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Family February 2013

FEATURES

6 Flu: Learn how to stay safe

The flu has hit the city hard this year. Keep yourself and your family healthy
BY JAMIE LOBER

8 Everyday love

Show love to your children with these simple tips
BY KIKI BOCHI

10 Hover charge

'Helicopter parents' can keep their kids from taking off
BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

18 Babies & books

New York mom Isobella Jade supports early reading
BY JAMIE LOBER

24 A mom sent to the principal's office

Her intentions were good, but she still landed in hot water
BY ALLISON PLITT

28 The right to know

Is there a way to tell if your home is really smoke-free?
BY SHEELAH A. FEINBERG

30 Sparkling smiles

How to protect and promote your child's dental health
BY KIKI BOCHI

41 Nap time

It's not just for sleeping!
BY TIM PERRINS

42 Local romance

New York City is the perfect backdrop for Valentine's Day
BY STACEY ZABLE

46 Calling young artists!

There's lots to explore at the Children's Museum of Art
BY MARIE HUESTON

52 Puppy love

Pets and the health of your baby
BY KIKI BOCHI



46

COLUMNS

12 Just Write Mom

BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN

14 Mommy 101

BY ANGELICA SERADOVA

16 Healthy Living

BY DANIELLE SULLIVAN

26 Dear Dr. Karyn

BY DR. KARYN GORDON

36 Dear Teacher

BY PEGGY GISLER AND MARGE EBERTS

38 Divorce & Separation

BY LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

39 The Book Worm

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

40 Ask an Attorney

BY ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER, ESQ.

44 Good Sense Eating

BY CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

54 Lions and Tigers and Teens

BY MYRNA BETH HASKELL

CALENDAR

48 February Events

SPECIAL SECTIONS

20 Catholic Schools Directory

52 The Marketplace

53 Party Planners



16



14

Letter from the publisher

Call for love

A number of our columnists in this month's issue have turned their attention to this "thing" called love. Of course, it's February and the time of year when so much focus is on romance and expressions of tender feelings.



So what is love? How do we know it when we have it or find it? How do we avoid the pitfalls of love, the false alarms and wrong choices that break our hearts and waste our time?

These are the questions that parents wish so much to be able to answer when their tweens and teens face the inevitable break-ups or heartbreaks or unrequited love experiences. We recall as parents looking back on the hurts of our

own youth the disappointments and sorrows. If only we could have the formula to give our youngsters that would help them through the pathways of love and longing. But we can be bracing and understanding and comforting even when

we hear things like, "If you loved me I wouldn't have to go to school", recently said to a member of our staff by her young son.

We need more love in this world, that's for sure. We need to love the ones who have no love, we need to spot the need for love in the unloved around us and help them feel secure, safe and untroubled. As parents we need to reach out for help for our children when and if we

recognize they are facing issues we are incapable of handling for them on our own. This is also a part of love. It is our responsibility to instill love and trust and security in those babies who come into our arms as brand new people and if they are in trouble, it is loveable to reach out for help.

In spite of horrible headlines from time to time, I believe we all are becoming more loveable. I see incredible changes sociologically with far less polarization, anger, revenge and separation. I see a growth in tolerance, understanding and acceptance and huge changes that make me know that many of us humans have come a long way. We are moving forward and there is progress on every front and that is because of love.

So we love our children, our pets,

our family, our friends, and if we're very fortunate, we get a partner to experience it all with that makes us less on our own. Some do and some don't. That's just the way it is. Not an easy thing to explain to one's children who are all hoping and dreaming of love everlasting and the bells and the banjos ringing.

Love is the answer. I say that every year and I mean it. We can't have enough. We must treasure every piece of it that comes our way.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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FLU

Learn how to stay safe

The flu has hit the city hard this year. Keep yourself and your family healthy

BY JAMIE LOBER

The flu has hit New York hard this year and has the city's parents talking.

Word out is that this season's vaccine is not as effective as it should be, making some patients hesitant about getting the flu shot for them and for their children. But doctors are stressing that getting the shot is better than nothing.

"Initially, patients refused flu vaccines because they were concerned about side effects and getting the flu from the vaccine, so it is important for people to know that it is not a live virus," said Dr. Nieca Goldberg, clinical associate professor of the Department of Medicine at Leon H. Charney Division of Cardiology, and director of the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health at New York University Lagone Medical Center. "Although it is not 100-percent effective, it is 62-percent effective and that is better than nothing," said Goldberg.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can infect the throat, nose, and lungs, causing





Regardless of your decision to get vaccinated, you should take proper precautions.

mild to severe illness.

For some people, the flu is more dangerous than for others.

"People who are particularly at risk for getting the flu are people with heart disease, lung disease, and illnesses that lower their immunity, like cancer," said Goldberg.

Scientists try to stay ahead of things by changing the vaccine each year depending on what the epidemiologists see as the trend.

"Last year's vaccine does not help you," said Goldberg.

Sometimes, people do not realize they have the flu at first.

"You start to feel achy all over, your muscles ache, you are very tired, and you may have a cough, diarrhea, or vomiting," said Goldberg. "Sometimes, the flu requires hospitalization. If you are dehydrated, not eating, dizzy, or feel like you are going to faint, you may be given intravenous fluids."

Symptoms are different in terms of intensity compared to your routine cold. It is important to remember that not everyone with the flu has a fever. Being prepared is the key to fighting the virus.

"A thermometer is a good piece of medical equipment to have in your house, and you should have acetaminophen on hand to take for muscle aches," advised Goldberg.

WebMD states that Americans are turning to cold and flu supplements in greater numbers this year. Instead of over-the-counter medications, people are considering natural remedies such as taking vitamin C, echinacea, and zinc, because the Food and Drug Administration has released reports about some over-the-counter cold and flu treatments being ineffective.

Studies show that while vitamin C can improve the immune system, it does not prevent colds when given in doses of one gram per day. But, it has proven to be beneficial as a treatment, reducing the duration of colds by as much as 24 to 36 hours.

Regardless of your decision to get vaccinated, you should take proper precautions. If you are exposed to someone who has the flu, you should talk to your doctor about antiviral drugs, which are typically between 70 and 90 percent effective at preventing you from getting sick. It is helpful to stay out of crowds and close quarters as best you can during flu season.

If you suspect you have the flu, take action.

"The fastest way to get rid of the flu, if you are having the most severe case, is to talk to your doctor so he can prescribe an antiviral medication known as Tamiflu, which shortens the course. The other thing you can do is stay home and rest," said Goldberg. If it seems to get worse instead of better, seek medical attention.

If you are feeling very sick, you should not go to work. If your child is sick, do not send her to school. Try to avoid sharing utensils, glasses, and personal items. Common surfaces like telephones, computer keyboards, and doorknobs should be wiped down regularly to decrease the spread of germs.

Washing your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water is also a good means of prevention. Even better, you can get your child in the habit of washing for the duration it takes to sing "Happy Birthday."

Lifestyle choices like managing stress, getting adequate sleep at night, eating a balanced diet, and staying hydrated can make a difference in your flu-fighting potential.

Do not think you are immune to this epidemic. Be safe rather than sorry by consulting your pediatrician or family doctor about what you can do today.

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

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Everyday love

Show love to
your children
with these
simple tips

BY KIKI BOCHI

Valentine's Day gets many people thinking about love. But in truth, love is something you show your children every day, through actions big and small.

Our actions speak more of love than all the candy, cards, and grand gestures in the world.

"While we mark holidays, children count every day as a reminder of how much they are valued, loved and respected," says Peter A. Gorski, MD, an advisor to the American Academy of Pediatrics' website, HealthyChildren.org. "Seemingly small efforts to give a child our full attention, to appreciate a child's interests, to acknowledge a child's genuine feelings — these have huge effects and rich rewards well beyond the moment."

Here, from the American Academy of Pediatrics, are some ideas on how to be a more loving parent. Better than a bouquet of roses, these dozen tips will bring smiles to your child's face all year long.

- Use plenty of positive words with your child. Try to avoid using sarcasm, as children often don't understand it, and if they do, it creates a negative interaction. Banish put-downs from your parenting vocabulary.

- Respond promptly and lovingly to your child's physical and emotional needs. Remember, there is amazing power in a simple hug.

- Make an extra effort to set a good example at home and in public. Use words like "I'm sorry," "please," and "thank you."

- Make plans to spend time alone with your child or teen doing something he enjoys. There is nothing more



valuable you can give your child than your time and undivided attention.

- When your child is angry, argumentative, or in a bad mood, give him a hug, or other gesture of affection. Don't escalate things by getting mad as well. A simple statement like, "I see you are feeling angry today" can help validate him and defuse the situation. When he calms down, talk with him about his feelings.

- Use non-violent forms of discipline. Structure, rules, and limits are important to all children. Punishments can include time-outs or suspending privileges, such as television time or other activities. Allowing children of any age to constantly break important rules without discipline only encourages more rule violations.

- Your child's health depends on the care and guidance you offer during the early years. By taking your child to the doctor regularly, keeping him safe from accidents, providing a nutritious diet, making sure he gets enough sleep, and encouraging exercise, you help protect and strengthen his body.

- Help your child foster positive relationships with friends, siblings, and members of the community. Encourage cooperation in your home rather than competition between siblings. Organize get-togethers with extended family, and make your child's friends feel welcome in your home.

Help your child connect with a larger community through sports and activity programs, community groups, or your church or synagogue.

- Mark family nights on your calendar so the entire family can be together. Put a different family member's name under each date, and have that person choose the game or activity for the evening. Choices can include board games, playing basketball, taking a walk together, or even doing a creative craft.

- Let your child cook with you to familiarize him with good food choices. Involve your child in the entire process, from planning the menus, to shopping for ingredients, to the actual food preparation and serving. Not only will your child eat better, but you will also turn a daily chore into a fun, shared experience.

- Help your child develop self-esteem. Your child needs your steady support and encouragement to discover his strengths. He needs you to believe in him as he learns to believe in himself. Loving him, spending time with him, listening to him, and praising his accomplishments are all part of this process.

- Don't forget to say, "I love you," every day to children of all ages.

KiKiBochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.

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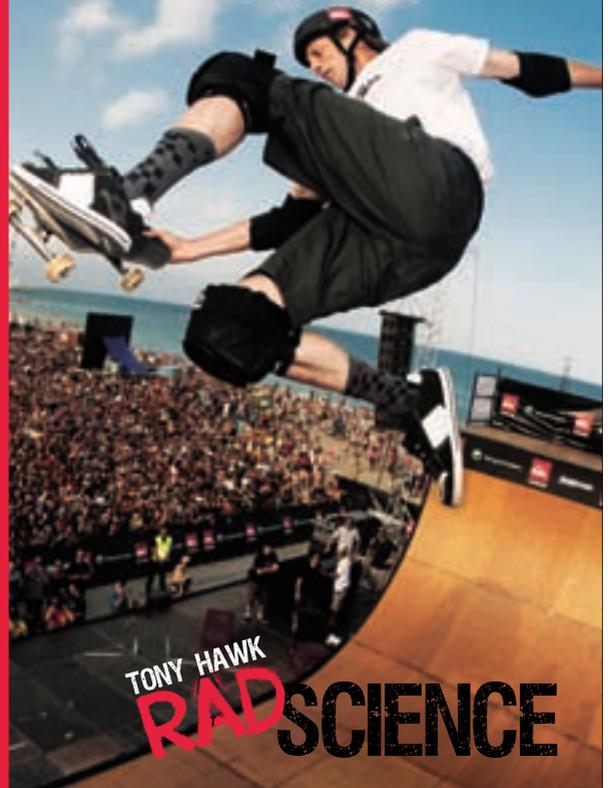
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Hover charge

'Helicopter parents' can keep their kids from taking off

BY LAURA J. VAROSCAK

Nancy was thrilled to receive an acceptance letter from her top-choice Ivy League school. For years, she researched the best college programs and studied how to produce a winning application package.

She hired one tutor to help with SAT preparation and another to help write a successful personal essay. She visited many campuses, touring and networking with deans, admissions directors, and professors. It was now time to share the good news with her son, Will — the one going off to college.

Will is among the thousands of young people, born between 1982 and 1995, who fall victim to a “helicopter parent.” The term first appeared in the 1990s to describe a specific group of baby boomers who hover over their children throughout every stage of their development. Despite good intentions, these parents do more harm than good.

This ineffective parenting style usually begins in preschool (with over-programmed kids attending karate, piano, ballet, yoga, gymnastics, swimming, art, and cooking classes after their regular school day) and escalates to college and beyond.

Lisa, a recent business school graduate, has always appreciated her father’s involvement in her life. A few months before graduation, he wrote her resume, embellishing it with impressive (albeit exaggerated) information, and spent big money on designer business cards. Now, he accompanies his 21-year-old daughter to career fairs and job interviews, often intervening when the delicate subject of salary comes up.

“She’s a bright girl, but I don’t want anyone taking advantage of her. I want her to start out comfortably.”

Lisa graciously accepts his help. “It’s nice to have someone who

cares so much about me and my future. I’m very lucky.”

It’s typical for parents to micromanage their young children. Babies rely on their caregivers to nourish and protect them. But for many parents, letting go becomes an emotional challenge — even when the child is ready for independence. As children grow older, they deserve opportunities to become more self-reliant and responsible. These are basic, but crucial, life skills. But helicopter parents interfere with every aspect of their child’s life, giving a very clear message: “You cannot succeed without me.”

They do not allow their kids to fail, or succeed, without their help. Children cannot learn to trust themselves if their parents do not trust them to handle their own affairs. Crossing the line from parental guidance to predominance can lead to negative consequences for the children by:

- Weakening their decision-making and problem-solving skills.
- Undermining their confidence
- Instilling a fear of failure.
- Encouraging dependence on parental approval.
- Increasing anxiety
- Decreasing self-motivation.
- Blurring the boundary between childhood and adulthood.
- Slowing social and emotional development.
- Fostering a negative self-image.
- Robbing them of valuable opportunities to learn from their own experiences.

Rise of the helicopter parents

Overprotective parents have existed since the beginning of time. However, with the rapid rise of technology, hovering has become much easier. Computers, e-mail, web cams, cellphones, and text messaging can collectively be called “the longest umbilical cord in the world.” They make it possible for parents and children to access each other around the

clock. The business of information technology is booming, and new products are being developed to target the helicopter parent population.

“These new products will significantly expand the monitoring and tracking capabilities of parents, enabling them to keep track of whom their children meet online, monitor kids’ movements and location, and keep tabs on their behavior and lifestyle,” according to senior analyst Kevin Osborn.

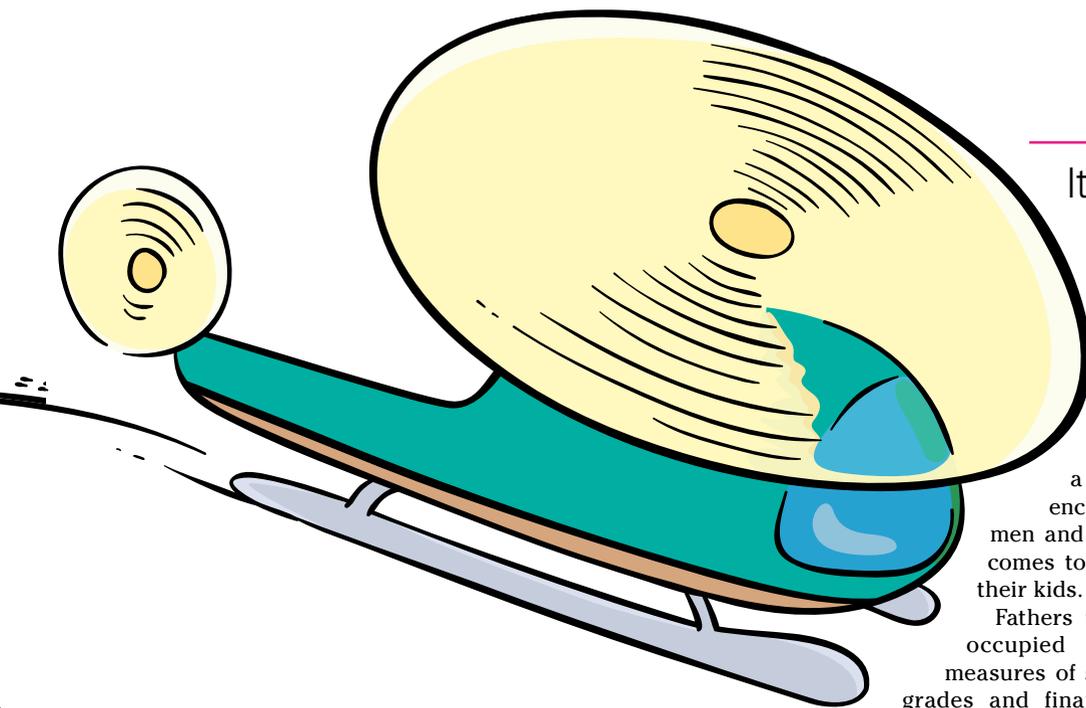
This growing trend may also be a result of today’s critical economic situation.

The uncertainty of the job market creates anxiety for both parents and their children. Desperately wanting their sons and daughters to land secure, well-paying jobs, helicopter parents may push too hard, especially during college years. Academic excellence is important, but it does not compare to the knowledge gained from living independently, which includes making mistakes and learning from them. That freedom is invaluable, because it enables young men and women to explore the entirety of what it means to be an adult.

Some helicopter parents encourage their children to attend prestigious universities, believing that the degree will result in a successful career, but then they strain to pay their child’s tuition. Parents can come to see their children as investments and believe they deserve to be involved.

Moms vs. dads

Helicopter parenting is prevalent among all racial and ethnic lines, as well as socioeconomic status. Recent studies indicate that nearly 70 percent of college students’ parents cross the line between supporting and controlling their children. Yet,



It's typical for parents to micromanage their young children. But for many parents, letting go becomes an emotional challenge — even when the child is ready for independence.



a marked difference exists between men and women when it comes to micromanaging their kids.

Fathers tend to be preoccupied with concrete measures of success such as grades and finances. They are more aggressive in their approach and go straight to the top to resolve problems.

Ben arranged for his daughter to attend a nearby university so she could live at home while taking classes.

Each night, he helps her with her homework, often re-writing papers for her. He carefully monitors her grades, expecting no less than a 3.08 average.

After she scored an 87 on a statistics exam, Ben visited the professor, demanding that the grade be changed. When the professor refused, he spoke with the head of the department and wrote a letter to the Dean until the grade was raised three points.

Mothers, on the other hand, tend to become more overly involved with their son's lives. Theirs is more of an emotional attachment, a desperate need to be needed.

Beverly drives more than two hours to her 20-year-old son's dormitory three times a week to cook him meals and do his laundry and housecleaning. She schedules his doctor's appointments and gets up early to give him a daily wake up call.

Whatever happened to autonomy — not to mention alarm clocks?

Common types of helicopter parents

The academic watchdogs: carefully monitor homework and grades, often completing assignments for their children; speak to teachers, professors, and administrators on behalf of their chil-

dren, often arguing over grades or deadlines.

The safety monitors: worry excessively about every aspect of their children's lives, including health, eating, and sleeping habits, living arrangements, relationships, exposure to sex, drugs, and alcohol; constantly keep tabs on children's whereabouts.

The enablers: provide unlimited money and domestic services, although their children are old enough, and capable enough, to take care of themselves.

The best friends: strive to maintain constant contact with their children, preventing independence and freedom; establishes no healthy boundaries.

The agents: organize, schedule, and sort out difficulties, while going to great lengths to give their children an advantage over their competition.

Stay grounded

As children develop, they need practice making their own decisions. Facing challenges builds self-esteem and confidence.

Too much parental participation can interfere with the development of autonomy, detrimental to self-reliance and independence.

A parent's duty is to respect her children's needs, while serving as a positive role model.

As tempting as it may be to jump in to prevent disappointment or failure, allow your children to learn from their mistakes. In the end, the lessons they learn will be invaluable.

By the time they reach their college years, young adults will be strong, ready to face the world with gusto.

Laura Varoscak-DeInnocentis is a writer, educator and mom living in Brooklyn. A regular contributor to New York Parenting Media, she has won several editorial awards for her articles.



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Why romance is dead

What are we teaching our girls about love?

It was a fitful night at best. Colds and runny noses were running rampant among my brood and my youngest couldn't sleep.

So together, we retreated to the living room couches at 4 am hoping to rest while watching TV. As he settled onto the sofa and pulled his Super Mario blanket up to his face, I knew he had dozed off, so I grabbed the remote as fast as I could because those Cartoon Network voices were grating on my clogged ears.

Switching to the OWN Network, I'd hoped to catch a good Dr. Phil repeat or something else that would distract me before my day would officially begin an hour later. I tuned into "The Nate Berkus Show" with his guest "Millionaire Matchmaker" Patti Stanger.

Stanger dished out dating advice at a moment's notice, but grew visibly sullen when she was asked why she wasn't married and where her millionaire was. Interesting. If I were single, that would probably be a clue that I shouldn't follow her advice.

I noticed her tone and instructions were harsh. For example, one woman in the audience had been

out on a first date and it apparently went well until the guy

said he was interested in bird-watching. The

woman was evidently so horrified that she

didn't know how to respond so she let

him ramble about his sightings.

Stanger's advice: "Get up and say, 'I

can tell this won't work, but if I find

a friend who may be interested, I'll

give them your number,' and then

run away." Stanger said the young lady

was "too hot and single" to listen about

bird-watching.

Yikes.

Was I in bizarro land? What happened to meeting someone you found interesting and sharing a quick bite to eat or a coffee? Now, it's turned into abandon a person mid-meal if you don't like his hobby. If you met a friend, a colleague, hell, even an acquaintance for a meal, you'd give him more courtesy than what she was advising.

Speaking of "hot," in a mock-date improvement segment, one young man began his would-be date by telling her she was "hot" (after creepily staring her up and down). Mind you, this was the first thing he did and said.

I let out a quiet "eew" in my darkened living room, but Stanger said, "Hot means sex, so he is looking at you sexually." Then the woman replied, "Thank you."

I couldn't watch much after that, as I scratched my head wondering if this is really the advice that young people are getting now. I will accept neither my daughter saying "thank you" for being called hot, nor my son using the word "hot" in the first sentence he utters to a girl (unless it's something like, "watch out, that pan is hot!").

People wonder why romance is dead, and maybe it's because so many of us have allowed common courtesy and decency to go by the wayside. Also, the fact remains that we teach people how to treat us, so if we settle for less, that is what we will get.

It reminds me of recent memo making the Internet rounds that says, "I often wonder if more girls were willing to be ladies, more guys would be challenged to be gentlemen."

The challenge lies for both genders, and I hope it's a challenge that we teach our next generation to take.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, has worked as a writer and editor in the parenting world for more than 10 years. Sullivan also writes about pets and parenting for Disney's Babble.com. Find her on Facebook and Twitter @DanniSullWriter, or on her blog, www.justwritemom.com.



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MOMMY 101

ANGELICA SERADOVA

The terrible twos

I think the terrible twos have arrived early. My sweet little girl has developed a whole other side to her that's not so sweet.

A few months ago, a friend asked several other moms for tips on how to deal with her toddler who had taken a liking to repeatedly biting her. Most moms advised on biting him back! Understandably, she didn't want to do that, nor spank him. Eventually, she decided just to ignore him, although ignoring the bite marks was a lot more difficult.

Luckily, Olivia is not a mini-Dracula. She prefers whining, hitting, and throwing herself (I'm not sure which situation is worst).

There's a ton of parenting advice and tips on how to discipline toddlers — everything from spanking to time-out, to talking and encouraging positive behavior rather than punishing bad. I'm not against spanking. I think it can work and if you pick your battles, it may be very effective.

However, when I've attempted to spank Olivia, she does it in return or does it to the dog. It's sad to see my pit bull being bullied by my 1-year old. And isn't it counter-productive to punish my child for hitting by hitting her? At this stage, I don't think a time-out is very effective, she's too young to understand. She doesn't understand that she is being punished. To her, mommy is leaving her all by herself. No lesson learned.

I do talk and encourage positive behavior as much as I can, but what I've also found to be effective for temper tantrums, whining, frustration, and other annoying toddler behaviors is distracting her. I read somewhere that when your child is acting up, the best thing to do is to distract her. That sounded genius and when I tried it, it was! The next time I felt a tantrum coming on, I brought her attention to something else, my cellphone. I focused on the phone like it was the most intriguing thing ever, and she followed my lead. Sometimes when she's being fussy

I'll just tickle her, and as much as she wants to be upset, she can't help but laugh and forgets her frustration, or even better, tries to tickle me back.

Another tantrum-fighting tactic: singing and dancing.

When Olivia is being uncontrollably fussy and moody, I'll engage her in a song and dance. Sometimes it's a nursery rhyme and sometimes it's something I've just made up. The more upbeat and silly, the better.

I try to look at things from her point of view — although there are some things she can

communicate to me: bottle, book, eat, bath time (she's very smart), but there are other things she hasn't mastered yet and that must be frustrating. Trying to understand the toddler brain is not always so easy.

Fortunately, we haven't had any public tantrums yet, but I'm sure we will. If and when that happens, I'll be prepared to tickle my daughter and break out into a ridiculous dance in front of strangers.

I'm sure the other parents will be able to relate, and if I'm lucky, they might just join in.

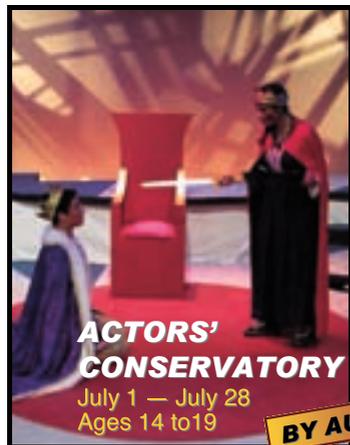




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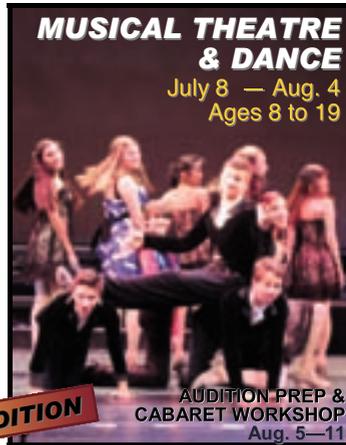
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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

The science of love

Love protects us from loneliness, poor health, and even helps us live longer. This month, while love is in the air and people are doing their best to find and keep love, could their efforts be in vain?

After all, you can date as much as you like and meet a whole lot of people, but if the chemistry just is not there, you cannot force the attraction.

Maternal love, of course, is a whole other story. It's primitive and fierce. That unique bond between mother and child does not end with delivery. In fact, the change is life-lasting. Some moms feel that instinctively from the get-go. However, the change is not only emotional, it's biological. There is a real science behind the concept of love.

Here are three distinct ways love can be explained through science:

Pregnancy

Research performed by psychologist Laura M. Glynn of Chapman University and Curt A. Sandman at the University of California proposes that pregnancy hormones help prepare a woman's brain for the stresses of motherhood. This includes everything from giving her more patience and becoming more resilient to stress, to becoming fine-tuned to her baby's needs.

Brain change

During pregnancy, just as the mom passes oxygen and nutrients to her baby via the placenta, it seems that a baby can pass DNA to his mother. Recent research out of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle has discovered that male DNA has been found in the brains of mothers who have given birth to boys. This strange phenomenon is also believed to ward off certain types of cancer, such as bowel and skin cancer. One of the oldest women studied was a 93-year-old woman who was found to have male DNA in her brain after death.

Romantic love

When talking about romantic love, it is simply like a drug — some



say it's addictive. A study from the State University of New York at Stony Brook suggests you can crave the person you fall in love with much in the same way you would a drug. Author of the study, psychologist Arthur Aron, says the change occurs in the brain, not the heart.

"Intense passionate love uses the same system in the brain that gets activated when a person is addicted to drugs," he explains.

Whether we see love as purely emotional, wholly scientific, or a happy blend of both, love is a wonderful thing to have in our lives and a reason for celebration.

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

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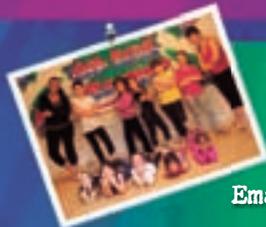
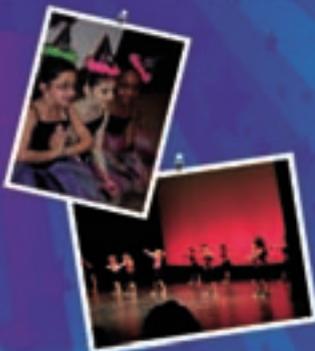


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Isobella Jade's son Phoenix is learning the importance of reading from a young age.

Babies & books

New York mom
Isobella Jade
supports early
reading

BY JAMIE LOBER

Isobella Jade is a self-described author, model, and new mom who claims to have both beauty and brains to make her a total package.

She instigated a new baby book blog called Phoenix Baby Book Club, where she features her son Phoenix's reading adventures and encourages new parents to start

reading early — even in the womb. Jade, known in New York City's fashion world as a petite model at 5-feet-2 inches, says her career took off when she wrote her first book at the Apple store when she did not have a computer.

"After I shared my underdog story I started getting a following and it grew from there," says Jade, who went on to write three more books, and claims she is not quit-

ting anytime soon.

She quickly learned that talking about how to get ahead as a shorter model was just one way she could reach out to young adults. She found that keeping things interesting and inspiring helped maintain her following. Instead of just being discovered as a model, she was starting to discover herself and wanted to teach young girls the lessons she had learned.

"It is not about if they are looking at every page, but they are listening and engaged."

"I gave them an awareness of being careful and talking to their parents about what they are doing," says Jade.

Her lessons grew more serious after she had a baby boy, who is now 2 ½ months-old and already working with a modeling agency in the city. Not only is he attractive, he is a wise little man.

"We share the books we are reading together with others, and since my mom was a reading teacher, reading is a common nature to me," says Jade.

When parents like to read, their children pick up on it.

"It is the best part of my day when I read to Phoenix, which is in the morning and before dinner time," says Jade.

She considers it a special moment when she can introduce her son to the beauty of the world.

"He gets to hear words he might not have heard in everyday life, see pictures, ignite his senses, and see colors," she says. If you fear your toddler may not be able to sit still long enough to read a book, don't try to fight it, but rather, try to set aside 10 minutes a day, she advises.

"Parents can make it fun. I make noises myself and am animated but humanistic," says Jade, adding she talks to her son like he is 4 years old instead of treating him like a baby.

Jade suggests that parents find teachable moments when reading to their children.

"We have paintings on our walls so I go through the colors and tell him to look at red, white, green, and go through the rainbow," she says. You may find you get a positive response from your child. "I make him giggle and it is fun, but you have to have the right attitude so it is a good experience."

The key is to acknowledge the world around you and not be afraid to be yourself, she says.

"It is weird reading to him because I am not sure if he under-

stands me and he probably does not understand every word, but he does understand my expressions and the way I move my mouth," says Jade.

Parents can also get their children involved by making reading interactive.

"Notice what is going on on the page that you can talk about, like the clouds, cool motorcycle, or owl, so it is more fun than just reading the sentence," says Jade. Use household items as you narrate. "If you have a stuffed animal or cool truck to incorporate — or other things in your room that are a color from the book, like a lampshade or couch — talk about it."

The more you practice reading aloud, the better you will feel about it.

"You have to bring your positivity, excitement, and positive voice to it," says the mom. Try to gage how your child is feeling. "I talk to him and ask how he is doing, and he will smile and hear my tone of voice and pitch go up when I am happy or excited."

And make sure to give your baby credit where it is due.

"They pay attention and are so smart, and that can be taken for granted," says Jade.

Each child's interest level varies, but all seem to care in their own way.

"It is not about if they are looking at every page, but they are listening and engaged," she says.

While the key is to start young, literacy matters for all ages.

"I love advocating for everyone to read so they can keep their wonder and imagination going, take a moment to escape, appreciate the story of someone else, learn so much, and appreciate the world and their own life and others better," states Jade.

She says she is most proud of how she is raising and portraying her family.

"It is one thing to be admired and liked for how you look, but it is another to have a perspective, opinion, be observant and appreciated," she says. "I am glad people think Phoenix is cute, but I love it when people say Phoenix is smart."

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

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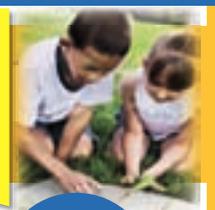


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Catholic Schools

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 20

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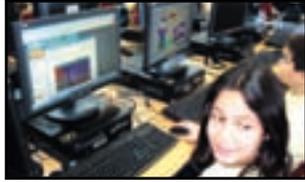
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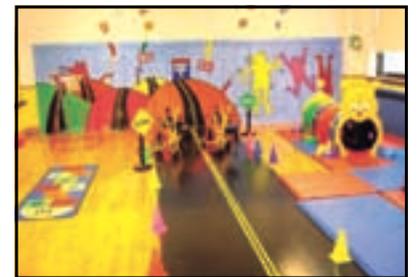
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A mom sent to the principal's office

Her intentions were good, but she still landed in hot water

BY ALLISON PLITT

Growing up, I was one of those strange kids who loved going to school to study and learn. Now, I love taking my 6-year-old daughter to the public school she's enrolled in, helping her with homework, and coming into her first-grade classroom to participate in special occasions.

My excitement about school, however, became a problem this year, when I got sent to the principal's office for putting pictures of the students on a public website.

When my daughter entered pre-K two years ago, a parent created a photo-share website. Whenever a special event happened at the school, he would take pictures and then send an e-mail to all the other parents informing them he had uploaded photos to the site.

I thought this was a great idea, so the following year, when my daughter started kindergarten at a differ-

ent school, I created a site for her class. So whenever a special occasion took place, like a Halloween party or a trip to the bowling alley, I took pictures of the kids. I then uploaded the photos, and e-mailed the parents telling them where they could find the pictures. The teacher, however, didn't have an e-mail address, so I never thought to tell her about the site.

Many parents complimented me on the photos and the site, so I created another one this year for the first-grade classroom. My first opportunity to take photos was at a class party in mid-October. I volunteered to help out at the event and showed up with my camera in hand.

A few days later, when I went to upload the photos, the site was advertising a new software program for its members, which would allow them to create a more elaborately detailed site.

With great excitement, I created a website for my daughter's class and uploaded all the photos from the party. In contrast to the previous year's website where I just uploaded pictures, this year I was able to add names to, or "tag," all the people in the photos.

I was also capable of creating a school calendar on the site. Since I even had the ability to add documents to the site, I uploaded the class list, which provided the names of all the students with their parents' names, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.

Then I sent an e-mail to all the parents and the teacher, telling them about site, and made them members of the site, which meant they could add and edit information.

Besides receiving a handful of compliments from the parents about the photos, I started to get



bad news.

First, the class parent who had organized the party told me the teacher had seen the website and told her to change the name of the website to "The Parents of the First Grade Class," so it would look like the parents, and not the school, were responsible for creating it.

Next, I received an e-mail from the assistant principal, requesting that the class parent and I meet with her and the principal.

Throughout my entire academic career I had never been in trouble with the principal. So before the meeting I e-mailed the principal and assistant principal links to both the kindergarten and first-grade classroom share sites I created. I was sure that if they saw all the hard work I did, they would realize how great it was for the parents to see photos of their kids and have access to so much information about the school.

At the meeting, the assistant principal asked me if I had asked the other parents or the teacher about creating the site. I told her I had made the site by myself because the parents from the previous year enjoyed seeing the kindergarten photos.

She told me that my first mistake was in not asking permission to create the site, since it involved the school. She also told me that when she went to the website, she could see the class list with the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all the parents.

When she told me that, I wanted to put a bag on my head for being so stupid, because I totally forgot to edit the visitor access to the site. In other words, anyone who went to the website could see a name tagged to each person's face in the pictures, as well as everyone's contact information.

The assistant principal told me to remove all of the personal data on the website immediately. She told me nowadays there are people with child custody issues, where one of the parents doesn't want the other to know their contact information or even their whereabouts.

Realizing this new set of circumstances, I apologized and told her I would speak to the teacher as soon as possible. I couldn't believe that what had seemed fun to me could now actually be construed as litigious.

After the meeting I went straight

home and untagged the names and edited the visitor access, so the only thing the visitors to the website could see were the photos.

I spoke to my daughter's teacher in person, and apologized about creating the site without consulting with her. She said she was concerned about people tagging photos, and cutting and pasting their faces to Facebook. I told her I had no idea something like that could even happen.

Ultimately, the teacher and I both agreed to delete the website. I also deleted both the kindergarten and first grade class sites.

I told my husband, who works with computers, what had happened, and asked him how the parent in my daughter's pre-K class had created a class website and never received complaints from the other parents concerning their online privacy.

My husband explained that the pre-K website was a secure site not open to the public, where the only visitors who could only access it had to receive an e-mail invitation. He said I, on the other hand, had created an unsecure website in which any person could visit and look at it.

Better understanding my error, I sent an e-mail to the parents, teacher, principal, and assistant principal telling everyone how sorry I was about creating the site without getting their opinions beforehand. I also let them know about the privacy issues in regards to tagging individuals in the photos and the unsecure visitor access, as well as the final decision to delete the site.

Reflecting on the entire incident, there are still times I want to put a bag on my head when I think about all the things I had done wrong. Nonetheless, I was also unaware of the more advanced technological concerns, such as being able to take a person's photo from a website and pasting it to a social media site.

I became aware that we're facing a new frontier where people act very cautiously about protecting their online privacy. Above all, I finally came to realize that it's vitally important to communicate verbally in this age of global communication.

Allison Plitt is a contributing writer for New York Parenting Media, and lives in Queens with her husband and 6-year-old daughter.

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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

How to build up your child's confidence

Dear Dr. Karyn,

Is self-esteem learned or genetic? And if we do learn it, how can I build my daughter's self-esteem? I've read several articles about why it's important and I'm terribly concerned that my daughter will suffer from low self-esteem, the way that I did growing up. Can you please offer some practical tips?



Dear Parent,

The great news is that self-esteem and confidence are 100 percent learned! Some people think it is genetic, but that is a myth! So how can we help to develop it in our kids? For this month I'm going to give extra information so parents have a clear idea what they can do! Here are three tips:

Model it

The truth is that we learn confidence from a variety of places (culture, media, peers), but after practicing for 16 years, I would say that the best predictor for what kind of confidence our kids will have is what has been modeled by the same-gendered parent. So, fathers to sons, mothers to daughters: pay attention!

We are the most influential teachers on this topic for our kids. Obviously, there are exceptions to this rule, but the great news is that if we are modeling it for our kids, there is

a high probability that they will learn it from us! While some people get excited with this information, others honestly feel a little daunted, thinking "Oh, no, so it's all up to me!" But think about it logically — wouldn't you rather be the most influential person in your child's life on this issue versus one of her friends or the media? This really is great news! If you are already feeling confident and you model this consistently, great! She will likely learn this automatically from you (it's like picking up a language as a child) without you ever having to talk about it! But if you or your spouse struggle with confidence, my number one suggestion is that you get coaching to fix this. This is 100 percent a fixable problem!

Understand it

If you were to read hundreds of articles and journals about this popular topic, you'd learn that self-esteem comes down to one word — "Attitude." How we think (attitude) impacts how we feel (emotions), which impacts what we do (behavior). If your 10-year-old daughter tells herself "I am too fat" (thought) she will feel "insecure, self-conscious, guilty, etc." (emotions) and this will highly impact her decision making in that she may count calories, weigh herself daily, or be overly obsessive about how she looks (behavior).

If your spouse tells himself "I am worthy only if I make this amount of money this year" (thought) he may feel anxious, overwhelmed, stressed (emotions), which will impact his decision-making. He may become a workaholic (since his self-worth is connected to his net-worth), he may be edgy with your kids and you, or he may find it difficult to relax (behavior). The truth is that emotions are always logical (emotions will feel whatever we tell them), but our thoughts that impact how we feel are NOT always logical (it depends on what we tell ourselves). Experts call these thoughts "internal dialogue" and it's incredibly powerful!

The two examples above are il-

logical thoughts (when we examine them objectively). However, as long as people tell themselves these kinds of thoughts, they will always feel insecure and anxious. To fix and build confidence we need to change how we think. A healthy, confident person does not tell herself conditional statements ("I am ok if _____" (ex. I get this position, make this amount of money, date this person, reach this weight)). Instead, she tells herself, "I am worthy as I am. If I get this goal, that's great, but my self-worth does not depend on it").

Just think about your kids. Can you imagine telling them a conditional statement such as "I love you if _____" — it's absurd! Loving parents do not put conditions on their love towards their kids. Similarly, someone who has healthy confidence does not put conditions on her self-worth. This internal dialogue is so powerful, and research demonstrates that when people have a genuine healthy confidence they are more likely to set goals and get them because they are fearless, take more risks, and have the guts and courage to charge after their ambition! When we unlock the dialogue in our head and challenge "toxic thinking," we unleash a powerful force! Just ask yourself — if you were fully confident, did not fear failure, rejection or what others thought — what would you do for 2013?

Affirm character

Your children desperately need to know that you are proud of them. So look for opportunities to affirm them — but focus specifically on their character.

We all hear a lot of talk about praising kids from different experts, and while some people think it gives kids a big head or false self-esteem, I couldn't disagree more.

The key is that you need to make sure you are affirming the right way, or it may backfire, in addition to giving regular constructive feedback so that it's not all praise and no substance.

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BY SHEELAH A. FEINBERG

All parents want to protect their children from potential health risks, especially at home.

We childproof our homes to prevent household injuries, install window guards, and use carbon-monoxide detectors. If any remodeling is done, we're sure not to use lead-based paint, and many parents insist that their homes are smoke-free.

But are they?

Multi-unit housing

New York City has the highest concentration of multi-unit housing in the country at almost 70 percent of homes.

That means most of us share walls, stairwells, lobbies, and most importantly, the air we breathe. Studies show that secondhand smoke travels between units and floors, and through cracks in piping, ventilation, and flooring. Secondhand smoke can never be entirely contained.

On average, up to 60 percent of the air in multi-unit buildings is shared. So, when one person smokes, the whole building smokes.

Children at risk

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is absolutely no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Even brief exposure can cause health problems, especially for children and the elderly. Secondhand smoke kills 42,000 Americans each year, including nearly 900 infants.

Approximately 200,000 New York City children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home. Children spend more time at home, so when they are exposed they have increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome, ear and respiratory infections, and worsening asthma



On average, up to 60 percent of the air in multi-unit buildings is shared. So, when one person smokes, the whole building smokes.

symptoms.

For those children who suffer from asthma, exposure to secondhand smoke leads to more frequent asthma attacks and more trips to the Emergency Room.

Clearly, children face a greater risk than adults of the negative health effects of secondhand smoke.

When secondhand smoke is in the air, young, developing lungs receive a higher concentration of inhaled toxins because a child's breathing rate is faster than that of an adult.

Parents can protect their children by voluntarily adopting a smoke-free policy in their homes, but for those who live in an apartment building, secondhand smoke can be a constant threat to your children's health, especially if you live near a smoker.

Smoking disclosure policies

Most people don't know if their building allows smoking, or if they will be exposed to secondhand smoke in their home, until they are already residents.

We all have the right to be free of hazardous conditions in our home, especially when it comes to our children's health. Why should our children be involuntarily exposed to secondhand smoke?

We have a right to know if the home we're choosing will be affected by secondhand smoke that could put our children's health at risk. Why shouldn't parents know if their building allows smoking before moving in?

Smoking disclosure policies would give prospective tenants and buyers the facts they need in order to make an informed choice when deciding where to live. Landlords and building own-

ers would need to disclose their building's smoking policy to anyone who is considering moving in.

We already have disclosure policies in place for many similar residential health hazards, such as lead-based paint, radon, and bed bugs.

Why not simply add tobacco smoke to this list? These disclosure policies appear to have contributed to reducing the health consequences resulting from exposure to these health hazards. When you consider all the facts, smoking disclosure policies just make sense.

New York City parents would then be able to choose to live in a building that has voluntarily gone smoke-free and know their children would be protected from secondhand smoke.

New York City stopped smoking in bars and restaurants almost 10 years ago, and last year, our parks and beaches became smoke-free.

If we can protect our health in these public places, why can't we protect our health in our homes? As concerned parents, we have a right to know if smoking is allowed in a building before we move in.

The NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City strongly supports smoking disclosure policies.

New Yorkers have a right to know if they will be involuntarily exposed to secondhand smoke and choose to live in a building that is 100 percent smoke-free to protect their children's health.

For more information, visit www.NYCSmokeFree.org/housing and www.SmokeFreeHousingNY.org

Sheelah A. Feinberg is the executive director of the NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City.



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Sparkling smiles

How to
protect and
promote your
child's dental
health

BY KIKI BOCHI

Could there be anything more precious than your child's smile?

Preserving and protecting that smile should be on the top of your list of priorities, yet oral health is often overlooked by many parents. It's understandable — you have so many things to deal with, and worrying about preventing cavities just seems to get away from you. Besides, they're just baby teeth, right?

Wrong.

Even baby teeth are important. Baby teeth serve as spacers to maintain the proper alignment for permanent teeth. And that's not all: children with healthy mouths chew more easily and gain more nutrients from the foods they eat. They learn to speak more quickly and clearly. Plus, a healthy mouth is more attractive, giving children confidence in their appearance.

If you're not taking the best care of your child's teeth, you are certainly not alone. For the first time in 40 years, dentists are seeing an increased number of children with multiple cavities, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Along with this alarming trend is an increased number of children who require hospital admittance and general anesthesia to treat their extensive cavities and tooth decay.

Teaching your child proper oral care at a young age is an investment in his health. To mark Children's Dental Health Month in February, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry offers this advice:

- Set a good example. Taking good care of your own teeth sends a message that oral health is important. In addition, cavity-causing germs can be transmitted through contact — like when your baby puts his hands in your mouth and then in his own mouth, or if you share cups or utensils. That's why it's so important to keep your own teeth and gums healthy.

- Be smart at bedtime. Do not nurse a young child to sleep or put him to bed with a bottle of milk, formula, juice, or any sweetened liquid. As a child sleeps, any unswallowed liquid in the mouth feeds bacteria that produce acids and attack the teeth. Protect your child from severe tooth decay by putting him to bed with nothing more than a bottle of water or a pacifier. And never dip a pacifier in sugar or honey — day or night.

- Attack plaque. Plaque is a sticky film of germs that forms on teeth and gums after eating or drinking,

which is why brushing twice a day is so important. To ensure children's teeth are properly brushed, parents of toddlers should do it for them with a soft brush by using a circular or wiggling motion on all tooth surfaces, especially where the tooth meets the gum line. Even once kids are old enough to do their own brushing, parents should watch over the process until children are at least 8 years old.

- Use the right tools. Clean a baby's gums regularly with a clean gauze pad even before any teeth have erupted. This will accustom your baby to an oral care routine, plus reduce the bacteria in your child's mouth. For toddlers, use a small, soft-bristled brush with only a smear of toothpaste so that they don't swallow it. Once children can spit, use a pea-sized portion of toothpaste so they don't absorb too much fluoride. Remember to replace toothbrushes every three to four months — and even sooner if the bristles are worn out, or if your children have been sick.

- Floss daily. It is important to remove plaque from between the teeth and under the gum line before it can harden into tartar. Flossing removes food and plaque between teeth that brushing misses. You should floss for your children beginning at age 4. By the time they reach age 8, most kids can begin flossing for themselves.

- Eat well. Children must have a balanced diet for their teeth and gums to develop properly. Equally important is a diet high in certain kinds of carbohydrates. Other foods, such as sugar and starches, may place your child at dental risk. Limit starchy or sugary foods, which produce plaque acids that cause tooth decay.

Choose wisely. Use dental products that contain fluoride, including toothpaste, and visit a dentist regularly.

KiKiBochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.



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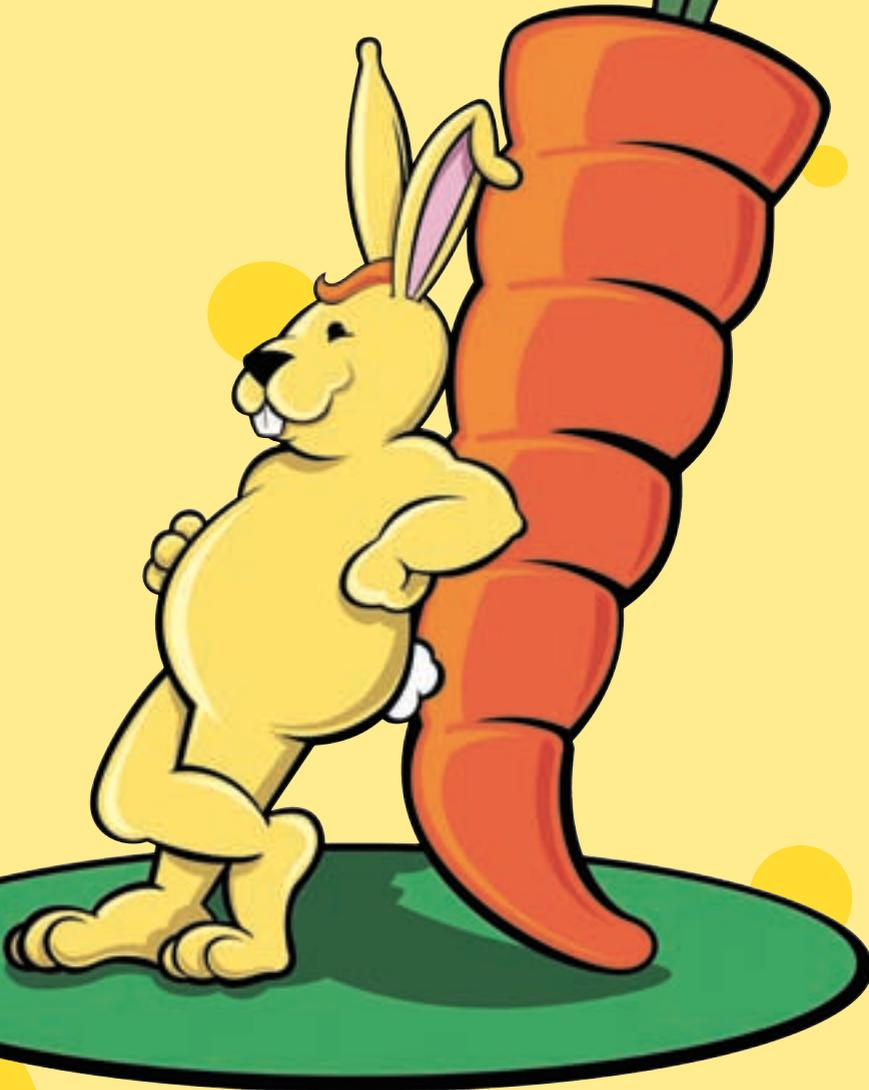


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Dr. Despina Pappas has been practicing pediatric dentistry for over 30 years, She graduated from Columbia University School of Dental and Oral Surgery and completed the post graduate program there, She established her office in 1979. Her primary goal was and is to provide quality dental care in a warm caring environment. She likes to spend time with her patients and their parents, explaining treatment options and goals. Her daughter Elayne, a graduate of Stony Brook's School of Dental Medicine and the Hospital's Pediatric Dental Residency Program, has recently joined the practice. Their main objectives, aside from providing their dental treatment, are to instill in their patients a good preventive regimen and to make them feel comfortable in the dental setting.

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Dr. Milchman received his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated with Honors and received two additional awards in the specialty of Periodontics. He expanded on his training with a one year General Practice Residency at Montefiore Medical Center. Dr. Milchman went on to complete a dual degree Orthodontic Residency Program at Temple University. In addition to his certificate in Orthodontics, Dr. Milchman has also earned a Masters of Science in Dentistry. In pursuit of the highest standards in his specialty, Board Certification, Dr. Milchman has successfully passed the American Board of Orthodontics Written Board Exam and Clinical Case Exam. Dr. Milchman serves the needs of the pediatric, adolescent, and adult community in his two private offices in Queens, New York. In addition, he is currently an Attending Orthodontist at St. Barnabas Hospital and Wyckoff Heights Medical Center.

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Dr. Leung holds a DDS degree from Stony Brook University and an MSD in orthodontics from Case Western Reserve University. She was the recipient of several awards while at Stony Brook, including the Nancy Wender National Board Achievement Award, given to the highest score in the national board exams, and the American Academy of Orofacial Pain Award;

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Dr. Shpuntoff is an active member of Queens County Dental Society and the New York State Dental Association. He is also a member of the American Dental Association, American Association of Orthodontists, Northeast Society of Orthodontists, and the Holistic Dental Association (HDA).

A graduate of Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, with additional training at Brookdale Hospital and a certificate in Orthodontics from New York University Dental School, Dr. Shpuntoff has over 20 years of experience. He provides orthodontic treatment for both children and adults as well as treating TMJ and Myofascial Pain Dysfunction.

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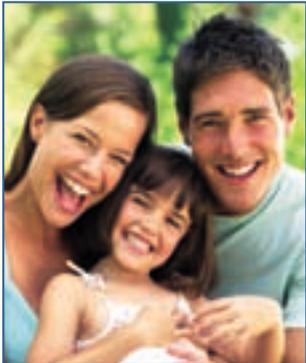
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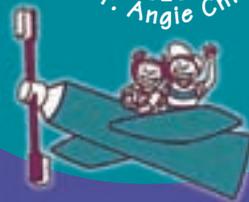
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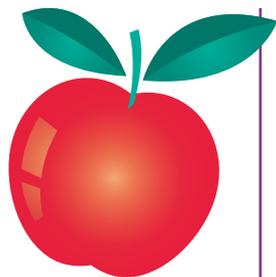


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DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

At what level are my children reading?

Dear Teachers,

How do I know if my young children in kindergarten and third grade are reading on grade level? Also, can you give me a list of books for these grades?

Dear Parent,

Report cards and teacher conferences should already have told you about your children's reading level in both grades. If not, ask their teachers for this information. Be aware that reading on grade level can mean different accomplishments at different schools. Plus, you should expect bright children to be reading one or more years above their grade level.

teacher or the school librarian. It also can be helpful to ask friends about books their children are enjoying.

Peer pressure

Dear Teachers,

How can I tell if my middle schooler is being accepted socially by his peers? He spends a lot of time in solitary pursuits.

Dear Parent,

Simple observation should largely answer your question. Are friends calling him on the phone? Is he calling others on the phone? Is he asked on outings with other children? Does he interact with neighborhood children his age? Does he participate in sports formally or informally? Does he belong to Boy Scouts or any clubs? Does he ever do school projects or homework with others in his class? What does he say about having friends? What does his teacher say about his socialization at school?

Caution: Are excessive online activities limiting personal contact with his peers?

Child labeled a trouble maker

Dear Teachers,

Since third grade, my child has been labeled as a trouble maker. He is currently in fifth grade and everything he does, no matter what, he gets a detention. We have a meeting scheduled with his teacher, because I have heard that this information is being sent over to his middle school — labeling him even before he arrives?

Dear Parent,

You have been hearing about your son's behavior for several years now. Why did he start acting this way in third grade? What happened in third grade to make the year different from first and second grade, before he had a label? And the big question: why hasn't something been done to change his behavior by you or the school?

As far as his records go, you will not be able to take out any information that teachers have put into them. However, you can look at the records

and put in information expressing your take on his behavior for the middle school teachers to see.

Realistically, it is past time for your son to change his image.

When you meet with his teacher, ask what can be done right now to help your son eliminate the trouble maker label.

Suggest that a behavior modification plan be developed immediately so some improvement in his behavior can begin to take place at once.

Helping a child who is a 'disorganized mess'

Dear Teachers,

My daughter is in the second grade, and the teacher says that she is a "disorganized mess" in class. The child often can't find missing books and is not willing to look for them.

Dear Parent,

Organization is a skill that young children usually learn at home. Getting your child to be more organized needs to be a two-pronged attack by you and the teacher.

First focus on the classroom and the missing book situation. If the child does not have a desk to keep her things in, books not being used always must be placed in a basket or cubby.

At the start of the day, take and store all books from her backpack and store them. Have a chart that she can check when this is done. She must also check the chart that a book has been put away when another is opened. The teacher should check the chart frequently and insist on this organization before other activities can be started. The chart can be taped to the top of the child's desk or table where she sits. At home, choose just one aspect of your daughter's life that ties in with school — possibly getting her backpack organized before 8 pm each day.

Submit questions and comments to dearteacher@dearteacher.com or visit www.dearteacher.com.

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On our website (www.dearteacher.com), you will find the San Diego Quick Assessment that will let you quickly gauge your children's reading ability. It is the first item under "Checklists." All you have to do is to have your children read lists of words. This is a first-step screening procedure; however, research has confirmed that it is a fairly accurate estimate of children's ability to read. Not only will it tell you the grade level in which your child is actually reading, but it will also tell you the grade levels where he can read independently and those in which he will struggle.

The best way to get a list of suggested books for your children to read is to request one from your child's



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DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

How collaborative divorce eases pain

When suffering from a physical ailment, such as back pain, what do we do to get relief? Who do we turn to solve the problem?

If resting, using a heating pad, and taking anti-inflammatories don't help, we will most likely make an appointment with a doctor who can take X-rays and prescribe physical therapy. We'll do whatever we can to avoid an operation, because surgery, the most invasive and potentially risky way to go, is the option of last resort.

Yet, when it comes to ending our marriages, the majority of us do the opposite; that is, perhaps fearful of what our spouse may do — or in reaction to what the spouse has already done — we schedule a meeting with the legal professional who tries to win everything possible for a client by going to (or threatening to go to) court, which generally in-

volves the greatest risk for us and our children.

Often, our first impulse is to consult a litigator — maybe a “shark,” the toughest advocate we think we can afford, who will protect us by tearing the other spouse to shreds.

At a recent training session at the Cardozo School of Law in Manhattan, Professor Adam Berner, a mediator and collaborative lawyer, used this analogy in pointing out the prevalence of litigation in our society, and how differently clients make decisions in choosing medical care on the one hand, and legal assistance on the other.

When divorcing, Berner said, we pay hefty retainer fees to enter and begin the court process. Even though more than 97 percent of divorcing couples will ultimately settle their cases out of court, as opposed to a judge making the ultimate decisions, we pay our litigators handsomely to prepare for a trial that is quite unlikely to ever take place.

For many couples, there is a better way to proceed. It is called collaborative divorce.

What is collaborative divorce? I can only begin to answer this question in one column, so here are the basics:

- You stay out of court: Both you and your spouse, and each of your lawyers, sign an agreement committing everyone to work together to reach respectful and lasting settlements, without litigation. It is this agreement that often reduces the fears we have, and allows for cooperation, rather than the battles so often seen in the courts.

Note: Either spouse can later decide to go to court. Such a decision results in the termination of the collaborative law process. This rarely happens and when it does, the collaborative lawyers can no longer represent the clients;

new attorneys must be hired.

Collaborative divorce does not always lead to agreements, but statistics compiled by the International Academy of Collaborative Professionals, the preeminent organization dealing with collaborative practice, show that 86 percent of cases settle. Only 11 percent are terminated, with another two percent of couples reconciling.

- Two-way and four-way meeting: In collaborative divorce, each spouse is represented by a lawyer. You and your lawyer will discuss your needs, for example: housing, financial security, and parenting matters. Your attorney will discuss with you how the law applies to the facts of your case. This work will happen in two-way meetings between you and your lawyer.

In four-way meetings with both spouses and their respective lawyers in the same room, the attorneys will assist in helping everyone to understand one another.

Understanding your spouse doesn't mean agreeing with your spouse. But it does allow for much better communication and for a rational discussion of the issues. And with this mutual understanding achieved, the lawyers will help you to develop options to satisfy both of your needs, and to consider the implications of the possible choices before you. Your lawyers will also assist in the negotiations.

There is much more to say about collaborative divorce. I intend to discuss such matters in the coming months. As always, I welcome your questions and comments.

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin, Esq., helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/home>.

Disclaimer: All material in this column is for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Discussing your particular case and circumstances with a legal professional before making important decisions is strongly encouraged to safeguard your rights.



Wrapping up loose ends

In “The Wrap-Up List,” a new novel by Steven Arntson, there’s a way of cheating death for 16-year-old Gabriela Rivera.

In Gabriela’s modern-day suburban town, Deaths — eight-foot-tall, silver-gray creatures — send a letter to whomever is chosen for a departure, telling them to wrap up their lives and do the things they always wanted to do before they have to depart.

Gabriela never thought about her own mortality, even though there were Death sightings everywhere, and a portrait of her late grandfather hung in her bedroom. Between school and hanging out with Iris, Sarena, and Raahi, life was full. She’d never com-



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

pletely get used to having Deaths wandering around close-by, but she never really gave them much thought, either.

Then she found the red envelope in the mail.

“You’ve been chosen for departure,” it said, and Gabriela’s blood ran cold.

When someone was contacted by a Death, he was told how many days he had left, with scant room for negotiation. The days allowed for tying up loose ends, saying goodbye, planning the leaving, and making a wrap-up list of things to do before he departed. Nobody knew why Deaths selected certain people, and the only way to escape departure was to find that

Death’s Noble Weakness — learn from the clues, and the Death could be cheated.

Once Gabriela understood that she would be departing with her Death, Hercule, she made her wrap-up list: helping her friends and herself get their first kisses.

There are a lot of things to like about “The Wrap-Up List,” starting with the sharp main character.

Arntson’s Gabriela is loyal and kind-hearted, good to her parents, and smart, but with enough self-doubt to make her believable. I liked the way she faced her own Death; how she befriended him and.....well, I can’t tell you any more without ruining everything.

The other great part about this book is that it forces you to think about what you’d do if you’d been picked for departure. The answer, and the world in which the question is asked, is the other part of



Arntson’s most excellent, creepy, sweetly created story, and I really liked it.

I’d say this book is appropriate for anyone ages 12 and up.

“The Wrap-Up List,” by Steven Arntson [240 pages, 2013, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$15.99].

Terri Schlichenmeyer has been reading since she was 3 years old, and she never goes anywhere without a book. She lives on a hill with two dogs and 12,000 books.

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Tax changes for '13

Do you need to change or update your estate planning documents in light of the “fiscal cliff” tax changes?

Much talk and press was devoted at the end of last year to the “fiscal cliff.” On Jan. 2, President Obama signed into law the “American Taxpayer Relief Act.” It will be left to each individual American taxpayer to determine if he is, in fact, relieved by the outcome.

The act makes several (supposedly) permanent changes to the tax code, impacting both federal income and estate taxes. Some of the estate tax changes implemented are:

- A \$5 million estate, gift, and generation-skipping tax exemption to each individual, indexed for inflation. The exemption for 2013 is \$5.25 million (up from \$5.12 million per individual in 2012).

- A 40 percent maximum estate tax rate for all assets transferred at death or during lifetime in excess of the federal exemption.

- “Portability” between U.S. spouses was made permanent. That is, a spouse who dies with less than the \$5 million plus federal exemption may “carry over” the excess to the surviving spouse, subject to some conditions on the surviving spouse’s remarriage. In other words, U.S. spouses have a combined exemption of \$10.50 million in 2013.

It is critical to keep in mind that New York State has “decoupled” from the federal estate tax regime and maintains only a \$1 million estate tax exemption. There is an unlimited marital deduction (i.e., you can leave an unlimited amount of assets to a spouse), but there is no “portability” in the New York State estate tax system.

The new tax laws make aggressive lifetime planning less of a priority for individuals with less than \$5 million and couples with less than \$10 million in assets, but tax planning is still important in light



of the comparatively low New York State exemption. This type of planning, however, is usually accomplished with lifetime transfers of assets at the death of the surviving spouse.

Second, the new tax laws may diminish the need for a credit shelter trust because of the portability exemption. A credit shelter trust allows a spouse to provide for a surviving spouse by placing assets in a trust that, literally, shelters the tax exemption credit and allows those assets to bypass the estate of the surviving spouse, thereby avoiding some estate taxes at the death of the surviving spouse.

Portability diminishes the need for that aspect of the trust, but a credit shelter trust still offers many

benefits like creditor protection, subsequent appreciation, protection from state estate taxes, and assurances that the assets will pass to the children of the first marriage if the surviving spouse remarries.

As with all legal matters, it is critical to consult an attorney to assess how changes in the law impact the facts and circumstances of your individual situation.

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

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Nap time

It's not just for sleeping!

BY TIM PERRINS

I'm a big fan of nap time. Now that I'm a father I'm not the one napping anymore, but I'm okay with that.

In the 11 months since my daughter Hazel was born I've learned to look forward to her nap time, and in the process I've gained a much deeper appreciation for time in general.

You might wonder why I'm so keen on sending my baby off to sleep. Don't I want to spend time with her? Of course I do, but I also have responsibilities to attend to. Have you ever tried getting anything done around the house while looking after a baby who is not napping? Good luck! When she's awake, my little Hazel is busy enough for both of us — I just follow her around the apartment doing damage control while she dismantles anything she can get her hands on. She helps herself to Cheerios, yanks baskets full of her clothes off the shelf, and flings the contents all around the room, rolls dog-food cans across the floor, and even pries open boxes of pasta to give herself a shower of rigatoni.

As if that's not enough, Hazel's obsession with the dogs' water dish has intensified. Since learning to crawl she has turned into a smiling wind-up toy — only this wind-up toy comes equipped with mystical water-divining

technology: if there's a liquid-bearing vessel anywhere on the apartment floor, she will locate it faster than you can say, "Um, where's the baby?"

My wife and I are finally remembering to move the water dish to the kitchen counter whenever Hazel is on the loose. (Sorry dogs, the bar's closed — come back tonight around 9 pm.)

So, just what is it that I do when she is asleep? I eat, of course. A lot. Who knows when I'll have another chance? In the first few months with Hazel, there were always cold, hard, waffles sitting in the toaster oven, or a bowl of soggy cereal, never touched by a spoon, left hastily atop the coffee maker. Newborns, it turns out, come standard with another sensor — one that causes them to scream for a bottle the instant anyone else in the room tries to eat something. Now at 11 months, she doesn't need to be fed every 90 seconds, but she's found other ways of making me go hungry. When I try to make a sandwich she immediately crawls over to me and tugs at my legs until I pick her up. And should I have the gall to continue my food preparation with just my one free hand? Well, then she just kicks that dog-dish full of water off the counter, and it's back to the life of a scullery maid for me.

In my previous life — the one before the baby — if I had an hour to spare I would put my feet up and turn on the television. Now, when the baby allows me a little time by taking an afternoon nap, I find myself moving in six directions at once. I'll start chopping vegetables for dinner, but then I'll realize the dishwasher needs to be emptied, and halfway through that I'll start putting away laundry, all the while tiptoeing around so as not to disturb the sleeping baby. If she wakes up in the midst of that whirlwind, then I'm really in trouble. Why? Because if I can't finish everything I started, my wife is going to come home to the biggest mess ever seen — laundry in a pile

on the couch, the dishwasher open and half-emptied, food all over the counter. "What have you been doing all day?!" she'll ask. "This place is a disaster!"

The end result of all of this is that I'm becoming a more efficient person.

Parenting, however, isn't just about time management, or about chasing a rowdy infant for an hour and frantically folding laundry the next. Throughout this chaotic and demanding time, you are getting to know your baby, even as she's just getting to know the world around her. Every day, right in front of your eyes, she is developing into a real person who, for some crazy reason, wants to share her newfound joy with you. In those moments, you learn just how valuable your time really is. Everything that requires your attention, from cleaning to career, serves a greater purpose than ever before. With that in mind, attending to household chores isn't quite so tedious. You might even find yourself happy to tackle them, knowing that after you're done you can get back to the more important stuff, like helping the baby redecorate the apartment with rigatoni.

On a recent afternoon, Hazel woke up from a nap and started whimpering. I scooped her up in my arms and carried her out to the living to see if she wanted a bottle. Instead, she leaned her head on my shoulder and went right back to sleep. By that point I'd done as much folding and cleaning as I could handle for one afternoon, so I sat down on the couch (slowly, so as not to disturb the little koala bear clinging to my shoulder), put my feet up on the coffee table, and switched on the TV. Sometimes, there's no better use of your time than just letting the baby sleep.

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





Photo by Jim Avondio

(Above) Spend some quality time with your sweetie at Oasis Day Spa. (At left) Light up your love with a trip to the Top of the Rock at night.

Local romance

New York City is the perfect backdrop for Valentine's Day

BY STACEY ZABLE

Call the grandparents or babysitter to take care of your children this Valentine's Day and plan a getaway for just you and your significant other. And since we live in one of the most romantic cities in the world, the alone time can take place close to home.

A key part of this amorous adventure is an overnight stay in the right property. Fresh from a \$10-million renovation, Manhattan's **Hotel Chandler** oozes boutique elegance, with the warmth and coziness that you might find at a larger New England bed and breakfast — but it's located on East 31st Street. With only 125 guest rooms and suites, the Hotel Chandler is able to offer something many New York City properties don't: intimacy. Guests are greeted with genuine smiles and "hellos" from staff, while the hotel's lovely library room and bar make for excellent areas to simply relax. A new high-end organic restaurant, Juni, by Executive Chef Shaun Hergatt, is set to open shortly and is sure to add to the romantic feel of the property.

Guest rooms boast classic bay windows and pampering touches such as Frette Italian linens and Molton Brown bathroom amenities.

The neighborhood location is quiet, despite being only a few blocks from one of the city's most romantic icons, the **Empire State Building**. Purchase

the "Chandler Refresh Package," and you can get all of Hotel Chandler's romantic elements wrapped up together including late check-out, complimentary cocktails, breakfast, and tickets to the Empire State Building. Rates vary by time of year, so call or go online to check your dates.

Hotel Chandler [12 E. 31st St. between Madison and Fifth avenues, (866) 627-7847; hotelchandler.com].

Using Hotel Chandler as your base, the city has many Valentine's Day week-specific events and anytime-fun for two. For another incredible view, the **Top of the Rock Observation Deck** at Rockefeller Center will host its Winter Starlight Music Series from Feb. 2 to 23, with a special Valentine's Day performance. Also on Valentine's Day, you can explore the Metropolitan Museum of Art and end your day with a three-course, prix-fixe meal, including a glass of sparkling wine, for \$60 per person at the museum's Petrie Court Cafe and Wine Bar.

Top of the Rock Observation Deck [30 Rockefeller Plaza between West 50th and West 49th streets, topoftherocknyc.com].

Metropolitan Museum of Art [1000 Fifth Ave. at East 82nd Street, (212) 570-3964].

Many restaurants will be offering special Valentine's Day menus, but why not skip the meal altogether and go straight to the decadent desserts? The **Valentine's Sweetheart's Sugar-tooth Tour** is a two-hour escapade

featuring a minimum of six stops to enjoy delicious sweets. The tour is available on multiple dates in February, including Feb. 14. Cost is \$52.74 per person, plus tour guide gratuity.

Valentine's Sweetheart's Sugar-tooth Tour (Meet at 1471 Broadway at West 42nd Street, sugartoothtours.com).

Pair your chocolate with wine, beer, tastings, and music at "**Cheers for Chocolate: A Party for Chocolate Lovers**" on Feb. 9 from noon to 2:30 pm and 4 to 6:30 pm at Hudson Terrace on West 46th Street between 11th and 12th avenues. The Chocolate Lovers Ticket includes admission with five chocolate tastes and one glass of wine or craft beer for \$45. The event is being sponsored by iAdventure.com, where you can buy tickets online.

Before or after the chocolate, enjoy a "**Side-by-Side Massage**" at Oasis Day Spa on Park Avenue, a short walk from Hotel Chandler. It costs \$240 for 60 minutes of pampering and is the perfect way to start or finish a day focused on the two of you.

Oasis Day Spa (1 Park Ave. between East 32nd and East 33rd Streets; oasis-dayspanyc.com).

Stacey Zable is an award-winning veteran travel writer and family travel expert. Her favorite trips are those that she shares with her husband and two daughters. Send travel questions and comments to Stacey at info@familytravel-trails.com.

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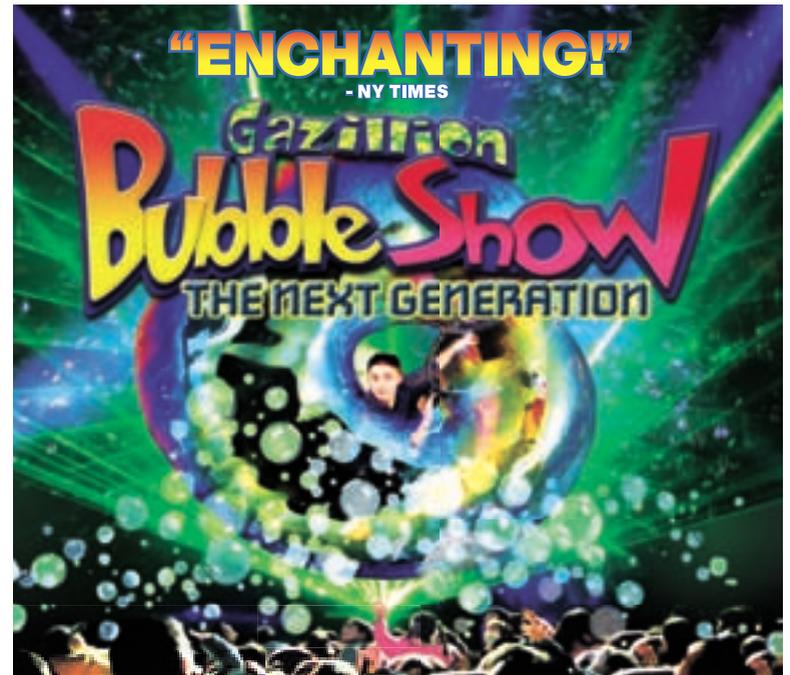


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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Organic food: Worth all that extra cost?

Shopping for organic foods is an individual choice for your growing family.

“For me, personally, my top priority is making sure that my family is eating the recommended five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day, whether it be from organic produce or not,” says Elizabeth Zawila, a mother of two young children.

Organic defined

On food labels, the term “organic” is legally defined as:

- 100 percent organic: The product must contain only organically produced ingredients.
- Organic: The product must contain at least 95 percent of organically produced ingredients.
- Made with organic ingredients: Processed foods may bear this label if they contain at least 70 percent of organic ingredients.

Why choose organic?

There’s increasing concern about the safety of exposure to synthetic pesticide residues, especially for

pregnant women and young children. What has captured parents’ attention is the emerging research linking pesticide exposure to children’s attention, cognition, and behavior, as well as sensory issues.

A clinical report published by the American Academy of Pediatrics in November 2012 came out in favor of buying organic produce and meat, but suggested you can skip the organic milk. The report, which analyzed existing scientific evidence, found there’s little difference in the vitamin and mineral content between organic and conventional foods.

The report does cite lower pesticides in organically grown produce and a likely lower risk of exposure to drug-resistant bacteria.

In one study cited, switching to organic produce for five days reduced the levels of pesticide residue in the urine of children accustomed to eating conventional produce.

“It remains unclear whether such a reduction in exposure is clinically

relevant,” the report states.

Organic milk is popular with parents due to concerns about growth hormone and estrogen often given to conventionally raised cows. The report concluded, “Ingestion of milk from estrogen-treated cows appears to be safe for children,” as there is little difference in the sex-hormone concentrations in organic and conventional milk.

Be strategic

Organics cost 10-to-40 percent more than conventionally grown produce. Save money by choosing store brands or shopping at warehouse clubs. Or you can purchase many organic grains, pastas, flours, dried fruit, and nuts in the bulk sections of stores for less.

“Labeling a food as ‘organic’ can give you a false sense of security. Even organic snack foods can be just as high in sugar, sodium, fat, as their non-organic counterparts,” reminds Zawila, a registered dietitian who is a clinical nutrition specialist at the University of Illinois Medical Center.

The debate continues about which is healthier, but consider this: eating more fresh fruits and vegetables in general is the point.

If buying all organic isn’t a priority or a financial reality for you, consider taking a strategic approach. Insist on organic versions of what retains the most pesticide residue, like apples, grapes, or celery. Skip it for produce with skins or peels you would not consume such as bananas, pineapples, and onions.

Zawila adds, “Having young children brings many expenses, and I know pigeonholing myself into only buying organic produce would limit the amount and variety that I would be able to buy and prepare for my family.”

Dietician Christine Palumbo is based in Naperville, Ill. and is a frequent speaker on health and wellness. Contact her at Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com. Her Facebook page is Christine Palumbo Nutrition and her Twitter handle is @PalumboRD.

Citrus-Yogurt Sundae

Makes six servings with one cup of fruit per serving

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. lowfat vanilla yogurt
- 1 tsp. freshly grated Sunkist® orange peel
- 1 tsp. freshly grated Sunkist® grapefruit peel
- 2 Sunkist® grapefruit, peeled and sectioned
- 2 Sunkist® oranges, peeled and cut into half-cartwheel slices
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 1 cup blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, or seedless grapes
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine the yogurt, orange and grapefruit peels; cover and chill. In a large bowl, combine all the remaining ingredients; cover and chill. To serve, spoon fruit mixture into individual dessert dishes and top with the yogurt.

NUTRITION FACTS: 150 calories, 0.9 g total fat, 0.4 g saturated fat, 4 g protein, 35 g carbohydrates, 2 mg cholesterol, 5 g dietary fiber, 26 mg sodium

Recipe courtesy of Sunkist®



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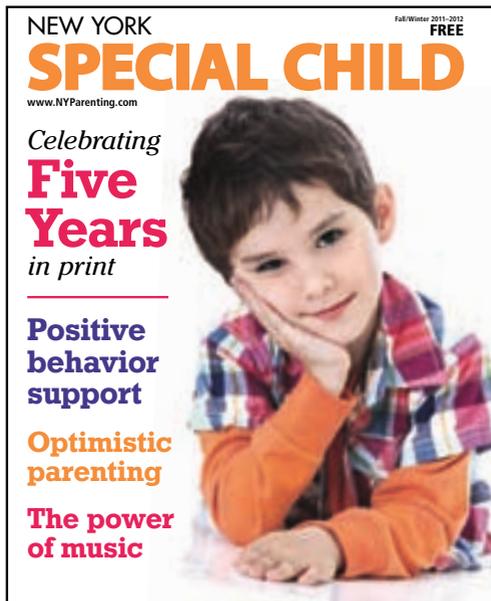
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Calling young

There's lots to explore at the Children's Museum of Art

BY MARIE HUESTON

Charlton Street between Hudson and Greenwich streets is an unassuming Manhattan block, populated by parked cars and passersby. But step inside the Children's Museum of the Arts, and you are transported to a world of bright color and boundless energy. There, you'll find kids of all ages looking at art, learning about art, making their own art, and bouncing gleefully on giant rubber balls.

Clearly, this is no ordinary museum.

It has been just more than a year since the archive moved to its new location at 103 Charlton St. from its previous home on Lafayette Street. Having nearly triple the amount of space has allowed the curatorial and educational staffs — as well as their young visitors — to really spread their wings.

"It was a great opportunity for us to be able to design a new space to meet all our imperatives," says Lucy Ofiesh, the museum's director of Development. "We were able to expand and update our exhibition space, and add classrooms to offer more after school and weekend workshops."

Enter the museum to find a 2,000-square-foot exhibition space, where artwork is just as likely to be suspended from the ceiling as it is hung on the walls. This month, for example, 26 sculptural "Letter Racers" by legendary graffiti artist RAMMELLZEE float overhead, while his found-object figurines fill a display case and his large-scale paintings line the walls.

The imaginative RAMMELLZEE

February events at the Children's Museum of the Arts

Lunar New Year Festival, Feb. 2 and 3 from 10 am to 5 pm. Ring in the Year of the Snake with special art demonstrations, music, and performances, including the classic Chinese Lion Dance.

ARTY Gras, Feb. 16 from 10 am to 5 pm. Enjoy the festive sounds of a New Orleans jazz band and construct fanciful masks, costumes, and noisemakers — then show off the creations in a parade!



Photo by Junenore Mitchell

Galaxseum is on view through Feb. 3, and will be followed on Feb. 7 by Face to Face, an exploration of children's self-portraits from around the world. The main gallery will be closed from Feb. 4 to 6 for installation of the new show, with an opening reception on Thursday, Feb. 7, from 4 to 6 pm, during the museum's pay-as-you-wish hours.

As with all of the museum's exhibitions, interactive stations invite children to try their hand at the media they see around them. After viewing Face to Face, children will be able to take pictures of themselves in the Media Lab to be projected onto the wall, or they can stop by the self-portrait table, where different kinds of mirrors offer different perspectives of facial features: realistic, cubist, and abstract.

"What's special for kids visiting our museum is that it's about more than just looking at art," observes Valerie Kharchenko, manager of Ed-

ucation Programs. "It's about looking and then making their own creations based on what they have seen, and learning that their art is just as important as what's in the exhibits."

Open workshops held during museum hours in the light-filled Fine Art Studio let kids experiment further with a variety of materials. Professional artists are on hand to teach techniques and offer guidance. A Clay Bar offers yet another opportunity for hands-on learning with tactile materials. Children 5 and under will want to stop by the WEE Arts Studio, where tables and chairs are scaled specifically for them, and projects and materials are better suited for tiny hands.

Parents of children with special needs will find a number of inclusive programs at the museum, including Stripes, for children on the autism spectrum. Held three Saturdays a month from 9:30 to 11 am (before the museum's regular — and more

artists!



hectic! — hours), Stripes helps improve motor skills while offering an outlet for self-expression. Inclusive weekend classes, held most Sundays from 1 to 3 pm, invite physically challenged kids and their siblings or friends to make art in a social setting. This month's themes are Stop-Motion Animation: Quiet Winter World on Feb. 10 and Sculpt It: Clay Works on Feb. 17. ARTogether invites families receiving preventive care, or in the foster care system working toward reunification, to bond and play in a safe, fun environment. Appointments for ARTogether are made on an individual basis, so anyone interesting in participating can contact the museum directly.

"Our aim is to provide an immersive experience to young artists of all backgrounds and abilities," Lucy Ofiesh points out.

The museum also has a wide range of classes taught by working artists. WEE Arts attracts the 5 and under set with morning and afternoon classes that frequently incorporate music and storytelling. There is a drop-in option for WEE Arts as well, allowing parents and caregivers greater flexibility. After-school classes for kids 5 to 12 are held from 4 to 5:30 pm on Monday through



Thursday. Illustration, Exploring Media Lab, and Drawing and Sculpture are a sampling of the spring 2013 schedule. The At 5 Program for 13- to 15-year-olds meets on Monday evenings from 5 to 7 pm.

During school breaks and summer vacation, the museum offers "Art Colony" Day Camp, with themes that change from week to week. For the upcoming private school spring break (March 18 to 22) kids 6 to 12 can choose between Claymation and Bookmaking. Animated Shorts



Photo by Hannah Swihney

focusing intently on colorful exhibitions and creative projects. Each hour, the Ball Pond is divided into three 20-minute intervals, grouping children by age for safety. Children 4 and under bounce at the top of the hour, followed by 5 to 7, and finally ages 8 and up enjoy the final 20 minutes.

If all of this isn't enough to convince you to visit the Children's Museum of the Arts, consider the reviews given by my own children during their first trip to the museum last month.

My 9-year-old son, Ian, summed it up in a word: "Awesome!" His 5-year-old sister, Sage, while happily smudging pastels in the style of Mark Rothko, proclaimed, "Ian, isn't this so fun?"

The Children's Museum of the Arts [103 Charlton St. between Greenwich and Hudson streets in Manhattan, (212) 274-0986; cmay.org]. Admission \$11; free members, infants, and ages 65 and older. Pay-as-you-wish Thursday, from 4 to 6 pm.

Marie Hueston is a freelance writer who lives in Brooklyn.

and Printmaking will be taught during public and private school spring break (March 25 to 29). Week-long summer sessions are held from June 10 to Aug. 30, both at the museum, for children 6 to 13, and on Governor's Island, for kids 8 to 15. Ceramics, Fashion Design, Fairy-Tale Films, Landscape Painting, and Origami are just a few of the subjects to be covered.

And what about those giant rubber balls? You'll find them in the museum's popular "Ball Pond," a great place for kids to burn off energy after

Calendar

FEBRUARY



Courtesy Nassau County Museum of Art

Spend Sunday with the family

Sundays are much more fun now, thanks to Family Sundays at the Nassau County Museum of Art!

Families enjoy a docent-led walk through of the museum, where the works of Copley, Peale, Whistler and O'Keeffe are on exhibit in the Artists in America wing. Also, view works by talented artist Martin Kline in the Contemporary Gallery.

The piece de resistance? The whole family can create a master-

piece to take home, with supervised art activity that's fun for all ages.

The tour begins at 1 pm, followed by arts and crafts beginning at 1:30 pm. Family Sundays are free with museum admission, parking is \$2 and free for members. Reservations are not required.

Nassau County Museum of Art, [1 Museum Dr. off of Northern Boulevard, Route 25 A in Roslyn Harbor, (516) 484-9338; www.nassaumuseum.org].

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

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

SAT, JAN. 26

"Bee Movie": Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

The voices of Jerry Seinfeld, Renée Zellweger and Matthew Broderick join together to make this little movie about a rebellious bee into a big hit.

SUN, JAN. 27

Winter Wetland Ecology: Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St. (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; 10-11:30 am; \$35 members, \$40 non-members.

Children will investigate the wetland environment, discovering what lies beneath the snow and ice of the zoo's ponds. Encounters with our animals that call the wetlands their home is included.

"Bee Movie": Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

The voices of Jerry Seinfeld, Renée Zellweger and Matthew Broderick join together to make this little movie about a rebellious bee into a big hit.

Mista Cookie Jar: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 1 and 3 pm; \$4 with museum admission (\$3 for members; \$10 theater only).

Kindie rocker Mista Cookie Jar brings his urban-based rock and roll in this great hip hop concert. For children 3 and older.

MON, JAN. 28

CHADD support group: East Meadow Jewish Center, 1400 Prospect Ave. (516) 932-0903; www.chadd.net; 7:30-8:30 pm; Free.

Children and adults with attention deficit disorder meet to discuss topical issues.

WED, JAN. 30

Internet safety workshop: The



Courtesy of The State Ballet Theatre of Russia

Oh, Romeo, Romeo

Shakespeare's timeless tragedy of star-crossed lovers *Romeo and Juliet*, performed to Prokofiev's ballet, comes to the Tilles Center for the Performing Arts on Feb. 16. The company of 51 classically trained dancers from the State Ballet Theatre of Russia is sure to delight audiences of all ages with this most romantic ballet

in celebration of Valentine's Day.

"*Romeo and Juliet*" on Feb. 16 at 8 pm. Tickets range from \$40 to \$75.

Tilles Center for the Performing Arts at C.W. Post campus of Long Island University [Route 25 in Brookville, (800) 745-3000; www.ticketmaster.com; www.tillescenter.org].

Portledge School, 355 Duck Pond Rd.; (516) 750-3244; portledge.org; 7 pm; Free.

Parents learn from guest speaker Marje Monroe how to protect their children from internet-safety issues.

FRI, FEB. 1

Wii Fridays: Hollis Public Library, 202-05 Hillside Ave. (718) 465-7355; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens meets with friends and play electronic games.

Hearts and crafts: Whitestone

Public Library, 151-10 14th Rd.; (718) 767-8010; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens make 3-D Valentine cards, finger puppet hearts and more.

Happy Hour: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens play board games, listen to music, and meet with friends.

SAT, FEB. 2

Acid Rain: Alley Pond Environmental

Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd. (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am.

Learn about acids and bases and their effect on us in our daily lives.

Compost drop off: Sunnyside Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave. (718) 784-3033; 10:30 am; Free.

Bring your frozen food scraps, fruit and vegetables, coffee grounds, nut shells, and tea bags to add to the weekly compost initiative. No meat, dairy, bones, or oily foods.

Exploring the weather: Forest Park Visitor Center, Woodhaven Boulevard and Myrtle Avenue; (718) 846-2731; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am; Free.

Urban rangers lead a discussion on the difference between climate and weather, and then how it affects the city and the parks.

Moving Image workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Noon-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 7 and older accompanied by an adult (ages 12 and older on their own) visit the museum and learn about moving images.

Masked Marvels and Wonder-tales: Goldstein Theater at Queens College, 64th Avenue at Kissena Boulevard; (718) 997-3075; 3 pm; \$20 (\$12 for children under 12).

Michael Cooper, visual artist and virtuoso mime, will perform his repertoire of madcap sublime images.

SUN, FEB. 3

Batter up: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 per family, plus museum admission.

Children 2 years and older explore the chemistry of kitchens. Registration required.

Groundhog Day: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd. (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am; \$18 per child.

Pre-register. Ages 5 to 9. Listen to stories about the groundhog. Only 10 participants.

Nature workshop: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Road at Shore Parks; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

From falcons and salamanders to deer and seals, everything leaves a foot print. Come with the rangers and search for the animal tracks left by the denizens of the fort.

WED, FEB. 6

New Year's celebration: Lost

Continued on page 50

Calendar

Continued from page 49

Battalion Hall Recreation Center, 93-29 Queens Blvd. at 62nd Drive; (718) 896-8511; www.nycgovparks.org; 9:30 am-2:30 pm; Free.

Wear a hat and help ring in the Year of the Snake with refreshments, folk dancing, and more.

Elmer the Elephant: Barnes & Noble, 176-60 Union Tpke. (718) 380-7077; 11 am.

Storytime featuring Elmer, the colorful elephant who teaches us that it's okay to be different.

Magic workshop: Briarwood Public Library, 85-12 Main St. at Village Road; (718) 658-1680; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn the tricks of the trade from magician Jeremy Pasternak. Pre-registration required.

Recycled art: Pomonok Public Library, 158-21 Jewel Ave. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 591-4343; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Teens use empty soda cans to create a winter work of art. Supplies provided.

Chinese New Year: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke. at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Celebrate the Year of the Snake. Refreshments served, pre-registration required.

THURS, FEB. 7

Practice SAT: Briarwood Public Library, 85-12 Main St. at Village Road; (800) 273-8439; www.princetonreview.com/events; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn strategies on how to take the college entrance exams. Registration required.

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

Teens learn how to work those sticks with musician Tony Genovese.

Girls workshop: Rosedale Public Library, 144-20 243rd St. at 145th Avenue; (718) 723-4440; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:45 pm; Free.

Teen girls 11 to 21 years old talk about major distractions that face girls today and how to prevent them from interfering with life goals.

Jewelry workshop: Rosedale Public Library, 144-20 243rd St. at 145th Avenue; (718) 723-4440; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Tweens and teens create wearable art with jeweler Yvette Powell. All materials included. Pre-registration required.

Drama Posse: Hillcrest Public Library, 187-05 Union Tpke. at 188th Street; (718) 454-2786; www.queenslibrary.org.

org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens 11 to 14 years old try their hand at acting. Perform in a live show. Weekly meetings are required.

FRI, FEB. 8

Wii Fridays: 3:30 pm. Hollis Public Library. See Friday, Feb. 1.

Hearts and crafts: Whitestone Public Library, 151-10 14th Rd. (718) 767-8010; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens make 3-D Valentine cards, finger puppet hearts, and more.

Happy Hour: 4 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Friday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 9

Compost drop off: 10:30 am. Sunnyside Library. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

Story time: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Road at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am; Free.

Urban rangers read nature stories to children and then make a craft.

Explorer workshop: Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; (718) 592-9700; www.queensmuseum.org; 11 am-noon; Free with museum admission.

For families affected by autism, explore the museum and register for afternoons of art, crafts and making connections.

Rufus & Mary: King Manor Museum, 150th Street and Jamaica Avenue; (718) 206-0545 X 13; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Celebrate the King Family at King Manor. Make a valentine hair clip or a valentine for someone dear. Children are welcome.

Moving Image workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Noon-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 7 and older accompanied by an adult (ages 12 and older on their own) visit the museum and learn about moving images.

Story songs: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 1 and 1:45 pm; \$3 with museum admission.

Debbie and Friends perform in this family concert including country, rock and reggae. For children 3 years and older.

SUN, FEB. 10

Fireworks: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org.

org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 per family plus museum admission.

Families celebrate the Lunar New Year with colorful splatter paint fireworks. Pre-registration required.

Lunar New Year Dance: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; Free.

A sampler of spectacular dance routines from China, Korea, Taiwan, India, Egypt, Columbia, and America. Presented by the New York Institute of Culture and Arts.

MON, FEB. 11

Zumba time: Poppenhusen Public Library, 121-23 14th Ave. (718) 359-1102; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Teens join with Audrey Bright for an exhilarating workout.

THURS, FEB. 14

Drama Posse: 4:30 pm. Hillcrest Public Library. See Thursday, Feb. 7.

Teen Advisory Board: Cambria Heights Public Library, 218-13 Linden Blvd. between 218th and 219th streets; (718) 528-3535; www.queenslibrary.org; 5:30 pm; Free.

Young adults are asked to give their opinions.

FRI, FEB. 15

"The African Drum": York College Performing Arts Center, 94-20 Guy Brewer Blvd. near Archer Avenue; (212) 724-0677; www.shadowboxtheatre.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$15.

Presented by the Shadowbox Theater. Puppets bring the wit, wisdom, and humor of African folk tales to life. Learn how the turtle got its shell and the adventures of Kijana and her animal friends.

Wii Fridays: 3:30 pm. Hollis Public Library. See Friday, Feb. 1.

Happy Hour: 4 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Friday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 16

Compost drop off: 10:30 am. Sunnyside Library. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

Safety workshop: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

See and sample products that aid in safety.

Moving Image workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Noon-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 7 and older accompanied by an adult (ages 12 and older on their own) visit the museum and learn about moving images.

Classical music workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$4-\$6 children (Members free).

Children learn all about the composers, then listen to a performance by Frederick Chiu.

Shout, Juba and Jive: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 1-1:45 pm; \$3 with museum admission.

David Pleasant performs a concert for children 3 years and older.

The Game-Making Game: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; 3:45 pm; \$5 for members.

Children examine all games from Tag and Tic Tac Toe to Pac Man and Super Mario.

"Romeo & Juliet": The Tilles Center for Performing Arts, LIU Post, Rt. 25 A; (516) 299-3100; www.tillescenter.org; 8 pm; \$40-\$75.

The Prokofiev's version of the classic will be performed by members of the State Ballet Theatre of Russia.

SUN, FEB. 17

Paper making: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 per family.

Transform recycled paper into handmade paper. Pre-registration recommended.

Shout, Juba and Jive: 1-1:45 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 16.

Family tree: Queens Historical Society, 143-35 37th Ave. (718) 939-0647 X 17; 2:30-4:30 pm; \$5 (\$8 non-members).

Join with Wilhelmina Rhodes Kelly and search your family tree. Could there be patriot or two on your branch? Kelly helps you trace your ancestry by going through the basics of research and tips on how to use on-line resources. Perfect for any age.

The Game-Making Game: 2:45 and 3:45 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Feb. 16.

MON, FEB. 18

Engineering Day: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-4 pm; Free

Find your family roots

Is there a president or two in your family tree? Find out when the Queens Historical Society hosts genealogist Wilhelmena Rhodes Kelly on Feb. 17.

She will provide tips and helpful hints on how you can search your ancestry in this genealogy workshop. From going through the basic research sources to how to effectively use online information,

you too can trace back to who knows where. This event is suitable for all ages.

Genealogy workshop on Feb. 17 from 2:30 to 4:30 pm. Admission is \$5 for members and \$8 for non-members.

Queens Historical Society [143-35 37th Ave. at Parsons Boulevard in Flushing, (718) 939-0647 X 17; www.queenshistoricalsociety.org].



Courtesy of the Queens Historical Society

with museum admission.

Day-long event full of interactive activities geared for children. Build, test, and construct with table-top activities that explore engineering.

Meet Bill Evans: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 2:30 and 3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children meet the meteorologist for WABCTV and author of "It's Raining Fish and Spiders," a book for middle schoolers.

The Game-Making Game: 2:45 and 3:45 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Feb. 16.

TUES, FEB. 19

The Game-Making Game: 2:45 and 3:45 pm. Museum of the Moving Image. See Saturday, Feb. 16.

WED, FEB. 20

Art workshop: Nassau county Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr. at Northern Blvd. Rt. 25A; (516) 484-9337; www.nassaumuseum.org; 11 am-2 pm; \$8 materials fee plus museum admission.

Enliven the school vacation week with an art drop off. Children take tours and then create their own art inspired craft.

Mid-Winter Zoo Camp: Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St. (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; 10-3 pm; \$125 members, \$150 non-members.

Children will discover the natural world around them in a two-day camp that includes a behind the scenes tour, arts and crafts, and exciting animal presentations.

THURS, FEB. 21

Art workshop: 11 am-2 pm. Nassau county Museum of Art. See Wednesday, Feb. 20.

Drama Posse: 4:30 pm. Hillcrest Public Library. See Thursday, Feb. 7.

Mid-Winter Zoo Camp: 10-3 pm. Queens Zoo. See Wednesday, Feb. 20.

FRI, FEB. 22

Art workshop: 11 am-2 pm. Nassau county Museum of Art. See Wednesday, Feb. 20.

Wii Fridays: 3:30 pm. Hollis Public Library. See Friday, Feb. 1.

Happy Hour: 4 pm. Flushing Public Library. See Friday, Feb. 1.

SAT, FEB. 23

Compost drop off: 10:30 am. Sunnyside Library. See Saturday, Feb. 2.

Moving Image workshop: Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Ave. (718) 777-6888; www.movingimage.us; Noon-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 7 and older accompanied by an adult (ages 12 and older on their own) visit the museum and learn about moving images.

"Sleeping Beauty Dreams": Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.lcm.org; 1 and 3 pm; \$5 with museum admission (\$10 theater only).

Mexico's Marionetas de la Esquina Family Puppet Theatre performs the classic fairytale. For children 3 years old and up.

SUN, FEB. 24

Block printing: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 per family plus museum admission.

Children carve designs into foam to make their own block then use ink and paint to make a project.

Print making: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$10 (\$8 members and children).

Hands-on workshop to learn how to make Chinese prints.

"Sleeping Beauty Dreams": 1 and 3 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 23.

MON, FEB. 25

Craft club: Broadway Library, 40-20 Broadway; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 12:30 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens meet and learn how to make fun projects. Materials supplied.

TUES, FEB. 26

"Sleeping Beauty Dreams": 10 am and noon. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 23.

Explorer workshop: 11 am-noon. Queens Museum of Art. See Saturday, Feb. 9.

WED, FEB. 27

"Sleeping Beauty Dreams": 10:30 am and 12:30 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 23.

Online test prep: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Teens get helpful hints on strategies to pass city wide tests.

THURS, FEB. 28

"Sleeping Beauty Dreams": 10:30 am and 12:30 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Feb. 23.

Girls workshop: 3:45 pm. Rosedale Public Library. See Thursday, Feb. 7.

SAT, MARCH 2

Explorer workshop: 11 am-noon. Queens Museum of Art. See Saturday, Feb. 9.

LONG-RUNNING

Winged Tapestries Moths at Large: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24 (\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

This exhibition features 34 striking and dramatic images of moths, displaying the arresting beauty and surprising diversity of moths from Ottawa-based photographer Jim des Rivières. Runs through September 2013.

The Butterfly Conservatory:

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street; (212) 769-5200; awang@amnh.org; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; \$24 (\$14 children, \$18 seniors and students).

The annual exhibition, "Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter" returns and celebrates its 15th year.

Laptop time: Hollis Public Library, 202-05 Hillside Ave.; (718) 465-7355; www.queenslibrary.org; Mondays - Thursdays, 3 pm; Now - Tues, April 30; Free.

Teens learn how to use a laptop.

The Last Reef: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 11 am-2 pm; \$6 (\$5 students and seniors) plus museum admission.

Fly across tropical reefs, brush through a cloud of a million jellyfish, and visit an alien world where the tiniest creatures live in this 3D theater presentation. Recommended for children 6 years and older.

Messy afternoons: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.lcm.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 3:30 - 5 pm; Sat, Feb. 2 - Sun, Feb. 24; Free with museum admission.

Children 18 months to 4 years old will be up their elbows in goop, shaving cream and play-dog.

Family Sundays: Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr. at Northern Blvd. Rt. 25A; (516) 484-9337; www.nassaumuseum.org; Sunday, Feb. 3, 1:30 pm; Sunday, Feb. 10, 1:30 pm; Sunday, Feb. 17, 1:30 pm; Sunday, Feb. 24, 1:30 pm; Sunday, March 10, 2:30 pm; Sunday, March 17, 1:30 pm; Sunday, March 24, 1:30 pm; Sunday, March 31, 1:30 pm; Sunday, April 7, 1:30 pm; Sunday, April 14, 1:30 pm; Sunday, April 21, 1:30 pm; Sunday, April 28, 1:30 pm; Sunday, May 5, 1:30 pm; Sunday, May 12, 1:30 pm; Sunday, May 19, 1:30 pm; Sunday, May 26, 1:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 seniors; \$4 students and children; Free for members).

Take a docent led tour and enjoy supervised art activities.

Puppy love

Pets and the health of your baby

BY KIKI BOCHI

New parents often wonder whether the arrival of a baby should prompt the exit of pets from the house, partly because of fears that living in close proximity with cats and dogs will increase the risk their child will become allergic.

There's no need to kick out Fido or Fluffy. A study published in the journal *Clinical & Experimental Allergy* revealed that keeping a dog or cat in the house, especially in a baby's first year, may actually reduce the risk of developing allergies.

As part of the study, researchers from the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit followed a group of children from birth until adulthood. Periodic contact was made with the families to collect information about exposure

to cats and dogs. At age 18, 565 study participants supplied blood samples to the researchers, who measured antibodies to dog and cat allergens.

The results? Being exposed to a specific animal in the first year of life appeared protective, rather than risky.

According to the study, young men whose families kept an indoor dog during the subject's first year of life had about half the risk of becoming sensitized to dogs, compared to those whose families did not keep a dog. And both men and women were about half as likely to be sensitized to cats if they had lived with a cat in the first year of life.

KiKiBochi, an award-winning journalist, reads hundreds of reports monthly to bring readers the latest insights on family health and child development.



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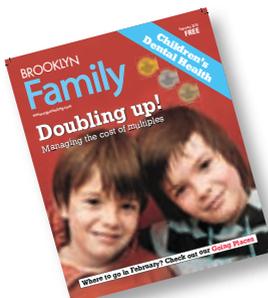
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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Teens eating healthy

It was the fall of 1978 when my 14-year-old friend and I decided to join America's newfound fitness craze. We devised a plan during sixth period lunch: we would bike clear across town without stopping. Here was the problem: fast-food restaurants galore along the way. My memory tells me we stopped at McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, and a hot dog joint before landing at the Caldor parking lot. After 12 miles, a large order of fries, two Bavarian cream donuts, and an over-stuffed chili dog, we gave each other a high five to celebrate our accomplishment. I get indigestion just thinking about it!

For decades, teens have been devouring fast food and salty snacks as part of their daily diets. Let's be honest: how many 14-year-olds do you know who opt for carrot sticks over a handful of salty fries? Is it hopeless, or can parents suggest healthy options that their teens will actually enjoy?



General guidelines

Dr. Howard M. Shapiro, a Manhattan-based weight loss specialist and best-selling author of the "Picture Perfect Weight Loss" series, urges teens to avoid certain foods.

"Limit foods high in cholesterol, saturated fat, and trans-fat, such as fatty meats, egg yolks, and foods prepared with hydrogenated oils and shortenings."

Shapiro suggests that teens include some "good fat" in their diets: olives, avocado, nuts, seeds, and olive or canola oil. Soy foods help to reduce the risk of heart disease.

"Include a couple of servings a day of any of the following: tofu, soy milk, or soy yogurt," he says. Also, soy protein powder can be added to shakes or smoothies — an added health benefit for these popular teen drinks. Teens might also try veggie or turkey burgers and veggie sausages.

Healthy eating habits include healthy eating schedules. Lauren Graf, a nutritionist for the Department of Pediatric Nephrology and the Pediatric Heart Healthy Program at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, advises, "Teenagers should eat multiple, small meals throughout the day and a good breakfast, because it will help them do better on exams."

Graf also warns about eating heavy meals too close to bedtime, a problem for many teens who are involved in after-school activities. Eating heavy meals late at night can lead to disrupted sleep and an inability to "work off" the calories.

Encourage the good stuff

Graf instructs parents to limit the amount of processed foods on hand.

"Stock up on frozen fruits. These won't go bad, and teens can use them as toppings on frozen yogurt. Parents should model healthy eating. Believe it or not, this will eventually click with your teenagers."

Quick tips:

- Prepare healthy casseroles on weekends and freeze for later in the week.
- Pack a snack to avoid fast-food stops.

- Opt for fresh over packaged and canned.

Quick snacks for active teens

The food has to look and taste good, or your teen won't eat it. Since many teens are constantly on the run, healthy snacks play an important role, and easy preparation is a must.

Healthy snack alternatives suggested by Dr. Shapiro:

- Soy chips with guacamole or hummus — instead of potato chips and sour cream dip.
- Whole-grain crackers and peanut butter — instead of a bagel with cream cheese.
- Roasted pumpkin seeds — instead of a bag of milk chocolate pretzels.

Graf says teens will be pleased to hear, "Dark chocolate is actually good for the heart. It provides antioxidants and doesn't have the levels of sugar and fat found in milk or white chocolate."

Graf also suggests slathering hummus or mustard on sandwiches in lieu of mayonnaise.

Tips and tales

"I only keep healthy snacks at home. My daughter learned to like celery and peanut butter. She'll also sprinkle cinnamon on apple slices."

Susan Cerulli, school nurse at Haviland Middle School, Hyde Park, NY

"Heart-healthy breakfast sandwiches: egg whites, mushrooms, and low-fat cheese on wheat bread. Use olive oil cooking spray for frying."

Maria Hoskins, Hyde Park, NY

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips for making the most of that first job at a fast-food restaurant or grocery store.

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, columnist and author of, "Lions and Tigers and Teens: Expert advice and support for the conscientious parent just like you" (Unlimited Publishing LLC, 2012), available at Amazon.com. For details, visit www.myrnahaskell.com.



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