he returns.

10. Constantly communicate

Find out early on the best way to contact your child's teacher — either by phone, email, note, or other. Then if an issue arises, don't wait to discuss it. Small problems can escalate if not addressed right away.

Even if things are going well, occasionally touch base to make sure you're both pleased with your child's progress.

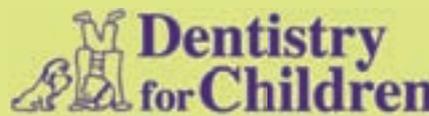
Denise Yearian is a former educator and editor of two parenting magazines and the mother of three children and four grandchildren.

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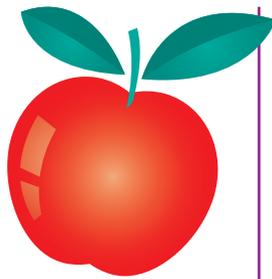
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DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Helping children to succeed in math

Dear teacher,

I always dreaded math classes and quit taking math courses as soon as possible, but I want my children to be successful in the subject. Can you help?

Dear parent,

Parents can definitely contribute to making sure that their children develop math skills. One of the best ways to do this is by helping them develop and keep a keen interest in math.

All young children start out being interested in math. They love to count objects and line them up in groups, like putting two ducks and three bears together to get five. They also love to play games in which they are throwing the dice and counting the number of squares that they can move.

Parents need to encourage this almost automatic interest in math. According to Jo Boaler, a professor of mathematics education at Stanford University, the best encouragement comes from providing a setting in which children's mathematical thinking is validated and encouraged. When parents give children a set of pattern blocks or Cuisenaire rods, they will do all sorts of mathematical things with them. This is the time for parents to marvel at the shapes or repeating patterns that the children have created.

Besides providing a setting that fosters mathematical thinking, children should be given puzzles and problems to solve. Then parents and children can work on them together. This does not have to be a nightly ritual, but it can be done at the dinner table from time to time. It is important for parents to ask questions about how children are trying to solve a problem, and for children to get in the habit of asking questions as they talk over how they will solve a problem. Children will gain enthusiasm for math through solving challenging problems. If parents



can't think of any to share with their children, they can search online for classic math problems.

There is one no-no in encouraging children's interest in math. Parents must not share their own negative experiences.

Visit our Dear Teacher website, DearTeacher.com, and you can find under "Math Skill Builders" ways to introduce mental math to your children. You will also find on the website a list of children's books with mathematics themes that will let them enjoy and learn math while reading interesting stories. There are also intriguing and challenging math riddles and puzzles.

Look for these signs of vision problems

Dear teacher,

My children always pass the vision screening at school. Beyond this, are there any signs of possible vision problems that I should be looking for?

Dear parent,

Vision plays an extremely important role in childhood development academically, socially, and athletically, according to Dr. Kara M. Cavuoto of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute. She encourages parents to take advantage of any vision screening opportunities that may be available to them.

According to the Institute, parents

should be aware of complaints and signs that may indicate a child has an eyes or vision problem:

- Does your child hold objects close to the face when trying to focus or sit close to the television?
- Does your child have frequent headaches?
- Is there an unusual appearance to the eyes?
- Is there frequent blinking or eye rubbing?
- Is there unusual sensitivity to light?
- Does your child close or cover one eye?
- Do one or both eyelids droop, or does one eyelid tend to close?
- Is the iris (colored part of the eye) different in color in the two eyes?
- Do the eyes tend to "dance" or show to-and-fro movements (nystagmus)?
- Do the eyes appear to turn in, out, up, or down, or tend to intermittently drift off center?
- Is there a head tilt or turn, particularly when concentrating on objects at a distance or near?
- Does your child complain of seeing double?
- Does your child lose his or her place when reading?
- Does your child have difficulty remembering what he or she reads?

Parents should keep vision in mind when equipping their children with all of the necessary tools for a successful school year. If there is a family history of significant pediatric eye or vision disorders or a potential eye or vision problem is detected during a screening examination, the child is usually referred for a comprehensive eye examination by a pediatric ophthalmologist or an eye care specialist appropriately trained to evaluate and treat pediatric patients.

Parents should send questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or ask them on the columnists' website at www.dearteacher.com.

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- Wednesday, November 2 at 6:30 PM
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www.caedmonschool.org

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Continued on page 26



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School Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 24

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www.montessorischoolny.com

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The Weekday School

Upper West Side
490 Riverside Drive
212-870-6743, www.wdsny.org

The school is a diverse community based on sharing, understanding, and respect where each child's gifts are celebrated. Dedicated to teaching children to become confident learners, passionate explorers, and discerning risk-takers, the curriculum draws from both progressive and traditional approaches to encourage children to use all their senses and skills to learn and grow. Offering compelling learning opportunities for children from two years of age through kindergarten, our teachers work collaboratively to create a loving community of learners. In addition, "Side by Side at Riverside" is a program providing a 90 minute introduction to the preschool experience for very young children accompanied by an adult. Skilled Early Childhood educators guide the children through music, movement and art activities and a circle time with songs and stories. Classes are scheduled on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and on Wednesday afternoons.

Wetherby-Pembridge School

Upper East Side
7 E 96th St (Opens September 2017)
212-328-9529
www.Wetherby-pembridge.org

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Continued on page 28

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718.721.7200 | stjohnsprepschool.org
21-21 Crescent Street | Astoria, NY 11105

Private/Independent School Guide

School Choices

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 26

from Central Park, the school's doors will open for its first incoming class in September 2017. It will bring to New York the rich traditions and academic excellence that are at the heart of its thriving UK schools and world famous brands. Wetherby-Pembridge School will offer a bespoke curriculum model combining the rigorous British National Curriculum with New York's progressive student-centered teaching approach. The school's vision is to awaken curiosity, cultivate high standards, celebrate successes and encourage children to continually question and create in the world around them.

PRIVATE PRESCHOOL

Evolution Enrichment Center

Lower East Side
38 Delancey Street (2nd Fl)
212-375-9500

www.evolutionenrichment.com

The school offers a unique and exceptional private program toddler preschool for 2-3s. This 15,000 sq. ft. early education center features bright and spacious classrooms with natural light, an outdoor playground, a dance studio and air-conditioned gym. Pre-K for All and Afterschool program options include Mandarin Explorers, FasTrackKids, G&T Test Prep, Music Explorers, and more. Open 8 am – 6 pm. Schedules include Full Time, Part Time & Half Day. Tuition is competitive. Schedule a tour by calling or go online and visit our website.

The Ideal School

Upper West Side
314 W. 91st Street
212-769-1699

www.theidealschool.org

New York City's only independent inclusion school, the school's K-12 program seeks to create a diverse community that affirms and accepts the full identities of all the people, while inspiring academic excellence, creative leadership, and a desire to build a more just and equitable world. With a commitment to neurodiversity and inclusion education, meaning all students – gifted and talented, typically developing, and students with learning differences – receive an individualized school experience holding them to high academic standards, while providing the challenge and support necessary for success. The school has two divisions: The IDEAL School (K-5) and IDEAL Academy (6-12). The Academy is a candidate to become an International Baccalaureate school.

Twin Parks Montessori Schools

Upper West Side

Central Park Montessori School
1 W. 91st St.

212-595-2000

Park West Montessori
435 Central Park West
212-678-6072

Riverside Montessori
202 Riverside Dr.
212-665-1600

www.twinparks.org

Accredited by the American Montessori Society, the Middle States Commission and members of affiliate schools of Columbia University. Providing nurturing, child-centered settings for children ages 3 months-6 years, the schools are committed to fostering a community of lifelong learners using proven Montessori methodology. Problem solving and creativity are emphasized along with age-appropriate academic subjects. Among Manhattan's most spacious preschools, offering rich and varied environments— from individual activity tables to open floor areas promoting group interaction, from the quiet areas for independent interests to the abundance of the Schools' glorious backyards: Central and Riverside Parks. Each of these environments invites exploration, discovery and fully meets the developmental needs of young children.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Gateway School – Special Needs

West Side
211 West 61st Street 6th Floor
212-777-5794

www.gateway.school.org

Teaching students with learning disabilities academic skills and strategies and helping them develop the social competence and self-confidence necessary to succeed in mainstream educational settings and in the community at large. The school provides a nurturing educational environment that empowers students to overcome developmental hurdles and allows their talents to flourish. As they learn to appreciate their strengths, cope with challenges, and take pride in their academic and social success, they gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to shape their own lives.

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For more information or to enroll contact Ms. Tricia Pool: tpool@wdsnyc.org

Twin Parks Montessori Open House Events

Central Park

Oct 25th 9:30 am
Nov 1st 9:30 am
Dec 6th 9:30 am

1 West 91st Street
 New York, NY 10024
 P (212) 595-2000
 F (212) 595-0101

RSVP
enroll@twinparks.org

Park West

Oct 20th 9:30 am
Nov 17th 9:30 am
Jan 12th 9:30 am

435 Central Park West
 New York, NY 10025
 P (212) 678-6072
 F (212) 678-1998

RSVP
pwadmissions@twinparks.org

Riverside

Nov 16th 9:30 am
Jan 18th 9:30 am

202 Riverside Drive
 New York, NY 10025
 P (212) 665-1600
 F (212) 665-1775

RSVP
admissions@twinparks.org

Twin Parks Montessori Schools are accredited by AMS, MSCES, and are members of ISAAGNY, NYSAIS, the Parents League and are affiliates of Columbia University.



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From **A** to **ZZZs**

Important
info linking
shut-eye to
great grades

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Want kids to bring home an A? Start with more ZZZs.

According to sleep experts and numerous new studies, lost sleep hurts learning and hinders school-day success. That's bad news, because today's kids get about an hour less sleep each night than they did 30 years ago, says New York Times bestselling author

Po Bronson in his book "NurtureShock: New Thinking About Children." This lost sleep comes with a steep price tag — impaired learning and academic success.

How does sleep boost learning? Researchers believe it has to do with the way the brain processes information during sleep. In fact, Michigan State University researchers found that children can even learn while they're asleep as the brain integrates new information and memories. Researchers from University of Florida discovered that newborns learn in their sleep, and new research from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine shows that sleep helps students perform better on tests.

Read on for age-specific information on how sleep impacts learning — and how to help kids get a better night's rest:

Early school years, 3-8

For sleep-deprived kids, school trouble starts early: 10 percent of kids in early education suffer from sleep disturbances that disrupt learning, according to a German study. The American Professional Sleep Society reports that sleep deprivation significantly worsens inattentiveness and hyperactivity in young children, leading to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder-like symptoms (known as "faux" ADHD).

Even modest sleep deprivation is enough to hinder learning. Ac-

How much sleep does your child need?

Is your child getting enough rest? Check these guidelines to be sure:

Ages 3 to 6: 10–12 hours per day

Ages 7 to 12: 10–11 hours per day

Ages 13 to 18: 8–9 hours per day

Parents must maintain firm school-year bedtimes and choose after-school and evening activities that end at least an hour before kids need to wind down for bed.

According to a study published in the journal "Sleep," a mere hour of lost slumber is enough to bring on inattentiveness and hyperactivity in young children. A 2011 study of 6 and 7 year olds shows that language skills, grammar, spelling, and reading comprehension suffer when kids get less than nine hours of sleep per night.

How to help:

Sleep-deprived children may not appear sleepy, says Dr. Shelby F. Harris, director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Program at Montefiore Medical Center in New York. In fact, they may act hyper and goofy. But preschoolers and school-age children don't outgrow the need for a consistent bedtime and bedtime routine. Establish an age-appropriate bedtime that allows your child to rest for 10 to 11 hours each night.

Tween years, 9-13

During the late elementary- and middle-school years, academics become more challenging and sports more competitive. But when increasingly busy schedules start cutting into sleep, kids retain less of what they learn, says Dr. Mark Splaingard, director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital.

"Long hours spent on sports practice or math problems are counterproductive, if these activities keep kids up late at night," he notes.

Kids will learn more and perform better — whether on the field or in the classroom — with sufficient shut-eye.

How to help:

Parents need to understand sleep's importance and guard kids' sleep hours zealously, says Splaingard. That means maintaining firm school-year bedtimes and choosing after-school and evening ac-

tivities that end at least an hour before kids need to wind down for bed.

Teenage years, 14-18

Teenagers are Splaingard's most sleep-deprived patients, a fact that doesn't surprise him. During high school, after-school jobs, extracurricular activities, sports, socializing, and homework simply don't leave enough time for sleep. Most teens need more sleep than parents think — more than nine hours a night — and chronic sleep deprivation hurts learning at a time when kids need lots of mental energy for tough subjects from chemistry to calculus.

But teens' busy schedules deserve only part of the blame for their sleep deficits: cellphones and laptops keep teens up late, often into the wee hours. When teens finally power off their computers and go to bed, round-the-clock access to phones disrupts sleep. A new study reports that sleeping near cellphones puts teens at risk for so-called "sleep texting:" waking up and firing off text messages during the night without any recollection of having sent the texts the next morning. All this sleep disruption adds up to bleary mornings and bleak report cards.

How to help:

Protect teens' precious sleep hours with a media curfew — shut down all electronics an hour before bed and establish a "charging station" outside the bedroom where teens leave their electronics overnight. This important step keeps bedrooms free of sleep-disrupting cellphones and computers, says Harris.

"The bedroom should be a place for sleep," she notes. "It's not a spot for homework, watching TV, or surfing the internet."

When it comes to learning, tutors, cutting-edge gadgets, and hours of homework can't compensate for hours of lost sleep. When parents prioritize kids' sleep needs, learning comes more naturally, says Splaingard.

"We think we're helping make kids more successful with more activities and more homework. But what they really need is more sleep."

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is "Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades."



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Finding her shtick

A Brooklyn comedian's journey to mommyhood

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Super-funny stand-up comedian Ophira Eisenberg is an avid storyteller. She shares her personal stories with strangers wherever she performs — and loves it! The popular host of NPR's hit trivia comedy show, "Ask Me Another," took the city's comedy scene by storm in 2001, when she arrived here from her native Canada to pursue her calling.

At 43, the newbie Brooklyn parent thinks she has that mysterious work-life balance stuff all figured out, and declares, "There's probably no such thing!"

When the budding funny gal dropped anchor in New York City she was hell-bent on making a name for herself in the cut-throat world of stand-up comedy. In her gut, she knew that standing out from the crowd meant having your own style, as well as your own shtick. And she had plenty of style. Finding her shtick, well, that would come with time. Ask any comedian, and they'll tell you the key is to keep working at it and trying out new material in front of different audiences to see what gets the most laughs.

After all, that's what comics live for — getting laughs.

When she started her "finding myself" journey, Eisenberg didn't want much out of life. Just to make a living and get lots of gigs, and hopefully find a New York apartment that was bigger than 300 square feet, so she could actually walk around her bed. Oh, and there was one other thing: she dreamed of owning a wine fridge. That was her definition of success.

Later on, life got a bit more complicated, as it always does. When the practicing New Yorker would meet up with her 30-something friends, who seemed like ticking biological time bombs (and rightly concerned about their aging eggs), it got her thinking. All that talk about pregnancy and stuff, combined with their collective yen for "gnawing on pudgy baby thighs," made the rising comic wonder why she wasn't experiencing that odd craving as well.

She would joke: "Every time I held someone's baby, it screamed and cried like they had slipped it into the



Photo by Annelie Gamet

The new mom has embraced mommyhood, despite her past disinterest in having kids. She says her son Lucas, now 6 months old, is her greatest achievement.

arms of an ice sculpture!

"I figured whatever came naturally to everyone else, just didn't come to me," she added. "On one hand, I felt bad about not being maternal. But I also liked it. It was okay that I wasn't put on this earth just to raise children and clean the house. I could focus on building my career. Plus, who would torture a child by raising it in New York City? You'd have to have the last name Rockefeller to get a place with closets, let alone a backyard."

Feeling stressed out, she just cavalierly shrugged off the whole mommyhood thing. After all, her career was finally taking off. And besides, she and husband Jonathan were having fun sans kids.

But it became increasingly difficult to ignore those "annoying" swirling thoughts of pushing strollers and bedtime stories.

"Then I turned 40. That year, things finally started to gel for my career: I was performing and traveling a ton, and I wrote a book. I had a job at NPR. For one nanosecond, I felt satisfied, but was still entirely ambivalent about having kids. So I ordered a wine fridge," Eisenberg recalled.

But the stork wouldn't have any of it!

When the stand-up comedian found out she was pregnant at 43, she immediately brought it to the stage.

By the time she was 34 weeks pregnant, she was exploding with new material about what it was like being a "prego," and her impending motherhood. She says she is still grateful for having so much more to riff on during her sets. When the expectant mom performed her fabulous show "Inside Joke" last year, at a Brooklyn venue with a snake-like Snuggle body pillow wrapped around her protruding, low-slung belly, the audience couldn't get enough of her self-described "clueless and unprepared" comments and complaints.

"It's funny how my act progressed. It was always autobiographical, but I have talked and written a lot on dating, relationships, marriage, and now on being a mom," Eisenberg said. "I joked that I was both high risk and an inspiration, that finding out was somewhere in between a surprise and a mistake, like a 'wow' with a 'holy crap' in it. Because I was older, I didn't have to worry about ruining my life, because now I'd be ruining someone else's life."

The comic said audiences lapped up these irreverent one-liners, but they also accomplished something larger: "The jokes made me feel safe. They distanced me from my intense fears and allowed me to partially rewrite my own story."

And that was something she definitely needed, after being to hell and

back prior to her pregnancy with her son.

Tragedy and comedy

It was shortly after she got her beloved wine fridge that everything changed.

"The next nanosecond, a sledgehammer smashed through my house of cards," she wrote in her book "Screw Everyone: Sleeping My Way to Monogamy."

After a routine test, she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

"Talk about a 'wow' with a 'holy crap' in it — just forget the 'wow.' To be clear, it was early stage breast cancer, but as you can imagine, there is no such thing as lucky cancer. And thus started a year of hell. I didn't take to Facebook and ask for thoughts or prayers.

I didn't live-tweet it. I was destroyed by it. I could barely hold myself up as I went through one, and then unexpectedly two, surgeries, hundreds of tests, 30 days of radiation, and endless hours of trying to figure out what I did to deserve this."

Somehow, Eisenberg got past it and is now okay. But fate had other plans in store for her when she took an at-home pregnancy test and discovered it was positive.

"The word 'pregnant' showed up in the little digital window. I called my husband and told him. Then I experienced my first actual pregnant pause," she wrote.

Soon after, though, she miscarried.

It was when she got pregnant with her son Lucas, who is now 6 months old, that everything came together for this Park Slope mom. She's so happy to finally have a chubby little guy of her very own. The family now lives in a decent-sized flat in the Brooklyn neighborhood.

Working mom

Eisenberg says she has found mommy bliss in her community.

"My mommy group is on the third floor of my apartment building, as there are four babies born the same year as Lucas, four other kids between 1 and 4, and one pregnant couple," Eisenberg said. "These are the people that dropped off food, water, and clothing when I came home from the hospital. True neighbors! On some weekdays, all the kids pour into the hallway and we just stand around the chaos and talk. It's



Ophira Eisenberg is a stand-up comedian and host of NPR's hit trivia comedy show "Ask Me Another." (Above) Eisenberg telling jokes at eight-and-a-half months pregnant, with her bedazzled Snoogle.

Google, 'My baby smiles so much, [and] you get an article that says it could be a brain tumor.')

And she's not worried that she had her child later in life.

"I'm enjoying the new perspective I have on life, and even though I'm one of the older moms, at least I don't have to worry about feeling like I'm missing out on the party life, because guess what — I've done it!"

See Eisenberg in action! Her home spot is Gotham Comedy Club. She performs there several times a month. You can also see her at Union Hall and The Bell House in Brooklyn. Recently, she teamed up with New Yorker cartoonist and author of "Mama Tried" Emily Flake for a comedy show, where all the acts talk about parenting.

"Sh!t Show" at Union Hall [702 Union St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope, (718) 638-4400, union-hallny.com] Sept. 8, 7:30 pm.

Eugene Mirman Comedy Festival at the Bell House [149 Seventh St. between Third and Second avenues in Gowanus, (718) 643-6510, thebellhouse.com] Sept. 17, 6:30 pm.

The new season of "Ask Me Another" is here! Listen to it on iTunes. For tickets to a live taping, visit www.nprpresents.org/organizer/ask-me-another

Ophira Eisenberg has also released her second comedy album "BANGS!" on Comedy Dynamics, www.comedydynamics.com.

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

quite wonderful."

But triple-checking two baby cams and drowning in doo-doo and diapers can be exhausting — even for a celebrity — so, baby in tow, Eisenberg recently fled back to Canada for a family visit and some downtime.

The host of "Ask Me Another" — described as "pub trivia meets a variety show," the rambunctious program is jam-packed with a mash-up of trivia, word games, music, puzzles, and celebrities — says she's getting better at prioritizing, but has also realized that it's best not to sweat the small stuff.

"Hey, guess what? If I don't reply

to that e-mail, because I'm too busy with my son and working, nothing really bad happens!" she says.

She has also realized why raising kids is more challenging today than ever before.

"I'm saying nothing new here when I say that the amount of information you have access to can be really confusing when it comes to figuring out how to raise your baby. On one hand, it's amazing to have all of this information just one desperate 3 am Google away, but you can also fall down a deep hole of contradictory ideas, and of course, terrible conclusions to simple problems. (You

Photo by Mindy Tucker



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
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Choosing a guardian

I have a Last Will and Testament that states who should become the guardian of my young children if my husband and I die, but I have heard that probate can be a long and drawn-out proceeding. Is there something I can do to protect my children in an emergency situation?

A Last Will and Testament is the document that nominates a guardian for your minor children when you die. If you die without a Will, a two-step process is required to administrate your estate. First, someone needs to petition the guardianship part of the Surrogate's Court to be appointed guardian, and then that person or another person with standing can petition to be appointed the administrator of your estate (it is usually the guardian). The person petitioning to be guardian might not be the one you would have chosen if you had properly completed the right documents.

A guardian ad litem — someone the court appoints to investigate what solutions would be in the “best interests of a child” — will likely be appointed to protect the interests of the child. The guardian would also need to account for any assets that come into the guardianship estate, and would need to petition to withdraw funds for the benefit of the child.

In contrast, if you nominate a guardian in your Will, the administration of the estate for the benefit of your children is somewhat smoother. First, the nomination is just that: a nomination. Ordinarily the court defers to the parents' nomination, but can decline to appoint that person if the person is not fit to serve as guardian. This is why it's important to name successor guardians. In addition, the person you nominate might decline to serve.

The second role to consider is the minor's trustee. This is effectively the guardian of the property — the person or persons who will manage the money for the benefit of your child, and distribute assets pursuant



to the terms of any minor's trust in your Will. He would also be responsible for making payments for the benefit of the child.

Some people wish to have the guardian be the same person as the minor's trustee. It is often a good idea to have a co-trustee serve if the guardian will be a trustee. The co-trustee is a good second set of eyes to help protect against mistakes or, even worse, someone who improperly uses assets, whether intentionally or negligently.

We also prepare for our clients a document known as a Designation of Standby Guardian. Another similar document is a Designation of a Person in Parental Relations. This is effectively a power of attorney for your child, empowering someone to make decisions for your child in your absence, or if you are incapacitated or cannot be reached, or even in the event of your death until a permanent guardian can be appointed. It does not necessarily allow someone to access your assets for the benefit of a child; that can only be done by a power of attorney that you execute appointing someone to handle your assets under certain circumstances.

With respect to a Designation of Standby Guardian, in the event of your incapacity or death, the designated person can act immediately to take care of your minor's needs. That person must then file a petition for guardianship in the Surrogate's

Court within 60 days of acting as the standby guardian.

The proceeding for appointment of guardian can be brought by any person who has an interest, or by the child him or herself if he or she over the age of 14. Notice of the proceeding must be given to the person with whom the minor resides at that time regardless of relationship, the nearest adult family members who live in the State of New York, and any other relatives the court determines, whether or not they are within the state.

Make sure your appointed standby guardian has all of that information. You may include an informational sheet with the document that you can update when necessary, or make sure your attorney has the information. It is also helpful to have available a copy of the minor child's birth certificate and any relevant documents such as adoption papers or medical information.

The court determines the appointment of guardian based on the “best interest of the child” standard, and the designated guardian by the parent is important in making such a decision. This is especially important if who you choose to take care of your minor children is not a family member, but instead may be a close family friend. Don't allow the court to make the decision for you, make your choice known and execute a Designation of Standby Guardian to help protect your minor children.

An estate planning attorney can help you identify a proper fiduciary and prepare these documents. By preparing and executing these documents, it can save your family time and expense in emergency situations, and help streamline the process to make it as smooth as possible.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists parents in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties with their estate planning needs. You can find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.

Disclaimer: This column is provided by Arden Besunder P.C. and New York Parenting Media as a public service to inform readers of legal issues. It is not intended to advise. Since legal issues vary with an individual's situation and needs, one should consult with an attorney. It is impossible to cover all aspects of the law in an article. Please be advised that the laws are constantly changing. The content in this article reflects the current law. Nothing contained in this article is intended as advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship between the reader and the firm. Individual consultation with an attorney is required to determine the specific facts and circumstances of any particular situation. A written retainer agreement between you and the firm is required before any attorney-client relationship may be created. Circular 230 Disclosure Notice: To ensure compliance with Treasury Department rules governing tax practice, we inform you that any advice contained herein (including in any attachment) (1) was not written and is not intended to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalty that may be imposed on the taxpayer, and (2) may not be used in connection with promoting, marketing or recommending to another person any transaction or matter addressed herein.



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Talking tough topics before the big day

Stephen and Natalie (not their real names) are engaged to be married. They have been dating for more than a year, enjoy the same music, both like sports, and have many of the same views about politics. Each has met the other's parents, and the families have met and like each other.

Natalie and Stephen are obviously in love, and are looking forward to spending their lives together. From what they had initially shared with the mediator, there were no problems looming.

But, there were many important questions, such as about money and having children, that they hadn't seriously discussed with each other — until coming to mediation.

Many couples don't have these serious conversations before marriage. Why not? Some partners assume that, because they're getting along, they must agree on all the issues that matter to them. Others don't give the future much thought. There are also "avoiders" who fear conflict.

Natalie and Stephen, as happy as they were, sensed that a lot had been left unsaid between them. Not knowing how to proceed on their own, they decided to try a premarital mediation session.

As in a divorce, a mediator can work with couples before marriage. He can:

- Help each partner to talk about what he and she wants and needs.
- Help them both have a constructive conversation, even when tensions rise.
- Guide the discussion so that hidden differences come to light.
- Assist the couple in addressing any issues.

In a premarital session with a young couple, a discussion about children might follow questions such as: Do you want kids? How many? When? Do you imagine one of you staying home with them (and would you be able to afford to)? Is the home you'll be living in to start with big enough? What have you discussed



about religion and raising children? Private school or public? And many more, each a potential springboard to significant issues.

Stephen and Natalie learned, among other things, that there are differences in how they view and feel about money.

"Our talking here was revealing," Stephen said after the session. "I found out how Natalie feels about money. [While] dating, it didn't come up. I did notice that she felt a little uncomfortable when we went to an expensive restaurant. But I had no idea that Natalie worries about money, about always having enough."

Asked how this knowledge might impact on their future, Stephen offered:

"Me, I kind of like the idea of having a really nice car. But knowing [now] how Natalie feels about money, well, let's say we need a car, I'll be fine with a cheaper one, if that'll make Natalie feel better. What we save could go in the bank, or whatever. We'll talk and figure it out."

Natalie was almost beaming, knowing that her fiancé understood her feelings; feelings that she hadn't clearly expressed to him before.

"I don't like talking about money," Natalie said. "Growing up, there were

a lot of arguments. But this was great. It means a lot to know that Stephen is so understanding about something that really concerns me. I wasn't exactly worried, but I think that money was more on my mind than I realized. I'm so happy that he is willing to work together to save money, even though it isn't as important to him. I'll feel more secure, financially, and in our relationship."

Talking about what is important to you, and what your respective values are, won't guarantee a happy marriage. But such discussions will increase understanding, and likely help you resolve problems that otherwise might eventually lead to divorce.

Try having a conversation on your own. It can be difficult, but don't give up. If necessary, outside help (such as from a mediator) is available.

New York City and Long Island-based lawyer and mediator Lee Chabin helps clients to express their needs, better understand one another, and reach decisions that benefit each of them. 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.

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



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

The politics of ... politics

I consider myself a very tolerant person. Actually, I'm accepting almost to a fault, and I can usually see all sides of an issue. I will definitely listen to everyone's side of an issue. This trait has helped me in parenting, managing a staff, and getting along with friends of all beliefs. I generally don't mind what anyone thinks or does, as long as he or she is not hurting anyone, of course. To each his own is a good rule of thumb.

However, I began to feel ruffled a few months ago when I would go on my social media accounts and see disparaging remarks about so many people who I like and respect. It felt unsettling. As the months progressed, it only worsened. Now, I don't expect any of us to endorse the same po-

litical candidate or have the exact same beliefs, but it seems that Facebook and Twitter, and even Instagram, have become a playground for people to be hateful, vengeful, and outright insane, mirroring the road this current election has taken.

When I was growing up and learned that people should not discuss politics or religion in public, I never quite understood why. As I grew older, I realized that the myriad opinions among any given group of people could be colossal and opposing. In addition, when those opinions are threatened, they can trigger a deep sensitivity that hovers around the person's beliefs on love, life, family, and patriotism. Unfortunately, not everyone can keep a rational head when triggered.

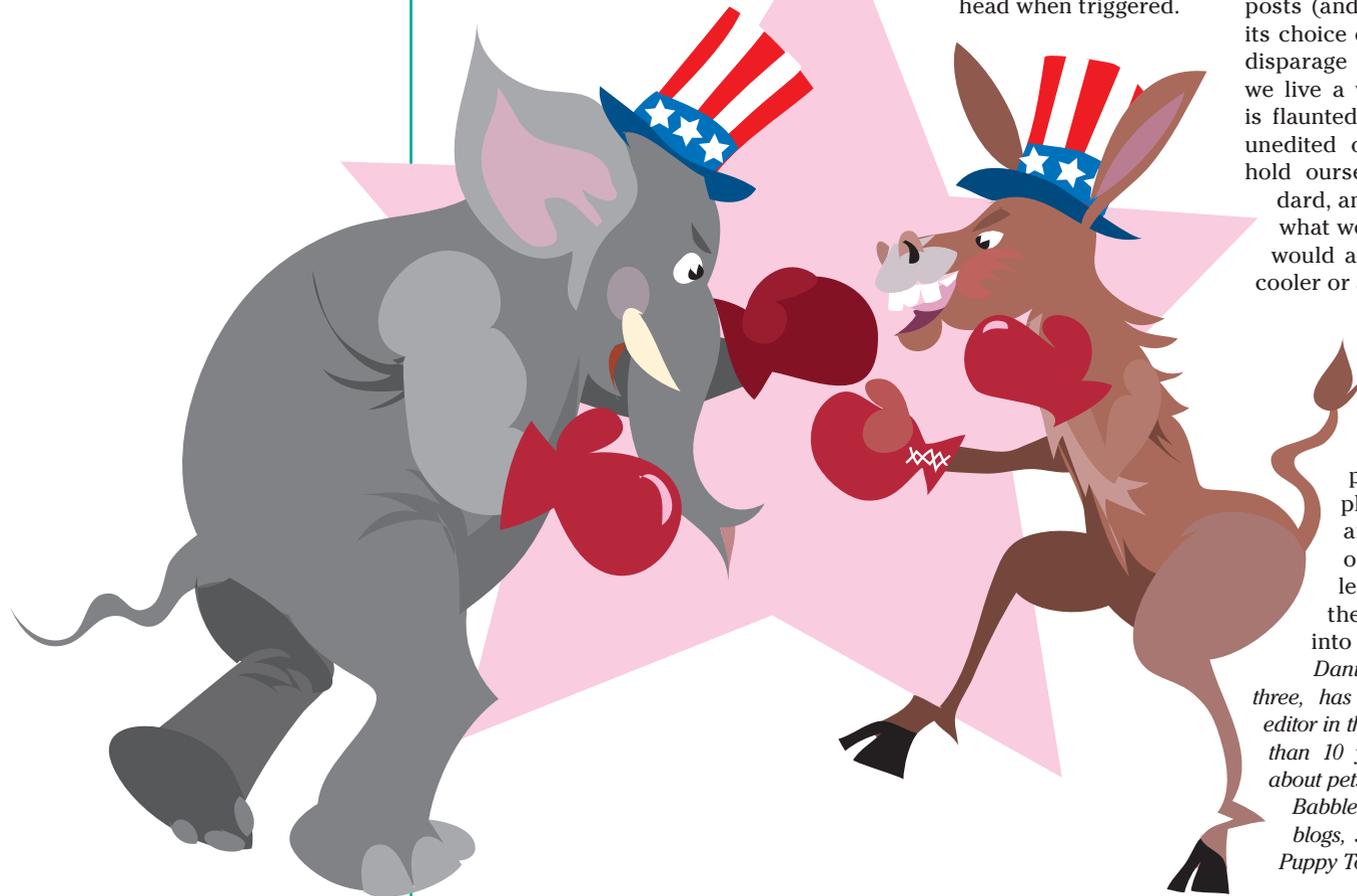
Everyday, I see people — many that I liked and respected — act like unruly 5-year-olds as they diligently fight to defend their view. Even worse, I see those same people spew poison with the ease of a black widow spider. I can't imagine that these people would intentionally want to display their worst selves to the world, or even worse, to their own kids ... and in writing.

As parents, our kids are intently watching how we behave, and reading what we put out there, or saying to a spouse, neighbor, or friend. How can we tell our kids not to bully others and then go on hateful rants as easily as we take a breath? I respect that everyone has their own ideas on how we can make this world better, but change can only come from working together with clear, rational minds and open hearts.

It comes to mind that another old saying still rings true, "If you don't have something nice to say, don't say anything at all." Of course, we all have the right to free speech, but that doesn't mean we have to choose the lowest form of ourselves to put on display. I much prefer the posts (and campaigns) that praise its choice of candidate rather than disparage the other. Even though we live a world where everything is flaunted, often disgustingly and unedited on Twitter, we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard, and consider how much of what we write online is what we would actually say at the water cooler or at a party.

Words are things. That's something that Maya Angelou, the great poet and writer, always said. Words have the power to bring people down or lift people up, deflate or inspire, and instigate vengeance or call out for peace, so let's commit to choose them with care as we head into November and beyond.

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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Calendar

SEPTEMBER



'Peace on Your Wings' soars

"Peace On Your Wings" soars into John Jay College Gerald Lynch Theater on Sept. 9 and 10.

"Peace on Your Wings" is an uplifting, new musical based on the true story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who survived the Hiroshima bombings and went on to inspire an international peace movement by folding one thousand origami cranes. The all-youth cast, making its New York premier, per-

forms original pop music with Japanese influences.

"Peace On Your Wings," Sept. 9 at 7:30 pm and Sept. 10 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$35-\$25 for general admission and \$15 for students.

John Jay College Gerald Lynch Theater [524 W. 59th St. between 11th and 10th avenues in Lincoln Square, (808) 744-5501, <http://ohanaarts.ticketleap.com/>]

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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!

THURS, SEPT. 1

IN MANHATTAN

Pee Wee Basketball: 71st Street Soccer Field & Courts, W. 71st Street and Riverside Boulevard; 311; 9:30 am to 11:30 am; Free.

All little ones (5 years old and under only) are welcome at Summer on the Hudson's introductory lessons in soccer and basketball.

Series Painting: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Noon to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years and older are inspired by Rufino Tamayo's multiple paintings of watermelons. The budding artists will create a series of paintings based on one chosen object (like watermelon) and paint it at least three different ways. Each time, they will be challenged to compose the painting in different and unique ways. How can the same object look so different?

Puppet friends: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Noon to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

It's Herry Monster from Sesame Street's birthday! To celebrate, young artists will make their own puppets in the fine arts studio!

Cross-Stitch Circle: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 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.

FRI, SEPT. 2

IN MANHATTAN

Puppet friends: Noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Thurs-



Meeting Washington

Celebrate the Battle of Brooklyn — in Manhattan — on Sept. 24, at the New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum.

Family Day recreates the Revolutionary War's devastating fight when British forces gained control of the city, and offers children an opportunity to engage in hands-on activities and even meet Gen. George Washington, who will mingle with families and teach them about

the battle.

Family Day is a family-friendly portion of a larger year-long exhibit on the historical event at the New-York Historical Society Museum.

Family Day Battle of Brooklyn, Sept. 24 from 10 am to 4 pm. Free with museum admission.

New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum [170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 873-3400, <http://nyhistory.org>].

day, Sept. 1.

SAT, SEPT. 3

IN MANHATTAN

Puppet friends: 10 am to 5 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Thursday, Sept. 1.

SUN, SEPT. 4

IN MANHATTAN

Puppet friends: 10 am to 5 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Thursday, Sept. 1.

Macy's story time: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 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 authors will hold a short discussion about the inspiration behind the book, and

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

Storytelling festival: Governor's Island at Nolan Park, Building 10; (347) 425-7770; www.brooklynartery.com; 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.

Hosted by Brooklyn ARTery Soundstage, the event features world renowned storytellers, puppet theater and more. Families can get the ferries to the island at 10 South St. in Manhattan or Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6 in Brooklyn.

THURS, SEPT. 8

IN MANHATTAN

Pee Wee Basketball: 9:30 am to 11:30 am. 71st Street Soccer Field & Courts. See Thursday, Sept. 1.

Cross-Stitch Circle: New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 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.

FRI, SEPT. 9

IN MANHATTAN

"Peace On Your Wings": John Jay College Gerald Lynch Theater, 524 W. 59th St.; jcovner@jagpr.com; ohanaarts.ticketleap.com; 7:30 pm; \$35, \$25, \$15-students with id.

"Peace on Your Wings," an uplifting, new musical based on the true story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who survived the Hiroshima bombings and went on to inspire an international peace movement. The presentation is by an all youth cast.

"The Tempest": The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace, 215 E. 99th St. at Third Avenue; www.brown-papertickets.com/event/2592723; 8 pm; \$15.

Presented by Identity Theater, this performance is a reimagining of Shakespeare's final play "The Tempest." Recommended for teens.

SAT, SEPT. 10

IN MANHATTAN

Stroller Tour: Whitney Museum of American Art, 99 Gansvoort St.; (212) 570-3600; familyprograms@whitney.org; whitney.org; 9:30-10:30am; \$25 per adult, plus museum admission (\$22 adults, \$18 seniors, free for members and children under 18).

Join Whitney Teaching Fellows, PhD candidates in art history, on engaging tours that highlight works in the exhibitions Stuart Davis: In Full Swing and Danny Lyon: Message to the Future. Tours are for new moms and dads when the museum is closed to the public. This program is just for parents and caregivers with babies up to 18 months.

Go Fish!: Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Park, 20 Battery Pl.; (212) 267-9700; bpc-parks.org/event/sunset-jam-on-the-hudson-2/all; 10 am to 2 pm; Free.

Join experienced anglers for catch-and-release fishing and learn about life in the Hudson River. Observe the day's catch in aerated tanks and discover what you can do to steward the recovery of the Hudson. Featuring Dan Zanes and Elizabeth Mitchell performing at noon.

Labor Day Parade: Parade Route, 44th Street and Fifth Avenue; (212) 604-9552; LDP@nycclc.org; www.nyc-clc.com; 10 am; Free.

Join Parade Grand Marshal James Callahan and Henry Garrido as they march with hardworking men and

Continued on page 40

Calendar

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Continued from page 39

women for the 2016 NYC Labor Day Parade.

Whitney Wees – Materials and Textures: Whitney Museum of American Art, 99 Gansvoort St.; (212) 570-3600; familyprograms@whitney.org; whitney.org; 10 am to 11 am; \$5 per child plus museum admission.

Children 4 to 5 years old can enjoy an interactive experience of looking, sharing, and working together in the galleries. This month, visit Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection. Try out our special touch objects to explore how artists create portraits with unexpected materials — broken plates, wax, and even real hair!

Sketching tour: Whitney Museum of American Art, 99 Gansvoort St.; (212) 570-3600; familyprograms@whitney.org; whitney.org; 10 am to 11 am; \$5 per child plus museum admission.

Children 6 to 10 years old explore current exhibitions through drawing! Look closely at works of art and create experimental sketches inspired by what you see. This month, visit Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection, and learn how artists push the limits of what a portrait can be by experimenting with unusual materials.

Bird Watching: Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Park, 20 Battery Pl.; (212) 267-9700; bpcparks.org/event/sunset-jam-on-the-hudson-2/all; 11 am; Free.

New York City is known among birders as a fantastic and unique place to observe birds, especially during fall and spring migration seasons. Join a naturalist/ horticulturist team as we look for birds and learn about the plantings and flowers. All ages and experience levels are welcome! Binoculars and field guides available to borrow.

"The Tempest": 2 pm and 8 pm. The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace. See Friday, Sept. 9.

"Peace On Your Wings": 2 pm and 7:30 pm. John Jay College Gerald Lynch Theater. See Friday, Sept. 9.

FURTHER AFIELD

TEAL Walk and 5K Run: Prospect Park, Ninth Street and Prospect Park West; (917) 310-4835; info@tealwalk.org; www.tealwalk.org/brooklyn; 8 am-1 pm checkin; regular registration (July 15-Sept. 2), \$35; late registration (day of event, not recommended), \$40.

The annual Brooklyn TEAL Walk/Run, they city's largest event spreading awareness and raising money specifically for ovarian cancer, takes place every September, which is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Participants include survivors, caregivers, families, friends, and the general public who come together to raise awareness of and promote a cure for ovarian cancer. Throughout the day, there is entertain-



Irish Cultural Festival

Shake out the shillelagh and break out the green for the Irish Culture Festival at the Children's Museum of the Arts on Sept. 18.

Children of all ages can join staff and enjoy the museum's celebration of all that is Irish. In partnership with the Irish Arts Center, families will explore the creative world of Irish literature and folk arts, as well as live music, dance, and art-making workshops! Enjoy performances by TJ Keevins and his friend Johnny Cuomo with the bodhran — a traditional Irish drum — along with singing and storytelling.

Workshops for the day include:

ment along with educational booths and fun activities for the whole family. The 2.5 mile walk is non competitive, but the 5K run is timed so that winners can be announced. This event is rain or shine!

SUN, SEPT. 11

IN MANHATTAN

Macy's story time: 11:30 am. New York Historical Society. See Sunday, Sept. 4.

"The Tempest": 3 pm. The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace. See Friday, Sept. 9.

MON, SEPT. 12

IN MANHATTAN

Irish Metalwork and Stone Sculpting: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org;

Irish metalwork and stone sculpting, Sean Scully's abstract emotions, Celtic knot patterns at the Clay Bar, and the animated poems of Oscar Wilde in the Media Lab.

Visitors will also enjoy the sounds of contemporary Irish rock in the Sound Booth, and learn about the beat and rhythm of famous Irish bands like U2, Two Door Cinema Club, and more!

Irish Cultural Festival, Sept. 18 from noon to 3 pm. Free with general admission to the museum.

Children's Museum of the Arts [103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street in Hudson Square, (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org].

org; Noon to 5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Unlike Britain, Ireland's geographic remoteness prevented colonization by Rome. Thus, despite regular trade with Roman Britain, the country became a haven for the uninterrupted development of Celtic art and crafts, which were neither displaced by Greco-Roman art, nor destroyed in the ensuing "Dark Ages." One such tradition was the Celtic metalwork and stone sculptors. Use cardboard to sculpt your own celtic creation and then paint it bronze, silver, or gold as if it were metal! For children 5 years and older.

TUES, SEPT. 13

IN MANHATTAN

Transitioning to High School: NYU Kimball Lounge, 246 Greene St. and Waverly Place; www.onewithnyu.com/event; 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

For parents of fourth- to eighth-graders who are preparing for high school in New York City with Dr. Richard Gallagher, NYU associate professor of Psychiatry and Child Psychiatry, director of special projects, Institute for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity and Behavior Disorders at NYU Child Study Center; Dr. Michael Rosenthal, Pediatric Neuropsychologist in private practice; and Jennyfer Bagnall, parent, and test prep and academic tutor.

THURS, SEPT. 15

IN MANHATTAN

Irish Metalwork and Stone Sculpting: Noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 12.

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New York Historical Society. See Thursday, Sept. 8.

FRI, SEPT. 16

IN MANHATTAN

Irish Metalwork and Stone Sculpting: Noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 12.

"The Tempest": 8 pm. The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace. See Friday, Sept. 9.

SAT, SEPT. 17

IN MANHATTAN

Farm Fresh Festival: Seaport District, Fulton and Front streets; www.eventbrite.com/e/farm-fresh-festival-for-kids-tickets-26305848501?aff=es2; 10 am to 4 pm; Free.

The community event connects kids and families to a wholesome and magical farm experience in New York City! Registration requested.

Whitney Wees – Materials and Textures: 10 am to 11 am. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Saturday, Sept. 10.

Sketching tour: 10 am to 11 am. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Saturday, Sept. 10.

Open studio: Whitney Museum of American Art, 99 Gansvoort St.; (212) 570-3600; familyprograms@whitney.org; whitney.org; 10:30 am to 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Bring your family to a special Open Studio to celebrate the exhibition Stuart Davis: In Full Swing. Families will explore shape, line, and color to sketch a large-scale, 3D, abstract still-life inspired by the work of Stuart Davis.

Mid-Autumn Moon Festival: Museum of Chinese in America, 215 Centre St.; (855) 955-6622; info@mocany.org; www.mocany.org/visit/events/

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midautumn_moon_family_festival_1; Noon–4pm; \$10 per person; \$8 for all museum Dual and Individual Level members. Free for museum Family Level members, children under 2, and Cool Culture families.

Fly to the moon. Explore the customs and traditions behind this harvest festival with a mooncake tasting, moon-themed arts and crafts, stellar story time, and more family fun!

Irish Metalwork and Stone Sculpting: Noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 12.

"The Tempest": 2 pm and 8 pm. The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace. See Friday, Sept. 9.

FURTHER AFIELD

Brooklyn Book Fair Children's Day: MetroTech Quad, Myrtle and Jay streets, Brooklyn; www.brooklynbook-festival.org; 10 am to 4 pm; Free.

Children 2 to 11 years old can enjoy a full day of literary activities featuring authors, story time where children hear authors read and discuss their books, workshops with topics ranging from bookmaking and STEM to reading maps and writing stories, and an Artspace where children create projects with authors. Books by participating authors and other new and beloved children's books will be on sale along with author book signings.

SUN, SEPT. 18

IN MANHATTAN

"The Quest for the Seven Teeth": Central Park (call for exact location); (347) 559-6223; www.Accomplisheshow.com/kids; call for times; \$60 each.

Presented by Accomplish the Show, this fun interactive scavenger hunt will ignite children's imaginations as they embark on a quest to assist the Tooth Fairy's cousin, Franklin, in finding some teeth to replace those that he lost. The event lasts approximately two hours, rain or shine, and is suitable for children 6 to 11 years old. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations in advance required.

Irish Metalwork and Stone Sculpting: 10 am to 5 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 12.

Mo Willems Family Day: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 11 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Explore New York through the lens of Mo Willems — just like Knuffle Bunny! Kids can make a Mo-inspired craft, listen to stories, get a Statue of Pigeon tattoo, and snap photos with Elephant



Malcolm Pinckney

Jesters and jousting

The Medieval Festival is coming to Fort Tryon Park on Sept. 18.

Don't miss damsels in distress, knights in shining armor, jugglers, and jesters, too!

Take a trip back to the Renaissance and medieval times and experience the excitement of jousting and juggling. Costumed vendors and characters will stroll

through the grounds to sell a wide variety of period items, food, and drink, and artisans will demonstrate their crafts.

Medieval Festival, Sept. 18 from 11:30 am to 6 pm (rain date, Sept. 25). Admission is free.

Ft. Tryon Park [Broadway and Riverside Drive in Inwood, (212) 795-1388, www.whidc.org/festival/home].

and Piggie!

Stories For All Ages: Teardrop Park, Warren Street; (212) 267-9700; info@bpcparks.org; bpcparks.org; 11 am; Free.

"Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another." Master storyteller Peninnah Schram continues the centuries-long tradition of telling Jewish stories filled with wit and wisdom that celebrate our memories. This event is a collaboration with Museum of Jewish Heritage.

Medieval Festival: Fort Tryon Park, Riverside Drive and Broadway; www.whidc.org/festival/home.html; 11:30 am to 6 pm; Free.

The 32nd annual event brings to life the customs and spirit of the Middle Ages. The park is transformed into a medieval market and visitors are greeted with medieval music, dance, magic, jesters, and a live chess game by performers in medieval costumes. The afternoon concludes with a thrilling joust between four knights on horseback (Rain date Sept. 25).

Macy's story time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Sept. 4.

Erin Go Bragh! Celebrate Ireland: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Noon to 3

pm; Free with museum admission.

Explore the creative world of Irish literature and folk arts, featuring live music, dance, and art-making workshops!

Girls Skate Jam: Skate Park at 108th, Riverside Drive and W. 108th Street; 311; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Girls of all levels learn to ride, decorate their boards, and how to play a game of S.K.A.T.E. Bring your board, and full gear including helmet, elbow and knee pads, and wrist guards.

"The Tempest": 3 pm. The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace. See Friday, Sept. 9.

FURTHER AFIELD

Brooklyn Heart & Stroke Walk: Brooklyn Bridge Park, Pier 6, Atlantic Avenue at Furman Street, Brooklyn; (718) 222-9939; alissa.kawahara@heart.org; www.brooklynbridgepark.org; 9 am; Registration fees apply.

The three mile walk-run is designed to promote physical activity and heart-healthy living.

The ShopUp NYC: 501 Union, 501 Union St., Brooklyn; www.eventbrite.com/e/the-shopup-nyc-tickets-25982876483; 6 pm; Free.

A live shopping event by Babyccino

Kids featuring more than 25 independent children's boutiques from around the world under one roof! Registration is not required but we encourage you to RSVP as we will be sending pre-event information for all registered attendees. You also have the opportunity to reserve a limited addition tote bag to pick up at the event.

MON, SEPT. 19

IN MANHATTAN

Story time: Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Park, 20 Battery Pl.; (212) 267-9700; bpcparks.org/event/sunset-jam-on-the-hudson-2/all; 11 am; Free.

"Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another." Master storyteller Peninnah Schram continues the centuries-long tradition of telling Jewish stories filled with wit and wisdom that celebrate our memories.

Weaving: Children's Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton St. at Hudson Street; (212) 274-0986; www.cmany.org; Noon to 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Budding textile artists ages 5 and older practice the traditional hand-weaving technique as they develop their sense of color, texture, and pattern.

FURTHER AFIELD

The ShopUp NYC: 10 am to 5 pm. 501 Union. See Sunday, Sept. 18.

WED, SEPT. 21

IN MANHATTAN

Transitioning to High School: NYU Kimball Lounge, 246 Greene St. and Waverly Place; www.onewithnyu.com/event; 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

For parents of fourth- to eighth-graders who are preparing for high school in New York City.

THURS, SEPT. 22

IN MANHATTAN

Weaving: Noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 19.

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New-York Historical Society. See Thursday, Sept. 8.

FRI, SEPT. 23

IN MANHATTAN

Weaving: Noon to 6 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 19.

SAT, SEPT. 24

IN MANHATTAN

Make it Wild: High Line, 14th Street Passage at 10th Avenue; (212) 206-

Continued on page 42

Continued from page 41

9922; info@thehighline.org; thehighline.org/activities; 10 am to 2 pm; Free.

This last program of the season will go out with a bang and get wild! Explore the wild side of the High Line, from its earliest self-seeded plants to the animals that call it home.

Family Day: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 10 am to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

The Battle of Brooklyn offers children an opportunity to engage in hands-on activities and meet George Washington, who will teach families about the battle and the start of the Revolutionary War.

Go Fish!: Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Park, 20 Battery Pl.; (212) 267-9700; bpc-parks.org/event/sunset-jam-on-the-hudson-2/all; 10 am to 2 pm; Free.

Join experienced anglers for catch-and-release fishing and learn about life in the Hudson River. Observe the day's catch in aerated tanks and discover what you can do to steward the recovery of the Hudson. Featuring Sonia de Los Santos performing at noon.

Weaving: 10 am to 5 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 19.

Whitney Wees – Materials and Textures: 10 am to 11 am. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Saturday, Sept. 10.

Sketching tour: 10 am to 11 am. Whitney Museum of American Art. See Saturday, Sept. 10.

Bird Watching: Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Park, 20 Battery Pl.; (212) 267-9700; bpc-parks.org/event/sunset-jam-on-the-hudson-2/all; 11 am; Free.

New York City is known among bird-



Albert Law

Breaking the code

Symphony Space's Thalia Book Club is opening the season with a reading of "Secret Coders" on Sept. 25, at the Leonard Nimoy Thalia theater.

Gene Luen Yang, author of the bestselling graphic novels "American Born Chinese" and "Boxers & Saints," and now the national ambassador for Young People's Literature, discusses the latest installment of "Secret Coders," his entertaining series about a school whose mysteries are unraveled by a band of top-

rate computer coding students. For children 8 to 12 years old. The event includes a creative writing project, a discussion with the audience, and a book-signing.

Thalia Book Club, Sept. 25 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm. Tickets \$16 for non-members and \$13 for members.

Symphony Space's Leonard Nimoy Thalia theater [2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 316-4962, www.symphonyspace.org].

ers as a fantastic and unique place to observe birds, especially during fall and spring migration seasons. The beautiful gardens of Wagner Park create a unique niche for these fascinating creatures. Join a naturalist/horticulturist team as we look for birds and learn about the plantings and flowers. All ages and experience levels are welcome! Binoculars and field guides available to borrow.

Submerge: Hudson River Park's Pier 26, N. Moore Street and the Hudson River; (212) 627-2020; info@hrpt.ny.gov; www.hudsonriverpark.org; 11am – 4pm; Free.

Hudson River Park Trust and the New York Hall of Science present this science festival celebrating the city's coastal waters. Join us for hands-on marine science activities, live music, presentations by noted scientists, citizen science, kayaking, fishing and more!

Family Days – World of Jazz:

Carnegie Hall Resnick Education Wing, 881 Seventh Ave.; (212) 247-7800; www.carnegiehall.org/Calendar/2016/9/24/1200/PM/Fall-Family-Days; Noon to 4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Carnegie Hall celebrates families by offering free interactive and fun musical activities. This season, families will explore the swinging world of jazz in the fall and discover classical music in the spring. Families have the opportunity to participate in songwriting workshops, turn everyday objects into musical instruments in a digital sound playground, join in on sing-alongs, and build instruments and play them in an ensemble. There will also be opportunities to take in performances. RSVP is required.

SUN, SEPT. 25

IN MANHATTAN

Weaving: 10 am to 5 pm. Children's Museum of the Arts. See Monday, Sept. 19.

Macy's story time: 11:30 am. New-York Historical Society. See Sunday, Sept. 4.

Family Days – World of Jazz: Noon. Carnegie Hall Resnick Education Wing. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

Ecology Sail: Schooner Pioneer, Pier 16; <https://web.ovationtix.com/trs/pr/961826>; Noon to 3 pm; \$45 (\$40 children).

Come aboard the schooner Pioneer and set sail past Governors Island for the fishing grounds of Bay Ridge. We'll set a trawl net and participants will haul it in, bringing up a variety of creatures from blue crabs to flounder. Children and adults help raise the sails so we can continue our exploration the old-fashioned way. While sailing past the Statue of Liberty we'll learn about the sea creatures we caught, examine plankton through a view-scope, test the water to learn how animals live here, and learn about our marine ecosystem. The sail is recommended for children aged 5 and up. Reservations required.

Say goodbye to Elephant and Piggie: New-York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; nyhistory.org; 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Good friends Elephant and Piggie have become OUR good friends, too! Stop by on the final day of the special exhibition The Art and Whimsy of Mo Willems to see the show one last time and give Elephant and Piggie a hug goodbye.

A different 'Tempest'

"The Tempest," presented by Identity Theater, is premiering at the The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace from Sept. 9 to Sept. 18. This performance is a reimagining of Shakespeare's final play "The Tempest." Set on a remote island, exiled sorcerer Prospero plots to restore his daughter, Miranda, to her rightful place in court and conjures a storm (the tempest) to lure his usurping brother Antonio and the complicit King Alonso to his island. There, his machinations bring about revelation, re-

demption, and romance. Recommended for teens.

Identity Theater was formed as a place where disabled actors could come and work. It creates socially relevant productions and promotes tolerance.

"The Tempest," Sept. 9 through 18 — Friday at 8 pm, Saturday at 2 pm and 8 pm, and Sunday at 3 pm. All tickets \$15.

The Underground Theater of El Barrio's Artspace (215 E. 99th St. at Third Avenue on the Upper East Side, www.brownpapertickets.com/event/2592723).



Calendar

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

Gene Luen Yang: Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 Broadway at W. 94th Street; (212) 316-4962; www.symphonyspace.org; 1 pm 2:30 pm; \$16 (\$13 members).

Author of the bestselling graphic novels "American Born Chinese" and "Boxers & Saints," and now the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature discusses the latest installment of "Secret Coders."

FURTHER AFIELD

The Edible Academy Family Garden Picnic: New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road, The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm; \$125 per adult (\$75 per child).

This festive celebration of organic vegetable gardening and cooking is set in the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden. The food-filled afternoon of outdoor discovery will welcome back special guest chef Carla Hall, co-host of ABC's "The Chew," who will take guests on a culinary adventure through hands-on cooking workshops and a delicious picnic.

MON, SEPT. 26

IN MANHATTAN

Transitioning to High School: NYU Kimball Lounge, 246 Greene St. and Waverly Place; www.onewithnyu.com/event; 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm; Free.

For parents of fourth- to eighth-graders who are preparing for high school in New York City.

THURS, SEPT. 29

IN MANHATTAN

Cross-Stitch Circle: 3:30 pm. New York Historical Society. See Thursday, Sept. 8.

FRI, SEPT. 30

IN MANHATTAN

Free Fridays: South Street Seaport Museum, 12 Fulton St.; (212) 748-8600; <https://southstreetseaportmuseum.org>; 3 pm to 7 pm; Free.

Each Friday is centered around a different theme. There will be thematic educational and programmatic activities including special tours, artisan demonstrations, talks and lectures, and hands-on activities for the whole family. Reservations are required.

LONG-RUNNING

IN MANHATTAN

Summer Sports: J Hood Wright Recreation Center, 351 Fort Washington Ave.; (212) 927-1514.; <http://nycgovparks.org>; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10 am – 8 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 17; Free.

Kids are welcome to learn about



Beth Beckman

Farm Fresh Festival

Manhattan's iconic Seaport will be transformed into a farm on Sept. 17 for the Farm Fresh Festival.

The community event connects kids and families to a wholesome and magical farm experience in the city. The interactive environment invites families to experience the sights, tastes, play, animals, farmers, growers, and harvest of a farm.

Activity zones will include meet the farmers and animals, farmers' market, creativity tent, tastes

of the farm, wagons and wheels, music shed, reading orchard, and kindness corner. The festival is presented by the Generation Fresh Foundation, Fresh Kids, and Howard Hughes Corporation.

Farm Fresh Festival, Sept. 17 from 10 am to 4 pm. General admission is free. Registration is requested.

South Street Seaport (Fulton and Front streets in Lower Manhattan, www.eventbrite.com/e/farm-fresh-festival-for-kids-tickets-26305848501).

sports from skilled Parks staff! The Summer Sports Experience provides a friendly, small group introduction to various sports on a drop-in basis. Kids will learn sports like soccer, football, kickball, and more!

Street of Ships – The Port and Its People: South Street Seaport Museum, 12 Fulton St.; www.southstreetseaportmuseum.org; Wednesdays – Sundays, 11 am to 5 pm; \$12 (\$8 seniors, students, \$6 children 6 to 17).

The exhibition examines the decisive

role played by the 19th-century Seaport at South Street — long known as the "Street of Ships" — in securing New York's place as America's largest city and its rise to become the world's busiest port by the start of the 20th century. The centerpiece of the exhibition examines the life and current restoration of the museum's 1885 full-rigged sailing cargo ship, Wavertree.

Mo Willems story time: New York Historical Society DiMenna Children's History Museum, 170 Central Park West

at W. 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; ny-history.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 2 pm, Now – Fri, Sept. 23; Free with museum admission.

Come every Tuesday and listen to the fanciful tales.

"Wonders of the Arctic": American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at W. 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; tcoppens@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10:30 am to 11:30 am; beginning Fri, Sept. 2; \$27 (adults), \$22 (students/seniors), \$16 (children); Member discount: \$13.50 adults; \$8.50 children; Free for Voyager-Level members and above.

The film tells the story of survival in one of the most unforgiving environments on earth dominated by a single element: ice. Through compelling stories told by scientists and Inuit leaders, viewers will discover the impact of ice on the Arctic's inhabitants.

Little New-Yorkers: New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at W. 77th Street; (212) 873-3400; ny-history.org; Tuesdays and Fridays, 3:30 pm, Fri, Sept. 2 – Fri, Sept. 30; 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.

Summer sports: Chelsea Park, W. 28th Street and 10th Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 17; Free.

At Chelsea Park, kids will take part in a softball program! They'll learn everything there is to know about softball and how to play.

Stories at the Statue of Hans Christian Anderson: Hans Christian Andersen Statue, Central Park, E. 74th Street and Fifth Avenue; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturdays, 11 am – noon, Now – Sat, Sept. 24; Free.

Connie Reagan Blake, Len Cabral, Laura Simms, and Lisa Marie Nedebergard will share Appalachian, Caribbean, and Danish stories with accompaniment from cellist Lynn Andersen. Storytelling is held rain or shine. The stories are appropriate for children 6 years old and up. Parents or guardians are asked to sit with their children.

Teen Night: Battery Park Conservancy Rec room, 6 River Terrace; (212) 267-9700; www.bpcparks.org; Fridays, 4 pm, Fri, Sept. 9 – Fri, Dec. 16; Free.

Friday Night for Teens is a free program that gives 13 to 19 year olds a safe space to have fun and hang out. Teens can drop by to play games like table tennis, foosball, super-sized Connect Four, board games, or just hang out.



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

Back-to-school eats

We all knew it was coming: the new school year has finally arrived! As we settle into our new schedule, we are forming new routines and rituals. This is a great time to establish weeknight family meals within those routines. Here are a few tips to create simple, fun meals to be shared together.

Stock up on your kids' new favorites

Over the course of the summer, our kids have had a chance to try new things. Through play dates, camp, traveling, and staying over with family, new flavors and types of cuisine have probably been introduced. I like to take the kids to the store or market and let them show me some of the foods they have been trying when we were away from each other — maybe even a new fruit or vegetable!

You can experiment with new recipes in the kitchen together, giving kids a sense of confidence about the exciting foods they are trying.

Take advantage of ripe September tomatoes

While canning your own tomatoes is a fantastic way to preserve the late harvest tomato bounty, few of us have the time and resources it takes to perform such a task. Another way to keep those sweet ripe tomatoes at your fingertips long after the final harvest has passed is to make soup or sauce out of it and then freeze that in quart containers for weeknight meals.

You can either quick boil (30 seconds) or roast the tomatoes on high for a few minutes to remove the



tomato skins. Use the skinless tomato flesh in marinara sauce, tomato soup, or simply freeze the peeled tomatoes as they are and add them to recipes later in the year. There are few meals as satisfying on a rainy, cold fall evening as grilled cheese and tomato soup. With summer's last sweet tomatoes sitting in your freezer, this delightful meal comes together in no time!

Create a noodle bar

Noodle bowls are a great way to please the whole family as everyone can add in whatever they like. Make a rich broth on the weekend, along with vegetable garnishes such as fresh corn cut off the cob, bok choy, and charred scallions.

If you're using meat such as chicken or pork to create the broth, remove the meat from the broth, portion it, and keep it in the fridge

for later. Just before dinnertime during the week, heat up the broth and warm the cooked vegetables and portioned meat in the broth. Once warmed up, put each garnish separately into little bowls.

Choices for quality noodles abound. Simply boil your favorite type, lightly dress with vegetable oil to avoid sticking, and put into a large serving bowl. Soft boil, poach, or fry eggs and put onto a serving platter.

At the table, let everyone customize their own bowl with broth, vegetables, meat, noodles, and eggs. Don't forget your favorite condiments such as toasted sesame oil, chili paste, and kimchi.

These types of meals are perfect for families that have some vegetarians. Just keep the broth veggie, add tofu as a choice, and keep the meat separate or don't serve at all.

Stock up for the weekend

Busy back-to-school schedules may prevent us from getting a chance sit down together to share meals during the week. I like to keep the pantry stocked with ingredients for my families' favorite brunch dishes, so we can all catch up with each other on the weekend. Whether it is pancakes (recipe follows), oatmeal, or scones, something freshly made on the weekend is extremely comforting. Round out the meal with fresh fruit and yogurt — or if you are like us, some jam and maple syrup from summer travels!

Don't over complicate the weeknight meal

Weeknight meals should be about togetherness, connecting over food. Simplify your offerings if it means that dinner gets served and does not cause the cook anxiety. When we sit down together and share a meal, we are supporting each other and learning healthy eating habits for a lifetime!

Joanna DeVita is executive chef at Léman Manhattan Preparatory School. She loves nothing more than spending time with her family outdoors and sharing with them her love and respect for nature, good ingredients, and the joy of cooking.

Whole-wheat blueberry pancakes

Serves: 2 to 4

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup white unbleached all purpose flour
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1 tbs baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 tbs maple syrup, agave syrup, honey, or granulated sugar
1 1/4 cup milk (maybe more,

depending on the flour)

1 egg
4 tbs melted, lightly browned butter
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 cup frozen wild blueberries or 3/4 cup cleaned, fresh blueberries

DIRECTIONS: Measure the flours, baking powder, salt, and sugar (if using) into a medium-sized mixing bowl. Mix lightly with a whisk and set aside. In another mixing bowl, add: milk, egg, melted butter, vanilla, and syrup

(if using).

Add the dry ingredients into the wet. Mix gently with a rubber spatula until batter just comes together. Do not over mix. Allow batter to sit for 20 minutes if you have the time. Thin the batter slightly with extra milk if needed.

Gently fold in the blueberries, taking care not to mix too much and turn the batter purple.

Griddle pancakes using fresh butter to grease the pan before every batch. Enjoy!

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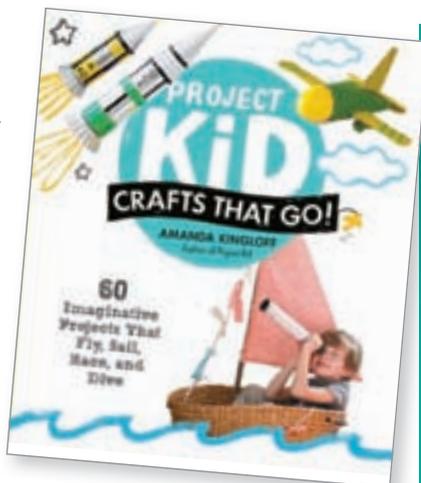
BY LISA J. CURTIS

Crafting 101

On Sept. 6, Amanda Kingloff's inspiring new transportation-themed craft book, "Project Kid: Crafts That Go!", screeches into bookstores. It's divided into chapters based on themes that children obsess over: cars, trains, farming vehicles, boats, construction equipment, planes, and space. The how-to manual is crammed with DIY ideas for adorable playthings, such as a portable road system made from square coasters that can be used over and over again in a multitude of configurations.

In the "sky" chapter, Kingloff details how you can "say it in skywriting," creating a decorative piece that would be a charming addition for a nursery wall or the bedroom of a third grader who's honing his cursive skills. You form the child's name in cursive using floral wire, attach white pom-poms to it, then attach the last letter to a brightly colored paper airplane.

The book has easy-to-read instructions, gorgeous photographs,



and a "resources" chapter where Kingloff, a veteran crafter, shares the contact information of the companies where she gets her supplies (seashells, jewelry findings, and more); although, many of the components are household items that she cleverly upcycles. This is a book that parents will use to bust boredom, decorate playrooms, and create clever playthings.

Project Kid: Crafts That Go! book by Amanda Kingloff, \$19.95, www.artisan-books.com.

Lunchbox must-have

It's back-to-school time, and for many of us parents-of-food-snobbs, that means that school lunches are shunned in favor of meals packed at home.

So it's another round of hectic mornings that entail making back-to-back meals at breakneck speed. And there are high expectations for breakfast and lunch; they both have to be delicious and nutritious.

Happily, Stonyfield has released new, uber healthy products — organic, grass-fed whole milk yogurt in cups and organic whole milk yogurt in pouches — which will help parents serve up



A-plus meals quickly and with considerably less guilt than the time we served up chocolate croissants for breakfast! (Hey, it was June!)

The pouches — in truly delicious, rich flavor combinations of strawberry-beet-berry and pear-spinach-mango — can be frozen, so when they're unpacked at lunchtime, they'll be a chilly treat. These little pouches pack a punch by delivering calcium, vitamin D, and 13 mg of omega 3s, DHA and EPA.

Stonyfield Organic Whole Milk Pouch, \$1.49, www.whole-foodsmarket.com.

Stamp out lost stuff

When I was preparing my son's stuff for camp this summer, I was dismayed every time I had to write his name sloppily with a permanent marker into a brand new shirt or bathing suit. Luckily, for the start of the new school year, I have found a much neater — and fun! — solution,

the Minestamp personalized label system. Inventor Paco Navarez bundles his self-

inking stamp — akin to one you might use to put your return address on a letter — with tweezers and a set of letters and numbers that you use to customize up to three lines of text.

After you insert your text (such as your child's name, phone number, classroom, e-mail address, or phone number) into the stamp, you're ready to click it onto anything that might go missing: backpacks, hoodies, lunchboxes, books, and more. The wash-resistant textile ink leaves behind legible text, unlike my attempts with the marker. And if you need to label a dark-colored item, the kit includes a white ribbon which can be stamped and placed onto the dark fabric.

Minestamp personalized label stamp, \$17, www.thegrommet.com.



Quality is in-grained

Ease your student's back-to-school burden with a backpack that combines comfort with retro style. Recommended for children ages 10 and up, LL Bean's new Wayfarer Pack features a fantastic *faux bois* pattern. That's French for "false wood," but this backpack is a true find. You'll want to go with



the grain because it has a padded back panel and two side water-bottle compartments. Add a little *je ne sais quois* by monogramming it with your child's initials or a single letter, for an additional cost of \$8. *Ooh-la-la.*

Wayfarer Pack, \$49.95, www.llbean.com.

Take note

For notebooks that will stand out from the crowd, check out the Museum of Modern Art's gift shop. Their Hidden Pencil Notebooks have *trompe l'oeil* covers which feature a scatter of colored pencils or tidy yellow pencils lined up in a row. A real pencil nestled in the middle of each cover's composition! The colored pencils notebook has 144 pages of blank paper, and the yellow notebook has 144 pages of graph paper inside. Both notebooks measure 8.5 inches high by 6 inches wide. Best of all, purchasing this clever, utilitarian



notebook from MoMA helps to support the museum's work, too.

Hidden Pencil Notebooks in colored or yellow, \$14.95 each, www.moma.org.



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