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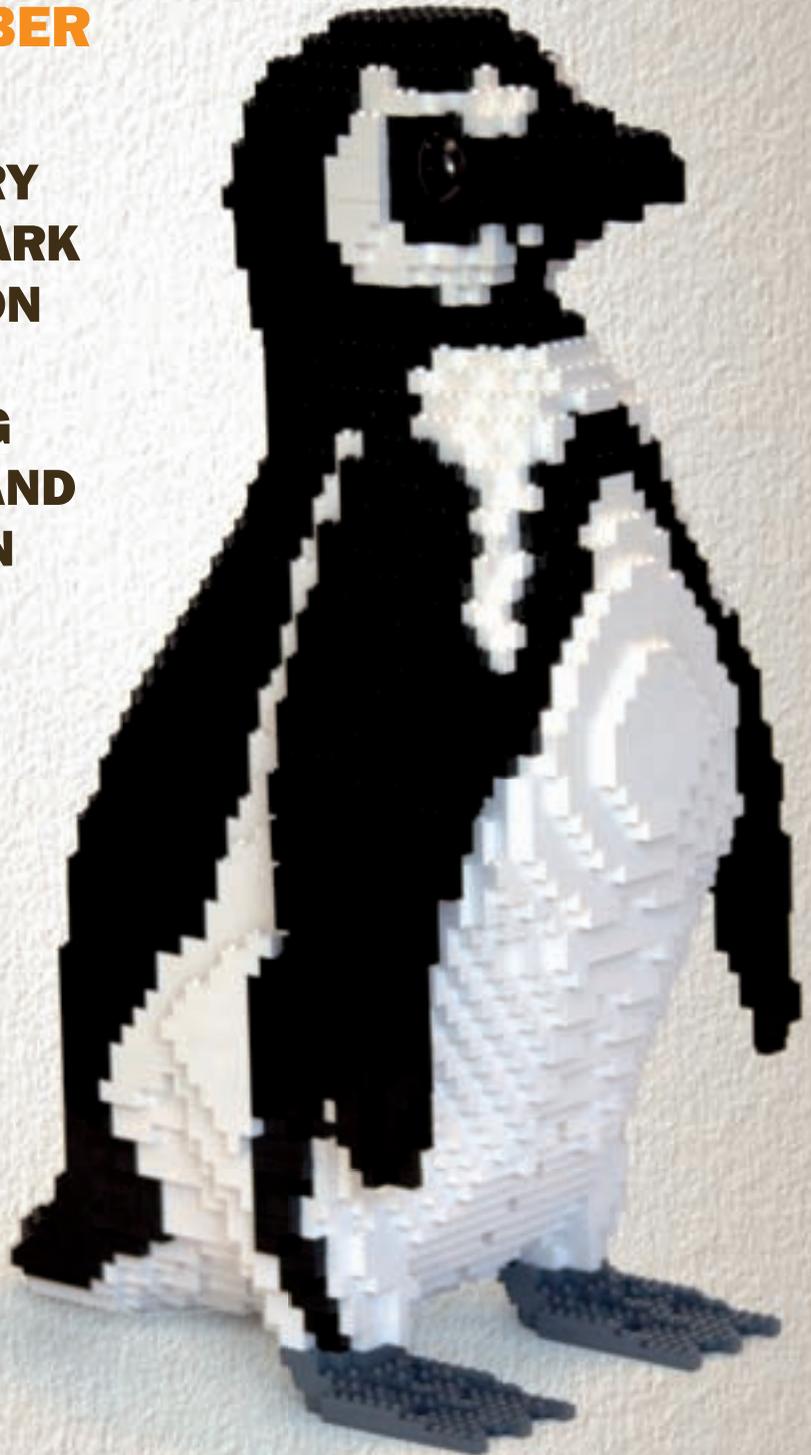


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Letter from the publisher

Keeping our kids safe

It's August and summer is more than halfway over. Many parents need to think about schools and school choices for the fall and preparation for the coming school year. Soon, it will also be time to start shopping for the kids and



getting ready to take advantage of sales and no-tax weeks. In this issue we present some tips for wise spending. We also feature our **Annual Fall School Directory** and hope you will also visit these listings on our website, www.NYParenting.com. We have a new domain name, so please make note of it.

Sadly, the recent tragedy in Brooklyn that took the life of a young boy has us all thinking about

child safety issues and how we can keep our children out of harm's way. This terrible event shook every parent to the core and our hearts go out to the family of Leiby Kletzky of Borough Park. The entire community of New York reeled from

the shock and the horror, and our contributing writer Laura Varoscak-DeInnocentiis, herself a mother of two young boys, has written a moving commentary on the subject of child safety and how we can teach our children to protect themselves from strangers.

I remember when my 10-year-old daughter was going to have to walk a few blocks by herself from a school bus to dance class. I thought

I had prepped her well for this experience, but I still needed to satisfy myself that she had the kind of "intelligent strong street behavior" that I thought would be necessary for this walk. Without her knowing, I followed her and watched her body language and checked out her attitude and route. After all my conversations and instructions, I was satisfied that she was able to handle the walk — and that I could handle her doing it.

It's not easy to let go of your kids and let them out there into the big world without you. We all have our hearts in our mouths until we see them safe and sound, which is why my mother never really slept until I was home from dates and socializing, even when I was in my early 20s. Now I am the same kind of mother and it's hard to explain

to my daughter why I can't really sleep until she comes home. The maternal instinct is very powerful and distance, time, and separation don't really ever change it.

I love being a mother. It's an amazing thing, and publishing these magazines and our website is a glorious opportunity to connect with other moms, like me, who know that the miracle of our children is the "light of our lives." Let's all do our very best to keep our kids safe and sound.

Please "like" us on FACEBOOK at **NYParenting** and follow us on TWITTER. Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis, Publisher

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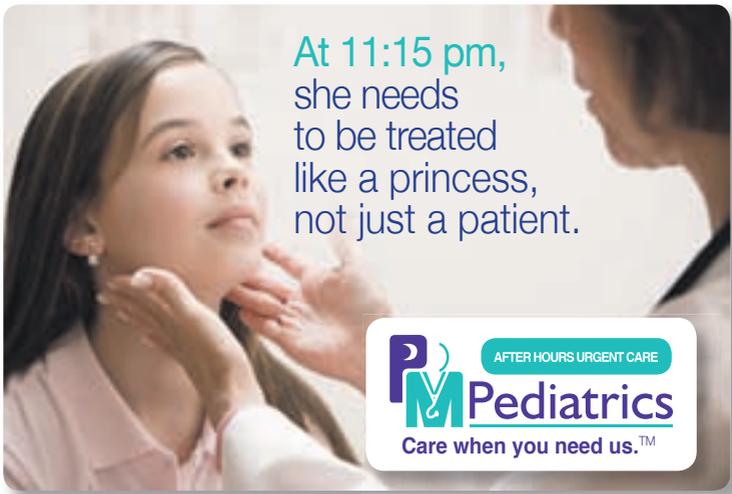
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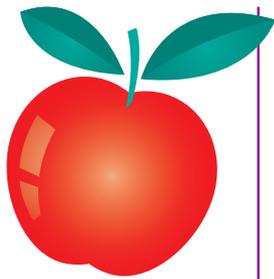
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DEAR TEACHER

BY PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS



Back-to-school cases

Back-to-school anxiety

Question: Every year my children and I have a fantastic summer. Then the first week of school comes, and their anxiety level suddenly rises to very high levels. How can we avoid this?

Answer: Parents can make back-to-school time less traumatic by clearing their schedules, so they can focus on being there for their children. The less parents have to do at home and on the job, the more relaxed they will be.

Children tend to be especially anxious if they are attending a new school or have had bad experiences the previous year. This is the time for parents to be calm, positive and reassuring. They also need to be careful not to overreact to problems that pop up in the first days and help their children develop coping strategies. If their children have been bullied or teased the previous year, their new teachers need to know about this during the first days of school to stop it from happening again.

Parents can also make the start of school more comfortable for their younger children by arranging play dates for them during the first weeks of school. This helps them rebuild social relationships with their classmates.

Too much TV for kids

Question: The TV is on in our house most of the day, but our young toddlers don't watch it much of the

time. Is this truly bad for them? All we ever hear about are the negatives of young children watching TV. Aren't there any positives?

Answer: Shut your TV off. Hearing TV in the background results in toddlers doing less talking and less listening to others talk. You'll clearly see this if you observe them playing while the TV is on.

You really should follow the TV viewing guidelines set by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The Academy strongly recommends that children do not view TV until they are age 2. After that, the Academy suggests no more than two hours a day. These are sensible guidelines for parents to follow and really allow for a lot of TV viewing. You must understand that most of the day in early childhood needs to be devoted to active play to maximize intellectual development. Just think of all the other opportunities to experience the world that your toddlers are missing while watching TV.

There are other downsides to watching too much TV at a young age. Some current research shows that, later on, you can expect many children to have poorer achievement in math in school and to be less physically active. They are also likely to consume more junk food than those who have watched less TV.

Early TV watching has been completely demonized by most child-development experts. However, there actually are some positive benefits for preschoolers who watch programs with a strong educational content. Later on, these children might read more and get better grades. Unfortunately, most children are not watching primarily educational programs.

Teacher job-sharing

Question: My son will have two teachers sharing the job as his second-grade teacher. One will teach Monday and Tuesday, and the other on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and the next Monday, Tuesday. Then their schedules will reverse. Is this a common practice? What are the chances of my child having a good year?

Answer: Sharing a teaching job is becoming more common in elemen-

tary school. Some school districts are encouraging this arrangement to save money. Others are primarily using it to let teaching mothers have more time at home with their children. Schools find that job-sharing results in a reduction of sick days taken and absenteeism — a benefit to the school and the children.

Most teachers are very enthusiastic about job-sharing. They say that the children get the benefit of two fresh teachers. And they feel that fewer children slip between the cracks because two teachers are observing the students. They also see benefits in the children being exposed to different instructional styles.

Job-sharing may occur in the pattern that you mention, or the teachers may each teach a half-day. In either case, the key to success lies in the communication between the teachers. Most communicate by e-mail, notes, journals and phone calls. They also hold joint parent/teacher conferences. Half-day teachers often have the benefit of an overlap time at lunch.

How successful the year will be for your son depends on the compatibility, cooperation and partnership of the two teachers. There will be problems, unfortunately, if the communication between the teachers is not good.

A lunchbox secret

Parents: One aspect of packing lunches that is very important is keeping the food safe for your children to eat. Before beginning to pack a lunch, be sure your hands are clean and that you are packing the food in a clean container. Use thermoses for hot foods and cold packs to keep food cold. One trick is to freeze some foods so they can thaw before lunch time. Finally, include moist towelettes as a reminder to your children to clean their hands. One caution: be sure to pack lunches that meet any restrictions the school has laid down.

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

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over-drying can waste a lot of energy and damage clothing. the best way to avoid over-drying is to...



a. check the dryer every 10 minutes



b. take the clothes out while still damp



c. use the moisture sensor on your dryer

answer: c

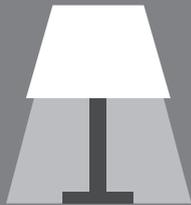
plugging appliances into a power strip...

- a. makes them more powerful
- b. makes it easy to turn them all off to save energy
- c. uses less energy because it all comes from one outlet



answer: b

what's the largest energy user for homes in our area?



a. lighting



b. heating



c. electronics



d. toasters

answer: b

showers use less energy than baths because...

- a. they require the water to be less hot than a bath does
- b. the acoustics are better for singing
- c. they use about half as much hot water



answer: c

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Changing schools

New ways to help your child with a tough transition

BY MONICA BROWN

If your children are attending a new school this fall and you're worried about their ability to cope with the change, take heart: there's a lot you can do — before that first bell rings — to help your child get acclimated.

That's an important job, because we parents don't have to worry about navigating a new lunchroom, or fear leaving lots of friends behind. Without a familiar face at the new school, some children may become apprehensive when September rolls around.

Kristan Kirsh — the senior marketing manager of Great Schools, a national organization whose website provides detailed information about more than 200,000 public and private schools, from preschool through high school — says that while some tips are common sense, parents often don't think to employ them. And that would be a big mistake, because they could make a huge difference.

Tip one: Plan a tour

"With your child, take a tour of the school," says Kirsh, who repeats the phrase with emphasis, because, she says, it's critical for your child's sense of familiarity. "It gives you a level of comfort, so that you know what to anticipate. And, if possible, while you're on that tour, meet the teacher."

OK, but it's August, and the schools are closed! True, but some schools do maintain office hours (albeit limited ones) and will gladly allow you to visit. If not, you can also ask for a tour the day or two before classes begin in September, when office staff members have returned from their summer break. If worse comes to worst, you can still request a tour during the first week of school,

as your child is still getting adjusted to his new surroundings.

Tip two: Check to see if the school has a Facebook page

"This will give you a sense of the culture of that school," says Kirsh. And what's more, a Facebook page — which she says many schools have these days — will often provide you with ways to contact other parents — a critical tool for your child's self-confidence, because you can use it to connect your children with his school-mates, before he even sets foot in the classroom.



Learn more

For more information about Great Schools, visit greatschools.org.

To reach the Office of Family Information and Action website, follow the Offices and Programs link on schools.nyc.org.

"See if there's a [Parent Teacher Association/Organization], and see if they're able to give out any of the names of the parents, so you can connect with another parent or two," says Kirsh. "And if they have kids the same ages as your children, see if they can meet up for a little pizza night. Or, have them over, so that the child could have an initial buddy. The fact that the child can have someone that they know in the school already is a tremendous anchor for them in those first couple months."

If that doesn't work, says Kirsh, Great Schools itself might be able to help.

"At Great Schools, we actually have a lot of the information, and you can connect with parents who might have already been on that school page, and you can reach out to any of them. We have our own community within each school. You can actually go on to greatschools.org and look up a particular school to find some of the [parent] communities that have already been active."

That may be the best bet for parents of New York City public school students, since individual city schools may not have their own Facebook pages. But for parents new to the country's largest school system, here's another Internet resource: the Department of Education's Office of Family Information and Action. And don't underestimate the power of dialing 311. Education officials say 311 operators can often answer questions about city schools — including curriculum information!

Tip three: Check out extra-curricular activities

Some (like sports groups) may even start over the summer, so look into it now, and your child may make a friend or two before school starts. Even if nothing is happening until September, start investigating the various after-school activities that your child might be interested in, says Kirsh, because those activities will open even more social doors for the child, while enriching them at the same time.

Tip four: Make sure your child is placed in the appropriate academic program

With a move, sometimes paperwork can stray. Kirsh says it's important to take time out (now!) to locate all academic records from the child's previous school (report cards, progress reports, etc.) so that you can advocate for him academically.

"Your child might be placed at a level that he might not really be at," explains Kirsh. "He might be performing higher in math or reading. Make sure the school has these records, so you can help place him properly, in a class where he would be challenged the most."

Of course, some simple tips still apply for a successful back-to-school transition, whether it's at a new school or not.

For example, re-establishing a routine is important. It can help kids feel less stressed out.

Kirsh says about two to three weeks before Labor Day, it's important to start shifting that bedtime routine back to a more suitable one for school hours.

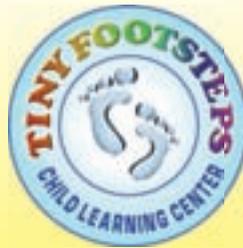
Set up a study space for kids, and make that space special.

"Put some pictures up, or do it with him," Kirsh says. "Or have him create his OWN study space. It's the anticipation. It goes a long way."

Try to make the annual back-to-school ritual fun. Consider getting together with neighbors and friends for a "back to school night," says Kirsh, where you relax and enjoy some time with your child's schoolmates and their families. Some parents, she says, have started making this an annual gathering — because it gives kids a chance to anticipate a more positive association with school, allowing them to look forward to that first day back.

The bottom line, says Kirsh, is that while some of these tips might not be easy to implement, they are worth it. After all, a child who is well-equipped to handle new experiences may find it much easier to succeed — at any age, in any school.

Monica Brown is a news anchor who lives on Staten Island with her husband and two children. She can be reached at monicaldbrown@gmail.com.



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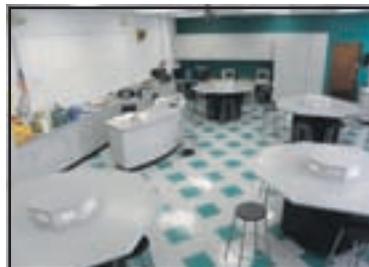
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Continued on page 12



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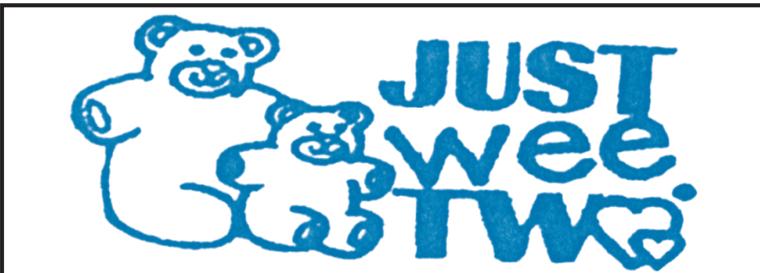


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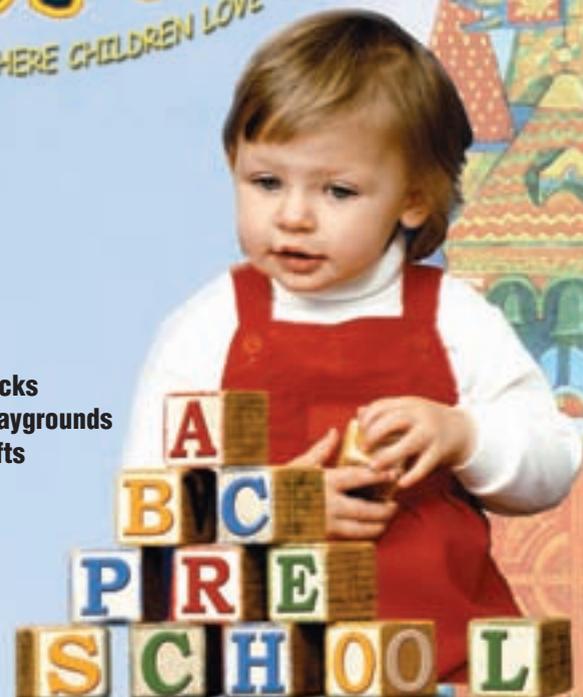
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Education

DIRECTORY

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74-15 Juniper Boulevard, Middle Village
718-899-2020 or www.thelearningtree.org

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Education

DIRECTORY

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There will be an entrance exam on Wednesday, August 10th.

For more information or to receive an application packet, please call (718) 894-4000 or send an e-mail to Info@MartinLutherNYC.org.

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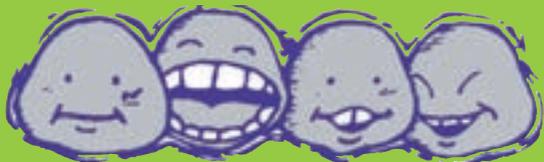


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Onward from pre-k

One family celebrates the past to prepare for the future

BY ROBERT TROTTA

The most joyful moment in my life was when my wife, Giovanna, gave birth to our son, Matthew Thomas. When we came home from Flushing Hospital with him back in 2006, I remember thinking how fortunate I was. As time went on, I had my days when I thought: “I can’t believe he’s really ours. I’m not babysitting someone else’s beautiful child. I don’t have to give him back to the hospital.” Like so many other parents, I have been so proud watching my child grow into the intelligent, caring, sensitive, funny, inquisitive and enthusiastic individual that he is today.

On June 25, Matthew and his fellow classmates from Kid Krazy Preschool in Astoria graduated. The ceremony was beautiful and touching. All the students were dressed in blue caps (with tassels, of course) and gowns, and they sang songs such as, “We’re Moving Up to Kindergarten.”

Giovanna had her pack of tissues to wipe the joyful tears, while I stood with heavy emotions, recording the graduation with our camcorder. (Since that day, we must have watched the graduation about 40 times, and we have sung the tunes that our “American Idol” belted out that day.) At one point in the graduation, the school secretary/teacher’s aide, Ms. Rodriguez, presented a heartfelt video that captured candid moments from the entire school year — scenes of laughter, affection, creativity, collaboration, goofiness, seriousness and, of course, learning. Ms. Rodriguez blessed us all with our own copy of the CD. Following the ceremony, Giovanna, Matthew and I, along with all four of

Matthew’s grandparents, went to an Italian restaurant to celebrate.

The day after the graduation, we, the parents, had a celebration together. About 23 students from the class, along with their parents, came together and had a wonderful time. Hot dogs and hamburgers, pasta, rice, fruit, face-painting and a guest visit from children’s book author Rick Arruzza were all on the menu. Arruzza read one of his published stories, “Sparky Goes to School,” and autographed a copy of the book

for each graduate. He even brought Sparky, his pit bull/pointer mix, to the party to meet and greet the children.

We’ve since gotten together with some of Matthew’s classmates and their parents for play dates. Giovanna keeps in touch with many of them through Facebook and e-mail. At a recent firework show at Astoria Park, a group of us watched the spectacular event together. As amazing as the fireworks were in the night sky, the fact that the parents and children were all together was even more special.

As we walked home from the park, one of Matthew’s favorite classmates, Haany, turned to me and said: “Matthew’s Daddy, can we have a play date every Thursday?” Those words made me melt.

Completing preschool is momentous for everyone involved. Some, or many, of the kids have been together for a couple of years, and parents have formed bonds with other parents as well. Keeping in touch, holding a play date here or there, sending a quick e-mail or a message on Facebook, sharing photographs or video footage with your child, and singing songs that were sung during the year are all effective ways — and important ways — of tackling the necessary adjustment period between the end of preschool and the arrival of kindergarten, come September.

And just because the children may no longer be classmates, or may no longer be students in the same school, doesn’t mean they, and their parents, can’t remain friends and spend time together. Parents can help their kids make sure that these special first friendships continue to grow.



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What is being left behind

Our emphasis on testing is forcing vital playtime out of the classroom

BY ALLISON PLITT

As a mother of a 5-year-old daughter living in Queens, I often ask myself things that, in hindsight, seem pretty ridiculous. Some of these reflections include: “Is my daughter enrolled in the best public school in her school district?”; “Is she signed up for the right activities that are best-suited for her needs and abilities that will help her get into college?”; “Will she be able to handle the amount of homework she is assigned to in kindergarten when she starts this fall?”; and (this one really makes me laugh) “When she enters third grade, will she be prepared to take this New York State test I hear all the school administrators and teachers fretting about?”

I try to keep in perspective that my daughter is only 5-years-old and has done so much already in her short lifespan, in comparison to myself at the same age, that worrying about these things is almost irrelevant. When I was 5 years old, I didn't have homework. I was zoned for only one public school and was automatically given a seat there. I took a dance class (though, to this day, I still have two left feet), and my parents had no clue about any of my school's state tests.

In contrast to the rather innocent years of my own early childhood in the 1970s, the world where my daughter is growing up in now is a technology-driven, fast-paced lifestyle, where everyone is trying to anticipate what will happen next. Considering what I'm exposing my daughter to on a daily basis, I started to ask myself some honest questions, such as:

- “Am I allowing her to watch too much TV, or to spend too much time



The author's daughter at play (above and opposite). Some believe creative play in our children's upbringing and education is a vital component to our country's future.

in front of a computer screen?”

- “Am I letting her eat too much junk food?”

- “Am I not giving her a chance to be a kid by inundating her with too many activities and too much information in my attempts to make her a well-rounded, intelligent child?”

Speaking to others in my Queens community about my concerns, I got some thoughtful responses from a lot of caring and reflective parents. I needed to remind myself that the New York City area is full of affluent, educated adults who all want what is best for their children, and sometimes in the whirlwind of our society, we often forget that our kids are just that — kids.

At the end of my research, I ended

up being directed to the website of Alliance for Childhood, an organization which adheres to the idea of raising children through creative play in an environment that rebuffs the constant presence of technology, media, commercialization and school testing.

All of the materials posted to the website (which includes reports, publications, and the Alliance's own position on certain issues) stress the importance of play being fundamentally important to a child's growth. Through play, children learn about whole body movement, manipulating objects, using their imaginations, and engaging themselves in activities with other kids their ages. Play even helps children reduce stress.

Creative play is derived from educators' definition of creativity as the ability to think up new ideas. They define play as an activity where children can create, imagine, and explore their environments — as opposed to a scheduled sports game or a dance class. By the first grade, children should be able to have mastered three different stages of play: solitary, parallel and cooperative.

This very first stage of play, called “solitary play,” is where children play independently. This is followed by “parallel play,” where two or more children are playing with toys alongside each other. When children reach ages 4 or 5, they should be emotionally- and socially-developed enough to engage in “cooperative play,” where they play with each other by communicating ideas or rules.

In the summer of 2010, William Crain, a psychology professor at the City College of New York, published a report stating that play is an inherent part of children's growth — much like the need for animals to

play when they are babies. Baby animals like to spontaneously scamper and jump around in the wild, which gives them an acrobatic balance with which to escape predators and handle footing in difficult terrain. Likewise, when children engage in creative play, they learn to problem-solve and feel empathy toward others, which will help them later in life, when they interact in the adult world.

The Alliance has posted to its website many articles about the importance that childhood play plays in fostering creativity in children, which will help them navigate through life's problems as they grow into adults. One of my favorite articles is a Newsweek piece published in July 2010. Written by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman, the article discusses a creativity test designed by Professor E. Paul Torrance, which was first conducted on a group of 400 Minneapolis children in 1958.

"What's shocking is how incredibly well Torrance's creativity index predicted those kids' creative accomplishments as adults," stated Bronson and Merryman in the article.

One of the highest scorers on the test was 8-year-old Ted Schwarzrock, who amazed scholars with his answers. Given a fire truck and asked how the toy could be improved, Schwarzrock gave 25 responses, such as "adding a removable ladder and springs to the wheels." Fast forward 50 years, Schwarzrock is now independently wealthy, having founded and sold three medical-products companies.

"His innovations in health care have been wide-ranging, from a portable respiratory oxygen device to skin-absorbing anti-inflammatories to insights into how bacteria become antibiotic-resistant," wrote Bronson and Merryman.

If Schwarzrock's test results and life accomplishments are any indication, creative play in our children's upbringing and education is a vital component to our country's future. Since 1958, the Torrance test has been conducted in the United States on an annual basis. The creativity scores had been steadily rising until 1990, when these scores slowly began to decline.

Other countries have taken notice of these scores and have made concerted efforts to reverse this down-



ward trend. In 2009, the European Union planned a European Year of Creativity and Innovation when conferences and experiential learning programs were conducted for both children and adults. Even the Chinese, long known for their drill-style teaching techniques, are also adopting a problem-based learning approach.

In comparison to the creativity programs of other countries, the

U.S. government has been slow to respond. None of the publications on the website say anything positive about the No Child Left Behind Act, which the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed in 2001 in a well-intentioned attempt to fairly appropriate federal funding to public schools.

Personally, I have never heard any teacher, school administrator or child psychologist make a positive remark about this legislation, which

they say essentially pressures teachers to have their students achieve high test scores so schools receive government aid.

As a result, public schools are spending inordinate amounts of time preparing children to take tests. Elementary school curriculums are now focused on teacher-led instruction, rote memorization, and test-taking, which leaves little time for recess or play. For their students to achieve higher test scores, teachers are now instructing children in kindergarten classrooms how to read and write, which many educators believe shouldn't be taught until first grade.

Although the Alliance disapproves of the increasing lack of play in these curriculums, it doesn't believe in chaotic classrooms. In its publication "Crises in Kindergarten," Alliance advocates Edward Miller and Joan Almon write that ideal classrooms are either where students "explore the world through play with the active presence of teachers," or involve "teacher guided learning with rich, experiential activities."

After having read the material on the Alliance's website, I have found that most of my worries about raising a 5-year-old can be assuaged just by adding some play time to her daily routine. When kids play creatively, they watch less television and spend less time in front of computer screens, which is known to decrease obesity rates. When children play outdoors they come in contact with nature and develop healthier attitudes toward food and their bodies.

While there are many advantages to exposing children to sports and the arts, the constant influx of classes and scheduled activities leaves children with little time to relax and enjoy the simple pleasures of being a child, such as playing in a sandbox with toys, filling up buckets of water from a sprinkler, or competing in a building block contest with a sibling or friend.

Thanks to the Alliance, I've learned that I'm lucky enough to give my daughter some free play time this summer (no camp, no family trips, no summer school) for her to indulge in her imagination and let her mind grow.

For more information about the Alliance for Childhood, you can visit its website at <http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/home>.

Eliminating bullying & violence from schools

Encouraging compassion through education, yoga and music

BY ELENA SHLYCHKOV

Nationwide incidents of youth violence, stress and bullying are growing alarmingly common. Studies estimate that about 30 percent of children are either being bullied, are bullies, or both. Thirty-two states across the United States have already instituted laws to reduce or eliminate bullying in schools. Tragic events resulting from acts of bullying are becoming frequent fixtures in our news.

The discussion of bullies has brought attention to other topics, such as the nature of high school cliques, mean girls, increased use of anti-depressants by teens, violence, and the importance of juvenile mental health. Bullying not only affects mental health, but it also has adverse effects on emotional and physical health of its victims. It provokes feelings of intense fear, which gives rise to frustration, intense anger and violence.

How can we defeat these problems and shift the paradigm toward compassion, viable health education, ethics and tolerance? First, we identify who are the most probable targets for bullying. While there is no definitive reason why a bully chooses a target, the most common tendencies are overachievers, overweight children, kids who are part of a minority, newcomers, gay and lesbian youth, and immigrants.

Can we explore the practice of yoga, focus more on fitness in schools and promote non-violent music as powerful tools for conflict resolution and better communication? It is a fact that an increase in sports and fitness activities improves a student's self-image and self-esteem. Yoga contributes to the growth of compassion and tolerance. It also helps in controlling stress and anger. Medical practitioners are finding that listening to instrumental music has a positive and calming effect on the mind and spirit.

Initiatives should be implemented



on all levels, large and small, to bring awareness to bullying and educate the public on how to identify and remedy this problem. Parents, educators, politicians, fitness professionals, and entertainers should unite and take part in programs to bring attention to bullying. Everyone has a role to play in reducing this crisis.

As violence and bullying continue to escalate, adults should take responsibility and make changes. We should transform the adversities that vulnerable students face into favorable conditions, to ensure that they have a place in the community to grow and learn.

Elena Shlychkov has a master's degree in education, and she advocates for juvenile health and wellness. Her mission is to promote, teach and encourage the practice of good and complete health. Her complete educational model consists of good physical health, mental health and emotional health in children. Through research, Shlychkov has discovered three main reoccurring issues that have a negative impact on juvenile wellness; they are childhood obesity, bullying and the increase in sexually transmitted disease rates in teens. It is Shlychkov's belief that these issues can be resolved through education, nutrition and exercise.



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Strategic school clothes

SHOPPING

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Youth apparel is a billion-dollar industry that peaks each fall with back-to-school clothes shopping. To get the biggest bang for your buck, begin with planning.

“The most common mistake shoppers make is buying too much on impulse when faced with a large selection, or buying

too much of the wrong thing,” says family budgeting expert and consumer economist Dr. Pam Norum. “Although the plan-and-budget mantra may have an ominous ring, it’s really as simple as taking an inventory of what your child has and deciding what he or she needs.”

Scott Krugman, spokesman for the National Retail Federation, agrees.

“Before leaving home, have a game plan. Know what your child needs and what you want to purchase. Otherwise, you’ll be overwhelmed when

you get to the stores.”

To do this, take inventory of your child’s closet with him. Determine what still fits, what needs to be replaced, and what items will be willingly worn again. This, says Norum, is critical for building on an existing wardrobe when you have a limited budget.

“Take special note of workable basic pieces — jeans, skirts, tops, other pants — and major color influences,” she says.

Next, make a shopping list of the basic items needed, based on the closet inventory. Although this list should be your guide, leave some room for flexibility. Your child may see an extra-special sweater that matches two or more basics in her wardrobe.

After taking inventory, establish a clothing budget for each child. While not every family can spend the estimated \$220 per child, it is important that you decide — before you go shopping — what you can afford to spend.

“Equally important is to know your price point,” says Krugman. “Are you going to spend \$15 for that pair of jeans, or \$50?”

When budgeting, keep in mind that as a child’s age increases, so does the price. As children move into adolescence, parents can expect a gradual 25 percent hike in clothing prices, Norum warns.

“The combination of increased peer awareness and pure size — more fabric, construction, and fashion features — adds to the bottom line,” she says.

Older children also tend to have a wider variety of social activities that require a more diverse wardrobe. Since adolescents are in the throes of growth spurts, it is best to spread purchases over a longer period of time. And don’t forget about



alterations. Those too-little pants or jeans can be easily made into shorts or capris.

While a budget is partly about establishing spending limits, it is also about getting the most value for your money.

"Since elementary-age kids, 6 to 11, tend to be more rough and tumble, value often comes from buying quality, durable clothing with easy-to-care-for features," says Norman, who believes wearability is value. When assessing additions to your child's wardrobe, consider these points.

• **Durability.**

Look for good enough quality to withstand repeated washings while remaining colorfast and not shrinking. Check for reinforced stitching and well-sewn buttons and buttonholes. When purchasing knits, go with fabric that is more dense than loose, with limited stretching. Keep in mind growth features such as elastic waistbands, adjustable straps, and longer shirt tails.

• **Versatility.** Staples, such as jumpers for girls and khakis for boys, are great dress-it-up or dress-it-down pieces, as are various colored T-shirts. Mixing and matching with the basics — jeans, tops, and other pants or skirts — make a wardrobe work harder.

• **Quality.** Getting the most value for your money means budgeting for quality. Backpacks and jackets, for example, are likely candidates for heavy wear and tear. "For items like these, it's a good idea to buy brands you trust," says Krugman. "Some items, such as backpacks, even come with warranties."

• **Comfort.** Children need to be comfortable when they are in a learning environment. When trying clothes on in the dressing room, have your child sit, kneel, twirl around and bend over. Are the clothes tight anywhere? Do they ride up or fall down? Are they itchy? If so, it may distract your child while he or she is trying to learn.

For most children, today's clothing makes a lifestyle statement — one that can stoke an emotional standoff when needs versus wants enter the financial equation. There

may be times when your child wants something more than your budget allows, or an item you simply find inappropriate.

"Conflicts are inevitable with children who don't understand that clothes are subject to spending caps," Norum says.

Krugman agrees.

"This is another reason why you should have a game plan before leaving home. You and your child will know what the expectations are, and you may be able to avoid conflicts altogether."

When conflicts over clothing do occur, seize the opportunity to discuss

the reason for spending limits with your child. This is usually tied to parents' personal convictions about what is and isn't extravagant.

"This is an important way to impart values and introduce ideas that will make the child a competent money manager as he or she grows up," says Norum.

If the situation warrants, consider a compromise.

"This keeps fun and camaraderie in the picture as parents and kids plan for back-to-school," she says. Norum recommends setting aside at least 10 percent of the overall budget. "That way, when you encounter an item that isn't essential, but extra special, your child has some freedom of choice."

"This is a good way to approach it," says Krugman, who offers yet another option: let children use their own money to buy that "must-have item," he says. "Kids these days are spending more and more of their own money on back-to-school clothes. If they find something they want, and it isn't in your budget, let them purchase it themselves."

Overall, preparing a back-to-school wardrobe can be a fun and rewarding experience. The key is to plan ahead, establish a budget, and keep an open line of communication with your child. Then, you can shop for style with savings in mind.

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

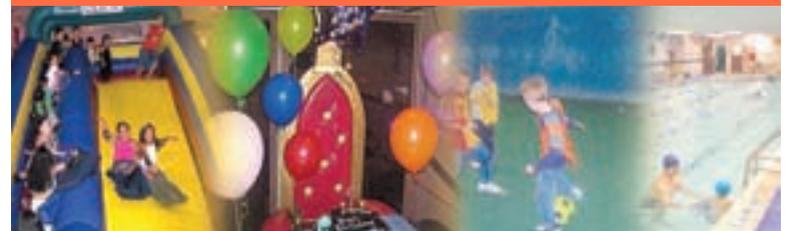
Did you know?

Statistics show that parents tend to spend more on girls' clothing than on boys. This is due, in part, to girls' higher interest in apparel. Girls' clothing also tends to be slightly higher-priced than boys' because of special details, such as lace, buttons, and fancy collars.

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'Zoofari' adventure

Bronx Zoo pairs LEGO sculptures with real-life counterparts

BY SHAVANA ABRUZZO

It's anybody's guess how a flamingo might react to a LEGO look-alike of its feather-tastic self or how a gorilla might view its life-size imitation made from those classic toy building blocks.

One thing is certain, it's sure to be a wild and exciting time when the jungle teams up with the wooden badlands at the Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo for "The Great Summer Zoofari—A LEGO® Wildlife Expedition" — a summer spectacle which pairs astonishing LEGO wildlife sculptures with their real-life counterparts.

Your front row seat is guaranteed, and it comes complete with hands-on activities and educational displays — but you'll need credentials!

Each visitor will receive a free Zoofari "passport" to plan their adventure and lead them to the eye-popping creations of LEGO master builders, which include a life-like tiger, penguins, a giraffe, Khansi spray toads and other cool critters.

Kids will love the part where they actually get to stamp their "travel permits" at each of the six stations located throughout the park. Those include Disney's Animal Kingdom Villas where visitors can immerse themselves in the wonders of the wild; a Build Zone where families can create their own LEGO masterpieces and participate in a LEGO mystery mural; and a Bank of America Explorer Zone where budding eco-buffs can discover how field scientists track wild animals and how conservationists determine which habitats to protect.

There's lots of food for thought to accompany the fun.

Visitors can tell their future grandchildren that they actually helped to prepare "lunch" for gorillas, tigers, and bears — an opportunity available to daredevil types at the Explorer Zone.

A stop-off in equatorial Africa is a must, too — at least the Bronx Zoo's version of it!

Learn about the continent of cheetahs and hippopotamuses — and preserve the memory by creat-

ing a magnificent tribal mask — at one of the workshops presented by the Museum for African Art and Tabilulu Productions.

There's more drama to ooh and aah over at the outdoor Wildlife Theater Shows, which incorporate conservation and nature lessons with puppets and music for audiences of all ages. This summer's shows include "Journey to the Pond," "Passport to Conservation," and "Butterfly Trek."

Summer is far from over, and if your budget screams "staycation" this year, fantastic family fun is as near as a trip to the Bronx Zoo where "The Great Summer Zoofari" brings the wild animals of the world to your neck of the woods.

The Wildlife Conservation Society's Bronx Zoo [Bronx River Pkwy at Exit 6, (718) 367-1010] presents "The Great Summer Zoofari—A LEGO® Wildlife Expedition" now through Sept. 30, 10 am to 4:30 pm. Admission is \$16 for adults, \$12 for children 3-12 years old (free for kids 3 and under), and \$14 for seniors. Wednesday is suggested donation day. For info, visit www.bronxzoos.com.



Photos by Julie Larsen Maher



Get your "passport" to the Bronx Zoo's Zoofari to see the amazing Lego creations — like this tiger (right) or gorillas (above).





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Strolling right to OBESITY?

The trend of pushing older kids could lead to health problems

BY SANDRA GORDON

On weekends, Lisa, a mother of a 2- and 5-year-old, wouldn't dream of leaving home without a stroller.

"If we don't contain the kids, my husband and I can't do any shopping," says the public relations representative. "When they start running between the clothing racks, we say, 'OK, we're strapping you in and you're staying put.'"

Of course, it's not unusual to stroll a 2-year-old. In fact, strollers are normally used for children from infancy to 36 months of age, according to ASTM International, a nonprofit organization in West Conshohocken, PA, which sets stroller manufacturing standards.

But, take a look around at any mall — or even in your neighbor-

hood — and you're likely to see parents pushing kindergarten, or even grade school-age kids. It's a burgeoning trend that hasn't escaped stroller manufacturers.

Maclaren, the upscale British import, for example, upped the weight limit on its strollers to 55 pounds because consumers are using strollers for older and/or larger children. (Forty pounds was the industry standard.) Its Techno XLR model is even designed to hold a child up to 65 pounds and 44 inches tall.

Making larger strollers helps parents with busy lifestyles accomplish their goals. And let's face it, if you have several hours' worth of errands to run, or even a fitness level to maintain, being able to "containerize" a dawdling preschooler or older child in a "mega"

stroller can make it all doable.

"Keeping Max, my 5-year-old, riding in our double stroller has been all about helping me get my exercise everyday as a busy mom," says Christine D'Amico, author of "The Pregnant Woman's Companion," and the mother of three, who walks 40 minutes daily while her kids come along for the ride (the youngest up front in an infant carrier).

The right way to 'strollercize'

Still, while strolling is excellent aerobic exercise for parents (D'Amico, for example, pushes and carries a total of 95 pounds of kid weight, which makes her daily stroll a "definite workout"), it does nothing for kids, which is a concern in light of the childhood obesity

How to avoid 'potatodum'

Besides using your stroller less for your older kids, here are other easy ways to help keep your kids active:

- Walk the walk. Instead of simply encouraging your kids to, say, go outside and play, be active yourself.

"Children model everything they see their parents do," says Christine W. Rivard, RD, program director and head of pediatric nutrition at Kidshape (www.kidshape.com), a family-centered, Los Angeles-based program that helps children develop healthier eating and lifestyle habits. "You want to set the tone as early as possible."

- Curtail couch-and-mouse "po-



tatodum." Set a limit on TV and computer-game time, and abide by that yourself. What's reasonable?

"One hour a day," Rivard says.

- Make weekends family friendly. Every weekend, make a commitment to do something active with your kids, such as going hiking, to the park or the zoo, playing ball in the yard, or even just turning on music and dancing in the living room. Every little bit counts.

"Parents need to just realize that five to 10 minutes of activity here

and there really makes a difference to prevent weight gain in kids in the first place," says Hill. (That includes walking in the mall for short stints, too.)

The best family-friendly activities include those that kids can also enjoy by themselves, such as walking, hiking, cycling, and roller blading.

"Non-team-related activities teach kids how to exercise on their own," says Frances M. Berg, author of "Underage and Overweight." In other words, your kids may not always play soccer. But, if you play your cards right, they'll walk, hike, cycle, or roller blade for the rest of their lives.

Top
Tips

Go for a stroll

Looking for a fun way to get fit when you have younger, stroller-bound kids? Strolling with your baby is a good workout, according to a study by the American Council on Exercise, and exercise scientists at the University of Wisconsin.

Subjects who pushed a 35-pound, simulated baby in a stroller at a brisk rate of 3.5 miles

per hour revved their heart rates up by an average of 12 beats per minute, and burned 444 calories per hour, which is on par with mowing the lawn.

According to the study, new moms shouldn't underestimate the value of taking their children out for a stroll — or the necessity of taking care of their own health and fitness.

courage your older children to walk as much as possible. Expect them to go in and out of the stroller; kids have a threshold of tolerance for both walking and sitting, says Anderson. Take their cues, rather than coaxing them to remain seated with an endless litany of snacks and other distractions, and factor in extra time. With older children on foot part of the time, you might not be able to cover the entire zoo, for example, in one shot.

problem that's raging.

According to recent government figures, nearly 12 percent of 2- to 19-year-olds are at or above the 97 percentile of body mass index for age-growth charts. Overweight kids have as much as an 80 percent chance of staying that way as an adult and suffering from weight-related health problems earlier on, like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Experts predict that the epidemic will get worse before it gets better unless we — and our kids — take action. Walking short distances is one thing, but it's not realistic to expect a 4-, 5-, or 6-year-old to go the distance at the zoo, fair, or amusement park.

"A child of that age isn't going to be able to walk for five or six hours," says Cheryl B. Anderson, PhD, associate professor of pediatrics at the Children's Nutrition Research Center at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas. Anderson thinks that strollers — like ice cream — are wonderful for older kids, but in moderation.

To keep your kids moving in the right direction, try these smart strolling strategies:

- Downsize your to-do list. Instead of routinely cramming all

of your errands into a day at the mall with your kids along for the ride, do as much as you can on your lunch hour so that weekend shopping trips are shorter and less sedentary for the kids.

"Give up a little bit of efficiency to get your kids more active," urges James O. Hill, PhD, director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado Sciences Center in Denver, Colo.

- Shop solo. If it's possible, get a sitter or have your partner play tag with your kids at home, so you can trek through the stores unencumbered. It's a win-win.

- Don't be pushy. On day trips, take a stroller along, but en-



Career changes

More men
are toiling
in fields
traditionally
tended by
women

BY CANDI SPARKS

Today more than ever, men are making the choice to start non-traditional careers. As the economy struggles to bounce back, men are now working in fields that were typically dominated by women.

Non-traditional careers are defined as ones in which more than 75 percent of the workforce is of the opposite gender. These career changes not only allow employees to follow their dreams and find career satisfaction, but they also benefit society as well. They unlock gender bias, and employees who are the first of their gender to succeed open doors for others. For men, this economy is opening new doors to finding careers they can be passionate about.

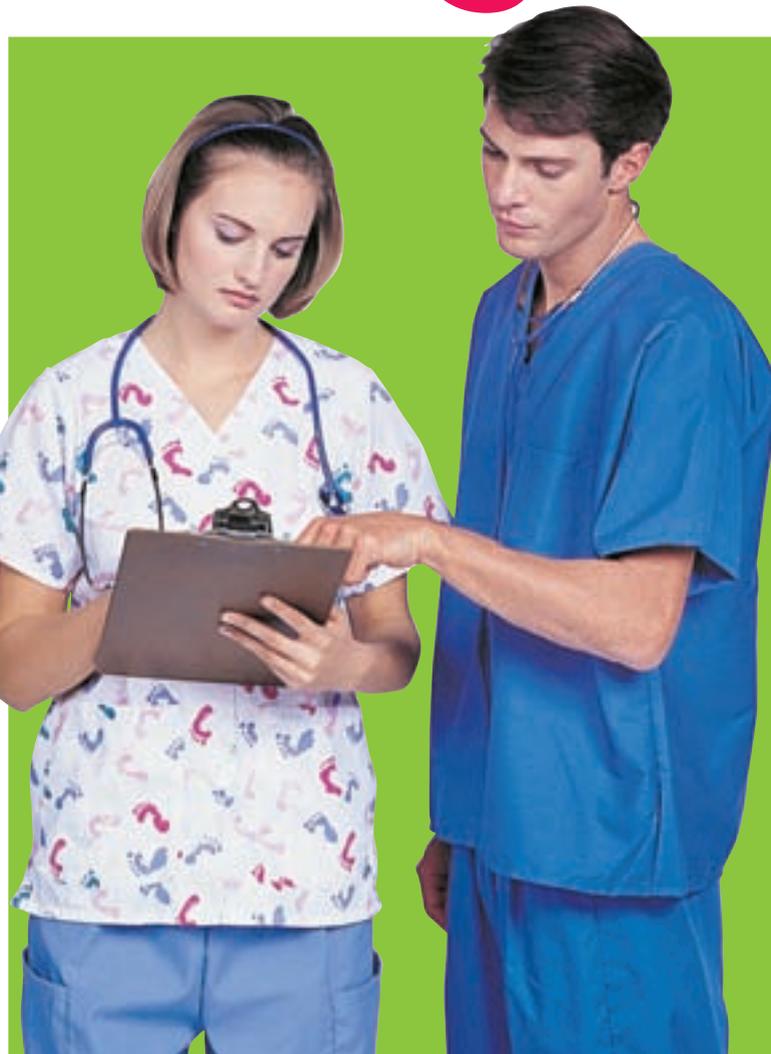
Nursing

In the 2000 popular romantic comedy, "Meet The Parents," actor Ben Stiller plays the role of a male nurse hoping to marry into a family dominated by Robert De Niro's character, a patriarch with a CIA past. The male nurse juxtaposed with an intimidating future father-in-law is a source of comedy in the movie and its sequels. Since the release of that movie, male nurses are still rare, but their numbers are growing.

The most recent national nursing survey by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration reports that men accounted for 6.6 percent of all RNs in 2008, up from 5.8 percent in the 2004 survey.

"My reasons for entering this profession were the same as everybody else's: great pay, career satisfaction and the chance to make a difference in the lives of my patients," says Trevor, a male nurse at St. Luke's Roosevelt hospital in Manhattan. He recommends nursing as a viable profession for men. Options in the field can include becoming a clinical nurse, nurse specialist, nurse midwife, nurse anesthetist, or working in non-patient care positions.

Lincoln was a male nurse delivery



specialist in the 1990s. He was the last resort for women delivering by natural childbirth who "needed a little help." When the 6-foot, 250-pound nurse was called in, he would help deliver the baby by using his elbows and upper torso to help maneuver the newborn into position for a natural delivery. Lincoln says that he is "a mother's best friend" when it comes to labor and delivery. His title is not a "midwife," but rather a non-gender specific "labor and delivery specialist." Regardless of Lincoln's title, when it comes to babies, he delivers!

Child care

Men are not only working to help deliver babies, they are also work-

ing in the child care industry. Male nannies, or "mannies," were dubbed the new Mary Poppins in 2006. The idea of men as professional caregivers for babies and toddlers was popularized by the hype around Holly Peterson's 2007 novel, "The Manny," and celebrities like Brittany Spears, Kurt Cobain, Courtney Love and Michael DeWitt, when they hired guys to do the job. (Celebrity mannies may also have to double as body guards for the kids.) Now, many agencies that help college students find employment offer "manny" placement positions.

Benefits of hiring a manny include providing gender balance or a high level of physical activity and energy

for the children. Men can be just as engaging as women, and a qualified nanny with the same interests as your kids may prove to be a tremendous asset to them and the home.

Teaching

Do you remember your child having a male teacher in elementary school? Most people can't. However, Brooklyn elementary school student Maximillion has had two male teachers in the past four years — in the second and fifth grades. In the second grade, Max, and many of his classmates, assumed that his male and female homeroom teachers were married to each other, because they got along very well, and it was his first time seeing a man and woman working together outside of the home.

When the class began sharing information about their families and personal lives, the teachers explained that they both had significant others. The class also discussed how people can work together and get along with others without being married, which helped the students to understand the relationship between their teachers.

Although men account for about 30 percent of those employed in educational services as a whole, they tend to gravitate towards teaching positions within colleges, universities and technical or trade schools.

According to the National Education Association, only 17 percent of elementary level teachers are male. However, men represent about a third of middle school teachers and about half of high school teachers. There has been a global push in education to hire more men in the classroom in general at every grade level.

Secretaries

Male secretaries are few and far between, but they do exist! Two men, both named Bob, are working as legal secretaries at prestigious New York law firms. Both are also pursuing careers in the creative arts, and are working in their current jobs because their bosses understand and support their artistic endeavors.

"I invite the whole firm to my performances, and actually have a solid following at work," says one Bob, an actor. "It helps working with someone that is a patron

of the arts."

"It beats waiting tables, and my boss is reasonable," says the other.

According to Dr. Randall Hansen, author, educator and founder of Quintessential Careers (www.quintcareers.com), there are more non-traditional careers for women than for men. Perhaps that is because there have been more employment initiatives for women in the government, public and private sectors to assist them. However, it is not clear whether men were ever precluded from non-traditional career paths. They simply may have snubbed these traditionally female jobs for higher pay, better benefits, or more glamorous titles:

- Bank tellers
- Bookkeepers
- Cashiers
- Child care workers
- Clerical/administrative support workers
- Cosmetologists
- Court reporters
- Dental assistants and hygienists
- Elementary and middle school teachers
- Flight attendants
- Hair stylists
- Home health aides
- Hotel clerks
- Librarians
- Maids and housekeepers
- Nurses
- Occupational and physical therapists
- Receptionists
- Secretaries
- Sewing machine operators
- Social workers
- Speech pathologists
- Teacher assistants

At a time when it is hard to find and keep employment, any job seems like a good job. Hopefully, this gender-bending economy will allow more people to express themselves and find satisfaction in non-traditional careers. Personally, I would enjoy seeing more "gendification" in my all-too-female world. Especially if the men are doing work that they love. You know the saying, "if you combine something you love with something you're good at, you'll never have to work a day in your life."

Candi Sparks is the author of the "Can I Have Some Money?" children's money book series, sold on Amazon.com and other retail sites. She is the Brooklyn mother of two and is on Facebook (Candi Sparks Author).



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Stranger danger

Recent news reminds us to keep our children safe

BY LAURA VAROSCAK-DEINNOCENTIIS

The news of Leiby Kletzky's murder horrified and shocked New Yorkers, especially the close-knit Hasidic community where the 8-year-old boy lived. The tragedy hit local parents particularly hard. Many thought, "What if this was my child?"

On Monday, July 11, Kletzky disappeared while walking alone to meet his mother after camp. Two days later, after a frantic search, police found his dismembered body and the man who allegedly killed him, Levi Aron.

Amid the breaking news, it was only natural for parents to want to hold their children close and never let them go.

While abductions of this kind are extremely rare, this tragic event reminds parents that they do occur. They can happen to any family, at any time, anywhere. As much as parents want to shield their children from this harsh reality, Kletzky's death proves that too much is never enough when it comes to talking to children about safety with strangers.

Parents can lower their children's risk of harm by teaching them a few simple lessons:

Define 'stranger'

Children meet "strangers" every day. They encounter them on the street, in the playground, at the library — and, for the most part, they seem friendly. Parents have the responsibility to teach their children that a stranger is ANYONE who the family does not know well.

Strangers can be young or old, male or female, and any ethnicity or race. They may appear gentle and kind. Regardless, EVERYONE should be considered a stranger until a parent or responsible caregiver says otherwise.

It is also important for parents to help children identify safe strangers in the community — like police officers, firefighters, and teachers. This will help children feel more at ease.



Establish clear rules

Parents know their children better than anyone else. Only they can gauge when their child is ready to take steps toward independence. Regardless of when that is, children need to be aware of family rules and follow them without exception. Children must let their parents know where they are and whom they are with at all times. A child should have his home address and telephone number memorized, along with his parents' cellphone and work numbers. Teaching children how to dial 911 is one of the most important lessons parents can share. If kids are allowed to walk home from school without parental supervision, they must follow strict guidelines:

- Stay in a group — there is safety in numbers.
- Walk the same, familiar route each day.
- Head straight home without any stops or detours.
- If plans change, call home immediately before leaving school.

Be aware of warning signs

While parents can assure children that most strangers are harmless, they must remind them to never let down their guard. Adults with bad intentions will try anything to trick kids into getting what they want. They may tug on their heartstrings (I lost my puppy), challenge their fears (your mom is hurt; you need to

come with me), persuade them with tempting promises (I know where there are awesome video games), or outright lie (your mom is stuck in traffic and asked me to pick you up today). Children who know what to expect will be prepared to deal with any suspicious behavior that comes their way.

Empower children

Children must first recognize inappropriate behavior to feel strong and confident in dealing with it. This comes with repetition. Parents who rehearse different scenarios provide valuable opportunities for their children to practice feeling comfortable with the language and actions necessary to defend themselves.

"No!" is the most powerful word a child can use. If a stranger ignores a child's refusal, that child must know that it is OK to run, scream, and fight. It is critical that parents give children permission to trust their instincts and act accordingly if they are in a situation that is dangerous or makes them feel uneasy. Parents can also help children by designating safe public places. If children are prepared for danger, they will feel more safe and self-protected.

Kletzky left an important lesson behind. His tragic death is a wake-up call to all parents to be more rigorous about keeping their children safe from strangers. This starts with awareness and education. As children grow older and practice more autonomy, parents need to establish clear, simple rules for them to follow in their journey toward independence. It may save their lives.

Laura Varoscak-DeInnocentiis, MA, is a teacher and freelance writer. She is a regular contributor to Family Publications and has won editorial awards from Parent Publications of America. She lives in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and is the proud mom of two sons, Henry and Charlie. Visit her webpage (<http://www.examiner.com/parenting-in-new-york/laura-varoscak>) for more articles on parenting.

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Building a parent/child connection

Tips on how to cultivate 'we' thinking

BY MICHELE RANARD, MED

I had to laugh at my sister as she lamented the fact that her husband was Facebooking their teen son from the other room of the house. What cracked me up was when she ranted, "I mean, what happened to the phone and texting?!"

Flesh-and-blood connections

Connectivity has exploded in recent years. Our children's generation is more connected than any other,

yet, the fact remains that they "still crave old-fashioned flesh-and-blood connections with their parents," writes clinician and author of "The We Generation: Raising Socially Responsible Kids," Michael Ungar.

Ungar is concerned that parents need reminding that children deeply desire to be noticed and be held responsible.

"Beneath the whirling cacophony of the information revolution are children pleading for someone to notice them. They are looking for genuine connections with concerned

adults," writes Ungar.

In order to help kids embrace "we" and transcend "me," Ungar says the key is to offer opportunities for compassion — and not through expensive toys, permissiveness, or over-protecting.

"Give a child a chance to connect, and she will," says Ungar.

Build better connections

The following tips to strengthen family bonds, cultivate compassion, and encourage "we thinking" come

“Beneath the whirling cacophony of the information revolution are children pleading for someone to notice them. They are looking for genuine connections with concerned adults.”

from ideas weaved through “The We Generation” and personal and professional experience.

•**Prioritize three.** Set a rule about family meals: everybody at the dinner table at least three times a week. It may not be realistic to squeeze in three week-night dinners, so expand your thinking to Saturday breakfasts, Sunday brunches, or Wednesday late-night cookies and milk. Seen the science about the emotionally healthy benefits of eating together? It’s true.

•**Really notice.** Ungar writes: “Our children want to be known to others. They want their parents to notice them. They want to be loved and caressed. And they want to be held responsible, for themselves and for others.” Frequently ask your child what she thinks she does well, and then have her demonstrate. For our son, it thrilled him to show us how far he could walk on his hands. Writing a word in cursive? Pouring juice into a glass? Kids love showing you what they’ve learned and how strong they’ve grown.

•**Take vacation.** Take as much family vacation as work allows. The opportunities for connection resulting from time away from the daily grind are GOLD and add up to memories for a lifetime. No one at the end of his life wishes he had just spent less time with his kids on vacation.

•**Don’t imagine they don’t need you.** Don’t assume friends and interests are enough. Give them your time. So often we underestimate how much our kids — especially tweens and teens — want to be with us. It’s important to carve out family time as often as possible, even if it feels like their peers have passed up on the

influence scale.

•**Help them craft their values and identity.** Just because they belong to the information age doesn’t mean it’s easier for your children to form an identity. Ungar reminds: “Their connectivity through the Internet, a five-hundred-channel-universe, means they can pick up and choose bits of their identity from around the world...They have, superficially, endless possibilities, in a world that floods them with one identity choice after another.” They need your help sifting through the garbage to get to the good stuff.

•**Try this high/low activity.** This works especially well during meal-time conversation. It’s easy. Ask your child to identify her best and worst daily moments. Don’t use this time to lecture if her “low” happens to be failing an exam. Instead, open your heart and connect with the emotion she is expressing. Share her joy and sorrow. You may be surprised at how much you learn about your kids’ inner lives.

•**Model compassion.** Rally your children to help with a project. Whether helping an elderly neighbor with yard work, painting at church, volunteering at a nursing home, or bringing groceries to someone less fortunate, join forces. See how the fruits of your labors extend way beyond an afternoon of hard work. Ungar writes: “I’m convinced their generation has the potential to become far more connected with others and more compassionate than the generation raising them was raised to be (that’s us).”

•**Write notes.** Words are powerful and are sometimes easier expressed on paper. Fill the pages with what you appreciate about your child, your wishes and hopes for her, and how she is full of potential and goodness. Leave the note on her pillow, and know that it will touch her — whether she mentions it or not.

Connecting with your children not only strengthens family bonds, but also allows them to develop compassion, empathy, and a healthier “we” outlook.

Michele Ranard has a husband, two children, and a master’s degree in counseling. She has blogs at cheekychicmama.blogspot.com and hellolove.lyinc.blogspot.com.

Resources: Ungar, Michael. “The We Generation: Raising Socially Responsible Kids”



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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Strep throat 101

For some, back to school is a pain in the neck

For many kids, back-to-school time unfortunately means it's back-to-the-doctor's-office. Some children are more susceptible to catching germs that are spread from student to student, and, often, there is little a parent can do to prevent it. Strep throat is one of those dreaded school-time infections.

"My daughter, Emily, 6, has had strep throat about six times throughout the school year, for two years in a row. The [Ear, Nose and Throat doctor] says it is not her tonsils, she just keeps getting it from other kids at school," says Lisa O'Connor of Bay Terrace, Staten Island. "He told me, 'Watch, she will not get it once from June to October,' and he was absolutely right!"

Strep is not to be taken lightly. Nancy Lawson's 5-year-old son, Jacob, also had strep last year, which caused him to suddenly be-

come very ill with a high fever and severe sore throat. At first, Lawson thought it was just a typical cold, but then his behavior changed.

"For an ordinarily very talkative little guy, he didn't say a word for 24 hours, and his fever hovered around 103 for two and a half days," says the Park Slope, Brooklyn mom. "I took him to our pediatrician and was told he had strep throat in about five minutes."

The infection is usually diagnosed through a rapid strep test culture done in a pediatrician's office. If found positive, the doctor will prescribe a 10-day course of antibiotics. But if it's left untreated, strep can worsen. Prompt treatment is vital.

"If a child's strep throat is not treated with antibiotics, or if she doesn't complete the treatment, the infection may worsen or spread to other parts of her body, leading to conditions such as abscesses of the tonsils or kidney problems. Untreated strep infections also can lead to rheumatic fever, a disease that affects the heart," states the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Often, kids who suffer recurrent strep throat may face several courses of antibiotics. O'Connor says her daughter has been on antibiotics several times over the last two years.

"Emily gets strep all the time, but my son Bryan, 8, never really gets sick," says O'Connor. "We brought Emily to the ENT to get her tonsils checked, because she had strep seven times from September to April. He did blood tests, and her strep levels did not show that her body was harboring the virus. She would take antibiotics, and it would go away. Yet, like clockwork, a few weeks later, she had it again."

So what can parents do to help stave off the strep infections? The American Academy of Pediatrics says the best way to avoid infection is to keep kids away from those already infected with strep, but points out that "most people are contagious before their first symptoms appear, so often there's really no practical way to prevent your child from con-

tracting the disease."

Of course, kids should be taught to wash their hands carefully, and not share beverages or food at lunch or snack time. But let's face it, sometimes that's not feasible with young children. Many moms require their children to wash their hands and even change clothes when they come home from school, but some are not convinced that those preventive measures help much after a full day of being in the classroom.

It is also recommended that children get a new toothbrush after antibiotics treatment is over, and it's imperative to not share cups or eating utensils.

Good, old-fashioned mommy vigilance can make a difference, too. After all, once you've been through a few illnesses with your child, it's easier to recognize when something serious is afoot. Lawson wished she had acted sooner in her son's case.

"I thought Jacob merely had a cold, and he ended up pretty sick and miserable," says Lawson. "If he had started treatment earlier, it would have saved him a day or two of a lot of pain. But I'm thankful it was diagnosed and treated, so there was no long-term damage."

O'Connor advises taking quick action once you notice your child coming down with something to prevent him from feeling worse and missing more school days.

"As soon as she says her throat hurts, I take her to the doctor, even without a fever, because I just know she has strep," says O'Connor. "I have even gone, and the doctor has said, 'Her throat looks OK,' but the test comes back positive. Luckily, I don't wait, so she never really gets sick, other than a sore throat. And after 48 hours on antibiotics (when she is not contagious anymore), she goes back to school."

Danielle Sullivan, a Brooklyn-born mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years, and was recently honored with a Gold award for her health column by the Parenting Media Association. Sullivan also writes for Babble.





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PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Returning to work and **heartbroken**

Dear Sharon,

Three months ago we had a second child and just now I have returned to my job. It hasn't been easy leaving the baby and going back to the office, but we need the money. Do you have any advice for a mom like me, who is battling depression at having to leave her baby and return to work? I feel so sad in the mornings and saying "goodbye" is breaking my heart.



Dear parents,

I am sorry that you have to go through the emotional pain of saying goodbye to your baby before you are ready; there is nothing easy about this time for you or your family. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that I know countless parents, including myself, who have remarkable relationships with wonderful children, even though they had similar choices to make.

Unfortunately, in these challenging economic times, many moms and dads have to return to work sooner — and for more hours — than they would like. Here are some ideas that I have suggested to people making a similar transition:

It is often useful to talk to other parents who have had to make similar decisions. Parents of older children can share strategies that made things more manageable for them. They can also be reassuring about your child's long-term health, well-being and development under these circumstances. Finding an understanding person to commiserate with can help you feel less alone and can make a big difference.

I also suggest that parents make sure that they spend good quality time with their child before and after work hours. This often means organizing meals and other tasks so that the "endless" chores at home don't rob you of your precious moments with your baby. Weekends can also be a particularly important part of parental efforts to "make up for lost time."

It is also good to remember that play can be an excellent way to connect with a little one. It can be hard to have fun after a long workday or in the course of a busy weekend, but finding time to laugh and/or smile with a loved one is often an important building block in strong relationships.

My next suggestion might not be possible in your specific circumstances, but some parents I know have successfully talked to employers about changing their work schedules. Many I know have spent a lot of time and effort sorting through more flexible work lives. Even a slight change, such as arriving home an hour earlier one day a week, can help you and your child feel less overwhelmed by the lack of choice involved in adult work lives. Moms and dads I know have also arranged to work at home for periods of time. They are not available to their baby during the time they're working, but

don't have to waste time in a commute and can sometimes spend a few minutes with their little one during breaks. I also often recommend that parents use all the sick, personal and vacation days they have, if available and at all possible.

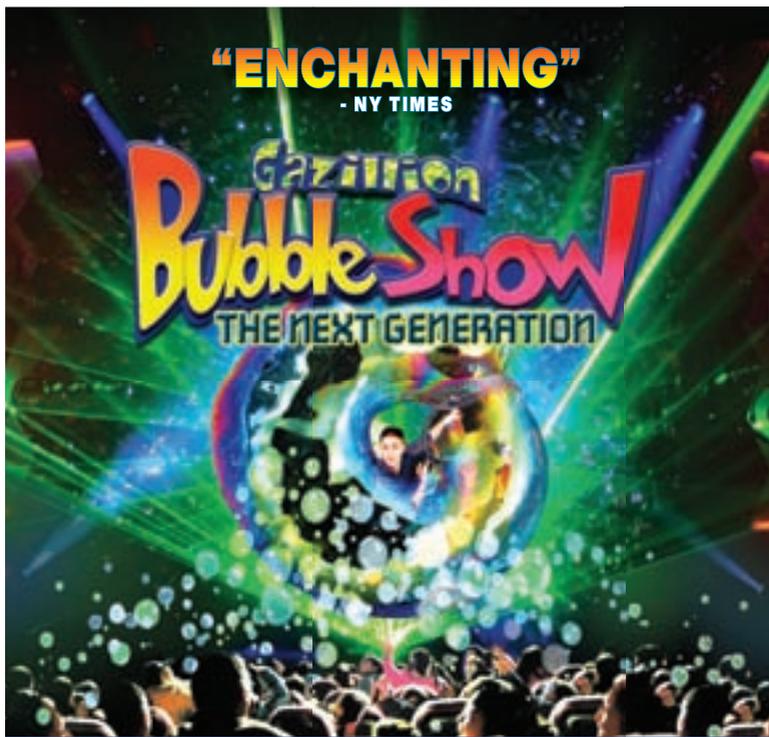
When first going back to work, it can also be helpful for parents to call home for reassurance about how things are going. Some contact with child care workers can ease worries about your child's well-being in your absence.

Although challenging, it is also important that all parents, even in your situation, take good care of their physical and emotional well-being so that they can be at their best when spending time with their children. It is important for working mothers and fathers to eat well and/or to get some exercise (using the stairs instead of the elevator, visiting a gym near work, or even making sure they take a minute every now and then to breathe). Parents can also think of some little things to do for themselves while away from home. This can improve adult moods and can help them find ways to lighten the hardships in their families.

Again, I am sorry that you have to go through the emotional pain of leaving your baby before you are ready. Best wishes as you sort things through.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, www.PHPonline.org.

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at SWeiss@cnglocal.com.



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Going Places

LONG-RUNNING

Dinosaur display: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th Street; (212) 769-5000; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am–5:30 pm, \$24 (\$18 students, \$14 children).

Children learn about the largest dinos, the long-tailed sauropods, by examining the innovative model.

The Yak Packers: Rubin Museum of Art, 150 W. 17 St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues; (212) 620-5000 ext. 344. www.rmanyc.org; Thursdays, 10:30–11:30 am, Now – Thurs, Aug. 25; \$10 child and parent (\$5 members).

Children 2 to 4 accompanied by an adult touch, explore and create projects inspired by Himalayan art.

“The Ohmies: Morning Wish Garden”- Peter Jay Sharp Theater, 416 W. 42nd St. at Ninth Avenue; (212) 864-5400; theohmies.com; Thursdays, 11 am, Saturdays, 10 am, noon and 3 pm, Sundays, Noon and 3 pm, Now – Sun, Sept. 25; \$35.

Dance along to this new musical.

Dancing workshops: Arverne Public Library, 312 Beach 54th St. at Rockaway Beach Boulevard; (718) 634-4784; www.queenslibrary.org; Thursday, July 28, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 4, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 11, 2 pm; Thursday, Aug. 18, 2 pm; Free.

Dance your way to being fit.

“A Jew Grows in Brooklyn”: Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; Box Office (718) 760-0064; Administration (718) 760-0686; www.queens theatre.org; Thursdays and Saturdays, 2 and 8 pm, Fridays, 8 pm, Sundays, 2 and 6 pm, Now – Sun, Aug. 21; \$9.50–\$39.50.

A coming-of-age musical comedy.

Teen happy hour: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; Fridays, 3 pm, Now – Fri, July 29; Free.

Friends, board games, video games and music.

Book buddies: Bayside Public Library, 214-20 Northern Blvd. at 215th Street; (718) 229-1834; www.queenslibrary.org; Fridays, 4 pm, Now – Fri, Sept. 23; Free.

Children in kindergarten through third grade read books with a teen buddy.

Meaningful maps: Rubin Museum



Photo by John E. Barratt, courtesy The Muppets Studio, LLC.

It's Muppet mania!

The Muppets take Queens, with a special exhibition and screenings devoted to the man who brought us Miss Piggy and Kermit the Frog at the Museum of the Moving Image.

Now through Jan. 16, 2012, the Astoria museum hosts “Jim Henson’s Fantastic World,” an exhibition that features more than 120 artifacts, including drawings, storyboards, and props, all of which illustrate Henson’s boundless creativity and innumerable accomplishments.

Until Sept. 25, the museum is also screening such Henson classics as “The Muppet Movie,” “The Muppets Take Manhattan,” and “The Great Muppet Caper” and even his television work — like



Photo by John E. Barratt, courtesy The Muppets Studio, LLC.

“Fraggle Rock” — to celebrate the childlike wonder and the sophistication of Henson’s artistry in films and television programs that are entertaining for all ages.

“*Jim Henson’s Fantastic World*” at the Museum of the Moving Image [36-01 35th Ave. at 37th Street in Astoria, (718) 784-0077], now through Jan. 16, 2012. Admission \$10, \$7.50 for seniors and students, \$5 for children 3 to 18. For info, visit www.movingimage.us.

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of Art, 150 W. 17 St., between Sixth and Seventh avenues; (212) 620-5000 ext. 344. www.rmanyc.org; Saturdays, 10:30 am– noon, Sundays, Now – Sat, Aug. 27; \$10 per child/adult pair (\$5 for members; \$5 for each additional child).

For children 6 and up, accompanied by an adult. Search the museum for hidden secrets using maps.

Arts and crafts: Lakeshore Learning Store, 2079 Hillside Ave. at Marcus Avenue; (516) 616-9360; mgermain@lakehoreslearning.com; www.lakeshorelearning.com; Saturdays, 11 am – 3 pm, Free.

Children 3 and up create fun projects.

DaVinci Time Machine: Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; Monday, Aug. 1, 10:30 am; Thursday, Aug. 4, 10:30 am; Monday, Aug. 8, 10:30 am; Thursday, Aug. 11, 10:30 am; Monday, Aug. 15, 10:30 am; Thursday, Aug. 18, 10:30 am; Monday, Aug. 22, 10:30 am; Thursday, Aug. 25, 10:30 am; Monday, Aug. 29, 10:30 am; Free.

Teens experience an interactive program on recycling.

Teen chess club: Queens Library at Bayside, 214-20 Northern Blvd. (718) 229-1834; www.queenspubliclibrary.org; Mondays, 6 pm, Now – Mon, Aug. 29; Free.

Volunteer instructors teach beginners.

Heritage workshop: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; Tuesdays, 1:30 pm, Now – Mon, Aug. 29.

Teens learn about each other’s cultural backgrounds and share stories of

Continued on page 40

Going Places

Continued from page 39

their families, their food and national emblems.

Farmers market: The New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at the Mosholu Gate; (718) 817-8700; pubrel@nybg.org; www.nybg.org/green-market; Wednesdays, 9 am–3 pm, Now – Wed, Nov. 23; Free.

Affordable, locally-grown produce and fresh, nutritious baked goods.

Staywell: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; Wednesdays, 10:15 am, Now – Wed, Sept. 28; Free.

Group meets each week to discuss health matters and exercise.

THURS, JULY 28

“Bessie’s Big Shot”: Queensbridge Park, Vernon Blvd. and 41st Avenue; (212) 360-8290; info@cityparksfoundation.org; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Root for Bessie as she accomplishes the impossible.

Reading and crafts: Broad Channel Public Library, 16-26 Cross Bay Blvd. (718) 318-4943; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

For teens and tweens. Materials supplied.

Summer reading: Broad Channel Public Library, 16-26 Cross Bay Blvd. (718) 318-4943; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens read and do a craft. Supplies given on first come first served basis.

Henna designs: Laurelton Public Library, 134-26 225th St. at Merrick Boulevard; (718) 528-2822; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Teens create their own temporary tattoos with a kit. Parental consent required.

Story and cooking time: Langston Hughes Public Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd. at 216th Street; (718) 651-1100; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Participants read, write and taste their culture.

FRI, JULY 29

Teen newspaper: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Take pictures, write articles and be a reporter for the Library’s paper.

“The Wizard of Oz”: Alley Pond Park, 76th Ave. at Springfield Blvd. (718) 352-4793; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm; Free.

Plaza Theatricals presents the children’s classic.



Boat loads of fun

Enter the dragon.

On Aug. 13, the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival returns to Flushing Meadows-Corona Park for a day of traditional dragon boat races across Meadow Lake. During the race, the oarsman row to the beat of Chinese drums.

On land, you can enjoy street theater, Chinese sword-dancing,

martial arts displays, face painting, and dine on rice dumplings.

Best of all, it’s free!

Hong Kong Dragon Boat Festival at Flushing Meadows-Corona Park [111th Street to Van Wyck Expressway between Flushing Bay and Grand Central Parkway in Flushing, (718) 767-1776], Aug. 13 from 9 am to 5 pm. Free. For info, visit hkdbf.ny.org.

Mid-Summer Pow Wow: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy. 718-347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 7–10 pm; \$10 (\$5 children 12 and under).

Performances by the Thunderbird American Indian Dancers.

“Tunde’s Trumpet”: Springfield Park, 147th Ave. at Springfield Lane; (212) 360-2777; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Puppet presentation about children’s problems. For teens and older children.

SAT, JULY 30

Adoption workshop: Family Focus Adoption Services, 54-40 Little Neck Pkwy. (718) 224-1919; www.familyfocusadoption.org; 10 am; Free.

For prospective parents.

Mid-Summer Pow Wow: Noon–5 pm and 7–10 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Friday, July 29.

Oldies and Pop: Ridgewood Public Library, 20-12 Madison St. at Forest Avenue; (718) 821-4770; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Vic Vincent Group performs.

Art contest: Long Island City Public

Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children 6 to 12 create a monster based on a story using recycled materials.

Family Camping: Cunningham Park, Francis Lewis Blvd. at Union Turnpike; (718) 846-2731; 6 pm; Free.

Grave a s’more and more. Families chosen by lottery. Dinners supplied. Pre-registration required.

“Tunde’s Trumpet”: 8 pm. Springfield Park. See Friday, July 29.

SUN, JULY 31

Sandcastle contest: Beach, Beach 117th St. and the Boardwalk; (718) 318-4000; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon–2 pm; Free.

Kids and adults compete; bring buckets and tools.

Mid-Summer Pow Wow: Noon–5 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Friday, July 29.

MON, AUG. 1

Baseball clinic: Al Oerter Recreation Center, 131-40 Fowler Ave. at College Point Boulevard; www.nycgovparks.org;

9 am–1 pm; Free.

Presented by Derek Jeter’s Turn 2 Foundation. For boys and girls 8 to 13. Pre-registration required.

Lanyard craft: Broad Channel Public Library, 16-26 Cross Bay Blvd. at West 16th Road; (718) 318-4943; www.queenslibrary.org; 1 pm; Free.

From box to serpentine designs, learn them all.

Gardening Club: Baisley Park Public Library, 117-11 Sutphin Blvd. at Foch Boulevard; (718) 529-1590; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 9 years old and up plant and tend to a flower garden.

Monday movies: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm.

A different fun film — for teens only.

Are you smarter than a sixth grader?: Pomonok Public Library, 158-21 Jewel Ave. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 591-4343; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm.

Teens answer questions on different subjects to win prizes.

Reading club: North Forest Park Library, 98-27 Metropolitan Ave. at 70th Avenue; (718) 261-5512; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 read, sing write poetry and draw.

Reading and movies: Lefrak City Library, 98-30 57th Ave. (718) 592-7677; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Read a book, watch a movie, teens enjoy time with their friends.

Dungeons and Dragons club: Baisley Park Public Library, 117-11 Sutphin Blvd. at Foch Boulevard; (718) 529-1590; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 9 and up enjoy fantasy role playing with Wizards. Pre-registration required.

Be crafty: Bellerose Public Library, 250-06 Hillside Ave. at 249th Street; (718) 831-8644; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Read and craft. For young adults. Registration required.

Movie making: Woodhaven Public Library, 85-41 Forest Pkwy. (718) 849-1010; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 15 turn a picture book into a movie that will be posted on YouTube. Must have waiver signed by parent.

Resume workshop: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd. (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Are you ready to apply for a job? Participants get helpful hints to create a winning resume.

Going Places

"Karate Kid": Cunningham Park, 196th St. at Union Turnpike; (718) 465-3341; www.nycgovparks.org; 8–10 pm; Free.

Wax on, wax off with Ralph Maccio. Arrive early to get your popcorn.

TUES, AUG. 2

Baseball clinic: 9 am–1 pm. Al Oerter Recreation Center. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Global dialogue: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 – 3 pm; Free.

Teens, sixth grade and older, learn about different countries, and then create a collage of national dishes.

Test prep: McGoldrick Public Library, 155-06 Roosevelt Ave. at Northern Blvd. (718) 461-1616; www.queenspubliclibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Students entering seventh and eighth grades get help in taking the specialized high school exam. Pre-registration required.

Cultural awareness: Laurelton Public Library, 134-26 225th St. at Merrick Boulevard; (718) 528-2822; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Caribbean teens explore their heritage.

Read and seed: Astoria Public Library, 14-01 Astoria Blvd. at 14th Street; (718) 278-2220; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:45 pm; Free.

Tweens learn about gardening.

National Night Out: Beach 108th Street Hockey Rink, Rockaway Beach Boardwalk at Beach 109th Street; (718) 318-4000; www.nycgovparks.org; 4–8 pm; Free.

Families enjoy entertainment, refreshments and giveaways.

WED, AUG. 3

Baseball clinic: 9 am–1 pm. Al Oerter Recreation Center. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Resume workshop: 10:30 am. Central Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Cultural awareness: 2:30 pm. Laurelton Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

American Indian craft: Auburndale Public Library, 24-55 Francis Lewis Blvd. at 24th Road; (718) 352-2027; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Make a bearclaw necklace. For ages 12 and up.

Creative writing: Windsor Park Public Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd. at 73rd Avenue; (718) 468-8300; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens are invited to bring



Tennis, anyone?

For the 16th annual Arthur Ashe Kids Day, pop superstars and tennis all-stars will converge at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Grounds on Aug. 27 for an all-day tennis and music festival for children and families.

In addition to watching the pros practice and scoring their autographs, attendees — who were lucky enough to score tickets — will also enjoy a musical performance from 1 to 3 pm by a pop star who has yet to be announced. (Previous years' headliners included such boldface names

as the Jonas Brothers, Demi Lovato, David Archuleta, Rhianna, and Britney Spears.)

Other activities include an obstacle course, where kids can test their agility, balance, and running skills; tennis clinics; face-painters; hair braiders; and balloon artists. There's sure to be something for everyone.

Arthur Ashe Kids Day at Arthur Ashe Stadium [Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Grounds, Flushing Meadows Corona Park in Flushing, (800) OPEN-TIX], Aug. 27 from 9:30 am - 3 pm. Admission \$10. For info, visit www.usopen.org.

in original artwork, poems and stories.

THURS, AUG. 4

Baseball clinic: 9 am–1 pm. Al Oerter Recreation Center. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Storytelling: Alley Pond Park, 76th Ave. at Springfield Blvd. (718) 352-4793; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Children 10 and younger listen to a story and do a fun craft project.

Camera Club: Far Rockaway Public Library, 1637 Central Ave. at Mott Avenue; (718) 327-2549; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am.

Teens take pictures of selected sites; and then will be judged in an art show at the end of summer.

Video tournament: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Do you love to play video games? Come and compete against your friends.

Cultural awareness: 2:30 pm. Laurelton Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Graphic arts workshop: Bayside Public Library, 214-20 Northern Blvd. at 215th Street; (718) 229-1834; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens practice their doodles and manga characters. Pre-registration required.

Go green: Windsor Park Public Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd. at 73rd Avenue; (718) 468-8300; www.queenslibrary.org; 6

pm; Free.

Tweens, teens and adults learn about the benefits of technology to the environment.

"Othello": Fort Totten, Fort Totten; (718) 352-4793; 7 pm; Free.

Presented by the Hip to Hip Theater Company. Bring a lawn chair or blanket.

"The Music Man": Holy Child Jesus School, 86th Ave. at 112th Street; (718) 847-1860; hcjtheendrama@gmail.com; 7 pm; \$10 (\$8 children, seniors).

Waterlily concert series: New York Botanical Garden, 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd. (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; 7 pm; \$20.

Featuring an extended viewing of "Spanish Paradise: Gardens of Alhambra" followed by a performance of music of Spain.

FRI, AUG. 5

Canoeing: Fort Totten, Fort Totten; (718) 352-1769; 11 am; Free.

Join park rangers and explore the waters of the protected lakes to the open river waters. For children 8 and up with a caregiver.

Cartoon workshop: Pomonok Public Library, 158-21 Jewel Ave. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 591-4343; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn how the basics of creating on paper forms from the human body to fantasy video characters.

"Harry Potter" quiz: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Test your knowledge about the Boy who Lived.

Squeaky Clean: Alley Pond Park, 76th Ave. at Springfield Blvd. (718) 352-4793; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm; Free.

Performs rock and roll classics from the '50s and '60s.

"The Music Man": 7 pm. Holy Child Jesus School. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

SAT, AUG. 6

Job search boot camp: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd. (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 10:30 am–4:30 pm; Free.

Spend the whole day learning about the best strategies for finding a job.

Nature hunt: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy. (914) 835-2153; www.queensfarm.org; 11:45 am; \$20 (\$10 children under 12).

Join "Wildman" Steve Brill and search for wild foods in mid-summer. Reservations required.

Continued on page 42

Going Places

Continued from page 41

Pop concert: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Arnie Gruber, signer and pianist, performs classics.

"The Music Man": 7 pm. Holy Child Jesus School. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

SUN, AUG. 7

Shore fest: Astoria Park, Shore Blvd. at Ditmars Blvd. www.nycgovparks.org; 1-7 pm; Free.

Families enjoy the shore with live music, fitness programs, food tastings and educational activities. Presented by the Astoria Park Alliance.

"Much Ado About Nothing": George Seuffert Bandshell (Forest Park), Woodhaven Blvd. at Forest Park Drive; (718) 235-4100; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm; Free.

Shakespeare classic, presented by the hip t0 Hip Theater Company.

"The Music Man": 7 pm. Holy Child Jesus School. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

MON, AUG. 8

Gardening Club: 2 pm. Baisley Park Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Monday movies: 2 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Are you smarter than a sixth grader?: 2 pm. Pomonok Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Reading and movies: 3 pm. Lefrak City Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Dungeons and Dragons club: 4 pm. Baisley Park Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Be crafty: 4 pm. Bellerose Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Movie making: 4:30 pm. Woodhaven Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Open mic: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union TPKE. (718) 380-7077; 7:30 pm; Free.

Share your poetry and listen to other original works.

"Breakfast with Scott": Cunningham Park, 73rd Ave. and Francis Lewis Boulevard; 8-10 pm; Free.

Rated PG 13. Free popcorn prior to the movie.

TUES, AUG. 9

Global dialogue: 1:30 - 3 pm. East Elmhurst Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Test prep: 2 pm. McGoldrick Public

Imaginations soar

Go fly a kite — literally! Riverside Park hosts a kite-making workshop on Aug. 20, where children can let their imaginations soar as they make, then fly, their own airborne contraptions.

Live entertainment and other activities will capture their attention when the wind dies down.

FlyNY 2011 at Riverside Park, Pier 1 [West 70th Street and the Hudson River in Manhattan, (212) 870-3070], Aug. 20, from 11 am - 4 pm. Free. For info, visit www.riversideparkfund.org.



Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Summer crochet club: Douglaston/Little Neck Public Library, 249-01 Northern Blvd. at 249th Street; (718) 225-8414; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Help create an afghan blanket to be donated to a local charity. Pre-registration required.

Story time: Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Carl Gussin tells tales of old and new from far and wide. For children 6 to 12.

WED, AUG. 10

Darlene Graham: Buz O'Rourke Playground, 214th Pl. at 33rd Road; www.nycgovparks.org; 10:30 am; Free.

The artist entertains children with folk music and children's favorites. Bring your own blanket or lawn chair.

Story time: Briarwood Public Library, 85-12 Main St. at Village Road; (718) 658-1680; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Carl Gussin tells tales of old and new from far and wide. For children 6 to 12.

Mexican yarn art: Auburndale Public Library, 24-55 Francis Lewis Blvd. at 24th Road; (718) 352-2027; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Make yarn paintings.

Natural jewelry: Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Use hemp to make knotted bracelets. Pre-registration required. While supplies last.

Creative writing: 4 pm. Windsor Park Public Library. See Wednesday, Aug. 3.

THURS, AUG. 11

Camera Club: 11 am. Far Rockaway Public Library. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

Test prep: 2 pm. McGoldrick Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Keeping a job 101: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd. (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Workplace etiquette, appropriate dress, punctuality and standards of behavior.

"Much Ado About Nothing": Fort Totten, Fort Totten; (718) 352-1769; 7 pm; Free.

Presented by the Hip to Hip Theater Company.

Waterlily concert series: 7 pm. New York Botanical Garden. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

Laughing Pizza: George Seuffert Bandshell (Forest Park, Woodhaven Blvd. at Forest Park Drive; (718) 235-4100; 7:30 pm; Free.

Enjoy the family-friendly band. Sponsored by Astoria Federal Savings Bank.

"Rent": Cunningham Park, 73rd Ave. and Francis Lewis Boulevard; 8-10 pm; Free.

PG 13; recommended for older teens.

FRI, AUG. 12

Happy hour: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Teens play video games, listen to music and hang out with friends.

SAT, AUG. 13

Dragon Boat festival: Meadow Lake North, Lake Mall and Meadow Drive; (718) 767-1776; 9 am-5 pm; Free.

Celebrate the Year of the Tiger.

History lesson: King Manor Museum - Rufus King Park, Jamaica Ave. at 150th St. (718) 206-0545; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Learn about the Rufus King family of pets.

Jazz concert: Rochdale Village Public Library, 169-09 137th Ave. (718) 723-4440; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

The Divas of Jazz, featuring The Tranchinas, perform selections by Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Carmen McRae and Nancy Wilson.

SUN, AUG. 14

Dragon Boat festival: 9 am-5 pm. Meadow Lake North. See Saturday, Aug. 13.

Shore fest: 1-7 pm. Astoria Park. See Sunday, Aug. 7.

"Othello": George Seuffert Bandshell, Forest Park, Woodhaven Blvd. at Forest Park Drive; www.nycgovparks.org; 7-8:30 pm; Free.

Presented by the Hip to Hip Theater Company.

MON, AUG. 15

Gardening Club: 2 pm. Baisley Park Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Monday movies: 2 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Are you smarter than a sixth grader?: 2 pm. Pomonok Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Reading and movies: 3 pm. Lefrak City Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Ecology workshop: Steinway Public Library, 21-45 31 St. at 21st Avenue; (718) 728-1965; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens learn about saving endangered species around the world then create a mural or poster of their choice.

Dungeons and Dragons club: 4 pm. Baisley Park Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Be crafty: 4 pm. Bellerose Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Movie making: 4:30 pm. Woodhaven Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Game night: South Jamaica Public Library, 108-41 Guy R. Brewer Blvd. be-

Going Places

tween 108th and 109th avenues; (718) 739-4088; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Fun for the whole family. Play board games and Wii. Light refreshments served.

"Despicable Me": Cunningham Park, 73rd Ave. and Francis Lewis Boulevard; 8-10 pm; Free.

Fun film for all ages.

TUES, AUG. 16

Global dialogue: 1:30 – 3 pm. East Elmhurst Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

Story time: Elmhurst Public Library, 86-01 Broadway; (718) 271-1020; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Carl Gussin shares tales of old and new from far and wide. For children 6 to 12.

The Dewey Race: Windsor Park Public Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd. at 73rd Avenue; (718) 468-8300; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children ages 7 and older learn about the Dewey Decimal System. Pre-registration required.

"Toy Story 3": Little Bay Park, Cross Island Pkwy; www.nycgovparks.org; 8 pm; Free.

Come and join the whole gang of Woody and Buzz.

WED, AUG. 17

School stress: Sunnyside Public Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave. (718) 784-3033; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am; Free.

Children 12 to 16 learn to cope with school. Pre-registration required.

Myths and monsters: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queensli-

brary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Explore the world of Nessie and Big Foot.

Art workshop: Laurelton Public Library, 134-26 225th St. at Merrick Boulevard; (718) 528-2822; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Teens create a mural of customs, values, languages and maps.

Oral history project: Windsor Park Public Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd. at 73rd Avenue; (718) 468-8300; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm.

Teens interview seniors and view historic photos and videotapes. Pre-registration required.

Key club: Forest Hills Public Library, 108-19 71st Ave. (718) 268-7934; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Teens meet to discuss civic issues.

THURS, AUG. 18

Camera Club: 11 am. Far Rockaway Public Library. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

"Grown Ups": Cunningham Park, 73rd Ave. and Francis Lewis Boulevard; 1-10 pm; Free.

PG 13 - free popcorn before the movie.

Waterlily concert series: 7 pm. New York Botanical Garden. See Thursday, Aug. 4.

SAT, AUG. 20

Eastern US Music and Dance: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Highlights include a violin concerto, and performance of Han, Menghui, Mongolian, Muslim and Tibetan dance.

SUN, AUG. 21

Shore fest: 1-7 pm. Astoria Park. See Sunday, Aug. 7.

MON, AUG. 22

Monday movies: 2 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Movie making: 4:30 pm. Woodhaven Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

TUES, AUG. 23

Global dialogue: 1:30 – 3 pm. East Elmhurst Public Library. See Tuesday, Aug. 2.

WED, AUG. 24

Picture book time: Windsor Park Public Library, 79-50 Bell Blvd. at 73rd Avenue; (718) 468-8300; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

Author Marcia Nass reads from her book about bullying.

Mask making: Auburndale Public Library, 24-55 Francis Lewis Blvd. at 24th Road; (718) 352-2027; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children 12 and up create an exotic mask.

THURS, AUG. 25

Urban chicken farming: Astoria Public Library, 14-01 Astoria Blvd. at 14th Street; (718) 278-2220; www.queenslibrary.org; 6:30 pm; Free.

Robert McMinn and Jules Corkery discuss how to raise and keep the livestock in the city.

FRI, AUG. 26

LIC Newspaper: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Av-

enue; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens take pictures, write articles and report issues in the community.

Reading Party: Steinway Public Library, 21-45 31 St. at 21st Avenue; (718) 728-1965; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Come join the end of summer celebration, fun, games and food. Teens only.

SAT, AUG. 27

"Monsters, Inc.": Bayswater Park, Beach 35th St. and Beach Channel Drive; www.nycgovparks.org; 8:15 pm; Free.

Join Sully and the gang and have some popcorn.

MON, AUG. 29

Monday movies: 2 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Monday, Aug. 1.

Reading party: Seaside Public Library, 116-15 Rockaway Blvd. (718) 634-1876; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Teens 13 to 18 celebrate the end of summer.

"The End of the Line": Astoria Public Library, 14-01 Astoria Blvd. at 14th Street; (718) 278-2220; www.queenslibrary.org; 6 pm; Free.

Documentary about global overfishing.

TUES, AUG. 30

Summer reading: Laurelton Public Library, 134-26 225th St. at Merrick Boulevard; (718) 528-2822; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Teens and children celebrate the end of the summer program.

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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Stressed to the max

Helping your teen cope as school approaches

I'm one who considers it "culture shock" when my family returns from vacation. First of all, it takes about three days to wind down once I get where I'm going. It takes those three days to eventually realize that I'm not on work-mother-maid duty anymore, and I finally relax. Returning poses more of a challenge for my family: Oh, the shock of it all! There's no one to make the bed, for goodness sake! Frantic schedules once again become the norm, and I'm forced to regroup. Sometimes, my stress level starts to rise before I even step through the doorway.

Teens experience similar emotions as the school year approaches after a long summer vacation. Even if their summer was filled with volunteer or work opportunities, a more lax schedule with time to surf, hike, or hang out was likely in the mix. Therefore, as the demanding school year draws near, many teens begin to experience high

stress levels. Parents can help their teens get a handle on stress before it wreaks havoc on the teen's psyche.

Why back-to-school stress?

Maybe she's worried about academic success or acceptance to a club she is interested in joining. Sometimes, it's a combination of social and academic stressors.

"Often, teens feel stress about the start of the school year because their schedule is quite different during the summer," reports Richard N. Shadick, PhD, director of Pace University Counseling Center and adjunct professor of psychology. "They are used to fewer demands and expectations. Also, during the summer, some teens tend to lose their social network. This makes for an awkward transition and the need to get reacquainted with peers after much time has passed."

Teens might be concerned about considerable changes as well, such as more intense academic loads or new school environments.

"Depending on the year, teens may be facing major challenges, such as starting high school, applying to colleges, or looking for work," points out Shadick.

Don't underestimate stress

Stress levels can escalate, resulting in teens making bad choices as they search for ways to cope. According to studies conducted in 2007 by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, 73 percent of teens surveyed reported that school stress was the primary reason for their drug use. A supplemental study showed that only seven percent of parents believe that teens will use drugs to cope with stress. Parents may be underestimating the effect that stress has on their teens.

"Signs that your teen's stress is getting out of hand include drastic changes in their grades, personality, or habits. For example, if a neat and orderly teen

starts to become disheveled and disorganized, parents may need to be concerned," warns Shadick. Parents should seek professional help if their teen is extremely anxious, seems unusually depressed, or exhibits signs of substance abuse.

Parents can help

Parents can help minimize their teen's stress level, but the first step is to acknowledge the stress and to take it seriously.

"Encourage your teen to stay in contact with their friends from school so that they will have the social support they need when they return to classes," suggests Shadick.

Additional ideas for a stress-free start:

- New school? Your teen should "walk" her schedule before the first day
- Great confidence boosters: a fresh haircut or new outfit
- Schedule downtime
- Teens should abide by "school night" curfews a week prior to school starting.

Tips and tales

"As school starts, I get fearless about taking things off our list if I see the stress levels getting too high. We also plan hikes or other nature-related activities because this is calming and refreshing to one's spirits."

Wendy Urban-Mead, Staatsburg, NY

"If my daughter starts getting anxious about the beginning of the school year, I talk with her about it — we take a "picture" walk in her mind." *Terri Hein, Poughkeepsie, NY*

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: What to do when your teen gets mixed up with the "wrong" crowd.

Please send your full name, address, and brief comments to myrnahaskell@gmail.com, or visit www.myrnahaskell.com.

Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer and columnist specializing in parenting issues and child and adolescent development. She is the mother of two teenagers.



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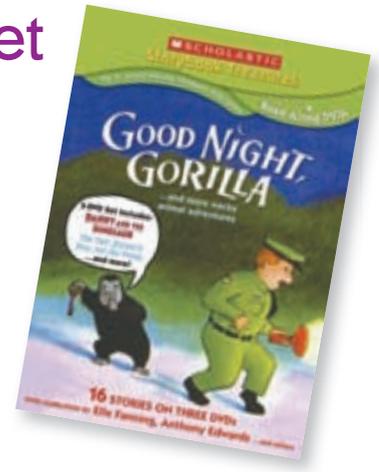
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"Good Night, Gorilla" box set, \$24.95. For info, visit www.scholastic.com.

Great beach read

Families can enjoy a day at the beach without needing to slather on the sunscreen with the new, hard-cover book "When a Dragon Moves In."

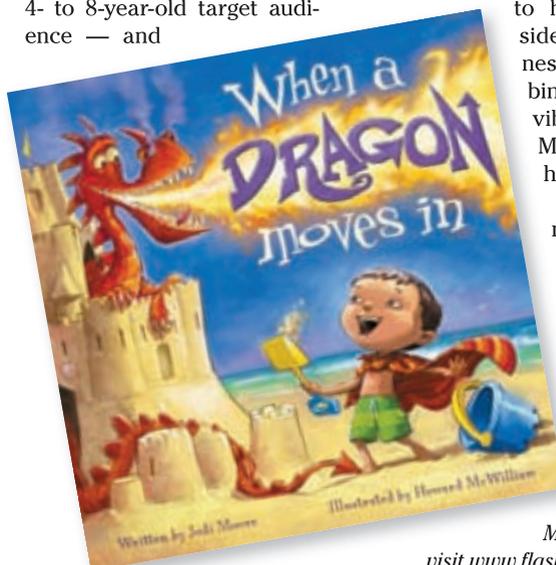
This humorous and endearing tale of friendship quickly engages its 4- to 8-year-old target audience — and

their parents — from the moment author Jodi Moore writes, "If you build a perfect sand castle, a dragon will move in."

The comedy ensues when the imaginative little boy tries to introduce his distracted parents to his new fire-breathing sidekick. The outlandishness of his attention-grabbing stunts — drawn in vibrant color by Howard McWilliam — increases as his frustration mounts.

Moore's story has a moral for the parents, too, serving as a reminder to busy moms and dads to take a moment to enjoy their own kids before their childhood — and magical sidekicks — go out with the tide.

"When a Dragon Moves In" by Jodi Moore, \$16.95. For info, visit www.flashlightpress.com.



Tutus much

These tutus just beg you to twirl.

For a bold, cheery photo op, sweet party outfit, or dance recital, these colorful tutus by Tutu Twirls are the perfect fit.

The tutus, in sizes newborn through 2 years old, come in a variety of color combinations, from this red-and-turquoise pattern (perfect for a Dr. Seuss-themed party!) to solid pink, purple and more, all with a ribbon-wrapped waistband for extra comfort.

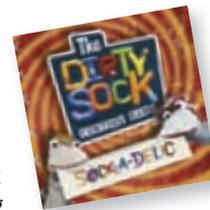
There's even an option to design your own tutu!

Tutu by Tutu Twirls, \$20-\$25. For info, visit www.etsy.com/people/tututwirls.

These 'socks' don't stink

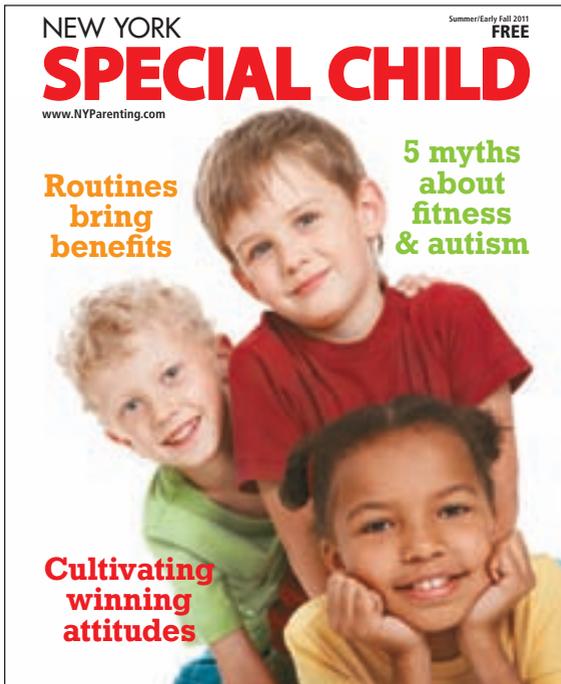
Don't let the name fool you — this band is good, clean fun.

The Dirty Sock Fun-time Band has won fans for its high-energy music videos on the Nick Jr. channel's "Jack's Big Music Show," and now, you can enjoy the music without turning on the TV with the band's new album, "Sock-a-Delic."



With influences ranging from Led Zeppelin to the Muppets, the band brings 16 rocking songs that will get you jumping around and singing along to its humorous lyrics at home or in the car.

It's truly sock-a-delicious. "Sock-a-Delic" CD by The Dirty Sock Fun-time Band, \$9.99. For info, visit www.dirtysockfuntimeband.com.



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