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Issue

- Raising global kids who care
- Pay it forward with Earth Day parties
- City kids slim down with veggies



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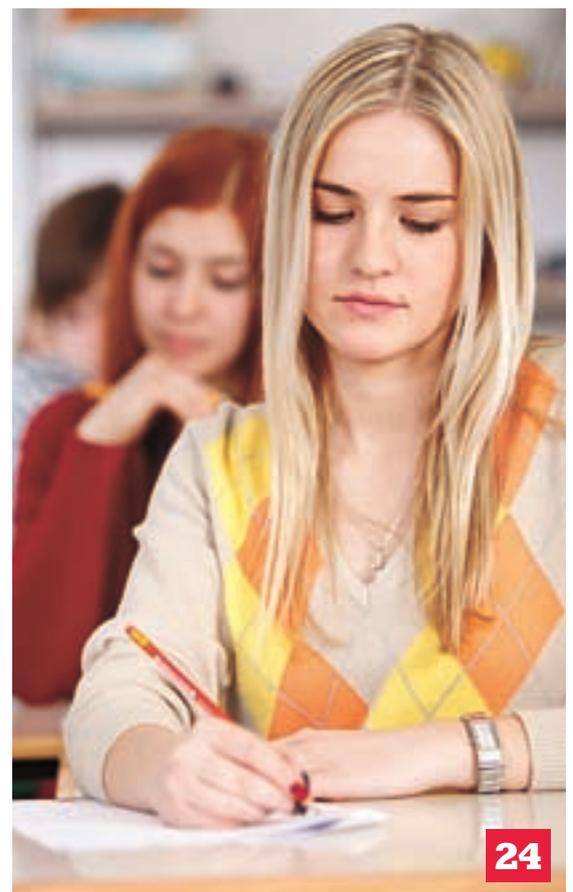
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Letter from the publisher

Loving the Earth

Every year we at *New York Parenting* join in the annual celebration of our planet and we encourage all the families in our communities to do so as well.

In this issue author Christina Katz has eleven ways to help us

raise global citizens. In addition Dr. Heidi Smith Luedtke gives us ideas for five Earth Day parties to reinforce the idea of going green.

We can't emphasize this enough for our children, that is, the importance of this being a priority for their future and the future of their children. Oscar Hammerstein, the great librettist and humanist, said it so eloquently, "You have to be carefully taught." We must carefully and pur-



posefully teach our children by example most of all, how to nurture our world/their world.

We must bend down and pick up the discarded trash and papers, even if someone else did it. We must form cleanup committees and get block efforts going in beautifying our communities. We must not only recycle but we should compost. We must make less waste and value longevity in the items we possess. Too much trash, too much new stuff is the mantra of our times and it was really great to remember a time when things sold themselves by the advertisement "made to last a lifetime."

We're getting better although as I go around the city I'm still seeing

plastic bags in the trees and cigarette butts all over the sidewalks. What makes a person who is otherwise a solid citizen throw their refuse out of their car windows and/or on to the sidewalk? What kind of carelessness is this? I see it as the "I couldn't care less" mode of thinking and acting. Shameful stuff.

I would like to challenge all my neighbors to bend down and pick it up and get your children in the plan too. Next time you go shopping make sure you have your own bags with you and eliminate the need to have them pack your things in plastic. Other cities have banned them entirely. We should be on that wavelength too.

Having your own cup will eliminate the need for all these discarded cups. Have your own and let them fill your coffee or tea or whatever in a

cup that you will take home or to the workplace and wash out. Save the earth! Save the unnecessary trash that we produce and the clutter that it brings to our surroundings. If everyone did something we could make a huge dent in the present horror of contemporary waste.

I know I'm not alone and that if we work together and we get our families in on the plan that we can make a striking change that will launch around our globe. Everyone has a part to play. Everyone counts.

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
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New York Parenting Media has been recognized for editorial and design excellence by PMA.

New York Parenting Media is published monthly by New York Parenting Media/CNG. Subscription rate is \$35 annually. Reproduction of New York Parenting Media in whole or part without written permission from the publisher is prohibited. All rights reserved. Copyright ©2014 Readership: 220,000. 2012 circulation audits by CAC & CVC.





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Raising global citizens

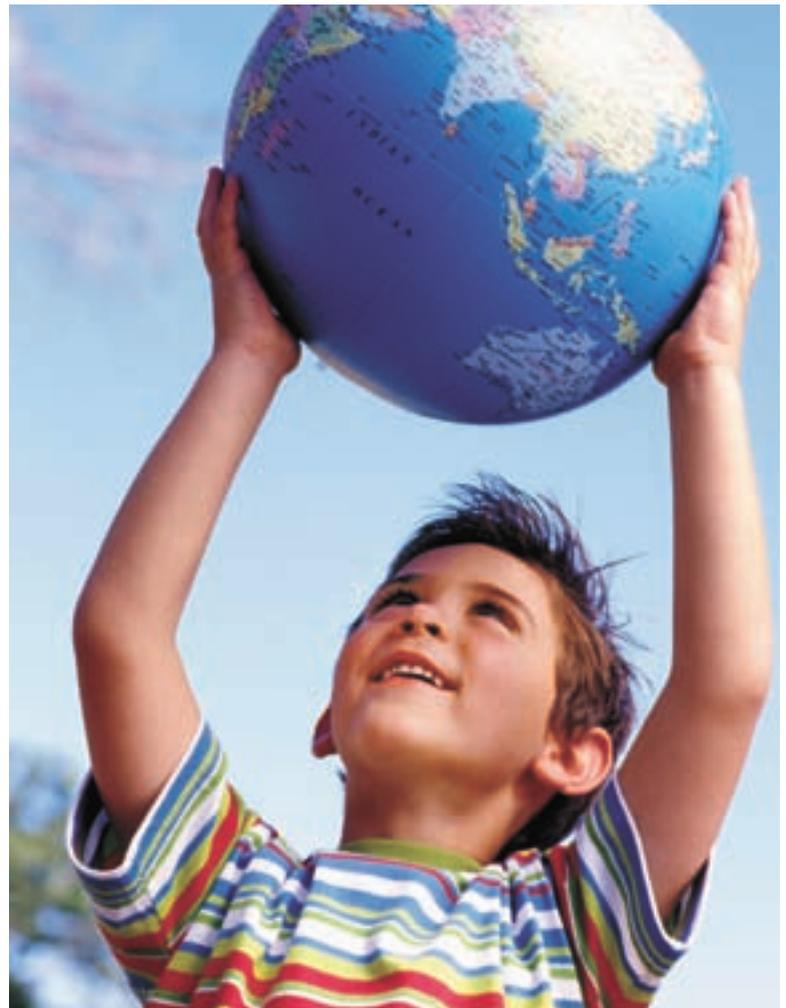
Eleven ways
to remind
kids we all
share planet
earth

BY CHRISTINA KATZ

Every April 22, we celebrate Earth Day all over the globe. But this Earth Day, before you remind your kids about the importance of conservation, planting trees, and recycling, why not remind them of a few profound truths about what it means to be a human being living on planet earth? If you can instill a healthy amount of awe in your kids about living on earth, you likely won't have to work as hard to get them to consume less, dig in the dirt more, and sort their trash.

According to worldometers.info, there are more than seven billion people on the planet already and that number is expected to grow to nine billion by 2042. Think about it. Right now and on any given day, we are part of this vast collection of humanity sharing a tiny globe that orbits the sun at a rate of about 30 kilometers per second (or 18 and a half miles per second). As we zoom around the sun, the planet that we are standing on is constantly spinning on its axis, one full turn per day.

If this information doesn't get your kids' minds spinning about the daily



scientific miracle of life on earth, I don't know what will. But how often do parents stop and consider our place in the larger scheme of things? Considering the length of our to-do lists, probably not often enough. So these reminders are not just for kids — they are for the benefit of the whole family.

Here's what parents can do to instill a healthy appreciation for planet earth in the hustle and bustle of our busy lives: we can slow down, pay attention to the miracle that is our life on earth, and raise our family's consciousness about our humble place in the vast scheme of things.

You might think, "But I don't want my child to feel inconsequential and overwhelmed." Don't worry. Learning about the world and our place in the universe has an inspiring affect on kids, and teaching them will likely inspire you to want to learn more, too.

Ready to remind your family that we all share planet earth? It's easier than you might think. Weave a glimpse of the universe into your home décor. Bring some globally minded toys to your kid's bedroom. Let children see for themselves that although we all matter, no one person is the center of

the universe. Here's how:

- Display a large, flat map of the world prominently in your home.
- Keep a globe within reach.
- Hang a mobile of the solar system.
- Get a telescope or visit an observatory.
- Take virtual trips around the globe together using Google Earth.
- Watch A&E Television Network's "Spaceship Earth" as a family (www.amazon.com/gp/product/B009505PX4/ref=dv_dp_ep6).
- Display a "you are here" image of our place in the galaxy.
- Subscribe to National Geographic Kids or National Geographic Little Kids magazine.
- Watch the documentary "Babies" with the whole family.
- Take a trip to the closest science museum and visit the planetarium.
- Read "Horton Hears A Who" and "The Lorax" by Dr. Seuss out loud every year on Earth Day.

Christina Katz loves being a member of the human race. Her latest book is "Permission Granted, 45 Reasons To Micro-publish," which presents her vision of a publishing model that creates less waste and is easier on the planet.

More resources

Use these books and toys to help raise little global citizens:

"National Geographic Kids, First Big Book Of Space" by Catherine D. Hughes and David A. Aguilar

"I Never Forget A Face" Matching Game with children's faces from around the world by Eeboo
Forty-eight-piece Solar Sys-

tem Floor Puzzle by Melissa and Doug

"If The World Were A Village, A Book About The World's People" by David J. Smith, Illustrated by Shelaugh Armstrong

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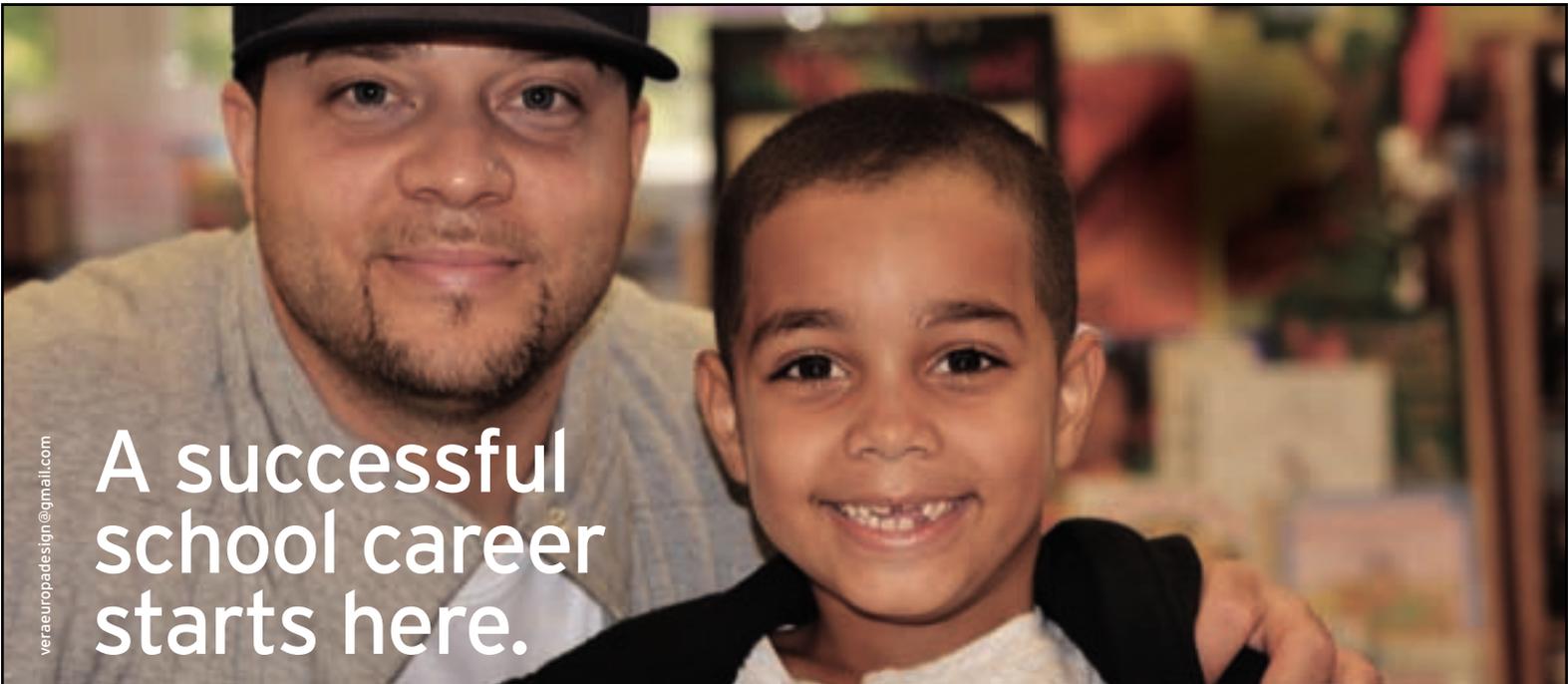


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Party for the planet

Five Earth Day parties that pay it forward

BY DR. HEIDI SMITH LUEDTKE

Our kids will be living on this planet long after we're gone, so they should learn to care for it. Why not throw a party to celebrate Earth Day, April 22, and use it to reinforce the importance of going green? Kids will have fun and make a difference in the environment with these Happy Earth Day party options.

Red-light, green-light

The facts: If each American family replaced just one traditional incandescent bulb with a Compact Fluorescent Light bulb, we'd save enough energy to light three million homes for a year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by nine billion pounds, an

amount equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.

Big bonus: This bulb lasts six times longer than an incandescent bulb and saves more than \$40 in lifetime electricity costs. Learn more at www.energystar.gov.

The fun: Host a twilight potluck block party and green-up the neighborhood. Purchase a case of Energy Star approved Compact Fluorescent bulbs at a home supply store. (A box of 48 bulbs costs around \$90.) Ask each family to purchase one or more energy-efficient bulbs and head home to green up their porch light before dark. Bask in the earth-friendly glow while you get to know the neighbors.

Pay it forward: At night's end, donate proceeds from bulb sales (and any additional donations) to a com-

munity program that subsidizes energy bills for low-income families or seniors. Ask \$5 per bulb, and you'll cover your costs and donate \$150.

Read it again!

The facts: Forty-two percent of American families with children can't afford food, clothing, or rent. That means they can't afford children's books, which cost between \$5 and \$25 in retail stores. Studies show limited access to print diminishes kids' motivation to read and their academic performance. Fortunately, there are many ways to donate old reads to those in need.

The fun: Host a bookish bash for your kids and their friends. Invite (pajama-clad) partiers of all ages to bring books they've outgrown and get several goofy grownups to read kids' favorites aloud. Use your silliest voices and outrageous props to make this a story time to remember.

Pay it forward: When the party's over, donate guests' well-loved books to Reading Tree (www.readingtree.org), a charity that distributes used books to underfunded libraries and schools in the U.S. and overseas. If there isn't a drop-off site in your area, ship your donations to Sheltering Books (www.shelteringbooks.org), a kid-created non-profit that provides books to residents of homeless shelters across America.

Choosing a charity

Whether you're donating money, material goods or time, you want maximum impact. Here are some things to consider:

- Can you keep it local? National charities often have greater visibility, but there are probably several worthy organizations close to your home. Keeping it local makes it easier for kids to see (and maybe even touch) those they've helped.

- Is the charity financially re-

sponsible? Non-profit organizations vary. Some use resources very efficiently, spending little on overhead and advertising. Others spend less than half their money on actual programs.

To find local and national charities related to issues that interest you and identify smart spenders, visit www.charitynavigator.org. Its four-star rating system will help you get the biggest bang for your buck.

Make a splash

The facts: The oceans cover 71 percent of the Earth's surface and contain 97 percent of its water, but they're under threat. Pollution and over-fishing destroy the habitats of many marine species, and some types of whales, dolphins, manatees, sea turtles, and sharks are endangered. And global climate changes mean rising water levels and temperatures.

The fun: Screen a sea-worthy film like the documentary "Oceans" (2009) or "IMAX: Deep Sea" (2010) at a water-themed celebration. Guests will have a whale of a time eating ocean-inspired treats while they view exhilarating underwater footage. Serve goldfish crackers and gummi sharks or make starfish sundaes. (Decorate small, star-shaped sugar cookies with colored sprinkles and stick 'em on ice cream "rocks.")

Pay it forward: In lieu of ticket sales, collect donations. Send them to the Ocean Conservancy (www.oceanconservancy.org), a marine-wildlife rescue (such as the Turtle Island Restoration Network, www.seaturtles.org) or a local waterways or wetlands preservation project.

Save a species

The facts: No one knows exactly how many species become extinct each year, but experts estimate the rapid loss of species we are seeing today is 1,000 to 10,000 times higher than the natural extinction rate. In the US, 619 animals and 817 plants are threatened or in danger of extinction. Find out which ones are endangered in your area using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's interactive map (www.fws.gov).

The fun: Choose an endangered animal that excites your kids — how about bats, frogs, birds, or wolves? — and throw a save-the- species

soiree. Let kids decorate with animal pictures and fun facts they find online. Plan games and activities around your animal theme, or get a long sheet of butcher paper and let the kids paint a mural depicting the endangered guest of honor.

Pay it forward: Collect donations from guests to send to a related charitable organization. Need ideas? Consider the American Bird Conservancy (www.abcbirds.org) or the Wildlife Conservation Network (www.wildnet.org).

Flutter by, butterfly

The facts: Butterflies are beautiful and fragile indicators of ecosystem health. They pollinate wild plants and agricultural crops, ensuring animals and people have food to eat. And butterflies themselves are a valuable source of food for songbirds. Learn more at www.zoo.org.

The fun: Plan and plant a butterfly garden at your school or in your neighborhood. Pick a sunny spot and let kids dig in the dirt and plant flowering nectar sources like asters, cornflowers, dogbane, goldenrod, and zinnias. Be sure to include plants that provide food for butterfly larvae, too (clover, milkweed and passion vine are good options). Place several, large flat rocks in the garden, so the butterflies can sun themselves after feasting and add a watering hole for thirsty guests.

Pay it forward: Plan a monthly or quarterly butterfly garden party to clear out debris, plant new flowers, and enjoy the fresh air and sunshine. Strong community ties are good for you, your kids, and the planet we call home.

Psychologist Heidi Smith Luedtke loves to scuba dive and search for seashells with her kids. She is the author of "Detachment Parenting."



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New York Parenting collects nine awards



Our publisher, Susan Weiss, proudly accepted nine Awards for Excellence from the Parenting Media Association at the dinner held in Philadelphia, Pa. on March 1, 2014.

She was thrilled to once again be present to receive these honors as the Executive Editor on behalf of our contributing writers and design team.

Our publications won awards in all three levels, Gold, Silver and Bronze, in the arena of cover design, as well as for content in our columns, articles, and calendar.

Manhattan Family was a winner for large circulation in several categories as was *Brooklyn Family*, with both *Staten Island Family* and *Bronx/Riverdale Family* also garnering recognition in the midsize circulation group. Our pioneering magazine in the special needs genre, *New York Special Child* was honored with a cover award for our Fall/Winter issue.

Congratulations to all the members of our team, but particularly to those named in the winning categories! They include writers Danielle Sullivan (a double winner), Tim Perrins, Alison Besunder, Lee Chabin, Tammy Scileppi (also a double winner), and our art director, Leah Mitch.

This event culminated the last year of the presidency of the Parenting Media Association for Susan as she handed over the gavel to the incoming president, Sarah Taylor of Metro Family magazine in Oklahoma City. Susan still retains a board position as she has for the past seven years.

In recognition of her years of service to the organization, a special plaque was presented to Susan in a very moving ceremony, and after she thanked everyone and made sincere remarks about the pleasure her years of service to the organization have meant to her, she was given a rousing standing



(Top) Sharon Noble and Susan Weiss with New York Parenting Media's awards. (Above) Susan Weiss with Parenting Media Association Executive Director C. James Dowden and incoming president Sarah Taylor.

ovation.

The awards are judged by a team of 26 from the University of Missouri School of Journalism, and this year, the panel of judges reviewed more than 700 entries from across the US, Canada, and Australia.

It was a wonderful night for our Sales Manager Sharon Noble and publisher. They look forward to next year and hopefully even more recognition for the wonderful staff of talented people who contribute to *New York Parenting*.

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Good eats

City kids lighten up and eat their veggies

BY ALLISON PLITT

For decades, there's been an increasing obesity rate in children, but in 2011, there was a reported decline in obesity in New York City schoolchildren spanning kindergarten through eighth grade. In fact, the obesity rate for this age group fell by 5.5 percent over a five year period, though it continued to climb for New York City teenagers and adults.

New York City officials were especially ecstatic over the drop in obesity for young children because of their recent attempts to combat obesity — putting calorie counts on menus at restaurants, an advertising campaign against sugary sodas, restrictions on school vending machines, and adding salad bars to some school cafeterias.

The decline in obesity was documented by the city during the public schools' annual physical education tests that are now completed by most of the city's kindergarten through eighth grade students.

City officials also observed trends among the participating schoolchildren. By age group, the decline was highest among 5- and 6-year-olds at 9.9 percent. By race, the drop in obesity was highest among whites (12.5 percent) and Asian children (7.6 percent), and lower for Hispanic (3.4 percent) and black (1.9 percent) children.

Dr. Marlene Schwartz, deputy director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University, concluded that younger children, who respond better to adult direction, and children from more

affluent families, which have the resources to change, were easiest to reach.

It may appear that there is a great disparity in public schools in obesity rates among children of different socioeconomic backgrounds. First Lady Michelle Obama has led a nationwide push to change young children's eating and exercise habits in 10,000 child care centers across the country, and many of these participating child care centers, including some in the New York City area, are in low-income communities.

In August 2013, a government report was issued stating that for the first time in decades, obesity rates among preschool-age children from poor families fell in 19 states, including New York, between 2008 and 2011. Some of the reasons for the change were attributed to Obama's initiative, an increase in breast-feeding, a drop in mothers giving their children sugary fruit juices, and changes in the food offered in federal nutrition programs for women and children.

Buoyed by such positive feedback, city officials now seem to be praising every suggestion possible in an effort to get parents to teach their young children about good eating habits. New insights in the crusade against obesity are now being researched and studied, but some of the information being published nowadays appears to be questionably beneficial.

For example, a new study published in the *Journal of Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* recommends the strategy of pairing a new food with something a person already

likes, which is referred to as "associative conditioning." The study states that if parents give their children a new vegetable to eat, the child will not likely consume it by itself. However, if that child is given cream cheese to dip the vegetable into, then the child will be more likely to eat the vegetable.

The premise of the study sounds simple, but after you read in detail what actually happened during the data collection, you can take some grains of wisdom from the results and disregard the study's dubious testing tactics. To begin with, 29 children (13 boys and 16 girls) aged 3 to 5 years were included in the data analyses. They were served food in a school room setting starting at 9 am. Children received the vegetable snack five days a week, from Monday through Friday.

Children were put into groups of five or six each and seated in different rooms, so they would not be influenced by another group's opinion. All the children were first served Brussels sprouts alone. Next, they were served the sprouts with cream cheese, and then later they were served the vegetable with sweetened cream cheese. The same tests were done with cauliflower. All the vegetables were cooked in boiling water for up to seven minutes. Each vegetable (alone or with cream cheese) was tested for seven days.

According to the results, the children liked Brussels sprouts more with cream cheese. (Whether it was sweetened or unsweetened did not matter.) As for cauliflower, there were no significant differences



among the children in liking the vegetable alone or with cream cheese. Researchers believe the children's more pronounced liking of Brussels sprouts with cream cheese was due to the fact that it was the more bitter vegetable.

When I spoke with Dr. Dyan Hes, medical director of Gramercy Pediatrics and an obesity specialist on the American Board of Obesity Medicine, about the study.

She said she didn't like the idea of vegetables being eaten with cream cheese, because she said a food should not be sweetened just so a child will like it. Believing that children should be exposed to and enjoy a variety of tastes, Dr. Hes says her children come home from school "craving lentil soup." She said recent research studies also found that children who were breast-fed as babies were more inclined to eat a greater variety of flavors.

I commented on the fact that cream cheese was high in fat, but when I put olive oil, salt, and pepper on the Brussels sprouts and then roasted them in my oven, my daughter loved them.

Dr. Hes also critiqued the study because she felt that the number of children evaluated was too small. Nevertheless, she thought the 3 to 5 year age range for taste testing was perfect.

"It's better to start them earlier," Dr. Hes said.

Another aspect of the study that Dr. Hes liked was that the evaluations were conducted in classrooms. If a child is served Brussels sprouts at school, Dr. Hes thinks that child will be more likely to eat them at home as well.

In sum, the study of "associative conditioning" isn't perfect, but the lessons learned from it are invaluable: start children eating a variety of healthy foods at an early age, to ward off obesity in the future.

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.



DIVORCE & SEPARATION

LEE CHABIN, ESQ.

Financial infidelity

It's a fact that money issues contribute to the breakup of many relationships.

As individuals, we worry about money. As couples, we argue about it. Or avoid the subject. Some people spend without knowing where their money goes. Others track every dollar and are frightened of losing it all.

Times are hard. Unemployment rates remain high — higher than the numbers the government reports, in part because the long-term unemployed are not counted in the statistics, as if everything was just fine with them.

Many have had their homes foreclosed on. Many saw their retirement, savings, and investments lose value in the recession, and could not take advantage when the stock market rebounded. College tuition continues to increase.

Such challenges are stressful and frequently contribute to marital problems — that's so, even when we are open and honest with each other. When there is "financial infidelity," relationships suffer even greater strains.

In January 2014, Harris Poll conducted a survey for the National Endowment for Financial Education, and the results, "Financial Infidelity Poses Challenges for Couples," were posted on the Endowment's website in February. Its findings are probably familiar to most who work with couples. Here are some of them:

Deceitful behaviors

Of those who have ever combined finances with a partner or spouse, 33 percent have committed financial deception.

When those who have combined finances were asked about their own behaviors, the data showed that 30 percent have hidden a purchase, bank account, statement, bill, or cash from a partner or spouse. Thirteen percent have lied about finances or debt.

Asked about the deceitful behavior of a spouse or partner, 30 percent said that a significant other had hidden a purchase, bank account, statement, bill, or cash. Twenty-one percent said a spouse or partner



had lied about finances or debt.

Seventy-six percent said the financial deceptions affected current or past relationships in some way. As one would expect, trust is damaged; 33 percent said it caused less trust in the relationship.

Why behave deceitfully?

- Thirty-five percent said they believe some aspects of their finances should remain private, even from their spouse or partner.

- Twenty-four percent said they discussed finances with their spouse or partner, but knew the spouse would disapprove.

- Sixteen percent were embarrassed or fearful about their finances and didn't want their spouse or partner to find out.

- Fifteen percent said that while they hadn't discussed finances with their spouse or partner, they feared the spouse would disapprove.

Conclusions? Some might take away from these findings that partners should share financial information with each other. All of it. Always. This approach may work well for some couples.

For others, deciding together that each can spend an agreed upon amount on whatever she or he wants without any obligation to tell the other, will be the right way to go.

(This approach would very likely suit those in the 35 percent that said they believe aspects of their finances should remain private.)

You and your partner may well have different temperaments. It is very possible that growing up, your experiences regarding saving, spending, debt and so on taught each of you different lessons. Some of those lessons may have been unhealthy; for instance, the perception that money is bad and something to be frightened of, which resulted in never learning how to handle financial matters.

With a partner, or just for yourself, being honest about money pays off. Admittedly, talking about money can be hard work, especially if one of you has been deceitful. But a willingness to talk, listen, and change destructive behaviors may help to improve your own life and strengthen the relationship.

New York City and Long Island-based divorce mediator and collaborative divorce lawyer Lee Chabin helps clients end their relationships respectfully and without going to court. Contact him at lee_chabin@lc-mediate.com, (718) 229-6149, or go to <http://lc-mediate.com/>. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lchabin.

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HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Benefits of spacing out your children

According to the research paper “Birth Spacing and Sibling Outcomes” by Kasey S. Buckles and Elizabeth L. Munnich of the University of Notre Dame, spacing siblings more than two years apart results in better scores on reading and math tests for the older children. Parents naturally want to do everything they can so their child can have an advantage, but there are other pros to spacing out your children.

I can’t say the spacing itself is the sole reason for the spike in test scores. I have three kids, each five years apart, unintentionally. They all do very well in school, but so do many of their friends, and some of them are only children or siblings spaced close together. I tend to believe that the parent’s educational goals and imposed study habits combined with a child’s natural ability and quality of teachers will largely determine a child’s educational outcome.

In our hyper-driven educational system that often cares more about test scores than actual learning, I wonder how much it even matters. Still, I have to say there are some definite advantages to spacing siblings widely apart.

Here is my top five:

Individual attention. With each child, I had time alone for him when he was a baby and toddler to focus on him for many hours a day. By the time another baby was born, the baby prior to that was in school, so I happily devoted time each day to playing, teaching, and enjoying the new addition. It was lovely.

Never diaper train more than one child at a time. My hat is off to the many moms who pull double duty and potty train multiple toddlers at a time. I don’t believe I’d ever have the patience to pull off such a feat.

Stagger out tuition. None of our kids will ever be in college when another is, and that realization is



huge. I especially recognize this perk since our oldest started college.

Live-in babysitters. As your oldest gets more mature each day, he can be a big help in watching the younger ones. This privilege should never be abused, of course, but sometimes having your 10-year-old watch her younger siblings — so you can finish dinner, help another with homework, or take a shower — can be purely joyful.

Prolong having a baby in the house. By the time my oldest was no longer a baby or toddler any-

more, I was pregnant again with another. I was lucky enough to have a baby in our home for many years. Now that it’s over (my youngest is 11), I can’t explain how much I miss it. A couple of years ago, when the baby urge hit an all-time high, we adopted an adorable black lab. Coincidence? I think not!

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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Camper to camper

Advice for newbies from seasoned kids

BY KIMBERLY CARLSON

When we were kids, summer camp meant something different to us than it does to our children. For us, camp meant camp: cabins or tents, canoeing, hiking, singing songs around a

campfire, and general camaraderie. Children today are much more active, much more schedule-oriented, and generally just busier. Consequently, the very dynamics of summer camp have changed. Camps offered now are much more focused and detail oriented. There's soccer

camp, art camp, violin camp, space camp, leadership camp, paleontology camp, etc.

But there are some things about camp that truly haven't changed, like the general apprehension your son or daughter might feel the first time he or she attends camp. Here's what seasoned camp veterans had to say to children who are going off to camp for the first time.

Everyone gets homesick

Some kids handle being away from home better than others. It's a great opportunity for the kids who don't get homesick to step up and show their sympathy, and their new friendship skills. In a dorm room with nine other campers, fourth-grader Dakota Lopez recalls two to three kids who got homesick.

"We felt bad for them, but we all tried to make them feel better. We brought them junk food and soda."

And the ones that do get home-

“Camp only lasts a week, and if you wait until the last few days of camp to make friends, you’ve missed out on half the fun.”

sick learn just how much they can rely on their peers to get them through difficulties. It’s a great learning experience for all campers.

“I didn’t like missing my mom,” said 10-year-old Michael. “But when the kids cheered me up instead of teasing me, I felt better.”

Learn something new

As a sixth-grader, Elise Finlinson is a seasoned camper. She’s been attending summer camps since she was in first grade.

“Camp is great because you get to explore things you wouldn’t get to do in school or learn about,” she says with a smile.

Elise has found a new love of art that wasn’t cultivated during the school year, but has stuck with her since last summer’s camp. She has since expanded her knowledge and delved into different artistic media with the help of an art teacher she sees outside of school.

Dakota reminisced about the sketches she and her roommates were tasked with writing and performing at soccer camp last summer.

“It was SO COOL!” she said. “We got to perform it in front of all the other campers and the coaches. That was the best part of camp.”

It was also unexpected. She was expecting all things soccer. But her favorite memory from soccer camp had nothing to do with soccer.

Have fun

This sounds like a pretty straightforward bit of advice, but sometimes children need to be reminded to have a little fun, lest they get caught up in the stress of the “new.” A new environment, new rules, new daily activities and routines.

“I love camp!” says 5-year-old Anna Finlinson. “I don’t ever miss

my mom, because I’m too busy having fun.”

Anna attended Princess Dance camp last summer, and is looking forward to “more and more and more camp” this summer.

“I didn’t think I would like the hiking, but it ended up being pretty cool,” said Michael.

Don’t be shy

One of the best parts about summer camp is the ability to “make new friends,” says Dakota.

“Some of them I’m still friends with from last summer’s soccer camp.”

Every child I asked had the same bit of advice right from the start: don’t be shy.

“Camp only lasts a week, and if you wait until the last few days of camp to make friends, you’ve missed out on half the fun,” says Elise.

Regardless of the type of camp you and your children have chosen, make sure they make the most of it. It will go by faster than either one of you expect. If your child can embrace the opportunities presented before him, he will have a much more enriched experience.

Elise says that “summer camp is much cooler than regular school, because although we’re still learning stuff, we’re not stuck behind a desk all day.”

Even Michael, who was the most apprehensive about attending summer camp, says he would “do it again” this summer. He found confidence and security in knowing he can rely upon himself, and trust in his peers to help him if he feels homesick.

“Riding horses was pretty cool, too,” he proffered.

Summer camp may only last a week or so, but the memories really do last a lifetime. See for yourself: ask any child you know about his summer camp experiences, and you’ll see his face light up with the memories.

Have your first-time camper talk to other children that have already attended. They are more than willing to share their experiences, and their energy and excitement about it can be quite contagious!

Kimberly Carlson is a published author, blogger, and mother of two. One of her kids loves camping in the mountains and snow while her other kid loves camping in the forest — in the summertime, of course!

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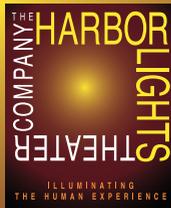


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Taxes & childcare

What parents should know about tidying up their taxes

BY STEPHANIE BREEDLOVE

April tends to be when tax talk reaches its crescendo. People are filing their personal income tax returns and crossing their fingers for a big refund check from Uncle Sam. But if you're a family in the Big Apple with in-home childcare expenses, you know your tax season really began back in January and is finally winding down.

By now, you've accounted for all of your caregiver's wages and taxes for 2013, given her a W-2 Form, and

filed paperwork with the Social Security Administration. It's quite a bit of work to do, so kudos for getting the job done!

There are only two things left to do before the April 15 personal income tax filing deadline. First, make sure you attach a Schedule H to your personal income tax return. Then, be sure to capitalize on your childcare tax breaks.

The Schedule H simply summarizes your household employment activity, so the Internal Revenue Service understands you paid someone to work in your home, withheld federal

taxes from her, and paid your share of federal taxes. If you've remitted the federal tax throughout the year using the 1040-ES (Estimated Tax) process, you'll reflect those payments on your 1040 Form and they will offset the liability reported on Schedule H. If you have not made those payments yet, they'll be factored into your tax payment and refund.

The tax break you'll want to take is the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (IRS Form 2441) — not to be confused with the Child Tax Credit. As long as childcare was needed because you and your spouse both work or are full-time students, you can apply the wages you paid your caregiver (and other qualifying childcare expenses) to this tax credit.

If you have one child, you can itemize up to \$3,000 of expenses per year and if you have two or more children, you can itemize up to \$6,000 per year. Most families will receive a 20 percent tax credit on these expenses, so you can expect to see a savings of up to \$600 if you have one child and up to \$1,200 if you have two or more children.

NOTE: If you applied your childcare expenses to a Dependent Care Account ("Flexible Spending Account" or "FSA") through your work, you likely cannot take the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit unless you have

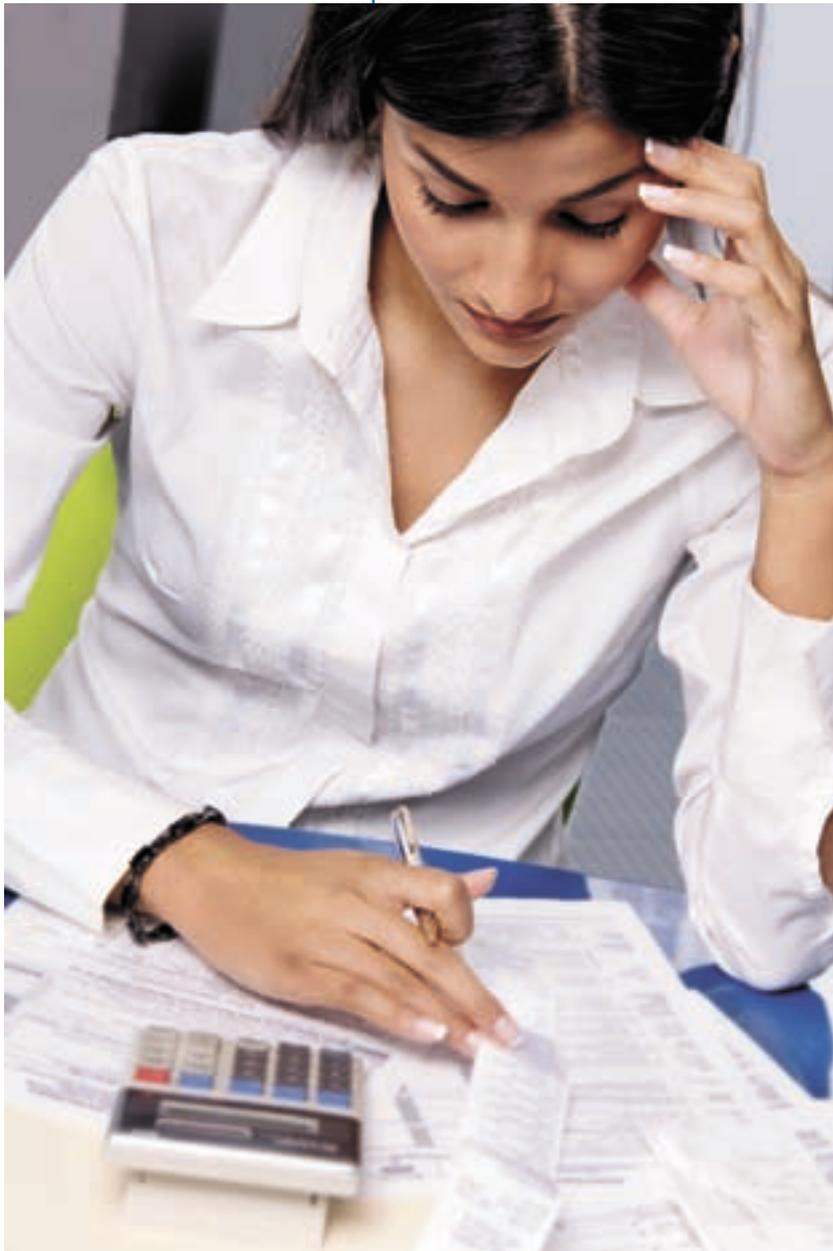
two or more children. The dollars applied in a Flexible Spending Account count against your expense limits. So, if you have one child and applied more than \$3,000 to your account, you have already exhausted your expense limit. However, if you have two or more children, you may itemize the expenses that have not already been applied to your account — up to \$6,000. Since most people utilize \$5,000 in their Flexible Spending Account, this provides an additional \$1,000 that can be itemized on Form 2441.

As you finalize these taxes and tax breaks, it's a great opportunity to look back at your care-related expenses in 2013 and see if you need to adjust your budget for 2014. For instance, a few things you definitely need to keep in mind are changes to laws specific to New York residents. As of this year, the minimum wage increased from \$7.25 per hour to \$8 per hour, so you need to make sure you've budgeted for this increase if you paid under \$8 per hour in 2013.

Lastly, if you're not doing so already, you'll need to make sure you've budgeted for your caregiver to have paid days off. State law mandates that if — on average — she works 30 hours or more per week, she is entitled to three paid days off once she's worked for you for a full year. If she works between 20 and 30 hours per week, she is entitled to two paid days off and if she works less than 20 hours per week, she earns one paid day off. This paid time off mandate was part of the New York Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights legislation that passed in 2010.

We know all these details are tedious, but taking care of all these tax and labor law obligations is important to you and your caregiver. It protects you from audit and wage disputes and entitles you to tax breaks. For your caregiver, the payroll system funds all the benefits and protections (Social Security, Medicare, Unemployment, etc.) other workers enjoy — now and in retirement. That peace of mind for both parties makes for a more professional and more successful working relationship.

Stephanie Breedlove is the vice president of Care.com HomePay.

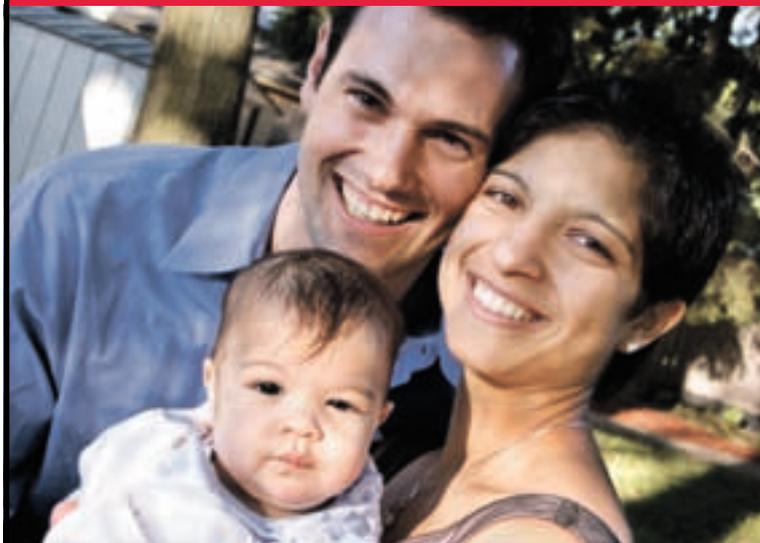


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SAT

in flux

Why the College Board is making changes to the SAT

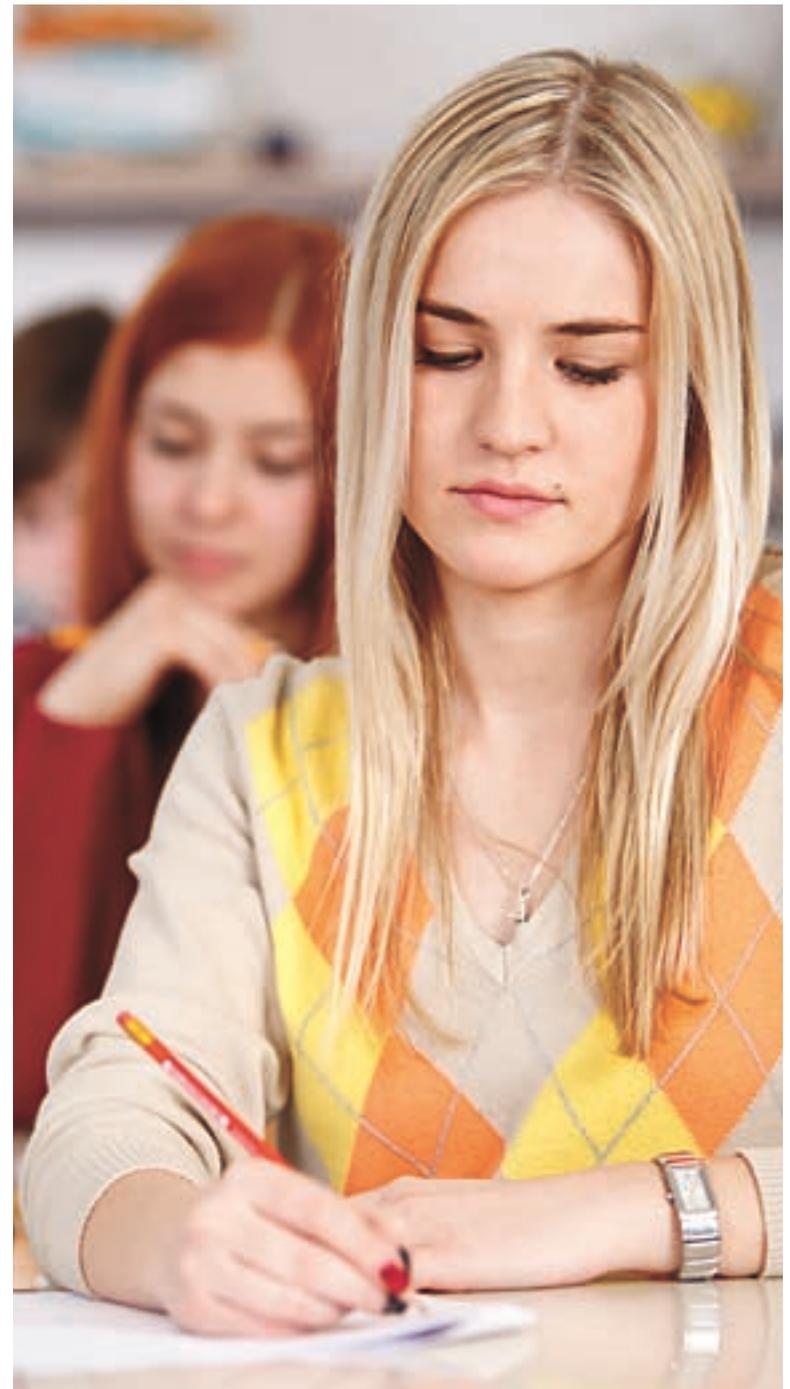
BY FRANCES KWELLER

Let the anxiety begin. The first line of the newly printed New York Times article reads, “Saying its college admission exams do not focus enough on the important academic skills, the College Board announced on Wednesday a fundamental rethinking of the SAT, eliminating obligatory essays, ending the long-standing penalty for guessing wrong, and cutting obscure vocabulary words.”

The College Board is advertising a newer test as a way to address social injustice. It is a flimsy defense against the criticisms of a test the College Board has administered for 81 years that is virtually impossible for most students to test in the top 10th percentile unless they can afford tutoring and materials. The reality is that the SAT has fallen behind the ACT in terms of test numbers and the College Board wants to make money. The College Board long held a monopoly as the only college entrance examination, but in the 1960s, the ACT emerged as a response to the SAT, long identified by many as a classist, and arguably racist, test. In 2013, 1.8 million students took the ACT as opposed to 1.7 million sitting for the SAT.

Actions speak far louder than

PERSONAL ESSAY



words, so let us examine what the College Board is doing rather than what it is saying.

SAT scoring will return to the system where the scores will be up to 1600, with a top math score of 800, a top “Evidence-Based Reading and Writing” score of 800, and the writing section optional. This seems to be a “back to the future approach” when once upon a time, the SAT consisted of a top math score of 800, a top “verbal” score of 800, and an optional written section. This is tantamount to an admission

of defeat with the retooled SAT as most college admissions departments never really adopted the writing portion of the exam in their processes because of the constant confusion surrounding it.

Furthermore, the college prep media never embraced the 2400 point exam. Even the “Bible” of college admissions, the “U.S. News and World Report” college guide, stuck to the 1600-point scale in its collegiate assessments.

This is not to say that I think that the SAT should remove the written section altogether. I think that would be a mistake. The strength of the SAT essay is to demonstrate

Actions speak far louder than words, so let us examine what the College Board is doing rather than what it is saying.

that a student can write a clear, concise essay in a tightly timed (25 minute) setting, using proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, a range of sentence structures, and apt vocabulary. There have been cases where the College Board essay was compared against student's college application essay to determine how polished the college application essay was by counselors, teachers, and parents.

Apparently, changes coming to the exam are going to be extensive: The SAT's "rarefied" vocabulary words will be replaced by words that are common in college courses, such as "empirical" and "synthesis." I sincerely hope I am not being abstruse in my query, but by what empirical metric is the College Board quantifying the syntax and lexis of the collegiately adept as opposed to the grammar and vocabulary of the vernacular? And doesn't this mean a lessening of the rigor of the exam without actually making preparation easier?

In addition, the use of a calculator will no longer be allowed on some math sections. In fact, most students must purchase \$100 to \$200 calculators for their daily math classes. That is the reality of today's schools, but the College Board has now arbitrarily decided that students who have used calculators in math classes for a generation, should now suddenly perform on a potentially life-changing exam without them. That Pandora's box has long been opened and cannot now be closed and still be representative of a student's high school work. This alone undermines the College Board's credibility as experts in measuring student performance.

The College Board touts its fee waiver program that allows students with limited means to send scores to up to four schools free of charge. The College Board has always offered this program, but

the process is labyrinthine and the waivers are ridiculously difficult to obtain, and the process must be repeated completely for each sitting for the exam. The College Board does not mention any improvement in this little-known program; it merely reiterates that the program exists.

Perhaps the most disingenuous statement is that, "It is time for the College Board to say in a clearer voice that the culture and practice of costly test preparation that has arisen around admissions exams drives the perception of inequality and injustice in our country." Big words for an institution that has for 81 years said nothing about the iniquities of its exams, and who charges an additional \$60 for online software with six tests, and charges \$19 for each time a student wants a copy of his test.

The Blue Book, a ponderous manual the College Board condones (and publishes for \$21.99) as the only "Official SAT Study Guide," is half useless. Literally, one entire half of the book is filled with jargon that is intended to detail the skills necessary for test success and instead ends up confusing readers, because everything is so poorly explained.

The second half of the book features 10 real SAT exams riddled with errors. For an extra \$10, the College Board will sell you a Blue Book with a CD with videos that makes a far better coaster than an effective preparation tool. And best of all, the Blue Book does not come with an explanation section, so that students can learn from the examiner how they will be examined.

And from the looks of the cease and desist letters sent to some educators who try and write explanation sections to the Blue Book, the College Board does not want anyone else explaining its tests either.

The College Board created the test preparation industry by the College Board's lack of direction and student outreach. It is not the test preparation industry that drives the perception of iniquity. It is the very necessity of such an industry that is the iniquity. It is an artificially created iniquity that the College Board wants to continue to profit from.

Frances Kweller is an education and testing standards expert and CEO of Kweller Test Prep in Queens.

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Calendar

APRIL



St. George Festival celebrates Earth Day

Now in its eighth year, this is one of the most anticipated events of the year. Giant puppets, a dragon parade, and all-day crafts provide lots of fun family stuff on April 26 at Tompkinsville Park at the St. George Family Festival.

Center stage provides space for live entertainment, dance, music, and spoken word as well as children's performances, Earth Day activities, and more.

The festival promotes themes of peaceful conflict resolution, sharing

resources and communal pride. It is a celebration of the neighborhood of St. George as well as the international holiday remembering the legend of St. George and the dragon.

The highlight is a giant dragon parade starting at 2 pm that re-tells the myth of St. George.

St. George Festival, April 26 from noon to 7 pm. Free.

Tompkinsville Park [Victory Boulevard at Bay Street in Tompkinsville, (718) 447-8256; www.stgeorgedaysi.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!

TUES, APRIL 1

ON STATEN ISLAND

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.

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

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

WED, APRIL 2

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Pinnocchio": 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.

Imagine Geppetto's surprise when his wooden puppet comes to life. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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.

Web Wednesdays: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 3:30-



Talkin' tantrums

If you're at your wits ends about your wee one's temper tantrums, then head over to Barnes and Noble, where children's author Artie Bennett — the "Butt Book" scribe who put the "stupendous" in "Poopendous" — will read and sign copies of his new picture book, "Peter Panda Melts Down!" on April 19.

The beautifully illustrated volume tells the tale of Mama Panda's assorted meltdowns as she copes with Peter Panda, her rambunctious 3-year-old whose

emotions run amok at the best of times. Peter has a tendency to resort to fury whenever things don't go his way — in the car, in the library, in the supermarket, well, almost anywhere he can hurl a hissy fit.

Artie Bennett reads and signs copies of "Peter Panda Melts Down!" on April 19 at 10:30 am. Free.

Barnes and Noble [2245 Richmond Ave. at Draper Place in New Springville; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com].

4:30 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old explore new tools available.

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.

FURTHER AFIELD

Mud Art: 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 learn about the earth, the rocks, sand, clay and other surfaces that cover the planet.

THURS, APRIL 3

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 10:30-11:30 am; Free.

Children 2 to 3 three year old with parent enjoy craft and activity. Registration required.

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

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

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

Children 3 to 12 years old hear a story and make a coloring craft.

Teen Lounge: Great Kills Library, 56 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.

FRI, APRIL 4

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/parent.

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

Little ones birth to 5 years old with a parent or caregiver.

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.

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.

SAT, APRIL 5

ON STATEN ISLAND

"The Pigeon Needs a Bath": Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 10:30 am; Free.

Enjoy a special story time with a reading of the above book and pigeon activities.

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

For children in Pre-k through 8th grade.

Opening day: Conference House, 298 Satterlee Ave. at Hylan Blvd.; (718) 984-6046; 11:30 am-4 pm; \$4 (\$3 seniors and students; Free for members and children under 5).

It's spring and the Conference House is flinging open its doors to let the sunshine in after this cold, cold winter.

FURTHER AFIELD

Citizen Science Series: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Noon-4 pm; Free with museum admission.

Citizen Science Series introduces audiences to a range of science projects.

Surprise buildings: New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718)

Continued on page 28

Calendar

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

Continued from page 27

694–1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; 1:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children older than 6 years discover the secrets of the 74th Street Powerhouse, built in 1902.

Rubber Band Month: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1:30 – 3 pm & 3:30 – 5 pm; \$5, plus museum admission.

Children explore cool projects made with simple rubber bands, including rubber band-powered helicopters and cars, musical instruments and Viking catapults.

SUN, APRIL 6

ON STATEN ISLAND

American Girl: Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; www.barnesandnoble.com; 1 pm; Free.

Join in for a special event featuring the newest American doll Isabelle and a raffle. RSVP requested.

FURTHER AFIELD

Sun Catchers: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am–12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Children 18 months and up will explore light and color as they experiment with prisms, flashlights and filters to create their own sun catcher in this workshop.

Baby Expo: PS 133, William A Butler school, 610 Baltic St., Brooklyn; www.eventbrite.com/e/brooklyn-baby-family-expo-presented-by-a-child-grows-in-brooklyn-tickets-10640645457; 11 am–3 pm; \$15–\$130.

A fun event that gives moms and dads access to products, advice and community resources for children, birth to early childhood. Vered Music, Little Rock its by Frolic and City Stomp provide the entertainment.

Surprise buildings: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, April 5.

Rubber Band Month: 1:30 – 3 pm & 3:30 – 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 5.

MON, APRIL 7

ON STATEN ISLAND

“Once Upon a Time”: 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.

Pushcart Players present four time honored fables, “The Princess and the

Pea,” “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” “All’s Well that Ends Well” and “Little Red Riding Hood.” Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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.

Movie Mondays: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nypl.org; 4–6 pm; Free.

Teens 13 to 18 years old enjoy a different flick each week.

FURTHER AFIELD

Science Workshop for Young Children with Autism: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; 718-699-0005 X 341; www.nyscience.org; 3:30–5 pm; Free.

Children ages 3 – 5 with autism and their families explore the physics of how things move as they play, paint, and build their own trains from recycled materials. Pre-registration is required.

TUES, APRIL 8

ON STATEN ISLAND

“Once Upon a Time”: 10 and 11:30 am. Center for the Performing Arts at CSI. See Monday, April 7.

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, April 1.

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.

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

WED, APRIL 9

ON STATEN ISLAND

“The Little Mermaid”: 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.

Come and join Ariel under the sea with all her pals. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Teen club: 2–4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

“Play it Forward NY”: Richmond-town Library, 200 Clark Ave.; (646) 765-6531; 3:30–5:30 pm; Free.

Anti-bully support group discusses coping for parents of tweens and teens that have been bullied and how tweens and teens can cope as well.

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.

Web Wednesdays: 3:30–4:30 pm. St. George Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

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

Children 13 to 18 years old learn how to create lanyard projects. All materials provided.

Read aloud: 4–4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

THURS, APRIL 10

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: 11–11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, April 3.

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, April 3.

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

For children 13 to 18 years old.

Teen Lounge: 3:30–4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, April 3.

FRI, APRIL 11

ON STATEN ISLAND

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: 10:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, April 4.

Baby time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, April 4.

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

Preschoolers 3 to 5 years old with caregiver/parent enjoy new and classic pictures books, action songs and related activities. Pre-registration required.

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

SAT, APRIL 12

ON STATEN ISLAND

“An Easter Carol”: Bethel Evangelical Free Church, 4550 Amboy Rd.; (718) 984-6838; 10:30 am; Free.

Mr. Nezzar is looking forward to opening Easterland, where everyone knows that Easter is about chocolate bunnies and colorful eggs — or is it? The whole family will enjoy this event, especially children who can get up, sing, dance and walk around. Gluten- and casein-free snacks are available.

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–1pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, April 5.

“Rise of the Turtles”: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2–4 pm; Free.

Fun flick for children 5 to 12 years old.

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.

FURTHER AFIELD

Easter Egg Hunt: Carl Schurz Park, E. 87th Street and East End Ave., Manhattan; (212) 459-4455; www.carlschurzparknyc.org; Noon–3 pm; Free.

Decorate Easter egg bags and then hunt for the treasures. For all ages.

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.

Citizen Science Series: Noon–4 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 5.

Calendar

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

Rubber Band Month: 1:30 – 3 pm & 3:30 – 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 5.

SUN, APRIL 13

FURTHER AFIELD

Sound Science: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am–12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Children ages 18 months and up will discover sounds as they make their own musical instruments with recycled materials and join in a jam session.

Eco House: Noon–6 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 12.

Rubber Band Month: 1:30 – 3 pm & 3:30 – 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 5.

MON, APRIL 14

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

Movie Mondays: 4–6 pm. St. George Library. See Monday, April 7.

TUES, APRIL 15

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Game time: 4 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Tuesday, April 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

BubbleMania: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1 & 2 pm; \$6, plus museum admission.

Families will enjoy a fun, 30-minute show by comic bubble-ologist Casey Carle.

WED, APRIL 16

ON STATEN ISLAND

Movies for teens: 3:30–5:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, April 9.

Web Wednesdays: 3:30–4:30 pm. St. George Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

Easter fest: Greenbelt Recreation Center, 501 Briele Ave. at Rockland Road; (718) 667-3545; www.nycgov-parks.org; 4–6 pm; Free.

Children search for the golden egg, paint and decorate eggs, and visit with Peter Rabbit and friends. RSVP required.



It's 'Bello Mania!'

Demetrius Alexandro Claudio Amadeus Bello Nock, the creative genius behind “Bello Mania,” is back by popular demand on the stage at the New Victory Theater.

Be prepared to witness brand-new antics and daredevil tricks performed as only Bello can. Families with children ages 4 and

up will be delighted by this super fun show.

April 4 through 20, multiple performances. Tickets range between \$14 to \$38.

The New Victory Theater [209 W. 42nd St. between Seventh and Eighth avenues in Times Square, (646) 223-3000, www.newvictory.org].

Magic tricks: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nysl.org; 4–5 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old learn about magic tricks and how to be amazed.

Read aloud: 4–4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

FURTHER AFIELD

BubbleMania: 1 & 2 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Tuesday, April 15.

THURS, APRIL 17

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: 10:30–11:30 am. St. George Library. See Thursday, April 3.

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

Teen Lounge: 3:30–4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Thursday, April 3.

FURTHER AFIELD

BubbleMania: 1 & 2 pm. New York

Hall of Science. See Tuesday, April 15.

FRI, APRIL 18

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler Time: 10:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, April 4.

“Johnny Appleseed”: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; www.nysl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Presented by the Traveling Lantern Theatre Company, this production is recommended for children 4 years and older and tells the tale of how apple trees were planted across the country.

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

FURTHER AFIELD

A Sneak Peak at “Dear Albert Einstein”: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 1 & 3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Members of the cast will sing selections from the musical and chat with audience members after the performance.

SAT, APRIL 19

ON STATEN ISLAND

“Peter Panda Melts Down”:

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

Author Artie Bennett reads from his latest book and shares his thoughts on melt downs and other assorted emotions.

Egg Hunt: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nysl.org; 11 am–noon; Free.

Children of all ages have fun in this spring hunt.

Baby time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, April 4.

“Diary of a Wimpy Kid Roderick Rules”: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nysl.org; 2–4 pm; Free.

Fun flick for children 5 to 12 years old.

FURTHER AFIELD

Rubber Band Month: 1:30 – 3 pm & 3:30 – 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 5.

SUN, APRIL 20

FURTHER AFIELD

Easter activities: Children’s Museum of Manhattan, 212 W. 83rd St. between Amsterdam and Broadway, Manhattan; (212) 721-1223; www.cmom.org; 11 am–3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Preschoolers create Easter collages, school age children decorate actual eggs and everyone goes on a hunt. Prizes awarded.

Rubber Band Month: 1:30 – 3 pm & 3:30 – 5 pm. New York Hall of Science. See Saturday, April 5.

MON, APRIL 21

ON STATEN ISLAND

“Pinocchio”: St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; www.nysl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Presented by Traveling Lantern Theatre. Recommended for children 4 years and older.

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, April 14.

Movie Mondays: 4–6 pm. St. George Library. See Monday, April 7.

Continued on page 30

Calendar

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

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TUES, APRIL 22

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Teens 8 to 16 years old learn how to personalize a folder. Materials provided. Registration required.

Bracelet workshop: 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, April 8.

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

FURTHER AFIELD

Colorful Kaleidoscopes: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Children ages 18 and up explore the colors and patterns inside of kaleidoscopes.

WED, APRIL 23

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Ranger Kathy: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 3:30-4:30 pm; Free.

Children enjoy a visit with a ranger and learn all about the parks.

Wii gaming: 3:30-4:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

Web Wednesdays: 3:30-4:30 pm. St. George Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

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

For teens 13 to 18 years old. Make your own unique poem. All materials provided.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

THURS, APRIL 24

ON STATEN ISLAND

Tech time: 3 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Thursday, April 10.

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

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

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

Writing workshop: New Dorp Li-

brary, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

April is Poetry month — children 7 to 12 years old can hone up on rhyming, and the written word.

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

Family matinee presents this great classic, so come along and fly with Peter, Wendy and all the lost boys.

FRI, APRIL 25

ON STATEN ISLAND

"A Cinderella Tale": 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.

Will it be happily ever after? Find out in this play based on a story that was told more than 1,000 years ago. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Toddler Time: 10:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, April 4.

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

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

Baby time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, April 4.

Pre-school story time: 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Friday, April 11.

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

SAT, APRIL 26

ON STATEN ISLAND

High Rock Challenge: The Greenbelt, Rockland Ave.; www.raceit.com; 8 am; See website.

In memory of Officer John Kelly. The race is a 10 K and includes obstacles and mystery events. For older teens.

MS Walk: Clove Lake, 1150 Clove Road; www.nycgovparks.org; 9:30 am-noon; (raise \$125.00).

For older teens and adults — walk to raise awareness and funds for those living with MS. RSVP to webiste.

Practice test: Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 11 am; Free.

Get a head start on practicing those college standardized tests. Children in sixth and seventh grades get a crack at it thanks to Kaplan. Registration required — 1-800-kaptest (reference code HKKM14049).

Craft time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, April 12.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, April 5.

St. George Day Festival: Tompkinsville Park, Victory Blvd. at Bay Street; (718) 447-8256; www.stgeorgedaysi.org; Noon-7 pm; Free.

Now in its eighth year, this is one of the most anticipated event of the year. Giant puppets, a dragon parade, and all day crafts provide lots of fun family stuff. Live stages with dance, music and spoken word round out the festivities, as well as kids performances, earth day activities and more.

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.

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

That whole incredible family is at it at the library.

Showtime: 2-4 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, April 12.

FURTHER AFIELD

Run for the Wild: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.wcsrun-forthewild.org; 8 am; \$30-\$40 registration fee.

The annual 5 K run/walk is dedicated to the WCS's 96 Elephants Campaign. Walkers and runners can choose from two different events — the Family Fun Run at 8:45 am and the individual race beginning at 8 am. Registration is required.

Plant a green 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 of all ages learn how the MTA is building green, and using more efficient forms of energy to keep the city green and clean.

SUN, APRIL 27

ON STATEN ISLAND

Hawk watch: Fresh Kills Park Parking Lot, 228 Wild Ave.; (212) 788-8277; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am-4 pm; Free.

Join with rangers and Freshkills park members to watch the raptors of Staten Island from the top of Fresh Kills North.

"Dora the Explorer": St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718)

442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 3 pm; \$22, \$16.

It's a new adventure for Dora and pals. Plus a meet and greet with the cast so bring your camera.

FURTHER AFIELD

Plant a green city: 1:30 pm. New York Transit Museum. See Saturday, April 26.

MON, APRIL 28

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Three Billy Goats Gruff": 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.

Children enjoy two tales come to life on stage with singing and dancing. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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

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

Movies the whole family can enjoy.

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, April 14.

Movie Mondays: 4-6 pm. St. George Library. See Monday, April 7.

TUES, APRIL 29

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

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

Game time: 4 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Tuesday, April 1.

FURTHER AFIELD

Exploring Circuitry: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; 10:30 am-12:30 pm; \$8 plus museum admission.

Children ages 18 and up explore the basics of circuitry with copper tape, coin batteries and LEDs.

WED, APRIL 30

ON STATEN ISLAND

Web Wednesdays: 3:30-4:30 pm. St. George Library. See Wednesday, April 2.

"Play it Forward NY": Rossville AME Zion Church, 584 Bloomingdale Rd.; (646) 765-6531; 4-6 pm; Free.

Anti-bully support group discusses coping for parents of tweens and teens that have been bullied and how tweens and teens can cope as well.

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

Book day: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 4-5 pm; Free.

Join in this bilingual Spanish/English language celebration of children's books, crafts and a puppet show. For children 4 years and older.

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

Teens 13 to 18 years old inhale, exhale and learn the poses.

LONG-RUNNING

ON STATEN ISLAND

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, April 1, 3:30 pm; Thursday, April 3, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, April 8, 3:30 pm; Thursday, April 10, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, April 15, 3:30 pm; Thursday, April 17, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, April 22, 3:30 pm; Thursday, April 24, 3:30 pm; Tuesday, April 29, 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 13 to 18 years old play Xbox 30 and PS3.

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

Children enjoy reading the classics.

Storytime: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; Wednesdays, 4-4:30 pm, Now - Wed, May 7; Free.

Children 12 years old and younger enjoy favorite picture books.

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

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

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

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

FURTHER AFIELD

Science Playground: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X



Photo by Reuben Raddling

Astrograss is a gas

Get ready for sing-a-longs and dance contests! Brooklyn's own Astrograss is bringing its high-energy show to Symphony Space for the last Just Kidding show of the season. Families will be dancing and singing together, while listening to the unique blend of bluegrass, old-time, and folk music.

353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$4, plus museum admission.

Children are encouraged to explore science through slides, seesaws, climbing webs, a water play area, sand boxes, and more, weather permitting.

Rocket Park Mini Golf: New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., at Avenue of Science, Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$6 (adults,) \$5 (children and seniors,) plus museum admission.

Golfers of all ages can learn about key science concepts such as propulsion, gravity, escape velocity, launch window, gravitational assist, and more!

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

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

"Bessie's Big Shot": Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater, 79th Street

April 5 at 11 am. Tickets are \$20, \$17 for members, \$15 for children, \$13 for member children. Family four pack of tickets are available for \$65.

Symphony Space [2537 Broadway at W. 98th Street on the Upper West Side, (212) 864-5400, www.symphonyspace.org/event/8028/Family/astrograss]

& West Drive, Manhattan; (212) 988-9093; Tuesdays - Fridays, 10:30 am & Noon, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm, Now - Sun, June 29; \$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.nyscience.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, May 6; Free with museum admission.

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

cockroaches.

Art Kid: Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30 am, Fri, April 4 - Fri, May 30; Free with museum admission.

Children 5 years and older explore a new style each week.

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.

Little Kids, Big Stars: MCU Park, 1904 Surf Ave. at W. 17th St., Brooklyn; (718) 37-BKLYN; info@brooklynclones.com; www.brooklynclones.com; Saturday, April 12 - Saturday, June 7; Free.

Baseball is back and the Cyclones want the little ones to experience the game. Coaches of little league and softball leagues throughout the boroughs can nominate one player their team to be named Little Kids, Big Stars of the week. For boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. The child should have a passion for baseball/softball, serve as a leader to the team and be helpful to the coaches. The winners will receive an invitation to a baseball clinic with the Cyclones a chance to throw out a first pitch and a commemorative t-shirt.

Dinosaur Safari: Bronx Zoo, 2300 Southern Blvd. at Boston Road, The Bronx; (718) 220-5103; www.bronx-zoo.com; Weekdays, 10 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-5:30 pm, beginning Sat, April 12; \$20.95 (\$16.95 children; Free for children under 3; \$18.95 seniors).

Mysteries Revealed features more than 30 dinosaur species and how scientists reconstruct the fossil pieces. The ride runs through the zoo and has fully animatronic dinosaurs as they move and snarl. The 40 foot T-Rex is joined by deinonychus, prodohadros, stegosaurus and edmontonia.

"Sharin' a Ride": New York Transit Museum, Boerum Place at Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; (718) 694-1600; www.mta.info/mta/museum; Saturday, April 12, 1:30 pm; Sunday, April 13, 1:30 pm; Tuesday, April 15, 11 am; Wednesday, April 16, 11 am; Thursday, April 17, 11 am; Friday, April 18, 11 am; Saturday, April 19, 1:30 pm; \$7 (\$5 children and seniors).

The original musical tackles carbon footprints and public transportation. Get ready to sing along in this 30 minute performance that is perfect for children 4 years and older.



GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

The taste of health

Like beauty, taste can be in the eye of the beholder. What tastes scrumptious to you may taste “yucky” to your child. Sadly, if the food you serve does not taste good, your family may not eat it, regardless of its nutritional content or how long you slaved in the kitchen.

“Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right” is this year’s National Nutrition Month® theme. National Nutrition Month is a nutrition education and information campaign created every March by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, headquartered in downtown Chicago.

Taste research

Consumer research confirms that taste tops nutrition as the main rea-

son why one food is purchased over another. While social, emotional, and health factors also play a role, the foods people enjoy are likely the ones they eat most.

As parents around the world know, children love sweet-tasting foods. Research conducted by the Monell Center indicates this heightened likeness for sweetness has a biological basis and is related to children’s high growth rate. This preference declines as kids’ physical growth slows.

Other research findings indicate most kids are sensitive to bitter flavors, such as those found in broccoli and other vegetables. Yet it is possible to get kids to enjoy them.

Combine taste and nutrition

“There is a lot of psychology involved with healthy eating. And there is a decent amount of evidence that tells us taste buds are adaptable,” says Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Angela Lemond, a board-certified specialist in pediatric nutrition and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. “A lot of parents are all-

or-nothing about healthy eating. Kids have high energy needs, so it’s okay to put a little ranch dressing or cheese on top of vegetables or salad” to improve their taste.

You’ve probably read this before, but it’s worth repeating. The process of a young child learning to enjoy a food can be long and tedious, but it’s worth the time and effort. Three- to 5-year-olds need up to 15 exposures to accept a new food. Yet, parents typically offer new items only three to five times, studies suggest.

Lemond is a big fan of avoiding so-called kid food by serving tots age-appropriate portions of regular grown-up food. She knows of a chef who serves his own little ones sushi rolls, which have become their favorite foods. This impressed on her if you just make adult food “the norm,” most children will accept it.

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.

Easy stuffed peppers

This is a meal in itself. It contains a vegetable, protein, and whole grain.

PREPARATION TIME: 30 minutes

COOKING TIME: 1¼ hours

SERVES: 6

INGREDIENTS:

1¼ pounds 96 percent lean ground beef

6 large green bell peppers

1 small onion, chopped

½ cup bulgur

1 egg

¼ cup white rice, uncooked

1-28 ounce can crushed tomatoes

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

½ cup water

DIRECTIONS: With a sharp knife, remove the stem and about 3 inches off the top of each pepper. Carefully

remove seeds and fibrous membrane from each pepper. In a large mixing bowl, combine ground beef, bulgur, onion, egg, rice, salt, and pepper. Divide the meat mixture into six portions, and stuff each pepper with it. Place crushed tomato and water in a large covered baking dish. Carefully add the peppers, so they are all standing up. Place in a 375 degree oven for about 1¼ hours. Carefully remove cover as there will be a great deal of steam. Serve on plate with tomato gravy spooned over each pepper and with additional gravy spread around the pepper.

NUTRITION FACTS: 270 calories, 32 grams carbohydrates, 25 grams protein, 6 grams fat (2 grams saturated), 470 mg sodium, 7 g dietary fiber, 25% DV vitamin A, 250% DV vitamin C, 25% DV iron, 29% DV zinc.



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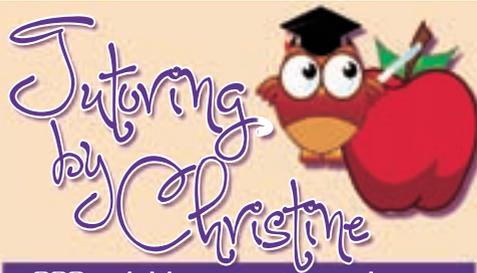


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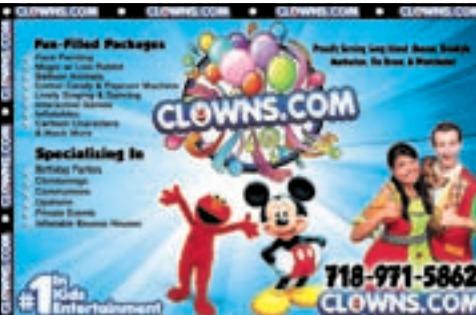
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ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

Designation of care

Many clients ask me what would happen to their children in their absence, either because the parents are away and can't be reached, or are incapacitated, or have passed away. A previous column discussed the designation of a Standby Guardian under a law known as "Surrogate Court Procedure Act Section 1726." This article discusses another tool in the estate planning toolbox: a designation of a "person in parental relation" under a separate statute.

What is a legal guardian and what are his or her responsibilities?

A legal guardian is not a child's parent, but is an adult who has the same authority over a child as a parent. A parent might need a guardian for a child where: the parents have died, are sick, are in prison, or are too sick or disabled to be able to care

for the child and make decisions for them. The designation is also useful for families with only one parent and when both parents will be traveling together. In many states, the enactment of these laws was to address the needs of parents living with HIV and AIDS, other disabling conditions, or terminal illnesses.

What laws permit a non-parent guardian?

Every state permits transfer of guardianship authority over a child from a parent to another adult when the child has no other parent available to assume responsibility for care and custody of the child. A traditional guardianship provides for the care of a child in the event of the parent's death or permanent disability and is generally regarded as a permanent transfer of custody and authority from the parent to the guardian.

One recent approach to transferring custody is facilitated through standby guardianship laws. Many states developed these laws specifically to address the needs of parents living with HIV and AIDS, other disabling conditions, or terminal illnesses who want to plan a legally secure future for their children.

Surrogate Court Procedure Act or General Obligations Law?

Under the Surrogate Court Procedure Act, a parent can execute a written designation, signed by two witnesses, designating a standby guardian under certain circumstances. After the triggering event stated in the designation (usually death or disability), the designated guardian must file a petition seeking permanent appointment after a court hearing. Once activated, the standby guardian and the parent, while living, have concurrent authority.

However, the Act designation has its limitations: it expires 60 days after it is signed by the parent unless the standby guardian petitions to be appointed as permanent guardian within that 60-day time frame. For example, a parent executing a standby guardian designation in the ordinary course of

executing estate planning documents would have to re-execute the form every 60 days. The designation would still serve as evidence of the parent's intentions, which is given a strong presumption that a parent's choice will promote the best interests of the child. Yet, it could be subject to challenge in a dispute over the appointment of a guardian. The diligent parent would then have to re-sign an Act designation every 60 days, which is impractical.

The alternative tool is a designation of a "person in parental relation" pursuant to a different statute, General Obligations Law Section 5-1551. This law allows a parent to designate another person to act "in parental relation" to a minor or incapacitated person. The "parental relation" designation lasts longer than the standby guardian — six months from the occurrence of a contingency stated in the designation, as opposed to 60 days from the date of signing. The designation of parental relations can be submitted to a child's school, health care provider, or health insurer. The parent can limit the scope of the powers, and can grant any or all of the powers and duties pursuant to the Public Health Law Sections 2164 (immunizations) and 2504 (medical, dental, health and hospital services) and Education Law Sections 2 and 3212 (educational matters). The designation can be revoked at any time in accordance with the statute.

Although there is overlap between the two statutes, it is helpful to have both mechanisms available to address the situations that arise when custody over a child is needed in a parent's absence. It is important to add one or both documents to your arsenal of estate planning documents.

Alison Arden Besunder is the founding attorney of the law firm of Arden Besunder P.C., where she assists new and not-so-new parents with their estate planning needs. Her firm assists clients in Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties. You can find Besunder on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at www.besunderlaw.com.



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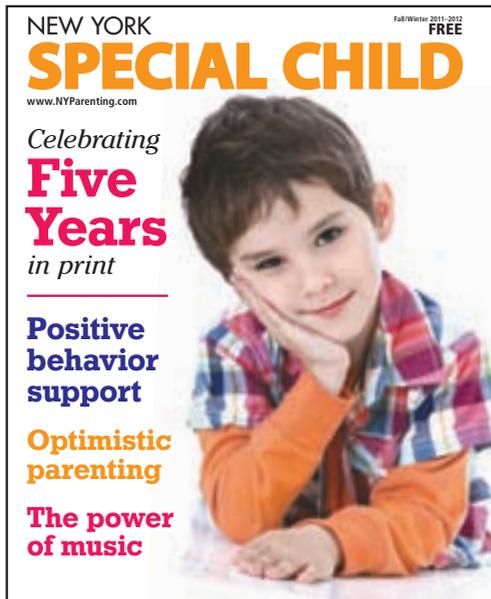
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