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Starting the discussion on gender

I've been thinking a lot about gender and the very new issues that the idea of gender is raising lately. I don't think I ever considered it before the last few months, but suddenly one is hearing about gender neutrality and I'm finding it fascinating. There are forms available now where a third gender possibility is optional, neutral.



I recall back when I was in school that there was a boy who sat next to me who was a rather odd character. He was without friends and seemed to actually lack an apparent personality. Every day I said hello to him although he would only nod in response. He was beyond shy, and never spoke to any-

one as I recall. He was an enigma. It made me sad and I purposely went out of my way every day to give him a greeting waiting for the day when he would open up. He never did.

Some years later, I was shopping at a major department store and a rather elegantly dressed and beautiful woman asked me if I had gone to such and such a school. I said yes and she told me she was a former classmate of mine. I couldn't imagine who she could be because she looked like no one I had ever known before. She said she wasn't at all surprised that I didn't recognize her because she was very changed from the way she looked in school. It turned out

that this lovely woman used to be that very shy and repressed boy who sat next to me in class and in the choir. She then went on to tell me that it took her many unhappy years to realize, accept and then act on the fact that she was in the wrong body. She also thanked me for having been kind to her. She said I was the only one.

There have been numerous articles written lately and TV programs about experiences like this and many parents are being advised to take seriously the issues of gender identity confusion or questioning and seek professional counseling. In this issue there is a letter posed to our columnist Sharon Peters from a concerned parent whose child is professing to be a different sex. She is unprepared for this reality and wisely is reaching

out. Fortunately, like many of the other topics in today's more transparent world, this issue is being addressed with greater sensitivity and intelligence.

Parenting is the most important thing anyone will ever do. It demands great patience, skill and adaptability and the willingness to reach out for help when help is needed.

Thanks for reading. Have a great month. It's almost spring

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,
 Publisher/Executive Editor
 Family@cnglocal.com

Community News Group

CEO: Les Goodstein
PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER: Jennifer Goodstein

New York Parenting

PUBLISHER / EXECUTIVE EDITOR:
 Susan Weiss
PUBLISHER / BUSINESS MANAGER:
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ASSISTANT EDITOR: Courtney Donahue
COPY EDITORS: Lisa J. Curtis,
 Shavana Abruzzo
CALENDAR EDITORS: Joanna Del Buono,
 Danielle Sullivan

Contact Information

ADVERTISING: WEB OR PRINT
 (718) 260-4554
 Family@cnglocal.com or
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CIRCULATION
 (718) 260-8336
 TFelicetti@cnglocal.com

EDITORIAL
 (718) 260-4554
 Family@cnglocal.com

CALENDAR
 (718) 260-2523

ADDRESS
 New York Parenting Media/CNG
 1 Metrotech Center North
 10th Floor
 Brooklyn, NY 11201

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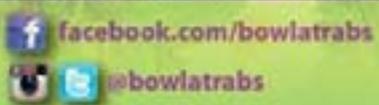
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Collaborating, not competing

New York's
complicated
and sticky
debate over
charter
schools

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

The ongoing clash between New York City's diverse traditional district schools and charters seems to resemble a World Wrestling Federation Superstars competition at times. And the confusing myths and media distractions swirling around this hot-button debate can make your head spin, especially if you're a parent.

So, what are charter schools?

These publicly funded hybrids are a vital part of the city's sprawling public education system, where there's no shortage of structural and cultural differences. Independently managed, charters are actually free public schools that are open to all New York City children. That includes English Language Learners and special needs kids, as well.

There are 197 charter schools here: Eighty-two in Brooklyn, 52 in the Bronx, 46 in Manhattan, 14 in Queens, and three on Staten Island. And the approximately 83,200 students who attend charters come from all backgrounds and ethnicities.

Charter schools have gotten a bad rap recently for not being inclusive enough, yet it appears they have taken the lead in and have done a good job educating special education students and English Language Learners, while making solid progress in recruiting more of these kids into their schools, according to the New York City Charter School Center, www.nyccharterschools.org.

In fact, according to that site, it seems English Language Learners attending charters become proficient in English more quickly than in public schools citywide, where it appears that many immigrant students

NY'S CHARTER SCHOOLS PART 1 OF A SERIES

may take about five-plus years to reach proficiency.

Opinions are mixed and emotions run high on both sides of the charter school movement issue, while politically driven battles over space, funding, and quality of education seem to add fuel to the fire and hinder much-needed collaboration.

The biggest issues about charter schools generally are:

Co-location

Some parents argue that public schools lose space to fit charter schools into public school buildings. But it turns out the issue may really not be that big of a deal. Did you know that (according to charternyc.org) the Department of Education has been co-locating public schools for nearly 100 years, and that surprisingly, charters are only involved in eight percent of all co-locations citywide?

Outperforming public schools

Charter schools are thought to outperform public schools test-wise. The big picture seems to indicate that charter schools are in fact outperforming peer district schools, but it appears that the quality of charters across the board isn't the same: some have high records of achievement, while others aren't as strong.

Money and funding

Charter schools have been described as "laboratories of innovation" by some and "a drain on public schools" by others.

• • •

For the past six years, early childhood education expert and longtime

Brooklyn resident Renee Dinnerstein, has been doing consulting work at a public school on the Lower East Side that shares space with a charter. She said the public school "serves incredibly needy children — children in shelters, foster homes, abusive homes, and they also have a very large special education population."

Dinnerstein feels that "our democracy should be putting money into public education to make it better, not using funds that they need to pay for charter schools," and she points out that "Special ed is very tricky — a child who needs speech therapy, or who is dyslexic, can be considered special ed. Then there are children with behavior disorders, who are very violent, and these children are also special education children."

Dinnerstein, whose grandson has always attended Brooklyn public schools, believes that "the charter school skims off children who are the highest-achieving students, or at least who come from the most involved families. If they take special ed students (which they tend not to) they absolutely don't take the children with behavior issues. Then the public school is left with the most needy children. Because they are losing more and more population to the charter school, they are losing more and more money and have less money for the children in their school, who need special services."

And in her opinion, "Parents are attracted to the charter school because it has all-new material, carpeted classrooms, two teachers in a classroom, and longer days. They don't understand that the instruction is basically test prep all year.

"Basically, the charter movement is a drive to privatize education. I



know that the people who run charters are saying that it's public education. Not so. Absolutely not so," she said. "Think about all of the money that they have for their advertising campaign. Think about closing all of the schools for a political jaunt to Albany. We should be putting all of our energy and funds into creating the best public education possible."

Dinnerstein's blog, "Investigating Choice Time: Inquiry, Exploration, and Play," www.investigatingchoicetime.com, is a place where she writes about inquiry-based choice time, and advocates for developmentally appropriate instruction for children in grades pre-K through third. She is also writing a book on inquiry-based choice time, scheduled to be published by Heinemann in the fall of 2016.

Indeed, finding a peaceful solution isn't easy, but there's hope.

In February, Schools Chancellor Carmen Fariña called for collabora-

Opinions are mixed and emotions run high on both sides of the charter school movement issue, while politically driven battles over space, funding, and quality of education seem to add fuel to the fire and hinder much-needed collaboration.

tion with (and from) charters, during a professional development day for district teachers and principals, held at an Uncommon Charter School in Brooklyn. She said that the future of the city depends on how all kids do, no matter what kind of school they come from. And it appears she's interested in finding ways for schools to share space and resources more effectively, according to a recent capitalnewyork.com article.

With 21 charters in Brooklyn, Uncommon New York City Charter

Schools, www.uncommonschools.org, serve more than 5,900 kindergarten through 12th grade students, including both single-sex and co-ed schools. According to its site, the main goal is to prepare students to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college. Students are randomly selected by public lottery in grades kindergarten and fifth, and waiting lists are kept through grade eight. It currently has schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brownsville, Crown Heights, East Flatbush, Prospect

Heights, and Williamsburg.

Uncommon Schools CEO Brett Peiser said they are incredibly fortunate to have had so many great minds united at their Collaboration Day event, including Schools Chancellor Fariña, and more than 170 educators from 14 district partner schools.

"It is exciting to collaborate with such talented, committed educators working in the same communities as we do each day. We get better as educators when we collaborate closely and learn from one another in order to keep making a meaningful impact in the lives of our students – and that is what we are all doing each and every day."

After weighing the pros and cons of charters vs. traditional district schools, interested parents should research, call, interview staff, and visit charter schools in their area to decide which is the best fit for their child(ren). For more info, you can visit: www.uncommonschools.org/our-schools/all-charter-schools-by-city.



ASK AN ATTORNEY

ALISON ARDEN BESUNDER,
ESQ.

How to talk openly about elderly care

My parents are getting older, and I am concerned about how my siblings and I are going to be able to take care of them while taking care of our own families. How can I broach the topic with my parents without upsetting them?

Starting the conversation with your parents is a tricky thing. They are already anxious about approaching or being in their golden years. Many of their friends in their age-group may be sick or have died, and this is a sobering reminder of one's own mortality. It is challenging to approach this issue without having some people feel like you are rushing them to their grave.

I advise my clients to approach the topic slowly and with sensitivity. Sometimes framing it in a way that makes your parents think that they are doing you a favor is helpful. Some examples:

"Dad, you know, Bob and I went to see an estate planning attorney to get our estate planning documents in order. She advised us to let our family know where we keep our documents. It made me think that I don't know where you keep any of your documents. Would you be willing to

talk about this with me?"

Or:

"Mom, a friend of mine is in a nasty lawsuit with her brother over their dad's estate because his affairs weren't in order. I'd really hate to have that happen with my siblings and I'm sure you wouldn't want your legacy to be us having an irreparable rift after you're gone. Can we have an open discussion about this when you're ready?"

Once you've benignly introduced the topic at an appropriate time (i.e., not Thanksgiving or Christmas!), below are some topics and questions you might want to use to get the conversation started — just not all at the same time:

Financial and legal

"Do you have a last will and testament? A health care proxy? A power of attorney? Where do you keep the originals? Who should we contact?"

If your parents don't have those documents, ask, "Would you consider meeting with someone to get those documents in place?"

"Who do you want to handle your financial affairs in an emergency or if your health fails?"

"Do you have a financial planner? Would you like to meet with one?"

Note: this is a much "softer" way to approach the assets, as opposed to "where is your money!"

A study from a few years back found that almost 30 percent of adult children are financially supporting their parents. Retirement calculators available online can help you determine whether your parents have sufficient assets to meet their objectives. This will not be resolved in a single conversation but will require multiple discussions over a period of time. Try to involve your siblings in the conversation so everyone is on board.

Health

"Would you consider giving your doctor permission to talk to me and my siblings about your health in case we have questions?"

"Can any of us come with you to your doctor appointments?"

"If, god forbid, something happened where we couldn't communicate with you, what is your feeling about being kept alive through artificial means like ventilators, artificial feeding tubes, or respirators? In what type of situation would you want or not want those medical technologies used to keep you alive?"

Living situations

"Where do you want to continue to live? Do you want to stay in your house? Are you willing to move into a smaller house?"

"If you need assistance would you rather move in with one of your children, or would you prefer hiring someone to help you at home?"

Don't be surprised if your first attempts are met with defensiveness and resistance. Also don't be surprised if your parent comes back to you a few weeks later and says, "You know, I had this great idea: why don't we go look at an assisted living facility?"

The trick to these conversations is letting your parents get there in their own time, but before a crisis happens. If they feel they are still in control and making their own decisions the stress of a difficult conversation can be alleviated.

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



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(Left and center) Cozy looks for girls and boys at the Anais & I show. (Above) New Jersey-based designer LaToia Fitzgerald of all-boy brand Dillonger with her son Dillon.

Trending now

In this stylish city, even kids get a fashion week

BY TAMMY SCILEPPI

New York City's tweens and teens, and even their little sisters and brothers, seem to have a built-in sense of street-smart style.

That fashion savvy reverberated down the runway in February, as spirited young models rocked a slew of cool designer threads during petitePARADE's popular bi-annual city event, Kids Fashion Week.

Spring beckons, but those warm, bright, and stylish head-turning looks have been the talk of the town since they were featured at the fall-winter 2015 Showcase, held at historic Bathhouse Studios in Manhattan's East Village. Several unique toddler-to-teen collections got plenty of oohs and aahs from invited guests and families eager to get a sneak peek at what the younger set will be wearing in the coming months.

Rising designer Alia Charvel opened the Showcase with the debut of her Little Miss Galia collection in the American market. The Mexican brand interprets fashion trends with colorful cultural elements and past traditions through lovely fabrics and patterns (littlemissgalia.com).

And designer Jane D' Haene debuted her collection with a fun kickoff that took place at a local school park. Kids modeled her clothes while playing hop scotch and volleyball.

During the grand finale, Manhattan-based designer HJ Chung of Imoga (a petitePARADE alumni brand) walked the runway with her teen daughter, who wore a fabulous wintry jacket that her mom designed. Crafting pint-size silhouettes that maximize style and freedom, Imoga is all about timeless and whimsical, fun-to-wear clothing, and Chung's designs keep little souls delighted all year long. You can find her creations

at dozens of stores all over the city (www.imogacollection.com).

All-boy brand Dillonger's New Jersey-based designer LaToia Fitzgerald and her son Dillon accompanied Chung at the finale walk. Young city dudes really dig the edgy style that makes her clothes stand out in a crowd.

This time around, Manhattan-based designer and mom Bonnie Young emphasized fun geometric shapes and showed off her signature dramatic style on the runway.

Here and there sparkly party and holiday pieces emerged, and a luscious blue velvet jacket was a hit with onlookers.

Short, retro black leather jackets looked hip on the runway; girls wore them with flare skirts, tights and leg warmers, reminiscent of the '80s. And there was lots of big hair.

An exotic flower motif adorned a stunning party dress by Anais &



(Above) Manhattan-based designer HJ Chung of Imoga walked the runway with her daughters, who wore fabulous fur jackets during the grand finale. (Left) This Little Miss Galia design has a throwback vibe.

I — a simple, geometric pumpkin sheath had that unmistakable '60s look. Oh, and your daughter will probably want to check out the newest version of a '70s shirt dress for fall. You can take a cue from petitePARADE designers and show her how she can create a great outfit by wearing a soft sweater (even a cotton one) under an edgy, zipper-accented textured vest. She can complete this look with a pretty skirt or dark leggings.

News flash! This fall, colorful large-print flowers will be popping up amidst those basic blacks and darker hues. And traditional prints and plaids — which were all the rage on the runway — got an unexpected twist. Look for fabulously mismatched prints as well, and muted tones juxtaposed against shiny fabrics. If you're thinking, anything goes! You're right.

Rumor has it that Gotham's trendy young ladies and gents will have a lot of great looks to choose from in the fall. And budget-conscious moms and dads shouldn't worry, because there are so many options out there for every wallet, and in the coming months you and your kids and teens will be finding runway styles at many local retailers.

More than ever before kids designers are saying: cute but not cutesy, sophisticated yet whimsical, basic but not mediocre, comfy but always stylish. Look around you. Long gone are the days of cookie cutter childrenswear — even for babies. Savvy designers are breaking all the rules while holding on to that innocence factor.

My own impressions: Bonnie Young's classy and dressy white colored black dress with white cuffs looked a lot like a piece that my cousin wore to a birthday party back in the '70s (I found an old pic). And one short red jacket with a wide collar looked like a really cool, very updated version of a gray '90s jacket that's still hanging in my friend's closet. Overall, the runway vibe seemed to range from sophisticated chic to slightly lil' rebel for the young set, while the wow factor was amped up for tweens and teens.

If you want to get an idea of what your kids', tweens' and teens' closets might look like this coming fall and winter, check out these awesome collections at: www.petiteparade.com/8th-edition/

Without a doubt, the newest kids' looks are kind of edgy and electric in a fun and funky way. For show highlights, you and your kids can go to: <https://instagram.com/petiteparade>.

And for a behind-the-scenes peek at the recent event, visit: www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhBHov7sNKO.

With more than 100 designers and 10,000 guests, petitePARADE continues to attract media, parents, and the children's industry, but philanthropy has always played a vital role. Each season, it partners with outstanding organizations, such as Only Make Believe, Free Arts NYC, New York Foundling, K.I.D.S./Fashion Delivers, and The Juice Foundation to raise money and awareness and provide the families in attendance with fun, interactive workshops which expose children to the importance of giving back.



Party in the PARK

Creative ideas
for planning
an outdoor
celebration

BY DENISE YEARIAN

Plant seeds for a memorable birthday bash or just celebrate spring! Here are several great outdoor party ideas to get you started.

Bloomin' invitations

Create flowers from cardstock and include party details, along with a suggestion for the children to wear outdoor play clothes. Place in an envelope, along with flower seed packets.

Turftop tommy

Items needed: old pantyhose; ruler; scissors; rubber bands; potting soil; grass seed; small, flat plastic bowl with lid; permanent marker; straight pins.

Cut off approximately 5-1/2 inches from one-foot section of a pair of pantyhose. Pour a little potting soil into the toe. Gather hose around the

soil and wrap a rubber band around it to make a nose. To make the head, fill the stocking with about 1 inch of soil (nose should be positioned to the side of the head). Sprinkle grass seed on top of the soil and, without shifting it, add more soil on top of the grass seed until the head is proportionate to the nose. Gather the nylon opening and tie it off with another rubber band. Carefully turn the head over (tied off end will be at the back) and place in a shallow plastic bowl. Cut two small oval eyes from the lid, and use a permanent marker to draw in pupils. Attach the eyes to the head just above the nose with straight pin. When guests leave, tell them to add a little fresh water to the bowl daily. Within days, "hair" will begin to grow.

Prize planter

Items needed: small terra cotta planters painted with bright colors; faux gemstones; glue guns (low setting); permanent marker; aluminum foil; small stones; potting soil; flowers.

Glue gemstones around the upper, outer rim of the planter. Around the lower section of the planter, write "My Garden of Delights!" Place aluminum foil around the outside of the planter to protect it from getting dirt. Place the stone over the planter's interior hole to keep soil from leaking through during watering. Fill planter one-third full of potting soil. Place flowers in

the center of the planter then cover the roots with potting soil, gently pressing around the plant to secure in place. Remove foil.

Crazy critters

Items needed: cardboard egg cartons; tempera paint; tacky glue; wiggly eyes; miniature pompoms; hole punch; pipe cleaners; pencil.

Cut and trim egg cups from the carton bottom. Paint outsides of the cups with tempera paint. Glue two wiggly eyes and a pompom nose on one side. Let dry. Trim pipe cleaners to 4 inches. With a sharp pencil, punch three holes on opposite sides of each carton cup. Push pipe cleaners from the outside of one hole through the inside of the opposite hole, bending pipe cleaner ends to create legs. Poke two holes on top of the cup near the eyes and insert pipe cleaners to make antennae.

Other activity ideas: Have children create a mosaic design using various kinds of seeds, or create garden markers for plants by painting individual vegetable designs on flat stones.

Flourishing games

Divide children into teams and play one or more of these relay games: "Water Down." Use a small, plastic watering can to transfer water from one bucket to another. "Budding Bouquet." Transport flowers one at a time from a bucket to a vase. "Can You Dig it?" Use child-sized shovels to move dirt from a pile to fill a bucket. Another fun idea is to give kids a magnifying glass and paper bag and have a nature treasure hunt.

Dirt diggin' treat

Items needed: Instant chocolate pudding; milk; whipped cream (in a tub); crushed Oreo cookies; gummy worms; serving cups, spoons.

You can prepare this fun treat or let the guests help. Prepare instant pudding according to box instructions. Let mixture sit for 5 minutes until it thickens. Add whipped cream and cookies. Transfer into serving cups. Add more crushed cookies on top of the pudding mixture. Garnish with gummy worms. Give children spoons and let them dig in!

Other food ideas include a veggie tray; cucumber and cream cheese sandwiches; veggie or fruit pizza; chocolate-dipped strawberries and fruit punch.

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

No laughing matter

Kid critic reviews emotional docu-drama about bullying

KIDS FIRST! FILM CRITIC

Jessica Burns has a secret that she's afraid to share with anyone — except her best friend Brian Slater. For the past year the 16-year-old has been victimized by another girl — her former friend Avery Keller, one of South Brookdale High School's most popular and beautiful students. What can you do when the world sees the image of a person, but not the reality? With Brian's help and a hidden digital camera, the evidence of Avery's relentless harassment is captured and finally exposed, bringing both girls and their families face-to-face with the truth.

This is a film that is shot to look like a real-life documentary about bullying, concentrating on everybody who is affected by it. "A Girl Like Her" truly shows that something that may seem so small can actually affect and mess up so many people. This movie isn't a ro-

mance or comedy or an action-packed adventure, but rather quite the contrary. It shows a drama-filled journey. It will not make you laugh. However, it may make you cry. It is about bullying, which should not be referred to as a joke.

In the film a girl named Jessica goes to one of the best public high schools in the nation. After refusing to let her "friend" cheat on her test, she starts getting bullied. She makes her real best friend tell no one of this. But the friend decides that they should do something about it. He gives her a hidden camera to wear and this documents all the bullying. Soon Jessica tries to commit suicide, and the movie shows the struggle of not only the victim and her family, but everybody — the bystander, the bully, the administration, everybody.

This movie is truly emotional. It is made to look like it is documenting



a real story. I didn't even know it was fake until the end! That's how good of a job it is! The acting is truly wonderful. This is the only time I have ever truly hated a character (the bully) and then felt pity for her. The director does a wonderful

job showing the emotions of characters and proving that bullying isn't just a normal part of life to deal with. It is a serious matter that has killed hundreds of children.

My least favorite scene is when the school administration denies the need to institute anti-bullying policies and tries to brush it away as nothing. It shows you how quickly a school will try to brush off bullying as nothing to look out for its own benefit.

This film should be seen by everyone above the age of 9. I give it 4.5 out of 5 stars because it is a wonderful movie about something we all know



is taking place around the world. The only thing I would have liked to have seen in this film is a message at the end or beginning saying that bullying is wrong and is no laughing matter.

Gerry O. — age 12

See his video review at: http://youtu.be/s_xCEC79MT4

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JUST WRITE MOM

DANIELLE SULLIVAN

Remembering Lily

It's not easy to say 'goodbye' to a beloved pet

About a week ago, our oldest cat, Lily, stopped eating out of the blue. She began vomiting a bit and quickly appeared dehydrated. She had become very skinny over the past few months, but I chalked that up to age, because she was still so friendly, happy, and lively. However, one day she was rubbing up on the kitchen chair and chomping down on a bite of pizza with the kids, and yet, just a few days later, she was vomiting and parched. I took her to our vet, Dr. Jeff Beverly, at Marine Park Vet Group in Brooklyn on Wednesday.

Initial blood tests ruled out a few suspected diseases, like thyroid issues and kidney failure. She was given fluids for dehydration and the next step was an ultrasound sched-

uled for Monday morning. But on Friday night, she looked listless and was projectile vomiting. Dr. Beverly said to bring her in at any time if she became any worse, and I did just that on Saturday morning. I was sure she needed fluids and, honestly, I was afraid to keep her at home.

Dr. Beverly agreed she should be hospitalized, because she needed IV fluids and had a heart murmur, but since the practice is closed on Sundays, he quickly set us up with an emergency care hospital where they could also perform an immediate ultrasound. In less than an hour, Lily was being triaged at the 24-hour facility.

A nice vet that I had never met before quickly proceeded to give Lily and exam and an ultrasound, and then informed us that Lily has intestinal cancer. There was a large tumor in her intestine, which is why she could not keep anything down. Then she said we could put her down that day.

When I heard that, I pretty much lost my train of any rational thought. I was just told Lily had cancer and needed to be put down all within 30 seconds. My brain was spinning, and as the vet calmly and sympathetically explained why Lily was not going to recover from this, I couldn't wrap my head around it all.

My oldest daughter, Amanda, was with me, thank goodness, and she asked if we could talk to Dr. Beverly before we made any decisions. The doctor said she'd call him to fill him in, and then we could call and speak with him. Just a few minutes later, she came back in the room and said he was coming right over.

I asked Dr. Beverly so many questions, but they all really boiled down to "what should we do?"

I didn't want Lily to suffer, but I didn't want to lose her, either. When he said that we could certainly take her home and bring her back when we reconciled ourselves with the poor prognosis, I took one look at beautiful Lily being cradled in my daughter's arms, her lethargic look, and her obvious dehydration, and I

knew we had to let her go.

I have said before that Dr. Beverly is outstanding, but he was even beyond that on Saturday. I don't think I would have been able to make that decision if it wasn't for his medical expertise and compassionate, thoughtful words.

I also would never have been able to do it without my daughter there. She was my rock. We cuddled and talked to Lily for hours that day while waiting, and then a little while after we made the decision, we kissed her sweet head and said "goodbye."

Now, even though I know it was the right thing to do, we are all still so very sad. We miss petting her, feeding her, and even talking to her. I always say "hi" to our pets every morning, and it feels strange to leave Lily's name out of the loop.

But I also feel slightly relieved, because I don't see her looking incredibly weary and trying so hard to get her to eat when it was the last thing she wanted to do.

I want to remember her the way she looked when she was healthy, a bright-eyed, loving, happy cat. The photo here really shows the true Lily, and that's the way I'd like to remember her. It is never easy to say "goodbye" to a beloved pet, but hopefully, the memories of the good years outweigh the suffering at the end. Lily had a wonderful and happy life, and that's what I try to keep reminding myself every time I miss her.

As I was finishing up this piece, I checked the mail and found a condolence card from the vet's office, and the text is on target: "Some friends come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave paw prints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same."

We'll always have Lily's paw print, and we are definitely all the better for it.

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.



Lily is remembered after losing her life to intestinal cancer.



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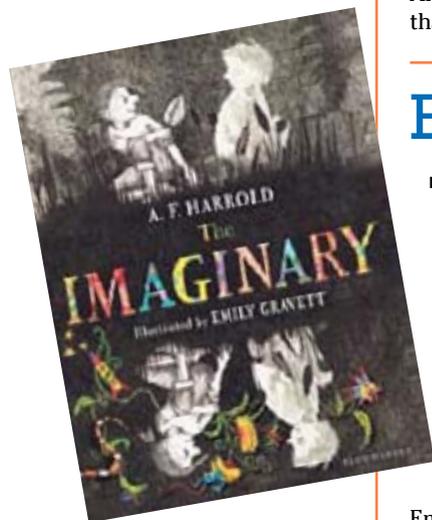
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THE BOOK WORM

TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER



Curl up with Nadine the dog

“**O**pen your ears and close your mouths!” That’s something your teacher says when she wants your class to be still and listen. “Look but don’t touch” is something Mom says, or “That smells fishy” when she doesn’t believe something.

Hearing, smelling, feeling: those are three of the five senses you might use every day. And in the new book “Nadine, My Funny and Trusty Guide Dog” by Carol Chiodo Fleischman, illustrated by Stephanie Ford, one woman “sees” with the help of four furry feet.

Nadine the guide dog had a lot of special training to do her job, but she could be goofy sometimes, too. She liked to steal socks, for instance, and she liked to pretend that she didn’t know how to slide inside her harness. But she really did know how, and she was happy to wear her harness when she was working.

Guide dogs have big responsibilities: they help their humans to see. And for Nadine’s human partner, that was important. Being outside

with Nadine was “like dancing,” no matter what the weather. Nadine the guide dog could allow her human to explore the neighborhood, and on one particularly chilly winter day, that meant a walk, the smell of chimney smoke, and fresh air.

But the wind grew stronger and the air got colder, and it was soon time for Nadine and her human to get home. There was a storm coming, and “walking became dangerous.” Traffic on the street was dangerous, too, but Nadine’s human remembered that “trust your dog” was one of the rules for having a guide dog. Nadine knew a lot of things, and she knew exactly when it was safe to cross the street! But did she know how to find their house?

She led her human partner past a squeaky gate. She led her by a garbage can rolling around in the wind. She warned her human that there was ice on the sidewalk and she didn’t get distracted when they heard another dog’s bark. Nadine’s human was glad for that — but where was home?



Author

Carol Chiodo Fleischman offers a cute tale of a young woman with a smart but very mischievous new buddy — one that will give her delightful independence. That new freedom is clear, both in story and in Stephanie Ford’s colorful illustrations. It’s in the author’s notes that you and your child will learn more about how a puppy becomes a Seeing Eye dog.

Meant for 3- to 6-year-olds, I like this book for classrooms — and, if your family’s thinking about raising a future guide dog, you’ll want it, too. “Nadine, My Funny and Trusty Guide Dog” is one your child will want to repeatedly open.

“Nadine, My Funny and Trusty Guide Dog,” by Carol Chiodo Fleischman [32 pages, 2015, \$16.99].

Everything is possible in ‘The Imaginary’

Yesterday afternoon you spent some time wrestling alligators. Someone had to! Wild animals can be dangerous in your neighborhood and besides, those snapping jaws were making it hard to find dinosaur bones.

Isn’t pretending fun? You can be anyone, anywhere — all you have to do is think it. And in the new book “The Imaginary” by A.F. Harrold, illustrated by Emily Gravett, even adults pretend, although that’s not always good.

Amanda Shuffleup wasn’t the least bit ruffled to find a boy in her closet. She was more worried about getting caught tracking mud across her mother’s carpet, or maybe the boy did it. Strangely, Mrs. Shuffleup didn’t seem to notice him; she didn’t say anything about him, so Amanda didn’t, either. And that was how Amanda met Rudger.

Before he woke up in Amanda’s wardrobe, Rudger had no recollection of anything, but he somehow knew he was where he was supposed

to be. He immediately liked Amanda, and it quickly became obvious that she was the only one who could see him — which was just fine. He was apparently meant to be her friend only and he “rather liked that.”

Oh, the adventures they had! Rudger thought Amanda had to be the best imaginer ever! That summer, they went to the moon, hiked through jungle and desert, and built an igloo without even leaving Amanda’s backyard. But on the day they were spelunking near the front door, real danger appeared.

A man told Amanda’s mother that his name was Mr. Bunting, that he was doing a survey. But he wasn’t alone. With him was a silent, creepy girl that Mrs. Shuffleup couldn’t see.

At first, Rudger liked the idea that he wasn’t the only imaginary friend in the world. But then Mr. Bunting’s creepy girl showed up one dark night and she attacked him! Rudger managed to escape but a few days later, near the swimming pool, Mr. Bunting almost got him again.

What was the name of your imaginary friend? If you don’t remember, maybe you’re not supposed to — though you’ll be sad if you can’t, after you’ve seen “The Imaginary.”

In the spirit of so many childhood classics, author A.F. Harrold and illustrator Emily Gravett invite us into a world that adults usually can’t see (or that they try to manipulate). It’s a world filled with innocence, the love of a friend, danger and frights, and wistful loyalty that’s heartbreakingly sweet; a world where everything’s possible — as long as you’re a kid.

So, yes, this is a book for 9- to 12-year-olds, but definitely, it’s for adults, too. I highly recommend it, in fact, as a perfect read-aloud. “The Imaginary” is a story I imagine you’ll both like very well.

“The Imaginary,” by A.F. Harrold [224 pages, 2015, \$16.99].

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



PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

SHARON C. PETERS, MA

Questioning gender

Dear Sharon,

Our 5-year-old son wants to dress like a girl. He says he's not really a boy and that he is a girl. What should we do?

Dear Parents,

Every 5 year old is unique. When parents ask me questions such as this I usually talk for quite a while before agreeing on useful perspectives.

Here are some general ideas that might be helpful as you think this through.

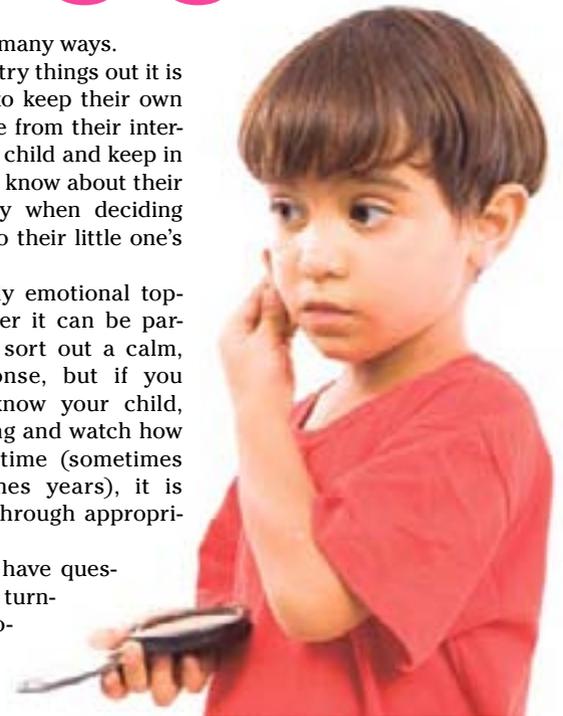
Five year olds experiment with all kinds of ideas that grow and change with time, including sorting through the differences between

girls and boys, in many ways.

When children try things out it is best for parents to keep their own emotions separate from their interactions with their child and keep in mind all that they know about their child's personality when deciding how to respond to their little one's ideas.

With potentially emotional topics such as gender it can be particularly hard to sort out a calm, thoughtful response, but if you remember you know your child, trust your thinking and watch how things go. Over time (sometimes months, sometimes years), it is possible to sort through appropriate reactions.

In time, if you have questions or concerns, turning to a trusted professional for support is always an option.



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

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

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Star

with a cause

Young actress puts spotlight on hungry kids

BY SHNIEKA L. JOHNSON

Actress Quvenzhané Wallis first gained notice for her role in the 2012 film “Beasts Of The Southern Wild.” The role of Hushpuppy led her to becoming the youngest actress to ever receive an Academy Award nomination. At the time, she was just 9 years old. She most recently starred in Sony Picture’s 2014 remake of “Annie,” in which she played the title character. The 11-year-old, Louisiana native is known for playing children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and this has inspired her to help other kids suffering from childhood

Action for Healthy Kids

Action for Healthy Kids is a nonprofit and volunteer network targeting both childhood obesity and undernourishment. The kids would otherwise not get that first meal of the day. By helping schools create or improve existing breakfast programs, the organization works to make schools become healthier places where kids learn to eat right, be active, and develop healthy habits.

It helps nearly 12.9 million kids in 29,000 schools across this country. Through its School Grants for Healthy Kids program and Kellogg’s, it’s working to help provide one million breakfasts during the 2015-2016 school year. To apply for grants, visit www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/apply-for-grants.

Links: www.kelloggs.com/en_US/give.html, www.actionforhealthykids.org/



Academy Award-nominee Quvenzhané Wallis wants to end the blight of childhood hunger in America.

hunger. Millions of school children in the United States are faced with this challenge.

Quvenzhané’s mother, Qulyndreia, is a former school teacher, and she knows firsthand how hunger can impact children on a day-to-day basis. Mother and daughter joined Kellogg’s efforts to give breakfast to kids in need. The two have been promoting the “Breakfasts for Better Days” campaign, which is part of Kellogg’s commitment to provide one billion servings of cereal and snacks to disadvantaged children and families around the world by 2016. Kellogg’s is taking a step towards that goal by providing up to one million breakfasts in 2015. The company is also partnering with the nonprofit organization Action for Healthy Kids — for a fifth year — to provide more children with breakfasts in schools.

I spoke to Quvenzhané about her partnership with Kellogg’s, other upcoming projects, and just what it’s like to juggle adolescence and Hollywood.

Shnieka Johnson: What projects are you currently working on?

Quvenzhané Wallis: Right now,

I am partnering with Kellogg’s in order to spread the word about childhood hunger in America. I learned that one in five children may go to school hungry, including my peers at school, and knew that I wanted to join Kellogg’s in spreading awareness on this issue.

SJ: Can you tell me a little about the “Give A Child A Breakfast” program?

QW: I am partnering with Kellogg’s in order to spread the word on childhood hunger in America. My mom, being a teacher, has always made sure I have breakfast before I leave for school. All kids need and deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential — and starting the day with a great breakfast can help get you going.

SJ: Why did you choose to team up with Kellogg’s for this initiative?

QW: I joined Kellogg’s when I learned that one in five children may go to school hungry, including my peers at school. Even though I’m an actress, I’m still a normal kid that goes to school and has homework. I’m fortunate enough to start my day with a great breakfast, like Kellogg’s Rice Krispies and milk,



Wallis acted opposite Jamie Foxx in "Annie" in 2014.

and I want to help other kids have that same opportunity. I'm excited for the chance to help other kids my age to reach their full potential. You can learn more at www.kelloggs.com/give.

SJ: Any upcoming movies or television appearances that we should look out for?

QW: "Annie" came out on DVD and Blu-Ray on March 17. Later this year, I have two new movies coming out, Kahlil Gibran's "The Prophet" and "Fathers and Daughters."

SJ: What are some of your hobbies when you're not acting?

QW: When I'm not acting, I love spending my time playing sports, especially basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading. I also like reading, playing video games, hanging out with friends, and playing with my two dogs.

SJ: What advice do you have for other kids interested in acting?

QW: Acting is all about having fun and keeping focus on your character. If you are determined and work hard, you can reach success in whatever you are doing. I believe that starting your day with breakfast can help you reach your full potential every day!

I also had a chance to speak with Quvenzhané's mother, Qulyndreia, about her daughter's career.

Shnieka Johnson: How do you manage your daughter's schedule between home life, work, and school?

Qulyndreia Wallis: The number one thing is that my husband and I treat her like a normal kid. We make sure she has structure in her day, does her homework and her chores, has time to have fun and experience life like every other kid. No matter how busy we get, we make it work. At the end of the day, she's just like any daughter. She's just been blessed to have an amazing opportunity, and I want to continue to encourage her to just do her best.

SJ: What do you do to keep your daughter grounded while working in the film industry?

QW: I think that focusing on giving back to the community is very important. That is why I support Quvenzhané's partnership with Kellogg's in helping give breakfasts to children in need. As a school teacher, I know how important it is for students to have breakfast before school. I'm proud of my daughter for helping raise awareness for this worldwide issue — Kellogg's has committed to a great goal.

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.

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DR. MARCIE BEIGEL

Kids and attention

To children, all attention parents pay is good

Kids love attention. To your little one any attention is good attention. If you're looking at her, then she's happy! If you are talking to her, then she's thrilled! Especially since you're her parent, every moment that you focus on her is one that she treasures.

You and I have a different definition of attention. For adults good attention is good, and bad attention is bad. You want your boss to congratulate you on a job well done — good attention. Yet you'll actively avoid your boss if you know he'll yell at you for a problem — bad attention. There's a big difference to you between the two situations.

Your small being doesn't see it the same way. She wants you to praise her for doing really well on her spelling test — attention. She's also okay when you're upset that she made a mess with her paints — more attention. The critical piece for you to remember is that your child doesn't see the difference and will gladly accept any attention that is focused attention on her. Why is this important for you to know? Because when your small being is looking for attention, I'll bet the farm that she'll find a way to get it. For instance when your small being dresses independently and doesn't get enough attention afterwards ("Look what I did!") she may start to refuse to dress on her own again. If you're small being is feeling ignored at bedtime and is lacking a solid routine, then she'll start fighting to go to bed so you're bound to give her all your energy.

So many times I find that problem behaviors in small beings are simply ways to obtain your engagement and have nothing to do with what she's supposedly fighting about. When your small being is begging you for five more Goldfish, keep in mind that she may simply want to speak with you. Find ways to connect your small being in a way that will feel good to all of you.

It's also helpful to provide attention on your own schedule, this way she'll demand less of it in negative ways. Yes, life is busy and you're try-



ing to get 10 things done at once, I understand. You do have more say in the matter than you probably know. Would you rather put other tasks on hold to calmly sit down for a snack with your daughter or have her stage a milk-pouring party in the kitchen while you're on an important phone call? Decide and stick to it.

Please note that your small being isn't making a conscious decision to wreck havoc; your child is not plotting step by step how to get your attention. It's a subconscious operation to get her basic needs met

and there's no logic and reasoning happening in these behaviors. Your small being is doing the best she can to get what she believes she needs. Children need parents' attention and will always (always!) find a way to get it. Teach them to do it in a better way!

Dr. Marcie Beigel is a behavioral therapist based in Brooklyn. She has worked with thousands of families for more than 15 years and has condensed her observations into her practice and programs. For more on her, visit www.BehaviorAndBeyond.net.

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Camp empowered



How to help your child achieve self-determination this summer

BY DR. HEIDI SMITH LUEDTKE

Parents spend a lot of time trying to motivate kids. We use chore charts, checklists, reminders, and rewards to get them to feed the dog, clean their rooms, and complete schoolwork. But these techniques don't change behavior long-term. Real motivation must come from within. And time at camp may be all it takes to

spark a little self-determination in your kid.

I know it sounds too good to be true. Your school-age slacker — the one who expects you to find his homework and pack his lunch — might start doing some things for himself. And your often-bored tween might come home with more pep in her step.

Psychologists use self-determination theory to explain why some

experiences make us feel engaged and excited while others drain and deplete us.

The premise is simple: when an activity meets our needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, we are energized and empowered. Kids' basic needs are no different from adults'.

Kids want to do things for themselves. They crave a sense of accomplishment and routinely seek feed-

Kids want to do things for themselves. They crave a sense of accomplishment and routinely seek feedback. And kids thrive on connections with loved ones and peers.

back. (“Look what I made, Mom!”) And kids thrive on connections with loved ones and peers. Feelings of belongingness boost their self-worth. Summer camp offers loads of opportunities to meet all these needs. And that should make kids (and the parents who love them) very happy campers indeed.

Autonomy

The need for autonomy is satisfied when kids control their own lives.

At camp, your son will have endless opportunities to care for himself. Staff won't select his clothes, organize the contents of his locker, or remind him to put on deodorant. No one will delay dessert until he eats his veggies. Independence is what camp is all about. Don't worry. The world won't stop if your son wears the same shirt three days in a row. His peers will speak up if he gets super stinky.

During the school year, many kids jump from one regularly scheduled activity to the next with no unstructured time in between.

Camp puts kids in charge of their own activities. Maybe your daughter will take a hike. Maybe she'll paint pottery. Maybe she'll write you an email. It is up to her to decide how she'll spend her free time. One thing is certain: she won't sit around whining about having nothing to do. And if she does, you won't be there to hear it.

Competence

The need for competence is satisfied when kids learn new things and get positive feedback about their efforts. Your kid might

choose a camp focused on art, science, sports, or music. Or, he may opt for a good, old-fashioned sleep-away experience, complete with row boats and weenie roasts. Some camp activities may be outside your kid's comfort zone. Stretching is good.

Your child may be unsure she can cross the slippery log over the creek. She may tremble with excitement about her role in the theater production. Peers and counselors will coax her along and give constructive advice. By the end of camp, she'll be the star of her own adventure stories.

If your kid is an experienced camper, encourage him to share what he knows with newbies. Being an ambassador or mentor affirms kids' competence in a big way. Teaching a peer how to trim a sail or chip a golf ball out of the tall grass will take your son's skills to a higher level. His confidence will soar in response.

Relatedness

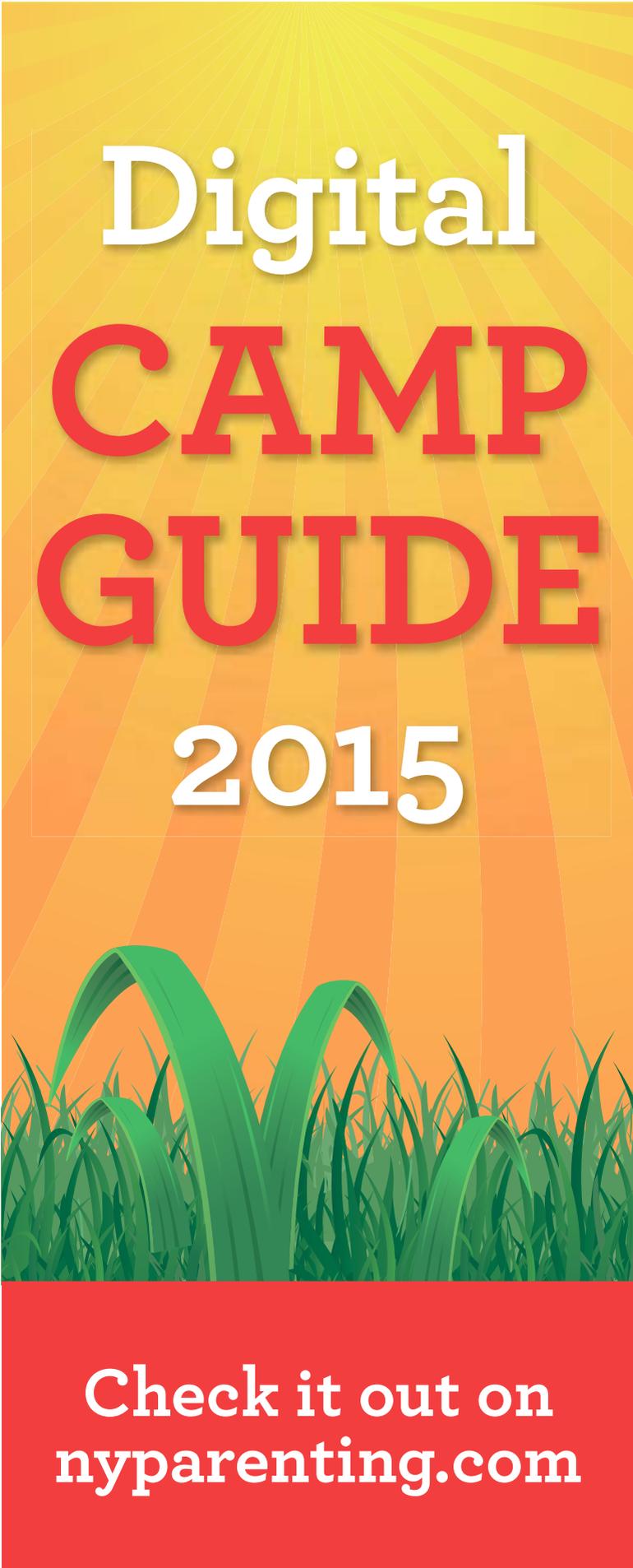
Your biggest concerns about summer camp may center on the social scene. Your child may not know anyone on arrival. That's okay. Camps create connections in many ways. Your kid will be instantly bonded with bunkmates because they share a home base. Family-style dining and friendly competitions encourage interaction, too. The pursuit of shared goals — like building a robot or putting a frog in the counselor's sleeping bag — cements kids' camaraderie.

Extroverted kids may make lots of friends at camp. Less-social souls may not. What matters most is that kids have opportunities to talk, play, and live with a diverse group of peers. They won't all become fast friends.

Learning to navigate the choppy waters of friendship formation is a big part of the camp experience. Your kid's social skill set will expand — even if she doesn't find a new BFF.

No matter what your kid takes to camp, he'll come home with a suitcase full of memories and a renewed sense of self-determination. You'll see it as soon as he wakes from his long post-camp nap.

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

Check it out on
nyparenting.com



HEALTHY LIVING

DANIELLE SULLIVAN



Get glowing

Four tips for regaining vibrant skin after harsh winter weather

After enduring this harsh winter, many of us not only have cabin fever. We are also suffering the after effects from sustained cold, like intensely dry skin. We have also grown accustomed to covering up with scarves and sweaters, forgoing our normal beauty routine because, let's face it, if there was ever a time to feel yucky and sluggish, it had to be these past few months. But now is the time to spring forward and revamp ourselves.

Since healthy, vibrant skin is the foundation of all beauty, how do we get it back after these long, cold months? It starts with not adding

more damage to your skin as the weather warms up.

"My skin has been so dry and flaky this winter, that I don't know if I'll ever get it back to being healthy again," says new mom Kristine McCraig. "I just cannot wait until I can go out in the sun every day again and not be covered up in gloves and scarves. I tried to cover my face whenever I was outside in the freezing cold, and I spend a lot of time in the car, but my face is still so dry."

1. Apply sunblock

Even though we are sun starved, Dr. Rebecca Baxt, a board-certified

New York City dermatologist, advises us to take pause and resist the urge to bask in the glorious, warm sunshine.

"Try to avoid the sun and use daily sunblock SPF 30 or above liberally and reapply every two hours. Moms do a great job protecting their kids, but they forget to put sunblock on themselves." For moms, particularly, Dr. Baxt recommends the powder sunblock because it's "easy to apply over makeup as the day goes on to maintain sun protection."

2. Replenish moisture

Yet, sunblock is only part of the equation, because many people require a moisturizer.

"Dry skin looks dull. Make sure you moisturize once or twice a day. I also recommend really good eye creams, serums, or plain Vaseline petroleum jelly if needed to moisturize — nothing looks worse than dry skin around the eyes, which accentuates wrinkles."

3. Shield your face

However, Dr. Baxt points out that if your skin is oily, a moisturizer may not be necessary. Other tips for long-term healthy skin include wearing a hat, which shields the face from sun damage, and wearing sunglasses.

"They prevent squinting in the sun and reduce wrinkles in addition to reducing risk of cataracts," explains Dr. Baxt.

4. Slather on the C

While everyone benefits from a healthy and regular skin care program, "retinols/retinA is great to help reduce sun damage, fine lines, wrinkles, and hyperpigmentation, as is glycolic acid. These are available over the counter or at the dermatologist's office or with a prescription. Not everyone can tolerate those chemicals, and topical vitamin C is a good alternative and great antioxidant."

Like most good habits, having luminous skin begins with a routine. So moisturize, moisturize, moisturize, put on the SPF — and then go out and catch the rays we have been waiting for this entire, dismal winter.

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.



Sunny skies

Safe, happy
air travel
with kids

BY MALIA JACOBSON

Whoever said, “Getting there is half the fun,” never flew cross-country with a needy newborn, a boisterous toddler, or a moody tween. Not to mention a purse full of wrinkled airline tickets and coloring books, snacks for every member of the family, and a caravan of luggage.

At best, airplane travel with children can be educational and exciting. At worst, it’s an all-out nightmare. Here’s how to plan for a memorable (in a good way) trip that starts before you land.

Baby-toddler years 0-4: Plane plan

Air travel with tots in tow takes planning, patience, and more planning. Celebrity travel expert and mom Amy Graff recommends using

a packing list (you can find one online at BabyCenter.com).

“You might not find the right kind of diapers or that exact baby

food your little one loves at your destination. This is the time when you don’t want to forget anything.” Prep for a smooth takeoff and landing by planning to feed baby — by breast or bottle — during the plane’s ascent and descent; the sucking motion helps equalize pressure inside their tiny ears to minimize painful popping (and the resulting screams). Remember to pack a few more diapers than you think you’ll need on flight, and a change of clothes — or several. And don’t forget to pack extra clothes in your carry-on for a toddler or preschooler.

On a long flight from California to North Carolina, Raleigh native Christen Pope remembered to pack plenty of clothes for 7-month-old Sydney, but forgot a change for her newly potty-trained 3-year-old Jaden. Guess who needed fresh pants shortly after take-off? She can bet she’ll never forget again.

School years 5-12: Fun fare

Elementary-age children usually love plane travel, but can be notori-

ously slow to get through airports. Yelling “Let’s go!” at the top of your lungs may turn some heads, but it won’t make your poky pre-teen move any faster. Instead make the most of kids’ pre-vacation excitement by treating the airport like a fun destination. Start by turning the dreaded security screen into a race; have kids try to get their shoes off and unload their luggage onto the conveyor belt as fast as they possibly can, says Graff.

“It’s a game of speed and it can be a lot of fun.”

School-age kids respond well to delegation, so assign each child a responsibility pre-take-off and in-flight, like carrying the family’s flight snacks or marshalling carry-ons as they come through the security conveyor. Grade-schoolers are also old enough to take responsibility for their personal belongings, both in the airport and in-flight; before boarding and deplaning, gently remind your child to gather her things — but don’t do it for her (you undoubtedly have your own hands full).

Teen years 13-18: Time travel

A long flight layover with bickering teen siblings is a recipe for vacation disaster; quell squabbles by allowing each sibling to take charge of a family decision (one sib can pick a lunch locale at the airport, while another gets to select dinner fare at the destination). Bring a deck of cards, teen-friendly snacks, and an extra set of batteries and AC adapters to keep electronics charged up while you wait.

On the trip, avoid the “teen tune-out” during travel by creating a connection to your destination before you leave. Did your family’s ancestors hail from the region? Do you have any childhood stories about the area? Any major historical happenings? Young teens may get a kick out of an on-flight scavenger hunt with landmarks to watch for during take-off and landing. Appointing a teen “trip historian” with responsibility for journaling and documenting the trip with photos ensures that you’ll have plenty of memorabilia — and gives you a chance to view the trip through your teen’s eyes.

Malia Jacobson is a nationally published sleep and health journalist and author of “Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades.”



Jessie and her red wagon, which holds the apples she picked with help from her father, Patrick Hempfing.

Hoarding memories

Cleaning the garage leads to a trip down memory lane

CHERISH THE MOMENTS

BY PATRICK HEMPFING

“Let’s clean out the garage today.” How did this statement come from my mouth? If I had typed these words, I could have highlighted the sentence and pressed the delete key before anyone saw it. However, like all words, once they’re spoken in front of witnesses, you can’t take them back. Mattie, my wife, quickly seconded the idea as this project had been on my Honey-Do list for quite some time. Jessie, my 9-year-old daughter, made it unanimous.

I then pointed out what I saw as the most likely problem in tackling this massive project — too many supervisors. I emphasized, “We can only have one supervisor!” Jessie’s hand shot up from the kitchen table, at which point I realized I either need to raise my hand faster or yell “me” when I end select sentences.

Okay, besides attempting to tackle this project with two supervisors — yes, Mattie also likes to lead — I knew our different personalities would enter into play. There’s Mr. Sentimental (me). I know Jessie can’t use her pink ball glove anymore, but we have to keep it forever. Then there’s Mrs. Clutterfree (Mattie). “We haven’t used it in the last five years. Take it to Goodwill.” Finally, there’s Miss Open Every Box. “What’s in that box? Let’s pull that box down.”

We weren’t into the cleaning project very long before I concluded that a trip to the dentist for a root canal would have been more fun.

At day’s end, I was pleased with the progress my two supervisors and I had made. The car would have to stay parked in the driveway for the night as the garage floor was covered with everything, but family harmony is more important. Overall, though, I thought we worked well as a team. Did we have differences of opinion? Yes. Did I go to bed exhausted? You bet. Will I get to be the supervisor for day two of garage cleaning? Like Jessie’s odds of getting a horse for her

next birthday, not a chance.

Although I had been dreading this huge project, my two supervisors and I shared some special times. Mattie and I pulled out possessions we hadn’t seen in years and Jessie had never seen. One box contained love letters and poems I wrote to Mattie before we were married. Jessie and Mattie laughed when I read one letter aloud. I can’t believe I wrote such mushy stuff, and it worries me a little that I have no recollection of writing it.

Jessie said she could part with her tiny red wagon. Mattie, Mrs. Clutterfree, said, “We can’t give that away. That’s where Jessie had her apple sales.” Jessie’s preschool class for 2-year-olds took a field trip to an apple orchard. I had fun picking apples with Jessie, and we filled her bag in no time. Of course, Daddy picked the high ones. When we got home, we decided to have an apple sale. We made a sign “Apples For Sale — Only 25 cents.” Jessie loaded her apples into her little red wagon and set up shop with her newly acquired red and green inventory. I cleared a small bookshelf in our guest room and it made a perfect display for Jessie’s merchandise. We had so much fun selling and buying apples, learning about money, giving change, and talking about how to run a successful business that we repeated the process after Halloween with Jessie’s trick-or-treat candy.

My most sentimental moment came when I pulled a sign away from the wall and found half of a pink, plastic Easter egg. Jessie hid plastic eggs long after Easter had ended. To make hide and seek last longer, she split each egg in half. I, Mr. Sentimental, said, “Oh, I’m keeping this.” Of course, Mrs. Clutterfree’s immediate response was, “Trash!” Now, I admit, a half of a plastic egg covered with dust and spider webs doesn’t make the best keepsake, but I’m not a hoarder. Okay, maybe I’m a hoarder of memories.

The garage cleanup will probably take several more days. Will I find the other half of the pink egg? Mattie better hope not, because if I do, I’m saving it. I’ll store it in Jessie’s tiny red wagon.

Until next month, remember to cherish the moments. Happy Easter.

Patrick Hempfing had a 20-year-long professional career in finance 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/patricklhempfung and on Twitter @PatrickHempfung.

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Calendar

APRIL



Winging it

Grab your nets and be on the lookout for beautiful butterflies at Blue Heron Nature Center on April 4.

Staten Island is home to an amazing abundance of wildlife. The Urban Rangers will lead you to the best viewing spots in the preserve. This trek focuses on butterflies,

cabbage whites, viceroys and monarchs, which are just a few of the species found there.

Butterfly exploration on April 4 from 11 am to 1 pm. Free.

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

Submit a listing

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

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

WED, APRIL 1

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

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

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

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

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

Teens and tweens play Minecraft.

THURS, APRIL 2

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Children 5 to 12 years old practice their artistic talents. Registration required.

FRI, APRIL 3

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Join in for a stress-free afternoon of stretching. Bring a yoga mat, water bottle and wear comfortable clothing. For all ages.

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

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

Italian 101: Huguenot Public Library,



No place like home

Dorothy and pals get blown in to the St. George Theatre on April 26.

Dorothy Gale of Kansas dreams of what lies over the rainbow. Come join Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman, the Cowardly Lion, and Toto, as they travel the universe of Dorothy's imagination! Songs include "Over the

Rainbow," "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead," and "We're Off the See the Wizard." Performed live and presented by Plaza Theatricals.

"The Wizard of Oz," April 26 at 3 pm. Tickets are \$18 and \$20.

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

830 Huguenot Ave. at Drumgoole Road East; (718) 984-4636; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Teens learn to parla Italiano! Registration required.

SAT, APRIL 4

ON STATEN ISLAND

Bunny Hop: Willowbrook Park, Eton Place and Richmond Avenue; (718) 667-3545; www.nycgovparks.org; 11am-2 pm; Free.

Bring the kids out and enjoy the day for the Annual Bunny Hop. Events for the day include face painting, crafts, games, and egg hunt, and much more.

Butterfly exploration: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am - 1 pm; Free.

Rangers guide you to the best wild-life viewing spots in the urban jungle. This exploration through the park will focus on butterflies. Cabbage whites, viceroys, and monarchs are just a few of the species found in New York City. Learn more about their fascinating abilities and amazing journeys.

Egg hunt: Staten Island Historical

Society, 441 Clarke Ave. at Arthur Kill Road; (718) 351-1611; 11 am; \$10 (\$9 members; Adult members free; \$5 non-member adults).

Bring an egg carton to decorate in high Victorian style, transforming it into a festive egg-holder that can hold up to six candy-filled eggs. All decorations are provided. Meet the Easter Bunny as you hunt for eggs in a Victorian town house decorated for spring. Refreshments will be served. Recommended for children ages 3 and up.

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

Autism celebration: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 1:30 pm; Free.

Staff from Autism Speaks will join in for a talk on awareness and advise parents with special needs children about resources. Interactive events are scheduled for the children 5 to 11 years old.

"Hugo": New Dorp Library, 309 New

Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2 pm; Free.

The magical world of adventure and a coloring activity sheet.

MON, APRIL 6

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718) 984-6670; 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.

Walk in workshop: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; stateniscandkids.org; 11:30 am to 3:30 pm; Free with museum admission.

Children can drop in every day and make a spring craft.

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

Children have fun making projects made from natural materials.

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

Children 5 to 12 enjoy books.

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

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

TUES, APRIL 7

ON STATEN ISLAND

Outdoor adventure: Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. between Snug Harbor Road and Tysen Street; (718) 448-2500; www.snugharbor.org; 11 am - 12:30 pm; Free.

Explore Staten Island's Snug Harbor, a cultural center and botanical garden, on this nature hike with your guide, Will Lenihan. All ages are welcome. Wear sturdy shoes and sun block.

Walk in workshop: 11:30 am to 3:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 6.

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

Children explore the grounds and learn about rocks.

Paint on Silk: Great Kills Library, 56 Giffords Ln at Margaret Street; (718)

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Calendar

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

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984-6670; www.nypl.org; 3:30 pm; Free.

Apply your skills to make wearable art. For teens 13 to 18 year old. Materials provided.

WED, APRIL 8

ON STATEN ISLAND

Walk in workshop: 11:30 am to 3:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 6.

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

What lies in the pond? Children find out.

Earth Day: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; nypl.org; 1 pm; Free.

Celebrate nature with giveaways, crafts, and information on recycling and composting.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

Minecraft gaming: 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

THURS, APRIL 9

ON STATEN ISLAND

Nature Hike: Conference House, 298 Satterlee St. at Hylan Blvd.; (718) 727-1135; 11 am-12:30 pm; Free.

Educators lead the children through the grounds. Wear appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes.

Walk in workshop: 11:30 am to 3:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 6.

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

Children learn all about those creepy, crawly bugs.

Kiddie tech time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington Place; (212) 621-0690; 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, APRIL 10

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Children birth to 36 months old with a caregiver listen to stories, do interac-



Inside an ecosystem

The Tiny Terrariums workshop celebrates Earth Day on April 26 at the SONY Wonder Technology Lab.

Families enjoy a day at the Lab and learn all about our Earth, the ecosystem, and how to preserve it for future generations. Features interactive games and

crafts. Suitable for children of all ages.

Tiny Terrariums, April 22, 2 to 3 pm. \$8 per participant. RSVP required.

SONY Wonder Technology Lab [550 Madison Ave. at 56th Street Midtown East; (212) 833-8100; www.sonywondertechlab.com]

activities, and join with other babies and toddlers.

Walk in workshop: 11:30 am to 3:30 pm. Staten Island Children's Museum. See Monday, April 6.

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

Children explore the park and learn about maps and how to read a compass.

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

The treasured story is brought to life and presented by the Traveling Lantern Theatre Company. For children 4 years and older.

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

Italian 101: 3:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, April 3.

SAT, APRIL 11

ON STATEN ISLAND

Kids craft time: Mariners Harbor Library, 206 South Ave. at Arlington

Place; (212) 621-0690; 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.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, April 4.

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

Travel the animal world on the big screen and bring home an activity sheet.

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

Children 12 years old and younger. Children see "Night at the Museum" and "Annie."

SUN, APRIL 12

ON STATEN ISLAND

Birding for beginners: High Rock, Tonking Rd. and Rockland Ave.; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgovparks.org; 11 am; Free.

Children learn how to identify the various birds in the park.

MON, APRIL 13

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, April 6.

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

For kids 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; 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.

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

Teens enjoy traditional games including Connect 4; Chess; Battleship; Monopoly and Jenga.

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, April 6.

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

TUES, APRIL 14

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

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

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

Children 6 to 11 years old develop strategic thinking and gaming skills while having fun.

WED, APRIL 15

ON STATEN ISLAND

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

Minecraft gaming: 4 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

THURS, APRIL 16

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Caps for Sale," and "Three Billy Goats Gruff": Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory

Calendar

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

Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Two tales for the price of one. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Easter fest: Greenbelt Nature Center, 700 Rockland Ave. at Brielle Avenue; (718) 351-3450; www.nycgov-parks.com; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free.

Search for the Golden Egg, get your face painted, and do crafts and egg dyeing.

Youcan the Tucan: New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free.

The puppet and explorer Jungle Jane embark on an adventure where children are part of the jungle exploration team. Presented by the Wildlife Theater from the Central Park Zoo.

FRI, APRIL 17

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Teens share their opinions on library programs.

Yoga: 3 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, April 3.

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

Italian 101: 3:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, April 3.

SAT, APRIL 18

ON STATEN ISLAND

Junior Science Club: Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Pl. corner of Wall Street; (718) 727-1135; www.statenislandmuseum.org; 10 am - noon; \$8 (\$5 members).

Electricity is on the menu for children 8 to 13 years old.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, April 4.

"Field Trip to the Planets": New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2-3 pm; Free.

Blast off with Jake on a musical out-of-space adventure.

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

Manipulate matter in all of its three stages — frozen, gas, and steam — to make mad elixirs. For children 5 years and older. Pre-registration required. Limited to 25 participants.



Whistle a happy tune

Emily Eagen whistles her way to Snug Harbor Cultural Center on April 26.

Emily is a musical innovator who sings and whistles everything from early music to traditional Americana. Eagen, a two-time international whistling champion, is a singing, whistling, and ukulele-playing member of the popular roots band The Whistling Wolves.

Emily and bandmate Spiff Weigand's original songs explore children's flights of fancy,

their dreams, and the way they turn familiar concepts on their head. Joined by friends from the Wolves, Eagen and her string band also toss in spoons, bones, jaw harp, and jug for a sound that has audiences stomping, clapping, and whistling.

Emily Eagen and the Whistling Wolves, April 26 at 2 pm. Free

Snug Harbor Cultural Center [1000 Richmond Terr. between Snug Harbor Rd. and Tysen Street in Randall Manor; (718) 448-2500; www.snug-harbor.org].

SUN, APRIL 19

ON STATEN ISLAND

Searching for Salamanders: Blue Heron Nature Center, 222 Poillon Ave. between Amboy Road and Hylan Boulevard; (718) 967-3542; www.nycgov-parks.org; 1 pm; Free.

Children take a hike with rangers to find salamanders and learn how important they are to the ecology of the forest.

MON, APRIL 20

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, April 6.

Baby and me: 1:30-2:30 pm. Great

Kills Library. See Monday, April 13.

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, April 13.

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, April 6.

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

TUES, APRIL 21

ON STATEN ISLAND

"Alice in Wonderland": Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Take a journey with Alice and all her

puppet friends. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

WED, APRIL 22

ON STATEN ISLAND

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

THURS, APRIL 23

ON STATEN ISLAND

Kiddie tech time: 4 pm - 5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Thursday, April 9.

FRI, APRIL 24

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Children 3 to 5 years old.

Play time: 11 am-noon. Mariners Harbor Library. See Friday, April 10.

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

Italian 101: 3:30 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Friday, April 3.

SAT, APRIL 25

ON STATEN ISLAND

Kids craft time: 11 am. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, April 11.

Tutoring: 11 am-1 pm. New Dorp Library. See Saturday, April 4.

"Sonic the Hedgehog Goes Green": New Dorp Library, 309 New Dorp Ln at Clawson Street; (718) 351-2977; www.nypl.org; 2-3 pm; Free.

Sonic takes Tails with him to the big city.

Saturday showtime: 2 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Saturday, April 11.

Michael Cooper "Masked Marvels & Wondertales": Center for Performing Arts at csi, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-2787; www.cfashows.com; 3 pm; \$16 and \$18.

This gifted performer presents a one-man extravaganza with dazzling imagery and stunning disguises. For all ages.

SUN, APRIL 26

ON STATEN ISLAND

Emily Eagen and the Whistling Wolves: Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. between Snug

Continued on page 32

Calendar

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

Continued from page 31

Harbor Road and Tysen Street; (718) 448-2500; www.snug-harbor.org; 2 pm; Free.

Presented by the Carnegie Hall Family series of Neighborhood Concerts, this innovative performer sings and whistles everything from early music to traditional Americana.

"The Wizard of Oz": St. George Theatre, 35 Hyatt St. between St. Mark's Place and Central Avenue; (718) 442-2900; www.stgeorgetheatre.com; 3 pm; \$20, \$18.

Plaza Theatricals presents Dorothy, Toto, the Tinman and all the rest in the merry old land of Oz.

MON, APRIL 27

ON STATEN ISLAND

Toddler time: 11-11:45 am. Great Kills Library. See Monday, April 6.

Baby and me: 1:30 - 2:30 pm. Great Kills Library. See Monday, April 13.

Teen Cafe: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Monday, April 13.

Board Games: 3 pm. Dongan Hills Library. See Monday, April 13.

Read aloud: 4 pm. Huguenot Public Library. See Monday, April 6.

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

TUES, APRIL 28

ON STATEN ISLAND

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

Teens make their own cards. materials provided. Registration is required.

Kiddie Game Time: 4-5 pm. Mariners Harbor Library. See Tuesday, April 14.

WED, APRIL 29

ON STATEN ISLAND

Steve Trash The Science of Ecology: Center for Performing Arts at CSI, 2800 Victory Blvd. at Morani Street; (718) 982-5678; www.enrichmentthroughthearts.com; 10 am and 11:30 am; \$8.

Celebrate Earth Day. Children learn how to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Presented by Enrichment Through the Arts.

Teen club: 2-4 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

Bricks 4 Kidz: Dongan Hills Library, 1617 Richmond Rd. at Liberty Avenue; (718) 351-1444; www.nypl.org; 4 pm to 6 pm; Free.



Ballet with Latin flair

Ballet Hispanico presents "En Familia" at the Joyce Theatre on April 18.

"En Familia" showcases excerpts from Asuka, CARMEN, maquia, Sombbreroisimo, and El Beso.

The whole family will enjoy this 90-minute, fun-filled journey through Latin American dance and culture featuring excerpts from Ballet Hispanico's diverse repertory and a question-and-answer with the dancers.

Hosted by Ballet Hispanico's Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro and Education Director AnaMaria Correa, this fun, interactive and educational performance gives families a glimpse into the beauty of the arts and Latino culture.

"En Familia," Ballet Hispanico on April 18 at 2 pm. Tickets are \$25.

The Joyce Theatre [175 Eighth Ave. at 19th Street in Chelsea; (212) 242-0800; www.joyce.org].

Learn about the historic, scientific and mathematical info on Lego and build models in teams. Registration required.

Read aloud: 4-4:30 pm. New Dorp Library. See Wednesday, April 1.

THURS, APRIL 30

ON STATEN ISLAND

Poem in my Pocket: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen Street; (718) 273-2060; statenislandkids.org; 2-3 pm; Free with museum admission.

Share a poem in Portia's Playhouse.

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

To celebrate Diversity in Action, children will make flags from their cultures or others they choose to display in the library.

Stories, crafts and fun activities.

Art Studio: Staten Island Children's Museum, 1000 Richmond Ter. at Tysen 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; \$5 plus museum admission.

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

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 museum 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.

"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, Now - Tues, June 30; \$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.

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.

LONG-RUNNING

ON STATEN ISLAND

Story Museum: Historic Richmond Town, 441 Clarke Ave. at Tysen Court; (718) 351-1611; 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; statenislandkids.org; Fridays, 2, 3 and 4 pm, Now - Fri, May 1; Free with museum admission.

Children experiment with all types of food.

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

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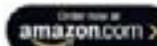
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GOOD SENSE EATING

CHRISTINE M. PALUMBO, RD

The forbidden fruit

Food restriction doesn't promote healthy habits

Do you prohibit your child from eating certain foods? Orange cheese puffs? Brightly colored sugar-sweetened cereals? Candy bars? If you do, you may wish to rethink your stance.

It turns out that food restriction is counterproductive. It makes the forbidden foods all the more appealing and makes your child want to eat it more.

Last year researchers at Pennsylvania State University found that preschool children identified as being highly motivated by food showed more interest in and ate more of off-limit snacks than children who showed less interest in the foods.

When it comes to picky or tiny eaters parents may encourage consumption by telling them it is good for them. Also not a good idea.

"Kids eat for taste and satisfaction. So when a parent tries to convince a child to eat a food using nutrition as the selling point, kids interpret that as meaning the food isn't tasty," says Maryann Jacobson, registered dietician, family nutrition expert, and coauthor of the book "Fearless Feeding." Jacobson summarizes the feeding strategy she employs with her children.

"I don't try to push or oversell healthy foods or try to get them to eat less of so called unhealthy foods," she says. "Instead, I serve a



variety of food in a structured way and teach them to listen to their tummy. I stress the importance of variety and frequency over pressuring and restricting."

Does this mean your children are allowed complete access to all foods? Of course not. Instead of keeping pop, candy, and salted snack foods

on the top shelf of your kitchen cabinets, do this: Stock your kitchen with primarily healthful foods, then allow the kiddos a reasonable amount of control over what they eat.

When it's snack time, ask them to choose between two nourishing items. For example, "Would you like corn chips with guacamole or ants on a log or a pear with peanut butter?"

When my own kids were young I noticed when their "restricted" friends came over they tended to binge on our treat foods.

"Unlike so many of the struggling adults I've counseled as a dietician, I want my children to eat healthy food and be active as part of their regular life," Jacobson says. "Basically, I want them to choose healthy habits because they are enjoyable, not because they feel obligated."

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

Broiled Sweet Scarletts™ grapefruit

PREP: 5 min. Time to Table: 10 min

SERVING SIZE: 2

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Sweet Scarletts™ grapefruit
- 2 Tbsp. turbinado sugar or granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp. granola
- 2 Tbsp. fat-free Greek yogurt

DIRECTIONS: Heat broiler and place rack 4-inches from heat. Cut grapefruit in half crosswise. If desired, use a paring knife to cut around segments to separate from membrane.

Sprinkle each half with 1 tablespoon sugar and immediately place on a baking sheet under the broiler. Broil until sugar is melted and browning. Remove grapefruit and let cool slightly. Serve each grapefruit half with 1 tablespoon each yogurt and granola.

NUTRITION INFORMATION: 140 calories, 33 g carbohydrate (27 g sugar), 3 g protein, 1 g fat (0 g saturated fat), 2 g fiber, 10 mg sodium, 30% DV vitamin A, 100% DV vitamin C, 4% DV calcium, 2% DV iron.

Adapted and used with permission from Wonderful Sweet Scarletts™ Grapefruit



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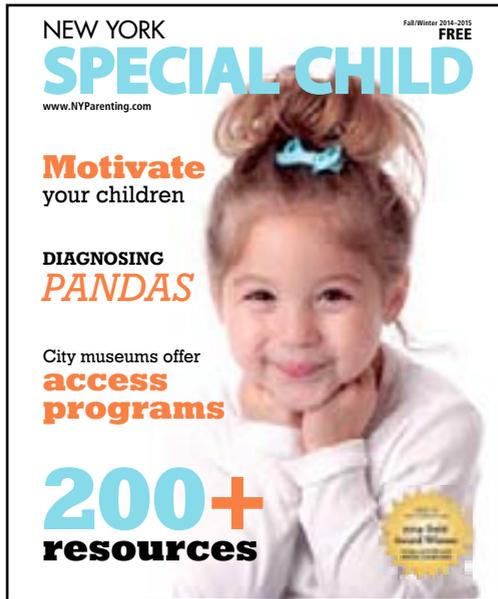
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