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# Family March 2015

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# Letter from the publisher

## Parenting choices all month long

**W**ho in New York isn't ready for a change in the weather? When those first pussy willows come up and we see some buds, we will be much happier. In the meantime, the days are growing longer and the quality of light will tell us that spring is just around the bend.



Our March issue offers a look ahead at Summer Programs & Camps as well as at Charter School tours. With April registration dates looming, now is the time to begin doing the research necessary to select choices for further investigation. One great thing about being a parent in New York is that there is an abundance of choice. Finding out your options and then going on tours is part of the responsibility of parenting. One needs to be a strong advocate for one's children, although it's a balancing act

every day in every way between being a working parent and working as a parent. I know from firsthand experience.

Although I didn't set out to be a single parent, it turned out that way, and the responsibilities I had combining a very necessary career with raising my child were daunting to say the least. Somehow, however, in spite of the full load, I managed to become the head of our school's parent body, drive my daughter to soccer games all over Long Island for two years, while also managing to take trips, visit museums, and go to the theater and ballet with her.

We are enormously fortunate to have so much intelligent stimulation around us and that we owe it to our children to participate with them in the myriad of possibilities that will further enhance their education and

well being. I argued with teachers sometimes (while being fully respectful of their objectives and priorities) that no, my daughter had not done her homework because we had gone out the night before to the ballet, or had seen a play. I considered us very lucky to have that even as an option, so saying no to the invite would have been nuts. That's what life in New York means to me and why I came here long ago from Chicago.

I believe in the enhancement of a total education that does not always take place in a classroom, but is found on the road on a family trip, in a museum, in front of PBS quality television programming, hearing music, seeing a family show, or reading a book together. Family time used well and fully is an integral piece of life and creates a foundation that is profound.

That said, please make use of our Calendars, both in print and online

at our helpful and informative website, [www.NYParenting.com](http://www.NYParenting.com). Our Calendar Editor Joanna makes a big effort to put together an exciting and full monthly guide to great events around the five boroughs. Speaking of our website, there is more information and helpful and provocative articles on our site than we are able to offer in print. If you like what you read here in the magazine, you will love the site. If you need any help in navigating to find what you're looking for, give us a call.

Have a great month. Watch for the signs of spring. It's definitely around the bend. Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
Publisher/Executive Editor  
[Family@cnglocal.com](mailto:Family@cnglocal.com)

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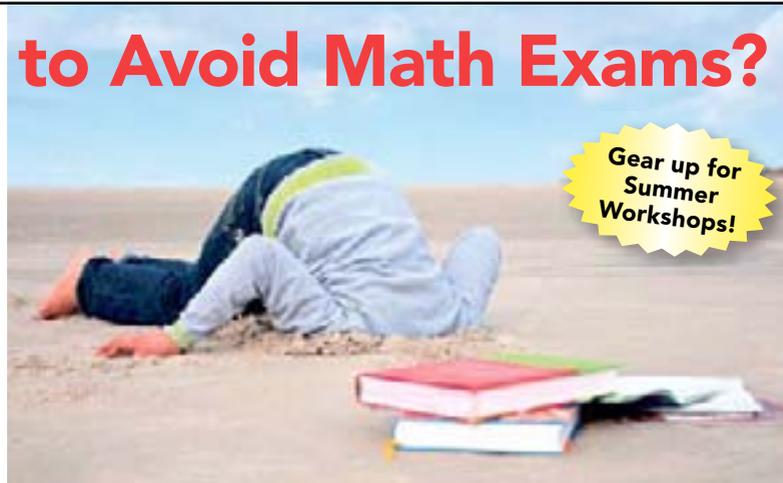
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# Teacher's tips

Advice for  
students taking  
the Common  
Core English  
Language Arts  
exam in third  
through eighth  
grades

BY ALLISON PLITT

**M**y daughter is enrolled in the third grade at a Queens public elementary school. For the past two years, she has come home with report cards saying she performs above grade level in writing. Since I work as a writer I have been trying to help her formulate her ideas into words and then into coherent sentences. Although my daughter is conscientious about doing her homework, I have found she is not receptive to listening to my advice when it comes to helping her compose sentences and essays.

This year I finally made the decision to hire a tutor to help her place her words onto paper. I found a woman through an online tutoring service who had been teaching English Language Arts to middle school students at a Brooklyn public school for 11 years. The New York City Department of Education's English classes are comprised of speaking, listening, vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar, and writing.

The tutor, Lisa Quercia, also prepares her own students for their yearly state exam, and last year was the first time she taught test preparation for the New York State Common Core Standards English Language Arts exam.

"This is the second real year for the Common Core Exam because the first year is really transitional," she observed.



The Common Core Standards English Language Arts exam for grades three through eight is a three-day test on April 14, 15, and 16. It is comprised of the same types of questions for all six grades. Students are given three booklets: one to complete each day of the test. On the first day, there will be reading passages and multiple-choice questions. On the second day the test booklet is comprised of reading passages, multiple-choice questions, short-response questions, and one extended-response question. The third day's booklet will have reading passages, short-response questions, and one extended-response question.

Students in grades five through eight will have an hour and a half

each day to respond to all the questions in their booklet. Students in grades three and four will have an hour and 10 minutes each day to respond to the questions.

"There is just so much information packed into the English Language Arts testing booklet, so timing is important," Quercia advises.

The night before the exam, Quercia tells parents to make sure their children get enough sleep.

"It's also important to build confidence in your children, so tell them to do the best they can do," she says. On the day of the exam, Quercia advises that students eat a healthy breakfast. "If students eat any sugary foods or drinks for breakfast, then they get tired in the middle of the exam," she observed.



The reading passages are separated into four categories: expository (explanatory), argumentative, instructional, and narrative. Creating a seven-step guide for answering the multiple-choice questions, Quercia says, “I always tell my students to read the directions first. Then, take a look at the title of the piece and also see if there are any pictures to scan over. Sometimes the directions might give them a hint. They might say ‘read this article,’ then you know it’s non-fiction and you’ll probably learn something. If the directions say ‘read this story,’ then you know you’re going to have characters, settings, problems, and solutions.”

Another tip Quercia tells her students is to preview the question before reading the passage.

“I tell them to read the questions first because it gives you an idea about what the passage is about and an idea about what you should be concentrating on,” she said.

After the students preview the questions, Quercia recommends that they read the passages actively.

“Students should be looking for key details from the questions as they read. They can bring and use highlighters on the exam and highlight information that is part of the answer later, but they shouldn’t get carried away with highlighting because it can slow them down.”

As far as answering the multiple-choice questions, Quercia encourages students to use process of elimination. Encouraging students to go back to the passage to find the an-

swers, she says, “They can flip back as much as they need to.” Because an electronic machine scores the multiple-choice part of the test, she says it is important that children fill in all of the bubble for their answers.

As Quercia has proctored the test for many years, she has seen every possible problem happen.

“Every now and then I would catch a kid just answering in the test book and then waiting to transfer the answers to the answer sheet. That can be a disaster if the student puts one answer in one wrong spot — then the whole test is wrong. It’s important that students put their multiple-choice answers on the answer sheet right away.”

In regards to leaving answers

blank, Quercia advises, “Never leave multiple-choice questions blank. The teacher will give you a two-minute warning at the end of the test. With two minutes left, finish the question you’re working on and then you might be able to start one more. Bubble in answers if you have five blank answers left. Just guess. Bubble in ‘C, C, C’ or ‘A, B, C, D.’ There’s no penalty for guessing.”

In regards to the extended-response questions, Quercia uses a formula that her school has been using for years called RAFT. As she explains, “R stands for ‘restate the question.’ A is ‘answer the question’ or parts of the question. F stands ‘for example.’ That’s where you give, for example, your text details. Students can quote the text details or paraphrase them. T is to ‘tie it together,’ to conclude it. Tie your conclusion back to the topic sentence in the introduction. Use summary type phrases like ‘as you can see.’ Those four steps should give you a good solid essay.”

Quercia warns about a part of the exam where students are asked to read two passages on the same topic.

“There will be a paired passage in one of the test booklets. It’s probably the third day. It’s two passages on a similar topic. You’ll read the passages and then there will be questions only about the first passage. Then there will be questions just about the second passage. Then there might be a short-response question about both. Then you write an extended-response question and you must include details from both passages as it says it in the directions.”

Since teachers from other schools will grade the short- and extended-response questions, Quercia says handwriting should be neat and legible.

“I’ve scored the test for the city and you’re sitting in this room with all of these other teachers reading test after test after test. Once you come across that test that’s sloppy, you really have to keep deciphering it. You can ask the other teachers to come over and have this whole group discussion about this one test book because you can’t read it. The truth is the test is easier to grade when it’s legible.”

*To obtain more information about the New York State Common Core Standards exams, educators, parents and students can visit the website [www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org).*

*Allison Plitt is an English Language Art writer who lives in Queens with her husband and young daughter. She is a frequent contributor to New York Parenting.*



## HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

# Debating vaccines

**I**f your pediatrician sent you a letter that said if you didn't follow his vaccination schedule, your child could no longer be a patient, would that bother you? Or would it upset you more to know that your newborn was sitting next a family of children who weren't vaccinated ... ever? The recent measles outbreak confirmed by the Health Department has sent not only a flurry of angst to an already overfilled and angry internet, but also poses real questions that parents and even doctors are mulling over. As with many hot parenting debates, there is no easy answer that will appease all groups.

A couple of years ago, even before the current measles outbreak was top news, eight pediatricians at a Chicago pediatric office informed their patients by mail that they will "no longer see children whose parents refuse to follow the childhood immunization schedule developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics."

Dr. Scott Goldstein, one of the pediatricians who participated, explained why: "All of the available research shows that the safest and most effective way to vaccinate children is on the schedule set by the CDC and AAP. To go against that schedule goes against proven scientific research and puts patients who do follow the schedule at risk."

"I would want my pediatrician to refuse unvaccinated patients. It is for the safety of all children in the practice," says mother of two, and Staten Island resident, Christina Colombo. "If parents choose not to vaccinate, then they will have to do the legwork of finding a doctor who will take them despite them not following medical advice."

It seems that more pediatric offices are following suit. In addition, the Wall Street Journal reports that, "In a study of Connecticut pediatricians published last year, some 30 percent of 133 doctors said they had asked a family to leave their practice for vaccine refusal, and a recent survey of 909 Midwestern pediatricians found that 21 percent reported discharging families for the same reason."



But the question to do so is not simple. Pediatricians are called to care for the children, even the children (or perhaps, especially the children) whose parents have difficult views, or ill-fitted opinions. Pediatrician Dr. Sydney Spiesel discusses the difficulty of the situation in a recent Slate article:

"On the one hand, we profoundly believe in the value and importance of vaccines. On the other hand, we profoundly believe in the value and importance of caring for all children who need us, and some of those children have parents who refuse to vaccinate."

Emily Patterson, who lives in the West Village and is a mom to a 2-year-old who has just finished up his set of scheduled shots, says that she would not want to go to a pediatrician that turned away children who need help.

"I choose to vaccinate my chil-

dren, so they are protected. If the parent sitting next me chooses not to, that's her business. I highly doubt the whole office will be infected just from taking in patients that haven't been vaccinated. I mean, think about how many people you encounter on the subway, or coffee shop, or plane. Can you safely say that everyone you come into contact with has been vaccinated?"

Does your pediatrician mandate that you must follow the vaccination schedule? Would you leave his practice if he did? Does it bother you to think your child is sitting next to an unvaccinated child? Have you ever thought about it at all?

*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.*

# Charter School

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### The Staten Island Green Charter School for

### Environmental Discovery

Proposed location: 1 Virginia Ave  
Executive Director: Dr. Carole Reiss  
718-608-5232 or [www.sigcs.com](http://www.sigcs.com) or [creiss1952@gmail.com](mailto:creiss1952@gmail.com)

The proposed charter school, Staten Island Green Charter School for Environmental Discovery (SIGCSED), is a K-5 college preparatory school that seeks to help prepare the youth in meeting the challenges of developing good citizenship, as well as life-long learning and leadership, in the 21st century. It primarily focuses on advocating for environmental preservation, healthy lifestyle and architecture by incorporating them into its curriculum and instruction which are aligned to Common Core Standards and stress literacy and mathematical excellence. The mission of SIGCSED is to help increase student literacy in Staten Island to at least 85 percent through early intervention; thereby, closing the achievement gap for all students. To achieve this, the school intends to provide parents and guardians with instructional programs on parenting, as well as nurture students in the K-5 level, with individual guidance and differentiated learning programs as well as preparing them for standardized testing.

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For questions & comments please contact:

**Carole Reiss, 718-608-5232, [creiss1952@gmail.com](mailto:creiss1952@gmail.com), [www.sigcs.com](http://www.sigcs.com)**

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# How to be a better cheerleader for your young athlete

What mom  
and dad  
can do to  
support their  
kids' athletic  
endeavors

BY DENISE YEARIAN

**C**hildren who participate in sports programs can maximize their potential physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. But it doesn't just happen. Although good coaching and league administration are important, nothing can replace knowledgeable, interested, and supportive parents. So how can moms and dads make the most of their athletic endeavors? Here are 10 tips:

**Recognize game rules.** The more you know about the sport your child is playing, the calmer and more at ease you will be. Some rules for a given sport may have been modified due to age and developmental level. So when you sit on the sidelines, it will help you know why a call was or wasn't made.

**Assess developmental milestones.** Be aware of the developmental milestones for the activity, so you can ascertain if your child is physically and mentally ready to take on the sport (see below).

**Assist with goal setting.** Help your child set realistic goals for himself. Just make sure they are goals he can own for himself. The more personal goals he sets and achieves, the more successful he will be and the more fun he will have.

**Collaborate with the coach.** Coaches may be a good source for providing drill pointers, but collaborating with them has even greater value. Know who's coaching your

kids and make sure he is in a safe environment and is being instructed in appropriate ways — that the coaches aren't too tough on him and are giving lots of positive reinforcement.

**Volunteer to help.** One of the best ways to know your child's coaches is to volunteer. Ask if the team needs an assistant coach or administrator, offer to spearhead a fund-raising event, or sign up to bring snacks for the kids after the game. Or volunteer to be the team journalist. Bring your camera and take pictures of the kids at practices and games. Then create an online photo album for the entire team. This can encourage communication and unity among team members, their families, and coaches.

**Communicate a life lesson.** Communication is a key role in sports parenting, especially when it comes to talking with your children about life lessons such as winning well, dealing with defeat, cooperation, perseverance and the like. For example, talk about how players have to work together to protect the goal, and how it's important to pass the ball, particularly if another player is near the goal. Also, discuss the need to be patient with everyone, because we all make mistakes.

**Listen up.** Listen to your child's frustrations and excitements. Sometimes he doesn't want you to solve his problem, he just needs you to listen.

**Maintain proper nutrition.** For children who are involved in rigorous athletics, it is particularly impor-

tant to have proper nutrition and hydration. An appropriate diet includes getting adequate complex carbohydrates, a lean protein source, and plenty of fruits and vegetables. During dinner, your child's plate should have 50 percent fruits and vegetables, 25 percent whole grains, and 25 percent protein. Think ahead on how you can provide healthy food options in the car. Also, make sure your child is staying hydrated. If the team isn't taking a water break during practice, speak up.

**Live it out.** Be a good role model for your kids, so your words and actions align. Workout on a regular basis and eat healthy, and encourage your kids to do the same. When you are in the stands, keep a positive attitude and cheer everyone on, even the other team if it has made a good play.

**Be a good cheerleader.** Make it to as many games and practices as you can, offer encouragement and support, and look for little ways to let your child know you are his greatest fan. After weekend game days, do something special — get a bite to eat, take in a movie, or go swimming. In everything, let him know you are his biggest fan.

## Developmental milestones for children in sports

**Preschool.** Many children at this age are beginning to get involved in organized sports. To see if your child is ready, assess his basic skills such



as running, throwing, and tracking objects in motion. Also consider his attention span. Is he focused enough to learn from group instruction? Most children aren't ready to participate in organized sports until they are around 4 or 5. Even then, practices should be short and allow time for free play. Programs should focus on the fundamentals of skill de-

velopment and emphasize fun over competition.

**Early elementary.** By now, most children have had at least one experience with an organized sport. The emphasis should continue to be on skill development and having fun, not on competition. This is a good time to analyze what you want your child to get out of sports participa-

tion. Ask him and he will more than likely say to have fun, be with his friends, and learn a new skill. Make sure this philosophy lines up with your child's coach and league's instruction. Let him sample different sports activities until he finds one he truly enjoys.

**Late elementary.** At this age, children are beginning to get a grip on

coordination and have a better concept of team effort. This is also a time when relative age factor comes into play and those who mature physically and mentally may seem to have an advantage. If not handled properly, it may put extra pressure on the mature child to perform, which could lead to burnout.

Children who mature later may have to work harder on skill development and may not initially get their coaches' attention, but given time and encouragement they often catch up with their counterparts. Because children mature at different rates, it is important to continue to emphasize the process, not the results, and to praise effort instead of outcome. This is especially important as competition elevates. Look for programs that adhere to this philosophy and make sure the entire team has an opportunity to participate in play, regardless of skill level.

**Middle school.** This is a time when children are beginning to master skills and techniques. This can also be a time when league politics, controlling parents, and abusive coaches may dominate an activity, though it happens earlier. If the child feels as if he has lost control over his activity or is being pressured by others, he may be in danger of burnout.

Kids at this age are better able to understand and handle the pressure of competition, but performance and self-esteem issues are closely tied now and can affect how youth feel about themselves in other facets of life. They may also need encouragement and information to deal with the awkwardness of changing bodies and minds.

### **Resources for parents**

#### **Books:**

"Home Team Advantage: The Critical Role of Mothers in Youth Sports" by Brooke de Lenche

"How to Win at Sports Parenting: Maximizing the Sports Experience for you and your Child" by Jim and Janet Sundberg

"101 Ways to be a Terrific Sports Parent: Making Athletics a Positive Experience for Your Child" by Joel Fish and Susan Magee

**Websites:** [www.sportsparenting.org](http://www.sportsparenting.org), [www.momsteam.com](http://www.momsteam.com), [www.nays.org](http://www.nays.org)

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

# Under their skin

When acne is spotted, these tips can help

BY JAMIE LOBER

**A**ccording to the American Academy of Pediatrics, acne is one of the most common skin conditions in children and adolescents. We all remember the feeling of embarrassment and self-consciousness that comes with a pimple — and we wish it would clear up over night. But the American Academy of Pediatrics said that it can take three to six weeks or longer to see a change, and 12 weeks for maximum improvement. However, with time and intervention from a dermatologist, your child's skin can improve.

"We wish that patients realized that we are generally going to treat acne rather than cure it and that it takes time to do so," said Dr. Seth Orlow, chairman and professor at the Ronald O. Perelman Department of Dermatology at NYU Langone Medical Center. "Even the most effective treatments work slowly, so you need to stick with them to see the benefits."

Acne can be part of growth and development.

"Adolescent acne is a skin condi-

tion of puberty when the body is producing increased levels of hormones called androgens, which in turn cause increased production of oily sebum and increased blockage of the oil glands facilitating the growth of acne bacteria," said Orlow.

When the oil gets trapped, you have acne inflammation.

"Some individuals are more susceptible to this problem and that is why some have worse acne than others," said Orlow.

Remind your child that nobody is to blame for the acne.

"It has little if anything to do with cleanliness, and you cannot scrub it away," said Orlow. Some kids are at higher risk than others.

"In women, irregular periods, excess facial hair, and obesity may be linked to acne," said Orlow. Time is the best medicine.

"Red marks that are left as inflamed acne lesions go away with continued treatment, so please do not pick at your acne lesions because we want to avoid scarring, and not foster it," said Orlow.

When it comes to treatment, peo-

ple usually start with over-the-counter medications for mild acne.

"I suggest something that contains benzoyl peroxide, which helps prevent the formation of acne pimples, or salicylic acid, which helps open up the clogged pores," said Orlow.

If over-the-counter treatments don't seem to work, make an appointment with a dermatologist. Prepare for your appointment by making a list of "everything you used before, and try to recall what worked and what did not," said Orlow.

Be an active participant in your healthcare.

"Do not be afraid to ask questions like how much to put on, exactly how to use the medications, and if something seems so impractical that you cannot make it work, let your doctor know rather than just not using it," said Orlow. Topical retinoids are often prescribed to help, or, oral antibiotics may be given for moderate to severe cases.

Patients failing to comply with treatment regimens are one of the biggest obstacles that dermatologists face.

"Too often, patients become frustrated with slow progress, and as a result, lose interest in following recommendations," said Orlow.

While there are always new remedies, the idea behind treatment is the same as it was years ago.

"The focus is on three key factors: preventing dead skin cells from blocking the oil glands, reducing excessive oil production, and reducing acne-causing bacteria," said Orlow.

While most over-the-counter medications take care of skin cell shedding and acne bacteria, they do not all attack the excessive oil production. Finding a doctor that you trust can make a difference as well.

"Board-certified dermatologists are well-trained to treat even the most severe acne, but you need a doctor with whom you feel comfortable and who can serve as both quarterback and cheerleader simultaneously," said Orlow.

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

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# A whale of a tale

## KIDS FIRST! FILM CRITIC

*If you enjoy seeing a documentary movie that will educate, inspire and amaze you, then you will love MacGillivray Freeman's "Humpback Whales."*

**I** learned more about the humpback whale from "Humpback Whales" than if I had studied this unit in school for a month!



This 40-minute, large-format documentary on humpback whales tags along with leading whale researchers using new methods to

see what the whales do when no one's watching them.

The documentary follows the whales to the tropical kingdom of Tonga, to summertime in Alaska and then to the warm waters of Hawaii. The audience has a chance to follow the cetaceans' migration,



while experiencing their incredible songs and underwater acrobatics.

One unique thing among humpback males is the singing that they engage in. In fact, the recordings of whale songs are what helped save the mammals from extinction as people became interested in the animals who could make these beautiful and unique sounds.

The humpback whales do cooperative food gathering known as "bub-

ble net fishing," in which they work together to release bubbles and loud "feeding calls" to herd and trap herring. This makes it easier for them to gulp down the herring or krill in large quantities — because they can eat up to two tons of food a day.

My favorite part of the movie was seeing and learning about the different researchers who have spent their lives studying the humpback whales. One scene showing the males cir-

cling a female whale in an effort to mate is usually seen once every 10 years. Nobody has ever seen the humpback whale actually mate, so there are many unanswered questions surrounding this aspect of the marine mammals.

Ewan McGregor narrates with a sense of wonder that inspires us to want to know as much as possible about the humpback whales. The upbeat music throughout the movie peaks our interest and curiosity about these extraordinary creatures.

The film teaches us to admire and appreciate the complexities and sheer beauty of the humpback whales. We also see how a whale is rescued when it becomes entangled in life-threatening fishing gear. This rescue requires a lot of skill and understanding of how to free the whale while the rescuers stay safe. We learn the important things we must ensure so that they do not become extinct. We must never again have a whaling industry, have safer fishing gear, less trash in the ocean and take precautions not to have collisions between ships and whales.

I give this movie 5 out of 5 stars and recommend it for ages 5 to 18.

— Adam C., age 9

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# Open communication

Actions speak louder than words when families try to understand one another

BY CAROLYN WATERBURY-TIEMAN

**A** common complaint in couples and families is “we don’t communicate.” Whether it is between spouses or parents and children, the typical description is, “I keep talking, begging for a response, and he just refuses to communicate with me!” There was a time when I would have accepted this statement and assumed the uncommunicative party just needed to be more communicative. Then I realized that all behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, is communication and conveys a message. So the issue is not whether or not you’re communicating, but what you are communicating and how well you are communicating it.

When people experience others as not communicating with them, it is often because the receiver is not responding in the manner that the sender desired, so the sender assumes the receiver didn’t “hear” the message. Some individuals assume that if the receiver doesn’t agree with the message, the receiver must not have heard or understood correctly. These people tend to confuse lack of agreement with misunderstanding. The confusion may be intensified if the receiver does not know how to effectively express their disagreement.

Then there are those individuals who send incomplete or hidden messages that are supposed to be decoded by the receiver who may not even realize a message has been sent. These message senders tend

to subscribe to the misguided notion that if someone really loves you, they will automatically be able to read your mind.

We sabotage our communication, and ultimately our relationships, in so many ways. It is amazing how well we have learned to communicate poorly. One can only wonder what would happen if we put as much energy into learning to communicate effectively as we put into avoiding it. Some of the practices that get in the way of effective communication are:

**Failure to match verbal and nonverbal cues.** Communication involves more than just the words we speak (studies have actually shown that we pay the least amount of attention to the words). It includes tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. When the cues from these don’t match, the likelihood of miscommunication is significantly increased.

**The filters we are listening through.** Perhaps you weren’t aware that there are tiny, invisible — and yes, metaphorical — filters in our ears. They begin developing at birth and are shaped by the significant communications we participate in as children. These filters determine how we hear the messages others send. Sometimes they create static that interferes with messages so that we hear criticism, threats, doubt, mistrust, or personal attacks whether or not any was intended. Our filters tend to reflect our level of self-esteem.

**Our emotional vulnerability.** One of the primary reasons we feel

vulnerable is that we give other people the power to determine our self worth. We forget that at the same time we are protecting ourselves from pain and disappointment, we are also robbing ourselves of the opportunity for deeply satisfying relationships with our spouses, children, relatives, and friends.

Now that we know all behavior is communication, how can we communicate more effectively with our children, and teach them to do the same? Here are a few suggestions:

**Learn and model open, honest communication.** Take the time and make the effort to accurately identify your feelings before speaking. Are you really mad, or are you actually hurt or disappointed? Are you really angry, or are you actually scared, embarrassed, or exhausted? You are much more likely to get the response you desire if you are honest about how you feel.

**Be sure the message you are sending is the one intended.** Attempt to match your words with a tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language that clarify (rather than confuse) the message you are trying to convey. Tacking on the phrase, “I love you,” after a scathing comment or while focused on a computer screen doesn’t feel like love to the receiver. For words to mean anything, actions have to match them.

**Check your filters and replace accordingly.** If you have faulty filters, do something about it. Clean them out and replace them with filters that allow you to listen freely and keep your sense of self-worth



intact. Remember, the way others communicate with you says more about them than about you. Be sure the way you communicate with others reflects the kind of person you are, or perhaps, the kind of person you want to be.

**Be quick to listen, slow to speak.**

Listen with your eyes as well as your ears. (Remember: listening does not mean approval, acceptance, or automatic permission. It just means you are listening.) Listen for the feelings behind the words and behavior, the feelings that are motivating the person to speak and behave in the way you are observing. Restate what you think you heard them say and check for accuracy before formulating a response. Take the time to consider what you want your words to accomplish before delivering a reply. Our communication must convince our children that we care enough to listen and respond thoughtfully.

**Talk “with” rather than “at” your children.** While nagging, criticizing, cajoling, threatening, lectur-

Take the time to consider what you want your words to accomplish before delivering a reply. Our communication must convince our children that we care enough to listen and respond thoughtfully.

ing, questioning, evaluating, and advising may be done with the best of intentions, these tactics tend to diminish rather than enhance communication. If we expect compliance, cooperation, honesty, and respect from our children, they are much more likely to exhibit these when we communicate clearly, consistently, honestly, and respectfully with them. I know I respond much more favorably to someone who speaks to me in this manner. How about you?

**Use open-ended questions.** Instead of asking, “Did you have a good day?” ask “What was good about your day?” The former requires a simple yes or no response. The latter is an invitation to become engaged in meaningful conversation.

For every complaint you have about a child, find five things you appreciate about him. Be sure you are doing as good a job expressing the latter as the former. It’s easier to comply with, “Thank you for remembering to put your dishes in the dishwasher.” “I really appreciate you getting right in on your homework.” “When you finish, would you please pick up the dirty clothes in your room and put them in the hamper? I need to do laundry,” than “Your room is a mess,” “You are such a slob,” or “Get in there and pick up your dirty clothes this minute!”

The next time you find yourself about to let them “have it” or give them a piece of your mind, ask yourself, “How would I respond to what

I’m about to say?” You might want to find a different way to say it.

We can either encourage or discourage our children’s enthusiasm, curiosity, and willingness to communicate with us by the way we listen and the things we say. Since the relationship we establish with our children is the foundation for every other relationship they will ever have, the model for communication we provide has implications for their relationships with their peers, their spouses, and eventually, their children. If we can’t not communicate, why not invest the time and effort necessary to do it well? Talk may be cheap, but effective communication is priceless!

*Carolyn Waterbury-Tieman has degrees in Child Development, Family Studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Waterbury-Tieman has been married for 29 years and has two sons. She spent 15 years in various agencies and clinics as a family therapist and parent educator. To contact her, e-mail [parentlife@yahoo.com](mailto:parentlife@yahoo.com).*



# Dos & don'ts at the doctor's office

**BY DR. MATTHEW WEISSMAN**

**A**s every parent knows, children, especially younger children, spend a lot of time at the doctor's office. Whether it's for a check-up or a sick visit, it seems like you and your child are in and out of the doctor's office on a regular basis.

Your child's routine doctor visit is the time to check up on growth and development, get up-to-date on vaccines, and raise any health-related questions or concerns. But, with all the information out there and different options for different tests, a visit to the doctor's office

can quickly become confusing. So, what should parents always do? Never do? Be cautious about?

As an internist, pediatrician, and a father of three, I've seen healthcare in a lot of different forms. Here's my advice on what parents should stick to and what they should question or avoid:

**Do this:**

**Get vaccinated.** It is important to vaccinate young children and adolescents from potentially life-threatening diseases. Schools require certain vaccinations for attendance, and that's a great thing.\* You may have recently heard about

the HPV vaccine, which helps protect children from human papillomavirus — a virus associated with multiple types of cancer. It's recommended for all children and young adults between the ages of 9 and 26, and children need to get three doses over the course of six months. I highly recommend that you add this to your child's list of vaccinations. (You may want to update your own vaccines, including hepatitis A and B, influenza, tetanus, and pertussis.)

**Ask for the flu shot.** Younger children are at the top of the list, along with the elderly, for high risk of hospitalization from the flu. The

Center for Disease Control reports that approximately 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized with the flu every year. The New York City Department of Education now requires the flu shot for all children, so be sure to get your child vaccinated. The flu shot is never 100 percent effective, but you should still get it 100 percent of the time. Most healthy children over age 2 can get a nasal spray flu vaccine, so needles are not even required.

**Find out Body Mass Index (BMI).** This simple number that measures body fat based on height, weight, age, and gender will reveal whether or not your child is at a healthy weight. If your child's Body Mass Index falls into the "overweight" or "obese" category, she is at greater overall risk for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, breathing problems, and serious health problems as she gets older.

**Check up on vision and hearing.** Medical researchers have estimated that one in eight Americans over the age of 12 have some degree of hearing loss in both ears, and approximately 12 million adults in the US who are in need of vision correction are not using any. It's important to screen children regularly for hearing and vision impairment, as problems can come to the surface from early on.

**Talk with your child's doctor about developmental milestones — and get anticipatory guidance.** You need to make sure that your child is developing at the proper rate. And, since young children grow so quickly, they should be visiting the doctor much more often during their first few years, where someone can assess whether they are meeting their milestones. After that, a child should see the doctor at least once annually, not just to check her development, but also to talk about what to expect over the coming year, and how to best prepare.

**Skip this:**

**Annual blood test.** Healthy children typically do not require a regular blood test, as long as they maintain a balanced and nutrient-rich diet. An exception should be made for children with certain risk factors such as a personal or family history of medical problems or deficiencies.

**Annual urine test.** Unless a

child is showing potential symptoms of a urinary tract infection — such as pain while urinating, the frequent urge to urinate without urination, or a fever or abdominal pain, or has particular family or personal risk factors — there is likely no need for a urine test.

**Annual tuberculosis test.** Tuberculosis has become less common with time, and most children are at very low risk of having the infection. A child's risk for developing it is heightened if she has HIV or another condition that leads to a weakened immune system, if she lives with an adult with tuberculosis, and if she was born in or is visiting a country where the infection is prevalent. Tuberculosis testing (through a skin test or blood test) should be reserved for those at highest risk.

**EKG or chest X-ray.** Radiation exposure is linked to increased risk of cancer, so it is important to limit the amount of X-rays a child receives to only what is necessary. While the risk from a single X-ray is low, cumulative radiation exposure should be avoided. If your child has not demonstrated any risk factors associated with heart problems or heartbeat irregularity, a routine EKG is not necessary or recommended. In general, unnecessary screening tests can drive up medical costs and lead to more invasive testing down the road.

**Finding out your blood type.** For many children, this is part of the birth and vaccine record. If not, there is generally no need to do a blood test just because someone "wants to know." Save your child the blood draw and she can find out her blood type if and when it really matters.

**For more information:**

- New York State Immunization requirements chart: [www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2370.pdf)

- For information on what vaccines are required or recommended for school children by New York State, visit [www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/childhood\\_and\\_adolescent.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/childhood_and_adolescent.htm)

- For other avoidable tests for children, check out [www.choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/american-academy-of-pediatrics/](http://www.choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/american-academy-of-pediatrics/)

*Dr. Matthew Weissman is the chief medical officer at Community Health-care Network.*

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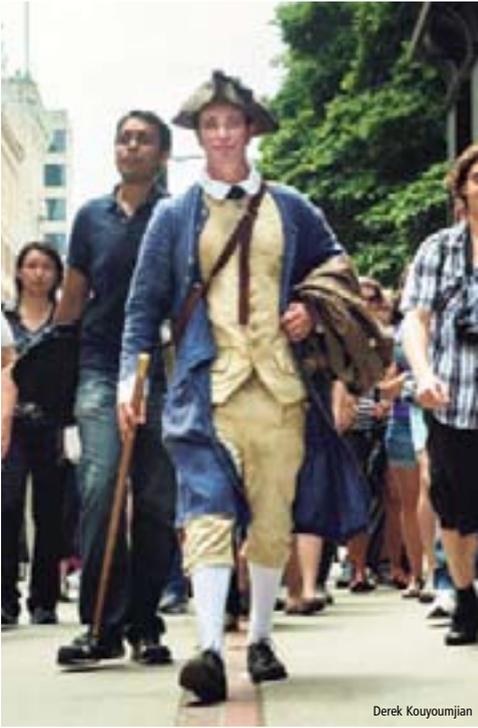
# Private/Independent School Guide








**Check it out on NYParenting.com**



Derek Kouyoumjian



Museum of Fine Arts / Leise Jones

# Family-friendly BOSTON

**BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON**

One of the oldest cities in our country, Boston, has a rich history. Serving as a port and manufacturing hub, Boston was an integral part of the American Revolution. Many historic events, such as the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, and the Battle of Bunker Hill, took place in the city. Now the City on a Hill is a destination for arts, sports, and American culture, with attractions suited for all ages.

For the sports fan Boston has a number of professional teams. The city is home to hockey's Boston Bruins, basketball's Boston Celtics, and baseball's Boston Red Sox and, of course, the most-recently crowned Super Bowl champions, the New England Patriots, have their home, Gillette Stadium, shortly outside the city.

During the warmer months, the Cradle of Liberty offers a range of outdoor recreation for the whole family. There are many opportunities for family fun, from fishing and kayaking to whale watching.

If visiting in March, you can take your family can participate in "Dine Out Boston," and enjoy the many restaurants that the Hub has to offer. The two-week event, which provides an opportunity to experience area restaurants at special prices, happens twice a year and is sponsored by the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau, in partnership with American Express. Participating restaurants offer prix-fixe menus for lunch and dinner, at one of three price options: lunch for \$15, \$20, or \$25 and dinner for \$28, \$33, or \$38 (please note that prices are per person and do not include beverages, tax or gratuity). Whether it is a trendy restaurant, a

local spot, or a chain, your family can dine out on a variety of cuisine from Boston and Cambridge to the suburbs north, west, and south of the city.

Overall, you can easily fill your days visiting a number of attractions and sites in Boston. Here's a list of my favorite things to do in the city. Kid friendly of course!

## **Boston Children's Museum**

[308 Congress St. at Sleeper Street, (617) 426-6500, [www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.bostonchildrensmuseum.org)]

This museum is truly for the kids, boasting a multistory climbing structure, art studios, and a hands-on construction zone. Highlights include a full-size replica of "Arthur the Aardvark."

## **The Boston Tea Party Ship Museum**

[Congress Street Bridge between Dorchester Avenue and Harborwalk, (617) 531-6241, [www.bostonteatpartyship.com](http://www.bostonteatpartyship.com)]

Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum will transport you and your kids on an incredible journey back in time. You will feel a part of the famous event that changed the course of American History.

## **Boston Pops**

[301 Massachusetts Ave. between Huntington Avenue and St. Stephen Street, (617) 266-1492, [www.bso.org](http://www.bso.org)]

The Boston Symphony Orchestra

was founded by Civil War veteran and musician Henry Lee Higginson. It's hard to believe that the orchestra gave its first concert in 1881. The organization performs in both formal and informal setting and hosts a series of family concerts.

### **Faneuil Hall, Quincy Market**

[4 S Market St. between Chatham Street and S. Market Street, (617) 523-1300, [www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com](http://www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com)]

More than 70 retailers occupy the 200,000 square feet of space at this mixed-use marketplace. Customers enjoy local shops, restaurants, and are entertained by street performers and musicians along the cobblestone promenades.

### **Freedom Trail Visitor Information Center**

[139 Tremont St. between Cufflin Street and Ricker Road, (617) 357-8300, [www.thefreedomtrail.org](http://www.thefreedomtrail.org)]

Download the app and take the kids to explore the 2.5 mile Freedom Trail, the brick-lined route that leads you to 16 historical sites. The trail starts at the front door of the Boston Common Visitors Center and ends at the USS Constitution in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

Your kids can further their experience by doing a little research first and downloading the "Junior Ranger" activities provided by the National Park Service. A great tip that I've received is to reverse the path and end at Boston Common.

### **Museum of Fine Arts**

[465 Huntington Ave. between Museum Road and Forsyth Way, (617) 267-9300, [www.mfa.org](http://www.mfa.org)]

This museum holds nearly 450,000 works of art and welcomes around a million visitors each year. Take your family to experience art from ancient Egyptian to contemporary, special exhibitions, and innovative educational programs.

### **Museum of Science**

[1 Science Park at Monsignor O'Brien Highway, (617) 723-2500, [www.mos.org](http://www.mos.org)]

One of the world's largest science centers, the Museum of Science is the most attended cultural institution in the Boston area. The museum offers programming for all ages as well as interactive exhibits.

### **New England Aquarium**

[1 Central Wharf at Old Atlan-

tic Avenue, (617) 973-5200, [www.neaq.org](http://www.neaq.org)

Give your children a real feel for marine life and visit this aquarium. There are engaging activities included in your admission to this space, like exhibits that include touch tanks. For a fee, you can schedule in-the-water animal encounters and behind-the-scene tours. For those interested, the aquarium also organizes whale-watching trips to Stellwagen Bank from April to October.

### **Public Art Walk at the Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events**

[Boston City Hall Room 802, Congress Street at North Street, (617) 635-3245, [www.publicartboston.com](http://www.publicartboston.com)]

Artworks, both permanent and temporary, from traditional to new media are on display throughout Boston. The public art pieces, paintings, murals, statues, bas-reliefs, sculptures, monuments, fountains, arches, and other permanent structures offer meaningful engagement with art throughout Boston's neighborhoods.

### **Zoo New England, Franklin Park Zoo**

[1 Franklin Park Rd. at Columbia Road, (617) 541-LION, [www.zoone-wengland.org](http://www.zoone-wengland.org)]

The Commonwealth Zoological Corporation is the non-profit that operates Franklin Park Zoo in Boston and Stone Zoo in Stoneham, MA. Franklin Park Zoo is the larger of the two, a 72-acre site. The zoo was founded in 1912 and with more than a century of service continues to be a destination for families.

### **Additional info:**

**Dine Out Boston**, spring: March 1-6, 9-13

**Greater Boston Bureau:** [www.bostonusa.com](http://www.bostonusa.com)

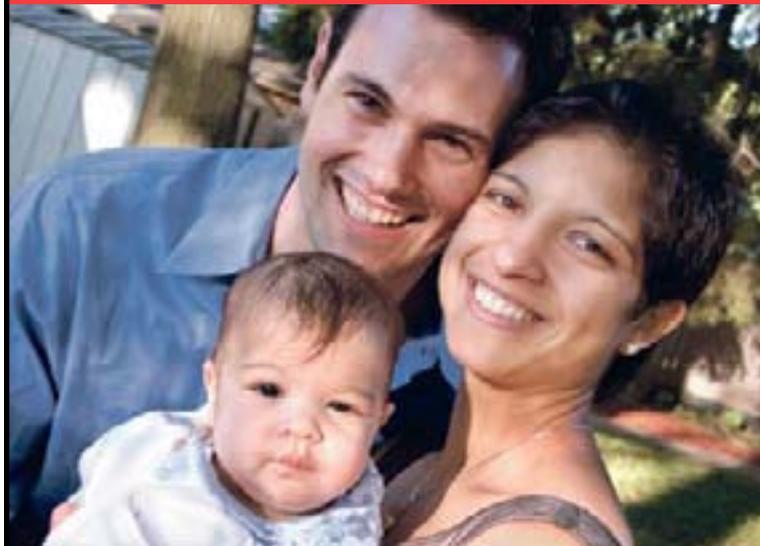
**American Express:** [www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com)

**NPS Junior Ranger program:** [www.nps.gov/bost/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm](http://www.nps.gov/bost/forkids/beajuniorranger.htm)

**Freedom Trail App:** [www.thefreedomtrail.org/book-tour/smartphone.shtml](http://www.thefreedomtrail.org/book-tour/smartphone.shtml)

*Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer. She is based in Manhattan where she resides with her husband and son. Contact her via her website: [www.shniekajohnson.com](http://www.shniekajohnson.com).*

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## NEW YORK Parenting

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# New York International Children's Film Festival

The country's largest film festival for kids and teens is happening right here in New York City

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

**R**ather than just taking your kids to the movies, take them to experience a film festival just for them. The country's largest film festival for kids and teens happens right here in New York City. Established in 1997 New York International Children's Film Festival serves as an Oscar-qualifying event for live-action and animated short films. The four-week event takes place Feb. 27 to March 22, showcasing more than 100 films from around the world. Throughout the festival, there are filmmaker question and answer sessions, filmmaking workshops, and audience voting. Best of all, it's all kid friendly!

With more than 3,000 short film entries, selected films are organized by the following categories:

- Shorts For Tots (Ages 3 to 6)
- Short Films One (Ages 5 to 10)
- Short Films Two (Ages 8 to 14)
- Flicker Lounge: For Teens & Adults Only (Ages 12 to adult)
- Heebie Jeebies: Spooky, Freaky & Bizarre (Ages 10 to adult)
- Girls' POV (Ages 10 to adult)

The festival ends with a fun, culminating event, the Closing Night Celebration, where award winners are announced and there is a screening of the "Best of the Fest" short films.

The festival itself is a non-profit organization that offers year-round engagements. If you have a future filmmaker on your hands, investigate the workshops for kids that take place during public school mid-winter and spring breaks as well as summer camps.

The 2015 Festival's schedule of films, many of which your kids will surely enjoy, is detailed below.

## **"Ballet Boys" – Kenneth Elvebakk**

*Documentary, Norway. In Norwegian with English subtitles.*

"Ballet Boys" takes us through four years in the lives of three young dancers. The only boy dancers in a world of girls, they strive to get into Norway's most prestigious ballet

academy. Beautifully constructed, slow-motion dance sequences, and life-altering auditions provide a pulse of drama throughout their journey, but the film is ultimately the story of their friendship, disappointments, victories, first loves, dreams, and doubts.

Recommended ages: 9 to adult

## **"Belle And Sebastian" – Nicolas Vanier**

*Live action, France. In French with English subtitles.*

A story of friendship, courage, and loyalty set against the jaw-dropping scenery and alpine panoramas of the Haute Maurienne-Vanoise region of France. Sebastian lives with his grandfather, César, in a vertiginous mountain village, where he crosses paths with a giant and dirty Pyrenean Mountain Dog who the locals have dubbed "the Beast" for allegedly killing their livestock. But Sebastian sees something good in the misunderstood canine and befriends the animal, renaming her "Belle." Their budding friendship is put to the test when Nazis march into town looking to root out a band of resistance fighters who are guiding Jewish refugees to neighboring Switzerland.

Recommended ages: 7 to adult

## **"Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins" – Torril Kove**

*Animation, Norway. In English.*

Academy Award-winning director Torill Kove's first feature film is a refreshingly warm and intimate tale based on beloved children's book character Alfie Atkins. Seven-year-old Alfie dreams of owning a dog, but his father insists that he is too small for such a big responsibility. Undaunted, Alfie finds an unlikely ally in George, a kindly magician who performs tricks for the neighborhood kids and has just adopted a puppy of his own. Lovingly animated with thoughtful, honest character interactions, "Hocus Pocus" offers an emotionally and visually rich cinema experience for audiences of all ages.

Recommended ages: 3 to 8

## **"Jellyfish Eyes" – Takashi Murakami**

*Live action and animation, Japan. In Japanese with English subtitles.*

Pop art superstar Takashi Murakami makes his feature film debut with a campy, genre-defying adventure that mixes lo-fi Japanese disaster movie, new kid-on-the-block coming-of-age story, and Pokémon-style anime with a delirious abundance of wonderfully imagined magical creatures. Setting Murakami's fantastical animated designs in an otherwise live action film, "Jellyfish Eyes" tells the story of Masashi, a young boy who moves to a sleepy town in the Japanese countryside in the wake of a natural disaster.

Recommended ages: 9 to adult

## **"Landfillharmonic" – Brad Allgood and Graham Townsley**

*Documentary, USA. In Spanish with English subtitles.*

The world generates more than a billion tons of garbage a year, much of it ending up in poor rural communities like Cateura, Paraguay, where more than 2,000 families survive by separating garbage for recycling. When a teen music program there can't afford new instruments, a garbage picker named Cola fashions a violin from an empty oil tin — thus inspiring the Recycled Orchestra. The film follows the young musicians as they reach even greater heights, performing concerts in the US, Europe, and Asia — even sharing the stage with heavy metal super-group, Metallica.

Recommended ages: 8 to adult

## **"Lou!" – Julien Neel**

*Live action, France. In French with English subtitles.*

Twelve-and-a-half-year-old Lou lives alone with her absurdly immature mother, Emma. Her mom has been in a funk lately, eating junk food in her pajamas, playing video games, and generally behaving more like a teen than her on-the-cusp-of-adolescence daughter. But all this changes with arrival of the new bohemian neighbor, Richard, who ignites her goofy mother's romantic



(Above) A still from "Ballet Boys." (Left) "Mune" is a contestant in this year's festival.



the heir apparent is passed over, and the title Guardian of the Moon is bestowed on the waif-like Mune, a small and frightened forest faun who seems wholly unprepared to take on such a weighty responsibility.

Recommended ages: 5 to adult

**"Satellite Girl And Milk Cow" – Chang Hyung-yun**

*Animation, South Korea. In Korean with English subtitles.*

Festival award-winning "Wolf Daddy" director Chang Hyung-yun has created a wholly original, exuberantly outrageous, sci-fi love story unlike anything before it. An orbiting, out-of-commission female satellite picks up a lovelorn pop song on its radio antenna and descends to Earth to try to discover who could be the source of such heartfelt emotions. On the way, it is transformed into the titular Satellite Girl, complete with Astroboy-like rocket shoes and weapon-firing limbs, while the balladeer in question — a loser 20-something playing at an open mic in a coffee shop — meets the fate that befalls all broken-hearted lovers: he is turned into a farm animal (albeit one who can walk around in a poorly-fitting human suit).

Recommended ages: 8 to adult

**"Secrets Of War" – Dennis Bots**  
*Live action, Netherlands. In Dutch with English subtitles.*

Netherlands, 1943. Best friends Tuur and Lambert spend their time dreaming up adventures and discovering secret passages in the caves and forests that surround their close-knit village. Homemade wooden pistols serve as props in their playful war games, as they make light of the conflict that is building all around them. When new girl Maartje enters their social circle, the boys' friendship faces a challenge typical of adolescence — and Lambert begins to feel more and more like the third wheel. "Secrets of War," with its lush backdrops and strong emotional performances from three young leads, expertly balances the universality of shifting young friendships with the moral complexity of war.

Recommended ages: 9 to adult

**"Wolfy, The Incredible Secret" — Grégoire Solotareff and Eric Omond**

*Animation, Belgium/France. In English.*

Though they're from opposite ends of the food chain, Wolfy and Tom (a wolf and rabbit, respectively) are best friends. Wolfy has always believed he was an orphan, until one day a gypsy tells him that his mother is still alive in the distant dynasty of Wolfenberg, Land of the Wolves. Despite his fear, Tom agrees to accompany his friend as they venture far from their peaceful countryside home. They arrive in the midst of Carne Festival — a grand meeting of the world's most renowned carnivores — and Wolfy's quest for self-discovery quickly turns into Tom's quest for survival. This beautifully animated film is based on the wildly popular French children's book series "LouLou" from writer and director Grégoire Solotareff.

Recommended ages: 5 to 10

**Additional information:**

*New York International Children's Film Festival, Feb. 27–March 22. Schedule: [www.gkids.com](http://www.gkids.com)*

*Locations: DGA Theater [110 W. 57th St., (212) 258–0800, [www.dga.org](http://www.dga.org)]*

*IFC Center [323 Sixth Avenue, (212) 924–7771, [www.ifccenter.com](http://www.ifccenter.com)]*

*Scholastic Theater [557 Broadway, (212) 343–6215, [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)]*

*SVA Theatre [333 W. 23rd St., (212) 592–2980, [svatheatre.com](http://svatheatre.com)]*

*Village East Cinema [189 Second Ave., (212) 529–6998, [www.villageeastcinema.com](http://www.villageeastcinema.com)]*



*Shnieka Johnson is an education consultant and freelance writer based in Manhattan.*

interests. Neel has turned the French comic and animated TV series into a quirky, mom and daughter buddy movie, with vibrant and brilliantly kitschy bubble-gum production design and plenty of cringe-worthy, awkward comedic situations.

Recommended ages: 8 to adult

**"Moomins On The Riviera" – Xavier Picard**

*Animation, Finland/France. In English.*

Sixty years ago, when Finnish author and illustrator Tove Jansson launched the Moomin comic strip, little did she know it would reach 20 million daily readers in more than 40 countries. In celebration of her 100th birthday, French director Xavier Picard brings Jansson's carefree and adventurous Moomin family to life, with delicately animated characters set within beautifully designed and

colored backgrounds, and the comic's traipsing storylines translated to the screen with just the right amount of absurdity and humor.

Recommended ages: 5 to 10

**"Mune" (3D) – Alexandre Heboyan and Benoît Phillippon**

*Animation, France. In English.*

A world of wonder, magic, and mythology is the setting in this sumptuously animated CGI adventure about a land divided between the realms of day and night. As legend has it, the first Guardian of the Sun threw a harpoon into the cosmos and roped the sun to bring light and warmth to all of humanity. Then the Guardian of the Moon lured the moon to the Land of Darkness to provide a balance to the sun and supply the world with dreams. At a momentous ceremony to appoint the two new guardians, an accident seems to occur;

# When Mom & Dad have **camp anxiety**

Terrified about sending your child away?  
Here's how to ease those fears



**BY DR. HEIDI SMITH LUEDTKE**

**I**f your kids are going to sleep-away camp this summer, you may be wrestling with worries and what-ifs:

- What if he wets the bed?
- What if the other kids are cliquish or mean?
- Will the camp director call me if she's miserable?

### **Why parents worry**

"Much of our anxiety as parents stems from the fact that there are so many things we cannot control in our children's lives," says Dr. Paul Donahue, a clinical psychologist and author of "Parenting Without Fear."

You may worry that without structure, kids won't be able to handle routine tasks like showering, brushing teeth, or getting dressed. One mom I know felt so sure her son wouldn't change clothes at camp that she packed his items — one pair of underwear, shorts, shirt, and socks — in gallon-size Ziploc bags, labeled with the days of the week.

Because parents focus so much on kids' needs, it's hard

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Ultimately, parents want kids to become self-reliant, and building self-reliance requires parents do less — not more — for their kids. Camp builds competence and independence. Give your kids time to stretch beyond their comfort zones.

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to step back. Coverage of natural disasters and child predators makes the world seem scary.

“Concern about the safety of children has become something of a national obsession,” Donahue observes. Even though our protective instincts keep us on edge, sometimes we have to trust others to care for our kids, and trust our kids to look out for themselves.

Fear of letting go can also be driven by our own uncertainty about who we are without our kids and what we’ll do while they’re away. Without baseball practice, piano lessons, bedtime routines, and movie night, our lives would be slower and saner and ... emptier.

#### **How to stop it**

Don’t let worries weigh you down. Use them as an opportunity to confront your own needs for safety, control, and closeness. Here’s how:

**Step back.** Anxieties have a way of sucking you in. Your thoughts and emotions may be swirling like a tornado around you. Get out of the eye of the storm and reflect on your feelings. What (exactly) are your worries? Write them down, so you can face them head on.

**Question your assumptions.** Fears may be fueled by irrational beliefs. Kids don’t suffer serious malnutrition from week-long candy binges. And wearing dirty clothes won’t kill them either. Concerned your temperamental child won’t fit in socially? Allow for the possibility she’ll find buddies to hang out with all on her own. Don’t let your beliefs limit kids’ potential.

**Keep goals in mind.** Ultimately, parents want kids to become self-reliant, says Donahue, and building self-reliance requires parents do less — not more — for their kids. Camp builds competence

and independence. Give your kids time to stretch beyond their comfort zones.

**Have a plan.** Keep anxieties in control by making a plan for how you’ll use your “time off.” Schedule special time with siblings who aren’t going camping. Plan a romantic date or overnight getaway with your spouse. Learn something new or catch up on your favorite shows. Stay busy (but in a good way). You deserve a change of pace, too.

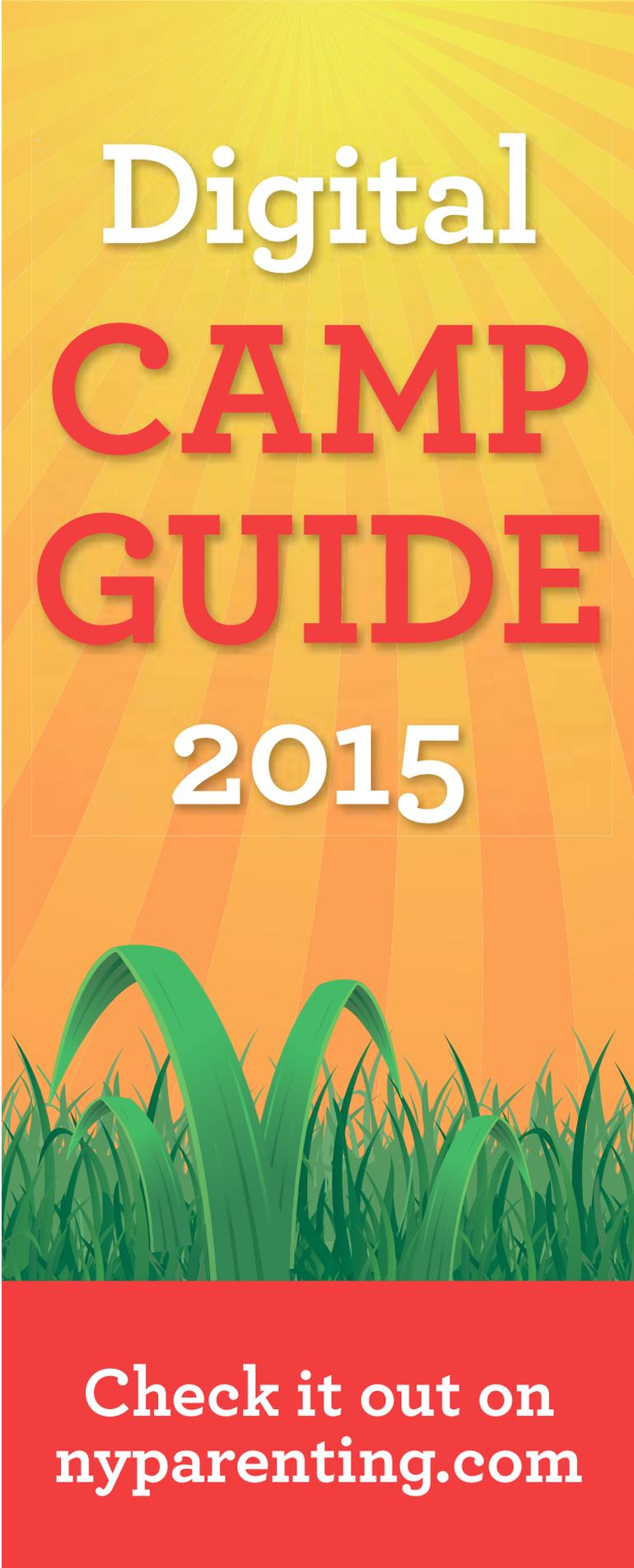
**Share stories.** One sure-fire way to break out of anxiety is to remember and share the fun times you had at camp with your kids. Tell them where you went and what you did. The time you flipped your canoe over and got sopping wet in the lake shouldn’t be a secret. Kids love to hear about parents’ camp adventures.

**Stay connected.** The kids will be gone but not forgotten. Find fun postcards, print pictures of family pets, and collect care-package items to send. Getting mail from home makes kids feel special. Resist the urge to check in every day: kids need space. Don’t forget to send supplies so your kids can send letters home. They’ll want to share their experiences and you’ll treasure their letters forever.

Anxiety is understandable, but it shouldn’t stop you from sending kids off to camp. It’s likely that many of your cherished childhood memories involve nature, new friends, and time to explore on your own — summer camp offers all these opportunities and more.

It’ll be okay if they stay up too late, eat burned marshmallows, or lose their swim goggles in the lake. Really.

*Heidi Smith Luedtke is a personality psychologist and mom of two adventurous kids. She is the author of “Detachment Parenting.” Learn more at HeidiLuedtke.com.*



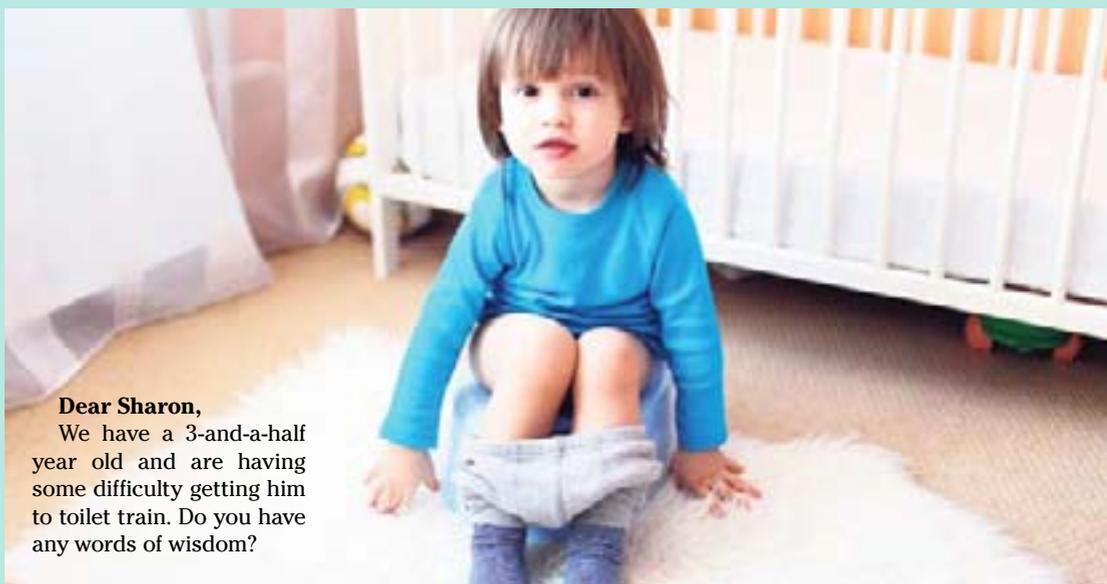
# Digital CAMP GUIDE 2015

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PARENTS  
HELPING  
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SHARON C. PETERS, MA



Dear Sharon,

We have a 3-and-a-half year old and are having some difficulty getting him to toilet train. Do you have any words of wisdom?

# Toilet-training tips

Dear Parents,

Strong-willed 3 year olds can make toilet training challenging. Here are some strategies that can help.

Before tackling toilet training, it is important to sort out when children (and their parents) are ready for toilet training. Even when a child is a little older than usual there may be underlying factors that need to be taken into consideration. If a child is having a hard time at school, getting used to a recent move, adjusting to the birth of a new sibling, working through complex developmental delays, or handling other challenges, then it might make sense to wait for an easier time to begin training. It is often wise to delay things if parents are overwhelmed or busy as well.

When you are ready to tackle training, find a relatively pressure-free time to focus on the project (probably at least a week). Pick a period when it is possible that all adults involved can stay focused on the “mission” and able to avoid distractions — social occasions, work pressures, extended family obligations, etc.

It can also help to involve children

in the planning process. Encouraging your child to help decorate a potty chair, select training pants, or talk through other details that can help him feel part of the project rather than the subject of someone else’s plan.

Concrete rewards can increase the chances of success as well. Parent and child can create a rewards chart together and choose the prize for completing the goal. If there have already been a series of failed attempts at toilet training it can help to offer small rewards for each accomplishment along the way rather than just working towards a “super duper” prize when “accidents” are over. (Three-and-a-half year olds who have avoided training for a while often need a “super duper” reward and motivator to lower their resistance.)

Before starting, many parents agree on a “plan of action” with their partner. As every child has his own unique personality, the specifics of plans may greatly vary. I know of families who have found it useful to have their child go pantless through this period while others have visited the bathroom every 30 minutes. Moms and dads should sort through an approach that could work for their little one.

Probably the most important part of any plan is an agreement to sup-

port each other to stay calm and clear throughout the process. Although difficult, parents who can stick to their plan and stay calm in the face of their child’s mistakes or upset usually are more effective.

It can also help to tell a child ahead of time that the end of diapers is coming. Use a confident, calm, and succinct tone to explain your ideas to the child — he’ll be more likely to believe that change is on the way. Of course, children often complain if given advance warning, but having a chance to “get ready” and let off steam beforehand can help the actual process go well.

Toilet training is much harder to do when everyone involved is tense or upset. It can be useful to get some especially exciting games or toys to play with during the process. The family can play together, take a break for toilet time, and then resume playing until the next break is needed.

Parents often inform their child’s school of their efforts so that teachers can encourage and reinforce their efforts. An “all hands on deck” approach can make a bigger impact.

Even if this is not the best time for your son to finish toilet training, I guarantee that he will eventually get the hang of it, probably much sooner than it feels to you right now.

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

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

# Be a **petal** pusher

## Celebrate Plant A Flower Day every day

BY SARAH YALE

**N**ational Plant a Flower Day is this month! But Plant-a-Flower-Day activities can continue throughout March, adding brightness and anticipation to an in-between time of the year. Children will learn about and appreciate our natural treasures, explore their creativity, develop feelings of accomplishment, make memories, and have fun. Since Plant a Flower Day is March 12, here are 12 ways to celebrate flowers and make March fun:

**1.** Take the kids to a greenhouse, botanical garden, flower show, or the floral department at the supermarket. Encourage them to discover flower varieties and colors. Bring sketchbooks and pencils for drawing and

note-taking. Ask the children to share their findings with you on the way home.

**2.** Buy some seeds to start now. Visit a garden center or the local discount store's garden section. Pick up potting soil and plastic pots, or use containers from your recycling bin. Follow seed packet instructions for starting plants indoors. Children can record the growth and development of the plants in their own hand-decorated flower journal. The journal can be a store-bought notebook with cover artwork created by the kids. Inside, they can make notes, draw pictures, attach seed packets, create collages from seed catalog pages, and more.

**3.** Contact your state or local cooperative extension service (through your state university) to learn about local endangered species of wildflowers. Find out when they flower and where you can go to see them at a nature preserve. Mark your calendar and make plans to go when they are in bloom.

**4.** Kids can design and color their own version of a seed package on an 8.5-inch by 11-inch sheet of paper. Have them create and name a new flower, or draw an existing variety.

**5.** Learn more about your state flower on [www.statesymbolsusa.org](http://www.statesymbolsusa.org). Notice the leaves and plant shape, as well as whether it grows in sun or shade. Maybe the children have seen it growing wild. Plan to go exploring for it on a spring hike before it comes in bloom. You can revisit it during the summer when it has flowers.

**6.** Children will enjoy decorating cupcakes with colorful, creative flowers. Supply them with candy, sprinkles, and squirt tube icing for active fun and delicious treats. Round and flower-shaped cookies are also great for decorating.

**7.** Three-dimensional pom-pom tissue paper flowers are fun to make and can be grouped to fill a centerpiece bowl. Look for packages of multicolor tissue paper at the dollar store.

**8.** Host an indoor, floral-themed party on a cold afternoon. Tell your kids to dress in bright floral colors so they can be the flowers. No matching outfits required.

Turn on all of the lights to make it sunny inside. Ask them to sway like flowers in the breeze while they sing a favorite song together. Let them make up a flower story to perform or have them read flower poems aloud. Do some floral crafts and decorate some floral treats for added fun. Remember to take lots of photos to share with friends and family far away.

**9.** Make "Spring Is Coming" cards with flower designs to send to the relatives, to give to elderly neighbors, or to a nursing home.

**10.** Have the children pick out books at the library about flowers and gardening. Encourage them to design and color a garden or choose flowers to plant after the last frost. Find out when the last frost is in your area. Mark your calendar to start planting outdoors. The kids will look forward to it with excitement.

**11.** Take a walk through your neighborhood to see if any flower bulbs have pushed up through the remaining snow or cold ground. Have the children draw what they see or make notes in their journals. Look up spring bulbs in your gardening library books. Snowdrops, crocus, and daffodils are some varieties of early blooming spring bulbs. The bulbs you see in your neighborhood may be available in several different colors. Mark your calendar and make plans to plant spring bulbs in the fall, so you can look for them next spring.

**12.** Make a seed packet display to hang in a window or doorway. Have the kids use a stick from your yard, a wrapping paper tube, or a wooden spoon for the hanger. The children can punch a hole in the top of the seed packets to hang them from the stick, tube, or spoon using different lengths of yarn, string, or fishing line. Use another piece of yarn to hang their display from the window or doorway.

Children can have fun now and plan activities to look forward to later in the spring, summer, and the fall. You will have encouraged the budding botanist in them, along with the nature lover, the artist, and the explorer.

*Sarah Yale is a mom and a writer whose children love flowers, exploring, learning, and creating. Our shared activities always grow great memories.*



# A St. Patrick's to remember

What to learn from a holiday picnic

## CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPING

**P**rior to St. Patrick's Day last year, my 9-year-old daughter, Jessie, came home from school and asked to have a picnic. Jessie loves picnics.

We tossed two blankets in the

yard and placed two lawn chairs on top of them. I relaxed in one of the chairs while Jessie prepared our picnic. She likes to be in charge of the menu and entertainment. About 10 minutes later, Jessie called for assistance. She carried the basket of snacks and a few sheets of paper. I grabbed the crayons and markers.

Of course, Sadie, our dog, joined us; it wouldn't be a picnic without Sadie. A few seconds later, Jessie's feet were free of socks. We munched on pretzels and raisins and shared a can of Orange Crush soda a friend gave her for Valentine's Day.

My future third-grade teacher (her current career aspiration) then distributed my first assignment, a St. Patrick's Day maze. She had downloaded the maze from a teaching website and printed copies for each of us. We raced to see whose leprechaun would reach the pot of gold first. Jessie won.

My second assignment involved a coloring sheet that pictured a pot of gold. I like to color; however, my aspiring teacher gave me the following writing prompt, "If I saw a leprechaun, I would ...". Instead of coloring the pot of gold, Jessie asked me to write my answer inside the pot. My writer friends know I'm not a big fan of writing on demand. I was ready to object, but noticed Jessie had already started to write on her copy, so I hastily began my assignment.

Jessie finished well ahead of me. She wrote, "If I saw a leprechaun, I would ask him nicely to give 1,000 million dollars to help find a cure for cancer."

Jessie's answer clearly beat mine, but for writing on demand, I did okay. "If I saw a lep-

rechaun, I would say, 'Hi, my name is Patrick. No, St. Patrick's Day was not named after me, though I'm a kind and loving man. I already found my pot of gold. I have a beautiful wife, daughter, and dog. I'm a blessed man.'"

Jessie then handed me my third assignment, a coloring sheet with the words "Happy St. Patrick's Day!" surrounded by green clovers. Finally, my chance to color. I searched for a green crayon.

Teacher Jessie had a different lesson plan. She gave me the writing prompt, "If I found a pot of gold, I would spend it on ..." with my answer to be written on the back of the paper. I wanted to raise my hand and ask for a bathroom pass, but I knew my request would be denied. Like before, Jessie finished well before me. She chewed on a pretzel stick and waited patiently.

Jessie's been campaigning for another dog, so her answer didn't surprise me. "If I found a pot of gold, I would spend it on one more dog. It would be a Havanese. I would spend the rest on books."

I've been campaigning for a man cave, a quiet area to focus on my writing. I wrote, "If I found a pot of gold, I would spend it on building a man cave. It would be a luxurious man cave with all the amenities a famous writer would have. I'd have state-of-the-art office equipment. I would install a bell on my desk. I would ring it to have my assistant bring me a snack or whatever else I need. For now, I'm happy with my man chair."

As I reflect on our St. Patrick's-themed picnic, these thoughts stand out. Jessie will make an outstanding teacher. Her best chance for a Havanese is to find a pot of gold; they're expensive little puppies. I'm getting better at writing on demand, though I still don't enjoy it. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Jessie found a leprechaun who could fund research to cure cancer?

Finally, I need to accept that my luxury man cave, with assistant, is not likely to happen. But hey, with the extra writing practice, maybe I'll become a famous author and can upgrade to a man sofa.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments.

*Patrick Hemping had a 20-year career in banking, accounting, and auditing before he became a father at age 44. He is now a full-time husband, stay-at-home dad, and writer. Follow him at [www.facebook.com/patricklhemping](http://www.facebook.com/patricklhemping) and on Twitter @PatrickHemping.*





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PHOTOGRAPH BY GUY AROCH

# Calendar

MARCH



Photo by Karen O'Donnell

## Take a ride across the river

Sundog Theatre presents "Scenes from the Staten Island Ferry" on March 7, 8, 13, 14, 15 at the New Dorp Moravian Theatre.

This production focuses on the intersecting plot lines provided by four playwrights about the iconic ferry that crosses the river into Manhattan. The outcome of all four will keep you guessing to the very last plot twist.

Recommended for children 10

years and older.

"Scenes from the Staten Island Ferry," March 7, 8, 13, 14, 15. Friday and Saturday showtimes, 8 pm, Sundays at 3 pm.

Tickets \$20 for general admission and \$18 for seniors and students.

*New Dorp Moravian Theatre [2205 Richmond Rd. and Prescott Avenue in Grant City, (718) 816-5453; [www.sundogtheatre.org](http://www.sundogtheatre.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](mailto:stateniscalendar@cnglocal.com) — and we'll take care of the rest. Please e-mail requests more than three weeks prior to the event to ensure we have enough time to get it in. And best of all, it's FREE!

## MON, MARCH 2

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**"Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad":** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Children learn about the life of this civil rights leader. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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

Little ones 18 months to 3 years old with a caregiver listen to interactive stories, fingerplay and spend time with other tykes. Pre-registration required.

**Baby and me:** Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 1:30-2:30 pm; Free.

From birth to 18 months old, parents and caregivers share a book, songs and rhymes.

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

Hang out with friends in the community room, do homework, bring snacks or check out a laptop and do homework or just browse. For children 13 to 18 years old.

**Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss:** Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3 pm; Free.

Celebrate with fun stories.

**Teen bingo:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Have fun with friends and family.

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



## Singing with Patrick

Join Patrick Rafferty for a sing-a-long concert and some tales of heroes at the Staten Island Children's Museum on March 22. The resident sing-a-long troubadour shares new songs and old favorites that are sure to put the spring back into your step after the long

snowy winter.

Patrick Rafferty on March 22 at 4 pm. Free with museum admission.

*Staten Island Children's Museum [1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street in Randall Manor, (718) 273-2060; [www.statenislandkids.org](http://www.statenislandkids.org)].*

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

**Homework help:** Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; [nypl.org](http://nypl.org); 5 pm-6 pm; Free.

Staff and volunteers assist children in grades one through six on assignments.

## TUES, MARCH 3

### ON STATEN ISLAND

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

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

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

Students in pre-K through eighth grade get help with math and reading by Staten Island High School volunteers. In-person registration is required.

**Kiddie Game Time:** Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; [nypl.org](http://nypl.org); 4-5 pm; Free.

Children 6 to 11 years old develop

strategic thinking and gaming skills while having fun.

## WED, MARCH 4

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**The Dragon's Tale:** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Journey across the Atlantic to see the lion dance. Presented by Enrichment through the Arts.

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

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

**Workshop:** St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4pm; free.

Make robots that draw by themselves! Using simple materials and a vibrating motor, make and decorate your own Doodle 'Bot. Learn about robotics and discuss the positives and negatives of automated machines. Presented by Staten Island MakerSpace. For ages 12 to 18 years old.

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

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

**Dance along:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Dance with Nintendo Wii.

## THURS, MARCH 5

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**The Dragon's Tale:** 10 am and 11:30 am. Center for Performing Arts at CSI. See Wednesday, March 4.

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

Children 3 to 5 years old listen to a story and do an age appropriate craft.

## FRI, MARCH 6

### ON STATEN ISLAND

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

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

**Doodlebug Fun Time:** Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; [www.nycgov-parks.org](http://www.nycgov-parks.org); 1 pm; Free.

Kathleen Hagen leads tots 18 months to 4 years old with a caregiver in stories, songs, crafts. Registration required. Series 1.

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

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

**Craft time:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3:30 pm; Free.

Children make assorted projects. Suitable for ages 4 and older.

**Italian 101:** Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn to parla Italiano! Registration required.

## SAT, MARCH 7

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Scientific Saturdays:** Dongan Hills  
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# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

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Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 11 am; Free.

Children learn from hands-on experiments.

**Spot:** Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. between Snug Harbor Road and Tysen Street; (718) 448-2500; [www.snug-harbor.org](http://www.snug-harbor.org); 2 pm; \$15 (\$13.50 members).

Toddlers and parents enjoy an interactive adventure and visit the farm. Recommended for children 3 to 7 years old.

**"Scenes From the Staten Island Ferry":** New Dorp Moravian Church Theatre, 2205 Richmond Rd. and Prescott Avenue; (718) 816-5453; [www.sundogtheatre.org](http://www.sundogtheatre.org); 8 pm; \$20 (\$18 seniors & students.)

Presented by the Sundog Theatre, this play features the intersecting plots of four writers who pen the events around New York's iconic ferry — and the outcome that will keep you guessing. Suitable for ages 10 years and older.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Mike Carbo's Big Apple Con:** Penn Plaza Pavilion, 401 Seventh Ave. at 33rd Street, Manhattan; [www.nycbm.com](http://www.nycbm.com); 10 am – 6 pm; \$20 (\$10 children).

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the city's longest-running comic book sci-fi/fantasy convention where collectors and enthusiasts will find hundreds of vendor tables, top comics, celebrities, pro wrestlers, dealers, panel discussions, costume contests, and more.

## SUN, MARCH 8

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**"Scenes From the Staten Island Ferry":** 3 pm. New Dorp Moravian Church Theatre. See Saturday, March 7.

**Owl Prowl:** Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 6:30–8 pm; Free.

Join Ranger Cliff Hagen and search for resident owls; Flashlights are suggested. Suggested for older children accompanied by an adult.

## MON, MARCH 9

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Toddler time:** 11–11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Baby and me:** 1:30–2:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Teen Cafe:** 2–4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, March 2.



## 'Renewal' for spring

Amanda Selwyn Dance Theatre opens its 2015 season with a world-premier performance of "Renewal" on March 13, 14, and 15.

This production features a series of shorts that offer fresh and vibrant movements, athleticism, energy, and balance.

Each short highlights signature structures and elements. Her dance moves activate emo-

tional expression and offer many in-roads for audiences to make meaning for themselves.

"Renewal" on March 13 and 14 at 7:30 pm and March 15 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$25. Recommended for older teens.

*BMCC Tribeca Performing Arts Center [199 Chambers St. and Harrison Street in Tribeca, (212) 220-1460; <http://tribecapac.org/amanda-selwyn-dance-theater>].*

**Optical illusions:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Leran how to make a trick of the eye art.

**Read aloud:** 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Homework help:** 5 pm – 6 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 2.

## TUES, MARCH 10

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Golden Dragon Acrobats:** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$9.

Be enthralled at this performance with costumes, music and more. Presented by Enrichment through the arts.

**Board Games:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3 pm; Free.

Teens enjoy traditional games includ-

ing Connect 4; Chess; Battleship; Monopoly and Jenga.

**Mask craft:** Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3:30 pm; Free.

Children 12 to 18 years create an African Inspired Mask. All materials provided.

**Tutoring:** 3:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 3.

**Support Group:** Rossville AME Zion Church, 584 Bloomingdale Road; (646) 765-6531; [playitforwardny.com](http://playitforwardny.com); 4–6 pm; Free.

Play it forward is an anti-bully support workshop for children/ teens/ who have been bullied. Parents welcome. Free refreshments.

**Lego workshop:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

For children 7 to 12 years old.

## WED, MARCH 11

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Golden Dragon Acrobats:** 10 am and 11:30 am. Center for Performing Arts at CSI. See Tuesday, March 10.

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

**Bead-tastic:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3:30 pm; Free.

Learn how to make colorful beads out of fabric and celebrate your own style. Materials provided. For children 12 to 18 years old.

**Read aloud:** 4–4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, March 4.

## THURS, MARCH 12

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Kiddie tech time:** Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; [nypl.org](http://nypl.org); 4 pm – 5 pm; Free.

Children can join in for a STEM focused play with computer games, building supplies, Legos and other crafts and games. For children 5 to 11 years old.

## FRI, MARCH 13

### ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Children 3 to 5 years old.

**Pot of Gold:** Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 3:30 pm; Free.

A trio of stories and music from Ireland is on deck to celebrate St. Paddy's Day.

**Italian 101:** 3:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, March 6.

**"Scenes From the Staten Island Ferry":** 8 pm. New Dorp Moravian Church Theatre. See Saturday, March 7.

## SAT, MARCH 14

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Kids craft time:** Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; [nypl.org](http://nypl.org); 11 am; Free.

Young crafters make a Percy Jackson themed project. For children 3 to 12 years old. First come, first served. Care-givers welcome.

**Saturday showtime:** Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; [nypl.org](http://nypl.org).

org; 2 pm; Free.

Children 12 years old and younger view a screening of "Shrek."

**Natural Science Club:** Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; [www.nycgov-parks.org](http://www.nycgov-parks.org); 2-2:30 pm; Free.

Inquisitive tweens 8 to 12 years old meet with resident naturalist Clay Wollney and explore the natural world. Registration required.

**Open house exhibit:** Alice Austen House, 2 Hylan Blvd. at Bay Street; (718) 816-4506 X10; 3-5 pm; Free.

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Becoming Clear Comfort exhibit, the doors are open to this landmark home.

**ssSecond ssSaturday ssSnakes:** Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; [stateniskids.org](http://stateniskids.org); 4-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Learn all about those slithery snakes from reptile expert Warren Taylor.

**"Scenes From the Staten Island Ferry":** 8 pm. New Dorp Moravian Church Theatre. See Saturday, March 7.

## SUN, MARCH 15

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**"Scenes From the Staten Island Ferry":** 3 pm. New Dorp Moravian Church Theatre. See Saturday, March 7.

**Irish Step Dancing:** Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; [stateniskids.org](http://stateniskids.org); 5:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Celebrate and enjoy Dawn Daniels and her steppers when they teach you all the traditional moves of stepping.

## MON, MARCH 16

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Math plus Magic equals Fun:** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichment-throughthearts.com](http://www.enrichment-throughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Fast-paced magic show designed to make math fun. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

**Toddler time:** 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

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

**Craft time:** 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, March 6.

**Read aloud:** 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, March 2.



Photo by Kate Hesler

## Fee-fi-fo-fum puppets

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater hosts "Jack and the Beanstalk," now through June 28.

This fresh retelling of the Swedish Cottage original production presented by the City Parks Foundation takes Jack on an enchanting adventure up a magical beanstalk. Jack encounters the notorious giant Milford whose thieving ways have brought misfortune upon Jack and his mother, but with help from friends, he risks his life to take back what the Giant stole.

The play is approximately 45

minutes long and is suitable for children 3 to 9 years old.

"Jack and the Beanstalk," now through June 28, showtimes are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 10:30 am and noon; Wednesdays, 10:30 am, noon, and 2:30 pm; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 pm. Tickets are \$7 for children under 12; \$10 for all others.

*Swedish Cottage Marionette Theater [W. 79th Street and West Drive on the Upper West Side; (212) 988-9093; [www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/swedish-cottage-marionette-theatre](http://www.cityparksfoundation.org/arts/swedish-cottage-marionette-theatre)].*

**Homework help:** 5 pm - 6 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 2.

## TUES, MARCH 17

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Stomp, Clap and Sing:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 11 am; Free.

Toddlers and pre-schoolers enjoy an energetic class of movement and dance.

**Tutoring:** 3:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 3.

**Kiddie Game Time:** 4-5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Tuesday, March 3.

**Finger-Knit:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

It's fun and you don't need tools, just your fingers. For children 12 to 15 years old.

### FURTHER AFIELD

**St. Patrick's Day Parade:** Kick off, 44th St. and Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; 11 am; Free.

Come on down to the world-famous parade, kick up your heels, listen to the bagpipes and be Irish for the day.

## WED, MARCH 18

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Butterfly, the Story of a Life Cycle:** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$9.

Take a microscopic look at the insect. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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

**Mighty Action Storytime:** Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Children 4 to 12 watch a performance shaped around the holiday season. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr is featured through song and dance.

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

**Dance along:** 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, March 4.

## THURS, MARCH 19

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Read aloud:** 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, March 5.

## FRI, MARCH 20

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Tortoise and the Hare:** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

"Aesop's Fables" teach the importance of patience. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

**Italian story time:** Huguenot Public Library, 830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 10:30 am; Free.

Come join pre-school story time with stories read in both Italian and English by Nonna Emilia. This will be followed by an Italian sing along and then play time.

**Toddler Time:** 10:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, March 6.

**Doodlebug Fun Time:** Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; [www.nycgov-parks.org](http://www.nycgov-parks.org); 1 pm; Free.

Kathleen Hagen leads tots 18 months to 4 years old with a caregiver in stories, songs, crafts. Registration required. Series 2.

**Fun Fridays:** 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, March 6.

**Italian 101:** 3:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, March 6.

## SAT, MARCH 21

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Scientific Saturdays:** 11 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Saturday, March 7.

**Kids & Kritters:** Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 11 am-12:30 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 7 years old with caregiver enjoy a craft, story or game; along with a walk outside (weather permitting.) Appropriate dress re-

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# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

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quired; registration required.

**Krafty Kids:** Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org); 1-2 pm; Free.

Children 4 to 10 years old with caregiver enjoy a craft, registration required.

## FURTHER AFIELD

### National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

**Event:** Pacplex Sports Recreation and Educational Complex, 1500 Paerdaget Ave. at Paerdaget 13th Street, Brooklyn; (347) 831-5688; [ajones.dtbe@outlook.com](mailto:ajones.dtbe@outlook.com); [www.daretobeextraordinary.org](http://www.daretobeextraordinary.org); 12:30-3 pm; \$25 adults, \$15 kids, free for kids 6 and under.

Games, entertainment, and photo shoots with Olympic gold medalist and TNA professional wrestler Kurt Angle.

## SUN, MARCH 22

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Photo workshops:** Alice Austen House, 2 Hylan Blvd. at Bay Street; (718) 816-4506 X10; 11:30 am-1:30 pm; \$10 (\$8 members).

Older teens will learn the basics of digital photography with instructor Robert Catalano.

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

Explorers 6 to 12 years old learn about the environmentalist Clay Wollney learn about nature.

**Sing-A-Long:** Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; [stateniskids.org](http://stateniskids.org); 4-5 pm; Free with museum admission.

Join in with Patrick and sing songs from your favorite storybook heros.

**Owl Prowl:** 6:30-8 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Sunday, March 8.

## MON, MARCH 23

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Teen Cafe:** 2-4 p m. New Dorp Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Toddler time:** 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Baby and me:** 1:30 - 2:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Rock star party:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Pre-schoolers and children 5 to 12

years old play Rock Star and dress up.

**Read aloud:** 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Homework help:** 5 pm - 6 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday, March 2.

## TUES, MARCH 24

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Tutoring:** 3:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 3.

**"Gateway to a Dream":** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$9.

The story of Ellis Island, courage, hope and fulfilling a dream. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

**Lego workshop:** 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, March 10.

## WED, MARCH 25

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**"Once Upon a Time":** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; <http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com>; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Old-fashioned fairy tales. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

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

**Library discovery:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old learn how to navigate the library. Registration required.

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

## THURS, MARCH 26

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**"Gateway to a Dream":** 10 am and 11:30 am. Center for Performing Arts at CSI. See Tuesday, March 24.

**Board Games:** 3 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, March 10.

**Kiddie tech time:** 4 pm - 5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Thursday, March 12.

**Read aloud:** 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Thursday, March 5.

## FRI, MARCH 27

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Toddler Time:** 10:30 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, March 6.

**Pre-school time:** 10:30 am. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, March 13.

**Fun Fridays:** 3:30-4:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Friday, March 6.

**Craft time:** 3:30 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Friday, March 6.

**Italian 101:** 3:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, March 6.

## SAT, MARCH 28

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Kids craft time:** 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, March 14.

**Scientific Saturdays:** 11 am. Dongan Hills Library. See Saturday, March 7.

**Kids & Kritters:** 11 am-12:30 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Saturday, March 21.

**Krafty Kids:** 1-2 pm. Blue Heron Nature Center. See Saturday, March 21.

**Saturday showtime:** 2 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, March 14.

**Storytime:** Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; [stateniskids.org](http://stateniskids.org); 6 pm; Free with museum admission.

Enjoy a special storytime with Walter Rutledge as he shares tales of heroes, heroines, and daring dos.

## MON, MARCH 30

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**"Stone Soup and Other Stories":** Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; [www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com](http://www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com); 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Tales of blended folk tales from around the world. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

**Toddler time:** 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Baby and me:** 1:30-2:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, March 2.

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

**Wax art:** Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); 4 pm; Free.

Children 5 to 12 years old use crayons and heat to make a masterpiece.

**Read aloud:** 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, March 2.

**Homework help:** 5 pm-6 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Monday,

March 2.

## TUES, MARCH 31

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Tutoring:** 3:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Tuesday, March 3.

**Kiddie Game Time:** 4-5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Tuesday, March 3.

**Finger-Knit:** 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Tuesday, March 17.

## LONG-RUNNING

### ON STATEN ISLAND

**Dinosaur encounter:** Staten Island Zoo, 614 Broadway at Martling Avenue; (718) 442-3174; [www.statenislandzoo.org](http://www.statenislandzoo.org); Daily, 10 am-4 pm, Now - Wed, April 1; Free with zoo admission.

Meet eight mighty dinosaurs including Dilophosaurus, Triceratops, and Oryctodromeus from the Secaucus Field Station. The dinos are spending the winter at the zoo. Realistically animated characters created by scientists, engineers and artists delight children of all ages.

**Minecraft time:** St. George Library, 5 Central Ave. at Hyatt Street; (718) 442-8560; [www.nypl.org](http://www.nypl.org); Weekdays, 1-3 pm, Mon, March 2 - Tues, March 31; Free.

Come explore and create your own world in Minecraft.

**Storytime:** Barnes & Noble, 2245 Richmond Ave. at Travis Avenue; (718) 982-6983; [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com); Tuesdays, 11 am-1 pm, Saturdays, 11 am, Now - Tues, May 26; Free.

Stories, crafts and fun activities.

**Story Museum:** Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; [www.historicrichmondtown.org](http://www.historicrichmondtown.org); Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm; \$3.

Toddlers and pre-schoolers with a caregiver listen to stories, do crafts, listen to songs, dance and sing and have play with other children.

**Kidz cook:** Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; [stateniskids.org](http://stateniskids.org); Fridays, 2, 3 and 4 pm, Now - Fri, May 1; Free with museum admission.

Children experiment with all types of food.

**Gallery exhibition:** National Lighthouse Museum, 4 Bay St.; (718) 390-0040; [www.lighthousemuseum.org](http://www.lighthousemuseum.org); Wednesdays, 10 am-4 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1-5 pm, Sat, March 7 - Sat, March 28; Free.

Works will be on display from the

# Calendar

Our online calendar is updated daily at [www.NYParenting.com/calendar](http://www.NYParenting.com/calendar)

first juried photography show.

**Art Studio:** Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tyssen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1-4 pm, Now - Sun, May 24; Free with museum admission.

Children create fun projects.

## FURTHER AFIELD

**Science Playground:** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org; Weekdays, 9:30 am-5 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 10 am-6 pm.; \$5plus museum admission.

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

**"Galapagos - Nature's Wonderland in 3D":** New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Queens; (718) 699-0005 X 353; www.nyscience.org;

Weekdays, 11 am & 2 pm, Saturdays and Sundays, 1 & 3 pm.; \$6 adults; \$5 children.

In this 3D movie, travel to the Galapagos archipelago to meet giant half-ton tortoises and marine iguanas that spit sea-salt from their noses, hunt fishes with the colorful blue-footed boobies, and swim with tiny penguins.

**Ice skating school:** Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594-7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Mondays and Wednesdays, 4-6:30 pm, Now - Tues, March 10; Free.

Instructions, fitness, homework help and lots more. Preregistration required.

**From Here to There:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Tuesdays - Sundays, 10 am-5 pm, Now - Sun, May 10; Free with mu-

seum admission.

This innovative exhibit teaches the science of how things move by land, sea and air. Visitors can heat up and launch a hot air balloon, operate an authentic canal lock system to move a boat and experiment with pneumatics, pulleys, hydraulics, and levers to move objects mechanically.

**Ice skating:** Lefrak Center in Prospect Park, Parkside and Ocean avenues, Brooklyn; (718) 594-7439; info@brooklynice.org; www.brooklynice.org; Tuesdays - Thursdays, 11 am-6 pm, Fridays, 11 am-8 pm, Saturdays, 10 am-9 pm, Sundays, 10 am-6 pm, Now - Tues, March 31; \$6 (\$8 on Sat. and Sun) plus \$6 skate rental.

Families have a great time twirling and skating and enjoying the rink .

**Art Kids:** Brooklyn Children's Museum, 145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn; (718) 735-4400; www.brooklynkids.org; Fridays, 11:30

am and 2:30 pm, Now - Fri, March 6; Free with museum admission.

Children explore a new style of art and discover the artistic process while developing artistic skills.

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

**Needlework and games:** Lefferts Historic Homestead, 452 Flatbush Ave. between Empire Boulevard and Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn; (718) 789-2822; www.prospectpark.org; Saturdays and Sundays, 1-3 pm.; \$3.

Join in with staff and make a small sampler and play board games.

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## GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

# Boning up on health

**A**s long as their children are growing normally, most parents are largely unconcerned about the health of their kids' bones. After all, osteoporosis is for old people, right?

Not so fast. According to a recent report by the American Academy of Pediatrics, osteoporosis may have its roots in the bone mass acquired in childhood and adolescence.

Lifestyle factors — consuming enough calcium and vitamin D, plus weight-bearing activity — all factor in.

It's no secret that physical activity has changed for many children compared to a generation ago. Recess is short, physical education is often weak, and kids don't necessarily walk to school or play outside with their friends.

The Academy report urges kids to exercise to strengthen their bones. Jumping, skipping, running, and dancing are some enjoyable weight-bearing exercises. Some sports that include these are rowing, tennis, volleyball, karate, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, and cheerleading.

### Nutrition

Today's parents are increasingly



choosing plant-based milk beverages in lieu of dairy milk because of perceived health benefits, milk allergies, or lactose intolerance.

And this has Debra Barone

Sheats, director of dietetics programs at St. Catherine University in Minnesota, concerned.

"Many parents think they're equivalent, but they're not equal at all," says Sheats. "Dairy milk contains nine essential nutrients. The white beverages made with plant sources don't necessarily contain these nutrients."

Children who drink alternative milks are twice as likely to have low vitamin D levels, according to a new study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.

"In Canada, as well as the U.S., vitamin D levels vary in non-cow's milk beverages," says Dr. Jonathon Maguire of the University of Toronto.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble hormone necessary for calcium absorption and utilization. Without it, only 10 to 15 percent of dietary calcium is absorbed.

Another nutrient of concern to Sheats is calcium.

"Often, these milk substitutes have calcium added. But there's a fair amount of data that the form of calcium is not absorbed as well as dairy milk. It probably has to do with the fact that milk has lactose and vitamin D. Often, these milks are lactose free."

The pediatricians' report does not recommend calcium supplements.

Other nutrients of concern highlighted in the report include protein and sodium. Diets too low in protein or too high in sodium tend to reduce the body's retention of calcium.

Finally, caffeine, found in energy drinks, colas, and coffee drinks, is also linked to decreased bone mass, the study found.

*Christine Palumbo is a Naperville-registered dietitian nutritionist who is a new Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She's grateful she did plenty of weight bearing activity as a kid. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*

### I beg your parsnips

Serve these matchstick fries as a super tasty and healthy alternative to French fries. They're fun to eat and packed with flavor.

Serves 2 (1/2 cup per serving)

#### INGREDIENTS:

Olive oil cooking spray  
1 large parsnip (about 9 inches long, 5 ounces), peeled  
Cracked black pepper  
Salt to taste

**DIRECTIONS:** Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. To make "matchsticks," cut the parsnips into



long, thin strips, using a very sharp knife, or a mandoline if you have one. Spray the parsnip sticks with

olive oil and lay them on the baking sheet. Lightly sprinkle with cracked pepper on both sides. Bake the fries for about 25 minutes, flipping them over halfway through. They are ready when they are cooked completely, crispy, and slightly brown. As you allow them to cool, sprinkle with pepper and salt to taste.

**NUTRITION FACTS:** 50 calories, 0 g total fat and cholesterol, 7 mg sodium, 12 g carbohydrates, 3 g dietary fiber, 3 g sugars, 1 g protein. Percent Daily Value: Vitamin C 19 percent, calcium 2 percent, iron 2 percent.

Used with permission from The Nutrition Twins' Veggie Cure by Tammy Lakatos Shames, RDN & Lysie Lakatos, RDN.

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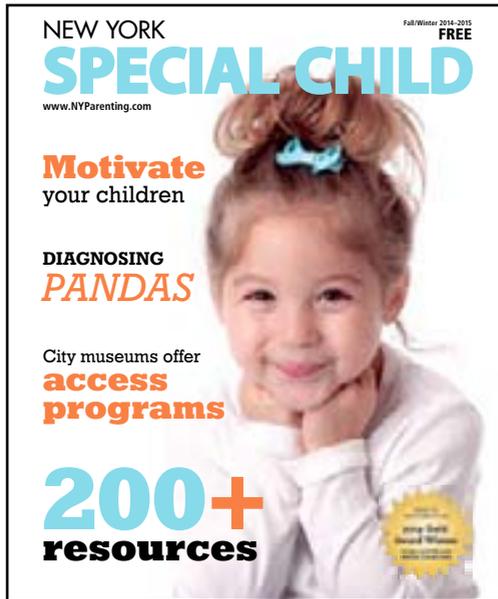
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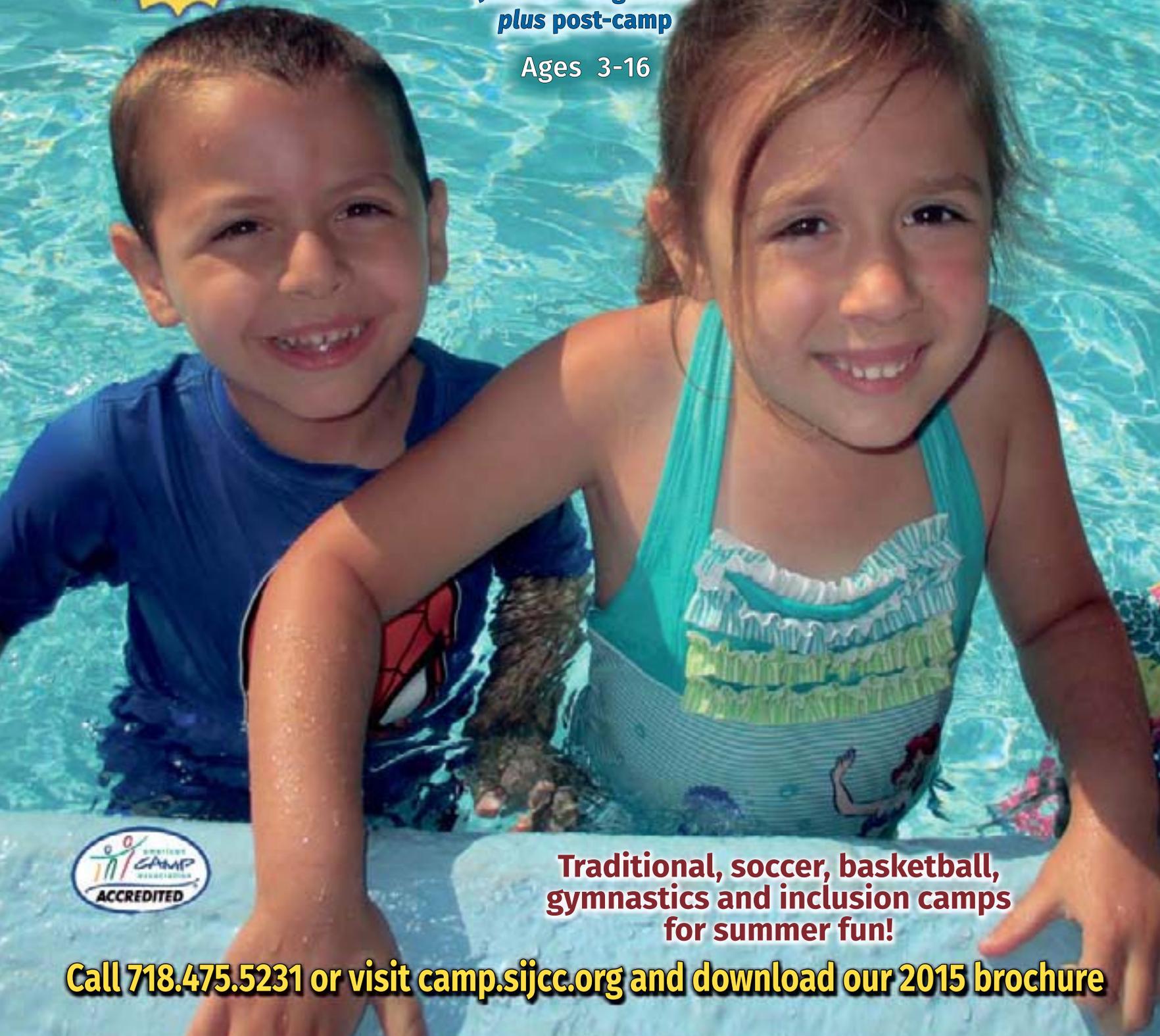
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