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Letter from the publisher

Braces, vision, and ‘newfangled stuff’

The world of orthodontics has come a long way since I was a kid. I was one of those lucky children whose teeth came in straight and I didn't need any correcting, but that wasn't the case for most of my friends. As I recall, the braces of my day were horribly unattractive and painful to the wearer. They were also painful to others. I can recall my first boyfriend having them and my first kiss ended with me having a cut lip. It was embarrassing to both of us and to me it was an alarming intro to new physical intimacy. Everyone who got them dreaded it no matter how much they wanted to have nice teeth and a good smile. They were also expensive.



mature types.” So many things are optional that didn't used to be. It's fantastic!

This is *National Orthodontics Month* and a great time to discover if your child needs to have corrections on his bite or teeth, or perhaps both. They do amazing things with little to no “big deal” for the child. There are so many improvements in the world of medicine and science. It's not only gadgets that indicate advancement.

Like everything else, there has been incredible improvement in the styles, fit and cost of corrective devices. Not only kids wear them these days. I know many adults who opt to wear them, and I don't mean just people in their 20s, but rather, fairly

Visit any dental office and you will see an array of contemporary techniques and equipment that make it all easy and far less costly than it used to be.

For me, having to wear glasses was the bane of my existence. I had to wear them early in school and I hated them and having something in front of my eyes, and they felt heavy on my face. I was absolutely certain they made me look like a librarian and that boys wouldn't like me. It happened for me at the tender age of 10 and I was also having the additional humiliation of the boy behind me snapping my (new) bra strap and pulling my ponytail repeatedly throughout the school day.

It was also peculiarly scary to realize that my eyes were not working to capacity and this reality made me feel somehow handicapped. Now

there are simple surgical procedures to cure myopia and astigmatisms. My grown adult nephew recently had the surgery and no longer needs corrective lenses. He's been urging me to go too and have it done, and I'm at last giving it some consideration.

October is a great month. Beautiful weather without being too cold and, of course, Halloween. Keep your children happy and safe when you're out trick or treating and most of all, have fun.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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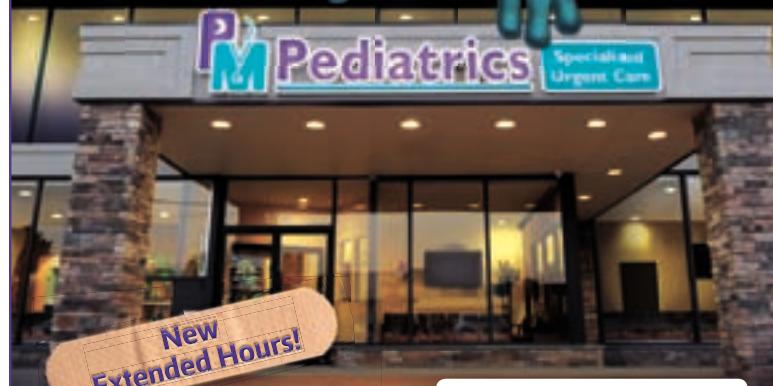
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Beware the PUMPKIN

How to avoid a common Halloween horror



BY KIKI BOCHI

With Halloween just around the corner, parents will hear a lot of safety warnings this month — from advice about selecting a costume that won't cause a child to trip, to advisories about equipping every child with a flashlight when walking in the dark. And of course, there are the cautions about carefully checking every piece of candy your child collects. All good advice, although you might be surprised to learn that the most common cause of injury at this time

of year has nothing to do with trick-or-treating.

You may not think of a pumpkin as posing a big risk to your family, but statistics show your child is more likely to get hurt carving jack-o'-lanterns than engaging in other spooky fun. Injuries to the hand and fingers are the most common accidents on Halloween, according to a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Pumpkins can be both slippery and tough, a recipe for accidents. Cuts can occur when a knife sticks in the rind, then abruptly dislodges as you tug on it. Or you can cut yourself if the handle gets slippery with pumpkin pulp, causing your hand to slide down the blade as you push the knife into the pumpkin. The American Society for Surgery of the Hand suggests the following safety tips:

- Leave the carving to adults. Your kids may beg and plead for a turn, but don't put a knife or other sharp tool in the hands of children, no matter how responsible or mature you think they are. The *Pediatrics* study found that most Halloween accidents happen to kids ages 10 to 14, but older teens also frequently get hurt. A slip can happen in a fraction of a second, and there won't be anything you can do to stop it, even if you are nearby.

Instead, encourage kids to draw a pattern on the pumpkin that an adult cut, and have kids be responsible for cleaning out the inside pulp and seeds.

When the adults do start cutting, they should always cut away from themselves and cut in small, controlled strokes.

- Choose your spot. Carve in a clean, dry, well-lit area. Wash and thoroughly dry everything you will use to carve the pumpkin: carving tools, knife, cutting surface, and even your hands. Any moisture can cause slippage that can lead to injuries. Take your time, and make sure your children stay back. The kids will want to lean in to watch, but you don't want to hit them by accident if your hand slips.

- Pick utensils carefully. A larger and sharper knife is not necessarily better, because it can become wedged in the thicker part of the pumpkin, requiring force to remove it. Instead, pumpkin carving kits — readily found online and at party supply stores — require less force to pierce the pumpkins. They are also easier to control than knives, reducing the risk of injury. However, accidents may still occur, so families should exercise caution with any carving tool.

- Consider a different approach. Instead of carving a pumpkin, consider decorating one. Kids can express their creativity with paint, markers, and other art supplies or items that can be glued or attached to a pumpkin. Some families skip the large pumpkin and instead, allow each child to decorate his or her own mini-pumpkin. You can even recycle parts of old Halloween costumes such as wigs and hats. Or, you may want to consider using a fake, foam pumpkin, available at many craft stores. These are easier to cut and decorate, and you'll be able to enjoy them for years to come.



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Friend or foe?

When you disapprove of your child's BFF

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

When kids are little, we bring them to play groups and baby classes, where we pick friends for them. Most of the time, parents and toddlers get along, and if there is a personality conflict that the parents do not want to work out, the friendship ends.

All that changes when children start preschool and select their own pals. Unfortunately, we are not always happy with their choices.

Prejudging others based on instinct

As parents, we think we know what is best for our children, and we have preferences for the friends and parents we invite on play dates. Sometimes, it is hard to put aside those preferences and not rely on instinct to prejudge others.

"Linda," a mom of a first and a fourth grader at PS 209 in Manhattan, says, "We have more experience, and we know the values we want to embrace."

Still, experts agree that avoiding play dates based on instinct alone is not good, reminding us that a child who parents avoid may possess positive attributes that are visible to our children, but not apparent to us.

Rosalind Wiseman, author of "Queen Bees and Wannabes," and the recently released "Masterminds and Wingmen," cautions against prejudging others.

"Instinct can justify and rationalize judgments based on race, socio-economic differences, and religion," she warns, by steering children away from others who "aren't like [their] family."

Wiseman also frowns on snap decisions based upon disapproval of different parenting styles.

"It's not fair to punish the child for the mother's behavior," she tells me, pointing out that a mother's parenting style may also differ from a father's.

Brooklyn-based school social worker Lori Hiller agrees. She notes that many of us mothers are ourselves very different from our mothers, and we shouldn't reject our children's pals based on our perception of their parents.

A parent's preference

According to Hiller, parents and caregivers can and should take more than their child's preference into consideration.

"Your child will 'read the mood' if you are unhappy at the other person's house," she says.

"Carol," the mother of a PS 6 second grader in Manhattan agrees.

"My son will know if I don't like his playmate." She also says she lets him come to the realization that a friendship is not a good fit, asking him, "How do you think the play date went?" — when she knows her son shares her frustration.

If a parent doesn't particularly like a friend, but does not want to nix the play date entirely, there are options. Hiller suggests an "outside" play date, so the children can play without "putting the parent in a 'tight spot.'" If that's not possible, Carol suggests moms with babysitters send the babysitter on the play date.

In addition, Wiseman notes that parents need to explain their reasons for not wanting a play date to a child younger than 8, but it is different with older children on "drop off" play dates. Even then, just blurting out your dis-taste is not the best approach.

Family values and friendship standards

Chances are, some of a playmate's poor behavior will bother your child, too. Linda recommends asking your child, "Does this feel good to you?" or "Are you comfortable with this behavior?" when faced with a friend behaving badly. If your child still feels strongly about keeping up the friendship, Carol then suggests setting boundaries for behavior that you will find acceptable, and talking about it.

Often, children will tell parents about their conflicts with friends, which will provide parents with another opportunity "to discuss their friendship standards with them — what they like and don't like in a friend's behavior — and what they want to do if their friend is violating those standards," Wiseman says.

Author of "Odd Girl Out," Rachel Simmons advises parents: "Be sure values are clearly crafted in the family." She says it is our duty as par-

ents to recognize "ethical violations," share our values, and model them for our children to help them understand why some behaviors are wrong. By doing this, we can help them decide for themselves what traits they look for in friends. Mothers whose daughters witness them gossiping regularly or totally obsessing over brand names will have a hard time condemning those behaviors in others.

Hiller says that by a certain age, describing how you don't like a certain friend of your child's because of your values will cause the child to defend that friend. Although you can explain your own thinking and wait for children to reach the same decision themselves, they may not, and it is important for them "to learn to make their own mistakes," Hiller says.

Unacceptable behavior and forgiveness

Some playmates are little terrors. Carol says she won't deny her kid a play date with such a friend, but limits those play dates to the other kid's house, where that child can make messes or smear tomato sauce on the wall, if that's his unchecked predisposition.

There are many other reasons a parent might dislike a potential friend. A friend might hyper-focus on brand-name toys or labels. Wiseman emphasizes the importance of "not com[ing] across to your child as disapproving of her friends," nor just simply telling your child that she can't have the play date because her friend is spoiled.

Instead, she counsels parents to initiate a dialogue and make it a teachable moment, asking the child such things as why she thinks the other kid talks about possessions so much, if she thinks the friend's goal is to impress others, and why she thinks her friend finds it so important to own certain things.

Parents sometimes witness young friends' behavior that they would never tolerate in adult counterparts. And yet, it seems as if the children often forgive their friends anyway.

"Kids are more tolerant of each other and more willing to call each other out, articulating their feelings and then forgiving," says Simmons.

She says that parents tend to not



own up as readily.

Some kids lie, spread cruel gossip or even "borrow" an item without permission.

Wiseman says the subject of the lie is significant. Some lies are merely rooted in common insecurities about "keeping up" materially, and although a parent should reinforce the evils of rampant consumerism and lying, generally, she can help her child understand there are times all of us feel insecure about fitting in.

Other playmates make promises they do not keep. In such situations, Wiseman recommends telling your child she can opt to say nothing, but should remember that the friend is unreliable. Or, she can confront the friend.

"Identify what happened and learn how to articulate [their disappointment with the broken promise] in a straightforward and ethical way," she advises.

Wiseman adds, forgiveness can be important and even with true, heartfelt apologies, the hurt one need not reciprocate with immediate forgiveness. She tells parents to teach their children to understand a true apology, which should, "Be said with a

sincere tone of voice, recogni[tion] of the thing that was hurtful, and offer to make amends."

Hiller says that a child's willingness to forgive readily "is a lesson, too. We don't want to teach our children not to forgive — but parents can still 'plant a seed.'" She says you can tell your child that you don't usually forgive someone as easily, and hope she follows suit, but cautions that such an approach may backfire if your child is trying to separate from you.

The road to independence

Hiller notes that children "start gravitating towards others as early as infancy," when they show a preference for one relative over another. She says that as children begin to select their own playmates, parents should try to allow them to play with others who make them comfortable, saying, "supporting our children's independence means supporting the choices they make, while keeping them safe — and that is true with their [choice of] friends."

We care about who our children pick as friends, because we feel it is

We care about who our children pick as friends, because we feel it is our job to guide them, and we want them to make "the right choices," subjective as that is.

ceptance, and it will take courage.

Once children reach their teen years, some parents feel as if all their youngster's friends might be engaging in unsafe or illegal behavior. If that is the case, Wiseman says your teen should ideally have one or more friends not interested in pursuing these activities. Concerned parents should tell host parents what their teen said they experienced at the host's house, despite the discomfort. It is that discomfort that "stops us from being parents," Wiseman says. She also stresses that children are never ostracized just for having parents who speak out; it is even likely that other kids will feel sorry for them.

In addition, if you are certain drugs or alcohol are in use in one home, you can forbid your teen from going there. It may not be easy to enforce, but it is worth the effort.

Simmons warns concerned parents to not assume their child is "the hapless victim of their peers." It would be wise, she advises, to reach out to teachers or coaches, to get other adults' impressions of your child, and try to piece together the whole picture.

As kids get older, it is usually better to refrain from repeated criticism of their friends. If you reinforced your value system for years, they already know precisely how you feel. You do not need to constantly remind your child of your dislike for a particular buddy, who she may even designate as "the one you hate." No doubt, your preferences are already in her head. In such a case, constant reiteration of your distaste can only serve to drive a wedge between you and your teen.

As our children age, we will fade more and more into the background when it comes to their social choices. When they are younger, we have more influence over their decisions, but as they proceed through adolescence we can still be there to parent and advise. The hope is that by setting boundaries when they are young and instilling proper values, they will ultimately seek out kind, supportive, and caring people to call friends.

Dress 'em up

Halloween costume ideas for the craft challenged

BY SUE LEBRETON

Sure, this Halloween you can go to the costume shop and buy expensive, perfect replicas of your child's favorite character, but making costumes at home is part of the fun. If you are the least crafty person on the planet — next to me — there are some fun ideas that are easy to make, meaning your children can do most of the work.

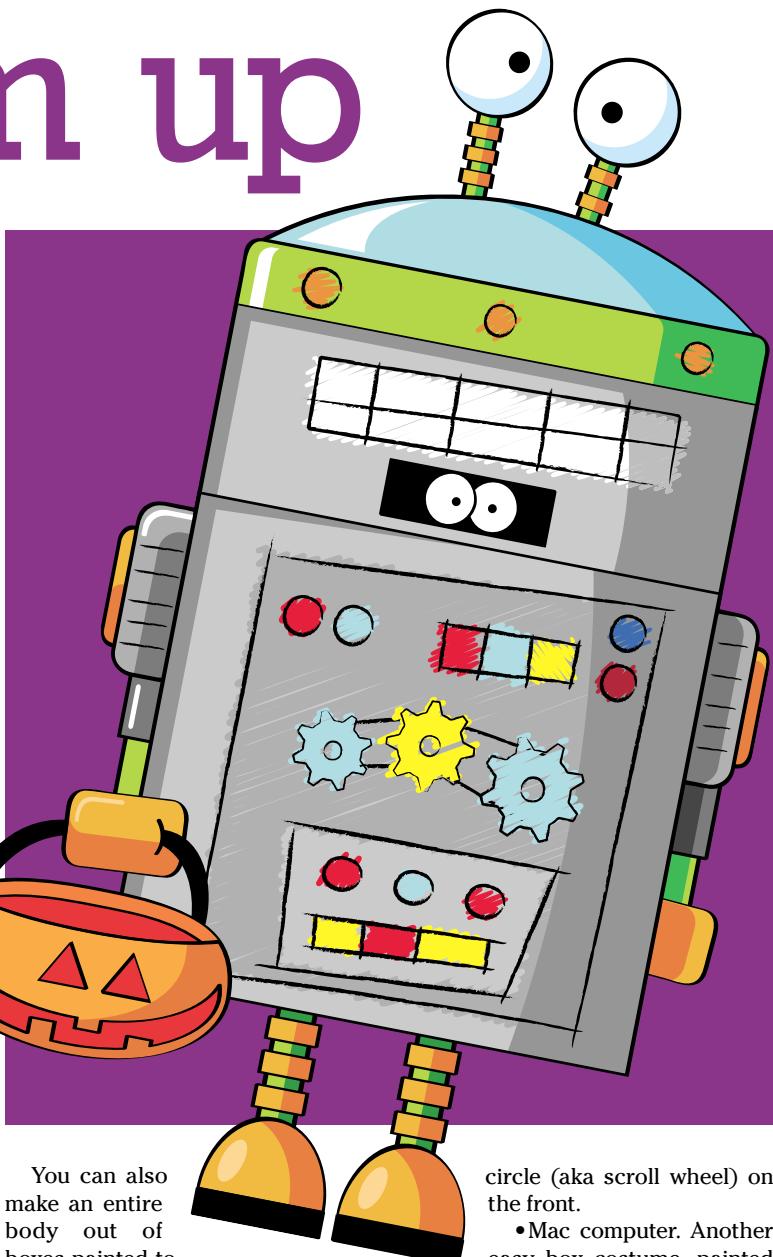
The trick is starting early, so the paint is dry before they head out hunting for treats. Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing. Thanks to the internet, you can find images for almost anything you can imagine.

For the video game lover, pick a favorite character. I usually try to steer my son toward a highly recognized character, otherwise he is disappointed when house after house asks, "Who are you?" But older kids may enjoy being an obscure character that only their friends understand.

• Mario and Luigi. These costumes require: overalls, a T-shirt and matching hat (red for Mario, green for Luigi), white gloves, and a bushy moustache. You can easily make and tape onto the hats the M or L logo. If your child no longer wears overalls, you can usually locate an inexpensive pair at the local thrift shop.

• Wii remote. You can use a box and paint it white, then draw on the logo and the buttons. Use a narrow box. For a smaller child, you could use a large, white T-shirt and draw the buttons and logo with fabric paint.

• Minecraft. This very popular game is based on building a world from blocks, so it lends itself to easy costumes. The costume could simply be the block head made from a box and an outfit that looks vaguely like the character you are emulating. Yes, you can purchase a Creeper or a Steve head, but all you need is a square box. Cut out eyes and a mouth and draw the face with paint or markers. My 11-year-old quickly made himself a Steve character head with supplies in the garage when I said "no" to paying good money for a cardboard box.



You can also make an entire body out of boxes painted to match the character, just be sure your child can walk and climb stairs in the getup. You can buy the pickaxe needed to mine in the game, but again, some foam board or cardboard and markers will do just fine.

Even if you are not a Mac family, the "i" devices make for fun, easy costumes.

• iPod. You need a slim, long box. Paint it black, or cover with black tape. On the front screen area, your child can draw on his favorite apps, or even print the icons and stick them on. Arms, legs, and head stick out from the iPod body, or your child can be inside the box, so that he is in the screen area acting as if he is in a You Tube video. If you want a coordinating costume, maybe you can go as the older, original iPod that your child may not recognize — you remember, the ones with the

circle (aka scroll wheel) on the front.

• Mac computer. Another easy box costume, painted silver or covered with duct tape. The simple apple icon is easy to print on the front.

• iPad and iPad mini. These two would make a cute matching ensemble for an older and younger child. You use the same idea as the iPod with the apps, just use boxes shaped more like the iPad. You can get clever and design your own apps and see if anyone notices.

Test out costumes at least a week beforehand, so you can make any adjustments. Remember to make costumes that are easy to walk in, see in, and be seen. A flashlight or reflective tape is always a nice, safe final touch.

Sue LeBreton is a writer and mother of a tween and a teen. She loves watching them create interesting Halloween costumes and tries to limit her role to cheering on their efforts.

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BREATHE easy

Schooling yourself about asthma
may help lower your child's absences

BY SUE LEBRETON

Asthma is the most common reason that kids miss school. According to the American Asthma Foundation, asthmatic children miss approximately 13 million

school days every year. In addition to missing valuable instructional time, children and teens can feel self-conscious about their absence and condition.

If your child is one of the increasing number of children affected by this chronic, inflammatory lung disease, increasing your knowledge about asthma can improve your child's condition and possibly reduce school absences. Here are some tips about triggers and treatments.

Use a spacer

A spacer is a large, plastic container that helps your child receive the intended dosage of her medication. The puffer is inserted into one end, and the other end is a mouthpiece. Smaller children may have a face mask on the mouth end to help the device stay sealed so no medicine escapes.

Is your child using her spacer at school? Registered Respiratory Therapist Carolyn McCoy says older children sometimes stop using the spacer, because it is bulky to carry and draws attention to them and their condition. If you notice your child's asthma flaring up during the school year, talk about how she is using her inhaled medication. If your child finds her current device too visible, speak to your doctor about options that are less obvious but equally effective.



Resources for help with asthma

Here are some resources for families of children with asthma.

Proper technique

- www.on.lung.ca/page.aspx?pid=413
- www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/taking-control-of-asthma/understand-your-medication.html

Resources

- American Asthma Foundation: www.americanasthma-foundation.org
- American Lung Association: www.lung.org
- Asthma Society of Canada: www.asthma.ca
- Canadian Lung Association: www.lung.ca

Perfect your technique

Only nine percent of patients use their inhalers effectively. Using spacers and puffers is not as simple as taking a breath. There are several styles and each requires a different technique. Discuss technique with a pharmacist, respiratory therapist, or doctor. You can also visit a reputable website to watch demonstrations. Ensure your child's spacer matches her inhaler, as that is another critical ingredient to proper usage. Review her technique regularly.

Go smoke free

Tobacco smoke can trigger an asthma attack. If you smoke and your child has asthma, consider a smoking cessation program to help you butt out. Not only is second-hand smoke an irritant, but third-hand smoke — that residue that clings to a smoker's body, clothing, and furniture — can also trigger an attack. Look for places your child may be exposed to third-hand smoke: a caregiver's home, a teacher's clothing, or hanging out with friends who smoke. Eliminate all smoke exposure.

Make sense of scents

Parents may also notice increased asthma issues during the school year because children are spending more time indoors where they may encounter allergens such as dust mites and irritants like scented products. According to McCoy, the issue with scents is significant in junior and high school, when students are conscious about smelling nice to increase their attractiveness to the opposite sex.

"It's hard for kids to accept that their Axe body wash or the perfume that they want to wear is affecting the health of the student next to them. They get the risk of peanuts, but not scents," she says.

If you notice your teen's asthma worsening, ensure she is wearing non-scented products and inquire about scents at school. If this is an issue, speak to the school about a scent-awareness program.

Battle dust mites

Many children's asthma is worse at night. This phenomenon is not fully understood, but McCoy suggests that limiting dust mites in your child's bedroom will help, because they are another common asthma trigger. Dust the bedroom regularly, vacuum carpets frequently, or, consider removing carpets. Dust mite covers for pillows and mattresses are expensive but effective. If your child is young and has a bed filled with stuffed animals, wash them weekly to kill the mites and negotiate reducing the number of bed buddies to decrease your workload.

Consider inhaled steroids

If your child needs to use her rescue medication twice a week (other than for exercise) this is a clue that she may need to add an inhaled steroid to her asthma management plan. Controlling asthma in childhood is essential for children to participate fully in school and activities, as well as for her future health. McCoy says many parents she helps are afraid of steroids, but they do help to control the inflamed airways.

Asthma that is poorly controlled during childhood causes the airways to become smaller, a phenomenon called "airway remodeling," and it's important to avoid this.

Discuss all symptoms and treatment options with your doctor. Educating yourself about asthma will improve your child's health and may help you rest a little easier.

Sue LeBreton's son has asthma, and she realizes they both need to brush up on their spacer technique.



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Bouncin' at Barclays

Talented youngsters shine in Brooklyn Nets Kids Dance Team

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

Hundreds of youngsters flooded Long Island University's Brooklyn campus on Aug. 14 for the chance to try out for the Brooklyn Nets Kids Dance Team — with 17 kids ages 6 to 13 making the cut.

The young dance team, presented by Cookie's, will be showcased in front of thousands of fans at Brooklyn Nets' Saturday and Sunday home games at the borough's Barclays Center, starting Oct. 12, and represent the basketball team at events and media appearances throughout the New York metropolitan area.

"With over 500 dancers auditioning for the 2013-14 Brooklyn Nets Kids, this was the biggest turnout the Nets have ever had for an entertainment team audition," said Kimberlee Garris, director of Entertainment Marketing for the Nets. "The level of talent was extraordinary, and in the end, 17 dancers were invited to join the team. The Brooklyn Nets Kids will be led by head coach and celebrity choreographer Tanisha Scott, who will bring her high energy

and unique hip-hop choreography to the team once again, ensuring Brooklyn fans will be brought to their feet at Barclays Center."

Scott, a professional dancer and choreographer for 13 years, has worked with stars like Beyoncé, Jay-Z, Alicia Keys, Britney Spears, and many others. She currently works with Rihanna and Sean Paul, in addition to new talent, including Becky G and Tristan Wilds.

She jumped at the chance to work with the Nets.

"Adar Wellington [dance team coach and choreographer], a friend and long-time dance colleague, asked me if I knew of any choreographer that would be interested in coaching the Brooklyn Nets Kids," said Scott, who lives in the borough. "I instantly said 'Yes! I would love to do it!' I adore kids and to have the opportunity to coach the first Kids Dance Team for the Brooklyn Nets is an amazing experience."

At least two years of dance training was the main audition requirement. For dancers looking to gain an edge, two audition workshops were held before open auditions, and the kids got to learn a Brooklyn Nets Kids routine straight from the court. Members of the older, all-girl Brooklynettes dance team were on-site to offer audition tips.

The day of auditions, there were four people on the judging panel: Petra Pope, the senior vice president who oversees event marketing and community relations, in addition to Garris, Wellington and Scott.

Once all the kids were checked in at the audition, Garris did a quick introduction of what the process would entail, and then they got started.

"First thing up was the Brooklyn-



Elijah, 9, of the Bronx, was selected to be a member of the Brooklyn Nets Kids Dance Team.

nettes, with a warm-up and stretch. Then the kids were taught a quick combination across the floor that would take them to the semi-final round. This was a test of basic skill and allowed us to see each child individually in a short time," Scott explained.

There were 120 kids in the semi-final round, during which Scott taught a routine.

"Once they learned this routine and had time to review it, we continued with the audition process and selected 50 kids as finalists. We then had the finalists show us any special skills that they had, i.e. tumbling, break dancing, etc. From there, we chose 17 spectacular kids."

Scott said she starts by finding a song that the kids would enjoy dancing to and the fans would enjoy, as well. Then she makes up the rou-





tine and teaches it to the kids at rehearsal.

"It usually takes two rehearsals to learn a full routine; then a few more to perfect it and make it into a performance on the court," she said. "They perform during the weekend home games, but sometimes for special games or events they perform on weekdays, as well. The kids alternate with the Brooklynettes during game time-outs."

Every year the look of the costumes changes. But it's always a hip-hop look that complements each dancer's own style, said Scott, adding, they look for kids that are great dancers, either with lots of experience or with raw talent. They must be able to pick up choreography quickly, and have a lot of charisma, personality, and individual style.

"We look for the stars of tomorrow that you just can't take your eyes off of, and those can brighten up a room with just their smile!" she said.

One of those kids is 10-year-old Frankie from Staten Island, who just appeared on "America's Got Talent" with Staten Island's Struck Boyz.

His mom, Felice, said she was thrilled and proud that her son is part of the team.



"There is no greater feeling than watching him do what he loves most," said Felice. "I can't wait for the first game to watch him perform center court at a professional basketball game at Barclays Center."

The young dancers have to juggle school and homework, with rehearsals in Brooklyn once a week after school for two-and-a-half hours, as they learn their moves, get ready to perform throughout the season, as well as at holiday events, and make special appearances.

"What I love most about working with the Brooklyn Nets Kids Dance Team is watching them on performance day, because the crowd loves them," said Scott, who also likes to watch them have fun dancing. "But more importantly, not only do I get to choreograph fun routines for them to do, I get to be their coach. I get to help inspire and mentor them to be the best that they can be on and off the court."

This year's team consists of many kids from New York City, including:

(Above) Frankie, center, of Staten Island, just appeared on "America's Got Talent" with Staten Island's Struck Boyz, and is now part of the Brooklyn Nets Kids Dance Team. (Left) Choreographer Tanisha Scott teaching moves to the kids.

Antonio and Vako from Brooklyn; Alexa, Frankie and Serena from Staten Island; J'Nai from Queens; Elijah and Keleah from the Bronx; Mario and Shirley from Long Island; Ellisyn from New Windsor, N.Y.; and Tymell from Wyandanch, N.Y. The other kids hail from New Jersey.

Alex, 9, from Manalapan, N.J., is a featured dancer in Justin Timberlake's latest video, "Take Back the Night."

The multi-purpose Barclays Center arena hosts the Brooklyn Nets, one of the hottest teams in the National Basketball League, and has been the concert venue for Jay-Z, Paul McCartney, and The Who. Most recently, MTV held its Video Music Awards at the arena. Beginning in 2015, the Barclays Center will also be the home of the New York Islanders of the National Hockey League.

For more, visit brooklynnets.com or barclayscenter.com.

Get involved!

Top tips for parents on being partners in their child's education this fall

Research has shown that families who are actively involved in their children's education can help boost learning and positive child development. As the new school year approaches, Learning Leaders, New York City's most experienced non-profit dedicated to engaging families and communities to promote student success, calls on parents to get involved where they can and reveals its top tips on how to do so.

Build relationships. Introduce yourself to your children's new teachers if you have not already done so and let them know you are available if ever they need to discuss an issue with you. Also arrange to meet the school's parent coordinator so you know who to contact about future events or changes in school policy.

Attend orientations. Attend any back to school events or orientations, particularly if you are new to the city or even the country. These will help you to learn about school policies and what is expected of your children — academically and behavior wise — as well as enable

you to meet the staff.

Go back to the classroom. Ask about family information workshops, which can help parents navigate the school system and applications progress, support literacy and math skills, and understand child development. Some schools offer these already — free of charge and often in more than one language — or may be able to introduce them to meet demand. Alternatively, the city's Department of Education website, Schools.nyc.gov/ParentsFamilies, is a user-friendly source of information for parents and families.

Volunteer. Find out whether the school has a volunteer tutor program you can join. Teachers and students will be grateful to have you, and even if you are not working with your child's class, you will learn valuable techniques to support his learning at home. This is also one of the best ways to become a part of the school community.

Stay connected. Try to attend Parent Teacher Association meetings throughout the year to keep up with

what is going on in your children's school. Let your parent coordinator know you are interested to receive updates and help out with that bake sale or trip to the zoo if needed.

Keep a calendar. Set up a family calendar at home and make a note of all school events, meetings, and workshops, so you don't miss anything. Free apps for smartphones and tablets, such as Cozi.com, can help.

Support learning at home. This does not end once the homework is finished. Think of ways to stimulate your young learners in everyday life, whether by holding a storytelling competition or having a baking day to learn about measures and fractions. Many online resources are available to help parents; two good places to start are Schoolfamily.com and PTA.org/programs.

Get help with the language. Parents who don't speak English as a first language can still learn about their children's schools. Use websites that provide materials about the United States school system and the Common Core Standards in several major languages; two are the K12.wa.us/CISL Family Engagement page and the Families section of the Common Core Library page at Schools.nyc.gov/Academics. City schools can ask to have materials translated, so find out if this is possible and search online for bilingual learning activities, such as Colorincolorado.org for Spanish speakers.

Jane Heaphy, executive director of Learning Leaders, says, "Our children are far more likely to succeed if families actively partner with schools to support their education. There are many ways for parents to get more involved and the new school year is the perfect opportunity for them to do so in whichever ways they are able, whether it be attending a couple of meetings a year, or volunteering once a week."

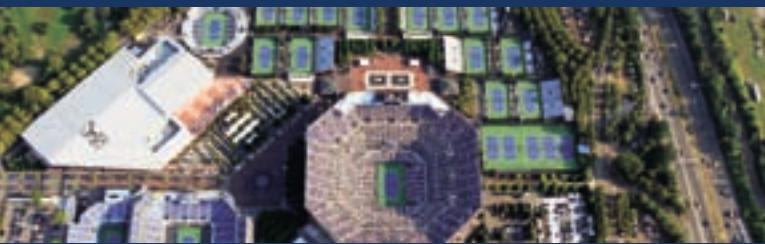
Learning Leaders is New York City's largest and most experienced non-profit organization dedicated to engaging families and communities to support student success. It offers family education workshops and resources in English and Spanish and recruits and trains volunteers to work in city Public Schools. For more, visit www.learningleaders.org or join Learning Leaders on Twitter or Facebook.



Photo by August Young

A Learning Leaders parent volunteer helps a student with reading in class.

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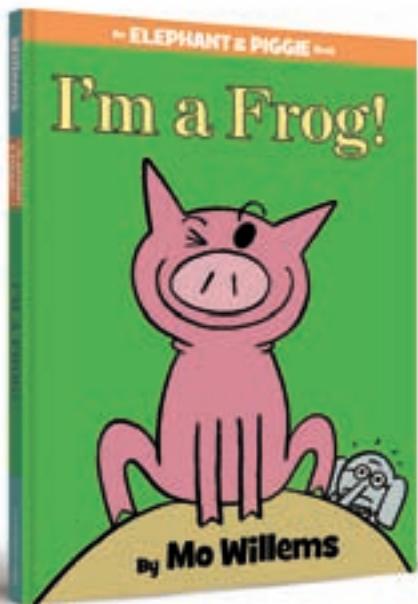
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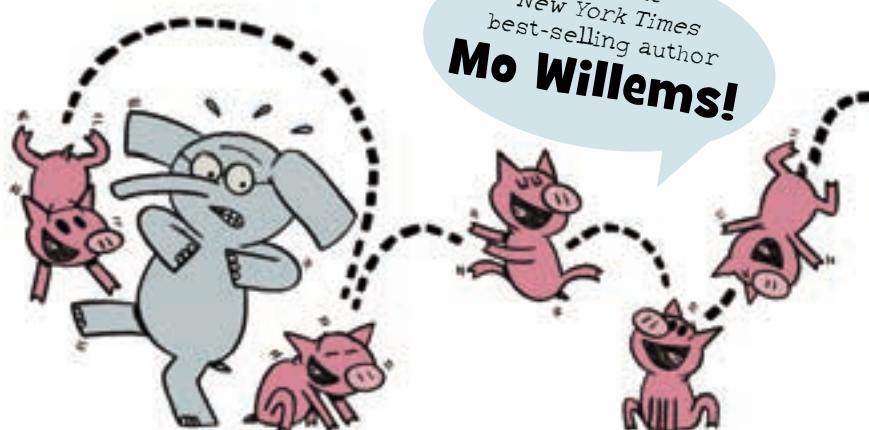
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Real partnership

How to build a fruitful relationship with your child's teacher

BY JENNY CHEN

If you're like most parents, your relationship with your students' teachers is tenuous at best. The teacher sends home papers and you glance at them — maybe. You exchange an e-mail or two with her when there's a field trip or your child forgot his homework. But developing a stronger relationship with your child's teacher will benefit the educator and your child in the long run. We talked to several teachers and parents about dos and don'ts when nurturing this important relationship.

DON'T be a helicopter parent

Your child may be the center of your universe, but that doesn't mean that you need to know the details of every little thing he is doing during school. Don't micromanage what goes on in the classroom, but rather, trust that the teacher knows what she is doing, says New York City parent and teacher Naomi Daniels.

Teachers need space and time to do what they do best — teach — and they don't have time to send you a progress report every day. But do let your teacher know that you are there to support her whenever necessary.

"An open channel of communication is good for everyone," Daniels says.

DO make teachers aware of your child's specific needs

At the same time, parents should reach out to teachers and communicate any special needs that their student might have.

"Teachers can't read minds," said veteran teacher and author of "Why Do Only White People Get Abducted by Aliens?: Teaching Lessons from the Bronx," Ilana Garon.

In a class of 20 students or more, parents need to let teachers know if there is something they should be aware of. Simply sending a short e-mail or requesting a parent-teacher meeting is enough, and teachers really do appreciate the extra information you can give them.

Yuri Min, a teacher and tutor in Southington, Conn., said that especially during the beginning of the year, she appreciates when parents share little tidbits about their children — their likes and dislikes and issues they may be having at home — to allow her to connect with her students better. These tidbits can be shared in passing during pickup or drop-off, or during informal conversation while you are volunteering at the school.

DO start off conversations positively

Social studies teacher Donna Paoletti at James Hubert Blake High School in Silver Spring, Md., picked up this trick in her 15-plus years of teaching: she begins each e-mail with a positive thing about the student. Regardless of what the e-mail is about, this puts the entire conversation in a positive frame of mind.

Parents can do this as well — start off each e-mail conversation with something that you appreciate about the teacher before addressing any concerns you might have.

DON'T expect immediate attention

Teachers are busy people and understandably aren't checking their e-mail all the time. If you send an e-mail, expect that educators might take a day or two to get back to you. Most of the time, they are in the classroom, making lesson plans, or meeting with other parents.

"They're not always sitting at their desk," said Daniels.

DO your homework before parent-teacher conferences

Come to parent-teacher conferences with specific questions about your child's progress and needs, says Garon. Know what your child has been doing, what he is struggling with, and what he enjoys. This will help your parent-teacher conferences be more productive and effective. Also, if you have to miss a conference, let the teacher know beforehand.

DON'T make excuses for your child

Understand that your child earned the grade he brought home, it wasn't just passed down as a judgment from the teacher, says Garon. There may be contributing factors as to why your child is not doing well in school, but work to hear the teacher's point of view before making assumptions. Automatically blaming the teacher is not a productive stance for the child.

"Just as parents are the authority figures at home, teachers are the authority figures at school, and parents should support that as much as possible. Teachers are the standard bearers for children while they are at school," Garon says.

Daniels agrees. She points out that neither children nor teachers are perfect, and parents should understand that their children might not be telling the whole story. Make sure to hear the teacher out first before making any judgements.

DO continue the education at home

Learning shouldn't stop when the child comes home, says Garon.

"Parents need to do their part to foster good educational goals and outcomes," she said.

Ways you can do this? Check your child's folders often, ask open-ended questions about school, and generally be supportive.

Jenny Chen is a freelance writer specializing in education and parenting. She has written for Washington Parent and Mothering Magazine.



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Admission *accomplished*

Top-five tips for success with finding the right city high school

BY MAURICE FRUMKIN

Mention the New York City public high-school admissions process, and you will hear everything from “confusing” and “overwhelming,” to “crazy” or “even worse than college admissions.” Why is this?

About 10 years ago, the largest citywide school choice process in the nation was created, where middle schoolers can choose from high-school programs throughout New York City. Students are then “matched” to one program on the basis of a number of factors, including school matching eligibility and priorities (different for each school), admissions methods for each program, ranks assigned to students by certain schools on the basis of previous year’s academic record, and sometimes other factors, and, of course, seat availability.

Add 700 programs to choose from, and no wonder most families are confused. If you are anything like me, you didn’t have to think about this when you were growing up—you just went to your local high school like everyone else.

So what can you do to give yourself the best chance of success? Let me preface this by saying that “success” is a relative term and may be defined differently depending on who you’re speaking with. In the context of admissions, I define success as this: you have given yourself every possible chance of your child being matched to a high school where he can flourish and be well-prepared for life after high school—whatever that may bring.

So here are my top five success tips, based on working with hundreds of families and reviewing thousands of high-school applications. Review these with your child, and



you will be on your way to success:

- Take action and educate yourself. This is called a choice process for a reason — you have to make choices when applying to high school. But without taking action and arming yourself with the right information, you will likely make poor choices and end up with a result you are

not happy with. You will never be an expert, but learning as much as you can, asking questions, attending information sessions and open houses, and finding other trusted sources with information that is reliable will go a long way. Your child’s school guidance counselor is a good start. Wherever you get help, do it

I define success as this: You have given yourself every possible chance of your child being matched to a high school where he can flourish and be well-prepared for life after high school — whatever that may bring.

now, so you won't have regrets later.

- Don't do it alone. As with many things in life, success is highly dependent on working with others and getting help. It's never too late, and seldom too early, to gather a team of "advisors." The process is much too complex, so don't think you can be an expert and do it alone. You can't. Everyone knows someone who can help, whether that's your school counselor, a teacher, a neighbor who has been through the process, friends, family, the Department of Education, websites like InsideSchools.org, or other professionals who know the process well.

And don't forget, your child should be a team captain! After all, it's your child's high-school career, not yours. Don't select schools you would have liked to attend or you think will look good to your friends. Remember, empowered students will be much happier once high-school match time comes around. And if your child is happy, you will be, too.

- Don't look back or compare yourself to others. Believe it or not, there are always other students and families who have done less than you have or are starting later than you are. So don't beat yourself up, there is no point. You are simply wasting time and energy and hurting yourself and your child's chances by harping on the past and what others are doing. What's more, not everything you hear will be accurate, so check with your counselor or another expert for the best information possible.

- Stretch yourself and keep all options open. Don't eliminate choices until you have done your research and decided for yourself. Consider as many choices as possible, and don't let someone else decide for you. In this game, any comfortable choices not made may be unavailable later on. Better to choose a less-than-ideal choice now while you can, rather than miss a golden opportunity and be left out in the cold later on.

- It's about fit. I can't tell you how many students I've spoken with who will tell you that School X is the greatest thing since sliced bread, whereas other students wouldn't apply there in a million years. Neither is wrong. Even if your friend or neighbor is telling you, "You simply HAVE to apply to Trendy High School Academy," take ownership of your choices and make the final decisions with your child. They are yours to make, and what's a great fit for one student may be a terrible fit for another. There are plenty of students who are accepted to Trendy HS and hate it, don't fit in, or finish in the bottom of their class when they could have attended Sleeper High School, loved it, and finished at the top of their class.

Bonus tip: Use a system to organize. Whether you have one day left in the admissions process or one year, none of the tips above will do you much good if you are not organized. School visits, open houses, interviews, auditions, fairs, it never seems to end.

For some of you, getting organized may mean using file folders or sticky notes. For others, it may mean using an electronic calendar, or a system provided by your counselor or another expert. Use whatever system helps you organize your materials, your time, your team, and your priorities. Just make sure you and your child are comfortable with the system, since, if neither of you use it, it will do you no good.

Consider these tips and use the time you have wisely. The last thing you want to do is look back and wonder, "What if?" High school is too important.

Maurice Frumkin is president of New York City Admissions Solutions, a Brooklyn-based firm that provides expert advice to families navigating the complex waters of city high-school admissions. Follow him on Facebook at NYCAdmissionsSolutions or on Twitter @NYCHSAmissions, and sign up for his free weekly video tips at www.nycadmissionssolutions.com.



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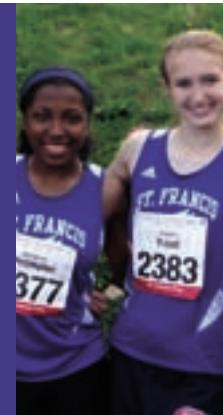
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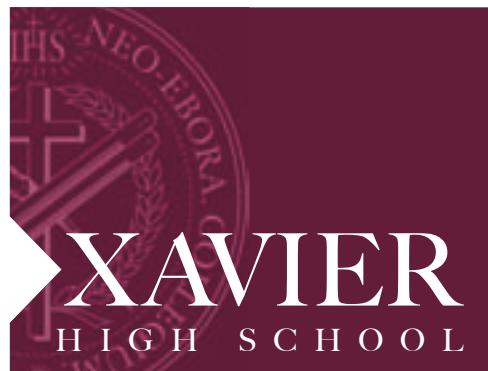
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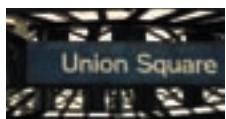
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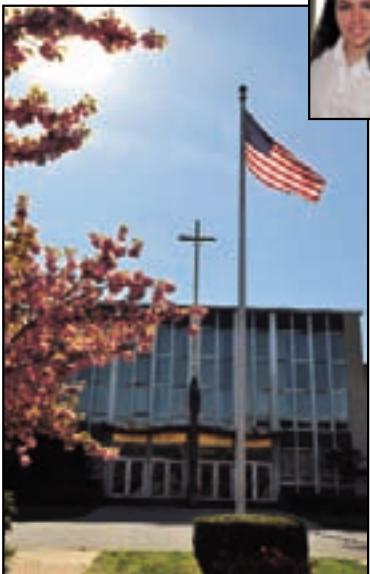


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Continued on page 24

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High School DIRECTORY

Continued from page 22

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High School DIRECTORY

St. John's Preparatory School was founded by the Vincentian Fathers in Brooklyn in 1870. It is currently located in the residential community of Astoria, Queens. The school building features large and well equipped science laboratories, state-of-the-art computer labs, wireless capability, smart boards, a well stocked library, a band room, art room, a magnificent auditorium, beautiful chapel, spacious guidance center, a large gymnasium, a fully-equipped weight room, an outdoor track, and its own retreat center.

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Contact: Jonathan Cambras, Director of Admissions

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Really bad hits

How teen fighting deals a blow to IQ

BY KIKI BOCHI

From the time they are little, we try to teach our children to use their words instead of their fists. As they get older, we hope we have instilled in them the self-worth and self-discipline that allow them to walk away from a fight. New research shows that there's good reason for these efforts, and not just to keep our children out of trouble.

A study that followed more than 20,000 middle and high school students revealed that teen girls who suffer just one fight-related injury experience an IQ loss that's equal to missing a year of school, and teen boys have a similar loss of IQ after two fight-related injuries.

The findings, published by researchers at Florida State University, are significant, because decreases in IQ are associated with lower educational achievement, behavioral problems, and even longevity.

ity, the researchers said.

"It's no surprise that being severely physically injured results in negative repercussions, but the extent to which such injuries affect intelligence was quite surprising," Joseph A. Schwartz, a doctoral student who conducted the study at the school's College of Criminology and Criminal Justice, said in a statement.

The study is among the first to look at the long-term effects of fighting during adolescence, a critical period of neurological development. Their findings were outlined in the Journal of Adolescent Health.

About four percent of high school students are injured as a result of a physical fight each year, the researchers said. Not surprisingly, boys experienced a higher number of injuries from fighting than girls; however, the consequences for girls were more severe, a fact the researchers attributed to physiological differences that give males an

increased ability to withstand physical trauma.

The researchers found that each fighting-related injury resulted in an average loss of 1.62 IQ points for boys, while girls lost an average of 3.02 IQ points. Previous studies have indicated that missing a single year of school is associated with a loss of 2 to 4 IQ points. The impact on IQ may be even greater when considering only head injuries, the researchers said. The data they studied took into account all fighting-related physical injuries.

The findings highlight the importance of developing policies aimed at limiting injuries during adolescence, whether through fighting, bullying, or contact sports, Schwartz said.

"We tend to focus on factors that may result in increases in intelligence over time," said Schwartz. "But examining the factors that result in decreases may be just as important."

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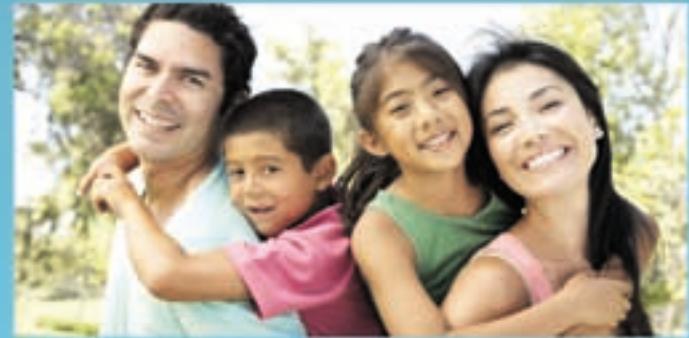
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Dr. Shpuntoff is an active member of the AAO and HSA, as well as other organizations - With over 20 years experience, Dr. Shpuntoff is certified by the American Association of Orthodontists and belongs to the Holistic Dental Society. As a member of the HSA, Dr. Shpuntoff believes that dental care relates to the entire person. He strives to inform and educate every patient so that they will be able to make informed decisions while feeling accepted, understood and supported emotionally.

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COUPON

Hours of fun family activities with Pumpkins

BY CAROL J. ALEXANDER

It's that time of year again — when pumpkins reign. If you want to get past the usual jack-o'-lantern carving and tackle some other pumpkin activities, you've come to the right place. Just read on for art, cooking, and learning activities your kids will enjoy.

If you want your pumpkins to last longer than carved jack-o'-lanterns, draw the faces on them with permanent markers.

Use mini pumpkins to create a centerpiece or other decorations for the season. Carve out the mini pumpkins and fill the center with a votive candle or tea light. Line the walkway or porch rail with them for Halloween or another evening occasion.

Having guests? Carve out a very large pumpkin and use it as a punch bowl.

Process your own pumpkin meat for pies, cakes, or muffins. This is enough fun the kids will want to help you. Here are the steps:

- Bake the pumpkin.
- When you can insert a fork through the skin, remove from the oven and let cool.
- When cool enough to handle, cut the pumpkin, remove all seeds, and peel.
- Save the seeds for other activities, and compost the peelings.
- Cut the meat into chunks and place in a thick-bottomed pot with a little water.
- Simmer until all water is cooked out and the volume is about half. Stir frequently.
- Freeze in quantities for your favorite recipes.

Make your favorite pumpkin recipes together as a family and package them to give as gifts.

You can always enjoy a game of pumpkin bowling. Cut the stem off a medium-sized pumpkin. Carve out three holes to resemble a bowling



ball. Set up rolls of paper towels or empty pop bottles as pins and get rolling.

Look up the formula for volume of an ellipsoid. Take the proper measurements of your pumpkin to estimate how much liquid your pumpkin will hold. Then carve it out and see if you got it right.

Hide miniature pumpkins around your yard and have the kids hunt for them like an Easter egg hunt.

Remember the seeds you saved? Wash, dry, and roast them. Sprinkle on your favorite popcorn seasoning and enjoy.

If you don't enjoy eating pumpkin seeds, put them in a quart jar. Have each family member guess how many seeds are in the jar and record everyone's predictions.

Count the seeds. Count by twos and place them in piles of 10s on the table. Arrange the piles in straight rows of 10 piles in each row to make 100 seeds per row. Set up 10 rows to make 1,000 seeds. Count them out by 10s and by hundreds. Since they are arranged

in straight rows, point out that $10 \times 4 = 40$, or that $10 \times 8 = 80$.

Finish counting out the seeds in the same fashion until done. How did your predictions measure up?

If you laid all the seeds end to end in a train, how long would the train stretch? Again, record everyone's predictions. But do you have enough room to lay out all those seeds? If not, assume that every seed is the same size and shape and lay out one pile of 10 seeds in a train and measure that. Multiply that number by how many piles of 10 you have. Divide that answer by 12 to find out how long, in feet, your seed train would be. How did those predictions measure up?

One last thing: color your seeds different colors with permanent markers. Then use them to create a mosaic. If you know what you want to create before you start, it will help you to decide what colors to color the seeds. You can use this technique to make a picture for the refrigerator or to make holiday cards to send to friends and family.

Happy pumpkin season!



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Understanding

Diagnosing and treating a child with a very tricky condition

BY ALLISON PLITT

In the fall of 2011, my then-5-year-old daughter began to complain daily of stomachaches. When she was dismissed from her kindergarten class every day, all her friends ran outside to enjoy the playground. Instead of joining them, she told me she was too tired, so I would take her back home, where she would lie on the couch, watch TV, and eat, which caused her to become overweight.

When she used the bathroom, it would take her more time than usual, so I checked up on her and discovered that she had diarrhea. For a couple of weeks, I made her eat foods known to prevent diarrhea, but her condition persisted. Perplexed by her illness, I took her to our pediatrician for an examination.

I told the pediatrician that my daughter has a half-sister with celiac disease. It's a condition in which gluten — a protein found in wheat, rye, barley, and some other grains — leads to damage to the lining of the small intestine, which results in the body's inability to properly absorb nutrients from food. Since celiac disease is a genetic disorder, the doctor thought my daughter could have celiac disease, too, and gave me the name of a pediatric gastroenterologist who could examine her further.

When we finally met with the pediatric gastroenterologist, we listed my daughter's symptoms and also let him know that my daughter's half-sibling suffers from celiac disease. The gastroenterologist showed us that my daughter's stomach was slightly distended, another trait of those who suffer from the disease.

The doctor ordered blood work, the initial step in determining if a patient has celiac disease.

Three antibodies

Celiac disease is not a food allergy. It is classified as an autoimmune disease, meaning that the immune system attacks one's own body. After assuring my daughter that drawing blood was like getting a pin prick, we went to a local medi-

cal lab to have her blood drawn. The test was to determine if she had high levels of three celiac antibodies: tissue transglutaminase, endomysial, and antigliadin.

After a week, the gastroenterologist called to say that he had received my daughter's blood test results and that she had high levels of all three antibodies. For him to make a definitive diagnosis for celiac disease, he would have to perform an endoscopy on her, which would involve placing a narrow flexible tube into her body to obtain a biopsy of her small intestine.

The doctor gave our daughter anesthesia before performing the endoscopy. After obtaining and examining tissue from her small intestine, he told us that our daughter definitely had celiac disease, and would have to be put on a gluten-free diet.

Living gluten-free

My husband and I explained to our 5 year old that she couldn't eat anything that had bread in it. We shopped a lot in organic food stores and purchased gluten-free versions of food, which was much more expensive than foods containing gluten.

When I did my grocery shopping at the regular supermarkets, I learned to read the labels if the product didn't say "gluten-free" on it. If the label listed wheat, gluten, flour, barley, or rye, we couldn't buy it for our daughter. In our kitchen, I was constantly cleaning the countertops, dishes, and toaster oven, so no residual food with gluten in it would contaminate my daughter's meals.

As soon as I put her on the gluten-free diet, I saw a change in her physical condition. She stopped suffering from diarrhea and no longer complained of stomach pain. She had much more energy and began frolicking in the park after school with her friends.

After six months, we visited the gastroenterologist's office. Based upon my daughter's most recent blood test results, the level of the celiac antibodies had been reduced by half. She had also lost weight

now that she had the energy to exercise, and the doctor showed us that her stomach distension was gone.

More tests

When we returned to the gastroenterologist's office after another six months, he ordered more blood work and said the antibodies had finally fallen to normal levels. The doctor also introduced me to his new associate, who he had hired to help him with his growing practice.

The new gastroenterologist, Dr. Nicole Jordan, insisted that my daughter's blood now be drawn to check the levels of vitamin B12 and the minerals copper and iron. She said celiac patients should have their vitamin and mineral levels checked annually to ensure their body is properly absorbing nutrients from their food.

With regard to my daughter's condition, Dr. Jordan told me, "It sounds like your daughter probably had classic celiac disease symptoms with the usual presentations of diarrhea, maybe not eating, belly pain, stomach distension, gassiness, not growing very well ... and vomiting."

According to Dr. Jordan, only a certain amount of patients with celiac disease show these classic symptoms.

"Unfortunately, there are a third of patients who have celiac disease who show atypical presentations, which tend to be outside of the gastrointestinal tract," she expounded. "These patients get symptoms like the skin rash dermatitis herpetiformis, a tooth defect called dental enamel hypoplasia, issues with their bones like osteoporosis and osteopenia, delayed puberty, and problems with height development."

Furthermore, Dr. Jordan said that around 20 to 25 percent of patients have no clinical symptoms at all or have very mild symptoms. With regard to the growing number of patients being diagnosed with celiac disease, Dr. Jordan said that since doctors now know that celiac patients can show no symptoms, more people walking into a gastroenterologist's office complaining of stomach pain are automatically getting

celiac disease



screened for celiac disease.

When I asked Dr. Jordan about the genetic factor for the condition, she said, "We say over 99 percent of celiac patients carry the genetic markers, HLA-DQ2 and the HLA-DQ8. There are about three to five percent of people with those genetic markers, however, that may never develop celiac disease."

The consequences of not following a gluten-free diet for a patient with celiac disease could be perilous, because the patient is not allowing her body to absorb essential vita-

mins and minerals in order for it to grow and function properly. Some of the conditions associated with celiac disease include anemia (iron deficiency), infertility and complications with pregnancy, eczema, depression, epilepsy, diabetes, thyroid disease, lupus, fibromyalgia, cirrhosis, and hepatitis. In addition, various medical studies suggest there may be a small increase in some types of cancer if you have celiac disease, such as lymphoma and cancers of the pancreas, liver, and bile ducts.

"We've seen that long-term mor-

tality can be affected by those who don't follow a gluten-free diet when they've been diagnosed with the disease," Dr. Jordan warned.

It's been two years now since we found out about our daughter having celiac disease, and she has come to accept that she cannot eat certain foods. Although she does get frustrated at birthday parties when cakes and cupcakes full of flour are served, I usually try to buy or bake a gluten-free alternative for her. Overall, we try to stay positive, especially since she now has so much more en-

ergy to run around the playground with her friends and to learn how to play different sports.

If you are a parent of a child with celiac disease and are interested in joining a support group in the Queens area, you can contact Dr. Nicole Jordan at her office at (718) 592-7797. For more information about celiac disease, visit the website for the Celiac Disease Foundation at www.celiac.org.

Allison Plitt is a freelance writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to New York Parenting.

Start off strong

Fortify your child against bone loss

BY HEATHER LEE LEAP

You know that kids grow healthy and strong through exercise and proper nutrition, but did you know that childhood is prime time for preventing osteoporosis?

Kids aren't just getting bigger and taller as they grow. Their bones are also growing stronger, increasing in density. Children continue to make more bone than they lose until their mid-20s. This is the time when they reach peak bone mass, the greatest amount of bone they will ever have.

According to the Osteoporosis Foundation, the more bone your child has at the time of peak bone



mass the less likely she is to break a bone or develop osteoporosis later in life.

Osteoporosis means "porous bone." It occurs when we lose too much bone, do not create enough bone, or both. Low bone density increases a person's risk of fractures. It is most common in women, but men also can develop osteoporosis.

Oct. 20 is World Osteoporosis Day. Use the following recommendations to build strong bones and develop habits that will keep your kids growing strong throughout their teens and into adulthood.

Nutrition

- Provide foods high in calcium such as low-fat cheese, yogurt, and milk fortified with vitamin D.

- Serve a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables, which are high in calcium.

- Limit soft drinks. Children who consume soft drinks are less likely to drink milk or calcium-rich alternatives.

- Offer milk or calcium-added non-dairy beverages at meals.

- Make homemade freezer pops from calcium-fortified orange juice.

Exercise

- Weight-bearing exercise strengthens bones as well as muscles. The Centers for Disease Control recommends children participate in bone-building activities such as jumping rope, running, or climbing on a jungle gym at least three days per week. Aim for 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

- Encourage your child to participate in sports.

- Limit periods of inactivity. Take a break from television, video games, even reading and homework. Sunlight is an important source of bone-strengthening vitamin D, so head outside to be active.

- Run, jump and play as a family. Go for a walk or jog together. Jump rope, play kickball, soccer, or basketball.

- Hold wheelbarrow races in the backyard. Have your child start in a push-up position. Hold her feet in your hands like the handles of a wheelbarrow as she walks or runs on her hands to the finish line.

Healthy habits

Educate your children on the dangers of smoking and of drinking alcohol. Both increase the risk of osteoporosis.

Heather Lee Leap is a freelance writer who focuses on parenting and health issues. Her mother's recent diagnosis of advanced osteoporosis inspired her to learn more about the disease to protect herself and her daughters.

Top Tips

Calcium minus the cow

Calcium builds and maintains strong bones and teeth, but what if your kids don't eat or drink dairy products? In addition to a calcium supplement, the United States Department of Agriculture recommends these high-calcium foods to meet children's daily needs (1,000 mg for ages 4 to 8; 1,300 mg for children 9 to 19).

- Calcium-fortified beverages: Juice and soy milk with 30 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance per cup.

- Tofu: Prepared with calcium sulfate.

- Legumes: Edamame soybeans, black-eyed peas, and

white beans.

- Leafy green vegetables: Turnip, mustard, collard greens, bok choy, kale, and broccoli.
- Canned fish: Sardines and salmon eaten with the bones.

- Black-strap molasses: Two tablespoons contain a whopping 400 mg of calcium.

For a bone-building boost, add calcium-rich foods to your child's favorite smoothie recipe. Try tofu, molasses, a stalk of kale or calcium-fortified almond milk. At snack time, offer dried figs (up to 55 mg in two) and almonds. Sprinkle sesame seeds on favorite foods.



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Try genetic testing for breast cancer

During this month of breast cancer awareness, the key message is to get regular check-ups and do monthly self-exams, so women can detect any abnormalities as soon as they appear. This lessens the chance of breast cancer being deadly. Sometimes, finding a lump is the best-case scenario, because it means that you can have it biopsied and removed. In addition, genetic testing can pinpoint if the breast cancer gene runs in your family, and it's a simple blood test.

My mother was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer nine years ago. Prior to that, she had her regular mammograms and

check-ups, so it was somewhat of a surprise when she found a lump, and it was found to be malignant. After intense chemotherapy and a mastectomy, she has been cancer-free. It was a long road, and she still takes preventive medication, which can be quite draining at times. Now, she is adamant about detection and follows all post-cancer protocols.

After my mother's treatment was completed, her doctors at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital urged her to get genetic testing done. A simple blood test known as BRCA would show whether she had the cancer gene, which would determine if the disease would be probable in my sister and myself, as well

as our daughters. Women with the highest risk variants of BRCA mutations have a theoretical breast cancer risk of 60 to 82 percent, compared to 12 percent of all women. The test came back negative, which was reassuring but still offered no guarantee. Consequently, if she had tested positive, her chances for developing ovarian cancer would have been higher.

According to the Breast Cancer Alliance, more than 200,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. Of those, seven to 10 percent (15,000 to 20,000 cases) will have an inherited predisposition. Among women with that predisposition, more than half (7,000 to 10,000 cases) will be the result of detectable mutations in BRCA1 or BRCA2. Those women with a BRCA mutation will also have a 10 to 60 percent risk of developing ovarian cancer in their lifetime (35 to 60 percent risk with a BRCA1 mutation; 10 to 27 percent risk with BRCA2). That's compared with a 1.5 percent risk of developing ovarian cancer for the general population.

The National Cancer Institute officially recommends that the following have the BRCA tests performed:

- Multiple breast and ovarian cancers within a family (often diagnosed at an early age)

- Two or more primary cancers in a single family member (more than one breast cancer, or breast and ovarian cancer)

- Cases of male breast cancer

It's vital for women who have had breast cancer to be tested to see if they have the BRCA mutation, for her own battle in fighting cancer, as well as her daughters' and granddaughters' health.

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 @DanniSullivanWriter, or on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.





DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

The day I just QUIT

I quit.

I am hip-deep in laundry. There are 17 more shoes than feet in our front hall — not pairs, just individual shoes. There's a kid I don't know sleeping on the couch. There's a dog I don't know drinking out of my toilet. My fridge is loaded to the gills with old Chinese food and outdated Gogurts. I'm out of bread, eggs, milk, hot dogs, and Ho Hos. I haven't shaved in four days. I have no clean towels.

I wander into my son's room where he's fallen asleep like a true warrior, in a puddle of drool surrounded by a crenelated edifice of Brisk cans and spent instant snack Ramen bowls. It's Snackhenge.

The dinner table is piled to the roofbeams with clean clothes. I put them there with the admonition that my kids ought to put away their own duds. They just started changing in the dining room.

There's a Wii avatar staring at me from the flatscreen. He seems angry, impatient, like he's been standing there a long time. He's looking at me like he's thinking, "Well? What are you going to do now?"

What am I going to do? The only sane thing left. This experiment called "summer" has run its course, and it's an epic fail. I know when I've been beat. I grab my keys, my giant leather manbag, and my panama hat, and walk out the front door.

I quit.

I've been a slave for nine long weeks. A kept man. A minion for my miniature overlords, and I've had it. I need to refill my man card.

I go to my favorite cigar lounge and disappear into a deep leather chair under a cloud of fine Nicaraguan smoke. I break out a good book. I order a cup of coffee so strong it can bend time. I wallow deeper into the leather, tilt my hat down over my eyes, and crack the spine on the book.

Then the texts begin.

"Dad where are you?"

"Nicaragua."

"Srsly. I'm hungry."

"I quit."

"LOL, dad. You're funny. Danny needs a ride home, and his dog pooped in the kitchen."



"I quit."

"Dad?"

It's a good cigar. I mean, really, really good. I keep smoking and stare into the haze until my phone vibrates a hole in the chair.

"Dad, Connor is GrubHubbing a pizza. Can I get a pizza?"

"I quit."

"LOL. Hilarious. I'm starving. Some dog pooped in the kitchen."

"I quit."

"Dad?"

The thing about a Partagas Maduro is you have to take time to smoke it right. You can't smoke it too fast, it's like fishing. You have to ...

"Hon? The kids seem concerned about you."

"I quit."

"It's been a long summer. You probably need a mini-vacation."

"I quit."

"Our house is full of kids and dogs, and they're all starving to death."

Maybe you should ... "

"I quit."

"If you quit your duties ... I'll quit mine."

I'm back at the house in 10 minutes flat.

Chris Garlington lives in a standard two kids, wife, dog, corner-lot, two-car dream package. He drives a 2003 Camry, sports a considerable notebook fetish, and smokes Arturo Fuente Partaga Maduros at the Cigar King as often as possible. His stories have appeared in Florida, Orlando, Orlando Weekly, Catholic Digest, Retort, Another Realm, The Dead Mule School of Southern Literature, South Lit, and other magazines. His short story collection, "King of the Road," is available on Amazon. His column "My Funny Life," was nominated for a national humor award. He is the author of the infamous anti-parenting blog, Death By Children; the anti-writing blog, Creative Writer Pro; and co-author of "The Beat Cop's Guide to Chicago Eats."

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A LETTER FROM COLLEGE

AGLAIA HO

My freshman jitters

College is an exciting time for teenagers. The experience is depicted in literature, pop culture, film, and even the stories from our parents as being the ultimate adventure of a lifetime. Teens get the opportunity to create new friendships, study abroad, quarrel with a roommate, and prepare for a future career. For most, college is very different from high school. It comes with newfound responsibilities and freedom. Instead of facing an early morning commute into the city, many teens travel to other parts of the country in order to pursue their studies. These changes can make attending college a daunting experience.

As I, like many high school graduates, begin a new chapter of my life this fall, I cannot help but feel anxious about what is to come. My personal experience is filled with many firsts: first time living away from home; first time doing laundry on my own; first time trying to pull myself out of bed (on time!) each morning without my mom prodding me awake; first time juggling schoolwork, a social life, and a campus job. Needless to say, it is a bit overwhelming. How will I ever be able to survive this diabolical list of new challenges?

For me, one of the biggest changes is living on my own. I'll admit that I have lived a seemingly sheltered and comfortable life. I have spent my whole life in the same two-story brick house in the same suburban neighborhood. The longest I have ever been away from home without my parents was probably four days during a fifth-grade field trip! Even then, while I thoroughly enjoyed myself, those four days felt like an eternity. I could not imagine staying away any longer!

Besides having to worry about the basic necessities of living alone (for example, cleaning, laundry, meals,

etc.), I am particularly concerned about missing my parents. We have an extremely close relationship. Being an only child, I have monopolized all of their support and attention. I am used to sharing all the information in my life with them. They know the names of my best friends, my school grades, my occasional drama-queen emotions, and even my deepest confessions. Our relationship has partially helped me succeed by providing an outlet for all my thoughts and concerns.

to only start over once more. Nevertheless, this feeling has forced me to reconsider my perspective on life. So many experiences are short-lived, so you need to focus more on the long-haul. If I have "lost" my old high school life, I have gained meaningful memories and experiences that may help me in the future.

College may give me some butterflies, but I am still optimistic. Talking with friends, coworkers, and family has truly shown me that, in many ways, I am prepared to take

on this new journey. Liv-

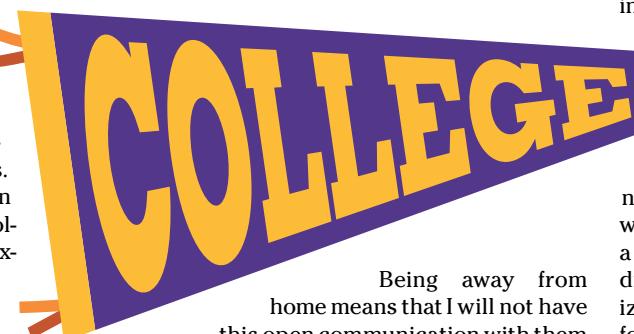
ing in New York City has

taught me so many things that I would have never learned anywhere else in the world. The city has instilled in me a maturity that I have just come to discover. Coming from a specialized public high school, I can look forward to a much smaller class size and more one-on-one attention with teachers. Working in the heart of Manhattan for two summers has taught me how to survive in even the most fast-paced society. Hey, if I can navigate the subway system — even on the weekends with all the service changes — and jay walking like a true New Yorker, I can find my way safely around campus. With the city's colorful cast of characters, I have probably seen it all. The city can be brutally competitive. No wonder they say if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.

Yet, the hardest change for me is leaving behind my old high school life. I've learned that I thrive under continuity. It provides me security, which allows me to channel all of my energy toward my work and success. Going off to college means leaving behind so much, both personally and academically. It is a melancholic feeling to realize that I'll suddenly have to part with the friends I have made and loved for four years. My friends have meant so much to me and provided me a stable social life.

Additionally, I feel like I am losing all of my accomplishments from high school. College is a fresh start, which for some may sound new and invigorating. For me, however, college means relinquishing my leadership positions from high school, the internships and summer programs I was involved in, my grades, and the awards I have won. It is the feeling that I have worked so hard

Aglaia Ho is a freshman at Williams College and a native New Yorker.



Being away from home means that I will not have this open communication with them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I will have to deal with my own emotions, make my own decisions, and trust myself. This is something I struggle with, but hopefully time on my own will only strengthen my confidence and self-reliance.

For me, one of the biggest changes is living on my own. I'll admit that I have lived a seemingly sheltered and comfortable life. I have spent my whole life in the same two-story brick house in the same suburban neighborhood. The longest I have ever been away from home without my parents was probably four days during a fifth-grade field trip! Even then, while I thoroughly enjoyed myself, those four days felt like an eternity. I could not imagine staying away any longer!

Besides having to worry about the basic necessities of living alone (for example, cleaning, laundry, meals,



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Ups & downs with blended families

Last month's column was the first of two on blended families, which are families in which one or both spouses bring children from a previous relationship. Dr. Kristin Davin, a clinical psychologist in Manhattan, explained that blending families takes time and patience, the primacy of the spousal relationship, the advisability of family meetings, and more. Here, we continue with that discussion.

Adults and children should know that there will be ups and downs during the years that the blending process continues.

"People get over some hurdles, and think the challenges are over, but there are likely to be new ones," Davin said.

For instance, children have different developmental stages — a challenge that exists in "intact" families as well. If parents have talked over how they're going to handle the different stages, be it the terrible twos or the teenage years, conflict between them is less likely.

Don't force a relationship

A parent may want everyone in the new family to be happy, push too fast, and pressure a child to quickly and lovingly embrace the new adult in his life. But this will happen on the child's timetable, not the parent's. As parents, we would do better to focus on "the times we have spent together with the child that have been comfortable, and then perhaps to do more of that and allow the relationship to develop on its own terms," says Davin.

Trial, error, and handling errors

Since each family is different, and each member is changing over time, try to remain flexible. Whether your approach (to dealing with household chores, for example) is working well or not, you will probably need to make adjustments at some point. Try a plan that makes sense, and rework it as necessary.

While some errors should never be made — making disparaging remarks about a parent to a child, for instance



— every parent will screw up occasionally. When that happens, own up to the mistakes or bad behavior.

"I called your father 'unreliable.' I'm sorry I said that, and I'll try very hard not to do that kind of thing again."

Consistency

Are house rules being broken? If so, as parents, try to maintain the same standards of what is expected of the children. Ask yourselves, "Do we have solid reasons for what we are asking of them?" Be consistent in how you treat different children, perhaps giving — and enforcing — the same curfew for kids who are the same age.

A child's resentment at inconsistent treatment may be magnified in a blended family.

There may be good reasons for inconsistency. When a child says, "I don't have to do that at Ma's," a legitimate response might be, "But this is our home that we've established, and the traditions and choices we're making."

Is my child alright?

"Kids' behaviors fall along a continuum," Davin said. "The question is 'are they out of line for their age?' Teenagers often isolate themselves, and this behavior may be just because of their age. Kids in intact fam-

ilies might behave the same way."

As parents, we can be apprehensive about talking to our kids. Davin advises, "Just ask them, 'How do you think things are going?'"

Let kids know you are dealing with some of the struggles they are.

"We're all experiencing changes and that includes me. It isn't easy. It's OK to be missing the old family."

Davin also suggests that parents talk to teachers to let them know that the child is about to become a member of a blended family.

Maintain routines

Did you used to play in the park with your child every Sunday, or have some other special time one-on-one with her or him? Continue with these routines as best you can. Find time for each child, and consider creating new routines for your new and blended family.

Contact Kristin Davin at (917) 715-6583.

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 or (718) 229-6149, or go to http://lc-mediate.com/.

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



A good night

Finding the best way to help your family fall asleep

BY JAMIE LOBER

Getting a good night's sleep comes down to sleep hygiene — basic strategies that you can implement to help your entire family get through the night easier. And there is no better time to start than the new school year.

Families often talk about changing their ways when school resumes, but the truth is that people should have a routine that works for them throughout the year.

"Kids should have at most a one-hour difference in sleeping and wak-

ing up on weekends and weekdays," said Dr. Sanjeev Kothare, associate professor and director of pediatric sleep medicine at the Department of Neurology at New York University Langone Medical Center. Many kids will go to sleep at midnight and wake up at 10 am on Saturday and Sunday, and expect to sleep on a weekday and get up at 6:30 am, but the brain does not allow you to do that. Here are some ways to help.

Make sure your day begins with daylight.

"When you wake up in the morning, you want to get a dose of bright light, and you can buy those at the

store," said Kothare.

Try to limit sleep to just nighttime. "Do not take naps in the afternoon, because the nap does not allow you to sleep on time at night since you have already had your little sleep taken care of."

Find ways to unwind before bed. Some kids like to take a warm bath in the evening, and you can add scents that your child finds relaxing to the water. Jeffrey Rose, clinical hypnotherapist at NYU, says certain essential oils can reduce stress and relax your child, but you must be sure they are from natural sources, rather than using artifi-

Make sure that the room is quiet, dark, and a little bit cool. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine suggests thinking of your room as a cave. Bats, which are great sleepers, get 16 hours a night.

cially created chemicals.

"Tone down all activities after 8:30 or 9 pm," said Kothare. This means ridding yourself of distractions. "Many teenagers are on the iPhone, iPad, computer, or texting, and those rev up your adrenaline and do not allow you to sleep easily afterwards." Listening to soothing music can be helpful as well.

Stay away from caffeine, especially after noon.

"Caffeine lasts about eight hours, so even if you take it at 2 in the afternoon it is going to linger in your body after 10 or 11 o'clock, and will prevent you from falling asleep," said Kothare.

In order to fall asleep when you head to bed, create an environment that is conducive to sleep. This means making sure that the room is quiet, dark, and a little bit cool. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine suggests thinking of your room as a cave — since bats, which are great sleepers, get 16 hours a night, in the dark, cool environment of a cave. It's also recommended to try to get rid of or deal with things that cause stress during the day, so you do not bring your worries with you to bed.

Encourage your child to sleep independently.

"A problem is that kids do not like to sleep on their own and like to sleep with their parents, so you have to gradually do separation," said Kothare. You can try to watch your child while he falls asleep, and if he wakes up, come in again and extend the behavior.

Everybody needs a different amount of sleep based on age.

"The newborn needs 16 to 18 hours; the 1-year-old needs 12 to 14 hours; the 2 to 4-year-old needs 10 to 11 hours; the preteens need about 10 hours; the teenagers need eight-and-a-half to nine hours; and the rest need eight to eight-and-a-half hours," said Kothare.

Some kids encounter obstacles that interfere with sleep.

"You can have organic problems like obesity or sleep apnea that need to be fixed, or other issues regarding your health like pain, eczema, or allergies," said Kothare.

There is a new entity that doctors are recognizing called metabolic syndrome.

"In that, if you do not sleep well and have sleep apnea you tend to eat more, have more diabetes, hypertension and obesity, which get perpetuated by a lack of good sleep," said Kothare.

So, if your child is reluctant to sleep, find out why.

"One of the issues that comes up in preteen kids is they have unusual fears and anxiety about sleeping alone or dreams with dogs biting or monsters appearing, and those are a normal phenomenon in that age group," said Kothare.

Some conditions are more severe than others. "Narcolepsy is a condition where you are sleepy and fall asleep, and when you laugh, you fall to the floor, which is cataplexy, and one of 2,000 kids have it."

Sleep has gained a lot of attention recently.

"People's awareness of sleep as an important issue has increased. Parents, families, teachers, and even patients are more aware that sleep is important and part of every aspect of our human body, because for everything that we do to run well, you have to have healthy sleep," said Kothare.

Do your part to motivate your child to get a good night's sleep.

"If you sleep well, you will be healthier in every way," said Kothare. Do not be discouraged if you, the parent, are struggling. "Everybody can improve their sleep and it can be good to see a sleep physician."

Jamie Lober, author of *Pink Power* (<http://www.getpinkpower.com>), is dedicated to providing information on women's and pediatric health topics. She can be reached at jamie@getpink-power.com.

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A safe Halloween

Halloween is a holiday that is notoriously fun for both parents and kids. The weeks surrounding Oct. 31 are filled with pre-Halloween parties, candy corn (my favorite!), picking out spooktacular costumes (I know every DivaMom loves to look as FabULyss as her DivaTot), scary-themed crafts, and more. But, in order for Halloween to be as enjoyable and memorable as possible, it has to meet the safety-standards of every parent, especially in the crowded-and-bustling New York City. Halloween is meant to be spooky and full of pranks and laughs, but we as parents know that the wellbeing and security of our children is not funny or negotiable. As a fellow mom of two (with a third on the way), I would love to share with you a "lysst" of some absolutely vital Halloween safety tips for kids of all ages:

See and be seen

After dark, kids aren't usually swarming the neighborhood. But on Halloween night, they are. That's why kids need to watch out for cars and other traffic.

Be sure that your child's mask or costume doesn't cover his eyes or make it tough for him to see where he is going. You might think about using makeup instead of a mask. If your child does wear a mask, make sure the eye holes are big enough that he can see.

Kids also need to be seen on Halloween, so it's a good idea to wear or carry something that glows in the dark. You might choose a glowing necklace, a glow-in-the-dark treat

bag, or a flashlight. You can also apply reflective tape to the costume.

Don't trip!

Kids want their costumes to look cool, but there's nothing cool about tripping and stumbling all Halloween night. Make the costume trip-proof by:

- Making sure it's not too long
- Wearing shoes that fit
- Avoiding swords, canes, and other props that can get in your way

Don't go alone

It's best for kids to trick-or-treat with family members or friends. And it's also a good idea to have a grown-up with them. A cellphone can be another handy item to have along. That way, if you're not on trick-or-treating duty, you can check in with your child, and, if need be, your child can call for help.

Talk it over when deciding where to trick-or-treat. Sticking close to home is great, because then children know many of the people and won't get lost in unfamiliar neighborhoods. And people who already know him just might throw an extra treat in his bag!

Make sure your child knows that, when trick-or-treating, he should avoid going inside a stranger's home. Sometimes a person might invite him in for a treat, but he can just say his mom or dad asked him not to go inside anyone's house. (Likewise, never go up to or into a stranger's car, even if the person offers a Halloween treat.)

And if a child is wondering about whether to go to a certain house, he

should check if the porch light is on. If not, that's usually a sign that they aren't home or they don't want any trick-or-treaters.

Let's talk treats

Before eating the treats in a trick-or-treat bag, you'll want to get a good look at them. When your child gets home, have him dump everything out and let you see what he has. You don't want him to eat anything that's loose or not in a wrapper. Anything unwrapped, including fresh fruit, should be thrown away. Without a wrapper, it's hard to tell if food is clean and safe to eat.

Once you've looked over the treats, let your children dig in! But make sure they don't overdo it to avoid tummy aches. Plus, if they don't eat too much on Halloween, they'll have leftovers to enjoy in the days and weeks to come. In other words, you can make Halloween a little sweeter by making it last a little longer!

Pumpkin carving

There are few things as much associated with Halloween as carving a pumpkin, but it can be extremely dangerous for younger children. As an alternative to carving, you can consider allowing your younger kids to use markers, paint, or a pumpkin-decorating kit without the risk of carving with a sharp blade. I love painting pumpkins with my boys. I have a feeling I will be painting a few characters from the movie "Monsters University" with my younger son.

Have a safe and ghoulishly fun Halloween!

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





THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Pirate and librarian make a great pair

Do you have a small child who makes a big racket? Is it hard to keep him quiet? Then this book might be just the thing to keep him entertained — and hushed.

Would you believe that it's just as hard to keep quiet when you're a pirate? It is, and in the new book "No Pirates Allowed! Said Library Lou," by Rhonda Gowler Greene, and illustrated by Brian Ajhar, you'll see all the challenges a buccaneer must overcome.

Everything was "just right" at Seabreezy Library. People were reading silently when, bang! Big Pirate Pete stomped through the door.

"X Marks this spot!" he hollered. He was looking for treasure, but nobody could get close enough to tell him that Seabreezy was a library because he smelled terrible!

But Library Lou was having none of that. She told Big Pete to be quiet.

Library Lou said that if Big Pete

couldn't hush, there would be no pirates allowed in her building!

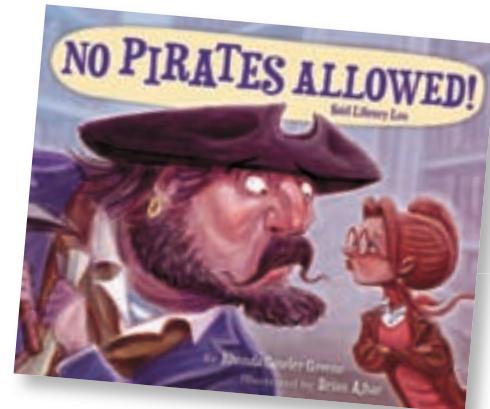
Library Lou told Pete that she would help him find the treasure, but first he had to take a bath.

The next day, Library Lou handed Big Pete another assignment. "X" didn't mark the spot; there were a whole bunch of letters to look through. It might have been a secret code, which would take a long time to figure out.

But after a few days of Q and L and Z, Big Pete got impatient. Was there actually gold hidden in the rows and rows and rows of books on the shelves? Where, exactly, was the treasure inside Seabreezy Library?

If you and your child are readers, you know where it is. But "No Pirates Allowed! Said Library Lou" is a fun reminder.

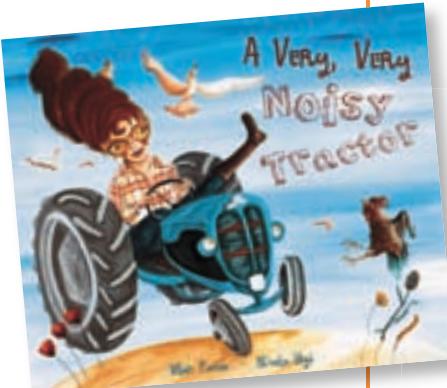
With a rhyme and a growl, Greene



lends faux-ferocity to a pirate who's really a pussycat, and gentleness to a tiny librarian who turns out to be a tiger. Kids who love books will surely want to see where Big Pete finds his "gold." Add in the wonderful illustrations by Brian Ajhar (pay attention to Big Pete's facial expressions!), you've got a book that's really appealing.

I'd highly recommend being very silly with this book, and putting your best pirate on when reading it aloud. Do that, and "No Pirates Allowed! Said Library Lou" will keep your 3 to 7 year old quiet — at least for a minute.

"No Pirates Allowed! Said Library Lou," by Rhonda Gowler Greene [40 pages, 2013, \$15.95].



Kids will clamor for this 'Noisy Tractor'

Your little one isn't exactly quiet, is she? You can hear her stomping to the bathroom to brush her teeth, rummaging around for her favorite toy, and clomping out the door.

In the new book "A Very, Very Noisy Tractor" by Mar Pavin and Nivola Uyá, everybody in the area knows who's coming down the road.

It was a quiet day in the country, when a lady with a HUGE hairdo came putt-putting down the road on a tractor. A pizza delivery boy heard her coming and hollered, "Ladies with crazy hairdos shouldn't drive tractors," but she never heard it, because the tractor was too noisy.

A few miles later, someone with thick glasses shouted, "Ladies with glasses shouldn't drive tractors!" but the lady on the tractor (who wore thick glasses, too) never heard it because the tractor was too loud.

Did we say that the lady on the tractor was wearing a raincoat? She was, and a mailman yelled that la-

dies wearing raincoats shouldn't be allowed on tractors. Of course, the lady on the tractor didn't hear him.

Soon, she pulled off the road and headed for a village filled with flowers and happy colors. But the villagers weren't so happy — they shouted at the lady, too, and said that people like her shouldn't drive tractors.

But a young boy on the side of the road was curious, because he hoped to have a tractor just like that one someday. He had a few questions and the lady answered him, but she couldn't stay long. Her husband — who was a very good cook — had dinner waiting for her, so she jumped on the tractor and cha-chugged off down the road.

At the end of the road, there was a man with a huge moustache and a huge smile. He didn't care what the lady wore or what colors she had on. The little girl with him didn't care what the lady on the tractor carried, either.

They saw what they saw, and it was love.

It's hard not to be totally charmed by "A Very, Very Noisy Tractor,"

which was translated from Spanish into English. It's cute, filled with positivity, and is curiously inspirational.

It's also a little odd: adult sensibilities might notice that authors Mar Pavin and Nivola Uyá seem to end their book twice — but turn the page, and there's plenty of story left. That's not bad, from a kid's point-of-view, but it's something for parents to remember as their read-aloud starts to wind down.

Still, the good here vastly outweighs that relatively minor quirk: kids will love the humor and the appealing characters. Adults will enjoy the dream-affirming message inside, and the illustrations are absolutely irresistible. Three to 7 year olds will shout about "A Very, Very Noisy Tractor."

"A Very, Very Noisy Tractor," by Mar Pavin and Nivola Uyá [28 pages, 2013, \$15.95].

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.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Understanding oral allergy syndrome

Have you ever bit into a juicy, ripe piece of fruit and experienced a tingling or numbness in your mouth? If so, you may have oral allergy syndrome, a reaction associated with pollen allergy — that is becoming more common.

Many raw fruits and veggies have proteins that are very similar to those found in tree, grass, and weed pollens, so your body responds to them in the same way. Up to a third of people with seasonal allergies experience oral allergy syndrome, according to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology.

Telltale signs include an itchy mouth and tongue, as well as swollen lips. In certain instances, ears can be itchy.

The most common food culprits are apples, carrots, peaches, plums, cherries, pears, tomato, melons, zucchini, cucumber, kiwi, and bananas. However, other foods can be problematic, such as lettuce, green pepper, and certain nuts. In some cases, peeling or cooking the foods before eating can help.

One or more of the foods could trigger oral allergy syndrome in susceptible individuals once they are sensitized.

Pollens and trigger foods

If you or your child is allergic to



tree pollens, avoid peaches, apples, pears, kiwi, plums, coriander, celery, fennel, parsley, cherries, and carrots.

If allergic to grass pollens, avoid peaches, celery, tomatoes, melon, and oranges.

If allergic to ragweed pollens, avoid bananas, cucumbers, melon, and zucchini.

Incidence increasing

"Most of the literature I have reviewed indicates oral allergy syndrome is increasing but did not provide an explanation as to why," says registered dietitian Debra Indorato, owner of Approach Nutrition Food Allergy Management, LLC and Kids With Food Allergies.

Oral allergy syndrome is more commonly found in older children, teens, and adults. Unlike certain other allergies, it is uncommon to outgrow it. My own daughter developed the syndrome in her early 20s after suffering from tree pollen allergy since middle school.

"A parent would be concerned if the obvious swelling of the face, lips, and tongue would occur after eating the trigger foods," explains Indorato. "A child might also demonstrate signs of trying to scratch their tongue or throat."

If your child experiences these symptoms, take him to a pediatric allergist.

"Diagnosis would be made by reviewing the history and pattern of symptoms, foods eaten when the symptoms occurred, how often after eating the symptoms occurred, prick skin tests, and possibly an oral food challenge," she says.

Helpful websites

- Kids With Food Allergies: www.kidswithfoodallergies.org

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology: www.aaaai.org

- American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology: www.acaai.org

Christine Palumbo, a registered dietitian nutritionist in Naperville, Ill., is on the faculty of Benedictine University. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.



Edamame hummus

Prep time: Five minutes

Total time: 10 minutes

Makes: 14 servings (1-1/4 cups total)

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups edamame, shelled and cooked according to package directions
1/4 cup soybean oil
3 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons garlic, chopped
3/4 teaspoon cumin, ground
1/2 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS: Puree edamame, oil, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, and salt in food processor for 30 seconds, scraping sides twice, until almost smooth. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. Serving tip: Serve with pita triangles, crackers, baguette, or raw vegetables.

NUTRITION FACTS: (Serving size: 2 tablespoons) 60 calories, 2 g protein, 5 g fat, 3 g carbohydrate, 0 g saturated Fat, 0 g trans fat, 1 g fiber, 0 mg cholesterol, 90 mg sodium.

Courtesy of United Soybean Board



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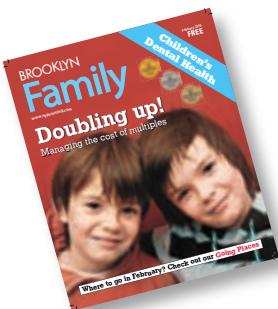
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Calendar

OCTOBER



Photo by Frederic De Fets

Brrr-ave 'Ghost of Sleepy Hollow'

The Headless Horseman is riding into the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Carriage House Theater for a spooky performance of "The Ghost of Sleepy Hollow," through Oct. 6.

Ichabod Crane will be the hair-raising star in the Arena Players Children's Theater's adaptation of the classic Washington Irving tale.

Performances for "The Ghost of Sleepy Hollow" are Saturdays and Sundays at 1 pm through Oct. 6. \$10 for adults. \$8 for children. Children under 3 years old are free. Reservations are suggested.

Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum's Carriage House Theater [180 Little Neck Rd. in Centerport, (516) 293-0674, www.arenaplayers.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!

MON, SEPT. 30

Health connection: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10 am–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children explore the role of evolution and natural selection.

TUES, OCT. 1

Rockin' Little Monsters: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.lcm.org; 2:30–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children of all ages have fun creating imaginary monsters with bits and pieces of materials.

WED, OCT. 2

Toddler time: Rosedale Public Library, 144-20 243rd St. at 145th Avenue; (718) 723-4440; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am–2 pm; Free.

For children 18 months to 3 years old with a caregiver.

Rockin' Little Monsters: 2:30–4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

THURS, OCT. 3

Rockin' Little Monsters: 2:30–4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Craft time: Howard Beach Library, 92-06 156th Ave.; (718) 641-7086; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30–5 pm; Free.

Children 4 to 12 years old make fun projects.

FRI, OCT. 4

Conference for Families of School Aged Children with Special Needs: Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd.; (718) 997-5000; cherrin.guws@gmail.com; 9 am; Free.

Families with children with special needs learn about different programs.



Test your game on the Adventure course

Enjoy the falling leaves and crisp autumn air and get your game on at the Adventure course at Alley Pond Park until Nov. 17.

Zip through the tree tops and balance among the branches along a course consisting of 20 high and low elements designed to challenge your mettle and encourage a connection with nature. Many of these elements are accessible to people with disabilities, and concentrate on team-building and problem-solving

skills. The Adventure Course staff is well-trained in program implementation and safety techniques.

Programs for children 8 years and older are available on a first-come, first-served basis every Sunday at 10 am and 1:30 pm (weather permitting).

The Adventure Course at Alley Pond, Sundays now through Nov. 17 at 10 am and 1:30 pm. Free.

Alley Pond Park [76th Ave. at Springfield Boulevard in Oakland Gardens, (718) 217-4685, www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers].

Pre-registration required.

Rockin' Little Monsters: 2:30–4 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 7–11 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

"The End of the Road," with Greg Saunier's Keyboard Army. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump

in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

SAT, OCT. 5

"Cinderella": Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.lcm.org; 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm; \$12 (\$10 members).

Enjoy the perennial children's fairy tale

with a zany godmother, a fancy ball, and of course, the glass slipper. Meet and greet with the cast.

Oktoberfest: Sunnyside Park, 48-21 39th Ave. between 48th and 50th streets; (718) 672-1555; Noon–5 pm and 7 pm to 10 pm; Free.

Enjoy a day out with fun games, activities, arts and crafts, traditional German food, and a pumpkin patch. (Rain date, Oct. 6.)

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 7–11 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

"Bollywood Bash." Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

SUN, OCT. 6

5K walk: Sunken Meadow State Park, 25 A Sunken Meadow Pkwy.; (516) 621-0552 X 101; www.cpsii.org; 9 am; \$30 (\$50 family).

Let's end bullying. Kiddie Fun Run for children 8 years old and younger. All ages and skill levels welcome.

Baby Expo: Hilton Long Island, 598 New York 110; (516) 415-2229; www.expectingparentsbabyexpo.com; 10 am–4 pm; \$10 (\$20 couple or family).

The first Expecting Parents and Baby Expo offers educational seminars, sessions, and exhibits dedicated to expecting parents, new parents and couples planning to start their families. Experts on hand to offer help in a wide range of topics, day care and preschool, employment rights, post-partum depression and much more. Registration required.

"Cinderella": 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Oct. 5.

Food workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$10 (\$5 children; members free).

Families try their hand and learn how to preserve food, canning, and health benefits of fermentation.

"Who Stole the Mona Lisa?": Le-Frak Concert Hall, 65-30 Kissena Blvd.; (718) 544-2996; ninell.silberberg@qc.cuny.edu; www.kupferbergcenter.org; 3 pm; \$20 (\$10 children and seniors).

Family concert series presented by the Queens Symphony Orchestra.

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 7–10 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

Continued on page 46

Calendar

Continued from page 45

Samuel Z. Arkoff double feature. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

WED, OCT. 9

Green-thumb workshop: La Isla Community Garden, 96–98 W. 163rd St. at 95th Street; (212) 788–8070; 4–6 pm; Free.

Teens get their hands dirty and learn about gardening from hands-on demos. Gloves, wheel barrels, and trowels included.

Toddler time: 11 am–2 pm. Rosedale Public Library. See Wednesday, Oct. 2.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder workshop: Hampton Inn, 120 Jericho Turnpike; (516) 802–0593; cindy@ptscoaching.com; 7–8:30 pm; Free.

Executive Function Skills — the key to success in life and in school — addresses tips, tools, and strategies for parents to use to promote optimal success for their special-needs child.

THURS, OCT. 10

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 5–9 pm; \$10 (\$5 members).

Animation Flip Out. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

FRI, OCT. 11

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 7–11 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

Slide show, featuring photos by Stephen Mallon. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

SAT, OCT. 12

E-Waste expo: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 10 am–4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Drop off your unwanted electronics, learn about sustainability with a screening of "The Story of Stuff," and hands on



'Eco' traveling exhibit

The Community Environmental Center Eco House is rolling into PS-IS 266 to teach the community how to save energy.

Representatives of the hands-on, fun-filled, traveling exhibition space and interactive learning center will inform children and

residents how to be more energy efficient in their daily lives, and save money, to boot.

Eco House at PS-IS 266 is open Mondays through Fridays from 9 am to 3 pm until Oct. 31. Free.

PS/ISS [74-10 Commonwealth Blvd. in Glen Oaks, (718) 784-1444 X181, [X181, www.cecenter.org/ecohouse](http://www.cecenter.org/ecohouse)].

activities and demos.

Glass painting: Lewish H. Latimer House, 34-41 137th St. at 32nd Avenue; (718) 961–8585; 1:30–2 pm; Free.

Cristina Cipriani teaches children the art medium.

Astronomy: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Road at Shore Road; (718) 352–1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm; Free.

Urban rangers guide you on a tour of the solar system, discuss the history and folklore of the universe and direct you to the best places in the city for amazing sky views.

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 7–11 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

Slide show, featuring photos by Stephen Mallon. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

SUN, OCT. 13

Michael Cooper's Masked Mar-

vels & Wondertales: Queens Theater, 14 United Nations Ave. South; (866) 811–4111; 1 and 3 pm; \$14.

The artist spins tales and weaves stories using unusual and colorful cast of characters.

Glass painting: 1:30–2 pm. Lewish H. Latimer House. See Saturday, Oct. 12.

Herbal workshop: The Shops at SkyView Center, 40-24 College Point Blvd.; (718) 460–2000; elagasse@quinnandco.com; www.shopskyviewcenter.com; 2–4 pm; Free.

Children explore the world of herbal foods and remedies and make their own tea bag.

WED, OCT. 16

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 5–9 pm; \$10 (\$5 members).

Youth Media Night. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

THURS, OCT. 17

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 7–10 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

"Galactic Drive In." Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

FRI, OCT. 18

Auto Show: Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 1255 Hempstead Turnpike; www.autoshowlongisland.com; 5–10 pm; Free.

Test news rides for this year's auto show. Participants are invited to browse the latest models for three fun-filled days.

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699–0005 X 353; www.ny-science.org; 7–11 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

"A Night at the Races." Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

Full Moon Drumming workshop: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463–7700; www.flushing-townhall.org; 7 pm; \$25 (\$20 members).

Celebrate the Harvest Moon with master drummers from Colombian and Korean traditions.

SAT, OCT. 19

Plant a tree: Rockaway Community Park, Almeda Avenue at Conch Place; 9 am–1 pm; Free.

Urban rangers and volunteers plant 20,000 trees in one day. Registration is required. Hosted by MillionTrees NYC.

Auto Show: 10 am–10 pm. Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. See Friday, Oct. 18.

Harvest festival: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; (718) 956–1819; www.socratessculpurepark.org; 11 am–3 pm; Free.

Celebrate the season by wearing a costume, or make one. Features music, art-making, and face painting. There will even be a costume contest for your pooch.

Fall festival: Victory Field, Woodhaven Boulevard and Myrtle Avenue; (718) 235–4100; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Games, music, pumpkins and more.

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of

Calendar

Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 7–11 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

Silent Movies. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

Calpulli Mexican Dance: Queens Theater, 14 United Nations Ave. South; (866) 811-4111; 8 pm; \$25-\$35. Traditional Mexican dancers.

SUN, OCT. 20

Breakfast with the Birds: Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St.; (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; 9–10:30 am; \$65 members, \$75 nonmembers.

Have breakfast with Queens Zoo director Dr. Scott Silver and help the keepers both feed the birds and conduct a morning census, in this unique opportunity to learn about birds and speak with the people who care for them.

Auto Show: 10 am – 5 pm. Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum. See Friday, Oct. 18.

Pumpkin Patch: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 11 am–5 pm; Free with garden admission.

Music, garden walks, composting, food, crafts, and a children's table with fun things to do.

Calpulli Mexican Dance: Queens Theater, 14 United Nations Ave. South; (866) 811-4111; 4 pm; \$25-\$35. Traditional Mexican dancers.

Calpulli Mexican Dance: Queens Theater, 14 United Nations Ave. South; (866) 811-4111; 4 pm; \$25-\$35. Traditional Mexican dancers.

Empire drive in: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.nyscience.org; 7–10 pm; \$15 (\$10 members).

American Made Cars, Trucks and Machines. Experience a new kind of drive-in movie theater. Jump in and out of cars reclaimed from local junkyards and watch a live show or film. This large scale multimedia installation is a full-scale outdoor theater made of reclaimed and recycled materials.

FRI, OCT. 25

Haunted House: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 4–7 pm; \$4.

Visit the haunted house for thrills and chills, treats, mulled cider, pumpkins and apples. Recommended for children 4 to 12 years old.



The Drive in is back

The “drive-in” has returned, bringing with it a new kind of adventure at the New Hall of Science, from Oct. 4 to Oct. 20.

Climb in and out of cars reclaimed from local junk yards as you watch a live show or film projected on the big screen. And the best thing of all is that your car is not required.

The large-scale multimedia installation and full-scale outdoor theater is made of reclaimed and recycled materials, and features a 40-foot screen and concession stand. Seating in cars are sourced from junk yards and low-power radio sounds emit from each vehicle.

Oct. 4-7 from 7 to 11 pm: “The End of the Road” is a featured slide show presented by the Museum of the Moving Image and Todd Chandler and Jeff Stark.

“Bollywood Bash” is on the big screen on Oct. 5 from 7 to 11 pm.

View a good ol’ fashioned double feature of the works of acclaimed B-movie producer Samuel Z. Arkoff on Oct. 6 from 7 to 10 pm.

“Animation Flip Out” is featured on Oct. 10 from 5 to 9 pm, and is

presented by Thomas Slathes and Tammy Arnstein. There will also be demos of projectors and film splicing, and flip book activity.

Oct. 11 and 12 offer a slide show of drive-in themed photos by Stephen Mallon, from 7 to 11 pm.

New films and filmmakers are spotlighted on Oct. 16 from 5 to 9 pm, featuring short films by youth media organizations from around the city.

Take a space adventure with “Flux Factory in Galactic Drive-In” on Oct. 17 from 7 to 10 pm.

The playbill features “A Night at the Races” — bike races that is! — on Oct. 18 from 7 to 11 pm.

Silent movies are spotlighted, along with a new short film by Lem Cohen on Oct. 19 from 7 to 11 pm.

The last show at the drive in is “American made: Cars, Trucks and Working Machines on Oct. 20 from 7 to 10 pm.

Empire Drive In installation is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm, with the special showings as outlined above.

New York Hall of Science [47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science in Corona, (718) 699-0005 X353, www.nyscience.org]. \$15 (\$10 members).

ence, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10 am–4 pm; Plus museum admission.

Celebrate the spooky season with Atka, a live Arctic gray wolf, and pumpkin chucking.

Gardening workshop: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; compost@queensbotanical.org.

org; www.queensbotanical.org; 11am–1 pm; Free with admission to the grounds.

Learn the basics of mulching, soil structure, fertilizer and planting. Registration required.

Halloween festival: Crocheron Park, 33rd Road and 215th Place; (718) 352-4793 X 301; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Spooky fun, rides, crafts, a costume contest, free giveaways and more.

Canine Costume Carnival: Rockaway Freeway-Beach 84, Beach Channel Drive and Beach 75th Street; (917) 903-6518; Noon–2 pm; Free.

Bring your pooch for a costume party and enjoy carnival games, face painting, and a photo booth for those pooch shots.

Haunted Lantern tours: 6:30–8:30 pm. Fort Totten Visitor’s Center. See Friday, Oct. 25.

SUN, OCT. 27

Dead or Alive: 10 am–4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, Oct. 26.

Fall Festival: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am–4 pm; \$5.

Wear a costume, enjoy games including bounces, magic shows, a petting zoo, and so much more. Plus, craft vendors, animal feedings, pony rides a hay ride, haunted house, and maze.

Botanical mask workshop: The Shops at SkyView Center, 40-24 College Point Blvd.; (718) 460-2000; elagasse@quinnandco.com; www.shopskyviewcenter.com; 2–4 pm; Free.

Children get into the Halloween spirit by making a mask out of natural leaves, flowers and seeds.

WED, OCT. 30

Halloween Hike: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 6:30–8 pm; \$7 (\$13 non-members).

Haunted activities for the whole family including a spooky trail walk, hot chocolate, ghost stories, and a costume party. Bring your flashlight and a lot of courage. Pre-registration required. For children 8 to 12 years old.

THURS, OCT. 31

Halloween Haunting: Cedar Grove Playground, Main St. and Reeves Avenue; (718) 816-6172; 3:30–5:30 pm; Free.

An afternoon of ghosts and goblins and frightfully fun activities. Crafts, games and a contest.

Halloween remixed: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 4 pm;

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Calendar

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Free.

Celebrate Dia de los Muertos, All Saints Day and Halloween in a festive all day long event. Make sugar skulls and hear ghost stories.

FRI, NOV. 1

Teen tiny trick o' treaters: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1-2:30 pm; \$12 (\$18 non-members).

Little ones 18 months to 4 years old enjoy the not-so-scary celebration with crafts, play games, and have a haunted snack. Caregiver must be present. Pre-registration required.

SAT, NOV. 2

Live bat encounter: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10 am-4 pm; Plus museum admission.

Meet some live bats with handler Rob Mies from the Organization for Bat Conservation and watch Chuck toss pumpkins with the catapult.

Wildlife: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am-4 pm; \$9 (Free with farm membership).

Birds of prey, frogs, bugs, and animal shows, plus hayrides, pony rides, and animal feedings.

Dead or Alive party: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 3-6 pm; Free museum admission.

Join Frankenstein-like projections by Mapathon, enjoy forensic science activities; Day of the Dead treats and Halloween projects. Prizes will be awarded for those in costume.

LONG-RUNNING

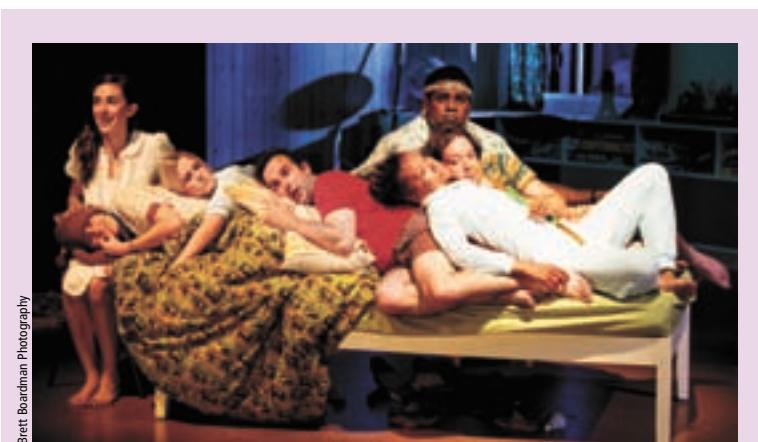
Eco-House: PS-IS 266, 74-10 Commonwealth Blvd.; (718) 784-1444 X 181; ce-center.org/ecohouse; Weekdays, 9 am-3 pm, Now - Thurs, Oct. 31; Free.

A mobile sustainability exhibit and environmental education center.

Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 10 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 31; \$4 per person plus museum admission.

Children explore, discovery and have fun in this outdoor playground with slides, seesaws and pits as well as fog machines. Each session lasts 45 minutes; weather permitting.

Story time: Barnes and Noble, 23-80 Bell Blvd.; (718) 224-1083; www.barnes-



'Peter Pan' and 'Me and My Shadow'

The New Victory Theater kicks off its fall season with rollicking adaptations of "Peter Pan" and "Me and My Shadow."

The tale of the boy who flies and never ages lands on stage with a dream ensemble, via the brilliant imagination of Sydney's Belvoir. Aided by a bit of fairy dust, ingenious stage magic, and lots of happy thoughts, the Darlings explore J.M. Barrie's Neverland, as their bedroom becomes a lagoon full of mermaids, a pirate ship at sea, and a cove overrun with lost boys. Under the spell of infectious make-believing, audiences are sure to un-grow up and fly along with them — second star to the right and straight on till morning!

More giggles galore are on the way during "Me and My

Shadow," when one young girl befriends a particularly sly and silly fellow — her shadow! A whimsical story about friendship, this clever and charming play earned the Patch Theatre Company a Helpmann Award for Best Presentation for Children in Sydney. The troupe's playground of paper, light, music, and magic ignites imaginations and tickles the fancy of little theatergoers in a big theater space.

"Peter Pan" on Oct. 4 at 7 pm; Oct 5 and 12 at 2 pm and 7 pm; Oct. 6 at 3 pm; and Oct. 13 at noon and 5 pm.

"Me and My Shadow" on Oct. 19 at 11 am, 3 pm, and 7 pm; and Oct. 20 at noon and 5 pm.

Tickets start at \$14.

The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd St. (646) 223-3010, www.newvictory.org].

sandnoble.com; Mondays, 11 am, Now - Mon, Nov. 4; Free.

Join in for an exciting adventure at every turn of the page.

Tesla's world: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays - Fridays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Sun, Oct. 20; Free with museum admission.

Explore the life and works of the inventor Nokola Tesla.

Space Junk 3D: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 10

am-5pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 31; \$6 (\$5 children) plus museum admission.

Children experience collisions, soar 22,000 miles above the earth and explore the challenges faced in protecting our planet, without ever leaving Queens.

Broken? Fix It!: Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, Tues, Oct. 1 - Sun, Jan. 5, 2014; Free with museum admission.

How do you fix it? It's easy! Visitors enter the family repair shop and try their hand at a variety of fix-it activities.

Story time: Barnes & Noble, 70-11 Austin St.; (718) 793-1395; www.barnes-

sandnoble.com; Wednesdays, 10:30 am, Sundays, 2:30 pm, Now - Sun, Nov. 3; Free.

Children hear stories from staff members and do a fun craft.

Rehearsals and auditions: Queen of Angels Church, 4404 Skillman Ave. at 45th Street; (917) 548-1086; unitystage-company@gmail.com; www.unitystage.org; Thursdays, 4-5:30 pm;; call for prices.

Unity Stage is offering children in grades kindergarten through sixth to take part in a production of "Oklahoma." The public performance is in March. Registration required.

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St. at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 31; \$6 (\$5 children, plus museum admission).

Putt your way through a nine-hole miniature course that teaches the science of spaceflight.

Nook and cookies: Barnes and Noble, 23-80 Bell Blvd.; (718) 224-1083; www.barnesandnoble.com; Saturdays, 10:30 am, Now - Sat, Nov. 2; Free.

Children listen to stories that come to life on a Nook, plus fun arts and crafts.

The Amazing Maize Maze: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; Saturdays, 11 am-4:30 pm, Sundays, 11 am-4:30 pm, Sat, Oct. 5 - Sun, Oct. 27; \$9 (\$5 children, Free for children under 3).

Three interactive corn mazes and lots of fun activities.

Pumpkin patch: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am-4:30 pm, Sat, Oct. 5 - Sun, Oct. 27; Pumpkin price based on size.

Children enjoy the crisp autumn air and wander through the pumpkin patch to find that perfect gourd.

"The Ghost of Sleepy Hollow": Vanderbilt Carriage House, 180 Little Neck Rd.; (516) 293-0674; www.are-naplayers.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Now - Sun, Oct. 6; \$10 (\$8 children, Children under 3 free).

Ichabod and the headless horsemen go head to no-head in the Washington Irving classic.

Adventure course: Alley Pond Park, 76th Avenue and Springfield Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; Sundays, 10 am and 1:30 pm, Now - Sun, Nov. 17; Free.

Take the challenge that encourages a physical connection with nature. Trained staff help you through the course. Pre-registration required.

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS



Tee off with mini golf

There are lots of reasons mini-golf is still around: it allows multiple generations to have fun together; it improves hand-eye coordination; it can be enjoyed by novices and experts; and now, with My Mini Golf by Starting Time, it's an activity that can be played indoors or out.

On a rainy afternoon, everyone in our family was waiting their turn to try out the Junior Set in the house. Recommended for ages 4 and older, it includes the kid's put-

ter and golf ball, six course pieces, and a mesh bag to store the pieces. (Starting Time also offers the option to purchase the pieces individually.)

Whether we played on wood floors or carpets, we were never in the rough, and we were thrilled with the quality of the pieces that stay put while you putt.

My Mini Golf Junior Set by Starting Time, \$169.95, www.startingtimelife.com.

Mister G hits a home run

Singer-songwriter Mister G, of "Chocolalala" fame, has just released a CD of bilingual songs which your family will enjoy while subconsciously honing their Span-

ish speaking skills.

In the liner notes of "ABC Fiesta," Mister G reveals that he first became interested in studying Spanish while he was pursuing his dream of playing Major League Baseball; he thought it might help him converse with his future Latin American teammates.

Mister G may have struck out in his bid to play pro ball, but he continued to practice his Espanol.

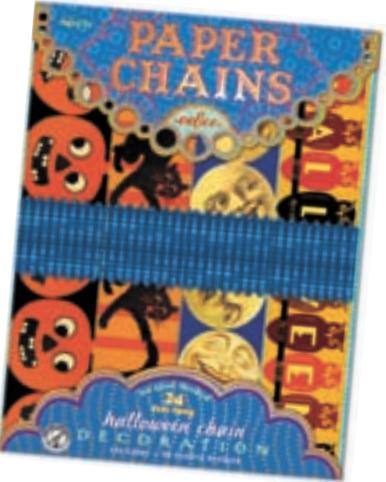
Now, he has a home run with this collection of original tunes which effortlessly combines both languages with the accompaniment of toe-tapping Latin rhythms and instruments.

"ABC Fiesta" CD by Mister G, \$14.99, [www.mistersongs.com](http://mistersongs.com).



Chain gang

Transform any room into a festive October haunt with the Halloween Paper Chain by Eeboo. This set includes 120 links in 30 festive designs. Gather the kids to make the links by using the precut slots — no tape, glue or staples necessary! With the quality we've come to expect from this Manhattan-based brand, the papers are printed on both sides with charming, vintage illustrations featuring jack-o'-lanterns, owls, black cats, and glowing golden moons. And after Halloween has come and gone, reuse the chain links by incorporating them into the scrapbook pages you'll make to preserve the memo-



ries of your spooky celebrations.
Halloween Paper Chain by Eeboo, \$10.95, www.geniusbaby.com.

Kids get drawn together

Parents who yearn for wholesome entertainment for their tweens, about contributing to their community, helping out at home, and ok, a smattering of puppy love, too, will be thrilled to screen the animated Japanese film "From Up On Poppy Hill" for their family's next movie night.

Just released on DVD and Blu-Ray, this 2011 movie is set in the quaint seaside town of Yokohama in 1963. It centers



on Shun (Anton Yelchin) and Umi (Sarah Bolger). The friends join to lead their fellow students on a crusade to save their school's quirky Latin Quarter, a beloved, ramshackle clubhouse.

Your tween may get drawn in by the movie's romance and stunning artistry, and will learn about a fascinating time in Japan's history.

"From Up On Poppy Hill" Blu-ray + DVD, \$34.95, DVD, \$29.94, www.amazon.com.

They're criminally cute

In Tracey Corderoy's new book, "Shifty McGifty and Slippery Sam," the canine title characters prove to be bungling burglars and — with the help of talented illustrator Steven Lenton — perfectly irresistible, too. Desperate for a big score, the thieving pooches bake up a storm of treats, invite their neighbors over for tea, and then set about robbing their homes.



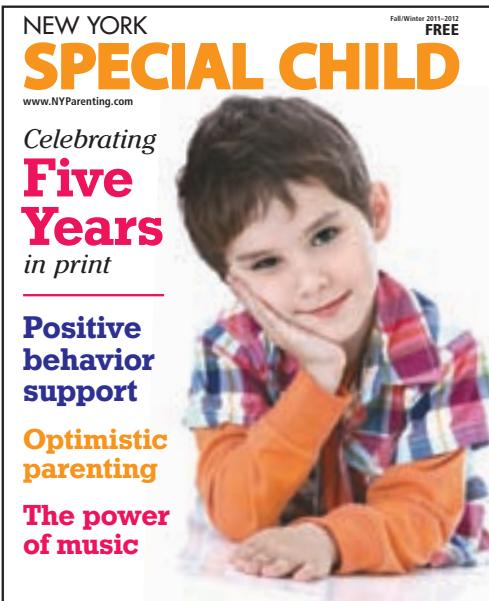
Luckily, Shifty's and Sam's pack of adorable friends see through their ruse, catch them in the act, quickly forgive, and encourage them to capitalize on their baking talent by opening a cafe.

Recommended for readers ages 4–7, the whimsical book has unexpected twists, turns, and suspense.

"Shifty McGifty and Slippery Sam" by Tracey Corderoy, \$14.99, www.amazon.com.

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