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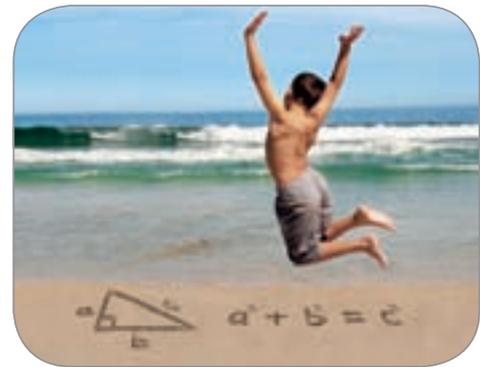
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Letter from the publisher

What a winter!

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

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



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

So at this point in the late winter/early spring

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

We have some very thought provoking articles this month like the

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks for reading!

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What did you say?

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

BY RISA C. DOHERTY

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

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

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

What is the cause?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The 'normalization' of foul language

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

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

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

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

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

O'Connor recognizes that eliminating swearing altogether is unrealistic.

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

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

Is it hypocritical to tell teens not to curse?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hiller recognizes that parents who never curse within earshot of

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

How to break the habit

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Tough nut to crack

Is there a potential cure for peanut allergies?

BY ALEX BIGWARFE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tolerate up to six peanuts.

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

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

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





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Stranger danger?

Ten smart tips to keep your kids safe

BY CHRISTA MELNYK HINES

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

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

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

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

Define ‘stranger’

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

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

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



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

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

Practice ‘what-if’ scenarios

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Safe-keep DNA samples

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

Share limited information

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

Take pictures

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

Avoid advertising your child's name

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

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

Emergency contacts

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

Tell them who they may NOT go with

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

Have a secret family password

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

Teach facts, not fear

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

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

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

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

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LOVING

eating healthy

New book on teaching kids about eating habits, not nutrition

BY ALLISON PLITT

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

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

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

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

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

What kind of parent are you?

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

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

‘The Big Fix’

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

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

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

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

Be a new foods booster

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

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

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

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

Rose’s food groups

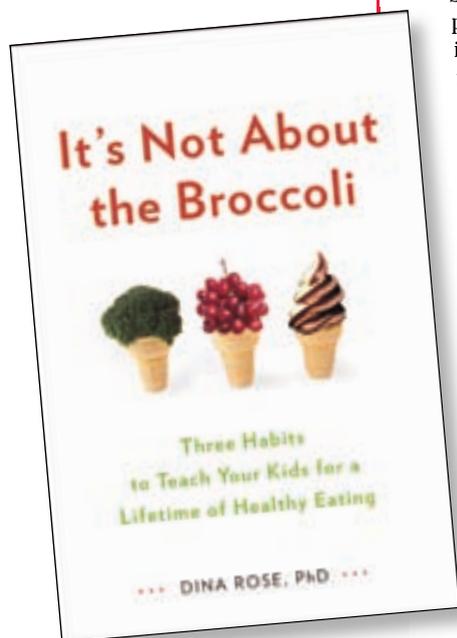
In her book, Rose classifies food into three categories:

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

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

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

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





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

Everyone's a critic

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

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

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

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

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

Teach good habits

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Puppy power

Medical benefits of pet ownership

Most of us know that pets can teach children about unconditional love, friendship, and responsibility, but having a pet also helps improve a family's health. It has been documented that people who have pets enjoy a more healthy and active lifestyle. After all, dogs require daily walks, which help improve cardiovascular systems. Dogs have also become a recognized strong force in the reduction of anxiety. Some animals have even alerted owners to a cancer or other health problem. Now, both cats and dogs are believed to be helping families get and stay healthy in another way.

Research shows that children who have pets at an early age may have added protection from developing pet allergies later in life. According to the medical journal *Clinical and Experimental Allergy*, "children who are exposed to pets during infancy may be less likely to become allergic to dogs and cats." The results were published after an 18-year study.

Furthermore, allergies to animals are said to be more likely in kids who were born into pet-free homes. Researchers at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit found that "babies younger than 1 who lived with pets were much less likely to develop sensitivity to animals than kids who got a family pet later in childhood."

The study followed 560 now-18-year-olds from birth since 1987. The children's pet histories were tracked and their blood was tested for a specific antibody indicating sensitivity to pets. Boys and girls who lived with cats during infancy were both half as likely to be sensitive to them later.

Researchers also believe that putting kids and pets under the same roof at an early age increase a



child's immune system against various forms of bacteria, making it less likely to react to animal dander later in life. The ramifications of this study may have an impact on children who have compromised immune systems. Researchers said the latest study doesn't prove that exposing infants to pets prevents allergies, but shows that more research is needed to determine allergy risk.

I was born into a home that had cats and dogs, and I lived with them my entire life, as have my kids. I couldn't even consider our family without our pets. Do I think that they have helped my kids become less allergic? I don't know. I do know that neither my daughters nor my son have allergies to pets.

I also know that what they have gained from taking care of our dogs and cats has been an invaluable lesson in love. A few years ago, we ad-

opted a new puppy at North Shore Animal League in addition to our chihuahua, Hayley, and three cats. Since we brought her home, it was instant love. Since then, the kids have happily (most of the time) fed, walked, and cleaned up after her.

Of course, no one should run out and bring home a pet simply because of any study, but hopefully this news might help parents who are considering having a pet and a baby, by showing them that it can be done, and may even be medically beneficial.

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 Sullivan on her blogs, Just Write Mom and Some Puppy To Love.

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First-time camper

How to
prepare your
child for a
time away

BY BOB DITTER

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

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

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

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

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

or while riding in the car doing errands.

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

Friends

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

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

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

Activities

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

Cooperating

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

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

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

Helping out

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

Getting help

Everyone has good days and

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

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

Being positive

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

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

• • •

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

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

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

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Camp Directors – Glenn Wechsler: gwechsler@sijcc.com 718-475-5231, Stephanie Feldman: sfeldman@sijcc.com 718-475-5232

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Camp employs child-friendly, energetic and dedicated staff. They receive extensive pre-camp and on-going training in the areas of child development, supervision, child safety, and camper sensitivity. The camp, which is American Camp Association accredited, is open to children ages 3-16 and runs from June 30 – August 22. Bussing and extended hours is available. The camp day is from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Additionally, there are camp divisions for children with diabetes and children with special needs.

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DEATH BY CHILDREN

CHRIS GARLINGTON

Right into the jaws of a family vacation

I am not a brave man. I don't have a problem with spiders or snakes; I am unsqueamed by the copiously sluiced fluids my children have ejected onto me. I can, and will, gut a fish while drinking a Bloody Mary and snacking on jerky. I will swim with sharks. I have swum with sharks. I almost lost both my children to sharks — not in a Shark Week way, but in a “we're-all-going-to-drown-here-in-the-gulf-of-Mexico-because-I-am-stupid” way.

Being idiots, my wife and I determined a Caribbean cruise would

be the perfect way to introduce our children to the ways and whiles of indigenous cultures.

We hauled them onto a ship that hauled us all into the white hot oven called the Gulf of Mexico in August, which is known by its people as the Gulf of Don't Go Here in August.

It was so hot, deck chairs and passengers from Wisconsin regularly burst into flames. My wife would not cool off in the salt water pool as the nearby towel steward could not adequately convince her there was a functioning jellyfish filter. We watched TV in our cabin for most of the first day.

We'd booked carefully vetted on-shore adventures specifically designed to educate our children in the thousand ways the world outside America can kill you with an open water dive with sharks we were assured were perfectly harmless.

As we sped out on a little harbor slip toward the middle of zilch, the captain offered us shots of homemade rum, which I felt bode poorly for us all as he took one for himself each time he gave one to someone else. By the time we stopped, he was drunk, some of the others were drunk, we couldn't see land, and he was throwing us all off the end of the boat.

My kids couldn't swim. My wife was scared of waves. Still, we'd paid and everything, so we confidently threw our children into the

Caribbean.

With sharks.

A few things were immediately clear:

- We were insane.
- There is no such thing as a perfectly harmless shark to a 6-year-old boy.

• The calm sea only seems calm until you're fighting for your life and the life of your children as they climb backwards over your head screaming, “THOSE ARE REAL SHARKS, DAD!”

My wife looked up to see the boat drifting away from us. We'd been given clear instructions to wave our arms over our head if we got into trouble, a difficult maneuver if your arms are pinioned to your skull by a child still screaming, “IT'S NOT LIKE SEA WORLD, DAD! WE'RE GONNA DIE!”

I managed to peel an arm out from under the kid and wave, then I remembered, the skipper is drunk, then I remembered “Left Behind,” then I started screaming, too.

In hindsight, and in agreement with a court order from the skipper's lawyer, I admit, yes, 14 feet is not that far away and nurse sharks are perfectly harmless. In my defense, I was being attacked by kids. I mean sharks. I mean rum.

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 coauthor of “The Beat Cop's Guide to Chicago Eats.”



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LIONS AND TIGERS AND TEENS

MYRNA BETH HASKELL

Hooked on hookahs

Teens trying out this old-world smoking method

If you are a parent of a teenager and you've never heard of hookah, you need to start educating yourself on the topic. Hookah is an ancient method of smoking that has been catching on in the US, and teenagers have been quick to pick up on this new trend. Although cigarette smoking has declined due to education about the many health risks and more stringent laws regarding usage, hookah smoking is on the rise.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports, "In 2010, the Monitoring the Future survey found that among high school seniors in the United States, about one in five boys (17 percent) and one in six girls (15 percent) had used a hookah in the past year."

Unfortunately, there is a prevailing misconception that hookah smoking is a fairly safe alternative to cigarette smoking. But make no mistake, hookah smoking is detrimental to your teen's health. Therefore, it's imperative that parents learn the truth about hookahs and start talking to their kids about the dangers.

Why hookah?

Hookah smoking was commonplace in ancient Persia and India. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of hookah use around the world, and it is becoming particularly popular among high school and college students.

Hookahs (or water pipes) are used to smoke specially made tobacco that comes in different flavors (e.g. apple and cherry). Hookah smoking is typically done in groups, with the same mouthpiece passed from person to person.

Dr. Brian A. Primack, associate professor of medicine, pediatrics, and clinical translation science at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, explains that the hookah has caught on due to its aesthetically pleasing tastes and environments.

"Hookah smoking is commonly

done in 'hookah lounges,' which are often dimly lit and beautifully decorated." He points out that hookah tobacco is flavored, sweetened, and cooled by the water, making it more palatable than cigarette-smoking.

Dr. Erin L. Sutfin, a developmental psychologist and assistant professor in the department of Social Sciences and Health Policy at the Wake Forest School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, NC, agrees with Dr. Primack.

"It is well documented that teens are attracted to flavored tobacco products and use them at much higher rates than adults," she says.

The risks

"We do have data that show hookah smokers are heavily exposed to hazardous toxins," explains Primack who claims that one hookah-smoking session, which lasts about 45 to 60 minutes, exposes the user to about 100 times the smoke volume of a single cigarette.

Dr. Dyan Hes, medical director of Gramercy Pediatrics in Manhattan and clinical assistant professor of pediatrics at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University, describes, "There are as much or more carcinogens in hookah smoke, particularly since the tobacco is burned at a higher temperature than in a cigarette."

Safe hookah products?

Some products boast that they are tobacco-free, hence, safe.

But Sutfin informs, "Smoking herbal shisha (a non-tobacco alternative) is still dangerous. Although there is not the risk of addiction since there is no nicotine, there is still exposure to high levels of carbon monoxide and other toxins."

Primack reports that hookah smokers have landed in emergency rooms with carbon monoxide poisoning.

Besides carbon monoxide, the charcoal used to heat the products produces smoke containing metals and cancer-causing chemicals.

The law

Laws have not caught up with this new trend. Although many states have enacted bans on smoking in enclosed

public places (e.g. New York's Clean Indoor Air Act), hookah lounges may be excluded from these laws, because they claim to qualify for exemptions offered to cigar bars, retail tobacco shops, and establishments that sell non-tobacco smoking products.

It's simple: parents need to talk with their teens about hookahs.

"Parents should show their teens the statistics of the carcinogens found in hookah smoke," urges Hes.

Tips and tales

Tips are provided by Dr. Alexander V. Prokhorov, professor of behavioral science at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center:

- Do not use tobacco products yourself. Kids model their behaviors and lifestyle after their parents.

- Create a tobacco-free policy in your household.

- Hookah generates a very large amount of smoke that contains toxic chemicals, just like the smoke from cigarettes and other combusted forms of tobacco.

- If you learn that your teen uses tobacco, show that you are disheartened by your teen's tobacco use. If you have a story about your relatives or friends who suffered or died from tobacco-related diseases, tell your teen this story.

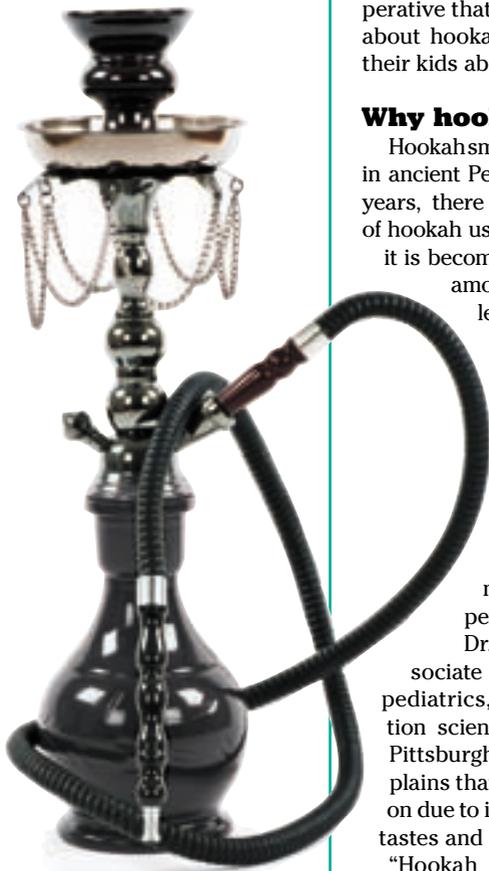
- Refer your child to reputable resources that help young people adopt tobacco-free lifestyles. One such program is A Smoking Prevention Interactive Experience, ASPIRE, www.mdanderson.org/aspire. Free apps are available (e.g. the Tobacco Free Teens app developed by experts at MD Anderson).

Share your ideas

Upcoming topic: Tips for staying connected with your teen even though her friends are her universe.

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Myrna Beth Haskell is a feature writer, columnist and author of "Lions And Tigers And Teens: Expert Advice and Support for the Conscientious Parent Just Like You" (Unlimited Publishing LLC, 2012).



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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

Put on a happy plate

Do crabby children live at your house? The culprit could be their diet. At one time, the link between food and mood was pooh-pooed by scientists. Now research suggests a child's diet may influence not only mood, but also stress, attention, anxiety, impulse control, and sleep.

"A diet for good mental health is the same one that dietitians promote for heart health — one with lots of fruits and vegetables and a variety of protein sources including lean beef, cold water fish, and legumes," says registered dietitian Bridget Swinney, a nutrition consultant and author of "Eating Expectantly and Healthy Food for Healthy Kids." "Overall, a balance of nutrients is important."

How it works

Proper nutrition is important to the production of neurotransmitters, which are brain chemicals that help messages get passed between nerve cells in the brain. An imbalance of neurotransmitters has been implicated in mental health. Amino acids — the building blocks of protein — are the precursors to neurotransmitters. Vitamins and minerals also play a role in their conversion.

One neurotransmitter is serotonin, which regulates mood, anger, and aggression, appetite and some cognitive functions. There can be



a shortage of serotonin due to an insufficiency of the amino acid, tryptophan. Although tryptophan is widely distributed in protein-rich foods, such as meats, poultry and fish, other amino acids in those foods interfere with the entry of tryptophan into the brain. The brain is then not able to make adequate serotonin.

By eating a balanced diet that also contains healthy carbohydrates, tryptophan can get into the brain where it's converted into serotonin.

Omega-3

Omega-3 fatty acids are an im-

portant structural component of brain tissue, and a lack of them may affect both cognitive function and behavior.

"There are promising studies showing a link between fish oil and decreased symptoms of ADHD, depression, and psychosis," says Swinney. They can be found in "cold water fish like salmon, sardines, supplements containing fish oil or omega-3 fat produced from algae."

Inflammation

There may be an inflammation-brain-mood connection, with inflammatory cytokines signaling certain regions of the brain to release the stress hormone cortisol, which can lower mood.

Anti-inflammatory foods include colorful produce, beans, mushrooms, anti-inflammatory spices (garlic, turmeric and curcumin), green tea, soy protein, extra virgin olive oil, and dark chocolate.

While there are some cases where diet is not enough to influence your child's overall mental health, dietary improvements are certainly worth a try.

Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.

Black Bean Burgers

Total time: 15 min

Prep time: 10 min

Servings: 4

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 can (15 oz.) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 cups Kellogg's® All-Bran® Complete® Wheat Flakes cereal, crushed to about 1 cup
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/3 cup salsa



DIRECTIONS: In large, nonstick skillet cook onion and garlic in 2 teaspoons of oil until tender.

In food processor bowl, combine onion mixture, beans, cumin, and

salt. Cover and process until smooth.

In medium bowl, stir together bean mixture, egg, cereal, and pecans. Shape into four 1/2-inch thick patties.

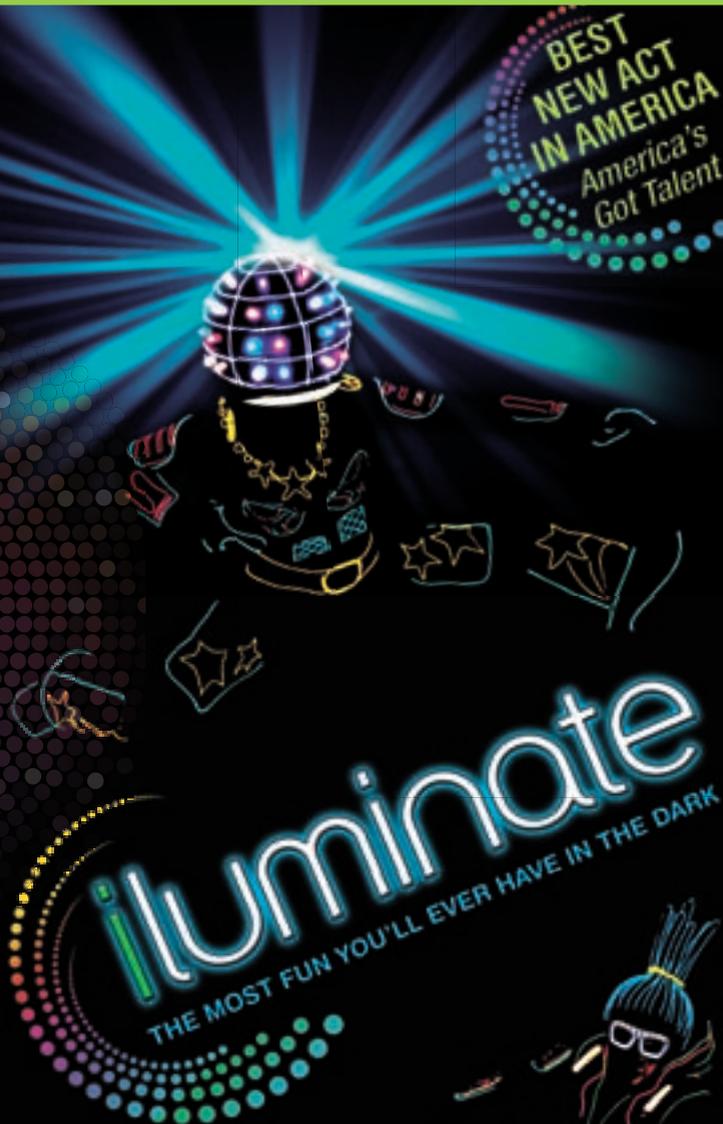
In same skillet, heat remaining 2 teaspoons oil until sizzling.

In skillet, cook patties over medium-high heat for 5 minutes or until lightly browned, turning once.

Serve with salsa.

NUTRITION FACTS: 250 calories, 37 g carbohydrates, 11 g fiber, 7 g sugar, 9 g protein, 11 g fat (1 gram sat fat), 45 mg cholesterol, 570 mg sodium, 80 percent DV iron, 80 percent DV vitamin C, 10 percent DV vitamin A, 8 percent DV calcium.

A recipe from Kellogg Kitchens®.



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**PARENTS
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SHARON C. PETERS, MA

When your child's friends are stealing

Dear Sharon,

Our daughter's friends have been stealing. When they go to a party at someone's home, they go through the drawers and take things. She told me this. What should I do about it? I feel I should do something, but I don't know what to do. — Susan



Dear Susan,

When children are caught up in ongoing stealing or other thoughtless actions, moms and dads can certainly help.

I encourage adults to make sure that they have good relationships with the parents of children in their child's social circle, strengthening ties with those who share their ideas about limits and general expectations for their children.

It is best to have ongoing relationships with other families in place before complex situations like the one you describe develop, but it is never too late to look for and talk to other parents who share your concerns. A group of adults can think through solutions such as better supervision and general awareness at parties and other social gather-

ings as well as agreeing on ways to speak to children about what is going on and how and why to avoid peer pressure.

Sometimes, it is even possible to enlist the help of caring school personnel who know the children involved. When parents and other adults can act in unison, children are less likely to feel separate from their peers and more a part of a caring community.

Unfortunately, it can sometimes be too difficult to reach out to others without negative consequences. The children who are acting out might not be given the support they need to successfully change their actions and difficulties could escalate. A child such as your daughter who is not involved in suspect behavior could also be ostracized or targeted for telling adults and getting the children in trouble.

If it is too risky to share confidential information, it can be best to focus on supporting a child who has managed to stay clear when

socializing gets "out of control." It is not uncommon for one or two young people in an exciting social situation, such as a party, to convince others that stealing or other troublesome behaviors are fun or a way to be included in a "popular" group. Peer pressure can be very hard to negotiate and resist.

Moms and dads can make a big difference by taking the time to listen to their child's concerns about social challenges, supporting and appreciating her good judgment, and setting up ample time and space for ongoing discussion about friendships. Helping children find like-minded friends who visit their home often can also help a great deal.

It is a good sign when children tell their parents about peer pressures they are juggling. Trusting parents enough to ask for help or advice can make a big difference to any young person. If one child is getting support and clarity at home, it can help other children handle social pressure as well.

Sharon C. Peters is a mother and director of Parents Helping Parents, 669 President St., Brooklyn (718) 638-9444, www.PHPonline.org.

If you have a question about a challenge in your life (no issue is too big or too small) e-mail it to Dear Sharon at Family@cnglocal.com.

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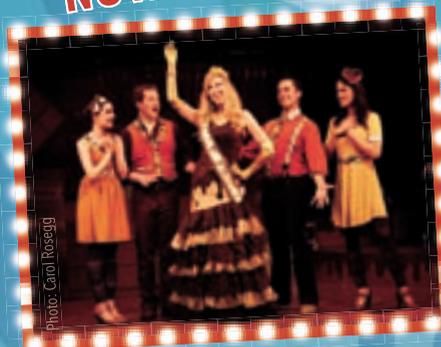
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Calendar

MARCH



Associated Press / Manuel Balce Ceneta

The night watch

Who goes there? It's an Owl Prowl at Blue Heron Nature Center on March 8 and March 22.

Charge up your batteries and get ready to explore the dark corners of the park with Cliff Hagen and see how many of the night flyers you can find and identify. Barn owls, snowy owls, screech owls, and great horned

owls search for food through the trees. Recommended for older children.

Owl Prowl on March 8 and March 22 at 7 pm. Flashlights are unnecessary but are acceptable. Free.

Blue Heron Nature Center [222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgouparks.org].

Submit a listing

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

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

MON, MARCH 3

ON STATEN ISLAND

The New Shanghai Chinese Acrobats: Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$9.

Carrying on the tradition of the Chinese circus acrobats, the troupe presents a revolving lineup of acts including Big-Big Drums, Diabolo, bicycle tricks, pole climbing, and more. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

"Green Eggs and Ham": Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 11 am; Free.

Children have fun at this special Read Across America event featuring children's stories by Dr. Seuss.

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.

Jewelry making: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 14 years old use different materials to make fashion pieces. Pre-registration required.

Homework help: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. near Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 5 pm; Free.

Library staff assist children in grades first through sixth with their assignments.

TUES, MARCH 4

ON STATEN ISLAND

The New Shanghai Chinese Acrobats: 10 am and 11:30 am. Center for the Performing Arts at CSI. See Monday, March 3.



Mouse in the house

There's a mouse in the house and he's here to stay. "Stuart Little" comes to visit the College of Staten Island as part of the Enrichment Through the Arts program on March 25. From the loving works of EB White, author of "Charlotte's Web," comes this musical about a mouse who is adopted into the Little family and

jumps headlong into adventures big enough for any imagination. This production features live actors with child-sized puppets.

"Stuart Little," March 25 at 10 am and 11:30 am. Tickets are \$8.

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

Baby space: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm; Free.

Tots birth to 18 months and caregivers listen to songs, play games and interact with other children. Pre-registration required. Two sessions. Attend only one session per day.

Mardi Gras: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 2:30 pm; Free.

Come celebrate and make a Mardi Gras mask, have snacks, play games, and watch a screening of "The Princess and the Frog." For children 5 to 12 years old.

Game time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children 6 to 12 years old build learning, strategic, and interpersonal skills with table top games Scrabble and Operation.

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 homework help in math and English. First come, first served.

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.

Loom jewelry: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 12 years old make the latest in rubber band bracelets using a loom kit. Feel free to bring your own bands and loom.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Children in grades three, four, and five learn about the cutting-edge field of neuroscience through hands-on ex-

periments and innovative lab activities.

WED, MARCH 5

ON STATEN ISLAND

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.

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

Children 5 to 12 years old play video games.

Tween science: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 12 years old experiment with a cup, some yarn and a paper clip. Pre-registration required.

Read aloud: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 4-4:30 pm; Free.

Children 3 years old and up finger play, learn action rhymes, and color.

Storytime: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 4-4:30 pm; Free.

Children 12 years old and younger enjoy favorite picture books.

Read and craft: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 read books and make a craft.

THURS, MARCH 6

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Harriet Tubman": Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$8.

This drama features music and explores the life and times of this female pioneer and activist. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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

For children of all ages.

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.

Teen Lounge: Great Kills Library, 56
Continued on page 28

Calendar

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

Continued from page 27

Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30-4:30 pm; Free.

Join with friends, bring snacks and use the library's lap tops for homework. For children 13 to 18 years old.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

FRI, MARCH 7

ON STATEN ISLAND

Arithmetickles: Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$8.

Take math off the page and onto the stage. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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

From birth to 17 months old, parents and caregivers enjoy simple books, gentle movements, lively songs and meet other babies in the community.

Pre-school time: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 10:30-11:30 am; Free.

Children 3 to 5 years old with caregiver listen to a stories, songs, and play with other toddlers.

Toddler time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Parents and caregivers with children 18 months to 35 months enjoy interactive stories, action songs and fingerplay.

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

Children 5 years and older listen to stories, play games, fun crafts, and sing songs.

Gaming: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old play Wii games.

"Beauty and the Beast": St.



Photo by Richard Termine

Don't miss the ball

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

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

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

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

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

George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 6 pm; \$22, \$16.

Belle finds beauty in the beast and turns his life around.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

SAT, MARCH 8

ON STATEN ISLAND

Tutoring: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 11 am-1pm; Free.

For children in pre-k through eighth grade.

ssSecond ssSaturday ssSnakes: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000

Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; 12:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Meet, greet and touch live exotic snakes.

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

The madcap Skipper and crew safe the day.

Owl Prowl: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 7 pm; Free.

Explore the dark corners of the park with Cliff Hagen. Flashlights are often unnecessary, but are acceptable.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Children enjoy erecting new buildings with an assortment of blocks.

Imaginative Dance with Erica

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

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

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

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

SUN, MARCH 9

ON STATEN ISLAND

Sunday sing-along with Patrick: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; Noon; Free with museum admission.

Join that Pied Piper of musical tones and play along with your own instruments or one from the museum.

Purim festival: JCC of Staten Island, 1466 Manor Rd. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 475-5251; 12:30-3 pm; \$15 (\$18 non-members; Adults free).

Children come in costume and dress up to the theme of the Wild Wild West, with face painting, arts and crafts, inflatables, carnival games and hamantaschen baking.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Meet Signal Tower Operator Paula, the museum's very own costumed storyteller who will tell tales of what it was like to work on the subways in the 1940s and how important signals are.

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

Metro crafty: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, March 8.

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

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

MON, MARCH 10

ON STATEN ISLAND

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Li-

Calendar

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

brary. See Monday, March 3.

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

Roll the dice, move pieces and have fun with board games. For all ages.

Film time: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 5 years and older enjoy an age appropriate movie. Times vary from 90 minutes to two hours.

Homework help: 5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 3.

TUES, MARCH 11

ON STATEN ISLAND

Baby space: 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. St. George Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Sewing workshop: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30-5:30 pm; Free.

Teens 13 to 18 years old explore their designer skills. Registration is required.

Tutoring: 3:30-5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

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

American Girl: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 6:30 pm; Free.

Young readers 8 to 12 years old enjoy fun activities, puzzles, crafts, and reading about Isabelle, the newest of the American Girls.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

WED, MARCH 12

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Butterfly - The Story of a Life Cycle": Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$8.

Take a microscopic look at the insect world on the big stage. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

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

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



Photo by Rob Davidson

VH1's Family Day

Yeah! It's Family Day at PS 334, The Anderson School, on March 22.

This annual family day of fun encourages children of all ages to express their love of music through a series of games, workshops, live musical performances, and more. This year's events will be hosted by Nick Lachey, and will feature Alex & Ani, The Annie Minogue Band, DJ Beauty and

the Beatz, and more that will entertain both children and adults alike!

Family Day on March 22 from 10 am to 4 pm. Admission is free, but you can purchase a VIP Family Package for \$150.

PS 334, The Anderson School (100 W. 77th St. at Columbus Avenue on the Upper West Side, www.vh1savethemusic.org/family-day2014)

College 101: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Teens and young adults learn all about how to get into college.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Storytime: 4-4:30 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Read and craft: 4 pm. West New Brighton Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

THURS, MARCH 13

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Butterfly - The Story of a Life Cycle": 10 and 11:30 am. Center for the Performing Arts at CSI. See Wednesday, March 12.

Tech time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 3 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old connect on the web with browser based gaming. Pre-registration required. Laptops available for use.

Read aloud: 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

Teen Lounge: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

"Cabaret": Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. between Snug Harbor Road and Tysen Street; (718) 448-2500; www.snug-harbor.org; 8 pm; \$20, \$25, \$28. \$30.

Musical presentation by In The Wings Productions.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

FRI, MARCH 14

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

For children 18 months to 30 months with caregiver or parent.

Baby time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Parents and caregivers with children birth to 18 months old enjoy books, songs and rhymes and meet other families in the community.

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

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Calendar

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

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

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.

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.

Fun Fridays: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, March 7.

"Cabaret": 8 pm. Snug Harbor Cultural Center. See Thursday, March 13.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

SAT, MARCH 15

ON STATEN ISLAND

Craft time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 11 am; Free. For children 4 to 12 years old.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, March 8.

Bedtime Math 2: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; Noon; Free.

Children build their own geometric creations with glowsticks and styro-foam balls.

Crafternoon: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 2-3 pm; Free.

Children 4 years and older make fun projects.

Showtime: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 2-4 pm; Free.

Children 12 years and younger enjoy a movie.

Purim festival: Temple Israel Reform Congregation of Staten Island, 315 Forest Ave. and Hart Boulevard; (718) 727-2231; 7 pm; Free (fee for carnival games).

A reading of the Megillah, and carnival; children may come in costume.

"Cabaret": 8 pm. Snug Harbor Cultural Center. See Thursday, March 13.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

Urban Park Ranger Nature Art and Photography teach you about your local environment and encourage artistic expression. Bring your own camera.

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

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

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

Children experience a quilting bee and stitch different pieces of fabric together and make a colorful patchwork quilt.

SUN, MARCH 16

ON STATEN ISLAND

Irish stepping: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; 2 pm; Free with museum admission.

Dawn Daniels leads the children on a jig or two with her troupe of step-dancers.

"Cabaret": 2 pm. Snug Harbor Cultural Center. See Thursday, March 13.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

MON, MARCH 17

ON STATEN ISLAND

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, March 3.

Board Game Bonanza: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 10.

Homework help: 5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 3.

TUES, MARCH 18

ON STATEN ISLAND

Baby space: 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. St. George Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Game time: 3 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Tutoring: 3:30-5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Bracelet workshop: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free. Make a friendship bracelet.

Elephants on Parade: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 4 to 7 years old learn all about pachyderms.

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

Loom jewelry: 4-5 pm. St. George Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

WED, MARCH 19

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory": Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$8.

In recognition of the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Storytime: 4-4:30 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Read and craft: 4 pm. West New Brighton Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

THURS, MARCH 20

ON STATEN ISLAND

Musical Health Show: Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$8.

Join Slim GoodBody and learn all about good health through song, dance and movement. Presented by En-

richment Through the Arts.

Read aloud: 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

Teen tech time: 3:30-5:45 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

Teen Lounge: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

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

FRI, MARCH 21

ON STATEN ISLAND

Pre-school time: 10:30-11:30 am. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, March 7.

Toddler time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, March 7.

Toddler Time: 11:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, March 14.

Clay time: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 make a project out of clay. Pre-registration required.

Fun Fridays: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, March 7.

SAT, MARCH 22

ON STATEN ISLAND

Kids & Kritters: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (917) 751-0071; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am-12:30 pm; Free.

Nancy Zawada Clair leads children 5 to 7 years old with a parent 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.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, March 8.

LeapFrog learning: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; Noon; Free.

Hands-on event for children 4 to 8 years old. Registration in advance is required.

Kraffy Kids: Blue Heron Nature

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Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (917) 751-0071; www.nycgovparks.org; 1-2 pm; Free.

Join Nancy Zawada Clair for a crafty afternoon. Pre-registration is required. For children 4 to 10 years old with a caregiver.

Owl Prowl: 7 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Saturday, March 8.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUN, MARCH 23

FURTHER AFIELD

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



'Bear' essentials

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt" at the Symphony Space on March 15. Are you ready for a hunt? This interactive show based on the popular children's book, and part of Symphony Space's Just Kidding series, is set to take audiences on a quest to find a bear. With catchy songs and interactive, hands-on scenes, adults and children of all ages will enjoy this

theatrical event.

"We're Going on a Bear Hunt," March 15 at 11 am and 2 pm. Tickets are \$25 for adults \$21 for adult members, \$15 for children, \$13 for member children.

Symphony Space [2537 Broadway at W. 95th St. on the Upper West Side, (212) 864-5400, www.symphonyspace.org/event/7967/Family/were-going-on-a-bear-hunt]

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

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

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

MON, MARCH 24

ON STATEN ISLAND

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, March 3.

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: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 10.

Film time: 3:30 pm. West New Brighton Library. See Monday, March

10.

Homework help: 5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 3.

TUES, MARCH 25

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Stuart Little": Center for the Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani St.; (718) 982-5678; www.theatertrips.org; 10 and 11:30 am; \$8.

Is there a mouse in the house? No, it's only Stuart Little. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Baby space: 10-11 am and 11:30 am-12:30 pm. St. George Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Mosaic creations: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30-5:30 pm; Free.

Children 8 to 16 years old create a mosaic design. All materials provided.

Tutoring: 3:30-5:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 4.

Bracelet workshop: 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, March 18.

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

WED, MARCH 26

ON STATEN ISLAND

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Wii gaming: 3:30-4:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Storytime: 4-4:30 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Wednesday, March 5.

Pajama storytime: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 7:45 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years are invited to don their pjs, bring a favorite stuffed animal and read favorite stories.

THURS, MARCH 27

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nypl.org; 11:45 am; Free.

Little tykes 18 months to 3 years old with a parent/caregiver enjoy interactive stories songs and fingerplays. Pre-registration is required.

Tech time: 3 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Thursday, March 13.

Read aloud: 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

Teen Lounge: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, March 6.

"The Little Mermaid": Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 5 pm; Free.

Come join Ariel under the sea with all her friends.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

FRI, MARCH 28

ON STATEN ISLAND

Baby time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, March 14.

Toddler Time: 11:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, March 14.

Doodlebug FunTime: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. be-

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Calendar

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

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tween 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.

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

Video games for the older set.

Movies for teens: 3:30-5:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, March 12.

Fun Fridays: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, March 7.

Puzzles and coloring: West New Brighton Library, 976 Castleton Ave. at N. Burgher Avenue; (718) 442-1416; www.nypl.org; 4-4:45 pm; Free.

Children 3 to 12 years old put the pieces together and stay in the lines in this fun crafting workshop.

SAT, MARCH 29

ON STATEN ISLAND

Craft time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, March 15.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, March 8.

Lunar New Year: Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. between Snug Harbor Road and Tysen Street; (718) 448-2500; www.snugharbor.org; 2 pm; \$10.

The celebration is rescheduled from Feb. 9.

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

From the creators of "Madagascar" comes this funny animated film about an underdog snail and a very big challenge.

Showtime: 2-4 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, March 15.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

A reading of the Richard Lewis play allows children to let their imagination flow through air, light, colors, and sounds.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SUN, MARCH 30

ON STATEN ISLAND

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.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

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

MON, MARCH 31

ON STATEN ISLAND

Board Game Bonanza: 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 10.

Homework help: 5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 3.

LONG-RUNNING

ON STATEN ISLAND

Read aloud: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; Monday, March 3, 4 pm; Monday, March 10, 4 pm; Monday, March 17, 4 pm; Monday, March 24, 4 pm; Monday, March 31, 4 pm; Monday, April 7, 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

Homework help: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street;

(718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; Monday, March 3, 4:30 pm; Thursday, March 6, 4:30 pm; Monday, March 10, 4:30 pm; Thursday, March 13, 4:30 pm; Monday, March 17, 4:30 pm; Thursday, March 20, 4:30 pm; Monday, March 24, 4:30 pm; Thursday, March 27, 4:30 pm; Monday, March 31, 4:30 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old get help with math and English.

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

Children listen to a different story each week.

Game on: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; Tuesday, March 4, 3:30 pm; Thursday, March 6, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, March 11, 3:30 pm; Thursday, March 13, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, March 18, 3:30 pm; Thursday, March 20, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, March 25, 3:30 pm; Thursday, March 27, 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old play Xbox 360 and Ps3.

After school book club: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; www.historicrichmondtown.org; Wednesday, March 5, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, March 12, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, March 19, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, March 26, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, April 2, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, April 9, 3:30 pm; Wednesday, April 16, 3:30 pm; Free.

Children enjoy reading the classics.

Up4Art: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; stateniskids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1, 2 and 3 pm, Now - Sun, March 30; Free with museum admission.

Children create fun projects.

Kidz cook: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; stateniskids.org; Saturdays, 2, 3 and 4 pm, Now - Fri, March 28; Free with museum admission.

Children experiment with all types of food.

FURTHER AFIELD

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

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

Beginner Hockey Clinic: Lasker

Pool & Rink, 110 Malcolm X Blvd., Central Park, Manhattan; (212) 348-4867; www.nycgovparks.org/events/2014/01/06/beginner-hockey-clinic; Mondays, 4 pm, Now - Mon, March 10; Free.

Children ages 6-9 can practice skating and puck control drills as well as scrimmaged play. Offered by the Central Park Conservancy must register through them.

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

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

Flight of the Butterflies in 3D: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X353; www.ny-science.org; Tuesdays - Fridays, 11 am, Noon & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, Noon, 1, 2 & 3 pm, Now - Fri, April 11; \$6 (adults), \$5 (children, students & seniors,) plus NYSCI admission.

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

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

Children of all ages meet grasshoppers, worms, and Madagascar hissing cockroaches.

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

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

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

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

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'Oz' toys roar into March

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

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



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

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

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

Smooth as Selkie

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

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

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



Lend 'em a hand

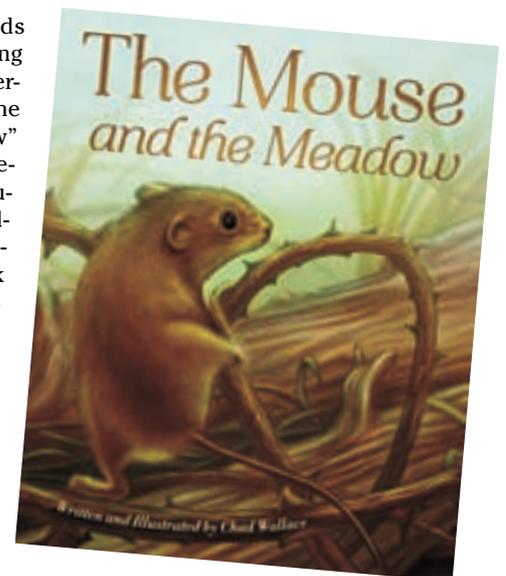
Lend me your ear. Really. Perhaps a large pink one? That's what kids will be saying when they break their new Chimeras out of the box. Walrus Toys' Chimeras [ky-mer-uhz] are mix-and-match plush toys, and each set includes two of the animals, so kids can immediately begin taking them apart and creating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

Take the Bunny and Monkey set. Their limbs and ears pop off and can be swapped with each other, creating new toys, like a Monny and Bunkey. Their appendages are also interchangeable with the Bat and Elephant set, for even more possibilities. Recommended for children ages 3 and older, these toys take the boring world of stuffed animals and give them a purpose beyond collecting dust! *Bunny and Monkey Chimeras set* by Walrus Toys, \$39.95, www.walrustoys.com.

A better mouse app

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

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



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

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

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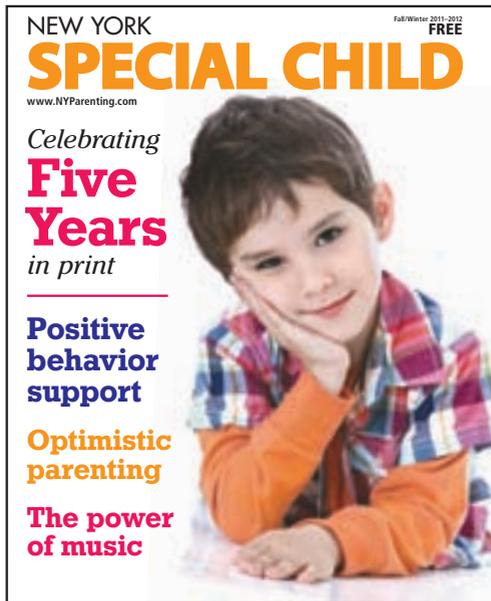
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