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As a Councilman, it is not your job to pave roads, enforce laws, or determine school curriculum.

It is your job to make sure the city agencies responsible for these issues are not short-changing our kids.

CHRIS WALSH

SOUTH SHORE COUNCILMAN

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"PEOPLE NOT POLITICS"

Letter from the publisher

Braces, vision, and 'newfangled stuff'

The world of orthodontics has come a long way since I was a kid. I was one of those lucky children whose teeth came in straight and I didn't need any correcting, but that wasn't the case for most of my friends. As I recall, the braces



of my day were horribly unattractive and painful to the wearer. They were also painful to others. I can recall my first boyfriend having them and my first kiss ended with me having a cut lip. It was embarrassing to both of us and to me it was an alarming intro to new physical intimacy. Everyone who got them dreaded it no matter how much they wanted to have nice teeth and a good smile. They were also expensive.

Like everything else, there has been incredible improvement in the styles, fit and cost of corrective devices. Not only kids wear them these days. I know many adults who opt to wear them, and I don't mean just people in their 20s, but rather, fairly "mature types." So many things are optional that didn't used to be. It's fantastic!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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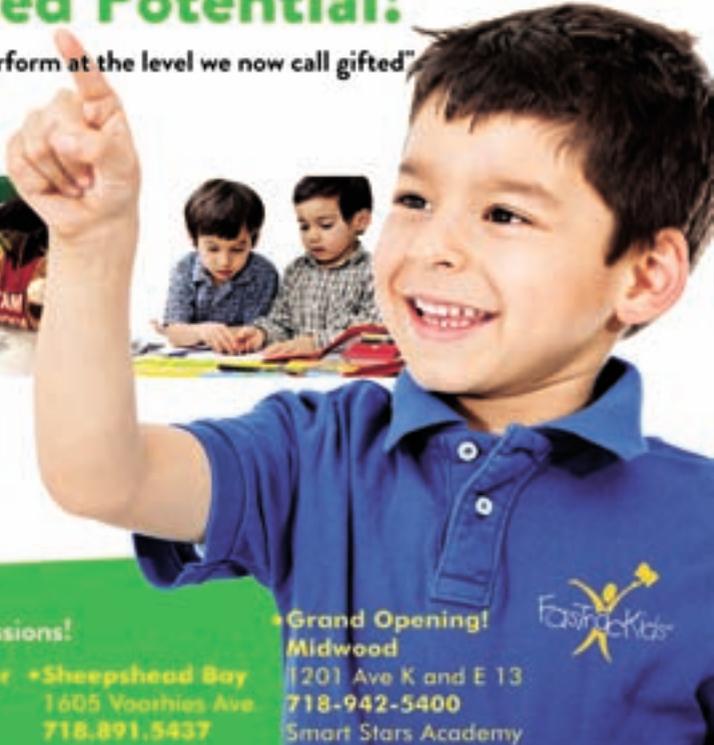
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Beware the

PUMPKIN

How to avoid a common Halloween horror

BY KIKI BOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





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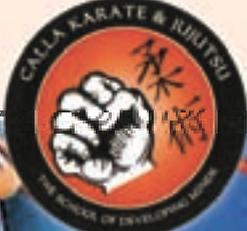
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Friend *or* foe?

When you disapprove of your child's BFF

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

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

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

Prejudging others based on instinct

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A parent's preference

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

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

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

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

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

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

Family values and friendship standards

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

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

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

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

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

Unacceptable behavior and forgiveness

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

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

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

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

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

She says that parents tend to not



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

own up as readily.

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

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

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

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

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

sincere tone of voice, recognition of the thing that was hurtful, and offer to make amends.”

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

The road to independence

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

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

our job to guide them, and we want them to make “the right choices,” subjective as that is. But, as Hiller points out, we need to let go and separate here a bit, too, just as we do with their choice of age-appropriate clothing, music, and TV.

Minefield of adolescent friendship

In middle school, our children’s social ties diversify, and we hear about new friends, some of whom are suddenly experiencing new levels of independence, perhaps too soon. These kids may be free to go places and do things you feel your child is not yet prepared for. Some socialize at unsupervised houses, and others sneak into R-rated movies. Parents may have approved of these same playmates in grade school, but they may behave differently now.

Simmons says we may still limit our child’s exposure to these friends by refusing to take them or allow them to hang out in places we don’t sanction. She says there are some decisions we may need to make as parents, which can put our children’s social status on the line, especially for this age group, which craves ac-

ceptance, and it will take courage.

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

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

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

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

...

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

BREATHE easy

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

BY SUE LEBRETON

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

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

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

Use a spacer

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

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



Resources for help with asthma

Here are some resources for families of children with asthma.

Proper technique

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

Resources

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

Perfect your technique

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

Go smoke free

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

Make sense of scents

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

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

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

Battle dust mites

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

Consider inhaled steroids

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

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

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

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

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Dress 'em up

Halloween costume ideas for the craft challenged

BY SUE LEBRETON

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

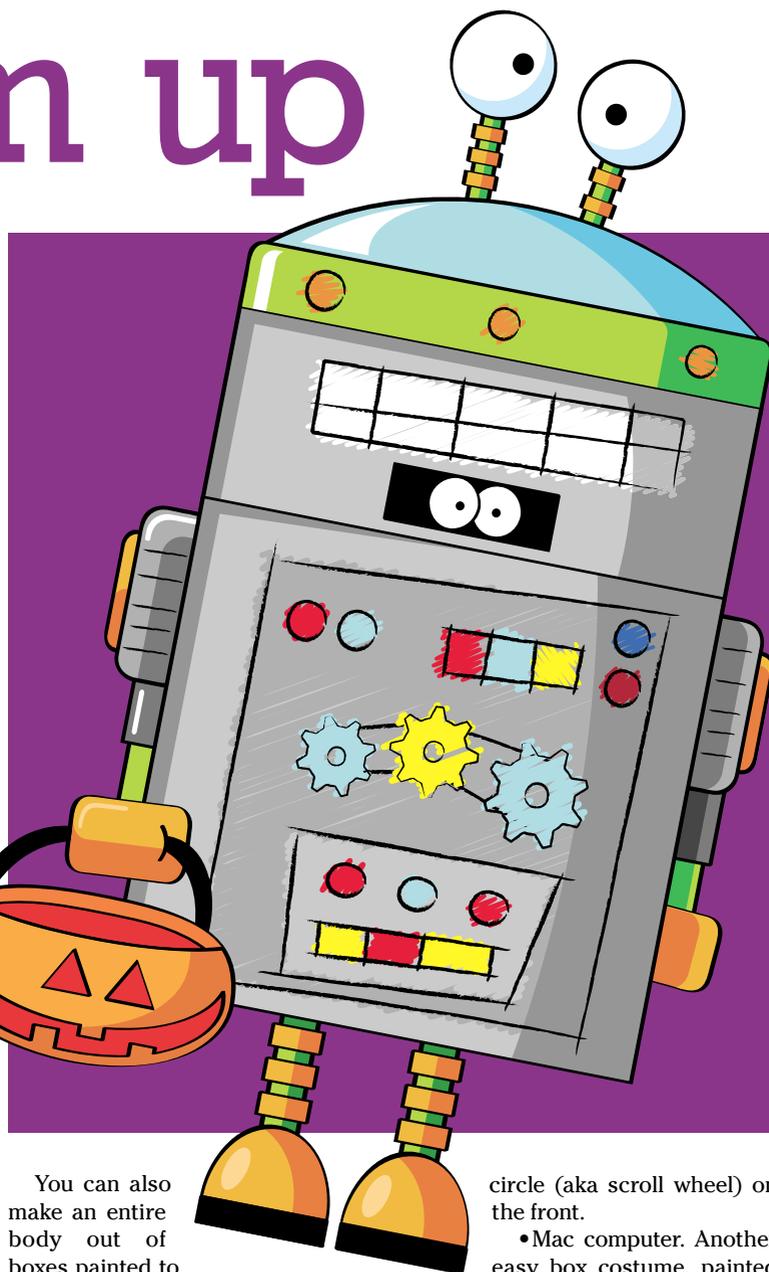
The trick is starting early, so the paint is dry before they head out hunting for treats. Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing. Thanks to the internet, you can find images for almost anything you can imagine.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

circle (aka scroll wheel) on the front.

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

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

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

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

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Bouncin' at Barclays

Talented youngsters shine in Brooklyn Nets Kids Dance Team

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

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

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

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

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

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

She jumped at the chance to work with the Nets.

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

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

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

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

"First thing up was the Brooklyn-

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

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

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

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



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





time and teaches it to the kids at rehearsal.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Real partnership

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

BY JENNY CHEN

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

DON'T be a helicopter parent

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

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

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

DO make teachers aware of your child's specific needs

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

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

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

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

DO start off conversations positively

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

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

DON'T expect immediate attention

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

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

DO your homework before parent-teacher conferences

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

DON'T make excuses for your child

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

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

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

DO continue the education at home

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

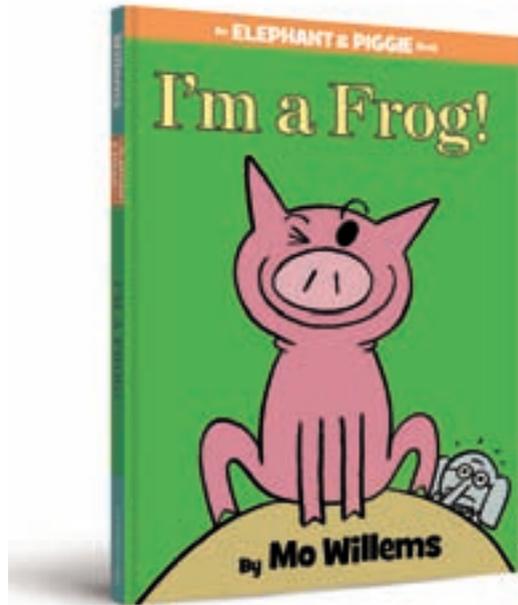
"Parents need to do their part to foster good educational goals and outcomes," she said.

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

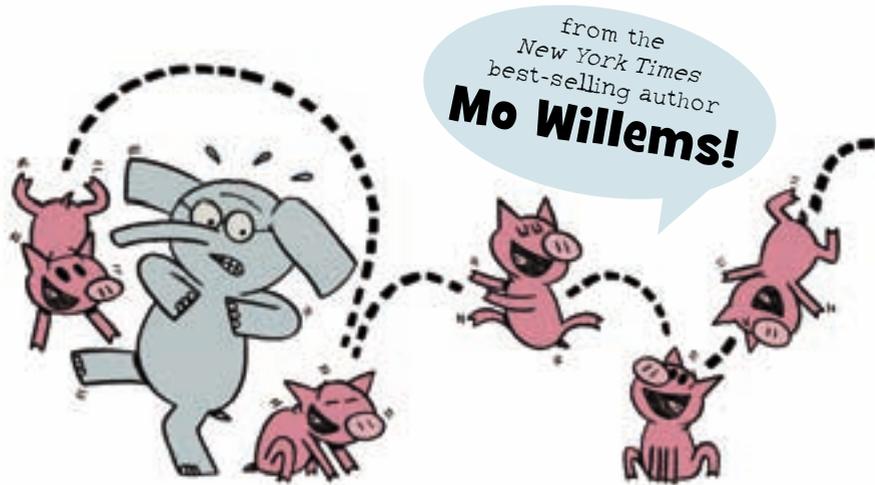
Jenny Chen is a freelance writer specializing in education and parenting. She has written for Washington Parent and Mothering Magazine.



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

BY MAURICE FRUMKIN

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

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

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

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

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



you will be on your way to success:

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

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

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

now, so you won't have regrets later.

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

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

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

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

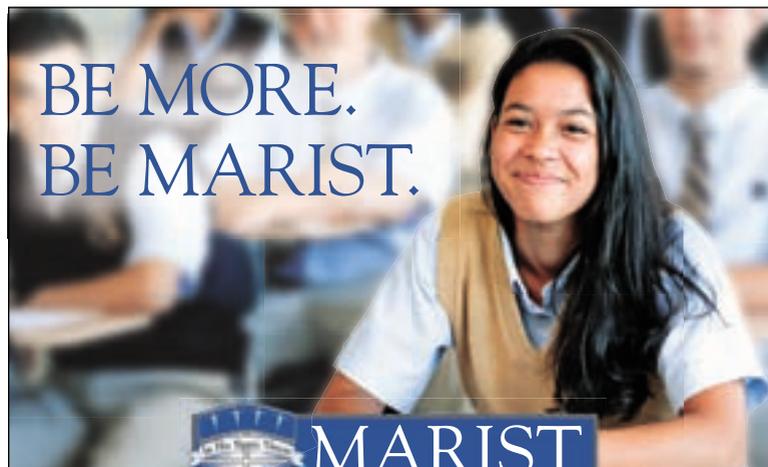
•It's about fit. I can't tell you how many students I've spoken with who will tell you that School X is the greatest thing since sliced bread, whereas other students wouldn't apply there in a million years. Neither is wrong. Even if your friend or neighbor is telling you, "You simply HAVE to apply to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

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

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

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

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



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Continued on page 24

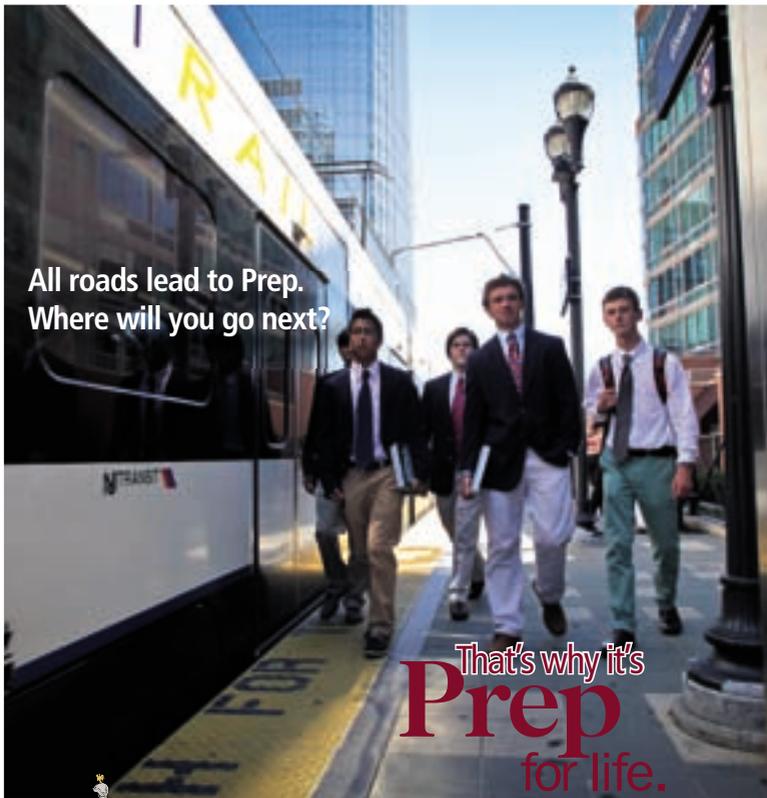
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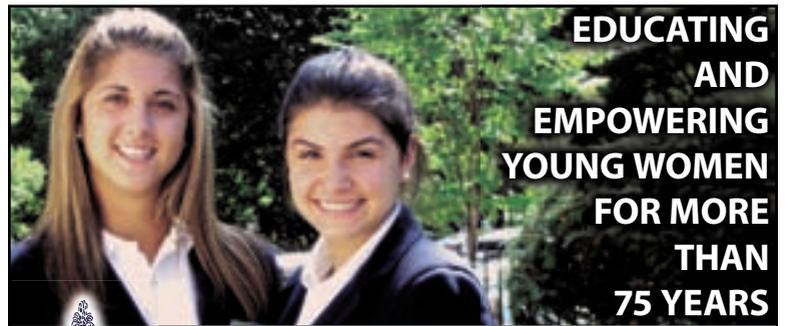
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High School

DIRECTORY

Continued from page 22

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Hours of fun family activities with Pumpkins

BY CAROL J. ALEXANDER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Happy pumpkin season!





HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Try genetic testing for breast cancer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Multiple breast and ovarian cancers within a family (often diagnosed at an early age)
- Two or more primary cancers in a single family member (more than one breast cancer, or breast and ovarian cancer)
- Cases of male breast cancer

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

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



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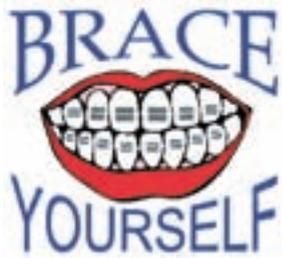
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Really bad hits

How teen fighting deals a blow to IQ

BY KIKI BOCHI

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

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

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

ity, the researchers said.

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

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

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

increased ability to withstand physical trauma.

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

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

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

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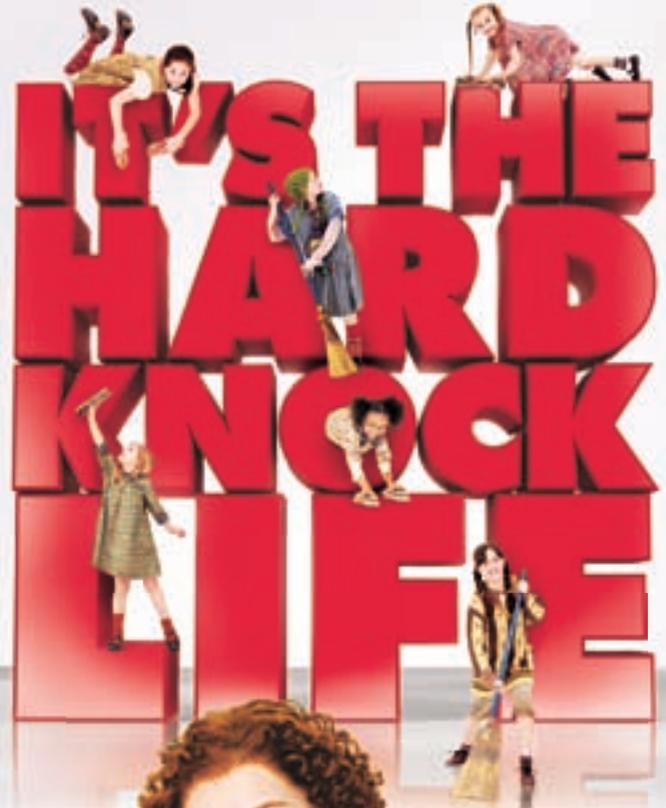
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A good night

Finding the best way to help your family fall asleep

BY JAMIE LOBER

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

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

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

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

Make sure your day begins with daylight.

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

store," said Kothare.

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

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

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

cially created chemicals.

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

Stay away from caffeine, especially after noon.

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

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

Encourage your child to sleep independently.

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

Everybody needs a different amount of sleep based on age.

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

Some kids encounter obstacles that interfere with sleep.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sleep has gained a lot of attention recently.

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

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

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

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

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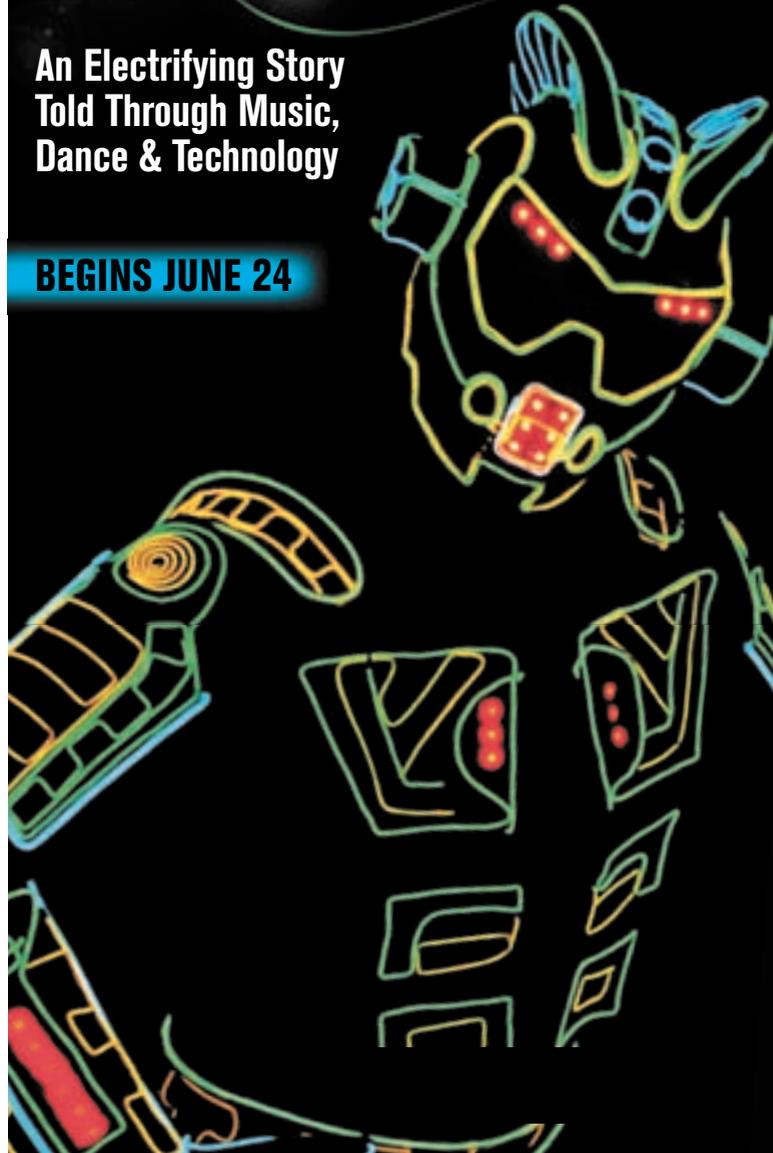
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Start off strong

Fortify your
child against
bone loss

BY HEATHER LEE LEAP

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

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

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



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

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

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

Nutrition

- Provide foods high in calcium such as low-fat cheese, yogurt, and milk fortified with vitamin D.
- Serve a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, especially green leafy vegetables, which are high in calcium.
- Limit soft drinks. Children who consume soft drinks are less likely to drink milk or calcium-rich alternatives.
- Offer milk or calcium-added non-dairy beverages at meals.
- Make homemade freezer pops from calcium-fortified orange juice.

Exercise

- Weight-bearing exercise strengthens bones as well as muscles. The Centers for Disease Con-

trol recommends children participate in bone-building activities such as jumping rope, running, or climbing on a jungle gym at least three days per week. Aim for 60 minutes of physical activity each day.

- Encourage your child to participate in sports.

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

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

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

Healthy habits

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

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

Calcium minus the cow

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

- Calcium-fortified beverages: Juice and soy milk with 30 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance per cup.
- Tofu: Prepared with calcium sulfate.
- Legumes: Edamame soybeans, black-eyed peas, and

white beans.

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

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

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

Top
Tips



DEAR
DR. KARYN
DR. KARYN GORDON

Overscheduling & teen relationships

Too much!

Dear Dr. Karyn,

My daughter collapsed at school in the spring. Prior to that, she was feeling very anxious and complaining about all her work. I know she was overcommitted with too many extracurricular activities. What can I do to help her balance her calendar this fall?

Dear parent,

Unfortunately, your question is one I get asked all too often. When people pack their schedule, there are many potential emotional and physical consequences. Thankfully, there are many things you, as a parent, can do to help.

First, take her to see your family doctor. Anytime there are physical symptoms, it's extremely important to get your doctor on board. Second, it's important for you to model having a balanced calendar yourself. If parents preach one thing but live another, your teen probably will not listen to what you have to say. Modeling is extremely important when we're talking about this topic.

Third, sit down with her and express your concerns. Let her know why you are worried (refer to the collapse as an example), and discuss the potential consequences if she does nothing different this fall.

Fourth, if she is willing, help her prioritize all her potential fall commitments. Get her to make a list of all her commitments in two categories:



negotiable and non-negotiable (i.e. sleeping, eating, school).

Get her to estimate how much time per week each commitment will involve.

Fifth, get her to map her non-negotiables on a calendar so that she can see what she is committed to and how much room there is left over.

Sixth, get her to prioritize from zero to 10 how important her negotiable items are to her. Some activities are going to be more important to her than others. The key is that you don't want to eliminate everything, but rather help her to focus on what is really important to her.

Finally, help her to say "no" to some of her potential commitments. This is the toughest step. The reality is that we are not robots — we have limits. And to be effective, we need to be selective. Once she does this, she will feel a huge difference emotionally and physically!

Teen dating

Dear Dr. Karyn,

I have a 19-year-old son who recently decided to get back together with an old girlfriend who is not good for him. Any suggestions?

Dear parent,

It can be extremely difficult when we see our teens dating someone that we don't approve of. When I coach parents, there is one strategy that I often recommend: focus on what you can control and accept what you cannot control. So many of us focus on what we cannot control

and as a result we get frustrated, angry, and anxious. The truth is you cannot control who your son dates, but you can control how and what you communicate to your son. So my encouragement is to focus on this.

Here are a few tips: first, aim to be a safe person for your son. When I say safe, I mean non-judgmental, warm, loving, caring, compassionate, understanding, and genuine. That means not saying that you don't like or approve of his girlfriend. If you do this, you can almost guarantee that his walls will go up and he will stop sharing with you.

I do think it's important for you to voice your concerns, but only if he is willing and open to hear it. Ask him, "I've got some concerns about your relationship — would you like me to share them with you?" If he says "no," then respect that. When teens are asked whether or not they want advice, I find they are much more open to hear it.

Second, ask questions. Ask him, "How are you and your girlfriend doing?" "What do you most appreciate about her?" "How is she similar or different to your past girlfriends?" "How would you describe your dream girlfriend?" At first, he may only say one-word answers. But over time, if he continues to feel safe with you, he is likely to start sharing more.

Finally, ask him how he feels about your relationship to your husband. This question can be a real eye-opener! The reality is children will often mirror relationships of their parents. Opening this up in a dialogue might give you some clues as to why he is attracted to her in the first place. Good luck!

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.



DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

The day I just QUIT

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

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

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

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

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

I quit.

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

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

Then the texts begin.

“Dad where are you?”

“Nicaragua.”

“Srsly. I’m hungry.”

“I quit.”

“LOL, dad. You’re funny. Danny needs a ride home, and his dog pooped in the kitchen.”



“I quit.”

“Dad?”

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

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

“I quit.”

“LOL. Hilarious. I’m starving. Some dog pooped in the kitchen.”

“I quit.”

“Dad?”

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

“Hon? The kids seem concerned about you.”

“I quit.”

“It’s been a long summer. You probably need a mini-vacation.”

“I quit.”

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

Maybe you should ...”

“I quit.”

“If you quit your duties ... I’ll quit mine.”

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

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

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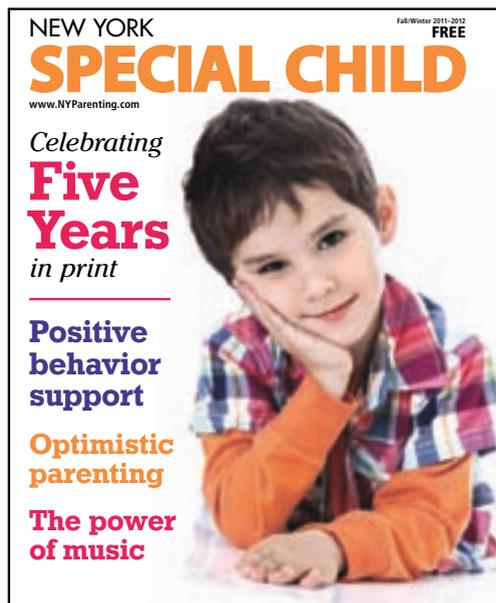
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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Understanding oral allergy syndrome

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

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

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

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

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

Pollens and trigger foods

If you or your child is allergic to



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

Incidence increasing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Helpful websites

- Kids With Food Allergies: www.kidswithfoodallergies.org
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology: www.aaaai.org
- American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology: www.acaai.org

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



Edamame hummus

Prep time: Five minutes
Total time: 10 minutes
Makes: 14 servings (1-1/4 cups total)

INGREDIENTS:

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

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

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

Courtesy of United Soybean Board



THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Pirate and librarian make a great pair

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

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

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

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

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

Library Lou said that if Big Pete

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

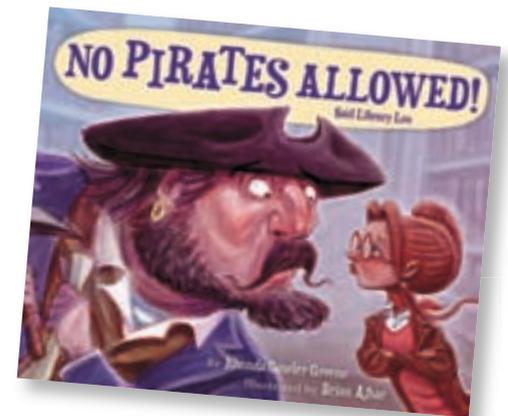
Library Lou told Pete that she would help him find the treasure, but first he had to take a bath.

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

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

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

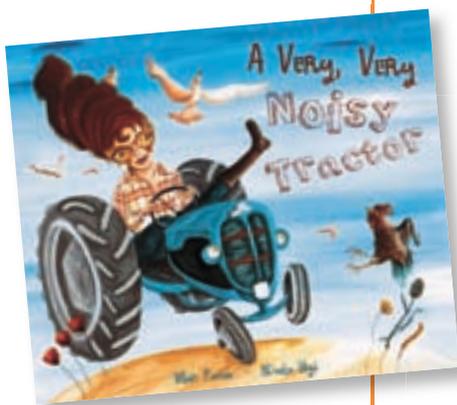
With a rhyme and a growl, Greene



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

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

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



Kids will clamor for this 'Noisy Tractor'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They saw what they saw, and it was love.

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

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

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

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

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

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



JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Proud to be a mom, even at the office

Parenting is certainly the hardest thing I've ever done, but it is also the greatest thing in my life. I'm not afraid to say it ... anymore. I'm not the type who talks incessantly about my kids or posts daily Facebook pictures of everything we do, but there is nothing that even comes close to the joy (and fear) that I receive from being a mother. I feel honored that I have these three people in my life, not to train, but to share life with, and watch them as they blossom into young adults. And I know I'm not alone in that feeling, yet, I have encountered countless moms that downplay the joy they get from motherhood.

One reason a mother might do it is because she's at work and doesn't want to be known as "that mom," or she may shelf her abundant mommy enthusiasm, because she wants to appear as hip as she was before she had kids. But being

a mom is the most important job we'll ever have. You can have all sorts of professional success, but being responsible for another person's health, education, emotions, outlook on life, safety, and more is nothing short of meaningful in every sense of the word.

Much of the mommy stigma starts in the workplace. During different times in my life, I have worked alongside hostile childless co-workers who resented my part-time status, and I have felt the need to purposefully not discuss my children at work. After all, work is for working, not divulging personal information, but I also knew that any swooning over my baby would result in certain co-workers holding the new mommy status against me. I have also witnessed a boss berate a co-worker for taking her child to the doctor and coming in 30 minutes late!

When I was an editor, I went out of my way to make new moms on staff feel included and just as valued as they were in their pre-pregnancy days, while also empathizing with their home situation, lack of sleep, and general emotional turmoil that can come with being a new mom. I have been around too many pregnant women — who felt embarrassed for taking extra bathroom trips, having bad morning sickness, or calling in sick, because they had a colicky baby — to not have compassion for women making the sometimes abrupt transition into motherhood.

At the same time, I've often heard snickers from childless employees about how the new mom was mentally scattered. Well, that happens sometimes. The swirl of pregnancy, birth, and new motherhood is, at best, daunting. Women need to support other women, in general, and it's not only the women who are stay-at-home moms or working moms — it

is also the childless women.

Women should not feel the need to downplay the joy in the workplace they derive from motherhood, but I think many of us still do. I'm not advocating having an all-day session about Junior's new tooth, but we should also be able to say, "I'm taking a sick day, because my child is sick," without suffering repercussions from it.

My career is vitally important to me, but if it were a choice between it and my children, my kids would win hands-down. In fact, with most anything, I would choose my kids. It's not the trendy parenting subject that gets talked about these days. It's an old-fashioned notion, I suppose, that even in this time of feminism and equal rights, I would value being a mom above all else. And, as much as I like to think of myself as progressive and modern, I still do value being a mom above anything. No matter what professional success I attain, I would feel like a failure if I failed at motherhood.

Throughout my career, I have changed jobs according to my family's needs, and I don't regret any of it. My career has thrived on the changes, and in each circumstance, I have grown personally and professionally. Motherhood transforms a woman, and there is no reason we should hide that fact. It's beautiful. Priorities change, and we often grow into more empathetic and caring individuals as a result of being a parent.

Despite the difficult times, sleepless nights and worry that comes from parenting, it remains the most important job most of us will ever have ... and we shouldn't be afraid to say so.

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



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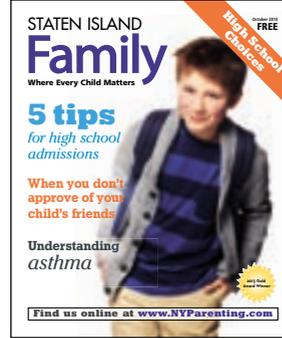
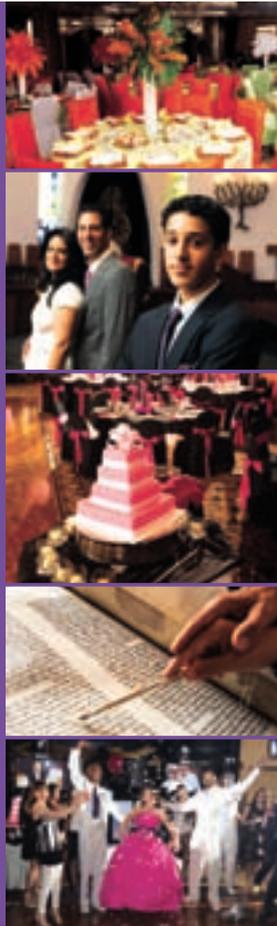
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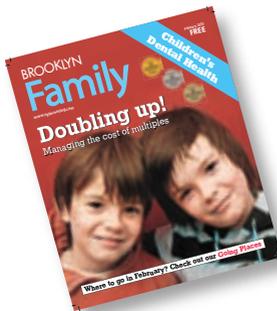
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Calendar

OCTOBER



Photo by Jeff Tureaud

Giffords Lane is rocking the rafters at St. George Theater

Giffords Lane is coming to St. George for a rocking-out, crazy concert on Oct. 5.

The talented tweens and teens — Serena Chierchia, Salvatore Grande, Dylan Kahan, and Nicky “Stixx” Taormina — will have you up and shouting until you lose your voice. This is one concert

that should not be missed.

It’s rock and roll at its very best, so come on down and rock on.

Giffords Lane on Oct. 5 at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$25.

St. George Theatre [35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark’s Place and Central Avenue in St. George, (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com].

MON, SEPT. 30

Teen Cafe: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

Hang out with friends, bring snacks, homework, or browse the web. For tweens and teens, 12 to 18 years old.

Read aloud: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 4-4:30 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

TUES, OCT. 1

Tutoring: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 3:30-5:30 pm; Free.

Children in pre-K through eighth grade get help in math and English homework. Register at front desk.

Resources for teens: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old learn all about what the library has to offer.

WED, OCT. 2

Greenbelt Peppers: Greenbelt Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; www.nycgov-parks.com; 10-10:45 am; \$4 (\$6 non-members).

Children 2 years old enjoy hands-on activities, finger plays, games, and stories. Pre-registration requested.

THURS, OCT. 3

Teen lounge: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30-4:30 pm; Free.

For children ages 12 to 18 years old.

Read aloud: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 4-4:30 pm; Free.

For children 3 to 12 years of age.

Calendar

Submit a listing

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

Send your listing request to statenlandcalendar@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!

FRI, OCT. 4

Toddler Rhyme Time: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 10:30–11 am; Free.

Children 18 months to 30 months enjoy interactive stories, songs, and fingerplays.

Toddler Time: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 10:30–11:30 am; Free.

Little ones 3 to 5 years old enjoy play time with a caregiver and/or parent.

Fun Fridays: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 3 years and older enjoy stories, songs and a fun craft.

SAT, OCT. 5

Soap Box Derby: Westerleigh Park, Neil Dow Avenue at Maine Avenue; westerleighpark@aol.com; www.nycgov-parks.org; 9 am–4 pm; Free.

Build it, race it, win it! Enjoy the ninth-annual race.

Clean out your closet: Guyon Rescue corner lot, New Dorp Lane at Mill Road; 10 am–3 pm; Free.

The seasons are changing — and families affected by Sandy still need assistance. Drop off used and worn, any season clothing. Sorry, no under garments, socks or footwear. Two days only.

"Frankenweenie": New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2–4 pm; Free.

Just in time for the spooky season. This movie is perfect for children of all ages.

Giffords Lane: St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 7:30 pm; \$25.

The band, comprised of 11 to 13 year olds, is making the rounds and Staten Island is on the list.



The magic is back in Staten Island

Be prepared to be amazed when Lyn Dillies performs acts of magic at the College of Staten Island on Oct. 28.

In the tradition of the great magicians, Dillies takes your breath away with feats of prestidigitation.

The illusionist presents eye-defying tricks that will keep you on the edge of your seats. Combined with a sense of humor and

warmth, Dillies teaches the secrets of magic to children. And that is fun.

Lyn Dillies on Oct. 28 at 10 and 11:30 am. Tickets are \$8. Reservations in advance are recommended. Hosted by Enrichment Through the Arts.

College of Staten Island [2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street in Bulls Head, (718) 982-5678; <http://theatertrips.org>].

Musical performance: Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. between Snug Harbor Road and Tysen Street; (718) 448-2500; www.snug-harbor.org; 8 pm; Free for students and children.

Presented by the Richmond County Orchestra, featuring the music from movies and the Mighty String Demons and Brian Moses.

SUN, OCT. 6

Clean out your closet: 10 am–3 pm. Guyon Rescue corner lot. See Saturday, Oct. 5.

Scavenger hunt: Clove Lakes Park, Park Drive and Clove Road; (718) 967-3542; nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Children hunt for clues and collect treasures.

MON, OCT. 7

Teen Cafe: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2–4 pm; Free.

Hang out with friends, bring snacks, soda, homework, or share the internet and browse the web. For tweens and teens, 12 to 18 years old.

Board Game Bonanza: Great Kills Li-

brary, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children play popular board games with friends.

Read aloud: 4–4:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, Sept. 30.

TUES, OCT. 8

Tutoring: 3:30–5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Jewelry making: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:30–4:30 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens 5 to 18 years old make friendship bracelets.

Resources for teens: 4–5 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

WED, OCT. 9

Greenbelt Peppers: 10–10:45 am. Greenbelt Nature Center. See Wednesday, Oct. 2.

Teen club: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2–4 pm; Free.

Young adults 12 to 18 years old discuss anime, draw, play games, and even do homework.

THURS, OCT. 10

Toddler story time: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Children 1 to 3 years old with caregiver listen to stories. Pre-registration required.

Family Matinee: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 3–5 pm; Free.

"Toys in the Attic" is the story of a doll named Buttercup who lives in an old trunk and, together with friends the marionette Sir Handsome and the lovable Teddy Bear, embarks on an adventure.

Teen lounge: 3:30–4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

Teen tech time: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:30–5:45 pm; Free.

For children 13 to 18 years old.

Read aloud: 4–4:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

FRI, OCT. 11

Pre-school story time: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Continued on page 44

Calendar

Continued from page 43

Children 3 to 5 years old with caregiver listen to stories. Pre-registration required.

Doodlebug FunTime: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 227-8839; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Kathleen Hagen tells stories, plays music, and arts and crafts for children 18 months to 4 years old with a caregiver. Registration required. Series 1.

Fun Fridays: 3:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, Oct. 4.

Story time: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 4-4:30 pm; Free.

For children 18 to 36 months and their caregivers.

SAT, OCT. 12

Pumpkin picking: Decker Farm, 435 Richmond Hill Rd. at Forest Hill Road; (718) 351-1611; 11 am-4 pm; \$5 (\$16 family of four).

Come to Decker Farm and enjoy a hayride, a pumpkin to take home, and a tour of the historic 1800s farmhouse.

Pumpkin festival: Willowbrook Park, Richmond Avenue and Eton Place; Noon-4 pm; Free (pumpkins for sale).

Games, pumpkin patch, carousel, face-painting, puppet shows, and crafts.

"Monsters Inc.": New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

Sully and the gang are ready to scare you silly.

SUN, OCT. 13

Pumpkin picking: 11 am-4 pm. Decker Farm. See Saturday, Oct. 12.

MON, OCT. 14

Columbus Day celebration: Decker Farm, 435 Richmond Hill Rd.; 11 am-4 pm; \$5 (\$16 family) Pumpkins extra.

Celebrate the day with pumpkin picking and visit an 1800s historic Decker farm. Get the bus in Historic Richmond Town parking lot.

TUES, OCT. 15

Tutoring: 3:30-5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Resources for teens: 4-5 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

WED, OCT. 16

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Movies for teens: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 4-5:30 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old watch an age-appropriate film.

THURS, OCT. 17

Crafts: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Tweens 10 to 18 make creative projects.

Teen lounge: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

Teen tech time: 3:30-5:45 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 10.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

FRI, OCT. 18

Teen Advisory Group: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old get hands-on experience by attending monthly meetings and volunteering for the library.

Wii gaming: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:30-4:30 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old play with electronic games.

Fun Fridays: 3:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, Oct. 4.

SAT, OCT. 19

Fall fair: Reformed Church of Huguenot Park, 5475 Amboy Rd.; (718) 356-3737; 10 am-4 pm; Free.

Children's activities, a guided tour of the church, sale items, and homemade baked goods. Also animal adoption truck with dogs and cats.

Halloween celebration: Conference House, Hylan Boulevard and Satterlee Street; (718) 984-0415; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am-4 pm; \$10.

Costume parade, magicians, haunted kitchens and a hay ride. Oh my!

Autumn and Halloween: Greenbelt Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; www.nycgovparks.com; 11 am; \$6 (\$8 non-members).

Have fun in a safe pre-Halloween environment where children 5 to 8 years old wear a costume, hear stories, and fill up their trick or treat bag. Pre-registration and pre-payment required.

Pooch parade: Wolfes Pond Park, Cornelia Street and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 816-6172; www.nycgovparks.org; 11

am-2 pm; Free.

Bring your pooch all dressed up and see who will win for best costume, longest tail and more.

SUN, OCT. 20

Natural Science Club: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 2-3:30 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 12 years old meet with Clay Wollney and discuss various science topics.

MON, OCT. 21

Baby and me: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

From birth to 18 months old, parents and little ones enjoy songs, rhymes, and stories.

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, Oct. 7.

Movie time: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:30-5 pm; Free.

Movies the whole family can enjoy.

Board Game Bonanza: 3:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, Oct. 7.

TUES, OCT. 22

Sewing workshop: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens and tweens 11 to 17 years old learn the basics all materials provided. Pre-registration required.

Tutoring: 3:30-5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Jewelry making: 3:30-4:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 8.

Resources for teens: 4-5 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

WED, OCT. 23

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, Oct. 9.

Pumpkin carving: Greenbelt Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; www.nycgovparks.com; 3:30 pm; \$7 (\$9 non-members).

Children 8 years and older learn the finer points of carving the gourds. Cost includes carving tools and pumpkin. Pre-registration and pre-payment required.

THURS, OCT. 24

Toddler story time: 11 am. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 10.

Teen lounge: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great

Kills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

"Lord of the Rings": Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 5-7 pm; Free.

Just in time for Family Film Night, this is the original animated version of the classic.

FRI, OCT. 25

Toddler Time: 10:30-11:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, Oct. 4.

Pre-school story time: 11 am. Great Kills Library. See Friday, Oct. 11.

Doodlebug FunTime: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 227-8839; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Kathleen Hagen tells stories, plays music, and arts and crafts for children 18 months to 4 years old with a caregiver. Registration required. Series 2.

Crafternoon: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:30-4:30 pm; Free.

Children 4 years and older make fun projects.

"Robin Hood": Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

The Traveling Lantern Theater Company brings the classic tale of Robin Hood, Maid Marion and the Sheriff of Nottingham to life.

Halloween in Richmond Town: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondtown.org; 3:30-5 pm; \$10 (\$5 adults, \$9 member children, member adults free).

Trick or treating throughout the village, costumed ghosts and goblins, crafts, apple bobbing, and games. Pre-paid reservations required.

Fun Fridays: 3:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, Oct. 4.

SAT, OCT. 26

"Hotel Transylvania": New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

Even Dracula has teen issues in this fun animated film.

"The Rocky Horror Picture Show": St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 9 pm; \$18.

What would Halloween be with out

Calendar

this cult favorite. Props, costumes and fun. For 17 year olds and older.

SUN, OCT. 27

Bowl-A-Thon: Rab's County Lanes, 1600 Hylan Blvd. at Raritan Avenue; (718) 979-1600; www.bowlatrabs.com; 12:30 pm.

Benefit the fight against cancer with a few strikes, some spares and lots of fun. Hosted by Greg Mocker of WPIX.

Creepy crawlies: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Urban rangers lead children on a hike through the preserve and look for falcons, salamanders, and deer.

Explorers of the Wild: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 2-3:30 pm; Free.

Naturalist Clay Wollney teaches children 6 to 10 years old about the environment and science.

MON, OCT. 28

Magic of Lyn: College of Staten Island, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; theatertrips.org; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Lyn Dillies amazes the audience with acts of prestidigitation. Great for all ages. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, Oct. 7.

Board Game Bonanza: 3:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, Oct. 7.

Read aloud: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road

East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

TUES, OCT. 29

Veronica Roth: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

The young adult author will be on hand to read from her books.

Tutoring: 3:30-5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

Resources for teens: 4-5 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, Oct. 1.

WED, OCT. 30

Halloween party: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln. at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 6 years old enjoy trick or treating, candy and fun activities. Don't forget your costumes. Pre-registration required.

THURS, OCT. 31

Teen lounge: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, Oct. 3.

Trick or treat and stories, too! New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln. at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 4 years and older can come to the library for a safe Halloween day. Wear your costumes, enjoy slightly scary stories and get treats.

FRI, NOV. 1

The Road to Success: College of Staten Island, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; theatertrips.org; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Don't be bullied, let the teachers lead the way. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

LONG-RUNNING

Storytime: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; Tuesdays and Saturdays, 10:30 am, Now - Tues, Dec. 3; Free.

Children listen to a different story each week.

Homework and Lounge: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; Tuesdays - Fridays, 2-5 pm, Tues, Oct. 1 - Wed, Oct. 30; Free.

Teens hang out with friends, do homework, and have library time.

After-school book club: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondton.org; Wednesdays, 3:30-4:30 pm, Now - Tues, Dec. 3; Free (plus cost of book).

It's back. Students in grades four to seven read and discuss selected books covering major periods in history.

Tree tots: Greenbelt Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; www.nycgovparks.com; Thursdays, 10-10:45 am, Thurs, Oct. 3 - Thurs, Nov. 21; \$6 (\$8 non-members).

Four-year-old children with a caregiver can do activities, observe nature, play games and hear stories. Registration is required.

Story Museum: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondton.org; Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm and 2:30-3:30 pm, Now - Wed, Dec. 4; \$3 (Adults free).

Pre-schoolers listen to stories, do crafts, dance, and sing.

"War and Peace": Alice Austen House, 2 Hylan Blvd. at Edgewater Street; (718) 816-4507; Tuesdays - Sundays, 11 am-5 pm, Sat, Oct. 5 - Tues, Dec. 31; \$3.

The exhibit by Melissa Cacciola features Tintype portraits documenting the armed forces from the Civil War to the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Up4Art: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; stateniskidkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1, 2 and 3 pm, Now - Sat, Nov. 2; Free with museum admission.

Children create fun projects.

Kidz cook: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; stateniskidkids.org; Saturdays, 2, 3 and 4 pm, Now - Fri, Nov. 1; Free with museum admission.

Children experiment with all types of food.

Kids & Kritters: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (917) 751-0071; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturday, Oct. 19, 11 am; Saturday, Oct. 26, 11 am; Saturday, Nov. 9, 11 am; Saturday, Nov. 23, 11 am; Saturday, Dec. 7, 11 am; Saturday, Dec. 14, 11 am; Free.

Nancy Zawada Clair leads children 5 to 7 years old and their parents on fun outdoor adventures throughout the center's grounds. Wear appropriate clothing that you don't mind getting dirty. Followed by a craft, story, and games.

Krafty Kids: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (917) 751-0071; www.nycgovparks.org; Saturday, Oct. 19, 1 pm; Saturday, Oct. 26, 1 pm; Saturday, Nov. 9, 1 pm; Saturday, Nov. 23, 1 pm; Saturday, Dec. 7, 1 pm; Saturday, Dec. 14, 1 pm; Free.

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New & Noteworthy

BY LISA J. CURTIS



Tee off with mini golf

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

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

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

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

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

Mister G hits a home run

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

ish speaking skills.

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

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

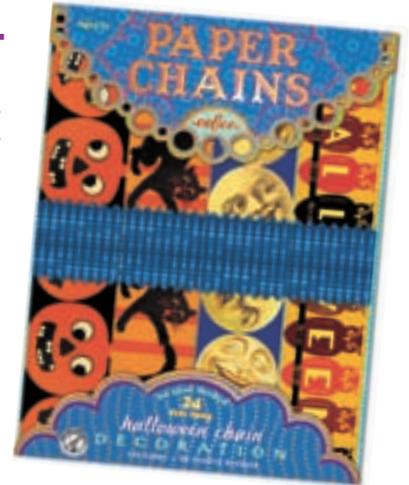
Now, he has a home run with this collection of original tunes which effortlessly combines both languages with the accompaniment of toe-tapping Latin rhythms and instruments.

"ABC Fiesta" CD by Mister G, \$14.99, www.misterongs.com.



Chain gang

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



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

Kids get drawn together

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

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



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

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

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

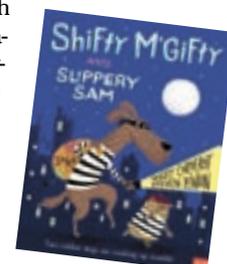
They're criminally cute

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

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

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

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





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