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Family September 2016



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Screen time, families, and children

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks for reading.

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A quiet problem



Ten tips for parents with shy children

BY DENISE YEARIAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Homework star

Ten tips
for parents
to make
homework a
home run

BY DENISE YEARIAN

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

1. Time it right

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

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

2. My space

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

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

he has questions or needs help staying on task.

3. Tuned in or turned off?

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

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

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

miliar songs without words such as soothing, classical music.

4. Aid and ally

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

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

5. Rapid review

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

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

6. Tarry and toil

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

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

long she worked.

7. Pay attention to patterns

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

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

8. Relegate responsibility

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

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

9. Scope out sick days

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

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

10. Constantly communicate

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

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

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

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Continued from page 12
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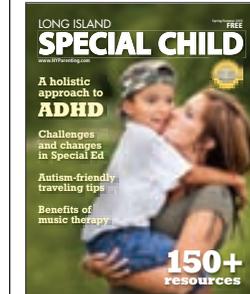
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From **A** to **ZZZs**

Important
info linking
shut-eye to
great grades

BY MALIA JACOBSON

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

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

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

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

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

Early school years, 3–8

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

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

How much sleep does your child need?

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

- Ages 3 to 6:** 10–12 hours per day
- Ages 7 to 12:** 10–11 hours per day
- Ages 13 to 18:** 8–9 hours per day

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

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

How to help:

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

Tween years, 9-13

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

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

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

How to help:

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

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

Teenage years, 14-18

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

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

How to help:

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

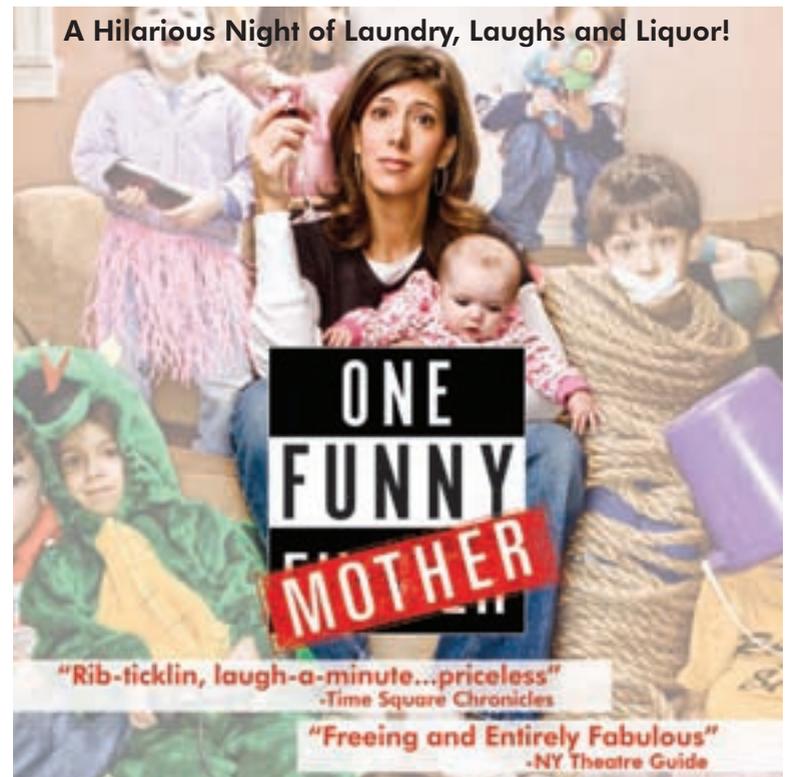
"The bedroom should be a place for sleep," she notes. "It's not a spot for homework, watching TV, or surfing the internet."

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

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

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

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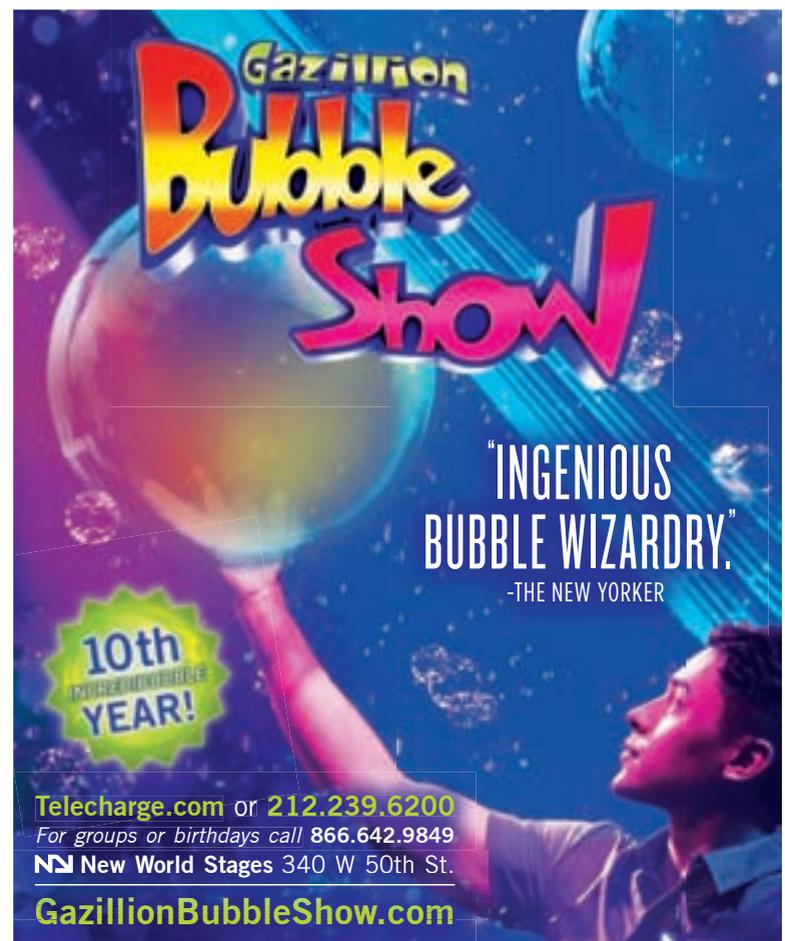
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Time to read

This whole family is going to hit the books

BY LISA A. BEACH

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

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

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

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

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

depth magazine articles and real books.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Choosing a guardian

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Court within 60 days of acting as the standby guardian.

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

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

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

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

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

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

When back-to-school time sparks anxiety

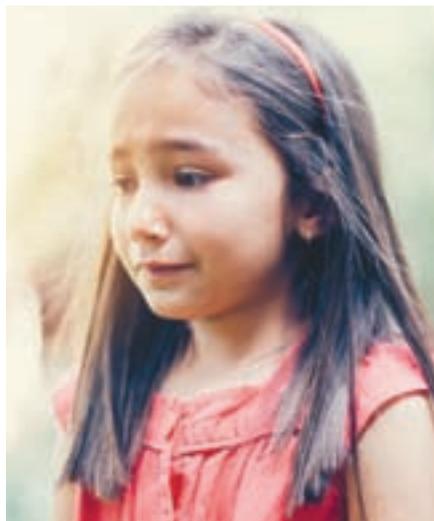
Back to school is a wonderful time for most children, not to mention parents. There are new teachers and classrooms, new experiences, and friendly faces. Most kids are eager to make friends and join the fun, even if they aren't exactly thrilled about the work. But there is a small population of kids, from preschoolers to teens, who absolutely dread school because they suffer from anxiety.

For these kids, it is not as simple as jitters before the first day. The American Academy of Pediatrics advises parents to not discount a child's fears. "Because anxious children may also be quiet, compliant, and eager to please, their difficulties may be missed," it says.

Anxiety can manifest itself in a number of ways — as physical ailments, outbursts, depression, or even anger. It can arise, seemingly out of the blue, in a child who was once previously happy and calm.

Children with anxiety disorder experience physical symptoms, some disabling, which inhibit them from being able to just shake it off. So telling a child he has no reason to be afraid may not help. In many cases, the child already knows that he shouldn't be scared of the test or the teacher or one of many things that stresses him out, but he doesn't know how to stop doing so.

Alternatively, understanding and validating a child's feelings does help. That's not to say parents should let their children avoid every anxiety-provoking situation. On the contrary, children need to go to school and find ways to be successful despite their anxiety. They also need to know that they can overcome it with help. Parents need to be their kid's biggest support and cheerleader. Children who know that their parents are there to support and fight for them and are with them, who know their troubles are being taken seriously,



and who know they are not alone, have a much better chance of overcoming anxiety long-term.

It is quite distressing to see your child suffer, but there are ways parents and teachers can help. The Anxiety and Depression Association of America offers the following tips for parents:

- Pay attention to your child's feelings.
- Stay calm when your child becomes anxious about a situation or event.
- Recognize and praise small accomplishments.
- Don't punish mistakes or lack of progress.
- Be flexible, but try to maintain a normal routine.
- Modify expectations during stressful periods.
- Plan for transitions. (For example, allow extra time in the morning if getting to school is difficult).

In some cases, anxiety in children is severe enough to impact their ability to attend school. The Association advises parents to "reach out to school personnel about any accommodations that may help your child succeed in the classroom. You have the right under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to request appropriate accommodations related to your child's diagnosis."

Some of these include:

Safe person: This could be a counselor, nurse, teacher, or any adult that the child feels comfortable with whom the child can go to during anxious moments. This person can talk to the child for five to 10 minutes, help calm him down, and return to his normal school day. Often just knowing there is someone who understands and will help him is just the bit of reassurance and support a child needs.

Cool down pass: This allows the child to leave the classroom when he is feeling anxious to put some cool water on his face or wash his hands, restore himself, and return to class less nervous.

Seating: An anxious child will do better sitting in the most quiet spot in the room, away from louder and unruly students. He will also often benefit from being seated near the door. Parents can also request that their child be moved to a smaller class.

Testing conditions: The child can be allowed to take tests in a quiet room or have extra time to finish. Often knowing that they have extra time to finish allows their minds to settle down, and they often do not need to use the extra time.

Many schools are willing to help these children and their families, but many are not. Once a child is diagnosed with anxiety, a parent can fill out a 504. Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires public schools to provide medically compromised students reasonable and appropriate accommodations, so they may participate fully in school. This will protect the child by ensuring that his medical needs are addressed and also that accommodations will be provided. Parents are the first and strongest advocates for their child.

For more information on children and anxiety, 504s, and school accommodations for children with anxiety visit, worrywisekids.org.

Danielle Sullivan, a mom of three, is a writer and editor living in New York City. She is a rare species called a Brooklyn native and very proud of the fact.

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Continued on page 22

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Continued from page 21

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Finding her shtick

A Brooklyn comedian's journey to mommyhood

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo by Anelle Garnet

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

arms of an ice sculpture!

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

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

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

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

But the stork wouldn't have any of it!

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

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

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

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

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

back prior to her pregnancy with her son.

Tragedy and comedy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Soon after, though, she miscarried.

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

Working mom

Eisenberg says she has found mommy bliss in her community.

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



Photo by Mindy Tucker

quite wonderful.”

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

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

“Hey, guess what? If I don’t reply

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



TIPS FOR FEEDING KIDS

CHEF JOANNA DEVITA

Back-to-school eats

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

Stock up on your kids' new favorites

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

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

Take advantage of ripe September tomatoes

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

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



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

Create a noodle bar

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stock up for the weekend

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

Don't over complicate the weeknight meal

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

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

Whole-wheat blueberry pancakes

Serves: 2 to 4

INGREDIENTS:

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

depending on the flour)

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

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

(if using).

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

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

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



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Talking tough topics before the big day

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New York City and Long Island-based lawyer and mediator Lee Chabin helps clients to express their needs, better understand one another, and reach decisions that benefit each of them. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

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

Calendar

SEPTEMBER



Making science fun

Little Makers at the New York Hall of Science allows children to explore science in fun workshops on Sept. 4, 11, and 18.

Kids ages 18 months and older can use their imagination to learn about a variety of subjects from magnets to building their own superhero gadgets.

Little Makers, Sept. 4, 11, 18, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 per family (\$5 for family members) plus general admission to the museum.

New York Hall of Science [47-01 111th St. in North Corona, (718) 699-0005 X 353, www.ny-science.org].

Never miss a great event!

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Calendar

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

THURS, SEPT. 1

IN QUEENS

Poetry slam: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtowhall.org; 6 pm; \$5 (free for members).

Open mic for poets of all ages, free-style rappers, and emerging artists of all kinds. Hosted by poet and storyteller Bobby González.

SAT, SEPT. 3

IN QUEENS

Capoeira for Beginners: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; (718) 956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; Noon to 1 pm; Free.

Led by certified instructors from Capoeira Nago Queen, this six-part series will introduce participants to the basic fundamentals of the Brazilian martial art of capoeira. This introduction will offer guidance with balance, flexibility, and agility while also providing a brief history of capoeira traditions. All ages welcome.

Hands-on History: King Manor Museum, Jamaica Avenue and 150th Street; (718) 206-0545; <http://www.kingmanor.org>; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Create paper out of recycled materials, read news stories for kids, and take a free tour of King Manor, where you'll see a copy of, *The Long Island Farmer*, the first newspaper published in Queens. Families with children ages 5 and up are welcome. Take a free tour of King Manor Museum!

Omar's Summer Send-Off Party: Forest Park Carousel, Woodhave Boulevard and Forest Park Drive; (718) 788-2676; nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 6 pm; Free.

End your summer right with this encore presentation of a party! Hosted by Omar Olusion, come celebrate the holiday weekend with live DJ music, dance contests, fun games, and magic shows. Omar's unique mix of creativity, passion, amusement, and magic will keep



New York City Parks Department / Elizabeth Green

A day on the water

Enjoy a day of kayaking and canoeing on Sept. 5 at Socrates Sculpture Park.

Paddlers depart from Socrates Sculpture Park Beach at Halletts Cove and enjoy a day on the water.

Astoria Boaters and Long Island City Community Boathouse host the all-ages event. No prior boating experience is required and participants may sign up on a first come, first serve basis.

And the best part is — now life preservers are available for any pets who want to join!

Minors (under 18 years old) must have a parent or legal guardian present. Event is weather permitting.

Kayaking and canoeing, Sept. 5 from 1 pm to 4 pm. Free.

Socrates Sculpture Park [32-01 Vernon Blvd. at Broadway in Astoria, (718) 956-1819, www.socratessculpturepark.org].

guests of all ages on their feet and entertained!

SUN, SEPT. 4

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 per family (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Kids ages 18 months and older create and launch their own high-flying rockets.

Taiwan Campus Folk Songs: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtowhall.org; 1:30 pm; \$25-\$35.

Originating in Taiwan during the 1970s, the Campus Folk Song was considered a modern wave and immediately spread far and wide across Chinese-speaking areas. Artists Ms. May Tai, Dr. Hsing-Lih Chou, Mr. Yu-Wei Hsieh, Mr. Yumin Liu, Sanguang Silk Bamboo Orchestra — and many more — are sure to give you a dazzling concert! This concert will be performed in Chinese with English and Chinese

subtitles.

Send-off summer party: Fantasy Forest Amusement Park, Corona Avenue and 111th Street; (718) 788-2676; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 6 pm; Free.

End your summer right! Come celebrate the holiday weekend with live DJ music, dance contests, fun games, and magic shows. Omar's unique mix of creativity, passion, amusement, and magic will keep guests of all ages on their feet and entertained!

Story Time and Craft: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; info@queensbotanical.org; www.queensbotanical.org; 2 pm to 3:30 pm; Free with admission.

Bring your little nature lovers to QBG for a relaxing afternoon featuring nature-inspired stories, followed by a botanically themed craft activity. Generously sponsored by the World Flower Children's Foundation.

FURTHER AFIELD

Storytelling festival: Governors Island at Nolan Park, Building 10, Manhattan; (347) 425-7770; [\[lynartery.com\]\(http://lynartery.com\); 1 pm to 3 pm; Free.](http://www.brook-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

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

MON, SEPT. 5

IN QUEENS

Kayaking & Canoeing: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; 718-956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Halletts Cove Astoria Boaters and LIC Community Boathouse offer kayaking and canoeing, departing from the Socrates Sculpture Park Beach at Halletts Cove. People of all ages are welcome to participate or volunteer; no prior boating experience is required and participants may sign up on a first come, first serve basis. Children under 18 years must have a parent or legal guardian present. Life preservers are now available for your pets who want to join! Weather permitting.

Presto Pete and Incredulous

Chris: Fantasy Forest Amusement Park, Corona Avenue and 111th Street; (718) 788-2676; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm to 2:45 pm and 4 pm to 4:45 pm; Free.

Presto Pete and Incredulous Chris of Pete and Chris Amusements are New England's only two-man kids magic show! They give an ultra, high-energy performance that captures kid's attention and doesn't let go! They are two brothers who have been performing around the east coast for the past four years making kids not only laugh, but also giggle and guffaw!

FRI, SEPT. 9

IN QUEENS

Family Camping: Fort Totten Visitor's Center, Ordinance Road at Shore Road; (718) 352-1769; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm to 7:30 am; Free.

Camping affords us the opportunity to unplug from the diversions of everyday life and to laugh and play with our families. The Urban Park Rangers celebrate the tradition of camping and we look forward to welcoming your family. Space is limited and participants are chosen by lottery.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

"Peace on Your Wings," is an uplifting, new musical based on the true story of Sadako Sasaki, a young girl

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

Continued from page 29

who survived the Hiroshima bombings and went on to inspire an international peace movement. The presentation is by an all-youth cast.

SAT, SEPT. 10

IN QUEENS

Urban Farming Workshop: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; (718) 956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; Noon to 3 pm; Free.

As fall and winter approach, we will provide resources for visitors to better understand what eating seasonally means and how they can support local farms year-round. Learn about how seasons affect work on a farm and what to expect by eating locally.

Back to School!: Alley Pond Park, Springfield Boulevard and 76th Avenue; (718) 352-4793; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon to 3 pm; Free.

Northeast Queens Parks Administrator Matt Symons invites you to beat the stress of returning to school with an afternoon of fun activities, including games, rides, craft projects, and free school supplies.

Capoeira for Beginners: Noon to 1 pm. Socrates Sculpture Park. See Saturday, Sept. 3.

Family Day: Rufus King Park, 90th Avenue and 150th Street; (718) 393-7370; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

Join New York City Parks and Councilmember Lancman for a day of games, inflatables, a photo booth, cotton candy, popcorn, ices, and more! All ages are welcome!

Making Magic with Ethan

Show: Forest Park Carousel in Forest Park, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Ethan's philosophy is that magic is meant to be created and shared with people; it should not simply be designed to trick the crowd. Together, both Ethan and the audience create an amazing show. Guests of all ages should come out and be surprised!

FURTHER AFIELD

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

The annual Brooklyn TEAL Walk/Run, they city's largest event spreading awareness and raising money specifically for ovarian cancer, takes place every September, which is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month. Participants include survivors, caregivers, families,



Meeting Washington

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

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

the battle.

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

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

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

friends, and the general public who come together to raise awareness of and promote a cure for ovarian cancer. Throughout the day, there is entertainment along with educational booths and fun activities for the whole family. The 2.5-mile walk is non competitive, but the 5K run is timed so that winners can be announced. This event is rain or shine!

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

Join Parade Grand Marshal James Callahan and Henry Garrido as they march with hardworking men and women for the 2016 NYC Labor Day Parade.

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

SUN, SEPT. 11

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005

themed scavenger hunt, a live exotic animal show presented by Rizzo's Wildlife Discovery, a surprise take-home souvenir, and snack. Limited to 40 participants. Registration required.

SAT, SEPT. 17

IN QUEENS

Poseidon's Parade: Boardwalk, Beach 106th Street and Shorefront Parkway; (718) 318-4000; www.nycgovparks.org; Noon to 3 pm; Free.

Don't miss this family-friendly celebration where participants wear sea-themed costumes with floats and artwork while celebrating the opening of Rockaway Boardwalk.

Viva La Comida: 82nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue; (718) 335-9421; leslie@82ndstreet.org; www.vivalacomida.com; noon; Free.

The fifth annual festival highlights the cultural diversity in Queens, combining food with music, art, dancing, entertainment, and more on a street known for its outpouring of vibrancy. With local food trucks, an art exhibition, an open market atmosphere, and dancing amid live music from a collection of latin, jazz, and roots bands.

Capoeira for Beginners: Noon to 1 pm. Socrates Sculpture Park. See Saturday, Sept. 3.

Honey bee workshop: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; info@queensbotanical.org; www.queensbotanical.org; 1 pm to 2:30 pm; \$6 materials fee.

Celebrate the city's Honey Week and nature's aviators at this family-friendly workshop! Take a tour of the Bee Garden, learn about these amazing insects, sample honey, and make a beeswax candle to take home. Registration required.

Ghost Card!: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; (718) 956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; 2 pm to 4 pm; Free.

This interactive card-game-turned-performance will reveal storylines and movements based on the crowd-sourced personal narratives of Socrates visitors. Throughout the afternoon, a troupe of hungry ghosts will transform these tales through a platform of contemporary dance and a host of irreverent storytelling tactics. Join artists Megan Weaver and Hassan Christopher and their team of performers for this haunting maze of surreal delights! Submit your story at ghostcardshow.com.

Skats the Clown show: Forest Park Carousel in Forest Park, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Skats the Clown has been bringing the funny to audiences for nearly two

Calendar

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

decades. His confusing style of clown comedy is guaranteed to bring out the inner child in everyone. Combining magic and clownery, Skats makes everyone laugh out loud while also leaving them in amazement!

Columbian Drum Circle: Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd.; (718) 463-7700; www.flushingtownhall.org; 7 pm; \$20-\$25.

Celebrate the Harvest Moon with a drum circle in Flushing Town Hall's garden with master drummers from Colombia. Begin with workshops led by the founder of La Cumbiamba eNeYé, Martin Vejarano, then jam with the entire group under the moon. Tambor drums, maracas, and guacharaca provided. All are welcome from beginner to professional, just bring your enthusiasm and participate!

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Children 2 to 11 years old enjoy a full day of literary activities featuring authors, story time where children hear authors read and discuss their books, workshops with topics ranging from bookmaking and STEM to reading maps and writing stories, and an Artspot where children create projects with authors. At a competitive illustrator draw-off, illustrators will create original drawings in response to prompts from the children in audience, plus the theatre group TADA will perform adaptations of books by Ezra Jack Keats.

"Beauty and the Beast Jr.," Long Island Children's Museum, 11 Davis Ave. at West Road, Long Island; (516) 224-5800; www.licm.org; 11:30 am and 2 pm; \$12 with museum of admission (\$10 with admission for members).

Plaza Theatrical presents the classic story of Belle, a young woman in a provincial town, and the Beast, who is really a young prince trapped under the spell of an enchantress. If the Beast can learn to love and be loved, the curse will end and he will be transformed to his former self.

Brooklyn-Queens Pageant: The Brooklyn Music School, 126 St. Felix St., Brooklyn; MissQueensOrg@gmail.com; www.eventbrite.com/e/miss-queens-and-miss-brooklyn-pageant-tickets-23731901757; 5 pm; \$25.

The 2017 Miss Queens and Miss Brooklyn Pageant Scholarships will be awarded to several incredible young women competing for the title and a new Miss Queens will be crowned!

SUN, SEPT. 18

IN QUEENS

Little Makers: New York Hall of Sci-



Time to get crafty!

The annual Craft and Fine Art Festival comes to the Nassau County Museum of Art on Sept. 24 and 25.

Hear from experts in the craft and art world, and enjoy delicious food and desserts including French sweet and savory crepes, smoothies, and more.

Crafting and art enthusiasts can find designer apparel in silk, cashmere, organic cotton, alpaca, and other natural fibers; diamonds, rubies, and sapphires set in gold and platinum; fine paintings on canvas; home furnish-

ings; original fashions in dyed leather; blown and stained glass; as well as hand-crafted creations fashioned from exotic, non-endangered woods; children's craft activities; entertainment; and so much more

Craft and Fine Art Festival, Sept. 24 from 11 am to 6 pm and Sept. 25 from 10 am to 6 pm. Entry is \$9 for adults and free for children under 12. Ample parking available.

Nassau County Museum of Art [1 Museum Dr. off Northern Boulevard in Roslyn Harbor, (516) 484-9337].

ence, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am to 12:30 pm; \$8 per family (\$5 members) plus Hall admission.

Kids ages 18 months and older design, make, and build their own superhero gadgets.

Antique motorcycle show: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am to 4 pm; \$5 (Free for farm members).

This show will include a display of various makes and models of motorcycles that have been out of production for 10 years or more. Music, farmhouse tours, hayrides, and food will provide fun for the entire family.

Celebration for children of all abilities!: Playground for All Children, Flushing Meadow Corona Park 111th Street; (718) 592-9700; www.queens-museum.org; Noon to 4 pm; Free.

So enjoy this series of fun family events that demonstrate that there is nothing more creative than a

playground full of activities that recognize that there is something special in all children. Learn about sensory play and learn about the history of this playground as the first in America to integrate activities for differently-abled and normatively-abled children.

Story Time and Craft: 2 pm to 3 pm. Queens Botanical Garden. See Sunday, Sept. 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

"Beauty and the Beast Jr.," 11:30 am and 2 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Sept. 17.

The ShopUp NYC: 501 Union, 501

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

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

MON, SEPT. 19

FURTHER AFIELD

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

FRI, SEPT. 23

IN QUEENS

Health & Wellness Fair: Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St.; (718) 539-5296; ave.mccracken@tsiny.org; www.queensbotanical.org; 1 pm to 4 pm; Free.

There's something for all ages, including an education center, doctor's corner, wellness shops, fitness zone, On The Scene Cuisine (food truck), and much more.

SAT, SEPT. 24

IN QUEENS

County Fair: Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; 11 am to 6 pm; \$10 per day (\$5 per day for children under 12).

One of our most popular events of the year! Don't miss this traditional county fair with blue-ribbon competitions in livestock, produce, home crafts, arts & crafts, and more. The fair features pie-eating and corn-husking contests, pig races, hayrides, carnival rides, midway games, and top-notch children's entertainment. Dance the day away at the Bavarian Garden with live music and traditional dancers. The Amazing Maize Maze opens this weekend, and there will be local food and craft vendors on the farm all weekend. Admission does not include The Amazing Maize Maze, carnival rides, midway games, and various other fair activities. Height rules apply at all rides.

Capoeira for Beginners: Noon to 1 pm. Socrates Sculpture Park. See Saturday, Sept. 3.

"The Magic of Rogue": Forest Park Carousel, Forest Park Drive and Woodhaven Boulevard; (718) 788-2676; www.nycgovparks.org; 2 pm and 4 pm; Free.

Continued on page 32

Continued from page 31

As seen on "America's Got Talent," Rogue brings a combination of magic and comedy. With tons of audience interaction, this show is a mixture of music, flowers, fire, and animals.

Smithsonian Day Live: Queens Historical Society, 143-35 37th Ave.; (718) 939-0647; info@queenshistoricalsociety.org; 2:30 pm-4:30 pm; Free.

Get free admission to the Kingsland Homestead. Guests will be able to tour the museum and see our newest exhibit — Toys & Games From the Attic and Beyond!

FURTHER AFIELD

Craft and Fine Art Festival: Nassau County Museum of Art, 1 Museum Dr., Long Island; (516) 484-9337; 11 am to 6 pm; \$9 (children under 12 free).

Professional craft and art experts, moderately priced and delicious food and desserts including French sweet and savory crepes, smoothies, and more. Plus, continuous craft demonstrations; dramatic metal and stone sculpture; designer apparel in silk, cashmere, organic cotton, alpaca and other natural fibers, and so much more.

"Beauty and the Beast Jr.," 11:30 am and 2 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Sept. 17.

SUN, SEPT. 25

IN QUEENS

County Fair: 11 am to 6 pm. Queens County Farm Museum. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

FURTHER AFIELD

Craft and Fine Art Festival: 10 am to 6 pm. Nassau County Museum of Art. See Saturday, Sept. 24.

"Beauty and the Beast Jr.," 11:30 am and 2 pm. Long Island Children's Museum. See Saturday, Sept. 17.

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

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



Albert Law

Breaking the code

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

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

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

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

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

The Edible Academy Family

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

This festive celebration of organic vegetable gardening and cooking is set in the Ruth Rea Howell Family Garden. The food-filled afternoon of outdoor discovery will welcome back special guest chef Carla Hall, co-host of ABC's "The Chew," who will take guests on a culinary adventure through hands-on cooking workshops and a delicious picnic featuring Carla Hall's Southern Kitchen chicken. Children of all ages can get on the go with their Picnic Passport and enjoy a selection of kitchen crafts and games, organic vegetable gardening, honey harvesting, apple pressing, tree climbing, live music, and much more.

THURS, SEPT. 29

IN QUEENS

STEM Night: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 5:30 pm to 8 pm; Free.

The community is invited to attend this workshop for high school and college students that will showcase the wide range of career opportunities available in the maker world. Students can engage in hands-on activities, hear from experts in the field through a panel discussion, and network with STEM professionals. Light refreshments will be provided. Free. RSVP required.

LONG-RUNNING

IN QUEENS

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St.; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org;

Mondays and Wednesdays – Fridays, 9:30 am to 5 pm, Tuesdays, 9:30 am to 5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; \$6 (\$5 children) plus admission to the Hall.

The game reveals that the same laws of motion and gravity that guide the motion of golf balls here on Earth. In this nine-hole miniature golf course, players will explore key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more. Recommended for ages 6 and older.

Quests program: Queens Zoo, 53-51 111th St.; (718) 271-1500; queenszoo.com; Wednesdays – Sundays, 11 am to 3 pm, Now – Mon, Sept. 5; Free with zoo admission.

Visitors learn about wild life in scavenger hunt format and embark on a nature adventure to identify local birds, discover ways to reduce pollution, learn about ocean and other aquatic habitats, and more. Participants receive a Quest map brochure at the start of each adventure, then visit several stations around the park to complete science and conservation challenges.

Summer Sports: Playground For All Children, Corona Avenue and 111th Street; (718) 393-7370; www.nycgpp-parks.org; Weekdays, 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm, Now – Fri, Sept. 2; Free.

Children learn about sports and play basketball, soccer, track & field and street hockey!

Sculpture Workshop: Socrates Sculpture Park, 32-01 Vernon Blvd.; 718-956-1819; www.socratessculpturepark.org; Saturdays, Noon to 3 pm, Now – Sat, Sept. 24; Free.

Saturday Sculpture Workshops are designed for kids (ages 5 to 13) and their families. Participants will work with a different artist each week, ex-

ploring innovative art mediums and a variety of subject matter.

Drop-in Family: Queens Museum of Art, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park; (718) 592-9700; www.queensmuseum.org; Sundays, 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Now – Sun, Oct. 30; Free with museum admission.

The Queens Museum invites children ages 5-12 and their adult companions to explore drawing from different sources of inspiration each week. Children with special needs are welcome, and adaptations are available. No fee or advance registration required. Just show up and stay for as long as you like.

The Amazing Maize Maze:

Queens County Farm Museum, 73-50 Little Neck Pkwy.; (718) 347-3276; www.queensfarm.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 am to 4 pm, Sat, Sept. 24 – Sun, Oct. 30; \$10 per day (\$5 per day for children 4 to 11; Free children under 3).

Ready to be amaaazed? Kids and adults alike will have a blast finding their way out of this three-acre corn maze! The adventure begins with a "Stalk Talk" to prepare you for the challenge of finding clues, solving puzzles, and making your way out of the maze.

FURTHER AFIELD

Mario Batali's Kitchen Gardens:

New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd. at Fordham Road, The Bronx; (718) 817-8700; www.nybg.org; Tuesdays – Sundays, 1:30 pm to 6 pm, Now – Sun, Nov. 20; Included in All Garden Pass Admission.

Garden beds are filled with plants featured in the favorite recipes of the chefs from Mario Batali's restaurants. Kids can explore the gardens to solve Mario's Menu Mystery.

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New & Noteworthy

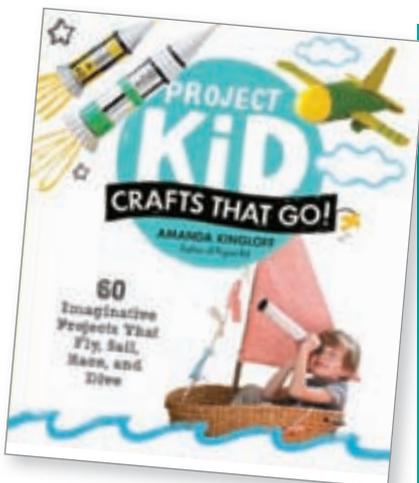
BY LISA J. CURTIS

Crafting 101

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

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

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



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

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

Lunchbox must-have

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

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

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



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

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

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

Stamp out lost stuff

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

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

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

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

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



Quality is in-grained

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



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

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

Take note

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



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

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

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