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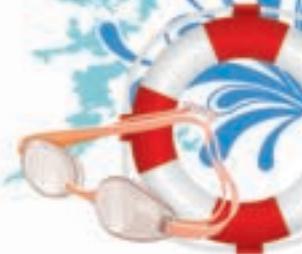
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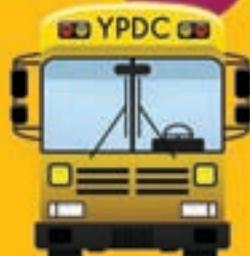
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Letter from the publisher

What a winter!

I live not far from a lovely park. That park has a sizeable hill and all winter long the kids have been having a blast. While the rest of us have been somewhat grumpy and grumbling about this year's winter weather, the kids have been having a largely different experience. Sleds, toboggans, saucers, and tubes; they have been climbing and sliding and enjoying the winter in a way only children can. The skating rinks have been busy and just in time a handful of new rinks were readied in the various boroughs, and they are beautiful!

In spite of the winter fun that many have been enjoying, hopefully this month we'll experience a hint of spring. It will be fantastic to put



aside these boots, hats, scarves, etc. and lighten our load. The kids will be happy too, I have no doubt and spring fun will begin with team sports and outdoor practices and the parks filling to capacity.

So at this point in the late winter/early spring

we're thinking a lot about summer and are highlighting summer camps and programs. Not too early in the least to start making some decisions for the summer. There are early-bird discounts that one shouldn't miss and all the Directors are hoping for a sensible sign-up season and not everyone waiting until the last minute. Why is it that so many people wait until the deadline to do everything?

We have some very thought provoking articles this month like the

bad language so many children are using on a regular basis. Our Award Winning writer Risa Doherty once again has tapped into a provocative topic and her piece in this issue is a must read. I know I'm not the only parent concerned with the way youngsters are expressing themselves and how it makes me feel to be hearing them.

Christa Melnyk Hines has written a piece on *Keeping Your Kids Safe* that is also a must read. All of us have experienced the anxiety associated with the thought of losing a child. This article will help give you some important steps to take to keep such a thing from happening.

Tammy Scileppi chimes in with an interesting article on a new app that can help us create time and commitment to achieve inner peace through meditation, and there's Allison Plitt's review of "It's Not About the Broc-

coli" and an interview with its author Dr. Dina Rose.

And in continuing on the health topic, a potential cure for peanut allergies is addressed by Alex Bigwarfe in an interesting article about new studies and potential cures. A lot to read and we hope you find it as interesting as we did.

Wishing you a good month and an end to snow and ice. We're all ready for a change and for those early spring plants to come up and let us know that spring is truly on the way.

Thanks for reading!

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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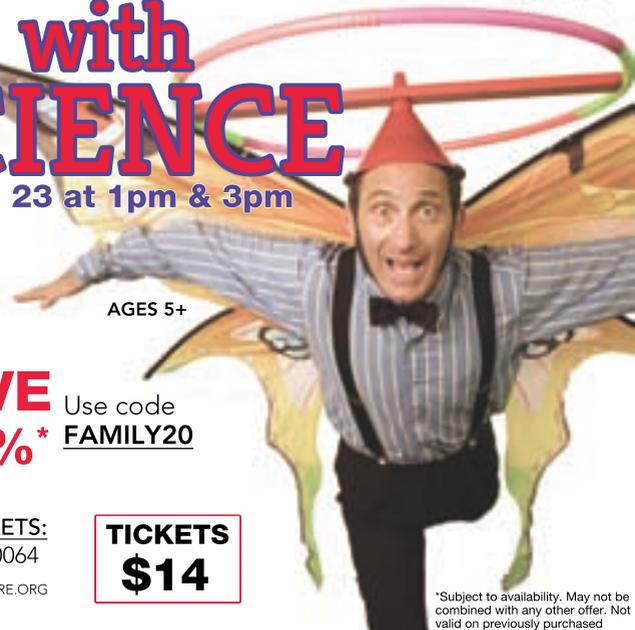
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What did you say?

Experts
weigh in on
how to curb
the F-word
scourge

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

Gone are the days when a parent would threaten to wash a child's mouth out with soap for using a "four-letter word." Many of today's teens and tweens sprinkle their everyday conversation with language our mothers would tell us was "right out of the gutter," and they don't know what parents are getting so upset about.

Sam, a freshman at a Brooklyn high school, and his friend "Mark," from an Upper West Side Manhattan high school, found it humorous that an adult would even care, saying, "So long as adults are not present, what does it matter?"

"Youthologist" Vanessa Van Petten, author of "You're Grounded! How to stop fighting and make the teenage years easier," and founder of the Radical Parenting blog written by teens, tells me such language has "been normalized," and that there is a definite generational difference in the way our teens express themselves.

What is the cause?

Opinions vary as to the biggest influence on our teens' colorful language. Van Petten points to pop culture and digital media as the main culprits for making this speech, which was once isolated to particu-

lar demographics, commonplace nationally. She also blames YouTube, where celebrities post videos replete with curse words, absent of content regulation.

It is hard to ignore the fact that the F-word is used with abandon in songs and popular films, such as "The Wolf of Wall Street" (506 times). The "Fockers" trilogy was a huge hit, as audiences delighted in quasi F-word humor. When Bono used the word to express excitement at the 2003 Golden Globes, the Federal Communications Commission initially let it slide, saying its use was "fleeting" and wasn't used in a sexual content. They later reversed their decision, condemning his utterance, along with similar award show slips by Cher and Nicole Ritchie.

In the 2005 documentary, "F--," radio show host Dennis Prager gives kids more credit, saying they know the difference between Hollywood and its fantasy world of movies and their own homes.

Journalism analyst David Shaw, who also appears in the film, attributed young people's indelicate language acquisition to the people around them: family members and friends, saying they hear it in backyards, placing the responsibility squarely on parents to protect kids. He said it is contagious, like a virus.

Kids do it to be more "adult-like, cool or popular," but, as kids use the words more and more frequently, they lose their initial impact, says Phillip, a Queens high school junior.

Brooklyn social worker Lori Hiller says that teens will "try on" language as they would different personalities, hairstyles, and clothing. She also says teens may use it to fit in, like on a neighborhood basketball court, where such words may make sense for the moment.

"It's lazy language," according to James O'Connor, founder of Cuss Control Academy. He says it is easier to fall back on those words, which are really not descriptive, and encourages teens to replace curses with alternative expressions, explaining that the word "s---" could easily be replaced with "manure," "garbage," "trouble," or "rotten."

The 'normalization' of foul language

Van Petten references "the normalization" of expressions which used to be considered bad language, such as "kick a--" or "s---- day." She said they now appear regularly in blog posts and are basically part of the lexicon.

People always cursed in anger. But, the casual, cavalier manner with which today's average teens insert the F-word multiple times in sentences is a recent development. When my teen expressed himself in such a manner, I was offended and was told that the F-word wasn't directed at me, and "This is the way people speak these days." Other teens agree.

It seems as if the F-word is no longer considered profane in teen circles, and its colloquial use is not meant to be offensive. Phillip explains, "It's a common word," saying that it is used "not in a way to be rude, it's just a normal adjective."

"Patrick," a middle schooler from Queens, says his peers use it thoughtlessly, and "They don't mean what they say." All the teens I spoke with tell me they are not particularly impressed by its usage and are actually annoyed when it is overused by their friends.

Some teens who are hesitant to curse out loud curse freely on social media. Hiller warns teens that what they write in cyberspace will stay with them, and colleges and prospective employers might access them. Even their own friends could be offended reading posted expletives without context and inflection.

O'Connor recognizes that eliminating swearing altogether is unrealistic.

"I would not say 'Swearing is a bad thing, you should never do it,'" he told me by phone. "It is a part of the way we communicate." O'Connor distinguishes between "casual" and "causal" usage of such words: the former "for the fun of it," and the latter to vent frustration or anger. He says they are regularly used "as meaningless modifiers" by chronic complainers and whiners.

Van Petten also tells teens that use of the F-word as a mere adjective is still not excusable, if the time and place is inappropriate. Even in casual use, it can be viewed as crude, and if the teen is uncertain of how it will be received, it is best to refrain.

Is it hypocritical to tell teens not to curse?

In the documentary, Hollywood director Kevin Smith says that it is too hypocritical never to curse, but that people can choose not to do it at home.

Van Petten is not troubled by the potential hypocrisy, as most adults limit their cursing to certain arenas. She advises teens to be aware of their surroundings and be extra

careful not to let loose in public areas where it would be considered crass and disrespectful, such as restaurants, trains, and sidewalks, and in front of adults and young children. She says the key is the teen's ability to learn how to moderate language, "to turn it on or off," depending on the environment, and that this is a skill every young adult needs to master.

Shocked as I was by my own teen's language, I understood that I would not be able to monitor it all the time. So, although I was not pleased that he would curse at all, I told him I never wanted to hear it, but that I would not know if he cursed if he was alone with his peers.

Some parents still prefer to tell their teens to refrain from cursing entirely, and commit to never use such language themselves, so that their rules are not inconsistent with their practice.

"Molly," a high school sophomore from Forest Hills, feels that her mother is backwards and out of touch with today's world because she doesn't curse.

Hiller recognizes that parents who never curse within earshot of

their children are creating "an artificial world" for them. She tells parents not to be ashamed if a curse word slips out occasionally in front of their teens, because they hear these words every day outside of the home. She does not condone inappropriate or excessive cursing, but she recommends parents think about how much of a bubble they want to place around their kids.

How to break the habit

Van Petten says it is habit forming, and teens get used to it. Moreover, it can be a difficult habit to get rid of, just like an unwanted regional accent. She called it "muscle memory" — a type of reflex response.

O'Connor agrees, saying that once it becomes ingrained, there is a greater chance that it can slip out at the wrong time: in front of a boss or teacher. Like any bad habit, it will take a concentrated effort to break, he says.

When my kids were little, I docked them a nickel or a dime for each curse word. It was fairly effective.

Russell Barkley and Arthur Robin, authors of "Your Defiant Teen," recommend a rewards and punishment system, using money or points to condition tweens and teens to restrain their speech — but its effectiveness is not so clear for this age group.

Van Petten, who has worked with hundreds of teens, says it is best not to get hung up on "nickel and

diming" tweens and teens, because it just does not work. She found that even fining them as much as \$1 to \$5 still backfires: it may curtail the cursing, but creates more animosity. Teens and tweens do not want to be controlled.

O'Connor wrote "Cuss Control" in 2000 to help people curtail their cursing, relying on anger-control and coping strategies, and suggesting teens find alternative words to express frustration. He points out that there are roughly 900,000 words in the English language and 30 basic swear words, recommending replacement phrases like "holy smoke" or "fiddlesticks." Unfortunately, these phrases won't cut it anymore, and it is difficult to find peer-accepted alternatives, as most teens care more about fitting in than starting new trends.

Van Petten points out that parents need to pick their battles. Don't lecture tweens and teens, but instead, let them know it is their own personal choice. It may be difficult for some parents to change gears from earlier patterns of preaching at their child to talking to their adolescent as they would an adult, but it will be more effective.

She believes it is more important to teach teens that they need to communicate in a respectful way, which hopefully will not include curses. She tells parents to explain to teens that constant cursing in the wrong company makes them appear unintelligent and crude, giving a negative impression to people who might then choose to disassociate from them.

Van Petten says teens should practice refraining from cursing around their parents, so that they don't accidentally use the offensive language at the wrong time.

Parents feel responsible for guiding their adolescents' behavior, even though it gets harder to control the actions of older and oft rebellious offspring. They should discount their teen's seemingly automatic response, which likely starts with "at least I'm not..." (insert: "doing drugs," "drinking," "killing people," or other serious infraction), and take some time to explain the importance of language. Parents of teens may indeed have to face more serious issues, but the words we all use still have an impact and our teens need to know that.

Risa C. Doherty is an award-winning freelance journalist who parented two teens. Read more at www.risadoherty.com or follow her on Twitter @risadoherty.



Tough nut to crack

Is there a potential cure for peanut allergies?

BY ALEX BIGWARFE

Food allergies are on the rise in the United States, having increased by approximately 50 percent between 1997 and 2011. This is according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The most common fatal food allergy reactions are caused by peanuts. This affects one in 50 children. Exposure to peanuts (even trace amounts) can put a child into anaphylactic shock, which can lead to death if not treated. Due to the severity of the allergy, parents of children with peanut allergies sometimes have to take extreme measures to ensure that their children are not exposed to peanuts or anything that has come in contact with them.

However, there may soon be some relief for families who suffer from peanut allergies.

The findings of a study conducted at Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge, England, were released in *The Lancet* in late January 2014. The study in "tolerance therapy" was conducted over a period of five years in response to the half a million people in the United Kingdom that suffer from this allergy. Ninety-nine children ages 7 to 16 took part.

The patients participated in a therapy to help them build up tolerance over a short time period. A very small amount of peanut protein was introduced daily, with the amount being slowly increased over time. The goal was to get the patients to be able to eat about five nuts with no allergic reaction.

The treatment succeeded in 84 percent of the children who par-

ticipated in the study. The quality of life for these families has increased significantly. Maureen Jenkins, director of clinical services at Allergy UK, said: "Peanut allergy is a particularly frightening food allergy, causing constant anxiety of a reaction from peanut traces. This is a major step forward in the global quest to manage it."

This is not the first study in this line of research. In 2009, researchers at Duke University Medical Center and Arkansas Children's Hospital concluded that small doses of peanut protein over time could result in tolerance among children with peanut allergies. This was followed in 2011 by a study from Duke University Medical Center, which found that after one year of treatment, 11 children who had peanut allergy could

tolerate up to six peanuts.

Still, Dr. Anna Nowak-Wegrzyn, associate professor of pediatrics at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York, warns parents that this is not an end-all cure. In order to maintain tolerance, those who are treated in this manner must continue eating peanuts daily.

Immunotherapy is part of the planned treatments in a new peanut allergy clinic opening at the Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust. More research is needed on the topic, but these studies provide encouraging outcomes for those who suffer from peanut allergies.

Alexa Bigwarfe is the mother of three small children. She has taken a special interest in child, maternal, and newborn health and writes regularly on these topics.



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"THE PLACE EVERYONE IS RAVING ABOUT"

Stranger danger?

Ten smart tips to keep your kids safe

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

With the parade sounds of blaring horns and beating drums marching off into the distance, Angie Worth, along with her newborn daughter Ella, her 2-year-old son Todd, and her elderly grandmother, began to head back to the car. The exciting morning turned into panicked chaos when Worth lost sight of her energetic toddler.

“Todd took off running into the crowd and was out of my sight in just a few seconds,” says Worth. “I started yelling his name and running in the general direction of where I thought he might be.” Just as she was about to call the police, Todd reappeared. “I was so relieved and shaken at the same time,” recalls Worth.

The idea of losing a child and not knowing what happened to him is every parent’s worst nightmare. Although abduction by strangers is statistically rare, the media sensationalism of such events makes the ordeal seem all the more likely.

Chances are, though, your child may need to seek help from a stranger at some point, which leaves many parents scratching their heads: Who should your child approach for help, and how much information should your child give? And what about those people who your family only “sort-of” knows?

Define ‘stranger’

Beth Wegner, a community crime prevention specialist, facilitates safety workshops with parents and children. She tells kids, “Strangers can be nice. They may have toys or pets, but strangers are people you do not know.”

In general, Wegner says, it’s easiest to teach very young kids not to talk to strangers at all.

“For the older children, we can go into more detail, and usually through



questions, flesh out what a dangerous stranger is,” she says.

Most importantly, if someone makes your child feel uncomfortable and won’t leave her alone, she should yell “Stranger!” and run and tell a trusted adult.

Practice ‘what-if’ scenarios

Use visits to large stores, shopping malls, or the zoo as opportunities to educate your children about what to do if you should become

separated from each other. Agree on an easy-to-find meeting spot.

Debby Helmer, a former nanny and school teacher, says she began pointing out cash registers at various stores to her son Alex, age 7, when he was 3 years old.

“I have found that the cash registers are easier to find than customer service. And I tell my kids to only talk to the cashier,” she says. Most of all, assure your child that you will never leave a place without him.

Are there safe strangers? Wegner doesn't advocate ever talking to strangers.

"With impersonators out there, including women with children, the safe stranger concept is a slippery slope," Wegner says.

Err on the side of caution if you point out strangers your children could seek help from. In a store, for example, make sure they notice a store employee's actual uniform, including distinctive name tags or badges, and not just the colors employees wear. Also, instruct them to only talk to employees in an area where other people are around.

Safe-keep DNA samples

What do your child's old toothbrushes, baby teeth and hairbrushes have in common? These items can serve as DNA samples to help find a missing child. Seal your child's old toothbrush in a plastic bag, labeled with the date and your child's name, in the freezer. Save your child's baby teeth in a labeled film canister in the freezer. Collect hair with the root still attached from your child's hairbrush and save it in an envelope labeled with your child's name.

Share limited information

Car rides provide a good time to practice going over your child's name, address, and phone number. Turning it into a sing-song jingle also helps him memorize all those numbers. If your child does seek help from a stranger, however, his first name and his parents' first and last names should suffice, says Wegner.

Take pictures

Helmer suggests nonchalantly taking your kids' pictures with your cellphone when you arrive at a busy public place. Not only will you have yet another adorable picture of their smiling mugs to text to your family and friends, you'll also have a current picture of your children to share right away with authorities should the unthinkable occur. And you won't have to rack your already panicked brain about what clothes they wore that day.

Avoid advertising your child's name

When a kid's name is on the back of his coat or backpack, predators

can use your child's name as a way to strike up a conversation.

Emergency contacts

Have a couple of "in case of emergency" friends on call, just in case. The schools typically ask families to designate a few emergency contacts who have permission to pick children up from school in the event of an emergency. Have a similar carte-blanche policy in your family and make sure your kids know who the designated safe people are.

Tell them who they may NOT go with

It's difficult enough to have someone untrustworthy in your family, but if you do not want that person to pick up your children in case of an emergency, then the children need to know that they should stay put until one of their "safe people" arrives. Remind your kids that their safety is, "more important than anyone's embarrassment, inconvenience, or offense," says Jennifer Blackwood, a certified Kid Power instructor, who teaches children safety skills and self-defense.

Have a secret family password

If someone asks your child to go somewhere with him, your child can say that her mom and dad only allows her to go with someone who knows the password. Explain to your child that even if the person is insistent that he has your permission, you would never give anyone permission to take her anywhere without her knowing ahead of time. And, if it's a real emergency, the person you've put in charge will know the family password.

Teach facts, not fear

Empowering a child with the skills to protect herself, like never approaching a stranger's car, builds confidence.

"Just as you would teach manners or crossing the street, weave personal safety skills into daily life in a very matter of fact way," Blackwood says.

For more child safety tips, check out www.McGruff.org, www.safekids.org, www.ncpc.org, www.missingkids.com, and your local police department.

Freelance journalist Christa Melnyk Hines and her husband are the parents of two boys. She is the author of "Confidently Connected: A Mom's Guide to a Satisfying Social Life."

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New book on teaching kids about eating habits, not nutrition

BY ALLISON PLITT

Dr. Dina Rose has spent the past 15 years of her life researching, blogging, and teaching families about how to get their children to eat healthy meals. Her new book, “It’s Not About the Broccoli,” takes a different approach to teaching children about health, because, while most books about children and healthy eating are written by nutritionists and revolve around nutrition, Rose, who has a PhD in sociology, focuses her efforts on changing families’ beliefs and behaviors about eating habits.

The book, her first, was published in January, and in it, she discusses her approach to getting kids to forge healthy eating behaviors.

“My PhD is in sociology, and that is what makes my work unique in the field of feeding children, because most people who approach this topic are nutritionists,” Rose says. “But if you think about what sociology is, which is really the study of socialization or how parents transmit norms and values, beliefs, and behaviors, this really fits right into that, because eating is not really about the food per se.”

According to Rose, “Nutrition teaches us about the food, but eating really is about the behavior about how we choose what to eat,

when to eat, why to eat, and how much to eat.”

What kind of parent are you?

So in order to teach our children how to eat right, Rose says parents have to teach their children how to behave in relation to food.

The first part of Rose’s book takes a look at the ineffective approaches parents use to get their kids to eat. Rose gives a name to each tactic parents use. For example, there are “It’s-Just-A-Phasers,” parents who constantly give-in to their children’s food preferences for chicken nuggets or macaroni and cheese. There are also “Comforters,” parents who use food to stop feelings, and “The Food Police,” parents who are so worried about nutrition, that they only allow their children to eat unprocessed, healthy food.

‘The Big Fix’

What happens next in the book is what Rose describes as “The Big Fix.” Explaining her solution, Rose writes, “The goal of the teaching approach is simple: to teach children the three habits of proportion, variety, and moderation — in other words, how to eat a variety of foods in moderation and in proportion to their health benefits.”

Rose recommends parents speak frankly with their children about her eating plan before trying it out at home.

“We need to talk to our children about our strategies, and about why

we’re asking them to eat in a way that we want them to eat,” Rose says. “We have to explain why they should eat the way they should, because of the value of the concept of proportion, which is you can have any kind of food you want, but we eat certain foods more often than other foods.”

Be a new foods booster

One of the main ideas in Rose’s book is the “rotation rule,” which means kids cannot be served the same meal two days in a row. The objective of her rotation rule is that the more foods you expose your children to, the more they will be willing to try them. She knows kids are scared of tasting new foods, so she recommends parents describe the new dish to them in terms of taste and texture.

Next, Rose suggests families adhere to a schedule for eating. The schedule she proposes allows kids to eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, a mid-morning snack, and another snack after dinner.

She also recommends that parents serve at each meal one “back-up food” — a food that children like, such as rice. So if children don’t like the main course, they can have a small portion of the “back-up food.”

She is also a proponent of children being in touch with their own feelings of hunger. She tells parents to never tell their children to finish eating all the food on their plates, and if their children are still hungry after dinner, they have to wait until they can eat their after-dinner snack.

Rose’s food groups

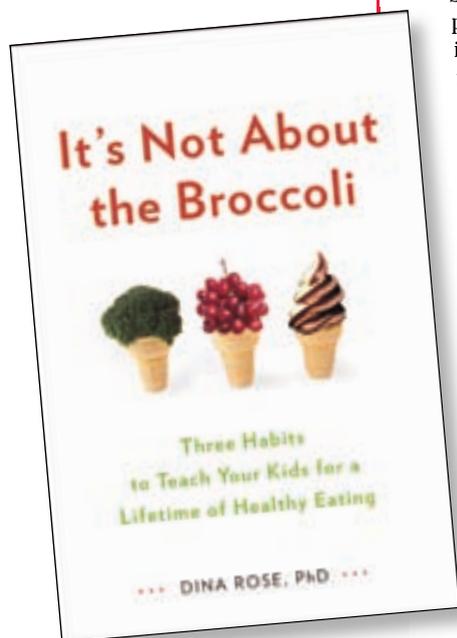
In her book, Rose classifies food into three categories:

- “Growing Foods” (fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, chicken, fish, eggs, beans, whole-grain bread, brown rice, nuts, unsweetened cereal, milk, and yogurt)

- “Fun Foods” (vegetables in rich sauces, fruits canned in light syrup, 100-percent fruit juice, red meat, hot dogs, chicken nuggets, pizza, peanut butter and jelly, bagels, pasta, popcorn, pretzels, pancakes, moderately sweetened breakfast cereals, sweetened yogurt, chocolate milk, and cheese)

- “Treat Foods” (any fried vegetables such as French fries, fruits canned in heavy syrup, fried chicken, doughnuts, muffins, heavily sweetened breakfast cereals, ice cream, frozen yogurt, soda, and sports drinks).

Rose says that, as a culture, Americans think healthy foods taste bad, and it is up to parents to teach their children the opposite.





Rose doesn't ban any of these foods. She explains, however, that parents need to show their children that they should eat these food groups in certain proportions: a large portion of "Growing Foods," a medium-sized amount of "Fun Foods," and small helping of "Treat Foods." Rose also believes parents need to teach their children to serve themselves the correct portions of food at meal times.

Everyone's a critic

Rose says that, as a culture, Americans think healthy foods taste bad, and it is up to parents to teach their children the opposite. She suggests parents not serve bland vegetables, but cook them in tasty recipes that children will enjoy.

Rose suggests amp-ing-up the fun at mealtimes by encouraging children to act as food critics, by having them circle different expressions

on faces as a way of indicating how much they like a specific food. Her theory is that if children enjoy being food critics, they will be more willing to try new foods. Rose advises never asking your child if he likes or dislikes a food, because children are fickle eaters and change their opinions all of the time.

Another interesting idea that Rose proposes is that when families eat out in restaurants, parents

should avoid ordering off of the children's menu, which usually consists of hot dogs, hamburgers, and mac 'n' cheese. Instead, Rose suggests children order appetizers off the adult menu, so they cultivate new tastes.

Teach good habits

Rose says that as a culture, Americans are so obsessed with their children receiving nutrients, that they don't recognize the habits they are teaching their children. For example, Rose says some American parents give their kids a cheese stick two to three times a day, because the food contains calcium and protein. What Americans don't realize is that cheese has a high amount of fat and that parents are actually teaching their children to eat fatty foods two to three times a day.

Providing frightening statistics, such as poor eating habits in childhood lead to poor eating habits as young adults, Rose cautions parents from constantly filling their baby's sippy cup with fruit juice, because all of that sugary water will lead to a teenager constantly drinking soda.

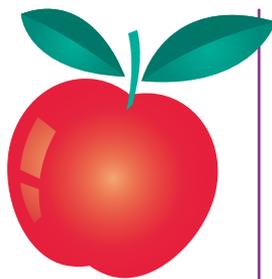
According to Rose, Americans eat a grain-saturated diet, in which we eat bagels or muffins for breakfast, sandwiches for lunch, and pasta at dinner. To counter this habit, she suggests parents try to serve a fruit and vegetable at every meal and every snack.

"I don't expect parents to succeed," Rose says, "but we should set that intention, because it's by setting the intention that we flip the proportion so that our children start getting more fruits and vegetables in their diet."

Rose sums up the premise of her book as, "If knowledge about nutrition were the way to healthy eating, Americans would be the healthiest eaters on the planet, because there has never been a time in the history of the world when a nation knew so much about nutrition. It's not about nutrition. It's about behavior. Once parents start thinking about habits, the answer about what to do becomes so much clearer."

For more information about Dr. Dina Rose and her book, "It's Not About the Broccoli," you can visit her website, <http://itsnotaboutnutrition.squarespace.com>.

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.



DEAR TEACHER

PEGGY GISLER AND
MARGE EBERTS

Kindergarten ready?

Dear teacher,

We have a decision to make soon. Our son has a fall birthday, but he still makes the cutoff date. He is a bright child who already knows his letters and numbers, and definitely could handle kindergarten, according to his preschool teacher.

I'm torn about whether I should send him to kindergarten in the fall or enroll him in our district's transitional kindergarten program. What are the benefits of transitional programs?

Dear parent,

It has been pointed out that today's kindergartens are quite often yesterday's first grades. On the other hand, transitional kindergartens are more like kindergartens used to be. In them, academics take a back seat to socialization. Children learn how to wait their turn, share, and play with other children. Most of their learning is done through hands-on activities. These programs are fun, and children tend to fall in love with school, which is not always the story when regular kindergarten academics may keep them at their desks doing worksheets. This can turn young children off to learning.

As far as research goes on the benefits of transitional programs, most of it is positive. The only big negative seems to be that it can add a year of schooling. Positives include less retention, less need for special education programs, and higher achievement scores beyond grade three. Plus, children attending transitional programs will be older and more mature in high school and college.

Not all children can attend a public transitional kindergarten program. In some areas there is no funding available, or enrollment may be limited to disadvantaged children. The advantage of attending a public program rather than non-school-based programs is that the teachers are certified in public programs, and the curriculum is aligned with the school district's kindergarten program. At the present time, far more children attend non-school-based programs.

Individual learning styles

Dear teacher,

My sixth-grader learns most eas-



ily by reading. However, her teacher puts a great emphasis on lecturing and class discussion. How can I get the teacher to give my child more reading assignments?

Dear parent,

Back in the 1970s, individual learning styles were a hot topic in education. The idea was that teachers should discover each student's learning style and teach in a way that best fits that student. Unfortunately, there hasn't been any solid scientifically based research to support this view. Further research is needed.

Your daughter has a preference to learn through reading. Most people do have a favorite way of processing information. Ignoring children's learning styles does not inspire or excite them to learn. The best approach is to incorporate all learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) in a teacher's instruction.

You certainly can talk to your child's teacher about your child's learning preferences. It is quite possible that the teacher would be able to give your child a list of materials to read that might make it easier for her to learn certain subjects. Be very careful that you are not criticizing the teacher's teaching style when you talk with him or her.

A problem with listening

Dear teacher,

Why would a smart 8 year old have problems listening to his teacher's instructions? No hearing problems have been found. Do you

have any ideas?

Dear parent,

Many children have never learned to listen. Listening is not the same thing as hearing. Hearing is a passive activity. For example, children hear thunder, the car engine, and bees buzzing. Listening involves active participation of their brain. What they hear must register in their brain. Listening is an extremely important skill — one that is closely related to academic success in school.

First of all, you want to be sure that you listen to what your child is saying. Set a good example by making eye contact with your child and responding to what the child says.

Fortunately, parents can improve their children's listening skills through activities that are fun. Try some of these with your child to help him become a better listener:

- Make a habit of reading to your child and pausing to ask questions about what has been read.
- Make a deliberate error in what you are reading, and see if your child catches it. For example, call the cat in the hat a dog in the hat.
- Play Simon Says, 20 Questions, and Junior Trivial Pursuit.
- Share family activities at the dinner table.
- Talk to your child about activities that interest him.
- Clap your hands in different patterns, and have your child imitate them. Then add thigh claps or head taps.
- Listen to a favorite TV program for a few minutes, then have your child shut his eyes and identify the speakers.
- Start a story at the supper table. Each family member ends a sentence with "then." The next person completes the sentence and ends it with "then" until everyone at the table has added something to the story.

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

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First-time camper

How to
prepare your
child for a
time away

BY BOB DITTER

Sending your child away to camp for the first time is a major milestone for most families, one that is often marked by excitement, anticipation, and perhaps even some anxiety. Although camp is certainly about making friends and having fun, it is also about being on your own and being a part of a community.

One of the most important things a parent can do to help prepare

their child for both aspects of camp is to talk with them about it before they go.

In fact, it may be better to have several occasional, shorter talks rather than one long conversation, as children often absorb more when there is less to think about at one time.

I also find that children do better with this sort of conversation if it is part of a more general conversation, and if it is part of a pattern of talking, either at the dinner table

or while riding in the car doing errands.

The following are some sample topics for discussion that will help prepare your child emotionally for their big adventure:

Friends

Camp is not anything if it is not about making new friends. If you are shy about meeting new kids, then learn to get to know others by being a good listener. Remember also that not everyone in your

Advice for kids: The more you put into camp, the more you will get out of it!

cabin, bunk, or group has to be your friend, and you don't have to be everyone else's friend. As long as you treat others with respect and they do the same with you, then having one or two friends at camp is fine. If you have more, then that's great!

Activities

There are many exciting things to do at camp, many of which you may never have tried before. If you're worried about being homesick, then remember the excitement of going to camp: Remember, when you first decided to go to camp, what made you so excited? You may not like all the activities, or you may be better at some than others. That's normal. I, however, hope you are willing to try. The more you put into camp, the more you will get out of it!

Cooperating

You, like every other camper there, will be part of a cabin, bunk, or group. As your parent, I hope you will cooperate with others and help out. That's part of what makes camp so special — kids helping each other out. Most kids will help you if you are friendly and help them.

Give yourself time. One thing about camp is that almost everything is new — the kids, the activities, the routines, the bed you sleep in, the bathroom. It takes a few days to get adjusted, so be patient with yourself.

Most of the time, you will be having so much fun, you won't mind all of the changes, but if you do, remember that you will get so used to things that by the time you come home, you will miss all those things!

Helping out

Camp is about fun, but it also requires that you help out. Cleanup is part of camp. You do it every day! As your parent, I hope you will cooperate!

Getting help

Everyone has good days and

bad days. If you are having a problem, your counselor is there to help you!

You don't have to wait to tell us if you are upset about something. After all, if your counselor doesn't know what might be troubling you, he can't help you. Be honest and ask for what you need. If your counselor doesn't seem to be concerned or doesn't help you, then you can go to the unit director, head counselor, etc. (Parents should know who these "back-up persons" are and how their child will recognize them if they need to.)

Being positive

It's a great thing to remind your first-time camper about her strong points. I would focus not just on what she does well, but her positive qualities as well, such as what makes her a good friend or the type of person other kids would want to know.

Helping children identify their strengths can help them when they are having a setback — one of those inevitable growing pains all children have from time to time.

...

Talking with your child about these kinds of issues is a great way to show support as your child gets ready to take this important step on the road to being more resilient and self-reliant. For you as a parent, it can give you more peace of mind as you allow your child to participate safely in a broader world.

To learn more about camp and child development, please visit the American Camp Association's family-dedicated website: www.CampParents.org, or call the toll-free number, (800) 428-CAMP (2267).

*Bob Ditter is a child and family therapist living in Boston who consults extensively with people who work with children. He was special consultant to the Disney Channel for the camp series "Bug Juice." Ditter has visited more than 500 children's camps in the United States, has been quoted in *Sports Illustrated*, *The New York Times*, *Parent Magazine*, and the *Ladies Home Journal*. He has appeared on "The Today Show" and the "Evening News with Peter Jennings" and is considered one of the nation's leading experts on camp.*

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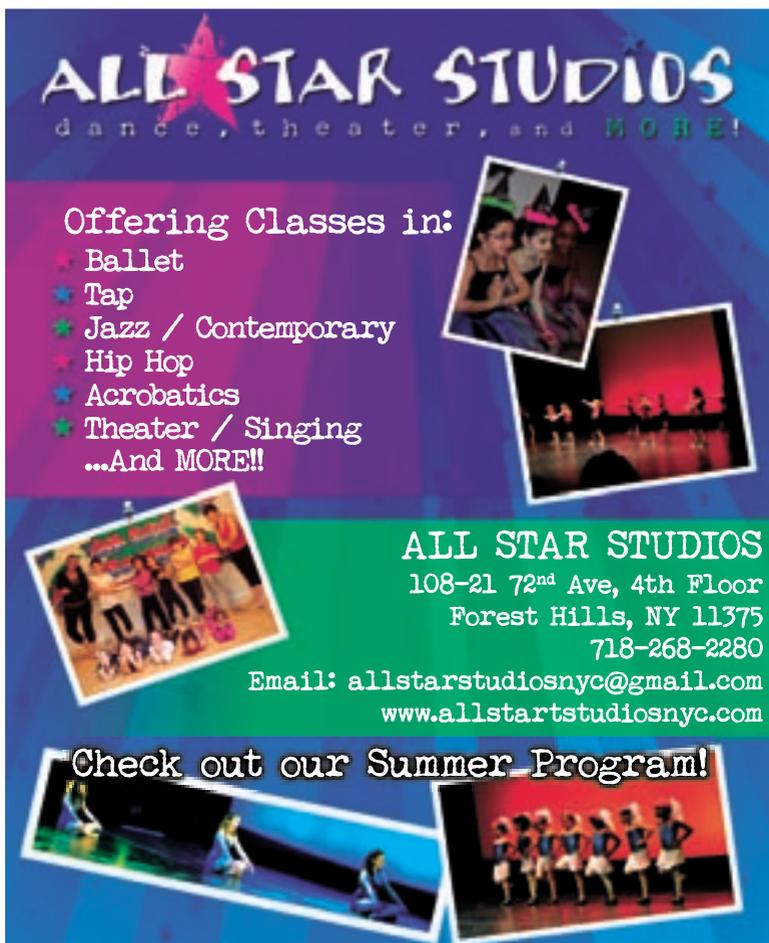
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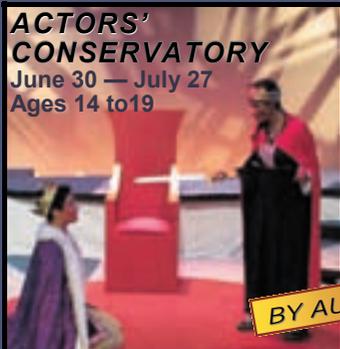


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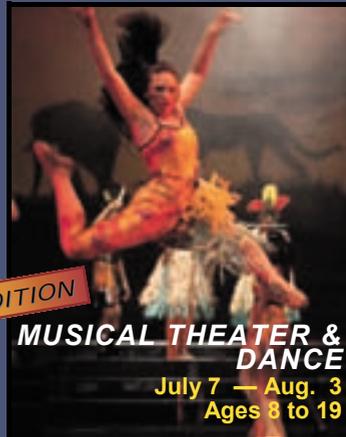
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Summer Camps/Programs

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 18

ments for seniors, home school learners and various community organizations. School Break workshops during Spring Break for Comics/Cartoons: (M-W) 2/17-19 & 4/14-16 @ 9:45am-12:30pm. Summer ART Clubs 7/8-8/7 T/W/TH are offered as 9:45-11:45AM for age 6-8.5 for serious beginners, explore fundamentals concepts in fine art. 12:50-3:30PM for age 9-MS/HS, classically training in fine arts, medium based & ability level instructions, plus Summer (6) Sundays 10am & 12:45pm on Comic/Illustration Workshops. Please visit www.kimmyma-artstudio.com for detailed curriculum and tuition. Tel: 646-209-9352. Curriculum is thoughtfully planned by Mrs. Ma. She holds Master of ART in the School of Education NYU. Her Art also participated in Travel Exhibitions in Italy & various exhibitions in NYC. As a dedicated art instructor and lecturer, she engages actively in art forums and public arts projects in various schools and education institutions in our Queens community for the past decade.

The Learning Tree

74-15 Juniper Boulevard, Middle Village

718-899-2020 or www.thelearningtree.org

The Learning Tree has been servicing the community since 1972. Their Middle Village location provides a safe, nurturing and creative environment. Age appropriate curriculum and positive social interaction are the schools key successful elements. Nursery, pre-kindergarten for children ages 2-5 and after-school programs are available. Summer Camp programs are also available for ages 2-14 with swimming on premises. Please contact for them for more information.

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World of Discovery Day Camp

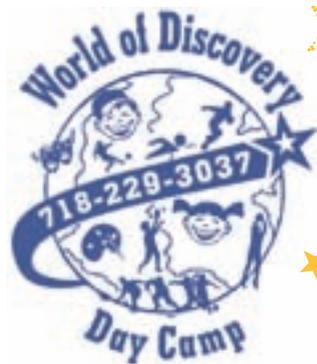
718 228 3037 or www.worldofdiscovery.org

World of Discovery Day Camp is designed to stimulate your child's imagination and provide an environment where kids can just be kids. Since 1977 children ages 4-15 have enjoyed baseball, volleyball, basketball, gymnastics, dance and drama, carnivals, scavenger hunts, swimming, Olympic week, trips and much more. Counselors must meet stringent standards and qualifications and all Directors and Assistant Directors are New York State Certified administrators and trained in CPR, First Aid and Responding to Emergency. The swim program stresses safety and fun. All swim instructors are certified lifeguards, carefully picked and receptive to camper's individual needs. Door-to-door transportation is provided.

Young People's Day Camp of Queens

1-800-856-1043 or www.queenscamp.com or www.ypdc.com

Since 1972, our family-run camp has provided safe, fun-filled summers for thousands of youngsters. YPDC is accredited by the American Camp Association, the New York Camp Directors Association, and is supervised by licensed teachers and administrators. The camp's philosophy is to "grow" children intellectually, physically, and spiritually in a FUN environment. YPDC provides a dynamic, diversified, and professionally supervised program enabling children to see, try and experience many activities. Activities include swimming, sports, arts & crafts, music & dance, natural science, academics, educational & recreational field trips as well as many other special events. YPDC is located in South Bayside. Door to door transportation is available at no additional charge. Young People's offers programs for children ages 4-15. 2-8 week sessions are available. Ask about our special discounts.



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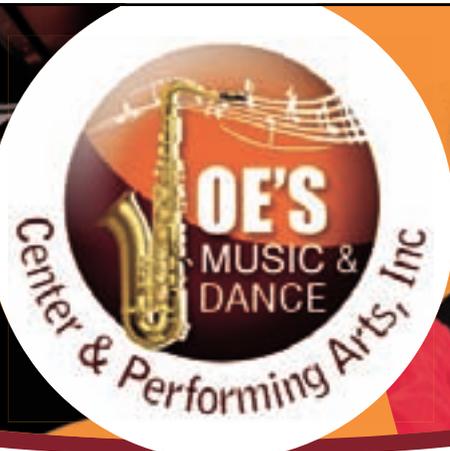
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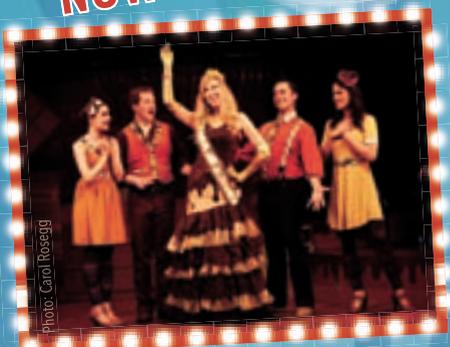
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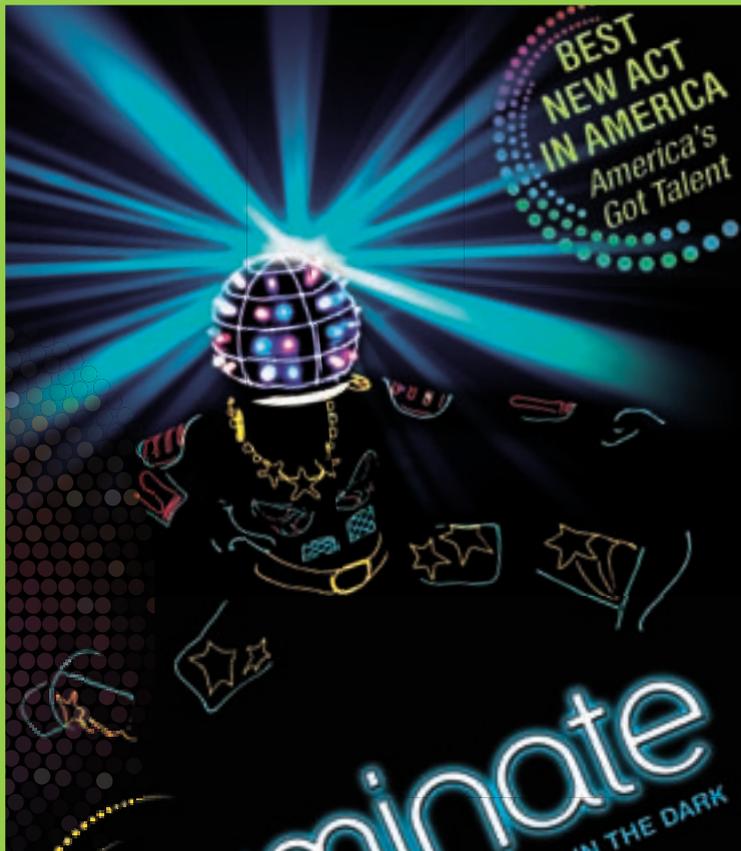
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DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Ten tips for better homework habits

What are some practical tips to get children to do their homework?

Years ago, I interviewed Erin Hemsworth who was the director of “Parental Guidance” on my radio show, and she offered 10 wonderful tips to get kids to do their homework.

At the time I was not a mom, but since having my twin 6-year-old boys, I have implemented many of her tips and found them to be extremely effective!

Enjoy reading!

Set up a homework routine. Make study time a component of every day — the way you do with mealtime and bedtime. Sit down with your child, and as a family, come up with a schedule that works for everyone. When planning, consider that earlier in the day is better, and the younger the child is when this is established, the less resistance you will encounter.

Create a space for homework time. Decide where would work best for your child and family and then provide the guidance and resources to establish this as an effective workspace. When established early, your child can enjoy this study space for years to come.

Decide on the time. The general expectation is about 10 minutes per day for each grade. For example: 10 minutes for first grade and 80 minutes for eighth grade. This can include reading time, although additional reading time is beneficial and is a great way to wind down at bedtime.

Help your child based on need. By being involved in his schoolwork, you will soon become aware of your child’s strengths and weaknesses. The goal is to foster independence and accountability. Be sure your child knows your realistic expectations.

Know the learning-curve method of studying. Also called “three times, then it’s mine.” After learning something new, read it over within 24 hours (day one). Go over it again 48 hours later (day three) and then again 72 hours after that (day six). This is a very easy, yet effective, way to learn and remember new information.

Focus on process, not product. Help enable your child to enjoy the learning process by working through projects and studying for tests. Demonstrate your pride in the fact that he is working hard and planning ahead, and remember that this was done even if the result or final mark doesn’t meet your expectations. Remember that people learn a lot through trial and error;

focus on what was done well and then work on next steps.

Concentrate on learning skills. They’re the most important part of the report card! In elementary school, learning skills include independent work, initiative, homework completion, use of information, co-operation with others, conflict resolution, class participation, problem-solving, and goal-setting. In secondary, the skills include teamwork, organization, works independently, work habits, and initiative. Regardless of academic aptitude, all students can develop learning skills. Once students graduate, these are the skills that employers look for — the skills that will serve your child well.

Provide sincere encouragement. Negative feedback can be crippling. That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t give constructive criticism, but when giving it, remember it is not what you say but how you say it. It is important to celebrate successes and learn from less than desired achievements.

Provide positive feedback. As long as it is genuine, there can never be too much positive feedback. Celebrate efforts, improvements, and achievements. Take note of how hard your child worked on an assignment or test and celebrate that.

Model good work habits. For parents who bring work home, try to do some at the same time (or at least when children can witness it happening). For parents who don’t, balance your checkbook, or catch up on some letter-writing. And most importantly, let your child see you reading for pleasure.

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



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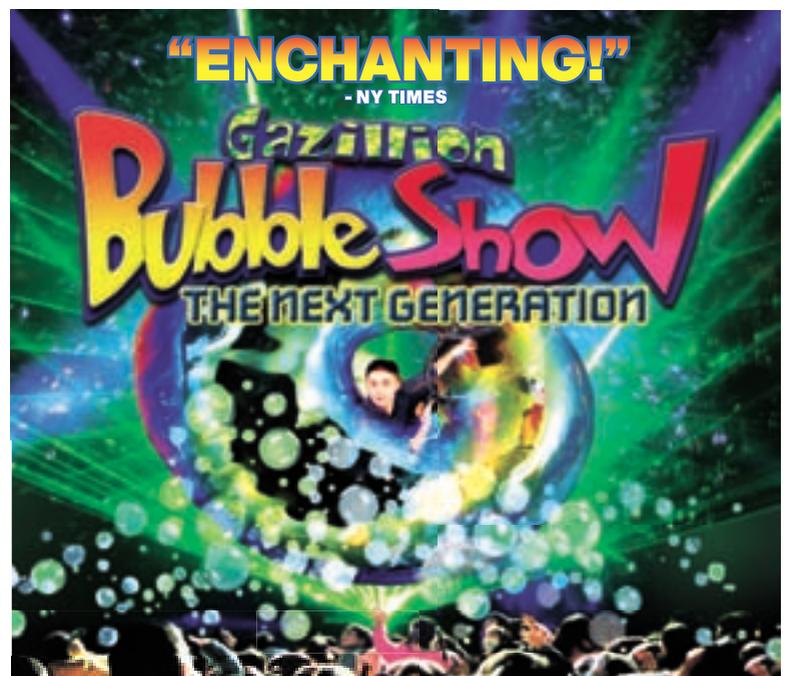


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Calendar

MARCH



A whale of a tale at Flushing Town Hall

It's a whale of a tale at Flushing Town Hall, when the United Kingdom-based theatre company Tall Stories visits on March 15.

The popular children's book comes to life on the stage courtesy of Tall Stories in this show geared towards children in pre-K through fifth grade. Children will go on a journey full of music, laughter, and top-notch storytelling, as the tiny

snail hitchhikes a ride on a humpback whale.

"The Snail and the Whale" on March 15 at 2:15 pm. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$10 for members, \$8 for children, and \$6 for member children.

Flushing Town Hall [137-35 Northern Blvd. in Flushing, (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org/events/event].

Submit a listing

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

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

SAT, MARCH 1

IN QUEENS

Young Chefs – Pepperoni Bread Roll: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am; \$24, \$18 (members).

APEC's Young Chefs will enjoy the art of cooking by preparing a delicious pepperoni roll and healthy fruit smoothie.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day in Queens: Al Oerter Recreation Center, 131-40 Fowler Ave.; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/01/national-girls-and-women-in-sports-day-in-queens; 11 am–3 pm; Free.

Join NYC Parks for free sports clinics, fitness demos, prizes, guest speakers and more!

What's That Sound?: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am; Free.

Queens Symphony Orchestra presents a five-session performance and instrument-making workshop for children age 6 and up accompanied by a caregiver.

Saturday Science Lab: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 11 am; Free.

Children ages 6-12 explore the world and have hands-on science fun with the Discovery Team!

Historic New York: Queens Museum of Art, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; 718.592.9700; www.queensmuseum.org; 1 pm; Free.

On this walking tour discover Flushing Meadows Corona Park, site of two 20th-century World's Fairs attended by millions of people and the largest park in Queens. Tour starts at the Unisphere across from the museum.

Sino-American Musician Association Presents a Spring Concert: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St.



Photo by Kim Nakashima

Drum up some fun

East meets West on March 29 at the LaGuardia Performing Arts Center in a performance of the Soh Daiko Japanese Drumming Collective.

The Carnegie Hall Neighborhood Concert Series is bringing a unique show to Queens. The Japanese drumming collective Soh Daiko will be performing on drums, bamboo flutes, brass bells, conch shells, gongs, and with intricate choreography, as it presents both original com-

positions and traditional Shinto music. This high-energy show packed into an intimate theatre will create a one-of-a-kind experience for the audience!

Soh Daiko Japanese Drumming Collective on March 29 at 3 pm. Free; RSVP required. E-mail to reserve seats rsvp-lpac@lagcc.cuny.edu.

LaGuardia Performing Arts Center [31-10 Thomson Ave. in Long Island City, (718) 482-5151; www.laguardia-performingarts.org]

at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

This concert will feature arias selected from various Italian, French and Chinese operas, as well as Chinese classics and pop songs.

"Pirate Pete's Parrot": The Secret Theatre, 44-02 23rd St.; (718) 392-0722; www.secrettheatre.com; 2 pm; \$15 (adults), \$10 (children).

This new musical pantomime show will take audiences on an adventure with Pirate Pete as he searches for his missing parrot.

"The Muppets Take Manhattan": Ridgewood Public Library, 20-12 Madison St. at Forest Avenue; (718) 821-4770; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Enjoy a screening of this classic film with the whole family.

Grow Your Own Edible Mushrooms: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children will learn about mushroom culture and how to grow edible mushrooms by starting a colony of oyster mushrooms in a milk crate, plus they

also have a chance to win a DIY mushroom-growing kit to take home.

FURTHER AFIELD

Shake, Rattle and Roll – Cuba: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Drummer Roman Diaz leads a hands-on drumming interactive event for parents and children.

Experience Korea: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Noon–5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Visitors will journey through a changing Korea and experience how the country's past enriches its present with performances, workshops, and more.

Wilderness Survival: Dana Discovery Center, 110th St. between Fifth and Lenox avenues in Central Park, Manhattan; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/01/wilderness-survival; 1 pm; Free.

On these fun, family friendly programs you will learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the

natural world.

Metro crafty: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate 20 years of MetroCards and then create your own one-of-a-kind design. For all ages.

SUN, MARCH 2

IN QUEENS

Nature Detectives: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10:30 am; \$21, \$15 (members).

Children ages 3-4 will discover how animals survive the cold winter and learn how to identify their footprints while enjoying a story, craft, detective game, nature walk, meeting live animals and a snack.

DINO: Queens Theatre, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; Box Office (718) 760-0064; Administration (718) 760-0686; www.queentheatre.org; 1 & 3 pm; \$14.

Audiences of all ages will be mesmerized by the story telling and display of lights in this tale about a good-natured dinosaur.

St. Pats For All 2014 Parade: St. Pat's for All Parade, Skillman Ave. & 47th St.; (718) 721-2780; www.stpatsforall.com; 2 pm; Free.

This is New York's most diverse St. Patrick's Day Parade. All are welcome and encouraged to participate and celebrate Irish culture.

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

Author Neal Gillen makes his second appearance to discuss how Queens has become the most diverse and ever changing community in America and how he weaves that into his writings.

Niall O'Leary Irish Dance Troupe Performance: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Irish culture takes center stage at this exciting Irish dance show of traditional forms and new choreography accompanied by Irish music on fiddle and accordion.

The Night Sky: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe.

FURTHER AFIELD

Metro crafty: 1:30 pm. New York

Continued on page 28

Calendar

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

Continued from page 27

Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 1.

TUES, MARCH 4

IN QUEENS

Nature Kids: Sunnyside Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave.; 3 pm; Free.

Greening Queens Library staff members teach about worms, mushrooms, seeds, soil, plants, insects and more.

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

Damon Foster will lead participants in an explosive African dance workshop series that focuses on movement and rhythm.

"Green" Comic Workshop: Sunnyside Library, 43-06 Greenpoint Ave.; 4 pm; Free.

Learn how to create your own comic book heroes and villains and find out how to make the world safer and cleaner at the same time!

FURTHER AFIELD

Inside Your Brain: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 4:30 pm; \$125, \$115 (Members).

Children in grades three, four, and five learn about the cutting-edge field of neuroscience through hands-on experiments and innovative lab activities.

WED, MARCH 5

IN QUEENS

Sciencetellers Presents "Po-tions!": Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; 4:30 pm; Free.

Storytelling meets science experiment in this interactive and humorous show about a hidden underground laboratory filled with mysteries, for children ages 6-12.

THURS, MARCH 6

IN QUEENS

Family Science Adventures: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 3:30 pm; \$60 (per adult/child pair), \$50 (members), \$15 each additional sibling.

In this four-part series, children ages 3-5 will make kaleidoscopes, observe patterns and colors, listen to the rhythm and beats of musical instruments, and use their taste buds to identify different flavors.

Arabic Calligraphy Workshop: Jackson Heights Public Library, 35-51

81st St. at Northern Boulevard; (718) 899-2500; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

As part of the Bridging Cultures: Poetic Voices of the Muslim World series, students will explore Islamic cultures through art and create their own Arabic calligraphy project.

3D Printing Workshop: Poppenhusen Public Library, 121-23 14 Ave., at College Point Boulevard; (718) 359-1102; 4 pm; Free.

In this class, students will use a computer to learn fundamentals of design, engineering and architecture, then see a 3D printer make their design materialize in front of their eyes.

FRI, MARCH 7

IN QUEENS

Teens Got Talent!: Rosedale Public Library, 144-20 243rd St. at 145th Avenue; (718) 723-4440; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens sing, rap, recite and otherwise show their talent.

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

Teens explore the creepy denizens of the island of Japan, from shape-shifting foxes and ghostly cats to hopping umbrellas, burning wheels and other strange creatures of the weird.

St. Patrick's Day Craft: McGoldrick Public Library, 155-06 Roosevelt Ave., off Northern Boulevard; (718) 461-1616; 5 pm; Free.

Children ages 7 and up will enjoy making a fun holiday craft. Preregistration is required.

FURTHER AFIELD

Twinkling Stars: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; 4:30 pm; \$100, \$90 (members).

Learn how different cultures have been spotting animal shapes in the stars, see the stars that inspired the stories, then make your own constellation model in this workshop.

SAT, MARCH 8

IN QUEENS

Animal Care Trainee: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10 am; \$21, \$15 (members).

This program teaches children ages 8-12 about the interesting job of an animal caretaker.

Art for Families: The Noguchi Museum, 9-01 33rd Rd.; 718-204-7088; www.noguchi.org; 10:30 am - 12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Families will be able to view the museum's exhibits and then participate in an art workshop designed families with children ages 5-11. Advanced registration is required.

Wilderness Survival: Alley Pond Park Adventure Center, Alley Pond Park; (718) 217-6034; www.nyc.gov/parks/rangers; 11 am; Free.

On these fun, family friendly programs you will learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural world, and might just save your life.

Saturday Science Lab: 11 am. Central Library. See Saturday, March 1.

Science Fair 101: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$24, \$18 (members).

From hypothesis to conclusion children ages 7-8 will get hands on experience to collectively create an innovative Science Fair Project.

Storytime Safari - Animal

Homes: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$18, \$12 (members).

This program includes games, songs, a snack, a craft, live animals and a nature walk for children ages 5-6.

"Princess Particular!": The Secret Theatre, 44-02 23rd St.; (718) 392-0722; www.secrettheatre.com; 2 pm; \$15, \$10 (children).

Children and adults alike will enjoy watching the story of Princess Particular come to life on the stage.

"One Singular Sensation!": Bay-side Public Library, 214-20 Northern Blvd. at 215th Street; (718) 229-1834; www.queenslibrary.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Lincoln Center Education continues its tradition of bringing the best of Lincoln Center to local libraries with this Marvin Hamlisch screening, where a preshow event, workshop, or appearance is included!

Celebrate Greek American

Heritage Month: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Agapitos Magkanaris and Bobby Sampelidis will perform a variety of traditional and contemporary Greek music.

"Amanda Palmer and the Grand Theft Orchestra": Ridgewood Public Library, 20-12 Madison St. at Forest Avenue; (718) 821-4770; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

This show for older teens will feature Amanda Palmer's intense stage presence and evocative storytelling wink at burlesque and glam rock, with a take-no-prisoners intensity and theatrical flair.

International Women's Day Music and Dance Celebration:

Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

This performance honors and celebrates women through music and dance.

FURTHER AFIELD

Block Party: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Children enjoy erecting new buildings with an assortment of blocks.

Imaginative Dance with Erica

Essner: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1 pm; Free with museum admission.

Stretch your bodies and imagination and enjoy a new exciting dance.

Metro crafty: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 1.

SUN, MARCH 9

IN QUEENS

Imagine Dragons: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; Free with RSVP.

Families will explore the rich history of dragons from around the world and make a dragon puppet to create their own dragon stories.

APEC Adventure Hour - March into Spring: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1:30 pm; \$16, \$10 (members).

This class will offer toddlers between the ages of 18-36 months and their parents or caregivers an opportunity to socialize and learn about nature in a relaxed environment.

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

Percussion presents the sounds of percussion around the world, from the drum and gong music of China to the sounds of the Brazilian rainforest, all on authentic, indigenous instruments.

FURTHER AFIELD

Journey to the past: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 11 am-4:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Meet Signal Tower Operator Paula the museum's very own costumed storyteller who will tell tales of what it

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

was like to work on the subways in the 1940's and how important signals are.

Block Party: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, March 8.

Metro crafty: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 1.

The Night Sky: Belvedere Castle, Central Park, Mid park at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/09/the-night-sky; 7 pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers will be your guides to the solar system, discussing the science, history, and folklore of the universe.

MON, MARCH 10

IN QUEENS

"The Last Pine Tree on Eagle Mountain": Woodside Library, 54-22 Skillman Ave.; (718) 429-4700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Urban Stages presents a new musical for children ages 4-10 and their families about friendship and the environment.

Jacqueline Pitts: Far Rockaway Public Library, 1637 Central Ave. at Mott Avenue; (718) 327-2549; www.queenslibrary.org; 5:30 pm; Free.

Meet local author Jacqueline Pitts, who uses urban fiction, historical facts and archaeology to portray the lives of rival street gang leaders on the Rockaway Peninsula who fight to control neighborhoods but fail to recognize the ties that connect them.

TUES, MARCH 11

IN QUEENS

Nature Kids: 3 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

African Dance Workshop: 3:30 pm. East Elmhurst Public Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

"Green" Comic Workshop: 4 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

Inside Your Brain: 4:30 pm. American Museum of Natural History. See Tuesday, March 4.

WED, MARCH 12

IN QUEENS

Animals Alive: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 10:30 am; Free.

Preschoolers ages 3-5, with their parent or other adult caretaker, will meet different kinds of live animals. Preregistration is required.



Blinded by science

Garry Krinsky is ready to take the audience on an adventure of science at the Queens Theatre on March 23. This one-of-a-kind show combines circus skills, music, and audience participation as children explore simple scientific concepts like gravity, leverage, and more. Truly family fun

for all ages, adults and children alike will enjoy this performance!

Garry Krinsky on March 23 at 1 and 3 pm. Tickets are \$14.

Queens Theatre [14 United Nations Avenue South, in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, (718) 760-0064, www.queentheatre.org/toy-ing-science].

Tales from the "Arabian Nights" and a Persian Carpet Craft: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children ages 6-12 years will listen to the story of Aladdin and other tales from the "Arabian Nights," then create their own "magic carpet" using traditional Persian rug colors, designs and motifs.

Environmental Action for Teens: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

This monthly program explores different environmental issues that we face today, how and why they are happening and what we can do with friends in our own communities to create positive change.

THURS, MARCH 13

IN QUEENS

Recycle the Earth Weaving: Astoria Public Library, 14-01 Astoria Blvd. at 14th Street; (718) 278-2220; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

In this environmentally-friendly workshop, students will discover the inherent beauty and value of commonly

used and discarded materials such as junk mail, postcards, plastic bags and more.

Family Science Adventures: 3:30 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Thursday, March 6.

FRI, MARCH 14

IN QUEENS

Teens Got Talent!: 3:30 pm. Rosedale Public Library. See Friday, March 7.

Historic Social Dances of Harlem: East Elmhurst Public Library, 95-06 Astoria Blvd. at 95th Street; (718) 424-2619; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

This high-energy workshop engages students in the classic dances of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom. Students learn the origins and relevance of social dances such as the "Lindy Hop," "Shorty George" and "Suzy-Q."

St. Patrick's Day Craft: Peninsula Public Library, 92-25 Rockaway Beach Blvd.; (718) 634-1110; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children ages 6-12 will make a St. Patrick's Day craft.

Eco-Jewelry Workshop: Broad-

way Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

Learn how to create colorful hand-made jewelry from recycled materials.

FURTHER AFIELD

Twinkling Stars: 4:30 pm. American Museum of Natural History. See Friday, March 7.

SAT, MARCH 15

IN QUEENS

Art for Families: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. The Noguchi Museum. See Saturday, March 8.

Saturday Science Lab: 11 am. Central Library. See Saturday, March 1.

The Snail and the Whale: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtown-hall.org; 1 pm; \$6, \$4 (Children).

Families will learn how to create a story in pictures, how to create a character using your body — and then tell your own story.

Black & White Winter Art Drawing: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Urban Park Ranger Nature Art and Photography programs allow you to interpret the natural world through artistic expression, while learning about the local environment.

Environmental Archaeology: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 1 pm; \$24.

Ages 9 and up with paying adult. Pre-register. Only 10 participants. Indoor science, an experiment, crafts.

French and Spanish Music for Cello and Piano: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

This concert with Boston-based cellist Nick Dinnerstein will feature music by composers from both France and Spain.

Nature Detectives: 1:30 pm. Alley Pond Environmental Center. See Sunday, March 2.

HSBC Children's Garden Family Day: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

Families will have a chance to plant seeds while learning about gardening and the environment.

"Pirate Pete's Parrot": 2 pm. The Secret Theatre. See Saturday, March 1.

The Snail and the Whale: Flushing

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Calendar

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

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Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2:15 pm; \$12, \$10 (members), \$8 (children), \$6 (member children).

Families will enjoy this show full of storytelling and live music based on the award-winning book by Julia Donaldson.

Purim Celebration: Hillcrest Jewish Center, 183-02 Union Turnpike; 718-380-4145; www.hillcrestjic.org; 7:30 pm.

Megillah reading and family celebration.

FURTHER AFIELD

Nature Photography: Dana Discovery Center, 110th St. between Fifth and Lenox avenues in Central Park, Manhattan; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/15/nature-photography-winter-wildlife; 11 am; Free.

Urban Park Ranger Nature Art and Photography program teaches you about your local environment and encourages artistic expression. Bring your own camera.

Imagine Jackson Pollock: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am; Free with museum admission.

Young tots examine the natural elements and explore fire and water while learning about the artist.

Squares in the City: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30-2:15 pm; \$7 (\$5 children and seniors).

Children explore the mosaic tiles and signage on the station walls.

SUN, MARCH 16

IN QUEENS

The Iris Ornic Jazz Ensemble: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 2 pm; Free.

German-born international recording bassist and composer Iris Ornic and her ensemble will be performing classic music and original compositions at this concert.

QBG Craft Table: Sky View Center, 40-24 College Point Blvd.; 2-4 pm; Free.

Children will be making clover bookmarks to celebrate St. Patrick's Day at this craft workshop.

FURTHER AFIELD

Imagine Jackson Pollock: 11:30 am. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, March 15.

Squares in the city: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 15.

MON, MARCH 17

IN QUEENS

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day: Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children ages 6-12 years will learn about and celebrate Irish culture with stories and a craft.

TUES, MARCH 18

IN QUEENS

Nature Kids: 3 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

African Dance Workshop: 3:30 pm. East Elmhurst Public Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Magic Workshop with Seth Dale: Bayside Public Library, 214-20 Northern Blvd. at 215th Street; (718) 229-1834; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Internationally acclaimed magician Seth Dale will shock and amaze in this magic workshop!

"Green" Comic Workshop: 4 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

Inside Your Brain: 4:30 pm. American Museum of Natural History. See Tuesday, March 4.

WED, MARCH 19

IN QUEENS

Sign, Read and Play: Douglass/Little Neck Public Library, 249-01 Northern Blvd. at 249th Street; (718) 225-8414; www.queenslibrary.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children age 3 and younger learn basic signing vocabulary reinforced with stories, songs, rhymes and activities.

The Gifts of Wali Dad: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children will help tell his story and then make a craft inspired by Islamic art.

The Amazing Seahorse: Poppenhusen Public Library, 121-23 14 Ave., at College Point Boulevard; (718) 359-1102; 4 pm; Free.

Children in grades 3-6 will find out what makes this fish so special and will do a related activity.

Teen Jeopardy: Flushing Public Library, 41-17 Main St. at Parsons Boulevard; (718) 661-1200; [\[brary.org\]\(http://www.queensli-brary.org\); 4 pm; Free.](http://www.queensli-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Teens and tweens are invited to answer academic and general knowledge questions, have fun and win cool prizes.

THURS, MARCH 20

IN QUEENS

Spring Equinox Egg-Balancing Challenge: Far Rockaway Public Library, 1637 Central Ave. at Mott Avenue; (718) 327-2549; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Can you make a raw egg in its shell stand on its end on a smooth surface without any other support? Try it on the spring equinox, a/k/a the first day of spring, when night equals day!

Family Science Adventures: 3:30 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Thursday, March 6.

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

As part of the Bridging Cultures: Poetic Voices of the Muslim World series, students will explore Islamic cultures through art and create their own Arabic calligraphy project.

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

In this two-part "Bridging Cultures: Poetic Voices of the Muslim World" program, teens and tweens ages 10-14 will create textiles inspired by poetry. Selections of poetry and swatches of fabric will be provided.

FURTHER AFIELD

Free Thursdays: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 3 pm; Free.

Enjoy the museum and all the exhibits free every third Thursday of the month.

FRI, MARCH 21

IN QUEENS

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

Children ages 5-12 and their families will observe some feathered friends and learn about bird adaptations.

Teens Got Talent!: 3:30 pm. Rosedale Public Library. See Friday, March 7.

Found-Object Puppet Making: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Urban Stages' puppeteers will show you how to take objects that might otherwise be discarded, such as bottles, cans and paper tubes, and transform them into animated puppets.

Magic Workshop with Seth Dale: South Ozone Park Library, 128-16 Rockaway Blvd. at 128th Street; (718) 529-1660; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Internationally acclaimed magician Seth Dale will shock and amaze in this magic workshop!

Poetic Textiles: 4 pm. Pomonok Public Library. See Thursday, March 20.

SAT, MARCH 22

IN QUEENS

Saturday Science Lab: 11 am. Central Library. See Saturday, March 1.

Weaving History: King Manor Museum in Rufus King Park, Jamaica Ave., between 150th and 153rd streets; (718) 206-0545; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/22/hands-on-history-weaving-history2; Noon-3 pm; Free.

Children will create weavings out of both cloth and paper at this workshop.

Eco House: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon-6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children will be able to enter this mobile, cutting-edge exhibit that lets visitors see behind the walls and underneath the floor of a home.

Parkour Workshops: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 12:45 and 1:45 pm; \$6, \$4 (members).

Museum visitors can try out parkour, a type of movement that encourages interaction between our bodies and environment.

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt": Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 1 pm; \$6, \$4 (Children).

Featuring theater games relating to the original book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt," this interactive workshop includes storytelling, physical activities and songs.

Nature Photography Workshops: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 1 pm; \$10 (one workshop), \$18 (both workshops).

Photographers Shari Romar and H. David Stein will offer a slide show of examples, and offer pointers on light and composition, plus 45 minutes of outdoor photography. Advanced registration is required.

Calendar

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

"Princess Particular!": 2 pm. The Secret Theatre. See Saturday, March 8.

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt": Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 2:15 pm; \$12, \$10 (members), \$8 (children), \$6 (member children).

Michael Rosen's award-winning children's picture book is brought to life on stage.

Celebrate the Month of La Francophonie: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

With lyrics in Arabic, French and English, Gota Negra's music embodies the multicultural nature of its band members in this multicultural musical experience.

A Musical History Tour of Rock 'n' Roll, Doo-Wop and Pop: Cambria Heights Public Library, 218-13 Linden Blvd. between 218th and 219th streets; (718) 528-3535; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

The Vic Vincent Duo invites you on a tour of the great eras of rock 'n' roll, doo-wop and pop.

FURTHER AFIELD

NASA Sun/Earth Day: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Noon-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Explore the special relationship between Earth and the Sun and learn about the delicate balance between them by talking with scientists, looking through telescopes, and hands-on activities at this family-friendly event.

Garifuna Drumming: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Noon; Free with museum admission.

Dance along to the music from the Garifuna community. They are descended from the Arawak Carib and West African peoples.

Subway studio: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 7 years and older visit the newest art exhibition "Transit on the Spectrum: The Art of Pure Vision" and then have a session with artist Katie Taylor who will introduce drawing techniques using charcoal, pastels, and brushes.

SUN, MARCH 23

IN QUEENS

MARCH for the Earth: Queens



Photo by Richard Termine

Don't miss the ball

New York Theatre Ballet presents "Cinderella" and Cinderella's Ball on March 1 at the Florence Gould Hall Theater.

This beautiful adaptation of the classic fairy tale will have both children and adults mesmerized. The costumes, characters, and choreography combine for a truly unique experience. As an added bonus, there will also be a ball held after the final show where children can interact and take pictures with the characters, hunt for the in-

famous glass slipper, enjoy delicious desserts, play games, and more!

"Cinderella" on March 1 and 2, with performances at 11 am, 1 pm, and 3:30 pm. The ball is after the 3:30 pm show on March 2. Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$35 for children. Tickets to the ball are \$50.

Florence Gould Hall Theater [208 W. 23rd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in the Flatiron District, (212) 355-6160, www.kidsncomedy.com]

Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 10 am-1 pm; Free.

Celebrate the vernal equinox by volunteering and then marching to the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park Unisphere. Advanced registration is required.

Scavenger Hunt: Kissena Park, Rose Avenue and Oak Avenue; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/23/scavenger-hunt; 10 am; Free.

Children will search for nature clues to complete this scavenger hunt.

Vet Tech 101: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.; (718) 229-4000; 10 am; \$23, \$17 (members).

Children ages 10-13 learn the specialized skills required to keep APEC's animals healthy.

Art for Families: 10:30 am - 12:30 pm. The Noguchi Museum. See Saturday, March 8.

Eco House: Noon-6 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, March 22.

Parkour Workshops: 12:45 and 1:45 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, March 22.

Sundial Craft Workshop: Queens

Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main Street; (718) 539-5296; www.queensbotanical.org; 1 pm; Free.

Make your own sundial pendant from tree cookies and various other discarded materials recycled for artistic use.

Toying with Science: Queens Theatre, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; Box Office (718) 760-0064; Administration (718) 760-0686; www.queens-theatre.org; 1 and 3 pm; \$14.

This family-friendly show combines circus skills, mime, original music, and audience involvement in the exploration of the scientific principles of gravity, leverage, fulcrums, and simple machines.

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

Young pianist Song Jia and master erhu artist Cao Baoan will perform art pieces and music for Western and Chinese instruments, experimenting with contrasting harmonies, tonalities and styles.

FURTHER AFIELD

Journey to the Past: 11 am-4:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Sunday, March 9.

Subway studio: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 22.

MON, MARCH 24

IN QUEENS

A Taste of Queens: Court Square Public Library, 25-01 Jackson Ave., in Citicorp Building; (718) 937-2790; 1 pm; Free.

Local Thai and Caribbean food vendors will offer free samples at lunch-time to share culinary traditions from their home countries.

TUES, MARCH 25

IN QUEENS

Nature Kids: 3 pm. Sunnyside Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

African Dance Workshop: 3:30 pm. East Elmhurst Public Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

WED, MARCH 26

IN QUEENS

Sign, Read and Play: 3:30 pm. Douglaston/Little Neck Public Library. See Wednesday, March 19.

Spring Craft: Queens Village Public Library, 94-11 217 St. at 94th Avenue; (718) 776-6800; www.queenslibrary.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children will create a special craft to welcome the spring season.

Environmental Action for Teens: Woodside Library, 54-22 Skillman Ave.; (718) 429-4700; www.queenslibrary.org; 5 pm; Free.

This monthly program explores different environmental issues that we face today, how and why they are happening and what we can do with friends in our own communities to create positive change.

THURS, MARCH 27

IN QUEENS

Family Science Adventures: 3:30 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Thursday, March 6.

FRI, MARCH 28

IN QUEENS

Teens Got Talent!: 3:30 pm. Rosedale Public Library. See Friday, March 7.

SAT, MARCH 29

IN QUEENS

Young Discoverers Club - Radical Rainforest: Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-06 Northern Blvd.;

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(718) 229-4000; 10:30 am; \$24, \$18 (members).

Children ages 8-12 learn about their environment through studies and tests, some of which can be done with simple household supplies.

Saturday Science Lab: 11 am. Central Library. See Saturday, March 1.

Exploring Clouds: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgov-parks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Urban Park Rangers will introduce you to these important scientific concepts that will help us prepare our city for a more sustainable future.

Nature Photography Workshops: 1 pm. Queens Botanical Garden. See Saturday, March 22.

"Pirate Pete's Parrot": 2 pm. The Secret Theatre. See Saturday, March 1.

Clothing Swap-O-Rama: Broadway Public Library, 40-20 Broadway at Steinway Street; (718) 721-2462; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Get free new-to-you clothing, find a home for clothing that no longer excites you, meet new friends and help save the environment. You bring clothes, other people bring clothes, and then you swap!

"Jononi Jonmovhumi": Central Library, 89-11 Merrick Blvd.; (718) 990-0700; www.queenslibrary.org; 3 pm; Free.

Celebrate Bangladesh Independence with this musical dance-drama as performed by the musical group Shrejon Music School, as they present patriotic, folk, and modern song and dance that celebrates the changes of the seasons.

Soh Daiko: LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, 30-20 Thomson Ave.; (718) 482-5985; rsvp-lpac@lagcc.cuny.edu; www.laguadiaperformingarts.org; 3 pm; Free with RSVP.

Performing on drums, bamboo flute, brass bells, conch shells, and gongs, audiences will be captivated by Soh Daiko's performance of original compositions and traditional Shinto music.

Karaoke at the Movies – "Dirty Dancing": Queensborough Performing Arts Center, 222-05 56th Ave.; 718-631-6311; www.visitqpac.org; 7:30 pm; \$5.

This one-of-a-kind interactive family-oriented film series encourages the audience to sing (and dance) along with their favorite characters.

FURTHER AFIELD

Transition through art therapy: Old Town Hall, 47 West Main St., Long Island; www.babylonarts.org; 11 am-1 pm; Free.

Mixed media artist create works for

students.

"Play, Said the Earth to the Air!": Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 11:30 am, 1 pm and 2:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

A reading of the Richard Lewis play allows children to let their imagination flow.

Nano days: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children experiment with tiny technologies that have a big impact the way we live. For children 4 years and older.

Miles of Tiles: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children 4 years and older discover the beauty of mosaic tiles that beautify the subway stations.

Nocturnal Wildlife: Belvedere Castle, Central Park, Mid park at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 628-2345; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/03/29/nocturnal-wildlife; 7 pm; Free.

Rangers will guide you to the best wildlife viewing spots to look for bats, raccoons, and maybe even owls!

SUN, MARCH 30

IN QUEENS

Art for Families: 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. The Noguchi Museum. See Saturday, March 8.

Civil War New York: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Rd. at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgov-parks.org; 1 pm; Free.

On this walking tour participants will learn about historic Fort Totten Park, and the city's military history.

FURTHER AFIELD

"Play, Said the Earth to the Air!": 11:30 am, 1 pm and 2:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, March 29.

Nano days: 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Children's Museum. See Saturday, March 29.

Miles of Tiles: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 29.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Flight of the Butterflies in 3D: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th

St., at Avenue of Science; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Tuesdays – Fridays, 11 am, Noon and 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, Noon, 1, 2 and 3 pm, Now – Fri, April 11; \$6 (adults,) \$5 (children, students & seniors), plus NYSCI admission.

Join millions of real butterflies on an amazing journey to a remote and secret hideaway in this award-winning film.

Rehearsals and auditions: Queen of Angels Church, 4404 Skillman Ave. at 45th Street; (917) 548-1086; unitystagecompany@gmail.com; www.unitystage.org; Thursdays, 4-5:30 pm, Now – Fri, March 7; 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.

ProjectArt: Corona Public Library, 38-23 104th St. between 38th and 39th streets; (718) 426-2844; www.queenslibrary.org; Fridays, 4 pm, Now – Fri, April 11; Free.

Children ages 8-12 will work with a teaching artist to learn the basic elements of design in various media, including painting, collage and drawing.

Youth Adaptive Swim: Roy Wilkins Family Center, Baisley Blvd and 177th St.; Fridays, 4 pm; Free with recreation center membership.

Children and teens with disabilities can practice swimming skills in this adaptive swim program.

Rehearsals and auditions: St. Mark's Church, 33-50 82nd St. and 34th Avenue; (917) 548-1086; unitystagecompany@gmail.com; www.unitystage.org; Fridays, 5-6:30 pm, Now – Sat, March 8; 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.

Laurelton Kids Got Talent: Laurelton Public Library, 134-26 225th St. at Merrick Boulevard; (718) 528-2822; www.queenslibrary.org; Weekdays, 4:30 pm, Mon, March 3 – Mon, March 31; Free.

Children in grades six and under will be challenged with intellectual games and assignments.

ProjectArt: Long Island City Public Library, 37-44 21 St. at 43rd Avenue; www.queenslibrary.org; Tuesdays, 4 pm, Now – Tues, April 8; Free.

Children ages 8-12 will work with a teaching artist to learn the basic elements of design in various media, including painting, collage and drawing.

Little Hatchlings: Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St.; (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; Wednesdays, 10:15 am,

11:45 am, Wed, March 26 – Wed, June 4; WCS Membersfree, \$250 non-members, \$270 for classes in one session.

For children ages 10 to 23 months with an adult. Provides a fun and engaging introduction to animals, nature, and the environment. Explore the zoo and learn about animals through songs, arts-and-crafts, and guided visits to exhibits designed especially for toddlers.

FURTHER AFIELD

The Butterfly Conservatory: American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street, Manhattan; (212) 769-5200; www.amnh.org; Daily, 10 am-5:45 pm; Now – Mon, May 26; \$27, \$16 (children).

This annual favorite features up to 500 live, free-flying tropical butterflies from Central, South, and North America, Africa, and Asia.

"Bessie's Big Shot": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, 79th Street and West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays – Fridays, 10:30 am & Noon, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm; \$10, \$7 (children under 12).

It's a bird, it's a plane, no — it's Bessie the cow! Based on the Puppet-Mobile show of the same name, this popular production is making its debut at the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre.

After School Ice Skating: Lasker Pool & Rink, 110 Malcolm X Blvd., Central Park, Manhattan; (212) 348-4867; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/01/08/after-school-ice-skating; Wednesdays and Fridays, 4 pm, Now – Fri, March 14; Free.

Children ages 5-7 learn the basic elements of ice skating through group and individual instruction. Offered through the Central Park Conservancy, must register through them.

Arty facts: Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Pkwy. at Washington Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 638-5000; www.brooklynmuseum.org; Sundays, 11 am and 1:30 pm, Now – Sun, May 18; \$10 materials fee plus museum admission.

Children 4 to 7 years old explore the galleries, enjoy an activity and take an art class.

Bug out!: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now – Tues, March 25; Free with museum admission.

Children meet grasshoppers, worms, and Madagascar hissing cockroaches.

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS

A-peeling pastime

For all of those times when you need your little one to be quietly entertained — without your smartphone — there's the Dogs & Cats at Home Peel & Play activity set. And unlike other sets that entail placing one-



time-use paper stickers on a background, with this toteable set, there are 26 thick, vinyl play pieces that can be used over and over again with the colorful, 18-by-10-inch play board — featuring the interior of a home — and a storage area where every figure can be put away to await their next fur-raising adventure. This will be your go-to set for road trips, doctor's waiting rooms, and restaurants — truly, it's the cat's meow.

Dogs & Cats at Home Peel & Play by Mrs. Grossman's, \$6.99, www.mrs-grossmans.com.

'Oz' toys roar into March

Lions, and scarecrows, and tin men, oh my!

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the release of Victor Fleming's iconic Technicolor film, "The Wizard of Oz," Mattel is re-releasing its Cowardly Lion, Tin Man, and Scarecrow dolls on its Pink Label Collection. The lion doll, whose face recalls the wonderful performance by actor



Bert Lahr, is spruced up after a visit to the Emerald City, with a curled mane topped with a red bow and his badge of courage upon his chest. The lion also comes with a green crown and a doll stand.

For children 6 years and older, there will be no place like a home with this 12-inch-tall friend.

Cowardly Lion Doll, \$29.95, www.TheBarbieCollection.com.

Smooth as Selkie

Get into the St. Patrick's Day spirit with the latest CD from Linda Marie Smith, "Mearra — Selkie from the Sea." A selkie is a mythical creature straight from Celtic legend that has the ability to transform from a seal into a human. My 7-year-old listener was just as captivated by the idea of a selkie, as he was lulled into a chill state by Smith's ballads, many of which had the sounds of a Celtic harp, flute, and whistle woven throughout. (If you like Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On" from the "Titanic" soundtrack, you'll enjoy this CD.) The songs on Smith's album tell the tale of Mearra, the selkie maiden,

who enjoys a seven-year-long romance with a fisherman before she must return to the sea. Recommended for listeners ages 9 and above, this lulling lullaby of an album will make you feel luckier than a four-leaf clover that you found an imaginative alternative to the frenzied sound of kids pop music.

"Mearra — Selkie from the Sea" CD by Linda Marie Smith, \$15, www.cdbaby.com.



Lend 'em a hand

Lend me your ear. Really. Perhaps a large pink one? That's what kids will be saying when they break their new Chimeras out of the box. Walrus Toys' Chimeras [ky-mer-uhz] are mix-and-match plush toys, and each set includes two of the animals, so kids can immediately begin taking them apart and creating new creatures.

Take the Bunny and Monkey set. Their limbs and ears pop off and can be swapped with each other, creating new toys, like a Monny and Bunkey. Their appendages are also interchangeable with the Bat and Elephant set, for even more possibilities. Recommended for children ages 3 and older, these toys take the boring world of stuffed animals and give them a purpose beyond collecting dust!

Bunny and Monkey Chimeras set by Walrus Toys, \$39.95, www.walrustoys.com.

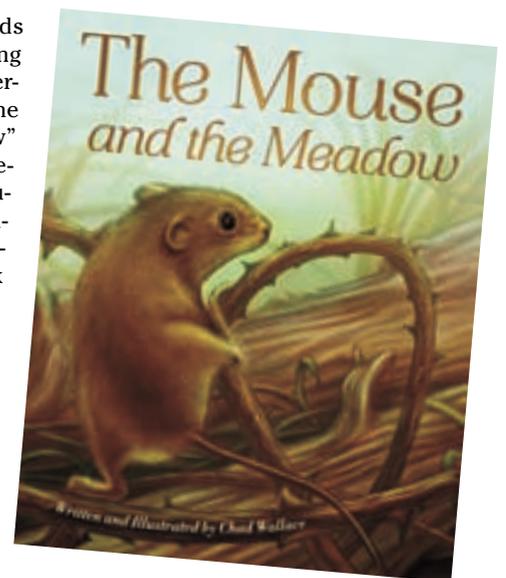
A better mouse app

When March winds blow the first day of spring to your stoop, it is the perfect time to enjoy "The Mouse and the Meadow" with your child — especially those ages 4-10. Author-illustrator Chad Wallace has created a beautiful and engaging book detailing the adventures of a naive mouse as he encounters his fellow meadow dwellers — animal and insect alike. While they enjoy the lively tale, little readers are slyly introduced to concepts like the food chain, animal altruism, and metamorphosis.

Even pre-readers will be drawn into "The Meadow" by the free app, which can be installed on your iOS or Android tablet or smartphone. The app narrates the story, while enabling the pages to burst forth in 3-D. With a tap of the finger, the adorable characters move: the mouse takes off

in a surprising scurry, the box turtle rears his head, and snoozing baby bunnies open their drowsy eyes. The whole family will be charmed by this fun, new way to enjoy story time.

"The Mouse and the Meadow" book by Chad Wallace; paperback, \$8.95, or hardcover, \$16.95; www.dawnpub.com.



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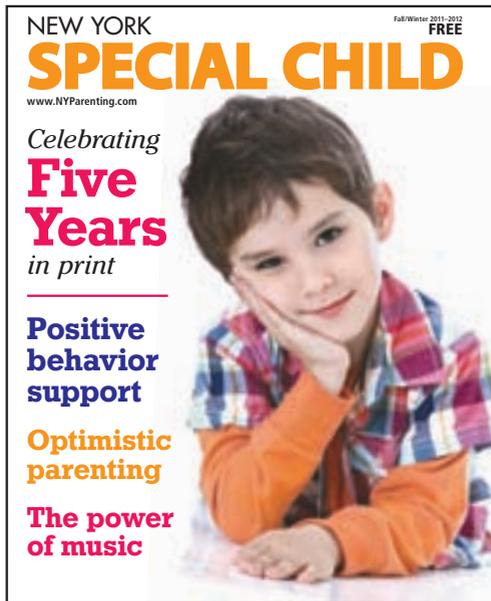
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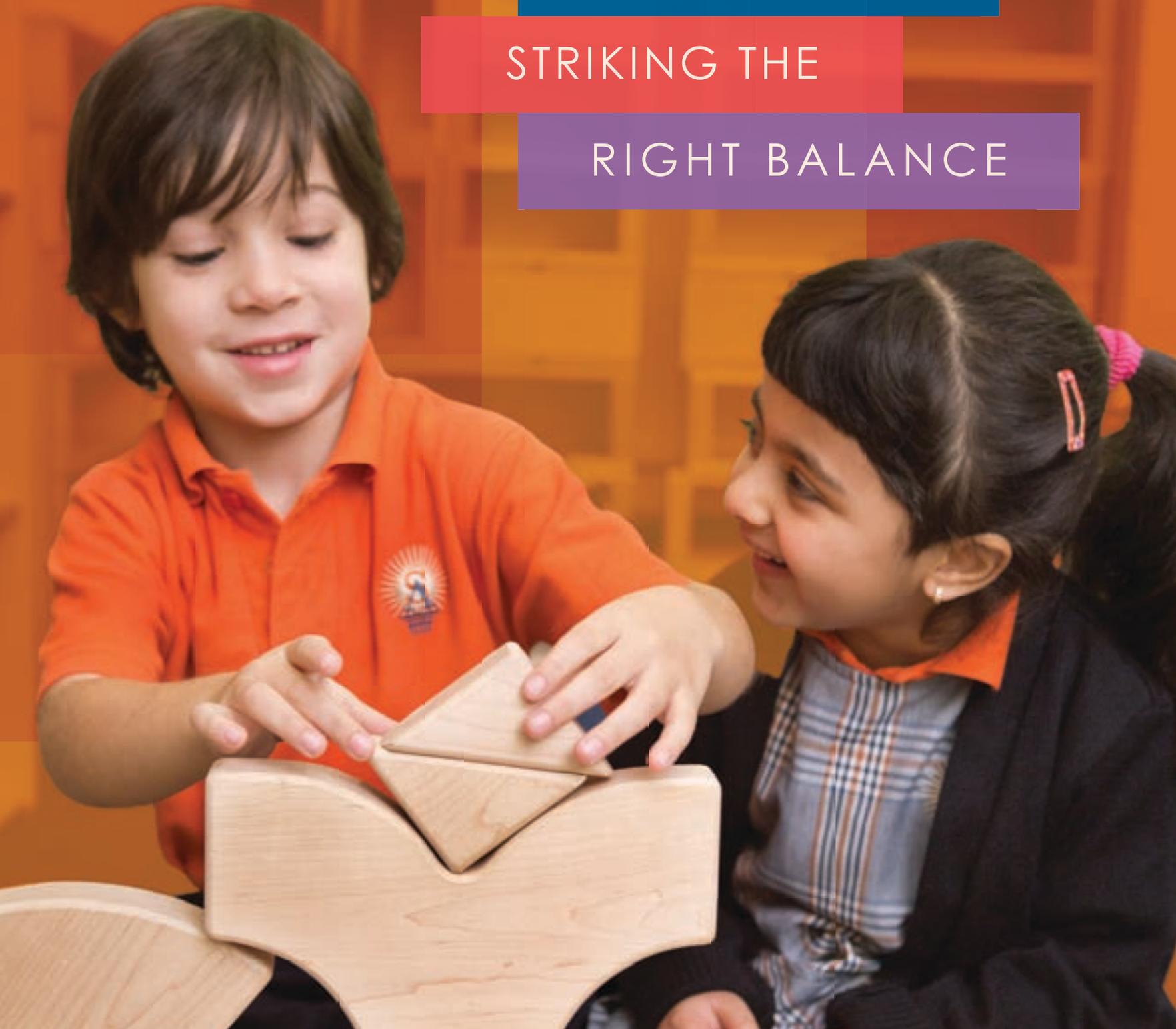


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